

community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

01/2015/EN



Our 2015 motto:
Joy in Christ

Proving, changing,
renewing: divine service in
Luxembourg

The Catechism in questions
and answers

Focus on the global
congregation: an overview
of our Church media

New Apostolic Church
International



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"Joy in Christ"

Moving closer together



Dear Brothers and Sisters around the world,

I am very happy to be able to present this new international member magazine of the New Apostolic Church to you. You are reading the first issue of *community*, which will from now on be published once every three months and supplied to every New Apostolic household around the world in a print or online version wherever possible.

The name of the magazine, *community*, says it all.

- **Communication.** The new member magazine is to help ensure that important information—whether in the form of divine services, doctrinal matters, current affairs, or developments in the Church—reaches as many of you as possible, dear brothers and sisters.
- **Unity.** We have one faith and one goal. That is why it is important for us all to be on the same level wherever possible when it comes to our doctrine as we hear it in the divine services and as we implement it in our daily lives.
- **Community.** We are an international community with many differences resulting from social and cultural backgrounds. Reports about our diverse and varied congregational life around the globe are to help us get to know each other better and learn to understand each other. The aim is to have the international church move closer together and grow together more than ever before.

Some of you might miss the *Our Family* magazine. But we have determined that we will be able to reach far more members this way than we ever have in the past decades. It is for this reason that the District Apostle Meeting decided on a new communication strategy during a conference in Canada

in October 2013. In addition to *community*, the online news magazine *nac.today* is also part of this strategy, and serves to supply you with news from around the New Apostolic world on a daily basis.

May these innovations strengthen our joy in Christ—in keeping with our 2015 motto—and help us all to move a little closer to our goal. I hope you have succeeded in beginning the new year—which is no longer new now—in this way, and I wish you a great deal of joy, much growth in the mind of Jesus, and the blessing of the Most High over the coming months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' and 'S' that are connected and looped together.

Jean-Luc Schneider

Proving, changing, renewing



Marcel Feßbe



Divine service in Luxembourg on 11 January 2015

Romans 12: 2

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Dear brothers and sisters, esteemed guests, here and in the connected congregations, I am happy that I can be here in Luxembourg with my brothers and sisters and that we can take another step together this year, a year we have declared to be a year of joy in Christ. I have already received quite a few messages from people telling me, "What a way to start the year of joy! Have you seen all that is going on?" Still, dear brothers and sisters, we are going to stick with it: we want to have joy in Christ this year.

And there is good reason for us to have joy in Christ! First, because God will continue to give us beautiful gifts that we can delight in. And even if there are difficult days ahead of us—this is something that we all have to deal with. Everyone has a hard day now and then, and this year will be no exception, but we still have reason to rejoice. This has nothing to do with being cheerful and jumping for joy, but we will feel that the Lord is very near to us, especially in times of trial. It is a special kind of joy when you realize, "The Lord is right there."

There is one reason in particular to rejoice in good as well as in not so good times, and this the Lord Jesus Himself gave, "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10: 20). We spoke with the children yesterday about heaven and what it is. That was a very interesting discussion. I will not go into it now, but you can think about it. "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven." What does that mean? It means that the Lord died for us so that we can have access to heaven, to the fellowship with God. The Lord has preceded us there. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14: 2, 3).

How can this be explained? I have often told the children. It is simple. Imagine you are going to a big event, for example a big service, and you send a friend ahead and ask her to save you a seat. She will put her hymnal on the seat or maybe a handbag or something else. And if somebody comes to sit down, she will tell that person that the seat is already taken. "But why?" "Well, my friend is sitting there." And when your friend arrives you tell him, "This is your seat!" And this is exactly what the Lord Jesus is doing for us. He went to the Father to save a seat for you and me, "This is my brother's seat, my sister's seat. I have saved it for them." Our names are written in heaven because the Lord Jesus has saved every one of us a seat in the fellowship with God. Whenever we think about this we have reason to rejoice.

The Bible text I have read is well-known and also very timely. Paul writes to the Romans, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." When you hear "world" you automatically think about evil and bad people and all kinds of things. But that is not what is meant here. This Bible text is about the time, the spirit of the times. Paul wants to show that, on the one hand, there is the almighty God who does not change. Never. He does not

need to change. After all, He is perfect. Not even certain events can pressure Him to change. His actions and deeds are not influenced by the happenings on this earth. "For I am the Lord, I do not change" (Malachi 3: 6).

And on the other hand, there is the spirit of the times as an expression of

the constant change that is going on in humankind. I do not want to develop a new theory now, but let me address two points: the relationship to God and the relationship to the neighbour. Both are in a state of constant flux. When things are going well for people they do not turn to God as much. But when things are going badly they run to Him for help, "Please, God, You have to help!" And people's behaviour and what is happening in the world has a great impact on interpersonal relationships. At times someone is good and nice, and the next moment everything changes and he becomes the worst enemy. Everything is in a constant state of change. World events have a bearing on our relationship to God, our relationship to our neighbour, our opinions, and our relationship to the truth. And when we see this we begin to understand Paul better, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Paul admonishes us to focus on God. In other words, "Don't let the spirit of the times sweep you along!" Dear brothers and sisters, our relationship to God must not change, no matter what. Our relationship to the neighbour should also not be influenced by what is happening in the world. Our focus is the almighty God and what He wants and what He says. His truth is our truth. We will not let ourselves be influenced by the majority. And even if the whole world wants to see things differently, we will persist, "Sorry, our focus is God, and the will of God has not changed. The law of God has not changed. We cannot go along with this." Even if we were only a very small flock—which we are not, by the way—as Christians, as a believing people our focus is on God. The happenings in this world must not have a bearing on our relationship to God or our neighbour. We cannot say, "Sure, but everybody is doing it and that is what everybody thinks." No, Paul tells us that we must prove what is good. It is up to us. I cannot dispute that and say, "But every-

*"Our names are written
in heaven because the Lord
Jesus has saved every one
of us a seat in the fellowship
with God."*

Apostle Jens Lindemann
from Germany addresses the
congregation



body else is doing it differently.” No, I am responsible for my relationship to God and the neighbour. It is my job to check whether something coincides with the will of God.

“Prove what is that *good* ... will of God.” What is good? Paul says that the law of God is good, the commandments of God, those which God gave Moses (Romans 7: 12). And whether the world is upside down or not, our focus is God. We are going to stick with the commandments of God, the law of God, which He gave to Moses. They have lost none of their validity. Part of this law is the law of love. “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Leviticus 19: 18). That is what we have to focus on. The Lord Jesus described in a very vivid way what it means to love one’s neighbour. He said, “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them” (Matthew 7: 12). This is as simple as it gets. It applies at all times and in all situations, also today, in the year 2015 in Europe, in Africa, and in America. We have to constantly examine ourselves whether this is still the case. Do I still act like that? Do I still think that way? What is good? Good is the law of God, the Ten Commandments, and the principle of loving God and loving each other.

