

Canada Field Report  
Combined Board Meeting, Feb 1-3, 2018  
Submitted by Dan Mayerle

Last fall the Field Leadership Team (FLT) identified three strategic areas that the organization should be developing and three ongoing responsibilities that need to continue for InterAct to be healthy, growing organization. Besides doing the everyday work of moving ministry forward the Canada Leadership Team (CLT) is working to grow in the three strategic anchors the FLT laid out for the organization. In this report I will spotlight some developments in the ongoing responsibilities as well as in the three strategic anchors. Below that is a few lines of update on each Canada field staff that you can refer to as you pray.

**Ongoing Responsibilities**

**Administration**

Wes continues to do an admirable job of juggling the sometimes competing demands of satisfying the legalities of InterAct Canada's oversight bodies (CRA, insurance, etc.) while keeping his primary focus on moving ministry forward and serving the missionaries.

**Supervision**

With Dale's encouragement, I continue to identify and develop leaders who can carry part of the ministry supervision responsibility, now or sometime in the future. At this time, there are four of us (Cohle Bergen, Greg Hamilton, Wes Schellenberg, and myself) sharing that responsibility with another (Roy Thiessen) taking up the baton soon. The goal is that each missionary, together with their supervisor, will develop an Annual Ministry Plan consisting of things they are praying for and goals they are working toward. The supervisor maintains monthly contact to encourage, discuss ministry, hear about progress, and pray together.

**Disciple Making**

Disciple making and church planting go hand in hand. Multiple conversations around disciple making are going on among InterAct missionaries. I very much believe that those who are discipled well will gather as a church.

Worldview discovery continues to be a focus for some of our missionaries. Joel Sewell continues to be mentored by Mike Matthews in the Novel Approach strategy and, in turn, Joel is applying that in his ministry context of Eden Valley as well as coaching a few others who are applying it in their ministry context. Understanding the core assumptions that people in a community are living with is hugely important for pre- and post-evangelism discipleship. The Thompson team, after significant input, has decided that with all the ministry efforts they already have going they will not implement the Novel Approach there.

The CLT is engaged in a discussion about disciple making. They are also developing a plan for engaging the rest of the Canadian missionaries in that disciple making discussion. In every context where InterAct Canada missionaries serve, people are being discipled. My

prayer is that these discussions will help us all to keep pursuing disciple making with greater thoughtfulness, intentionality and prayer.

## **Strategic Anchors**

### **Mobilization**

Since mobilizing new missionaries is a primary focus for this year we have been talking about it more on the Canada field as well. Jim Hamilton is going to be decreasing the time he spends recruiting at schools in the U.S. He will continue to do some recruiting for all the fields at Canadian schools that are closer to home. As well, Jim plans to step back from giving leadership to *EnGage!* Canada in the next couple years. Dale and Debbie Kenyon (InterAct missionaries on-loan to SIM Bolivia) have agreed to participate in the 2018 Canada *EnGage!* program with the possibility of them returning to North America and to service with InterAct in 2019 to do recruitment for InterAct and to give leadership to *EnGage!* Canada.

### **A Caring Community**

A caring community is something the next generation of missionaries is looking for. Developing a caring community among a group of quasi-independent missionaries spread across four provinces requires intentional effort. Supervisors who do more than just check-up on ministry; coaches who come alongside and talk about family and personal life; a community that shares and prays for each other; retreats and conferences designed to encourage and equip. Those are all things we are doing to build a caring community in InterAct. In today's world of social media there are multiple ways to stay connected and it is good that InterAct missionaries are using them. People also need face time with others to live out the one anothers of Scripture. We continue to pray about the need for someone to wear the mantle of member care on the Canada field and in the whole organization.

### **A Learning Community**

Continuing education and training is needed in InterAct Canada. The CLT is talking about how to offer quality training that will equip and keep our missionaries moving forward in effectiveness. One solution we plan to research is online training ... online training that includes an interactive community component so that people can learn from each other as well. Our desire is to offer three training opportunities to InterAct staff each year. One of those venues would likely be the annual staff conference.

For the 2018 staff conference we are planning in-house, interactive training sessions focused on relational disciple making.

## **Notable in 2017**

*EnGage!* 2017 had seven participants ... four in a Native community and three in an ESL internship in Winnipeg. We are praying for 8 *EnGage!* participants in 2018.

