

Health, growth, completion

Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

www.nac-usa.org

Summer 2018

Dear brothers and sisters,

And they continued... May these words bring to expression our forward determination and zeal after the wonderful Pentecost feast that we experienced. I was filled with gratitude and joy to see how many could come together to celebrate Pentecost and participate in the activities of the weekend. Thank you for your willingness to share the weekend with us and for your many prayers in preparing for this special event.

The Holy Spirit opened new understandings for all of us in this divine service.

With our Holy Sealing we received a:

- **Seal** – the assurance we belong to God and He will always receive and accept us.
- **Guarantee** – the assurance that *as long as we remain in an active, close relationship with God*, He will provide all that we need to enter His kingdom, despite the weaknesses that exist in the visible church.
- **Promise** - the assurance that we will experience the resurrection of our body and enter the kingdom of God. This is the foundation of our hope for the future.
- **Pledge** - the assurance that we can already today receive part of our inheritance in experiencing a foretaste of the Kingdom by going deeper into the knowledge of our Father in the divine word, feeling His presence in the sacraments, and growing in His unity in our fellowship.
- **Calling** – the task to praise and witness Jesus Christ to those around us and profess His gospel and His return.

In light of these wonderful assurances and tasks, let us keep the promises we have made to the Eternal One when we were baptized, sealed, and confirmed, and thus, prove our faithfulness to Christ. We live under His gracious benefits and spiritual blessings!

With loving greetings,





What a busy time leading up to the joyous celebration of Pentecost! The Chief Apostle and District Apostles began to arrive in Washington D.C. as early as the Tuesday before Pentecost Sunday.

Chief Apostle Schneider led the District Apostle Meeting International, a two-day meeting with all the District Apostles and District Apostle Helpers of the world. The spiritual part of the meeting focused on the return of Christ and our desire to be with Him.

While these meetings were going on, the wives were able to spend time in fellowship together and with others through various activities. Together, they packed backpacks filled with school supplies to give to children who are refugees in the USA. They were also able to participate in a small group experience on a portion of Acts 2:42 about the breaking of bread. These small groups were led in English, Spanish, and German, so that all could have a chance to be involved. The wives also visited a new museum in D.C. – the Bible Museum. There, they explored the history of the Bible, some of its stories, and also the impact that the Bible has had on people throughout history and the world today.

After this busy week, finally the Pentecost weekend arrived. Our theme for the weekend was **And they continued...**, as this is a reference to the work of the early congregation after they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Today we also have the desire to continue together in learning about Christ and growing in our faith as we share moments of fellowship and communion. And Pentecost is an important time when we can celebrate our unity in this continuation of our mission as Christ's disciples.



Already beginning on Friday, members began to arrive for the weekend's activities. Music rehearsals for the Pentecost divine service began early Saturday at the Hylton Memorial Chapel, where the Pentecost service would take place. Altogether, the choir, soloists, organist and pianist, with the conductors, rehearsed for a number of hours, all while the sanctuary was being set up for the divine service.

Also, at the Chapel was a NAC-USA Exhibition, which is something that the national church has never done before on such a large scale. Here, NAC-USA volunteers and administrative staff provided information at different booths about some of the initiatives and teachings happening in the district church. This was a time for members to ask questions and learn more about these newer resources and teachings. The booths at the Exhibition dealt with the topics of Giving, FaithArc, re Charitable Ministry, Spiritual Gifts, Prepare & Enrich, the NAC-USA Development Institute, and the You're Home resources. Later in the afternoon, the Chief Apostle, the District Apostles, and their wives also had the chance to visit the Exhibition. This opened the opportunity to greet and converse with a number of our members. Local food trucks provided a chance to remain together and enjoy a meal together during the day.

Also during the Exhibition, everyone was invited to attend short presentations on different topics – NAC Talks. Since English is not the only language that is used in divine services in the USA, these talks also were offered in multiple languages. District Apostle Kriel, from South Africa, gave the first presentation about working with what you have, in English. District Apostle Deppner

then gave the next talk, also in English, about church life in the Congo. Following this, District Apostle Montes de Oca spoke about Brazil and Bolivia, which was presented in Spanish. And the last talk was given by Evangelist Kiefer, the church theologian, about the life and times in the first church. His talk was in German, and translated into English. For each NAC Talk, the room was filled with people eager to hear from the international visitors.



