

Canada Field Report  
December 2010  
Submitted by Dan Mayerle

The InterAct Ministries Canada field is continuing to develop and grow. Among the 25 active missionary member “units” on the field we have an employment spectrum from volunteer to full-time serving in 16 ministry locations across western Canada. Every missionary is committed to developing relationships resulting in disciples who are in a growing relationship with Christ. Most are working toward establishing a reproducing gathering of believers who are impacting their community. It is not easy to maintain a strong passion when working among three of the most resistant people groups in western Canada but InterAct missionaries have a deep seated desire to be effective.

**VISION**

Vision for the Canada field is difficult to put into a concise package of words. Three significantly different people/religious groups in a variety of contexts – rural to urban, mono-ethnic to multi-cultural, steeped in traditional religions to bordering on secular humanism – means that each local ministry needs to craft its own ministry vision and strategy within the ‘box’ of field vision and organizational vision.

The Canada Leadership Team (CLT) wants to see a culturally relevant church that is reproducing itself as it transforms Muslim, Punjabi, and Native communities across western Canada.

Elements of this vision that have been identified are:

1) Placement

- a. Our focus will be ministry *teams*. We will focus on strategically placing new missionaries with other InterAct missionaries to build strong ministry teams.
- b. Our primary focus will be finishing well in the communities where we are currently engaged in ministry. Secondly, after evaluation, we will place teams in some areas where InterAct has ministered in the past. Lastly, after research, we will place ministry teams in new ministry locations that will help us accomplish our vision.

*EVAL: Both of these seem to be increasingly hard to do as we gain missionaries who come with an interest in a particular area or roots in an area due to other employment, past ministry involvement, or a burden for the people in a specific region. In order to accommodate their interests and increase our missionary force we are sometimes sacrificing the foci above.*

2) Strategy

- a. Empower missionaries to develop a local ministry strategy using multiple means including MAP, goal setting & consistent evaluation, consultation, and ongoing training opportunities.
- b. Assist missionaries in determining whether their ministry role falls into the broad category of Pioneer, Partner, or Facilitator and then help them to live out that role appropriately.
- c. Facilitate a strong commitment to ministering from a foundational understanding of the worldview of the host people. This means a strong focus on culture acquisition which will lead to intentional chronological teaching addressing the non-Biblical worldview. The default will be to learn the language unless it is deemed not applicable in a specific context.

- d. Equip missionaries and indigenous believers to facilitate transformation in hurting communities through offering training such as the Genesis Process addictions relapse prevention seminar.
- e. Help missionaries and indigenous leaders evaluate and develop effective and sustainable church model(s) that focus on function rather than form. One model being researched is house churches.
- f. Develop and implement urban ministry strategies that will result in healthy churches impacting the urban indigenous communities. 60% of aboriginal people and close to 100% of immigrant people live in urban areas.

*EVAL: There is progress in most of these strategies but it is going to take time to see them really develop and produce fruit. InterAct leadership needs to encourage and empower without growing impatient and chasing after 'silver bullets'.*

- 3) Next generation ministry in both the East Indian and First Nation communities continues to be a recognized need. Ongoing strategy to address this need will include continued encouragement of Native Youth Conference and the Anchored Warriors follow-up ministry in Native communities.

Anchored Warriors is currently a pilot project ministry venture in partnership with First Nations Alliance Churches of Canada. InterAct is the active partner as we finance, give oversight, and assist the team of Native and non-native young adults who carry the torch for this project. As God continues to develop these young leaders and provide funding I anticipate Anchored Warriors becoming its own entity within two or three years.

There are many other ministry avenues that need to be explored in this crucial area. That exploration requires manpower, mostly likely in the form of new recruits. There needs to be an ongoing recruitment effort for both indigenous and dominant society youth ministry specialists.

*EVAL: InterAct is struggling to recruit the next generation of missionaries. Determining what needs to 'tweaked' in our organizational and leadership style as well as in our funding models is important. InterAct needs to be as compatible as possible with what this next generation is looking for in a ministry organizations. We also need to keep growing in our ability to incorporate host culture youth ministry specialists into the ministry, while keeping the strategies mentioned above clearly in focus.*

### **Native Ministries**

The Native ministry landscape in most western Canadian communities continues to point us to posturing ourselves as ministry facilitators or partners, rather than pioneers. There are several challenges associated with implementing that shift. One challenge is both missionaries and native believers making the paradigm shift from the missionary being the hub of church development to facilitating the indigenous believers being the hub. Another challenge is helping our native brothers understand what we are learning about the importance of knowing the worldview of the people we are presenting the Gospel to.

