

community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

1/2025/EN

It's time
to do good!

Editorial

It's time to do good!

Divine service

Paving the way for everyone

Doctrine

Unity and diversity of
the Church

New Apostolic Church
International



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It's time to do good!



NAC International

Dear brothers and sisters,

Our motto for 2025 is: “It’s time to do good!” Goodness is anything that pleases God and that corresponds to His will. And Jesus Christ taught us what it means to do good.

God wants all human beings to be saved. Let us start with ourselves. Be good to yourself and occupy yourself with your own salvation.

Then let us continue our efforts in the congregation: Jesus wants us to look out for one another, to care for one another, and help one another. He wants us to grow together into a strong community.

This is how we send out a message for Jesus Christ and demonstrate that His gospel is powerful and works at any time and in any situation. Then others will see and feel it too: “Good things are happening.”

We should always do the same good to others that we ourselves would like them to do for us. Let us take advantage of every opportunity. In fact, let us actively look for them. The Holy Spirit will show us all the things that we can do.

Let’s do good now!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jean-Luc Schneider'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'J' and 'S'.

Jean-Luc Schneider

| Paving the way for everyone



Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider conducted a divine service in Mzuzu in Malawi on 30 June 2024

NAC Malawi

Isaiah 62: 10

*“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!”*

Beloved brothers and sisters, it is a great joy to be together this morning. The reason for our gathering is simple. I think we all feel a need to worship God and to thank Him for His grace and mercy. And then we all want to be prepared for the return of Christ, which means that we must become more and more like Jesus Christ. That means having the same love as Jesus Christ, the same desire, and doing the same works He did. Jesus Christ wants to save all human beings. And the more we develop into the nature of Jesus Christ, the more this wish and desire grows in us to contribute to the salvation of our neighbour: both the living and the dead.

Since we will be celebrating the divine service for the departed next Sunday, we will concentrate on the souls in the beyond today, which is why I chose this Bible text from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

You know the story of the people at that time. The country had been invaded by the enemies, the king had been defeated, and a part of the population had been sent into

exile. The city of Jerusalem had been destroyed and was desolate, and the people were discouraged and downcast. It took several decades before God granted grace and changed the situation. Those who had remained in Jerusalem were allowed to rebuild the city, and those who had been sent into exile were allowed to return to Jerusalem.

In our Bible text, God talks to those who remained in Jerusalem and calls on them to prepare the way for those coming back from exile. They were to raise a banner to show them the way and that this was the place they were to come back to.

They were supposed to remove stones and any obstacles and make it easy for them to come back. That is the context of this Bible text.

For us as Christians, as New Apostolic children of God, the city of Jerusalem, Zion, is an image for the church of Christ. Jerusalem is the place where God dwells with His people, where we can meet God and have fellowship with Him. Those who are in exile are all those who are still under the dominion of evil. God wants to save them and lead them to His city, the church of Christ—both the living and the dead.

Look out for your neighbour and contribute to his or her redemption



In addition to District Apostle Kububa Soko, several African District Apostle Helpers and Apostles were also in Mzuzu



And He tells us, who already live in this city, to go out, lift up a banner, and remove the stones from the highway so that people will make their way to Jerusalem. The image Isaiah uses, namely to pass through the gates, does not mean that we are to leave the Church. The parable of the prodigal son speaks to the point, where Jesus described the attitude of God toward sinners. The young man left home, but when he decided to come back home, his father, in this case God, ran to meet him and welcome him back and embraced him.

With this story Jesus wanted to show the love of God for sinners. And God tells us to go out too. That means we must not just be concerned with our own salvation. No, we need to be concerned about the salvation of our neighbour and not be selfish.

Look out for your neighbour and contribute to his or her redemption. Go to them. That means we must be con-

cerned about them, share in their suffering, and show solidarity with them and let them know that we are not better than they are. We must meet them at eye level. That means we do not consider ourselves better than others and think that we deserve salvation. We do not deserve to be a child of God. It is grace. We are not better than our neighbour. And it is our desire that our neighbour receive the same grace that we have received.

We must therefore be sensitive to the suffering of others, show solidarity with them, and be aware that we are all the same because we are all sinners, and no one deserves salvation.

How can we help the souls in yonder world? Through our prayers we can intercede for

them. And this is the call of our heavenly Father: pray for those in the beyond, show your love for them, and pray for their salvation. Do not just pray for yourself. Do not only be concerned about your own salvation. Think about the salvation of your neighbour. Approach others and show them

*The unity of God's people
is the banner that shows:
here is the place where
God is at work*

A large choir and orchestra added to the festive atmosphere in Mzuzu



the way, lift up a banner so that they know that this is the place they must come to: this is the place where God dwells with His people; this is the place where you can receive salvation; this is the direction you need to go in.

How then can we lift up a banner for the souls both here and in the beyond so that they know that this is the place? First, by expressing our gratitude to God. Let us thank God for our salvation both in good days and in bad days. And even when we go through hardships, when times are difficult, let us still be thankful. We are thankful for God's love, for His grace, and for His salvation. And that helps these souls to realise how important salvation and grace are. And they see, "Oh, that must be something special because they are thankful even in difficult times." Let us raise the banner so they can see and realise, "Oh, salvation can be obtained there. They are thankful in good and in bad days." Let us show them that we are God's people and that we are no longer under the dominion of the evil one. Our conduct in everyday life is the banner that shows: this is the place where redemption can be obtained. People must realise that as children of God we are no longer forced to follow the devil. God has enabled us to act and behave in a different manner. We do not react like everyone else, but do the will of God in every situation.

Let us behave as true disciples of Christ. Do not allow others to influence your behaviour. Even if they do wrong, we do the right thing. We do not answer insult with insult, and evil with evil. We are no longer under the dominion of sin. We have the opportunity to do good. Let's do it!

Jesus said: "Love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13: 34-35). He even prayed: "Father, let them be one so that people can believe that you have sent Me." So, the love towards my brother and my sister in the Church, the unity, the oneness of the people of God, is the sign that shows: here is the place where God is at work; here is the place where I can overcome sin, here is the dwelling place of God on earth. That is the banner.

Dear brothers and sisters, our gratitude towards God both in good and bad days, our conduct, the fact that we do not pay back evil with evil, our love for one another, and the unity of God's people is the banner that shows people, "Come here, this is the place where you can find redemption!"

And then we must remove the obstacles, the stones on the way. What could be an obstacle for the people here on earth

and those in the beyond to accept our teaching? There is one big obstacle. And that is when we expect that they become like us and we impose our rules on them: if they want to be saved, they must be New Apostolic as long as we have been New Apostolic. If they want to be saved, they must work as long as we have been working. If they want to be saved, they must suffer in the same manner that we have suffered. If they want to be saved, they must become like us. And all of that makes it impossible for them to be saved. Smooth the way, remove these obstacles!

Let us not be resentful and behave like the elder brother of the prodigal son, who was not happy that their father showed mercy to his younger brother. Jesus condemned that. And let us not behave as the workers in the vineyard, who were upset that the workers who were hired last received the same reward as the ones who were hired first. Everyone deserves grace. Don't impose your own rules. Let God do good to your neighbour. Remove this obstacle.

There is another obstacle. If we, for example, accuse souls in the beyond, our reproach and our accusations become obstacles on their way to finding redemption. How will they ever be able to join our faith if they feel, "We are not welcome. They accuse us." They need to know that we forgive them. There must be no more accusations and reproaches. Let us forgive them as God has forgiven us. That is an obstacle, a stone, that we can remove.

However, there are other stones, other obstacles, that we cannot remove. These are things that make it difficult for these souls to be saved, but we cannot remove them. However, we can still help them overcome these obstacles. One big obstacle, a big stone, is our own imperfection. We invite them, "Come! This is the work of God," and then they look at us and see that we are anything but perfect, "They are supposed to be saints? Look at them. Look at the Apostles, the other ministers, they are anything but saints. There are so many conflicts in the congregations."

