

# community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

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## The Chief Apostle in Papua New Guinea

*Editorial*

Celebrating Sunday

*Divine service*

Divine gifts

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Salvation in the new  
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of the confirmation vow

New Apostolic Church  
International



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# Celebrating Sunday

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is a beneficial tradition for us as Christians to celebrate the Sunday.

*We profess our belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Throughout the course of a week we experience many an injustice and see many terrible things that happen in this world. And then we come together on Sunday and profess: “Nevertheless, we believe that Jesus Christ has risen. He has conquered death, evil, and sin. He is right. He has the last word!” This is a wonderful way to close the week and begin a new week.

*We profess our belief in the resurrection of the dead and hope for our own transformation.*

We are waiting for the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of the living. And no matter what we have experienced, lived through, or seen: our hope is founded upon the return of Christ. We send a signal when we gather for divine service on Sundays and give first place in our lives to the things that are important.

*We profess our belief in goodness.*

There are various reasons for which people demonstrate, at times also because they want to show: “We do not agree



NAC International

with this or that. We see things differently.” As Christians we do not agree with injustice or the power of evil. And this is what we demonstrate when we come together for divine service on Sundays. We believe that goodness will triumph over evil. We believe in the first resurrection of Jesus Christ and in His return.

Let us celebrate every Sunday in this manner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' and 'S'.

Jean-Luc Schneider

# Divine gifts



Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider went on an extended eleven day journey to Australia and Papua New Guinea last year. On Thursday, 28 September 2017 he conducted a divine service in Kombikum in Papua New Guinea to celebrate Thanksgiving with the brothers and sisters there

NAC Australia



2 Corinthians 9: 8

*“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”*

Dear brothers and sisters, it is a great joy and grace for me to be able to experience this divine service with you. It is a special service: we are celebrating Thanksgiving today! We give thanks to God for everything He has granted us. It is clear that God neither needs our gratitude nor our offerings. He is not like us humans, who typically expect a thank-you when they do something, and if nobody thanks them they are upset or even angry. God does not need our thanks, nor does He need our offerings. The only reason He might want to have a thank-you from us would be to grant us even more blessing. Because what do we do when we prepare for Thanksgiving? We count God's blessings, and become aware just how much God has given us. We recognise how great His grace is towards us. And while we are preparing for Thanksgiving we also become aware how rich we are in God. The blessing lies in the fact that we recognise how rich we are in God. And joy is the blessing we receive today.

The Apostle writes here that God has an abundance of grace for us. When we celebrate Thanksgiving we profess our faith in God the Father. We believe that everything comes from God the Father and that everything is grace. God the Father is the origin of all life. God is the source of life, and we are thankful for this. Human beings cannot

create life. Life is only possible because God the Creator grants it. God created the world—nature—and entrusted it to man as a gift. He gave us His perfect creation, a gift we are grateful for.

But He gives us so much more. After all, He also sustains His creation and the created life. God grants us health. God grants us the strength we need to work, and He blesses our work.

Good health is a grace. It is nothing we deserve. I know many people who are far better than I am. Although they have done nothing wrong they are sick. So I am aware that good health is truly a grace. And we are thankful for this grace. God also gives us the skills and the strength we need to do our work. This too is grace, and we are thankful that we are able to work. But I know many people who work hard and just have no success. If God does not bless the work, there can be no success. Let us thank God that He has given us health and strength, and that He blesses our work.

God has also given us the people around us. I am sure you will agree with me: it is a grace to have a husband or wife. It is a special grace to have children. It is even a grace to have

*God not only gives us a minimum, but an abundance so that we have enough to do good works*

More than 24,000 people participated in the Thanksgiving service in Kombikum (Papua New Guinea)





other people around us. Our life would be very difficult if we were alone. We often depend on the help of others. It is a grace to be part of a family. It is a great grace to be part of a nation. And in His love and wisdom, God has also given us a law: the commandments. This too is a grace, because if we follow these commandments our life together will be peaceful and balanced. We are thankful to God for the commandments, for His law.

We thank God for everything that He has granted us: creation, life, health, strength and blessing, the people around us, and the divine commandments. We know and believe that God has given us enough so that we can do good works. However, He not only gives us a minimum, but an abundance so that we have enough to do good works.

What are these good works? The first good work is our gratitude to God. We thank God for all the gifts He has granted us. We believe that He always gives us enough so that we can say thank you. There is always enough to bring God a thank-offering: "This belongs to You, because You have blessed us."

*As children of God, we believe that God has given us enough so that we can help our neighbour*

Brothers and sisters, this is the kind of strong faith we want to show. God always gives us enough so that we can express our gratitude to Him through our offerings. We always have enough to reach out to our neighbour and share with him. In fact,

we can afford to not only think about ourselves. God has given us creation as a gift, and in our relationship to nature we can afford to not only think about our neighbour, but also about the next generation. We believe that there is enough, but we need to treat the environment with the



Many people walked up to seven days to attend the service. In order to provide food for all the visitors, the congregations planted additional crops already months before. They also built shelters

appropriate care, and not only think about ourselves. Even if we do not have too much, we believe that God always gives us enough so that we can help our neighbour in need.

I know many people who do not agree with that. They complain, "We are so poor. We have nothing at all." As children of God, we believe that God has given us enough so that we can help our neighbour. We believe that God has given us enough to live on and that we can afford to keep His commandments. We are not forced to commit a sin to get what we need. Many people think that they don't have enough to live on and become thieves. They have lost all honesty because they want more. That is not our belief. We are satisfied with what we can receive while observing the divine commandments. We believe that God has given us enough so that we can obey His law.

We even believe that we have received so much that we can afford to take care of our soul. You know, many people say, "Your church is nice, but I have no time to go to church. I have to work to provide for my family." We, however,

believe that God provides us with everything we need so that we can care for our soul and do not have to worry about being "punished" for going to church. We can afford to go to church and take care of our soul without suffering a shortage in our daily lives.

God has given us many gifts. By grace, He has given us enough so that we can be thankful, think about others, and help them. He has given us enough so that we can obey His law and take care of our soul.

But we are not only thankful to God our Father. We are also thankful to Jesus Christ. We are thankful to the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has given us a very special gift. He gave His life so that we can have eternal life. Through His sacrifice it has become possible for us to enter into the kingdom of God and have eternal fellowship with Him. Nobody else could have defeated death and evil. And, honestly, we do not deserve it. When Jesus laid down His life for me, I was not even born! Nobody knew that I would exist one day. But He loved me so much that He died for

Seated beside the altar:  
District Apostle Helpers  
Edy Isnugroho and Peter  
Schulte, District Apostle  
Andrew Andersen



me. What grace! We were able to contribute nothing, yet He gave us everything. We are thankful for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; we are thankful for eternal life.

We are grateful to the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit we could certainly read the story of Jesus Christ in the Bible, but it would not help us. But through the activity of the Holy Spirit, we can receive eternal life through the word of God and the sacraments. The Holy Spirit helps us, or rather enables us, to attain eternal life. He sustains this life through His word and the sacraments. That is why it is such a grace that we know Jesus Christ and can follow Him. We are so thankful that the Holy Spirit gives us the strength to follow Jesus.

