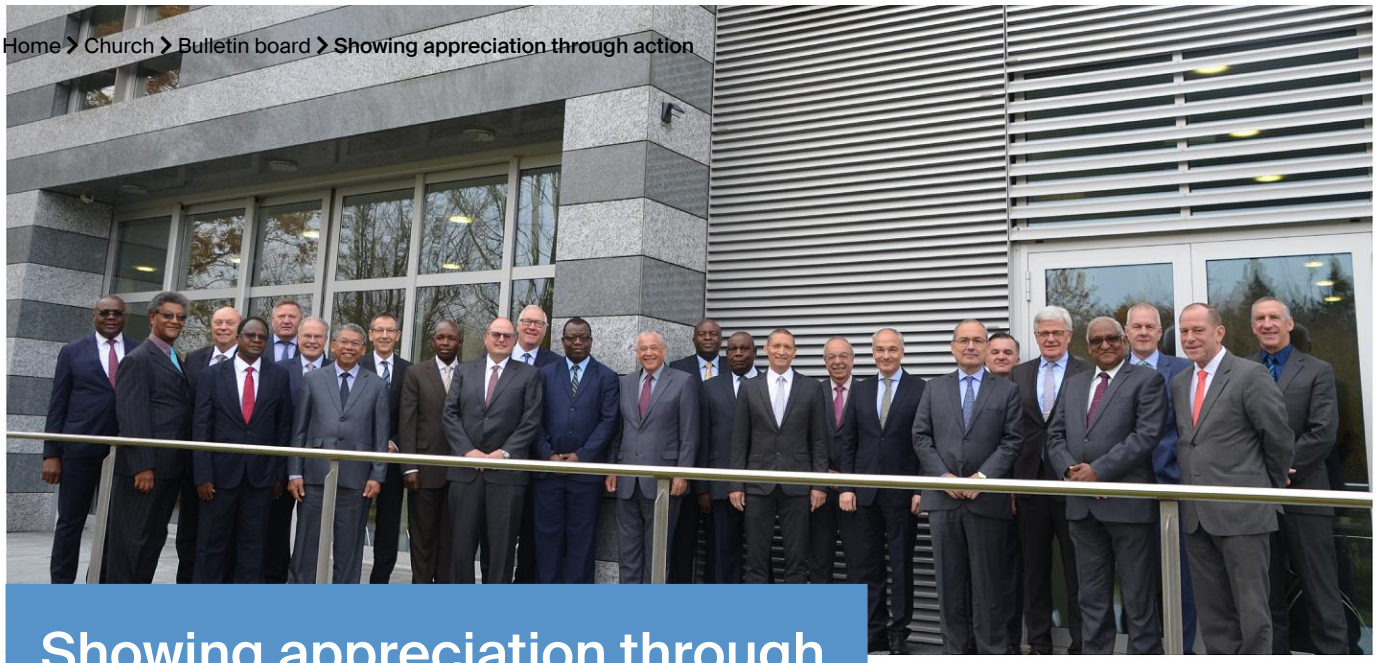


Showing appreciation through action

The most recent District Apostles' Meeting came to a close with a divine service for ministers of the New Apostolic Church that was broadcast throughout Europe. Prior to this, the Church leaders from all over the world had discussed numerous matters.

"We should never forget that the message of the sermon is always more important than the vocabulary used." The Church leader, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, reminded the ministers of this at the beginning of last Sunday's divine service. "We live in a world where so much emphasis is placed on words," he noted, pointing out that "especially when it comes to showing appreciation to our fellow human beings, let us place more importance on action than on words".

A growing church

The membership of the Global Church rose by 1.5 per cent last year. While there was a decline of around 1.1 per cent in Europe, South America and Oceania saw a slight increase. Africa reported the strongest growth, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, and South Africa.

In addition to membership development, the District Apostles also discussed the issue of brand protection. The New Apostolic Church International (NACI), whose head office is based in Zurich, is responsible for the worldwide protection of the word and figurative marks to prevent misuse.

Work in progress

The ongoing training of ordained ministers was on the agenda again. A previous meeting had shown that not all Regional Churches have an established training system. Posing an added challenge is the diversity of languages. NACI is now developing an e-learning programme for these regions, and a sample module was presented.

The international project management team also provided a status report on the various working groups (WGs). These include the Divine Service Guide Working Group, which develops the basis for standardised preaching at the global level; the Working Group Communication Europe, which is currently updating the design manual; and the CTM Steering Committee, which is currently finalising the textbooks for religious instruction in Europe.

Farewell and welcome

The District Apostles' Meeting began on Thursday with the traditional spiritual impulse given by the Chief Apostle. The topic this time was "Blessing and challenge" on the diversity of cultures and developments in the proclamation of the one gospel. The article will be published in a special edition of the *Divine Service Guide*.

For John L. Kriel this was the last District Apostles' Meeting and he was given a farewell. The District Apostle of Southern Africa will retire in mid December. Apostle Thomas Deubel was welcomed into the District Apostles' Meeting. Following his assignment as District Apostle Helper for the District Apostle Area Switzerland in September, he now took part in his first meeting of the highest decision-making body of the New Apostolic Church.

30 November 2023