

ACTS CHURCHES

A network of churches and a fellowship of ministries.

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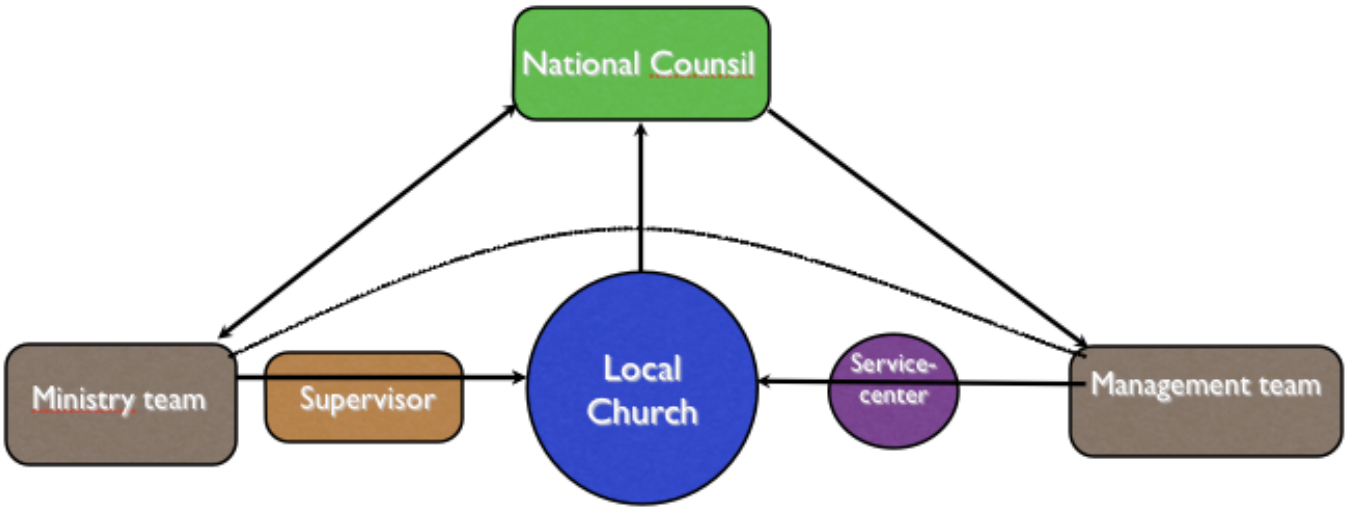
1. Structure



The local church in the centre

Apostolic church is planting and building local churches that of nature are apostolic / missional, and that are helping people finding Gods plan for their life. We wish, that in fellowship with others. to fulfil the Great Commission by planting and building living and growing churches everywhere.

As churches we make a network. We share ressources and a common administration, where it is beneficial for the local church. This is illustrated in the right side above.

The leadership in a local church in the network, have to submit to a common foundation, called a “statement of accession”. That is described in section 2 in this paper. The statement of accession, contains four main areas that describe Ministry view, Theology, Mission and Resource sharing for the network.

We believe in a fellowship of mutual commited ministries across local churches in the network and in that way we will also practise accountability. This is illustrated in the left side of the model above.

A local church is being led by ministry/ministries, which is given credentials by the network. The foundation for the credentials is primarily accession of the two main areas in the accreditation that deals with the ministry related and ethical guidelines. It is therefore the individual leader (fivefold) that needs to access these two areas.

The local Apostolick churches in Denmark are connected in a basis structure. This structure has been developed through a longer process from 2006 to 2008. The purpose with the structure is to create a good and dynamic frame for both the network of churches and the fellowship of ministries. The structure is dynamic and flexible for change and can at any time be adjusted so it reflects the wishes and needs of the local church. Change in the structure can only be made by the National council.

National council

The national council is the highest authority of the network and fellowship

The national council exists of representatives from all churches who are connected to the network. The wide representation secures that the local churches has influence on the forming of the common guidelines and decisions. At the same time, the local churches also have influence on the composition of the teams that will lead the daily things on behalf of the national council. Several other topics will also be decided here cf. the list below.

All National councils are being led by the leader of the Ministry team together with the leader of the management team.

