

community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

04/2018/EN

District Apostle Markus Fehlbaum retires



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A rich variety of gifts

Divine service

Faith, hope, love

Doctrine

Prayer – indispensable in all
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New Apostolic Church
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A rich variety of gifts

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For as long as human beings are inclined to compare themselves with others, they will always emphasise their differences: colour of skin, social status, nationality, abilities, possessions, and so on. And when it comes to such comparisons, our own position is often the preferred standard: whatever is dissimilar is recognised as a difference, regarded with distrust, and at times even condemned.

God Himself does not make such distinctions. Certainly He loves those who are like us, but He also loves those who are completely different from us. Let us not stand in the way of this love. All are to experience the love of God in the same manner.

Beyond that, let us join together to fight for God and with God. As those whom God has called, let us joyfully proclaim the gospel. For this we need one another. We need our differences. We need the gifts and talents of our neighbours—and they need ours.

When we look at it this way, our differences will still be evident, but we will no longer perceive this diversity as an obstacle. These differences will no longer be a reason for disparagement or condemnation for us. When we recognise that each of us can contribute our various gifts, we see our differences as an opportunity—they represent an added value for all of us.



NAC International

As members of the body of Christ, let us serve one another. Within the church of Christ, let us put our gifts and talents into the service of Jesus. In so doing we will feel a deep sense of gratitude toward all Christians, both past and present, who have placed—and continue to place—the gifts and talents they have received from God into the service of Christ and His church.

The gifts are very different. Let us all engage our gifts and strengths without the need for recognition—but always out of love for God and our neighbour!

With heartfelt greetings,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' and 'L' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Jean-Luc Schneider

| Faith, hope, love



The service was held in our church in Berne-Ostermundigen and transmitted to congregations throughout the District Apostle Area

Jonas Spengler and Marc Genou

1 Corinthians 13: 13

“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Dear brothers and sisters, I bid you a warm welcome to this special divine service today. It is also a special day that will go down in the history of the Apostle district: your District Apostle will be retired. Naturally this is not a matter of honouring and praising a man. We take this as an occasion to give thanks to God for that which He has done upon us over the last ten years. We thank God for the blessing He has granted us through the activity of the District Apostle, and for the fact that He has been with our District Apostle during these ten years of activity in this ministry. Now we find ourselves at the beginning of a new stage on our way to our heavenly home, as the choir has just sung.

When you have a car, it is quite normal to take it into the shop for an inspection after a certain period of time, just to see if everything is still in order and that the safety systems are still functioning properly. It is better to look after this ahead of time. Perhaps it is also appropriate for us to carry out an inspection in our life of faith in order to see if all the safety mechanisms in our souls are still in order.

Let us today open up our hearts to the activity of the Holy Spirit for just such an inspection. Is everything that has to do with the safety of our life of faith still in order?

What contributes to safety when it comes to our salvation? It is precisely that which Apostle Paul mentions here as the most important points. Here he is talking about faith, hope, and love.

After looking into it a little bit, I discovered that it has already been quite a long time since any Chief Apostle has conducted a divine service based on this passage. Certainly we know that faith, hope, and love are important, but here we are talking about our salvation. It is imperative for our salvation that this faith, hope, and love are still as manifest within us as the Lord would wish.

The first point that Paul mentions is faith. Faith is extremely important because salvation depends upon it. Only faith can save us. Only faith can lead us to God. It all comes down to faith. Everything else is secondary. Paul writes: "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5: 7). This means that—for as long as the Lord has not yet come, and for as long as the plan of salvation has not yet been completed, human beings must believe. Their relationship with God is based on faith alone.

What is faith? Faith is the certainty that something exists even though it cannot be seen or understood, or perhaps even envisioned. It is simply the inner certainty: this is how it is although I cannot see it or even envision it. That is faith. It is important for us to be aware of the fact that we will need faith until the end.

What do we believe in? We believe that God is love. That is the foundation of the Christian faith. We believe in the triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three are completely one and intimately connected with one another. This is precisely the definition of love. Love is this fundamental relationship that already exists in the Trinity between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Three different Persons are one. They cannot be separated. They are indivisibly bound to one another. This is the very definition of love.

The triune God has created mankind: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Genesis 1: 26). He wanted to incorporate mankind into this fellowship. Human beings were to share in this love. But they were disobedient and fell away from God. Nevertheless, God is love. All of His activity, right from the start, was aimed at bringing fallen mankind back into this fellowship and restoring the relationship between Himself and man, so that humanity can once again live in perfect fellowship with the triune God.

We believe in Jesus Christ. In His love, God sent His Son to earth. He became Man. Jesus Christ has revealed the nature, the thoughts, and the will of God to us. We believe this. We see God because we see Jesus Christ, and if we hear

We believe that God is love. That is the foundation of the Christian faith





Jesus Christ—and read His words—then this is God’s word and God’s will. We believe in Jesus Christ, whom God in His love sent to earth, and who brought His sacrifice for us. This is the path that God, in His love, has given us in order to find our way back to Him.

We believe in God, the Holy Spirit, the Maker of the new creation. In His love, God sent the Holy Spirit to earth. This Holy Spirit is now in the process of putting the love of God into practice and preparing a new creation. First, He creates a new man, He creates salvation, He completes the plan of redemption. God is present on earth today through the Holy Spirit. It is through Him that the love of God takes its effect. Through the Spirit, God executes His plan, with the objective of bringing all human beings into fellowship with Himself.

Furthermore, we believe that God, in His love, has given us the church, the ministry, and the sacraments, and we believe in the promise that Jesus gave—and which the Holy Spirit keeps alive—namely that the Lord will come again and that He will then establish His kingdom. We believe that God will bring into being a new creation for all people who follow Jesus. That is what we believe! It is important for us to continually remind ourselves about these things. Faith produces trust.



We believe that God is love. We believe that the love of God is still at work, and that God desires to grant mankind salvation.

Today we cannot always see this. Nevertheless, we believe that God also loves us! Even when we do not understand what God is doing, we trust Him—even when everything seems to be going wrong. We believe and have trust. God creates salvation. He is working on the salvation of all mankind. That is the future. We trust the omnipotence of God. Faith is the first important point. Salvation as a whole depends upon it.



The Christian faith is fundamentally oriented to the future

The second point Paul goes on to mention is hope. Hope grows from faith. We believe in the intentions of God. We long for these intentions to be fulfilled. We patiently wait for this to happen and prepare ourselves for this event. That is the definition of hope. The Christian faith is fundamentally oriented toward the future. Two weeks ago in Washington I already said—because this is a concern of mine—that when I look into the Christian world I notice that, while there is still some faith here and there, the hope for the future, for eternal life—which for us is the first resurrection, then later, salvation for all who have accepted Christ as their Lord in the new creation—has diminished.

For Christians, there is a great danger that the Christian faith might come to be perceived as nothing more than a set of ethics—a doctrine that imparts ethical values in order to facilitate human coexistence, perhaps—and these ethical values might indeed be very good, but they could also be replaced by others.

Where our faith is not associated with the future, it becomes nothing more than a tradition or a set of morals, but it will not bring salvation.

Our faith is oriented to the future. We are waiting for God to fulfil His promise. We are waiting for the salvation He will grant us. Ultimately we are waiting for the new creation. All those who have accepted Christ as Lord will then have found salvation.

Our hope consists of the fact that we know it will happen. The Lord Jesus said that the kingdom of God is already within us (Luke 17: 21). In other words, we have a bit of a foreshadowing of what is to come. Here Paul says, “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Corinthians 13: 12). We already have an inkling of glory, of perfection today, but everything is still a little unclear. Yet we know it will come. Everything is already in the process of coming to be. The new creation is already present, but it is still in the process of coming to be.

The church is already there, but it is not yet perfected. It is still developing. Salvation, which God desires to grant all human beings, is already present, but it is still developing. We cannot see it quite clearly yet, but it is coming because God has promised it. God is as we have always believed Him to be. He will send His Son—we prepare ourselves for this. That is our hope. There is already something that we can experience now, but everything is still in the process of development—and still imperfect.

The church is not perfect, the ministers are not perfect, the believers are not perfect, salvation is not yet perfectly manifest, peace is not yet perfect ... All of this is still in the process of development. We have the certainty that it will come, and we prepare ourselves for that moment. This hope helps us to remain steadfast, even when we must go through trials, even when we are tested. We remain firm in our hope. It is worthwhile to remain faithful. The kingdom of God will come. We will enter into it and be blissful and happy for all eternity. Just wait. It is worthwhile to remain faithful.

Here and there a death occurs, and then people say, “Now he is dead. What benefit is there for him now?” But our hope transcends even death. It goes much further. Even if death should occur, this changes nothing about our hope! God has promised: “I will complete what I have begun! As long as you are in agreement, I will bring you into My king-



Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider retires District Apostle Markus Fehlbaum (left) and appoints Jürg Zbinden (right) as the new District Apostle

dom.” That is the hope that lives within us. It is for this reason that we do not give up. If we fall down a hundred and fifty times, we will simply get up again one hundred and fifty times. We will simply carry on! And because we have this hope, we purify ourselves, continue the battle against sin, and make the effort to overcome and to develop in our new life. We do not give up our hope!

