

Executive Director's Report to the Boards of InterAct Ministries

July/August 2017

*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time
we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
Galatians 6:9 NIV*

At the outset let me state that I continue to enjoy the opportunity to serve this organization and the people that comprise it. At times I feel overwhelmed and under equipped but I am daily reminded of my calling and am refreshed as I sit at Jesus' feet. As the only employee who answers to you I feel a significant responsibility to give you a clear accounting of what has been accomplished over the past six months. At the same time I want to communicate clearly the challenges. Thank you for entrusting me with this responsibility and for giving me the privilege to serve in this role of significant influence. With God's strength and only with His empowering I strive to fulfill InterAct's mission, vision and values, and to accomplish the "ends" for which you hold me responsible.

About "ends." If we were to operate under the Carver Policy Governance Model, as a board you would have clearly identified the ends for which you hold me accountable. I have no agenda to go down the road of the Carver Model nor to resist a change from our present model. We already operate under a "governance policy model," just not the detailed model developed by the Carvers. There are strengths and weaknesses either way. One challenge for a board that meets semi-annually is the level of work it would require on the front side to implement the Carver model. Presently we operate as a governance board that follows the general guidelines presented by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability in the book by Michael Batts, *Board Member Orientation*. A broadly defined governance model flowing out of this book is in line with established good practice for non-profits/charities. A downside of not having ends identified for the CEO of any organization is that there is a lack of clarity regarding what is expected of the board's employee. Various board members may define success differently thus giving mixed messages.

Please don't hear me saying that the water is so muddy that I feel I have no direction. I feel the board has given me some clear macro direction in our mission, vision and values. Our values provide important general direction for decision-making. The following points are my understanding of the board's expectations:

- cast vision and implement strategy mission-wide
- guard the organization from undue risk
- maintain organizational integrity and assure that we comply with all legal requirements

- plan requisite logistics for board meetings and maintain appropriate records of all board meetings (implied)
- supervise/oversee three fields and two offices
- raise funds for organizational operation and advancement
- mobilize new staff to accomplish our calling
- vet and train new staff
- prepare for future leadership transitions

In this report, I will address both the explicit ends I have been given and the implicit ends I believe you expect of me.

Let me jump in with an expectation that has never been stated but I believe to be foundational (implicit). I believe you expect me to walk with God in such a way that it is obvious to those around me. People around me should see me progressively becoming more like Christ. I have no idea how one should measure this in himself, so I won't try. Rather I will tell you that it is a practice of life for both Carol and me to spend the first part of every day in the Word and in prayer. God continues to teach both of us about Himself and how He works in our world. In addition, I am committed to challenge and accountability with my primary leadership team. I feel it is critical that InterAct sees their executive director modeling a growing intimacy in his walk with the Lord – and a man who is demonstrating his dependence on the Master by increasingly modeling a lifestyle of prayer.

An expectation, that may or may not be that of the board as a unit, is that I work to grow the organization. Looking at the needs across the North Pacific Crescent I am convinced that this is a valid goal – to better develop InterAct's ability to minister by growing the organization. Do we want to build an empire? Absolutely not. But in light of the vast need, I am convinced that we need to expand our ministry capacity. Our sovereign God does not need us to be big to accomplish what He wants accomplished. But I believe it would be presumptuous to sit back and fade into oblivion because we did not seek to grow our capacity – both people and infrastructure. You can be looking for an annual report in February detailing the growth/shrinkage of the over the preceding year.

One of my concerns has been the time and energy needed to facilitate growth in Alaska. This spring I appointed Steve Horsman as the assistant field director. Steve and Jill live at the Lazy Mountain Campus which fulfills a desire of the field to have an Alaskan involved in leadership. They are picking up many of the administrative details and advancing InterAct's profile in Alaska. The advancement of ministry will undoubtedly be enhanced by their efforts and it should make my role there a lighter load to carry.

In the two field director reports and the assistant field director report (Alaska), you will have an update of the staff on each field. Canada continues to grow and ministry is expanding at a steady, manageable rate. Although there is growth, we

can never sit on our laurels. Lucas's report shows a good start toward rebuilding of the struggling Russia field. Russia only had three units on the field when I arrived and we lost one to administration (Slawson) and one to governmental complications (Gilbert). With only one addition we are sitting at two ministry units with another slated to arrive in August for a year. The abundance of summer workers gives us hope that some will return. Let's keep praying! Alaska has seen a high attrition rate over the last decade - due in part to death and retirement. Many of the missionaries have joined the mobilization effort which lays a firm foundation for future growth. The results are not yet showing in fielded missionaries but I am confident that the work that has been done will result in new staff coming through the doors in the days ahead. In His time.

It is obvious that we need to ratchet up mobilization for Alaska and Russia. Both fields need new missionaries just to stay afloat – much less expand. We need new missionaries (is there an echo in here?). Mobilization is one of the three strategic anchors – key strategies of the primary leadership team. I am asking the Inc. organization to either make a mid-budget correction of \$20,000 for increased mobilization effort or allow me to overspend the budget up to that amount for recruitment.

