

AC TALK

WHERE THE APOSTOLIC COUNCIL SHARE THEIR HEARTS

FEBRUARY 2011



FROM KEITH'S HEART TO YOURS

It's a real privilege for me to greet the Church of the Nations family at the outset of the new year.

I trust that the days that will go down in history as 2011 will prove to have been a time of deep and significant intervention by Father God in your life.

I am conscious of the fact that AC Talk finds its way into many different nations where we are represented, and is read and received by many in our family whose culture, language and living conditions differ vastly from mine. The challenge in writing this article then, is to bear in mind that, in our unity we are diverse,

and to try and capture something that the Lord might be saying to all of us, despite our different cultural backgrounds. There are three things I pray for the year ahead.

1. **That we recapture a sense of the greatness of God.** By the time you read this article, I hope that you'll have had a chance to access my latest blog update, where I will elaborate a little more on this theme. For now, let me say that I believe we are in desperate need of a fresh encounter with the side of God that we don't easily understand or make time for. I am so grateful for the fact that we have learned to know Him

as our Father, as the one who graces us with His presence and power, that He reveals Himself as the One who is not detached from us but as one involving Himself in our lives. But, we run the risk of so reducing God to our experiential level that we forget about how majestic and righteous and awesome He really is. He is my Saviour, but He is also my Lord. I was so encouraged to read Tony's AC Talk article at the end of last year, where he reminded us of the Kingship of Jesus. It's that level of awestruck wonder that needs to find its way back into our thinking, speaking, and experience.



2. That we maintain substance in our lives.

I remember clearly, a conversation I had some time back with a friend of mine who would not call himself a Christian, but whose opinion and wisdom I have long appreciated and admired.

He was comparing two men with whom he had worked, who claimed to be followers of Jesus, but whose impact on his life had been vastly different. The thing that had caused the one to have real influence into my friend's life was that he had *gravitas*. The dictionary defines the word *gravitas* as "weightiness, importance, bearing, presence". In other words, this man had SUBSTANCE and that substance had profoundly affected my non-Christian friend.

I can't help but wonder how much *gravitas* we carry in the circles in which we move? And, if we do have that weightiness, how consistently do people see it and experience it? Do we really have the right to speak into people's lives because of the way we live out our testimony before them, regularly, rhythmically, consistently, believably? We can speak all we like about being Kingdom people, about taking back ground from the enemy, yet fail at the very basic hurdles because we lack weightiness, bearing, and substance. I am regularly challenged in my own heart about whether I am a person of substance because of who I am in Christ and the way I live out my life and express my opinions before man; why people would want to take me seriously; why they would want to seek out my opinion or advice, and so on. As I write this article, the world's foremost business and political leaders are meeting in Davos for the World

Economic Forum 2011. The agenda items are: Economic growth, Environmental stability, Financial systems, Health for all, and Social development. All of these sound very familiar, don't they, and well they should, because they're part of Christ's Kingdom agenda. My question then is this: what Christian presence will there be at something as important as this conference, and, assuming we are there, how much *gravitas* will be accorded to the opinions of the people of God?

I pray that we will be a people who carry substantial, influential weight because we have a believable testimony of the grace of God in our lives that is obvious to anyone who encounters us.

3. That we appreciate the privilege of belonging to something bigger than ourselves.

I have yet to meet someone whom I'd regard as being an influence for the good of the Kingdom, who does not appreciate the need for accountability or alignment with spiritual oversight in their lives. That's not to suggest that I amount to something significant only because there's someone keeping an eye on me. However, as we teach in our basic values, we do believe strongly that a man or woman under authority, carries authority. It's something Jesus was only too willing to embrace as He held Himself accountable to the Father, and a principle He warmly endorsed as He interacted with the Roman centurion who had approached Jesus to heal his servant. Nowhere in Scripture to my knowledge, are we given licence to operate as individualistic followers of Jesus. Part of Jesus' death on Calvary

COTN - How we function

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Rather than looking to "the corporate world" to define our structure, we choose to honour our values and look to Biblical Hebrew understanding. [Judges 6:15](#) says, 'So he said to Him, "Oh my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.'" In this verse it is clear that the Hebrew people lived in family, clan, tribe and nation. The structure of COTN is built on a similar foundation and the language used is as follows:

FAMILY = A CHURCH

The structure of local churches in COTN varies.

