

Canada Field Report
2022-01

Reflecting on this past year brings several emotions to the fore of my mind. *Exhaustion*, after another full year of pandemic restrictions and the reverberating effects on ministry opportunities there is a weariness that at times can be overwhelming. *Exuberance*, listening to our field staff and the ministry opportunities that they have participated in this past year gives me hope that God is still at work building His church. *Fear*, I have found that it is easy to fall into fear as the number of challenges continue to be set before us. *Faith*, I was reminded in my bible study this week that the opposite of fear is not boldness, but faith. Faith in our Lord and Savior! Faith in our God! So many of the stories that I have been reading in the Bible show how common fear is in response to circumstances. Adam, Eve, hid. Abraham and Sarah lied; the disciples were constantly reminded 'Do not be afraid!' I am learning that my response in the middle of uncertain circumstances needs to depend on the faithfulness of our God and to not turn in fear and my own resources.

Recent Highlights from the field:

- Interior BC: missionaries from both InterAct and NAIM joined together in hosting a fall 'Waymaker' youth weekend at Gardom Lake Bible Camp. Byron Sayer reported that it was the best attended weekend that he has attended. Youth from at least six different communities attended, even several came with the speaker from Alberta.
- Kamloops Fellowship: a young father who had been incarcerated had been witnessing and seeing some come to faith while in prison. Upon his return he was excited about being able to grow in his faith and become more involved in the local fellowship.
- Cardston/Kanai: this fall several from the local community as well as a pastor from the local church began to take more leadership in serving the local First Nations community. As Roy and Laura have now resigned from this ministry it is encouraging to see the ways in which the Lord was already beginning to prepare others to step into roles of encouragement.
- Restora (Calgary): a young man who had been working over several months with the Restora team has now stepped out and taken a position in the workplace. As First Nations young people look for ways of finding regular employment having the opportunity to grow in skills and develop a resume can go a long way in developing young people.

Personnel Changes:

- Andrew Chinn: Andy has moved out of the Mobilization director role and will be developing church ministry with Mayerles in Calgary. He will continue to assist in the mobilization pipeline.
- Travis Harms: Travis has been a part of the Thompson, MB team. He has served in S.A.L.T., Midway Bible Camp and Midway Builders. Travis has felt the need to move from a full-time ministry to a volunteer ministry. Travis will continue to use his skills in construction in the local community and be available to assist the Thompson team in discipling and camp ministry.
- Joel and Amanda Sewell: Joel and Amanda have served for thirteen years in Longview, Eden Valley, Alberta. Joel and Amanda have chosen to close this part of their ministry journey and have returned to the United States. They are planning to settle somewhere in eastern Montana.
- Roy and Laura Thiessen: Roy and Laura have served for twelve years in Cardston, Alberta. They have been involved with the Blackfoot people on the Kanai reservation. Roy and Laura have developed several networking relationships both on and off the reserve that have resulted in several being willing to step into roles of encouragement from the local community. Thiessens have returned to New Jersey to be closer to their extended family.

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Future Planning/Advances toward Field Vision

- Development of the leadership team. Given the changes in personnel this past six months has placed a significant load on the present leadership team. Dan Mayerle, Jim Hamilton and myself continue to carry the supervisory care of our team. I will need to focus on continuing to develop a new circle of leaders that is able to carry supervision responsibilities.
- Urban Fire – YFC partnership. This past fall, a number of factors have caused fractures to be exposed in the partnership between these ministries. InterAct Canada has been able to secure the necessary liability insurance to mitigate the risks of community living. While several encouraging advances have taken place, some of the key personnel in YFC have changed responsibilities and this has led to a weakening of the relationship between our teams. In the days to come there will need to be a reevaluation of moving this ministry program forward and developing a network of relational trust that leads to further participants in the community.
- Lucas Orner and Dan Mayerle are presently involved in leading a training seminar on ‘How People Change’ by P. D. Tripp. This is a follow up to the earlier training on ‘Instruments in the Redeemers hand’. While I don’t know of anyone attending Biblical Counseling training this year, there are a number of staff that continue to apply this training to their own lives and ministries.
- EnGage! 2022. It is our hope that we will be able to host a summer short term ministry this year. Our focus would be in northern Manitoba using the Midway Bible camp as an opportunity to have summer workers both in community and then in the context of camp as well.

Hot Spots/Concerns/Further Discussion

- Winnipeg Punjabi Fellowship: As the pandemic progressed, the church that has hosted the fellowship has taken the opportunity to complete several renovations on their building. It seems that during that time the fellowship was also asked to remove their belongings from the building and that the fellowship would not be able to access the building in the future. More recently the CLT has had a conversation with a local pastor and stakeholder. He has given us several connections to pursue. It would be our hope to approach the leadership of the Maples Church to secure the use of this building in the future for the gathering of this local fellowship. There are also a few relational pieces that are presenting challenges within the fellowship that need to be worked through delicately.
- Midway Bible Camp (Site 6): Over several years the present location of the camp has continued to deteriorate. The ability for camp to remain in the present location is also coming to an end, both the ownership by a mining corporation and a local First Nation land claim is putting the present site in jeopardy. While the CLT has pulled back from developing a multi-million year around site, there is still a need to secure a site for the future of this ministry. This past year the province has given InterAct a conditional agreement that would lead to a 21-year lease of 10 acres. The CLT sees the value of resubmitting a plan to the province that would develop the property with winterized access and should allow for the purchase of the land. It seems prudent in terms of fundraising and comparable development costs to be able to secure the land.
- Recruitment: Given the changes in personnel over the past year, the gap has further widened between our senior missionaries and the younger generation. As I continue to observe those who have served in long time ministry, I am concerned by the number of couples who are

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quickly reaching their seventies. This is a natural time when energy begins to wane, however effectiveness remains. Our challenge is in both developing and recruiting another generation of servants that will be committed to long-term service. It is going to be critical for the viability of continued ministry to see new people join and serve in Canada.

- Staff Conference August 15-19, Winnipeg, MB: You are invited! I just wanted to encourage each of you to consider joining the Canada staff conference. We would be delighted to host you and give you the opportunity to hear firsthand some of the stories of ministry. Please mark your calendar and be in touch with me if you would like to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Hamilton
Field Director Canada