This is a huge obstacle on the way for these souls to join us. And this obstacle is one we cannot remove because all of us—and I am the first one to whom this applies—are and remain sinners until the end. Even if we do our best there will always be conflicts in our congregations. We will always commit sin. We all make mistakes. We cannot remove this stone, but we can help the souls to overcome this obstacle by showing them, for example, how we deal with conflicts and how we solve them.

We are imperfect but these souls must be able to see that we are sincere. Let us never stop working on ourselves and



The Chief Apostle expresses his thanks to District Apostle Helper Arnold Mhango (left), who retired in the divine service

mending our ways. Let us be humble and repentant and ask for grace. This is how we can help these souls to overcome the obstacles that come about as a result of our imperfections. We can show them, "Yes, there are conflicts, but look at the way we solve them. Sure, we commit sins, but we are sincere, humble, and repentant and ask for grace. Sure, we make mistakes, but we struggle to mend our ways." This is how we can help them to overcome this obstacle.

Another obstacle is their own imperfection. They are weak human beings as we are, and then we tell them that they must become like Jesus Christ. And then they realise that they will never achieve this, "It is too difficult. I won't manage that." We can help them by letting them know that God is love, "Trust Him. He will help you. He gives you His word, His grace, and Holy Communion. You will be integrated into the fellowship of the children of God. And with God's help and grace, and with the help of your fellow brothers and sisters, you can overcome your own imperfection and you can make it." And through this comfort out of the Holy Spirit, we can help them to overcome this obstacle.

Let me mention a third obstacle, the last one we cannot remove ourselves. Jesus said: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider assigns six Lead Apostles, each for a specific region



follow Me” (Matthew 16: 24). That is a godly rule. If you follow Christ, you must deal with hardships and with opposition. To follow Him one must renounce a number of things, and that is very difficult. And this poses an obstacle, but we can help these souls to overcome this obstacle by showing them how important and how great the glory of our heavenly Father is. Whatever we go through on earth, we know it is worth remaining faithful because the glory of heaven will be so great that we will not even remember our suffering on earth. Don’t give up, keep going, it is worth the struggle. The fellowship in heaven is much greater than all the things you go through today.

To this end, let us help these souls in overcoming the obstacles that cannot be removed. And let us remove those that can be removed.

Those are the obstacles that hinder souls in the beyond. Now, I know that there are brothers and sisters who have left the city of God. The reasons are manifold. Some were just misled and left. The same word applies for them. We want them to be saved with us. We still pray for their salvation. It is difficult for them to come back. Let us remove the obstacles. Don’t accuse or reproach them, but show

them forgiveness, love, and thankfulness if they come back. This is how we show them that this is the place where the Holy Spirit is at work and where God dwells with His people. Our behaviour here is different. Let them know that they are welcome, that we love them. We want them to be saved with us. Let us remove the stones: no accusations, no reproaches. Let us simply be quiet and forgive them and tell them that they are welcome in our midst.

Remember the story of the prodigal son.

CORE THOUGHTS

We want our neighbour to be saved. Our gratitude, our behaviour, and the love we have for one another confirm that Christ is at work in the Church. Let us be compassionate to others and let them feel that we care for them.

Seven steps to humbleness

From Adam and Eve to Jesus—because the former were not humble, the latter humbled Himself. In a recent divine service, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider explained how exactly we can all be saved as a result.



Right: Pictured are Apostle Allen Pouru, who was retired in this service, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, and the District Apostles Peter Schulte and Edy Isnugroho

For the divine service in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea on 9 June 2024, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider brought along a Bible text from James 4: 10. But to start with, he took a leap back into the Old Testament.

“You know what was wrong with Adam and Eve? They wanted to become like God—and that was the sin,” he said. And the consequences of falling into sin: “They were separated from God, had to leave Paradise, and were from then on subject to the dominion of the evil one.” And what was God’s reaction? “He Humbled Himself.”

“God sent His Son, who left the glory of heaven, came to this earth, and became human,” said the Chief Apostle. Jesus “was hungry, He was thirsty. He suffered from evil just like everyone else.” And He did all of this in order to make it possible for human beings to find their way back

to God. Even though they were not exactly kind to Him: “He agreed to be condemned and put to death by imperfect human beings.”

“In order to enter into the kingdom of God, we must follow the example of Jesus Christ,” said the Chief Apostle. God Himself does not humble His children, even though it would be an easy thing for Him. “He wants us to humble ourselves. It has to be our own decision.” And then the Chief Apostle went on to explain what comprises genuine humbleness.

Knowing what comes from where: “Everything we have we owe to the grace of God,” the Chief Apostle reminded his listeners. Even though many people are convinced that they have earned everything for themselves. “In so doing, they forget that there are many other people around them



The Chief Apostle ordains Kenneth Korokai as a new Apostle for Papua New Guinea

who have worked much harder than they have.” We must always be aware: “Whatever we have in our lives is a gift from God. Let us be thankful for it.”

Being aware of our own imperfections: “We are anything but perfect,” emphasised the Chief Apostle. Those who are humble have a longing to have their sins forgiven. “It causes us suffering to know that every sin separates us from God. And then we regret what we have done. And then we ask for forgiveness. We are prepared to change.” That is how we can find grace.

Trusting in God: “We must always be humble before God. We must accept that we cannot always understand Him and that we have to trust Him,” said the Chief Apostle. He went on to compare God and the believers to a scientist and a child. The scientist cannot explain to the child exactly what he is currently researching, even if he tries. “Even if God were to explain everything to us, we could not understand it,” concluded the Chief Apostle. “We must therefore accept that we cannot understand God. We simply have to trust Him.”

Asking God for help: “We cannot manage on our own, with our own strength, our own wisdom, and our own efforts,” the Chief Apostle said. “We need God’s help.” He then went into some problems that come up in daily life and perhaps even in our congregations. “Sometimes we think we have tried everything and still haven’t found a solution. Are you sure that you have really tried everything already?” the Chief Apostle asked. “How would it be if you were to ask God for help and He would tell you what you should do?” Applying the gospel is always the best solution,

the Chief Apostle said. “And I can tell you, dear brothers and sisters, it works!”

Serving our neighbour: Being humble means “that in all situations—both in good and in bad days—we should always ask what God expect of us. What does He want me to do now?” the Chief Apostle said. “How can my life contribute to the salvation of someone else? How can I help others to make the experience that God is there and that He loves us? We serve the Lord and we serve our neighbour by helping them to find Jesus and to follow Him, to experience God’s love and feel God’s presence.”

Doing it for God, not for our own honour: “Whatever we do, let us do it for the Lord and not for our own honour,” the Chief Apostle said. “You do not need to tell anyone about the good things you have done. You have done them for the Lord and the Lord knows it.”

Accepting that everyone can be saved: “We must accept that God loves our neighbour exactly as He loves us. We must accept that God wants our neighbour, even those we do not like. We have to accept that God wants to save them as much as He wants to save us, and that He wants to grant them eternal life as much as He wants to give it to us. In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard it becomes clear: “No one can deserve salvation.” All those who are humble will receive eternal life.

CORE THOUGHTS

James 4: 10

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

Jesus abased Himself so that we can be exalted with Him. We follow His example by being humble before God and others.

The youth choirs from Southern Germany (below) and South America sang during the divine service



Hayden Careless: NAC Canada

Loving, believing, and serving like Jesus

Before the divine service started, there was a spontaneous vocal number. The American, German, and Australian youth who had travelled to the Pan-American Youth Summit in St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada could hardly wait for the service to begin.

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider based this youth service on Sunday, 4 August 2024 on a Bible text from the book of Romans.

