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Berlin. Berlin's Treptow congregation was the worthy site of a festive divine service with Chief Apostle Richard Fehr on 29.02.2004. Together with their wives, all ministers of the New Apostolic Church throughout Europe were either at the service in person or connected by satellite transmission. Victor Bezgans was appointed a district apostle helper and Sergei Bastrikov was ordained apostle.

Chief Apostle Fehr, who gathers all ministers from Europe once each year for a divine service, had an audience of around 47,000 on this occasion. He thanked them and gave them abundant encouragement for the work that lies ahead of them in the future.

Before the divine service reached its conclusion, the chief apostle reorganised the pastoral care and missionary work of the church within Russia. The New Apostolic Church in Russia now comprises more than 37,000 members in 300 congregations, who are served by a total of 700 ministers. Previously, four European district apostles had shared responsibility for this gigantic region. With the appointment of District Apostle Helper Victor Bezgans (51) from Twer, Chief Apostle Fehr now set down a new organisational structure. For some time, Bezgans has already been president of the administration centre of the New Apostolic Church in Russia, which has its seat in Moscow. In future he will bear even more responsibility and travel across all regions of this enormous country to care for the brethren. Except for District Apostle Fritz Schröder (Berlin, Brandenburg) all other European district apostles and apostles will gradually withdraw from their work in Russia.

Sergei Bastrikov (48) was ordained to succeed the new District Apostle Helper Bezgans. He comes from Chabarovsk and works as president of the Far East regional administration centre of the New Apostolic Church. As a bishop he had previously been responsible for congregations in vast regions of Russia's far east.

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