

community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

03/2019/EN

Our concept of ministry

Editorial

The congregation is
alive and active

Divine service

The crown of life

Doctrine

Our concept of ministry

New Apostolic Church
International



■ Editorial

- 3 The congregation is alive and active

■ Divine service in Asia

- 4 The crown of life

■ A visit in Europe

- 10 Some truths from a reliable source

■ A visit in America

- 12 Jesus offers eternal life

■ A visit in Africa

- 14 Filled with the gospel

■ Children's corner

- 16 The great supper
18 At Mariangel's in San José (Costa Rica)

■ Doctrine

- 20 Our concept of ministry

■ Global news

- 24 "My friends, family, and congregation make me rich"
26 Giving voice to the gospel together
27 Divine service in the southernmost city of the world
28 Rebuilding shattered lives after the flood
30 A significant change to our tradition

■ West Africa News

- 32 District Apostle Michael Ehrich: We can be proud of our church!
32 Benin: Youth Days
32 Togo: Blessed Youths
33 Ghana: Days of Youth 2019
33 Nigeria: Youth Convention
33 Guinea: Youth Meeting
34 Nigeria: "Here I Am" in Lagos
34 Ghana: Here – There – Everywhere . . . Here I Am!
34 Sierra-Leone: Showcase of Talent
35 Ghana: Concept of Ministry
35 Guinea: Meeting of Ministers
35 Guinea: District Church goes online
36 South Germany: Divine service with the District Apostle

The congregation is alive and active



Dear brothers and sisters,

A number of great events now lie behind us: for several days we celebrated the International Youth Convention together with our young brothers and sisters from around the world. We enjoyed the fellowship, music, and discussions in this large circle. I am convinced that much of the associated enthusiasm and excitement has also rubbed off on you, even if you were not able to participate in this event in person.

A week later, we celebrated the feast of Pentecost. We experienced the divine service as a large congregation, gave thanks to the triune God, and expressed our praises to Him. We also made use of our time together in Goslar (Germany) for our first international meeting of the District Apostles and their Helpers this year.

The concept of ministry introduced in April has been in effect since Pentecost. In future we will distinguish between ministerial authority and leadership functions. The three levels of ministry incorporate the Deacon ministry, the priestly ministry, and the Apostle ministry. The five leadership functions are comprised of the congregational rector, the district rector, the Apostle, the District Apostle, and the Chief Apostle.

Brothers are *ordained* into ministries. They are *appointed* to leadership functions through prayer and laying on of hands. Thereby we underline the importance of the leadership functions. In future, their assistants—for example, the Chief Apostle Helper, District Apostle Helpers, Bishops, and representatives of the district rectors and congregational rectors—will be *assigned*. Evangelists, Shepherds,

District Evangelists, and District Elders will no longer be ordained in future. However, we acknowledge the past in that the brothers currently in these ministries will continue to exercise the ministries to which they have been ordained.

The duties performed by the ministers, as important as they may be, are only some of the many services and duties that are performed in the congregations. As the spokesman for all the Apostles, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our brothers and sisters who engage themselves in the congregations and support our work, not least of all through their offerings. We thank you with all our hearts! May God bless you richly for this!

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script that is difficult to read but appears to be the name of the author.

Jean-Luc Schneider

The Chief Apostle gathered with 500 believers at the Palacio de Maynila in Manila in the Philippines on 18 November 2018. The divine service was transmitted via Internet so that many congregations could follow it



NAC South-East Asia



The crown of life

James 1: 12

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

Dear brothers and sisters, today is a special divine service. It seldom happens that such a large congregation is assembled in Manila, and that so many Apostles are present at the same time. As you know this is also a special day because your District Apostle will take his retirement and a new District Apostle will be appointed. That certainly makes this day quite special. We make use of this opportunity to give thanks to our heavenly Father for all the blessing that we have received through your District Apostle. We give thanks to God that He has blessed the work of the District Apostle. And you have nothing to worry: even if the man at

the helm changes, God remains the same. The goal remains the same, and the path that we follow to this goal also remains exactly the same. We follow Christ, and we will also continue to do so in the future. Jesus Christ is our Lord. He is the way. And He will continue to help us, just as He has helped us to this point.

What is our goal? It is nicely described in our Bible text: “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” The crown of life is an image for salvation. The Bible often uses the image of a crown, sometimes—as here—in connection with life: the “crown of life”, or sometimes also the “crown of righteousness” (2 Timothy 4: 8), or the “crown of glory” (1 Peter 5: 4). And all of these images describe the very same thing, namely our redemption. This is an image for eternal life, for fellowship with God in His kingdom. In order to describe the path we must follow in order to attain this crown, the New Testament often makes reference to a competition. Both Apostles Paul and James make use of this image. In those days already, there were competitions on a large scale, at which athletes competed in races and in which the victor would receive a crown—not one made of gold, but in the form of a wreath of laurels. With this comparison, the Apostles wanted to make it clear that one must run like an athlete in a competition in order to attain eternal life and to enter into the kingdom of God.

First of all, a competition requires a great deal of energy. In order to attain salvation, we must bring our thoughts and actions into line with the will of God. In order to be redeemed, we must follow the example of Jesus. That requires energy and endurance, just as a competition would. It simply will not happen without some effort. That is the first point.

In order to enter into the kingdom of God, one must summon up a great deal of strength. People do not simply stroll into the kingdom of heaven! This is a competition! This requires endurance, just as if we were engaged in a competition.

As an athlete, one must do a great deal of training. Redemption and deliverance are not simply leisure activities. They constitute a daily challenge! We must work hard on our-

selves every day! We must sacrifice a great deal! We must work on bringing our thoughts and actions into agreement with the will of God.

In order to enter into the kingdom of God it will not suffice to merely attend every divine service, put something into the offering box, pray to God, and live as a Christian. We need to make a much greater effort in order to ensure that our thoughts and actions correspond to the will of God. The comparison to the athlete makes this very clear.

Those who participate in a competition must do a great many things if they want to gain the victory. At times they must even give something up, but they do this because the victory is so important to them. They simply accept this. Allow me to make this clear with a concrete example: at times we must make a decision. For example, we might hear: “If you move over there, you will be able to earn a great deal of money.” Naturally, we all need money. But then we discover that there are no congregations there and that there is no possibility of attending the divine services. Then the question is: “What shall I do? Should I accept the offer? Should I go there? After all, I could earn a lot of money over there!

But I might only be able to attend the divine services three or four times a year ...” What will you decide? Some would say, “Oh well, that may be, but I will have a better life because I will earn more money.” Are you sure that you are going to have a better life without Holy Communion? Without the comfort that comes from the word of God? Without the fellowship of your brothers and sisters? I would punctuate that with a big question mark.

Just as in a competition, one must also make sacrifices at times if one wishes to enter into the kingdom of God. An athlete must also be prepared to struggle and suffer at times. We are not exempt from this either. In a competition, there are also rules that must be obeyed. Every discipline has firmly defined rules which must be obeyed if one wants to win. This also applies to our salvation. Jesus also made this very clear. On one occasion He mentioned that even if one were to perform good works, they would be worthless if one failed to heed certain rules. He spoke of some who performed great deeds in His name, but said to them: “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness!” (Matthew 7: 23).

*It requires strength
to bring our thoughts
and deeds into line with
the will of God*



One of the rules in this competition for salvation is the commandment of love. Whatever you do, do it out of love for the Lord and out of love for your neighbour. Anything that is not done out of love is completely useless. That is the rule. This is not something invented by the New Apostolic Church! Jesus Christ Himself established this rule! Even if we were to perform the most fantastic feats for God, they would be useless if they were not motivated by love.

A competition is not the same as a sporting pursuit where you can do as you please! Those who participate in a competition must adhere to the rules. In a competition you are not alone. There are other competitors who do not want you to win. That is the principle of a competition.

However, a competition for salvation is a little different. We do not need to compete against others in order to bring our

lives and thoughts into agreement with the will of God. Our only adversary in this competition is the evil one. He is the one against whom we must fight. And I can assure you: he will do everything he can to ensure that we do not win the competition! He will do anything he can in order to win this competition in the end. He is our adversary!

Whatever you do, do it out of love for the Lord and out of love for your neighbour

Whatever you do, do it out of love for the Lord and out of love for your neighbour.

Those who make every effort, who play by the rules, who love Christ, and who remain faithful to the end will receive the crown. But we must fight against our enemy, against the evil one. With the help of the Lord we will be able to conquer him!

In every competition there is also a referee. He sees to it that all the rules are obeyed, and he is the only one who can decide the winner in the end. And even in a competition



for salvation there is a judge, namely Jesus Christ. He will decide who will be among the victors. He will judge the thoughts and deeds of every individual. This notion is not very popular with people, but Jesus Himself stated that we will be judged by our works.

