

Alaska Field Report  
August 2018  
Steve Horsman

A little over two years ago the Alaska field reflected on our past to redefine and redirect our future. The outcome of that conference was a refined mission statement, (We exist to make disciples among least-reached peoples in cooperation with churches and like-minded organizations), a redirected vision statement, (We desire to see reproducing disciples impacting communities throughout the state), and a renewed commitment to our core values (Scripture, Relationships, Cross-cultural ministry, Whole-life discipleship, Gathered believers, and Commitment).

We condensed this into a “T-shirt ready” focus statement:

**Diving Deep into Discipleship...  
Heart by Heart  
Community by Community**

As we developed our field ministry map, the MAT (Map Advancement Team) met monthly to advance the areas we had designated as most critical: recruitment, equipping, village, and urban (RE-VU). The goals were advanced and we have seen God work extensively in several of these areas, bringing us to our current stage of revitalization, refinement, and renewed effort. It has been particularly helpful for the field to realize our strengths, what makes us unique in our approach, and to grow in what we espouse as our core values so that our individual and corporate ministries clearly reflect these values.

**What’s New**

Conference 2018 had closure, as we celebrated the retirement of the George & Judy Richardson, Dave & Kay Henry and Dave Hill. And it included a beginning as I was accepted as the new field director. With conference and the retirement party we had a large number of retired and former InterActers, and I counted it a privilege to stand for a photo with a large group of godly men that have served as Alaska field directors or executive directors. I am honored to serve on a field with such a rich history of godly leadership.

**Alaska- Our Way to Do Ministry**

**Potential Staff and Appointees**

It’s all about Relationships

Although it stretches our resources, it’s been beneficial to be personally invested in developing relationships with interested individuals and continuing to pursue them within those relationships. Our dialogue becomes increasingly focused as they move from interest to investment, and prior to requesting an application we collaborate with them to develop an individualized ministry snapshot. While not a job description, these tools help describe the “big picture” ministry possibilities, which becomes invaluable for me as I see where we have new interest and helpful for these interested individuals as they pray about joining InterAct.

Finally, as these individuals transition from interest to status as appointees, we have invited them to participate in a variety of field activities, which is another effort to develop and extend relationships on our field.

### Augmented Options

We have worked with other InterAct leadership to widen and revitalize the ways individuals and families may serve. While Jerry Crosby (U.S. HR director) continues to refine the phrasing, we are now actively discussing:

- Long-Term Volunteer Missionaries
- Short-Term Missionaries
- Part-Time Missionaries
- Full-Time Missionaries, as well as our occasional employees.

While some of these options are less desirable from a field perspective, our current climate suggests that we may need to embrace a wider number of involvement options as we rebuild and revitalize our ministries in Alaska.

### Prepared for Arrival

Our goal is to see all staff equipped to begin (or continue) successful ministries, which is good for them and for InterAct. Our process includes:

- A streamlined application process (currently being updated by the Mobilization Team)
- ViEW—learning how the infrastructure of InterAct works
- Kingdom Come Training—training and mentoring as they build their donor-funded ministry team
- Center for Intercultural Training (CIT)—for solid and comprehensive preparation before arriving on the field.

In Alaska, we also require all staff to have an **EnGage!** Alaska type experience, although we work with them to determine the best timing for their experience.

### **Arrived Staff**

#### Field Onboarding

We are working to complete our onboarding process and all new staff are informed that they will start their field ministry on the Lazy Mountain Campus for this orientation. During this time we will be utilizing a number of existing InterAct staff, leaders from a number of organizations with whom we partner, both Jill and I, and some programs and use of technology to equip them specifically for their new ministry. Our goal is to build upon the equipping they will have received from the support-raising process with specific training for their Alaska ministry. A sample of the general topics include:

- Administrative and reporting information
- Development of their start-up ministry map and goals
- Alaska Native ministry context (InterAct historical, current, etc.)
- The Novel Approach<sup>2</sup>
- Working with Others
  - Team Building and Equipping
  - LiFO (Life Orientations- how you function in team)
  - Conflict management
- Continued dialogue on healthy family life, avoiding burnout or pitfalls

### First Year Mentoring

During the onboarding activities each new missionary will be paired with a mentor. That mentor will be attending as much of the onboard as possible, and then will be responsible to meet weekly with the new missionary as they begin their ministry.

