

Health, growth, completion

# Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

[www.nac-usa.org](http://www.nac-usa.org)

Autumn 2012

Dear brothers and sisters,

The words of our Chief Apostle at the Canada Youth Summit still remain in my ears – “Let us always be thankful! Everyone has reason to be thankful!”. May this feeling always have a permanent place in our lives.

When thankfulness truly becomes an element in our spiritual character, life changes. Our way of worship becomes more sincere in that our prayers start to have new expressions and our hymns take on new meaning. Our perspective changes. Spouses filled with thankfulness communicate without criticism to one another; parents filled with thankfulness care for their children without harshness and thankful children honor and respect their parents. Ministers that appreciate the congregation cherish all and are humbled to serve. A thankful congregation recognizes the sacrifice of all who serve them and receive this service with joy.

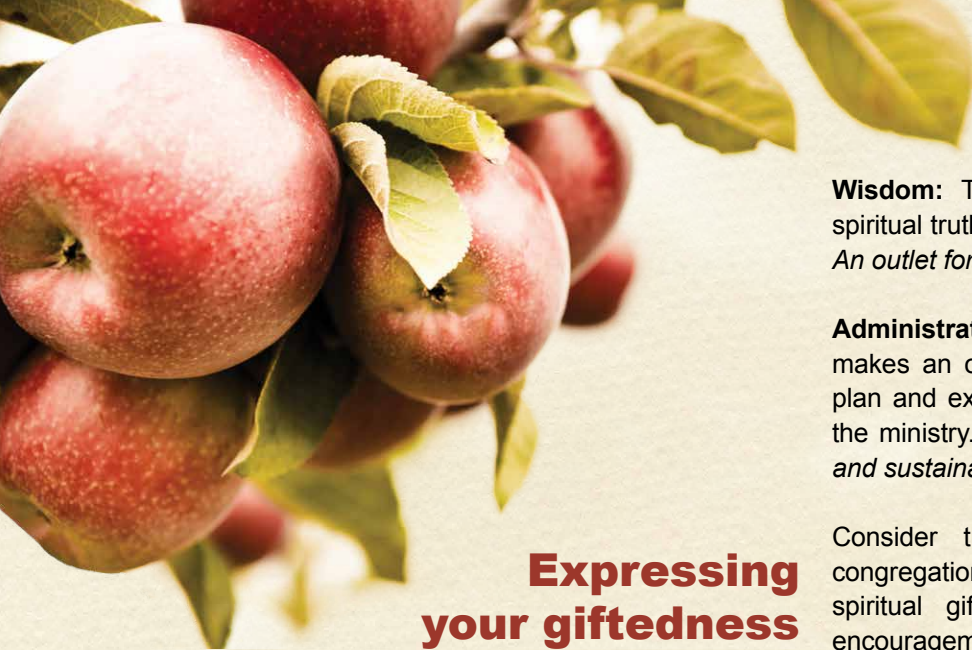
Something else also changes. We begin to grow in our personal relationship with our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ and thus become more self-responsible. [Ref. Vision articles 2009]. As this matures, we seek His counsel in our prayer life and trust the impulses that He gives us - sometimes directly in our thoughts, sometimes in an experience of faith, sometimes in the divine service, sometimes in a Bible verse, and sometimes in the advice of those who minister to us. It is vital that we can recognize all the various ways the Lord wants to touch, strengthen, and counsel us. God's people should not be needy and indecisive. We stand with Christ, our Savior and Helper! A thankful attitude toward Him equips us to stand firm in our faith and causes this connection with Him always to be open and available.

I encourage all to “exercise” this intimate connection with Christ. Perhaps at times we are tempted to default to an easier path of simply asking someone for advice. Let us always first seek the Lord and allow Him to direct us in the way He pleases. Remember the words of the Psalmist – “But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.” Such effective prayers will open new ways of understanding and we will truly find our Father's will, if we seek it.

We are not alone! This further gives us cause for thanks because we intercede for each other and serve each other as we continue our journey together. Please set aside some time during this Thanksgiving season to allow thoughts of gratitude to flood your soul and thereby enrich your relationship with Christ.

With loving greetings,





## Expressing your giftedness

As you approach this time of harvest and Thanksgiving season, the abundance of our heavenly Father's love for you may be evident all around – from the food on your table to the family and friends gathered around it. And as you reflect on those tangible elements, be also thankful for your God given spiritual gifts given to each one through the Spirit (ref. Corinthians 12).