We look into the world and see the hardships, the injustice, and the terrible lot of many people. We even see those who have distanced themselves from God, who are far away from Him. When we see all this we could become discouraged. Then some might ask, “Well, what is your God doing about that?” God is at work through His Holy Spirit. He is working on His plan of redemption for the salvation of all human beings. God will continue to work until the end.

It is worthwhile to continue serving the Lord and to continue to bring sacrifices for His work. It is worthwhile to help along because the plan is proceeding, and no one can stop it. That is our hope. We know it is coming. We are waiting for this. We long for this and prepare ourselves for it. We endure in patience and continue to do battle against sin, because we know the end of the story. At the end, in the new creation, there will be salvation for all.

And one last point: Paul mentions faith first, then hope, and then love. This is a bit peculiar. Most of the time, these would be in different order, but there is a good reason. After all, when our faith is in order and when there is hope, then

love will grow. Faith tells us: God loves you. God loves mankind. He allows us to feel this love. Hope shows us all the things God will give us. And it is on this basis that our love for Him grows. It is because God loves us in this manner that we too can love. This love grows from faith. Without faith, this love would not be possible. We believe that God is love. Even if we cannot see this, even if we cannot understand this, even if we cannot imagine this, we believe in it—and it is from this that our love will grow.

Paul says that faith works through love (Galatians 5: 6). Just as faith would be nothing without hope, so too, faith without love is a dead faith. Love is the standard by which our faith is measured. Where there is true faith, there will also be love, love for God. How does this love come to expression?

The Lord Jesus Himself said, “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him” (John 14: 21). Those who love Him will be obedient to Him. Many people—even many Christians—have a different conception of love. We cannot change anything about this passage. These are the words of Jesus Christ. Jesus defined it that way. Faith is measured by love. “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.” Do we still have this sincere desire to live in accordance with the commandments? Do we still have this sincere desire to attune ourselves to the law of God and structure our lives in accordance with it?

If we know that faith matters, and that God measures our faith by our love, and that He defines our love by way of our obedience, then we may not find love so comfortable any more!

The commandment that Jesus gave is the commandment to love our neighbour. God has promised us fellowship with Himself. If we have this hope, we will long for that moment and prepare ourselves for fellowship with Him. We will attune ourselves in such a manner that we can already become one with Him today, such that His thoughts and His way of thinking also become our thoughts and our way of thinking. What is Christ's way of thinking? He loves my neighbour just as He loves me. We endeavour to grow into Christ's way of thinking. Jesus Christ is God. God is love. He loves my neighbour. That is how all of these things fit together. I grow in love because I have this hope: I am waiting for fellowship with God. I prepare myself for this fellowship with God. God is love, therefore I too must be love. That is the reason why love is so infinitely important. Therefore: faith is imperative for salvation, faith results in hope, and faith is measured by our love.

Now we come to the end. Paul says, "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three"—these are the foundations—"but the greatest of these is love." Paul does not say that love is the most important, only that it is the greatest. And he explains this himself. After all, faith will cease at some point in time. When the time for faith is past, we will come to sight. Then we will see what we have believed. Then faith will cease.

Today already we can experience our faith here and there. These experiences strengthen us in our faith. When we are with God, we will no longer need to believe. Then everything will be clear.

Hope: we are expecting something. Here too we have a little foretaste of fellowship with the Lord, namely in Holy Communion. It is beautiful when we can experience how fellowship with God might be, but it is only a foretaste. At some point in time, God will fulfil His promise. Then we will no longer need any hope. Then we will live in this new reality.

Love is also something that we can experience today already in many different ways, but it will never cease! Why? Let me come back to the beginning. We will then be enveloped in this relationship with God. We will then live in this relationship. And this relationship is love. When we have finally made it, once we have reached our goal, when we are admitted into this intimate fellowship with God, once we are fully one with Him, when we are so close to

Him that no one will ever be able to separate us from Him ever again—that is love! Love will never cease. Love will be perfect when we live in fellowship with God.

And what about our love for our neighbour? That will not cease either! It too will become perfect because we will be in the marriage chamber, and later on in the new creation. Human beings will live in new conditions. They will then all be completely immersed in the love of God. In this intimate connection with God, the relationship between human beings will also be completely different. Everything sinful will be gone. All human beings will then be completely focused on God. God will be all in all. The relationship between human beings itself is a divine relationship because it is based on God. It will be perfected by the love of God. The goal of the whole exercise is eternal love, that we may live in eternal fellowship with God and that the relationship between all human beings may be an image of the relationship within the Trinity. The relationship between all human beings will then only be based on love. That is our future.

There we have some thoughts about these three fundamental terms—faith, hope, and love. We would do well to occupy ourselves a little more with them. What do I actually believe? What do I believe in? Over time, so much dust has collected on this, and at times we may confuse faith with something else, perhaps tradition or whatever else there may be. Let us get to the heart of the matter. What do we believe? What do we actually believe in? And out of this faith, hope and love will grow. Without hope, our faith would be dead. Faith is measured by our love.

The goal is to be eternally enveloped in the love of God together with all our fellow human beings.

CORE THOUGHTS

Faith, hope, and love are indispensable for salvation. We believe that God is love and we trust Him. Faith generates hope and engenders love. We reciprocate the love of God by obeying His commandments and living in accordance with the example of Jesus.

The pledge of divine inheritance for all

“Let us give our neighbour a foretaste of the kingdom of God.” This is the 2018 Pentecost message which the Chief Apostle addressed to all New Apostolic believers across the world. What exactly does he mean?



■ Allsane Ferguson/Alex Ferguson

It is not only because it is the birthday of the church that Pentecost is important, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider said on 20 May 2018 in Washington, D.C. (USA). It is more than that: Pentecost testifies of the faithfulness of God, because He keeps His promises. His incarnation in Jesus Christ, the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the sending of the Holy Spirit—all these things were inconceivable then and remain inexplicable. “We can only grasp this in faith.”

The same is true of the promises given to believers today. The return of Christ will be accomplished in a way that cannot be explained or imagined. “But we know one thing: it will happen! Jesus will return!” the Chief Apostle insisted. “That is our Pentecost joy: God fulfils His promises. Our God is the faithful God.”

The sign of our special relationship

“We have received the gift of the Holy Spirit at Holy Sealing,” the Chief Apostle said with reference to the Bible text from Ephesians 1: 13–14. The image of this seal shows: “We belong to God. We have a special relationship with Him, a relationship we call ‘childhood in God.’”

This implies a double promise. “For one thing, God loves you because you are His child. No matter what you do, even if you do everything wrong, it will not change anything for God. If you come back to God, whatever you have done, He will accept you as His child.” And secondly, “The Spirit who raised Jesus Christ from death dwells in you. You will experience your own resurrection.”



Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider with all active District Apostles and District Apostle Helpers following the service in Washington D.C.

how we can experience the peace of God already today.

A committed team for and with God

“God is all in all,” the Chief Apostle said with reference to 1 Corinthians 15: 28. “If we allow the Holy Spirit to shape us, we can overcome greed and selfishness.” Also the natural differences between human beings cannot prevent unity in Christ: “We need our differences. They are a chance and a blessing if we have decided to become a team and fight for God and with God.”

Finally, Holy Sealing implies that we are witnesses of Christ. Let us

show that the gospel is much more than a method for a successful life or a collection of standard ethical values, because the Christian faith is based on a promise: it is about the future, about eternal life.

“It is up to us that our neighbour can experience: God is love, God is grace, God is patient,” the Chief Apostle said in conclusion. “This is my appeal to you on this Pentecost feast: let us give our neighbour a foretaste of the kingdom of God.”

The guarantee of salvation

With our sealing God confirmed His will to save us, the Chief Apostle said. “No power, no spirit can hinder the completion of God’s plan of redemption. Those who are sealed have the guarantee that they will be saved despite their mistakes and weaknesses. Don’t give up. Keep working. You can do it.”

“God will provide all we need to enter into His kingdom.” The Chief Apostle said that God will never allow anything to prevent our salvation. “However, this guarantee will only work for those who are willing to allow themselves to be prepared for the return of Christ, for those who make it a priority.”

The foretaste of eternal happiness

With the gift of the Holy Spirit, God makes man the heir of eternal life. In addition to this promise, the believer already today receives a pledge, that is, a down payment or a foretaste, the Chief Apostle explained.

Only once we are in the kingdom of glory will man see God as He is. “But already today we can get a rather precise idea of Him. We can perceive His presence more and more, and can recognise better and better that He is indeed love, that He is omnipotent and that He is grace.”

Eternal peace still belongs to the future. But if we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, if we allow Him to shape our thoughts, desires, and our very being, then we will always be in accordance with the will and nature of God. This is

CORE THOUGHTS

Ephesians 1: 13–14

“In Him [Jesus Christ] you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a guarantee that God will save us. It is also a pledge of the perfect fellowship with God and a call to serve Christ.



| We cannot help but love

There are many reasons to ignore, despise, or even hate our neighbour. “But be steadfast in love, don’t give up,” the Chief Apostle says. “We believe in the final victory of love. That is our conviction.”

In the first century, the Christians in Asia Minor were persecuted by the authorities because they refused to worship the Roman emperor as their god. One of them, John, was banished to an island, where God gave him a message for the congregations. God told him: I know you; I know your situation, but I have something against you.

This is how Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider outlined the background to the Bible text he used on 12 November 2017 in Raipur (India).

