An “African weekend”

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Zurich. “I have just returned from an ‘African weekend,’” said Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber, the international leader of the New Apostolic Church. On 8 December 2007 - the Saturday preceding the second Sunday of Advent - he conducted a divine service in Banjul, Gambia, followed by another divine service in Ziguinchor, Senegal on Sunday, 9 December 2007. Two Apostles and three Bishops were ordained. On the return trip, there was an unscheduled one-day stop in the Senegalese capital of Dakar: the aircraft had a technical defect.

For the New Apostolic Church in Senegal, Chief Apostle Leber ordained Francisco Dione Gomis (48) as the country’s first Apostle. The New Apostolic Church in Niger was happy to receive its first Bishop in Gilbert Viaho (49). In addition, the Church leader ordained Louis Mendy (49) as Apostle for the New Apostolic Church in Burkina Faso. Natana A. Agoualibiga (35) and Diamano René Lombo (30) will now work as Bishops in this West African country.

Bishop Augusto Da Costa from Guinea Bissau retired for health reasons.

About 500 people took part in the divine service in Banjul, which was also broadcast on national television. Chief Apostle Leber addressed the congregation with a message from the gospel of Matthew, namely to “lay up treasures in heaven.” The Bible passage that served as the basis for Sunday’s divine service in Ziguinchor—which was attended by some 1,700 people—is recorded in Luke 8: 40.

In a ministers’ meeting following the service, Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber officially transferred the administrative leadership of the New Apostolic Church in Guinea Bissau from the District Church of Hessen to the District Church of North Rhine-Westphalia. The country’s approximately 46,000 members will now be served from Dortmund as a result. District Apostle Armin Brinkmann, leader of the District Church of North Rhine-Westphalia, made use of his involvement in this “African weekend” to conduct his first service in Ignore in northern Guinea Bissau.

The New Apostolic Church in Senegal numbers some 16,000 members. They attend divine services in 230 congregations and are provided with pastoral care by around 600 ministers. In Niger, approximately 8,000 Christians in 80 congregations profess the New Apostolic faith. Some 180 ministers support them with pastoral care.

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