

Lectures on Church History



The AcaM in the United States -
an apostolic mission
and its outcome

What do we know about Apostle Hoppe and his apostolic mission churches in the United States?

How did this mission end?

What was the impact?

This presentation follows on from older presentations on the following topics (e.g. meeting in Hamburg 2016).

Teil I

Der Sendbote.



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Ein Sonntagsblatt für Stadt und Land.

N^o 7. Hamburg, Sonntag, den 15. November. 1863.

Preliminary remarks and
beginnings

Title of the "Sendboten" edited by Heinrich Geyer, 1863.

Preliminary Remarks

- Today we meet an old acquaintance: The General Christian Apostolic Mission, as it came into being in Hamburg in 1863.
 - It brings with it its typical characteristics: High-church liturgy in simple circumstances ("Geyer Liturgy of 1864"), Catholic-apostolically inspired structures ("mission evangelists", "gate congregations"), conservative and all-Christian beliefs, German-Protestant influence, etc.
 - We also find all this in the USA of the late 19th century.
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Preliminary Remarks

- In researching the history of the General Christian Apostolic Mission in Germany we already faced a problem: Tendentious narration of history - many of the sources we have are "New Apostolicized", and thus partly useless.
 - With a view to the USA we have intensified this problem, because unlike in Europe there are no known successor groups of the AcaM or "continuation of the tradition" of this community there, which would have preserved original sources.
 - Consequence: Almost all sources require sharp criticism. There are hardly any "neutral" sources.
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Preliminary Remarks

- The most prominent researcher in the history of AcaM in the USA (whom we know) is the New Apostolic Apostle Karl Weinmann (1901-1993).
- As a kind of "by-catch" to his research into early New Apostolic history, he noted interesting facts about the history of AcaM (also) in America in various places.



Sources on the history of AcaM in the USA

- Karl Weinmann: 100 Years of the New Apostolic Church 1863-1963 - Apostle District of Hamburg
 - Karl Weinmann: The Origin of God's Work in North America, in: Calendar Our Family 1968, p. 88f., Verlag F. Bischoff, 1967
 - Johannes A. Schröter: The Catholic Apostolic congregations in Germany and the "Fall Geyer" (used here: third edition of 2004). Especially relevant: End marks 127.c (H.F. Hoppe) and 133 (Robert Geyer).
 - Ken Brown: Sources on the Early History of New Order Apostolic Churches in Chicago, in: Newsletter 3/2019, p. 4ff.
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Who was Heinrich Ferdinand Hoppe?

- Born May 1, 1830.
 - Catholic-apostolic probably already in 1854.
 - By profession first basket maker, then policeman.
 - 1864 deacon in the Hamburg congregation.
 - Married Doris in 1862, two common children - Emilie (born 1860!) and Albert L. (born 1863).
 - Appointed Apostle for America on 10.10.1864.
 - He emigrated to America on 28.02.1872 and took up residence in Chicago.
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A Photo...



Doris and Heinrich F. Hoppe, undated photo (detail), possibly from the 1880s.
(Photo: Private collection Christian Groth / Source: AS)

Who was Heinrich Ferdinand Hoppe?

