

# community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

02/2015/EN



District Apostles meet in Zurich

## With heart, soul, and reason

Asking in the name of Jesus: divine service in Dodoma

The question of why in times of affliction

19+1: the leadership board of the Church meets

New Apostolic Church  
International



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# Joy in Christ

Dear Brothers and Sisters around the world,

A few months of the year 2015 have already passed. They have brought happiness and tragedy, distress and grief, joy and confidence. When I published this motto—"Joy in Christ"—at the beginning of the year, I did not realize how multifaceted it was. Some may even have been thinking about earthly happiness. And who would not be delighted about that! But there is so much more to this motto: for example, there is the joy we feel in divine service, the joy that results from the forgiveness of our sins, and the joy we experience in Holy Communion. Have we not all experienced such beautiful moments of fellowship, of togetherness, of encouragement and support? I am confident that our motto will continue to live on. It is far more than just a slogan.

Following are some thoughts concerning our 2015 motto "Joy in Christ".

- We can rejoice that we are part of such a beautiful fellowship of God's children. We are members in a congregation and are not alone on our path of faith.
- The Lord loves us and has died for us. Our sins are forgiven and He calls us to His table to have fellowship with Him. In every divine service He steps into our midst and we experience Him.
- The Lord will return. He has promised this and will keep His promise. Is that not what we are looking for-



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ward to most of all? He will return to take home His bride. And we can expect His coming!

You have to admit: this is wonderful!

This is something in which we can all rejoice together. Remember the words in Psalm 103: 2, "Forget not all His benefits."

Wishing you a joyful time ahead,

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean-Luc Schneider".

Jean-Luc Schneider

# Asking in the name of Jesus



Children welcome Chief Apostle Schneider  
and the Apostles to Dodoma in Tanzania  
on 19 April 2015

John 14: 14

*"If you ask  
anything in my name,  
I will do it."*



Dear brothers and sisters, dear guests, this Sunday is indeed a very special day for God's work here in East Africa. All the African District Apostles are here because your District Apostle will be retired and a new one will be ordained. I am sure that this will be a decisive day in the history of the Church in East Africa. Don't worry, the Master will remain the same. Only a new servant will be ordained. All of us—whether Chief Apostle, District Apostles, or Apostles—are only servants of Jesus Christ. He is the Master, the Lord. We are just servants. The new District Apostle will be a servant of the Lord just like the former one was. I have a wish, however. May every single one of us—including me—take a decisive step towards the goal of our faith today and so come closer to Christ. Let us take a big step towards Him so that we can become like Him, act and react like Him, and do His will.

The Bible text I have read is a wonderful promise. Jesus says, "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." Imagine all the wishes people have. It would be wonderful if all we had to do was to ask Jesus and He would fulfil all our wishes. But He attached some conditions to this promise. First of all, we have to believe in Him. We have to believe that He is the Son of God and not just a miracle worker, or a big prophet who tells wonderful stories, or somebody who can help us with our problems. We have to believe that He is the Son of God, the Saviour, who came on earth to bring salvation to mankind and to prepare us for eternal life. So we have to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of our soul, and not just in the One who can solve our problems.

The second condition is that we have to ask in His name, in other words, ask as though He were asking in our place. If we want our prayers to be answered, they have to be prayers that Jesus Himself could

be praying. Asking in His name means that Jesus Himself could have uttered the plea. Every time somebody came to Jesus to ask for something and He realized that they did not have enough faith, or that He could not approve of the plea, He refused to do what He had been asked. Some Pharisees came to Him one day and said, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." But He refused and answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12: 39–40). That was a clear answer, "If you want to believe in Me, you have to believe in the Resurrection. You will not receive any other sign."

Dear brothers and sisters, we have to believe in the Son of God. We have to believe in our Saviour and believe that He laid down His life for us. That is how He proved His love. We cannot come to God every morning and say, "Can you not do a miracle to show how great Your love is for me?" That will not work. Jesus produced evidence long ago that He loves us: He died for us.

Apostles and Bishops seated next to the altar





Neither can we demand of Jesus, "Please do a miracle so that we can recognize that Your work is really the work of salvation." Imagine if God were to do something wonderful here in Dodoma to prove: these are my children, this is the work of God. But He does not do that. He says, "My children are the proof that this is the work of God because they are developing into a new creature." A kind of resurrection is taking place. Our old nature is dying off and the new creature is emerging and becoming more and more visible. We believe in the work of God because we see the new creature emerging.

Jesus gave many examples. For one, there was the parable of the talents. A nobleman wanted to go to a foreign country. Before he left he called ten of his servants and gave them each a mina and told them, "Do business

till I come." When the master came back, he called his servant to account. One of the servants who had kept the mina and did nothing with it tried to argue, "For I feared you, because you are an austere man" (Luke 19: 13,

21). But the Lord Jesus made it clear that the servant had been given an order and that he should have carried it out. He should simply have obeyed. Jesus tells us, "I am the Son of God. That is why My words will not pass away."

*If we ask the Lord for a strong faith, He will give it to us because He prays for exactly the same thing for you and me.*

Many people today would surely like to ask Jesus, "Can't You change Your gospel? I have my doubts. Why don't You adapt it to our time, to our country, to our conditions." But Jesus will not do that. Those who believe that He is the Son of God know that what He said is valid for all eternity. He will not change the gospel because of us. There is no point in asking Him to do so.



**Top left:**  
District Apostle Shadreck Lubasi  
addresses the congregation during  
the divine service

There is also no point in asking Jesus to bless a divided heart. He is the Son of God and wants the whole heart. In the Sermon on the Mount He explained that many will come knocking on heaven's door at the end of time, requesting to be let in. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you'" (Matthew 7: 21–23). He knew that even though they had done great things in His name, their heart was undecided. It was divided.

We cannot ask the Lord to bless us if our heart is divided or if we are not obedient. You know, if we have a problem we can ask the Lord to help us. But what we cannot do is solve the problem by dishing up a lie. That will not work. If we do that we are actually asking Him to bless our disobedience. We did not respect the covenant, but expect His help. That will not work. He cannot bless a divided heart.

There is something else that does not coincide with His thoughts. It is pointless to ask Him to punish sinners. The disciples tried once and said to the Lord, "Do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" (Luke 9: 54). Jesus rebuked them. Another time, the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to Him and said, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act" (John 8: 4), expecting Him to punish her. Jesus refused because these were not His thoughts. It is pointless to ask Jesus to punish the sinner. He will not do it. After all, He is the Saviour and wants to deliver the sinner and not punish him.

One last example. When Jesus was with Mary and Martha, Mary was sitting at His feet listening to Him, and Martha was busy with all kinds of preparations. She came and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered, "Mary has chosen that good part" (Luke 10: 40, 42). We cannot expect Jesus to attach more importance to our earthly life than to eternal life. Eternal life will always be more important for the Lord. So it is useless to ask Him to shift priorities. He will not do it. So you see, there are things where it is pointless to ask Him. He will not be able to change them, because they testify of a lack of faith on our part, and that does not correspond to His will. He wants us to believe.

