

# community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

03/2016/EN



Victory with Christ:  
**Perseverance is everything**

Divine service in Angola:  
Bought at a price

Catechism:  
The doctrine of  
future things

Catechism:  
From the history  
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# Perseverance is everything

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the letters of the New Testament we find many references as to how we can gain victory with Christ. For one thing, we read how Apostle Paul takes stock of his life: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness” (2 Timothy 4: 7–8). Therefore, when it comes to faith, gaining the victory does not mean being the best of all, but rather enduring to the end and reaching the goal.

The letters to the Corinthians (9: 25–26), to the Hebrews (12: 1), and the Philippians (3: 13–14) likewise refer to the image of an athlete or a race. These passages help us to train in perseverance and endurance. Accordingly, those who want to endure till they reach the goal must

- know the goal. Ours is to enter into eternal glory. To this end, we must come to resemble Christ more and more all the time. But do we occupy ourselves sufficiently with this effort?
- keep their eyes on the goal. Let us not allow ourselves to be distracted from pursuing our course by the cheers or boos on the side-lines.
- divide up the distance. We do not need to be discouraged when we find we are still such a long way from acquiring the nature of Jesus. We can always resolve to focus on a single characteristic and live in accordance with it very conscientiously for a while.
- not overdo things. Those who find their life of faith too taxing might try treading more lightly when it comes to natural things and concentrating more on the spiritual instead.



■ NAC International

- get rid of ballast. Guilt and irreconcilability make it difficult for us to make progress. Let us always seek forgiveness and in turn also grant forgiveness!
- stick with their diet. What sort of nourishment helps us in our course of faith? Let us only supply our souls with that which strengthens us enduringly. Above all, this includes the word of God and Holy Communion.

“Being there is everything” is the Olympic motto. When it comes to our life of faith, however, the thought that counts is “perseverance is everything”. Let us be inspired by the call to action recorded in 1 Timothy 6: 12: “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called.”

Warm greetings

Jean-Luc Schneider



Hermann Bethke and ENA Angola



# Bought at a price

1 Corinthians 7: 23

*"You were bought at a price; do not  
become slaves of men."*



Dear brothers and sisters, the hymn of the choir is an expression of our joy that we can participate in this divine service today. I share this joy with you, however, I can also well imagine that there are some among us who are not feeling so joyful—not because they cannot believe, but because they must live through trials, or have a great many cares, or perhaps are very concerned about their future or the future of their children. I would like to call out to these brethren today and say, “Dear brother, dear sister, you have not been forgotten. Today God desires to comfort and strengthen you. He desires to draw near to you so that you may feel, ‘God is very close to me!’ He assures you of His help.”

The greatest help God seeks to grant us is redemption from all evil. That is much greater than being delivered from a momentary illness. He will see to it that we are eternally redeemed from all suffering, from all evil, from everything bad. Therefore be of good cheer: God is working to help you!

This work began when the Son of God gave His life for us. That is what Apostle Paul is talking about when he states, “You were bought at a price.”

Through Adam’s fall into sin, all human beings have become slaves to sin. We suffer from the evil one because we are exposed to his power. All illness, all injustice, all suffering, and even death are consequences of sin. From birth on, human beings are slaves to sin. And it is precisely from this that the Lord desires to redeem us. It is for this purpose that He has bought us at such a price. He has given His life. He was condemned and executed—put to death—in our place.

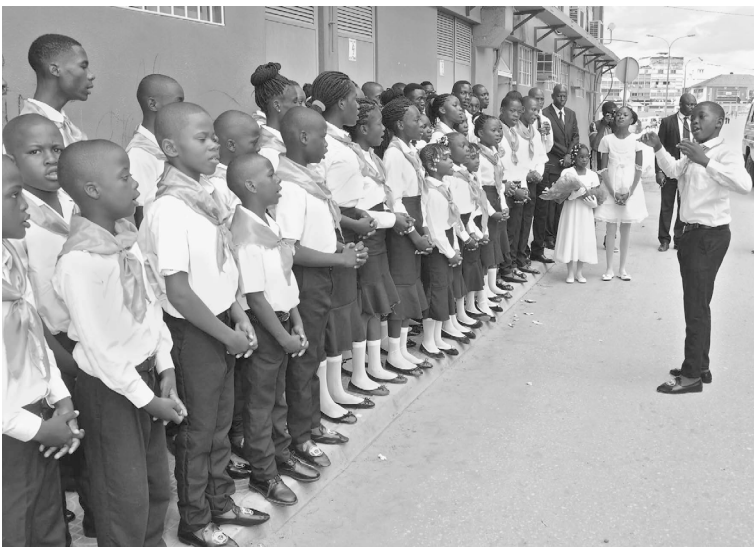
He who was perfect, He who had never made a single mistake, took it upon Himself to be condemned so that we would not have to be condemned. He was chastised so that we would not need to be chastised as a result of our mistakes and sins. Through His merit we can be redeemed.

Our God loves us so much that He sent His Son to die for us. Let us also remember what God has undertaken for us even after the sacrifice of His Son such that we would be able

to profit from this merit: He has sent the Holy Spirit, He has given us the Apostles, and through all the centuries He has seen to it that the gospel of Jesus Christ could continue to spread. There were times in which many people accepted the gospel, but there have also been other times—times in

*Let us not pursue our own way but rather follow Jesus Christ. We know that those who battle with Jesus Christ at their side will gain the victory.*

Nearly 14,000 people attended the service in the basketball stadium Cidadela and in the adjacent hall



which Christians were persecuted. But God has always seen to it that everything would carry on.

We are also mindful of the many individuals who have ensured that we today can discover the message of the gospel. Jesus Christ paid dearly for us—and many people have brought sacrifices in the service of Jesus Christ such that we today can be redeemed. There have been so many sacrifices so that the Apostle ministry can be active among us today!

Now Paul goes on to say, “You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.” This has nothing to do with individual persons, but is intended as a reference to the slavery of the world: God has redeemed you, has paid a great price for you, so that you never need to become slaves to this world ever again! Here the reference is to “slaves of men”. A slave

is not free. He is bound. He has a free will but has nothing to say. The slave must do what his master wants. He is compelled to work and does not receive any payment for his labours. He performs all his labour for free. As children of God, we are not meant to become slaves to this world ever again. What does this mean?

*Following Jesus Christ is never in vain. Those who follow Him will receive the crown of eternal life, the greatest reward there could ever be.*

In the Bible there are many examples of people who were chosen or purchased, yet who lost everything owing to a poor decision. Take Esau, for example. He had been chosen! He was the firstborn and was to have received a special blessing, but he got

caught up in his earthly needs. And because he was a slave to these needs, he was no longer able to make a free decision. He sold his blessing for a pottage of lentils! His earthly concerns were more important to him than the blessing. That is why he became the servant of his brother. In re-







Assisting in the divine service were District Apostles Patrick Mkhwanazi (top right) and District Apostle Noel E. Barnes (both from South Africa)

sponse to his question as to whether he had any other blessing left for him, his father told him, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants ... What shall I do now for you, my son?" (Genesis 27: 37).

There is a great danger that we too might become servants and slaves to our natural needs and that our natural well-being might become more important to us than the salvation of our souls. Some will then say, "I cannot come to the service because I have to go and do my work." Others might say, "I cannot obey God—I cannot live in accordance with the commandments—when it comes to money." And yet, at their Holy Baptism, at their Holy Sealing, or at their confirmation, they made the firm decision to follow Jesus Christ and live in accordance with the commandments of God. But because they became slaves to their earthly lives, they were no longer free—and were thus unable to keep the promise they had made. They stopped respecting the commandments because of their earthly needs.

We have been bought at a price! Let us not become slaves to the earthly ever again! We have decided for the Lord and are free to pursue the path that God has laid down for us.

Apostle Paul made it clear that the question of whether one is a slave or a free man, a Jew or a Gentile, a rich man or a



poor man, is not important for the salvation of one's soul (Galatians 3: 28). What is important is the attitude of one's heart. Let us have the right heart's attitude. Let us not allow ourselves to be led by our earthly needs.

Another example from the Old Testament is the story of Samson, the judge of Israel. His mother dedicated him to God when he was born. God had chosen this man in order to fight against the Philistines, the enemies of Israel. At that time, when a man was dedicated to God, when a man stood in the service of God, his hair was never to be cut. Everyone knew: whenever someone comes along with long hair, he must be a man dedicated to God, a servant of God. This was also the case later on with Samuel. No one was allowed to cut his hair either (1 Samuel 1: 11).



Left: Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider ordains District Elder José Calenga Baza (kneeling) as an Apostle. Apostle Alfonso Avelino (standing) was placed into retirement in this service after 30 years as a minister

Samson was very strong and fought against the Philistines, but one day he met Delilah, and this woman was bribed by the Philistines. The princes of the Philistines came to her and said, “Convince him to tell you what gives him such great strength, and find out how we can overpower him such that we may bind him and capture him, and we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.” Delilah continued to pester Samson with the question, “Please just tell me the source of your great strength!” After some time Samson finally gave in just to please her, and ultimately told her, “No razor has ever come upon my head for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man” (Judges 16: 5–17). In other words, his strength lay in his intimate connection to God. What did the woman do? She cut off Samson’s locks of hair. She thereby deprived him of the very symbol of his relationship with God. He was then taken captive and became a slave to the Philistines. Why? Because he had made the wrong decision. The favour of this woman had become more important to him than the favour of God.

We endeavour to fill our place in society and cultivate good relationships with other people, but these relationships with others must never become more important than our relationship with God! Let us please God more than men. There are times when we must say, “No, I will not go along with this, even if you do not like it. I will not do this because the favour of God is more important to me.”

