

ALASKA FIELD REPORT

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It has been an extremely busy year for me personally. Three hats to wear leave little time for family. Planning a SpA around the time of my prostate surgery, so I could be away for eight weeks to visit supporters together with Marci as I recuperated, was the best cure for our lack of time together, as it gave us many hours in the car together to finish conversations that we never seemed to get to finish before that time. My health has improved dramatically and so has family life.

Serving in my first year as the official field director has provided many experiences and opportunities to grow in leadership. We continue to depend on the Lord's favor and blessing to rebuild a struggling field.

When it comes to cross-cultural church planting, InterAct does not have a resident mission thinker to turn to for strategy and direction here in Alaska. While it is true that we have the Scriptures as our ultimate authority and have the Holy Spirit as our guide, it is a challenge within our own ranks to discern what is the best church-planting model and strategy to follow. It is also healthy for an organization to think outside of our own box. Tom Steffen has provided a "leading-edge" study of mission strategies and practices in his recent writing of the "The Facilitator Era," which has helped me greatly in making a quantum leap forward in mission strategy for the Alaska field. This Field Report is intended to provide information to the board about the Alaska field and how we interface with this new Era of missions.

Most missiologists believe that we have entered a fourth era of missions. The first three eras of missions were:

Era 1 points to William Carey who focused on the coastlands.

Era 2 points to Hudson Taylor who focused on the inlands.

Era 3 identifies Donald McGavran and Cameron Townsend and their emphasis on unreached people groups.

Many mission thinkers and practitioners today believe that we have entered Era 4 of missions which is primarily about becoming facilitators (serving from the back, the front, alongside or any position when called upon by indigenous/national believers). This Era 4 has some eye-opening characteristics that have been included in a separate packet and not in this report. These charts come straight from Steffen's book for your easy reading and understanding.

It is essential that leadership at all levels keep abreast of where InterAct stacks up with the rest of world missions and that, as leaders, we gain wisdom and knowledge from those who have researched mission trends, so that we may gain insight from those findings that could increase our ministry and outreach. What I find fascinating is that several years ago we, as a mission, came up with what we called a M.A.P. strategy for each of our fields. Alaska arrived at five

mandates for our field that now seems to be a perfect fit for this fourth era of missions. Those five areas were:

1. Partnering with indigenous leaders
2. Youth Ministries
3. Training and Equipping
4. Recruitment
5. Critical Concerns for wounded hearts.

As I reflect back I am amazed that the Alaska field strategy coincided with what many mission leaders currently say are the most important areas to focus on for the future of missions, and in our case we have arrived at those 5 areas of focus several years earlier. In other words, we had the right strategy then, but somehow got distracted from that strategy, but hopefully we can revive that vision.

In this fourth Era, Stefen believes that pioneer missions is coming to a close because all across the globe there are national/indigenous believers who stand ready to assume leadership. While this may be true across the globe, it is not coming to pass as quickly in Alaska. A reality check in Alaska is needed. Although we have indigenous/national leaders to help facilitate in their respective ministries, because Alaska is such a vast and remote land, with still many unreached villages and so few indigenous leaders in villages, there is still a great need for more pioneer missionaries to be placed, while we also enter into this fourth era of facilitating indigenous believers. Thus, here in Alaska we cannot say that the need for pioneer missions has come to a close. In my assessment we are just at the very beginning of this new Era 4.

Another point in this new Era 4 of missions is that its chief characteristic is involvement in partnerships. These are to be partnerships with other like-minded organizations and indigenous groups (i.e. Kokrine Hills Bible Camp, Alaska Freedom Journey, the Kramer's ministry – Workers in the Harvest, Moravians, Friends, Covenants, Native New Life, Victory Ministries, etc.). These partners can accomplish more together for the Kingdom of God than they can by working alone in ministry. There seems to be a strong desire and willingness to work together in Alaska, not to say there aren't some real obstacles that exist that must be addressed in order to make partnerships work effectively.

The historical roots of Alaska were about separation and territorial boundaries. These territorial boundaries still exist today when it come to planting churches. It results in regions of Alaska with traditional religions that will not allow in and/or really resist other organizations' efforts to plant churches. It also results in native leaders' ministries being "lone-wolf" type ministries that are accountable to no one. A reality check is needed: if InterAct cannot work with our partners because of our narrow boundaries, then we, too, become a "lone wolf" ministry, and are accountable to no one as well. In other words as Jesus said, the "beam" may be in our own eye.