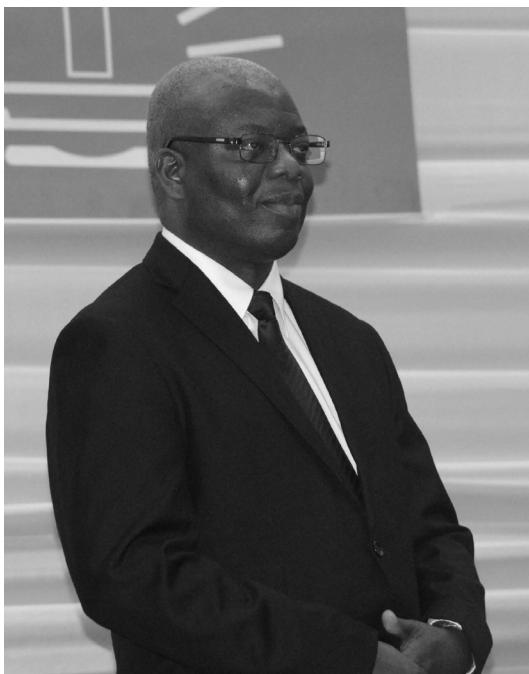
So what can we ask Him for? That is actually quite simple. We can ask Him for those things He asked His Father for. Jesus said to Simon Peter, "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail" (Luke 22: 32). We can ask the Lord to give us a strong faith and that we can believe no matter what happens, and that we can believe without signs and just

because He said it. That constitutes a strong faith. If we ask the Lord to give us a strong faith, He will do it, because He prays for exactly the same thing for you and me.

We can pray in the name of Jesus, "Lord, Your will be done." I know that is not that easy, because sometimes there are misconceptions about the will of God. We think that God wants us to suffer, to be sick, and to die. But that is a misconception. God does not want us to suffer. God wants us to remain obedient in suffering. God wants us to remain faithful even if we have to suffer.

Jesus knew exactly what the will of His Father was. He knew, "This is the path I have to take, but the will of God is that I remain faithful and obedient until the end." That was the will of His Father. When Jesus said, "Not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22: 42) He knew, "My Father does not want Me to suffer and die. All He wants is that I remain obedient until the end. That is His will which has to be done." If we pray as Jesus did, "Father, Your will be done," it means that we have decided to remain faithful no matter what. And then Jesus will help us.

**Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider ordains Joseph Ekhuya as the new District Apostle for East Africa. Behind them, District Apostles Patrick Mkhwanazi from South Africa and Michael Deppner from the Democratic Republic of the Congo**



A token of appreciation to the retiring District Apostle.

Pictured left to right are District Apostles Noel Barnes and Shadreck Lubasi (ret.) with Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider



Praying in the name of Jesus also means asking Him for grace in the way He expects. He explained very precisely what we have to do to obtain grace: we have to be humble and repentant and forgive our neighbour. That is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and if we observe it and then ask Him for grace, He will grant it to us.

The old Apostle even said that Jesus is in heaven and intercedes for us with the Father to forgive us, "And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2: 1). He is in heaven and intercedes for us. So if we ask for grace with a humble, repentant, and forgiving heart He will grant it. He asks the same for us.

In another prayer, Jesus prayed for the unity of His Apostles and for all those who believe in Jesus Christ through them. Therefore He also prayed for us. We are those who believe in Jesus Christ through the Apostles, and He prays for the unity of His people. I would like that each and everyone in every congregation prays: "Father, whatever happens, let us be one." If we pray sincerely for the unity in our congregation, Jesus will grant it because He is praying for exactly the same thing.

If we ask Him, "Please shorten the time and come quickly," He will fulfil our plea, because He is praying for exactly the same thing. So you see, where these five points are concerned we always pray in the name of Jesus. He will answer and fulfil our pleas. If we ask Him for a strong faith, He will give it to us. If we ask Him to help us in remaining obedient and faithful no matter what, He will do it. If we ask Him for

grace, He will grant it. But we have to ask for grace in His name, in other words, we have to accept His conditions.

If we long for unity and pray for it, He will grant it because He too longs for it. And if we pray for the shortening of the time, "Lord, come quickly!" He will do it. He wants it too.

## CORE THOUGHTS

**Jesus answers those petitions He can approve of.**

Our prayers have to be firmly grounded on faith in Jesus Christ and correspond with the will of God. God hears those who pray for a strong faith, perseverance in tests, grace, and unity, and who strive for the first resurrection.

So that our prayers can be answered, they must be founded on faith in Jesus Christ and be offered to the Lord in His name, in other words they have to correspond with His will.

# The Lord fills the hungry with good things

On his last trip to Asia in December 2014, Chief Apostle Schneider also conducted a divine service in the Makati congregation in Manila, the Philippine capital. There are more than 40,000 New Apostolic Christians in the Philippines. They are cared for by District Apostle Urs Hebeisen and more than 1,500 ministers.

Hunger is a sensation that represents the need to eat food. It signals us that there is a deficiency, a lack, that we need to remedy by eating something. In the language of the Bible, hunger symbolizes the spiritual need of the soul to receive the gifts of God that it requires.

Our souls, for instance, need comfort. The angel had announced to Mary that she was the chosen one and would give birth to the Son of God, a king whose rule would never end. But she had to give birth to Him in a stable and put Him in a manger. God wanted to strengthen Mary, but this is something He did not do directly. Instead He sent

the shepherds to her, who came and told her that they had seen an angel who had told them that the Son of God had been born, confirming the promise she had been given. God made us His children and promised us that we would rule with Jesus in eternity. This does not mean that God will spare us from trials and suffering. What He does do, however, is send us His servants who confirm His promise.

## Growing in faith, grace, and knowledge

It is important that our faith becomes stronger. True faith not only means that we believe in the truth of the word,





Top and right:  
Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider with brothers and sisters

but that we do the will of God. Who of us could claim that we always do the will of God? Let us not hesitate to tell the Lord, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9: 24). He will know how to strengthen our faith.

We need grace. At the time of the miraculous catch of fish, Peter realized how far away he really was from the majesty of Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5: 8). God is a loving Father for us and Jesus is our best friend. But we must never forget the glory and majesty of God. If we want to come closer to them we need grace! "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4: 6).

Another field in which we have to grow is knowledge and wisdom. Let us ask God for this in our prayers and, like Mary did, take time to reflect on these things. "But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2: 19). God gives wisdom to those who ask Him for it (James 1: 5).

Our souls longs for fellowship with God. This is something we experience in Holy Communion provided we come to Him with a repentant heart. We can also find it in the brotherly fellowship as long as we are prepared to give up our prejudices. If our prayers reflect our longing for salvation, God will hear them (Luke 18: 7).



Seated around the table from the left:  
District Apostle Helpers David Devaraj and Frank Dzur, District Apostles Norberto Passuni and Markus Fehlbaum, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, District Apostles Urs Hebeisen and Mark Woll, District Apostle Helper John Sobottka

## CORE THOUGHTS

Luke 1: 53

**"He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty."**

God answers the prayers of those who humbly ask Him for comfort, a strong faith, grace and wisdom, and to lead them into fellowship with Him.



# The question of why in times of affliction

It was an international congregation that Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider served in Skopje in Macedonia on 8 March 2015. The invited guests included members from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia, as well as ministers from the Ukraine.

Anyone who has ever experienced suffering or need quite often sees this as a trial from God. "And yet God does not need trials in order to measure our faith and our love," underlined Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider before going on to ask, "So then, why does this happen?"

For as long as we are on this earth, we will encounter calamity and unrighteousness. The experience of evil puts our faith to the test. After all, we believe that

- God loves us—and yet we experience suffering.
- God blesses those who are obedient. But those who do not know God often seem to be better off than we are!
- the church is holy, yet we are afflicted by all the imperfections of its members.
- Jesus Christ will return soon; but He still has not come!

God is omniscient. He does not need to subject us to trials and difficulties in order to assess our spiritual maturity. Our final exam, so to speak, will take place when the Lord returns. Those who are considered worthy will be accepted into the glory of God.

## Blessing in trials

In His love, God can turn our trials into blessing, provided that we allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit.

In trials, the Holy Spirit

- makes us aware of our weaknesses. Prior to the arrest of the Lord Jesus, Peter thought he was stronger than all the rest.



