

golia from 1868-1870. At the end of 1870 he left the Scheut missionaries and returned to his home diocese of Utrecht where he first took over the parish of Bredevoort (see Fritz Bornemann, A.E. Smorenburg, *Verbum SVD* 14, 1973, pp. 213-215).

In 1874 the Prefect Apostolic of Hong Kong, Msgr. Raimondi, visited him. It was from Msgr. Raimondi that Fr. Arnold heard about Fr. Smorenburg. When Fr. Arnold visited Fr. Smorenburg in Bredevoort he wanted to get his advice as well as “information about China which could be important for him. He was received in a most friendly way and got all the requested information about the country, the people, life and work of the missionaries in China and about the way of doing missionary work there” (auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl* [The missionary society of Steyl], p. 23). Furthermore Fr. Smorenburg wrote the following declaration which was meant for publication:

The work which your Reverence began and for which you have been working so zealously until now, that is to establish a German - Dutch house of the foreign missions in connection with a preparatory school for the training of missionaries, certainly is a very necessary and God pleasing work. How much I wished to give everything in my power again to the pagan mission, at the present this will perhaps hardly be possible any more. Instead from the bottom of my heart I will oblige myself to support your work in any possible way and in case you needed an old missionary in order to teach from his own first hand experience your future missionaries about China and the adjacent countries to the north of it, its language and the customs of its people, the way of doing missionary work and similar things which are worth knowing: it will be my pleasure to be available to you free of a charge for a teaching course, in case that you intend to buy or rent a house here in my parish for instance for the final preparation of your missionaries.

Bredevoort, March 9, 1875

A. E. Smorenburg

Parish priest, former Apost. Provicar of Peking and Mongolia,
Professor at the imperial university of Peking

(Bornemann, A. E. Smorenburg, *Verbum* 14, 1973, pp. 217-218).

For Fr. Arnold this declaration was of great importance: “He who himself had no mission experience whatsoever now could write on the program of his seminary the name of a respected missionary who furthermore could be a representative of the Dutch part of the German - Dutch mission house” (*ibid.*, p. 218). 25 years later we read in the silver jubilee book of the mission house: Even though Fr. Smorenburg had taught Chinese only to Frs. Anzer and Freinademetz, “at that time the declaration was important and also served the purpose of placing more confidence in the founding of the mission house in the eyes of the bishops and the Catholic people and made the process easier” (auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl* [The missionary society of Steyl], p. 23 [transl. from Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 58, footnote 57]).



Divine Word Missionaries Secretariat Arnold Janssen Steyl

VOLUME 4 | No.5 | MAY 2010

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The Arnoldus Family Story

In telling the story of the foundation of St. Michael's mission house in Steyl we are still in February 1875. By this time Arnold Janssen had received a number of smaller donations and a bigger one had been promised. However, he had not yet found a suitable and affordable property. Two students of theology had shown their interest in the new mission house: Franz Xaver Reichart from the diocese of Brixen (South Tyrol) who studied in Louvain / Belgium and Johann Baptist Anzer from the Regensburg diocese.

Staff Members and Advisors

The new mission house was planned as an Apostolic School, and so Arnold Janssen was looking for teachers. On February 4, 1875, therefore, he wrote to the former provincial superior of the Dominicans, Fr. Rouard de Card and asked for some priests as teachers. Since he was convinced that his foundation could not lack “the foundation of a religious congregation”, he also asked, “if the need should arise, to allow the seminary to be affiliated with the Dominican Order” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen* (Engl. ed.), Rome 1975, p. 56).

Frs. Arnold and Rouard did not only exchange letters but in “the spring of 1875 they met twice. We have evidence that they met in Kevelaer and that Fr. Arnold visited the Dominicans in Duesseldorf” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 96).

John Baptist Anzer had written to Fr. Arnold for the first time on February 8, 1875. In answer to Fr. Arnold's – unfortunately lost – reply of February 12, Anzer wrote again to Fr. Arnold on February 15, 1875:

Reverend, Most Revered Fr. Editor!

Noble Sir!

I received your esteemed letter of 12/2/75. From that I realize that it is you, Your Reverence, who had the great and holy idea to call into being a mission house for Germany and you who are trying to realize the project. From a few remarks in your letter I see that great obstacles stand in the way. However, I live in the fullest confidence that they will not lessen your determination; for the way to salvation is through the cross, the way to victory through struggle. Rest assured, God wills this holy work, particularly in these sad days. ...

I, for my part, wish most sincerely that your enterprise may be crowned with the

greatest success, and I pray daily, yes even hourly, in this intention, as fervently as I, weak man, am able. I would be happy if I, too, could lend a helping hand. Perhaps God will still give me this good fortune. For the time being I will do all I can to win people to pray for this holy work and perhaps also subscribers for your magnificent "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart"...

