

This new edition of GO reflects on a range of differing wholistic approaches to the mission of God Interserve has been committed to for more than 160 years now. Practice and reflection need to be two sides of the same coin, mutually informing each other, but also helping us to determine the way forward, to discern how God's Spirit is seeking to guide us into the next season of organisational life.

We have talked in past editions about change, about deepening our spirituality and strengthening community, and about building the next generation. Currently we are wrestling with our purpose and identity as a worldwide mission fellowship in a much-changed global environment. All too often we human beings desire the seductive safety of status quo over the at-times-painful work which change brings upon us. Yet without pain there is no gain, as the saying goes. For disciples of Jesus there is no other way!

As we look at our world and its needs and opportunities, it is paramount that we be innovative and creative. Our heavenly Father is the ultimate Creator and Innovator, so we can lean into Him to learn how He works, and follow His example. After all, that was the Jesus way – doing only what He saw the Father do, He continually surprised His followers with new approaches.

Making wholistic disciples was the theme

of our last magazine – that was how Jesus framed the task for all who would follow Him. He modelled it; He grew His little band that way and amply demonstrated that the approach works (and so much better than all of our wonderful programmes). He is committed to working with us as we obey Him, as we help build disciples into a transformed and transforming community, His church.

As God's community on earth, the church – with all of its faults, warts and wrinkles – is nevertheless God's way 'to demonstrate His wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places' (Ephesians 3:10). Building the church forms the core of Interserve's deepening commitment to 'see His kingdom come and His will done, here on earth as it is in heaven', and so we work alongside, within, and through it.

Engaging in such outreach, we dare not neglect to intentionally focus on deepening our own personal and corporate spiritual walk, and on becoming emotionally whole. It seems improbable but so many of us who profess allegiance to Christ, and even serve in His name, do not spend time with Him, nor allow Him to go to those painful and broken places which cripple and blunt us. Christians can be some of the least emotionally healthy people around, yet God's call is to restore, to heal, to renew. Taking His healing to the nations, going as healers of individuals and communities

requires us to experience this as well, accessing His throne of grace.

And for that we need to regularly draw aside, into silence, reflection, contemplation. We live in a noisy and unrelenting world, more so than for any previous generation. Many of us are out of control, driven by forces outside of us, no longer aware of our emotions, ourselves, and our choices. Sabbath rest and rhythms of life are crucial elements of spiritual discipline we need to relearn if we want to know God and make Him known. Many of those who have gone before us can teach us such things, and can inspire us to believe that faithful prophetic minorities can and will turn nations. Soli Deo Gloria!

Joanne

