

CANADA FIELD REPORT

It is often said that “hindsight is twenty-twenty.” While it is certainly easier to look back and see where we have made advances and have had setbacks, there can also be questions of missed opportunities. Taking time to look back and consider what is behind and then to shift our focus to the year ahead is vitally important for our renewal and the intentionality that is necessary to move forward in confidence. One area that I have been challenged on recently is in proclaiming the name of the Lord intentionally.

Do we lift the name of the Lord boldly? Do we take time to declare His beauty and holiness? Are our prayers filled with awe and wonder at His name? In a world that is full of noise and distractions, we need to take opportunity to focus our praise with His name. The book of Psalms often declares the name of the Lord. Psalm 116: 12-14, “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I shall lift up the cup of my salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I shall pay my vow to the Lord, oh may it be in the presence of all His people.”

Reminding ourselves of the gospel is key to declaring the name of the Lord. Our salvation and a life that has been changed by it is a strong testimony of what the Lord desires to accomplish in the lives of others. My prayer is that our staff would boldly proclaim the name of the Lord in the days to come and that lives would be changed by that testimony.

Recent highlights from the field:

- Local leadership from within the Punjabi Fellowship in Abbotsford, BC has continued to take up leadership for the church. Younger leaders have taken on key areas of leadership, leading worship and directing the ministry of the church. John reports that while a recent inquiry into planting another church has been put on hold, the fellowship has been challenged with how it can continue to impact the community more broadly.
- Four students from Steinbach Bible College, who are all from communities in northern Manitoba, took part as interns for the summer. They each were given the opportunity to try leadership positions at Midway Bible Camp during the summer. Before they returned to school, they joined the Canada Field Conference and were a great encouragement to our staff. Pray for Tanika, Mark, Crystal and Charlene as they look for the Lord’s continued direction in their lives.
- Loon Lake: Several families have sent young people to Bible College this year. One at Nipiwini Bible College and Indian Bible college. The fellowship in Loon Lake continues to grow in its local leadership and seeing some struggling believers returning to a growing relationship with the Lord.
- Anchored Warriors has begun to be the name used by the youth ministries across the Canada field. There is growth in sharing resources and ministry practices across the various ministries. There is consideration being given to a partnership with a camp in southern Alberta and refocusing youth ministry in that area.
- The process of partnering with Native Youth Conference, held each year north of Edmonton is underway. We desire to bring resourcing in three key areas; finance, vulnerable sector training, and having an InterAct member be a part of the volunteer

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committee. The conference is focused on evangelism of the First Nations youth from across western Canada and has over one hundred young people attend each year.

Personnel Changes:

- Jim and Becky Hamilton retired at the end of 2023. Jim and Becky have served in ministry since 1969. They continue to be involved on a volunteer basis. Recently they returned for a week to visit the Native community where they served in the early 1970s. Becky wanted to follow up once more with the ladies who were a part of her teen girl's Bible study. They continue to in relationship with a fourth generation of people in the community.
- Glenna Houston retired at the end of 2023. Ed and Glenna served with InterAct since 1977. Glenna has carried on Native Bible Centre after the death of her husband Ed. Glenna is caring both for her mother in Oregon as well as a daughter facing health issues.
- David and Marlene Nelson, retired at the end of 2023. They have served with InterAct since 2001. David continues to deal with the progression of MS. Marlene has continued to build relationships among Arabic ladies and building relationships with second and third generations in those families. Marlene remains committed to volunteering in immigrant ministry in the Calgary area.
- Dale and Debbie Keyon retired at the end of January 2024. Kenyons have served with InterAct since 1981. They have relocated to Tennessee and have continued to be involved with relationships that they have built in communities in Canada, Bolivia, and their time in India.
- Chantel Whiteford has joined the office team in Canada. Chantel brings a ministry administrative background from over ten years of involvement with GoodSeed ministries. Chantel is assisting in a number of administrative/HR areas as well as learning several of the finance functions.
- Matthew Cunningham, served in an internship this past fall. Matt comes from North Battleford, SK. He has finished his degree from Eston College and is interested in working in a northern community with involvement with First Nations people. He was involved with Restora, office administration and youth ministry.

Future Planning/ Advances towards Field Vision

- Development of a leadership team: I continue to meet on an individual basis with several of our staff. Josh Beutler, Byron Sayer, Stefan Schulz, David Sebald and Morgan Serger. While we have not been meeting together, my focus for much of the fall was involved with developing staff in our office. There is still a great need to develop further

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leadership potential on the Canada Field and that is something that I am planning towards focusing on in the coming year.

- Disciples Making Disciples: We are beginning to see the development and involvement of First Nations people in ministry. Morgan Serger in particular is key in developing opportunities for direct ministry involvement from those who have been discipled over the years through the ministry of Midway Bible Camp. However, in several communities the involvement of the people group that was the focus of discipling to being disciplers is coming to fruition.
- Worldview Level (ANA): This is an area that has not seen any advances over the past year. Josh Beutler continues to be the main involvement of worldview type ministry in Canada. I recently had some conversation with the director of Ethnos Canada, who is beginning to focus their ministry in Canada in the far north. There could some opportunity to develop some partnering with them. It will still be a focus of training as new staff come to Canada.

Hot Spots/Concerns/Further Discussion

- Native Bible Centre: I have made a transition in leadership from Glenna Houston to Mark Dabrowski late last year. Native Bible Centre is at this point largely a free online resource for anyone who would like to use it.
- Ministry in Bolivia. Dale and Debbie Kenyon have retired from InterAct and will no longer be members. With the retirement of this couple, InterAct Canada should be able to refine our ministry area to falling fully within the North Pacific Crescent. I will be looking towards refining our statements on the T3010 to bring alignment into place with the government.
- Midway Bible Camp (Site 6): Early last spring it came to our attention that the land that InterAct had a development permit for was part of a land claim by a local First Nations band. By God's grace we had not invested in any development except for a survey of the property. Morgan Serger was able to submit a request and secure a land lease on a different sight for a 15-acre parcel that is south of Thompson. In December a local company was contracted to put in the road access for this property and land has been cleared to prepare for the spring and summer building season. The funds for the development of the new site continue to be raised. There is approximately \$280,000 that has been designated towards the new site. The office also just received a refund from the province of Manitoba of \$15,000 that we had spent towards the survey of the previous site. I praise the Lord for His work in keeping us from development at the previous site that could have broken our relationship with the local band. The new site is much more suitable for the development of a permanent site. For the sake of clarity, the land we are developing is under a 21-year lease, with an option to renew for a second 21 years. The way that Manitoba has laid out the process is to base the sale of the land on the completion of the work of the initial lease. The lease states that we will

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build a lodge and place tent platforms by the fall of 2025. There is risk involved in 'pouring cement' without ownership in hand. We continue to trust that the funds will be fully raised, and that the property will be in use for the summer of 2025.

- Staff Conference August 24-28, Red Deer, Alberta. We are bringing our location back to the center of the field and will continue to host the conference here. It would be wonderful to have any board members come and be a part of this time together.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Hamilton
Field Director Canada