

Canada Field Report
Combined Board Meeting, Feb 4-6, 2016
Submitted by Dan Mayerle

The ministries that make up InterAct's Canada field continue to move forward. God is at work through the continued faithful and ongoing efforts of missionaries who are committed to doing His kingdom work.

Native Ministries

Anahim Lake, BC (Carrier, Chilcotin, Bella Coola)

Andy and Jesi Chinn have been living in Anahim Lake since September. They are involved in a Bible study with one family who have been discipled by Charlie and Judy Cook over the years. A primary focus for the Chinns is building relationships and discovering the worldview of the people so that in time they can clearly share the gospel with them.

Pray that Andy and Jesi would begin well by setting solid foundations in relationships, boundaries and a commitment to understanding the context in which they are living out and presenting the gospel message.

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

John and Anne Giesbrecht continue part-time ministry at the Blueberry reserve and some itinerant ministry at Prophet River as well. A younger couple from the area continues to help with the children's ministry as well. Halfway and Doig are the other two communities in the area where there is potential for ministry. John and Anne continue to pray this couple, or someone, will join them full-time and be free to invest more time into much needed disciple making and church planting ministry.

Pray that the Lord would provide His choice of workers in this ministry area so that disciples would emerge and grow to maturity.

Redstone, BC (Chilcotin)

Don and Kim Gillaspie completed their Special Assignment in December and are continuing to actively serve in the community in a number of ways.

Pray that the Lord would lead Gillaspies to those who are dissatisfied with life as they are living it and are desiring deeper spiritual understanding.

Praise that an acceptable level of reconciliation took place between Don and Steve in a mediated dialogue in August. Dale was a wonderful exhorter and conciliator in that discussion.

Williams Lake, BC (Chilcotin, Shuswap)

Jess Tanis is officially retired as of December 31. Jess will continue in relationships with people and in his role as an elder-advisor in the Cariboo Community Church as health permits.

Pray that Jess will have the health to continue to be an influence in the lives of people in the community.

Kamloops, BC. (Urban Native)

Valen and Carol Straley have completed their Special Assignment and are very glad to be back in the church and in the lives of people in the church. **Charlie and Judy Cook** stepped in to mentor **Greg and Linda Snell** who filled in and got some experience in ministry in a developing First Nations church.

Dottie Kasten continues to have a valuable discipleship ministry among the ladies and helps out in the children's ministry program at the church.

Byron and Danielle Sayer continue to serve among the youth in the Kamloops church. Serving full-time as InterAct missionaries is something they aspire to. Pray that God would give them the faith necessary to make this step.

The fourth Native Christian gathering in Kamloops is planned for April 21-24, 2016.

Pray that mature believers would emerge in the Kamloops Native Fellowship and that they would pursue godly living in all areas of their lives.

Native Bible Centre

Ed and Glenna Houston continue to rework **Native Bible Centre** courses and make them available online. Hardcopy sales of the courses have continued on par with the last few years. Ed's ongoing health issues and their age invoke a question of what will we do with these courses once the Houston's retire from this ministry.

Pray that these Bible study courses will be used towards the development of mature believers, strong leaders and healthy churches in Native communities across Canada.

Lethbridge, AB (Blood Tribe/Blackfoot)

Dan and Barb Kees continue as half-time employees. Their focus is split between a small weekly gathering of believers and the camp ministry at what used to be called Camp Gladstone (now called Camp Nookoowai). **Josh and Joylynn Beutler** are moving forward in their ministry with Blackfoot youth and deepening their understanding of Blackfoot worldview through implementing the Novel Approach method and starting Blackfoot language learning.

Pray that the Kees' ministry focus and the Beutler's ministry focus would produce disciples who become part of a sustainable gathering of Blackfoot believers.

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 in Cardston. After a lot of delays they are finally settled in their house on an acreage a few miles out of town.

Roy continues in relationship with Blackfoot people of all ages. After several years of Bible study and discipling he is thankful to have one of the leaders in the church – a Blackfoot believer – moving ahead in reaching out to the community.

Pray that Roy would have wisdom in balancing the many facets of this ministry alongside appropriate prioritizing of his family.

Eden Valley, AB (Stoney)

Joel and Amanda Sewell have re-engaged in relationship with some people at Eden Valley but Joel continues to struggle to regain his passion for ministry and give this ministry his all. The potential teammates for Sewells have not worked out and it seems unlikely that they will be candidates in the future. Field leaders continue to work with the Sewells to develop and implement a sustainable ministry plan.

Pray that Joel and Amanda would know God's leading as they seek biblical balance between ministry demands and personal/family life. Pray also that if God wills it a passion for ministry at Eden Valley would be re-ignited in Joel and the Lord would provide teammates for the work.

Morley, AB (Stoney)

Boris and Mirka Vyskocil no longer have a role in the Sunday ministry at the United Church on the reserve. They are focusing on relational discipleship with a few people and have been involved in a weekly Bible study for the past two months.

