

Canada Field Report
Combined Board Meeting, Feb 7-8, 2014
Submitted by Dan Mayerle

If I were to attempt to summarize the past year of InterAct Canada I would say “A year full of the joys and challenges of giving leadership to an aging missionary force and a year full of the joys and challenges of giving leadership to an emerging missionary force.”

Native Ministries

Fort St. John, BC. (Beaver, Cree, etc)

John and Anne Giesbrecht continue part-time ministry both in town and out at the Blueberry reserve. At the urging of a few Native believers John started Sunday services in Ft. St. John late last winter. In late spring the attendance was primarily non-native people so he stopped for the summer. Due to lack of commitment he has not resumed the services but may begin a Bible study if people can commit to it and add that to weekly studies at Blueberry.

Redstone, BC (Chilcotin)

Don and Kim Gillaspie continue to build relationships in the Redstone community. Don is being asked to participate in funerals and memorials through music and sometimes spoken word. They continue to host a Sunday gathering when the few believers who attend are available. As they continue to grapple with contextualization concepts they are going deeper in understanding the Chilcotin worldview.

Williams Lake, BC (Chilcotin, Shuswap)

Jess Tanis has ministry among the Chilcotin and Shuswap people he has known for many years and he maintains a role of elder-advisor in the Cariboo Community Church.

Kamloops, BC. (urban Native)

Ellis Kasten moved to his eternal home on Canadian Thanksgiving week-end. The celebration of his life included several testimonies of his ministry and impact in Native people’s lives and in the lives of his grandkids. **Dottie** will continue in ministry at the Kamloops Native Fellowship alongside **Valen and Carol Straley** and **Byron and Danielle Sayer**.

Valen and Carol have both come through cancer surgeries and Carol has undergone a few rounds of chemo treatments. Hopefully the cancer is gone and they will not have to deal with it again.

Byron and Danielle have stepped up their involvement and are travelling the 230 km round trip from their home in Vernon to disciple Native youth. Several youth and an adult were baptized this fall. The team from northern California, Grenada Berean Church, came up for a second summer of ministry activity.

InterAct will be partnering with NEFC and NAIM for a second Native Christian gathering in Kamloops April 10-13, 2014.

Native Bible Centre

Ed Houston's health has not been good this fall but he is home now and seems to be levelling out. **Native Bible Centre** course sales have increased some and **Glenna** is working to edit and format courses for online availability. It is hard to predict how many downloads will occur once the online courses are all available but it should give greater access to students and decreased workload and expense for InterAct.

Lethbridge, AB (Blood Tribe/Blackfoot)

Dan and Barb Kees – Lethbridge, AB have new team-mates ... sort of. **Josh and Joylynn Beutler** have completed the membership process, had their first child, and are now working with Greg on a timeline that would see them take the Kingdom Come training and begin support raising this spring, attend Center for Inter-cultural Training (CIT) in April, participate in EnGage in the summer and raise support in earnest in the fall.

Dan and Barb are now officially half-time employees and **Dianne Voth** puts in a few hours each week. The majority of ministry momentum is among the youth and young adults but discipleship does continue with the small number who continue to attend the Sunday gathering. Dan and Barb have initiated a discipleship gathering for college students.

Cardston, AB (Blood Tribe/Blackfoot)

Roy and Laura Thiessen continue to build relationships on the Kainai First Nation and serve as the part-time pastor of the multi-cultural Baptist church.

Their strong focus this fall has been relationships and community service in the Blackfoot community, developing outreach as a life-style for church members, and shoulder-to-shoulder holistic discipleship with young men. Roy would love to have team-mates to work alongside and complement the ministry he is in the thick of.

Eden Valley, AB (Stoney)

Joel and Amanda Sewell continue to focus on Stoney culture and language acquisition. After spending a few thousand dollars on logs, in hopes of building a log cabin on the reserve, Joel and his family are living part-time in an empty house that is "owned" by a Native Christian family trying to get established in Calgary.

Joel would really like to have team-mates who are focused on the New Tribes model of culture and language acquisition but the further Joel progresses the more difficult it will be for those kinds of team-mates to fit in.

Joel and Amanda have had their Permanent Resident application verified as eligible which is a major accomplishment. Barring some unforeseen

technicalities it seems they should be processed in time and receive their Permanent Resident cards.

Morley, AB (Stoney)

Boris and Mirka Vyskocil continue their Sunday ministry at the United Church on the reserve. Recently the 78 year old co-preacher/partner who has been working alongside Boris said he would be retiring in 18 months. As a result Boris and Mirka are evaluating what is their best use of ministry time and energy on the Stoney First Nation.

Calgary, AB (urban Native)

Amy Flater is **Anchored Warriors (AW)** only core team member who is also an employee of InterAct. The other five team members in Calgary are all volunteers with no official ties to InterAct. Anchored Warriors has become more organic and is, in a very real sense, a vision statement (*Inspiring youth through hope and change that impacts the heart of aboriginal communities*) that people resonate with and contribute to.

