

# community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

03/2025/EN



Look up to  
heaven

*Editorial*

God speaks to us

*Divine service*

Fit for the grand finale

*Doctrine*

Deliverance and  
preservation

New Apostolic Church  
International



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# God speaks to us

God has given humanity a special place in His creation. God speaks to us. He does not speak to mountains, trees, or goats. The only created beings to whom He speaks to make His will known are human beings.

This is what God has always done. He spoke directly to the first human beings. Later, He also spoke very directly to Abraham. He did not speak directly to the people of Israel. That would have frightened them. That is why He spoke to Moses when He wanted to communicate something to them, and Moses then told the Israelites. Later, God spoke through the prophets.

Then Jesus Christ came. God had become a man. And Jesus spoke directly to people. Then, when Jesus returned to His Father, His Father sent the Holy Spirit and His Apostles. He promised them, “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me” (Matthew 10: 40).

God today uses different means to speak to us. God can speak to us through reading the Bible, through the Holy Spirit, and in our thoughts. But above all, He speaks to us through the Apostles. In preaching, God reveals to us what we must do to obtain salvation, which is why it is important for us to listen to the word preached by God’s messengers. They are and remain sinful people, but God sanctifies them



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so that they can proclaim the gospel. The preaching may be imperfect, but if we believe in Jesus Christ, listen to His messengers, and are determined to do what He tells us, it awakens peace, joy, and hope within us. It strengthens our faith, broadens our knowledge, nourishes our love and ultimately prepares us for the return of Christ.

Heartfelt greetings

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' and 'S'.

Jean-Luc Schneider



# Fit for the grand finale



Andrey Lifantiev

Shortly before Christmas last year, on 15 December, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider conducted a divine service in Omsk in Russia

Luke 21: 28

*"Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."*

Dear brothers and sisters, I must say that I am particularly grateful to God that we can experience this service together today and that I can be in Russia again for once. I have regular opportunities to meet with Apostles Akchurin and Lazarev, but I really felt the need to be with you again in this country and to have fellowship with my brothers and sisters. And I am as happy as a little child that this has become possible. It is not about me personally, but it is important to me that we can continue to prepare together for the return of Jesus Christ. That is our common goal and I am happy to see that my brothers and sisters in Russia are also continuing to prepare for this. You could now say, "Well, you said that five years ago when you were here in

Russia. And the Lord Jesus still has not come. So when is He coming?" I don't know. I can only say what the Bible says: He will come when the time is fulfilled. That is the only thing God tells us. Don't worry about it. He will come when the time is fulfilled.

That was already the case with the Jews back then. They had been given the promise, the promise of God, that He will be the Messiah. And it took a very long time. But Apostle Paul said, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son." But what does the phrase "when the fullness of time had come" really mean. It does not mean that God had to wait until something happened here and there and all the conditions were met. God did not have to wait for anything to happen on earth so that He could send His Son. When the "fullness of time had come" simply means: God had decided now is the time, and then He sent His Son. The Holy Spirit has told us, "Jesus is coming again!"

Already the disciples asked, "But when will this happen? By what signs can we recognise that the Lord Jesus is coming?" And the answer is the same: when the time is fulfilled. So it is not a question of God waiting until something happens on earth, that certain conditions are met and then, when the people are in the state they should be in, God can send His Son. God is not dependent on what happens on earth. Nor will He wait for me. He will send His Son when He decides. The disciples wondered whether there would be a sign by which they could recognise that the Lord was coming. And the Lord said, "No, you cannot recognise the signs." He will come at a time when you do not expect it. There will be no outward signs. You cannot do the maths and figure it out—because this has happened and this has happened, it is likely that the Lord will come. Jesus Christ said, "We know neither the day nor the hour." Nor can we calculate it. He will simply come at a good moment. So, there are no external signs which point to the Lord's coming. The time of Christ's return is not dependent on what happens on earth. God is God. He does exactly what He wants and when He wants. Nor is it dependent on us.

But now you are probably thinking: "Yes, but the Lord Jesus explained all the things that will happen in the last days in the gospel of Matthew and Luke." That is true. The Lord Jesus often spoke about the latter days, about the end-time, about all the things that will happen. But you must be aware of what Jesus meant when He spoke about the end-time. For Jesus Christ, the end-time began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This was the beginning of the end-time. So the beginning was at the first Pentecost and will end with the Last Judgement. And when He spoke about all that would happen before His return, His description included everything that has happened since the first Pentecost and since He returned to His Father.

And that is how we must understand His gospel. What Jesus described as the end-time applies to all Christians from the beginning of the church up until the end of the church. He said that there would be war and destruction. And the Jews were soon to find out exactly what this meant. Seventy years after Christ, the Romans came and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple. Jesus also said that Christians would be persecuted in the end-time. The first Christians already experienced this ten years

later. Jesus said that false prophets would emerge who would distort the gospel to their advantage. And already Paul experienced that people came and said, "We are also Apostles and we understand the gospel in this way. Christ is also with us." Jesus also spoke of natural disasters. He mentioned many ugly conditions.

*No matter what happens, it is time to look up to heaven*







Brothers and sisters, if we look back in history, you will realise that these things have existed since the beginning. Of course, every generation thinks that the things that are happening in their time are terrible. And we tend to think that it has never been this bad. But that is a very self-centred perspective. If I hear something like this then I always have to say, "Yes, things are bad today, but would you rather have lived in the Second World War? Would you rather have been a slave in the fifteenth century? Would you rather have lived in a time when there was famine and people died because they had nothing to eat?" If we are honest with ourselves and look back and around us, then we must admit that even if it is bad today, there have been worse times. And that is the proof that we cannot say, "Because things are the way they are today, the Lord must come." What the Lord Jesus described has been happening constantly in the history of Christianity. So Jesus' message was not, "When this and this happens, I will come." Rather His message is, "When this happens, you must behave in such and such a way." That is the difference. "When things like this happen, you must look up and lift up your heads."

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the message for us today, as it has been for every age of Christianity. No matter what is happening in the world, no matter what is happening in

your life right now, now is the time to pick yourself up and look up to heaven. And that is also the message for us today and the message for all of God's children worldwide. Now, in this time, look up and lift up your heads.

