

## Community Precedes Mission

Dearest Friends and Family-

This month the MCD staff and board attended our annual community-building retreat at a local Salvation Army Retreat Center. The focus of this year's retreat was "Community Precedes Mission" – a concept rooted in the belief that in order for a community of people to participate in helping usher in the Kingdom through mission, this group must make strides in reflecting the Kingdom within their own community. In preparation to lead our community in this discussion, I was reminded through my studies just how foundational community life is to missional life.

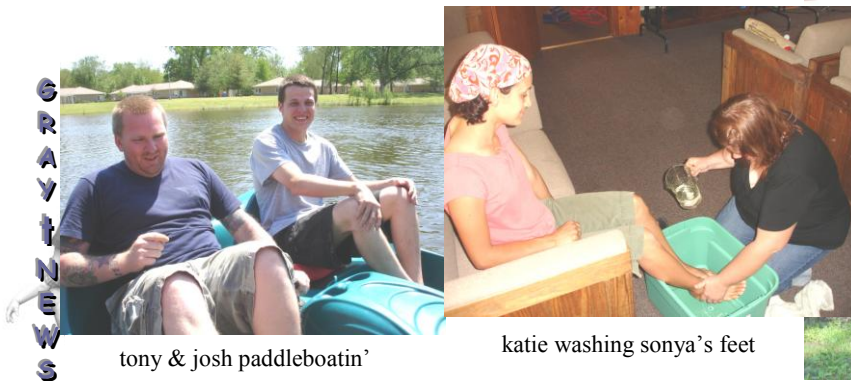
To begin, when meditating on the Trinity one can't help but be moved by the fact that God, Himself, exists in community (one God in three persons). This has significant implications across the board in terms of who God is and how we are to view Him. For instance, something is greatly missed in our understanding of Jesus' crucifixion if this aspect of the Trinity community is removed from Jesus' cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). For it is when Jesus' connection with His community is severed, that His deepest cries of anguish emerge.

Prior to this, during His time on earth, Jesus continued to proliferate the value of community by not sending out His disciples on mission (Matt 10) until they were solidified as a community under His love (Matt 4-9). Becoming a Kingdom community preceded their being sent to proclaim the coming Kingdom.

This concept of community preceding mission continues: the radical display of community offered by early Church in the book of Acts, Paul's discourse on the "body of Christ" (I Cor 12), John's exclamations to love one another (I John 3-4), to name a few.

As you know, achieving this type of community is EXTREMELY difficult. It demands that we daily die to ourselves, being committed to one another through Christ-like humility and love. PLEASE PRAY for our community's earnest desire and continued steps towards becoming a Kingdom community where His will would be done "on earth as it is in heaven".

With great love and gratitude,  
*Christian, Sonya, Adina, & Elliott Gray*



tony & josh paddleboatin'

katie washing sonya's feet