The beginnings of the Church in Macedonia go back to 1958.  
Today there are some 400 members in this south European country



After 2003 and 2009 this was the third visit of a Chief Apostle to Macedonia. Chief Apostle Schneider was warmly welcomed

- makes our total dependence on God clear to us: without Him we can do nothing at all!
- enables us to measure our love. If we truly love the Lord, then we will continue to serve Him, even when His visible blessing seems not to materialize. If we really long for eternal fellowship with Him, then our spiritual preparation will always have priority, no matter what happens.

## Growing knowledge

In our trials, the Holy Spirit also enables us to grow in the knowledge of God because we

- experience His grace: everything we have, we owe to His grace and not our own merit.
- feel His nearness.
- experience the efficacy of His help, which makes us capable of remaining true and faithful, even when we must bear a cross.

Trials and adversities also give us the opportunity to celebrate victories (Romans 5: 3–4) by

- fighting at Christ's side. Then we will be able to resist those spirits who want to lead us away from God.
- forgiving those who have caused us harm.

Because He remained faithful and true even in trials, Joseph became a source of blessing for his whole family. Because they allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit, children of God who live through trials and sufferings can likewise be a source of blessing to others.

- They demonstrate that it is indeed possible to follow the Lord, despite all difficulties and adversities.
- They are able to understand those who have challenges in accepting their cross, because their own experience has made them humble.

- They can bring comfort and strength to those who find themselves in suffering.

Whenever a child of God lives through a trial, the Holy Spirit prompts the congregation to unite in intercession and support for the one who suffers. The experience of fellowship is not only a true benefit for those who suffer, but also for those who come to their aid.

## CORE THOUGHTS

*Psalm 66: 10*

**"For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined."**

When we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us, our trials can be turned into something beneficial.

- We learn to recognize our weak points and correct them.
- We grow in the knowledge of God.
- We gain victories with the help of Jesus.
- We can be a blessing for others.
- We enjoy the benefits of brotherly fellowship.

# Recognizing the glory of the Lord

The divine service conducted by Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider on Sunday, 22 March 2015 in the Kitchener Central church in the presence of some 1,100 members and guests was transmitted throughout the country.

NAC Canada



The question as to why the largest New Apostolic church building in Canada is located in the city of Kitchener (which has a population of only 220,000) is explained by a look into the history of the area. Kitchener was a hub for German immigrants, the secret German capital of Canada. The influence of German immigrants is still visible in the present cityscape: the city hall of Kitchener, with its savings-bank-aesthetic, would fit in just as easily in any city or town in Germany. The church building, however, would not. There it is impossible to miss the influence of American style elements, even now that the gigantic emblem in front of the scarlet velvet curtain behind the altar—which, since the time of Chief Apostle Streckeisen always created a very special mood in all the big divine services as a result of its indirect lighting—has long since been removed.

## On the mountain

The disciples were deeply shaken when Jesus announced to them that He would be killed, and that they too would have

to experience tribulations (Mark 8: 31–35). In view of their despair, He took three of them along with Him to a mountain in order to pray (Luke 9: 28). It was there that Jesus was transfigured: for a moment, the disciples no longer saw the Man Jesus, but rather the Son of God in His glory.

Moses and Elijah also met with Jesus. Their presence

- confirmed the fulfilment of the promises. Moses had already been told of the coming of the Saviour in his time (Deuteronomy 18: 15), and the prophets had preached about His suffering and death (Isaiah 53).
- demonstrated the faithfulness of God. Moses and Elijah both suffered owing to their calling, but God did not forsake them.
- made it clear that the salvation brought by Jesus applied to both the dead and the living alike.

The cloud that engulfed them symbolizes the presence of God: it was visible when God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, during the dedication of the temple of Solomon, and later also at the Ascension of Jesus. God



Seats from left to right:  
District Apostle Helper John Sobottka,  
District Apostle Mark Woll, Chief  
Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, District  
Apostle Helpers Frank Dzur and  
David Devaraj

called upon the disciples to hear His beloved Son: by accepting His word they would be saved.

Our sufferings cannot be compared to the Passion of Jesus Christ. However, we too—like the Lord—are confronted with pain and death. We too suffer from the imperfection of those around us, and we too experience the power of the evil one.

### The Holy Spirit strengthens us

In order to help us, the Lord invites us to attend the divine services. He is in our midst when the congregation unites in prayer (Matthew 18: 19–20). During the divine service, the Holy Spirit comforts and strengthens us. It is to this end that He

- leads us into the knowledge of Jesus and reveals His glory to us.
- teaches us that we too must pass through many afflictions in order to enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14: 22). Everything that happens to us lies in the hand of God.
- calls to mind how God came to the aid of those who came before us in all of their trials.
- reminds us that we are only able to see a part of the work of God. No one knows how many reborn souls are preparing themselves for the return of the Lord in the beyond.
- grants us the certainty that those who align themselves by His word will be saved.

### Glorifying the Lord

The Lord is also sympathetic to the suffering of our fellow human beings. He also desires to strengthen them! To this end He needs us. Jesus gave His own the glory that God had given Him (John 17: 22). He expects those who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of glory (1 Peter

4: 14), to glorify Him by conducting themselves in accordance with His example, by forgiving one another because God loves them, and by remaining one in Christ despite all of the differences between them.

When we act in this manner we can demonstrate to all the world the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of His love (John 17: 21–23). May God also be able to say of us, “These are My beloved children. Hear them!”

### CORE THOUGHTS

*Mark 9: 2, 7*

**“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!’”**

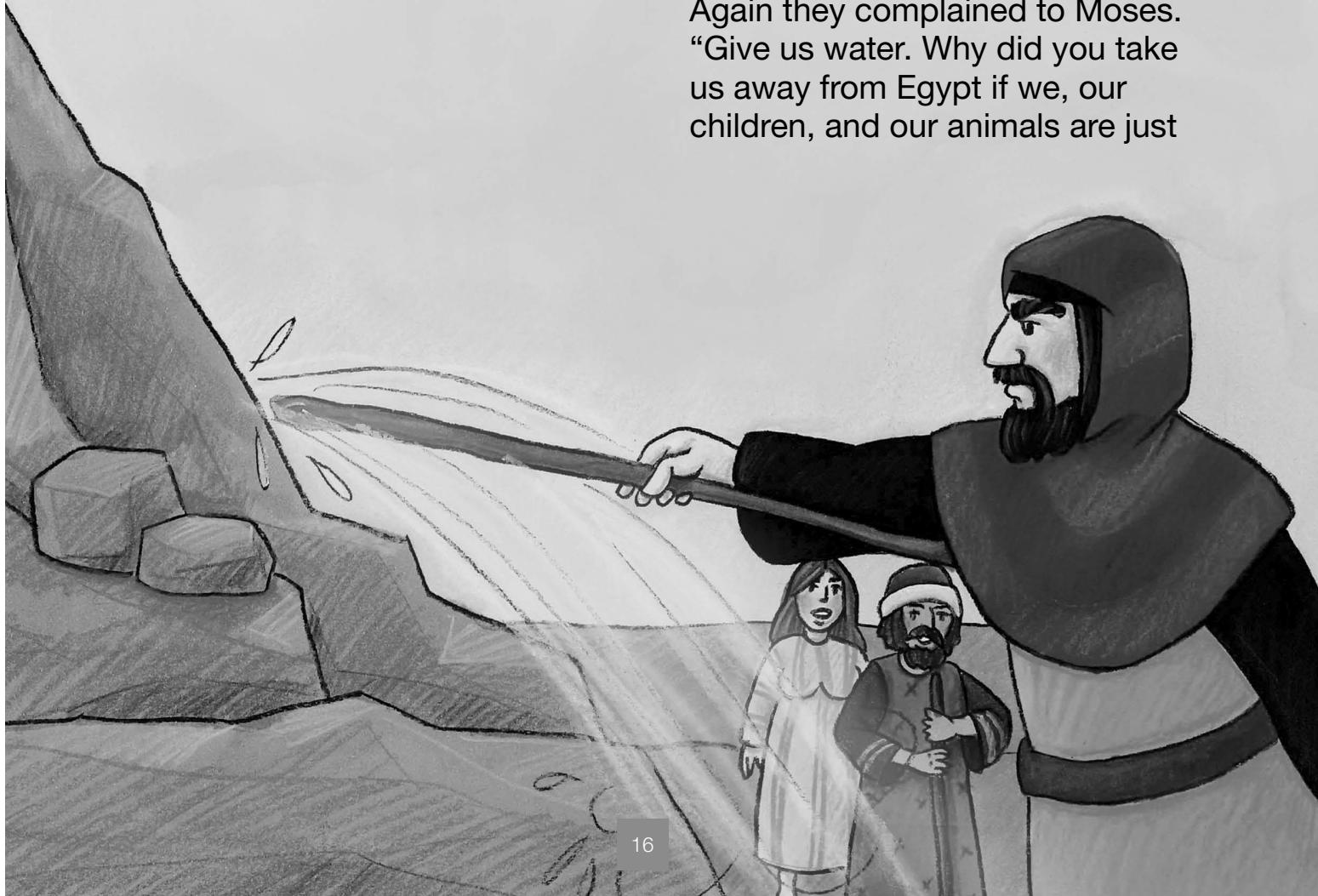
In order to strengthen His disciples, Jesus allowed them to see His glory. In the divine service the Holy Spirit strengthens us by showing us the glory of God. When we glorify the Lord we also help make it possible for our neighbour to recognize Christ.

