

# The New Apostolic Church in Southern Africa

It is probable that news of the calling of new Apostles, as it occurred within what would be later called the Catholic Apostolic Church, reached Southern Africa for the first time through Edward Irving, who maintained regular correspondence with a close friend and fellow Presbyterian minister, John Pears. John Pears was invited by the Dutch Reformed Church to minister to Scottish settlers and Dutch inhabitants in the Cape. After arriving on 3 March 1829, he also served as a minister in the Eastern Cape, where after a year, he returned to Cape Town in 1830. Here he was offered the position as Professor of Classics in the newly established South African College, which later became the University of Cape Town. According to the brochure, *When the fulness of the time was come ...*, Irving seemed to have informed Pears about the reoccupation of the Apostle ministry in 1832, and the calling of six Apostles, until Irving passed away on 5 December 1834. Pears finally settled in Somerset East in the Eastern Cape where he served as a Dutch Reformed minister from 1841 until his death in 1866. The nearby town of Pearston was named after him.

It was only in 1889, however, and after the 'Hamburg schism' in 1863 with the remaining English Apostles of the Catholic Apostolic Church, when the first actual person landed on African soil to bring testimony of the reoccupation of the Apostle ministry. It was in Hamburg where the calling of new Apostles was accepted. From 1864, this new order of followers referred to themselves as the *allgemeine apostolische Gemeinde* (universal apostolic congregation). From here the 'new apostolic movement', which at the time functioned under a bewildering variety of names, spread to other parts of Europe and around the world.<sup>1</sup>

## Phase 1: The Beginning in Southern Africa (1889-1955)

What will be discussed here are the beginnings of the New Apostolic Church (NAC) in East London, and then Cape Town, from where it spread to various parts of South Africa, South West Africa (Namibia), and then to Livingstone in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi), from where it spilled over to other countries in Africa. There are particularly two personages that stand out during this period. The first is Apostle Heinrich Franz Schlaphoff, the son of a German immigrant, who helped to expand and consolidate congregations throughout Southern Africa. Around the time of the Second World War, he served as 'Assistant Chief Apostle', and in addition to his journeys in Southern Africa, also made arduous journeys to Europe, North and South America, and Australia. His tireless ministry came to an end in 1954 when he was suspended from his ministry due to the 'Botschaft' of Chief Apostle Bischoff. There is also the towering figure of George Henwood who became an

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<sup>1</sup> Manfred Henke, *The Making of the New Apostolic Church – 150 years of church history* (Zurich: New Apostolic Church International, 2013), 55-60. It was only in 1930 when the official name 'New Apostolic Church' was adopted.

outstanding missionary and first 'black' African Apostle. Through his unrelenting efforts, the NAC was established in Zambia and neighbouring countries.

By 1955, three large independent District Churches were established in Southern Africa, which were eventually consolidated into two in 2016.

### ***The Arrival of Apostle Carl Klibbe in South Africa in 1889***

Since most countries of Southern Africa formed part of the British Empire, it only stands to reason that the history of the NAC for most of this region would be closely interlinked.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, however, the establishment and development of the Church was the result of the endeavours of German and Dutch immigrants who associated themselves with the 'new apostolic movement' in Germany and the Netherlands. It began in 1889 with the arrival of the Evangelist Carl Klibbe from Australia.

Carl Klibbe was born in Pomerania on the Baltic Sea on 24 December 1852. He was a minister in the Lutheran Church and already before he emigrated to Scotland, and eventually, Australia, he came into contact with the new apostolic movement. It was in Australia, however, after he came into contact with Evangelist Heinrich Niemeyer (whom he had met first in Germany) where he joined the Church. When the Evangelist Niemeyer was ordained an Apostle in 1886, Klibbe and his family were sealed. As an eager servant of the Church, he was soon ordained an Evangelist, and in 1889 was commissioned

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<sup>2</sup> I have relied on several sources to give an overview of the history of the NAC in Southern Africa. This includes the book compiled and revised by G. Rockenfelder, *The History of the New Apostolic Church* (Frankfurt: J.G Bischoff). The dating of this book is uncertain, but it was translated into English and Afrikaans and printed in South Africa around the late 1950s or 1960s. An expanded and revised edition was printed and published in English by Friedrich Bischoff publishers in 1970.

More significant sources are the following *Our Family* magazines printed and produced in South Africa under license of Verlag Friedrich Bischoff: NAKI, 'The Silver Wedding of "Our Pal and his dear Wife" and Twentieth Anniversary of the Asst. Chief Apostle H. F. SCHLAPHOFF', *Our Family*, August (1948), 7-14; NAKI, 'The commencement of the Lord's Work in South Africa', *Our Family* 29.5 (1983), 138-141; 'South West Africa: Namibia', *Our Family* 29.5 (1983), 153-156; 'The Development of God's Work in Pretoria', *Our Family* 29.9 (1983), 280-282; 'Ons apostels in die hiernamaals', *Ons Familie* 36.6 (1984), 161-163; 'Our Apostles in Eternity', *Our Family* 30.6 (1984), 186-187; '100 Jaar Nuwe Apostoliese Kerk in Suid-Afrika', *Ons Familie* 42, Januarie (1990), 20-23.

See also the chronicles, 'The New Apostolic Church South East Africa', in *South Africa: Johannesburg. International Apostles Meeting. Pentecost 2002* (Frankfurt: Friedrich Bischoff Verlag, 2002), 54-55; and 'The New Apostolic Church Cape', in *One Spirit One Goal. International Apostles Meeting. Pentecost 2010* (Frankfurt: Friedrich Bischoff Verlag, 2010), 78-81.

Also invaluable are the many booklets and brochures that were produced to commemorate special dates or that accompanied visits of a Chief Apostle to the region. These include:

*1889-1985* (The New Apostolic Church [Africa], 1985). A booklet that gives an historical overview of the Church in the Cape between 1889-1985.

*The Development of the Head Office of the Pretoria Apostle District* (Pretoria Apostle District, 1985). This is a small booklet that celebrates the inauguration of the Church administration office in Bedfordview, Johannesburg, in 1985.

*Commemorative Chronicle, New Apostolic Church, Port Elizabeth, 1893-1987* (New Apostolic Church [Transvaal] [=Pretoria Apostle District], 1987). This gives a short overview of the history of the Church in Port Elizabeth and the Eastern Cape between 1893 to 1987.

*When the fulness of the time was come ...* A brochure produced to commemorate the centenary of the Church in South Africa and produced in 1989 by Cape Apostle District. It chronicles the arrival of Apostle Klibbe and developments up to the death of Apostle Georg Heinrich Wilhelm Schlaphoff in 1928.

*1912-1995: South East Africa* (New Apostolic Church – South East Africa, 1995). A brochure that covers the development of the Church in the South East Africa district as it was structured at the time.

by Apostle Niemeyer to travel to South Africa for the establishment of the Church on the African continent.

Initially, Klibbe brought testimony to German immigrants of Cape Town and Worcester, but with little success. He then heard of the German settlement called Berlin in the Eastern Cape, situated about 60 km from East London. This settlement was established by German immigrants disbanded from the British army in 1857. After relocating to East London, Klibbe's testimony to German-speaking locals bore fruit and the first congregation within South Africa, indeed, Africa, began to take shape in 1892. In order to perform Holy Sealing, and nominated by Apostle Niemeyer from Australia, Carl Klibbe was called to the Apostle ministry by the Apostle College in Europe according to a letter dated 8 July 1893. The fledgling congregation in East London was housed in a modest chapel in Southernwood, a suburb of East London.

