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Duisburg. In a divine service on Sunday, 18 September 2005, Chief Apostle Wilhelm Leber released three apostles into a well-deserved retirement: Gunter Homburg, Klaus-Dieter König, and Günter Wiktor. He went on to ordain Wolfgang Schug (46) as the new apostle for the District of North Rhine-Westphalia. Thus the reforms in Germany's second-largest District Church have taken on clearer dimensions.

The regions in Russia formerly in the care of the District Church of North Rhine-Westphalia have been administered by District Apostle Wolfgang Nadolny from Berlin since the beginning of this year. That was why it would not be necessary to replace all three retiring apostles, noted Chief Apostle Leber before the ordination. Besides this, the District Church of North Rhine-Westphalia, under the leadership of District Apostle Armin Brinkmann, is already undergoing an even more comprehensive structural reform with the objective of more evenly distributing over 500 congregations into 32 districts.

The chief apostle discharged the three retiring apostles with words of friendship, stating that all three had served the congregations in faithfulness and truth for many decades. Thus Chief Apostle Leber came full circle to the Bible passage from Revelation 19:11, which he had read out at the start of the service: "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True." With reference to this passage the chief apostle said, among other things, that we too—the listeners of today—should strive after the ideal of the Son of God, Jesus Christ (see Romans 8:29). Taking on Christian duties in daily life is part of this, said the chief apostle.

For a detailed report (in German only), visit www.nak.de/nrw/berichte/20050918_01.html.

19 September 2005