A Punjabi gathering of believers was initiated in Winnipeg. Over a dozen Sikh and Hindu background people have confessed belief that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Akmal and Sarah have their hands full discipling and, in His providence, God has provided a few people who are coming alongside to help out. Currently there are about 30 people

gathering every Sunday evening to worship, fellowship and learn. Akmal and his 'Timothy' are praying for 50 new believers in the first six months of the church.

The urban ministry team, now called Urban Fire, continues to have monthly virtual meetings to lay ministry foundations. They continue to lay foundations for a successful launch. Four more of the seven anticipated team members have been accepted as InterAct members and are raising support.

I said this last year and I will say it again ... 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 despite significant heart health issues for Anne. They continue to faithfully lead Bible studies and there is a younger couple who help with the children's ministry.

*Pray that the Lord would provide His choice of workers to pick up the ministry and that disciples would emerge and grow to maturity. Pray for John as he continues to chair a board focused on re-starting a camp ministry for youth in the area.*

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

**Andy and Jesi Chinn** have become part of the Anahim Lake community. They are encouraged that their 'man of peace' has recently attended a Bible study with his wife and elderly mother. In the midst of working alongside a few believers, the Chinns 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 be encouraged and see God's work through them. Pray that they would understand how to clearly communicate the gospel story in a way that deeply connects with the hearts of the people. Praise for their newly discovered pregnancy and pray that this baby would be born healthy and strong.*

### **Redstone, BC (Chilcotin)**

**Don and Kim Gillaspie** continue to be very active in community life at Redstone. Don continues to have opportunities to serve in the community and share the gospel via weddings, funerals and community functions.

*Pray that God will continue to open doors to relationship with people who are thirsting for relationship with the Lord. Praise for a new relationship with a couple who they are meeting with weekly.*

### **Kamloops, BC. (Urban Native)**

**Valen and Carol Straley** continue to faithfully serve in the development of the First Nation church. They have seen some encouraging developments with people from the church stepping up to lead while they were away for a family illness and funeral.

*Pray that 'T' would take a consistent stand for the Lord, overcome his struggles, and not look back.*

**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.

*Praise that Dottie continues to have health and energy to serve in discipling ladies and teaching children.*

**Byron and Danielle Sayer** have seen their support level come up to 65%. They want to move back to Kamloops and do ministry full-time. It would be a real boost to the

Kamloops church to have the Sayer family there. The Native Christian gathering in Kamloops is planned for April 27-30, 2017.

*Pray that the Sayer's support would come in and that their house in Carstairs, AB would sell so they can make a complete move and settle into youth ministry in Kamloops*

### **Native Bible Centre**

**Ed and Glenna Houston** continue to stay in contact and encourage those who are taking **Native Bible Centre** courses. They are praying that the Lord would provide someone who can carry on this ministry. Ed has had significant health struggles this year but they continue to press on in the ministry.

*Pray for a missionary family that is seeking the Lord's direction for whether they should become part of the NBC ministry.*

### **Lethbridge, AB (Blood Tribe/Blackfoot)**

**Dan and Barb Kees** are going on SpA this spring to visit their churches and individual supporters for what may be the last time. They are planning to fully retire in the fall. They will continue as ministry volunteers in the relationships they have built over the years and in the Camp Nookoowai ministry.

*Pray that the Lord would bless Dan and Barb's visits with faithful supporters and that they would be blessed with seeing fruit from their ministry efforts in Lethbridge.*

**Josh and Joylynn Beutler** are moving forward in discipling Blackfoot youth and deepening their understanding of Blackfoot worldview through implementing the Novel Approach method.

*Pray that the Lord would give wisdom to Josh as he teaches the Word to Blackfoot youth and that the day would come when this youth group would become a church.*

### **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. Roy has begun a MA in Biblical Counselling and is dreaming about how to use what he is learning in the community.

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 to know how to use what he is learning as a discipler/counsellor with the people in his community. Pray for his family as he juggles ministry, school and family life.*

### **Eden Valley, AB (Stoney)**

**Joel and Amanda Sewell** continue to engage in relationships at Eden Valley and live and speak out their relationship with the Lord. Joel continues to prepare to teach the story of Scripture chronologically in a way that should bring clearer understanding of the gospel message. The Lord has provided some great 'helpers' but no on-site teammates.

