

Executive Director's Report to the InterAct Ministries Boards

July/August 2016

The best-equipped army cannot save a king, nor is great strength enough to save a warrior. Don't count on your warhorse to give you victory—for all its strength, it cannot save you. But the Lord watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love. He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone.

Psalm 33:16-22 NLT

God continues to surprise me. I am surprised every time I think about His plan to use me in any kind of leadership role. In earlier days, I had not seen myself as a leader. Yet He has chosen to use me in numerous leadership and supervisory roles since my teen years. God can choose and use whomever He decides. In fact, the more insignificant the tool, the more glory He receives when His purposes are accomplished through us! Sometimes the twists and turns of our journey catch us off guard.

One of the tensions I face with these reports is finding the balance between too much information and too little. I will seek to lean toward “too little” for this report and leave it up to you to ask about anything that might not have been adequately developed. Even though it may not seem like a “little” report, believe me, I am leaving out a copious number of details!

If I understand our respective roles properly, you are responsible for the “ends” and I am responsible for the “means.” In other words, you give me directives regarding what you want the organization to accomplish through our mission/vision/values, my job description, assignments at the board meeting, et cetera, all within the implied parameters of legal, biblical and ethical considerations.

So I have operated under the presupposition that you are seeking to increase the number and maturity of disciples being reached and developed across our target peoples of the North Pacific Crescent. How have we advanced toward that end in the past six months? This report will attempt to answer that question.

Canada. This field continues to grow, both in effectiveness and numbers. As Dan's report indicates, we are seeing new people coming into the organization at a very encouraging rate – in fact about as fast as we can presently assimilate new staff. (Thank you, Lord!) God continues to use InterAct Ministries as part of new ministry advances among First Nations and immigrant ministries. Dan's report gives details so I won't be redundant here. God is using Dan and the leadership

team of Greg Hamilton and Wes Schellenberg to build our Canada field. I am very blessed to have these competent men as friends and co-workers!

Siberia. Under Lucas Orner's leadership we are seeing forward motion. Although this is a small team, Lucas has a defined strategy and is working and praying for God to build and expand the outreach of InterAct across the harvest fields of this vast land. His personal ministry is active with strong connection to a local church, as well as investing much of his time teaching English classes - a great point of contact for the gospel. His clear vision and passion for the needs of this region make it much easier to invite people to join us in ministry. This summer we have two young ladies serving in our *EnGage!* program and one couple from another organization who will be with us through September. Of these four individuals there is a very good possibility that one or more of them will end up with InterAct long-term. At the moment, we can only grow at a limited rate but as we field more staff, the requisite infrastructure will develop so we can grow more quickly (as in Canada). I continue to pray that the Lord of the Harvest will raise up new workers called to serve in Siberia.

I have attached a recent communication from Lucas offering his perspective on the new laws affecting religious liberty.

Alaska. At this time last year, I would never have anticipated the significant changes that have taken place in Alaska. All of you are aware of the complications I have faced with finding the right field director for the state. David Joseph did a good job in maintaining field ministry, provided pastoral care, moved partnerships forward and was responsible for three new couples on the field, but never clearly defined strategy for advancement. Following David, I stepped in and served as interim field director for almost a year. During this brief window of time, under the Horsman's leadership, we did launch the LEaD program on the Lazy Mountain campus. Although I was thrilled to see this new program, other than this new initiative, we saw little corporate advance in Alaska.

In the summer of 2014, I contacted Darris Arnold and asked if he would be willing to let his name stand for the Alaska field director position. Although I knew this concept had its drawbacks (no personal missionary experience, living out of state, only willing to commute to Alaska seven days a month, etc.), I was optimistic it could work. With the background, gifts and experience Darris brought, I was confident he would be a good choice for field leadership. According to InterAct Ministries, Inc.'s bylaws, I bring forward the name I seek to have on my team and then bring that name to the Inc. board for approval. Once the board approves my choice the name is advanced to a vote by the gathered field staff (bylaws require there be no electronic vote – only a called meeting of all field staff). A straw vote (by secret ballot) in May 2015 indicated that Darris did not have the necessary support to be approved. After conversation with Darris, he was willing and confident that he could change the field sentiment by loving and serving them until the vote scheduled for the May 2016 field conference.