After this great day of learning and fellowship, all looked forward to the Pentecost divine service the next morning.

The congregation gathered to worship before the service around 10:15am on Sunday. The music was a balance of traditional and contemporary songs, choir and soloists, along with instrumental selections.



Chief Apostle Schneider opened the service with Ephesians 1:13-14:

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

With these verses, he brought to light that the gift of the Holy Spirit we receive in Holy Sealing is a seal that shows our childhood in God, is a promise of Jesus' resurrection power in us, is a guarantee that God will complete the work that He began in us, and is a pledge, which is the foretaste of the kingdom of God.



Chief Apostle Schneider then called District Apostle Joseph Ekhuya from East Africa, District Apostle Markus Fehlbaum from Switzerland, and District Apostle Andrew Andersen from Australia to assist in the divine service.

After the service, everyone spent time together in fellowship and enjoyed lunch from local food trucks. Some of the District Apostles and others stayed for meetings that continued into the next week, while everyone else, including the Chief Apostle, either went home or took some time to further explore Washington D.C.



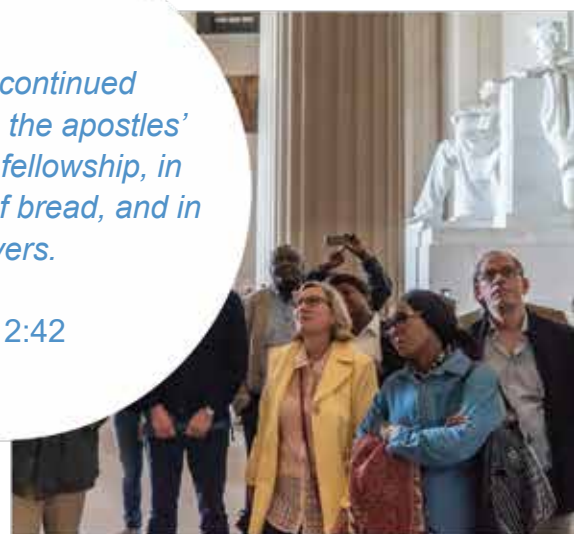
Through these experiences, we could truly see how God had blessed all of the prayers and preparations for this time together, and provided us with a wonderful Pentecostal feast. – VAA





*And they continued
steadfastly in the apostles'
doctrine and fellowship, in
the breaking of bread, and in
prayers.*

Acts 2:42





In a manner nobody could imagine...

Taken from the Pentecost service held by Chief Apostle Schneider

Pentecost is a very important feast for us because it bears witness that God is the faithful One. God promised that He would send the Savior, the Messiah. And He fulfilled this promise, but *in a way nobody could imagine*. Something incredible happened. God, the Son, came to earth and became man. That was beyond anything man could imagine.

Jesus announced that He would have to die, they would kill Him, but then He would go back to His Father. In His resurrection, He rose from the dead, and He was taken up to His Father in heaven *in a way nobody could imagine or explain*. That was something so wonderful. He was dead, He rose from the dead, and He went into heaven. *Nobody could imagine that*.

Jesus promised that He would send a Comforter. I have no idea what the disciples thought, if they thought, "Okay, He will send a friend or somebody." The Bible doesn't say it's the Holy Spirit. But when Pentecost arrived and the Holy Spirit was poured out, *it happened in a manner nobody could imagine before*. God fulfilled His promise.

Jesus promised that He would come back to take the elected ones, His Bride, to Himself. *It will happen in a manner nobody can imagine*. That's definitely beyond our understanding. Nobody can explain it. Nobody can describe it. The return of Christ can only be grasped in faith. But we know one thing. **It will happen! Jesus will come, and He will take His Bride.**

Dear brothers and sisters, that's our joy of Pentecost. We know that God fulfills His promises. We cannot explain it. We cannot describe it. **We need to grasp it in faith.** But we know, we are convinced, it will happen. Our God is the faithful one.

