

Executive Director's Report to the InterAct Ministries Boards

February 2018

Menucha Retreat and Conference Center

Corbett, Oregon

Let me state at the top of this report how appreciative Carol and I are for the gift you gave us of time away for refreshment. One of the most rigorous trips we make every year is the one we make to Siberia to spend time with our staff and ministry partners in that part of the world. It is always invigorating but very exhausting. You allowed time and money so we could have a period of renewal – both on our way to Siberia and on our way back. As your guests we enjoyed three full days in Greece on our way to Russia and two full days on the way home. This made our fifteen-hour time zone transition to the other side of the world much more enjoyable and reasonable. Thank you for making it possible!

Since the time of our last meeting I have been away from home even more than usual. I was fearful that my frenetic pace would have engendered chaos across the organization. My involvement in the details of the organization were minimal, both intentionally and due to travel, but the organization continued and prospered regardless. Let me clarify what I meant by saying my involvement in the details has been intentionally reduced. It is easy to micromanage when things are not going exactly the way I think best. By doing this in Alaska (no field director) and in Canada (the field director in Canada has handled many of the executive director functions since I began my present role), I was holding back progress. With field leadership support I made the decision to push greater leadership authority and responsibility onto the field directors and work more comprehensively with and through them. In Alaska, Steve Horsman has been given more and more responsibility and he has rallied. He is moving the field forward – far more effectively than I would ever be able to do as the absentee/interim field director. His development and progress over time has convinced me he is ready to move into the role of Alaska field director. As noted on the agenda I am hoping for approval to move his name forward for a field ratification vote at the May Alaska staff conference. Recognizing that he is not a long-term solution I have communicated that this will be a three to four year appointment – with the understanding that he will identify and mentor a mutually aggregable successor.

For the last few years I have been encouraging Dan Mayerle to move away from doing the macro oversight of the Canada organization and focus on leading the field staff and developing/implementing field strategy. After significant reflection I realized it was untenable for me to be in the middle of the Canada mix without a complete reorganization of the structure (i.e. Dan, Greg and Wes all reporting to

me). Rather than “upset the applecart” by making a change of that magnitude I decided to step back from my level of involvement with the Canada field/organization and lead through Dan Mayerle, letting him take the lead for both field and organizational issues. I now spend more time than ever in a mentoring/coaching role with Dan and thereby lead through him. This means my time at the Canada office, except for meeting with Dan or an occasional meeting with Wes or Greg, is minimal. This new arrangement has some very positive “wins.” It reduces the messiness of trying to figure out who is responsible for what due to the overlapping responsibilities of the executive director and the field director. Leaving Dan in charge of the Canada organization, not just the field, frees me from dealing with the details and encourages delegation and trust to my key leader. By carrying greater responsibility and authority, Dan is being stretched and developed as a leader more than ever. Rest assured, he continues to do so under the direction and protection of his supervisor (yours truly).

Russia has always functioned in a rather autonomous manner so I continue to carry a similar pattern with Lucas. He is doing well as a leader and I am working hard to have a regular mentoring role in his life. He is growing as a man and as a leader and I see an even stronger leader emerging.

After having said all this I hope you have some questions for me. You should. ☺  
As you wade through the verbiage you should see a significant paradigm shift.

Something you will have seen in each of the field director’s reports is the focus being placed on certain key strategies. Leading the macro organization to accomplish our stated mission, vision and values is something you expect of me. As I gather the primary leadership team, one of the most important things we do is dialogue together to determine strategies that fulfill our mandate – making disciples of the least reached peoples of the North Pacific Crescent. To do that we need a strategy – a strategy that will morph over time. To determine the best strategy, I have been walking the team through a process outlined in Patrick Lencioni’s book, *The Advantage* (Jossey-Bass, 2012). I will spare you the process and but give you the results. We have identified three “strategic anchors” (by working through our mission, vision, values, etc.) that need to be accomplished if we are to succeed in our calling. These three strategic anchors are **recruiting, developing a caring community** (member care) **and becoming a learning community** (training our staff adequately to assure success in cross-cultural evangelism, discipling, church-planting, etc.). Lencioni states that an organization can only fully focus on one strategic anchor at a time. The one thing that is so important that we must immediately address becomes “The Rallying Cry” – a sort of 911 call to action. For the current twelve-month window, we have identified our need for recruiting as our call to action, our Rallying Cry. Recruitment is our thematic goal for 2017-2018.

In addition to leading our organization toward accomplishment of our mission, vision and values, I believe you have other “ends” that you are expecting of me. I believe you are expecting me to be a growing man of God, while at the same time seeking to nurture the same “heart” across the organization. It is almost impossible for any of us to accurately assess how we are doing in this regard but I will say that I continue to grow in passion for walking more intimately with Christ and it is my heart to see this develop in the hearts of those I lead. My primary investment in this regard is with the leadership team(s). Every time we gather I challenge each of us to continue making intimacy with Christ and time with Him the foundation of our leadership. They in turn are challenging me, as well as those they lead, to prioritize their intimacy with the Savior as well. My heart is to see an ethos across InterAct where ministry is done out of the overflow of our walk with the Lord.

As mentioned earlier, I am focusing on recruitment for the organization this year. This was mentioned as one of the implicit “ends” I believe you are looking to me to accomplish. While recognizing that bigger is not always better I believe we can better fulfill the mandate He has given us if we have new staff joining our ranks. We are seeing growth, if not exponentially, for sure steadily. If for no other reason than our aging staff, it is imperative that we continue to seek new missionaries. Canada has made steady forward motion for the last five or six years and continues to grow. Both Dan Mayerle’s and Greg Hamilton’s reports reflect this. With eight missionary units currently in the mobilization pipeline for Canada (six couples and two singles) there is grounds for encouragement. Equally encouraging is that Alaska presently has four couples raising support and applications in hand from a fifth couple. Russia just had a phenomenal summer with eight summer workers – always something that bodes well for the future. A young couple being recruited by Lucas Orner for the Russia team just spent twelve days exploring the ministry to which they sense God calling. Frankie Emrick hopes to arrive in Russia in February – this February! We are presently seeking to build the systems and infrastructure necessary to assimilate a larger number of new missionary candidates. Until these are in place we are all keeping very busy, and wearing several extra “hats” trying to keep up. A good problem.

