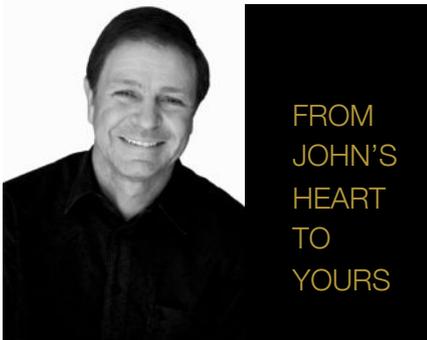




*cofn*  
CHURCH OF THE NATIONS

# AVOIDING SIDE ROADS



Nothing is clear anymore.  
There are no boundaries, no  
rules and for the world in general,  
no absolutes anymore.

The world has changed.

It's happened very quickly and we, the Church, have been left scrambling to catch up, trying to avoid being irrelevant in what is becoming a post Christian world.

But it's moved on even further from there. We're living in a **Post-Truth** world.

At the end of 2016 Oxford Dictionary announced their Word of the Year: this word is judged to reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of that particular year and to have lasting potential as a word of cultural significance.

The Word for 2016 was **POST-TRUTH**

It means *“relating to circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”* (Oxford Dictionary)

It is a culture where personal preferences, opinions, feelings and emotions are elevated above facts and truth. It's not that there is no acknowledgement of truth, but that My preferences matter more. I don't care about truth. This is MY truth.

Abdu Murray writes the following in his book *“Saving Truth.”*

He says Post-truth has two modes:

*“The first is a “soft” mode, by which I mean that we may acknowledge that truth exists—or that certain things are true—but we don’t care about the truth if it gets in the way of our personal preferences.<sup>1</sup>”*

In other words, he is saying truth exists objectively, but our subjective feelings and opinions matter more. MY truth and MY feelings and MY opinions hold highest value for me.

*“The second mode is “hard,” by which I mean a willingness to propagate blatant falsehoods, knowing they’re false, because doing so serves a higher political or social agenda.<sup>1</sup>”*

This is deliberate disinformation, the dawn of the now infamous Fake News!

**No one** is immune to this mindset!

It can affect politicians, voters, pastors, philosophers, parents, and scientists alike.

Truth and reality might exist, but it conflicts with my preferences or my feelings, so I don’t care and therefore I will freely share my opinions and views openly.

So many people seem very quick to share openly on social platforms whatever they or others feel, without any thought of the consequences.

In an article entitled “Sticking to truth” Summit ministries made the following comment recently:

- *“American adults spend more than 11 hours per day watching, reading, listening to or simply interacting with media. More than 5 billion people in the world have a cell phone... Digital is the prominent source of information everywhere. Will it serve as a platform for truth? “*

Nothing is clear anymore. There are no boundaries, no rules and for the world in general, no absolutes anymore.

Everyone becomes a law unto themselves.

This elevation of feelings over facts has blossomed into a Culture of Confusion.

This is not Freedom, but Autonomy.

We should not be ignorant of the schemes of the evil one.

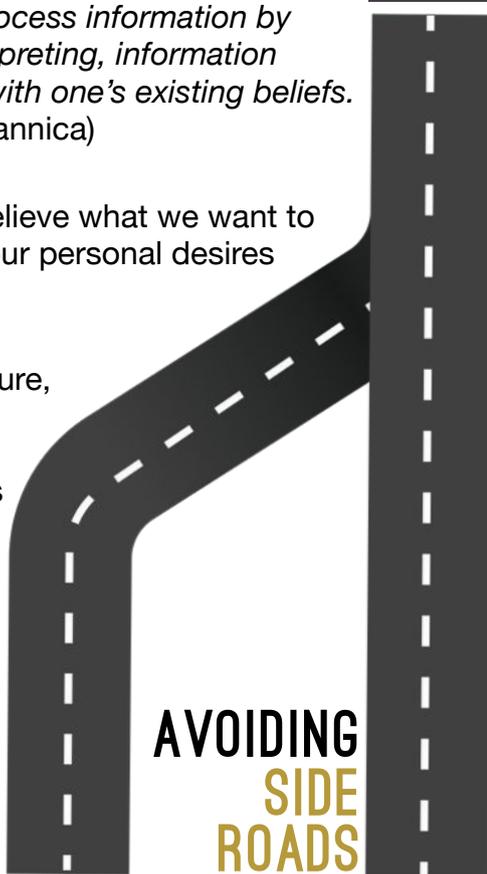
It seems many Christians have also fallen for this so called “global ministry of truth.”

On the one hand, Christians have compromised the clarity of Scripture for the sake of acceptance and to avoid conflict and on the other some have indulged in the cultural practice of vilifying those with whom they disagree.

