

**Alaska Field Report**  
**August 2012**

Life seems to be a moving target that runs at a rapid pace. Major events take place, and then other major events replace them with new challenges. On a personal note, in June I lost my brother to a short bout with cancer. In the last three years I have lost three siblings to lung cancer (all smokers), one each year. Also in September my father-in-law passed away after a long battle with congestive heart failure, which required we find long-term care for my mother-in-law who suffers with Alzheimer's disease. The good news is that we will be having our first grandchild, a baby boy, before this report gets to the board. Please ask if I have a picture of little baby Carson, for I surely will. I am torn between being present for his birth and attending the InterAct board meeting which may happen around the same time.

New interest and excitement concerning the Alaska "**Networking Summit**," which happened in April continues. Forty different organizations attended and some called it the "The Miracle at Miracle Lodge," as there was some very raw and honest healing that took place at Victory that weekend. Organizations continue to talk, partner and network together as others who were not there write and say they want to be a part of the next Summit. Most recently I received a letter from the Southern Baptist organization that wants to begin networking with other churches and organizations for the future. They are probably the largest evangelical organization of churches in Alaska. I am not sure that I can lead the next event, as this one took a lot of time and energy, but I may be able to help organize the next group of planners.

I would just like to mention some ongoing momentum from the Summit. Arctic Barnabas continues to roll out an "**Alaskan Ministries Connection**" website for organizations to coordinate calendars, schedule pilots and network, as distance and communication have been one of our great barriers to the advancement of the gospel in Alaska. Secondly, a confidential **informational list** of organizations, leaders, churches and ministries (includes phone numbers and email addresses) is being assembled that is up-to-date and has the latest data for all the villages of Alaska. Parachurch organizations are seeing the **Alaskan churches** as key players in missions in Alaska and are developing relationships of working together in ministry. Consequently the trust level is beginning to grow as local churches begin to see that once again they need to play a major role in missions and are no longer isolated from parachurch ministries in our joint quest to reach out to "see culturally relevant churches transforming communities" throughout Alaska. **Ongoing reconciliation** is being made from one organization to another. **Ministry Profiles**, given at the Summit, have provided much needed information for organizations to be in relationship with one another.

**InterAct Annual Conference**

For the first time we had our field conference in May, basically moving the conference three months earlier than our usual time in August. This change seems to be welcomed and we will once again have our conference in early May next year. This year's conference theme was "**Hitchin' Our Wagons.**" Our future will be bound to

organizations to which we “hitch our wagons.” From the counsel of the Alaska Team Ministry (ATM), it seemed that our future as an organization was connected to the Summit, so the conference was basically a follow-up of the Summit and focused on “Networking and Partnering.” Our speakers for conference were basically those with whom we felt we could partner and network in ministry; therefore speakers from SEND North, the Evangelical Covenant Church, ChangePoint and Fairbanks Native Bible Church came to share and to consider how we can work together and be in relationship with one another. Even though a couple of InterAct missionaries chose not to come because of the earlier date, the majority attended and the conference went very well and will go a long way for continuing future collaborations and partnerships in ministry.

### **Training Program**

At the conference the concept and possible reality of an eight-month training school on Lazy Mountain beginning fall 2013 was well received by the missionaries. There were lots of questions with only very general answers given because the specifics and further collaboration had not taken place yet. It was shared that the school will major on 18 to 26-year olds, will be led by an Alaskan ministry and leadership, and the program itself will be an outside-of-Alaska model for training, which will need to be revamped for Alaska’s needs. This training is based on a model in use by Pine Cove Christian Camps in Tyler, Texas ([www.pinecove.com](http://www.pinecove.com), click on “The Forge”).

Those who will be at the table for these further deliberations will be Victory Ministries’ leader, Brian Headings, a pastor from ChangePoint, myself and others. We are hoping to mainstream some Alaskans and young Native leaders into the program as well. Worldview issues need to be addressed and a curriculum that would be unique to Alaska needs to be discussed.