Mentoring will be both formal, with related paperwork and topics for discussion, and informal, which will cover some of the aspects of member care for our new missionaries and families.

Jill and I are working to complete the Mentor Training Manual and related structure, as well as beginning to dialogue with staff that will serve as mentors. After completing a year of being mentored, we hope to find new missionaries that can serve as mentors for upcoming new staff in future years.

### **Existing Staff**

#### Individual Ministry Maps

We have edited the previous ministry map template, updating it to reflect some of our current approaches and common language (4 Chair Discipling<sup>1</sup>, biblical counseling, and The Novel Approach<sup>2</sup>). We spent the better part of a day at conference working in small groups to reread previous ministry maps and begin drafting current ones for all ministries. These maps will be completed when Jill and I conduct field visits over the next few months, and then utilized for 6-month goals. As a field, we want to be intentional in our cross-cultural relationships and focused heavily on discipleship. We want to grow in our ability to skillfully draw people into God's Word and emphasize the things that most directly speak into their hearts.

#### Alaska Professional Reading Group

Life-long learning is something we value and is also something that upcoming generations find essential. Early this winter we began our first round, definitely much trial and error, to learn together as a field. We selected the book, 4 Chair Discipling<sup>1</sup>, and then opted to use Google Hangouts for our platform. All staff read selected chapters, with specific focus questions, and then commented on Hangouts based on the readings. While participation was not as high as we would have liked, it was a start. We will continue moving ahead this fall with additional field learning opportunities as it promotes our field relationships and allows us to learn together in areas directly impacting all ministries and related to our core values.

Secondary learning opportunities come through other conferences or events that fit our ministry goals. One of these was an opportunity to take the basic biblical counseling training, via video, with a licensed ACBC leader. Four staff took advantage of this training and attended. We look forward to more such opportunities, and also that of a winter retreat.

#### Communication and Connecting

One of my goals is to increase communication on the field and to help staff connect more regularly among themselves. I began doing weekly email updates, called "Triple A," as a way to communicate and remind members that we are part of a larger team and organization. Jill continues to distribute a monthly prayer calendar. I am proceeding with the selection of a few men to serve on a

Leadership Advisement Council and Jill and I will begin visiting staff toward the end of summer, and will work with them to complete their individual ministry maps and 6-month goals.

### **Partnerships and Programs**

#### Alaska Bible College (ABC) & InterAct MOU- Intercultural Ministry Emphasis Internship

This summer began our maiden voyage of implementing this partnership. Noah Holland, ABC student, will be going to Port Alsworth for his village internship and working alongside the staff of Tanalian Leadership Center. His internship is worth 2 semesters, 6 credit hours, and he takes additional courses online through the year. Our role is to fully mentor him and supervise the internship. I will be doing on-site visits twice, the flights for which are being provided through Alaska InReach at no cost to the internship or InterAct.

Jill and I completed our first workshop with Noah, a 3-hour workshop on donor-funded ministry and he is prepared to begin raising his funds. We are finalizing all the additional workshops and materials, having just completed the syllabus for both semesters. The goal of this internship is to give the student a realistic slice of cross-cultural ministry, particularly InterAct Alaska style. Throughout his two semesters he will be doing things that are a condensed version of the onboarding and training all of our full-time staff receive.

#### LEaD Alaska

After taking a different approach last year, we are set to go with 2018-2019 year, starting on October 21. We are working to incorporate more vocational ed opportunities, as well as working with ABC to get some credit hours attached to the program. We've had several inquiries but no applications yet to this residential, discipleship training program on the Campus.

#### EnGage! Alaska

Despite David Joseph's concentrated recruitment efforts, we still had no students apply for Alaska. Jill continues to refine the materials and resources for this program. One of our goals will be to do some mentor training this year, prior to next year's start date.

