

# community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

04/2019/EN



## Pentecost 2019

*Editorial*  
A powerful force

*Divine service*  
The activity of the Holy Spirit

*Doctrine*  
The return of Christ

New Apostolic Church  
International



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# A powerful force

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Holy Spirit works in a powerful manner. This was already the case in the past, it is still the case today, and it will also continue to be so tomorrow. The Holy Spirit admonishes, strengthens, comforts, and inspires. He is our constant companion in all situations of life.

We recognise the Holy Spirit in His activity. In the church of Christ He has always reinforced belief in Jesus—even in times of persecution, need, and suffering. And He urges us today—as He has done in the past—to continue spreading the gospel with the certainty that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Through the Apostle ministry, the Holy Spirit prepares the believers for the return of Jesus. Through the apostolate, believers receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and celebrate Holy Communion in fellowship with one another.

The Holy Spirit is active in the congregations—both in small congregations and large ones, regardless of the different cultures and conditions of life. He is present.

Within the believers the Holy Spirit produces the strength to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, to believe in Him, and to trust in Him. The Holy Spirit provides the strength to bear our burdens and to serve our neighbour in the congregation.



NAC International

Nothing can ever stop the Holy Spirit. Nothing will stop the progress of the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit is at work with all His might. With all our might, let us allow this power to be revealed in the congregations and within ourselves.

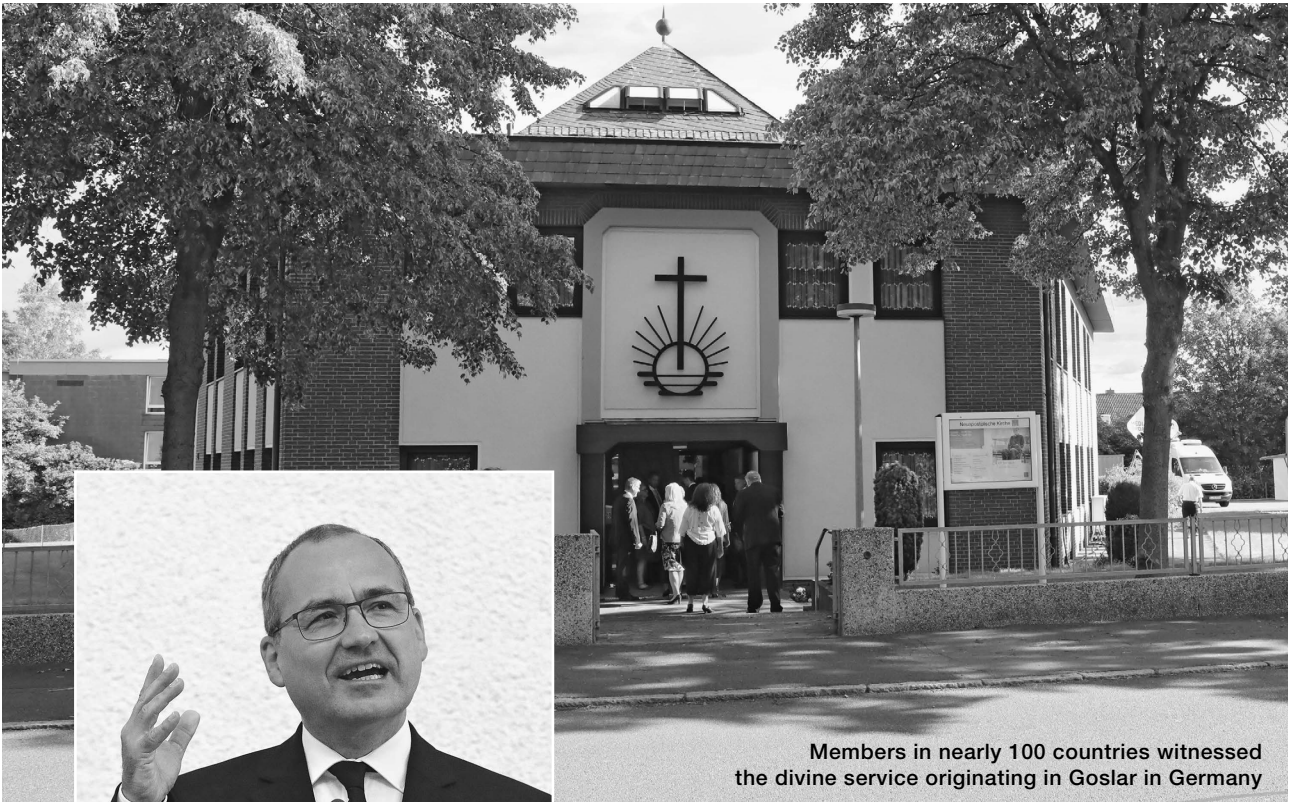
Let us thank the Holy Spirit again and again for His activity in the church of Christ, in the Apostle ministry, in the congregations, and within each and every one of us.

Warm greetings

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

Jean-Luc Schneider

# The activity of the Holy Spirit



Members in nearly 100 countries witnessed the divine service originating in Goslar in Germany

Oliver Rütten

1 Corinthians 12: 13

*"For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."*

Well, dear sisters, dear brothers, on Pentecost we commemorate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the institution of the church of Christ—and that is naturally a reason to celebrate. It is a nice opportunity for us to bring honour and praise to God the Holy Spirit. I know that this seems a little too abstract at times. We have rather a simple image of God the Father. We can easily imagine the Creator. After all, we can see the creation. With God the Father we associate the image of a caring Father, who provides for us. When it comes to the Son of God, we immediately think of Jesus Christ. And here we could imagine a great many things. But the Holy Spirit, the power of God—this is still a little more abstract. We cannot really come up with an image for the Holy Spirit. We can only experience and recognise the Holy Spirit by that which He does upon human beings, and



through human beings. We recognise the Holy Spirit by His activity. And then everything immediately becomes concrete for us.

Ever since the institution of the church of Christ, the Holy Spirit has been working very powerfully within the church of Christ. He has never ceased to be active in the church of Christ. Ever since the Holy Spirit has been active on earth, He has granted countless human beings the knowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Paul states that without the activity of the Spirit, a human being would not be able to recognise that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Whenever any human being comes to the recognition that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, this is an effect of the Holy Spirit's activity. All this time, the Holy Spirit has seen to it that believing human beings, who have come to faith in Jesus Christ, could be incorporated into the church of Christ through baptism. The Holy Spirit has seen to it that the message of the gospel could be spread to the most remote corners of the world. He has seen to it that the believers could be strengthened in their faith through the preaching of the gospel. It is quite something to think about all the things that Christians have had to experience and endure over these centuries: many were perse-

cuted, and still others had to live through situations of great suffering and need. And yet the Holy Spirit always ensured that they were strengthened so that they could remain firm in their faith in Jesus Christ. Throughout the entire history of Christianity there have been so many Christians who experienced such terrible things. Everyone said, "Well now, where is God?" But strengthened through the preaching of the gospel, they remained steadfast: "No! I believe in Jesus Christ! I will continue to follow Him." Here we can recognise the powerful activity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy

Spirit has always been at work in the church of Christ. Naturally, many things that were not pleasant have also occurred in the visible church of Christ—and this is simply because human beings always are—and remain—human beings. At times, the name of Jesus Christ was abused in order to wage war.

Christians have even persecuted and killed non-Christians. Christians have even fought among themselves and killed one another. Many other mistakes and serious errors have been committed, simply because human beings are human beings. But the Holy Spirit has seen to it that, despite all human imperfections, it has always been possible to continue spreading the gospel, and for Christians to continue believing in Jesus Christ and remain faithful to Him. When

## *The fire of the Holy Spirit burns in all the congregations!*

A Bible reading from Acts 2: 36–43 follows the reading of the Bible text (right)

Interpreters arrive at the church in Goslar (below)





we think about this for a moment, we realise just how powerfully the Holy Spirit has been at work. Despite all the misery, despite all the temptations, and despite all the errors that have been committed, the Christian faith has not died out. There are still many Christians who believe and who follow Jesus Christ! We give thanks to the Holy Spirit for working so powerfully throughout all of these centuries—and for the fact that He is still at work today!

We give thanks to the Holy Spirit for working through the apostolate. Ever since the apostolate was newly occupied, the Holy Spirit has worked powerfully through the Apostles. Through them human beings are able to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and become a new creation in Jesus Christ. The powerful effect of the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to celebrate Holy Communion and thereby partake in the body and blood of Jesus. Through the Apostles the Spirit works powerfully and tells us, “The Lord is coming soon!” But ever since the Apostle ministry

has been newly occupied, there have also been many obstacles to overcome. Here and there the Apostles and their followers were also persecuted. But the Holy Spirit simply continued working. No one was able to stop Him. Even the Apostles are only human beings who are imperfect. And even where the Apostles are at work there will be mistakes. Even there it can happen that human views or culturally

based interpretations are mixed into the sermon. And then certain things are preached where we must admit: “Well, that really has nothing to do with the gospel.” Even the Apostles are only hu-

man beings who are certainly imperfect. But these human inadequacies have never stopped the Holy Spirit. He works powerfully through the Apostles. And the gift of the Holy Spirit is dispensed, Holy Communion is celebrated, and the bride is being prepared. We are thankful to the Holy Spirit that He still works powerfully through the Apostle ministry, and that imperfect human beings can be prepared as the bride of Christ.

