

NACI creates new department for ecumenical outreach

Zurich. The international umbrella organisation of the New Apostolic Church, NACI, has decided to institutionalise its ecumenical outreach: the long-standing Working Group Contacts with Denominations and Religions has fulfilled its mandate. A department for ecumenical relations has been established in order to give appropriate attention to this subject.

This international coordination unit will serve as a point of contact for other denominations and religions. Other tasks include advising the international Church leadership and supporting the regional contacts.

The subject of ecumenism is important to the international Church leadership: “In order to maintain the relevance of ecumenical outreach in the long term, a transnational advisor must continue to be available. This coordination unit will serve as a contact point for other denominations and religions on behalf of the New Apostolic Church International.”

Until further notice, Bishop Peter Johanning and his deputy, Apostle Arne Herrmann, will take on this position. Both already represent the New Apostolic Church in the Council of Christian Churches in Germany.

The working group achieves its objectives

At the beginning of 2024, this central unit took over from the Working Group Contacts with Denominations and Religions (WG CDR). For around 25 years, this group handled ecumenical matters on behalf of the Church leadership. Its task was to clarify fundamental questions. What strategy is the international Church pursuing

in ecumenical relations? Is it possible to become a member of the various Councils of Christian Churches (WCC)? Where are the opportunities, where are the limits?

These questions have long since been answered. Today, the New Apostolic Church is one of the ecumenical churches, especially in Europe, but also in other countries around the world, as shown by numerous memberships in ecumenical organisations. In the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, and Germany there are WWC memberships at all levels.

A central point for cross-border contacts

Since 1 January 2024, a new system is being applied: a working group has been turned into an administrative department at NACI. “A good approach,” says Bishop Peter Johanning, who has been involved in ecumenical matters since the first group was established. “Today, the various Regional Churches see to the local and regional ecumenical activities themselves. In the meantime, all European Regional Churches have their own ecumenical advisors, who work towards a coordinated approach at the local and regional level. Contacts with other ecumenical churches are good and strong.” The same approach will now be taken by NACI for the worldwide work.

The Church leadership is particularly grateful to the members of the outgoing working group. Thanks to their many years of dedicated work, there are now good contacts and the means to even institutionalise this topic on a permanent basis.

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