

**Notes on the history and ministers
of the
Katholsk-Apostoliske Menighet
(Catholic Apostolic Church)
in Norway**

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Front and back cover: Former Catholic Apostolic Church building (detail), Thor Olsens gate, Oslo (photos: Tom Askerøi)

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Contents

Preface	1
Chapter 1: Introduction	2
Chapter 2: Available sources concerning the Catholic Apostolic Church in Norway	8
Chapter 3: Church address books and census data	16
Chapter 4: Church registers and Annual Reports	26
Chapter 5: The Norwegian ecclesiastical situation in the 19 th century	42
Chapter 6: Foreign Catholic Apostolic missionaries in Norway	45
Chapter 7: The early years of Drammen and Christiania, 1877-1885	54
Chapter 8: Bergen 1883-1900	65
Chapter 9: Drammen 1886-1900	73
Chapter 10: Larvik 1890-1900	82
Chapter 11: Stavanger	87
Chapter 12: Christiania 1886-1900	90
Chapter 13: Christianssand	105
Chapter 14: Arendal	109
Chapter 15: Skien, Moss, Tönsberg, Porsgrund, Farsund and other towns	111
Chapter 16: Drammen, Larvik, Bergen and Christiania in ‘the time of silence’	116
Chapter 17: Epilogue	141

Appendix 1: Catholic Apostolic Church registers, published on the internet	143
Appendix 2: Catholic Apostolic Church registers, available in the archive in Bergen	149
Appendix 3: Catholic Apostolic Church reports, available in the archive in Stavanger	149
Appendix 4: Catholic Apostolic Church registers, available in the archive in Kongsberg	150
Appendix 5: Catholic Apostolic Church reports, available in the archive in Oslo	151
Appendix 6: Dates of laying-on of hands in the Catholic Apostolic Church in Norway	154
Appendix 7: Dates of laying-on of hands in the Catholic Apostolic Church in Christiania (after 1894), Bergen and Stavanger	156
Appendix 8: Angels of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Norway	157
Appendix 9: Called and ordained priests of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Norway	160
Appendix 10: Deaconesses of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Norway	164
Appendix 11: Called (but not ordained) priests, deacons and underdeacons of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Norway	166
Appendix 12: Newspaper article about and letter from Gunnar Arntsen	170
Appendix 13: Professions of those who have received the laying-on of hands in the Catholic Apostolic Church in Norway	172
Bibliography	177
Websites	180
List of illustrations	183
Many thanks...	185
About the author	186

Preface

Browsing the internet in the Autumn of 2009, looking for Catholic Apostolic Church (CAC) literature, I stumbled upon a number of Norwegian Katholsk Apostoliske Menighet (i.e. Catholic Apostolic Church) register books. They had been put online by the Norwegian State Archives and could be viewed (except for a few pages containing too recent data) free and without restriction. Although it soon appeared that not all registers of all congregations were available, I felt the thought popping up: “How about writing an article about the Katholsk-Apostoliske Menighet in Norway?” I decided to print all available pages of the registers and put them into lever-arch files. At around the same time I discovered that the West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford, United Kingdom, offered digitized versions of the CAC Annual Reports from 1875 onwards for sale. I decided to buy the CDs and received them in October 2009. Meanwhile I had to finish my study of Theology, write the final thesis and graduate. As time passed, I forgot about the registers and CDs.

Browsing through my lever-arch files in the Autumn of 2012, looking for photocopies of a specific book I certainly knew I had (somewhere...), I stumbled upon the Norwegian CAC registers. Remembering that I had this idea of writing an article about the history of the CAC in Norway, asking myself why I had not yet done so, answering myself that I could not come up with a reason, I instantly decided to start writing. During the writing process the article grew out to the size of a book.

This book is not an academic study in a strict sense. I chose to not investigate all possible sources. I lacked the time to search in person in the various archives in Norway. A personal visit could have provided me with more information, especially since it sometimes proved difficult to explain via emails the difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the CAC. Archive employees (which I, without exception, have experienced as most helpful) may have missed information and documents regarding the CAC because of this confusion. Sources as contemporary Norwegian newspapers and religious periodicals were not used: they were not available online. Nevertheless I tried to be as accurate as possible. Footnotes were used throughout the book, in order to show where I’ve found my information. I know this book is not error free. Any correction or addition (with reference to a source, please) is most welcome. If somebody should provide me with photocopies of one or several of the missing Norwegian CAC registers, I hereby promise to write a second, extended edition of this book.