Paul continues and says, “Prove what is that good and *acceptable* ... will of God.” That means we have to think about what pleases the Lord. There were times when the disciples thought they were doing what Jesus expected of them, but they were wrong. The Lord had to tell them, “That is not how we do things.” The disciples had understood their task. It was their job to fulfil the law. It was their job to serve the Lord, and it was their job to proclaim the gospel and defend it. All of this was perfectly clear to them, but they did not always set the right priorities. Think of Peter. He knew that he had to defend the Lord. When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, he drew his sword and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear (John 18: 10). This did not please the Lord. “You cannot defend me like that.” What conclusions do we draw from this? God is not pleased if we hurt our neighbour in our endeavours to proclaim and defend our faith. This is some-

thing that cannot be said often enough in today’s society. That does not please God. That also applies to us.

Another time, John came to the Lord and said, “Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us” (Mark 9: 38). John was outraged that this man cast out demons in the Lord’s name but was not a disciple. The Lord intervened and said, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side” (Mark 9: 39–40). I am sure Jesus’ reaction was surprising for John. John was sure he had done the right thing. Maybe he even expected the Lord to praise him, “Good job!” But the Lord saw things differently. I have often thought about this incident. This man did not believe in the Lord and did not follow Him. He most

“God is not pleased if we hurt our neighbour in our endeavours to proclaim and defend our faith.”



Top:
Contribution by the mixed choir

Left:
Apostle Rudolf Kainz from Austria ministers to the congregation

likely did not see the Son of God in Jesus, yet he did good and helped his fellow human beings by driving out demons. In other words, he did miracles. So obviously God was with this man and used him as an instrument to help others. And he was not even a disciple of Jesus. And Jesus said, "That is fine."

Dear brothers and sisters, many people on this earth do not share our faith. They do not share our faith in Jesus Christ, in the Son of God, and yet they make every effort to help their neighbour and to serve God. God uses them as an instrument to help others. It would not please God if we were not to respect these people, but were to despise them or even attack them. This is not an invention of my own. This is something that goes back to words of the Lord Jesus. This esteem does nothing to diminish our faith. We believe in Jesus Christ. We walk the path that He paved for our salvation. We believe in the return of Christ, we believe in the Apostle ministry. But, please, there is no reason to condemn and despise others. We know that God can also work with other people and help and bless them, and they can do good deeds. It pleases God when we respect them.

There was another time when John came and said, “And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’” (Luke 9: 54). The Lord Jesus rebuked them and told them, “No, you may not do that.” He was not pleased about this. He did not want the disciples to force people to accept Him by threatening them to send fire from heaven if they did not accept Him. God is not pleased if we try to motivate people by threatening and frightening them. We have to love God and our neighbour. We have to set the right priorities. We have to understand this law properly and implement it. The Lord Jesus explained that our relation-

ship with God hinges on our relationship with the neighbour. The two are inextricably linked. One cannot exist without the other. He said Himself, “Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and



Right:
Chief Apostle Jean-Luc
Schneider with members
after the service

Bottom:
Contribution by the choir
during the service



offer your gift” (Matthew 5: 23–24). This shows that we cannot serve God and at the same time condemn and hate the neighbour. The love for God and the neighbour are inseparably linked.

The Lord Jesus also made it clear that we cannot choose our neighbour. It would be great if I could decide whom I love. The Lord Jesus determines who my neighbour is! The neighbour is the one who is sick, the one who is in prison—imagine that!—and the stranger who is so completely different, whose culture, whose faith, and whose views differ from ours (Matthew 25: 35–40). Him you are to love! You yourself cannot determine who your neighbour is. The neighbour is the person God has put next to you. Of course, as long as the foreigner stays in his country and is far away, we love him. But now God has maybe decided that sick and poor people, offenders and strangers live in your village, in your town. God wants it that way. They are your neighbours now. God has ordained it to be this way. Please, now it is up to you to find out what pleases God.

We can see that our faith, the New Apostolic faith, is something very concrete. It quickly comes down to practical aspects. God determines who our neighbour is. The person God has put next to us is the person we are to love.

The Lord Jesus went on to explain that charity is not a substitute for serving God. Both belong together. Some people think that if they serve their neighbour they will not have to serve God. That will not work. You know the story about Mary who anointed the feet of Jesus with very expensive perfume. One of the disciples thought it was nonsense and said, “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always” (John 12: 1–8). He wanted to show that service to others is not a substitute for service to God. Both are required. That is what pleases God.

“Prove what is that ... *perfect* will of God.” God is perfect. He does not need to change or to adjust or to adapt. He is perfect. That is all there is to it. But we are not perfect. We have to examine ourselves to see what still needs to be changed—not so that I fit in with the spirit of the times, but that I can hold my own when measured against the perfection of God. We have to constantly question ourselves, and that applies to the Church as well as to every individual. What is the will of God? What does the Lord Jesus want? We have to ask ourselves repeatedly, and if necessary adapt when we realize that God has moved on but we have not yet understood His intentions.

Something similar happened to Peter. He thought that salvation was for Israel. The first commission he received was to go to the children of Israel and not to the Samaritans (Matthew 10: 5). But then God showed him that he was also

to go to the Gentiles. Peter had to change his perspective. It is not any different with the Church. We have to constantly examine whether our teaching is in line with the will of God or whether we need to change something. When we realize, “Yes, now we understand the Lord Jesus better!” we have to make changes, have to adapt, because what we have been teaching is no longer in line with the will of God. What we have been teaching has not been wrong, but in the meantime we have come to understand that the will of God has moved on. And then we small humans just have to adjust ourselves. Important is the will of God. And what applies to the Church applies to every single one of us. We cannot afford to come to a standstill because of traditions, “We have always done things that way.” Let us take a critical look at ourselves and ask, “What is my position with regard to God and my neighbour? What can I change? What do I have to change? What should I change? Very uncomfortable, that. For me, too. That is something I don’t like to do, but it is absolutely necessary. “Prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Examine what you still have to do in order to come up to the perfection of God, in order to come closer to God.

Many consider changes a nuisance. They are a cause for annoyance. But for the faithful who take these things seriously—these adjustments, this calling into question, this constant examining—these changes can be a source of great joy simply because the Lord Jesus said, “I like that! Here is my blessing!”

CORE THOUGHTS

Our relationship to God and our neighbour must not be influenced by events and happenings and things in our immediate environment. We align ourselves with the will of God, which expects of us that

- we love God and the neighbour.
- we are tolerant and respect others.
- we agree that we have to improve and mend our ways in order to reach perfection.



Hans Zwiener



NAC Brazil

Hope in the resurrection

At the end of the year 2014, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider visited members on the South American continent. On the Saturday evening he gathered with the ministers and their wives in a ministers' meeting, and on the Sunday he conducted a divine service in a hotel, which was attended by some 500 participants.

With its 20 million inhabitants, the greater metropolitan area of São Paulo in Brazil is one of the most densely populated urban areas in the world. Many records are constantly being broken in this city of nearly 6,000 skyscrapers: the city is home to the largest residential building in the world, namely the Copan Building erected by Oscar Niemeyer for 5,000 residents. It is here that records are broken for downtown traffic jams that extend for an average of roughly 150 kilometres every day—and going strong. The longest one so far was

300 kilometres. The trip to the central church can quickly become a nerve-wracking ordeal. However, the ministers who had been invited to a special gathering with the Chief Apostle on Saturday, 15 November 2014 would likely not have had any problem lining up in one of the endless columns of vehicles on the road that weekend to get to this unique event in the church in Bosque da Saúde, especially since this was to be the first chance for most of them to meet Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider. Members from the eight congregations in the



Left and above: The choir and orchestra contributed to the divine service with their music

federal state of São Paulo, as well as from some of the neighbouring states, were invited to the Sunday divine service, which took place in a local hotel.