It was in 1901 that another German immigrant and shoemaker, Georg Heinrich Wilhelm Schlaphoff, visited the congregation in East London. This was the time of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), and in the midst of this difficult time, he was sealed, ordained Evangelist, and commissioned to move to Cape Town in 1902. At first, Evangelist Schlaphoff only served his own family, but one day a Mr. Reimers, who disembarked from the goods ship Gaus, which returned from an expedition to the South Pole, knocked on his door. Mr. Reimers explained that he attended a service of Apostle Woodhouse in Hamburg and wanted to hear more about the activity of living Apostles. More families joined the small congregation, and eventually, the first eight people were sealed in Cape Town by Apostle Klibbe on 10 April 1904. The sealing service took place in the home of Evangelist Schlaphoff at 41 Argyle Street, Woodstock.

As the congregation grew, a plot of ground in Palmyra Road, Claremont, was purchased. Here the first church was built and dedicated by Apostle Klibbe on Pentecost, 4 June 1906.<sup>3</sup> In attendance was the German Consul, and because the services were almost exclusively conducted in German, many locals who were also present called it the 'German Apostolic Church'.

Of course, being on the southern tip of Africa, it was inevitable that the Church would grow to include non-German speaking immigrants and natives. It was in Cape Town where the Kreunen brothers, Christian, and the younger Jacobus, who immigrated to South Africa from the Netherlands in 1904, were sealed in 1907. The older brother, Christian, because of his command of Dutch, was soon ordained a Priest to assist Evangelist Schlaphoff to minister to the Dutch-speaking residents in Cape Town.

Soon missionaries were sent to Durban, Johannesburg, and Port Elizabeth, and from Port Elizabeth brothers emerged who were sent to Grahamstown, King William's Town, Berlin, and other towns in the Eastern Cape. This included the sending of a Brother Malachi to New Brighton, a traditionally black residential area of Port Elizabeth, to work among his people there. In 1904, Apostle Klibbe also sent a Brother Tobin to Kimberley.

The Church was also introduced to South West Africa (later Namibia) by a Priest Haelbich, captain of a ship, who landed at Swakopmund in 1903 and who encountered a few New Apostolic immigrants from Germany. Soon divine services were conducted in the local lighthouse. A Brother Johannes Karow, also a German immigrant, who was sealed in Woodstock in 1904, relocated to Windhoek in 1908 where he zealously testified. That same year, Apostle Klibbe sent Priest Thiel from Paarl in the

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<sup>3</sup> See also Oliver Rütten 2017, *A trip to the first congregation in South Africa*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/525570>>.

Cape to care for the members in Windhoek. Within a year, Apostle Klibbe went to Windhoek where the first families were sealed on 20 June 1909.

In 1913, Chief Apostle Hermann Niehaus entrusted the care of the members in South West Africa to Apostle Georg Heinrich Wilhelm Schlaphoff because of Apostle Klibbe's refusal to cooperate with the Chief Apostle, but due to the First World War, Schlaphoff was only able to visit the country in 1920. The first church was built in Windhoek and dedicated by Apostle Schlaphoff on 30 November 1930. The first church dedicated in 1930 in Windhoek was 'Klein Windhoek'. In late 1930 and beginning of 1931, the local authorities granted the New Apostolic Church a site in Garten Strasse. The church, which came to be known as the 'Gross Windhoek' congregation was dedicated in 1936. A church that was built in Swakopmund was also dedicated in June 1936.<sup>4</sup>

### ***A Time of Crisis: The Chief Apostle Ministry and New Leadership***

Developments in Europe also brought challenges to the Church in Africa. After the death of Apostle Schwartz in 1895, the various Apostles looked to Apostle Friedrich Krebs for leadership. On Pentecost 1897, he received the calling to lead the Church, so this date is the official birth of the Chief Apostle ministry. After the death of Chief Apostle Krebs in 1905, the Chief Apostle Hermann Niehaus (1905-1930) followed as his successor. In 1906, like other Apostles from all over the world, Apostle Niemeyer journeyed to Europe to visit Chief Apostle Niehaus. At the behest of Apostle Niemeyer, Apostle Klibbe did the same in 1908.

After his return from Europe, Apostle Klibbe, as well as the Priest Christian Kreunen, relocated to Johannesburg in 1910. Christian's younger brother, Jacobus Rembrandinus Kreunen, was then encouraged in 1911 to take up residence in Pretoria. It was around this time that the relationship between Chief Apostle Niehaus and Apostles Klibbe and Niemeyer deteriorated. The exact reasons are not clear, but it would appear that not all Apostles at this time came to accept the centralisation of authority around one person. Apostle Klibbe made his position clear when he returned all mail received from the Chief Apostle unopened. As a result of his separation, Georg Heinrich Wilhelm Schlaphoff was invited to Germany where he received the Apostle ministry from Chief Apostle Niehaus on 21 September 1913 in Bielefeld.<sup>5</sup>

Thereafter, a time of confusion for the Church in Southern Africa followed, because for the next 13 years, there appeared to be two 'New Apostolic Churches' in Southern Africa: one led by Apostle Wilhelm Schlaphoff and the other by Carl Klibbe, who ignored the fact that he had been removed from office in 1913.

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Apostle Wilhelm Schlaphoff, as a German subject, was interned in Pietermaritzburg. As a result of repeated petitions by members, he was released, but was forbidden to stay in a coastal town. He initially settled in Kimberley for 18 months. After this, he went to Pretoria at the request of the Brothers so he could assist them in their task. It was around the beginning of 1919, when civil prisoners of war were released, that he could return to Cape Town.

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<sup>4</sup> NAKI, 'Ekhaya lam – "my home". The New Apostolic Church in Namibia', *Our Family* 58.2 (2012), 16-17; Windhoek Express 2016, *The birth - and possible death - of an icon*, we.com.na, viewed 25 February 2021, <<https://www.we.com.na/news/the-birth-and-possible-death-of-an-icon/>>.

<sup>5</sup> In a statement drafted by Assistant Chief Apostle Schlaphoff (dated 11 January 1944), he also mentions that in '1908 charges were brought against the then leader of the New Apostolic Church, Mr. C.G. Klibbe, for embezzlement of Church moneys.' If such is the case, this could have contributed to the deterioration of the relationship with Chief Apostle Niehaus.

On 30 October 1921, he ordained his son, Heinrich Franz Schlaphoff, into the Community Evangelist ministry to care for the congregations in Cape Town while he travelled throughout the country. At this stage, many members were still coping with the division and divided loyalties. This brought confusion and bitter conflict, which could only be settled in a court hearing on 22 (or 26) December 1926. It was ruled that Carl Georg Klibbe had vastly deviated in his teaching from that of the New Apostolic Church in Germany and that he was in future to carry on his activities under the name of 'The Old Apostolic Church of Africa'.<sup>6</sup> This was officially registered in June 1927. Today, the Old Apostolic Church is not affiliated in any way to the worldwide activities of the New Apostolic Church.

While on a journey to visit all the congregations in 1928, Apostle Schlaphoff suddenly became ill on his arrival in Johannesburg, and he passed away in the arms of his wife on 16 August 1928 in the home of Bishop Indan. At this time, the membership throughout South Africa comprised over 7,000 people and 39 congregations.

### ***An Assistant Chief Apostle: Heinrich Franz Schlaphoff***

As a result of Apostle Wilhelm Schlaphoff's death, on 5 December 1928, during an Apostles' Conference in Bielefeld, the District of South Africa was entrusted to the care of Evangelist H.F. Schlaphoff, who at the same time was given the Apostle ministry. When this decision was announced (by letter), the joy in the congregations was great. His ordination was later officially confirmed at an Apostles' Meeting in Bielefeld, Germany, by Chief Apostle Niehaus on 28 July 1929. He was also asked to assist the few members of the Church in Argentina, a place he visited in 1930 and 1931.<sup>7</sup>

Even though the Old Apostolic Church was registered in 1927, after the death of Apostle Wilhelm Schlaphoff, Klibbe made a new case in order to claim the name, rights and property of the New Apostolic Church. After the newly ordained Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff returned from Bielefeld, he opposed Klibbe's application at the Supreme Court in Johannesburg and the matter was finally settled in a court case in November 1929.<sup>8</sup>

Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff proved to be a man of tremendous energy and industry, and as one equipped with an innovative and progressive temperament which at times made him quite unpopular with some Apostles in Europe. One of the first things he did was to stop conducting services in German and he dissolved German-speaking congregations as well. Services were henceforth to be conducted in the local languages of English and Afrikaans.<sup>9</sup> His 'otherness' was also demonstrated by the fact that he often flew around in his own aeroplane to visit congregations, which later, the Chief Apostle prohibited him from doing for his own safety.

