

placed in front of the missionaries' house and blessed. The cross stands in the center before our house and since it is so high, it can be seen from near and far. Our confreres who come here for their mission work can already see it from the distance, from the sea (Matthias Dier, *Freud und Leid in der Togo Mission / Joy and pain in the Togo mission*, Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote / Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart, 20, No. 5, February 1893).

### *Blessing of the Chapel*

On September 18, the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, the chapel of the new mission house was blessed. "The chapel was on the ground floor of the tropical house which was built mainly of wood. It had been pre-fabricated in Steyl and brought along from there by the missionaries" (Hermann auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl...* / The mission society of Steyl..., Steyl 1900, p. 384).

### **Argentina**

#### *Letter to Superior Becher*

In a letter to Rev. Becher, Fr. Arnold expressed his anger about a letter written by the secretary of the bishop of Parana. "The secretary of the bishop wrote to me from there, a miserable short letter. It does not seem as if the leaders of the episcopal administration there are really interested in our helping them. Otherwise the bishop would have written himself and the secretary would have put in a bit more effort than to send me these words, written in a hurry, with almost illegible writing on such miserable paper. Fr. Arnold wanted a letter signed by the bishop. "Perhaps we are not welcome in the diocese of Parana and therefore it would be better to look for another diocese and be useful there. Perhaps they are afraid of the Liberals and we are not sure of the support of the episcopal administration." After this Fr. Arnold expressed his opinion that it was very necessary to increase respect for religion in Argentina. "That purpose is being served when you and your confreres work zealously and unselfishly, furthermore when printing presses are founded and daily newspapers are published ...". If Superior Becher wanted a Catholic press, he should write two documents in Latin which Fr. Arnold would like to send to Rome: "1. A report about what you have done so far, 2. the necessity of publishing a paper for the Germans there. Then I can send them both to Rome and request the blessing of the Holy Father ... Then we will have a good foundation and, when later on difficulties come our way, and they certainly will, we have better protection and will not hang in the air, and the whole enterprise will win more respect. We are also protected from the accusation that a printing press is not a matter for a religious congregation"(Jos. Alt, ed., *Arnold Janssen, Briefe nach Südamerika / Letters to South America*, vol. I, p. 58-59).



## **Divine Word Missionaries** **Secretariat Arnold Janssen Steyl**

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Missionshaus Steyl | Postfach 2460 | D-41311 Nettetal ■ Missiehuis St. Michaël | St. Michaëlstr. 7 | NL-5935 BL Steyl/Venlo

### **The Arnoldus Family Story**

#### **JULY 1892 – Steyl / Togo**

##### *First SVD Missionaries sent to Togo*

On July 17, in the Upper Church of Steyl Archbishop Krementz of Cologne gave the mission cross to the first five SVD Togo missionaries saying: "Beloved son, look on the cross, your protection in all dangers, your guardian on all your ways, your consolation in life and death."

In procession the archbishop and the five missionaries walked through the church; in front of the altars of the Sacred Heart, Our Lady and St. Michael a suitable antiphon, versicle and prayer were sung, to place the departing confreres and their great and difficult task under the protection of these holy patrons ("Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" – "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart", 19, No. 11, August 1892). On July 21, they left Hamburg by ship for Togo where they arrived on August 27 (Jos. Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Steyler Verlag Nettetal 2002, p. 637).

#### **AUGUST 1892**

##### *Government permission to start the mission house in Nyssa /Silesia /Poland*

On August 10, the imperial Prussian government in Oppeln (Silesia) informed Fr. Arnold "that on 20 July the new foundation of the Society of the Divine Word 'for the purpose of training German missionaries for the pagan missions' had been approved but also 'that members of the foundation should not undertake other activities without the express approval of the state'" (*ibid.*, p. 447).

##### *SVD Provincial Chapter in China*

From August 10 – 22, 1892, the SVD Provincial Chapter took place in Puoli (South Shantung). Its main topic was: "The new constitutions of the Society have to be adapted to the situation in our mission. What is feasible and what must be modified? What does not suit our situation? A commission of first three and then six confreres had prepared a draft "for the modification of the Society's constitutions" (Richard Hartwich, *Steyler Missionare in China – Steyl Missionaries in China, Analecta* 61, p. 220).

Because of the difficulties in translating "WORD" in the Society's name a new name was unanimously accepted for China and approved by Fr. Arnold "ad experimentum": "Society of the Holy Spirit". However, later on a suitable translation for "WORD" was found, and the Society's customary name – Society of the Divine Word – was retained: "Sheng-Han-Yui" (*ibid.*).