- Karl Weinmann reports on the financial difficulties of the apostle Hoppe.
 - Around 1885/1886 Hoppe moved his residence to New York. There, too, there was an AcaM community.
 - He died in New York on 24 February 1903.
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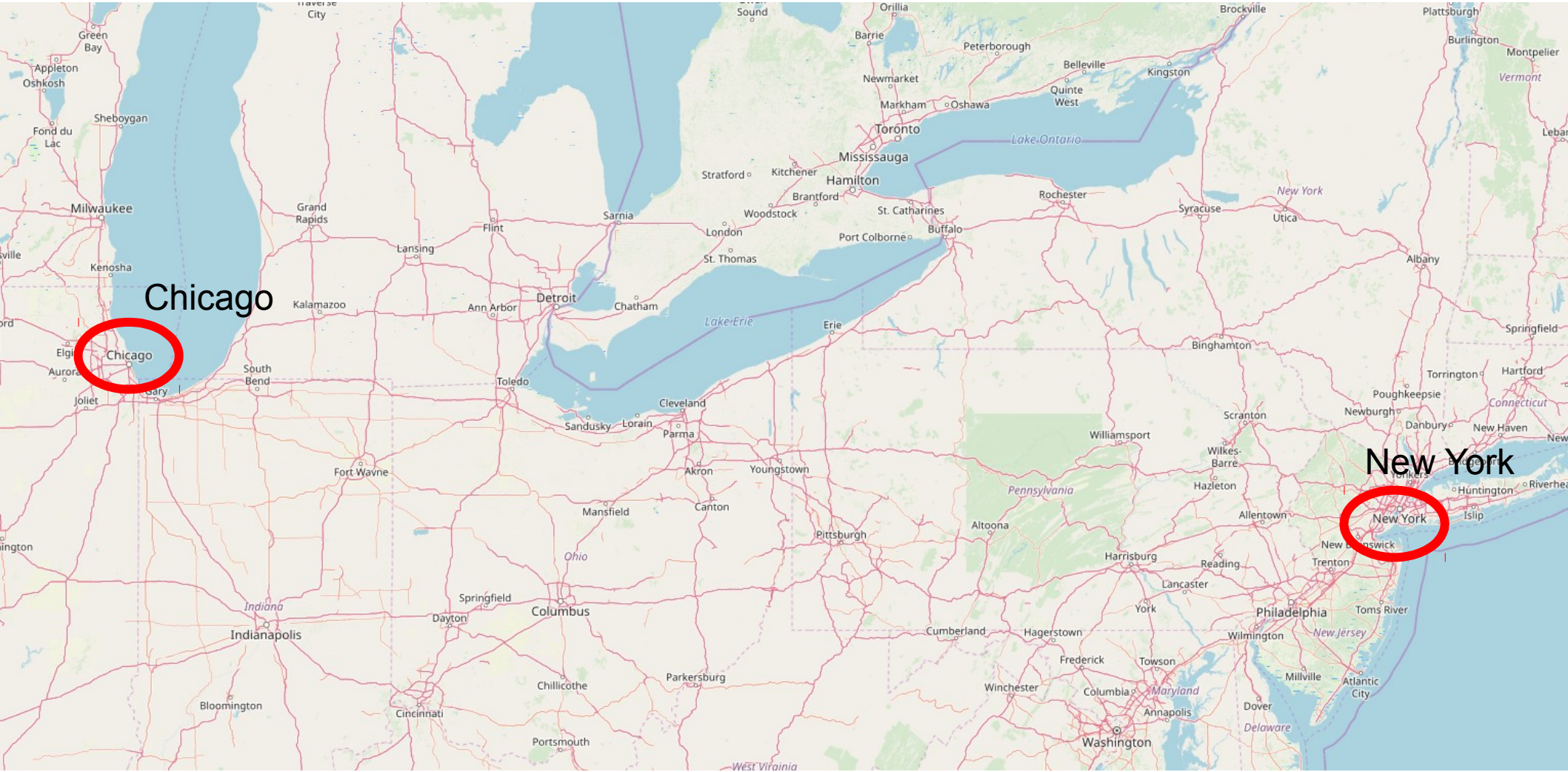
Teil II



Development of the First General Apostolic Mission Church (FGAMC)

Title page of the Liturgy of the General Christian Apostolic Mission of 1864.

Proven FGAMC communities in the USA



Chicago - Mother Church of the American Branch of AcaM

- Already in the years 1864 to 1866 three small groups emigrated from Hamburg, which belonged in the consequence in Chicago to the first American municipality of the AcaM.
 - This congregation is called First General Apostolic Mission Church.
 - Among them is Jakob Westphaln (1840-1925), later the most important minister of the FGAMC in the USA.
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Milestones in Chicago

- After the arrival of the emigrant groups, i.e. from 1865 onwards, apostolic worship services probably took place in modest circumstances.
 - Jakob Westphaln becomes priest and head of the congregation. Perhaps he had a "mission order".
 - Around 1872 Apostle Hoppe and his family were added.
 - Around 1873, a small church was built in Chicago and used until 1909. (1751 West Superior Street, details in Newsletter 3/2019, p. 11ff.)
 - The rapid succession of church plant->church building points to an active, sacrificial church.
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The further dissemination of the FGAMC in the USA

- The Chicago community remains small.
 - In September 1909, the congregation gave up its church building because it had become dilapidated - and probably also because the population demographics in that part of Chicago had changed significantly.
 - Most of those of German descent had moved.
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The FGAMC in New York

