Chapter 2

Historical background

History is complex and it is difficult to focus on only one aspect of history because there are always other factors and role players, although not always directly related to the subject, that have an influence on the subject. Therefore, it is necessary to give a brief overview of the most important aspects that influenced the subject. (For a list of some of the notable events in the history of South Africa from the European settlement in the Cape up to the end of the Second Anglo-Boer War in 1902, see Appendix 1).

The study of Christian based education in the ZAR immediately brings various other historical fields into focus. It is impossible to give a summary of the history of all the relevant subjects such as the political, economical and world history that had an influence on the people living in the ZAR. Therefore, the short notes that follow only focus on the absolute essential matters that need to be stated to help the reader to understand issues that are referred to in the later parts of the work.

First, a short word is spoken regarding the historical background of education. Religious education is not a modern trend but is as old as education itself. Christian based education was part of the educational system of Christians since the days of the first Churches. This custom was brought to South Africa in the 17th century.
The second section of background information focuses on the historical setting of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR). The forming of the Afrikaner nation at the southern part of Africa serves as starting point for the later development of the ZAR. This is not a complete summary, because important issues like the economic and agricultural development of the region, the striving for leadership and land as well as other political and social issues and the language problems are not covered. Some of the historical information given, like the tasks of the field cornet, is not directly related to the development of the ZAR but it is included because of the important role these officers played in the government of the ZAR and the influence they had on the people living in the ZAR. It will help to understand some of the information given in chapter six.

Lastly, a few remarks are made regarding one nation with three different Churches opposing each other. The Churches are all Calvinistic and there are no big differences regarding the way that they handle issues like education, membership and most other things, but the people belonging to the different Church groups can be described as near fanatics, never to be convinced that they are not the only ones that are right. This strife clouded the perspective of the writing of Church history in South Africa for more than a hundred years.

2.1 General background on Christian based education

2.1.1 The development of Christian education

‘Education denotes the methods by which a society hands down from one generation to the next its knowledge, culture, and values. The individual being
educated develops physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, and socially. The work of education may be accomplished by an individual teacher, the family, a Church, or any other group in society’ (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1998: History of education).

The oldest known systems of education had two major characteristics: they all taught religion and they promoted the traditions and culture of the people (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1998: History of education). In the temple schools of ancient Egypt religion as well as the basic principles of writing, the sciences, mathematics, and architecture were taught. Hebrew education centred on the study of the Torah and the adherence to its teachings and principles in day-to-day life. Scholars taught in the synagogues, although the major responsibility for the education and training of children fell on parents. (Borrowman, ML. Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia 1996: History of education).

It is hard to find or formulate a meaningful definition of Christian education. So many aspects should be included, depending on the point of view of each scholar asked. In general, it can be said that Christian education forms part of the ‘traditional’ side of education. Newsam says that ‘[t]he traditional position starts from the assumption, taken to be so obvious as not to be open to question, that the purpose of teaching is to ensure that those taught acquire a prescribed body of knowledge and set of values. Both knowledge and values are taken to
reflect a society’s selection of what it most wants to transmit to its future citizens and requires its future workforce to be able to do’ (Newsam, P. Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1998: Teaching and learning). To my mind, everything Newsam says about traditional education can be transferred into a definition of Christian education: Christian based education starts from the assumption, taken to be so obvious as not to be open to question, that the purpose of teaching is to ensure that those taught acquire a prescribed body of knowledge and set of values all based on the Bible and Christianity. Both knowledge and values are taken to reflect the Christian’s selection of what he or she most wants to transmit to and requires from the next generation to believe and practise in everyday life.

The earliest types of Christian education were catechumenal. There were schools for converts; the more advanced catechetical schools for Christians; and the Episcopal or cathedral schools that trained priests (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1998: History of education).

Education among the early Christians was both religious and secular. Along with the religious traditions of the Jews and Christians, the Greek and Roman educational systems that aimed to prepare intellectually well-rounded young people to take leading roles in the activities of the State and of society, also formed part of the educational system of the early Church. These influences all had a long and lasting influence on Western culture (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1998: History of education).
During the Dark Ages, which extended from the fall of Rome to the beginning of the Carolingian revival (c.770), education nearly came to a standstill in Europe (Borrowman, ML. Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia 1996: History of education). The only formal education was provided by monasteries and was religious in nature. This changed with the development of movable type (c.1436), when it became possible to publish books in large quantities and to distribute knowledge more cheaply, quickly and widely (Borrowman, ML. Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia 1996: History of education).