Amy does not want to become, nor do I want her to become, the administrator of this ministry arm for InterAct so she is developing a ministry focus in Calgary of building relationships that will lead to disciple making among aboriginal youth. The AW Calgary team continues to focus much of their energy on Eden Valley youth with both a monthly youth activity night and a monthly Arts Initiative program.

The larger AW ministry includes Beutler and Sayer. There are also at least 4 others who have little tie to InterAct. This larger ministry includes a Leaders of Leaders networking retreat week-end (approx. 15 people), the Momentum leadership development week-end (approx. 35 people), and a summer mentoring/ministry trip (approx. 12 people).

Loon Lake, SK (Cree)

Dick and Ruth Browning continue to facilitate church growth and develop leaders. The church members continue to take on more responsibility in the fellowship. “Mr. and Mrs. Browning”, as they are affectionately referred to, are considered elders in the community and respected as such in the church as well. This perspective motivates the church members to step up to the plate and take more responsibility.

Dick and Ruth are considering purchasing the house they are now living in and living out the rest of their earthly days in Loon Lake. They also would like have team mate(s) who could focus on youth ministry.

North Battleford, SK (Cree)

Paul and Joanne Janzen hit the burn-out wall this past summer and they have taken some time away to get some counsel as they consider ministry direction in the future. At this point they have expressed interest in moving out of North Battleford and taking on a Member Care role. They are being encouraged to consider caring for people through a supervisory coaching role.

Kelsey Quibell is finishing up her internship in North Battleford. She feels God has given her a burden and a calling to this community. North Battleford now has the distinct reputation of having the highest, per capita, crime rate in Canada and of one in every three youth in the city having a criminal record. Kelsey plans to return home to Ontario to raise support, attend CIT in April, and be back and active in ministry ASAP.

The C&MA church is pleading with us to let Kelsey continue ministry there and offering her a part-time ministry position. There is significant hesitation to place Kelsey in North Battleford for long term ministry without team mates to work alongside.

Ron and Taya Browning, currently managing Jedidiah House for Youth For Christ in North Battleford, are wrestling with how long they can continue in that role. Both Greg and I have had conversations with Ron about options within InterAct if he decides to make that move.

East Indian Ministries

Surrey, BC (Punjabi)

Sam and Judy Paras continue outreach, discipleship, and gathering of believers. The Southern Baptist missionary who was focusing on growing the satsung (fellowship gathering) has returned to the USA for visa reasons so Sam and Judy have picked up more responsibility in that area.

Both Christmas outreach programs went well despite some resistance from a Caucasian ‘Christian’ teacher at NAAD (Punjabi fine arts school) who said he would not participate in the program because it was too strongly evangelistic last year. However the Sikh director of NAAD clearly said he does not agree. In his words “Christmas is about Jesus, and if he isn’t at the middle of our program, it’s a complete waste of time.”

Sam and Judy have picked up a coaching relationship with Akmal and Sarah as well.

Abbotsford, BC (Punjabi)

John and Tracey Tobin continue to move forward in growing a healthier marriage relationship and John’s bi-polar seems to be fairly stable at this time. John continues his discipling ministry with several Punjabi men struggling with addictions as one of his primary ministries. John’s office has been relocated to the EV Free church office. He has ongoing relationship with the two pastors at Indo-Canadian Christian Fellowship (ICCF). This church’s vision is a Punjabi church for both Punjabi speakers and the next generation of English speaking Punjabis.

Winnipeg, MB (Punjabi)

Akmal and Sarah Erastus are raising support and significantly involved in evangelism among the 20,000+ Punjabi speakers in Winnipeg. The Baptist General Conference is really stepping up to the plate in moving this ministry forward and providing a multi-cultural home church to do it from. Akmal has

some tremendous resources and inputs into his ministry and life. Sarah is working to supplement their income and making some contacts with Punjabi speakers in the process.

Since ministry among Muslims is his background Akmal is not limiting his outreach to Sikhs only. He is very strong in literature distribution and wants to get literature into the hands of both Punjabi Sikhs and Muslims. I am currently working with BGEA to get Billy Graham's "Steps To Peace With God" translated into Punjabi script and printed. They recently put on two Christmas outreach events, one focused on Muslims and one focused on Sikhs. Akmal is working with his church to initiate a ESL program as another way to reach people.

Muslim Ministries

Fayez and Vivian Narooz continue to develop the True Love Arabic church under the umbrella of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist denomination. Fayez has finished his first Arabic theological text book and is working on the second of a series of 10. His goal is to spend a month or two every year in Egypt and Jordan teaching theology.

David and Marlene Nelson are facing some significant life adjustments as a result of David's , planning to take a six month SpA starting in January as they adjust to new realities and so that she can reconnect with supporters.