CHURCH STRATEGY



What will the Church look like in fifteen or thirty years? A fascinating question for which we cannot provide competent answers without a strategic approach. In an interview with our online news magazine nac.today, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider provides detailed information on his plans for the years to come.

How and in what direction should the New Apostolic Church develop in the years to come?

Our actions are distinguished by several objectives. Our primary goal is to preach the gospel truthfully and conscientiously throughout the world. For us as Apostles, this means the following.

- We need to be careful that Jesus Christ takes first place, and not the institution or a particular person.
- We want to define the New Apostolic doctrine on the basis of the Bible. This is the purpose of our Catechism. It describes the current globally valid doctrine of the New Apostolic Church in a clear and structured manner.
- We want to make sure that the sermons correspond to the biblical message and the doctrine.
- We want to give priority to that which is decisive for the salvation of the believers. While Church traditions certainly deserve respect, they must never become as important as the message of the gospel itself. We want to clearly distinguish between the message of the gospel, the rules of the Church, and local traditions.
- We need to make sure that all New Apostolic children across the globe receive quality religious education that is adapted to their needs and local conditions.

All of our Church-related activity must be defined by this focus on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Making people into disciples of the Lord ... What do you mean by that?

Let me put it this way: we want people to follow Jesus Christ. As Apostles, we can make a decisive contribution to this. Love for Jesus Christ and belief in His teaching are to be spread in all directions and encouraged and promoted. Of course there are limits to such activities, but these have been set by God Himself.

- He has given man freedom of choice. Faith is a gift that God gives to man, but man must long for and accept it. We cannot force anyone to love the Lord. But what we can do is encourage our neighbor to follow the Lord.
- The gospel is the absolute truth. We cannot adapt it to suit people's tastes. God expects us to proclaim the pure, unadulterated gospel.
- And finally, we need to make sure that salvation, which God will offer until His return, remains accessible to all.

If it is so important to adhere to the ever valid gospel, is there still even room for change?

