

community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

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Walking in the Spirit

Pentecost 2016
Divine service in Germany

Catechism
Divine service
and acts of blessing

Catechism
The forgiveness of sins

New Apostolic Church
International



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With the weapons of God

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am sure we are all familiar with the story of Gideon. Gideon gathered a large army to fight against their enemies, the Midianites. He had 42,000 soldiers. But God told him, "The men you have are too many." And He told Gideon to reduce the army—until, finally, there were only three hundred men left. On top of this, this small band of soldiers was to go into battle without any kind of weapons. All they were to take was a trumpet and a jar with a torch inside it.

This was contrary to all common sense. How were they supposed to fight against a huge army with only torches and trumpets? But Gideon was filled with the fear of God and thought, if God tells us to fight with these weapons then we will win. From a human point of view this was absurd, but because Gideon feared God and trusted Him, he took his men with their pathetic weapons and went into battle. He defeated the enemy: God gave Gideon the victory!

God wants us to fight with His weapons, not with earthly weapons. People use force and violence to fight. And the



NAC International

strongest wants to win. But God says, put your weapons aside and use the weapons of prayer and obedience. And use the readiness to forgive as a weapon, as well as patience and the love of God.

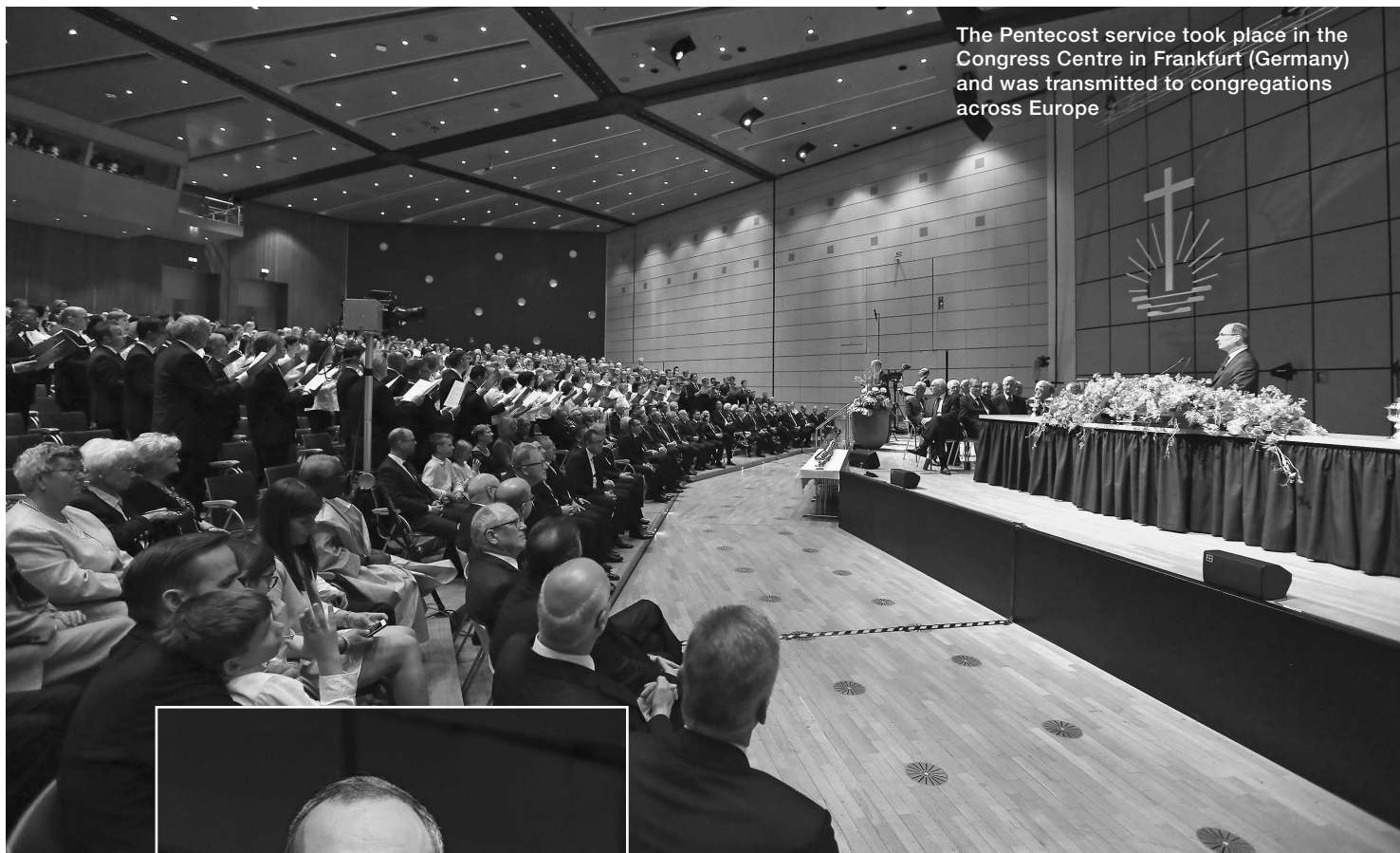
Let us use these weapons when we are attacked. This may seem absurd at first, but it works. Try it!

Yours sincerely



Jean-Luc Schneider

|Walking in the Spirit



■ Jessica Krämer, Marcel Felde, and Oliver Rütten



Galatians 5: 25

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Dear brothers and sisters here and in the connected congregation, for this year's Pentecost celebration we will first of all hear a Bible reading from Acts 2, verses 1 to 4 and verses 12 to 21: "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

"So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'Whatever could this mean?' Others mocking said, 'They are full of new wine.' But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose,

since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.””

Dear brothers and sisters, like every religious holiday the celebration of Pentecost is first and foremost a celebration of thankfulness, an opportunity for the believers to gather and give thanks to God for something very special. On Christmas we give thanks for the incarnation of Jesus, the Son of God. On Good Friday we give thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. On Easter we express thanks for the resurrection, and on Ascension Day we express our gratitude for the promise that Jesus will return. And on Pentecost the believers gather together and give thanks to God for sending the Holy Spirit.

Let us go back to the time of the disciples for a moment. They were able to experience God in a very special way, after all. They recognized God in Jesus Christ. Today we cannot imagine what it would have meant for people in those days to experience God in this manner. They experienced that God was with them in His Son. He spoke with them and to them, He taught them and comforted them. He defended them when they were attacked and when they were criticized. This was something very special for the disciples to experience God in such nearness. And when they had finally understood and grasped this properly, Jesus said to them, “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father” (John 16: 28). Then all the love of the Father came to expression in the promise of Jesus: “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that

He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14: 16–17). And because God sent the Holy Spirit to them, the disciples were able to experience the nearness of God just as we can today. Otherwise we would have been thrown back into the old days when God dwelled in heaven, very far away.

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus continued to live in the hearts of the disciples. Through the Holy Spirit they were able to continue to experience how the Lord Jesus prayed with them, how He comforted them, how He was near to them, how He spoke to them, how He taught them.

Because God sent the Holy Spirit to the earth at that time, we today can experience the nearness of God

through the Holy Spirit. God speaks to us, He comforts us, He defends us, and He helps us through the Holy Spirit. I certainly think this is a good reason to be thankful.

Pentecost is also the day when the church, which Jesus Christ instituted, was revealed for the first time. For the first time, it was possible to see the church of Jesus Christ, in which we can find salvation. For this too we can be grateful. Where else could we find salvation? This is only possible in the church of Christ.

The church of Jesus Christ is also the fellowship of the believers. Brother, sister, can you imagine how it would be if

That which the Holy Spirit has inspired must also be explained by Him.





you were all alone, just a lone soldier? What would we be without this fellowship of the believers, the fellowship of God's children, this wonderful community to which we belong? This is certainly worth a thank-you, isn't it? We thank God for sending His Spirit to us. We thank God for instituting the church of Christ for us, and for granting us this fellowship of the believers. And today we would also like to give very special thanks to God, the Holy Spirit.

Paul writes here: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." In other languages this is clearer. There it says: "If we live through the Spirit ..." This means that we can only live through the Holy Spirit. He is the reason that we have divine life within us! This can only come into being through the Holy Spirit. And for this let us today give thanks to God, the Holy Spirit, together. Through Him—that is to say, because of Him—we have divine life. This begins when the Holy Spirit reveals to us that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. No one will come to believe in Jesus Christ merely through reflection, studying, or by reading the Bible. This can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit, who is able to grant human beings the opportunity to recognize that Jesus Christ is true God. This is the first work of the Holy Spirit.

Through the Holy Spirit we have received divine life. Through the rebirth out of water and the Spirit, God has placed this divine life into us through the Holy Spirit. For this we are thankful. The Holy Spirit also grants us everything we need so that this life can unfold within us.

He grants us the nourishment we need in order to feed this life out of the Spirit. How does He do this? Jesus Himself said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4: 4). And He pointed out: "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11: 28). This means that we cannot just read the word of God. We must hear it! In order for it to develop within us, the divine life requires the word of the sermon. This is not an invention by the Church. This is a divine truth. That was how the Lord Jesus defined it. Blessed are those who hear the word of God!