*We give thanks to the Holy Spirit for working so powerfully throughout all of these centuries*





The Holy Spirit works powerfully in the church of Christ. He works powerfully through the Apostle ministry. He works powerfully in the congregations and in the children of God. At present we have around 60,000 congregations around the world. And the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in all of these congregations! I am prompted to think about the young people. You can well imagine that I have to make some sort of reference to last weekend! All of those who enjoyed this great assembly with the youth in Düsseldorf can attest: the fire of the Holy Spirit is burning there! These young people are inspired by Jesus Christ! They follow Him

and serve Him! And Düsseldorf is not the only place I have experienced this with our youth! This is something I experience each time when I get together with the young people anywhere in the world. It is surely worth giving thanks to God for having given us so many young people whose hearts burn for Jesus Christ, who allow themselves to be taught and guided by the Holy Spirit. But this is not only the case with the young people. I can well attest that this is also the case in all 60,000 congregations around the world. Even in the very small congregations, where only a handful gather to worship, the Holy Spirit works in His full author-



District Apostle Peter Schulte from Australia and Apostle Helge Mutschler from Germany serve as proxies to receive Holy Communion for the departed (right)

District Apostle Rüdiger Krause (Germany) uncovers the chalices for the celebration of Holy Communion (left)



ity. And no one can say, “Oh well, there are only three to five of us—so the fire of the Holy Spirit is only a low flame in our congregation.” Even in these very small congregations, the Holy Spirit unfurls the fullness of His power, and the believers can feel the presence of God! They can receive the fullness of salvation. The Holy Spirit is not bound to a number. Even in a very small congregation, He can work in the fullness of His power, He can even do so in completely impossible situations. Here I am reminded of the many congregations where the brethren gather together in refugee camps. Others have to conceal their activity and have to gather in the forest. They have nothing, but they receive the fullness of salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit. In countries where we have many members, we even have congregations in prisons. New Apostolic Christians there have been convicted and are held in prisons. And divine services are even celebrated there. Society has told them, “We do not want you. You have to get off the streets for a while.” But wherever divine services are celebrated, the Holy Spirit can work in His full authority. Even these members, these believers in this extraordinary context, can experience the presence of God, can experience the love of God, and can receive everything that they need for their salvation. These are just a few very concrete examples. We

give thanks to the Holy Spirit for working so powerfully in every congregation through imperfect human beings.

The Holy Spirit acts and works powerfully in our brothers and sisters too. We have so many members who are examples to us. Some of them have heavy burdens to bear, and some of them have had to do so for years. They have had to endure great need. At times we ask ourselves, “How do they manage that? How do they cope?” These brothers and sisters have trust in God—unshakeable trust in God. They continue to love Jesus Christ. They continue to follow Him and remain faithful to Him. All we can do is marvel and admire them. I am reminded of the many brothers and sisters who serve the Lord tirelessly—be it in a ministry or in some other duty. They would have 250 reasons to say, “I quit.” But they simply continue to serve. They allow themselves to be led and guided by the Holy Spirit. We give thanks to God, the Holy Spirit, for strengthening, comforting, and uplifting these members again and again. On this feast of Pentecost, I would like to act as spokesman for the apostolate worldwide, and tell you, dear brothers and sisters around the world: “As the Apostles of Jesus Christ, we say, as Paul once did: ‘We thank God for the joy that we can experience through you! You are our joy!’” I would like to





District Apostle Helper  
David Devaraj (India)



District Apostle Kububa Soko  
(Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe)



District Apostle Helper  
John W. Fendt (USA)

express this gratitude in the name of all the Apostles. Once again, we say with Paul: “We thank God for the joy we can experience through you! You are our joy!” I needed to tell you that.

This powerful activity of the Holy Spirit—whether in the church of Christ, through the apostolate in the congregations, or in our members—is a source of comfort and joy for us. It is upon this that our hope is based and founded. The Holy Spirit will also continue to work powerfully until the very end. The Lord Jesus once spoke of the kingdom of God and compared it with a seed that a man planted in the ground. He said that no matter whether this man was awake or asleep, no matter whether he worked or did not work, the seed would continue to grow and develop, even though he himself did not understand its mysteries. Here Jesus merely meant to express that human beings cannot obstruct the development of the kingdom of God. It simply continues on toward its perfection and completion in mysterious fashion. The Holy Spirit will also continue to work powerfully upon us. If we allow ourselves to be led and guided by Him, He will perfect the new creation within us—and we imperfect human beings will be able to develop into the image of Jesus Christ! The Holy Spirit will also continue to work powerfully through the Apostle ministry and continue to help the Apostles so that they may carry out their mandate to the very end. The bride of the Lord will be prepared when the Lord comes. The Holy Spirit will continue to work powerfully in the church of Christ, even after the return of Jesus Christ. God will see to it that believing Christians are nourished through the Holy Spirit even in the time of the anti-Christian afflictions—the af-

flictions that will unfold in the great tribulation. And even when the adversary of Jesus Christ pulls out all the stops, he will not be able to stop the activity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will see to it that Christians will continue to be nourished so that they may remain faithful to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will complete His work. He will complete and perfect the church of Christ, and will lead it into the new creation, where it will have fellowship with God forever. When we look at it that way, dear brothers and sisters, we actually have a great many reasons to give thanks to the Holy Spirit, to thank, praise, and glorify the Holy Spirit. We have so many reasons to thank Him for having made us so rich in Jesus Christ. We, the Apostles, have so many reasons to give thanks that He has made us so rich in Jesus Christ. Indeed: praise be to God the Holy Spirit! He will complete His work.

## CORE THOUGHTS

We recognise the power of God the Holy Spirit in the history of the church, in the service of the Apostles, and in the service of the believers.

Let us live by the Holy Spirit! Then we will be raised up by the Holy Spirit at the return of Christ.



# Actions speak louder than words

Simply saying, “I love you” is not enough. “Do something concrete and give what is needed.” Some food for thought on Christian love from a divine service by the Chief Apostle.

In November 2018 Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider visited South-East Asia. Over the last week of his trip, he was in Indonesia and celebrated several divine services and had meetings with the leading ministers. On Sunday, 25 November 2018 he conducted a divine service in our church in Bandung Andir (Java, Indonesia), which was transmitted to congregations throughout Indonesia.

The Chief Apostle based his sermon on Matthew 25: 40: “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”

## In expectation of Christ’s return

“We want to prepare our souls for the return of Jesus Christ. That is why we attend divine services,” the Chief Apostle said at the beginning of the service. Remaining faithful to Christ means modelling our lives on His teaching. “And in every divine service we hear part of the teaching of Jesus Christ.” The Chief Apostle explained that the Bible text was taken from the parable of the Last Judgement. Jesus announced that He will judge everyone at the end. “That doesn’t apply to us, though,” someone might object, the Chief Apostle pointed out. “But we will be judged at the





More than 10,000 believers across the country followed the broadcast of the divine service.

Above: Chief Apostle Schneider (second from the left) with Apostle Samuel H. Tanshtikno (right)

return of Christ, because Jesus will decide: this one is ready, this one is not; they are worthy, they are not." It is important to know how Jesus will judge, he said. "One of the first things He will definitely consider is our love for God and our love for our neighbour."

## Believing in Jesus and following Him

Jesus declared those to be His brothers and sisters who do the will of His Father (Matthew 12: 50). And what was the will of the Father? That they believe in Jesus Christ and follow Him (John 6: 40). Later on, Apostle Paul said that those who are reborn out of water and Spirit are children of God. For through the rebirth out of water and Spirit they became children of God, and thus brothers and sisters of the Son of God. And these children of God have been called to be joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8: 14–17).

## Being there for one another

In the parable Jesus speaks about the lot of His brothers and sisters. Some

- are hungry and thirsty. They are poor and cannot afford even the barest necessities. "Just give them what they need and then their suffering is over. Do something concrete and give them what they need and the problem will be solved. That is also part of the gospel."

- are sick, are in a desperate situation, or are suffering otherwise. "There are situations in which there is little we can do. But we can provide comfort. We can show our compassion. We can encourage and pray for them."
- are strangers and feel misunderstood. "If they are strangers, accept them as they are. Don't ask them to change, just love them and accept them even if they are different."
- are prisoners, are being persecuted because of their faith, or have made a mistake and are now bearing the consequences of it. Even if they face hardship, are sick or weak or different, it must be our main objective to help them remain faithful.