We cannot come to God and tell Him, "You know, I just cannot remain faithful under these circumstances." God tells us, "Get up now and today in the situation you are in and don't stay down". In other words, don't give up! Maybe we are disappointed because the Lord has not yet come. Maybe we are disappointed because we are unhappy with the situation in the world, unhappy with life. We are disappointed because we thought the development of our Church would be different. Remember the situation of the disciples when Jesus told them that He would be arrested and would die. They went to Gethsemane with Him and, according to the Bible, they fell asleep out of sheer sorrow. They were so disconsolate and disappointed that they fell asleep. And that is the risk. We imagined things would be completely different. And God did not give us what we wanted. And now we are in a situation that is very different from what we had expected. We thought everything would be very different, and now we are confused and disappointed. And this sadness and disappointment poses a great risk of falling asleep. But then the Holy Spirit tells us, "Get up!



*Get up and get  
ready, and wait  
for the Lord*

Today's situation is no reason to fall asleep. Get up, keep going, don't give up." To get up and look up also means to wait for Lord.

Yes, there are many different situations. And sure, there are different people, for example in our family. Part of our family, when something is planned, is never in a hurry. And indeed, they are always late. Another part of our family is ready to go half an hour before we have to leave. Their premise is: you can never tell what might happen. Let us be ready half an hour before. I am not saying that one is good and the other is bad. Of course, my wife is on the good side, I am on the bad side, but spiritually speaking I am concerned about a certain wait-and-see mentality in the children of God: we are waiting for the Lord, but let's see when He comes. The Holy Spirit tells us to look up and expect the Lord, which means there must be a certain tension. The Lord is coming soon. We need to act. We must be ready, and not just say, "I believe the Lord will come some day." No, our hope must be alive. We must feel a certain tension. The Lord is coming! Let us hurry because we want to be ready when He comes.



Then the Holy Spirit tells us, "Yes, as preparation you must reconcile with your neighbour and forgive her." We know that, but a year later we still have not reconciled with our neighbour. We know that we must be ready. We know what we must still overcome and what we need to change. And we are aware of the things that still need to be sorted out. And yet, six months later, nothing has happened. We must really ask ourselves, "Am I really waiting for the Lord? Do I really believe that He could come at any moment?" I must clearly say: obviously not; you are not doing anything about it. Instead, you are still seated in your chair. You have not even taken one step towards your neighbour. And you are not doing a thing to change it. You may believe in the return of Christ, but you are not expecting it. "Get up! Get ready! Do something! Overcome, change, reconcile, and forgive.





District Apostle  
Thomas Deubel



Apostle  
Gerd Kisselbach



District Apostle  
Rüdiger Krause



Apostle  
Marat Akchurin

“In other words, do what God asks you to do.” Once again, if this living hope, this tension lives in us, then let us be ready today and do everything we can to do what God asks of us. And to be honest, I am preaching to myself. I must also practise what I preach. And I must admit, sometimes it takes me a little while to do that myself. And to be honest, I still need to improve. But being Chief Apostle does not give me any advantage in preparing for the day of the Lord. If I don’t prepare, I will not be there. That has nothing whatsoever to do with my ministry. We all need to prepare. Look up and get up.

Jesus referred to Isaiah’s words, who said, “Arise, shine; for your light has come!” In modern language we might say something like: “Arise and become visible.” Christians tend to want to hide and there is a risk in that. We don’t want to stand out. To avoid problems, we simply rather do nothing. What the others do, we do too. We allow ourselves to be carried along by the tide. People normally don’t want to stand out. We want to be as comfortable as possible. But Jesus tells us that things don’t work like that. You cannot just follow along. You must confess Jesus Christ. And if your neighbour does something that is not in accordance with Jesus Christ, then you must say, “I cannot participate in that. I cannot say that. I cannot do that.” And why not? After all, everyone else is doing it. “No, I am a Christian. A Christian cannot behave like that.” And sometimes it is very concrete. Here, too, the Holy Spirit tells us, “Get up. Declare your faith in Jesus Christ. Do not let anyone force anything on you. You are a Christian. There are things you cannot do. There are things you cannot say. Arise. Show that you are a Christian.” That does not mean that we need to convert the whole population, but people should see and

realise that we are Christians. Arise, lift up your heads. That means look up, lift up your head.

Yes, it is still the case that people tend to always look at what is wrong. I have often said, “Don’t look at what the devil is doing, look at what God is doing.” Let us always look upwards to God our Father. Jesus Christ said, “My Father is greater than all.” Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to once again write this deep into our hearts. Our Father is greater than all. Don’t forget that, look up at Him. He is in control of the situation. Nothing happens without His permission, and He ensures that nothing can hinder His plan of salvation. No matter what the spirit from below does, nothing can hinder God’s plan of salvation. Our Father is greater than all.

There are situations that we absolutely do not understand. In such cases, let us look up. Our Father is greater than all. Even if we do not understand Him, we know He is not making a mistake. Lift up your heads to Jesus Christ. He has conquered evil once and for all. He has overcome sin and death. And He has chosen us. He wants us to be with Him forever. He wants to draw us to Himself. Even in the current situation, let us look up to Him. Jesus Christ, who overcame sin and death, who overcame the evil one, wants you to come to Him. And that is the purpose of your existence. Even if your whole life is bent and twisted, remember that this is the goal. He chose you—even if everyone despises you, and it hurts you to realise that there is no one who appreciates or respects you. Maybe you have the impression that no seems to care about you. Look up to Jesus. There is someone who died for you. He appreciates you so much. He loves you so much. And even if nobody takes





any notice of you, even if your husband, your wife, or your children no longer respect you and everyone says, “You can forget about him or her,” lift up your head. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for you, specifically for you because He loves you.

Again, it can be very painful not to be seen and receive absolutely no recognition or appreciation from other people, and to be disappointed by your own family. Perhaps you are even despised in your congregation. Maybe you feel you don’t matter. I deliberately repeat this, “Look up and lift up your head.” Jesus Christ died for you. He shares in your suffering and in your joy. He is not indifferent. Every single one of your concerns is important to Him. He shares your every sorrow. In your current situation, look up to God the Father, look to Jesus Christ. Lift up your head. The Holy Spirit will show you the way forward. And that is the right way forward for your particular situation.

But look up to Jesus Christ, the first human being to enter the kingdom of heaven. Take Him as your role model. What should I do now? How should I behave? Whatever it is, follow the example of Jesus Christ. And if everything falters and collapses, lift up your heads. This is the example we follow. That is how we want to be, how we want to become. Even if we were to experience everything that Jesus described, Jesus Christ is and remains our role model. Let us mature into the image of Jesus Christ. And then look up and see what Jesus Christ has prepared for us: eternal life in His glory, perfect fellowship with God. No matter what you experience today, it is worth remaining faithful. The glory of God is so great that you will not even think about what you experienced on earth. It is easy to say that,

and as I say this and think about it, I am reminded of what some of our brothers and sisters around the world experience. There is many a brother, many a sister, who had a good life, but which ended so terribly. I do not even want to go into it. And then I think, but once they are with Jesus, they will forget all of these terrible things. And immediately the thought arises: that is impossible; how can you ever forget something that terrible? And yet, the glory of God is so great that they will no longer remember it.

