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Pentecost 2012: A high point of faith

Die große Pfingstgemeinde in Köln

Cologne/Zurich. It was a high point of the church year for New Apostolic Christians around the world: Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber conducted the Pentecost divine service in Cologne on 27 May 2012. The spiritual leader of all New Apostolic Christians called out to the believers with a special Pentecost message: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." The sermon revolved around the question as to how children of God are to lead their lives in our time. What is important is to keep faith, always be willing to make peace, subordinate our will to God's will, and draw strength for daily life from the resurrection of Christ.

The Pentecost service 2012 in Cologne took place in the presence of all active District Apostles of the world as well as the active Apostles of Europe. In accordance with longstanding tradition, Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber addressed a Pentecost greeting to the congregations around the world: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (from Luke 18: 27).

Drawing power from the Spirit

"Human beings have barriers, but there are no barriers with God," explained the Chief Apostle. He called upon the believers to draw strength out of the Holy Spirit in order to put aside disputes and annoyance and to endure difficult situations with the help of God.

In this connection the Chief Apostle briefly described the global situation: Christendom around the world is on the retreat, and even in the congregations there are challenges here and there. Often we are confronted with the question of how to

carry on. “But let us not only think about the situation from a human perspective! After all, we know: all things are possible for God!” said the Chief Apostle.

If we trust in the help of God, it does not mean that all our difficulties will be resolved all at once, “but with God’s help it is possible to overcome barriers.” For this reason it is necessary to make use of His power.

Living as children of God

The remainder of the sermon was based on a Bible passage from Romans 8: 16: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” In reference to the Bible text the Chief Apostle explained that the Holy Spirit inspires us so that we can live as true children of God.

The Holy Spirit inspires us to keep our faith even in difficult situations. “Children of God are always prepared to make peace,” said the Chief Apostle as he listed a second point. And beyond that: “They are devoted to God and they incorporate the resurrection of Jesus Christ into their daily lives.”

Heeding the inspiration of the Spirit

“Human beings can only attain salvation and blessedness—i.e. fellowship with God—through God,” added District Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider (France) as he elaborated on the Chief Apostle’s thoughts in his contribution to the service. In this context, blessedness signifies deliverance and fellowship with God. The advice of the designated Chief Apostle Helper was as follows: “If we heed the advice of the Spirit we can already become blessed today!”

District Apostle Noel Barnes related that the schedules of the District Apostles from overseas had had to be changed quite unexpectedly, an amendment related to the appointment of the new Chief Apostle Helper. “However I was happy to come here to you and rejoice greatly in this Pentecost fellowship.”

Bible reading from the book of Acts

At the beginning of the divine service the participants listened to a Bible reading from Acts 2: 1-4: “When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Transmission around the world

Some 1,600 New Apostolic Christians in Cologne experienced the divine service on location in the large hall of the Maritim Hotel. Beyond that, more than 1.5 million people in over 100 countries were connected to this divine service by satellite transmission. According to the feedback received so far the transmission was a success, without any reported technical problems or disruptions.

The music for the divine service was provided by a specially established youth choir and a young orchestra. They played various modern spiritual pieces, including “O come, Thou Spirit of truth” and “I sing with the Spirit”. The transmission began with a short film which introduced the New Apostolic Christians of North Rhine-Westphalia as well as the various institutions established by the hosting District Church.

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