



# Values & Procedures Manual

A large, teal-tinted image of the Earth as seen from space, showing the curvature of the planet and swirling cloud patterns. It occupies the bottom half of the page.

*cofn*  
CHURCH OF THE NATIONS

# History

During a prayer time in 1978, a seed was planted for what has become Church of the Nations (COTN) - ministry hubs that would win, train and send people to places where the hurting would be healed, the captives freed and lives restored to live in the destiny God had purposed for them. These hubs were to serve other centres, so that multiplication could take place. In 1979, it became clear that the vision was really the planting and establishing of local churches. In September 1979, a church - Abundant Life Ministries - was established in England and the foundation of what was to become COTN was laid.

Church planting began and God joined hearts in covenant relationships around the world. Ten years later, in 1989, an international conference was held in the UK and that which was operating under various names, came together under the name of Church of the Nations. Our second decade had begun.

As the journey continued into the second decade, it became a time of multiplication. COTN was watched over by an International Team served by a Presbytery of four men. Church planting was taking place and already established churches were also being added to the family. New nations were beginning to open to us. Towards the end of this decade, the leadership realised that COTN had come of age and that to walk into our third decade and the new millennium, structure needed to be put in place which would serve the growth of this stage of our life. In October 1999, the International Team met in London to accomplish this. While fine-tuning this in the months that followed, COTN began operating in this structure and already enjoyed the fruit of it. That which was decided is as follows:

## *The Vision, Heart and Structure*

The following outlines the vision, heart and structure of COTN or, as it has become known to us over the years, the **cause, community and corporation**:

# The Vision, Heart and Structure

## *Mission Declaration*

A Family of Apostolic Clusters,  
Advancing the Kingdom of God.

## *Vision*

To plant, build and strengthen local churches, with  
the goal of advancing God's Kingdom.

## *Strategy*

To accomplish this by:

1. Bringing people into wholeness, being equipped and released to fulfil their destiny
2. Raising up leaders
3. Training
4. Trans-local ministry
5. Church planting teams
6. Conference and leadership gatherings
7. Missions and evangelistic outreach
8. Mercy ministries
9. Establishment of apostolic clusters



# The Vision, Heart and Structure

## COMMUNITY: *(The Family Heart)*

Every church, like a person, has a personality. Our purpose focuses on “what we do”, while our style focuses on “how we do it”. The personality or lifestyle of the local church determines how it goes about doing its ministry. Our style of ministry (or what is commonly known as our Philosophy of Ministry) is developed out of a clear understanding of the Biblical values to which we hold.

COTN should be recognized, not because we all look the same, but rather because we have the same heart (DNA) and we hold to the same values.



Understanding the principle of building from relationship to structure, rather than from structure to relationship, we embrace the following values:

## Values

- Christ-centred lives, expressing the Lordship of Christ.
- Apostolic alignment.
- Accountability (being under authority releases authority).
- The principle of spiritual Fathers and Sons.
- Expressing the Father heart of God.
- A sense of belonging and family.
- Authentic Relationships (openness, honesty and integrity).
- A Spirit-filled church where the ministry of the Holy Spirit is a priority.
- Team ministry.
- Unity in the Body of Christ.
- Living Bible-based Christianity.

# Values . . . continued

- The priesthood of all believers and every believer a minister.
- The unique value and divine destiny of each individual.
- Living a supernatural life, naturally.
- Excellence of ministry.
- Sacrificial servanthood.
- Passion for God, His church and His Kingdom.
- Kingdom values, vision and lifestyle.
- A world vision and a compassionate burden for the lost.
- Righteousness and justice are the foundations of the Kingdom.
- Living life in the grace and mercy of God.
- A Kingdom influence and impact on the moral fabric of society.
- Hebrew rather than a Greek (Hellenistic) mentality.
- The principle of reasoning from the whole to the part.
- God confirms His Word through signs and wonders.
- Implementing God's economy through Kingdom stewardship.

Christ-centered lives clearly expressing the Lordship of Jesus.

*Value:*  
an engagement  
of a set of belief  
systems we live by.

# The Glorious Church

The foundation series, “The Glorious Church” by Tony Fitzgerald, teaches the heart on which COTN is built. Many of the subjects covered in this series are also taught in expanded form in their own series.

## THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

### COURSE OUTLINE:

**Ephesians 5:25-27, 4:11-18, 1:22-23**



- T** Thy Kingdom Come
- H** Hebrew Mentality
- E** Evangelistic Community
  
- G** Giving; Grace
- L** Love
- O** Order and Government
- R** Radical and Relevant
- I** Inspirational Faith; Intercession
- O** One Anothers and Servanthood
- U** Unity
- S** Supernatural; Spiritual Warfare
  
- C** Christ-Centered
- H** Hospitality; Hope
- U** Unlimited Potential of Every Believer
- R** Revival, Restoration and Reformation
- C** Community and Commitment
- H** Healing Environment

# Corporation - The Structure

## *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:

COTN Terminology:

### *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

### *Nation = The Body of Christ*

The Church international

A sense of belonging  
and family.

*Note: From here on in this document, we will therefore refer to church, cluster, COTN and The Body of Christ.*

# COTN Structure

## COTN Structure

COTN is protected and watched over internationally by “The Apostolic Council”.

## The Apostolic Council

The Apostolic Council is a team of Apostolic fathers and other acknowledged five fold ministries.

**Note:** From here on the Apostolic Council may be referred to as the AC.



This council will continue to grow, but one is added to it by the acceptance of the AC after identification and recommendation of the council members. This is seen as a council of peers for the following:

1. Fellowship and accountability within the Apostolic Council and shepherding and bishoping each other.
2. Overseeing doctrine.
3. Overseeing the upholding of COTN values.
4. Casting corporate vision, and maintaining and executing the vision for COTN.
5. Nurturing unity and relationships within COTN.
6. Recognising and releasing clusters and their leaders.
7. Overseeing the moral and personal lifestyles of cluster leaders.
8. Initiating international events.
9. Building unity with the wider Body of Christ.



# How do churches relate?

## *A Church's Relationship to Cluster*

Churches in COTN are governed and led by their governing elders, and are directly served by an apostolic father or fathers. This is a person who is seen by the local leadership as their apostolic input and relational link into COTN. This normally occurs through a father/son (or sons) relationship that has developed over time, and relates primarily at a leadership level and through that, to the church. We regard local leadership as spiritual fatherhood into the local church, whereas apostolic fatherhood is leadership into adult fathers and therefore more of a grandfather role to the rest of that church. The involvement of this fatherhood role varies depending on history, relationship and whether it is a church plant or adoption.

Churches relate into COTN through a person, not through a committee or a team, although that person may have a team serving him in that task when required. That person would be either the leader of a cluster or one who is linked through a relationship to that cluster leader.

## *A Cluster's Relationship To COTN*

Apostolic cluster leaders personally relate into COTN directly through a member of the Apostolic Council. This Council has no direct government into any local church except through its cluster leadership. It does have authority in dealing with matters arising in leadership of a sinful nature or a dispute that needs oversight ruling.

Righteousness and justice are  
the foundations of the Kingdom.

# Explanation of Chart

At the centre of the relationship flow is the Apostolic Council. For purposes of the illustration, 'A' would be a member of the Apostolic Council. (If 'A' were not a member of the AC, he would need to relate to a member of the Council).

'A' would, by virtue of his gifting of being a father (Ephesians 4 equipping ministry), lead a cluster of sons and/or churches. Ideally (although not imperatively), these sons would be in leadership or defined ministry. Let's call these sons B,C,D,E,F & G, for the sake of the exercise.

Out of this group each again may have sons, but by way of illustration we have singled out 'G'. 'G' has a cluster comprising six sons of which one is 'K'. 'K' develops a powerful network and becomes a man of stature in the body of Christ and goes on to develop a cluster of sons in his own right.

The possibility does exist, but it is unlikely that 'K' could be invited to be a member of the Apostolic Council, whilst his Father 'G' is not. Such invitation is at the discretion of the Apostolic Council, and not

of necessity because either 'G' or 'K' are cluster leaders.

Built on the principles of discipleship and multiplication, it is our desire to see sons become fathers while still walking in a measure of sonship. In COTN we desire to see the multiplication of all aspects of our life, including clusters. Through multiplication, no cluster leader will become overstretched.

