

"The mission of ESA/Love INC is to mobilize Christian churches and individuals to transform lives and communities in the name of Christ."

From the desk of Alan Doswald

What If?

The Church is the largest group in our city. It has 500 branch offices in Fresno/Clovis and 100,000 employees. It's huge and it represents the greatest hope for our city and the greatest resource for helping those in need - if we will help.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest command was, He replied, "To love God and to love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27) Why wouldn't Christians/Followers of Christ want to obey Jesus' greatest command? How sad that there is Good News, in fact great news, but often we won't share it with others (I include myself in this). We can get so self-focused. We know God can change lives. He's changed ours, but we just remain upset at others as they live their unchanged lives. People need the Lord!

If most Christians won't share their faith and most non-Christians won't go to church, there is little hope that the lost sheep will find their loving Shepherd. **What if we did start obeying our Lord's greatest command?** It

would change lives and our community. What can we do? We can love our neighbors, share our stories, and we can pray and help develop a culture in our church of loving others. This is becoming a national movement, with Max Lucado's church leading the charge. Here's what one church in Fresno is doing:

A number of Life Groups have made the decision to focus on being a "Neighborhood Life Group." In our Life Group we are focusing on Lynn Cory's book, Neighborhood Initiative. We are learning to practically engage our neighbors through prayer walks, beginning conversations as neighbors simply walk their dogs and most importantly taking advantage of those kairos moments (opportunities) that God provides.

At my home, we are in the process of creating a "front yard patio" with fire pit and comfortable chairs in order to turn our yard from private space to public space and create an environment conducive to engaging neighbors and building relationships. Jesus said the two greatest laws are to love God and love your neighbor (Luke 10:27). The Bridge provides focus on loving God and the ESA ministry, Loving Our Neighbors, has given us ideas on how we can complete the command.

Jim Lloyd
The Bridge

Thanks for
helping ESA
so we can
help others.
(envelope enclosed)



Jim Lloyd, loving his neighbors



Love INC

Love INC is a network of caring churches and ministries that uses a clearinghouse strategy to assist people in need.



Behind the Scenes at Love INC

Here are some of our Love INC stories that most people never hear about.

Love INC received a call for help from a lady. She needed help for her husband and son to get back to their home in Nebraska so that they could work. They had a job waiting for them, and a place to live if they could just get there. After



verifications, Love INC was able to assist them with 2 train tickets. We are thankful that because of financial donations to Love INC, we could offer the much needed hand up, instead of a hand out. The family was very thankful and grateful for the help.



Love INC was also asked to help a woman in the Marjaree Mason Center. She needed to get back to her home in another state. She was going to be graduating from the Center on a Saturday and we bought her a train ticket so she could leave on the next day. She was very grateful and relieved. It was a pleasure to help someone coming out of an abusive situation.



A married couple with 6 children in their home called Love INC needing a refrigerator. The husband had recently lost his job and money was tight. They discovered their refrigerator was not keeping food cold and food had begun to spoil. She called Love INC and we were able to call Willie's Appliance who went out and evaluated whether their fridge could be salvaged. Unfortunately it wasn't able to be fixed but thanks to the generosity of our partner churches and Willie's Appliance, we were able to get them a refrigerator!



We had a 76 year old lady call us for help. We sent someone out to determine the need. It was legitimate and would cost about \$400 for supplies. We contacted a couple of churches and asked for finances in order to help this client. We were able to call some church volunteers and give them the go-ahead to take care of this need of new carpeting on her mobile home deck. When we called the client to give her the good news, she started crying. She was overwhelmed and said that she needed some good news. She said that she would be praying for Love INC every day. She was so happy.

Churches Helping Churches in Our Community

Butler Church is made up of 4 congregations serving Christ in Southeast Fresno. Recently we had a chance to visit with Lead Pastor Scott Holman. Butler Church has been a blessing to our community and to ESA. We refer many people with needs, who live in the surrounding area to their church for help. Their friendly, always willing to help attitude is a blessing. As I talked with Pastor Scott, I asked how his church was able to meet the many needs that people brought to them.

