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March 2009

Hi there,

Schmelen Kleinschmidt Foundation

Sooner than I had planned I write to introduce the idea of creating a Foundation. I thought in my old age I was at last free of organisational burdens, but old habits die hard and I cannot see outcomes without organisational shapes to them.

Several people have mooted the idea of a Foundation. One reason to get started now is because of news just received that the graves in Otjimbingue, where missionary Heinrich and his wife Hanna lie buried has been damaged due to a vehicle having driven into it. The headstone is broken, the fence is down and subsidence toward the river is the cause of further damage. Dr. Rainer Heller and his sister Inge, who visited there a few weeks ago, conveyed this information. Rainer and Inge live in Cologne and were on their first visit to SA and Namibia. [Their grandmother was Mathilde Kleinschmidt who in was the daughter of Franz Heinrich (born in Rehoboth in 1851, married to Mathilde Sophie Krause of Levern, Westfalen in 1847. Both lie buried in Otjimbingue Heinrich was the 5th child of the missionary couple.) Inge took the attached picture on their recent visit. Those of you who have been to Otjimbingue know how desolate a place it is. The only choice open is for 'us' to take steps that will care for and restore this heritage of our family.

I intend to go to Swakopmund to our mother's, Eva Kleinschmidt's, 93rd birthday in April and would use the occasion to engage knowledgeable people to restore these

graves. I will make enquiries right away to find out who may be best suited to do the work. Any advice would be most welcome.

But the graves at Otjimbingue are not the only place that is in desperate need of restoration and regular maintenance. The old church (declared monument) and the mission school are in poor repair. The Schmelen house in Bethanien (also a declared monument) is badly in need of repair. And then there are the graves in Komaggas where Hinrich Schmelen and his second wife are buried – equally in need of care and restoration. There is the Komaggas church, the pastors manse, the historic gardens, the Bethuel ruins – all in pitiful state. We still need to locate the grave of Zara Schmelen near Saron and it will need attention.

Besides restoration there is a further idea that the Foundation should be a vehicle that, for example hosts a gathering/conference in Komaggas in 2014 to coincide with the 200th wedding anniversary of Zara and Hinrich. The idea would be to bring together interested relatives from these many diverse backgrounds. At the same time to have a set of papers delivered that locate the Schmelen legacy in a wider and historic context.

I would personally be interested to also establish a learning centre/museum in Komaggas such that locals and visitors gain insight into the history, the place and its people. Any efforts in Otjimbingue, Bethanien or Komaggas on our part should also benefit the immediate surrounding communities in some form. It would seem out of place if we engaged merely in a family recognition without understanding the historic and social situations that affect each of these communities. I do not mean charity, but rather some form in which developmental benefit is derived at local level.

There may also be aspects of the Finnish mission and our relations in Finland that might be taken up. I have not interacted with any of you but hope to get a response.

All this costs money. The amount we raise will determine the parameters of the project. How much? I have no idea at this stage. What we can do is to proceed in a manageable phased approach.

My proposal is that I establish a **dedicated account** here in Cape Town into which anyone who is interested can make donations – either on a small and monthly or regular basis, or on a once-off basis. [Just to put some dimension to this I am currently able to put R200 each month into such an account. Once actual budgets have been established Christine and I will revise this upwards] I'd like to have another Cape Town person as a co-signatory to the account (besides myself) but have no-one in mind as yet; there are other relatives in town who might be interested.

[If a case can be made to Church bodies or Mission Societies who might fund some of the work envisaged, this has to be pursued also. Equally, if responsible Ministries in South Africa or Namibia have dedicated funds for monuments under their jurisdiction, funds should/will be elicited from them]

The Foundation should be subject to **a lawfully registered Trust Deed** that complies with South African law. I hope to be able to engage the services of a sympathetic lawyer in town who can assist with this. I would circulate draft copies before registration.

Trustees: At present the idea is for Ursula Truper (author of the...), Ds. Jetro Cloete and myself to serve as initial Trustees. I am willing to undertake the work that this entails. I do not seek remuneration for this. Part of the Foundations work would be to do what is suggested above. It would also be to keep you informed through mailings such as the ones I have started sending and it would be to produce reports and accounts for any work that is undertaken – once again along the lines of what is suggested above.

This is an exploratory mailing. If I get the impression that there is sufficient interest and support I will proceed with opening

an account and having the legal work done. I thus await your responses!

Kindest regards,

Horst