New doctrinal statement on the "Great Tribulation"

Nice (08.10.2004). A comprehensive subject discussed during the District Apostle Meeting in Nice bears the title "The Great Tribulation". This heading refers to the events described in various passages in the Revelation of John.

When Chief Apostle Richard Fehr announced the broadening of the Church's doctrinal understanding of the First Resurrection on Pentecost 2003, further questions entered into the theological discussion. Some of them involved the subject of the "Great Tribulation". What do we understand by the "Great Tribulation"? When does it begin? When does it end? How long will it take? Who is affected by it? What significance does it have for us?

Up until the present, our church's teaching on the subject of the "Great Tribulation" was not uniform, and was emphasised differently in various regions. The main points of the new treatise are thus to be understood as more precise statements of the previous doctrinal understanding. They follow in summary:

- The "Great Tribulation" (Revelation 7: 14, Matthew 24: 21), and the "hour of trial" (Revelation 3: 10) stand for one and the same period of time, namely the time from the return of Christ to take home His bride until the next coming of the Lord with His congregation.
- The bride will be caught up before the "hour of trial".
- The "great multitude which no one could number" from Revelation 7: 9 is not the bride of Christ, nor is the bride of Christ part of this multitude.

A detailed treatise of this complex subject will first be presented to the ministers of the church in a special issue of the "Word of Life", which will later be followed by an article in the "Doctrine and Knowledge" section of the "Our Family" magazine.

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