Edwin Diersmann, Overasselt/Netherlands, 14th July 2014

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The movement that led to the so-called “Catholic Apostolic Church” started in the second decade of the 19th century. It can best be described as a revivalist movement with charismatic characteristics. Its roots lay in Scotland and England, where prophetic-ecstatic utterances that warned mankind for the imminent Second Coming of Christ were embraced by one of the most famous London preachers of those days, Rev. Edward Irving of the National Scotch Church.¹ Irving died, 42 years old, on 8 December 1834 in Glasgow. Though he may justly be called a ‘fore-runner’ of the movement,² the commonly used name “Irvingite” is not justified for the Church which later developed from it. Irving had never been in a position of authority, being only an angel (bishop) of one London (Newman Street) congregation, and he died during the early formative years of the movement, long before the CAC had been fully ecclesologically organised.³

During the years 1832-1835 twelve men were called by prophetic utterances, believed to be the voice of the Holy Spirit, to the office of apostle.⁴ Other men were called by these utterances to serve as angels, evangelists, elders, priests and deacons in the newly formed Church.⁵ On 14 July 1835 the apostles were officially ‘separated’ (see Acts 13:2-3) by the angels of the seven London congregations of the movement. The apostles subsequently stayed in Albury, Surrey (at the estate of one of them, Henry Drummond) until the summer of 1836. During this period they were assisted by prophets. A twofold structure of the Catholic Apostolic (CA) ministry developed, consisting of a fourfold order or degree (apostle, angel/bishop, priest, deacon), on

¹ The following books may be consulted by those who wish to enter into a more detailed account of the beginnings of the Catholic Apostolic movement in England and Scotland: G. Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals. Protestant Secessions from the Via Media, c. 1800-1850* (Oxford 2001). G.C. Flegg, ‘Gathered under Apostles’. *A study of the Catholic Apostolic Church* (Oxford 1992). J.A. Schröter, *Bilder zur Geschichte der Katholisch-apostolischen Gemeinden/Images of the history of the Catholic Apostolic Church* (Jena 2001). T.C.F. Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession. Radical Evangelicals in Switzerland and Britain 1815-35* (Edinburgh 2000). For the beginnings of the movement in Germany see: J.A. Schröter, *Die Katholisch-apostolischen Gemeinden in Deutschland und der “Fall Geyer”* (Marburg 1997, ³2004).

² Cf. the title of the book by A. Dallimore, *The life of Edward Irving. Fore-runner of the Charismatic movement* (Edinburgh 1983, Chicago, IL 1983). A selection of the most recent books about Irving: D.W. Dorries, *Edward Irving’s incarnational Christology* (Fairfax, VA 2002). B. Waddington, *The Rev. Edward Irving & the Catholic Apostolic Church in Camden and beyond* [Occasional Paper No. 7 of the Camden History Society] (s.l. 2007). T.G. Grass, *Edward Irving. The Lord’s Watchman* [Studies in Evangelical History and Thought] (Milton Keynes 2011). B. Waddington (ed.), *The Diary and Letters of Edward Irving* (Eugene, OR 2012).

³ See Flegg, ‘Gathered under Apostles’, 63.

⁴ For their names and tribes, see Flegg, ‘Gathered under Apostles’, 65-66, 71. For short biographies of them, see Schröter, *Die Katholisch-apostolischen Gemeinden*, 371-381 (footnote 20.b). My references are to the first edition.

⁵ See [F.V. Woodhouse], *A narrative of events affecting the position and prospects of the whole Christian Church* (London 1847, s.l. ²1885, reprint 1938), 36: “[...] the Apostles were forbidden to ordain any man to the priesthood, whether as Angel or Elder, who had not been first called by a Prophet.” My references are to the second edition.

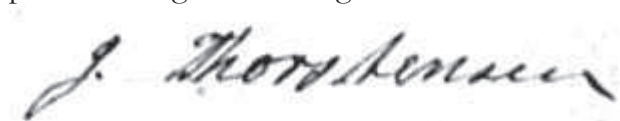
CHAPTER 8

Bergen 1883-1900

We have already referred to the evangelistic efforts of Sir George John Routledge Hewett, 3rd Bt., in Bergen (1857), to Bergen citizen Amund Hermundsen, tailor, the first Norwegian to receive the laying-on of hands (9 Sep 1866, Copenhagen) and in footnotes to the first three persons (one of which was Hermundsen's wife) who received the laying-on of hands in Bergen, on 5 Sep 1880. Capadose visited Bergen again in Sep 1882, where sixteen persons received the laying-on of hands. In these services no Holy Eucharist was celebrated. The persons who had received the laying-on of hands remained members of the state church. Capadose explains why: "As I was utterly unable to provide a Priest for them, & as the long & expensive voyage from Kristiania to Bergen, makes periodical visits from this, the nearest Church, almost impracticable, it was evidently much better for these people not to separate, & to preserve their free admission to the Holy Communion in the Established Church."²³²