At the end of this competition, I cannot go up to Jesus and say, “Yes, but look at what everyone else did! They did the very same things I did.” I will not be able to say, “But none of the others played by the rules either! That is the reason I did not play by the rules!” At His return He will judge me

by my own actions, by my own thoughts, irrespective of what others have done. We cannot point to others in order to excuse our own behaviour. We must accept that Jesus will indeed judge us, and He will also inquire into our motivations. Those who will be accepted are those who love Jesus Christ. We will be measured by the degree of our love, and by the degree of our longing for salvation. These are the criteria He will use for His judgement. Certainly, we will not be able to gain the victory over evil in every situation, but please do not forget, dear brothers and sisters: we will be measured by the intensity of our love, by our will to be saved, and by our resolve to act in accordance with the will of God. On the one hand, this is a comfort, because we know we will be accepted even if we do not do everything right. But on the other hand, we must take this very seriously. After all, when we look at ourselves, we must admit that our effort to fulfil the will of God could at times be a little stronger.

We must therefore expend a great deal of energy. We must fight. We must play by the rules. We must heed the law of love. We must fight against the adversary, the evil one, and we must accept the fact that we will be judged by Jesus Christ.

And then there is still one last point. It is not the athlete who decides when the competition will take place. He cannot simply say, “Oh no! Not today! I am not in my best form! Let’s just postpone the start of the



District Apostle Urs Hebeisen (South-East Asia) is retired—after serving in the Apostle ministry for 36 years. In his address, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider brings the District Apostle’s activity down to three common denominators: passion, love, and trust in God

Many countries, many nations, and many cultures. It is no easy task that Edy Isnugroho (below, right) has taken on as the new District Apostle for South-East Asia. At his appointment, the Chief Apostle told him how it will be possible for him to succeed



Olympic Games to tomorrow!” No. Someone else determines the start of the competition, and the athlete must simply be ready.

God has decided that the competition will begin now, precisely today. And we must simply accept that. We cannot say to Jesus: “I am too young for this. Let’s please postpone the competition for ten years. That would be better for me!” The battle begins today, here at this point in your life. Let us summon up all our strength to ensure that we win! With the help of Jesus we can win, we can attain salvation—and with it, the crown.

What does salvation consist of? As I said, this is the crown of life, eternal life! It is eternal fellowship with God. A crown is the symbol of victory, the symbol of renown. Those who partake in the first resurrection—those who receive the resurrection body, the glorious body—and enter into the kingdom of God, they will share in the renown of Jesus Christ!

However, a crown is also a symbol of rulership and power. And it means that those who overcome—those who win the competition—will reign with Christ. They will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him a thousand years (Revelation 20: 6).

We must, however, be clear about what this reign signifies. No political power will be exercised in the kingdom of peace of Jesus Christ. This reign is not rulership in a political or temporal sense. When Jesus reigns, it means that He will ensure the unobstructed proclamation of His gospel. That is what the rule of Christ will be in the thousand-year kingdom of peace. He will rule, and no one will be able to prevent His gospel from being proclaimed or prevent people from being saved. Jesus is also faithful to Himself! He will rule as a servant. His service to man will be the deliverance of all humanity.

So when it says that we will rule with Him, this means that those who will be with Him in His kingdom will also serve



The Chief Apostle was accompanied by the District Apostles Jürg Zbinden (Switzerland, left), Mark Woll (Canada), Peter Schulte (Western Pacific), and Urs Hebeisen

Him and mankind with the objective of making deliverance possible for all. They will proclaim the gospel to all people. Their reign will be a service to others.

Jesus once gave a parable, namely the parable of the minas (Luke 19: 12–27). A nobleman called ten of His servants together and gave each one of them a mina. They were to work with the money and invest it. One of them was very diligent and successful, and he turned the one mina into ten minas. When the nobleman returned, he told the servant: “Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.”

Another invested the mina and turned it into five minas. His master was also delighted at this result and said to him: “You also be over five cities.” The lazy servant, who had done nothing with the mina, received nothing. They thus received differing rewards. One received power over ten cities, and the other over five cities.

If one understands power as the exercise of rulership, one might say, “It is nice to have power over ten cities. That is better than having power over five cities.” However, that is not the way it is. This is not a question of rulership. All of

them are only servants. In the kingdom of peace, all will serve God. But we will serve in different ways, corresponding to our possibilities and abilities. The services we perform will be different, but the crown, the reward, will be the same. We will be with Jesus forever. That is the crown of life!

And the end of the story is that all those who inhabit the new creation will serve God and reign with Him. This arrangement remains! They will share in His glory and majesty—and will serve Him for all eternity.

That is our future, dear brothers and sisters. Let us be true athletes in this competition. Let us fight every day to ensure that our thoughts and actions are in agreement with the will of God. That is very difficult. This means suffering at times. Let us accept this!

Let us play by the rule that our actions are to be motivated by love for the Lord and for our neighbour. We are not to fight against our brother or against our sister. Rather, our fight is with the evil one. At times we will win, and at times we will also lose. We are aware of this, but what really counts is the measure of our love and longing.

Let us take up this battle now. Those who are faithful and loyal will gain the victory. Those who truly love Christ will receive the crown.

CORE THOUGHTS

In order to attain the crown of life, let us fight to

- bring our thoughts and actions into agreement with the will of God;
- keep the law of love for God and our neighbour.

At times a fight also requires us to do without and to be prepared to suffer. Those who emerge from the battle as victors will reign with Christ in the kingdom of peace.



Jessica Krämer

Some truths from a reliable source

A Bible text, three images, many springs, and a cycle. When it comes to blessing there is certainly no dearth. Ideas galore from a divine service by the Chief Apostle in Wiesbaden (Germany) on 20 January 2019.

The biblical context is as follows: Caleb, one of Moses' scouts, gave his daughter a piece of land for her wedding. Situated on a slope, it was very dry so that she asked her father for springs as well.

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider used this story as an image for the blessing of God. "He gives us the springs of blessing: the upper and lower springs." But what exactly is blessing? God's blessing is the salvation He offers us. God's blessing is everything that contributes to eternal life.

The upper springs

"The upper spring of blessing—the source of salvation from heaven—is Jesus Christ," the Chief Apostle pointed

out. "Thanks to His merit, His election, the sacraments, His word, and His activity we have salvation." But there is nothing automatic about this. This image, this spring, implies: one has to go there and draw water.

- Going there means: "In order to obtain salvation, one must come to Jesus Christ in faith. One must go to the source, to the spring, and walk the path of faith, the path of repentance, and the path of regret."
- Drawing water means: "If the sacraments are to be truly effective and unfold in us, we must develop the following attitude: I want to renounce sin; I want to overcome evil; I want to have fellowship with God; I want to belong to the bride; I want to enter into the kingdom of God."



A total of 31,000 members participated in the divine service; 900 of these in our church in Wiesbaden

The lower springs

“God has also given us the lower springs,” the Chief Apostle continued.

- Our strengths and abilities. “If we commit ourselves to our salvation, if we put our gifts, our strengths, and our abilities at the service of God, they will become a source of blessing.”
- The Apostles and ministers: “If we turn to them to help us bring about our salvation, to make the right decisions for our soul, then we can find the strength, consolation, and love we need. But we must go there and draw strength from this source.”
- The congregation: “In order to be able to benefit from the inherent wealth of the congregation, we must first of all invest in it. If you want to be loved, love first. If you seek help, start by helping your neighbour. If you are looking for love and attention, start by turning to others first.”

The cycle of blessing

“Blessings from below, blessings from above. I see yet another beautiful image: a cycle of blessing,” the Chief Apostle said. God blesses man, and man blesses God.

CORE THOUGHTS

Joshua 15: 19

“She answered, ‘Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water.’ So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.”

God blesses us: He offers us salvation in Jesus Christ; He offers us the opportunity to be blessed, if we use His gifts of grace wisely. We bless God by praising and serving Him. We bless our neighbour by sharing the spiritual gifts we have received with him.

“We know that God has blessed us: through the upper spring and the lower spring,” the Chief Apostle said. In response we bless God: we trust Him, we thank Him, and we serve Him.

What’s more, we want to be a source of blessing for our neighbour. “Because God’s blessing is so great, and we can recognise and appreciate it, we also want to pass it on and share it.”

Jesus offers eternal life

When does Jesus help? What's the purpose of the gospel? What are good works good for? There are many ideas about this and some misconceptions. Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider clarified what really matters in a divine service in Charlotte, North Carolina (USA) on 10 February 2019.



■ NAC USA

“Christ offers eternal life to those who believe in Him and who orient themselves to His image,” Chief Apostle Schneider said in summing up the divine service. And he added, “We are responsible for the proclamation of the gospel. Our behaviour must reflect the godly life that God has placed in us.”