In the kingdom of God

“The first important point is: we are partakers of the kingdom of God,” the Chief Apostle said. After all, mankind was able to experience the presence, love, and grace of God on earth through Jesus Christ. “Today we experience the presence of God, His love, and His grace through the Holy Spirit.”

The second point: the kingdom of God is present. Through Jesus Christ the kingdom of God was established on earth. Christ overcame death and evil. “We still benefit from His

victory today,” the Chief Apostle said. “Through Him, and with His help, we can overcome evil. We want Jesus to be the King in our hearts.”

The third point: “We are waiting for the future kingdom of God,” the Chief Apostle said. We are waiting for the return of Christ to lead us into His kingdom, where there will be no more evil, suffering, or death.

In tribulation

The first Christians suffered from persecution. “We too live in a time of tribulation,” the Chief Apostle said and went on to elaborate. “Many people today serve the god of money and possessions. Everything revolves around success, money, and prosperity. Of course we would like to live better lives, but not at all costs. Our god is Jesus Christ. The salvation of the soul is our priority.” Such an attitude can sometimes isolate us in today’s society.

“The temptation of the first Christians was that the return of Christ, which they were waiting for, did not take place,” the Chief Apostle continued. “When our requests and



wishes are not answered, then it is a test. For us it is a matter of abandoning ideas that displease God.”

In love

The same dangers lurk today as they did in the past, the Chief Apostle said, and referred to the warnings given to the congregations in Asia Minor.

“Because you are lukewarm ...” Being lukewarm means making compromises. Many people live according to the principle: making the most of your chances. “Do we really have to keep all the commandments? Is it really that bad if I tell a lie or if I take something that does not belong to me?” But Jesus told the congregations to be careful, there is great danger lurking.

“You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.” Faith without works is nothing more than a religion based on tradition. And a religion based on tradition is not a living faith.

“... that you have left your first love.” Because people are not nice to you, because they are against you, you stopped loving your neighbour. In the best case, you are just indifferent. In the worst case, you hate them. That is a big danger.

What can protect us from these dangers? Let us be kind and do good to our neighbour, and keep the commandments, the Chief Apostle asked the congregation. “There are plenty of good reasons to give up and not love our neighbour. But we cannot help but love, because this love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We believe in the final victory of love. That is our faith, our conviction.”



Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider ordains the Apostles Devadas Basappa, Fred Charles Marihal, and Prabhakar Beergi

CORE THOUGHTS

Revelation 1: 9

“I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

We are waiting for the kingdom of God and are preparing for it today. We will not allow persecution, temptation, and struggles to discourage us. We show perseverance in faith, both in our mission and in love.



■ NAC Southern Germany

| Chosen, now what?

Called and chosen. This central concept from the gospel implies both inclusion as well as exclusion. How is that possible seeing that God loves all of mankind? Thoughts from a divine service by the Chief Apostle.

On his trip to Africa at the end of February this year, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider also visited Cameroon and conducted a divine service in Yaoundé on 28 February.

Recognising the elect

Revelation reports that John saw the community of the elect with Jesus Christ after His return. Those who will be able to participate in the Lord's return can be recognised by the following, the Chief Apostle explained:

- the elect were not chosen for their merit or their achievements, but by God's will alone.
- the elect come from all tribes and nations.
- the elect are numerous, but their number is limited. This is how Chief Apostle Schneider interpreted the image of the 144,000.

Understanding election

Those who will participate in the Lord's return have been chosen

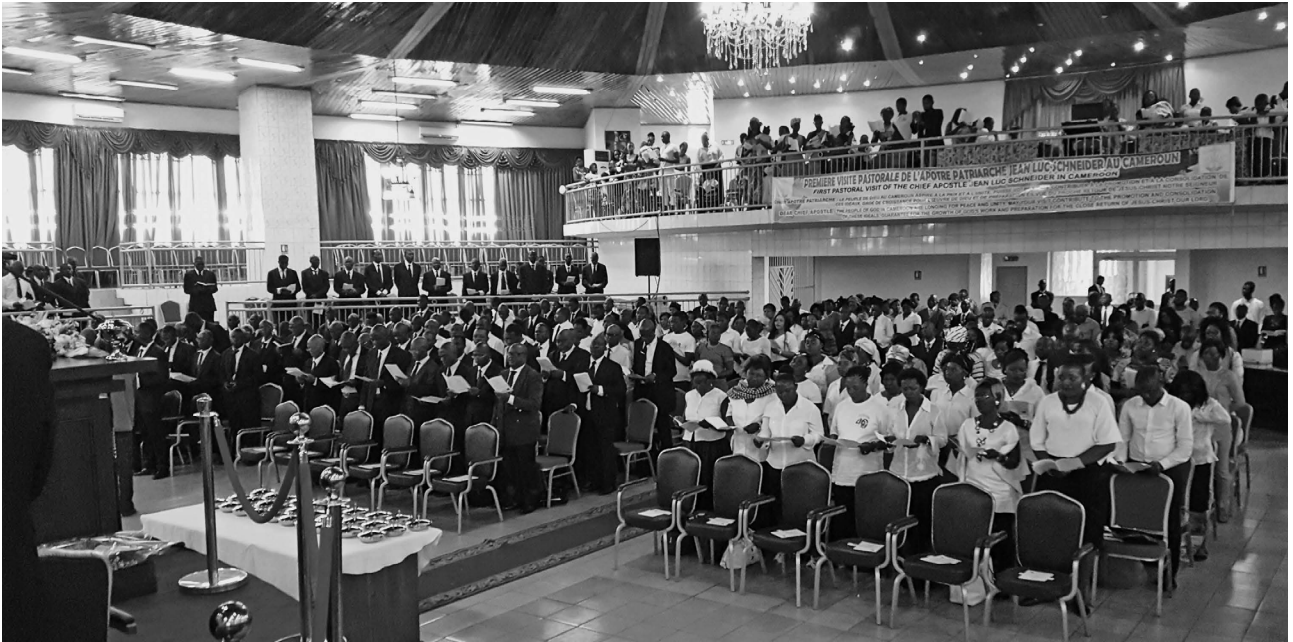
- to be firstfruits. They will be the first human beings after His resurrection to put on the resurrection body of Jesus.

- to constitute the bride of Christ. The image of the wedding means that these will be the first ones who will be intimately connected with Jesus, who will live with Him and share everything with Him.
- to serve and rule with Jesus. However, they will not rule over human beings. They will not exercise authority over them, but they will put all their strength in the service of the salvation of mankind.

Clinching our election

The elect bear the name of God. They belong to God. "Jesus has redeemed us with His sacrifice. The devil has no claim on us any more," the Chief Apostle said. And the elect follow His call: "You have become a child of God because Jesus has chosen you personally and redeemed you." And they receive the Holy Spirit: "This seal is of course also the symbol for the regeneration through water and Spirit, which we have received through Holy Baptism and Holy Sealing."

The elect refrain from practising idolatry, because idols keep us from God. "If education, money, and success are more important to you than Jesus, you have chosen an idol." Idol worship, so the Chief Apostle, also includes witchcraft



At the end of the service Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider ordained three Apostles: Ignatius Che Nchi for Cameroon (third from the right), Braima Saffa for Sierra Leone (second from the right), and Ernest Onyebuchi Onwukwe for Nigeria



and Spiritism: “We no longer trust Jesus, but seek help elsewhere.” And preachers can also become a danger for our faith: “When men become more important than Jesus, then this too, is idolatry.”

The elect follow Jesus. To follow Jesus means wanting to be with Jesus already today: “In divine service, in prayer, and particularly in Holy Communion.” The elect obey Jesus Christ unconditionally: “Because we love Him and want to be together with Him.” And the elect bring the message of salvation to strangers and sinners. “We love strangers. We love the weak.”

They are blameless. The elect acknowledge their sins and regret them. “God was able to wash away their sins, and they became blameless.”

They follow the Apostles. Through the Apostles the elect receive the seal of the Spirit: “It is the apostolate that has received the mission to prepare the bride for the return of the Lord.”

CORE THOUGHTS

Revelation 14: 1

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads.”

We were chosen to become firstfruits of the Lamb. To achieve this, we give ourselves completely to God, reject all forms of idolatry, serve according to the example set by Jesus, long for grace, and follow the Apostles.

PAUL SHIPWRECKED ON MALTA

(ACTS 27 AND 28)

Paul was to be taken to Rome by ship along with other prisoners. It was very stormy. When the ship anchored in Crete, the Apostle warned the crew against continuing the voyage. But the centurion would not listen to Paul.

The wind developed into a fierce storm. The crew tried in vain to secure the ship. The following day they threw the cargo into the sea. The storm did not die down. A day later all the ship's tackle and anything they did not need was thrown overboard so that the ship would be lighter. For days they did not see the sun or the stars. The storm continued to rage and the travellers soon began to lose hope. God, however, sent an angel to Paul and told him that all 276 passengers and crew would be saved.

Fourteen days and nights passed. It was midnight. The crew decided to test the depth of the water and found that it was no longer so deep. Now they were afraid they would run aground on the rocks. Some of the crew tried to escape in the lifeboat. Paul warned them: "Everyone must stay here on board together if we are to be saved."

Shortly before daybreak, Paul advised everyone to eat. He took some bread, thanked the Lord, and began to eat.