## GOD PROVIDES WATER IN THE DESERT

(EXODUS 17: 1-7)

*God had freed His people from captivity in Egypt. The Israelites had been wandering through the desert for a considerable time. They had not yet reached the Promised Land.*

The Israelites were complaining because they had nothing to eat. So every evening God provided them with quails and every morning He provided manna that they were able to find around the camp. They carried on walking and then they ran out of water. The people were very thirsty. They thought they were going to die of thirst. Again they complained to Moses. "Give us water. Why did you take us away from Egypt if we, our children, and our animals are just



going to die here in the desert?" Moses asked them, "Why are you so angry? Why do you not trust God? He cares for you." The Israelites were not pacified, however. They became more and more angry.

Moses called out to God, "What am I going to do with these people? It won't be long before they start stoning me."

God answered, "Gather together all the elders of the tribes, take your staff with which you struck the River Nile and walk ahead of the people. Go to the rock at Horeb. I will stand

before you on the rock. Strike the rock and water will come out of it for the people to drink as much as they want."

And that is what happened.

When it seems that all is lost, God will help.





## AT MARTINA'S IN SANTIAGO DE CHILE (CHILE)



My name is **Martina**. I was born in Argentina, but I have been living in Chile since I was 20 days old. Now I am eleven and live in Santiago de Chile, the capital of our country.



My **family** consists of my mother, Evelina, my father, Carlos, my sister, Luciana, and me.

Another member of the family is our dog, **León**. This is the Spanish word for "lion". In my spare time I like listening to music. I like to think up dance routines to the music and I like dressing up.

Luciana and I go to the same school. Luciana is in grade three and I am in grade five.

This is our **central church** in Chile, the church we go to. It was built more than 100 years ago and was recently renovated.



The **congregation** is called Marin. My father is a Priest there. Luciana goes to Sunday School and I attend Religious Instruction, which is taken by my grandmother, Mili.

My mother also helps with Religious Instruction and I help her with the **flower arranging**. I enjoy decorating the altar with flowers. After Sunday service we spend the rest of the day with my grandparents, my aunts and uncles, and my cousins.



We also celebrate Independence Day with our family. This is Luciana and me outside the **government palace** with a big flag. Independence Day is celebrated from 18 to 21 September with games, dancing, and a lot of food.



A typical Chilean meal is **pastel de choclo**, a type of pie made with sweet corn. This is my favourite meal. It is made with minced meat, chicken, olives, hard-boiled eggs, and ground sweet corn. On top you can sprinkle some sugar. When my parents make this pie it tastes especially good ...

## Letterbox



OFTEN WE ARE SO DISAPPOINTED WITH PEOPLE THAT WE DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH THEM ANY MORE. TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES.



“Ha, ha, how funny!” – ‘What are they laughing at?’ Now she feels left out and goes to Sophia, her best friend. She would never do anything like that. ‘Quickly to Sophia for comfort! Sob! Sob!’”  
Cosima, 10, from Leipzig (Germany)

“I was disappointed when my mum took me to a Smiggles store to buy a bag. When I got there it was too much money, which made me sad. I then bought smelly highlighter, which made me very happy.”

Erin, 9, from Perth (Australia)



“One of my friends had promised to give me something that I particularly liked. But she never did. I was so cross that I didn't want to see her any more. But then I heard something in service and understood that God doesn't like it when we behave like this.”

Luc-Olivier, 12, from Porto-Novo (Benin)



■ NAC International

In September this year, the *Catechism of the New Apostolic Church in Questions and Answers* will be published in book form. *community* presents excerpts of some of the 750 questions and answers. In this issue we will look at the creed and the triune God.

### **What is a creed?**

A creed is a summary of the essential content of a doctrine of faith. Such a creed contains all the things which the members of a particular religious denomination profess. It is by way of its creed that a religious denomination distinguishes itself from another.

### **How did the first Christian creeds come into being?**

The first Christian creeds are called the "early church creeds". They came into being between the second and fourth centuries AD. It was during this time that the doctrine of the trinity of God and the doctrine of the essence of Jesus Christ, that is, of His nature, were formulated.

This had become necessary because there had been disputes about various contents of faith. For example, there was the opinion that Jesus Christ did not really die on the cross and that He did not really resurrect. The function of the creeds was to distinguish the faith from these heresies.

### **Which are the most important of the early church creeds?**

The two most important early church creeds are the Apostolic Creed ("Apostolicum") and the Creed of Nicaea-

Constantinople. The basic features of the Apostolicum were compiled in the second century and lightly supplemented in the fourth century. The Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople is the result of the Council of Nicaea (in the year 325 AD) and the Council of Constantinople (in the year 381 AD). The main purpose of this creed was to enshrine the profession of the trinity of God.

*A council is an assembly of senior religious dignitaries, who come together to discuss important matters of faith.*

### **What significance do the early church creeds have for the New Apostolic Church?**

The doctrine of the New Apostolic Church is based upon Holy Scripture. The early church creeds summarize important contents that are attested in Holy Scripture.

The New Apostolic Church professes belief in the triune God, in Jesus Christ as true God and true Man, in Jesus' birth by the virgin Mary, in the sending of the Holy Spirit, in the church, the sacraments, the expectation of the return of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead, as formulated in the two early church creeds.

Despite the differences between the individual denominations, these professions constitute a binding element among Christians.

The term "confession" can mean "creed" or "church affiliation". The different Christian denominations can also be described as different "confessions".

#### What is the text of the New Apostolic Creed?

"I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth.

"I believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, entered the realm of the dead, rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from where He will return.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the one, holy, universal, and apostolic church, the community of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting.

"I believe that the Lord Jesus rules His church and thereto sent His Apostles, and until His return still sends them, with the commission to teach, to forgive sins in His name, and to baptize with water and Holy Spirit.

"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.

"I believe that the Holy Baptism with water is the first step to a renewal of a human being in the Holy Spirit, and that the person baptized is adopted into the fellowship of those who believe in Jesus Christ and profess Him as their Lord.