Pray that Boris and Mirka would be used to develop solid belief and growing faith in those they are doing Bible study with.

Calgary, AB (urban Native)

Amy Flater continues to move forward with **Anchored Warriors** ministry among youth and in leadership development. Amy continues to focus much of her energy on Eden Valley youth with a monthly youth activity night, weekly volunteering in a high school where several Eden Valley youth attend, and ongoing contact with several youth from Eden Valley. She is also becoming more involved in discipleship of Native young adults who live in Calgary.

Pray that Amy and the ministries that are a part of the Anchored Warriors network would see Native youth who are serious about pursuing a growing relationship with Christ.

Loon Lake, SK (Cree)

Dick and Ruth Browning continue to see people from the community taking leadership in the church and growing in living in obedience. The youth worker from Healing Hearts Ministries who has been partnering with them married a local believer last fall but she remains involved in youth ministry for the time being.

Please join Dick and Ruth as they continue to pray for teammates (ideally a young man) who can focus on the growing youth population in Loon Lake.

North Battleford, SK (Cree)

Paul and Joanne Janzen are coaching the younger missionaries serving in InterAct Canada's Native ministries. This role involves a minimum of monthly contact including face-to-face time a few times a year. We trust this will alleviate some of the discouragements and frustration in our younger missionaries by helping them keep their ministry focus sharp and encouraging healthy personal and family life. Paul is a strong mentor and advisor in Tyrone Bird's life and ministry and both he and Joanne continue to speak into the lives of First Nation people living in North Battleford.

Kelsey Quibell was married to a local RCMP officer a month ago. She is continuing in her discipleship ministry with teen girls.

The partnership between Territorial Drive Alliance Church and InterAct continues to move forward both in the city and on the Moosimin reserve where Tyrone pastors an indigenous church.

Pray that God will continue to bless this ministry partnership and grow His church. Pray that these ministry workers – Native and non-Native – would have strength to stand firm in the battle.

East Indian Ministries

Surrey, BC (Punjabi)

Sam and Judy Paras continue outreach, discipleship and gathering of believers. Their involvement in the Satsung (fellowship gathering) continues as a partnership effort with a Southern Baptist missionary and a Punjabi believer.

The Christmas outreach programs saw about 100 Sikhs – and a few Hindus and Muslims – attend in two different venues where the gospel was shared. Sam and Judy continue in their coaching relationship with Akmal and Sarah (Winnipeg) and that relationship has proven to be mutually beneficial.

Pray that the years of investment that Sam and Judy have made in Punjabi people will result in a gathering of Punjabi disciples who love Jesus with all their heart.

Abbotsford, BC (Punjabi)

John and Tracey Tobin have struggled this past year with their 16-year-old son who is sometimes defiant of their authority and antagonistic with them. This has tested the strength of their marriage. Pray for Jack Teeter and others who have opportunities to speak into this situation and their marriage.

John is in an important peacemaking role with the Punjabi church leadership team as the church transitions from one-person pastoral leadership to a leadership team. To this point they have worked through the issues that have arisen and there is hope that the church will move towards being a thriving community that is reaching out.

Pray for continued health in John and Tracey's marriage, for God's grace to draw their son Harry into submission and obedience to God and his parents. Pray also that God will give

John wisdom to stand in the gap as the Punjabi church moves forward under the direction of a leadership team.

Winnipeg, MB (Punjabi)

Akmal and Sarah Erastus continue with ministry to Sikhs and Muslims. Akmal is working full-time alongside a Muslim man who was in need of employment. Unfortunately Sarah has been unable to find work and their support is low enough that the extra income is needed. Approximately 85 Sikhs and Muslims attended two different Christmas outreaches. Akmal continues to work with churches who have a desire to reach their neighbourhood. He longs for the day when he can work with teammates.

Pray that the Lord will bless Akmal and Sarah with some Punjabi believers who they will be able to begin discipling. Pray also that the Lord will give Akmal patience as he seeks partnerships with Canadian churches who don't seem to take reaching their neighbours as seriously as he does.

Muslim Ministries

Fayez and Vivian Narooz continue to develop the True Love Arabic church under the umbrella of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists denomination. Fayez spent over a month in Egypt and Jordan teaching theology this fall again.

David and Marlene Nelson continue to face significant life adjustments as David's MS limits him more and more. However their passion for reaching Muslim people with the gospel does not waver. Teammates for Marlene would be a big help in moving ministry forward.

Praise that God has provided workers in Mesh and Laura Hit who became InterAct members last fall. Pray that they would move forward in raising support and become part of InterAct's ministry to Muslims.

Administration

Wes and Carol Schellenberg and **Greg and Laura Hamilton** continue to keep the necessary organizational pieces of administration and human resources functioning. It seems the admin and HR requirements and workload only keep increasing as time goes on.

