



Love INC

Love In the Name of Christ



FALL 2014

VOLUME XXIII ISSUE III

Casting Bread Upon the Waters!

Pastor Bruce Wasson, a graduate of Liberty University, and his wife, Rachel, were called earlier this year to a small and struggling church in southern Albemarle County. The congregation had suffered a wrenching church split involving not only themselves, but a rift between their long-time pastors and the denomination. A handful of disheartened folks remained.

At this low ebb, Pastor Bruce had a simple question to ask those who stood with him: How can our church be an influence for Christ in the community about us? He urged his people to turn their vision outward rather than on their own problems.

So the people set to work reaching out to others in their neighborhood, finding furniture, offering solace and assistance. They visit, listen, welcome ‘strays’ into their fold, and reach out beyond their walls.

Part of this outreach was to hold a community wide yard sale on behalf of Love in the Name of Christ. The congregation gathered together as much as they could. Love INC gave the church many things not needed specifically by our clients. Another donor gave many Christian books and scriptures to the cause. And, people from nearby churches came to donate.

If you have any interest in seeing the response, pictures of many tables laden with bric-a-brac and glassware, books and household items can be seen on the church's FACEBOOK page. <https://www.facebook.com/morningstarscottsville>. But, we primarily want you to visit this page, as there you will be able to learn more about this church and specifically gain a further glimpse into this pastor's background, heart and vision. On the site is a copy of an article published in the *Scottsville Weekly* this past June, entitled: “Building a

Healthy Church Body Begins By Being Relational.” And, that is the heart of the Love INC ministry as well!

As a follow up to the yard sale, Pastor Bruce personally came to the office to present Love INC with a check. “I know people might think it a strange thing to do, to give money away when there is not even money for our own church, but it is in reaching out to others that we will grow.”

Indeed, this attitude is patterned after the Macedonians in the apostle Paul’s day, of whom he said: “In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity” (2 Corinthians 8:2).

Pray for this body of believers — and do check out the Facebook page! ■

The Family — Dog and All — Lived in a Van

R eferred to Love INC by the pastor of this family’s church, their problems seemed insurmountable, but stick with us and you will see how God intervened through

His people and others — and there is a “happy ending” to the story.

Health issues played their toll.

Ralph’s* wife had a serious chronic illness and of their three living children, one had autism, and the older child seemed to have a disability as well. They

had another teenager, but that child was now deceased and no one would talk about what had happened.

And, there were financial problems. Their church and other churches sporadically paid for motels. While Ralph had a job, his income was never enough for a security deposit and first month's rent. As a result, since the winter, they were living and sleeping in their van much of the time. The youngest child had a service dog that also lived in the van. In fact, the dog prevented them from being accepted into a shelter.



Actually, Ralph previously had a good job with a technology firm, but with the economic downturn and as the prospects for making a profit grew less and less, like many, he lost that position. Before long, he could no longer support his family.

Ralph applied for job after job until he found the one he has at present — at far less pay and without the benefits that were enabling the family to get help for their littlest one. He had spent all his savings and was soon in

debt.

Personal problems added to their burden. While the income was ebbing, the news came that they had both lost their licenses. Their vehicle insurance had lapsed when they were unable to keep up payments. So they were operating their vehicle on suspended licenses.

As the problems mounted, their church feared that they would not be able to help them any longer. The money had just run out. This was more than any one church could cope with.

Referrals were made to area agencies. An appeal was made to area churches. Help was enlisted through The Haven, through the school system, from the Alliance for Interfaith Ministries and CARES. Sharon Root, a good friend of Love INC, who works with the Department for Homeless Migrant in the Albemarle County Schools, worked on the Coordinated Assessment Packet and initiated a case review with all participating services.

With some insistence from Sharon, they went ahead and transferred their social service benefits to Albemarle County. The family was given money for gas and lodging.

Through Love INC, donations of food and assistance for his insur-

ance and drivers license poured in from churches and individuals.

In God's timing, Pastor Bare, Senior Pastor of **Covenant Church of God**, heard about the family's problems as he was preparing his church's "Hope House" to be sold to the city. As a result, he offered the family a place to stay at that facility so that they would be out of the heat and could get showers and cook meals. In the meantime, the couple's licenses were restored.

Then in mid-June the good news came that the family had been approved for the Rapid Rehousing money through The Haven! Rapid Rehousing will pay the 1st and last months' rent, the deposit, and guarantee the rent for a year if he was unable to pay it.

By early July, they were ready to move and receive furniture. Again there was an outpouring of love, furniture and household items from churches and individuals.

This family is now housed. Ralph is still working. They still attend their church. They are still trusting that God will take care of them. — and thankful that He has ■

** Names of those served have been changed throughout the newsletter to protect confidentiality*

Expanding the Ministry — Meeting More Needs

Love in the Name of Christ receives an abundance of donated clothing for infants and small children. And frankly, the staff has been hard pressed to 'manage' all those donations. So, as we pondered

what to do, the answer was right before our eyes.