A third example from the Old Testament: Israel was the chosen people of God. Naturally this did not please the other nations. On another occasion, the Philistines came to make war on the people of God. And this time

the enemy had a mighty man on their side, namely Goliath, a giant with heavy weapons who terrorized everyone. He mocked the Israelites, made fun of God, and said, “Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us” (1 Samuel 17: 8–9). The Israelites were afraid—and their fear very nearly made them slaves to their enemies. Fortunately, little David came along—and he was not afraid. He knew that he would be able to conquer Goliath with God’s help. And David liberated his people.

At times we also feel we are too weak and that the spirit from below is so powerful. After all, his theories are spread with such great force. Those who follow him are so successful, and at times we have such a struggle in our lives. The Devil has such means at his disposal that we cannot defend ourselves against him! — But that is simply not true! Even if our enemy is as powerful as all that, we know that we can gain the victory with Christ! Christ is stronger than our enemy! We follow Jesus Christ, and we take up the battle against evil. With Him we will win. Let us not become slaves to the evil one!

This last example was given by Jesus Himself. He shared the following image with His disciples: “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first” (Luke 11: 24–26). This image holds a message for us.





Following the divine service, the Chief Apostle answered questions put to him by the local media

allow the Holy Spirit to develop properly, another spirit will come back and take His place.

Another example. Perhaps there are some who feel they want to be a “somebody” in the congregation, in the Church. All they are concerned about is to shine in the Church and through the Church. Perhaps they sing in the choir, but not in order to praise the Lord but to be in the limelight. And perhaps there is a brother who will do anything he can in order to attain a higher ministry. He wants to become the boss. He has thus become the servant to another spirit and no longer serves the Lord. He only seeks to work to his own advantage. Everything he does is done with an ulterior motive. One wants to become rich, the other wants to count for something in the Church. These people become servants to another spirit and will not receive what they are after! At some point they will be disappointed.

Through our baptism, through Holy Sealing, we were purified. The evil one was driven out and had no more claim on us. We belong to Jesus Christ. But now it is up to us to decide who will live in our hearts.

The evil spirit with its seven companions could come back to us if our hearts are empty and there is room for them.

Let us see to it that the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts and that He fills our whole heart, our whole life. The new creation in Jesus Christ must develop within us. If the life we have received out of the Holy Spirit fills our whole heart, no other spirits will find any room there. But if a person is baptized and sealed, and his heart is not filled with the Holy Spirit, the evil spirits will return and this person will then be very unhappy.

Then the same spirit who came to Jesus in the time of His temptation will come to this person and say, “Why don’t you utilize your childhood in God to have a better life here on earth?” And then, although this person may well come to the divine services, he will be more concerned about his earthly concerns, and will simply pray, “Dear God, please see to it that things go well for me. I am Your child, after all. Please make me rich.” The old spirit will thus have returned, and now he decides what one should pray and what one should do. And such a person will have a difficult time of things because he will notice that it simply does not work. “I am New Apostolic, but I am not becoming wealthy.” And then he is worse off than he ever was before.

It may indeed be the case that one is baptized and sealed, and that one’s heart was purified, but if one does not really

These are just some simple examples of people whom God had chosen for blessing but who made a poor decision. They ended up becoming “slaves of men” again.

Let us be servants and handmaidens of Christ. Out of love for Jesus we are very closely connected to Him. Let us not pursue our own way but rather follow Jesus Christ. We know that those who battle with Jesus Christ on their side will gain the victory. Following Christ is never in vain. Those who follow Him will receive the crown of eternal life, the greatest reward there could ever be. And because we have been bought at such a price, let us truly be disciples and servants of Jesus Christ. The reward for this will be indescribably great.

## CORE THOUGHTS

Christ paid dearly for us with His sacrifice. Let us therefore make sure that we

- are not servants to earthly concerns;
- please God more than mankind;
- are not awed and impressed by the power of the evil one;
- allow the Holy Spirit to fill our whole heart.



■ Daniel Rudolph



## The fundamentals of divine comfort

In a divine service in Berlin (Germany) on 14 February 2016, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider developed a multi-dimensional agenda on comfort. There is more to it than just receiving comfort ... Including the 70 congregations that received a video broadcast of the service, there were more than 8,100 participants.

This much is clear: “As New Apostolic Christians we are not better or worse off than other people,” the Chief Apostle said. “We are human, have to deal with illness, death, and injustice.” And maybe even a bit more, because in the face of all of this we still try to remain faithful to God. And this is really a battle sometimes, he said.

“As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you,” is a promise given by the Lord. “God always comforts us through the Holy Spirit.” The Comforter and Helper does not force Himself upon us. “He comes when we call Him.”

### God’s agenda on comfort

Chief Apostle Schneider developed a three-stage agenda of divine comfort in his sermon. The first aspect of comfort is the alleviation of pain. This occurs through love: “God has not forgotten you. He loves you as much as He loves His Son Jesus when He was on earth.” Then there is hope: “Things will not remain as they are. They will soon change.” And then there is still God’s presence: “Through many small signs and experiences you realize and feel just how close God is to you.”

“This is the second aspect: God strengthens us through His Holy Spirit and shows us how we should pray. And in every divine service the Holy Spirit gives us strength from God through Holy Communion. Every time God permits a test, He gives us an assignment. He tells us, ‘I want you to be a blessing and an example for your neighbour.’” “And then we come to the third aspect. God’s comfort is also redemption.” God grants His grace. “If you have made a mistake, don’t worry about it. Everything is fine again.” Jesus gained the victory over evil: “The work of redemption is already in progress—and the lion’s share of it is already done.” And then there is the promise for the future: “The great redemption is still ahead of us: the day we will enter God’s kingdom, where He will wipe away all tears.”

### Prepared to comfort others

“What God does for us we are asked to do for our neighbour,” the Chief Apostle said, and gave some guiding principles.

There are several ways to alleviate pain. One way to do this is to refrain from judgement and accusation: “The





A congregation of 1,500 gathered in Berlin-Lichtenberg for this divine service in which Apostle Hans-Jürgen Berndt was placed into retirement after many years of dedicated service



dumb response, ‘It’s your own fault,’ has never helped anyone.” Secondly, we can show empathy: “Let us take time to listen.” And a third possibility is to inject new hope: “Don’t worry, things will change. The Lord will change your situation.”

Let us provide help and strength. This is best done through intercession: “The first thing we can do to help is to pray for the neighbour.” We can also provide help by being a testimony: “We can simply talk about the help we have received from God.” And then let us express our admiration: “You know, you are a real example for me. I admire how you manage all of this.”

We can contribute to redemption by working on our own redemption, for example: “The more I overcome the evil in my heart, the less I am a stumbling block for my neighbour.” Another way to contribute to redemption is to fight evil with good: “If something happens then let us simply do more good to balance things out again. The good must always outweigh the evil.” And then we can pray for the return of Christ: “Let us not become tired, but continue to pray for the Lord to come soon.”

## CORE THOUGHTS

*2 Corinthians 1: 3–4*

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”**

- The Holy Spirit comforts us in trials by alleviating our pain, providing help and strength, and redeeming us from the evil one.
- We comfort the suffering by showing empathy and sharing their pain, by supporting them, and by fighting against evil.

# The strategies of the Adversary

Nearly 30,000 members participated in the divine service that Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider conducted on 3 April 2016 in Buenos Aires (Argentina). The service was broadcast to congregations in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. – Unbelief, disobedience, and irreconcilability are only a few of the methods the Devil has to separate man from God. But there is an antidote.

“Peace in Jesus Christ does not mean that there are no conflicts and difficulties, that everything is quiet and we can enjoy life,” the Chief Apostle said. Peace in Jesus Christ, he went on to say, is distinguished by a special relationship with God: “Peace in God means perfect oneness.”

“Man was created to have fellowship with God.” But as a result of the fall into sin, man had to leave this fellowship.

But the sacrifice of Christ has opened up the possibility of restoring this fellowship, and the gospel points the way.

## The intentions of the evil one

“But there is a problem. We have an adversary,” Chief Apostle Schneider made clear. “He does not want us to have this peace in God and is doing everything he can to separate



■ NAC Brazil



us from God.” It is very important that we recognize these machinations and resist them—based on the example set by Jesus Christ. The Chief Apostle mentioned five specific points.

The Devil uses the suffering of humankind to sow doubt about God’s love for man. “Sometimes we do not know why God allows the one or other thing. But let us not doubt the love of the Lord, but trust in His love.”

Satan makes enticing offers, the Chief Apostle said. “All he wants is to lure us into sin because he knows that sin separates from God.” The antidote: being obedient to God, because we know that He can give us far more than the evil one.

To further his cause, the evil one tempts us with our freedom of will: “This can become a problem if our ideas were to differ from those of God. That would mean we cannot have fellowship with Him.” Let us follow the example of Jesus and make the heavenly Father’s will our own so that we can do what we wanted to do in the first place: enter the kingdom of God.

Another strategy of the Devil is to sow injustice in order to plant the desire for retaliation in us: “Such thoughts can grow in our hearts to the point where we are no longer prepared to forgive. But if we do not forgive,” the Chief Apostle continued, “we cannot be forgiven.” The antidote: “Because we want to obtain grace we forgive our neighbour.”

Satan uses the weaknesses of our neighbour, of our brothers and sisters, to provoke us to stay away from the services

by telling us: going to church is useless; it is full of sinners. “But”, the Chief Apostle says, “staying away from the divine services means separation from God, because then we no longer receive Holy Communion. And without Holy Communion we cannot become more like Jesus.”

“Let us recognize that Satan is behind all of this and wants to separate us from God,” the Chief Apostle said in closing. “But you and I have decided that we want to be one with God. That is why we put up a fight and look up to Christ, the Overcomer, and follow His example. And with Christ we will overcome.”