Joel continues to do a great job of coaching Beutlers and Chinns. His input as someone who is a few steps ahead in the Novel Approach process is invaluable.

*Pray that the Lord's will would be done regarding teammates. Pray also that the Lord would give Joel wisdom as he determines the best option (place and style) for teaching; that He would provide the resources that Joel and Amanda need to move ahead in the ministry ... and that, whether those resources are new teammates 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 and regular participation in church services at Morley.

*Pray that Boris and Mirka would have wisdom as they lead Bible studies and seek to encourage growing commitment to following Jesus.*

#### **Calgary, AB (urban Native)**

**Amy Flater** had a baby girl in November (her and Brandon's first child) and Amy is currently on a year of maternity leave. The pool of ministry volunteers, organized by Stefan Dick, continue the monthly youth ministry events at Eden Valley. She continues to keep in touch with several of the aboriginal youth she is working with in Calgary in the midst of adjustments to being a mom.

*Amy and Brandon are more settled in Calgary than they ever have been. Pray for their adjustment to being parents and that they would have wisdom to know how Amy should move ahead with ministry in the future.*

**Stefan Dick**, has virtually completed his support raising. He is connecting with people and businesses in Calgary to build a network for the **Urban Fire** ministry. He is also giving leadership to the monthly meetings and conversations with the rest of the Urban Fire team who are raising support or will soon be raising support.

*Pray that Stefan will have wisdom to know how to best prepare for the launch of Urban Fire. Also pray that some of others would raise their support quickly and get settled in Calgary.*

#### **Loon Lake, SK (Cree)**

**Dick and Ruth Browning** continue to faithfully serve and encourage the local believers to serve. Pray that the church community would continue to grow and be a witness.

*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** are facing more health challenges with Paul's Parkinson diagnosis this past fall. They continue to coach some of InterAct's younger missionaries and are planning and implementing the spring retreat. Paul and Joanne also continue as

mentors and advisors in Tyrone and Ginger Bird's lives as well as other Native people in the area. Tyrone is now on staff at Territorial Drive Alliance Church (TDAC).

**Kelsey Comley** had a baby girl in October (her and Ben's first child) so she has been on maternity leave since then. She is planning to get back into ministry this month with the teen girls she has been discipling for a few years now.

*Praise the Lord for the ministry partnership between TDAC and InterAct. Pray for wisdom as Tyrone enters full-time ministry. Pray that the church at Moosimin would be a growing influence in that community and that other churches would be 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 figuring out how God is using him as a leader.

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

**Travis Harms** has struggled with the effects of multiple concussions since he was re-injured at camp this past summer. He is finally back in Thompson and working with his discipleship ministry through **Midway Builders**.

*Pray that God would complete the healing of Travis' concussion and protect him. Also pray that the young men he was training, working with and discipling will have a deep desire to grow spiritually.*

**Thomas and Nicole Olney** have transitioned well to Thompson. They are doing a good job of fitting ministry in around Thomas' work as a pilot, flying into the communities in the north.

*Praise for a good transition and the provision of a flying job for Thomas. Pray that his time in other communities would open doors for relationship and ministry in these communities. Pray that their involvement in the ministry team would continue to enhance the ministry that is moving forward.*

### **Nelson House, MB (Cree)**

**Daniel Maresty** became a student again this fall at the University College of the North in Thompson. This has limited his capacity to do ministry but he continues to oversee the SALT ministries at Nelson House. He hopes to get an education degree and eventually live and teach in Nelson House.

*Pray that God will continue to work in and through Daniel and that He would strengthen Daniel to be a clear witness on the university campus as well as in the SALT ministry at Nelson House.*

### **Split Lake, MB (Cree)**

**Kyla Plett** continues to oversee the SALT ministries at Split Lake and in Thompson. Kyla also has several young ladies from Thompson that she is discipling.

*Pray that God will continue to use Kyla as she speaks truth into the lives of youth. Pray that if there is a way for a ministry team to live long term in Split Lake that God would open the door.*

### **York Landing, MB (Cree)**

**Morgan and Krista Serger** continue to serve the isolated community of York Landing despite health issues from previous concussions. Morgan accepted the role of principal at the community school when approached by band leadership and has served as a catalyst to a weekly community church service.

