

Newsletter 12d

Further interest in the history of Komaggas.

The successor to the Schmелens at Komaggas, after the death of Hinrich Schmелen in 1848 was Missionary Weich and family. There are several graves in the immediate vicinity of the Hinrich grave where Weich children and later others were buried. Offspring of the Weichs have recently visited Komaggas. They have asked to be included in the list of recipients of this Newsletter. A big welcome to the Weich family and may we pursue an interest in Komaggas together!



The mission homestead as it looks today. A small part of it might have been built in Schmелen's time, much more during Weich's time and further changes and extensions in subsequent periods.

Bethanien

The next night we stayed at the Bethanie Guesthouse¹ run by Carin Bester. We were delighted to learn that Carin has become interested in the Schmелen significance to Bethanien. She has recently made further renovations to the Guesthouse and plans to dedicate a space to information about the missionary history of the village. This is most welcome since the Schmелen House and the first church ever built in Namibia, despite being declared national monuments are miserably neglected.

¹ www.bethanieguesthouse.com or bookings@bethanieguesthouse.com or bestbed@iway.na or +264 (0)63 283 013

The Schmelen house door as well as the door of the adjacent church stands open and both places are dilapidated. The Evangelische (Reformed) Kirche of Namibia and their German support base are a disgrace not to pay any attention to the maintenance of these two sites that they generally claim as their heritage! The monuments authority of Namibia stands equally accused.

Occupy Wall Street in Bethanien, Namibia

Next to the church grounds we found a small tent camp surrounded by posters protesting the corrupt ways the authorities deal with public funds. And, even in this remote part of the world they were quick to point out that they felt solidarity with the 'Occupy Wall Street - 99%' protesters in the USA and elsewhere. They invited us to take pictures and convey their protest to the wider world.



Occupy Wall Street solidarity and service delivery protest in Bethanien, Namibia

Youth unemployment in Namibia is estimated to have crept up to 50%.

Bethanien like Komaggas or Otjimbingue are very distant from the main road routes, a product of colonial, apartheid, but also post-apartheid planning. These are the towns where the poor, the dispossessed and the racially discriminated against people lived and live. The cycle of increasing poverty and spiraling under-development cannot be turned around without national planning, integration into the economic network and above all education, education, education!