## CORE THOUGHTS

*John 16: 33*

**“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**

Doubt, disobedience, different ideas than those of God, refusing to forgive, and not partaking of Holy Communion are things that separate us from God. Thanks to Jesus Christ we can overcome these conditions that separate us from God and have fellowship with Him.



# The importance of development

There is no question about it, light supplants night. The day of the Lord will dawn. That means that we have to wake up in time and do the right thing. Highlights from a divine service the Chief Apostle celebrated in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.



■ NAC Berlin-Brandenburg



Whether at the creation or at the time of Jesus' birth, the miraculous escape of Peter from prison, or the conversion of Paul: "Wherever God is present and active, there is light and clarity. Wherever God is present, there is truth, security, and life," the Chief Apostle said. "We can find this image time and again in the Bible."

This image of night turning to day is to illustrate that the return of the Lord is unstoppable: "However dark and long the night there will definitely be a new day! Darkness cannot prevent the new day from dawning. This is an absolute certainty."

## A wake-up call

Associated with this is an urgent call: "It is high time to wake up." Paul already refers to this in verse 11. The Chief Apostle went on to highlight two aspects.

A person who is asleep shows no reaction. But "every time we hear that the Lord is coming soon, there must be a re-



action. Something must stir in us. Let us be filled with zeal: 'I must get ready! What else do I still have to do?'"

Someone who is asleep is unaware of any dangers around him. "If we believe that it is enough to be baptized and



Reception to promote a peaceful religious dialogue. Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider met with representatives of the state, other churches, and Islam

sealed, to remain faithful and come to every divine service, we are in danger. Our faith is not a tradition,” the Chief Apostle said. “It is not a matter of repeating the same things over and over again. We must develop and change and become a new creation.”

### Casting off works of darkness

Verse 12 of Romans mentions two more points where we need to act: we are to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.

“The works of darkness are everything we do in secret, everything we do when no one sees us,” the Chief Apostle explained. “Let us not only cleanse our deeds, let us also cleanse our thoughts. Let us also overcome our secret sins, the sins that no one knows and no one sees. They are just as important to the Lord Jesus as all our other sins.”

The armour of light can also be used as a weapon.

Our faith helps us to resist the thought that God may have forgotten us. “When the night around us is very dark then let us draw this weapon and say, “I believe that God loves me!”

“Love is the only weapon that always wins but never causes injury.” It helps to defend us when we are attacked by the weaknesses and imperfections of our neighbour. And: “This is the weapon we use to fight for our neighbour’s salvation.”

Hope is the weapon we use to fight against discouragement. “We think about the glory we will have in the future and fight for our salvation. We fight for the Lord because we know that this fight is worth it.”

“We defend ourselves and fight against evil with faith, love, and hope,” the Chief Apostle said in conclusion. “Our victory is assured. Those who fight with Christ on their side are victorious.”

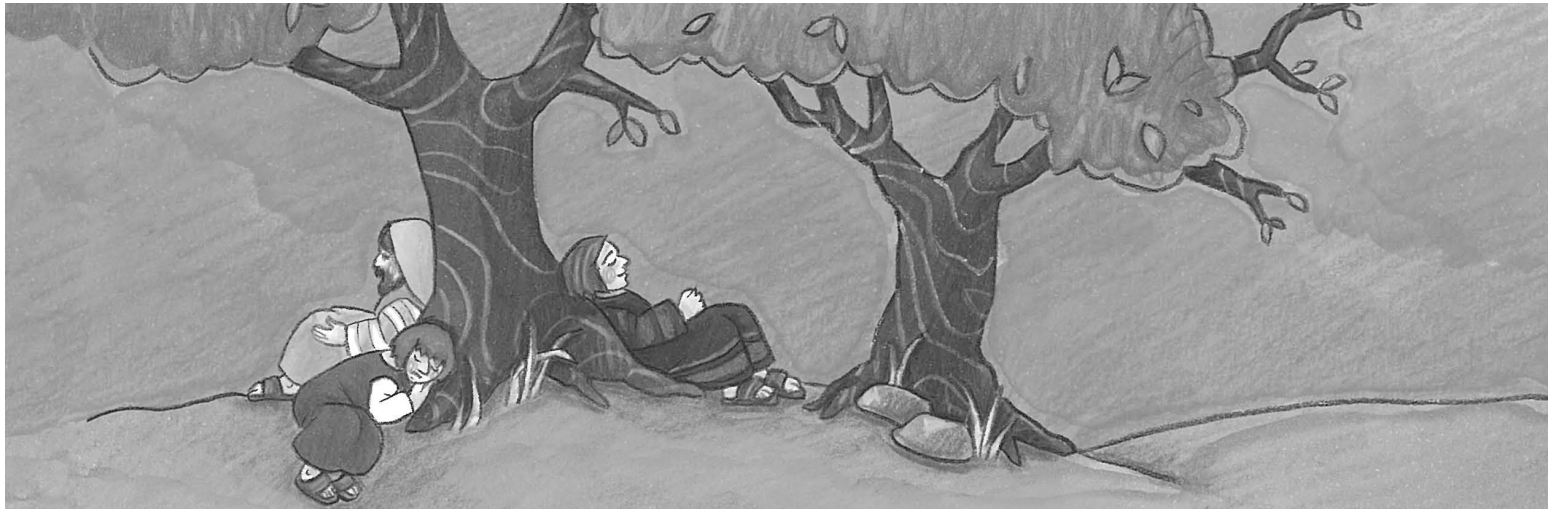
## CORE THOUGHTS

*Romans 13: 12*

**“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”**

The return of the Lord is certain. We are preparing ourselves for it by

- purifying our thoughts,
- growing in love,
- fighting against evil with the weapons of faith, love, and hope.



## JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

(MARK 14: 26–43)

*On the Feast of the Passover, Jesus ate supper with His disciples for the last time. Jesus knew that He would soon be betrayed and would have to sacrifice His life. He went with His disciples to the Mount of Olives.*

On the way to the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus said to His disciples, “In a few hours you will all desert me. Even one of the prophets said a long time ago that the sheep would scat-

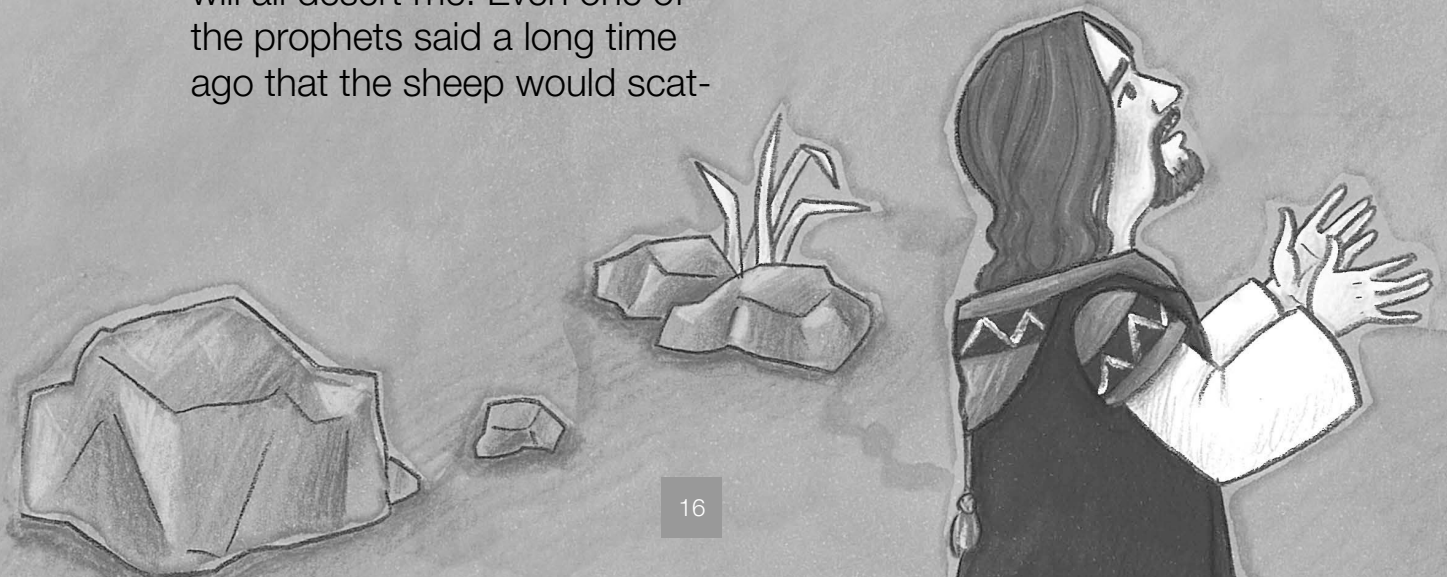
ter when the shepherd was killed. I will, however, rise again after My death and will reveal Myself to you.”

Peter spoke up, “Even if the others desert You I will never leave You.”