This is something we all have to digest, the Chief Apostle said. "All of them are brothers and sisters of Christ. And now Christ says that He can identify Himself with all of them." The Chief Apostle went on to say that Jesus wanted to say: "We belong together. When you suffer, I share your suffering and pain. When you are sad, I share your sadness." And now He makes it clear that He wants us to help His brothers and sisters. And there are many possibilities to do so with the love of God. Our love for our neighbour is the standard that Jesus uses to measure our love for God. In this context, Chief Apostle Schneider went on to remind the congregation what it says in John: "You cannot love God without loving your brother. Those who love God must love their brother."

## CORE THOUGHTS

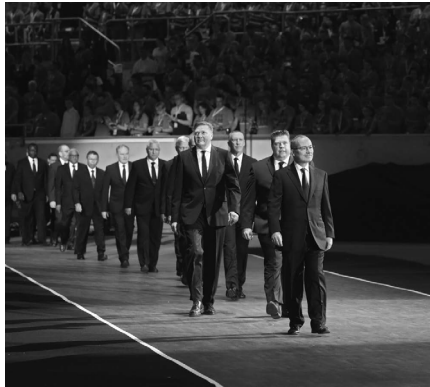
*Matthew 25: 40*

**"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"**

Following Christ does not spare us from trials and temptations. The Lord loves His own without exception. He expects us to help one another. He wants all of mankind to be saved and calls upon us to do our share.



■ CC Spindler



■ Oliver Rütten



■ CC Spindler



■ Andreas Otto

# | Here I am ... loved by God

Closing event and highlight of the International Youth Convention. 30,000 young believers came together in the Arena on Sunday morning for a divine service. Chief Apostle Schneider reminded the believers in his sermon of the omnipresent love of God. This love is to become tangible and perceptible in our fellowship through the young Christians.

At the beginning of the divine service on 2 June 2019, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider looked back over the last few days of the youth convention and thanked the youth on behalf of the Apostles for all the preparation and congratulated them: "You have done a great deal of work, and God blessed your work with success." In particular, the Chief Apostle praised the young people in how they did all of this together: "You filled the fellowship with life, and brought the motto of the youth convention, 'Here I am', to life."

## Sharing the gospel of God's nearness and love

"Here I am," God says, "I am here for you," the Chief Apostle said, adding: "God says: tell your neighbour that I am also here for him." The Chief Apostle wished that the young Christians would respond as follows: "Here I am! That is what I am going to do." It is our mission to pass the gospel of God's nearness and love on.



■ Oliver Rütten

## Witnessing Christ: loving and accepting

In response to the question how this can be implemented in today's life situations, the Chief Apostle said that Christ gives a clear answer in our Bible text: "People recognise that you are disciples of God if you live this love among one another." Jesus was not talking about human love, he said, where people love and expect to be loved in return, but the love of God.

God's love lives in us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is this gift which the young believers are to make tangible and perceptible. "Show your neighbour how God loves him and share God's love," the Chief Apostle appealed to the youth.

## Sharing and helping one another

"We are rich in Christ and want to share this wealth." In a time of increasing selfishness that means that we need to sincerely share the joy and suffering of our neighbour, he said. "Let us pray for one another, let us share with one another."

In order to express His love, Christ helped the people in a concrete way. The Chief Apostle called upon the youth to not only pray, but to actually act and do something to alleviate our neighbour's plight, both in the circle of the youth, the congregation, and the Church as a whole.

## Working together

Christ constantly sought fellowship with His disciples. This is still as important today, the Chief Apostle said. "Let's be together and work together—and in real life, not only via the Internet and the smartphone. Pray together, experience divine services, and celebrate Holy Communion," the Chief Apostle appealed to the youth. Sometimes one needs to bring a sacrifice for this: "Participate, get involved, even if you don't feel like it at the moment," the Chief Apostle encouraged the youth. Being active in our fellowship creates joy.

Christ forgave His disciples over and over and granted them reconciliation. In the circle of the youth there are also conflicts, the Chief Apostle said. Let us use the love of God as a source of strength in order to forgive our neighbour.

## Core thoughts for the future generation

The Chief Apostle said that many of the aspects that had been mentioned were already being lived by the young people, as could be seen over the past couple of days. But he said that it is important to him to give the new and future generation of the Church the core thought and these particular points to take along. "God loves you and expects that you also tell your neighbour that. The proclamation of the gospel begins with the fact that we love one another, accept one another, share with one another, help one another, spend time with one another, work with one another, forgive one another and reconcile."

Young New Apostolic Christians are not alone on this path. Christians serve their Master Jesus Christ also in other denominations. "This service is comprised of showing people that God loves everyone." That is why the New Apostolic Church fosters good relationships with other Churches.

What if there are difficulties when we proclaim the gospel? "With God's love we can overcome disappointments and resistance, and then simply carry on. ... Let us love one another as Jesus loves us. That will give the congregation, the Church, and Christianity a special kind of radiance."

## CORE THOUGHTS

*John 13: 34–35*

**"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

Jesus asks us to love one another as He loves us by accepting one another, sharing our joys and sorrows, helping one another, coming together to praise and serve God, and by forgiving one another.



# Unity in the congregation

The sincere celebration of Holy Communion could solve problems. This view was taken by Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider in a divine service in Colonia (Uruguay) on 17 March 2019. Holy Communion is more, much more, than mere liturgical routine.



INA Uruguay



“You know, I don’t understand this. They’ve celebrated Holy Communion so often, but it has achieved so little. Their problem should have been solved long ago,” the Chief Apostle cited one of his predecessors in the District Apostle ministry regarding a problem in a congregation. “If only they would celebrate Holy Communion properly just once, the problem would be solved.” He went on to ask the assembled congregation whether his thinking was idle fancy or an unattainable ideal. His answer: “No, it’s a divine fact that one celebration of Holy Communion is enough to overcome problems.”

## Fellowship in the sacrament means fellowship with God

The Chief Apostle based his sermon on a word from Paul. He helped along in explaining this biblical text: “When we gather and celebrate Holy Communion, our fellowship with God is strengthened as is our fellowship among one another. This is what Paul means in a nutshell.” And then

the Chief Apostle listed the various aspects of fellowship:

- The sacrament of Holy Communion nourishes and strengthens our fellowship with God. Why? “Because we remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and are constantly reminded just how completely dependent we are on God.” Man depends on grace and the forgiveness of his debts. That is why Holy Communion is so important: the believer shares in the merit of Christ, the Chief Apostle said. “He fought and won, and now shares His victory with us. There is nothing we could give or do to save our soul.”
- The celebration of Holy Communion strengthens our bond with Jesus Christ. Every time we celebrate Holy Communion, He reminds us: “You are mine! I have redeemed you, I love you, I died for you.” No matter what happened, the Chief Apostle said, “Jesus loves us! He says, ‘Don’t worry, you still belong to Me. You are Mine!’” Our response to this is, “Yes, I am Yours! This is what I promised You at my baptism, at my confirmation.”



A total of 22,000 believers were able to participate in the divine service, most by video broadcast. Two thousand were in Colonia, where he conducted the service. The Chief Apostle was accompanied by District Apostles Enrique Minio, Raúl Montes de Oca, Wolfgang Nadolny, as well as the Apostles from South America

- The life of God, the new creation, which has been laid into us, is nourished and can grow within us, the Chief Apostle said. “In Holy Communion we draw the strength we need in order to grow in the mind of Jesus Christ and to assimilate His nature.”
- When we celebrate Holy Communion we realise that we are part of the body of Christ. “He is the head and we are the members.” The head decides what must be done, the members execute it, the Chief Apostle said. We must preach and disseminate the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Chief Apostle said.
- Finally, the celebration of Holy Communion is also a foretaste of and a means to prepare for eternal fellowship in the kingdom of God. “Our imperfections, our shortcomings, and our faults will no longer exist. Nothing will separate us from God any more. We will have perfect fellowship with Him.” This is a fact that strengthens the fellowship of God’s children among one another, the Chief Apostle said. “If all of us are aware that we are completely dependent on the grace and merit of Jesus Christ, then we know that it is superfluous to reproach or accuse our neighbour.” If we are aware that we are completely dependent on the grace and merit of Jesus Christ, we will be humble towards our neighbour. “There will be no more discussions or competitions to find out who is the best.”

## CORE THOUGHTS

*1 Corinthians 10: 16–17*

**“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.”**

Holy Communion shows how dependent we are on God. It strengthens our bond with Him, nourishes the divine life within us, strengthens our calling, and prepares us for eternal fellowship with Him. As a result, it strengthens our fellowship in the congregation.

## THE MIRACLE OF PENTECOST

ACCORDING TO ACTS 2: 1-47

*Fifty days after Easter, at Pentecost, the Apostles together with men and women who had followed Jesus, were gathered in a house in Jerusalem. They were waiting for the Holy Spirit to come and strengthen them as Jesus had promised.*

Suddenly there was a loud noise. A violent storm came down from heaven and filled the whole house. Tongues of fire rested above each of them and the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were able to speak in different languages and tell of God's great deeds.

