

**A HISTORICAL-EDUCATIONAL APPRAISAL OF  
PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS  
IN FORMAL EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA  
[1652-1910]**

by

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I declare that

***A HISTORICAL-EDUCATIONAL APPRAISAL OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES  
AND RIGHTS IN FORMAL EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA [1652-1910]***

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mrs CS le Roux', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Mrs CS le Roux

30 November 1998

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# SUMMARY

The grounds for asserting that parents of all cultures can be held responsible and accountable for the care and education of their children derive from sources such as the primordial nature of humanity, the precepts of state statutes and international protocols that refer to educational issues and the tenets of scripts that apply to adherents of a particular philosophy of life — for example the Bible as the guide for parents who subscribe to a Christian philosophy of life.

The issue of parental say in formal education as provided for in current education legislation is perhaps not an entirely unique development. In this thesis the development of the concept of parental responsibilities and rights in relation to formal schooling in South Africa during the Colonial period was investigated. An attempt was made to determine what Colonial parents — who were predominantly Protestant Calvinist and who consequently subscribed to a Christian philosophy of life — did to ensure that their children's formal education met with their approval and fulfilled their expectations. A further aspect examined related to the identification of the specific issues in education that these parents believed they should be afforded the right to regulate in order to ensure that their children's formal education — as an extension to their primary education — conformed with the fundamental principles of their philosophy of life.

The research affirmed the significance a philosophy of life holds for the perception of what it is that constitutes authentic education. It can consequently be concluded that parental involvement in formal schooling should not be seen as intrusion in a realm beyond the jurisdiction of the parent, but as cases of judgement, discernment and selection dictated by the parent's philosophy of life.

## Key terms:

parental rights; parental responsibilities; philosophy of life; Christian philosophy of life; humanist philosophy of life; South Africa; Colonial education; language in education; religious instruction; Cape Colony; Colony of Natal; Orange Free State; South African Republic; Zuid-Afrikaansche Republic.

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The greatest praise without doubt goes to my Creator through whom I exist and to whom my greatest debt is. To God be all the glory and praise for He is Indeed Almighty.

Cheryl le Roux

Pretoria: November 1998

DEDICATED TO MY HUSBAND, HENNIE,  
AND OUR THREE SONS  
PIERRE, ETTIENNE AND JUAN

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

*The education of youth should be watched with the most scrupulous attention.*

*Education forms the moral characters of men and morals are the basis of  
government.*

*Noah Webster*

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# CHAPTER 1

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## INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

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### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

**T**he young of the human species are dependent on the purposeful care, love, protection and guidance of adults — generally their parents — to reach maturity in, for example, the physical, intellectual, moral, social and spiritual spheres<sup>1</sup>. It is true that in most cases, professionals like teachers, doctors and clergymen will play a considerable part in directing and influencing the childhood phase but none of them, under normal circumstances, do more than merely support the parents whose primary and inescapable responsibility it is to ensure that the child grows up into a well-adjusted adult person.

The grounds for asserting that parents of all cultures can be held responsible for the care and education of their children, stem from sources such as the following:

- the ontic, primordial, fundamental or innate nature of humanity (Buchanan 1987: 339; Du Plooy, Griessel & Oberholzer 1982: 29) — the foundation is biotic and the essence is love (Van der Walt & Dekker 1982: 91)
- the authority of the Bible and the baptismal vow made by Christian parents (Jenson 1982:21; Kruger 1983: 36; Landman, Barnard, Gerber, Roos, van der Westhuizen & Smit 1978: 141; Raath 1995: 15)
- common law<sup>2</sup> (*ultra vires*) which extends to parents not only the right and obligation to feed, clothe and tend to the basic needs of their children, but also the right to direct the

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1 Maturity is generally regarded as that stage when the young person has developed the ability to act independently and to accept responsibility for his relationships with the surrounding world, his fellow man and God [Venter 1992: 19].

2 Common law can be defined as the uncodified [not recorded as statutes] legal tradition as derived from the Roman-Dutch and English law [Oosthuizen [ed.] 1994: 40].

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intellectual and moral upbringing of their children (Blackstone in Broom & Hadley 1869: 549-552)

- statute law (e.g. the *Children's Act*) which entrenches the parent's right and duty to provide for the child's physical and educational needs (Republic of South Africa 1960)
- case law which rests on the doctrine of precedents (*stare decisis*) that holds that a previous judgment may influence a later judgment. By following a precedent set by a competent court, new legal rules are created which may thereafter be applied by other competent courts (Oosthuizen [ed.] 1994: 47)<sup>3</sup>.

During the early childhood years parents have a virtually autonomous say in how they raise their off-spring. It is the parent who decides matters like discipline, moral and religious values and social interaction within the obvious limits of social convention and laws that disallow neglect and abuse (Henniger 1987: 227). In short, parents elect to raise their children in accordance with their convictions and although contemporary parents are assailed from all sides by materialistic and spiritual influences from the world-at-large, they are able to significantly control the way in which they raise their children.

However, the complexity of modern society makes it difficult for parents to fulfil the educative task without assistance and they have become obliged to delegate aspects of their educative responsibilities to schools (Möller 1991: 81). The establishment of formal schools arose from a societal need and schools cannot, thus, claim absolute independence from the community (Oberholzer 1983: 1). It follows that the educative function fulfilled by the school is perceived to be a natural extension of that carried out by the home (Departement van Nasionale Opvoeding 1992: 11) and it can be argued that there should be congruency and continuity between the principles of home and school education so that the child is not confronted with conflicting norms or a discord in approach<sup>4</sup>. Schools and parents have a decided effect on the lives of children, therefore there should be clarity and unanimity regarding the purpose of education as well as commitment to this common goal by both home and school (Henniger 1987: 226). Should this

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3 Where parental rights conflict with statute law, courts invariably respect parental judgment regarding matters that affect the education of their children. This attitude stems from the long tradition of parental obligation [common law tradition] to direct the upbringing and education of their children [Buchanan 1987: 348].

4 It is not only what a child is taught, it is also how the child is taught that is important.

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requirement not be met, the child is in danger of growing up in two disparate educative worlds (Liebenberg 1985: 136). It follows that it would not be inaccurate to anticipate that parents could claim a right to know about and become involved in matters that have a direct influence on their children's formal schooling.

If it is accepted that education — in whatever form — is as old as humankind itself, then it is to be expected that parents have, since the inception of formal schooling, desired and sought co-operative interaction between themselves and the teachers/schools to which they have entrusted their children. Currently a good deal of attention and publicity is being given to the newly drafted education legislation that provides South African parents the right to involvement in certain aspects of their children's education through representation on school governing bodies and much is being made of the "originality" of this development (*Beeld*: 9 February, 1996; *The Star*: 9 February, 1996; *Sunday Times*: 11 February, 1996; *The Mercury*: 4 April, 1996, *Pretoria News*: 3 September, 1996). It could nevertheless be asked how unique this development is. Very little has been written on the topic of parents' educative rights and responsibilities as manifested in the history of South African education, but this does not necessarily imply that parents in the past were not afforded the opportunity to make their voices heard. It is in the light of the preceding that this study is undertaken.

## 1.2 MOTIVATION

The South African education system is currently adjusting to extensive social and political change in terms of the new *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Republic of South Africa 1996a) which sets the ground rules and imposes obligations on national and provincial governments to transform public services — including education — so that they embody the new democratic order of the country. The transformation of the education system is seen to be an obligation, not an option (Bengu 1995; Government Gazette 1994: 7).

Fundamental to these changes is the acknowledgment of a human rights culture and the consequent abolition of discrimination in its various guises. Applied to the education system, this would mean the establishment of an integrated education system that aims to provide equal opportunities for

all, irrespective of race, sex, socio-economic class, language, age, religion, geographic location or political opinion. As stated previously, one of the issues that has attracted much attention and discussion is the matter of parental say in education and parent representation on statutory bodies which provide the parent community with certain rights and responsibilities regarding their children's education as entrenched in the *South African Schools Act* (Republic of South Africa 1996b).

Recent developments in the transformation of education have followed a distinctive pattern which, if traced, outline the premise from which the current government views the nature and scope of the provision of education. Focussing on the envisaged role of parents in education the following is of note. In chapter 4 of the first white paper on education entitled *Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa* released to the public in February 1995, (Government Gazette 1994) it was stated that parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children and have the right to be consulted by the state authorities regarding the form that education should take and to take part in its governance (Government Gazette 1994: §4.3). The second white paper on education, *The Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools*, issued in February 1996 recognised these same rights (Government Gazette 1996a: §1.10) and the 1996 *South African Schools Act* stipulates that school governing bodies (the structures through which parents can exercise their prerogatives and make their choices known) should play a major role in school governance and have the right to determine *inter alia* the mission, policy and character or ethos of schools (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §16-§21)<sup>5</sup>. The parent's right of choice regarding the language of instruction, cultural and religious basis of the child's education is also acknowledged (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §6-§7). However, it is to be accepted that these rights are both limited by and must be exercised within the broad framework of the guidelines laid down in the Constitution (Government Gazette 1996b: §1.1[1]; Republic of South Africa 1996b: §1.2[3]).

One of the implications of the Constitution for issues of governance is that governing bodies<sup>6</sup> of schools receiving funds from the state are prohibited from organising compulsory religious

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5 The principle of parental involvement through school governing bodies was also provided for by the previous government in the not too distant past in the *Bantu Education Act* [Act 47 of 1953], the *National Education Policy Act* [Act 39 of 1967] and the *Education and Training Act* [Act 90 of 1979].

6 See 1.1. Parents are represented on these governing bodies.

education classes and religious observances at those schools (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §7)<sup>7</sup>. It needs to be borne in mind that the essence and practice of a persuasion or philosophy of life — be it religious or secular — determines *inter alia* the adherent's perception of the essence of childhood and of the purpose and nature of education. Religion is thus not confined to religious education classes, but is pervasive throughout the entire structure and functioning of the school — from the selection and interpretation of subject matter to the disposition and conduct of the teacher. In the light of the preceding, the following dilemma can be anticipated: according to the new education legislation, the position of religion in the curriculum and religious observance is not that straight forward. In practice, various religions will need to be accommodated in South African schools. Religious education or observance will be confined to specific times set aside for this specific purpose and attendance will be optional. The presentation of the remainder of school activities — e.g. the selection of tutorial matter, its method of presentation and its interpretation — will of necessity be a-religious/secular/humanist if the equality of all learners and the religious rights and freedom of expression of each learner is to be respected in terms of the human rights<sup>8</sup> bill.

The character of schooling is changing and it could be questioned whether the state's interest in standardising the educational experience within the framework of a human rights culture does not conflict with the right of parents to control the upbringing of their children and to choose the method and character of their children's education. It is not unusual to find that parents of school-going children speculate not only on how these developments will influence their children's schooling, but also on how these policies will affect their capacity as parents to ensure an education for their children in conformity with their convictions. It is consequently the researcher's opinion that these issues need to be identified and addressed in the interest of education and of parents of school-going children.

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7 This is in contrast to the provision under the previous government which entrenched a Christian and national character of education [Republic of South Africa 1967; Republic of South Africa 1979]. Justification for this approach could possibly be found in the fact that a significant proportion of the population [76,5% according to Central Statistical Services 1993] claimed to adhere to a Christian philosophy of life [Beckmann 1995: 97].

8 A *human rights* culture is not to be equated with a *humanist* disposition towards life — the former acknowledges religion and the right to religious freedom, while the latter negates religion in any form. This issue will be discussed in depth in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

In danger of stating the obvious: "education" and "parents" presuppose each other for education [schooling] cannot exist without children and children do not come into being without parents. Consequently, the issue of parental say in education is in all probability not an entirely recent development. Education appears to have a reputation for being a contentious issue and it could be worthwhile investigating the provision of education and the development of the concept of parental responsibilities and rights in relation to formal schooling in the early years of South African history as it could be informative to determine what the issues were in which parents since the inception of formal schooling in South Africa believed they should be given a say. It could be particularly enlightening to analyse the strategies that were followed and the nature of the regulations and legislation that were passed to afford parents the opportunity to exercise their right to involvement in their children's education. How parents responded to these arrangements could provide further insight into the issue of how parents go about exercising their responsibilities and rights in relation to their children's education. But before these issues can be dealt with, a clear statement of the research problem needs to be formulated.

### 1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

A synopsis of the preceding discussion indicates that:

- contrary to the nature of the provision of education under the previous government which purported a Christian national character, education will in future be conducted according to democratic principles and will consequently be provided within the framework of a human rights culture which reflects the principles of unity, equity and equality
- within the framework of the new education policy, devolution of responsibility to school governing bodies (parents) regarding certain governance issues is mandatory
- the right of parental choice currently covers issues that include the ethos of the school, admission policy, choice of language medium and the scope and nature of religious instruction
- the exercising of these rights must be within (and is limited by) the framework of fundamental human rights clauses entrenched in the Constitution.

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These statements prompt a number of points for consideration and it is a combination of these issues that constitutes the general research problems that will form the focus of this thesis.

- ➔ **HOW DO PARENTS' ADHERENCE TO A PARTICULAR *PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE* INFLUENCE THEIR PERCEPTION OF THEIR *EDUCATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS* IN RELATION TO THEIR CHILDREN'S *FORMAL EDUCATION*?**
  
- ➔ **WHAT *DEVELOPMENTS* TOOK PLACE IN THE COLONIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT *EXTENDED TO PARENTS THE RIGHT OF CHOICE* IN MATTERS THAT AFFECTED THEIR CHILDREN'S FORMAL SCHOOLING?**
  
- ➔ **TO WHAT *EXTENT* WERE PARENTS OF SCHOOL-GOING CHILDREN IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE THAT THEIR CHILDREN RECEIVED *SCHOOLING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR PARTICULAR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE*?**

A refinement of these broad questions brings further issues to the fore which will be presented below.

## 1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to add to and develop a body of knowledge regarding the development, nature and scope of parental rights and responsibilities with regard to their children's formal schooling. It is with this encompassing goal in mind that the following aims and objectives of the study are identified.

### 1.4.1 Research aims

The ultimate responsibility of raising children rests with parents. When the child reaches school-going age, parents delegate — but do not relinquish — aspects of this responsibility to the school<sup>9</sup> (Oosthuizen [ed.] 1994: 45). In this study, the development of the provision of education and

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9 The application of the concept *in loco parentis* comes into play; the teacher acts on behalf of the parent [Oosthuizen [ed.] 1994: 45].

the framework of parental responsibility and rights in relation to formal schooling will be investigated. An attempt will also be made to gain a deeper understanding of and insight into the essence of the concept of parental responsibility and rights. This research will chiefly be directed towards extending the theoretical knowledge base regarding the topic being researched.

In the final chapter of this thesis it will be necessary to evaluate whether these research aims have been realised. It is consequently imperative that these broad research aims be refined and reformulated in terms of pertinent, concrete, operational objectives.

#### 1.4.2 Research objectives

The objectives which the researcher proposes to achieve can be stated as follows:

- to *define* the basis and scope of parental responsibilities and rights in relation to education
- to *provide a conceptual analysis* of the concept *philosophy of life* and related concepts
- to *analyse and contrast* the underlying principles of a humanist or secular and a Christian philosophy of life in relation to education
- to *outline* the development of the provision of education in South Africa between 1652 and 1910
- to *gather data* on and *give an appraisal* of the development of parental responsibilities and rights as provided for by the South African school system from 1652-1910
- to *determine* which issues parents have desired to control or influence in relation to their children's education
- to *identify and evaluate* how provision was made in the past to afford parents the opportunity to exercise their presumed responsibilities and rights in relation to their children's education
- to *assess* the effectiveness of these above determined measures
- to *analyse* parents' response to these measures and to *evaluate* parents' commitment to exercising their presumed responsibilities and rights
- to *critically evaluate* the issue of parents' rights and responsibilities in relation to education and to *propose* direction for future decisions in this regard.

Should the research objectives outlined above be attained, it is believed that a contribution will be made to extending the theoretical and practical body of knowledge regarding the research topic.

## 1.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

From the aims and objectives set out above, it is anticipated that the value of this research will be twofold. Firstly, it is envisaged that a theoretical contribution will be made. This thesis aims to contribute to the discussion of parents' rights and to extend an understanding of the concept of parental responsibilities and rights within, on the one hand, the notion that education is never neutral but stems from a particular philosophy of life, and on the other, that education is influenced by the prevailing social and political framework. This statement points to two main areas of investigation:

- the scope of parental responsibilities and rights with regard to education in relation to a particular life view, and
- the exercising of parental responsibilities and rights within the framework of prevailing education policy.

The basis of the concept of parental responsibility was broadly outlined in the introduction to this chapter — one of them<sup>10</sup> being adherence to Biblical tenets. Within the framework of the new education dispensation in South Africa, it is to be anticipated that schooling will exhibit a secular character. This is in contrast to education which previously was intended to exhibit a religious [Christian] character.

If one were to think back on the social and political history of South Africa from its earliest days, two issues come to mind. Firstly, the inhabitants hailed from various parts of the world and, depending on the prevailing circumstances, sought — to varying degrees — either social integration or segregation. Secondly, for roughly two and a half centuries [1652-1910], the country was subjected to Colonial rule under either the Dutch or the British with each sovereignty seeking to

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10 Which it would seem would apply to that considerable part of the population who profess a Christian philosophy of life. See footnote 7.

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impress its particular social and political character — also with regard to education — on the developing nation. One cannot overlook the fact that these events have significantly influenced and determined the current education situation and the possibility that parallels to the present situation could be sought and found should not be ignored. However, a cursory review of literature on parents' rights of choice regarding their children's education, shows that very little has been written on this topic with regard to the provision of education in the South African schooling system during the Colonial period.

Although not the first legislation referring to parental involvement in education, the 1967 *National Education Policy Act* (providing for the education of white children) that referred to the establishment of parent representative bodies appears to be the rubicon in legislating for parental involvement in schooling<sup>11</sup> (Republic of South Africa 1967). However, this legislation focussed on issues such as the constitution and functions of these bodies while parental choice regarding issues that consciously affect the "what, how and why" of teaching and learning matter presented to their children did not — according to this legislation — fall within parents' jurisdiction. Similarly, according to current legislation (Republic of South Africa 1996b) the sphere of governing bodies is governance (policy determination) while the organisation of teaching and learning and the activities that support teaching and learning fall within the sphere of school leadership — the principal and teachers<sup>12</sup>.

It is in the light of the above that the second field of contribution is identified, namely in relation to educative practice. It is believed that various interest groups could benefit from the research undertaken. These groups include:

- parents and school governing bodies, who could take cognisance of the results of this research to direct negotiation and the formulation of school governing policies
- policy makers, who should be made aware of and will be able to gain an understanding of those issues that are fundamental to decisions and proposals affording parents a say in the education of their children, and

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11 See footnote 5 in this regard.

12 It is acknowledged that these spheres overlap and that the distinction of roles needs to be agreed upon with the provincial Education Department [Government Gazette 1996a: §3.7].

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- national and local government bodies (under whose guidance school governing body capacity building programmes are to be instituted as provided for in draft legislation: *cf* Government Gazette 1996a: § 18), who will be able to base capacity building strategies on the results of this research.

With the main research problem, the aims and objectives of the study and the expected contribution of the research now broadly outlined, it is necessary to define the process whereby answers to these questions are to be sought.

## 1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

History of Education embraces the entire past of humanity and although it concentrates on educational theory and practice as manifested through the ages, the field of study remains vast and complex. It thus becomes necessary to delimit the field of study in both spatial and temporal terms.

### 1.6.1 Delimitation in relation to time

When a search for literature related to the development of parental rights in relation to schooling in South Africa was made, it was found that very little has been written on the topic<sup>13</sup>. The researcher decided to undertake the task of compiling a data base which traces the developments in relation to the perception and scope of parental rights in formal schooling from the earliest years in the history of schooling in South Africa. In terms of the temporal demarcation, it was decided to cover the period from 1652 when the first permanent settlers arrived at the Cape of Good Hope until Union in 1910 of the four regions of which South Africa was comprised at the time. In the study, cursory reference is made to current developments regarding the granting of parental say in education.

### 1.6.2 Delimitation In relation to space

With regard to a spacial delimitation, it was decided to trace the development of the concept parental responsibilities and rights in relation to the provision of formal schooling opportunities among South African settlers<sup>14</sup> during the Colonial period [1652-1910]. Initially settlement was confined to the Cape Colony region, but due to geographical expansion In consequence of *inter alia* the Great Trek, three other regions – Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal – became populated. Although it was the intention of the Colonists embarking on the exodus to achieve independence from the Cape Colony and to establish independent Boer Republics, development in these three regions remained bound to events in the Cape and consequently, the history of the four territories is inextricably linked – also with regard to the emergence of education systems. The study reviews the development of education and of parental involvement in formal schooling in each of these regions until Union of the two Boer Republics (the Orange Free State and the South African Republic [Transvaal]) and the two British Colonies (Cape Colony and Colony of Natal) in 1910.

The progression of the study can be traced in the chapter demarcation that follows.

### 1.6.3 Chapter demarcation

In *Chapter 1* the research topic is introduced and demarcated. The aim of the study and the research method applied are outlined. The research findings are organised in separate chapters. In *Chapter 2* the premise of parental responsibilities and rights is discussed. This chapter also includes a clarification of the concept philosophy of life and a discourse on how a philosophy of life influences the perception of parental responsibilities and rights in terms of education. The two general world or life views examined are those of the Christian and the secularist/humanist.

A historical overview of the manifestation and actualisation of parental responsibilities and rights in the various school systems of the day from the earliest times at the Cape in 1652 until the close of Batavian Republic rule in 1806 is undertaken in *Chapter 3*.

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14 The focus in this thesis is on the formal schooling of children from European descent, however, in certain instances reference is made to the education of children from other races where such reference contributes to the comprehensiveness of the research undertaken.

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In **Chapter 4** an appraisal of the development regarding the scope of parental responsibilities and rights in relation to education systems in the Cape Colony [1807-1910] and the Colony of Natal [1834-1910] is provided.

**Chapter 5** focusses on the formalisation of schooling and the development of the scope of parental responsibilities and rights in relation to education systems in the Orange Free State [1836-1910] and the South African Republic [1837-1910].

In the final chapter, **Chapter 6**, a synthesis of the findings of the previous chapters is provided. Factors which play a role in determining the scope of parents' responsibilities and rights are highlighted and structures which afford parents the opportunity to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities towards their children in the school system are discussed. In conclusion a critical appraisal of the issue of parental rights is given and guidelines for future discussions in this regard are provided.

#### 1.6.4 Constraints experienced during the research undertaken

The researcher's original intention was to conduct an appraisal of the development of the concept of parental responsibilities and rights in relation to formal schooling from 1652 to the present. This initial demarcation was based on the results of a preliminary investigation into the availability of material on the topic of research that indicated that the topic had not previously been researched and consequently that a very limited amount of data was available for the period that the researcher intended to investigate. The research was thus commenced under the title *The scope of parental responsibilities and rights in the South African school system*.

However, as the researcher became more deeply involved in the study, it became evident that, although no data on the topic was readily available, a considerable amount of data that had not been anticipated was forthcoming. Through searching in fields other than education and through accessing the early reports of the first Superintendents of Education and Commissions of Enquiry into educational matters — much of which is archival material — a comprehensive account of parental involvement in education during the early years of the provision of formal schooling in South Africa could be compiled. It became increasingly clear that the original demarcation was far

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too extensive and the research being undertaken was in danger of taking on such immense proportions that a re-evaluation of the original delimitation of the field of study needed to be seriously considered. It was then decided to continue the study under the current title *A historical-educational appraisal of parental responsibilities and rights in formal education in South Africa [1652-1910]*. The motivation for selecting this period and the relevance that it has for this doctoral research has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

## 1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

The nature and activities of educational research are often determined by the particular perspective from which the phenomenon is viewed and consequently, historical-educational research is characterised by a predisposition unique to the perspective. Because this study aims to review the development of parents' rights in the South African schooling system, a historical-educational research method needs to be followed.

### 1.7.1 Historical-educational research

*Historical research is a systematic process of describing, analysing and interpreting the past based on information from selected sources as they relate to the topic under study (Wiersma 1991: 203).*

Historical research deals with events of the past, while historical-educational research focusses on educational theory and practice as manifested in the past. The historical-educational researcher thus needs to make logical deductions from data about events related to education which are gathered from the past. In the interpretation of the data the context of the event needs to be taken into account lest one makes oneself guilty of presentism. People, events and ideas cannot be understood apart from their historical contexts (Stone 1981: 31; Wiersma 1991: 203).

Educational reform and social reform are issues best served by historical research. If the historical perspective is known, these issues are better understood. Historical-educational research provides a perspective for decision making about educational problems and facilitates understanding why things are as they are. It can also be useful in predicting future trends and provides important

information to avoid repeating previous mistakes (Wiersma 1991: 204).

The field of study in historical-educational research is so extensive that intentional reduction is necessary. The ordering principles for reducing the wealth of information and gathering relevant data are characteristic of the nature of the research to be undertaken. In this event, to ensure the validity and reliability of the research undertaken, it is necessary to follow a systematic process in this procedure.

### 1.7.2 Activities in the research process

When scientific research is undertaken, there are certain specific steps that are involved. Wiersma (1991:206) identifies four stages<sup>15</sup>.

1. Identification of the research problem.
2. Collection and evaluation of source material.
3. Synthesis and presentation of information.
4. Analysis and interpretation with the formulation of conclusions and the drawing of generalisations.

The research undertaken for this thesis was directed by these steps.

### 1.7.3 Collection of relevant data

The investigation was undertaken by means of a literature study and the attendance of negotiations regarding the scope of parental rights and responsibilities during the negotiation phase of the current education legislation. Schumacher and McMillan (1993: 112-113) contend that a literature review adds to the understanding of the selected problem and helps to place the study in historical perspective. It is thus a necessary activity in developing an acceptable body of knowledge on an education topic. A literature review helps the researcher to refine the problem and directs one in the interpretation of research findings. It also leads one to discovering new information and knowledge — a prerequisite for a thesis.

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15 These steps tend to overlap and often run concurrently.

During the literature study, both primary and secondary sources were consulted. Techniques of internal and external criticism were applied — external criticism to determine the authenticity of the source, internal criticism to determine the credibility (trustworthiness and accuracy) of the facts (Borg & Gall 1989: 821-824).

#### 1.7.3.1 *Primary sources*

The following types of primary texts were consulted: newspaper clippings, government reports, council minutes, commission reports, education department reports, legislation as enactments and regulations as prescribed by statutory bodies.

In an attempt to augment the body of knowledge accumulated through the study of primary sources, conferences and seminars on issues related to parental rights, parental involvement and the provision of education under the new educational dispensation were attended to obtain additional information on the research topic.

#### 1.7.3.2 *Secondary sources*

A computer based search for literature pertinent to the topic was conducted. A careful selection of relevant sources was made from the titles suggested. This selection was based on *inter alia* the authors' eminence and stature as an academic and researcher and the degree of comprehensiveness with which the research was conducted. A further consideration was the extent to which primary sources had been consulted.

#### 1.7.4 Technical considerations

The following technical issues need to be borne in mind regarding the presentation of data. The latter needs to be done in such a way as to ensure clarity, and to promote the comprehensiveness and unity of the study as a whole and for that reason it is necessary to point out the following. It will be noted that:

- in relation to personal details, square brackets — [] — have been used to indicate the period which individuals served in a particular capacity e.g. as governor, superintendent of

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- education, etc. and round brackets — () — to indicate date of birth and of demise
- two of the content chapters (chapters 4 & 5) are unusually lengthy due to the nature of the research undertaken
  - chapter 4 focusses on the topic as manifested in two regions (the Cape Colony and the Colony of Natal) which have similar histories and backgrounds and it is for this reason that they have been dealt with in the same chapter
  - the provision of schooling and the development of parental rights and responsibilities of two regions (the Orange Free State and the South African Republic) are discussed in the same chapter — chapter 5 — since the development of these issues followed similar lines and the histories of the two regions are inextricably linked
  - in a few instances primary sources have not been used and reference is made to these sources through a secondary source; the reasons for this are either that the researcher is not conversant with the language of the source (e.g. German) or the original/primary source could not be traced (e.g. in the case of certain archival documents).

## 1.8 EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Before the research can be undertaken, it is necessary to first clarify the key concepts fundamental to the study. Conceptual analysis clarifies [educational] concepts by describing the essential or generic meaning of the concept. Differential analysis distinguishes among the basic meanings of the concept and provides a clearer idea of the logical domain covered by the concept. When these analyses have been undertaken, a working definition of the concept can be formulated.

The definitions discussed below are concerned with those concepts cited in the topic and also those which are directly related to the topic.

### 1.8.1 Explication of concepts implied in the topic

The following concepts included in the title of this thesis require further clarification.

1.8.1.1 *Parental*

According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (1978: 1512) a

PARENT is:

*father or mother, person who has begotten or borne a child, a person who holds the position of a parent; a protector, guardian*<sup>16</sup>.

PARENTAL, although referring to the root word *parent*, bears in addition the connotation of "love" as can be deduced from both the New Universal Self-pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language (1930: 656):

*pertaining to or becoming parents; fond*

and Webster's Dictionary (S.a.: 282):

*pertaining to or becoming parents; tender, affectionate.*

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (1978: 1512) is not as explicit in its reference to the bond of affection, but rather by implication alludes to this:

*characteristic of a parent, motherly, fatherly.*

Spiro (1971: 317) provides a judicial definition and in this regard distinguishes between:

*PARENT, the father or mother of a child born of or legitimated by a lawful marriage, or the mother of an illegitimate child, and includes an adoptive parent.*

*FOSTER PARENT means any person who undertakes the temporary care of any child who has been placed in his custody in terms of criminal procedure legislation.*

*GUARDIAN means a tutor testamentary, tutor dative or assumed tutor to whom letters of confirmation have been granted under the law relating to the administration of estates.*

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<sup>16</sup> Usage of these terms is dated back to 1526 according to the source.

For the purpose of this thesis:

- ➔ PARENT REFERS TO THE CUSTODIAN ADULT[S] WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IT IS TO OVERSEE AND PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS, PROTECTION AND EDUCATION OF A CHILD OF SCHOOL-GOING AGE.

### 1.8.1.2 [Parental] responsibility

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (1978: 1810) defines RESPONSIBILITY as:

*a charge, trust, or duty, for which one is responsible<sup>17</sup>; a person or thing for which one is responsible<sup>18</sup>.*

The definition the same source (1978: 1810) provides for RESPONSIBLE is:

*answerable, accountable (to another for something); liable to be called to account<sup>19</sup>; morally accountable for one's actions; capable of fulfilling an obligation or trust, reliable, trustworthy; involving responsibility or obligation<sup>20</sup>.*

A judicial definition in relation to PARENTAL DUTIES [responsibilities], is provided by Spiro (1971: 76) though he maintains that rights and duties are too inextricably interwoven<sup>21</sup> to allow artificial separation. The PARENTAL DUTIES that he refers to are:

*maintenance, protection and education.*

Heslep (1992: 420-421) provides a pivotal explanation of the concept and refers to the nature and origin of DUTIES by saying:

*Duties share the quality of being something necessary, or required. To state a specific duty is to state a specific action. We often use "should" or "ought to" rather than "must" in describing the actions [duties] we are bound to perform.*

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17 In use since 1796.

18 In use since 1832.

19 Used in this sense since 1643.

20 Used in this sense since 1855.

21 Also the view of Prinsloo & Beckmann [1988: 32].

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*We have duties for a variety of reasons: the social positions we occupy, the commitments we make, and among other possibilities the personal qualities we have. We have them [duties] only if we are voluntary agents, specifically, occurrent voluntary agents. Duties involve CORRELATIVE DUTIES, namely, those of noninterference and assistance.*

*The performance of a duty never implies a reciprocal duty for the performer. Finally, some duties may be independent of rights and other duties, although they might depend upon values.*

Dekker (1986: 72-73) discusses the essence of parental rights. She maintains that without PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY true parenthood and education are unattainable. In view of the nature, content and character of parental responsibility, parents are not in the position to relinquish this responsibility. She further correlates PARENTAL DUTIES with the rendering of a service, but not only is there a responsibility in relation to the performance of the service (duty), there is also the responsibility for being held accountable for the worth of the service performed.

Prinsloo & Beckmann (1988: 38) point out that PARENTAL DUTIES concerning [formal] education are described in statutory and common law.

For the purpose of this thesis:

- ➔ PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES SIGNIFY A COMMITMENT TO RENDER AN EDUCATIVE AND PROTECTIVE SERVICE TO A CHILD FOR WHICH THE PARENT CAN BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE. THE ORIGIN OF THIS COMMITMENT IS PRIMORDIAL AND MANIFESTS ITSELF NOT ONLY IN THE ALLEGIANCE OR NATURAL AFFECTION THE ADULT HAS FOR THE CHILD, BUT ALSO IN LEGISLATION.

### 1.8.1.3 [Parental] rights

That which has been written on the concept "right" ranges from a philosophical justification and clarification of the term to discussions on theories regarding rights. For the purpose of this thesis only the following issues in relation to rights are regarded as important.

A dictionary definition of the term RIGHT is provided in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (1978: 1831):

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*Justifiable claim, on legal or moral grounds, to have or obtain something, or to act in a certain way. A legal, equitable, or moral title or claim to the enjoyment of privileges or immunities.*

The LEGAL RIGHTS and duties of parents are clarified in Van Schalkwyk & Oosthuizen (1994: 143) as follows:

*A parent's right in respect of his child is principally founded in common law. Common law principles stipulate that a parent has a right and a duty to educate, nurture and provide for his child. The right of a parent to educate a child is of a prestatal nature. It is a primordial and authentic right which coincides with parenthood and human existence and which must be protected by the State as soon as the State comes into existence. Furthermore this is a fundamental right granting, for example, an individual a free living space and the parent the authority to manage the affairs of his child to the latter's benefit. This fundamental right implies that a parent is entitled to co-operate with another person (teacher) in respect of his child, to be heard when he speaks on behalf of his child, to make suggestions and decisions.*

Spiro (1971: 82-83) gives a classification of the LEGAL RIGHTS of parents and mentions the following:

- *the right to **bringing up** the child (to feed, clothe, shelter, protect from harm, attend to the child when ill)*
- *the right to **educate** the child (to develop the body, to mould the character, to bring the child up in a particular language and religion, and to determine with whom the child may have social contact)*
- *the right to **correct** the child (parents would not be able to bring up and educate their children properly if they were not entitled to correct and punish them).*

The inherent RELATIONAL NATURE OF RIGHTS is described by Machan (1989: 1-2) who links the concept to the broad context of social morality, politics and law, while Stoljar (1984: 1) refers to the more intimate triadic relation: *who* is the right *for*, *who* is the right *against*, and *what* is the right *about or to*.

Although one must avoid oversimplification, there is evidence of a correlation between rights and duties. Heslep (1992: 422-423) alludes to the CORRELATIVE NATURE OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES when

he says:

*At the same time that rights entail correlative duties for others, they also might involve reciprocal duties for their bearers.*

Spiro (1971: 27) draws the attention to an important fact — the meaning of parental power — and warns that it is not identical with the relationship between parents and children. The bond of love cannot be sacrificed to the austere language of rights and duties.

For the purpose of this thesis:

- ➔ PARENTAL RIGHTS<sup>22</sup> REFER TO THE PARENT'S MORAL AND LEGAL CLAIM TO REGULATE THE UPBRINGING, CORRECTION AND EDUCATION OF THE CHILD IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS CONVICTIONS WHILE BEARING THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD IN MIND. THIS IMPLIES CORRELATIVE DUTIES FOR HIMSELF AND FOR OTHERS AFFECTED BY THESE CLAIMS.

#### 1.8.1.4 *School system*

It is not the intention to discuss the aim, function and essence of a school system in detail. However, for the purpose of argumentation and evaluation in the final chapter of this dissertation, a cursory review must be included.

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (1978: 1902) defines SCHOOL as:  
*an establishment in which boys or girls or both, receive instruction*

and SYSTEM (1978: 2227) as:

*a set ... of things connected, associated, or interdependent, so as to form a complex unity ...*

Stone (1985: 17-33) provides a classification of theories of the perceived nature and function of the SCHOOL. The following is a summary in relation to the theories examined.

- Schools are *places* for instruction, a place of preparation for adult life, where cultural maturation occurs, training grounds for true democracy.

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<sup>22</sup> Used interchangeably with *parents' rights*.

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- Schools *aim* to hand down norms and a philosophy of life, humanise the youth, provide education in the widest sense, prepare youth for a worthwhile life in a future social order.
  - The *motive* of the school is secular, rational and shaping.

Stone (1985: 33) also refers to the nihilistic school theory which advocates the replacement of the school by alternative methods of education because *in many ways the school has an adverse effect on the child's education.*

An EDUCATION SYSTEM is described by Van Schalkwyk (1988: 59) as the totality of all the social structures functioning together as a unit in view of offering educative teaching. The *components* of the education system are:

- the educational *institutions* (*inter alia* pre-primary, primary, secondary and special schools)
- the *managerial and administrative structures* (*inter alia* state and provincial departments of education, and structures for formulating educational policy)
- *supporting services* (*inter alia* education media service, curriculum service and teacher training)
- structures with an *interest* in education (*inter alia* the state, family and Church).

For the purpose of this thesis:

- ➔ ▪ SCHOOLING IS SYNONYMOUS WITH EDUCATIVE TEACHING<sup>23</sup>
- A SCHOOL IS AN INSTITUTION WHICH PROVIDES PRE-TERTIARY INSTRUCTION (PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLING EXCLUDED)
- A SCHOOL SYSTEM ENCOMPASSES THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION AS DEMARCATED ABOVE, THOSE SOCIAL STRUCTURES WITH AN INTEREST IN EDUCATION, EDUCATION SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AS OUTLINED.

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23 Educative teaching is regarded primarily as a two-fold process of opening up, unfolding or development of potential and includes:

- realisation of human potential
- revelation of reality to a human child [Van Schalkwyk 1988: 13].

### 1.8.1.5 Education

A variety of definitions of the concept EDUCATION are to be found, but the following definition by Van Rensburg & Landman (1990: 330) will suffice.

- ➔ EDUCATION IS THE PRACTICE – THE EDUCATOR’S/PEDAGOGUE’S CONCERN IN ASSISTING THE CHILD ON HIS<sup>24</sup> WAY TO ADULTHOOD. EDUCATION MAY THEN BE DEFINED AS A CONSCIOUS, PURPOSEFUL INTERVENTION BY AN ADULT IN THE LIFE OF A NON-ADULT TO BRING HIM TO INDEPENDENCE. BEARING IN MIND THAT EDUCATION IS THE POSITIVE INFLUENCING OF A NON-ADULT BY AN ADULT, WITH THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF EFFECTING CHANGES OF SIGNIFICANT VALUE. IT IS THEREFORE A PURPOSEFUL ACT, DESIGNED TO GUIDE THE CHILD’S HUMANISATION ON A DETERMINED COURSE, WITH AN EDUCAND CO-OPERATING IN FULL ACCEPTANCE OF HIS MENTOR’S GUIDANCE. THE FINAL ISSUE CANNOT BE SCIENTIFICALLY DETERMINED OR GUARANTEED, NOR CAN EDUCATION GO ON INDEFINITELY. AS THE EDUCAND SHOWS HIMSELF PROGRESSIVELY AMENABLE TO DECIDE FOR HIMSELF AND TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR AUTONOMOUS CHOICE, THE EDUCATOR REMOVES HIMSELF MORE AND MORE FROM THE SCENE OF ACTION, LEAVING HIS CHARGE TO DO THINGS ON HIS OWN.

### 1.8.2 Explication of concepts related to the topic

The following concepts underlie much of the discussion undertaken in this thesis and therefore need to be recorded. However, a detailed analysis of these concepts is provided in Chapter 2.

#### 1.8.2.1 Philosophy of life

The Shorter Oxford Dictionary of Historical Principles (1978: 1570) defines PHILOSOPHY as:

*The system which a persons forms for the conduct of life.*

Du Plooy *et al* (1982: 303-306) identify the following essences of a PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE. It:

- is acquired and is not inherited
- is a person’s conception of God or a god and humankind
- is concerned with questions about humankind itself and the significance of life

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24 For the sake of convenience — and not in defiance of the recognition of the equality of gender — the masculine gender will be used throughout this thesis unless the occasion calls for the use of the female gender.

- 
- is limited to life on a personal level
  - bestows on a person certain obligations and is the motivating force of his or her life and actions compelling the person to act in a certain way
  - is an inherent awareness of responsibility which disciplines the person and urges him or her on to a conscientious dedication to his or her task in life.

Janse Van Vuuren (1974: 27-28) explains the coherence of these essences:

*Life is characterised by a designation and pursuit of values which is directed by a hierarchy of values. A philosophy of life is characterised by the fact that it is supra-rational. It originates from the deepest essence of humanness namely the religious. A philosophy of life knows no compromises and in the positive sense of the word, it is intolerant.*

In this thesis the terms PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE and WORLD OR LIFE VIEW will be used Interchangeably.

### 1.8.2.2 *Christian*

The word CHRISTIAN is a transliteration of the Greek CHRISTIANOS — a name given to the early followers of Christ (*Spirit Filled Life Bible* 1991: 1647). The term was first used in Antioch and in Acts 11: 26<sup>25</sup> CHRISTIAN refers to:

*a follower of Christ,*

while in John 1: 12 the relationship to God is stated:

*those who receive Him, to them He gave the right to become **children of God.***

and such a person *inter alia*:

- believes in, trusts, loves and desires to obey and follow Jesus Christ (John 10: 14, 27)
- seeks to glorify and honour God in everything that he or she does (1Cor 10: 31); and
- progressively displays more of Christ's victory over Satan in his or her daily life (Rom 5: 17; Col 2: 15; Heb 2: 14-15).

CHRISTIAN as defined by Gangel & Benson (1983: 15) is:

*committed to Jesus Christ and the Scriptures.*

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25 All Bible text references are taken from the 1991 edition of the Spirit Filled Life Bible.

Webster's New World Dictionary (1976: 998) defines THEISM (a criterion of Christianity) as:

*a philosophy which views all of life as a divinely ordered sequence, the belief in the existence of one God who is viewed as a creative source of man, the world, and value, and who transcends and yet is immanent in the world.*

### 1.8.2.3 *Secularism*

The definitions of the terms SECULARISM, SECULARISATION and SECULARISE are included because of the close relationship between these terms and the concepts HUMANISM and HUMANIST which form the basis of an understanding of a human rights culture.

According to The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary of Historical Principles (1978: 1926) SECULARISM is:

- [1] *the doctrine that morality should be based solely on regard to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future state*
- [2] *the view that national education should be purely secular*

while the term SECULARISATION is defined as:

*The giving of a secular or non-sacred character or direction to [art, studies, etc.]; the placing [of morals] on a secular basis; the restricting [of education] to secular subjects*

and SECULARISE as:

*to convert from religious or spiritual to material and temporal purposes; to turn [a person, his mind, etc.] from a spiritual state to worldliness.*

### 1.8.2.4 *Humanist*

It is commonly accepted that the HUMANIST believes in himself and in his individuality, independence, freedom and in the sovereignty of his mental abilities, insight, opinions and convictions (Schoeman 1985: 40-43). These presuppositions are substantiated by the statements that follow.

Webster's New World Dictionary (1976: 463) defines HUMANISM as:

*a philosophical movement that holds that man can be moral and find meaning in his life through reason, without the aid of supernatural religion.*

According to *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933) and *Humanist Manifesto II* (1973):

- *we [humanists] are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism ... (Humanist Manifesto I: affirmation 6)*
- *the complete realization of human personality is the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfilment in the here and now ... (Humanist Manifesto I: affirmation 8)*
- *we [humanists] begin with humans not God, nature not deity, ... humans are responsible for what we [humanists] are or will become ... no deity will save us; we [humanists] must save ourselves [themselves] (Humanist Manifesto II: affirmation 11).*

#### 1.8.2.5 *Democracy*

The concept DEMOCRACY carries a variety of meanings but is generally understood as:

*Government of the people, by the people, for the people*<sup>26</sup>.

The cornerstones of democracy are described as being FREEDOM and EQUALITY (Smith 1995) and in practice these two components need to be reconciled (Labuschagne 1988: 260).

The meaning of the concept is determined by a philosophy of life and can range from (Viljoen , Vermeulen & Jordaan 1989: 1):

***Vox populi vox Dei***

*(the voice of the people is the voice of God)*

to

***Lex Dei lex populi***

*(the law of God is the law of the people).*

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<sup>26</sup> Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), U.S. Statesman. Included in his address on the dedication [19 Nov. 1863] at the National Cemetery on the site of the Battle of Gettysburg [Daintith, J., Isaacs, A., Martin, E., Pickering, D., Stibbs, A., Chapman, D., Egerton, H., Salomon, R., Smith, K., Wright, E. [ed.] 1988: 165].

According to Van der Stoep (1974: 15) the underlying essence of democracy lies in:

*order, authority, norms and an inquiry regarding the source of the aforementioned.*

Baron ([ed.]1981: 7) understands DEMOCRACY to imply:

*The right and power to make decisions in public matters does not reside in a single individual or a group or class of individuals, but in each and every citizen.*

Bachrach (in Baron [ed.] 1981: 8) argues that:

*The crucial issue is whether DEMOCRACY can diffuse power sufficiently throughout society to inculcate among people of all walks of life a justifiable feeling that they have the power to participate in decisions that affect themselves and the common life of the community.*

These above concepts are fundamental to the research as outlined previously.

## 1.9 CLOSING REMARKS

There can be little dispute that parents have a primary obligation and a right to participate in the education of their children. This responsibility cannot be relinquished to the school or the state. The responsibility for educating a child involves more than merely guiding the child to physical maturity — it is his destiny that is at stake — and those who accept this responsibility can be held accountable for their success or failure in this regard.

South African society, it seems, will in future be characterised by a human rights culture. Parents are also becoming increasingly aware of their parental rights in relation to their children's education and it can be expected that they will become more motivated and sophisticated in their attempts to influence the education system to provide an education from which — in their view — their children can best benefit.

In the chapter that follows, the premise for parental responsibility and rights is examined in an attempt to identify what parents<sup>27</sup> perceive to be the scope of their rights and responsibilities in regard to the education of their children.

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27 The perceptions of parents who purport a religious [Christian] and a secular philosophy of life will be reviewed.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE BASIS, SCOPE AND PERCEPTION OF PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

*Our ideas of education depend upon our ideas of man, his nature and his end.*

*De Hovre*

## CHAPTER 2

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# THE BASIS, SCOPE AND PERCEPTION OF PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

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### 2.1 RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS *OR* RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

**T**he question of whether rights or whether responsibilities are primary follows much the same line of thought as the "chicken and egg" dilemma! Viewed from the perspective of the parent, one might wish to support the argument that the parent's *right* to nurture and educate his or her offspring is foremost, while viewed from the perspective of the child, one might rather argue that it is the parent's primary *responsibility* to nurture and educate his or her children.

Geiger (cited in Dekker 1986: 72) views the primordial parental responsibility to raise children as being paramount to parental rights. The conclusion which Dörpfeld (cited in Dekker 1986: 71) reaches regarding this issue is that parents' claims to rights extend only to that point to which parents accept and fulfil their responsibilities, while Mainz (cited in Dekker 1986: 72) states that the right to rear the child does not only imply competencies but also points to pertinent responsibilities in relation to caring for the child. It could consequently be argued that true parenthood is tantamount to responsibility.

However, parents in general may have differing views regarding what they perceive to be their basic rights and responsibilities and the role which they are to play with regard to the upbringing and education of their children. These differing views may be related to their cultural or their religious background, but are probably best understood when viewed against the background of their philosophy of life or world view<sup>1</sup>.

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1 See 1.8.2.1

## 2.2 A SYNOPSIS OF THE CONCEPT PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

In Chapter 1, the principles of a life or world view were broadly outlined. Gentile (1875-1944), in *The reform of education* (1922), warns that the belief that one may educate without concerning oneself with the subtle problems of philosophy, indicates a failure to understand the precise nature of education (cited in Rusk 1928: 13). A life or world view is no more nor less than a philosophy of the essence of life. It consequently becomes apparent that it is necessary to provide a more substantial discussion on the concept than was provided in the previous chapter in order to establish the nature of the relationship between a philosophy of life and the perception of the essence of education.

### 2.2.1 The essence of a philosophy of life

The combination of salient elements that form the way a person views the world, thinks and behaves is what constitutes a person's philosophy of life (Katz 1991: 97). As such it embraces the following aspects:

- an approach to reality<sup>2</sup> — cosmology
- a view of humankind<sup>3</sup> — philosophical anthropology
- a conception of values<sup>4</sup> — axiology
- a moral code<sup>5</sup> — ethics, and
- a conception of truth<sup>6</sup> — epistemology.

Answers to questions concerning each of the above aspects provides a picture of the particular philosophy of life (Du Plooy *et al* 1982: 306-308).

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2 The origin, nature and purpose or destination of the world and humankind.

3 See the previous footnote.

4 A hierarchy of values built up through experience which has led to conforming with and accepting or rejecting values espoused by the particular community. These values are used as criteria for evaluation to determine whether other values are to be condoned or rejected [Schoeman 1989: 22].

5 Can be seen as a subdivision of values — ethical values and choices made on the basis of the values the person ascribes to [Schoeman 1989: 22].

6 Deals with the origin, nature, relevancy, accuracy and eminence of knowledge as truth [Schoeman 1989: 23].

A philosophy of life is not a tangible entity — it is a system of thought dependent on and determined by mental activity<sup>7</sup>. The evidence of the principles<sup>8</sup> of the philosophy of life are to be found in the person's behaviour.

Although a philosophy of life owes much to knowledge — as the attribution of meaning to the world in which the person finds himself — it is an individual and personal affair (Van Staden 1972: 30) which is difficult to explain rationally and as such is a creed that goes beyond the intellect. A philosophy of life reflects a hierarchy of what is considered to be significant or of value in the person's life (Du Plooy *et al* 1982: 304-306) and choices and decisions are made in terms of this hierarchy of values (Janse van Vuuren 1978: 28). Van der Merwe (1983:32) emphasises the link between one's religious convictions and one's philosophy of life. He contends that one's religious convictions influence one's view of humankind and of the world.

A philosophy of life gives meaning and direction to life and is the motivating force for life. It determines the way the person lives his life (Van Staden 1972: 31). It is normative as it bestows on man certain obligations and disciplines him to conscientiously dedicate himself to pursuing ideals expected of him according to the demands of propriety set by the philosophy of life (Du Plooy *et al* 1982: 304-306).

Although it could be said that a philosophy of life is inherently ideological by nature, it is different from an ideology as the latter is *inter alia* inclined to:

- be totalitarian as it is practised under the leadership of an elite who possess all the power; it aims to be all inclusive and to result in the subjugation of the masses
- express intolerance towards those who challenge the ideology
- absolutise that principle on which the ideology is based; (the suffix -ism is characteristic of the name [e.g. communism, socialism, capitalism])
- use state and economical power to maintain and to realise itself, and

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7 Rational choices and decisions are made in terms of a hierarchy of values.

8 A principle is:

- the starting point of thinking and acting; the root of life
- indicative of direction; it leads life from a certain origin to a goal, and
- a driving-force, a basic motive without which one cannot live [Van der Laan 1979: 4].

- 
- misrepresent or distort the truth (distinctive propagandistic sloganeering is typical) (Pienaar S.a.: 2; Van der Laan 1979: 3).

While the ultimate objective of an ideology is imposition of its tenets on the populace by those who espouse the ideology, a philosophy of life — although it may have a communal spirit — is individually acquired.

### 2.2.2 The acquisition of a philosophy of life

All people subscribe to a particular philosophy of life whether they are able to give a theoretical defence of it or not, but a philosophy of life is not something received at birth — it is in general acquired during the course of life. A child acquires a philosophy of life among and with other people<sup>9</sup> and under their influence. It is acquired from identifying with the people who love and take care of the child and whom the child seeks to emulate. These people — the child's educators — have a particular view of the world, man, values in life and the ethical (Janse van Vuuren 1978: 28) and are compelled by their particular philosophy of life to confront the not-yet-adult — in a structured and functional way — with the values and norms inherent to the philosophy of life to which they adhere (Katz 1991: 98; Van Rensburg & Landman 1986: 416) so that the child, too, is able to acquire a personal philosophy of life (Janse van Vuuren 1978: 28).

The attainment of a philosophy of life is never completed. However, with moral maturity, a fair measure of constancy enters into it. A high degree of constancy does not mean inflexibility, but merely that a philosophy of life gives particular direction to a person's life (Du Plooy *et al* 1982: 304). Each situation with which the person is confronted during the course of his life, will appeal to him for cogitation, decision and action<sup>10</sup> in terms of his philosophy of life.

Each philosophy of life has a historical course and as such represents the traditions, convictions and history of a particular group. With the passage of time, a nation generally develops a relatively fixed

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9 Indicative of the social nature of a philosophy of life.

10 See Katz's definition in 2.2.1

pattern according to which value judgments are made (Janse van Vuuren 1978: 26, 28). However, not only does a philosophy of life have a past dimension, it is also future directed as it guides and directs the life of the individual according to the precepts of the particular philosophy of life (Van Staden 1972: 34).

Because a philosophy of life cannot be explained theoretically or described concretely, there is no way of establishing whether each individual of a particular cultural or religious group replicates the philosophy of life. Taking the diversity and uniqueness of humanity into account, it is probably safe to assume that although one can speak of a particular philosophy of life, each person forms a unique philosophy of life within the tenets of the encompassing philosophy of life. However, there would be more points of correspondence than elements of discrepancy and thus it is justifiable to use broad categorisations of philosophies of life e.g. a Christian or a humanist philosophy of life.

### 2.2.3 A basic classification of philosophies of life

People from the earliest of times have sought for an explanation of the specific nature of human life (Meier & Le Roux 1996: 8) — of the world and its people; i.e. a world or life view. According to Rupert (1965: 37) over the past two thousand years, the two main schools of thought which can be distinguished in western philosophy are the THEISTIC and the HUMANISTIC. Gangle & Benson (1983: 15) differentiate between CHRISTIANITY and SECULARISM<sup>11</sup>.

*Theism* is derived from the Greek *theos*, meaning God or a god. Monotheism refers to belief in one god — for example the Jewish, Islamic or the Christian faiths — while polytheism refers to belief in various gods — characteristic of the ancient Greek and Roman beliefs (Meier & Le Roux 1996: 9). *Humanism*, in contrast, searches for the meaning of life in humanity (Rupert 1965: 36). Seen against the background of Rupert's classification — Theism and humanism — Christianity is but one of the Theistic philosophies of life. However, for the purpose of this thesis — given the nature of the study and the period under review — the categorisation by Gangle and Benson — Christianity and secularism — suffices.

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11 See 1.8.2.2 - 1.8.2.4

Oberholzer (1968: 140) differentiates between a

- CATHOLIC THEISTIC and a
- PROTESTANT THEISTIC life view,

and Coetzee (1965: 28) distinguishes between four PROTESTANT life views common to South Africa, namely the

- GREEK-ORTHODOX
- ANGLICAN
- LUTHERAN and
- CALVINIST,

while Nel (1994: 64-67) identifies the following sub-groupings within the Christian philosophy of life; the

- EVANGELICALS<sup>12</sup>
- FUNDAMENTALISTS<sup>13</sup> and
- CHARISMATICS<sup>14</sup>.

She further groups South African PROTESTANT CHRISTIANS as either

- EVANGELICAL OR
- NON-EVANGELICAL in their orientation.

However, for the purpose of this thesis, to arrive at a precise categorisation of Christians and their — perhaps divergent — philosophies of life is inconsequential. Fundamentally their qualification lies in the fact that each one acknowledges the Trinity. In this thesis, Christian<sup>15</sup> implies BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY<sup>16</sup>, a commitment to Jesus Christ and the Scriptures (Gangel & Benson 1983: 15) — a view which is confirmed in 1 Corinthians 8:6:

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12 This is an umbrella term used to include both fundamentalists and charismatics who share core evangelical beliefs. They adhere to distinctive doctrines as principles of faith and identity and seek to convert others to their way of thinking [Appleby 1989: 75].

13 Fundamentalists are those who have a *Christ against culture* stand. Fundamentalists believe that the secular world is sinful and corrupt, and are politically and socially conservative [Rose 1988: 4].

14 Charismatics are those who believe in a *Christ transforming culture*. The emphasis is on religious experience and testimony rather than on the defence of doctrine [Rose 1988: 4].

15 See 1.8.2.2

16 References to the tenets of a Christian philosophy of life will be founded on pronouncements from the Bible as the source of knowledge and enlightenment.

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*Yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.*

**Colossians 1:10:**

*That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

**and Psalm 117:105:**

*Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

As indicated above, a HUMANIST<sup>17</sup> or SECULAR<sup>18</sup> philosophy of life is also distinguished. Secularism is defined by Baker's Dictionary of Theology (1960: 477) as:

*The integration of life around the spirit of a specific age rather than around God. It is living as if the material order were supreme and as if God did not exist. While secularism may not indicate theoretical atheism, it certainly does represent practical atheism ...*

while Lamont (1982: 15) asserts that humanism can be described as:

*man's own reason and efforts are man's best and, indeed, only hope; and man's refusal to recognise this point is one of the chief causes of his failures throughout history.*

The underlying precepts of these philosophies of life will be discussed at greater length under the headings 2.4 The essence of a Christian philosophy of life and 2.5 The essence of a humanist philosophy of life.

In an earlier discussion, it was pointed out that a philosophy of life is acquired through interaction with significant others — generally the educators<sup>19</sup>. These educators include the parents and — once the child reaches school-going age — the teachers. The task of an educator is to accompany the child — the not-yet-adult — to adulthood, and in this process, the child is significantly influenced

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17 See 1.8.2.4

18 See 1.8.2.3

19 See 2.2.2

by his educators. This influence — generally referred to as education<sup>20</sup> — can be described as being, on the one hand, intentional and on the other, inadvertent.

#### 2.2.4 The relationship between a philosophy of life and a view of education

Education is synonymous with living which suggests that a philosophy of life must be fundamental to education. Each educator has his own particular philosophy of life which determines the way he looks at, perceives, makes sense of and attributes meaning to life. In addition, his view of the child, his view of knowledge and his ideas about the purpose and nature of education are also influenced by his philosophy of life. It is the guideline which determines his perception of the aims of education, the subject content selected to be taught in view of achieving these aims, the priorities he assigns to the different aspects of the curriculum, his approach to and methods of teaching, the evaluation strategies used to determine whether the set aims have been realised and finally the values, principles and attitudes he will transfer to his pupils. The educator thus consciously and unconsciously imparts his own philosophy of life to his pupils (Möller 1991: 83; Nel 1994: 42). Through education, the direction and course of the child's life — and in effect the identity of the child — are determined by the philosophy of life and the underlying values and norms of the educator (Pienaar S.a.: 1).

Given the potency of a philosophy of life, it makes sense that the philosophy of life espoused by parents in the home and that espoused by the teachers at school should be similar if the child is to experience congruency and if learning is to be successful<sup>21</sup> (Katz 1991: 100). Rusk (1928: 15) goes so far as to state that the answer to every educational question is ultimately influenced by one's philosophy of life.

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20 See 1.8.1.5

21 See 1.1

#### **2.2.4.1    *The influence of a philosophy of life on the perception of the aim and nature of education***

Education systems are based on perceived aims of life. Philosophy formulates what it conceives to be the goal of life; education offers suggestions how this end is to be achieved (Rusk 1928: 15). Because of the inherent ideological qualities of a philosophy of life it is important to those who subscribe to a particular philosophy of life that the younger generation should acquire a similar life view as themselves (Coetzee 1965: 28). This is why children are educated and one finds that the aims of organised education and educational practice are related to the philosophy of life that is propagated. As a result, it can be expected that a philosophy of life will influence the subject content presented at the school and the view taken by the teacher when interpreting subject matter (Janse van Vuuren 1978: 28-29). Underlying each philosophy of life there is an express philosophy of education and educative practice and *vice versa*: each doctrine of education is a portrayal of an intrinsic philosophy of life. But, for education to take place, educative content must be disseminated.

#### **2.2.4.2    *The influence of a philosophy of life on the perception of the scope and nature of subject content***

Education is achieved *inter alia* through the transfer of knowledge — subject matter or attitudes and skills demonstrated or taught by the teacher is to be mastered by the pupil. A philosophy of life plays an important role in the selection of subject content. The latter can be regarded as a verbalisation of the philosophy of life — the medium through which the acquisition of the required knowledge and value system associated with the particular philosophy of life is to be actualised (Coetzee 1965: 24).

The selection of subjects and their content is directed by a classification or selection of what is perceived to be the leading or most important activities which constitute human life. Once one seeks to fix the relative value of subjects in the order of their importance, differences of aim and of philosophy emerge (Rusk 1928: 15) so that those principles which are fundamental to the philosophy of life, will feature prominently in the subjects presented to the child. The associated values and attitudes will permeate the variety of subject disciplines with which the child is

confronted and it can be assumed that those who hold a sound, comprehensive philosophy of life of which they can convince others, will direct the formulation of curricula (Briggs cited in Rusk 1928: 16).

In the educative situation, subject content is transmitted and interpreted by an educator — an individual who subscribes to a particular philosophy of life with its associated values and attitudes.

#### 2.2.4.3 *The influence of a philosophy of life on the perception of the role of the educator*

The educator — whether consciously or intuitively — confronts the child with *inter alia* knowledge, concepts, perceptions and attitudes. Why and what he teaches, as well as how he teaches, are all influenced by his philosophy of life for the teacher who consciously reminds himself of the aim of education as he goes about his duties, realises the implications his philosophy of life has for his teaching strategy. Thus, the manifest interrelationship among the basic aspects of education — the aim of education; the selection of subject content; the method of instruction and the disposition of the teacher through whom education is realised — is obvious. Miller in *Education for the needs of life* [p314] (cited in Rusk 1928: 23) summarises these thoughts:

*There is probably no worker whose practice is more affected by his philosophy than the teacher's. One's attitude toward life may be a very decisive factor in his teaching at very critical points. It makes a profound difference to the work of the instructor whether his philosophy of life is crassly materialistic or whether it is idealistic enough to make him believe in the imperishability of moral and spiritual values. It makes a difference to his own interest and enthusiasm, and in what he selects for emphasis in his instruction.*

The character of the educator is of immeasurable significance because the perpetuation and consolidation of a philosophy of life lies rather in example than in precept (Janse van Vuuren 1978: 29). A philosophy of life is practised not preached and for this reason education cannot claim to be neutral. It is generally accepted that schools should prepare children for citizenship, but it is also a place where personal lives are being lived; where decisions which are essentially decisions between values must constantly be made. Embedded in this is the implication that the teacher will

be called upon to guide children on matters involving moral judgment. Teachers thus not only play a considerable part in educating children in civilization, they also transmit morality and facilitate value judgments (Niblett 1963: 16-17; 19).

In the preceding section, the relationship between a philosophy of life and education was outlined. In this thesis, the basis and the scope of parental responsibilities and rights in relation to the child's education is to be examined. In the previous chapter<sup>22</sup> consideration was given to the question whether parents will be able to exercise their responsibilities and rights regarding the education of their children according to their particular philosophy of life within the envisaged education dispensation with its distinctive humanist character. It was also pointed out that according to the 1993 survey by the Central Statistical Services, 76,5% of the South African population claim to be Christians<sup>23</sup>.

It was also stated that — broadly speaking — philosophies of life can be categorised as being either theistic or secular<sup>24</sup>; and for the purpose of this thesis, Christian or humanist. It now becomes necessary to determine the essence of a Christian and a humanist philosophy of life and the respective views of education. For the sake of coherence, the circumstances and events that led to the development of these philosophies of life will be briefly sketched before the essence of each is discussed.

### 2.3 A CONCISE REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN AND HUMANIST PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE

With the coming of Christ, a new basic religious motive came into being which was to exercise a powerful influence on the thought and life of western man. The central commandment of submission towards God and love towards fellow man is the fundamental principle of Christianity.

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22 See 1.2 & 1.5

23 See footnote 7 of Chapter 1.

24 See 2.2.3

Initially the main task was to establish the Christian faith and consequently early Christian education was exclusively aimed at the religious and moral life of man with little emphasis being placed on intellectual development (Schoeman 1985: 32-35).

It is generally accepted that Augustine (354-430) was the founder of the Christian philosophy of education. This famous Church father considered that education should strive towards a subjection to God which should be based on love. During the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic Church showed great interest in education and teaching and they are still remembered for the education systems and schools — initially the monasteries and later the convents — that they established world-wide. The principal objective of monastic education was to educate man for eternal life and initially teaching was given only to prospective members of the clergy destined to become monks. However, by the 10th century, the educational objective had broadened to include social education (Verster, Theron & van Zyl 1982: 8).

For many centuries, Christianity co-existed alongside the well-established Graeco Roman culture. Numerous attempts were made to amend the doctrines of the ancient philosophies (e.g. Plato's idealist system) to conform to and be reconciled with Christian philosophy (Meier & Le Roux 1996: 31-32). With the rise of a scientific investigative spirit — known as Scholasticism — the truths of the Christian faith were subjected to investigation on rational grounds. The main object of Scholasticism was to search for the mutual relation between theology and philosophy by means of a thorough investigation into Christian theology and pagan philosophy. Pagan philosophy and science hereafter took up an equivalent position to the Bible as authoritative sources of knowledge. The idea that the nature of man is not radically affected by sin gained recognition. According to this point of view, the nature of fallen man is only weakened by sin and consequently governed by a common natural law and natural reason. Life became divided into two spheres — the secular and the sacred. The authority of the Bible was limited to the sphere of faith, Church and theology, whilst reason prevailed in the secular sphere of life. However, the main object of Scholastic education remained religious and moral by nature (Schoeman 1985: 38).

Around the 15th century — a period generally referred to as the Renaissance — discoveries which were to change the course of the history of humankind were made. Copernicus (1473-1543),

Galileo (1564-1642), Kepler (1571-1630), Newton (1642-1727), to name but a few, were to demonstrate that the universe is governed by fixed natural and physical laws. The period is associated with a revival of interest in matters other than religion. Man re-evaluated himself — physically, spiritually, aesthetically and ethically — and gained a new consciousness of his own abilities. He began to place more trust in himself. This new attitude of mind was no longer of a theistic nature — it was humanistic. It could be said that humanistic man "dethroned" God and man himself took up the sovereign position. Man's interest in eternity was weakened and replaced by an intense interest in temporal reality and consequently the attention was shifted from the divinities to the humanities. A new kind of learning which was entirely intellectual by nature and which would significantly change the nature of western culture and education, arose. In time, western man would — to a great extent — renounce his traditional Christian view of life and the world and replace it with a secularised concept of man and his world. God would no longer be his criterion for life: henceforth his personal freedom would become the essence of life — it meant a turning away from preoccupation with personal immortality to making the best of life in this world. Humanistic man turned to his own opinion, insights and convictions of what constitutes good and bad, right and wrong, valuable and worthless; these issues were no longer determined by the revelation of God in Christ. Whereas the philosophies of life of the Middle Ages were characterised by their general theistic nature, increasingly, a secular or humanist philosophy of life was being propounded and many divergent points of view in humanist philosophy such as realism, rationalism, liberalism, naturalism, pragmatism, psychologism, socialism and so on were established (Lamont 1982: 20; Meier & Le Roux 1996: 32-33; Schoeman 1985: 41-43; Van der Laan 1979: 18; Verster *et al* 1982: 11).

The humanist intellectual awakening consisted largely of a rediscovery of and a return to the Greek and Latin classics. The features of Renaissance humanism that were taken over by present-day humanism include its insistence on moving away from religious control of knowledge; its ideal of the well-rounded personality; and the emphasis on man's enjoying to the full his life in this world (Lamont 1982: 21). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, humanism could be described as a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in the natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science and democracy (Lamont 1982: 12).

The term, humanism, has been adopted by various groups and persons, each ascribing to the term a different form and a different emphasis. To place all humanists under the same framework would therefore do a disservice to an understanding of the differences that exist between them (Clouse 1993: 298). Generally known varieties of humanism are the:

- **ACADEMIC HUMANISM** founded in the early 1930s by Irving Babbitt and Paul More which revived the return to the ancient classics as the foundation stone of education and brought the humanities into contention with the sciences
- **CATHOLIC or INTEGRAL HUMANISM** which is in essence a theocentric philosophy (far removed from the man-centred humanism) emanating from the tenets of Thomas Aquinas (1227 -1274) as developed by Jacques Maritain (1882-1973)
- **NATURALISTIC HUMANISM**<sup>25</sup> which implies a world-view in which nature is everything, in which there is no supernatural and in which man is an integral part of nature and not separated from it by any sharp cleavage or discontinuity, and
- **RELIGIOUS HUMANISTS**, a sub-group of naturalistic humanists, who derive their main strength from the ranks of Unitarian<sup>26</sup> clergymen, but whose philosophic viewpoint does not carry the same meaning generally attached to the word "religion" — religion in their context is religion without a belief in the existence of God as is found in religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, secular humanism and others. Various groups who closely adhere to a similar philosophy include the Ethical Culture Societies, the Freethinkers and Rationalists, the Marxists, Communists and Socialists. These groups reject all religious authority and the supernatural and rely on science and its techniques in setting up the welfare of humankind in this life as the supreme goal (Lamont 1982: 22-26).

The Renaissance humanism which created so much self-confidence in mankind led, in turn, to a renewed interest in the Church and religion. The Roman Catholic Church was examined in the light of this newfound human freedom. Conflict arose, and amid cries for ecclesiastical reform, the

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25 The American philosophers Morris Cohen, John Dewey and George Santayana were in essence humanists who could be classified as natural humanists, while prominent scientists on the roster of naturalistic humanism include Pierre and Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud and also authors such as Thomas Mann, Somerset Maugham, Jean-Paul Sartre. Statesmen such as Eduard Herriot, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Chinese revolutionary leader, Sun Yat-sen, were and are eminent natural humanists.

26 Those who affirm the unipersonality of the Godhead as opposed to an orthodox Trinitarian [The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles 1978: 2421].

Church had to rebut accusations of heresy and irregularities. This new movement which desired to place God central by purging the Church of irregularities, was known as the Protestant Reformation (Verster *et al* 1982: 12-13). After the reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries, a Protestant doctrine of education — back to God and His Word — was established by men such as Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564). Possibly the most well-known Protestant schools of thought are the Lutheran, the Anglican and the Calvinist — each advancing its own view of education although significant similarities do exist. John Calvin is presumably best known for documenting a detailed and systematic philosophical premise for a Calvinist philosophy of life as described in *The Institutes* [1535] which propounded a true devotion in a life of dedication to Christ. These tenets were further defined and elaborated on during the 19th and 20th centuries by the Dutch theologians, A. Kuyper (1837-1920), H. Bavinck (1854-1921) and J. Waterink (1890-1966). The Calvinist Christian philosophy of life and doctrine of education had its adherents in England and North America. In South Africa, J.C. Coetzee (1893-1989) is possibly the person most closely associated with the Calvinist philosophy of education which has significantly impacted on the South African schooling system (Gunter 1970: 21-22).

It was outlined above that within the Christian and humanist philosophy of life, a diversity of schools of thought can be distinguished and one should consequently rather speak of *a* Christian or *a* humanist philosophy of life rather than *the* Christian or *the* humanist philosophy of life. A broad outline of the development of the two philosophies of life has been summarised. The attention is next turned to the fundamental principles of each of the life views.

#### 2.4. THE ESSENCE OF A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

A Christian philosophy of life holds central the concept of the sovereignty of God as revealed in the Bible. Christian life revolves around the basic theme of the Bible — that of the creation, the fall and redemption. Everything finds meaning and destination in God. For Christians, no reality exists outside God's creative Word and all human activity is consequently to be practised to the honour of the Creator and the well-being of one's fellow man (Schoeman 1985: 99). Further, a Christian philosophy of life rejects the dualistic approach which divides life into the sacred — in which

religious and moral values of God's Word have authority — and the secular — in which Independent science and reason prevails and where God's Word has no say (Nel 1994: 45). Central to a Christian philosophy of life is the acknowledgement of the triune God or the Trinity.

#### 2.4.1 A Biblical view of God

The Bible does not contain a formal definition of the word God, yet God's being and attributes are displayed on every page and consequently it is an impossible task to do justice to providing an adequate perspective of the character of God. The existence of God is not subject to scientific proof: it is a postulate of faith. Since God transcends all His creation He can be known only in His self-revelation<sup>27</sup>. God is Spirit<sup>28</sup>, a Supreme Being<sup>29</sup>, a nonmaterial personal being<sup>30</sup>, self-existing<sup>31</sup> and self-determining<sup>32</sup>. God is *inter alia*:

- A triune God<sup>33</sup>— God the Father (purposing redemption), God the Son (securing redemption) and God the Holy Spirit (applying redemption) (Nel 1994:46), yet He is not three deities, but one Godhead since all three Persons share the one Deity
- Infinite in His being — He is omnipresent<sup>34</sup>; everything in the universe is immediately in the presence of God

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27 See Rom 1:20. *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God ...*

28 See John 4:24. *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

29 See Ps 47:7. *For God is the King of all the earth...*

30 See 1John 4:12. *No one has seen God at any time.*

31 See John 5:26. *For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.* Also see Ex 3:14; Deut 32:40 and Rev 16:5.

32 See Eccl 3:11. *He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*

33 See Mat 28:19. *...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* Also see 2Cor 13:14; 1Peter 1:2.

34 See 2Chr 6:18. *But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built.* Also see Jer 23:24.

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- Infinite in His wisdom<sup>35</sup> — He is omniscient; He knows everything — both past and future
  - Infinite in His power<sup>36</sup> — He is omnipotent
  - Infinite in His holiness<sup>37</sup>, justice<sup>38</sup> and goodness<sup>39</sup> — these words signify God's moral attributes. *Holiness* is regarded as His central ethical character; *justice* refers to His administration of rewards and punishments among the personal beings of the universe; *goodness* indicates His love, His grace towards all and His special grace in saving sinners<sup>40</sup>
  - Infinite in His truth<sup>41</sup> — this attribute designates the basis of all logic and rationality; the axioms of logic and mathematics and all the laws of reasons are not laws apart from God to which God must be subject — they are attributes of God's own character<sup>42</sup>
  - Love<sup>43</sup> — God is love, *agapé* or divine love that is unconditional and selfless
  - Eternal<sup>44</sup> — without beginning or ending, and
  - Unchangeable<sup>45</sup> — points to the perfect consistency of God's character.

Apart from the above, God is the Creator of the universe which came into existence through His will. In Genesis 1:1 the expanse of His creation is described — the heavens and the earth — and all that it contains.

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35 See 1Cor 1:25. *For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom.*  
See 1John 2:20. *For God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything.*

36 See Rev 19:6. *...Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!*  
See Job 37:23. *The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power.*

37 See Lev 11:44-45. *Be ye holy because I am holy.*  
See Lev 19:2. *You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.*

38 See Is 30:18. *...for the Lord is a God of justice...*

39 See Ps 116:5. *Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yes, our God is merciful.*

40 See Titus 3:4-5. *But when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.*

41 See Rom 3:4. *Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar...*

42 See Heb 6:18. *...it is impossible for God to lie...* Also see Titus 1:2.

43 See 1John 4:8. *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

44 See Rev 1:8. *"I am the alpha and the omega; the beginning and the end," says the Lord, "Who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."*  
Also see Ps 9:7.

45 See Heb 13:8. *Jesus Christ is the same today, yesterday and forever.*

### 2.4.2 A Biblical view of reality and man

The starting point for any consideration of the doctrine of creation is Heb 11:3.

*By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*

The creation was the work of the triune God and is attributed to the Father<sup>46</sup>; the Son<sup>47</sup> and the Holy Spirit<sup>48</sup>. These afore-mentioned passages indicate that heaven and earth were not made out of any pre-existent matter, but were spoken into existence through the divine Word of God. It could be said that matter is the congealed word of God. This creation is distinct from God who is eternal — i.e. without beginning or ending — because His creation had a beginning and will have an end. The creation is dependent on Him for its continued existence<sup>49</sup>.

Because love is one of God's predominating characteristics, He desired to surround His throne with creatures whom He might love and by whom He might be loved<sup>50</sup>. God thus first populated His spiritual (supernatural) realm with angelic beings<sup>51</sup> — created, holy, spiritual, beings<sup>52</sup>. Because of His holiness, these creatures must also be holy, and by logical necessity, love and holiness cannot be forced. Therefore these creatures must be able to choose whether to glorify God or to reject Him. After a period<sup>53</sup>, Satan, one of the angelic host whom God had created beautiful and

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46 See Gen 1:1. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

47 See Col 1:15-16. *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible ... all things were created through Him and for Him.*

48 See Gen 1:2. *... and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters;* and Job 26:13. *By His Spirit He adorned the heavens ...*

49 See Col 1:17. *...in Him all things hold together.*  
See Acts 17:28. *In Him we live and move and have our being.*

50 See Ps 103:20-21. *Bless the Lord all you His hosts. You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.*

51 Scripture does not tell us the time of their creation, but it was certainly before the creation of man.  
See Ne 9:6. *Thou, even thou art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host...*

52 See Col 1:16. *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible.*

53 This event occurred before the fall of man for Satan deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden.

perfect<sup>54</sup> — became proud. Pride led to self-will and self-will to rebellion<sup>55</sup>. This principal angel became the adversary of God and led other angels into rebellion<sup>56</sup>. As a result, these angels lost their original holiness and became corrupt (The New International Dictionary of the Bible 1987: 271).

God then created the physical (natural) world and man. Man is unique among all of God's creation: he is created in God's image<sup>57</sup>; he is different from other creatures<sup>58</sup>; he is more valuable than other creatures<sup>59</sup>, he is created a little lower than angels<sup>60</sup> and he is in possession of a body, a soul<sup>61</sup> (mind, emotions, will [Virkler 1986: 110]) and a spirit<sup>62</sup> (that part of man which enables him to recognise and communicate with God). In addition, because he was created in the Image of God, man was created as an emotional, rational, moral creature with an independent mind and will. Man has the ability to discern between good and evil<sup>63</sup> and as such is able to exercise choice.

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- 54 See Ez 28:12-19. *You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty...You were the anointed cherub, you were perfect in your ways...*
- 55 See Is 14:12-14. *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!* [These verses have a double application – part of a proverb against the King of Babylon and Satan (Lucifer, the morning star)]. Also see Ez 28:12-19.
- 56 See Rev 12:7,9. *That serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth and his angels were cast out with him.*
- 57 See Gen 1:26. *... Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...*
- 58 See 1Cor 15:39. *All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.*
- 59 See Mat 6:26. *Look at the birds of the air, ... are you not of more value than they?*
- 60 See Ps 8:5.
- 61 See Luke 12:20. *But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you."* Also see Acts 14:22 and 1Peter 4:19.
- 62 See 1Cor 2:11. *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?* Also see Pr 18:14; 20:17.
- 63 See Gen 3:22. *Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil"...*

Because Satan already hates God, he hates man whom God (who is love) created, and tries to destroy him<sup>64</sup>. The choice man is purposed for, is to choose between God and Satan — a choice which was first put to him in the Garden of Eden. After the fall — when man asserted his independence, chose incorrectly and as such succumbed to sin — man still retained those qualities<sup>65</sup> but as a sinner<sup>66</sup> he is in need of redemption. Satan and his angels have as their principal purpose to oppose God and to try to defeat His will and frustrate His plans. Satan and his host endeavour to separate believers from God by *inter alia* inflicting disease, by tempting man to sin, and by spreading false doctrine<sup>67</sup>. It needs to be understood that a spiritual battle for the souls of man<sup>68</sup> is being waged between Satan and God. Only through the grace of God can man be saved<sup>69</sup> from eternal damnation with Satan. This redemption is made possible through the blood of Jesus Christ<sup>70</sup> who was crucified to atone man's sins<sup>71</sup> (Daniel, Wade & Gresham 1987: 72) and who was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven.

Although man is saved by the grace of God, he needs to recognise that he is a sinner and to understand that he must commit his life to God, in other words, he must choose God as his only salvation through which his redemption can be realised. To make this choice, man needs the wisdom of discernment; the choice he needs to make will of necessity have to be based on the true knowledge of God.

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- 64 See Gen 3 – the temptation and fall of man. Also see 1Peter 5:8. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*
- 65 See 1John 3:2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is.*
- 66 See 1John 1:8. *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*
- 67 See Acts 10:38. *...who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil...*  
See Mat 4:3. *...now when the tempter came to Him ...*  
See 1Kings 22:21-23. *...I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all His prophets ...*
- 68 See Eph 6:10-18. *...for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood ... [but] ... against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places...*  
See Mat 10:28. *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
- 69 See John 3:16. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*
- 70 See 1 John 2:2. *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.* Also see 1Tim 1:15. *...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...*
- 71 See 1John 4:8. *He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

### 2.4.3 A Biblical concept of knowledge and truth

God is the source of wisdom. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians<sup>72</sup>, explains the power and magnitude of God's wisdom when he says: *Has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world?* and *For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom*. According to the Bible, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding<sup>73</sup>.

However, one needs to discern between earthly – human – and heavenly – God's – wisdom. James<sup>74</sup> describes the "wisdom" that is earthly, as unspiritual and of the devil, while on the other hand, there is the "wisdom" that comes from heaven that is pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

This distinction needs to be borne in mind when the following texts are examined. The acquisition of wisdom – genuine understanding – is a command<sup>75</sup>. It is the Lord who gives wisdom and knowledge<sup>76</sup> which is regarded as being of more value than gold and precious stones<sup>77</sup> for the goal of the acquisition of knowledge is eternal life<sup>78</sup>. The knowledge of God is possible only because God in His love has called men to Himself<sup>79</sup>. God knows those whom He has chosen; His knowledge is spoken of in terms of election<sup>80</sup>. Obedience is the condition of receiving knowledge<sup>81</sup> and liberates

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72 See 1Cor 1:18-20, 25; 2:9-11.

73 See Prov 9:10 & Ps 111:10.

74 See James 3:13-17.

75 See Prov 4:5, 7. *Get wisdom! Get understanding! ...Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and in all your getting, get understanding.*

76 See Prov 2:6. *For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

77 See Prov 8:10 *...for knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than rubies ...*

78 See John 17:3. *And this is eternal life that they may know You ...*

79 See Acts 2:39. *For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.*

80 See Jer 1:5. *Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you ...*  
Also see Rom 8:29-31.

81 See Rom 2:7-9. *Eternal life to those who be patient continuance of doing good seek for glory, honour and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness – indignation and wrath.*

the soul from error<sup>82</sup>. The process of enlightenment and acceptance may be called coming to the knowledge of the truth<sup>83</sup>.

God is a God of truth<sup>84</sup>; Christ is truth<sup>85</sup> and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth<sup>86</sup>. Truth about God and the created world can only be fully revealed to the believer by the Holy Spirit<sup>87</sup>. While the righteous love truth<sup>88</sup>, the wicked resist and turn away from truth<sup>89</sup>.

Those who love God, will obey his ordinances and will search His Word for guidance. God's order for family life in its various facets, is one of the themes to receive priority in the Bible.

#### 2.4.4 A Biblical view of parenthood

From a Biblical perspective, to be a parent entails first the institution of a marriage between a male and a female<sup>90</sup> followed by the procreation of children<sup>91</sup>. It further needs to be remembered that placement in a human family is no accident, it is a divine appointment<sup>92</sup>. Having children is not only

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- 82 See John 8:31-32. *...If you abide in My word, you are my disciples indeed. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*
- 83 See 1Tim 2:3-4. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
- 84 See Deut 32:4. *...a God of truth and without injustice ...*
- 85 See John 14:6. *I am the way, the truth and the life ...*
- 86 See 1John 5:6. *...because the spirit is truth.* Also see John 14:17.
- 87 See 1Cor 2:13-14. *...which the Holy Spirit teaches... but the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
- 88 See 2Thes 2:10. *...the unrighteous ... did not receive the love of the truth ...*
- 89 See 2Ti 4:4. *... and they will turn their ears away from the truth ...*
- 90 See Gen 2:24. *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.* Also see Mat 19:5; Eph 5:31.
- 91 See Gen 1: 28. *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*
- 92 See Ps 68:6. *God sets the solitary in families.*

a response to the command to be fruitful and multiply, children are viewed a heritage from the Lord<sup>93</sup>. This means that children belong to God; they are "ours" only in a secondary sense and are to be cherished and not despised<sup>94</sup>. To love and care for children is one of the principal ways to honour God and share in building His Kingdom<sup>95</sup>. Parenthood requires responsibility to handle the gift of children properly and this means that parents must perform specific duties towards their children. These duties stem from their derivative authority — derivative of the Creator<sup>96</sup> (Whitehead 1985: 58).

Regarding the upbringing of children, God Himself provides a model for parents<sup>97</sup>. He reveals Himself as a Father who is tender, close to His children, and sensitive to their needs — teaching, encouraging, helping and healing them. God does not leave growing up to chance, He conscientiously nurtures His children. God holds parents — and in particular fathers — responsible for raising children, providing a right attitude and foundation<sup>98</sup>. An atmosphere in which criticism, condemnation and unrealistic expectations of the child are predominant is not conducive to sound teaching (Douglas & Tenney 1987: 752) neither is it characteristically Biblical. However, God views discipline as an important part of upbringing as He Himself disciplines His own people out of love and for their own benefit and expects parents to do the same to their children<sup>99</sup>. Sometimes,

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93 See Ps 127:3. *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.* Also see Gen 33:5; Sam 1:27.

94 See Mat 18:10. *Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones...*

95 See Mat 18:5. *Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.*

96 See Rom 13:1 *...for there is no authority except from God ...*

97 See Hos 11:1, 3, 4. *When Israel was a child, I loved him...I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arm; but they did not know that I healed them. I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love, and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck.*

98 See Eph 6:4. *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

99 See Heb 12:5. *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.* Also see Deut 8:5. Prov 22:6.

verbal correction is not sufficient<sup>100</sup> and tougher measures will need to be employed<sup>101</sup> but there is a distinction between physical abuse and discipline. Discipline may be painful but not injurious — at times pain may be a part of effective correction. Proper correction is crucial — even the child's eternal destiny can hinge upon the Godly discipline provided by parents<sup>102</sup>.

Christian parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children and consequently they have an interest in the education received by their children. This interest on the part of the parent has its roots in the Biblical premise that the parent is the primary educator of his child and must, accordingly, accept responsibility for that education. In addition, Christian parents are subject to the authority of the baptismal vow they made. This responsibility cannot be transferred to a school or to a Church.

#### 2.4.5 A Biblical view of the child and of the aim and method of education

Each child is of great value as can be deduced from the numerous passages that indicate that children are viewed as a gift of God<sup>103</sup> and are highly esteemed<sup>104</sup>. The Bible also provides examples of admirable children such as Isaac, Jephthah's daughter, Samuel, Timothy and Jesus. Jesus Himself provides the perfect example to children as a model of obedience and honour to His parents<sup>105</sup> and reminds others that this is a cardinal principle of the Law<sup>106</sup>. He underscores the fact that children

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100 See Prov 29:19. *A servant will not be corrected by mere words; for though he understands, he will not respond.*

101 See Prov 29:15. *The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.* See Prov 22:15; 23:13.

102 See Prov 23:14. *You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.*

103 See Ps 127:3. *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.*

104 See Prov 17:6. *Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.*

105 See Luke 2:51. *The He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them ...*

106 See Mat 19:19. *Honour your father and your mother...* Also see Mark 10:19.

should be respected by all<sup>107</sup> and the parable of the lost sheep<sup>108</sup> is indicative of each individual's worth before God.

Christian education is an act, a conscious, purposeful and dedicated act, not a process. During the educative act, the educator — in response to his calling<sup>109</sup> — purposefully and responsibly interacts with the educand with the explicit purpose of guiding him to a meaningful, responsible Christian adulthood (Van Wyk 1976: 51-52) according to Biblical principles. Education is thus not factually, morally or spiritually neutral (Naudé 1995b: 2). Children are not merely educated — they are educated for the purpose of bringing glory to God<sup>110</sup> through true discipleship<sup>111</sup>. Parents are to train their children in truth<sup>112</sup> and in righteousness<sup>113</sup>, they are to transform them to conform to the image of Christ<sup>114</sup> and making them disciples of Jesus Christ<sup>115</sup>.