"I believe that Holy Communion was instituted by the Lord Himself in memory of the once brought, fully valid sacrifice, and bitter suffering and death of Christ. The worthy partaking of Holy Communion establishes our fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is celebrated with unleavened bread and wine; both must be consecrated and dispensed by a minister authorized by an Apostle.

"I believe that those baptized with water must, through an Apostle, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to attain the childhood in God and thereby the prerequisite for becoming a firstling.

"I believe that the Lord Jesus will return as surely as He ascended into heaven and that He will take to Himself the firstfruits of the dead and living who have hoped for and were prepared for His coming; that after the marriage in heaven He will return to earth with them to establish His kingdom of peace, and that they will reign with Him as a royal priesthood. After the conclusion of the kingdom of peace, He will hold the Last Judgement. Then God will create a new heaven and a new earth and dwell with His people.

"I believe that I am obliged to obey the worldly authorities provided no godly laws are thereby transgressed."

#### What is the significance of the New Apostolic Creed?

In ten Articles of Faith, the New Apostolic Creed brings the doctrine of the New Apostolic Church to binding expression. It also has the function of defining the attitude of faith of New Apostolic Christians.

Beyond that, the creed serves to make other people familiar with the most important elements of the New Apostolic faith.

#### Masthead

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# The triune God

## Who is the triune God?

God is a spiritual, perfect, and completely independent being. He is eternal, without beginning and without end. The one God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When we talk about “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”, we are not referring to three different gods, but rather three persons who are the one God.

## What characteristics of God do we know?

Human beings are incapable of fully describing God. However, we know some of God’s characteristics: He is the One God (the only God), the Holy One, The Almighty, the Eternal, the Loving One, the Gracious One, the Righteous One, and the Perfect One.

## What is the relationship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to one another?

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are names for the three divine persons. Although they are to be distinguished from one another, they are nevertheless the one God. In Christian tradition, each of the three divine persons is assigned a particular point of emphasis: God, the Father, is the Creator of heaven and earth. God, the Son, is the Redeemer who became human and gave His life as a sacrifice for the redemption of mankind. God, the Holy Spirit, is the Maker of the new creation: He sees to it that the salvation of God is made accessible to mankind and that the new creation comes to its completion.

## What does the term “Father” mean when it is used in relationship to God?

When the term “Father” is used in relationship to God, it is associated with divine aspects of creatorship, authority, and loving care. God is the source and sustainer of that which He has created. In this respect, all human beings are able to address God, who is their Creator, as “Father”.

## What does the creation tell us about God?

The creation and the laws by which it functions bear witness to God’s wisdom, the magnitude of which cannot even be imagined by man. In admiration the psalmist exclaims, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19: 1).

## In what span of time did God create the world?

God created the world in six “days of creation”. The term “day of creation” refers to a period of time whose duration is not precisely specified. A “day” in the creation of God is not to be equated with a day according to our reckoning of time. Genesis 2: 2 states, “And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had done.”

*“... that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3: 8).*

*“For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past” (Psalm 90: 4).*

## Does the creation of God only consist of that which human beings can grasp with their senses?

No. There is also an invisible creation of God. Its mysteries elude human inquiry—like God Himself. Holy Scripture nevertheless contains references to realms, occurrences, conditions, and beings outside of the material creation.

## Is the Devil part of the invisible creation?

The Devil was originally one of the angels. As such he is part of the invisible creation. This angel rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven and the fellowship of God with his followers owing to his disobedience, envy, and lies.

*“For ... God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell” (2 Peter 2: 4).*

# Coming in book format in September 2015

*"And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgement of the great day" (Jude 6).*

## What is the task of the angels?

It is the task of the angels to worship God, fulfil His commissions, and thereby serve Him. God's love for human beings is also revealed in that He allows angels to serve human beings. From Matthew 18: 10 we may even conclude that children have special angel protection.

*"I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One. ... For not of any favour of mine, but by the will of our God I came; wherefore praise him for ever" (Tobit 12: 15, 18).*

*"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18: 10).*

## Should angels be worshipped?

No, because angels only act in accordance with the will of God. For this reason it is not to them, but to God alone, that thanks and worship are due.

Angels are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1: 14).

## Why should human beings concern themselves with the invisible?

Man is an entity consisting of spirit, soul, and body (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5: 23). The body is mortal and thus belongs to the visible creation of God. Soul and spirit thus belong to the invisible creation of God. Because soul and spirit continue to exist even after physical death, it is important to concern oneself with the invisible.

The attitude which a person adopts toward God during earthly life will have consequences for his existence in the beyond. This insight can help him resist the temptations of the Devil and lead a life that is pleasing to God.

The significance of the invisible is clarified by Apostle Paul, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4: 17–18). Occupying themselves with the invisible therefore helps human beings process that which they experience.

The Catechism of the New Apostolic Church is scheduled to appear in a new format on 1 September this year. Such was the decision made by the District Apostle Meeting at its last session. The instructional text has now been revised and will be launched shortly in a question-and-answer format.

Translations into the Church's five primary languages have also been completed, as has the layout of the new text. The finishing touches to prepare the work for printing are currently underway.

## Joint launch in several languages

Actually, the *Catechism in Questions and Answers* (CNAC QA) might just as easily have been published in phases, namely in English, German, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. However, the District Apostle Meeting resolved that all the primary language variants of the work should be released on a common date. This also marks the starting shot for the release of other languages where the translation has already been completed. This primarily includes a series of regional languages in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is home to approximately one third of our Church's worldwide membership.

## Instructional material

The Church leadership considered it important to develop a version of the Catechism especially suited for the purpose of instruction. It was for this reason that the text of the Catechism was broken down into 750 questions and answers. This was explained by the project group The New Apostolic Faith (PG TNAF), which has been working on this foundational text for almost ten years now.

The format of questions and answers is not foreign to Christian catechisms, and has already been in use for centuries. It has even had a long tradition in the New Apostolic Church. The didactic methods behind this are tried and tested. Thus the Catechism in Questions and Answers is also to be used for the instruction of ministers, and as a teaching manual to support the education of children and young people.

# A new era in East Africa



*community* in conversation with the retiring District Apostle Lubasi (left) and his successor, District Apostle Ekhuya

His profession is land surveyor. As leading pastor and shepherd of the New Apostolic Church East Africa, Joseph Opemba Ekhuya now has a large field of activity to survey and look after. In mid April he was ordained as District Apostle for the region. But there were more ministerial gifts for the region.

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider's stay in East Africa lasted four days: most of it he spent in Tanzania. But he also stopped off on the island of Zanzibar. Crowning the trip was the divine service on Sunday, 19 April in Dodoma, the capital of Tanzania, where the new District Apostle was ordained. The divine service was broadcast on national television in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

## District Apostle Helper since 2013

Joseph Opemba Ekhuya was born in December 1969 in Kenya to New Apostolic parents. He is the first of seven

children. On completing school and his studies he went into land surveying, a profession that also took him to Kenya, Mozambique, and the Seychelles. In the year 2010, he was appointed as the managing director of KUMEA (Kujenga Maisha East Africa), the aid organization of the New Apostolic Church East Africa.

In January 2000, he was ordained as a Priest. It was his first ministry in the Church. Further ordinations followed. In February 2011, he was then ordained as an Apostle by Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber. In July 2013, Chief Apostle Schneider appointed him as a District

Apostle Helper. The new District Apostle lives in Nairobi in Kenya and is married. He speaks Luhya, Swahili, and English.

## Leading the District Apostle area into independence

District Apostle Shadreck Lubasi was placed into retirement by the Chief Apostle during the divine service in Dodoma. Over nearly 30 years, he had carried various ministries in the Church. In March 2009 he was ordained as a District Apostle and assumed the management of the newly established and independent district. Until then, the district comprised of Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda had been in the care of the New Apostolic Church USA. Currently, 17,500 ministers care for some 650,000 members in 6,400 congregations.