Becoming like Jesus: in future and already today

There are two dimensions to becoming like Christ: “Firstly, there is the dimension of eternal life,” the Chief Apostle said and explained, “Jesus Christ was the first human being who could enter the kingdom of God. God gave Him a new body and He was able to enter the kingdom of God.” For us human beings this means that if we want, we can receive this resurrection body and become as perfect as Jesus Christ was, the Chief Apostle said. This would allow us to have perfect fellowship with God.

The second dimension: “You can become Christ-like now, in this life.” Already today we can develop Christ-like attributes, he said. As the Chief Apostle continued he went on to list some.

Confidence: “Jesus Christ was absolutely confident when He was on earth: I know the future; I know what is going to happen.” For us this means that we can become like Christ and have the same confidence in the future. We know what is going to happen, the Chief Apostle said.

Love: “Jesus was perfect in love.” Human beings are everything but perfect: “From time to time we do things we should not do and we hurt others. But Jesus tells us: if you want, you can become like Me. I will tell you how you can love in a perfect manner.”

Wisdom: “Jesus always made the right decisions.” And with the help of the Holy Spirit we can do the same. We are human beings and sometimes we make mistakes and wrong decisions, but in terms of eternal life we can be wise and whatever we decide will not hinder our salvation, the Chief Apostle said.

Strength: “Jesus was strong, powerful. He decided: I want to go back to My Father and nobody can hinder Me.” We

| Listen to God and act now

God speaks to us and works for our salvation. And our mission is to listen to Him, do His will, and proclaim His gospel—tirelessly, even in times of doubt and opposition.



NAC Western Germany



The Chief Apostle conducted a divine service in our church in Tbilisi in Georgia on 20 July 2024

On a Saturday in July last year, members and friends gathered in Tbilisi in Georgia for a special service with Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider. His sermon focused on God's love and His ongoing work for the salvation of humankind.

God's love never fails

The Chief Apostle reminded the congregation of this in his sermon, "No matter what human beings do, God will continue to love them, speak to them, and work for their salvation." He illustrated this using the example of the Israelites at the time of the prophet Isaiah. They lived in cities that had been destroyed and believed that they had failed and God no longer answered their prayers because of their unfaithfulness. But God answered through the prophet, "No, that is not the case. I still love you and will continue to speak to you. I am going to send you the prophet who proclaims My word." God promised to rebuild Jerusalem, even though the people could not see any progress immediately.

The Chief Apostle also referred to Adam and Eve in his sermon, "Think of Adam and Eve. They left God, but God continued to love them." He explained that even after



the first humans sinned, God cared for them, gave them clothing, and promised to send them a Saviour. "He drew up a plan to save human beings and went to work to bring about their salvation. Out of love for Adam and Eve, God spoke to them and continued to work for their salvation."

Many people today think that God is punishing them for their doings or that He has abandoned them in their suffering. The Chief Apostle most definitely does not agree with this and said, "God does not punish human beings. He still loves us and wants our salvation. He speaks to us, but people do not hear it." He emphasised that God is still active today. "God continues to make sure that His gospel is



A final photo of the congregation with the Chief Apostle and the visiting Apostles after the divine service in Tbilisi

preached.” However, human beings often do not recognise His actions because they no longer perceive them.

Staying in conversation with God

The Chief Apostle pointed out how important it is to be persistent in our prayers, even if God’s answers sometimes are not immediately obvious to us. “Let us not remain silent but keep at it and continue to speak to God.” The Chief Apostle said that even if you find yourself in difficult situations, it is important to be open to God: “If you have trouble with God—that can happen—He will not be angry with you. But please talk to Him.” The Chief Apostle urged the congregation to bring their doubts and disappointments before God, “Just tell Him, ‘God, I do not agree with you. You have let me down.’ But please speak to Him.”

It is just as important to listen to God’s answer and be prepared to accept His will, even if this is not always easy. “Listen to what He has to say and take His advice. Don’t forget, He is the almighty God. What He tells you is the truth.” Chief Apostle Schneider reminded the sisters and brothers that God is never unprepared: “God always has good advice that is just right for our present situation. God always makes a way for us.”

There may be times when we do not immediately recognise God’s actions, the Chief Apostle said. “Sometimes we think that God is silent or inactive. But He tells us, ‘I love you, and nothing has changed in My love for you.’”

Prepared to change

Another key point is the willingness to develop in faith and be prepared to change, the Chief Apostle said. “No matter what happens, we should always be aware: through this situation, the Lord Jesus wants to help me become like Him.” This development is not a theoretical process, but a very concrete and practical task, the Chief Apostle said. “Ask yourself honestly, ‘What would Jesus Christ say in this situation? How would He react?’”

The message is clear, the Chief Apostle said, “Allow God to mould you.” It is our mission to accept God’s activity in our lives and to change and become more like Christ.

This should not be done in silence either, the Chief Apostle said, because proclaiming the gospel is an important mission, regardless of the reaction of those around us. “Let us continue to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and profess our faith in Him. Let us continue to work in the Church until the work is completed.”

CORE THOUGHTS

Isaiah 62: 1

“For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns.”

God loves sinners. He works tirelessly for their salvation. His word guides and comforts us. He acts for us and within us to save us. Let us take His word to heart and serve Him tirelessly.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

ACCORDING TO LUKE 15: 1-7

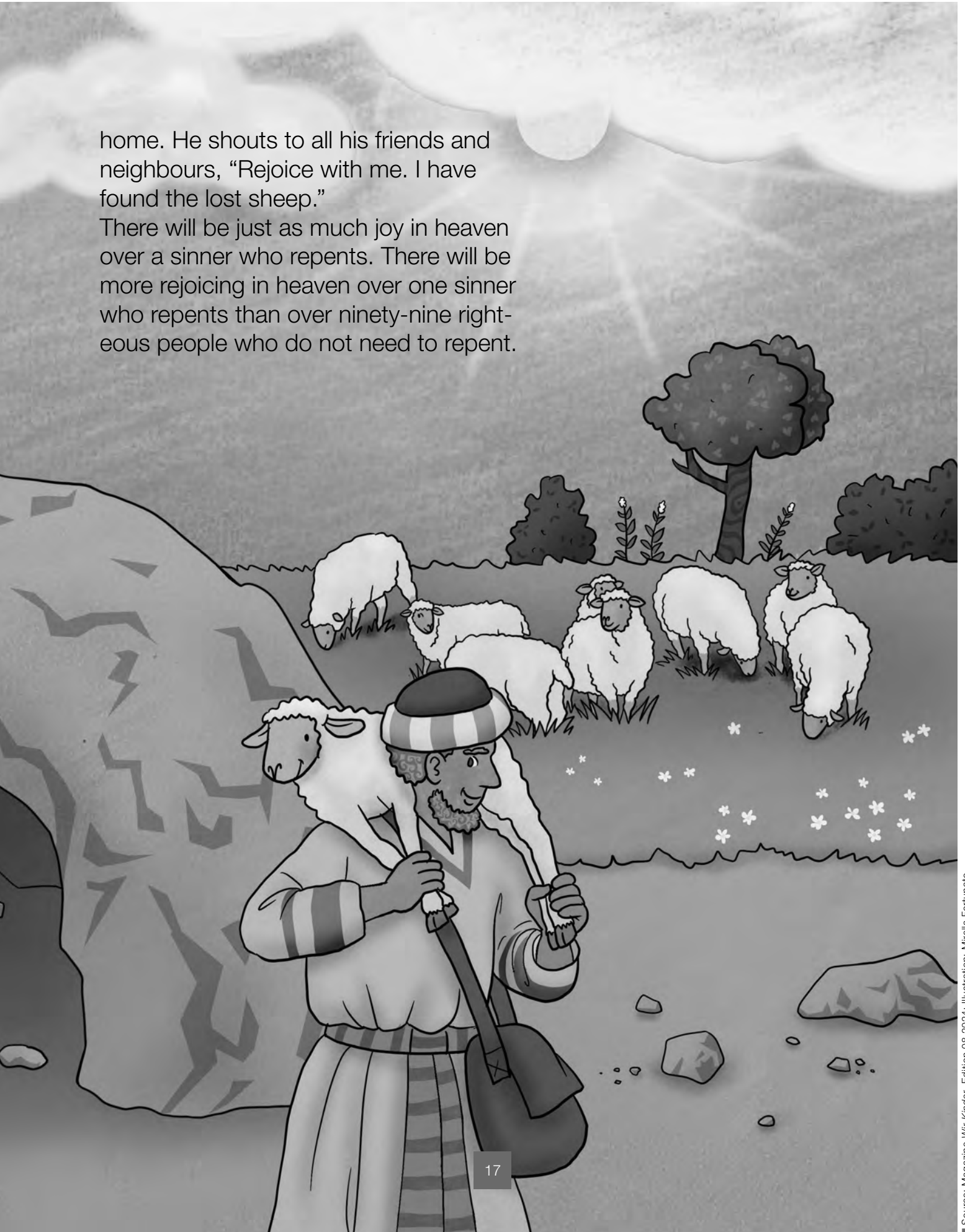
When Jesus spoke, everyone came closer to listen to Him: men, women, and children. One time, Jesus told the story of the lost sheep.

