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■ 1863 - 2013: 150 Years New Apostolic Church

its existence. To commemorate this anniversary, congregations around the world are planning a variety of events. Originating from a small Catholic Apostolic congregation in Hamburg (Germany) the New Apostolic Church today has more than ten million members worldwide. New Apostolic Christians assemble in over 60,000 congregations. The highlight of the anniversary year will be the Pentecost service, which Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber will hold on 19 May 2013 in Hamburg (Germany).



The roots of the New Apostolic Church date back to the 19th Century. Around the year 1830 individuals and groups in England and Scotland prayed for an "outpouring of the Holy Spirit". These prayers expressed their hope for a renewal of Christian life within the various denominations that they felt had become formal and uninspiring. An "apostolic movement" developed which gradually turned into an organised church after twelve Apostles had been called by prophetically gifted persons between 1832 and 1835. The distinctive feature of what became known as the Catholic Apostolic Church was that it was headed by Apostles who by the laying on of hands dispensed the gift of the Holy Spirit to prepare the believers for the return of Christ, which they expected soon.

In 1863 the congregation in Hamburg separated from the Apostles of the Catholic Apostolic Church. The reasons were fundamental differences of opinion concerning the role of the Apostle ministry in the preparation of believers for the return of Christ and on the possibility of completing the number of Apostles that had by then decreased from twelve to six. On 27 January 1863 Friedrich Wilhelm Schwartz, the bishop in charge of the Hamburg congregation, was excommunicated from the Catholic Apostolic

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Zurich. For the New Apostolic Church the year 2013 is a special year. It commemorates its 150th anniversary. In many countries special activities have been planned on this occasion: District festivities, trans-regional communal activities and even church conventions. From now on a special section of [www.nak.org](http://www.nak.org), the New Apostolic church website, will provide a wide range of information concerning the anniversary and the history of the church.

The anniversary goes back to events in 1863. In that year the small congregation in Hamburg was excommunicated from the Catholic Apostolic Church. Bishop Friedrich Wilhelm Schwartz, together with ministers and members in Hamburg, had accepted the call of a new Apostle, who, however, was not acknowledged by the Apostles of the Catholic Apostolic Church. Starting with that small congregation in Hamburg an international church with more than ten million members developed in the course of those 150 years.

## Articles on the history of our church

On the occasion of our Church's one hundredth anniversary a book was published in 1963 which also referred to the history of the Catholic Apostolic Church and the events leading up to the separation of the Hamburg congregation from it. In the meantime new sources on the history of the Catholic Apostolic Church have been studied that help us to gain a deeper understanding of what happened at that time.

For some months a series of articles on the development of the Church has been published in the church magazine “Our Family” and on New Apostolic Church websites. The articles show important developments in the Catholic Apostolic Church, but are especially related to our anniversary. In those contributions particular attention is given to such elements in the development of the Catholic Apostolic Church that help us gain a deeper understanding of what happened in 1863.

On the [special site 150.nak.org](http://150.nak.org) you will find information on the development of the New Apostolic Church and a calendar of events showing activities planned all over the world. In the course of the year reports on events related to the anniversary will be added.

**16 January 2013**