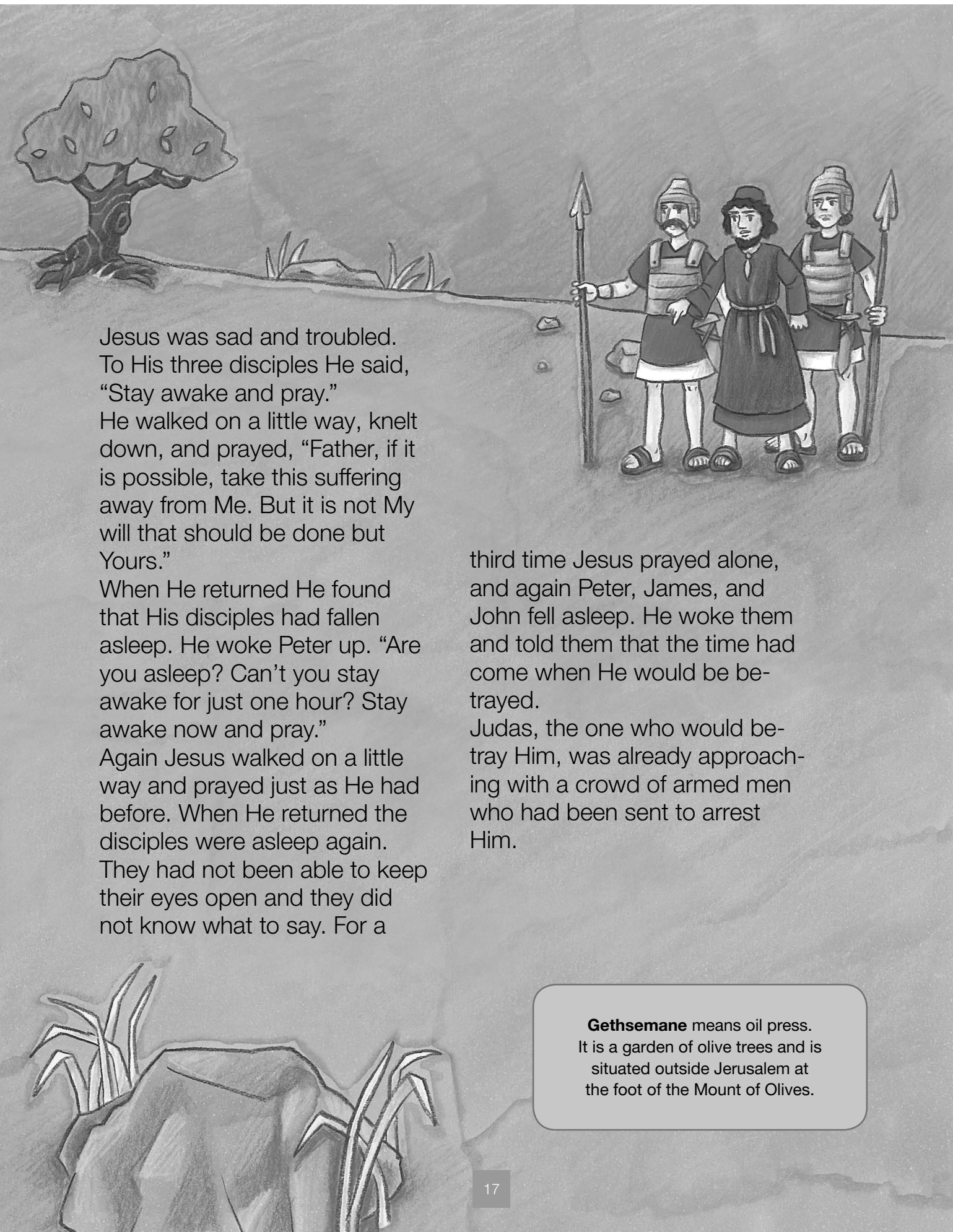
Jesus said to him, “Even before the cock crows three times you will deny that you know Me.”

“I would rather die than do that,” Peter exclaimed.

The other disciples agreed with Peter. When they arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus told His disciples to sit and wait while He went to pray. He took Peter, James, and John with Him.







Jesus was sad and troubled. To His three disciples He said, "Stay awake and pray."

He walked on a little way, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if it is possible, take this suffering away from Me. But it is not My will that should be done but Yours."

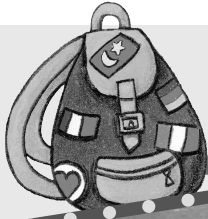
When He returned He found that His disciples had fallen asleep. He woke Peter up. "Are you asleep? Can't you stay awake for just one hour? Stay awake now and pray."

Again Jesus walked on a little way and prayed just as He had before. When He returned the disciples were asleep again. They had not been able to keep their eyes open and they did not know what to say. For a

third time Jesus prayed alone, and again Peter, James, and John fell asleep. He woke them and told them that the time had come when He would be betrayed.

Judas, the one who would betray Him, was already approaching with a crowd of armed men who had been sent to arrest Him.

**Gethsemane** means oil press. It is a garden of olive trees and is situated outside Jerusalem at the foot of the Mount of Olives.



## AT ELBERT'S IN YOGYAKARTA (INDONESIA)



My name is Elbert and I am 11 years old. I live in Yogyakarta on the Indonesian island of Java. Most people refer to the city as Jogja. I am the youngest of **three boys**. My brothers are already 22 and 18 years old.



I ride my bike to **school**. My school is only a few hundred metres from our house. I am in grade five. My favourite subjects are the natural sciences. Once a week I have violin lessons. I am learning to play classical music.



After school I always do my homework right away and then I help my mother with the housework. My hobbies are **playing the violin** and reading. I like to read books about famous people.

I always look forward to Sunday School, where I have many good friends. I also like it when we **sing** at church. In the services I often accompany the choir on the violin.



My father is an Apostle. I love him very much and I always pray for him when he travels. Once in a while he lets me come along, like here in the Kedoya congregation in Jakarta. Organs are not all that well known in Indonesia. Instead, many congregations have an **angklung orchestra**.



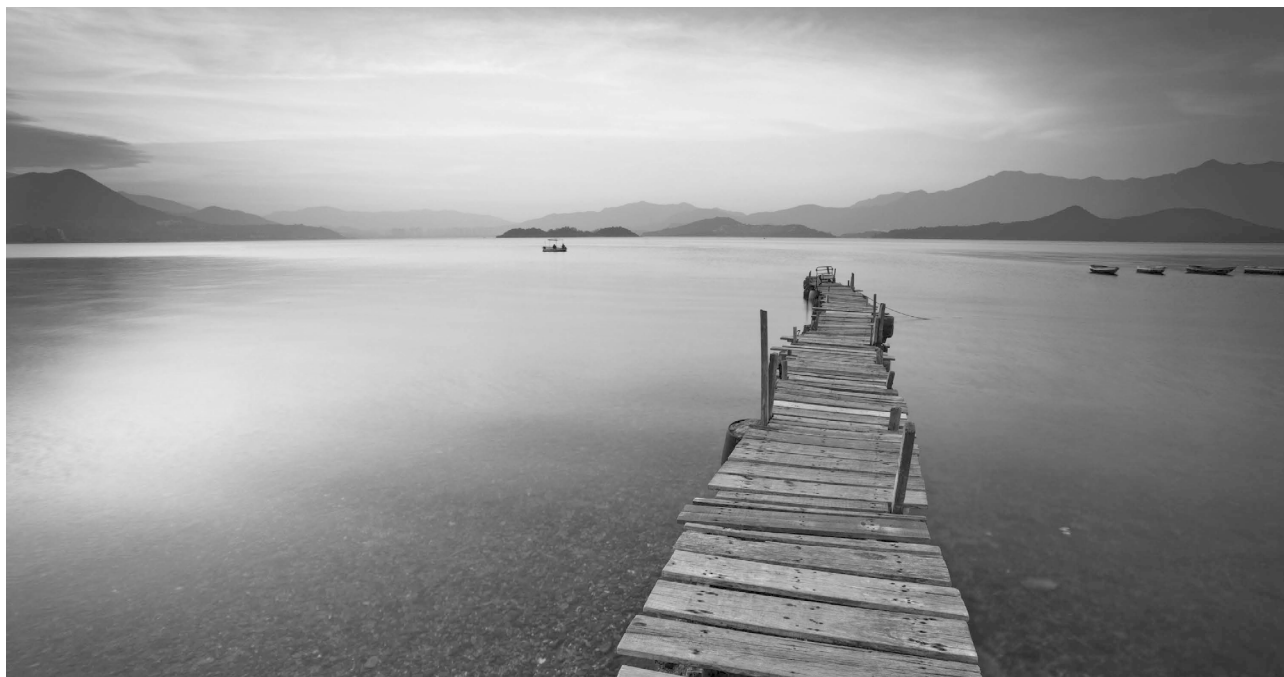
What I like most is our annual **Children's Day**. There are many children my own age there and we all have a really good time together. Since my father looks after several districts, I get to participate in the Children's Days in Yogyakarta, West Java, Jakarta, and Pantai Utara Jawa. The photos give you an idea of what we do there.

Not only tourists come to Yogyakarta, but also many students from all over the country, because there are several universities here. There is much to see in the city, such as the Kraton, the palace where the sultan of Yogyakarta and his family live. If you drive north, about 30 kilometres, you will see the **Merapi**, one of the most active volcanoes in the world. About 40 kilometres south of the city there are many beautiful beaches. I often go there.

My favourite dish is **nasi goreng Jawa**, which translates into Javanese fried rice. I also love Magelangan, a mix of fried rice and instant noodles. As a drink I usually have ginger ale.

During the holidays I often visit my uncle in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. There are many tourist spots to visit. There is also a botanical garden with a bird park that I have been to. One of the **birds** even sat on my shoulder.





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# The doctrine of future things

The *Catechism of the New Apostolic Church in Questions and Answers* was published in September 2015. *community* presents excerpts of some of the 750 questions and answers. In this issue we will look at the doctrine of future things and at aspects concerning the history of Christianity.

## **What future event is the goal of faith of New Apostolic Christians?**

Jesus Christ is coming again—that is a central statement of the gospel. Since His ascension into heaven the Apostles have proclaimed the return of the Lord. It is the goal of faith of New Apostolic Christians to be accepted by Him on this occasion.