Already on Friday, 17 April, Chief Apostle Schneider had placed two Apostles into retirement in southern Tanzania. Wilson Abnel Mtiga (64), who became New Apostolic in 1983 and had been ordained as a Priest in the same year. He served as an Apostle for nearly 17 years. Also retired was Elias Ambokile Mwaaisaka (67), who was baptized and sealed in 1989. In the same year he was ordained as a Deacon. He received the Apostle ministry in 2006.



**Above:** District Apostle Shadreck Lubasi (66) went into retirement in April 2015

**Above right:** The new District Apostle is Joseph Ekhuya (46)

**Right:** Bishop Peter Johanning and Priest Andreas Rother in conversation with the two Apostles

## Five new Apostles with four different mother tongues

In the service on Friday, 17 April in the city of Mbeya, the Chief Apostle ordained five new Apostles: Watson Kalyembe (50), Emmanuel Paulo Macheho (48), and Hamisi Elisha Meleine (41) from Tanzania, and Nicholas Oso Lorua (40) and John Njun Sire (40) from Kenya. All except District Elder Sire from Kenya had been Bishops.

Although all five speak English, the men's background and their mother tongues give a good idea of the cultural diversity found in the region. The languages they grew up with are Nyakyusa, Turkana, Gogo, and Masai.



# One plate of cornmeal every two or three days

The flooding in Malawi at the beginning of the year caused suffering for hundreds of thousands of people. Scores died and tens of thousands were left homeless. The Henwood Foundation and *NAK-karitativ*, two New Apostolic relief agencies, responded quickly and went to work in the area alongside other international organizations. They drew up the following report at the time.

People in the south-east of the African country in particular are quite accustomed to and prepared for flooding. But this year, the rainfalls were late, heavy, and enduring. Some 64,000 hectares of land are under as much as a metre of water—and this in a region where most people make a living by farming.

According to the most recent report from the United Nations, approximately 610,000 Malawians will be dependent on aid for the next two to five months. Some 173,000 people have lost their homes and are living in emergency

shelters. In the southernmost and poorest region of the country, Joana von Jamersted and Ann Soko, employees of *NAK-karitativ* (Germany) and the Henwood Foundation (Zambia), coordinated their relief efforts.

## A return home is out of the question

“We are actually supposed to receive one plate of cornmeal every day, but at times there is no food at all for two to three days,” Siggy Yalu tells the two aid workers. The New Apostolic woman from Malawi lives in Bangula Camp



1| The helpers from the Henwood Foundation and *NAK-karitativ* with aid packages

2| The flood destroyed houses and fields

3| Ann Soko (seated at left) from the Henwood Foundation speaks with villagers



2



3



4| Truckloads of aid are brought to the people

5| Distribution of aid in Bangula Camp

with her eight children. She is thankful for every meal and for every day they do not need to go hungry. The family of ten has already been in the camp for three months. Their house has been destroyed. A return home is out of the question for them at this time. Their house is still buried knee-deep in mud and water.

Some 100 tons of foodstuffs have already been distributed in the region by the two relief organizations. Cornmeal, rice, beans, sugar, and salt have been helping over 3,200 families make ends meet for the time being. Ten tons of food supplements and enriched cornmeal have been distributed to pregnant women, mothers with infants, the elderly, and the sick. Beyond that, the team assisting Ann Soko and Joana von Jamerstedt have given out blankets, dishes, buckets, and mosquito nets to needy families.

## The food supply is not the biggest problem

The United Nations estimates that the flood victims will need nearly 24,000 tons of corn in the coming months. Yet that is not even the biggest challenge, as the relief workers discovered in the village of Nsanje, "The biggest problem is the water and sanitary situation," explains the leader of the local clinic. "Many camps, and even entire villages, have far too few toilets and water sources."

This lack of sanitation brings with it the threat of disease. By late March, the United Nations had registered some 148 cases of cholera. Two deaths were recorded. "So far, cholera has only turned up outside of the camps," says the leader of the Nsanje clinic. "The moment this infectious disease finds its way into the camps, it becomes very difficult to control." In order to arm the clinic, the Henwood Foundation and NAK-karitativ have flown in large numbers of hygiene kits.

## Preparations for reconstruction

The people lodged in emergency shelters will still have to endure until the end of the rainy season in April. Only then can they dare to undertake the way back to their destroyed houses and fields. The two New Apostolic relief organizations are already preparing for this. Tarpaulins are currently being organized and will shortly be sent to the disaster area. These can either be used as shelters or serve to provide temporary repair to houses.

But the battle for survival is not yet at an end: the people of southern Malawi still face the challenge of rebuilding their livelihoods and reclaiming their fields for farming.



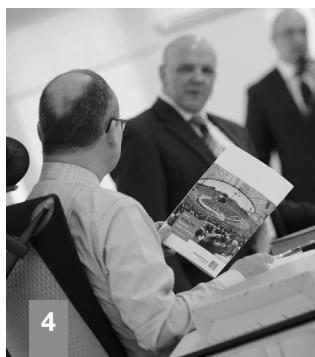
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# |19+1: the leadership board of the Church meets

The international leadership of the New Apostolic Church met for a conference in Zurich in Switzerland in mid March. How does such a District Apostle Meeting proceed? Who is in attendance? What is on the agenda?

The District Apostles usually meet twice a year for conferences, most often in the Church's head office in Zurich. The conference room there is equipped to handle all technical and organizational requirements. For example, this includes the ability to show presentations in up to three languages at a time.

## The Church's executives

Invited are all active District Apostles from around the world. Presently there are nineteen. Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider serves as chairman of the group. This panel

comprises the actual leadership level of the Church, as set down in the statutes of the New Apostolic Church International. In Paragraph 8 of the Statutes it states: "The District Apostle Meeting advises and supports the Chief Apostle in all matters concerning the Church and, together with the Chief Apostle, bears responsibility for the unity of all New Apostolic District Churches."

Also invited are the District Apostle Helpers, of which there are currently nine. Although they too take part in the conference, they do not have the right to vote. When resolutions are passed, the votes of the attending—or legally represented—District Apostles is what counts. A

- 1| The conference centre at the Church's head office in Zurich seats 28 delegates and has several interpretation booths
- 2| District Apostles in conversation: Michael Ehrich, Rüdiger Krause, and Rainer Storck from Germany (left to right)
- 3| District Apostle Noel Barnes from South Africa explains his point of view. The conference languages are English and German
- 4| Chief Apostle Schneider with the first issue of community
- 5| Attentive participants from the first to the last row

three-quarters majority is required in order to adopt a resolution. Often decisions need to be made on the calculations and elaborations prepared by various project and work groups.

## Everything begins in prayer

At the start of each day, the Chief Apostle opens the meeting in prayer. Since he is surrounded by his closest helpers, who are not so often with him, the prayer is a little longer and a little more emotional than usual. His view is always focused on the needs of the global Church. And this is also reflected in the petitions in his prayer, for example, the members affected by Ebola, the believers who suffer as a result of unrest and persecution in some countries, and the worldwide unity of the Church.

The focal point of the meeting on 12–13 March was primarily on theological topics. At the top of the agenda were discussions surrounding our conception of ministry. This topic has regularly occupied a prominent place on the agenda for over a year already. It is also a topic that Chief Apostle Schneider has already addressed in public on several occasions, for example in a panel discussion at the International Church Convention.

## Theology and Church strategy

In the meeting, the District Apostles also had a workshop to discuss the topic of our conception of ministry in order to bring their personal experiences to bear. The debates on this topic are still in the process of first reading, which means significant resolutions were not anticipated.

Aspects of Church strategy were also addressed, for example, the question of the minimum standard that must be fulfilled in order for a congregation to be able to function. The cultural circumstances around the globe are extremely different: while some harbour the wish for a pipe organ, others in the past have been desperate just to acquire enough Bibles.

