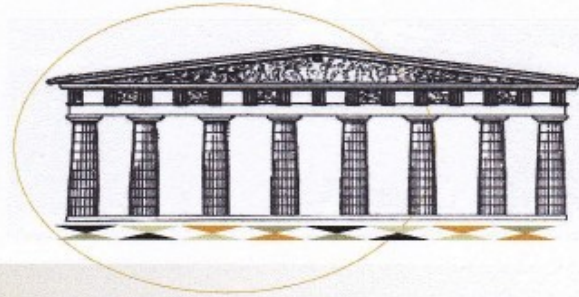


# THE FORUM

(est. September 2009)



**FOR CONCERNED MEMBERS OF THE OLD APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

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17 February 2010

The Apostle: Administration

The Old Apostolic Church

Private Bag X9

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Dear Apostle,

## **OLD APOSTOLICS AND A TALE OF "2's" and "7's"**

Attached, for your information, a copy of a document compiled for consideration by The FORUM and any other person interested in the life and times of the Old Apostolic Church.

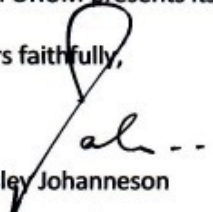
As indicated in our framework document, the development of position papers on topical issues is one of the core activities of The FORUM in order to empower members with informed opinions on matters pertaining to the welfare of the Church.

As you will glean from the contents, this is an issue that should be of particular concern to officers serving the non-white communities. Since our white brothers and sisters have been shielded from the developments of 1972, it is not uncommon to find most whites today being totally ignorant of this part of the history of the Church; let alone knowing about the existence of a great apostle by the name of Robert Lombard, as well as the now thriving Reformed Old Apostolic Church founded by him.

In line with its stated policy, The FORUM again takes a principled view in this regard. However unpalatable it may be in some quarters, this is part of the history of the Old Apostolic Church. And preserving the history of the Church should be an institutional priority for Head Office. The FORUM is perturbed at the apparent lack of attention given to this core function by salaried officers of the Church.

The FORUM presents its compliments and wishes to re-assure Head Office of its highest consideration.

Yours faithfully,



Wesley Johanneson

SECRETARY

## 2772

**OLD APOSTOLICS AND THE TALE OF “2’s” and “7’s”**

*(A perspective on the concurrent existence of two Old Apostolic Churches who preach the same gospel and adhere to the same apostle doctrine, as well as the parallels between the developments and events of 1927 and 1972)*

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 *History, the axiom decrees, repeats itself.* Will this hold true for the Old Apostolic Church of the post 1972 era? That is the question this paper intends to review for the benefit of those apostolics who truly believe (in word and deed) that the Holy Spirit still prevails in our Church.
- 1.2 Numbers and its impact on the evolution and governance of the Old Apostolic Church never cease to amaze and fascinate the keen observer. To be at *sixes* and *sevens*, denotes a state of confusion, disorder or disarray. In the case of the Old Apostolic Church, *twos* and *sevens* in the previous century seem to depict a very succinct and final act of severance with no room left for reconciliation, re-unification, or just good old common fraternal relations.
- 1.3 To be more specific, the numbers 27 and 72 have been indelibly seared into the fabric – but not the conscience - of the Old Apostolic Church. In 1927, following the breakaway from the New Apostolic Church (Africa), the Old Apostolic Church of Africa, in terms of a ruling by the Witwatersrand Local Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa, came into existence. In 1972, under yet to be fully determined circumstances, the Apostle Lombard and a number of officers and members parted ways with his brother, the Apostle Campbell, to found what is today the thriving Reformed Old Apostolic Church.
- 1.4 Fact (and historically proven) is, that in both instances the breakaway factions continued to be the custodians of the traditional values and norms of the apostolic way of life, as well the repository for the gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit. The mother body (in both instances) unwittingly, through fanciful modifications, tends to lose these capacities over time. After about two or three generations since separation, the Prophet ceases to be active and the mother body proceeds to become just another powerful religious entity with considerable financial resources and a high-sounding moral dictum, but no capacity to demonstrate the infinite powerful working of the Holy Spirit.

