

## InterAct Ministries Joint Board Dialogue

CHIEF, Phoenix, Arizona  
February 8, 2013

**Present:** Andy Baxter, Gerry Breshears, Huron Claus, Hugh Grant, Rick Green, Alan MacKenzie, Mike Matthews, Sheldon Penner, Dave Perry, Ray Prigodich, Doug Prins, Dale Smith, Jack Teeter, Bill Twichell, and Gale Van Diest.

**Absent:** Daryl Kroeker.

**Others Present:** Roy Martin (staff) and David Joseph (Alaska Field Director). Dan Mayerle (Canada Field Director) and Thomas Slawson (Russia Field Director) were unable to be physically present due to illness but participated electronically.

### **Welcome**

Dale Smith began the meeting at 8:10 AM by welcoming the participants, leading in prayer, and going over a few housekeeping details. For the benefit of the new board members, he asked each person present to tell something about himself.

### **Devotional and Prayer**

Mike Matthews led the group in a lively discussion of honor and shame, based on the book of Philemon. Dimensions covered included 1) outward behavior (Onesimus was a thief and a runaway slave), 2) socio-cultural institutions (slavery, the church, the economic system, reciprocity, the kinship/family system, the government and its prison system), and 3) values (shame/honor, individual/group, hierarchy/equality). Mike also touched briefly on 4) core assumptions/worldview and 5) metanarrative. The bottom line: Paul skillfully put Philemon into a position of really having no choice but to free Onesimus, but he did so in a way that would not cause Philemon to lose face.

Following Mike's devotional, there was a brief time of corporate prayer.

### **Canada Field Report**

Dan Mayerle went through his written report, commenting on a number of details and placing special emphasis on the "20 by 20" ministry plan. Sheldon Penner then led in prayer for Dan and for InterAct's Canadian ministry.

### **Russia Field/Public Ministries Report**

Thomas Slawson went through his written report. He noted that three years ago, when he assumed the role of Russia Field Director, things were very much in turmoil, and it was unclear if Russia would be able to survive as a field. Today, however, the situation is considerably more stable, and visa restrictions in Russia have eased to some degree.

Thomas also noted that the Elisha Foundation is excited about working with InterAct and is prepared to recruit new missionaries on InterAct's behalf and to provide training for them to engage in ministry to disabled children.

Thomas highlighted Dave and Kay Henry's plans to visit Yakutia , as well as Krasnoyarsk, in the spring and noted that everyone in Yakutia speaks very highly of them.

Thomas continues to feel that it's time for him to step down from his role as Russian Field Director—particularly because it has become increasingly clear that it will not be feasible for his family to return to Russia for three months every year, as they had been hoping to do, inasmuch as their son will be needing surgery every six months for some time to come.

After having seriously explored the possibility of serving as an assistant pastor at his church in Gresham, Thomas has now made the decision to remain with InterAct Ministries, in anticipation of devoting more of his time and energy to his public ministries role.

Thomas also mentioned that Franky Emrick, who already knows the Russian language and culture, is in the process of applying to serve with InterAct for at least two years in Krasnoyarsk.

Dave Perry led in prayer for Thomas, his family, and his ministry.

### **Alaska Field Report**

David Joseph went through his written report. He also noted that because of the deteriorating health of Harry Hafford's mother, Harry is currently unable to devote much time to his pastoral responsibilities at the Fairbanks Native Church, making it necessary for David temporarily to fill the gap to some degree.

David reported that a second networking summit is being planned for October 2013, with the expectation that the number of participants may as much as quadruple. The first summit demonstrated to many in Alaska that InterAct Ministries is still very much alive, and David has been asked to emcee the second summit, as he did the first.

David noted that much is happening in Alaska. The Southern Baptists and the Covenant Church each have hundreds of churches in the state. David called attention to the Alaska Mission Connection website <<http://www.akmissionconnection.org>>, which includes information on what dozens of missionary organizations are doing in Alaska.

David said that he is very encouraged over the three new InterAct missionary couples who are on their way to Alaska, and he is actively working to recruit additional new missionaries. He will soon be meeting with the Verlees, a young couple in Wisconsin with expertise in wilderness ministry, and he requested prayer that they will move our way. As a new team begins to emerge, new life is being breathed into the Alaska field.

David said that, given his struggles with winter darkness and potential burnout, he is working on a personal exit strategy, with the expectation that he and his family will leave Alaska permanently in perhaps three years.

There was some discussion of the fact that a number of native Christians whom InterAct has trained over the years have ended up serving with other organizations. Gale Van Diest said, however, that this has never bothered him, inasmuch as these people are still making significant contributions to God's work in Alaska.

Jack Teeter led in prayer for David and his ministry.

### **Vision/Purpose Discussion**

Dale Smith led a lengthy discussion of proposed changes to the vision/purpose statement of InterAct Ministries. He began by reviewing the initial proposal that was presented to both boards in August 2012: ***“InterAct Ministries exists to make disciples and transform communities among least reached peoples in cooperation with churches.”***

Next he reviewed the suggested expansion of the originally-proposed text, as recorded in the August 4, 2012, minutes of the Inc. board: ***“InterAct Ministries exists to make disciples, gather believers into local churches, and transform communities among least reached peoples in cooperation with churches and other likeminded organizations.”***

Then he reviewed the wording as proposed in both the Inc. and Canada board agendas for February 2013: ***“InterAct Ministries exists to make disciples, gather believers and transform communities among least reached peoples in cooperation with churches and likeminded organizations.”***

After further discussion, the following change was proposed: ***“InterAct Ministries exists to make disciples who gather together and transform communities among least reached peoples in cooperation with churches and likeminded organizations.”*** This proposed wording makes it clear that InterAct's current focus is on making disciples rather than on planting new churches, but it also makes clear the expectation that those who become true disciples will regularly gather together as believers and serve as agents of transformation in their communities.

After even more discussion, it was suggested that the wording be streamlined as follows: ***“InterAct Ministries exists to make disciples among least reached peoples in cooperation with churches and likeminded organizations.”*** The suggestion was that it is not necessary to include any explicit reference to disciples gathering together as believers or transforming communities, since such outcomes are implicit in the making of true disciples. But while it is understood that real disciples will indeed do these things, these particular activities are, in fact, not explicitly included in the Great Commission.

At this point, Dale announced that discussion of this issue would continue this evening during the JMAC meeting.

The meeting ended at 12:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ray Prigodich, Recording Secretary

Oswego, Illinois

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