Liberty, not supremacy

“It is important that we know why we come to Jesus,” Chief Apostle Schneider said with reference to the miracle of feeding. At the time, five thousand people were fed with five loaves of bread and two fish. They were convinced that Jesus was the successor of Moses or a prophet and wanted to make Him king in the hope of freeing them from the yoke of the Romans. There are similar ideas today, the Chief Apostle said. People imagine that if they go to church, are faithful and believe, and pray in the right manner Jesus will help them in life. Jesus does help sometimes, but that is not the point of the gospel. “If we only come to Jesus for help,

In mid February, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider travelled to the USA, where he met with the Apostles and Bishops of the working area of District Apostle Leonard R. Kolb and celebrated a divine service in Charlotte, North Carolina on Sunday, 10 February 2019

we come for the wrong reasons.” After all, Jesus wants to deliver man from the bondage of the evil one.

Fellowship with God, not moralising lectures

People look at the Bible as a code of ethics, the Chief Apostle said, and maintain that if society as a whole were to follow its teachings and principles then life would be better. “Maybe,” he conceded. Even if everybody were to live according to the Bible, he said, it will not solve the root cause of the problem. “Jesus came to offer eternal life. He wants to solve the whole problem and He says, “The reason for your problems is the dominance of sin. I have defeated the devil and evil, and I want to deliver you from this evil. I want to lead you into eternal fellowship with God.”



In this service, Apostle Reinhard Hecht (left) retired after 42 years of ministerial activity, 17 of these as an Apostle. District Evangelist Robert C. Ferguson was ordained as an Apostle

Not works, but believing and focusing on Christ is important

Some people are convinced that good works are necessary in order to attain eternal life. But it is Jesus Himself who offers eternal life. No one can earn it. “It is a gift and remains a gift of grace,” the Chief Apostle said. “And to receive this gift you have to believe in Jesus Christ.” This includes belief in the incarnation of Jesus, His sacrifice, His resurrection, and His return. And then it is important that we take what Jesus said seriously, “To attain eternal life, you must be re-born out of water and the Spirit, and you must receive My body and My blood. You must celebrate Holy Communion.” Jesus went even further and said, “If you want eternal life, you must renounce yourself and follow Me.” So it is not just a question of attending the divine services and receiving the sacraments. It is not only about works or even good works. We must make sure that our thoughts and feelings coincide with those of Jesus.

Proclaiming the gospel, not converting people

“All of us have the mission to profess our faith, to proclaim the gospel, and to help our neighbour in finding his or her way to Jesus in order to be saved.” How can this be done? By promising our neighbour great sermons, nice services, and answers to prayers? “Yes, sometimes that happens, but sometimes it doesn’t, and people are disappointed.” Referring to the time of Jesus, the Chief Apostle said, “The disciples stayed with Jesus because they were convinced that

He is the Son of God.” Today too, believers will stay if they see that our goal, the purpose of our faith, is to be one with Jesus. “Let us bring our thoughts into line with those of Jesus. Let us have a close relationship with Him,” the Chief Apostle said. And for this to happen it is necessary that we keep the commandments and do the will of God, regardless of whether we are successful or not, or whether we receive earthly blessing or not. We do what we do because we are convinced of it. It is only because we are one with Jesus that His opinion and His will is our opinion and our will.”

“We are not responsible for the success, for the number of people who come. That is God’s task. Those who are drawn by God will come to Jesus. We are only there to act as an instrument. And we do it because it is our nature.”

CORE THOUGHTS

John 6: 26–27

“Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.’”

Christ grants eternal life to those who believe in Him and bring their lives into line with His image. We are responsible for the proclamation of the gospel. Our conduct must reflect the divine life which God has laid into us.

Some 1,300 participants attended the service in Benguela, which took place in a theatre



■ NAC Western Germany



I Filled with the gospel

It is important and good to believe in it, but the Christian message of salvation should also inspire and excite us. What this does to the individual believer and how the people around us perceive this, is what the Chief Apostle focused on in Benguela (Angola) on 13 January 2019.

The word of Christ is, first and foremost, the preaching of the gospel, the Chief Apostle said. This includes the incarnation of Jesus, His sacrifice, His resurrection, and His promise: “I will come again and receive you to Myself.”

The good news of the gospel fills our lives

The Chief Apostle said that the word of Christ must live within us. It is not just a question of us saying, “Yes, I believe in it. I am convinced that this is the truth.” Rather, it must inspire and motivate us, he said. And it generates enthusiasm and excitement. “Enthusiasm means being passionate about God: ‘God lives in me, and I am enthusiastic about Him!’” And this knowledge is driving force, energy, and joy.

We are determined to follow the teaching of Jesus as a whole

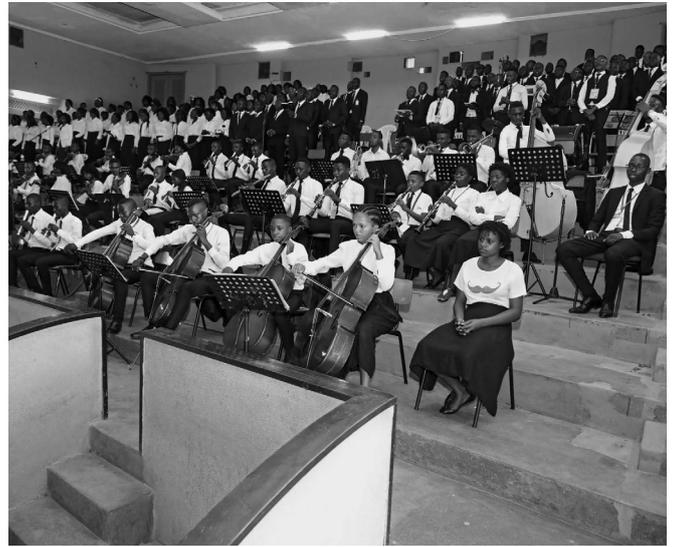
The teaching of Jesus also includes the commandments. They are not to be a law that comes from outside, in the sense of: “Watch it, if you don’t do this or that!” the Chief Apostle continued. If this were the case, then we would obey Christ’s commandments merely because we are afraid of being punished. There are many Christians who understand God’s commandments in this way, and that is sad, he added. “The commandments of Christ live in us, and we keep them out of love for God. And because we love God we obey His commandments and do His will.”

Our common vocation helps us to overcome our differences

“The most important thing for us is that our neighbour has also been called by God. God loves him just as much as



The music in the service was provided by an orchestra from the province of Mexico



He loves us. That helps us to bridge any differences. The important thing is not what my neighbour is like, but that God has called him and loves him.” And referring to the absolution in the divine service, the Chief Apostle said: “How can I still accuse or blame my brother at the end of a divine service if God has forgiven him?! I must say that sometimes we do lack respect for God here.”

The gospel determines the content of our conversations

People always want to talk about their opinion, what they have done, and what they are doing. And yet it’s so unimportant. Let’s talk about what God has done and is doing, the Chief Apostle said. It would be great if in our conversations we were to speak more about what God has done than what we have done, if we were to speak more about God’s thoughts than about our opinions.” And with reference to the Golden Rule the Chief Apostle added: “God expects us to comfort and strengthen one another, and to support one another with the word of God. He even says that we should teach and admonish one another, and at the same time adds ‘in all wisdom’. Because none of us likes it when someone comes and lectures us or preaches down on us. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. This is how we can teach in all wisdom.”

Let us share the word of God with our children and the people around us

“God’s wealth is so great that we can share it with other people without impoverishing ourselves. If the word of God dwells among us in abundance, let’s share it with

others.” The Chief Apostle went on to refer to Matthew 12: 34: “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” This is a direct allusion to the conversations of the members in the congregation and the conversations with our children. “Remember, what we harbour in our hearts is our treasure.” We feel a need to share our treasure with our fellow human beings and let them know that God became Man and that He will return.

CORE THOUGHTS

Colossians 3: 16

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

We thank God for His salvation by focusing on the return of Jesus Christ. We thank Him for His patience by fighting against evil. We thank Him for His forgiveness by forgiving others. We thank God for His kindness and gifts by serving Him, and for His love by telling our neighbour about the salvation that God offers.

THE GREAT SUPPER

ACCORDING TO LUKE 14: 15-24

This occurred on the Sabbath. Jesus had been invited to dinner by a distinguished Pharisee. One of the people sitting at the table said to Jesus, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" This prompted Jesus to tell the following parable.

A certain man gave a great supper and invited many people. When it was supper time, he sent out his servant to those who were invited to tell them, "Come, everything is ready now." But all the guests said they could not come. Everyone had an excuse.

The first one said, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me."

The second one said, "I have bought five pairs of oxen, and I am going to try them. Please excuse me."

The third one said, "I just got married, and therefore cannot come."