Hope and preparation

Belief in the resurrection is an indispensable part of Christian doctrine. Those who doubt in the resurrection will only see Jesus as a healer. Sooner or later they will naturally be disappointed because the miracles they expect do not come to pass. Our hope, however, is to be permanently redeemed from the evil one in the first resurrection, and we prepare ourselves for this event. This hope is a more certain and firmly rooted anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6: 19). For this reason we, like the early Christians, remain faithful to the Lord despite all adversities (Acts 8: 1, 4). The Lord will help us by comforting us and ensuring that no trial is impossible for us to overcome.

Our goal is to become like Jesus. As long as we are on this earth we will be imperfect (Romans 7: 19). Only the resurrection will enable us to attain perfection. We prepare ourselves for this by battling against evil (1 John 3: 3) and seeking grace (1 Peter 1: 13). The Lord helps us in the process by forgiving our sins.

We believe in the holiness of the church (1 Peter 2: 9). At present it is still shrouded in human imperfections. The perfection of the church will only become visible after the resurrection. We contribute to this perfection by working on the unity of the believers, who have been called “in one hope” of our calling (Ephesians 4: 1–4). God’s role in this process consists of sanctifying us through word and sacrament.

Sometimes we are disappointed by the small number of people who accept our testimony. It will only be after the first res-

urrection that we will be able to bring the gospel to all mankind. We prepare ourselves for this task by learning to love all human beings without exception. God will help us in this endeavour by bringing us into contact with different people of all sorts—and giving us the power to love them.

CORE THOUGHTS

1 Corinthians 15: 19–20

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

We hope for the first resurrection, which will enable us to

- be redeemed from the evil one.
- be like Jesus.
- see the church in its perfected state.
- become priests of God and of Christ.

With the help of God we prepare ourselves for this. We also hope in the resurrection of the dead, which will open up access to the new creation.

Recognizing the Saviour

In December 2014 the Chief Apostle embarked on a journey through South-East Asia, in the course of which he conducted four divine services. The first was in Hong Kong, where he addressed a small, young international congregation in this metropolis of millions on the South China Sea. It was also here that Chief Apostle Schneider retired the Apostles Amarendra Babu Somala and Devdas Lalba Suryawanshi from India.



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Where else if not here could one apply the account of the tower of Babel to the present day? The Chief Apostle did just that by summarizing that “without God, mankind has no future”. District Apostle Markus Fehlbaum accompanied the Chief Apostle to the Philippines and, while there, the District Apostle took the time to see how things were progressing with some development projects financed and operated by the Swiss relief organization *NAK-Humanitas*. The province of South Cotabato, which lies in the south of the Philippine island of Mindanao, is a region with a majority Christian population. This area is also home to a larger than average number of New Apostolic Christians. On 14 December the Chief Apostle conducted a divine service with retirement and ordination in the city of General Santos, which was attended by two and a half thousand members and guests.

Seeing the Saviour at work

The Jewish people hoped that their Saviour would rule over Israel, just as the prophets had foretold, and that He would liberate them from the yoke of the Romans. However, the Lord came to rule the hearts of mankind and deliver them from their worst enemy, namely sin, which separates them from God.

The Jews were waiting for a glorious Saviour, who would emerge in spectacular fashion. When Jesus began to work, however, they did not accept Him because He was of lowly descent. They knew where He had come from and were acquainted with His parents. How do we understand our baptism? Do we see in it the salvific activity of Jesus upon us or

At right: Some 2,500 members took part the divine service in General Santos

Below right: Apostle Mercurio Nuyad is placed into retirement

Below left: Chief Apostle Schneider at the altar with his interpreter



NAC South-East Asia



do we merely regard it as a tradition that our parents wanted to cultivate? Some think that the act of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit should be associated with impressive acts. We believe in our Holy Sealing, no matter how simple the dispensation of this sacrament may have been.

There was nothing extraordinary about Jesus' emergence in public. Those who wanted to arrest Him needed Judas in order to recognize Him. Nevertheless, His doctrine caused people to take notice because He spoke as one having authority (Matthew 7: 29). This authority derived from His commission: He did not speak of Himself, but rather proclaimed the will of the Father, who had sent Him. The Apostles of today are human beings just like everyone else. The authority of the men who hold this office does not derive from their personality, but rather from the commission which the Lord has given them.

Many of the Jews dismissed the Saviour because He consorted with sinners. Let us accept that the Lord offers salvation to our neighbour, even if he is not like us and does not live up to our standards.

CORE THOUGHTS

1 John 4: 14

“And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world.”

Belief in the word of God is indispensable for recognizing the Saviour. Salvation consists of our liberation by God from all things that separate us from Him. We recognize the activity of the Saviour in the sacraments and in the Apostle ministry. We accept the fact that the Lord will also deliver our neighbour.

Perfect like God

More than 900 brothers and sisters attended the divine service in the Motherwell church and well over 115,000 throughout the Cape watched a video transmission of the divine service the Chief Apostle held in this congregation in the city of Port Elizabeth in South Africa at the end of January.

Port Elizabeth, with a population of some 700,000, is one of the largest cities in South Africa. It is located in Eastern Cape Province. The congregation of Motherwell, in which Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider conducted the divine service, is located in the township of the same name. It is an extensive residential area. Townships are remnants of the Apartheid regime. Thanks to economic development schemes, many of the once haphazardly built shacks of corrugated iron that mushroomed into huge settlements without any infrastructure have developed into large and more prosperous communities. Today there are brick houses, streets, and squares, and the townships are considered part of the culture-rich environment that makes up this Rainbow Nation. Motherwell and several other townships are among the fastest growing residential areas in the region.

Meeting the expectations of God

“This is how Jesus defined perfection,” Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider said. “God is the standard. God is perfect.” That makes it difficult, he added. “The perfection of God is beyond the understanding of man.” But this is where Jesus comes in and makes it easy for us, “And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.”

Using the example set by Jesus, the Chief Apostle elaborated on four aspects of perfection.

- Perfect knowledge: Jesus was absolutely in a position to distinguish between good and evil, and demonstrated this.
- The perfect servant: He served God and fulfilled His mission right until the end in a perfect manner.



■ NAC Cape

Right:
Chief Apostle Schneider ordains George Fawlo an Apostle for the Kasama district in Zambia and Edwin M. Kasamu as an Apostle for the Mazabuka/Monze district also in Zambia

Below right:
A view of the congregation in Motherwell



- Perfect love: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15: 13).
- Perfect unity: “I and My Father are one” (John 10: 30).

“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Chief Apostle Schneider does not only see these words of Jesus as a promise for the future, but also as a task for the present.

