



## Change at the head of the New Apostolic Church / Wilhelm Leber is the new chief apostle

Stuttgart/Zurich.

A fully occupied church in Fellbach, near Stuttgart, some 360 apostles, and more than 1.5 million souls around the world enjoyed their last divine service by Chief Apostle Richard Fehr. After 17 years, the 66-year-old transferred the leadership of the Church into the care of younger hands.

This Pentecost will go down in the history of the New Apostolic Church. Some 8,000 congregations around the world—more than ever before—were connected via satellite to the events transpiring in Fellbach. Chief Apostle Richard Fehr from Zurich, who had led the international Church for 17 years, was given a festive retirement on this memorable day. It had always been his concern to demonstrate his unity with, and love for, the believers in his care.

The new chief apostle of the New Apostolic Church is the hitherto District Apostle Wilhelm Leber. The 57-year-old doctor of mathematics from Hamburg assured the believers: “I reach both my hands to you and promise that I will always love you!” He told the brethren that, like his predecessor, he too would make the return of Christ the focal point of his activity.

He thanked the retiring Chief Apostle Richard Fehr for the magnificent work that he had done, adding that his love for Jesus Christ and the believers in his care had been exemplary. He had opened doors, given many impulses for change, and shown a great deal of courage and foresight.

The ongoing developments of the Church in theological matters, as well as the establishment of expert panels and project groups, feature prominently among Chief Apostle Fehr’s accomplishments. The approximately 20 committees of experts deal with many diverse subjects, such as teaching manuals for children, Church music, and interpretations of specific books of the Holy Scripture. Richard Fehr intensively supported the international efforts of the New Apostolic Church in measures of prevention in the battle against HIV-AIDS infections. In 1999 he established the Ecumenism Project Group, which facilitates regular, official exchanges with other churches. By steering a farsighted course for the future, he

addressed the increased demands - even in financial matters - resulting from the rapid growth of the Church, particularly in Africa and Asia.

The sermon in Fellbach near Stuttgart was conducted in two languages - German and English - and was then translated into another 24 languages. This year's Pentecost service dealt with being a Christian in our modern time. "The things we read about the first Christians are also the standard for us today," emphasised Chief Apostle Richard Fehr.

Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber bid farewell to the festive congregation from around the world with an appeal to stay united at heart despite the vast distances between them.

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