



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022

Clarity is Kindness

Most Christians agree that church unity is important. One need only consider Jesus' prayer "that [my disciples] may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21, ESV). He goes on to pray for unity among disciples in the same way that he and his Father are one "so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me" (17:23). Lack of unity in the Body of Christ threatens the church's witness to the world.

Achieving church unity is even more challenging due to three differing perspectives of what it means to be unified in Christ. The first perspective involves refusing to interact with anyone who does not agree on every point. This approach is often seen in conservative circles and prioritizes faithfulness to truth over preservation of relationships. This perspective eliminates unity by deepening isolation of each group.



A more common approach prioritizes relationships over truth. Best seen in early ecumenical movements and the focus on areas of agreement (and minimizing differences). While helpful in initial conversations, this approach is ultimately unable to resolve the root causes of conflict. By not addressing disagreements directly, leaders and organizations appear untrustworthy or deceptive to those unwilling to sacrifice truth-claims for relationship. Minimizing contested convictions may protect institutional unity, but it comes at the price of increased anxiety and confusion. Those who decide to leave an institution are also often cut off from ongoing efforts of unity because of their disloyalty to the institution, similar to the aforementioned approach.

A third way recognizes both faithfulness to the truth and pursuit of relational connection. Rather than placing faith in human efforts to short-cut or avoid conflict resulting from competing convictions, we seek a unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3). Christian unity is discovered through relating to each other, serving Jesus in community, and bearing witness of God's will to each other and the world.

This third approach also recognizes that "we see in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor. 13:12) and our broken humanity prevents a full understanding of God's will. We must

always admit we have more to learn and be slow to cut off contact with those with whom we disagree. And, we cannot treat our convictions as arbitrary or unsure. To paraphrase Martin Luther, our consciences are captive to God's Word and we cannot act otherwise. To do so is to risk becoming like "children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes" (Eph. 4:14).

As we pursue unity of Spirit, Evana Network works with those who share common goals and mutual calling.

This is a relational commitment to work with others while maintaining a commitment to God's truth as we understand it and not compromising convictions. Our personal and congregational covenants provide clarity on where we are headed and what is expected from Evana and leaders. Our covenants reflect a commitment to truth claims manifested in relationship to God and one another.

As we celebrate Christ's birth, and the Creator's incredible gift of redemption, we also await the gift of unity in Jesus' own body, the church. We actively prepare ourselves and seek unity wherever it may be found, while receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, which brings the conviction and the repentance necessary for spiritual maturity and full knowledge of Jesus.

Providing clarity about what one believes and practices is a kindness by reducing passive aggressive behavior, political posturing, and attempts to manipulate others into affirming teaching and practices that go against convictions. We need courage to have tough conversations and be honest with one another about differences. Only then are we able to make progress in working toward unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- Matt Hamsher, Executive Director

**ReGen 2023 Early Bird
Registration is now LIVE!**

See back page
for more details
or visit our website at
www.evananetwork.org





A NEW SEASON

"And I will make them and the places around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing." Ezekiel 34:26

As 2022 comes to a close, we are fast approaching the end of our New Season Campaign. Will you consider supporting Evana's work with your year-end giving? We are about \$22,000 away from our goal, and no gift is too small to make an impact!

Our member congregations provide much of our financial support, but we need individual partners to help cover half our budget. Current funds being raised also go towards the additional travel and resourcing we are undertaking as churches explore joining us.

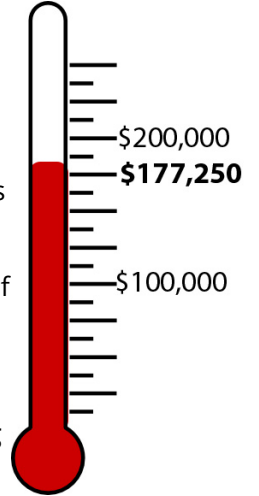
If the amount raised exceeds the initial \$200,000 goal, additional amounts will be divided equally among our Church Planter Fund, Pastor Retreat Scholarship Fund, and Operating Funds related to Church Resourcing.

Please continue to pray as we discern with others about future affiliation. And if you appreciate the Evana Network's wider witness and ministry resourcing, will you consider helping fund this new season of growth? Financial gifts of any size are greatly appreciated.

You may contribute via the Donate button at www.evananetwork.org or by mailing your gift to Evana Network, PO Box 33, Millersburg, IN 46543.

Thank you for investing in Evana Network's future and in God's Kingdom work!

- Matt Hamsher, Executive Director



Sing Love Confirmed for ReGen 2023: Transformed

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind - Romans 12:2

We are excited to announce that **Sing Love Worship** has confirmed their involvement in ReGen 2023, June 26-30, 2023! Sing Love is a worship collective based out of Central Indiana and comprised of all high school youth. Those who were with us for ReGen 2021 know just how much these young musicians are passionate for God to work in our midst. Our friend and gifted worship leader Becca Totty will be returning, as well as several members from the previous team. Our speaker schedule is still being finalized, but we promise you, it will be the kind of quality and equipping input that you've come to expect.

We are also using a new registration platform for this year's event, and invite your patience as it rolls out. When you register, be ready with an individual email address that will be tied to the Whova event app. This app will contain maps, seminar information, agenda, chat features and more. Evana is also offering a new group ticket option for youth groups and large church groups.



We'll be hosted by Taylor University, and welcome pastors, church leaders, families and youth to join us. Whether you are a long-time member or exploring a relationship with us, ReGen is the place to experience what we are all about. Come join us Monday through Friday and explore how all of us are called and equipped to live out the Father's love.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Evana Early Bird Prices: Ages 3-11 at \$349, Ages 12-up at \$399

Public Early Bird Prices: Ages 3-11 at \$399, Ages 12-up at \$449

The Evana Network Staff wishes everyone a blessed Christmas Season and a New Year filled with God's rich mercy, joy and peace.

Our offices will be closed for the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. We'll reopen January 3, 2023!

