



My dear Brothers and Sisters,


Recently, I was permitted to be with our Chief Apostle for two divine services in Zambia and with the District Apostle Barnes for two divine services in Cape Town. Please receive the loving greetings from our brothers and sisters in these congregations. It was an incredible experience to witness the zeal and excitement of these members. This was profoundly expressed by the many choirs and orchestras in a musical range from thundering choruses of praise and worship to mellow, meditative solos and hymns. Further, the intensive joy in the faces of the children and parents, the young and old brought a sense of exhilaration to my wife and I. Be assured that from all regions of the globe God's people are steadily moving forward to our completion.

I wish you a peaceful and meditative Advent season!

I ask all rectors to limit the number of formalized activities on our December schedule so as to permit us all to enjoy "informal fellowships". I remember these from my youth when our family would visit with various other families, seniors, widows, etc. to share the Christmas season. These were more than just a social visit and included warm conversations, sharing cookies, singing, playing games, and at the conclusion, praying together. These moments enrich us and create deeper bonds of friendship and love. In such ways we can celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ as we engage each other in conversations highlighting our Heavenly Father's goodness over the past year and looking for His grace for the coming one.

May this season lead us all to a wonderful celebration of Christmas and a joyful entrance into 2011.

With my sincere best wishes and the greetings from all the apostles with whom I was just together,



Leonard R. Kolb

## Looking back... Looking forward

Roughly one year ago, we stood on the threshold of the year 2010 together and spent much time contemplating and praying over the plans for the year. The Holy Spirit awakened the thought within me to dedicate much of the year 2010 to the task of cultivating a culture that combines the very best of our past heritage with new understandings that are relevant to our needs today.

So during this past year, through various methods and venues, a conscious effort was made to cast the following vision and cultivate a common understanding:

- Healthy congregations will lead to growing congregations which in turn will lead to the ultimate completion of our faith; experiencing the return of the Lord Jesus.
- Healthy congregations have the following characteristic: The members and ministers alike strive to live like Christ. It is the place where we all are constantly emerging in our calling to serve Him and where we all are continually being transformed by His gospel.
- We all may serve Christ by serving others. We all have God given gifts and a calling to minister to others according to His divinely inspired plan.

Together, we shared moments of discovery and openness in our Town Hall Meetings and interacted as brothers and sisters on a very personal level. One could say that we dug deeply into our inner most convictions and most closely held core values. The old and the young turned over the soil together and gained insights into each other's expectations

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for the future of our congregations. Cultivation is not always easy or comfortable.

Together we also experienced remarkable, moving events within the visit of our Chief Apostle, the National Rector's Conference and the Youth Convention 2010 at Purdue. From these events we also gained new insights and understandings.

Initially of course, the year stretched out before us with seemingly endless time to dedicate to these projects. But here we are in the waning moments of 2010 and as we assess our progress, I'm humbled by the following observations:

- Our God has been so good to us; we have such reason to rejoice and worship Him. He has blessed us and permitted us to experience and discover daily His kindness and the direction of the Holy Spirit.
- Our Chief Apostle loves us dearly. He continually shares his vision for our future. This is such a source of strength and inspiration to me as I also strive to emerge in my ministry and my service to Christ. He supports our objectives and is committed to our success.
- The brothers and sisters and the ordained ministers of our district love the Lord, care deeply about their congregations and each other and are committed to serving Christ and experiencing His return.
- Our district has a bright future in our youth.
- The year has flown past and we have barely scratched the surface; there is so much more to learn, to discover, and to become together.



So as we now stand on the threshold of 2011, let us acknowledge that the cultivation of these fundamental New Apostolic Christian ideals is an ongoing process; it must continue and will yield further goodness and joy. However, let us also plan to sow new seeds where we have prepared the field.

During the coming year let us commit ourselves to a culture of continual learning; a pursuit to discover and elevate our Savior and Redeemer within our lives and to be transformed by His gospel. The Chief Apostle described this lifelong striving so succinctly and convincingly in a recent divine service:

***"He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease."***

*That is my message today as a servant of God and I ask you to please take it to heart. Jesus must increase and we—egotism and selfishness—must decrease. Jesus must increase. What does that mean? Where shall He increase?*

- *First of all, Jesus must grow greater within us.*
- *Secondly, He must grow greater in the congregation.*
- *And thirdly, He must grow greater in those around us.*

*That clearly describes our tasks. Jesus must increase within us means that our love for Him must grow. It must not decrease. Every day we must feel that we are coming a little closer to the Lord Jesus. That is growth.*

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## Perspective: The Work of Ordained Ministry

*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*

Over the past year, we have given the introduction of the “Work of Ministry” a high priority and much attention within local congregational life. It is an important component of our plans to improve the health of each congregation and a resource for rectors to more effectively lead the congregations they serve. This critical initiative revolves around the concept that each member has a divine calling and a God given gift of ministry to edify the Body of Christ. We will continue to support each member in the discovery of their unique gift of ministry and to help them weave it into the fabric of their congregation.