The chapter ended on August 22. “The chapter accepted the request for the SVD’s own small brewery; however, Anzer and Fr. Arnold rejected it. Furthermore the chapter wanted a China missionary to be member of the General counsel. A lively discussion was held about the relationship to the superiors. “Should their orders become more strict? - Going even as far as the suspension of a confrere who had been negligent in obeying? Should a second Apostolic Vicariate be established as a solution to the unbearable tensions? Later this chapter was called a ‚grousing chapter” (ibid., p. 221).

## Argentina

On August 13, Fr. Arnold informed Rev. Becher, the superior in Argentina, of the estimated arrival of 5 new missionaries in Argentina around October 27. They were two priests and three brothers. “Once the aforementioned have arrived, there will already be 7 priests and 9 Brothers there – a rather big number for a mission which is only three years old.” Fr. Arnold then expressed his disappointment about the lack of exact information about the work of the confreres there, for instance “how many Catholics there are of whom the missionaries take care on their individual stations.” Furthermore it caused him difficulties because the mission in Argentina did not make a financial contribution to the departure expenses of the new missionaries. Then: “I really would like to help in establishing a printing press in Argentina. Yet one loses courage, when in such a well-off country as Argentina the SVD in Steyl has to bear the entire financial burden. I would certainly like to do it, if I had the finances. Since they are lacking, it is impossible.”

How greatly Fr. Arnold was interested in a good knowledge of the situation, we learn from this remark of his: “I have no idea whatsoever of the situation of the stations Crespo and Maria Luisa. I really would love a small drawing indicating where they are or still better a good map of Entre Rios”.

In conclusion the caring spiritual father asks: “What about the zeal of the confreres? Are you happy with all of them? Is a good religious life being observed? Are all of them well? Are they all content?” (Jos. Alt, ed., *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika*, Band I (Letters to South America), vol. I, 1890-1899, Analecta SVD – 65/I, pp. 55-57).

## Togo

On August 28, the feast of St. Augustine, the Steyl Mission in Togo was opened in Lomé with the celebration of Holy Mass (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 637).

The first property for a mission station was donated to the mission by the imperial governor, Mr. von Puttkammer (Hermann 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. 384).

## SEPTEMBER 1892

### Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart)

On the last page of the September edition of the “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) we read: “Herewith the ‘Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote’ concludes its 19<sup>th</sup> year of publication. We are delighted to inform you that the number of

its readers grew in the past year considerably; 25 000 copies were printed. Our heartfelt thanks goes to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for this blessing and for all the good which the ‘Little Messenger’ may have done.”

We also express here our warmest thanks to our dear friends and benefactors who have gained great merit through the distribution of the ‘Little Messenger’. We ask them to continue as much as possible to win subscribers for our little publication; it is an effective way to help our Society in resolving its great tasks and in that way to participate in all the good our Society is able to do through the grace of God.”

### Steyl – Convent of the Mission Sisters

On the occasion of the entrance of three new postulants into the convent in Steyl, Mother Maria Helena Stollenwerk relates in her chronicle how the new postulants were welcomed. If possible all the sisters gather together in one or two rooms. The superior and postulant directress will take the postulants into these rooms. First of all they greet each other with the words: ‘Praised be Jesus Christ’ – ‘Forever, Amen’. Then the sisters shake hands with each postulant saying: ‘God bless your entrance!’

### Togo

#### *Laying of the Foundation Stone / first Baptism*

In Lomé the missionaries had received sufficient land to begin with the building of their house. On September 3, the foundation stone was laid. It came from the Callistus catacomb in Rome. “Br. John worked as the master builder, Bro. Venantius erected the cross on the building site, Bro. Norbert, however, suffered at home from malaria.” The mission station’s name was ‘Statio ad dolorissimam Matrem Dei’ – Station dedicated to the sorrowful Mother of God.’

On September 4 the first baptism was administered in Lomé. At the wish of her father, Rev. Matthias Dier baptized a two-year-old girl, Julia (Matthias Die, Freud und Leid in der Togo Mission (Joy and pain in the Togo Mission), *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart), 20, No. 5, February 1893).

#### *Learning the Ewe or Ephe Language*

On September 10, Rev. Dier made his first attempt to tell his pupils something about God in the Ewe or Ephe language. “‘Mawu deka ele!’ I began. ‘There is only one God’. Since the children understood me, I got more audacious: ‘Mawu enjo. Mawu lo mi!’ ‘God is good. God loves us!’ In order to make the little ones better remember what I had said, I had several of them repeat it... I did not get any further this time with my Ephe learning... By the way, the difficulties of learning the Ephe language, are not as big as I had thought earlier. However, a fine hearing ability and good singing voice contribute to learning the language, since very often the meaning of one and the same word depends on the high pitch, low pitch or no-tone. But with some practice you can achieve something” (in Hermann auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl .../The mission society of Steyl...*, Steyl 1900, p. 385).

#### *Erection of the cross*

On the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14, a huge cross was