In the *Annual Reports 1881* we read about a "Deacon Evangelist from Jutland, in Denmark, [who] was sent some years ago to Bergen."²³³ Next year's report seems to refer to the same person: "The Deacon Evangelist from Denmark, who in May 1881 was sent to Bergen, has been labouring there all this year, delivering a course of public lectures, & constantly having cottage meetings in the town, & in a neighbouring village. There has been no lack of auditors, but the Norwegian, with his strong feeling of independence, is not easily brought round to submit to ordinances."²³⁴ Capadose also refers to the angel evangelist Lindstrøm, who had preached in Bergen since Easter 1883. In this same year all these combined efforts resulted in the founding of the independent (from Christiania) CA congregation in Bergen. The first Holy Eucharist was celebrated by Capadose on 22 Jul, on 29 Jul fourteen persons received the laying-on of hands, in the following days two deacons were blessed and one priest ordained. Amund Hermundsen was transferred from the Christiania Internal register 3 (regular lay communicants) to the Bergen register on 20 Aug 1883.

Jens Thorstensen (* 8 Apr 1828, laying-on of hands 22 Apr 1877, † 15 May 1914) was ordained deacon 23 Jun 1877 in Christiania and blessed 6 May 1878. By profession he was a factory worker. On 4 Nov 1881 he became a VII deacon. He was called priest on 20 Sep 1882 and ordained priest in Bergen on 1 Aug 1883. In the Christiania membership list from 31 Dec 1883 he is listed



as number 76, being "menighedforstander" (principal of the congregation), with "opholdsted" (town of residence) Bergen, but

the line is subsequently blotted out. Thorstensen was the first resident priest there. A note on

²³² *Annual Reports 1883*, 33.

²³³ *Annual Reports 1881*, 46.

²³⁴ *Apostle's Record 1882*, 24.

that same line states that at that time his wife still was a member of the state church. The couple and their youngest child lived in Bergen until they returned to Christiania in Oct 1889. Thorstensen's wife was Karen Margrethe, née Nicolaisdatter (* 17 Jan 1827, laying-on of hands 2 Sep 1885, † 28 Jan 1902).²³⁵ The couple's three children all received the laying-on of hands, their son Theodor later was ordained priest in Christiania. Jens Thorstensen died in Christiania, aged 86.

The only register available from the Bergen congregation is an External register, starting in 1892. That means that we lack all information regarding the ordinations of ministers, the dates of laying-on of hands and other specific 'internal' information. However, we have been able to find a number of events regarding Bergen in Internal registers of other congregations, as well as in various Annual Reports. An overview of the information found is listed in the table below:

Date	Event	Source(s) ²³⁶
7 Sep 1884	Laying-on-of hands 11 persons	Annual Reports 1885 (number), Internal register K, L (date)
2 Sep 1885	Laying-on-of hands 6 persons	Annual Records 1886 (number), Internal register C (date)
8 Sep 1886	Laying-on-of hands 11 persons	Annual Reports July 1887 (number), Internal register K (date)
Sep 1886	Ordination of one deacon	Annual Reports July 1887
17 Sep 1887	Laying-on-of hands 17 persons	Annual Reports July 1888 (number), Internal register C, K (date)
Sep 1887	Ordination of one deacon	Annual Reports July 1888 (number)
27 May 1889	Laying-on-of hands ? persons	Annual Reports 1889, Internal register A, K (date)
17 Sep 1890	Laying-on-of hands ? persons	Annual Reports 1890, Internal register A, K, L (date)
Sep 1891	Consecration of an angel	Annual Reports July 1892
Sep 1892	Introduction 'shorter intercession'	Annual Reports July 1893
9 Aug 1893	Blessing of (at least) one deacon	Internal register K (date)
3 Sep 1894	Laying-on-of hands ? persons	Annual Reports July 1895, Internal register K (date)
10 Sep 1895	Laying-on-of hands ? persons	Annual Reports July 1896, Internal register K, L (date)
25 Apr 1899	Blessing of (at least) one deacon	Annual Reports August 1899, Internal register C (date)

