

The significance of Y Adams vs OAC

A perspective on why this is not just another court case, as well as its implications for the long overdue process of administrative reform and transformation in the Old Apostolic Church (OAC). Her "crime" was misconduct, but she lifted the lid on much of what is wrong in the administration of the Church.

Court cases are nothing new to the OAC.

Born of a demoralizing spate of legal wrangling at the beginning of the previous century, followed by two further major schisms and legal battles of equal public note in 1968 and 1972, respectively, it may now be safely concluded that court cases are an integral part of the DNA of the Old Apostolic Church. Alternatively, it may (in lighter vein) also be said: what is an OAC without a court case now and then, or, when is your next court case?

And the real problem or issue at stake here? Leadership, leadership, leadership!!! It appears to be all about man's law and his ways; hope there is still room for divine intervention in the top structures of the OAC.

Compounded by the fact that the apostles continue to have exclusive control (congregations formally excluded) over the administration of the Church, it is no secret that the leadership has a credibility problem.

Yolanda Adams

Essentially a case of an employer acting against an employee (head office clerk of long-standing service) accused of being disloyal and acting against the best interest of the establishment by divulging (to her attorney) information about the Western Cape regional head office of the OAC that was considered to be confidential, sensitive and of a strategic nature. Following an internal tribunal by Top Management, the matter moved to the courts and all relevant parties agreed that the law should be allowed to take its course. And it did. Legal processes have as yet **not** been concluded. Regardless of the outcome, The FORUM believes that history will eventually validate Sister Yolanda Adams as the whistleblower whose actions rebooted the unstoppable quest for administrative reform and transformation in the OAC. A tragic heroine, she should then be proclaimed, in a saga which seems to have all the trappings of a classic Greek tragedy.

The **purpose** of this paper is to highlight some of the dynamics of the **impact** her case has had on the perceived impregnable citadel of the OAC empire. Therefore, in no specific order of priority, the following aspects of the case are intended to open a window on the theatrics in an arena in the OAC that remains to this day **off limits** to members/congregations - the real OAC - and most officers who seem to have no clue of what is happening within the inner circle of power in their own church. They seem to be cultivated like the proverbial mushroom, as far as the administration of their Church is concerned.

Furthermore, this is also an **ideal opportunity** to expose members/congregations to other aspects of the administration of their church that they may not be aware of. **Not to revive the past**, but just to

give **real content** to much of the idle talk and ill-informed opinions that are stalking the corridors and occupy many stages and altars in the OAC. Also, to attend to the prevalence of acute attacks of selective **amnesia** many of the senior officers in the Church are often seem to be afflicted by.

Because the **past informs the present** and the future, we sometimes have to dwell on the past no matter how uncomfortable it may be for some of us. And if there is **unfinished business**, it is merely a consequence of what took place in the past. But not the escapist **hogwash** contained in the teachings by many senior officers, of: *“forget about yesterday, focus on today and tomorrow is in God’s hands anyway”*. So, deal with it dear friend!!

Whistleblower

Fact of the matter is that somebody from within the fortress blew the whistle on what was transpiring behind the Jericho Walls of the OAC headquarters in the Western Cape Region. The ferocity (and cunning) with which Head Office apparently reacted to have the person court-martialled, merely vindicates the nobleness and justness of the cause by dissenting voices within the Church clamouring for justice, transparency, integrity and accountability in the administration of the OAC. A **limitless** budget (with no sanction by the congregations) for legal costs also seems to be in place to achieve the particular outcome desired by Top Management. It would seem that a sledgehammer is the only instrument Top Management has in its arsenal to kill a fly with, as had happened so often in the past. What if Top Management loses a court case? Who picks up the tab? To the observant eye, it brings to mind images of “How the West was Won”.

- OAC members/congregations (and most officers) were awakened to alleged irregularities in the administration of their church when, inter alia, a newspaper (Die Son) got whiff of it. Despite being **prompted** by the leadership not to read the newspaper, they continued to monitor events via the same newspaper until the case ended up at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (**CCMA**). Up till that point, Top Management (and true to the nature of the beast) still did not deem it prudent to take members/congregations into their confidence about a matter the whole outside world was already privy to. Until today, the newspapers and The FORUM are still the only **credible sources** of information for members/congregations of the OAC. From Top Management, all they got thus far was secrecy and innuendo, thereby leaving them no alternative but to resort to rumour, conjecture and speculation. In fact, conventional wisdom among the rank and file in the OAC lamentably has it that Top Management had won all their battles and that the enemy (so-called disgruntled former officers and The FORUM) had been taught a lesson they would never forget. No respect for the truth. And apparently neither any respect for the cash cow (members/congregations) that puts food on the table for a very special group of individuals, occupying lofty positions of trust in the Church.
- A complaint of an **unfair labour practice** was filed by Adams at the beginning of 2008, which was settled towards the end of that same year. As part of the settlement agreement, she was not allowed to discuss the terms of the agreement with the media. Although the case was parochial in essence, it appeared to have assumed **national dimensions** overnight for the OAC. Whereas the Western Cape (apparently) traditionally employ the services of a specific firm of attorneys, the Apostolate (**Johannesburg**) reportedly stepped in and flew

down to Cape Town their own set of top-flight legal experts (at what cost), ostensibly to ensure that this “bull” was truly dead. Why? What was wrong with the Western Cape lawyers?