We all suffer from **Confirmation Bias**: *the tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one’s existing beliefs.* (Encyclopedia Britannica)

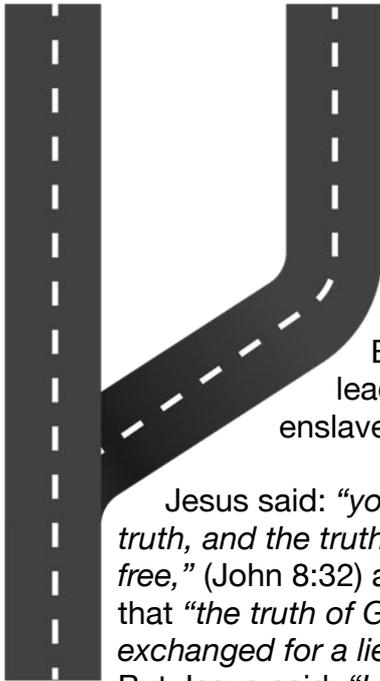
We are prone to believe what we want to and thus confirm our personal desires or preferences.

In a post-truth culture, where preferences and opinions are elevated over facts and truth, anything that challenges our preferences, even if a challenge is laced with facts, is deemed offensive and oppressive.



**AVOIDING  
SIDE  
ROADS**

<sup>Mark</sup> Murray, A. (n.d.). *Saving Truth: finding meaning & clarity in a post-truth world.*



Autonomy means to be a law unto oneself. Whatever feels good to me, is right for me, no rules, no chains, no bounds, no borders.

But autonomy leads to sin and sin enslaves us.

Jesus said: “*you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free,*” (John 8:32) and Paul warned us that “*the truth of God would be exchanged for a lie*” (Rom 1:25).

But Jesus said: “*I am the way, the truth and the life.*” (John 14:6)

## So, Truth is ultimately a Person. Truth is Jesus Christ

*And the Word became flesh... full of grace and **truth**... and grace and **truth** were realized through Jesus Christ.* (John 1:14,18)

As Paul wrote to Timothy, some women are “*always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth*” while some men “*also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.*” (2Tim3:7-8”)

Jeremiah 18:15 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> But my people have forgotten me;  
they make offerings to false gods;  
they made them stumble in their ways,  
in the ancient roads,  
and to **walk into side roads,**  
not the highway...

There is a highway of truth that God has given us. A highway found in His Word. It’s an absolute and unfailing Truth we have based our lives on.

Let us stop “**walking in the side roads**” in the futility of trying to please the world with a gospel that is not offensive, a gospel that white washes sin and fails to set people free.

If “misdemeanors” are called sin, we know how to deal with them. Dancing around opinions and feelings in order not to offend, perpetuates confusion and blurs the boundaries, denying the power of His Truth. Needing to create more impressive gimmicks to entice people into the Kingdom draws people away from The Truth.

There are some absolutes in our Christian walk that some of our heroes of recent centuries walked in. Men and women filled with the Holy Spirit, saw God do the most amazing miracles in their midst. They preached The Truth under the anointing and thousands got saved and became powerful witnesses for our Lord.

This was long before the advent of gimmicks.

One of our past elders involved now in education internationally, visited us recently. His comments and observations after some years of being away were very interesting. He said: “*the Lord spoke to me in my time with you about organizational provision as the result of staying true to the call (purpose). What you walk in now...is the result of staying true.*”

So, this is a call to all of us who are members of COTN to stay true to the highway of our purpose; to preach The Word of Truth boldly and without compromise; to hold on to our values; **to avoid the side roads** and to prepare for the long haul.

*John*



JOHN & JAYNE  
**SCHOLTZ**

**IMPACT THOUGHTS FROM OUR 50 YEAR JOURNEY**

**“Personal thoughts of and thanks for the Journey:”**

We are in the midst of a wonderful season of celebration! COTN was officially 40 years old in September, my sweetheart Marilyn turned 70 in November and on January 1 2020 we will celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary!

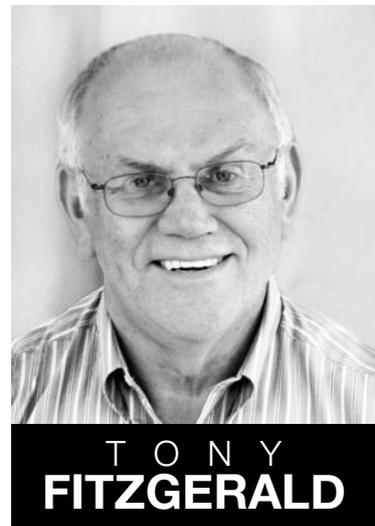
For the first 3 months of 2020 we will be on Sabbatical. At the end of this time it will be 50 years since we started our “ministry journey” and are grateful to you all for traveling with us. We have so much to be thankful for as we reminisce and look forward to the future.

We are reminded of the kingdom truth that God’s people are to live blessed with a thankful heart. In the Old Testament His people did not live under the blessings as it says in Deuteronomy “because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness of mind and heart in gratitude for the abundance of all with which He had blessed you.” (Duet.28:47)

May we always celebrate with thankful hearts and especially at this Christmas time as we rejoice in the King, the One who made our journeys possible!

Marilyn and I believe with you for a blessed Christmas season and clear 2020 vision!

*Tony*



For any comments, suggestions and news, please do not hesitate to contact the COTN Virtual Resource Centre at

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