Christian parents are responsible for the total religious education of their children in all spheres of their lives in order to direct the relationship between the child and God in word and deed (Postma 1987b: 211). The whole scriptural teaching about God's covenant requires that knowledge of the terms of the covenant and its obligations be conveyed in the first instance by parents to children<sup>116</sup>.

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107 See Mat 18:10. *Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones...*

108 See Luke 15:4-6.

109 See Prov 22:6. *Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

110 See Eph 6:7. *With goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.*

111 See John 15:8. *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

112 See John 8:31-32. *...If you abide in My word you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

113 See 2Tim 3:16. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

114 See Col 1:28,29. *...teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*

115 See Mat 28:19. *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ...*

116 See Gen 18:19. *For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord ...* Also see Deut 6:4-9; Eph 6:4-9.

The command to honour one's parents<sup>117</sup> is designed to ensure that the teaching which the parents are obliged to impart will be heeded, to the consequent spiritual benefit of the child (Nichols 1975: 37).

Given the complexity of society, parents are not adequately prepared for educating their children in totality and consequently the school as an educational institution developed from a community need. However the school may not formulate its aims in absolute independence. The continuum of educative intervention links home and school as a unit and consequently a Christian parent could believe that he is justified in wishing to know what is happening to his child at school, what values and norms are being inculcated, what subject content is being taught and more particularly, what interpretations are being given via these subjects. Seen in this light, it is the right of a Christian parent to ensure that all curricular activities make some contribution towards the child's attainment of proper adulthood within the perspective of a particular philosophy of life (Möller 1991: 81) — in this instance a Christian philosophy of life.

Christians declare that without opportunities for worship or for seeing how other Christians' lives are directed to and by God, no understanding of their responsibility to God can be reached nor will the sovereignty and the grace of God in their lives be discovered. It is here that the Christian teacher's heaviest obligation lies: that children should become progressively aware of God as their intellectual and moral powers mature. Christianity is not primarily a learning of doctrines and then an attempt to put their consequences into the practice of living. Much more it is a learning of attitudes so that a Christian carries about with him a different set of values, a different understanding of the relative importance of things from the non-Christian. A feeling of dependence on God, a recognition of the givenness of the world, creatureliness, humility as against self-sufficiency: these are Christian (Niblett 1963: 20).

An investigation into the basic classification of philosophies of life revealed that the two main "categories" of philosophies of life are theistic and secular — Christian and humanist<sup>118</sup>. The essence of the philosophy of life of the latter will now receive attention.

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117 See Ex 20:12. *Honour your father and your mother ...*

118 See 2.2.3

## 2.5 THE ESSENCE OF A HUMANIST PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Humanism traces its roots from ancient China, classical Greece and Rome, through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment to the current age typified by scientific and technological achievements. It has become apparent that part of society believe that in this newly evolved era, a contemporary religion that would have greater appeal and be more appropriate to prevailing circumstances, needs to be defined and established. In 1933, a *Humanist Manifesto* was drafted by a group of more than thirty men who came to a general agreement on certain affirmations which they believed demonstrated the essence of a candid and explicit social ethic — humanism — being experienced at that time. In 1973, *Humanist Manifesto II* was drafted along similar lines in the belief that the following century could and should be the century of the humanist. Both manifesto's commence with an extended preamble or introduction followed by a set of common principles<sup>119</sup> that serve as its philosophical basis.

The essence of humanism as characterised by these manifesto's can be summarised as follows:

Humanism:

- has as a central value the preciousness and dignity of the individual person (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 5 & 8)
- considers the complete realisation of human personality to be the goal of life (*Humanist Manifesto I*: affirmation 8) not for a favoured few, but for all of humankind (*Humanist Manifesto II*: introductory comments)
- upholds the view that human life has meaning because man creates and develops his own future and that happiness and the creative realisation of human needs and desires — both individually and in shared enjoyment — are continuous humanistic themes (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 3)
- believes that man alone is responsible for the realisation of the world of his dreams and that he has within himself the power — through the dedication, will, intelligence and cooperative skills of humankind, (*Humanist Manifesto II*: introductory comments) reason and compassion (*Humanist Manifesto II*: closing comments) — for its achievement (*Humanist*

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119 *Humanist Manifesto I* has 15 affirmations, while *Humanist Manifesto II* has 17.

*Manifesto I: closing comments)*

- believes in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility as exercised through the possibilities of individual freedom of choice (*Humanist Manifesto II: affirmation 5*)
- finds religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a co-operative effort to promote social well-being (*Humanist Manifesto I: affirmation 9*)
- maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the enhancement and fulfilment of human life (*Humanist Manifesto I: affirmation 13*), and
- has at its core a design for a secular society on a planetary scale (*Humanist Manifesto II: introductory comments*) that transcends the limits of national sovereignty (*Humanist Manifesto II: affirmation 11*) and is committed to an open, integrated community and participatory democracy (*Humanist Manifesto II: affirmation 8*) where people have maximum opportunity for free and voluntary association (*Humanist Manifesto II: affirmation 11*). Consequently the building of a world community with a system of world law and a world order based on transnational federal government is envisaged (*Humanist Manifesto II: affirmation 12*).

John Dewey (1859-1952) — who was also signatory to the *Humanist Manifesto I* of 1933 — in his work *A common faith* (1934: 23), states the premise of humanism as follows:

*Its goal is democracy. This means that there can be no differences nor distinctions, such as between heaven and hell, good and evil, right and wrong, or the saved and the lost. All such distinctions perpetuate a spirit of aristocracy.*

Humanism reflects the idea that the greatest of all attributes are those that make people distinctly human. Awareness of self, sensitivity to others, appreciation of the potential within humankind and the ability to express and analyse feelings are traits stressed by humanists. Humanism implies devotion to the interests of human beings, wherever they live and whatever their status (Clouse 1993: 298). If the focus is essentially on man, what then of God?

### 2.5.1 A humanist view of God

Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe — as depicted by modern science — makes unacceptable any supernatural being and that within the philosophy there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind associated with a belief in the supernatural (*Humanist Manifesto I*: affirmation 5 & 10).

The religious attitudes of past religious forms and ideas are believed to be obsolete and it is contended that man has come to the realisation that he alone is responsible for establishing his happiness (*Humanist Manifesto I*: closing comments). Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or realising their full potentialities. It is the opinion that too often traditional faiths encourage dependence rather than independence, obedience rather than affirmation, fear rather than courage (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 1) thus defeating the purpose of man — his self-actualisation — as it is perceived by humanists.

The second manifesto outlines the humanist view on deity as follows.

- *We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the questions of the survival and fulfilment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves (Humanist Manifesto II: affirmation 1).*
- *There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from self-actualisation and from rectifying social injustices (Humanist Manifesto II: affirmation 2).*

Salvation is not to be found in a deity, but in humanity itself; man places faith in himself and not in God. Each person creates his own values and is saved by his own efforts. No divine purpose or providence for the human species can be found. To elaborate on the preceding comment, it becomes necessary to determine what the humanist view of man and his world is.

### 2.5.2 A humanist view of reality and man

Humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created (*Humanist Manifesto I*: affirmation 1). Nature is considered the totality of being. It is a constantly changing system of matter and energy that exists independently of any mind or consciousness (Lamont 1982: 13). It is believed that any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence. It is on the basis of this premise that traditional dogmas or religions that place the revelation of God above scientific experience are deemed presumptuous and inaccurate (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 1). It is condoned that nature may indeed be broader and deeper than currently known, but any new discoveries will only enlarge knowledge of the natural (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 1).

Man is believed to be an evolutionary product of nature of which he is part (*Humanist Manifesto I*: affirmation 2). His mind is invisibly conjoined with the functioning of his brain. Body and personality are an inseparable unity (*Humanist Manifesto I*: affirmation 3). Consequently, there can be no conscious survival after death (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 2).

The worth and dignity of the individual person is an intrinsic humanist value and individuals should be encouraged to realise their own creative talents and desires (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 5). Human beings are integrated wholes. All development — cognitive, affective and behavioural — is interrelated. However, it is the freedom to choose which is one of the most distinctively human characteristics and very likely the most important (Clouse 1993: 315; Kolesnik 1975: 33-34; Valett 1977: 6). Freedom of choice, however, underlies the determination and acquisition of a moral standard or a code of values.

### 2.5.3 A humanist concept of values, morals, truth and knowledge

It is believed that moral values are derived from human experience — inferred from the choices made. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 3). There are no absolutes — values are relative, personal and situational.

Because of the intimate nature of values, they cannot be imposed by an outside source. Telling someone what values should be adopted or modelling values for emulation will be effective only if the other person decides to adopt these values as his own. No one can force another person to accept certain values. As a result, it is advocated that one should be encouraged to choose one's own values without regard for tradition — one must choose freely with no hint of coercion (Clouse 1993: 302, 314; Koehl 1993: 34).

Values clarification is a method for teaching about making decisions about values. The following seven criteria must be met for a person to clarify a value. The individual must:

- be able to choose freely without restriction
- consider viable alternatives
- choose only after thoughtfully considering the consequence of each alternative
- be happy with his choice
- affirm the choice publicly
- act on his choice, and
- incorporate the choice into his life pattern (Clouse 1993: 306).

The first three criteria involve the act of *choosing a value*, the next two signify a *prizing of the value*, while the last two imply *acting upon the value* chosen.

Humanist ethics is opposed to the puritanical prejudice against (worldly) pleasure and (carnal) desire that marks the western tradition of morality. The profound wants and needs of both an emotional and physical character should not be suppressed but fulfilled as an essential ingredient in the good life. Ethical rules of conduct need to change as conditions change (Lamont 1982: 229; 233). Individuals should be permitted to express their proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire. Intolerant attitudes often cultivated by orthodox religious and puritanical cultures, unduly repress conduct. To enhance freedom and dignity the individual must experience a full range of civil liberties in all societies — for example, euthanasia, the right to suicide and abortion are condoned (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 6).

Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments for gaining knowledge or resolving problems that humankind possesses. There is no substitute; neither faith nor passion suffices in itself. Critical intelligence is the best method that humanity has for resolving problems, but it is essential

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that reason be balanced with compassion and empathy (*Humanist Manifesto II* : affirmation 4). The only reliable method for attaining knowledge is said to be the scientific method (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 4). In a similar context it is stated that technology is a vital key to human progress and development (*Humanist Manifesto II* : affirmation 16).

Through the use of the scientific method, the present body of knowledge is constantly revised and rendered more precise for it is believed that, as a method, it is self-corrective and self-evolving (Lamont 1982: 197). Consequently, it is asserted that absolute truth does not exist – only, what was termed by John Dewey, *warranted assertability*. In the search for knowledge only varying degrees of probability can be determined (Lamont 1982: 215).

It is generally accepted that one of the facets of education is the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In the light of the preceding where a review of the humanist perspective of knowledge and how it is acquired is provided, it follows that an explicit humanist perception of the child and the aim of education needs to be provided.

#### 2.5.4 A humanist view of parenthood, the child, the aim and method of education

The preciousness and dignity of the individual person is a core humanist value. Individuals are encouraged to realise their own creative talents and desires. Maximum individual autonomy must be pursued and all moral, religious or ideological codes that denigrate the individual, suppress freedom, dull intellect, or dehumanise personality are rejected (*Humanist Manifesto II*: affirmation 5).

It can consequently be deduced that humans are perceived to be inherently good and born with the potential for moral development. Parents should provide a warm, accepting, positive, non-directive environment; an atmosphere of encouragement and opportunity so that the child has a chance to develop his inherent potential. It is believed that with fewer restrictions or controls individuals will be able to develop their potential (Clouse 1993: 313-314; Kolesnik 1975: 36).

With regard to the aims of education, the following comments provide an indication of how the humanist sees that goal. According to *Humanist Manifesto I*: affirmation 3 & 8

*... the quest for the good life is the central task for mankind. Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfilment in the here and now;*

while Carl Rogers, an adherent of humanism, perceives the goal of education to entail the following:

*... to assist students to become individuals who are able to take self-initiated action and to be responsible for those actions; who are capable of intelligent choice and self-direction, ...who work, not for the approval of others, but in terms of their own socialised purposes (cited in Valett 1977: 9).*

The educative aim is thus directed at enabling the child to develop his natural potential fully. The ultimate of this potential is called self-actualisation — *self-knowledge* (self-awareness, understanding, acceptance, expression, assertion, control, and self-renewal) (Valett 1977:7). The word *self* designates that the process comes about through changes that occur within the person, or self, rather than by changes imposed from without. *Actualisation* has the meaning of arriving at a desired state. According to Maslow (1973) self-actualised people tend to accept themselves, others and the natural world for what they are. They are realistically oriented and yet spontaneous and creative in their thinking and behaviour (Clouse 1993: 303-304; Kolesnik 1975: 40-41).

The development of emotive abilities, the shaping of affective desires, the fuller expression of aesthetic qualities, and the enhancement of powers of self-direction and control should receive instructional priority. It must be recognised that the primary purpose of education is to develop individuals who will be able to live joyous, humane and meaningful lives. Education is perceived as a lifelong process of developmental experiences. Effective humanistic education must begin with an assessment of human needs. Humanist education insists that the individual not be manipulated by some superimposed social ethic (Valett 1977: 12-13).

The tenets underlying the method of education are alluded to in the following extract from the second manifesto.

*Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking (Humanist Manifesto II: affirmation 11).*

Nothing should be allowed to hinder the child in his natural, active and creative encounters with his surroundings as this would inhibit his development and growth (Postma 1987a: 193). The child is perceived to be a *creative* being — not a *created* being (Coetzee 1963: 337). Humanistic educators favour a student-centred concept of education in which not only the interests and needs, problems and goals of individuals are taken into account, but are the very starting point and guiding principles of the entire educative process. The humanist educator is essentially a facilitator who guides and supports the learner in the process of becoming a unique person (Valett 1977: 7). However, guidance, direction, suggestions and help should be held to a minimum. The emphasis should be on learning — even to the point that each student should be free to make his own choices regarding what, when and how he should learn. The discovery method of learning is favoured (Kolesnik 1975: 55, 61).

A concise comparison of the main issues underlying a Christian and a humanist philosophy of life will be outlined in summary of the above discussions.

## 2.6 A BRIEF COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ESSENCE OF A CHRISTIAN AND A HUMANIST PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

When a Christian and a humanist philosophy of life are compared, significant differences emerge although it is common to find that society generally believes that the underlying principles of Christianity and humanism are indeed quite similar. The cornerstone of this misrepresentation is the argument that every human being is a bearer of the image of God, bestowing on him inherent dignity and entitling him to inalienable human rights. Thus, both propound that humanity is unique and precious and that the brotherhood of man is an ideal to be pursued. But it is here that the similarity ends. This view overlooks the complete theme of the Bible. It is true that God created man in His own image, but due to the fall of man, he lost this perfection and became a sinner in

need of redemption<sup>120</sup>. The Christian concepts of rights, justice, freedom, equality, peace and fairness differ fundamentally from their apparent counterparts in the field of humanism. There is a basic incompatibility between Christian principles such as humility, self-sacrifice, restraint and chastity with the humanistic or even human rights ideology that promotes maximum individual freedom in pursuit of self-actualisation (Visser & Potgieter 1994: 494).

The following main differences can be highlighted.

- The focus of a Christian's philosophy of life is belief in God and a spiritual life after death. Humanists denounce the existence of God and an afterlife<sup>121</sup>.
- According to Christians, humankind and the world were created by God; humanists believe in the self-existence of the universe and the evolution of living organisms<sup>122</sup>.
- Christians derive their sense of truth, morality and values from the pronouncements of the Bible and believe these to be constant. According to humanists, values, truth and morality are not absolute but can alter with the passage of time and as circumstances change<sup>123</sup>.
- Living by example is an underlying principle of a Christian philosophy of life, whereas freedom of choice and absence of coercion is the precept of a humanist life view<sup>124</sup>.
- A Christian has God firmly at the centre of his universe and he places himself as a Christian at the service of others. He believes that his personal needs will be taken care of by his Heavenly Father. His purpose is to — of his own free volition — commit his life to God, become subservient to God, change his perspective of life to focus on God and the will of God; and as such live a life obedient to God and to bring glory to his Saviour. In contrast, humanists place themselves central to their thought and are committed to social service to the extent that they benefit from the relationship — the attainment of self-actualisation is primary; personal considerations and needs are foremost<sup>125</sup>.

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120 See 2.4.2

121 See 2.4.1 & 2.5.1

122 See 2.4.2 & 2.5.2

123 See 2.4.3 & 2.5.3

124 See 2.4.4; 2.4.5 & 2.5.4

125 See 2.4.5 & 2.5.4

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- Another basic difference between these two philosophies of life is that Christians regard the pronouncements of the Bible as the guiding principle of their lives — humanists are under no religious obligation to hold the Bible in similar regard<sup>126</sup>.

As such, it could be expected that while Christians would regard the Bible as being an authoritative source of information regarding parenting, humanists would choose to refer to other sources regarding issues associated with parenting.

The basis and scope of both parental rights and responsibilities is both broad and well documented and is to be found in sources which enjoy wide recognition such as *inter alia* the Bible, international conventions such as the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and relevant state legislation. In the following section, the principal elements of these texts will be reviewed in as far as the rights and responsibilities of parents are discussed in relation to the education — both informal and formal — of the child and as far as it holds significance for the scope of this thesis.

## 2.7 THE BASIS AND SCOPE OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

The underlying issues which will need to be addressed in this thesis revolve around those basic tenets which are used to define a Christian<sup>127</sup> and a humanist<sup>128</sup> perception of the basis and scope of parental rights and responsibilities<sup>129</sup>. Christians believe in, trust and desire to obey and follow Jesus Christ. To do this they turn to the Bible as the guiding principle of their lives. Those — such as the humanists — who do not adhere to Christian tenets do not consider themselves under any ethical or religious obligation to be deferential to the pronouncements or ordinances of the Bible. The statutes of the state are consequently the main regulating forces to which they must submit and with which they must comply.

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126 See 2.2.2; 2.4.4; 2.5 & 2.5.1

127 See 1.8.2.2

128 See 1.8.2.4

129 See 2.2.3.

In view of the preceding remarks, the following texts will be reviewed for guidelines regarding the nature and scope of parental responsibilities and rights:

- the Bible – as the directing principle of Christian life
- relevant<sup>130</sup> statutes<sup>131</sup> and legislation<sup>132</sup> of the Republic of South Africa, and
- the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* – as an international document designed to address the rights of children and the consequent obligations and rights of parents in this regard.

2.7.1 A Biblical perspective of the basis and scope of parental rights and responsibilities  
 What sets Christians apart from the rest of the world is that Christians base the significance and their mode of existence on the Bible – both old and new Testaments – which they unconditionally accept as the inspired Word of God which they must abide by<sup>133</sup>, keep<sup>134</sup> and serve<sup>135</sup>. A Christian, however, is also acquiescent to the statutes of the state of which he is a citizen<sup>136</sup> although, when there is a clear conflict regarding obedience to authority, Christians are to obey God, not human beings<sup>137</sup>.

Although parenting and some of its issues and problems are universal, Christian parents receive specific instruction on the principles of parenting. The theological roots in Christian parent education are to be seen not only in certain passages, but in the nature and purpose of God as outlined through the whole of the Scriptures (Johnstone 1984: 8). It is from Biblical texts that

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- 130 That which has bearing on parental rights and responsibilities in relation to *inter alia* the education of children in the Republic of South Africa.
- 131 Written laws passed by a legislative body, e.g. an Act of Parliament [Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder 1994: 1521].
- 132 Laws collectively [Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder 1994: 872].
- 133 See John 8:31. *If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.*
- 134 See John 8:51; 14:23. *...assuredly I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.*
- 135 See Acts 6:4. *But we shall give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*
- 136 See Rom 13:1-2,5. *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God...* Also see Titus 3:1; 1Peter 2:13.
- 137 See Acts 5:29. *...we ought to obey God rather than men.*

Christians formulate their concept and interpretation of *inter alia* social roles such as parenthood and of parental rights and responsibilities.

The duties of Christian parents can be summarised as follows. Parents are to:

- love their children<sup>138</sup>
- be tolerant and patient with them<sup>139</sup>
- feel and show compassion for their children<sup>140</sup>
- provide for them<sup>141</sup>
- instruct them in God's word<sup>142</sup>
- correct them<sup>143</sup> — intervention; the Greek word *noutheteo* is translated as "admonition" meaning to let someone understand something — both "correct" and "admonish" imply leading to an improvement of the person to whom the action is directed
- have authority over them<sup>144</sup>
- train them for God and bring them into a saving relationship with Christ<sup>145</sup>
- command them to obey God<sup>146</sup>
- not provoke them<sup>147</sup>.

138 See Titus 2:4. *That they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,*

139 See Prov 15:1. *A soft answer turneth away wrath...* Also see Gal 5:22-23.

140 See Is 49:15. *Can a woman forget her nursing child and not have compassion on the son of her womb?* Also see Ps 103:13 and 1Thes 2:7.

141 See 2Cor 12:14. *...for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.* Also see Job 42:15; 1Tim 5:8.

142 See Deut 4:9; 6:7 & 11:19. *... and teach them to your children and your grandchildren; ... You shall teach them diligently to your children, ... You shall teach them to your children.* Also see Is 38:19. *...the father shall make known Your truth to the children.*

143 See Prov 13:24. *He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.* Also see Prov 19:18; 23:13; 29:17; Heb 12:7.

144 See 1Tim 3:4. *One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence.* Also see 1Tim 3:12.

145 See Eph 6:4 *... but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.* Also see Mat 19:13-14.

146 See Deut 32:46. *...you shall command your children to be careful to observe all the words of this law;* Chron 28:9. *... know the God of your father, and serve him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind.*

147 See Col 3:21. *Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.* Also see Eph 6:4.

When parents are wicked, they set a bad example for their children and instruct their children in evil<sup>148</sup> and the negligence of parents is sorely punished<sup>149</sup>, but welcoming a child is like welcoming Jesus<sup>150</sup>.

The Bible is also very clear on the duties of children which are closely linked to the duties of parents. These duties involve the following. To:

- obey, fear and remember God<sup>151</sup>
- honour parents<sup>152</sup>
- attend to parental instruction<sup>153</sup>
- submit to discipline<sup>154</sup>, and
- respect the aged<sup>155</sup>.

The underlying law or universal principle which is at the heart of all relationships was provided by Jesus Christ Himself. It is the law of reciprocity provided in Mat 7:12<sup>156</sup> which states:

*Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets ...*

and it is thus conceivable that when the Bible focuses on the relationship between parents and children, it lays emphasis on the duties of parents and of children rather than on their individual rights.

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- 148 See 1Pet 1:18. ... *from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers.* See also Ezek. 20:18; Amos 2:4; Jer 9:14.
- 149 See 1Sam 3:13. *For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them..*
- 150 See Luke 9:46-48. *Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me ...*
- 151 See Deut 30:20; Prov 24:21...*My son, fear the Lord ...* Also see Eccl 12:1.
- 152 See Ex 20:12. ...*honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.* Also see Heb 12:9.
- 153 See Deut 4:9; 11:19; Prov 1:8-9. *My son, hear the instruction of your father and do not turn away from the law of your mother.*
- 154 See Prov 29:17. *Correct your son and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.* Also Heb 12:9.
- 155 See Lev 19:32. *You shall rise before the gray headed and honour the presence of an old man, and fear your God; I am the Lord.* Also see 1Peter 5:5.
- 156 Also see Luke 6:31. *And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise;* Mat 22:39; Rom 13:8; Gal 5:14.

Nevertheless, in the secular world provision is also made for instances where the relationship between parents and children needs to be controlled by means other than Biblical tenets. Such provision is made in the statutes of the particular state and for the purposes of this thesis, the Republic of South Africa. In this regard, legislation which has shaped the perception of the relationship between parents and their children will be reviewed with the purpose of establishing the perceived scope of parental rights and responsibilities provided for in common and statute law.

### 2.7.2 A statutory perspective of the basis and scope of parental rights and responsibilities

The parent-child relationship is an intimate one and it can be appreciated that parents would want to be able to raise their offspring autonomously and in privacy. Privacy and autonomy provide the moral space within which concrete personal familial relationships can be formed<sup>157</sup>. One of the basic principles of this kinship relationship is commitment — a condition of mind; an attitude or inner resolution. However, another principle that regulates the relationship between parents and their children, is a legalistic one which defines duties and entitlements and is concerned with overt, clearly definable acts. The language of entitlements or rights — although austere — does appeal to one to sharpen one's understanding of moral boundaries (Schoeman 1980: 6, 8,15) and to critically evaluate whether the nature of relationships between individuals is appropriate or adequate.

One of the main incidents of both common law and statute law regarding the relationship between parent and child, is the parental power afforded to parents — the origin of which stems from the consanguinity relationship between parent(s)<sup>158</sup> and child<sup>159</sup> (Spiro 1971: 21). In the light of the preceding, parents are deemed to have the necessary competency — and consequently the right — to make decisions regarding the person, lifestyle and estate of the child. However, the parent not

157 To give the state authority to regulate family relationships would result in a redirection or socialisation of these relationships.

158 According to the *Children's Act*, parent means the father or mother of a child born of or legitimated by a lawful marriage, or the mother of an illegitimate child, and also includes an adoptive parent [Republic of South Africa 1960]. In terms of the *Child Care Act*, parent is also a guardian and ... any person in whose custody the child is [Republic of South Africa 1983]. On 6 March 1996, Cabinet approved *The Powers of Natural Fathers of Children Born out of Wedlock Bill*, which, if legislated, will recognise the rights of fathers of children born out of wedlock and will allow such fathers who are not legally married to the mothers of their children to approach the court to grant them custody, guardianship and adoption rights, provided these are consistent with the interests of the child (SA Now 1996: 60-61).

159 The *Child Care Act* defines "child" as a person under the age of 18 years [Republic of South Africa 1983].

only has rights, he is also responsible for the physical and spiritual upbringing of the child and for his education (Van der Vyver & Joubert 1991: 592). Thus, by recognising the existence of parental power, the existence of parental rights and responsibilities in view of their children is also acknowledged. This in turn leads to the deduction that children consequently have concomitant duties and rights. Spiro (1971: 75) is of the opinion that these rights and duties of both parents and children are inextricably interwoven and should not be separated.

Nevertheless, the scope of parental power — with its related rights and responsibilities — can only be understood if the nature of parental power is more clearly defined.

#### 2.7.2.1 *The nature of parental power*

Parents acquire the parental power over a legitimate child at the time of its birth<sup>160</sup>. Parental power is sometimes called *guardianship* to emphasise the characteristics of parental power as the sum total of the rights and duties of parents in respect of their minor children (Spiro 1971: 27, 41, 302).

The law of parent and child is subject to two fundamental rules:

- parental power does not allow interference which is not wanted
- the state (Supreme Court) is the upper guardian of all minors<sup>161</sup>.

Should these rules clash as in the case of e.g. divorce proceedings, the court regulates the exercise of parental power by the parents in accordance with the interests of the minor child concerned (Spiro 1971: 239-240; Van der Vyver & Joubert 1991: 620).

Parental power belongs to both parents but the father has a predominant position (Van der Vyver & Joubert 1991: 596). Parents may come to certain arrangements between themselves in respect of certain issues related to the exercising of their parental powers. For example, parents who adhere to different faiths must come to an understanding<sup>162</sup> in respect of the religious education of the

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160 Also see footnote 158 in this regard.

161 *Parens patriae*.

162 *Apportionment* of parental power (Spiro 1971: 35).

child especially in instances where the child is not yet in a position to decide for itself. In general, the father has the overriding rights where parents cannot agree, but the arrangement will only be recognised if it is in the interests of the child. This principle also applies in divorce proceedings (Spiro 1971: 34-35; 123).

Parental power cannot be waived or abandoned<sup>163</sup>. Should a parent by his conduct abandon a child, he is subject to legal consequences<sup>164</sup> and intervention by the authorities (in particular the children's court) is justified. Likewise, a parent may only delegate his parental power in favour of another person in cases of adoption, *legitmatio per subsequens matrimonium*<sup>165</sup> and *emancipation*<sup>166</sup>. The court may in certain circumstances transfer parental power, but it is then not the parent who transfers the parental power but the state (Spiro 1971: 33-34).

Because of the increasing complexity of modern society<sup>167</sup> parents are not usually in a position to attend to all the various incidents of parental power in person and they are thus entitled or duty bound to avail themselves of the assistance of other persons. This could, for example, entail sending their children to school and entrusting teachers with the education of their children. In this regard they need to follow their good conscience and custom with due regard for the interests of their children. The delegated person acting *in loco parentis* is only delegated as much parental power as may be necessary to answer the purposes for which he is employed (Spiro 1971: 36).

Parental power thus refers to rights and correlative responsibilities and *vice versa*. It needs to be recognised that parental power has its origin in the primordial nature of the bond between parents

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163 Parental power may, however, not apply or fall away in certain instances. The natural father of an illegitimate child does not possess parental power [however, see footnote 158], parental power can be taken away by a court order or it may come to end *inter alia* when the child reaches the age of majority, or when emancipation is awarded [see footnote 159 & 166], is adopted or gets married. Parental power is also lost when the parents die or with the death of the child [Spiro 1971: 21, 227].

164 See *Child Care Act* [Republic of South Africa 1983: §50.1(b)].

165 Illegitimate children whose parents marry after their birth become legitimated as the result of the subsequent marriage of their parents [Spiro 1971: 16].

166 Minor children who, with the knowledge of their parents, live apart from them and openly exercise some trade or calling and earn money which they keep for themselves and spend without parental control, are emancipated. An emancipated minor is not in the same position as a minor who has attained majority, e.g. the emancipated child still requires the consent of parents to marriage [Spiro 1971: 230-231].

167 See 1.1

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and their children<sup>168</sup> and cannot be waived; only in certain instances can aspects of parental power be delegated for specific purposes. Not only is parental power provided for in common law, legislation has also played a part in clarifying the basis and scope of parental rights and responsibilities.

#### ***2.7.2.2 The basis of parental rights and responsibilities from a statutory perspective***

The natural rights of parents in respect of their minor children are those rights which would prevail if no custody order existed. The "legal rights" of parents means the same as what is understood by "natural rights". It is used in a wider sense as being synonymous with "legal guardianship", i.e. parental power, or in a more narrow sense as relating to those incidents of custody which are not merely of a physical nature (Spiro 1971: 77-78). The various incidents of parental power (rights and duties) regarding a minor child can be grouped as follows:

- those which pertain to the physical rearing of the child, and
- those which relate to the education of the child (Spiro 1971: 81-82)

while the responsibility of parents to maintain their children arises from:

- the authority of the natural blood relationship
- a sense of duty
- a sense of affection
- natural necessity (Spiro 1971: 361).

With the basis for parental rights and responsibilities outlined, attention can next be paid to the scope of parental rights and responsibilities.

### 2.7.2.3 *The scope of parental rights and responsibilities from a statutory perspective*

From a review of current and draft legislation<sup>158</sup> affecting parental rights and responsibilities, it can be concluded that not only are the *individual rights* of parents acknowledged, but also their *collective rights*. For the sake of clarity, a discussion of these two "categories" of rights will be dealt with separately.

□ It would seem that the *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS* of parents extend to:

- custody<sup>159</sup>
- choice of religion
- punishment (the reasonable correction<sup>160</sup> of the child to facilitate the rearing and education of the child), and
- the earnings of the child

while the duties arising from the above relate to:

- maintenance (to feed, clothe and shelter<sup>161</sup>)
- protection (to ensure that the child does not suffer harm and attend to the child when it has fallen ill;<sup>162</sup> and especially in the case of the very young child, protect him in terms of his life, health, intellectual, spiritual and moral development); and
- education (instruction in a particular language, religion and culture<sup>163</sup>, arts and trades according to each person's condition to make the child a useful member of

158 *Children's Act* [Republic of South Africa: 1960]; *the Child Care Act* [Republic of South Africa 1983]; *Draft White Paper on Education and Training: Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa* [Government Gazette 1994]; *Draft White Paper II: the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools* [Government Gazette 1996a]; *the South African Schools Bill* [Government Gazette 1996b]; *Proposed Alterations to the Rights, Powers and Functions of Public School Governing Bodies* [Government Gazette 1996c] and the *South African Schools Act* [Republic of South Africa 1996b].

159 It has been held that custody entitles control over the person and the education of the child. Custody can be divided into personal custody, physical custody and legal custody but is viewed to be less than parental power [Spiro 1971: 80-81]. Custody and parental power are not necessarily synonymous. *Custody* denotes the control of a minor which in terms of the order is awarded to one or to the other of the parents or to a third person. The term *access* relates to an incident of the parental power of which the non-custodian parent is not deprived [Spiro 1971: 81].

160 Without transgressing the limits of their rights and duties. Should parents exceed their rights, they may be guilty of committing a criminal offence at common law or under statute law and could be held civilly liable [Spiro 1971: 83].

161 See *Child Care Act* [Republic of South Africa 1983: §50.2].

162 See *Child Care Act* [Republic of South Africa 1983: §50.2].

163 See *Draft White paper on Education and Training : Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa* [Government Gazette 1994: §4.3].

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society, both bodily and mentally) (Spiro 1971: 76, 82; Van der Vyver & Joubert 1991: 610; Government Gazette 1994: §4.3)

In terms of common law principles the right and the responsibility to educate the child is one of the most important competencies a parent has<sup>164</sup>. Van der Vyver & Joubert (1991: 609) see education as encompassing various domains. The child requires education in terms of physical, mental, spiritual, moral and cultural aspects with the purpose of preparing him for his role as an adult in society and it is the duty of parents to ensure that the child is indeed educated<sup>165</sup>. The duty to educate presupposes that the parent has at least the following competencies:

■ The competency to *EDUCATE*:

The parent should oversee the child's education in the following realms:

- ***Physical development and care.*** Hygienic conditions and healthy surroundings should be provided to enable the child to develop hygienic habits and acquire habits of personal cleanliness. The child should also be encouraged to participate in sport.
- ***Character building.*** The child must learn to be honest, truthful, obedient, diligent, patient and respectful towards others. Negative and anti-social behaviour should be eliminated.
- ***Intellectual development.*** The child must be sent to school to acquire the necessary training for a trade or profession to enable him to fulfil a meaningful role in society.
- ***Social interaction.*** Parents have the responsibility to determine with whom the child should or should not have social contact.
- ***Religious education.*** The child must be brought up in a particular religion.
- ***Cultural development.*** The child must be brought up in a particular language and associated culture (Spiro 1971: 82-83; Van der Vyver & Joubert 1991: 609; Van Schalkwyk & Oosthuizen 1994: 145).

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164 See Draft White Paper on Education and Training: Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa [Government Gazette 1994: §4.3].

165 See Draft White Paper on Education and Training : Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa [Government Gazette 1994 §13.32] and South African Schools Act [Republic of South Africa 1996b: §3.1].

■ **The competency to *DECIDE*:**

The parents' responsibility with regard to the above is related to their competency to arrange the child's education according to the various aspects mentioned. The parents should be in a position to decide which school the child should attend, what type of training he should receive and the way in which he should be brought up to ensure that the child receives a balanced education in terms of the aforementioned aspects. To assist him in deciding these issues, the parent has the right to gather information regarding the child's school records, performance, behaviour, the contents of and method used in the child's education. The parent also has the individual right to be heard and to state his case, to make suggestions and to give advice in respect of his child's education to the latter's benefit (Van Schalkwyk & Oosthuizen 1994: 144).

Parents decide which Church the child should attend, what type of religious instruction he should receive and what philosophy of life should be followed. In addition, parents choose which activities the child is allowed to participate in and what places he may frequent. These decisions are to be made with the best interests of the child in mind (Van der Vyver & Joubert 1991: 610).

■ **The competency to *DISCIPLINE*:**

As the parents are the custodians of the child, they are legally charged with the care, education and development of the child. To enable them to carry out their duties, parents (or guardians or any other person who has legal custody of the child) need to be able to insist on the child's compliance with and obedience to their decisions and consequently the law recognises the parental right to discipline. Since the time of Roman law, the legal requirement for discipline was that it should be commensurate with the offence and that it should serve to educate the child (Bosman-Swanepoel & Wessels 1994: 133; Henning 1978: 162). In deciding suitable punishment, the following should be considered:

- the nature and gravity of the transgression
- the physical and emotional condition of the child to be punished
- the nature and method of discipline to be administered
- the extent of the punishment to be administered

- the purpose and motive of the person administering the punishment (Van der Vyver & Joubert 1991: 610; Van Schalkwyk & Oosthuizen 1994: 145).

Parenting, although basically an autonomous and individual matter, is also an act which is carried out in a group — typically where the education of children is concerned — and, because parents are not in the position to waive or abandon their responsibilities and have to fulfil their individual duties while acting in conjunction with other parents, one can thus also speak of the collective rights of parents.

- The *COLLECTIVE RIGHTS* of parents stem from parent participation in education which is statutorily founded<sup>166</sup> and is presently in the process of refinement. According to the *South African Schools Act* (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §16.1) the governance of a public school shall be vested in its governing body – the structures through which parents can collectively voice their opinions and participate in the governance of their children's schools<sup>167</sup>. The Member of the Executive Council<sup>168</sup> (MEC) has the power to determine which powers and functions may be exercised or performed by the governing bodies of schools and for which additional powers and functions a governing body may apply (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §20.1(m)). The Head of Department<sup>169</sup> may withdraw a power or function of a governing body in instances where it is believed the governing body concerned either does not have the capacity, has failed, or is unable to exercise the allocated powers and functions effectively (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §22.1).

Collective rights entitle parents to be collectively involved as members of the parent community in decision making concerning the learner body. Through the school governing

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166 See *Draft White paper on Education and Training in: Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa* [Government Gazette 1994: §5.92; §7.29 & §7.44; §12.29(2)(c),(d) & (e)]; *Proposed Alterations to the Rights, Powers and Functions of Public School Governing Bodies* [Government Gazette 1996c: §31]; *South African Schools Act* [Republic of South Africa 1996b: §23.2].

167 See 1.2

168 The Member of the Executive Council of a *province* who is responsible for education in that *province* [Republic of South Africa 1996b].

169 Head of Department means the head of an *education department* [Republic of South Africa 1996b].

body, parents are given an opportunity to have a say in matters that affect the nature of their children's schooling.

These issues include a number of aspects such as the following.

- Policy development regarding the:
  - mission, goals and objectives of the school as outlined in the school's constitution (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §20.1)
  - admission of learners to the school (in concurrence of the MEC) (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §5.5)
  - language policy (subject to national and provincial policy) (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §6.2)
  - religious observance at the school (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §7)
  - code of conduct (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §20.1(d)).
- Miscellaneous aspects which include a school governing body's authority to:
  - determine school times (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §20.1(f))
  - determine the extra-mural curriculum (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §21.1(b))
  - recommend the appointment of educators and non-educator staff to the Head of Department (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §20.1(i) & (j))
  - determine and oversee the budget of the school annually (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §38.1)
  - determine, charge and oversee the collection of any school fees payable by parents of learners at the school (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §38.1 & §39)
  - raise other revenues (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §36)
  - establish and administer a school fund (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §37.1)
  - purchase textbooks, educational materials and equipment for the school (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §21.1(c))
  - administer, control and maintain the grounds and buildings of the schools and pay the accounts for services to the school (Republic of South Africa

**1996b: §21.1(a), (d) & (g))**

- join voluntary associations (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §21.3)
- allow the reasonable use of the facilities of the school for community purposes (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §21.2)
- promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §20.1(a))
- support the principal, educators and other staff in the performing of their professional duties (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §20.1(e))
- encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff to render voluntary service (Republic of South Africa 1996b: §20.1(g)).

When the individual and collective rights and concomitant duties of parents are compared, one finds that there are certain aspects which overlap, such as the parental right and duty to educate children in a particular language, culture and religion and the right to determine a reasonable behavioural code.

It was pointed out at the outset of the chapter that when the rights and responsibilities of parents are acknowledged, by implication, the concomitant rights and duties of children are also recognised. An international document which addresses the rights of children and thus also the duties of parents is the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1991). This document will now be reviewed as an internationally accepted contract to ensure that children are treated humanely and with dignity for their personhood.

### **2.7.3 The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and its implications for the scope of parental responsibilities**

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is an internationally ratified document that strives to safeguard the person status of children to ensure that all children are treated with respect, given the opportunity to develop their capacities to the fullest and to become active participants in society.

Through the convention adult society is made aware of its responsibility to safeguard children's survival, development, protection and participation and in this way the convention aims to change the way adults view and treat children (Le Roux 1995: 38-39; 105). A brief review of the events which have led to the drafting and international recognition of this document is provided.

### **2.7.3.1 A concise review of the origin and current status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Historically, rights in society had been ascribed to adults only (Worsfold 1974: 142) but in 1978, in commemoration of the millions of children Poland had seen die and orphaned during the war, Poland's government submitted a proposal to the *United Nations Commission on Human Rights* to constitute a convention on children's rights to coincide with the *International Year of the Child* celebrated in 1979 (Suchodolski 1979: 45). A number of precursors are acknowledged in the convention: the *Charter of the Rights of the Child* [1919]; the *Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child* [1924]; the seven principles included in the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* [1948]; and the United Nations General Assembly's ten point *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* [1959]. The draft of the proposed convention was based on the principles of the latter, yet it was only in 1989 that the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 44/25 — the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Le Roux 1995: 97).

On 26 January 1990, the first day that the convention was opened for signature, 61 countries became signatories of the convention (Leach 1994: 207). By March 1995, a total of 170 countries had become signatories to the convention while South Africa ratified the convention on 13 June 1995 (Lombaard 1996: 30). The convention is seen as a comprehensive expression in international human rights law of that which the world community wants for its children. It spells out the basic human rights to which all children are entitled. These include the right to survival; development of physical and mental potential; protection from influences that are harmful to development and to participation in family, cultural and social life (Lombaard 1996: 30). Yet, for these rights to be realised, the state, community and parents are obligated to fulfil certain duties.

### **2.7.3.2 *The scope of parental responsibilities and rights in terms of the Convention on the Rights of the Child***

The preamble of the convention establishes the general mood of this document: the child is recognised as being entitled to special care and assistance while the family is recognised as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children. The paramountcy of the state as overseer of the well-being of the child is established in *Article 3(2)* and *Article 20(1)* in which it is stated that it is the state's duty to ensure — through appropriate legislative and administrative measures — that the child receives protection, care and assistance when deprived of such care by his family or family environment (United Nations 1991).

The scope of parental rights and responsibilities as described by individual articles of the convention can be summarised as follows:

- to acknowledge that the upbringing and care of the child is their primary responsibility (§7& §18)
- to provide a unified, nurturing family environment (§22.2)
- to provide the child with adequate nutrition, clothing and housing (§24.2(e) & §27.3)
- to protect the child from harm and accidents (§24.22(e))
- to provide the child with health care services (§24.1)
- to provide a standard of living adequate for the child's physical (including recreational activities), mental, spiritual, moral and social development (§17.1; §27.1-2; §31.1)
- to provide an upbringing in keeping with the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background (§20.3 & §31.1)
- to protect the child from any form of exploitation (§32.1; §33; §34; §38)
- separation from the child is only justified when it occurs in accordance with applicable law and procedures and then such separation must be for the best interests of the child e.g. in cases of parental neglect, abuse or where parents are living separately (§9.1)
- to maintain contact with the child after separation should this be in the child's best interests (§9.3)
- to ensure that the child receives primary education (§28.1(a)), and
- to provide appropriate direction and guidance to the child to exercise his rights as recognised in the convention (§5 & §4.2).

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The theory of the inherent relational nature of rights<sup>170</sup>, is supported by the preceding discussion where a clear relationship between the rights of children and the concomitant responsibilities of their parents are outlined. It is of interest to note the similarity between the responsibilities of parents in terms of the *Convention* and the responsibilities as enshrined in statute law<sup>171</sup>.

## 2.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter an attempt was made to determine the essence of a philosophy of life and to indicate the influence that a philosophy of life has on the perception of the child, his education and related issues. A review of a Christian and a humanist philosophy of life was undertaken and concisely contrasted to highlight points of dissimilarity. This was done to illustrate the fact that a Christian and a humanist educator will in essence have differing views regarding *inter alia* the child, his calling in life and the way in which he should be educated.

Because of their dependence on adults for their basic survival — especially in the early years — children are in need of adult accompaniment, nurture and guidance. The scope of parental responsibilities and rights in this regard is outlined in various sources. For the purpose of this thesis, three of these sources were examined. Pertinent passages in the Bible, humanist manifesto's and both national and international statutes and legislation were reviewed. In essence it can be concluded that:

- A Biblical perspective of the responsibilities of parents and children hinges on the principle of love — education should lead to love and respect for each other<sup>172</sup> but most of all, love for and obedience to God. It is the latter aspect which constitutes the principal difference between the Christian and secular perspective of the responsibilities of parents.
- A secular or humanist perspective (as provided for in humanist manifesto's and in statutes and legislation) of the responsibilities of parents revolves around the issues of balancing of

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170 See Machan in 1.8.1.3

171 See 2.7.2 & 2.7.2.3

172 The command to provide for, nurture, instruct and discipline the child all stem from the principle of love.

rights. The main objective of human existence is believed to be the optimisation of inherent potential and the attainment of self-actualisation in the here and now.

## 2.9 CLOSING COMMENTS

In closing, the following needs to be stated. The Christian faith bears the handicap of being identified — throughout the African continent — with western imperialism and the resented, discarded colonial system. Some peoples in the underdeveloped countries may think of Christianity as the religion of the white man who has for centuries been their greatest oppressor. Humanism does not suffer from this handicap. This could be why Sir Julian Huxley, once head of UNESCO, suggested that the general philosophy of the United Nations agency should be a scientific world humanism, global in extent and evolutionary in background (Lamont 1982: 59-60).

In keeping with the thinking relating to globalisation as referred to by Huxley, Naudé (1995a) is of the opinion that in a society of which the aim is a united brotherhood of man — a world humanism — traditional loyalties, ties and associations will of necessity become lax. Definite convictions and opinions gradually fall apart and the human being becomes basically a consumer and culturally mass produced. In a mass society passivity will become a wide-spread social attitude resulting in the feeling that life is adrift and that one has little control over it. Even when one holds autonomous opinions, they cannot be acted out.

In a more confined sense, a concern raised by Adams (1993: 4-6) in relation to state intervention in education is the following. All schools exist in a social context. The head and staff do not control it alone and they inevitably work within the regulations imposed by the state. Should legislation require that government and education authorities not aid, foster or promote one religion or religious theory against another and in effect advocate no religion for fear of being accused of discriminatory behaviour, this in effect would amount to the establishment of the religion of secularism. The state, in an attempt to exclude the inculcation of values and morals stemming from any one religion instead of protecting diverse world views, may be inculcating a single world view — a secular world view.

It is hoped that these issues will become clearer as the research progresses. Nevertheless, it could be argued that those who determine what young people are taught and what they experience will set the course for the future of a nation (Koehl 1993: 34).

In the following three chapters — keeping the essence of the findings and pronouncements of this chapter in mind — the development of the perception and scope of parental rights and responsibilities from the period of the first Dutch settlers [1652] until the unification of South Africa [1910] will be traced.

## CHAPTER 3

# THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CAPE COLONY (1652-1806)

*Educational systems express the innermost beliefs, ideals and aspirations of a  
people.*

*Malherbe*

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## CHAPTER 3

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# THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CAPE COLONY [1652-1806]

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

**T**he motivation for and circumstances surrounding settlement and ultimate colonisation of South Africa were unique and this fact had a profound influence on the character of the education system which was to develop on the sub-continent. Colonisation of the Cape was not an issue at the core of the Dutch East India Company's decision to settle Europeans on the tip of the African continent. The Company merely wished to establish a refreshment station for use by its fleets plying the ocean route between Holland and the East (McKerron 1934: 14). This fact significantly influenced the composition of the group of individuals sent to the Cape as temporary settlers. The team consisted predominantly of men who would be responsible for erecting a fort for the protection of the settlement and its inhabitants, soldiers who would garrison the fort and agriculturalists who could plant and maintain crops for the benefit of ships *en route* to and from Holland (Theal 1882: 24). There was clearly little need of women and least of all children as an integral part of the community of settlers<sup>1</sup>.

Although the controlling powers were not in favour of colonisation, as time passed, the Cape became a permanent home to a number of Company officials who wished to take up residence in the Cape rather than return to the mother country. Those who had wives and families in the

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<sup>1</sup> Although there were instances where wives and children accompanied the men, this was generally limited to the higher ranking officials. The Commander, Jan van Riebeeck, the chief gardener, Hendrick Boom, and the sick comforter, Willem Wijlandt, were accompanied by their families. The total number of women and children arriving at the Cape in 1652, was 20 [Leibbrandt 1900a: 18; Theal 1895: 8-9].

Netherlands, had requested that they be allowed to join them at the Cape<sup>2</sup> and several were given free passage to enable them to re-unite with their menfolk (Leibbrandt 1900c: 95; Theal 1895:23). In addition, a number of emigrants from Europe, refugees from France, slaves from Africa, the East and other parts of the world as well as a number of convicts — mainly from Batavia — made the Cape their home (Freund 1972: 28-29). As the Colony expanded it became necessary to provide those facilities commonly found in civilised society — among these were Churches and schools.

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to trace the development of a system of education for South Africans and the role that parents played in relation to their children's education from the time of Dutch appropriation of the southernmost tip of the African continent until the end of the Batavian Republic rule. The period [1652-1806] to be dealt with in this chapter will be subdivided according to the following historical periods based on who was governing the Cape at the time:

- 1652 - 1795 (Dutch occupation under the rule of the Dutch East India Company)
- 1795 - 1803 (British occupation)
- 1803 - 1806 (Dutch occupation under the rule of the Batavian Republic).

Educational systems express the innermost ideals and beliefs of a people. Education — and thus also an education system — cannot be decontextualised and consequently, to comprehend the intricacies of its development, it is necessary to provide an outline of the cultural-historical circumstances — social, cultural, religious and political factors — and their influence on the establishment of the system from the time of its inception.

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2 During his inspection of the Cape between March and June 1657, Commissioner Rijkloff van Goens deemed it desirable that the wives and children of the men should be with them. In a letter dated 17 May 1657, Van Riebeeck brought this to the attention of the Amsterdam Chamber [Leibbrandt 1900b: 304,324,320]. Also see 3.2.1

## 3.2 THE DUTCH SETTLEMENT OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

[1652-1795]

History teaches that social expansion is generally driven by one or a combination of the following three considerations: overpopulation, missionary zeal or mercenary fervour (Eybers 1918: 10). What then prompted the Dutch to establish a settlement at Table Bay?

The Hollanders had little desire to leave their homeland in search of a better future in a foreign country with unknown prospects since Holland was at the time experiencing both social stability and prosperity (Dominicus 1919: 3). In relation to a religious crusade, although profoundly Protestant in outlook<sup>3</sup>, missionary zest was only of secondary importance<sup>4</sup> (Theal 1882: 25). In the case of the Dutch, the motivation was indirectly based on the latter of the three incentives. Trade with the East was lucrative but there was a serious drawback to eastward commerce — especially to a country with a small population — the abnormally high mortality among ships' crews. The establishment of a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope that could supply passing ships with fresh provisions was hence a matter of paramount importance (Theal 1882: 22-24). The primary objective to secure a foothold on the African continent was based on mercenary considerations — a factor which in itself would influence the character of the Cape settlement.

### 3.2.1 The Dutch East India Company assignment

The Netherlands was gaining recognition as an European commercial centre by the start of the 17th century. Expansion of geographical frontiers, greatly attributed to advances in maritime enterprise, had opened up a lucrative trade with the countries of the East. In 1602, a number of Dutch rival merchant companies amalgamated to form a chartered company, the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) — Dutch East India Company (DEIC) — to which the States-General granted a twenty year monopoly of trade with all countries lying between the Cape of Good Hope and the

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3 The devotion to the principles of the reformed religion was the outcome of the struggle for religious liberty against the Spanish oppression. This served to unite the Netherlands into a single commonwealth [Malherbe 1925: 21].

4 It was not proposed to Christianise the natives of the sub-continent, but merely to live on good terms with them [Eybers 1918: 11].

Straits of Magellan. The company consisted of six loosely associated chambers with the supreme direction being vested in a body known as the *Heeren Sewentien* — the Lords Seventeen (Lords XVII) also known as the Chamber of Seventeen (Chamber XVII). From the start, the Company concentrated its activities on the Far East and within a short time the Company had appointed representatives to take charge of company interests in India, Ceylon, Cambodia and Japan. It dominated the trade of the entire Indian Ocean spreading its tentacles from the Archipelago to the China Seas even visiting Tasmania and New Zealand. Although heavy capital outlay was required initially, great dividends were forthcoming (Cameron [ed.] 1991: 59; Hattersley 1973: 5).

The decision to establish a fortified refreshment station at Table Bay originated in July 1649 when Leendert Jansz and Nicholas Proot presented a document setting forth the advantages to be derived from the occupation of Table Bay to the Directors of the Amsterdam Chamber of the DEIC. Jansz and Proot had lived at the Cape for more than five months after their ship, the *Haarlem*, had been stricken by a gale and was driven on the Blueberg beach. The survivors had settled in Table Valley where they had successfully cultivated all manner of vegetables and had been amply supplied with cattle and sheep by the locals. The memorial was referred by the Chamber of Amsterdam to the Lords XVII who resolved on 30 August 1650 to establish a victualling station as had been proposed (Theal 1882: 21-23). On 24 December 1651, the three ships, the *Dromedaris*, *Reiger* and *Goede Hoop* in company of a fleet of merchant ships<sup>5</sup> set to sea from the port of Texel. Jan van Riebeeck was named Commander<sup>6</sup> [1652-1662] and was issued with various instructions concerning the expedition and settlement. After a passage of one hundred and four days, they reached their destination on 5 April 1652. The following day, a sloop was sent ashore to explore the territory and on 10 April the men commenced work on the construction of the fort (Theal 1882: 28-29).

Van Riebeeck's journal entry speaks volumes when he remarks that the men were very badly acquainted with their duties (Leibbrandt 1897a: 18). This was not the only hardship which Van Riebeeck was to encounter. Many of the men were in ill health following their sea voyage, and the

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5 These included the *Walvis* and the *Olifant* [Boucher 1991: 61]

6 The position of Commander of the station was first offered to Proot but he declined. Jan van Riebeeck, to whom the position was then offered, had been in Table Bay with the fleet that took the *Haarlem's* crew home [Theal 1894: 22].

summer — which had been extremely long and dry with scorching southeasterly winds — had brought with it a severe drought. As a result of the latter, no sorrel nor wild plants of any kind could be found as treatment for scurvy. To complicate matters further, fresh water was scarce and no livestock could be procured from the locals. By June, the party was reduced to 116<sup>7</sup> of whom only 60 were able to perform any labour (Theal 1882: 34-35; Theal 1894: 26). These were the conditions with which Jan van Riebeeck and the European pioneers were faced.

### 3.2.1.1 *Colonisation*

Jan van Riebeeck firmly believed that the introduction of slaves would lighten the burden of his men and would expedite the development of the settlement to the benefit of the Company. His first request for extra hands was made scarcely a month after their arrival. On 13 May 1652 Van Riebeeck lodged a request for Chinese labourers and Dutch or India freemen as Colonist farmers in a letter to the India Council at Batavia (Leibbrandt 1900a: 24, 26, 28). A similar request was repeated to the Chamber of XVII in April of the following year (Leibbrandt 1900a: 100) and again on 28 April 1655 in a letter directed to the Lords XVII in which he bemoaned the lack of workmen (Leibbrandt 1900b: 70). Despite these repeated requests, Van Riebeeck had to manage as best he could with those men who were allotted to him by the Company.

Ironically, the first slaves to arrive at the Cape, could not have been what Van Riebeeck had had in mind! On 28 March 1658 a shipload of slaves arrived at the Cape aboard the Dutch ship, the *Amersfoort*<sup>8</sup>. Most were in ill-health, but this was not the greatest of the drawbacks. Most of the consignment of slaves were girls and small boys from whom for the following four or five years little work could be had (Leibbrandt 1897b: 113). However, the first step towards the practice of importing slaves had been made. A little more than a year later, the *Hasselt* arrived with 226 slaves aboard<sup>9</sup> (Leibbrandt 1900c: 55) with others to follow. Slaves subsequently became a major source of labour for the Colony.

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7 The party of settlers whose responsibility it was to establish the refreshment station numbered 120 persons. See 3.2.1.2

8 A Portuguese slave ship with her slaves had been taken by the *Amersfoort* [Leibbrandt 1897b: 113] which took on 250 of the 500 slaves, 175 of whom were brought to the Cape [Leibbrandt 1900b: 32].

9 6 May 1659.

It was possibly Van Riebeeck's persistent appeal for freemen<sup>10</sup>, artisans<sup>11</sup> and slaves<sup>12</sup> to assist in cultivating and improving the country, that led to the introduction of the *vrijburger* system. Van Riebeeck had suggested to the Lords XVII that they encourage immigration of European burghers in an attempt to overcome the labour crisis. He believed that this would at the same time lessen the dependence of the settlement on paid employees of the Company consequently cutting the costs of administration. The Lords XVII were not yet prepared to go so far, but did however at a later stage grant the Commander permission to release a handful of his own men from the Company's service. According to this concession, once the five year contract which bound these men to the Company had expired, they could procure their freedom by means of a *vrijbrief* (Dominicus 1919: 13) The first 9 *vrijburgers*<sup>13</sup> were allowed to settle as farmers in two groups along the Liesbeek River in the vicinity of Rondebosch in February 1657 (Dominicus 1919: 9). These farmers remained subject to Company control and were granted no political rights — the term *vrijburger* could thus be described as being rather misleading! They were liable for military service and although they were exempted from land tax for twelve years, they were discouraged from entering into competition with the Company and were required to sell their produce to it at prices determined by the authorities (Boucher 1991: 62). Nevertheless, these men were the first true Colonists.

There were also other sources of population increase. Apart from wives and children arriving to join the menfolk, there were extended families arriving from the Netherlands to join relatives; crew members of foreign ships seeking permanent residence; and in 1688 the Chamber even sent out a small group of orphan girls from Amsterdam and Rotterdam who were carefully protected and provided for until they found suitable husbands in the Colony (Boucher 1991: 65; Theal 1894:

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- 10 Van Riebeeck made a point of requesting Dutch and not Batavian freemen as colonists believing that the latter were so accustomed to luxurious living that they would not adapt to the stringent conditions prevailing at the Cape [Leibbrandt 1900b: 160].
- 11 Letter addressed to the Chamber of XVII dated 14 April 1653 [Leibbrandt 1900a: 100]. Also see letter of 28 April 1658 requesting agriculturists [Leibbrandt 1900b: 94].
- 12 Batavian or Angolan slaves were requested since the Madagascan slaves, although they could possibly be procured more readily, had a bad reputation [Leibbrandt 1900b: 158; 255].
- 13 As soon as a man proved himself able to make a competent living, he could apply to have his wife and children sent out to him from Holland [Theal 1894:33]. These letters were granted and signed by Rijkloff van Goens, Commissioner of Batavia. Jan van Riebeeck and the Council of Policy [see 3.2.3] co-signed these documents [Leibbrandt 1900c: 262].

51).

It was, however, the immigration scheme of 1685 that brought to the settlement the only sizeable and initially cohesive group to swell the numbers of the Colonists. When Louis XIV of France revoked the Edict of Nantes removing the last guarantee of immunity from the persecuted Protestants of France, the DEIC, in an attempt to alleviate the problem of hundreds of French refugees converging on Holland, decided to allow the French Protestant refugees<sup>14</sup> to emigrate to the Cape. Some were attracted by the DEIC's offer of a free passage to the Cape and the chance to begin a new life there. The first Huguenot settlers landed in April 1688. The group consisted of some 180 persons of all ages. The greater number settled at Drakenstein and in the adjoining valley which was named Fransche Hoek (Theal 1895: 23-24). Because the DEIC was afraid that the Colony would be flooded by French refugees, it undertook to increase the number of Dutch emigrants (Theal 1882: 279). This scheme for free passage for intending immigrants was available between 1685 and 1707 (Boucher 1991: 65; Dominicus 1919: 3-4).

When Van Riebeeck left the Cape in 1662, the free burgher population had increased from the original 9 men of 1657 to a total of 130 of whom 37 were women and children. Settlement was confined to Table Valley and the banks of the Liesbeek River. Between March 1677 and the arrival of Simon van der Stel [1679-1699] as Commander in October 1679, rights to farmland or pasture were given to burghers at Hout Bay, Hottentots-Holland, along the Eerste River and east of the Tygerberg (Boucher 1991: 66).

Movement into the interior<sup>15</sup> was closely linked with the change from arable farming to stock farming together with the distaste for town life and the restraints and irritations imposed by the authorities. This movement gained momentum when Governor Willem Adrian van der Stel [1699-1707] began to issue free grazing permits in 1703. The Company was soon to recognise that a movement had started which it was unable to control and new districts such as Swellendam and

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14 They were commonly known as the French Huguenots, a corruption of the word Eed-Genoot, which means Oath Associate, or Covenanter as it was used in Scotland [Theal 1895: 23].

15 A new culture was in the making. These "trekboere" would in the years to come, set the example to the pioneers of a new generation of Colonists who would launch themselves into the unknown interior; an exodus which would become known as the Great Trek.

Graaff-Reinet were formed (Boucher 1991: 66). By 1780, the free population numbered 10 500 (Boucher 1991: 65).

### 3.2.1.2 *The composition of the settler community*

Since the focus of this thesis is on parents and their responsibilities and rights in relation to their children's schooling, it is necessary to gain some kind of perspective on the number of families and children who made the Cape their home at the time the first schools were being established.

When Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape, he was accompanied by his wife, a son of eighteen months and two grown-up nieces (Böeseken, Krüger & Kieser 1952: 23). Both the chief gardener (who had five children<sup>16</sup>) and the sick comforter also brought their families (Theal 1895: 8-9). In total those who remained at the Cape to establish the refreshment station numbered 120 which included 20 women and children. This number also included female slaves who had been brought with (Leibbrandt 1900a: 18). The first white child to be born at the Cape was the son of the sick comforter, Willem Wijlandt, born on 6 June 1652. The second was Van Riebeeck's son, Abraham, born on 18 October 1654 (Böeseken *et al* 1952: 24, 30).

The muster roll of 31 May 1657 mentions 24 women and children (Leibbrandt 1900c: 287-291) and by February 1658 the statistics provided indicate a total of 12 wives and female slaves and 13 children (Leibbrandt 1900c: 291-295). In roughly six years, the number of women and children had only increased by five, of whom at least two were mere infants!

With the implementation of the *vrijburger* system those men who could prove that they were able to generate a living from the land allotted to them, could have their wives and families from Europe join them. By 1672 there were 39 women in total at the Cape and 65 children (Theal 1882: 182). The number of children increased steadily and by 1679 there were 117 white children in the Cape Colony (Böeseken *et al* 1952: 80) and by 1700, 605 children — 310 girls and 295 boys — were resident at the Cape (Dominicus 1919: 7).

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16 This is deduced from the fact that after having completed his five year tenure when he requested his free papers, he had a wife and seven children, two of whom had been born at the Cape [Leibbrandt 1900b: 329].

As the number of settlers and *vrijburgers* increased, more land was required and it became necessary to extend the boundaries of the Colony. Various districts were established and these included Stellenbosch [1679], Drakenstein [1688], Waveren [1700] which later became known as Roodezand<sup>17</sup> [1743], the Zwartland [1745], and Swellendam [1746]. Graaff-Reinet, Uitenhage and others were to follow (Theal 1895: 20, 23, 28, 32-33, 39).

When the Dutch arrived in 1652, the settlers, although predominantly Dutch, included individuals of other nationalities as it was Company policy to employ sailors and soldiers from countries other than the Netherlands. The first mass immigration of persons other than of Dutch extraction were the French Huguenot families who arrived in April 1688. By 1691 two-thirds of the total number of settlers were Dutch, one-sixth French, one-seventh German and the rest were Swedes, Danes and other nationalities (Dominicus 1919: 7) all of whom found themselves under the authority of the Dutch East India Company.

### 3.2.2 The Dutch East India Company as sovereign power

There was little doubt regarding the aims of the DEIC to establish a refreshment station at the Cape. Expansion of the Colony was definitely not one of its aspirations<sup>18</sup>; only the promotion of the profitability of trade between the motherland and the commercial empire of the East Indies. Yet, there was also the possibility of the generation of profit from what the Cape itself could offer. It was the expectation that Company officials were to bear the best interests of the Company in mind at all times. This fact — in the opinion of the Governor — was to be of the utmost personal importance<sup>19</sup> (Leibbrandt 1900a: 66). This point is clearly illustrated by the nature of the wording of instructions to officers during their exploration of the coast in search of trade opportunities<sup>20</sup> that they were

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17 This region became known as Tulbagh in 1804 [Theal 1895: 32].

18 On 20 November 1667, the Lords XVII reprimanded the Commander, Jacob Borghorst [1668-1670], accusing him of encouraging rather than discouraging strangers to the shores. He was told to imitate the example set by the Portuguese in Brazil who discouraged all strangers. This matter was viewed in such a serious light that he was later recalled to the Netherlands because of this lapse of judgement [Böeseken *et al* 1952: 72; Dominicus 1919: 8].

19 Instructions to the commanding officers of the *Goede Hoop* proceeding to Saldanha Bay issued on 27 November 1652 by Van Riebeeck.

20 Instructions to commanding officers on *Goede Hoop* issued on 14 October 1652 by Van Riebeeck.

*...verplicht ... hun best te doen om hare heeren ende meesters voordeel met alle vermogens ende crachten te zoeken sonder aensien van lijff, leven, moeijten, swaren off lichten arbeit alsoo d. E. Comp<sup>e</sup> haer gelt ende cost niet gaerne om leegh gaen geeft (Leibbrandt 1900a: 59).*

This outlook was not confined to the demeanour of Company employees. At the time of the establishment of the first school at the Cape<sup>21</sup> the guiding principle to which learners were to submit was

*... [d]e Heere God en het welvaren van de Hoog Edele Groot Achtbare Heeren Bewinthebberen van de O I Compagnie zij de hoogste wet (Theal 1882: 331).*

The sovereignty of the DEIC could not be disputed and the Colonists, as servants of the Company, were subservient to its dictates. Dominicus (1919:6) contends that the freedom enjoyed by the Dutch in their own country did not transfer to the Colony and the Dutch pioneers found themselves under a most repressive administration. Little doubt could be left in the Colonists' minds that they were, in a manner of speaking, enslaved to the Company authorities.

### 3.2.3 The Dutch East India Company administration

For almost the first 150 years of white settlement at the Cape, the "government" was a commercial company with little sympathy for the aspirations of the Colonists. The head of the settlement was termed the Commander or Governor<sup>22</sup>. The laws that applied were those of Holland and of the Dutch possessions in India. All public matters were regulated by a body termed the Council of Policy<sup>23</sup> which consisted of members who were the highest officers in rank — all of whom were appointed by the directors of the DEIC [Theal 1894: 53; Theal 1895: 27]. The Commander was

21 A school for slave children. The regulation is dated 15 July 1685 [Theal 1882: 332].

22 On 14 December 1690 Simon van der Stel was promoted to the rank of Governor. As from that date, the rank of the officer in charge of the Cape would forthwith be that of Governor [Böseseken *et al* 1938: 116].

23 High Commissioner Van Rhee de who visited the Cape in 1685 enlarged the Council of Policy so that it consisted of 8 persons: the Governor as president, the secunde [second in charge], the fiscal, the treasurer, the garrison bookkeeper, the chief salesman, and the two military officers highest in rank. The composition of the Council of Policy was never again enlarged during the entire government of the DEIC. The fiscal's task was to fight corruption at all levels, with particular regard to shipping. After 1690 he was directly responsible to the Lords XVII and not subject to local control. Only in 1793 did the fiscal's independence end [Boucher 1991: 64]. If necessary, the fiscal acted as prosecutor on behalf of the Company [Theal 1882: 230].

a Company employee as were the members of the Council of Policy who assisted him. His chief duty was to carry out Company instructions at minimum cost to his employers. The Cape administration had only limited freedom of action as it was from the first subject to the authority of the Lords XVII in the Netherlands and until 1732, to that of the Governor-General and his council in Batavia as well. Only the slow communications of the age allowed for a certain degree of autonomy, but this was further circumscribed by the periodic arrival of senior Company officials, either as designated visiting Commissioners or as admirals of the fleet who took precedence over the Cape's chief executive during their stay (Boucher 1991: 64).

The jurisdiction of the DEIC also extended to religious matters. The Dutch Reformed Church was the only authorised Church until 1780 when Lutherans were given freedom of worship (Boucher 1991: 64). It was further not the prerogative of the Colonists to call a minister to their Church. The clergy were appointed by the Company without consultation with the congregation (Spoelstra 1906: 455-456).

Throughout the period of Company rule, the burghers had no voice in government decision-making at the highest level and possessed only limited powers in other spheres. Officials held the reins in all subsidiary councils<sup>24</sup> with burgher representation. The final selection of burgher members — even of Church Councils — lay with the Governor and the Council of Policy. Election to one of these councils was effected by submitting a double list of names to the Council of Policy who made a selection of representatives from this list. Popular election to any office was unknown (Theal 1894: 54).

Simon van der Stel made a promising start with local government when, in 1682, he appointed four burghers as *heemraden* at Stellenbosch<sup>25</sup>. These representatives were confirmed in office by the Council of Policy. Three years later they were placed under the supervision of a government official — the landdrost — at the instruction of High Commissioner Van Rheeде<sup>26</sup> who called at the

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24 These included the *heemraden*, orphan chamber, matrimonial court, Church Councils, petty court of justice [Theal 1894: 54].

25 Van der Stel was responsible for founding this country town [Theal 1895: 20].

26 Hendrik Adriaan van Rheeде tot Drakenstein, Lord of Mydrecht [Theal 1882: 425].

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Cape between April and July 1685 (Theal 1882: 230). This policy was later to apply in all the rural districts (Boucher 1991: 68).

As time passed, the townspeople became concerned about their ignorance regarding administrative and governance issues. They were not familiar with the statutes of the Colony and were afraid that their ignorance of such issues was being exploited. In 1779 the burghers petitioned that they be informed of the existing laws and statutes governing the DEIC and of the general laws of their mother country, Holland. The burghers also requested representatives in the legislature. They further requested that authentic copies of ordinances and notices relating to the Cape be provided<sup>27</sup>. These measures were required, it was stated, to protect them from the arbitrary will of the fiscal and the landdrost (Dominicus 1919: 30). On 16 October 1779, four delegates from the Colony appeared before the Lords XVII and made a verbal statement of the wretched conditions and the unjust acts of the officials and delivered the memorial with a large number of documents supporting their report. The delegates received a sympathetic ear, but Governor Joachim van Plettenberg [1774-1785] in his reply of 21 March 1781 to the Chamber of XVII, contested that the views were not representative of the Colonists in general. He further objected to admitting burgher members to the Council of Policy saying the interests of the Colony would be lost sight of. In his view the interests of the Company were paramount (Theal 1964b: 176-183).

Burgher insurrection arising from unaddressed grievances, dissatisfaction, and general disillusionment were later characteristic of conditions at the Cape. This was especially so in the outlying districts. It was under these conditions that the British were to make their entry to the Cape Colony in 1795 (Theal 1964b: 310-311).

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27 The Cape did not have a newspaper or a postal service through which the public could be informed of laws and ordinances [Dominicus 1919: 40].

### 3.3 EDUCATION UNDER THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY [1652-1795]

The aim of the preceding was to provide an outline of the circumstances that characterised society of the early Cape Colony and to sketch a basic profile of the settlers themselves. Because a great deal has been written about the history of education in South Africa where the focus has been on *inter alia* the establishment of the schools, the personalities who acted as teachers and the scope of the curriculum, it is not the intention of this thesis to duplicate the comprehensive work that has been done by others (*inter alia* Du Toit 1937; Eybers 1918; Malherbe 1925; McKerron 1934; Pells [S.a.]) but to focus on the role of parents in relation to their children's education.

Initial examination of the available literature on the period under discussion [1652-1806] indicated that very little reference has been made to the role of parents in relation to the education of their children or to their responsibilities or rights in this regard. It is hence the intention to review the establishment of a school system in South Africa from the perspective of the administration and control of these schools in an attempt to determine upon whose initiative the schools were founded, for what purpose, what the credentials of the teachers were and upon whose recommendation they were appointed, and what measure of community involvement there was in relation to the schooling provided and related issues. It is presumed that it would be these issues that would interest parents were they to involve themselves in their children's education. In short, the investigation will aim to determine whether parents had the schooling of their children at heart, what significance they attached to the schooling provided and whether there were avenues for recourse should they have desired to intervene in their children's schooling. It is inevitable that there will be an overlap of interests and terrains, but it will be the author's endeavour to focus on the issues outlined.

#### 3.3.1 Foundations of the provision of education in the Cape Colony

To understand activities relating to education at the Cape during the reign of the DEIC they must be seen against the background of educational policy and activity in Europe, which, at the time, consisted of learning to read, write and to calculate. The content of education was derived from the Bible and the Christian religion. The primary aim of learning to read was to be able to read the Bible (Education Bureau 1981: 1).

Article 21 of the Synod of Dordrecht [1618-1619] ruled that

*... [d]e Kercken-Raden sullen allomme toesien datter goede Schoolmeesters zijn, die niet alleen de Kinderen leeren, lesen, schrijven, spraken, ende vrije Consten, maer oock deselve inder Godsaligheyt ende inden Catechismus onderwysen* (in Vorster 1981: 105)

and accordingly, at schools which were to be instituted in country places, towns and cities, religious instruction was to be given. The Church Magistracy was to see to it that well-qualified persons taught with suitable compensation. The children of the poor were to be instructed free. In all schools only orthodox Christians might teach. To secure these ends, suitable means of Church inspection of schools had to be devised. The principal power of the Church lay in the generally acknowledged right to examine regarding creed subscription (Malherbe 1925: 23).

The early Cape settlers were predominantly Calvinist (Kuyper 1900: 11) and when the French Huguenots followed in 1688, this group of ardent Protestants further supported the already strong Calvinist trend set by the Dutch. The significance of attaining Church membership applied equally strongly to the early Colonists as to their European counterparts. Qualification for Church membership (confirmation), generally at the age of 13 (McKerron 1934: 60), was an integral part of life — failure of which implied a degree of social ostracism. To become a member of the Church a measure of literacy and a degree of education were required since confirmation implied being able to read the Bible, recite the Catechism or articles of faith and write one's name (Behr 1988: 88). This matter was rather straight forward for those living in the towns and who were close to a Church and school, but much inconvenience was caused to parents who lived in the interior to have their children examined and admitted as members of the Church (Borcherds 1861: 23). Yet, it is said, that it was this preparation for confirmation that ensured the preservation of some degree of formal education among the isolated and wandering Colonists (Behr 1988: 10).

Schooling was suited to the needs of the time: it did not cultivate erudition and perhaps no great intellectuals were forthcoming, yet, measured against the requirements of the times, the education provided by schools was adequate. What children learnt preserved them from spiritual as well as physical dangers: the two pillars of the pioneer's lifestyle — the Bible and the rifle — were foremost (Fouche 1910: 11; Malherbe 1925: 47).

### 3.3.2 The first schools and the circumstances which lead to their establishment

Although the DEIC was interested primarily in financial gain, it was nevertheless concerned about the religious well-being of its employees and at the very least, a sick comforter<sup>28</sup>, if not a clergyman, accompanied its men (Behr 1988: 10). Since the primary importance attached to education was the preparation of the individual for Church membership, it seems rather obvious that it would be exactly these people who would have been expected to uphold a semblance of learning during the early years of settlement.

#### 3.3.2.1 Informal or home schooling

Although there were children present right from the time Jan van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape in 1652, no provision was being made for the formal education of white children. There are, however, indications that a measure of informal education was being maintained and it can be assumed that this education would have applied to white children too.

In a letter to the Chamber of XVII, Jan van Riebeeck alludes to the instruction of Eva, a native girl, — the niece of Harry, the interpreter and leader of the local Strandloper-Hottentots<sup>29</sup> — within his own home. She had basically grown up in the Commander's household where she had acquired European habits and had learned to read and to behave as a Christian although as yet she was not

28 On the long voyages from Holland to the East, it was customary for any one who became ill to choose one of his comrades to tend to him. If there were many patients on board, the captain appointed a suitable person as sick comforter to attend to the physical needs of the sick. He also had to attend to the spiritual needs of the patients and this phase of activities came to be looked upon as the important one. In course of time the sick comforter was appointed by the different presbyteries of the fatherland who issued them their orders and instructions which were subject to the approval of the directors of the DEIC. All sick comforters had to sign the confession of faith of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of the Synod of Dort [Dordrecht]. Their religious duties were especially emphasised, and all traces of their secular activities were soon lost. In 1643 their duties were defined by the Church Order to be the following:

- First and foremost to instruct, comfort and encourage the sick out of God's Holy Word.
- To conduct services at suitable periods with singing and prayers and the reading of a portion from the scriptures and of an appropriate sermon.
- To say grace before and after meals.
- To instruct the ignorant, to exhort the sinners and to comfort and encourage the downcast and the small of faith.

The sick comforter had not necessarily to undergo a special training, but men of *good comportment, quiet and orderly life and ability in reading and in singing the Psalms* were eligible for the post. When the first resident minister arrived at the Cape in 1665 [Dominee Joan (Johan) van Arckel] the sick comforter's duties became more related to the reading of the scriptures and leading in singing and he became known as the *voorlezer* or the *voorzinger* [Eybers 1918: 24; Theal 1882: 137].

29 A native group — also known as the Goringhaiconas [Leibbrandt 1900c: 235-259].

baptised<sup>30</sup> (Theal 1882: 110). In turn, she had been teaching the children of her brother-in-law's tribe the rudiments of the Christian doctrine. It is stated that the chief wished her to be further instructed in the Commander's house (Leibbrandt 1897b: 208). It would seem that Van Riebeeck did not consider this "home education" of sufficient value for his own two boys aged nine and seven. These children were sent to school in Holland in 1660 (Leibbrandt 1900c: 190).

Du Toit (1937: 252) records another instance of home schooling. Jacobus le Sueur, a member of the Council of Policy, took it upon himself to educate his own children due to a lack of adequate public education. This event occurred prior to the establishment of the Latin school<sup>31</sup> and the proposals of Ziegler<sup>32</sup>— which he supported since he personally signed these documents — to improve the conditions and provision of education. Le Sueur's concern for the education of his children is further affirmed by the fact that he had sent two of his sons to further their education in the Netherlands in 1788. Another recorded example of home schooling is that of Johannes Munnik who had asked the Captain of the *De Schelde* to bring a schoolmaster from Holland to tutor his children. The tutor brought to the Cape for this purpose was Francois Ageron, who was engaged in this capacity in July 1792 (Leibbrandt 1989: 1473, 1536).

### 3.3.2.2 *Pieter van der Stael's slave school*

It could be said that the initiative to establish the first school at the Cape on 17 April 1658 was taken by the "local government" as it was at the discretion of the Commander, Jan van Riebeeck, that Pieter van der Stael<sup>33</sup>, the sick comforter, was appointed to teach a group of recently arrived West African slaves (Malherbe 1925: 28). When these slaves were introduced to the Cape in

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30 Eva was baptised soon after the arrival of Commander Wagenaar [1662-1666][ on 3 May 1662 according to a letter by Pieter van der Stael addressed to the Classis of Amsterdam on 2 April 1663] and two years later married the surgeon and explorer Pieter van Meerhof [Spoelstra 1906: 23; Theal 1882: 143]. See 3.3.2.2

31 See 3.3.2.13

32 See 3.3.3.4

33 Brother-in-law to Jan van Riebeeck. He replaced Willem Wijlandt as sick comforter in 1656 and was himself succeeded by Ernestus Back in 1663 [Theal 1882: 81, 110, 136].

March of that year, it was found that communication was difficult<sup>34</sup>, and that the people were heathen. The founding of the school had a dual purpose: to benefit the Company by teaching the slaves<sup>35</sup> to speak Dutch and to facilitate conversion to Christianity. In this undertaking, Van Riebeeck had the support of the visiting Commissioner, Rijckloff van Goens, who had instructed that slaves were to speak Dutch only (Böeseken 1938: 132). Van Riebeeck's motivation for appointing Van der Stael (apart from the fact that it was customary for the sick comforter to attend to the religious instruction of the ignorant) was that he could read Dutch correctly (Leibbrandt 1897b: 115). When the pupils' propensity to abscond could not be altered — even though Van Riebeeck instructed the teacher to give each pupil a glass of brandy and two inches of tobacco after school each day — it was decided to close the school (Malherbe 1925: 28).

On his own initiative, Van der Stael continued his efforts to teach the rudiments of Christianity and the Dutch language to slaves and Hottentots (of whom there were approximately 50 at that time) within the settlement. His work was commended by the Directors in the Netherlands who extended his term of service and increased his salary. Although he was still to attend to his commitments such as conducting the Sunday service, his evangelical work had the blessing of the authorities (Theal 1882: 110).

### 3.3.2.3 *Ernestus Back's integrated school*

A fierce dispute was at the time raging among the clergy of the Reformed Church in India on whether the children of unbelieving parents should be baptised or not. The Cape custom was that all children brought for baptism were duly baptised<sup>36</sup>. The parents and the owners of the slaves who presented the child for baptism were sternly admonished that it was their duty to ensure that the

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34 The slaves could not understand the instructions of their masters and neither could the masters understand their slaves.

35 The majority of the slaves aboard the *Amersfoort* were children. The *Hasselt* aboard which there were adults, arrived at the Cape in 1659.

36 Pieter van der Stael mentions in his letters to the Classis of Amsterdam the baptism of children of female slaves and also the baptism of illegitimate children. These letters are dated 20 March 1660, 13 March 1661, 31 March 1662, 2 April 1663 [Spoelstra 1906: 13, 16-17, 20, 24].

child attended school and Church and was educated in the Christian religion<sup>37</sup>.

On 25 January 1664 the Governor General and Council of India informed the authorities at the Cape that the Ecclesiastical Court at Batavia in conjunction with the Classis of Amsterdam had decided in favour of baptising children of unbelieving slaves<sup>38</sup>. In conformity with this decision the Company had established a school at Batavia for the education of the children of its own slaves and the Cape government was directed to do likewise (Theal 1882: 138).

It could have been the intensity of the debate and the urgency of the matter that had prompted Zacharias Wagenaar, Commander of the Cape [1662-1666], to be proactive and open a school on November 30, 1663. The new sick comforter, Ernestus Back, was appointed schoolmaster (Leibbrandt 1901: 83). This school had 17 pupils: 4 slave children, 1 Hottentot and the remaining 12 were Europeans. The parents were expected to pay monthly fees which constituted the teacher's salary, but slave and Hottentot children were to be taught *pro Deo* (Theal 1882: 141). Back's intemperance resulted in his dismissal<sup>39</sup> and replacement by, not a sick comforter but, a "quiet and useful young man" (Leibbrandt 1901: 189), Daniel Engelgraaff, under whose care the pupils increased in number until his death<sup>40</sup> (Theal 1882: 141).

#### 3.3.2.4 *The Church and its relation to education*

From the beginning, it was obvious that the Church played a significant role in providing education. As is evident from the preceding, the teaching task was generally undertaken by the sick comforters whose prime objective it was to impart knowledge of the Christian faith. This was not a foreign

37 When Dominee Johannes Overney arrived at the Cape in 1678 *en route* to India, he found that the community was without a minister. He was requested by the residents to remain in the Cape to tend to their spiritual needs. In a letter directed to the Classis of Amsterdam he explains the policy followed by the Cape clergy in the past in relation to the baptism of slave children [Spoelstra 1906: 28-29].

38 Dominee Johannes Overney refers to this document in his [undated] letter directed to the Classis of Amsterdam in which he reports the incident where Dominee Philippus Baldaeus, a clergyman travelling to the Netherlands from Ceylon, refused to baptise a slave child [Spoelstra 1906: 28]. A full report of this affair is documented in the Resolutions of the Council of Policy dated 22 March 1666 [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1957: 340-341].

39 Fouché [1910: 6] mentions that the whole Colony supported the Governor in this decision and were convinced that the comet that appeared in the skies at that time, was a sign from God as confirmation of His displeasure at the conduct of the sick comforter.

40 13 September 1666 [Leibbrandt 1901: 189].

concept: even European education had as overriding purpose attainment of the knowledge of the principles of the Christian faith in preparation for Church membership. Who better then to assign the task of teaching to than the Church itself?

Between 1652 and 1665 there was no established Church and religious matters resorted under the Governor and the Council of Policy. During these years, Church and school were conducted by the sick comforter — himself a Company employee. Only when an ordained clergyman temporarily visited the Cape, were the sacraments received. This person was lower in rank than the Governor and was thus subordinate to him. The Ecclesiastical Court<sup>41</sup> was established in 1665 after the arrival of the first resident clergyman<sup>42</sup> (Vorster 1981: 38) and was represented by the clergyman (who was an employee of the Company), the Political Commissioner (a member of the Council of Policy), the deacons who were selected by the Council of Policy from a double list of names furnished by the Ecclesiastical Court, and the elders who were elected by the Ecclesiastical Court as representatives of the congregation and whose election needed to be approved by the Council of Policy (Malherbe 1925: 33-34; Theal 1882: 137).

The Court was subordinate to the Council of Policy. The appointment of sick comforters, *voorlezers* and Church clerks needed to be approved by the Council of Policy and clergymen were appointed and deployed at Council's will. The Council of Policy also decided matters such as the founding and building of Churches<sup>43</sup> (Vorster 1981: 38-39). As the Colony expanded district towns were formed and each established its own Church and Church Council.

In conformity with Article 21 of the Synod of Dort<sup>44</sup>, the Church took responsibility for the education of the youth. Apart from the earlier attempts of the sick comforters to provide education for the children of slaves and the Colonists, the Church itself drew attention to the education of slave children as early as 1666 when it approached the Council of Policy which subsequently

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41 The Ecclesiastical Court was also referred to as the Consistory or Kerkraad [Malherbe 1925: 33].

42 Ds Johan van Arckel (1640-1666) arrived at the Cape in August 1665 and died there at the age of 26 on 12 January 1666 [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1957:339].

43 The Council of Policy even refused the establishment of the parish at Drakenstein [Spoelstra 1907: 259].

44 Synod of Dordrecht — see 3.3.1

resolved on 17 June 1666 ... *dat de slavinne kinders uijt de tuijn, die alreets bequaemheijt hadden, moghten te schoole gaen* (Du Toit 1937: 44)<sup>45</sup>.

On 28 December 1676 Dominee Hulzenaar, representing the Ecclesiastical Court, submitted a request to the Council of Policy that a separate school<sup>46</sup> be established for the education of slave children stating that it was *nodig sij alhier gelijc als in India een school, soo wel voor de swarte als Duijtsche kinderen ... op te regten*. The request fell on sympathetic ears. Nevertheless, the Council of Policy decided that the more able slave children should still be allowed to attend the school for white children until a suitably qualified teacher could be found for the slave school (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1959: 159-160). In Du Toit's (1937: 45) speculation regarding the motivation for such a request, he mentions various possible reasons. These include an increase in the number of children of school-going age making current provision inadequate<sup>47</sup> and disparity among the slave community itself where those slaves in Company service and living in slave quarters were not exposed to the Christian way of life of their Dutch owners as were the household slaves. This issue was to receive further attention during the visit of High Commissioner Van Rheeде in 1685 as will be discussed later<sup>48</sup>.

The Ecclesiastical Court continued to keep a watchful eye over the education of the Colony's youth. In a letter to the Classis of Amsterdam dated 4 July 1697, the Ecclesiastical Court mentioned that each evening a prayer was uttered for the *teedre Jeugt en de Schoole, van d'E. Comp<sup>e</sup> opgeregt* and in its letter of 9 April 1703 the Ecclesiastical Court reported that *de teere jeugt in de schoole* were being taught *de beginselen en gronden van de godsdienst en moeten alle Sondagen in de kerk de vragen van den Hijd. Catechismus beantwoorden* (Spoelstra 1906: 32, 35).