- A date of foundation is not known, neither who belonged to the congregation. Also the name is not testified.
 - The move of the apostle Hoppe in 1885/1886 suggests that at this time at the latest a community life arose.
 - In retrospect 1913, the congregation is described as a "gate congregation", i.e. an essential main congregation of the AcaM - which aspired to twelve gate congregations worldwide. So it could have had a certain size.
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The Apostle Hoppe's trip to Silesia

- Even in the late 1880s, the small Silesian communities of Schönau and Hirschberg were controversial between the AcaM and the Apostolic Community (Menkhoff, Krebs).
 - In 1887 the Priest-Elder Obst was called as the Apostle (the AcaM!) for Silesia. In the following year, however, he approached Apostle Krebs and the "Apostle Unity".
 - In 1889, Apostle Hoppe travels to Silesia and visits these churches together with the Prophet Geyer, but without success.
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Apostle Hoppe and the Official Acts

- Ken Brown has thoroughly researched the family history of the FGAMC member families.
 - Between 1872 and 1886 there were at least nine marriages of FGAMC children.
 - Hoppe, however, held only one - all others were carried out in neighbouring e.g. German Lutheran churches.
 - This seems remarkable: For reasons unknown to us, the next generation of the FGAMC already turned away from (a wedding in) the FGAMC...
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Apostle Hoppe and the Official Acts

- This included in particular the children of the officials Hoppe (2) and Westphaln (2).
 - The assumption suggests itself that these children in the FGAMC were no longer active in a church office...
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Teil III



The Hoekstra-Intermezzo

The Hoekstra family before departure to America, 1898.

Previous Events

- Before 1896 there were no known (new) apostolic missions to the USA.
 - Thus the FGAMC stood alone beside the Catholic Apostolic congregations of the USA - a unique constellation.
 - In other words: From 1866 to 1896 the FGAMC could operate in the USA without "threat" from the New Apostolic congregations.
 - Why was that so? Did Menkhoff and Schwarz continue to silently acknowledge Hoppes' apostolate?
 - In any case, after their death, lively activity immediately sets in...
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New Apostolic dispatches to the USA as of 1896

"On 21 April [1896] the apostle [Friedrich Krebs] travelled to Hamburg, where the evening service was held, in which Br. H[ollen] was appointed as an evangelist for America, who would move to America and begin his ministry in New York.

"... and on the third feast day, as on the Pentecost service [26 May 1896], there was an afternoon service [in Berlin III] from 4 o'clock to almost 9 o'clock, in which 143 souls were sealed and a brother, Ernst Pollmann, was sent to America as a deacon evangelist, who will leave with his wife and son for America (British Canada) within a short time, but will only visit the evangelist stationed there, Br. Hollen, in New York."

New Apostolic dispatches to the USA as of 1896

"Pleasing reports also come from America; the Evangelist H[ollen] who was sent there recently rented a spacious hall in New York, furnished it with church furnishings and regularly holds church services.

There has already been quite a crowd of regular visitors who are already helping to build the temple of God. But here too the solution applies: "In one hand the trowel, in the other the sword to ward off enemies". The God of All Grace also wanted to build and complete his work there to the glory of his name".

The first New Apostolic divine services in the USA?

Prélude

- Luitsen B. Hoekstra (28.7.1860-19.6.1955) came from the tradition of the Dutch Apostolic Zending. He was a free church preacher and joined the community of Apostle Schwarz.
- He was to be called (according to his and probably also the Apostle Krebs's wish) in 1897 to succeed the Apostle Schwarz. Instead, however, van Bemmelen was summoned and split occurred.
- Hoekstra is said to have made bitter accusations about Krebs.

Hoekstra's Mission

- Therefore, Krebs invited Hoekstra to Hamburg, where he was appointed apostle for the USA on 19.9.1897 and used to replace the "unfaithful Hoppe".
 - A detailed report can be found in "Herold" (October 1897, No. 40d, p. 4ff.).
 - The reason for the appeal sounds interesting:

"A year ago, a messenger was sent from Hamburg to America to proclaim the *contemporary* work and Word of the Lord and to bring the deeds of God *of the present time* to those in the distance.