The National council consists of :

- Representatives from all the local churches; by the pastor/church leader and together with the whole leadership team / team of elders. This is where the decision making is places. (Distribution of votes is regulated in the articles of association)

Other people that are invited to the gatherings of The National council:

- Everyone with credentials (both in ministry and function)
- Bible school and Boarding school chairmen.
- The leader, chairman and employees in Apostolic church children and youth work (AKBU)
- Employees of the Servicecentre.

The National council has the responsibility for the following:

- The approval of account and budget, including the contribution rates of the coming year.
- Selction/appointing the Management team leader for the following 2 years.
- Selction/appointing the leader of the Ministry team for the following 2 years.
- Exclusion of churches after recommendation from the Ministry team.
- Approval of new churches after recommendation from the Ministry team.
- Modification of the "Statement of Accession".
- Modification of "articles of association".

Management team

The management team is responsible for leading the administration in the network of churches.

The team consist of 5 – 7 persons, mainly with connection to the leadership of a local church. The reason for this, is a for both skills and competence but also the knowledge of local church circumstances and conditions.

The leader of the Management team is being chosen according to the articles of association.

The leader of the Service centre and the manager of AKBU will always be members of the Management team. One member of the Management team is being appointed by and from the Ministry team. The leader of the Management team is putting together the rest of the team, choosing from the people that has been recommended by the leaderships of the local churches cf. articles of association.

The service team is appointed for a period of 2 years.

The purpose for this team is to function as a leadership for the Service Centre and in that way be able to develop principles and guidelines for the work in the service centre. The Service team must work with vision and at all times secure a high quality in the services.

The following is the teams areas of responsibility:

- Hiring and firing of the leader of the Service centre. Staff development interview with the leader of the Service centre. (The leader of the Service centre is employing all other staff for the Service centre).
- Determine the contribution rate and differentiated services for the local churches.
- Participation in ad hoc conflict councils and decisions councils.
- Coordinating of ad hoc conflict councils and decisions councils.
- Developing guidelines for the Service Centre areas of responsibilities.
- Maintenance of"Articles of association" and Statement of accession" together with the Ministry team.
- Approval of considerable property-related financial dispositions in the local churches, that are part of the "Property company." (On recommendation from the Service centre)
- Development of general staff-policies for employees in the Service centre and local churches.

Ministry team

The Ministry team is responsible for leading the fellowship of ministries

The Ministry team consist of 5 – 7 persons.

The leader of the Ministry team is being chosen according to the articles of association. The leader of the Ministry team is putting together the rest of the team, choosing from the people that has been recommended by the leaderships of the local churches cf. articles of association. (The procedure is defined in the articles of association).

The Ministry team is appointed for a period of 2 years

The most important task of the Ministry team, is to inspire, equip and release other ministries, so that the vision of the Apostolic church, to build living, growing and missional local churches, can be fulfilled.

The Ministry team is to be facilitating and coordinating the whole fellowship of ministries. The Ministry team aims to activate the diversity of ministries; for the benefit and building of the local churches.

The role of the teamleader is to lead, gather and facilitate the work of the Ministry team.

The Ministry team is the highest authority in giving ministry credentials.

The following is the teams areas of responsibility:

- Planning and conducting ministry gatherings.
- Make the final decision in the giving ministry credential.
- Gatherings of supervisors and coordinating of the task of the supervisor.
- Participate by being represented in the Service team.
- Appoint a mission facilitator for Apostolic Church Mission (ACM).
- Participate in ad hoc conflict council and decisions council. Hasas the final vote in case of disagreement or conflicts.
- Outwardly representation of the network of churches and fellowship of ministries
- Maintenance of"Articles of association" and Statement of accession" together together with the Management team.
- Preparing, inviting and conducting the annual national council gathering – together with the Management team.

Supervisor

A supervisor is the person whom the church leadership and accredited ministries are accountable to.

As a natural part of our ministry philosophy, the local church leadership and accredited ministries, is to stand accountable to a person, whom they trust. This person is called a supervisor.

The local church leadership has to find a supervisor among the accredited ministries. A supervisor is chosen for a period of 2 years. Hereafter the agreement is being evaluated and it is possible to find a new supervisor.