To be able to understand the written word of God in the Bible we need the Holy Spirit. The Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit and can only be interpreted with His help.

*The Holy Spirit
gives us the capability to
discern the spirits.*

There are many people who study the Bible. But if it is not the Holy Spirit who inspires them, they cannot grasp the meaning of Scripture. It is impossible for a human being to understand on his own. This requires the activity of the Holy Spirit. That which the

Holy Spirit has inspired must also be explained by the Holy Spirit. That is the first thing.

It is not enough to just read the Bible. One must hear the sermon. And the sermon must naturally also be inspired by the Holy Spirit. In the past we always spoke about the "Spirit-inspired word". Now, I know very well that not every single word that is preached is divine truth. I know this out of my own personal and most recent experience.



Incidentally, I still have to apologize to our members in Lörrach and ask them to please forgive me! On Ascension Day I preached with full power and conviction that *Moses* and *Elijah* ascended into heaven—and that was naturally an error! It was *Enoch* and *Elijah* who ascended into heaven. *Moses* had to die, but God Himself buried him. His grave was never found afterward. The man did indeed have to die. I made a mistake, and for that I apologize. So as you can clearly see, not every single word preached at the altar is the word of God.

Well then, what happens with this inspiration from the Holy Spirit? The activity of the Holy Spirit confers special power to the spoken message. And the activity of the Holy Spirit also helps the believing listeners to recognize and receive this power out of the word that is preached to them. That is the activity of the Holy Spirit, and for this we are grateful.

The Holy Spirit also causes the body and blood of Jesus to be joined to the bread and wine in the celebration of Holy Communion. And only in this way can we celebrate Holy Communion and receive the power and nourishment we need in order that the divine life within us may develop.

I will cite one last element of the activity of the Holy Spirit. He also sanctifies the Apostles and the ordained ministers so that they can perform their spiritual work. Without this sanctification they could not do this. After all, how are imperfect human beings supposed to do anything

that has salvation-bringing effects? This could not possibly work. Only a sanctified servant of God—whom the Holy Spirit has sanctified—can do this.

Those were just a couple of broad strokes to help us reflect upon how and why we can live through the Holy Spirit and what reasons we have to be grateful to Him.

So then, it is all very nice when we sing hymns of thanks and praise. But every mother would also tell her child, “Well, that is all very nice, but I would like a little more than that in response.”

How else can we give thanks to the Holy Spirit for granting us this life, this nourishment, the opportunity to allow the divine life within us to develop? By taking in the nourishment provided by the Spirit. He prepares His nourishment for us in the word of preaching and through Holy Communion. So the least we can do is dig in, listen to the word of preaching and accept it, and partake of Holy Communion. I have often said—and I am going to say it again here today—it is not a question of attending divine services! It is a question of our salvation!

It is simply impossible to enter into fellowship with God without hearing and accepting the word of preaching and without celebrating Holy Communion. This is not something I invented. This is divine truth, whether it is accepted or not. I am simply a servant of God and can only preach what He tells me. And I am not the only one He tells! He



Apostles accept Holy Communion
on behalf of the departed

tells this to many believers. Let us therefore show our gratitude to the Holy Spirit by taking this food from the Spirit and absorbing this nourishment.

How else can we express our gratitude to the Holy Spirit? Well, by praying in the Holy Spirit. This is also something very important. Earlier I said that Jesus prayed with His disciples. Then He sent them the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit helps us in prayer. The Holy Spirit prays along with us in our prayers and tells us how we are to pray. In Holy Scripture it says: “You received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Romans 8: 15). *Abba* is an Aramaic word that simply means “Father”. It expresses our unreserved and complete trust in God.

When we say, “Dear heavenly Father”, or “Our Father in heaven”, this means that what we are about to say is characterized by complete trust in God: “I know You love me. I know You are the Almighty! I may not be able to understand You, but I will trust You fully and completely!” This is a prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore pray in the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit naturally needs a little time in order to act. It is surely nice if we pray regularly, but at times we pray out of pure habit. And that is surely not bad, but whether it is always so inspired by the Spirit is something of which I am not quite so sure, at least not as far as I am concerned. It is also beautiful when our prayers are inspired by emotions. Perhaps we feel something very special and then we pray quite spontaneously, just on the basis of our emotion. And that is absolutely okay. But it is also nice if we allow ourselves a little more time for prayer every now and then, and allow the Holy Spirit to become active, in order to prepare ourselves for the prayer. And then, through the Spirit, we can set our priorities and really talk to God and say, “So now I would like to say what has priority for me, and then

what takes second and third place.” If our prayer is uttered in the Spirit, the priorities will be very clear. And that is not something we can do every morning before or after breakfast, but every now and then it is nice—I can only recommend it—to take some time to utter a very personal prayer in the Spirit, where the priorities are very clearly established, and in which one can then speak with God in complete trust.

Let us also fight with the Spirit. We are baptized, we are sealed, and thus we have expressed our will to follow Jesus Christ and fight against evil and overcome it. After all, the Holy Spirit gives us the capability to discern the spirits. And then it is also important that we fight the right battle, namely that we fight against the right enemy.

When we hear that we are to fight against the world and gain the victory over the world, the impression might well arise at times that we are not quite so comfortable here on this earth, and that everything is terrible, everything is unpleasant, everything is dirty, and that we long only for heaven, where everything is wonderful. In that case, we would be fighting the wrong sort of battle. We are not to fight against that which is earthly per se, because that which is earthly is not necessarily bad, it is not necessarily evil. We do not despise our lives on this earth! There are some very pleasant, some very exalted things on earth. Jesus did not despise these things either. He had friends, and He enjoyed their friendship. He even drank and ate and celebrated with them, and probably enjoyed this.

No, we do not despise our lives on earth. We treasure them and can even enjoy them. The battle that we wage is a different battle, namely the battle against evil. This battle can be summarized in a single sentence: we fight against everything that violates the commandment of love for God and our neighbour. That is the proper battle.

Through the Holy Spirit we are also incorporated into the body of Christ. Jesus Christ said of Himself: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20: 28). So now that we have been incorporated into the body of Christ through the Holy Spirit, then our commission will naturally be exactly the same. We have not become part of the body of Christ in order to be served, to have others serve us. For many believers, the Church has become nothing more than a service centre. Well, whenever you need the Church, you just knock: “They owe me that, after all. I am a member! I have brought my offerings, so this is something they owe me,” and so everyone would like to have others serve them. I do not need to expand any further on this.



Apostle Jürg Zbinden



District Apostle Wilfried Klingler



Apostle Volker Kühnle

Let us do good in all respects. Why? There is a very good reason: we want to point the way to Jesus. Why do you do this? Because Jesus did the same, and I would like to become like Him. Why else do you do this? Because Jesus loves me and I want to return this love. In everything that we do, let us serve. Let each one of us do good things in order to point the way to Jesus Christ. This applies to each of us individuals, but we are also a fellowship of believers. And even the church of Christ is there to serve Jesus Christ.

And how can we serve? We can serve by testifying that Jesus Christ rules His church, that Jesus Christ is present in His church, and that He is the one at work there. Our fellowship is a sign that shows and proves that Jesus Christ is present in His church, in the congregation, and that He is at work there. Brothers and sisters, please take this thought with you. The quality and intensity of our fellowship is the testimony and proof that Jesus Christ is present and at work in the congregation.

One last point: let us also grow in the Spirit. We became children of God in order to participate in the day of the Lord and to enter into the Lord's kingdom as the bride of Christ.

At times we hear the reproach that all of this is really rather selfish: "You just want to save yourselves. You just want to go to heaven—and you are totally indifferent to the fate of all the other people." Sure, one could look at it this way. But let us look at the whole matter once more in the light of the Holy Spirit. What is the objective of God's plan of redemption? He not only wants to save me! He not only wants to save you! He wants to deliver all human beings who ever lived from the evil one! He wants to liberate them all from suffering and death. For this He has made a plan, the new creation, where not even death will exist any more. That is God's plan of redemption. The next step in this plan is

that Jesus will return and take His bride. This bride will be part of the royal priesthood, which will then be active in the thousand-year kingdom of peace. That is our belief. And from this I will draw my conclusion.

Certainly we want to help people and alleviate their need. But the best way to definitively liberate them from their need—the best service I can actually perform for humanity—is to prepare myself for the coming of the Lord so that God can move His plan of redemption forward.

God wants to help all human beings. His goal is the deliverance from death in the new creation. The next step in His plan is the return of Christ. Let us grow in the Spirit so that we are ready when the Lord comes. This is not only for our own benefit, but is also a service to humanity. Let us thank God, the Holy Spirit, today for His activity, for the life He has given us, for the nourishment that He gives us, for the support He gives us again and again.

CORE THOUGHTS

The Holy Spirit is the channel to our fellowship with God. We can thank Him by

- accepting the spiritual nourishment He offers,
- praying in the Holy Spirit,
- following the example of Christ,
- loving our neighbour, and
- by preparing ourselves for the return of Christ.