The Chief Apostle formulated the promise of Jesus as follows, “With my grace and my help you can become perfect as God is perfect.” Jesus will help those who in faith accept the word of God, the forgiveness of sins, and the sacraments to become like Him on the day of His return.

Our task today is, “Jesus wants to see a development in us.” The Chief Apostle pointed out five areas in which there needs to be development.

- “A perfect will does not change with the conditions and situations. We want to become like Jesus in good as well as in bad days. And nothing can change that.”
- Perfect knowledge between right and wrong means we have understood the will of God and do good out of conviction on account of the spiritual maturity we have reached.
- Perfect servants do not serve because they see their own advantage, but because they love Jesus.
- Perfect Christian love means that we wish everyone—including our enemies—the same salvation we hope for ourselves.
- Perfect unity does not mean that we all have to have the same lifestyle and have to agree on everything. What it does mean is, “We all agree: Jesus Christ is right. His teaching is the right way. His way is the only one that leads to the Father.”

“If we do that,” the Chief Apostle said in closing, “we will have perfect joy in Christ.”



CORE THOUGHTS

Matthew 5: 48

“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

By following the Lord we have the possibility to attain perfection in Christ upon His return. Today the Lord urges us

- to be very determined to become like Him,
- to grow in knowledge and love, and
- to be one in Christ.

THREE MEN IN THE FIERY FURNACE

(DANIEL 3)

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were friends. They came from Jerusalem and were being held as prisoners in Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar put them through school and afterwards promoted them to responsible positions at his court.

One day Nebuchadnezzar ordered that a big golden statue should be built. It was to be erected in a valley near Babel. The king summoned all the high officials in the country together. Trumpets, harps,

horns, and all kinds of instruments were to be played and everyone in the country had to bow down before the statue and worship it. "Anyone who does not worship the statue will be thrown into the fiery furnace," Nebuchadnezzar decreed.

When the trumpets sounded and the harps rang out, all the people threw themselves to the ground before the golden statue and worshipped it. That is, almost everyone. Some men complained to the king about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. "They did not



obey your command. They did not honour your god, and they did not worship the golden statue.”

Nebuchadnezzar became furious and ordered that the three men be brought to him. He threatened them, “If you do not worship the statue the next time, you will be thrown into a blazing hot furnace. Then we will see whether your God will help you.”

The friends were true to their God. “Our God can save us from the furnace and also from you.”

The king ordered that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter than usual. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were chained and thrown into the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar suddenly jumped up after a while. Terrified, he asked, “Didn’t we

throw three men into the furnace. I can see four in there. And they are walking about!”

He moved closer to the furnace and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego! Come out!” They came out of the furnace. Not one hair was singed nor were their clothes burnt. Then the king said, “Blessed be your God, who sent His angel. You have trusted in Him and He has saved you. No one should speak badly of your God. Those who do will be punished. There is no other god who can save us as this God does.”



God protects those who are faithful to Him.



AT MATEO'S IN MONTEVIDEO IN URUGUAY



Hello everybody! My name is Mateo. I live in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay in South America. I not only love to watch football but I also love to play it. Uruguay's national football team is nicknamed **La Celeste**, which means something like "blue sky", because the players always wear blue shirts.

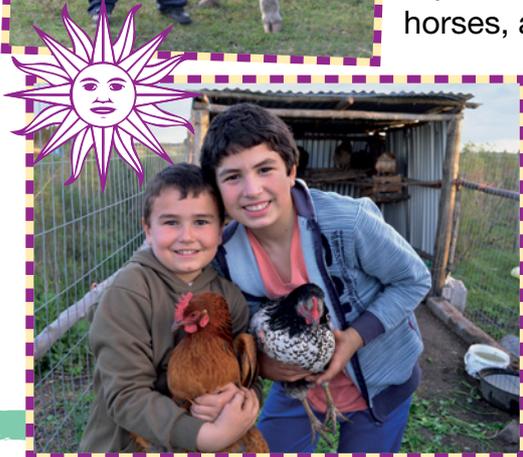


I am seven years old. My **brother**, Augustín, is four years older than I am. I like to play with him and other friends from our neighbourhood. I also like to play with our pets. We have an aquarium, a frog, two turtles, and two birds who live in a big cage.



I have a heart for animals and really love it when we spend our holidays or weekends on a farm called San Jacinto. We usually go there with the whole family: my parents, my grandparents, my uncle and aunt, and Maite and Sofía, my cousins. There are sheep, horses, and **cows** on the

farm as well as **chickens**, our favourite animals. As soon as we get there we always run to the hen house to collect eggs.



I love horseback riding. My **horse's** name is Zorrito. That means "small fox". One of the horses is expecting a foal. That is going to be Augustín's horse. We have a friend on the farm. His name is Rafael. He is the same age as Augustín. In summer we go fishing together. Sometimes we make a camp fire and sit outside and talk until late into the night.



My parents both work in a supermarket. **Papa** Carlos is 35 years of age and works in the department that makes photo prints. **Mama** Gabriela is 35 and works in the office.





LETTERBOX

WHAT SHOULD A FRIEND BE LIKE?

Sunday School children from Buenos Aires in Argentina have made drawings of their ideal friends.

We go to church in the **congregation** of Carrasco. It is not far from our house. When my grandparents go to clean the church, I usually tag along and help them. I really like helping.

I love **Sunday School** because I have friends there and because our teacher, Sabrina, is so nice. She teaches us many things about God.



My father is a Priest. My grandfather and my uncle are also Priests in our congregation. My dad and my uncle are **twins**.

You can see them on the photo. Can you figure out which one is my father?



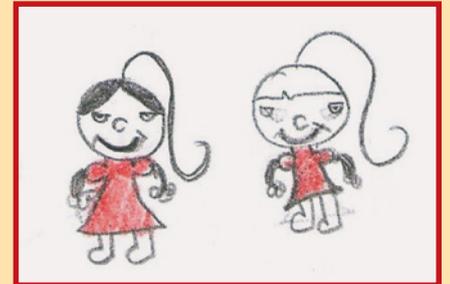
private

"I want friends who are kind and friendly and who share their things with me."

Victoria, aged 7

"For me, a friend has to be kind and honest."

Martina, aged 9



"A friend should be nice, generous, and fun to be with."

Noelia, aged 7



"A friend should have a nice friendship with me, in church and outside of it too. A friend should be there when you need her, and always pray for you to God."

Sofía, aged 7



Your favourite toy or your bike ... Tell us about the things that mean a lot to you and that you just cannot do without? Send us your answers and/or pictures by **1 June 2015**.

Our address:

Verlag Friedrich Bischoff GmbH, Editorial "Wir Kinder"
Gutleutstrasse 298, 60327 Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Email: wir.kinder@bischoff-verlag.de



Oliver Rütten

The Catechism in questions and answers

“A church that forgets its doctrine is a weak church!” This statement from the Chief Apostle in a divine service in Toulouse in France clearly expresses just how important it is to the Chief Apostle that all New Apostolic Christians know their doctrine. He wrote into the hearts of the members that they should make the endeavour to familiarize themselves with the doctrinal contents of the New Apostolic Church.

