

## Portrait – New Apostolic Church

The roots of the New Apostolic Church date back to the beginning of the 19th century. Influenced by the French Revolution and the industrialization of Europe, committed Christians from various churches first came together in prayer meetings in England, Scotland and Germany from the mid-1820s in order to reflect on the Christian faith on a biblical basis. A central idea of these awakened circles was the imminent return of Jesus Christ and the preparation of devout Christians for this event. In particular, the personal reoccupation of the apostle's office should serve this purpose. From the beginning of the 1830s, this movement formed the first communities in England, which finally merged into the Catholic Apostolic Church. By the year 1835, twelve apostles were called by prophetic word according to the biblical model. Starting from England emerged in the following years also in Germany and in other European countries Catholic apostolic communities.

After the first of the twelve appointed apostles had died or no longer held office for other reasons, it came in 1863 after internal differences over the personnel and content orientation of the church in Germany to the foundation of the "General Christian Apostolic Mission" ("Allgemeine christliche apostolische Mission"), from which finally the "New Apostolic Congregation" emerged. Since 1932 the name "New Apostolic Church" has been used.

### Vision of the New Apostolic Church

*"A church in which people feel at home and, inspired by the Holy Spirit and their love for God, align their lives to the gospel of Jesus Christ and thus prepare themselves for His return and eternal life." ([Catechism of the New Apostolic Church \[CNC\]](#), 2012)*

### Mission of the New Apostolic Church

*"Reaching out to all people in order to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ and to baptise them with water and the Holy Spirit.*

*Providing soul care and cultivating a warm fellowship in which everyone shall experience the love of God and the joy of serving Him and others." ([CNC](#), 2012)*

### Structure

As the supreme spiritual authority, the Chief Apostle, together with the apostles, leads the New Apostolic Church. It is divided into several district apostles, each headed by a district apostle and several apostles, which in turn comprise one or more regional churches.

The center of ecclesial life is the congregations. The apostles assign shepherds, evangelists or priests to direct them. The congregation rectors are assisted in their service by other priests and deacons.

Several regionally obvious communities are combined to form a church district. In fulfilling their regional tasks, the apostles are assisted by bishops, district elders and district evangelists.

### Volunteer service

The pastoral and organizational tasks in the congregations are fulfilled voluntarily and on a voluntary basis. All church actions and blessings, e.g. baptisms, wedding ceremonies, wedding anniversaries or funerals are carried out free of charge.

### Worldwide spreading

The approximately 9 million New Apostolic Christians living in five continents and around 60,000 congregations (parishes) worldwide belong to all social classes, nationalities and generations. In Switzerland, the New Apostolic Church has around 34,000 members in 160 parishes.

### The Creed and the Catechism

The New Apostolic Church is committed to the ancient church confessions, the foundations of the Christian faith: the Apostolic Confession and the confession of Nicaea-Constantinople.

The first three articles of the [New Apostolic Creed](#) correspond to the "Apostolicum". The other seven articles of faith represent an interpretation in the sense of the New Apostolic faith.



The foundations of New Apostolic doctrine are summarized in the [Catechism of the New Apostolic Church](#), published in 2012, and in simplified form as a [Catechism in Questions and Answers](#) (published in 2015).

The Catechism expresses common fundamental beliefs of all Christians. In addition, he unfolds the peculiarities of the New Apostolic faith. He is written out of faith and for believers. It should be emphasized that in the case of existing differences of opinion, the New Apostolic Church appreciates other churches with their teachings.

#### **Sacraments and blessings** (see *"The sacraments in the New Apostolic Church"*)

The New Apostolic Church has three biblically founded sacraments. Water baptism, Spirit baptism (Holy sealing) and Holy Communion. Everybody can receive these sacraments. With children, the guardians take responsibility in faith.

In addition to the three sacraments, the New Apostolic Church knows blessings such as Confirmation blessings, wedding blessings, blessing for wedding anniversaries.

