



cofn
CHURCH OF THE NATIONS

THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER



FROM KEITH'S HEART TO YOURS

The English idiom says, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder",

that certainly seemed to be supported by an advertising campaign that was launched back in 2013 by the manufacturers of Dove soap.

In this campaign, several women were invited to describe themselves to a forensic artist, who proceeded to sketch them. The artist sat with his back to each lady so he could not see their physical features and relied simply on their response to questions he posed to them about their physical features. When he had finished doing so, the "subject" was replaced by someone from the public who had been tasked with observing her over a short period of time. Again, the artist sat with his back to the person doing the describing and proceeded to sketch the same "subject",

but this time, from the description given by the observer. The two sketches of each lady were then set up side by side and, almost without fail, when each lady viewed the end result, they could not believe how differently they were viewed by their respective observer compared with how they saw themselves. Comments like, 'I look so sad in my picture but so full of light and life in the one drawn by my observer' or, 'I really have some changing to do', were commonplace. Two very different interpretations of beauty, depending on whose viewpoint it was derived from.

But, I want to suggest that there's a lot more than just beauty that is defined by the way we view things.

Just last week, I received a fascinating video clip from a friend, in which six photographers are asked to take portrait shots of a man. Although it is the same man every time, each photographer is given a different storyline about their subject. Each identity is totally fake (unknown to the respective photographer) and they are tasked with portraying him as they see him in the series of pictures they take. He is portrayed as a millionaire, fisherman, life-saver, psychic, former prison inmate and, a recovering alcoholic. The results are astounding as each photographer demonstrates how our perceptions, stereotypes, worldview and cultural lenses all affect the way in which we see things, when given a bit of insight or “colouring”. Although it was the same man, dressed in the same outfit, shot in the same environment, the end result showed six vastly different portrait portrayals.

So, beauty, behavior, rank, status and so forth, can be severely affected by the filters we apply, knowingly or unknowingly, every day. But there’s more.

Millionaire



Convict



Life Saver



In the middle of January each year, global political, business, economic and social leaders gather in Davos, Switzerland, for the annual World Economic Forum meetings, in which matters of importance to those sectors are discussed. Each year, CNN’s Richard Quest broadcasts his business program from the conference, interviewing an incredible array of individuals drawn from these sectors. He has a whiteboard chart for each new year, in which he asks his guests to make a mark representing how they feel about the topic he has selected as the most important theme for that year.

In 2016, his guests were asked to reveal on his “Worry Wall”, how negative or positive they were about global economic conditions at present and whether they thought things would improve or worsen during the year.

Though there were certainly those that indicated total pessimism and no one was daring enough to commit to a totally optimistic position, the consensus at the end of the week was, surprisingly, around 3-4 on a scale, where 1 was total hope and 10 was absolute hopelessness.



It’s not just beauty, behavior, rank or status that is affected by our filters, but also our moods, our perceptions of reality and our view of the present and future.

There is no doubt that 2016 has brought its own challenges that are no respecter of nation, people, geography, first or third world, developed or developing worlds. They may

differ in shape or form, but they are just as real and challenging for everyone. How we process them in our context can vary vastly, depending on how and what we are seeing and what filters we allow to colour our judgement. In my own country, the whole issue of racism is beginning to play havoc with our country's collective psyche and is playing out primarily against the background of cultural and generational differences. I am amazed at how quickly we allow adjectives to slip into our national, societal and church discourse, so that we refine who we are, what we believe, who is with us and who we are against, until we are left only with a narrow band of people with whom we are comfortable and prepared to work with or tolerate. We can even allow racial adjectives, theological adjectives, political affiliation adjectives etc to determine who and what we see, to the exclusion and expense of others. In a world determined to make me a Conformer, I am so glad that Father's call to us today is to be Reformers.

That means that we refuse to play by the world's agendas, to judge or deal with each other by the world's narrow bands of stereotyping, profiling, prejudice or difference. It also means we will not allow our hope for the present and future be undermined by the stock-market, currency fluctuations, geopolitical crises, changes in government or any other measure which can influence our daily emotions. It causes us to live in the hope we have in Jesus, a hope that looks expectantly each day for the return of the King of kings and, until that day, to live in and operate from the assurance that, no matter how much it may seem the kingdom of darkness is ruling, our God has the final say.

Whatever context you find yourself in today, may God make you a Reformer and, if you do have any adjective to describe you, let it be, Transformer (of that context to His glory.)

Every blessing.

Keith

Navigating through political upheaval!

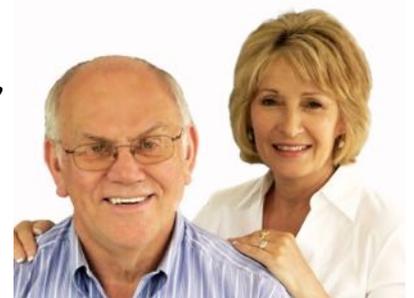
This current USA Presidential election is being described as the most unusual of all time. Australia is heading to the polls, maybe as early as July, as the fourth Prime Minister in three years or so seeks a mandate to govern. South Africa is in increasing political turmoil. Great Britain is holding a referendum on whether to remain in Europe and on it goes. What a year!!

A couple of years ago I sensed the Lord give me this thought that impacted me greatly and continues too..

Politics polarize while the Kingdom unifies without compromise

May the Lord grant you wisdom as you navigate the kingdom path through this year of political shift.

Tony & Marilyn Fitzgerald



COTN EVENTS 2016	DATE
COTN LEADERSHIFT SA, Durbanville	14-17 APRIL 2016
COTN DAY OF PRAYER	11 SEPTEMBER 2016
COTN LEADERSHIFT CANADA, Calgary	29 SEPT -2 OCT 2016

**GLORY
TO
GLORY**
MATURING AS WE ARE
CHANGED INTO HIS IMAGE



cotn
CHURCH OF THE NATIONS kingdom
**LEADER
SHIFT**
14-17 APRIL 2016
DURBANVILLE
SOUTH AFRICA

BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM
GLORY TO GLORY, JUST AS FROM THE LORD, THE SPIRIT.
2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

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