(Emphasis by the speaker)
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Hoekstra's Mission

- Hoekstra's mission was thus explicitly motivated by the "New Light", the sending out took place "through the unity of the apostles" (ibid., p. 6).
 - Significantly, Hoppe and his work are not mentioned in the report.
 - Soon afterwards Apostle Hoekstra travels to the USA.
 - In December 1897 the herald reports of a seal by Hoekstra in "New York".
 - For the year 1898 the magazines do not contain anything useful ("in America works in the blessing of the Lord"...) except short mentions of his mission.
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A Change of Mind

"On July 12, the Apostles Krebs and Ruff arrived in Hamburg, where the evening service took place, in which the first Apostle Ruff was dispatched with blessing and protection to make a journey to America. The I. apostle R. left his family and church, yes, his tribe, for a long time ... to carry out the mission of his sender* in obedience to faith.

The former apostle H. [meaning Hoekstra!], who was sent there, left his inheritance disdainfully, although he was sent by the truthful in the apostle unit, recognized his mission at the time, and moved to America comforted with many promises. But all God's promises are subject to conditions, ... If God does not conform himself to our views and desires, and if he does not follow them, then man will begin to protest and then know everything better than God himself, but to his own destruction."

*Krebs, further, the Apostle Unity embodied by Krebs who is the living Christ (New Light Doctrine)

Hoekstras Return

In the USA Hoekstra is said to have come into contact with the Catholic Apostolic congregations and the American FGAMC.

Since he first stayed in New York, he probably also had contact with Apostle Hoppe.

Around 1900 he returned to Germany and accused Apostle Krebs of spiritual fraud.

Obviously Hoekstra rejected Krebs's reforms and the "new light".

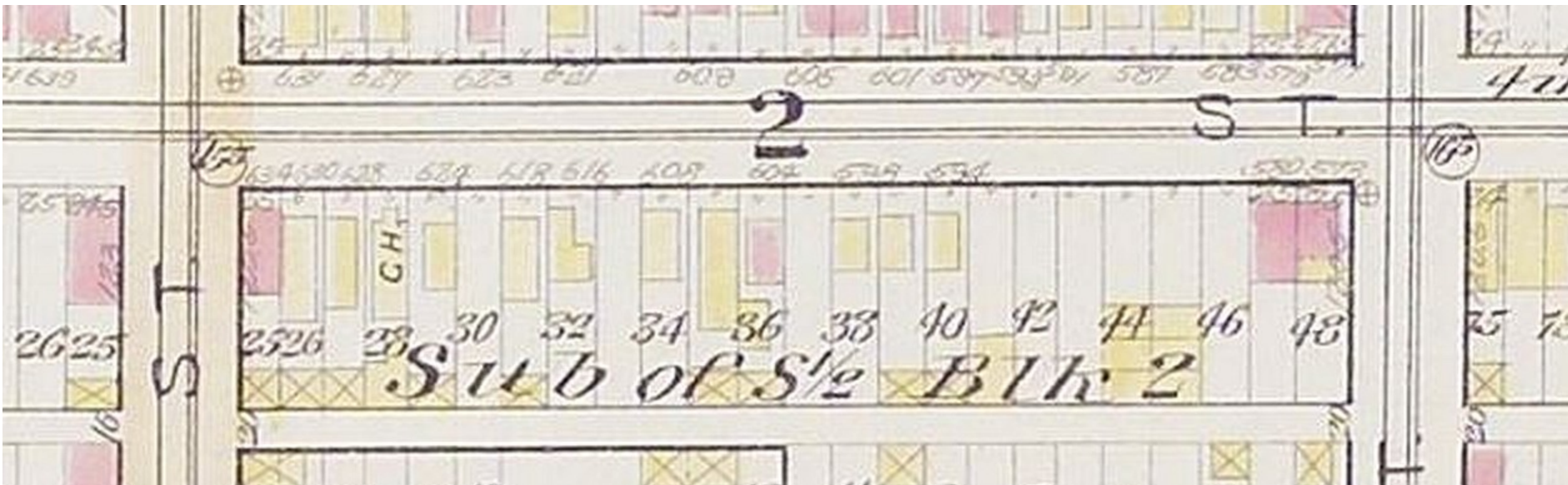
Hoekstras Return

- He probably kept in touch with Hoppe and also made connections with the Old Apostolic Church under her apostle Friedrich Strube (Stapelburg). This community has still hardly been researched, but its liturgy is clearly oriented on the Hamburg liturgy of 1864.
 - It is said that Hoekstra only returned to the Reformed regional church after the National Socialists banned the congregations he founded.
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The development of NAK in the USA