Native Bible Centre (NBC) is now producing their training material in the Canada office. **Ed and Glenna Houston** have not sold their house and their move to southern BC is being delayed. As part of his new role **Greg Hamilton** is now responsible for producing the Bible study materials and will work with Houstons as they move toward making this study material available online.

**Kim Kakakaway**, a half-time InterAct employee, is giving leadership to the Anchored Warriors pilot project. This project is a partnership effort with First Nations Alliance Churches of Canada (FNACC). FNACC is giving oversight to Kim's partner Amy Sell, a non-native Christian & Missionary Alliance worker. Tristan and Lesley Lefthand (southern AB) are their team mates. Anchored Warriors vision is to "*inspire youth through hope and change that impacts the heart of aboriginal communities*". The goal is to be a catalyst for a reproducible, community focused, local church based model that will see Native youth growing in their ability to follow Christ. The team is now actively involved with two communities and building relationship with a third one.

**Valen and Carol Straley** (Kamloops, BC) are developing a more intentional team ministry with **Ellis and Dottie Kasten** in the Kamloops church plant. Straleys and Kastens give pastoral leadership to this fellowship as they continue discipling the believers and working towards developing leaders for this church. Ellis continues writing courses for NBC as well.

**Jess and Alta Tanis** (Williams Lake) have been looked to as Christian elders by many of the Native people they have known during their many years of ministry in the Williams Lake area. Their partnership with the Cariboo Community Church has been a very positive for some of the native believers as well. As difficult as Alta's battle with cancer and her home going were the Lord's strength and glory shone through incredibly. Jess plans to continue in ministry relationships. Williams Lake continues to be a strategic ministry hub and Jess would make a wonderful mentor for a younger missionary couple. Pray to the Lord of the harvest.

**Steve and Jill Horsman** and **Don and Kim Gillaspie** (Redstone, BC) have several ministry foci. One focus is documenting the worldview of the Chilcotin and addressing that worldview through chronological narrative teaching. It is very difficult to have a consistent audience so creative thinking is needed all along the way. This is a common concern in all native ministry contexts. Jill is again working as principal at the community school so their life continues to be characterized by busyness. The team continues to hold Sunday morning gatherings for the Chilcotin believers. Gillaspies have been granted Permanent Resident status.

This team needs prayer as they work through struggles with team dynamics and relationship stress. At least part of the struggle is a spiritual battle that has been evident in the Chilcotin ever since InterAct began ministry there over 35 years ago.

**John and Anne Giesbrecht** (Fort St. John, BC) are focusing much of their ministry energy on a community called the Prophet. John has retired from full-time employment and they now want to focus on ministry among the First Nation people they have built relationship with over the years. It would be wonderful if God provided a younger missionary for them to mentor and introduce to the area. Pray to the Lord of the harvest.

**Dick and Ruth Browning** continue to serve in Loon Lake, SK. Dick and Ruth have taken the Genesis Process training and Ruth is now leading a second Change Group. One of the younger ladies in the church is assisting her and learning the material. As Brownings put feet to the worldview and Genesis training they have decided to stop some of their children's ministry and focus on helping the church to become a change agent in the community.

InterAct has a growing partnership relationship with Healing Hearts Ministries based in Regina, SK. A Healing Hearts missionary who lives and works in the Loon Lake community is working alongside the Brownings to see the Native church develop a stronger youth focus.

**Dan and Barb Kees** (Lethbridge, AB), as  $\frac{3}{4}$  time employees, are busy with people. Between ongoing relationships, weekly Bible studies, and a Sunday gathering (now called a Bible study) they have no shortage of activity. Some of the most committed Native believers attend the Anglo church services. Dan is an important part of the southern Alberta ministry network. He continues to pray for the recruitment of a young couple that he can pass the baton to.

A Northern Canada Evangelical Mission worker, a First Nations believer, has been seconded to work with them in Lethbridge for the next 8 months while the NCEM Bible school revamps their entire program to focus on developing Biblical worldview in their students.

**Dianne Voth** (Lethbridge, AB) is a valuable team member in the Lethbridge ministry. She is involved in discipling women, volunteering in a pregnancy care center, and taking a Blackfoot studies class at the university. All these activities are opening doors for relationships and understanding more of the Blackfoot worldview.