The farmer plants seed in preparation for harvest. In caring for his seed, the farmer anticipates the opportunity to harvest the product of that seed, the result often resembling something entirely new. The simple flower seed produces a beautiful flower; the apple seed produces life sustaining fruit. Consider your spiritual gifts in a similar fashion – the gift as a seed planted into us by God Himself. The spiritual gift is that seed that germinates within you and develops into times of harvest and not just a single harvest, but many. These harvests are the fulfillments and expressions of your spiritual gifts.

**Evangelism:** The divine enablement to effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers so they respond in faith and move toward discipleship in Christ. *Harvest: The Gospel of Christ is spread according to His great commission.*

**Shepherding:** The divine enablement to nurture, care for and guide people toward ongoing spiritual maturity and becoming like Christ. *Harvest: Souls made secure and strong in Jesus Christ.*

**Creative Communication:** The divine enablement to communicate God's truth through a variety of art forms. *Harvest: An engaging message of salvation capable of connecting with all souls despite their diversity.*

**Hospitality:** The divine enablement to care for people by providing fellowship, food, and shelter. *Harvest: An atmosphere of acceptance and abundance.*

**Wisdom:** The divine enablement to effectively apply a spiritual truth to meet a need in a specific situation. *Harvest: An outlet for God's guidance.*

**Administration:** The divine enablement to understand what makes an organization function, and the special ability to plan and execute procedures that accomplish the goals of the ministry. *Harvest: An atmosphere of peace, confidence and sustainability.*

Consider the potential harvest if everyone in your congregation and community utilized these additional spiritual gifts: apostleship, craftsmanship, discernment, encouragement, faith, giving, healing, helps, intercession, knowledge, leadership, mercy, prophecy, and teaching.

It is now a time of harvest. What are your spiritual gifts producing?

Work of Ministry initiative is designed to help you discover your spiritual gifts so that we, as the saints, are equipped to edify the body of Christ. (ref. Ephesians 4:11) We not only have an opportunity, but also a responsibility to ignite our spiritual gifts to produce a harvest, an expression of our giftedness. Perhaps we have previously volunteered **to do** things in the congregation out of obligation. While this can also be the case today, we continue to shift the focus **to become servant minded**. To continue to edify the body of Christ through the work of ministry, we are equipped with our spiritual gifts to serve Christ by serving others in love; we do whatever it takes to glorify Him. When this is accomplished, we can truly feel fulfilled in our serving. And in our serving, we grow closer in relationship to Him.

Allow this Thanksgiving and harvest season to be a bountiful one for you as you express your giftedness in the congregation, within your family, and your community.

### **The Work of Ministry – Work Group**

In order to support Work of Ministry throughout the USA District, a work group has been established. This work group, comprised of Scott Heidema, Art Graham, Mike Tewes, Adam Daehnke and Scott Culbertson, can help answer your questions, share best practices and address any concerns you may have surrounding the contents, implementation, and sustainability of Work of Ministry.

Questions or comments concerning Work of Ministry may be directed to the email address [wgwom@NAC-USA.org](mailto:wgwom@NAC-USA.org).

-WG Work of Ministry

# PERSPECTIVE on Stewardship

As we approach our New Apostolic Thanksgiving celebration, let us look more closely at our understanding of offering and related concepts. Often times, words that are used repeatedly become cliché and lose their impact. Sometimes we use words interchangeably without grasping the nuance and subtlety of their actual meaning. A deeper understanding can create a more powerful and transformational experience. The following is offered in the hopes that it will generate further contemplation and discussion.

Let us start at the beginning. Everyone has some material, natural wealth; it is the sum total of our possessions and income. The amounts are relative. Obtaining wealth is a necessary lifelong pursuit because it creates our earthly security; the food on our table, the roof over our heads and the investment we make in raising our children.

Because we must toil for our earthly security, it is tempting and natural to assume that everything we earn and obtain is “ours”. It is easy to forget that everything is still actually God’s. He made this clear throughout the scriptures. To Job, He replied emphatically: *“Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.”* (Job 41:11)

Could we see that in reality we are not owners but rather stewards over God’s property? Can we recognize that our wealth whether large or small comes from Him and is simply within our temporary custody? A steward is an old English term describing a person responsible for managing the property of another. Our responsibility is to manage “all things” to the glory of God. Peter further described the responsibility of stewardship in the following manner:

*“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.... that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...”*  
(1 Peter 4:10-11)

With this understanding as a starting point, let us continue our exploration. What would prompt us to offer some portion of the wealth under our stewardship to God?

There are a number of reasons. The primary motivation is one of worship. It is an expression and a confession of our ever expanding awareness of God’s greatness and goodness. It is one method by which we honor Him and glorify His name. We voluntarily and joyfully return to God a portion of our (His) wealth, knowing full well that it reduces our comfort and security, in the hopes of communicating our feelings to Him.