Spring cleaning the temple of the heart

The Chief Apostle visited Kimberley in South Africa in March 2016 for the first time. The city is the capital of Northern Cape Province and falls within the working area of District Apostle Patrick Mkhwanazi. Kimberley became known for the diamond trade. The Big Hole—located just outside of the city—with a circumference of 1.6 kilometres testifies of the diamond rush. By August 1914, some 22 million tons of earth had been excavated, yielding 14.5 million carats of diamonds.

The focus of the divine service on 20 March 2016 in Kimberley was on the cleansing of the temple. Over 4,400 participants assembled in the Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre for the event, and roughly another 1,450 receiving stations were connected by video transmission. The sermon was based on the following scriptural passage: “Then He taught, saying to them, ‘Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it a den of thieves”’ (Mark 11: 17).

The Chief Apostle explained that the term “temple” has three meanings: the place of our encounter with God, the church and congregation as a fellowship of believers, as

well as each individual believer. “It is important to know how Jesus would like this temple to be,” he went on to add.

Out of love, not fear

“One does not make deals with God,” the Chief Apostle said with reference to the fact that Jesus drove the merchants and money changers from the temple. Making deals is characterized by the position, “I will give you something if you give me something,” but “our relationship to God is based on love, not some other interests.” The Chief Apostle defined the den of thieves referred to in the Bible text as the hiding place

Left-hand page: The Chief Apostle places Apostle Michael Dabula Dimba into retirement

Right: Chief Apostle Schneider ordains the Bishops Armindo Mazuze (left) and Jacques Eugéné Cronjé (right) as Apostles

Below right: The Chief Apostle and his party toured the Big Hole on Saturday afternoon. Before that he met with the confirmands and the youth



of evildoers who are trying to escape their punishment. “When we go to the divine service, then let us do so because we want to grow into the nature of Jesus,” he emphasized, “not out of tradition or because we think, God will punish me if I do not go to church.”

A shortcut through life?

The location of the temple in Jerusalem led many people to use the complex as a shortcut when transporting heavy loads. There is a similar effect still today: “If you look at the church or the congregation primarily as a social institution, you will expect support and help for everyday life, such that life becomes easier for you.”

“That is not our understanding, however,” explained the Chief Apostle. “We are aware that we have a mission to fulfil in the church, in the congregation. Every child of God is called upon to serve God by praising and glorifying Him, by proclaiming His works, and by exalting His grace and love.”

A house of prayer

The Bible text calls upon each and every believer and every congregation to be a house of prayer. These prayers are to be characterized by humbleness, trust, faith, and persistence.

This house of prayer is intended for all nations, said Chief Apostle Schneider. Redemption is offered to all human beings, and this also means that my neighbour does not need to become like me in order for God to love him as He loves me. “This is part of the basic knowledge of God’s people,” he emphasized: “We are all different and we all come from different places, we all come from different cultural circles and have different traditions—and yet we comprise a house of prayer for all nations. This house of prayer is for both the weak and the strong, the poor and the rich, no matter what differences there may be.”



CORE THOUGHTS

Mark 11: 17

“Then He taught, saying to them, ‘Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it a den of thieves.’”

We follow Jesus out of love and not for other reasons. Our prayers testify of our gratitude, humbleness, trust, faith, and persistence. We pray for our own redemption and for that of all other people.

The Jericho plan

Argentina was on the Chief Apostle's agenda for April 2016. He visited the brothers and sisters in Bahía Blanca and celebrated a divine service there. He showed them a strategy on how they can call on the help of God.



■ NAC Argentina



First he explained the biblical context. When the people of Israel wanted to enter the Promised Land, their way was blocked by the city of Jericho, a walled city. It seemed impossible to conquer the city, since Israel had no experience in capturing a fortified city. But God told His servant Joshua what he should do.

“This story is a nice image for our salvation,” the Chief Apostle said. “We want to enter the kingdom of God, but for that we have to overcome the evil one. But that is not possible. Nobody can do that. Only God can save us. But we have to do our part so that God can save us.”

A four-step strategy to help

So what do we have to do? The Chief Apostle listed four points.

Live according to the law of God every day: the Israelites had been told to march around the city—with the ark of the covenant that contained the tablets with the law. “Living according to the gospel of Christ, that is our law.” And that



also means that we do not, for example, solve problems by committing a sin.

Follow the servants of God: God spoke to the people of Israel through Joshua. And today? “It is not enough to read the Bible and know the gospel. God wants us to listen to His will today.” That is why “we have to follow the teaching

The Chief Apostle poses with the children after the divine service in Bahía Blanca



of the apostolate”. “We believe that listening to the sermon and acting according to what is preached will help us.”

Maintain unity among one another: the Israelites marched around Jericho together. “God does not want to save a number of individuals. He wants to save a united people, souls, who are one.” Therefore “remain in the fellowship of the children of God, even if everything goes wrong in your life”.

Persevere to the end: for the first six days that the people marched around Jericho absolutely nothing happened. “Let us wait, knowing that God loves us; we trust Him.” Sometimes He removes the obstacles, but only if they prevent us from being saved. In other cases, when the obstacle is not that great and we can be saved despite the difficulties, He will help us in a different manner.

The Chief Apostle concluded that God grants help and salvation to those who conform to His law, who listen to His word and do what they are told, who strive for unity and remain in the fellowship of God’s children, and who persevere to the end. “That is my wish for you and me. That is my promise for you and me.”

CORE THOUGHTS

Joshua 6: 20

“So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.”

God grants help and salvation to those who act according to His law, who hear and act on His word, who seek unity, and who persevere to the end.

| Love is all that counts

Exactly 333 people attended the divine service on 29 May 2016 in Daejeon in South Korea. In his sermon, the Chief Apostle focused on the fact that God looks at the heart and that love is more important than anything else.



■ NAC South-East Asia



God sees deeper, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider said at the beginning of the service, and used the example of David to illustrate this. Of all the sons of Jesse, the youngest and smallest was chosen. “God could see that his heart was humble and full of the fear of God.”

David proved this in his fight with Goliath as well as in his struggle with King Saul. David did not suppose that he would be able to conquer the giant. His attitude was: “God will win the battle.” And when David came upon the sleeping king in a cave, he did not follow his companions’ suggestion to kill him. He could not see the will of God in this.

“Because David was humble and God-fearing, God could give him the victory,” the Chief Apostle continued. “We want to have victory in Christ. We do not have to be strong



District Apostle Helper John Sobottka



District Apostle Helper David Devaraj



District Apostle Andrew Andersen

for this. All we have to do is put ourselves in God's hand and be humble and God-fearing."

Bad deeds

"Man only looks at the deeds. God looks into the heart." The same applies to sinners. "Man looks at the sin and condemns the sinner, whereas God sees the sinner but looks at the heart. And depending on the heart's attitude, He will grant grace."

The Chief Apostle gave two examples to illustrate this. When Saul was disobedient toward God and was confronted about it, he blamed the people instead of admitting that it was his fault. "He could not find grace." When David arranged it so that Uriah was killed in battle so that he could have Bathsheba for himself, he realized what he had done wrong and repented.

"That applies to us too: no one is perfect. Let us admit our sins and repent, for then God will grant us grace."

The divine standard

God sees the heart. This does not only apply to bad deeds, but also to good ones. "We do not want to serve God and be obedient out of fear or calculation," the Chief Apostle said and addressed our motivation. "When we offer we do so because we are thankful to God. When we serve Him we do so out of love. And if love and gratitude are the reasons for our service and our offerings, God will grant His blessing."

When it comes to blessing, God looks at the heart too. "For some people blessing consists of being in good health, having money, and being successful." But that is not the

way God wants to bless us: "God wants to bless our hearts." A joyful heart, peace in Christ, coming closer to God, and becoming more like Him—"that is His blessing".

"God looks at the heart, at the invisible things. This also applies to the Church," the Chief Apostle said. Judging by human terms, the completion of the Church would mean that it becomes more and more popular and that it would continue to grow. "But God looks at the heart. The perfection of the bride of Christ cannot be expressed in numbers." The only thing that counts for God is the love of the bride for Christ and the neighbour, as well as unity. "And once He sees that there is enough love for Christ, enough love for the neighbour, and enough unity, then He will say, 'Now I can come!'"

CORE THOUGHTS

Jeremiah 17: 10

"I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

God looks at the heart. He gives victory to those who fear Him, gives grace to those who repent, blesses those who serve Him with a pure heart, and saves those who are filled with love for Christ.

DAVID AND ABIGAIL

(1 SAMUEL 25)

David and his men had protected Nabal's shepherds and sheep. Nabal, however, appeared ungrateful. Nabal's wife, Abigail, cleverly managed to prevent David from taking revenge on Nabal.

Nabal lived in Maon, an area of desert. He was a very rich man. He owned 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. Nabal was married to Abigail. She was clever and beautiful. Nabal, in contrast, was rough and mean.

David heard that Nabal was in Carmel while his sheep were being sheared. He sent ten of his men to Carmel. They were to give Nabal a friendly message and to ask him for food and drink. Nabal asked David's men, "Who is this David? There are too many servants on the run from

their masters today. Why should I take my bread and water and the meat I have prepared for my shearers and give it to people if I don't know who they are and where they have come from?"

