

Canada Field Report
Combined Board Meeting, Feb 2-4, 2017
Submitted by Dan Mayerle

The ministries that make up InterAct's Canada field continue to make an impact for the Lord's name and glory. God is at work through the continued faithful and ongoing efforts of missionaries who are committed to doing His kingdom work. Success, in terms of people's movement toward Christ and spiritual growth, is often hard to determine but I believe that each InterAct worker is committed to making a difference in the area where they serve and that God is at work through them.

Below are some of the primary areas that Dale and I have set goals for and are continuing to work towards. Below that is a few lines of update on each Canada field staff that you can refer to as you pray.

Training and Developing

Developing the ministry workers that God has provided and continues to provide for the Canada field is a primary area of focus over this next year. Ongoing training, equipping, and coaching is an integral element in casting vision and helping people accomplish their vision for their local ministry.

Training for potential InterAct missionaries starts with a week of orientation and debrief as part of the EnGage! short term ministry experience. Those who are then called to serve with InterAct long term get four weeks of excellent cross-cultural ministry training at the Center for Intercultural Training (CIT) once they have completed the application process and shortly before they head to the field. Once on the field ongoing training is offered regularly for all staff so they can continue to grow and develop. The Canada field leaders are focusing on offering ongoing equipping in two primary areas:

- 1) Deeper understanding of host community's culture and worldview. This understanding assists in developing relationships of greater depth and giving the missionary understanding to present the Gospel in a way that brings clarity and connects at a deeper level with the hearts of the people. Mike Matthew's Novel Approach model is a great foundation to work from in discovering the core beliefs that govern a culture's reactions to life. Two of our newer missionaries are utilizing this model and Joel Sewell is coaching them.
- 2) Growing understanding and ability to use the Word in practical disciple making. Most people deal with significant levels of brokenness. Some camouflage it better than others. The people groups InterAct works with are no exception. The Word provides us with answers for life and godliness. We want our missionaries to continue growing in their ability to apply Scripture to the issues of life that people struggle with and that keep them from becoming mature and godly. In February nine people from the Canada field will attend a Biblical counselling conference as part of this training focus.

The training day that kicks off the annual Canada staff conference will, in August 2017, feature Dr. Paul Magnus teaching on Discipling and Developing Leaders.

Personal growth and development continues to be important as well. Walking with missionaries – especially the younger ones – and helping them figure out how to balance ministry and life seems to be a growing concern. Paul and Joanne Janzen continue to coach some of the younger generation in these areas. There are times when it seems like even more needs to be done. Dale and I talk occasionally about the need for a full-time member care person in Canada.

Pray that InterAct leaders would have wisdom as we seek to help our missionaries to be growing believers who are equipped for making disciples among other cultures.

Recruitment Target – 20 teams in 20 communities by 2020

With the completion of the Mid-Way Christian Leadership merger we now have missionaries serving in 19 communities across western Canada. One Muslim community, three Punjabi Sikh communities, and 15 First Nation communities. We are continuing to research the needs in other communities of western Canada and particularly those that are in close proximity to where we are now working.

The urban ministry team continues to develop. One more of the couples has completed the application process and are now appointees. The other two singles and couple who plan to join the urban ministry team have applications in hand. Within the next 12 months we fully expect they will all be InterAct members and well on their way to full support and discipleship ministry in Calgary.

Thomas and Nicole Olney are joining the Midway ministry team in Thompson, MB this month. Avery & Joy Radke are hoping to join the Punjabi ministry in Winnipeg once he finishes his M.A. in TESOL this coming summer. They have applications in hand. Another couple (Ryan & Ruthann Dyck) who have applications in hand live in the Ft. St. John area. They have a vision for ministry among local First Nation communities with a specific focus on the Halfway River First Nation. There has been some discussion about InterAct taking on the ministry of an older, independent missionary couple at the Sunchild and O'Chiese communities close to Rocky Mountain House, AB. Jayden & Stephanie Froese have been volunteering in those communities for a few years and they are very interested in pursuing full-time ministry. However there does not seem to be a strong likelihood that the current missionaries will be ready to hand the reins to InterAct anytime soon.

One of the challenges continues to be recruiting people to join existing ministries and become team-mates to missionaries already involved in ministry. Most of the InterAct missionaries on the Canada field have expressed the need/desire to have team mates join the ministry they are involved in. However, many of the new recruits that are joining InterAct already have vision and passion for a community where they feel led to serve.