- 1.5 Of paramount importance is the fact that *white* Old Apostolics, as well as *non-whites* outside of the Western and Eastern Cape, hardly knows anything about the 1972 phenomenon in the Church. Keeping them continually ignorant about these developments, is tantamount to perpetuating a lie. An act that can best be regarded as treasonous. And treason has been an act for which many a senior officer in the past had been removed from office. Meanwhile, the Reformed Old Apostolic Church has been growing significantly in the Western Cape, as well as other parts of the country. Just like the Old Apostolic Church did after the rupture of 1927.
- 1.6 However, it should be pointed out that this paper is not intended to favour any fundamental position in respect of the two Churches, but merely to serve as an impulse to alert the leadership of both institutions to the gravity of a situation that will have a telling impact on the fortunes of soul salvation for the officers vested with the power of apostleship, both in life here on earth and beyond. I present my humble apologies if I come across as preposterous, but I have no alternative to getting it off my chest (and conscience). Unlike most Old Apostolics, I make a special effort of visiting other denominations, as well as other Old Apostolic congregations, in order to keep abreast of developments and to be able to espouse opinions from a position of first-hand experience. A major deficiency in the evangelical armour of the Old Apostolic Church, is the lack of the necessary intelligence on the capacity of its competitors. King Saul of Israel had the same woes with military incapacity until David came on board with his profound knowledge (gained in foreign/enemy territories) of enemy capabilities, technology and strategies.

## **2 Brief overview**

- 2.1 Just as in 1972, the step taken by the Apostle Klibbe in 1927 was very traumatic for the leadership and the congregations of his time. But, God-willing, the Old Apostolic Church of Africa advanced and grew by leaps and bounds into the mighty institution it is today. The prayers of the founding fathers have undoubtedly been answered.
- 2.2 Now since 1927, there have been several smaller breakaways from the Old Apostolic Church of Africa that gave rise to the proliferation of apostolic entities of a varied nature, as manifested across South Africa today. However, what makes the breakaway by the Reformed Old Apostolic Church so profound is the fact that it has since its inception in 1972, remained more traditional and spiritually effective than its alma mater. On the other hand, the post-1972 Old Apostolic Church of today vaguely resembles the spiritual powerhouse it had been before its leadership was enveloped by the dynamics of big money and power. Fact of the matter is that today there exists in non-white South Africa two Old Apostolic Churches (one being the Reformed Old Apostolic Church) who follow and preach exactly the same apostle doctrine, with the same activities by the Prophet. Except for the names, they are identical twins (in operation and style). It is, therefore, a question of which camp makes the first knock on the door. Clearly, this is an

untenable situation for the Evangelist (Under-deacon) in non-white areas. There cannot be two similar Gods in the flesh. And, if we are of the same God, then why are we not in the same tent?

### **3 Reality check**

- 3.1 Now where is this line of thinking leading to? Quite simple: there is a very clear pattern as to what happened to both alma mater and sibling since the parting of their ways in 1927 and 1972, respectively. As indicated previously, in both instances, the mother body developed into a colossal institution with incisive modifications to the apostle doctrine, at the expense of the traditional role and impact of the Prophet. The siblings, on their part, started from scratch (financially and otherwise), but preferred to stay traditional in terms of the apostle doctrine. The reality is that after each of the relevant breakaways, the siblings invariably ended up as the true (in word and deed) custodians of the gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit, as revealed through the Prophet.
- 3.2 The purpose of this paper is also to highlight the problem the Evangelist - as represented by the Underdeacon and brothers and sisters (in non-white areas) who dutifully ply the fields of testimony - encounters today when two sets of messengers knock on the same door, conveying the same message. This may not be a problem in traditionally white neighbourhoods, but officers in traditionally non-white neighbourhoods should have tabled this issue ages ago for debate and resolution. Unlike, the New Apostolic Church, whose message after decades had evolved to such an extent that it is no longer in contention, the Old and the Reformed Old Apostolic Church still convey an identical message. Therefore, the two Churches operate as two identical sides of the same coin.
- 3.3 What is clearly discernible, is the fact that the leadership of the Old Apostolic Church has since the landmark court case of 1975, wherein which the Old Apostolic Church successfully forced the then Non-white Old Apostolic Church to assume the name Reformed Old Apostolic Church, for some peculiar reason systematically set about to effect certain fundamental changes to its liturgical architecture. With the demise of apartheid in the early 1990's, and the consequent merger between white and non-white social entities in the Church, nuanced traditional differences in practice and beliefs from within surfaced and had to be accommodated by further amendments to structures and practices in the Church. However, the losers in this process were the non-whites who had to sacrifice much of their apostolic cultural goods in favour of the imperatives of their white compatriots. Are the white leaders entirely to be blamed for this self-defeating act? Personally, I do not think so because the non-white leadership who have the numbers consistently failed to contest it and negotiate an equitable settlement.
- 3.4 As indicated earlier, New and Old Apostolic Churches for some time after 1927 vied for the banner as the standard bearer of the true apostle doctrine, until such time as the Prophet went