However, our focus on this initiative may raise questions or reservations within one or the other that I would like to address. Let me state simply and clearly that in no way does this teaching change or devalue the role of our ordained ministers. Quite the contrary! The same Bible verse in Ephesians illuminates the role of these individuals; they are to equip the saints for their work of ministry!

Let us revisit a fundamental understanding of our faith. Although we have many ministries, they can be grouped into the following categories based upon their primary characteristics:

- **Apostles:** These individuals are called to be the ambassadors of Christ. They are charged with teaching and proclaiming Christ’s gospel and leading God’s children to a spiritual readiness for His return. They are commissioned by Him to dispense His sacraments and to ordain additional ministries that serve the “Body of Christ”.
- **Priestly Ministries:** This includes all ministers from priests to bishops. They speak the word of God in the divine services, inspire repentance and reconciliation, and forgive sins in the commission of their apostle.
- **Deacons:** This ministry is primarily pastoral. They assist the priests in caring for the many needs of the members and stand as examples; true men of God with exemplary character in the midst of the congregation.

While ordained ministry gives no one a special path to salvation, I would ask that you join me in thanking God for calling these men to serve Christ on

our behalf. More and more we recognize the importance of their ministry and appreciate the indispensable investment they make.

Likewise, we can heed the advice of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians: “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern” (Philippians 3:17). By answering our own call to minister to others, we can all share in the communal spirit so evident in the first Christian church (Acts 2:44) and, together edify the Body of Christ. By sharing commonly in ministry to each other, we can help our ordained ministers live a life that is in balance and sustainable. ■

Here I am, Lord.

Is it I Lord?

I have heard You  
calling in the  
night.

I will go Lord, if  
You lead me.

I will hold Your  
people in my  
heart.

*excerpt from the hymn  
Here I am, Lord*

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Let us also sow in 2011 within the following NAC-USA district wide activities with a strong focus on good planning.

The following high priority initiatives will help us reach our goal of healthier congregations and will supply each member and minister with the necessary resources to reap a good harvest.

**Work of ministry:** In 2011, you will receive tools and resources to help you discover your God given calling and gifts of ministry. I urge you to investigate these resources honestly and to search earnestly for our Heavenly Father's direction for your life as a matter of personal responsibility. No one should feel pressured. After completing the process, schedule quality time with your rector to discuss your discoveries and to create a plan to integrate God's gift into your congregation.

**Minister education:** The Minister Development Institute has been created to support our culture of continual learning. It is a web based educational platform containing a nationwide curriculum to support our ordained ministers in their work to serve Christ within each congregation. I encourage each of our ministers to avail themselves of this opportunity and to strive to continually emerge in their ministry.

**District wide Strategic Planning:** Currently, your dis-

trict leader is engaged in a focused effort to research carefully the circumstances within each congregation and to share his findings with your bishop and apostle. In 2011, we will work together to carefully and thoughtfully enhance the health of each congregation in the USA. Where possible, we would like to create congregations of critical mass; where all the resources possible to consistently provide a deep and satisfying spiritual experience based upon the gospel of Christ can be found. We also need to provide solutions to enhance and support our smaller congregations that are geographically isolated. It is inevitable that there will be developments as we strive to leverage our strengths and resources, minimize our weaknesses and meet the challenges of our current realities.

Change always causes concern or anxiety. As we work through these solutions, my commitment is to communicate all changes well in advance and provide ample time and opportunity for discussion and good planning. In our vision for the future, no one is left behind and the foundation for realistic future growth can be built.

Lastly my very dear brothers and sisters, I would like to wish for each one a warm and loving advent experience within the circle of your family and congregation. In the hustle of the season, let us remember to celebrate our redemption and salvation through Jesus and to rejoice that His return is imminent. ■

## Upcoming Events:

A **new divine service liturgy** will be introduced on the first Sunday of Advent, November 28th. The most pronounced changes will be evident during Holy Communion. Please be patient with our ministers as they also become accustomed to this new procedure. When fully implemented, it will enhance the divine service experience for all. For more a more detailed explanation of the changes, please see the November issue of the Our Family publication.

The Christmas and New Year Holiday schedule will be as follows:

### Christmas Day, Saturday Dec 25th

Divine service at 10:30 AM

### Sunday, Dec 26th

No divine service

### Wednesday, Dec 29th

No divine service

### Friday, Dec 31st

Closing of the Year service at 7:00 PM

### New Year's Day, Saturday, Jan 1st 2011

No divine service

### Sunday, Jan 2nd 2011

Regular divine service