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**"At the moment, the most important thing is to help people"**

Bezirksapostel Hebeisen berichtet aus Südostasien,

Buenos Aires. The situation in Japan is also a topic of discussion at the spring meeting of the world's District Apostles. The two New Apostolic congregations in Japan comprise approximately 100 members—all of whom have survived the terrible earthquake and the devastating tsunami. "The most significant problem at the moment is the nuclear catastrophe that is now out of control. We do not yet know how this situation will play out." It was with these words that District Apostle Urs Hebeisen began his presentation on the work of the New Apostolic Church in South East Asia.

He went on to mention that, since neither the UN nor the Japanese government have so far made any requests for financial aid, the New Apostolic Church cannot at this time launch any kind of donation campaign. "I have received many inquiries from Europe. The wave of solidarity and willingness to help is tremendous. But for the time being, Japan will have to solve these problems. The people there have a great deal of strength!" Given the vague details of the situation at present, he explained that another sort of support is called for anyway: "At the moment, the most important thing is to help people, to find those who have been trapped in the rubble, and to provide medical attention to the injured."

Even the New Apostolic Church's aid organisation, NAK-karitativ, is not planning any concrete action at the moment. "The situation is still too uncertain for anything like that," explains Bernd Klippert. "We are currently in constant contact with our partner organisations in order to keep up to date, clear up the details of the situation, and determine the needs. What we need is an appropriately planned approach." An

account with the key word “Nothilfe Japan 2011” (“Emergency aid Japan 2011”) has already been created however, says Klippert.

### **South East Asia – a positive balance**

“China is certainly still a large country for the work of the Christian churches,” reports District Apostle Urs Hebeisen, as he continues his presentation. Last year the highest representative of the New Apostolic Church, Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber, visited the province of Szechuan, and he plans to go there again in the year ahead. In Hong Kong and Taiwan on the other hand, the work is currently stagnating. The mobility of the members there is very high. In contrast to that, the District Apostle—who has himself been living in the Philippines for decades—reports that Korea is in good care. Although there are only few congregations there, all are working wherever they can.

### **India – a great challenge**

District Apostle Mark Woll is responsible for the Church’s work in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. He reports on some completely different challenges, both political and cultural, especially in India. “Nevertheless, some very promising young people are growing up in faith! With the help of God, things will develop well.” District Apostle David Devaraj reported to the District Apostle Meeting on the Church’s strategy for land acquisitions. The property values in many large Indian cities are not only high, but also unpredictable. Nevertheless it has become possible to purchase land in ten cities and build twelve new churches, albeit with the help of support from other District Churches.

### **Pakistan – after the great flood**

District Apostle Helper John Sobottka relates that the first new church building has just been erected in Kathmandu, Nepal, and that two other properties have also been acquired. A property has also been acquired in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The District Apostle Helper is especially happy about this acquisition because Dhaka is one of the newest mega-cities in Asia. John Sobottka also provided an update on the situation in Pakistan, where devastating floods last year put pressure on so many people. Over 300,000 dollars were donated by various District Churches in response to the crisis, and phase 3 of the support project has just been initiated this March. Now that the affected people have received financial help over phases 1 and 2 of this project, the next step is to rebuild or renovate 73 church buildings that were lost or damaged in the flooding. District Apostle Helper Sobottka also conveyed the greetings of those whom the Church was able to help.

### **Congregations in the South Pacific**

Last of all, District Apostle Andrew Andersen gave a report on the work of the New Apostolic Church in the South Pacific. In contrast to the situation in Asia, most of the population in this region is already Christian thanks to the Christianising efforts of earlier centuries. There are New Apostolic congregations in seven of the fourteen countries that are geopolitically designated as “Oceania”. The region is home to Melanesians, Micronesians, and Polynesians alike. Only in Papua New Guinea, where the New Apostolic Church has already been working since 1976, are there

over 480 congregations. However—and this is what makes the work so challenging—over 800 different languages, not dialects, are spoken there! For this reason, divine services are frequently conducted in Pidgin English. The District Apostle is convinced that the future belongs to the English language in any case.

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