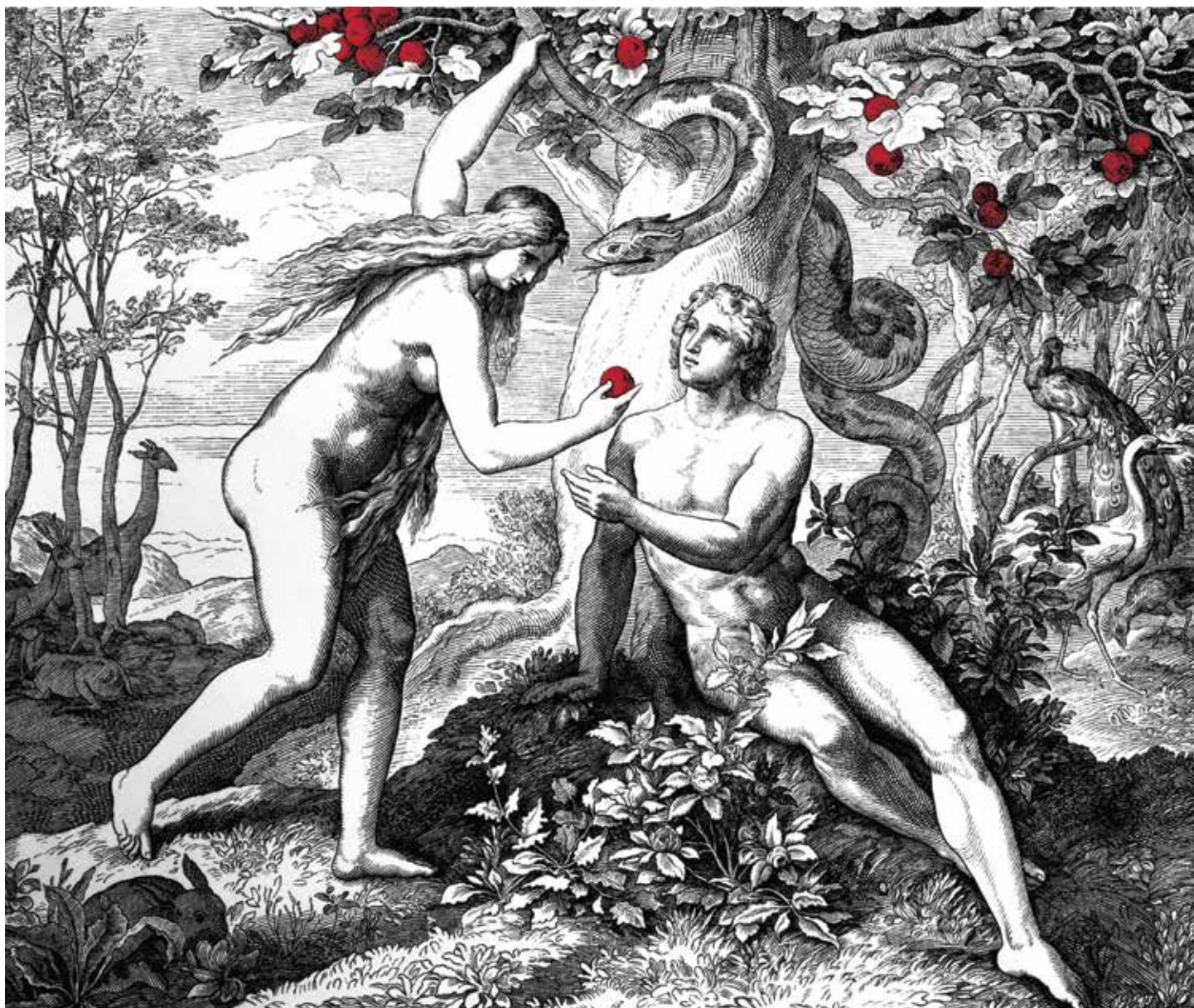
Well, there will always be changes and they happen all the time, even in our Church. In terms of faith, the gospel of the Lord offers everything that a believing person needs.

Our mission is going to people and making them into disciples of the Lord, not members of the Church.

We fulfil our mission by making sure that people feel at home in our Church, that they can experience the love of God and the joy of serving Him and others, and feel a desire to bring their lives into alignment with the gospel. That is our Vision! And in my opinion, that is quite sufficient.

To read the rest of the interview with the Chief Apostle, search for the following articles on www.nac.today:

- ***Making people Christians, not members of the Church***
- ***A faith that lives in cultural diversity***
- ***Contributing to a collective solution***



What is sin?

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Romans 5:19

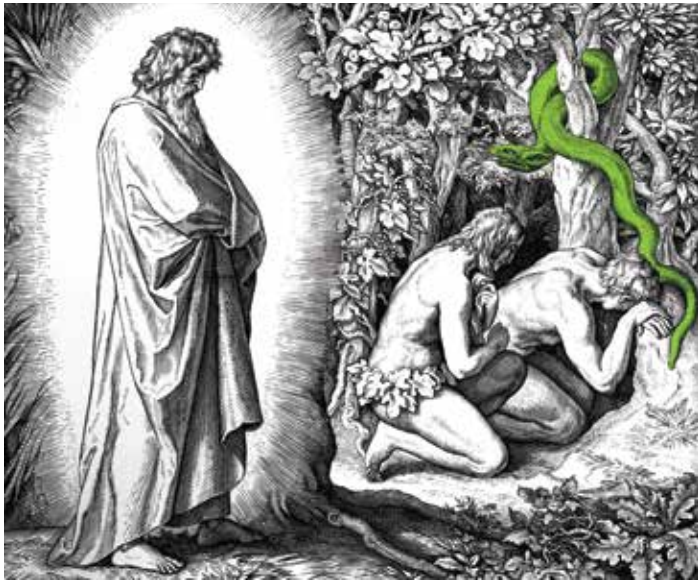
Because of the fall of Adam and Eve, humans are born with *concupiscence*, the inclination to sin. Since this inclination is a part of our nature from the day we are born, we should take some time to try to understand sin and its effects on our lives.

