

New Apostolic Church, district church of Mitteldeutschland

# Serving and Leading





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Serving  
and  
Leading

**Developments in the  
district church  
"Mitteldeutschland"  
from 1986 to 2009**



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Our  
claim

**Our goal:**

**The nature of Christ shall grow and become  
recognisable in all areas of our church**

**That means:**

**Each and everyone is working on letting Christ's living example of  
the human being determine all our behaviour, thinking and feeling**

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Growing into  
the nature  
of Christ

### **This means in particular:**

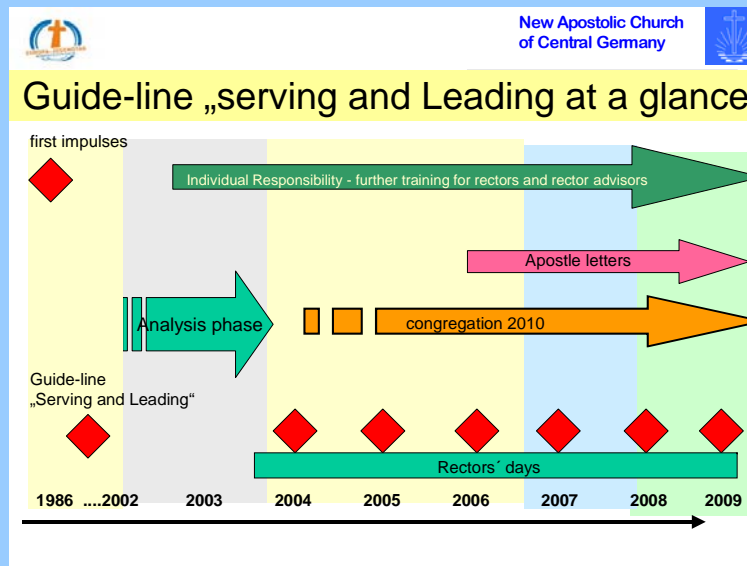
- Vital congregations where the nature of Christ can be concretely experienced
- Recognising and utilising of all capabilities
- Pastoral care which is oriented on requirements
- Divine services in which Christ is the centre of the service
- Ministers that serve and lead through inner authority
- Open and mutual respect, acceptance of other opinions without judging



