

InterAct Ministries
Executive Director's Report to the Board
February, 2012

Two years have come and gone since I agreed to step into the role of executive director for InterAct Ministries. To say it has been a very full two years would be an understatement. To say we have provided a stable platform for ongoing ministry by a host of faithful missionaries would be realistic. My skills to lead an organization with this level of diversity were embryonic at the outset. Though I am honest enough to admit that I still have a lot of learning and growing ahead of me, I am encouraged to see development in my understanding and ability to perform my mandated duties. I trust that one of the strengths I bring is my collaborative style of leadership. It focuses on relationship and influence, which takes longer to build than a more directive style, but in the past I have seen it reap very positive returns. I remember almost every day that, like a quarterback on a football team, I am only effective when surrounded by an effective team. InterAct Ministries has fielded a very competent and committed team with whom I feel privileged to serve.

One of my great encouragements has been to see a praying organization become an even stronger praying organization. One of my challenges to the executive leadership team as well as to the fields has been to prioritize **Prayer, Partnerships** (seeking synergistic relationships with like-minded churches and ministries), **People** (mobilization), **Public Presence** (telling what God is doing through InterAct) and **Perspective** (recognizing and functioning appropriately in the new era of missions – facilitating).¹ Although the latter “four P’s” have moved forward at varying rates across the fields and offices, the “P” that has moved forward the most consistently has been the “P” of prayer. A praying organization is increasingly finding ways to cry out to God for His favor and blessing for accomplishment of His calling in the North Pacific Crescent. I am confident that He is honored by this growing intentionality to focus on prayer!

Partnerships continue to mark the *modus operandi* of our Russia field. Everything Thomas Slawson and his team accomplish is in partnership with national churches and organizations. Dan Mayerle and the Canada field are growing in partnerships with groups such as Anchored Warriors, Worldview Resource Group, Northern Canada Evangelical Mission and others. As a natural networker, Dan is committed to seeking and interfacing with any like-minded group in western Canada. David Joseph has scheduled an Alaska Partnering Summit at Victory Bible Camp for the weekend of April 20-22, 2012. This gathering has the potential to develop partnering relationships with a host of other churches and ministries who share the same heart to reach Native Alaska.

The **People** component of the “five P’s” continues to move forward under the leadership of Jerry Crosby. Approximately 10 Christian colleges are receiving regular visits from various staff members including: Jerry Crosby, Jim Hamilton, Dan Mayerle, Thomas Slawson, June Temple and myself. As we continue to invest time in students at these schools I am confident we will see an increasing number of them sense God’s call to join us in ministry to the North Pacific Crescent.

¹ The PowerPoint of the “Five Ps” given at the August board meeting can be found on the InterAct member’s website.

Another of the “five P’s” is **Public Presence**. Telling the story of God’s working through InterAct across the North Pacific Crescent brings a host of benefit to InterAct – while I trust also bringing glory to Him. Being the “face of the mission” is a central part of my job description. Included in this would be donor development, mobilization and communication with the public. It is no great surprise that these functions are not receiving the level of attention I desire. This is not meant to be apologetic or self-abasing. Rather, I see more time becoming available to the more public roles as I personally grow into the job and develop structures around me that are compatible with my leadership style.

As we let people know of the movement of the gospel in our arena of responsibility, I am confident we are triggering enhanced prayer, a burden to participate through giving, as well as providing exposure to needy fields that still need workers. In this past year I have taken opportunities to connect with churches and individuals in Alaska, Canada and continental U.S. about InterAct. I will be focusing a greater amount of time and energy on **Public Presence** in the months ahead.

With the loss of Valerie Brumbelow on our home office staff, we lost a very effective editor of our official InterAct organ, “InterACTION.” This tool has been a great asset in communicating our story. To replace our previous eight page glossy mailer, Roy Martin has put together a new format for InterACTION, a monthly, one page, two-sided insert for all our mailings. Using this shorter, “tighter” communication tool allows us to have our story in people’s hands on a monthly basis.

One change that is happening in the arena of **Public Presence** is the writer of the appeal letters. Over the course of the last two years, we have not seen a great return on our efforts in this area, though economic factors may be affecting this outcome. In an attempt to remedy this situation I have assigned Roy to write these critical letters for the next year. He brings many years of development experience to this assignment.