Another obstacle on the Alaska field is a hidden worldview issue among native people (described in more detail in "The Facilitator", Chapter 2.) There is a growing sense of "independence" among native people that says, "We don't need you." Stefen says this is a natural reaction to paternalistic and colonial missionary style leadership that has inadvertently created

“dependence” and communicated over the years a “you-need-us” mentality. Neither position is correct in this Era 4 of missions. What is needed instead is a sense of “interdependence,” that says “we need each other” to facilitate, compliment, and finish the work of the Gospel side by side.

Currently there are groups willing to partner with InterAct, and the biggest buzz word among those interested in partnership is training. There is a need for training native leaders for ministry, training of STM’s (short term missionaries) and LTM’s (long term missionaries). The needed challenge before us in Alaska is how to effectively partner with the Covenants, the Moravians, and the Friends, because there are some doctrinal differences such as infant baptism, and the ordination of women for ministry. A great deal of work will have to be done to bring the leaders of these groups to the table, build relationships, and decide to work together on what is essential for a training curriculum and how to not focus on those doctrines that are nonessential. Until we can figure out how to work as partners, things may look a little messy without clear cut lines, and one of the greatest challenges will be how to arrive at a mutually agreed upon doctrinal statement of beliefs that are absolutely “essential” for faith and practice, and an understanding of beliefs that are “not essential” for working together.

As the Alaska Field Director, I hope to be able to serve as a coach for the team, but just like sports teams, in order to have a winning team we will need people at skilled positions. Quarterbacks that know our system and run the plays from the field, running backs that advance the ball, and wide receivers that catch, run and score touchdowns. An attitude of playing “team” is a necessity, instead of one of playing “each as an individual”, so that together we can do whatever it takes to advance the Kingdom.

There are some partners like Alaska Freedom Journey and Lance Kramer’s ministry, Workers in the Harvest, that are great “fits” from the start. I am currently working with Don Shugak and Alaska Freedom Journey in helping to develop their strategy for ministry in Alaska. We are currently working with Lance Kramer on a pilot run and rewriting the introduction for the Genesis Process Training, to be culturally more understandable by Native Alaskans. We hope to soon get him under contract for the rest of the material, as funds are generated for the project. We believe that “The Genesis Process” and “Hearts Going Toward Wellness” are essential programs for the Critical Concerns component of the M.A.P. Strategy.

All of the three other Mission Eras were characterized by a predominance of youth, both in the people group that was reached and the youthfulness of the missionaries that were doing the outreach. Thus when it came time to pass the baton of ministry to indigenous leaders there was time left in their lives to disciple others and duplicate/multiply and raise up the next generation for ministry. In Alaska we have a shortage of younger missionaries, very few young indigenous believers/leaders, and no real youth movement on the horizon. The real danger is that “THIS BATON MAY GET DROPPED AND NOT GET PICKED BACK UP AGAIN”. InterAct cannot just walk away from this coming reality, we must be proactive.

InterAct Alaska strategy must decide to be proactive about reaching the Youth of Alaska. The current bright spots in Alaska for Youth Ministry are the Zooks at the Native Bible Church in

Fairbanks, the Kramers in the Kotzebue area, Kokrine Hills Bible Camp, and the Covenants who are making perhaps the greatest impact in terms of discipling and producing young native leaders. We need to be proactive in the following ways:

1. Identify the most influential young people across the state and bring them all together several times a year for short, concentrated periods of training and discipling.
2. Begin to place missionaries in native youth hot spots for ministry and relationships (i.e. Alaska Christian College, Mount Edgecombe, Nenana Boarding School, Galena Boarding School).
3. Work towards a state-wide youth conference to inspire and challenge young people all at one time.
4. We need to Seconded a missionary from our organization into the Covenant organization to work with the youth in order to be on the network of who is making the greatest impact.
5. As Alaska Bible College has moved to the Palmer-Wasilla area, can we partner with them to make the school more native friendly?
6. Have missionaries who work with Christian college students on the campuses in Anchorage and Fairbanks, who are purposefully looking to build relationships, encourage and disciple those that stand out as potential young native Christian leaders.