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45 It is interesting to note that this resolution was passed immediately after the Church Council had written to the Classis in Amsterdam regarding the events surrounding the decision of visiting Ds Philippus Baldaeus not to baptise the children of slaves. Baldaeus' decision was in opposition to Cape custom instituted since the time of Dominee Johan van Arckel [see 3.3.2.3].

46 This had been done in India as referred to the *Resolution of the Political Council of 28 December 1676* [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1959: 160].

47 By 1679 there were 117 white children alone at the Cape. See 3.2.1.2.

48 See 3.3.2.8

In April 1706, the Ecclesiastical Court could report to the Classis that apart from the public catechism classes, a special Catechism class had been instituted

*... om de teere Jeugt nog meerder aanlijding te geven, en de gronden van de goddelijke waarheden in te lijden, behalven de private een publijke Catchizatie, dat noyt voor desen hier gedaan is, [ingesteld], moetende de Schoolmeesters alle Woensdagen haar schoolkinderen, onder 't luyden van de kerkklok, selfs in de Kerk lijden' alwaar dan een gebed gedaan, gesongen, en de beginselen van de leer der waarhijd haar ingeboesemt en daar in onderwesen worden 'twelk, onder Gods goedhijd, sodanig toeneemt, dat aldaar niet alleen over de 120 kinderen toevloyen, maar ook bejaarde comen aanhooren ... (Spoelstra 1906:37).*

And so it remained until 1714 that the Ecclesiastical Court was appointed by the Council of Policy to concern itself directly with educational matters. In the rural communities all schools were Church schools and the sick comforter acted as schoolmaster. This was also the custom in the Cape itself (Vorster 1981: 106) until a small number of schools were established upon private initiative with private schoolmasters — and even then the schoolmasters were to be examined by the Church Council. After 1714 the Church retained a good measure of control in relation to the supervision of education — a matter which will receive attention further on<sup>49</sup>.

✕ In 1737 the first mission school was established at the Cape at Genadendal by George Schmidt of the Moravian Brothers. His first scholars comprised four men, two women and four children (Schmidt [S.a.]: 4). Schmidt was later to leave the country in 1743 when disputes with the Dutch Reformed Church surrounding his right to baptise converts arose<sup>50</sup> (Spoelstra 1906: 195-199). The Church and the school were later reopened by three Moravian missionaries in 1792 (Theal 1895: 41).

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49 See 3.3.3.3.1

50 On 26 September 1742, ministers Le Sueur, Van Gendt and Van Echten wrote to the Classis in Amsterdam regarding Schmidt's baptism of 5 converts expressing their disapproval of the matter [Spoelstra 1906: 195-199].

### 3.3.2.5 *The charity schools*

The Board of Orphan Masters was established in 1674 (Theal 1964a: 221) and had as one of its tasks the provision of education for destitute orphan children and children of indigent families under its charge. The Board comprised six members consisting of a president who was a government official, a burgher vice-president, a burgher secretary, one burgher member and two members who were servants of the Company — an equal number of burgher and Company representatives (Eybers 1918: 42).

The charity schools<sup>51</sup> were to provide education for indigent children and were presided over by the Church wardens in each parish (Borcherds 1861: 183). The resident sick comforter acted as the teacher (Spoelstra 1907: 279). Mention is made of Cornelis Agterman who served in this capacity until his replacement in 1777 by Albert Joosten who was still teaching in this capacity in 1796 (Spoelstra 1906: 461; Spoelstra 1907: 312-313).

### 3.3.2.6 *Commissioner Verburgh's observations and recommendations regarding education*

When Commissioner Nicolaas Verburgh visited<sup>52</sup> the Cape in 1676 (Leibbrandt 1902: 234), he commented on the poor schooling arrangements saying

*...ende gemerckt alhier tot noch toe geen vaste Scholen gehouden zijn, om de jeught te leren lesen, schrijven en in de Christelijcke deughden op te trecken ...* (Verburgh in Böeseken 1938: 132).

He further observed that there were a good number of children of school going age<sup>53</sup> and warned the government to address this issue. They were to find a *steenens huijs* that could serve as a school building and at his instruction, Jan Wittebol<sup>54</sup>, *van goede bequaamheijt en deugdelijck*

51 These schools were known as the *Diakonieskole* [Du Toit 1958: 26].

52 4 February 1676 -17 March 1676 [Leibbrandt 1902: 234,239].

53 The Journal entry of 16 October 1672 notes that the number of white children had grown to 65. The number of slave children is not noted [Leibbrandt 1902: 82].

54 Wittebol Arrived at the Cape in 1669 as a midshipman. He was promoted to the position of surveyor in 1670 by Commissioner van de Brouck [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1959: 69].

*comportement wesende* was appointed schoolmaster. To augment his salary, the schoolmaster was allowed to charge school fees, but indigent parents were to be exempted from paying fees. Verburgh was the second Commissioner to specifically address educational matters at the Cape<sup>55</sup> (Böeseken 1938: 132).

### 3.3.2.7 *The first district school: Stellenbosch*

Simon van der Stel [1679-1691] was one of the Commanders who showed a lively interest in school matters and it was at his recommendation that the first district school was established at Stellenbosch in 1683. On 28 September of that year the burghers petitioned the Council of Policy to establish a school in the district pointing out that there were about thirty landowners in the district many of whom had families, but as yet there was no school in which the children could be taught the principles of Christianity and reading and writing. It was too far to travel to the Castle on Sundays to attend the Church services and the young, they feared, were in danger of growing up as barbarians. They requested that a suitable person be appointed to keep a school, to read a sermon on Sundays and to act as visitor of the sick (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1961: 72-73).

This request was viewed favourably and once a suitable building had been erected, Sybrand Mankadan was appointed to fulfil these duties (Theal 1882: 223). It was brought to the notice of the Council of Policy that Mankadan was proving less than satisfactory in 1688 and that he had been reprimanded by both the *heemraad* and the local Church Council, but to no avail. The *heemraad* was instructed to give him a thorough warning that he should *inter alia* with regard to the children in his care *door goede en naarstige onderwijsing* recoup the damage of the past<sup>56</sup> (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1961: 185-186). Later in the history of the Stellenbosch school, Christiaan Crijnauw [1761] was appointed sick comforter and *voorlezer*. For a good number of years, he served the school well, but in 1779, the parents of the community refused to continue

55 See footnote 2 and also 3.3.2.2

56 On 11 January 1688, Mankadan wrote to Simon van der Stel complaining that he, an old man, was being unfairly treated by the Church Council and *heemraad*. After the *heemraad's* petition had been tabled and discussed, the Council of Policy warned the *heemraad* to in future ... *omsigtiger en wijselijker omtrent 't beleggen van verklaringen strekkende tot schande van kerk en schoolbediende onder sulke ruwe gasten als d' inwoonders te dier stede zijn hebben te dragen en veel eer de gebrekken van alsulke persónen met den mantel der Christelijke liefde te dekken dan door openbare getuijgschrijven deselve rugtbaar te maken* [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1961: 185].

sending their children to his school as he had delegated the teaching to his wife and children (Spoelstra 1907: 402-403). Parents were possibly worried that the quality of the education offered would not be of an acceptable standard and did not merely stand by to allow this to happen, but brought the matter to the attention of the Church Council since the person in question was under their authority. On 17 May 1783 the Council of Policy resolved to replace Crijnauw with the sick comforter, Gillis de Korte (Jeffreys 1938: 151).

Simon van der Stel's interest in education is also evident from the proposal of the following resolution to the Council of Policy on 22 December 1687 which applied to both free born and slave children (bearing in mind that slave and white children were not necessarily attending the same schools at this time). He tabled the following proposal.

*Raadslot tot handhaving der kinderleer:*

*D'Ed. Hr. Commandeur in Rade vertoog gedaan hebbende hoe gewigtige een saak het zij, dat de scholen als planthoven en kwekerijen aller deugden en voornamentlijk onder dese ruwe en grove ingesetenen gehandhaaft werden: So is na rijpe overweging ten dienste des gemeene bestens goedgevonden en beslooten om de schoolkinderen, so vrij als slaav gebooren meer en meer tot Christelijke deugden en wetenschap aan te moedigen en op te wekken, hun eenmaal in 't jaar op den dag die ter gedagtenis der geboorte Onses Saligmakers gevierd word, na dat-se door schoolarchen of haar opsienders in hun voortgang ondervraagd, en dat se proestukken in't leesen, schrijven, cijferen, en huns geloovs Articulen sullen gegeven hebben, elk na sijn verdiensten 's Comps. wegen met een prijs te vereeren (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1961: 179).*

Van der Stel did not limit his interest in schooling to inspections and the presentation of prizes, he also examined the curriculum to determine its relevance to current circumstances. It was at his suggestion that the curriculum was extended to include the handling of weapons for all boys between the ages of nine and thirteen to enable them to be proficient in such matters. It was the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children attended these exercises (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1961: 179).

### 3.3.2.8 *Commissioner Van Rhee­de's observations and recommendations regarding education*

In 1685 Commissioner Van Rhee­de visited<sup>57</sup> the Cape to investigate and report on the administration of the settlement. The first regulations issued by a civil authority for the management and supervision of education were forthcoming. Van Rhee­de laid down regulations which determined the nature of the curriculum, the methods of discipline, hours of study and stipulated that the clergyman should twice weekly visit the school and enquire after the pupils' progress (Malherbe 1925: 35).

He was struck by the neglect of slave children's educational interests and recommended that a special school be established for them in the slave quarters saying that their cultural backwardness necessitated that they receive special attention at a separate school. Slave children under the age of twelve were to be sent to school to learn the principles of Christianity as well as to read and write. As schoolmaster, a mulatto of exemplary conduct, Jan Pasqual<sup>58</sup> of Batavia, was appointed and as schoolmistress, Margaret, a freed woman of the Cape (Theal 1882: 233). The regulations further stressed that no white children were to be permitted to attend the school and that, in relation to the slave children, *dat hare ouders haar om gene oorzaken van de school zullen vermogen af te houden* (Theal 1882: 332).

These regulations indicate that Van Rhee­de expected all Colonist parents — regardless of race — to accept responsibility for ensuring that their children received an education.

### 3.3.2.9 *The second district school: Drakenstein*

The French Huguenots had no sooner been located at Fransche Hoek and Drakenstein, than they addressed Commander Simon van der Stel upon the subject of a school for the education of their children. He approved their request and on 8 November 1688, Paul Roux, who understood both Dutch and French, was appointed schoolmaster. It was important to Van der Stel that the French

57 19 April 1685 -16 July 1685 [Theal 1882: 230].

58 According to the resolutions of the Council of Policy, on 15 September 1687 he was replaced by Claas Cornelisz 'n persoon van goeden wandel en vereij­schte bekwaamheid after the Council had been informed of Pasqual's immodest behaviour towards the female pupils [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1961: 160].

were not given the opportunity to form an exclusively French enclave hence the choice falling on one who was proficient in both the spoken languages of the time<sup>59</sup> (Theal 1882: 284-285). A similar regulation was to be imposed by the Chamber of XVII in 1690 when they resolved that the teachers at Stellenbosch and Drakenstein were to be men who understood both languages and care was to be taken that the French children were instructed in Dutch (Theal 1882: 291).

Roux was later replaced by Jacob de Groot in 1700. Although De Groot could also speak both languages, his appointment had been primarily in the interest of the Dutch children — many of whom did not understand French. It was expected of him to hasten the integration and assimilation of the French into the Dutch communities (Du Toit 1958: 8). It could no longer be doubted that it was the wish of the DEIC that the Huguenots become amalgamated with the Dutch as speedily as possible (Theal 1882: 292). Malherbe (1925: 52) contends that it could have been the disillusionment suffered by the French Huguenots at the treatment by their fatherland which had, in a manner of speaking, driven them from it, that contributed towards the apparent ease of their assimilation with the Dutch at the Cape.

The first private school to be established at Drakenstein was that by Hendrik van Vreede in May 1762. Permission was granted by the Church Council with the understanding that he would subject himself to the authority of the Council (Spoelstra 1907: 457). Evidently this school continued to exist for a number of years for it is recorded that after his death, Jacobus van Leeuwen was appointed to the position of public schoolmaster on 21 June 1779 after having been examined by the Church Council (Spoelstra 1907: 465).

Not all children attended the local schools — resident tutors were also to be found as is evidenced by an entry in the Drakenstein Church Council Archives of 24 October 1790. The local Church Council had need to replace the serving schoolmaster and decided to appoint Johan Hermans, *een duchtig en zedelijk subject*, who was at the time in the employ of the *heemraad*, Adriaan Louw, resident in Drakenstein (Spoelstra 1907: 470).

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59 The concession of appointing a teacher who was proficient in French was made because this was seen to be a period of adjustment [Malherbe 1925: 27].

### 3.3.2.10 *Le Boucq's attempts to improve the provision of education*

Immediately after his arrival at the Cape in March 1707, Dominee Engelbertus le Boucq<sup>60</sup> lost no time in submitting a request to the Council of Policy to attend to the deplorable state of education. His first submission was dated 8 June 1707. In this letter, he asked the Council of Policy to investigate the control and regulation of schools in the Colony. He claimed that the custom of the sick comforters acting as schoolmasters had fallen into disuse and these persons were more interested in pursuing occupations assuring them of financial gain than in the spiritual well-being of the community<sup>61</sup>. Le Boucq also expressed concern that a black convict from Batavia named Daniel Rodrigo, had been authorised to teach. His concern was that the reputation of the man was tainted and that for this reason, he was unsuitable for the prominent and influential position of schoolmaster (Spoelstra 1906: 65, 69).

The Council of Policy apparently turned a deaf ear to his request, but Le Boucq was not so easily put off. On 21 June he again submitted a request to the Council of Policy that they attend to the matter he had previously brought to their attention prompting them to *deze saken ter herte te neemen, want hoe langer men met de scholen en de godsdienst sleurt, hoe meer de kinderen en anderen verwilderden* (Spoelstra 1906: 72). In response, the Council of Policy resolved that the sick comforter's conduct be examined and that Rodrigo be told not to teach the children of Dutch parents in future (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1962: 10). This response could be described as being rather half-hearted and could perhaps be attributed to the current Council of Policy's indifferent attitude towards education.

Not satisfied that this reaction was sufficiently convincing, Le Boucq appealed directly to the Classis in Amsterdam. In his letter of 20 April 1708 — to which he attached copies of his submissions to the Council of Policy — he wrote ... *[d]at de scholen aenbelanght, daer ist seer sleght mede wijl deselve van gheen goede meesters versien ...* (Spoelstra 1906: 65) and he went on to appeal to the Classis saying

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60 Le Boucq replaced De Groot at Drakenstein. The latter had been recalled to serve the Cape congregation [Du Toit 1937: 64].

61 Le Boucq states in his request to the Council of Policy dated 8 June 1707 — a copy of which was sent to the Classis in Amsterdam — that the sick comforter at the Cape was running a boarding house in the building that Van Rheeede had put aside for a school. Le Boucq requested that the man be reminded that he had been appointed a sick comforter and not a shopkeeper or hotelier [Spoelstra 1906: 69, 72].

*... [m]ijn versoeck is, dat het UwEerw. Goede gelieft sij, van dese saeken eens te oorwegen, en door UwEerw. Wijs belijdt te bevorderen, dat hier goede meesters, die de kinderen leeren, gesteld en dat ook de kerken en scholen van goede regelementen voorsien werden, want soo het hier soo voortgaet, ist te dughten dat de Africaanders tot het Hottentotdom vervallen sullen ... (Spoelstra 1906: 66).*

Le Boucq's concern was directed at the conditions in established schools, yet there were a good number of children living in the remote interior for whom it was impossible even to attend these basic institutions of learning.

### 3.3.2.11 *Education in the interior: itinerant teachers*

Expansion into the interior continued and even though country towns such as Stellenbosch and Drakenstein had been established, a great number of Colonists found themselves beyond the reach of both Church and school. Not that the pioneers regarded these matters as being of lesser importance. The head of the house was the undisputed religious leader of his family and he took his duties seriously. The Bible, which was often the only book to be found in the household, occupied a place of honour and was the daily source of enlightenment and strength (Borcherds 1861: 55, 197) but the lives of these people were preoccupied with survival, and there was no time for the parents to engage in home tutoring. It was thus common practice for a farmer to employ a teacher — even if only for a short period — to instruct his children and possibly those of his neighbour too (Pells [S.a.]: 15). Because funds were scarce teachers often had to be prepared to receive remuneration in token. They were also often expected to fulfil duties other than teaching. After 1692 in an attempt to exert some form of control over the type of individual who acted as an itinerant teacher — and more particularly to ensure that he was of the Reformed faith — the Council of Policy stipulated that a contract be drawn up between the teacher and the farmer. This contract was generally valid for a year. The government expected that, when either a *vrijburgher* or a Company official was employed as a teacher he would

*... gehouden sullen zijn, het selve den Ed. H<sup>e</sup> Gouverneur bekend te maken, en met desselvs bewilliging hier ter Secretarie het verdrag of contract tusschen huurder en verhuurder angegaan plegtijlik te laten beschrijven (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1961: 259).*

When Van Imhoff<sup>62</sup> presented his findings on the conditions of education in the Colony [1743], he reported on the especially poor conditions in the interior. At this stage there were over 400 leasehold farms — some which were three to four days journey from the nearest Church (Martinius 1922: 21). In an attempt to institute some measures to overcome this problem, the Council of Policy then pronounced that nobody would be allowed to teach in the interior without prior consent and approval by the Church Council<sup>63</sup>. This resolution had a dual purpose: to enable the Church Council to determine whether the person had the ability to teach and whether he subscribed to the Reformed faith. It was feared that because of the prevailing disorderly state it could happen that erroneous doctrines would be introduced (Martinius 1922: 21). The regulation was reiterated in 1769 but it cannot be concluded that all private teachers and employers paid attention to this regulation since they were beyond the immediate control of the authorities (Spoelstra 1906: 197; Spoelstra 1907: 308, 399, 540).

In December 1785, Colonists submitted a petition to the Council of Policy in which they bemoaned the wretched conditions under which they were living. In their Despatch of 23 December 1785, the Council of Policy undertook to address their grievances. With regard to the issue of schooling, it was resolved to release a number of its officials of lower rank to temporarily act as itinerant teachers. It was acknowledged that the country residents had many children and, living on farms far distant from each other, they found it impossible to collect the children into one school. The Company regarded it its responsibility to supply the families with itinerant teachers (Leibbrandt 1905: 291).

In an attempt to address the poor provision of education in the outlying districts, especially since such poor reports<sup>64</sup> were still forthcoming, the Council of Policy in 1786 suggested that public boarding schools should be established in the more densely populated rural areas. It was believed

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62 See 3.3.2.12

63 This had been the prevailing custom. In a letter dated 26 September 1742 to the Classis in Amsterdam, the practice of examining all schoolmasters prior to their being allowed to teach was mentioned [Spoelstra 1906: 197].

64 Reports had been forthcoming from Commissioner van Imhoff [1743], Jan Cloppenburg [1768] Dr Jean Spenlin [1788]. The only favourable report had been presented by Faber, the magistrate from Stellenbosch, who had acted upon the request of Governor Ryk Tulbagh [1750-1785] to compile a report on the educational situation in the interior [Du Toit 1937: 20].

that the implementation of this scheme would counter the private schooling and home tuition movement which it believed was inferior. The Chamber of XVII approved the plan and the help of the Church Councils, magistrates, *heemrade* and Scholarchs<sup>65</sup> was called in (Spoelstra 1907: 514). After serious consideration, the plan was abandoned. The Council of Policy realised that the education of children in the interior could not be achieved through boarding schools due to a lack of funding and resigned themselves to the only alternative — that of providing ex-officials as itinerant teachers (Du Toit 1958: 27).

However, not everyone who offered their services as itinerant teachers were ex-company officials. There were private individuals, who, for reasons of their own, decided to serve in this capacity. These teachers were neither responsible to the government nor to the Church Councils but taught in an entirely private capacity reporting to their employers only (Pells [S.a.]:15). Although the itinerant teachers generally lacked academic qualifications, they were respected by their employers and did much to prevent a situation of total illiteracy and ignorance from prevailing in the interior.

#### 3.3.2.12 *Governor-General Van Imhoff's observations and recommendations regarding education*

Baron Gustaav van Imhoff, Governor-General of the Indies instituted an inquiry into the affairs of the settlement when he visited the Cape in 1743 (Theal 1882: 340). The state of education was reported to be appalling and the majority of teachers were said to be incompetent<sup>66</sup>. To address this problem he proposed that two additional Churches be established in the interior. This would in turn necessitate the appointment of two additional ministers together with their sick comforters. A third sick comforter was to be appointed to assist in educating the youth. As a result, Churches were established at Roodezand — Waveren [September 1743] with Arnoldus Meiring as minister and Louis van Dyk as sick comforter and teacher. Abraham Schietekat was appointed as sick comforter and teacher at Grootvadersbosch in May 1744. In June of the same year a Church was established in Zwartland with Rutger Weerman as minister and Wietse Botes as sick comforter and teacher. It

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65 See 3.3.3.3

66 He placed it on record that the residents in the country districts could better be compared to an assemblage of blind heathens than to a colony of European Christians [Theal 1882: 340].

would appear that the sick comforters had interests other than teaching and it became necessary to replace both Botes and Van Dyk (Böeseke *et al* 1952: 160-162, 164, 228; Du Toit 1958: 19; Spoelstra 1907: 502).

### 3.3.2.13 *The Latin school*

On 31 July 1714, a Latin school with Lambertus Slicher as rector, opened in Cape Town (Leibbrandt 1989: 1043). An assistant, Adolf Hoffman, was appointed in 1719 and he was later assisted by Johannes Swoigne. It would appear that the school was well-supported since in August 1720, Slicher appealed to the Council of Policy to supply him with additional tables, chairs and ink stands necessitated by

*... de gestadige aanwas en toevloet van de jonge kinderen en leerlingen de dagelijks ter schoole worden bestelt and consequently de banken en tafelen welke reets in gemelde schoole sijn, onmogelijk kunnen toerijken om aan desleve bequame sitplaatsen te kunnen beschicken ... (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1968: 65-66).*

Mention is made of the school in De Chavonnes's School Ordinance<sup>67</sup>. According to the Ordinance, Slicher was accorded authority in relation to overseeing educational issues — *om onder den naam van Rector, het opzigt over de Scholen te hebben*. This could imply that Slicher in essence, might have been termed a "superintendent of education" (Du Toit 1958: 13). Malherbe (1925: 36) contests this view pointing out that Slicher's jurisdiction did not extend beyond his own school and that the Ordinance of de Chavonnes distinctly states that the rector and the schoolmaster shall always treat them (the Scholarchs) with due reverence, under penalty of standing correction if the contrary be done.

Slicher was appointed to the ministry in 1725, but the school continued to function under Hoffman and Swoigne. The school was, however, closed in 1730 (Du Toit 1958: 13-14).

The foregoing is illustrative of the general conditions of education in the Colony under Company rule. There was no formal education policy that assured uniformity, coordination or standardisation

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67 See 3.3.3.2

of education — a fact bemoaned by those who were concerned about the deplorable state of education in the Colony.

### 3.3.3 The formalisation of schooling: education control and legislation

During the initial years, the decision to establish schools lay with an official of the DEIC — the Governor and his Council of Policy or a Commissioner who acted under the direction of the Directors of the DEIC. The Council of Policy received petitions from the Ecclesiastical Court, Church Councils as well as from parents regarding education — the founding of schools and the appointment and dismissal of teachers. The community appealed to the Ecclesiastical Court and local Church Councils regarding education related issues such as the conduct of the schoolmasters.

#### 3.3.3.1 *The Ecclesiastical Court or Consistory*

It was generally accepted that the sick comforter would attend to the schools established in the various parishes so it was consequently logical that the body to monitor the educational institutions was the Ecclesiastical Court of the Dutch Reformed Church<sup>68</sup> given the fact that the schoolmaster was effectively under the authority of the Church. A further "quality control measure" was that a sick comforter needed to acquire a licence from the Classis in Amsterdam before he could perform the duties of his calling (Malherbe 1925: 33-34; Theal 1882: 137).

In relation to education, the duties of the Ecclesiastical Court — some of which were delegated to the local Church Councils — included the following:

- examination of applicants as to their suitability and qualifications to act as teachers;
- the supervision and examination of schools;
- closing a school when the type of education offered could not be approved of (Spoelstra 1907: 278, 398-399).

Although it was one of the duties of the Ecclesiastical Court to oversee the educational institutions, there was as yet no special body responsible for the control of education *per se* nor had any

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68 Although subordinate to the Council of Policy since all decisions required the approval of this body.

legislation affecting education been passed. Le Boucq's submission to the Council of Policy in the first decade of the 1700s had pointed out this shortcoming but his concerns had not prompted action of any note. During the visit in 1710 of a retired Governor-General, Jo[h]an van Hoorn, this matter was again brought to the attention of the Council and Van Hoorn suggested the implementation of the Scholarch system similar to that which prevailed in Batavia<sup>69</sup> (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1962: 151).

### 3.3.3.2 *The School Ordinance of De Chavonnes*

The School Ordinance of Governor Maurits Pasques de Chavonnes passed in 1714 was the first attempt at educational legislation proper. It introduced no innovations, but codified educational practice of the times. The main tenets of the Ordinance were that:

- prospective teachers were to be examined by the Governor and the Council of Policy to determine whether they were indeed capable of teaching and whether they subscribed to the reformed faith
- all teachers were to sign the Ordinance as a declaration of their commitment of its regulations before they would be authorised to teach — this measure also applied to the Rector of the Latin school and practising schoolmasters since they were to apply these regulations henceforth
- the content of education was to be almost entirely religious and taught according to the tenets of the Reformed Church
- children were to be taught respect for others and were to be courteous at all times
- final authority in education was to rest with the state
- although boys and girls were to attend the same school they were to be seated separately and this segregation was to be enforced both in and out of school
- only those books that were being used in the Netherlands were to be used in both groups of existing schools: the Latin school and the *kleine kinderschoolen*
- a register was to be kept and in the event of truancy, parents were to explain the absence of their children

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69 The Scholarch system was not foreign to the Dutch. Simon van der Stel referred to the *schoolarchen of haar opsienders* in his resolution regarding annual prize-giving. See 3.3.2.7

- to ensure that the preceding regulations were enforced, a Body of Scholarchs was to be established to oversee educational matters; this body would be subservient to the Council of Policy and the Governor
- contravention of these regulations was to result in corrective measures being taken against the recalcitrant (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1962: 419-421).

### 3.3.3.3 *The Education Commission or the Body of Scholarchs*

Although the system of Scholarchs was familiar in the East, it was as yet unknown in the Cape. Appointed to the Board of Scholarchs<sup>70</sup> were the secunde, the clergyman and the military captain. Both the secunde and the clergyman already served on the Ecclesiastical Court while the secunde and the military captain both served on the Council of Policy. The Board of Scholarchs was however subordinate to the Ecclesiastical Court and the Council of Policy (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1962: 421).

For a considerable time this body existed in name only and the supervision of education as a whole resorted under the Council of Policy or the Church Council who were originally the overseers of education, albeit without full authority since they were accountable to the Council of Policy.

#### 3.3.3.3.1 *The authorisation and appointment of teachers*

In keeping with the prevailing view of whose responsibility it was to oversee education, the authorisation and appointment of new teachers resorted under the jurisdiction of either the Council of Policy, the Church Council or the Body of Scholarchs<sup>71</sup>.

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70 In the literature reference is made interchangeably to the Education Commission, Board of Scholarchs or the Scholarchs during the same period of time which would indicate that these in fact represent the same body.

71 An examination of prospective teachers' requests directed to the Council of Policy between 1714 and 1795 [when the British disbanded the Council of Policy] indicates that of the 49 applications, 19 were explicitly referred to the Church Council; 6 [Meijer 1737; Prins 1737; Craus 1781; Volsteedt 1782; de Bruijn 1788; Compagne 1792] to the Scholarchs and 7 [Migaute 1719; Van Est 1724; Roux 1730; Ambuuren 1734; the Military Academy 1786; Van Baak 1791; Ziegler 1794] appear to have gained permission directly from the Council of Policy. The sources do not consistently indicate to whom the application was directed for final approval – hence the discrepancy regarding the tally [Leibbrandt 1905; 1906; 1988; 1989 passim].

On 22 December 1716, after the Council of Policy had taken a decision on whom to appoint to the Church Councils of Drakenstein and Stellenbosch, it alluded to the responsibility of these local Church Councils to examine the religious beliefs of would-be teachers and to report their findings to the Council of Policy (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1964: 121). On 30 March 1717 a similar directive was addressed to the clergy (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1964: 156) indicating that the Council of Policy were of the opinion that the Church Council was the appropriate body to examine prospective teachers. Although the Council did not give specific instructions regarding the examination, the Church Council was generally requested to inquire into the candidate's religious beliefs and his ability to teach. It was generally found that the report would note that the applicants were *in staat om die jeugd in de gronden van den godsdienst, als mede in het schrijven, cijferen, leesen, singen te kunnen onderwijzen*. If the applicant satisfied the Church Council, the appointment was confirmed by the Council of Policy (Du Toit 1937: 97-99).

On occasion the Church Council was bypassed in these matters. The first application to be received in accordance with the De Chavonnes Ordinance, was that of Louis Migaute in 1719 (Leibbrandt 1906: 738). It was routinely dealt with by the Council of Policy who, after considering his religious affiliation and attributes, pronounced him suitable. No investigation into his teaching abilities was made. The application of Isak van Est in October 1724 was dealt with similarly, although he was to report to his local minister (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1971: 84). Jeremias Roux [9 May 1730] and Dirk Ambuuren [18 March 1734] were dealt with by the Council of Policy itself which after due consideration granted the applicants permission to establish schools<sup>72</sup>. The Council of Policy granted Roux permission on the grounds that he was a member of the reformed congregation while Ambuuren's request was granted outright (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1975: 95-96, 335-336).

In 1737 when Johannes David Prins applied to establish a school, the Council of Policy referred the matter to the Scholarchs (Leibbrandt 1988: 890) to report not only on the applicant's *leer en leven* but also on his teaching ability (Du Toit 1937: 93-95). Other instances where the Scholarchs were to investigate the requests of burghers to establish schools include those of Jacobus

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72      The former intended opening a French school while the latter was to teach Mathematics in addition to the regular school subjects.

Meijer [1737], Johannes Craus [6 February 1781], Floris Volsteedt [5 February 1782] and Nicolaas de Bruijn [13 June 1788] (Jeffreys 1930: 17,31; Jeffreys 1931: 52, 82; Leibbrandt 1905: 178; Leibbrandt 1906: 747).

### 3.3.3.3.2 *Extension of duties undertaken by the Scholarchs*

In 1737 the privileged schoolmasters<sup>73</sup> submitted a request to the Council of Policy to investigate the practice whereby unauthorised teachers were keeping school and visiting private houses to tutor children to the financial detriment of the petitioners. The matter was referred to the Scholarchs. In their report, it was requested that:

- the number of authorised teachers be limited
- the Council review the appointment of Dirk Ambuuren in view of De Chavonnes' guidelines that only persons who were *bequame en God vreesende Leermeesters* should be permitted to teach and the person in question was bringing the teaching profession into disrepute through his improper conduct
- the Council suspend Jacobus Meijer from teaching since he had not yet obtained the necessary authorisation (Du Toit 1937: 96).

The Council of Policy granted the Scholarchs their wish even though it meant backtracking on their prior decision regarding the appointment of Ambuuren. Later that same year, the application of Meijer to resume teaching was referred to the Scholarchs who were asked to evaluate his ability to teach (Du Toit 1937: 96).

In 1753 the privileged schoolmasters again submitted a petition to the Council of Policy. As before, the matter was referred to the Scholarchs (Leibbrandt 1989: 1075). A similar grievance was lodged for the third time on 29 May 1779 and yet again, the matter was referred to the Scholarchs<sup>74</sup>. They were asked to conduct a detailed investigation into the current state of education (Jeffreys 1927: 78-79). The Scholarchs submitted their report to Council on 31 August 1779

73 This term was used to describe those teachers who had — following examination by either the Council of Policy, Church Council or Body of Scholarchs — been declared competent and were authorised to establish schools.

74 Those now serving on the Body of Scholarchs were 2 members of the government, and the 2 ministers of Cape Town [Du Toit 1937: 96]. By 1779, the body of Scholarchs comprised 2 government officials, 3 ministers and *den ouderling van burgerswege* [Jeffreys 1927: 79; Spoelstra 1906: 573]

— the essence of which was that:

- the grievances of the privileged teachers were unfounded — if these teachers were diligent, children would not be lured away
- the accusations against a certain Johan Wedel were unreasonable since he was teaching advanced content and was consequently not in competition with the privileged schoolmasters
- apart from the Company's slave school, there were eight other schools<sup>75</sup> with a total of 696 children in attendance — of whom 82 were slave children
- the slave school schoolmaster was underpaid and the children were being withdrawn from the school before they had been able to benefit from tuition — there were 84 children in attendance (Jeffreys 1927: 89-94).

The Scholarchs were of the opinion that the schools and their teachers would benefit from constant supervision and this motivated them to request that they be awarded the necessary authority to make recommendations to improve the state of education. The request was that

*... zij als scholarchen mogen werden gequalificeerd, om, wanneer aan hum iets ter verbeetering omtrent de Schoolen in't generaal, mogten voorkomen, als dan daartoe de nodige ordres te stellen, en dat de resp.<sup>ve</sup> Schoolmeesters mogen werden geordonneerd, daaraan behoorlijk t'obedieeren* (Jeffreys 1927: 92).

This request was viewed favourably and herewith signs of the concession of decentralisation of authority with regard to education issues was manifested (Jeffreys 1927: 92).

### 3.3.3.3 *The School Ordinance proposed by the Scholarchs*

In April 1782, the Scholarchs submitted to the Council of Policy for approval a school ordinance consisting of eleven articles. This ordinance addressed issues such as the responsibilities of teachers, school attendance, school books, discipline and the salaries of teachers. The ordinance of De Chavonnes was to remain the general school Act as their regulations were to apply to schools in Cape Town only (Jeffreys 1931: 127-130). It would appear that this school ordinance was based

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75 These were the schools of Jacobse [1753], Meijer [1764], Mellet [1769], Dureng [1770], Knoop [1772], Joosten [1776], Wijdeman [1776] and Redelinghuis [1777] [Leibbrandt 1905: 389; Leibbrandt 1906: 607, 614, 640, 764, 769; Leibbrandt 1989: 1367, 1469].

on the Batavian School Ordinance which had been approved in Batavia in April 1778 — a copy which had reached the Cape in 1778 (Jeffreys 1926: 499-507).

#### 3.3.3.3.4 *The evaluation of Spenlin's proposals*

Towards the close of 1788, Dr Jean Frederic Spenlin, a German army chaplain of the Württemberg Regiment, visited the Cape and reported on existing educational conditions. He greatly admired the youth of the Cape describing them as having been endowed by nature with good dispositions of heart and soul, a healthy mind, intelligence and talents which lay dormant awaiting the nourishment of good education at the hands of trained teachers. Colonist parents, he maintained, could be grouped into three categories depending on their view of education. There were those who were ignorant of the existence, use and necessity of education. A second group were those who were more informed but were indifferent as to the quality of education they desired for their children. These parents allowed their children to be educated by unqualified teachers. In the third place there were those parents who, realising the deplorable situation surrounding education at the Cape, elected to send their children abroad to be educated. So doing, these poor children would be exposed to the perils of a sea voyage, the lavish and extravagant life-style of the Continent, and would be deprived of parental care and counsel. As a solution to the grievous situation described, he proposed the establishment of a well appointed educational institution with himself at the head (Du Toit 1937: 202-203). The Council of Policy rejected his proposal, yet referred it to the Body of Scholarchs for their comment (Du Toit 1958: 22).

#### 3.3.3.3.5 *The Scholarchs' plan for the improvement of schools*

Chiefly as a result of inquiries from the Chamber of XVII resulting from Spenlin's proposals, the Scholarchs issued a general plan for improving the schools saying the present unsatisfactory state of education was to be blamed on the poor quality of the schoolmasters<sup>76</sup>. By 1790 they had drafted and submitted their own plan<sup>77</sup> for the improvement of education based on the proposals

76 In a letter to the Amsterdam Classis dated 1 February 1790, the Ecclesiastical Court bemoans the fact that there are so few teachers and in addition, those that are to be found, are poorly qualified for their task [Spoelstra 1906: 569]. In 1792, the deplorable state of education is again bemoaned and a *gecombineerde vergadering van schoolarchen en predikanten uyt de buytendistricten* was called to discuss the possibility of establishing boarding schools in an attempt to improve the state of education in the Colony [Spoelstra 1907: 514].

77 *Plan ter verbeetering van 't Shoolweezen ter deezer plaatze in 't algemeen, en ter stigting van een goed Fransch en Latijnsch School in het bijzonder* [Du Toit 1958: 22].

of Spenlin — although less philosophical and more practical. This proposal included strategies to import teachers from the Netherlands; to ensure an appropriate salary and rank for teachers and to implement a system whereby teachers could become involved in training prospective teachers. Three kinds of schools were planned: the Dutch, French and Latin schools corresponding to the elementary, preparatory and high schools. The purpose of the French and Latin schools was to prepare the children of Colonists for *de Hoogeschole in het vaderland* (Spoelstra 1906: 573). The plan as a whole could not be faulted, but the acting Governor of the Cape, Governor van de Graaff [1785-1791] could not be persuaded to give the matter serious thought and nothing came of the submission (Du Toit 1958: 22).

After Van de Graaff's departure in 1791, the Scholarchs resubmitted the plan to the Council of Policy who, themselves taking a favourable view of the proposal, decided to send a copy to the Chamber of XVII for their approval. The proposal of the Scholarchs met with the support of the Cape citizens (parents), for within a short period of time a large sum towards the funding of the project had been raised<sup>78</sup>. In the mean time, the Scholarchs provisionally appointed Latin and French teachers. Due to pressure from the community, a Latin school with Cornelis Josias van Baak<sup>79</sup> was opened by the Scholarchs in 1793 before approval of the plan had been forthcoming. The latter was received from the Chamber of XVII in January 1794 (Du Toit 1958: 23-24).

Unfortunately, no educational programme had much chance of success at that time for the DEIC was on the verge of bankruptcy and the fate of the Cape was uncertain.

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78 The Ecclesiastical Court also contributed *eene zeer aanzienlijk som* [Spoelstra 1906: 573]. The remaining funds were eventually to be transferred to the South African College in 1837 when the plans for improving education were shelved due to social and political changes which occurred shortly afterward [Malherbe 1925: 38-39].

79 Van Baak had approached the Council of Policy in 1791 for a licence to teach Latin [see 3.3.3.3.1; footnote 71]. He prided himself that he had passed through the various classes of the Latin school and was currently involved in a private capacity teaching Latin. At that stage he had already prepared several of the youth for their University lessons [Leibbrandt 1905: 221].

#### 3.3.3.4 *Independent schools of the period*

Mention needs to be made of two schools which came into existence during the latter half of the 18th century and which did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Scholarchs. These schools were the Military Academy [1786] and the French School [1794]. Both schools could be termed secondary schools as each required a degree of appropriate prior learning as an entry requirement. The Military Academy provided military training as well as instruction in mathematics and the rudiments of military science. This school was established by Governor van de Graaff under the authority of Colonel Gillium and was placed under the direction of Ordinary Engineer Thibault, a man of exceptional talent and high conduct. Justus Hendrik Gunkel was appointed to assist him (Leibbrandt 1905: 312, 806; Leibbrandt 1906: 806; Leibbrandt 1989: 1205). Due to the cut-back policy of the Chamber of XVII, the military school was closed in 1790 (Du Toit 1958: 25).

Towards the close of Company rule, a private French school was opened by Jacob Ziegler with the permission of the Council of Policy. The origin of the school can be attributed to the actions of a certain merchant, Olof de Wet. Acting in the interests of his grandchildren, he commissioned Jacob Ziegler to teach his grandchildren. Apart from De Wet's grandchildren, other parents, who presumably believed that Ziegler would provide their children with a better and more advanced level of education than was generally available, also made use of his services. The establishment of the French school came after Ziegler realised that the Scholarchs had so far only been able to establish a Latin school. He appealed to the Council of Policy for permission to establish a French school, but although he had the support of a good number of the prominent residents of Cape Town, the Scholarchs appear to have been opposed to his proposal (Du Toit 1958: 25; Leibbrandt 1989: 1577).

That the provision of education needed to be coordinated and set on a more structured path to meet the diverse needs of the growing Colonist population cannot be disputed, but political and economic uncertainties had a retarding effect on this process.

### 3.3.4 Conditions towards the end of DEIC rule

For nearly one hundred and fifty years the Dutch East India Company had been the provider and caretaker of the growing community at the Cape. There had been times during which the Cape had flourished under the command of competent and well-liked Commanders, but there had also been periods when corruption and disunity among the Colonists prevailed. The DEIC had not foreseen that the Colony would expand to the degree that it had, and consequently it had been obliged to provide facilities which it had not originally intended nor planned for.

#### 3.3.4.1 *The provision and state of schooling*

Towards the close of the 18th century, the schooling facilities which existed were the public primary schools run either by the sick comforter or an authorised teacher, the charity schools established by the Church to cater for children who were the responsibility of the Orphan Chamber, the Company's slave school and the Latin school which served as a secondary school. The regulations of De Chavonnes' Ordinance determined how these schools were to function and it was under the watchful eye of the Scholarchs and the Church Councils that these schools carried out their educative task.

A number of private schools run by uncertified teachers had also been established. In some instances, steps were taken against these individuals — as in the case of Meijer — but there were instances where a blind eye was turned to the practice — as in the case of Wedel<sup>80</sup> who offered his services from home to home (Jeffreys 1927: 79). In such cases, it was the Scholarchs — acting under direction of the Council of Policy who undertook the investigations and reported to the Council. The Church Councils had not entirely relinquished their supervision of education for in Drakenstein, private teachers who had established themselves there were summoned by the Church Council to give an account of their religious persuasion (Du Toit 1958: 18). Clearly the practice of private tuition was not limited to the interior of the Colony, but also occurred where public facilities were available. Economic conditions at the Cape were fast deteriorating and government taxes and restrictions were becoming increasingly stringent. One of the reasons private individuals were eager to establish schools was to generate an income in an attempt to provide themselves with

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80 See 3.3.3.3.2

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a certain degree of financial security in a financially insecure climate.

Many changes had taken place since the first settlers had set foot at the Cape. Many of the developments, such as the expansion of the Colony itself had not been envisaged — neither could the DEIC have anticipated that it would directly and indirectly be responsible for establishing a system of education for the growing number of Colonists' children. However, the situation had manifested itself and had been brought to the attention of the authorities by various circles — the local authorities, the Church, the broader community, and not least of all, parents.

#### 3.3.4.2 *Observations and deductions regarding parental involvement in educational issues*<sup>81</sup>

Despite the fact that the DEIC had not envisaged colonisation — and the ensuing responsibilities that this would bring — it did not neglect to establish schools<sup>82</sup> for its employees' children as well as those of the Colonists as the need arose. At the time when the Cape was being colonised, it was the Church<sup>83</sup> in Holland and France (the Fatherlands of the majority of the Colonists during DEIC rule) that provided and controlled education. Thus, the Company's efforts to provide schooling facilities should be applauded since the Company could not have been blamed if it had held the view that the provision of schooling fell beyond its scope of duties. It is of note that during Company rule, several instances of burgher dispute and uprising regarding various regulations and practices introduced by the DEIC have been recorded, yet objections to the principle of establishing schools are not found indicating that the Colonists must have appreciated, or at least approved of, this undertaking.

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81 No cross-referencing will be made in this section: these preliminary findings will be discussed at greater length in the final chapter.

82 The first schools in the Colony were established by the DEIC itself — although it used the Church's employee, the sickcomforter, to run the school. In time, the Church was encouraged and permitted to establish schools but since the Church was under the authority of the state, approval had to be obtained from the government before a school could be established. No instances of the state refusing such requests were found and it can be concluded that the authorities and the Church worked in relative harmony in this regard.

83 In France, the Catholic Church and in Holland, the Reformed Church undertook to provide education. In addition, it needs to be remembered that in neither of the Fatherland countries had a formal education system as yet been instituted.

It is reasonable to assume that the majority of those who settled at the Cape were generally not exceptionally well educated — apart from the few higher-ranking DEIC officials — and they would in all probability not have insisted on nor expected an elaborate education for their children. Initially, the age and the number of the Colonist children did not warrant the establishment of a school, but as time passed and the number of children increased, schools were established. However, the tendency of the free burghers and the settlers to trek into the interior made it difficult for the authorities to provide schools for all the children of the Colony.

Because it was common practice for the Church to establish schools and meet the educational needs of the youth, parents would understandably be disinclined to interfere with this accepted procedure. The Colonists were well-known for their particular religious spirit and it is to be expected that they would have been happy to allow the Church to exercise the right to establish schools on their behalf. Based on the fact that the Colonists were devout, it seems fit to assume that they took their duties enshrined in the Bible and the baptismal vow seriously. Consequently, they ensured that their children attended school to be instructed in the tenets of the Christian belief. Even non-believers — for example slave parents — who had their children baptised were admonished to ensure that this was done. The aim of education was preparation for Church membership. The latter status ensured social acceptance and hence it was imperative that all children would receive a measure of education to achieve this status. Parents would thus either send their children to the local Church school, engage a private tutor or an itinerant teacher at own expense. There would also have been instances where parents would have personally instructed their children.

Although the concept "parental rights" was, so to speak, unknown, it can be concluded that parents sought to exercise their right to guarantee that the education their children received — and for which they were paying — was the best that could be had. It was found that parents were instrumental in:

- requesting that schools be established (e.g. Stellenbosch, Drakenstein)
- protecting their children from being taught by men of dubious character by approaching the Church Council or the government to either reprimand or dismiss the intractable individual (e.g. Back, Crijnauw, Rodrigo)
- insisting that their children were instructed in the language of their choice (e.g. the French

**Huguenots)**

- ensuring that their children received the best available education by relocating their children to schools run by better qualified teachers (as evidenced by the Scholarch's response to the petition by permitted teachers).

In general, it was the Church Council and later, the Scholarchs, that acted on behalf of the parents in the above matters. More was possibly achieved through this arrangement since these groups not only had the status which parents lacked, but were also closely associated with the authorities through representation of government members serving on the body. In effect, these controlling bodies enquired into and regulated issues that parents would have desired to have had control over. One of the more important of these issues was the character of the teacher. These bodies took care to examine the aspiring teacher prior to appointment. This inspection encompassed the moral, religious, personal and intellectual qualities of the individual. These would certainly have been those issues that parents would also have been concerned about.

It was not required that members of these controlling bodies were to be parents. It could have happened that certain of the members were indeed parents of school going children and they would consequently have had a vested interest in the state of education. The fact remains, however, that this would have been coincidental since being a parent was not a prerequisite for neither election nor appointment.

That a number of parents took their responsibility regarding the provision of adequate education seriously is confirmed by records that show that parents even went as far as having a suitable person sent out from Holland to act as a tutor to their children. An alternative arrangement for affluent parents was to send their children to Europe to attend school there. The type of education provided in these instances would have been more liberal than that generally provided. In later years, parents and the community endeavoured to address the inability of the Colony to fill this need by raising funds to establish a Latin school which would cater for this need. A number of independent schools providing a more elaborate curriculum were also established.

The foregoing is indicative of the extent to which parents fulfilled their responsibility to procure a balanced education for their offspring. Nevertheless, there were instances of parents not using the facilities provided — apparently because they did not view education as being of much importance. These parents were reproached by representatives of either the clergy or the authorities. In certain instances, however, parents were unable to heed their educative responsibility and in such cases the government or the Church acted *in loco parentis*. Examples include the establishment of the schools for slave and for indigent and orphan children. Both the authorities and the Church took their duties seriously for several visiting Commissioners made a thorough investigation into the state of education and the Church made regular reports to the Classis regarding the state of education in the Colony.

Although not explicitly stated, by implication it is possible to deduce that parents were aware of parental responsibilities and inadvertently exercised those rights to which parents generally ascribe. Yet economic and political realities, both locally and in Europe, undisputedly hampered further growth.

#### 3.3.4.3 *The economic and political state of the Colony and the influence of the political situation in Europe*

Towards the close of the 18th century, Company affairs were in dire straits. The DEIC was in a state of hopeless insolvency and Governor van de Graaff took little trouble to restrain the officials from corruption. Knowing the end of the Company was at hand, it appeared that all were trying to accumulate as much wealth as possible. The States-General appointed a Commission to examine the Company's affairs and two men, Sebastian Cornelis Nederburgh (Chief Advocate of the DEIC) and Simon Hendrik Frykenius were sent to South Africa in 1792<sup>84</sup> to assume control of affairs. Little improvement was noted, however (Theal 1894: 96-103; Theal 1964b: 263).

At this time, Western Europe was in a state of social and political upheaval. France had become a republic, the people of the Netherlands were divided into two parties — one, the Patriot party which

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84 July 1792 - September 1793 [Theal 1964b: x].

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was in sympathy with the French and the other, the Orange party, favoured a stadtholderate<sup>85</sup> with considerable powers and the continuance of the alliance with England. On 1 February 1793, a declaration of war with Great Britain and the stadtholder's government was issued from Paris by the Patriots. When a French army entered Holland, it was welcomed by the Patriots. Consequently, the Prince of Orange was obliged to leave the country and fled to England. Holland was now named the Batavian Republic and entered into close alliance with France. The Batavian Republic and France subsequently entered into alliance against England (Theal 1894: 103; Theal 1895: 43).

With the news of the outbreak of hostilities reaching South Africa, the Commissioners appointed an official, Abraham Josias Sluysken [1793-1795] to head the Cape government. They then proceeded to Java leaving Sluysken in charge of the Colony. Unrest plagued the Cape and the Colonists themselves were divided in opinion as to where their own loyalty lay. The officials and a few of the burghers favoured the Orange cause, but most of the Colonists were in sympathy with the Patriots. Early in 1795 the burghers of Graaff-Reinet set up a government of their own asserting their loyalty to Holland and the Patriots. They outrightly objected to the rule of the DEIC. More or less simultaneously, the Swellendam farmers drove their magistrate away and formed a republic. Sluysken had no means of enforcing his authority (Theal 1895: 42-43).

In June 1795, an English fleet under Admiral Elphinstone and Major-General Craig arrived in Simon's Bay. The commanding officers stated that they had come to protect the Cape from possible attack by the French and produced an order issued by the Prince of Orange. The government could not obey the order of a fugitive prince and did not admit the English troops into the forts. The defence offered was feeble and the soldiers and burghers sent to defend the road from Simon's Town to Cape Town at Muizenburg offered little resistance. The Colony was given up in September 1795 when a government by English officers took the place of that of the Dutch East India Company. Thus ended the rule of the Company after an occupation of little over a hundred and forty-three years (Theal 1895: 43-44) and a new socio-political era under the British was to dawn.

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85 A state ruled by a viceroy or lieutenant-governor of a province or provinces; *stadtholder* is the title borne by the chief magistrate of the Dutch Republic (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles 1978: 2099).

### 3.4 EDUCATION UNDER THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT [1795-1803]

The British did not come to the Cape as victors nor as reformers; they came to occupy a strategic colony that was feared might fall into the hands of the French enemy. Although they had no vested interest in the Colony and did not count on retaining it at the end of the war, they were obliged to concern themselves with administering the Cape<sup>86</sup>. Because the administration and control of the Colony was in the hands of the British, it was necessary to abolish the Dutch Colonist Council of Policy. However, a nominated citizens' council or Burgher Senate was instated in its place. This council, although less autonomous than its forerunner since the British were cautious of the possibility of it being used as a representative body, had to perform various functions – one of which was the joint supervision of education in the Colony (Cameron [ed.] 1991: 76; Freund 1972: 121).

#### 3.4.1 The control of education under the British Government

No revolutionary changes in education marked the beginning of the British occupation as the English stated that they did not wish to interfere unduly in the domestic concerns of the people (McKerron 1934: 18). The School Commission or Body of Scholarchs retained control of educational matters<sup>87</sup> and were assisted in their task by the Burgher Senate (Du Toit 1944: 1). The Body of Scholarchs had been extended and its members now included the Governor, two members from the Burgher Senate, the Directors of the Orphan Chamber, two clergymen of the Dutch Reformed Church in Cape Town and a Lutheran clergyman. During this period of British rule and the period subsequent to the Batavian rule when the British again occupied the Cape, the Scholarchs were known as the Bible and School Commission (McKerron 1934: 18). This was also the period of Church and missionary expansion.

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86 Prior to the British occupation, burgher insurrection had brought about a state of social tension which was still evident. Nederburgh and Frykenius who had been sent to the Cape in 1792 to try to regain a semblance of control under the deteriorating circumstances, had not been successful. Sluysken, who had replaced them, had also not been able to improve conditions. See 3.3.4.3

87 In 1800 the Scholarchs gave Johan Rykheer permission to keep a public school [Leibbrandt 1989: 1016].

### 3.4.2 The Church and missionary expansion: the influence on education

In March 1799, the London Missionary Society commenced its labours in South Africa and its first agents were the reverends J.T. Vanderkemp, J.J. Kicherer, J. Edmonds and W. Edwards. Upon their arrival in Cape Town, a South African Missionary Society was formed with a view to assisting in the conversion of the heathen (Spoelstra 1906: 588; Theal 1964c: 67). To attain this goal, elementary instruction in reading and writing would be required.

In contrast to the noticeable increase in mission activity, the only development in the Dutch Reformed Church was the founding of a new congregation at Swellendam in 1803 (Spoelstra 1906: 588). The Church Council retained its duty to oversee the local public schools — a fact which is confirmed by the actions of the Drakenstein Church Council which summoned the local schoolmaster, Johan Diederich Hermans, to explain the charge of *ergelijke kaartspel* which had been brought against him on 21 October 1798 (Spoelstra 1907: 473). However, the state of Churches was rather wretched at this time since several of the Churches were without pastors (Spoelstra 1906: 588; Theal 1964c: 104). It can consequently be assumed that schools in these areas were experiencing equally pressing times since the practice of employing the sick comforter as a resident teacher was still in existence. In addition, it was to the local Church Councils — of which the clergyman was the president — that all prospective teachers were to apply for certification, irrespective of whether they were applying to teach in the rural or urban areas.

### 3.4.3 The provision of education in the towns

The last accurate and comprehensive report on the state of schools in the Cape prior to British occupation is that of the Scholarchs who submitted a summary to the Council of Policy in 1779<sup>88</sup>. Hereafter, no comprehensive account of the provision of education during this period appears to be forthcoming. However, it is possible to form a fragmented impression of circumstances at the Cape during the period from incidental sources. Biographical narrative by persons residing in the Cape at the time provide a glimpse into prevailing conditions. In this regard, the auto-biography of Petrus Borchers (1786-1858), Civil Commissioner of the Cape division and resident magistrate

for Cape Town and its district, as well as the journal entries of Lady Anne Barnard<sup>89</sup> (1750-1825) are insightful.

There is evidence that the charity school which had been established after the founding of the Board of Orphan Masters [1674] still existed during this period as mention is made of Albert Joosten who was still actively teaching at the school for orphan and indigent children in 1796. The death of the revered Stellenbosch teacher, George Knoop, who had been appointed *voorlezer* and schoolmaster in 1785, is also recorded during this period. Apart from teaching the local children, Knoop also taught indigent children at his school for which he had been reimbursed from Church coffers (Du Toit 1958: 26, 28). Although his health had been failing, he had continued teaching with the greatest of dedication until his death in April 1800 (Du Toit 1958: 29).

A Company slave school was still in existence at that time for on 4 January 1802, a resolution was taken by the Ecclesiastical Court to appoint two teachers, the *voorlezer*, Johannes de Vries, and the schoolmaster, Johan van Graan, *tot het onderwijzen van slaven en andere onchristenen* after the death of the previous teacher, Christiaan Stens. The number of pupils increased considerably under the tutorage of Van Graan. The Court took cognisance of this and resolved to increase his salary (Spoelstra 1907: 361). Three years later [1805] Mosis Davidson was examined by the Church Council and appointed *oeffenaar in de goddelijke waarheden voor Heydenen en ook voor Christenen*. De Vries was also examined and promoted to the position of Catechist (Spoelstra 1907: 482). In the Stellenbosch Church Council archives, mention is made of an ex-elder, Desch, who, in a private capacity established a school for slave children in 1800 (Spoelstra 1907: 415).

Although the British were not concerned with bringing about significant improvements to the Colony, it would appear that they took it upon themselves to establish a young ladies' seminary for the daughters of well-to-do citizens. This is mentioned by De Mist<sup>90</sup> in his *Memorandum on the*

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89 Wife to Secretary of the Colony, Andrew Barnard. They arrived at the Cape on 5 May 1797. Lord Macartney, the Governor, had not been accompanied by his wife, so it fell to the Secretary's wife to be the chief lady at the Cape. She won the affectionate regard of the Dutch people. Lady Anne remained in Cape Town until January 1802 and her husband a few months longer until the Cape was restored to the Dutch [Anderson in Barnard 1924: ii-vii].

90 See 3.5

*Cape*, a report compiled for the *Aziatische Raad* in 1802 (Jeffreys 1920: 201). Possibly this institution had been established at the prompting of serving British officials anxious to have their daughters educated in a manner to which they were accustomed in Britain.

Colonial parents who valued education took it upon themselves to provide that which the local schools could not. Petrus Borchers, son of the Reverend Meent Borchers of the Stellenbosch parish, mentions that after he had graduated from the local school at Stellenbosch where he had been taught by the above-mentioned George Knoop, he received further tuition from his father. Borchers (1861: 37) says in this regard that

*... Latin grammar, the vocabulary of Dellarius, and, ultimately, Cornelius Nepos were introduced and my time was well occupied by morning and evening lessons.*

He was further encouraged by his father to improve his mind by reading (Borchers 1861: 39). When the admiral and commander of the British fleet, Sir Hugh Christian, arrived in 1798, he indicated that it was his wish that he and his party — which included his son and other youngsters together with their chaplain and tutor, Dr Dolling — should stay with the Borchers in Stellenbosch. This was arranged, and Borchers mentions that he was admitted to Dolling's classes where he learnt the rudiments of the English language under his competent tutorage (Borchers 1861: 37-38).

In 1801, Borchers accompanied Commissioners Petrus Truter and William Somerville as assistant secretary on a journey into the interior. In his account, he mentions that several schools were to be found in the town of Worcester, a town which was then the seat of the magistracy which had formerly been at Tulbagh (Borchers 1861: 42, 45).

Since no education legislation was forthcoming during the period it can be deduced that conditions were not much altered under the rule of the British and that the provision of education was similar to that provided under the rule of the DEIC.

#### 3.4.4 The provision of education in the interior

Lady Anne Barnard's journal provides a vivid description of conditions in the interior<sup>91</sup> and on several occasions, mention is made of the presence of tutors in the homes of the farmers whom they visited (Barnard 1924: 177, 204, 209). On each occasion, she speaks favourably of these persons and mentions in particular the refinement of a Prussian tutor whom she describes as follows.

*... His manner was so dignified and so polished, his bow so genteel, and his French so good, that he struck me much* (Barnard 1924: 240).

From this it can be deduced that farmers were in the habit of employing tutors and that the ability and refinement of these persons — as deduced from Lady Barnard's descriptions — could be described as adequate for the task.

Borcherds also undertook a journey into the interior and in his narrative, he mentions that the inhabitants of the Roggeveld had been deprived of education and that some could not even write their names. Upon visiting the farmers of this region, he found that a religious spirit was natural to many though some, he admitted, displayed indifference. The only opportunity that these pioneers had to receive some form of education was to attend the instruction offered by itinerant missionaries visiting the Bushmen in that area. These men would on occasion convey religious instruction at meetings known as *oeffeningen* (Borcherds 1861: 54-56).

The British occupation was not intended to bring about fundamental changes to social institutions — including education — and it would seem that the provision of education continued along much the same lines as it had under the DEIC. Since no dramatic changes were made and no comprehensive reports on the state of education at the time were forthcoming, the prevailing state of education can only be deduced from comments made in passing by persons such as outlined above.

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91 Lady Anne Barnard and her party undertook a tour into the interior between 5 -31 May 1798 [Barnard 1924: 174-241].

### 3.4.5 Observations and deductions regarding parental involvement in educational issues<sup>92</sup>

Generally speaking, the British made no change to the administration to the Cape during their brief sojourn. In effect, there was little to gain from their temporary occupation of the Colony and they could hardly be blamed for displaying a rather indifferent attitude. England, as was the case elsewhere in Europe, had no established formal education system which the British authorities could have attempted to transfer to the Colony and consequently, the provision of education proceeded as it had under the DEIC.

With regard to parents accepting their responsibility for their children's education, the accounts of Barnard and Borchers in general attest to the fact that parents in the interior, even though they were cut off from Churches and schools, did not neglect this duty. It can thus be assumed that parents who lived in the vicinity of schools would have heeded their responsibility to have their children educated in the tenets of Christianity — the unchallenged aim of education at this time.

Apart from increased mission activity and the subsequent establishment of a significant number of schools among the blacks, the number and type of schooling facilities for whites and the Colony's slaves remained relatively constant. Education was under the control of local Church Councils and the Scholarchs or Bible and School Commission as it was then known. The number of representatives on the body of Scholarchs was increased — yet this did not mean a unique opportunity for parental involvement and say in education — certainly not intentionally. It can be deduced that parents would have appealed to the Church Councils in matters regarding education — not that this was unusual, but due to the fact that the authorities were of a foreign culture and language and this fact would complicate effective communication.

These conditions were thus not much different from what had prevailed under the DEIC and it was only after the Batavian government proposed education reform, that the provision of education was to be placed in the spotlight and subjected to modification and revision.

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92 No cross-referencing will be made in this section: these preliminary findings will be discussed at greater length in the final chapter.

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### 3.5 EDUCATION UNDER THE BATAVIAN REPUBLIC [1803-1806]

As peace returned to Europe, the restoration of the Cape Colony to the Batavian Republic was an issue that needed to be dealt with. The British occupation of the Cape ended in accordance with the treaty of Amiens signed in August 1802 and High Commissioner Jacobus Abraham de Mist (1749-1823) and Governor Jan Willem Janssens (1762-1838) were appointed to command the Colony. It had been arranged that De Mist would take command in Cape Town on 1 January 1803, but at the last moment, the British commander received instruction from Britain, where a new outbreak of war was expected, not to surrender the Cape. The Dutch officials remained outside Cape Town during this time and made studies of the country. In February, the orders were countermanded (Freund 1972: 153) and it thus happened that De Mist took possession of the Cape on 1 March 1803 (Freund 1972: 122, 131; Theal 1964c: 106).

During the decline of the DEIC, its affairs had been taken over by the state and transferred to the Committee for East Indian Trade and Possessions. This body was replaced by a committee for Asiatic possessions and establishments, the *Aziatische Raad*, in 1800. This committee, unlike its predecessor, took a greater interest in the Cape particularly when the preliminary negotiations for the peace of Amiens in 1801 indicated that the British were prepared to relinquish control. In December 1801, the Dutch government requested the *Aziatische Raad* to furnish it with proposals for the future administration of the Cape. De Mist was chosen to prepare a memorandum to highlight the main administrative issues that would have to be attended to. Among the issues to be addressed, was education. These would serve as general guidelines for a future Dutch government (Freund 1972: 148-151). In preparing the memorandum, De Mist made extensive use of, *inter alia*, the reports of Nederburgh<sup>93</sup>, one of the last governors at the Cape before British occupation (Jeffreys 1920: 161). The *Aziatische Raad* approved the memorandum and on 8 March 1802, the government formally accepted certain of the proposals. All legislation was to be temporary in character as the *Aziatische Raad* intended to formulate a constitutive charter for the Colony at a later stage (Freund 1972: 148-151).

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93 See 3.3.4.3

With the reinstatement of Dutch rule at the Cape, the Council of Policy was reinstated. As had been customary under the DEIC, this Council was to function together with and alongside the Governor according to the instructions or decisions of the state or of the *Aziatische Raad* delegated to the Governor. One of the explicit duties of the Council was, in correspondence with the magistrates, to deal with matters relating to education (Freund 1972: 168).

### 3.5.1 A review of De Mist's memorandum to the *Aziatische Raad*

In his proposals regarding the future administration of the Cape, it is not surprising that De Mist was particularly concerned with reforming education since, as mentioned before, he made substantial use of Nederburgh's reports of circumstances at the Cape. The latter had expressed concern about the lack of adequate educational facilities as reflected by the low level of culture at the Cape and felt strongly the need to introduce institutions that would refine the population (Freund 1972: 120). The development of a national education system and the promulgation of a *School Act* in the Netherlands also influenced De Mist's views on the role and administration of education to be provided at the Cape. De Mist believed in the efficacy of education as a means of inculcating a population with morality as well as skills. He desired a standardised, general education system which enjoyed state support (Freund 1972: 227-228).

#### 3.5.1.1 *A general lack of civilization*

In his report to the *Aziatische Raad*, De Mist deplored the uprisings and rebellious conduct of the Colonists in the preceding decade and attributed this to the corruption of the burghers' moral sense brought about by a lack of social intercourse with civilized individuals. He pointed out that the circumstances of the Colonists living nearer Cape Town differed only in degree and not in kind. Among the most serious causes for the decline of morals in the Colony, he believed, was the lack of a proper means for educating the youth (Jeffreys 1920: 198-199; 202).

In addition he drew attention to the fact that only two Church denominations had as yet been authorised under the previous government of the Cape — the Reformed and the Lutheran. De Mist was of the opinion that schoolmasters stationed in different parts of the country districts would have

great success in disseminating the first principles of civilization since the isolated sermons infrequently heard, were *als zaad, in eene onbereide aarde, voor niets weggeworpen* (Jeffreys 1920: 46). He went on to applaud the efforts of the Moravian Brothers and other religious societies which had involved themselves in planting the seeds of the Christian religion in the Colony and added that these efforts should be encouraged and extended (Jeffreys 1920: 202). To address this issue, laws guaranteeing religious freedom were consequently promulgated in 1805 probably in the hope that this would encourage the establishment of a greater number of congregations to attend to the spiritual — and thus also the educational — needs of the burghers. The decree proclaimed the equality of recognised religious denominations before the law and tied the Churches to the state — no religious association could meet or worship without the consent of the government (Freund 1972: 215).

#### 3.5.1.2 *Proposals regarding the provision of education*

De Mist proposed that a number of teachers — twenty to twenty-five — be selected from teacher training schools<sup>94</sup> in the Netherlands to take up duty at the Cape and especially in the remote inland districts. It was assumed that the School Boards (presumably the Bible and School Commission or Scholarchs) would assist the furtherance of the scheme (Jeffreys 1920: 200).

With regard to the content of education that was to be provided by these qualified teachers, De Mist considered school books that were

*...goede, verstaanbaare en verstandige schoolboeken, en eenvoudige zedekundige handleidingen, en vooral korte, stichtelyke liederen en lofzangen, voor welke die Landbewooners eenen zonderlingen eerbied hebben ...* (De Mist 1802 in Jeffreys 1920: 46) both essential and appropriate.

It would appear that De Mist was endeavouring to provide a type of education which the Colonists would approve of and support. In relation to the scope of education, De Mist advocated the fostering of instruction in every branch of learning — the foreign languages, history, geography, ethics, natural history and drawing. The arts and sciences were to be encouraged, the efforts

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94 These had been established by the *Tot Nut van 't Algemeen* organisation [Jeffreys 1920: 200]. See 3.5.2.2, footnote 97.

towards establishing an Agricultural Society were to be stimulated, the Public Library and Museum were to be preserved and augmented and the immigration of efficient professionals and tradesmen who could share in developing the prosperity and resources of the community was to be encouraged (Jeffreys 1920: 201-203).

**3.5.2** A review of the process towards the formulation of De Mist's school ordinance The memorandum which De Mist prepared for the *Aziatische Raad* was based on reports of those who had been resident at the Cape — previous governors and the accounts of notable travellers into the interior. On arrival at the Cape, both Janssens and De Mist undertook their own reconnaissance journeys and were able to form a first-hand opinion of the existing conditions.

#### **3.5.2.1** *An evaluation of existing conditions*

Governor Janssens was the first to venture into the interior<sup>95</sup>. It became evident to him that the education situation in the interior was appalling and he lost no time in acquainting De Mist with the facts (Du Toit 1944: 14). The impression which Janssens formed was that ... *opvoeding en instructie ontbreekt hen, en niets behoeven zij meer dan dat* (Theal 1911: 209).

He appreciated that parents in the interior were eager to provide for the educational needs of their children since they were in the habit of engaging private tutors and itinerant teachers — the latter having been made available to them by the Company. Yet, the quality of these teachers, although they did much to prevent total illiteracy, left much to be desired. Janssens found them *meest waanwijs en zelden wijs* (Theal 1911: 212).

Even before De Mist could venture into the interior to conduct his own investigation into the education situation, various persons had informed him of prevailing conditions. The Church Councils of various congregations also brought the conditions to the attention of the government who made every attempt to make arrangements to improve the situation. In March 1803, De Mist had the opportunity to visit Simon's Bay and was shocked at the absence of education facilities in

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95 3 April 1803 [Du Toit 1944: 14].

a town so close to the hub of the Colony (Du Toit 1944:14-15). On 30 March 1803, the Burgher Senate in Cape Town was issued with provisional instructions regarding its duties. Article 18 of these directives addressed education and the Senate was charged with overseeing public instruction and education of the youth in Cape Town and with procuring the necessary means for that purpose (Theal 1899: 181).

Still, De Mist decided to bring the deplorable state of education to the attention of the general public in an effort to impress on them the graveness of the situation and to confront them regarding their personal responsibility. A proclamation was duly published in the *Kaapsche Courant* on 11 June 1803 in which he emphasised that without education, religious stability and civilization were impossible. The relevant section reads

*... dat naarmaate de banden van Godsdienst by eenig volk losgemaakt en mingeacht, en het publiek onderwys verwaarloosd wordt, de misdaden van allerlei aart in deselfde evenredigheid vermeerderen, het gezach der wetten vertrapt, en alle gezellige Deugden verwaardloosd worden!* (De Mist in Du Toit 1944: 15).

The Commissioner committed himself

*... om deeze steunpilaaren der maatschappij, Godsdienst en Opvoeding der Jeugd, op alle wyze aan te moedigen, te bevorderen en te ondersteunen!* (De Mist in Du Toit 1944: 15).

In October 1803 De Mist himself undertook an extended tour of the interior. His observations corresponded with those of Janssens and De Mist was able to gain insight into the way of life of the inland Colonists and their particular problems and needs<sup>96</sup>. He found that parents were not indifferent towards education but *een ieder lamenteerd zeer het gebrek aan onderwyjs zijner kinderen* (Theal 1911:428).

It is recorded in *Secrete Resolutiën [1803-1804]* that early in 1804, Janssens addressed the Council of Policy on the state of education imploring them that *... [o]nze vereendigde pogingen zyn meer dan noodig, om het kwaad maar binnen eenigzints beperkte oevers te houdend, veel meer om iets goeds daar te stellen* (Du Toit 1944: 17).

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96 Barrow [1806: 82] also noted that the means of education were very difficult to be had among a people so widely scattered over a vast extent of country as were the locals of the interior of the Cape Colony.

### 3.5.2.2 *De Mist's proposal for an education system for the Cape Colony*

It would be no easy task to design a workable and uniform education system for a society as diverse as that of the Cape Colony. To assist him in this daunting task, De Mist thought it expedient to call in the help of the recently established society, *Tot Nut van 't Algemeen*<sup>97</sup>. The society was requested to furnish the Commissioner with a proposal regarding the provision and funding of general education by 1 June 1803 (Du Toit 1944: 18). Their proposal was completed by May of that year. It would appear that De Mist considered their proposal to be both an accurate reflection of prevailing circumstances and a feasible solution for improving the education situation for he based his own proposal largely on that of the Society's (Du Toit 1944: 18).

In short, the following deductions were made. The youth of the Colony could be divided into three groups according to their parents' ability to fulfil their educational needs. There were those whose parents were:

- able to afford basic education as well as education in foreign languages, the arts and science and whose children had the mental capacity to benefit from such instruction
- of the middle social class and could afford basic education for their children — as was currently being provided, and
- destitute and unable to afford education for their children and whose children's education was currently being provided by the Church and Orphan Chamber through charity schools.

The educational needs of children in the interior, it was believed, would best be provided for through boarding schools. Parents would be expected to pay fees for their children's instruction which would enable the schoolmaster to attend solely to teaching without having to turn to other occupations to supplement his income (Du Toit 1944: 19).

De Mist made good progress with the design of his proposed school ordinance but had not yet been able to decide on a feasible financing plan. He was convinced that funding could be raised through taxes, but the Society had warned him that he should not rely on the benevolence or goodwill of

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97 The society was founded in 1784 in Edam when Jan Nieuwenhuizen, a local Mennonite minister, became aware that there was a distinct need to reform primary education in the Netherlands to bring enlightenment and its understanding of virtue and education to the people. The work was continued by the son, Martinus. The Cape branch of the Society was established on 15 July 1802 by a group of like-minded public spirited persons under the leadership of H A Vermaak [Du Toit 1944: 97-98].

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the Colonists and that the raising of additional taxes would neither be tolerated nor supported. Consequently, a special commission was established to investigate the matter of financing. The presidents of the Colonial Accounting Chamber, the Orphan Chamber, the Desolate Estate Chamber, the Lombard Bank and the Burgher Senate, together with a member of the Council of Policy as chairperson, constituted the Commission (Notule De Mist: 23 July 1804 in Du Toit 1944: 20).

In its response, the Commission proposed that the initial improvements to the education system should be undertaken by the state itself and that the cost of education was to be procured from Colony earnings. A separate education fund was to be established once the economic situation of the Colony showed signs of improvement (Du Toit 1944: 22). With regard to De Mist's proposal of levying additional personal tax<sup>98</sup>, the Commission proposed that the responsibility for collecting the taxes should not be borne by the School Commission. De Mist had also proposed the levying of various taxes which ranged from taxes on the sale of alcohol, purchasing of slaves, settlement of estates, raising of loans and even to the use of horses and carriages in town. The Commission approved of the taxes raised from the sale of alcohol, but did not approve the taxes on the importation of slaves since slave labour was "a necessity and not a luxury". The Commission supported the suggestion that the monies accrued from the release of slaves previously paid to the Church, in future be paid into the school fund. The Commission had been requested to suggest alternative ways of procuring funds for education and these ranged from arranging biannual collections for education purposes through the Dutch Reformed and the Lutheran Churches, the levying of estate settlement taxes and the establishment of a substantial fund of which the interest accrued was to be used for the maintenance of schools (Du Toit 1944:25-26).

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98 These taxes were to be voluntary contributions mainly from the more affluent sector of the community [Du Toit 1944: 22].

### 3.5.3 A brief analysis of De Mist's school ordinance

By 11 September 1804, De Mist had finalised the *Schoolordre voor de Volkplanting aan de Kaap de Goede Hoop*. The ordinance which consisted of two parts — the first addressed the general control and provision of education and the second part concerned itself with the financing of education — was presented in part<sup>99</sup> to the citizenry in successive editions of the *Kaapsche Courant*<sup>100</sup>. A preamble sketching the prevailing education situation in both the interior of the Colony and in the towns preceded the actual ordinance. De Mist commended the efforts of individuals to establish funds for providing education in the towns and lamented the untenable situation in the interior. He further pledged to ensure that the provision of education would be properly coordinated in future (Dreyer 1936: 31-32).

#### 3.5.3.1 *The control of education*

In the first three articles of the ordinance, De Mist addressed measures relating to the control of education. The Governor was named the *Beschermer en Voorstander* of education and, as such, was named the *Opper-Skolarg*. Together with his Council it was his prerogative to ensure that funds for the maintenance and administration of schools were acquired and accounted for. The management of schools was to be undertaken by a School Commission which would comprise the Governor, a representative (to be named by the Governor) from the Council of Policy to act as chairperson, a member of the Orphan Chamber (to be named by the President of the Chamber), two ministers from the Reformed and one from the Lutheran congregations (of which the youngest would preside as secretary), the president of the Burgher Senate (or a member nominated by him) and an eighth member named by the Governor to act as treasurer to the fund that would be established. In addition, the rural magistrates and ministers would be honorary members. As such they would have the right to attend all meetings and to advise the meeting on matters affecting education in their particular districts (Dreyer 1936: 32-33).

99 The section on financing was never published. It is thought that De Mist might have anticipated that these regulations would not meet with public approval as the special Commission and the society *Tot Nut van 't Algemeen* had warned. In 1809 the School Commission commented that publication had been withheld since the Dutch government did not think it proper to make it public nor to implement it [Du Toit 1944: 41-42].

100 9 March to 1 May 1805 [Du Toit 1944: 27]. An unabridged copy of the ordinance is to be found in Dreyer's work *Boustowwe vir die geskiedenis van die Nederduits-Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika* published in 1936.

### 3.5.3.2 *The provision of education*

The ensuing articles related to teachers and teacher training. Trained teachers who had distinguished themselves were to be imported from the Netherlands to act as schoolmasters in the Colony until such time as trained teachers could be provided by a training institute to be established locally. The services of an efficient individual who would be responsible for establishing the envisaged institute would be sought. The Burgher Senate, magistrates and ministers would then be required to nominate candidates — with the permission of their parents or guardians — to be trained as teachers. Such candidates were to be not older than twelve, of good mental ability, free from deformity, from good homes, and be of irreproachable character and conduct. Parents would bear the cost of training — either in cash or in agricultural products. In the case of deserving orphans or children from poverty-stricken families, the Orphan Chamber would carry the cost. The duration of training would be five years and the School Commission reserved the right to dismiss individuals on the grounds of poor conduct or insufficient progress. The envisaged institute was to be established on the outskirts of the town. The Scholarchs would be responsible for drafting regulations regarding the administration and control of the Institute. These regulations were to be approved by the Governor (Dreyer 1936: 33-36).

### 3.5.3.3 *The provision of schools and teachers in the country districts*

The School Commission was responsible for providing the outlying districts with teachers. Boarding and day schools were to be established from funds provided by the districts. The Scholarchs or magistrates and clergymen — who were honorary Scholarchs — would be expected to visit these schools regularly to determine what progress was being made. The School Commission reserved the right to dismiss a teacher on the grounds of improper conduct. Those who lived in remote areas too distant for their children to attend these schools, could apply to the School Commission in five years' time for the services of a resident tutor. The Scholarchs were to determine these private tutors' conditions of service. De Mist also made special provision for schools in Simon's Bay (Dreyer 1936: 36-37; 40).

#### 3.5.3.4 *The provision of schools and teachers in Cape Town*

Apart from the existing schools which were to remain under the control of the Burgher Senate, De Mist considered it imperative that an *Instituut van Kost-en Dag-School* be established in Cape Town without delay. The services of a qualified teacher from the Netherlands would need to be acquired until such time as the envisaged local teachers' training institute could provide suitably qualified teachers. This school was to serve all children irrespective of whether they lived in the town itself or the rural area or whether they were citizens or foreigners to the Colony. The teachers would be expected to teach the reading and writing of Dutch, arithmetic, the more commonly used foreign languages and the rudiments of mathematics, geography, history *en wat dies meer zy*. Music, dancing, fencing and horse riding were also to be taught. The principles of the Christian religion of the parents' faith — under guidance of the Church — were to be taught. The teacher would be allowed to charge a reasonable fee for his tuition (Dreyer 1936: 37-38).

A girls' boarding and day school was to be established on the outskirts of Cape Town where young and older girls would be taught — apart from the conventional reading and writing of Dutch — etiquette, deportment, the principles of the sciences, handwork and housecraft. The appointed female teacher would have the assistance of one or more tutors to teach the basic principles of arithmetic, Christian religion, music, dancing, drawing and other cultured arts and recreation (Dreyer 1936: 39).

The Burgher Senate remained responsible for the existing primary schools. The appointment of teachers and drafting of school regulations was to be conducted in accordance with the principles of the school ordinance and applications in this regard were to be made to the School Commission (Dreyer 1936:40).

The Latin school was applauded for its contribution towards edifying the youth and it was stated that it had the assured support of the government. Administrative improvements to the existing school included the appointment of a minimum of two teachers — to be known as the Rector and the Co-rector. In addition, all administration would be controlled by the School Commission acting under the jurisdiction of the Governor and it was expected that the Rector and his assistant would comply with the regulations as laid down by the School Commission (Dreyer 1936: 41).

### 3.5.3.5 *A prelude to introducing compulsory school attendance*

It was the intention of the ordinance to indirectly oblige parents to make use of the education facilities being provided. To achieve this objective, it was stipulated that no child born in the Colony after 1 January 1800 who had not attended either the Latin school or the envisaged Institute, would be considered for appointment to a civil post or an honorary position generating an annual income of 300 Rix dollars or more. Promotion would be reserved for those who had passed the highest class of the Latin school. In addition, this pass had to be attained on merit and a testimonial signed by the School Commission attesting to this fact had to be submitted for consideration for promotion to posts where the annual remuneration exceeded 1000 Rix dollars (Dreyer 1936: 42).

It should be noted however, that although no earlier record of a proclamation prescribing compulsory schooling could be found, the concept of compulsory school attendance was not unknown in the Cape. Theal (1882: 368) recounts an incident which occurred in 1754 where a widow had refused to allow her two children to attend school. The elders of the Church reminded her of her duty and the clergyman reprimanded her but to no avail. The consistory reported the circumstance to the Council of Policy who admonished her not to bring up her children as heathens. She remained obdurate maintaining that it was her right to have the children educated or not. The matter was then settled by the Governor, Ryk Tulbagh [1751-1771]. The widow was ordered to consign her children to the Church authorities so that they might be instructed in the duties of Christians. If she did not comply, she would be flogged.

### 3.5.3.6 *Financing of education*

De Mist called upon the Colonists to view their financial contribution to the establishment and maintenance of schools as a service to their children and descendants. The existing school fund<sup>101</sup> was to be used exclusively for education. The Governor and the School Commission would determine the annual contribution that Colonists in the country districts were to make to the Church and School Fund and it was the task of the School Commission to devise methods for collecting and administering all funds whether collected from taxes or contributions. The ordinance

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101 This fund had been established by the Scholarchs to raise money to establish a Latin and a French school in keeping with their proposals for improving the provision of education. Many private individuals supported the scheme and by 1793, a substantial sum had been accumulated [Du Toit 1958: 24]. See 3.3.3.3.5

provided for amendment and adaptation to ensure better arrangements for the maintenance and provision of schooling should those which had been suggested prove inadequate or impracticable (Dreyer 1936: 43-46).

#### 3.5.4 Changes initiated by De Mist's school ordinance

Within a week of the Council of Policy's meeting at which Van Medenbach Wakker was appointed president of the School Commission, the full contingent of representatives was announced in the *Kaapsche Courant* of 27 February 1805. It was decided that the Commission would meet once a month (Du Toit 1944: 56-58).

One of the first tasks to be undertaken by this newly established body was to oversee the establishment of a school for girls. Abraham Pahud, a French Swiss, and his German born wife, Antoinette, had approached the *Aziatische Raad* in connection with establishing a school at the Cape. The *Raad* in turn notified the Cape authorities and Pahud was asked to submit a copy of the proposal. The Pahuds had envisaged establishing a boarding school for both boys and girls at which Dutch, French and the rudiments of ethics and moral philosophy, reformed religion, world history, geography, arithmetic and the basic principles of geometry and the natural sciences would be taught saying it was their desire to fulfil the expectations of both the government and the parents through their concerted efforts (Du Toit 1944: 58-62). The memorandum thus prepared was tabled at a meeting of the Council of Policy on 13 February 1805. The School Commission, officially instituted on 20 February, studied the proposal and submitted a full report early in March. It was recommended that a school for young girls — as provided for in article 22 of De Mist's ordinance — be established under the guidance of the Pahuds. Consequently, the directive delivered to the Pahuds was that they had permission to establish and manage a day school for girls. Early in April, the general public were informed of the proposed school and interested parents were invited to approach the treasurer of the School Commission regarding admission (Du Toit 1944: 58-67).

According to the ordinance, the Latin school was obliged to bring itself in line with the other schools in order to facilitate congruity and educational reform. The School Commission had not made specific proposals in this regard, but it is noted that the school did not develop into the calibre

of institution intended by the Commissioner General. Janssens even questioned the feasibility of the school since, in his opinion, Latin was a language generally considered to be of little purpose in the Cape and it would appear that the school was not greatly supported (Du Toit 1944: 72-74).

The public primary schools, described by Janssens as *de gewoone Lees- en Schryfschoolen*, resorted under the Burgher Senate and provided schooling for the middle class children. In 1779 there were eight such schools and during the course of the Batavian rule, several other schools providing education in various additional subjects including foreign languages and mathematics were established (Du Toit 1944: 75-83). The education of orphans and children from indigent families was undertaken by the charity schools — the *Kerkskole* — and in most cases, the Church Council chose to use the services of one of their clerics. The Lutheran community established its own school which was attended by children from both indigent and affluent families of the Lutheran congregation. The latter were required to pay school fees (Du Toit 1944: 83-84; Leibbrandt 1906: 710-714).

The practice of sending children overseas for further study was still commonplace and the government encouraged this practice by even providing financial assistance when required (Du Toit 1944: 85-86).

The establishment of a teachers' training institute did not materialise — basically as a result of insufficient funds and not as a result of a lack of interest from the School Commission. The education fund, originally intended for use only by the Latin school, was now a national education fund but the members of the School Commission doubted whether under the prevailing circumstances it would be reasonable to expect the already hard-pressed community to make further contributions to the fund (Du Toit 1944: 90-94).

After the establishment of the society *Tot Nut van 't Algemeen* in 1802, it became a matter of importance to the founding members to establish their own school. On 18 June 1803, Nicolaas van Es, one of the society's members, published an article in the *Kaapsche Courant* in which he outlined the main aim of the society as ... *middelen uit te denken om dit kwaad, de bron van zo veel zeden verwoestende ondeugden tegen te gaan en te verhelpen* (Du Toit 1944:

100). He explained that parenthood presupposed the good intention to guide the child to the acquisition of virtue and knowledge<sup>102</sup>. His exhortation warrants mention. Van Es termed the attainment of virtue ...*'t welk men zedelyke opvoeding noemt* which could be acquired by all ... *zo onze daaden, onze woorden maar niet beliegen, en men zich altoos toone, zo als men den kinderen hebben wil*. There was no disputing that it was the parents' responsibility to mould the child according to high moral standards and he advised that lying, deception, cruelty, mockery and association with slaves sowed and nurtured the seed of roguery in the hearts of the youth and should be avoided at all cost. Unappreciativeness, one of the greatest vices, was never to be tolerated. Children were to be taught moderation, sincerity, patience, steadfastness, diligence and service to those less fortunate. The most important, however, was the acquisition of a deep respect for the Almighty from whom parental authority derives. In closing the following quotation was cited.

*... Dat hy die God vreest, geene andere vreeze kent ...[ maar]... toch God niet vreest en erkent, zulk een is een monster in de Maatskappy, dewyl zeer zeker geen band hem heilig is (Kaapse Courant 30 July 1803).*

The school that was subsequently established by the society in January 1804 was run by J.H. Brinkhoff and in addition to the usual subjects, he also taught mathematics and arithmetic (Du Toit 1944: 103-104). Under the leadership of Francois Agron, the society organised a special quasi-secondary school for its own members (Du Toit 1944: 104, 108).

The work done by such organisations and the requests of individuals to open schools providing for special educational needs, indicates that educational development under the Batavians came not only from the government but also from the desires of local people to establish institutions to improve education.

### 3.5.5 A review of the consequences of De Mist's school ordinance

A distinct move away from the practice of employing the assistance and guidance of the Church in relation to educational matters is evident. When De Mist sought guidance regarding the preparation of his school ordinance, it was to the society, *Tot Nut van 't Algemeen*, and a

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102 It would appear that this was the first explicitly secular exhortation to parents defining parental responsibility.

specially constituted Commission that he appealed for direction, and not to the Church.