In an unprecedented move by the Apostolate, they also appointed a **sub-committee** (Secretary and the Chair of the Apostolate, as well as three apostles from other areas) before which the Western Cape Chairman and the Regional Secretary of the Church had to appear in this regard. Does the Church (congregations) know about this development? And if they do, the only sources where they could get it from had to be the newspapers and rumour. An interesting upshot of this initiative appears to be the fact that since the visit of this esteemed delegation to Cape Town, the local **Apostle Forum** now meets every Thursday at Head Office to discuss business, as opposed to the customary (exclusive) meetings between the Chairman and the Regional Secretary where all the **important business decisions** regarding the Western Cape used to be taken prior to the Yolanda Adams saga. The relevant Apostle Forum had a non-white majority at the time, implying that those earlier business meetings had been another “Whites only roadshow”. Because congregations are formally excluded from the administrative processes in their own church, members (and most officers) will never know the truth about these crucial developments.

- When Adams, in 2009, lodged a **grievance complaint** about unfair treatment she was subjected to at her work place following the settlement of 2008, another sub-committee (two apostles) from up north was appointed by the Apostolate to attend to the matter. The issue later ended up at the CCMA, where the respective parties had to appear. She lost her claim of an unfair labour practice; was consequently suspended from work and subsequently **dismissed** in her absence. What needs to be highlighted here, is the fact that the OAC (in **sinister** and inappropriate fashion) apparently managed to have insight into the (confidential) depositions of her and her attorney to the South African Police Service (SAPS) before the trial, thereby affording the OAC team an **unfair advantage**. It wreaks of mafia tactics and strategies, even pointing to the possible engagement of the services of secret agents paid out of church funds. What else are they capable of? Tapping telephone lines and hacking into e-mails of the enemy? And before we forget, this is the Old Apostolic Church and its apostles that are being discussed here. Yolanda Adams and her attorney are also members of the same church. Old Apostolics, like Old Testament Israel, may be forgiven for steadfastly believing that their Apostles will always win their battles because God is (ostensibly) on their side. In the case of the ill-gotten information from the files of the SAPS, should the success of that operation then also be attributed to God? The answer can be in the affirmative only if it is assumed that the leaders of the OAC are serving two Gods simultaneously. The question is: have there been other **similar incidents** of deliverance by Mammon of which members/congregations (and officers) are not aware of? This is all the more reason why comfort zones in the OAC should be disturbed or routed.
- Adams has since then referred an unfair dismissal case to the **Labour Court**. Meanwhile Top Management, in a newsletter, informed members that the Government had decided not to proceed with charges against the OAC. Fact of the matter is that **Government** did not have any court case against the OAC (see FORUM paper dated 25 August 2011). Also, that they (Head Office) had been handed a clean bill of health by the auditors. Reference to Government must rank as the crudest piece of **disinformation** Head Office can ever dish out

to congregations (the Church). It is deceitful and not becoming of persons who profess to be the anointed of the Lord. It is subterfuge at its brilliant best. However, it is also still in tune with the kind of mentality that sanctions the illegal procurement of information from the secret files of state departments. Also, a clear indication of panic stations around Head Office - strategic blunders and muddled thinking. And because the majority of members/congregations (and officers) have virtually been reduced to hapless and gullible spectators in their own church, they could not see this one coming or react to it.

The truth is that her (Adams) case is scheduled to serve before the Labour Court on 14 – 15 February 2013. And the OAC is expected to be represented there. Important to remember here is the fact that there was no need for Head Office to **disinform** (untruth) the Church about the legal quicksand in which it is still stuck. More important still, is the fact that the Church was being disinformed by the same officers who are being royally remunerated to serve its best interest. This kind of act was treasonous. Should the **culprits** not be hanged (like they did to Sister Adams) for serious misconduct? And what is worse, they determine and write out their own pay cheques, with no sanction by a governing body where congregations are duly represented. And had such a body been in existence, it would have instructed the Apostolate to replace the current management team in the Western Cape with one that was in step with the times and one that would serve the best interest of the OAC. In a civilized environment, such heads would have rolled ages ago. Oh well, with the kind of **comfort zone** they presently command, why should administrative reform and transformation in the OAC be a priority for the current leadership of the Church? It sounds like lines from the script of a Hollywood thriller movie.