God has also given us other children of God. We are all part of the church of Christ. I think you agree with me: it would be very difficult to remain faithful if we were alone. We are so grateful to have so many brothers and sisters helping us, praying for us, and struggling with us and for us.

Through the Holy Spirit, God has also given us a special law. Do you know the law of Jesus Christ? Results and success are not decisive for Him. All that matters for Him is our love and our efforts. It would be terrible if all that would count for God were the things we were successful in. In this

case, I think we would be far fewer today. At least I would not be here, because I have made many promises to God—I will overcome this, I will not do that again, and I promise to do this for You—and failed to keep them. Thankfully, God does not consider this. The only thing that matters for Him is our love for Him and our dedication, as well as our efforts. And that is why we are so grateful for this law of Christ. He has given us the law of love and forgiveness. Otherwise we would not have such fellowship with each other. This is the law that God has given His people. For this reason it is possible to remain together and to remain united.

These are the divine gifts. By grace He has given us eternal life, which He sustains through His word and the sacraments. He has granted us the grace to be part of the fellowship of the children of God. He has given us the law of grace, love, and forgiveness. And He has given us so much that we can do good works. God has given us so much that we can renounce all those things that do not please Him. We do not need to follow the devil. God has given us so much that we can afford to give up our thoughts and opinions and accept the thoughts of Jesus. We have received so much from Jesus that it does not cost us much to say, “OK, You don’t agree with me? I will give up my ideas and think like You.” If Jesus tells us, “I don’t agree with the way you think,” we say, “OK, Jesus, I am going to change.”



We can afford that because we are so rich: the glory He has already given us and the glory He will still give us—eternal fellowship with God and taking on the likeness of Jesus. This is so magnificent that we are able to endure hardship on this earth and serve the Lord and our neighbour—simply because we know that it is worth suffering for Christ and with Christ. It is worth serving the Lord and worth serving our neighbour. Committing ourselves to God's work is worth it. The reward for it is eternal fellowship with Christ. The glory which we will experience there will be so great that we will not even think about our suffering and our service any more. Even those who have suffered all their lives will not think about it any more once they are together with Jesus Christ in His kingdom. God has given and promised us so much that we can serve and even suffer, if it has to be. This is a wonderful divine promise. God has given us enough so that we can become servants in the kingdom of peace. Imagine that! Although we are weak sinners and imperfect human beings, God has blessed us so richly that we can become servants of Jesus in the kingdom of peace, and can be a tool in God's hand for all people. Already today, God has given us enough so that we can share our spiritual wealth with our neighbour. And already today, we have so much that we can share our faith and the gifts of God with others. Not only in the kingdom of peace, but right now.

Brothers and sisters, these are a few examples of the gifts we have received from Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. We are so thankful for them. Let us do good works with them. Let us renounce everything that does not please God. Let us suffer for God and serve Him. We have received enough to do so. Let us share these gifts with our neighbour today and proclaim the teaching of Jesus. At the return of Christ we will become servants in the kingdom of God and be a tool in God's hand for all people. We have so many reasons to praise and thank God. And this gratitude is also a blessing for all of us.

## CORE THOUGHTS

The abundance of grace we have received enables us to do good works on earth and be true disciples of the Lord.



Frank Schuidt

# The secrets of a feel-good congregation

A congregation in which everyone feels welcome and loved. How is that supposed to work? The Chief Apostle’s answer: everyone can contribute. Here are ten reasons to rejoice and five building blocks that contribute to a feel-good congregation.

The beginning of a hymn that was sung by pilgrims on their way to the temple in Jerusalem was at the heart of a divine service on 26 November 2017 in Essen (Germany).

“To begin with, we see Jerusalem and the temple as an image of the heavenly Jerusalem,” Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider said, and cited five reasons why we should rejoice.

- Our motivation is not to escape an announced catastrophe, nor to flee an existence that has become unbearable for us. We want to go there because we love God and long to be with Him.
- Naturally, there will be no more suffering, no more pain. But what is even more beautiful for me: we will be delivered from our sinfulness, from our imperfections, and from our faults.

- With God there is enough room for all people. He wants to draw everyone to Himself.
- We do not only want to enter the house of the Lord because we ourselves want to be saved. We want to go there because we want to help people and support God.
- We can only walk this path together. Individualists will not make it. Let us do it together.

“We can also see Jerusalem as an image for the congregation today that gathers to celebrate divine service,” the Chief Apostle continued and cited five other reasons for joy.

- We rejoice because we can have fellowship with God already now: through His word and in the celebration of Holy Communion.
- We delight to go into the house of the Lord because it is precisely there that we receive the strength so that



District Apostle Joseph Opemba Ekhuya, District Apostle Helper Edy Isnugroho, and District Apostle Enrique Eduardo Minio were called to assist

we can follow the path that leads to the heavenly Jerusalem.

- We gladly go into the house of the Lord because we can be freed from the burden of sin there already today.
- We gladly go into the house of the Lord because we can pray together there. And we know: praying always helps.
- We gladly go into the house of the Lord because there we find everything we need to have fellowship and to build up unity—despite our differences. There we find everything we need so that we can live together in peace.

A task is connected with this, the Chief Apostle explained: “All New Apostolic Christians are jointly responsible that everybody comes into the house of the Lord gladly.”

- It is the house of the Lord, and this is something you have to be able to feel and experience: Jesus Christ has the final say here; His law applies here; He is the Master.
- It must not happen that some do everything in a congregation and the others are only “customers”, who show up when they need something. Let us all experience the joy that lies in mutual service.
- You can be a peacemaker. You can help in building peace and in preserving it. Everybody can do that. Every child of God has received this gift: you do not always have to say what you think; and you do not always have to be in the right.
- So that we may come into the house of the Lord gladly, a certain number of things are required, and for that we also need money. Here too, let us put our gifts into the service of God and the congregation.
- If everybody does what they want and uses their gifts on a whim, there will be chaos. An amount of organisa-

tion is necessary. We also need the Church leadership: globally, in the district, in the congregation. – It is not that simple, but we are doing our best to make it work.

Many are of the opinion that everybody should be able to find everything according to his or her own liking in their home congregation. “But that is absolutely impossible,” the Chief Apostle said. “And why? Simply because we are human and therefore all different,” he explained. His definition: “A congregation in which members feel good is one in which everybody comes to seek Jesus Christ—and finds Him.”

## CORE THOUGHTS

*Psalm 122: 1*

**“I was glad when they said to me,  
‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’”**

We look forward to attaining eternal fellowship with God soon. We are happy to attend the divine service where we receive what we need to reach our goal. We humbly use our gifts to serve the Church.

# “I wish I had sufficient vocabulary to describe it!”

How will the future kingdom of God actually be? In response to this question, the Chief Apostle simply stated that he was at a loss for words. But it might be helpful to read what the Bible has to say on the subject.



INA Brasil

“God desires to share His glory with us.” This was the clear message that Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider addressed to the congregation in Natal (Brazil) during a divine service he conducted there on 6 August 2017.