**Roy and Laura Thiessen** (Cardston, AB) are working to define a clear focus in the spider web of ministry options in Cardston. The MAP process and consultation with WRG consultant, Mike Matthews, has been a real help. Roy is pursuing learning Blackfoot and intentionally focusing on understanding the worldview. The partnership with Cardston Baptist Church continues to have some challenges but Roy and Laura remain committed to it. Thiessens have applied for Permanent Resident status with Canada Immigration.

**Joel and Amanda Sewell** (Eden Valley, AB) are focused on culture and language acquisition, New Tribes style. This focus, which is built on language immersion, has been a struggle because the closest housing they have found is 26 kms from the community. However Joel is diligent and could be ready to start teaching in the Stoney language by June 2012. Sewells are applying for Permanent Resident status in Canada.

**Dan & Deanna Woodard** (Carstairs, AB). Dan was the administrator of the Inter Mission Cooperative Outreach until the member agencies voted to dissolve the association. Dan networks with many Native ministry leaders keeping his finger on the pulse of the Native church across the country. He also training and equipping several missionaries to developing a strong supporter base. Ministry Development Program has morphed into an independent missionary training program called Preparing All-Nations for Transcultural Horizons (PATH). Dan is a key player if the development of this new missionary training program.

**Boris and Mirka Vyskocil** (Calgary, AB) continue their volunteer ministry at Morley. Boris preaches regularly at the United Church on the reserve while the denomination looks for a pastor. It is difficult to determine whether it would be good to even begin looking for an InterAct recruit who could fill that position.

**Byron and Danielle Sayer** (Vernon, BC) are InterAct's newest volunteer members. Byron's work led him to Vernon, BC next door to the Okanagan Indian Band. Their desire is to build relationships and find the role God is calling them to fulfill in that native community. They are receiving some help from a NAIM missionary who used to serve in the area.

**Dale and Debbie Kenyon** (Calgary, AB) have been accepted as seconded missionaries with SIM. They are learning Spanish and plan to be living in Bolivia by summer 2011

This fall Bev and I travelled to six of InterAct's ten native ministry locations to review and revise the local ministry MAP that was developed 4-6 years ago. It seemed to be a helpful

process for most of our missionaries. Each missionary is now working towards accomplish a set of 12 month goals from that revised MAP.

The **Camp Gladstone** ministry is continuing despite the uncertainty caused by the facility being for sale. Native believers and missionaries from several different fellowships and mission agencies work together to make this ministry effective in the lives of the youth who attend. Last summer saw the largest number of campers since the camp started 15 years ago. A committee of Native people is developing a business plan with a view to placing a formal purchase offer.

### **East Indian Ministries**

The immigrant population in western Canada continues to grow. This growth is translating into smaller urban centres seeing visible groups of Sikh (and Muslim) peoples emerging in their communities. With recruitment into Punjabi ministry at a virtual standstill and very few local churches actively ministering to the immigrants around them, the need for more workers is becoming crucial.

**Sam and Judy Paras** (Surrey, BC) are partnering with a Canadian National Baptist Convention worker. They have begun an outreach house 'satsung' (fellowship) that includes Hindu, Muslim and Sikh background people. Half of those attending are not believers. In the future there may be a network of connected house churches that are language specific.

**John and Tracey Tobin** (Abbotsford, BC) work under a local Punjabi pastor, helping the Indo-Canadian church (ICCF) become sustainable. Their relationship with a young Punjabi lady has opened the door to relationship with a Reformed Church in Lynden, WA. This church is very keen to reach a growing population of Sikh people in their neighbourhood. John and the Punjabi pastor have begun an equipping and training process in that church.

House of Hope, a culturally relevant addiction recovery program for Punjabi men is a vision John continues to pray about.

It would be a great thing to have more missionaries available who could partner with the existing Punjabi church in reaching out into some of the other communities where there is a significant population of Sikhs who are not being reached

### **Muslim Ministry**

The ministry among the Turkish people of Edmonton, with **Dave and Alice De Haan**, is moving ahead with vigour. Dave and Alice have many contacts and relationships and they continue to see God's hand directing their ministry. They are still looking for a church with a vision to reach Muslim people whom they can partner with.

**Dave and Marlene Nelson's** involvement in the Canadian Network of Muslim Ministries (CNMM) continues. CNMM put on their first national conference in Calgary in November and had a very good response. Marlene's many relationships with Muslim ladies opens doors to family and extended family contacts where the light of the Gospel is rarely seen. David's struggle with the progressing disease of MS continues but his prayer ministry continues.