The **Perspective** element is tied closely to **Partnering**. This “perspective” is a grid through which we continue to view the world of missions. Rather than seeing ourselves only in the pioneer mode we seek to see ourselves looking for indigenous/Native/national partners who are ready to do ministry or are already doing ministry. Increasingly, our role is to come alongside their efforts and seek to help them succeed. Each of our field directors is looking through this grid and finding many new places to serve the emerging/emerged leaders. Pretty exciting stuff.

Evaluating the level of travel that comprises my life is important. Travel, simply for the sake of travel, is expensive, exhausting and ineffective. It means a somewhat divided life – divided between Alberta, Oregon, Alaska and various other places. Let me give you a glimpse. Of the 130 work days since our last meeting I have been on the road, on InterAct executive director business, for 95 of those days. There was other travel - this only includes travel specifically to support my InterAct position. While this may not be untenable, it does cause one to examine whether or not it is efficient.

In order to remain sustainable, Carol and I have endeavored to build in time away from work. In addition to taking time for rest and relaxation, we are becoming more intentional about building in time for reading, prayer and reflection. In December this came in the form of a week away at Fairmont Hot Springs. We were refreshed with this time of reflection and hearing from God.

In August, the Inc. board gave us the excellent gift of two days away at Banff. Because of some surprises in our schedule, we chose not to take that time away this fall but are looking forward to indulging ourselves early this spring. Thanks so much!

The Canada office team is seeking an office location somewhere in the Crossfield, Alberta area, where I will have an office. This will allow me to have an office in Canada as well as an office in the U.S. In addition to the five work days per month I have averaged in the Boring office, I will be spending time with the Canada office team as well.

One of the roles my wife, Carol, has been playing, has been that of my administrative assistant. Although she has not been able to pick up all the requisite pieces because of traveling with me, she has been an incredible help – especially in areas related to travel and board meetings. Once the new Canada office is in play, I will be exploring the value of using an administrative assistant for those duties that Carol is unable to fill due to her own travel.

As much of my time in the past two years has been spent visiting with InterAct staff across North America, I have become convinced that we need a full-time member care director. One conflict situation alone has already cost leadership, staff and professionals several hundred hours of time.² I believe InterAct needs a member care professional on each field and a director to oversee this ministry. George and Judy Richardson are presently serving in this capacity in Alaska but are not too many years away from retirement.

The InterAct Ministries, Inc. office staff continues to do a good job of serving the fields. As the office manager, Roy provides the primary leadership to this team in my absence. The loss of his logical thinking and significant experience will be greatly felt when he eventually makes the move to retirement. He is training his replacement – at least in the area of finances. I continue to look for a supported missionary with a business management bent who would be interested in joining our office management team in Boring.

Jerry Crosby is wearing several hats in our Inc. office. As already mentioned, he oversees our mobilization program. In addition to this role, he continues to wear the hat of human resources professional. He continues to do a good job of keeping us apprised and legal in the area of HR law. When not wearing either of those hats he oversees our IT department. This critical role seems to be demanding a growing amount of his time. Like Roy, Jerry is a consummate professional and is a key part of the office team.

Diane Schoming has had a good year as InterAct's development director. She continues to learn new ways to connect donors with opportunities to invest in eternity. Her enthusiasm, love for the Lord and love for the mission continue to serve us well. Diane did a stellar job of raising InterAct's **Public Presence** in Alaska this fall by putting together and hosting our 60th anniversary fundraising banquet in Anchorage. Those of you who were there had the privilege of seeing the reconnection of many InterActers from days gone by. Even more exciting was the host of people who rediscovered InterAct, many, after years of little or no relationship to the organization. Many of us sensed a corner was turned with supporters of InterAct Alaska as a

² This is an estimate, but Carol and I together have spent seventeen days plus well over 100 hours of dialogue, preparation, follow-up, etc. Dan and Bev Mayerle have spent much more!

result of this banquet. I count it a blessing to have her as part of the leadership team and appreciate the unique gifts and perspective she brings to development.

Dan Mayerle continues to grow in his leadership of the Canada field/organization. Building team has been an ongoing strength. New people, new ministries and a well thought out field strategy are all the result of Dan's leadership. Because of the health of the Canada field/organization, I am confident that we can expect to see continued growth in numbers and impact.