What is sin? We may feel inclined to answer this question by reducing sin to an action we do or some words we say. But how do we know what a bad

word or action is versus a good one? Who sets this standard? Even when we look at different societies or countries, we find different sets of laws and regulations. Which are correct? When we consider these questions, we can come to understand that sin is more complex than something that is "bad." Sin is: a turning away from God. We can see that the definition also becomes the consequence of sin – we are turning ourselves away from our God. Every word or action that disorients us from God's will makes a mark on us that continually pushes us away from Him and warps us into a being He did not intend us to be.

In Romans 3:23, Paul wrote, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...* We need to understand that the sins we commit do not begin with just the things we do or say. Understanding

our sin starts with who we are. We are not good people who sometimes sin. We are sinful people who sometimes do the right thing. It is a part of our nature. We are permanently in a state that is separate from God, because He can't be where sin is. We are sinners in need of a Savior. When we become aware of how much we *fall short*, we begin to comprehend our dependence on our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is through Him that this divide can be mended.



Before a person comes to know or believe in Christ, they cannot understand their need for a Savior. Unbelievers are trapped in sin because they either remain tolerable of their sin, or, without accepting Christ as their Savior, they think they can save themselves.

Believers in Christ understand that they are dependent on Him. When they accept Christ in their lives, they have to work to transform from their old, sinful nature into the new nature of Christ. The battle against sin, which tries to prevent that new creation from growing, is between the believer's old nature and their new nature. It's not just about the things you might do each day that are sins, but rather, that you are a sinner and that's why you do those things. This fight between the old and the new nature is more than just trying to change our behaviors or actions, it is about changing who we are. It is possible to change our actions on our own. But we cannot change our underlying, sinful nature. To do that, we are completely dependent on Christ and His sacrifice. Only the power and freedom from sin we have through Him gives us

the ability to overcome our nature and transform into His image. It's not about *doing* something, it's about *becoming* an new person in Christ.



When we come to the realization that we are sinners in need of forgiveness, we are led to confess our sins and to repent for them. Until we are made perfect through God's grace, we will always be sinners. Martin Luther, in his 95 Theses said,

"Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ...willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

Reflecting on our sin and turning to Christ must become a daily practice or discipline.



Following Christ does not mean that we are just trying to be a good person or that we want to be nice to those around us. Following Christ means our sinful nature dies daily. But until His Spirit wholly consumes our old nature and we are re-joined with God, we will be sinners. Because of this, let us always humbly and joyfully embrace God's gift of repentance, which we will talk about in the next Vision Newsletter. - **VAA / MJB**



Following is an article from one of our members, Lacey Smith, who participated in a year-long medical fellowship in Thomassique, Haiti, explaining her experiences there:

Tomorrow, God-willing

On my last night in Haiti, I sat eying a spider in the corner of my room from the thatched chair I had come to call my own. While the familiar whirl of my fan and the din of the crickets filled the heavy air, I thought about the year I had spent in villages, beneath mango trees, and under a sun made of fire.

I thought about the stories I had gathered - stories of hardship and endurance and cholera and malnutrition. Stories of a place and a culture both vibrant and complex. Stories of hurricanes and palm-roofed houses, of health committees and clean water initiatives, of village birth assistants and local doctors that rose above and beyond what was asked of them by their profession.

I thought about these stories, and I understood that, in thirteen months, these narratives had restructured my world view. For despite a life that seemed difficult and unforgiving, the men and women that lived these narratives were stronger and more forgiving. They were kind, funny, and frustrated at times, but ultimately collaborative in a world that seemed divisive and iniquitous. Before my fellowship, I had understood this kind of compassionate resilience in a parabolic way - as one internalizes Sunday School lessons, applicable yet still analogic. During my year as a Global Health Fellow, I was handed the opportunity to witness what “love of neighbor” should, could, and does entail.

My thoughts were disrupted by a buoyant knock on my open door.

