



# Community

# CURRENT

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*Equipping the church to reach the world for  
the glory of God through Christ*

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*Editorial note*

## **Community. Why does it matter?**

Is it just another buzzword that will be replaced in 5 years? What is true community? Community is the reality that we are called into as God's people, the bride of Christ, the church. In other words, Christ's incarnation and death was an expression of hospitality, of drawing us into His community, the communion of the Triune God eternal. Wow.

*Ingrid Chung*

# Community<sup>1</sup>

By Pastor Bob



Someone once said that hospitality saved us. Sounds a little strange. And it's a little bit of an overstatement, but there are some things to learn by taking a hospitality approach to some salvation oriented texts. It might just spur us on to more of a community-hospitality-salvation mindset ourselves. They are not such strange bed-fellows as they might at first glance appear.

We were once strangers to God, but are now welcome (Eph. 2:12); enemies, but now friends (Rom. 5:10). The Lord's Supper reminds us that we are traitors not just forgiven of treason, but brought in for supper.

In Luke 7, when Jesus chides Simon the Pharisee for not lowering himself enough to wash his feet as a hospitable courtesy, we get a foretaste of the hospitality of Jesus. He not only wrapped a towel around his waist and carried a basin for his followers, but he also eventually put a crown of thorns on his head and carried a cross so that curtains could be ripped and veils torn, bringing us into God's presence "with confidence" (Heb. 4:16).

Jesus' told His followers to "Love one another, even as I have loved you." And the letter to the Ephesians restates Old Testament truths of alienation between Jews and Gentiles: "Remember that you were at one time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in this world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near" (Ephesians 2:11-13). Later on, he focuses the teaching further: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 4:32-5:2).

This is the function of the church early on in Acts. In Acts 2:42-46, Christians were eating together with happy hearts, being hospitable to each other as their Father was to each individually. Take careful note of what kind of results this fellowship produced. We can be sure they loved each other more and enjoyed each other's company greatly but notice also, "the Lord added to their numbers daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

It appears as if Christians opened their homes to unbelievers - food, fun, and conversation. Deep discussion followed sharing their food and homes. This appears to be Paul's recollection of his time with

<sup>1</sup> Parts of this article were taken directly from <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2012/08/02/when-hospitality-and-hell-fire-kiss/>.



**Summer in review...**



**Independence Day Celebration**



**Siliguri, Summer India Mission**

*Community*, cont. from page 2

the Thessalonians as he writes, "So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves" (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

*Some TACC action items:*

1. Let us open our homes in hospitable ways to our friends at TACC. There is no better way to develop deep and lasting friendships than in our homes together sharing God's goodnesses to us. Spiritual gifts are best used in the context of personal relationships. Seek to build up, minister to, and encourage.
2. Purposefully allow the discussion to center on Christ, His church, and our mission to the world and Orange.
3. Open our homes to our co-workers, neighbors, and

friends. There is no better apologetic for our faith than a Christian home centered on Christ.

4. Practice hospitality, not entertainment. Entertaining seeks to impress or entertain. Hospitality opens the heart and home as they are, with warts and faded fabric, so that Christ is exalted and society's "norms" are not the focus.
5. It's much easier to spend Sunday afternoon at a restaurant with well-known and mostly safer friends. Make a habit of opening your home to lesser-known, maybe less safer acquaintances who just may need a friend in time of need.
6. Be a good listener. Do not so much seek to have others understand you, but seek to understand each other, and make efforts so that they know you know, so that they are convinced you understand.
7. As you part, pray together. Nothing fancy or pastoral, but as one friend to another.

# ON COMMUNITY: QUOTABLE

There is a certain kind of so-called conversion which separates a man from his fellow men. It may fill him with a self-righteousness which rejoices in its own superiority to those who have had no like experience. It may move a man to a Pharisaic self-isolation. There have in fact been not a few so-called conversions as a result of which a man has left the Church to belong to some smaller and holier body. The plain truth is that such a one should very seriously examine himself, if he finds what he regards as his Christian experience separating him from his fellow-men, or his fellow-Christians.

... William Barclay (1907-1978)

Life together under the Word will remain sound and healthy only where it does not form itself into a movement, an order, a society... but rather where it understands itself as being a part of the one, holy, catholic, Christian Church, where it shares actively and passively in the sufferings and struggles of the whole Church. Every principle of selection, every separation connected with it that is not necessitated quite objectively by common work, local conditions, or family connections is of the greatest danger to a Christian community. When the way of intellectual or spiritual selection is taken, the human element always insinuates itself and robs the fellowship of its spiritual power and its effectiveness for the Church, and drives it into sectarianism.

... Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)



**New believers!**



# Youth in Community

By Pastor Andrew

## Casa de Pan, Mexico Mission

*I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.*

### **-Exodus 6:7-8**

From July 29-August 4, 22 high school and junior high students and 6 adult counselors made the trek up to Hume Lake summer camp for a week of recreation, reflection, and God-centered teaching. The theme at Hume Lake this year focused on the often wandering journey of the Israelite nation from Egypt to the Promised Land. We were reminded of the character of God and of His saving acts toward those He chooses as His own. In short, we were challenged with

the reality of our community as the people of God.

### **A community of salvation**

One thing that unites us as a church and as a youth group, which is part of the church, is that we have all been saved by gracious act of God in sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Because of His perfect life, death, and resurrection, we can be called sons and daughters of God. This year at Hume, we had one student, Corrine, make a first-time decision to trust Christ with her life. In a very real sense, she has now become a part of our community because of the saving act of God. Another of our students, Rachel, decided to make a public profession of her faith through baptism. She was led by the Spirit of God to obey Christ's command to be baptized on the Sunday we returned, thereby providing a beautiful picture of the salvation God brings.



**This month @Taft Avenue...**

**Communion Sunday**

Sunday, September 2

**Directory Photos & Updates**

Sundays, September 9, 16, 23

**Family Prayer Event**

Sunday, September 16, @6pm

**India Fall Mission**

Thursday, September 13–

Tuesday, September 25

**A community that shares life together**

Throughout our time at camp, we were challenged to “get real” in our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. So often, it can be tempting to put on a face for the crowd at church. This face says “everything is fine,” “no problems here,” or “I’m cool.” The reality is we are all dealing with the struggles of life in one way or another and God has given us a church community to strengthen us when we are weak and to walk through the peaks and valleys of life together. In order to do this, we must let other people into our lives and we must engage in the lives of others. More and more, I believe our youth are catching the vision for what Biblical community looks like as we share together in the journey.

**A community on mission**

One thing that sets the community of the body of Christ apart from many other communities is that we are a community on mission. We make it our aim to know Christ and to make Him known, to make disciples of all nations, and to be His hands and feet in the places He has put us. Recently, the youth have enjoyed serving together through doing construction projects and leading a VBS in Mexico, volunteering in Compton (before Hume) and helping run the kids’ Music Camp here at church the week after Hume. God is using them to be a light to the community. Pray for them that God would continue His good work in their lives and through His mighty hand, bring revival to the next generation.



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An Evangelical Free Church

1350 East Taft Avenue

Orange, CA 92865

(714) 637-3220

Office open M-Th, 9am-12:30pm, 1-5pm