In keeping with the principles by which Love INC is chartered to function, volunteers from community churches are the ones

who should be doing the work of this ministry. So, we gave an open invitation to any believing woman desiring to both sort cute baby clothes and to be here to minister to the mothers that come to get those clothes.

The thought was that volunteers would come for 3-4 hours in the afternoons to sort and re-sort the clothes, be available to help the moms find suitable clothes and speak with them about their lives and children.

Lo and behold five women have already contacted Love INC and some — from **Grace Community Church** and **Immanuel Lutheran Church** — have started coming one or two afternoons a week. Furthermore, they have agreed to also spend one on one time with the moms who come in to get the clothing!

But, we have to admit that it is with some reluctance that the staff “gives up” this ministry, since, as Susan adds, “the joy one gets from giving just the right clothing for each mom and her baby can’t be measured.”

What other ministries are there out there? What ministry could your church take on? Could the folks in your church find joy in giving as well? Well, here are some of the examples that have spawned to involve church groups and/or have the potential to do so:

Painting: Kids can paint! **Southside Church of God's Vacation Bible School** took on the painting of several rooms in two elderly women's homes.



Yard work: Recently a group from **Zion United Methodist Church** undertook to paint the foundation of an elderly couple's home, to remove vines from the

fencing, and to plant flowers around the yard. The couple was overwhelmed with gratitude as they relayed all that had been done for them. Another church is making plans to put fencing around a single parent's yard.

Musical Activities: A lady at one church gives free music lessons to disadvantaged children and her church collects donated pianos to give to the families of these children.



Cooking Activities: One volunteer from **First Baptist Church, Park Street** contracted with a client to cook together once a week. Perhaps no one thought cooking would transform a life, but the client's entire life has been transformed in both her physical and mental health.

Delivering Furniture: A team from **Calvary Chapel of Charlottesville** has faithfully moved furniture once a month for over five years. They bring Bibles, minister and pray with hurting donors and clients, and bring folks to their church as often as allowed.

Firewood: Donations of firewood and clients needing trees cut down add to piles of wood that can be donated in the winter months. **Ivy Creek United Methodist Church** has an ongoing wood ministry as does **Scottsville United Methodist Church**.

Holiday Food Baskets open the door to longer term relationships. One woman and her husband kept in touch with “their” family

throughout the year following their gift. They even helped them move to a much more affordable rental, which they had helped the family find. And now, several years later, they still stay in touch.

Moving assistance: It is hard to pack up belongings and move to a new place. It is much harder if one is elderly or infirm or confused in mind and without the financial means to get help.

Personal care items: One church is struggling to put together a personal care and cleaning items closet. A group from another church could collect laundry soap, or shampoo, or other items to contribute.

Prayer ministry: Love INC will send any church a list of people in their area who have requested assistance. These folks can be prayed for and even contacted by that church body.

Sign language: A mother and son team taught a grandmother just a few things to say to her favorite grandson. One evening changed everything for this grandma.

Toys: One volunteer collected toys throughout the year and refurbished them for Christmas gifts to others in need. Bicycles could be collected, refurbished, and given away.

Maybe this has given you an idea. Call us at 434-977-7777 or email office@loveinccville.org and we will work with you to help expand your church's vision in ministry.

■



Meeting a Need or Ministering to the Whole Person?

Typically, Love INC gets a call like this once or twice a month: "I came here to stay with a friend but things aren't going well..." Probably drawn like a magnet to Charlottesville, because of its reputation as a great place to live, with a lower than average unemployment rate, people arrive with high hopes. They imagine moving in temporarily with a friend, but with the anticipation of being in their own apartment within a few short weeks.

But once they get here, the high cost of living — coupled with a scarcity of available jobs outside of the service sector — soon brings disillusionment or worse, homelessness. It is hardest for women with children, who come expecting to find housing, child care and a job, then find none of these.

Often, the 'friend' who offered the temporary place didn't take into consideration the impact of an entire family moving in for an extended period. And, as a result, tempers flare, money to sustain the increased numbers runs scarce and friends are at enmity.

One of our city agencies received a phone call from one such young mother. She asked for diapers as her client couldn't afford to purchase them for her child. Wanting to respond to the need, the worker contacted Love INC.

We asked the worker to have her client call us, as we some-



times have donated diapers and are also able to refer suitable candidates to a relational diaper ministry run by one of our caring churches.

Jennifer eventually did call us, but at the time we did not have the diapers she desired for her baby. She also was not inclined to give any personal information, but nevertheless we placed her file on follow-up as it was possible that we would have the items within a week or so. The diaper ministry also had no immediate openings to add this client to their waiting moms.

A week later we received a phone call from the agency worker wondering why we had not been able to assist her client when we had a church ministry designed to assist with diapers. She went on to share that she had asked her own church for help, but had received only a one-time assistance for diapers — quite insufficient for the need.

