

**Small Talk – June 2 2021**  
**By Michael Small**

For the first nine years of my life, my father spent many of those years at sea, usually as a First Mate on a Merchant Marine vessel somewhere in the Pacific Ocean. After moving from the Merchant Marines to the U.S. Coast Guard he brought home with him some of the tools he used for sailing and navigation. One of my favorites, the one I liked to pull out, look at, and look through was my father's "celestial navigational sextant". With maps, stars, the horizon, and the sextant one can determine their location at sea and set forth the next steps in your journey. It was a long and tried tool for navigation used for hundreds of years. Now navigation on sea and land is done by satellite – far more accurate and sometimes less artistic I suspect!

I ask, what are the tools that are available to us – to navigate through the stormy and turbulent seas of our time? What are the maps we can use to boldly move into a future that is sometimes blocked by many obstacles? What will be the sources of wisdom for making the hard decisions?

First, I would suggest that we invest in science, research, and development. Our research needs to cover all the fields that we might discover ways to live in harmony with one another – living in ways that are both sustainable to self, to all of humanity, and for all of the earth. May self, all of humanity, and the earth live in ways that promote life, liberty, fulfillment, productivity, accountability, joy, respect, and happiness. May we discover ways to become earthlings who walk with gratitude and who dream dreams and see visions for what we are becoming.

Secondly, may we be guided by, and into the ways of wisdom. That wisdom may be ancient or just unfolding. It may be present or distant. That wisdom may come from personal experience, science, research, history, poetry, fiction, meditation, faith systems, ancient teachings that have been tried, tested, and found to be true. May we always be grounded in truth, truth that builds up and creates and led by the spirit. Truth that is expansive, not restrictive. May we constantly be open to new wisdom unfolding before us and within us each and every day. May we be willing to be surprised, laugh, and change letting go of those things that hinder and hold back. I try to ground the wisdom I follow by comparing and contrasting it to the touchstone ways and wisdom of Jesus and the prophets. If wisdom bears good and healthy fruit and behavior, more than likely it is true, for now. If wisdom reveals paths for going forward in healthy and sustainable ways – I will at least explore that path. If wisdom brings joy, fulfillment, and challenge to the many that creates healthy and inclusive communities, then I am on-board. When wisdom constricts, shuts down relationship and conversation, when it becomes exclusive, unreasonable, even violent – then I seek another path.

Lastly, walk your path in mindful ways, with eyes and ears open. Be aware of what it is you are feeling. Listen to heart. Breathe deeply. Pause. See, hear, feel . . . and respond.

Find place to be quiet and reflect. And as said in previous writings - take a break from your social media. Jim Burklo writes in his most recent *Musings* of a friend Shane who says “The social media companies have commodified our attention’. Getting it back means looking up, looking within, being mindful of that constant physical urge to check our smart phones. It means taking a break from devices long enough to be mindful of everything else. Shane sees liberation from social media as the most recent front in the long struggle for freedom from oppressive social systems.”

As we use our newly found “celestial navigation sextants” let us move into this day with intention and greater purpose – making space for a new way of being through the doors of wisdom, light, joy, meaning, and contentment.

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

***To Donate***

***And watch 11:00 am Sunday worship services live and at any time.***

***Go to [www.uccwalker.com](http://www.uccwalker.com)***

***Find back issues of “Small Talk”.***