Additional but related emotions move us:

- The overwhelming awe that He chose to offer salvation to us via the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Our thanksgiving for His help and deliverance in so many circumstances of daily life.
- An appreciation for God’s house. In the Old Testament it was the temple. In the New Testament it is the outlet of salvation and pastoral care that we find within our church; a congregation of fellow believers and disciples. This is the place where so much of God’s spiritual abundance, word and sacrament, is shared with us.

In our next installments, we will delve into the related topics of tithing, sacrifice, blessing and fasting. We would welcome your thoughts as well as the further findings and conclusions of your discussion groups for the good of all: submit to [communications@nac-usa.org](mailto:communications@nac-usa.org). -LRK

# Protecting Children, Youth and Adults

My dear brothers and sisters,

I would like to share with you the following information on a topic that is not only dear to my heart as a father, but also as a minister and member among all of you.

The utmost protection of our children and youth, as well as adults in vulnerable positions, is a major concern for every parent, and likewise all ministers and teachers who are active in the New Apostolic Church USA. The potential for abuse is a serious issue that every organization dealing with youth and children must address. The headlines of the media report on the tragedies that are possible when the proper vigilance is not exercised.

As an organization inherently built on trust and faith, we therefore should and must take formal steps to ensure that our youngest and most vulnerable members experience their faith in a safe and appropriate environment. These steps will come at a price; part of our privacy. However, all will agree that safeguarding our membership is worth any inconvenience.

These formalized policies are now well documented and legal and insurance requirements demand that such safeguards be put in place. After careful research and collaboration with the apostles, bishops and district leaders, I am announcing the following changes in our internal policies regarding those ministers and members that teach and counsel our youth and children. While I understand that this may cause difficulties for some, I invite you to join me in pride, with the confident knowledge that we are doing what is right and necessary.

Beginning this year, all ministers, youth leaders and teachers in Sunday school, Religious Instruction and Confirmation must undergo a **criminal** background check. This requirement will extend to all new and existing volunteers in these positions. **This background check does not gather financial information**, but rather searches only for criminal convictions.

Due to the number of volunteers involved, we expect the roll-out of this program to take approximately one year. Given the enormity of the process, we will initially begin with ordained ministers and then proceed to the remaining groups. Thereafter, we will periodically update existing background check information to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this safeguard.

Implementation of this program will be conducted with the utmost concern for each volunteers' personal information. Besides me, only one designated apostle and one member of the administrative staff will have access to the findings, which will be kept secure and locked. The actual background checks will be conducted by trusted third-party providers, specializing in such services.

Members requiring additional information about this program should direct their inquiries and questions to [communications@nac-usa.org](mailto:communications@nac-usa.org). All requests for information will be kept confidential.

Given the requirements of our insurers, a program like this requires the mandatory participation of all volunteers who are active in one or more of the functions listed above. It is not possible to have partial compliance and therefore no exceptions can be made.

Members who decide not to participate in this program will be asked to discontinue their ministerial, youth care or teaching responsibilities until further notice. This is a matter of personal responsibility and conviction and there will be no stigma attached, however I encourage all to approach this decision with the best interests of our youth and children and the future of our church in mind.

I sincerely thank all our ministers and members who have dedicated time and effort to serve Christ and each other.  
- LRK



# Adoration

Since the earthquake on January 12, 2010, God's work in Haiti continues to grow in special ways. The most obvious and measurable is the increase in attendance. However, in addition to the measurable, there is also a deeper commitment to Christ and His work. This commitment is evident in the increased sense of care and more interest in helping others. Contributions from our members around the world continue to support the people of Haiti. NAK Karakativ is supporting the construction of a new church for a congregation who lost their building in the earthquake. We are also working on a new water well to be installed on our Leogane church grounds for the benefit of the entire community.

During this time period, "Stepping Forward" has taken a new and exciting path. The concept of worship evenings has been discussed and in true Haitian form, the idea was immediately embraced and is now front and center in their weekly lives. In each congregation there is the normal divine services scheduled for Sundays and Wednesdays. Now, in addition to the Wednesday midweek services, there is a Thursday evening "Adoration" or worship hour. This "Adoration" is organized by the members and features singing, prayer, bible-readings, and sharing of experiences of faith. It is beautiful that these worship evenings are now a consistent part of their New Apostolic experience!