At the same time, there were pilgrims from Mesopotamia, Asia, Egypt, Libya, and Rome visiting in the city. Many pilgrims came to the house where the disciples, who had been filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke to them. Something remarkable happened. Each of them was able to hear the gospel in his own language.

"How can this be possible?"

These men come from Galilee. How can they suddenly speak different languages?" the visitors asked themselves. Some thought the disciples might be drunk. Then Peter spoke.

"No one is drunk here. Today a great miracle has happened. God has poured out His Holy Spirit, just as the prophets promised." Then he told them about Jesus, how He had been crucified, and had resurrected. Peter's sermon touched their hearts.

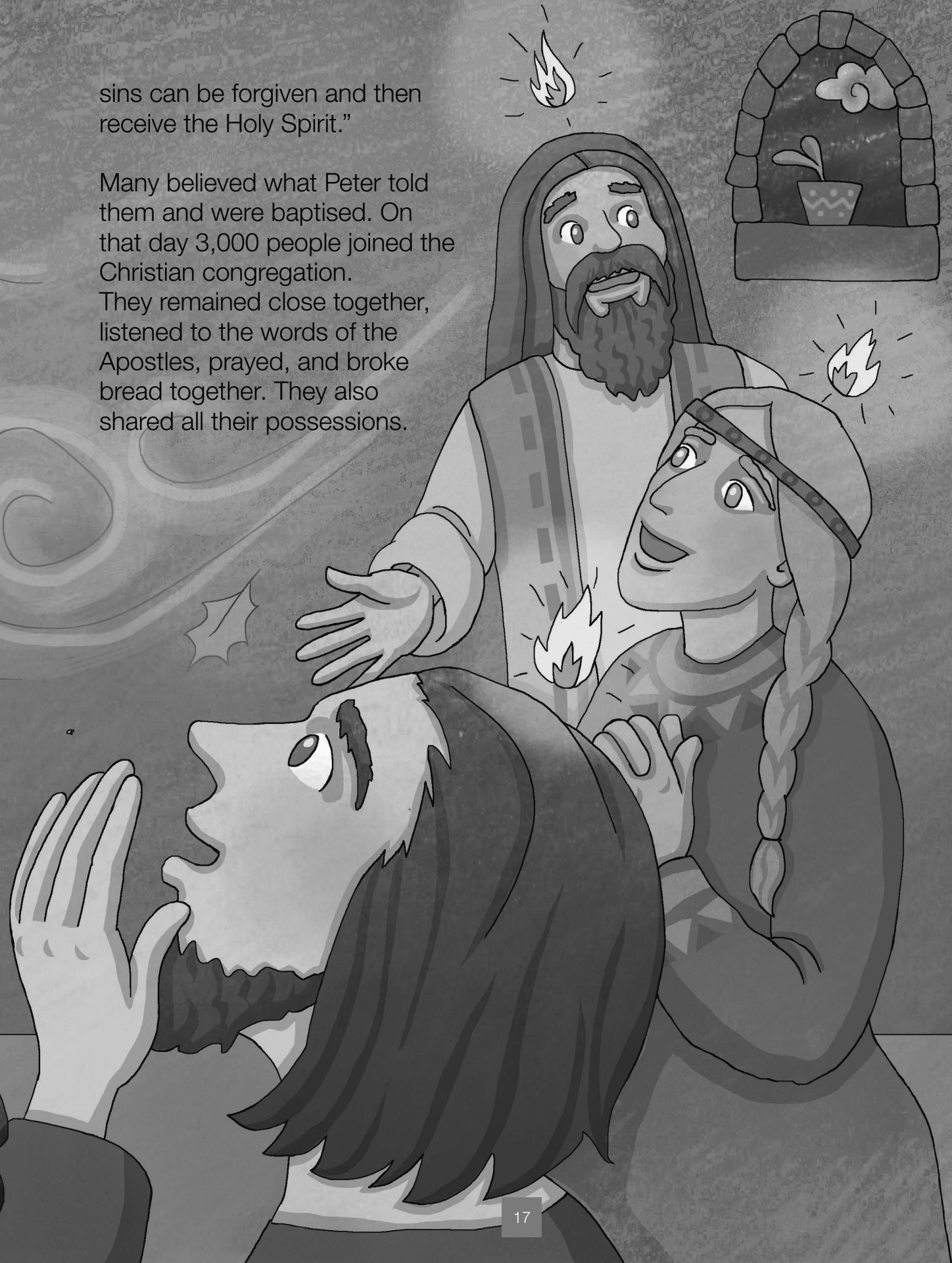
"What should we do?" they asked the Apostles.

Peter told them, "Be baptised so that your



sins can be forgiven and then receive the Holy Spirit."

Many believed what Peter told them and were baptised. On that day 3,000 people joined the Christian congregation. They remained close together, listened to the words of the Apostles, prayed, and broke bread together. They also shared all their possessions.





## AT RÚBEN'S IN MARANGUAPE (BRAZIL)

Hello, my name is **Rúben**. Welcome to my home country of Brazil!

Brazil is a very large country in South America. In fact, it is the fifth largest country in the world. I live in **Fortaleza**, the state capital of Ceará, located in the north-eastern part of the country. It is very hot here throughout the year.

Our **beaches** are beautiful. Many tourists come to Fortaleza to enjoy the ocean and the beaches.

Along the beaches and on the ocean you can see many **jangadas**. A jangada is a traditional wooden fishing boat used in the northern part of Brazil. Actually, it is a kind of sailing raft.

The municipality in which I live is called Maranguape. It is surrounded by **mountains** and lakes. The region is very lush and green and beautiful. I love to go on nature walks with my father and my sisters. Two months ago I turned six. When I am older I want to walk all the trails and see all the animals that you only find here.

I have two **sisters**, Rute and Raquel. They are twins. We love each other very much. Here you can see us in front of our church in Maranguape. My sisters sing in the district choir. When I am older I also want to sing in that choir. I love the hymns they sing there. Although I do not always understand everything that is



preached, I know that a divine service is something very special. My father always says that we encounter God in every divine service.

And this is what the interior of our **church** looks like. My father is a District Evangelist. During the week he often picks me up from school and takes me along to other congregations. My favourite congregation is Mucunã. There is a very beautiful garden there that the sisters from the congregation take care of.

This is my **family**. A few years after I was born, my mother became ill and died. I was four years old then. I miss her very much. My father always tells me that she loved me very much. After my mother had the twin girls, she wanted to have a son. And then I was born. God fulfilled her wish.



During the day I am at school. In the mornings I do my homework there that we were given the day before. My **friends** there are Heitor, Vinícios, Emanuela, and Sofia. Did you know that we have grades ranging from 0 to 10? Ten is the best grade. Our school year begins in February and ends in December. In July we have two weeks of holidays.

Then I have time to play with my **action figures**. This is my favourite one, Max Steel.

On the **motorbike** I like to think that I look a little bit like an action hero. What do you think?





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# | The return of Christ

Preparing Christians for the return of Jesus and making them fit for the challenges of the twenty-first century, that is the task of the apostolate. This is what Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider discusses in a letter addressed to the congregations.

Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is present and active in the church (CNAC-QA 712). We can attest to the activity of the Holy Spirit in the church in the fact that

- He keeps the promise of Christ's return alive (CNAC-QA 203).
- the Apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, are working to prepare the believers for the return of Christ (CNAC-QA 433).
- the preaching inspired by the Spirit always has the objective of preparing the congregation for the return of Jesus Christ (CNAC-QA 626).

The Catechism states that "it lies in the nature of the Apostle ministry to proclaim the return of Christ and to prepare the congregations for this event" (CNAC-QA 442). To me this seems like a good opportunity for us to think about the best way to proclaim the return of the Lord and keep this promise alive in our time.

## Impediments to proclaiming the return of the Lord

The early Christians were convinced of the imminence of the return of Christ. But the fact that this promise was not fulfilled, together with the interruption in the activity of the Apostles, caused the Christians to push the return of the Lord further and further into the future.

The imminent return of the Lord has again been proclaimed with authority since the renewed occupation of the apostolate. However, we cannot help note that the promise of the return of Jesus does not inspire nearly the enthusiasm it deserves. The reasons for this are numerous. Some of these follow below.

- The Apostles have been proclaiming the imminent return of the Lord since the mid 1830s, and He has not yet come. The signs that were supposed to herald the end-time gave rise to different interpretations, which often turned out to be erroneous.
- Owing to the fact that living conditions have improved for many, believers no longer feel the need to "flee" life on this earth and to be "saved" from this world. Many, even among the least fortunate, rely more on economic and social development than on God to improve their lives.
- The supernatural character of the events we proclaim (the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the rapture of the living, the thousand-year kingdom of peace) makes our preaching difficult for a large number

of our contemporaries to understand. Even internally, some educators counsel us not to speak of these things to the children in order to avoid traumatising them.

