

Canada Field Report
July 28, 2020

As with the rest of the world, the pandemic had a significant impact on InterAct's missionaries and ministries across western Canada. Six fellowships – First Nation and Punjabi – where InterAct missionaries are giving leadership and several Bible studies were all paused. Some of those gatherings went digital but general consensus said online was not as effective as face to face. Most of those gatherings have now resumed. EnGage! had to be cancelled due to border closures and all camping ministry has been paused (Nookoowai – southern Alberta) or gone online (Midway). Berge Lake is planning to do one week of day-camp in Lynn Lake, MB.

Likely the biggest impact on ministry has been relationships among the broader community where our missionaries serve. Many reserves are starting to open up but non band members are still not entirely welcome to be a regular part community life. A few reserves have had outbreaks and caution seems to be the order of the day. On the other hand, relationships with believers and non-believers that were strong before COVID seem to have become even stronger. Like everyone else, InterAct missionaries have utilized all the online and social media modes of communication they could to stay connected with people. One of the younger missionaries captured the benefits by saying 'I am having online conversations that I may not have had face to face'. In spite of all the digital opportunities activity definitely slowed down for a few months and everyone is anxious to get back into relational ministry in their community.

Training

Ministry slow down did give an opportunity for some online training facilitated by several InterAct staff. 30 to 40 InterAct staff from across all three fields participated in each of the four training sessions. Currently there is a weekly online leader's study of Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands - a foundations book for helping people change by Paul Tripp. 10 InterAct'ers from Canada and Alaska are attending. As well, some InterAct staff are meeting for a weekly online prayer meeting hosted by Joel Sewell and Bev Mayerle is hosting a monthly ladies prayer time.

Staff Updates

Andy and Jesi Chinn have moved from Anahim Lake, BC to Crossfield. As you can see in his report, Andy is doing a great job developing vision and structure as he picks up the oversight of mobilization for all of InterAct. Since EnGage! was cancelled Andy is having to wait until 2021 to walk through the process with Jim Hamilton and the EnGage! team before he takes over the leadership of that short-term ministry program.

Urban Fire Communities

The Urban Fire team is on the cusp of launching Restora Property Care. This business will focus on rental turn-over cleaning and light maintenance and be used as a discipleship platform. The higher COVID count in Calgary has paused the recruitment of Urban Fire program participants

almost completely. The team is doing what they can to mitigate the risks but it is likely the pandemic will hinder First Nation young adults from joining the ministry for a while.

Midway Bible Camp – Site 6 Proposal

A revised application has been submitted to the Manitoba Land office for one-season, rustic camp use on the “Site 6” land. There has been no response to date.

Berge Lake Bible Camp

Through fire insurance and local support the facility owned by the town of Lynn Lake, Manitoba is being rebuilt and will be available for the ministry of Berge Lake Bible Camp in 2021. The camp ministry volunteers have been busy replacing about \$10,000 of equipment that was stored year-round at the facility and was lost in the fire.

Midway Ministries – Station Road office relocation

In early March, field leadership and the Midway Team decided to pause any forward momentum on the purchase of the Station Road building until the fall (2020). Shortly after that the building was sold so this project is inactive unless the Lord opens up another opportunity.

Staff Conference

For the first time in my memory the annual gathering of the Canada field staff is not happening. The conference is going to be a two-day online event instead. The planning committee is trying to make it as relational and personal as possible.

Administration

Thankfully, the corona virus pandemic has had negligible impact on missionary support. The biggest impact comes from pausing camp programs and therefore those project donations and their accompanying assessment are diminished but that decrease is more than offset by the reduced expenses of an online conference and reduced leadership travel expense.

With the encouragement and help of some of the younger missionaries we are in the process of moving ministry expense reporting to an app and web-based platform that will make the process simpler for our staff. Outdated server software is being replaced by new back-up equipment and file syncing software. We are also now processing e-transfer donations and payments.

Leadership Development

Dale has started meeting weekly online with four of us from the Canada field. I and three younger guys are benefiting greatly from ‘iron sharpening iron’ conversations around the Word and a servant leadership book.

Time will tell if COVID-19 affects the ministries of InterAct going forward.

Dan Mayerle, Canada Field Director