

AOTALK

WHERE THE
APOSTOLIC COUNCIL
SHARE THEIR HEARTS

OCT
2012



FROM
TONY'S
HEART TO
YOURS

Earlier this year Marilyn and I stood on Nicholson Street in Bairnsdale, Australia, thanking God for his faithfulness over the 40 years of life and ministry we have shared together since first being posted to the Salvation Army corps — on that same street — as newly commissioned officers, way back in 1972.

We had arrived in Bairnsdale — our first appointment out of college — in our early 20's, with one baby daughter and little else besides a call to serve God with all our hearts. Years later, having served our wonderful King and His Kingdom for over four decades on three different continents, the journey continues from our base in the USA with nearby family members that include three daughters, their husbands, and eleven grandchildren.

We can now look back on a lifetime of choices which have led to much change in our life of continual adventure. Milestone moments like these provide an opportunity to reflect on both the successes and failures which mark the many

EMBRACING change

changes one experiences over such a 40-year season. "Constant change is here to stay," was the foundational statement in the early years of our COTN family. Well, that has certainly proven true!

I have been thinking a lot about change recently — personal, economic, political, and even global change. Perhaps the World has never gone through as much change as it is currently experiencing. I have been mindful of many changes in Church life, as well — all bringing adjustment and shaping of direction as the Kingdom of Heaven continues to increase on the Earth.

My 40 years of ministry started in the midst of a visitation of God on the earth — the Charismatic Movement and Jesus Revolution — a time of dramatic change that continues to reverberate across the global body of Christ today. In the midst of such constant change, there are moments that affect not only your life, but impact

history as well; moments of seismic change that “shift” the very ground under our feet. One such time was the Protestant Reformation which began nearly 500 years ago.

Recently, Marilyn and I were ministering in Magdeburg, Germany, the first city to see large scale defections from Catholicism as a result of the preaching of Martin Luther in the early days of the great reform movement God initiated, in part, through Luther’s willingness to embrace changes that departed from his own church experience.

Luther had returned to the city of his youth after famously nailing his “95 Theses” — arguing against the power of the Pope’s indulgences — to the door of All Saints’ Church in Wittenberg on 31 October, 1517, a day that changed the world in so many ways.

Now, nearly half a millennium later — and after 40 years of Cold War Communist occupation — there are probably less than 1,000 Evangelical/ Pentecostal believers among Magdeburg’s population of nearly one quarter of a million people.

An area just north of this region “boasts” the smallest percentage of believers in God — any god! — than anywhere else in the world. Even at this moment, Lutheran pastors in Germany are embroiled in debate over the very existence of God!

Encouraging the remnant in Magdeburg, and witnessing their fervency and passion, was a privilege and inspiration for me, yet even in places like this, where reforms once took root that changed the landscape of Christianity forever, there is still much to be done to see the kingdom rule of God on earth restored.

One of the results of the seismic change brought by The Protestant Reformation was **the Scriptures being given back to ordinary people**. The time of restoration of all things began afresh.

Along with many others, I believe a second Reformation is coming, and can already be seen in the incredible advance of the Kingdom we see around the world today — led by apostolic wisdom, organically grown through an activated body of believers — **as the Church itself is now given back to the people**.

We need to be a people who not only **expect** change, but **embrace** it.

To enter into all this season holds, we need to be a people who not only expect change, but embrace it. This kind of change will challenge our comfort zones and deal with our preconceived ideas. We must be a people who do not let fear hold us back from taking the necessary faith steps required to facilitate ongoing Spirit-led change that forcefully advances our Great King’s rule in the Earth (Matthew 11:12).

Five hundred years ago, whole cities and even nations changed. We could see it again in our own day, and even greater!

Tony



TONY & MARILYN FITZGERALD

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