Under his leadership, the Church expanded, and the first big church in the province of Transvaal was built by the members. Pretoria Central, with a seating capacity of 620, was inaugurated by the Apostle

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<sup>6</sup> See also Andreas Rother 2017, *One name, two denominations: New Apostolic in South Africa*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/453923>>.

<sup>7</sup> NAKI, 'The Silver Wedding of "Our Pal and his dear Wife" and Twentieth Anniversary of the Asst. Chief Apostle H. F. SCHLAPHOFF', *Our Family*, August (1948), 9; Andreas Rother 2015, *A man who blazed new trails*, nac.today, viewed 7 January 2021, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/295186>>.

<sup>8</sup> NAKI, 'The Silver Wedding of "Our Pal and his dear Wife" and Twentieth Anniversary of the Asst. Chief Apostle H. F. SCHLAPHOFF', *Our Family*, August (1948), 9.

<sup>9</sup> This switch to local languages he also implemented later as 'Assistant Chief Apostle' in South America and Australia. See Andreas Rother 2015, *A man who blazed new trails*, nac.today, viewed 18 August 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/a/295186>>; Andreas Rother 2018, *They called him Papito*, nac.today, viewed 18 August 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/a/629917>>.

on 2 November 1930. As a result of his continuous missionary work, a total of 70 congregations were established throughout Southern Africa by 1931.

Because of the isolation of Chief Apostle Johann Gottfried Bischoff (1930-1960) in Germany in the 1930's, Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff was ordained as 'Assistant Chief Apostle' for the Southern Hemisphere during a service conducted in Frankfurt, Germany, on 30 July 1933. Between 1928-1934 he had been entrusted to care for the members in South Africa, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, South America, Australia and the Far East. In addition, he also took care of crises on behalf of the Chief Apostle that occurred in North America and the Netherlands. During that time, he must have maintained close contact with the Chief Apostle, and a photo published in 1983 has a caption that explains it was taken during his visit to Chief Apostle Bischoff in Germany around 1937.<sup>10</sup> His vast area, spread over six continents, was controlled by one administrative office in Cape Town from where Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff regularly took arduous and dangerous journeys. This included him being shipwrecked off the coast of Brazil and being lost for two weeks.

South Africa received an additional Apostle when Robert de Vries was ordained on Thanksgiving Day, 4 October 1935. He served as a pillar of strength to the brethren in Port Elizabeth, and he is also remembered for being responsible for the rapid growth of the Church among the 'Coloured' people in Cape Town. Mission work among the Xhosa people was also making headway, and in 1940, a small congregation was started in the home of Priest H. Ngugu, who was transferred from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth. This later became the New Brighton congregation.

In 1939, the year of the outbreak of the Second World War, the New Apostolic Church in South Africa became a recognised body. The Church also grew to such a degree that the Assistant Chief Apostle divided the work into various dioceses: Bishop J.R. Kreunen (Pretoria Diocese, including Rhodesia, and Natal); Bishop J. Indan (Johannesburg Diocese, including Midlands); Bishop A. Gaugusch (Cape Diocese); Bishop E. Bell (Eastern Province Diocese, including East London); and Bishop R. Liebchen (South West Africa Diocese).

It was also in 1939 in which Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff undertook his fifth and sixth journeys to South America. After the death of Apostle John Erb (of the USA and Canada) in November 1942, Chief Apostle Bischoff instructed the Assistant Chief Apostle to also take the church in North America under his charge.

He visited South America again in 1944. While returning to Buenos Aires from Chile, he was arrested at the Argentine border, since his passport did not satisfy the war-time requirements. He was eventually released, and while he was in Buenos Aires, he received a call from Bishop John P. Fendt of the USA – 'Come and help us!' He left Buenos Aires and arrived in Miami, Florida, where he was detained by the political branch of the FBI on suspicion of being a German spy. When he tried to leave to return to South America he was again detained by the FBI and allowed to go only if he returned to

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<sup>10</sup> Photograph in *Our Family* 29.9 (1983), 227. Of course, he would have been exposed to the reality of Nazi Germany. In a statement the Assistant Chief Apostle drafted on 11 January 1944, he mentioned that during his visit to Windhoek (South West Africa) in 1936, he encountered 'a very strong Nazi element in the Church'. He called a meeting of members concerned, and he writes: 'I made it clear that everybody belonging to the Nazi party must resign from the church, as the Church is absolutely non-political.' When he visited Frankfurt in 1937, he related further, 'I experienced a lot of inconvenience and trouble which appeared to be a repercussion of my work in Windhoek in clearing the Nazi element out of the Church ...'.

Cape Town.<sup>11</sup> All his dangerous journeys by sea and difficult experiences earned him the reputation of being the 'iron Apostle'.<sup>12</sup>

By the end of the war in 1945, the number of congregations in Southern Africa had grown to over 200. On 19 January 1947, Bishop Otto Wucherpfenning was ordained as an Apostle during a service in Claremont, but sadly, passed away only a year later. It was also at this time that the Church was firmly established in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and Nyasaland (Malawi). The focus will be on how the NAC became established in Zambia and Malawi. It could not be determined exactly when the Church was introduced to Zimbabwe, but a presence must have already been established by 1928 since it formed part of Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff's area when he took over from his father.<sup>13</sup>

### ***The First Black Missionary and Apostle: The expansion to Zambia and Malawi***

In June 1928, the Brothers Henwood and McPherson were sent to Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) from the Cape to bring testimony to the local population. It is especially George Mkandawire (known as George Henwood), who is of great significance, since he became the first black missionary of note, and later, the first black Apostle in Africa. He was instrumental for the establishment of the NAC in Zambia and Malawi.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, Zambia became the engine room for further expansion to countries in Central and Eastern Africa. Apostle Henwood criss-crossed Zambia and Malawi on his bicycle – as he would say, 'Me and Mr. Phillips'<sup>15</sup> – testifying to all he encountered.

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<sup>11</sup> NAKI, 'The Silver Wedding of "Our Pal and his dear Wife" and Twentieth Anniversary of the Asst. Chief Apostle H. F. SCHLAPHOFF', *Our Family*, August (1948), 10-11.

<sup>12</sup> The *Our Family* article of 1948 cited above, and a statement drafted by Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff (dated 11 January 1944), mentions several overseas journeys of the Assistant Chief Apostle, often made under perilous and dangerous conditions, including multiple arrests, being shipwrecked, and surviving hurricanes and starvation at sea, etc. His journeys in chronological order are as follows:

1929 Bielefeld, Germany  
1930 South America (Argentina)  
1931 South America (Argentina)  
1933 Frankfurt, Germany  
1934 South America  
1935 Australia  
1936 South America  
1937 Frankfurt, Germany  
1939 South America (two journeys)  
1939 USA  
1946 South America  
1947 Australia

<sup>13</sup> Sources also indicate that there were already members in Salisbury (Harare) when the Deacon (and later Apostle) Gert Naudé from Pretoria settled here in 1951. Subsequent to that he was ordained a Priest and then District Evangelist in 1954. In 1958 the congregation in Salisbury finally received its own church building, today known as Harare-Eastlea. See NAKI, 'Four congregations in Zimbabwe visited', *Our Family* 44.8 (1998), 28.