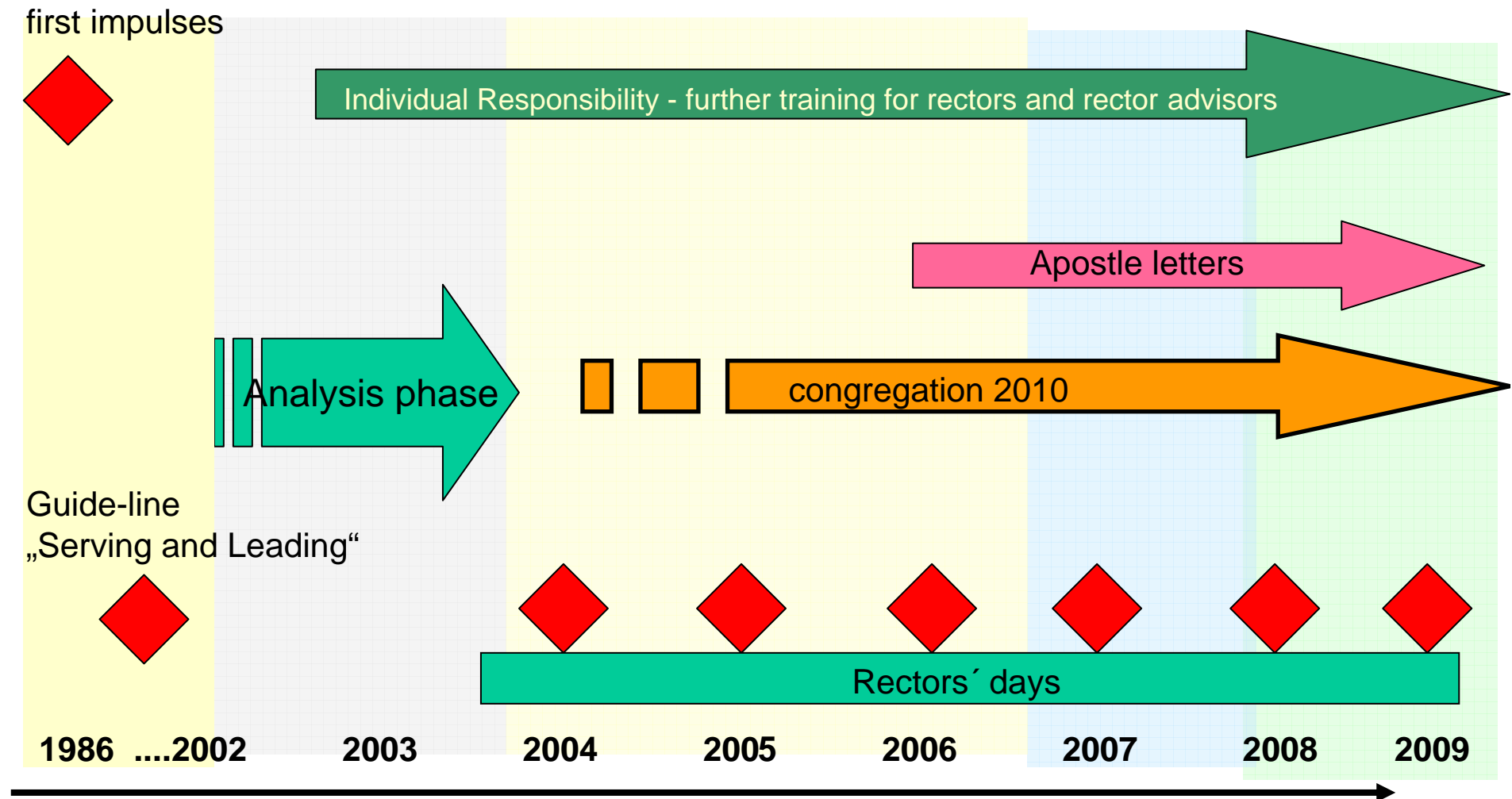
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Process  
Flow



# Guide-line „serving and Leading at a glance





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First impulse  
in 1986, 2000

**1986: Chief apostle Urwyler addresses the congregations and emphasizes on the individual responsibility of each and every new apostolic Christian...**

**2000: Upon prompting from chief apostle Fehr the guide-line "Serving and Leading" in the new apostolic church is published. Statement to the points:**

- Inner authority
- demand on leadership behaviour
- Open communication
- Conflict management

**... devoted, not patronizing pastoral care in the sense of Christ ...**



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Taking up  
on first  
impulses  
in 2002

The guide-line  
„Serving and Leading  
describes the goal  
without pointing out  
development steps

Therefore district  
apostle Klingler  
decided to initiate  
a long-term  
development process

Autumn 2002:  
Rector workshops in  
the district  
„Lower Saxony“

*In addition:  
Signals from the rectors to  
indicate when help is needed to  
be able to perform their tasks*

*The first steps had to be planned  
carefully and various experiences had to  
be taken into the consideration for  
further steps*

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## 2002: Workshops for rectors

- Gaining an objective overview on inner state, concerns and required support in the congregations
- Where is the need for change in leadership behavior?
- Introduction to topics of communication, conflict, pastoral care, ...
- Overcoming the boundaries between the congregations

*Talks were conducted in a brotherly and open atmosphere without hierarchy and also shed light on very critical topics (for example: leadership, pastoral care, attention, understanding of the ministry)*



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Further steps  
2003

**Reflecting on oneself and focus on own inner development starting within the circle of the apostles. .**

**Offer " Further Training for Rectors"**

Rectors in groups of 15 get together 12 times over the course of 1.5 years to work on all important topics regarding communication, pastoral care, conflict management. Extension of this further training to youth leaders.

