

200 books of juvenile stories” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Arnoldus Press Manila, p. 119). In Paderborn he won as a contributor Countess von Brackel, who wrote Catholic entertaining literature and who in 1875 had published her exciting novel ‘The daughter of the artistic rider’ which reached around 100 editions; he noted down authors of church historical and art historical books and the editor of the Literature circular”(Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Steyler Verlag Nettetal, 1969 p. 121 f).

Fr. Arnold placed the new publication under the protection of Mary, Mother of God. “She is the seat of wisdom, the queen of all angels and saints”, he wrote in the first issue of the Holy City of God.

“It was published under the name of St. Michael’s Mission Seminary, Steyl.” The name of John Janssen, Fr. Arnold’s youngest brother, was given as editor. “He had published a few articles in newspapers during his years of study ... His first contribution was a poem on the first page of the first issue; a poem that Rector Janssen had emended and put in final form. For some time the Rector went over all the material himself and in the process gradually initiated his brother into the work.” In 1878, when Fr. Arnold went to Rome, Fr. John Janssen took over the editorship. “But the founder and superior of the community never relinquished the general supervision.” Everything that was mentally active in the house contributed. The necessity of having 5 to 5 ½ large pages of interesting material ready for printing every week “must have kept the members of the community on their toes”(Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*-Engl. Edition p. 120, German edition, p. 122).



p. one of the first issue of the „Heilige Stadt Gottes“ (Holy City of God)



The Arnoldus Family Story

THE PRESS APOSTOLATE

Fr. Arnold Janssen was firmly convinced of the importance of the press apostolate. Therefore almost his whole priestly life was also at the service of this apostolate, first through the publication of leaflets in the service of the Apostleship of Prayer, from 1874 on through the publication of his mission magazine “*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote*” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart); later on this name was changed to “*Steyler Missionsbote*” (Steyl Mission Messenger), and finally through the publication of the “*Stadt Gottes*” (City of God) and the “*Michaelskalender*” (St. Michael’s Almanac) in 1878 and 1880 respectively. Interestingly, Fr. Arnold got the idea of publishing the latter two from a Dutch and a German layman.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE “HEILIGE STADT GOTTES” (HOLY CITY OF GOD)

Fr. Arnold got the idea of publishing the “*Heilige Stadt Gottes*” (from now on I will mainly use the English translation “Holy City of God”) from the successful Dutch publisher and printer Henry Bogaerts of s’Hertogenbosch. “By 1877 his printing establishment was one of the largest in Holland. He was especially good at printing pictures. The basis for this success was the modern techniques he used in the preparation of the plates. Bogaerts was eager to put his store of plates, already used in Holland, to further commercial use in other countries”(Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 118). So one fine day in 1877 he went to Steyl and “presented Father Janssen with a plan for a pictorial family magazine for German-speaking readers. The offer took the rector completely by surprise. Was such a magazine compatible with the missionary program of the seminary?” (*ibid.*)

Fr. Arnold had to give his answer within 8 days, otherwise Bogaerts would present his plan to another publisher in Germany.

Since the Bishop of Roermond agreed to the publication of such a magazine, Fr. Arnold decided to go ahead with it. On January 6, 1878 the new magazine was launched; its name was “*Die Heilige Stadt Gottes*” – “The Holy City of God”.

REASONS FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THE “HEILIGE STADT GOTTES” –

In the magazine’s first issue Fr. Arnold told his readers why he had gone ahead with the publication:

“When someone wants to spread something good, he must strive to influence his fellow men. For this purpose, he has to use means suitable for the circumstances of the time. At present one of those means is the press. Passing speech disappears; the printed word remains and can be read again and again. Through the press I also have the possibility to speak to people who live far away from me, whom I have never seen nor will ever see. And yet my thoughts have an impact on them; indeed, in case they accept my words, I can make them children of my spirit, and I can convey my way of thinking to them. For my thought is embodied in the writing, and the written word is multiplied through the printing and reaches them through today’s extraordinarily easy means of transport” (transl. Mansfield/Mulberge in Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p.153 and JO). Fr. Arnold’s aim with his publications was the same as that of the Swiss “St. Paul’s association for the promotion of a good press”: “to make the principles of the faith prevail more and more in the State, in the family, and in the life of the individual” (transl. Frederick M. Lynk, in Hermann Fischer, *Life of Arnold Janssen*, Techny, 1925, p. 239)

And what means do we have to achieve this aim? Fr. Arnold asked, and he gave this answer: “If we want to achieve this aim we first of all must see to it that we will be read. For if the printed word is not read it was printed in vain. Therefore we choose an illustrated weekly.