<sup>14</sup> NAKI, 'George Henwood Mkandabile. A propagator of the gospel amongst the Bantu', *Our Family* 47.8 (2001), 28. See also Andreas Rother 2015, *A home-grown talent full of vitality*, nac.today, viewed 13 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/249053>>; and Andreas Rother 2018, *Ninetieth anniversary celebrations in Zambia*, nac.today, viewed 13 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/579301>>. In addition to the resources about South Africa, for the beginning of the NAC in Zambia, I also made use of a booklet published in Zambia, *Jubilee Year. Lusaka, Zambia 1932-1982* (Zambia District, 1982), which celebrated the jubilee year and inauguration of the new Central church in Lusaka.

<sup>15</sup> As related to me by my father who lived in Zambia in the 1950s.

George Mkandawire was born in Nyasaland (now Malawi) around 1900. He was sent to school by his parents and was a gifted student who adopted the name of his teacher, Henwood. He was educated as a missionary at the Livingstonia Mission School. When his teacher was transferred to Cape Town, George Henwood decided to leave his family and to follow him. In Cape Town, he worked as a shoemaker, and it was at this time where he met his wife who introduced him to the NAC in 1923. Here he was adopted and sealed, and he was a very active member in the congregation of Athlone. In 1926, he was ordained a Priest and a year later as an Evangelist. With the blessing of Apostle Wilhelm Schlaphoff, he returned to Livingstone in Northern Rhodesia in 1928, where he vigorously brought testimony. Initially, he was met with much opposition, but despite these difficulties, several people gathered around him. These included Samuel Mkandabile, his brother (in whose home the first members were baptised and where the first congregation met), as well as the future Apostle, Jeremiah Njamba.

Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff intended to visit Livingstone, but his entry was prohibited by the local authorities. At this stage, there was even a prohibition on services being conducted there. After the exchange of many letters, Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff and Bishop Kreunen finally obtained permission to visit Livingstone in 1932. The first plot of land could be acquired in Maramba, a suburb of Livingstone, where a temporary building was built for the fledgling congregation. The first sealing service was conducted there in Zambia, on 21 September 1932, where 244 members were sealed. During this service, George Henwood was also ordained as a Community Elder.

Livingstone then became the centre from which many missionaries were sent out. In 1932, the Brothers Donald Kaluba and Eliya Jere, and later, brother Samson Siyongo, were sent to Lusaka to establish a congregation. Soon Elder Henwood commissioned more brothers to go to the Copperbelt and other regions, and congregations were established in Ndola, Choma, Kitwe, Kabwe, Mazabuka, Chingola, and Lyamanyinga. By 1936, the congregation in Lusaka had grown to 120 members, and many other congregations were established in and around the capital city.

Apostle Robert de Vries visited Livingstone and other congregations in 1936. George Henwood was ordained as a District Elder, and he soon moved to Choma, situated approximately 200 kilometres from Livingstone. With the help of the Brothers Titus Mbanjo and James Sililo, from 1937 onwards, and amidst fierce opposition, new congregations could be established in that region. Apostle Otto Wucherpfenning from the Cape visited congregations in Zambia on one occasion. Bishop Kreunen visited Northern Rhodesia only about once a year. Visits by Apostles and Bishops from South Africa were infrequent, due to the bad roads and enormous distances that had to be travelled. District Elder Henwood therefore looked after the members in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland predominantly on his own, and at a time when there was a serious lack of ministers and district leaders, a situation that hampered the development of the Church immensely.

The information about Nyasaland (Malawi) is not consistent, but around 1943 or 1944, District Elder Henwood himself or other Brothers sent by him visited Malawi where they brought testimony for three months. He also sent Deacons to Mzimba, the region where he grew up, to establish congregations. Another source states that around 1944 to 1945, the Deacons Herbert Kaira and Wilson Chipeta were commissioned to do missionary work in Nyasaland.

It was also in 1947 when Priest Njamba introduced the NAC to the King of the Lozi people, Litunga Ilute Yeta II. When he endorsed the Church and became a member, the NAC received a massive boost within Zambia.

Due to the upheaval of the Second World War, Apostles from South Africa could only visit the Rhodesias for the first time in June 1952. This must also have been the occasion when the first



members were sealed in Malawi. Because of the difficult conditions for travelling, they had to travel 1 400 kilometres to where the Apostle was serving.<sup>16</sup> District Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff, accompanied by the Apostles Malan and Erasmus, conducted several services on this visit and ordained George Henwood as a Bishop Helper on 11 June. His leadership and organisational capabilities were clearly on display when the District Apostle discovered during his travels through the region that many places had their own churches.

### ***A Second Crisis: The 'Botschaft' and New Leadership for Southern Africa***

After the Second World War, Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff, assisted by various other Apostles and ministers, continued to oversee development of the NAC in Southern Africa. This would have continued uninterrupted would it not have been for the 'message' ('Botschaft') of Chief Apostle Bischoff on Christmas Day 1951, when he announced that the Lord would return to fetch 'the Bride' during his lifetime. This 'message' became required preaching for ministers as it assumed the status of dogma, and it introduced one of the saddest chapters in the history of the NAC. This was a time of strained relations among the faithful, since some members firmly believed in the 'message', some acquiesced and accepted this while others doubted and rejected it. It was a time of excommunications and schisms, of feverish eschatological expectation, but also bitter disappointment. Even ordinations of new ministers and sealings were subject to acceptance of the 'message'. In South Africa, the Apostles D.C. Smuts Malan and Philippus Jacobus Erasmus refused to accept the 'message', resigned from their ministry, and left the Church going their separate ways.

District Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff himself resisted the implementation of the 'message' and its accompanying dogma. His rejection of the 'message', of course, would potentially have undermined the authority of the Chief Apostle across the entire world and potentially create a separate locus of power and influence outside of Germany. Eventually, in May 1954, the Chief Apostle suspended him as District Apostle for South Africa, and consequently, in June, District Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff resigned from the Apostle ministry. It was a sad end for the man who gave so much of himself for the Church, who was so much loved and respected, and whom members in South Africa simply called the 'Chief'.

Already before the 'Botschaft', District Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff experienced opposition from European Apostles, which could be presumed, was rooted in his status as Assistant Chief Apostle, his more 'liberal' leadership style, and because he did not belong to the 'inner circle' of Apostles in Europe. During an Apostles' Meeting held in Frankfurt on 21 September 1951, it was unanimously decided to 'reject him as Chief Apostle Helper and successor to the Chief Apostle'.<sup>17</sup> This is quite ironic because the 'message' that followed only three months later was delivered because it had not supposedly been revealed to Chief Apostle Bischoff that he would have a successor.

When Chief Apostle Bischoff died in 1960, it caused disappointment and confusion. Despite this, the NAC continued to grow and develop. The prophetic behaviour of District Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff, the onetime Assistant Chief Apostle contributed to this growth and development, because he set a leading example when he continued to attend services in Claremont (Cape Town) until his death on 20 November 1965. This speaks volumes for his humility, character, and commitment to the core teaching of the NAC. (It was only in 2013 when Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber took the brave and necessary step when he officially declared that 'the New Apostolic Church no longer maintains that

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<sup>16</sup> It is not said who this apostle was and where and when this occurred, but I infer it was Apostle H.F. Schlaphoff's first visit to the region after the Second World War. See NAKI, 'The New Apostolic Church in Malawi', *Our Family* 39.23 (1993), 16.