Thank the Lord for His continued provision of workers! 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 for the EnGage! program. Under Jim's leadership EnGage has become a primary door for recruiting long term missionaries.

EnGage! 2016 included a team of students focusing on ESL as a platform for building relationships among immigrant people in Winnipeg. Last year we did not have any EnGage! participants in First Nation communities.

Jim loves his recruiting work but he continues to look for someone to pass the baton on to. It is difficult to find a person with the unique experiences and skill set that Jim and Becky have who will be able to speak for the Canadian context.

This past September a Millar College of the Bible student began an eight-month internship in Loon Lake, SK. She will finish in April of this year. It is difficult to predict this student's long term involvement in Native ministry but so far it has been a positive experience for both Bethany and the believers in the Loon Lake fellowship. A fourth year, eight-month internship is becoming more common in some schools and we are working to offer a credible cross-cultural internship for this student demographic.

Pray with us for 12 EnGage! participants in 2017 ... eight in First Nations communities and four in immigrant ministries. 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 four days last September. They worked through a MAP process and defined vision and steps to accomplishing the vision for each major area of Community, Housing, Work, and Education. The team – and a few InterAct leaders – continue holding monthly conference calls to keep each other updated as research is completed and information is gathered. They are in the process of choosing a more official name. The current timeline would see the majority of the team in Calgary and moving forward with the project by spring 2018 rather than the spring of 2017 which was initially projected.

There are lots of things to figure out before 2018 and the team is addressing one or two of them every time they meet. Thank the Lord for the progress already made and pray that this team would have wisdom beyond their years to continue to move this project from concept to reality.

Mid-Way Christian Leadership Merger

Mid-Way has become a part of InterAct. The paperwork is being filed with the government for the dissolution of Mid-Way Christian Leadership charitable status. This merger has taken significant amounts of time and energy to complete, especially on Wes Schellenberg's part. Wes' administrative diligence was the deciding factor in getting this merger completed within this calendar year.

Thank the Lord for His sovereign direction in this merger and the relational unity that prevailed in the middle of many administrative details.

Leadership Development

Progress continues to be made toward the pressing need of identifying and developing leaders on the Canada field. Younger missionaries are being ‘tapped on the shoulder’ as they are identified for potential leadership positions and I am seeking to encourage leadership development through education and experience.

The Canada Leadership Team has been re-vamped. The people on the team are Greg Hamilton, Wes Schellenberg, Cohle Bergen, and myself. There is at least one other person that is being considered and will likely be approached in the near future.

Prayer

Barbi Gonzales continues to hold the banner of prayer high. This focus on prayer is very important to our success in God’s kingdom work and is a huge encouragement for the staff. Leadership also encourages the use of the mission-wide, monthly Prayer and Praise and many InterAct’ers use the online prayer/praise email service.

Pray that we would never lose sight of our need to be people of prayer.

Partnerships

There are no new partnerships to highlight at this time.

Pray that if there are partnerships that InterAct should be involved in because they will enhance His kingdom work the Lord will lead us and give us eyes to see the potential.

One of my regular prayers is that in His grace God will pour out His Spirit and Jesus Christ will build His church among the Muslim, Sikh and Native communities of Canada in way that causes many to recognize who God is and submit to Him ... and I pray that God would give InterAct the privilege of playing a small part in that movement.

Thank you for your service as boards over InterAct Ministries.
Dan Mayerle

Native Ministries

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

John and Anne Giesbrecht continue in part-time ministry at the Blueberry reserve and some itinerant ministry at Prophet River as well. A younger couple from the area continue to help with the children's ministry. Anne's fragile health continues to be a concern. John chairs a board that is developing a camp ministry. The former Blueberry Camp property is not accessible so they are hoping to develop a mobile camp ministry for this coming summer that can be taken to several communities in the area.

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

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

Andy and Jesi Chinn are settled into life in Anahim Lake. They are getting more and more connected and involved in community activities like mushroom picking, youth events, and funerals. In the midst of working alongside a few believers, Chinn's continue to focus on building relationships in the greater community and discovering the worldview of the people so that they can share the Gospel with increasing clarity.

Pray that Andy and Jesi would not give in to the discouragement that comes from time to time as the 'newness' of ministry is past and the realities of the community and its struggles become clearer. Pray that in this next year they would gain insight and wisdom into communicating the Gospel story in a way that deeply connects with the hearts of the people.