David's servants returned and told him what had been said. David told his men, "Go and get your swords!" They all did this, including David, and strapped their swords around their waists. Around 400 men followed David while the remaining 200 stayed in the camp.

A man went to Abigail and told her what had happened. "David sent some of his men from the desert to wish our master well, but he just shouted insults at them. The men have actually been very good to us and have never done any harm to us. In fact, while they have been here nothing has been stolen from us. With them around while watching our sheep we have felt as safe as if we were in a walled city. They have protected us. Can you think what we can do? If not we will

In biblical times, if someone was found guilty of causing the death of an innocent person then the dead person's relatives or members of his tribe could take revenge and kill the murderer.



really be in trouble. No one dares to speak to our master though."

Abigail quickly got together 200 loaves of bread, two jugs of wine, five cooked sheep, five sacks of roasted corn, 100 fruit cakes, and 200 fig cakes. She did not say anything to her husband. The food was loaded on donkeys and they headed towards David and his men.

David was thinking, "I wasted my time guarding Nabal's things in the desert. Not one sheep was lost; and now Nabal repays my kindness with insults. God will be his judge!"

When Abigail saw David she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before him. She said, "I swear by the living Lord and by your life that the Lord has kept you from taking revenge and killing innocent people. Here are gifts of food that I have brought for you. Share it with the men who are following you. Forgive me. May nothing bad happen to you as long as you live. You will never kill innocent people. When

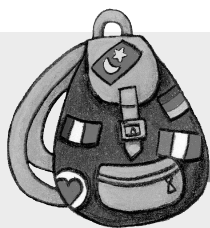
the Lord does all those good things for you, please remember me."

David said to Abigail, "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you to me today. And you too should be praised for your good sense in preventing me from spilling innocent blood."

David took the food that Abigail had brought. He said to her, "Return to your home in peace." However, when Abigail arrived home she found that Nabal had prepared a great banquet and was already drunk. She did not tell him what she had done. The next morning, however, when Nabal was sober Abigail told him of how she had appeased David. Nabal's face turned to stone and he suffered a heart attack. Ten days later he died.

David knew that God had avenged him and that, because of Abigail, he had been prevented from becoming guilty himself. David sent messengers to ask Abigail if she would marry him. And Abigail became David's wife.



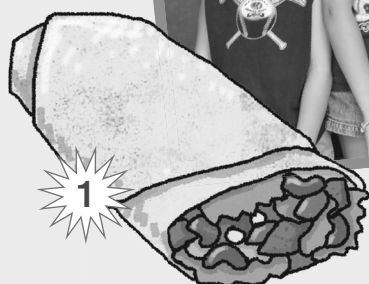


AT LEAH'S IN NEW JERSEY (USA)



Hello, my name is **Leah**. I am 8 years old and live in New Jersey in the United States of America. I have a six-year-old **brother**. His name is Michael.

My **father**, John, works as a project manager for a medical device company, and my **mother**, Rachel, is an X-ray technologist.

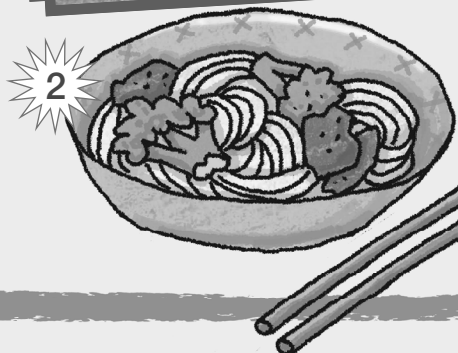


From where I live it is about a 30-minute ride by car to New York City. I can even see the New York City skyline with the **Empire State Building** on my way to church in the town of Paramus. My father is a Priest in our congregation.

Oleksandr Dibrova/Fotolia.com



At church my best friend is Anna. We go to Sunday School together. Our teacher, Andrea, makes our class really fun! I especially enjoy going to **Vacation Bible School** in the summer. Children from nearby congregations and other friends join us. We have fun activities, songs, and games that help us learn about God's work. This picture taken in front of our church is from our last Vacation Bible School.

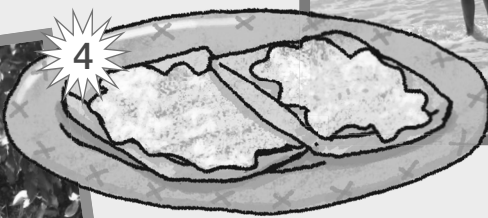
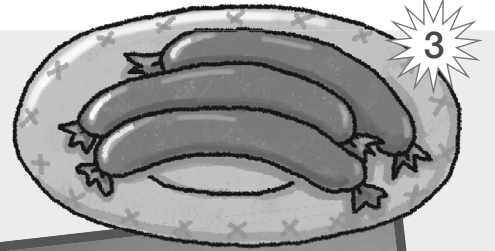


My brother and I go to the same **school**. He is in kindergarten and I am in the third grade. My favourite subjects are math and reading. I also love music.

At school I like to play with my friends on the playground. My best friend at school is **Lindsay**. We spend lots of time together.

When I am not at school or at church, I enjoy dancing and painting. I have been taking art lessons. Mom has even framed some of my **paintings**. This is one of them.

This part of the country has areas with high mountains for skiing and hiking. There are also long beaches in the east along the Atlantic Ocean. In winter I like to go **sledding** and skiing. In summer I like to go to the **beach** and swim.

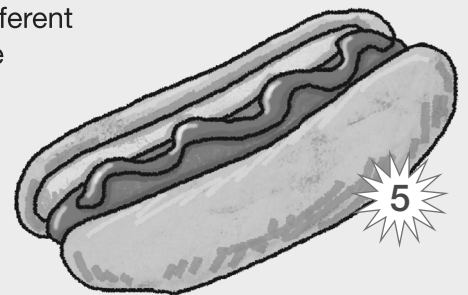


New Jersey is called the Garden State because there are farms that grow lots of fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, blueberries, and corn. I have picked **apples** before in the fall.

Assign Leah's favourite foods to their country of origin:

- ☒ 5 America
- ☐ China
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ France
- ☐ Mexico

The United States is home to many different cultures, and because of this I am able to enjoy many different types of food. Some of my favourites are burritos, bratwurst, Lo mein noodles, French toast, and hot dogs. Some of the best hot dogs are sold by street vendors in New York City! On my birthday we spent the day in New York City and my father treated me to a hot dog.



Solution:
1 burritos – Mexico, 2 Lo Mein noodles – China, 3 bratwurst – Germany,
4 French toast – France, 5 hot dogs – America



■ Oliver Fütten

Divine service and acts of blessing

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 topics of divine service, acts of blessing, and the forgiveness of sins.

What is a divine service?

Divine service is the activity of God upon human beings. At the same time, it is a work of human beings for God. In the divine service, people come together to worship God, praise Him, and thank Him. They also gather in order to hear the word of God and receive the sacraments. Thus divine service is an encounter between God and man. In the divine service, the congregation perceives the presence of the triune God and experiences that God serves them in love.

Is God present in the divine service?

Yes. At the beginning of the divine service, God is invoked with the words: “In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”. This invocation of God is called the “Trinitarian opening formula”. This makes it clear to those

attending the divine service that God is present, just as the Son of God promised (Matthew 18: 20).

What are the basic elements of the divine service?

Concerning the early Christians in Jerusalem we read as follows: “And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2: 42). From this we derive the basic elements of the divine service: the Apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer.

What is the main content and objective of the sermon?

The main content of the sermon is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the glad tidings that Jesus has brought the sacrifice, has resurrected, and will return. The Holy Spirit speaks

through the ministers. It is in this manner that faith is inspired and reinforced. The proclamation of the word always has the objective of preparing the congregation for the return of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 11: 2).

What is the duty of the listeners in the sermon?

Before the sermon, listeners should pray that the Lord may grant them strength and peace in His word. They are to accept the word in faith and put it into practice in daily life in thought, word, and deed. They are thus called upon to lead a life of following Christ.

What is the only prayer that is spoken in accordance with a fixed wording in the divine service?

The prayer which Jesus taught is the Lord's Prayer. It is the only prayer that the believers pray together in accordance with a fixed wording. One version of it is recorded with five pleas (Luke 11: 2–4), and another, more detailed version is recorded with seven pleas (Matthew 6: 9–13).

With what words is the forgiveness of sins proclaimed?

The Apostles proclaim the forgiveness of sins with a direct reference to Jesus Christ: "I proclaim unto you the glad tidings: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, your sins are forgiven. The peace of the Risen One be with you! Amen."

The priestly ministers proclaim the forgiveness of sins with reference to the Apostle ministry: "In the commission of my sender, the Apostle, I proclaim unto you the glad tidings: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, your sins are forgiven. The peace of the Risen One abide with you. Amen."

What are "acts of blessing"?

God shares His blessing with human beings in various situations of their lives. When we talk about "acts of blessing" we are referring to all church acts that are performed on special occasions. Acts of blessing are not sacraments.