When it was light the sailors tried to steer the ship towards land, but they ran aground on a sandbank. Some began to swim; others clung to planks of wood and beams from the wrecked ship. All 276 passengers managed to reach land. They were safe. The island where they had landed was called Malta.

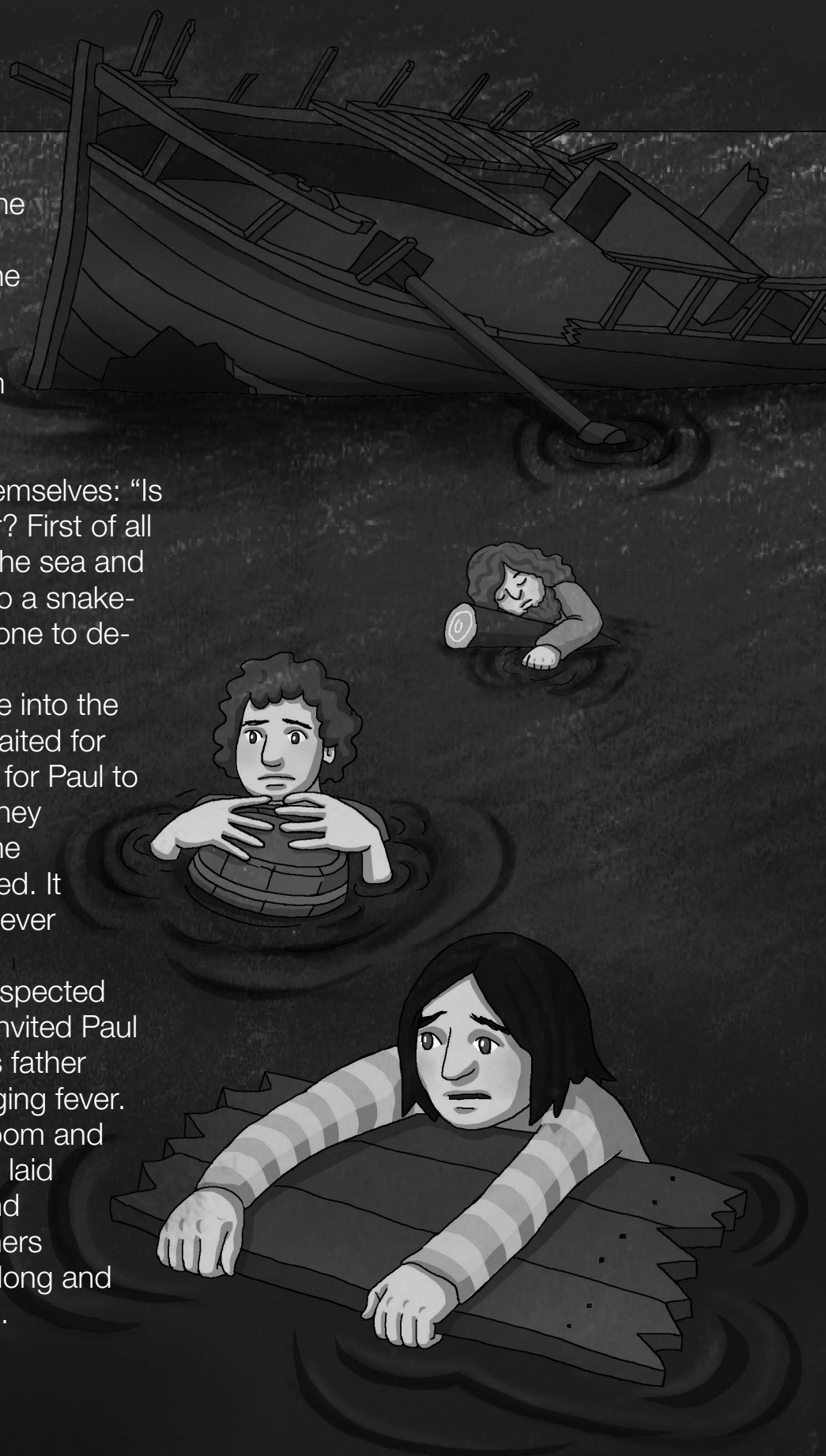
The people who lived on the island welcomed the survivors. As it was cold and wet they lit fires for them. Paul helped to collect twigs for the fire. As he

threw a bundle on the fire, a snake came out on account of the heat and bit Paul in the hand.

Was his rescue from the storm to be in vain? The islanders muttered among themselves: "Is this man a murderer? First of all he is rescued from the sea and then he falls victim to a snake-bite. What has he done to deserve this?"

Paul threw the snake into the fire. The islanders waited for the hand to swell or for Paul to fall down and die. They waited for a long time but nothing happened. It was as if Paul had never been bitten.

Publius, the most respected man on the island, invited Paul to stay with him. His father was ill and had a raging fever. Paul went into his room and prayed with him. He laid his hands on him and cured him. Then others who were ill came along and Paul healed them all.



AT DAMIAN'S IN DOHA (QATAR)

Welcome to Qatar! My name is **Damian** and I am 13 years old. My **parents**, my **brother** Dillon (he is 15), and I live in Doha, the country's capital city. Qatar is situated in Western Asia, on a small peninsula north-east of Saudi Arabia.



This is the **entrance** to our house. My parents came from South Africa and moved to Qatar seven years ago because my dad found a good job here. He is an associate director for a project management company at the new airport in Qatar and my mum is the head of instrumental music at my school. Many foreigners live in Qatar. Only one in nine people is a Qatari. Most foreigners came here to work in the oil and gas industry. These natural resources have made the country very rich.

This is a picture of me and my **friends** at a birthday party in a restaurant.

My dad is the rector of the congregation, a choir member, and an organist. My mum is the choir leader, an organist, and an orchestra member. She plays the oboe. Music is a talent that runs in the family. As you can see, I play the **cello** and my brother the keyboard.

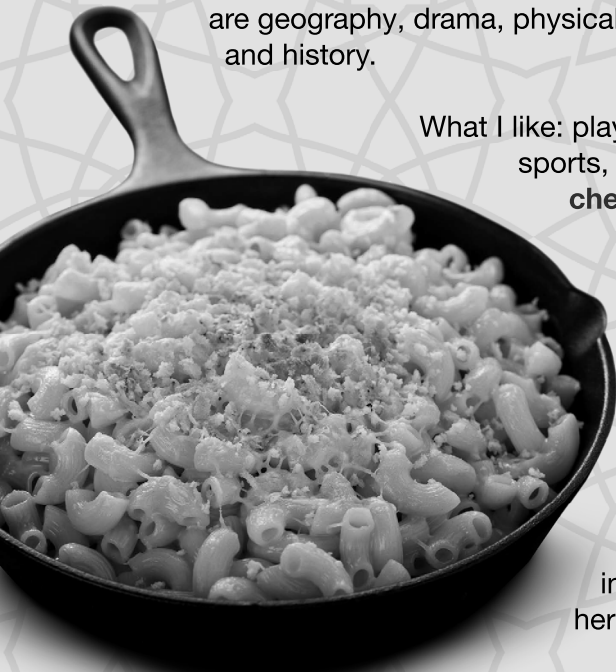
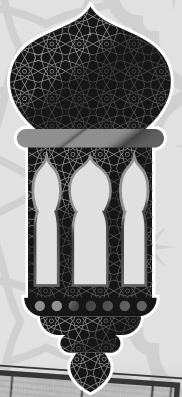