*Pray that Morgan and his family would have health and strength to be a bright light in York Landing. Pray for Krista and their four pre-school children as life is not always easy in this community.*

### **Midway Bible Camp**

**Cohle and Rebecca Bergen**, oversee this ministry among youth in northern Manitoba communities. Cohle is developing in his leadership of this camp ministry. He would love to have a program director to work alongside him this coming summer. A discussion with some Native people has been initiated about setting up the camp on their land allotment.

*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 government approval of the current proposal or possibly through members of the First Nation community.*

### **East Indian Ministries**

#### **Surrey, BC (Punjabi)**

**Sam and Judy Paras** continue outreach, discipleship, and the satsung (fellowship gathering). The satsung is now a ministry partner with Paras' home church and that blending of two worlds has been a great blessing.

*Sam and Judy have many relationships in the Punjabi community. Pray that the Spirit of the Lord would open hearts to the gospel that has been proclaimed and lived through Sam and Judy.*

#### **Abbotsford, BC (Punjabi)**

**John and Tracey Tobin** have had some struggles this past year. It appears that the doctors have finally found a balance of meds that will work for John and allow him to fully engage in ministry among addicted Punjabi men and on the Punjabi church leadership team. Their marriage relationship seems to be stabilizing as well.

*Pray for John and Tracey as they meet with a counsellor for a two and half day intensive session. 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** are partnering with the C2C – a primarily Mennonite church planting effort in Canada – and that means their support has improved. With the birth of the Punjabi church Akmal is very busy evangelizing, discipling new believers and developing a Punjabi church.



*Pray for Akmal and Sarah's support needs to be fully met. Pray also that Akmal will have wisdom as he sponsors a few Pakistani believers, some of whom have the potential to become ministry teammates upon arrival in Canada.*

### **Muslim Ministries**

**Fayez and Vivian Narooz** continue to serve as spiritual leaders in the True Love Arabic Church. It burdens Fayez that there are over three small, struggling Arabic churches in Calgary who cannot seem to band together. Fayez continues to develop theological curriculum in Arabic and teach a Master's program in Jordan.

*Pray for Fayez's ministry to develop church leaders for the Arab world. Also pray their financial needs will be met as they get closer to retirement.*

**David and Marlene Nelson** face ongoing life adjustments as David's MS limits him more and more. However, their passion for reaching Muslim people with the gospel does not waver. David continues to pray for Muslim people and Marlene has no shortage of women who seek out her friendship and spiritual wisdom.

*Pray that the Lord would provide the Nelsons with teammates for their ministry in Calgary.*

### **Administration**

**Wes and Carol Schellenberg.** Wes is integral to keeping the necessary organizational pieces of administration functioning. He has also picked up a supervision role and is a great help in keeping us thinking about InterAct's role in Muslim ministry in western Canada.

*Thank the Lord for these servants whom God has gifted for the work they do. Pray for wisdom for Wes as he develops another administrative person in the office and gives oversight to the two missionary units we have working among Muslims.*

**Greg and Laura Hamilton.** Greg wears many hats ... too many probably ... as he looks after HR in Canada, coaches new missionaries raising support, heads up the mobilization task force, supervises five missionary units, and continues in the important role of assistant field director.

*Thank the Lord for Greg and Laura. Pray for wisdom and health for Greg as he carries many responsibilities and is a father to three teens.*

**Barbi Gonzales** continues to hold the banner of prayer high. She has identified a team of three other women and is seeking to pray regularly together with them over the phone for InterAct's ministries and staff.

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

**Jim and Becky Hamilton** continue to recruit and give leadership to *EnGage!* They are reducing their U.S. travel in order to focus on the Urban Fire team and do some recruiting closer to home in Canada.

*Pray for wisdom as they make this transition.*

**Dan and Deanna Woodard** continue to mentor and coach emerging leaders and develop training materials and workshops to promote ministry.

*Pray that Dan will have wisdom as he coaches and mentors emerging ministry leaders.*

*Pray that he will become a strong contributor in training InterAct staff.*

**Dale and Debbie Kenyon** are considering moving back to North America and serving as recruiters with InterAct again.

*Pray that God will direct their steps and that it will be clear to everyone what His plan is.*