## **Who promised the return of Jesus Christ?**

Jesus Christ Himself promised His Apostles: “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14: 3). This promise of Jesus was reinforced by angels at His ascension into heaven: “This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1: 11).

## **Who knows the exact point in time when Christ will return?**

Neither angels nor men know the day or the hour of Jesus Christ’s return. Only the triune God knows this.

## **What does the promise of Christ’s return mean for us?**

It is one of the fundamental certainties of the gospel that Jesus Christ will return and take His bride unto Himself. He Himself has promised His return (John 14: 3).

## **Why do we believe that the promise of Christ’s return is near?**

The fact that the Apostle ministry is once again occupied is a sign that the return of Christ is imminent. The expectation that this promise of the Lord will be fulfilled is as much



the focal point of the New Apostolic faith today as it is the hope of each individual to personally experience the return of Christ and the rapture.

#### **How do we prepare for the return of Christ?**

The Apostles prepare the believers for the return of Christ through word and sacrament.

The believers conscientiously align their lives by this.

#### **What will happen at the return of Christ?**

In summary, the following results from the statements of Apostle Paul: At the return of Christ, the dead who have died in Christ, will be the first to resurrect incorruptible. The living who have allowed themselves to be prepared for the return of Christ will experience the transformation without having to suffer physical death.

Both the dead and the living will receive a glorious body. This body will be like the resurrection body of Christ. Together they will be caught up to Jesus Christ and will thus enter into eternal fellowship with the triune God.

These events are part of the first resurrection mentioned in Revelation 20: 5–6.

#### **Who will be caught up at the return of Christ?**

The rapture at the return of Christ is first of all promised to those who have been granted the rebirth out of water and the Spirit, who believe in Jesus Christ, and who follow Him. This group is also called the “bridal congregation” or the “male child” (Revelation 12: 5).

Whether God will also grant the grace of the rapture to others is beyond human judgement and is subject to the decision of God.

#### **Are there any characteristics for those who will belong to the bridal congregation?**

Yes—one such outstanding characteristic is that they wait daily for the return of Christ and are steadfast in praying: “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22: 17, 20).

#### **What events comprise the first resurrection?**

During the first resurrection, the dead in Christ will resurrect and, together with the living who belong to the bridal congregation, will be caught up to God.

After the marriage in heaven, the martyrs from the great tribulation will resurrect and be numbered among the royal priesthood.

These two events are described as the first resurrection: “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Revelation 20: 6).

#### **What follows the conclusion of the first resurrection?**

After the conclusion of the first resurrection, Jesus Christ will establish His kingdom of peace and exercise His royal reign for a thousand years. These thousand years symbolize a long, but limited, period of time.

#### **What transpires during the period of the kingdom of peace on earth?**

During the time of Christ’s kingdom of peace, Jesus Christ and the royal priesthood will preach the gospel unhindered. The gospel will be brought to all human beings living on earth as well as to all souls in the realms of the departed. By the end of the kingdom of peace, all human beings of all time periods will have become acquainted with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### **What happens to those who find grace in the Last Judgement?**

Those who find grace in the Last Judgement will—together with those who partook in the first resurrection—become citizens of God’s new creation. They will then all have eternal fellowship with God. The others will remain in the misery of remoteness from God.

#### **What does the Bible have to say about God’s new creation?**

After the Last Judgement, God will replace the old creation with a new creation: “He [God] will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God” (Revelation 21: 3). Thereby the expectation expressed in 2 Peter 3: 13 will be fulfilled: “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” This kingdom of God will be eternal, and then God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15: 28).

# From the history of Christianity

## How did the first Christian congregations come into being?

The first Christian congregation came into being on Pentecost (Acts 2: 37 et seq.). This congregation consisted only of Jews. Owing to the persecutions that followed, many of the believers fled from Jerusalem (Acts 8: 1; 11: 19). In their new surroundings they continued to preach the gospel, which also met with faith there. So it was that Christian congregations began to form in other places.

## How did Christendom develop after the second century AD?

What had begun with the stoning of Deacon Stephen grew into waves of persecutions: many Christians were killed for their faith and thereby became martyrs. Despite these persecutions and many obstacles, the Christian faith spread throughout the Roman Empire.

## How did Christianity develop in the time before the Middle Ages?

During the great Migration Period (in the fourth and fifth centuries) Christianity gained in strength in both Europe and Asia.

Monasticism, which first came into being in Egypt in the third century, played a special role in the spread of Christianity. One of the principle duties of the monks was to live a life of poverty in accordance with the example of Christ, and to spread the Christian faith. In the Middle Ages, monks and nuns accomplished outstanding achievements in science, and were also involved in agriculture and social issues.

Increasingly, Christianity came to define the lives of the people, as well as the culture, politics, and society of Europe. In the year 1054, tensions led to a split between the Western Church (Roman Catholic) and the Eastern Church (Orthodox).

## What else did Christians have to contend with starting in the seventh century?

Starting in the seventh century, Christians in parts of Asia, Africa, and even Europe had to contend with a new religion, namely Islam. Many areas were lost to the Christian faith, for example the Middle East and Northern Africa.

This led to battles, for example, the Crusades. These took place between 1095 and 1270 in the Middle East with the stated objective of conquering Jerusalem and the Holy Land for Christendom.

## What developments led to the efforts to reform the church?

Over the course of the Middle Ages, the church became more and more secular—faith and doctrine lost more and more of their value. This can be attributed to a lack of orientation from the gospel.

It was for this reason that an increasing number of efforts were made to reform the church. On the one hand, there were endeavours to reform the church within monasticism, and on the other hand, others like the Frenchman Peter Waldo (1140, died before 1218), the English theologian John Wycliffe (1320–1384), and the rector of the University of Prague, John Hus (1369–1384), began to make efforts of their own. All of them were consistent critics of the secularized church. The movements initiated and supported by them affected large parts of Europe, and eventually led to the Reformation.

## What is the Reformation?

The Reformation (from the Latin *reformatio*, meaning “restoration” or “renewal”) was a religious renewal movement in Europe, which was based on the desire to return to the gospel. It is closely associated with the German monk Martin Luther (1483–1546). According to his conviction, the sole basis of the doctrine was to be the biblical testimony of Jesus Christ. Luther translated the Bible from the Hebrew and Greek languages into German, and thus made it accessible to the people. The Anglican state church came into being independently in the year 1534.

## What was the condition of Christendom in the nineteenth century?

In the nineteenth century, increasing efforts were made in order to win back those who had, through poverty and ignorance, grown alienated from the faith, for the gospel (“Inner or Home Mission”). Beyond that, “missionary societies” were established in order to see to the spread of Christianity in countries outside of Europe, particularly in Africa.

### What important developments occurred in the Christendom of the nineteenth century?

The so-called “revivalist movements”—which became especially popular among Protestants in England and the USA—were also of great significance: believing Christians appealed for people to turn away from “cultural Christianity” and return to a living Christian faith. This call for reflection on the gospel was often associated with the hope in the return of Christ.

This is the historical context in which God prepared for the renewed activity of Apostles.

### How did the renewed occupation of the Apostle ministry in the nineteenth century come about?

Between 1826 and 1829, believing men gathered for conferences in Albury (Southern England), in order to study the Revelation of Jesus Christ together. These conferences took place at the invitation of the banker Henry Drummond (1786–1860) in close collaboration with Edward Irving (1792–1834), who was a clergyman of the Scottish National Church. The participants of these conferences wanted to gain clarity on the biblical statements concerning the activity of the Holy Spirit and the return of Christ.

Believers of various denominations in Scotland were also waiting for an increased activity of the Holy Spirit. In 1830, manifestations of healing, glossolalia (speaking in unknown tongues), and prophecy occurred in their circle, and were widely noticed.

In the autumn of 1832, John Bate Cardale (1802–1877) was called by the Holy Spirit to be an Apostle and was designated as an Apostle by Henry Drummond.

Starting in September 1833, another eleven Apostles were called by prophecy—especially through the prophet Oliver Taplin (1800–1862).

### How did the Catholic Apostolic Church come into being?

In 1835, the Apostles withdrew to Albury for a year of intensive deliberations together. They developed the *Great Testimony* (1837), a confessional text that was made available to all spiritual and secular leaders of Christendom.

In this document the Apostles called upon Christians to gather under their leadership and thereby prepare themselves for the return of Christ. They were thus not interested in establish-

ing a new church, but rather in bringing the various existing churches together under the leadership of Apostles.

The majority of Christians did not accept the call of the Apostles, however. The few Christians that did believe the Apostles banded together in a new church, namely the Catholic Apostolic Church.

### How did the New Apostolic Church come into being?

Priest Rudolf Rososchacky (1815–1894), the rector of the Catholic Apostolic congregation in Königsberg, was called to be an Apostle by the prophet Geyer on 10 October 1862. The Apostles of the Catholic Apostolic Church did not acknowledge this calling.

The prophet Geyer and the leader of the Catholic Apostolic congregation in Hamburg, Friedrich Wilhelm Schwartz (1815–1895) were, however, convinced that this calling had been the work of the Holy Spirit.

The congregation in Hamburg thus acknowledged the calling of this Apostle on 4 January 1863, and was excommunicated from the Catholic Apostolic Church as a result.

Thus the beginning of the New Apostolic Church dates back to January 1863.

Even after Apostle Rososchacky resigned from his ministry a short time later, Geyer, Schwarz, and the Hamburg congregation remained firmly convinced that his calling had been a divine one.



Peter Johanning

# Working on developing our conception of ministry

What is a spiritual ministry? And what is an organizational structure? Questions such as these were not only on the agenda of a recent District Apostles' conference, but are also occupying the Apostles of the New Apostolic Church right around the globe.