This fourth Era of missions looks a little different in that it includes not only youth, and lots of them, but also a sea of adults. In the first three eras long term missionaries reigned and in the fourth era long termers and short termers will have to learn how to compliment each other's ministries. Short termers and long termers can become facilitators with other partners to make youth ministry a success, wherever it exists. In other words this new Era is not about being young in order to work with Youth (although this is a great asset), but serving alongside those who are young and doing everything possible to help them be successful (through administration, fund raising, prayer, organizing events etc.).

According to Stefen, in a day when the mega churches are spending more of their funds to send their own people on short term missions (thus drying up the funds for long term missionaries), organizations will have to become very creative in how business and ministry can work together to create funds that are drying up mission organizations on a worldwide scale. On the Alaska field we are appealing to the board for a policy change that would allow funds to stay in Alaska from certain properties that would allow us to rebuild the field in strategic ways.

An example of this would be in the area of Recruitment. Few can question how hard it has been to recruit new missionaries to the Alaska field. From our M.A.P. Strategy we knew back then that Recruitment would be an absolute key to rebuilding our field. We have noticed that we have been far more effective in recruiting our own missionaries. Examples are the Zooks, the DeShanes, possibly the Andersons, and most recently a young couple by the name of John and Jenn Tramm. Funds were not available to bring the Tramm's on a vision trip to Alaska, so from a variety of funding (various donations, InterAct redirecting some budgeted funds, and the Tramms funding themselves), we collaborated to bring the Tramms to Alaska and be introduced to our field. The results were effective and immediate as they returned home, filled out an InterAct application, and are making plans to come to the field as soon as possible. With a policy

change we could use designated property funds for vision trips, recruiting, rewriting the Genesis Process, and a variety of other ministries that would help rebuild the Alaska field. At this time I really need to believe that there are many people on my team fighting for Alaska's survival as a viable mission.

MISSIONARY REPORTS:

Julia McDonald (Kodiak)-During the past year, Julia has continued to work on Bible Studies, correcting and preparing them for use on the Internet. In January, she moved to Kodiak to work alongside Alan and Linda Ross. From January through March she helped Alan and Linda prepare for an auction/fundraiser for Hearts Going Toward Wellness workshop that they hope to have this fall.

Tim & Larissa Zook (Fairbanks)-The Zooks' primary focus is on teens through the Fairbanks Native Bible Church. They have a large group of teens that meets weekly through the school year and monthly over the summer. They hold a Bible Study on Sundays for teens who are more serious in their walk with Christ, and meet one-on-one with as many teens as they can. Tim drives the van route before and after church every Sunday. Larissa helps lead a Genesis process group for adult women in the church and helps lead worship music each Sunday. Larissa also serves on the ATM, which serves as an advisory role to the field director. Tim works full time as a pipe insulator and has a small business siding homes. Larissa works one day a week as an optician and is a full time mom. Tim recently was in a work-related accident and underwent surgery to repair two fingers tips that were nearly lost in a chop saw accident.

Dave & Kay Henry (Fairbanks)-Dave and Kay are working with the Fairbanks Native Bible Church, focusing particularly with native elderly people, whom they have known through the 50+ years they have served in missions here. Dave preaches when needed. Kay teaches an inductive Bible study with Native women in her home. Kay is also taking some local training in the Genesis Process. They visit natives, where they are -- in the hospital, extended care facilities, in their homes, at funerals and various fund raisers for those with special needs. Dave also serves on the Alaska Team Ministries and the advisory committee for Alaska Freedom Journey. They are in e-mail contact with several Russian and Yakut people. They are assisting in bringing two Yakut Christian young men from Russia to Kingdom Air Corps near Sutton, Alaska as future missionary pilots with their own people. It is a program ran by Dwayne King who served with SEND in Alaska and Russia.

Doug & Marlin Prins (Palmer)-Doug's responsibility is maintenance/property for InterAct Ministries here in Alaska, which he does a great job. Doug also serves on the Alaska Team Ministries in an advisory role to the field director and serves on the InterAct Ministries board. Marlin helps out when called upon with the annual Alaska Mission Conference and other special projects.

Rich & Kathy Voran (Palmer)-Rich and Kathy are on a part-time status (at about 35-40%) with InterAct for several years now. Rich has been involved in computer programming and program maintenance for the mission which included home office's payroll program. The office has recently changed some of what they use so that area is less now. He continues to maintain the payroll and bookkeeping program he has written for 1 or 2 non-profit groups in Alaska. Periodically, he fills in

for Doug Prins with the maintenance needs at the InterAct Field Office and campus on Lazy Mountain.

