



**New Apostolic Church  
International**



# **150-Year anniversary of the New Apostolic Church**

**From 1863 to 2013**

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# The development of the New Apostolic Church



### Divine intervention

- In the nineteenth century God intervenes in the history of the church
- People search for meaning
- Politics exploits religious forces
- Social issues challenge Christian ethics
- Natural sciences dominate thinking
- New religious movements
  - Gifts and activity of the Holy Spirit
  - Revitalisation of the gospel



### Why Great Britain and London?

- British Empire dominates the world
  - First industrialised nation
  - Most powerful navy
  - English as universal language
- London is the capital of the United Kingdom
- 1.9 million residents in 1831
- Divine guidance evident



### Why Apostles?

- Albury conferences
  - Objective: gain clarity on biblical statements
- Apostle ministry newly occupied through the gift of prophecy—for the completion of the church of Christ
- In 1832 John Bate Cardale is called as an Apostle
- Another eleven Apostles called by 1835





### Understanding of the Apostle ministry

- Apostles are for all Christians
- As of 1847: laying on of hands as precursor to Holy Sealing
- Great Testimony sent to spiritual and secular leaders
  - Intent was to unite Christianity under the spiritual leadership of the Apostles
- Some theological interpretations are still fundamental



# 150-Year anniversary of the New Apostolic Church

## I. Background: Conflicts among the Apostles

- Founding of the Catholic Apostolic Church
- Number of Apostles is gradually reduced by deaths and other factors
- Disagreement about filling the vacancies
- New callings are rejected
- Catholic Apostolic congregations today without ordained ministers



### The Hamburg congregation separates from the Apostles

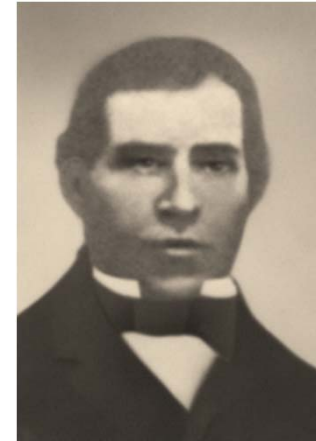
- Apostolic congregations are founded in Northern Germany by Apostle Thomas Carlyle
- Prophet Heinrich Geyer calls new Apostles
- Hamburg congregation under the leadership of Bishop Friedrich Wilhelm Schwartz recognises newly called Apostles
- Hamburger congregation and ministers are excommunicated





### II. Early history: The new order

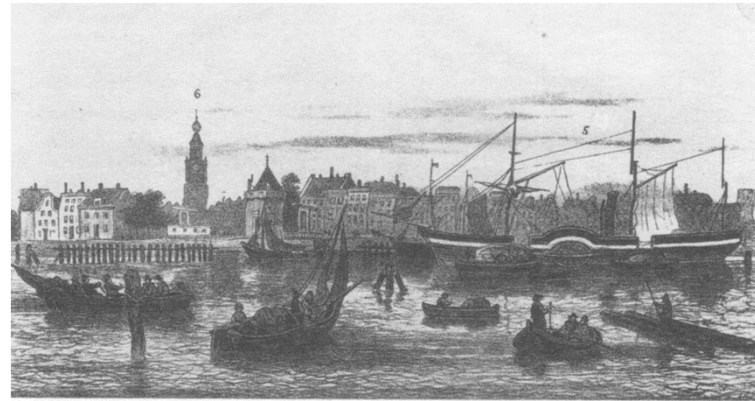
- First calling in the Hamburg congregation: Apostle Carl Wilhelm Louis Preuß
- Second calling: Apostle Schwartz
- Further Apostles are called
- Regional points of emphasis: Northern Germany and the Netherlands



## 150-Year anniversary of the New Apostolic Church

### Geographic expansion

- Apostle Schwartz moves to Amsterdam
- Schladen is the next congregation in Germany after Hamburg
- The later Chief Apostle Krebs is among the first Church members
- More Apostles travel overseas