The local church leadership is to inform the whole church whom they have chosen to be their supervisor.

The supervisor is entering in to a mutual trust relationship with the local church leadership.
It is the supervisor's responsibility, as a minimum, to supervise the church in relation to the Statement of accession and the accredited ministry / ministries in the church.
The supervisor is accountable to the Ministry team for his/her function and needs to be present at the supervisor-gathering called by the Ministry team.

The individual supervisor, together with the Ministry team, must consider, how many churches he/she can supervise optimally.

The leadership of the local church is encouraged to have the supervision in interaction with 2 different people. A possible second person will be a co supervisor. A co-supervisor can be a person outside the Apostolic church, but still has to recognize the statement of accession. The initiative to take on a co supervisor can come from both the leadership of the local church and the supervisor, but the final decision is the local leadership.

The following is the supervisors areas of responsibility:

- A yearly check up on the local church compliance to the Statement of accession.
- Accreditation of local ministries in cooperation with the Ministry team.
- A yearly check up and development interviews with the accredited ministries and local church leadership.
- Requesting the Ministry team of a possible termination of accreditation.
- Assist in local questions, which does not demand involvement of the conflict or decision council.
- Participate in upcoming conflict and decisions council.
- See also the folder published by the Ministry team about the function of the Supervisor.

Conflict- and decision council.

A Conflict and decision council is set when necessary

The term “Decision council” is being used when there is a local issue/problem that is not based on a conflict. Ex if a local church is considering fusion with another church.

The term “Conflict council” is being used when there’s a conflict in a local church that doesn’t seem to be able to solve locally.

Conflicts need to be solved as close to the conflict as possible. Which means that the local church leadership and maybe their supervisor, always first must aim at solving the conflict where it began.

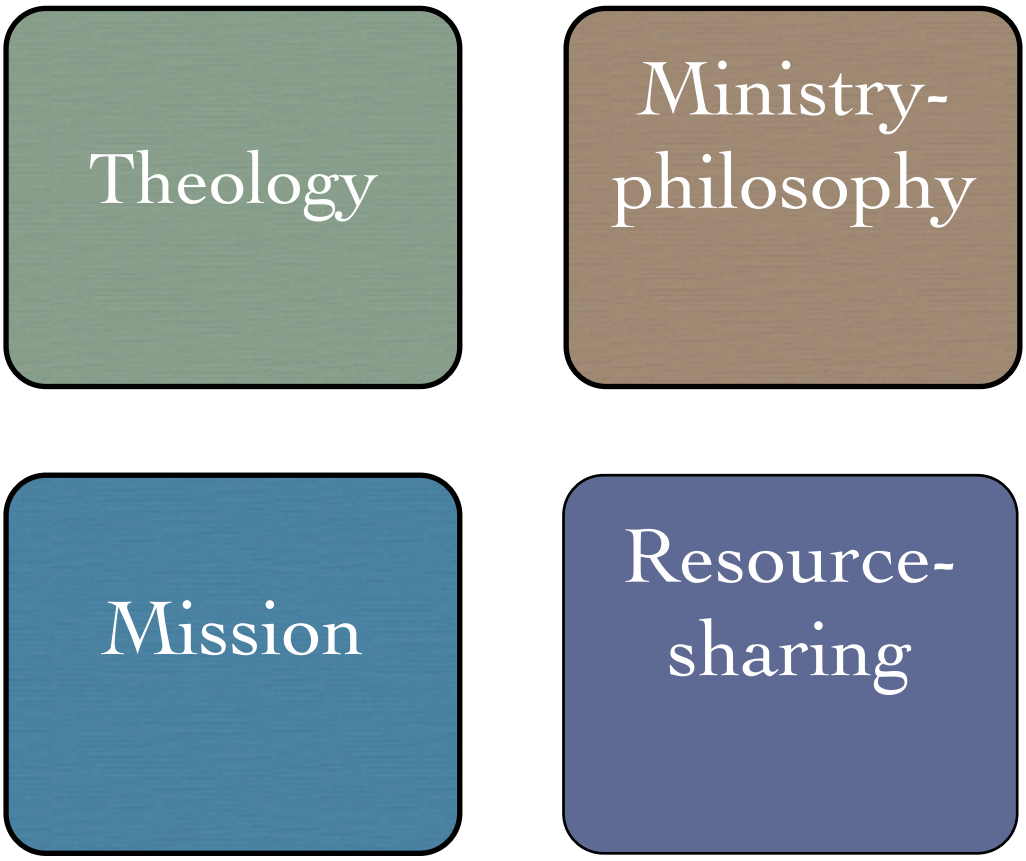
The local church leadership, Ministry team and or Management team can at any time, if it is found necessary, ask to have a conflict or decision, which seems to be of significant value for the whole Apostolic church network, handled in and by a conflict or decision council.