- Some do not accept the idea that Jesus would preside over a judgement at His return. The prospect of being judged by God appears frightening and incompatible with the image they have of Jesus. We should also note that many of the believers live in families comprised of New Apostolic Christians and others who are not, or of practising and non-practising members. The prospect of being separated from their loved ones at the return of Christ worries them and causes them suffering.
- Certain aspects of our doctrine of future things do not correspond to those of the majority of other denominations. When we talk about the return of the Lord, we are criticised for emphasising the differences rather than the similarities we have with other Christians. And when we teach that it is necessary to be sealed by a living Apostle in order to be part of the bride of Christ, we are accused of being exclusive and sectarian.

## How should we talk about the return of the Lord?

This background situation should not discourage us from fulfilling our mission of proclaiming the imminent return of the Lord. But in order to be heard, we must do as Apostle Paul and put ourselves on the level of our audience (1 Corinthians 9: 20–23). Today our preaching concerning the return of the Lord should incorporate the following aspects.

Like the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, His return can only be grasped in faith. The Lord explained that it was not possible to determine the moment of His return (Matthew 24: 44; Luke 17: 20). He clearly told His Apostles, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1: 7). In Mark 13, Jesus spoke about the events that will precede His coming. There will be wars, earthquakes, famines, persecutions, as well as false prophets who will perform wonders and miracles. All of these things have existed throughout all of the centuries that have passed. The fact that they still happen today cannot be considered proof of the imminent return of Christ. At most, we can conclude that they will not in any way impede the plan of divine redemption. Let us therefore avoid talking about the "signs of the time" in order to convince the believers of the imminence of the return of Jesus. We believe in the return of the Lord because Jesus



has promised it and because the Spirit proclaims it to us. We believe that He will come soon because the apostolate is again at work on this earth in order to prepare the way for His coming.

The salvation that God offers us is much more than an improvement of our material existence. He wants to lead us into His kingdom, where evil and all of its manifestations (suffering, injustice, deceit, hypocrisy, hate, and death) are banished. God desires to grant us eternal life, in other words, eternal fellowship with Him. In our heavenly homeland (Hebrews 11: 14–16), human beings will live in harmony with God and among one another. They will form a communion of distinct but perfectly united people—in the image of the divine Trinity. Our motivation is not to flee this world or escape some future catastrophe. For us, entering into the kingdom of God is not an escape, but an accomplishment. We aspire to become that which God has created us to be.

We do not deny that by combining their efforts people of goodwill can (or could) establish peace, justice, and well-being for a certain amount of time and for a certain segment of humanity. But we are convinced that they cannot, by any means, do so on the scale of all humanity. Only the Almighty can come to the aid of all mankind of all time periods, by intervening in history Himself. The incarnation of the Son of God was one such direct intervention of God in the history of humanity. The next such interventions will be the return of Jesus Christ, then His coming in power and great glory with His firstfruits, and later on, the Last Judgement. All of these divine interventions are beyond human comprehension and can only be grasped in faith. We do not see these as a frightening threat, but as an expression of God's love for mankind.

At His invisible return, the Lord will only take unto Himself the elect who have reached the necessary state of maturity. The prospect of this judgement makes us aware of the need to prepare ourselves seriously for this event, but it should not worry us. We place our hope fully in the grace that the Lord will grant the believers who are animated by the genuine desire to be in communion with Him (1 Peter 1: 13).

Jesus will return to take His bride unto Himself and celebrate the marriage of the Lamb with her in heaven. The image of the bride is a reference to the notion of fellowship in love, just as the image of marriage is a reference to the idea of joy and sharing. However, the rapture of the bride is not an end in itself. This must be seen as a step in the plan of

redemption. Those who are part of the bride are called to fulfil a special mission, namely to proclaim the gospel to all human beings of all time periods in the thousand-year kingdom of peace. The ultimate goal of God is to allow all human beings access to eternal life, in other words, to have perfect fellowship with God and among one another.

## How do we keep the promise of the Lord's return alive?

The Apostles have been given the commission to dispense Holy Sealing, by way of which the believer becomes an heir of God, and to prepare the latter for the return of Christ. This preparation requires the active collaboration of the believer: each one must work out his own salvation (Philippians 2: 12). This is why it is so important for us to inspire the believers to keep the promise of the Lord's return alive in their hearts.

In order to encourage the believers to prepare themselves actively for the return of the Lord, we have two possibilities at our disposal:

- increase their love,
- make the church a prefiguration of the kingdom to come.

## Developing the love of the believers

Through Holy Sealing, God allows believers to share in His nature by granting them the gift of His love (Romans 5: 5). Out of this love, believers develop the desire to answer this love (1 John 4: 19). We can develop this love in the hearts of the believers by

- showing them the magnitude of the sacrifice of Jesus.
- allowing them to share in the fullness of Christ's merit.
- telling them about the inheritance God has in store for them.
- allowing them to taste the love of Christ through our care and understanding.

Children of God who truly know the love of Christ are rooted in this love, and are filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3: 17–19). They desire ardently to be with Jesus. This desire comes to expression in their daily prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22: 20). But it will also translate into consistent efforts to remain in the fellowship of life with God already today.

Through the teaching of the Apostles and the worthy receiving of Holy Communion, the believers can grow in

Christ. The love of Christ enables them to overcome egoism and indifference in order to open up to others. They

- take an interest in the lot of their neighbour and show him their concern and care.
- endeavour to help him discover Christ through their testimony in both word and deed.
- want the gospel to finally be preached to all mankind without hindrance, which is why they implore God to continue His plan of redemption by sending His Son and establishing the kingdom of peace
- actively prepare themselves to become priests of God and of Christ in the kingdom of peace in order to proclaim salvation to all mankind.

### The church, a prefiguration of the kingdom to come

When the Pharisees asked Him when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus responded by telling them that the kingdom of God was within them (Luke 17: 20–21). In fact, the kingdom was already present in His person: those who believed in Him were able to experience the kingdom of God on earth through Him.



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In our time, Jesus is present in His church through the Holy Spirit. He works in the church through word and sacrament, and leads it through His Apostles. Where the Holy Spirit is at work through the ministry authorised by Jesus Christ, the believers experience intimate fellowship with the Lord and one another in Holy Communion. This means that they can have a foretaste of the salvation of the future kingdom of God already here on earth.

A believer who is content to wait for the Lord's return by praying and attending divine services will eventually become weary. On the other hand, if he can already taste the joys of the kingdom to come beforehand, he will be all the more motivated to enter into it. With the power of the Holy Spirit, let us work to make the Church prefigure the kingdom to come! Our objective is to allow everyone to attest

that Jesus Christ rules His church. The presence of Jesus can be recognised by the following signs.

- The deaf, the mute, and the blind are cured. With the help of Jesus, we can overcome all things that might impede our communication and relationship with others.
- Accusers are silenced (John 8: 9), and we no longer talk about the mistakes that Jesus has forgiven.
- All disputes about who is the greatest cease, and each one places himself at the service of others (Mark 9: 34–35).
- Human differences fade away for the sake of unity in Christ (Galatians 3: 28).
- Material things no longer pollute spiritual concerns (Mark 8: 14–18).

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# The Church between the cultures

How much religion does the world need? How much congregation does belief need? And how much unity does the Church need? Answers were given in a panel discussion with the Chief Apostle at the IYC—and they are even correlated.



Oliver Rütten



The event entitled “Here we are” attracted about 6,500 spectators in Düsseldorf and via live stream. On the podium next to Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider were two young people, Nicole Hagel and Chris Harmsen, District Apostles Rainer Storck from Germany and Jürg Zbinden from Switzerland, and Professor Stephanie Tritt, a medical doctor. The discussion was moderated by Friederike Gottschalk.

In terms of rules to uphold the unity of the Church, the Chief Apostle follows the mantra: as little as possible and as much as necessary. He was responding to a question about unity in the Church. Although the cultures differ, the teaching has to be the same everywhere. This not only applies to the music in the Church, but also to the development of teaching material, the way we go about pastoral care, and even the ordination of ministers. After all, “ministry will not work without a congregation. The minister must also be accepted by the congregation”. And there are cultural differences in the congregations.

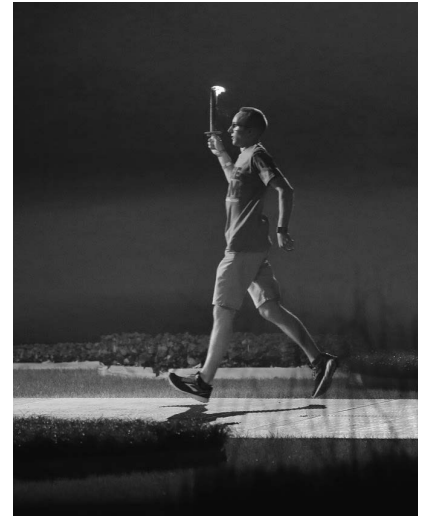
The world is in a permanent state of flux, there is pressure to perform, stress, burn-out, and depression: this is how Professor Tritt described the downside of progress. Why is the Church not more successful in establishing itself as a haven of peace and security, the moderator asked. Bad marketing?