The first meeting by phone went well with the initial planning group and we believe it can be a win-win for everyone involved. The allocation of space needs to be carefully laid out and thought through as we still want to make the Lazy Mountain campus available for hospitality and other partners in ministry, like Alaska Freedom Journey (AFJ). We may have to tie up the homes on the hill to accommodate various ministries and consider how we can make up the difference financially for the rent that would be lost if we used the houses for ministry.

The purpose of the training program is to train and raise up leaders for Alaskan ministries and could be a good recruiting venue for InterAct. It has long been a recognized fact that we lost our recruiting ability when Victory Bible Camp was spun off and it is interesting that a cooperative effort with Victory Ministries may help restore that ability again. I am approaching this training concept with great optimism but treading carefully that Victory not absorb all of our resources and our ability to position ourselves for future ministry.

## A FUTURE VISION FOR MINISTRY IN ALASKA

Without question a clear vision for ministry needs to be cast for Alaska. In part, this is directly related to some conditions that have to be met before we can position ourselves for casting that vision.

1. That InterAct as an organization redefine and clarify its philosophy of ministry as an organization. For example: Are we a church planting organization or are we an organization that helps and assists other churches to plant churches?
2. That the Alaska Field must have new people on the field that have the energy, time and ability to carry a banner for change, otherwise we will just continue doing what we are doing, maintaining status quo if you will. With the addition of the Tramm, Horsmans and Rebecca Bell to the Alaska field there is some renewed hope for casting a vision and a strong desire on their part, along with many of our other long-term missionaries currently on the field to carry out a dream for future Alaska ministry.
3. That our future is also connected to other partners in ministry (i.e., the Training Program on Lazy Mountain) and that our own ministry can be enhanced as we network with others. The Networking Summit helped other organizations to see that InterAct is still being used of the Lord to make a difference on the Alaskan mission field.
4. That any future vision needs to grow out of prayer, seeking the Lord and His will, communicating His ministry plan through a field MAP and having missionaries and leaders fully committed to that vision.

As a leader for the field, I have many ideas for the future, such as:

1. **Counseling Center** that deals with abuse, trauma and recovery of all kinds. Unless we are able to help potential leaders out of their woundedness and give them the tools to help others, we will continue to add another layer of the gospel on a heart that is unable to follow the way of discipleship and grow into Christian maturity and leadership. Rebecca Bell is completing her Master's degree at Liberty University in counseling and will be returning to Anchorage next summer to serve out an internship for her degree with a qualified supervisor and Christian counseling agency. Her arrival back is good timing as InterAct is about to consider a mission-wide recovery program.
2. **Native Church Plant** in the Palmer-Wasilla area. This church plant would be at the request of AFJ and in partnership with another local church. After talking with other leaders of other organizations there seems to be no Native church in this area with a high population of Native people and where they feel comfortable taking leadership positions within the church. Many Native people attend various churches but over the years it has become my conviction and opinion that Native people who assimilate into the dominant-culture church will seldom even become leaders to their own people. To reach Native Alaska we need Native leaders serving in local churches.
3. As we partner with other organizations we need to recruit "facilitating missionaries" that give InterAct the ability to connect with other organizations. We also still need to recruit "pioneer missionaries" for villages that need to be reached for Christ. These "pioneering missionaries" need to be a special person or couple who are called of God for these roles in villages and we need to provide

the opportunity for them to be a part of a team approach and community instead of being in extreme isolation. Church planting in urban centers or hubs at this moment is possibly a better strategy for training these new recruits.