Jamaica has also started congregational worship on a regular basis, however their focus has been on Sunday mornings before the sermon starts. District Elder Shorn Stephenson from Jamaica writes:

*Worship sessions in the Caribbean, particularly in Jamaica are a welcomed treat to the members. Singing is embedded in the nature of us Caribbean people and when it was announced that the members are invited to participate in more singing in the services, this was a welcomed change in the worship experience of our members. Our members embrace the new English hymnal as well as the addition of the Celebration hymnal.*

*The congregations quickly adapted to this new idea and in many areas the members made special efforts to attend service earlier to participate in this singing experience. They wanted to do more than just sit and listen to the choir. Not long after the emphasis on congregational worship was communicated, I made a visit to the main congregation in Kingston. On reaching the gate of the church at 10 am I was greeted with jubilant singing as if the opening song for the service had commenced. I had to check my watch again to assure myself that I was not late. I never went straight to the sacristy area as I usually do but out of curiosity checked the main auditorium and was so impressed to see the turnout of members singing so joyfully to the Lord.*

*It created a worshipful experience and led the way for the Divine Service. It was a special experience for me as I felt a pulling force from the congregation. This force was their anticipation to receive the word in the divine service. A quiet and peaceful atmosphere was felt as the Holy Spirit became active. I must say that the Divine Service experience has never been the same since this new development has taken place in the congregations. Members would come to greet ministers at the end of the service to say thanks and relate their experiences in the service.*

## Expressions from our members

*"It's very important... one more meeting with God. We join together, singing and praying... We have fellowship, we talk to each other, we rejoice together."*

*"I feel we are late with this so important moment. It gives us the opportunity to share experiences of faith. We sing together, we give testimony of our faith and we feel the presence of our heavenly Father."*

*"These moments bring to us new power and encouragement, especially after the earthquake."*

# THE FIRST CHURCH ♦♦♦ A MODEL OF APOSTOLIC CULTURE

My attention has been captured recently by the scriptural account of the first Christian assemblage as described in Acts 2. Here we see a glimpse into the conditions within a healthy church during a period of explosive growth and development. I would like to highlight a few key points for our consideration:

- In the oft quoted Acts 2:42 we read of their steadfastness in the apostle's doctrine. Let us understand this correctly. This is not a doctrine about apostles; it is the doctrine of apostles which is their profession of Christ's gospel. They proclaimed the person of Jesus Christ as the outlet for God's love towards mankind. They taught the first Christians how to live according to His teachings and to find salvation through the power of His sacrifice and resurrection. It was a potent combination of word and sacrament.
- These first Christians were quite ministerial. They cared for (ministered to) each other's needs. Can we see a similarity between their sharing their earthly possessions and our sharing of our spiritual gifts?
- In addition to ministerial, they were quite missional (rather than passive) church goers. Their worshipful testimony of God during their continuing interaction with one another formed "the church". The body of Christ was a state of being more than a physical location. It was an active state of worshiping, teaching, and ministering to each other within the daily flow of their lives.
- They had favor with all the people. This is an intriguing description. They were not considered odd or peculiar.
- Acts 2 concludes with this illuminating statement: *"And the Lord added daily those who were being saved."* Can we see the significance of this simple yet powerful summation? It describes the correct order of things. The church

focused itself upon the key elements of spiritual health, and then God added to (grew) the church daily.

When reading the scriptures, we seek the relevance for our time and our lives. I see this account of the early church as a **cultural** template for our contemporary church. I hope that you can see it reflected within Stepping Forward, our strategic plan for the NAC-USA district. When we collectively follow this template within our congregations, the church becomes healthy. Then God will add to the church those who will be saved. So let us be specific:

Our congregations must equip each member to come into a close fellowship with Jesus Christ. To understand His gospel more and more; to be reconciled with God by His sacrifice and transformed by the power of His resurrection. Here and there some may feel that this focus diminishes the role of the apostles and I strongly disagree. As in the first church, the apostle's doctrine today is the profession of Jesus Christ, the clarification and interpretation of His Gospel and the dispensation of His sacraments.

Likewise, we are called to minister to each other today as in the first church. God has given unique spiritual gifts to each one whereby we may edify the body of Christ. I ask each member plainly and directly; have you discovered your calling and your gifts via the Work of Ministry? The body of Christ requires your giftedness. This is more than a book to read; it is a fundamental way to view our calling within the church of Christ. It is a blueprint to become strong in Him for the sake of others and to fulfill His command to love one another.

Closely related is a feeling of mission that connects our faith with every aspect of our life. Sadly, the experience of the first Christians has evolved for many in our time to a passive and superficial "visit" to a church building. One leaves their secular life for a brief moment of spiritual life. It is uncomplicated and compartmentalized, but often also sterile and joyless. Without

judgment, I ask you to compare this to a singular and continuous life in the Lord. It is a life of intensity; a life of deeply felt love and peace that comes from discipleship. But the comparison cannot be made theoretically, it must be experienced. Why simply come and see the church when you can be the church!