First, the Chief Apostle said, the Church (“it is only an institution”) could do nothing to alleviate this, only faith in Jesus Christ can. Secondly, the gospel is not a product that can be changed or developed to make it sell better. And therefore, thirdly, success cannot be measured by how many accept the gospel.

Is there a risk that the world will lose its Christian values. “No,” Chief Apostle Schneider said. “Not as long as there are Christians who live what they believe.”



Oliver Rütten



Jessica Krämer



Marcel Felde



# The IYC celebrates our diversity

#HereThereEverywhere was the name of the show which demonstrated just how big the I in IYC really was.

On Saturday evening the participants of the IYC gathered in the Arena for a special event: #HereThereEverywhere – Jesus, the light in us.

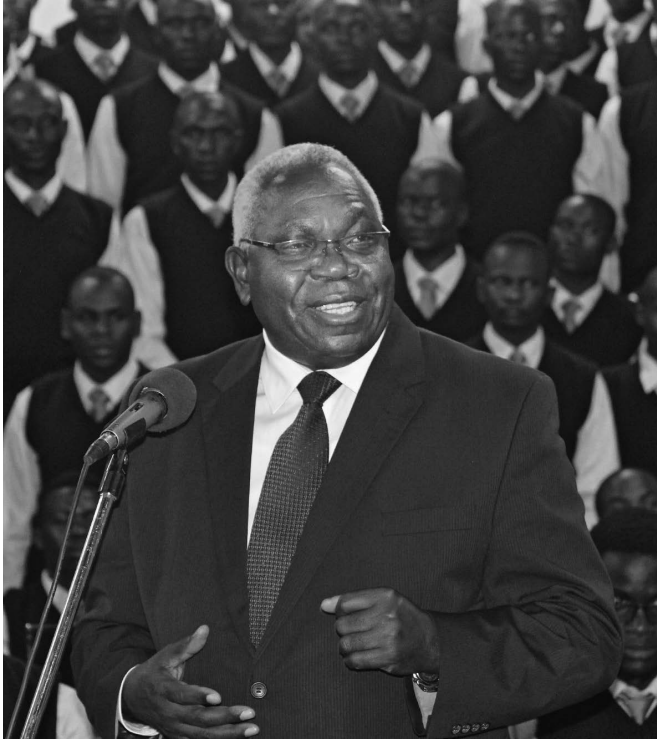
On stage and through videos and music, the youth were taken on a monumental journey across the five continents—and taking centre stage throughout the presentations and performances was our faith in Jesus Christ

In the run-up to the IYC2019, the young people had prepared video material about their home countries, their cul-

ture, and their congregations. These clips were projected on huge screens around the Arena, alternating with colourful and extravagant performances on the centre stage of the Arena.

The two-hour show was enriched by music, dance, and acrobatics. Between Australian didgeridoos, Chinese dragons, Japanese sumo wrestlers and Kendo fighters, Chinese tuk tuks, American rugby players, African choirs, and a dazzling fireworks display the evening was a feast for the eyes and ears.





■ NAC Zambia, Oliver Rütten



# Moving on with team spirit

In the circle of the District Apostles he is considered a man with a great deal of experience, whose aim was always to achieve conciliation and integration. You could always count on him. Charles Ndandula retired on 21 July 2019 after 14 years as a District Apostle. Here is a small tribute.

He likes to smile and is a wonderful story-teller. He is modest and unassuming, soft-spoken. Yet he knows exactly what counts and is important. District Apostle Charles Sakavumbi Ndandula has turned 65. His dark hair is greying, and his well-deserved retirement will bring to an end a successful and very intensive career in the Church. What will remain of him are many big and small experiences, recommendations, decisions made to benefit his many brothers and sisters and congregations in the heart of Africa. He is a level-headed, sensible person, who always bore in mind the everyday problems of the believers in his care.

## A friend to his brothers and sisters in faith

He often took the front line when earthquakes and violent storms lashed the country and offered help where possible. Whether it was spontaneous emergency aid for people affected by a bush fire in Mongu in Western Zambia or the internationally coordinated emergency aid for victims of the floods in Southern Province in 2008. He is also known for his strategic and creative thinking in terms of planning and seeking out possibilities and opportunities for the Church



District Apostle Charles S. Ndandula with his brothers and sisters (facing page) and at a meeting of the District Apostles

in the country. The financial viability of the District Church he led was always a desirable objective for him. Finally, he was even a member of the Finance Committee of the International Church, working closely with the Chief Apostle. The committee was established in 2014.

### On public television

His comprehensive portfolio also includes the topic of communication. Thursdays between 6 and 8 p.m. ZNBC TV 3, a public television channel, broadcasts New Apostolic content. More than 680,000 households are reached this way—with the numbers rising. After all, the New Apostolic Church in Zambia does have a membership of one million, making it a real force to be reckoned with. Two hours of free airtime per week—nationwide. The programme airs music events, divine services, documentaries, and lectures on our doctrine of faith. The Communication Department of the District Church is responsible for the content.

### From his biography

His biography makes exciting reading. Charles Ndandula was born on 26 December 1953 in the small village of Kapela near Lukulu in the western part of Zambia. He was the youngest of eight siblings. In spite of the family's relative poverty he managed to get a very good education: from primary school right to the University of Zambia, where

he did his bachelor in law and continued his studies until he was admitted to the bar as a lawyer. As head of the legal department of the Post and Telecommunication Cooperation PTC (today Zamtel) he moved to Ndola, Zambia's third-largest city, with a population of about 400,000.

### A life-changing year

Then came 1971, a life-changing year for Charles. Thanks to his brother, he came into contact with the New Apostolic Church. He felt attracted to it without being able to say exactly why. He wanted to know more, but was not prepared to change his denomination just like that. So he did what many believers do: he gave God an ultimatum. He opened the Bible, read the text from John 4: 41–42 and asked God that this be the basis of the sermon in the next divine service. And it was! The Priest based his sermon on exactly this Bible text, and young Charles was deeply impressed. He became New Apostolic.

His Church career began in the congregations of Kitwe and Ndola as choir leader. In 1984 then, things started in earnest. The then Apostle Duncan Mfuno ordained him a Priest. A year later already he was a District Evangelist in the district of Chifubu with 14 congregations and three missions. Another year on, he was asked to lead the district as a District Elder. On 28 June 1987 Charles Ndandula was ordained an Apostle. Chief Apostle Hans Urwyler had come to Lusaka in order to carry out the ordination. Starting in 1995 Charles Ndandula assisted his District Apostle as a District Apostle Helper, before being appointed to lead the District Churches of Zambia and Malawi on 13 March 2005. In 2007 he was asked to also look after the Church and the members in Zimbabwe.

### Things will continue

Now he is retired. Charles Ndandula was in the ministry for a total of 35 years: 32 as an Apostle and 14 as a District Apostle. "Our new District Apostle will be Kububa Soko (50)," District Apostle Ndandula wrote in April this year in a circular addressed to the congregations. "Please accept and support the new District Apostle upon his appointment." In looking back over his time in ministry, District Apostle Ndandula said: "Let me say that whatever has been achieved during my time as District Apostle was achieved by God through our teamwork. Through teamwork, our God will achieve many things through our next District Apostle."

# Faith is there for everybody

Congregations everywhere are in the middle of public life. There are congregations who open their doors for the public, others who invite people in for discussions, and then congregations who walk through the streets with a brass band to create awareness.

When New Apostolic congregations in Ghana celebrate an anniversary, it is not uncommon for them to do so publicly. This is how it was recently with a health and proclamation walk in Aburi. And this is also how it was in Kyekyewere: on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, the congregation marched through some of the town's main streets with a banner and a brass band in tow. Unusual? Not really. Spreading the gospel with music was already done way back when in the 1920s in Germany.

Three weeks after the International Youth Convention of the New Apostolic Church in Düsseldorf (Germany), the Protestant Church of Germany hosted its 37th Church Day ("Kirchentag") in Dortmund. Participating in the event are New Apostolic congregations from the city of Dortmund and the Working Group Contacts to Churches and Denominations. The offer ranges from prayers to evening services and discussion groups.



In Kyekyewere, a small village in Ghana, members took to the streets to create awareness ...



... and invite their neighbours to the anniversary service



For many New Apostolic Christians, open-air services are a matter of course



For many years, the New Apostolic Church has fostered contacts to other churches

# Light despite massive power outage

On 16 June 2019 Argentina stayed dark. A massive power outage hit the country. The blackout also affected Uruguay and parts of Paraguay.