The Protestant reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin of the 16th century believed that it was important for all Christians to be able to read the Bible. They urged the State to help establish an educational system and followers of Calvin maintained primary schools where everyone could learn to read (Borrowman, ML. Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia 1996: History of education).

In the Netherlands, the influence of the Reformation, with its emphasis on education and religious instruction, led to a unique system of education. Song education stood side by side with Biblical instruction as the two major parts of education. Teachers also had to teach the children to read, write and to do mathematics (Muller sa:356). The first European settlers brought this form of Christian based education to the Cape and it had a great influence in the forming of a new nation at the southern corner of Africa.
2.1.2 Christian education in South Africa

The first settlers brought with them the trusted educational system from the Netherlands. This system was firmly imbedded in the Calvinistic way of living and every aspect of the lives of the pioneers was influenced by it. The Church and government worked together to ensure that all children received proper Christian based education.

The leaders of the Afrikaner nation – past and present – always show great interest in education and the Christian foundation of education is seen as of uppermost importance (Helberg 1984:5). By using their influence on the people, they ensured that the principles of Christian based education formed part of the official educational system. From the beginning of the settlement, the aim of Christian based education was made clear:

1) to prepare people to become members of the Church by public confession of their faith,

2) to accumulate knowledge,

3) and to form a religious personality (Van Wyk 1949:27).

It was generally accepted that ‘[r]eligious education should provide the spectacles through which the rising generation could observe the totality of existence, and particularly its own place and involvement in the totality’ (Engelbrecht 1980:8). ‘While education, in general, is engaged in the moulding of the minds of the young and preparing them for life and a livelihood, Religious Education should point out to them and persuade them by reason and historical example that a man
is not what he has, not even what he knows. In the final analysis a man is what he
believes’ (Geyser 1980:23). This view of education stayed part of the educational
history of the Afrikaner nation. It can be traced like a golden thread through the
history of South Africa.

Although the educational system was accepted and implemented throughout
South Africa, it was not without problems and difficulties. The serious struggles
and conflict in political and religious aspects of life, had a negative influence on
education (Prinsloo 1972:10). Teachers, preachers and politicians all became
involved in these issues, resulting in the neglect of their duties and obligations to
the education of the children.

Another problem regarding education in South Africa was the fact that education
was done in foreign languages. For two centuries, the Afrikaner children had to
learn through a foreign medium. In the early years after settlement, it was not a
problem to be educated in Dutch because most of the people spoke Dutch but very
soon things changed. Afrikaans became the language of the Afrikaners while
Dutch stayed the language that was used for education and religion. When Britain
took over the Cape, the government provided education in English. This had a
degrading effect on the Afrikaners and gave them a deep sense of inferiority
(Fourie 1954:18,19). ‘Calvinist theologians adapted Christian Nationalism to
counter liberal educational policies in the 19th century Cape. They later
reformulated it into Christian National Education (CNE) to ensure the survival of
the Afrikaans language and culture’ (Cross 1999:13).
The Voortrekkers continued to educate their children with the trusted Dutch material. Dutch stayed the language of the school and the Church until the 1930’s when it was replaced with Afrikaans.

Christian based education came with the Voortrekkers to the northern parts of the country and became the basis of all education in the ZAR. It was firmly rooted in the Christian religion and based on the Bible as fundamental handbook and guideline. After the Afrikaners lost their Republic, they fought to keep the educational system intact.

In reaction to the educational laws of Lord Milner (Ord 7 of 1903), the Afrikaner teachers turned to Christian National Education, grasping back at the laws of the ZAR (law 8 of 1892) (Barnard 1935:79,80). The South African CNE idea included political, social and cultural aspects of life. ‘Embedded in the doctrine of Christian National Education, this tradition [the nationalist-conservative tradition] tends to glorify traditional Afrikaner values and to promote Afrikaner nationalism’ (Cross 1999:13).

The Institute for CNE promoted Afrikaans medium schools where ‘pure Calvinistic and national principles formed part of the education, given in the spirit of the Voortrekkers’ (Fourie 1954:146 – my translation). The result was the continuation of Christian based education in schools for nearly a century to come.
2.2 The historical setting of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek

2.2.1 Settlement at the Cape

Sailors mistrusted the Cape from the beginning of Portuguese maritime ventures. Vasco da Gama’s men quarrelled with the indigenous people in 1497 and a few years later, an expedition under da Saldanha was attacked and da Saldanha wounded (Le May 1995:11). The final discouragement came in 1510 when Viceroy d’Almeida, returning from the Portuguese Indies, was attacked and killed on the shores of Table Bay along with sixty of his ship’s company (Le May 1995:11). After this, the Portuguese sailors regarded the Cape with feelings of suspicion and superstition, preferring St Helena as a port of call (De Kiewiet 1941:2). The Cape was not recognised for what it finally became; the ‘golden gate of a new nation’ (Calpin 1944:38).