So, she was not a happy worker. And furthermore, she added that she thought her client might also need a security deposit.

Meanwhile the Love INC staff had a visit from another young mother-to-be who had been put on the list for the church diaper ministry. She came into the office looking for baby clothes, and in the course of conversation, mentioned that she would be moving out of the area — making her ineligible for on-going ministry.

So our staff contacted the diaper ministry to ask if there was a possibility of putting Jennifer, our

new mom in this one's place. The answer came back "YES, the ministry would have an opening."

With this good news, the staff called Jennifer, inviting her to be a part of the diaper ministry. And, the opening question to her was: "So how are things going for you?" However, the staff was quite unprepared for the answer that tumbled out. Abuse, threats on her life, cut off from family, looming homelessness, limited child-care, the story went on and on...

It became apparent that diapers, or even a security deposit, would do no more than put a band-aid on a gushing wound. This young woman needed many more hands and professional help as well: legal assistance, on-going government financial assistance (the Rapid Re-housing Money available only to those deemed "homeless," meaning in a shelter), a safe place to live, and therapeutic counseling. We immediately made a referral to the abused women's shelter.

But Jennifer was so distraught that she was not thinking clearly. So, our staff contacted the diaper ministry detailing the reasons for making the referral to the shelter and concurrently asked for their help in encouraging the client to follow through.

In response, her diaper ministry mentor, Carrie Eisenberg from **Olivet Presbyterian Church**, wrote:

"Hi Susan, happy to put in my 2 cents worth:

"When I met her she was renting a room in an apartment, for she and her daughter to live while she tried to find work. The apartment was completely bare of anything bright or cheery — no toys, art for her child or anything to do except for a very large TV.

"She shared that she had come to Charlottesville from another state to be with her 'boyfriend'. She left all of her belongings behind and had spent her money on the plane ticket and living arrangements.

"When she first arranged to move, she had arranged for living space, but upon arriving in Charlottesville that arrangement fell through and she was left scrambling for housing and using up her available savings. She was resourceful and was walking up to the mall for job interviews at JC Penny and even as far as Walmart and Kroger. She was taking her little child along on these very long walks in the heat with no stroller to use.

"I brought her diapers and also bought her a few bags of food to help her out. She was grateful and shared with me that she was escaping a domestic abuse situation; the father of her child was threatening to kill her and

the child.

"Her situation was flimsy at best and I could see that the slightest mishap was going to land them on the street. She wanted to work 2 jobs but had no plan for childcare for her very young child. Her 'boyfriend' did not seem to be involved much, but was paying for her cell phone service."

With only a week before she would be on the street, Jennifer decided to go to the shelter. After a couple weeks working with the counselors at the shelter, she contacted Susan to ask about a ticket to return to her home state to live with her mother. We assured her that we could assist.

The church that originally assisted her with diapers was quite willing to help her again. But on the following Monday morning there was a message from the shelter that Jennifer was already safe and sound with her mother.

Here is the email Susan sent out to those who had worked with Jennifer:

"I wanted to let you know about the young lady with the diaper needs earlier this spring. As you probably did not know, Carrie

Eisenberg, working with that ministry, proved to be a tremendous blessing to this young mom. But then, after having heard more of this lady's story, I had referred her to the Shelter for Help in Emergencies.

"After some discussion with the counselors at SHE and many text messages back and forth between Sara and me, she decided that the most sensible plan was to move back home to her home state with her mother.

"I heartily concurred, as Charlottesville is a hard place for a young woman with no family in the area and only a few (fickle) friends. The counselors at the SHE shelter were likewise pleased at the decision. Her rationale was that day care was expensive, apartments are expensive, and that her work paid little, even with two jobs.

"I could not have hoped for a better outcome. She will no longer be needing diapers, of course, but she still needs our prayers."

Thanks to all of you for your help and interest in this young lady. I am very grateful to the Lord for re-connecting her with her mother. In His Name" ■

Solve the Mystery and Benefit Love INC



Join us for Love INC's first Murder Mystery Dinner and Show Fundraiser at the Doubletree Hotel in Charlottesville, VA on November 7.

Enjoy dinner and a mystery theater show, as tables compete to see who can solve the mystery first.

Characters from the play will visit each table and can provide valuable clues – if you ask the right questions and give the right donation.

Mark your calendars now!

To reserve your seat or table contact Love INC @ 977-7777 or email: office@loveinccville.org



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Love INC
Love In the Name of Christ

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Love INC is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit ministry that links people in need to volunteers from a network of area churches.

Web Site: www.loveinccville.org
E-mail: office@loveinccville.org

I/We appreciate what the Lord is doing through the Ministry of Love In the Name of Christ of Charlottesville/Albemarle County and want to share in its support with a financial gift.

Please indicate amount:

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Name: _____ Date: _____

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Thank you so much for your support!

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