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A festive premiere in Jakarta

Jakarta. Never before has the chief apostle gathered with all district apostles and district apostle helpers for a divine service in Indonesia. Thus it is hardly surprising that the festive divine service conducted by Chief Apostle Richard Fehr on Sunday, 06.02.2005 in the Convention Centre in Jakarta was presaged in so many special ways.

The Convention Centre was festively decorated and filled to overflowing with more than 6,000 participants. Chief Apostle Richard Fehr served the congregation with a passage from Psalm 119: 27: "Make me understand the way of Your precepts; so shall I meditate on Your wonderful works." Right at the start of the service, the chief apostle acknowledged the special radiance of the assembled Indonesian brethren: "I can feel that you have warm souls," he said.

One district apostle from each continent served along during the service. Several choirs and a very large ****angklung-orchestra** provided a considerable musical framework for the service. At the end of the divine service the District Church of Indonesia received a new bishop: Samuel Handojo Tansahtikno (*1971). The new bishop had previously led the districts of Jakarta and Java-West as a district elder. In his place, the chief apostle went on to ordain another district elder who will look after this area from now on.

The brethren from the district of Assam (India, under the care of the District Church of North Rhine-Westphalia) also received a new bishop: Mukith Parvez Chowdhury (*1968).

The chief apostle's first overseas journey of the New Year led him first to Australia, where he conducted a festive divine service in Brisbane on Sunday, 30 January, then on to Singapore. It was there that the chief apostle convened a District Apostle Meeting on 4 February, in which all district apostles and district apostle helpers of the world took part. The next stop on the trip was Indonesia on Saturday, 5 February.

With a surface area of some 1.9 million km², Indonesia is the 15th largest country in the world. The Indonesian state includes a total of 13,677 islands, of which only 6,044 are populated. Indonesia is home to 210 million people, comprised of around 360 ethnic groups. Besides the official language, there are more than 250 regional languages as well as hundreds of dialects. Some 87% of the population are Muslim and only about 10% are Christian. District Apostle Alfons Tansahtikno looks after the approximately 17,500 New Apostolic Christians living here.

** The angklung is Indonesia's national instrument. It consists of several bamboo pipes that hang from a bamboo frame in the fashion of organ pipes. When struck with a special mallet they produce a soft, muffled sound.

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