And why the necessity to re-assure the Church that the auditors gave Head Office a **clean bill** of health? This only happens when something had been amiss. And apparently there was. The OAC's dilemma is that they apparently (as a rule of thumb) did not submit the books of account of the Church to an independent firm of external auditors (Chartered Accountants) for scrutiny, as required of institutions who deal with public/trust funds. **Auditing** has apparently been done by an officer (with accounting background and affiliation) with the rank of Four-fold Officer and closely allied to Head Office. Clean bills of health had apparently been the norm, until the Adams saga broke. And, so thorough had the bookkeeping been that no one apparently ever picked up on the hundreds of thousands of rands that the OAC had been **defrauded** out of over a period of close to a year by another head office official. It was only detected when the **bank** apparently alerted Head Office to it. And even then this incident would apparently have been allowed to die a quiet death, had it not been for the Adams saga that catapulted it onto centre stage. The ensuing court case, which was the topic of prominent media attention, ended with a settlement between Head Office and the relevant official, which apparently left an uneasy sense that there had to be much more to this matter than meet the eye. It did not rule out the impression of a mutually beneficial arrangement that possibly let some important individuals off the hook, including the internal auditing outfit which should have expired on the gallows. **Nothing happened** to them, they are still happy in the service. And so are the Regional Secretary and the Apostle (Administration). The clean bill of health from the (required) external auditing firm apparently only came after the visit to Cape Town by the various sub-committees mandated

by the Apostolate. And the manner in which the congregations have been informed about it is reminiscent of a naughty boy reporting back that he had now been rehabilitated. And whether that is indeed the case, remains to be seen. However, for this level of work performance, the OAC (members/congregations) pay some of the highest salaries in the business.

- Whereas the OAC is essentially a federal structure by nature consisting of nine semi-autonomous regions, why then do the **Western Cape Region** seem to loom so disproportionately large on its landscape? And why does it appear to be so **vulnerable**? A simple and innocent question it may seem like, but the answer happens to be a long and loaded one. However, a quick introduction would be: this is the region that still seems **trapped** in the long shadow cast over the OAC landscape by the indomitable legacy of the late Apostle George Campbell, longest serving and the most powerful apostle the OAC has ever known. He was also the master builder of the current administrative structure of the Church. The Western Cape was his Fort Knox. It is also the theatre where the “murder” (controversial removal from office) of the late Apostle Robert Lombard took place, giving birth to the now well-established Reformed Old Apostolic Church (ROAC).

It is **necessary** to point out that this is not a vendetta against the person of the late George Campbell; the poor man is in no position now to defend himself. However, it is **also necessary** to point out that no **meaningful discussion** about the OAC will be complete without reference to the **consequences** of his long incumbency in office as Chief Executive of the Church during a crucial period in its history. He was, after all, the architect of most of what is under discussion here and his legacy can, therefore, not escape the tyranny of the magnifying glass.

The Apostle Campbell is remembered, inter alia, for:

- Being the **master builder** of the current administrative architecture of the OAC. An incumbency apparently renowned for little or no regard for opposition and freedom of expression.
- Being primarily responsible in 1972 for the removal from office of the late Apostle **Lombard**, which precipitated the fundamental changes the OAC has seen since then. It was also the advent of the spiritual downward spiral, the OAC has still not been able to arrest (even now). In **2013**, the OAC may be financially secure but spiritually insecure, the exact opposite of what it was in **1927** at the inception of the Church.
- Enshrining in the church structures the status of non-White incumbents as **Helper Apostles**, including the apostles for Mozambique and Botswana (an apartheid ploy, because “Whites” could not be subservient to “non-Whites”). They had no executive powers or say in financial matters, but performed the spiritual duties of a fully-fledged apostle. And at the time of his removal from office, the Apostle Lombard was more senior (by far, and respected) in service as an apostle than a youthful George Campbell, who could have been his son. Non-white congregations were blissfully unaware of this **differentiation** in status. Well, so much for honesty, integrity and serving a **Living God**. However, the status of Helper Apostle **evaporated** from the church structures in 1993, when the National Party (apartheid)

was about to be consigned to the scrapheap of South African politics. Now, if the position of Helper Apostle was divinely-inspired and therefore one of the important pillars in the top structure of the OAC, why did it have to be **abolished**? Irrefutable proof then that the Apostolate, under the command of Campbell, was not serious (if not irresponsible) and was playing political games in a church of the stature of the OAC – no different to what the (notorious) **biblical** Kings Saul and Ahab sometimes did. All Helpers (who have already been doing the work of full apostles) were **re-ordained** after 1994, so as to make the OAC seem **politically correct**. Therefore, the OAC “White” leadership has yet to confound charges that the Church had been tacitly supporting the worst aspects of the obnoxious, ungodly, dehumanizing and criminal policy of apartheid.

- Controversially changing in 1993 the format for the serving of the sacrament of the **Holy Communion** (*Golgota for the highly respected and influential **Overseer William Blouws**, who questioned it*). No drinking from the same cup and stainless steel tweezers to dish out the bread with, thereby obviating **physical contact** between “non-White” and “White” members, despite their sharing the same faith and God. It was an era that was unmistakably marked by fundamental socio-political change in South Africa, but as OAC Head Campbell opted for **cosmetic changes** and thereby leaving the Church (until 2013) with toxic apartheid baggage. The OAC family has yet to deal with its (racist) apartheid past. The customary monthly ritual for the **remission** of sins will not bail out the OAC because you are only forgiven when the same sin is not repeated, a hurdle the OAC and its leadership could not clear until now.
- Several **amendments** to the church constitution, without consultation with or approval by the church (members/congregations). The church constitution is out of line with the national constitution. Constitutional reform should be the starting point for the transformation that is required in the administration of the OAC. Without **constitutional reform**, the apostles of the OAC may be accused of having the one hand on the bible and the other one in the till. The stage could soon be reached where many of their followers might say to them: “Sorry, we cannot hear what you are preaching because the till is ringing too loud”. And as long as they appear to remain averse to constitutional reform, they have no moral right to claim to be the Ambassadors for Christ. More important though, white minority rule in the OAC in 2013 can only endure as long as the non-White (blacks and coloureds) majority allow it to continue to run a once proud and trailblazer of a church into the ground. Therefore, “non-Whites” in the OAC actually should not complain about **racism**, because of their inaction they deserve every single blow that rains down upon them. Maybe a little more discrimination is needed to spur them into action. And because the OAC is largely still a **racially segregated** community, senior “non-White” officers should realize that their “White” colleagues take their **cue** from them regarding matters of race and colour. So, can “Whites” in the OAC really still be blamed when they pick up signals from their “**non-White**” counterparts (their brothers and sisters) that discrimination is OK?

