



MUSEUM OPENED AT PNIËL

Submitted by Janine Myburgh

The village of Pniël was established in 1843 as a mission station for the freed slaves who worked on the surrounding farms. Thus came into being the nearest mission station to Cape Town and one of the few remaining historical areas within a specific geographical boundary where the freed slaves built their houses and worked the lands. Today the Pniël Congregational church, only church in the village with close to 3000 congregants, still play an important role in the lives of people and also a major part in the preserving of a very rich heritage. After more than a century of self-governance, the village now forms part of the Stellenbosch Municipality, 10 km away - Franschhoek to the north and Paarl ±10 km away.

The village is situated in the bosom of Simonsberg Mountain that watches over a history of slavery, but also of a people that struggled for freedom through hard work, faith and education. Today the narrow streets, beautiful oaks and old buildings are part of a heritage that never fails to captivate and enchant visitors to the village.

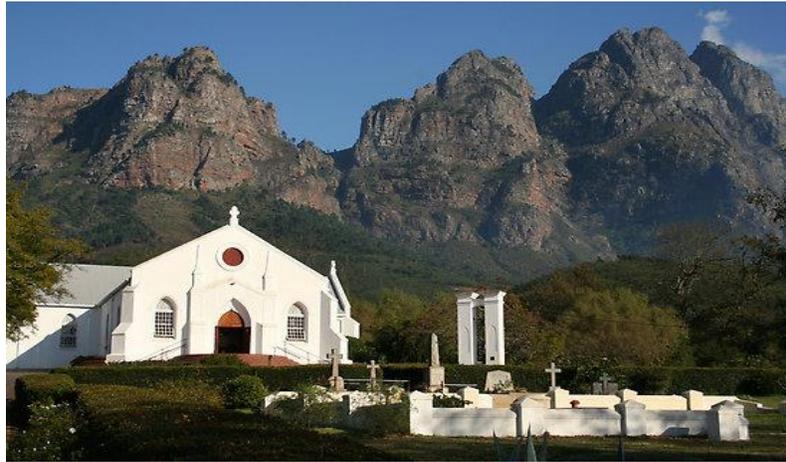
Over the past few years the church has put in a tremendous effort to make people aware of this unique heritage by erecting a few monuments on the historic *Werf* area. Monuments like the Slave Memorial erected in 1993 to commemorate the emancipation of slaves in 1838, the Slave Bell and the Ubuntu Monument that was commissioned by the National Heritage Council and unveiled by Dr Kenneth Kaunda, tells of this rich history.

The following logical step then was the establishment of a heritage site of which a museum was to be the focus. To this end the church was fortunate to have obtained the services of the renowned Prof Mathilda Burden, Senior Curator and Researcher, Cultural Heritage at the University of Stellenbosch. With her assistance and support the Pniël Museum was officially opened on the 18th of May 2013, which is some 175 years after the abolition of slavery in 1838. The Museum was officially opened by Rev Thulani Ndlazi, Secretary of the Synod of South Africa and the Rev Leon Klate - resident minister of the Pniël Congregational church and Moderator of the Peninsula Regional Council.

The establishment of a museum in Pniël is a long awaited dream and an ideal that has been nurtured over a very long time. Because of this, plans to sustain such an undertaking also developed over time. The last hurdle was the lack of an appropriate venue. The museum will now be housed in the old Manse, the former homestead of Papiere Molen, the farm on which Pniël was founded. This building was built in the 1700's and was used as residence to the local minister from 1843 - 2010. The fact that the building will now be used as a museum will thus also assure that the building will be better protected in its historic surroundings.



PNIËL PHOTO GALLERY



Pniël Congregational Church

MONUMENTS



The Freedom Monument: unveiled 1993



Ubuntu monument unveiled by Dr
Kenneth Kaunda

The Pniël Museum is managed and administered by the Pniël Heritage and Cultural Trust. To contact the museum telephone 021 885 1094 or mobile: 0833247691 or you can e-mail Trustee MJ Cyster at cystermj@telkomsa.net.

