

FROM  
TONY'S  
HEART  
TO  
YOURS

Can we handle the change that is before us and be an authentic answer to those around us...

The 2009 June edition of AC talk was the first of the relaunch of this communication tool and I was asked to document the first thirty years of COTN. In October **2009** as the AC met in Plymouth UK the decision was made to fully embrace our progression and our mission statement was changed from “Building a family of Churches Reaching the Nations”, to “A Family of Apostolic Clusters Advancing the Kingdom of God”.

Well here we are in 2019 looking forward to a new decade in 2020 and as a COTN family a new biblical generation.

In summary, COTN is an international family made up of five apostolic clusters, served by an Apostolic Council. The AC is committed to maintain our values and heart in each of the clusters, while encouraging diversity of expression and working together to see the Kingdom of Heaven established on earth. The beginning of each decade has been very significant, so we look forward to all that God has for us as we move into the beginning of our fifth.

This has been an incredible season of change as the political and economic structures of the world have been challenged. Areas of influence are shifting as power bases in the world adjust. Transition is everywhere. We learnt many years ago that transition is new position for new provision. Change is not to be feared but embraced. Remember an early phrase in our life of COTN; “Constant change is here to stay.” How prophetic this is today.

As we rise to the challenge of a world that has shifted into, what many refer to as, the fourth industrial revolution we are also facing the existence of a generation that will be the loneliest generation ever to live. Stephen Herzig, a COTN Prophetic Teacher, wrote a powerful article a year ago called “All the lonely people”. I encourage you to read the whole article but here are a few excerpts.

*“A little over 2 years ago Jo Cox was murdered outside her constituency office in northern England by a religious extremist. She was a very passionate woman, who carried a deep concern for her constituents and had a particular social concern for loneliness.*

*With good reason did Jo Cox say “I will not live in a country where thousands of people are living lonely lives forgotten by the rest of us”.*

*Robin Williams, one of a number of celebrities who have taken their own lives in recent years, made this comment “I used to think that the worst thing in the world was to end up alone. It is not. The worst thing in life is to end up with people who make you feel alone”.*

*We now live in the Internet Age.*

*This is a relatively recent development and researchers and social scientists are only now beginning to explore the relational implications. At first glance it would seem that the Internet should provide many additional ways for people to communicate with an ever increasing group of ‘friends’. For some however, it is clear that the Internet tends to dilute existing friendships and increase a sense of isolation in an ever increasing crowd.*

*All the lonely people, where do they all come from? All the lonely people, where do they all belong?*

*This is the chorus line of a song by The Beatles, written nearly 50 years ago. There is a poignant irony to the lyrics of this song. It is about an old lady and a Catholic priest in a lonely dying church community. No one comes to listen to the priest’s sermons; no one comes to the old lady’s funeral.*

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*There is such a contrast between this image and the stories told in the early chapters of the Book of Acts. There we find a church community empowered with the life of God. They eat together, pray together, fellowship together, and share all resources together. It is actually said that there was not a needy person amongst them; what a contrast. The other irony of the Beatles song is that the one place in which you would hope to find real community you don't, and that makes the loneliness and the sadness so much more isolating and desperate.*

*It was in the Old Testament that we read of God's heart for the lonely, and the vulnerable. He introduces himself as God the Shepherd to help us get the message. He talks of setting the solitary in families (Psalm 68:6) or as the NASB says "He makes a home for the lonely." He left clear instructions to draw everyone into their feast celebrations including the foreigner, the refugee, the widow and the orphan.*

*He made sure they understood that they needed to leave food in the fields after harvest for the poor to glean; he called the temple 'a house of prayer for all nations'; none were to be excluded. In our families and communities, large or small, may we have the same heart of inclusion and generosity. Governments, have very limited capacity when it comes to community building, the Church on the other hand, has both the mandate and the responsibility to do just that".*

Can we handle the change that is before us and be an authentic answer to those around us as the fourth industrial revolution takes hold?