If a shepherd has a hundred sheep and one runs away and gets lost, does he not leave the ninety-nine behind to go and look for the one that is lost? He looks everywhere and listens for it until he finds it. When he has found the sheep, he is happy. The shepherd lifts it onto his shoulders and carries it



home. He shouts to all his friends and neighbours, "Rejoice with me. I have found the lost sheep."

There will be just as much joy in heaven over a sinner who repents. There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent.



AT NAELLE'S IN DAKAR, SENEGAL

My name is **Naelle** and I am seven years old. I am the youngest in our family. I have two sisters, Tracy and Gerty, and a brother, Joven. They are 14, 12, and 17.



My family lives in Dakar, the capital and largest city of Senegal. The city is situated on the westernmost point of the African mainland. We speak French, but my brother and my sisters also talk to each other in Wolof, one of the local languages.

In Senegal, the dry season lasts from November to June. This means that it almost never rains during this time. From July to October, however, it rains frequently. Because Dakar is on the Atlantic and it doesn't get cold even in winter, you can swim all year round, or go for a walk on the **beach**, or dance in the sand. People here love music and dancing.

My father, Abdon Privat, is the rector of the congregation Liberté 5. My mother, Julie Nanina, sings in the choir. She sings alto, but sometimes at home she sings bass because she has a very deep voice. When we go to church or have a performance

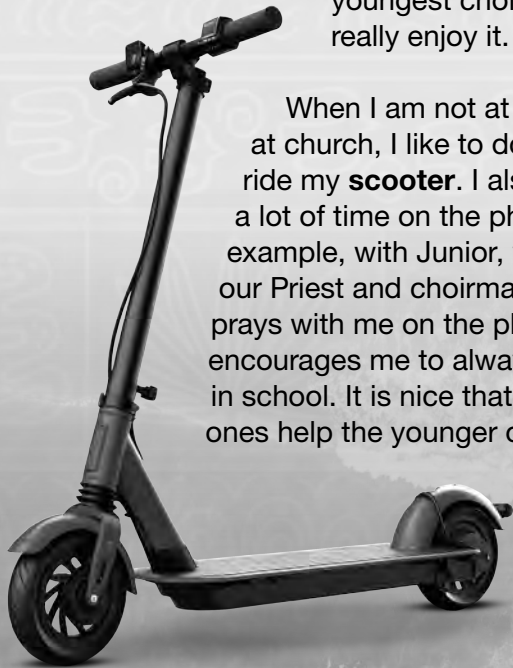


with the **choir** we always dress up in our concert attire.

I am in grade one. I passed pre-school and the first year of primary school with very good grades. I have been **singing** since I was four years old. Like my mother, sisters, and brother, I am also in the choir.

And even though I am the youngest choir member, I really enjoy it.

When I am not at school or at church, I like to do puzzles or ride my **scooter**. I also spend a lot of time on the phone: for example, with Junior, who is our Priest and choirmaster. He prays with me on the phone and encourages me to always try hard in school. It is nice that the older ones help the younger ones.



My favourite dish is **fumbwa**. It is a bit like spinach. It is cooked with peanut butter and we eat meat with it. I also like chicken with onion sauce and lemon, and of course burgers and pizza.



Our **congregation** offers music lessons for children and young people. I play the soprano recorder and am learning to play the violin. One day I want to be as good as my sisters are.





evening_tao - stock.adobe.com

Unity and diversity of the Church

Congregations that grow thanks to migration, cultures coming into contact, and information that travels around the globe at lightning speed ... These developments are not only a blessing for the Church but also a challenge. However, there is a general and always valid response to this.

This essay was presented at the District Apostle Meeting International in November 2023 and published in a special edition of the *Divine Service Guide* (January 2024). In it, the Chief Apostle speaks about his function which, among other things, consists of creating unity in the Church and spreading the testimony of faith in a uniform manner (*The Catechism of the New Apostolic Church*, 7.6.6). Closely related to this is the subject of the universality of the Church, of the gospel, and of its proclamation. An essay on the topic of the universality of the church was already covered in a special edition of the *Divine Service Guide*, which was published in April 2017 and then printed in *community* 1/2019. Following, the Chief Apostle continues and expands upon his reflections on this subject.

Migratory movements: a blessing and a challenge

At the beginning of its history, the New Apostolic Church developed thanks to emigration. It was primarily due to faithful German-speaking members from Europe that the Church was able to establish itself in America, Australia, and certain African countries. The immigrants began by inviting their compatriots. At first, the divine services were conducted in German and the congregations were permeated by the German culture. It took some time before a mind shift took place. The Church was able to adapt little by little to the local realities, thereby paving the way for the integration of believers from other cultural backgrounds.

For some decades now, our Church has experienced a strong migration movement out of Africa. The arrival of believers from Africa is a true blessing for the Church in other parts of the world. Their faith, their energy, and their commitment have breathed new life into congregations that urgently needed it. However, this movement is also a challenge for the Church. The new arrivals have their own New Apostolic culture which differs significantly from that of the local people. Can we ask a congregation to Africanise itself on the grounds that most of its members come from Africa? Or should newcomers be urged to align themselves with the local culture? This issue has always existed, but it takes on a particular relevance in today's society. When confronted with developments that they cannot control, and when they are worried about their future, people tend to withdraw into themselves and cling to their traditional values. This behaviour can also be found in the congregations, both among the locals and the new arrivals. How should we respond to this challenge?

Diversity of the believers: a blessing and a challenge

Most of our congregations are made up of believers of different ages and circumstances, who are united by their faith in Christ and their attachment to the apostolate. This diversity is what constitutes the wealth of our Church. With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we have always endeavoured to meet the needs and expectations of each category of believer. Not everything is perfect, but I think the Church has done a pretty good job of this.

Society today tends to favour the individual over the collective. People insist on their particular individuality, emphasise their differences, and expect their specific expectations to be met. They become more demanding and less tolerant. This trend can also be observed in the Church.

Some of our members would like the Church to become more involved in society to make up for the shortcomings of governments. Others believe that social commitment



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is not part of the Church's mission. Some of our members would like to be told very precisely how to behave in order to be blessed. Others, on the contrary, hold fast to their freedom and refuse to accept any interference in their private lives. Some want nothing to change in the Church, while others want to change everything. One group wants emotion, while another group wants more reflection. It is impossible to satisfy everyone.

Globalisation of information: blessing and challenge

Thanks to the internet, information circulates easily and quickly throughout the world. This development has greatly facilitated the work of the apostolate and the Church in general. However, it also brings with it its share of complications. What we say in one place or to one group of believers is likely to be published all around the world within hours—more or less accurately and generally out of context. This way of communicating is completely unsuitable for dealing with complex matters that require perspective and in-depth reflection.