He surprised me by explaining that **Bethany Church** in North Fresno, with Pastor Brian Wiebe, every Christmas, holds a food drive at their church, and restocks Butler Church's food pantry. Wow, what a great example of churches

working together to minister in our city. Butler Church refers people to call Love INC, we screen their need, and then Butler Church meets and ministers to that need with help from Bethany Church.



We hope to match more frontline churches with resource churches to help them minister to those in need in their area. **How can your church be involved?**



Disability Ministries

Rick Eastin is our Disability Ministry Specialist that serves with Joni and Friends. He has struggled with cerebral palsy since birth.

Whenever we find ourselves in a situation that is good, bad or somewhere in between, we need to remember that there are 2 possible purposes behind it. We read in Genesis 50:20, that when Joseph was in prison he understood that man's intent was to harm him, however he also understood that God had another reason for his imprisonment. The Bible says, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

This is often the case for people with disabilities. This is a reason why the church needs to reach out to people with disabilities. If we don't, their situation is very often devastating. As we reach out, we can begin to see their circumstances turn around for good and be used for God's glory. I've seen this happen in many lives. I've also seen this happen in my own life as I've adjusted to living with cerebral palsy. God has not only helped me, but He has enabled me to help others.

You can contact Rick at reastin@aol.com or 375-2281



Don't miss Fresno CityFest, with Luis Palau, held on the grounds of the Save Mart Center, April 1 & 2.

This free, family festival is aimed at spreading the hope, love, forgiveness and peace of Jesus Christ.

CityFest will feature grammy-award winning artists, Lecrae, For King & Country, as well as Lincoln Brewster, Marisol Park and Soulfire Revolution. Saturday, beginning at 7:00 am there will be a fitness competition featuring CrossFit Games champion Rich Froning. The afternoons of April 1st and 2nd, beginning at 2:00, will feature soccer and football clinics, professional BMX and FMX demos, and your favorite VeggieTale characters. Beginning at 5:00 pm there will be performances, and you'll hear a message of hope from **Andrew and Luis Palau** where they will share the loving forgiveness of Jesus and the exciting life of salvation.

Our hope is that you invite your friends and relatives. For more information go to fresnocityfest.org

We would like to thank the Rotary Club of Fresno for their donation of a Fujitsu Scansnap ix500 Scanner. ESA/Love INC has used the scanner to make our office more efficient and to improve our communication with our many church partners.

Again, thank you Rotary Club of Fresno!



If you are interested in volunteering at ESA/Love INC, please contact Karen at 244-0105
1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

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Love in the Name of Christ
Helping Churches Help People

Evangelicals for Social Action/Fresno, Inc.
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Fresno, CA 93710-7903

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DONATIONS

ESA/Love INC can receive donations through Direct Deposit, PayPal or through the following Credit Cards: Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express. To give to ESA in this way, please contact Karen at 244-0105 for further instructions.

Checks can be made out to ESA
and mailed to:
ESA

**1300 E Shaw #136
Fresno, CA 93710**



Evangelical Council for
Financial Accountability

A CHANGE AT ESA



Well done, Jan

Jan Fayle will be retiring at the end of March after 19 years at ESA. She began as a volunteer in 1998, then served part time as Love INC Clearinghouse Coordinator from 1999-2004. Jan has been Alan's Executive Assistant since 2005. She has not only been a great Executive Assistant but has also been a major connector of churches and leaders in our Christian community. Jan will be greatly missed.



Welcome Marva

Marva Ward has been hired as Alan's new Executive Assistant starting in April. She served as a volunteer at ESA for 9 months before being hired as the Church Relations Administrator for the upcoming Fresno CityFest with Luis Palau. Marva is a member of Fresno First Baptist Church.

DONATIONS OF STOCKS AND MUTUAL FUNDS

ESA now has the capability to receive donations of stocks and mutual funds. For donors who have appreciated securities that they would like to donate in lieu of cash, this is now a possibility. Donors receive a charitable deduction for the value of the securities. If you are interested, call RBC Wealth Management at (559) 447-8251 and ask for Jessica Najarian. She will be glad to provide assistance.