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WANTENAAR (*Gerard*) (Soest, the Netherlands, 19.3.1886 - Basankusu, Zaire, 2.12.1951). Son of Piet and Hilhorst, Antonia (Additional note to vol. VI, col. 1102-1104).

Gerard Wantenaar was ordained priest on July 25, 1909 at St Joseph's College for Foreign Missions, Mill Hill, London. After his ordination he was sent to the Philosophicum of the Mill Hill Society at Roosendaal, the Netherlands. There he prepared the young candidates for priesthood and missionary life. In 1919 he was appointed to Belgian Congo, one of the most difficult missions. For the fifteen years the Mill Hill missionaries worked there 11 out of 22 died. In 1923 he had to take over the running of the mission because Mgr. Brandsma, the Superior, had been called away to East Africa. In 1927 he was appointed Prefect Apostolic of Basankusu. He gave himself completely to his difficult task. His priority was the reorganization of the education. Schools were built in all the mission-stations and a Teachers Training School was started at Bokakata. From 1929 until 1941 nine new stations were opened and nine brick churches were built of which the Cathedral at Basankusu is one of the most beautiful buildings in Zaire. In 1949 he was appointed Vicar Apostolic and consecrated bishop at Soest, his birthplace. On his return to Belgian Congo he followed his motto *In verbo tuo Domine*. He threw out the net, and the catch was remarkable. The number of pupils in the schools, who were only 6,000 in 1919, grew to 36,800. He died suddenly of heart failure on December 2, 1951.

Date (?)
W. Mol.