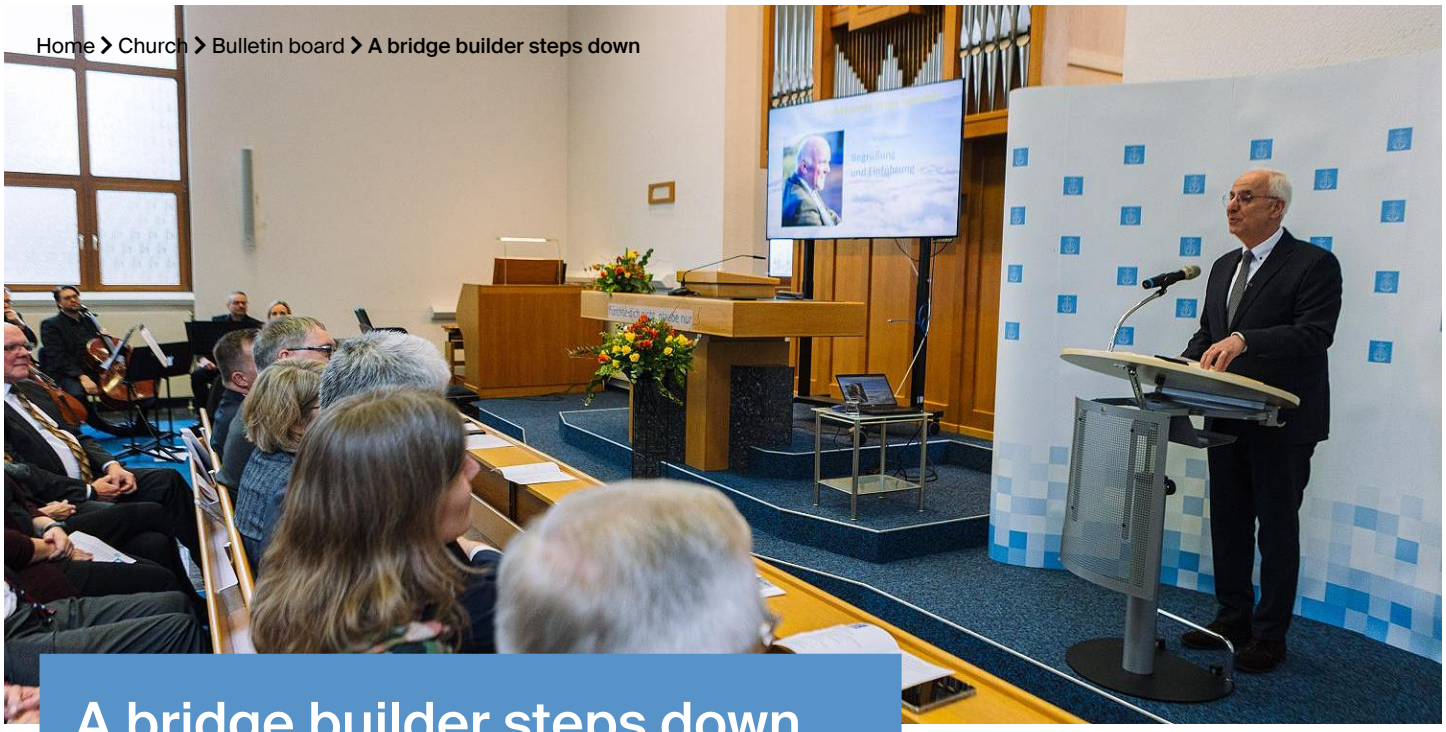


A bridge builder steps down

When it came to fostering ecumenical dialogue, he was a trailblazer in the New Apostolic Church. In a ceremony, the retired Bishop Peter Johanning received an official farewell for his work on the Church's ecumenical committees.

The motto of the ceremony was "Walking unknown paths ..." The event was moderated by Apostle Volker Kühnle (ret.), who had worked closely with Peter Johanning from the very beginning. Both were founding members of the Ecumenism Project Group, which was convened by Chief Apostle Richard Fehr in 1999. And both played a key role when the mandate was expanded in 2011 to include the Working Group Contacts with Denominations and Religions.

Bishop Johanning continued this work as a consultant for the New Apostolic Church International when the mandate was transferred into a coordination unit at the beginning of 2024. In this capacity, he also represented the Church as a delegate in the Council of Christian Churches in Germany (CCCG). Both responsibilities concluded with the Council's Autumn Assembly in 2025. On 30 January 2026, numerous companions from various denominations gathered at the New Apostolic Church Frankfurt-North to honour him.

As host, District Apostle Stefan Pöschel opened the ceremony with a spiritual message. Additional speakers included Reverend Maibritt Gustrau for the Protestant Church, Father Augustinus Sander OSB for the Catholic Church, Reverend Christopher Easthill as the CCCG chairman, Verena Hammes as the CCCG executive director, and Andrew Schäfer, representative for religious and

ideological affairs of the Protestant Church in the Rhineland. All expressed their gratitude and appreciation.

Addressing the assembly, Bishop Johanning quoted from Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider's sermon on 11 January 2026 in Mombasa, Kenya: "We support the unity in the church of Christ. We assign greater importance to the things that unite us—the longing for eternal life, the adherence to Christ's commandment, and the desire to be like Him—than to our differences."

Succeeding him in the Church's ecumenical work is Apostle Arne Herrmann, who has already familiarised himself with the role as a delegate to the Council of Christian Churches in Germany. His deputy is Bishop Matthias Grauer, bringing experience from his work with the Council of Christian Churches in Baden-Württemberg. Both come from southern Germany.

20 February 2026