The time could come when 'G' would be released from the direct relationship with 'A' (should 'G' become part of the Apostolic Council) and lead his own cluster. This would both release the principle of multiplication of clusters, and 'A' to father a new son.

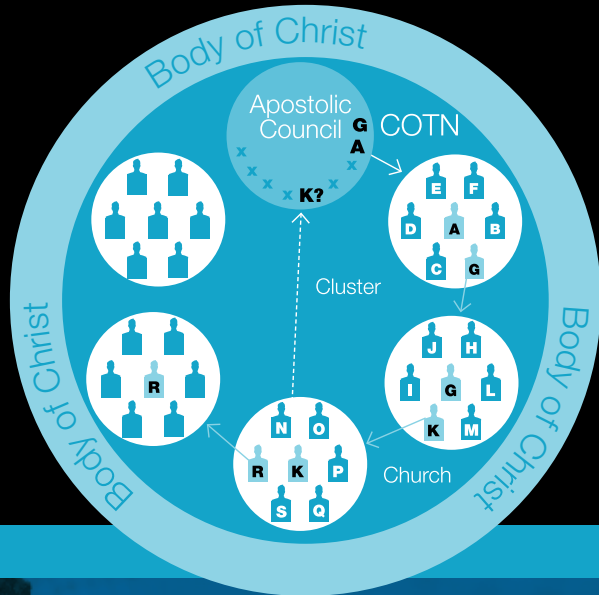
Within this structure, there is room for both churches and whole clusters to be adopted into COTN.

Building a prophetic vision towards unity, without compromising one's own vision, requires the ability to reason from the whole to the part, not the part to

the whole; even though we reason from the whole to the part, it is expressed in its practical outworking from the part to the whole.

It is important to recognise the difference between growth of COTN as a whole and caring for the churches within clusters. Finding COTN life within countries, nations or common geographical areas etc., need not challenge or cause insecurity in the father and son relationships that are already established in clusters.

Being given to the whole is the only way we can maintain unity with diversity, and save us from the sectarian spirit warned against by the Scripture, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos".



# How do churches relate?

## *A Church's Relationship To COTN*

The above outlines the way a church is cared for, served and protected, and how its local leadership lives with accountability and security. Because this is relationally based and not geographical, there are instances where COTN churches will be close to others geographically, yet relating to different clusters. In the area of vision, it is important that each church sees COTN and not just cluster. The whole of COTN is available to be drawn on by all the churches and it is important that together we find vision for geographical areas, regions, countries etc. This should neither cause any insecurity nor challenge cluster relationships.

## *COTN's Relationship to the Body of Christ*

The leaders of COTN will continue to build relationships into the wider body of Christ. This will happen through the Apostolic Council relating to

apostolic streams and other ministries. Furthermore, this will happen at local church level as each church builds relationships within their locality, and with the rest of the body of Christ - believing that God's desire is unity. Ultimately, it is the expression of the body of Christ that is the goal and must always be our aim.

## *Becoming a part of COTN*

A church becomes a part of COTN in one of two ways. Firstly, through the initiative of the Apostolic Council, cluster, or church, having planted a new church. Secondly, a church that is already in existence, sensing a joining in relationship with a leader of COTN and desiring to be a part of something bigger than themselves. As the Bible says, "God puts the solitary into families". (Ps 68:5).

We refer to the first way as birth and the second as adoption. When a church is coming in through adoption, it would normally happen via the following process:

# How do churches relate?

## *Friendship Phase*

It is normally this phase that has introduced the church to COTN, as a friendship has been established over some time with a COTN leader and the church has been exposed to our life.

## *Engaging Phase*

During this time, there would be a visit or visits from cluster leadership (or their representatives) to meet with the elders, share our values and procedures, minister in the church, etc. The link relationship, if

different to the cluster leadership, would also remain in continuing contact and friendship.

## *Welcome into COTN event*

For this to take place a church must:

- Be Eldership ruled.
- Embrace the values and principles of COTN.
- Be Apostolically aligned, which means holding itself accountable to apostolic oversight, government and fathering.

Principle of reasoning from  
the whole to the part

# Becoming a part of COTN

## *Ongoing Relationship*

The ongoing relationship is always a two-way experience. Conferences, leadership times, missions and church planting etc., all provide opportunities for involvement in the whole, while ministry input, accountability and help are provided for the church through the cluster. Although a new church relates into a specific cluster, the resources and giftings of COTN as a whole are made available.

