

“§ 2 The sole, exclusive goal of the Society is the foreign missions, primarily China. This excludes all secondary objectives and activities for Europe which cannot be regarded as necessary means for the attainment of the primary goal.

“§ 3 The means to achieve this goal are as follows:

a) Formation of the mind: the necessary ecclesiastical scholarship and a practical and linguistic training for the mission countries concerned.

b) Formation of the heart: asceticism and religious exercises based on the Roman Rite and the liturgy of the Church as is customary in well-regulated clerical and mission seminaries.

“§ 4 The Society will accept those aspirants who are ready to go to pagan missions and to live and die for the propagation of the holy faith in the spirit of the apostles, or to work as teachers for a time or for an indefinite period, for the training of missionaries in the motherhouse, whereby preference, vocation and ability will be taken into account. Consequently, there is no essential difference between teachers and missionaries, only an accidental or temporary one.

“§ 5 These directives can only be changed by the unanimous vote of all the members of the Society entitled to vote, also those in the missions” (*ibid.*, pp. 106-107).

After reading this draft Fr. Arnold was very upset: “he uttered only one word: ‘Rebellion!’” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelsang, Rome 1975, p. 87).

Fr. Arnold wrote the minutes of these events of March 8, 1876. However, Fr. Bill and the two seminarians refused to sign them, for in their opinion the minutes described their way of action “pretty confused, unclear, leading to misunderstandings, lending themselves to be interpreted in Fr. Arnold’s favor” (Peter Bill, *Erinnerungen* [memoirs], *ibid.*, p. 70). Fr. Arnold wrote: “When required to point out any lack of accuracy, they were unable to do so. They felt a more detailed report of their own procedure was lacking but when I called on them to draft it, they protested that it would take too much time. They also said the present text would lead to misunderstandings” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 107).

Why was Fr. Arnold so upset about those statutes drawn up by Fr. Bill and the two seminarians? Fr. Bill had this explanation: “Rev. Janssen was of the firm belief that he was called by God to found a new religious order (or religious congregation as the orders are called today) and that God had already partly revealed to him the laws and statutes for his new order and he would also reveal what was still lacking at the proper time” (Peter Bill, *Erinnerungen* [memoirs], p. 70).

What Fr. Bill sensed in 1876 did become a reality during the lifetime of Frs. Arnold and Bill!

Merry Christmas and God’s blessing for the New Year!



The Arnoldus Family Story

MARCH 1876 – The TENSIONS NEAR THEIR CLIMAX

On Sunday morning, March 5, 1876 Fr. Bill met Arnold Janssen to explain to him his refusal to accept the order of Masses as Fr. Arnold had drawn it up. In the afternoon Fr. Arnold called Fr. Bill and the seminarians Reichart and Anzer to a conference; he himself took the minutes and had the three sign them. The central issue was whether Fr. Bill granted Arnold Janssen “the right to determine the time and place for Fr. Bill to celebrate Mass” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 112). Fr. Bill did not answer; he felt that Fr. Arnold’s questions were “too unclear by far, too obscure, too complicated and difficult than that a clear, definite answer could be given.” Furthermore all the participants in the conference “were too agitated and not in a mood or state of mind to understand explanations and receive them well” (Peter Bill, *Erinnerungen* [memoirs], p. 59).

Fr. Arnold then told Fr. Bill: “The matter is serious. Now I am going to his Lordship the Bishop of Roermond, to inform him about the situation. If you wish, you can come with me and defend yourself” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p.112).

Getting the Bishop of Roermond involved

Arnold Janssen travelled to Roermond and gave the minutes of the conference to Bishop Paredis. He also mentioned the fact that when they bought the house, the house had been registered under Fr. Bill’s name – and that had been done because of Fr. Arnold’s proposal. However, now he wanted a change and that the house be registered under his name.

Fr. Arnold recalled the meeting with the Bishop: “When the good Bishop Paredis read the document, he shook his gray head. He, too, saw the need for Fr. Bill to resell me the house, especially since more buildings had to be put up, and he wrote him a letter to that effect” (*ibid.*).

Fr. Arnold wanted Fr. Bill’s answer by the following day; Fr. Bill, however, asked for a delay for his answer. “I wanted to gain time in order in the meantime to find advice and help,” and the first one he turned to was his own bishop, Bishop Adames of Luxemburg.

STATUTES – MARCH 8, 1876

Fr. Bill and the two seminarians Reichart and Anzer were unhappy that there were no statutes for the mission house. On March 8, 1876 they had a conference at which Fr. Arnold presented his own draft statutes:

“§ 1 The name of our house is ‘St. Michael’s Mission House’, Steyl. In Latin ‘*Domus missionum exterarum ad s. Michaellem in Steyl*’.