CLAN = A CLUSTER

This is a grouping of churches and ministries relating to a spiritual father or fathers.

TRIBE = COTN

Church of the Nations



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was to redeem for Himself a people who are set apart and who form a family here on earth and that they would provoke those who don't follow Him to envy.

The early believers, in their very public practice of believer's baptism by being fully immersed in full view of the very civic authorities who would seek their death for such identity with Jesus, continued this practice, as they viewed it as symbolic of what Jesus had done for them spiritually, making them part of His body. Whether I like it or not, my claim to be a child of God places on me the imperative of being part of His bigger picture, and makes me accountable to the body of Christ for my actions, beliefs, and behaviour. It's been my experience that when I've got something to hide, or I reveal my immaturity by being easily offended and not being able to take Godly correction, that that's the time when I most readily speak negatively of being aligned and holding myself accountable to spiritual fathers. But when my life is focused on pleasing Father and fulfilling His mandate for me, I will be only too glad to be aligned with those who have the same focus, and to be held accountable by people of such stature. I'm the first to admit that there's a lot of stuff being taught and



practiced in the name of spiritual fathering and sonship, alignment, accountability and other related terms which we in COTN have come to value deeply, and with which we could never be associated. However, just because there's a wrong approach does not mean that we can afford to ignore something as important as this principle.

So, those are my three areas of prayer for us as a family of churches, made up as we are of individual believers who are called to be a Kingdom people.

Be blessed.

Keith



KEITH & SHELLEY du PLESSIS

Keith and Shelley serve on the COTN Apostolic Council, and are in full time pastoral ministry in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. They find great delight in helping Christians understand the power of being correctly aligned, discovering their redemptive purpose and call in God, and then living it out daily.

COTN-WHAT WE ENVISION

We envision the world learning about, accepting and focusing on Jesus and His Kingdom on earth.

We see authentic Christianity as coming under the loving Lordship of Jesus Christ and being joined to a community of believers who are learning to live a new life in a new way. We want each and every person given to us to live a self-governed life while fulfilling their God-given destiny within a community of believers.

The Great Commission was given by Jesus as an apostolic mandate to disciple nations. This was based on God's original purpose stated in Genesis when He gave man a dominion and a domestic mandate. Jesus commanded us to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, not the gospel of the church.

So we see local churches reaching their destiny when aligned to an apostolic vision. This allows Jesus to fulfill His promise when He said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it" ([Matthew 16:18](#)).

KINGDOM AUTHORITY

Recently I wrote an update to our Makarios Cluster reflecting on the latter part of 2010 and expectations for 2011. I concluded it with an encouragement from Wellington Boon, a wonderful African American apostolic leader in the USA, who received a scripture from God for 2011. After reading it I also sensed it was a word for me and all of you. The scripture is 1st Corinthians 16:9 KJV

“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and (there are) many adversaries.” The Amplified version says “For a wide door of opportunity for effectual (service) has opened to me (there, a great and promising one), and (there are) many adversaries.”

I am currently in Australia. The nation here is suffering through the tragedy of the Queensland floods which have also now affected the rest of the Eastern states. It is so sad to see so many loose so much. I was in Queensland last week and, even as I write this, the state is preparing for a cyclone which is being reported as one of the biggest on record. With the apparent increase of natural disasters and growing turmoil in the Middle East, one is continually aware of the need for the Kingdom’s advance as the earth continues to groan waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of the Kinadom.



We talked much about cross over during 2010 but 2011 needs to be a year where we crossover into greater Kingdom authority than we have ever known. Most of the prophetic words I have seen concerning this year refer to “great opportunity” and yet also “warnings.” Warnings of false doctrine, apathy, pride and even to be watchful as the enemy sows tares in the midst.

Take ground this year, grow in your Kingdom authority, seize this day! But be alert!

Tony



TONY & MARILYN FITZGERALD

Tony and Marilyn have planted and pioneered many churches, and continue to influence churches within COTN worldwide. They place strong emphasis on the Father Heart of God, Kingdom and Finances and they have a passion to see the Kingdom of God established.

COTN EVENTS

COTN Conference SA	UNITE TO IGNITE	Johannesburg, SA 14-16 April 2011	conference@hrm.org.za www.cotn.org
COTN Day of Prayer		International COTN family 11 Sept 2011	prayer@cotn.org www.cotn.org
COTN Conference Calgary		Calgary, CANADA 20-23 Oct 2011	www.cotn.org

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