- The NAC USA only received stability through the work of the apostle Friedrich Mierau (9.1.1869-26.7.1925), who worked as an apostle from 1901.
 - Contacts to the FGAMC in the USA have not yet been established.
 - However, still in 1930 a book with the significant "Liturgy" appears, which contains instructions for some official acts and whose texts are directly translated from the liturgy of 1864...
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Teil IV



Decline of the FGAMC communities

Robinsons Atlas of the City of Chicago, Illinois, Volume 4, Plate 20, 1896.
The "CH" indicates "church".

The New York Church robbery

Karl Weinmann reports in his book "100 Jahre Neuapostolische Kirche 1863-1963 - Apostelbezirk Hamburg" on one of the most remarkable crimes in New Apostolic history (from p. 392).

There, a woman named Fendt, mother of the later District Apostle J.P. Fendt, tells of the time around 1900.

The narrative seems to be very distorted, but some facts can be deduced.

The New Yorker Church robbery

- Apostle H.F. Hoppe had founded a small congregation in New York using at least two locations (a small German "Evangelical Lutheran" church (on 52nd Street?)).
 - The young J.P. Fendt and his brother attended "Sunday School" in the congregation.
 - Their father came into contact with the New Apostolic congregation and heard there (possibly distorted and unwanted) stories about the apostle H.F. Hoppe.
 - Around 1900 he decided to take a unique step.
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The New York Church robbery

- Shortly determined, [the father of J.P. Fendt] went to the assembly hall of the unfaithful Apostle Hoppe, loaded up all the church chairs, the instruments of the Lord's Supper, and everything that belonged to the apostolic church, and brought it back to his [New Apostolic] church. (Weinmann, p. 393)
 - Weinmann conceals here what must have been clear to him as a connoisseur of early apostolic history: this was an inventory of the FGAMC, not of the early NAC - the incited Fendt had become a church robber.
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The New York Church robbery

- The FGAMC probably ceased to exist in New York with the death of the apostle Hoppe in 1903.
 - In any case, the New Apostolic sources report nothing further about it - in 1913 there is talk of the "gate lying down", i.e. the congregation probably no longer existed.
 - The biography "Friedrich Krebs" from the year 1993 takes over the above description almost literally without proof (p. 91f.).
-

The slow demise of the FGAMC in the USA

- After the turn of the century, the FGAMC in the USA is in its final phase and in a crisis from which it can no longer find its way out.
 - It still has the congregation in Chicago, which gave up its church building in 1909 and gathered in private households.
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A remarkable source - the Deed Records from Chicago

"Jacob Westphaln, legally sworn, declares that he is a resident of Park Ridge, Cook County, Illinois State, and that he was one of the founding members of the parish called First General Apostolic Mission Church of Chicago.

The Named Church was built and registered around 1873 and its registration documents were drawn up in the common form at the time of the founding of the Church."

A remarkable source - the Deed Records from Chicago

“They acquired certain premises in Chicago from John Siebelt, the sworn brother-in-law, in early 1873 ... for the use of that church, and subsequently built a church on the said property, and began to use it for religious purposes, and continued this use until about September 1909, when the building became dilapidated and the congregation had largely moved to other parts of Chicago.

It seemed inadvisable for [the congregation] to bear the cost of making the building usable again, and since September 1909 this church has held meetings from time to time in the homes of its members. ...”

Teil V



The strange legacy of
FGAMC

Jacob Westphaln 1913 in Hamburg.