## Jerusalem, an image for the kingdom of God

“Today we understand this text in view of Jesus Christ,” said the Chief Apostle as he began his sermon. Jerusalem is an image for the church. It is a reference to the heavenly Jerusalem, the community of the believers. “And it is to this community that God says: “I will free you from the evil one! And I will also lead many people to Jerusalem.”

- Jesus has conquered hell and death. He will share this victory with us. He will definitively free us from evil and death. We will never again have anything to do with the evil one. When Jesus comes, we will partake in His victory.
- Jesus has received the resurrection body. With this resurrection body He was the first to enter the kingdom of God. There He is the firstborn among many brethren, and He will share it with us.
- We will enter into the glory of God. I wish I had sufficient vocabulary to describe it. But there are no words for this. There is one thought that might help us envision it: this glory will be so great and magnificent that we will have a new reason to give thanks and praise to God with each passing day in eternity!



Over 400 believers gathered at the Holiday Inn in Natal (Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil) for the divine service celebrated by the Chief Apostle on 6 August 2017. His sermon was interpreted into Portuguese at the altar



### Not only tomorrow, but already today

“However,” said the Chief Apostle, “we do not necessarily have to wait until the Lord comes. We can already experience a foretaste of this today. In the divine service we can experience that God grants us grace. Today already we can benefit from the merit of Jesus Christ.” And this, he admonished, is something that the people around us should actually notice.

### Our future — our present — our task

After all, Jesus has died for all human beings, and for this reason His sacrifice is also valid for all. He will still lead many people to His city. That is why the following words apply to those who already have a place there: “Go out to them, show them the way, move the stones out of their way.” This, he said, is our task, namely to show them the way through our conduct, our testimony, our words and our deeds.

Chief Apostle Schneider concluded by saying: “We are to guide people and show them the way. That is our future, that is our present, that is our task.”

## CORE THOUGHTS

*Isaiah 62: 10–11*

**“Go through, go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway! Take out the stones, lift up a banner for the peoples! Indeed the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the world: Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.’”**

Upon His return, the Lord will share His glory with us. Thanks to Christ’s merit, we can be in fellowship with God already today. Jesus wants to draw all sinners to Himself. He asks us to lead them to Him.

# On our way home

Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. First surprise: this place was finished a long time ago. Second surprise: man has already been there. The question now is, how do we get back home?

More than 114,000 participated in the divine service which Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider celebrated in the congregation of Claremont in Cape Town (South Africa) on 15 October 2017—most by video transmission.

## Looking further to see the whole picture

When Jesus spoke these words He was together with His disciples, telling them what was about to happen to Him: betrayal, suffering, distress. The disciples were beside themselves, but Jesus expanded their perspective. He told them that He was going to His Father. That was the purpose, the Chief Apostle explained: “He wanted them to know the end of the story.”

This is also true for us. “We know that we have to go through hardship, we know that we have to carry heavy burdens.” But God does not lead us into tribulation or into hardship. In fact, He wants to lead us out of tribulation and hardship and into His kingdom. “Let us have this broader perspective, let us see further through the Holy Spirit.”

## Where human beings were intended to be

Jesus went to prepare a place for us. What kind of a place is this? The place where man should have been in the first place. God created human beings because He wanted them to live with Him, to have fellowship with Him. But by falling into sin they lost the privilege of living with God.



The Chief Apostle addresses Apostle John G. Stephens, who is retiring after 44 years as a minister, 17 of these as an Apostle



The Chief Apostle pointed out that Jesus came to prepare this place again: “Through His sacrificial death and His resurrection He made it possible for human beings to enter into the kingdom of God.” This place has been ready for a long time. “Everything is ready. Each and every one of us has a place in heaven. It’s there, ready and waiting for us.”

### It is not enough to just stay on the way, we must move forward

The way there is clear. “I am the way,” Jesus said. “Let us take this way,” the Chief Apostle said. His way is one of

- faith. “I am the kind of guy who wants to understand, who needs proof. And when it is clear in my mind I’m okay. But when it comes to Jesus and His work and His deeds I have to come to terms with the fact that I cannot understand it. Let us follow the path in faith.”
- the sacraments. Whoever wants to enter the kingdom of God must be reborn of water and Spirit. And whoever wants to be caught up must partake of the flesh and blood of Jesus. “This is not an invention by the Church. It was defined by Jesus Himself.”
- obedience. “Whoever wants to follow Jesus must keep His commandments. Let us stay on this way even if it is difficult. It is the only way, the one paved by Jesus.”
- self-denial. “Jesus Christ wants more than just obedient people. He wants us to be transformed into His image so that His thoughts become our thoughts. Are we still on the way of transformation?”
- oneness. “We must learn to become one in Christ because He will not return to take individuals unto Himself. He will come and take home a people that is one.”

“It is not enough to just stay on this way. We must move forward,” the Chief Apostle said in conclusion. “Jesus will return. He will come and meet us because He knows that we will not be able to make it by ourselves. And if I pray: ‘Lord Jesus, please come!’ then I can hear His answer in my soul: ‘Yes, I am coming, but you have to come too. Don’t stop, keep moving on this path.’”

## CORE THOUGHTS

*John 14: 3–4*

**“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”**

Through His sacrifice and resurrection, Jesus prepared a place for us with God. He will return in order to take those with Him who meet His expectations.

## JESUS IS TEMPTED

*MATTHEW 4: 1-11*

*After Jesus had been baptised by John in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit led Him into the desert. There He was tempted by the Devil, but Jesus resisted all his advances.*

For forty days and forty nights Jesus fasted: He did not eat a thing. He was very hungry. The Devil came to Him and said: "If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread."

Jesus replied: "It is written in the Scriptures 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

The Devil then led Him to Jerusalem and took Him to the highest point of the temple. He said to Jesus: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