The topic that the Church leaders have been working on for at least two years is called "conception of ministry". The Catechism—published at the end of 2012—supplies a whole chapter of answers to the question: "How do we understand the term 'ministry'?" "But now we have follow-up questions to deal with," Chief Apostle (ret.) Wilhelm Leber already said in an interview in 2013.

What this is all about was explained by Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider at a panel discussion at the International Church Convention in Munich in June 2014: What is ministry? What are duties? What happens at an ordination?

Only once the theological groundwork has been rethought can one begin to consider social aspects: Who can carry a ministry? What will a congregation accept? What is possible at the regional level?

- 1 | District Apostle Leonard R. Kolb (USA) speaking at the conference of District Apostles
- 2 | District Apostle Noel E. Barnes (left) and District Apostle Helper John L. Kriel (South Africa)
- 3 | District Apostle Tshitshi Tshisekedi (left; DR Congo) and District Apostle Helper Arnold N. Mhango (Zambia)
- 4 | District Apostle Wilfried Klingler (Germany)





## All Apostles are involved

The Working Group Questions of Faith has been doing the essential groundwork for this since early 2014. The District Apostle Meeting, as the Church's highest executive board, has been deliberating over this regularly since March 2015.

The discussions have now reached a new stage. Following an initiative by Chief Apostle Schneider, all Apostles—of which there are currently some 350—are informed about the status quo as well as pending questions and have been asked to submit a statement. After all, the Catechism defines the apostolate as authoritative for doctrine.

The District Apostles spent almost the entire Thursday, 10 March, poring over the feedback from the nineteen District Churches. Dozens of points and suggestions were up for consideration. The results have now been referred back to the specialist group to prepare another round of worldwide consultations.

## Status quo in the Catechism

The entire seventh chapter of the Catechism is dedicated to the conception of ministry. The spiritual ministry “constitutes authorization, blessing, and sanctification issued through ordination for service in the church of Christ” and “it is exercised in the power of the Holy Spirit”.

Other passages examine the foundation of the ministry on the sending of Jesus Christ as well as corresponding references in Scripture. Ordination and the exercise of a ministry are also among the topics being discussed. The ministerial hierarchy is represented in three levels: the diaconal, the priestly, and the Apostle ministry. The Apostle ministry is given the most comprehensive definition in the Catechism.



## Meeting with delegation from the United Apostolic Church



NAC Cape

The United Apostolic Church of South Africa was founded in the 1950s. This goes back to a break with the New Apostolic mother church in South Africa and several countries in Europe at the time.

On 6 February 2016, for the first time, representatives of the New Apostolic Church travelled to Port Elizabeth for a first official meeting with the delegation of the United Apostolic Church. The delegates of the United Apostolic Church were Apostle Johannes Erasmus, Bishop Robert Swiegelaar, District Elder Colin Richter, and Community Elder Carel Smith. District Apostle Helper John Kriel, the Apostles Gerome Mintoer, and Brian Swartbooi, as well as Bishop Frans Flores represented the New Apostolic Church.

The meeting was of an exploratory nature. The representatives wanted to get to know and understand the contents and teachings of the other church. Both churches have undergone great changes and important developments since their separation.

The cordial atmosphere of this first meeting gives rise to hope that more meetings of a similar nature will take place. The two delegations were unanimous in this. Apostle John Kriel of the New Apostolic Church extended an invitation to Apostle Erasmus when he travels to Cape Town again. The meeting was concluded by collectively praying the Lord's Prayer.



Bishop Peter Johanning (right) in an interview with District Apostle Wilfried Klingler

■ Oliver Rütten

# Churches merge in Germany

Farewell for one, a new chapter for many others: the merger of the District Churches of Northern Germany and Central Germany is coming closer and closer. The course has been set.

His main concern: the future of the Church. This was what District Apostle Wilfried Klingler had always sought to assure, not only in his traditional working area of Central Germany, but also on an international level. For example, for many years he served as chairman of the Coordination Group, the highest advisory panel to the Chief Apostle. Now the time has come for him to take his leave. District Apostle Klingler will retire in the middle of this year.

And that does not necessarily come easily, especially now that the future of the Church is one of the works in progress at the moment, for instance, as concerns the topic of our conception of ministry. The District Apostle acknowledged this in an interview with Peter Johanning, the Church spokesman, at the most recent District Apostles' conference, which was the last official meeting of this kind for Wilfried Klingler. Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider

also took this opportunity to address some heartfelt words of thanks to the District Apostle for his many years of intensive work.

## Church offices have been in contact since 2015

In the meantime, the preparations for the time following District Apostle Klingler's retirement are well underway in Central Germany. It will be a future shared with the District Church of Northern Germany, because the local District Apostle Rüdiger Krause is to assume leadership for both working areas after District Apostle Klingler retires in June.

The first concrete meetings between the two Church leaders already took place in January 2015. The Apostles and

Bishops of the two areas also became better acquainted in September 2015. The meeting in Hannover was captioned by the motto: “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God” (Romans 15: 7).

## Work groups set the course

On the employee level of the two Church offices, preparations for this amalgamation already began at the start of 2015. The first results of this collaboration have already been prepared by the Work Group Common Administration. In the process, the two Church offices discovered that they each adhere to some very different practices and guidelines in some cases. A common intranet platform is to be in place by mid June in order to help implement new regulations.

In addition to the financial experts, the two construction departments have also remained in close contact with one another. It was in this area that the central Work Group Site Development was established. And finally, preliminary efforts for merging the previously separate District Churches into a single common body are already in progress. Bjorn Renz, spokesman for the District Church of Northern Germany, relates that a well reputed law firm is also on board.

## Concentration in Germany

The merger had already been announced in October 2014. The decision had been made “under consideration of the demographics in Germany and the global development of the Church as a whole”. In other words, membership numbers are declining in Germany as a result of aging membership, while District Apostles in Africa, for example, often care for significantly greater numbers of members.

The new working area will incorporate the German federal states of Hamburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony, and Thuringia. In addition, the new District Church will also be responsible for Poland, the British Isles, and the countries of Northern Europe from Greenland to Estonia.

## New homepage in June

“New Apostolic Church of Northern and Eastern Germany” that is what the new District Church will be called. This decision of fall 2015 was the result of an online survey of the Church’s members. The most popular proposal, namely Northern Europe, did not quite fit geographically and seemed a little oversized. However, the present compromise also garnered broad acceptance in the survey.

To coincide with the retirement of District Apostle Klingler, the Church map will also change on the Internet. At the same time, the two previously separate websites for Northern Germany and Central Germany will go offline, while a new single home page will go online.

## Two Chief Apostles together—a rare thing indeed



Björn Renz

Nordheide in Germany is a thirty-minute drive from the city of Hamburg, Germany’s big port and gate to the world. And Nordheide is the place where Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber goes to church. Since his retirement on Pentecost 2013 he has been a member there and plays the organ now and then; also on Good Friday this year. Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider had announced his visit and was thrilled to have his predecessor at the organ for the service. It was a special service for Chief Apostle Schneider: no transmission, just the small congregation, and the region’s District Apostle, Apostles, and Bishops as guests.

There was a special atmosphere in the small congregation that somehow lightened the normally somewhat solemn and mournful mood on a Good Friday. In his sermon—which was based on Isaiah 53: 10—the Chief Apostle explained that a Christian has every reason to look on Good Friday with gratitude. He made clear that the Son of God made Himself equal to mankind. “He overcame evil. If we are confronted with evil, we can find strength in Christ so that we can remain faithful to God and do His will, serve Him, and forgive our neighbour,” the Chief Apostle said.

# Theology course for Apostles

True to the motto “Educating the leaders” a new training programme has been initiated. This follows a decision by the Chief Apostle who stipulates that the Church leaders need more than firm faith and a good knowledge of the Bible.

Apostles and Bishops met at the Dennekraal Training Centre near Cape Town (South Africa) for a first round of theological training. This first part of the course covered the fundamentals: the dogmatics of the Christian faith, in other words, the systematized belief.

## The fundamentals of our doctrine

Unusual for many of the participants was not only the strict rational approach to our doctrine, but many also found the terminology daunting at first. But they had a well-versed interpreter in their presenter from Johannesburg, Markus Cromhout, who is employed by the New Apostolic Church South East Africa. He has a doctorate in New Testament Studies from the University of Pretoria and has published numerous articles in journals and two books.

An introduction to theology; dogmatics in the Early Church, natural theology, Holy Scripture; and the doctrine of God were covered in this pilot event. Additional topics will be covered in July this year and in January 2017. These are christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Christology covers that part of theology that relates to Christ, ecclesiology is the science that relates to the church, and eschatology is the teaching of the last things. The entire course has been designed in close collaboration with the Theological Services of the New Apostolic Church International.

## Answers to today's questions

The attendance is open to all African District Churches. This is what the District Apostles had decided at their conference in October last year. In addition to South African



■ NAC Cape



Apostles and Bishops, delegates from Zambia also attended the four-day course at Deenekraal.

This course is the implementation of a decision taken by Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider during the meeting of African Apostles over Pentecost 2015 in Lusaka. On account of rising education among our members, ministers are facing entirely new challenges, he said. Ministers have to be able to convey the doctrine in a convincing and understandable way. "Please make sure that you really master the doctrine. The Holy Spirit will not tell you what it says in the Catechism, you have to learn it!"

### Online modules

Lively conversations and exchanges of perspectives ensued during the four days the group was together. District Apostle Helper John Kriel of the District Church Cape said that the course certainly opened up new perspectives and helped gain a better understanding. Now there is some homework to be done: there are online modules to be covered by each participant in his own time and at his own pace. Assessment questions at the end of each e-learning module will ensure that the content has been mastered to satisfaction. Judging by the conversation at the conclusion of the training it was clear that those present were looking forward to the follow-up course which is scheduled for July this year.