Such a council consist of a representative from the **Ministry team**, the **supervisor** and a representative from the **Managemetn team** and a person from the **local church leadership** where the conflict og issue is.

The Management team gather and coordinate a conflict / decision council. In case of disagreement in the conflict / decision council about the handling and solution, the representative from the **Ministry team** that has the final saying.

A conflict / decision council dissolve when the concrete conflict is solved or a decision is made.

2. Statement of accession:



The 2 areas in the statement of accession

In order to be a part of the Apostolic Church the leadership of a local church must acces this statement. The statement describes 4 central areas to which we commit ourselves mutually as a fellowship.

All congregations, who want to be a part of Apostolic church must access this statement. This goes for current congregations as well as new, who want to be a part of the fellowship. The purpose of this is to renew and secure a mandate for the mutual foundation and to express unity and cohesion about the history and future of the fellowship.

The 4 areas are described with both a theoretical and a practical part. This means how we understand the area, and how we want to practise it.

This statement can be adjusted at any time and be changed through decision in the National Board

Ministry Philosophy

Doctrine:

The Apostolic Church's view on ministry is based on the revelation of the church, which is the body of Christ on earth today (Col. 1:26; Eph. 1:23-24). He has bought it with His blood (Acts 20:28, Rev. 5:9). Jesus is the Lord of the body and He will build His church (Matt 16:18), which lives in the tension field between the perfection of The Kingdom of God and "the gate of hell".
God has placed ministries within the church (mentioned as gifts of ministry) to lead His church (1. Cor. 12:28) By the coming of the Holy Spirit God lives in His people, which He justifies, sanctifies and equips to be His Church – Christ's body on earth. The equipment is the gifts of the Spirit (charismatic), which each Christian receives by the Holy Spirit. It is through these gifts that God's church serves people in the world. The gifts of ministry (gifts of resurrection) are gifts of leadership through which the members of the church re built up to maturity, unity and equipped for their ministry (Eph. 4:11-16). The Apostolic Church distinguishes between gifts of ministry and gifts of the Spirit. The word "ministry" is one the most missional words, which The New Testament uses regarding the function carried out and going out from the church as an expression for God and the Holy Spirit's work through people.

Praxis:

1. Gifts of ministry, which are given by the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ (resurrection gifts) to the church have two purposes: to honour and serve the Lord Jesus Christ and to reach out to people with the gospel about God's love. The purpose of the ministries is to build up mission-orientated congregations where people can receive salvation, forgiveness and are invited to take part in meaningful and caring relations.
2. These gifts of ministry, which the church of God is, are a part of the "sending" to the world (John 20:21) and should therefore in everything strive to fulfil this purpose (locally and internationally) by taking part in mission, inspire to mission, budget for mission and generally promote a winning and including church life with numerical and maturity related growth. (Acts 2:47; 16:15; Eph. 4:13).
3. Every ministry should be anchored in a local congregation, but the gifts of ministry given to all God's church, and therefore there should be both financial possibility and time to be "at the disposal" for both "equipping the holy" and mission in a tuned proportion between your own church and other congregations.
4. God's church should be led by the best suitable among the ministries (apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers, elders, church servants) with the gift to lead, manage and administrate (see 1. Cor. 12:28b).
5. As the Apostolic Church confides a lot of freedom of action and power to the gifts of ministry, there should be a willingness to stand account and be under supervision in doctrine, life, ethics and administration (1. Tim.3:4-5), which is described in the section on ethics in the foundation of accreditation.
6. Ministries are being "born", thriving and growing in fellowship/teams, nurtured by the Holy Spirit and by faith and encouragement by confirmation from other ministries. Authority is given it is not taken. Self-appointed ministry is unhealthy. The should be an aim for the five fold ministries to be represented in the local church leadership.
7. No ministry is "born" fully developed. Whether it is 'in shroud' or in responsible and full function, you should seek renewal, growth and development in your ministry (faith challenges, further training/education etc.)
8. Ministry in "ordaining" other ministries, appoint and call, should only happen after careful consideration and prayer after consultation with another ministry within Apostolic Church (Acts 13:3; 1. Tim. 3:10; 5:22; 1. Cor. 14:29) and willingness to be discerned by others.