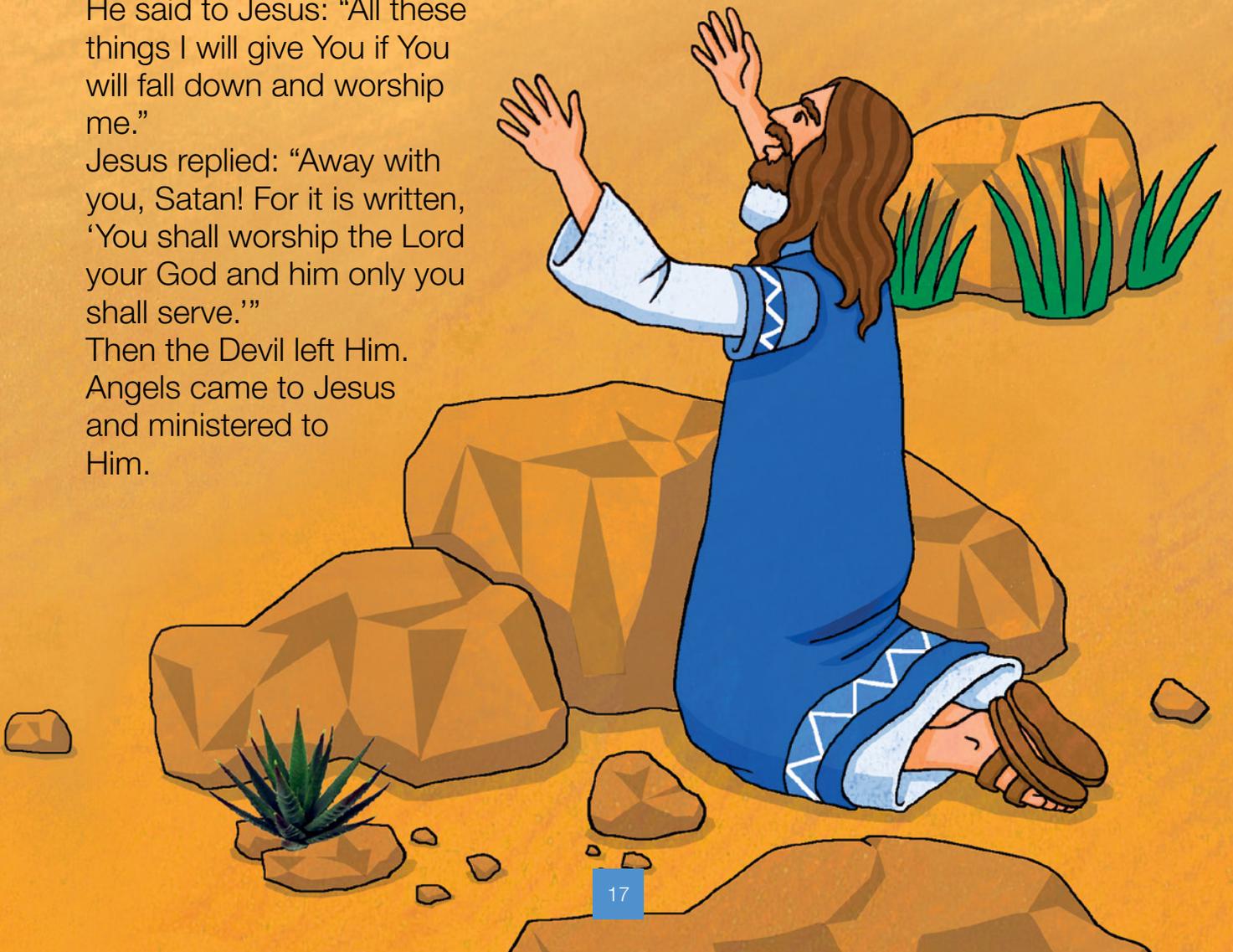
Jesus said to him: "It is also written in the Scriptures, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

The Devil then took Him to the top of a very high mountain and pointed out to Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

He said to Jesus: "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

Jesus replied: "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only you shall serve.'"

Then the Devil left Him. Angels came to Jesus and ministered to Him.



## AT CYNTHIA'S IN N'DJAMENA (CHAD)

Hello, my name is Cynthia, I am twelve years old. A year ago, in January 2017, **Chief Apostle** Jean-Luc Schneider celebrated three divine services in Chad. And one of them was in N'Djamena, our capital. This is where I live. I was asked to give him some flowers as a welcome.



Chad is located in the heart of Africa. The northern part is very dry. Much of it lies in the Sahara. There are also volcanic mountains. Further south is the Sahel region, which is semi-arid. In the south of the country there are forests and extensive marshes with abundant **wildlife**.

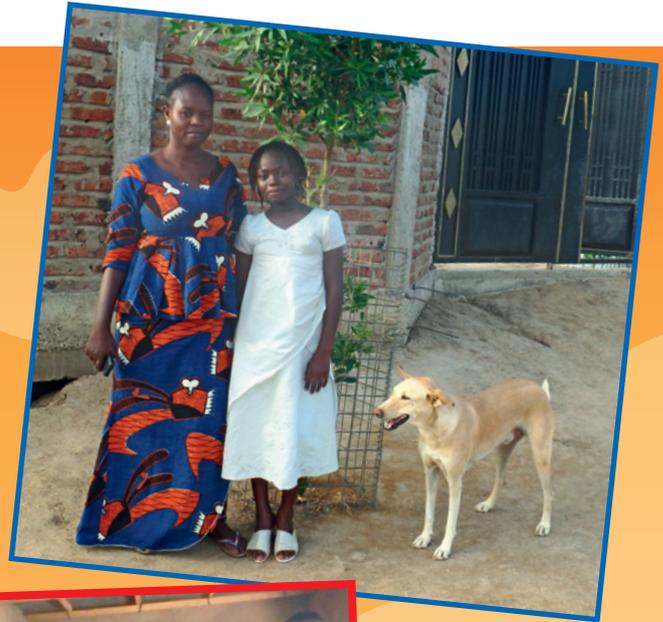


Two large **rivers**, the Chari and Logone, flow through the country. N'Djamena is located at the confluence of the Chari and Logone Rivers, which flow into Lake Chad. We live on the outskirts of the city. If we want to go into town, we have to cross the Chari.

Meet my **family**. In the last row you can see my mother, whose name is Sabine, me, my cousin Caroline, and Aunt Félicité. Standing next to my grandfather is my cousin Frédéric. And my cousin Anastasia is with my grandmother on the right. Christian, my father, is not on the picture.



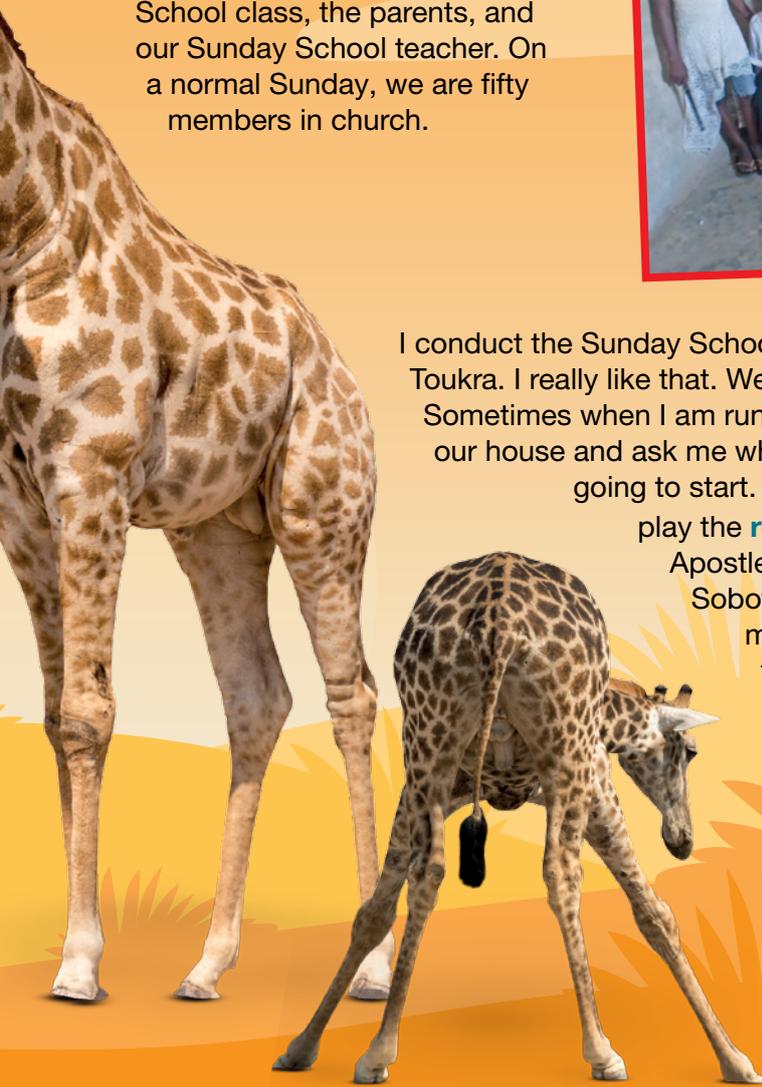
My mother is a nurse and has to travel a lot. That is why I live at my **aunt's** place with my cousin Caroline. She loves us a lot and helps us with our homework. Caroline and I are both in grade five. School begins at half past seven in the morning and ends at five o'clock in the evening. There is no school on Saturdays. Chad has two official languages: French and Arabic. Oh, I almost forgot to introduce Patience, our **dog**.