Redstone, BC (Chilcotin)

Don and Kim Gillaspie are very active in community life at Redstone. Kim has been filling a temporary teaching position at the school because there was no-one else to fill the position. Don has been taking a Chilcotin language course through University of British Columbia and that has opened new relational doors in the community. There have been growing number of opportunities to serve in the community and share the Gospel via weddings, funerals, and community functions

Pray that the increased busyness would lead Gillaspies to those who are searching for spiritual answers and that the Lord would give them the energy for the increased workload.

Williams Lake, BC (Chilcotin, Shuswap)

Jess Tanis is officially retired and still has a desire to be used by the Lord in Chilcotin and Shuswap people's lives. He is continuing 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 continue to faithfully serve in the development of the First Nation church. They have had some discouragements this year as people they have been discipling have slipped back into old patterns of living for a time.

Dottie Kasten continues to faithfully disciple and serve. Her discipleship ministry among the ladies and her expertise in the children's ministry at the church are areas of service where she excels.

Byron and Danielle Sayer have moved back to Alberta to be closer to family as Byron's sister-in-law developed terminal cancer. She passed away in October. They are also hoping that being closer to their hub of churches and contacts will allow them to raise more support and move into full-time ministry by the summer of 2017. Continue to pray that God would provide and give them the faith necessary to 'step off the cliff'.

The Native Christian gathering in Kamloops is planned for April 27-30, 2017

Pray that mature believers would emerge in the Kamloops Native Fellowship and that they would pursue godly living in all areas of their lives. Pray also that the youth Byron and Danielle have discipled would pursue growing understanding of following Christ.

Native Bible Centre

Ed and Glenna Houston continue to rework **Native Bible Centre** courses and they currently have 15 available online. Hardcopy sales of the courses have declined somewhat but online use is increasing. Interestingly one of the consistently large book orders comes from the Native church in Fairbanks AK.

One of Ed and Glenna's primary roles is staying in contact and encouraging those who are taking courses on their own. They are praying that the Lord would provide someone who can carry on this ministry once their health inhibits them.

Pray that these Bible study courses will be used towards the development 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 but are considering decreasing their official time commitment to ministry. Their focus continues to be on the small group of believers who gather weekly, the people who have been part of the Native church in the past, and the Camp Nookoowai ministry. The possibility of Greg and Linda Snell coming alongside Dan and Barb to carry some of the ongoing ministry load is being explored.

Josh and Joylynn Beutler are moving forward in discipling Blackfoot youth and deepening their understanding of Blackfoot worldview through implementing the Novel Approach method. Learning the Blackfoot language has become a relationship building tool as opposed to becoming fluent in the language.

Pray that the Kees' ministry focus and the Beutler's ministry focus would both produce disciples who become part of a reproducing 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. With the

blessing of InterAct leaders Roy is on the verge of beginning distance education toward a MA in Biblical Counselling.

Roy continues in relationship with Blackfoot people of all ages. In several relationships he has become a trusted friend and for some of the believers and spiritual elders Roy is a great source of encouragement and fellowship.

Pray that Roy would have wisdom in balancing his relationships and ministry responsibilities with appropriate prioritizing of his family and his desire to learn and grow as a discipler/counsellor. Pray for team-mates who can serve alongside him.

Eden Valley, AB (Stoney)

Joel and Amanda Sewell are engaging in some relationships at Eden Valley as Joel prepares to teach the story of Scripture chronologically in a way that should bring clearer understanding of the Gospel message. Joel and Amanda continue to struggle with the reality that there are no team-mates on the horizon. However, a door has been cracked open for connection in a partnership between Northern Canada Evangelical Mission and New Tribes Mission that may produce some team-mates.

Joel continues to do a stellar job of coaching Beutlers and Chins. His input as someone who has ‘been there,done that’ is invaluable.

Pray that the Lord would provide the resources that Joel and Amanda need to move ahead in the ministry ... and that, whether those resources are new team-mates or some other solution that we cannot see, that they would be able to rest in the confidence that God is sovereign over it all.

Morley, AB (Stoney)

Boris and Mirka Vyskocil continue to focus on relational ministry. The initial follow-up Bible studies from a Will Graham crusade have turned into long term relationships and further Bible study.

Pray that Boris and Mirka would have discernment as they go further in relationship and see some of the deeper needs and spiritual warfare that they know need to be addressed in order for spiritual growth to continue.