#### MarketPlace Ministry

This was a new ministry idea, very similar to *EnGage!*, that David Joseph created and started this summer as a trial run. In essence, it invites students to come and work part of the summer and then experience cross-cultural ministry for a comparable amount of time. We had 4 students participate this year and look forward to hearing their reviews so that we can formalize the program for future years, and create greater infrastructure, resources, and locations for ministry.

#### Lazy Mountain Campus

Our houses are full as we continue to lease until homes are needed for staff, which is soon to become our reality. This spring we partnered with the Alaska Evangelical Covenant Church to run their international discipleship training program, Acts 29. It allowed our Campus to be utilized, strengthened our connection with the leadership in Alaska, and brought in some revenue during a

slower time. Our retreat housing continues to be heavily utilized and we hope to plan some specific retreats and training programs this coming year.

#### Northern Ministry Training

When MDP was closed, all of the organizations sought alternatives to equipping new staff for ministry. In Alaska, SEND North developed their approach, "Northern Ministry Training," which has been running for about 4 years. It is five days of short workshops facilitated by invited Native and non-Native leaders from throughout Alaska. Overseen by SEND, a small committee is responsible for program implementation each year and SEND has invited all like-minded organizations and churches to attend. Jill and I served on the steering committee this year and facilitated several workshops while exploring relevancy for InterAct attendance and participation in the future. Modeled much like the former MDP, we believe it is an excellent place for networking and is certainly important for InterAct to have a presence each year. We do not, however, see it replacing any of the training programs we have currently established. We will encourage staff to attend in future years but it will not be a requirement.

#### Arctic Barnabas & Alaska Mission Connection (AMC)

Finally, we come to the quandary of research- what are the current village needs, the data, and where do we expend our efforts most strategically? While we have continued working on this research and data entry, we have also held numerous discussions with other organizations about the research they are also doing. In an effort to reduce duplicate efforts and research, Alaska Mission Connection has now dedicated a staff member for the next year to facilitating and completing this process. We have reviewed the categories they have selected and they closely match those that we selected. Our next step will be a meeting between AMC and a few organizations to discuss the process, and the way the data will be shared, restrictions, etc. We are hopeful that this will give all of us a better grasp of what's needed, where, and who will be sending staff next to those locations.

#### **Staff Updates**

##### Steve & Jill Horsman- Palmer

Field director and continuing to serve as property director and campus supervisor, as well as directing LEaD Alaska.

##### David & Marci Joseph-Fairbanks

Continuing to serve in Mobilization, as well as doing all the supervision and implementation of MarketPlace Ministry 2018.

##### James & Shannon Miller-Fairbanks

James and Shannon completed a lengthy SpA this year, and continue to do extensive itinerant work in Grayling. They assist with Alaska Freedom Journey's training modules, and Shannon assisted in teaching one this April geared for women. James is working to gain necessary flight endorsements and is planning to begin a PhD program this year.

##### Ted & Kate Mole-Soldotna

Ted and Kate continue in their roles in Soldotna, seconded to New Hope Counseling program and Kate is employed as a nurse, in addition to being involved in a variety of other ministries and assisting with LEaD.

##### Shirley Morgan-Anchorage

Shirley continues her active ministry discipling women in Anchorage.

Dennis & Celesta Richardson-Anchorage

No changes for Dennis & Celesta as they continue pouring into the lives of people and doing intentional discipling through SonRise Community Church.

Alan & Linda Ross-Kenai

Alan & Linda have had a difficult year with the return of their son's brain cancer and related treatments. Despite this, they continue involvement with Hearts Going Toward Wellness. We have appreciated a new approach to this ministry and look forward to Alan and Linda doing 10-week home studies with interested individuals in the Kenai area. We see this as a great discipling opportunity.

Win & Gracia Stiefel-Glennallen

Win & Gracia continue their connections in the Copper River Valley, as Gracia also continues writing materials for future Bible studies. They were helpful to David Joseph with connecting individuals for the MarketPlace Ministry opportunities in the Valley.

