



SLT Report, February 2016

Looking down the road

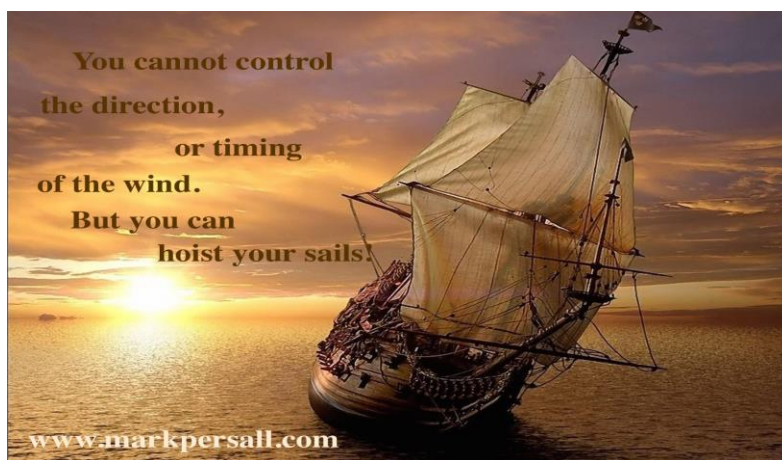
As we look to the future, it is important to remember that our needs as individuals and as a community are ever changing and being transformed through the Spirit. We are not a static people, and thus our structures and practices should not be seen as static either. The winds of change will blow, and we must be prepared to set our sails to follow God's leading. A wise community and Servant Leader Team will learn to anticipate some of these winds. Let us explore a few thoughts and ideas on winds that are or should be blowing in GOWCC.

Winds that are blowing

1. **Individualism.** Some winds will blow where we do not want to go, and should not go. We live in a culture that idolizes individualism but avoids serious transformation. What we should want at GoW is individual spiritual transformation that spreads into the community in a healthy way. Our spiritual lives are not our own. Our spiritual lives are the stories we tell one another so that we all have the opportunity to experience transformation. This is where discipleship begins.
2. **Community.** This wind is not blowing in the way that it used to blow. Overall, GoW has moved from 'intentional community' and towards 'practical community'. We have lost some elements of sharing our spiritual lives, our homes, our belongings and our money. But, community is happening. Sharing childcare, our food, our tables and our time is increasing; but it is not necessarily happening in all sectors of the community.
3. **Children and youth.** We have an abundance of children at GoW. What changes need to be made for them? Do we treat them as if they are just along for the ride? Or, do we adults go out of our way to welcome them, connect with them, and mentor them? How do we help them to discover their gifts and become the adults that they very

soon will be? How do we support their parents and make community events a place to celebrate and enjoy?

4. Aging. We are all getting older. As we age, we often do not need the same supports around us as when we were younger, and thus we do not engage in the same way. We are looking for something new, which for many of us, is reflection, contemplation, and exercising our gifts, as we move towards the end of our lives. This can sometimes feel like it is in direct opposition the needs of the younger generations.
5. Grief and loss. We are moving into a time when we will be losing our friends to an earthly death. This is as it should be, but that does not make it easy. What supports do we need? How do we best support one another during these difficult times? What will our rituals be as a community as we say goodbye to those we love and care for?



Winds to steer towards

1. Mutual discipleship. Discipleship is a word that can sometimes make us uncomfortable. If we add the word 'mutual' it might make discipleship an easier word to live with. Historically we might have thought of discipleship as one person teaching, and another learning. There is nothing inherently wrong with this model, but we are sometimes a stiff-necked, anti-authoritarian, individualistic gathering of people, and this perception of discipleship can rub us the wrong way. If we can change our thoughts, to discipleship being a two-way street, we may be more willing to enter into relationships where we are mutually accountable and being disciplined.