I have been New Apostolic since I was born. My grandmother Odile is very active in the congregation. My grandfather's name is Dakoua. He is an Apostle. He encourages me to sing in the choir and to help with **Sunday School**. On the picture you can see our congregation's Sunday School class, the parents, and our Sunday School teacher. On a normal Sunday, we are fifty members in church.



I conduct the Sunday School choir in our congregation in Toukra. I really like that. We practise three times a week. Sometimes when I am running a little late, they all come to our house and ask me when choir practice is going to start. Caroline and I also play the **recorder**. District Apostle Helper John Sobottka introduced this musical instrument in the New Apostolic congregations in Chad.





## INFORMATION

**1-2.** Administration brothers and wives service with District Apostle Urs Hebeisen in Mati congregation, Davao Oriental. **3-12.** Bishop Bacane (Philippines) went into a well deserved retirement in a divine service in Dumaguete, Philippines on 21 January 2018. **13-14.** brothers and wives service of Jakarta and Banten district with District Apostle Urs Hebeisen in Depok congregation on 27 January 2018.





## INFORMATION

**1-8.** Divine service with District Apostle Urs Hebeisen in Depok church on 28 January 2018. **9-14.** Annual convention NACSEAsia 2018 in Denpasar congregation, Bali on 2-3 February 2018. Evangelist Dr. Reinhard Kiefer the theological consultant of the international church was guest of honour. He engaged all in a lively seminar and created an enthusiastic atmosphere. In the same occasion, all the participant also learned how to play Angklung (Indonesian traditional music instrument from bamboo).





## INFORMATION

**1-5.** District Evangelist Zacharias Aragon went into well deserved retirement after 34 years of active ministry in a District Service for Cebu on Sunday, 11 February 2018. **6-9.** Together with Ap. Cleofas Bual and Bishops Quako and Puso the DAH Edy Isnugroho toured the area of Cebu and Bohol from 12th to 18th February in between of District Apostle visit to the region. **13-14.** Wedding blessing for Pr. Erwin and his wife in Lampung, 24 February 2018.





## INFORMATION

**1-5.** Divine Service with District Apostle Urs Hebeisen in Kalirejo congregation, Lampung on 25 February 2018. **6.** Contemplation at Gendeng Church, Yogyakarta, Indonesia in preparation for Divine Service for the Departed. **7-8.** Service for Departed at Gendeng church, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. **9-11.** Family day in Pangasinan, Philippines. **12.** District Elder Marcena went into well deserved retirement. **13-14.** District Apostle together with DAH Edy Isnugroho, Apostle Fred Wolf and Bishop Samuel visited Tui Thang congregation in Chin State, Myanmar.





Helen Holton - fotolia.com

# Salvation in the new creation

Nearer my God to Thee: which role will the bridal congregation play in the kingdom of glory. Will it have a special position? Will it be closer to God? The answers are clear.

The Catechism makes it clear that the New Apostolic Church professes belief in the return of Christ as formulated in the early church creeds. We believe that Jesus Christ will return in (power and great) glory in order to judge both the living and the dead (Apostolicum in Catechism-QA 34) and “we look for ... the life of the world to come” (Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople in Catechism-QA 35).

When we speak of the return of Christ, we are first of all referring to the rapture of the firstlings. This is the work the Apostles concentrate on, since the gathering and preparation of the bridal congregation is one of the main reasons for the renewed personal occupation of the Apostle min-

istry in the nineteenth century. However, in all of this it is important not to lose sight of the divine plan of salvation as a whole.

## God will be all in all

The actions of God make it possible for all people of all time periods to gain access to salvation. The firstfruits (firstlings), whom the Lord will take to Himself, will be brought together with those human beings who gave up their lives for the sake of Christ in the great tribulation. During the thousand-year kingdom of peace, salvation will be offered to all human beings. All those who will then decide for



Christ will be granted access to the new creation, and they will have the fullness of divine life. After all, “God will be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15: 28). Human beings will (then) live in eternal fellowship with God. Peace and joy will prevail eternally because everything—the new heaven, the new earth, and all those who inhabit them—will coincide with the will of God.

### Images pertaining to the future

Jesus Christ made use of various images when He spoke of salvation. The parable of the talents (Luke 19) might seem to indicate that there is a “hierarchy” of salvation: the nobleman promised the first servant power over ten cities, and promised to set the second over five cities. However, the parable does not point to a hierarchy of salvation. On the contrary, it emphasises the kind of attitude that is important for attaining salvation. When Jesus Christ speaks of “having power”, this is to imply that the believers

- will reign with Him, in other words, share His glory with Him.
- will be assigned a working area, which means that they will continue to serve Him.

### No hierarchy of salvation

The question arises as to what place the bridal congregation will occupy in the new creation. The Revelation of Jesus Christ speaks of New Jerusalem and of servants who will serve God and reign with Him.

These are images for the fellowship that human beings will enjoy with God and among one another. The idea that there would be two categories of salvation in the new creation is not convincing in light of the account in Revelation. Can we really claim that there will be two classes of fellowship with God in the new creation? Can we really claim that those who participated in the return of Christ will occupy an exceptional position in the new creation?

Such notions do not correspond with the testimony of the New Testament. If God is going to be all in all, then there cannot be anything that goes above and beyond that. There is nothing that could be greater than the fullness of eternal life or eternal fellowship with the triune God in His glory and light!

### For all: fellowship with God

Love for the Lord is inseparably linked to the love for our neighbour. Jesus expects His own to love the neighbour the same way He loves them. He, the Perfect One, is prepared to share His inheritance with us sinners because He loves us. If we truly love others the way Jesus loves us, we will not be indignant if He allows our neighbour to have the same reward He grants us ...

Others fear that we might call our election into question if we stated that God will open up the prospect of life in eternal fellowship with Him for all. However, let us bear in mind that we have not been elected so that we can be the only ones saved, but rather to have the opportunity to be the first to be delivered! Let us not forget that our election is first and foremost a calling: we have been called to serve the Lord, to proclaim the praises of God, both today and in the thousand-year kingdom of peace. Let us fulfil this service with joy in order to give thanks to God for His grace, and not in order to receive a reward.



Oliver Fürtten

# The meaning of the confirmation vow

It began with baptism. The confirmation vow of the New Apostolic Church is more than 1,700 years old. More on its history and significance.