There is a distinct sense that many of the senior “non-White” officers, especially apostles, deliberately choose to **look the other way** when they are supposed to (confront) address issues concerning racial discrimination and other alleged irregularities in the Church. They are apparently often heard to say: “no, we rather prefer to concentrate on the spiritual side of things and not the natural; and let the **culprits** (meaning their “white” counterparts) pay for their sins some day”. What a cop out!! Meanwhile, they accept and indulge in all the perks (**natural things**) that go with their positions. And they are in the majority? So, it has to be assumed that they are either willing accomplices in this moral mess, or that they are completely out of their league - **incapable** of mastering church administration. Or, could it be that they have been deliberately selected to be manipulated? It brings to mind the old adage about the **colonization** of Africa by the Europeans: *“When they arrived on our shores, we had the land and they only their bibles. Today we sit with their bibles, and they with our land”*. Well, so much for self-respect and dignity as far as many of the senior “non-white” leaders of the OAC are concerned. And then they have the **audacity** to flex their muscles and give their respective “non-White” congregations “hell” over the most innocuous of issues and incidents, as if they were wielding real power in the Church. However, the problem awaiting them is the fact that they will be succeeded by a younger (educated) generation of Old Apostolics who are going to frown upon the legacies of their fathers.

- An unprecedented incumbency of twelve (12) years as Chairman of the Apostolate. The normal tour of duty for a Chairman is two (2) years. Those **twelve years** were crucial for growth and development in the OAC, but **nothing visionary** and uplifting happened on his watch. It was rather marked by a steady slide towards an abyss of archaic authoritarian rule and incompetence among a certain hue of officer the Church is still burdened with these days. Nepotism seemed to have thrived and hallowed positions such as Secretary of the Apostolate, Regional Secretaries and Apostle: Head of Administration, were enshrined as appointments for life, thereby guaranteeing the incumbents not only a **newfound career**, but also turning them into some of the highest paid church officers in the country, if not the world. **No term limits**, no formal training, no special skills and no independent vetting authority to obviate the vagaries of correct attitude/connections/ blood line/the blessing or curse of having a “white” skin from influencing appointments. And then there are the appetizing prospects of a golden handshake and pension benefits at the end of a glorious career of low work output, but high maintenance in terms of remuneration. **No value added**, only individuals pursuing lucrative executive “careers”; the likes of which would not survive in a civilized environment – no accountability, no shame, no remorse.

Campbell was chairman of the Apostolate (est. 1984) from 1987 to 1999. When the Conference of Apostles was founded in 1995, he became the first chairman and served until 1999. When he stepped down from this **all powerful** status he commanded, the constitution was amended so that the term of office for a chairman was not only reduced to two (2) years, but his powers were also considerably diminished. By the time the first non-White incumbent took office (in

the new South Africa) it had degenerated into (practically) a **titular/ceremonial** position. True to tradition, real executive power in the OAC (since its inception) remained the preserve of the **White male**. The most powerful position in the OAC today is that of Secretary of the Apostolate, which is safely and firmly in the hands of a “White” incumbent who still has some years to go before retirement. Knowing this set-up, what kind of a “non-White” person would still accept the position of chairman under such conditions, especially in the new South Africa? Maybe for the pecuniary benefits (**natural things**)?