Thank the Lord for these servants whom God has gifted for the work they do.

Training

Training to equip missionaries to discern how the host culture understands and views life in their community remains a priority for all new missionaries coming onto the Canada field. It is important to have a clear presentation of the gospel that is understood and makes sense to those living in the community.

Five InterActers from the Canada field will again attend a biblical counselling conference next week in an ongoing effort to better understand how to use Scripture in disciple making.

The Canada staff conference training day in August will focus on making reproducing disciples. We are still working to find the person who will lead this training day.

Recruitment Target – 20 teams in 20 communities by 2020

In the past year we have added three new members to the Canada field pipeline. All three are raising support. Stefan Dick is at 25% support after quitting his job and focusing his energy on raising support. Stefan is planning to be the first person on the ground in Calgary developing the foundation for the urban ministry team. The other couple, Mesh and Laura Hit, would like to focus on reaching Muslims in Calgary but Mesh is having a hard time shifting from employment to support raising.

There are two other singles and two other couples who have made verbal commitments toward joining the urban ministry team. Some of them are already working on filling out applications. Another young couple, who will be married in April, are planning to join the Punjabi ministry in Winnipeg once they have a year of marriage under their belt and have their support raised.

One of the great challenges is recruiting people to join existing ministries as teammates to missionaries already involved in ministry. Most of the InterAct missionaries on the Canada field have expressed the need/desire/longing to have teammates join the ministry they are involved in. However many of the new recruits that are joining InterAct already have their sights set on a community where they feel led to serve.

Pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth workers who are willing to come alongside existing ministry workers and join the work already started ... if that is His will.

Short term ministries

Jim and Becky Hamilton continue to recruit and grow the *EnGage!* program. Under Jim's leadership *EnGage!* has become a primary door for recruiting long-term missionaries. *EnGage!* 2015 included a team of students focusing on ESL as a platform for building relationships among immigrant people in Winnipeg. Three other teams were placed in First Nation communities.

Jim loves his recruiting work but he also feeling like it is time to pass the baton on to someone else. It is difficult to find someone with the unique experiences and skill set that Jim and Becky have.

Pray that the Lord will help us to identify the person of His choice to fill this important recruitment role.

New Initiatives

Urban Ministry Team

The development of an urban ministry team using some level of business-as-mission as part of a whole-life discipleship focus continues to move forward. The team of seven met

together for three days in November. During that time they spent some time with a few Native advisors and were challenged and encouraged by their input. The team – and a few InterAct leaders – are now holding monthly conference calls to keep each other updated as research is completed and information is gathered. The current timeline would see the majority of the team in Calgary and moving forward with the project by early spring 2017.

There are lots of things to figure out before 2017. Pray that this team would have wisdom beyond their years to take this from concept to reality.

Mid-Way Christian Leadership Merger

Much time and energy has been invested into the possible merger of Mid-Way into the ministries of InterAct. It continues to appear to be a win-win on both sides. Mid-Way is looking for administrative expertise and structure to move ahead in the discipleship ministries in northern Manitoba. InterAct can meet that need and gain a ministry team complete with supervisory leadership. This ministry has potential to be a recruitment point – particularly with the residential camping discipleship program, an opportunity to expedite and grow First Nation ministry in another corner of the North Pacific Crescent, and open a door to relationship with a whole new constituency group.

Pray for God's sovereign plan to be carried out as both the Mid-Way board and the InterAct board have yet to give final approval.

Leadership Development

One of the pressing needs on the Canada field continues to be spreading out the supervision load so that missionaries get higher 'touch' and so that I can put leadership energy into other areas of development. Progress is being made but we are looking at 2-5 years of leadership development and preparation before the pressure will begin to lessen. In the meantime others like Paul and Joanne Janzen, Greg and Laura Hamilton, and Joel Sewell are picking up coaching and/or supervising responsibilities. I am very thankful for the Canada Leadership Team who work hard to make ministry happen.

Prayer

Barbi Gonzales and **Leila Cross** continue to hold the banner of prayer high. It is a powerful role that is a huge encouragement to staff and, more importantly, is what God calls us to do in releasing His work and His power. Leila has been diagnosed with terminal cancer so her time in this role is very limited but she continues to serve where she can.

Partnerships

As new partnerships emerge **Dan and Deanna Woodard** are available to equip churches and people to reach out across cultural barriers and love their neighbour well.

Pray that InterAct will be a 'value-added' partner with the churches and ministries we come alongside.

I said this a year ago and I will say it again ... I am OK with what appears to be plodding toward our goal of seeing disciplined, gathered believers who are reproducing if that is what it takes to stay the course long term and reach the goal. I am optimistic and hopeful that InterAct leadership continues to be led by the Spirit of God as we pursue effective ministry, set strategy, and serve people.

Hoping to serve well,
Dan Mayerle