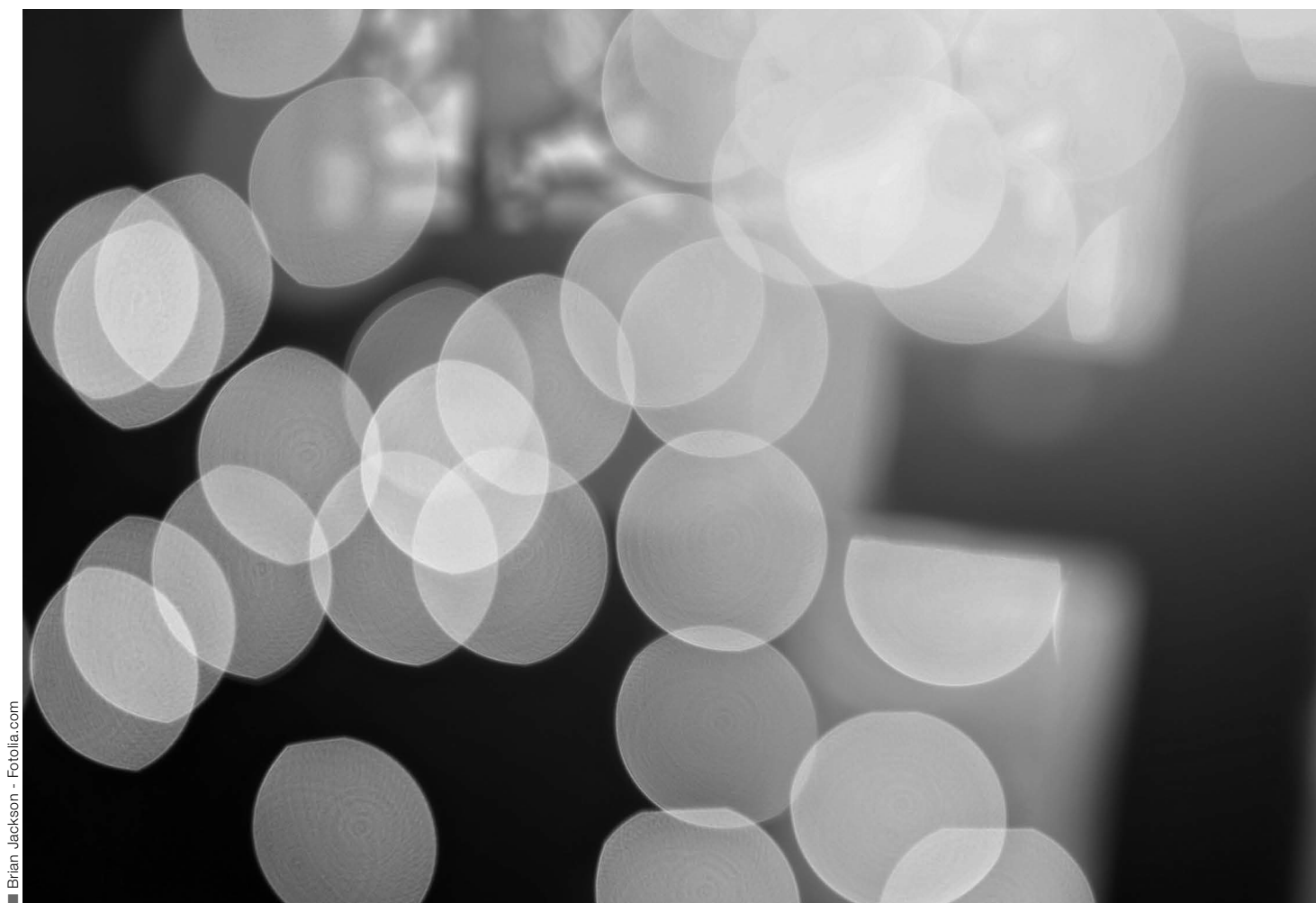
Our services take place in a Christian religious complex. In a small room we have chairs and a table set up for us. But we also have a locker holding tablecloths, a keyboard, hymnals, hymn collections, and stands for the orchestra. We have to set up the church for every **service**.

This is my **school**. My favourite subjects are geography, drama, physical education, and history.

What I like: playing soccer and other sports, eating **macaroni and cheese**, and playing on my electronics. What I don't like: playing rugby, tomatoes, and English as a subject at school.

Qatar will be hosting the 2022 **FIFA World Cup**. Because the temperatures in summer often exceed 40 degrees Celsius the tournament will take place in winter. Even then average temperatures here are still 17 to 20 degrees.





| Prayer – indispensable in all situations of life

Why do we pray? What makes a prayer a prayer? And what does it take to have an active prayer life? Thoughts on our dialogue with God—originating from the pen of the Chief Apostle.



When we talk about prayer, we may at first be prompted to think about the prayers that are spoken in divine service. Adoration and worship, thanksgiving, petitions, and intercessions are essential elements of these. The prayers uttered in divine service are not merely personal expressions of gratitude, petition, and need on the part of the officiant. Rather, these prayers bring to expression the various elements that move and affect the congregation as a whole.

Nevertheless, public prayers in divine service repeatedly remind each and every one of the participants just how important private prayer is for an individual's faith. Prayer in divine service is intended to encourage the believers to likewise pray on their own—and not only in difficult situations of life, when they are in despair and no longer see a way out, but rather in all situations of life.

Expression of faith and fellowship

Prayer is an essential expression of communion—that is, of the relationship—between God and man. The Catechism states the following on the subject: “In prayer, the believer

experiences: God is present, God hears, and God answers” (CNAC 13.1).

Nevertheless, for many people, personal prayer—namely the practice traditionally described as “prayer life”—often fades into the background. For this reason it is necessary to remind ourselves again and again that we always have the opportunity to pray. Beyond that, if one is responsible for the religious upbringing of children, it is particularly important to pray with them regularly so that they may recognise that prayer is not only an element of divine service, but also a component of daily life.

First and foremost, our prayers are an expression of our faith, because without belief in God, it would be pointless to address Him or seek a response from Him. However, believers know that they can indeed address God in prayer—and that He answers. Human beings are creations of God, made in His image, and have thus already been addressed by God.

Those who make use of the opportunity to pray will also experience that God is our counterpart who listens and responds to us. This experience leads believers to recognise God and feel His presence. They thereby learn that He is interested in human cares and concerns, and that He accompanies them on their way of life. In this way prayer is also the expression of an inner attitude that is characterised by trust in God.

Those who pray should also be aware of the elements that are part of prayer. These will be more closely explored in the following.

Inner and outer posture

First of all, prayer usually incorporates some sort of physical expression, for example the folding of one's hands. This signals that we have ceased all activity and focus entirely on our dialogue with God. Those who kneel while they pray demonstrate that they are humbling themselves before God, and that they venerate Him as the almighty, exalted, and merciful, to whose care and providence they commend themselves without reservation. Closing our eyes while we pray keeps us from being distracted in our conversation with God.

Such an outward posture on the part of the supplicant already makes it clear that he is completely focused on God. Prayer occurs on the basis of a direct need to turn to God, to give thanks to Him for gifts received, and to ask Him for help or support. In prayer, human beings are there-

fore always the recipients, even when they are wrestling with God, as Jesus did in Luke 22: 44, and even when they come to Him in a demanding manner. The person praying is therefore the supplicant, and God the giver and benefactor. Ultimately, prayer is a matter of grace and salvation—something which human beings need, and which God in turn bestows upon them.

When we pray, God is our sole partner in dialogue. This also applies to collective prayer and the prayers in divine service. It is not the assembly of participants in the divine service who comprise the addressee, but rather God alone. In this way prayer is neither a monologue nor a speech to those assembled in prayer.

Those who commend themselves to God in prayer will experience that God is a loving Father and provider, who grants strength and support in the most diverse conditions of life. When we profess God the Father as the Creator, Jesus Christ as the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as the Maker of the new creation, we can also experience that this is the case in prayer. For one thing, our profession will become part of our life and, on the other hand, our worship and adoration, thanksgiving, petitions, and intercessions—all of which are part of prayer—will grant us insight into the nature of God. It is for this reason that prayer is also an important source of direct knowledge of God.

Let us now explore the aforementioned aspects, which are elements of both public and private prayer alike.

Adoration and worship

First of all, prayer is comprised of adoration and worship. The experience of the divine, which is omnipotent, majestic, mysterious, and sublime, causes man to tremble, but also fascinates him at the same time. Worship occurs before any petitions or intercessions are expressed. Worship is owed primarily to God, because He far transcends anything we can directly experience, and because all limitations are suspended in Him. It is in adoration and worship that the individual approaches the majesty of God in reverence, which comes to expression in terms such as “holiness”, “omnipotence”, and “eternity”.

In both the Old and New Testaments, there are many examples of worship and adoration: “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psalm 95: 6). Revelation 4: 10–11 relates both the proper posture and language of worship: “[Then] the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne saying: ‘You are wor-

thy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”

In the Old Testament, the only legitimate object of worship is the God of Israel, who is at the same time the Creator of the entire universe. The New Testament establishes that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are due as much worship as God, the Father. The resurrected and exalted Lord is also to be worshipped. The Holy Spirit is worshipped as the presence of God and the Maker of the new creation.

The ultimate goal is that all people and nations, as well as all visible and invisible powers of this world, may come to worship the one God (Isaiah 45: 14; Zechariah 14: 9, 16; Psalm 96: 7–9; John 4: 20–24). The risen Jesus Christ is both the exalted Lord, who should be—and is—worshipped. That which was said of God in the Old Testament is now also applied to Christ (Philippians 2: 9–11). At the ascension of the Lord it becomes clear that Jesus Christ is likewise an object of worship: “And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24: 52).

Thanksgiving

Gratitude emanates from the certainty that the whole of human existence is affected by one’s relationship with God. Those who give thanks do so first and foremost on their own behalf, for their very existence—regardless of whether they are successful by human standards or not. This gratitude brings to expression that God is the creator and sustainer of His creation and that the individual understands himself as part of this creation.

The experience of divine protection as well as the presence and gracious care of God in their lives inspires human beings to give thanks to Him. This gratitude is expressed in the knowledge that one’s life and conditions of life are not governed by coincidence, but are defined by that which God permits and forbids.

Petitions

At times it appears as though our prayers consist primarily of petitions. Even in the Lord’s Prayer there are many petitions. Turning to God in petition makes it clear that God is the One who can be addressed in all situations of life. The supplicant also incorporates his own situation of life into the prayer.

Anyone who asks God for anything recognises in Him the helper, giver, and benefactor of life. In prayer, man experiences that God is merciful and kindly disposed to His cre-



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ation. Human beings recognise Him as the One who either grants or denies petitions. A prayer of petition is based on the insight that God inclines Himself to His creation and that He loves that which He has created. God is not distant from, nor indifferent to, His creation—of which human beings are an integral part—but rather accompanies and protects it. He desires to make salvation and eternal life accessible to all human beings.

Intercessions

Intercessions arise from the believer's awareness that he does not practise his faith on his own, but rather in the fellowship of other believers. Beyond that the supplicant knows that he has been created in the image of God, and thus exists in relationship to other human beings—as they have likewise been created in the image of God—and therefore shares in the fellowship of all God's creatures together with them.