The glory that Jesus Christ wants to give us is much greater than anything we can imagine. And that is not cold comfort along the lines of, “Don’t worry, everything will be fine.” This is a divine promise! The God of truth tells us: I guarantee you that what I want to give you is much, much greater than all the suffering you have experienced.

We are living in the end-time and we are having to deal with all the things Jesus described. But our redemption is near. Let us get up and actively wait for the Lord. Let us get ready and keep looking up. And then we will experience the coming of the Lord.

## CORE THOUGHTS

Followers of Christ face trials and sufferings. These difficulties do not discourage us. We continue to prepare for Jesus’ return and follow His example.



The Chief Apostle conducted a divine service in Cúcuta in Colombia on 15 February



# | Making it through fiery trials

Sometimes in life it feels as though we have been thrown into a fiery furnace. Life can be hard, and it is certainly tempting to take an easier path. But such paths lead away from God. Let us follow the example of three young men.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were Daniel's companions who were with him when he was taken into Babylonian captivity. Because the young men refused to worship an idol they were thrown into a fiery furnace. How God saved them and what this has to do with us today Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider explained in a divine service in Cúcuta in Colombia on 15 February 2025.

God blesses faithfulness. "We know we belong to God," the Chief Apostle said. "We do not want to follow the ways of this world. Let us model our lives on the law of God. And I will be completely honest: we have experienced this. We have experienced God's blessing because we kept His commandments and remained faithful to Him."

But then we experienced fiery trials. "One day, everything changed and suddenly we had experienced difficult times, hardship, and distress," the Chief Apostle continued. "So, as we were taught, we prayed to God. However, nothing changed, and we had no explanation for it."

And this is when the devil started to add fuel to the fire: "You see, there is no point in following God. You know, in this difficult situation you could for once make an exception. If you decide to ignore God's commandments, I can give you so much more. But if you stick to God's will, you will end up with much less than others."

And what is our answer? "I prefer to have less. I want to maintain my relationship with Jesus Christ. I love Him, which is why I obey His law. I do the will of God because I want to become like Jesus so that I can enter the kingdom of God."

God is in the fiery furnace with us. "We can experience His presence and His help in the divine services. He talks to us there personally. And He tells us that He loves and understands us. He comforts and strengthens us. We can experience His presence in the celebration of Holy Communion. Even though He may not give us what we ask for, He still answers our prayers. We can experience His nearness in the





fellowship of God's children and in the small miracles of everyday life."

Trials end. "Then you will experience what the three young men experienced. It was a terribly difficult time, but your relationship with God did not suffer. Your faith was strengthened. Your love for Jesus became deeper. You did not accuse anybody. You were even willing to forgive. There was no bitterness, no anger, but peace and joy," the Chief Apostle said. And once we are in the kingdom of God, we will not even remember what we went through on earth.

Being a blessing for others. The Chief Apostle went on to explain, "Let us show others that it is possible to fulfil God's will even in terrible situations. This way, we can help them understand that the promises of the evil one are not true and show them how blessed we are by following God. And in doing so, we will become a great blessing in the kingdom of peace, teaching all nations and all people how great God is, how great His love is, and how great His help is. Brothers and sisters, this is our future."

## CORE THOUGHTS

*Daniel 3: 28*

**"Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!'"**

God blesses those who obey Him. Let us remain faithful to Him even when our prayers are not answered. He is at our side during trials to protect us.





Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider conducted a divine service in Worcester in South Africa on 5 December 2024



NAC Southern Africa

# Our cry and God's response

How long is God going to wait before He intervenes? The question is thousands of years old. And the reaction can be shocking: perhaps He will not intervene at all—at least not in the way we expect. But there is hope.

Habakkuk was no longer sure he understood anything anymore. Evil was prevalent in his time, and it seemed that God was not doing anything about it. But the prophet did not give up. People in our time feel very similarly, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider said before going on to ask, “What can we learn from the prophet Habakkuk today?”

## When God fails to react

“Violence prevails around the world. Evil deeds are committed everywhere. The less honest you are, the richer you become,” the Chief Apostle said as he described the situation. “Often we do not understand, and we ask, “Oh God, how long will You tolerate this?” So many brothers and

sisters, members of my own family, and even I—we suffer. And many times, God answers our prayers. “But as soon as one problem is solved, another comes to take its place,” sighed the Chief Apostle.

At times we are disappointed, we are tired. But when that happens, the important thing is, “Do not stop talking to God! And then the answer of the Holy Spirit will come.”

## Speaking, listening, trusting

“The Holy Spirit responds to all of these questions with this prophecy: Jesus Christ will come again soon in order to save humanity.” But He will only take to Himself those who remain faithful to Him.

The service took place at the Boland Park Stadium



“What is important in order to remain faithful and loyal to Him?” the Chief Apostle asked and then went on to list the following points:

- “Do not stop talking to God in your prayers, in your thoughts. Even if you do not agree with Him, even if you do not understand Him, just keep talking to Him. You can complain. You can be very tough with Him. He will accept this, but do not leave God. Always talk to Him.”
- “And then let us listen for His answer.  
Listening to God involves more than merely coming to the services and listening to the sermon. Listen to God, even when He tells you something you do not like. He never said the church would triumph. He has always told us this would be a very difficult time. It is important to understand the true message.”
- “And then we must also trust in Him and in His word. Just as He told the prophet here: ‘Don’t worry. I am faithful. I do everything I say I will do. And even if it takes some time, trust Me.’ We do not need to wait for any other signs to show us that the Lord is going to come. The Lord will come at a moment that we do not expect. But He will fulfil His promise. That is for sure.”

### Developing, shining, uniting

“Instead of complaining, it would be better to make use of the time we have been granted in order to prepare ourselves for the return of Christ,” the Chief Apostle said, before going on to list the following as examples:

- “I have to change. I must become more and more like Christ. And no matter what is happening all around me, nothing is going to change my resolve!”
- “Let your light shine wherever you live! The people around you are discouraged and dispirited. They see so much evil. Give them hope so that they can still believe in humanity and say, ‘Yes indeed, it is still possible to repay evil with good.’”
- “No matter what happens in this world, let us be aware that we cannot make it on our own. We need to stay in the unity of God’s people. Let us work on this unity. Let us remain one in Christ!”