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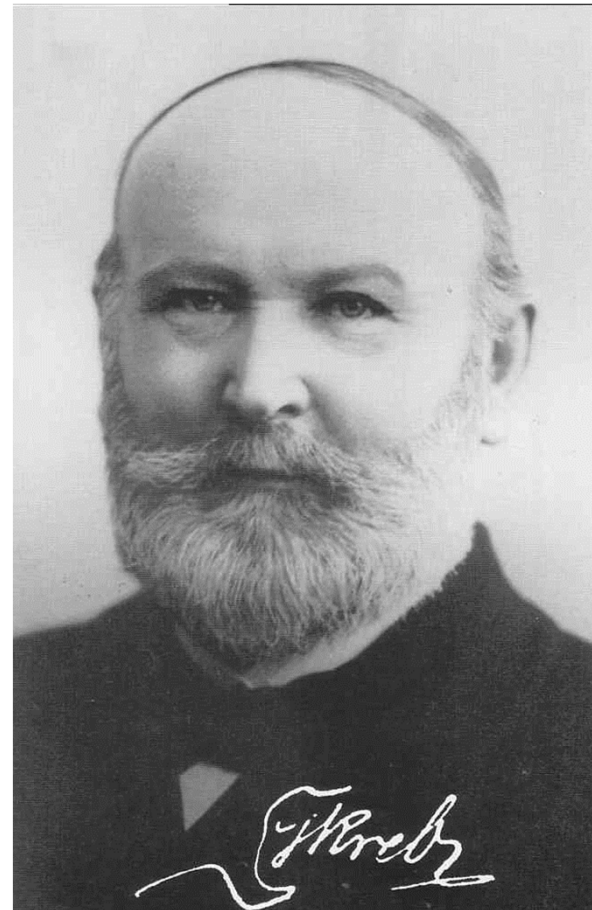
## Liturgy

- Apostles Schwartz and Menkhoff do away with Church robes
- Liturgical hymns, altar candles, and incense are discontinued



### Chief Apostle ministry

- Apostle Friedrich Krebs assumes leadership function after Apostles Schwarz and Menkhoff
- Primary concern: unity among the Apostles
- Traditional term: the working area of an Apostle was named after a tribe of Israel



### Introduction of communion wafers

- As of 1917: Wafer with three drops of wine for Holy Communion
- Sent to the front in army postal service letters
- By 1919: Use of the wine chalice is discontinued for hygienic reasons





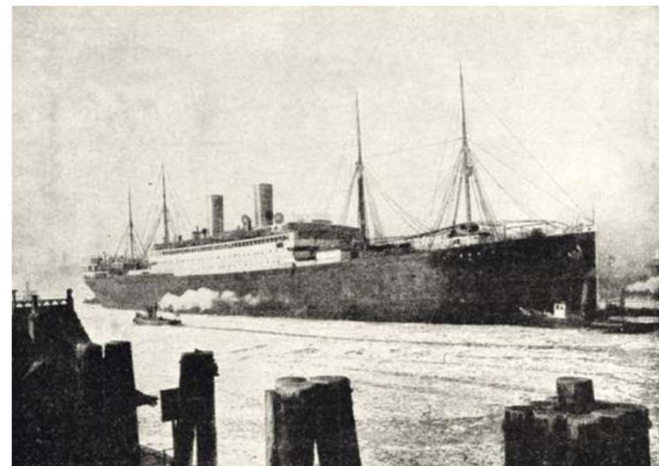
### Development of the Church's name

- Hamburg congregation at first called itself the *Allgemeine christliche apostolische Mission* (General Christian Apostolic Mission)
- The designation “New Apostolic Congregation” was used to avoid confusion with Catholic Apostolic congregations
- As of 1930: New Apostolic Church