The universal gospel: our response to these challenges

Confronted with these challenges, we adopt the same attitude as Apostle Paul: “For Jews request a sign and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1: 22–24). We focus our preaching on the universal gospel, on that which is valid for all. The universality of the gospel lies in what Jesus Christ teaches us about God, about ourselves, about our relationship to God and to other people, and about the salvation that God offers us. We proclaim the perfection and love of God. We declare that He wants to give us eternal life, perfect and eternal happiness. We know that the love of God does not consist of giving people everything they ask of Him, but of giving them that which they need to receive from Him for their salvation.

The universal preaching of the gospel

Let us remember the manner in which Paul proclaimed the gospel: “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law, to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9: 19–22).

Having been raised in the Jewish faith, Apostle Paul considered the law of Moses to be holy, good, and just (Romans 7: 12), but he did not want to impose it on non-Jews. For him, the main thing was to inspire faith in Jesus Christ within them. Today the majority of Christians recognise the validity of the Ten Commandments, but the way in which they interpret them depends on their cultural environment and personal situation. The role of the Apostles is not to arbitrate between different cultures and the aspirations of the believers. Rather, their role is to proclaim to everyone that God loves them as they are and that He desires to save them, and to prove to them that they all have their place in the Church, that they are respected, understood, and loved.

Paul made himself weak for the benefit of the weak. Who is weak? When it comes to keeping the Commandments,

everyone tends to believe that it is the other party who is weak.

Let us take the Fourth Commandment as an example. Africans are offended by the way Europeans treat their elders. Putting their parents in a retirement home is a violation of the Fourth Commandment as far as they are concerned. Westerners, however, are appalled that there are still countries in the world where parents invoke this commandment in order to impose a spouse of their choice on their child.

In some parts of the world, homosexuality is considered to be a particularly serious sin. They reproach the Western world of showing complicity in weakness by tolerating it. On the other hand, many Westerners are outraged by the corruption that prevails in certain countries. They do not understand how other Christians could ever resort to methods they would judge to be morally reprehensible in order to obtain or achieve something. The list could go on and on. Each of us is weak in someone's eyes. In reality, we are all weak before God.

Being weak with the weak does not mean approving of everything they do and think. When dealing with the weak, we must remember our own weaknesses, and above all, we must never believe ourselves to be better than they are. We know that God loves the weak just as He loves us. God does not punish us for our weakness. He is patient with us. Let us act towards the weak as God acts towards us.

It is not up to us to measure the faith or love of others by their behaviour. The opinion we have of our neighbour has no impact on the love that God has for him or her—but it can work to our disadvantage. God will judge us by the way we behave towards our neighbour, in particular with regard to the “least” of our brothers and sisters (Matthew 25: 40), those who seem weak in our eyes.

For their preaching to be effective, the Apostles must teach that which Jesus commanded them (Matthew 28: 20). And the Lord always explained that the commandment

of love takes precedence over all the prescriptions of the Law (Matthew 22: 3–40). Apostle Paul understood this perfectly: “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law” (Romans 13: 8–10).

Let us tirelessly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is truly universal!



What God meant them to be

Being a minister in Guyana is challenging because you have to be so many things all at the same time. Not only a preacher and a counsellor, but also a teacher and a builder, and you have to know your way around boats. The congregations in Wakapau and Akawini in Guyana, on the northern coast of South America, built their own churches.

A river runs through the jungle. The locals call this one a creek because it is slightly smaller than the others. But it is certainly big enough for alligators. A boat bounces across the water, loaded with timber cut to size. The wood is being transported to an island.

Without any electricity, Priest Hilton Smith and his son, Priest Joel Smith, as well as some brothers and sisters, took

bags of concrete, mixed it locally, poured it, and smoothed it, and cut joints in the wood so that everything would fit together, and finally nailed everything together. They were building a church for the congregation of Wakapau in Guyana in the centre of the island, slightly elevated on a hill so that it can be easily seen from any point on the island.

How the church came to the jungle

Guyana is known as the “land of many waters”, a reference to the many rivers. The country’s economy is based on agriculture and mining. The discovery of oil in 2015 brought the country strong economic growth. Most Guyanese live in the cities near the coast, only a few, mainly the indigenous peoples, live in the vast remote interior. There are no roads, no power lines, and only rarely a cell tower. The people get around by boat or they walk through the jungle.



The church in Akawini was built slightly elevated on a hill so that it can easily be seen from any point on the island



Robert Ferguson



It is quicker by boat and less dangerous



In Wakapau the members are proud of their church, which they built themselves

Apostle Robert Ferguson is happy at the good attendance of the divine service and that even the children are quietly paying attention



The New Apostolic Church has been established in Guyana for some time, mainly near the coast. There are nine congregations in the country today, seven of which are concrete structures with electricity. Thanks to the Richards and Smith families, the New Apostolic faith has also penetrated into the interior of the country since 1993. A church building was erected for the congregation of Akawini in 2008 and in Wakapau in 2018. Previously, Priest Hilton Smith had to walk more than two hours through the dangerous bush for each service.

Support from the USA

The only thing still missing in the Wakapau church are louvred windows. “When it rains, and it often does, the people get soaked in the church,” Apostle Robert Ferguson from the USA says. He is responsible for the Church in Guyana. He had a look at it at the beginning of May 2024 and is seeing about getting the problem fixed.

Although the building supplies were paid for by the New Apostolic Church USA, the two churches in Wakapau and Akawini were built by the local people, on their own initiative. While the foundation of the church building in Wakapau is cast in concrete, the church building in Akawini was built on stilts, because Priest Joel Smith could not find a level surface.

Naturally, the members are proud of their church. This can also be seen in their festive attire at the divine service with the Apostle. There is only one thing that is still a mystery to Apostle Robert Ferguson: how the Priest’s shirt could be so crisp and white in the middle of the jungle and without electricity. It looked dry cleaned, but there are no dry cleaners.

Lead singer and teacher

Priest Joel Smith, the son, uses the boat that the Church bought him to travel to and between the two congregations.

With two other ministers from Guyana, who regularly accompany him, it takes him two hours to get to Wakapau and Akawini. He runs the motorised boat at full speed. Priest Smith has multiple canisters of gas in the back and keeps refilling.

Many of the brothers and sisters are not able to read. There is a school, but few teachers. It is the task of the ministers to explain the Bible and the faith to the people. “The ministers do a lot more than just preaching the word,” the Apostle says. “They really teach and educate everyone who may not receive an education.” The people learn everything by listening, also singing. “To be a good minister, you must be able to sing loudly because everyone is listening to you to learn the melody and the words.”

Humble, grateful, happy

The effects of climate change are also being felt here in the form of a drought. In many places, the river levels have fallen sharply, resulting in muddy areas. It impacts fishing. In the past, you could almost drive the boat right into where the church is, but with the water levels down the villagers have laid some planks over the muddy ground so that you can walk up to the village on dry ground.

Most men go off for three or four months at a time to earn money. There is foresting and mining. “Life is hard, and yet they are happy people,” is how their Apostle describes it. “They are thankful for our faith. They are faithful, humble, and pure. Although they don’t have much, they are happy and grateful to the Lord. And this is what God meant human beings to be.”

Arie van der Linden installing a well drill



■ NAC Netherlands

| Serving the Lord in rubber boots

They came wearing shorts, a shirt, a baseball cap, and rubber boots—sometimes you have to dress in work clothes to do the work of God. And it was for precisely this purpose that a number of members from the Netherlands crossed the sea to visit South America.

It's 30 degrees outside and there is a lot of work ahead: together with the other Netherlands, Arie van der Linden gets out of the small, humming bus and smiles. The 78-year-old is in good spirits and comes equipped with plenty of experience in the field of drilling for water. He is finally ready to do a job for which the New Apostolic Church of the Netherlands has been preparing for months.

