



Forty-year anniversary of the New Apostolic Church in the Philippines

40 Jahre Neuapostolische Kirche in den Philippinen

(Grafik: NAC SouthEastAsia)

Zurich/Manila. It has been 40 years since the New Apostolic Church was established in the Philippines. At the time, in October 1972, it was the Apostle Erwin Wagner who conducted the first divine service in Manila. Today this part of the world is home to many thousands of New Apostolic Christians. Across the country this Sunday, the District church will commemorate its history and thus also celebrate the Thanksgiving divine service as an anniversary service.

According to the church book, the then Apostle Erwin Wagner from Canada travelled to the capital on 12 October 1972 in order to conduct the first New Apostolic divine service in the country. District Elder Pache from Japan then took on responsibility for the ongoing efforts on location. Today the responsible District Apostle Urs Hebeisen lives in the Philippine capital of Manila. For 30 years he too has been travelling throughout the District Church of the Philippines. He states: "Writing down the history of the New Apostolic Church in the Philippines is associated with many emotions. Naturally I could list all sorts of facts and figures, but only the Lord knows what tremendous efforts were made in order to establish the Church here."

A great deal of hope and faith

After ten years of the Church's work in the country, the first Apostle was ordained for the Philippines: it was the then District Evangelist Urs Hebeisen, who had moved to Manila in 1982 with his wife. He summarises as follows: "I still remember very clearly the strong missionary zeal that was often enough eyed with suspicion in the country's pre-democratic period. Yet even under the regime of President Marcos, we were still able to develop spiritually. In those days of political restrictions, the

people had a great deal of hope and a strong faith, which caused the churches to grow. There was not much else for which to hope!”

The New Apostolic Church also grew. Congregations were established, and ministers were ordained. After the political shift of 1986, freedom, democracy, and economic growth swept through the country. Increased mobility and migration had an impact on the young congregations. Many Church members moved away. On the occasion of the 25-year anniversary of the Church, District Apostle Erwin Wagner wrote: “We remember where we have come from and what we have experienced, and as Jesus said: ‘I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ This is to be the guideline for our work.”

Forty years and no end in sight

District Apostle Hebeisen goes on to add: “When I look back on the last 30 years with all their ups and downs, I can say with conviction: we would not have what we have, had we not lived through trials, challenges, and changes over these years.” He also issues the appeal to continue the work: “We are very certainly no longer what we were 40 years ago, but neither are we yet that which we are to be on the day of the Lord.”

For [more information](#), please visit the website of the New Apostolic Church in the Philippines.

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