Dennis & Celesta Richardson (Anchorage)-Dennis and Celesta serve in a partnership ministry with Mountain View Baptist Church in Anchorage, Alaska. Because of MVBC's strategic location in the Mountain View Community, Dennis and Celesta minister alongside people from many different cultures in this inner-city outreach to one of the most diverse yet difficult neighborhoods in Anchorage. This small-church setting allows them to invest their time in one-on-one relationships through discipleship and counseling. As senior pastor, Dennis preaches at both Sunday morning services and provides leadership for the elder board. Celesta assists in the ministry of the church wherever needed including meal preparation, nursery, office and administrative tasks. With Food Shelf ministries, Kids for Christ Club, and mid-week discipleship and monthly prayer gathering, they are very busy in ministry to this diverse community.

Alan & Linda Ross (Kodiak)-Alan and Linda are in a strategic location on Kodiak for ministering to over 3,000 native Alutiiq people on the island. They have served as church planters for 24 years and lead a Native New Life Fellowship that meets weekly for church. Linda is leading a Genesis Process Group. Evangelistic meetings are held in the city and village outreach occurs annually. "Hearts Going Toward Wellness" conferences have been held the last several years and this year's conference will be based on funding, in which they have about half of the funds needed. Reaching youth has been their biggest frustration, and there is not a generation to pass the ministry on to as they are thinking retirement.

Brian & Missie Deshane (Fairbanks)-Brian and Missie are assisting at the Fairbanks Native Bible Church. Brian is preaching/teaching when David and Harry Hafford are not available. Brian is also helping in leading Tuesday night Bible Study and assisting with Sunday School. They are very good to help meet the physical needs of people and are leading the church's effort in adopting two needy villages to help feed and give gifts this winter around the Christmas holidays. Missie is teaching Sunday School, leading a Genesis Process group, and helps with administrative duties at the church, while Marci is away. Both are active in helping to disciple native people and helping them to grow in Christ.

David & Marci Joseph (Fairbanks)-David and Marci serve as church planters in the Fairbanks Native Bible Church. It is a time of transition at the church as Harry Hafford is being mentored by David and being prepared for the role of native pastor. The Genesis Process groups are continuing to meet and to help people overcome wounded hearts. David leads men's groups. Marci teaches Sunday school, leads children activities, and is the administrative assistant for the church as well as for David with his duties as Field director. Marci's parents' poor health requires her to be away from Fairbanks to care for her parents in Indiana several times a year.

George & Judy Richardson (Palmer)-George and Judy are active in Member Care for InterAct. They serve quietly on many fronts in people's lives. They are mentoring Lance and Corina Kramer, helping to bring order and harmony in their family life. They are also serving as advisors to Lance in the rewriting of the Genesis Process for native people. George is serving on the Alaska Team

Ministries leadership team in an advisory role. George is often called upon to do funerals back in the villages because of his long standing relationships with native people. Judy volunteers for many ministry opportunities outside the role of member care.

Rebecca Bell (Palmer)-Rebecca Bell will be putting her missionary status on hold as she returns to Liberty University back east to finish her masters in Christian Counseling. Her intentions, upon completion, are to return to the mission field and lead the Genesis Process program.

Phil & Margie Cobb (Palmer)-Phil & Margie Cobb are hoping to be seconded to our partner in ministry, Alaska Freedom Journey. Phil already works with Native New Life and does their videoing and producing CD's for viewing statewide. He also sends out the large mailing list of Native New Life meetings to the villages. Margie does bookkeeping for the Alaska field.

Lisa Michael(Troy, AL/Palmer)-Lisa gathers information for InterAct and other mission agencies within Alaska, who have needs that short term teams could help meet throughout the State. She is compiling the needs into a list for future work and ministry opportunities. She tries to answer questions and match the needs from the mission agencies to those who are looking to serve in Alaska on these short term trips. She is currently working closely with those interested in the short term mission projects to do cross cultural training for the team, helping with logistics in travel and accommodations in preparation for their trip to Alaska. She is preparing and updating a manual for use in short term mission ministry projects. She is receipted by Alaska Bible College, doing logistical work for the college, and volunteers for InterAct. She is trying to secure housing in Palmer.