Beyond that, intercession follows from the commandment to love one's neighbour. The plea of the supplicant that God should also protect and preserve others and grant them salvation protects the believer from the danger of desiring salvation exclusively for himself.

Summary

Anything that moves and stirs within a human being's heart—including our own needs and wishes, as well as the needs and wishes of others—is part of prayer. Prayer incorporates fears and joys, health and sickness, life on the threshold of death, the magnificence of nature, and the beauty of humanity in fellowship and being there for one another, but also that which is unfathomable, such as the destruction that man inflicts on nature and other human beings. Prayer is therefore an indispensable element of a life defined by faith and following.

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Mannkee Nag is an inspiring example for many young people in India in living her faith



■ Vipin Tandra and Stanley Sappadla



The day that changed my life

Professing one's faith can be a real challenge. In fact, it can even turn into a struggle for survival. This is the experience of Mankee Nag, a 27-year-old Indian woman. She gives us a candid look into her life.

■ *Where do you live?*

I come from a village called Krushnar, which is located in Jagdalpur district in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh. People here speak Hindi, the national language, as well as the local languages Gondi and Halbi. It is a very backward tribal region in which religion, community, and caste are of great significance to this day.

Some 94 per cent of the population in the region are non-Christian, and the people in our village do not know anything about Jesus Christ. In our culture, we worship idols.

■ *How did you become acquainted with the Christian faith?*

In the course of my life, I had always wondered how idols formed from metal, stone, or wood could have anything to do with God. One day in March 2014, as I was going to see my relatives in a village some 25 kilometres away, I met an Evangelist from the New Apostolic Church. He told me

about Jesus Christ, the only true God, and about the New Apostolic life of faith. In our conversation, the Evangelist helped me understand what the altar of grace was and that it was the only way to salvation. On my way back home, it became clear to me that Jesus Christ is the real way to salvation, and I made the decision to follow Him. This day changed my life.

■ *When did you become New Apostolic?*

The following month, on 13 April 2014, I walked five kilometres to attend an open air service conducted by Apostle Chistranjan Nanda. It was a rare sight in my area to see two hundred people together. We were all very excited, as it was the first time we could see an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He spoke about salvation that is offered at the altar of grace. I listened with open eyes and ears. That day I was one of 19 people who received the sacrament of Holy Sealing through Apostle Nanda. I decided to remain strong under all circumstances.



Mankee Nag has learned to sew and earns a living for herself and her parents

I still had many questions, and I was sure that the person who could answer them was Apostle Nanda. This kept me quite busy for some time to follow, as I called him over the phone every day for an entire month. He guided me through my doubts and prayed with me

■ *Was there a New Apostolic congregation near your village?*

Another month later, Apostle Nanda visited the village of Mardapa, which is two kilometres away from our village. In a divine service there he ordained a Priest. I was so happy that I would finally be able to attend divine services every Sunday. Now we have a small group of twenty people who gather at a member's home for divine services. It gives me immense joy to walk up to other villagers and invite them to come to church. I also organise prayer meetings and Bible study circles to keep our members connected when the minister is out of town. On Sundays I love to spend the day with the members of the congregation and share my experiences, since most of the people in my village do not speak to me during the week.

■ *And how did your family react to your decision to become a Christian?*

I was really excited to share my new insights about Jesus Christ with them and my conviction. My parents sternly refused to accept Jesus Christ, as they knew that the entire family would be cast out of our community. Although my parents refused to accept my conviction, they are denied work in our farming community because I am Christian.

■ *Your decision to live a Christian life breaks with traditions that are followed in your village ...*

In India, the average age for a girl to get married is about 22. However, according to our local rituals, a girl should be married around the age of 15. It is therefore common practice for parents to plan the wedding of their daughter from the time of her birth, and I am no exception. The boy chosen for me was not a Christian. But I am firm with the decision of leading a Christian life and would rather remain unmarried than marrying a non-Christian. I pray to God to reveal His will to me.

■ *How do you manage? What do you do for a living?*

Our region is known as the Rice Bowl of India. We grow many varieties of rice and seasonal pulses. As a family, farming was our livelihood. Since we are no longer permitted to work on farms, as I mentioned earlier, life has become very difficult for us. So I learned how to sew, and support my ageing parents by tailoring for people in nearby villages. This is how we try to make ends meet. Actually, I finished grade 12 and would like to pursue a bachelor's degree in arts, which would help me help my family and allow me to contribute to society.

■ *What is your greatest wish, your dream?*

I wish my family could understand what I feel. I am waiting for the day when all the people in our village get to know about Jesus Christ, the New Apostolic doctrine, and we get our own church building.

Many cultures in Scandinavia

Following an invitation by Apostle Jörg Steinbrenner and Bishop Rainer Knobloch, the rectors from the congregations in the Nordic countries met in Sweden's national capital, Stockholm, from 9 to 11 March 2018. It was the second meeting of its kind. The meeting served to encourage the rectors in matters of faith and give them the opportunity to have fellowship, as well as to clarify everyday issues that come up in the congregations. The ministers from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Greenland shared their ideas and talked about their experiences. They also spoke about the Nordic Day of the Youth planned for August in Turku (Finland).

One observation that was made at the meeting was that the Nordic congregations are comprised of members from many different cultures. Many come from countries in Africa and have found a new home in congregations such as Turku (Finland) or Larvik (Norway). "These differences should be seen as a chance," District Evangelist Sebastian Jaggi from Oslo said. It injects new life into the congregations and is enriching for all members.

The rectors' meeting took place at the Långholmen Conference Centre in Stockholm, a building that once served as a prison



Apostle Jörg Steinbrenner and Bishop Rainer Knobloch invited the rectors from the congregations in the Nordic countries to Sweden's national capital, Stockholm, for their second annual meeting





Dragon Boat Regatta

There are many New Apostolic congregations around the globe—rich in tradition and their own culture. There is a lot of energy everywhere, the congregations are colourful, and yet they are all united under one roof.

The annual Dragon Boat Regatta on Canal Walk in Century City right in the middle of Cape Town drew hundreds of participants. It was the second major event in a few weeks, following the amazing Young People's Convention at Cape Town Stadium in February. The race took place on Monday, 2 April, and was another opportunity to get together. Sixty teams ranging from the outskirts of Langebaan on the west coast (Langebaan Whalers) to Gauteng (Spirit Chasers) in the north-east registered. Thousands of spectators, including District Apostle John Kriel, came to cheer for their favourite teams. The teams battled it out. The final was a close and nail-biting race and, in a matter of split seconds, the Northpine Vikings were once again victorious, defending their 2017 title. Although the competitive spirits were high, fellowship was the winner of the day!





Island of Hope is an adult day care centre for people with disabilities



Full containers on their way to Central America



Top: District Evangelist Jörg Leske (NAK-karitativ) and Ludmila Gutko (Island of Hope in Minsk)



| Volunteers provide ongoing help

To really make a difference requires more than goodwill and helpfulness. The magic word here is persistence. Because those who provide lasting help, provide the best help. Following are three examples of ongoing projects by New Apostolic charities on three continents

On 1 March 2018 the first container of the year from the Dutch charity Stichting Corantijn arrived in Suriname. The charity developed from an initiative called Adoptie Plan Suriname, which was started in 1989. Volunteers in the Netherlands collect donations and supplies that are needed in Suriname and, once a month, they put everything together. Twice a year, they load a forty-foot container with all the supplies and ship it to Suriname. Several years ago, a fundraising drive called Third Container was started. The charity is hoping to be able to fund a third shipment to Suriname. The relief supplies are distributed to children

and seniors' homes, to hospitals, schools, and prisons, but the items are also shared with the general public.

Day care services for the disabled in Belarus

Nak-karitativ and the New Apostolic Church Berlin-Brandenburg recently celebrated the first anniversary of a joint operation in Belarus. Island of Hope is a day care centre for people with severe disabilities. It is located in Minsk and is the only centre of its kind. It was established in 1996



New wells for Benin, Ghana, and Togo. Such facilities are vital for the people in West Africa

by Ludmila Michaelnovna-Gotko. For a good year now, Nak-karitativ has been financing a part of the day care centre's budget and has made it possible for Ludmila to expand her services. The centre provides assistance for 62 severely disabled people between aged 16 to 40. The centre is open ten hours a day. The project is run in co-operation with the New Apostolic Church Berlin-Brandenburg.

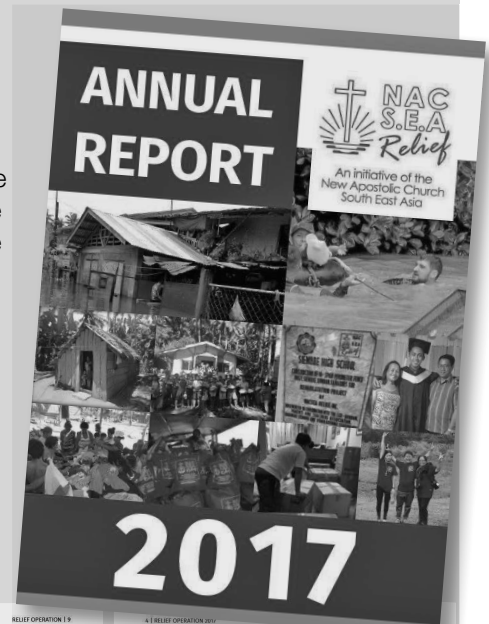
Clean water for West Africa

human aktiv, the charity of the New Apostolic Church Southern Germany, supports the construction of wells and toilet facilities in the West African countries of Benin, Ghana, and Togo. The project is called Water is Life. Benefiting from the project are particularly neglected rural areas. Wells are being drilled and equipped with pumps and filters. With access to clean water, the risk of water-borne diseases is reduced. The charity also supports a water supply project named CARD in Cameroon in order to provide clean and potable water in an effort to promote rural development. human aktiv contributes up to 80,000 euros a year to such projects.