“You worry too much about spiders,” my friend Kiki told me, following the course of my gaze. I laughed and un-furrowed my spider-furrowed brow.

“Only for one more day.” I said.

“Only until tomorrow, if God wants.” Kiki said.

In the language of Haitian Creole, one rarely says only the word, “tomorrow.” The phrase in its entirety is always “*demen, si Dye vle*” or “*tomorrow, God-willing*.” This linguistic nuance always made me grin. It was as if, embedded in the vernacular of Haitian life, there was a spirituality that framed my experience - that reminded me that the stories I gathered from yesterday, from Haiti, are meant to be a part of my tomorrow. That as a future physician, community member, daughter, sister, and friend, I have every reason to love my neighbor as deeply and as unequivocally as I am loved by God. I remember feeling that this is something that I wouldn’t forget. I also remember hoping that God forgot to include spiders under the term “neighbor.”

The tomorrow after that last night, I left the clinic and ended my fellowship. However, my connection to that place and those people still remains. Currently, the charity of the New Apostolic Church USA, **re Charitable Ministry**, is forming a relationship with the clinic’s US-based organization, Medical Missionaries. If you or someone you know would like more information on the Global Health Fellowship in Thomassique please go to: <http://www.medmissionaries.org/id208.html>



Lacey obtained her undergraduate degree in Health and Human Sciences from Loyola Marymount University, in Los Angeles. During college, she volunteered as a clinic assistant at the Venice Family Clinic, acted and sang in several productions for the LMU Theater department, and served as an emergency medical technician for the university. Lacey is currently a US-Ireland Alliance Mitchell Scholar pursuing a Master of Science degree in Immunology and Global Health at National University of Ireland, Maynooth. After Ireland, she will attend Harvard Medical School.



VENEZUELA

Due to the strained relations between the countries of the United States and Venezuela, neither District Apostle Kolb nor Apostle Fendt has been able to visit the members in Venezuela for the past two years. With the passing of Apostle Diaz last year and the retirement of Apostle Lara this year, the full weight of caring for the members lies with recently ordained Apostle Barrera. Please remember him in your prayers.



REFUGEES IN A CAMP IN COLOMBIA - SOME ESTIMATES PUT THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES AS HIGH AS 4 MILLION, MORE THAN 10% OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)



ONE MILLION PEOPLE ENTERED COLOMBIA DUE TO THE CRISIS IN VENEZUELA - INFLATION HAS RENDERED MONEY ALMOST WORTHLESS (GETTY PHOTOS)



WITH THE ECONOMY IN CRISIS DUE TO GOVERNMENT RATIONING, HYPERINFLATION AND AN OIL CRISIS, FRUSTRATED PEOPLE IN CARACAS, VENEZUELA WAIT FOR HOURS JUST TO GET BASICS LIKE FLOUR AND SOAP. THE ONLY OTHER OPTION, BUY ITEMS ON THE BLACK MARKET. (AFP)



VENEZUELAN'S REPORTED LOSING ON AVERAGE 24 LBS IN BODY WEIGHT LAST YEAR AND ALMOST 90 PERCENT NOW LIVE IN POVERTY, ACCORDING TO A NEW UNIVERSITY STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF A DEVASTATING ECONOMIC CRISIS AND FOOD SHORTAGES. (KYODO VIA AP IMAGES / VICE NEWS)



Please also continue to pray for our brothers and sisters, and all others, in Venezuela. Though we may not see much coverage on news stations, the crisis in Venezuela continues. Food shortages and increasing prices have caused outbreaks of looting and violence. Some are turned away at the border when trying to escape the country. More infants, children, and adults are suffering and dying from preventable diseases, again due to a lack of medicine/medical equipment and increasing prices. It is hard to truly understand these facts when we don't see or experience them ourselves, but these are horrifying conditions that no one should have to live in.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to donate supplies or funds because the Venezuelan government often does not accept humanitarian aid. However, please keep praying for the situation there and the people who are living through it. We must have faith that God hears our prayers and sees our desire to intercede for our brothers and sisters who are going through such difficult times.