### First overseas journey by a Chief Apostle

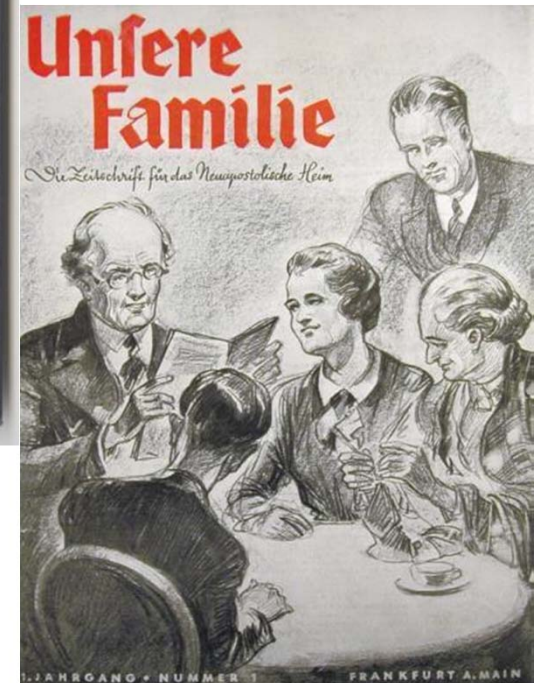
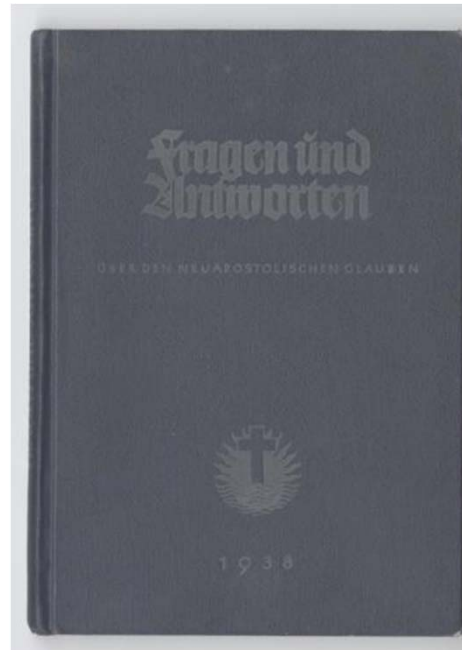
- Chief Apostle Krebs dies in 1905
- Apostle Hermann Niehaus becomes his successor
- 1909: First overseas trip to North America—a round trip of three weeks
- In 1930 Apostle Johann Gottfried Bischoff assumes the duties of Chief Apostle Niehaus



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### Reading material

- “Questions and Answers concerning the New Apostolic faith” appears in 1938
- In retrospect:
  - First Church magazine appears in 1884 under the name “*Der Herold*”
  - The first edition of “Our Family” appears in 1933



## 150-Year anniversary of the New Apostolic Church

### “Modern technology”



- Church relies on modern technology for transmissions
- Membership numbers stabilise





### The “message” of Chief Apostle Bischoff

- Imminent expectation reaches its zenith in CA Bischoff’s “message” of 1951
- Chief Apostle Bischoff dies in 1960
- The “message” is not fulfilled
- District Apostle Walter Schmidt is elected as the new Chief Apostle
- May 2013: Statement by Chief Apostle Leber





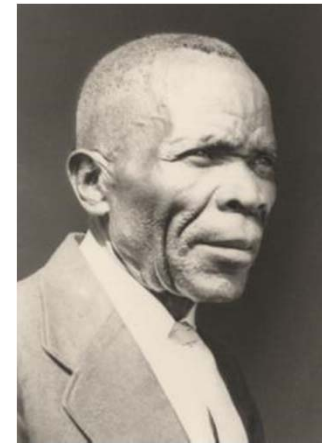
### International Apostle Federation

- Chief Apostle Schmidt appoints District Apostle Ernst Streckeisen as his successor
- International Apostle Federation replaces Apostles' College in 1977
- In 1990 the New Apostolic Church International becomes the legal successor



### Internationalisation

- Internationalisation progresses
- Chief Apostle Streckeisen travels to all five continents
- The Chief Apostle dies in Cape Town, South Africa in 1978
- District Apostle Hans Urwyler is chosen by the Apostles as his successor



### Pentecost tradition

- In 1980 Chief Apostle Urwyler invites all Apostles of the world to Zurich
- Pentecost takes the place of New Year's Day as the occasion for central divine services
- Successors continue this tradition
- Chief Apostle Fehr begins the tradition of Pentecost greetings



### Personal responsibility



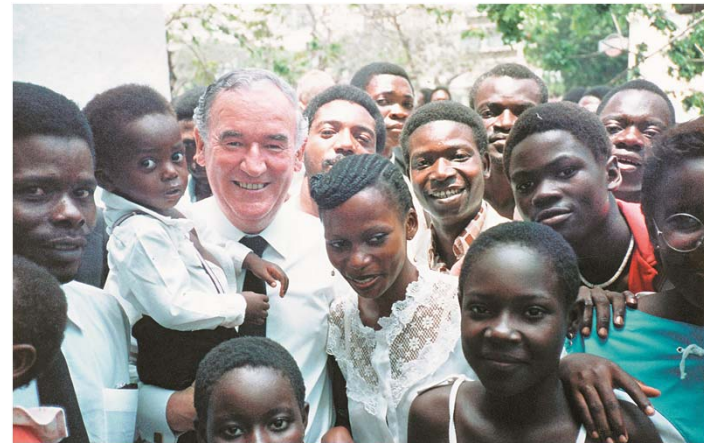
- Chief Apostle Hans Urwyler continues the modernisation process
- He reinforces the individual responsibility of the believers
- Restrictions on admission to Holy Communion are lifted



