



JULY/AUGUST 2021

Re•Gen Participants Experience “New Life” Together

Re•Gen 2021, Evana Network’s biennial national church convention was held July 1-5 on the campus of Taylor University in Upland, IN. With the theme “New Wine, New Life” from Mark 2:18-22, the 440 children, youth, and adults who attended the event were challenged to shed old wineskins to fully experience the new life of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The opening message on Thursday evening was brought by Matt Hamsher, Executive Director of Evana Network, who urged attendees to consider whether they were trying to pour the new wine of faith in Jesus Christ back into the old wineskins of their former life. Those old wineskins could include seeking after popularity and acceptance for youth or political affiliation for adults.

Hannah Gronowski Barnett, founder of Generation Distinct, spoke during the morning worship sessions. Generation Distinct empowers the next generation to discover how to make an impact in the world with an emphasis on justice and reconciliation by introducing them to a relationship with Jesus.

Gronowski Barnett said that too often we want to experience a breakthrough in our lives, but we miss out on it because we aren’t willing to do anything different in our lives. Instead of waiting until we know God’s plan before stepping out of the boat, “God doesn’t want to comfort you with a plan because He has already comforted you with His presence.”

On Friday night, President of Eastern Mennonite Missions, Marvin Lorenzana, drew from personal experience of our Christian calling to reach and disciple our neighbors and communities.

Nehemiah Chigoji, pastor and founder of the Nigerian Anabaptist Peace Center, contrasted ways that people live in a culture of anger and bitterness with the peace of Jesus Christ and how Christians should not retaliate but show the love of Christ to their enemies. “It’s not so much about what you eat, but about what is eating you from the inside that matters.”

Director of Church Leadership and Communication Tyler Hartford and Director of Church Development Wes Furlong challenged attendees to beat our weapons of death and war into instruments of life and growth, including ways that we use our tongues to speak words

of life or death to others. Transformation can happen even through simple acts of peace in line at the gas station or in the break room at work.

Re•Gen 2021 attendees also chose to attend daily seminars on a wide range of topics from a focus on prayer to navigating gender identity in the church and from gap year programs for youth to developing discipleship and local mission programs. Representatives from Mennonite Disaster Service, Mennonite Central Committee, and Everence joined others from VidaNet, Global Disciples, and several

other organizations to network and provide information about resources and programs available to individuals and congregations. “Since I’ve been living overseas for most of the past seven years, I’m so glad I was finally able to participate in my first Re•Gen gathering. I absolutely LOVED it! While we always need to be like the Bereans and test everything we hear against scripture, it was so refreshing to be able to relax and simply receive in this setting.” Wendell Nofziger, Executive Director of VidaNet, shared. “I come away encouraged and hopeful for the future of this fellowship of Jesus-followers. To God be the glory!”



With around half of the participants twenty years old or younger, worship at Re•Gen focused primarily on youth and young adults, led by Sing Love, an Indianapolis-based worship collective of teen musicians.

“The experience of being led by 15 to 17 year-olds, combined with a worship leader and main speaker in their 20’s was one of the most high-energy, high challenge corporate worship environments I’ve ever been in,” said Tyler Hartford. “Our network also highly values women in leadership and I was personally blessed by the leadership of Gronowski Barnett and Sing Love worship leader Becca Totty.

“Apart from the planned worship, seminars, and other events, what most attendees are still talking about is the powerful spontaneous worship and the overflowing of prayer outside of formal worship times.

“We had reports of youth groups staying up past midnight praying for each other, and during services, young people were gathering around other young people for support and prayer,” said Hartford. “Others have spoken of rededication and salvation, even one long time minister who experienced praying in

tongues for the first time. Our global partners and local members alike noted how this simply felt like church, not a conference."

Delegates from Evana congregations met for three hour-long sessions during the weekend. They received operational reports, affirmed new terms for Evana board members, and approved a by-law change to continue meeting every two-years without requiring a meeting in even-numbered years. Outgoing board members Moises Angustia (Brooklyn, NY) and Sonya Miller (Sarasota, FL) were affirmed for their service and new board members, Rex Broad from North Canton,

Ohio and Marketo Michel from South Bend, Indiana, were introduced to the delegates.

"This past year was a difficult one for our pastors and our churches," said Matt Hamsher. "But God has been good in allowing us to finish the year in a strong financial position and even add another full-time staff member. The delegates affirmed our theological identity and pursuing new relationships with others who resonate with our desire to follow Jesus above current politics and ideologies, to stand firm on our biblical convictions, and to seek God's justice and God's peace in our world today."

Prayer Ministry Transition

Larissa Moore Willard has resigned as Evana Network prayer team leader to better direct her full attention towards the pastoral ministry work she and her husband Randy Willard are providing at Marion (IN) Christian Fellowship.

Larissa shares,

"Prayer has been a passion of mine for as long as I can remember. Sharing this gift with the body of Evana has been an honor. During ReGen I remember praying about a tiredness I felt in my Spirit and physical body. I began to remember that I have gone through many changes in just a short two years. I moved from Cleveland, OH to Orrville, OH. I got married. I moved again to Shipshewana, IN and started a new pastorate with my husband. And in all this, I also found I wanted step aside for the person that God has ordained for this next season. It has been an honor serving and praying for Evana staff, churches, pastors, and lay leaders. The joy I experienced praying for youth at ReGen along with leaders at Flourishing has been indescribable."



We are so thankful for Larissa's investment in Evana Network as a pastor, former Board member and prayer coordinator. Her passion for seeing people empowered and transformed by the Holy Spirit, coupled with her heart for intercession has been a constant presence within our Network. We are thankful for her continued involvement, and look forward to seeing what God will do in through the Willard family in the days ahead

Often, Larissa has prayed this verse over others, and we will offer the same for her: "For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance." - Philippians 1:19 NLT

Pastor & Spouse Retreat 2021

Our worship and renewal allows space for Christian ministry leaders to build a peer support network, gain helpful training and reconnect with God and their spouse. *Flourish 2022 will take place February 17-21, 2022 at the Christian Retreat Center (Bradenton, FL). Register by October 31 for early bird pricing at \$399/person for Evana members or partners and \$499/person for public registration at www.evananetwork.org/events.*

Our theme for the weekend will be "Finding Hope in Worship." Marketo Michel and Marcus Clingaman of Adoration Worship (www.adorationworship.com) will lead our worship. Our main speaker is to be announced at a later date. We are also excited about our new location and amenities at the Christian Retreat Center, set along the beautiful Manatee River (www.ChristianRetreat.org).



Tractor for Peace Fund

Kaufman Mennonite Church would like to invite other Evana members and churches to join them in providing the Nigerian Anabaptist Peace Center and Pastor Nemi Chigoji with a new tractor and implements to further their Kingdom impact. \$40,000 is needed to buy a 2021 tractor from a local New Holland dealer and ship it to Nigeria.



Email info@kaufmanchurch.com or call (814) 479-7813 with any questions. Checks can be mailed to Kaufman Mennonite Church, 916 Miller Picking Rd., Davidsville, PA 15928 and earmarked Tractor for Peace Fund. Donations can also be given directly online at <https://faithlife.com/kmc-v/give?funds=37106>