First, the guests from Europe take a look at the blue metal frame on two wheels that is waiting for them in Welbedacht. It has had a long journey, having recently arrived by container from China. "There are two drilling machines with diesel engines, each with 24 horsepower," says Ruud Vis, who is also from the Netherlands. As a Bishop of the New Apostolic Church, the 63-year-old is responsible for the ten congregations in the Commewijne district in Suriname and is therefore someone who can get things done in the country: time runs differently in Suriname. If you want to get something done here, you have to come up with your

own solutions—which in this case includes supplying clean drinking water. And that is exactly what Ruud Vis and Arie van der Linden will be looking for today.

The New Apostolic Church of the Netherlands has been active in the country on the east coast of South America for 35 years. In 1997, it founded the Corantijn Foundation, which is named after one of the longest rivers in the country and supports the people of Suriname regardless of skin colour or religion. Ruud Vis is the foundation's deputy chairman and knows that this form of aid often involves things that people in the global north take for granted: education, training, but also a reliable supply of water.

Help for the poorest

"There are ten New Apostolic congregations in Suriname. Over many years, we have built eleven houses on the site in Welbedacht, which are rented out as social housing,"

explains Bishop Vis. The New Apostolic Church does not keep the rental income. These funds benefit the whole village community. In addition, the village is also home to a New Apostolic Church and a second-hand shop run by the foundation. “All the houses have electricity, but even after six years, the government has not managed to connect the houses to running water,” says Ruud Vis. Due to the lack of available alternatives, residents have been getting their water from an open well or collecting rainwater in barrels. It was used for everything, including drinking water, but, “The water was brown and contaminated with heavy metals such as mercury,” says the Bishop.

The Corantijn Foundation decided to take the initiative in remedying the situation, and thus called on the expertise of a company in the Netherlands that specialises in water supply—a company where Arie van der Linden also used to work. The company not only provided the necessary expertise, but also sponsored the two drilling machines that the foundation bought from a Chinese company.

Bring on the water!

Arie van der Linden and his former colleague Hilko Nijhof don't need long that day to set up one of the machines and check that it is working properly. First, an excavator digs a hole that is then filled with rainwater. Then van der Linden and Nijhof position the drill over it and start the diesel engine. The machine rattles and belches black clouds of smoke into the air—and then begins to eat its way, centimetre by centimetre, through the thick clay and ever deeper into the ground. After around 24 metres, the men first come across a layer of sand, and a good 16 metres after that they find what they have been hoping for: water! “It

took a little while to drill out the dirty water, but clear water soon began bubbling out of the pipes,” says Bishop Vis. The people erupt in loud cheers.

Members supporting members and others

With donations that come primarily from New Apostolic Christians, the Corantijn Foundation has built numerous houses and even a polyclinic in Suriname. But it is also about the simplest things: the foundation regularly sends school furniture, household goods, diapers, and medicines to Suriname. Four times a year, containers with used clothing arrive from Europe. The residents of Welbedacht sell this second-hand clothing in their small shop and earn a little extra money that way. Apart from that, most people live off the agricultural goods that they produce in the fields, mainly for their own use, but also for sale. “Many people have small street shops, and some of the customers come from the neighbouring, wealthier country of Guyana and stock up in Suriname,” says Ruud Vis.

The work goes on

A total of three wells have been in operation since November 2023. The water from all sources has passed its first quality tests, and further samples are being examined in the Netherlands. Ruud Vis travelled back to Suriname later in the year to drill a fourth well, this time in the village where the polyclinic is located. The two men from the Netherlands then received help from the local people: van der Linden and Nijhof not only drilled wells, but also trained several local people to be drillers and assistant drillers—certificate included.



The Corantijn Foundation has completed an important project by drilling these wells to provide drinking water for the people, but its work continues. Support remains high, says Bishop Ruud Vis. Around 80 per cent of the donations come from New Apostolic believers, while the remaining 20 per cent is from external donors. “Our foundation is very well known in the Netherlands,” he says. He will find new projects that he will implement some 8,000 kilometres from his home, whether in a suit or in rubber boots ...

They did it! The team after successfully completing the drilling work

Left: In small groups, the Apostles complete a writing assignment. Right: Reinhard Kiefer, a theologian, and Apostle Jürgen Loy, chairman of the working group, in conversation



Oliver Rütten

Divine Service Guide writers' workshop

The publication with the largest circulation in the New Apostolic Church is tiny in comparison. Printed, it is leaflet size. But it is also produced in audio form and as a yearbook version. We are talking about the *Divine Service Guide*. The authors recently met so that the publication can continue to be created.

It is June 10th, 2024 in a hotel close to the airport in New York (USA). It is half past nine in the morning. The pre-meeting conversations between District Apostles Michael Deppner and John Schnabel with the retired District Apostle Leonard Kolb, and District Apostle Helpers Frank Dzur and Robert Nsamba, Apostles Bradley Bourne, David Heynes, Arnaud Martig, Gerome Mintoor, Samuel Tansahtikno, and Fred Wolf are slowly winding down.

Apostle Jürgen Loy, head of the *Divine Service Guide* Working Group welcomes his colleagues. They have all been appointed by the Chief Apostle as authors to write two to three articles a year each. He reminds the group how

important the *Divine Service Guide* is for those who conduct services and that the authors constitute an instrument that strengthens the unity of the Church.

Tailor-made programme

Once a year, the English and German-speaking authors meet for a workshop. The meeting usually lasts several days and serves to foster personal interaction and hone writing skills.

Evangelist Reinhard Kiefer is also there. As a theologian and member of the working group, he regularly gives lectures

also in the circle of the authors. The topics include current issues as well as subjects on which the authors have submitted questions.

First, the 2025 theme calendar is presented. Apostle Loy and Priest Oliver Rütten from the DSG Working Group explain how the various theme series correspond to the liturgical year.

Three groups, three articles

After lunch, small groups of three are created. They receive a sheet outlining a writing assignment, as they usually do by e-mail, and together they create an article. The sheet includes an extended context, which includes an explanation of the Bible text to be used, the theological significance, the theme series, and the focal point.

Normally, the authors sit alone in front of a blank screen, but in a group of three or four Apostles things are not necessarily any easier. Together they create a structure, which they present to the other participants. The actual writing of the article takes place in another group session. “Nice results.” The members of the working group are happy with the articles. “They have come up with some really good articles that we can use for the first *Divine Service Guide* issues in 2025.”

Delving deep into the Bible

A lecture by Evangelist Kiefer is dedicated to the tools that the Apostles are given for their texts: the extended contexts. He explains how these can be used to help with their writing.

The theologian will also be giving specialist lectures. On Tuesday afternoon, the Apostles hear two lectures dealing with the epistle to the Romans, namely “Israel” and “State and governing authorities”. Apostle Loy gives a talk on the modern-day issue of Anti-Semitism.