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### International expansion

- Chief Apostle Urwyler: congregations in all countries
- Missionary work in Portuguese-speaking countries
- In 1989 ministers travel to the former Soviet Union
- Number of Apostles grows from 64 to 176 under Chief Apostle Urwyler

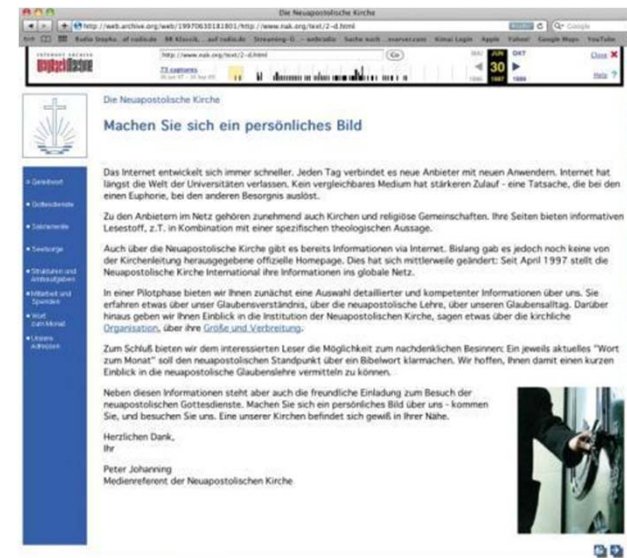




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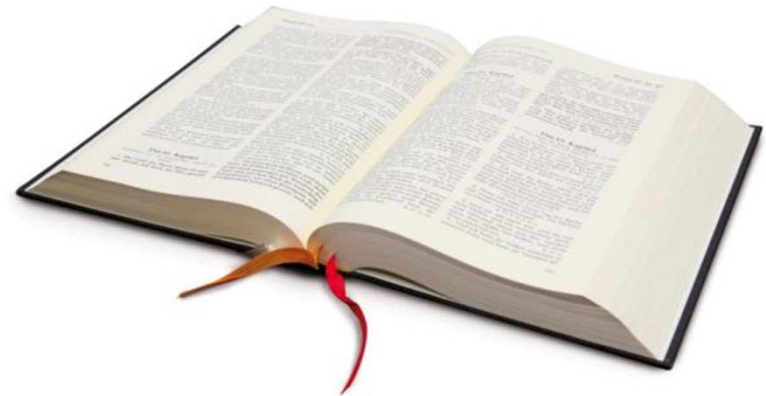
## The Church opens up and public relations begin

- In 1987 Chief Apostle Hans Urwyler appoints a Helper in Richard Fehr
- Chief Apostle Fehr assumes leadership of the Church on Pentecost 1988
- He diligently continues the process of opening up the Church
  - Ecumenism Project Group
  - Increased public relations work
  - Online presence



### Further developments

- 1984 Luther translation declared authoritative in 1999 (German)
- As of 2002: New King James Version (English)
- Chief Apostle Fehr retires on Pentecost 2005 at the age of 65
- Wilhelm Leber becomes his successor
- New District Apostle districts



## Youth care and Church Days

- European Youth Day 2009 in Düsseldorf
- First Day of the Youth in South East Asia 2011
- First pan-Russian Youth Day 2011
- International Church Day 2014 in Germany



## Catechism

- Work Group develops the Catechism over ten years
- Published in December 2012
- Reference work on the New Apostolic faith
- Book forms the basis for further ecumenical dialogue





## 150-Year anniversary of the New Apostolic Church

### The New Apostolic Church today

- 10 million members
- 61,243 congregations
- 253,000 ministers who serve in a voluntary capacity
- 80 Per cent of members live in Africa
- Largest church building is in South Africa





## 150-Year anniversary of the New Apostolic Church

### Our mission and vision:

- ... to be a church in which people feel at home
- ... to reach out to all people
- ... to cultivate warm fellowship



Thank you for your  
attention!



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