When the board cancelled the field vote for May 2016, it meant that the vote was put off until May 2017 (the next time we would be gathered for a legal vote). With three key families considering other options in ministry if Darris was left in place, decisive action was required. In April 2016, I flew to Alaska to informally poll the staff regarding their willingness to follow Darris as their field director. I made every effort to honor Darris and the missionaries in these discussions but before I had even met with each family it was obvious there would be less than 60% support. That level of support was including many “votes” from people who did not represent the future of the organization (either retirement age or part-time in ministry). Something had to be done – quickly. Waiting would mean the field could lose key people and forward motion was going to be delayed yet again with the possibility that Darris would not have been ratified in 2017. With great sadness, I realized that the field was best served by removing his name as Alaska field director appointee. It goes without saying that this has had a life-changing impact on Darris and Debbie. Being a part of the pain and disappointment caused to a brother and sister in Christ has had a huge impact on me, as well. Though I am not living with the outcome of this change the way Darris and Debbie are, I still carry a very heavy heart over the outcome.

When I informed Darris in May that I was removing his name from the role of Alaska field director appointee, we agreed to allow him to be a part of the Alaska field conference. Darris also was committed to serve the field by follow through with his plan to provide the meals for the whole team attending the MAP. This was a true gift of loving service from both Darris and Debbie.

With the mandate on my plate to present an Alaska ministry strategy to the board (Inc.) by July 2016, it was time to be particularly directive. Mission organizations are best served by utilizing the wisdom and experience of the field missionaries who are on the front lines. To do this, I asked Mike Matthews to facilitate a MAP process, a strategic planning model InterAct has used successfully many times in the past. The missionaries’ appreciation in being included in the strategic planning process was apparent in their willingness and enthusiasm to accommodate last minute schedule changes in order to participate. The event happened the three days prior to the field conference at Lazy Mountain, May 23-25. Participants spent hours, willingly sacrificing free time to discuss, massage and pray through the deliberations. What follows is the outcome of the initial stages of this plan.

- InterAct Alaska will seek to move forward in four key areas of focus:
 - Recruitment
 - Village ministry
 - Urban ministry
 - Equipping
- In order to focus on these areas, we have identified and initiated meeting as a leadership team. (The members of this team, the MAP Advancement

Team (MAT), are committed to two years to advance and implement our emerging field strategy. The team is comprised of (in alphabetical order):

- Steve & Jill Horsman
- David Joseph
- George & Judy Richardson
- Dale Smith
- John Tramm
- The focus will be to:
 - Identify the village needs and opportunities
 - Build relationships of trust with key people in the villages we choose to target
 - Focus on recruitment for summer workers (*EnGage! Alaska*) in these selected villages as well as for select urban ministry locations
 - Deploy summer and short-term workers to these locations, assuming that villages will generate the most interest initially, but remaining open to placement in urban settings when possible
 - Continue to develop partnerships with like-minded ministry organizations and churches (ABC, LEaD, village partnerships with SEND, etc.)
 - Seek to identify placement locations for long-term deployments in villages, and urban areas as God provides.

Following my time in Alaska for the MAP strategy sessions and the Alaska field conference, it became obvious that it would not be possible to use Darris in any role in Alaska. His ongoing presence was proving to be divisive – something we did not need if the field was to advance. It also became apparent that Darris did not see me as a leader and was not going to follow me as his leader. That meant it was untenable for him to serve in Alaska or anywhere else as part of my leadership team. After consulting with many of you on the board, as well as a number of advisors not on the board, I made the decision that Darris would be released. After speaking with the board chair and the finance committee chairman, I offered him a three-month payout - \$9,000 InterAct funds plus his support. He asked if I would be willing to carry him for four months, \$12,000, and continue to list him as an employee while he made the transition. I agreed.

It should be obvious that I am once again looking for an Alaska field director. In the short term, I am again wearing that hat. Rather than try to do it alone, independent of the small missionary force we already have in Alaska, I am choosing to use them as my “Alaska Field Director Replacement Team” (not a real title – just for explanation). The MAT named earlier in this report now comprise the de facto Alaska field director. While I will be leading the team, I am already delegating and depending on them for many details. My longer-term plan is development of a prospective field director from within the organization. A plan is in place to begin investing in a pool of prospective field leaders across the organization.

