

Canada Field Report
Combined Board Meeting, Feb 1-2, 2019
Submitted by Dan Mayerle

Good news or hard news first?

Let's start with the news that is hard to hear. In the last nine months four InterAct Canada staff units have resigned. That is unprecedented in my tenure as field director and in my predecessor's tenure as well.

Wes and Carol Schellenberg cited InterAct's use of biblical counselling training for equipping missionaries as the cause of their resignation. Both Woodards and Janzens sensed the Lord leading them on to other areas of ministry. Woodards have joined Action International and Janzens have not notified us of their future intentions (at the time of writing this report). Daniel Merasty's resignation came as his focus on university education overtook his ministry involvement.

Now the good news! I see the Canada field beginning to gain momentum towards clearer ministry strategies and better definitions of the ministry targets we are working towards. A couple areas contributing to this momentum are:

1. Greater alignment on the Canada Leadership Team (CLT) which means less time deliberating about ministry strategies and more time defining and implementing ministry strategies.

In the next year I plan to work with the CLT to develop a clearer picture of the core principles and elements for whole-life disciple making to define our focus and increase ministry intentionality. This will be passed on to the Canada field missionaries and, Lord willing, will result in greater effectiveness toward making reproducing disciples. Some of this momentum is connected to direction coming out of Dale's Field Leadership Team (FLT).

2. Another area contributing to the momentum are discussions about how to better collect information from our missionaries that will allow leadership to resource InterAct's ministries more effectively and give better and more complete reports about what God is doing.

Dale has been encouraging me to figure out ways to enhance intentionality among our missionaries and at the same time to do a better job of recording and reporting what God is doing in the places where InterAct works. This has led to a significant discussion about matrix, measuring, and the call to faithfulness no matter the results. There is significant discomfort with anything that could cause the missionary or the believers in the community to feel like they are being measured by results they don't control or being treated as statistics. The CLT is now moving down the road of developing community assessments completed by the supervisors

for the missionaries/ministries they oversee. These assessments will help to identify needed resources and give us a format to report on what God is doing where InterAct works.

Needless to say, it has been a stretching and challenging nine months. There are things that I would handle differently now because I have learned and grown through this part of the journey. I also have a greater trust that in God's sovereignty He will draw out good for everyone who is seeking to love Him and follow His call. I feel the loss of these co-workers and I do see God working for the good of InterAct as we come out the other side.

Administration

Obviously, Wes' transition out of the Administration Director role has left a big hole. Melanie Young is doing a good job and continues to grow in her understanding and capacity for handling the financial administration. The infrastructure that Wes put in place (i.e., monthly reporting spreadsheets) and the training he gave Melanie before he left has been a huge help. Greg Hamilton and I—mostly Greg—have also had to pick up a number of admin pieces since August 1. It has become clear that it is not in the best interest of either Melanie or InterAct Canada to let Melanie carry the breadth of admin oversight that Wes did. Thankfully Sally Cross is now in the office at least one day a week assisting Melanie and Greg. Sally is learning InterAct's admin processes and in time this will give us greater depth and another person who can fill gaps when necessary. With Greg's continued involvement I believe the Canada organization is coming through this transition well.

Supervision

The CLT is made up of five men; Roy Thiessen, Cohle Bergen, Greg Hamilton, Jim Hamilton, and myself. These men are each supervising a handful of missionaries. We have defined the supervisor's role and everyone is moving forward with the missionaries and ministries they oversee.

Disciple Making

Training and discussions around disciple making continue to be facilitated among InterAct missionaries. Those who are discipled well will gather as a church.

Worldview discovery through Mike Matthew's Novel Approach method is one of the prongs on the ministry fork that we are exposing all our new missionaries to. The application will look different from community to community but the principles of knowing how people see life so that the gospel, and becoming a disciple of Christ, can be shared in way that is relevant, meets needs, and changes people at the heart level is very important. Joel Sewell continues to be mentored by Mike 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.

We continue to encourage and facilitate training in biblical counselling as a tool for disciple making that leads to heart change. Two of our newer missionaries, Brooke Wortham and Jesse Stigile, will be taking the foundational track at a training conference in a couple weeks. Roy Thiessen, my wife Bev, and I will be taking advanced training at the same conference. Roy is also working towards a biblical counselling Master's degree. We

hope to see a few more missionaries get some training at a conference this coming summer.

Strategic Anchors

The CLT continues to focus on the three strategic anchors as set out by the FLT 18 months ago. Below is a summary of new developments on the Canada field in those three areas.

Mobilization

Jim Hamilton will have wrapped up his recruitment efforts in the USA by spring. InterAct has recruitment efforts in four Canadian colleges (Millar College - both SK and BC campuses, Peace River Bible Institute, and Prairie Bible College). With Jim able to give some of his time to recruitment in Canada we are planning to renew recruitment efforts at Nipawin Bible College and Steinbach Bible College. Dale and Debbie Kenyon have decided that leading *EnGage!* is not where the Lord is leading them, so Jim plans to continue giving leadership to *EnGage!* Canada for at least the next year.

A Caring Community

Bill and Lois Twichell were able to spend a couple weeks in southern Alberta connecting with missionaries in preparation for taking on the member care role among the Canada missionaries, Lord willing. Bill's health issues give us good reason to add that qualifier. With Paul and Joanne Janzen's resignation we no longer have people picking up the member care coaching role. There is some discussion as to whether that role is really needed given the style of pastoral supervision the CLT seeks to implement and given Twichell's plans to focus on member in Canada. Dale and Debbie Kenyon have expressed an interest in doing some member care coaching of younger missionaries once they move back to the continent from Bolivia later this year. That will be determined as we move forward.

A Learning Community

A few weeks ago 18 InterAct staff attended a Navigators training session on Discipling for Development (D4D). It was a helpful time of thinking through whole-life disciple making.

With George Walker joining InterAct as a training consultant I am planning for time together with George, Mike Matthews, Joel Sewell, Dale Smith, and the CLT to talk through a training plan with emphasis for the Canada field.

We continue to research online training options. The ideal online training will include the opportunity for InterAct staff to engage with each other about application in their specific ministry contexts.

Notable in 2018

EnGage! 2018 had two participants. This is the smallest *EnGage!* we have had since our first *EnGage!* in 2012. This team served in a First Nation community that borders Calgary where there have been very limited opportunities and they developed some significant relationships we can build on.

The Punjabi gathering of believers continues to see people coming to Christ. Akmal and Sarah have their hands full discipling. Akmal has continued to look for other mature believers to come alongside him and had some disappointments. Last summer he met a family who had recently arrived from India and they seem like they are willing to take on some of the pastoral responsibilities.

The Urban Fire team now has four team members and a volunteer couple in Calgary. Lord willing, Brooke Wortham will complete her support raising by next fall and the whole team will be on site. The team is currently looking for rental housing and participants who are ready to join the community.

Midway Bible Camp's land application was approved and a lease option has been given to InterAct by the Manitoba government. That application was submitted before Midway merged into InterAct. The CLT has wrestled with the concept of a four-season facility but they endorse the continued operation of the single-season camp ministry that is a platform for SALT, a year-round discipling ministry. A proposal for research and development of a business plan has been submitted for consideration.

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