- And when apartheid was abolished and the **reform era** dawned in South Africa, new top management structures with impressive titles such as The Conference of Apostles, Board of Management, etc., were introduced (no consultation with or approval by the Church) with him as the Chair of everything executive in the OAC. And despite them all being paid officials, they were apparently **untouchable** and accountable only to themselves. No independent regulatory body to keep them on their toes. It was also the advent of the new “exit” by South African “whites” (many of them OAC members) who started packing for Perth, Toronto, London, New Zealand, USA and such enticing destinations. This was seen as an opportunity to establish OAC cells in those places, thereby giving the OAC a highly questionable **international image**. Overnight, it provided certain Apostles (and their dear wives) in South Africa with the prospect of looking forward to royal all expenses paid annual excursions overseas to service the flocks over there. And again, it had **racial overtones**, because it seems to be only “white” apostles and senior officers that go on these trips. International travel, therefore, became a new and ever-increasing budget item (what class of **air tickets** and what grade of **hotels**?). If the OAC had truly gone international, why not ordain all the officers required locally (apostles included) in the respective countries? And again, there is no fully representative regulatory authority in the OAC to keep a vigilant eye on the running of this international outfit and its finances.
- An unprecedented **proliferation** in the number of officers following the removal of the Apostle Lombard in 1972, apparently a calculated ploy to “divide and rule” in order to neutralize any further attempts at challenging the new power structure. Whereas the Lombard era was renowned for a crop of **exceptionally gifted** and **accomplished** officers, the **stampede** of the Campbell protégés also seemed to have brought to the stage a calibre of person (officer) that the OAC needed like the proverbial hole in the head. This increase in numbers also found its way to the list of persons (officers) making a career/living off church funds and therefore begs the question: is the church getting its money’s worth out of this coterie of “public servants”? Worst still, is the absence of a regulatory body with due representation from the congregations to monitor and evaluate the employment, work performance and remuneration of these extremely fortunate people – a billowy wage bill. A proper **work study** exercise should prove that a transformed OAC could do with about 50% (fifty) less of the current number of paid and non-paid officers. No wonder there is resistance to reform and transformation. As long as the exclusive control over the administration resides with the apostles, so long they will be seen having to perform high-wire **balancing acts** like circus trapeze artists, or

principal film actors who have to do their own high risk stunt acts. Is that what apostles are supposed to do?

- Apparently spending practically the entire post-1972 era, until his tragic demise, trying to erase from the Church the legacy of the Apostle Lombard by **reinventing** the OAC in order to get as much distance between it and the new ROAC, which chose to remain true to the traditions of the founding fathers (and Christ). Congregations were also arrogantly and **unceremoniously stripped** of the authority they had over their monthly incomes and subsequently dragooned into a new system (the current system) of central command that is (in a sense) reminiscent of the old Soviet Union style of governance. Allegations of apparent **racial discrimination** in the appropriation of church funds between “White” and “non-White” congregations, which (inter alia) resulted in the removal from office of the outspoken Apostles Lombard and Ndlovu, also continue to abound in the OAC. That is why there are ample grounds for making the case that the OAC of today is fundamentally no longer the Church founded by the Apostle Klibbe. Nothing wrong with **change**, but then the leadership should be honest about it and not try to have members/congregations (and officers) believe that nothing has changed in their Church. Even the people outside who are being targeted on Monday and Thursday evenings for conversion to the OAC, know that they are being confronted by a different animal. Growth and development statistics in the OAC seem to maintain a consistent **downward trend**, while salaries and the numbers for the ordination of new officers seem steadily on the **increase**.
- A sad testimony to the **quality** (of most) of the current leadership the OAC seems to be hamstrung by, is the fact that they still appear to be trapped in the outdated Campbell straightjacket. Observing the actions and views of many current senior officers in the Western Cape, it is as if they are still marching to the tune of the drum of their late mentor whose tenure of office ended in a less fortunate manner. Having been at the helm of the OAC for almost forever, there is hardly anything worthwhile in his legacy that the OAC can build on for the future. What a waste – and how many pay cheques and missed opportunities/blunders later? His followers seem to lack **innovation** - no discernible signs of realizing that the time for peaceful change is running out, or, that the ivory towers of the OAC are losing the battle for survival (especially) in the impoverished (economically and socially) non-white townships around the country. A major part of the problem is the fact that (too many of) the calibre of officers responsible for these townships seem hopelessly out of touch, not only with the thinking of their own Head Office, but also the changing socio-political landscape around them. A chain, it is said, is only as strong as its **weakest link**.

About the great King Saul and his son (Jonathan), an enterprising and unconventional young David lamented after their deaths in battle: “How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished” (2 Sam 1: 27, King James Version 1611).

Comfort zone

- The concern by The FORUM over the comfort zone occupied by the apostles and certain senior officers, should not be construed as being a case of **sour grapes**. It is about the custody and management of public funds (trust money) and assets by paid officials of the OAC, over whose actions there is no regulatory supervision by a **fully representative body** of the Church. It is about **careerism/jobs** (and attendant perks) at Head Office and elsewhere, which seems to have reached the stage where it takes precedence over anything else in the appropriation of church funds. It is about a public image and infra-structure of the Church that have to be corrected. It is about the **future** of the OAC, the planning/building for which should start today. Members/congregations are excluded from the administrative processes in their own Church, a situation propped up by the current deficient constitution of the Church. It is about a constitution that was drafted (and continually amended) by a handful of apostles without the consent of the Church (members/congregations), their paymaster.