#### **The path of the New Apostolic Church Switzerland into ecumenism**

In a joint discussion commission, intensive theological discussions were held from 2008 on central questions of New Apostolic doctrine. As a result of these discussions, the New Apostolic Church Switzerland has been acknowledged as a guest of the AGCK Switzerland since April 2014.

The results of the talks were published in a [joint orientation](#) document from 2015. It represents the binding basis between the New Apostolic Church and the member churches of the AGCKCH, such as the mutual baptismal recognition, the handling of interdenominational marriages, the participation in common actions or the mutual provision of premises

#### **Special features of the teaching of the New Apostolic Church**

- **Apostle ministry** (see *"The Ministry in the New Apostolic Church"*)  
The apostleship was donated by Jesus and equipped with appropriate authority. Apostles are messengers of Jesus Christ and proclaim the Gospel, mediate the forgiveness of sins, and administer the sacraments. All other ministries come from the apostleship and, like this, are based on the call of God (Ephesians 4:11).
- **Life After Death** (see *"The life after death" as well as "The doctrine of the future things - Eschatology"*)  
It is one of the fundamental beliefs of the New Apostolic faith that mankind lives on after death. Since the sacrifice of Christ, the state of souls in the hereafter can be changed to the good. So salvation can also be obtained after bodily death. The apostles donate the sacraments for the dead three times a year. To whom this sacramental grace is granted lies solely in God's judgment.
- **Return of Jesus Christ**  
Even the early Christian apostles encouraged the faithful to prepare for the return of Jesus Christ. This expectation is also witnessed in the Apostolic See, and it is at the center of the New Apostolic faith. New Apostolic Christians believe that those believers who have prepared for the return of Jesus will have everlasting fellowship with Jesus Christ before the Final Judgment, and will perform with him further tasks to fulfil God's will to universal salvation (1 Thessalonians 4: 15-15). 17, 1 Corinthians 15:51.52; Philippians 3:20.21; [CNC 10.1.2](#)).

#### **Mutual baptismal recognition**

The New Apostolic Church recognizes the baptism performed in a Christian church, performed in the name of the triune God and with water.

The New Apostolic Church of Switzerland commits itself to the "Certificate of Mutual Baptismal Recognition" and has applied to sign the mutual recognition of the baptism of Riva San Vitale.

#### **Different confessional marriages**

As usual in the AGCK, the marriage between members of the NAC and another AGCK member churches is to be preceded by a conversation with pastors of both churches. The involvement of each spouse in the life of their church should be addressed as well as questions about baptism and Christian education as well as the different understandings of the godparenthood.



### **Participation in liturgical activities**

The mutual visit of worship strengthens ecumenical relations. A communion with the other AGCK member churches does not exist. If an invitation to the Lord's Supper is given in the context of the service, all worshippers must make the decision according to the rules of their own church.

Since the term "divine service" according to New Apostolic understanding refers to a service in a solid liturgical form and with certain, the officeholders reserved liturgical acts, common services are not possible in this sense. Common celebrations, devotions and prayers, however, are possible and are also encouraged by the New Apostolic side as a sign of communion in Christ and experienced as a means of deepening communion.

On this basis, a participation of Church ministers of the New Apostolic Church or a member church of the AGCK at the other worship or religious services (marriage, baptism, funeral) is possible by a greeting, a reading, a prayer or the transmission of blessings, each outside the actual blessing act. Here is the connection in Christ in the sense of the reconciled difference with other Christians and according to the Charter Oecumenica expressed.

### **Invitations, practical support, hospitality**

The New Apostolic Church participates in ecumenical events within the AGCK at national, cantonal and local level. If mutual invitations are spoken on-site, e.g. for charity events, anniversaries, festivals or for the dedication of church rooms, they should be accepted if possible.

Mutual support and hospitality between local Christian communities, such as providing venues for events and worship, is evidence of a good ecumenical relationship.

### **Social commitment of the New Apostolic Church**

The New Apostolic Church Switzerland has founded the charitable foundation NAK Humanitas for its social, charitable commitment. In addition, it supports diaconal and charitable institutions of other churches and institutions.

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