Lastly, I believe that we have a misconception about our place within our communities. Our old culture was preoccupied with remaining separate from "the world". Often the justification for this came from the following Bible verse from the Kings James version: *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a **peculiar** people,"* 1 Peter 2:8-10. We interpreted "peculiar" to mean "odd". But it's difficult to "have favor with all the people" as the first church did if you're odd. In the New King James version we see a different perspective. The word "peculiar" becomes "special". While this is quite different than "odd" we must also take care not to interpret this as "exclusive".

Not surprisingly, the right balance can be found squarely within the teachings of Christ. If we truly are His disciples, we will live lives of love, honesty, compassion and service to others just as He did. Isn't that a unique or special occurrence in a cold and self-absorbed world? And it is unique in a way that finds favor with people rather than distances us from them.

So in conclusion, as we engage ourselves in building healthy congregations, let us embrace this cultural template from the first church. It is easier to focus on the structural elements of Stepping Forward such as building new churches or merging congregations. But let us be convinced; our health is absolutely and unequivocally dependent on attaining an apostolic congregational culture and then our God will add to the church those who will be saved. -LRK



# Small group - A Deeper Look

Let's go into greater details concerning the benefits of developing a small group experience in your congregation. You may have noticed that the concept of "Small Group" was introduced in the Vision newsletter Winter 2011 edition within the section entitled "Strengthen the House". Here you are encouraged to use the small group approach to enhance your learning of the teachings of Christ.

Small Group is a cultural movement within our Stepping Forward plan that leads to congregation health, growth, and completion. The mission of the New Apostolic Church and its objectives are experienced through Small Group. These objectives include:

- Broadening our mission
- Enhancing Gospel teaching
- Renewing our ministry
- Enriching our worship

The benefits of Small Group include...

## Fellowship

Moves people together and out of self-centered isolation. As we have experienced, where two or more are gathered, God is more present than when we are in isolation and more present is His transforming power. You learn to care about others and share the experiences of others in an environment of unselfish and sympathetic love.

*"And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. 12:26)*

## Application

Helps develop spiritual ripening through practical and relevant application of God's Word. It is difficult to grow to spiritual maturity by attending divine services alone and being a passive observer. We need painstaking, patient, and careful application of Scripture to our daily lives. Small Group is an active environment that draws on each other's love and support to apply God's will to our life.

*"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:16)*

## Accountability

Allows people to share and fulfill their God-given mission in their lives, within the congregation, and through the world around them. When Jesus walked the earth, the disciples became His small group. Today we are the body of Christ. Through our God given gifts we serve Christ through serving others. While we are accountable in our ministries, we can

also support and serve others to be accountable to their ministries.

*"He creates each of us to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing" (Ephesians 2:10 MSG)*

## Guidance

Draws upon the background and experiences of group members and the Holy Spirit to contribute to each other. In each congregation, there are those who must make choices about vocations, ministry involvement, relocation, relationships and much more. Small Group is an environment where through prayer and listening, the Holy Spirit's presence can speak.