As you read the HR reports you will also see that we have increased mobilization activity. With the addition of David Joseph to the mobilization team we are having additional conversations that we are confident will lead to new people coming our way. I am looking to our recently launched Mobilization Task Force to streamline our process and guide us to greater effectiveness in both recruiting and “onboarding” of new staff.

One of the ways I desire to better serve our staff is through providing pastoral care. Ideally, we would have someone who would lead this ministry mission-wide and have staff on each field to assist this ministry. In God’s sovereignty He has

not provided anyone – yet. I am still praying and seeking for the right couple(s) to lead the charge in this area. The younger generation coming to us is looking for an organizational family that provides the time and resources necessary to help them develop and grow. Since I believe that we are all in process (progressive sanctification), and that even missionaries face personal struggles and crises in their lives, it is critically important that we have caring and skilled staff to loving walk with them. Until God provides such people to be a full-time part of the solution for member care I am thankful that we have individuals and leaders who are picking up the slack of caring for one another. I would appeal to you to let me know of individuals who might have significant people skills, pastoral experience, a willingness to raise support (or already have it), who have excellent people skills and a heart to encourage. I am looking for more than just an encourager but rather a person who will challenge us to deal with the struggles of life – whether from without or from within. This is a tall order but I know there are many folks out there who would excel in this role.

Since we do not currently have anyone to oversee Member Care, I have sought to train and empower our staff to do “member care” with one another. Biblical counseling training, such as ACBC training events in Indiana, Oregon, Montana and Alaska have been encouraged and even partially funded. Many of our staff are learning and honing skills in helping people – both within the organization and among the people we serve. This is more than just “counseling training” – this is discipleship training.

And speaking of discipling, this continues to be the heart of what InterAct does. Each of our fields are advancing a vision to “make disciples who make disciples” on their fields. They are doing this through speakers at conferences, reading books together as a field, going to disciple making conferences and more. Field leadership “owns” the vision for multiplying disciple makers and they are advancing it across their area of responsibility.

Let me throw in a quote by a missiologist I read earlier this month. This is not exactly what it said but it captures the thought. “Where there is church-planting there *may* be reproducing disciples. Where there are disciple-making movements there will *always* be church-plants.” I throw that in to remind us that we still expect churches to be that result of our discipling. A fully trained disciple *will* have a heart to see churches established!

In my last report I stated:

*Legally we are being watched over by two financial watchdog organizations: CCCC's in Canada and the ECFA in the U.S. We continue to be in good standing with both organizations through the detailed care given by Wes Schellenberg in Canada and Karen Schweitz in the U.S. Our*

*annual audits once again showed we are well cared for in this department. I also work closely with and lean heavily on Wes and Karen to keep us apprised and current on all our insurance situations. Jerry Crosby (U.S.) and Greg Hamilton (Canada) are doing a good job keep abreast of H.R. law and our compliance of the same.*

Why reinvent the wheel? It was true then and it is true now. We continue to be well managed legally, ethically and financially with the people we have in place. As mentioned, we are also further protected by the oversight of and accountability to CCCC's and ECFA.

Jerry Crosby and Wes Schellenberg are also doing a good job of managing the physical plant at the U.S. office and the Canada office. It is a blessing to have men like this who handle the details of our facilities so they don't land on my plate. Be sure to read Thomas Slawson's report in the appendix. He is a very gifted man who is making a significant contribution by making InterAct look good to the public. He is also adding value in mobilization and Russia ministry.

One of the things you will see in both budgets that have been submitted is a reduced expectation of spending. The U.S. organization has deeper pockets than Canada but I feel we have been overly dependent on the markets. We had to dip significantly into our reserves this year to meet expenses, more than I am comfortable doing. So, we reduced our budget. You will see that there is money in this U.S. budget for a development director. We are still weighing benefit versus burden on this decision.

Canada has also tightened the belt. We are not trying to lessen money available for ministry but rather seeking to be more frugal in areas where internal expenses have gradually crept up. Not that we have any reason to hang our heads. Rather, we are making these budget cuts so we can be the best stewards possible – without hampering ministry.

Be sure to dig in to the reports from the Russia and Canada Field Directors and the Alaska Assistant Field Director. Each of these three men is doing a stellar job in advancing ministry in their areas of responsibility. Each is growing as a man of God and it shows. It is a joy to witness increasing maturity in each of them. These men are also serving their staff. They are not simply seeking to make a name for themselves by having a powerful ministry but are genuinely caring for each of their people. They are also investing in and developing younger people – the future leaders of our organization. I am blessed to have a team like this!

As you will also see, we have had, or will have, resignations from both boards. Since we were already running a minimal number on each board we will need to act at this meeting to advance appropriate names for member ratification. You and

your wives are a rather amazing group. As a team you have a breadth of experience, a noticeable bond with one another and great heart for this ministry. Please pray with me that God will identify and call the right new board members to be a part of your ranks. I continue to be blessed by association with each of you. As a group you have given me good counsel. Many of you have been counselors, advisors and friends at a personal level as well. I know you pray for me and for God's hand of favor on this ministry. For that I am greatly thankful! Thank you for caring for me *and* for my bride. We feel honored.

Privileged to serve,

Dale Smith