“Only those who have internalized the Church’s teachings will also be able to share them with others. For this it will not suffice to merely know the doctrine—one must also be convinced of it!” It was in this context that the Chief Apostle made reference to the soon to be published *Catechism of the New Apostolic Church in Questions and Answers*, which presents our doctrine in a format that is easier to understand.

With the publication of the *Catechism of the New Apostolic Church in Questions and Answers* (CNAC QA) scheduled for

the year 2015, two formats of the same work—each of which respond to different needs—will be available.

Many other translations followed quickly after the Catechism’s publication in the Church’s main languages in the year 2012. In addition to the print edition, the Catechism was also made available in electronic format. Various other versions were also prepared for use on the Internet. The development of the Catechism App for smartphones and tablets was at the very cutting edge of the times. All of these editions are the same in terms of content.

It was a concern of Chief Apostle Leber that a suitable version of the Catechism also be developed for purposes of instruction. This was intended to facilitate access to what are at times difficult concepts and interrelationships. This latest product, namely the Catechism in questions and answers, is designed to address this need. For the creation of this reference work, the text of the long version of the Catechism was divided up into 750 questions and answers. With its easy-to-understand structure, this work can be used around the world for instructing the ministers and providing Church instruction on various levels.

Why questions and answers?

The question-and-answer format has already been in use for centuries in various Christian catechisms, and has also had a long tradition in our Church. The underlying didactic methodology has often proven itself. It has also been used in teaching Confirmation Instruction for a long time. Thus the Catechism in question-and-answer format is also to be used as a reference work to accompany various levels of instruction. Beyond that, it is also very well suited for imparting Christian doctrine in general—as well as the specific doctrinal statements of our Church—in a vivid manner.

At the suggestion of Chief Apostle Leber, the *Catechism of the New Apostolic Church in Questions and Answers* underwent a test phase which provided important insights to the project group tasked with its compilation. Three sample chapters were converted into question-and-answer format and tested in Confirmation Instruction. The tests were conducted in Africa, which is home to the vast majority of our Church's members.

The greatest emphasis in the drafting of this reference work was on reader friendliness, which is why the text contains many complete Bible citations. This offers readers the benefit of being able to reference these Bible passages even when they do not have a Bible. This is particularly important when it comes to those countries in which not everyone owns a Bible. Thus the reference work not only serves to help members become acquainted with our doctrine, but also provides a good overview of statements in Scripture that are essential to our doctrine.

Terms that are not necessarily comprehensible to everyone at first glance are explained in detail the first time they appear. In order to allow for the use of the Catechism in conjunction with the *Catechism in Questions and Answers*, the latter corresponds exactly to the CNAC in terms of overall structure. Thus the *Catechism in Questions and Answers* can also be used as a workbook in conjunction with the Catechism. Thereby it also fulfils the purpose of helping individuals understand the content of the Catechism in their personal study.

An important objective in its production was to provide the greatest possible level of clarity and comprehension. Different means and methods were used in order to achieve this.

- By way of 750 questions and answers that build upon one another, readers are taken by the hand, so to speak, and led through the content of the Catechism.
- In order to allow readers to comprehend subject matter that is at times complex, the topics have been structured into a large number of individual questions and answers. This allows for shorter trains of thought to be incorporated into the work.
- The text is formulated in a format that is as easy to remember as possible, without using many technical terms.
- Overly detailed descriptions of the various trains of thought leading up to specific doctrinal statements have been largely avoided.
- For certain terms, explanations have either been incorporated or expanded further on the basis of those already contained in the Catechism.

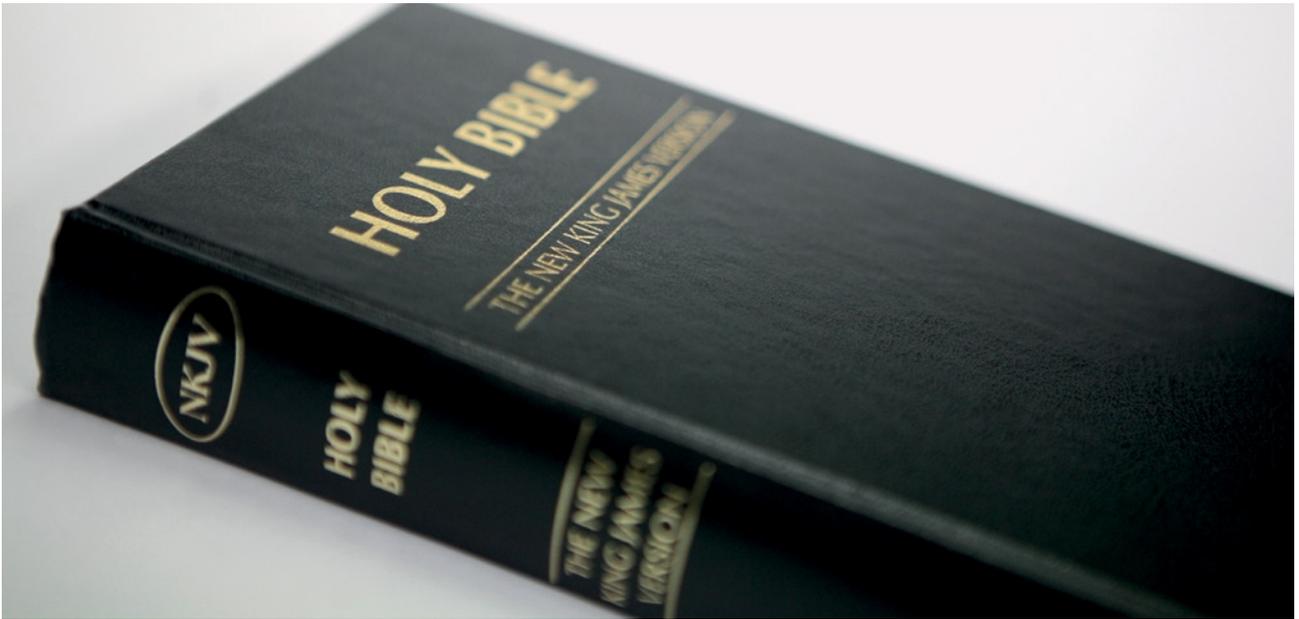
The illustrations serve as an invitation for readers to pause for a moment. Some of them serve to emphasize the texts to which they have been assigned, while others merely serve as illustration. This breaks up the monotony of the type and serves for visual appeal, which leads to improved readability.

In his foreword to the reference work, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, who has closely monitored the progress of the *Catechism of the New Apostolic Church in Questions and Answers*, addresses the following words to its readers:

“Like the CNAC, this version of the Catechism is an appeal to all New Apostolic Christians to occupy themselves intensively with the content of their faith. It is also an invitation to all interested parties to become better acquainted with the New Apostolic doctrine. May the use of this reference work serve for blessing!”

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Oliver Rütten

Chapter 1: The revelations of God

The *Catechism of the New Apostolic Church in Questions and Answers* has been designed with a didactic and methodological approach in mind. By way of 750 questions and answers, readers are taken by the hand, so to speak, and led from statement to statement in a manner that is easily understandable.

What is the source of our belief in God?

