

THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ON THE ZUID-AFRIKAANSCH REPUBLIEK

by

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Abstract

The Impact of Christian education on the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek

The study focuses on the influence of Christian based education on the building of the Afrikaner nation. The children settling with their parents in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) after the Great Trek all received Christian based education. The unique way in which both the country and the nation developed was the result of Christian based education. It had a direct influence on the development and functioning of the ZAR resulting in the forming of a Christian country with a Christian based constitution and Christian based laws. Christianity and Christian based education also influenced the social lives, culture and worldview of the people living in the ZAR, leaving a permanent mark on the Afrikaner nation.

The stern Calvinistic religion, together with the influences of early Pietism and the worldview of the Romanticism as well as the traditional Christian based education brought from the Netherlands, all worked together to mould the Afrikaners into a unique nation. Religion was the one outstanding factor that determined all aspects of the lives of the Afrikaners, from their character and worldview to their way of speech and the standard of education given to the children. The goal of all education was to enable children to study the Bible – the Handbook to Life – and to become members of the Church.

Their faith in and commitment to the Lord, was the force that kept the Afrikaners a unique nation with a strong character despite the extreme living conditions and changing circumstances through which they lived in the short years of the existence of the ZAR. The people living in the ZAR were the carriers of the influence of the Christian based education and the stories of their lives bear witness to the impact their education had on the development of the country and the nation. The legacy of Christian based education, as it was used in the ZAR, is still alive in the hearts and minds of Afrikaners today.

The focus of the thesis made it necessary to use material from several different academic fields. Aspects of South African Church history, the general and political history of South Africa and the ZAR, the history regarding the development of education, as well as the social and cultural history of the Afrikaner nation were brought together to give a picture of the impact that Christian based education had on the ZAR.

The historical-critical method is used, in order to establish what really happened and to show its significance, both in the historical context and in the present situation. The theoretical framework being used is didactical theological.

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Key words:

Christian education

Christianity

Education

Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek

Afrikaners

Afrikaner spiritualism

Afrikaner worldview

Afrikaner character

Afrikaner pioneers

South African history

Religion

I declare that

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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.