Our present confirmation vow is contained in a text that was drafted at the start of the third century AD. This text is known as the *Traditio Apostolica*, which, when translated from Latin, means “Apostolic Tradition”. This *Apostolic Tradition* is ascribed to the scholar Hippolytus of Rome. Next to the *Didache*, the “doctrine of the twelve Apostles”, which dates back to the second century, the *Traditio Apostolica* is the most important source of information concerning congregational life and divine service order in the early Christian congregations.

The text of our confirmation vow is contained in the *Apostolic Tradition* among the specifications for baptism. It was thus originally a baptismal vow that was, as a rule, given by adults who had converted to the Christian faith and had completed their course of baptismal instruction. When children were baptised, their parents or another family member would give the vow on their behalf.

In the New Apostolic Church, this ancient baptismal vow is used as a confirmation vow. When they give this vow,

the confirmands confirm the vow which their parents gave on their behalf at their baptism and sealing.

The term “confirmation” derives from the Latin *confirmatio*, which can be taken to mean “reinforcement” or “consolidation”. At confirmation, the confirmands reinforce the yes given on their behalf when they received the sacraments, and thereby promise to live a life of following Christ.

The confirmation vow consists of two formulas, one of them a formula of renunciation and the other a confessional formula, which bring to expression some fundamental decisions that are part of being a Christian: the no to evil is a renunciation of Satan, while the yes to the triune God signifies surrender to God as the Lord of our lives.

The renunciation formula reads: “I renounce Satan and all his work and ways.” (In the original it says: “I renounce, you, Satan, all your pomps and all your works.”)

The idea behind this formula is that the confirmands have decided to deliberately turn away from evil, which has become personified in Satan. From then on it is their own responsibility to do so! Examples of the works of the evil one include the temptation to turn away from God or even to rise up in rebellion against Him, as well as idol worship, contempt for the sacrifice of Christ, disregard for the will of God, lovelessness, or unbridled thirst for power. Those who utter these words in faith thereby express the desire to distance themselves from all of this.

This renunciation formula does not mean, however, that those who have spoken it are suddenly without sin or that they will always succeed at resisting the influences of the evil one. Rather, it brings to expression

that the confirmands are aware of their sinfulness and do not want to lead a life in the domain of that which is evil and opposed to God. That is why the support and help of the Holy Spirit are necessary, and the confirmands have already received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Using only their own strength, human beings are incapable of keeping this vow.

Following the renunciation formula is the confessional formula, which declares: “I ... surrender myself to You, O triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in belief, obedience, and the earnest resolution to remain faithful to You until my end.”

First of all, those who speak this formula thereby make it clear that they accept the triune God as their Lord, and that He is to define their lives. Belief and obedience are the essential aspects of a life with God. To believe in God is to have trust in Him. Obedience to the divine will is an essential result of faith.

At the end of this vow, the confirmands speak of an earnest resolution. This brings to expression that the confessional formula is not lightly spoken, but rather that those who speak it are serious about fulfilling it. They thus profess the will to live their lives with God in a manner consistent with their faith—in other words, the will to remain faithful to Him until their end. Here the faithfulness which the confirmands promise is nothing other than their response to the faithfulness of God, which comes to expression in the gift of the sacraments and in His protection and support.

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

# A career that started in a children's choir

A 17-year old young woman is currently inspiring members of the New Apostolic Church in South Africa with awe. First they picked up the telephone for their sister. Now they are proudly sharing her videos. A success story between church music and pop music.

A Swabian is busy making traditional German Spaetzle in South Africa. Joachim Schmidt from the south of Germany is on tour with the New Apostolic Church Motorcycle Association to support the annual Toy Run. The TV is running and all of a sudden the host starts cheering, "She made it. She won!"

"She" is Paxton Fielies, a young woman from Cape Town who dropped out of school to pursue her biggest dream: music. And her parents supported her. It was a risk, she says. But it was worth it. The 17-year-old has just been voted South Africa's newest idol in the casting show's thirteenth season.



Paxton as a young soloist (above) ...



... and with her choir (above: centre; left: second from the right)

NAC Southern Africa, Jessica Krämer and Marcel Felde



The 17-year-old young woman was voted South Africa's idol in the thirteenth season of the popular reality competition, Idols SA



During the competition of Idols SA, the young woman had her very own fan club rooting for her: her brothers and sisters from the New Apostolic Church. And they did more than cross their fingers. Even the New Apostolic Church Southern Africa mobilised support for her on its Instagram account as well as on its official Facebook page for music events.

### It all began with the NAC Children Choir

“My wife and I have been following this for weeks,” District Apostle John L. Kriel said when asked by *nac.today*. And they were both eager to put in their telephone vote in order to help their favourite candidate move on another audition round.

“We are really proud,” the District Apostle said. After all, Paxton’s career as a singer began in the Church, specifically in the NAC Children Choir. At the age of nine she joined the choir, which is well known beyond South Africa’s borders. She was part of the choir until her confirmation in 2015.

### Congratulations from all over the world

A bit shy but with a beaming smile: that is how people remember Paxton from that time. Shy and introverted is also how the judges of the casting show described her. But in the course of the competition she really blossomed and stole the judges and the viewers’ hearts.

Not only South Africans but people from all over the world are posting compliments and congratulations in the form of photos, videos, and messages. Among the many well-wishers are also people from Germany where Paxton Fielies spent her first international concert tour with the NAC Children Choir in 2014 to sing for a project called kids4africa.

### Staying grounded

Paxton made the biggest impression on the people in Bishop Lavis, the Cape Town suburb where she lives. A beacon of hope, they call her. Violence has become the order of the day in the community: unemployment, poverty, and crime. But the 17-year-old singer gives people hope, District Apostle Kriel says. Her success shows what one can achieve with determination and hard work.

Despite her popularity and fame Paxton is still the same friendly and modest young woman she has always been, the District Apostle says. He just spoke to her on the phone recently: “She is a very believing girl from a faithful family.” And staying grounded is definitely the plan for this young star. When asked what the most important factors in her life are, Paxton Fielies says: “God, family, and music”—in exactly that order.

Trouw zijn aan Christus  
Ser fieles a Cristo  
**Treue zu Christus**  
Fedeli a Cristo Верность Христу  
**Faithful to Christ**  
A fidelidade a Cristo Besnikëri ndaj Krishtit

## | Cultural wealth in a logo

One faith, one doctrine, and cultural diversity. “Faithful to Christ” is the motto of the New Apostolic Church for 2018. Creative minds around the world have designed logos to reflect the new motto.

At the start of a new year, there is a great deal of excitement in the New Apostolic congregations in South-East Asia. In the first divine service the brothers and sisters do not only hear about the new motto which the Chief Apostle issued to all the congregations worldwide, some congregations also watch his taped video message together after the divine service. In addition, the church goers receive a promotional button with the new motto, which they can wear every day.

### Constancy and commitment

An expressive brush font in dark blue on a light blue background with orange accents. The “t” in “faithful” takes the form of a cross and symbolises Christ. The “u” has been designed as a kind of check mark to symbolise trust and acceptance with regard to our faith in Christ. “The circular logo symbolises our never-ending commitment to Jesus Christ,” Priest Keefe Setiobudi explains.