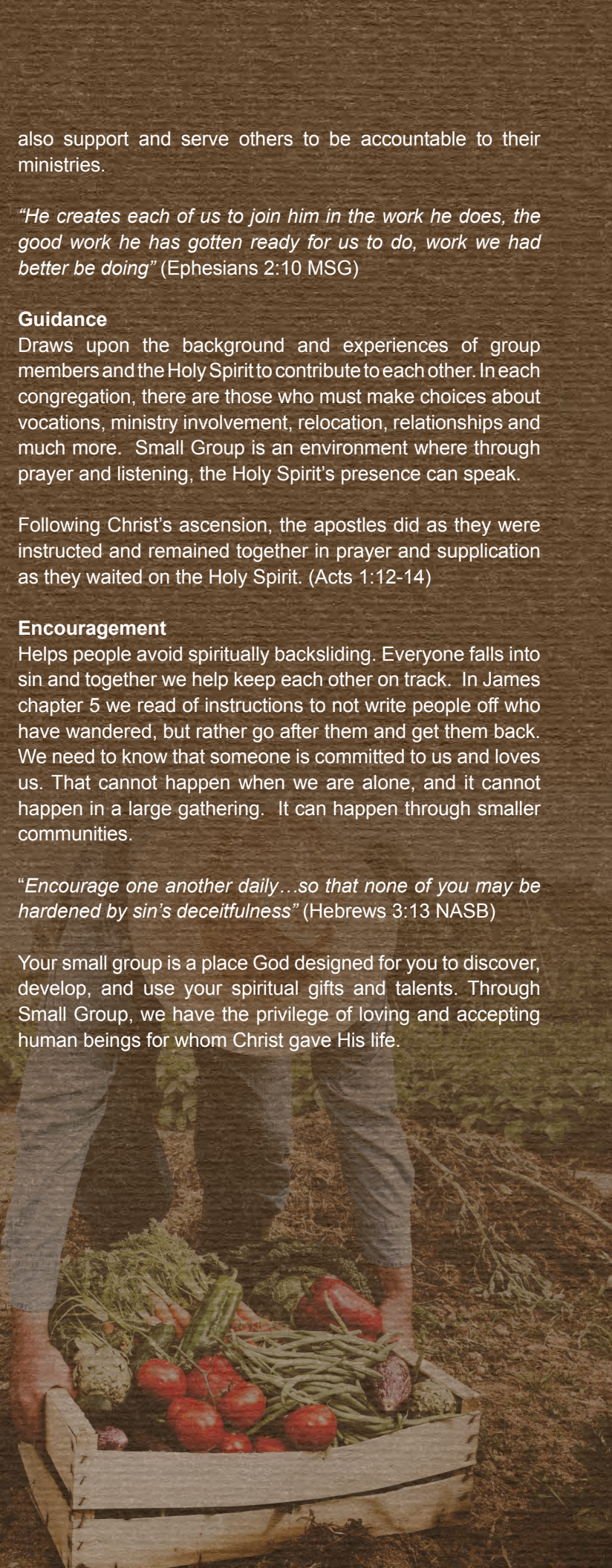
Following Christ's ascension, the apostles did as they were instructed and remained together in prayer and supplication as they waited on the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:12-14)

## Encouragement

Helps people avoid spiritually backsliding. Everyone falls into sin and together we help keep each other on track. In James chapter 5 we read of instructions to not write people off who have wandered, but rather go after them and get them back. We need to know that someone is committed to us and loves us. That cannot happen when we are alone, and it cannot happen in a large gathering. It can happen through smaller communities.

*"Encourage one another daily...so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Hebrews 3:13 NASB)*

Your small group is a place God designed for you to discover, develop, and use your spiritual gifts and talents. Through Small Group, we have the privilege of loving and accepting human beings for whom Christ gave His life.





## Roots of faith...

Sometime during the 1860's, Priest Jakob Westphalen and his family emigrated from Germany to the new world. Their extended family, which had established themselves in earlier years, drew the Westphalens to Chicago. Priest Westphalen brought testimony to his family, telling them of the wonderful experiences he had personally witnessed being a child of God in the New Apostolic Church. The family united to establish the church in Chicago.



Priest Westphalen remained in contact with the Apostle in Hamburg – telling his Apostle of the developments in Chicago. In 1872, Apostle Hoppe from Hamburg, Germany was sent to Chicago to serve the congregation that had grown to 25 adults and about as many children. The services were first held in the home of Sister Siefert. Her home was eventually demolished, and in its place, members built the first Church-owned property on the American continent.

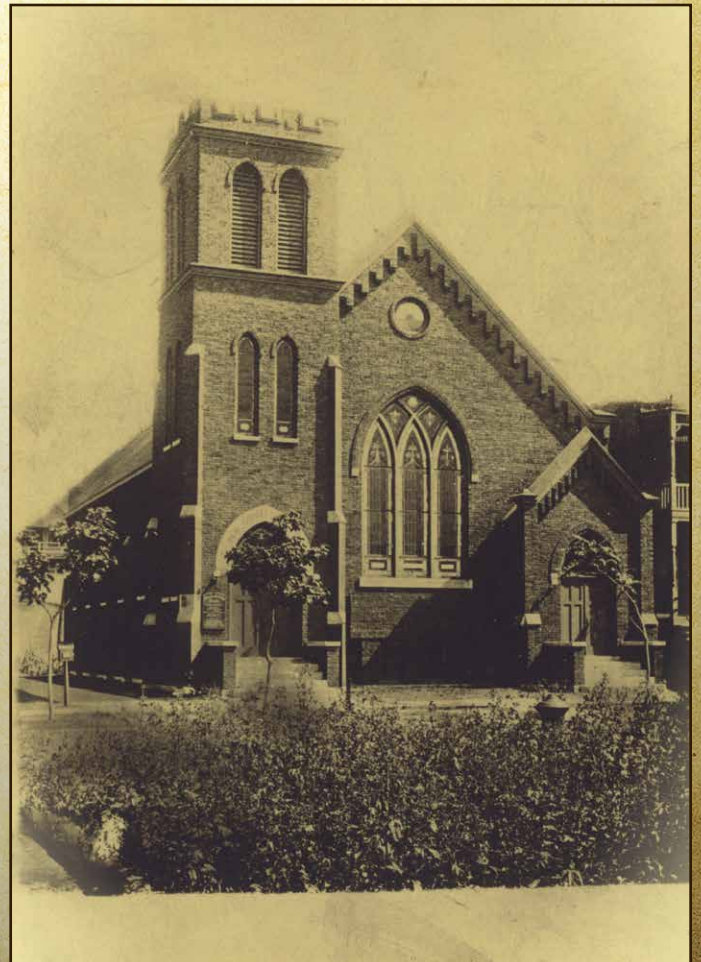
Apostle Hoppe left Chicago for New York in the 1880's, leaving Priest Westphalen to care for the Chicago con-