What happens in an act of blessing?

In an act of blessing, God turns to a human being who sincerely longs for blessing. Through Apostles and priestly ministers, God blesses those who request this blessing and offers them His help, grace, and compassion. The dedication of a church building or place of worship

for a congregation also represents an act of blessing in an extended sense.

Which acts of blessing take place within the divine service?

The following acts of blessing take place within the divine service: confirmation, adoption into the New Apostolic Church, dispensation of engagement blessings, wedding blessings, and blessings on wedding anniversaries. Ordinations and other acts concerning the spiritual ministry are also performed during the divine service.

What is the function of music in the divine service?

The purpose of music in the divine service is to bring praise and glory to God (Psalm 150). It therefore has a serving function. It can deeply move the soul, prepare the congregation for the proclamation of the word, and underscore the word of God. Singing—be it by the congregation or the choir—and instrumental music expresses and imparts courage, strength, and confidence. In times of sadness and hardship, music can provide comfort. Music and silent worship before the divine service help those attending the divine service gather their thoughts, and prepare the way for the proclamation of the word. In the singing of the congregation, all present are actively involved in the divine service experience. Before the celebration of Holy Communion, the congregation can attest to their feelings of repentance in a hymn. In the hymn sung during the celebration of Holy Communion, they express their love and gratitude toward God.

How is the divine service concluded?

At the end of the divine service, all those who are present receive the blessing of the triune God. Together with the Trinitarian opening formula, the concluding benediction forms the framework that embraces the divine service event. This makes it clear that everything which occurs in the divine service emanates from the triune God.

What is the text of the closing benediction?

The closing benediction is imparted to the congregation with the words from 2 Corinthians 13: 14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!"



■ Malyski Dzmitry - Fotolia.com

| The forgiveness of sins

What must a person do in order to have his sins forgiven?

In order to obtain forgiveness for one's sins, the following are required:

- the person must believe in Jesus Christ as his Redeemer (John 8: 24).
- in addition, one must believe that the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed by the Apostles.
- it is also necessary to acknowledge that one has sinned, thereby incurring guilt, and that one is thus in need of grace.
- the person must have the desire in his heart to be reconciled with God.
- the sinner must regret his sins and acknowledge this before God in the Lord's Prayer: "And forgive us our debts ..."
- one must make the earnest resolution to overcome one's weaknesses and mistakes.
- the sinner must have the desire to be reconciled with those who have wronged him and thereby incurred guilt with him.

What is the wording of the Lord's Prayer in divine service?

In divine service, the Lord's Prayer is prayed in accordance

with the words recorded in the gospel of Matthew: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

What does the address "Our Father" mean?

The address "*Our Father*" indicates that this prayer is a communal prayer. When people address God as "Father", they bring to expression that He has created them, that He is their Lord, and that He provides for them. They can address God as "Father" without fear, in love, and in confidence.

What do the words "in heaven" signify?

The words "in heaven" emphasize that God is greater and higher than all things earthly. And nevertheless, He is close to human beings in His omnipotence.

What does it mean to say: "Hallowed be Your name"?

This is the first plea in the Lord's Prayer. God is holy. The believers hallow His name by giving all glory to Him and by

endeavouring to live in accordance with His will. This plea is also reminiscent of the Second Commandment.

What do the words “Your kingdom come” mean?

The kingdom of God has come to mankind in Christ. With the plea “Your kingdom come” believers pray that the nature of Christ becomes more and more perceptible in the congregation. Beyond that, however, this plea is also a prayer that the future kingdom of God may soon be revealed: this will begin with the return of Christ to take home His bridal congregation.

What does it mean when we say: “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”?

In heaven, the realm in which God rules on His throne, His will reigns without restriction. This plea expresses the desire that all things may also occur in accordance with God’s will on earth. With these words, believers also pray that they may succeed in doing the will of God themselves.

What does it mean when we pray: “Give us this day our daily bread”?

With these words, believers pray for all the things a person needs in order to live. This plea also incorporates the request that God will sustain the creation. In the figurative sense, the plea also requests that God may provide His word as “food” for the immortal soul.

What does it mean to pray: “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”?

All human beings incur guilt on account of their sins. With these words, the believers acknowledge that they are sinners before God, and ask Him for forgiveness. Because God is gracious and forgives us, He expects us to likewise forgive those who have wronged us. Therefore, we will only be granted forgiveness if we ourselves are reconcilable and willing to forgive.

What do we mean when we pray: “And do not lead us into temptation”?

The believers ask God to help them resist sin with all their might. These words also express the plea that God may protect them from severe trials of faith.

What is meant by the words “Deliver us from the evil one”?

This plea expresses the desire that God may deliver the believers from the power of the evil one. Ultimately it is a plea for God to grant ultimate redemption by delivering us from the evil one forever. In the Son of God “we have redemption, ... the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1: 14).

What do we mean when we say: “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever”?

These words are an expression of praise to God (doxology). They serve to glorify the Almighty God, and He thereby receives the glory He is due. Our view is hereby also directed to the completion of His plan of salvation, when the redeemed will be permitted to experience the glory of God in His presence forever.

What does the word “Amen” mean?

This word derives from the Hebrew and translates to mean: “So be it!” This word concludes the Lord’s Prayer and once again reinforces everything that has been expressed in this prayer.

When do the believers receive the forgiveness of sins in the divine service?

The proclamation of the forgiveness of sins occurs directly after the collective prayer of the Lord’s Prayer.

How is it that sins can be forgiven?

Sins can be forgiven because God, as the God of love, sent His Son to the earth. With His death on the cross, the latter brought the eternally valid sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Through the voluntary surrender of His life, Jesus broke the power of Satan and conquered him and his works, namely sin and death. Since then, it has been possible for human beings to be liberated from sin (Matthew 26: 28). Jesus sacrificed His life for us so that our sins could be forgiven and so that we would not need to remain under the rule of sin.

Who forgives sins?

It is the triune God who forgives sins. On their own, human beings are incapable of forgiving sins or being liberated from sin. “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin” (Romans 4: 8).

What are the effects of the forgiveness of sins?

Forgiveness of sins cleanses us of sin and cancels out the guilt that exists with respect to God. The believers whose sins have been forgiven are assured of the peace of Jesus Christ with the words: “The peace of the Risen One abide with you!” If this peace is absorbed believably in the heart, all fear of the consequences of sin will retreat. Irrespective of the forgiveness of sins, a person remains accountable for the consequences and responsibilities that have come about through his sinful conduct, whether they are of a material or legal nature.

Prayer for peace at memorial

"C'était genial." It was awesome! These were Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider's own words as he said goodbye in South Korea. He had been in the Far East for ten days. His visit left lasting impressions, but he also took many impressions home with him.



■ NAC Korea

Incheon is the name of the airport, the largest one in South Korea, from which the Chief Apostle returned home to Europe. On his way in, he had landed at Tokyo International, Asia's second largest airport. The small congregation in Japan was excited to have the Chief Apostle visit them and prepared a special welcome for him.

On the evening of his arrival, Chief Apostle Schneider was welcomed with traditional music played on a koto, a Japanese stringed instrument, and was given a taste of some of the country's culinary delights such as shabu-shabu and sushi.

Start in Japan

The divine service on 22 May took place at the Keio Plaza Hotel in Tama Center. The sermon was based on Jeremiah 29: 11: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil." The core thought in the service was: "The Holy Spirit comforts us by revealing divine thoughts and teaching us His will."

Chief Apostle Schneider visited the Tama church later that day and got first-hand information on the history of the New Apostolic Church in Japan. The beginnings go back to August 1968 and the sealing of two Japanese families.



The Chief Apostle and the Apostles sound the peace bell in Imjingak Memorial Park

Jeremiah 17: 10: “I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind.” He said that the Lord is watching us and knows how we mean it. “Let us never try to hide from him.”

Meeting with district leaders from China

The Chief Apostle also had the rare opportunity to meet with district leaders from China. The Church there is not active as a formal institution, District Apostle Urs Hebeisen says, but there are congregations in the country who follow the New Apostolic doctrine and who are led by Chinese Apostles.

Special memorial in South Korea

A particular highlight on this trip was his visit to Korea, a divided country, where the Chief Apostle visited the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), a strip of land that is four kilometres wide and roughly 250 kilometres long. It was established at the end of the Korean War in 1953 to serve as a buffer zone between the two Koreas.

Imjingak Memorial Park is located just outside of the city of Paju in South Korea, close to the DMZ. Its many statues and monuments—such as the peace bell and Freedom Bridge—are a symbol of hope for reunification. Together with the Apostles, the Chief Apostle rang the peace bell and spoke a prayer for the people on both sides of the demarcation line. He prayed for the living and the dead: for their well-being and especially for their salvation.

Apostles' conference with an open debate

On Saturday, the Apostles from South-East Asia and Australia met for a conference in Daejeon to deliberate on the Church's understanding of ministry, the topic that is currently being developed. The Chief Apostle took lots of time to answer questions, something he had already done at the conference at Pentecost.