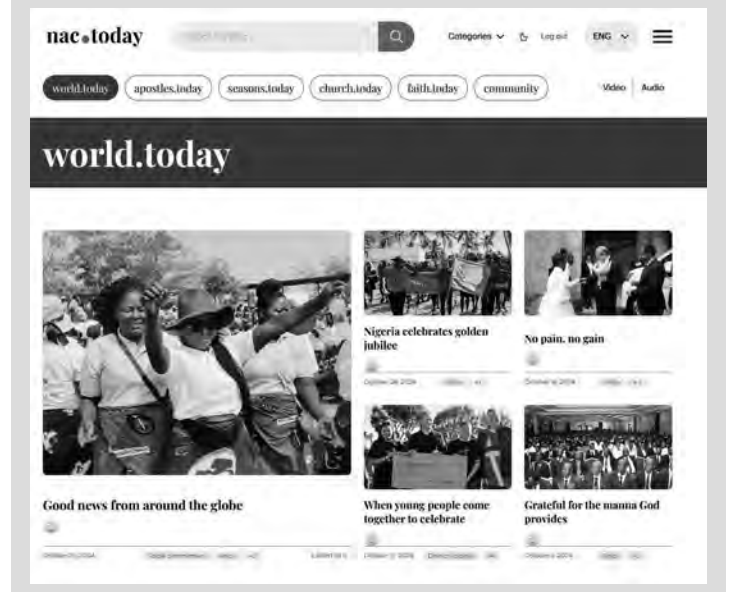
Looking forward to divine services

On Wednesday afternoon, the Apostles emerge from their meetings with a new focus and approach and are ready to return home into their working areas. Everybody benefits, not least those who attend the divine services. Because if the *Divine Service Guide* is well written and internationally understandable, the ministers in the congregations have a good basis to work with.



Many voices, united in faith.

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- Quote of the day



Young people let their light shine in Canada

It was certainly easy enough to find friends. Around a thousand young people from all over America, Australia, and Germany came together at the beginning of August 2024—to learn how to shine and to spread their light together.



Hayden Careless, NAC Canada



On the last day, the participants themselves staged the summit's motto

“Ummm... I don't know if you noticed but...we're wearing the exact same shirt.” — “Whoa!! We should definitely be friends.” A picture on the Instagram account of the Pan-American Youth Summit 2024 illustrated with a wink that whenever two young people met on the grounds of Brock University in St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada over the weekend, they would feel connected by their faith and the joy of being part of this event.

At the beginning of August 2024, nearly a thousand young people from Australia, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, the USA, Germany, and Canada participated in this event. It was in the above order that a drone show presented the flags of the participating countries during the opening ceremonies. Amid enthusiastic applause, the drones also formed the emblem of the New Apostolic Church and the motto of the Youth Summit, SHINE.

Getting to know each other at the speed of light

The motto, which was based on Matthew 5: 16 (“Let your light so shine before men...”), was put into practice from the very first day. At the opening event, the young people worked together to build large towers out of cardboard, balloons, and lights that shone far into the approaching night.

Languages were no barrier. If necessary, the youth communicated with their hands and feet. It was easy to get to know other people, whether playing football or basketball or board games or computer games. And if any of the youth ever managed to lose their way on the large university campus, one of the many helpers wearing a SHINE hat would come along with a smile before they even realised there was a problem.



The programme offered time for conversations with the Chief Apostle and contemplative moments to remember the departed

Learning how to shine together

In one of the workshops, the young people used a personality test to figure out how they could let their light shine in their congregations. And in order to be able to shine at all, one needs to be in good mental health. That was what the talk “Loving Yourself Enough to Never Give Up” was all about. Here the participants were asked to put their hands on their hearts and say, “I am worth it—I am enough.” “The love of God was palpable in a relaxed atmosphere and I felt a deep connection with all the participants. It all felt like true pastoral care,” said one of the participants.

More than just a glimmer of hope

The days began with yoga, morning devotionals or, for those who enjoy their sleep in, a typical Canadian breakfast. “When you spend the day together with people from all over the world and start the day with the Lord, you simply notice that the love is the same wherever you go,” enthused one of the young people.

Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider also came to Brock University over the weekend. He took the time to talk to the young people. What SHINE moments has he had in his life? After thinking about the question for a while, he stated that it wasn’t the big moments in his life that had left a lasting impact on him. Rather, it was his encounters with fellow believers who had to bear heavy burdens and yet did not give up. That had always motivated him to carry out his duties.

On Saturday evening, the agenda called for what it called a SHINE experience. For this event, the approximately one thousand Youth Summit participants were carted to the

nearby Central Community Church in yellow school buses. To start off, a video about the creation of the world set the mood for the young people. Suddenly, a number of brightly lit drums appeared in the dark hall. A band played some musical pieces, glowing balls bounced over the crowd, and Brandon Leake, one of the winners of *America’s Got Talent* in 2020, was welcomed with thunderous applause before going on to perform a Christian poem he had created. The young people also let off some of their energy by dancing and singing together.

By contrast, the candlelight vigil later in the evening on the university grounds was quieter and more contemplative. Over candlelight and music, the young people also took time to commemorate the departed.

A shining example

On Sunday, the young people met up once again in the Central Community Church for an evening service. With the band onstage, all the youth in the audience formed a single large choir. The only exceptions were special performances by the South American and German guests, who performed “Brillar” and “God’s Love, God’s Grace.” During the service, the Chief Apostle explained how to become like Jesus in order to radiate the love of God.

Afterwards, all the young people once again boarded their busses, this time to head to Niagara Falls, where a large illumination festival of the three waterfalls that make up Niagara Falls awaited them—including fireworks. Although it was not staged specifically for the Youth Summit, it almost felt as though it was, because wherever you looked, you would see young people with the same glowing bracelets and the same white T-shirts bearing the SHINE logo.

DISTRICT APOSTLE MICHAEL EHRLICH: Take the time to do good!

Dear brothers and sisters

The motto of this year 2025 is: "It's time to do good!" Let us do so according to the words of Galatians 6:10: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

There are many things, which are not good in these days. This make it all the more important to always do good to our neighbour. However, we should also do something good for ourselves.

This does not mean that we should elevate ourselves above everything and consider ourselves to be the most important person. But those who rely on the Lord and take Him into their lives are doing something good for themselves. This is really the best we can do.

With warmest regards,

Yours



Michael Ehrlich



Loving children showing the world, "It's time to do good."

GHANA:

Sunday school children set an example

In the Takoradi Apostle area, our Sunday school children implemented the motto through a role-play. The Sunday school children acted out how to help an elderly neighbour with gardening. With posters bearing our motto, the children demonstrated their understanding and commitment to spreading kindness and compassion. This heart-warming act is a shining example of our motto in action.



Our children helping the "elderly sister"



Welcoming the Lead Apostle to GRA congregation

NIGERIA:

Don't hesitate do good!

The GRA congregation in Nigeria experienced a festive divine service with the Lead Apostle Oscar Nwanza. He used the word from Ecclesiastes 11:4: "He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap." The Lead Apostle explained: "This illustrates one aspect of our theme for the year. Don't wait for perfect conditions to act! Be proactive in doing good and serving the Lord. Fear and uncertainty often cause us to hesitate. Instead, we must trust that God will give us the strength and wisdom to overcome them and continue to do good."



The Lead Apostle baptized and sealed a child



Warm welcome to the District Apostle and the Apostles



Warm welcome to the divine service

BENIN:

Jesus is our example

On Thursday, 23rd January, District Apostle Michael Ehrich conducted a festive divine service in the Atchoukpa congregation. The focus was on this year's theme. The District Apostle reminded the congregation to do good, and explained what this means in a society that tends towards individualism and selfishness. He urged the children of God to follow Jesus Christ.

TOGO:

Good for your soul!

Doing good means reflecting the light of Christ, spreading peace, and showing mercy. The new apostolic congregations in Togo are committed to this mission with faith and devotion. They make great sacrifices in order to experience divine services. They travel long distances to do good to their souls and to receive the grace of God.



Kenema church appreciation act



Sunday school children learn to recognize the needs of others

SIERRA LEONE:

Gifts and awards

Receiving gifts and awards boosts self-esteem and is a sign of consideration, love and care. On Christmas Day, leading church ministers in Kenema gave surprise gifts to active serving members in the Ken-Nongoa district. "Human Aktiv", the relief organization of the New Apostolic Church, in cooperation with the Joerg Wolff (JW) Foundation have been building schools and awarding Teacher Training Scholarships. Scholarships have been awarded to five cohorts and are periodically given to vulnerable and brilliant pupils of these schools.

GUINEA:

We must act now!