gregation. By 1917, the congregation moved into a new building on the north side of the city. This building, known as Chicago North Side, still stands today and houses the NAC USA Administration Office.

The growth and development of the Chicago District, however, was not isolated within the Chicago city limits. At the turn of the 20th century, God's work was taking root in the inner Chicago suburbs, such as Melrose Park and Brookfield. During the same time, the Milwaukee congregation was being formed which is 95 miles (153 km) to the north in the state of Wisconsin. These anchor congregations were the seeds of many families that are still active in the Chicago district today.

During the first half of the century, the Chicago District continued to experience a surge of growth and expansion. These developments formalized the work that had sprung up in the neighboring states of Minnesota and Iowa.

Throughout the remaining century, the members of the original congregations began to move to the developing suburbs, and as a result, many congregations were established across the greater Chicago area.





Dear readers,

In our last edition, an article appeared describing NACTV, our online divine service broadcasting arrangement. One of our apostles has since forwarded an article written by Tim Stevens, a minister in Indiana. His article provides some excellent insights into the role of on line church services verses the benefits of communal worship within a congregation. We publish it here for your contemplation with a few editorial changes by our District Apostle, with the author's permission.

## Why go to a church service when you can stay home and watch “NACTv”?

The church needs you – I'm not talking about the building or the organization. Rather, the people of God need what you can offer. Your physical presence, words of encouragement, and acts of service—combined with what others bring, is what makes the people of God. When you “go to church” with missional eyes opened wide, you arrive early and stay late, you engage in conversations with other followers of Jesus, you look for people who need encouraged and you lean into “coincidental” conversations with people that God will bring along your path.

It's not just about spiritual food – if going to “church” twice a week was just about gaining what you need spiritually to make it through another week, then tuning in online would be just fine. You could get what you need on Christian radio, reading books, studying the Bible or watching your favorite TV preacher. But the purpose of church is so much broader than that. It is about corporate worship, praying and studying the Bible together, serving one another and reaching out in mission together. This can't be done in isolation.

You need the church — You need the “church” (those people who are followers of Jesus and gather together with your congregation) more than you think you do. There is so much in Scripture about the relational aspects of the church—love one another, be devoted to one another, encourage one another, instruct one another, greet one another—and these can't be done as well in a virtual environment.

The church is a living organism — You remove your pancreas or esophagus or left arm, and it will cease to live outside your body. The New Testament knows nothing about a Christian who is not connected to a church. Your gifts, skills, ideas, service, leadership, resources, love—everything you have to offer—is a crucial part to a congregation thriving.

Your presence matters more than you think — Many times we think we won't be missed. I don't vote on election day because it doesn't really matter. I don't show up for my kids basketball game because he won't even notice. I commit to the work day, then stay home, because surely they have enough people. I stay home and watch the service online, because in a church with 100 people, who will even notice that I'm not there? But that is so short-sighted and inaccurate. You underestimate the significance of your presence when you think it doesn't matter. You undervalue the power of the Spirit of God residing within you when you believe staying home is just as good as showing up. You possibly miss what God wants to do through you and for you when you stay home.

### So, Why Provide Online Church Services?

Because there are lonely, isolated people in the world, and it provides a bridge to them so they can eventually take a step into a community of faith.

Because the internet reaches billions of people all over the world, some who are not close enough to participate in a vibrant church.