John & Jen Tramm-Ruby

John and Jen returned from a lengthy SpA and jumped right back into ministry. This summer they have had several work teams to assist with house repairs and to build a much-needed addition to their home. They are keenly focused on discipling the people in their small community.

Bryan & Brandy Watts-Palmer (New, Long-Term Volunteer Missionaries)

The Watts family arrived in June and will serve as full-time volunteers. Bryan will also be taking classes at ABC to complete the degree he began, while Brandy works part-time at Creekside Church in Wasilla. We have completed their job description, which will be an urban ministry in the Mat-Su Valley with a focus on older youth and young adults, and they we are getting started with onboarding and launching this new ministry.

Tim & Larissa Zook-Fairbanks

Tim and Larissa continue seeking new ways to find and disciple youth in their urban context. We look forward to planning some youth conferences this year.

**Interested Individuals-Appointee Updates**

Rodericks- North Carolina

The entire family attended our Conference and they are actively pursuing the opportunity to come as short-termers, with the intention of transitioning to long-term after a couple years. They will be serving in property and campus oversight, as well as attending SonRise Community Church to help with whatever they can. They still need a little over \$1000 a month but hope to arrive in early fall. We hope they do, too!

Snells-Montana

Greg and Linda are still planning on urban ministry in Anchorage, but some health needs have postponed their process. Pray for Linda's full recovery from surgery.

Petersons-Washington

Chad and Andrea, and their family, are eventually tracking for a ministry with older youth and young men in the Copper Center area. They have chosen, however, to attend another full year at Alaska Bible College and are moving up the end of July. They will be residing on campus and so we look forward to deepening our relationship with them and doing some of their onboarding while they are here this year. After school they will return to Washington to build their support team.

### Derrs-Eagle River, Alaska

Matt & Lisa have served with SEND North for three years and are exploring the opportunity to join InterAct as urban missionaries in Anchorage. They attended part of the conference and Jill and I have met with them several times. We look forward to seeing how God will lead in this opportunity.

### Smiths-Palmer

Ryan and Rachel, and family, moved up to Alaska for health reasons. They moved onto the campus in February and Ryan has been a part-time employee and volunteer, helping with property related tasks. They have completed their application process to become full-time missionaries and we are working with the rest of the team to determine the best potential fit for them, particularly given their strengths, their limitations and family needs.

### Millers-Willow, Alaska

Leroy and Sarah Miller, and family, have another year' commitment at North Star Bible Camp. We are continuing our relationship with them and will be inviting them to co-facilitate some of LEaD Alaska this year, seeing if this is a good fit for them as a ministry. Our prayer is that they decide to become full-time members of the InterAct Alaska team when they come to the close of this current commitment.

### **MISC.**

#### Properties

We completed extensive work shoring up the foundation of the Grayling house, which makes it possible to continue multiple ministry to the village. Currently two with the MarketPlace Ministry are staying in Grayling and working alongside the Millers. Toward the end of July I will be flying with Dave Hill to Chignik so that I can assess both the house and the ministry potential.

We are doing as much upkeep and renovating as is possible with the houses in both Anchorage and on the campus.

#### Hammond Estate

You may know that Norma Hammond (John, deceased, former InterActers) passed away in June. The will divided the estate with the personal effects going to family members and the house and property being shared between Lazy Mountain Bible Church and InterAct. I am working with a lawyer, and with all beneficiaries, as I step into the role of Executor. While not a task I wanted to take on, it was the right thing to do and I am praying that the family (in particular) will be blessed as God uses me, and InterAct, throughout this lengthy process.

Board men- thank you for taking the time to read this update, and for your service as board members.

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<sup>1</sup> Spader, D. (2014.) *4 Chair Discipling: Growing a Movement of Disciple-Makers*. Chicago, IL. Moody Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Matthews, M. (2017.) *The Novel Approach: The Significance of Story in Interpreting and Communicating Reality*. Tellwell Talent.