The divine service on Sunday, 29 May in Daejeon took place in a hotel. The Chief Apostle based his sermon on

Visits by the Chief Apostle are always special, District Apostle Hebeisen ends his report, and for many brothers and sisters a rare opportunity. It is an awesome experience and many happy memories linger. Yet one thing is always the most important, the strength that such visits impart: it strengthens faith, motivates us to carry on and not give up, and creates the resolve and desire in us to do better.

The participants of the Apostles' conference. On the agenda was the Church's conception of ministry



Old masters and new songs

“Outstanding! Wonderful voices! A fantastic programme!” These were the reactions to the evening’s concert programme. Pentecost concerts are legendary. The special thing about this year’s concert in Wiesbaden was a children’s choir from Cape Town.

The Wiesbaden Kurhaus—a worthy venue for a festive concert in a historical setting. The princely building boasts twelve magnificent halls and ballrooms. The foyer, with its 21-metre-high dome, is most impressive, and the technical

amenities are state of the art—an optimal setting for both the artists and audience of this year’s Pentecost concert. The programme featured old masters and new songs alike. And it all began with the boisterous sound of drums, timpani, and piano and with over 100 children taking to the stage in orange-coloured T-shirts to sing the “African Alleluia” by Jay Althouse. The American artist, who was born in 1951, lives in South Carolina, and his works to date include some 600 titles.

Pentecost means commitment and joy

Thereafter, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, addressed the audience. He spoke of commitment and dedication, but also of joy and the help of God. It is precisely on Pentecost that these notions play such a great role, he said, our dedication to the gospel is accompanied by the joy of the Holy Spirit. The Chief Apostle’s wish for himself and all concert-goers was that all may be able to shut out the cares of





The impressive concert on the evening before Pentecost Sunday 2016 came to a close with an additional performance by all participating musicians

daily life and allow themselves to be prepared for the Pentecost service.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy wrote *Paul*, a magnificent oratorio. The young composer began working on this piece in 1832, and in 1836 it was performed for the first time at an annual music festival in Düsseldorf (Germany)—right on Pentecost Sunday. It is a complex work that endeavours to showcase the entire breadth of Apostle Paul's character. The philharmonic chamber orchestra and concert choir of South Hesse performed the overture and two chorales from this piece under the baton of their conductor Burkhard A. Schmitt.

Further works from the Baroque and Romantic periods resounded next—glorious voices blending together through some highly demanding chords: the choir is tried and tested, and masters every challenge to produce a most impressive sound. This was particularly true with a composition by Peter Cornelius, “Ich will dich lieben, meine Krone”.

We are children of the light

Then, sporting blue T-shirts, twelve girls and boys took to the stage. It was certainly impressive to witness the ele-

gance and discipline that the twelve young performers exhibited as they sang under the direction of Anthea Rohde. “Come, Spirit, come!” was the name of their simple, but very emotional hymn. And the choir and orchestra responded with “We are children of the light and of the day” by Mark Hayes, a work that fit beautifully into the musical setting of the concert.

Chief Apostle Schneider took to the stage once more for some closing words, and praised all artists and musicians. “On a personal note, I am very impressed! This was a wonderful preparation for the coming Sunday,” he said. And he showed his gratitude with enduring applause directed at all performers.

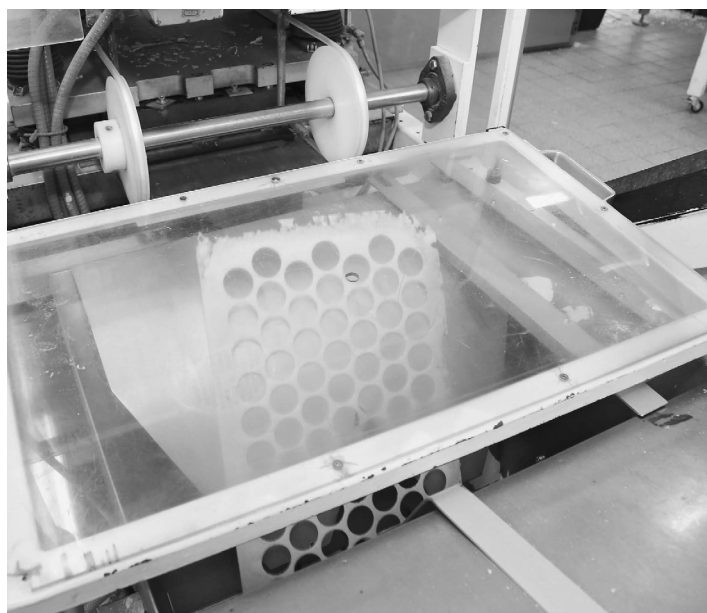
He then went on to ask his predecessor in ministry, Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber, to say a few words. He expressed how pleased he was with the diversity of the programme: “There was such great stylistic diversity—and yet everything was geared toward the Holy Spirit,” he said, expressing his assessment in the form of a call to action: “So let us also enjoy this feast of Pentecost together, namely in the unity of the Holy Spirit.”

Parcels for 60,000 congregations

They weigh only 0.25 grams and yet it takes airplanes and ships to bring them where they are needed—communion wafers. New Apostolic congregations can celebrate Holy Communion only if the logistics work.



■ Frank Schultdt



The Church runs three wafer bakeries

Neither a choir, nor heating, nor a satellite receiving system, and not even a church building with enough seating are absolutely necessary for a congregation. When it comes to the minimum in the way of equipment that a congregation requires, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc lists three things in particular: ministers, the *Divine Service Guide*, and Holy Communion.

Ministers are ordained by Apostles and commissioned to work in the congregations by them. The *Divine Service Guide* is written by Apostles and published by the Chief Apostle. And the communion wafers that are used for Holy Communion are produced—no, not by Apostles—in a wafer bakery, from which 60,000 congregations around the world are supplied. Years of experience and sophisticated logistics make this possible.

The New Apostolic Church runs wafer bakeries in three locations: one in Bielefeld in Germany, another one in Cape Town in South Africa, and a third one in Lusaka in Zambia. And then there is still a small bakery in India that makes wafers by hand with iron plates and then sprinkles them with red wine. Together the four bakeries produce 200 millions wafers per year. This works out to seven wafers per second—round the clock, seven days a week. The ratio of flour to water is always the same: 1:1.3.

The oldest bakery is in Bielefeld in Germany. It was founded in 1931. The wafer bakery in Cape Town was established in February 2003, the one in Lusaka in March 2012. The reason for these additional bakeries: producing wafers close to where they are needed has made for shorter supply chains and has helped the Church to cut costs. The bakery



The New Apostolic Church runs three wafer bakeries: one in Cape Town (South Africa), a second one in Lusaka (Zambia), and a third one in Bielefeld (Germany)



in Cape Town supplies the districts of South Africa, South East Africa, East Africa, and parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (West). Lusaka supplies the congregations in Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe.

Dispatch by delivery van, plane, and boat

The bakery in Bielefeld has three full-time staff, one part-time employee, and someone who helps out when needed. More than 60 countries and many thousands of congregations receive their communion wafers from here. The most remote congregations are some 16,000 kilometres away on American Samoa and Fiji in the South Pacific.

After baking the wafers are packaged in small boxes and are readied for shipping. In addition to the actual production, this is an important task of the staff. Up to ten times a month pallets are loaded on to transport vehicles and collected by haulage companies. These are often high-volume orders, such as for the congregations in the Congo. They are air-freighted to Central Africa, from where they are distributed to nearly 80 Apostle districts.

Sometimes the wafers are returned

The communion bakery in Bielefeld also prepares three dozen shipments for traditional parcel delivery. Some countries receive monthly shipments, others two or three shipments a month. "It all depends on the requirements," Michael Block, the manager of the bakery says, who is a District Evangelist. One shipment is delivered by sea-freight: congregations in Sierra Leone in West Africa receive their communion wafers by ship. In this case, it is the fastest method. Over a hundred million communion wafers leave the company premises in Germany. Some 34,500 are produced by hand for people with gluten intolerance. They are mainly destined for congregations in Europe, Canada, and the USA.

"Every now and then it happens that a package is returned," District Evangelist Block says. Why, nobody knows. So far, however, no one has refused the delivery of the wafers. Not when first shipped nor in the divine service when the congregation celebrates Holy Communion and enjoys fellowship with Jesus Christ: "Eat and drink! Do this in remembrance of Me," Jesus said.



■ NAC Zambia

They have their hands full in Zambia

More than one thousand people to seal in a three-hour service! Where is that still possible today? In Zambia, a New Apostolic stronghold. From time to time, the Apostles really have their work cut out for them in keeping up with people waiting to be sealed.