### Street concert attracts large audience



NAC Philippines

Sunday, 31 January, 5.30 a.m. The main street in Klaten (Java/Indonesia) is cordoned off for the city's annual Car Free Day (CFD). As merchants, bikers, and pedestrians take over the otherwise busy street, a group of young people carrying angklungs appear almost out of nowhere and start to sing and play. People are delighted and stop to listen.

The concert by the young people from the district of Surakarta was part of a campaign to profess love for their neighbour. In collaboration with the local branch of the Red Cross, the youth had organized a blood drive that day and were able to interest spectators, as well as our brothers and sisters who had come, to give blood.



## Being a help to the dead is an expression of God's will

In all churches there are memorial ceremonies and services—defined to a greater or lesser extent—for loved ones who have passed away. Some Orthodox denominations celebrate with bread and cake at the grave. Other churches celebrate services of remembrance. The New Apostolic Church celebrates divine services for the departed three times each year.

“Divine services for the departed take place three times a year, on the first Sunday of March, July, and November, respectively,” it says in the *Catechism of the New Apostolic Church* (12.1.13). This describes a practice which only developed concretely over the course of church history, but was actually always in existence. Apostle Friedrich Wilhelm Schwartz (1815–1895) already acted in accordance with this practice. In the early travel reports of the Apostles, we often even find specific references as to how

many were sealed, whether from among the living or the dead.

The current practice—namely to have three divine services for the departed each year—dates back to a ruling by Chief Apostle Johann Gottfried Bischoff in the year 1954. Accordingly, departed souls are to receive Holy Communion every Sunday through an Apostle. And three times each year, special divine services are to be conducted in which

the sacraments can be dispensed to departed souls who long for salvation.

## Early church tradition

The purpose of a divine service for the departed is to impart sacramental acts—at least in those places where the Chief Apostle or the District Apostles are conducting divine services. In all other congregations it is a service of remembrance. The Catechism makes reference to an early church tradition: “Already in the congregation of Corinth, the living were baptized on behalf of the dead (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. In the other congregations, the departed are then commemorated in a special prayer after the celebration of Holy Communion.”

## God’s offer of salvation applies to all

Such divine services for the departed have an important place in the New Apostolic church year. The congregation is prepared for this special service on the preceding Sunday. Compassion and empathy are to inspire intercessions on behalf of the departed. The preparatory service leading up to the service for the departed in March was based on Psalm 95: 6: “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

It was with these words that the praying congregation of that time was encouraged to worship God, who created the world and who guides it in His sovereign power. Such an attitude is also necessary in view of a service for the departed. After all, people generally need to summon up a great deal of faith for things they cannot see or assess in a scientific manner. Despite our limitations, however, the will of God remains unchanged: salvation is offered to both living and dead alike.

## The Apostle ministry is necessary

In the early post-apostolic period, the church began to distance itself from the practice of intercessory dispensation of sacraments to the dead, and ultimately prohibited baptisms for the dead in the year 397 at the Third Council of Carthage. From the New Apostolic perspective this is not surprising, because it was only the renewed personal occupation of the Apostle ministry in the 1830s that made a renaissance of this early Christian practice possible.

The New Apostolic Catechism emphasizes the importance of the Apostle ministry for the dispensation of the sacraments: “The Apostles fulfil the commission of Jesus—namely to proclaim the gospel, to forgive sins, and to administer the sacraments—upon both the living and the dead. They act in Christ’s stead and in His name. Just as Jesus Christ brought His sacrifice on earth, salvation is also imparted through the Apostles on earth. Since sacraments always have a visible component, they can also only be performed in the visible realm. The effect of the sacraments as essential elements in imparting salvation is the same for both the living and the dead” (Catechism 9.6.3)

## Not Spiritism

The dispensation of the sacraments in New Apostolic services for the departed must not be confused with Spiritism. The object is not to gain or procure insights into the beyond. It is not a matter of acquiring knowledge about the worlds in the beyond or the condition of the dead. By no means is the beyond to be incorporated into the here and now or made accessible to us. This practice is not intended to satisfy any sort of metaphysical curiosity. It simply expresses the promise of salvation which, according to the will of God, applies to the living and the dead equally.



Marcel Felde



## Sierra Leone: Blessed days

Together with a large festive congregation, the District Apostle conducted a divine service in Lumpa (Sierra Leone) on May 30th, 2016. He was accompanied by Apostle Hans-Jürgen Bauer from South Germany. The basis for the sermon was taken from Romans 6: 8-9: "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him."

As on the previous day in Conakry (Guinea), the District Apostle also ordained district leaders in this service: three Brothers received the District Elder ministry and 13 the District Evangelist ministry. Music did not come short either: a large choir made a wonderful contribution.

One day later, on May 31st, 2016, a meeting took place in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, with the country's three Apostles and two Bishops.



## Guinea: Joy in Conakry

The Brothers and Sisters in Conakry (Guinea) were happy to greet the District Apostle and their Lead Apostle Hans-Jürgen Bauer in their midst for a divine service on Sunday, May 29th, 2016. Psalm 97: 11 was used as the basis for the sermon: "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Our Brothers and Sisters made a musical contribution to the service with enthusiastically sung hymns. Seven District Elders and 13 District Evangelists could be ordained.



The District Apostle also held a meeting with the three Apostles and two Bishops who are active in Guinea. He thereby strengthened them for exercising their high ministry.

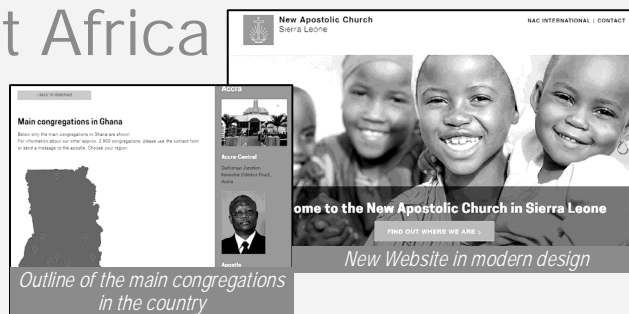
## News from NAC West Africa

The newly formed Internet sites of the New Apostolic District Churches in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone bring news which is dynamic, responsive, current and user-friendly on every terminal!



The Internet sites of the District Churches Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone are published in modern design, with new concept and extensive functions. The sites under [www.nac-ghana.org](http://www.nac-ghana.org) / [www.nac-nigeria.org](http://www.nac-nigeria.org) / [www.nac-sierra-leone.org](http://www.nac-sierra-leone.org) have a clear navigation and interesting contents.

An important function is the „responsive design“. This means that the appearance of the Internet site adjusts to the size of the terminal with which one looks at the site. This allows an optimum use independent of the terminal (computer, Tablet or Smartphone).



### Discover more features:

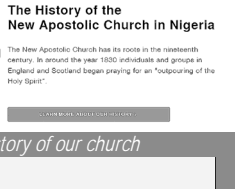
**Where we are** – The main congregations of the country are described with a photo of the church building and the responsible Apostle, each with contact.

**Who we are** – The number of congregations and their members is shown.

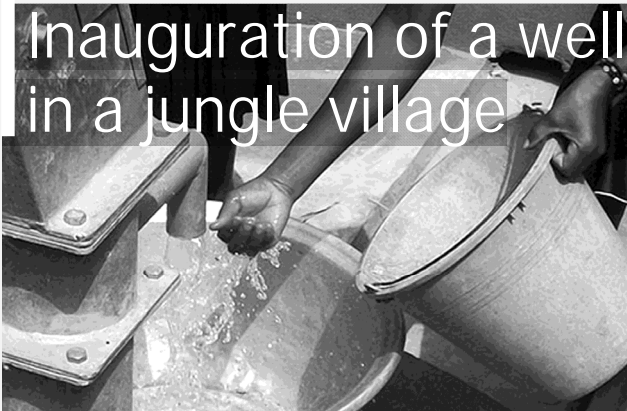
**Activities** – In the field „Our Activities“ the essential tasks and offers of the New Apostolic Church are described.

**Doctrine** – Under „Our Doctrine“ we find a direct link to the catechism which describes our faith in detail.

**History** – The development of the New Apostolic Church worldwide as well as in the country is shown.



## Togo: Inauguration of a well in a jungle village



The villagers in Atti-Apedokoe (Togo) turned the inauguration of a well into a large and joyful festival. Brothers and Sisters from South Germany had donated toward the building of the water well. Following a request for tenders, a well building company constructed the well which can be used free of charge by all villagers and residents in the vicinity.

The inauguration was carried out by Apostle Herbert Bansbach following a divine service in the New Apostolic congregation in Atti-Apedokoe. He handed over the well with a key to a committee which had been founded in the village to supervise the preservation and use of the well (a member of this committee is New Apostolic).



## Apostle Afoutou departed

On Saturday, March 19, 2016, our retired Apostle Yaovi Afoutou (Togo) passed away. He had been seriously ill for a long time already, and has now been released from his suffering. Yaovi Afoutou was born on July 22, 1942 in Agou-Attigbe-Bayeme in Togo. He married his wife Bertine on July 1, 1979. Their marriage was blessed with four children. Our dear departed Apostle was ordained into the following ministries: 1988 Priest, 1990 Evangelist, 1991 District Evangelist, 1994 District Elder, 1996 Bishop, 1998 Apostle. He was placed into retirement by Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber in a divine service in Accra (Ghana) on November 16, 2008.

Previously, the next well with clean water was about 30 km away, and the villagers were therefore unable to satisfy their daily water requirements from there. Due to this, they fetched their water from a nearby pond, which unfortunately resulted in numerous infectious diseases.