According to De Mist's school ordinance, Church intervention would be restricted to matters relating to religious instruction. Control of education was in the hands of the School Commission under the patronage of the Governor who presided as *Opper-Skolarg*<sup>103</sup>. The appointment of teachers no longer resorted under the Church but under the School Commission. The prelude to the implementation of this principle was already forthcoming prior to the publication of the ordinance in 1804 as attested to by the following occurrence. In March 1803, De Mist appealed to the Church to find a suitable person to be deployed to teach at Simon's Bay, but, he insisted this should be done *zonder het aanvoeren van eenige dogmatische geschillen tusschen bijzondere Kerkgenoodschappen* (Du Toit 1944: 43). A possible explanation could be that in the past only persons who adhered to the tenets of the Dutch Reformed Church were appointed as teachers and since the Lutheran Church had also gained state recognition [1780] the selection of a suitable teacher could no longer justifiably be restricted to a person of the Reformed Church. It is possible that De Mist wanted to avoid friction and dissension in the matter<sup>104</sup>.

It has been said that De Mist was responsible for the secularisation of education. In support of this argument, De Mist's statement to the Church Council (Kerkorde)<sup>105</sup> is quoted.

*... [D]e openbaare scholen strekkende tot onderwyzing der Jeugd, behooren niet tot eenig byzonder Kerkgenoodschap. Het zyn kweekplaatsen, om goede Burgers voor den Staat te vormen: en als zodanige staan dezelve onder het onmiddelyk toezigt en bestuur van het Gouvernement (De Mist in Dreyer 1936: 12).*

The focus of education was on citizenship, but it is true too that De Mist viewed the Church as having a significant role to play in education and upliftment. According to the ordinance, it was the state's responsibility to finance education and to provide and maintain educational institutions. The teaching of religious subjects was obligatory and it was the Church that was to preside over this

103 It must be noted, however, that the clergy were well represented on this body and were outnumbered by only one representative.

104 Religious freedom was only gained in 1805 – see 3.5.1.1

105 The 18th article [*Provisioneele Kerken-Ordre voor de Bataafsche Volkplanting aan de Kaap de Goede Hoop*] [Dreyer 1936: 12].

religious instruction. The Church further contributed to the control of education through representation on the School Commission.

De Mist had reservations regarding the suitability of the clergy to act as teachers stating on 25 July 1804 in the *Provisioneele Kerken-Ordre voor de Betaafsche Volkplanting aan de Kaap de Goede Hoop* addressed to the Ecclesiastical Court that

*... geen ongeordende personen, staande in betaling en onder het bedwang van byzondere Societeiten, saamgesteld uit Leden van een of meerdere Kerkgenoodschappen, worden binnen deze Volkplanting geduld om als afgezondene van zodanige Societeiten onder de alhier thands aanwezige, of by vervolg met publiek gezach opterigten Christen-gemeenten eenig gedeelte van het openbaar Leeraars ambt of privaot onderwys uit te oefnen (De Mist in Dreyer 1936: 11).*

Janssens was even more resolute saying that teachers should be

*... kundige manne, en wijnige of geene geestelijken — deeze laasten smoooren alle liberale denkbeelden, kunnen misschien Christenen vormen, maar veel al elendige Leden voor eene Maatschappij, die veel activiteit behoeft (Janssens in Du Toit 1944: 44).*

Implementation of the ordinance and an evaluation of its merits and shortcomings were not forthcoming since the Batavian rule was short lived and by 1807 the Cape was once again under the administration of the British — an aspect that will be dealt with in the next chapter. However, much groundwork had been done in this period to address the formal provision of education at the Cape and an overview of these initiatives provides insight into the degree of parental involvement in education at the time.

### 3.5.6 Observations and deductions regarding parental involvement in educational issues<sup>106</sup>

Developments regarding the formalisation of the provision of education in Netherlands were afoot at the stage when De Mist was preparing his proposals for education reform at the Cape Colony. It is thus probable that he was influenced by the tenets of liberalism upon which the Dutch education system was developing as well as the reports by Colonists and Commissioners regarding the ineptitude of the Colony's education system to address the prevailing lack of civilisation. It was clear that private and Church initiative had not been able to resolve the education crisis. De Mist believed that the state would best be able to alleviate the consequences of prevailing inadequate provision.

Education facilities that existed at this time were the Church schools, the charity schools, private schools — not necessarily established because of a concern for the state of education but to ensure a personal income for the schoolmaster — and itinerant or private tutors. Under these circumstances, parents managed as best they could. Those who lived in areas where there were schools, made use of these facilities; those who could afford to and who felt that local provision was inadequate, sent their children to Europe to further their education, and parents in the interior far from Churches and schools employed tutors.

With regard to the supervision of education, parents still had no formal say nor representation on the bodies overseeing education. It would be merely incidental that parents enjoyed representation on the controlling bodies i.e. the Burgher Senate or Body of Scholarchs (School Commission) — there is no indication that an effort was made to purposefully elect parents to these bodies, nor did the composition of these bodies readily accommodate the general parent body — it was the clergy, lay persons and members of the state who were represented on these councils.

A notable event in relation to the substantiation that parents have indisputable responsibilities in relation to their children's education was the appeal of Van Es recorded in the 30 July 1803 edition of the *Kaapsche Courant*. Perhaps this was one of the first nonecclesiastical treatises directed to Cape Colony parents to fulfil their obligations in relation to the task of educating their

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106 No cross-referencing will be made in this section: these preliminary findings will be discussed at greater length in the final chapter.

children.

Researchers involved in the history of education are obliged to make use of state documents and legislation to gain an understanding of prevailing conditions since little in the form of personal narrative is available. It is difficult to deduce from these accounts the attitudes of individuals and a reconstruction of prevailing circumstances becomes a matter of [subjective] speculation. It is commonly accepted that parents rejected De Mist's educational reforms since they were too liberal — too secular. It needs to be remembered that De Mist did not, nor was it his intention to, exclude religious instruction from the curriculum. Religious instruction was still mandatory and remained under the supervision of the clergy. However, education was not restricted to this domain, but included secular subjects — a more liberal approach. Colonists to whom education was important sent their children to further their studies in Europe where exactly this type of curriculum was being offered. In addition, several local private schools which offered a wider range of subjects than the four R's — reading, writing, 'rithmetic and religion — were established during the time De Mist was preparing his memorandum. There is every indication that these schools were voluntarily supported by parents. The failure of De Mist's system could better be ascribed to the short duration of Batavian rule which complicated implementation, the shortage of trained teachers and the shortage of funds than the outright rejection of the system by parents.

### 3.6 CLOSING COMMENTS: GENERAL CONDITIONS RELATING TO EDUCATION AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN FORMAL EDUCATION<sup>107</sup>

Jan van Riebeeck introduced to the Cape a form of education similar to that which prevailed in the Netherlands at the time. Education was a concern of the Church since it was the Church that provided the teachers and the content of instruction. An important aspect of the educational activities of these times was the instruction of the pupils in Christian religion in order to prepare them for Church membership. It can be deduced that parents also viewed the aim of education in a similar light. Parents were instrumental in requesting that schools be founded in the newly

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107 No cross-referencing will be made in this section: these preliminary findings will be discussed at greater length in the final chapter.

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established towns and it was generally to the Church that they directed this request.

This proclivity for an education based on the tenets of Christianity not only determined the content of education, but also influenced the character of the nation which was evolving. A nation's system of education is one of the most vital of its whole social structure for it is more than a mere institution to impart knowledge to the rising generation (Balfour 1920: 12). An educational system expresses the innermost beliefs, ideals and aspirations of a people and can thus become an active creator and moulder of the nation's ideals and character. Just as devotion to the principles of the reformed religion had united the Netherlands into one single commonwealth and had made emigration to a foreign country to escape religious oppression a favourable option for the French Huguenots, so too did this same devotion lay the foundation for building up a distinctive colony of people.

The first schools at the Cape were established before a Church had been founded and consequently the state took responsibility for the provision of education. The Governor, however, appointed the sick comforter to teach at these schools. Once a Church had been established, the provision of schools and teachers became a joint effort: the Church Council was not an autonomous body and needed to appeal to and gain approval from the Council of Policy for its proposals for establishing schools and appointing schoolmasters. In turn, the state relied on the Church to provide teachers and to ensure that the principles of the reformed faith were accurately taught and it thus happened that the Church also appealed to the Classis in Amsterdam to seek and deploy suitable sick comforters and clergymen to the Cape. Parents too appealed to the Council of Policy regarding the provision of schools, but usually lodged complaints regarding the conduct of teachers with the local Church Council<sup>108</sup>.

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108 Instances of appeal to the Council of Policy or the Governor in relation to education include the petitions of the Ecclesiastical Court regarding a school for slaves [1666], of Commissioner Verburgh regarding the state of schools in the Colony [1676], of the residents at Stellenbosch for the establishment of a school [1683], of Commissioner Van Rheeде regarding a school for slaves [1685], of the Drakenstein community for a school for the newly arrived French Huguenots [1688] and that of Le Boucq for educational reform and regulation [1707]. Colonists in the interior appealed for itinerant teachers [1785], Spenlin for the establishment of a teacher training institute [1788], Ziegler for the establishment of a French school [1792]. Parents appealed to the Church regarding the conduct of teachers such as Mankaden and Crijnauw, and the Council of Policy on innumerable occasions ordered the Church Council to examine prospective teachers before authorising them to teach at existing schools or to establish and teach at new schools. State control of schools was further symbolised by the presence of the Secunde on the Church Council and the Governor and Secunde on the Board of Scholarchs .

Those parents who lived too far away for their children to attend the established schools, did not neglect their duty to have their children educated — even if the purpose of this education was merely to ensure confirmation. These Colonists in the interior believed that education was a personal matter and many farmers employed itinerant teachers regardless of whether they were ex-government officials or were connected to the Church or whether they were merely private individuals who offered to serve as tutors. Education was at most the concern of the Church since the goal of education was confirmation and Church membership.

Under the DEIC, the Dutch Reformed Church had a measure of control over education through bodies such as the Ecclesiastical Court and the local Church Councils and later the Body of Scholarchs. Although the establishment of the latter increased state representation, the Church retained a good measure of control since some of the representatives on the Body of Scholarchs were also members of the Ecclesiastical Court. All these councils or bodies were themselves subservient to the Council of Policy and the Governor — the state. No far-reaching changes were brought about by the British rule [1795-1803], but a distinct move away from consultation with the Church regarding educational matters was demonstrated under Batavian Rule [1803-1806]. Under De Mist, the latter system gave way to a School Commission system in 1804. The clergy also enjoyed representation on this body, although their numbers were one fewer than the number of secular representatives.

Behr (1988: 88-89) contends that De Mist's attempt to introduce a comprehensive education system during the rule of the Batavian Republic came to nought because of its short duration. The lack of funds was a further drawback. Other authors such as Du Toit (1944: 160) add that the failure of the system was its secular and progressive character which was too liberal to be acceptable to the conservative Colonist mind.

In the next chapter, the conditions of education in the Cape Colony under the British government as well as the development of education systems in the Colony of Natal will be examined and analysed.

## CHAPTER 4

### **THE FORMALISATION OF THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN COLONIAL SOUTH AFRICA: THE CAPE COLONY (1807-1910) THE COLONY OF NATAL (1834-1910)**

*The administration of education, much more than education itself, seems to have had the power of raising in the breasts of politicians of all parties more hatred, more anger and uncharitableness, than any other subject.*

*William Balfour*

## CHAPTER 4

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# THE FORMALISATION OF THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CAPE COLONY [1807-1910] & THE COLONY OF NATAL [1834-1910]

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### 4.1 EDUCATION IN THE CAPE COLONY UNDER BRITISH RULE [1807-1910]

**D**uring the years of initial European settlement, the Cape of Good Hope — although cosmopolitan in composition — was Dutch and consequently Dutch culture and social customs predominated. The French were the only cultural group to have settled at the Cape in any significant number, but they soon adopted Dutch custom and language under Simon van der Stel's assimilation policy<sup>1</sup>. Between 1795 and 1803 the British administered the Cape at the request of the Netherlands' Prince of Orange who feared that the Cape might fall into the hands of the French with whom the Netherlands were at war. When peace was restored, the Colony was returned to the Batavian Republic — as the Netherlands were then known.

On 12 May 1803, less than three months after the Cape Colony had been restored to the Batavian Republic, Britain was at war with France, Spain and the Batavian Republic. When this news reached Governor Janssens at the Cape, he prepared the Colony for attack as he was certain that the British would wish to acquire the settlement to protect their trade route with India. His means were limited since his best regiment had been sent to Batavia where troops were urgently needed. Defence consequently rested upon the burghers (Theal 1894: 131-132; Theal 1902b:

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1 See 3.2.1.1 & 3.3.2.9.

91-92; Whiteside 1909: 51).

On 4 January 1806, Commodore Popham's fleet of 63 British ships anchored at the entrance of Table Bay. The ensuing battle under Major General David Baird<sup>2</sup> was won by the British and on 10 January 1806, articles of capitulation were signed. All Colonists in arms were to return to their former occupations; all rights and privileges including the right to public worship were retained; Dutch retained its status as the official language and all private property was to be respected. Baird was to act as Governor until a replacement was sent<sup>3</sup>. The Dutch troops under General Janssens and the employees of the Batavian administration were allowed to return to Europe and on 6 March 1806 the last representatives of Dutch dominion of the Cape set sail for Holland (Theal 1894: 135-137; Theal 1895: 52; Whiteside 1909: 51).

In 1813 the Prince of Orange who had been in exile in England since 1795 returned to the Netherlands. The British government regarded the Cape as a conquest that might be restored to its original owner at the conclusion of peace, but the Netherlands were in dire financial straits and agreed that for six million pounds sterling the Cape Colony and other Dutch provinces in South America would be ceded to Britain. The British thus acquired dominion over the Colony and the claim of the Netherlands to the Cape was for ever quelled (Theal 1894: 146-147).

During their first occupation of the Cape, the British refrained from implementing any major administrative changes to the Colony since they viewed their sojourn at the Cape as being of a temporary nature only<sup>4</sup>. However, in consequence of Britain's conquest of the Cape in 1806, the Cape became British territory. Finality regarding the fate of the Cape was reached eight years after its capture. No substantive administrative changes — also with regard to education — were initially made, but in 1814 the Cape was formally ceded to the British in terms of the London Treaty and ownership was no longer disputed.

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2 Baird was acquainted with the Cape and its fortifications since he had served there as Brigadier-General at the request of Lord Macartney and General Dundas from December 1797 to November 1798 [Theal 1964c: 192].

3 Baird was Acting-Governor from 10 January 1806 to 17 January 1807. He was replaced by Acting-Governor Lieutenant General Grey from 17 January to 21 May 1807. The Earl of Caledon was appointed Governor on 21 May 1807 [Theal 1964c: xii].

4 See 3.4 & 3.4.1

Control of the Colony initially resorted under the Governor who had absolute authority. This system was modified in 1825 by the creation of a Council of Advice comprising six members to assist and advise the Governor. In 1827 two private citizens were added to the membership of the Council. A conscious step towards Representative Government was taken in 1834 when the Council of Advice was abolished and an Executive Council and a Legislative Council<sup>5</sup> were established. In 1854 Representative Government was instituted and this movement towards increased democracy reached its culmination in 1872 when the Cape Colony was granted Responsible Government. According to this system, representatives elected by the people and not imperial appointees had the power to make and alter laws, to levy taxes and control the use of public funds (Botha 1962: 141-142; Malherbe 1925: 90-91, 115-116).

The section that follows will examine the changes made to the provision of education by the British during the period 1806-1910. As in the previous chapter, an attempt will be made to highlight the role played by parents in the education of their children, but it must be remembered that in the early stages of British rule — as under the Dutch — the parent body had not as yet been afforded the statutory right to intervene in their children's education.

Generally speaking, three distinct phases with regard to education can be identified:

- 1806 - 1822 (Expansion of the provision of education according to established policy)
- 1822 - 1839 (Establishment of schools to further the anglicisation policy)
- 1839 - 1910 (Measures to ensure the formalisation of the provision of schooling)

Once more, the provision of education *per se* will be examined, and instances of parental intercession or petition will be focussed on to trace the development of the principle that parents remain responsible for and retain the right to intervene in the education of their offspring.

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5 The Executive Council consisted of five British officials who held their appointments at the pleasure of the Secretary of State. The Legislative Council comprised an equal number of official and unofficial members selected by the Governor from among the Colony's most influential merchants and landowners.

#### 4.1.1 Foundations for the provision of education in the Cape Colony

Although De Mist had advocated a move from a system of Church control to a system of state control, religious instruction had remained compulsory<sup>6</sup>. To some extent, this must have appeased most parents, yet some still contended *better no education at all from books than instruction not based on religion* (Theal 1964c: 173).

In 1807 the School Commission reported to Lieutenant-Governor Grey [1807] that Major-General Baird [1806 -1807] had directed that education was to continue as usual till such time as the fate of the Colony had been clarified. In 1809 the School Commission reported to the Earl of Caledon [1807-1811] on the state of education and lamented the shortage of funds for education, yet advised that school fees should not be increased for

*... parents already show so indifferent a neglect about the instruction of their children, the least alteration by the Commission in increasing the charge, ... could not be attended with any other consequences than that the most of the parents would let their children grow up without any education whatever* (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 11).

Other shortcomings were the lack of free public schooling for indigent children, poor education standards due to an unqualified teaching corps, the unsuitability of the buildings which served as schools, and the fact that these schools were but arbitrarily conducted (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 11). Consequently, Sir John Cradock [1811-1814] asked the Chief Justice of the Circuit Court, Justice Truter, to enquire into the general character of the settlement and the state of education while on circuit in 1811. So many shortcomings were revealed that the government was roused to activity (Martinius 1922: 28; McKerron 1934: 18; Theal 1901b: 287).

#### 4.1.2 The provision of education under Sir John Cradock: extension of established policy

During his term of office Sir John Cradock devoted much attention to improving the provision of education in the Colony. It was at his instigation that Church clerk schools and the monitor system were instituted. Cradock also played a significant role in introducing instruction in English to the schools.

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See 3.5.3.1 & 3.5.3.4

#### 4.1.2.1 *The Church clerk schools: the reintroduction of Church participation in education*

Under Cradock's administration, a return was made to co-operation with the Church in matters relating to education for Cradock envisaged a system of education that would provide an understanding of the Scriptures and simultaneously lay the foundation for a civilised, moral and industrious life. In this endeavour he must have enjoyed the sanction of the parents who were accustomed to and relied on Church involvement in education. He recommended that a number of free, public schools run by the Church clerks be established in Cape Town and also in the country districts (Theal 1901a: 29). To ensure the success of the system, magistrates and clergymen were asked to stimulate community interest in the planned schools<sup>7</sup> (Martinius 1922: 29; Theal 1902b: 101, 108; Theal 1964c: 267).

The Church clerk schools were controlled by the Bible and School Commission<sup>8</sup> — as the Education or School Commission established under De Mist was now known<sup>9</sup>. Two additional members — two clergymen — were appointed so that the clerical members were once more in the majority. Country district schools were controlled by district School Commissions. These committees were accountable to the Bible and School Commission and generally comprised the magistrate, members of the Church Council and other respected members of the community. Apart from ensuring that teachers fulfilled their duties, they also investigated teachers' grievances and parents' complaints — although parents generally approached the local clergyman or elders before bringing complaints or requests to the attention of the district Commission. An additional task of the Commission was to review applications to open schools (Eybers, E. 1918: 40; Martinius 1922: 29; Van der Westhuizen 1953: 130; Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 16).

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7 The cost of these schools was to be covered partly by funds raised by public subscription. Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State, stipulated that these schools and Churches were only to be established in places entirely destitute of instruction since Colony expenses were to be kept within the limits of its receipts [Theal 1901a: 29]. Magistrates were authorised to augment taxes to enable them to establish district education funds. Nothing came of this proposal and the Colonial Treasury carried the general cost of education [McKerron 1934: 20].

8 The aim of the Bible and School Commission was to distribute the Scriptures and to promote education. The Commission was modelled on the British *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* and the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*. Because of its religious underpinning, the Commission met with the general sanction of the Colonists who favoured religious education [McKerron 1934: 19].

9 See 3.5.3.1 & 4.1.1

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Due to the futility of establishing fixed schools in rural areas, the government announced its willingness to appoint itinerant teachers to sparsely populated country areas. It was envisaged that the magistrates would be consulted about the appointment of suitable teachers. In spite of these arrangements, parents in the rural areas continued to engage their own private teachers to provide some form of formal education (Martinius 1922: 29). This attitude probably prevailed because of the Colonist's aversion to any infringement on the freedom to arrange his own affairs<sup>10</sup>. In addition, it was a system with which he was familiar<sup>11</sup>.

#### 4.1.2.2 *The monitor system and the introduction of gratuitous schooling*

Despite Cradock's attempts to improve the provision of schooling, a considerable number of children — partly on account of the inadequacies of the existing schools, poverty and the apathetic attitude of their parents towards schooling — received no schooling (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 17). The Bible and School Commission consequently suggested to Cradock the introduction of the Bell-Lancaster monitor system of education to the Colony. Through the application of the monitor system of schooling, it was envisaged that the neglected and indigent child would be taught — gratuitously — the principles of Christianity and of moral conduct by means of a simple, cheap and a universally acclaimed mode of teaching. In addition, these schools would serve as institutions through which the acquisition of English could be advanced (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 17). The Commission recommended that a *Master well acquainted with the new system of Education (commonly called after the name of Dr. Bell or Mr. Lancaster) and capable of introducing the same into the lower schools of this Colony under the superintendence of the ... Commission ...be sought in Europe. Apart from this criterion, this person had to be familiar with both the English and the Dutch languages* (Theal 1901a: 216-217).

The monitor school established in Cape Town was a success and attempts were made to introduce similar schools to the country districts, however, these schools met with less fortune. The Paarl school failed because the parents objected to the principles of the schooling system and withdrew

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10 See closing remarks in 4.1.4.3 — Dale's comments [in Malherbe 1925: 112].

11 See 3.3.2.11

their children. In Stellenbosch the school was discontinued due to the ineptitude of the teacher. The only other successful monitor school of the time seems to be the one established in Simon's Town. The school was run by the Church clerk of the English Church, but unlike the other monitor schools, one of the prime motivations was not to introduce Dutch children to English, but to provide education to the large number of needy English-speaking children (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 106-107; 123; 159-160).

Since the government's attempts to provide schools for the indigent were unsuccessful, it was left to the Lutheran and the Dutch Reformed Churches to provide schools for their respective congregations' needy children. This they did by establishing charity schools, but it soon became evident that the Church Councils needed to constantly monitor their pupils' attendance and it was frequently necessary to bring obdurate pupils and parents before the Council to duly remind the parents of their duty to see that their children were educated and attended school regularly (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 106).

It will be noted that the monitor schools had a dual purpose: to provide free education for the indigent and to introduce English to the predominantly Dutch-speaking community.

#### 4.1.2.3 *The introduction of English: first attempts at anglicisation*

At the time of British occupation, most schools — both in the towns and in the country districts — were conducted in Dutch by Dutch schoolmasters<sup>12</sup>. Initially this situation remained unchallenged, but it was inevitable that sooner or later an overt attempt would be made to introduce the language of the ruling power to the Colony's schools. Cradock chose to attain this goal by entrusting the task to those controlling education. For example, he directed the newly appointed Rector of the Grammar School<sup>13</sup> in Cape Town... *to promote and establish the cultivation of the English language to the greatest extent among your pupils* (Theal 1901a:

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12 In Cape Town there were six lower Dutch schools attended by approximately 600 children, the Latin school and a young ladies' school. The town also boasted an English school attended by approximately 40 pupils. A private Dutch school, *Tot Nut van't Algemeen*, had also been founded. This school added French to its curriculum in 1807 and in 1813 the inclusion of English was suggested [Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 12].

13 Referred to elsewhere as the Latin school [cf Van der Westhuizen 1953: 30].

### 39) and to the Bible and School Commission he proposed

*... knowing how much the knowledge of the English language will in future promote the permanent advantage of this Colony, and forward all the various interests of individuals ... you should bear this in mind in your future selection of teachers (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 15).*

Nevertheless, the introduction of English was not indiscriminately or insensitively effected. In the Church clerk schools established under Cradock's direction already commissioned Church clerks were appointed as schoolmasters (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 15). Since these schools were established in predominantly Dutch communities, it can be accepted that most of these schoolmasters were Dutch. In addition, in introducing the Scriptures to the schools the Bible and School Commission was to *endeavour to be informed ... in what language the Bible may be wanted throughout this settlement (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 17)*. It will also be remembered that when the monitor system was introduced, the services of a master acquainted with the system and *one who understood Dutch* was to be acquired<sup>14</sup> (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 17).

It is debatable whether these measures to introduce English significantly altered the face of education or whether the British authorities considered these efforts adequate since the period that followed under Lord Charles Somerset [1814-1826] is renowned for its uncompromising anglicisation policy which profoundly affected education and was the cause of much bitterness for many years to come<sup>15</sup>.

**4.1.3 The provision of education under Lord Charles Somerset: the anglicisation policy**  
The commendable efforts of Sir John Cradock to improve the provision of education were articulately brought to the attention of Lord Charles Somerset by Lord Bathurst in 1814. In a communique to Somerset, Bathurst observed that

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14 See 4.1.2.2

15 Although Somerset is credited with implementing an anglicisation policy, his ideas in this regard were not unique. In 1809 Colonel Collin suggested that a number of qualified British teachers who had learnt Dutch should be employed to teach the Dutch children English and in a short time, the rising generation would all be English [Eybers, E. 1926: 33].

*... [t]here has been nothing in the whole administration of Sir John Cradock which has afforded His Royal Highness more entire satisfaction than the zeal he has uniformly manifested to propagate Christianity and to promote education ... and His Royal Highness trusts that your Lordship will no less than your predecessor appreciate the value of the System which has grown up under his protection, and not to suffer it to languish for want of your countenance and support (Theal 1902a: 141).*

There could have been no doubt in Somerset's mind that he would be expected to take a particular interest in education.

**4.1.3.1 A review of the state of education at the start of Somerset's term of office**  
Cradock had tried to improve the provision of education, but the situation remained disquieting. The teacher training institute had not materialised<sup>16</sup> and the Bible and School Commission was in the precarious position of being unable to provide the established schools with worthy teachers. Somerset granted the Commission permission to obtain teachers from the Netherlands and between 1816 and 1826 it was able to adequately supply the established Dutch schools (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 102-105).

Although many of the Dutch schools were but short lived, they were functional and parents preferred to send their children to these schools since they regarded the Church clerk schools as being inferior. The fact that fees were charged did not deter parents from sending their children to these schools. This attitude probably arose from the view that if fees were charged, the schoolmaster would be under an obligation to carry out his duty effectively for he was accountable to the parents who had paid the required fees. In some instances, English was introduced to the curriculum of these Dutch schools — not through obligation, but presumably through eagerness to broaden the scope of schooling provided (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 137-143; 159).

It is also recorded that Cape Town boasted a number of private English schools. Of the teachers' names on record, 36 of the 53 were English (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 137-143; 159). As

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16 See 3.5.3.2; 3.5.3.4 & 3.5.4

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there were very few English-speaking Capetonians, these schools were probably attended by Dutch children whose parents wanted them to learn English. These schools must have made a significant contribution to introducing the English language and customs to the Dutch-speaking citizens<sup>17</sup>. However, these efforts cannot be ascribed to a decided attempt at anglicisation, but should be attributed to private initiative to extend the scope of education provided.

Schooling in the country districts was in a dismal state. Attendance was irregular, few children attended for more than a year and many lived such distances from the schools that their attendance was extremely erratic. Attendance was even worse during the planting and harvesting seasons because parents often kept their children home to help with the increased work load (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 127).

Without doubt the general state of education was on the decline and in 1816 the Bible and School Commission reported that

*... during the three years in which public Schools and Schoolmasters have existed, not much real advantage has been derived from these institutions; ... the Schools established by public authority, are not much frequented, nor are the public Schoolmasters, as might have been expected, preferred by the Inhabitants to the private ones, whom every Colonist procures as he can* (in Van der Westhuizen 1953: 135).

Even though Cradock's efforts were commendable, Somerset had inherited an education system that required major transformation to bring it in line with the educational requirements of the Colony's youth.

#### 4.1.3.2 *The establishment of English free schools: anglicisation in earnest*

Prior to 1822, very little had been done to change the fundamental Dutch character of the Colony or the nature of education. The establishment of English schools, apart from the monitor schools in Cape Town and Simon's Town, was due to private initiative rather than a concerted anglicisation

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17 These schools must have been successful because Somerset did not consider it necessary to establish additional English schools in Cape Town at the time he introduced his anglicising programme to the Cape Colony's schools.

effort by the government. Even after the arrival of the 1820 British settlers, English remained a "foreign" language to the majority of the Colonists<sup>18</sup>. In a letter to Somerset dated 26 January 1821, Rev George Thom wrote

*... [o]ut of Cape Town ... there are not 400 who can converse in English and not 200 or 150 who write it, or can read it. The Settlers who have arrived last year, and others from England are about 5 000 all situated in one District Albany, and thus there are nearly 60 000 Dutch Colonists who do not understand a word of English and are likely to remain so ... for they occupy all the farms in the District and keep together (Theal 1902a: 388).*

Nevertheless, on 5 July 1822, Somerset proclaimed that English would become the official language of the Colony (Eybers, G. W. 1918: 23). To promote a knowledge of English, Somerset approached Thom in the matter of the *necessity of establishing English Schools at the different Drostdies in the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope ... to procure persons of unimpeachable Character and ... capable of teaching the English Language ...* (Theal 1902a: 386). The British government concurred with Somerset's decision to establish English schools and also shared his opinion that the Dutch schoolmasters were to be superseded by *Englishmen of a superior class, as affording both the best means of making the English Language more general in the Colony and improving the manners and morals of the People*<sup>19</sup> (Theal 1902a: 457).

Thom's response to Somerset's request is of note since it gives insight into the prevailing view of and attitude towards education.

*... Most of all, the Dutch Schoolmasters in the Colony are proverbially known for their want of knowledge of the Dutch Grammar and in most cases otherwise unqualified, we should steer clear of giving a mere pittance ... by which the schoolmaster cannot live... In no part of the World are*

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18 Since 1821, clergymen of the Established Church of Scotland had been placed in vacant parishes — the main purpose being to facilitate the acquisition of the English language by all classes of society. These clergymen were first sent to Holland to learn the Dutch language before being sent to the Colony. The Dutch Colonists accepted these foreigners. There was little difference between the Dutch and Scotch religious tenets and form of worship, and these clergymen used Dutch from the pulpit and made no attempt to supplant the Colonists' language. The Scots mixed readily with the Colonists and were easily reconciled to their customs [Eybers, G. W. 1918: 80].

19 Somerset's anglicisation endeavour could only be accomplished through a system of state controlled public schools and consequently, the role played by Churches to provide schools and teachers (the Church clerks), was curtailed. Somerset did not consult the Bible and School Commission regarding the establishment of the English schools and neither were they controlled by the Commission but by the Governor [Van der Westhuizen 1953: 167].

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*Schoolmasters ... so little esteemed as in South Africa, and yet there is a universal desire on the part of Parents that their children should be instructed.*

*... That a knowledge of so much Dutch which will be sufficient for the Teachers to communicate a knowledge of the English will be necessary, and this will wonderfully interest the Colonists. ... That the charge made on parents for instructing their Children.... It should be ... half the sum paid to the Dutch masters, so as to induce the Parents to send their Children, and ... to teach them to value it ...*

*... I need not inform your Lordship of the zeal manifested by some of the more respectable and better circumstanced Dutch Colonists to have their Children no longer taught French, and even Dutch, but rather English (Theal 1902a: 387-388).*

Thom managed to procure six teachers who arrived in the Colony in July 1822. All were Scots – among them was James Rose-Innes, a man who would yet play a significant role in Cape Colony education<sup>20</sup>. These men were to teach English, writing, arithmetic, the principles of sacred music and the precepts of the Christian religion. The government intended all its youthful citizens to enjoy the benefit of education and to achieve this, the education provided at these schools would be at public expense. The most appropriate and cost effective teaching method to meet this aim was the monitor system<sup>21</sup> (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 163, 168).

The free English schools established in the country districts by these six teachers aimed not only to provide for the needs of the Colonists but also to further the policy of anglicisation. The teachers were probably the best qualified that the Colony had ever been able to procure and it was hoped that the schools established by them would promote the envisaged dual aim: making education accessible to the Colony's youth and simultaneously accomplishing the anglicisation of the nation.

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20 Merely as a matter of interest – Reverend Andrew Murray also arrived at the Cape aboard the same ship as Rose-Innes and his colleagues [Bornman 1989: 32].

21 This system was also known as the "British System". It was later alleged that the eventual downfall of the English free schools could be attributed to the teaching system employed. Where teachers were sensitive to the shortcomings of the system and adapted the methods to the Colony's conditions, the schools were successful. It was suggested that the system worked in England since instruction was given in the pupils' mother tongue. The situation was quite different in the Colony and hence its failure [Van der Westhuizen 1953: 169].

#### 4.1.3.2.1 *The progress of the English free school movement*

In 1824, Justice Truter again reported on the state and progress of the government or established schools which he had visited while on circuit<sup>22</sup>. The newly established English schools were well supported — parents who had never made use of the Church clerk schools were sending their children to the English schools and from the start, these schools attracted more pupils than the previous schools ever had<sup>23</sup>. It was generally found that after the establishment of the English schools, the Dutch schools dwindled and some even closed<sup>24</sup>. The only Dutch school that showed progress was Leendert Hoogwerf's school at Graaff-Reinet. This school was attended by 45 pupils while the English school was attended by 80 children (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 19). Based on the success of the new schools, parents appealed to the Governor to establish schools in their areas too and consequently during the following four years, 14 additional English schools were established<sup>25</sup> (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 165, 174).

Truter ascribed the success of the English schools and the regression of the Dutch schools to the fact that:

- parents were eager to afford their children the opportunity to learn English ... *without any compulsion, to place their children in the English schools, where an opportunity is offered them to get their children instructed without incurring any expense*
- the children were anxious to acquire the language and applied themselves diligently
- parents were quick to avail themselves of the superior abilities of the English teachers

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22 See 4.1.1

23 At Uitenhage, 60 children were enrolled on the first day — the Church clerk school at that town had never had more than 30 pupils on its register. The Dutch school at Caledon had barely managed to exist, yet on its first day 32 children enrolled at the English school [Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 19].

24 It was pointed out that several of the Dutch schools were already in dire straits prior to the establishment of the English free schools and the reasons to which this was attributed include:

- the social and economic conditions in the country districts — children lived far from the schools and it was more practical to engage a tutor; many parents needed their children's help on the farms
- the incompetence and the dubious character and conduct of many of the Church clerk school teachers
- administrative matters — the government showed little interest or concern in the conditions at or control of these schools and this negatively affected the teacher's attitude and zeal. The government was dedicated to anglicising the Colony and it would consequently have been counterproductive to have supported and improved institutions that would perpetuate a system it was hoping to bring to an end [Van der Westhuizen 1953: 155-158].

25 It was estimated, however, that two-thirds of the children in the interior were still deprived of education, principally because they lived too far from the drostdies and their parents could not afford to send their children to these schools [Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 19; Van der Westhuizen 1953: 164].

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- parents recognised that the English free schools were better resourced and controlled and had the backing of the government (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 17).

The supervision of the schools was left to the magistrate but because it could not be expected of him to inspect the schools regularly, the government placed the schools under the control of district School Commissions. Although the Bible and School Commission had not been consulted regarding either the establishment or the staffing of these schools<sup>26</sup>, it had to administer the payment of salaries and keep a record of teacher qualifications (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 167-168).

Truter recommended that future Commissioners on circuit should visit the district schools as this would gratify the magistrates, parents and teachers: the magistrate would be induced to keep a watchful eye over the school, the teachers would double their industry — and the children would reap the benefits — and the parents would welcome the interest shown in their children's education (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 17).

The initial success of the schools and the enthusiasm they had been greeted with wore off and increasingly, certain aspects of the system became cause for concern.

#### *4.1.3.2.2 Attempts to deal with the regression of the state of education*

Both the government and the Bible and School Commission tried to improve conditions in the country district schools, the former by arranging for the inspection of the schools by the Circuit Commissioners and the latter by promulgating regulations relating to inspection to be effected by the local School Commissions. These regulations proved futile because those serving on the local School Commissions<sup>27</sup> — generally the resident magistrate, the clergyman and other prominent community members appointed by the government — were engrossed in their own demanding occupations and had little spare time to devote to the inspection of the schools in their areas (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 205-206).

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26 See 4.1.3.2 footnote 19.

27 See 4.1.3.2.1

Individual schools also tried to improve the quality of education and to meet the expectations of the local community. For example, to increase its patronage, a private Dutch school at Stellenbosch included the instruction of English in its curriculum; some English schools included Dutch in their curriculum — and consequently flourished at the expense of the local Dutch schools; a certain district School Commission specifically appointed two "visiting members" at the beginning of each term to visit the school at regular intervals and to report on the school's progress; at the request of parents the English-speaking teacher at an English free school used the Dutch Bible and included instruction from the Heidelberg Catechism in his lessons (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 206-210; 214). From these attempts it can be deduced that, from the community's point of view, the critical issues to be addressed in education were the opportunity for parental say in educational matters, the approach used in religious instruction and the language issue.

The position of Dutch in the English schools appears to have been enveloped in controversy. The incidents described above led the district School Commission to question the legality of the act. In reaction, the Bible and School Commission ruled that *teaching the Dutch language forms no part of the System and it is only to be used as a means of communication*. All district School Commissions were informed of the decision (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 206). But three years previously in 1827, the resident teacher at the Swellendam English free school was dismissed because he refused to heed government instruction to use Dutch as the medium of instruction to prevent further loss of pupils<sup>28</sup> (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 213, 215).

The education scene appears to have been characterised by inconsistencies of policy and general confusion regarding appropriate procedures. Under such circumstances both teachers and controlling bodies must have found it difficult to steer the provision of education in any particular direction.

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28 A similar incident occurred at Caledon. The magistrate was instructed to examine the free school teacher's ability, conduct and fluency in Dutch in an attempt to determine why the school was deteriorating. The teacher's knowledge of Dutch was adequate but, the magistrate reported, *I have heard some persons complain that he had objected, or did not use, the Dutch Language in conveying his Instructions to his Scholars* [Van der Westhuizen 1953: 213, 215].

#### 4.1.3.2.3 *The decline of the English free school movement*

The English free schools established in 1822 as part of Somerset's anglicisation policy were on the decline. Many Dutch parents took exception to the exclusion of Dutch from the schools and children were withdrawn and placed with private tutors. An alternative solution to the problem was followed by several parents: where it happened that where there were both Dutch and English schools in the same town, children would alternatively attend both schools — the child was thus assured of keeping his Dutch and catechism lessons up to date while he also learnt English (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 127).

There was little doubt regarding the status of the languages as far as Somerset was concerned. In 1824 Somerset even considered the feasibility of English supplanting Dutch in the Church<sup>29</sup>. Sir John Truter warned that such measures would be rash. Somerset thus resolved that religious education could be taught through the medium of Dutch for some time to come provided always that English was taught in all schools (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 172).

A summary of the reasons for the decline in popularity of the English free schools appear to have been:

- although the Dutch were not opposed to their children learning English, they were opposed to the abolition of Dutch from the schools and feared for the status of their language<sup>30</sup>
- because instruction was free, it was believed that:
  - parents were negligent about ensuring that their children attended school
  - the education provided was inferior
  - teachers were neglectful and indifferent towards their task
- the monitor system was unsuitable for the Colony's circumstances

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29 This proposal had originated with the Synod decision to publish an English translation of the Heidelberg Catechism for use in the schools [Van der Westhuizen 1953: 172].

30 In 1825, Truter wrote that ... *the apprehension that the Dutch language was to be totally proscribed was fast spreading among the public* [Theal 1904: 498-499].

- the moral conduct of teachers was poor — only Robertson and Rose-Innes maintained success<sup>31</sup>
- the salaries were too meagre to attract persons of worth to the teaching profession
- a number of competitive private schools had been established in which Dutch was afforded appropriate status in the curriculum
- the communities were invariably poverty stricken and parents were obliged to keep their children from school to help with tasks at home<sup>32</sup>
- the Bible and School Commission was unable to act effectively as a controlling body especially with regard to the provision of education in the districts (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 192, 221).

It could be conjectured that if an empathetic attitude had been adopted, if the wishes of parents had been respected and if Dutch had been included in the free English schools, the decline and ultimate closure of these schools could have been prevented.

The decline of the Somerset schools coincided with the revival of private schools. The Dutch people supported these schools as a reaction to the suppression of their language and the loss of other privileges. Even the English supported private schools (Malherbe 1925: 68) because of the perception that traditionally private schools catered for privileged classes and provided better schooling whereas free schools catered for the poor and offered poorer quality teaching. It could be assumed that private schools continued to exist mainly because they provided for the individual needs of the local community and because they were perceived to be of a superior status.

Attempts by teachers and local communities to prevent the decline of the free English schools — although in several ways ingenious — were ineffective and the problem of the provision of schooling in the country districts had to be dealt with at a higher level.

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31 Their success was attributed to their decision to include Dutch in the curriculum and to adapt the monitor system to meet the unique requirements of the Colony [Van der Westhuizen 1953: 172-177, 215, 218].

32 After the emancipation of the slaves in 1833 farmers become dependent on their own children to help on the farms.

#### 4.1.3.3 *Attempts to improve the provision of education: the regulations of 1834*

In an effort to address the education crisis, the Bible and School Commission promulgated new regulations for the country district schools. The gist of these regulations was that:

- schooling would no longer be gratuitous — parents would be obliged to pay school fees
- instruction was to be in English or Dutch or both at the behest of parents<sup>33</sup>
- each town would have its own local School Commission consisting of not less than 3 members
- the Bible and School Commission would consider the recommendations of the local School Commissions regarding appointments (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 20).

Still, the conditions remained deplorable. Apart from the reasons<sup>34</sup> to which the failure of the English free schools were attributed<sup>35</sup>, the Bible and School Commission was ineffective and the schools were unable to depend on the Commission for support. There was also a general absence of coordination between the government, the Commission and the district School Commissions.

#### 4.1.3.4 *Prevailing attitudes and expectation of the Colonists regarding education*

In essence, the provision and control of education had a deeper dimension and was a more sensitive and complicated issue than what was generally appreciated. Traditionally, schooling in the Colony had been ultimately provided for by the Church. Although the state had played a major role in education, it rarely disregarded the role of the Church in contributing in some way or other to the establishment of schools, provision of teachers or selection of learning material.

Since the Church was central to the lives of the majority of the Colonists, it is to be expected that they would have wanted the Church to play a prominent role in providing and supervising their

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33 It was presupposed that teachers would be bilingual.

34 To this list could be added the requirement that teachers were to be bilingual – according to the new regulations of the Bible and School Commission. Consequently fewer teachers would qualify for selection and appointment.

35 See 4.1.3.2.3

children's education<sup>36</sup>. Where the Church through circumstance had little influence in the sparsely populated remote areas, the provision of schooling was a parental responsibility met by employing itinerant schoolmasters — however the motivation remained a religious one. The baptismal vow admonished parents of their duty to educate their children, and being religiously inclined, parents heeded the duty unwaveringly.

Parents were accustomed to paying for their children's education and they did not regard it the duty of the state or of anyone else to provide the material requirements associated with schooling. Although the majority of the Colonists were not wealthy, they did not readily accept charity and took pride in being able to pay for their children's education<sup>37</sup>. The fact that they had made a financial contribution to their children's schooling made them take an interest in, and insist on, *inter alia* worthwhile education, the diligence of the teacher and regular attendance by their children.

Since the arrival of the British, the state had made a concerted effort to provide schools and to influence the way in which these schools functioned<sup>38</sup>. Of these, only the Church clerk schools were under the direct supervision of the Church. The Bible and School Commission (with its religious underpinning) had played a role in selecting appropriate teachers for the monitor schools, but no religious body *per se* had selected or approved the teachers of the English schools which the authorities hoped would eventually supplant the other public schools.

How did the principally Dutch Colonists view these efforts? It can be assumed that they must have commended some of the efforts since they merely reinforced and perpetuated an already accepted system. Other benefits were also to be had: their children were given the opportunity to learn

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36 In an editorial of the *Cape Times* of 3 November, 1924 [in Malherbe 1925: 109] the Dutch Reformed Church's efforts related to education in the Colony over the previous 100 years were reviewed and the comment was made that ... *It is hardly too much to say that the Cape would not have had an education system at all had it not been for the energy and devotion of the Dutch Reformed Church.*

37 Gratuitous education was invariably viewed as being inferior and of denying the right to intervene or demand results.

38 The Church clerk schools, the monitor schools and the free English schools were all established through the direct intervention of the state.

English<sup>39</sup> and they were being exposed to a broader, although more secular, education. Colonists were generally suspicious of the underlying rationale and feared that some form of forfeit would be called for. Given the attitude of many of the Dutch Colonists towards the government at this time, it is easy to understand that state intervention in education would in all probability have been mistrusted.

But, the education system appeared to be heading for disaster. School attendance was poor, the general incompetence of teachers had caused education to fall into disrepute, the system did not provide for the unique needs of the Colonists and there was little public involvement or interest in education. The control of education in the hands of the Bible and School Commission left much to be desired and the fact that local School Commissions were appointed by the government and not elected locally, resulted in communities showing little interest or initiative in relation to local schooling. The system needed to be remodelled. A fresh start had to be made since those affected by the state of schooling — parents, children, teachers, controlling bodies, and others with an interest in education — were in all probability legitimately frustrated by the inadequacy of the prevailing system.

#### 4.1.3.5 *Events leading up to major changes in the provision of education*

By the 1830's, the poor state of education could no longer be ignored. William Robertson, a Dutch Reformed minister and former teacher, wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Colonel Bell, expressing his concern for the dismal state of education. His concern was reiterated in 1835 and in 1836 he was moved to petition for greater tolerance towards Dutch — a language towards which the majority of the Colonists showed a *very natural prejudice*. He advocated that children at all government schools be taught Dutch and the principles of religion in Dutch. This compromise, he believed, would induce a spirit of reconciliation between the government and the Dutch Colonists (Bunbury 1848: 267; Van der Westhuizen 1953: 232).

John Fairbairn, the editor of the *South African Commercial Advertiser* and ex-schoolmaster, also advocated educational reform and used his newspaper to point out the inadequacies of the

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39 The ability to speak English fluently was a sign of gentility and was highly sought after [Changuion 1842: 7].

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current education system. In the 18 January 1837 issue of the paper he used the editorial column to clarify his proposal for a Secretary or Minister of Public Instruction to replace the Bible and School Commission. He not only blamed the government and the Commission for their neglect of education, but added that

*... every well-wisher to this Colony and every Friend of the Human Race has failed in not addressing his Majesty's Government on this subject, explaining and proving the imperfections of the System itself — the unfitness of the Bible and School Commission, ... the whole Department has become not only useless, but positively injurious to the Community (South African Commercial Advertiser: 18 January, 1837).*

Educational reform was in the air. In August 1837, Colonel Bell submitted a memorandum on the reform of the public school system to the Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban [1834-1838]. In February 1838, Fairbairn formally presented his concept of educational reform to George Napier [1838-1844] who had succeeded D'Urban as Governor. In this proposal, *Memorandum, or Suggestions for the Advancement of Education at the Cape*, Fairbairn outlined the idea of a Superintendent of Education as a professional leader and included a detailed scheme of the envisaged duties of this functionary (Malherbe 1925: 75, 78; Van der Westhuizen 1953: 233; Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 21).

In February 1838 Napier submitted Bell's memorandum to Sir John Herschel, an eminent philosopher and scholar, for his comment (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 21). In his response, Herschel pointed out that he regarded it the state's responsibility to provide education. The system of education itself would have to be adapted to the requirements of the Cape Colony (Bunbury 1848: 266). In addition he advocated that the teachers should be treated generously. He proposed assigning them a rank among government officers which would *class them as gentlemen and entitle them to be received as such on public occasions of ceremony or festivity* (Watermeyer Commission 1863: xxxvii). He believed that the status of education could be improved through creating, maintaining and financially supporting an organised system of public education (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 22).

In March 1838 Napier submitted the relevant documents to Lord Glenelg, Secretary of Colonial Affairs of the Home Government, who approved a non-sectarian system of education for the

Colony according to the principles outlined by Herschel. Bell, Rose-Innes and Herschel unanimously decided that parents alone were to be consulted regarding the nature of their children's religious instruction — hence the exclusion of sectarian influence from government schools (Bunbury 1848: 267).

On 23 May 1839, a government memorandum on education was published and Dr James Rose-Innes<sup>40</sup> became the first Superintendent General of Education (Van der Westhuizen 1953: 234-235). A new era in the provision of education had dawned.

#### 4.1.4 A new education dispensation: Government Memorandum on Education – 23 May 1839

The only previous legislation which had applied to the general provision of education, had been that of De Chavonnes<sup>41</sup> in 1714 and De Mist's proposals<sup>42</sup> — which were never officially implemented — in 1804. Although the British had made significant changes to the provision of education — such as Somerset's anglicisation policy — the provision of education had not been formalised or placed under the control of a body with significant power to ensure its success. The publication of the *Government Memorandum on Education, 23 May 1839* was the first official attempt to evince the British government's stance regarding the provision of education<sup>43</sup>.

According to the government memorandum the aim of schooling was to:

- form in the Individual advantageous personal habits
- store the mind with useful knowledge and practical maxims available for the demands of life
- extend mental powers and capabilities and exemplify high moral and intellectual conduct

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40 Rose-Innes's contribution to the administration and improvement in the quality of instruction can hardly be overestimated. Under his care, the number of schools and the number of pupils on the school rolls increased considerably [Cuthbert 1911: 4].

41 See 3.3.3.2

42 See 3.5.3

43 The system is also called the *Herschel System* since the regulations are a close replica of Herschel's proposals.

- 
- form good citizens and men, instructing them in the relations of social, civil and spiritual life
  - diffuse a correct knowledge of the English language among all ranks of the people (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 24).

As motivation for the last point, the following was offered

*... and whilst his Excellency respects the attachment which is naturally felt by the Colonists of Dutch extraction to their own language, associated as that feeling must be with the dearest relations of life, and has met their wishes in this respect by making the Dutch language a part of the elementary course of instruction in all schools where it is required ... the cultivation of the English language as inseparably connected with the future prosperity of this Colony (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 24).*

The established schools would in future be divided into first class schools or principal schools in which both primary and secondary courses of instruction would be offered, and second class schools in which only the elementary course would be taught. Government schools would be open to all and instruction at second class schools would be free; a moderate fee would be charged at the first class schools. Deserving youth of poor families could receive scholarships entitling them to gratuitous education (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 24).

The curriculum proposed included religious and secular instruction. Every effort would be made to allow pupils to attend the catechetical instruction of their respective pastors after school hours. Children could, upon written application, be exempted from engaging in the religious exercises of the school should the parent conscientiously object (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 24).

The duties of the Superintendent General of Education included the responsibility to:

- call for quarterly reports of the examination held in the presence of the School Commissions<sup>44</sup>

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44 Nothing is said about the composition or the method of appointment of the local School Commissions.

- 
- hold constant communication with teachers on:
    - method of instruction
    - progress of education in various parts of the world
    - local difficulties with which the teacher might have to contend and
    - every topic that could contribute to advance the cause of education in the Colony (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 24).

The main objections raised by parents and the community regarding the envisaged provision of education focussed on the:

- exclusion of sectarian doctrines from the course of instruction and the
- possibility of integration of white and coloured children (Bunbury 1848: 277-278).

This new system of education formed the basis upon which subsequent regulations to improve and extend the education system would be made. Dr James Rose-Innes [1839-1859] held the position of the first Superintendent-General of Education for almost twenty years. He was succeeded by Dr Langham Dale [1859-1892]<sup>45</sup>, a competent and experienced academic who had also made a thorough research of the provision of education in the United Kingdom. He served in the capacity of Superintendent-General of Education for thirty-three years when he was replaced by Dr Thomas Muir [1892-1915]<sup>46</sup> (Malherbe 1925: 139; Van Wyk 1947: 86-87).

#### 4.1.4.1 *The formalisation of education: subsequent developments*

In consequence of the 1839 memorandum, further memorandums and circulars relating to education soon followed. Those which had a bearing on issues of interest to parents included:

- 1842 Instructions to local School Commissions (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 28)

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45 Dale is said to have been influenced by the *laissez faire* policy in vogue in England and consequently proposed a similar policy for the Cape. He believed that all initiative in relation to education should come from the parents and the state was merely to assist in this effort by removing hindrances [Van Wyk 1947: 95].

46 When Muir was appointed, Europe, Great Britain, and also the Cape Colony were experiencing a dawning of national pride. Muir arrived at the Cape from Scotland and being a typical representative of imperialism, broke with Dale's *laissez faire* system and promoted a centralisation and anglicisation policy [Van Wyk 1947: 145-146].

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- 1843 A Government Minute regarding conditions for providing aid to farm and public schools (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 29)
  - 1844 A memorandum on elementary education (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 30)
  - 1855 An Act to establish Divisional Councils and their obligation to fulfil the duties previously undertaken by the district School Commissions (Eybers, G.W. 1918: 83-85)
  - 1858 An Act to establish Educational Boards (Eybers, G.W. 1918: 87).

The 1842 letter of instruction to local School Commissions<sup>47</sup> influenced the management of schools at local level and allowed for a measure of parental say in educational matters. The local School Commission was informed that the Bible and School Commission had ceased to exist and that they were to report directly to the Superintendent-General of Education. In effect, these measures amounted to local Commissions being given the right and responsibility to:

- visit and inspect schools
- oversee examinations
- suggest improvements and report to the government on issues that affected the school's character or compromised its usefulness
- deal with parents' grievances<sup>48</sup>
- ensure that elementary education was gratuitous and accessible to all
- ensure that children attended school regularly, were civil and clean and neat in appearance.

The Commission had no right to intervene in the course of instruction, the code of discipline, or to regulate the internal arrangements of the schools. Although these matters had been dealt with by the Bible and School Commission in the past, they would in future be dealt with by the Superintendent-General of Education (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 28).

The principle of local control over educational matters was again provided for in terms of *Act No. 5, 1855, An Act for Creating Divisional Councils in this Colony*. Section 32 of the Act

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47 The local School Commissions took over the functions of the Bible and School Commission but no mention is made of the composition of the body nor who qualified for appointment.

48 These complaints were first referred to the teacher for comment prior to their being investigated [Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 28].

stipulated that the powers and functions vested in the School Commissions would cease and that the Divisional Councils whose members were elected by the inhabitants, would control education in their particular districts (Eybers, G.W. 1918: 85).

Another step designed to encourage community involvement in educational matters was taken by *Act No. 14, 1858, An Act for the Creation of Educational Boards in the Field-Cornetcies, Villages and Towns of the Colony*. According to this Act, residents could appeal to the Divisional Council to draft regulations for adoption in their particular district's schools. Rights which could be claimed were the right to:

- nominate and appoint the schoolmaster
- fix the school hours and school fees
- hear and deal with grievances relating to the professional conduct or moral character of the schoolmaster who the committee would be empowered to censure, suspend or dismiss as deemed necessary (Eybers, G.W. 1918: 87-88).

These regulations provided parents with the opportunity of becoming directly involved in educational issues. They had a measure of power to influence and determine the character of the school since they had a say in the nomination and appointment of the schoolmaster of the school in their community.

In reality parents were not unfamiliar with taking the initiative in directing their children's education. In the past many parents had — at their own expense or at their own discretion — taken responsibility for ensuring that their children received the type of education they, as parents, sanctioned. During the period of Somerset's anglicisation policy, parents who believed that the education offered in the free schools was inadequate or who feared that the mother tongue was being suppressed in the government schools, were quick to support private schools which addressed these concerns.

This propensity lingered and individuals in the community continued to establish private schools since it was maintained that the English and free schools were foreign to the temperament of the people. As a result a system of schools established by local effort developed alongside the government funded school system (Malherbe 1925: 111).

#### 4.1.4.1.1 *The grants-in-aid system in support of local effort*

Private schools continued to be established and it became difficult to maintain an adequate or comparable standard between these schools and government schools established at government expense. A compromise needed to be reached and a system of government aid in the form of grants to assist local efforts came into being. The system of grants-in-aid hinged on the principle of voluntary effort initiated by the community or parent body — when a local body took the initiative to provide educational facilities, the effort was supported by a government grant<sup>49</sup> (Malherbe 1925: 111, 116).

Grants were provided on condition that the local community provided the school buildings and contributed a proportion of the teachers' salary. In certain instances this gave rise to the guarantee system by which the community pledged itself to contribute a certain sum in order to earn an equivalent government contribution (Malherbe 1925: 116). Although this system suited the temperament of a people who had a natural aversion to any form of imposition, it did not always work well in practice. The weaknesses of the grants-in-aid system were that the initiative was left entirely to the community. Consequently the system helped those who were most able and willing to help themselves, but those who from ignorance, poverty or indifference made no effort to establish schools, were left to their apathy unless an external agency — other than the government — was set to work on their behalf. Eventually, however, the government-aided school system superseded the system of state schools (Malherbe 1925: 114, 117).

The mission schools were the first schools to benefit from the grants-in-aid policy. In 1841 the government undertook to pay the teacher's salary, but in return, the schools were to refrain from sectarian religious instruction during school hours. The teaching of English was obligatory (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix V No. 26). In relation to the farm schools — which subsequently became known as third class schools — their claim to grants-in-aid was provided for under the 1843 Government Minute, but in return a number of preconditions applied. In fact,

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49 In discussing grants to schools, a distinction must be drawn between state schools and aided schools. In the case of state schools, the state accepted full responsibility for expenditure. As far as aided schools were concerned, the non-sectarian public schools received special grants with no special preconditions. Aid to third class and mission schools was received subject to language requirements and other conditions. The grants could only be used to pay teachers' salaries [Bornman 1989: 47].

the preconditions that applied to schools<sup>50</sup> applying for government grants as embodied in the 1843 Government Minute were that:

- English was to be taught and although Dutch would be allowed in the lower classes, English would become the colloquial language as soon as was practicable
- the school would be accessible to all
- fees were to be levied, but free tuition could be granted to indigent children at the discretion of the local School Commission
- the Holy Scriptures alone would be used for religious instruction and would form part of the daily routine (Watermeyer Commission 1864: Appendix V No. 29).

This development in relation to government support for privately established schools needs to be placed in perspective. Seen against the backdrop of political developments and the steady evolution from absolute authority [1806] towards Representative Government [1854] and eventually to the attainment of Responsible Government [1872], a change in the socio-political awareness and aspirations of the Colonists was apparent — an awareness which also influenced the perception of and attitude towards education. Parents had become conscious of the increasing necessity for education and that they had the right to have their interests and needs in this regard addressed.

At this time, economic conditions were improving and the material prosperity experienced also affected education. The number of pupils increased and though the system was unable to coax all children of school going age into schools, it appeared to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing population (Malherbe 1925: 91-92). Nevertheless, the demands on the Department increased and the administration of the grants-in-aid system became a difficult issue to manage.

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50 The Colony's educational institutions were now classified as:

- established first and second class schools under the immediate management and superintendence of the government and wholly supported from the Colonial Treasury
- aided public schools including the district schools, Church clerk schools and farmers' schools
- aided mission schools which, although their first concern was the religious education of the poor, were to introduced secular instruction as per the elementary course [Watermeyer Commission 1963: Appendix V No. 33].

#### **4.1.4.1.2 Evaluation of the provision of education: Commissions of Enquiry**

The new system of education had been in operation for some years and it was inevitable that its successes and shortcomings would need to be established if the government was serious about providing and upholding an effective and efficient education system. Routine inspection of the aided schools by Langham Dale highlighted irregularities such as the inclusion of catechisms and other religious denominational teaching in school hours and the neglect of teaching English. It was reported that some children attended school only to learn the Dutch catechism while other were admitted on condition that they were not to learn English. Local commitment to education was poor (Cape of Good Hope 1860: *passim*). It was irregularities such as these that prompted a series of Commissions of Enquiry into the education situation.

#### **4.1.4.2 The Fairbairn Commission of Enquiry**

Over the years, the distribution of grants-in-aid had been applied according to a complicated set of rules and a rather disorganised system had evolved. The scheme required systematisation. Shortly after the institution of Representative Government<sup>51</sup> in 1854, the Legislative Assembly appointed a Select Committee on Public Education under the chairmanship of John Fairbairn to investigate the state of education and to suggest reform measures. The main recommendations focussed on procuring trained teachers from England to surmount a local shortage and the levying of school fees to support government contributions. The extension of the £ for £ principle which made the government and the local community equally responsible for the cost of schooling was proposed as the grants-in-aid system had been openly abused. The local community generally made little effort to contribute towards the financial needs of schooling and deficits were usually carried by local philanthropists (Malherbe 1925: 92-93; Van Wyk 1947: 87-88).

However, there were other pressing issues that were not investigated or addressed by the Fairbairn Commission and it became necessary to undertake yet another investigation into the state of the Colony's education system.

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51 The effect of Representative Government on education is probably to be found in the number of government Commissions appointed in the ensuing years to examine and report on the state of education.

#### 4.1.4.3 *The Watermeyer Commission of Enquiry*

The Fairbairn Commission had failed to provide comprehensive details and consequently, a Commission to enquire into the state of education was appointed in 1861 under the chairmanship of Justice Watermeyer. The Commission was asked to make recommendations regarding the provision of elementary instruction (Watermeyer Commission 1863: iii). The Commission used the evidence of government teachers, clergymen and others involved in education to draft a comprehensive report on the condition of education in the Colony.

For the purpose of this thesis which focuses on the development of the concept and scope of parental rights and responsibilities, it is necessary to look further than the Commission's summary of findings and recommendations and to analyse the actual proceedings of the enquiry. It could be said that the opinions voiced reflected the views of the parent body. Some of the more contentious issues<sup>52</sup> reviewed and the pronouncements that ensued included:

#### □ RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

- the object of education was moral and intellectual training hence the Bible was to form an integral part of instruction; the exclusion of religious instruction would be injurious to the whole community; exclusion of the Bible from schools would be offensive to a great body of the people (Robertson; Rose-Innes, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: 21, 63)
- no parents or guardians had yet complained about the religious instruction offered in either the established or aided schools since the regulation had been adopted twenty years previously (Rose-Innes, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: c, 21)
- dogmatic instruction was the province of the Church and not the schools; the Church could provide religious instruction through Sunday Schools (Rev Pears, Somerset; Rose-Innes, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: 21; Appendix I: 36)
- religious instruction was to be left to parents, guardians and clergymen (Rev Moran, Grahamstown; J. McNaughton, Wynberg Established School, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 61; Appendix II: 3)

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52 Although the author could be accused of adopting a rather protracted approach by providing individual responses regarding the issues highlighted during the enquiry, it is believed that the significance of these pronouncements would be lost if they were merely summarised.

- in mission schools the aim was to teach the Christian religion and in so doing it was impossible not to teach the doctrines of a particular Church or sect for all would refer to the Bible as a proof of the truth of their teaching (Rev Belson, Malmesbury, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 47)
- it was the duty of the clergy to urge parents to educate their children — this responsibility formed part of the vow taken at baptism that parents should instruct their children or cause and assist them to be instructed in the knowledge of the Word of God and in the doctrines held by the Church; those enlightened by the Scriptures did not object to religious instruction since they recognised the inspired command to instruct the youth; not even Malays had objected to instruction from the Bible (Robertson; Rev A.R.M Wilshire, Claremont, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: 63; Appendix I: 9)
- in country districts, the importance of education lay in its religious rather than its secular benefit as the Dutch considered the main object of learning to be preparation for Church membership (Hon. Reitz, Swellendam; Rev Prof Murray, Stellenbosch; Robertson, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: 63; Appendix I: 6, 25)
- religious instruction was to occur in the mother tongue of the children (Robertson, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: 63).

□ LANGUAGE

- parents were generally opposed to their children being instructed in the Dutch language (Rev H.M.M. Wilshire, Caledon, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 4)
- parents objected because Dutch was not taught and resented the emphasis on English (Rev Neethling, Stellenbosch; Rev Fraser, Beaufort, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 41,56)
- English was not to be the *sine qua non* in farmers' schools which served Dutch communities since deserving Dutch teachers were, by the want of it, debarred from being appointed (Rev W. Murray, Middelburg, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 66)

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- Dutch texts written in Holland by Hollanders were unintelligible to the lower classes (Hon. Reitz, Swellendam, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 6-7)
  - the proviso that teachers were to be bilingual complicated efforts to secure morally and intellectually qualified teachers and since school attendance was generally limited to less than a year, it was imperative that as much knowledge as possible be communicated to the pupil through the medium of the mother tongue during this short period (Rev Prof Murray, Stellenbosch; Robertson, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 25, 68).
- TEACHERS' VIEWS OF PARENTS AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCHOOLING
- it would be to great advantage if parents could be induced to attend to the education of their children at home; it was important to encourage parents to take an interest in public examinations (J. Gibson, Uitenhage Established School; Hon. Reitz, Swellendam, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 7; Appendix II: 21)
  - parents were ignorant of the value of education and showed little interest in education (a commonly expressed concern)
  - parents kept their children from attending school as they were required to help out on the farms (a commonly expressed concern)
  - many parents had not enjoyed a proper education themselves and were hence unable to appreciate good schooling<sup>53</sup> (Rev Horak, Mossel Bay, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 44)
  - all illiterate persons were to be regarded as minors before the law and parents and guardians who neglected their duty to ensure that their children learnt to read and write were to have their names brought discreditably before the public since such persons were disloyal to the trust committed to them (J. Inglis, Paarl Established School; T. Pratt, Bathurst Established School, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix II: 25, 35).

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53 Parents were of the opinion that their children were not to know more than they did and they were consequently satisfied with a superficial education.

#### □ SUPERVISION OF SCHOOLS

- where teachers were free from the control of parents and local School Commissions, the school suffered<sup>54</sup> (Rev A. Murray, Graaff-Reinet, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 49)
- the local School Commission and Divisional Council was incompetent to inspect schools<sup>55</sup> (Rev H.M.M. Wilshire, Caledon; Rev Murray, Clanwilliam; Rev Neethling, Stellenbosch; S. von Tongerloo, Clanwilliam Established School; P. Wither, Somerset East Established School; J. McNaughton, Wynberg Established School in, Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 5, 18, 42, 4; Appendix II: 5, 26, 28)
- an intelligent person sufficiently acquainted with what education was and ought to be was to be appointed to inspect and judge schools (Rev Smith, Uitenhage; J. Loxton, Malmesbury Established School, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 54; Appendix II: 14)
- due to their interest in training the youth, local clergymen were best adapted to inspect schools; clergymen whose congregations were connected to the school were to be represented on the local School Commission (Rev Sheard, Mossel Bay; Rev Smith, Uitenhage, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 31, 54)
- clergymen, doctors and those who had themselves received a liberal education were best suited to inspect schools (Rev Pears, Somerset; P. Wither, Somerset East Established School, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 38; Appendix II: 28)
- schools were to be inspected by an independent local board so constituted that two thirds of the members were chosen by the parents (Rev Hofmeyr, Stellenbosch; Rev Read, Stockenstrom, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 49, 59-60, 67 Robertson, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: 61)
- local committees were to inquire into the wants, difficulties and possible attainments of the school (Rev Hartman, Goshen, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 71)

54 Dale remarked that *the only good schools in the country, as a rule, are those under Government Inspection* [Watermeyer Commission 1863: 44].

55 *Unless when it is either more intelligent than usual, or the teacher more ignorant.* [H McLachlan, Stellenbosch Established School, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix II: 30].

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- inspections were not to be conducted to discover deficiencies of professional character but to aid teachers in the difficult work by private counsel (F. Tudhope, Graham's Town Established School, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix II: 12)
  - schools were under the constant scrutiny of the parents and community, additional inspection was unnecessary (J. McNaughton, Wynberg Established School, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix II: 5).
- SCHOOL FEES<sup>56</sup>
- children of the upper and upper-middle class were not to be educated at government expense (Rev H.M.M. Wilshere, Caledon, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 5)
  - aided schools were better attended and a greater interest was shown in these schools since parents were called to action — because they had to pay fees they took an interest in the school (Rev Krige, Prince Albert, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 64)
  - the principle of gratuitous education was generally opposed: the common motives were to *see that they got their money's worth* and a loss of self-esteem because they felt that they were not independent (Rev H.M.M. Wilshere, Caledon, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 9; a general sentiment)
  - attendance improved where fees were exacted (Dale, in Watermeyer Commission 1863: 35)
  - when the payment of fees was mandatory, the actual deficiencies of the schools became more apparent: schools with competent teachers and assistants were well attended and the fees regularly and freely paid, however, the opposite was also true (Watermeyer Commission 1863: xli -xlix).

Teachers and clergymen were practically unanimous in opposing the imposition of compulsory schooling however there were a small minority who felt that compulsory education would do much to uplift the community and largely secure the stability and well-being of the state (Watermeyer Commission 1863: Appendix I: 8).

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<sup>56</sup> Until the establishment of free schools under the British, the Colonists had been accustomed to paying for their children's education – unless they were indigent in which case they could be exempted from paying school fees.

The official recommendations forthcoming from the Commission's report included:

- the gradual abolition of the government school system and gratuitous education
- the extension of government aid to undenominational public schools according to the £ for £ principle once these schools had satisfied government requirements
- the acknowledgement of the right of the Municipal Boards and Divisional Councils to appropriate an amount towards the establishment and maintenance of schools in their towns
- inspection of schools by local managers and persons appointed by the government
- mandatory religious instruction although attendance was not compulsory
- the medium of instruction at farm schools could be Dutch if preferred (Watermeyer Commission 1863: lxxiv-lxxvi).

When a comparison is drawn between the findings and the recommendations, the underlying issues which needed to be addressed become evident. These included the position of religious instruction in the schools, the inspection of schools by local committees, the language issue, financial responsibility of and support towards schooling and also the desirability of compulsory school attendance.

That religious instruction was to form an integral part of the curriculum was indisputable and it was clear that the education system would not have had the sanction of the Colonists unless it was included. Colonists were not averse to the inclusion of English — in fact, there is evidence that they welcomed the opportunity for their children to learn English — but they objected when it became evident that this would happen at the expense of the status of Dutch. As a compromise, Dutch would be the medium of instruction in the farm schools — the areas where children would have been least exposed to English. It is interesting to note that there was an appeal for children to receive religious instruction in the mother tongue. The underlying rationale — although not explicitly elaborated on — was pedagogically commendable.

There was a direct correlation between parental involvement in schooling and the levying of school fees. Education was valued when parents were obliged to pay fees. A direct consequence appears to have been that parents ensured that their children attended school regularly. This was one of

the reasons why gratuitous education was to be abolished and the £ for £ principle implemented. A reason for the discontinuation of the system of government schools could have been that the Colonists felt detached from the government established schools in comparison with schools that they had established to address their particular needs.

Although the Watermeyer Commission [1863] advised the establishment of district boarding schools<sup>57</sup>, it was only in 1873 that this was made possible by the extension of the grants-in-aid to such institutions on the £ for £ principle. In effect, the state was attempting not only to bring the schools to the children but also to bring the children to the schools. The attempt was not greeted by much enthusiasm by the farmers who were not blind to the difficulties associated with such an arrangement. For one, the provision of suitable accommodation arrangements for young children was a problem. In addition, parental discipline and influence would be lost. These were the problems that parents anticipated and were concerned about (Cillie 1919: 337; Malherbe 1925: 102). Furthermore, once the children were beyond their parents' supervision, parents could to a large extent lose their influence over language issues and religious education policies incorporated in their children's education — issues which were generally of deep concern to parents.

An incontestable proviso expressed by those involved in education, was that only those who were qualified to inspect schools should be given the task. It was generally believed that those inspecting the school should have a personal interest in the school. Taking the background of the Colonists into account, it could be assumed that very few local residents — apart from the clergymen, doctors or magistrates — would have had any amount of liberal education and the majority would consequently not be qualified to conduct inspections. However, parents were the ones who had vested interests in the schools and to address the dilemma, it was suggested that parents should have a significant say in electing the members of the School Commission responsible for carrying out local inspections. This arrangement would ensure that their interests were protected. However, the educated members of the community were already involved with demanding careers of their own and this left them little time or energy to pursue school inspections.

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57 The notion of district boarding schools was not new. In 1786 the Council of Policy proposed the establishment of such schools in the remote rural area to enable children who were growing up in a state of ignorance the opportunity to acquire some education. Nothing however came of these measures. See 3.3.2.11

With regard to the institution of compulsory education it was felt that the time was not yet right<sup>58</sup>. One of the overriding reasons was that the Colonists were generally averse to any form of regulation or compulsion — this appeared to be a characteristic disposition. As late as 1891, Dale remarked

*... [a]mong the noticeable points, strong and weak, of the colonial character [is] the natural aversion to any infringement of personal freedom (in Malherbe 1925: 112).*

The findings and recommendations of the Watermeyer Commission were not to remain a dead letter and were to significantly influence the focus and character of the Education Act which followed two years later.

#### 4.1.4.4 *The Education Act of 1865*

*Act No. 13, 1865, Education Act* incorporated and systematised the various modifications that had evolved from the attempts to adapt a centralised government education system to the needs of the community. The Act coordinated and placed on the statute books the efforts of the government to encourage local participation and effort (Malherbe 1925: 98; Van Wyk 1947: 103). It regulated the mode of appropriating grants from the public revenue in aid of general education. Certain preconditions needed to be complied with before schools were eligible for grants-in-aid — the medium of instruction was to be English, non-sectarian religious instruction was to form part of the daily routine and the schools were to be open to inspection by government officials. Schools were to be divided into three classes:

- undenominational public schools — A class schools divided into first, second and third class schools<sup>59</sup>
- mission schools — B class schools classified into Class I, II and III depending on the scope of instruction<sup>60</sup>

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58 This would remain a recurring debate for several years to come.

59 Apart from in farmer schools (third class schools) where, if required, the instruction would be in Dutch, the medium of instruction in these schools was to be English [Cape of Good Hope 1865b: 54, 6, 7].

60 English was the medium of instruction [Cape of Good Hope 1865b: 8].

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- aborigines' schools — C class schools<sup>61</sup>

In addition, the Act repealed §32 of *Act No. 5, 1855* and *Act No. 14, 1858*<sup>62</sup> since schools were to function according to school regulations approved and published by the Governor and were in future to be controlled by School Commissions (Cape of Good Hope 1865a).

#### 4.1.4.5 *Changes in the socio-political consciousness of the Dutch: opposition to anglicisation and the rise of an Afrikaner identity*

Opposition to the increasing anglicisation of the Cape Colony became increasingly evident during the 1870's through a movement which had its origin in Paarl. The two papers, *De Zuid-Afrikaan* and the *Ware Afrikaander*, published a series of articles under the heading *De Afrikaansche Taal* in which the regression of the Afrikaner nation was deplored. In 1875, the association known as *Die Genootskap van Regte Afrikaanders* was established<sup>63</sup>. This organisation aimed to *staan vir ons Taal, ons Nasie en ons Land* of the *Regte Afrikaanders*. The struggle was contested on a literary, cultural and national level and consequently had a pronounced influence on the social climate of the Colony. Education was not to escape the influence of this movement and it was perhaps in consequence of the statements of Jan Hofmeyr describing the current schools as outlandish and foreign, pointing out that Dutch was being neglected and that schools tended to be irreligious institutions, that the *South African Teachers' Association* petitioned Parliament in 1877 to investigate the current state of education. In September 1879 a Commission of Enquiry into education under the chairmanship of Justice J.H. de Villiers was appointed (Van Wyk 1947: 112-122).

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61 It was preferred that instruction be given in English, but where the teacher was capable of providing instruction in the native language only, the grant would be considerably lower [Cape of Good Hope 1865a: Orde C §3].

62 See 4.1.4.1

63 Prominent activists in the cause were S.J. du Toit, J.H. [Onze Jan] Hofmeyr, C.P. Hoogenhout and A. Pannevis.

#### 4.1.4.6 *The De Villiers Commission of Enquiry*

The Commission was to enquire into the way the existing Education Acts were functioning in the Colony and were to report on proposed alterations and amendments with a view to increasing the efficiency of the provision of education. A special enquiry was to be made into the condition of the rural population in respect of the means of education available to them (De Villiers Commission 1879: vi). The Commission found *inter alia* that:

- there was an absence of sectarian animosity in the system which was attributed to the so-called "conscience clause"<sup>64</sup> that had been in operation since the inception of the system
- the co-existence of at least three languages proved problematic and needed to be dealt with judiciously
- the current system contained no regulation to compel parents to ensure that their children attended school and received basic schooling (De Villiers Commission 1879: ix-xxxix).

From the actual proceedings and interviews with those knowledgeable about educational matters, a number of comments were forthcoming. These remarks give one insight into the prevailing attitude towards educational issues.

#### □ RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

- religious and secular education were well nigh inseparable (De Villiers, Civil Commissioner, Victoria West, in De Villiers Commission 1879: Appendix I: 49)
- the nature of the Colonists was such that they would keep their children from school if religion was to be excluded (Dale, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 37)
- neither parents, children nor the clergy objected to the way in which religious instruction was offered (Dale, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 34)
- the "conscience clause" should be amended to read: *scholars shall not be compelled to attend religious instruction if their parents or guardians object instead of without the consent of their parents or guardians* (Bishop of Cape Town, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 221)
- no complaints had been received about teachers abusing their position to introduce religion into secular subjects e.g. into history lessons (Dale, in De Villiers

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64 Children could be exempted from attending the classes if their parents conscientiously objected.

**Commission 1879: 35)**

- those who were sticklers for denominational education had their own schools, e.g. the Roman Catholics. The majority of the Protestant bodies accepted the undenominational system (Dale, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 36)
- the Roman Catholic Church preferred its children to attend Catholic schools. Where such schools were not available, children were sent to other schools with proper safeguards. The opinion of the Catholic Church was that it was essential that education — to be worthy of the name — was to have religion as its basis (Re Rev Bishop Leonard, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 210)
- the education system was to be brought more under the influence of religion since the prevailing attempt to accommodate the supposed differences of religious belief led to scepticism and infidelity to the Christian religion (De Villiers, Civil Commissioner, Victoria West, in De Villiers Commission 1879: Appendix I: 49)
- the reason Mohammedans were reluctant to send their children to Christian schools was because their own religion was receiving greater attention (Lightfoot, Canon, St George's, Church of England, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 363)
- the decision regarding the specific hours to be set aside for religious instruction was best left to the local authorities and it was not a decision to be taken by the Department (Dale, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 34).

**□ LANGUAGE**

- the teaching of Dutch in the aided schools was not compulsory, but neither was it prohibited (Dale, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 106)
- the knowledge of Dutch was advisable for Dutch children — even if their parents did not express such a wish — since these children belonged to a Church where the preaching was in Dutch (Murray, Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church; Hanau, a merchant residing in Victoria West, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 302; 387)
- it was better to have education in Dutch than none at all and if one was to give way to the people with regard to their own language, one would be more likely to secure their attention to English afterwards when it became clear that there was no prejudice. It would be best to encourage the study of both languages (Dale, in De

**Villiers Commission 1879: 107)**

- parents wanted their children to learn English (Gill, Secretary to the Senate of the South African College; Murray, Dutch Reformed Church, Wellington; Stegman, Senior minister, Dutch Reformed Church, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 138, 299, 195)
- in some districts parents were opposed to instruction in English (Dale, in De Villiers Commission 1879:106)
- the teaching of Dutch ought to be forced on the English to make the situation more equitable, but the ideal would be that it be brought about voluntarily and not by compulsion (Smith, Judge of the Supreme Court, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 467)
- in mission schools where instruction was in English, the children had little understanding of the language and they would be better educated in the home language (Ayliff, Secretary of Native Affairs, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 444)
- instruction through the medium of the mother tongue among younger children was imperative and facilitated the learning of other languages (Hofmeyr, Professor Theological Seminary, Stellenbosch; Van Oordt, Doctor of Philosophy; Leyden University; Ross, M.A. Lady Grey, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 202, 375; Appendix I: 14)
- with regard to the country districts, every teacher was to be able to converse with his pupils in the Dutch language, and certainly intelligibly in the colloquial *patois* (Rev Leibbrandt, Free Protestant Church, Graaff-Reinet, in De Villiers Commission 1879: Appendix I: 88).

□ **ATTITUDE OF PARENTS**

- there was a feeling of indifference or even hostility to education and it was impossible to infuse the least enthusiasm or care for it in the minds of parents of the lower population (Bishop of Cape Town, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 222)
- parents of the poorer classes had not themselves learned the value of education and were negligent in ensuring regular attendance (Oglvie, Principal of the Diocesan College, Rondebosch, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 333)
- the matter of education was to be left in the hands of the parents (Lightfoot, Canon, St George's, Church of England, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 362)

- in the course of time shame would compel most Colonial parents to send their children to school (Gill, Secretary to the Senate of the South African College, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 202)
  - compulsory attendance seemed uncalled for since there are few, if any, European parents who did not strive to give education of some kind to their children (Berry, M.A., M.D. Queenstown, in De Villiers Commission 1879: Appendix I: 81)
  - if parents did not voluntarily keep their children at school up to a certain age, the government should step in paternally (Hole, Rector of Trinity Church, Cape Town, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 363).
- SUPERVISION OF SCHOOLS
- the committee was generally not competent to test the qualifications of a master (Gill, Secretary to the Senate of the South African College, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 191)
  - the committee generally comprised a doctor or a magistrate and other persons of intelligence and these men are competent to form a school committee (Nixon, Government teacher, first class school, Paarl, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 253)
  - the board of managers was almost entirely clerical and since the clergy were the best educated, they generally had the most influence and consequently denominational interests then dominated (Anderson, Principal of the Stellenbosch Gymnasium; Rowan, Deputy Inspector, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 399, 421)
  - the appointment or dismissal of a master was not to be left to a small board of country people (Ogilvie, Principal of the Diocesan College, Rondebosch; De Kock, Teacher, Prince Albert, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 329; Appendix I: 6)
  - members of the committee did not seem to always recognise the obligations resting on them and then wished to be relieved of their duties and obligations (Dale, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 40).
- COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE
- it was impracticable because the Department did not have the right to insist on parents sending their children to school unless schools were within reasonable reach of each child (Dale, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 27)

- compulsory attendance was possible in the towns but not in the farmers' schools (Nixon, government teacher, first class school, Paarl, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 262)
- given the disposition of the population, they would send their children just as much without as with a compulsory act; there would be resentment against the school and the government system and they would prefer not to submit to regulations compelling attendance (Dale, in De Villiers Commission 1879: 28).

Among the official recommendations forthcoming were that:

- no system of national education could serve the purpose for which it was intended unless all attempts at proselytising were excluded from schools — it was hence imperative that a "conscience clause" be included in all future regulations and that attendance of religious instruction classes be voluntary
- compulsory education was not to be enforced since the Colony was not yet ripe for such measures, but a modified system of compulsory education could be introduced whereby children between 5 and 13 were obliged to be able to read and write in English or in Dutch and had a knowledge of elementary arithmetic — parents would be liable for prosecution if their children were illiterate
- no school fees were to be levied in cases of proven poverty
- since Dutch — in a modified form — was the language of the majority of the citizens, all restrictions applying to medium of instruction were to be removed
- a school board system — one for each district — was to be instituted to inquire into and to provide for the needs of each individual district
- "parent" be defined as guardian or tutor or any person who is liable to maintain or has the actual custody of any child (De Villiers Commission 1879: ix-xlix).

The findings and recommendations of the De Villiers enquiry were to influence the gist of the education legislation promulgated three years after the institution of the Commission. These specific amendments addressed two of the more prominent issues in education: language and religious instruction. However, the Commission of Enquiry had also brought other educational dilemmas which could not be ignored to the fore and it was these dilemmas that give rise to the further investigations.

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**4.1.4.6.1 Response to the De Villiers Commission of Enquiry:  
Proclamation 113 of 1882**

Amendments to *Education Act No. 13, 1865* that were made upon the recommendations of the De Villiers Commission and were included in *Proclamation No. 113, 1882* made provision *inter alia* for:

- tuition in and of Dutch where required — parents were able to choose whether their children were to be instructed in Dutch or English
- the school committee being authorised to include religious instruction outside school hours to be attended by pupils whose parents or guardians had granted permission for them to attend (Kaap de Goede Hoop 1882).

However, these amendments were not sufficient to entirely eliminate persistent difficulties.

**4.1.4.6.2 Recurring dilemmas: irregular school attendance and the language issue**

In 1882 Donald Ross, a Scot, who was appointed Inspector-General of Schools and Colleges with the aim to relieve the Superintendent of the more professional duties and give him time for administrative work, compiled a report on the state of education in the Colony. In theory, Ross observed, the educational system of the Colony was admirable in its gradation, symmetry and democratic nature. However, only one-sixth of the children of school-going age were attending school with beneficial regularity. A further concern which he elaborated on was the inferior education farm children were receiving and the irregularity of their attendance. He argued that the farmers were the backbone of the Colony and the prosperity of the country would depend on the development and progress of the farming community. The education being offered to farm children was doing very little to promote their development (Cillie 1919: 336-337; Malherbe 1925: 124; Martinius 1922: 71).

The idea of compulsory education had been contemplated and discussed at length during previous Commissions of Enquiry<sup>65</sup>. Although the desirability of compulsory education was agreed upon by various prominent people, Dale was of the opinion that the introduction of compulsory education would irritate the farmers; prejudice and alienate their sympathies (Malherbe 1925: 113). In his

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65 See 4.1.4.3 & 4.1.4.6

**1890 report, Dale stated**

*... [n]o rigid code will promote the education of the children of the South African Boer; the regulations must be elastic, the hand and voice of the administrator must lead, not command; by judicious tact children will be won for schooling; by arbitrary official rules parents will be deterred and the children will suffer (Dale in Malherbe 1925: 112).*

Apart from the feasibility of instituting compulsory education, another point which enjoyed considerable attention was the issue of who would be responsible for enforcing the regulation. It was proposed — and counter proposed — that the local magistrate should carry the responsibility, that a truant officer be appointed or that the Divisional Council or the School Board should carry the responsibility (De Villiers Commission 1879: 202, 428; Appendix I: 73, 97; Malherbe 1925: 125).

The other persistent dilemma which enjoyed much debate and discussion was the issue of the status of Dutch in the schools. The Dutch language movement had reached a climax with the establishment of the *Taalbond* in 1890 but in the eyes of the Dutch, it was felt that the language was generally neglected and some feared that it might vanish from schools. In 1891, Hofmeyr<sup>66</sup> brought this concern to the attention of Parliament. The Dutch Reformed Synod also supported the movement and urged that Dutch be reinstated as an official language of the Colony (Cillie 1919: 339; Van Wyk 1947: 147) and subsequently, in the same year, a Commission of Enquiry into the provision of education in the Cape Colony under the chairmanship of Sir J.D. Barry was appointed and commenced its investigation.

#### **4.1.4.7 *The Barry Commission of Enquiry and the subsequent reorganisation of the Education Department under Muir***

The Barry Commission of Enquiry was appointed to seek ways of solving problems such as:

- irregular school attendance
- the institution of boards of management
- local finance and control
- the status of Dutch and the institution of bilingual instruction (Cuthbert 1911: 5; Malherbe 1925: 139).

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66 See 4.1.4.5 footnote 63.

From the results of the investigation, the Commissioners were able to estimate that only one-third of the children of school-going age were attending school. This was attributed to the ignorance of parents regarding the value of education, to poverty, scarcity of labour, the want of teachers and the tolerance of scholars' truancy (Martinius 1922: 77). However, the Commission did not see its way clear to recommend the adoption of compulsory education for the whole Colony because of the unique conditions of the region.

With regard to the financing of education, the Commissioners remarked that

*... it may be the duty of the whole body politic to assist in the mitigation of ignorance, but the local community cannot be released from the obligation of appropriating some of the local wealth further to assist in this direction. The only way in which this can be done is by a contribution from the local rate (in Malherbe 1925: 126).*

It was argued that if schools were to be maintained upon public responsibility, the public had the right to choose those who were to be entrusted with the work (Cuthbert 1911: 5-6).