<sup>17</sup> Andreas Rother 2019, *The "Chief"—way ahead of his time*, nac.today, viewed 18 August 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/685398>>; See also Andreas Rother 2015, *A man who blazed new trails*, nac.today, viewed 18 August 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/a/295186>>.

the “message” of Chief Apostle Bischoff was a divine revelation ... It is my sincere desire to ask forgiveness of all those who suffered under the “message” of Chief Apostle Bischoff, or who even turned away from the Church.<sup>18)</sup>

Chief Apostle Bischoff instructed District Apostle Arno Abicht to take over the Church Southern Africa and was given strict instructions that all ‘worldly’ activities should cease.<sup>19</sup> District Apostle Arno Abicht was born on 23 December 1901, in Kassel, in east Germany. At the age of 22, together with his older brother Otto, he emigrated to Argentina in 1923. In 1931, he became acquainted with Apostle Schlaphoff, who at this time was entrusted to take care of the members in South America. In 1936, the Assistant Chief Apostle asked him to move to Australia to support Apostle Dietz who had become ill. When Assistant Chief Apostle Schlaphoff could finally manage to travel to Australia after World War II, he ordained the man who would replace him as leader in South Africa. He ordained Arno Abicht as District Apostle on 20 April 1947.<sup>20</sup>

## Phase 2: Reorganisation of Southern Africa into Various District Churches (1955-2019)

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After 1955, the congregations of Southern Africa were organised into three, and sometimes four concurrent District Churches. As it now stands, there are only two.

### District Churches in Southern Africa

<b>Zambia</b>	
<b>Established:</b>	2007
<b>District Apostle:</b>	Kububa Soko (since 21/7/2019)
<b>District Apostle Helpers:</b>	Robert Nsamba (Zambia) Arnold Ndakondwa Mhango (Malawi and Zimbabwe)
<b>Headquarters:</b>	Lusaka, Zambia
<b>Working areas:</b>	Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe

<sup>18</sup> For downloadable PDF entitled ‘Statement concerning the message of Chief Apostle Bischoff’ authored by Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber (dated to 13 May 2013), see Peter Johanning 2013, *Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber comments on the “message” of Chief Apostle Bischoff*, nac.today, viewed 18 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/161688>>. Mention should also be made that following the ‘Statement of Reconciliation’ in November 2014 between the New Apostolic Church and the United Apostolic Community in Düsseldorf (Germany), District Apostle Helper John Kriel and other representatives of the church in South Africa met with a delegation of the United Apostolic Church of South Africa on 6 February 2016. The United Apostolic Church forms part of the United Apostolic Community in Germany. See Peter Johanning 2016, *Meeting with delegation from the United Apostolic Church*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020; <<https://nac.today/en/a/331858>>; NAKI, ‘Meeting with the delegation from the United Apostolic Church’, *community* 03/2016, 25. Also of interest is Andreas Rother 2016, *Third step to reconciliation: the date is set*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/392967>>; and Peter Johanning 2016, *Historical meeting in Hilversum*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/400441>>.

<sup>19</sup> These ‘worldly’ activities included dancing, concerts, bazaars, and a sports league where members engaged in various sports like soccer and netball.

<sup>20</sup> NAKI, ‘Three continents blessed’, *Our Family* 47.12 (2001), 23. This was the second visit of the Assistant Chief Apostle to Australia. His first visit occurred in 1935.

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<b>Southern Africa</b>	
<b>Established</b>	2016
<b>District Apostle:</b>	John Leslie Kriel (since 18/12/2016)
<b>District Apostle Helpers:</b>	Patrick Mkhwanazi
<b>Headquarters:</b>	Cape Town, South Africa
<b>Working areas:</b>	Botswana, Falkland Islands, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Namibia, Réunion, Rodrigues, Seychelles, South Africa, St. Helena Island, Eswatini.

After District Apostle Arno Abicht received responsibility for the Church in Southern Africa in 1954, he visited Zambia where he sealed many people and ordained many ministers, a development that was desperately needed. At the same time, he found the challenges to lead the Church quite different, and vast distances separated the congregations and Apostle Areas.

To overcome the challenge of this expansive area, seven Apostles were ordained in the course of 1954. On 18 July, Joseph Johannes Matthys Swart (South West Africa); on 12 August, Bishop John Robert Bell (Eastern Cape); on 12 September, Bishop Jacobus Rembrandinus Kreunen (Pretoria); and then on 12 December, Bishop Hubert Howes Fernandes and District Elder Henwood (for the Rhodesias and Nyasaland), Evangelist Karl Rudolf Gut (Cape), and Bishop Arie Boer (Johannesburg). Quite significant is the fact that George Henwood had the distinction of becoming the first African Apostle. (We can also mention that on Christmas Day, in 1955, a further significant development took place when Apostle Henwood sealed Duncan Burton Mfune, who later became the first African District Apostle in 1989.) Another significant fact is that Apostle Kreunen, who was the pioneer of the Church in Pretoria and who already worked there for 43 years and as Bishop was commissioned to care for Natal and the Rhodesias (Zambia and Zimbabwe), was 74 years old at his ordination.

Apostle Hubert H. Fernandes was requested to move to Rhodesia to assist Apostle Henwood. He undertook an extended missionary trip in March 1955 to the Rhodesias. During the trip, he got malaria and blackwater fever, from which he suffered debilitating consequences for the next 28 years. That same year, he moved to Salisbury (present day Harare) in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).<sup>21</sup>

In addition to ordaining more Apostles, District Apostle Abicht recommended that three District Churches should be established to cope with the expansive area. Thus, during a divine service on 19 October 1955 in Frankfurt, Germany, Apostles Jacobus R. Kreunen and Hubert H. Fernandes were ordained into the District Apostle ministry. The vast district of Southern Africa was divided on 10 November 1955<sup>22</sup> as follows:

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<sup>21</sup> For the early history of Zambia and neighbouring countries, see NAKI, 'Fifty years in Lusaka', *Our Family* 29.4 (1983), 107-108; 'Opbou en ontwikkeling in Sentraal-Afrika', *Ons Familie* 35.4 (1983), 93-94; See also Peter Johanning 2016, *Chief Apostle to visit Blantyre, Malawi's oldest municipality*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/400451>>.

<sup>22</sup> According to the Zambian jubilee publication, this occurred in October 1956. See *Jubilee Year. Lusaka, Zambia 1932-1982* (Zambia District, 1982), 11.

**District Apostle Arno Abicht: Cape District**

Remained responsible for the Western Cape Province and South West Africa (Namibia), known as the Cape District.

**District Apostle Jacobus R. Kreunen: Pretoria District**

Provinces of Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal and Eastern Cape, variously known as the Transvaal or Pretoria District.

**District Apostle Hubert H. Fernandes: Rhodesia District**

Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi), which was also referred to as the 'Central Africa' district.

Since 1955, the histories of the Church in South Africa and the Zambian district underwent quite distinct developments, although the territories of Zimbabwe and Botswana did exchange hands between them on a few occasions.

***Further developments in South Africa: 1955 to present***

Only three years after his new responsibility, during a mission to South America, District Apostle Abicht died in a car accident on 27 September 1957. Karl R. Gut was then ordained as District Apostle on 22 June 1958 during a service in Pforzheim, Germany, to lead the Cape Apostle District. Karl Gut is especially known as the person who strongly developed the musical culture in the Cape, and even today the Cape is known for producing outstanding choirs. At this time, he had the Apostles Hendricks, Laubscher, and Mitas to assist him.

On 12 October 1958, District Apostle Kreunen, who oversaw the Pretoria District, ordained the first Apostle for Zulu-speaking members, namely Stuart Mboneleli Bhulana, who thus became the second African Apostle, and the first in South Africa. Apostle Bhulana, who resided in Johannesburg, was also responsible for Xhosa-speaking members in the Eastern Cape. The first Xhosa-speaking Apostle was ordained twenty years later, when on 1 November 1978, Wilkin Ntiso Jonas was ordained as an Apostle by Chief Apostle Ernst Streckeisen (1975-1978) during a service in the Feathermarket Hall in Port Elizabeth. At that time, Apostle Jonas took over responsibility for the Eastern Cape, including the so-called Bantu homelands of Ciskei and Transkei.

