



Pentecost 2007:

Internet message of Chief Apostle Dr. Wilhelm Leber

Dear brethren in faith,

In the Judaic calendar, Pentecost was originally a feast of thanksgiving. The special offerings which were brought on Pentecost as a token of gratitude for the harvest consisted of two loaves of bread baked from the first ears of grain harvested – the firstfruits of the harvest. That is why this feast was also known as the “Day of Firstfruits.”

After the ascension of Jesus Christ, God gave new meaning to this day through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Son of God Himself had already referred to the Holy Spirit on many occasions. For example, we read the following in the gospel of John: “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14: 16-17).

And these are the essential characteristics and effects of the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit is the “Helper” who, after Jesus’ return to the Father, ensures that the doctrine of Christ – the gospel – is kept alive
- The Holy Spirit testifies of Christ
- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, who reveals the various interrelationships which Christ had not yet disclosed to His Apostles

In the second chapter of Acts Luke describes what happened on the actual *day* of Pentecost, that is, on the tenth day after Christ’s ascension and the fiftieth day after His resurrection. Peter preached a powerful sermon, and 3,000 people were baptised and thereby added to the congregation. Thus Pentecost has become a model for the compelling power of sermons inspired by the Spirit, as well as for the growth of the congregation through the activity of the Apostles.

We celebrate the feast of Pentecost in commemoration of the day on which the Holy Spirit was poured out by God upon the believers. We too – in memory of the events in Jerusalem described above – speak of Pentecost as the “birthday of the church of Christ”. It is a feast of joy in the knowledge that the Holy Spirit still defines Christ’s church today.

I greet all of you on this year’s feast of Pentecost 2007. My Pentecost message is: “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him”, according to the word 1. Corinthians 6, 17.