Another of the implicit ends with which I have been tasked is care for our staff. In one sense our field staff are independent contractors (they raise their own money for the privilege of serving with us), and in another sense they are InterAct employees. Either way I believe a mark of a Christian organization is to care for the needs of the people. This means caring for spiritual/emotional needs, training and resourcing for effectiveness in ministry, care in crisis situations and more.

One way I have been seeking to fulfill this implicit end is by offering biblical counseling training opportunities for our staff. While church-planting I felt the deep need to be better equipped in providing spiritual guidance for the critical concerns we dealt with on a day-to-day basis. To date, well over fifty biblical counseling training events have been attended by staff. In addition to learning new biblical people helping skills, each of us has been challenged to apply these same biblical principles in our own lives as a part of InterAct's "whole life discipleship" value.

Another way to serve the pastoral care/crisis care of our staff is to find the right people for member care. This is influenced by the bent of the leadership team to desire member care personnel who are confident in the authority of Scripture for the issues of life. This doesn't mean we are against medicine or against psychology but rather that we have confidence that the issues that are most important to God (glorifying Him and growing in Christlikeness) are best handled by member care personnel who start with Scripture and have confidence in Scripture (the first on the list of InterAct's values). One of the exciting twists in our search for member care has been the many InterActers who are already getting trained in biblical counseling. It turns out that we are raising up a growing

team of trained member care people right within our own ranks. Still, I continue to look for the right person/people to oversee the big picture of member care for InterAct Ministries, Inc. and InterAct Ministries of Canada.

In keeping with our purpose and vision statements (noted at the end of this document), I continue to cast a vision for discipling. Disciples, those who have been taught to obey all things, are the building blocks of a church. Having vision to make disciples who make disciples (disciple-makers) and being actively involved personally, is the core work of what Christ has called us to do. This is another of management's strategic anchors – vision for making disciplers. Toward that end I have been spreading across all three fields the book and model presented in *4 Chair Discipling*, by Dann Spader. This is an attempt to give a biblical model that can help us as we seek to advance the mandate of Matthew 28 across the North Pacific Crescent.

Another unspoken, implicit end would be to inform and enlist involvement from the Christian public. Sharing “God Stories” makes Him look good and frequently stirs others to partner with us through finances, short-term teams, summer ministries, long-term service, prayer and general advocacy. The primary means we are using to make this happen is through the website, InterAction (monthly mailing of InterAct stories), InterCessor (monthly prayer guide), and direct contact with our missionaries and staff (deputation, mobilization, speaking in churches). Are you receiving these publications? Do you read them? We are also editing Barney Furman's book on InterAct's history for publication in the near future. Most of this is being overseen by our Communication Director, Thomas Slawson. The quality and quantity of our public face has moved forward significantly since Thomas has taken responsibility for this department. There is more that we could be doing and would like to be doing but we are building as we have capacity to move forward.

I have been tasked with protecting InterAct Ministries. That includes being sure we are legal, ethical and financially protected. 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 arena. 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 keeping abreast of H.R. law and our compliance of the same. Frequent discussions with each of these staff members assures me that we are appropriately protected.

Early on in my tenure as director, I asked the leadership team to wrap their focus and reporting around five “P's”.¹ Partnerships is one of those “P's.” I am not sure

¹ **Prayer**, **Partnerships** (with like-minded churches and organizations), **People** (new staff), **Public Presence** (raising the profile of God's activity), **Perspective** (serving in the facilitator era)

whether this is really an end for which you are holding me accountable but it is definitely something that is an important part of leadership's strategic intent. We no longer live in a world where we are strictly the pioneers. Today's mission contexts have not only many believers but also a significant number of spiritually mature indigenous leaders. Both wisdom and pragmatism tell us that we must partner with churches and likeminded organizations – both mono-culturally and cross-culturally. We are advancing in our efforts as is mentioned in the field reports.

One “P” that has been mentioned but not adequately unpacked is prayer. Again this is not something that has been explicitly put on my plate as an end. I feel safe in saying you look to me to be modeling dependence on the Lord of the Harvest by being a man of prayer myself and encouraging greater prayer in our staff and constituency. I am encouraged to see a growing passion and practice in this area. I just finished one of the most convicting books I have read in recent years, *Billy Graham: Leading with Love* by Matt Woodley. It challenged me deeply with the need to increase prayer personally and at every level across the organization – even the board (just sayin’). Are we praying? I’m confident we are. Are we praying enough? Probably not. Please talk to me about ideas you may have regarding ways we can become an organization that really prays.

Thanks for letting me lead the amazing team of InterAct Ministries. It is an honor to serve the Lord beside them – and you.

Honored to serve.

Dale Smith
InterAct Ministries
Executive Director

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!
Matthew 7:11 NIV

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.
Luke 18:1 NIV

Bonus material - once again 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 (churches) across the North Pacific Crescent. (This is my heart – to see fully trained disciples gathered.)