INA Sud



Millions of people were cut off from power, huge cities were literally left in the dark. But none of this could keep four congregations from celebrating their long-planned festivities.

**Santa Fe N°1:** the congregation is located in Lanús, about eight kilometres south of the capital city Buenos Aires. The congregation there celebrated the seventieth anniversary of its dedication, which took place on 12 June 1949. The ser-

vice was attended by 162 believers and conducted by Apostle Guillermo Eduardo Canessa.

**Lobos:** the city is situated about 100 kilometres south of Buenos Aires. Our church there was dedicated on 17 May 1969. Many former members were invited for the fiftieth anniversary festivities. Also participating were retired ministers, among them the retired Apostle Norberto Picchi. Bishop Ruben Ramos conducted the divine service.

**El Talar N°1:** in the district of Tigre, situated 28 kilometres north of Buenos Aires, the congregation El Talar No. 1 celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Because of the power outage the celebration turned out a little different than planned. The service was conducted with emergency lights and without microphone. But nothing was able to dampen the festive mood of the 110-strong congregation. Apostle Gerardo Daniel Zanotti conducted the service.

**Garín N° 1:** here too, the congregation celebrated its jubilee. The renovations were completed just in time so that the celebration turned into a kind of recommissioning. Bishop Fernando Altare conducted the service. The power outage here could be remedied with an emergency generator.

In Oberhausen (Germany) the Chief Apostle ordained three Apostles on 30 June; before this he retired five Apostles



■ Oliver Rütten, NAC India, NAC Ghana

# Changes in the circle of Apostles

Currently there are 350 active Apostles. Fifteen Apostles were retired in the first half of 2019. In the same period, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider ordained ten new Apostles.

Assisting the Apostles in their work are a total of 249,500 diaconal and priestly ministers. Together they care for 58,500 congregations around the world. The apostolate includes nine District Apostle Helpers, 16 District Apostles, and the Chief Apostle.

## Ordinations

On Sunday, 27 January 2019, Chief Apostle Schneider conducted a divine service in Cape Coast (Ghana) and ordained four District Elders as Apostles: Richard Osei Senyo (1976), Anthony Kofi Kuada (1965), and Samuel Ayidaana Atinga (1974) for Ghana, as well as Oscar Kabanga Nwanza (1972) for Nigeria.

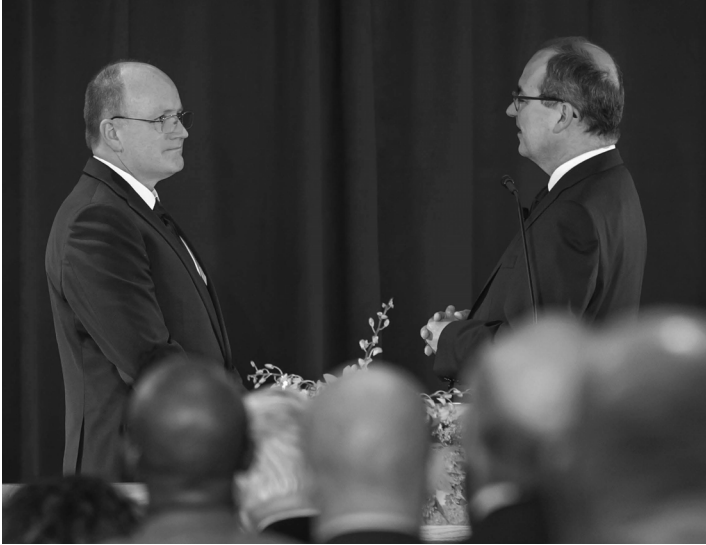
On 10 February 2019, the Chief Apostle conducted a divine service in Charlotte, North Carolina (USA), in which he

ordained District Evangelist Robert C. Ferguson (1962) an Apostle. He succeeds the retired Apostle Reinhard Hecht.

In a divine service in Kampala (Uganda) on 31 March 2019, the Chief Apostle ordained Bishop Charles Godwin Zimba (1963) and District Elder James Chinkubila Kasongo (1963) as Apostles for Zambia.

On Sunday, 30 June 2019, Chief Apostle Schneider conducted a divine service in the working area of District Apostle Rainer Storck. In this service in Oberhausen (Germany) he ordained three new Apostles: Dimitrios Diniz Vassiliadou (1966), previously a Bishop, and Stefan Pöschel (1968) and Thorsten Zisowski (1967), who previously worked as District Elders.





Robert C. Ferguson (left) was ordained an Apostle by Chief Apostle Schneider on 10 February 2019 in Charlotte, North Carolina (USA)

## Retirements

District Apostle Helper David Devaraj retired Apostle Lazrus Patel (1954) in Banswara (India) by commission of the Chief Apostle.

Four Apostles went into retirement on 27 January 2019 in a divine service in Cape Coast in Ghana: Samuel Arthur (1953), Wilson Dzattah (1954), and Benjamin Kwadzo Pidah (1956) from Ghana; and Emmanuel Ityoapine Hagher (1955) from Nigeria.

District Apostle Helper David Devaraj retired Apostle Chistranjan Nanda (1951) on 27 January 2019 in a service in Amath (India) by commission of the Chief Apostle.

In the service in Charlotte, North Carolina (USA) on 10 February 2019, Apostle Reinhard Hecht (1953) retired after 42 years in ministry, more than 17 of which he worked as an Apostle. The retirement was carried out by Chief Apostle Schneider.

District Apostle Charles S. Ndandula retired the Apostles Alexon Alec Samson Nyaleye (1954) and Moses Kangwa Chileshe (1953) on 31 March 2019 in a divine service in Blantyre (Malawi) by commission of the Chief Apostle.

During a divine service in Lavistown on 12 May 2019, the Chief Apostle retired Allister D. Kriel (1954).

Five Apostles from the District Apostle Area Western Germany retired on Sunday, 30 June 2019. Chief Apostle



District Apostle Helper David Devaraj (right) retired Apostle Lazrus Patel in Banswara (India) by commission of the Chief Apostle



On 27 January four Apostles in Ghana retired. The Chief Apostle thanks them for their many years of dedicated service

Schneider took the opportunity to thank the Apostles Pavel Gamov (1957), Clement Haeck (1953), Wilhelm Hoyer (1953), Manuel Luiz Jerónimo (1952), and Walter Schorr (1953) for a total of more than 121 years of activity as Apostles.

## Sixteen District Apostle Areas

The District Apostle Areas across the globe are led by the following District Apostles: Michael David Deppner (DR Congo West), Michael Ehrich (Southern Germany), Joseph Opemba Ekhuya (East Africa), Edy Isnugroho (South-East Asia), Leonard Richard Kolb (USA), Rüdiger Krause (Northern and Eastern Germany), John Leslie Kriel (Southern Africa), Enrique Eduardo Minio (Argentina), Raúl Eduardo Montes de Oca (Brazil), Wolfgang Nadolny (Berlin-Brandenburg), Peter Schulte (Western Pacific), Kububa Soko (Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe), Rainer Storck (Western Germany), Tshitshi Tshisekedi (DR Congo South-East), Mark Woll (Canada), as well as Jürg Zbinden (Switzerland).

## DISTRICT APOSTLE MICHAEL EHRLICH: Experience Fellowship

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The intention we have in the congregations is expressed in our Church's Vision and Mission: to have sincere fellowship in which everyone can experience God's love and joy through serving the Lord and others. Our congregations are certainly highly conglomerate – people from different age groups and with different personal interests and life plans are found therein. This is already visible within a close cultural region. The further we look, the more apparent the human differences become.

Despite all differences, we are united by our belief in the Lord and thus our expectation of the return of Jesus Christ. Therefore our fellowship is characterized by the gospel.

This fellowship includes hearing God's word and celebrating Holy Communion together, treating each other in love and respect, taking an active interest, sharing joy with each other and also mourning together, being there for one another, and interceding in prayer. The sincere sibling like relationship is also expressed in the address "Brother" and "Sister".



Regarding fellowship with Jesus Christ and amongst one another, the metaphor of the body (1 Corinthians 12: 26-27) clarifies the structure in our congregations: the Lord is the head, we are the members. If He, as the head, controls each member, this results in harmonious togetherness despite all differences in personality, life experiences, capabilities, background or social status.

In Philippians 2: 1 under the heading "Unity through humility" we can read an advice from Apostle Paul which I wish to place into our hearts today: "Therefore if there is any consolation in

Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus".

With sincere greetings, yours

*M. Ehrlich*  
Michael Ehrlich

## GHANA: We Love and Care for You!

On the occasion of Thanksgiving the youth of Hohoe congregation seized the opportunity to embark on pastoral care visit to two aged members of the congregation. Pastoral care visits are essential for the spiritual development of individuals and the congregation at large. It is against this background that the youth set out to visit two

sisters of the congregation who could not attend the divine service due to their old age. The youth interacted with the members, singing uplifting songs and hymns. The elderly sisters were full of joy to have the youth around them. They seized the opportunity to provide counsel to the youth.



