



## **The making of the New Apostolic Church (10)**

### **Changes in Germany**

Apostle Carlyle died on 28 January 1855. Heinrich Josias Thiersch of Marburg, a former professor of theology, had worked closely with Apostle Carlyle. Entries in Thiersch's diary show that he still felt close to Apostle Carlyle even years after his death. But now Thiersch had to adjust and become used to working with his new Apostle Francis Valentine Woodhouse.

Woodhouse's first visit to the small university town of Marburg (Germany) was rather dramatic. On Wednesday, 8 August 1855 the local policeman delivered a letter prohibiting the divine services—and Thiersch chose to ignore it. On Saturday the Apostle arrived by train, and on Sunday morning the apostolic congregation assembled for a sealing service. While Thiersch and the Apostle were still in the sacristy he was told that the policeman had arrived and was taking down the names of those assembled. Thiersch asked the Apostle to leave the building and went to meet the policeman to divert his attention from the fleeing Apostle.

### **Changing circumstances**

Thiersch and the other ministers had become used to having frequent contact with Apostle Carlyle. But with Apostle Woodhouse this all changed. Carlyle had had a flat in Berlin and had spent a greater part of the year there or in other congregations he visited. Woodhouse, on the other hand, wrote to the ministers that the Apostles had to reside at Albury to keep close contact with each other. Instead of coming in person they had to act mainly through the ministers whom they had commissioned to perform the various tasks. Their meetings became quite formal. Instead of having the whole congregation assembled to have coffee and refreshments the Apostle invited selected ministers to have tea with him. On those occasions he did not discuss church matters. After his first invitation for tea with the Apostle and his family, Thiersch wrote in his diary that he had felt awfully bored. He preferred to discuss church matters with him.

### **Changing regulations**

Others may have found it even more difficult than Thiersch to accept the new Apostle's ways. In a circular written in his first year as a successor to Carlyle, Apostle Woodhouse addressed some resentments amongst ministers who thought that he was introducing different principles from those that had governed Carlyle's actions. There were no two ways about it, the Angels (Bishops), who had been Apostle Carlyle's closest associates in the congregations, had to accept changes. Woodhouse wanted them to believe that he did not differ from Carlyle, but that he had to rectify matters where they had misunderstood his predecessor. Carlyle had permitted certain exceptions from the rule, he wrote, and they had taken the exceptions to be the rule. In the pioneering days, he explained, Carlyle had found it necessary to do things or permit things that were against the rules and which he himself would have rectified once things had developed to a stage when "order can and must be established".

## **A new liturgy**

In proof of his assertion Woodhouse correctly stated that Carlyle had already given orders to start work on a revised liturgy. In 1853 a committee headed by Apostle Armstrong had passed a liturgy for all churches under Apostles to replace the versions published by individual Apostles. The forms had become so elaborate that several Priests were needed to celebrate Holy Communion. The German version of that liturgy was finally printed in 1862. Until that time the Priests had to read the services from the old liturgies that made it possible to hold a full service with just one Priest and one Deacon, but as soon as the new Apostle had taken up the reins he declared this practice to be against the rules.

## **Larger congregations**

If more Priests were needed, did it mean that smaller congregations had to be closed? The Apostle did not go as far as that, but he did not permit any more small congregations to be opened. In the past it had been normal for the founding members of new congregations to receive Holy Communion in the established churches until local apostolic ministers were locally found and congregations established. Now Apostle Woodhouse ruled that the future members had to attend services in the established church until at least 50 of them had been found. Of the 17 congregations that had been founded in Prussia while Apostle Carlyle was responsible we find that by December 1861 seven of them had less than 50 communicants. In other words, these congregations would never have been founded if the new rules had already applied. After Apostle Carlyle's death seven more congregations had been founded there by 1861—and they had the required number of communicants.

## **Educated ministers**

In Apostle Carlyle's time many ministers continued to earn their living in their old trades because the income from tithes was not sufficient to secure a livelihood for them and their families. Apostle Woodhouse aimed at reducing the number of Priests and restricting the founding of new congregations. By these means he hoped to maintain all Priests from tithes to give them more time for reading the Bible, prayer, and meditation. Otherwise he considered them unfit for their ministry. In the past congregations had often been founded and raised by journeyman artisans, but by 1861 most Angels were men who had received some form of higher education. From the pioneering times there remained the former journeyman artisans Carl Hennig at Liegnitz (Silesia) and Eduard Schwarz in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad); their number was complemented in 1858 by the former journeyman tailor Friedrich Wilhelm Schwarz, Eduard's brother, who was given charge of Hamburg. When the latter became an Apostle in the Netherlands he changed his surname to Schwartz.

## **Rothe's prominent position**

At that time there were 35 independent states in Germany; northern Germany was dominated by the kingdom of Prussia and that is where most Catholic Apostolic congregations were. Although Prussia was more tolerant than other German states local police sometimes obstructed the founding of new congregations. And when congregations had been established the church authorities urged the Catholic Apostolics to officially leave the established church, fearing that otherwise they might encourage others to join with the new faith. Here and there conflicts flared up over baptisms, marriages, and burials. Carl Rothe, a former Lutheran pastor, was the Angel (Bishop) of the congregation in Berlin, the Prussian capital, and spokesman for the "apostolic congregations in Prussia" when negotiating with the authorities. The Apostle's Pastor, Heinrich J. Thiersch, was his nominal superior, but being a subject of the Prince Elector of Hesse-Cassel, the Prussian officials considered him a "foreigner" who could not negotiate with them.

## **Subject to the higher powers?**

In addition, political developments in his native Hesse made the going hard for Thiersch. There the divine services of the apostolic church at Marburg, founded in 1849, were forbidden between February 1852 and January 1855 and again from August 1855 to August 1858. A prophecy by Heinrich Geyer, the only German Prophet ranking as an Angel or Bishop, had shown them how to circumvent the decree. Apostle Carlyle had condoned those practices and Apostle Woodhouse, though full of misgivings, did not act against Carlyle's ruling.

## **A discontented Prophet**

But soon another problem arose. Prophet Geyer was a native of the Kingdom of Hanover and near his former home he had found people who believed his message. He had even called three Priests, schoolmasters like him. Apostle Woodhouse decided against ordaining them and putting them in charge of congregations because it was prohibited by the state and the Apostle insisted on strict obedience to the authorities.

The Prophet found it hard to accept that decision, but there were other developments as well with which he was dissatisfied. Others, too, thought that the Lord's work was not being done as Apostle Carlyle would have wished.

**Manfred Henke**

## **Summary**

Apostle Woodhouse succeeded Apostle Carlyle on his death. Woodhouse spent less time in Germany than Carlyle had done. Carl Rothe, Angel of the church in Berlin, could act quite independently whereas Heinrich Thiersch, whose official position should have enabled him to supervise the local ministers, was hampered by political obstacles and could not really fulfil that task.

Certain measures introduced by the new Apostle, though aiming at larger congregations, more elaborate services, and a more educated priesthood, were seen by some ministers as a renunciation of Apostle Carlyle's admonition to seek for faster progress of God's work. This feeling was shared by the Prophet Heinrich Geyer and it was intensified when the Apostle refused to condone the illegal gathering of apostolic congregations by Priests whom he had called for work in his native Kingdom of Hanover.