Those who remain faithful and true to God in all aspects of life, and who prepare themselves for His return, will experience this: “God is present in His temple. He is still active in the work of salvation, in the church of Christ, and in the apostolate. God is present in my life. Christ is present in the fellowship of His own. And then the day will finally arrive: Christ will come and will lead us into His kingdom together.”

## CORE THOUGHTS

*Habakkuk 2: 3*

**“For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”**

Jesus Christ will come soon to deliver us from evil. We are in dialogue with God and trust in Him. Let us become more and more like Christ and contribute to the salvation of our neighbour and remain in the fellowship of our brothers and sisters.



# Do it now, otherwise you'll never do it

It is the most topical aspect of our annual motto. And it can be explained by all kinds of weather. Here is an entire divine service about a tiny little word.



The Chief Apostle conducted a divine service in Spreewald in Germany on 12 January 2025

“He who observes the wind will not sow.” The Bible text refers to the image of a farmer who refrains from sowing in windy conditions so that the seed is not carried away. “Sowing in the Bible is often used as an image for our way of life,” the Chief Apostle said. “The wind is an image for all the things that make sowing difficult.”

Figuratively that means: “If you have something to do, don’t wait for all the conditions to be ideal. Do it *now*, otherwise you’ll never do it.” And in the context of our annual motto that means: “We should not wait for all the conditions to be ideal. The time to do good is *now*.”

The Chief Apostle gave two examples:

- It is high time that we take a serious look at our own salvation. Let us not allow ourselves to be distracted by our problems and worries. See to your soul and do the will of God *now* even in these circumstances. Do it *now*.

- Doing good also means that we should make sure that our children learn to love God and their neighbour. Don’t look at the wind. Don’t wait for favourable conditions. Do it *now*. Make sure that the gospel is planted in their hearts.

## Headwinds and trust in God

And then there are the headwinds. “Doing God’s will is not very popular today,” the Chief Apostle said. Qualities such as being obliging and accommodating, being forgiving and tolerant are sometimes rejected because they are considered weak, the Chief Apostle said. “Forget this headwind. Our motivation to do good is not based on what the people around us think. It is based on our heart’s attitude.”

“We are only responsible for sowing the seed and not for it to sprout,” the Chief Apostle explained. “God will see





to that. He decides when and where the seed will sprout. Good things are never free. God will bless this. Do what is good, even if you think it is completely useless.”

### When clouds gather

“And he who regards the clouds will not reap,” it says in the Bible text. “The harvest is a metaphor for God’s judgment,” the Chief Apostle explained. For us that means that we cannot calculate the moment of Christ’s return. “There is only one thing we do know: He will come! Make sure you are ready. *Now!*”

The sun is covered by clouds. All that prevents us from seeing the majesty of God are the clouds. “Don’t look at these clouds that hide God, that make you forget how great and almighty God is. He will send His Son, regardless of what it looks like on earth, what it looks like in your congregation, or what it looks like in your life.”

### Clouds versus truth

And then there are the clouds that bring no rain. “You think it is going to rain, but the wind comes, disperses the clouds, and there is no rain. In the Bible, this is an image for false teachers,” the Chief Apostle explained. “Don’t allow yourself to be seduced by these clouds.”

“The only one who tells the truth, the only one who can and will fulfil every one of His promises is God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.” Therefore, let us hold on to the word of God. I am talking about the gospel of Jesus Christ, the foundation, the essence, and the creed. What we believe in will be fulfilled. Do good things *now*. It is high time.

## CORE THOUGHTS

*Ecclesiastes 11: 4*

**“He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap.”**

The new creation in Christ does good unconditionally and under all circumstances. We believe in the imminent return of Christ and are actively preparing for it.

## PETER DENIES JESUS

ACCORDING TO LUKE 22: 24-62

*While Jesus is celebrating Passover with His disciples, He tells them that one of them will betray Him. The disciples wonder who it could be. They start to argue about which of them is the greatest. Jesus tells the Twelve that they should serve one another.*

Jesus said to Peter, "Satan wants to scatter you. But I have prayed that you will not lose your faith. Help your brothers be stronger when you come back to Me." Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, I am ready to go to prison with You. I will even die with You." But Jesus said, "Peter, before the rooster crows tonight, you will deny three times that you know Me!"

After the Passover meal, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, and His disciples followed Him. He went a little way ahead to pray. He also told His disciples to pray so that they would not become

weak.

Jesus prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done."

Then an angel appeared to Him and strengthened Him. Jesus was in agony and prayed even even more. He struggled with death. Sweat dripped from His face as if He were bleeding. When He had finished praying, He went to His disciples. They were asleep. Their sadness had made them very tired. Jesus woke them up and told them to pray. Meanwhile, Judas, one of the Twelve, had led Jesus' enemies into the garden. Jesus was





arrested and brought to the house of the high priest. Peter followed them at a distance.

The soldiers started a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat together. Peter sat with them. A servant girl saw Peter sitting there and said, "This man was also with Him."

But Peter denied this and said to the girl, "Woman, I do not know

Him."

After a while someone else said, "You are also one of them."