Handover to the next generation

- Heinrich Geyer dies on 4 October 1896.
 - The publisher Jakob Weber becomes Heinrich Geyer's successor in the prophet's office of the Hamburg community.
 - A chapel of his own is opened in Alexanderstraße in October 1899.
 - The last (active) apostle of the AcaM, Johann Friedrich Güldner, dies on 31 March 1904.
 - After that the Hamburg congregation under the bishop H.W. Lehsten is without apostolic office.
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Connection with the AAM

- In 1909, the Jena congregation "General Apostolic Mission" (AAM) under the leadership of Robert Geyer , which had emerged from the Old Apostolic Church under the leadership of Friedrich Strube, was adopted into the "original" AcaM in Hamburg.
 - As positive as this increase in numbers may have been at first, difficult are the resulting consequences.
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Jakob Westphaln's dual mission

- In 1913 Jakob Westphaln travels to Hamburg. He now holds the office of an angel prophet.
 - He wanted to support the German AcaM congregation in Hamburg - after ten years without an apostle, another AcaM apostle was to be called for Germany.
 - A new apostle is also to be called for the USA in order to close the gap that has arisen there as well, following the death of the apostle Hoppe.
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Jakob Westphaln's dual mission

- On 12.10.1913 there is indeed a call service in Hamburg, but the mission fails fatally (and twice):
 - Titus Kopisch, called apostle for Germany, soon broke away from the Hamburg congregation and separates himself from it.
 - Robert Hermann Geyer, called apostle for America, does not travel there (probably also due to the war). The AcaM in Hamburg subsequently experiences conflicts and divisions. It was not until 1921 that Robert Hermann Geyer was separated as an apostle.
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Record of Prophecy for Apostle Robert Hermann Geyer

"And you, Robert Geyer, the Lord calls you as an apostle for North America, you shall build the gate that lies down in New York. Wait the time until the Lord will clear the way until you are called out of the gate... Do not be afraid and believe... Bear one another's burden... Do not be afraid, you little congregation, He will unlock and no one will lock, He will open the door to the great crowd for you."

Robert Geyer's trip to the USA

“[Robert] Geyer visited the USA (after a prophetic request by [the gate* prophet Wilhelm] Guldner in 1924) only from 20.11.1925 to 2.2.1926. This trip, which led him to New York and Evanston near Chicago (where he met with [Jakob] Westphaln), "should" (according to Geyer) "according to God's will only be an information and mission trip to survey American conditions and population". The fact that the apostle called for America no longer took care of his field of commission was later reproached to him several times by his brothers in office".

*"gate" prophet – The AcaM had the idea that there should be 12 "gate cities" in the world as headquarters of the respective tribe. There would have been gate prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and an apostle, of course. We know of the following gate cities: Hamburg, Breslau, New York, and possibly Amsterdam. Most certainly, they never even named all twelve.



Gotthilf Haug, Heinrich Walter Lehsten und Robert Geyer im Jahr 1932.



„Oekumenisch-apostolische Kapelle in Hamburg, Bürgerweide Nr. 62“, ca. 1935.
(Archiv des SDV)

Epilogue

- Probably also by the arguments in the AcaM in Hamburg, following divisions and the size of the rest of the congregation it does not come any more to missionary work of the "Hamburgers" in the USA.
 - Robert Geyer's theological views may have contributed to the fact that the AAM or their successor groupings positioned themselves differently and no longer tried (or managed) to work in the USA.
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Epilogue

- The further history of the FGAMC can only be opened up rudimentarily by genealogical research, further sources are not yet known.
 - Descendants of the families Westphaln, Doose and Siebelt move to California in the 20th century.
 - But we don't know any clues about a community in California.
 - So the trace of the Chicago community is lost after 1909.
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Epilogue

- The daughter of the apostle Hoppe, Emilie, married John Saggan in New York in 1887, who also came from Hamburg.
 - A trip to Hamburg is documented for the year 1891.
 - She is also said to have been buried in Hamburg.
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Epilogue

- To date, no evidence has been found of personnel continuity from the FGAMC to the American NAK. An early Chicago membership directory does not show any personnel similarities.
 - It seems that the FGAMC did not make the leap to the next generation for several reasons, but its members did not turn to the NAC either.
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Hypotheses for the downfall of the FGAMC

Speculatively, the following hypotheses can be assumed, which could also explain the decline of FGAMC:

Purely German services,

strong ecclesiastical competition and rapid change of the sociological milieu in the surroundings of the church building ("typical American problem")

unstable official structure and teaching,

strong problems of generational transition.

In the end there are only assumptions...

That's All!

This presentation is available for download at <http://www.me1542.de> .

It would not have been possible without the work of Ken Brown and the support of Edwin Diersmann and Andreas Ostheimer.

Thank you very much!