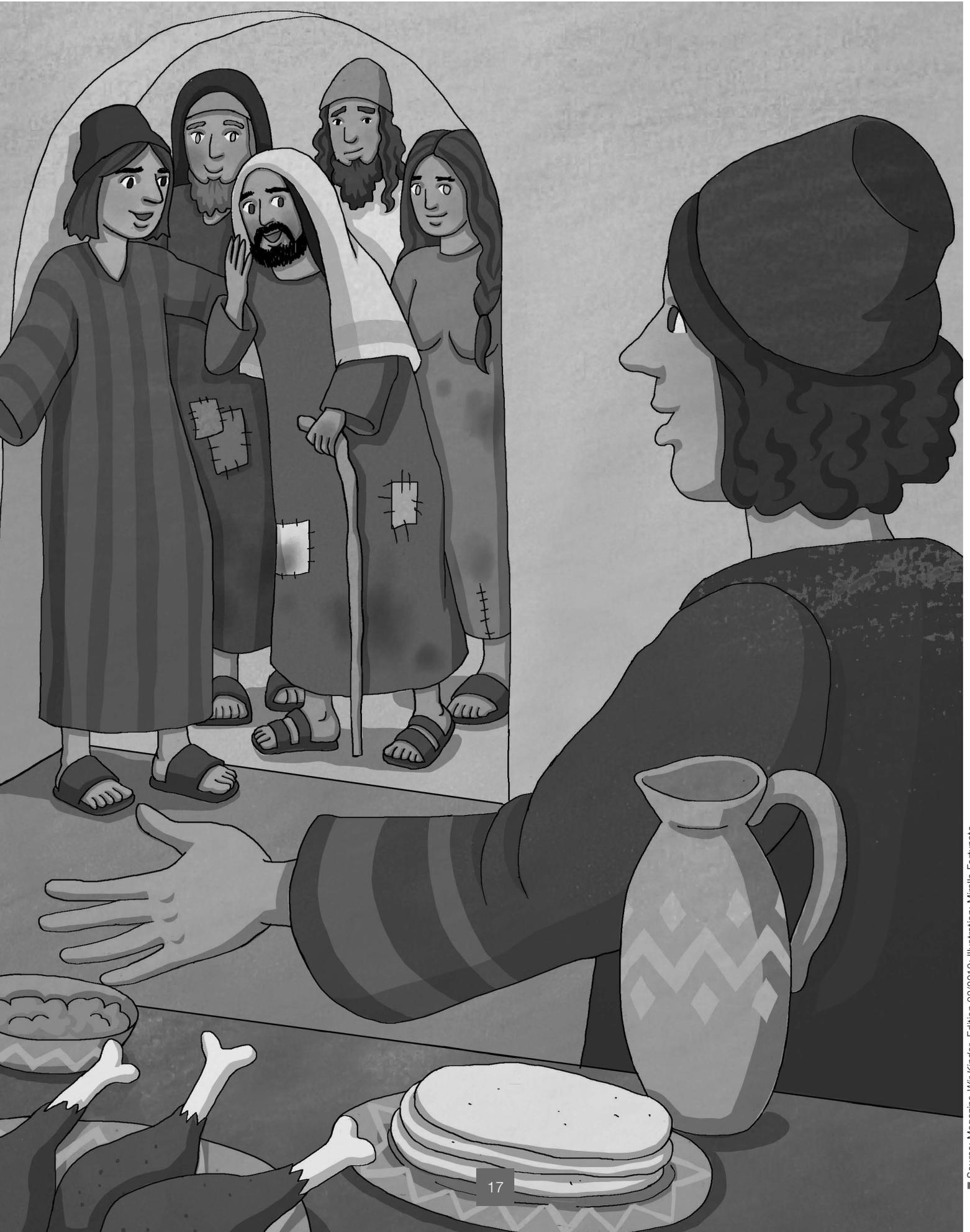
The servant returned and told his master what had happened.

The master became angry and said to the servant, "Go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind."

The servant went and brought them all in and said, "Master, I did what you told me to do, but there is still room."

The master said to the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled. I tell you that none of those who were invited first shall taste my supper."





AT MARIANGEL'S IN SAN JOSÉ (COSTA RICA)

My name is Mariangel, and I love Sunday breakfasts because the whole family is together and it is so peaceful. My favourite dishes are spaghetti with cheese, meat soup, and French fries.



Fotos: privat

I live with my grandparents because my parents cannot look after me. My grandmother's name is Lena and my grandfather's is Adolfo; I call them **Mami** and **Papi**.

After breakfast on Sundays we drive to church in Tirrases. I started Sunday School last year. The teachers are Mami and my aunt Fania.

Both are **teachers**: Mami teaches at an elementary school, and my aunt is a pre-school teacher. Mathew, Mateo, Ema, and Dominick go to Sunday School with me. I like to sing. My uncle Fabio plays the organ. He started as a young boy. And he teaches us new songs.

This photo is a souvenir from the visit of our **District Apostle Leonard R. Kolb**. He lives in the USA, but also looks after Central America, where Costa Rica is situated.



Costa Rica is situated between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The country takes its name from its discoverer, Christopher Columbus. He was an explorer and navigator, and when he landed on our shores he saw that the people wore gold jewellery.

That is why he called the land Costa Rica, meaning rich coast.

We live in Costa Rica's province number 1, the capital of our country: it's name is San José.

In May I turned eleven. I am in grade four at elementary school, which is named after a national hero of Costa Rica's: **Juan Santamaría**. He served in the army as a drummer boy, and with his help, the army won a decisive battle and was able to preserve the country's independence. My favourite subject is math. I love to solve mathematical problems and equations. I would like to take part in an art festival for students. This year I am going to apply for the subjects of mask, colour drawing, and photography.

I love to skate and I would love to learn to play the violin. I had organ lessons and at school I had some recorder lessons. At home I like to play with my lego stones and my dolls. My favourite colour is fuchsia because it is such a cheerful colour.





Our concept of ministry

■ NAC Southern Africa

Three ministerial levels and five leadership functions. Evangelists, Shepherds, District Evangelists, and District Elders will no longer be ordained. Bishops will be assigned. A distinction will be made between ordination, appointment, and assignment ... The concept of ministry of the New Apostolic Church includes familiar and new aspects. Here is an overview.

The concept of ministry is oriented to the witness of the New Testament, and endeavours to live up to the work and nature of the person of Jesus Christ. The Apostles, whose ministry was established by Jesus Himself, have the task of acting as “stewards of the mysteries of God” (CNAC 7.4.1/CNAC-QA 421–433). Thus the apostolate is also obligated to structure and define the ministerial order in accordance with the requirements of the time.

Source of ministry

“Everything that church is, and everything on which it is based, has its origin in the person and deed of Jesus Christ, who both is and brings salvation” (CNAC 6.2.2/CNAC-QA 368, 369). Christians of all denominations believe that

Jesus Christ has two natures: He is true Man and true God (CNAC 3.4.3/CNAC-QA 104–106). Jesus’ person—which is characterised by these two natures—and His activity comprise the standard for the church and everything that has to do with its function and form. For this reason, it is only logical for the doctrines of church, sacrament, and ministry to be in line with the doctrine of the dual nature of Jesus Christ. This is to be made clear on the basis of the definition of the relationship between ministry and person.

Nature of ministry

Ministry and person exist in close relationship to one another. They are interwoven with one another, so to speak. There is a correlation between the two natures of Christ

and the relationship between ministry and person. Here the ministry refers to the divine nature, while the person of the minister refers to the human nature.

Ministry and person

In the act of ordination, the good capabilities and characteristics that a person possesses are put into the service of the ministry. The ordination does nothing to impart any new gifts or talents, however.

The minister works in the fellowship of the apostolate in accordance with the will of Jesus Christ. He is a servant of God and the congregation, and makes the endeavour to live up to the gospel in both word and deed. Ministry and person, the exercise of ministry and the lifestyle of the minister, are to be consistent in that both are aligned with Jesus Christ in word and deed.

The minister is to proclaim and advocate the gospel in the sense of the New Apostolic Creed and its interpretation as expressed in the Catechism of the New Apostolic Church. In addition, ministers demonstrate their sincerity in living up to the gospel by accepting the theological training offers of the Church along with other such offers that enable them to lead in the service of the Church.

Although the ministry and the person exist in close relationship to one another according to the New Apostolic understanding, this does not mean that the ministry can never again be separated from the person at some future point. The ministry does not pass into the possession of the person, nor does it leave an indelible mark on the person. Rather, it is and remains a gift of Christ, which Jesus Christ controls, and which He can either grant or deny. Thus it is also possible for the ministry to be removed.