### In the footsteps of Jesus

The New Apostolic Church South America has illustrated the 2018 motto “Faithful in Christ” with the silhouette of a person following a set of footprints. After all, the idea is to follow the way paved by Jesus, our correspondent Viviana Aloy says, and cites examples such as being constant in love, serving Him faithfully, and keeping our promises.

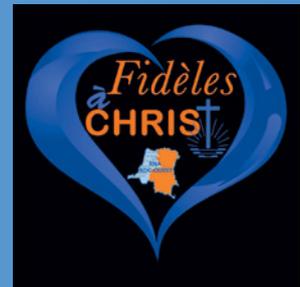
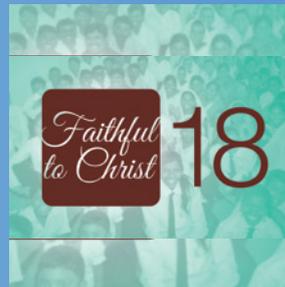
### An indissoluble bond

Constancy and commitment are also reflected in the logo of the District Church Brazil/Bolivia. A white cross on a dark blue background symbolises Jesus Christ. And both are securely held in place in an orange diamond ring—as a symbol for an indissoluble bond. This is how our *nac.today* correspondent Karin Zwar explains it.

US



CTY



■ NAC South-East Asia, INA Sud America, INA Brasil, NAC Canada, NAC Southern Africa, NAC India, ENA DR Congo

### A partner for the Church emblem

The New Apostolic Church Canada uses a pared-down design to illustrate the annual motto: slim lettering in a subtle shade of blue, and subtly framed. There are good reasons for this design, *nac.today* correspondent Christy Eckhardt says. This way, the logo for the annual motto does not compete with the Church emblem. Instead, the emblem and the annual logo complement each other through the use of standard design colours, and both work equally well in the design of letterheads, as email signatures, as well as in flyers and other promotional media.

### A covenant under the sign of the cross

The New Apostolic Church Southern Africa has put its focus on the fellowship of the faithful with blue and orange elements in the form of abstract people, in this case, a family. Above them are two curved lines that look a little like a rainbow—the Old Testament sign symbolising a covenant—which is crowned with the symbol of the cross and stands for the new covenant with Christ.

### Diversity: tradition and programme

The New Apostolic Church Western Germany has decided to concentrate on the international character of the Church in designing its logo. “Faithful in Christ” is repeated in nine

different languages for the countries they look after. The New Apostolic Church India works with different colours every year. Their design focuses on the year—not least of all because the logo is used in their annual wall calendar.

Such diversity has become a tradition in our Church. Since Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider issued his first motto in the year 2014 (“Labour in love”) the District Churches have done their best to come up with evocative ideas: on the Internet and letterheads, in magazines, or in calendars. And creativity is contagious: different designs from various congregations are coursing through the social networks—nothing official, but with a great deal of heart for the cause.

“We are an international Church and live in many different cultural areas,” Peter Johanning, the spokesman of the Church says. He welcomes the idea that the central message issued by the Church is regionally adapted as a logo and shared. There is one exception, however: the official Church emblem may not be modified. “This is our official internationally recognised emblem; it must remain identifiable as such,” Peter Johanning stresses. “Otherwise,” he says, “we can gladly show that we are a living and diverse community.”



Oliver Rütten, NAK Nordrhein-Westfalen, NAC Kosovo



# Young people make a difference

The New Apostolic Church maintains twelve aid organisations around the world. A thirteenth project is now celebrating a birthday and has decided to adopt a new name.

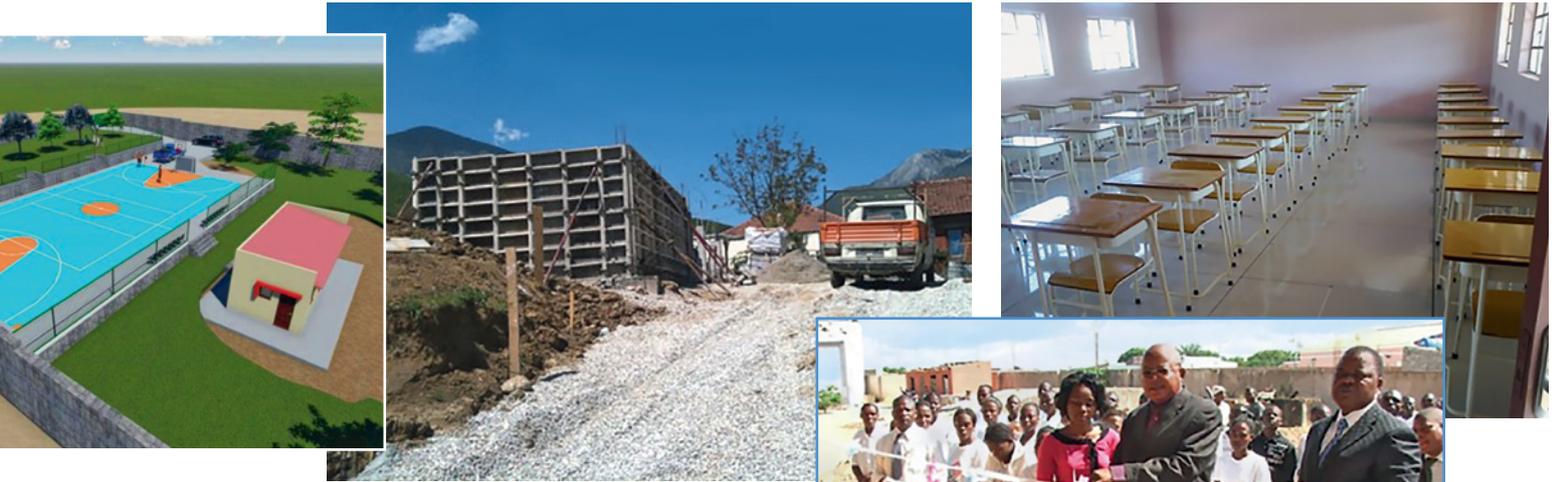
New Apostolic aid organisations give millions to provide much needed aid to people around the world—often collaborating with local partners and organisations. They provide disaster relief, establish welfare programmes and back them financially, help people to help themselves, and finance training programmes. There are many ways to help people in distress. Young people from North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany are doing their share in helping where they can. Their aid project is already celebrating its fifteenth anniversary this year.

## Half a million euros in donations

Since 2002, the young people have been raising money year in, year out with various activities. For the most part, the proceeds are used to assist young people abroad,

especially in regions cared for by the District Church. In the first year, the amount raised was 200,000 euros. The money was used to support young people in Armenia and Georgia.

In addition to numerous fundraising activities in the various church districts in Germany, the youth symphony orchestra and the youth concert choir of North Rhine-Westphalia have also contributed to the initiative. Both give benefit concerts and donate the proceeds to Jugend bewegt (“Young people make a difference”). This year 28,000 euros were raised; and 23,000 euros, 21,700 euros, 33,000 euros, and 24,000 euros in the previous years. More than half a million euros have been raised this way over the last few years, and have been passed on through the youth initiative.



