

## Communications Director Report

February 2020

Over the decades of serving the Lord with InterAct Ministries, there has been a common theme in my life—stretching. It began as a summer missionary in the Chilcotin of British Columbia where Dale and I lived in a tent with our two-year-old daughter. God has gently pushed me into numerous roles and situations of stretching ever since. For six months now, I have been on another learning journey as *temporary* director of the communications department.

When Thomas Slawson left InterAct to pastor a church, he gave me a crash course in the publications aspect of communications. With Erin Bruzda as writer and Bryan McClelland as layout designer, we have managed to keep the printed and emailed publications afloat. That includes four InterACTIONS this year (stories of ministries), monthly InterCessor (prayer guide), overseeing two appeal letters for the year, brochures and printed material for mobilization and individual missionaries. Thomas used his many skills to develop the public and private website, bringing us up to date on our methods, adding videos and linking us to public media. I don't have the skills nor the time to jump into that venue. Jerry has taken on website maintenance so we are functioning for now. It won't be long till we will see a dating of the material and will need someone with creative capabilities in that area.

Though there are many things I can't do as a communications director, what I bring to the role is an understanding of all the fields, passion for the people we seek to reach and an awareness of the core values of InterAct Ministries. Gary Brumbelow, who has a degree in communications, has graciously spent time coaching me in ways to move ahead with the skills I have. His advice confirmed my inclination to spend more time passing on the values we hope to communicate than trying to learn a whole set of skills. In light of that, and with Dale's encouragement, I am trying to set up the department with guidelines that should prepare the way for a *real* communications director. I am discovering areas that need some tweaking and systems that could be streamlined before we pass them on to new staff. This is a role that serves all the fields and as such requires good communication with the field directors and mobilization staff. If that relationship is strengthened it will make be a plus for future staff.

I am praying diligently for a replacement (nothing like desperation to increase one's prayer life). A supported missionary would seem to be the ideal choice but there are none in sight with the required skills. In the meantime, I plan to contact Christian colleges with communications departments to see if we can get a graduate for a one-year paid internship.

My favorite role in InterAct is assisting Dale and filling in holes for him. He is operating without the level of support I usually give. Were I not serving as communications director, he would have far more to oversee so it's a fair trade off. I am not sure how long I can juggle the added responsibilities, but I am thankful for the stretching opportunity to learn about the inner workings of communications. When God provides the person to take over, I will have some basics to offer in training and passing on the heart of InterAct's ministry.

Carol Smith