The **comfort zone**, inter alia, entails:

- Unfettered **exclusive control** over the administration, finances and assets of the Church by the apostles and a group of paid senior officers. They are perceived as being accountable only to themselves. They are also perceived to be untouchable. Any member or officer who dares to cross their path, is met with the full force of their authority in the Church. And if taken to court, there seems to be no concern about the amount of money (public funds) that is spent to get them off the hook. **Freedom** of expression is not tolerated and **dissent** from among the ranks of officers invariably results in arbitrary removal from office. Excommunication is also an option, despite the creed that *“once an apostolic always an apostolic”*. The **unwritten** rule seems to be: “do as you are told, and shut the h..l up”. Although a powerless, voiceless and voteless mass of people, Old Apostolics would still faithfully and conscientiously commit their tithes when indirectly threatened and scared stiff to do so by way of exposure to carefully selected texts from Scripture and targeted teachings. Changes to the constitution, and this apparently happens at the drop of a hat, are the exclusive preserve of the apostles. It is off limits to the congregations, who are in fact the real church. So, why would they (top management) be keen to agree to wholesale reform and transformation of the administration of the Church? There can be no substitute for constitution-based and fully representative regulatory supervision at all levels in the Church. **“Who guards the guard”**, is the dilemma of the administration of the OAC.
- Royal **remuneration** packages determined and paid out by Top Management unto themselves. Perks include self-approved salary increases, liberal retirement benefits, corporate credit cards, housing allowances, motor vehicle schemes, etc. No work performance evaluation from outside, in order to inform pay progression and probity. The FORUM does not **begrudge** incumbents their “cosy” situation. In fact, we are optimistic about the fact that the OAC is able to look so well after its officials, as opposed to other major churches who **cannot afford** it. The FORUM’s obsession is about the absence of proper formal regulatory supervision over this

aspect of the Church finances. In terms of the present set-up, the OAC is trapped in the situation where Top Management is policing itself. And they get quite agitated when reminded or questioned about it. How does this mess (corrupt practices) get beyond an auditor, without any **qualified reports**? No wonder there is no affinity at Head Office for the services of independent external auditors.

Outside the circle of apostles, certain other **senior management officers** were also allowed to live in church houses (primarily a White preserve). Did members/congregations know about this? Following the departure from office by the Apostle Campbell, they were apparently allowed to purchase these properties at below market value. Motor vehicle schemes were apparently also adjusted so as to enable them to acquire more expensive vehicles at reasonable rates. In addition, Head Office became a **lucrative** career path for several fortunate individuals. In the absence of the necessary checks and balances in a system of this magnitude, it remains an open question as to how secure the interests of the OAC really are. A Head Office **policing itself**, cannot be the solution. The current system is not sustainable and therefore not in the best interest of the Church. And still the OAC continues to pay excellent salaries to keep such a system in place.

- Annual **overseas trips** to minister to pockets of ex-pat South Africans is an area that seems to be casually treated as just another series of field trips around the countryside. This is a budget item that escalates by the year. Although it could possibly be proven that nothing untoward is happening under this portfolio, it fails to erase the **impression** of glitzy, trendy, globe-trotting apostles/senior officers and their wives who cannot wait for their next trip to materialize. They travel **thousands** of kilometres (at great cost) not to preach to the world (as Jesus and his apostles would have done), but only to have fellowship with miniscule pockets of ex-pats who are converted already. If apostles and relevant other officers were to do this on a **rotational basis** among themselves, it might serve to appease inquiring minds and at the same time build **capacity** in leadership circles. But then it also appears to be another “whites only” preserve. It is presumed that the numbers abroad **justify** these trips. And if the numbers suffice, why not ordain all the required ranks of officers from among the ex-pats in their various countries? It will make **economic sense**, especially at a time when churches are tightening their belts. But no, this seems to be another plum niche for the elite of the OAC. And the **moral issue** is: how many of the ex-pats happen to be **next of kin** of the travelling officers and their wives, who might be kicking their heels all year long until the next flight to a happy family re-union (at OAC expense) abroad? As in the case of the civil service and most other institutions, the **golden rule** is that official trips should be separated from private ones. And again, there is no authority to monitor this aspect and to see that **ethical codes** are observed by the mighty in the OAC.
- The **asset management** portfolio is an area that should be brought into sharper focus. Tenders, contracts, failed deals, corruption and major losses immediately come to mind. But the OAC essentially is also a **business**, with directorships and shares coming into play in cases where companies (allied to the Church) have probably been registered. With companies come issues such as **investment policies**,

shareholders meetings, dividends, directors fees, special bonuses and the possibility of corruption, for which there is no watchdog in the OAC. It begs the question: if the Apostolate is the highest authority in the OAC and the Conference of Apostles a **toothless tiger**, who keeps the Apostolate in check? This is where constitutional reform will bequeath to the OAC a **national congress** that will be the highest authority in the OAC to which the Apostolate would be answerable to and where congregations are directly represented. The OAC can no longer afford to have an executive organ (Apostolate) that is without supervision and exposed to the likelihood of being susceptible to **rogue tendencies**. And worst of all, reference here is about the actions of a very special class of spiritual leaders on this planet. Heaven only knows if there are enough hours in a day for them to attend to God's work as well.

This is all the more reason why a handful of apostles can no longer be allowed to hold exclusive sway over an administration of such magnitude. The OAC financial powerhouse of 2013 is a **far cry** from the simple business enterprise (company, shares, shareholders and dividends) of 1927, over which the Apostle Klibbe wrestled in court with his former parent body. Congregations are the **real shareholders** and should, therefore, be allowed to take their **seat at the table**. If left in abeyance, this issue will become a time bomb ticking away in the basement of the OAC. Asset management alone, especially the manner in which the OAC is structured, is ample indication of how complicated the reform and transformation process of the Church administration can be. Hence, the appeal to leadership to timeously start creating an enabling environment for the commencement of the process. Now that this specific issue is out in the open, the **public debate** around it can only deepen and intensify.