The incapacities of the existing school committees were catalogued and the recommendation was the partial introduction of School Boards — their establishment being limited to areas where school attendance could be made compulsory. It was further recommended that each School Board should be a body corporate and that its duties include the determining of educational needs, the provision of schools and the effective management of these schools (Cuthbert 1911: 5-6; Malherbe 1925: 126).

The investigation also brought to light that the perception that the teaching of Dutch was not receiving adequate attention was gaining ground. The Commissioners did not believe that the country was ready for compulsory bilingualism, but recommended that Dutch should be added to the list of subjects prescribed for the school elementary examination. It further recommended that the choice of medium or mediums be left to parents (Martinius 1922: 78).

Although these recommendations appear to have been rather tentative the deficiencies of the system could not be ignored and needed the attention of one who would take the provision of

education seriously. Shortly before Dr Thomas Muir assumed office as Superintendent of Education in 1892, the report of the Barry Commission appeared and this meant that a recent and well-thought-out document was available for the information and reaction of the new Superintendent.

Dr Thomas Muir made an in-depth study of the Cape education system by taking an extended tour of the Colony's schools and came to realise that the deficiencies of the provision of education could be mainly attributed to a disorganised Central Department of Education. In his report of 1892, he stated that it was necessary that the organisation of education keep pace with growth. To decree compulsory education before having put in operation machinery for producing school buildings, teachers etc. would be discouraging; to institute School Boards before ways of supervising their duties had been devised would be inappropriate. In essence, there were three dominant prerequisites:

- the reorganisation of the Education Department
- the institution of a system of School Boards and school committees to provide, maintain and supervise schools
- the enforcement of compulsory school attendance (Cuthbert 1911: 7; Van Wyk 1947: 151).

These objectives were realised with the enactment of *Act No. 35, 1905, The School Board Act*. This Act was a milestone in the history of education in the Cape Colony since it could aptly be viewed as the culmination of Muir's efforts to institute a well-oiled education system. However, all the credit of the comprehensiveness of this Act cannot be laid before Muir and the recommendations of the Barry Commission of Enquiry for the Act embodied many of the excellent ideas that had been suggested from time to time in the past (Malherbe 1925: 127; Van Wyk 1947: 158-159).

#### 4.1.4.8 *The School Board Act of 1905*

The passing of *The School Board Act* was the first important education legislation since 1865. In the interim, only regulations applicable to certain aspects of education had been forthcoming. The intention of the Act was to provide for the establishment of School Boards and for the better

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management of education throughout the Colony. In summary the Act provided for:

- the division of the Colony into 100 School Board districts (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §4)
- the formation of School Boards — consisting of 6-18 members [either male or female] of whom two-thirds were to be elected by the local tax payers, the rest appointed by the Governor — (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §8 & §10) to:
  - control the schools in each district (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §34)
  - establish undenominational schools (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §33)
  - take financial control of the schools under its jurisdiction e.g. collecting school fees, paying salaries etc. and raising funds through local taxation<sup>67</sup> (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §39, §70 & §73)
  - enforce compulsory education for all European children between the ages of 7 and 14 years of age<sup>68</sup> through the appointment of attendance officers — remembering that certain children were not affected by these regulations<sup>69</sup> (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §51, §52 & §60)
  - enquire into instances where children in the district were not attending school (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §55, §62, §63 & §64)
  - warn parents or guardians to comply with the compulsory attendance regulations (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §65)
- the creation of school committees — comprised of parents and guardians of children enrolled at the school and elected by parents whose children attended the school — to manage individual schools by (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §41):
  - supervising the school (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §45[1])
  - appointing and suspending teachers (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §45[3])

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67 The idea of School Boards being allowed to raise local taxes for education was first suggested by De Mist in 1805. The Divisional Councils of 1855 nearly realised the idea, but it was only in 1905 that the proposal became reality. See 3.5.3.3 & 4.1.4.1 and see [Eybers, G.W. 1918: 85§32].

68 Only by 1910 was compulsion in actual operation in 91 out of the 119 School Board areas [Malherbe 1925: 129].

69 These included children who were under efficient instruction by other means, children who lived more than three miles by road from the nearest school, children who were prevented from attending school through ill-health, or children who were engaged in a regular occupation and who had passed the fourth standard of the elementary school course.

- dealing with the representations or grievances from parents (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §45[4])
- advising the board in all matters affecting the school's welfare (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §45[5]), and
- ensuring that the school under its control opened with the Lord's Prayer and with Scripture reading provided that no child attending such a school would be required to be present when this was done if the parent or guardian expressed a wish to the contrary. The procedure for opening of schools would not be incumbent upon schools of non-Christian designation (Cape of Good Hope 1905: §81).

When these Articles are reviewed, it becomes apparent that several contentious issues which had for a number of years been raised and debated, were being dealt with: the recognition of the desire for community and parental involvement in education, compulsory school attendance and the principle according to which religious instruction would be accommodated in the education system.

Although *The School Board Act* provided for religious instruction and prescribed regulations which determined the character and method of its tuition, an Education Commission of 1910 found that young people showed disturbing ignorance of the Bible. Religious instruction and the inculcation of moral values had evidently been neglected (Bornman 1989: 168). The deduction that could be drawn was that the time spent on the tuition of Biblical principles was inadequate, that the teachers were either indifferent or simply neglected their duty in relation to the teaching of the subject or that parents were not monitoring the progress their children were making in relation to religious instruction nor were they reinforcing the same principles at home. The government had made its stance clear: religious instruction had been assured an undisputed position in the curriculum so it was up to the teachers and parents to ensure that this privilege was rightfully exercised.

The Act also provided for the institution of School Boards to control schools and school committees to manage schools. The School Boards had been instituted to achieve two main objectives: to levy local taxes to ensure a more equitable system for the financing of education and, secondly, to assist in the enforcement of compulsory attendance. The first school to implement compulsory attendance was Kenhardt, but it was only in 1909 that the government made attendance mandatory and then only in six districts. There was a distinct fear of antagonising the

parents — hence the decision to make the introduction gradual. The system spread rapidly during the following year and by 1913 most School Boards had exercised their right to enforce compulsory school attendance (Bornman 1989: 172; Malherbe 1925: 167, 132).

Although there had been an attempt to do away with the local school committees, the bodies remained intact and afforded parents representation in matters relating to the local schools. Possibly the most important task assigned to this body was the appointment of the teacher. This right of parents or their representatives to select the teacher had been regarded throughout time as an inalienable local privilege and was an issue that needed to be reckoned with in any form of education administration introduced in the Colony (Malherbe 1925: 129 -131).

Many changes had taken place on the education scene over the century. A cursory review of the provision and formalisation of schooling during this period makes it possible to trace the development of the degree and scope of parental involvement in the formal education system to which they entrusted their children.

#### 4.1.5 A review of the attitude and position of parents towards their responsibility and right to provide for the education of their children<sup>70</sup>

When the British took possession of the Cape for the second time, they inherited De Mist's system of state controlled education which was allowed to persist until the Colony's future was clarified. The first change brought about was Cradock's attempt to return to Church co-operation in educational matters and the introduction of free Church clerk schools. Further Church influence was attained through appointing two additional clerical members to the Bible and School Commission in whose charge the supervision of schools was left. Cradock also instituted district School Commissions to give parents a voice in certain issues affecting their children's education. Despite these attempts to improve the education system — and possibly to make it more acceptable to the Colonists — most parents were indifferent about their children attending school. It was found that parents preferred to engage their own private teachers than to send their children to the state schools or to use state approved itinerant teachers.

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70 No cross-referencing will be made in this section: these preliminary findings will be discussed at greater length in the final chapter.

A conclusion that could be drawn from the foregoing is that parents and the state had differing views regarding the perceived aim of education. Parents were happy to provide their children with just sufficient education to enable them to become members of the Church — which could be achieved within six months — while the state would have preferred seeing children attend school for longer periods and follow a more liberal and broader education. Another issue which appears to manifest itself is that parents chose to select and engage their own teachers. In the government system, parents did not have this privilege since it fell beyond the scope of duties of local School Commissions.

During Somerset's term, the English free school movement was started. Initially these schools were well supported since the system was perceived to be better resourced and administered. A further advantage was the fact that children were afforded the opportunity to learn English. Somerset provided for the establishment of district School Commissions, but these bodies were not elected by the parents or the local residents — they were centrally appointed. The reasons given for the decline in the popularity of the Somerset schools were that parents had not been given a say in the control of the schools, the status of Dutch was diminished and religious instruction had been relegated to non-doctrinal instruction. These in brief were the issues that parents felt they should be able to dictate: they wanted a forum that offered them leverage in the administration of their children's schools and they wanted their aspirations regarding language and religious instruction to be considered. Another factor that impeded the development of Somerset's schools was the fact that tuition was free: the general perception of parents was that if tuition was free, the standard was inferior, the teachers were indifferent since they were not accountable to the parents, and there was little motivation to ensure that children attended school regularly since the parents were not paying for the service.

During the reform years [1830's-1850's] attempts were made to address these issues. In the interim, the private school system continued — presumably because through this system the concerns of parents could be — and were — addressed. The government could not ignore this local effort and in the 1840's a system of grants-in-aid to stimulate local initiative was implemented. However, there was a compromise. To qualify for the grant, the school had to confine religious instruction to teachings from the Bible, English was to be the medium of instruction and fees had to be levied. The latter proviso could not have been too much of an imposition given the general opinion regarding gratuitous instruction, but the other prerequisites addressed contentious issues. Nevertheless, many schools qualified for government grants.

From the findings of the numerous Commissions of Enquiry into education [1850's - 1890's] the attitude of parents towards the provision of education became apparent. Although parents could be blamed for their apparent apathy with regard to their children's education, they generally gave their undivided attention to those issues they presumed important. Parents persevered in their desire to be given a say in the administration and control of schools through representation on school committees. It was generally felt that to ensure efficiency, the body should comprise educated persons (usually the clergyman and the magistrate since most parents would not have had the opportunity to have acquired more than a meagre education themselves) who, if practicable had been elected by the parents. There was little opposition to the youth learning English, however, this was not to occur at the expense of Dutch. The perception that religious education and education itself were inseparable predominated and any system of education which negated this desire, would have failed.

The desirability of implementing compulsory school attendance regulations began to feature more prominently during the early 1900's, but the government decided to implement the regulation gradually for fear of opposition from the parent community who, typical of the temperament of the Colonists at the time, resented any imposition on their freedom — especially if its origin was to be found with the government.

In retrospect, Cape education had started off with a centralised system, and, in time, evolved into a system which seemed to accommodate the population's propensity for liberty of thought, independence and self-government. These issues appear to have been served through the establishment of local managing and supervising committees — a development which culminated in the institution of local School Boards with the local school committees to represent the interests of parents under their regulation and guardianship. *The School Board Act, 1905* was the last education legislation to be passed under the system of British government and remained in force with Union in 1910.

The Cape Colony was not the only British Colony in southern Africa at this time — to the north-east lay the Colony of Natal. However, this region's history — and the development of its education system — had progressed along different lines to that of the Cape and the focus will now fall on events in this territory.

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## 4.2 EDUCATION IN THE COLONY OF NATAL AFTER SETTLEMENT AND COLONISATION [1834-1910]

Although Natal was discovered by the Portuguese as early as 1497 (Botha 1962: 164), it was only in 1721 that a European settlement under the Dutch East India Company was established. However, this settlement was abandoned shortly afterwards (Bird 1888a: 258). The next European settlers were a party of 25 Englishmen under Lieutenant F.G. Farewell who settled in the area in 1824 hoping to open up a trading post. A stretch of land was ceded to them by the Zulu King, Chaka (Bird 1888a: 193), but this act was not recognised by the British government.

Between 1834 and 1840, a number of Dutch frontier farmers — or Voortrekkers — under the leadership of Piet Retief and Gerrit Maritz and others, left the Cape Colony to establish their own states in the interior<sup>71</sup>. Some moved into the region of Natal. The British settlers cordially received the Dutch and it was decided to join forces with them (Bird 1888a: 360). On 6 February 1838, Dingaan, Chaka's successor, granted Port Natal and the land between the Tugela and the Umzimkulu rivers to the Voortrekkers. However, Dingaan murdered Retief and his company of leaders after the deed of cession had been signed. He also attacked the unsuspecting laagers along the Bloukrans and Bushmans rivers. The loss of human life was appalling. During the winter of that year Gerrit Maritz also died and of all the principal Natal leaders only Karel Landman, the Chief Commandant, was left (Du Bruyn 1991: 133-134; Whiteside 1909: 103).

When Andries Pretorius arrived in Natal in November 1838, he was appointed Commandant-General of the Voortrekkers. Preparations for a punitive expedition against the Zulu force were made and on 16 December 1838 at the Battle of Blood River, vengeance was wreaked on the Zulu King. The emigrants looked upon the land as their own by right of conquest and the first

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71 There were no legal impediments to their emigration [Chase 1843: 53] and the main reasons for their exodus — the continual invasions and plunder by the native tribes for which the farmers received neither compensation nor protection from the government, the insecurity experienced and losses sustained after the emancipation of slaves and the unfounded accusations brought against them by certain missionaries — were outlined in a manifesto of the emigrant farmers drafted by Piet Retief in 1837 [Chase 1843: 83-84]. Also see 5.2

The term "Voortrekkers" was used to refer to these Dutch farmers — the Boers — who wished to escape from British interference and dominance and consequently organised a mass emigration from the Cape Colony. These people did not consider themselves Colonial subjects and emigrated in search of freedom and liberty in Republics which they would establish after suitable territories had been secured.

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Voortrekker Republic, the Republic of Natalia, was established<sup>72</sup>. Britain did not recognise the Republic and in 1842 Sir George Napier, the Cape Colony Governor, sent troops to occupy Port Natal. They were withdrawn a year later and the Dutch settlers set up their government headquarters at Pietermaritzburg<sup>73</sup> (Du Bruyn 1991: 134).

The Dutch Voortrekkers appealed to Napier to acknowledge them a free and independent people but this request was denied (Bird 1888a: 612). In May 1843, Natal was proclaimed a British Colony — albeit annexed to the Cape Colony — with Lieutenant-Colonel A.J. Cloete as Commissioner (Chase 1843: 277-281). The Dutch farmers were guaranteed the peaceable possession of their farms, but many refused to accept British rule and once again trekked over the Drakensberg to seek a home elsewhere<sup>74</sup>. So great was the exodus that in 1846 a mere 60 Dutch families remained in Natal. Those who remained were to be found chiefly in Pietermaritzburg and the northern country districts (Hattersley 1950: 79; Whiteside 1909: 107).

Without doubt, much had happened in the decade since the first wagons of the Voortrekkers had crossed the Drakensberg in 1837. It seemed as if the search for freedom and liberty that had prompted the Dutch pioneers to cross the mountain range had been fruitless. Ironically, the territory thus conquered, lost and vacated by the Voortrekkers, became home to a steady stream of British immigrants of whom almost 5 000 arrived between 1848 and 1852 (Holden 1855: 244; Theal 1895: 103). Within a short period, the first experiment at establishing an exclusively Dutch Voortrekker state had ended in it becoming the most British region of Southern Africa.

For a time Natal remained annexed to the Cape Colony, but this arrangement was burdensome and consequently on 15 July 1856 Natal received Representative Government and became a separate Colony. John Scott [1856-1864] became governor and a Legislative Council with sixteen members was appointed. On 3 July 1893 the Colony was awarded Responsible Government

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72 This Republic theoretically embraced Natal and the Winburg and Potchefstroom areas although the latter never assumed the subordinate role allotted to it [Williams [ed.] 1956: xi]. After the annexation of Natal [1843] a new Voortrekker Republic was established at Potchefstroom. See 5.2

73 The central government consisted of an elected Volksraad of 24 members with a president or chairman. As far as local government was concerned, the landdrost and heemrade system was established [Du Bruyn 1991: 134].

74 See 5.1 & 5.2

(Whiteside 1909: 107-108).

These then were the events that led to the establishment and influenced the administration of the Colony of Natal. It appears that the era can be roughly divided into three periods:

- 1837-1843 (Settlement by the Voortrekkers)
- 1843-1856 (British control of the region under Cape Colony administration)
- 1856-1910 British control under Representative Government [1856-1893] and Responsible Government [1893-1910]).

In the discussion that follows, the focus will fall on the development of educational opportunities and schools and the role of parents in this regard during each of these periods.

#### 4.2.1 The Voortrekker tradition of education [1834-1843]

Underneath the tenacity and resoluteness with which the Voortrekkers undertook the arduous journey to escape the jurisdiction of the British and to search for a homeland they could call their own and establish according to their needs, was an indomitable religious spirit and trust in the Almighty. To these God-fearing people, religion, politics, social custom and education were inseparable.

##### 4.2.1.1 *The Voortrekker teachers*

Although living in the 19th century, the Voortrekkers belonged to the 17th century in their way of thinking and consequently their ideas on education were very similar to those prevailing in the early years at the Cape under the DEIC (Malherbe 1925: 182).

The Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church seated in the Cape Colony disapproved of the Trek and the Boers were advised to recognise the legitimate authority of the British Crown and remain in the Colony. The government also called in the help of prominent Church leaders to discourage the exodus. As a final resort, clergymen and teachers were dissuaded from joining the Trekkers and consequently very few teachers accompanied the Trekkers (Dreyer 1929: 3-4, 6-9).

During the migratory years, parents were the principal educators since trained teachers were scarce. In response to the baptismal vow which stressed the parental duty to bring children up in the Christian religion, parents conscientiously saw to it that their children learnt to read the Bible<sup>75</sup>, read and recite the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Twelve Articles of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism — learning which prepared them for Church membership (Steenkamp 1941: 25). Although there were instances where a teacher of sorts accompanied a Voortrekker party, parents generally did not entrust religious education to these persons since they had reservations about their ability as teachers (Spoelstra 1924: 60). A number of years later, Bishop Colenso (1855: 205) would remark that Dutch parents were very careful to educate their children themselves to the best of their ability and in respect of godliness. A respectable Dutch family would be found to surpass by far the majority of English families with the same opportunities.

Notwithstanding the fact that teachers and clergymen had been discouraged from joining the Voortrekkers, most of the parties were accompanied by at least one individual who offered his services as a teacher. Piet Retief's group had Wynand Maré who had two large tents at his disposal and Gerrit Maritz had the services of Erasmus Smit<sup>76</sup>, a Dutch clergyman who doubled as a *legerschoolmeester* (Lubbe 1942: 78-79; Preller 1920: 203). Steenkamp (1941: 23) also mentions the freed slave, Barnard Hobbel, who accompanied his former master when the latter decided to join the Voortrekkers. Hobbel had been educated in the Cape Colony and although his own education could not have encompassed much more than basic reading and writing, he undertook to teach his master's children as best he could.

Though the education provided by the parents and the quasi-teachers could not have been of a very high standard, it was sufficiently adequate to prevent the younger generation from growing up illiterate or heathen.

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75 Since school books were hard to come by, the Bible was often the only book used to teach the child to read.

76 In 1837 Piet Retief appointed Smit as the minister of the itinerant congregation of Voortrekkers [Malherbe 1925: 182].

During these years, the migrant Boers were not officially united under any form of elected government and it was up to the individual Voortrekker party leader to see to the affairs of those who accompanied him. However, circumstances necessitated some form of unification since it should be remembered that one of the main reasons for undertaking the exodus from the Cape Colony was to establish an independent Boer Republic in the interior and consequently the Volksraad was formed.

#### 4.2.1.2 *The Volksraad's attitude towards education*

The Natal Volksraad dates its existence from 17 April 1837. In October 1838 the Constitution of Natal was embodied in the *Regulatiën en Instructiën, voor den Raad van Representanten van het Volk, aan Port Natal en omliggende land*, the attitude of the Volksraad towards the provision of education is outlined in the thirteenth article of the Constitution which reads

... [d]e Raad zal ook een wakend oog over de Godsdienst en Scholen moeten houden, en alles aanwenden tot bevordering derzelve (South African Archival Records 1958a: 286).

Despite this resolution, the pioneers and their leaders were preoccupied with protecting their families and property and no permanent schools were forthcoming. But this does not mean that the necessity to provide schooling was not recognised. On 2 January 1840, David Jacobs and D. du Preez were appointed *Chatigiseermeesters* (South African Archival Records 1958a: 25) and on 16 January 1841, the Volksraad granted the Church Council of Port Natal permission to build a Church or school on government ground. It was pointed out, however, that the Volksraad was unable to offer any financial assistance (South African Archival Records 1958a: 74). Later during the same year, the Volksraad gave all the Church Councils of the various districts permission to reserve open land for Churches and schools (South African Archival Records 1958a: 117). In a memorandum dated 21 February 1842 addressed to Napier protesting British military occupation, the Volksraad intimated that they had gained the confidence of the people by placing government, and also religion and education, on a firm footing and stated that

... alreeds hebben wy een aanzienlyk gestigt voor het waarneemen van den openbaaren Godsdienst opgerigt, en het onderwys der Jeugd is op eenen goeden voet (South African Archival Records 1958a: 395).

During this time, religious associations in Holland began to show an interest in the fate of the emigrants. One such society was *The Commission for supplying the religious wants of the inhabitants of Natalia* under the management of Mr Jacob Swart, an elder of the Church in Holland. It had been conjectured that the Boers were fast lapsing into a state of barbarism and heathenism (Basson 1956: 52; Bird 1888b: 416, 426) and consequently on 6 April 1842 an agent of the society, J.A. Smellekamp, addressed the members of the Volksraad to enquire into the Colonists' most pressing needs. Among those mentioned were clergymen, teachers and school books (South African Archival Records 1958a: 148). Promising still further assistance, Smellekamp left behind one teacher who had accompanied him. The latter unfortunately was reported to *exercise an influence on the minds of the farmers in the inland districts not conducive to their own happiness or the peace of the country* (Bird 1888b: 361).

The duration of the autonomous Boer Republic governed by the Volksraad was short-lived. Early in the 1840's Britain contrived plans to secure Natal as a British possession.

#### 4.2.2 The British tradition of education: the period of annexation [1843-1856]

In reaction to the annexation of Natal by the British in 1843, many Voortrekker families left the coast to settle in the inland districts in an attempt to escape British authority. Some even went as far as relocating to the Orange Free State and Transvaal regions<sup>77</sup>. At the same time, British immigration was encouraged and a large number of British Colonists settled in the Colony<sup>78</sup> (Bird 1888b: 359, 386; Steenkamp 1941: 35).

Schools were urgently needed. In 1844 Rev Faure, the Dutch Reformed minister, wrote to John Montagu, Secretary to Government of the Cape Colony, stating that

*... the ignorance of the emigrants is great indeed: that the rising generation, following the example of their parents, is growing up more expert in the use of the gun than the knowledge of the alphabet... Need I add, Sir, that, besides the number already recommended, four clergymen, and an equal*

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77 See 5.1 & 5.2

78 See 4.2

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*number of good schoolmasters, would find abundant employment in dispersing the cloud of ignorance and sowing the seed of undefiled religion (Bird 1888b: 361).*

The government showed its commitment to education in the *Regulations and Instructions for the Council of Representatives of the People at Port Natal and the Circumjacent Country* of 2 September 1844 in which the following resolution was outlined.

*... The Council shall also be obliged to keep a watchful eye upon the performance of divine worship, and schools, and encourage all to the improvement thereof (Bird 1888b: 421).*

This regulation was included at the insistence of the Boers who were of the opinion that the education of the youth was the concern of the government<sup>79</sup>. Cloete had advised the Cape Colony government on 8 September 1843 to heed this request since it would afford the opportunity to

*... exert such an influence on the moral and intellectual improvement of the rising generation as will tend to dispel the state of ignorance in which the large mass of the present population is growing up, and prepare them for the enjoyment of a more refined state of Society and a higher state of Civilisation (Cloete in Steenkamp 1941: 35).*

The Dutch Colonists continued to lobby for their religious and educational needs and in 1845 Sir John Maitland, Governor of the Cape Colony, wrote to the Secretary of State in London that Dutch Colonist parents wanted Swart's religious society in Holland<sup>80</sup> to supply schoolmasters for Natal. Maitland, however, suggested that other means be sought to procure suitable teachers<sup>81</sup>. His suggestion was to approach the Rotterdam Missionary Society who had shown its worth in recommending Rev Faure, a man of exceptional quality and good standing (Bird 1888b: 461-463).

It would seem however, that the Colonists were concerned about the state of education and felt the need to take steps to deal with the problem themselves since the government had until then

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79 Petition to Cloete from the Volksraad 4 Sept 1843 [South African Archival Records 1958a: 449].

80 See 4.2.1.2

81 Maitland seriously doubted the credentials of the society and was suspicious of its intentions. It was apparent that the Dutch were enamoured with the society and desired at all cost to remain in its favour [Bird 1888b: 462].

not made any attempt to provide schools for the youth of the Colony.

#### 4.2.2.1 *The first privately established schools*

Once the immigrants became more settled and life assumed a more stable nature, an attempt was made to establish some form of formal schooling arrangements for the youth. The enterprising individuals who took it upon themselves to establish schools must have taken parents' wants regarding education into consideration to ensure that their schools enjoyed the support of the local communities. From a brief review of some of the schools established one is able to determine what it was that parents viewed as being important in the realm of education.

One of the first schools established upon private initiative appears to have been the school of H.A. Repsold. In *De Natalier* of 19 April 1844, he advertised his intention to open a school in which he also hoped to hold evening classes. In the same newspaper, C.E. Boniface advertised tuition in languages and the Spanish Guitar. As the community grew more cosmopolitan, the provision of education became more comprehensive if anything is to be deduced from an advertisement in *De Natalier* of 21 February 1845 in which

*... mejufvrouw Catharina Muller ... geeft hiermede kennis ... eene School zal openen, en onderwijs sal geven in het Spellen, Lezen, Schrijven en Cijferen, soo in de Hollandsche als Engelsche Talen ...*

Although no mention is made of the scope of the curriculum in Repsold's school, Boniface indicated that in his school, instruction in the languages would feature. Miss Muller also specifies that both Dutch and English would be taught at her school: either Dutch parents wanted their children to learn English or Miss Muller was providing tuition for the English-speaking Colonists' children as well.

Because of the influx of British immigrants<sup>92</sup> more schools were required, but at the same time more qualified teachers or individuals who considered their own education sufficiently adequate to try their hand at teaching, arrived in the Colony. From a perusal of advertisements in the Colony's local newspapers of this period, evidence of a number of other enterprising individuals'

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82 See 4.2

efforts to establish schools are found. A few are mentioned to indicate the scope of the schooling provided and the resourcefulness of the individuals.

In 1846 Mrs Lundie proposed opening a sewing school at her home. Children would also be instructed in reading and writing in the English language (*Natal Witness*: 12 June, 1846). In 1850 Mr W.M. Wood advertised a private school for boys offering instruction in the usual branches of an "English education" (*Natal Witness*: 5 July, 1850). During the following year, the Government Surveyor, Edmund Tatham, planned a system of *a la carte* tuition for boys (*Natal Witness*: 10 October, 1851). An ambitious venture to establish a private school in Pietermaritzburg was also taken on by the London family in 1854. The merits and scope of their school were outlined in a letter which appeared in the *Natal Independent*.

*... The virtuous education of our offspring ... is one of the most important objects of life. The happiness or misery not merely of an individual, but of the world depend upon the good or bad morals of its inhabitants ... consequently we may look upon the religious instruction as the surest basis of future respectability of character (Natal Independent: 14 September, 1854).*

Later reference to the same school reaffirms that moral emphasis was to pervade the academic endeavour and students were offered a liberal and solid education in which the formation of character, moral and religious training were given the strictest attention (*Natal Witness*: 5 January, 1855). This emphasis would indeed have satisfied the expectations of Dutch parents especially those who advocated education with a religious underpinning<sup>83</sup>.

The village of D'Urban also had its entrepreneurs. In 1854 Miss Sarah Crowder advertised that she was

*... desirous of receiving a select and limited number of Young Ladies, to instruct in the usual branches of a solid English education, with French, drawing and painting and music if required (Natal Mercury: 12 April, 1854),* and in 1856 Mrs Holman advertised her school where tuition in all branches of an "English Education" would be provided for children between the ages of 5 and 12 (*Natal Mercury*: 6 June, 1856). From these advertisements it would appear that by now, the British immigrant

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83 See 4.2.1.1

population had grown to the extent that schools were being established that would reflect the character of the education to which these new Colonists had been accustomed in their homeland.

There were also those who wished to perpetuate the tradition of home schooling, and similar to the tradition of the itinerant teachers of the Cape Colony, domestic service was also offered<sup>84</sup>. An example is that of a *respectable young female* who applied to join a family to assist as a teacher of the younger members of the household. She mentioned too, that she was useful with the needle (*Natal Witness*: 4 October, 1850). Another applied for domestic work, adding that she could also render assistance in the instruction of two or three young children (*Natal Witness*: 27 February, 1852).

Tuition in these privately established schools as well as that offered by governesses and tutors, provided for the obvious need for education based on the expectations of the cosmopolitan parent body, but simultaneously secured for these individuals both a profession and a personal income. However, the government could not ignore that it too had a responsibility towards providing for the education of the Colony's youth.

#### 4.2.2.2 *The establishment of government schools and the introduction of the system of grants-in-aid to support local initiative*

The first indication that the government intended to establish a school is to be found in a local newspaper article. An extract reads that

*... this government intends to offer Mrs Stuckie the situation of Teacher of a Free School ... If our information be correct, we look upon this measure as not only tending to the benefit of the rising generation, but as a highly benevolent act on the part of the Government (The Patriot: 5 March, 1847).*

A year later the tender to erect a building which was to serve as a government free school was approved by the Natal Executive Council (South African Archival Records 1962: 15) and in July 1849 — six years after annexation — the school opened with 80 children under the first

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84 See 3.3.2.11

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schoolmaster, Mr Marquard<sup>85</sup>. The school boasted a curriculum which included the classics, geography, algebra and geometry (Hattersley 1940b: 194-195).

Church interest in educational matters was also forthcoming<sup>86</sup> — a not too unfamiliar situation during those times for both British and Dutch parents held that the Church was to concern itself with education<sup>87</sup>. In 1850 the Church of England at D'Urban under Bishop Colenso applied to the government for aid for a school established under Mr J.R. Goodricke, the parish clerk and schoolmaster. They were informed, however, that a government public school was envisaged and shortly afterwards, tenders were invited for the construction of a school building in the village of D'Urban. The school opened later in that same year [1850] with William Nesbitt as school master (Nuttall [ed.] 1949: 16-16).

These two schools laid the foundations of the governmental education system in Natal<sup>88</sup>. Although these schools were in principle "free", education was not entirely gratuitous for it was recommended that all government schools should levy moderate fees to cover costs (Steenkamp 1941: 44).

In 1851 government funds were set aside to assist privately established village schools and a system of government aid to denominational and undenominational schools was introduced<sup>89</sup>. Schools in towns as well as those in country districts were eligible to receive aid, but the teaching of English as a subject was a precondition to qualify for a government grant. One of the first schools to

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85 When a replacement was sought for Mr Marquard in 1858, the candidates were required to write an examination on various subjects which included languages, mathematics, history and the natural sciences. Dutch was one of the languages examined, but not English — presumably the examination was conducted in English and it was expected of all candidates to have a thorough knowledge of the language. Apart from this demonstration of cognitive abilities, the successful candidate's moral character was to be beyond reproach and he was to show an aptitude for teaching [Steenkamp 1941: 45]. The successful candidate was the military chaplain, William Nesbitt, a formidable scholar and disciplinarian and the first teacher to be appointed to the D'Urban government school.

86 See 4.2.2.3 & 4.2.3.6

87 See 4.1.2.1, 4.1.2.2 & 4.2.1.2

88 By 1861 both these schools comprised a primary and a secondary division. To accommodate the large number of children in the primary section, the monitor system — similar to the Cape Colony system — was employed. Also see 4.1.2.2

89 See 4.2.3.4

receive aid was a school at Greytown in the Umvoti district. At the stone laying ceremony of the school, the Lieutenant-General wrote

*... for the education of the youth of that country which is almost exclusively inhabited by Dutch farmers. ... and the instruction to be given in it, is to embrace some branches of education hitherto unknown to the most intelligent of the Dutch farmers (Steenkamp 1941: 48).*

Colenso (1855: 119) remarked that the imposition of having to teach English at these aided schools was accepted by the Boers who wanted their children to learn English. The fact that the Weenen community expressed an urgent appeal to acquire the services of *an Englishman who can speak Dutch* for their school, supports this view.

Although the government had taken steps to involve itself in establishing a system of education, there were no regulations dictating policy with regard to the establishment of schools, the granting of aid or the possibility for parental involvement through representative bodies such as school committees and it became apparent that government policy in relation to education was necessary.

#### **4.2.2.3    *The formalisation of education: attempts to develop government policy on education***

The authorities appear to have been dissatisfied with the state of education in the Colony because in 1849 the Colonial Secretary, Mr D. Moodie, requested the submission of proposals which would lead to the creation of an efficient education system. A School Commission<sup>90</sup> comprising the Colonial Secretary, the minister and senior Churchwarden of the Church of England and the minister and senior elder of the Dutch Reformed Church, was asked to conduct an investigation into the state of education in the Colony (Nuttall [ed.] 1949: 15).

##### **4.2.2.3.1    *The first Commission of Enquiry: the School Commission of 1849***

In its report to the government on 9 August 1849, the Commission drew a number of conclusions and made several recommendations. Those that impacted on issues of interest to parents included the following:

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<sup>90</sup> The Commission acted as a local school committee for the government school in Pietermaritzburg [Nuttall [ed.]1949: 15].

- due to the large number of children attending the government schools which complicated the teachers' teaching task, the curriculum was to be limited to instruction in:
  - reading and writing
  - arithmetic and introduction to mathematics
  - geography and ancient history<sup>91</sup>
  - the faith and duty of a Christian, but no doctrinal instruction
  - English, Latin and where necessary, Dutch
- English was to be the medium of instruction, but Dutch was to form a part of the curriculum in government schools as time and circumstance allowed
- no gratuitous schooling would be offered, reduced fees would be exacted in cases of indigence
- local school committees, appointed by the Lieutenant-General, were to be responsible for the management of government schools and their duties would encompass *inter alia*:
  - control of financial matters subject to the approval of the government<sup>92</sup>
  - consideration and recommendation regarding teacher applications and appointments
  - admission and expulsion of children
  - investigation of parents' or guardians' grievances according to stipulated procedure
  - monitoring of annual examination<sup>93</sup>
- the principal's duties included:
  - decisions regarding teaching methods, assistant teachers and discipline
  - selection of tuition material (school books) in conjunction with the school committee
  - opening and closing the school day with prayer (Steenkamp 1941: 58).

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91 Modern history was omitted to avoid commentary regarding prevailing constitutional conditions which could have been contentious and have led to friction [Steenkamp 1941: 54].

92 The school committee was to fix the school fees and determine the amount of the grant [Steenkamp 1941: 58].

93 Hattersley [1940a: 179] reported that ... *Colonial schoolmasters suffered from the suspicious supervision of managing authorities. Members were virtually in a position to dictate the nature of the curriculum.*

From these recommendations a number of deductions regarding the Commission's perception of the educational needs of the Colonists can be drawn. No specific provision was made for mother tongue instruction in Dutch — presumably because many of the Dutch had already left the region<sup>94</sup>. However, both English and Dutch were accommodated in all government schools in which was a predominantly British Colony. Religious instruction was non-doctrinal, but instruction in the general principles of Christian-living was obligatory. It is presumed that sectarian instruction was the domain of the various denominational Churches of which there were several. Provision was made for the establishment of school committees that would give the community and parents a say in educational matters, but these bodies were not elected by the parents but appointed by the government. In addition, no guidelines were given regarding the nature of the composition of the body and it can only be assumed that the Lieutenant-General would provide parents representation on a body that was to preside over their interests in relation to their children's education.

These recommendations were not formally issued as a proclamation and because no positive outcomes were forthcoming, the government appointed a second Commission of Enquiry into education in July 1853.

#### **4.2.2.3.2    *The second Commission of Enquiry: the Education Commission of 1853***

The Education Commission's terms of reference was to investigate *inter alia* teacher qualifications, school subjects taught, the method of instruction and discipline. Recommendations regarding the grants-in-aid system were to be made. In their instructions it was stated that religious instruction was to be left in the hands of the teachers who were to read a portion of the Scriptures in the mother tongue of the children on a daily basis (Steenkamp 1941: 59-60).

In the drafting of their recommendations, the Education Commission found that they could not reach consensus and they consequently brought out a majority and a minority report. A number of these aspects would have been of interest to parents. According to the majority report, it was recommended that:

- the government should provide financial support to existing schools and privately established schools on *inter alia* the following conditions:

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94      By 1846 only 60 Dutch families remained in the Colony. See 4.2

- the schools were to be managed by local committees representing the interests of the parents
- religious instruction was to occur according to government policy with daily Scripture reading in the mother tongue
- the school would be subject to regular inspection
- schools receiving government grants were to be supplied with school books
- a permanent Board of Education representative of all the religious and educational interests of the Colony was to be appointed.

In conclusion, the Commission expressed the hope that sectarian influence would prevail so that the different Church groups would not have reason to fragment the provision of schooling by establishing separate denominational schools (Steenkamp 1941: 62-64).

The minority report focussed on the inability of the state to provide or to pay its teachers. The commissioned teachers were overworked and were unable to give their pupils the required attention. It appeared that the independent Church schools were more cost effective and in addition, were well attended. It was recommended that a system of government support to schools established by the various religious denominations be adopted. The irony of the matter was that the majority of the teachers of government schools were either ordained ministers or members of Church Councils and the government was, in effect, already working in close conjunction with religious organisations. The final recommendation thus merely proposed closer liaison between the government and Church organisations co-ordinated through a central body (Steenkamp 1941: 65-66).

In summary, both the School Commission and the majority report of the Education Commission urged for the establishment of local school committees and the continuation of the system of government and aided schools. The minority report urged for closer cooperation between the government and the different Churches in establishing and providing education. One of the joint recommendations was an appeal for a Central Board of Education. However, a change in the system of Colonial government was to check any immediate changes to educational policy.

### 4.2.3 The British tradition of education: the period of Representative Government [1856-1893]

The granting of Representative Government to Natal brought independence to the region in the sense that it was no longer annexed to the Cape Colony. Although a serious investigation into the provision of education under the previous government had been launched, no significant changes based on the recommendations of the Commissions of Enquiry could have been forthcoming, for during the first session of the Legislative Council, Governor Scott stated

*... I would here call your attention to the present imperfect means provided for the education of the youth of both sexes. It will afford me great pleasure to carry out any scheme your wisdom and local experience may recommend for making better provision in a matter of such vital importance to every resident in the Colony (Scott in Nuttall [ed.] 1949: 18).*

That the intentions of the government were *bona fide* is attested to by the fact that a Select Committee was appointed in 1858 under James Arbuthnot to consider the subject of education in the Colony.

#### 4.2.3.1 *The Select Committee and its enquiry into education*

During its investigation, the Committee conducted interviews with those who were involved in and had an interest in education to determine their opinions on the provision of education. Specific attention was given to the method and content of religious instruction. Attempts were also made to determine how religious education could be combined with secular education or whether it was preferable that each should be taught exclusively (Natal Government Gazette 1858a: 234-235; Steenkamp 1941: 69-70).

In conclusion of its investigation, the Select Committee recommended:

- the establishment of a Central Board of Education
- the appointment of a General Inspector of Education
- that religious instruction in government and aided schools was imperative; however, its dissemination was to be non-sectarian and aimed only at imparting those Christian principles universally accepted by all Christian denominations
- that the grants-in-aid system be refined

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- that local controlling bodies be elected from persons who had paid subscriptions (non-parent members) and those who paid school fees (parents of scholars) to *inter alia*:
    - administer and monitor the grants-in-aid
    - select and appoint teachers
    - determine the school or subscription fees — indigent children were to be admitted free
    - visit schools and supply statistics and a progress report to the Colonial Secretary
  - the appointment of itinerant teachers in remote country districts and
  - that English would be compulsory in all schools (Natal Government Gazette 1858a: 234-236).

These findings and recommendations were heeded and resulted in the government taking action in relation to education policy.

#### 4.2.3.2 *The Central Board of Education*

As a result of the Select Committee's report, a Central Board of Education was established in 1858<sup>95</sup>. The Board comprised the Governor, the Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops of Natal, the Colonial Secretary, the First Puisne Judge, the Attorney-General and two clergymen<sup>96</sup>. Four clergymen had been proposed, but Rev Campbell declined on account of prior commitments and Rev Faure because *het onderwijs in den Bijbel geen noodzakelijk vereiste in de school was nie*<sup>97</sup> (Natal Government Gazette 1858b: 396-397).

The Board had the full financial and moral support of the Governor. In its first report the Board passed resolutions regarding various concerns. Issues that either directly or indirectly concerned

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95 At this time, similar sentiments were in vogue in the Cape Colony. See 4.1.3.5

96 The composition of the Board drew a good deal of criticism. In the *Natal Mercury* of 7 October 1858 it was stated in the editorial that... [*w]e object to the Commission being composed exclusively of clergymen and officials, which is an insult to the educated and independent laity of the Colony...* However, it was possibly the very diversity in religious conviction that contributed to the non-sectarian stance finally adopted with regard to religious education.

97 The Select Committee had proposed non-doctrinal religious instruction and the imparting of general Christian principles acceptable to all Christian denominations. See 4.2.3.1

parents included the following:

- the Board would aid, direct and control the Superintendent of Education in his task of managing the education system — the Superintendent was the link between the Board and the schools
- all government aided schools would elect school committees comprising 3-5 members. Those eligible for nomination and able to vote were individuals — not only parents — who had paid a contribution of £1. The duties of the local school committees were the same as those outlined by the Select Committee<sup>98</sup>, but in addition, local school committees could appeal to the Board for advice regarding the selection of appropriate secular school books<sup>99</sup>
- while decidedly recommending the daily reading of the Scriptures as a text book of moral and religious instruction, the Board would not commit itself to making such reading compulsory. The local school committees were to be left to decide the schools' policy regarding religious instruction. Children could be exempted from attending the classes if their parents conscientiously objected
- grants-in-aid would be awarded conditionally to schools, but the grant was to be supplemented by local contributions
- itinerating schools, their teachers and local school committees were to be controlled by the same regulations that applied to all other aided schools (Natal Government Gazette 1858b: 396-397).

For a number of years — in 1849 and again in 1853 — Education Commissions had proposed the institution of local school committees<sup>100</sup>. The Select Committee of 1858 had made similar proposals, but it was only after the institution of a Central Board of Education that the establishment of school committees became a reality and parents and the broader community were able to become personally involved in school matters. Another issue addressed by the Board of

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98 See 4.2.3.1

99 The Board of Education would not prescribe books, but would provide advice if asked to.

100 See 4.2.2.3.1 & 4.2.2.3.2

Education was the need for a Superintendent of Education<sup>101</sup> and for the next number of years, the character of the education system of the Colony would be influenced by the personality of the commissioned Superintendent at the time.

#### 4.2.3.3 *Superintendents of Education and their contribution towards the formulation of education policy*

In the Board's opinion a Superintendent of the Education Department was required to ensure the efficient working of an education system financed by public revenue. The Board would aid, direct and control this officer and through him the education system. The Superintendent would have full power of supervision and of disposing of any difficulties which might arise in the management of schools receiving government aid (Natal Government Gazette 1858b: 397).

##### 4.2.3.3.1 *Dr Robert J. Mann [1859-1870]*

On 8 July 1859, Dr R.J. Mann<sup>102</sup> accepted the position as the first Superintendent of Education<sup>103</sup>. Significant issues became evident during his numerous inspections of schools of which the following warrant mention.

#### □ ATTITUDE OF THE COMMUNITY TOWARDS SCHOOLING

Mann found that parents and the community were generally reluctant to contribute towards the financial support of the schools in their areas as they believed that it was the government's responsibility to provide schooling facilities. This attitude had a negative effect on the teachers. Because they became totally reliant on government grants for their salaries, many lost interest and neglected their duties. This in turn led parents to withdraw their children. To resolve the problem, Mann recommended that the grants be continued

101 The Board established in 1858 was dissolved in 1859 and got no further than submitting the list of resolutions outlined. The Board resumed its duties under clearer direction in 1877 [Steenkamp 1941: 112]. See 4.2.3.7.1 & 4.2.3.7.2

102 Mann was qualified in science and medicine. He did not receive his appointment for his reputation as an educationist, but rather because he was essentially an educated man. He was admired for his impartiality towards all ecclesiastical denominations [*Natal Mercury*: 26 May 1859; Vietzen 1973: 30].

103 At the time of his appointment, education was being provided through 2 government schools, 9 aided country district schools and a number of itinerant schools of which, after he had inspected them, he recommended that 7 should be given government grants [Natal Government Gazette 1860: 6].

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— for to have withdrawn them would have left the teachers destitute — but that the community be induced to take an interest in education. This was done by holding public meetings to inform parents of the relationship between government and community responsibility in relation to education and explaining that financial assistance provided by the government was to be proportionate to the degree of self-help by the community. Mann fully believed that a payment-by-results system would serve to motivate and assist teachers (Natal Government Gazette 1860: 6-7).

Despite the general apathy towards involvement in education, Mann observed that Dutch parents were keen that their children should learn to read and write — the underlying motivation being preparation for Church membership<sup>104</sup>. The more erudite Dutch wished their children to have *een goed engelsch onderwys* and to achieve this they expressed their need for *een engelschman, die Hollandsch kan onderwyzen, zouden verkiezen, boven een Hollander, die engelsch kan onderwyzen*. At the same time they wanted someone who *moeten behooren tot het geloof van de Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Kerk* (Natal Government Gazette 1860: 8-9).

□ LOCAL SCHOOL COMMITTEES

Only a third of the aided schools had appointed local school committees. Mann encouraged the establishment of committees at the remaining schools, but it was clear that only a small circle of individuals showed any interest in school matters (Natal Government Gazette 1860: 10).

□ THE ITINERANT SCHOOL SYSTEM

These schools catered principally for Dutch children living in the remote rural areas a good distance from the few established towns. A pressing issue in the provision of education in the Colony was the inability to find suitably qualified teachers to teach at these itinerant schools while other factors that were responsible for hampering the development of the system were the too brief a period of school attendance to gain any sound education and

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104 Similar attitudes are mentioned in the Superintendent of Education's reports for 1875 [Colony of Natal 1875: 22-23].

the vast geographical expanse of the Colony. To address the first issue, Mann approached the Church of Scotland Training College in Edinburgh for suitable teachers, and in the case of the latter problem, he advocated the extension of the Itinerant teacher system in the hope of eventually establishing central district schools in the more densely populated areas (Natal Government Gazette 1865: 112-113).

The system of employing itinerant teachers was popular with the Dutch who were accustomed to the system from their days in the Cape Colony<sup>105</sup>. Cachet (1909: 129-130) remarks that

*... de Boeren kunnen hunne kinderen niet naar de dorpen zenden om school te gaan; het is veel te kostbaar, te tijd-rovend en in vele opzichten, ook uit 'n zedelijk oogpunt beschouwd, te gewaagd. Nu engageert men 'n Hollandschen of Engelschen schoolmeester (gewoonlijk door een predikant of welbekende vriend aanbevolen)... [wat] onderricht geeft in de gewone vakken van lager onderwijs in het Hollandsch of (en) Engelsch, de Bijbelsche geschiedenis en hen het Kort Begrip laten leeren ... Na zes maanden of een jaar op eene plaats te zijn geweest, gaat de onderwijzer naar eene andere ...*

The community expected these teachers to be familiar with Dutch and English and to be members of the Dutch Reformed Church. To encourage the instruction of English in these schools an additional grant could be gained if English was taught (Steenkamp 1941: 94, 110, 119).

#### □ SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION

Mann's approach to the selection of subjects is unique. Through the prescribed subjects, the child was to learn more about the resources and products of his own country. Emphasis was placed on the natural and physical sciences while languages — even Dutch and English — were overlooked and it was noted that

*... [e]en leerling moet klaarblykelyk, eerder opmerkzaam en slim worden, door de beschouwing der levende dieren en planten, die hem omringen;... dan door zich bezig te houden met de*

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105 See 3.3.2.11

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*kunstwoorden en scherpzinnigheden van de talen...* (Natal Government Gazette 1860: 7).

Mann was aware of the major shortcomings of the prevailing system, but believed that radical changes to the system would not be acceptable to the teachers or the parents and he consequently chose to improve and develop the existing policy. Of the reforms proposed were annual refresher courses for teachers, the establishment of a Normal College for the training of teachers, and the general improvement and promotion of country education (Natal Government Gazette 1860: 9-10). Seven years after Mann's appointment, there were 4 government and 63 aided schools in the Colony (Nuttall [ed.] 1949: 18). In 1866 Mann left for England where he had been appointed special Emigration Agent by the Natal Legislative Council. He was obliged to resign his post as Superintendent in 1870 and Mr T. Warwick Brooks who had acted in the capacity during Dr Mann's absence, was formally appointed in 1872 (Vietzen 1973: 32).

**4.2.3.3.2 Mr T. Warwick Brooks [1872-1876]**

During Brooks' term of office the main shortcomings of the Central Education Department and its administration of the existing education system became apparent. The main problems were the lack of staff<sup>106</sup>; the fact that the interests of the Colony did not enjoy the attention or the consideration of the British government; and the ineptitude of the local school committees — the majority of which existed in name only and continued to decrease in number, and the sparseness of the population in the districts (Colony of Natal 1872: 11, 16, 18). In addition, Brooks lamented the indifference of parents to the education of their children (Colony of Natal 1873: 15). Perhaps the essence of the problem was that the whole matter of education, however earnestly desired, was often eclipsed by the business of survival (Vietzen 1973: 44).

From the education reports compiled and submitted during Brooks' term of office, insight can be gained into the general provision of education and the attitude of parents towards the education system.

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106 The first clerical assistant was appointed in 1873 [Malherbe 1925: 187].

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"School-keeping" was not a lucrative vocation and the community generally lacked the interest to establish schools. Brooks recognised that the founding of schools would have to be initiated either by the government or the various religious bodies<sup>107</sup> and in this regard, the latter had already made substantial contributions. These denominational institutions sought aid from the government, but the state was reluctant to spend money on the improvement of estates which were strictly speaking, not public. Where aid was given to Church established schools, apart from the usual preconditions applying to all schools seeking government grants, it was clearly stated that children of any denomination were to be admitted (Colony of Natal 1875: 17-18, 21-22, 29). Furthermore, it was difficult to find teachers of sufficient educational and moral qualification in the Colony to take charge of government and itinerate schools so it was proposed that staff be acquired from the Cape Colony (Colony of Natal 1872: 16).

Brooks found that the Dutch were not averse to letting their children learn English, but were opposed to their neglecting Dutch. Some communities felt strongly about this matter as the following incident attests. In 1875 the Church Council of Weenen and Kliprivier petitioned the government to subsidise a teacher who taught only in Dutch. However, Brooks believed this contradicted the resolution of the Select Committee which in 1858 stipulated that all teachers would be compelled to devote part of their time to English teaching<sup>108</sup> and it was noted that no amendment to this provision had yet been made (Colony of Natal 1872: 16).

There was reason to believe that the commitment of the government to seek methods to provide for the educational needs of the Colony's youth was being thwarted by the uncooperative attitude of certain parents. Apart from the lack of interest in establishing new or supporting existing schools there were instances where, out of spite or pique, parents withheld their children from school so as to prevent the teacher from receiving his government grant<sup>109</sup> with the result that the plight of many itinerant teachers had become untenable (Colony of Natal 1875: 26).

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107 Religious bodies mentioned were the Wesleyan Society, the Church of England, the Roman Catholic, the Church of the Province of South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church. See 4.2.3.6

108 See 4.2.3.1

109 Teachers' salaries were determined by the number of pupils taught [Steenkamp 1941: 64].

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After Brooks' death in 1876, Dr Robert Russell temporarily filled the position until his formal appointment as Superintendent of Education in January 1878<sup>110</sup> (Nuttall [ed.] 1949: 20). Russell inherited an education system that was disorganised, lacked structure and unity and it appeared that education was being provided for at the whim of the local community. Russell summed up the situation as follows.

*... All the requirements, essential to a sound educational system, were wanting and it is no wonder that districts were left without schools, that schools fell in incompetent hands, and that the state of Primary Education generally was insufficient and unsatisfactory (in Steenkamp 1941: 123).*

#### 4.2.3.3.3 Dr Robert Russell [1879-1903]

Russell advocated the reinstatement of a Central Board of Education. However, he had reservations regarding the ability of a Board to rectify matters as he believed that the failure of the education system could be attributed to the lack of local community interest (Malherbe 1925: 190, 193). In 1877, just prior to Russell's official appointment, *Law No. 15, 1877, Law to make better Provision for Primary or Elementary Education in the Colony of Natal* was passed<sup>111</sup>.

The annual education reports submitted during the period following the implementation of the Law, provide a glimpse into the prevailing conditions and attitudes and also focus the attention on issues which proved contentious or problematic. A brief summary of the main issues addressed in the reports that were reviewed is provided below.

#### □ EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY DISTRICTS

The provision of education in the country districts remained a cause for concern. Boarding schools were established in Greytown, Hermannsburg, Ladysmith and other places in an effort to centralise the provision of education. The Dutch — for whose needs mainly this system had been established — were reluctant to send their children to these schools since they needed their children to help out on the farms. They were also loath to pay boarding fees since they preferred the itinerant system which they found more convenient. In

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110 This title was retained until 1939 when it was altered to Director of Education. P.A. Barnett and C.J. Mudie respectively held the position until Union in 1910 [Nuttall [ed.] 1949: 20].

111 See 4.2.3.7.2

addition the teacher was generally Dutch while the teachers at the boarding schools were English (Steenkamp 1941: 103). There was no desire to discontinue the itinerant schools *in accordance with the wishes of our Dutch fellow-Colonists*, but in time the Dutch themselves seemed to doubt whether these itinerate schools were providing comparable education. This developing change in attitude was noted in the Education Commission's report in 1872-1874<sup>112</sup> which stated that

*... [t]he Boers are becoming more and more alive to the importance of giving their children a thoroughly good education. They are willing to pay liberally for it and they will send their children to good Central Boarding Schools provided there is nothing in the management of the schools antagonistic to their ways of thought (in Steenkamp 1941: 120).*

In 1877 grants to itinerant teachers were discontinued, but from 1884, *pro rata* capitation grants were offered to parents or guardians whose children<sup>113</sup> passed an examination by the school Inspector (Colony of Natal 1887: 20). The first response to this provision came five years later when 39 families made use of this opportunity (Colony of Natal 1889: 3). The general standard of work of the children who presented themselves for examination conformed with that of the government schools<sup>114</sup> (Colony of Natal 1890-1891: 3).

#### □ COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS LANGUAGE ISSUES

- In July 1880 the headmaster of the German school at New Germany<sup>115</sup> informed the Council of Education that he intended to give more time to the instruction of German than English. No objection was made provided that a fair knowledge of English remained one of the preconditions upon which aid would be granted

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112 See 4.2.3.7.1

113 These children resided further than six miles from a government school.

114 The system was now termed the "farm-house" system [Colony of Natal 1890-1891: 3].

115 A number of German immigrants had settled in the Colony, mainly in the areas known as New Germany and New Hanover. These persons were serious about education and soon established flourishing schools. See 4.2.3.5 & 4.2.3.6

(Steenkamp 1941: 167).

- In September 1882 the Dutch parent community in Greytown petitioned the Council of Education to appoint a headmaster proficient in Dutch at the new school in the town. It was also requested that Dutch be taught at the school. In reply it was stated that an English headmaster had already been appointed, but that he would be instructed to institute a Dutch class. By 1885 Dutch was being taught at a number of district schools<sup>116</sup> (Steenkamp 1941: 168-169).
- In 1883 it was requested by local School Commissions in the larger towns that Zulu be included in the curriculum. Steps taken to accommodate this request included tuition three days a week after school hours at one of the high schools in Durban and in Pietermaritzburg (Colony of Natal 1884: 24).
- In 1888 Mr J. Moor, member of the Legislative Council, suggested to Parliament that

*... the Legislative Council beg respectfully to inform Your Excellency, that in the opinion of this House it is desirable and necessary that instruction in the Dutch Language should be part of the Curriculum in all the Government Schools of this Colony; and to pray Your Excellency to be pleased to take the necessary steps to give effect to this resolution (in Steenkamp 1941: 170).*

The Council accepted the recommendation and among the decisions taken were that

*... it is quite to be expected that the wish for instruction in the Dutch Language should be strongest amongst the parents of English scholars. Among the Dutch population, at any rate, Colloquial Dutch is required at Home ... allowing for the study being included in the lists of subjects of instruction named in Section 18 of Law 15 of 1877 ... (in Steenkamp 1941: 171).*

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116 Comparing the two situations it would appear that the German school took it upon itself to seek and employ German teachers and that their intention was communicated to the Council for its cognisance and approval. The Dutch on the other hand expected the Council to find a suitable teacher for them and to adapt the curriculum to accommodate the instruction of Dutch. It could further be argued that Dutch was more commonly used than German and that its status in the Colony, given its history, would have been superior —yet the attitude of the Colonists indicate subservience and reserve to have the language acknowledged.

Due to the agitation by the Dutch Reformed Church and a number of Dutch Farmers' Associations, Dutch was included as a school and examination subject in terms of a Government Gazette proclamation in 1894. However, few children used the opportunity and Russell's remark that *they* [Dutch children] *evinced no desire to know the language of their fathers as it is written* (in Steenkamp 1941: 191) would seem valid. It could be argued that Dutch was indeed a foreign language to these children since it differed from the vernacular that was evolving from Dutch (Steenkamp 1941: 191).

Reporting on the instruction of the Dutch language that had been instituted in a number of government, aided and private farm schools, the assistant Inspector of schools remarked that with regard to the examination papers in Dutch language that

*... the papers of English boys are better than those of boys whose mother tongue is South African Dutch. The latter presume on their knowledge of the language as they speak it, to the neglect of the details of the somewhat difficult grammar. English boys, on the other hand study the grammar as they would Latin* (Colony of Natal 1895: 29).

In his report of the following year, the Inspector added that *there is no desire on the part of Dutch farmers to have their children taught any other but the English language* (Colony of Natal 1896: 28). It needs to be taken into account that the reason very few children on farms learnt Dutch was because the teacher was invariably English and was unable to teach Dutch.

#### □ PAYMENT-BY-RESULTS

A Commission of Enquiry into education was appointed in 1887<sup>117</sup> to enquire into the system of payment-by-results. Both Mann and Brooks had recommended the introduction of the payment-by-results system to encourage deserving teachers, to arouse indifferent ones and to oblige inferior ones to leave the teaching profession (Natal Government Gazette 1887: 1102-1103).

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117 See 4.2.3.7.4

The findings of the Commission were rather negative, but were contested by Russell who remained a staunch supporter of the system (Colony of Natal 1887: 4). The system was claimed to be unpedagogic with its demerits outnumbering its merits. The contentions raised were that:

- children were viewed in terms of their monetary value and not their inherent worth
- teachers were foiled of their purpose by parents with a grievance who deliberately kept their child out of school just long enough to fall short of the required number of attendance days to qualify for the government grant
- undue emphasis was placed on preparing the children for the inspection
- children's creativity was suppressed since emphasis was laid on feats of memory
- the necessity of completing inspection withheld the Inspector from constructively assisting teachers
- once the required minimum attendance had been reached, the teacher inevitably became lax
- those subjects not required for examination were neglected
- the more intelligent pupil was held back (Malherbe 1925: 192).

Nevertheless, in 1889 Russell was pleased to report that the intermittent agitation against the system had abated (Colony of Natal 1889: 3) and deserving teachers could count on the system to augment their government salary. The grants-in-aid system, however, was still proving problematic to the financing of education.

#### 4.2.3.4 *The grants-in-aid system*

When the system of grants-in-aid was first instituted in 1851, there was no fixed policy regarding the awarding of grants<sup>118</sup>, but after ten years, a fixed scale based on the school's average attendance figures was established. This system was later adapted and an attempt was made to follow the £ for £ principle that had been instituted in the Cape Colony<sup>119</sup>. It was found that parents were often prepared to make higher contributions in order to secure better qualified

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118 See 4.2.2.2

119 See 4.1.4.3

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teachers. The strict application of the principle was never secured and the Education Commission appointed in 1873 reported that the system of grants-in-aid for local efforts had failed to establish and maintain good primary schools within the Colony (Malherbe 1925: 189; Steenkamp 1941: 107). During the depression years, grants-in-aid were generally confined to schools in country districts as the government was unable to continue lavishing funds on all of the Colony's schools. The onus now rested on the more affluent communities to accept responsibility for the financial needs of their schools (Steenkamp 1941: 109).

It was intended that the system of grants-in-aid should function in conjunction with the local school committee system: the creation of school committees was presumed to be an embodiment of local interest in education and the grants were provided to support and stimulate local interest. The founding of the school committee was invariably merely an essential preliminary to secure and take receipt of a government grant (Malherbe 1925: 187-188). However, it was not the initial intention that school committees should have such a limited function — their envisaged role in local education was far more multi-faceted.

#### 4.2.3.5 *The local school committees*

The local school committee system was officially instituted in 1858 in consequence of the recommendations of the Select Committee and the Central Board of Education<sup>120</sup>. It was foreseen that through these committees, community and parental involvement in education would be secured. The local committee was to be elected annually by people — not necessarily parents — who had paid a subscription fee of not less than £1. An additional vote — the total not exceeding five — could be gained for every additional £2 subscribed (Natal Government Gazette 1858b: 396).

The institution of school committees presumed an individual interest in local schooling and how well received and effective these committees were, can only be deduced from the statistics available which indicate that in 1865 — nearly ten years after their inception — of the 42 aided schools only 24 had managing committees. Of these, 17 held meetings or exercised some practical influence.

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120 See 4.2.3.1 & 4.2.3.2

It was reported that the local bodies were weak from the start — they had no meaningful responsibilities and their powers were not clearly defined. The main task attended to was the administration of the government grant<sup>121</sup> (Malherbe 1925: 185-186; 203).

As alluded to previously, the local school committee system was not very effective<sup>122</sup>. Those serving on the committee were not necessarily parents or individuals with vested interests; not all schools had local committees and it was within the power of the Superintendent to assemble a committee from prominent persons in the community and where this was not done, the teacher was obliged to make his own arrangements with the Superintendent (Malherbe 1925: 188).

An idea can be formed of what the ideal school committee should have embodied from a contract drafted by parents of the German school at New Hanover in 1884. In this agreement the parents undertook to send their children to school from the age of 7 and those who resided more than three miles from the school, from the age of 8. Children would not be kept from school without permission from the clergyman or the teacher. No child would be allowed more than five days leave of absence granted either by the clergyman or the teacher. Parents would be liable for a fine of five shillings per day payable to the congregation's treasury should any of the proceeding regulations be contravened (Malherbe 1925: 188).

This school committee was the exception to the rule. The demise of the committees can be attributed to one principal reason — a lack of community interest in educational affairs. The social composition of the population may be regarded as a prime reason for the apathetic attitude towards local control. A characteristic of the Dutch was their penchant on being afforded a say in matters that affected them. In relation to education, Dutch parents had through the years aspired for representation on bodies that influenced or determined the management and functioning of the schools their children attended. After annexation, many of the Dutch families left the country leaving behind a predominantly British community. The British on the other hand generally lacked this trait and did not feel as strongly as the Dutch about being afforded the right to become involved in community matters.

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121 See 4.2.3.4

122 See 4.2.3.3.1

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Certain Churches maintained an interest in education and were able to meet some of the local educational needs which the community itself failed to do.

#### 4.2.3.6 *The influence of the various Churches on education*

Throughout the ages, the Christian Church has been associated with education. The establishment of the various branches in Natal introduced into the Colony an educational agency of far-reaching importance (Vietzen 1973: 50). A review of some of the Churches' attempts is provided to indicate the extent of its influence.

The Church of England under Bishop John Colenso<sup>123</sup> took immediate steps to provide educational facilities. A short but comprehensive journey through rural Natal convinced him of the need for schools conducted on Church principles in the many scattered villages of the country. In his opinion the government was obliged to provide assistance in proportion to the Church's exertions (Colenso 1855: 11) and in this regard he stated that

*... it is the plain duty of the Church, which receives the devoted services of the parents, and requires the full expenditure of all their energies in their different spheres of duty, to relieve their minds from any anxiety as to the education of their children (Colenso 1855: 206).*

How successful the Church of England was in setting up schools is debatable if the words of the Dean of Pietermaritzburg, James Green, are heeded.

*... Years ago we had the youth of the Colony in our hands, but we let it slip and the German Lutherans and others are now in the field (Lewis & Edwards 1934: 333).*

During the early years of the Roman Catholic Church in Natal, the Church made no notable provision for education. In 1857 Bishop Allard was reprimanded by his superiors for not having made any progress in creating missions for the Zulus. In 1865 Father Barret and Father Sabon — according to Roman Catholic practice which assumes it the parish priest's duty to establish a day school so that Catholic children might receive Catholic education from their earliest years —

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123 See 4.2.2.2

opened schools in Pietermaritzburg and Durban. It was advertised that these schools would be exclusively secular — the rationale being to secure government grants and to win public support in a community where anti-Catholic prejudice was strong (Vietzen 1973: 67-68).

Evidence is also found of the attempts of the non-episcopal Churches to establish schools or attempt to support communities by making their facilities available for educational purposes. One such example was the school established by the German Lutheran Church at New Hanover<sup>124</sup> — a school which enjoyed sustained parental support and achieved considerable success. A similar institution was later established at New Germany and it enjoyed similar success (Colony of Natal 1875: 17, 29; Colony of Natal 1896: 14).

The various denominations felt obliged to contribute to education and many accepted the "conscience clause" to secure the government grant. Important to remember is that the clerics themselves represented of the best educated men in Colonial society and consequently their contribution to education was necessary and appreciated.

Education, however, also attracted the attention of the authorities and a number of Commissions of Enquiry into the provision of education were launched during the ensuing years.

#### **4.2.3.7 Further developments in relation to the evolution of education policy**

In response to the findings of Commissions of Enquiry into education, recommendations were made that generally influenced education legislation. In the following section, mention is made of some of these Commissions of Enquiry and an overview of the resulting legislation as far as it influenced and impacted on parents and the local community is provided.

##### **4.2.3.7.1 The 1872-1874 Commissions of Enquiry into the provision of education**

In 1872 the government appointed an Education Commission to enquire into the status of education in the Colony. The Commission reported that

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124 See 4.2.3.5

*... [t]here are wanting the elements necessary to secure stability to any educational undertaking in the country districts. For lack of School Boards the schools had virtually become schools of private adventure, and for want of accommodation, of sufficient remuneration, and of assured continuance of support in the country districts, their tendency had been to gravitate ... to the two Towns (in Steenkamp 1941: 121).*

It was evident that education attracted little interest. Reasons to which this situation was attributed included the vast expanse of the region which inhibited communication and liaison; the inability of communities to establish local school committees; the incompetence of members of school committees in instances where such committees had been established and their inability to positively influence education (Malherbe 1925: 121-122).

The Commission advised that a Board of Education should be instituted which would take control of the education of the Colony since it was believed that education was a government concern. A specific hierarchy for education management was envisaged: a Central Board of Education supported by the Superintendent who would in turn be supported by school Inspectors followed by local school committees elected by taxpayers and parents of children at the schools. It is interesting to note the latter requirement — the issue of local school committees — was again raised even though the system had proved a failure in the past. These committees were to administer the local school, monitor that the Board of Education regulations were complied with, and appoint accredited teachers. It was also proposed that the school committee would advise the Board regarding local needs (Malherbe 1925: 193; Steenkamp 1941: 123-135).

For the first time, the recommendations of a Commission of Enquiry were to culminate in the promulgation of legislation aimed to give structure to the Colony's education system.

#### **4.2.3.7.2    *The Education Law of 1877***

It is interesting to find that although there were several Commissions of Enquiry into the state of education over the years with each Commission compiling reports in which proposals for the improvement of the provision of education were made, no education legislation was forthcoming.

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The first education law for the Colony promulgated almost four decades into its history was *Law No. 15, 1877, Law to make better Provision for Primary or Elementary Education in the Colony of Natal*. This Act was based *inter alia* on the 1872-1874 Commission of Enquiry report and the 1876 education report which had been submitted to the Privy Council in England for approval. The views of two Superintendents of Education, Brooks and Russell, were also used to determine which issues were to be included in the ensuing legislation. Their recommendations had focused on the reinstatement of a central body of authority, the introduction of a payment-by-results system and the plight of education in the country districts. A shortcoming pointed out by the Privy Council was that no provision had been made for the implementation of the principle of compulsory education (Malherbe 1925: 194-195).

The fundamental issues addressed in this Act included the:

- establishment of a Council of Education<sup>125</sup> but the clergy were precluded from membership (Colony of Natal 1877: §1 & §3) possibly in a bid to avoid discord regarding denominational issues
- recognition of the value of local community effort in combination with the system of grants-in-aid — one of the preconditions for grants-in-aid was that these schools would be subject to inspection (Colony of Natal 1877: §8 & §11)
- provision for the introduction of the payment-by-results system to improve standards of teaching and to augment teachers' salaries (Colony of Natal 1877: §15)
- scope of the curriculum which was more comprehensive than the one instituted by Mann<sup>126</sup> but which again omitted Dutch (Colony of Natal 1877: §18)
- provision for religious instruction — the Bible was to be read with the proviso that *no religious Catechism or formulary, distinctive of any particular religious denomination, be taught and that no attempt be made to attach the children to any particular denomination*. Respect of the right to conscientious objection was obligatory (Colony of Natal 1877: §19)
- provision of revised school rules that *inter alia* dealt with school fees, non-sectarian religious instruction, and corporal punishment (Colony of Natal 1877: §20 & §21).

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125 Prior to this public education had been under the control of the Governor acting through a Superintendent but without a Department of Education [Malherbe 1925: 194].

126 See 4.2.3.3.1

Probably because of the poor track record of local school management committees, this education law made no provision for the compulsory appointment of local school committees. The duties that would normally have fallen under their authority were now assigned to the Council of Education and the Inspectors. The result of these events was that parents would be unable to steer the direction of their children's education.

The Council of Education was to superintend the establishment and management of schools and the administration of funds voted for education. Other duties included the appointment of headmasters, assistants and pupil teachers in all educational institutions; the awarding of grants-in-aid; the examination for certificates; textbooks; holidays; fees; and scope of the curriculum. All decisions were subject to the Governor's approval (Malherbe 1925: 194). An Inspector of Schools and assistant Inspectors would be appointed to enforce the regulations and instructions and in effect, compared to his previous status, the Inspector of Schools — as the Superintendent was now known — had lost a good measure of his autonomy. In future, his influence would be indirectly effected through the Council of Education (Malherbe 1925: 199).

For the next number of years, the education system was directed by the precepts of this education law, but as time passed the promulgation of additional regulations to guide the administration of education was necessary to safeguard the effectiveness of the system.

#### **4.2.3.7.3 *The school regulations of 1883***

In 1883 new regulations for the control of schools were published. Certain issues of interest included:

- the school was to be opened with the reading of a prayer approved by the Council of Education
- only the headmaster had the right to inflict corporal punishment
- the number of hours devoted to religious instruction in the high schools was to be reduced (Steenkamp 1941: 154-156).

With regard to the latter point, it is noted that when Mr G. Gardner, a British Inspector of Education, visited the Colony, he remarked that the time allotted to religious instruction was

inadequate with the result that regulations were passed in 1893 which determined that apart from the obligatory opening of school with prayer and Scripture reading, the number of hours devoted to religious instruction be extended to two hours per week (Steenkamp 1941: 157). Perhaps it was because of a lack of parental involvement or parental say in education matters that this issue had not been raised before for it could hardly be surmised that parents would have been indifferent to their children's spiritual and moral development.

As was customary after the promulgation of legislation, an investigation into the consequences of the new regulations was undertaken.

#### **4.2.3.7.4    *The 1887 Commission of Enquiry into education***

One of the elements of the 1877 legislation was the implementation of the payment-by-results system, and it was the task of the ensuing 1887 Commission of Enquiry to inquire into *inter alia* the payment-by-results system. The Commission reported that the defects were serious enough to warrant its abolition<sup>127</sup> (Natal Government Gazette 1887: 1102). The Commission also investigated the scope of the current curriculum, the merit of establishing municipal or local School Boards for the local control of education, compulsory education and possible amendments to be made to the existing school laws (Natal Government Gazette 1887: 1102-1107).

The Commission thus recommended the abolition of the payment-by-results system; the extension of the existing curriculum; the postponement of the institution of School Boards and the implementation of compulsory education under certain conditions (Natal Government Gazette 1887: 1102-1107).

These recommendations were made at the end of an era for the Colony was on the brink of being awarded Responsible Government with challenges and opportunities unique to this style of government.

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127    See 4.2.3.3.3

#### 4.2.4 The British tradition of education: Responsible Government [1893-1910]

Natal received Responsible Government in 1893 and entered the new era as a self-governing Colony. The period from 1893 was one of expansion. Firstly there was territorial expansion: in 1897 Zululand was incorporated into Natal (Brookes & Webb 1965: 188). Secondly there was population growth brought about by a continuing influx of immigrants. In 1899, Natal and the British Empire entered into war with the Boer Republics and a period of disruption ensued. Peace followed in 1902 and a period of reconstruction and re-evaluation was entered. Russell had retired as Inspector of Schools and was succeeded by Mr P.A. Barnett, a British educationalist, whose main task was to reorganise the Natal system of education in the wake of the Anglo-Boer War (Malherbe 1925:210). The first education legislation of this new era was tabled soon after the institution of Responsible Government.

##### 4.2.4.1 *The 1894 Education Act*

A year after Responsible Government was granted, a new education act, *Act No. 5, 1894, Education Act to amend the Laws relating to Education* came into operation. This Act provided for the abolition of the Council of Education and all its powers were transferred to the Department of Education under Sir John Robinson, the first Prime Minister and Minister of Education. A Superintendent was assigned the chief executive of the Department under the Minister of Education. His duties included the appointment, promotion and transfer of teachers, dealing with questions of dispute and monitoring financial arrangements (Colony of Natal 1894: §4, §5, §9 & §10).

No reference is made to local school committees and the duties that generally resorted under these bodies — the selection of teachers, discipline and management of schools, collection of school fees — were controlled by the Department of Education. Without doubt, the provision of education was a highly centralised issue with no official provision for parent involvement. Even issues that affected the everyday management of schools such as the approach towards enforcing discipline, were centrally determined irrespective of the individual nature of the different schools in the Colony or of parents' views in this regard. It seems unlikely that parents would have tolerated such exclusion from matters that concerned their offspring and it seems to follow that revision or amendment of these regulations would be necessary.

#### 4.2.4.2 *The revised school rules of 1895*

After the promulgation of the education Act in 1894, revised rules for government schools were published the following year. These regulations, it was said, had been based on measures that had recently been introduced into the best British elementary schools. These rules dealt with school fees, provided for simple non-sectarian instruction subject to the "conscience clause", for corporal punishment only to be inflicted by the Head Teacher and for homework being restricted to one hour a day (Colony of Natal 1895: 2).

In the next few years certain important developments took place in relation to education. These developments included the institution of the principle of compulsory school attendance and the concomitant appointment of school attendance officers. Local Advisory School Committees also came into being as prescribed by the revised rules (Nuttall [ed.] 1949: 25). But in the mean time, a bitter war was about to be fought on the borders of the Colony. Although influenced by the Anglo-Boer war, education in Natal was not disrupted to the same extent as it was in the Colony's two neighbours — the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (ZAR).

#### 4.2.4.3 *The influence of the Anglo-Boer war on education*

The disruption caused by the war [1899-1902] influenced the development of education in Natal. Progress was retarded in the northern districts bordering on the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, but the effect was negligible in comparison with the total disorganisation and disruption to the systems in the two Republics<sup>128</sup>. Natal was affected by an influx of refugees from these war-torn Colonies who wanted their children to attend schools in Natal and as a result, border town schools expanded (Nuttall [ed.] 1949: 25).

Although gratuitous education was unknown in the Colony, liberal government assistance to children whose fathers had been killed during the war was forthcoming. It was especially the districts of Vryheid, Paulpietersburg, Utrecht and Babanango — formerly part of the ZAR — that were hardest hit. In 1906 regulations were drafted to allow 30 of these children free board at government or aided schools (Steenkamp 1941: 179).

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128 See 5.1.3.1 & 5.2.4.1

The signing of the Peace of Vereeniging in 1902 marked the cessation of the Anglo-Boer War. Assurance was given that the Dutch language would not be neglected, but in reality, schools in the formerly Dutch regions became English. In reaction, the inhabitants resolved to follow the example of the Transvaal and establish Christian National Education schools<sup>129</sup> (CNE) and Church schools through which

*... het voortbestaan van de Afrikaanse natie te verzekeren, door o.a. op de voorgrond te stellen het aanleren en de handhaving van de Hollandse taal (Nienaber 1934: 97-98).*

The first of these schools was established in the vicinity of Newcastle. After the Department of Education made language concessions to the schools in Dutch districts, the CNE schools either disbanded or were taken over by the state (Steenkamp 1941: 192).

During these war years, the Natal government appears to have taken the initiative in overseeing the state of education. However, given the changed social climate brought on by the aftermath of the war, it would seem that the time was right for education legislation to be passed that would allow parents a say in educational matters.

#### 4.2.4.4 *The 1910 Education Act: the establishment of Advisory School Committees*

It will be remembered that *Law No. 15, 1877* made no provision for the appointment of school committees<sup>130</sup> and consequently, it was very difficult for the local community — and parents especially — to exercise any amount of say in the management or performance of the local schools. In 1909 an Education Commission recommended the establishment of local Advisory School Committees for all Municipal Boroughs and local townships to support the Department in promoting an active and general interest in education (Colony of Natal 1909: 4). This recommendation was embodied in *Act No. 5, 1910*.

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129 See 5.1.3.3 & 5.2.5.3

130 See 4.2.3.7.2

This Act provided for the establishment of Advisory School Committees for government and aided schools (Colony of Natal 1910a: §1). The number of members represented on the committees would be determined by factors that related to the status of the school — whether it was a government or aided school and whether it was a borough or local township school. The number of representatives ranged between 3 and 7 members (Colony of Natal 1910a: §3). All the members would be elected by parents or guardians of children attending the school (Colony of Natal 1910a: §5). The function of the committee would be to advise the Department of Education on all matters relating to education and it was entitled to visit and inspect the school under its care (Colony of Natal 1910a: §2 & §10).

Because the functions of these Advisory Committees were not clearly outlined and because they had no executive power, parents soon lost interest in these bodies. These bodies were disparaged by teachers who complained that the members abused their right to inspect schools and caused trouble (Steenkamp 1941: 177-178). Once again the system seemed doomed to fail.

This was not the only issue to be dealt with during the course of 1910. During the same year legislation providing for compulsory school attendance was also promulgated.

#### 4.2.4.5 *The 1910 Education Act: provision for compulsory school attendance*

Compulsory attendance was introduced in terms of *Act No 6, of 1910* (Colony of Natal 1910b)— nine years prior to the provision of free education. Children over the age of 7 and younger than 14 were to attend school except under certain proviso's applicable in particular circumstances (Colony of Natal 1910b: §1). The Department of Education appointed full time attendance officers who were to assist the district Inspector in encouraging parents to send their children to school (Colony of Natal 1910b: §3). If parents neglected to comply with the requirements, they were liable to be fined (Colony of Natal 1910b: §2).

To support the institution of compulsory attendance, the government needed to establish hostels for children who lived too far from schools to be able to travel back and forth daily. Paulpietersburg was one of the first towns to benefit from this decision — perhaps because the district was so poor as a result of the recent Anglo-Boer War (Steenkamp 1941: 179).

When conditions towards the close of the period are reviewed, it is found that about two-thirds of the Colony's European children were educated solely by the state while the education of nearly all the remainder was carried out by denominational and private bodies subsidised by the government. Local involvement in education was minimal: the provision of education was the cardinal responsibility of the state.

These then were the circumstances surrounding the education situation during the first decade of the 20th century but much had transpired in relation to the provision of education and the role that parents had played in relation to their children's education since the first Trekkers had crossed the Drakensberg into Natal during the 1830's.

#### 4.2.5 A review of the attitude and position of parents towards their responsibility and right to provide for the education of their children<sup>131</sup>

The first European immigrants to settle in Natal were the Dutch Voortrekkers, but after the annexation of the region most relocated to the rural interior and some even went as far as resettling in the Transvaal and Orange Free State in a bid to escape British dominion. Only a handful of Dutch immigrants remained. The population of Natal consisted mainly of British settlers with most of the population resident in the towns.

During the Voortrekker period, Dutch parents were careful to educate their children as best they could in preparation for Church membership and in accordance with the baptismal vow they held dear. There were few teachers of note and it was the parents' duty to see that their children were educated. When the Volksraad was established, it acknowledged that it was the state's responsibility to watch over education, but given the circumstances under which life was conducted during those early years, little came of this intention. The Netherlands, who closely followed the exodus of the Voortrekkers, attempted to assist Voortrekker parents by providing them with trained teachers. However, before much could be done in this regard, the territory was annexed by the British.

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131 No cross-referencing will be made in this section: these preliminary findings will be discussed at greater length in the final chapter.

Based on the fact that the new authority also acknowledged that it was obliged to oversee education in the Colony, it was generally accepted by parents that the state was responsible for education. However, it was six years before the first government school was established and in the mean time, had it not been for Church and private initiative, no schools would have come into being. The majority of the British immigrants lived in towns where children could attend these schools, but most of the Dutch lived in the rural areas beyond the reach of schools. Here the itinerating school system prevailed with parents engaging whomever they regarded as suitable to see to their children's schooling needs. As time went by, English teachers were also appointed to the country districts schools where the population was predominantly Dutch. Although this could be attributed to a covert anglicisation policy, part of the blame could also be placed at the door of the local school committees, for had it not been for their apathy, they could have ensured that a Dutch character was retained and reflected in their local schools.

The 1850's were characterised by the appointment of a number of Commissions of Enquiry into the provision of education and regular inspections into the functioning of schools carried out by Superintendents of Education. Most of these reports were unanimous in their findings that parents were generally apathetic towards education and there was a reluctance to support government initiative. Provision was repeatedly made for the establishment of local school committees whose functions ranged from supervising the schools, controlling the financial issues, attending to parents' grievances and to appointing teachers, yet the committees — whether centrally appointed or elected by the local community and parents — never managed to function as had been envisaged. One of the prime functions of these bodies was to receive and administer the government grant in support of local initiative. Many committees existed solely for this purpose and fulfilled no further function. The failure of the school committee system was attributed to the ineptitude of the committees and the indifference of parents and the local community towards cooperating with and supporting the government education system. The provision of education was almost entirely in the hands of the state since parents waived their right to become involved in their children's schools.

It is conspicuous that the education legislation passed in 1877 made no further provision for the establishment of local school committees — presumably due to their poor track record. A Central

Board of Education was reinstated and the principle that the government was responsible for the education of its children became the basis of the Natal educational policy. Parents had relinquished their right to voice their opinions and desires regarding education to the state. Matters regarding the appointment of teachers, the nature of the religious instruction provided in schools and the medium of instruction — issues which parents had intermittently shown an interest in — were in future decided by the state. With regard to religious instruction, a liberal policy was followed. Bible reading was compulsory but doctrinal tenets could not be proclaimed. Parents had the right to withdraw their children from religious instruction classes if they conscientiously objected to the nature of the instruction provided. Religious education was provided in the mother tongue.

A few years prior to the Anglo-Boer war, it was suggested that a system of local Advisory School Committees be established. Provision for these bodies was made in 1910 when legislation was passed making it compulsory for all schools — government and aided — to elect from among its parents an Advisory Committee. The functions of these bodies were not clearly defined and once more, parents lost interest in these bodies.

When the measure of parental involvement in education in Natal and the insistence by parents that they be afforded representative forums through which influence regarding the provision of education could be negotiated is compared with other regions, it could be conjectured that the specific nature of the composition of the population could have influenced the general perception of parental rights and responsibilities towards education. Perhaps the predominantly British community felt content that the authorities would have their interests at heart and would ensure that the tradition of a British education would be perpetuated in the Colony. At the same time, the number of Dutch parents who could perhaps have felt that their unique educational propensities were not being acknowledged was possibly so small that they had difficulty in making their voice heard. Be it as it may, parental say in education was minimal — not because the government had not given parents the opportunity to become involved in their children's education, but because parents chose to relinquish this responsibility and privilege to the state.

In the next chapter, the perception and development of parental rights and responsibilities of parents in the Orange Free State [1836-1910] and the South African Republic [1837-1910] will be similarly reviewed.



# CHAPTER 5

## **THE FORMALISATION OF THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN COLONIAL SOUTH AFRICA: THE ORANGE FREE STATE (1836-1910) THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC (1837-1910)**

*If there is one thing on earth where violent revolutions are ill advised, it is in the province of education. Educational systems must grow; external force is synonymous with disaster. To every growing need of the country there will be a solution, provided that it is met in the right spirit.*

*J. Anders*

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## CHAPTER 5

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# THE FORMALISATION OF THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE ORANGE FREE STATE [1836-1910] & THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC [1837-1910]

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### 5.1 EDUCATION IN THE ORANGE FREE STATE AFTER SETTLEMENT AND COLONISATION [1836-1910]

There were three main movements through which the trans-Orange<sup>1</sup> territory became populated by Europeans. First, there were the Cape Colonists under *inter alia* Mocke and Michiel Oberholzer who, without discarding British authority, moved across the Orange River in search of grazing for their herds and flocks (Gie 1939: 343). The second movement took place from 1836 as part of the Great Trek under Voortrekker leaders such as Piet Retief, Andries Pretorius, Louis Trichardt, Jan van Rensburg and A. Hendrik Potgieter<sup>2</sup>. The third movement came from Natal which supplied settlers to the Orange River territory from 1843 after Natal was annexed by the British<sup>3</sup> (Eybers, G.W. 1918: lx-lxi; Theal 1964d: 277, 467).

Orange Free State society was essentially rural. The first region to be occupied was that of Winburg — a territory obtained by Potgieter in June 1838 by barter from the Taung leader, Makwana. The territory was incapable of supporting a dense agricultural population and was consequently sparsely

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1 The area was originally known as the Transgariep as the Orange River first bore the name "Gariep".

2 The majority of the emigrant farmers moved either to Natal [Retief, Maritz and Pretorius] or crossed the Vaal, as did Potgieter, Trichardt and Van Rensburg. A few hundred families remained along the lower Caledon [Theal 1964d: 277, 467]. Also see 4.2 & 5.2

3 See 4.2 & 4.2.2

populated with little intercourse among the settlers. About three-quarters of the population were Dutch, the rest were English and German (Theal 1964d: 276-277). By 1847, an estimated 2 000 families were living in the region (Du Bruyn 1991: 136; Du Plessis 1919: 83).

As more people began to settle in the territory a need was felt for some form of government and in 1843 a *Boeren Maatschappij* with its headquarters in the Winburg district was established<sup>4</sup>. Potgieter and the Burgher Council laid claim to exercise authority over the region as far south as the Orange River (Du Bruyn 1991: 136; Kok 1904: 1). But the Trekkers had hardly established themselves, when the region was annexed to the British Crown by Sir Harry Smith in 1848 and the ideal of establishing a Boer Republic was thwarted. The region was named the Orange River Sovereignty (ORS) and was divided into four districts with their respective magistracies: Winburg (Winburg), Griqua Land (Bloemfontein), Caledon River (Smithfield), and Vaal River (Vreëddorp [sic]). Major Warden [1846-1852] remained in Bloemfontein as British Resident — the equal of a High Commissioner (Orange River Sovereignty 1848; Theal 1902b: 285).

Most of the immigrants were annoyed that the system from which they had fled had been reimposed. However, Britain decided in favour of ceding the Sovereignty to the burghers in 1854<sup>5</sup> — an action validated by the Bloemfontein Convention — and the people occupying the region between the Orange and the Vaal Rivers regained their independence. The Republic of the Orange Free State (OFS) was established, a Volksraad was elected and a Constitution drafted. Hoffman [1854-1855] was elected the first State President. Tumultuous times under various presidents whose policies vacillated between amalgamation and annexation<sup>6</sup> followed. In 1864, President Brand [1864-1888] assumed leadership and a period of consolidation and stability was entered

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4 See 5.2 for further detail of these events.