Doctrine:

Teologi

The theological foundation: **The Apostolic creed**:
"We believe in God the father, creator of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son our Lord, who has been conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified dead and buried, descended to Hades, risen on the third day, ascended to Heaven, sitting at the right hand of God the Almighty, from where He's going to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, a Holy ordinary church, the community of saints, the forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the flesh and eternal life. Amen"

Praxis: The Apostolic Church has the following comments to the creed.

a. We justify our name "apostolic" on the classic meaning: a) based on the teaching of the apostles b) a desire to be in accordance with the first church, as described in New Testament, c) acknowledgement of the missional nature of the church as being sent.
b. We connect to the Trinitarian articles of faith about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We believe that the understanding of the Holy Spirit and the church has got renewed and considerable substance with both a Pentecostal and charismatic renewal. We believe that active use of the gifts and ministries in the church life is a crucial expression for apostolic church life.
c. We believe that the purpose of being a church is described in the words about 'loving God and loving your neighbour'. Thus the purpose of the church is both directed towards God and towards the world.
d. We believe that the four characteristics, which describe the nature of the church (nicaenum), one, holy, ordinary, apostolic) are also tasks, which the church as God's tool have in the world - to communicate unity and reconciliation, to be at God's disposal for service and worship, to include people of all races, languages and layers of society and to spread the gospel of God's love and salvation in Jesus Christ in concrete mission.
e. We believe the entire Bible to be inspired by God. It reveals His nature and relation to people. We have a classic Bible view and believe that the Bible, as the highest authority, is a guideline for teaching and guidance in the church and everyday living. (The Lausanne treaty)
f. We believe that baptism requires confession of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.
g. We believe God has placed ministries in the church to build up the saints, so that everybody can serve with his or her gifts and calling (1. Cor. 12:28; Eph. 1:11-16)
h. We believe that the church should be led by a majority of ministries as widely represented as possible, and that it should be under apostolic supervision from ministry / ministries from outside the local church. Basic qualifications for leadership and ministry are described in the Scriptures about "elders" and church servants (Timothy and Titus).

Mission

Doctrine:

With mission we mean concrete border crossing movement from church to not church, both locally and internationally. We regard mission to be one of the most important purposes of being church sent with the gospel of God's love (John 20:21). To be an Apostolic church is thus to be a church sent to the world both locally and globally. Mission is closely tied to our identity and nature, both in local church understanding and more traditional foreign mission. Mission is more than an "activity". It is the eligibility for the church's existence!
We have expressed this popular, that mission is our first priority from an understanding that the last words from Jesus; "go out in all the world" must be our first priority as a church.

Praxis:

Any local church commits itself to be missional from the following understanding:

- Any local church enters actively in mission work.
- Any local church should strive to be active in missional initiatives in Denmark towards everybody, no matter ethnical background.
- Any local church furthermore strives to enter actively in social initiatives such as efforts to help people, who suffer, famine, efforts in catastrophic areas and similar situations, and development aid in general.

