



Munich/Zurich. The first ever International Church Convention of the New Apostolic Church came to an end on Sunday evening. Blessed with beaming sunshine and, for the most part, high summer temperatures, Christians from many parts of the world celebrated their faith with great enthusiasm over the space of three days. Some 50,000 participants assembled in Munich's Olympia Park for the International Church Convention, which took place over the Pentecost weekend from 6-8 June 2014. Organisers have concluded that the event was a great success.

The big event was festively inaugurated with an opening ceremony attended by 38,000 ICC visitors in the Olympia Stadium on 6 June. In addition to the international Church leader, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, numerous other New Apostolic clergymen from many countries were also present, along with guests of honour from other Christian churches. Dr. Elisabeth Dieckmann, managing director of the Association of Christian Churches (ACC) in Germany, extended the greetings and best wishes of the churches affiliated with the ACC. On behalf of Bavaria's premier minister, Christoph Hillenbrand, regional minister for Upper Bavaria, addressed a message of greeting to the participants of the ICC in which he emphasised his appreciation for the great volunteer commitment of New Apostolic Christians. This was also quite clear at the Church Convention: in addition to the approximately 2,200 exhibition leaders, lecturers, and musicians, the event was supported by over 2,000 other helpers.

Over 250 events

The mood at the approximately 250 different events—which included lectures, workshops, musicals, plays and skits, exhibits, panel discussions, devotionals, and concerts—was joyful and relaxed. For music lovers there were many different options including sacred choral music of various time periods, psalms set to music, classical music, gospel music, Asian angklung music, African rhythms, and even Bavarian folk music.

The concerts were among the highlights of the Church Convention and were often attended by thousands of people. However, there were also many verbal presentations, including lectures on prenatal diagnostics, workshops on motivation techniques, and moderated discussions on biotechnology, climate protection, and responsibility for the creation. Topics also revolved around conflict resolution, the dangers of burnout, and even support in the event of unplanned pregnancies. Around 12,000 visitors also attended a lecture by the Benedictine priest Anselm Grün, who spoke on the motto of the Church Convention: "For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17: 21).

Numerous panel discussions and lectures

The panel discussions turned out to be a veritable magnet for audiences—especially when Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider took to the podium to speak on church-related topics and theological subjects such as the role of women in the Church, the global orientation of the Church, humanitarian aid, and the Church’s status with regard to ecumenism. For some years now, the New Apostolic Church has engaged in increased dialogue with other Christian churches. This became clear in a discussion on the New Apostolic Catechism, in which both Protestant and Catholic theologians, as well as Professor Helmut Obst—a denominational observer with profound knowledge of the New Apostolic Church—participated.

The spiritual high point of the three-day event was the divine service on Pentecost Sunday, which was conducted by Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider in the Olympia Stadium and attended by over 47,000 Church Convention visitors. The service was transmitted live around the world by satellite and radio to over 100 countries, allowing millions of New Apostolic Christians to join in the experience of this central Pentecost celebration with the Chief Apostle. The Chief Apostle based his sermon on a Bible text from Romans 5: 5 which states: “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” The service was translated simultaneously into over 20 languages.

A successful event

District Apostle Michael Ehrich, leader of the District Church of Southern Germany—which incorporates Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria—was the host of this event. He expressed his joy over the fact that tens of thousands of Church members and guests were able to share in “a warm celebration of faith and fellowship, and experience the motto of the Church Convention for themselves” in this “cosmopolitan city with heart”. His wish is that this celebration of faith, with its many beautiful experiences and encounters, may radiate into the congregations, create lasting inspiration for congregational life, and provide further motivation to the Church’s members.

A number of live excerpts can be seen on the [website of the Church Convention](#) or on [nacworld](#), the social network of the New Apostolic Church.

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