### **MISSIONARY UPDATES**

#### **Tim & Larissa Zook - Fairbanks**

Tim and Larissa are working with 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders at the Fairbanks Native Bible Church by meeting each week for youth group. They often have sleepovers and minister to teens one-on-one as they face life issues and need guidance. Larissa is getting ready to have their third little boy and the demands of home and jobs for both Tim and Larissa are beginning to take their toll on the time they can give to the youth group. Larissa serves on the ATM and enjoys thinking and planning on big picture things. Tim works full time and does the van route each Sunday, picking up elders and those who cannot drive. Seeing their time constraints of family and jobs and realizing we have many young teens in our church ready to move up to their youth group, we are praying for and have asked Jerry Crosby as well as others we know, to be on the lookout for someone or a couple who could come on as an intern to help them with youth ministry at this busy time of their lives.

#### **Dave & Kay Henry - Fairbanks**

Dave and Kay are respected elders of the Fairbanks Native Bible Church as well as Interior Alaska. They are involved in a variety of ministries that support the church. They regularly visit the hospital, attend almost all the Native funerals, weddings and gatherings and continue to build strong relationships with the Native community. They give rides to people so they can attend church, counsel people with their godly and Scriptural wisdom and do most anything asked of them. Dave has been working with a Native man in the church to learn to count the offering and make the bank deposit. He also serves on the ATM and offers good wisdom to the group. Kay does Bible studies with some older women in her home.

#### **David & Marci Joseph – Fairbanks**

I am in the transition phase of “handing” the Fairbanks Native Bible Church into the capable hands of Harry Hafford and his wife, Heather. Harry’s ordination is being planned for late fall in Fairbanks. I will continue working with the Fairbanks Church and mentoring Harry for the role of Native pastor. Marci works with Heather on children’s ministry, ministry to families in the church and they talk frequently about how God helps them to grow in helping their husbands and working alongside them in ministry. We have begun to try to meet together monthly as couples to have some time to talk and share about serving in ministry. Marci also does the church’s donation receipts and pays the bills for the church. I continue serving as InterAct’s Alaska Field director and now that Marci’s time demands are less with caring for her aging parents, she is able to help me more as my personal assistant in my role. I will continue to help with the networking and partnering responsibilities in Alaska and hope to bring others on to do some of the work.

#### **John & Jenn Tramm – Minnesota – to be in Fairbanks**

Their vision is to minister among Native Alaskans so that they may know God, and experience healing and freedom through His power. They will come for a few years to be

trained in the Fairbanks Native Church, where John desires to focus upon men's discipleship as well as to reach out to homeless and the poor and Jenn plans to use her gifts in music with the Native Church and reach out to Native women. They are currently in full-time fund-raising and are preparing to come to the Alaskan field this fall and are over 50% funded. The Church recently helped pay John's way to Fairbanks to check out the housing situation and meet with leaders and people of the Native Bible Church.

#### **John & Norma Hammond - Palmer**

John is still going to Native New Life every Monday evening. They are still sending out over a hundred DVDs of the meetings. John sends out about 20 of every meeting and Phil sends out over 80 of two meetings each month. New Life is holding its own, though attendance has been running a little lower than in the past - generally between 30 and 40 each night. The big auditorium at ChangePoint is swallowing up the group and not working out very well. They are working on getting Skype set up so the villages can tune in and attend. Health-wise, they are holding their own. John is getting back to normal after his fall last year.

#### **Phil & Margie Cobb - Palmer**

Phil and Margie are having a house built in the Valley and plan to move in this fall. It will be the first time in a long time that there will not be any missionaries on Lazy Mountain with the exception of Brian and Sandy Anderson who take care of hospitality. Phil continues to serve in the video department and Margie is the bookkeeper for InterAct Alaska.

#### **Steve and Jill Horsman – SpA – to be in Palmer**

Steve and Jill are packed and in the process of moving from Canada onto the Alaska field for ministry. First they will go on an extended special assignment (SpA) and strengthen their support base in the loss of Jill's income at the school. They will move to the Palmer area and serve as "facilitator missionaries" to network with other organizations, work in the planting of a potential Native church plant in the area and provide leadership in the area of training and counseling. They have lots of energy and desire to serve and revive our field of ministry.