The source of our belief is in God Himself. He allows human beings to recognise Him: He “reveals” Himself. The knowledge that God exists has been given by God Himself. God does not conceal Himself, but rather allows Himself to be recognised by human beings such that human beings can speak of God and believe in God.

“Because what may be known of God is manifest in them [human beings], for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1: 19–20).

How does God reveal Himself?

God reveals Himself in different ways, in nature and in history.

How does God reveal Himself in nature?

God reveals Himself in nature as the Creator: in the existence of the universe, of mankind, and of animals and plants.

“He waters the hills from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth” (Psalm 104: 13–14).

How does God identify Himself?

God is a spiritual being. He identifies Himself as God,

- the Father, the Creator and Sustainer of the creation (cf. Genesis 1; 8: 21–22),
- the Son, the Redeemer and bringer of salvation (cf. 1 John 5: 20),
- the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Helper, who leads into all truth (cf. John 16: 13).

Where are revelations of God recorded?

Revelations of God are recorded in Holy Scripture. We understand the term “revelations of God” in several ways:

- God allows Himself to be recognised. He provides insight into His being and nature (“self-revelation” of God).
- God makes His will known to human beings.
- God encounters human beings in His love, especially in His word and in the sacraments.

Are there any other insights into God’s actions?

Yes, through the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Apostle ministry, God grants us knowledge and insights about His actions for the salvation of mankind. These are referenced in the Bible and further exposed by the Holy Spirit.

How are human beings to conduct themselves with respect to God’s revelations?

Human beings are to believe in God and His revelations. Only through faith can human beings grasp the divine revelations. If they believe, divine matters will be valuable to them and will define their lives. For example, someone who does not believe in God as the Creator will not see the universe as a work of God in which the Creator has revealed Himself, but rather as the result of coincidental processes unfolding in nature.

How do human beings come to believe?

Faith is granted and reinforced by the Holy Spirit. Among other things, this comes about through the preaching of the gospel on the foundation of Holy Scripture.

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10: 17).

What is Holy Scripture?

Holy Scripture—the Bible—is a collection of writings about God’s activity, promises, and commandments. It consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Holy Scripture attests to the revelations of God, however it is not a complete or exhaustive account of all of God’s deeds. God has seen to it that that which is important for the salvation of mankind has been preserved.

*The term “Bible” is derived from the Latin word *biblia* which signifies “books, scrolls”.*

Who is the author of Holy Scripture?

The author of Holy Scripture is God. Human beings, whom the Holy Spirit inspired to this purpose, wrote down that which

God revealed. As concerns form and manner of expression, the biblical books bear the mark of their respective authors as well as the worldview and experiences of their time.

In translation, the term “inspiration” means: “prompting”, “breathed in”. Divine inspiration signifies that the Holy Spirit has prompted a human being to do something or has imparted something to a human being.

Have the texts of the biblical books been handed down in a reliable manner?

Yes, God has seen to it that the texts of the biblical books have remained unadulterated over the centuries.

How did the biblical books come to be collected?

The biblical writings were collected over the course of centuries. This not only came about as the result of human contemplations, but also especially through the will of God. The Christian canon of the Old Testament is based on the Hebrew canon of Judaism, the writings of which are presumed to have come into being over a timespan of about 1,000 years. The canon of the New Testament consists of the gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of the Apostles, and one prophetic book, namely the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The writings of Apostle Paul were the first to gain esteem in the early church. The gospels—of which the gospel according to Mark is the oldest—and the other writings were added later on. The writings of the New Testament came into being over the space of approximately 70 years. In order to preserve and hand down these original accounts of the Christian faith, they were compiled into a collection that ultimately came to be certified as “canonical” in the course of various synods.

*The collection of writings that are definitive for the teachings of a particular religion are called a “canon”. For the Christian faith, these include the writings of the Old and New Testaments. The term “synod” is derived from the Greek word *synodos* and means “gathering” or “assembly”. A synod is understood as the assembly of an ecclesiastical body that has the authority to pass binding resolutions.*

A pioneer becomes District Apostle Helper

“He is New Apostolic with all his heart,” a friend and companion says about Apostle João Uanuque Misselo. On 22 February 2015, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider commissioned Him as a District Apostle Helper for Angola. This is an opportunity to look at his life and the country he lives in.



Top: Apostle Misselo is welcomed by children



The best person to speak to about this is no doubt District Apostle Armin Brinkmann. He is retired, but District Apostle Brinkmann not only ordained João Misselo into all the min-

istries from Deacon to District Elder between 1985 and 1994, but was also instrumental in building up the New Apostolic Church in Angola.



Continuous growth

“In the beginning, there were only two believers,” District Apostle (ret.) Brinkmann remembers. “And three decades later, there are nearly 250,000 people who profess the New Apostolic faith there.”

No wonder, the pioneers of the New Apostolic Church found deeply religious people when they first came to Angola. The country looks back on a long Christian tradition. With the colonization by the Portuguese some 500 years ago, Christianity was also brought to this West African country. Before long, there was a church in every village. The Roman Catholic Church also shaped the education system.

The New Apostolic faith was also received with open arms. District Apostle Brinkmann remembers a trip to the eastern part of the country in August 1985: “When we arrived at our destination, we held divine services for hours. More and more people came, listened to us, and asked to be baptized and sealed.”

Below: Impressions from the Apostles' conference in Angola



Top: District Apostle Rainer Storck with Apostles from Angola and his working area in Germany



Apostles—Manuel Eduardo Mbuta, Alfonso Avelino, and João Uanuque Misselo—have been coordinating the work of the New Apostolic Church in the various regions of the country. Today a total of 15 Apostles and ten Bishops look after the New Apostolic Christians in more than 2,200 congregations. And growth is continuing.

Commissioning of a District Apostle Helper

It was time for the next step. On 22 February, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider visited Luanda, the country's capital, and commissioned a District Apostle Helper for Angola. "Apostle Misselo is the right man for the job," District Apostle Rainer Storck says, who is now responsible for Angola. "He has a good overall picture of the situation in the country and is an excellent pastor. He is humble, but knows what he wants."

"And his horizon extends beyond the country's borders," District Apostle (ret.) Brinkmann adds. When he first came to Angola, where Portuguese is spoken, Armin Brinkmann encouraged the brothers to learn English. "The only one who did was João Misselo." This enabled him to be appointed to the Workgroup Africa and other internationally staffed committees.

The appointment of a District Apostle Helper for the growing Church in Angola is a logical decision, District Apostle Rainer Storck emphasizes, "Apostle Misselo is still under the age of 50. The decision was made with long-term goals in mind."

Dangers and obstacles

It was a trip with obstacles: "The borders were closed. Until 2002, life in the country was defined by civil war." Although the conditions were chaotic, District Evangelist Manuel Eduardo Mbuta managed to get two airline tickets. And the way was clear for us to visit our future brothers and sisters."

It was not only a period that was full of excitement and adventure, but also a period fraught with danger. In August 1989, Apostle Brinkmann and four other ministers were ambushed by rebels in northern Angola. Sukami Landu Ronsard, the first local Apostle, was so badly wounded that he died of his injuries.