5 The reasons appear to have included the imminent war with Russia, the recurring trouble with the Basuto, the apparent worthlessness of the territory, the criticism of many of the Cape Colonists to British interference and the opposition of OFS settlers to British rule [Eybers, G.W. 1918: lxii-lxvii].

6 The main political proclivities of the inhabitants were

- reannexationist — those who advocated reannexation, identified with the Cape Colony and its British institutions, mainly English-speaking and living in the Bloemfontein area
- amalgamationist — those who sought amalgamation with the South African Republic, mainly Dutch-speaking and concentrated in the Winburg area
- moderate — those who attached importance to continued independence, united with J.H. Brand when he became President of the Republic of the Orange Free State [Heydenrych 1991: 146].

(Eybers, G. W. 1918: lxiii-lxv; Heydenrych 1991: 147-148; Theal 1964d: 316).

Tension between the settlers and the Basuto's was recurrent and at a point when victory seemed eminent for the Free Staters, the Basuto leader, Moshweshwe requested British assistance. On 12 March 1868, Sir Philip Wodehouse annexed Basutoland declaring the Basuto's British subjects and their country British territory. The Volksraad were rankled at the interference, but deputations to England protesting the act met with defeat. During the same time, the discovery of diamonds at Hopetown involved the OFS and Britain in conflicting land claims, the latter laying claim to a region even though the area had been purchased for the OFS by President M.W. Pretorius [1860-1863] from the Griquas in 1861<sup>7</sup>. Through the British-instigated claims of Nikolaas Waterboer, the Griqua captain, that the region was his legitimate property, the territory became part of the Colony of Griqualand West — in terms of the Keate Award — proclaimed by the Cape Governor, Henry Barkly, in 1871. For four years, Brand contested the claims and in 1876 the British government paid compensation of £90 000<sup>8</sup>. These incidents generated strong anti-British feelings among many Free Staters (Heydenrych 1991: 149).

During the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902 the OFS joined forces with the South African Republic (ZAR)<sup>9</sup> and consequently the Free State was annexed by Britain on 24 May 1900 and renamed the Orange River Colony (ORC). Military rule came to an end by virtue of Royal Letters Patent on 2 August 1901. From 23 June 1902 the Colony was commanded by a Governor and a nominated Executive and Legislative Council. The period of Crown Colony Government ended on 5 June 1907 when a system of Responsible Government was established under the premiership of the Hon. A. Fischer — a situation which remained until Union in 1910 (Eybers, G.W. 1918: lxvii; Whiteside 1909: 146).

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7 See 5.2

8 According to Eybers, the loss of the diamond fields was a blessing in disguise: the territory was spared the disadvantages of the commercial and materialistic spirit that degraded politics and retarded education elsewhere. Stability characterised the country and the OFS has been described as being one of the purest and best administered modern democracies [Bryce 1927: 484; Eybers, G.W. 1918: lxvi]. In 1883 when Brebner visited the school at Jagersfontein [see 5.1.2.5], he remarked that *de finantieele toestand van de Delverijven heeft een nadeeligen invloed of de school gehad; het aantal leerlingen is verminderd ... en [die onderwyser] klaagt over het ongeregeld schoolbezoek der kinderen* [Oranjevrijstaat 1882-1883: 53].

9 See 5.2

The provision of education in the OFS will thus be discussed under the following distinctive periods:

- 1836-1854 (The Voortrekkers and the Orange River Sovereignty under British rule)
- 1854-1900 (The independent Orange Free State Republic)
- 1900-1907 (The Orange River Colony under British Military and Crown rule)
- 1907-1910 (The Orange River Colony under Responsible Government)

In order to form a clearer picture of the role parents wanted to and were allowed to play in the type of education provided for their children, an attempt will be made to provide details of parents' attempts to become involved in their children's education and of the issues that were of primary importance to them. Furthermore, attempts will be made to determine under whose direction education was provided and who the main decision makers were in this regard.

#### 5.1.1 Provision of education prior to and during the Orange River Sovereignty [1836-1854]

It stands to reason that initially very little progress was made with regard to education. The main reasons being that the emigrants had entered an undeveloped and inhospitable area in which they had to first establish themselves. Most of their time and effort was taken up providing for their immediate physical needs and defending that which they had managed to secure.

The greatest factor in providing schooling — both during the migratory years and immediately thereafter — was the family or small community group<sup>10</sup>. In keeping with the predominating Christian philosophy of life, tuition was strictly religious — the Christian Protestant religion being the basis, and the acquisition of a knowledge of its basic tenets, the aim of education. Teaching children to read the Bible, to recite the Catechisms, to memorise and sing the psalms and to be able to sign their names in preparation for Church membership, was a parental responsibility invoked by the baptismal vow (Kok 1904: 85; Lubbe 1942: 74, 113-114).

The link between Voortrekker parents' perceived aim of education and the affairs of the Church is indisputable and consequently it is to be expected that the Church would have been obliged to respond to the educational needs of the young pioneers.

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10 This was common practice during the Great Trek. See 4.2.1.1 & 5.2.1.1

### 5.1.1.1 *The role of the Dutch Reformed Church*

In 1847 the first call for assistance in relation to schooling was directed by the immigrants to the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape Colony. In response, the Synod took it upon itself to minister to the spiritual and educational needs of its members north of the Cape Colony border<sup>11</sup>. Towards the end of the year a Commission consisting of Revs Andrew Murray senior<sup>12</sup>, P.K. Albertyn and two elders was sent to determine what could be done to improve education in the territory (Bruwer 1936: 8). The Church was able to obtain two teachers from Holland — Groenendaal and Van der Meer — who were posted to the Free State. They arrived late in 1849 and were assigned to Fauresmith (Riet River) and Bloemfontein<sup>13</sup> respectively (Du Plessis 1919: 112). The prevailing social conditions in the Sovereignty were aptly described by Groenendaal who remarked: *Ik heb nooit zoo iets gezien en dat bij menschen, verstoken van school en kerk* (in Lubbe 1942: 108).

Harry Smith granted permission for the appointment of these teachers from Holland<sup>14</sup>, but the language policy was clear: English as well as Dutch were to be taught in all government schools. Bilingualism on the part of the teachers was a *sine qua non* — a reminder that there was a section of the population whom the Dutch Reformed Church did not represent and whose needs were to be respected (Bruwer 1936: 10). However, the fact that Smith sanctioned the appointment of Dutch teachers also points to the fact that it was difficult to acquire local teachers.

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11 The Church had not sanctioned the emigration of Boers from the Cape Colony [Gardener 1934: 11]. Also see 4.2.1.1

12 See 4.1.3.2 footnote 20.

13 Rev Andrew Murray junior reported in 1849 when he assumed his clerical duties in the town, that there were only two Dutch and some thirty English families in the village [Du Plessis 1919: 91]. Van der Meer would thus have been expected to teach English-speaking children as well. There appear to be differing opinions regarding the appointment of the two teachers — Gardener [1934: 71] places Groenendaal at Bloemfontein and Van der Meer at Fauresmith, yet in the same source [1934: 164] he mentions that Van der Meer was of great help to the Rev Murray in Bloemfontein. Du Plessis [1919: 112] relates that Rev Murray, upon return from one of his visitation tours, found that Van der Meer had installed himself in his parsonage. Bruwer [1936: 51] also places Van der Meer at Bloemfontein.

14 The request for the teachers was made when the territory was under the authority of the *Boeren Maatschappij*, but they arrived after the territory had been annexed by Britain — hence Smith's intervention.

### 5.1.1.2 *British government involvement in education*

Smith was well aware of the pressing need for teachers. During a tour of the Sovereignty in 1848 he had found that

*... the emigrant farmers [were] without any means of education ... At their request I undertook the task of attempting to rescue them from so lamentable a position, and my effort was to ... send ministers and teachers ... (Smith in Bruwer 1936: 18).*

On 22 March 1849 Smith published a proclamation undertaking to appoint a schoolmaster to each town that was a seat of magistracy<sup>15</sup>. Teachers were thus appointed to Bloemfontein (Mr Drury<sup>16</sup>), Smithfield (Mr Auret) and Winburg (Mr Plerik) (Bruwer 1936: 51; Gerdener 1934: 66, 71; Lubbe 1942: 110; South African Archival Records 1953: 505).

But this was not enough to address the needs of the Colonists. Gerdener (1930: 113) records a description of the prevailing schooling situation as described in an article in the *Friend*: July 1850 as follows.

*... [E]n beschouwt men nu het onderwijs en de opvoeding die gegeven wordt van naderby, O! dan ziet het er betreurenswaardig uit.*

The author of the article also believed that the dismal situation could be attributed to the indifference of parents. It was conceded that many of the inhabitants were incapable of educating their children themselves while others were unable to afford the services of a tutor. If the situation was to be improved, either the government would have to provide qualified teachers or the citizens themselves would have to contribute towards acquiring the services of suitable persons (Gerdener 1930: 114).

In a report to Smith in 1850 on the state of education, Warden pointed out that parents were anxious for their children to receive schooling and he believed that an itinerant system would be a practical solution given the expanse of the territory and the absence of towns of note. To meet the needs of the Colonists, the teachers were to be Dutch and also members of the Dutch

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15 In the proclamation, no mention is made of the fourth magistracy – Vrededorp. See 5.1

16 Mr Drury could not have stayed long since Van der Meer took up the post late in 1849. See 5.1.1.1

Reformed Church. Warden believed that fixed town schools were impractical because few people had settled in towns<sup>17</sup>. This opinion seems to have been valid for Mr Auret, the Smithfield teacher, reported that after having been in the town for over a year, he had neither a permanent home nor a school (Gerdener 1930: 111).

Nevertheless, many parents remained concerned for their children's education and this matter needed to be dealt with.

#### 5.1.1.3 *Steps towards local participation in education*

To improve the provision of schooling in the few town schools that had been established, a resolution was passed in 1850 that masters and their schools were to be placed under the direction of a School Commission<sup>18</sup>. The precedent for this regulation was a district school which had, of own accord, established a school committee to supervise the teacher and his school and the arrangement was said to have improved the efficiency of the school (Bruwer 1936: 27). It can be assumed that these parents had established the committee after the manner of the Cape Colony and Natal's school committees<sup>19</sup> because they felt the need to have more influence over their children's schooling. School committees were consequently established in Bloemfontein and in Winburg. Bloemfontein's school regulations were published in the *Friend* early in 1852. In essence, according to these regulations:

- teachers were required to be both properly trained and bilingual
- school fees were laid down but indigent children would receive gratuitous schooling
- the teacher was responsible for the internal organisation of the school
- the school was to be visited each week by one or more committee members
- the quarterly exams were to be supervised by the school committee (Bruwer 1936: 27).

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17 This observation is supported by that made by Brebner at a later stage. See 5.1.2.5

18 No indication is given of how many members were to be elected, by whom they were to be elected or who was eligible for nomination and election.

19 See 4.1.2.1, 4.2.2.3.1 & 4.2.3.5

Later that year, the school committees were instructed to appoint three rural schoolmasters in each district (Bruwer 1936: 53). No record of the School Commissions — other than that of Bloemfontein — their role or the appointment of rural teachers could be found and the existence and efficiency of these bodies can only be guessed at.

#### 5.1.1.4 *Conditions towards the close of British rule*

Under British rule between three and five village schools were in operation. When the Dutch took over in 1854, there were four — Bloemfontein, Winburg, Harrismith and Fauresmith — Smithfield being vacant at the time. The itinerant rural school system was in similar dire straits as no government schoolmasters had been appointed to the rural districts. Private itinerant teachers, invariably of dubious character, offered their services to farmers and the government's attempt to induce qualified teachers to become itinerant masters, had failed (Bruwer 1936: 52-53). Without doubt the territory needed a solution for its education problem.

### 5.1.2 The provision of education under the Republic of the Orange Free State [1854-1900]

The Orange Free State Republic Constitution was adopted on 10 April 1854 within three weeks of the territory becoming independent of Britain. According to Article 23 of the Constitution, the Volksraad was responsible for the furtherance of religion and education and in Article 24, the Dutch Reformed Church was raised to the status of State Church which would enjoy the promotion and support of the Volksraad (Orange Free State 1854). These were the principles that would direct the course of the provision of education in the new era.

#### 5.1.2.1 *The Volksraad's attitude to education*

The Volksraad had serious economic, political<sup>20</sup> and Basuto issues to contend with and was unable to extend the provision of education beyond the already established schools (Du Toit 1958: 126; South African Archival Records 1952: 301-302). The residents — as *huisvaders van kinderen*

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20 See 5.1 footnote 6.

— of districts other than the magistracies were anxious for the Volksraad to appoint teachers to their districts. On 9 September 1854 a memorialist from the Smithfield district approached the Volksraad to be appointed as an itinerant government school master in the area. He submitted proof of his proficiency as a teacher and testimonials vouching for his competence — one was signed by a member of the Volksraad — as well as a petition signed by sixty residents of the district. An itinerant teacher from the Modder River district also requested a government appointment. He had recently completed the education of 28 children within six months and intended starting a new school with 25 children<sup>21</sup>. At the same Volksraad meeting where these requests were attended to, a petition signed by several Bloemfontein residents was submitted to the Volksraad asking them to appoint *J.S. Higson, als eene bekwaame man* to a local school. The Volksraad decided that they *vooreerst zulke onderwijzers niet zal aanstellen, totdat wij een plan kunnen beramen hoe dat zulke personen onpartijdiglijk aangesteld kunnen worden* (South African Archival Records 1952: 75, 128, 141, 156). The "plan" devised appears to have been the institution of local bodies guaranteeing community involvement, and presumably also parental involvement, in educational matters — also in relation to appointment of teachers.

#### 5.1.2.2 *The establishment of district School Commissions*

The Volksraad adopted a motion to establish district School Commissions<sup>22</sup> on 16 February 1855. The Commission was to comprise the magistrate, the clergyman, a member elected by the residents of the town and two members elected by district residents. The Commission was to supervise the school and examine prospective teachers. The government would ratify the appointment of applicants recommended by the Commission (South African Archival Records 1952: 99).

A year later, School Commissions were informed that they were to comply with the wishes of the majority of the residents in their districts on whether itinerant teachers should or should not be able to teach English. This option did not apply to town schoolmasters since they were all required

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21 Six months was considered sufficient time to prepare children for Church membership — the aim of education [Brebner 1903: 57].

22 This strategy had also been proposed in the 1850's. See 5.1.1.3

to be bilingual<sup>23</sup> (South African Archival Records 1953: 27). But although concessions had been made regarding local say in appointing itinerant district teachers, in reality, these areas appear to have remained destitute of education<sup>24</sup>. In 1858, burghers from the Winburg district approached the Volksraad on the matter as follows:

*... we most earnestly implore you to use all the available means you may have from time to time ... to the increase of Education and providing more Clergymen to Labour amongst us... in so Holy and Godlike a work* (South African Archival Records 1958b: 547).

The effectiveness of the local committees was disputed and to resolve the problem, the 1855 regulations were repealed and new regulations passed providing for the central appointment of local School Commissions [1861] (Malherbe 1925: 358). The next step taken in an attempt to set education on a forward course, was the promulgation of school regulations in 1863.

#### 5.1.2.3 *Regulations for the management of government schools in the Orange Free State Republic: 1863*<sup>25</sup>

The regulations provided the first detailed guidelines according to which the financing of schools was to be dealt with. The Volksraad bound themselves to donating grants to every village in the OFS from whom it received a memorial requesting the establishment of a government school. An estimated nine towns were expected to make use of the offer. Evidently the Volksraad anticipated that the community would take an interest in initiating the establishment of its own school. A subscription list was to be opened when the opening of a school was being contemplated. Subscribers were to bind themselves to pay an annual subscription for three consecutive years for which sum they would be allowed to send two children to school. "Honorary" subscribers were persons who, though having no children of their own at school, would have the right to have two children taught at their expense (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §2-§4 in Bruwer 1936).

23 This provision was made under the ORS and seems to have been retained. See 5.1.1.3

24 In 1860, Rev Andrew Murray addressed a Conference of the Dutch Reformed Church at Worcester and highlighted the crying need for teachers and more schooling facilities in the OFS where he believed that at least 50 teachers were urgently needed. The Volksraad had appropriated salaries for 25 itinerant teachers, yet the money remained in the treasury for the men could not be found [Du Plessis 1919: 189].

25 Bruwer [1936: 338-341] contains a translated version of the regulations. The original Dutch version could not be traced.

Article 6 allowed for the establishment of a School Commission comprising 5 members: the magistrate, the Dutch Reformed Church minister and 3 members elected by the subscribers from among themselves. The Commission had the right and duty to *inter alia*:

- select and appoint a teacher — the State President was required to ratify the appointment (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §7[1] in Bruwer 1936)
- dismiss the teacher in the event of immoral behaviour, incompetency, ill-treatment of the children, subscribing to unorthodox religious principles, violation of the school regulations (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §7[2] in Bruwer 1936)
- submit an annual report to the government (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §7[4] in Bruwer 1936)
- deal with the financial matters of the school (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §8 in Bruwer 1936).

The teacher was expected to *inter alia*:

- furnish the Commission with testimonials testifying to his competency and his moral character (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §18 in Bruwer 1936)
- commence and close each day with a prayer, Scripture reading and a hymn, and to teach Bible history (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §11 in Bruwer 1936)
- follow the method of teaching he considered best (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §20 in Bruwer 1936)
- be bilingual, use Dutch as the medium of instruction but also teach English as a subject (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §22 & §23 in Bruwer 1936)
- hold a biannual public examination at which each member of the Commission would have the right to question the pupils on the work dealt with by the teacher during the course of the year (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §12 in Bruwer 1936).

The regulations appear to have been quite comprehensive, and through their duties, the local School Commissions had a good measure of say in the character of the school and the temperament of its teacher. When the reasons for dismissal of the teacher are examined, it becomes evident that the Commission would have needed to draft a comprehensive list of school regulations defining the parameters of acceptable behaviour. It can also be expected that the Commission would have been required to deal with complaints from parents who would bring infringements of these regulations and rules to their notice — especially if these offences were cause

for dismissal. Clear guidelines regarding the medium of instruction and religious observance — probably the two most sensitive issues from the parents' point of view — were provided, while the measure of liberty granted the teacher to organise the method of instruction could be termed enlightened.

However, it would seem that the hoped for improvement regarding the provision of education was not forthcoming. Perhaps this was because there were more pressing issues on the minds of the citizens like the unrest caused by ongoing hostilities between the Basuto and themselves. In the following year [1864], President Brand was elected State President for a term of four years<sup>26</sup>. His concern for the state of education can be gauged from the measures he took to try to establish the causes of its failure and suggestions of ways to improve the situation. At his instigation circulars were issued to clergymen and magistrates throughout the Republic to determine local opinion on the needs and shortcomings of education<sup>27</sup> (Malherbe 1925: 358-359).

#### 5.1.2.4 *Local perspectives on the state of education*

At the time Brand's circulars were being distributed, citizens were becoming increasingly agitated regarding the state of education and took it upon themselves to bring these matters to the attention of the Volksraad. The calibre of district or itinerant teachers appointed by the government was sometimes suspect if the following letter of 2 November 1865 addressed to the State President is anything to go by.

*... Dat alle personen, die zich uitgeven voor Districts — of private Onderwyzers dat zy behoorlyk zullen geëxamineerd worden, of zy wel de bekwaamheden, voor dat vak, bezitten waarvoor zy zich uitgeven; want zy zyn niet alle kokken die lange messen dragen (Brand in Gerdener 1930: 163).*

In 1866, in response to the President's request to provide an opinion on the prevailing education situation, Rev du Toit of Jacobsdal summed up the prevailing situation.

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26 See 5.2

27 Only a few replies were received — possibly in consequence of the Basuto unrest [Bruwer 1936: 12] and the little time that could be afforded to this additional task.

*... Niemand kan ontkennen dat het met den Staat der opvoeding in deze volkplanting maar zeer armoedig gesteld is... Het eenigst dat er aan de opvoeding der kinderen ... gedaan wordt is dat een paar Boeren-onderwyzers van plaats tot plaats rondgaan om school te houden en die onderwyzers kunnen zelve ter naauwernood schryven ... (Du Toit in Gerdener 1930: 168).*

He recommended that

*... door het Gouvernement een geschikte schoolgebouw op elk dorp worde opgerigt, en dat er dan aanvraag worde gedaan naar geschikte Gouvernements onderwyzers, die ten minste in het Hollandsch en in het Engelsch goed bedreven zyn, dan kunnen de verschillende gemeenten van haren kant ook bydragen tot onderhoud dier onderwyzers... (Du Toit in Gerdener 1930: 168).*

When the provision of education is discussed, the question of who is primarily responsible is invariably raised: is it the state, the Church or the parents who are responsible — or is it a particular combination of participants<sup>28</sup>? On this issue, the OFS Dutch Reformed Synod addressed the Volksraad pointing out its primary responsibility<sup>29</sup>, but also assuming that the Church shared part of the responsibility stating that

*... [d]e belangen toch van het onderwys der jeugd zyn van zoo groot gewigt, dat henne behartiging der Regering als de eerst harer verpligtingen is opgedragen. Die uitwendige belangen der Kerk zyn mede van uitnemend gewigt (in Gerdener 1930: 177).*

28 *The establishment of Grey College* illustrates the oscillation between state and Church responsibility and is included for the purpose of illustrating the point.

In 1856 President Boshof announced that Sir George Grey had donated £2000 of which £320 was to be used to purchase three erven in Bloemfontein for the purpose of building a school. The rest of the sum was to be used toward the construction of the school building and the teachers' residence [South African Archival Records 1953: 13]. An additional amount of £3000, the interest of which was to go towards the salary of one or more teachers, was also donated. This generous contribution led to the establishment of the prestigious Grey College in Bloemfontein [Gerdener 1930: 355]. Grey approached the Dutch Reformed Church to appoint a committee to found, supervise and control the school. The representatives elected were President Boshof, Rev Andrew Murray and Mr J.D. Griesel, an elder of the Church. In 1856, the Volksraad voted an annual sum of £180 towards the school and because of this gesture, the issue of the Volksraad's role in the control and management was brought up. The issue of medium of instruction was also raised. Some of the members of the Volksraad were of the opinion that because Dutch was the official language of the country, the school should be Dutch [South African Archival Records 1953: 51]. In actual fact, according to Grey's Trust Deed, the study of English at the school was required — nothing was said about the medium of all instruction. However, in 1882, Sir Grey was approached for permission to annul the original Trust Deed so that the school could be placed under government control. He gave his consent ungrudgingly and the measure was provided for in §5 of Government Ordinance No. 16, 1882 [Oranjevrijstaat 1883-1884:15-18].

29 See 5.1.2

A report compiled by a Commission appointed by the Synod to enquire into the state of education in the country addressed to President Brand and dated 3 May 1869, offered a different solution to the dilemma. The recommendations that applied to district schools were that:

- the community, including the clergy, be encouraged to show an interest in education
- competent teachers be awarded letters of recommendation and be recommended to parents
- the State President award the £30 grant for itinerant teachers upon receipt of a letter of recommendation issued either by the clergyman or the district magistrate including proof that a minimum of fifteen children would receive instruction from the said teacher
- the schools be visited regularly (Gerdener 1930: 176).

Accordingly, this proposal suggested that not only were the state and Church responsible for providing education, community involvement and interest was also imperative.

The idea of local involvement was not new. During pioneering days parents had taken on the responsibility of educating their children<sup>30</sup> — either personally or by engaging a private tutor. This was the practice many years before the first government teachers were appointed<sup>31</sup>. In 1855 the Volksraad had provided for the establishment of district school committees who had the right to select and recommend teachers to their districts. In addition, the community was given the right to decide on language and medium of instruction in their districts<sup>32</sup>. Yet schooling facilities remained inadequate and in need of amelioration. Year after year the Volksraad discussed the subject of education, but year after year, the matter was shelved. In his opening address for the 1871 session of the Volksraad, President Brand openly reproached the Volksraad for having fruitlessly discussed and postponed such an important issue while the majority of the Free State children were growing up without any instruction whatsoever. He suggested the immediate framing of an education law together with a scheme of taxation to support the financing of education. The outcome was *Ordinance No. 5, 1872* (Bruwer 1936: 14) which placed the Volksraad at the head of the education system, provided for *inter alia* the establishment of local school committees, regulated courses of instruction and outlined the duties of teachers (Malherbe 1925: 358-360).

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30 See 5.1.1

31 See 5.1.1.4

32 See 5.1.2.2

The ordinance remained in abeyance until the beginning of 1874 when Dr John Brebner<sup>33</sup> assumed duty as Inspector of Schools and the ordinance become education law (Bruwer 1936: 14; Malherbe 1925: 362).

#### 5.1.2.5 *Dr Brebner: Inspector of Schools [1874-1899]*

Brebner began his work by undertaking an extensive reconnaissance tour of the country to determine both the views of burghers towards education and the actual state of education. In the towns he would call a meeting of the principal citizens and explain government policy for establishing schools. He advised the formation of committees for the purpose of petitioning the government to open a public school in the town<sup>34</sup>. He became aware that the villages were very small, some consisted of no more than twelve or fourteen houses. Moreover, these villages lay far apart and the majority of children that had to be educated were scattered on isolated farms entirely beyond the reach of village schools. The only facilities in country districts were a number of private schools conducted by untrained teachers of Dutch, German or British origin. A common failing of these individuals was their intemperance and dubious moral character (Brebner 1903: 54, 56).

In relation to the issue of language of instruction in these schools, parents made varying demands. Some wanted their children to be instructed in Dutch only, others in English. A compromise reached by some teachers was the alternative use of the two languages as medium of instruction on particular days of the week. Another controversy which arose was the issue of religious instruction. To eliminate dissension, religious instruction was confined to Scripture reading and instruction in Bible history — dogmatic teaching was excluded (Brebner 1903: 56, 57).

Brebner found that schools were conducted in all manner of buildings, attendance was most irregular, some schools existed only for the purpose of preparing the youth for confirmation and Church membership and local participation and interest was limited. In relation to the latter,

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33 Brebner was a Scottish born minister who came to South Africa in 1861 and accepted teaching posts first at Burghersdorp and later at Somerset East in the Cape Colony.

34 According to the 1863 regulations in respect of the management of government schools, the Volksraad had bound themselves to donating grants to every village in the OFS from which it received a memorial requesting the establishment of a government school. See 5.1.2.3

Brebner believed that not only were school committees to be appointed, they would need to be taught to grasp their duties and the intricacies of education legislation (Brebner 1903: 57).

After Brebner returned he submitted a report to the Volksraad with the recommendation that the current legislation should be amended. Consequently, a new education ordinance, *Ordonnantie No. 1, 1874, Ordonnantie op het Openbaar Onderwijs voor Blanke Kinderen in den Oranjevrijstaat* (Oranjevrijstaat 1874) was forthcoming. This legislation remained the basis of future legislation under the Republican regime and was only amended regarding details in matters of finance and the mode of electing school committees.

#### 5.1.2.5.1 *Ordinance No. 1 of 1874 providing for the public education of white children*

The government acknowledged its responsibility to set funds aside for public education. To supervise this responsibility, an Inspector of Schools was appointed. He was to inspect and report on the various schools in the Republic. Some of the duties of the Inspector of Schools are outlined as some appear to encroach on duties generally ascribed to School Commissions. It was *inter alia* the Inspector's duty to:

- appoint a School Commission with the magistrate and minister of the Dutch Reformed Church as official members and three resident members (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: II §15)
- appoint or dismiss teachers pending the President's ratification of these actions (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: II §11)
- investigate grievances brought against teachers (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: II §8 & §10).

Apart from the duties previously enumerated<sup>35</sup> but also amended by the latest regulations, the School Commission was to:

- have joint supervisory rights<sup>36</sup> over district, ward and itinerant schools inspecting them each month (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: II §16 & §18)
- bring parents' grievances against teachers to the attention of the Inspector (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: II §21)

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35 See 5.1.2.3

36 With the Inspector of Schools.

- bring issues affecting or compromising the efficiency of the school to the attention of the Inspector (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: II §20)
- expel pupils from the school if necessary (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: II §22).

Issues of interest to parents were that teachers were to:

- submit testimonials attesting of good conduct, membership of the Protestant religion and a certificate of competence issued by the Inspector of Schools (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: III §2 & §4)
- have a sound knowledge of and offer instruction in both Dutch and English (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: III §7 & §12)
- keep a record of and provide the School Commission with the names of recalcitrant pupils (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: III §8)
- provide undenominational religious instruction — children whose parents objected to their children attending the classes would be exempted from these classes (Oranjevrijstaat 1874: V §2 & §5).

The regulations mentioned above were selected with the purpose of illustrating the degree and scope of community and parental involvement provided for by this legislation, the position of the state regarding its perceived responsibility to education, the duties of teachers, policy regarding religious education and the issue of language — as medium of instruction and as a subject.

Brebner had done much to set education on a firmer footing and tirelessly worked towards this goal.

#### ***5.1.2.5.2 A review of education during Brebner's term of office***

During his term of office, Brebner conscientiously inspected all the schools in the OFS and drafted comprehensive reports for submission to the Volksraad describing the prevailing conditions at each of the schools whether itinerant, ward or district. Copies of all these reports are available and it was from these sources that an overview of certain issues which appear to have been contentious — either to Brebner or to the parent community — has been compiled.

□ AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION

According to the 1874 ordinance, government schools, were classified as itinerant, ward (farm), and district (town) schools. During Brebner's term the number of government schools increased from 10 to 179 and the number of pupils from 348 to 7390 (Oranjevrijstaat 1897: xxxii). When he conducted his first school inspection, there were five itinerant schools. Initially, these schools were unpopular because it was very difficult to find qualified teachers willing to teach under nomadic conditions. There was also dissatisfaction among parents regarding the way the system functioned. These schools were usually held in the homes of the more affluent farmers who could have done without the government grant — the owner of the farm received £20 per annum for the hire of the school building — and as a result, indigent farmers to whom the grant would have meant much, were denied the benefit (Oranjevrijstaat 1876-1877: 2).

The state of government schooling in the rural areas was generally unsatisfactory, the situation being complicated by want of suitable buildings, qualified teachers and cooperation of the local community to arrange for the establishment of schools in the area. Children in the towns were at an advantage since they were able to attend the Church Sunday schools under the supervision of the local minister (Oranjevrijstaat 1881-1882: 11). Although there was an improvement, the situation was far from satisfactory. Brebner acknowledged that the government schools would never be able to fulfil the needs of the rural community and that private schools<sup>37</sup> would always play an important role in education (Oranjevrijstaat 1888-1889: 12-13). The education ordinance of 1889 attempted to give inhabitants greater say in the establishment of schools with the following stipulation that

*... het wordt aan de keuze overgelaten van de inwoners eener wijk, waar geen erkend dorp gesticht is, of zij eene vaste wijkschool willen stichten of Rondgaande Onderwijzers willen hebben (Oranjevrijstaat 1889: §3).*

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37 To qualify for aid, private schools were to be inspected; the teacher was to be of good character and be a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. In 1880 the first 7 private schools were awarded grants. By 1898 there were 42 aided private schools (Oranjevrijstaat 1898: 1)

The number of itinerant schools increased dramatically. In 1890 there were 28 of these schools (Oranjevrijstaat 1890-1891: 1, 13). By 1898, there were 144 such schools. It seems that parents in the country districts had grown to prefer this type of school, but it was a costly system from the government's point of view. Each of the itinerant teachers received a fixed salary paid by the government but the schools were attended by only a few children (Oranjevrijstaat 1890-1891: 13; Oranjevrijstaat 1898: 1).

Despite the increase in the number of schools, there were still large numbers of children who were illiterate (Oranjevrijstaat 1893-1894: xi). School attendance was notoriously bad and teachers often complained that parents were neglectful in ensuring their children's attendance and kept them from school to help out on the farms. It was also common to find that parents believed that after four or six months their children were sufficiently educated. It was for these reasons that Brebner remained a vigorous advocate for the institution of compulsory education — a goal which was achieved in 1895 when *Act No. 14* was passed (Oranjevrijstaat 1877-1878: 25; Oranjevrijstaat 1878-1879: 23).

Finding suitably qualified teachers was a problem from the start. Brebner's attempt to address this problem was less than successful because he had to admit

*... met leedwezen ... dat mijn plan om onderwijzers uit Holland voor onze scholen te krijgen eene totale mislukking is. De School commissien, in wier handen de kiezing van onderwijzers door de Ordonnantie geplaatst is, geven altijd de voorkeur aan Afrikaners, en willen liever wachten, dan iemand uit Holland ontbieden* (Oranjevrijstaat 1882-1883: 8).

That the community was concerned about who was responsible for conducting its schools, is evident from the above, but this leads one to wonder how actively involved the community was in relation to other educational matters.

#### □ COMMUNITY AND PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS AND EXPECTATIONS REGARDING EDUCATION

During Brebner's first annual inspection, he found several schools that concentrated on preparing children for Church membership. The scope of education was confined to learning to read the Bible (Oranjevrijstaat 1876-1877: 25; Oranjevrijstaat 1878-1879: 23). A teacher is reported to have complained that

*... sommige ouders haar verboden hebben aardrijkskunde of taalkunde aan hunne kinderen te onderwijzen, en andere boeken dan den Bijbel en Kinderbijbel als schoolboeken te gebruiken (Oranjevrijstaat 1877-1878: 20).*

The opening statement of Brebner's 1880-1881 report reads

*... zoolang zoovele ouders dit alleen begeeren dat hunne kinderen voor de aanneming voorbereid worden en niet meer verlangen, zal eene Gouvernementsschool die niet uitsluitend voor de aanneming kan gebruikt worden, nooit volkomen voldoening geven, en zal de voorkeur steeds aan private scholen worden gegeven (Oranjevrijstaat 1880-1881:1).*

These were true words, confirmed a number of years later

*... er zijn vele private scholen nog waar de onderwijzer op uitdrukkelijk bevel der ouders zich bepalen moet bij werktuigelijk lezen, een weinig schrijven, en het Catechisatie-boek van buite leeren ... (Oranjevrijstaat 1885-1886: 14).*

Brebner blamed the inability of the government school system to progress on community apathy saying that

*...geen onderwijssysteem, de omstandigheden des lands in aanmerking genomen, meer gelegendhede aan de burghers op het platteland geven om grondig en goedkoop onderwijs voor hunne kinderen te krijgen dan het tegenwoordige, tenzij de burgers genegen zijn veel meer van hunnen kant bij te dragen. Wat ontbreekt is niet Gouvernements ondersteuning, maar samenwerking en belangstelling en overleg om het systeem in werking te brengen ... Dit hangt van de burgers zelve af: en de Ordonnantie is zoo ingericht dat het initiatief altijd bij de burgers zelve berust (Oranjevrijstaat 1885-1886: 15).*

The section of the Ordinance to which Brebner was referring, was the provision made for election of local School Commissions to oversee the local schools. Community interest in education could possibly be gauged by determining what these bodies did to become involved in their schools.

□ THE LOCAL SCHOOL COMMISSIONS: THEIR COMPOSITION AND THEIR DUTIES

The composition of the School Commission was discussed previously<sup>38</sup>. *Ordinance No. 22, 1889* (Oranjevrijsstaat 1889) altered the composition of the Commission by specifying that Article 15 of *Ordinance No. 17, 1874* (Oranjevrijsstaat 1874) — which affirmed yet also amended the set guidelines regarding the composition of the Commission as stipulated in 1863 — be amended to read

*... er bestaat in elk district eene Districts-Schoolcommissie, bestaande uit den Landdrost, als officieel lid, en vier andere leden door het publiek gekozen* (Oranjevrijsstaat 1889: §1).

The Dutch Reformed minister was thus no longer an official member of the Commission and the members were to be elected by the general public — not only the parents or subscribers. However, the public seem to have been generally disinterested in these elections and it was reported that

*... ongelukkig stelt het publiek in het algemeen zeer weinig belang in die kiezingen. Het gebeurt dikwijls dat niemand op den dag der kiezing verschijnt ... of als het vereischte getal stemgerechtigde burgers tegenwoordig is, dat leden gekozen worden, die geen bijzonder belang bij het onderwijs hebben* (Oranjevrijsstaat 1889-1890: 12).

From the annual reports one can deduce that School Commissions could generally be divided into three categories — those who took an active interest in education and enthused the local community to take an interest in the schools; those who merely carried out their duties; and those who were indifferent to the needs of the community and its school. In the latter instance, the schools were irregularly visited, there was little cooperation between the Commission and the teacher and schools tended to wane and many eventually closed. Some of the teachers at these schools were also apathetic — a point evidenced by the poor results their pupils attained during Brebner's inspection. A reason for teacher apathy is possibly to be found in the fact that ineffective School Commissions struggled to collect the school fees which formed part of the teacher's income. The school buildings in these districts were often in a deplorable physical

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38 See 5.1.2.3

condition, yet the public could not be roused to provide better facilities for their own children (Oranjevrijstaat 1876-1877: 22, 25,30; Oranjevrijstaat 1878-1879: 44; Oranjevrijstaat 1879-1880: xi; Oranjevrijstaat 1880-1881: 38; Oranjevrijstaat 1881-1882: 49; Oranjevrijstaat 1887-1888: 43).

Fortunately there were School Commissions which did much for their schools. The schools were visited regularly, there was a good relationship between the Commission and the teacher, parents were kept informed of the progress and the needs of the school to which they responded, members of the community voluntarily became involved in teaching extra courses like handwork, and the number of subscriptions exceeded the number of children attending the school indicating that members of the community other than parents were also interested in the schools (Oranjevrijstaat 1876-1877: 25, 28; Oranjevrijstaat 1878-1879: x, 17-18; Oranjevrijstaat 1879-1880: 15; Oranjevrijstaat 1890-1891: 43).

Two interesting events recorded by Brebner illustrate how a dynamic Commission could contribute to the well-being and prestige of its school — apart from the fact that teachers of such schools were generally enthusiastic and their pupils achieved good results to the good repute of the school. In 1882 when Brebner inspected the school at Boshof, the local School Commission reported that *een bazaar onlangs ten behoeve van de school gehouden geeft boven de £200 opgebracht* (Oranjevrijstaat 1882-1883: 49). The other incident occurred at Senekal, where, after his inspection of the school in 1886, Brebner records that *in den avond werd een "Entertainment" gegeven bestaande uit piano- en zangstukken, dat zeer goed afliep. Deze is eene zeer goede school* (Oranjevrijstaat 1886-1887: 37). This event was repeated in 1891 (Oranjevrijstaat 1891-1892: 39).

#### □ RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

The relationship between parents' view of schooling and the position of religious instruction in education has been outlined previously<sup>39</sup>. To be added is that schools customarily provided religious instruction in the mother tongue dividing the classes into two where

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39 See 5.1.2.5.2 Community and parents' attitude towards and expectations regarding education.

children of both language groups were present in the same class (Oranjevrijstaat 1877-1878: 18; Oranjevrijstaat 1898: 1). According to legislation which had most recently addressed the issue, *Ordonnantie No. 17, 1884, Op het openbaar onderwijs voor blanke kinderen in den Oranjevrijstaat (ter vervanging van Ordonnantie No. 13, 1879; No. 14, 1880 en No. 6, 1881)* although religious instruction was compulsory, the "conscience clause" applied (Oranjevrijstaat 1884: §86).

#### □ THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

The OFS adopted a liberal attitude towards the language issue and was perhaps at the time the most bilingual of the four territories comprising South Africa. The course regarding language was set by the 1863 regulations proclaiming Dutch the medium of instruction but providing for the teaching of English as a subject<sup>40</sup> (Oranjevrijstaat 1863: §23). Dutch as medium of instruction was confirmed in Article 13 of the 1889 regulations *Ordonnantie No. 22, 1889, Wijziging Onderwijs-wet* which conferred on the teacher the duty that *onderwijs zal, zooveel mogelijk, door middel van de Hollandsche taal moeten gegeven worden* (Oranjevrijstaat 1889). No mention is made of the status of English in this ordinance, but it is presumed that because this ordinance was an amendment to the previous legislation, the previous admonition to *zorgen voor grondig onderwijs in de Hollandsche en de Engelsche taal* (Oranjevrijstaat 1884: §52) remained in force. The 1891 law *Ordonnantie No. 2, 1891* stipulated that after Std. II at least half of the subjects were to be taught in Dutch (Malfherbe 1925: 368).

Brebner's reports bring various issues to the fore in relation to the language issue. Most schools were divided into English and Dutch classes, some learning only English, others only Dutch and others both languages. Some schools were notorious for the neglect of teaching Dutch (Oranjevrijstaat 1877-1878: 18, 42; Oranjevrijstaat 1878-1879: 20). Some teachers remarked *dat de ouders tegen het Hollandsch onderwijs objecteeren* with the result that tuition was given primarily in English (Oranjevrijstaat 1878-1879: 21) while others provided instruction in Dutch only (Oranjevrijstaat 1877-1878: 16). The medium of instruction was probably less determined by legislation than by the teacher's

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40 See 5.1.2.3

ability to teach the required languages and the pressure of parents regarding choice of medium of instruction<sup>41</sup>.

Perhaps Brebner's retort in the 1891-1892 report best reflects 1890's attitudes regarding parents' views of an "ideal" education when he states the results of an inquiry into the reasons why some parents preferred to have their children educated beyond the OFS borders as being

*... dat men meer in aanraking komt met de groote wereld; dat in zekere scholen ten minste, de leerlingen onder meer bepaald Christelijken invloed gebracht worden, en dat men beter gelegenheid heeft om Engelsch te leeren (Oranjevrijstaat 1891-1892: 11).*

- SCHOOLING FOR THE INDIGENT AND ITS RELATION TO COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
- From their inception, School Commissions had been granted the right to exempt certain pupils from paying school fees<sup>42</sup>. This issue was revisited when compulsory education was being discussed. It was found that several poor children were not attending school because their parents could not afford the cost. It was recommended that not only were these children to receive gratuitous education, clothing and food were also to be provided. However, parents remained indifferent — possibly because they attached little value to education. Brebner felt even more strongly about instituting compulsory school attendance because he believed this attitude detrimentally affected the whole community (Oranjevrijstaat 1879-1880: xi-xii, Oranjevrijstaat 1892-1893: xiv; Oranjevrijstaat 1897: xiv; Oranjevrijstaat 1898: xiv).

Article 2 of *Law No. 14, 1895* made it compulsory for all children between 10 and 16 living within a two mile radius of a school to attend school (Oranjevrijstaat 1895). In a sense attendance was compulsory, but the number of schools was inadequate and the area over which compulsion was exercised must have been small in comparison to the non-

41 Article 27 of *Law No. 21, 1899* provided that Bible, General and Particular History, Geography and Arithmetic were to be taught through the medium of Dutch only. No child could be forced to learn English without the consent of the parent or guardian. The law was published on 7 July 1899, but was never enforced owing to the outbreak of the war [Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: Appendix XXVII:119].

42 See 5.1.1.3

compulsory area. Farm schools tended to shift from one centre to another so that the "compulsory area" did not remain constant.

□ PAYMENT-BY-RESULT

The payment-by-results system was instituted in the OFS in 1884. The amount allocated to diligent teachers was not to exceed £50. Teachers who qualified were those *wier scholen aanmerkelijk vooruitgegaan zijn, zoowel in degelijkheid van onderwijs als in aantal leerlingen en die bijzondere vlijt en ijver in hunne plichtsvervulling getoond hebben* (Oranjevrijstaat 1884: §57). Brebner's subsequent annual reports provide lists of the names of teachers qualifying for the grant. In effect, not only would the teachers have benefited, the children would have had to their advantage superior tuition.

Without doubt, the education system had come a long way in the 25 years under Brebner's control — a fact that he too looked back on in his final report. He added though that

*... ik koester de hoop dat het werk onder vele gebreken en vele eigenaardige moeilijkheden verricht dinen zal als een echt fundament waarop de heerlijke tempel van Christelijk en nationaal onderwijs voort gebouwd zal worden* (Oranjevrijstaat 1898: xv).

Brebner's wishes of continued progress in relation to education would have to be postponed for some time, for the OFS in alliance with the Transvaal were preparing for war against England.

### 5.1.3 Education under British rule: The Orange River Colony [1900-1907]

When the Anglo-Boer War broke out in October 1899 organised education in the OFS came to an end (Otto 1954: 151).

#### 5.1.3.1 *The Anglo-Boer War and its effect on education*

Everyday life changed dramatically once war broke out. Concentration camps became home to a vast section of the population and it must have been disturbing to some parents to find that their children's formal schooling had come to an abrupt end. Some must have resorted to home

schooling in a bid to provide a basic education for their children — especially with the aim of preparing the youth for confirmation. In the camps a number of former teachers established private schools where children could receive tuition at a fee, but because of the dire circumstances under which the refugees lived, few could afford the fees (Bruwer 1936: 121-123, 125; Malherbe 1925: 303).

#### 5.1.3.1.1 *A review of schooling under British Military Rule*

When the British authorities noted the Boer's keen interest in education, it was decided to establish schools in which the Boer youth could be anglicised — a task which would have been nigh impossible to accomplish had the population remained widely scattered. Soon free English schools were established in all 15 Free State concentration camps<sup>43</sup> (Great Britain 1902b: 5, 39). Secular subjects were taught in English, but religious instruction and Bible history were taught in Dutch *to assist the parents and the ministers of religion to prepare the children to become full members of the Church to which their parents belong*. Parents seemed content with this arrangement (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 4). The teachers were locals — many were Dutch — but due to the anglicisation policy that was to be followed, it was decided to commission teachers from England<sup>44</sup> who would be better suited to the objective<sup>45</sup> (Otto 1954: 151-156). Dr Franks, a medical Inspector remarked that

*... considering the enormous influence upon the future of South Africa which education of the rising generation will exercise politically as well as intellectually, I think that the headmaster in all the schools in the burgher camps should be a loyal Britisher and if possible at least half of his assistants should be the same*<sup>46</sup> (Franks in Otto 1954: 163).

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43 These schools resorted under the Military Governor [Otto 1954: 151].

44 In total, 475 foreign teachers arrived in South Africa between January 1902 and June 1903. They were assigned to schools in the OFS, Natal, the Transvaal and the Cape Colony. The majority were British and Scottish. Some came from Canada, New Zealand and Australia [Otto 1954: 166].

45 At the Bloemfontein camp school the headmistress was a daughter of General Ferreira. Her teaching was good, but she was anti-British and did not conceal her antipathies [Great Britain 1902a: 5].

46 See Great Britain [1902a: 28].

On 6 November 1900, Mr E.B. Sargant<sup>47</sup> was appointed acting Director of Education over the combined territory of the OFS and the Transvaal. Sargant was impressed with *the eagerness of the Dutch people to take advantage of every opportunity of education for their children* (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 4) but he was an imperialist and when he realised that the Boers had established Dutch schools on their own initiative in most of the camps, he remarked *this fact influenced me in deciding to start in English without any secular instruction in Dutch*<sup>48</sup>. Sargant pointed out that generally Boer children understood as little Dutch as they did English since they spoke only the *Taal* [Afrikaans] and consequently many parents preferred instruction to be given in English (Otto 1954: 164). Although no decided effort was made to suppress the Dutch schools<sup>49</sup>, most soon declined and were eventually closed<sup>50</sup> (Otto 1954: 155).

#### 5.1.3.1.2 *The development and progress of the concentration camp schools*

Initially, attendance at the concentration camp schools was not compulsory. Nevertheless, records indicate that parents were persuaded of the advantages of education (Great Britain 1902b: 43) and the number of children increased to the extent that the schools needed to be enlarged<sup>51</sup>. The largest school was the one at Norvalspont<sup>52</sup> personally established by Sargant and here attendance was compulsory. The children numbered 800 children and the teaching staff comprised 13 members (Great Britain 1902b: 49). From May 1901 till May 1902, the number of children attending concentration camp schools increased from 1 370 to 12 066 (Otto 1954: 155, 157, 161).

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47 Sargant was undertaking an extended tour of the British Colonies studying various education systems when Lord Milner offered him the position of acting Director of Education in Transvaal and OFS [Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 1-5].

48 The Harrismith school disregarded this prerequisite. It was the most advanced of all the camp schools and prepared some children for the Cape Town University exams. The school was comparatively well resourced and the Royal Engineers had made benches and seats for the school [Great Britain 1902b 107].

49 The Commandant at Norvalspont offered to suppress the Dutch school so that the children would be forced to attend Sargant's English schools, but Sargant declined the offer [Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 4].

50 One exception seems to be the Dutch school at the Kroonstad camp which continued to function in October 1901 [Great Britain 1902b: 98].

51 The school buildings were either marquees, canvas shelters or brick and canvas combinations. Facilities, materials, and equipment were generally totally inadequate and teachers had to be innovative in their teaching.

52 It is interesting to compare this situation with that at the Vredefort camp where an attendance officer had been appointed to "whip up" fresh scholars! [Great Britain 1902b: 103].

To promote the anglicisation policy teachers were imported from Britain and Scotland<sup>53</sup>. Sargant wrote a circular welcoming each of the foreign teachers in which education policy was outlined: English was the medium of instruction except in religious instruction *lest we should produce a feeling of spiritual alienation between father and son ... to introduce the English Bible into camp schools ... would be to divide a house against itself*; teaching was to occur in cooperation with established teachers; the Boers were to be befriended — as equals — and their language and customs learnt and respected; the children were naturally charming and docile but apparent stupidity could be forthcoming because of the *difficulties of comprehension in a foreign tongue*. Many of the children, it was pointed out, were unaccustomed to schooling. At the same time he wrote a letter to teachers at the camp schools asking them to welcome the foreigners with the hospitality *characteristic of the Dutch race and of South Africa*. They were assured that their positions were not threatened — only the *incompetent must fall out of the ranks*. Substitutions would be found for the very young, unqualified teachers who would be given the opportunity to develop their talents in training colleges (Great Britain 1902a: 77-79).

#### **5.1.3.1.3 Education in the concentration camp schools towards the end of the war**

On 31 May 1902 when the Peace of Vereeniging was signed at the end of the war, there were 12 066 children attending concentration camp schools (Transvaal and Orange River Colony: 1904: 12). The attempt to anglicise the Boer children was unsuccessful, due probably to the brevity of time<sup>54</sup> and the parents' bitterness towards the British. At the conclusion of the war, the authorities decided to continue the schools hoping that the parents would leave their children in their charge while they restored their farms. This arrangement met with little support and the number of children attending the school steadily dropped until the last camp school was closed in March 1903 (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 12).

#### **5.1.3.1.4 Education in the Orange Free State other than in concentration camp schools**

By March 1900 not a vestige of Brebner's school system remained. A transition was made from the pre-war system with its dual medium of instruction to a new system from which Dutch was

53 See 5.1.3.1.2 footnote 44.

54 The camps started to break up from June 1902 [Otto 1954: 168].

banned. Towards the end of 1900, a number of village schools were reopened, but all in all, only 15 or 16 government schools remained functional throughout the war (Bruwer 1936: 120-121). The number of children attending government schools in towns remained quite constant with 2 691 children being accounted for in government town schools at the end of the war (Transvaal and Orange River Colony: 1904: 12).

In the aftermath of the war it became necessary to reestablish education on a firmer footing. The steps taken in this regard culminated in the passing of an ordinance directed towards the provision of public education.

#### 5.1.3.2 *Education legislation : The Public Education Ordinance of 1903*

The education legislation of the Republic of the OFS had been abolished and with the relaxation of military rule, a substitute had to be found. In reality, the initiative of the parent in regard to establishing schools was substituted for state initiative. The aim of new educational policy was *inter alia* the:

- development of a free, undenominational and non-compulsory system of government schools
- state assistance to denominational schools
- compulsory registration of private schools and their compliance with government regulations
- association of the various Churches with the state regarding religious teaching in its schools
- local financial responsibility and local control (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 20).

The *Public Education Ordinance No. 27, 1903* embodied these principles. In essence, the ordinance provided for:

- the establishment of a Department of Public Education under the Director of Education (Orange River Colony 1903a: §1[a])
- the Lieutenant-Governor to determine the expedience of school fees, however, irrespective of whether fees were levied or not, indigent children would be entitled to free elementary education (Orange River Colony 1903a: §2)

- religious instruction taught by teachers employed at the school; instruction could be given in Dutch (Orange River Colony 1903a: §5[a])
- ministers of religion to provide doctrinal religious education during the two hours prescribed to children whose parents requested it; this instruction could be given in Dutch (Orange River Colony 1903a: §5[b], 5[c], §6 & §9)
- children whose parents requested exemption from religious instruction to receive some form of secular instruction during the two hours; this instruction could be tuition in the Dutch language (Orange River Colony 1903a: §5[c])
- the right of parents to request that their children receive instruction in the Dutch language for three hours a week (Orange River Colony 1903a: §6)
- the appointment of local committees whose functions and duties would be determined by the Lieutenant-Governor (Orange River Colony 1903a: §9).

According to the *Ordinance's Code of Regulations for Government Schools*:

- schools would be open to children of all denominations although parents could withdraw their children from religious instruction classes or from any religious observance (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: Appendix X: §1)
- parents had the right to request denominational teaching by a minister of religion recognised by the government (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: Appendix X: §4)
- Dutch and English *inter alia* were included in the subjects of instruction (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: Appendix X: §7 & §15).

Under Article 9 of the *Public Education Ordinance, 1903* provision was made for the establishment of local school committees. Regulations defining the functions and duties of local education committees were also published (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: Appendix XVII). According to these regulations:

- the committee would consist of 3-9 members nominated annually by the Lieutenant-Governor (Orange River Colony 1903b: §2[a]).
- the committee was to:
  - appoint 3 members as visitors of each of the schools under its supervision (Orange River Colony 1903b: §24)

- expel children whose removal from the school would be in the interests of the school (Orange River Colony 1903b: §25).
- the committee was to consider complaints from parents on issues such as the:
  - character of religious instruction (Orange River Colony 1903b: §23[a])
  - inefficiency in teaching the Dutch language or any other subject (Orange River Colony 1903b: §23[b])
  - alleged ill-treatment of scholars or misconduct of teachers (Orange River Colony 1903b: §23[c])
  - disorderly behaviour or slovenliness on the part of children (Orange River Colony 1903b: §2[a])
  - neglect of the school premises (Orange River Colony 1903b: §23[e])
  - issues compromising the efficiency of the school (Orange River Colony 1903b: §23[f])
- school attendance was to be improved and for this purpose, government appointed attendance officers who were to report truancies to the committee (Orange River Colony 1903b: §18)
- the school committee would call a biannual meeting of parents whose children were attending the school (Orange River Colony 1903b: §22)
- the Inspector would call a quarterly meeting of parents of children attending a school where no local school committee existed at which occasion grievances and suggestions of parents would be considered (Orange River Colony 1903b: §33, §37 & §38)
- if desired by the parents, ministers of religion were to be provided with facilities through the committee so that scholars were:
  - able to attend Sunday School (Orange River Colony 1903b: §26[a])
  - able to be presented for confirmation (Orange River Colony 1903b: §26[b])
  - protected from proselytising influences separating them from their parents' religion (Orange River Colony 1903b: §26[c])
- the committee had the right to set aside one Friday per year as Arbor Day for planting of trees by the school children (Orange River Colony 1903b: §30)
- gratuitous education in fee-paying schools was to be provided for indigent children (Orange River Colony 1903b: §28).

These provisions embodied the central government's strategy to address the educational needs of the country. However, parents petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor in September 1903 to grant

specific powers to the school committees. Their request was that:

- the school committee be partly elected by the public
- the committee should have the right to appoint teachers
- five hours per week be allowed for the teaching of Dutch
- religious instruction be non-doctrinal (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: Appendix XXVIII).

In a detailed reply to the memorialists, it was pointed out that their requests were indeed embraced by the current legislation (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: Appendix XXVIII). However it was evident that certain parents did not agree with the government's assurances and it was decided to establish private schools that met the aspirations of these individuals.

#### 5.1.3.3 *The development of Christian National Education Schools*

Towards the end of 1903 after the Dutch Reformed Church had failed to obtain certain concessions for which it had been negotiating since the declaration of peace, it decided to start its own schools — the Christian National Education (CNE) schools. These schools were designed to preserve the chief features of the Republican government schools and allowed for *inter alia* that which was dear to the Afrikaner tradition — their religion and language (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 37).

In September 1904, the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church called a meeting with the government to endeavour to settle the differences. The injunctions focussed on increased powers for school committees, additional time for teaching Dutch and for undenominational religious instruction in government schools. As a result of the agreement reached, legislation in which these issues were addressed was drafted and the CNE schools amalgamated with the government schools (Orange River Colony 1905b: 18).

### 5.1.3.4 *Negotiation and agreement: Education legislation of 1905*

The result of the agreements reached with the Dutch Reformed Church and with delegates from the Conference of Representatives of the Churches held in 1905 on the matter of religious instruction, was embodied in new education legislation passed in 1905 (Orange River Colony 1905b: 21; Orange River Colony 1907: 29).

The general supervision of education was to be placed in the hands of a school committee. In future:

- the bare majority of the committee members would be elected by the public and the rest nominated by the Lieutenant-Governor; the committee would consist of 5, 7 or 9 members (Orange River Colony 1905a: §6)
- only men could be elected as members and it was not a prerequisite for them to have contributed to the school fund (Orange River Colony 1905a: §7)
- the school committee would have the right to *inter alia*:
  - fix centres for new schools in country districts
  - enforce the compulsory attendance clause for children between 10 and 16 years
  - institute prosecution against parents whose children did not attend school
  - appoint members as visitors of the school
  - investigate parents' complaints
  - nominate teachers subject to conditions regarding qualifications; appointments were subject to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor
  - undertake a share of the financial responsibility (Orange River Colony 1905a: §34[1]-[9]).

General provisions were that:

- education at all government primary schools would be free and open to European children (Orange River Colony 1905a: §29)
- attendance was compulsory for children between the age of 10 and 16 (Orange River Colony 1905a: §40)
- any scholar would at the request of his parent or guardian receive tuition in the Dutch language (Orange River Colony 1905a: §53)

- English would be the medium of instruction but the time devoted to the tuition of the two languages as subjects would be equal (Orange River Colony 1905a: §54)
- religious instruction — which could be taught in Dutch — would focus on Bible history and would be taught by the school staff; the "conscience clause" would apply to attendance (Orange River Colony 1905a: §55 & §56)
- denominational instruction could be given with the school committee's approval after the set school hours (Orange River Colony 1905a: §57 & §58)
- teachers could conscientiously object to teaching Bible history (Orange River Colony 1905a: §59)
- according to the interpretation of terms in the preamble of the *Education Act*, "parent" shall include the guardian and every person who is liable to maintain or has the actual custody of any child (Orange River Colony 1905a: interpretation of terms [no paragraph number]).

In the following year, Hugh Gunn, Director of Education, reported that the school committees had as a rule taken a deep interest in their work and had been of great assistance to the Department. In April, a conference of delegates chosen from each of the school committees was held to discuss administrative changes and the necessity for the establishment of additional country schools and the means of providing for these schools. Again the issues of school fees was debated, but the motion in favour of fees was defeated. It was found from experience that very little money could be raised by school fees, that the charging of fees created invidious class distinction and that the private circumstances of parents had to be enquired into. It was further decided that it was practically impossible to have compulsory education without having free education (Orange River Colony 1907: 13-14, 31, 59).

In the 1907-1908 annual report, Gunn reported that the most important function discharged by the school committees was the nomination of teachers. However, it was noticeable that the best qualified applications frequently failed to secure appointment probably due to the fact that committee members had difficulty in forming a correct estimate of the relative value of the different academic and professional certificates (Orange River Colony 1907-1908: 3-4). Other shortcomings of the school committee system were identified as being the scarcity of educated men

who could devote sufficient time to the supervision of schools. This placed a heavy burden upon the willing few. Further, committee members were invariably out of their depth in relation to the administrative issues brought before them and time was lost with protracted correspondence with the central authorities (Orange River Colony 1907: 59). Brebner's remark that school committees required training in their tasks seems to ring true<sup>55</sup>.

From the reports of the various circuit Inspectors, it becomes evident that three specific topics continued to be the cause of dissension and debate: religious instruction, the language issue and the amount of local control granted (Orange River Colony 1907: 29-30). But at this stage the Orange River Colony was on the eve of changing to a system of Responsible Government and this event would bring further education legislation and further alterations to the system.

#### 5.1.4 The provision of education under Responsible Government [1907-1910]

In 1907 the Orange River Colony was afforded Responsible Government. General Hertzog, the Attorney-General, was appointed Minister in charge of education. At the first meeting of Parliament, a bill was introduced to provide for extended administration and control of education.

The main features were the:

- establishment of an Education Department and the institution of School Boards and school committees (Orange River Colony 1908: §3[1], §33, §59, §68 & §69)
- introduction of compulsory education for children between 7 and 16 (Orange River Colony 1908: §7)
- introduction of school fees (Orange River Colony 1908: §15, §18, §33, §34, §35 & §96)
- equal treatment of Dutch and English — English and Dutch were to be the sole and equal mediums of instruction for every child up to and including Std IV; in and after Std IV, both languages were to be taught; below Std IV the study of the second language was optional (Orange River Colony 1908: §14, §15[1] & [2])
- instruction in Bible history up to Standard VI; the "conscience clause" applied (Orange River Colony 1908: §18)

- institution of school committees of 5-7 members (not necessarily parents, and also not the resident or the assistant magistrate) to be elected by parents of children attending the school<sup>56</sup> (Orange River Colony 1908: §33, §34, §35 & §36)
- institution of School Boards consisting of 9 members of whom 4 would be appointed by the Minister and the remainder elected by the members of the school committees within the school district (Orange River Colony 1908: §59)
- alteration to the definition "parent" to ... *mean the father of the child and if there be no father the mother of such child; and if the father and the mother of a child be dead or absent from such child's usual place of residence the person having actual custody or control of such child* (Orange River Colony 1908: 2).

In terms of this legislation, the school committees had *inter alia* the following duties to perform:

- to bring to the attention of the School Board any matters concerning the welfare or the efficiency of the school (Orange River Colony 1908: §57[1])
- participate in the appointment, suspension or dismissal of teachers (Orange River Colony 1908: §57[3])
- to investigate complaints made by parents and to forward these to the board (Orange River Colony 1908: §57[4])
- to expel children if it was in the interest of the school (Orange River Colony 1908: §57[6]).

From the Inspectors' reports of 1909-1910, the attitude towards and problems associated with these alterations to education legislation can be deduced.

#### □ COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The provision for compulsory education had remained a dead letter. Attendance Officers needed to be appointed<sup>57</sup>. It was also suggested that school committees should be entrusted with the powers of enforcing attendance which was for the time being vested in

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56 No additional powers were given to these bodies but owing to the mode of their election, they became more representative of the parents over whose children they were to exercise supervision. Only the father, as representative of the parents or as the legal guardian was entitled to vote. If he was absent, the wife could vote.

57 See 5.1.3.2 [Orange River Colony 1903b:§18].

the School Boards. Yet, instances were recorded where committee members did not report cases for fear of offending. Teachers were subjected to petty annoyance if they reported truancies. Parents were presumed indifferent to the legislation and lacked sufficient interest in education to ensure that their children attended school (Orange River Colony 1909-1910: 4, 15, 18, 27, 42).

□ SCHOOL FEES

School committees were responsible for determining who was to be exempted from paying fees yet were not responsible for collecting the fees. This gave rise to indifference or arbitrariness on the part of the committee and complicated the work of the School Boards as collection agents (Orange River Colony 1909-1910: 12).

□ THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

The regulations were easier to carry out in the town schools since there was a larger teaching contingent with extended fields of expertise. Generally, few objected to their children learning both languages and most agreed that the teacher of the lower classes should use the medium best understood by the child. But in certain country areas, the situation remained unresolved and traces of fanaticism from both Dutch and English were apparent. In essence, the language issue had two dimensions: an educational and a political argument (Orange River Colony 1909-1910: 12, 43).

An obstacle in the teaching of Dutch was the "new" and "old" spelling which caused a good deal of confusion. Books published in Holland were no longer suitable for the lower classes who had difficulty in understanding High Dutch (Orange River Colony 1909-1910: 54).

□ RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Reports of negligence regarding the tuition of Bible history were submitted. Numerous Inspectors gave no account of the position of Bible history yet provided detailed reports on the other compulsory subjects of instruction (Orange River Colony 1909-1910: 44) Given the agitation and heated debate that had surrounded the position of doctrinal and non-doctrinal religious instruction in the schools in the first place, it is strange to find that this apparent negligence towards religious instruction was tolerated.

□ SCHOOL COMMITTEES

The system of committees had aroused a considerable amount of community interest in schooling, but the committee's efficiency was often compromised by administrative red-tape (Orange River Colony 1909-1910: 40).

The issues reviewed above were those that were proving to be contentious and they were simultaneously those issues about which most parents had set views. The only real vehicle through which parents could voice their dissatisfaction or have their opinions taken into consideration was the local school committee, but this system too seemed to be having to cope with problems of its own. Nevertheless, parents were in the position to make their needs known since the prevailing attitude towards the provision was that it was a joint state and parent responsibility.

5.1.5 A review of the attitude and position of parents towards their responsibility and right to provide for the education of their children<sup>58</sup>

When the early Colonists settled in the Orange Free State, the environment was inhospitable and conditions were harsh. Everyday life was reduced to ensuring one's survival and under these circumstances education was unavoidably kept to the bare minimum. The Colonists were deeply religious and this predisposition influenced the way parents educated their children. Children were assured of sufficient education to enable them to become members of the Church — a task that was generally the personal responsibility of the parents since very few qualified teachers had accompanied the immigrants.

The population remained essentially rural almost throughout the entire period reviewed and even when towns were established only a few people settled there. The result was that once life became more established, parents living in the rural areas preferred to make use of the itinerant teacher system than to send their children to school in the towns. Apart from the additional expense that would be incurred, the children would be beyond the care and influence of their parents — a situation feared by most caring parents.

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58 No cross-referencing will be made in this section: these preliminary findings will be discussed at greater length in the final chapter.

Before government approved teachers could be had, it was customary for parents to engage anyone who offered his services as a teacher — unfortunately the Colonists were themselves relatively uneducated and could ill judge whether the teacher was suitably qualified. Those who could afford this luxury were in the minority as several parents were just too poor to be able to hire a tutor. In addition, parents who fell into this category were invariably themselves uneducated and were thus unable to undertake the tuition of their own children. The education of many children was sadly neglected and the situation was without doubt dismal. Aware of the importance of education and realising their inability to resolve the education dilemma, parents appealed to the Synod in the Cape to assist them in acquiring teachers and in consequence of this two teachers were obtained and sent to the Free State.

It was at this time that the region was annexed by the British. Smith realised that the Colonists were in great need of teachers and set out to appoint a teacher to each of the four magisterial districts. This did not do much to alleviate the problem since the population was predominantly rural. The fact remains that through this act, Smith demonstrated that he regarded it the state's responsibility to provide for the educational needs of the Colonists. When Warden assessed the state of education shortly after annexation, he reported that parents were anxious for their children to be educated and some even showed particular initiative in this regard. At one of the schools, a self-appointed school committee served as a precedent to pave the way for the institution of similar committees at other schools. In 1850 the Volksraad passed regulations according to which schools and their teachers were placed under the supervision of local school committees. Shortly after the region was restored to the Dutch, the Volksraad acknowledged its responsibility to further education. However nothing was forthcoming with the result that parents successively petitioned the Volksraad to deal with the education crisis by appointing teachers. The Volksraad was also approached by prospective teachers asking to be appointed. However the Volksraad replied that it was its intention to institute local bodies to guarantee parent and community involvement in addressing the education needs of individual communities indicating that in the government's opinion, education was a joint state and community or parent responsibility.

Several regulations were passed that provided for the appointment of School Commissions through which parents were afforded the opportunity to become involved in the provision of education.

Until 1861— when it was ordained for the first time that the school committee was to be centrally appointed — these Commissions were jointly appointed by the state and elected by the communities they were to represent. It was customary to appoint the local clergyman and the magistrate to the committee. The duties of the committee included the general supervision of the school, the appointment of teachers and the right to implement a language policy suited to the local needs. In terms of regulations passed in 1856 it was incumbent on the committee to comply with the wishes of the majority of the parents regarding the status and use of either English or Afrikaans at their children's school.

The 1870's were characterised by the passing of new education legislation and in each instance provision was made for parent involvement in education either through direct representation on local committees or through having the right to nominate and elect community members to the body. The duties assigned to the local committees included developing language and religious education policy, dealing with parents' grievances regarding the education offered or issues that involved the teacher. The Free State adopted a liberal policy toward the language issue and it was possibly the most bilingual of all the southern African regions at the time. In relation to religion it was decided to follow a non-doctrinal instruction policy with parents retaining the right to have their children exempted from attendance if they so desired.

Not all parent representative bodies functioned equally well. During his inspection, the Inspector of Schools found that some committees were flourishing to the undisputed benefit of the children, others merely carried out their duties but showed no further initiative while still others showed little interest and neglected their responsibilities and it was the children who suffered. A further observation was the indifference of rural parents to the importance of education and of regular school attendance. It was found that they kept their children from school on the pretext of needing their help on the farm. It was generally these same parents who believed that their children need only attend school long enough for them to be able to gain Church membership. Some parents even went as far as insisting that the teacher use only the Bible, the Dutch children's Bible and the Catechisms as tuition material.

During the Anglo-Boer war years education was under state control, however after the war a return was made to joint state and parent responsibility regarding schooling. A state Department of Public Education was established and local school committees were appointed. The powers and duties of the committees were similar to those prior to the war. In 1903 parents petitioned the government for additional rights which included the right to elect their own representatives to school committees from the local parent and community body, the right to select and appoint teachers and the right to devote more time to instruction in Dutch — since the war, English was the official medium of instruction. When these requests were not heeded, many parents supported the drive to establish private CNE schools through which the Dutch could devote attention to the two issues they held most dear — mother tongue instruction and religious education. Despite this split in the provision of education, the state system continued to flourish with Gunn applauding the dedication of parents to the cause of education. The school committee system seemed to function well and in Gunn's opinion, the most useful function performed was in relation to the selection of teachers. However, in time, it was found that the school committee system was faced with a scarcity of educated men who could make themselves available for election to the body. It was also found that under the new regulations, the efficiency of the committee was compromised by administrative red-tape.

The provision of education does not occur in a vacuum and it is often affected by prevailing social and political trends. In the wake of the war, there was growing discord among the officials of the Department of Education and the dissension among the ranks regarding *inter alia* the language issue and the role and duties of school committees was possibly merely a reflection of the general mood of the Colonists themselves. A split between Dutch and English became increasingly evident and the latest education legislation appeared to have been conceived in a spirit of dissension and strife (Bruwer 1936: 98-99, 103). The pursuit of solutions to these matters was to continue after Union in 1910.

These debates were not limited to the education circles in the Orange River Colony — similar events were taking place within education in the South African Republic. However, much had transpired in relation to education in this region before these events took place. The development of the provision of education in the South African Republic will next be traced bearing in mind that an attempt will be made to focus the attention on the role parents played and were allowed to play in relation to the education of their children.

## 5.2 EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC AFTER SETTLEMENT AND COLONISATION [1837-1910]

The history of the Transvaal runs parallel to that of Natal and the Orange Free State since the habitation of the region across the Vaal River was also in consequence of the Great Trek. The histories of the regions are also linked through the subsequent annexations of the two regions<sup>59</sup>.

Near the southern banks of the Vaal River, the Voortrekker parties of Louis Trichardt and Jan van Rensburg joined forces<sup>60</sup> and journeyed across the Vaal River towards the Zoutpansberg which they reached in 1837. While Trichardt remained at the Zoutpansberg, Van Rensburg went on to Delagoa Bay, but the entire party was killed during an attack by native tribesmen (Preller 1920: 7). Later Trichardt decided to undertake the same journey and although Delagoa Bay (currently Maputo) was reached in 1838 the cost of the venture was high, for Trichardt, his wife and 24 others in the party died of malaria. The survivors returned to Port Natal (currently Durban) aboard the *Mazeppa* the following year (Du Bruyn 1991: 130).

The Voortrekker party led by Hendrik Potgieter who had founded Winburg in the Orange Free State<sup>61</sup> moved on into the Transvaal and in 1839 reached the Mooi River where they established Potchefstroom. In December 1843 Potgieter journeyed to Delagoa Bay to meet with the Hollander, Smellekamp<sup>62</sup> and to bring back with him a clergyman recently arrived from Holland.

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59 The history of the region can be traced to 2 December 1836 when the first Voortrekker Volksraad was established by the Trekkers congregated north of the Orange River by A. Hendrik Potgieter [Preller 1924: III; Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: xxiii]. The Vet River Constitution adopted on 6 June 1837 formed the basis of Voortrekker administration and government [Preller 1924: III]. Piet Retief and his parties moved into Natal and Potgieter and others remained in the Free State or trekked across the Vaal River. Two independent Voortrekker Republics were established — one to the east and one to the west of the Drakensberg. On 16 October 1840, the two Republics united and formed the Republic of Natalia. The regions involved were Natal, Winburg and Potchefstroom [see 4.2]. An *Adjunk Raad* which also had authority over the people of Winburg was set up at Potchefstroom. The strength of the union between the two Republics — east and west of the Drakensberg — could not have been too binding since Winburg and Potchefstroom did not regard themselves as being affected by the capitulation of the Natal Volksraad to the British in 1843. In 1844 regulations and laws for legal proceedings of the Potchefstroom *Raad* — the *Thirty-Three Articles* — were drafted [Eybers, G.W. 1918: 349, 357; Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: xxiii]. These regulations formed the basis of future ZAR laws.

60 See 5.1 footnote 2.

61 See 5.1

62 See 4.2.1.2

Smellekamp advised Potgieter to relocate the Republic to a position north of the 25th degree of latitude to ensure that Britain could not lay claim to the territory (Lugtenburg 1925: 29-30). This Potgieter did and in 1845 Andries-Ohrigstad which was to serve as the new seat of the Volksraad was established (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: xxiv). Because so many of the inhabitants of the town died of malaria, it was decided to move to a healthier site and consequently the village of Lydenburg was established in 1846.

Disputes over leadership of the region soon arose. Potgieter had been assured that he would retain the position he had held as Chief Commandant and Head of the Executive in the Potchefstroom Volksraad. However, J.J. Burger, former secretary of the Natal Volksraad who had relocated to the Transvaal together with several other Natal Trekkers<sup>63</sup>, agitated for leadership. In June 1846 Potgieter and his followers withdrew from the Volksraad and established their own government. This peculiar situation of dual government persisted until 1848 when Potgieter and his supporters resettled in the Magaliesberg, Potchefstroom and Zoutpansberg areas<sup>64</sup> (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: xxv; Theal 1895: 83-84).

After the annexation of the Republic of the Orange Free State in 1848, Andries Pretorius and his party who had previously left Natal and had temporarily settled in the Free State, also moved across the Vaal. Further disputes over the leadership in the region were initiated with Potgieter claiming that he had been the first to occupy the region while Pretorius claimed superiority since he had conquered Dingaan, besieged Durban and had been instrumental in offering resistance to Britain's annexation of the Orange Free State<sup>65</sup>. Pretorius had a substantial following in Potchefstroom and the Magaliesberg while Potgieter was recognised as the leader in the Zoutpansberg area although he too had supporters in Potchefstroom and the Magaliesberg. Lydenburg, however, recognised neither leaders with Burger retaining his influence. Since the followers of the various factions occupied the same territory, conditions were both tense and confused (Gie 1939: 352). In an attempt to resolve the situation, it was agreed that the regions

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63 See 4.2

64 Several farmers relocating from Natal also selected farms and established themselves along the Magaliesberg mountains and later a site was selected where the village of Rustenburg was founded in 1859 [Theal 1895: 84].

65 See 4.2 & 5.1

should unite, elect a Volksraad and establish a central government<sup>66</sup> (Whiteside 1909: 124). The new government was accepted by Potchefstroom, Rustenburg and Pretoria only — Utrecht<sup>67</sup>, Zoutpansberg and Lydenburg chose to perpetuate their own Republics (Nixon 1885: 23; Whiteside 1909: 125).

Indeed, the matter was not to be simply resolved. To further complicate matters, Pretorius, of own accord and without consulting the Volksraad, negotiated with British Commissioners C.M. Owen and W.S. Hogge to secure the sovereignty of the Transvaal through the signing of the Sand River Convention on 17 January 1852<sup>68</sup>. Potgieter was embittered that he had not been consulted, but the issue was resolved during a meeting of both parties on 16 March 1852. The Convention was subsequently ratified by the Potchefstroom Volksraad (Whiteside 1909: 125).

After the death of Pretorius and Potgieter in 1853, Martinus Wessel [1855-1860; 1864-1872], Pretorius's son, was elected President of the ZAR<sup>69</sup>. Pretoria was founded [1855] as a "neutral capital" in an attempt to constitute cohesion among the Republics, but hunger for power and persistent dissension among the burghers was counterproductive to unification<sup>70</sup>. In 1857 the ZAR laid claim to the Orange Free State Republic and Pretorius crossed the Vaal with a small army to take possession of the region. Fortunately peace was concluded and each Republic agreed to

66 The development of the Volksraad of the South African Republic or, as it was known, the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* [ZAR], after its split from the Republic of Natalia can be traced to three periods: the Potchefstroom Volksraad [1844-1845]; the Volksraad of Ohrigstad [1845-1849] and the Volksraad of the ZAR after 1849 [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: xxvi]. The most significant features of the Constitution of the new ZAR government were that the people were the source of authority; there was no equality between blacks and whites and only the latter had the franchise, slavery was outlawed, legislation was entrusted to the Volksraad which had absolute supremacy; the Dutch Reformed Church was the State Church — no Roman Catholic Churches or Protestant Churches that did not follow the same tenets of the Christian belief as contained in the Heidelberg Catechism would be tolerated and Volksraad representatives were to be members of the Dutch Reformed Church [Eybers, G.W. 1918: lxxvii-lxix, 366].

67 Although Utrecht was not within the boundaries of the Transvaal, the inhabitants sought affiliation with Lydenburg in 1852 [Heydenrych 1991: 151] and consequently viewed themselves part of the ZAR.

68 The recognition of the independence of the ZAR by Britain happened just prior to the Cape Colony receiving Representative Government [1853] and the Free State acquiring its independence from Britain [1854].

69 Pretorius introduced a policy of seclusion and in the years that followed, foreigners (Englishmen and Germans) were prohibited from holding land in the Transvaal. During this time only a few Hollanders made their way into the Transvaal [Fisher 1900: 139-140].

70 Union of the four Republics was ultimately achieved in 1860 [Nixon 1885: 23]. Zoutpansberg was the first to be incorporated with the Potchefstroom Republic. Lydenburg and Utrecht soon followed [Lubbe 1942: 101; Whiteside 1909: 125].

recognise the independence of the other. In 1860 under cover of leave of absence granted by the Volksraad, Pretorius proceeded to the Free State ostensibly on private business and was elected President of the territory. In indignation, the Transvaalers suspended him from office. This act caused great dissension and the next four years were characterised by civil war among the different factions<sup>71</sup> (Whiteside 1909: 125-126). The ZAR appeared to have been given up to lawlessness and disorder and when peace was ultimately restored<sup>72</sup>, the government was destitute.

The discovery of diamonds at the confluence of the Vaal and Harts Rivers [1868] and of gold near Pietersburg [1871] and on the Witwatersrand [1886] altered the course of history for the ZAR (Grundlingh 1991: 183-184; Heydenrych 1991: 154). Pretorius' failure to secure the diamond fields during the dispute which culminated in the Keate Award<sup>73</sup>, brought about his resignation as President and T.F. Burgers [1872-1877] was elected as his successor. Initially Burgers infused new life and spirit into the country, but as it became apparent that conditions were not improving many dissatisfied burghers sought a new home in Benguela. This expedition resulted in disaster with only a handful of survivors reaching their destination. Sensing the vulnerability of the country, native tribes became increasingly hostile and the Boers had difficulty in subduing their onslaughts. In 1877 Britain, fearing for the safety of Natal which bordered on the Transvaal, decided to annex the Transvaal to the British Crown in an attempt to secure peace and stability in the region. Sir Theophilus Shepstone hoisted the British flag at Pretoria on 12 April 1877 and President Burgers retired to his home in the Cape Colony (Whiteside 1909: 129).

The Transvaalers viewed the annexation a violation of the Sand River Convention and a deputation consisting of Paul Kruger and Piet Joubert was sent to England to protest the case and obtain rescindment of the annexation. Sir O.W. Lanyon replaced Shepstone as Administrator in 1879 and at the same time Mr Gladstone, a prominent member of the Liberal Party in Britain, strongly denounced the annexation. When he became Prime Minister of England in 1880, he however declined to uphold his pledges of reinstating the territory as an autonomous Republic. The Boers were convinced that independence would only be regained through insurrection and on 16

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71 Schoeman was elected Commandant-General and stood in for Pretorius during his absence, but was deposed by the Volksraad and Rensburg was made Acting-President [Whiteside 1909: 126].

72 When Pretorius returned to the Transvaal in 1864, he was re-elected as President [Nixon 1885: 26, 28].

73 See 5.1

December 1880 the flag of the Republic was hoisted and a Triumvirate consisting of Kruger, Joubert and Pretorius was appointed to provisionally administer the government (Nixon 1885: 156; Whiteside 1909: 129-130).

The outcome of the War of Independence [1880-1881] was in favour of the Transvaal but did not entirely free them from British domination. According to the Pretoria Convention of 1881 the ZAR was restored and Kruger [1882-1897] was elected President (Grundlingh 1991: 183; Nixon 1885: 47-52, 121; Whiteside 1909: 110-113). However, England regarded the Transvaal as a British suzerainty. To the Transvaal this was unacceptable and in 1883 a three man delegation of which President Kruger was one, went to consult the British government on amendments to the Pretoria Convention. The signing of the London Convention in 1884 meant that the Transvaal would regain its status as the ZAR and would be virtually independent. However, the years that followed were characterised by a fluctuating yet steady increase of tension between Britain and the Transvaal with the British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, insisting that the British suzerainty over the Transvaal had not been relinquished (Grundlingh 1991: 183-184).

Materially the region flourished with the discovery of gold and other minerals and the subsequent influx of prospectors and mining activity (Whiteside 1909: 136). The Boers resented the influx of foreigners and felt that their political independence was being threatened. As a result, newcomers were excluded from political power by lengthening the period of residence before they would be entitled to vote for representatives in the Volksraad. The foreigners were dissatisfied with the situation since they believed that they had saved the Republic from bankruptcy, had built Johannesburg and were paying four-fifths of the taxation yet were not being allowed a voice in the government of the country. Dr Jameson, Administrator of the British South Africa Company, and Mr Cecil John Rhodes, Premier of the Cape Colony and Managing Director of the Company, were sympathetic towards these individuals and resolved to assist them. However, the 1895 Jameson Raid which was to have been instrumental in achieving this goal, was abortive. Jameson was compelled to surrender and he and his cohorts were handed over to the Imperial Government. In Britain a Commission of Enquiry exonerated Chamberlain for complicity in the incident yet many believed he had played a significant role in the episode. Rhodes was forced to resign as Premier and his dream of drawing the Transvaal into a federation under the British flag was thwarted (Grundlingh 1991: 183-184; 190-191).

Tension continued to mount after the fiasco of the Jameson Raid. While Kruger laboured for the unquestioned independence of the Republic and the maintenance of political supremacy, the outlanders petitioned for the recognition of their rights. In May 1899, the British High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, and President Kruger made an attempt to reach an amicable agreement but Chamberlain refused to drop the claim of suzerainty. Rumours of war were soon widespread (Whiteside 1909: 139).

In October 1899, the Orange Free State Republic joined forces with the Transvaal against the British<sup>74</sup>. British territory – Ladysmith, Mafeking and Kimberley – was invaded and these insidious events resulted in the British responding to the challenge. The Anglo-Boer War [1899-1902] became a reality. On 4 July 1900 the Transvaal was placed under British Military Rule but several Boer leaders continued the struggle and vainly cherished the hope that some European power would come to their assistance. On 31 May 1902 the signing of the Peace of Vereeniging brought an end to the war and both the ZAR and the Orange Free State Republic swore allegiance to the British Crown. From this date until the granting of Responsible Government in 1907 the Transvaal was a Crown Colony. This was the situation until Union of the self-governing Colonies of southern Africa was achieved in 1910 (Botha 1962: 173; Whiteside 1909: 140-146).

With the focus of this thesis being an appraisal of the development of the concept of parental rights and responsibilities in relation to education, the provision of education in the Transvaal Republic and the role of those who viewed it their responsibility to ensure that children were provided with education will be discussed in relation to the following periods:

- 1837-1877 (Settlement by the Voortrekker pioneers)
- 1877-1881 (British influence in consequence of the annexation of the ZAR)
- 1881-1899 (Restoration of the ZAR)
- 1899-1907 (British Military and Sovereign Rule)
- 1907-1910 (Responsible Government)

### 5.2.1 Provision of education during the early years of the ZAR [1837-1877]

The Voortrekkers who crossed the Vaal River had left the Cape Colony for the same reasons as those who had claimed Natal and the Orange Free State as their new homeland. The philosophy of life subscribed to was unequivocally Christian Calvinist and this in itself would determine the lifestyle of the Voortrekkers and the nature of the education provided. However, it took several years of travel before the first towns that could boast a fundamental infrastructure were established and during this time other more pressing issues than formal education occupied the time and minds of the Transvaal immigrants.

#### 5.2.1.1 *The Voortrekkers and their attempts to provide education for the youth*

The Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church had discouraged teachers and clergymen from joining the emigrating groups of trekkers with the result that very few competent teachers were to be found among the Voortrekker parties. However, it is to the credit of Voortrekker parents that their children did not grow up illiterate or uneducated. It is granted that no great number of learned men were forthcoming during this period: education was limited to acquiring the skills and knowledge required to qualify for Church membership — anything beyond that would have been superfluous. In any event, it is to be doubted whether there were many in the Voortrekker parties who were qualified to teach more than the rudiments of learning (Basson 1956: 49).

Nevertheless, some of the Voortrekker parties had been able to include a teacher or two among its members. Daniël Pheffer, an elderly teacher, accompanied Louis Trichardt's party and was possibly the first to establish a "permanent" school in the Transvaal. When Trichardt reached the Zoutpansberg he decided to set up camp for a while. His son, Pieta, is said to have busied himself with constructing a school house. On 23 March 1837, Trichardt recorded *en het [Pieta] een span osse uitgejaagt om hout te haalen voor de school* and two days later *het Pieta dekgoed voor de school aangesleep*. On 22 April he recorded *heb ouwe Daniël de kinderen in de school gezit* (in Lubbe 1942: 77). The place where the group had temporarily settled appears to have been unsuitable since the group resettled elsewhere and by 17 June 1837 a second school building was under construction. By 27 June the school was functional (Lubbe 1942: 77). In August 1837 Trichardt decided to journey to Delagoa Bay. Many of the group contracted malaria

and on 21 April 1838 Trichardt recorded that *met hanekraay is ouwe Daniel overleden, in den ouderdom van 78 jaar, 2 maanden and 7 dagen* (in Lugtenburg 1925: 18).

Various reasons for Pheffer's accompanying Trichardt could be postulated. Perhaps it was because Trichardt, as a father and the leader of the group, attached importance to ensuring that the children in his party received some form of education and for this reason he ensured that a teacher accompanied his party. Or else, because a *meester* accompanied the party, Trichardt ensured that this teacher was given the necessary support to carry out his duties to the benefit of the children in the party. To Trichardt's credit it should be noted that even under circumstances of temporary settlement, he sanctioned the construction of a school building. Furthermore, he repeated this effort by having a new building constructed when the group relocated a short while after.

There were also teachers among Potgieter's party and the names of a certain MacDonald and Tielman Roos are mentioned. The latter is said to have established a school in Potchefstroom at which he ran a three months' course (Lugtenburg 1925: 19, 28).

Without doubt, the number of trained teachers who accompanied the Voortrekker parties was far too small to undertake the education of all the children present, and consequently the responsibility for ensuring that the children were educated rested with the parents — in most cases the mother (Lugtenburg 1925: 21). Circumstances prevented the establishment of permanent schools during the migratory years, but once the groups settled and a semblance of permanence was established, the education of the youth received attention.