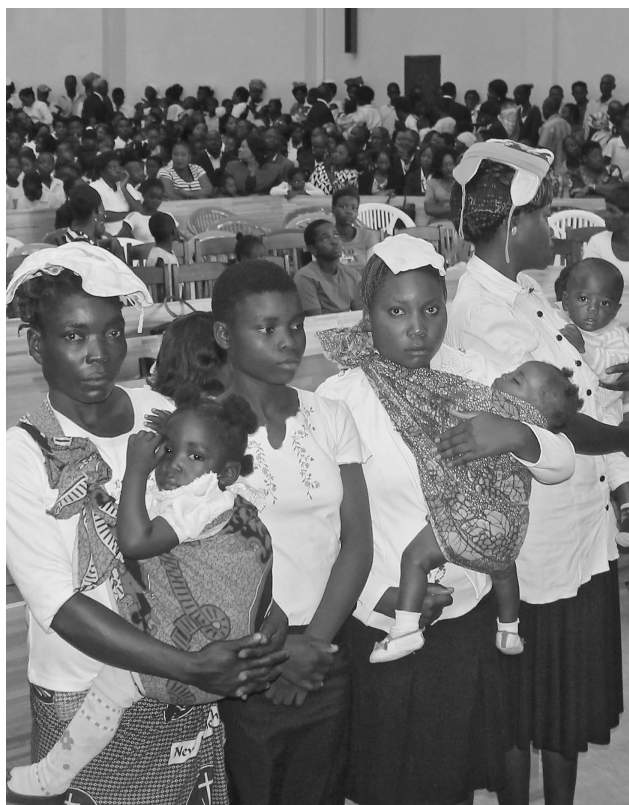
Zambia is a wonderful country with wonderful people. Situated in south-central Africa, it borders Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia. The New Apostolic Church in Zambia has a membership of over one million. The nearly 10,000 congregations are cared for by 30,000 ministers.

District Apostle Charles Ndandula is the national church president. He travels a lot and visits congregations everywhere. In mid April, he was in the north of the country for

a whole week, in North-Western Province. His agenda was crammed. He reports that a series of divine services and meetings had been planned. "Initially I had not planned to visit any particular congregation on Sunday, 24 April, so I used the opportunity to go to Ndola," the District Apostle writes.

More than a thousand people sealed

The divine service took place in our congregation Ndola-Central. People from five neighbouring districts had been



invited to Ndola who had so far only been baptized but not yet sealed. The local Apostle Aaron Katungu had been ill for quite some time and therefore unable to work. Regrettably, he passed away in September 2015. So there had not been any divine services in the region with Holy Sealing since the middle of last year.

The District Apostle has seen a lot, but what awaited him in Ndola was even unusual for him. More than 4,000 people had gathered for the divine service, and 1,304 expressed the wish to receive Holy Sealing. “That was very moving and at the same time a historic moment. The service lasted nearly three hours. It was very long, but that could not be avoided,” he said afterwards.

Ndola: a young old city

Ndola is one of the largest cities in Zambia with a population of over 400,000. It is the capital of Copperbelt province, an industrialized region in north-central Zambia known for its mine service industries. It is a young city (founded in 1904) and at the same time the second oldest in the country. This is one of the many secrets in this wonderful country with its many wonderful people.

We even invented new words



NAC Japan

It took Toshiyasu Matsuoka just four months to translate the five hundred pages of the Catechism into Japanese. Others need far longer to just read the book. He just presented the first copy to the Chief Apostle. Did he ever think of giving up while working on it? Although it was hard going at times, such a thought never crossed his mind. He says that he had a lot of support from brothers and sisters, for instance with proofreading. And anyway: “I love this work!”

An anniversary in Nepal



NAC Canada

The New Apostolic Church in Nepal celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary this year—although our faith has been known there longer. Officially, the Church in Nepal turned twenty-five in the year 2015, but on account of a devastating earthquake in April 2015, the celebrations had to be postponed. District Apostle Mark Woll had to reschedule his visit for 2016. As part of the celebrations there was a divine service for ministers and their wives in our damaged church in Kathmandu, as well as central services for the brothers and sisters from the highlands in Kathmandu and for the members from the southern part of the country in Jeetpur. In this way, all congregations in the country were able to take part in the belated birthday celebrations of their Church. There are a total of 13 congregations in Nepal and just on a thousand members.

District Apostle Michael Ehrich:

Victory with Christ

Assessing our own performance

Do not rush headlong into something, but define goals. Do not waste your strength, but use it wisely. In his reflections on our annual motto for 2016, our District Apostle Michael Ehrich looks at some indispensable conditions.

To win a victory you first of all have to define a clear goal. Let us take an example from the field of sports. You will approach a 100-metre sprint differently than, say, a race over 5,000 metres. It is helpful if you know your own capabilities and performance. This is the objective of training. And training will also bring to light any weak points.

It is our goal to partake in the return of Jesus. To this end it is necessary that we take on more and more of His nature. We will still all need grace in the end, but the Lord will most certainly acknowledge the efforts we have made.



The word proclaimed in the divine services helps us to recognize our weak points. We receive strength in the services in order to remedy these effectively. The Lord also strengthens our will to win, in other words, our will to overcome everything that does not correspond to His mentality and nature.

We have to exercise our faith every day, and be consistent about it. That requires effort. There will be victories, but we will also experience defeats. But if we "continue steadfastly" (Acts 2: 42) we will ultimately succeed in reaching the goal as victors with Christ.



Nigeria:

Youth Convention in Uyo and Ikot Ekpene

Youth in Uyo

This year youth day in Four towns Uyo started with a football match competition which four towns district won. The opening ceremony was done by District Elder Uwem Inyang on Friday morning the 9th of September 2016. After the opening ceremony, the youth went on a rally to testify about the new apostolic church in four towns; more than a thousand youth went out for this rally. Sunday Divine Service, conducted by Apostle Effiong Ekpenyong, Victory is sure for those who have in God. Surely there is VICTORY WITH CHRIST; this was the climax of this year Youth summit under Apostle Effiong Ekpenyong working area in Uyo the Akwa Ibom State capital, Nigeria. We want to thank our heavenly Father for the grace and His protection for a successful youth summit 2016.

Youth in Ikot Ekpene

A very good number of youth attended the Ikot Ekpene youth convention from 8th – 11th of September 2016. Just like in Uyo which is about 70 km away, the Ikot Ekpene youth convention was full of activities; it went from cultural dance to choreography of Christian songs, games, choir presentations and singing. The peak of the activities was the rally in the town of Ikot Ekpene where all the youth in thousands storm the city with their banners; no one in Ikot Ekpene will say he did not feel the presence of the VICTORIOUS YOUTH IN CHRIST of the New Apostolic Church in Nigeria. The programme ended on Sunday the 11th of September 2016 with a divine service conducted by Apostle Peter Usoro. He read a text from Roman 12:13

West Africa: Victorious with Christ



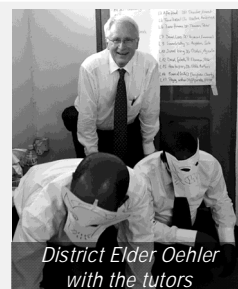
Joy in confirmand class

Under this headline, this year many seminars were conducted in the 11 countries of West Africa.

The motto was given by our Chief Apostle in the African Apostles' Meeting

in Lusaka on Pentecost 2015. In the 11 countries, which were under the care of our District Apostle Ehrich, we have more than 3.000 Sunday school and confirmand class teachers. To train the more

than 100 seminar trainers in the new teaching method, District Elder Oehler from Germany conducted seminars in Guinea, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Sierra Leone / Liberia, Guinea Equatorial, Togo / Benin and Ivory Coast. A main issue of this seminars was, to bring the subjects of Sunday school closer to the children by acting in role plays. Just have a look how creative the tutors were in illustrating the stories of the Holy Bible and how the children like this!



District Elder Oehler with the tutors



Ghana: Youth Days 2016 report

In Ghana Youth Days take place in the months of August and September every year. This year the country was divided into three main zones excluding the Bolgatanga Apostle Area in the Northern part of Ghana which will be held in Nov. 2016. The aim was to allow the youth to fraternize with their counterparts in other Apostle

Areas. Zone one consisted of the four Apostle Areas namely Accra, Volta North, Volta Central and Volta South. The Youths converged at the Volta Regional Capital Ho from 18th to 21st August 2016 at the Ho Polytechnic. Three thousand one hundred and fifty one youths attended the program.

Zone two comprises the Apostle Areas Nkwaw, Koforidua, Takoradi, and Cape Coast, which took place at the Abuakwa State College at Kyebi in the Eastern Region of Ghana from 25th August to 28th August 2016. Here too one thousand three hundred and sixty Youths attended the program.

Sunyani, Kumasi, Techiman, Wiawso, Dunkwa and Konongo Apostle Areas constituted Zone three. The youth program was hosted in Sunyani at the Sunyani Technical University formerly Sunyani Polytechnic. Three thousand and eighty one Youths attended the Youth program. In all a total of seven thousand five hundred and ninety seven Youths participated in the three Zones. Matters of faith, career, sports and social responsibilities like blood donation to public hospitals form the basis of the youth programs.

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Sierra Leone: Youth Convention in Kenema

As part of the manifestation in the VICTORY WITH CHRIST motto for 2016, a youth convention was organized in Kenema with the assembly of youths of the eight existing New Apostolic congregations in the township of Kenema and the outskirts.