It takes passion to help

The NAC SEA Relief Fund, the aid organisation of the New Apostolic Church in South-East Asia, published its annual report for 2017 in March. In it the charity documents how it uses the donated funds and informs the general public about the many different projects. In the editorial, District Apostle Urs Hebeisen talks about what motivates the team: "For us it is important that help and support make common sense, and are not motivated by some kind of hidden agenda or motifs of pride and reputation."

And something else becomes clear from the annual report: humanitarian organisations are particularly strong and effective when they are part of a network. For many years already, the NAC SEA Relief Fund has partnered with other charities such as NAK-Humanitas, a Swiss charity, and NAK-karitativ, a German organisation. Together these three charities have been able to realise many aid projects and have helped many people in Asia. Numbers and pictures prove that.



RELIEF OPERATION IN LANAO DEL NORTE

NACSEA Relief is supporting its partner of many years, NKP (Island Kids International Foundation) who reaches out to Lanao del Norte helping the victim of typhoon Vinta.

ISLAND KIDS PHILIPPINES (IKP) PHIL. ISLAND KIDS INT'L FOUNDATION, INC. (PIKIF) OPERATION "GINHAWA", AFTER VINTA, RELIEF OPERATION IN LANAO DEL NORTE



Search and Rescue Operation



Repacking relief goods at PKNP Learning Center

OPERATION 'TULONG'

"Tulong means in Filipino as much as 'aid' and refers to 'helping' (to tsuga nangangailangan) 'helping those in need' Our NACSEA partner who led the relief operation in Bicol Typhoon Nina, see our post 'A scary Christmas' reports as follows. We thank all donors who will support this action.



NACSEA RELIEF REPORT: "OPERATION TULONG" IN BICOL & QUEZON DUE TO "TYPHOON NINA"

As typhoon "Nina" intensifies on Christmas evening of 20th December 2016, strong winds have caused damage from medium to high-risk structures, uprooted trees, toppled down electric poles, and destroyed crops to most communities in Region V (Bicol) NACSEA Relief, immediately



| When the Church goes to school

Christian love transcends borders. Join us on a trip around the world as we visit school projects in South-East Asia, Central America, and Africa currently receiving help from the New Apostolic Church.



Actually, it is nothing more than a simple wooden structure that has been built in the south of the Philippine island of Mindanao. But for the people for whom it was built it means everything.

For one, the structure is synonymous with the future: there is room for fifty children in the two classrooms in this new school in Kiamba, an isolated village. Education, the village elder says, is the way out of poverty for the children. They belong to the indigenous T'boli peoples. Secondly, the new primary school is a joint charity effort. Funded by the Swiss aid organisation NAK-Humanitas, the project was carried out and built by NACSEA Relief together with the people of Kiamba.

The construction phase was anything but a walk in the park. Getting the building materials to a pick-up point was already a two-hour drive. From there, the material still had to be carried up to the construction site in a five-hour march over rough terrain. "It was worth the effort," District Evangelist Freddie Nuyad said at the dedication of the school.

So that little ants do not just work

The charity NAK-Humanitas is also engaged in projects on the other side of the world. It is currently funding a project in Nicaragua called Las Hormiguitas. The name is no coincidence. It means "little ants", and this is precisely how



many of the children from the poor neighbourhoods in the city of Matagalpa have to work. They unload vans and pick-ups at the local market, carry heavy parcels, or pick up garbage. Since most of them work to help their families, their pay—except for a meal—is usually a pittance.

Thanks to the project, these children can go to school for a few hours a week. Twice a week, the project's employees visit the market or the city's dump with their mobile school. The lessons allow the children to escape the stress of their everyday lives for a little while and discover new things. They are offered tutoring, training courses, and leisure activities.

From the foundations to the roof

reCharitable Ministry of the New Apostolic Church USA has been working and helping in Mackenzie, one of the largest shanty towns in Ndola (Zambia). There is no running, clean water and no sewage system, let alone medical care. Most of the population in Mackenzie does not have a full-time job or occupation.

Most children cannot afford to go to public schools because they do not have money for a school uniform, shoes, and teaching material. This is where so-called community schools come in, which are often supported by non-profit organisations.

Working with iChange International, another humanitarian organisation, reCharitable Ministry provided funds and sent out volunteers to lend a hand and get a project underway: the construction of new classrooms. You can follow the adventure from the digging of the foundations to the building of the roof on Facebook. The latest post reads: "Yay! The classrooms are finished and ready for the school year!"



Escort on horseback



NAC Southern Africa



When District Apostle John L. Kriel from South Africa visited the congregation of Kolonyama in Lesotho at the end of April, he was welcomed by the rector, the local chief, and herdsmen on horseback, who escorted him to the village. The region is very remote and the members are spread over a wide area so that the rector travels to them on horseback. The District Apostle was presented with a Basotho hat as part of a traditional welcome. The design of this straw hat is said to have been inspired by the conical Mount Qiloane. It is a national symbol of the Basotho and Lesotho peoples, and is found on the national flag of Lesotho. The divine service, to which the members from Masaru and Ladybrand had also been invited, was attended by 180 people. The District Apostle served in English. His sermon was interpreted into Sesotho, the second official language of the independent kingdom of Lesotho.

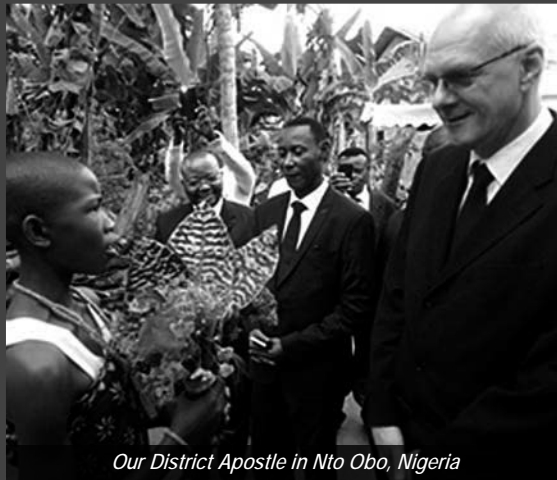


DISTRICT APOSTLE MICHAEL EHRLICH: Accepting responsibility

Upon their confirmation our young Brothers and Sisters take over the responsibility for their life of faith. Responsibility is associated with competency. For example, if someone is assigned responsibility in their job, they should also exhibit the necessary competency. If we apply this to our young Brothers and Sisters who testify at their confirmation their belief and the desire to purposefully follow Jesus Christ, we can establish: they not only accept the responsibility but also possess the associated competency. In the course of the

confirmation lessons they were taught – often on the basis of what they had already learned from their parents and Sunday School teachers – the essentials of the New Apostolic doctrine, the value of our faith, and our spiritual goal. I would like to use this opportunity to sincerely thank our dedicated teachers for their work!

It is then the task of our young members to observe the transferred responsibility in that they profess Jesus Christ in their further life in word and deed. They can be successful in this if they follow the Lord in His servants and believingly and trustfully commit themselves to God's hand.



Our District Apostle in Nto Obo, Nigeria

Jesus demonstrated what it means to trust God. Whether we have just been confirmed or have been responsible for our life of faith for decades already – it is necessary for all of us to look up to Jesus Christ. If we are consistent in our faith, apply Him as our benchmark and the focal point of our life, then we will be able to keep our promise to remain faithful.

Faithfully following Jesus' example means, for example, remaining steadfast in prayer and doing God's will. The strength to do so is imparted in the confirmation blessing

as well as in the sermon in divine services and particularly in Holy Communion.

The Lord Jesus gave His disciples the new commandment "that you love one another" (John 13: 34), and with reference to the old covenant He summarised the commandments "you shall love the Lord your God above all things and your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10: 27). This is a high demand. In practise it means that Jesus' nature should become increasingly evident in us.

If we practise the responsibility for our faith in this manner, HE will accompany us with His blessings and accept us in grace when He returns.

NIGERIA:

Working with love and devotion

As New Apostolic Christians, upon confirmation, we take up a mantle with an instruction to resist temptation, profess the faith and serve God wholeheartedly. However, while the pledge is a few sentences long and thus easy to recite, we all come to learn along

our journey that keeping up with it is not an easy task. Accepting responsibility is a deal and a will to act faithfully amidst inevitable trials and challenges.

The most effective way to achieve this is by enveloping our responsibilities in the house of God and our Love for Him as one entity. In this way, singing in the choir becomes a pleasure, evangelism, a delight and serving in the house of God an expe-

rience we always look forward to. This shows us that the only way to express true faith and to accept responsibilities and carry them out diligently is through love.

Through love and dedication a sister at the University of Lagos was led to search and invite some new apostolic youth residing on campuses around The Surulere congregation, so that they can be attending divine services there instead of forming campus fellowship where they cannot receive Holy Communion. A Priest from Badagry District also mobilized a few youth to renovate their congregation so as to give it a new look for thanksgiving service.