Ministry and authority

Jesus is the One who has been sent and equipped by God with the corresponding powers. “Ruling and reigning, effecting reconciliation with God, proclaiming God’s will and foretelling future events—all of these can be found in perfect fashion in Jesus Christ” (CNAC 3.4.7/CNAC-QA 116). The apostolate participates in the authority of Jesus Christ: “The apostolic ministry is the Apostle ministry given by Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, with all its powers, namely to proclaim the gospel, administer the sacraments, and forgive sins (Matthew 28: 19; John 20: 23)” (CNAC 6.4.1.4). As an ambassador of Christ, the Apostle thus also shares in the high priesthood of Jesus Christ referenced in the letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 4: 14).

Not all ministries have the same authority. The three levels of ministry are based on the different powers inherent in each of the individual ministries, namely Apostles, Priests, and Deacons. The Fifth Article of Faith states: “I believe that those designated by God for a ministry are ordained only by Apostles, and that authority, blessing, and sanctification for their ministration come forth out of the Apostle ministry” (CNAC 2.4.5/CNAC-QA 37, 45).

Priestly ministries and Deacons participate in the ministerial authority of the Apostles in different ways: priestly ministers are commissioned to dispense the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, proclaim forgiveness of sins, and preach the gospel properly, as well as to perform acts of blessing (CNAC 7.9.1/CNAC-QA 452, 469). Deacons have no sacramental authority, however, like the priestly ministers they have the authority to properly proclaim the gospel (CNAC 2.4.5/CNAC-QA 45) and dispense the Trinitarian benediction in a word service.

Authority and the dispensation of the sacraments

“The all-encompassing administration of the sacraments—the dispensation of Holy Baptism with water, Holy Communion, and Holy Sealing—is entrusted to the Apostle ministry” (CNAC 6.4.4/CNAC-QA 402, 404).

The priestly ministry participates in the apostolic authority to dispense the sacraments: it can administer Holy Communion as well as Holy Baptism with water.

Authority to preach the word

“The commission to teach also applies to the proper proclamation of the gospel of the death, resurrection, and return of the Lord” (CNAC 2.4.4/CNAC-QA 44). This statement serves, first of all, to make clear the content parameters within which the proper preaching of the gospel occurs.

Proper preaching is based solely on the word of Christ as it is attested in the New Testament. When it is heard, it awakens and reinforces faith (Romans 10: 17). The word of Christ—that is to say, His preaching as it was addressed to His Apostles and contemporaries—is passed along by the apostolate and the ministries associated with it in authority.

The Chief Apostle emphasises that the Bible is the foundation for proper preaching, and that the Apostles of the present have both the duty and capability to interpret the Bible with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Priests and Deacons

also participate in the authority of the apostolate as concerns the proper preaching of the gospel.

The ministerial order

Now that some essential theological aspects of the concept of ministry have been expressed, we will go on to present the ministerial order. It is based on the three levels of ministry, namely the Apostle ministry, the priestly ministry, and the diaconal ministry, each of which is equipped with different spiritual powers. In future, only Apostles, Priests, and Deacons will be ordained. The other ministries will no longer be occupied, as has already been the practice with Community Elders and Sub-deacons, for example.

Ministerial authority and ministerial mandate

Clear levels of authority are conferred upon these three ministries. The term “authority” refers exclusively to the specific acts (that is, the dispensation of sacraments, acts of blessing, public preaching of the gospel) the respective minister is entitled to perform.

A ministry comprises ministerial authority as well as a ministerial mandate. The ministerial authority is of a theological nature, the ministerial mandate is of a canonical nature.

- Definition of ministerial authority: ministerial authority constitutes the right to act and speak in the name of the triune God, which is founded upon Jesus Christ and issued through the Apostle by way of ordination in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ministerial authority is issued through ordination. It ends when the Apostle accepts the resignation of the minister, when a minister is dismissed, or at the time of his death.

- Definition of ministerial mandate: in the ministerial mandate the minister is assigned the right and responsibility to fulfil his tasks in the ministerial authority he has received, within a framework that is limited in terms of both duration and location.

The ministerial mandate ends when the minister moves outside the area for which his mandate applies, when he retires, after the Apostle accepts his resignation, when the minister is dismissed from his ministry or dies.

Ordination, appointment, assignment

In terms of content, the three categories—ordination, appointment, and assignment—are distinguished from one another as follows: ministerial authority is imparted during ordination. A spiritual leadership and administration function is conferred by way of an appointment. In an as-

signment, a person is entrusted with a service or duty that has a spiritual emphasis. Whether in an ordination, an appointment, or an assignment the same value is attached to the personal and professional competencies present in the candidate. Appointments and assignments can be limited in terms of duration.

Ordinations and appointments take place after the celebration of Holy Communion in the divine service. They are received while kneeling.

Ordination of Apostles, Priests, and Deacons

The fact that it is God who designates a person for a ministry and that this is the foundation for every ordination continues to apply unreservedly in the ministerial order now in effect. Ordination to a ministry is an act of God upon the sinner to serve both God and man: “Ordination is the investiture of a spiritual ministry. It is performed in the name of the triune God by the Apostle through laying on of hands and prayer. In the ordination, the minister receives authority, sanctification, and blessing. It is effected while taking into account the spiritual competencies required for the services associated with the respective ministry. Before the laying on of hands, the aid and support of the Holy Spirit are requested in prayer for the fulfilment of these services.” Ordination thus refers to that act in which authority, as well as blessing and sanctification, are imparted. The following ministries are ordained:

- Chief Apostle and Apostle
- Priest
- Deacon

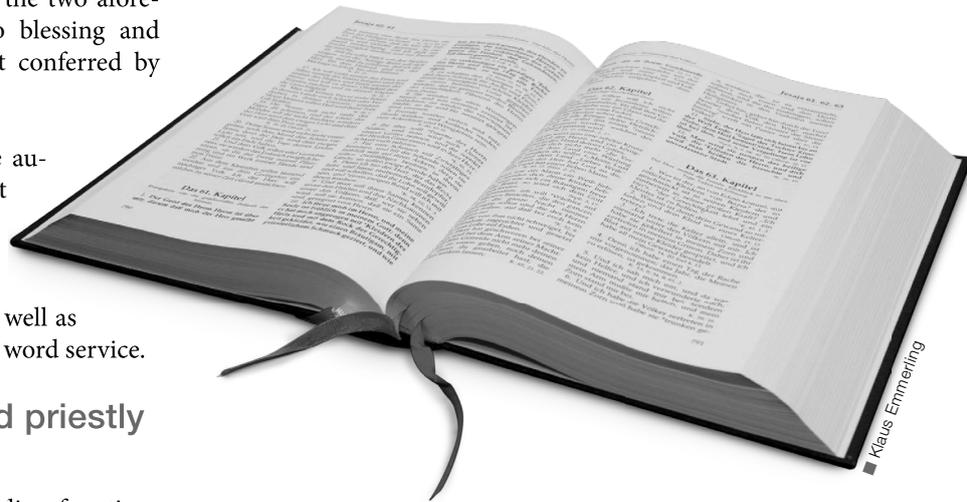
Ministerial authority of Apostles, Priests, and Deacons

The apostolate, in which all sacramental powers necessary for the church as a whole reside—that is, the administration of baptism, communion, and sealing, as well as the preaching of the gospel—is of central importance. The powers of the other ministries derive from the authority of the Apostle ministry. Accordingly, the Fifth Article of Faith states: “I believe that those designated by God for a ministry are ordained only by Apostles, and that authority, blessing, and sanctification for their ministration come forth out of the Apostle ministry.”

Upon ordination, the Priest receives the authority to proclaim the forgiveness of sins in the commission of the Apostle, the authority to administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, as well as the authority to perform acts of blessing—in addition to the authority to properly preach the gospel. The authority to proclaim for-

giveness of sins and the administration of the two aforementioned sacraments is—in addition to blessing and sanctification—the spiritual empowerment conferred by the Apostle in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Upon ordination, the Deacon receives the authority—that is, the spiritual empowerment conferred by the Apostle in the power of the Holy Spirit—to properly preach the gospel in a divine service and to convey the word of God in a pastoral care visit, as well as to dispense the Trinitarian benediction in a word service.



Appointment of Apostles and priestly ministers

Ministers can be appointed to exercise leading functions within a District Church, a district, or a congregation.

Although the Apostle ministry has an inherent leading or ruling character—that is, participation in the three ministries of Christ: King, Priest, and Prophet (CNAC 3.4.7/ CNAC-QA 116)—Apostles can also be entrusted with other leadership functions. Priestly ministers can be appointed to perform leading functions within a district or a congregation.

- An Apostle can be appointed a District Apostle.
- A priestly minister can be appointed a district rector or congregational rector.

The appointment is performed by the Chief Apostle, District Apostle, or Apostle—or in exceptional cases by a minister commissioned by the Apostle—in the name of the triune God through laying on of hands and prayer. In the appointment, the minister receives sanctification and blessing. Appointments take into account the personal competencies (e.g. pastoral, doctrinal, and organisational) required for the services associated with the respective leadership function. The appointment is not bound to the duration of the ministerial activity, but it does end along with it.