It was not only the unsettled nature of the Voortrekker's existence that had prevented the establishment of schools but also the lack of a competent teaching corps that made the establishment of schools futile. Since teachers could not be acquired from the Cape, the Transvaal Voortrekkers directed requests to Holland for teachers as had the Voortrekkers in Natal and the Orange Free State<sup>75</sup>.

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75 See 4.2.1.2 ; 4.2.2 & 5.1.1.1

### 5.2.1.2 *Holland's contribution towards education in the ZAR*

The predicament of the Transvaal Voortrekkers was brought to the attention of the management of the Dutch *Handel en Reedery Maatschappij te Vlaardingen* in July 1848. The Volksraad asked them to assist them in acquiring the services of a clergyman, but also stated that *goede onderwyzers voor de jeugd even noodzakelyk [waren]* (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: 258). In August 1848, an agent of the *Maatschappij*, Smellekamp, notified them that H.F. Bührmann would soon be arriving to *de betrekking van Schoolmeester by u te vervullen*<sup>76</sup> (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: 259).

In 1849, Rev J. Spyker (Chairman of the Commission of Education of the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape Colony) acting on behalf of the Voortrekkers in the Transvaal, wrote to Professor Lauts<sup>77</sup> of the *Amsterdamsche Commissie* in Holland requesting the services of additional teachers for the Voortrekkers saying that although three teachers had already been obtained from Holland<sup>78</sup> *er is dringende behoefte aan Onderwyzers*. Prospective teachers were required to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, History — also Bible History — and the principles of Geography. It was important that the teachers *zy neiging en bekwaamheid bezitten om aan de jeugd de godsdient [sic] te onderwyzen als voorlezer en voorzanger in de kerk op te treden* (Gerdener 1930: 547).

At Lauts' prompting, the services of three teachers were acquired and in 1851 Hendrik van der Linden, Jan Willem Spruyt and Willem Poen arrived in the Transvaal (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: 335-337). Poen was immediately appointed at Lydenburg by the local Church Council who also undertook to pay his salary (Lugtenburg 1925: 39; Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1950: 79).

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- 76 Although Bührmann was sent out as a teacher, he never functioned in that capacity [Lugtenburg 1925: 33]. He was placed with Potgieter at Zoutpansberg and was later appointed to arbitrate the leadership disputes between Potgieter and Pretorius [see 5.2]. He was biased in favour of Potgieter and consequently caused more dissension than he could resolve. Bührmann became increasingly involved in politics and was appointed secretary of the Volksraad. At one stage he was also magistrate of Lydenburg [Lugtenburg 1925: 34-35, 38].
- 77 Professor Lauts was a staunch supporter of the Boers and endeavoured to provide in the spiritual needs and thus also in the educational needs, of the emigrants [Lugtenburg 1925: 36].
- 78 These teachers were presumably the teacher Smellekamp left behind in Natal [1842] [see 4.2.1.2] — or perhaps Bührmann since his arrival was more recent and coincided with that of the others — and Van der Meer and Groenendaal who had been seconded to the Orange Free State in 1849 [see 5.1.1.1].

Lauts was of the opinion that the Volksraad would make the appointments — presumably since education was controlled by the state in Holland — and thus placed Van der Linden and Spruyt at the mercy of the state by addressing their letters of referral to the Volksraad (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: 335). He can not be blamed for this inference since it was the Volksraad that had directed the request for teachers from Holland. However, the Volksraad was not in a position to provide the required educational facilities (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1950: 48) and it had to resort to the assistance of the Church in this regard. Consequently, Spruyt and Van der Linden were only appointed to positions in 1852 — Spruyt to Rustenburg and Van der Linden to Potchefstroom. In each case the matter was referred to the local Church Council whose responsibility it was to ensure payment of the teacher's salary and that the schooling was of a Christian nature (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1950: 63; Transvaal Education Department 1976: 4).

In the interim, Van der Linden started a school at Suikerboschrand. However, he became involved in politics and many disputes were to arise between him and Dirk van der Hoff<sup>79</sup>, the Potchefstroom Dutch Reformed Church minister. This situation resulted in Van der Linden's resignation from his teaching post at Potchefstroom in 1854 where after he took up teaching in Grey Town in Natal. He later returned to the ZAR<sup>80</sup>. Discord also arose between Spruyt and Van der Hoff with the result that Spruyt resigned from his post at Rustenburg in 1854. He relocated to Bloemfontein where he continued his teaching career (Lugtenburg 1925: 51).

Up until this time, parents had taken it upon themselves — either by teaching their children themselves or by engaging a teacher of sorts — to ensure that their children received sufficient education to enable them to become members of the Church. However, the Church and the state realised that the prevailing situation regarding the provision of education was deplorable — essentially due to a lack of trained teachers — and together they took it upon themselves to seek assistance from Holland.

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79 See 5.2.1.3

80 During Van der Linden's career, Rev Begemann [1860 in Potchefstroom] and Shepstone [1877 in Middelburg] commended his teaching ability after they had had occasion to visit the school where he was teaching [Lugtenburg 1925: 40, 50-51].

No education regulations existed at the time when these teachers assumed their duties. The task fell to Hendrik van der Linden who, at the prompting of Lauts, submitted a proposal for school regulations to the Volksraad at the time of his appointment (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1949: 335).

### 5.2.1.3 *Early education legislation and the interaction between state and Church*

The regulations drafted by Van der Linden could be viewed as the first attempt to draft education legislation for the ZAR. These regulations were adopted by the Volksraad on 15 March 1852. The *Schoolreglement* comprised 13 Articles according to which *het Gemeente-Bestuur*<sup>81</sup> *en de te benoemen onderwyzers zich te houden hebben*. Article 5 determined the scope of the curriculum and in addition ruled that *de onderwyzer verpligt aan alles eene godsdienstige strekken te geven*. The teacher was free to choose his own method of instruction provided that this was not in conflict with *deugd en goede zeden*. According to Article 13 parents were not allowed to remove their children from school without the teacher's knowledge or consent (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1950: 302-303).

In September 1853 a Constitution for the ZAR was proposed and according to Article 16

*... [d]e Volksraad is ook verpligt om een opzicht te houden over de scholen en anderen inrigtingen welken strekken kunnen om het onderwys of anderen nuttigen kundigheden, te bevorderen ...* (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1950: 478-479).

Education was without doubt a state concern. It was also resolved at the Volksraad meeting on 21 September 1853 that *geen anderen Kerk, godsdienst, onderwys, en alles wat op godsdienst betrekking heeft* would be allowed unless they conformed with the tenets of the Dutch Reformed Church (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1950: 153).

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81 *Gemeente* could be interpreted to mean either *community* under the control of the state or *congregation* under the authority of the Church. The former would be in keeping with the trend which was prevalent in Holland because since 1815 the Dutch Constitution had stipulated that *Het openbaar onderwijs is een aanhoudend voorwerp van zorg der regering* and this presumably would have been the background against which Van der Linden would have formed his regulations [in Basson 1956: 54]. The latter would have been consistent with the Dutch tradition of Church supervision of or intervention in education [see 3.6], a situation peculiar to early Cape practice.

In November of the same year, the Dutch Reformed Church minister in Potchefstroom, Dirk van der Hoff, addressed a letter to the Volksraad of the ZAR in which he bemoaned the fact that although the Volksraad had acknowledged that education was a state concern, it had shamefully neglected its duty and had it not been for the Church Council of Potchefstroom, the local school *geheel zou vervallen, ja welligt vernietigd zyn zou*. Van der Hoff further requested the Volksraad to approve new school regulations as proposed by him. These regulations dealt *inter alia* with the following issues:

- only teachers approved by the local Church Council<sup>82</sup> would be granted permission to teach
- the government could only appoint one teacher, approved by the Church Council, to each town
- infant schools could only be established with the approval of the Church Council and would therefore be supervised by the Church Council (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1950: 503-504).

According to Van der Hoff, the intention of these regulations was to ensure that

*... geen onderwyzers hier zoude binnensluipen die der jeugd verkeerde beginselen konden inprenten, strydig met de Nederd. Geref. leer. Zy roept dus de beschermende hand der politieke magt by deze in* (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1950: 504).

With these regulations, Van der Hoff would gain Church control of education. He was probably of the opinion that if the Church was expected to pay the teachers' salaries<sup>83</sup>, it should be afforded a say in the selection and appointment of the functionaries.

The Volksraad accepted these proposals and approved the immediate implementation of the regulations (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1950: 186-187).

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82 There is the possibility that members of the Church Council were parents of school-going children, but this was not a prerequisite and would merely have been coincidental.

83 See 5.2.1.2

In 1855 it was decided to draft a new Constitution<sup>84</sup> for the *Maatschappij der Hollandsche Afrikanen benoerde de Vaal Rivier* and according to Article 29 of this Constitution

...[h]et volk verlangt de opbouw, bloei en welvaart van kerk en staat en uit dien hoofde, voorziening in de behoefte aan Ned. Hervormde predikanten en schoolonderwyzers (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 383).

This Constitution was published in the Government Gazette of 16 October 1857 as Article 27 (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 441). Less than a year later in March 1858, the Constitution of the ZAR was adopted and the above provision was entrenched in Article 24 (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 498).

But in reality, there were differences of opinion regarding whether education was the concern of the Volksraad (state) or of the Church. In support of this view, a number of incidents could be mentioned.

- On 2 December 1854, in a letter addressed to the Volksraad, Van der Linden entreated the Volksraad to ensure that teachers fell under the jurisdiction of the state and not the Church since *het onderwys komt de staat toe, en niet de Kerk* (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 246)— state responsibility.
- On 9 March 1855, the *Amsterdamsche Commissie* wrote to the Volksraad of the ZAR regarding the fact that Van der Hoff, who was highly regarded by the ZAR, dealt with *alle zaken kerk en school* (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 284) — Church responsibility.
- In June 1855, the ZAR Volksraad wrote to the Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Grey, requesting him to assist them in acquiring the services of teachers and clergymen (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 337) — state responsibility.
- In June 1855, the Volksraad replied to the *Amsterdamsche Commissie* that they were unable to provide precise information regarding the need for *Dorps en Huisonderwyzers* since they were unsure of what the Church had been able to do in this regard (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 360) — joint Church and state responsibility.
- According to the *Nieu Wetten voor de Maatschappij der Hollandsche Afrikanen benoerde de Vaal Rivier* of November 1855:

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84 Presumably this was done with the intention of bringing about the consolidation of the various Republics.

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- ... *de scholen en het onderwys ... staan onder het toezigt en de leiding van de leden van den staatsraad [Volksraad<sup>85</sup>] en de predikanten* — joint Church and state responsibility
  - teachers were to submit written proof of their competence to the *staatsraad* — state responsibility
  - the state was responsible for the salaries of teachers (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 410, 413) — state responsibility.
  - At a *Kommissieraadsvergadering* held in Pretoria on 27-30 May 1856, it was decided that the expenditure of the state included government teachers' salaries (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 142) — state responsibility.
  - According to Article 35 of the *Kerkelyke Wetten en Reglementen voor de Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Gemeenten in de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* of 8 May 1858, *het onderwys der jeugd staat onder het toezigt der kerk* (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 566) — Church responsibility.

Education was perceived to be the responsibility of the state, the Church or both — but there was little clarity regarding exactly whose responsibility education was. The role of parents in education was limited to coincidental representation through the Church Council or possibly the Volksraad and was not intentional for no forum for parent representation existed. The apparent confusion regarding who was responsible for the provision of education would need to be resolved if education was to make any progress.

#### 5.2.1.4 *Schools in the early ZAR and a general impression of education*

It needs to be taken into account that since the settlement of the region, the country had been caught up in constant feuding among the leaders<sup>86</sup> — a condition which was in all probability reflected in the community. Such circumstances could not be conducive to establishing a stable and least of all, a flourishing system of education.

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85 This assumption is made on the grounds that ... [d]e administratieve magt of het inlandsche bestuur ontleent haar gezag van de uitvoerende magt en staat onder de bevelen van den staatspresident en den *staatsraad* [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1951: 406].

86 See 5.2

Apart from the unsettled social climate, the provision of schooling for the youth of the ZAR was fraught with logistical problems. The community was spread out and few towns had been established; few children could be "spared" for school since they were required to help out on the farms and there was a general lack of qualified teachers (Lubbe 1942: 106). In addition, schooling never lasted long — once a child had acquired the rudiments of learning and had attained a level of education which would enable him to qualify for Church membership, his parents regarded him as being sufficiently educated. Most parents did not see the need for their children to attend school for longer than three to six months and until the arrival of the first teachers from Holland, education was entirely a private matter between parents and whoever offered his services as a teacher. The only regulation that was in force was that prospective teachers needed to obtain a teaching permit from the local magistrate where after they were to report to the field cornet in their area. Parents in remote areas either engaged the services of an itinerant teacher — often of dubious character — to teach their children or managed as best they could and taught their children themselves (Basson 1956: 55).

When Dirk van der Hoff arrived as the Dutch Reformed clergyman for the Transvaal in 1853, he described the general level of civilisation in Potchefstroom to Louts in unveiled terms<sup>87</sup> as

*... de onkunde onder het opkoomend geslacht, dat is te zeggen tot den ouderdom van 40 jaar toe, is verregaand; natuurlyk met enkele uitzonderingen. De oudere van dagen die in de Kolonie nog godsdienstige opvoeding genoten hebben, zyn nog eenigszins ervaren; ... Het gros echter is verwilderd ... Schryven of rekenen kunnen slechts weinigen ... Wat het lezen aangaat, of daar heeft men Job's geduld voor noodig om het aan te hooren (Van der Hoff in Lugtenburg 1925: 45).*

After the resignation of Van der Linden and Spruyt in 1854<sup>88</sup>, it became Van der Hoff's responsibility to ensure that schooling was re-instituted. In November 1854 he was appointed *Binnen- en Buitenlandsche Correspondent voor Kerk en Schoolzaken* and also as *Schoolopziener* but later confined his attention to education in Potchefstroom (Lugtenburg 1925: 51). Van der Hoff managed to reopen the schools during 1855, but they were soon closed again.

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87 It needs to be said in all fairness that Van der Linden had only been teaching in Potchefstroom for a short while before Van der Hoff compiled this report on the state of education.

88 See 5.2.1.2

By 1857, formal schooling had come to an end and the Church seemed to have lost interest in educational matters (Lugtenburg 1925: 53). It was at this point that the newly appointed President of the ZAR, M.W. Pretorius, wrote to the Church Council of Potchefstroom [1857] asking them to approve the appointment of A.F. Schubart, a *Bekwaam onderwyser*, since *de jeugd hier ongeleerd opgroe*. Pretorius also asked the Church Council to supply a temporary school building until such time as the state was able to do so itself (Lugtenburg 1925: 53). The implication of the foregoing is that the state accepted that it was its responsibility to acquire the services of suitable staff, to provide the necessary infrastructure and to pay the salary: the Church's responsibility was to examine the candidate and recommend him if he was found competent.

Schubart was, however, appointed as clerk to the President and A. Scheurkogel, a religious education teacher from Java, was appointed instead. He was dismissed after three months because he had given one of the girls at his school a sound trouncing. Such behaviour was not unusual and magistrate Grimbeek noted in this regard that

*... de grootste gedeelte van de kinders zyn reeds uit de school genomen door hunne ouders om die reden (mishandeling) ... en daar gaf Scheurkogel weinig om want hy krygt zyn traktement, of er een ofte geen kind in school is (Grimbeek in Lugtenburg 1925: 55).*

In this regard it can be noted that all recourse parents had was to remove their children from the man's presence. There were no channels through which their disapproval could be made known, neither were they in a position to insist on the person being suspended or even dismissed from the school.

It appears that the only town to have had a stable school was the one at Lydenburg where Poen was appointed early in 1852<sup>89</sup>. Although few children attended his school — the town was small — he was esteemed by the community and willingly supported — not as much financially as with food and fresh produce. Van der Hoff's visit to Lydenburg in 1854 was intended to reorganise the provision of education. As a result of his negotiations, a fixed salary from the Church Council was assured and Poen's material position was much improved (Lugtenburg 1925: 57).

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89 See 5.2.1.2

In Pretoria, the efforts of the local magistrate, A. du Toit, to appoint a teacher for the youth were constantly frustrated. He appealed to the President in 1857 for permission to appoint Struben and also enquired what salary should be guaranteed. No reply was forthcoming. He made a second appeal and from the third made in October of that year, it would appear that Struben had lost interest in the position for Du Toit had to ask

*... zend tog een onderwyzer voor de arme jeugd. God zal hun zielen van ons eischen, om hun in de diepe onkunde te doen voorgroeien* (Du Toit in Lugtenburg 1925: 56-57).

At Zoutpansberg no appeal was made for the appointment of Dutch teachers to their school since the community appeared to be satisfied with the way *meester* Jan Helberg taught. Clergymen who visited the town appeared to have been satisfied with the children's progress. However, at some stage Helberg must have stopped teaching for in 1858 when Rev Heut visited the town he took it upon himself to instruct between 50 and 60 children daily for the entire duration of his stay (Lugtenburg 1925: 61).

That Transvaal parents were generally indifferent to education is attested to by a statement in the Government Gazette of 22 April 1859 which warned against the prevailing notion that stood in the way of education. It was often heard said that

*... myn vader wist niets meer dan ik, en hy is wel door de wereld gekomen, waarom moet myn kind of myne kinderen meer dan ik kennen?* (Lugtenburg 1925: 56).

There were no clear or consistently enforced regulations which designated the provision of schooling to a particular body. The state, Church and parents — those generally viewed as the three main role players in the provision of education — appeared to be equally incapable and unconcerned about establishing a solid foundation for the education of the country's youth and had it not been for the efforts of some concerned individuals, no form of formal education would have existed.

### 5.2.1.5 *State policy regarding education and the passing of the first education legislation*

The lack of education was a situation which could no longer be ignored. A concerted effort was being made to unite the individual Republics to form a consolidated *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* and to attain this aim, the Constitution of the ZAR was adopted on 16 February 1858 and a national flag — the *Vierkleur* — was hoisted. The national motto — *Eendragt maakt Magt* — was adopted. In theory the formalisation and systematisation of education could have and should have been furthered under these circumstances. It would appear that the Volksraad indeed had this in mind and took steps in this direction.

The first step towards systematisation of education taken by the Volksraad occurred on 7 April 1859. At a meeting of the Executive Council a School Commission of 5 members — which included President Pretorius and Rev Van der Hoff — was assigned the task of compiling regulations for government teachers<sup>90</sup> (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1952: 247). These regulations were published on 20 May 1859 as the *Reglement voor de Gouvernements Onderwyzers in de Z.A. Republiek* and comprised 30 Articles (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1952: 247-249). These regulations dealt with several issues such as:

- school fees were to be levied but the Church Council or the School Commission would determine which children were to be instructed free of charge (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §2, §3 & §4)
- teachers chose the method of instruction provided it furthered the children's intellectual and moral development (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §9)
- the teacher was expected to administer *vaderlyke tucht* in relation to the children entrusted to him (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §10)

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90 With the institution of School Commissions in the ZAR a Cape Dutch tradition was perpetuated for a parallel could be drawn between this body and the Body of Scholarchs in terms of the De Chavonnes regulation (see 3.3.3.3) and De Mist's School Commission (see 3.5.3.1).

Initially this School Commission confined its activities and guidance to the Potchefstroom area. In 1859 the body was afforded the status of general School Commission having jurisdiction over the entire Republic. This decision was taken at the prompting of Rev P.A.C. van Heijningen of Lydenburg who approached the Volksraad on the issue on the day of the adoption of the regulations. It was subsequently decided that local School Commissions would be appointed to oversee education in the communities. Furthermore, the members of the Commissions would be appointed by the state as were the members of the general School Commission (Basson 1956: 57).

- parents had no right to approach the teacher — *noch binnen noch buiten de school* — regarding grievances; complaints were to be addressed to the president of the School Commission who would refer the matter to the School Commission (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §19)
- the teacher had the right to appeal to the president of the School Commission in the event of parents disregarding the aforementioned regulation; the matter would then be referred to the School Commission (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §20)
- members of the School Commission reserved the right to visit the school at all times (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §21)
- the teacher, as a government employee, had the right to appeal to the Executive Council for redress should he be of the opinion that he had been unfairly treated (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §23)
- teachers had to be members of the Dutch Reformed Church (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §26)
- parents had to notify the teacher of their intention to remove the child from the school 14 days prior to the action (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §27)
- parents had to inform the teacher in writing of their wish to visit their child at the school (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1859: §29).

The above regulations made no provision for parental say in the composition of the School Commissions which were to oversee the schools their children were attending or in the selection of teachers. Reference to parents is limited to matters that refer to their obligation to pay fees and the method of dealing with grievances. Possibly the most conspicuous transformation brought about by this legislation, was the exclusion of the Church in educational matters. The only link with the Church was that government teachers had to be members of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Church had a say in which children should be exempted from paying school fees. Education was clearly a state concern.

An indication of the number of schools at the time can be deduced from *Commissie tot opneming der begroting van Inkomsten en Uitgaven Minutes for 1863-1864* (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1953: 175). The total number of government teachers is given as seven.

It was the opinion of the Commission that this number would need to be reduced. It was thus decided that the minimum number of children attending government schools should be fixed at 20 children. There was an urgent need to appoint 31 district teachers, one in each field cornetcy, but the Volksraad reported that at that time it

*... moet oogenblikkelyk tegen die aanstellingen zyn tot tyd en wyle er meerder beskikbare inkomsten voor het Gouvt. zullen zyn, waartoe zy aan het volk recommanderen om meerdere opbrengsten te betalen (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1953: 175).*

It was around this time that President Pretorius assumed the presidency of the Orange Free State [1860-1864]. Social and political conditions were such that the ZAR fell into a state of disorder and strife and under these circumstances, education came to a virtual standstill<sup>91</sup>. When comparative stability was restored, it was decided that the newly elected general School Commission (20 February 1866) should draft new education legislation suited to the needs of the country (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1953: 87-88). The newly appointed Commission accepted the task saying

*... de Comm. is overtuigd van de hooge belangstelling door de Regering in de zaak van opvoeding en onderwys getoond gedurende de afwezigheid van Z.H.E. den President en recommandeert den Volksraad deze zaak in byzondere en naauwkeurige overweging te nemen. De Comm. is ook van gevoelen, dat het van groot belang voor het opkomende geslacht dezer Republiek is, dat op de Gouv. Scholen, zoowel de Engelsche als Hollandsche taal zal worden onderwezen<sup>92</sup>(Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1953: 390).*

This then was the background against which future education legislation would be drafted. Parental say in education was limited to bringing grievances against teachers to the notice of the centrally appointed Commission. Education was under state control. A new development however, was the inclusion of English in the curriculum.

91 In the Volksraad Minutes between 1859-1863, apart from reference to the regulations for government teachers passed in 1859, the only other mention of schools is related to the school being used as a venue for political meetings or for Volksraad meetings [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1952: 87, 90].

92 A similar view was aired on 16 March 1866 when the general School Commission addressed the President and members of the Executive Council. The reason given was that *op grond dat onze betrekking met het Britsche Gouvernt. en de Engelsche onderdanen dagelyks toenemen, de Engelsche taal onmisbaar [is] in een Gouv. School* [Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1953: 395].

### 5.2.1.6 *State policy regarding education in the united ZAR and the subsequent revised education legislation*

The groundwork for new education legislation had been laid and on 4 September 1866, the *Wet op het Onderwys in de Z.A. Republiek* was adopted. This was a comprehensive document with a total of 107 Articles and it dealt with general provisions regarding education, regulations for the general School Commission, regulations for local School Commissions, regulations for government teachers and regulations for district teachers (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1953: 427-432). Of these issues, those that require mention since they impact either directly or indirectly on parents are the following:

- the Volksraad would appoint a general School Commission<sup>93</sup> whose responsibility it would be to:
  - provide for schooling and regularly inspect the schools (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: A: §1 & §11)
  - appoint teachers with the approval of the Volksraad and determine their salaries with the approval of the Executive Council (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: §4 & A: §8)
- the Volksraad would provide the school building and other facilities and would determine the school fees while the local School Commission would determine which children qualified for gratuitous education (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: §1; A: §6; B: §21)
- the Volksraad<sup>94</sup> would appoint a local School Commission<sup>95</sup> whose responsibility it would be to:
  - supervise<sup>96</sup> and promote the schools under its care
  - submit an annual report to the general School Commission

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93 The members had to have an academic qualification [*eenen wetenschappelyken graad*] and had to be members of the Protestant Church according to Articles 21 and 24 of the Constitution [De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: A: §2]

94 The magistrate was to appoint a local School Commission in cases where none existed on condition that the members were approved by the president of the Executive Council [De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: A: §14].

95 The members were to be resident in the district and members of the Protestant Church according to Articles 21 and 24 of the Constitution [De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: B: §3].

96 The school was to be visited regularly by at least two of the members per month to determine the state of schooling and the pupils' progress [De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: B: §12].

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- attend to parents' grievances against the teacher
    - suspend and temporarily dismiss teachers if they neglected their duty<sup>97</sup> (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: A: §4,9; B: §1, §14, §15, §17, §18, §22 & §23; C: §13; D: §11)
  - English would also be taught at government schools and preference would be given to teachers who knew both Dutch and English (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: §2; A: §9)
  - the teachers<sup>98</sup> had the right to:
    - select the school books, the choice was to be approved by the Commission bearing in mind that the schooling provided was to advance intellectual and moral development
    - administer fatherly discipline (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: C: §3, §5 & §15)
  - district teachers appointed by the general School Commission were under the authority of the field cornet and reported to him but had to submit to the general School Commission confirmation and details of his teaching activity issued by the field cornet (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: C: §9 D: §4, §5, §6, §10).

Two issues of significance were entrenched in these regulations: the role of the state in providing education and the status of English in the curriculum. The control of education undisputably resorted with the state since even the district or local School Commissions were appointed by the Volksraad. No mention was made of Church intervention bar the fact that the members of the Commissions and the teachers had to be members of the Dutch Reformed Church. The other issue was that English was introduced to the curriculum for the first time. With regard to the inclusion of English, the following comments. Since those who were involved with the drafting of the Act and those on whom its approval depended were either Dutch Boers or Hollanders resident in the ZAR, it would be erroneous to attribute this inclusion to so-called infiltration of British influence.

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97 The general School Commission formed a Court of Appeal between the School Commission and the teacher in cases of grievances [De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: A: §13].

98 Teachers were to be appropriately qualified [*moeten een onderwyzersrang bezitten*] and were to be members of the Protestant Church according to Articles 21 and 24 of the Constitution [De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1866: C: §1].

Perhaps the reasons for the inclusion of English were either one or a combination of the following:

- English was a recognised language in two of the ZAR's neighbours — Natal and the Cape Colony — and a knowledge of the language would facilitate trade and communication between the ZAR and these Colonies
- the inclusion of a "foreign" language in the school curriculum was standard practice in Holland and it could thus be expected that this trend would be transferred to the ZAR which was in several respects influenced by the Dutch
- the form of the Dutch language as spoken in South Africa was in the process of changing and a "new" language, Afrikaans, was emerging — Dutch could perhaps be described as becoming equally "foreign" to the younger generation as was English
- the ZAR's closest ally, the Republic of the Orange Free State, had itself included English in its curriculum<sup>99</sup>.

Taking the foregoing into account, it could be concluded that the drafters of this Act were farsighted enough to realise that the inclusion of English could benefit the youth of the country whose education had, until this time, been sorely neglected.

#### **5.2.1.7    *The effect of the 1866 Education Act on the provision of schooling in the ZAR***

The extent to which the view of the compilers of the regulations corresponded with that of the inhabitants of the Republic can be deduced from the extent to which the implementation of the regulations were supported.

##### **5.2.1.7.1    *State control of education***

According to the regulations of the Education Act, the general School Commission appointed by the Volksraad was responsible for the provision of education. The local School Commissions were accountable to the general School Commission to whom annual reports were to be submitted to enable the latter to report to the Executive Council on the state of education in the country. In the President's opening address to the Volksraad session in 1867, he proposed that a

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99    See 5.1.2.3

Superintendent of Education be appointed to take over the duties of the general School Commission (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1965: 159). The general School Commission made a similar proposal in its annual report to the Executive Council in the same year (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1965: 258). Steps in this direction were forthcoming the following year.

After the reading of the general School Commission report in 1868, it was decided that the general School Commission should be disbanded — the Executive Council had come to the conclusion that *de algemeene schoolcommissie van geen nut is* — and that the control of schools should be placed with the Executive Council and the local School Commissions (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1965: 115-116; 117-118). Again the President proposed the appointment of a Superintendent of Education (Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefstukke 1989: 110), but the suggestion was not implemented.

The firm way in which the state controlled the provision of education is possibly justifiable from the point of view that the communities — and thus parents — were themselves uneducated and consequently little value was attached to education. Had the matter been left to them, the situation would probably have been even more wretched.

#### 5.2.1.7.2 *The language issue*

Basson (1956: 63-64) briefly recounts the response of some of the government schools in the ZAR to the language policy introduced by the new legislation.

- Pretoria — parallel medium instruction was introduced at the government school with Stiemens giving instruction in Dutch and Jackson in English.
- Potchefstroom — both dual and parallel medium were introduced; 22 children were taught in English, 20 in Dutch and 20 received dual medium instruction.
- Wakkerstroom — the teacher was reported to be equally competent in English and in Dutch.
- Rustenburg — the prospective teacher requesting to be examined prior to appointment asked to be examined in English only since *voor het teenwoordig, geen Hollandsch onderwijs vereischt worde*.
- Heidelberg — one Dutch government school and one English government school.

Mention is also made of the establishment of private English schools — attended by both English and Dutch speaking children — in Pretoria, Potchefstroom and Heidelberg (Basson 1956: 64). Although the Education Act only provided for the tuition of English as a language, the community — and thus the parents — in many instances chose to go beyond this provision and consequently provided schooling in English either parallel to Dutch or in tandem with Dutch. This was conceivably an indication that the regulation enjoyed the sanction of the parent community.

As had happened in the past, shortly after new education legislation was passed, more pressing issues curtailed its implementation and progress. This time, it was the political upheaval caused by the loss of the diamond fields due to the Keate Award<sup>100</sup>. The outcome of the dilemma was that Pretorius was obliged to resign the presidency and in his stead, T.F. Burgers [1872-1877], a clergymen from Hanover in the Cape Colony, was appointed as the new President of the ZAR. Burgers was dynamic, well-educated and progressive (Basson 1956: 65) and it was to be expected that he would attempt to alter the provision of education in the ZAR to match his progressive ideas.

#### 5.2.1.8 *The development of education and education legislation under President Burgers*

At the time of Burger's appointment, life in the ZAR was essentially rural and nomadic. The region was sparsely populated and there was little in the line of cultural progress — the country could not even boast a single Dutch newspaper to form or mould the opinions of its citizens. The progress of education in the towns was followed with some interest, but in the country districts the situation was deplorable (Basson 1956: 65).

Burgers made a concerted effort to place the provision of education on a sounder footing and by 1874, a new Education Act — which was subsequently dubbed the Burgers Act — was passed by the Volksraad. The circumstances surrounding the drafting of the Act seem a little obscure. Lugtenburg (1925: 90-95) mentions the appointment of a select committee in 1873 to report on the existing state of education and to submit proposals for education regulations. However,

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100 See 5.2

Basson (1956: 66) cites Dr S.P. Engelbrecht as having proved that the committee was not appointed by the Volksraad or by the Executive Council and that it comprised five Pretoria residents<sup>101</sup> — mainly English speaking persons — elected at a public meeting held in Pretoria. The task assigned to them was to prepare a scheme of state education for the ZAR<sup>102</sup>. Be it as it may, the report provides insight into the prevailing conditions and attitudes of parents towards education in the ZAR at this time and it is for this purpose only that the content of the report is considered. In the report (as taken up in Lugtenburg) it was pointed out that:

- the adoption of any one form of Christian belief as the distinctive religion of a state school system would be unpopular with the parent community (Lugtenburg 1925: 289)
- to meet the rightful desires of every parent and child, only men [and women/persons] of blameless character and of high religious principle were to be appointed as teachers; if this expressed wish of every parent was not scrupulously respected, the religious and moral education of the children would be left to such men to conduct as they saw fit (Lugtenburg 1925: 290)
- the principal of schools was not only to possess the required religious attributes, he was also to have attained a high standard of *actual learning*, have extensive experience in teaching and in interpersonal relationships (Lugtenburg 1925: 290)
- masters of schools were to have the above attributes and in addition he was to have *acquaintance with the Dutch language and the distinctive characteristics of our population* while mistresses were to be cultivated, of high character and sound attainments (Lugtenburg 1925: 291)
- district masters were to be liberally supported and guided for *to them alone can we at present look for making up any of the leeway in education that adverse circumstances, immense tracts of country and troublous times have brought us* (Lugtenburg 1925: 293)
- the expense of the system was to be carried by a combination of state funding and guaranteed subscriptions from the public and parents (Lugtenburg 1925: 295)
- a Central Board of Education comprising 5 Commissioners would have the control of

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101 The members were W. Skinner, P.J. Marais, H.W. Struben, J. Rhind [M.D.] and J. Buchanan.

102 The committee itself alludes to this fact in its closing statement of the report and suggests that a similar *meeting of the Gentry at Potchefstroom* be called so that a similar report on the subject could be drafted after which the government would be in possession of the ideas of its chief citizens and be in a position to frame a good Education Law without loss of valuable time [Lugtenburg 1925: 302].

education: 3 of the members were to be elected by the public subscribers and 2 by the government (Lugtenburg 1925: 298, 299).

The crux of the report appears to revolve around two aspects: the moral-religious and the issue of state control of education supported by community participation. Parents, it was reported, wanted the teacher to be a religious man of irreproachable moral worth. If this was the requirement of the man, it stands to reason that similar expectations regarding the nature of the schooling provided by him would be held. The other aspect was the issue of control of education. The state was to be the controlling power, yet community involvement through public subscription towards education was advocated. These public subscribers were to be allowed a say in the administration and control of education — a justifiable expectation since these individuals would be contributing towards the education fund. Whether Burgers was aware of the public opinion outlined in the report or whether he heeded the report itself, is not clear, but the fact remains that the issues touched on in the report are also those issues dealt with in the Burgers Education Act.

The Burgers Act was approved by the Volksraad as *Wet No. 4, 1874*. The draft which preceded this Act was the source of great controversy. According to the draft of Article 26 of the Act

*... [G]een godsdienst onderwys wordt gedurende de schooluren gegeven; echter zullen de schoollocalen buiten de schooluren met goedvinden der schoolcommissieën, daartoe beschikbaar zyn voor Godsdienstleeraars of onderwyzers (Lugtenburg 1925: 95).*

Article 41 which provided the criteria for teachers made no mention of the fact that the teacher had to be a member of a Protestant Church and Article 51 of the draft read

*... [D]e onderwyzers of-essen zullen zich onthouden van iets te doen of te laten dat strydig is met de eerbied verschuldigd aan de godsdienstige begrippen van andersdenkenden van het geven van onderwys in de Godsdienst gedurende schooluren, en er zich zelf buiten de schooluren niet mede in laten, tenzy op uitdrukkelyk verzoek van de ouders of voogden der kinderen (Lugtenburg 1925: 95-96).*

It was because of these statements that the Act was labelled as being far too modern and secular and consequently unacceptable to the inhabitants of the ZAR (Basson 1956: 70). In the final draft, these controversial Articles were amended by the inclusion of a few sentences which gave

the Act an entirely different look. To Article 26 was added ... *zullen verder in ieder school in den bybel worden gelezen en in de bybelgeschiedenis onderwezen worden*. The term *godsdiensonderwys* was now limited to *dogmatic* religious instruction and the Article thus complied with the expectations and wishes of the majority of the ZAR parents. Included in Article 41 was the requirement that teachers were to belong to a Protestant Church and although Article 51 was not altered, the amendments to the other Articles, resulted in the alteration of Article 51's interpretation (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1874: §26 & §41).

The Act provided for the establishment of a Department of Education and the appointment of a Superintendent of Education by the government. When Burgers could not find a suitable candidate for this position in the Republic, he resorted to obtaining one from Holland. In 1876 the position was filled by W.J. van Gorkom [1876-1878]. After his appointment, the Act was implemented (Basson 1956: 66-67, 71). Van Gorkom was responsible for inspecting all *hooge scholen en distrikts scholen en zooveel mogelyk aan de wykscholen* — schools were classified as high, district and ward schools. A Commission of 6 members — 4 to be appointed by the residents of Pretoria and 2 by the Executive Council — would be responsible for the intended Gymnasium in Pretoria. Each of the district schools was to be controlled by a School Commission comprising 7 members — the magistrate as *ex-officio* member and 6 members elected by the residents of the town. In the country districts, a ward Commission was to be elected — the field cornet was *ex-officio* member and 6 other members were to be elected by the district's residents (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1874: §54 & §66). The duties of the Commissions included the:

- selection of appropriate teachers who were then appointed on probation by the Superintendent
- levying of school fees
- payment of the teachers' salaries
- attending to grievances brought against the teacher by parents
- regular inspection of the schools and the submission of a report to the Superintendent of Education every three months (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1874: §15, §29, §39, §41 & §58).

The Commission would become the owners of the government school property which they would be free to sell to raise funds for new buildings if this was deemed necessary. With this a new

principle was introduced: the state's responsibility was to supervise the provision of education, provide financial support and examine the scholastic competence and calibre of prospective teachers. The community as a whole was free to take responsibility for other issues which would determine the nature and spirit of the education provided and any resident had the right to visit the school provided that school activities were not disrupted (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1874: Preamble, § 11, § 21 & § 37).

It is generally believed though that the Burgers Act was doomed to fail. The main reasons cited include:

- Burger's liberal ideas and the unfortunate wording of certain Articles of the draft Bill
- the contentious appointment of a Hollander as the first Superintendent as well as a considerable number of Dutch "foreigners" as teachers
- the subsequent evidence that the Superintendent of Education was unable to appropriately administer the system
- the Dutch appointee's support of Burger's progressive and liberal views which were too enlightened for the ZAR (Lugtenburg 1925: 114-115)
- the fact that members of the community — including parents — were not yet prepared for nor sufficiently interested in becoming involved in education through the School Commissions, and
- that the School Commissions were given responsibilities for which they were not yet qualified (Barnard & Coetsee 1976: 55).

Once again political events affected the course of education. The Republic was annexed by the British in April 1877 and in consequence of this step the administration passed into the hands of a British official, Sir Theophilus Shepstone on 12 April 1877 and for the next four years the ZAR would be under British Administration.

### 5.2.2 The provision of education during British annexation [1877-1881]

The administration of education was initially left in the hands of Van Gorkom. On 4 June, Dr Vacy Lyle [1877-1879], house surgeon to Shepstone, was appointed as the Superintendent of Education. Lyle's first assignment was to enquire into the state of education in the country, the laws regulating education and the wants of the people regarding the provision of education

(Lugtenburg 1925: 77). For the first time an in depth analysis of the prevailing conditions surrounding education in the ZAR was undertaken and of special note is the fact that the wishes of the inhabitants were to be enquired into.

#### 5.2.2.1 *Lyle and his recommendations regarding the provision of education*

Lyle gained insight into the requirements of the people regarding the provision of education by questioning ministers, teachers, School Commissions and prominent members of the community who had an interest in education. He was able to sympathise with the ideals of the inhabitants and realised that the tenets of the Burghers Act was incompatible with the desires of the people (Lugtenburg 1925: 117). The main shortcomings appeared to revolve around the issues of religious education, medium of instruction and the lack of schools in rural areas. In consequence of the findings, Lyle proposed a number of changes to the existing education policy.

- To meet the wishes of parents regarding the provision of religious instruction he proposed the inclusion of a "conscience clause" to secure for all who desired it religious instruction for their children and secular education only for those who desired only secular education. Religious instruction was to be conducted daily and was to be based on the Bible (Transvaalsche Gouvernements Courant 1879: §66, §67, §68 & §73). Ministers of religion were asked to inspect schools until such time as official Inspectors had been appointed (Transvaalsche Gouvernements Courant 1879: §87-§119).
- Local School Commissions elected by the inhabitants were to supervise the schools (Transvaalsche Gouvernements Courant 1879: §87-§119).
- The rural areas were conspicuously lacking in educational facilities and the state was to establish schools in these areas. Because of the lack of suitably qualified teachers, Lyle proposed the use of itinerant teachers who were to be assisted in improving their teaching abilities (Transvaalsche Gouvernements Courant 1879: §84).
- Private initiative regarding establishing schools was to be promoted by providing government grants-in-aid to individuals or organisations who founded schools. This measure would meet the needs and desires of various groups who were dissatisfied with the state schools established by Burgers (Bot 1951: 13).
- Lyle found that Dutch parents showed a preference for having their children taught in English. These parents were of the opinion that their children learnt Dutch at home in any

event. In this regard Lyle expressed his concern that it was pedagogically unsound to enforce English as the medium of instruction. His comments in this regard are insightful.

*... I cannot conceive that it would be just to make it a rule absolute that the English language shall be the vehicle of instruction, and it would not fully satisfy the people under existing circumstances to make Dutch the vehicle, and yet to teach the rudiments of knowledge in two languages at the same time, seems to me overtaxing young and undeveloped brains. Except in very exceptional cases such process must exercise a retarding influence, and children educated under it will not exhibit an average advancement, equally that to be found where one language only is used in Elementary Education (Transvaalsche Gouvernements Courant 1879: §114).*

The proposal made to address this issue is found in Article 118 (Transvaalsche Gouvernements Courant 1879) in which the establishment of separate schools for the two language groups was suggested.

Although it appeared that the Transvaalers were prejudiced against the education regulations — not because they ran counter to Boer convictions, but simply because they emanated from the British office — the provision of education improved. This is attested to by the fact that from 1876 to 1879, the number of schools increased from 15 to 20 and the number of pupils from 442 to 838 (Bot 1951: 13-14).

In 1879, before his proposals could be finalised and entrenched in education legislation to be implemented for the benefit of ZAR youth, Lyle died. He was succeeded by the Rev H.S. Bosman.

#### **5.2.2.2 Bosman and developments regarding education legislation**

Bosman was an ordained minister of the *Hervormde* Church in Pretoria and was familiar with the prevailing education situation. He identified with Lyle's view on education and although he attempted to further Lyle's ideas, the 1880 education legislation which recalled the Burgers Act of 1874 (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880a: §1) did not provide for many of Lyle's proposals.

*Wet No. 10, 1880, Tot regeling van de wijze om uit Publieke Inkomsten subsidie te krijgen ten dienste van Algemeen Onderwijs* comprised 6 Articles only, but was supported by a proclamation *Gouvernements reglementen ten opzichte van subsidies ten behoeve van elementaire scholen* comprising an additional 23 Articles. Three deviations from Burger's legislation were the implementation of a payment-by-results scheme (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880b: §2 & §10), the termination of the School Commissions (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880a: §3) and the retraction of itinerant teachers from the system and the establishment of hostels (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880b: §18). The main issues that need to be mentioned are the following:

- the government would provide subsidies to support private initiative to establish schools; the subsidies would be determined by the number of pupils and the qualification of the teachers and the progress of the children; but only schools that levied fees would qualify for aid (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880a: §1 & §2; De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880b: preamble; §3, §4, §7 & §10)
- to qualify for subsidies, the school needed to be run by teachers who were of impeccable moral character and appropriately qualified (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880b: §8)
- inspection of the schools would be undertaken by persons appointed by the Superintendent while even the Mission schools, although managed by their associations, were to be inspected regularly by government officials (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1880b: §17 & §21).

The revival in education under the British was of short duration — largely as a result of the ex-Republican resistance to the British annexation of the ZAR. War was declared and after the battle of Amajuba and the signing of the Convention of Pretoria on 3 August 1881, the ZAR was restored to its former state of independence. Control passed into the hands of the Triumvirate: Pretorius, Kruger and Joubert<sup>103</sup>.

### 5.2.3 The provision of education under the restored ZAR [1881-1899]

The aim of the Triumvirate Government was a restored Republic freed from British influence. Ironically, the "despised" Burgers Act was re-instituted when the Republican Government was re-established. This was a temporary measure, however, for a person was being sought who would be able to incorporate the ideals of the new government into the education system<sup>104</sup>. The person selected to promote these ideals was Rev S.J. du Toit [1881-1888] from Paarl — well known for his role in founding *Die Genootskap van Regte Afrikaanders*<sup>105</sup> (Bot 1951: 15; Transvaal Education Department 1976: 17-18).

#### 5.2.3.1 *S.J. du Toit and his contribution to formalising the provision of education in the ZAR*

Du Toit believed that the responsibility for the education of the youth rested with the parents — not with the state — and that education should be under the supervision of the Church. He was also convinced that the basis of education should be religious with the dogmatic aspect being left to the discretion of the Church<sup>106</sup>. The result was that education legislation was again amended in accordance with Du Toit's principles and in 1882 a new education Act was passed according to which state-aided private schools became the rule and state education the exception (Bot 1951: 15).

According to *Wet No. 1, 1882, Regelende het onderwijs voor de Blanke bevolking in de Z. A. Republiek*, the following seven general principles set the tone of the Act (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1882: §1-§7).

- Parents were responsible for the education of their children and the state would confine its interest in education to:
  - encouraging private initiative by providing financial support

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104 The ideal was to further material development and religious awareness in the Transvaal [Ploeger 1952: 3].

105 See 4.1.4.5

106 These views were very similar to those of Dr A. Kuyper, the champion of the free school movement in the Netherlands. Du Toit acknowledged that he had merely adapted Kuyper's *Ons Program* to the requirements of the Transvaal in his *Program van Beginselen van den Afrikaander Bond* [Kuyper 1880: passim; Ploeger 1952: 3].

- regular inspection to ensure that the instruction provided was according to Christian tenets
- establishing an institution for higher education and the training of prospective teachers.
- Doctrinal religious education was the province of the Church, but government supported schools were obliged to ensure that:
  - the education provided was imbued with a Christian spirit
  - each day was opened and closed with prayer and scripture reading
  - Biblical history was taught during school hours
  - doctrinal religious instruction was left to the respective Churches
  - the school facilities were available to the Churches to provide doctrinal instruction.The various Churches and Church Councils were encouraged to establish their own schools and to elect School Commissions to oversee the functioning of such schools<sup>107</sup>.
- The state aimed to make education accessible to all — including those who lived in remote areas — and would hence provide annual grants in respect of all schools that complied with state regulations regarding number of children in attendance and the standard of education provided at the school.
- Schools would be classified as elementary, secondary (*middelbaar*) and high (*hooger*). Dutch was to be taught at elementary school; the principles of the English and High German languages could be taught, if so desired, at secondary school.
- The Superintendent of Education would determine which children were on the elementary and on the secondary level.
- Subsidies for elementary and secondary pupils would be paid to the schools each quarter and in addition, the payment-by-results system applied to teachers who exhibited superior proficiency.
- Dutch was the medium of instruction<sup>108</sup>.

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107 President Kruger had clear-cut ideas regarding the responsibility of the Church and the state with regard to education. He had once remarked that *zijn Zaligmaker had de opvoeding in handen der Kerk gegeven – de Staat moest enkel het onderwijs steunen. Blijf de school in handen van een Staat, dan zouden wij een Rijk des Satans worden*. On the same occasion, Du Toit stated that education was to be Christian ... *omdat hoofd en hart een [waren] en zich niet lieten scheiden* [Ploeger 1952: 8].

108 This was in contrast with Article 36 of the Burgers Act which allowed for the parallel use of English and Dutch.

Other matters of importance included in the Act were the:

- appointment of a Superintendent of Education<sup>109</sup> whose task would include the supervision of schools, the administration and provision of education and the submission of annual progress reports to the state (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1882: §13), and the
- re-introduction of the School Commissions which were *inter alia* to:
  - draft *eigene huishoudelijke bepalingen* according to which the school would be managed
  - select a suitable teacher<sup>110</sup> whose appointment would be ratified by the Superintendent
  - provide a suitably furnished school building
  - submit a quarterly report to the Superintendent of Education (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1882: §8-§12).

The perceived improvements or revisions provided for by the Act when compared to earlier legislation included:

- increased community involvement — schools established through private initiative would enjoy state support; schools would be under the direct supervision of a local School Commission which had the right to determine the ethos of each school to suit community needs provided that this was done within the spirit of the Act, the Church — and its members which would include parents — was encouraged to establish and manage its own schools
- improved education opportunities for children in the country districts — because of the subsidies provided, the provision of schooling in remote areas would be expedited; it needs to be remembered that a significant proportion of the population fell into this category and in previous years, given the exacting and impoverished living conditions in the rural areas, the education of the youth had been neglected

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109 The Superintendent was to provide proof of his *wetenschappelijke bekwaamheid, zuiverheid in de leer, onbesprokenheid van wandel* and in addition he had to be a member of a Protestant Church [De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1882: §13].

110 The teacher required a certificate of competence issued by the *Commissie van Examinatoren*. In addition the prospective teacher had to be a member of a Protestant Church and of high moral character [De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1882: §12].

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- opportunity for Church involvement in education — education was to have an undisputed Christian character and the Church was given a significant say in the religious education of the youth.

Perceived shortcomings were that there was:

- no indication of the nature of the composition of School Commissions i.e. how many members were to be elected, by whom and how they were to be elected and whether they were to be parents of children attending the school or whether they were merely members of the community
- no indication of the minimum number of children in attendance for the institution to be registered as a school; the result was that several schools with very few children in attendance were established in close proximity of, and thus in competition with, one another (Ploeger 1952: 12)
- Dutch was the exclusive medium of instruction — of all the Articles in the Act, this was the one that caused dissatisfaction among certain sections of the community and was also the one most frequently disregarded.

Du Toit made an effort to make the principles of the Act known to the burghers and consequently he hosted meetings attended by parents and others interested in education in several districts. Education progressed under Du Toit and by December 1882 there were 43 state subsidised schools with 873 pupils<sup>111</sup>. This growth was attributed to the support of local Churches and their Councils (Ploeger 1952: 13). By 1886 there were 95 schools with 2 308 pupils (Ploeger 1952: 19). Church involvement was thus welcomed and confirmed the aspirations of the community for an education system run according to Christian principles — a system which reflected the convictions of the majority of the burghers.

However, the issue of medium of instruction was to prove contentious with sections of the community having a preference for education provided through the English medium or of having English as an alternative medium of instruction. According to the Article, children who received their instruction in English at a Dutch school, would not be considered for the purposes of subsidies

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111 Although the number of pupils had not increased dramatically since 1879 [see 5.2.2.2] the number of schools had doubled.

and would be regarded as not attending the school. Ways of circumventing the provision of Article 7 were sought but the attitude of the state remained resolute: it had no intention of altering the law to accommodate alternative arrangements or instruction through the medium of English (Ploeger 1952: 14).

In an article in *De Volkstem* shortly after the implementation of the Act, it was said that Article 7 was opposed by the English, those favourably disposed towards the English, anglicised Afrikaners and the clergy. The "old" Transvaalers were conservative and opposed to the introduction of "new ideas" and they consequently supported the Act. Be this as it may, in the education report of 1883, it was established that there were several schools in rural areas where instruction was not provided through Dutch, yet the schools continued to receive state subsidies (Ploeger 1952: 15).

Du Toit and President Kruger had differing opinions regarding the interpretation of the Article and they also differed regarding the issue of who should be employed as teachers: Du Toit was in favour of locally trained teachers which included those trained in the Cape Colony, while Kruger was in favour of obtaining teachers from the Netherlands. Du Toit was accused of being pro-British because he gave the impression that he was open to persuasion regarding the issues of language of instruction. He held this view because there was a serious shortage of readers and textbooks in Dutch and he was concerned that if the letter of the law was adhered to, several children would be lost to the government school system. The President remained adamant that Dutch was to be, and remain, the medium of instruction (Ploeger 1952: 16, 22-24).

Du Toit was to loose favour<sup>112</sup> and his resignation became inevitable. Hendrik Stiemens [1888-1891], a former teacher and since 1882 Secretary of Education, took over as acting Superintendent of Education in August 1888.

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112 His loss of esteem was not attributed only to these issues. He was also involved in matters which did not concern education and it was felt that he was not giving his full attention to educational issues [Ploeger 1952: 18-19].

### 5.2.3.2 *H. Stiemens as acting Superintendent of Education and events leading to new education legislation*

Stiemens had inherited a situation fraught with conflict. In the 1889 Volksraad session, it was decided to open a debate on Du Toit's education Act in an attempt to provide an improved system of education. The alterations proposed referred to the employment of better qualified teachers and better arrangements regarding the inspection of schools (Ploeger 1952: 28). Since two Inspectors had been appointed in 1889, the education report of that year was much more reliable and provided valuable insight into the prevailing conditions. The general level of education was mediocre; English remained the medium of instruction in several schools while Dutch was neglected; many Johannesburg schools were exclusively English. The amendment of the Act was presumed a matter of urgency (Lugtenburg 1925: 152).

The influx of mainly English-speaking miners to the ZAR due to the discovery of gold boosted the influence of the English. Johannesburg developed at a remarkable pace and at many schools the medium of instruction was English — Dutch being totally negated (Lugtenburg 1925: 157). To the government, this, and the fact that English was being used in numerous spheres — *inter alia* the courts, civil service, markets — was a cause for concern. Although the government welcomed the immigration, it feared for the national spirit and independence of the country (Basson 1956: 94) and it was thus decided to counter the escalating use of English through legislation. *Act No. 10, 1888, Op het gebruik der Hollandsche Taal*, was passed. The first Article affirmed that Dutch was the official language of the country and that all other languages were foreign languages (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1888: § 1).

It was at this time [1889] that Dr W.J. Leyds<sup>113</sup>, Secretary of State, made serious attempts to gain favour with the Netherlands and specifically with the *Nederlandsch Zuid-Afrikaansche Vereeniging* which he approached in the matter of obtaining financial support for education in the ZAR. The underlying purpose of these negotiations was to ensure the ZAR's intellectual independence from the British and to establish permanent contact with the Netherlands (Ploeger 1952: 35-37).

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113 Leyds was an ardent adversary of Du Toit and had openly challenged Du Toit's apparent support for the English [Ploeger 1952: 24].

Leyds was not the only individual who took up the cause of education. H.W. Stumpf, a Dutch teacher who had emigrated to the ZAR in 1886, presented the State President with a detailed memorandum on improving the provision of education in the country [1889]. In relation to the establishment of schools, he recommended that the clergy be reminded of their responsibility to establish and manage schools since according to the prevailing legislation, the establishment of schools with a Christian ethos was the Church and her congregation's responsibility. He further suggested that the clergy, Church Councils, parents and all burghers be reminded of their duty regarding the education of the youth of the ZAR and that parents were to show an active interest in their children's progress at school. He also pointed out the necessity of educationally uplifting the older, established section of the population since this sector was in danger of being overshadowed by those more recently arrived. He advocated that teachers should be found locally, but in the event of foreign teachers being acquired, it should be ensured that they refrain from adopting a derogative attitude towards the country, its people or its history (Ploeger 1952: 37-38). Although the memorandum was not dealt with by the Volksraad, it does provide insight into the presumed shortcomings of the prevailing system.

In the mean time [1890], the government had commissioned an enquiry into the state of education and by July 1891, the recommendations of the Commission's findings were submitted. It was decided to leave the drafting of new legislation to a new Superintendent (Ploeger 1952: 39) and since Siemens had tendered his resignation in August 1891, the appointment of a suitable successor became a matter of urgency.

#### 5.2.3.3 *N. Mansvelt and his contribution towards revised education legislation*

Dr Nicolaas Mansvelt [1891-1900] was well known in the Transvaal as a result of his association with the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Taalbond*. He was a Hollander by birth, had taught at a Christian school in the Netherlands and was, at the time of his appointment as Superintendent of Education in the ZAR, a professor of Dutch at the Victoria College in Stellenbosch (Transvaal Education Department 1976: 26).

The existing education Act required revision and it was Mansvelt's task to prepare an amended form of the current legislation before the Volksraad. *Act No. 8, 1892, Regelerende het onderwijs voor de blanke bevolking in de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, ter vervanging van Wet No. 1, 1882* was similar in many respects to the Du Toit Act which it replaced. The noticeable amendments were *inter alia*:

- the inclusion of the word *Protestantsch-Christelijke* (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892a: §1[b], §2[a])
- the requirement that the Superintendent and his deputies, were to be members of a *Hollandsche-Protestantsche Kerk* (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892a: §5 & §8)
- the omission of a section in Article 2 of the 1882 Act which provided for Churches and congregations taking the initiative to establish their own schools
- the extension of the subjects taught in the different phases of education and the introduction of school Standards I to VI (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892a: §4)
- the composition of the School Commission was defined — for ward schools this meant 3 members of whom as many as possible would be elected with the sanction of one or more members of the Church Council, the field cornet or arbitrator of the ward; for district schools a minimum of 5 members recommended or elected by the Church Council, the magistrate, field cornet or arbitrator (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892a: §11)
- those eligible to stand for election and to vote were all *vaders van huisgezinnen, die binnen een redelijken afstand van de betrokken school wonen* and all men who had contributed towards the school fund (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892a: §11)
- with regard to the duties of the School Commission, additional functions included the collection of school fees and of government subsidies; the introduction of a £ for £ principle; gratuitous schooling was to be determined by the Commission — however, no contribution would be made in this respect by the government (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892a: §17-§23)
- instruction would occur in Dutch and only when a foreign language was being taught, was instruction to occur in that language (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892a: §24)
- a foreign language could be introduced from Standard III for 3 of the 25 hours of instruction per week and from Standard IV, 4 of the 25 tuition hours per week if so desired by the parents (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892a: §25)

- all textbooks were to be Dutch except those relating to the foreign language and the selection of textbooks would be left to the discretion of the teacher and the School Commission (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892a: §27 & §28).

As was the case in the 1882 Act, this Act also emphasised that parents carried the responsibility for their children's education. Ploeger (1952: 40-41) discusses a number of aspects in this regard. He refers to the argument that in a country as sparsely populated as was the ZAR at the time, it was not expedient to leave the initiative of providing for educational needs to parents who in most instances had not themselves received and could thus not appreciate the value of a sound or liberal education. However, it can be presumed that the majority of ZAR parents would be quite satisfied with their children receiving an education that prepared them for Church membership — parents would view this as the fulfilment of their baptismal vow according to which they were admonished to take responsibility for the education of their children. Children from rural areas would, in any event, have little use for a more liberal or scientific education.

The above review possibly explains why the itinerant system of teaching and the sanctioning of appointing unqualified teachers in rural areas persisted into the early 1890's. In addition, the period of schooling seldom exceeded three months and teaching was confined to preparation for Church membership. President Kruger sanctioned the system and had great empathy with the humble desire for a purely religious education asking those who felt that unqualified teachers should not be allowed to teach

*... wie ondersteunen wij, de kerk of de wetenschap? De wetenschap en de godsdienst zijn twee, de godsdienst is het dierbaarst (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1889: §391).*

He also pointed out that large numbers of rural children would be denied even the most basic form of education should these unqualified teachers not be allowed to conduct their schools (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1889: §391).

The shortage of teachers complicated the ability to enforce the system of education proposed by the new legislation and again it became necessary to seek teachers elsewhere. Although teachers were sought from the Netherlands, many of the Transvaal parents were anxious that their children

learnt English and thus preferred teachers from the Cape Colony and schools where the medium of instruction was English (Basson 1956: 104-105; Ploeger 1952: 74). Mansvelt bemoaned this fact and attributed it to

*... onkunde, modezucht en verkeerd begrepen eigenbelang van de zijde der ouders. Verkeerd begrepen eigenbelang noemde ik het, dat zoo vele ouders hun kinderen in de meest zeer beperkte leerjaren met het leeren van twee talen wilden belasten ...* (Mansvelt 1902: 30).

As can be deduced from the general trend of the education Act, Mansvelt, was committed to providing a system of education through which the Dutch language and Dutch national spirit would be promoted. However, he was aware that English needed to be accommodated in the curriculum but there was no doubt regarding the status it would have. He remarked that *de taal [Nederlandsch] de schooltaal werd of bleef en het Engelsch slechts als bijtaal geleerd werd* (Mansvelt 1902: 32). However, events beyond his control challenged this ideal.

#### 5.2.3.4 *The agitation of the Outlanders for English medium schooling*

Due to the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand [1886], foreign prospectors descended on the ZAR in droves — and most of them were English-speaking. In August 1892, a number of Outlanders established the *Transvaal National Union*<sup>114</sup>— a body which aimed to unite and strengthen the voice of the newcomers. The Chairman of the Union, John Tudhope, elaborated on the *sins of omission* of the government — one of which was the neglect of education for the Outlanders' children. The Outlanders felt that they had made a considerable contribution to the wealth of the country and objected to the Dutch education that was being imposed on their children by the state (Basson 1956: 112-114).

The government reached a compromise with the Outlanders and offered them the option of tuition in English in government subsidised schools through the so-called *Besluit skole* provided for in *Besluit van den E.A. eersten Volksraad (art 344 d.d. Woensdag 1 Juni 1892) Regelende de subsidieering van die scholen, waarin krachtens speciale vergunning van de H Ed Regeering het medium van onderwijs niet Hollandsch behoeft te wezen*. The *besluit*

114 This Union was preceded by a body known as the *Transvaal Republican Union* [Basson 1956: 112]

comprised 10 points which lay down the conditions as follows (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1892b: §1-§10):

- all further regulations regarding the provision of education in state schools as outlined in the education Act were to be followed
- the children attending these schools were to receive instruction in the Dutch language by teachers approved by the Superintendent of Education
- the schools would be inspected, but the purpose of the inspection would be to determine the children's knowledge of the Dutch language
- the children's ability in Dutch would be tested according to the general education standards as laid down by the Superintendent regarding both the practical and theoretical knowledge of the language
- based on the results of these tests, children would be graded and this would in turn determine the subsidy for which the school would qualify
- the examination would occur biannually as would the payment of the subsidy
- these measures constituted a temporary measure only and would remain in force for three years only because it was preferred that

*den kinderen van niet Hollandsch-Afrikaansche of Hollandsche ouders ... zoo spoedig mogelijk de landstaal eigen te maken en daardoor in de voorrechten van het volgens Wet gesubsidieerde onderwijs te kunnen deelen.*

The Immigrants rejected this regulation and its principles. Few supported the *Besluitkole* since the proposals were viewed as being unreasonable. It was generally impossible for a child to attain within the time named such proficiency in Dutch as to be able to receive all instruction in the language (Basson 1956: 115, 137). Consequently, a large number of Outlander children remained in need of education.

In 1895 Mr H.S. Caldecott, a leading Johannesburg solicitor, addressed a meeting of influential Johannesburgers during which he called attention to the deplorable state of education among the Outlanders on the gold-fields. It was estimated that of the 6 500 children of school-going age, 2 000 did not attend school — despite the fact that there were 55 Outlander schools. However, of the 187 teachers at these schools, only 46 were adequately qualified and the schooling provided was all but adequate (Bot 1951: 32-34; Transvaal Department of Education 1976: 40).

Substantial funds were subscribed at the meeting and it was decided to found *The Witwatersrand Council of Education* which would establish and support private English medium schools for children on the gold-fields whose education had so far been neglected. Further funds were promised by shareholders in London and the Chamber of Mines, but because of the political uncertainty caused by the Jameson Raid<sup>115</sup>, it was impossible to press the mines for their pledges. It was thus decided to go ahead with the existing funds collected at the inaugural meeting (Bot 1951: 32-34; Transvaal Department of Education 1976: 40). The aspirations of the Council were to provide the children of the miners with proper education in proper schools; to support deserving city schools in the interests of tradesmen and to establish and maintain schools for the needy regardless of nationality (Basson 1956: 138).

By the end of 1896 the Council had established three schools of its own and had assumed the control of and financial responsibility for three others. All effort was made to ensure that these schools were efficient and consequently only trained and experienced teachers were employed. Other schools adopted the Council's code of instruction and a measure of uniformity of aim of education was achieved on the Witwatersrand. In January 1897 classes in physics, chemistry and assaying were opened. These classes were largely attended by teachers and pupils of Johannesburg schools who wished to qualify for the examinations of the University of Cape Town. Many students in chemistry and assaying came from the mines. Within a short while these schools were highly acclaimed (Transvaal Department of Education 1976: 40) but these efforts were viewed with distrust by many of the Dutch since the Dutch community felt threatened by the determination of the Outlanders to provide alternative schooling opportunities for their children and feared that the Dutch language would be marginalised (Basson 1956: 115-116, 139-143).

In 1896 legislation relating to the schooling of Outlanders was passed. *Wet No. 15, 1896, Ter verdere voorziening in het onderwijs en de opvoeding van blanke kinderen op de geproclameerde goudvelden in de Z.A.R.* (De Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek 1896) was contested by the Outlanders because from these regulations it appeared that the qualifications of the teachers of new schools were so limited and so narrowly defined that it was impossible for anyone but a Hollander to become a headmaster. In addition, the instruction of Dutch was to be introduced from the first year of schooling and by the fourth year, the child was to take his entire tuition through the medium of Dutch (Transvaal Department of Education 1976: 41).

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115 See 5.2

However, with the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war in 1899, education throughout the ZAR was affected to such an extent that the administration of education virtually came to a halt.

#### 5.2.4 Education under British Military Rule during the Anglo-Boer War [1899-1902]

The provision of education under British Military Rule in the Transvaal should be read in conjunction with that of the Free State<sup>116</sup> since the education systems of both regions were placed under the authority of E.B. Sargent [1900-1903] as Director of Education<sup>117</sup> and were dealt with similarly. Many of the circumstances surrounding the establishment of concentration camp schools and the attitude towards these schools were similar, and only certain aspects regarding the Transvaal schools will thus be reviewed.

##### 5.2.4.1 *The status of the ZAR government schools at the time of the Anglo-Boer war*

On 3 October 1899 the Executive Council of the ZAR Volksraad announced that all state and state subsidised schools would be regarded as having been closed as from the first of that month (Ploeger 1956: 322). Some of the ZAR government schools were taken over by the British authorities and it is recorded that in May 1902 a total of 46 schools other than concentration camp schools were operational in the Transvaal. The schools which appear to have continued were a number of town schools, a school opened at Zeerust by Lord Methuen, private Afrikaans schools<sup>118</sup> started with funds from Holland and which later developed into the Christian National Education (CNE) schools<sup>119</sup>, 13 private English schools and the German school (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 3; Transvaal Education Department 1976: 47). In June 1901 a few additional town schools were reopened — invariably in conjunction with concentration camp

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116 See 5.1.3.1

117 See 5.1.3.1.1

118 It was the intention to run these schools according to ZAR educational policy. In most cases these schools were in the hands of Hollander teachers who had been employed by the government of the ZAR. The medium of instruction was principally Dutch [Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 3].

119 See 5.2.5.3

schools. Rural schools remained closed until September 1902 (Basson 1956: 152, 157; Malherbe 1925: 297).

#### 5.2.4.2 *The development of the concentration camp schools*

As the English armies closed in on the Republic, women and children found on the farms were gathered and assembled in concentration camps. This herding together of so many children necessitated steps to meet their educational needs. When Sargant arrived in the Transvaal in 1901, he found that the military administration had as yet made no provision for education in the region (Malherbe 1925: 298). He also found that in certain instances, the refugees had taken it upon themselves to ensure that the children received some form of education. In the Heidelberg camp, for example, regular classes were being held to prepare children for confirmation (Great Britain 1901a: 72, 148). In May 1901, H.A. Hesse, a prisoner-of-war in the Klerksdorp concentration camp, assisted by Miss A.J. Teengs started a private school for some 60 children. The purpose of the school was to *bouwen en te bewaren* a system of education characterised by a Christian and national spirit — in other words, to perpetuate the pre-war type of education. If the rapid growth is taken into account — by August 1902 the school was attended by over 1 000 pupils — it can be deduced that parents approved of the type of education their children were receiving at the school. The school was later taken over by the Department of Education (Hesse 1918: 162-163). Other private schools were also established in various concentration camps, but were not very well attended since it was difficult for the parents to pay the fees called for (Great Britain 1901a: 275, 276).

Once the Burgher Camp Department had furnished the Education Office with particulars regarding the number of children in the various camps and the available accommodation, steps were taken to establish schools. Schools that had been established by refugees were taken over by the Education Department and turned into British free schools (Great Britain 1901a: 170, 275, 276). By early 1902, 21 such schools existed under military administration (Transvaal Education Department 1902: 1).

#### **5.2.4.2.1 *The nature of the concentration camp schools***

The concentration camp schools were free day-schools managed by teachers appointed by the Department (Great Britain 1901a: 55). The background of the teachers employed at these schools was varied: some were refugees who lived in the concentration camp (Great Britain 1901a: 59, 67, 371), others were qualified teachers who lived in the town adjacent to the concentration camp and who came to the camp daily to teach (Great Britain 1901a: 67). Some of the teachers were acquired from Natal, the Cape Colony and even from overseas (Great Britain 1901a: 171; Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 8). The teachers were either English or Dutch speaking — the latter being required to be proficient in English. Generally speaking, the authorities preferred English speaking teachers to Dutch (Great Britain 1901a: 228, 301) but it was also noted that teachers who could not speak both Dutch and English and who had no knowledge of the Boers, were ineffective in these schools even if otherwise well equipped as teachers (Great Britain 1901a: 276).

The scope of schooling provided at these schools was generally elementary and extended no further than the 4 R's — reading, writing, arithmetic and religion. The medium of instruction was English, but Dutch was used in religious instruction. Although some parents objected to their children learning English, most were pleased for the opportunity for their children to learn English. The children showed similar enthusiasm and made good progress in acquiring the language (Great Britain 1901a: 169, 172, 200, 276, 375; Great Britain 1901b: 43; Great Britain 1902b: 150).

#### **5.2.4.2.2 *The attitude of the refugee parents towards the concentration camp schools***

Some of the schools were so popular that they were already at the time of opening, too small to accommodate all those wishing to attend. Even young adults used the opportunity that these camp schools offered to gain some education. These older pupils were particularly eager to learn English (Great Britain 1901a: 262, 275, 276, 298; Great Britain 1901b: 43; Great Britain 1902b: 144; 172).

Ingenious ways of encouraging parents to make use of the schools and to take an interest in their children's education were adopted. At Belfast, the school master would hold a résumé of the

children's work each Friday afternoon and parents would be invited to attend to see for themselves what progress had been made (Great Britain 1901a: 231). In other instances, the schoolmaster would visit parents personally or hold public meetings at which the value of schooling was emphasised. The more common reasons for children being kept from school included illness (there were several outbreaks of infectious diseases in the concentration camps) or being kept home to do chores (Great Britain 1901a: 122). There were also instances where parents objected to sending their children to these schools since they did not want their children to be taught in English. Some would remark that they would wait till the war was over and if the English won, then their children would have to learn English; but if not, then they would learn in Dutch. Other deterrents were the rumours being spread. One was that the government intended to teach the children English, gather them into Pretoria and ship them off to England. Another was that the free education was a mere trick and after the war, parents would be called upon to pay arrears of fees at the rate of £5 per child per quarter (Great Britain 1901a: 122, 195, 276).

From the concentration camp reports it can be deduced that the Education Department schools were generally appreciated and well supported. However, an incident which took place at the Irene camp on the outskirts of Pretoria needs to be mentioned since it provides insight into another side of the general attitude towards education. At this camp, a Dutch school comprising three classes was started without the knowledge of the camp superintendent. Although Dutch teaching had not been explicitly forbidden it was understood that no such school could be established without consent from the government (Great Britain 1901a: 352). When the camp was inspected by a committee appointed by the Secretary of State for War, they found that a Mr Leibrandt was conducting a Dutch school of 808 children. Evidently, the schoolmaster and his school had the support of a large number of parents. The school master was reprimanded and six months later when the camp was again visited, no mention was made of the Dutch school (Great Britain 1902b: 121).

### 5.2.4.3 *The provision of education towards the end of the war*

Although the concentration camp schools continued to exist for some time after peace was declared<sup>120</sup>, they soon dwindled as families returned to their homes. The last of these schools closed at the end of 1902. Apart from the town schools that had continued during the war, several other schools were established in towns held by the British with the military authorities often taking the initiative in this regard. After six months of the cessation of the hostilities there were 79 town schools in operation (Transvaal Education Department 1902: 3). Attendance at town schools became higher — higher even than in pre-war times — because many towns became small-scale refugee camps<sup>121</sup>. Another possible reason for the increase could have been an increase of interest shown by parents and children in school-going.

Once the burghers returned to their farms, country schools started being developed. In September 1902, 10 farm schools were opened and by the end of January 1903, they numbered 101. Teachers were drafted from the camp to the country schools. It was customary to send two women teachers or one man to each of these schools. It also happened that one overseas and one Afrikaner woman teacher were placed together at a farm school, a situation said to have worked well (Transvaal Education Department 1902: 2; Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 12-16).

However, the cessation of hostilities and a changed political situation necessitated both the reorganisation of education and the drafting of new education regulations.

### 5.2.5 Post-war education in the Transvaal under British Rule [1903-1907]

As a result of the war, the ZAR became a Crown Colony governed by the High Commissioner of South Africa, Lord Milner. During the period of repatriation the country remained under martial law and Sargant and Mr Fabian Ware [1903-1905] who succeeded Sargant as Director of Education in the Transvaal in 1903 when the common control of the two regions came to an

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120 The Peace of Vereeniging was signed on 31 May 1902 bringing an end to the war.

121 Many of the farms had been destroyed during the war. Farm homesteads and crops were plundered and burnt during hostilities and many of the refugees had nowhere to stay other than the towns where, as *bijwoners*, they were able to find temporary employment [Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 14].

end<sup>122</sup>, did much to advance education in the newly annexed Transvaal Colony (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 25). The objective of the Milner regime was the anglicisation of the Colony. To facilitate the reconstruction and remoulding of the education system to achieve this goal, it was decided to institute a centralised administration system in the belief that such methods would best serve the ends (Malherbe 1925: 315).

#### 5.2.5.1 *British attempts at post-war education legislation*

The ZAR school law was abolished during Military Rule and with its abolition, new education legislation was required to define the direction the provision of education would take under the new government. Sargent contended that the revival of local school committees would be expedient for these committees could relieve the central office from several of its duties and simultaneously encourage local participation and interest in education. However, Milner preferred a centralised system believing that the anglicisation policy could be jeopardised if local bodies were given too much say (Malherbe 1925: 316).

On 25 February 1903 the first education ordinance under British Colonial administration was passed. According to *Ordinance No. 7, 1903* (Transvaal Education Department 1903) state initiative substituted parent initiative regarding the establishment of schools. Provision was *inter alia* also made for:

- the establishment of a Department of Public Education under the Director of Education (Transvaal Education Department 1903: §1[a])
- free elementary education (Transvaal Education Department 1903: preamble)
- grants for denomination schools (Transvaal Education Department 1903: §1[c])
- denominational religious instruction by ministers of religion and undenominational religious instruction by teachers, both of which could be given in Dutch (Transvaal Education Department 1903: §5[1] & [2])
- the "conscience clause" according to which children might be exempted from attendance of religious instruction classes if their parents wished this (Transvaal Education Department 1903: §5[3])

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Mr Hugh Gunn was appointed Acting Assistant Director of Education in the Orange River Colony at the same time. See 5.1.3.4

- instruction in Dutch to the extent of 5 hours a week for children whose parents desired it (Transvaal Education Department 1903: §6)
- the appointment (by the Lieutenant-Governor) of local committees who would function in a consultative and advisory capacity and whose duties would be defined by the Governor (Transvaal Education Department 1903: §8).

In the years to come, the matter of local control which had been so central an issue in education legislation under the ZAR, would prove to be a matter which education authorities and legislators would persistently be called upon to deal with.

#### *5.2.5.1.1 Local control and the establishment of local advisory bodies*

Ware shared Sargant's view that the government should introduce a policy of devolution of authority and proceeded by means of several regulations to stimulate local interest in education. Towards the end of 1903 *Government Notice 860, 1903* (Transvaal Education Department 1906b:2) ruled that all government free schools (outside Pretoria and Johannesburg) having an average attendance of over 100 pupils were permitted to establish Advisory Committees elected by the parents. The chief duties of the committees were to visit the school and to hear parents' grievances. Their duties and powers were limited and there was little doubt that they merely acted in an advisory capacity. No action could be taken without the sanction of the Central Department. Ware noted in his annual report that although the committees were successful, it was clear that there was a certain sensitiveness regarding the limitation of their powers. In August 1904 the number of children attending the school qualifying for its own committee was reduced to 60 pupils and in December 1905 to 30 pupils (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 2).

During this time, a separate system of school committees had also come into being. A number of so-called fee-paying secondary schools were being maintained by the government parallel to the free government elementary schools. These schools had been established because there were parents who objected to their children associating with an indiscriminate collection of children at the free schools. These schools were distinguished from the free schools, not only by a superior staff, but also by the social class stamp that resulted from the levying of fees. The classification as "secondary" schools was erroneous since the curriculum at these schools was identical to that of the elementary schools. However, the continuation of these schools was permitted provided that

the curriculum was indeed upgraded to that of a secondary school. In addition, the government grant was restricted to a capitation grant. All expense above this amount was to be met by the committee in whose hands the control of the school was placed (Transvaal Education Department 1905a: Appendix F: 57-60).

These committees had more powers than the Advisory Committees of the government free schools. The committee consisted of 5 to 10 members who managed and controlled the school. The Resident Magistrate and the Inspector of Schools were *ex officio* members. The Lieutenant-Governor had the right to nominate additional members but the members so nominated together with the *ex officio* members could not exceed two-fifths of the total number of the committee (Transvaal Education Department 1905a: Appendix F:§2). All fathers or male guardians of scholars who had paid fees or other male adults who had contributed towards the support of the school (a sum not less than the annual school fees) were eligible to vote. Any male adult residing within the magisterial district of the school was eligible to stand for election (Transvaal Education Department 1905a: Appendix F: §3). This committee was responsible *inter alia* for the:

- general management of the school
- financial control of the school and the fixing of school fees
- nomination of teachers to be appointed by the Director of Education
- suspension, but not dismissal, of teachers in a case of misconduct
- granting of the use of the school buildings after hours on conditions determined by the committee (Transvaal Education Department 1905a: §12, §13, §14, §16, §17 & §22).

These regulations applied to 12 schools established under the aforementioned conditions (Transvaal Education Department 1905a).

These schools were later integrated with the free schools and were granted the same functions and powers assigned to all school committees under the new regulations issued under *Government Notice 1117, 1905* which extended the powers of committees (Transvaal Education Department 1905b). These regulations and extension of powers were owed largely to the commitment of Lord Selborne<sup>123</sup> — who had succeeded Milner as Governor — to improving education. The basic principles of his concept for education were outlined in his memorandum — dubbed the Selborne Minute — issued on 17 November 1905.

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123 See 5.2.6

### 5.2.5.1.2 *The Selborne Minute: the Magna Carta for education reform and its influence on education legislation*

Selborne showed great interest in educational matters and issued the Selborne Minute which could well be called the *Magna Carta* for Transvaal local control in education. He believed that two of the main dilemmas in the education system as it stood were the desire of parents to have a say in the selection of their children's teachers, the need to establish local school committees, and the Dutch language medium question (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 152-157).

#### □ ADVISORY SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY SCHOOL BOARDS

In relation to the first issue, Selborne proposed the appointment of an Advisory School Committee at each government school elected by the parents of children registered at the school regardless of the number of children attending the school<sup>124</sup>. Selborne had been struck by the healthy relationship between the existing committees which had been established in accordance with previous regulations<sup>125</sup> and the teachers and the government. He had found the committees enthusiastic and competent and believed that the system of education would be strengthened and improved by the extension of the principle of local involvement in education. He was also of the opinion that the functions of the committees should be enlarged and that they should be entrusted with the general supervision of the school including the buildings and grounds and should be given a direct advisory position in connection with the selection and suspension of teachers. In relation to the selection of a teacher, Selborne remarked that

*... I am not of opinion that the Government, great as its responsibility is in this matter, can relieve the parents of children of that natural responsibility which every parent ought to feel in respect of the character of the teacher who is to teach his children. As a matter of fact, I have found school committees everywhere deeply interested in this question, and I have found that in this matter, questions of race, happily, have not been allowed to enter (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 155).*

To further improve the system, Advisory School Boards for larger districts were proposed to act as intermediaries between the Education Department and the school committees. These Advisory

124 At that stage, only schools with a minimum of 60 children were eligible for Advisory Committees [Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 153]. See 5.2.5.1.1

125 *Government Notice No. 860, 1903* [Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 163].

School Boards together with Advisory School Committees were to constitute the permanent local educational machinery. The general supervision of primary education within the districts was delegated to the boards bringing them in direct relation with the Education Department on the one hand, and with the school committees—and hence the parents of the children in the schools – on the other (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 2, 17).

According to the regulations of *Government Notice No. 1117, 1905* (Transvaal Education Department 1905b) which incorporated several of Selborne's proposals, the Advisory School Board comprised 6-9 members. The resident magistrate was the *ex officio* chairman of the board and the Lieutenant-Governor could nominate as many members as would, together with the chairman, make up one third of the total number of members. The remaining two thirds of the members were to be elected by the members of the Advisory School Committees of the district (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §10 & §11).

School committee members were to be elected by the male parents and male guardians of the children at the school. Candidates for the committee had to be white males who were qualified to vote or who were resident within the ward of the school (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §3 & §5). The number of members on the Advisory School Committee was determined by the number of children attending the school (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §2). The school committees had *inter alia* the powers and duties to:

- select a teacher for appointment or suspend a teacher in the event of misconduct (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §24)
- appoint from among its members 3 visitors of the school, or if so determined to appoint 2 visitors and as a third visitor, a woman, chosen from among the mothers of families attending the school or resident in the Ward to visit the school (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §25)
- receive complaints of parents in relation to:
  - the character of the religious instruction given
  - alleged inefficiency of teaching
  - ill-treatment of scholars or the misconduct of teachers
  - neglect of school premises

- disorder and want of cleanliness of scholars
- matters impairing the efficiency of the school or the well-being of the scholars (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §26)
- make arrangements for the use of the school premises for other purposes beyond school hours (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §28)
- submit reports to the Advisory School Board as specified (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §29)
- arrange an annual Arbor Day (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §30)
- arrange school sports days and school treats (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §32).

#### □ THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

In relation to the language issue, Selborne distinguished between the question of medium of instruction and the question of language lessons. Without doubt, the objective was that every child should acquire a thorough knowledge of English and as soon as the child understood the language, it was to be made the medium of instruction. He was fully aware of the importance of mother tongue instruction during the early years of education stating that *... learning is, therefore, easier for him if he learns at first through the medium of this, the language he understands* but added that since the Dutch child had a natural aptitude for languages, English should be introduced earlier than the third standard as had been suggested in education circles. As far as the Dutch language was concerned, Selborne advised the teaching of Dutch in all government schools to all children whose parents desired it — an issue which applied to children of Dutch and of British parentage. Further advice in this regard was that

*... no children can be taught Dutch whose parents object to it, but, with this proviso, I should say that the more children are taught Dutch, the easier and the better will be organisation of the instruction. The school committees should be freely consulted as to the time and attention to be given to the teaching of Dutch, subject, of course, always to the provisions of the existing Public Education Ordinance, Sections 5 & 6 (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 156).*

The specifics of the language policy were also dealt with under *Government Notice No. 1117, 1905* in which it was stipulated that teachers were allowed to use either English or Dutch as the

medium of instruction as long as they made themselves understood to the children. English was to be used as the medium as soon as the children were able to follow the teacher's instruction in English. A knowledge of English as prescribed for each standard was a precondition for promotion from one standard to the next (Transvaal Education Department 1905b: §46 & §47).

The rationale of Selborne's minute to a great measure foreshadowed the Smuts Act which was the next step in the direction of extended education legislation for the Transvaal.

#### 5.2.5.2 *Conditions in relation to education under British administration*

An indication of the schooling conditions and the attitude towards the education provided at this stage can be gained from a survey of education reports submitted by the Inspectors of education to the Director of Education. Several issues which appear to have been rather prominent and which were of interest to parents during this period are discussed below.

##### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Attendance was often irregular owing to several causes: the indifference of parents to the importance of continuity and regularity in school attendance, the scarcity of labour and the lack of money to hire the necessary hands during harvesting and ploughing operation (Transvaal Education Department 1905c: 14, 22). Regulations determined that no scholar's name was to be retained on the school register after more than a fortnight's absence (Transvaal Education Department 1905c: 5) which probably gave rise to an inaccurate reflection of the prevailing conditions of education.

##### COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

The issue of compulsory education had been raised in the 1905 Education Report. It became evident that of the 62 277 children between 5 and 15 years of age, 25 137 were not accounted for in schools. This was a situation which could only be addressed by the state — the perceived solution being the introduction of compulsory school attendance. The introduction of compulsory schooling would require that elementary education facilities would need to be increased in certain towns. In the country districts, bringing elementary education within reach of all white children could only be achieved at

considerable expense (Transvaal Education Department 1906a: 10). However, it was strongly believed that in the interests of the individual and of social well-being, the time was ripe for the introduction of compulsory education: primary education would be provided free and all parents would be compelled — within reason — to take advantage of the opportunity (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 42-43).

□ THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

The status of English was assured in terms of the anglicisation policy — it was the status of Dutch that was in question. The promotion of Dutch was hampered by the clause in the language regulation which made its instruction optional at the request of the parents (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 49). In practice, the instruction of Dutch as a language posed a problem in schools where only a few out of each class wished to take it as a subject. The Middelburg school attempted to address this difficulty by regarding Dutch as a class subject. No child was compelled to learn, but it was taken for granted that each child would attend the class and learn the language unless the parents expressed their wish to the contrary (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 67). It seemed that there was no universal demand for the instruction in Dutch, but in the opinion of the Inspector, instruction in Dutch should be made compulsory for a knowledge of the language would be useful to all (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 79).

□ RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

In accordance with education legislation, the subject was being taught from a historical point of view. Since no complaints regarding the teaching of the subject had been forthcoming from the parents during that year (June 1905-June 1906) it was assumed that the staff were conscientious in their work (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 50).

□ PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

A general conclusion reached during the inspection of schools during the year under review (June 1905-June 1906) was that the novelty of free education had to some extent lost its attraction to parents and children. Parents were less disposed to make sacrifices to send and to keep children at school; children were less urgent in imploring their parents

to be allowed to attend school. It was also true that there was a considerable proportion of the population who were indifferent to the advantage which education could bring their children. Children were withdrawn from school on frivolous pretexts. The motivation for this attitude, it was believed, could range from indifference, selfishness, or even perhaps animosity to either the teacher or the system. Nonetheless, it was the children who were suffering from this injustice (Transvaal Education Department 1906b: 42-43).

Although there were indications that elements of the system were appreciated and approved, the education programme did not have the undisputed support of the Colony and it was natural that those who were displeased would seek alternative ways of fulfilling their aspiration in relation to education.

#### 5.2.5.3 *The rise of Christian National Education in the Transvaal*

Understandably a number of Dutch burghers were opposed to the direction education was taking under the British Department of Education and, to keep their children out of the government schools, a system of private schools known as the Christian National Education (CNE) schools was established<sup>126</sup>. The initial committee responsible for this move was a group of six Dutch teachers who formed themselves into an organisation known as the *Vriendekring*. Substantial financial assistance for the project emanated from Holland. The arrival of these funds simplified the task of establishing and supporting the proposed schools (Bot 1951: 52).

The main contention was that the 1903 Ordinance<sup>127</sup> ostensibly gave no pledge that Christian and God-fearing men and women would be appointed as teachers. Moreover, it was considered that the government regulations, by its suppression of Dutch, threatened the national spirit of the people (Malherbe 1925: 321). The aim of these schools was consequently to perpetuate the religion, language, history and traditions of the Dutch-speaking people of the Transvaal. To achieve these objectives it was necessary that the system was centrally administered. A system of school committees stringently controlled the appointment of teachers and most other matters of

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126 See 5.2.4.1

127 See 5.2.5.1

importance in school management. The committees of the CNE schools were elected for each school by the parents of the children attending the school (Transvaal and Orange River Colony 1904: 36-38). These schools were very successful and soon a system rivalling that of the government had been established<sup>128</sup>. The general curriculum was equal in standard to that of the government institutions and to keep a check on the standards, an Inspector was appointed (Bot 1951: 52).