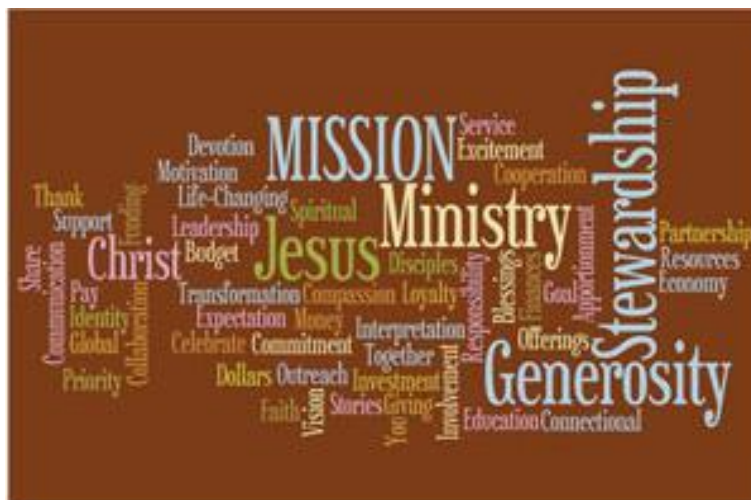
In ancient Greek, to be a disciple means to learn and to follow. Yes, we have the Bible, and our own experiences to learn from, but we also have one another. We all have much to teach and much to learn. Behind all of our other various reasons for being a church-community together, lies this one; to learn and to follow Christ. And, as we are all journeying to become more and more Christ-like, why not rely on each other to become more and more transformed into the disciples that Christ is calling us to be?

2. Intentional community. Grain of Wheat, as a Christian community, is intended to be a place to transform into who God wants us to be. A place to explore the edges of our faith and beliefs, while journeying together in time of both joy and sorrow. Community is hard work. Community is the holy grinding of the rough spots of life. Community is the support system that says, together we can journey to the best life God has for us, choosing to follow Christ to the best of our ability.

How do we choose to be part of an Intentional Community? What is required of each of us to step out of our comfort zones, to reach out to create a space of safety and healthy challenge for our fellow travellers? What is required for GOWCC to become truly multi-generational; where each person (very young & older) is valued and treasured for the energy, enthusiasm, gifts, talents they bring to the group?

3. Worship - Grain of Wheat has a tradition of rich, creative, meaningful worship times. What is most precious and how do we carry this into the future? What might we need to let go of?

When we gather together to worship, we do so as a community. A collection of people with different needs and preferences. There is currently some tension between what our plethora of children need in a worship time, and what many adults are looking for in a worship time? How do we balance this out? How do we enrich this time together for one another as we worship together? How do we share this with our children? How can we encourage growth, exploration in worship and learning about our God and Creator.



Budget Reflections

Matthew 6:21 tells us “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”. Do you see this in the GOW budget? Our discussions around Time, Talent & Treasure showed us that GOW values worship and community. Does our budget adequately reflect that? How does a budget reflect time? Is it the time we spend together building community – retreats, Common Meals, family events? Does our budget reflect our talents? Does that mean we support people who lead worship well? Or maybe our teaching times? What about musicians? Maybe treasure is the easy piece – God loves it when we give back some of our financial treasure. But what about other treasure – our time and talents are treasure as well.

But I have a bigger question – in whatever you understand about budgets and finances – do you see God reflected in how GOWCC chooses to spend money? Do you see the reflection of GOW’s priorities in our choices of ministries we support? What are your questions?

Questions to think about for 2017 and beyond:

- 1 – Looking ahead to 2017, we will need to make difficult decisions about our financial treasure. Can you see places that GOW’s budget does not reflect our heart?
- 2 – GOW finds itself more and more in a place of paying Servant Leaders to do what was once done on a volunteer basis. Are we sharing our time and talents as God wants us to?

Seed Groups for 2016-17

Below is the outline for how we will be reforming seed groups this next year. As always, at this time of year, a number of thoughts and wonderings arise as to if we should keep this same model, or do something differently. We feel that we are too far into the year to make any significant changes to what we have been doing in recent years. We did approach the seed group leaders this last autumn with possible changes. After discussion with them, we felt it best to keep our model for this year. However, we do have an opportunity now, to evaluate and discuss possible changes for the upcoming years. Please pass along any thoughts on our seed group structures to the SLT during the rest of winter and into early spring, so we can decide whether this needs a more formal community conversation.

Feb. 24th – Seed groups have initial talk about whether they are continuing next year

March 23rd – Seed groups make final decision as to whether they are continuing for 2016-17

March 24th – Seed group leaders tell leadership who is moving on and who is staying in their groups and whether they are continuing leading.

March 29th – SLT start shoulder tapping potential SGLs

April 27th – Deadline for new seed group proposals

May 9th – deadline for new seed group choices

May 24th – New seed groups finalized and announced/posted

June 8th – Last meeting of old seed groups

June 22nd – First meeting of new seed groups