**The First Chief Apostle Visit to Africa**

Apostles from Europe already visited South Africa before, but it was only in April 1965 when a Chief Apostle visited the African continent for the first time.<sup>23</sup> Chief Apostle Walter Schmidt (1960-1975) conducted divine services in the Wembley Ice Rink in Johannesburg on 11 April, where he ordained Albert G. Budden as District Apostle to assist, and then take over, from District Apostle Kreunen who retired at the ripe old age of 85 on 17 October 1965. The Chief Apostle then continued his visit by inaugurating a church in Katlehong, a township east of Johannesburg on the afternoon of 11 April. This was followed by another service in Port Elizabeth on 14 April in the Exhibition Hall, followed by services in Cape Town, first in the Goodwood Showgrounds for Good Friday on 16 April, and then the Easter service on Sunday, 18 April.

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<sup>23</sup> See also Andreas Rother 2015, *The first visit of a Chief Apostle in Africa*, nac.today, viewed 15 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/257816>>.

## The Church and 'Apartheid' in South Africa

Some may argue that one of the historical weaknesses of the NAC was its unwillingness to openly speak against social injustices and oppression inflicted by governments in countries they operate in. Although the NAC never supported apartheid ideology, it was never openly critical of the government. During apartheid, the 'prophetic' voice of the NAC was to quietly go about its business and engage in mission work to as many and diverse people as possible, but it did so within the legal framework required at the time. Apartheid only became an official government policy in 1948, and therefore, there were many forced removals which in various ways also affected members of the NAC. For example, since the late 1920's a 'coloured' congregation had been growing in Marabastad, west of Pretoria. The congregation grew under difficult circumstances whilst being forced to hold services in small houses, being served by Priestly ministries from Pretoria Central. During the 1960s, the Eersterust area east of Pretoria was proclaimed a coloured area and all the families of Marabastad by force had to move to Eersterust. A building site was eventually purchased there, and in 1967, District Apostle Budden inaugurated the Eersterust church.

Forced removals also led to the rapid development of the Church in Mitchell's Plain, a suburb of Cape Town. Despite government policy, divine services on a large scale were held across the colour barrier, in Silvertown and later in the Good Hope Centre. Special permission was required from the government authorities to do so.

The political landscape became more challenging with time because of violence and protests, and the District Apostle Johann R. Kitching found it difficult in the 1970s and 1980s to minister to 'black' members in townships. Apostle Wallace Clingen also had to transport 'black' members of the Eastern Cape by bus into his working area, where they could attend a service of the District Apostle Johann R. Kitching. Despite the political circumstances and unrest, many congregations over the years could be established in the 'black' suburban areas of Mamelodi, Atteridgeville and Ga-Rankuwa. The Apostles Pienaar B. Shongwe, Marema, and Japie Slabbert, likewise continued with missionary work among the 'black' population (including the 'Bantu' homelands) in the 1980s.<sup>24</sup> It was also in the 1980s that a 'black' congregation was started in Johannesburg, in the 'white' suburb of Bez-Valley. Racial segregation and political violence, however, still posed a stark reality in South Africa as a whole, and it remained the framework within which the NAC had to operate for some years to come.

## The Church is introduced to Mozambique

The NAC was introduced to this part of Africa when Priest Benjamin Diedericks moved with his family to Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) in December 1970.<sup>25</sup> He battled to speak Portuguese, and while bringing testimony in the street, a certain Paulo Senda Cumbana (and later Apostle) with his Bible under his arm walked by and offered to translate for him. Together they were energetic testifiers, and many congregations could be established reaching as far as the Gaza Province to the north. Priest Benjamin Diedericks was at this time also arrested by the Portuguese secret police on suspicion of

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<sup>24</sup> Pienaar B. Shongwe, 'Die Here het groot dinge aan ons gedoen ...', in *Ons Familie. Die Jaarboek vir die Nuwe Apostoliese Kerk* (Frankfurt: Verlag Friedrich Bischoff, 1987), 101-104; J. P. Slabbert, 'Die soektog na geestelike diamante', in *Ons Familie. Die Jaarboek vir die Nuwe Apostoliese Kerk* (Frankfurt: Verlag Friedrich Bischoff, 1987), 113-115.

<sup>25</sup> For the history of the NAC in Mozambique, see *Mozambique* (New Apostolic Church – Transvaal/Pretoria, 1993). This is a brochure that gives an overview of the Church in Mozambique between 1970 and 1993. See also, NAKI, 'Mosambiek – werk in die wingerd tussen oorlog en vrede', *Ons Familie* 45.24 (1993), 14; and 'Mozambique: rijk harvest in a poor country', in *South Africa: Johannesburg. International Apostles' Meeting. Pentecost 2002* (Frankfurt: Friedrich Bischoff Verlag, 2002), 100-109.

being a spy and was eventually deported to South Africa. At this time, however, at least three congregations (Mashaba, Rua Lopez, and Mahotes) could be established.

Several missionary journeys to Mozambique took place under the District Apostles Karl R. Gut and Johann R. Kitching during the 1970s and 1980s, and a solid foundation was laid for future growth. District Apostle Gut conducted the first sealing service in Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) on 6 November 1972. This was also the occasion when the first ministers for Mozambique were ordained, including Paulo Senda Cumbana, who was ordained a Priest.

From 1975, access to the country was hampered by civil war. The Cold War also had repercussions in Africa as the attempt was made to make Mozambique a socialist country. It was only in October 1980 when District Apostle Johann R. Kitching could visit the country. In the interim, it was largely up to Priest Cumbana to take care of the members, and during the District Apostle Kitching's visit, he was ordained as a Shepherd. A year later, Chief Apostle Hans Urwyler (1978-1988) invited Paulo Senda Cumbana to Switzerland, and during a youth service in Berne, on 27 September 1981, he was ordained as the first Apostle for Mozambique. Unfortunately, he died only seven months later in a car accident. During a visit of Chief Apostle Urwyler to South Africa, Mucuchela Chaincomo was ordained as Apostle in the Silvertown congregation in Cape Town, on 1 January 1983.

The political situation continued to make missionary work very difficult. Civil war continued to rage in the country and landmines were located everywhere, making travelling outside of the capital of Maputo exceedingly dangerous. Transport was also difficult to come by, but despite these challenges, the Church began to spread to the northern provinces of Mozambique, reaching Mocuba (Zambézia Province) in 1988. Mocuba then proved to be the nucleus for major expansion within this area. There was also a report of a local sister who travelled from village to village converting the local inhabitants.

The Church was also assisted by a group of 145 young Mozambicans who became acquainted with the NAC in the then Communist East Germany who returned to Mozambique in 1989. They proved to be pillars in their local congregations and assisted in bringing testimony to people in the provinces of Nampula and Cabo Delgado. It was also around this time that the leader of a local denomination in Beira, consisting of 800 members and ten congregations, approached and joined the NAC.<sup>26</sup>

On 9 September 1990, another Apostle for Mozambique, Acacio Munguambe, was ordained by Chief Apostle Richard Fehr (1988-2005). Two years later, on 4 October 1992, the peace accord was signed in Rome, and access to other parts of the country became easier. At that time, there were 54 congregations in Mozambique and the NAC was established in nine of the ten provinces. District Apostle Johann R. Kitching junior, who was the successor and bore the same name as his father, made several visits to the country. He requested Bishop Moises Suto to move to Beira to co-ordinate missionary activity, and eventually, Chief Apostle Richard Fehr ordained him as Apostle on 6 July 1993.

The Church was introduced to the region of Nampula in the north of Mozambique in 1995, when a local man who became New Apostolic in Tanzania, returned and testified in his hometown. Apostle Moises Suto thereafter went to the region and sealed the first members. By 2002, there were 84 congregations in the region.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> NAKI, 'Mission journey to Mozambique', *Our Family* 38.1 (1992), 16-18.