- And then there is the “clincher”, the dreaded **Blue Book** (THE ORDER) – the ultimate **insulator** that shields top leadership from impulses from the masses (and officers). One of the precepts is that you do not question the wisdom or instructions/directives of a superior. Difference of opinion, as a matter of policy, is frowned upon and often interpreted by intellectually challenged officers as being sacrilegious. Without further elaboration, it has to be stated that this is a **blunt instrument** that not only enhances the comfort zone of the leadership, but also relegates the OAC to the leper colony in a free society. It may also be argued that by keeping the noses of Old Apostolics **seven days a week** to the Blue Book grindstone, they will (hopefully) not have the time to think about (or wonder) what the apostles are doing with the money and assets of the Church; or, that they are perhaps being led to believe that the current system of administration is what really pleases God. Such a comfort zone is **ill-founded** and, in the case of a church like the OAC, nothing less than evil.

The only other colour-coded books (in the same category) in recent history, are: the **Red Book** of Mao Tse Tung of China and the **Green Book** of Muammar Ghaddafi of Libya. Prominent among the other ones without colour are “Mein Kampf” by Adolf Hitler and The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The

leadership of the OAC, therefore, find themselves in interesting company. So scared (apparently) are OAC members and officers of the Blue Book, that the Church ought to guard against it becoming part of the stock phrase of the Afrikaans language: “*so bang soos n Ou Apostolie vir n Blou Boek*”. Going from the sublime to the ridiculous, would be the price to pay for sustaining the current comfort zone.

And contrary to Jesus and his apostles, as well as the kings and prophets of Old Testament Israel, who would ride out in the lead (first) chariot in battle with the world outside, the top leaders of the OAC studiously avoid battle by shying away in contrived meetings or reposing in posh subsidized mansions while expecting of ordinary members/congregations (who they have formally excluded from the administrative processes of their own church) to brave the odds by promoting and defending the OAC. As far as Christ and His gospel are concerned, this is just **too much for comfort** for apostles in the 21st century. And how does the OAC concludes all its gatherings: “*As it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be. World without end, AMEN*” ?????

- **Reform** and transformation should bring about a brand new constitution with all the necessary **checks and balances** to ensure good and democratic governance, as well as creating the ideal environment to allow the OAC to develop to its full potential - something the world has not yet seen since the inception of the Church in 1927. Let alone, the years following the departure of Jesus and the passing of the original apostles. The biblical injunction is: “you will do more, because you will have more time”. Judging by the performance of the current OAC and its leaders, it just goes to show how far off base we are. This can only be corrected once the hands of the anointed have been **liberated** from counting money and attending to bricks and mortar. That is why the comfort zone cannot be left alone. Its very existence is an **affront** to the apostolic mission the OAC has to sustain and, therefore, needs to be dismantled without reservation.
- Broadly speaking, the principal reason why the current comfort zone should go, is: the absence of an elected, fully representative body (congregations included) to which the Apostolate and any other executive organ are answerable to. Furthermore, the engagement of the services of an independent external auditing firm (chartered accountants) which will not award a structurally flawed administration such as the current one of the OAC with “clean bills of health”/unqualified reports until such time as a new church constitution has been put in place. Also (as a matter of policy and enforcement), the excise from the entire body of the OAC, all residual pockets of alleged continued racist and other related practices in order to enable the Church to take up its rightful place as a respected member of the religious community on the planet.

Significant

Other court cases in the Western Cape and other regions of the Church, have been about finite issues where the respective regional head offices could, with the help of the OAC cheque book and top-flight lawyers from the secular world, demonstrate their authority and might over small men and women who dared to offend them. The Adams case is about **opening** up a Pandora's Box and revealing to members/congregations what is happening behind the high walls of the OAC. If only it had been a success story about excellence, vibrant growth and glory of the Church that is supposed to be that shining city on the hill, all the publicity would have been worth the while. At best, it now ought to serve as a **wake-up call** for members/congregations (and officers) who are serious about the well-being of their Church. The leaders of the OAC are not super men; they have feet of clay.

Reform

The road to reform has to start with Top Management **recognizing** that the architecture of the current administration of the Church is fundamentally (fatally) flawed. Followed by an **admission** by them that it cannot be a sound foundation on which to build a successful and dynamic OAC for the future. And then the acid test: demonstrating the **necessary will** to embrace and implement a programme for reform and transformation.