Calgary, AB (urban Native)

Amy Flater’s ministry among aboriginal youth in Calgary is growing. She continues to move forward with the **Anchored Warriors** ministry network and leading a team of volunteers in youth ministry at Eden Valley but she is also spending a significant amount of time working with girls in the city. Some of those relationships can be very demanding so she needs wisdom to know what to respond to and what to let go of.

Amy and Brandon have been unsettled in their future plans for a number of months. Pray that they would know the Lord’s direction and be able to put roots down in the place that He knows is best.

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 intern from Millar College has been

mentored by one of the Cree ladies in the church and this has been a very positive experience for everyone. Dick and Ruth were gone visiting supporters and family for a couple months and the church carried on with services and Bible studies in their absence ... a good sign of growing health.

Please join Dick and Ruth in praying that the believers in Loon Lake would continue to grow in seeing the next generation follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

North Battleford, SK (Cree)

Paul and Joanne Janzen seem to be past the health concerns that were significantly limiting Joanne's ministry involvement. They are continuing in coaching some of the younger missionaries serving in InterAct Canada's Native ministries. Paul and Joanne also continue as mentors and advisors in Tyrone Ginger Bird's lives as well as other Native people in the area.

Kelsey Comley (Quibell) continues in her discipleship ministry with teen girls.

The partnership between Territorial Drive Alliance Church and InterAct continues to be a blessing for Native ministry in both the city and at the Moosimin reserve where Tyrone is developing others who are assisting in shepherding the church.

Pray that God will continue to bless this ministry partnership and grow His church. Pray that God would use the Janzens, Comleys, Birds, Klippensteins and others from the Moosimin and Alliance churches to see the disciples multiply and other churches being established.

Thompson, MB (Cree)

Thompson is the hub of the Serving And Leadership Training (SALT) discipleship ministries. **Cohle and Rebecca Bergen** are now the senior missionaries in Thompson. Cohle is now the team leader for the SALT ministries and has oversight for Midway Bible Camp as well.

Pray for Cohle's development as a leader. He has some natural ability and a heart to serve.

Travis Harms continues to develop a discipleship ministry called **Midway Builders**. Using his background in construction, he obtains short term jobs (roofing, building sheds, small renovations, etc) and hires young Native men to do the jobs with him. In the process of developing some valuable life skills there are conversations about spiritual things.

Pray that God will continue to bless Travis and his input into the lives of these young men. Pray that the Lord will continue to provide jobs at the right times and that these young men would see the joy there can be in work and that their spiritual hunger would grow.

Thomas and Nicole Olney are the latest addition to the team in northern Manitoba. SEND North was not able to provide them with an aviation centric ministry so they have transferred to InterAct. Thomas will be seeking a full-time flying job in northern Manitoba and they will serve as volunteers with the ministries where they can. Thomas hopes to see some doors open in some of the northern communities as he gets to know people through the aviation industry.

Pray that the Olneys would be able to transition well, get settled, and begin to see the open doors for ministry that God facilitates. Pray for a job that will provide them with income and time to get invested in people's lives.

Nelson House, MB (Cree)

Daniel Maresty oversees the SALT ministries at Nelson House, which happens to be a community he lived in for a few years as child. He leads a team that goes out for a weekly Bible study and youth activities. As well he is connected to the youth and young adults throughout the week via social media people travelling back and forth between Thompson and Nelson House. There is also a church in southern Manitoba that sends a team up to Nelson House weekly to lead a Sunday School program for youth and adults.

Pray that God will continue to use Daniel and others to bring believers to maturity and establish His church in Nelson House. Pray also that the Lord would provide the financial support that Daniel needs to continue in ministry.

Split Lake, MB (Cree)

Kyla Plett oversees the SALT ministries at Split Lake. She facilitates a team that goes out for a weekly Bible study and youth activities. Kyla also has several young ladies from Thompson that she is discipling as well. Thompson is the hub for northern Manitoba so she connects with youth from Split Lake when they are in town as well. There is also a church team that goes up to Split Lake a couple times a month to lead a Sunday School program for youth and adults.

Pray that God will continue to use Kyla and others to clearly present the Gospel and facilitate spiritual growth. Pray that if there is a way for a ministry team to live long term in this community that God would open the door.