Dave & Sally Hill (Chignik)- David and Sally Hill serve as church planters to the village of Chignik. The ministry also extends to the villages of Perryville, Chignik Lake and Chignik Lagoon. Sunday Morning church serves are held in the Chapel building. Sunday School, and Bible studies are held in the Chapel house as opportunities arrive. The winter village Native population is less than 100, however the summer population from April-October is between 300-700 at any given time as fisherman from surrounding villages (mostly Perryville) and cannery workers reside in Chignik. Dave works part-time odd jobs for the village/City of Chignik and school as the community has needs. His work among the people gives many opportunities for witnessing. Sally had worked in the past part-time at the village clinic however, she gave that job up in Dec. 2010 as the need to care for a grandchild (Eli, age 5) became apparent. Dave and Sally spent a considerable amount of time out on SpA this past year, with Dave returning to Chignik in April and Sally planning to return to Alaska in July with grandson, Eli, of whom they now have legal and permanent custody.

Ed White (Palmer)-Ed continues to battle with health issues. His motto when it comes to his health and ministry is "I will do what I can when I can". Ed has a passion for a web site for Alaska that will reach out to villages in Alaska with discipleship material. Jerry Crosby and I have tried to work with him as he tends to stick his neck out a little too far. It has been difficult to rein him in, because with his health condition he does not always remember what he has said or what has been said to him. Ed is really in need of our prayers.

John & Norma Hammond (Palmer)-John has been the primary caregiver of his wife Norma who has been homebound since November with degenerative back disease. John fulfills his Native New Life responsibilities, does the sound mixing and camera at meetings, edits the meetings on computer and sends out the small mailing list while Phil sends out the larger one. At his age he feels that it is not a hard task to turn two hours of work into eight hours of work. Norma is in need of your prayers as her condition will not get any better apart from the Lord's intervention and John will continue to be her care provider.

Rhaylene Abbey (Kodiak)-Rhaylene has been back east visiting family over the summer. On Kodiak she most recently helped the Kodiak Bible Chapel with vacation Bible school. She is busy visiting native friends on the island and during the school year she leads two different Bible studies each week with native ladies. This past year they finished the book of Hebrews.

Barney Furman (Palmer)- Barney continues to compile the history of InterAct as our historian and is always busy writing for the mission as he works toward the final release of the book - The History of InterAct Ministries. Barney has a secretary, Gretchen Strawn, who has been helping him with this project. They are putting the material he has into usable Work Files by subject, and are working to complete the remainder of Alaska from where they left off in the Pre-Release Book. The next steps will be to edit them down to fit the book, arranging them in book order, finding pictures for the book, and getting permission for use for all who wrote or spoke the words contained in it. In the Pre-Release the Home Office helped with much of the work. Barney's health is holding up, but he is no longer driving. Pray for Barney's mind to stay clear as he preserves the stories of our missionary heroes.

Virginia Maillelle (Anchorage)- Virginia stays busy with her family and the many difficulties they experience. Virginia's ministry is with the native community in Anchorage, AK. She makes visits and prays with patients at the Native hospital. She also is involved weekly at the Food Bank, and supports Native New Life meetings.

Win & Gracia Stiefel (Glennallen)- Since SEND and Alaska Bible College are moving out of Glennallen, Win and Gracia find themselves somewhat alone in Glennallen. Win was helping SEND with their bookkeeping but no longer is involved. Gracia was good to fill in for hospitality this year when needed and would drive to Lazy Mountain to help with hospitality. She continues to write and refine her worldview materials with a native group of ladies, but these ladies are getting older and are not as active as they once were.

Shirley Morgan (Anchorage)- Shirley's ministry is with the native community in Anchorage, AK in the areas of mainly discipleship, counseling and one-on-one ministry with women who are now experiencing victory in their lives over alcohol. She continues to do home and hospital visitation, friendship evangelism and follow-up on referrals from village missionaries. She also assists in Native New Life Fellowship, Musicale and Howling Huskies. Shirley had a total knee replacement one year ago, which she continues to have some problems with, but hopes within another year it will be completely healed.

Wally Bays (Richland, WA) – Wally’s ministry is to the alumni students of InterAct’s Victory High School and Arctic Bible Institute (ABI), where he seeks to keep in touch with them and encourage them. He is also forming a committee of alumni in Alaska to continue the ministry to Alaskan alumni. He is also trying to form a similar committee in Canada to continue the ministry to Canadian alumni. He is planning a Canadian Alumni reunion in July.