## Working with heart, soul, and reason

The most recent District Apostle Meeting ended with a festive divine service. And it was precisely the work that had been done over the previous days that Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider chose as his main focus.



"Naturally people are always interested and wonder what we are up to when we sit together and talk for days at a time," said the Chief Apostle at the start of a transmission service on 15 March 2015 in the congregation of Schaffhausen-Neuhausen in Switzerland. "How do we work in this circle?"

"We start off with prayer," he explained. "When it comes to making a decision or setting a new course, we begin with a prayer, because we naturally need the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Without Him we would not want to do anything anyway."

"We also need our faculty of reason. And we need to acquire the necessary knowledge," said the Chief Apostle as he explained the second phase. "We have to ask ourselves, What does it say in Scripture? And then we have to dig." He went on to note that additional expertise is necessary in many areas. "This is not something we acquire at our ordination! We need to read up on things and study what they are all about!" The third phase is a lively exchange of experiences, but also of feelings and sentiments. "This is where the heart, and our brotherly love, come to expression," he related. "At times we become aware that we still do not have enough information on a certain subject—and then we must simply acquire more knowledge. Other times we notice that we need more time for exchange. But often we also feel that we need more of the Holy Spirit: let us pray more often and more sincerely."



# Divine services for the departed: a New Apostolic specialty



■ Andreas Otto

On Sundays, after celebrating Holy Communion with the congregation, the Chief Apostle also administers the sacrament to the departed. Two ministers receive the body and blood of Christ on behalf of the dead.

Three times a year, New Apostolic Christians celebrate a divine service in which they not only remember the departed, but in which the sacraments are also administered to the dead. What is this all about?

In the Catechism of the New Apostolic Church it says, "Divine services for the departed take place three times a year, on the first Sunday of March, July, and November respectively. With this in mind, New Apostolic Christians also pray that souls who have died in an unredeemed state may find salvation in Christ" (Catechism 12.1.13).

The biblical foundation for this is God's universal saving will. Jesus Christ is Lord of both the living and the dead (Romans 14: 9). History tells us that already in the congre-

gation of Corinth, the living were baptized on behalf of the dead. This we can read in 1 Corinthians 15: 29. "This practice is continued in divine services for the departed conducted by the Chief Apostle and the District Apostles: in them, two ministers receive Holy Baptism with water, Holy Sealing, and Holy Communion on behalf of the dead. The sacraments are performed in the same manner as usual," it says further in the Catechism. "In the other congregations, the departed are commemorated in a special prayer after the celebration of Holy Communion."

## Every day except Sundays

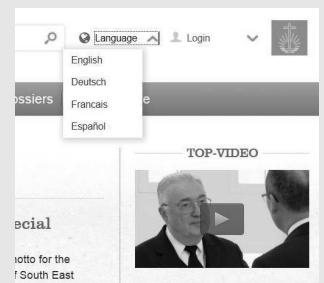
Interested in more? The *community* magazine is not the only way to stay on top of things in the New Apostolic Church. There is a lot of activity on the Internet, and especially on *nac.today*.

For those who have access to the Internet there is nothing easier. All you have to do is type *nac.today* in the address bar of your web browser and press return. The website will pop up. Enjoy the free offer!

There is a whole range of topics: a report on nearly every divine service that the Chief Apostle conducts, detailed information on the Church and its history, and especially stories on the life in our congregations around the world.

*nac.today* is offered in four languages: English, French, Spanish, and German. Which language comes up first depends on your operating system.

If you click on the globe next to "Language" you will get a drop-down menu where you can select a language. And those who login can select their language preference and, on top of that, will be notified in the event of new articles.



You can read the website on smartphones, tablets, and the computer: the design automatically adjusts itself to your device. And those who drop in regularly will always be up to date, because we run reports on six days of the week—with the exception of Sundays.

The screenshot shows the homepage of *nac.today*. At the top, there's a search bar, language selection, and a login button. Below the header, a navigation bar includes links for Glaube, Organisation, Geschichte, Gesellschaft, Panorama, community, Dossiers, and Mediathek. A news ticker on the right lists recent events: "15.05.2015 - Falakpur Chittu – Weg zum Himmel (matrone.de RSS-Feed)", "15.05.2015 - Chia de Comunión de los 100 años de Orízola (Iglesia Nueva Apostólica en España News)", "15.05.2015 - Präsident Choi speaks at the transmission service on 24 May 2015 (Sunday) at 4:00 pm Hongkong time (New Apostolic Church)", "15.05.2015 - Visita a Calamarca y La Loma (Iglesia Nueva Apostólica - Sud América)", and "15.05.2015 - En Monte Hermoso y Bahía Blanca (Iglesia Nueva Apostólica - Sud América) Mehr". A large video player in the center features a portrait of a man. Below it, a caption reads "Rückblick über die Schulter von Stammabköpfle Leber" and a short text about the anniversary. To the right, there are sections for "TOP-VIDEO" and "SERVICES".

## Salvation through Christ

The core question, which all Churches pose, is, How is a transformation of souls possible in the afterlife? The Catechism answers this in that it says that those souls in the beyond who have never heard of the gospel, never experienced forgiveness of sins, and never received any sacraments are in a condition of remoteness from God. This can only be overcome by believing in Jesus Christ, accepting His merit, and receiving the sacraments. It is important, therefore, to intercede for unredeemed souls and to ask the Lord to help them. "The dead and the living in Christ comprise a single fellowship. Together they are part of the Lord's work of redemption. In the beyond—as here—they will work in His mind, interceding with God for the unredeemed." Redemption occurs solely through Jesus Christ.

## Historical aspects

The New Apostolic understanding of redemption for the departed developed in the Netherlands. Apostle Wilhelm Schwartz began to baptize and seal the living on behalf of the dead in 1872. In the late 1870s, Holy Communion for the departed started to be dispensed as well.

In the beginning, the dispensation of the sacraments for the dead was administered to one person who was designated through prophecy. Under Chief Apostle Niehaus, a woman and a man received the sacraments for the departed. Women received the sacraments for the female departed and men for the male departed. Since the 1930s, two ministers have been receiving the sacraments for the departed.

For the longest time, the dispensation of sacraments for the departed took place once a year on the day after Christmas. In the 1950s, Chief Apostle Johann Gottfried Bischoff initiated the practice of three services for the departed a year.

# Confirmation



Confirmation is an act of blessing in which the confirmand vows to lead a life of faith that corresponds to the gospel of Christ in personal accountability to God.

After a brief address, the minister asks the confirmands if they wish to pursue their future way of life as New Apostolic Christians in faithfulness to God. The confirmands attest to their willingness to do so with a

collective "Yes", and then go on to say their confirmation vow together. It states the following:

"I renounce Satan and all his work and ways, and surrender myself to You, O triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in belief, obedience, and the earnest resolution to remain faithful to You until my end. Amen."

The word 'confirmation' derives from the Latin word *confirmare* and means "to strengthen", or "to certify".

## Confirmations in Nigeria



In this year 2015 in our Church at Igue-sale in District Afuze of Apostle Augustine Rotimi working area, twelve (12) young Brothers and Sisters were confirmed in a Divine Service in the presence of eighty two (82) members.



In a Divine Service in Ado Central Church, District Ado-Ekiti of Apostle Augustine Rotimi working area on Sunday 12th of April 2015, eight of our young Brothers and Sisters were confirmed. Attendance in the Service was 33 members.

## Liberia and Guinea



It was so also for the congregation of Monrovia Central church, Liberia, where the children were beauty-fully dressed and displayed before the altar with their gifts of Bibles and the Chief Apostle's letters to the confirmands. ►

In Guinea Bishop Tolno confirmed about 18 children in Gueckedou Central church. ◀



## Benin: Confirmations in Mono district



The Apostle Olu Justin and confirmants from Tanguietta.