quiet among the ranks of the New Apostolic Church. From that moment on, the Old Apostolic Church burgeoned as the only centre where the Holy Spirit was still active, as proven by the proliferation in numbers, church halls, human and financial resources. Then came 1972, a carbon copy of the fissure of 1927. Today, thirty-eight (38) years later, the Reformed Old Apostolic Church still exude the same traditional spiritual vibrancy of the pre-1972 era, without having changed a single aspect of what had been traditionally Old Apostolic since 1927. The same cannot be vouched for the performance and achievements of the Old Apostolic Church of today.

- 3.5 If this continuum should persist, then it is axiomatic that the Old Apostolic Church will follow the same path of spiritual impotence and decline as that of its alma mater about three decades after 1927 - a recession of and ultimate end to revelations by the Prophet, an inability by the Elder to heal the sick, as well as a rapid decline in the acquisition of new members through a pervasive incapacity by the Evangelist to touch people. In other words, the Church will eventually govern itself out of business as the true followers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as conferred upon his apostles. On the other hand, the Reformed Old Apostolic Church seem to survive admirably with their traditional approach to the apostle doctrine.

**Some of the vivid fundamental changes effected by the Old Apostolic Church since 1972**

- New tune for the Gloria Patria at the end of the final benediction
- New hymn book (change from Sionsgesange to Sing Immanuel)
- No more audible prophecies at the servicing of the crypt during sealing services, as well as the limitation to the number of audible prophecies during a service
- No more memorial services at the death of a member, as well as dispensing with the safe custody traditionally accorded the departed soul until the internment of the body. Also the prohibition on audible prophecies at funeral services
- Prohibition on the opening of coffins in church at funeral services
- No sipping from the cup during the serving of the holy communion. Reasons for the absence of the cup are very suspect; perceived as racially motivated. Also the grape juice as substitute for wine, as well as the use of a tweezer in stead of the sanitized hand of an anointed officer).
- Toned-down (uninspiring) version of procedures by the Elder during healing sessions. Has effectively become a ritual. Hardly anybody gets healed anymore
- Loss of control over own administration by congregations
- Obscene display of a multitude of collection boxes for money in front of the altar. Also the obsession with money, mostly at the expense of pastoral care.

## **4 Compelling parallels**

### **4.1 Between mother bodies (former and current)**

- Deliberate initiatives to introduce changes, first cosmetic and then more fundamental, to establish a clear differentiation between mother body and sibling. This seems to be part of a morale boosting effort and to portray traditionalism as a negative
- A diabolical cold war of no communication and disregard for mutual interest between mother body and the sibling
- The systematic abolition or transformation of core practices of the faith, as the prophet continuously becomes less potent (dramatic decline in audible prophecies, followed by an ebbing and ultimate disappearance of visual revelations)
- Greater reliance on the ability of human expertise and technology, because the Prophet has become dormant. A lack of confidence in their abilities among officers, further serves to paralyse the mother body and thereby restrain it from distinguishing itself as a potent spiritual force.
- Cessation of evangelization through the field of testimony, as the intake of new converts had virtually dried up. Given the current trend in this respect, it looks like The Old Apostolic Church will soon be confronted by that decision.
- Greater reliance on economic survival to sustain, inter alia, head office overheads - especially the royal remuneration packages of a bloated top leadership
- Irreversibility of the process of divergence occasioned by the changing of the guard after a generation or two. Made impossible by a new leadership who was born after the breakaway and, therefore, persons who have no first-hand experience of the former glory days of the Church and the powerful working of the Prophet and the Evangelist back then.
- The major cause of their decline is the departure from traditional core values, norms and practices. They unwittingly developed an identity crisis from which they never really recovered. And they cannot not turn back because the sibling has procured that space.