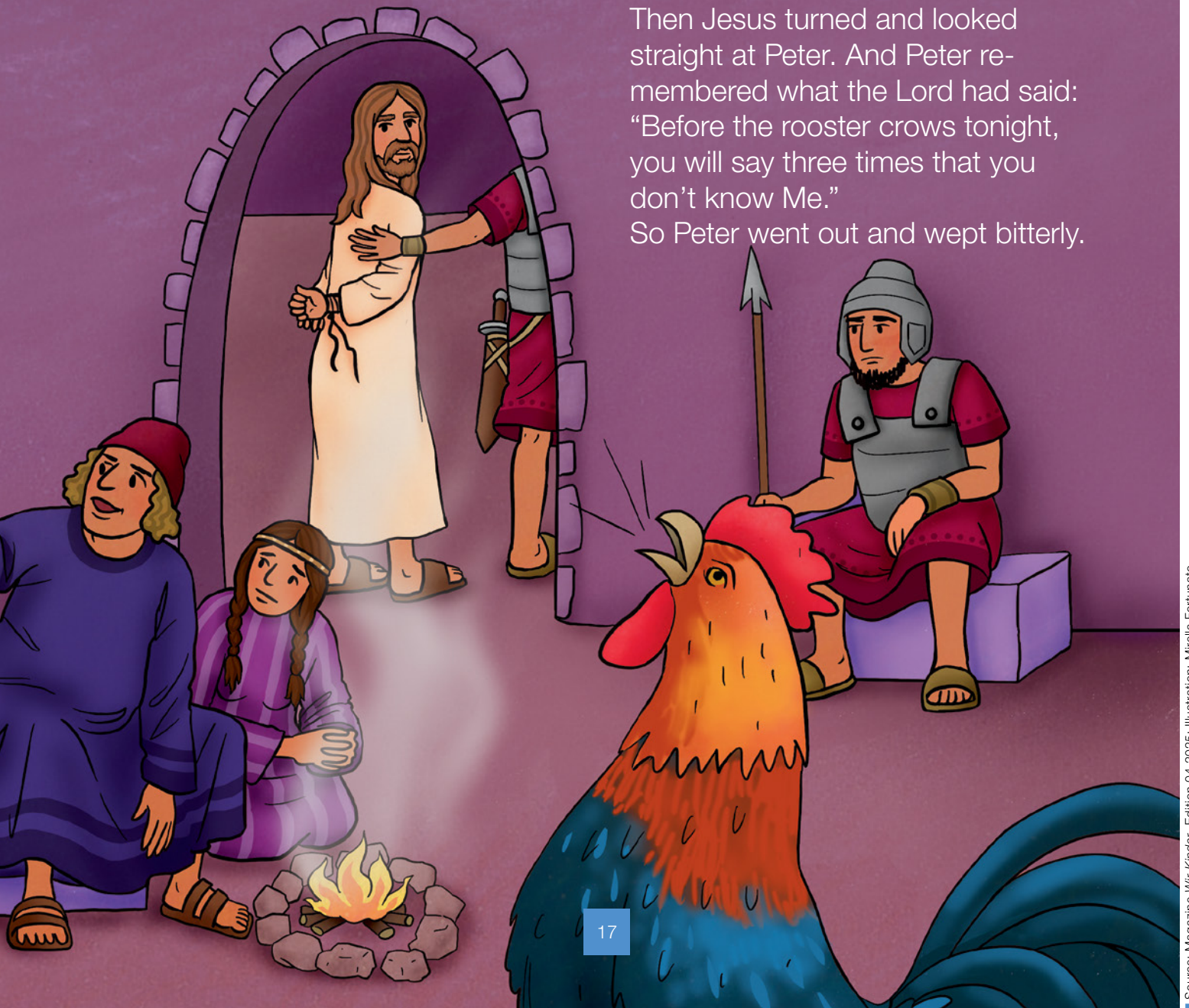
Again Peter denied this and said, "Man, I am not."

About an hour later, another man insisted, "It is true! This man was with them. He is from Galilee."

Peter denied it a third time, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!" And while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.

Then Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter. And Peter remembered what the Lord had said: "Before the rooster crows tonight, you will say three times that you don't know Me."

So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

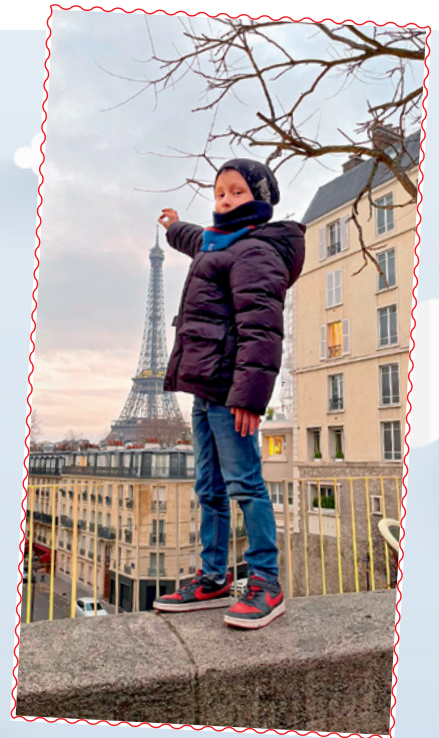




## AT ALFRED'S IN PARIS, FRANCE

Did you know that the **Eiffel Tower** was built by Gustave Eiffel, an engineer, for the 1889 World Fair to demonstrate how high you could build with wrought iron? And the people in Paris did not even like the tower at first. For forty years, the tower with its 312 metres was the tallest building in the world. It was not until 1930 that a skyscraper taller than the Eiffel Tower was built in New York. Today, the tower is an icon of Paris. Many people come here to take photos. Just like me.

My name is **Alfred**. I live in Pantin, a suburb in the north-east of Paris. This photo was taken on my last birthday. You can see how old I am.



This is a picture of our family: my **papa**, Anthony, my **mama**, Katja, and my **sister**, Daria. She is three years old. We usually get on well and we get up to all kinds of nonsense together.

Every now and then we visit museums and famous landmarks in Paris. Here, for example, you can see me at the **Louvre**. The museum is famous for its large glass pyramid that serves as the entrance, and for the Mona Lisa, the painting by the Italian artist Leonardo da Vinci.



Mmm, delicious! I love **crêpes**. I am sure you have heard of them before. But do you also know *croque monsieur*? That is a French sandwich with cheese, cooked ham, and béchamel sauce. This is then baked in the oven with even more cheese. Délicieux!



Speaking of food. We have a lovely tradition in France. On Epiphany at the beginning of January, we eat a round, flat cake called **galette des rois**, which is filled with almond cream—and a small ceramic figure. Whoever finds it in their piece of cake is crowned king or queen for a day and gets to wear a paper crown. This year, we celebrated the festival together with our congregation.



Every Sunday, my mother, my sister, and I go to church in the Paris Central congregation. This is the entrance to our **church**. My sister goes to Pre-Sunday School and I go to Sunday School.



We also sing in the **children's choir**. We performed at our Christmas celebration last year.



I am in the third grade at the **école élémentaire**, that is French for primary school. My favourite subject is geography because I find other countries so exciting.



I love drawing. Here you can see me at a **drawing course**. Do you like to draw too?



# What faith and doctrine all mean

Jesus Christ established His church and sent His Apostles to make full salvation accessible to humankind. It is therefore essential that we understand correctly what this salvation consists of.



■ Sergii Pavlovskyi/stock.adobe

tion that best suited their expectations. The same phenomenon is also evident today. Depending on our situation, we primarily see salvation as deliverance from suffering, a means to escape a threat, or an opportunity to see a loved one again.

All of these perspectives are quite justifiable and understandable. However, we must never lose sight of what is essential, namely the will and the activity of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer.

## Deliverance and preservation

By definition, salvation comes from God. God intervened in the history of the people of Israel in order to deliver them from the yoke of the Egyptians. The Son of God came to the earth in order to deliver us from the bondage of sin and to open up access to God. Jesus Christ will return in order to lead the elect into His kingdom.