Finally I would like to give you some information about myself. I was born on May 16, 1851, of poor parents. In spite of considerable material lack, I successfully completed my high school studies; then I attended lectures in the different philosophical subjects for two semesters and already for three semesters I have been studying theology, and two years from next Pentecost I will be ordained a priest. ...

Already more than six years ago the strong desire arose in me to become a missionary in pagan countries, particularly in those of Asia. Over the years this aspiration has grown even stronger. One reason for that, I think, already lies in a natural inclination to a life as missionaries live it; however, nature alone could not move me to become a missionary, never! Much higher reasons are there. – In any case I am totally determined to seek only the honor of God and the salvation of souls, but for myself suffering and sacrifices and persecutions. Naturally, reality would remain far behind the ideal; for our flesh, and in particular my flesh, is weak, but the grace of God is powerful also.

My spiritual director did not approve of my decision to join your mission house as soon as it was completed. He said that it could take years and by then I would be too old and I would not learn the necessary languages well anymore; I should instead join a missionary society as soon as possible and that all the more since all the time which I spend in our school would be completely wasted for me. More about this another time. However, the best would be if could speak with you personally.

Right now, however, I would like to ask you, whom I already think of as my spiritual father, to advise me what I should do. In order to complete my theological studies, could I not be accepted into a French or English or also Belgian mission seminary? There I would have the tremendous advantage of learning those living languages, as well as furthering my knowledge of Latin ..., then later I could dedicate myself totally and more usefully to your enterprise.

Should your Reverence be in a position to do something for me in this regard, then I would very much ask for this favor.

Finally, I ask for your prayer so that the obstacles which are still standing in the way of my desire will be happily removed.

In the meantime I have the honor to remain, with all respect and veneration, Your Reverence's and Noble Sir's most obedient

John Anzer C. Theol

(John Baptist Anzer †, *Briefe aus dem Jahre 1875 an Arnold Janssen* (Letters from the year 1875 to Arnold Janssen), *Verbum* 3, 1961, pp. 56-57).

Arnold Janssen did not only ask the Dominicans for help for his new mission house. On February 16, 1875 he also wrote to the founder of the Benedictine Abbey of Beuron, Abbot Maurus Wolter. He introduced himself to the Abbot with these words:

"The writer of this letter is an old teacher of your Rev. Fr. Doering from Bocholt and a good friend of the Nadaud family from Bonn related to you (and of Dr. Lamers, the husband of Caec. Nadaud, a bosom friend from our student years)". He sent the Messenger of the Sacred Heart for Fr. Gams OSB "with the not immodest request 'to send us for the library of the mission house which is soon to be established in the diocese of Roermond (near Venlo) for Germany and Holland a copy of the valuable work *Series Episcoporum*'. He wanted it in particular for the articles on the missions. He was too poor, he claimed, to buy it himself" (Alt, *Arnold Janssen, Journey in Faith*, pp. 59-60, footnote 61).

He then asked the Abbot if he "perhaps could come to his aid with one or two priests". "At one time the Benedictines had been almost the only missionaries in the Church. Now he wanted to start an apostolic school. When the students finished their studies, they were free to go wherever they wished. Some of them might decide to join the Benedictines. 'Now the question is whether you can come to our assistance out of love of God and the missions?'" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen* (Engl. ed.), Rome 1975, pp. 56-57).

On February 20 the Dominican Fr. Rouard de Card answered Fr. Arnold's letter of February 4th. Fr. Rouard's letter of February 20 shows that he "had already heard about Janssen's plan in December 1874" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 98, footnote 25). With regard to a possible affiliation with the Dominican order he wrote that "it could not be discussed until a study program had been tried and found successful." Concerning Fr. Arnold's wish for teachers the answer was: "None of his priests were available for the seminary as long as it was possible for them to do some work in Germany" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen* (Engl. ed.), p. 56).

An entry of February 6, 1875 in Fr. Arnold's notebook shows that during "these months of preparation" he "also sought contact with and help from the Sacred Heart Missionaries" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 59).

At the end of February or beginning of March 1875 Fr. Arnold visited the Dutch priest Antonius Everardus Smorenburg (1827-1904) in the Dutch town of Bredevoort. From 1854-1870 Fr. Smorenburg served as a missionary of outstanding merit in China, first with the Vincentians and then with the Scheut missionaries. As a Vincentian he worked as a teacher in a language school in Peking which trained interpreters. In 1861 he wrote a "Chinese song book – 56 sheets of paper – with the Gregorian chant melodies for the Masses of the main feasts. The corresponding Chinese characters were written into the note heads; however he overlooked the fact that the five tone Chinese system does not correspond with our eight tone scale. Two revised editions of the booklet were published in 1894 and 1904." Furthermore he wrote a Latin grammar for Chinese beginners (between 1864 and 1867). The seventh revised edition was published as late as 1930! In addition he also published a small vocabulary. Besides being a teacher he also was the Pro-Vicar of the Vicar Apostolic of Peking. After having joined the Scheut missionaries in 1867, he was the ecclesiastical superior in Mon-