



Spend Yourself Well

In 2020, Evana will introduce a new initiative called, "Spend Yourself Well" to help individuals & families discover & leverage their gifts, interests, and experiences in service to others. It will include teachings, an assessment tool, and discussion guide that can be used in a class format or individually. The following excerpt from 'Smart Compassion' captures part of the hope we have for the initiative:

"Before sunset on a Friday evening in 1859, a man named Henri Dunant walked in utter dismay across the Italian countryside, surveying a fifteen-mile battlefield where forty thousand soldiers lay dead and dying. The Battle of Solferino was the most savage battle the country had ever seen. Dunant stood in utter disbelief that so many wounded soldiers had been abandoned. The nearby townspeople had secluded themselves behind locked doors, waiting for the horrific sounds of the wounded to die down. In a moment of outrage and desperation, Dunant ran through the streets rallying the townspeople, crying out, "All are brothers, all are brothers!" The people responded. They began to open their doors to the hurting and wounded soldiers. Before Saturday dawned, several makeshift hospitals were saving hundreds of lives. It was an amazing feat: on Friday night the townspeople hid inside their homes, unable to fathom the hell outside; on Saturday morning, a hope had exploded into action.

All of this began with one open door. It began with one person looking out and discovering that the "problem" was simply another human being in need! Everyone who opened their door that night had every reason not to. Their apprehensions likely compounded exponentially as they thought through what-if scenarios. What if they rob us? What if I catch a disease? What if there's a backlash for helping our enemies? I've heard those men are savages. Who knows? Maybe they're getting what they deserve.



It's absolutely chaotic out there. I'm not good with blood. This house is a wreck. I've got a thousand things piling up here. If there's time later, I'll see what I can do. It takes a mix of compassion, selflessness, and boldness to sidestep all of those justifications and open your door.

In Solferino, as neighbors began bringing food and supplies and blankets, caring for the wounded, and noticing others doing the same, they began to experience the energy and hope of collective empowerment. As they opened themselves and their homes to those in need, they drew near to the other through radical hospitality. Their close attention to the specific needs and areas that tilted the balance between life and death is a picture of healing presence. It's often easier to close our doors. When our consciences nag us, we can toss out a few gifts to justify our separation from those in crisis.

Opening our door is a powerful first act. When collective empowerment, radical hospitality, and healing presence come together, you'll always find new life. A Friday and Saturday in Italy changed battlefields forever. Dunant's prayer—his plea that all are siblings, all are family—changed modern history. Dunant's actions marked the beginning of what we know as the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. What about your community? How well do you know it? Is doing good no longer good enough? Do you have a vision for real change as you pray, "God, your kingdom here as it is in heaven"? Let's draw a circle around our

neighborhoods and say, "Things are going to be different here." Let's start waging peace. Let's open our front doors. Let's get to work."

Excerpt from *Smart Compassion* (Wesley Furlong, Herald Press, 2018)

Letter from the Executive Director



Since its humble beginnings as a home for evangelical Anabaptist congregations with shared convictions, the Evana Network has sought to be faithful to God's call. As we have sought God's will together, the Lord has revealed a larger mission for us as a network.

One of the biggest surprises and blessings along the way has been the discovery of Christian brothers and sisters who share our convictions and who have found a new home with Evana, even though they had little or no experience of Mennonites and other Anabaptists before. As Greg Boyd wrote in a blog post, "A Word to My Mennonite Friends," over ten years ago, "There is a beautiful and powerful grassroots Kingdom movement arising all over the globe that Mennonites in particular need to notice. Millions of people are abandoning the Christendom paradigm of the traditional Christian faith in order to become more authentic followers of Jesus . . . What many who are being caught up in this movement lack is a sense of *tribal identity* and *historical rooting*, and many are looking for this. A central feature of post-modernity is the longing to 'live in a story' that's bigger than oneself. Many, therefore, are looking for a tradition they can align with." I believe with all my heart that the Evana Network can provide that identity and sense of belonging. We can offer these new evangelical Anabaptists a sense of identity and a historical rootedness if we can find ways to get the word out about who we are and invite them to join us.

In order to respond to these opportunities, however, we will need further financial investment. Similar to a Silicon Valley start-up, Evana has needed to rely heavily on the generous support of a few key donors to fund our missional vision thus far. Because of their

investment in our work and mission, we have grown from a dream that existed only on paper to a network of forty-six churches and church plants with common beliefs and convictions. We have developed some incredible resources like the community mapping process, vital impact assessment, and more. We now have a gifted and talented group of regional pastors who lead huddles for pastors, provide pastoral care for pastors and congregations, and can assist congregations with credentialing and leadership transitions. With our growth in individual and church membership, I am happy to report that we are now within \$60,000 of closing the gap between our current budget and the amount we receive in membership contributions. With this much to celebrate it is tempting to be content with how far we have come and consolidate the growth we have experienced together. Yet I believe this would be a mistake when God is calling us as organization to continue in faith toward the future God has planned for us.

If you believe in our vision and calling as a network, would you consider supporting Evana with a monthly gift? If ten people would step forward to pledge \$1,000 a month and fifty people would pledge to give \$100/month, (that's only about one person in each Evana church), then we could meet our goal. If you would rather give to a specific project, we are also accepting designated donations in three areas: church planting, grants for churches to update and implement child safety policies, and scholarships for pastors to attend Flourishing, the pastor-spouse retreat. If you would like to know more about our specific needs or would like to make a pledge, please contact Executive Director Matt Hamsher at (330) 749-9692 or matt@evananetwork.org. Contributions can be sent to Evana Network, PO Box 33, Millersburg, IN 46543. ~Matt Hamsher

REGISTER TODAY!

Flourishing registration is still open! It will be held at the Life Enrichment Center at Fruitland Park, FL Feb. 13-17, 2020.

ReGen will be July 2-6, 2020 at Taylor University in Upland, IN. Register before Jan. 31 for early bird pricing.

*Visit <https://evananetwork.org/events> for more.