

Alaska Field Report 2013

In reflection...

This past year has been a year in which we have seen the Lord move in special and powerful ways. In reflection it is easy to account for His hand at work. First, my “first” grandchild, Carson, was born this last year and just recently at our family Christmas gathering, my daughter Betsy and her husband A.J. announced they will be bringing another little grandchild into our lives. Marci and I are in the era of grand parenting; it’s great!

Harry Hafford’s ordination was a big deal in Fairbanks. A jam-packed house observed this deeply moving event in the life of the Native church. Harry and his family had a great day and sensed the seriousness and significance of this day. Harry’s commercial job on the pipeline is starting to dry up because of other competition for his work and his mother is experiencing her last days as she is losing the cancer battle. So Harry needs your prayers with his work situation and his mom.

For me there are so many things to be encouraged about regarding the Alaska field. In April last year, the **Networking Summit** surprised all of us in terms of its scope and effect. Many organizations came together and are launching joint ministries and working together as the body of Christ. Out of the summit came an Alaska mission’s connection website for all the organizations to communicate, compare calendars, post pilot schedules, and announce ministry events and needs. Efforts are underway to plan a second Summit which may have an even larger scope than last year. I am forming a planning committee at the writing of this report, made up of some of the larger church denominations of Alaska such as the Southern Baptists and Evangelical Covenant.

There is such great excitement and desire to come together at such a level that so many things are happening beyond anyone’s control for lasting and far-reaching impact. My goal is to see many more churches and pastors involved, believing the longevity of this movement is clearly dependent on the churches being more in the driver’s seat. When you visibly see the Body of Christ come together it reminds me of Ezekiel 37 when the question was asked, “Son of man, can these dry bones live?” And the conclusion was the bones did come together and the Lord says in v.14, “I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it declares the Lord.”

From the hand of the Lord ...

Three **new missionary couples** are preparing to serve the Lord in Alaska. In the last board report there was a brief report on all the missionaries, and in this report I would like to give an update on new missionaries.

Steve and Jill Horsman come to serve as facilitating missionaries. Although they are outside raising their support level they have been working in ministry. They are busy recruiting for InterAct, forming a professional reading group for continuing education for our missionaries and other interested individuals and networking for us as an organization.

John and Jen Tramm have seen a boost in their support as of late and are excited about getting to the field. Their current service in ministry at a Baptist church has given them valuable ministry experience for the field. After a long conversation with them the other day they are planning to fly and be on the field in March. They will ship up a few things and possibly have someone drive a vehicle up for them believing the trip is too hard for their little ones. It will be nice change to have these three new couples at our annual conference this year in May.

James and Shannon Miller are outside raising their funds and look to be back in Alaska in the spring. They have a home outside of Fairbanks and live a very frugal and self-sustaining lifestyle. As a pilot, his ministry will be to fly out, itinerate, develop relationships and mentor Native men in ministry for days at a time.

We are hoping that the details will work out soon for **Rebecca Bell** to get back to Alaska and complete her supervised hours in counseling with an Anchorage counseling agency. In order to have an effective recovery ministry it will be a huge plus to have a specialist on board with the educational degree in counseling to help lead the charge against abuse issues.

Phil and Margie Cobb have announced their resignation from InterAct effective February 25, 2013 to be considered as staff with Anchorage Native New Life Fellowship and moving their funding over to another missionary organization called Central Missionary Clearinghouse out of Houston, TX. They have made some requests about the video department that are under consideration in partnership with ANNLF. We will draw up a "Memorandum of Understanding" with them similar to the current one we are working on with Alaska Freedom Journey.

An Analogy Of What "Not" To Do

In the movie "Field of Dreams," Kevin Costner was given a vision "that if you build it they will come." Meaning that if he would build a ball field in the middle of nowhere then baseball players from antiquity would come and play the game they loved the best. After much hard work of cutting down acres of corn, extensive dirt work, planting grass seed, building a pitcher's mound, painting lines, building a backstop, and raising poles with expensive lights, a beautiful ball diamond emerged, and yes, the players magically came walking out of the corn fields in their baseball uniforms to play the game.

If missions could only be as simple as a Hollywood fantasy with an unlimited budget then our job would be easy. When it comes to an Alaskan strategy to "rebuild and retool"

the Alaska mission field, I am **NOT** of the opinion that the Lazy Mountain property become our “field of dreams,” but it will have a part to play in the bigger picture.

As far as a strategy is concerned it would be tempting to remodel the facility, develop a program of some sort, and say this is our strategy for the future. At this point we cannot say with assurance that a partnership between InterAct, Victory Ministries and ChangePoint will result in a Leadership Training Program, as the other parties seem to be dragging their feet and leaves me wondering if the idea will ever materialize. We cannot put all of our eggs in that basket. Instead, what I feel led to do is focus on developing our team, a team with passion, desire, will and most importantly time to implement a strategy.

Recently at meetings with the FLT and the ELT we discussed at length the idea of investing in people and not property, and in particular the investment in a team that would develop and implement a strategy for Alaska along with the field director. I believe I have their encouragement and support for **WHAT TO DO WHEN IT COMES TO OUR DREAMS OF THE FUTURE.**

Such a team is coming into focus with these new missionaries but there are some team members that we need in order to cross the barrier for turning our field. We need a youth specialist with experience and administrators for implementing a whole-life discipleship and mentoring program that includes counseling, recovery and biblical training.

I have submitted a funding proposal to Dale Smith and Roy Martin to build such a team. Again, it is an investment in people and not property. If a team is in play that will develop a strategy, own that strategy, and have the time to implement that strategy, we will position ourselves for success, and God’s dreams for us will come into being. Before any changes will be made to existing properties I believe that there needs to be some measures of success in ministry to prove that changes in property are in our best interests for growth and reaching Alaska.

Annual Mission Conference

The Alaska Annual Missions Conference will be May 2-4, 2013 at the Resource Center. Mike Matthews will be our speaker for this year and address the Alaska field on the subject of personal worldview. Mike did a similar presentation at the Canada staff retreat this past year. Marci will be organizing the food. If all goes well the new missionaries should be present and it will be a nice change to have lots of little children running around again on the Lazy Mountain campus.

For His Glory we live and serve,

David Joseph

Alaska Field Director
InterAct Ministries Inc.
david.joseph@interactministries.org
Home 907-479-4466 cell 907-347-4746