New Apostolic Church International

Changes in the concept of ministry enter into effect as of Pentecost 2019

OR

Fotos: O. Ruetten

Zurich. The effective date for the New Apostolic Church's modified concept of ministry is Pentecost 2019. This means that in future, only three levels of ministry will be ordained, and five levels of leadership function will be appointed. As of 1 September 2019, official assignments to assistant functions will also enter into effect.

In a video transmitted around the world at the start of April, the international leader of the New Apostolic Church, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, introduced the changes in the Church's teaching on ministry that would enter into effect on Pentecost 2019. In the future, there will be a distinction between ordinations and leadership functions conferred by way of appointment. Ministerial authority will be imparted through ordination, and leadership functions will be imparted by way of appointment. As already laid out in the Catechism of the New Apostolic Church, there will only be three levels of ministry as of Pentecost 2019, namely Deacons, Priests, and Apostles. One exception is the Chief Apostle, who will also continue to be ordained in the future, since the "Petrine office"—which is charged with preserving the purity of the doctrine and developing new insights—is an additional power attributed to the apostolate.

Ministerial authority and leadership functions are two different things

In the future, leadership functions within the Church will be conferred upon the congregational rector, the district rector, the Apostle, the District Apostle, and the Chief Apostle. They are responsible for leading entities of varying sizes. Congregational and district rectors, as well as District Apostles—as leaders of national churches—will in the future be appointed through prayer and laying on of hands. Their assistants, who support them in their leadership duties, will be assigned. Assignment applies to the functions of a Chief Apostle Helper, District Apostle Helper, Bishop, and the deputies of the district rector and congregational rector.

A more flexible hierarchy

At the same time, the previous, traditionally familiar ministerial levels of Evangelist, Shepherd, District Evangelist, and District Elder will no longer be occupied as of Pentecost 2019. Ministers who have received these ministries through ordination will retain their ministries. Although these ministries will not be discontinued, they will no longer be occupied.

Green light for official assignments

In addition to the many duties incumbent on the ministers of the Church, there are also services and duties in the congregation that are not bound to a ministry. These

are of a pastoral nature, or serve to provide instruction in doctrine. Such duties and services likewise played a large role in the discussions concerning the revised understanding of ministry, as they apply to a large number of members who commit themselves as volunteers in service to their congregation.

For these duties and services, the District Apostle Meeting in Goslar passed a globally binding resolution: from now on, all sisters and brothers who serve as the primarily responsible teachers in Pre-Sunday School, Sunday School, Religious Instruction, and Confirmation Instruction, will be publicly assigned to their service—either in the presence of the congregation or in the circle of the children. Their assignment applies until their mandate comes to an end. At that point, they will also be publicly discharged from service. The same applies to youth leaders who exercise their duty over the long term. In other words, the leaders of the aforementioned services will be assigned, while their respective assistants will continue to serve without a formal assignment.

Effective as of September 2019

In terms of execution, assignments to these duties and services will proceed in the same way as assignments among the ministers. They will be performed by way of an official act with a prayer and a handshake.

This new regulation will enter into effect as of 1 September 2019.

13 June 2019