Angola takes the next step

But not even this loss, as painful as it was, was able to deter and discourage the local ministers. More and more congregations were established and the membership grew steadily. In 2005, the Church even had to install an additional management level in Angola. Since then the so-called lead

1, 2, 4, 5: NAC Southern, Germany.
3: Christ Church Jebel Ali



Religious diversity under one roof

The Chief Apostle’s visit to the United Arab Emirates in January fell under the motto “diversity”: many nations in one congregation and many denominations under one roof.

Jebel Ali is the name of the port in which Jean-Luc Schneider conducted his first divine service as Chief Apostle in the Persian Gulf region. The countries there are looked after by District Apostle Michael Ehrich of Germany. Jebel Ali, once a small coastal village, became one of the world’s ten largest and busiest container ports in the 1970s. Today it is the world’s largest man-made harbour and the biggest port in the Middle East. Jebel is Arabic and means “mountain”, Ali means “high or elevated”.

More than 130,000 people work in this free economic zone. “Many of them are foreign workers, like in Dubai and many of the other emirates,” Bishop (ret.) Rolf Ludwig says. Until recently, he looked after the New Apostolic members in the Persian Gulf region and is familiar with the congregations there.

These expats make up the New Apostolic congregations. Many of the members, the Bishop says, are from Pakistan. “Many work in construction. Most of them are here without their families, and send the greater part of their monthly pay

cheque home to support their families—earnings that are well below 1,000 Euros. The divine services for them are held in Urdu. The other expats in the congregation—mostly South Africans, but also Americans, Canadians and Germans—hold jobs at the middle management level.

Common to both groups are the comparatively strict working conditions. Residence permits are issued only for the duration of their employment contract, and that can be terminated at any time with only a few weeks’ notice. That is why the make-up of the congregations is in a constant state of flux.

Not only the local English-speaking congregation was invited to the divine service on 16 January in Jebel Ali, but also the four other congregations from the Emirates Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah, as well as from the neighbouring states of Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait.

So that the brothers and sisters could come at all, the divine service took place on a Friday, the official holiday in a Muslim country. Sunday is a normal working day, Rolf Ludwig



- 1| The choir during service
- 2| Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider at the altar
- 3| Christ Church Jebel Ali
- 4| Members use the opportunity to have their picture taken with the Chief Apostle
- 5| District Apostle Michael Ehrich (left) and Chief Apostle Schneider

explains. “Even though Christians are in the minority, they and the members of other religions are treated with a great deal of respect, and are allowed to practise their faith. Like in other Muslim countries proselytizing is prohibited.”

The New Apostolic Church does not have its own church building in the Emirates. That is why the services in Jebel Ali take place in the Anglican Church, which is officially allowed to build and maintain its own churches. This is something that goes back to the time of the British protectorate. For the service on 16 January, therefore, a room was rented in the Christ Church Jebel Ali.

The New Apostolic Church is in good company. Some thirty other denominations from about 15 different countries worship and conduct services under the roof of the Anglican Church. The various denominations have a locker in which they keep the things they need to celebrate their services. On some days—from six o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night—one denomination after the other celebrates its divine services on the premises. “This is how up to 30,000 Christians of various denominations gather for worship in such a church complex in the region on one day,” Bishop Ludwig reports.

Help for flood-stricken Malawi



Hardly noticed by the world, thousands of people in southern Malawi are suffering from the consequences of a disastrous flood. Hundreds of thousands have not only lost their homes but also their livelihood. In addition to the United Nations and its partner organizations, NAK-karitativ and the Henwood Foundation are on the ground and helping. More than half the country has been declared a disaster area. Thirty of our churches have been completely destroyed. Thousands of brothers and sisters live in emergency camps. Malawi is home to some 17 million people, of which 83 per cent are Christians.

Violent protests in Niger



During violent protests in Niger nearly 100 Christian churches were looted and torched. Christian schools and homes of Christians were also looted and burned. District Apostle Koberstein has decided to suspend divine services for the time being in order not to put the members in any danger. The Catholic Church has reacted with similar measures.

The focus is on the global congregation

This is the first issue of *community*. And *nac.today*, the online news magazine of the New Apostolic Church, was just launched at the beginning of the year too. Why? What for? The Chief Apostle answered these questions a few weeks ago in an interview he gave *nac.today*.

■ *Another website! And another magazine! The Church has just launched nac.today, and community will follow soon? How do you keep track of everything?*

(smiles) Oh, that is easy. These media are part of our communication strategy. We have restructured it and given it a new direction.

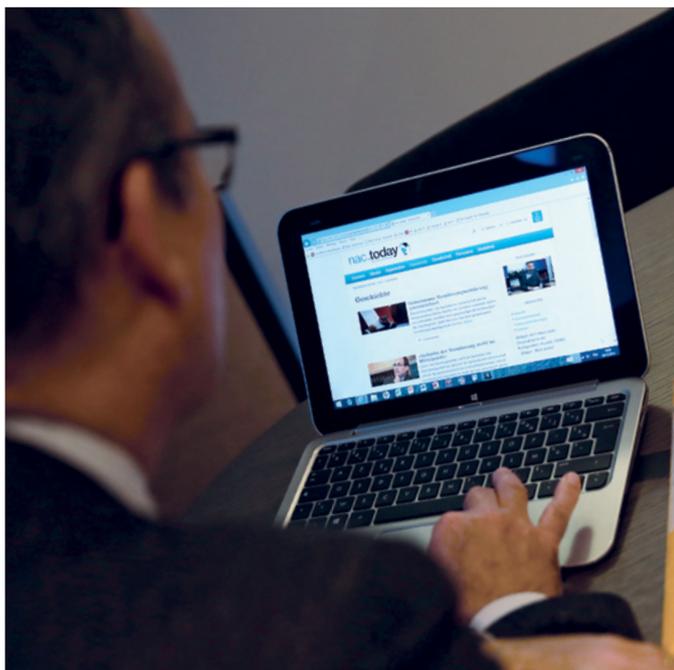
■ *Why are you communicating on several channels?*

Every channel has its own identity, its own content, its own target group. There is *nac.org*, for example. It is the official website of the Church, where you will find official announcements. It also addresses the general public. And then there is

nac.today, which is intended for the members of the Church. We want to show the great diversity that is found in the New Apostolic Church worldwide. The information on this medium will be presented in a journalistic manner.

■ *Won't people who have no Internet feel left out with so much going on online?*

Well, the Internet is global and we can reach many members quickly and fairly cost-effectively. Besides, next to the *Unsere Familie* in the German-speaking regions, a new international magazine will be launched: *community*. As a magazine for members, it will be distributed in many countries worldwide.



Oliver Rütten

Left: Chief Apostle Schneider gets his first glimpse of *nac.today*

Below: District Apostle Leonard Kolb and correspondents from the USA at a meeting with the Communications Services group of the New Apostolic Church International



Andreas Rother

- *Why did you tackle the topic of communication so early on in your term?*

Communication is vital today and it has to play a corresponding role in our ranks. It serves the purpose of coordination and exchange on a global level. It is a way to promote the unity of the doctrine, for example, and to create an awareness of the various cultures.