This includes the Kenema central church, Tissor, Burma, Kissy town, Nyandeyama, Kpetema, Forniko and Panderu respectively. There were two sets of programs, that is the indoor and outdoor: The indoor program took place at the Kenema District Youth Hall. In addressing the youths Apostle Kargbo used a text word out of 1 John 3:22 "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight".

Topics on the integral doctrine of the New Apostolic Church were discussed with the youths. There were musical performances of both local songs and of the hymnal.

The outdoor activities were climaxed by games and sports; drama, music and dance. Central feeding was provided in this fellowship of youths. It is always joyful when youths come together as they sing songs of confidence like - "the more we are together, together, together, the more we are together the happier we shall be; my friend is your friend and your friend is my friend, the more we are together the happier we shall be"; Are you ready for the return of the Lord . . . etc.



Cameroon: Youth Convention

On Thursday afternoon, August 4, about 85 young brothers and sisters arrived in Ebolowa, the Capital of South Province in Cameroon. They were delegates from the various districts in French speaking area of Cameroon, cared for by Apostle Félicien Ebanga Edoa. He arrived together with Apostle Volker Kühnle on Saturday, August 5, to join the young members in their Youth Convention 2016 under the guideline "Victory with Christ!". Many different activities on Friday had already motivated the "future of our Church". On Saturday, after some encounters about our Catechism, they went out in groups in order to spread the Gospel all over Ebolowa town. Returning from their testimony work, many of them were very tired – but all very happy because of the wonderful experiences they had in inviting people to our Church and explaining our doctrine.

After arrival, both Apostles started an intensive and very interesting round-table-meeting with the young members in which many questions could be answered and all motivated. The Youth Convention was closed on Saturday by a very dynamic concert and on Sunday by a very vivid Divine service, conducted by Apostle Volker Kühnle. Even by a very good lunch, all the participants went back home – looking forward already to next year's Youth Convention!



Benin:

Victory with Christ

Experiences of victories with Christ have been developed throughout the year in the congregations of the working area of Apostle Yedenou. After several months of discussion on this motto with the different layers of the church, a divine service was celebrated on our congregation of Vakon with over 1,450 members from some districts. The biblical text is from Daniel 6: 5. Apostle urged everyone to defeat evil by means of faith. The fear of being devoured by lions and willingness to reach a higher social status could bring about a change of attitude in Daniel. Every New-Apostolic Christian should fight by means of faith and not by conviction or by prejudice. "With Christ, we always win. Our daily efforts to be blameless before God and men are recognized and rewarded by the Lord during the Holy Communion and the final blessing." Spiritual concerts, games have given joyful moment to members at the end of the divine service. YE



Benin:

Our children also

"Victory with Christ": this is a beautiful motto for the whole church. We redirected all church activities toward achieving this goal. Even with our children in Sunday School, we want to teach that we must get victory with Christ. Monitors and Tutors are invited to draw the attention of our children on this motto. Apostle Yedenou also made a journey in some districts in his working area to strengthen this ideal for our children. Together with teachers and tutors, some themes of the Handbook "Come! Lord Jesus" were introduced to the children. Role plays have been specially prepared to show how we could get victories with Christ. It was also a great experience for our children who now want to also learn to overcome with Christ. YE



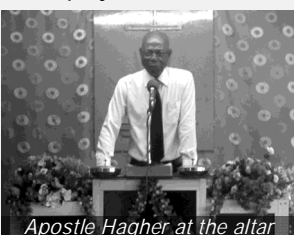
Role play: David and Goliath



Nigeria:

Joyful Sunday

The members of Surulere Congregation, Lagos District Nigeria, were blessed to have the young talented musicians who have been at Ikeja Central Church Music camp for couple of weeks now, to worship at the mother Congregation – the cradle of New Apostolic Church in Nigeria. The divine service was conducted by Apostle Emmanuel Hagher, in company of the district ministers of Lagos district: District Elder Omeh, District Evangelist Edobor and District Evangelist Kabanga who is also the co-ordinator of the music camp. The text word for the divine service was read from the book of Psalm 118: 25 "Save now, I pray, O Lord: O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity".



Apostle Hagher at the altar

Our blessing bearers, District Evangelist Edobor, District Evangelist Kabanga and a visiting Priest from Benin City (Priest Osamuyimen) were called to serve a long in the divine service. It is a memorable divine service.



Nigeria:

Joyful youth

After a very successful youth convention in Port Harcourt South Nigeria, on the 26th and 28th of August 2016 at the govt girls secondary school Rumuene Port Harcourt where the youth were engaged in different activities such as: seminars, workshops, choir competitions, sports, skill acquisitions, evangelism and catechism study, the Apostle decided to move on to Bera District for a divine Service which was prepared due the great number of souls that were waiting for holy sealing. In total they were 42 souls for sealing, to the joy of the members in the district, the Apostle ordained priests and deacons for this growing district and the choir of Bera district thrilled the Apostle to a beautiful rendition after the divine service.



During the evangelism



Nigeria:

Music camp

It is since 1998 that Apostle Peter Gfeller re-implemented within the Territorial Church, a Music Department, led by District Evangelist Nwanza Oscar Kabanga as the co-ordinator. A series of training began and stopped midway due to heavy finance on transportation and feeding of the participants. To continue with the programme, L'apostle Geoffrey Nwogu decided to organize a music camp in summer using children within the age of 9 to 16 to reinforce the music department in the country.

With the help of the Jorg Wolff foundation in South Germany, and to prepare the next generation of choirmasters and instrumentalists, District Evangelist Kabanga and Priest Famous were committed to run the music camp for 3 weeks. Thus, from 29th of July to August 21, 2016 a music camp was organized.



Ghana: Organ and orchestra a priority

To make our congregations more lively during divine services, many children and the youth has been introduced to study organ and orchestra, under the caption "Catch them Young". Since 2015, many congregations has began in their own small way to improve the level of music and orchestra.

Selected children and youths are camped at a particular place during school vacations for that purpose. They lodge with members of the host congregation which takes care of their accommodation and feeding. The cost of their transportation are borne by the mother congregations.



Trainees after a seminar



Sierra Leone:

Minister 1 Seminar

The seminar took place in Goderich church in Freetown, where church ministers of West Area Central district were invited to partake. It was scheduled from 13th to the 14th August 2016, from 9h00 to 16h00 daily. The tutors were District Elder Khanda and Priest Sannoh.

The topics of the minister 1 seminar are: Definition and basic principles of a ministry, how one receives a ministry – ordination, connection to one's bearer of blessing, outward appearance – clothing and mannerism, obligation of confidentiality – legal advice, end of ministerial activity – leave of absence, retirement, resignation, importance of divine service, proclaiming the word – sermon – and outward order of church premises etc. The participants were very joyful and express satisfaction about the concept of the seminar.

Bishop Yemeh Sesay came briefly to observe the seminar and he addressed the participants to take the seminar seriously, grasp the impacted knowledge in an effort to implement them in their ministerial activities / life. It was a very nice spiritual and educational fellowship.



Sierra Leone:

Church Dedication

Pujehun is the district head quarter town of Pujehun district, that is, one of the twelve districts of Sierra Leone. The New Apostolic Church congregation had struggled to exist in this Muslim dominated town but we give God the glory that one faithful Priest of the Church was transferred there by his office to work.

He has invested his time, effort and money, relative to mobilizing the few members of the small congregation to build a small nice church. This church was finally inaugurated by Apostle Garber and Bishop Sesay recently.

The Priest, being a choir master tutor himself, invited choir master tutors and choristers from Bo and Freetown to grace the dedication ceremony.

Everybody has appreciated this venture and it is a very nice thought of brothers and sisters, to always help along in the work of the church according to one's personal ability to the glory of God for His abundant blessing.

South Germany: Divine Service with the Chief Apostle

On Sunday, August 14th, the Chief Apostle conducted a divine service in Heilbronn (South Germany), which was transmitted in the European working area of District Apostle Ehrich. The Apostle Hans-Peter Schneider entered into retirement after 39 years of ministerial activity, 18 of which were in the apostolate. Apostle Schneider served in South Germany and a few years also in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone.

Bible text: "Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord, You alone."
(Isaiah 37: 20)

Core thoughts: Faced with violence, we ask for angel's protection and trust in God. But above all, we pray for our salvation (Mt 10:28). We ask God for strength:

- n to not answer evil with evil. We do not want to become slaves to evil by falling into selfishness, hatred or violence;
- n to remain faithful in obedience to God and imitation of Jesus, even when sinners seem to have more success than us.

We pray for "the remnant that is left". Of course, we pray for persecuted Christians. But also pray for the survival of Christian faith. Let us ask God to strengthen the faith of Christians by allowing them to confirm His nearness. Let us also pray for our congregations. God's will is that the remnant takes root downward and bears fruit upward (v. 31).

God wants us to be deeply rooted:

- n in the faith in Jesus Christ – He is our Saviour, He is the way, the truth, and the life;
- n in the love of Jesus Christ – we love Him because He loved us first;
- n in the hope of Jesus Christ – eternal fellowship with Him will make us forget all sufferings.

In this way, we can bear fruit in all circumstances.