Assignment of Apostles and priestly ministers

An assignment is the allocation of a spiritual service. It is initiated and terminated by an Apostle or a priestly min-

ister. It is effected while taking into account the personal competencies (e.g. pastoral, doctrinal, and organisational) required for the performance of the respective services. The blessing of God is requested for the fulfilment of these services.

The Chief Apostle, as well as the District Apostles, Apostles, and priestly ministers who perform leadership functions can receive special support by way of assistants or delegates:

- an Apostle can be assigned as a Chief Apostle Helper, District Apostle Helper, or Lead Apostle.
- a priestly minister can be assigned as a Bishop, in other words, as an assistant to the Apostle.
- a priestly minister can be assigned as the representative or delegate of the district rector or congregational rector.

Termination of ministerial mandate and ministerial authority

The ministry—along with both its components of ministerial authority and ministerial mandate—can come to an end in various ways. Only the ministerial mandate is ended by way of retirement, while both the ministerial authority as well as the ministerial mandate are terminated in the event of a resignation or dismissal from ministry.

“My friends, family, and congregation make me rich”

Christoph Baumgärtner has been in a wheelchair all his life, yet he radiates joy and gratitude. He gave us a glimpse of his day-to-day life.



■ Dinara Ganzer, private



Christoph is delighted about the visit of Apostle Steinbrenner (right) and the Bishops Novicic (back) und Knobloch

A roomy bungalow in a very quiet neighbourhood on the outskirts of the city of Lübeck in northern Germany. Christoph Baumgärtner shows us his room: a desk with a laptop, a keyboard, two cupboards, a bed. It would be a room like many others, if there were not a gadget next to the bed, which immediately attracts your attention: a lifting device. Christoph, 38 years old, needs help to transfer from his wheelchair to his bed.

Grateful to his parents

“There were complications when Christoph was born,” Priest Klaus Gatzke says, his uncle. “The newborn did not cry immediately and there was no ventilator nearby.” Bärbel, Christoph’s mother, passed away several years ago

following a bout with cancer. Christoph’s father, Kurt—a Priest and the rector in the congregation of Bad Schwartau—passed away in 1995 already following a heart attack.

The child’s cognitive development was age-appropriate, but unlike his peers, Christoph never learned to walk. “My parents always gave me the help I needed.” Thanks to them, he was able to complete his schooling.

On the street and in church

At age three, Christoph began to take piano lessons. In church services for people with disabilities in the Harsefeld congregation, he is usually in charge of the musical accompaniment on the electric piano. Many an officiant in Lübeck

Christoph with his rector (below) and his family (right)



and the surrounding area counts on Christoph's memory to prepare for a church service rather than reverting to a song concordance.

In many ways, Christoph is not able to determine his own day-to-day life. He depends on assistance from others. In his spare time, Christoph likes to go into town or meet up with a friend. These are the liberties he can take on his own steam. In summer, Christoph even goes to the island of Sylt with a carer. "I keep my keyboard in a hotel and play music on the street. The money I make supplements my pocket money a little," Christoph says cheerfully.

Not without God and faith

His fixed weekly ritual includes trips to the divine services on Wednesdays and Sundays. To get there Christoph uses public transportation or assisted transport. He organises it himself. "I like the fellowship we have in church," he says. "I could not imagine my life without God or faith."

Christoph feels very much at home in the congregation. "The members accept me as I am. And no, I don't think that the brothers and sisters are uncomfortable with my disability." Christoph's positive outlook is infectious. The man in the wheelchair doesn't hide the fact that he also has phases in which he is down, "But then the desire to go to church takes over; it's much nicer in the congregation."

He prefers openness rather than compassion

When asked whether he ever blamed God for his fate, he says, "No, never. Even when my parents died I was deeply saddened, but I did not blame God." In his situation, which no one envies him for, Christoph remains compassionate and sensitive. "I spent three years in a centre for disabled children. I met children there who were worse off than I am. Their fate touched me."

When asked how people react to him, Christoph says in a positive way. "Many are very helpful." What he really likes is when people approach him in an open and friendly way. "One day a lady boarded a bus I was on. When she saw me she said in a voice loud enough for me to hear, 'Oh, the poor man!'" How did he react? "I smiled. I don't feel poor. My big family, the congregation, and my friends and acquaintances make my life rich."



Archpriest Radu Constantin Miron (right) congratulates Apostle Volker Kühnle (left)

During an ecumenical service in a Protestant church in Hofgeismar (Germany), the New Apostolic Church was awarded associate status in the Council of Christian Churches in Germany



Jessica Krämer

Giving voice to the gospel together

A handshake between the chairman and the delegates sealed it: the New Apostolic Church has been awarded associate status in the Council of Christian Churches in Germany (CCCG).

The admission as an associate member was the second reason for the ecumenical service that took place at a Protestant church in Hofgeismar (Germany) on Thursday, 4 April 2019. The first item on the agenda was the introduction of the newly elected board of the CCCG, with Archpriest Radu Constantin Miron as the new chairman.

Apostle Volker Kühnle, himself a delegate, said that he was very happy that, after years of intensive dialogue, such a good result had been achieved. When asked by nac.today, he said that he was particularly grateful for the prayers and the goodwill of all those who accompanied this process and promoted its development.

For the Apostle, this is not the end of the line. In fact, it is really only the beginning: as Christians it is important to give a voice to the values of the gospel together. Nobody loses their profile in the process, on the contrary, everyone can bring their own strengths to bear.

During the service, the participants also professed the Creed of Nicaea and Constantinople, which is found in the first three articles of the New Apostolic creed. Musically, the event was embellished by instrumentalists and a choir from the New Apostolic congregation of Kassel-Korbach (Germany).



The Roman Catholic pastor Dr Burkhard Neumann, director at the Adam Möhler Institute for Ecumenism in Paderborn, had outlined the course and the various stages that the CCCG and the New Apostolic Church had reached over the last twenty years. On 28 October 1999 Chief Apostle Richard Fehr established the Project Group Ecumenism and appointed Apostle Volker Kühnle as its chairman. Together with Bishop Peter Johanning, who has also been a member of the group since its creation, and the Apostles Rolf Wosnitzka and Clément Haeck, the working group promotes interfaith dialogue with global ecumenical institutions.

In Germany this is the Council of Christian Churches in Germany (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland, ACK), with its 17 member churches, among them the two major churches, as well as a number of free churches in Germany. Eight churches have been awarded associate status, five denominations have observer status.

In 2006 the New Apostolic congregation in Memmingen was the first New Apostolic congregation to be awarded associate status in the local branch of the CCCG. Currently, 150 congregations of the New Apostolic Church have associate status in local branches, 25 of which are in the western part of Germany. In Witten and Brilon, the local New Apostolic congregations were even the founding members of the local branch of the Council of Christian Churches.

Divine service in the southernmost city of the world

Whether at the end of the world, close to the South Pole, or on a small island somewhere in Africa, divine services and fellowship are possible nearly everywhere in the world. All one has to do is get up and go ...

“The end of the world” is located at the southern tip of South America. The city of Ushuaia is built at the foot of a steep mountain slope. It is the gateway to Antarctica, and cruise ships and expeditions set out from here. At the beginning of March 2019, Apostle Claudio González visited the 80 New Apostolic Christians in Ushuaia and celebrated the divine service for the departed with them. He also conducted Holy Sealing and enjoyed fellowship with the congregation.



INA Argentina





NAK-karitati, Alvin Witten

Rebuilding shattered lives after the flood

Blue skies and green meadows ... A holiday photo? Far from it. Until recently there was still a village here. “There is devastation everywhere,” Bishop Alvin Witten says. The New Apostolic Church Southern Africa dispatched him to Beira for a week.

Beira is the big port in Mozambique with a population of half a million people where Cyclone Idai made landfall in March. The cyclone swept across the country at speeds of up to 200 kilometres per hour, bringing days of heavy winds and rain. It left a devastating trail of destruction as it crashed through Malawi, then Mozambique, and finally Zimbabwe.

There is no end to the people’s plight

Situation report is the name of the newsletter issued by UN OCHA, the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs. With respect to Malawi and Zim-

babwe it had become rather quiet by early April. But from Mozambique there were still daily updates.

The cyclone had claimed more than 600 lives. Nearly 240,000 houses were destroyed or heavily damaged. Well over 160,000 people were forced from their homes and had to find shelter in more than 160 collective emergency shelters. The biggest risk was the lack of clean and safe drinking water, causing an outbreak of disease. Nearly 3,600 cases were reported.

And there was still no end in sight. Even three weeks after the flood, entire regions were still under water. To make matters worse, the annual rainy season had just started.