In our Church there were times when the return of the Lord was predominantly seen as an act of deliverance and preservation:

- the Lord is coming again in order to deliver us from suffering;
- He will preserve and protect us from the great tribulation, that time of affliction in which evil will reach its zenith on this earth.
- those who partake in the first resurrection will not have to appear before God at the Last Judgement.

Both the Old and New Testaments speak of liberation, deliverance, preservation, forgiveness, victory, and even redemption. These different facets of salvation are also evident in the course of history, namely in the way in which Christians—including those in our Church—have understood salvation. Depending on the time and place in which they lived, they emphasised that aspect of salva-



In order to be accepted by Christ at His return, the believers were admonished to receive the sacraments and remain faithful to the apostolate.

This knowledge is still valid. It is, however, recommendable to put it into the broader context of the gospel as a whole. Focusing on deliverance and preservation as the only aspects of salvation harbours certain risks:

- believers might be tempted to close themselves off from the outside world; they might feel that the most important thing is to remain faithful so that they can be preserved from the catastrophe that has been foretold. The fate of their fellow human beings thus fades into the background;
- missionary efforts might no longer be exclusively motivated by love for our neighbour, but rather by the desire to escape earthly sufferings as quickly as possible (“when the last soul is sealed”);
- the sacraments might well be misunderstood as ends unto themselves—receiving them guarantees salvation;
- life on earth might be portrayed negatively—the earth is nothing but a place of suffering, from which one must escape as quickly as possible.



## Eternal life in fellowship with God

When Jesus Christ spoke about salvation, He often used the term “eternal life”. Eternal life is much more than immortality.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit has created human beings in His own image and grants them access to fellowship with Himself. Through the fall into sin, human beings were excluded from this fellowship. The aim of God’s activity of salvation is to enable human beings to take their place in the presence of God once again. The eternal life promised by Jesus consists of sharing in the fellowship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To be in fellowship with God does not imply being God. In the kingdom of God, the redeemed will remain creations of God, and God will always stand above everything and everyone. Nevertheless, they will live eternally and in perfect harmony with Him. They will worship and praise Him into all eternity and continually discover new aspects of God’s glory.

The Lord has made clear the conditions we must fulfil in order to have access to eternal life: we must believe in Jesus Christ, be born again out of water and the Spirit, and receive the body and blood of Christ. These prerequisites are necessary, but not sufficient. Receiving the sacraments gives us the possibility of entering into eternal fellowship with God, but it does not automatically guarantee us ultimate access. We must also prepare ourselves intensively for the return of Jesus. This preparation consists of sanctifying ourselves, or more precisely, allowing ourselves to be sanctified by God. If we allow the Holy Spirit to work on us, He will cleanse us, give us the strength to resist sin, and teach us to renounce all the things that separate us from God.

New Apostolic Christians do not wait for the return of the Lord only to escape from this earth. They do not necessarily see their earthly existence as a vale of tears. Their life on earth is a time of grace which God grants them so that they can prepare themselves for eternal fellowship with Him in both joy and sorrow. For them the first resurrection is much more than an escape—it is completion!

## Fellowship with God and human beings

To be in fellowship with God is to be filled with God’s life and to fully abide by His will. The essence of divine life is



love. If we want to be one with Jesus Christ as He is one with the Father, we must have the life of Christ in us.

The New Testament makes it clear that divine life is inextricably linked with love for our neighbour. Jesus attaches just as much importance to the love we bear our neighbour as to the love we have for God. He prays for the oneness of His own. He urges the disciples to love and serve one another.

Preparing ourselves to live in eternal fellowship with God also means preparing ourselves to live in fellowship with others. On their own, human beings are incapable of living in harmony with one another. They must first become a new creation in Christ, filled with the love of God and guided by the Holy Spirit. Perfect fellowship among human beings will only be possible in the kingdom of God when all are freed from sin and human imperfection. However, we must learn to live in fellowship with one another today in particular!

We cannot prepare ourselves for eternal life on our own. It only makes sense within the community of those who are striving for eternal fellowship with God.

### The role of divine service

The divine services have a particularly important place in the believer's preparation for the return of the Lord.

By participating in the divine service, a believer prepares himself primarily as an individual. He strengthens his personal relationship with God. He makes the effort to detach himself physically and mentally from his daily life in order to encounter God. The sermon inspired by the Holy Spirit strengthens his faith in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. By joining in the Lord's Prayer, the believer expresses his desire to be in fellowship with God: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done." The absolution frees him from the burden of his sins. Partaking worthily in Holy Communion



strengthens his hope and nourishes the divine life he has received in the rebirth.

Participating in the divine service also prepares the believer to live in the community of the saints in the kingdom of God. By coming to the divine service, the believer demonstrates the importance he attaches to his relationship with God: His desire to praise and worship God, his need to commune with God and be near him is so strong that he finds himself gathering with people with whom he would otherwise never have associated.

Beyond that, the encounter with our brothers and sisters gives him the opportunity to take an interest in others, to share in their joys and sorrows. And since no one is perfect, congregational life enables the believers to learn to forgive one another, reconcile with one another, and learn to overcome their differences.

When the believer comes into the congregation, he perceives that God speaks the same message to all present; God thus makes use of the same message in order to strengthen the believers in completely different situations. This simple observation gives an idea of the power and effectiveness of the preaching of the gospel. By praying the words aloud together “Forgive us our debts,” the believers publicly profess that they are all—without exception—in need of grace.

Receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion is an essential component of our preparation for the return of the Lord. Holy Communion is also an express meal of fellowship, namely the fellowship of Christ with the believers, but also the fellowship of the believers with one another. Holy Communion produces all of these effects when the believer receives the consecrated wafer from the hands of an Apostle, or a minister commissioned by him, in the presence of the congregation.

When we celebrate the Lord’s Supper together, each one of us can see that the Lord welcomes everyone else in the same manner, shows them the same love, and gives them exactly the same thing He gives us. This experience is a wonderful preparation for the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Finally, it should be noted that the celebration of a divine service usually requires a number of believers to work together: for example, the officiant, the ministers who are called to assist, the choir members, the musicians; those responsible for ushering, the altar decorations, the cleaning, etc. This collaboration is also an excellent way to learn how to live together.

**SUMMARY:** At His return the Lord will take us unto Himself. Delivered from sin and its consequences, we will live in perfect fellowship with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We will also be in perfect fellowship with one another.

The preparation for the return of Christ consists of cultivating fellowship with God and with one another. Participating in divine services is of special importance in this preparation.