The brothers and sisters of Guinea also want to make the most of the time to do good. This also means that we must not wait to act with kindness and benevolence. Every moment is an opportunity to help others, to be just and to spread good around us. It reminds us how important it is, to act without putting off the good deeds we can do today. Whatever your age or situation. The children practiced this in Sunday school by role-playing.



Some beneficiaries of JW Foundation scholarship



Sunday school children practice helping their neighbours



Creating enthusiasm among our youth is also doing good

GUINEA ECUATORIAL: Do good – act now!

In a meeting at the beginning of the new year, Apostle Salvador Mitogo Obiang invited his fellow workers of the Bata I district to put the new annual motto into practice. He motivated all to do good:

- 1) By taking care of the mission to which we have been called with our different talents.
- 2) By preaching the Gospel as it is taught through the apostolate and with divine authority.
- 3) By taking special care of children and youth as the future of the Church, so that they can become vivid members.
- 4) By helping those in need out of divine love, regardless of the person and their origins and beliefs.
- 5) By visiting families so that each family member can be a legible letter of Christ in society.



Donation to the Plaine-Ayéme congregation, Owendo district

GABON: Do good out of love!

The New Apostolic Church in Gabon did not wait for the new year to do good in order to implement the motto for 2025: "It is time to do good". The Sunday school children and the women's group "Les Mères de Sarepta" from the Angondjé congregation have already realized their wish to share joy with children and parents from disadvantaged families. By this they did good during the 2024 Christmas celebration. To mark the occasion, a fundraising campaign was organized in the form of clothing and food for poor children and destitute families in rural communities. In the districts of Libreville and Owendo, many people in need were helped, for example in c Bolokoboué, Plaine-Ayéme, Nzamaliugué and Santa-Clara congregations.



After the divine service in Douala-Bassa

CAMERODN: Do good!

The concept of good can be interpreted in different ways. Our Chief Apostle particularly referred to God's will in this regard. Putting God's word into practice means doing good to oneself and to one's neighbour.

Doing good to oneself means, above all, submitting ourselves to God's word and regularly attending church services.

Doing good to one's neighbour is also on the agenda of the congregations in Cameroon, especially how people can be won for Christ.

Also the young members of our Douala-Bassa congregation, for example, take care of this.



Afua with the Birmingham youth in a Christmas performance

GHANA: Sharing talents

Although our sister Afua travelled to the UK to pursue postgraduate studies, she dedicated any free time she had to 'doing good' in the congregation of Birmingham.

Following the call of her rector, she took on the role of a "big sister" to bring her talents as a Sunday school teacher and active youth member at East Legon and to help rebuilding the youth.

When she left, Afua had helped increasing the number of active youth members from 3 (including herself) to 8. According to Afua, "doing good also means serving with your natural gifts and talents".



The Chief Apostel with all District Apostles and Helpers in Accra

GHANA: International District Apostle Meeting

The International District Apostle Meeting was held for the first time in Accra from 21st to 22nd November 2024. There are currently 14 District Apostles and 8 District Apostle Helpers in the New Apostolic Church. Together with the Chief Apostle, the assembly discussed important topics such as the further development of the Catechism of the New Apostolic Church.

On Saturday, the Chief Apostle, the District Apostles and more invited Apostles visited the UNESCO World Heritage Site Cape Coast Castle, a fort that reminds to the abduction and dehumanization of millions of Africans.

The big finale was the festive divine service in the central church in Accra on Sunday, 24th November. Around 3000 participants were gathered in and around our Accra central church. The whole event was broadcast on YouTube and on national television. The Chief Apostle based the service on the Bible passage from Matthew 6:12: "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." The divine service was made even more special because two Apostles, Moses Otchere Ayarkwa (Ghana) and Kodzo Amevoh (Togo) stepped into retirement and three new Apostles were ordained.



The Chief Apostel (right) and District Apostle (left) with Sunday school children

NIGERIA / GHANA / TOGO: RETIREMENT



Lead Apostle Geoffrey Odinakachi Nwogu, Nigeria

Date of birth: 4 March 1958

02/05/1999: Ordination as Bishop in Lagos, Nigeria

03/12/ 2005: Ordination as Apostle in Owerri, Nigeria

Lead Apostle from 2016 (for Nigeria) to 2024

(from December 2019 also for Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon)

18/12/2024: Retirement in Abuja-Central, Nigeria



Apostle Moses Otchere Ayarkwa, Ghana

Date of birth: 16 November 1957

04/10/1998: Ordination as Bishop in Accra, Ghana

12/01/2016: Ordination as Apostle in Ivory Coast

Working area: Sunyani, Ghana

24/11/2024: Retirement in Accra, Ghana



Apostle Sédjro Kodjo Amevoh, Togo

Date of birth: 31 December 1959

11/2008: Ordination as Bishop

15/01/2017: Ordination as Apostle in Lomé, Togo

Working area: Dassagba and Poude, Togo

24/11/2024: Retirement in Accra, Ghana

GHANA / TOGO / GUINEA / NIGERIA: ORDINATION



Apostle Patrick Konadu Yiadom, Ghana

Date of birth: 13 September 1971

Formerly Deputy District Rector

24/11/2024: Ordination as Apostle in Accra, Ghana

Working area: Sunyani, Ghana



Apostle François Esse Yovo, Togo

Date of birth: 29. January 1976

Formerly District Rector

24/11/2024: Ordination as Apostle in Accra, Ghana

Working area: Dassagba and Poude, Togo



Apostle Jacques Tolno, Guinea

Date of birth: 5 January 1989

Formerly Deputy District Rector

24/11/2024: Ordination as Apostle in Accra, Ghana

Working area: N'Zerekore, Guinea



Apostle Emmanuel Olaonipekun Adeyemi, Nigeria

Date of birth: 28 January 1980

Formerly Deputy District Rector

18/12/2024: Ordination as Apostle in Abuja,

Nigeria

Working area: Nigeria West, Nigeria

NIGERIA / CAMEROON / EQUATORIAL GUINEA / GABON:

NEW LEAD APOSTLE



The retired Lead Apostel Nwogu

District Apostle Michael Ehrich conducted a divine service on 18th December 2024 in Abuja, Nigeria. Lead Apostle Geoffrey Nwogu retired after 47 years of ministry. As his successor, Apostle Oscar K.Nwanza was assigned as Lead Apostle for the above mentioned four countries.



The newly assigned Lead Apostel

NIGERIA: Divine service with the District Apostle

On October 27, 2024, District Apostle Michael Ehrich celebrated a divine service on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the New Apostolic Church in Nigeria in the Ikeja Central Church in Lagos. All the Apostles and Bishops from Nigeria took part in this special divine service as well as the Apostles Ebanga and Chi Nche (Cameroon), Mitogo Obiang (Equatorial Guinea), Leghanza (Gabon) and Lead Apostle Ohene-Saffo (Ghana).

Bible text:

“But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’”
(Matthew 14:30-31)

Core thoughts:

This passage recalls the courage of the apostle Peter as he walked on water to meet Christ. Yet, when he shifted his focus from Jesus to the storm around him, he began to sink, prompting him to cry out for salvation. This story served as a powerful reminder of the importance of keeping our eyes on Christ. Lead Apostle Geoffrey Nwogu in his sermon likened Peter’s experience to the many challenges and obstacles faced by the pioneers of the New Apostolic Church in Nigeria. Just like Peter, sustained by faith, the church has triumphed over trials by holding Christ as the foundation of its faith. The congregation was encouraged to disregard the troubles and distractions of the world and keep their attention firmly on Christ.

During the divine service, several district ministers from various regions across Nigeria were retired and new ones appointed and assigned, marking another significant moment for the church.

Among the divine service's highlights were marriage blessings for Lead Apostle Nwogu and his newly married wife, the celebration of 40 years of marriage for retired Apostle Hagher and his wife, and 25 years of marriage for Apostle Nwanza and his wife.