<sup>27</sup> NAKI, 'Joy in Mozambique', *Our Family* 48.12 (2002), 22-23.



## Further developments in Namibia

The Church reached the northern parts of South West Africa (now Namibia) in the 1950s through the Church in Zambia. Men from the Caprivi Strip went to Zambia, Botswana and South Africa looking for employment, and then returned. One of them was a Brother Bubeli Mayumbelo, who returned from Livingstone in Zambia as a Deacon. He brought testimony, and the first congregation gathered on 15 September 1958 at Sibbinda, situated 60 km from Katima Mulilo. Further testifying work was done in local villages by means of local choirs, and in the 1960s, many congregations could be established in the wetlands of the Caprivi in the far east.

In the 1970s and 80s, Namibia struggled for independence, and at the time the Caprivi Strip was used by the South African Defence Force for military bases. The Church suffered much loss at this time as many congregations moved or shut down, and many members went into exile. When Apostle Jeremia Njamba from Zambia came to conduct a sealing service, he was detained at the Wenela border.

Whereas the Caprivi was looked after by Zambia, Tsumeb was the most northern congregation of the Cape Apostle District in 1983. At this time, the Cape looked after congregations in central, coastal, and southern Namibia, and the northern congregations were looked after by ministers from Zambia. When Namibia gained independence in 1990, the entire country was transferred to the Cape District Church. In 1996, Namibia received its first resident Apostle when Moses Mulopo, originally from Zambia, was ordained.<sup>28</sup> Subsequent to this, more congregations were established in the north in places such as Ovamboland, further bolstered by missionary journeys from Cape Town, which, as per local tradition, took the form of travelling choirs.<sup>29</sup>

## Developments and the Reorganisation of South Africa: 1971 to present

After the death of District Apostle Albert Budden on 15 April 1971, District Apostle Karl R. Gut of the Cape was commissioned to care for the Pretoria District as an interim measure. It was eventually in 1972 that Apostle Johann Rissik Kitching relocated to the Transvaal from Cape Town, and on 13 October 1974 was ordained as District Apostle for the Pretoria District.<sup>30</sup> To assist District Apostle Kitching in his growing task, the Apostles active in the Pretoria District in 1985 were Mucuchela Chaincomo (Mozambique), Wallace D. Clingen and Wilken N. Jonas (Eastern Cape), and Willy L.J. de Smedt, Pienaar B. Shongwe and Japie C. Slabbert.

Due to health reasons, District Apostle Kitching was placed into retirement, and his son, also Johann Rissik Kitching, was ordained as District Apostle by Chief Apostle Fehr (1988-2005) at the Rembrandt Hall in Pretoria on 2 October 1988. The latter had the distinction as being one of the longest serving District Apostles, a total of 23 years, until his retirement on 29 January 2012.<sup>31</sup> After the death of District Apostle Anthony Fernandes (who was responsible for Malawi, Botswana and Zimbabwe), the District Church of South East Africa was formed on 13 December 1994 to replace the Pretoria District. This included the incorporation of the countries of Botswana and Zimbabwe, while the Eastern Cape was handed over to the Cape Apostle District. The South East Africa district therefore incorporated

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<sup>28</sup> NAKI, 'Distriksapostel Graf by die broeders en susters in die Caprivi-strook', *Ons Familie* 44, Februarie (1992), 15-18; NAKI, 'Ekhaya lam – 'my home''. The New Apostolic Church in Namibia', *Our Family* 58.2 (2012), 17-19; Andreas Rother 2019, *A journey to African roots*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/782859>>.

<sup>29</sup> NAKI, 'From Cape Town to Oshakati!', *Our Family* 45.12 (1999), 18-21.

<sup>30</sup> See also Peter Johanning 2020, *A man who said yes and stayed true*, nac.today, viewed 9 December 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/881664>>.

<sup>31</sup> See Peter Johanning & Andreas Rother, *Johann R. Kitching Jr.: a champion with vision*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/263941>>.

the north-eastern provinces of South Africa, as well as the countries of Lesotho, Swaziland (now Eswatini), Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Botswana. (On Sunday 29 April 2007, however, District Apostle Kitching officially handed Zimbabwe over to District Apostle Ndandula to form part of the District Church of Zambia.)

The Cape District leadership was transferred from District Apostle Karl Gut to Ernst H. Graf in 1985. It was also at this time when the Island of St Helena came under the auspices of the Cape. The first visit of an Apostle to the St Helena Island occurred in October 1990, when Apostle Noel E. Barnes conducted several services.<sup>32</sup> It was on 15 December 1996 that a significant event happened, when, at the retirement of District Apostle Ernst H. Graf, the same Apostle was ordained as District Apostle for the Cape, thereby becoming the first 'coloured' District Apostle in South Africa.<sup>33</sup> The membership of the NAC in the Cape predominantly comes from the so-called 'coloured' community.

The District Apostles Barnes and Kitching served for many years side by side looking after their respective District Churches. They did so without much mutual support or interaction, and the character and ethos of their respective areas differed greatly. District Apostle Kitching was retired by Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber (2005-2013) on 29 January 2012. That same day, he also ordained his successor, Patrick Mkhwanazi, who for a while served as the first 'black' District Apostle in South Africa until 2016, when he was appointed as a District Apostle Helper.<sup>34</sup>

The District Churches of the Cape and South East Africa were eventually amalgamated to form the Southern Africa District Church, under the leadership of District Apostle John L. Kriel. This happened on 18 December 2016 when Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider (2013-) placed the District Apostle Noel E. Barnes into retirement after more than 20 years in the ministry during a service in Silvertown in Cape Town.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Further developments in the Zambian District Church: 1955 to present***

As recounted already, the district of Southern Africa was divided on 10 November 1955 into three district churches, after the Apostles Jacobus R. Kreunen and Hubert H. Fernandes were ordained into the District Apostle ministry on 19 October 1955 in Frankfurt, Germany. District Apostle Fernandes, who then resided in Salisbury (Harare), was given the responsibility for Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), Malawi (Nyasaland), and Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia). In order to assist him, his brother, Bishop Andrew Fernandes, was ordained as an Apostle by Chief Apostle Bischoff on 24 March 1957 in Stuttgart. That same year he also relocated to Salisbury from Cape Town.

It was in Zambia, however, where the most significant growth of the Church took place in the earliest years. In a report published in 1959, Apostle Andrew Fernandes described how he undertook a journey to Barotseland in Northern Rhodesia, accompanied by Apostle Henwood and Bishop Gert Naude, and over a period of several days he sealed 1 633 members.<sup>36</sup> The constant growth was also due to the untiring missionary and organisational efforts of Apostle Henwood who regularly travelled throughout Zambia. His contribution came to an end while he was en route to visit the District Apostle in Salisbury,

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<sup>32</sup> NAKI, 'Eerste apostelbesoek op St Helena', *Ons Familie* 43, September (1991), 15-17.

<sup>33</sup> NAKI, 'The Chief Apostle in South Africa', *Our Family* 43.3 (1997), 4-5, 32.

<sup>34</sup> NAKI, 'New District Apostle for South East Africa', *Our Family* 58.4 (2012), 7; see also 'From the Seychelles to Lesotho, from Botswana to Mauritius', *Our Family* 60.3 (2014), 16-19.

<sup>35</sup> Oliver Rütten & Daniel Mauthe 2016, *A new team for Southern Africa*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/431744>>; Peter Johanning 2016, *Southern Africa: the birth of a new district church*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/419820>>; NAKI, 'Southern Africa – the birth of a new District Church', *community* 02/2017, 31.

<sup>36</sup> Report of Andrew Fernandes, 'Rhodesian Itinerary', *Our Family* 5.5 (1959), 111-112.



when he passed away on 15 (or 17) September 1963 of a heart attack in Chirundu, Zambia. Another missionary pioneer, Jeremia Kaputeni Njamba, who worked with Apostle Henwood in Kabwe in 1937, was then ordained an Apostle on 16 August 1964.