York Landing, MB (Cree)

Morgan Serger (and Krista), the former Mid-Way general director has moved with his family to York Landing, a remote ice road/ferry/air access community. Morgan accepted a full-time teaching position as his way into the community. He and Krista will be getting to know the handful of believers there and coming alongside them in fellowship and reaching out to the community.

Pray that Morgan and his family would be well accepted by the community and their presence would be the catalyst for a gathering of believers to start fellowshiping regularly. Pray for the transitions their whole family will be working through as they get settled in this community.

Midway Bible Camp

Cohle and Rebecca Bergen, oversee this ministry to youth from northern Manitoba communities. Over 50% of the staff come from the north and most of those are part of the year-round SALT discipleship ministries in the communities. The camp has an application into the federal government for a parcel of crown land as a future camp ministry site. It has been over two years and they have not had any response to their request. Currently the camp is located on property owned by a mining company and the company has given notice that they will need access to the land within the next 8 years.

Pray that the discipleship impact of this camp will keep growing. Pray for the Lord's provision of a suitable piece of property either through a government approval of the current proposal or in some other way.

East Indian Ministries

Surrey, BC (Punjabi)

Sam and Judy Paras continue outreach, discipleship, and gathering of believers. The face of the satsung (fellowship gathering) has changed as the Southern Baptist missionary has moved to a different location to focus on a different strategy for church planting. There are some good things developing but the transition has not been easy.

Sam and Judy have dealt with a lot of death this past year ... both personally and in ministry. Judy's step-dad passed away and a Punjabi believer committed suicide. The suicide has been particularly difficult because there are other believers in the family and community who are grieving. As well there are non-believers family members who are potentially looking askance at Christianity as a result of this.

Pray for the satsung that now meets in Paras' home church. Pray that this gathering will facilitate spiritual growth and outreach in the Punjabi community

Abbotsford, BC (Punjabi)

John and Tracey Tobin are experiencing God's work in their marriage as they deal with a sometimes bumpy relationship with one of their sons. Their marriage seems to be getting stronger through this time.

John is excited about the growing unity among some of the Punjabi Christian leaders in the area. The church has weathered the leadership transition and now may be poised for greater outreach and growth as partnership with other Punjabi ministry looks more realistic.

Pray for continued health in John and Tracey's marriage and for God's work in their son's lives. Pray also that God will give John wisdom as he continues to work with Punjabi men who are struggling with drug and alcohol addiction.

Winnipeg, MB (Punjabi)

Akmal and Sarah Erastus continue with ministry to Sikhs and Muslims. They have bought a house and live in the middle of a high density Punjabi neighbourhood. Due to low support Akmal is working a full-time night job and continuing with ministry as much as possible. They now have a fellowship gathering with a few Punjabi believers and are inviting other Sikh Punjabis into that emerging community.

Pray for Akmal and Sarah's support needs to be met. Pray also that Akmal will have wisdom as he seeks to find sponsors for some persecuted Pakistani believers, some of whom have the potential to become ministry team-mates upon arrival in Canada.

Muslim Ministries

Fayez and Vivian Narooz have seen one family of Syrian refugees become believers and others are hearing the Gospel. They have also had to relocate the True Love Arabic church which is causing the members to think through church finances and responsibilities. Fayez

continues to develop theological curriculum in Arabic and teach a Master's program in Jordan.

Praise and continued prayer for Syrian refugees coming to Christ. Pray also for Fayez and Vivian's financial needs to be met.

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. Unfortunately the Hit family decided to take on a pastorate rather than joining the Muslim ministry team.

Pray that the Lord would provide the Nelsons with team-mates for their ministry in Calgary.

Administration

Wes and Carol Schellenberg and **Greg and Laura Hamilton** continue to do an amazing job at keeping the necessary organizational pieces of administration and human resources functioning. Both of them are also picking up supervision roles with a few of the field missionaries.

Thank the Lord for these servants whom God has gifted for the work they do. Pray for an increase in Greg's financial support.

Barbi Gonzales continues to serve as a prayer warrior. She is very diligent to spend hours in prayer every day, which is a huge encouragement to our missionaries.

Pray that Barbi's health will allow her to continue in this ministry for as long as the Lord wills it.

Leila Cross continues to have increasing pain from her cancer and therefore is on increasing amounts of pain control medication. She is no longer able to do much in the ministry responsibilities of prayer and encouragement through sending cards. Local missionaries seek to visit and help when they can.

Pray for the Lord's sustaining peace as Leila goes through this time in her life.