Asakpo congregation before renovation



Our young brothers during the renovation

SIERRA LEONE:



Inauguration of the New Apostolic Primary School

Joyful people of New Apostolic Primary School, Koidu gathered to Inaugurate their new school.

Like other schools, the Koidu school started from 2004 in the NAC Central church, Koidu. There were challenges but since Apostle Thaimu Kargbo took over the area, he encouraged the school community to continue.

In November 2015, the Jorg Wolff (JW) Foundation sponsored the construction of a six classroom structure, office/store and toilet of three compartments, via New Apostolic Church.

On the 10th December, 2017, school pupils, teachers, parents, church members in and around Koidu town, together with distinguished personalities came to grace the occasion.

The school children, parents and teachers marched along the main Kainkordu Road to the Church/school compound where the event took place. Children enacted to the audience topics they have learnt in social studies and religious education relative to the doctrine of NAC.

There were words of gratitude and recognition to those who played a part to erect the building and the affirmation for continual development of the school from strength to strength. It was the wish of all for the school to be a source of education, spiritual blessing and development for this generation and those yet unborn.

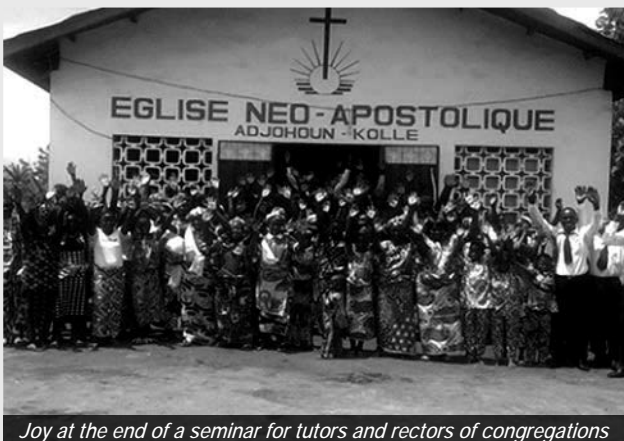


Teachers in Asobi - uniform - African outfit

BENIN:

I want to be educated too

This is the theme by which the Apostle Yedenu organized the women of their field of activity. Our sisters are educated on the basis of the annual manual for catechumens. They also want to be active and grow in faith. They are organized in groups of instruction under the responsibility of rectors of congregations and teachers.



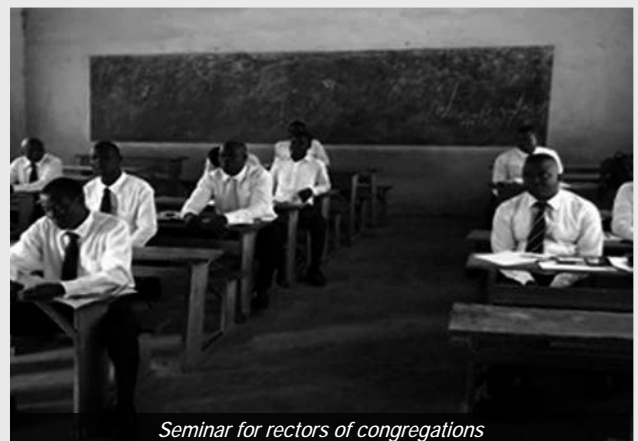
Joy at the end of a seminar for tutors and rectors of congregations

TOGO:

Ministers training

In 2018, the rectors of congregations were trained in their duties. The seminars took place with a strong participation of the rectors.

The learning contents of the seminars were developed by the tutors together with all participants with many role-playing exercises.



Seminar for rectors of congregations



The Sunday School teachers attentively listening during a seminar



A group picture of the Sunday School Teachers after the seminar

GHANA: Sunday School Teachers' Seminars

A Sunday School Teachers' seminar was successfully organized on the days of 6th – 7th September 2018 for 12 teachers of the Nkenkaaso District (Kumasi Apostle Area)

They were taught how to use the teacher's manual and role plays for the various lessons.

Role play which allows the students to better understand the

lessons of the Sunday school, was a key point of the seminar.



A role play on the Temptation of Jesus Christ by the Sunday School teachers

As Sunday school teachers, the '5 + 10 commandments' of a good teacher was also highlighted to equip them for their task.

The teachers were glad to have received the lessons and were energized to deliver the Sunday lessons going forward

GHANA: Confirmation Class Teachers' Seminar

A seminar was held for 16 Confirmation Class teachers from 10 communities in Accra.

In an engaging class where ideas were shared, the brothers and sisters exchanged their experiences on the challenges they face, and the joy of having the confirming ones express a positive interest in the lessons as well as counting down to the actual confirmation day.



Deacon Boamah a question during the workshop

The role-playing and group work activities included the Lord's Prayer, with each group offering a selected section of prayer as well as individual presentations and exercises.

With the examples from the seminar and new materials for the next two years, the brothers and sisters were confident and looked forward to a livelier, entertaining

and a more participatory confirmation class.



Group picture of the Confirmation Class Teachers



Participants performing an enjoyable activity



Sister Estefania, Mongomo - Equatorial Guinea, teaches the children in Sunday School



Apostle Chi Ignatius Nche in Bamenda, Cameroon surprisingly attends the Sunday School and the Confirmation Class

EQUATORIALE GUINEA and CAMMEROUN: Teaching and learning about the Kingdom of God

What a blessing to have good teachers and willing children!

With great passion our Sister Estefania is teaching the children in the Sunday school in our Mongomo congregation in Equatoriale Guinea. And with great interest the children are learning.

Also, Apostle Chi Ignatius Nche from the English speaking part of Cameroon was on hand to witness this occasion. For two consecutive



The children learn with great interest at Sunday School.

Sundays due to unrest in the local area, no gatherings were allowed. But our new apostolic children of Bamenda Sunday School and Confirmation class were not lazy: they learnt the Ten Commandments and the Ten Articles of Faith by heart and showed their skills proudly at the unexpected visit of the Apostle CHI Ignatius Nche at their next possible meeting.

NIGERIA: Youth convention

More than 200 district youth and their leaders from the east of Central Apostle Area (Nigeria) gathered in the Owerri Central Church for their annual youth gathering. This took place under the theme "Fidelity to Christ" from the 21st -23rd September 2018.

On evening of 21st, the young people gathered for a welcome fellowship. There was also a choir competition among themselves. After an opening prayer and a short message of welcome and thankfulness to God by Apostle Ernest the next day, the youth went together with the Apostle on an evangelism rally. Afterwards, the young people gathered in the central church to attend workshops and seminars, where they were trained by some professionals on the production of local soups, liquid soap, and tie and dye cloth. The evening was a memorable time for the youth, as the Apostle was the quizmaster for a bible quiz. It was an exciting atmosphere as all participants and even the audience were eager to answer all questions. The gathering ended with a special Sunday service.



Apostle Ernest with the first evangelism team

NIGERIA: Keeping our promises

The 2018 Youth Convention of the South Area Nigeria took place at Auchi, Edo State with the Apostle Goddey Odili.

The 4-day camp began with the registration and allocation of accommodation facilities following which the host district performed welcoming activities. The youth enjoyed further activities on the 2nd day as they were involved in various cultural displays, choir ministrations, a seminar, and a prayer meeting. The 3rd day, Saturday, began with prayers followed by physical exercises and cleanup activities. There was a march past with Apostle Odili on ground to witness the parade district by district. Three more seminars and a workshop in addition to a number of various exciting activities were held. The youth were also engaged in other events such as Bible quiz, choir competition, talent show, cultural displays, and football. A festive divine service was conducted on the last day, Sunday, to conclude the 2018 Youth Convention.



A section of the youth singing a hymn during the divine service

South Germany: Divine service for the departed with the Chief Apostle

On Sunday, November 4, 2018, our Chief Apostle conducted a divine service for the departed in Fellbach (South Germany), which was transmitted to the District Apostle Area in Europe.

Accompanying by the Chief Apostle were the host, District Apostle Michael Ehrich, Apostles Klaus Katens from Berlin-Brandenburg, Jörg Steinbrenner from North and East Germany, Anatolij Budnyk from Ukraine and seven Apostles from southern Germany.

Bible text: **"His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."**
(John 2 : 5)

Message: **Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.**

Core thoughts: The text word is from the story of the wedding in Cana. Mary realized the difficult situation and distress of the hosts; she did not ask for the cause and guilt, but wanted to help. She knew, "Jesus can help!" In the Christian tradition, Mary is also a symbol of the Church of Christ, and so we should be attentive to believers and to perceive the plight of the people. 'Need' in a deeper sense is to be distant from God and thus to have no peace, no comfort, no real joy. Mary was sure that the help will be provided by the word of the Lord; from this she convinced the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it!"

Let us radiate the inner conviction that Jesus Christ is salvation and salvation is received. In this world and in the afterlife faith is required: "What the Lord says is help!"

The more we put the word into action, the more salvation we get. If we receive the sacrament worthily, we experience help and gain ever more peace, joy, salvation and blessing. In the picture of the wedding in Cana, it is important for us to fill "the pitcher" up to the top, that means:

- Fight against sin,
- Implement the gospel,
- Follow the apostles,
- Be baptized and sealed

To accept and implement Gospel aspects: "Fill your life with the gospel!"