#### **Doug & Marlin Prins – Palmer**

Doug continues to faithfully maintain the InterAct properties in Alaska. He serves on the ATM with the field director and four other missionaries. Both Doug and Marlin are involved in ministry with Lazy Mountain Bible Church. Doug is on the elder board, leads the men's ministry and also leads a men's Bible study. Marlin is involved with the worship team, leading ladies Bible studies and mentoring young ladies. They love spending time with their grandchildren who live close by and also attend Lazy Mountain Bible Church.

#### **Sandy Anderson – Palmer**

Sandy and her husband Brian live on the Lazy Mountain campus, where Sandy provides hospitality for InterAct. Brian works for a computer store in Palmer and as a paramedic. Sandy also serves as my administrative assistant as needed for projects that I have come up, such as the Networking Summit. She is very gifted administrator.

**Barney Furman - Palmer**

Barney is plugging along working on the history of InterAct Ministries. One day we will look back with great appreciation for the man who worked diligently to record many details of our ministry as an organization. We recently visited with Barney and Myrtle at the Pioneer home and they continue to plug along with fairly good health.

**Rich & Kathy Voran – Palmer, retiring**

Rich and Kathy have made it official and are retiring from InterAct. At some point as the field director, I will be doing the exit interview with them.

**Ed White - Palmer**

Ed has a heart of gold and a great desire to be in ministry but his health will not allow very much at this time. In light of his health and frustration of not being able to do much, it has affected his home and relationship with his wife. We have informed Ed that he must focus first on his relationship with the Lord and then his wife and family and that ministry must come after the other two are in good health.

**Russ & Freda Arnold – Palmer, retired**

Although Russ and Freda are in retirement, Freda has indicated an interest and willingness to be involved as time allows in helping in the InterAct Lazy Mountain office. I feel she is a valuable resource with much knowledge, wisdom, experience, energy and willingness, that we should utilize her, as her time allows. She helps in the office at Lazy Mountain Bible Church one or two days a week. Russ' health is stable right now.

**George & Judy Richardson - Wasilla**

George and Judy continue to exercise their gifts in member care and interaction with people who need their help and mentoring. George serves on the ATM. They have been very concerned with their son Joel who has been in very poor health. Joel is gradually getting better and it may take a couple of years for his health to turn around. In April, Judy had surgery on her neck. She was losing feeling in her limbs and now the feeling is coming back and she is healing up very well. They were only able to attend the very last meeting of InterAct annual conference this year because they were driving up the highway at that time. Their lives are always interfacing with others for ministry. Judy does the InterCom publication for InterAct.

**Alan & Linda Ross - Kodiak**

Linda is planning a Heart Going to Wellness (HGTW) event this August and has been raising funds for the event. Her fund raising event went very well and she has raised over half of the funds needed for the conference. She is also using the Genesis Process in small groups to help people overcome their wounded hearts. It has been interesting to observe how both HGTW and Genesis are being worked in conjunction with each other to disciple and continue on in the healing process in people's lives. Linda serves on the ATM. She is also on the board of Alaska Freedom Journey. Alan leads Native New Life meetings in Kodiak and they work in close fellowship with the Kodiak Bible Chapel.

**Rhaylene Abbey - Kodiak**

Rhaylene is actively involved in Native New Life Fellowship on Kodiak. For the summer she is visiting the elderly in the fellowship who cannot make it to the services. She is excited about two new young couples that are now attending. She had surgery in March and is recovering nicely, although she struggles with energy problems. She served on a grand jury from April through June. She will once again lead a Bible study this fall.

**Julia McDonald – SpA - Kodiak**

Julia has had more than her share of heartaches and troubles. She had an internal bleeding issue that was corrected and most recently fell out of bed on her head and hurt her back. She is recovering well and headed to Michigan and Colorado on SpA. She has been helping the Ross's with HGTW that will be held in August and is trying to get back for the conference. When she returns they will make a decision as to whether she will continue to take care of her cousin Chuck or leave him in a nursing home facility since his wife Vicki passed away. Unfortunately they have no children and no family other than Julia to help meet the needs of Chuck who is in bad health as well.