Since our strategic planning process, MAP, Alaska has initiated several important steps. David Joseph is scheduled to meet with InterAct's primary recruiter, Jim Hamilton, to be mentored in mobilization methodology with the intention of visiting several schools this fall. Research regarding locations for summer worker placement have begun. Face-to-face dialogue has taken place with SEND North leadership regarding partnering in both village and urban ministry. Further dialogue with Alaska Bible College has continued, building on the relationship begun by Darris. Monthly MAP Advancement Team meetings have already begun - with enthusiasm and active participation by every member - a picture of teamwork.

In my report to the boards in February, I stated:

Although each of these are a part of the vision I have for InterAct, I have come to believe, for the immediate future, my energy needs to be focused on three key areas:

- 1. Making sure each of our fields has a focused vision of where God would have them go*
- 2. Mobilize prayer for workers to fulfill this vision*
- 3. Maximize efforts to identify and recruit those God has prepared to be part of our team.*
- 4. I would like to add a fourth - investing significant focus on developing leadership (mentoring) within the organization.*

These four areas of focus are central in my thinking and time as I seek to advance the whole organization. Especially at this juncture, they are particularly key to moving Alaska forward. As you have heard before, both Russia and Canada have clear vision guiding their future direction. As discussed above, Alaska's vision is not fully formed, but it is well underway.

Both organizations continue to operate fully within the purpose, vision and values that have been established by the two boards. The strategies used to accomplish these objectives vary with the field and specific ministry context but we are well within the parameters given us by the boards.

Managing risk, maintaining organizational financial health and compliance with governing and legal requirements are all being carefully scrutinized and directed largely by Wes Schellenberg in the Canada office and Karen Schweitz in the U.S. office. This year, both InterAct Ministries, Inc. and InterAct Ministries of Canada have delivered commendable financial performance and demonstrated fiscal responsibility as validated by clean audits. Jerry Crosby continues to develop a sense of community among the U.S. office staff. In addition to his other responsibilities he has overseen the recent completion of our new guest house at our U.S. headquarters. It is a lovely two-bedroom, fully furnished retreat. As a board member, you are invited to reserve and use this gift.

I desire to discern God's direction, continue to develop clear vision for the organization and the fields (of course *with* the leadership teams and staff), set faith goals in line with His heart and mobilize new workers to increasingly accomplish this God-given mandate.

On a more personal level, I am increasingly convinced that the ministry of InterAct Ministries needs to be a ministry springing out of intimate relationship with the Father. As management and board members, our walk with the Master is far more important than our leadership savvy, business knowledge, people skills, ministry experience, etc. This has to start with each of us and flow down to the staff and out to those we serve. Will you pray for me, as I pray for you, that we will work ever more closely with Him, and that our ministry will show the fruit of that walk?

OK, so much for a *short* report. Still, there are a host of details that you may want to know. Please ask for clarification or amplification of what you have read.

As always, I covet your prayers as I seek to lead us into the future He has for us.

Privileged to serve,

Dale Smith
Executive Director
InterAct Ministries

Bonus material, but added as a reminder. 😊

Purpose Statement: InterAct Ministries exists to make disciples among least reached peoples in cooperation with like-minded churches and organizations.

Vision Statement: InterAct Ministries desires to see reproducing disciples impacting communities across the North Pacific Crescent.

Core Values:

- Scripture – Authoritative and sufficient for life and ministry
- Relationships – Loving God and loving people
- Cross-cultural ministry – Recognition of worldview and cultural implications in ministry
- Whole-life discipleship – Walking with disciples through all stages of life and growth
- Gathered believers – Recognize the centrality of the local church
- Commitment – High priority on long-term ministries.

Flowing out of these statements are several other statements that guide our strategies and day to day ministries.

Core Ministries: evangelism, discipleship, counseling, training, leadership development (From InterAct archives)

Core Strategies: determined by the field (From InterAct archives and practice)

Our Desire: To see fully developed disciples among each people group we serve who have formed into local bodies of multiplying disciples across the North Pacific Crescent. (OK – this is my own personal addition – but it is my heart for fully trained disciples to gather.)