In spite of numerous difficulties and challenges, David Joseph is moving the Alaska ministry forward. He is building a team and is thinking outside the box. On a personal level, David has had two very difficult years. Things have not happened as quickly as I would have liked in Alaska, but it is obvious that they are moving at God's pace. I am the first to admit that I have something of a patience problem but God does not. The Alaska ministry is rebuilding slowly, but on a solid foundation. At this juncture in ministry development, it is essential that David does not move ahead of the emerged/emerging Native Alaskan leaders. David, with his team, is discovering the specific roles God has for InterAct Alaska in the decades ahead!

Thomas Slawson is a bundle of excitement and new ideas. It is fun to be around a guy with so much energy and passion for the job God has given him. Along with his team he has laid a solid strategic foundation for the time when he will be fielding a much larger team. Thomas's move to the Boring community in the spring will add a whole new dimension to this team. He will continue to direct the Russia field from Oregon with plans to spend summers in Russia. His role as part-time Public Ministries Coordinator will aid our forward momentum with two of our "P's" – **People and Public Presence**.

One of the more exciting plans being advanced by Thomas and his team is the new ministry thrust directed to Uzbeks and Tajiks in St. Petersburg and surrounding area. These central Asian people groups number in the millions in this region. I am prayerfully excited to see God directing this team to minister among these needy peoples.

There are a few personnel changes that need to be noted. **Wally Bays** has submitted notice that he plans to retire, effective January 25, 2012 – the day before his 86th birthday. **June Radcliff** has also submitted notice of retirement the end of January. She will continue to work as before but will do so as a volunteer. **John and Jen Tramm** are now accepted with the mission and are actively raising support. Their goal is to be on the field in Fairbanks by early fall of 2012. **Brian and Missie Deshane**, who serve in a Fairbanks, have submitted their resignation effective January 25, 2012. They appear to be looking for less accountability and are going with a mission clearinghouse that provides negligible accountability on the field. InterAct Ministries, Inc. is continuing the secondments of two staff: **Gary and Valerie Brumbelow** to The Disciple Nation Alliance and **Ted and Kate Mole** to New Hope Counseling Center. InterAct Canada is extending the secondment of **Dale and Debbie Kenyon** to SIM Canada as well. The only other personnel change is that of **Ernie & Barb Gonzales**. Retired missionary Ernie went home to be with the Lord this fall. In order to continue to receipt Barb, InterAct Canada has hired her in a part-time member care type role, which is simply putting on paper what she is already doing.

In conclusion, I would like to invite discussion. As I reflect on my role as executive director of InterAct Ministries, I find myself desiring further clarity. The mandate I understood myself to have received from the board(s) was that of being more involved with public roles than my

predecessor and therefore less involved with *centralized* vision casting. I believe each field understands itself to have a high level of autonomy to determine vision and direction – within given organizational parameters. This is a big change from what we experienced for fourteen years, yet it seems much more in line with our organizational culture. Though I love the challenge of setting direction and strategy, it is healthier for those plans to grow on the field where the ministry is taking place. Greater field autonomy is appropriate and is one of the reasons I was willing to take this role. As a result of this change, we take on some of the feel of a large mission organization, like SIM or SEND, where vision and strategy are almost exclusively determined by the fields. Is this still the intent of the board(s)? While granting the fields this level of autonomy I have been given the mandate in my job description to work closely with the field directors in determining their strategy. What does this look like? Is this “hands off” or a fully collaborative effort? Another important question is: Does the board expect me to cast vision for the whole organization or is this the purview of the fields? I am not looking to abdicate leadership but rather hoping to hear the board’s heart regarding what is to be directed and what is to be released.

I am encouraged with the stability I see across most of the organization. InterAct is providing a stable ministry platform for ministry for those wishing to serve the more unreached peoples of the North Pacific Crescent. The new energy in the mobilization department bodes well for the future growth of the organization. Russia is postured for growth. Alaska is working to determine their future direction through their upcoming Partnership Summit. Canada continues to develop and implement strategies to reach their mandated people groups in western Canada.

One thing that keeps me going in this job is a clear sense of God’s calling. It is a wonderful to be on mission with God through InterAct Ministries – a ministry that is making an eternal impact. I consider myself blessed to play a part. I am convinced that many of those who will be gathered around His throne from “every tribe, language, people and nation” will be there because of the faithfulness of InterAct and its missionaries. Thank you for your ongoing confidence and support as together we seek to see a culturally relevant church transforming every community in the North Pacific Crescent.

For His glory,

Dale Smith
Executive Director