Training

The Canada staff conference training day in August 2014 will likely feature Dan Gibson, a WEC missionary who has written on honour and shame cultures. Tim Pasma, a Biblical counselling instructor and pastor, will be our conference speaker. At this point, beyond training new staff at the Center for Intercultural Training (CIT) no other training events are being planned.

Short term ministries

Of the four 2012 EnGage participants two of them, who are now married or engaged, are in serious conversation with Jim Hamilton about returning to be involved in ministry. Of the 6 non-InterAct 2013 EnGage participants three of them are talking seriously about joining InterAct full-time. That is a work of God in itself.

For EnGage 2014 we are praying for 12 participants. We are working on developing an ESL internship in Calgary connected to the Muslim ministry for the summer of 2014.

Jim is hoping for decreasing responsibilities within the next two years so discussion is underway about the possibility of Greg working alongside his dad and beginning to pick up the EnGage baton.

Recruitment Target – 20 teams in 20 communities by 2020

In the past year we have added 5 new missionaries to the Canadian field. As I prepared for my staff conference field address I realized that meant we were on target for the 42 new missionaries it is going to take for us to have ministry teams in 20 communities by 2020. That is God at work through our simple human efforts!! **Greg and Laura Hamilton** have been invaluable as coaches and mentors to the new missionaries coming on the field as they journey down the road of support raising.

At the CLT meeting in September we added Winnipeg (immigrant ministry), Urban team (First Nations - Calgary, Lethbridge, or Edmonton), and Peace River area (First Nations). This area includes communities like Fort St. John, High Level, Grand Prairie, Chetwynd, and Dawson Creek. We decided that before we choose three focus communities in this region we needed to do some research to determine the most strategic communities to focus on.

Leadership Development

One of the biggest immediate and pressing needs on the Canada field has been spreading out the supervision load so that missionaries get higher ‘touch’ and I can put leadership energy into other areas of development. That has begun to happen. **Charlie and Judy Cook** are taking on the supervision of BC Native ministries for a minimum 2 year term. **Greg and Laura Hamilton** are taking on the supervision of Muslim ministry. Paul and Joanne were slated to take on the supervision of SK Native ministries but that is in flux right now. There is a need for two more supervisors. One for Native ministry in Saskatchewan and one for immigrant ministry (Punjabi and Muslim combined).

New Strategy

The development of an urban ministry team using some level of business-as-mission (BAM) as part of a whole-life discipleship focus is gaining momentum as the new strategy we are going to focus on. In time this model will allow the team of missionaries to be at least partially financially self-sustaining. This model is gaining a lot of traction on the recruitment front and holds a lot of promise for an area that we have struggled to figure out how to do well – urban Native ministry.

Administration

Wes and Carol Schellenberg continue to do an amazing job at administrating the InterAct Canada organization and keep us current with all the Canadian charity requirements. Wes has had a significant increase to his workload this year as he seeks to ensure that InterAct is in compliance with a new Charities Act that comes into force Jan 1, 2015.

Greg and Laura Hamilton wear several hats. Two of the time intensive ones are assisting the Field Director and Human Resources for the Canada organization.

The 5 P’s

Prayer:

Barbi Gonzales continues to hold the banner of prayer high. It is a powerful role for her and she takes it very seriously. We have asked **Leila Cross** to come back in a very part-time role and contribute to the prayer focus as well as doing some care and encouraging of staff.

Partnerships:

There are an increasing number of churches that would like to be involved in greater ways. We continue to realize that, as important as these partnerships are, we have limited capacity in what we can manage and do well in this area.

People:

God continues to draw people to the ministries on the Canada field and all we can do is stare in wonderment and do our best to build relationship, follow-up well, and work out placement.

Perspective:

Worldview training and practical implementation have come back to the forefront as a core part of our strategy. Plans are being made for adding a ‘personalized’ worldview training component to the CIT training that all our new missionaries will be taking. And developing an ongoing training and implementation path that will equip and hold new staff accountable to focus on understanding the worldview of the people they seek to minister among. Mike Matthews and Worldview Resource Group (WRG) will likely play a significant role in this.

We are also continuing to pursue ministry workers who have training in Biblical counseling and we are continuing to raise the light level regarding Biblical counseling among our staff.

Promotion (Public Presence):

Dan and Deanna Woodard are spending more and more time in this arena as Dan, wearing his InterAct hat, works with WRG to develop a worldview studies program in partnership with Nipawin Bible College (NBC). Dan taught his first missions course at NBC and has also done at least one missions workshop at a church within the NPC in the last couple months.

I continue to see God’s hand at work through the people and ministries that comprise InterAct Ministries of Canada. I am optimistic and hopeful that we are being led by the Spirit of God as we pursue effective ministry, set strategy, and serve the staff.

Amazed by His love,
Dan