The two principles over which the government and the CNE organisation could not reach agreement were that parents should have a voice in the appointment of the teachers and that Dutch should enjoy the same status as English as the medium of instruction. These were the principles that the Dutch Transvaaler saw as guaranteeing the religious character of education and a means of preserving his own national aspirations and traditions (Bot 1951: 52).

Although these schools were established in opposition to the government schools, the attitude of the authorities was not entirely negative. Warre Cornish [1904-1905], acting Director of Education, remarked in relation to these schools that

*... I am prepared to say that the school is in every essential a model of what the department itself makes its aim. As regards language, the curriculum and methods secure all that the Government have ever wished to secure, viz., that the scholar, on leaving school, should be thoroughly proficient in the English language, and, if he is of Dutch birth, properly furnished with a literary knowledge of Grammatical Dutch. ... As regards religion, they are of various denominations, Dutch, Scotch, and English. What is it then that keeps the Committee of this school aloof from co-operation with the Government? Nothing that one can see, except some relic of mistrust which it is to be hoped will be removed by the introduction of representative institutions (Cornish in Malherbe 1925: 323).*

Initially the CNE movement worked towards securing education for the children of Boer traditionalists, but it was later used as a political propaganda instrument. Many of the leaders of the organisation became members of the first Cabinet to hold office when Responsible Government was granted in 1906. General Smuts became Minister of Education and promised to introduce an

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128 By 1906 there were 200 of these schools [Malherbe 1925: 322].

education law that would satisfy the aspirations of CNE. Due to a lack of funds and the confidence placed in Smuts, the CNE institutions capitulated and were assimilated into the government system under the Smuts Education Act of 1907 (Bot 1951: 54).

**5.2.6 Responsible Government and adjustment in the provision of education [1907-1910]**  
The outcome of the Anglo-Boer war was that the independent ZAR was reduced to a Crown Colony under the administration of Lord Milner. When Milner left South Africa as High Commissioner in 1905, it was the intention that the Transvaal would pass through an intermediate stage of Representative Government before Responsible Government was granted, but due to a change of government in Britain, Responsible Government was instituted in the Transvaal in 1906. Lord Selborne succeeded Milner as Governor and proceeded with the transfer of authority (Malherbe 1925: 325). Under self-government the Transvaal Parliament paid particular attention to education legislation. General Smuts was appointed Director of Education and one of his achievements — alluded to above — was the assimilation of the CNE schools into the government education system. The other milestone of the period was the promulgation of the Education Act of 1907.

#### **5.2.6.1 *The assimilation of the CNE schools***

The granting of Responsible Government created conditions under which the assimilation of the CNE schools into the government system could become a reality. Although arguments continued to be put forward by CNE zealots — statements were made that inferred that the government school was based on a lie and a presumption for it placed the government between God and the parent; that the government school was a steady but certain poison for all true religion and that it could never provide their children with education imbued with a national spirit — Smuts, as the first Minister of Education, dealt with the issue with proficiency. He reasoned that the one way to keep apart the two peoples destined to dwell together in the country, was to educate them in separate and distinct schools. By bringing them together in their impressionable school days, racial animosities would disappear. He promised an education law that would embody that which was good from the previous system and at the same time the aspirations of those who had been led to establish the CNE system (Malherbe 1925: 336).

### 5.2.6.2 Smuts' Education Act of 1907

*Act No. 25, 1907, An Act to amend the Law relating to Public Education and for other purposes* — commonly known as the Smuts Act — assented to on 19 August 1907, repealed the Education Ordinance of 1903 and set the new trend for the provision of education. According to this law, provision was *inter alia* made for:

- the establishment of an Education Department administered by a Director of Education appointed by the Governor and subject to the direction and control of the Minister (Transvaal Education Department 1907: I §3) and the establishment of a Council of Education comprising a Director and 4 other members to advise the Minister (Transvaal Education Department 1907: II §7 & §8)
- the establishment or maintenance of primary schools and aided farm schools where free primary education (save under certain conditions) would be provided (Transvaal Education Department 1907: III §16-§18)
- the establishment and maintenance of secondary schools, trade or industrial schools and teachers' training institutions at which fees would be levied (Transvaal Education Department 1907: IV §23-§27)
- compulsory education for every white child between 7 and 14 years of age and the appointment of attendance officers to warn and prosecute persons who disregarded the regulation (Transvaal Education Department 1907: III §19 & §21)
- a system of education where the medium of instruction would be the native language of the pupil in the lower standards for such time as was required to ensure proper educational progress and development; English would be introduced by the third standard (Transvaal Education Department 1907: VI §30)
- promotion from one standard to the next dependent on the progress made in the English language (Transvaal Education Department 1907: VI §31)
- the teaching of Dutch as a language in every public school to every child unless the parent desired otherwise (Transvaal Education Department 1907: VI §32[1]) and the use of Dutch as the medium of instruction in any two subjects other than the instruction in the Dutch language above the third standard (Transvaal Education Department 1907: VI §32[2])
- the right of the governing body to appeal to the Minister regarding the medium of instruction (Transvaal Education Department 1907: VI §33)
- non-doctrinal religious instruction, the opening of each school day with scripture reading

- and prayer; instruction in Bible history by the teacher during school hours; the inclusion of the "conscience clause" (Transvaal Education Department 1907: VII §34)
- the local management of schools through the constitution of schools boards in the various school districts as well as the constitution of school committees (Transvaal Education Department 1907: IX §38, §39 & §66)
  - the appointment of one third of the members of the School Boards by the Minister and the remainder elected by taxpayers resident in the district; those eligible for nomination were any white persons of full age residing in the district and no person would be disqualified on account of gender (Transvaal Education Department 1907: IX §40 & §41)
  - the duties of the School Board to encompass:
    - making decisions regarding the establishing or closing of schools
    - visiting schools
    - dealing with matters referred to them by the school committee
    - keeping records, accounts and administering funds
    - making decisions regarding the use and care of school buildings
    - receiving the Inspector's reports (Transvaal Education Department 1907: IX §57-§65)
  - the appointment of school committees comprising 5-6 members by parents resident within the school district or within 3 miles of the boundaries thereof and who had one or more children on the roll of the school (Transvaal Education Department 1907: IX §67)
  - the duties of the school committee to encompass:
    - bringing matters concerning the welfare or the efficiency of the school to the notice of the board
    - taking part in the appointment or suspension or dismissal of teachers
    - discharging other duties or powers delegated by the board (Transvaal Education Department 1907: IX §71)
  - the management of schools by the School Board in cases where school committees had not been established (Transvaal Education Department 1907: IX §68).

The initial effect of and attitude towards this legislation on the provision of education can be deduced from the education report submitted by the Director of Education, J.E. Adamson [1905-1924] during 1908 which will be discussed below.

### 5.2.6.3 *The effect of the Smuts Act on education*

The significance of the Smuts Act have been outlined above, yet the primary effect of the Act in the schools needs to be reviewed. Issues of significance in relation to the thesis relate to issues such as the attitude of parents to the principles of the legislation and provisions made for parental involvement in education; the principle of compulsory attendance; the language issue and religious instruction. From a perusal of the report, a number of deductions can be made.

#### □ GENERAL COMMENTS

The increase of activity in relation to education was seen to be a consequence of the fact that the principles and ideals of the Smuts Act were familiar and acceptable to the people of the Colony — many of whom had previously stood aloof in relation to the provision of education. It was further believed that the presence of compulsory clauses had brought some parents to a sense of their duty towards their children (Transvaal Education Department 1909: 1-2)

#### □ SCHOOL BOARDS

The School Boards showed a keen desire to co-operate with the Department in the furtherance of education. They showed the *utmost zeal and readiness to sacrifice business and leisure time* (Transvaal Education Department 1909: 10) to fulfil their commitments. In relation to particular boards in the various districts the following points were mentioned by the various Inspectors:

- these boards had the local knowledge and influence to promote the conditions of the new law in dealing with the supply of schools (J.D. Kerrich, Eastern Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 50)
- the board had the welfare and progress of education at heart (H.P. Mills, Northern Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 58)
- the boards showed firmness in adopting the policy of amalgamating schools but did not grudge granting the establishment of a small school in a neighbourhood where circumstances did not lend themselves to amalgamation (C. Mansfield, Pretoria District, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 65)

- the boards were anxious to demonstrate their independence and managed the affairs entrusted to them with as little outside assistance as possible and jealously guarded their honour and dignity; the attitude of the boards to the new legislation was sympathetic and they were anxious to implement its provisions as amicably as possible demonstrating patience and taking a broad and generous view of their duties (N. Hofmeyer, South-Eastern Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 74)
- the board considered it one of its primary duties to make the government system acceptable to the people, but had sometimes sanctioned the establishment of schools contrary to their declared policy of amalgamation; yet the board would be strong enough to enforce the policy as the need arose in the future since *they have a growing body of intelligent public opinion to back them* (M. White, Western Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 84)

#### □ ATTITUDE OF PARENTS TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

- parents were indifferent to the importance of their children attending school regularly, there was a general attitude of apathy towards education and little self-denial to ensure that children received proper education (Transvaal Education Department 1909: 56, 61, 68, 75, 94)
- Dutch parents were anxious for their children to make progress in English (Transvaal Education Department 1909: 76)
- after the introduction of the compulsory attendance clause — but without the necessary machinery to ensure its enforcement — parents believed that the authorities were afraid to set the law in motion and were even more disposed to keeping their children from school (Transvaal Education Department 1909: 82)
- parents (*Boerenbevolking*) were most appreciative of the interest shown by the Inspectors in the education of their children and commented that

*... [i]edereen scheen uitermate in zijn schik om te zien, dat de Regering geen moeite of onkosten ontziet om de belangen van de Hollandse taal op de scholen te bevorderen. Hierdoor zal de zaak van de opvoeding ongetwijfeld een goede stoot vooruit krijgen, vooral op 't platteland. Het gebeurde dikwijls*

*dat ouders de inspektie bijwoonden, omdat zij dezelve in 't Hollands volgen konden. De belangstelling in de opvoeding van hun kinderen wordt hierdoor ook zeer aangewakkerd* (T.C. Stoffberg, Western Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 102).

#### ☐ COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

It was generally felt that the compulsory clauses had very little effect on the attendance. One of the reasons to which this was attributed was the fact the attendance officers had either not been appointed, or although they had interviewed defaulting parents, no action had been taken. Another assumed cause was that many children were beyond the three mile radius of an existing school and were consequently not affected by the clause (Transvaal Education Department 1909: 52, 56, 61, 68, 71, 75, 82).

#### ☐ LANGUAGE

Due to the proviso's of the language clauses of the Act, School Boards showed a preference for bilingual teachers (Transvaal Education Department 1909: 16). General Circular No. 1 of 1908 provided instructions regarding the language issue in public schools, contemplated that schools would fall into three broad categories:

- the country school where the introductory medium was Dutch
- the Rand and Pretoria schools where the medium was mainly English and where the study of Dutch was gradually introduced
- the town schools where the pupils were of different nationalities and where a special method of meeting the medium difficulty was required (Transvaal Education Department 1909: 26-27).

The general position was that practically no pupils had been withdrawn from the Dutch lessons and the study of both English and Dutch was a general principle throughout the Colony (Transvaal Education Department 1909: 27).

The following comments were received from individual Inspectors:

- the spirit in which the teachers had accepted the recommendations of the Circular was worthy of the highest praise (F.H. Thompson, Johannesburg and Rand Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 53)

- in places the Dutch teachers knew no English and the English teachers could speak no Dutch; *English teachers thus situated should remember that they have less excuse for not learning Dutch than the Dutch teachers have for not learning English, for they are surrounded by people who speak the language of which they are ignorant* (C. Mansfield, Pretoria District, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 68)
- the language circular was most effective, the only hindrance being the lack of bilingual teachers (N. Hofmeyer, South-Eastern Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 76)
- parents in the region opposed the conditions set out in the language circular, but the dissatisfaction arose from misunderstanding and no alteration was thus required (M. White, Western Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 94).

#### □ RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Few Inspectors commented on the nature of the religious instruction provided and only the following observations were forthcoming.

- *A good deal of time is devoted to this important subject, but I think a good many teachers look upon it as a mere part of the ordinary curriculum. The result is a dull half-hour practically wasted, instead of an inspiring character-stimulus to many a boy and girl* (N. Hofmeyer, South-Eastern Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 76).
- *In no subject is there such a gulf fixed as that between the teacher who looks upon this subject as his great opportunity and the teacher who is poorly equipped to start with and does not take the least trouble to prepare his lesson. In no other subject have I heard teachers so nearly reach perfection, and in no other subject have I heard such dull and ineffectual lessons* (M. White, Western Circuit, in Transvaal Education Department 1909: 96).

Perhaps comments from two divergent factions regarding the Act would best provide the general view of the Transvaalers in relation to the most recent of legislation affecting their children's education.

The Director of Education, J.E. Adamson remarked that

*... generally, I think it is true to say that the Education Act of 1907 is in a real sense a Transvaal Act in that it reflects, as it should, the aspirations and traditions of the Transvaal people, and is, at the same time, a comprehensive statutory instrument which embodies the principles of a sound system of public education, and under which suitable and liberal educational opportunities may be given to all sections of the inhabitants of the Colony. It is, in a word, native, sound and liberal (in Basson 1956: 267-268)*

while the Chairman of the *Vereniging van Onderwijzers en Onderwijzeressen in Zuid-Afrika*, W. Klooster noted that

*... de totaal indruk kan worden weergegeven in deze woorden: Niet ons ideaal, maar als overgangswet een stap in goede richting. Wij wilden meer rechten voor de ouders, beter waarborgen voor de taal en de geest van 't onderwijs en geen gratis onderwijs (Klooster 1918: 31).*

In looking back of the years since the first pioneers had established themselves in the region, it is found that the provision of education had indeed come a long way through, very often, discordant and difficult times and likewise — parental involvement in the education of their children.

#### 5.2.7 A review of the attitude and position of parents towards their responsibility and right to provide for the education of their children<sup>129</sup>

Many hardships had had to be endured before the Voortrekkers reached the Transvaal. These trials merely reinforced their devout religious predisposition and it is thus not surprising to find that Voortrekker children did not grow up uneducated since parents regarded it their undisputed duty in response to the baptismal vow to ensure that their children acquired sufficient learning for them to qualify for Church membership. Most parents undertook this responsibility personally since few teachers had accompanied the Trekkers.

Shortly after the region was inhabited the Church and the Volksraad — on behalf of parents — appealed to Holland for teachers since none could be obtained locally. However, once they

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129 No cross-referencing will be made in this section: these preliminary findings will be discussed at greater length in the final chapter.

arrived, disputes regarding whose responsibility it was to provide school buildings, pay salaries and oversee education arose. The first education regulations emphasised that education was a state responsibility but was to have a religious underpinning while the following regulations advocated Church control — presumably since the Church was being held responsible for the teachers' salaries, it was the opinion that it should have the right to dictate related issues. This arrangement must have met with the approval of parents who themselves upheld education of a religious nature. But by the mid 1850's even the Church seemed to have lost interest in the struggle to provide schooling and formal education came to a virtual standstill. The only education during this period seems to be what parents instituted privately to ensure that their children were given a basic education — often not lasting more than three or four months — to prepare them for confirmation. In any case, few parents wished their children to have more than this basic education — ensuring one's daily survival was more important than education.

Political and social tension and strife characteristic of the times, must have had a negative impact on the provision of education for it is interesting to note that only after attempts had been made to unify the individual Republics in the 1860's, was a system of local School Commissions brought into being. However, these Commissions were centrally appointed and parents had no say in the composition of these bodies. Even the Church was given no say in schooling — apart from the fact that all teachers had to be members of the Dutch Reformed Church. A possible motivation for the uncontested state control is that the state had promoted the Dutch Reformed Church to the status of State Church and was thus itself supportive of the Church and in addition, there must have been very few parents sufficiently educated to be able to make a positive contribution to the management of schools. From a review of the educational policy adopted, it can be deduced that the state had indeed taken — what they perceived to be — the parents' wishes into account: religious instruction was obligatory yet non-doctrinal, it was imperative for teachers to be of blameless character and although Dutch was the language of the Colony, provision was also made for instruction in English — an issue many parents supported whole-heartedly. It was only when Dutch was suppressed in the years under British rule that parents objected to their children learning English.

The 1870's were characterised by the establishment of school committees elected by parents. Their duties included deciding on the appointment, suspension and dismissal of teachers, dealing with parent's grievances and in general determining the nature and spirit of education at their children's schools. When it appeared that a too liberal attitude towards religious education was being contemplated by President Burgers, the community repulsed the moves with the result that the pending legislation was amended to fulfil parents' and the community's aspirations. During the period of annexation, Lyle examined the existing education system and found that parents believed that the major shortcomings revolved around issues such as the policy regarding religious instruction — it had to be made compulsory, yet those who did not want their children exposed to religious education were to have the right to withdraw their children; language — the Dutch were anxious for their children to be taught English so English was included in the curriculum; rural education — teachers needed to be trained and local initiative regarding establishing schools had to be supported by the government.

However, with the restoration of the Republic to its former status, Du Toit reinstated the concept that parents were primarily responsible for their children's education and the Church was to assist them in this regard. Religious instruction was the domain of the Church and parents were to decide issues affecting the ethos of the school and select appropriate teachers to ensure an undisputed Christian character in schools. Mansvelt went as far as specifying that school committees were to be appointed by Church Councils.

It was during this time that the Outlanders — predominantly English — decided the time had come for them to provide for their children's educational needs since the state had neglected the education of foreigners. With their own funds, efforts and management system a series of schools which were later commended for their success, were established. After the war and the introduction of British influences in education, the Dutch established their own schools with a similar motivation to ensure that their language was not relegated to an inferior status and to provide education based on a firm religious footing.

Even during the war when education was under state control, schools came into being in the concentration camps that prepared children for confirmation. These schools were later assimilated

into the concentration camp school system. During the first few years after the war parents had little opportunity to become involved in education. Local committees were appointed by the government and their input was confined to a consultative and advisory capacity. This must have proved most frustrating to parents who had enjoyed a measure of say in education prior to the war and it could possibly have been why a separate school committee system evolved during this time. Some of the more affluent or erudite parents established fee-paying schools where better qualified teachers provided a higher standard of education and the children were able to mingle with children from more cultured homes.

Selborne acknowledged that parents had a natural responsibility in respect of approving the character of the teacher who was to teach his children and hence it was important that committees be established where parents had the right to select the teacher. However, there were still several parents who disregarded the importance of education — beyond what was required for Church membership — and it was thus the responsibility of the state to ensure that, in the interests of the individual and the community at large, all children were obliged to attend school. With the implementation of the Smuts Act, parents were again given the right to elect the teachers of their children's schools. With regard to the other contentious issues — language and religious instruction — the state ruled that parents had the right through the governing body to determine the school's language policy and non-doctrinal religious instruction was obligatory but due to the inclusion of the "conscience clause" parents had the right to choose whether their children attended or not. Compulsory education was also introduced in the hope that parents would be brought to their senses to recognise the importance of education and not stand in the way of their children's future.

This then is the state of education and parental involvement and say in education in southern Africa at the close of Colonial rule. In the next and final chapter, a review and an appraisal of the development of the concept parental responsibilities and rights within the context of the 1652-1910 provision of education in South Africa, will be presented.



## CHAPTER 6

### **THE EMERGENCE AND MANIFESTATION OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS IN FORMAL EDUCATION IN COLONIAL SOUTH AFRICA [1652-1910] – SYNOPSIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

*A reading in history provides no easy answers. At the minimum it can stimulate reflection, and at the most result in corrective action.*

*Takanishi*

## CHAPTER 6

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# THE EMERGENCE AND MANIFESTATION OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS IN FORMAL EDUCATION IN COLONIAL SOUTH AFRICA [1652-1910] — SYNOPSIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial responsible parents or substitute caregivers have taken it upon themselves to nurture, educate and discipline their offspring. The fundamental basis of accepting this responsibility is to be found in the innate nature of humanity. Apart from responding to this primordial calling, parents are also accountable to the precepts of state statutes that address the issue of education and child rearing; to international protocols that refer to such issues and to which the particular state is a signatory; and to those tenets of scripts that relate to child rearing issues that apply to adherents of a particular religious persuasion or philosophy of life<sup>1</sup> — an example of which, for the purpose of this thesis, is the Bible as the guide for Christian parents.

It was suggested at the outset of the study that the issue of parental say in education as provided for in current education legislation is perhaps not an entirely unique development and that the concept of parental involvement in education is conceivably as old as education itself<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, the broad aim of this thesis was to trace the development of parental rights and

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1 See 1.1; 1.8.1.3; 1.8.2.1; 2.2.1; 2.7; 2.7.1; 2.7.2 & 2.7.3

2 See 1.2

responsibilities in relation to schooling in South Africa during the Colonial period (which signifies the advent of formal education in the country) in an effort to determine what parents did to ensure that their children's formal education met with their approval and fulfilled their expectations regarding education. A further issue examined in this thesis related to the identification of those issues in education which parents believed they should be afforded the right to regulate. It is opportune to review the foregoing study against the background of the intended objectives of the research as outlined in the first chapter<sup>3</sup>.

## 6.2 A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN

Despite the interest in and present focus on the scope of parental rights and responsibilities in education, a review of the research undertaken in this regard showed that no comprehensive study has yet been made of the development of the concept of parental say in education in South Africa from a historical-educational perspective. Studies of a historical-educational nature that have been made have focussed mainly on the evolution of the provision of education. In order to make a contribution to the field of education, this study has focussed on the development of the concept of parental rights and responsibilities in formal education in Colonial South Africa as an indicator of those issues which parents have regarded as being of importance in education and of the strategies that parents have used to attempt to influence the nature of their children's formal education<sup>4</sup>.

In *Chapter 1* the research problem and its subsidiary aims and objectives were defined. Key concepts underlying the study were briefly outlined and those of particular significance were elaborated on in *Chapter 2* — specifically the concept of a philosophy of life as the motivating force for life and the basis from which the scope of parental rights and responsibilities can be deduced, was analysed. The underlying precepts of a Christian and a humanist or secular philosophy of life in relation to their views on education were outlined and contrasted and in this endeavour authoritative texts such as state legislation that refers to children and their upbringing

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3 See 1.4.2

4 See 1.5 & 3.3

and their education, similar international protocols and Scripture were reviewed in an attempt to establish the scope of parental rights and responsibilities as defined by these documents. These documents were selected as being representative of documents which humanist or secular and Christian parents would consider as being directive in education matters bearing in mind that the Scriptures would apply to Christian parents only.

*Chapters 3, 4 and 5* traced the historical development of the provision of formal education in Colonial South Africa and investigated the development of the concept of parental rights and responsibilities in relation to education. The most significant contribution of these chapters is possibly to be found in the identification of the specific issues which parents desired to control or influence in relation to their children's education. A further contribution was the identification of the strategies and avenues that parents utilised to exercise their educative responsibilities and rights. Based on the available research material, an attempt was made to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed and to evaluate parents' response and commitment to exercising their presumed rights and fulfilling their educative responsibilities.

In this *final chapter* a synthesis of the findings of the research is presented and an appraisal of the issue of parental educative rights and responsibilities is provided. In conclusion, the key issues to emerge from the study are discussed and relevant recommendations are made. Issues requiring further research are also identified.

### 6.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS: A DISCUSSION OF THE KEY ISSUES

To be able to *trace the development of the concept of parental rights and responsibilities in formal education in Colonial South Africa*, it is necessary

- firstly, to understand the *premise* on which parents base their perception of what it is that entitles them to claim the responsibility and right to intervene in their children's education
- secondly, to investigate the *context* in which formal education was provided in the four regions that constituted the Colony.

**6.3.1 A philosophy of life as the premise for the responsibility and right to educate**  
 Parents are the primary educators of their children and are required to provide for *inter alia* the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual upbringing of their children with due regard for their children's best interests<sup>5</sup>. However, education is never neutral but stems from a particular philosophy of life<sup>6</sup>. In the study undertaken, it was found that the Colonial parents were predominantly *Protestant Calvinist* and consequently adhered to a *Christian philosophy of life*. The *Bible* was central to their lives and also central to their children's education and it was in response to the *baptismal vow* that parents undertook their children's education<sup>7</sup>.

For both the Christian and the secular or humanist parent, the focus of education is the guidance and instruction of the child. However, the motivation differs. The *Christian parent* sees the education of his children as an obligation and not an option since he is aware that he is *accountable to God* to bring his children up in the ways of the Lord<sup>8</sup> and education could be seen as "*education for God*". On the other hand, from a secular or *humanist perspective*, the aim of education is the optimisation of inherent potential and the attainment of *self-actualisation*<sup>9</sup> and education could thus be termed "*education for humankind*".

Since the institution of formal schooling it has become necessary to delegate — but not relinquish<sup>10</sup> — this responsibility to the teachers when the child starts school. With the advent of a democracy in South Africa in 1994, the introduction of a human rights culture and the democratisation of societal institutions including education, various issues pertaining to education have come to the fore. Among these is the issue of parental responsibility in education and the scope and right to parental involvement in education<sup>11</sup>.

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5 See 1.2; 2.7.2; 2.7.2.1; 2.7.2.2; 2.7.2.3 & 2.7.3.2

6 See 1.5

7 See 3.2.1.1; 3.3.1; 4.2.1.1; 5.1.1 & 5.2.1

8 See 2.4.2; 2.4.3; 2.4.4; 2.4.5, 2.7.1; 2.7.2.2; 2.7.2.3 & 2.8

9 See 2.5.1; 2.5.2; 2.5.3; 2.5.4; 2.7.2; 2.7.2.2; 2.7.2.3 & 2.9

10 See 1.1 & Dekker in 1.8.1.2

11 See 1.1 & 1.2

Because *parents remain accountable* for ensuring that their children receive an adequate education<sup>12</sup> it could be assumed that they need to be provided with specific means to guarantee that this indeed takes place. In terms of current education legislation in South Africa (which needs to be interpreted against the background of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights which guarantees all South Africans regardless of cultural, religious or linguistic proclivity similar status and a right to equal treatment before the law and to freedom and security of person), all parents

- are held *primarily responsible* for their children's education
- have the *right to representation on school governing bodies* which are the "voice of the parent body" and to play a role in specific facets of their children's education through these bodies<sup>13</sup>.

One of the recurring dilemmas in the provision of education appears to have been the identification of exactly whose responsibility it was to ensure the establishment and maintenance of an effective education system. In most cases there appears to be an oscillation between perceptions that either the Church, the state or parents themselves and even combinations of these role players were responsible for providing and controlling education. An attempt will accordingly be made to identify the part played by each of these agents — bearing in mind that it is well nigh impossible to discuss the contribution of the one without referring to the role played by the other.

### 6.3.2 The provision, control and supervision of education

The European settlers arriving at the Cape were not the first inhabitants of the region, but it was they who introduced the social institutions of western civilization— such as schools — to Southern Africa. *The prevailing education policies of Europe influenced the establishment and the nature of education in Southern Africa*<sup>14</sup>. The following examples can be mentioned:

- when the first settlers arrived at the Cape, it was believed that the provision of education was the undisputed province of the *Church* (as provided for in Article 21 of the Synod of Dordrecht) and its *aim was the attainment of Church membership* and the schools

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12 See 1.9

13 See 1.2 & 2.7.2.3

14 See 3.5.1

that were established embodied this perception<sup>15</sup>

- during Batavian rule, a concerted effort was made to *secularise* the provision of education (as had been provided for by the promulgation of the *School Act* in the Netherlands) and the *broadening of the scope of education* was advocated<sup>16</sup>
- Cradock introduced *gratuitous schooling and the Bell and Lancaster monitor school system* (as was being practised in Britain) during his term as Governor of the Cape Colony<sup>17</sup>
- *teachers were recruited from Britain and/or Scotland and also from the Netherlands* to meet the needs of Southern African schools<sup>18</sup>
- British immigrants to Natal established private schools (before state schools were founded) and offered the "*branches of an English education*"<sup>19</sup>
- the Natal government introduced the *British system of school rules* to its schools<sup>20</sup>.

The introduction and implementation of the education policies outlined above were facilitated by that particular agent that assumed that education fell within its jurisdiction: either the Church, the authorities (state), parents or private individuals or a combination of role players.

In the section that follows, a synopsis of the role of each of these agents will be outlined. The purpose of this discourse is merely to establish the context within which the provision of education occurred. Consequently, an attempt will be made to *trace the broad trends* in relation to the role played by each in the provision, control and supervision of education.

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15 See 3.3.1 & 3.3.3.1

16 See 3.5.1 & 3.5.1.2

17 See 4.1.2.2

18 See 4.1.3.1; 4.1.3.2; 4.2.1.2; 4.2.3.3.1; 5.1.1.1; 5.1.3.1.2; 5.2.1.2; 5.2.3.1; 5.2.3.2 & 5.2.3.3

19 See 4.2.2.1

20 See 4.2.4.2

### 6.3.2.1 *The Church and its role in the provision, control and supervision of education*

The first settlers — the Dutch and the French — were and remained predominately *Protestant in religious orientation*<sup>21</sup> and were acquiescent in allowing the Church to play a leading role in setting up schools and providing teachers. The basic *aim of education* was the attainment of *Church membership*. The importance of Church involvement in education was generally undisputed and both welcomed and requested by the majority of the Colonists. This perception persisted throughout the Colonial period<sup>22</sup>. The following issues can be mentioned in support of this point.

- At the first schools established in the **CAPE COLONY** upon the instruction of the resident Commander<sup>23</sup>, Governor<sup>24</sup> or visiting Commissioner<sup>25</sup>, it was common practice to appoint the *sick comforter as schoolmaster*. Although he was in the service of the Church, he was also a DEIC Company employee and his appointment needed to be confirmed by the Council of Policy. The Church functioned relatively autonomously in relation to the provision of schooling provided that the state sanctioned the decisions of the Church Council<sup>26</sup>.
- The *Church Council* was responsible for determining the *prospective teacher's religious orientation and deciding on his appointment* and, if needed, his dismissal<sup>27</sup>.
- Combined *Church and state* intervention was evident in instances where parents were unable to ensure that their children received a proper education — for example in the case of *slave, indigent or orphan children*<sup>28</sup>.

21 See 3.2.1.1; 3.3.1; 4.2.1.1; 5.1.1 & 5.2.1

22 See 3.3.2.4; 3.4.2; 4.1.3.4; 4.2.1.2; 5.1.1.1 & 5.2.1.2

23 See 3.3.2.2 & 3.3.2.3

24 See 3.3.2.7

25 See 3.3.2.2 & 3.3.2.6

26 See 3.2.3 & 3.3.2.4

27 See 3.3.1; 3.3.2.4; 3.3.3.1; 3.4.2; 3.5.3.3; 4.2.1.1; 5.1.1 & 5.2.1

28 See 3.3.2.2; 3.3.2.5; 3.3.2.6; 3.5.4 & 4.1.2.2

- The *supervision of education* was placed in the hands of the *local clergyman* who was to inspect the schools twice weekly according to the 1685 education regulations<sup>29</sup>.
- The emphasis on religious education taught according to the *tenets of the Reformed Church* was codified in the De Chavonnes School Ordinance<sup>30</sup>.
- Although the *secularisation of education* was advocated under Batavian rule and the role of the Church was restricted, religious instruction was not excluded from the curriculum for the principles of the parents' Christian faith were to be taught under the guidance of the Church<sup>31</sup>. The *Church remained responsible* for those schools that it had established and for overseeing all matters relating to *religious instruction*<sup>32</sup>.
- Under the British occupation that followed, *Church cooperation in the provision of schooling was again sought*. In addition, the number of clerics serving on the controlling body — the Bible and School Commission — was increased placing them in the majority<sup>33</sup>. The role of the Church in supervising education was eventually to give way to state and community control.
- In some instances provision was made for doctrinal religious instruction conducted by the clergy. This instruction was to take place after school hours<sup>34</sup>.
- In NATAL the *various religious denominations* took steps to provide *schools for children of their parishioners*. Later many of these Church schools adopted a non-sectarian stance towards education in order to qualify for a state grant-in-aid towards education<sup>35</sup>.
- When the central Board of Education was first established in Natal, its *membership was overwhelmingly clerical* and it was only later that education legislation barred clerics from

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29 See 3.3.2.8

30 See 3.3.3.2

31 See 3.5.3.4

32 See 3.5.5

33 See 4.1.2.1

34 See 4.2.2.3.1; 5.1.3.2 & 5.2.3.1

35 See 4.2.3.6

membership<sup>36</sup>.

- The **ORANGE FREE STATE** burghers appealed to the Cape Colony Synod of *the Dutch Reformed Church for teachers*. This request was heeded and the Synod was successful in obtaining the services of teachers from the Netherlands<sup>37</sup>.
- Church intervention in education in the **SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC** was cardinal when it was realised that the Volksraad — which had legislated that education was a state responsibility — was unable to finance the provision of education and the *Church was called in to take over the financing and support of education*<sup>38</sup>.
- The South African Republic burghers had confidence in the Church's ability to regulate and provide education. In 1853 Van der Hoff drafted education regulations aimed at ensuring *Church control over education*. In 1857 President Pretorius asked the *Church to provide schooling* because the state school system had disintegrated<sup>39</sup>.
- It was common practice to *appoint the local clergyman to the particular body* with which the supervision and control of education was entrusted<sup>40</sup> — one of the reasons being that the clerics were among the most educated members of society. According to regulations passed in 1877 in Natal and in 1889 in the Orange Free State, the *clergy were not to be automatically appointed* to the School Commission<sup>41</sup>. On the other hand, in 1892, those members appointed to the School Commissions in the South African Republic, were to be *persons approved by the Church Council*<sup>42</sup>.

The Church was actively involved in — but was not solely responsible for — the provision, control and supervision of education. The state was of necessity involved in regulating the provision of education.

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36 See 4.2.3.2 & 4.2.3.7.2

37 See 5.1.1.1

38 See 5.2.1.2; 5.2.1.3 & 5.2.1.4

39 See 5.2.1.3 & 5.2.1.4

40 See 3.3.3.3; 3.4.1; 3.4.2.; 3.5.3.3; 4.1.3.2.2; 4.2.3.2; 5.1.2.2; 5.1.2.5.1 & 5.2.3.3

41 See 4.2.3.7.2 & 5.1.2.5.2

42 See 5.2.3.3

### 6.3.2.2 *The state and its role in the provision, control and supervision of education*

Although it would appear that the Church was the basic provider of education in the early years of the Cape Colony, the state [DEIC] was the principal authority and the Church was subservient to the DEIC so it could be said that the ultimate control of education was vested in the state. State interest in education progressed as attested to by the following events and developments.

- Under Batavian rule of the **CAPE COLONY**, to *advance the secularisation of education*, the state sought the control of education and intentionally minimised the Church's input<sup>43</sup>.
- Under British rule, although the state sought cooperation with the Church in education<sup>44</sup> to *implement the anglicisation policy* of the 1820's, the state needed to play a significant role in providing and regulating schooling<sup>45</sup>.
- In 1714 the *first formal education regulations* were passed by *Governor de Chavonnes*<sup>46</sup>. According to these regulations, a *Body of Scholarchs* was to be established to oversee educational matters. This body would be *subservient to the Council of Policy and the Governor*<sup>47</sup>.
- Under the British [1795-1803] the *School Commission* (Body of Scholarchs) and the *Burgher Senate* — which had replaced the Council of Policy — jointly *controlled education*<sup>48</sup>.
- In time, *district School Commissions* that were accountable to the Bible and School Commission were *appointed by the government* and they were responsible for overseeing education in the districts<sup>49</sup>. After the Bible and School Commission was declared redundant, the district School Commissions were to *report directly to the Superintendent of Education* in whom the final authority lay<sup>50</sup>.

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43 See 3.5.3.1; 3.5.3.2; 3.5.3.3; 3.5.3.4; 3.5.4 & 3.5.5

44 See 4.1.2.1

45 See 4.1.2.2; 4.1.2.3; 4.1.3.2; 4.1.3.2.1 & 4.1.3.4

46 See 3.3.3.2

47 See 3.3.3.2 & 3.3.3.3

48 See 3.4 & 3.4.1

49 See 4.1.3.2.1 & 4.1.3.4

50 See 4.1.4.1

- The duties of the district School Commissions were taken over by the *Divisional Councils in 1855*<sup>51</sup>.
- The control and supervision of schools remained a contentious issue and in 1905 the *state legislated the School Board Act* which provided for the establishment of School Boards and school committees<sup>52</sup>.
- Shortly after the Voortrekkers settled in NATAL, they established a Volksraad and according to its Constitution, the provision and supervision of *education was the province of the state*. However, financial constraints stood in the way of providing education<sup>53</sup>.
- Under the British, the government acknowledged that education was a *state responsibility*. The state also provided *aid to privately established schools* in recognition of their efforts<sup>54</sup>.
- A *Council of Education* and, after its abolition, a *Department of Education* was established to control and supervise education. The provision of education was consequently a state matter with no direct parental or Church involvement<sup>55</sup>.
- The British *government* of the ORANGE FREE STATE, acknowledged its responsibility to *provide teachers* for its citizens' youth<sup>56</sup>.
- When the Dutch took over the administration and governance of the Orange Free State, the *Volksraad accepted responsibility* for providing education facilities<sup>57</sup>.
- In the SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC the *Volksraad accepted responsibility* for the provision of education, but because they lacked the necessary funds, they appealed to the Church Council to take over this part of their responsibility.

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51 See 4.1.4.1

52 See 4.1.4.8

53 See 4.2.1.2

54 See 4.2.2.2

55 See 4.2.3.7.2 & 4.2.4.1

56 See 5.1.1.2

57 See 5.1.1.2; 5.1.2 & 5.1.2.4

- In all four regions, the *state was responsible for facilitating education reform*. These efforts culminated in the *centralisation of education* under a Central Board or Departement of Education under the direction of a Superintendent General or a Director of Education<sup>58</sup>.
- In an attempt to gauge the state's performance in providing education, a number of *Commissions of Enquiry were instituted* — the findings of which were generally incorporated in subsequent *legislation*<sup>59</sup>.
- During the Anglo-Boer War, the British Government took responsibility for establishing *concentration camp schools*<sup>60</sup>.
- The *controlling and supervisory bodies* which included the Church Councils, the Councils of Policy, the School Commissions, the Bible and School Commissions, the School Committees, the Divisional Councils, the School Boards and the Advisory School Committees were all *instituted through state authority*. The election of members to these the bodies varied from state to community appointment — and in some cases, a joint venture<sup>61</sup>.

In view of the preceding, it becomes apparent that somewhere in all these events, parents and the broader community would have needed to respond to the activities of the state in providing education for the developing countries' youth.

### 6.3.2.3 *Parents and the broader community and their role in the provision, control and supervision of education*

The reason for the *Dutch Colonist parents' preoccupation with schooling* — especially a religious education that would culminate in Church membership — is probably to be traced to their *ardent religious beliefs and commitment to the precepts of the baptismal vow* taken at the

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58 See 4.1.4; 4.1.4.7; 4.2.3.2; 4.2.3.3; 5.1.2.5; 5.1.3.2; 5.2.1.6; 5.2.1.7; 5.2.1.7.1; 5.2.1.8 & 5.2.3

59 See 4.1.4.2; 4.1.4.3; 4.1.4.6; 4.1.4.7; 4.2.2.3.1; 4.2.2.3.2; 4.2.3.1; 4.2.3.7.1; 4.2.3.7.4; 5.1.2.4; 5.1.2.5; 5.2.1.8 & 5.2.5.1.2

60 See 5.1.3.1.2 & 5.2.4.2

61 Sources to substantiate this statement are too numerous to warrant their individual identification.

baptism of their children. To the majority, religion and education were inseparable. In reality, parents and the community played an important part in ensuring that the youth of a rather remote part of the world did not grow up illiterate or heathen. The following specific attempts to provide for the education of their children need to be mentioned.

- In the absence of schools — after initial settlement at the Cape and while on Trek to the interior — or when parents believed that the established schools were not providing adequate schooling, *parents resorted to home schooling* and either attended to the *instruction personally* or *employed a tutor or an itinerant teacher* for this purpose. In this type of education the *Bible was the focus of the instruction* together with tuition in the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic<sup>62</sup>.
- The system of *itinerant teaching was especially favoured* by the rural communities in all four regions and it is conjectured that its success could be attributed to the Colonists' desire to arrange their own affairs<sup>63</sup>.
- In the **CAPE COLONY** a number of *private schools* were opened — sometimes in competition with the public schools. As a "quality assurance" measure, these persons were expected to subject themselves to the authority and examination of the Church Council. However, this latter arrangement did not apply to all private schools<sup>64</sup>.
- Some private schools such as the *Latin school, the French school and the Military Academy* were founded (during DEIC rule) as secondary school education institutions<sup>65</sup>. Under the British occupation of the Cape Colony, a *young ladies' seminary* was established<sup>66</sup>.
- When parents were concerned that the standard of local education was inadequate, they resorted to sending their *children abroad* to further their studies<sup>67</sup>.

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62 See 3.3.2.1; 3.3.2.11; 3.4.3; 3.4.4; 4.2.1; 4.2.1.1; 4.2.3.3.1; 5.1.1; 5.2.1.1; 5.2.1.2 & 5.2.1.4

63 See 4.1.2.1; 4.2.2.1; 4.2.3.3.1; 4.2.3.3.3; 5.1.1.2; 5.1.2.5.2 & 5.2.3.3

64 See 3.3.2.9; 3.3.2.13 & 3.4.3

65 See 3.3.2.13 & 3.3.3.4

66 See 3.4.3

67 See 3.3.2.1 & 3.5.4

- Under Batavian rule of the Cape Colony, state provision of education was advanced and for the first time *community involvement was actively sought* for it was proposed that taxes be levied to supplement the costs incurred by the state for financing education<sup>68</sup>.
- During the early Cape Colony era, state and Church bodies controlled and supervised schooling. *Parental or community representation on such bodies was merely incidental* and not provided for through legislation or regulation.
- Three years after the Divisional Councils were appointed to control and supervise schooling, *local communities were given the right to appeal to the Council* to draft regulations applicable to their particular district's schools<sup>69</sup>.
- The first legislation that was passed that gave *parents the legal right to become genuinely involved in their children's education*, was the *School Board Act*. Two-thirds of the members of a School Board were to be elected by the *local tax payers* and the *school committee* was to be comprised of *parents and guardians of children* enrolled at the school. This committee was to be *elected by the parents*<sup>70</sup>.
- In NATAL, *private initiative preceded state provision* of schooling. Most private teachers provided an education with a *firm moral-religious basis*. Nevertheless, a liberal education along the lines of the "English education" was also offered<sup>71</sup>.
- With regard to the supervision of schooling, *local controlling bodies* appointed by the community and parents were first established after 1858 but because these bodies were ineffective, their duties were assigned to the Council of Education and subsequently to the Department of Education<sup>72</sup>.
- Advisory School Committees whose *members were elected by parents and guardians* were established in 1910, but again this initiative met with failure due to the disinterest of the local community<sup>73</sup>.

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68 See 3.5.2.2

69 See 4.1.4.1

70 See 4.1.4.8

71 See 4.2.2.1

72 See 4.2.3.1; 4.2.3.7.2 & 4.2.4.1

73 See 4.2.4.4

- The **ORANGE FREE STATE** government and itinerant school system were not always adequate and to *stimulate local interest in establishing schools*, the government undertook to pay grants to teachers who established *private institutions*. The precondition of the grant was that the teacher should be a member of the Dutch Reformed Church<sup>74</sup>.
- The Orange Free State authorities appear to have viewed parental and community involvement in education as being of importance if the following is considered:
  - In 1855, the *Volksraad adopted a motion to establish district School Commissions* whose members were to *consist of and to be elected by community members*. However, the effectiveness of these bodies was disputed and it was decided to appoint these bodies centrally<sup>75</sup>.
  - In 1863, School Commissions were to comprise the magistrate, the clergyman and *three additional members elected by community members* who had subscribed to the education fund of the school<sup>76</sup>.
  - According to regulations passed in 1874, the Inspector of Schools was to appoint the School Commission although the composition of the body remained the same as in 1863<sup>77</sup>.
  - In 1889 it was stipulated that four members — apart from the magistrate — were to be appointed to the School Commission and that these individuals were *to be elected by the general public and not only the parents of children attending the school*<sup>78</sup>.
  - Under British governance, a Department of Public Education was established and the Lieutenant-General appointed a local school committee. *Parents petitioned the Lieutenant-General for the right to elect the committee members*

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74 See 5.1.2.5.2

75 See 5.1.2.2

76 See 5.1.2.3

77 See 5.1.2.5.1

78 See 5.1.2.5.2

*themselves*<sup>79</sup>.

- The 1905 education legislation allowed for the *majority of the school committee members — only males were eligible — to be elected by the public*<sup>80</sup>.
- In 1907, School Boards were instated and *school committees* comprising community members, but not the magistrate, were *elected by the parents*. The committee members *did not have to be parents*<sup>81</sup>.
- Education seems to have been treated with such disregard in the **ZUID-AFRIKAANSCH REPUBLIC** that it was scarcely possible to establish a state or even a Church system of education. *No private individuals appear to have taken an interest in promoting education* in the area either apart from the following two particular instances.
  - In 1892 the *Transvaal National Union* was founded to protect and promote the interests of the "*outlanders*" — mainly English-speaking foreigners who had descended on the ZAR in the wake of the discovery of gold. The government had made little effort to provide education suited to the needs of these people's children and consequently *The Witwatersrand Council of Education* was founded. By 1896 the *Council* had established a number of very successful private schools that provided for the needs of this particular community<sup>82</sup>.
  - In the wake of the Anglo-Boer War many Dutch parents were opposed to the direction education was taking under the British and consequently established a system of private schools — the *Christian National Education* schools<sup>83</sup>. CNE schools were also established in the Orange Free State and Natal for the same reasons<sup>84</sup>.

Throughout the preceding discussion a rather wide range of perceived parental and community responsibilities and rights with regard to education were alluded to — involvement that ranged from

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79 See 5.1.3.2

80 See 5.1.3.4

81 See 5.1.4

82 See 5.2.3.4

83 See 5.2.5.3

84 See 4.2.4.3 & 5.1.3.3

***accepting personal responsibility*** for ensuring that children received education adequate to meet the perceived aim of education to ***exercising the right*** to supervise the way individual schools were run through representation on statutory bodies instituted for this purpose. A wide variety of such bodies were instituted during the Colonial period — each with a distinctive composition and terms of reference — both influenced and determined by prevailing social and political circumstances.

#### 6.3.2.4 *A cursory review of the diversity and composition of the bodies entrusted with the supervision and control of education*

Initially, before any formal education governance or control structures or bodies had been instituted, parents approached whomever they considered most influential or efficacious with regard to educational matters. Probably the first instance of a concerted effort made by parents to ensure that their children were provided with schooling were the CAPE COLONY'S Stellenbosh burghers who approached *Governor Simon van der Stel* in 1683 to establish a school in the town. They were concerned that their children were in danger of growing up heathen due to the absence of schooling facilities<sup>85</sup>. A similar situation arose when the French Huguenots settled at Fransche Hoek and Drakenstein. They, too, approached *Governor Simon van der Stel* regarding the establishment of a school for their children. This was the first request for schools that provided schooling in a language other than Dutch. However, although the request for the establishment of a school was heeded, exclusive mother tongue instruction was refused and it was not long before the French had been assimilated into the Dutch<sup>92</sup>.

During the early years of the CAPE COLONY, it became recognised policy for *state appointed Church Councils* or *School Commissions* to deal with education matters and parents directed their queries and complaints through either the state's *Council of Policy*, the *Church Council* or the *Body of Scholarchs*. During the second British occupation, district *School Commissions* that were *accountable to the Bible and School Commission* were *appointed by the government*. However, it was *customary for parents to first approach the local clergyman* on such matters

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85 See 3.3.2.7

92 See 3.3.2.9

before bringing grievances to the notice of these bodies<sup>93</sup>.

With the centralisation of education, *locally appointed Divisional Councils* were established and had as one of their functions the control of education in their districts<sup>94</sup>. Then came the *School Boards* of whom the majority were elected by *local tax payers* and the associated school committees comprised of and elected by *parents and guardians*<sup>95</sup>.

When the situation in NATAL is reviewed, it is found that it was repeatedly recommended that *local school committees* be appointed. As early as 1849 provision was made for the establishment of *state appointed committees*. In 1853 it was proposed that schools be managed by local school committees and in 1858 the election of *local controlling bodies* by *subscribers* and the establishment of a *central Board of Education* was suggested. Education legislation in 1910 allowed for the establishment of *Advisory Committees* whose members were *elected by parents and guardians*. However, none of these committees met with any degree of success<sup>96</sup>.

A review of the measures taken to regulate the local control of education in the ORANGE FREE STATE presents the following issues. In 1850, a particular school drafted its *own set of school regulations* — presumably initiated by the teacher or concerned parents — and this praiseworthy act was upheld as an example for other schools<sup>97</sup>. The Volksraad sanctioned the appointment of *district School Commissions* comprising *appointed and locally elected members* in 1855. Because the effectiveness of locally appointed school committees was disputed, it was later decided to *appoint these bodies centrally*<sup>98</sup>. Attempts were made through subsequent legislation to reintroduce *joint community and state appointed School Commissions* that would have the

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93 See 4.1.2.1

94 See 4.1.4.1

95 See 4.1.4.8

96 See 4.2.2.3.1; 4.2.2.3.2; 4.2.3.;1 4.2.3.2; 4.2.4.1 & 4.2.4.4

97 See 5.1.1.3

98 See 5.1.2.2

right to determine the character of the school and the temperament of its teacher<sup>99</sup>.

The setting up of measures to supervise and control education — when it was being provided — in the **SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC** was a difficult process and, for various reasons, appears to have been plagued by failure. In 1859 the *Volksraad* tried to revive education and passed regulations that *inter alia* provided for the *establishment of School Commissions* which would, among other duties, attend to parents' grievances. *Parents had no say in the composition of this controlling body — and neither had the Church*. However, the outcome of these regulations came to nought and education remained inadequate<sup>100</sup>.

In terms of the 1866 education regulations, *the Volksraad appointed general and local School Commission* to supervise and promote schooling, but by 1868 these bodies were disbanded and the control of education was placed with the *state Education Commission and local School Commissions*<sup>101</sup>. According to the Burghers Act [1874], *district School Commissions* comprising the magistrate and *six members elected by the residents* were to be instituted. However, the community and parents had no previous experience in administering education neither had they shown much interest in education and consequently no improvement to the provision of education was forthcoming<sup>102</sup>.

When S.J. du Toit took over as Superintendent of Education in 1881, he made it clear that education — in his opinion — was the *responsibility of the parents* and not the state nor the Church and *reintroduced the system of School Commissions*<sup>103</sup>. Mansvelt modified the composition of the School Commissions in 1892 stating that the additional members were to be *elected to the committee with the sanction of the Church Council* and that these additional

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99 See 5.1.2.3; 5.1.2.5; 5.1.2.5.1; 5.1.3.2; 5.1.3.4 & 5.1.4

100 See 5.2.1.5

101 See 5.2.1.2; 5.2.1.3; 5.2.1.5; 5.2.1.6 & 5.2.1.7.1

102 See 5.2.1.8

103 See 5.2.3.1

members would be "*fathers*"<sup>104</sup>.

Under British rule [1903] a system of *school committees* was revived because it was believed that it was *essential to stimulate local interest in education* if any progress was to be made in the provision of education and during 1905, a system of *Advisory Committees elected by the parents* was instated. At the same time, a separate system of *school committees associated with the fee-paying secondary schools*, also come into being at the initiative of the parents of children attending these schools. *Men and fathers* who had paid the required fees were eligible for election and were allowed to vote. These committees had more power than the Advisory Committee<sup>105</sup>.

In 1907, education legislation was passed that provided for the establishment of *School Boards* of which two-thirds of the members — who could be either male or female — were to be *elected by the tax payers* in the district. *School committees elected by parents* were to be responsible for the welfare of the school and for the appointment of teachers<sup>106</sup>.

From the preceding it becomes apparent that these regulating bodies were either:

- *appointed by the state* at the state's discretion and could thus include or exclude parents dependent on the inclination of the particular appointing authority
- *appointed by the state in conjunction with the community* (parents exclusively and/or members of the broader community) and in which case:
  - the members could comprise *community members and/or parents* with the additional proviso that the members all be *male or that gender discrimination not apply*
  - the prerequisite that the members were *subscribers to an education fund or not* was determined by the particular instance.

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104 See 5.2.3.3

105 See 5.2.5.1.1

106 See 5.2.6.2

The range of allotted duties also proves interesting since it provides insight into that which the authorities, parents and the community regarded as being of importance in education — important enough to warrant influencing or directing.

### 6.3.2.5 *A cursory review of the scope of duties assigned to the formally appointed bodies entrusted with the supervision and control of education*

Since the duties entrusted to these bodies altered as circumstances changed and the composition of the bodies was adapted, the individual responsibilities and rights of each body will not be listed separately and a full range of the duties assigned over the years will be provided.

The duties assigned to the controlling and supervisory bodies included the following:

- to *establish new or close existing schools* as required<sup>107</sup>
- to *supervise and examine schools* and to monitor the annual examination<sup>108</sup>
- to *examine* (with regard to character and qualifications), *approve and appoint the teacher*<sup>109</sup>
- to *admonish*, and if required, *dismiss* intractable teachers<sup>110</sup>
- to *draft school regulations*<sup>111</sup>
- to investigate *teachers' and parents' grievances*<sup>112</sup>
- to determine the *medium of instruction and the language policy*<sup>113</sup>

107 See 3.3.3; 3.3.3.1; 5.1.3.4; 5.2.1.6; 5.2.3.1 & 5.2.6.2

108 See 3.3.3.1; 3.3.3.2; 4.1.3.2.1; 4.1.4.1; 4.1.4.8; 4.2.2.3.1; 4.2.4.4; 5.1.1.3; 5.1.2.2; 5.1.2.5.1; 5.1.3.2; 5.1.3.4; 5.2.1.5; 5.2.1.6; 5.2.1.8 & 5.2.6.2

109 See 3.3.1; 3.3.2.2; 3.3.2.4; 3.3.2.11; 3.3.3; 3.3.3.1; 4.1.4.8; 4.2.2.3.1; 5.1.2.2; 5.1.2.3; 5.1.2.5.1; 5.1.3.4; 5.1.4; 5.2.1.6; 5.2.1.8; 5.2.3.1; 5.2.5.1.1; 5.2.5.1.1; 5.2.5.1.2 & 5.2.6.2

110 See 3.4.2; 4.1.4.8; 5.1.2.3; 5.1.2.5.1; 5.1.4; 5.2.1.6; 5.2.5.1.1 & 5.2.6.2

111 See 3.5.3.4 & 5.2.3.1

112 See 4.1.2.1; 4.1.4.1; 4.1.4.8; 4.2.2.3.1; 5.1.2.5.1; 5.1.3.2; 5.1.3.4; 5.1.4; 5.2.1.6; 5.2.1.8; 5.2.5.1.1 & 5.2.5.1.2

113 See 4.1.3.3; 5.1.2.3 & 5.1.3.2

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- to ensure learners' *regular attendance*<sup>114</sup>
  - to suggest *improvements to the provision of education* and report issues that compromised the schools' success<sup>115</sup>
  - to fix the *school hours*<sup>116</sup>
  - to determine the *school fees* and administer the finances of the school<sup>117</sup>
  - to determine the school's *religious instruction policy*<sup>118</sup>
  - to decide policy regarding the *admission and expulsion of learners*<sup>119</sup>
  - to submit an *annual report* to the authorities<sup>120</sup>
  - for parents or the public to *elect school governance bodies*<sup>121</sup>
  - to arrange *sport days* and an annual *Arbor Day*<sup>122</sup>.

It can be deduced that the issues that bodies involved in the supervision and control of schools sought to deal with or which the state believed fell within their jurisdiction ranged from issues that related to the *administration of the school*, issues that pertained to the *ethos of the school* as well as *instructional issues*.

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114 See 4.1.4.1 & 5.1.3.4

115 See 4.1.4.1; 4.1.4.8; 4.2.4.4; 5.1.2.5.1; 5.1.3.2; 5.1.4; 5.2.5.1.2 & 5.2.6.2

116 See 4.1.4.1

117 See 4.1.4.1; 4.2.2.3.1; 4.2.3.; 5.1.1.3; 5.1.2.3; 5.1.3.4; 5.2.1.8; 5.2.5.1.1

118 See 4.1.4.8; 4.2.3.2; 5.1.3.2 & 5.2.5.1.2

119 See 4.2.2.3.1; 5.1.2.5.1; 5.1.3.2; 5.2.3.1 & 5.1.4

120 See 5.1.2.3; 5.2.1.6; 5.2.1.8; 5.2.3.1 & 5.2.5.1.2

121 See 5.1.3.2

122 See 5.1.3.2 & 5.2.5.1.2

**6.3.2.6 A cursory review of the extent to which parents' educative rights and responsibilities were fulfilled through the control and supervisory bodies**

The findings of Commissions of Enquiry into the state of education conducted in the **CAPE COLONY**<sup>123</sup> are in all probability representative of the perception of parents throughout the region regarding the control of education. A consolidation of the findings brings the following to light:

- *supervision and inspection of schools was essential* and was in the interest of education
- *the controlling bodies were generally found to be incompetent and ineffective*
- only *educated persons* were to be assigned with the task of supervising and controlling schools and education — persons such as the local clergyman, the magistrate or physician were suggested
- such persons however were invariably *unable to devote the time* to executing their duties properly since their careers claimed much of their time
- those responsible for inspecting the schools should *have a personal interest in the school*, and consequently
- *parents should be allowed to have a say* in the election and composition of the controlling body.

It was found that the *local controlling bodies* appointed by the community and parents in **NATAL**, also met with *very little success*. This was attributed to the fact that the committees were not given any meaningful responsibilities or clearly defined tasks<sup>124</sup>. Consequently the few duties assigned to these committees later fell under the jurisdiction of the Council of Education. After the Council was abolished, the control and supervision of education became an exclusively state issue with no direct parental involvement<sup>125</sup>.

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123 See 4.1.4.3 (Watermeyer); 4.1.4.6 (De Villiers)

124 See 4.2.3.5

125 See 4.2.3.7.2 & 4.2.4.1

The situation in the **ORANGE FREE STATE** and the **SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC** was not much different because Brebner<sup>126</sup> and Du Toit<sup>127</sup> had cause to remark that it was *imperative for parents to be knowledgeable about education regulations* and to be *taught to understand the duties entrusted to them* in consequence of school governance structures on which they served. It was believed that *training in these facets was essential*.

Notwithstanding the fact that various role players were involved in providing, supervising and controlling education, those closest to the provision of education were probably the parents as intermediate "consumers" of education. The education "provided" by the agencies was to be "consumed" by parents' children and, given the fact that it is the parents' primary responsibility to ensure that the child is adequately educated — spiritually, mentally and physically — it follows that parents, of necessity, need to take cognisance of the type of education being provided to ensure that it fulfills their expectations and criteria. At this point it is expedient to review Colonial parents' perception of and attitude towards education as a guide to identifying the key educational issues that parents in the past considered to be of primary significance.

### 6.3.3 A review of parents' perception and attitude towards schooling

It is conceded that parents did not necessarily have exceptionally high expectations of the scope or quality of education provided for their children. The majority of parents recognised from the onset their responsibility — as enshrined in the baptismal vow — to ensure that their children received a measure of education. The first official mention of parental responsibilities was made in the de Chavonnes school ordinance of 1714 according to which parents were held responsible for ensuring that their children attended school<sup>128</sup>.

A review of the research undertaken provides insight into Colonial parents' perception of the value of education, particularly with regard to the purpose and importance of education; the medium of instruction and religious instruction.

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126 See 5.1.2.5

127 See 5.2.3.1

128 See 3.3.3.2

### 6.3.3.1 *The purpose and importance of education*

To most settler parents, the significance of education was the opportunity it provided the child to *prepare himself for confirmation and subsequent membership of the Church*. Schooling was not a protracted affair and for many, *did not last more than a few months*<sup>129</sup>.

*School attendance* in the country districts was particularly *poor* during the harvesting and planting seasons since children were invariably kept home to help with the increased work load<sup>130</sup>. In addition, because many parents had themselves not been exposed to a broad education they *adopted an indifferent attitude* towards education<sup>131</sup>. When the state proposed that *boarding schools* be established to encourage children in the rural areas to attend school with more regularity and for longer periods of time, parents countered that the system posed more drawbacks than benefits. The main concern was the fear that *they would lose control over discipline, language issues and religious education policies*. The itinerant schooling system remained the preferred option until much later<sup>132</sup>.

On the other hand it is also documented that Dutch parents attached *considerable importance to education* — especially *religious instruction* — and they were conscientious in ensuring that their children attended school<sup>133</sup>.

From the inception of formal schooling parents — except the indigent — were expected to pay for their children's education. This custom of paying for schooling was to persist for many years<sup>134</sup> and was also raised and discussed during Commissions of Enquiry into the state of education<sup>135</sup>. Parents

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129 See 3.3.2.11; 4.2.3.3.1; 5.1.2.1; 5.1.2.5 & 5.1.2.5.2

130 See 4.1.3.1; footnote 32 of Chapter 4; 4.1.4.3; 4.2.3.3.3 & 5.1.2.5.2

131 See 4.1.4.6; 4.1.4.7; 4.2.3.3.1 & 5.1.2.5.2

132 See 3.3.2.11; 3.5.3.3; 4.1.4.3; 4.2.3.3.3 & 5.2.2.2

133 See 4.1.4.3; 4.2.1.1; 4.2.3.3.1; 5.1.3.1.1 & 5.1.3.1.2

134 See 3.3.2.2; 3.3.2.3; 3.3.2.5; 3.3.2.6; 3.3.2.11; 3.5.4; 4.1.2.2; 4.1.3.1; 4.1.3.3; 4.1.4; 4.1.4.3; 5.1.2.5.2 & 5.1.3.2

135 See 4.1.4.3 & 4.1.4.6

appear to have been *quite willing to pay school fees*<sup>136</sup> — and at times even lobbied for the right to request that school fees be levied<sup>137</sup> — believing that

- the *schoolmasters would feel under an obligation to carry out their duty effectively* since they had accepted remuneration
- it would *ensure a better social class of children* attending the school

and parents tended to show a *greater interest* in their children's education — even if it was only to ensure that they got their "*money's worth*"<sup>138</sup>.

*Compulsory school attendance* was only introduced towards the end of the Colonial period<sup>139</sup> since it was believed that parents would *resent being dictated to*. It was also believed that compulsory education could only become *practical when the state had established schools within reasonable reach* of each child<sup>140</sup>.

Apart from the significance parents attached to schooling, they also expressed concern regarding the scope and quality of education when issues such as religious instruction and the language issue were in question.

**6.3.3.2** *The language issue: medium of instruction versus independent subject Language*, in the history of Colonial education, appears to have taken on both *an educational and a political dimension*. In addition, it is difficult to divorce the issues of language medium and religious instruction as will be evidenced in this review.

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136 In NATAL a different situation appears to have prevailed. Parents — presumably predominantly British since most of the Dutch families had relocated to the Orange Free State and the South African Republic — viewed the provision of education a state responsibility and were reluctant to contribute to the financing of education. This attitude could possibly be attributed the immigrants' experience of gratuitous schooling in Britain. See 4.2.3.3.1

137 See 5.1.3.4 & 5.1.4

138 See 4.1.3.2; 4.1.4.3; 4.2.3.4; 5.2.1.4 & 5.2.5.1

139 CAPE COLONY [1905] (see 4.1.4.8); NATAL [1910] (see 4.2.4.5); the ORANGE FREE STATE [1895] (see 5.1.2.5.2; 5.1.3.4 & 5.1.4) and the SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC [1907] (see 5.2.6.2 & 5.2.6.3).

140 See 4.1.4.3; 4.1.4.6 & 4.1.4.6.2

When English was first introduced to CAPE COLONY schools, the Dutch parents *were not averse to their children learning the language* and these schools were well supported — presumably because the teachers who had been obtained from overseas were competent and properly trained<sup>141</sup>. There are also instances of the *traditional Dutch schools including English* in their curriculum in response to a felt need<sup>142</sup>. However, as the anglicisation policy gained momentum after 1822 when English was declared the official language of the Cape Colony, *parents became increasingly opposed* to the type of education that the state was providing and made *alternative schooling arrangements*<sup>143</sup>. Where the teachers were sensitive to the parents' expectations regarding their children's education and continued to afford Dutch its customary status — especially with regard to religious instruction — the schools flourished<sup>144</sup>. From the reports of Commissions of Enquiry<sup>145</sup> into the state of education, it can be deduced that:

- Dutch parents were *not averse to their children learning English*<sup>146</sup> and only resented the instruction of English when Dutch was neglected<sup>147</sup>
- *mother tongue instruction* (Dutch) was considered imperative<sup>148</sup> — apart from the obvious educational gains to be had, it was also the language of most of the local Churches<sup>149</sup>
- it was believed to be *in the interests of the youth and the Colony* to encourage the *study of both English and Dutch* and it was also suggested that the study of Dutch be made compulsory for English speaking learners<sup>150</sup>.

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141 See 4.1.2.2; 4.1.2.3.1; 4.1.3.1 & 4.1.3.2.1

142 See 4.1.3.2.2

143 See 4.1.3.2 & 4.1.3.2.3

144 See 4.1.3.2.2

145 See 4.1.4.3 (Watermeyer); 4.1.4.6 (De Villiers)

146 See 4.1.4.3; 4.1.4.6; 4.2.2.2; 4.2.3.3.1; 4.2.3.3.2; 5.1.2.5.2 & 5.1.3.1.1

147 See 4.1.4.3 & 4.2.3.3.2

148 See 4.1.4.6

149 See 4.1.4.6

150 See 4.1.4.6 & 4.2.3.3.3

The *Education Act* of 1865 passed subsequent to the Watermeyer Commission of Enquiry stipulated that, for schools to qualify for the grants-in-aid, English would be the medium of instruction<sup>151</sup>. Shortly after [during the 1870's] the implementation of this legislation, the Dutch community made a decided effort to provide schooling more suited to the needs of Dutch children. The current schools were perceived to be outlandish, foreign and to *neglect the teaching of Dutch and religion*<sup>152</sup>. These developments prompted the De Villiers Commission of Enquiry into the state of education. The legislation that followed in the wake of the results of the findings of this Commission was *Proclamation 113* of 1882 which stipulated that parents had the *right to choose their children's medium of instruction* and school committees were authorised to include religious instruction outside school hours<sup>153</sup>. The Dutch language movement continued to gain momentum due to the perception that the language was not being afforded legitimate status and subsequently, the Barry Commission of Enquiry was instituted to *inter alia* report on the status of Dutch and the *institution of bilingual instruction*<sup>154</sup>.

With the establishment of government schools in NATAL, the precondition that English be taught as a subject was readily accepted by the Dutch<sup>155</sup>. According to the 1849 recommendations following a report from the School Commission, *English was declared the medium of instruction but Dutch was also accommodated*<sup>156</sup>. This arrangement held for the entire period up to Union. Instruction in languages other than Dutch and English was sought by certain communities in Natal. These languages included *German and Zulu*. There was no objection provided that English retained its status<sup>157</sup>.

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151 See 4.1.4.4

152 See 4.1.4.5

153 See 4.1.4.6.1

154 See 4.1.4.6.2 & 4.1.4.7

155 See 4.2.2.2

156 See 4.2.2.3.1 & 4.2.3.1

157 See 4.2.3.3.3

Of all the regions reviewed, the **ORANGE FREE STATE** education system appears to have been the *most bilingual*. From the start when the British granted permission for the appointment of Dutch teachers from Holland, the language policy was made clear: *English as well as Dutch was to be taught in all government schools* and soon regulations were passed requiring all teachers to be bilingual<sup>158</sup>. Even under Dutch administration, although Dutch was the medium of instruction, English was taught as a subject<sup>159</sup>. After the War, *Dutch was banned as a medium of instruction yet the instruction of religious education continued to be provided in Dutch for Dutch children*. Dutch language instruction was soon reintroduced and by 1905, both English and Dutch were afforded equal time of instruction as languages. In 1907, *Dutch and English had equal status as mediums of instruction*<sup>160</sup>.

Those who settled in the **SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC** were Dutch and it follows that the medium of instruction was Dutch. However, the *study of English* was included in 1878. This arrangement appears to have met with the Dutch parents' approval — some even wanted English as the medium of instruction, but Lyle could not sanction this request and based his decision on the *importance of mother tongue instruction*. He advocated that only one language — the mother tongue — be used in the elementary levels. In 1881, education legislation again affirmed that *Dutch was the medium of instruction*. But, in the meantime, a number of immigrants whose home language was English had settled in the region and clearly this stipulation totally disregarded their needs. In response, many schools ignored the regulation — much to the chagrin of the Dutch authorities. A law was subsequently passed [1888] that stipulated that *Dutch was the only official language* and that all other languages were to be considered foreign<sup>161</sup>. Shortly afterwards, *The Witwatersrand Council of Education* established a number of schools to provide suitable schooling for the immigrants. At these schools, *English was the medium of instruction*<sup>162</sup>.

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158 See 5.1.1.1; 5.1.1.2 & 5.1.1.3

159 See 5.1.3.2

160 See 5.1.2.5.; 5.1.2.5.2; 5.1.3.1.4; 5.1.3.4 & 5.1.4

161 See 5.2.1.6; 5.2.1.7.2; 5.2.2.1; 5.2.3.1 & 5.2.3.2

162 See 5.2.3.4

In the *concentration camp schools* (also established in the Orange Free State) founded by the British during the Anglo-Boer War, *English was the medium of instruction, but Dutch was used to teach religious instruction*. A prerequisite was however, that *all teachers were to be conversant with both languages*<sup>163</sup>. In 1903, Dutch language instruction was provided for and by 1905, it was legislated that the *principle of mother tongue instruction was to be heeded in the elementary phases* and that *English would be the medium of instruction at higher levels*. The same provision was made in the 1907 legislation and the status of Dutch was further advanced in that it was stated that all children were to receive instruction in Dutch as a language — unless parents objected to their children attending the classes<sup>164</sup>.

In the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War, an "alternative" school system, *Christian National Education* [CNE] was established in the **BOER REPUBLICS** (Orange Free State and the South African Republic) and in **NATAL**. These schools were founded to ensure the perpetuation of the Dutch culture [*religion*] and *language*<sup>165</sup>. In **NATAL**, after language concessions were made to the schools in Dutch districts, the CNE schools either disbanded or were taken over by the state<sup>166</sup>. After negotiations between the government and the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church, the government and the CNE schools of the **ORANGE FREE STATE** amalgamated<sup>167</sup>. The **SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC** CNE schools were later to be used as a political propaganda instrument<sup>168</sup> and it was only after the passing of the Smuts education legislation in 1907 that the CNE schools in the South African Republic were assimilated into the government education system<sup>169</sup>.

Parents were not only concerned about the issue of language, but also about the status and character of religious instruction in formal schooling.

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163 See 5.2.4.2.1

164 See 5.2.5.1; 5.2.5.1.2 & 5.2.6.2

165 See 4.2.4.3 ; 5.1.3.3 & 5.2.5.3

166 See 4.2.4.3

167 See 5.1.3.3

168 See 5.2.5.3

169 See 5.2.6 & 5.2.6.1

### 6.3.3.3 *Religious instruction: doctrinal versus non-doctrinal instruction*

As stated previously<sup>170</sup>, to many parents, *religious education epitomised education per se*. In the early years, *doctrinal religious education was the norm* since this education was provided by the Church or under its guidance. Even under De Mist's policy of educational secularisation, the teaching of religion remained obligatory and the Church was to preside over this facet of education<sup>171</sup>.

However, according to the Herschel education regulations of 1839, *sectarian religious education was excluded from the curriculum* since it was believed that parents alone were to be consulted regarding the nature of their children's religious instruction. Many parents and members of the community objected to this arrangement<sup>172</sup>. The 1865 education legislation also specified that, to qualify for grants-in-aid, *non-sectarian religious education* was to form part of the daily routine<sup>173</sup>.

CAPE COLONY parents' perception of the status of religious instruction in schools can be deduced from the reports of Commissions of Enquiry<sup>174</sup>.

- the majority of parents — especially parents in county districts — believed that the *Bible was central* to education<sup>175</sup>
- *religious and secular education were well nigh inseparable*
- religious instruction was to occur in the *mother tongue* of the child
- sectarian or dogmatic religious instruction was the *province of the Church* and the parents who were to respond to the calling to the *baptismal vow* to instruct their children
- *Protestants* tended to *accept undenominational religious instruction*
- the "*conscience clause*" afforded parents the right to withdraw their children from religious education classes.

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170 See 6.3.1; 6.3.1.1; 6.3.1.3 & 6.3.2.1

171 See 3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.3.3.2; 3.3.3.3.1; 3.3.4.1; 3.4.4; 3.5.1.1; 3.5.5 & 4.1.3.5

172 See 4.1.3.5 & 4.1.4

173 See 4.1.4.4

174 See 4.1.4.3 (Watermeyer); 4.1.4.6 (De Villiers)

175 See 4.2.3.3.1

*Non-sectarian religious instruction* in government schools was the *sine qua non* in NATAL in consequence of the 1849 education legislation<sup>176</sup>. A similar situation prevailed in the ORANGE FREE STATE. The "*conscience clause*" was to apply in both education systems. Religious education — which was to cover Scripture reading and a study of Bible history — was to occur in the *mother tongue*. Provision was made for the *clergy to use school facilities for doctrinal religious instruction after school hours*<sup>177</sup>.

Religious instruction was mandatory in the SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC and in the 1852 school regulations it was stated that the content of *all education was to be almost entirely religious according to the tenets of the Dutch Reformed Church*. In terms of legislation passed in 1881, education was to be imbued with a *non-doctrinal Christian spirit* and in 1892, it was stipulated that *Protestant Christian education principles* were to be adhered to in education. The 1903 legislation (reiterated in 1907) provided for *undenominational religious education* during school hours — the "*conscience clause*" was to apply — and *denominational classes by the clergy after hours*<sup>178</sup>.

From the preceding a number of specific issues that were of particular concern to parents can be deduced.

#### 6.3.4 Issues that elicited parental concern and reaction

When the provision of education during the Colonial history of the country is reviewed and the issues that evoked parental concern and reaction are identified, it is found that certain specific concerns are paramount. These concerns can be summarised and categorised as issues relating to<sup>179</sup>:

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176 See 4.2.2.3.1

177 See 5.1.2.5; 5.1.3.2 & 5.1.3.4

178 See 5.2.1.2; 5.2.1.3; 5.2.1.5; 5.2.1.6; 5.2.3.1; 5.2.3.3; 5.2.5.1 & 5.2.6.2

179 It will be noted that language and religious instruction issues have been included under two of the categories — this is not an oversight, since these issues each manifest two different dimensions: a cultural or philosophical and an educational or material dimension.

- the **EDUCATIONAL CLIMATE** of the school:
  - the *appointment of teachers*<sup>180</sup> or the *dismissal, suspension or reprimand of teachers* due to dissatisfaction regarding the quality of education being provided<sup>181</sup>
  - *mother-tongue instruction and medium of instruction*<sup>182</sup>
  - *religious instruction*<sup>183</sup>
- the **SCOPE AND NATURE OF ASPECTS OF THE CURRICULUM**:
  - *mother-tongue instruction and medium of instruction*<sup>184</sup>
  - *religious instruction*<sup>185</sup>
- representation or the direct **INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROVISION, SUPERVISION AND CONTROL** of schools:
  - *establishment of schools*<sup>186</sup>
  - *choosing to send their children to the best school available*<sup>187</sup>
  - *involvement in school governance*<sup>188</sup>.

In retrospect, it can be said that from this study, it was found that responsible parents saw intervention in the provision of their children's education primarily as a duty — especially when the parent was serious in his attempts to uphold the principles of a specific philosophy of life. In this particular research it was found that the principal philosophy of life adhered to was the Protestant Calvinist or Christian philosophy of life and it is against this background that the following conclusions to the research questions formulated in the first chapter<sup>189</sup> are drawn.

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180 See 3.3.2.11 & 5.2.5.1.2

181 See 3.3.2.3; 3.3.2.7 & 3.3.2.10

182 See 3.3.2.9 & 5.2.5.1.2

183 See 4.1.4.3; 4.1.4.6; 4.2.1.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.2.3.1; 4.2.2.3.2; 4.2.3.1; 4.2.3.2; 5.1.1; 5.1.2.3; 5.1.2.5; 5.1.2.5.1; 5.1.2.5.2; 5.1.3.1; 5.1.3.2; 5.1.3.3; 5.2.1.1; 5.2.1.2; 5.2.1.8; 5.2.2.1; 5.2.3.1; 5.2.3.3; 5.2.5.1; 5.2.5.3 & 5.2.6.3

184 See 3.3.2.9 & 5.2.5.1.2

185 See 4.1.4.3; 4.1.4.6; 4.2.1.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.2.3.1; 4.2.2.3.2; 4.2.3.1; 4.2.3.2; 5.1.1; 5.1.2.3; 5.1.2.5; 5.1.2.5.1; 5.1.2.5.2; 5.1.3.1; 5.1.3.2; 5.1.3.3; 5.2.1.1; 5.2.1.2; 5.2.1.8; 5.2.2.1; 5.2.3.1; 5.2.3.3; 5.2.5.1; 5.2.5.3 & 5.2.6.3

186 See 3.3.2.7 & 3.3.2.9

187 See 3.3.2.7 & 3.3.3.3.2 (as discussed in 3.3.4.2)

188 See 4.2.3.5; 5.1.1.3 & 5.2.5.1.2

189 See 1.3

## 6.5 CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE RESEARCH

Parents tend to seek the right to become involved in their children's education when they become concerned that what their children are learning undermines their moral belief system, their values or that which they hold dear e.g. their culture, language and religion. The imperative to intervene in their children's schooling stems from the obligation to fulfil their educative responsibility<sup>190</sup>. Parents also seek recourse when they experience that they are being pressured or coerced by external forces.

The following conclusions deduced from the research findings apply to the three over-arching research questions posed in Chapter 1.

- ➔ HOW DO PARENTS' ADHERENCE TO A *PARTICULAR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE* INFLUENCE THEIR *PERCEPTION OF THEIR EDUCATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS* IN RELATION TO THEIR CHILDREN'S *FORMAL EDUCATION*?

From the research it can be concluded that most Colonial parents adhered to a *Christian [Protestant Calvinist] philosophy of life* — a fact which influenced their perception of their educative responsibilities and rights in relation to their children's formal education.

A conclusion to be drawn from the study is that parents who are committed to ensuring that the fundamental tenets of a particular philosophy of life are respected and accommodated in their children's formal education are of the opinion that *one of the functions of formal education is to endorse and advance the core essences of the education provided by them as primary educators* and such parents thus tend to *take a serious view* of not only the *content* of schooling, but also of the school *milieu* within which the education is provided.

Consequently, parents believe that *specific avenues of recourse* should be accommodated within the administration, organisation and management of formal education through which they are *provided the authority and sanction to negotiate and implement changes* — when and if necessary — that ensure that their children's *formal education embodies those philosophical principles* fundamental to their way of life.

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190 See 1.8.1.3; 2.7.1 & 2.7.2.3 — specifically *The competency to educate* & 2.7.3.2

➔ **WHAT DEVELOPMENTS TOOK PLACE IN THE COLONIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT EXTENDED TO PARENTS THE RIGHT OF CHOICE IN MATTERS THAT AFFECTED THEIR CHILDREN'S FORMAL SCHOOLING?**

Colonist parents were predominately *Protestant Calvinist* and this fact influenced the provision of education and the recourse that extended to parents the right to intervene in matters relating to their children's education.

Parents took *personal responsibility* for the education of their children in instances where no formal education was provided. When public schools were first established *control of education resorted with the Church* under the sanction of the state as provider of education. The nature and scope of the education provided was *conservative and religious* in orientation and reflected the prevailing social climate. In time, a combination between *Church and state control* of education followed. Representation of parents on these control bodies would have been incidental and *no statutory provision* was made.

Colonial society was initially relatively isolated and the social climate was characteristically *conservative and Protestant Calvinist*. One of the consequences of the influx of immigrants towards the close of the Colonial period was the *emergence of intellectual and religious freedom* which influenced the social and political climate. *The provision of formal education reflected these social and political changes through the nature and content of the ensuing legislation*. This legislation and related education regulations *provided for the creation of parent and/or community education control bodies*. However, although parents were resolutely insistent on having a say in the way schools were run, they were *generally incompetent to fulfil the responsibilities assigned to them*.

However, legislation that did afford parents the right to choose an education suited to their particular needs, was the inclusion of the "*conscience clause*" and the right to choose the *medium of instruction*.

- ➔ TO *WHAT EXTENT* WERE PARENTS OF SCHOOL-GOING CHILDREN IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD GIVEN THE *OPPORTUNITY* TO ENSURE THAT THEIR CHILDREN RECEIVED *SCHOOLING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR PARTICULAR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE*?

Provision was made for parental say in education through *legislation* that approved the:

- creation of *educational control bodies* on which *parents would have either direct or indirect representation*
- inclusion of the "*conscience clause*"
- parent's choice to select the *medium of instruction*.

By *appropriating the right to representation on controlling bodies*, parents would be able to both *determine and influence the nature of the schooling* their children received — depending on the scope of duties assigned to the body and the degree of authority delegated to the parent representative body. Through exercising these rights and responsibilities in the light of the duties that were assigned to parents, they were in a position to significantly *determine the character of the education provided and the climate within which schooling took place*. However, because parents had not been trained in carrying out these duties and were inexperienced in the administration and supervision of schooling, these bodies failed in their purpose.

Through enforcing the "*conscience clause*" parents were able to *control the nature of the religious instruction* — a fundamental issue in the practising of a philosophy of life — to which their children were exposed. Through electing to *enforce the right to choose the medium of instruction*, parents were able to *influence the cultural dimension* of their children's education since *language and culture are inextricably linked*. These issues are also *fundamentally linked to a philosophy of life*.

## 6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF ISSUES NECESSITATING FURTHER RESEARCH

Before proposing recommendations in view of the research conducted, the following points need to be stated as it is in the context of these considerations that the recommendations are posed.

Because parents' *expectation of formal education is the facilitation of the child's attainment of proper adulthood within the parameters of a particular philosophy of life*, they need to be aware of what is happening to the child at school and what he is being exposed to. Parents who are sincerely concerned about their children's education and who are anxious to ensure that their children receive an education that is in line with the principles of their life view, *do not have a choice to become involved in their children's education — they have an obligation* in this regard. Nevertheless, it needs to be recognised that the measures that they might seek to implement could constitute a limitation or restriction applicable to their own children and they should not attempt to limit other children's options as this could be construed as tampering with the rights of others.

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, the following *recommendations* are made.

- ➔ Because *parents have a moral and legal claim* to bring up their children in accordance with their convictions and are *obliged to delegate this educative responsibility to the school* when their child reaches school-going age, *education policy* should be drafted in such a way that it:
  - *recognises and respects the philosophy of life* of its learners and their parents
  - *recognises parents' rights to become involved* in issues that affect the nature of their children's education when the claim to this *right originates from a philosophy of life* that directs the education of the child and is *not politically motivated*
  - *delegates to parents particular educative responsibilities* in such a way that the educative task is a joint responsibility shared by parents and teachers

- ***accommodates and prescribes the creation of appropriate structures*** through which parents can exercise their rights and responsibilities
- ***clearly outlines the scope of rights and duties*** entrusted to parents
- ***details the procedures*** according to which parents can exercise their educative responsibilities and rights.

*At first glance, it would seem that this recommendation has been recognised and provided for in current education legislation. However, it could be questioned whether the **scope of responsibilities and rights afforded parents in terms of current legislation is broad enough to encompass all the issues that parents need to be afforded a say in if the education in schools is to reflect, endorse and perpetuate the principles of the parent's philosophy of life as embodied in the education provided at home.***

➔ In the event of education policy ***recognising and providing for the parent's right to voice an opinion on educational matters through specific structures such as school governance bodies***, the parent body should be ***empowered*** to exercise the rights to which they are entitled by being trained to:

- understand the ***significance and scope of the duties*** with which the governing body is entrusted
- be able to ***interpret*** the education legislation
- ***apply the principles*** of the legislation to a particular situation
- ***comprehend the implications*** of the legislation
- be aware of the ***legal consequences*** of the legislation
- be familiar with and ***understand the content*** of ***other relevant legislation*** that forms the framework within which parent rights in education are to be exercised.

The success of school governing bodies lies in the ***degree of appropriate and effective training*** that they receive in these issues. Training ***should not be limited to the governing body members***, but should include training of the educators — especially the head teachers — and the broader community including non-elected parents.

*Provision was made for the institution of capacity building programmes in draft education legislation that preceded the South African Schools Act. However, parents, the community at large and even educators at most schools — including schools in privileged communities — remain ignorant of the content, interpretation and implications of current education legislation. This is a precarious situation with which to be confronted.*

In relation to these recommendations, the following issues that necessitate *further research* are identified:

- ➔ To determine whether parents who uphold a particular philosophy of life have adequate scope in terms of current education policy to ensure that their children are educated in accordance with the fundamental principles that constitute their philosophy of life, it is necessary to:
  - *identify which school issues* — apart from religion and language — are fundamental to a particular philosophy of life
  - *critically examine and analyse current education and other relevant legislation* to determine the scope of parental rights currently being afforded
  - *investigate and propose the extension of current responsibilities and rights* to meet the particular needs of parents.

*The investigation suggested above could be made applicable to any philosophy of life. A philosophy of life influences not only the perception of the essence of childhood, but also the nature and purpose — not necessarily confined to the temporal but also including the eternal dimension — of education. There is the possibility that religion could be excluded from formal schooling. Through exercising this option to ensure the acknowledgement of the right of all citizens to religious freedom in a community which upholds a diversity of religious persuasions, the school would in effect be discriminating against the learners' right to religious observance — an undemocratic principle which cannot be supported by the human rights bill. There is also the possibility that — to address the same problem of acknowledging a diversity of religions — all religions will be included and each will*

*be afforded equal status. This would violate the principles of certain religions and could result in the isolation and labelling of these children who would of necessity have to distance themselves from this all-inclusive view. Such a situation could detrimentally affect inter alia the social and emotional development of these children.*

- ➔ To determine what the underlying principles are that motivate the curriculum planners to select particular subject matter, it will be necessary to analyse in depth the content of curricula or learning programmes to establish the nature of the covert or hidden agenda.

*Education is never neutral and stems from a particular life or world view and it can be argued that the underlying principles of a philosophy of life serve as criteria in the selection of curriculum themes or subject matter. In curriculum development it is not the learning content but the learning outcome that first needs to be determined. Parents generally have no say in this matter and the choice of subject matter or learning programme is generally determined by what the broad community values and what the state — as provider of education — believes should be dealt with in formal schooling.*

*Parents will be obliged to be take cognisance of the subject matter to which their children are exposed and the interpretation being given to the learning content. Consequently it can be expected that parents could petition to have a say in the content of the curriculum to ensure that their educative rights as parents adhering to a particular philosophy of life are not being violated. Courses in, for example, human sexuality, world religions, values clarification or the prescribing of text books and readers that advance a view of life other than that to which the parent subscribes, could be viewed by certain parents as infringing on their rights to ensure education in conformity with their particular philosophy of life especially if the teacher of this subject matter is indifferent towards or ignorant of the particular principles of the philosophy of life. If parents are sincere in their concerns, it can be accepted that they will not be asking for others to necessarily agree with their beliefs, but to allow them the right to limit their children's exposure to such subject matter.*

## 6.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The research undertaken reaffirmed the significance a philosophy of life holds for the perception of what it is that constitutes authentic education. Education in recent years has been in danger of focussing on the child's intellectual development believing that the formation of character, moral and spiritual development is a subordinate concern belonging to the domain of the parents and the Church.

The active participation of concerned parents in education should be welcomed since parent involvement is beneficial to education. Education is preparation not only for a life of work, but a life of worth and when parents seek to exercise their right to ensure that the education their children receive conforms with their expectations, their actions should not be seen as cases of censorship, but rather as cases of judgement, discernment and selection dictated by their particular philosophy of life.



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