*The youth in a pose with one of the elderly sisters (seated in middle)*



*The youth singing a song for the other elderly sister (seated in middle)*

GUINEA:

## Children Experience the Fellowship



*The catechumens of Kissidougou presenting a biblical scene*



*A game scene of children's hide and seek after divine service*

The children of the congregation Kissidougou experienced the fellowship on a children's day. The children enjoyed recreational games, and enacted biblical scenes in the presence of their parents and ministers at the premises of the congregation.

Subsequently, a divine service with District Evangelist Camara took place. He served with the word from Luke 2: 49 "He answered them, Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must take care of

my Father's business?" Addressing the parents of the children, the District Evangelist asked that children should not be treated poorly at home. Rather, parents must support the religious education of their children through prayers, and providing them with bibles to sustain their interest in Sunday School and Catechism Classes. He advised parents to speak encouraging and kind words to their children. He reminded them: "Children are a blessing for us!"



*Matching on the beach*

## SIERRA LEONE: Doctrine and Fellowship

Three congregations of the New Apostolic districts (West Central, East Kissy and East Lumpa), in the Western Area of Freetown came together after a divine service at the Bureh Beach in the outskirts

effort to familiarize with one another as belonging to the same church to eat, play games and have fun. Food was provided in the form of "Bring and share" There were competitions of beach

football, volley ball, dancing and many more.



*Photo taking*

of Freetown – the Peninsular – for a family outing.

A prayer was offered by Apostle Saffa Braima, who addressed all and sundry - thanking them for coming; in an



*Members listening to the Apostle*

Over 800 brothers and sisters experienced this wonderful time of fellowship.

## NIGERIA: Music Camp

Music is very important in our congregations. While the New Apostolic Church in Nigeria has active adult and children's choirs in some congregations and districts, we currently have seasonal choirs in many of them.

A music camp was organized in Lagos with the full support of the JW Foundation from Germany. The project was to inform, energize, and engage the participants a more spirited singing life, based on

proven practices and the use of our new local English hymn book. During the camp, participants were taught to give glory, honor, and praises to God through every choral and instrumental

ensemble practice and presentation. In addition, there were elective classes in the areas of a cappella, composition, orchestra, piano, conducting, and praise team for participants to learn more in-depth about a specific area in music.



*Music camp children with Apostles Odili and Nwanza at the Central church Lagos*



Part of the congregation at the youth service

The choir at the youth service

## CAMEROON: Youth Convention 2019

The general theme for the 2019 youth convention was: Youth, Security and Dynamism – Symbols of Wealth.

About 200 young New Apostolic members from the French speaking part of Cameroon came together for guidance about special topics such as “Youth and Drugs – Possible Consequences”, “Sexual Diseases and Their Consequences”. These were presented by experts of the Ministry of Health and

other health professionals. Issues of spiritual growth and doctrinal discussions were based on the motto of 2019, “Rich in Christ”. There were also some leisure activities and games, such as iron arm, scrabble and draughts.

The Youth Convention 2019 came to a blessed and joyful close in a divine service on Sunday 18th August, led by Apostle Félicien Ebanga Edoa.

### TOGO:

## Beneficial initiative



Harvest of cotton

Our brothers and sisters of the congregation of Djonou-Kope, working area of Apostle Amevoh, have undertaken and produced a cotton field. The work was very laborious and required a lot of sacrifices. But the sale of this cotton made it possible to release profits which were used to make bricks.

These bricks are produced in view of erecting a church for this congregation.



Manufactured bricks for church construction



Brothers and sisters of the congregation Djonou-Kope

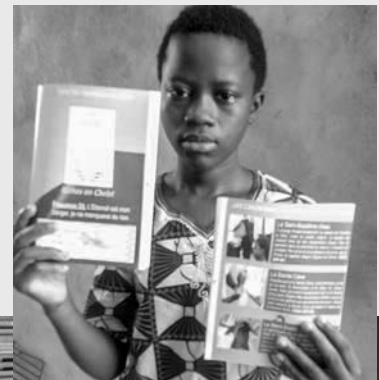
### BENIN:

## Support to young pupils



The children were happy about the new exercise books

This school year has been a very happy one for needy children in different congregations. 500 school notebooks, were printed for the benefit of school children. On the back-covers were printed excerpts from the New Apostolic Catechism that deal with the three sacraments of our church. This brought great joy to our little school children



A boy presents the new exercise book



Many exercise books could be distributed



Our Chief Apostle at the altar in Monrovia

The choir sings in the divine service

Goodbye

## LIBERIA:

## Joy in the Chief Apostle's visit

On Sunday, October 13, 2019, the brethren in the city of Monrovia (Liberia) celebrated a divine service with the Chief Apostle.

It was the first divine service of a Chief Apostle in the West African country of Liberia, bringing great joy to the brothers and sisters there. Our District Apostle Ehrich and District Apostle Ekhuya (Kenya) accompanied the Chief Apostle.

The service took place in the central church in Monrovia. He was broadcasted via TV and radio throughout the country. Based on the Gospel of Matthew, which contains the so-called golden rule of which Jesus Christ spoke in the Sermon on the Mount, *"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men*

*should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets"* (Matthew 7:12).

District Apostle Ekhuya and Apostle Sanpha Sesay from Sierra Leone were called to assist in the service.

On that Saturday, October 12, 2019, there was also an Apostle meeting under the direction of the Chief Apostle and in the presence of the District Apostle Ehrich and the Apostle Bauer. In addition to Apostle Alexander Wreh from Liberia, nine active Apostles coming from neighbouring countries Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast, who are all under the care of Apostle Bauer, also attended the meeting.



Children performed in the concert at Monrovia

Concert in Monrovia

## GUINEA:

## Visit of our District Apostle

In the congregation of the City of Air, Conakry District, our District Apostle Ehrich led a Divine Service on Tuesday, October 08, 2019.

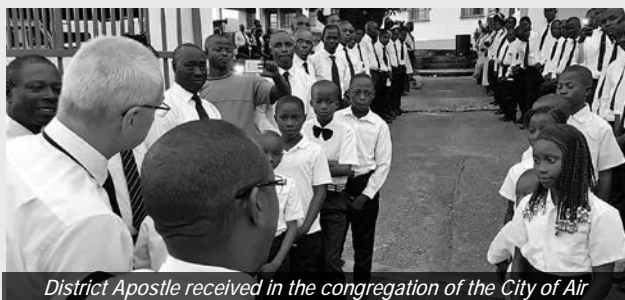
The text word was from Matthew 10: 12-13 *"And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you."*

The Word teaches us about our acceptance of the Apostles' ministry. The Lord has sent these Apostles to the world to announce the kingdom of God, but to those who will accept to be saved. To become a Christian is to decide to leave the world.

To be a Christian is to live faithfully to Christ. To be faithful to Christ is to walk in the teaching of the Gospel, in the house of God and to put on the character of Christ.

The divine service was assisted by Apostle Bauer and Bishop Haba. In the divine service, Bishop Haba was retired due to ill health.

The District Apostle announced the visit of our Chief Apostle to Guinea in March 2020, in Conakry. He asked for all to enjoy the fellowship of each other as part of the blessings of God.



District Apostle received in the congregation of the City of Air



The Bishop Marcel Haba being retired



# South Germany / West Africa: Divine service with the District Apostle

On Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2019, our District Apostle conducted a divine service in Schwäbisch Hall (South Germany), which was transmitted to the District Apostle Area Europe and per live streaming to the District Apostle Area West Africa.

**Bible text:** **"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."**  
(John 12: 26)

**Core thoughts:** The Lord introduces himself as a servant of His Father. He is also the servant of the people to whose salvation He gave His life. To follow Jesus means to be ready to serve. He tells us what to do where and when. If we dedicate ourselves to the service of the Lord, earthly worries cannot stop us from fulfilling this ministry.

What are our tasks?

- Preaching the gospel in word and deed. This involves confessing our faith and aligning our lives with the divine law.
- Supporting the work of the Apostles who have to announce the imminent return of the Lord.
- Refraining from judging others (Luke 6:37).

Where and how should we serve?

- First in the congregation with the gifts that the Lord gives (1 Peter 4:10).
- In society, we can serve by shaping our lives in the spirit of the gospel. This includes turning to those who are needy, forgotten or marginalized (Matt. 25: 38-40).

When should we serve?

He who places the Lord at the center of his life and follows Him will always be ready to serve. Here, too, the Lord is the perfect model:

- In happy moments - the Lord attended the wedding at Cana, but did not forget His mission.
- In difficult times - even on the cross, the Son of God was still worried about His neighbour.

So let us serve out of love for God and neighbour, until the Lord comes again - this is what the Lord will take in grace at His return!

