

Canada Field Report
August 2021

"Greetings,

It has been some time since I have sent out an update and for that I apologize. It has been a very difficult year for all of us and a very difficult year to be a missionary. Pandemic restrictions have been a real motivational drain; it has been hard. I am thankful for the friendships I have here and thankful that I can see them again. After lockdown for so long people are longing for connection. It is a great window that we have to share the love of Christ!" [From a recent prayer letter of an InterActer]

I believe that quote sums up what most staff have faced for the past eighteen months. This has been a difficult year to be a missionary. The hopes and plans for so many normal human activities have been laid aside or greatly adjusted. However, I am praising the Lord for the innovation and creativity that so many staff have shown during this time. The use of technology, creative outdoor gatherings, 'on the doorstep' visits, our team has shown their ability to adapt and continue to build spiritually into the lives of people.

Highlights of the past six months

- Loon Lake, SK; The ongoing leadership by First Nations community members. Even during the response to a suicide within one of the fellowship families, the community is watching and asking questions of those who attend the fellowship.
- Kamloops, BC; The resurgence of the 'residential school' story has raised significant conversations across our FN communities. Those conversations are opportunities to live out a true reflection of the gospel. A statement has been crafted and released for use by InterAct Ministries.
- Winnipeg, MB; The building that the Punjabi Fellowship has been renting is no longer available to use. The impact of this is significant to this ministry. However, the outreach of Akmal Erastus across the world during this season has been significant using technology.

Personnel Changes:

- Josh and Joylynn Beutler; new baby daughter Florence.
- Two applicants; Amanda Brock; Julia Zentner.
- No deaths or resignations
- Brooke Wortham (Urban Fire) will arrive to the field August 4th, 2021

Future Planning/ Advances toward Field Vision

- It has been a significant transition as Dan Mayerle and I have switched roles. I am daily gaining perspective on more of the responsibilities that have been carried by the Field Director that are not always seen. In particular is the giving of oversight to the personnel and strategy of the field. I have carried more of the administrative functions and that is more of my strength. The challenge ahead for me is as ministry begins to unfold this fall is to put significant time into developing the CLT and a broader group of supervisors/leadership team.
- Field Vision: Biblical Counseling principles and Worldview level ministry principles are two areas that significantly inform the underlying foundations of our ministry. Out of those foundations come practices that help us to apply those principles. The communication piece that was completed last fall uses the tag line: Crossing Cultures – Discipling Relationally – Advancing

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Churches. I believe those define well the vision of the Canada Field to see disciplined gathered believers.

- Two pieces I would like to see the CLT implement is the discipling principles of Instruments in the Redeemers Hands (Paul D. Tripp) Love - Know – Speak – Do. As well as revisiting ‘The Facilitator Era’ by Dr. Tom Steffen.
- This past year Dan Mayerle and Roy Thiessen have led three sessions of a twelve-week study on Instruments in the Redeemers Hands.
- Seventeen members of Canada took part in the virtual training week of biblical counseling from Lafayette, IN. Roy T. led three sessions of reflection following the week of training.

Hot Spots/Concerns

- **Thiessen family;** Roy has had significant pressure from his family to return to the US Midwest. Aging parents, family relationships, and lack of significant community in the ministry setting have contributed to the tension. Roy and Laura’s two older daughters are both nearing the end of high school and will be making transitions in the next couple of years. Roy has also been working on his MA in biblical counseling and is doing significant work in applying it both local and corporate situations. Roy has been a significant voice at the Canada leadership team and is seen as one who could step into further realms of leadership. It would be a significant loss if the family were to leave ministry completely.
- **Urban Fire/Restora Property Care;** We are now two years into the start of the urban ministry team. The final member Brooke Wortham, of the original team is arriving in August. The reality of seeing young adult First Nations participants in the community living has been difficult to navigate. Several have started, but not lasted long, Covid is also a contributing factor. This spring the team was really struggling with determining the ‘next steps’. A conversation had begun last fall with a similar ministry in Lacombe, AB serving under the auspices of the local Youth for Christ chapter about group living ministry. Those relationships led to further conversation with the local YFC chapter in Calgary. YFC has a ministry that is focused on “at risk youth”, but do not have a group home that they can go use for further discipleship or leadership development opportunities. A proposal for MOU partnership between IMC and YFC has been developed that would look at the opportunity to include up to four youth in a youth leadership program.
- **Midway Bible Camp;** The camp team has made the difficult decision to run virtually again this summer. Current restrictions allow for day camps, however the proximity of the property does not make this type of program viable. **Site 6** development continues in a less intensive use of the new site. After consultation with the province a smaller land acquisition of 10 acres (vs 34) with a 21 year lease is to be approved. The team will pursue the land survey and continue the process of acquiring the lease permit.
- **EnGage!** Our short term summer ministry also was cancelled for a second summer. Many communities are still limiting access by outsiders. One of the key implications is the lack of recruitment that has come out of our summer ministries. Mobilization is going to be important in the next year to see a continuing stream of people joining the organization.