The year of 1965 was also significant for the Church in the Zambian District, since as already mentioned, it was the time when the first visit of a Chief Apostle took place to Africa. After Chief Apostle Walter Schmidt visited South Africa, he conducted three more services in Salisbury, Lusaka, and Livingstone on 24-25 April.

Because District Apostle Hubert H. Fernandes contracted malaria in 1955, he struggled with serious illness. To relieve him somewhat, the Chief Apostle Walter Schmidt entrusted Zambia and Malawi to his brother, Andrew Fernandes. At that time, he was assisted by Apostle Jeremiah Kaputengi Njamba who was ordained an Apostle in 1964, as well as Bishop Gert Naude. Eventually, Andrew Fernandes was ordained as District Apostle on 2 February 1971 for Zambia and Malawi. District Apostle Hubert Fernandes had to have a leg amputated in 1969, and the other one soon thereafter, and after many years of suffering he retired, and eventually passed away on 6 March 1976. His brother who was responsible for Zambia and Malawi thus took over responsibility for Zimbabwe, the Caprivi in Namibia, Botswana, and parts of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) for a period as well.<sup>37</sup>

Chief Apostle Walter Schmidt ordained the Bishop Naude an Apostle during a service in Dortmund on 26 March 1972. As a builder by trade, he was involved in an extensive programme to construct churches in Zambia. As the NAC grew in membership, more apostles were needed. On 4 March 1975, Duncan Burton Mfune and Barrington Nawa Sianga were ordained to assist District Apostle Andrew Fernandes. This was followed by the ordination of Maxwell Sikiwibele Maimbolwa by Chief Apostle Hans Urwyler during a service in Lusaka on 16 November 1980. On 1 January 1982, during a service in Sindelfingen, Harrison Chibale and Brown Shambwe were also ordained for Zambia. That same year, on Christmas day, Chief Apostle Hans Urwyler conducted a service and inaugurated the new Central church in Lusaka.<sup>38</sup>

When District Apostle Andrew Fernandes passed away, his responsible area was subdivided into two, when two District Apostles were ordained on 9 June 1989. First, District Apostle Anthony H.H. Fernandes (the son of Hubert H. Fernandes) was appointed over Malawi, Botswana and Zimbabwe. At this time, Malawi had three Apostles, with 70 000 members who gathered in over 500 congregations and 282 mission stations. In Botswana and Zimbabwe, there were around 30 000 members who were served by the Apostles Clement Sililo and Jan Welman.<sup>39</sup> Second, another significant first occurred for Zambia when Duncan Burton Mfune was ordained as the first 'black' African District Apostle who was placed in charge of Zambia.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See also Andreas Rother 2017, *Three times a District Apostle: at work in the heart of Africa*, nac.today, viewed 8 December 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/a/448838>>.

<sup>38</sup> NAKI, 'Opbou en ontwikkeling in Sentraal-Afrika', *Ons Familie* 35.4 (1983), 94-95. See also *Jubilee Year. Lusaka, Zambia 1932-1982* (Zambia District, 1982) for a full report of the service and building plans of the massive church.

<sup>39</sup> NAKI, 'The New Apostolic Church in Malawi', *Our Family* 39.23 (1993), 16.

<sup>40</sup> See also Andreas Rother 2017, *Three times a District Apostle: at work in the heart of Africa*, nac.today, viewed 8 December 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/a/448838>>.

These districts formed in 1989 did not exist for long, however, because when District Apostle Anthony H.H. Fernandes passed away towards the end of 1994, Malawi was handed over to the Zambian District, and Zimbabwe and Botswana were transferred to the District Church of South East Africa.<sup>41</sup>

With the retirement of District Apostle Mfune in 2005, Zambia and Malawi counted some 1.4 million members in 7,500 congregations who were served by 32,000 ministers.<sup>42</sup> By 2010, it grew to nearly 1.6 million, with Zambia alone having over 1.3 million members.<sup>43</sup> District Apostle Mfune was succeeded by District Apostle Charles Ndandula. He was a qualified lawyer, who came into contact with the NAC in 1971 and was ordained an Apostle on 28 June 1987. From 1995, Charles Ndandula assisted District Apostle Mfune as a District Apostle Helper, before being appointed to lead the District Churches of Zambia and Malawi on 13 March 2005. In 2007, he was also given the responsibility for Zimbabwe.<sup>44</sup> His successor, District Apostle Kububa Soko, was appointed as District Apostle Helper in April 2018, and then appointed as District Apostle on 21 July 2019.<sup>45</sup>

### ***The District Church of Southern Africa in its African Context***

From the 1970s onwards, a second phase of the Church's introduction and spread into Africa began to take shape in all earnest, as the NAC was steadily introduced to Central, West, and East Africa. Whereas immigrants from Germany and the Netherlands and the Apostle Henwood were primarily responsible to establish the Church in Southern Africa, it was missionaries primarily from Europe and North America who introduced the NAC to other regions of Africa. However, their efforts were bolstered by the enthusiasm of many African missionaries who took their own initiatives. For example, missionaries from Zambia reached countries like Zaire, Angola, and Tanzania, and missionaries from Kenya went to Uganda. There were also women missionaries. As mentioned already, there was a sister in Mozambique that testified from village to village. A report by Apostle Schwarzer published in 1980 also mentioned a sister in the town of Wakala in the Democratic Republic of the Congo who established an entire district through her own testifying.<sup>46</sup>

These combined missionary efforts introduced an era of rapid growth in membership for the NAC in Africa. The *Our Family*, the official magazine of the NAC, also contains a plethora of reports that indicate the impressive development that occurred in the various countries of Africa in the 1990s onwards. In 1970, there were around 168 000 members in Africa. In 1980, there were over 500 000. Since the end of 2019, the bulk of the membership within the NAC came from Africa, with the official records indicating 7,854,289 members, 49,402 congregations, 210,755 ministers, and with the majority of Apostles (256 out of 325) being active on the African continent. Logistically, new plans had to be made so that the members could be served Holy Communion, which is a wafer manufactured in a bakery. From 1931, practically all congregations were supplied by the bakery in Bielefeld in Germany. To cope with the increasing membership in Africa, two communion factories, one in Cape Town (2003)

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<sup>41</sup> NAKI, 'Come and share your master's joy!', *Our Family* 41.3 (1995), 16-17; See also 'Four congregations in Zimbabwe visited', *Our Family* 44.8 (1998), 26-28.

<sup>42</sup> NAKI 2005, *A journey through Africa*, nak.org, viewed 8 December 2020, <<http://www.nak.org/en/news/news-display/article/12705/>>.

<sup>43</sup> NAKI 2010, *An impressive journey to Zambia*, nak.org, viewed 8 December 2020, <<http://www.nak.org/en/news/news-display/article/16990/>>.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Johanning 2019, *Moving on with team spirit*, nac.today, viewed 8 December 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/158036/737398>>; NAKI, 'Moving on with team spirit', *community* 04/2019, 26-27.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Johanning 2019, "Please accept and support the new District Apostle", nac.today, viewed 8 December 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/158036/712830>>.

<sup>46</sup> NAKI, 'Die werk in Zaire', *Ons Familie* 32.10 (1980), 230.

and another in Lusaka (2012), were constructed to ensure members in Africa receive the wafer for the sacrament of Holy Communion.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> NAKI, 'Communion bakery in Cape Town', *Our Family* 49.7 (2003), 28-29; Andreas Rother 2015, *A home-grown talent full of vitality*, nac.today, viewed 13 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/249053>>; Andreas Rother 2019, *Baking wafers outside of Bielefeld*, nac.today, viewed 14 July 2020, <<https://nac.today/en/157547/672367>>.