**Dave & Sally Hill – SpA - Chignik**

Dave and Sally are church planters in Chignik. They are currently on SpA in South Carolina and discouraged about the lack of receptiveness by the people toward the gospel in Chignik. We are discussing reassignment to another village along the chain that is closer to Anchorage and less expensive for travel. I believe that we need to keep them in prayer because of their discouragement and pray that God would confirm their desire to return to Alaska for ministry.

**Win & Gracia Stiefel - Glennallen**

We recently visited Win and Gracia at their home in Glennallen. Gracia is essentially a volunteer with InterAct and Win is not. She works well with a group of Athabaskan women and is developing materials for worldview studies. She presented me with a DVD of her work and studies with local Athabaskan women in the Copper Valley. She is motivated to finish some of her worldview studies, although two of the three women that she worked with have passed away in the last few years. They seem to be doing very well in their retired years and desire to stay active in ministry.

**Dennis & Celesta Richardson - Anchorage**

Dennis and Celesta continue to minister in the Mountain View Community of Anchorage in partnership with Mountain View Baptist Church (MVBC) and Anchorage Grace Church. Dennis recently received a degree in counseling. Dennis has served as the senior pastor of MVBC for almost eight years and Celesta assists in the Sunday morning outreach, oversees the women's ministries and provides secretarial support for the elder board. Their Sunday morning outreach, which includes two services and a hot meal, has grown dramatically over the past year as have the other programs of the church. MVBC is a multi-cultural church body and ministers to the local community through a bi-monthly food shelf which provides food staples for an average of 120 families per month, a mid-week Kids for Christ Club for elementary-age children, men's and women's ministries and a mid-week adult Bible study. Dennis is helping the Grayling church to have a more solid foundation and assisting Marvin Deacon as he leads the church.

**Shirley Morgan - Anchorage**

Shirley enjoys discipling ladies and directing their lives in a positive direction as many turn to her for encouragement. She is supportive of Native New Life and Native Musicale and helps out in whatever capacity that she can. Living in a large mission duplex in Anchorage, she helps with hospitality in Anchorage for some InterAct missionary couples and single women as needed.

**Virginia Maillelle - Anchorage**

Virginia still is getting rides to work in the food bank in Anchorage. She is certainly ready for full retirement but she benefits from the small amount she is getting from supporters which helps her a great deal. With the several people that are living with her at her house, it is always a financial struggle. She is supportive of Native New Life and attends when the weather and her health cooperate.

**Rebecca Bell – Virginia – to be in Anchorage**

Rebecca's status as a missionary with InterAct is on hold at the moment. She is finishing up on her master's degree in counseling at Liberty University. She is having a wonderful school year and finishing up at a faster rate than expected. Her health is still doing well, considering her Multiple Sclerosis. We talk, dream, and pray about the possibility of starting a counseling center in Alaska using the Genesis Process as one effective tool in our tool belt. In my last conversation with her she will be coming to Anchorage next summer to complete her degree program as an intern with a counseling ministry with a qualified supervisor.

It was Henry Blackaby that said, "It is important to see where God is at work and join him in that work." I can see how the Lord is working in our midst, bringing new energetic people to serve on our field, bringing a statewide interest and desire to partner and network as the bigger body of Christ and beginning to see progression toward a long-awaited training program coming into view that will help us reach Alaska and recruit young people for ministry. We clearly see the hand of God at work in a powerful way and we have joined Him in that work. Join us in prayer as we desire and wait to see the Lord cast His vision, blessing and favor upon the Alaska field.

**For His Glory we live and serve,**

**David Joseph  
Alaska Field Director  
InterAct Ministries**