

InterAct Ministries
Executive Director's Report
September 2024

The big discussion around InterAct these days is around leadership change. In Alaska, Mark Overbeek is tracking to take the baton from Steve Horsman by September 2025. Not long after that transition, I anticipate stepping down as executive director to be replaced by my successor. Change is underway. The good news in these transitions is our confidence that God is fully in control. Fear of change seems understandable, but with a sovereign God at the helm, it is truly unwarranted. Proverbs 21:1 tells us - "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord, he turns it wherever he will." (ESV). God can use good leaders, and He can use poor ones. He is fully capable of accomplishing His purposes with either! Although I firmly believe all of InterAct's primary leadership team walk closely with Him and are gifted with leadership abilities, InterAct's effectiveness is based on the empowering work of the Lord of the Harvest, not on us. I rest confidently in His divine oversight over our current leadership transitions!

Looking across the organization I see advances and retreats. The Alaska report reflects things are going well. The focus on ETANA (a comprehensive missionary training program developed by Mike Matthews), biblical counseling, and church planting, are in line with InterAct's historical values. There are open doors in many communities in Alaska where community leaders are asking us for missionaries to come and serve among them. It will be a blessing to watch how new leadership takes on the challenge of establishing thriving Alaska Native churches across the state.

Greg Hamilton overseas several strong leaders across the expanse of the western provinces. Morgan Serger leads strategic and intentional discipleship and camping ministries among First Nations youth in Northern Manitoba. This includes camping programs in the summer and discipleship groups through the fall, winter, and spring. A recent change has been to consolidate InterAct Canada's youth work under "Anchored Warriors," led by Byron Sayer. Church planting continues in Calgary, AB, Loon Lake, SK, Kamloops, BC, Lethbridge, AB, Ross River, YK, and beyond. There are multiple immigrant led churches in the lower mainland and Winnipeg where our missionaries serve as facilitators. I won't steal Greg's thunder by sharing all the details of what is happening. Read his report and rejoice.

Siberia continues to be the most pioneering place we serve. Lucas Orner faithfully leads his team in a very challenging context. They are under constant scrutiny and are diligent to follow necessary protocols. Even so, there have been prolonged interviews and questioning but their ability to minister is still possible. New doors of ministry are open for Frankie and Ira Emrick now that he has received his residency permit. Shawna continues to serve the local Buryat church as she disciples ladies and provides encouragement to this fellowship. Lucas's long-term vision to carry the good news to unreached communities of the region is becoming a greater

reality. As part of the “Chosen Frozen” Siberia team, we have one young couple on a home assignment and one short term missionary.

Working with prospective leaders this past year has been one of the most productive and rewarding uses of my time. I led a cohort of five men with significant leadership savvy and potential, including the three current field directors. We met every other week for two hours and dug deeply into the spiritual prerequisites to effectively lead a ministry. Most men spent 3-4 hours before the meetings in preparation for our times together. These times proved challenging and developmental for all of us as we dug into the Word, memorized pertinent passages, and gleaned insight from the writings of many godly leaders. Primarily the time together was a focus on the *character* component of leadership.

This year, I plan to work with these men to dig deeply into the *competencies* necessary to lead well. Spending time with the nominee for the Alaska Field Director’s role and with the prospective nominee for the Executive Director’s Role will be time well spent. Bringing future leaders along for this journey seems like a wise use of time.

It was interesting to hear myself described by one board member as a “workaholic.” I feel like my plate is very full, but I desire to serve InterAct without compromise. Carol and I work hard but are not driven by the fear of “losing face.” Rather, we feel a stewardship responsibility for the roles with which we have been entrusted, which require effort. We intentionally take a day a week to rest and take time away to visit family. We even take real vacations. We are going to Hawaii in October, a gift from our kids, in celebration of our 50th anniversary. Would we like to slow down a little? Sure. Is that likely to happen with training successors at two levels of the organization over the next 12-18 months? Not likely. Although our energy levels are not increasing, with God’s help, I believe we still have enough tread on the tires to finish the roles with which we have been entrusted, that of executive director and communications director. Prayer is appreciated!

One final thought. At the end of many of my recent reports, I have reposted our mission, vision, and values. You will find them again in this report. Organizational consultant and author, Patrick Lencioni, says every CEO worth his salt should also be the organization’s CRO or Chief Reminding Officer. He says we should be shameless in reminding members of our organizations of the direction we are headed by restating and repeating our mission, vision, and values until people tire of hearing them. Hence, I typically repeat them in my board report. Read over them again. Maybe think through whether they should be revisited or tweaked. I have some thoughts, but this may not be the time or place to have that conversation. As Gale Van Diest used to say, “Just dropping a dime to see if anyone picks it up.”

I have been promoting the following statement with our staff:

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. (Fully trained disciples will gather. Teaching to gather as “church” is a key part of “teaching them to obey all things...”)

I often use a shortened version to make it memorable:

InterAct Ministries seeks to make disciples who make disciples who gather. Although “church” is not explicitly stated in this abbreviated statement, it is implied and can be unpacked in even the briefest conversation. Continually reminding our staff of the business we are in is essential to keep moving toward our mandate – making reproducing disciples who gather as reproducing local churches (who in turn make disciples, who reproduce, who gather as reproducing churches, and on and on). Stepping down from my soapbox now....

Thank you for your continued support and confidence in me. It remains a pleasure to serve you and this amazing team of missionaries called InterAct Ministries!

P.S. Yesterday, Carol and I finished up our second field conference in three weeks, first in Alaska and now in Canada. It was refreshing and encouraging to see what God is doing through the faithful ministries of our staff in both places! I am very proud to be associated with this godly and faithful group!

InterAct Ministries Purpose/Vision/Values Statements

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.

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.