It is undeniable that virtual divine services offer many advantages, but they do not have the same salvation-bringing effect as a divine service attended in person. The experience of fellowship is an essential component of the preparation of the bride.

Likewise, receiving a consecrated wafer in the absence of the priestly minister and the congregation cannot have the same salvation-bringing effect as the celebration of Holy Communion in the congregation.

Therefore I see it as my responsibility to solemnly remind all New Apostolic believers that participating in the divine services is an essential component of our preparation for the return of Jesus. To consciously and regularly abstain from attending divine services, when it is indeed possible to come to church, can be detrimental to our salvation.

Relief supplies at last. It took a huge effort to bring the supplies into the mountain area



NAC Papua New Guinea



# | Gruelling pastoral work

A fatal landslide, unwavering commitment, and a hopeful development. That is the story behind this picture taken in the forests of Papua New Guinea.

The rector of a New Apostolic congregation and his wife were on their way to tending their kitchen garden when the mountainside shifted. The Boana area in the eastern highlands of Papua New Guinea had been hit by torrential rains, resulting in washed away roads and bridges.

And now the mountainside gave way burying the couple under tonnes of earth, rubble, and trees. Villagers watched the landslide from a distance—they had been evacuated just in time—but were unable to help as the ground was still shifting. Despite rescue efforts, only the wife was found alive. She had managed to dig herself out. Her husband, and father of their six children, had been buried much deeper. Church members and the

community searched and could only recover his body. He was buried early the next morning after a funeral service.

## In the fight against nature

In the wake of this disaster, funds were donated to provide much-needed aid to help the survivors: gardens and crops



On a three-day trek through the jungle





The Apostle conducted divine services enroute, sealing nearly a thousand people

had been destroyed and food was scarce. Apostle Patrick Silabe and his team launched relief efforts, distributing non-perishable food supplies.

In order to get the relief supplies to their destination, the villagers, including many young people, had to contend with washed-out paths and relentless rain to transport these provisions back to their communities. Following the initial relief mission, Apostle Silabe embarked on a grueling journey to a remote mountain area himself.

### Three-day trek through the jungle

The Apostle had last visited the region in 2014—by helicopter. But none were available now. With unwavering determination, the Apostle and his team travelled as far as possible by PMV vehicle before undertaking a three-day trek through treacherous terrain.

On this trek, he held church services along the way at central points, for which members also walked long distances. In one location, the Apostle sealed 393 believers, in another 556. He also performed 30 ordinations. These gatherings were filled with spiritual joy and celebration, despite the immense physical challenges faced by all.

The return journey proved equally arduous, involving another three-day trek through the jungle. The team rested in makeshift shelters along the way, before finally reaching a point where they could access transport back home.

## Succession plan in place for South America

Apostle Herman Ernst is to familiarise himself with the district and prepare for his future task. This is what Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider said at the end of March when he assigned the Apostle as District Apostle Helper for South America.

The purpose of today's act is to give you time and the opportunity to familiarise yourself with the tasks of a District Apostle, the Chief Apostle explained in Buenos Aires in Argentina on Sunday, 30 March 2025. That includes becoming familiar with the entire District Apostle Area, which includes Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

"Indeed, many countries and so many different people. But they all want to love Jesus. And Jesus loves them all," the Chief Apostle said. It is therefore important that you learn to love and understand them all, he went on. "You cannot imagine how thankful we are to have you. And we are glad and happy to work with you."

The new District Apostle Helper was born on 16 March 1966 in Colonia del Sacramento in Uruguay and grew up in a New Apostolic home. He was ordained as a Subdeacon in 1985, his first ministry. He was ordained an Apostle in 2011 and has been responsible for the New Apostolic Christians in Uruguay since then. He is married and has one daughter.



NAC South America



Время делать добро! É tempo de fazer o bem!

Es ist Zeit, Gutes zu tun!

It's time to do good!

È tempo di fare del bene!

¡Es tiempo de hacer el bien!

Il est temps de faire le bien!



## Annual motto inspires designers

Hands and hearts and wonders of nature: these are the most popular symbols in the logos used by the Regional Churches to symbolise our 2025 motto “It’s time to do good!”

A stylised heart is the starting point for the logo from South-East Asia. The reasoning behind the design is this: doing good is rooted in love, symbolised by the heart—an emblem of compassion, kindness, and selflessness.

Two hearts form the shape of a butterfly. With its transformative journey from caterpillar to winged beauty, it serves as a powerful symbol of change and hope, reminding us that growth and renewal are always possible, no matter the challenges we face.

### Hand and heart

The hands symbolise the work to be done, and the heart symbolises the good that is to be done. The two Regional

Churches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) each designed an image of two hands holding a heart. In the District Apostle Area DRC South-East, the central position of the cross dominates all the other components of the logo, referring to the salvation in Jesus Christ and His return.

The logo from the District Apostle Area DRC West was designed with a lot of heart(s). The two hands, the small heart in the centre, and the large heart carrying the clock together constitute a large heart, which responds to God’s urgent call and tells us: “Today, if you hear His voice, don’t harden your hearts.” The clock signifies the urgency. And the two hands, which together form a larger heart, “are ready to bear one another’s burdens and also to join in prayer”.





*saatnya  
berbuat baik!*

The logos designed by the Regional Churches to illustrate our 2025 motto

## Holding and reading

The New Apostolic Church Southern Africa designed a logo showing two hands that come together in the form of a heart. Because Jesus wants us to do good out of love, it says in an explanatory video. The circle around the hands symbolises our common goal to serve one another. The colours are equally meaningful: golden yellow radiates joy and happiness, while azure blue brings a sense of calm and peace.

Two other District Apostle Areas also designed their logo with hands in mind. The New Apostolic Church Western Pacific chose as its logo an image of a Bible being read by many. It is intended to demonstrate where the standards for good works can be learnt. East Africa chose as its logo two stylised figures, holding and carrying a third figure. It is to symbolise support and care for others.

## Time and growth

The time factor also seemed to play a central role for the designers. The New Apostolic Church Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe framed its logo within a clock face containing a heart. And South America chose the cross as a clock hand pointing at one o'clock to illustrate a specific moment: "This is the moment, and no other, in which the beloved God asks us to act with generosity."

The focus of the designs from India and Canada is growth. The Church in India held an art contest for children and young people inviting them to "express goodness in every stroke" and received 250 submissions from across India, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka. The winning entry was submitted by a 17-year-old from Mumbai. It shows hands praying and caring for a plant.

The Canadian logo is designed in a similar way. The logo shows a person nurturing a sunflower. This person is made up of a beautiful array of colours, representing the richness and diversity of our gifts working together in unity. The rising sunflower symbolises the good we do: working towards our own salvation and the salvation of our neighbour, helping others, and contributing to the joy and oneness of the Church.