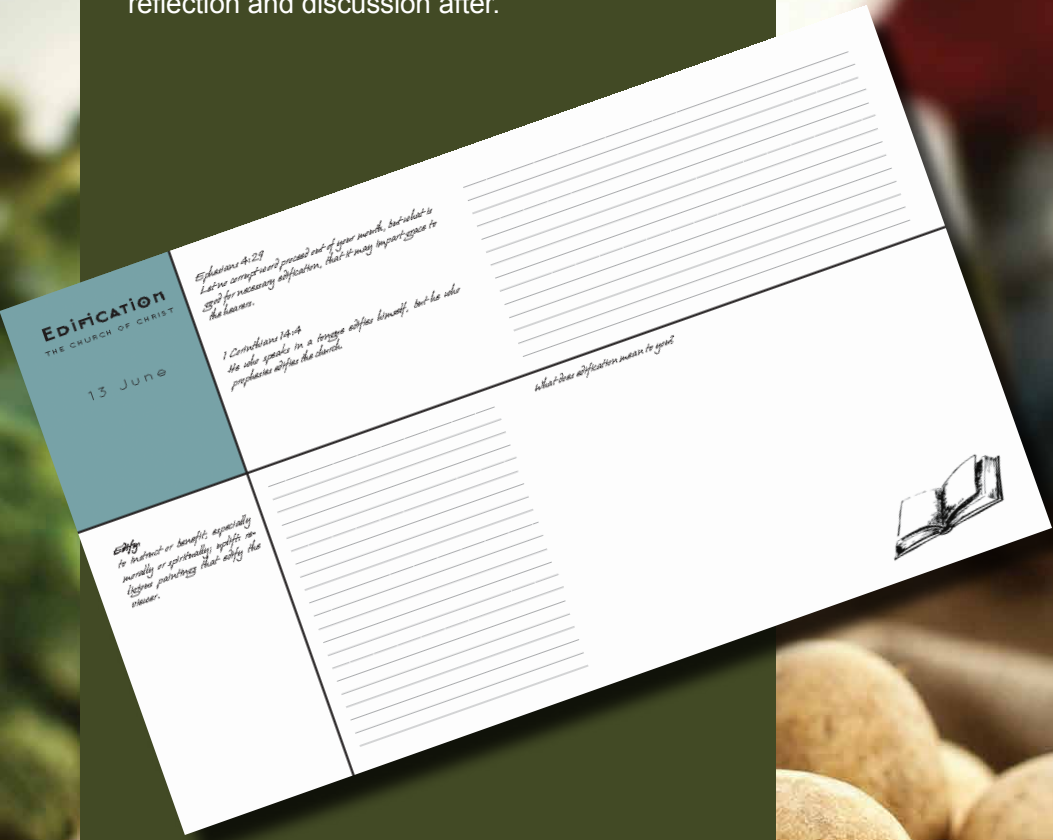
Because there are times when you are out of town, on vacation or away at college and it gives you a link to stay connected to your church.

Because it serves as an easy invite tool for your friends who aren't ready to step into a physical gathering, but they are hurting and need Jesus, and an online service can help you reach them.  
-T. Stevens

# Seek Him... A year of journaling

The Devotional Journal will take on a new approach for 2013. Instead of a weekly exposition of a Bible verse and contemplative questions associated to it, this journal will follow the themes and topic series for all divine services in 2013. Now you will have the opportunity to know the theme of the message along with supportive Bible verses for each divine service.

The goal of this journal is to enhance your divine service experience, giving you time to ponder and prepare ahead of time and moments of reflection and discussion after.



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## DSG Group Visit

We are happy to report that the NAC-USA district recently hosted two series of meetings with international church significance. Firstly, the English authors of the Divine Service Guide work group met in Erie, PA. This work group is comprised of various district apostles and apostles from around the world, and is chaired by the Apostle Wolfgang Schug and Priest (Dr.) Reinhard Kiefer from Germany.

The work group is responsible for creating the Divine Service Guide, a document that our ministers use to prepare for the divine services worldwide. Apostle Schug and Priest Kiefer work directly with the Chief Apostle Leber and were instrumental in compiling the Catechism that will be published later this year. Priest Kiefer is the editor in chief of the Divine Service Guide and an employee of the theological editorial staff of the New Apostolic Church magazine "Our Family". The group attended service in the Erie congregation with our District Apostle Kolb on a special Tuesday evening midweek service and then continued on to their next meeting in Buffalo.

This meeting was expanded to include a larger number of ministers who attended a theology workshop hosted by Apostle Schug and Priest Kiefer.

The topics discussed included the concept of apostolicity, John the Baptist, Wisdom of Solomon, II Esdras, and the concept of the Service for the Departed to name a few. We hope to publish various elements of this workshop and distribute them to our ministers and membership as well as collaborate more closely with Priest Kiefer in the future.

