

The face of South Africa By Annalize Mouton

It is lunch time at the mission village of Genadendal in the Overberg, and the centuries-old rhythm of work and rest runs its course on this winter's day. No noise of machinery disturbs the bucolic scene, as the land is still ploughed with horses and other hand tools are used. Donkeys and cows can be seen grazing amongst the trees, and a teenage boy clip-clops by on a horse. From the direction of the church the sound of a trumpet player practising classical music can be heard.

Genadendal was the first mission station in South Africa, established by Georg Schmidt of the Moravian Church in 1738. The first teachers' training college in the country was established here, Bibles were printed, and the mission became known for the manufacture of knives and furniture. The historic core of the village around the church has been preserved, including a museum, and some of the old crafts are now being revived.

Not everybody can live here, but even just a short visit may help to restore some tranquility to the heart and mind of the city dweller!