## A kindergarten, music lessons, and professional training

The list of projects is long: encouraging musical education in Angola by creating an orchestra and purchasing 39 musical instruments; funding music lessons in the central church in Luanda (for three teachers and one hundred participants); financial assistance for a kindergarten in Kosovo (supervision of sixty children, acquisition of a van); funding of an addition for the New Apostolic School in Matala (Angola); and professional training courses (nursing, etc.).

Two projects were completed recently, the New Apostolic Church North Rhine-Westphalia reports on its website: a recreation centre for the youth in São Tomé and financial assistance for Peace Village International in Oberhausen (Germany).

### Recreation centre in São Tomé

Fundação Acção Nova Apostólica de caridade, a religious foundation in São Tomé and Príncipe, has been operating a farm in the north of the island of São Tomé for several years. There is a very large open space on the property, which will in future be used for youth gatherings. The membership of the New Apostolic Church in São Tomé and Príncipe is nearly 20,000. More than half are younger than the age of 25. “Jugend bewegt” helped fund the recreation centre by contributing 20,000 euros in 2017.

### Peace Village International in Oberhausen

“Peace Village International is an organisation that has committed itself to helping children in war-torn regions. It organises medical care either directly in the country or brings them to Germany for treatment. Peace Village works with 170 hospitals in Germany, which provide free



places for treatment. Following their treatment, the children have the opportunity to go back to the village and recover from their ordeal there. There they are cared for by doctors, who work on a voluntary basis,” the New Apostolic Church North Rhine-Westphalia says, which runs the aid project for the young people. “Once the children have recovered they return home to their families, where doctors continue to monitor them. In addition, the families receive support as well, such as clothing or food. The youth initiative sponsored Peace Village International with 10,000 euros in 2017.”

### The next big project: IYC 2019

Young people from all over the world have been invited to the International Youth Convention (IYC) 2019 in Düsseldorf (Germany). Many of them will not be able to pay for such a trip by themselves. That is why the German youth initiative would like to make a financial contribution and help some of them. This applies especially to young people who live in European countries outside of Germany that are cared for by the District Church North Rhine-Westphalia. A total of 30,000 euros has been set aside. The project has been termed “Travel funds for the IYC 2019”.

On the occasion of its fifteenth birthday, the youth initiative changed its name. It is no longer called Jugend hilft Jugend (“Youth helps youth”) but Jugend bewegt (“Young people make a difference”)—and this is exactly what young people do. They drive things forward and make a difference.



Markus Glombitza

# The social media policy of the Church

Not sure what the Church's position is regarding Facebook and Co.? A little unclear on how to handle the blurry boundaries between professional, private, and religious use when you post? The District Apostles have ratified *The Social Media Guideline of the New Apostolic Church* to provide guidance on the wise and appropriate use of social media.

We should appreciate others and treat them respectfully. We are encouraged to be transparent and authentic. That really goes without saying for a Christian. In the age of virtual personalities, nicknames, and online profiles the question should, however, be allowed how we can actually live up to this.

## Guidance for Church members

At a recent meeting of the District Apostles with Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider in Dortmund (Germany) they

also discussed the *Social Media Guideline*, which a working group had compiled over the previous weeks. The Guideline has been written for Church members, but it also provides information for communication officers in the national churches and for ministers. Clear positions and recommendations distinguish the paper.

## In line with the gospel

In the foreword, Chief Apostle Schneider explains the reason for such a guideline: "Ministers and workers in the

Church, and also members, acknowledge themselves and their faith quite naturally online. They ought to know where the New Apostolic Church stands on activities in social media.” And he adds: “What is important is that everyone is aware of the consequences of his statements and behaves in an appreciative and respectful fashion, in accordance with the gospel.”

Communication is faster and more public than ever before. The number of contacts and dialogues is on the increase. Information and news are visible and freely available around the world via the social media networks. “Let us use social media responsibly, and carefully weigh up the use of our time and our words,” Chief Apostle Schneider requests. It is important to the president of the Church that we are careful how we communicate on the Internet.

A policy of good conduct is described in the codex; ten points that do not constitute a panacea, but that express recommendations and encourage users to communicate in a respectful way in the digital world.

## The heart of the Guideline: the Codex

*1. We respect our neighbour.* We respect our neighbour. We maintain a respectful tone and are aware that we are communicating with other people. We have consideration for their emotions and feelings. That is why we refrain from any expression which could be construed as racist, violent, extremist, fanatic, sexist, discriminatory, or otherwise offensive. We publish only what we would say to the recipient in a personal conversation.

*2. We are friendly.* A clear, understandable language—free of irony, sarcasm, or provocation—is the basis for a constructive exchange of views. Rage, anger, and frustration do not lead anywhere. Criticism is possible, as long as it is not hurtful or personal. Problems with individual people are not discussed publicly. We remain calm, even when others are not.

*3. We are honest and authentic.* We use our real name and do not deceive. If we are not serving the Church in an official capacity on social media, we can decide for ourselves whether we admit in our profile whether we are working full-time or voluntarily for the New Apostolic Church.

*4. We respect the intellectual property of others.* Content, whether text or images, may in general only be published with the permission of the original author (copyright).

When third parties are quoted, the quotes must be clearly identified and the source of the quote given. Quotes are only ever used as a supplement to one’s own thoughts (right to quotes). If pictures or videos are published, the people depicted must be in agreement (right to one’s own image).

*5. We act responsibly.* Each person is responsible for the content which he publishes on social media. We do not speculate. Communication on the Internet is often simple and in places banal. Whenever it concerns topics to do with Church we try to keep the conversation above the ordinary.

*6. We spread good news.* We are witnesses of our faith and the public face of our Church. In our activities on social media we demonstrate Christian values.

*7. We protect the private sphere.* We are aware that what we communicate on the Internet is, on principle, public. Even if we try to limit the visibility of our social media activities to certain people, content can at any time be redirected, either inadvertently or on purpose, and thus be made public. Private information must remain private. This includes, among other things, personal data and confidential information.

*8. We keep politics and business separate from Church involvement.* As far as social media activities for the Church are concerned, we refrain from any party political remarks. Likewise, we keep a strict separation between voluntary or Church involvement and business or professional interests.

*9. Count us in.* A responsible use of social media during work time may be possible. We clarify with our superiors to what extent we may, during work time, use social media to establish contacts, increase our knowledge, or build networks.

*10. We do not have to know everything.* If we are unsure we ask the person in charge. We do not spread rumours. When we make a mistake we admit it, apologise, and learn from it.



# Coming up

- 1 April 2018 Nottingham (England)
- 8 April 2018 Karlsruhe (Germany)
- 15 April 2018 Toronto (Canada)
- 22 April 2018 Trebaseleghe (Italy)
- 29 April 2018 Livingstone (Zambia)
- 10 May 2018 Trier (Germany)
- 20 May 2018 Washington, D.C. (USA)
- 3 June 2018 Ostermundigen (Switzerland)
- 10 June 2018 Luanda (Angola)
- 17 June 2018 Leipzig (Germany)
- 24 June 2018 Landshut (Germany)

New Apostolic Church  
International