The helpers are optimistic

However, there was also good news. Big humanitarian organisations like the Red Cross were in Mozambique and providing emergency aid. Well over 750,000 people were receiving food assistance. And nearly as many people had received an oral cholera vaccination. Meanwhile, the distribution of seeds for the winter harvest had begun so that people could begin to grow crops again on the fields that had been destroyed by the cyclone.

“It was great to see how the relief organisations work together here,” Bishop Witten reported from his working area in Mozambique. The New Apostolic Church in the country is comprised of nearly 190,000 members, organised in eleven Apostle districts. The region that Apostle Agostinho Dzimba works in—he looks after 43 congregations—was the hardest hit by the flood. Eight churches were completely destroyed, many others were damaged.

A step-by-step rebuilding process

How do the people in Mozambique deal with all the hardship? “They have never had much and are used to hardship,” Bishop Witten says. “They do what they have to do in order to get on with their lives. They roll up their sleeves and start with rebuilding their lives.” And this is what the New Apostolic Church Southern Africa wants to support through its relief organisation Masakhe.

After hearing reports of the flooding caused by the cyclone, Church members had expressed a desire to help the people in Mozambique. Masakhe Foundation responded with a fundraising campaign. The money will go towards the

reconstruction of schools. “In the middle of all this chaos, there were children standing there in their school uniforms, wanting to go to school: but the school was gone,” says Bishop Witten, referring to a situation that had touched him particularly.

Relief efforts in full swing

A co-operation with NAK-karitativ is being discussed for the school reconstruction project. While the German charity was already thinking about reconstruction in Mozambique, emergency aid in Malawi and Zimbabwe was still running at full capacity. This is what the project coordinator, Joana von Jarmersted, reported.

Some 15,000 people were provided with emergency aid kits containing food, blankets, tarpaulins, and chlorine tablets to prevent water-borne diseases. The kits also included pens and notebooks for the children. Another focus area was southern Malawi. A health kit was sent there by air, which provided painkillers, antibiotics, bandages, and nutritional supplements for a thousand people for three months.

This is a joint project which NAK-karitativ is working on together with the New Apostolic Church Relief Organisation (NACRO) and a German organisation called Help e.V. – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe. NAK-karitativ not only receives financial support for this from an ongoing fundraising campaign, but also received a 50,000-euro donation from the New Apostolic sister organisation human aktiv in Southern Germany. And NAK Humanitas from Switzerland joined the ranks of the helpers by sending 30,000 Swiss francs directly to the Red Cross.



Apostle Agostinho Albino Dzimba in the destroyed church in Mafarina (Mozambique): only the altar defied the destructive forces



A significant change to our tradition

A reform to our definition of ministry ... Why is this necessary? What's the point? And how is it supposed to work? The Chief Apostle's video address provides the answers. Here are the most important aspects in a nutshell.



Oliver Rütten

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider sees plenty of reasons to revisit the subject of ministry: there are gaps in the Catechism, which were left in order not to delay its publication. And the manner in which the congregational and district rectors have been entrusted with their tasks to date has not been appropriate to the significance of their function. Above all, the Church needs to react to constantly changing realities: more frequent changes of residence for professional reasons, or mergers of congregations and districts. The hierarchy in place until now has led to discrepancies, which have caused confusion in congregational and district structures and diminished the sanctity of the ministry.

Decoupling ministry from hierarchy

The basis for ministry is the authority to speak and act in the name of the triune God. Those who make organisation-

al decisions do not do so by the authority of God, the Chief Apostle pointed out. Although linked, ministry and leadership function are two distinct matters.

For ministry, the structure arises from the traditional allocation of authority: Deacon (with the authority to proclaim the word of God and bless the congregation), Priest (with the additional authority to perform Holy Baptism with water, celebrate Holy Communion, proclaim the absolution, and carry out acts of blessing), and Apostle (with the additional authority to perform Holy Sealing and ordain ministers).

For the leadership function the hierarchy also arises from traditional structures: rectors lead a congregation, district rectors lead a district, Apostles the Apostle district, District Apostles the District Apostle Area, and the Chief Apostle the global Church.

No new Evangelists, Shepherds, or Elders

Where in all these considerations are the Evangelists, Shepherds, District Evangelists, District Elders, and Bishops? These priestly ministries will not be abolished, however, no new brothers will be ordained to these ministries. This will come into effect across the globe as of Pentecost 2019. Something similar has been in effect for the Apostle ministry since June 2018.

The view that each ministry was associated with a particular personal characteristic came to be hierarchised over time, the Chief Apostle said as he outlined the history. In part, the size of the congregation played a role in whether a rector was ordained as a Priest, Evangelist, or Shepherd, even though no additional spiritual powers were conferred.

Even in the past, no additional ministerial authority was needed to assume a leadership function. All that was required was the corresponding blessing and sanctification. This will in future be imparted by way of an appointment—not only with a simple handshake, but through laying on of hands while the minister kneels.

The Chief Apostle mentioned two exceptions. The designation “Bishop” will be retained for the Priest who will serve as assistant to the Apostle. This is a concession to a tradition

that was highly esteemed in certain parts. The Chief Apostle will continue to be ordained in order to document the special character of the service inherent in this ministry.

“I am aware that this represents a significant change to tradition,” the Chief Apostle said. “It will certainly take some time to become accustomed to it. However, I am absolutely convinced that this reform will have beneficial effects for the Church.”

Next question: ordination of women

In conclusion he gave an outlook on the next steps in our concept of ministry. This also includes the question of the ordination of women. In addition to theological aspects, cultural aspects must also be taken into consideration. The Church leaders will take the time needed to sound out the depths of this subject and inform the members of the progress of their work when the time comes.

At the end of March, Chief Apostle Schneider’s video address was recorded in our church in Dessau (Germany). In the meantime, it has been presented in all District Apostle Areas. It can be watched any time on the websites nak.org and nac.today



Left: Chief Apostle Schneider in conversation with the producer, Nicole Ide
Above: Apostle Gert Opdenplatz, Bishop Peter Johanning, and the Chief Apostle discuss the final recording sequence

DISTRICT APOSTLE MICHAEL EHRICH:

We can be proud of our church!

From an interview with our District Apostle on youth work:

? *What do you advise adolescents who want to experience God?*

To fully engage in God, so to speak, in both our good and bad times. There is no physical proof of God, but also, there is no proof that God does not exist. It is ultimately a matter of faith and trust. And you can only experience God if you commit into His hands. We are not the same as God, even though it is said in the scriptures, we will be like Him. He remains creator, we remain creatures. Ultimately, one can only meet God in total humility and submission; anything else does not work.

? *How can the gospel help young Christians find their own place in life?*

As said before, the gospel must speak into our here and now; its statements directly affect the way of life of the people; and



then there are the commandments. If I replace every "Thou shalt" into "I will," these commandments really have an effect in my life; it becomes a personal experience with God, where I learn that He is not a distant God who observes me, but a Heavenly Father. A father who accompanies you, who gives you advice; He guides you. Then, you can experience the good God.

? *What possibility do young people have to get involved in the church?*

In the congregation and in the district there are many possibilities. There is plenty to do in every congregation; whether these are administrative things, teaching a class, singing in the choir, playing an instrument, participating in communal evangelism...we have something to offer; we can be proud of our church!

(Interview excerpt from Our Family 11/2018)

BENIN: Youth Days



Youth service at Aplahoué

"RICH IN CHRIST": It is with this theme that 1,250 young brothers and sisters of the field of work of the Apostle Olou met at Aplahoué from August 29 to September 1, 2019. Various spiritual activities were organized by the young people, making it possible to live a wonderful atmosphere for the 4 days. Apostle Olou Justin ended the event with a divine service in which the best students were rewarded.



The musical contributions inspired all



Despite being far away, Benin was very close to the IJT2019

TOGO: Blessed Youths



Welcome by the youth choir

There were hundreds of young brothers and sisters of the work of the Apostle Abalo who came together to share moments of great blessing before the resumption of the school year. Debates, exhortations, sketches and many other activities helped to maintain an atmosphere of brotherhood, and enrich the culture and faith of our younger brothers and sisters. The climax was the service that the Apostle Abalo rendered based on the biblical text of Galatians 5: 13-14.



Interesting and impressive scenic representation of the youth

GHANA: Days of Youth 2019



● ACCRA

Around 700 participants from 20 districts attended the Accra Apostle Area Youth Camp in Swedru from 1st to 4th August. Interesting program items awaited the youth: history of the Church in Ghana and the role of youth in the Church, career counseling, "Time with the Apostle", health and vineyard walk, sports activities, choral evening with all youth choirs, and a divine service with Apostle Ohene-Saffo.



The much-anticipated youth convention for the Kumasi Apostle Area finally arrived with an expectation of about 500 youth from 13 districts. The convention was held at the Nyinahin Catholic Senior High School under the leadership of Apostle Amos Osei-Du. In addition to seminars and lectures as well as sports activities, the youth divine service with Lead Apostle Oppong-Brenya was the absolute highlight and the final event.