All these procedures may vary slightly because of history, relationship and cluster emphasis, but the overall principles are to be followed.



## *Finances*

We are given to the principle of the tithe and that the answer to the need is the seed. Therefore, we ask that all churches in the COTN family give at least 10% of their income out of themselves to their cluster fund. The cluster will then give a tithe of that income to the COTN International Fund. In addition, we encourage each local church to work towards setting aside another 10% towards its own mission fund.

Giving should always be done out of a spirit of liberality and relationship, and never be viewed as a tax or due. It should be seen as a joy to participate in the whole knowing that God has called us together to reach the nations. The set leader of a cluster, or extra-local Ephesians 4 ministries, may consider personally tithing to their spiritual storehouse.

# Conclusion

In all the above, it is important to remember that the focus is Jesus and His Kingdom on earth.

Let's always be aware that:

The Word did not become a philosophy, a theory or a concept to be discussed, orated or pondered, but the Word became a person to be followed, enjoyed and loved.

A world vision and a  
compassionate burden for the lost.

# Statement of Faith

- **We Believe** that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and that they only constitute the Divine Rule of Christian faith and practice.
- **We Believe** there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things and who is the only proper Object of Worship.
- **We Believe** there are three Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.
- **We Believe** that Jesus Christ was God made manifest in the flesh; truly and properly God and truly and properly man, and that He, by His suffering and death, made atonement for sin and that by His resurrection, there is eternal life for all who believe.
- **We Believe** that since the fall of our first parents, man is entirely unable in his own strength, to find salvation and reconciliation with God and that he is wholly dependent upon God's grace and mercy.
- **We Believe** that salvation, by God's grace, depends upon repentance, faith in God, cleansing by the shed blood of Jesus and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
- **We Believe** that baptism in water is a personal and dynamic meeting with God and a sign of the believer's death, burial and resurrection in Jesus Christ.
- **We Believe** it is the privilege of all believers, in response to the command of God's Word, to receive the power of the Holy Spirit to live holy and victorious lives, and that the Holy Spirit operates through gifts, ministries and manifestations to glorify Jesus through His Body to the world.
- **We Believe** that Jesus Christ, at the time of His ascension into Heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father, gifted the Church with living ministry expressions of Himself through apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the building up of the Body of Christ and the equipping of the believers to the work of service.



# Statement of Faith

- **We Believe** that neither ritual, tradition, ceremony or rite can replace conversion, relationship with God, or true worship, and that nothing less than the Lordship of Christ upon a life is the mark of a Christian.
- **We Believe** in the continuance of the Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, as instituted by Jesus with His disciples, so that we may truly discern the Body of Christ in its totality, unity and authority, and that this celebration stands as a memorial of Christ's suffering and death and as a prophecy of His coming, and as such is commanded to all His followers until that Day.
- **We Believe** in the physical, triumphant return of Jesus Christ to an overcoming and glorious Church.
- **We Believe** it is the commission of the Church to go into the whole world to preach the gospel and extend the Kingdom of God, knowing that "this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come."
- **We Believe** in the judgment of God, in the eternal punishment of the wicked and in the everlasting happiness of the righteous.

Influence and impact on the moral fabric of society.

## *Footnote:*

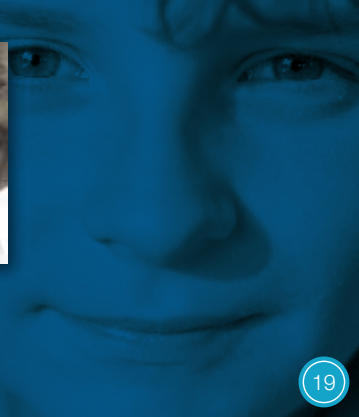
*This Statement of Faith may form the basis for Statements of Faith of COTN local churches.*

# Core Scripture

Therefore go and make disciples  
of all nations, baptising them in the  
Name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit,  
and teaching them to obey everything  
I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always,  
to the very end of the age.

*Matthew 28:19 & 20*



A Family of Apostolic Clusters  
Advancing the Kingdom of God.



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[www.cotn.org](http://www.cotn.org)