**Fayez and Vivian Narooz** are finally permanent residents of Canada. Their support is very minimal and they need to focus on increasing it. Fayez is working on getting a theology doctorate and doing ministry both within and outside the crescent.

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment is a growing focus at the field leadership level. **Jim and Becky Hamilton** will bring a tremendous boost to our recruiting effort and help the field be more responsive to the recruitment strategy he is developing. The CLT has ownership of this issue as do several of the field missionaries. There is more willingness to be recruitment friendly at the field level than there has been for a number of years.

The most promising summer ministry candidates are a young couple from Moody that Dale and Carol talked with. There are also a few other contacts who are in different stages of dialogue and exploration but at this point there are very few applicants in the Canada field pipeline. Canada field missionaries are recruiting at four colleges and a few mission fests in western Canada but recruiting western Canadians to serve in western Canada still seems difficult.

### **Administration**

The administrative infrastructure of the Canada field is a miracle in the making. Three and half years ago Dale and I met with a group of advisors to discuss what would need to happen if I was going to be able to give long term leadership to the Canada field. The most crucial component identified at that meeting was the need for more people in administrative leadership. At that point the prospects looked bleak. Now the Canada field not only has a full-time administrator in **Wes Schellenberg (Carol)** but also a human resource administrator. **Greg Hamilton (Laura)** has joined the office and leadership team. He will be spending the next several months getting up to speed on our organization. At a recent administrative planning session we identified several areas of human resourcing that Greg, with a Masters in Business majoring in Human Resources, will give some great leadership to. Truly amazing!!

With at least four people planning to use the office on a regular basis there has been some discussion about moving to a bigger and more visible office space. For the last several years the Canada office has been an administrative office with very little public traffic so our current situation has been quite adequate. Now with the Executive Director residing in Canada and a full-time recruiter utilizing the office it seems there may be more visitor traffic through the office. A core question that keeps arising is “How important is it that the Canada field office gives a ‘strong organization’ first impression to visitors and the general public?” It will be easier to answer this question 12 months down the road.

Dale has laid out four “P’s” for each field to be developing. Here are a few of the things happening on the Canada field to move ahead in the four areas:

**Prayer.** In March the Canada field staff who can attend will participate in a retreat that will focus on the theme “... by prayer”. I also plan to make prayer a stronger focus for my field director role on a personal level and in my communication with the missionaries.

**People.** Ongoing training remains a strong value and goal on the Canada field. Most of the Canada staff have been trained in worldview ministry principles and are now working toward making those part of their ministry practices. The Genesis Process training will equip missionaries to help people overcome addictions and the hurdles they present to mature Christian living.

**Partnerships.** As can be seen in this report partnerships, at many different levels, have become an integral part of InterAct’s ministry on the Canada field. Dialogue between leaders of mission agencies about how we can complement each other’s work has been and will continue to happen. I firmly believe that we minister in an age where mission organizations cannot afford to focus on their little piece of Kingdom work and ignore what other organizations and churches are doing – particularly as the indigenous church begins to blossom.

In March the CLT, Dale, and a few others will be meeting with Tom Steffen to discuss the implications of his latest book, The Facilitator Era, on the ministries of InterAct in Canada as we seek to partner with and facilitate local and national spiritual leaders in our host peoples.

**Promotion.** InterAct missionaries are being encouraged to share what God is doing through their ministry. Sharing the ministry passion with local churches, with churches more removed, with short termers, with other potential missionary recruits, and with potential funding sources (foundations, etc) has to be done intentionally with a heart for more harvesters or it can seem a burdensome distraction from the *'real'* ministry of reaching people and making disciples.

Going beyond sharing to giving others a chance to connect in a tangible way with the ministry is a significant challenge. As missionaries who are focused on results that come primarily from long term relationships it is difficult to envision how short term teams and individuals can make an impact in our cross-cultural world. More thinking and dialogue is happening as InterAct personnel wrestle with these important issues.

It has been an interesting and stretching year. As Bev and I have visited InterAct missionaries we have been impressed with the uniqueness of each ministry and missionary that is a part of InterAct in Canada. God has placed His people in situations that He is enabling them to serve effectively in. From a human perspective it is hard to figure out how it all fits together sometimes but I am convinced that God is at work through InterAct Ministries and the people of this organization are accomplishing His Kingdom work.

Thankful that God never gets overwhelmed,  
Dan Mayerle  
Canada field director