There can be no question about the only course and direction future developments regarding the administration of the OAC can take:

- **Smaller** regional (and national) head offices and **autonomy** to congregations. Incremental development according to a deliberate programme with inviolable time frames, taking into account a new modus operandi for managing capital expenditure and asset portfolios. Such a development should also considerably reduce the current astronomical salary/wage portfolio that is threatening the financial security of the Church.
- Routinely **elected**, democratically oriented church councils in congregations. No more appointed chairpersons. **Own Affairs** to be the preserve of congregations, subject to broad constitutional guidelines in order to ensure a general OAC image, vision and mission.
- Direct representation by congregations in regional and national bodies of the Church, taking care of **General Affairs**. Congregations must take **ownership** of the church. Regional and national congresses to be a permanent feature on the calendar of the Church. National congress to be the **highest authority** in the Church, not the Apostolate. Four-fold Officers (the real seat of **executive power**, not the apostles) should be allowed to assume their rightful role as the **Defenders** of the Faith and the Church.
- Establishment of **permanent** in-house structures to formally (and **independently**) deal with issues for conciliation, mediation and arbitration; thereby obviating the current archaic system of the erratic hiring and firing of persons (officers). And also bring under control the incidence of court cases and the consequent wasteful spending on legal costs.
- **Realignment** and balancing of the forces between the clergy and the administration of the Church. Keeping the apostles away from the **cash register**. Revisiting the role and status of **women** in the church structures, should be a constant agenda item until parity has been reached (the closest confidant of Jesus was a woman, and the OAC once had women as deacons).

- Formal **training** (in-house or otherwise) for ordained officers and other office-bearers.
- Regional and national **formal structures** for Sunday Schools and the youth wing, as well as programmes for adults. **Bible literacy**, the Achilles heel of the OAC, should be one of the focal points in these structures and programmes; for, without any major improvement in this area, the OAC will continue to be at the back of the class in the religious world of today. Also, optimum investment in the **multi-cultural capacity** of the OAC, its ultimate marketing tool and drawcard.
- Credible and viable structures for **welfare** and other related social services in the OAC. Jesus first healed, then fed and finally preached the gospel to the people he met during his time on earth. The OAC has an **embarrassing** reputation for being missing in action as far as community service is concerned, while its members (officers included) are among the biggest beneficiaries of such programmes run by other churches (the so-called world, according to the OAC).
- Bilateral co-operation with other churches, as well as being an active and **respected** member of society at large.

The **alternative** to this direction can only be the current disposition of inaction and resistance to reform and transformation, thereby setting the OAC on the road toward further **decay** and possibly oblivion. Judging by the actions of the current leadership, they seem to be not only against any notion of reform but also **failing** to recognize that things are falling apart and that they have already lost the initiative to lead the process for change. The **moral high ground** is no longer theirs to claim. They will be perceived as playing catch-up. Only bold and visionary leadership will let them off the hook.

OAC on trial

The case of **Y Adams vs OAC** is therefore not just another court case in order to settle a personnel issue. It is the OAC that is in the court of public opinion. It is also significant because in the past, court appearances of a similar nature were usually allied to schisms, and the truth about what was happening in the church never surfaced. This time around, the OAC is indirectly on trial and the traditional veil of **secrecy** ripped apart from top to bottom. A reformed and transformed administration in the OAC, with the necessary in-house structures in place, would have dealt with the relevant issues long before the need for lawyers and exorbitant legal fees arose.

The administration at the Western Cape Regional Office was a **boil** that had to be lanced. And if it had not been for a Yolanda Adams, members/congregations (and officers) would never have known about this **cancer** in the body of the OAC. This time, the mighty dragon (Head Office) could not cover its tracks as it probably had been doing for decades. The OAC will never be the same again. However, it is inexorably, albeit over the proverbial dead bodies of committed and fuming die-hards/dinosaurs, on the way to a new and **prosperous** tomorrow – a church empowered by the necessary instruments to rid itself from the scourge of bigotry, claims of corruption, incompetence and lethargy.

History

Although she may be the **villain** for now in the eyes of many, but it is this kind of incident/event that ultimately elevate persons like Sister Yolanda Adams to a special place in the **pantheon** of heroes

and heroines of institutions and organisations. The true history of the OAC has yet to be written. And the real villains, named and shamed.

Members/congregations of the OAC **deserve better** - leadership (at all levels) that understands the issues (life), that is in sync with the gospel of Christ and, who can walk the talk. The sum total of the actions of the current leadership appears to amount to merely preserving the status quo, instead of boldly taking the OAC to a new level where dynamic growth and development is possible.

Having read this paper, even the staunchest **critic/enemy** of The FORUM will have to admit that the OAC is in need of reform. The current system is not sustainable. Preserving the careers and salaries of top management at the expense of **growth and development**, cannot be left unchallenged by members/congregations, which are the “cash cows” for an OAC utopia of a privileged few.

By steadfastly resisting change and transformation, the current leadership automatically **disqualify** themselves as candidates for the role of ‘Moses’ to lead the OAC out of its Egypt of today to the Canaan of tomorrow. But, hold on!! All may not be lost, after all. The **Apostle Paul** who is required to lead the OAC out of this quagmire, currently still goes by his Hebrew name of Saul (of Tarsus) and he is to be found among the current crop of Apostles and the Four-fold Officers. The heavens are awaiting the appointed hour.

Alas, the words that **succintly** capture the nature of the administrative dilemma in which the leadership of the OAC finds themselves, seem to be that of the evergreen Afrikaans saying: *“Al loop die leuen hoe snel, die waarheid agterhaal hom wel”* . Eventually, it will be the leadership (in its current format) that will have to embrace the thinking (and proposals) of The FORUM; and not the other way round.

Wesley Johanneson (He is also the Secretary of The FORUM)

Bellville

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