When it comes to mission in other countries, the mission work of the Apostolic church is facilitated and co-ordinated by the mission facilitator of the Apostolic Church in co-operation with the service centre and the local churches from the following understanding:

- A local church can start new mission areas. If it is in the name of Apostolic church it must be co-ordinated with Apostolic Church Mission. In new areas of mission there must be strategically thinking from the beginning directed by guidelines. In that connection Apostolic Church Mission is at your disposal with guidance and supervision.
- As a church you can connect with an existing mission area: Apostolic Church Mission is at your disposal with guidance and supervision.
- A church can step out of a mission area after current rules. The conditions for stepping out are stated in these. Also here Apostolic Church Mission is at your disposal with guidance and supervision.
- As a local church you should strive to secure that the financial engagement in mission outside Denmark will be of a considerable size. A minimum could be an amount similar to 10 percentages of the total income in tenth and gifts.

A mission facilitator is appointed by the service team, and sits for a period of 2 years at a time.

Leadership responsibility for the Apostolic church mission areas lies within the mission groups. The individual group is to be led by a mission leader. In the establishment phase of a mission area of a shorter period can be represented by a single contact person until a mission group has been formed. Apostolic Church Mission's mission facilitator and the service centre offers consultancy, supervision and administrative service etc. ACM has worked out some guidelines and considerations, which can be at help for local churches, for example in connection with new mission areas. ACM is officially member of DMR (Danish Mission Council), Danish Mission Council's Development department (DMRU) and the Project Council.

Theory:

Resource-sharing

Fellowship in economical tasks can make good sense in supporting both small and big churches with their individual challenges. The purpose of Resource sharing is to lift up the mission work in the local church and their day-to day tasks. In order to fulfil this purpose the Resource sharing will always be submitted to current evaluation and efficiency.

The contribution from the local churches to the fellowship through regular payments must be held at a minimum and the use of the contributions must be tied to the fellowships' intention to plant and build living, growing churches.

Local churches can have its owen local legal identity, and take part in the fellowship on equal terms with churches who are part of the Corporate legal identity.

As a fellowship of ministries, Apostolic Church does not distinguish between participating churches and ministries in the fellowship of ministries with back ground in the financial model chosen by the local church. There will be churches, which are fully part of the resource sharing, and there are churches, which are only partly members through their own rules and regulations, ex. Reduced financial contribution. See below. No matter the arrangement of the local churches, they do take part in the national council gathering and other gatherings on equal terms.

Praxis:

The church, which choses to be a part of Apostolic Church commits to living out the following practice:

- To take proportional part in lifting up the churches common expenses, so that the at all times current percentage can be paid to the service centre every month as a participation in the basic common expenses. Payment of a basic amount is the requirement for participation in the network of churches and fellowship of ministries.
- Local churches with full participation pay the annually stated percentage of the gifts and tenth to a shared cash register. Local churches with their own administration and society identity pay half rate. A higher limit is stated for contributions. For local churches on half rate, it is half of what local churches pay with full rate.
- Local churches can expect to be serviced in relation to big management benefits, agreements on discount and other expert knowledge from the service centre.
- The service centre currently make known what is the content of the basic package, which the churches buy access to through the service centre.
- On top of the basic rate, you can buy additional services from the service centre or other ministries in the network. Additional services can be tasks carried out by the service centre, but what lies above what is financed by the currently stated percentage. For example: accounting, mission guidance, tenant- administration (church rentals), currency management in connection with mission work etc.
- Permanent employment of ministries can take place as project employment in limited periods of time and should happen in relation to budget approval by the national council.
- National ministries are paid and are best supported through the churches, which are using the ministry, no matter whether it is administrative or ministry related service.

3. Accreditation:

The purpose and function of accreditation

An accredited ministry means to recognize, approve and authorize the people, who in our network can lead and serve local churches. A local church in the network can only be led by ministry / ministries that are accredited by the Apostolic Church

Accreditation helps to create a common foundation, a common standard and a common fellowship for ministry in the network.

Accreditation involves being accountable to the Ministry fellowship and is thereby creating safety for the local churches, which are being led and managed by these people.

Accreditation helps visualize to the local churches which ministries in the fellowship has a wide recognition.

Accreditation also include participation in the yearly Ministry gatherings, where ministries get together to equip, challenge, serve and shape each other and build relationships.

Who can be accredited?

Accreditation involves a personal agreement on the 2 areas in the statement of accession describing “ethics” and “ministry relations” and the willingness to be accountable to the church supervisor and thereby also the ministry fellowship in the Apostolic church.