**Training of Rector Advisors, who can provide support in difficult situations in congregations across districts.**

**Annual rector days to reflect and to pick up new impulses**



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Goal  
description

## Formulation of our vision

Our Goal is being drawn up into 10 points.

### Goal remains:

**“The nature of Christ shall grow  
and become recognisable in all areas of our church”**

Those 10 points have been further specified.

***Many valuable things had already been created in the past. Now it was time to further develop the old and proven and enable new and positive growth.***



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Growing into  
the nature  
of Christ

**This we want  
to experience  
in our congregations:**

## **Goal conception:**

What will I experience in 2010, when I visit a congregation

**The congregation is the centre, anchor and engine of its members**

**Christ centred services enriched with experiences**

**True Christians with a living faith**

**A community in which god's gifts are recognised and acknowledged**

**Pastoral care according to individual needs of congregation members**

**Competent Christian leadership through inner authority**

**An open and missionary congregation**

**Honest and kind dealing with weaknesses and conflicts**

**Christians who are aware of god's grace**

**Ministers who work on their own further development**



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Rectors' Day  
2004

### **Presentation of the new guideline Serving and „Leading“**

- Impulse internal development into the nature of Christ
- Ten key aspects: what do I want my congregation to be like in the future
- No external excessive desire for action but a process of internal development

### **Task Setting:**

To present this development process to all members during the course of the next weeks with the aim : **"The nature of Christ shall grow and become recognisable in all areas of our church ."**

*The ten points should specify the wish: **What do I want to experience in my congregation in the future?***

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Rectors' Day  
2005

## Impulses for the work

- Further development to enable the spreading the gospel
- To inspire faith
- How do I lead and motivate others?
- Development of people to be open to feedback and also critic
- Introduction of rector counselling
- Presentation of training concept for all ministers
- Honest and kind dealing with weaknesses and conflicts in an open manner
- Harmonious combination of all blessings



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Rectors' Day  
2006

### **Thematic developments regarding experiences in the congregations:**

- **S**preading of the word ( aid for the preparation of services)
- Pastoral care conveyed in new ways
- Experiences with concept of youth and religious instruction for the children
- Groups that assist the rectors
- Involvement of retired ministers
- Public relations and letters adressed to the Congregations
- Further training of ministers and rector advice

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Rectors' Day  
2007

## Constructed as Rectors' Family Day

- Divine service for rectors and their families
  - A service in Christian spirit for the needs of those present
  - Presentation of options for church music
- Music in the divine service (presentation)
- Music with children (presentation)

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Rectors' Day  
2008

**Definition of view points for specific examples and impulse for changes in case of:**

- The atmosphere within the congregation
- Discussion groups
- The involvement of more Brothers and Sisters in pastoral care and others tasks within the congregation.....

**Information stands:**

- Introduction of new ordained ministers to their tasks
- Discussion groups
- Thoughts for improving the effect on children



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What is  
happening  
in 2009?

## **New viewpoint definition end 2009**

- Rectors´ Days 2009 in Lower Saxony, Upper Saxony and Saxony-Thuringia
- Additional Impulses to enable further development in the working areas through the church leadership.
- Continuation of further training
  - Rector development
  - Development of all ministers

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## Apostle's letters

Internal communication is an important element of the development process

Therefore District Apostle Klingler decided to write regular „Apostle's Letters“ to the congregations in which he details ideas for their further development.

These letters are published several times a year were focussing on one main topic at a time..

The Brothers and Sisters as well are being informed regarding important changes via the internet and intranet.



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District  
Apostle's  
service  
transmitted

Every Year, the District Apostle addresses all Brothers and Sisters in a service which is transmitted into the congregations.

New main topics are being established and new impulses are being given for further development.

These services already embody the new guideline.



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Where are  
we today ?

What have we achieved so far?

On many points recognisable progress has been made. This is not yet complete but is consequently being followed up.

The congregations vary in size and structure, which is why their individual development varies as well. However, congregations everywhere are striving to develop further.