“Illustrated magazines have the advantage that they can count on a large circle of readers as long as the task is fulfilled even only to some degree. A beautiful illustration appeals to the viewer. Therefore illustrated magazines are read often and with pleasure. The main difficulty is the supply of such illustrations. Through God’s providence it has been made possible for us to conquer this first and main difficulty easily and without risk for the house.” The reason was that the publisher Bogaerts supplied the illustrations.

Fr. Arnold continues: “At first we were totally against taking on this project. The main reason was that Germany already has illustrated papers. Then we were told that if we did not accept the offer within eight days, it would be given to another publishing company in Germany and there would be no doubt that the other company would accept it as it was so advantageous a project. Confronted by this fact we realized that the production of a new German illustrated weekly was not to be prevented. We had to ask ourselves whether we should undertake the matter ourselves for the good of the house, our holy religion and the great work of propagation of the faith, or allow it to pass into other hands” (transl. from Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 153 and JO).

“If we were to let this opportunity pass, most probably it would not be offered to us a second time, and later we would have to reproach ourselves for losing, through lack of courage and trust in God, such an exceedingly valuable opportunity which, on the one hand, would bring our printing press up to the standard of the times in this for the missions so important and difficult job of illustrations and on the other hand to do somewhat more than has been done so far to influence the public mind in Germany in favor of holy religion.”

Another important argument in favor of accepting Mr. Bogaert’s offer was the hope of making some profit. For, so Fr. Arnold said, we knew well how difficult it was to struggle along only with donations” (H. auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl. Ein Bild der ersten 25 Jahre ihres Bestehens* (The Mission Society of Steyl. A picture of the first 25 years of its existence), Steyl 1900, p. 72).

When the Bishop of Roermond approved publication of the magazine, Fr. Arnold decided to go ahead with it and he made a contract with Mr. Bogaerts.

PRINTING OF THE “HEILIGE STADT GOTTES”

According to this contract, Bogaerts “would supply the plates but the type would be set in Steyl. A matrix was made of the finished pages. The stereotype for that was the only new piece of equipment that Steyl had to provide. From the matrix the Dutch firm would cast the actual printing plates, print the magazine and send the finished product to Steyl. The magazine was published as an eight page weekly in a large 10 ½ by 14 inch format” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Arnoldus Press Manila, p. 118).

NAME AND CONTENT OF THE MAGAZINE

Fr. Arnold called his new publication “*Die heilige Stadt Gottes*” – “The Holy City of God”. He probably adopted this name “with a slight modification either from St. Augustine’s *City of God* or from *The Mystical City of God*, a book of visions of the famous Spanish Franciscan of the 17th century, Maria of Agreda” (*ibid.*, p. 119).

In the first issue Fr. Arnold described to his readers the kind of magazine “The holy City of God” was to be:

The Stadt Gottes is intended to be 1. An enjoyable magazine. Therefore it strives to bring good stories and novels, beautiful engravings and drawings from daily life, as well as from daily and war history; it will bring something of those many things which are suitable to fill an hour of leisure in a pleasant and if possible instructive way.

2. The “Stadt Gottes” will be an instructive magazine for the purpose of spreading generally useful knowledge, particularly about that grand temple of God which is nature. God has placed us there so that nature will proclaim to us His existence, His greatness, His wisdom and all His exalted qualities.

3. The “Stadt Gottes” will also be a religious magazine; that means it will inspire and teach also in religious matters, and in this regard it wants to do a little more than other current illustrated weekly magazines.

STAFF AND EDITORIAL OFFICE

One reason for the reservations of Fr. Arnold and his confreres regarding the publication of a new magazine was that they lacked the necessary editorial staff.

So Fr. Arnold soon began to travel “trying to find contributors. In Duesseldorf he got a promise from Wilhelm Herchenbach, the popular writer of stories, especially for younger readers. Herchenbach had already written or published some