With music played by a brass band, dancing, recitals and sketches the villagers celebrated their direct access to good drinking water.



## Nigeria: Handing Over and Take Over of an Apostle Working Area

What a great blessing and joy for us the New Apostolic Church in Nigeria to receive the visit of our beloved Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider in the beginning of the New Year, 2016. During this visit, he conducted a festive Divine Service in our Church Four-Town in Uyo. One of the highlights of the Service is the Ordination of four Apostles. Children of God in Nigeria now have ten Apostles, comprising of nine Apostles working areas and Apostle Geoffrey Nwogu as the Lead Apostle. This led to the fulfillment of the long awaited re-organization of Apostle working areas in Nigeria. This re-organization affected me, Apostle Augustine Rotimi and my former working area "The Northern part of South-west" of the Country which was split

into three and merged with South-west, mid-west and the whole Northern part of Nigeria is now my new working area. It was my joy to meet the Ministers, brothers and sisters who are eagerly looking forward for my visit. It

was a joyful encounter on Saturday 13th February, 2016 being our first meeting in Abuja the federal capital of Nigeria where I was formerly introduced to all the District leaders of the Northern part of Nigeria by the Lead Apostle in the presence of Bishop Yohanna Magaji. I was given a warm welcome/reception, followed with prayer and fellowship, thereafter, Apostle Nwogu who was formerly taking care of this area took me through the handing over and taking over. On Sunday, we were served in a festive Divine Service in our Central Church Abuja by Apostle Geoffrey Nwogu with the Text from Genesis 32:26. The Divine Service was concluded with my introduction as their new Apostle, followed by fellowship with our brothers and sisters.

GN



Apostle Rotimi, Apostle G. Nwogu and Bishop Magaji



Children choir sings to welcome Apostles and the Bishop



Togo:



## Donation to AIDS relief organisation

*Apostle Herbert Bansbach (on left) hands over the donation to the AIDS centre in Lomé*

A donation of 5,500 Euros was made to an AIDS relief organisation in Lomé (Togo). Part of the donation was directly contributed by Brothers and Sisters from South Germany, the major share came from the budget of the missionary organisation of the South Germany District Church, and therefore also from the offerings and donations of members.

AIDS is a result of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The virus is conveyed through blood and body fluids (sperm, vaginal fluid), in other words primarily during sexual intercourse without a condom. In addition, mothers with the virus can infect their children through their breast milk.

About 37 million persons are currently infected with the virus worldwide, of whom 70 percent live in Africa south of the Sahara. 45 percent of those bearing the HI-virus are not even aware that they are infected. However, this is the first important step toward treatment with antiretroviral medication. It is therefore particularly important that the people in the highly

## Church Policy HIV and AIDS

The New Apostolic Church will welcome those with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) and their families with love and acceptance.

The Christian response to a person with HIV/AIDS must be compassionate, helpful, and redemptive. Jesus, as our example, cared for those with disease with a personal demonstration of God's love (Luke 5:12-16).

à More information and instructions see: <http://www.nak.org/en/news/news-display/article/14196/>

affected countries allow themselves to be tested and treated. The knowledge of whether one is infected also helps to prevent further contamination, for example of children through their mothers when breastfeeding.

In Togo, as in other African countries, there are many "AIDS orphans" – children whose parents have died of AIDS and who now have to survive without the protection and security of the family. One estimates that there are more than 15 million "AIDS orphans" worldwide. About 2.5 million of these have already been infected with the virus, either at birth through the mother's blood or through the breast milk they received as a baby.

AIDS relief organizations in Africa – such as the AIDS center in Lomé – take care of such "AIDS orphans". They additionally work toward prevention and education, support medical projects, train health advisors, and try to improve the living conditions of HIV-infected persons and those suffering from AIDS. Terminal care is also provided for AIDS patients.

## Benin: "You give them something to eat."

This was the Bible text used by Apostle Yedenou for the divine service on 24.02.2016 in Kodé-Aguékou.

Some of our members, victims of the phenomenon of transhumance in areas of Adjohoun, Gbanan, Saïdonou and vicinity gathered on our congregation of Kodé-Aguékou to live a fellowship day. Indeed, this year, the phenomenon of transhumance had reached proportions never before. The beasts of the nomads destroyed all agricultural production in a big part of the Ouémé Valley. The effort of a whole year of hard work was destroyed. Entire families have remained hungry for weeks and months.

To help New Apostolic families' victims, Apostle Yedenou appealed to all congregations in his working area.

And in a fraternal atmosphere, food crops and money was given to victims who could not all move. It was a great experience for the whole church.

YE



*Apostle Yedenou Handing over the food crops to the victims*

## Ivory Coast: Divine services in Yopougon and Koumassi



*After the service in Koumassi*

A divine service in Yopougon with Apostle Hans-Jürgen Bauer resulted in great joy for the youth on June 4th, 2016.

Matthew 6: 33 was used as the bible text for the sermon: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

By means of many beautifully presented hymns – already before the service, as well as after it – the young Brothers and Sisters made their contribution to the lovely experience.

On the following day, June 5th, 2016, Apostle Bauer conducted a service in Koumassi during which – in the commission of the District Apostle – he ordained a District Evangelist and a number of further ministers who shall be active in various congregations in the country.

## Ghana: District Apostle in Accra

The highlight of the visit of District Apostle was the festive divine service at the Accra Central Church on the 1st of May 2016.

He was accompanied by all the Apostles and Bishops of Ghana. The text word was Romans 6:8-9 "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him".

The District Apostle said through Baptism and Holy Sealing, we die with Jesus Christ so can also participate at the Holy sacrifice of Jesus Christ. With him we have to "die to sin". It is not possible for us as human to stay from sin, we are not perfect. The important thing for us is to fight against sin and to resist it. We receive the "essence of Jesus Christ" by the word of God,



Group picture of Apostles and Bishops



A child welcoming District Apostle

and the Holy Communion. That is why the divine services are so important. We are interested in the Church and bring sacrifices to the Lord and invest our gifts and talents given by God in his work. We also use every opportunity to give testimony of our faith and put the goal of our faith in the centre point of our life.

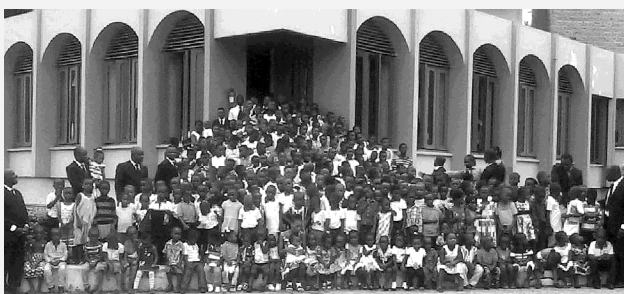
### The Apostle and Bishop Meeting with our District Apostle

The District Apostle had a meeting which was divided into two main parts, Spiritual and Administrative, with all Apostles and Bishops of Ghana. The basis of the Spiritual part was from 1 Timothy 1:12 "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry". OP



District Apostle discussing a point

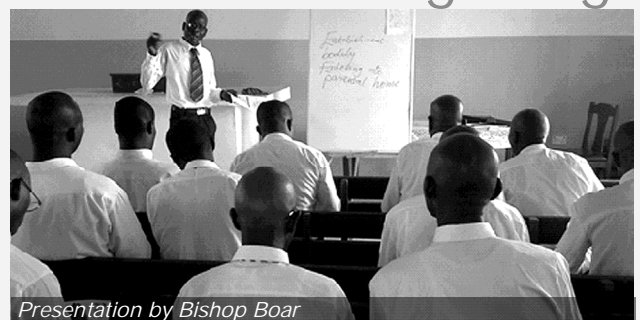
## Ghana: Fun fair for children in Kumasi



A group picture of the children after the function

It has been a tradition in the Kumasi Elder District to hold a fun fair for the children in the various congregations of the metropolis on Easter Monday. This year was no exception. Three hundred and three children gathered at the Kumasi Central Church on Monday 28th March 2016 for that purpose. These children are accompanied by their parents and Rectors. There are a lot to do during such gatherings, for example recitals from the Bible, traditional dancing, songs and play as well as exchange of gifts. OP

## Ghana: Youth Care Seminar in Bolgatanga



Presentation by Bishop Boar

1st and 2nd of April 2016, were dates planned for the Youth Care Seminar in Bolgatanga. The seminar coordinator, Bishop Eric Ampadu (rtd) from Accra, attended this introductory seminar for the seminar trainer. The seminar which provided fundamental background knowledge for the Youth of the New Apostolic Church in Ghana, touched on the objective of youth care, the task of the youth leaders and the organisation of the youth work. Bishop Paul Boar of Apostle district Bolga lectured while the coordinator interjected with further explanations. AM

South Germany:

## Divine Service with the Chief Apostle

A number of congregations in South Germany were permitted to celebrate Ascension Day in a divine service with the Chief Apostle.

**Bible text:** "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool" (Hebrews 10: 12-13)

**Core thoughts:** Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of mankind; on His Ascension, He rose and entered as victor into fellowship with God. He is seated at the right hand of God.

Jesus Christ is King and Saviour. In order to attain salvation, we must believe and follow Him. He helps us in our battles against the evil one and is our support just as He was for Stephen (Acts 7: 56). He redeems us when we battle for our spiritual bliss and love Him with all our heart.

As His bride we are waiting for Him to fetch us on His return. And He, the Bridegroom, is the advocate for sinners and is already waiting for His bride. This is a wonderful expression of God's love.

Because Jesus Christ was perfect, He was able to ascend from the earth and enter directly into His Father's kingdom. We will never be able to reach the perfection necessary to enter into fellowship with God. And therefore He will come and meet us: He will grant us grace and permit us to enter His kingdom.