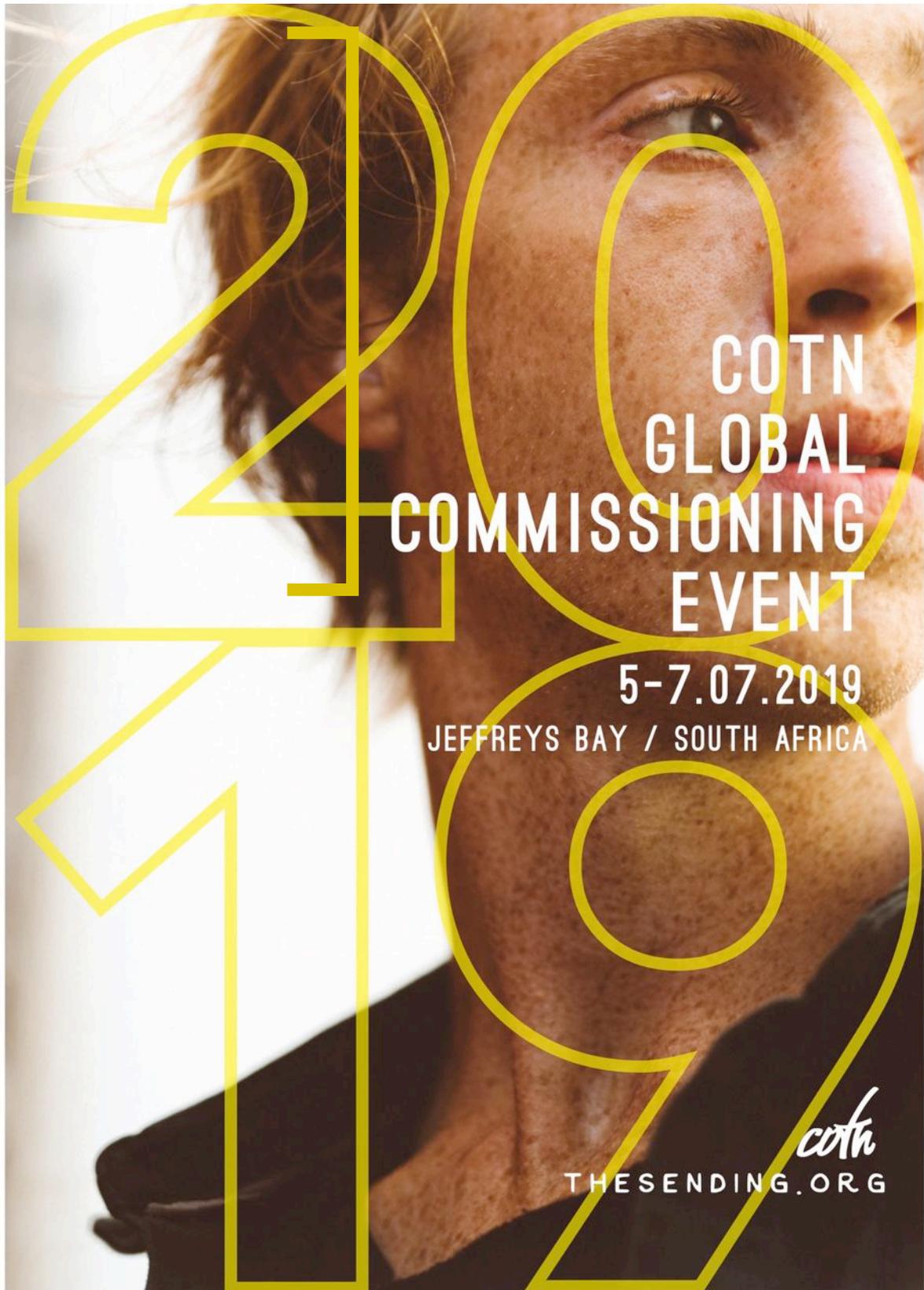
Forty years ago I was a part of a team in the UK that stood in a tent speaking to a new generation challenging them to walk in their Kingdom destiny. In a few days we will stand as COTN Leaders and send a new generation to do the same. A new Biblical generation of sons and daughters of the Kingdom, reaching their age, dreaming dreams, releasing vision and raising up caring communities as a new wineskin forms.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at  
THE SENDING!

*Tony*



**TONY & MARILYN FITZGERALD**



For any comments, suggestions and news,  
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