● KUMASI

VOLTA CENTRAL ●

About 400 young people from the Volta Central Apostle Area met in August in the Junior Common Room [JCR] of the Ho University of Technology. This 3-day assembly gave the young people the opportunity to know each other, have exposure to a range of contemporary matters of faith and their day to day living, as well as celebrate a divine service as one family of youth with the Lead Apostle and their Apostle.

● TAKORADI

From August 8 to 11 2019, the youth from 16 districts gathered at the Kikam Technical School in Essiama for Youth Camp. They had four great days of worship, seminars, and lectures on the concept of ministry, dealing with social media, health care and the history of NAC Ghana. Likewise, many sports activities and role plays were on the program. The highlight was on the fourth day, in a divine service with Apostle George Sam.

NIGERIA: Youth Convention



The stage play by the West youth exhibiting the rich culture

WEST AREA

From Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th August 2019, the West Area of Nigeria had a fun-filled weekend full of excitement, suspense and education as over 500 young people from the 15 districts cared for by Apostle Oscar Nwanza gathered together at Abeokuta, Ogun State, for this year's annual Youth Convention.



National Youth Convention committee members with the "magic boat"

SOUTH CENTRAL AREA

It was fun, excitement, suspense and thrilling on Saturday 13th July, 2019 at Uyo, South Central Area as the central working committee of 2020 National Youth Convention watch with disbelief as the young people displayed their God given talents.

GUINEA: Youth Meeting



The choir in the youth service

From 25 to 28/07/2019 took place in the southern region of the Apostle Béavogui Jules a meeting of young New Apostolic of Guinea. Several recreational activities, sports, biblical games, musical performances were held in accordance with the program of youth leaders.

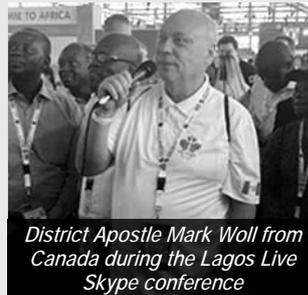
The meeting was closed by a divine service led by the Apostle Béavogui accompanied by Bishops Tolno and Haba.



Musical performance of the youth choir of South



Youth in Lagos during the live Skype Session with Düsseldorf



District Apostle Mark Woll from Canada during the Lagos Live Skype conference



Lead Apostle Nwogu addressing the youth in Lagos during the live skype session

NIGERIA:

“Here I Am” in Lagos

The distance between Düsseldorf (Germany) and Lagos (Nigeria) is 6,952.6 km, but with the help of social media and internet technology, the distance was brought down to just 76 centimeters. Lagos City in Nigeria, experienced an exciting online live program from the International Youth Convention in Düsseldorf Germany. A well-organized live Skype conference booth, by NAC South Germany, was setup to link the youth in the satellite districts in West Africa to the ongoing IYC 2019 in Dusseldorf.

A group of twenty (20) youth, each from the various Apostle Areas in Nigeria especially South, East Central, South Central and North; joined over 150 youth in the West Apostle Area to participate at the event which was going on in Germany. During the live video interaction, the youth from Nigeria were able to interact with those in Düsseldorf by singing, dramatizing as well as hold a questions-and-answers session about themselves, the Church and happenings at Düsseldorf.

GHANA:

Here – There – Everywhere . . . Here I Am!

In the spirit of oneness of the New Apostolic family, the International Youth Conference 2019 (IYC) came to live in many countries as the youth around the world took part in the IYC held in Dusseldorf via video conferencing. On Saturday 1st June 2019, it was the turn of Ghana as youth members of the Accra District joined the celebrations



Apostle Ohene-Saffo was the anchor man in Accra

their leaders, District Apostle Ehrich and Lead Apostle Oppong-Brenya as well as participating brethren from Ghana and Germany. Led by Apostle Benjamin Ohene-Saffo in Accra at the East Legon congregation, the 30-minute interaction involved the sharing of goodwill messages and singing of songs.



The Ghana stand at the IYC 2019

SIERRA LEONE:

Showcase of Talent

Children from various congregations came together in the Central church of Freetown for a service on 15th June 2019. It was the eve to the June 16 celebration of the day of the African child.

Topics like the Lord’s prayer, Ten Commandments, Articles of Faith, 23rd Psalm, memorial Bible verses etc were recited by either Sunday school or Confirmation children in a



Deborah Senesie reciting Articles of Faith



Group photos at the church

competition amongst the congregations.

Apostle Braima Saffa conducted the divine service and read a text word from 1st Thessalonians 5:5. He admonished that inasmuch as we are all children of God and friends of Jesus, we should shine as light to bring peace and love to others.

All enjoyed the funs and talents of the kids.



Lead Apostle Opong-Brenya teaching the class



Lead Apostle having a discussion with the District Leaders

GHANA:

Concept of Ministry

On 7th June 2019, the Apostle and District leaders of Volta North Apostle Area, had the opportunity to be the first group in Ghana to go through a seminar by the Lead Apostle Samuel Opong-Brenya on the Concept of Ministry, pending the declaration of the Chief Apostle on Pentecost day.

Key pointers of the meeting were as follows:

- Concept of Ministry
- Pentecost day streaming service by Chief Apostle

- Review of the Apostle area
- Brainstorming on how to move the church forward
- Plan for the National Youth conference with the District Apostle in 2020

The Lead Apostle concluded the meeting by encouraging the leaders to urge all members to participate in the Chief Apostle's Pentecost day divine service to be streamed live from Goslar.

GUINEA:

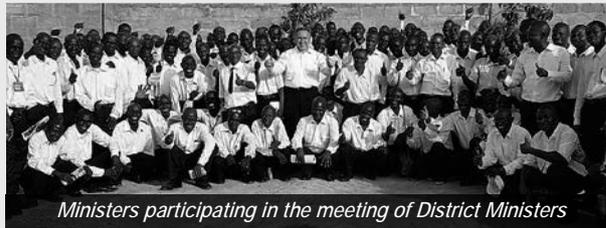
Meeting of Ministers by Lead Apostle Bauer

On May 13, 2019, Apostle Bauer led a meeting for District Ministers in Kissidougou with Apostle Leno.

After some introductory words from John 15:16, the Lead Apostle introduced the Definition of Ministry. He explained the reasons for this implementation; the department and management functions; the investiture documents; ministerial power; the ministerial structure; ministry as well as services and



Apostle Bauer presents the new ministerial



Ministers participating in the meeting of District Ministers

gifts within the New Apostolic Church. Afterwards, supervisor Samuel Cole explained current points of church construction. Apostle Leno, introduced the new restructuring of the districts in the three zones of the Apostles of Guinea. Lead Apostle Bauer also announced the upcoming visit of the Chief Apostle to Guinea in 2020. The atmosphere of being in God's circle of servants was great.

GUINEA:

District Church goes online

The District Church of Guinea belongs to the area of work of our District Apostle Michael Ehrich. The website of the District Church can be found at www.ena-guinee.org and offers, among other things. Brief information on the doctrine and structure of the New Apostolic Church, including the main locations of New Apostolic congregations, as well as the contact details of the four respective Apostles in



The homepage of the new website www.ena-guinee.org

Guinea. Illustrated reports on current events are regularly scheduled for the website.

The website, www.ena-guinee.org, is now the fourth "Africa Website" of the District Churches from South Germany - Ghana (online since 2016), Sierra Leone and Nigeria - and also the first in French, for a multilingual country where French is the official language.

South Germany: Divine service with the District Apostle

In the first half of 2019, our District Apostle conducted a divine service in Söllingen (South Germany).

The District Apostle celebrated the divine service together with all the Apostles, Bishops and District Ministers of Southern Germany, having held an earlier meeting with them.

Bible text: **And he said to them all, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."**
(Luke 9: 23)

Core thoughts: Many people came to the Lord for help and then left. The disciples followed Him because they wanted to stay with Him. That's the way it is today. We want to follow the Lord, stay with Him and enter His kingdom. This includes denying one's self:

- We cannot go our own way, but align ourselves with the gospel.
- We cannot earn salvation through works. Only Christ can give salvation.
- Rebirth has made us a "new creature in Christ." Now it is time to renounce our sinful being and to align ourselves with the example of Christ.

Anyone who wants to enter the kingdom of God must daily take his cross. Let us not hesitate to confess as Christians - the lie, the bad handling of the neighbour or, for example, unwillingness to renounce wealth - so we take up our cross daily! We too have struggles and suffer misfortunes.

We follow Jesus to enter the kingdom of God:

- God has given us a mission and we are determined to fulfil it: to proclaim the gospel and thus to contribute to the salvation of humanity.
- We fulfil the new commandment by serving and forgiving one another.
- At His return, He will clothe us with the resurrected body, much as He wore it, and will lead us into eternal communion with God.

