



The Making of the New Apostolic Church (9)

Apostles' Council 1851: Hope and Disappointment

In the year 1846 the Apostles – ten in number – had found a compromise that enabled them to continue the work begun in 1835. However, it had become impossible to achieve the great goals they had at first hoped to reach. Apostle Carlyle felt sure that he knew the reason: The “sacred number twelve” was incomplete, so contrary to what had been expected the Apostles could not be sent out in the full power of their office. He hoped for a change at Pentecost 1851 – but did his fellow Apostles share this hope?

Apostles' Council summoned

In 1846 it had been agreed that Cardale would re-convene the Apostles whenever he thought it right or two other Apostles requested it. In February 1851 he had received such a request from two Apostles. As agreed, Cardale summoned the Council, but did not want to bear responsibility for any negative consequences because the Apostles still differed in their opinions and so he prayed against “all possible evils” that might arise. “If good is produced,” he wrote to Drummond, “the two brethren taking on themselves the responsibility of causing us to be convened will deserve our gratitude.”

At present we do not know of any documents revealing the names of the two Apostles who asked for the Council to be summoned. It is very likely that Apostle Carlyle was one of them for he above all others urged the believers entrusted to his care to pray for a success of the great venture. He expected much: The number of Apostles was to be completed, the other Apostles were to “become fully active” and “become of one mind in all things”. Thus the ground was to be laid for what was still missing – the sending out of the Apostles. Through this act the Apostles would “receive power and commission as they have not yet”.

Great expectations raised

Thomas Carlyle, the Apostle for northern Germany, addressed this appeal to a small congregation in his working area. It was printed within days and “put into the hands of the rulers of the Churches in North Germany, for the use of the congregations under their care, and only in the congregations” so that all the faithful might be encouraged “at this important juncture in the history of the work that they may all with earnest prayer assist the Apostles”.

Apostle Carlyle stressed the importance of that event by a (typological) interpretation of the history of King David. David, he found, had been anointed king three times: At first secretly through the prophet Samuel (cf. 1 Samuel 16.13), next after Saul's death through the men of the tribe of Judah (cf. 2 Samuel 2.4) and finally through all Israel (cf. 2 Samuel 5.3). Carlyle considered the prophetic call of Apostles equivalent to the first anointing, the Separation on 14 July 1835 corresponded to the second anointing, and the third anointing would find a parallel when the Apostles were sent to the whole of Christendom. This meant

that since their Separation the Apostles exercised their ministry towards “those who received them”. As soon as they were sent in their full power “those whose hearts strive for perfection” would “ask them to take up their due position as heads of the catholic [= general Christian] church”. Afterwards “they who do not wish to be perfect” would “end up in the terrible hour of temptation” whereas those who accepted the Apostles would be “translated to the throne of God”.

Intense consultation

At Pentecost on 2 June 1851 the ten Apostles who were still active met in their nearly unused council chamber at Albury. Deputations of two Apostles each were sent to the Apostles Dalton and MacKenzie to urge them to return. The Apostles then met from 1 to 7 June and again on 8 August only to learn that Apostle MacKenzie’s attitude was unchanged and that Apostle Dalton had by then developed “serious doubts both as to any proof in Scripture of God’s purpose to restore Apostles and also as to the Divine character of the Work itself”.

The ten Apostles who had assembled in conference testified in a letter to Apostle Dalton that they stood firm in their faith, having felt God’s “presence and guidance” in the fulfilment of their duties in the five years since 1846. Once again, however, differences of opinion among the Apostles prevented firm action. Some thought inactive Apostles could be deposed and replaced. Others, Cardale included, demanded a special act of God for such a decision, but refused to give way to the thought that God might advise them to do so through prophecy.

Strengthen what has been achieved

Apostle Carlyle held fast to his hope of a more rapid development of the work. He believed that he would still be alive to experience the sending of the Apostles to all Christians. His fellow Apostles, however, were resigning themselves to the apostleship remaining incomplete in number and unable to reach the goals they had once aimed at.

Cardale did not expect the influx of large numbers but sought to improve the outward beauty of the divine services, the discipline in the ministry and the spiritual life of the members. As a consequence of this change of perspective he was permanently given the care of the Seven Churches in London (that had in fact been reduced to six after Westminster had been closed). Cardale also encouraged the building of an impressive new church building for the central church. This was built close to his residence and a richly decorated eastern chapel was added to it as the Apostle’s Chapel for England.

Apostle Carlyle’s lecture and other writings were published in German for the benefit of the members entrusted to him. English versions were published in Apostle Cardale’s “tribe” or working area – but with a difference: The references to a larger work to be done by Apostles were left out, and in a book entitled *Apostles Given, Lost and Restored* the paragraphs referring to the three anointings of David, that had been included in the German edition, did not appear. In England the believers were taught to cherish what had been achieved. The Apostles’ authority as rulers of the “churches” or congregations already gathered was stressed and the time when the Apostles would be sent was relegated further and further into the future.

Disappointment in Germany

Apostle Carlyle resigned himself to the decision his fellow Apostles had made, but his actions show how much he disapproved of their attitude. When they asked him in 1852 to contribute to a new edition of the *Liturgy* he wrote back suggesting that this was a fit task for those Apostles (like Dow, Perceval, Sitwell and Tudor and in part Armstrong and King Church) who had no “churches” or congregations to look after or, in other words, who had achieved little or nothing in their working areas.

Apostle Tudor had not even tried to address members of the Polish nation – whose former territory was at that time divided between Russia, Austria and Prussia. With Tudor’s assent Carlyle sent a Priest speaking Polish to the Poles in Prussia. Apostle Dow’s visit to Norway had been without result and Carlyle travelled to Norway and Sweden in the autumn of 1854. He taxed his body far too much, returned to Albury in a state of utter exhaustion and died there on the morning of 28 January 1855.

Carlyle’s death gave new urgency to pleas for complementing the number of Apostles, but once again the remaining Apostles refused to accept any new member to their circle. Northern Germany, formerly under the late Apostle Carlyle’s care, was now to be added to the regions under Apostle Woodhouse’s responsibility. Again the German ministers had to stomach a disappointment, but they did not give up the hope instilled into them by Apostle Carlyle. They continued to expect the Apostles to be sent to all Christians and then “to take up their due position as heads of the catholic church”.

Manfred Henke