

InterAct Ministries
Canada Field Director's Report to the Board
August 2015

This report on the Canada field is primarily an update on developments since the February board meeting. God's work continues to be done across the Canada field through faithful InterAct missionaries. I am encouraged with the direction ministry is moving.

Staff Concerns and Highlights

Joel and Amanda Sewell (Eden Valley, AB) have completed 13 months of Special Assignment. During that time they have connected with members of their support team as well as stepping back from ministry to recover from the beginnings of burn-out. InterAct leadership has continued to work with them and offer them resources that allow them to become further equipped for thriving in ministry long term.

Sewells have spent time under pastoral counselling and with New Tribes member care personnel. They came back to Alberta in the spring with a strong sense of a need for team-mates and a re-worked strategic ministry plan for ministry at Eden Valley. They felt that without these two ingredients they could not return to ministry. God has opened a potential door for team-mates through Dale's connection with some New Tribe's missionaries. This family is considering joining the work. Mike Matthews has taken on the role of consulting/facilitating the process of developing a ministry plan that will provide direction and ministry sustainability.

The outcome is still unknown but InterAct is doing what they can to keep messengers engaged in Kingdom work among the Stoney people.

Roy and Laura Thiessen (Cardston, AB) are doing three months of 'lite-duty' ministry ending September 30. Since last fall Roy has been through a time of deep personal struggle. The Lord, through a few key events, has allowed Roy to turn the corner from struggle to growth. This 'lite-duty' summer is a time to firm up what God has been teaching him, spend time with his family, take a course on preaching, finish the basement in the modular home they are moving into, and develop a sustainable ministry plan as they move forward in making disciples and shepherding the believers at the Cardston Baptist Church.

Valen and Carol Straley (Kamloops, BC) will be on Special Assignment (SpA) from September to November. **Charlie and Judy Cook** will fill in for them and give spiritual leadership to the Native fellowship. Charlie also plans to use this time to mentor **Greg and Linda Snell** (long-term appointees) as they plan to begin raising support for ministry on the Canada field.

Don and Kim Gillaspie will also be on SpA from September to November. Don and Steve will be meeting before the Canada conference to dialogue about the things that are hindering them from reconciling their relationship.

Jess Tanis has decided that he should retire as of December 31, 2015. His support team will be notified of the change and both offices will continue to receipt funds that are designated to him.

The staff retreat in March featured Brian and Debbie Aho teaching on balance in living a life focused on ministry – balance and rhythm between the busyness of doing and the need for time with the Lord to grow in relationship with Him.

Vision and Strategy

In September the **Canada Leadership Team** (CLT) will meet again for our annual planning meeting. One of the primary topics will be planning and praying toward spreading out the leadership load. We need to develop leaders who can take on supervision of a few missionaries and ministry areas. This will take a few years to implement but needs to be done for ongoing ministry effectiveness.

Conversations have been initiated by the General Director of **Mid-Way Christian Leadership (formerly Continental Mission)** about the possibilities of a merger. This is a quote from their website “*Mid-Way Christian Leadership is a not for profit organization based on the Biblical principles of making disciples of all nations. Based in Thompson Manitoba, our vision statement is, “Growing Christian Leaders in the North.” Each of our staff have been commissioned as followers of Jesus to do just that as we run Mid-Way Bible Camp, Youth Life Coaching and Adult Life Coaching Ministries.*” Mid-way currently has 7 missionary units, mostly younger missionaries.

Midway’s board has asked the director, Morgan Serger, to search possible ministry organizations to merge with. After a few conversations it is clear that Midway’s purpose and vision are line with InterAct’s and that they have a strong relational approach to ministry as well. The Midway board meets July 18 to discuss Morgan’s research and decide whether or not to continue the dialogue that has begun.

In November there will be a meeting of the five people who have made an initial commitment to the **urban ministries whole-life discipleship project**. The team is gathering to begin developing a plan that will accomplish the vision of this project. This meeting will involve some level of SWOT analysis as well as identifying skills and experiences among the team members, identifying the training needed, brainstorming business options, considering options for the housing component, and beginning to determine how to work with the furthering education component of the project. Of course we will spend a significant amount of time in prayer seeking the Lord's direction and leading in the project.

Training

Four from the Canada field attended a biblical counselling training session in Indiana. Others have expressed interest and I look forward to an increasing number of the Canada staff getting training in biblical\pastoral counselling and using it as a discipleship tool.

Mike Matthews has taught the “Novel Approach” worldview discovery method to four of our newer missionaries and they are now implementing it as a primary step in starting well in their local ministry. We are planning to train and equip all the new missionaries coming to Canada with this training. Accountability and coaching is set in place to assist these younger missionaries as they pursue excellence in ministry.

Mobilization

God continues to draw people to serve on the Canada field. *EnGage!* 2015 had 12 participants this summer. Three of them served under Akmal Erastus as ESL workers among the Punjabi Sikhs of Winnipeg. Five were in Saskatchewan, three of whom assisted Tyrone and Ginger Bird in the ministry they have on the Moosimin Reserve. Four of them, the Beutlers and the Chinns, have raised their full support in the last year.

Josh and Joylynn Beutler finished raising their support in April, welcomed their 2nd son into their family at the beginning of June, and are participating in the *EnGage!* program as the final step toward investing themselves in ministry to Blackfoot youth and adults in Lethbridge and on the Kainai First Nation. **Andy and Jesi Chinn** have raised their support in six months and are moving to Anahim Lake, BC at the beginning of September. Charlie and Judy Cook, who served in Anahim over 30 years ago will be coaching them as they get settled.

By the time of the board meeting Greg Hamilton will have led the interviews for three Canadians who have applied to join us in ministry in Canada.

Whitney Conaway, who was accepted as a member of InterAct last December, has decided to go back to school and get a counselling degree. Unfortunately, she has felt the need to resign from membership with InterAct to do that.

I am thankful that God continues to provide health and energy to both Bev and I as we serve this team of faithful missionaries. Missionaries who are committed to serving the communities God has called them to. I am thankful for the committed leadership team that God continues to raise up on the Canada field. May the name of Jesus be made famous in every one of those communities and may Jesus build His church as we pursue strong discipleship.

Grateful to serve, expecting to be led by Him,
Dan Mayerle