### **4.2 Between siblings (former and current)**

- Both started out penniless and without buildings, armed with only their faith and a small Gideon band of followers. Both were lead by apostles and fourfold-officers who were endowed with above average ability, talent and fortitude.
- Adhered meticulously to tradition and saw it as their only way to survival and salvation. They did not change a single thing. And they were proven right, because they doubled in numbers and size within a few decades.
- Unlike their mother bodies, the Prophet enjoyed an unprecedented boom period which paid rich dividends as far as the work of the Evangelist was concerned. Audible and visual prophecies flourished and are cherished by the leadership as the lifeblood of the Church. The voices from the dead region, as well as those of departed souls prior to internment of their mortal remains, are still revered as some of the cornerstones of the apostolic faith.
- After the demise of the Prophet in the mother body, the sibling became the sole custodian of the gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit. Members have first-hand experience of the capability of e.g., the healing powers of the Elder, the vigilance of the Prophet, as well as the protection they enjoy under the wings of a motherly priesthood. The mother bodies could not regain this capability and had to continue as just another major church with considerable financial muscle.
- As they progressed in numbers, as well as their intellectual base, their financial situation grew exponentially and soon they became a force to be reckoned with.
- Their simple recipe for survival, success and continued growth is the retention of traditional values, norms and practices. In short, they never had an identity crisis.

## 5 Conclusion

- 5.1 It is rather peculiar that the fate of the Old Apostolic Church can somehow be defined in terms of a set of dates (27 and conversely 72) of equal peculiarity. Of further interest is the fact that, as opposed to a current world-wide trend where erstwhile enemies are opting for reconciliation and in some instances re-unification, the leaders of the two churches whose doctrines are predicated, inter alia, on the principles of repentance and forgiveness continue to maintain a cold war of no contact or dialogue. Shortsightedness, or intellectually challenged, could be an explanation for such a disposition on both sides. There is a compelling case to be made for the leaders of all apostolic churches of today to have a formal structure for regular conferencing.
- 5.2 In the case of fundamental changes by the Old Apostolic Church to aspects such as the abolition of audible prophecies during the servicing of the crypt, no more memorial services and custody of the departed soul, etc., a pertinent question arises: why all these drastic changes? Have the Church been wrong about it all these years? How do you explain that on the field of testimony?



Worst is, questions by subordinates in this regard are unceremoniously wiped off the table by officers with a reprimand that there has to be unconditional acceptance of whatever directives or changes the Apostolate decree. Ironically, these questions never get answered.

- 5.3 The pattern is unmistakable and the tell-tale signs are becoming more discernible. Unless the trend is reversed, it seems safe to predict that history is bound to repeat itself. The Old Apostolic Church will eventually go the way of the New Apostolic Church and the Reformed Old Apostolic Church will emerge as the new torchbearer of the apostle doctrine.
- 5.4 Judging by the processes and events that precipitated the re-unification of the House of Israel (Judah and Israel) in biblical times, the Prophet of our age has his task very starkly defined. During the cause of the execution of his assignment to restore the House of the Lord to its former glory, he will inevitably have to trample on toes, bruise and deflate fragile egos, and in some instances even call for the unceremonious termination of the careers of many a top officer in the Church.
- 5.5 Although the white component of the Church currently seem to be immune to the pressures of a *two-apostolic churches-yet-one-doctrine* phenomenon, it will soon come to pass for the Church as a whole to redefine its position of being the one and only way to soul salvation in the face of a Reformed Old Apostolic Church which seem destined to grow and develop to unprecedented heights as a credible beacon of hope and light to a world that is increasingly searching for answers to life beyond the grave.
- 5.6 A big question is: What do the apostles of the 21<sup>st</sup> century make of these developments and how do they interpret Christ in this context? First, in terms of an apostolic diaspora that is clearly in disarray and, secondly, to a religious world that, through the benefit of advanced technology and research, are busy shifting the age-old Christian paradigm which constitutes our apostolic DNA.
- 5.7 On balance, it seems fair to surmise that the Old Apostolic Church (Israel) is spiritually on the decline, while the Reformed Old Apostolic Church (Judah) is on the ascent as a bastion from where the Prophet and the Evangelist could launch their campaign to round up and resuscitate the flock of the Lord.

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Loevenstein

14 February 2010