PATIENTS AWAITING EMERGENCY CARE FILL A HALLWAY AT LUIS RAZETTI HOSPITAL IN PUERTO LA CRUZ, VENEZUELA. THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY HAS EXPLODED INTO A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY. (MERIDITH KOHUT / NYT)



YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE

NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH USA | SEPT 21-23 | DETROIT, MI

YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE

District Apostle Kolb has invited the young adults from around the country to Detroit, Michigan for a conference the weekend of **September 21 – 23**.

The theme of the weekend, **BACK TO BASICS**, will focus on understanding and implementing the basics of what it means to be a Christian. In looking at this, we will explore topics such as personal spiritual disciplines that contribute to our overall spiritual health and identity as Christians, as well as our individual spiritual giftedness.

Participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from Detroit, as well as making their overnight arrangements. A group rate for the conference hotel, Detroit Metro Airport Marriott, has been set up, and will be accessible while rooms are available.

The cost of the weekend is \$70 and includes meals, the conference space, and materials. After August 31, registration will increase to \$100, and is only open based on availability.

For more information, and to register, visit events.nac-usa.org.

A SEASON OF THANKSGIVING

Many of the holidays we celebrate in our church are preceded by a season that builds our anticipation of the celebration. For Christmas, we have Advent. For Easter, we have Passiontide and Holy Week. For Pentecost, we have Eastertide.

Let us also create a season of Thanksgiving to carry us towards this holiday. During this season, we have the opportunity to be intentionally aware of what God has given us, to increase our joy in Him, and to strengthen our trust in Him. Starting on the first Sunday of October, each service leading up to Thanksgiving Sunday will focus on an aspect of giving thanks to God:

- 1. Gratitude for God, the Father***
- 2. Gratitude for Jesus Christ***
- 3. Gratitude for the Holy Spirit***
- 4. Gratitude for the church of Christ***
- 5. Gratitude for the salvation power for the departed***
- 6. Gratitude for our congregations and our childhood in God***

We encourage you to think more about these six aspects of gratitude and how you can help create this season of Thanksgiving in your congregation. You may also want to use the themes of *Giving is love* and *Giving is faith* to help guide these ideas.



As we approach this season of thanksgiving, consider these thoughts and be encouraged in your personal giving as an expression of love and faith.

GIVING IS FAITH

Giving is an attribute of the Triune God, thus, it is an attribute of Christian behavior, and faith is a necessary foundation to be a Christian.

We give because we believe in the future that Jesus has promised us – to share His glory with us if we remain faithful. We are secure with Him, knowing that what we give in this temporal life originated from God. By His grace He will give me eternal life and infinitely more.

If we truly believe in the Triune God, we trust in His work and ways. As we grow in our love of God, we want to be with Him, and to be with Him, we have to be like Him. Thus, as giving is an attribute of God, in faith to Him, we want to do the same.



GIVING IS LOVE

Giving to God: We want to give something to God. What do we give to Him when He has everything already? We can only give back to God what He has given us first – our free will. We can let His will be the dominant force in our lives.

Giving to our neighbor: By letting God's will be dominant in our lives, we begin to think and feel like Him. We love our neighbor, and out of this love, we want to give them the one thing that they do not have from us: our time. We can have empathy for what our neighbor is going through by being with them.

Giving to the church: The church is the assembly of believers and was established by Jesus. We belong to this assembly, so we want to share the gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit, and our resources, to sustain it.



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NAC USA ONLINE UPDATE

Starting in September, NAC USA Online – our website that allows members to watch webcasted services – will require a username and password. Because the website is a product of the NAC USA District, a username and password is the best way to ensure that it serves the USA members.

In order to be set up with a username and password, individual users of NAC USA Online will need to give their rector an up-to-date email address by Sunday, August 26. Submitting your email by this date will help avoid disruption to viewing the webcasted services through NAC USA Online. Shortly thereafter, you will receive an email with instructions about how to set up your username and password.

On-demand video clips of Chief Apostle and District Apostle services will be able to be accessed without a login on www.nacusaonline.org and the app.