Again we stress that the information above certainly is incomplete. When years are missing in the list (e.g. 1896, 1897), this does not at all mean that no laying-on of hands or ordinations of ministers had taken place (Bergen has been visited almost every year, either by Capadose or by apostolic delegates), only that no specific information is given in the Annual Reports. When we list an exact number of persons receiving the laying-on of hands, this means that either this very number is mentioned in the Annual Reports, or that the number can be deduced by subtracting specific numbers we have from other congregations from a known total number. A question mark means that we found one or several persons in other congregations' Internal registers who

²³⁵ See for his family in 1875 http://www.rhd.uit.no/folketellinger/ftliste_e.aspx?ft=1875&knr=0301&kenr=042&bnr=2338&lnr=00 and for 1900 see http://www.rhd.uit.no/folketellinger/ftliste_e.aspx?ft=1900&knr=0301&kenr=369&bnr=0002&lnr=05 (both accessed 6 Jun 2014).

²³⁶ A = Arendal, B = Bergen, C = Christiania, D = Drammen, L = Larvik, K = Christianssand, M = Moss, S = Skien, St = Stavanger, F = Farsund, ? = unknown. In order to save space, we refrain from providing footnotes for all specific Annual Reports and Internal registers.



On the old photo of the interior we see two lamps or candles, one to the left and one to the right of the altar, symbolizing the offices of apostle and prophet. We also see the “seven lamps” hanging from the ceiling. These only hung in church buildings of congregations whose angel was “inducted”.³⁵³ In the Summer of 1893 Capadose expected this to happen “soon [...], all preliminary steps thereto having been fulfilled.”³⁵⁴ The induction of the angel Martin Olsen has probably taken place in Aug 1893 and has been performed by the two apostolic delegates Emanuel Edward Christie Fleischer and Hans Peter Jensen (evangelist and pastor with the apostles, respectively).

It is most unfortunate that the available Internal registers (except 1 and 2) end around these years. The last date of laying-on of hands recorded is 12 Sep 1894, though from other congregations’ Internal registers we know that on 12 Oct 1897 and 4 May 1899 several persons received the rite in Christiania.³⁵⁵ In the Christiania Internal register 3 (regular lay communicants) the last date entered is also 12 Sep 1894. The last date entered in Internal register 9 (called priests)

³⁵³ “The ‘induction’ of an Angel presupposed the presence of a Fourfold Ministry of Priests (Elder, Prophet, Evangelist and Pastor) and it could be carried out only after a unanimous vote by the adult members of the congregation and was normally valid for life.”, Schröter, *Bilder/Images*, 17, 19.

³⁵⁴ *Annual Reports July 1893*, 27.

³⁵⁵ See Appendix 7.

About the author



Edwin Diersmann was born 1962 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. By profession he is an ICT manager. He has studied Theology part-time at the Radboud University Nijmegen from Sep 2001 until Apr 2010 and graduated with a thesis entitled *Die Kirchenspaltung in der Hersteld Apostolische Gemeente in de Eenheid der Apostelen' in den Jahren 1946 bis 1951, unter Berücksichtigung wissenschaftlicher Theoriebildung bezüglich Kirchenspaltungen* (published by Edition Punctum Saliens, Bielefeld 2010).⁶²⁵ His other publications so far are:

- “An ihren Früchten sollt ihr sie erkennen.” *Das Erbe von Friedrich Wilhelm Schwarz: 100 Jahre niederländische apostolische Gemeinschaften, ein geschichtlicher Überblick* ([Remscheid] 2007);
- “‘De Christus van het heden’. De ontstaansgeschiedenis van Het Apostolisch Genootschap en zijn leerstellige ontwikkelingen 1946-1951’, in: *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis* 2007/4, 110-122;
- ‘Die Geschichte und Entwicklung der Hersteld Evangelisch Apostolische Gemeente’, in: M. Eberle (ed.), *Kirche auf dem Weg. Die apostolischen Gemeinschaften im Verlauf des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bielefeld 2010), 89-168;
- ‘Ontstaan en ontwikkeling van de Hersteld Evangelisch Apostolische Gemeente tegen de achtergrond van het conflict Van Oosbree-Smit’, in: *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis* 2011/1, 21-32.⁶²⁶

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⁶²⁵ See <http://www.edition-punctum-saliens.de/hazea.php> (accessed 7 Jun 2014).

⁶²⁶ See <http://www.rediroma-verlag.de/index.php?det=105>, <http://www.vnkonline.nl/orgaan/teksten/2007-4.html>, <http://www.edition-punctum-saliens.de/bielefeld.php> and <http://www.vnkonline.nl/orgaan/teksten/2011-1.html> respectively (all accessed 7 Jun 2014).