This year 2015, 315 children were confirmed in all the districts in Benin. They all received the blessing of God during divine services with joy because it took them 3 years to complete the syllabus of the confirmation classes.

In the district of Mono alone, 135 children received the confirmation blessing.

Bishop Ahlinkou and the confirmands from Dassa-Zounmè.



## NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH SUNYANI



## Ghana: Confirmation divine service at Sunyani

Confirmands and Ministers

Apostle Samuel Oppong-Brenya conducted a Palm Sunday divine service at the Sunyani Central Church with confirmation on the 29th March 2015. Twenty children gathered from Sunyani, Nsoatre and Dumase congregations were confirmed by the Apostle. He also baptised and sealed the child of a faithful sister who was herself confirmed in the year 1999, and has now become a parent. The text word was Matthew 21:10

After the message by the Chief Apostle, the Apostle advised the newly youth to be faithful to Christ and fulfil their confirmation vow. In attendance were 510 members and guest. Accompanying Apostle Oppong-Brenya were Apostle Ben Darko who cares for the Sunyani Apostle area and his two Bishops



Apostle Oppong-Brenya with a confirmand

## Sierra Leone: Confirmation 2015

In Sierra Leone, about 395 children were confirmed. It has always been a festive day for the congregation at large especially the confirmands and their parents in particular. They were nicely dressed to fellowship with the church members in the breaking of bread, in prayer.



▲ Yamandu

◀ Goderich, Freetown



◀ Central church Freetown

▼ New London

Wellington, Freetown ▶

▼ Sembuhun Kokofele



Manjama ▶



## Ghana: Children's Day

On Easter Monday, 6th April 2015, hundreds of Sunday School children and their teachers from 17 congregations, gathered at the Accra Central, New Apostolic Church to celebrate "Children's Day."

This is an annual event established by Apostle Peregrino Kotei Afutu, to bring as many as possible all Sunday School Children to one point to celebrate the day with music, recitations, drama and entertainment.

At this year's event, the Apostle used Prov. 22 : 6 to address them.

Osu children were adjudged the best for best presentation, in recitations and choreography amid jubilations.

Accompanying the Apostle were the Bishop Asare, the 2 District Elders and their Evangelists as well as some Rectors. The meeting ended with a prayer by the Apostle.

*Prince Boakye*



## Ghana: Apostle meets District Rectors

As part of his duties to strengthen all ministers under his care, Apostle Samuel Oppong-Brenya scheduled a one day District Rectors meeting on the 10th of February 2015 for Kumasi and Konongo Elder Districts at the Kumasi Central Church.

The Apostle used the Catechism to explain in detail the duties of the District Elder and District Evangelist ministry (Catechism 7.9.1). Using the Bible as the point of reference the Apostle urged the District Rectors to work according to the spiritual gifts that has been bestowed on them. Ephesians 4:7

He pointed out that such high ministry in the church carries with it enormous responsibilities and there should be no room for excuses or shared blame, citing Genesis 3:12-13 and Exodus 32:22-24 in the case of Adam and Eve and Aaron respectively to buttress his point.

## Benin: Youth Day

The end of 2014 has been exceptional for the New Apostolic youth of Porto-Novo district. Postponed several times during the same year, the youth camping was finally held to the joy and satisfaction

of the whole Church. No one could hide his/her delight. Both biblical subjects and extensively doctrinal issues had literally captured the attention of many.

The theme for the year 2014 meeting was: "Growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men" Luke 2: 52.

The questions / answers based on biblical stories and the doctrine of the New Apostolic Church as well as various games organized by youth actually rekindled the youth in Benin.

*Vincent Yedenou*



Divine service celebrated by Apostle Vincent Yedenou



▲ Youth choir

▼ Feelings of joy after a football match between young people.



Apostles and Bishops with District Rectors

In attendance were Apostles Ben Nketia and Annom Nortey who care for the Districts and their Bishops as well as 56 District Rectors.

*Samuel Oppong-Brenya*

# Benin: A Sunday school more attractive

The teachers of the Sunday School in Benin have accepted the challenge to raise the level of awareness in our children with Biblical stories and plays. With greater involvement of parents the children have formed groups to study the Bible. In recent months, the teachers organized the children to perform plays which were witnessed by their parents. In some congregations, one could notice a greater interest by the children and their parents. Every family hoped his child had a role to play too. The greatest joy for the teachers was that discussions continued even at home during the week. Some children were exceptionally good in their performances by pronouncing very well the biblical names in their scripts.

*Vincent Yedenou*

Congregation Tchaada in Porto Novo: Two children imitate Rebecca giving water to Eliezer at the Well.



# Ghana: Apostles and Bishops meeting

To avoid excessive travel and travel cost Apostle Oppong-Brenya divided the Apostles and Bishops meeting into Southern and Northern zones comprising six and four Apostles areas respectively.

The Spiritual part was from the thoughts from the Chief Apostle's divine service "But He said to them where is your faith" Luke 8:25 (extract) The Apostle said at the request of

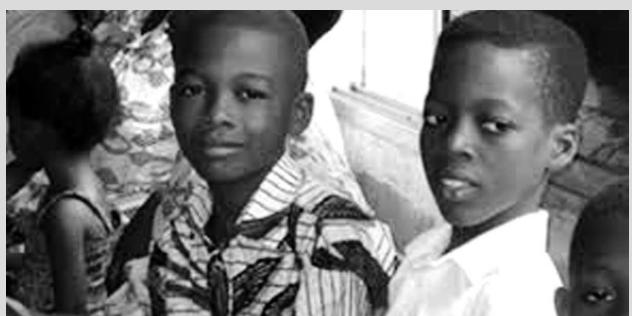
# Togo: Joy at the visit of District Apostle

With great pleasure more than 900 ministers and their wives assembled in the central church for a divine service in Lomé, the capital of the West-African state Togo, on Saturday, February 7th, 2015. District Apostle Michael Ehrich held the service. After this divine service for ministers he led a meeting of the Apostles and Bishops from Togo and the neighbouring Benin.

On Sunday a divine service was celebrated in Lomé in the Palais des Congrès with about 4,200 Brothers and Sisters. The brethren had travelled long distances to join their colleagues. They contributed to the divine service with beautiful musical presentations. "It was a very joyful congregation", the District Apostle said. As the Bible text, the District Apostle used Colossians 3: 2: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Apostle Herbert Bansbach, responsible Apostle for Togo since December 2007, accompanied the District Apostle on this journey. He then travelled to the neighbouring state Benin for which he is also responsible and celebrated a divine service in Cotonou.

Togo and Benin has been under the care of the District Apostle district since January 2001.



Jesus the disciples had started to cross the lake when the storm began. He said Jesus has invited his Apostles to set out the Kingdom of God. On the way the Apostles of today also face particular hardships for example, worldwide decrease in divine service attendance and holy sealing. Believers are distraught because their prayers and efforts seem useless. He urged the Apostles not to be disturbed but look up to the author and finisher of the faith which is Jesus Christ. *Samuel Oppong-Brenya*

# NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH PENTECOST 2015 LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

## Pentecost 2015 in Lusaka (Sambia)

**Bible text:** "And the Spirit and the bride say,  
'Come!'" (Revelation 22: 17)

- The Holy Spirit calls mankind to come into the fellowship of the faithful. His power becomes effective already in Holy Baptism, because those who are baptized have the power to resist sin.
- The power of the Holy Spirit develops its full potential through the Apostle ministry
- The power of the Holy Spirit is something we also experience in Holy Communion.

*Have confidence and trust in the power of the Holy Spirit. He is the way that leads to God.*