- *What are you hoping to achieve with this?*

Our denomination has a worldwide dimension. Where certain issues are concerned this does not always make things easy. But information from other countries helps us to better understand our brothers and sisters, their situation, and their needs. It is our aim to show that the New Apostolic Church is a living, diverse, and joyful Christian denomination.

- *How are we going to communicate? What style of communication would the Church like to cultivate?*

We want to communicate in a Christian way: sincere, transparent, and respectful. This is something that applies to our personal conversations, to our dealings with each other in the congregation, as well as to what we publish in our online and print media.

- *Can members participate in these new media?*

A lot of people are already participating in social networks. We even have our own network for this: *nacworld.net*. Here, members can discuss their faith undisturbed. A number of possibilities are being planned for *nac.today* so that people can participate.

- *People in the business know: What you are planning means a lot of work. How is this supposed to work?*

We will make use of the potential we have: we have a lot of competent people in our ranks. We have established a worldwide network of correspondents and translators. If we combine our strengths and make an effort in a spirit of trust and cooperation, and are happy to do the members a service, we will be able to achieve amazing things.

- *How are you going to be involved?*

(laughs) Nice question. Well, I made a start on *nac.today* by giving a New Year's Day speech. And right now we are doing this interview. I see my main task in creating the framework so that as many brothers and sisters as possible can find a suitable medium for themselves. Even if I am not going to be involved in the day-to-day running of things, I will no doubt give the one or other impetus in the future ...

Day of the Youth in Korea



NAC Korea

The youth in Korea have two Days of the Youth per year; one in summer and one in winter. The motto of the winter event was "I am a child of God". The youth and their rectors came together for two days in January with Bishop Yang and District Evangelists Lee and Cha. They had group discussions about their faith and watched the sunset over Suncheon Bay.

First national choral workshop in Indonesia



NAC Indonesia

A group of 67 conductors from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines came together for their first national choral workshop in Surabaya in Indonesia. The two-day seminar was led by Tommyanto Kandisaputra, a choral maestro who has much experience and has won many international awards. Rehearsal technique and vocal training were only two of the subjects taught. On Sunday there was a concert with the choir of the local congregation, who were joined by the Eliata Choir, an inter-denominational Christian choir. On the programme were the "Coronation Anthems" by George Frideric Handel and the "Hallelujah Chorus" from his *Messiah*. In Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines there are about 61,000 New Apostolic Christians.

Meeting of religions makes a difference

An unusual gathering at a special point in time: the New Apostolic Church Luxembourg had the privilege of playing host to some high-ranking clergy of various religions on the occasion of the Chief Apostle's visit on 11 January 2015.

Already before the divine service, the guests of honour were welcomed by name. They included Grand Rabbi Alain Nacache of the Jewish Consistory of Luxembourg; Jean-Luc Karleskind, Vice President of the Grand Duchy's Muslim community; and Jutta Bayani, Chairperson of the Baha'i community. The Catholic Church was represented by Théo Péporté, representative of the Archbishop; Christian Descoups, Secretary General of the Archdiocese; and Willy Fuchs, Secretary General of the Catholic Men's Movement. The Protestant Alliance of Luxembourg was represented by Bishop Adama Ouedraogo and Deacon Fernand Gilles.

Their participation in this divine service was a response to an express invitation which in turn dated back to some successful cooperation on a political level in past months. Clément Haeck, the Apostle responsible for Luxembourg explained the situation at the request of *community's* editors. He relates that the government in Luxembourg was negotiating with the churches to arrive at a stronger division between state and religion. Up for discussion here were state treaties which, if revised, would result in new regulations for financial support, for example.

It was in this context that representatives of various religious denominations banded together to reform the previous state of religious instruction in the nation's schools. Together they advocated for a kind of religious instruction that would impart knowledge about the most varied of confessions in addition to teaching confessionally neutral ethics. The New Apostolic Church is also among the signatories of a corresponding submission to the government. In the course of their preliminary meetings, the group became better acquainted, relates Apostle Haeck. And this was what inspired the idea of inviting their discussion partners to the service.

What no one would ever have guessed at the time was the special relevance that would come to be assigned to this meeting of religions: only a few days before the divine service—on 7 January—Islamic terrorists carried out an attack on the offices of a satirical magazine and a Jewish supermarket in Paris, killing a total of 16 people. And it was precisely on the day of the service—11 January—that millions of people of various religions and all walks of life demonstrated together against terrorism and xenophobia.

It was against this backdrop that Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider paid tribute to the visit of these special guests. He also emphasized the special significance of their presence at a gathering with them after the service, during which he thanked them for their visit and expressed his solidarity with all victims of racism and intolerance, be they Jews, Muslims, or Christians.



Apostle Clément Haeck (1st from left), Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider (7th from left), and District Apostle Bernd Koberstein (3rd from right) with the guests of honour after the divine service

Illustrating our motto “Joy in Christ”

“Joy in Christ”, the motto of the New Apostolic Church for 2015, is unfolding more and more from service to service. What does it mean for us, what do we connect with it? Join our interactive project and help us illustrate the 2015 motto!

There are many facets to the motto. Already in his New Year’s Day message, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider mentioned four points according to which “joy in Christ” includes the joy over salvation through Christ, the joy that is experienced in the fellowship of Christians, the joy that is derived from serving according to the example set by Jesus, and the joy that we derive out of the strength and the gifts we receive every day.

The Chief Apostle spoke in detail about two of these aspects in the New Year’s Day service he celebrated in Herne-Wanne-Eickel in Germany. The joy over salvation through Christ arises on account of the certainty that, in the end, the goodness of God will conquer evil. And joy arises because we have the possibility to become like Christ, and that we can win small and large victories by working with and in the Spirit of God.

The fellowship among Christians is another source of joy, the Chief Apostle said, provided we understand the congregation as a team in which everyone wants to reach the same goal, and provided we see in the baptism or sealing of a soul or in the ordination of a brother the individual’s decision: “Yes, I want to become a Christian. I want to serve the Lord.” We also have to see our victory as a team victory, and that we have managed to preserve the unity despite all personal and cultural differences.

These are quite a few impulses that are waiting to be put into action. And sometimes it helps to actually visualize things to get a better picture. What do I see? How do I see it? *community* is calling on its readers to do exactly that. We are asking the brothers and sisters around the world to help us depict

the 2015 motto. Take pictures, make a short video clip, ask the children to draw a picture, or let your own creativity gush, inspired by the thought: “I feel joy in Christ because ...” or “I feel joy in Christ when ...”



Oliver Rütten

Whatever you come up with, send it to us! Over the course of the year we will publish the best ideas on *nac.today*, our online news magazine. There are a few rules to consider. By submitting something, you automatically consent to its being published. Give us your name, age, the name of the congregation you belong to, and the country you live in. Make sure that all the persons shown on the photograph agree with the publication of the photo. Check with them to make sure they agree.

Please do not send any photos or works of art for which you do not have the express permission for publication. We will not be able to

publish works by others. Items from the Internet fall under this category too.

We hope you enjoy the activity. The editors can be reached at: info@nac.today. If you prefer, you can send your creations to us by mail. The address is:

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PREVIEW

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Photo: Pentecost 2014 in Germany

New Apostolic Church
International