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Congregation

**What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

### **Congregation**

- Brothers and sisters are actively involved and assume responsibilities in the congregation (reception, organization, discussion groups, ...)
- Congregation members demonstrate an inviting atmosphere
- Brothers and sisters show more appreciation and sympathy for each other
- Church activities were extended to discussion groups, after-service sessions, devotions, presentations



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Divine  
services

**What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

### **Divine services**

- Are held devotedly, without messages of threat
- Services are referring to real life situations and are focus on turning faith into practice
- Holy communion is consciously celebrated as the highlight of the service
- Are prepared by readings more frequently
- Main contents of the services are being discussed with the children



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Capabilities

**What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

**• Capabilities**

- Capabilities are viewed as blessings
- Versatile capabilities of brothers and sisters within the congregations are
  - Recognized,
  - Acknowledged
  - Promoted and
  - Utilised across congregational boundaries



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Tolerance  
and  
fortrightness

**What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

### **Tolerance and fortrightness**

- Open communication is practiced
- Controversial topics can be discussed
- One tries to achieve to tolerate other opinions without devaluation
- One tries to achieve to accept **everyone** and to segregate **no one**, even when those look or act differently

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Communi-  
cation

## What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ? In Communication

- Periodic apostle letters deliver important messages about necessary steps of advancement to all brothers and sisters
- Transmission services of the district apostle give ever new impulses for further advancement
- New information is transferred promptly to all ministers through e-mail and intranet access
- The internet portal of the regional church informs brothers and sisters comprehensively about appointed dates, apostle letters, announcements



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## Dealing with conflicts

**What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

### **Dealing with conflicts**

- Church ministers receive training in dealing with conflicts
- Conflicts are being addressed and, if necessary, resolved with professional help
  - Specially trained counsellors are available to the rectors upon demand
- Ministers and brothers and sisters make all efforts to resolve conflicts in Christian manner



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External  
appearance

**What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

### **Outwards impression**

- Fostering contacts is encouraged:
  - To the neighbors
  - To other churches and
  - To the public life

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Pastoral  
care

**What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

### **Pastoral care**

- Ministers are familiarized with all aspects of pastoral care in periodic educational courses
- Brothers and sisters without ordination are also providing pastoral care for each other
- Retired ministers are also supporting the pastoral care
- Brothers and sisters without ordination are active as youth group leaders

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Involvement

**What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

**Involvement of brothers and sisters without ordination**

- Welcoming and reception
- Organization and conduction of discussion groups
- Readings before the divine service
- Supporting of the congregation administration
- Visiting the sick people, support of pastoral care



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Ministers

**What do I see today, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

### **Ministers**

- Reduction of exaggerated authority and hierarchy
- Utilization of colleague-counselling by rectors and district ministers
- Periodic educational offers are provided and used
- Obtaining feedback on the sermon

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Response  
(ministers)

**What do I see today, at the level of ministers, when I visit a congregation in my region?**

- More energy, joy and enthusiasm among the leadership
- Knowledge and improvement of the leadership situation across all levels
- Knowledge of the real topics

***This development process would not have been possible without intensive work from the church leadership and a "focus on individual improvement and development".***



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Result  
(Youth)

**What do I see today, as young human, when I visit a congregation in my region ?**

- the nature of Christ is a key aspect of pastoral care
- Capabilities of the youth are being recognized and utilized
- Significant progress in forthrightness to each other
- Difficult and controversial topics can be addressed with devaluating persons
- Youth services are "close to Jesus Christ" and refer to life situations of the youth.
- Topics relevant for the youth are being discussed at "eye level" in youth meetings



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Pushing  
forward!

**For your development **you** have to endeavour too.**

**Further information is available on the internet page of the district church „Mitteldeutschland“.**

**Link: <http://www.nak-mitteldeutschland.de/start.html>**



## Picture credits

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- Knipsermann „Sonnenblume“ <http://www.pics.de/fotos/43>: Bild 1, 2
- CD [www.1aBilder.de](http://www.1aBilder.de), Bild 3, 4, 7, 8, 16, 17, 20, 21, 33, 34, 37, 38, 49, 50, 61, 62