Following in ministry can be considered for accreditation:

- Pastors, and co-pastors in the local churches.
- Other (fivefold) ministries who serve in and outside a local church.
- “Function”pastors, who serve in and outside a local church. (For instance a worship pastor)

Procedure for accreditation

Prior to applying for accreditation both the applicant and the recommending local pastor / leadership and supervisor agree to apply for the accreditation. The application and approval for the accreditation happens after the accreditation procedure.

Functions accreditation

Persons who handle significant assignments in and out from the Apostolic church can achieve a function accreditation, as long as the particular function is existing. It is expected that they participate in the ministry fellowship and the ministry gatherings organized by the Ministry team.

This function accreditation concerns ex. Bible school and boarding school principals, missionaries, the service team and other people in the Apostolic church network, schools and organizations.

Doctrine:

Ministry-relations

We in the Apostolic church have chosen to commit ourselves and
each other to the following values:

- **Accountability,**
- **Diversity in unity,**
- **Honesty,**
- **Courtesy**
- **Giving**
- **Appreciation**
- **Reconciliation.**

These seven values express the way we wish to relate to each other.
These values have a high demand on our view of humanity, hereby our respect and appreciation of each other. We are members of the same body, and as such we have the responsibility of both the wholeness and the thriving of the individual and an experience of being carried and lifted by the fellowship.

The goal is that we all individually grow fully in boldness, anointing and in the calling and ministry that God has given us. That we together grow in both quality so we together can contain Christ, and in quantity so His kingdom being spread to other people and new places. The relationship part is not just pointing in but is being seen as the actual condition for being a healthy and true missional church.

Praxis:
Ministries that have been accredited and are ministering in and out from the Apostolic church, are being obligated to follow this praxis:

- That the individual daily prioritize to spend time on his/her relationship with God.
- Being accountable with ministry and personal life to the church supervisor. (See the section about supervisor in the statement of accession).
- Actively pursue relating to others in the Apostolic church network, both privately and ministry wise.
- Actively participate in the yearly National and regional ministry gathering arranged by the Ministry team.
- Contributing to increase unity in the body of Christ as a unit when possible.

Doctrine:
Ethics means “Rule of life” and in this context it means agreed guidelines and norms for how we in Apostolic church will handle cases which are difficult or could contain the potential for a conflictor a frustration.



Praxis:
The individual who choose to be part of, and minister in and out from Apostolic church obligates them selves to follow this praxis:

In the personal life:

- To strive for a life in purity and following of Christ and being accountable with his/her life.
- To live with a high standard in both ministry and personal life. Accountable in use of money both for the church and privately, thrifty with alcohol and other addictive stimulants, purity in the sexual area, humble in managing the power that a leader naturally has. (These three areas, money, power and sex is especially mentioned as it has been shown to be the three main areas of struggles).
- That you, in case of serious sin or character flaws, accept to submit to the discipline and act of restoration that the supervisor will assign.

In relation to others:

- To manage the responsibility for your family especially your spouse and children in a worthy and caring way that glorifies God.
- To treat all Christians and non-Christians with respect and dignity as God’s creation.
- To act with confidentiality with the knowledge about sensitive topics or confessions, unless it goes against the Danish legislation.
- That we do not store sensitive information in writing, about present or former members also in this area of submitting to the Danish legislation.
- To require Children certificates for everyone that are responsible and work with children and teenagers.
- That we consciously avoid habilitation issues, by allowing others to judge and act in crucial and sensitive cases, where family members are involved or at least as a minimum involvement of others.
- To treat other Christians in ministry with respect both inside and outside the Apostolic church.
- Aim strongly to solve conflict as close to the conflict and as fast as possible.
- To forgive in your heart, those who might hurt or violate you in some way.
- Go totje person if you feel that something has come between you that hinder a free and unforced relationship.

Relations between the churches:

- To contact the pastor or church leadership before challenging someone in ministry, if they already serve in another church.
- To inform the former church or pastor if one of their members want’s to change church membership.
- To make sure – when possible, that if someone wants to change church that there has been a good ending from the former membership and all possible conflict has been solved.
- To inform other pastors in a city or in the area if you wants to start a church in the same areas as them.