“§ 2 The main purpose of our house is the promotion of the foreign missions of the Catholic Church, especially in the pagan countries of the Far East.

“§ 3 For this purpose we will use the following means:

a) Accept candidates with a missionary vocation, educate them in the lower and higher classes and guide them in those virtues which seem to be particularly necessary for successful missionary activity.

b) Equip the trained missionaries, send them out and support them in their missionary activity through advice, alms, prayers and daily offering of the good works being done in the house, namely, the Way of the Cross and weekly Communion especially on Wednesdays and the ascetical exercises customary in the house.

c) Encourage the faithful to make the concerns of Jesus their own concerns, to see the spread of the gospel as a main concern of Jesus and to help to achieve this through prayers and alms, and by offering their children who feel called to apostolic activity.

“§ 4 Evangelical messengers generally fulfill a double function: 1) pastoral, 2) teaching and educational. The first is seen in mission stations and apostolic journeys in the foreign country, the second in the motherhouse and the mission colleges to be established. Consequently, our Society will comprise two classes of membership: teachers and actual missionaries. Both have the same rights and obligations and are free to apply for one or the other on entrance. This choice, however, is subject to feasibility and as long as there are no important reasons for assigning someone to another task for some time.

“§ 5 The Society practices a special devotion to the Divine Word and his servants, the Holy Angels. Wednesday is set aside in a special way for this veneration; this weekday has a special significance for the foundation of the Society. On that day the members are expected to offer up Holy Communion for the intentions of the house and the veneration of the Divine Word and his servants, the Holy Angels, but the candidates are free to choose for themselves. The missionaries should venerate the Divine Word primarily as the *lux illuminans omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum* [as the light which enlightens every one coming into this world, cf. Jn 1:9] and as the Word through whose grace alone their words become dynamic; the science teachers as the *sapientia increata ex qua est etiam omne lumen humanae sapi-*

entiae [the uncreated wisdom from which all light proceeds for human wisdom]. For the latter, the cultivation of these sciences is also an obligation of their position *per se*, an indirect support of the missions and an important task for our times in which our house participates to the best of its humble ability in an auxiliary fashion to the extent that the main goal does not suffer. This scientific pursuit should be supported as much as possible by the house. But the sacred sciences should be taught and studied not in the spirit of modern times, but in the deep and pious spirit of the holy Church fathers and the older scholastics, that is, of St. Thomas Aquinas and the canonized saints who have left writings for posterity” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, pp. 104-105).

Fr. Bill and the two seminarians did not agree with this draft of the statutes. They rejected “the cultivation of the sciences by competent teachers”. “The Rector tried to reach agreement by softening the language and dropping the word ‘class’ in § 4 but without success” (*ibid.*, p. 105).

Fr. Arnold, on the other hand, did not want to give up the cultivation of sciences. He “pointed to an official document which he regarded as fundamental, since on this point hinged the approval of the Archbishop of Cologne, which many other bishops had followed. This was the submission of 17 March 1875 drawn up by Rector Janssen together with Dr. von Essen and sent to the Archbishop of Cologne.” In this submission “cultivation of Christian scholarship” by the teachers of the house and giving them “the necessary time for this purpose” had been presented as a “secondary objective” of the house (*ibid.*, p. 106).

Seminarian Reichart asked Msgr. Dr. von Essen about this “secondary objective”. He gave the following answer: “Fr. Janssen, your boss, believed that the Mission House could become a *sedes sapientiae* [seat of wisdom] against the illusions of German science. In my heart of hearts I found the words superfluous because I considered the teachers of the house had enough to do educating the young people” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 106, footnote 9).

Seminarian Anzer made Arnold Janssen report in the minutes that “he felt the goal of influencing Europe scientifically was not reconcilable with the idea of a mission house for pagan lands” (*ibid.*, footnote 10). For Fr. Arnold, however, mission in ‘pagan lands’ was the main, but not the only and exclusive purpose of the mission house!

Since Fr. Bill and the two seminarians did not agree with his draft statutes, Fr. Arnold asked them to draw up their own statutes. On behalf of the group Reichart submitted the result of their deliberations to Arnold Janssen; it reads:

“§ 1 St. Michael’s Foreign Mission Society is a society of secular priests. Consequently, the Society cannot adopt the rule of an already existing congregation or draw up and introduce a rule which might change and affect its identity as a missionary society of secular priests.