# Four impossible things, but doable

This was the beginning of a faith dialogue with young people. But the opening question was a tough one, and the Chief Apostle simply switched roles during the interview.

Bolivia and Brazil were the stops on Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider's trip to South America. He not only conducted a divine service in Santa Cruz in south-eastern Bolivia, but also met with young people in our church in the Sirari neighbourhood for a talk.

What are the impossible things that we can do with and like Jesus? That was the warm-up to the interview, a question which the Chief Apostle returned without further ado. He let the young people answer.

*Chief Apostle:* Ok, any ideas? I think you have thought about this. Tell me. What seems impossible for human beings? And what can become possible with Jesus?

*Young sister:* Flying?

*Chief Apostle:* OK, and do you think it is possible with Jesus? For me, it does not work. I have to take an aeroplane.

*Young sister:* Resurrection?



During a youth discussion on 26 September 2024, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider asked the questions







NAC South America

A final picture of the young people with the Chief Apostle and District Apostles Enrique Eduardo Minio from South America and Mark Woll from Canada

*Chief Apostle:* Yeah, for example, the resurrection. Good point. Absolutely. And many people think that is crazy: the person is dead, the body has perhaps been cremated, and then there is the resurrection? People say, "That is crazy." Oh, but that is definitely possible. Good example. Anything else?

*Young sister:* Love.

*Chief Apostle:* Absolutely. OK, you can do it without Jesus, but perfect love is only possible through the Holy Spirit. Because human love is always limited by conditions: you love someone because they are like you or because they are beautiful. But love, pure love, without any conditions or personal interest is only possible through the Holy Spirit. OK, so resurrection, love. Anything else?

*Young sister:* Forgiveness.

*Chief Apostle:* Absolutely, and that is something great. People spend their time explaining to us that it is impossible

to forgive, "How can you forgive that? That is just not possible." Jesus does not say, "Oh, it's nothing, just forgive." He says, "With My help and under the influence of the Holy Spirit you can forgive what seems impossible to forgive." Three great answers already! See, you can become a Chief Apostle. One last answer?

*Young sister:* Will!

*Chief Apostle:* Absolutely! Jesus had a very strong will and He did exactly what He wanted to do. He wanted to go to His Father, and they tried everything to prevent Him from doing so. And yet He did it. And if our will is in line with the will of Jesus Christ, we can do exactly what we want. And no spirit or person can prevent us from doing so.

And even if the whole world is against us, we can enter the kingdom of God. Impossible for human beings, possible with God.

# Making sure that friends don't become enemies

It is easy to make online friends on social media—or whatever you call them. But beware of the risks.



Rawpixel.com/stock.adobe

As a very communicative person, I spend a lot of time on my smartphone. But social media can also offer less talkative people opportunities to friend others and share ideas.

There are dating sites for those looking for the love of their life, and then there are sites for those looking to connect with like-minded people. It is relatively easy for children or students to make new friends. Adults who move to another city, for example, often find making friends more difficult. Especially if you are not the type to join a sports club or a

class or cannot find anyone at work or in the congregation with whom you are on the same wavelength.

Even if you get up the nerve to accept an invitation, you probably will not end up asking the person you are having a casual chat with in the kitchen, “Do we want to be friends?” If, on the other hand, you use an app where everyone who is registered is also looking for friends, everything is clear from the start, and it is easy to start a conversation. Even for more exotic hobbies and areas of interest, there are



channels and groups on the internet where you can connect with like-minded people.

### Shared joy is double joy

Social media allows you to interact and share experiences. When you share your photos or favourite songs others can decide for themselves whether they want to look at all the pictures or not.

Even people with whom you have not been in touch for a long time are stimulated to engage in an uncomplicated way by posting a comment on the photo or song. Even if you don't react immediately, you stay up to date and can respond to the other person's posts the next time you actually meet them in the real world.

### Those who share a lot can lose a lot

Sharing, however, is not always good. For example, if you are contacted by seemingly nice strangers, they may turn out to be scammers who create false profiles in order to obtain data or photos of other people, which they then place in a false context and use to blackmail their victims.

But not only such false friends can cause suffering. Jonathan Haidt, a social psychologist and professor, has found that anxiety disorders, depression, self-mutilation, and suicide among students have increased since 2011. When you see your friends' perfect photos, it is likely that you are going to compare yourself with them. Better and better filter settings make it possible for everyone to look as if they have had a professional make-up job done.

Your own reflection quickly becomes your enemy. Although there are awareness campaigns that are designed to show up the grave impact of these filters and encourage people to show their natural beauty online, it does not stop at appearances

### Not every filter is visible

Nowhere is it easier to put up a perfect facade for one's friends and colleagues than on social media—even for those who do not post glossy photos of themselves. Constantly seeing the smiling and perfect photos of your friends' families and their exciting activities can create pressure: "Why does everyone have such a perfect family?" or: "How can they have so much energy when all I want to do after work is eat and go to bed?"

Let's not forget that photos are deliberately selected snapshots that hardly say anything about the reality happening around these moments. Instead of taking this content as truth and a benchmark, we should rather be happy that our friends are sharing their happy moments with us.

### Who I always follow

Self-awareness is the first step towards improvement. Nevertheless, I will certainly not always be able to maintain a healthy approach to social media in the future. There will certainly still be situations in which I would like to put my smartphone far away because bad news or reports about conflicts seem to overwhelm me. That is why I do not ever want to forget one thing: there is someone I want to follow forever because His influence on me is entirely good, His content is pure truth, and He will never kick me off His list of friends, even if I make a mistake in life: Jesus.



Monkey Business/stock.adobe



# Coming up

- |               |                           |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| 6 July 2025   | Lausanne, Switzerland     |
| 20 July 2025  | Kinshasa, DR Congo        |
| 22 July 2025  | Mbanza Ngungu, DR Congo   |
| 25 July 2025  | Boya, DR Congo            |
| 27 July 2025  | Mbuji-Mayi, DR Congo      |
| 8 Aug. 2025   | Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso |
| 10 Aug. 2025  | Niamey, Niger             |
| 24 Aug. 2025  | Tirana, Albania           |
| 21 Sept. 2025 | Paris, France             |
| 3 Oct. 2025   | Gabon                     |
| 5 Oct. 2025   | Cameroon                  |
| 12 Oct. 2025  | Germany                   |
| 19 Oct. 2025  | Kitchener, Canada         |

**New Apostolic Church**  
International

