



Change in the leadership of the New Apostolic Church: Wilhelm Leber is the new chief apostle

Zurich. This year's Pentecost service came to a festive conclusion as an emotional congregation bid farewell to Chief Apostle Richard Fehr, who after 17 years in office, officially transferred the leadership of the New Apostolic Church into younger hands.

Following is a press release from the New Apostolic Church on the subject:

A fully occupied church in Fellbach near Stuttgart, along with some 360 apostles, and more than 1.5 million believers throughout the world, experienced their last divine service with Chief Apostle Richard Fehr. After 17 years in ministry, Richard Fehr, nearly 66, had decided to place the leadership of the Church into younger hands.

This celebration of Pentecost will go down in the history of the New Apostolic Church. Some 8,000 congregations around the world—a record number—were witness to the events in Fellbach via satellite transmission. Chief Apostle Richard Fehr from Zurich, who had led the international Church for 17 years, retired festively during this divine service. It had always been a concern of his to demonstrate his solidarity and affection for the believers.

The new chief apostle of the New Apostolic Church is the hitherto District Apostle Wilhelm Leber. The 57-year-old mathematician from Hamburg assured the believers: "I extend both my hands to you and promise that I will always love you!" Like his predecessor, he said he too would, as chief apostle, place emphasis on the return of Christ, which is the goal of all New Apostolic Christians.

He thanked retiring Chief Apostle Fehr for the magnificent work that he had done, mentioning that his love for Jesus Christ, and thus for the believers, had been exemplary. He went on to say that Chief Apostle Fehr had opened doors, given many new impulses, and demonstrated courage and broad vision. The continued development of the Church in theological matters and the promotion of professional and Project Groups are among the accomplishments of Chief Apostle Fehr. Some 20 of these committees, consisting of professionals in their fields, deal with many diverse subjects, including the development of teaching material for children, issues related to church music, and the interpretation of certain books of the Holy

Scripture. Richard Fehr also actively supported the international New Apostolic Church in its many endeavours to battle the spread of illnesses related to HIV/AIDS through preventative measures.

In 1999 he established the Ecumenism Project Group, which facilitated an official and regular dialogue with other churches. His visionary modifications enabled him to address the increased demands associated with the tremendous growth of the Church - especially in Africa and Asia - even in terms of finances.

The sermon in Fellbach (near Stuttgart) was conducted in two languages - German and English - and translated simultaneously into 24 other languages. This year's Pentecost service dealt with being a Christian in modern times. Chief Apostle Richard Fehr reinforced that "what we read of the first Christians also applies as a standard for us today."

In parting, Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber appealed to the festive congregations around the world to remain close to one another in their hearts, despite the great distances between them.

15 May 2005