2.2.1.1 The ‘golden age’ of the Netherlands

The people of the Netherlands – also known, unofficially, as Holland – revolted against the authority of the Spanish king in the 16th century, resulting in the wars of independence between 1568 and 1648 (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1998: The Netherlands). The Dutch Republic that was officially established by the Treaty of Münster in 1648, fell to France in 1795 (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1998: The Netherlands).

The political rebellion in the Netherlands coincided with the Protestant revolt against the Roman Catholic Church that was the official State Church of Spain (Bloemhof 1980:158). As soon as independence was assured, an era of great
commercial prosperity began and by the mid-17\textsuperscript{th} century the Netherlands was the foremost commercial and maritime power of Europe, with Amsterdam as the financial center of the Continent (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 1998: The Netherlands).

It was the Dutch who first appreciated the importance of the Cape (De Kiewiet 1941:2). After the closing of the harbour of Lissabon to ships of the Netherlands, the sailors of the Netherlands led by Cornelius Houtman, tried to find their own way to the East (Jooste 1946:37). When this goal was reached in 1595 (De Kiewiet 1941:3), various companies sprang up to make the most of the trading opportunities (Jooste 1946:37). These companies united in 1602 into one big company, named the Dutch East India Company (DEIC), under the control of the \textit{Heren XVII} (Lords Seventeen) in Amsterdam (Jooste 1946:37). By 1650 the DEIC had become the world’s largest trading enterprise (Giliomee 2003:3).

The stiff competition between the European nations and the constant threat of scurvy forced the sailors to look for a place where a refreshment post could be set up (Jooste 1946:37). The waters of the storm tossed coast at the Cape brought terror to the sailors, for many a ship did not survive the journey around the southern corner of Africa.

In 1648 one of the ships of the DEIC, called \textit{Haerlem}, got stranded at the Cape (Van Broekhuizen 1922:3). The sailors safely reached the shore and were able to save the ship’s cargo. Months later, the sailors were picked up by another of the
DEIC’s ships and after their return to the Netherlands, two of the *Haerlem’s* officials, Leendert Janzen and Nicolaas Proot, convinced the Lords Seventeen to use the Cape as a refreshment post (Jooste 1946:37). In 1652 Jan Van Riebeeck came to the Cape to build a half-way station to provide the heavy-laden merchantmen on their way to and from the East with fresh food and water (Le May 1995:3).

### 2.2.1.2 The refreshment post at the Cape of Good Hope

At first, the refreshment post at the Cape did not seem to be a great success. The Company tried to make a garrison under military control do the work of a farming community (De Kiewiet 1941:5). They were inefficient workers whose cost to the Company was out of proportion compared to the produce of their labour (De Kiewiet 1941:5). In 1657 the company decided to substitute self-interest for discipline and as a result of a suggestion by Van Riebeeck, nine of the Company’s servants became ‘free burghers’ and landholders (De Kiewiet 1941:5). By 1679 the number of these independent farmers grew to 260 and in 1688 the number of free burghers were nearly 600 (De Kiewiet 1941:6). At the beginning of the 18th century the number of free burghers were about 2 000. By the end of that century they were about 25 000 (Van Jaarsveld 1971a:35).

Twenty-five years after the landing of Van Riebeeck a cattle and hunting frontier had already come into existence. In 1760 Jacobus Coetsee, an elephant hunter, crossed the Orange River (De Kiewiet 1941:11). Not until they reached the latitude of Delagoa Bay, generations later, did the Trek Boers suffer from the
tsetse fly and malaria-mosquito. Neither climate nor topography seriously hindered their progress (De Kiewiet 1941:11).

Within 80 years, the colony spread about 800 kilometres into the interior of the country. To the north, the semi-desert land formed a natural border. To the north east the Bushmen occupied the land while the south moving tribes in the east stopped further expansion for the next sixty years (Van Jaarsveld 1971a:142).

The evolution of the Trek Boers was the result of a successful adaptation to South African conditions. Capital and labour were scarce while land was cheap and plentiful (De Kiewiet 1941:13). ‘Coming from a land that had taken the lead in thrifty and intensive cultivation, the Company settler gradually became a herdsman and a hunter’ (De Kiewiet 1941:13). Geography and climate left an indelible mark upon the character of the Afrikaner (De Kiewiet 1941:13).

‘At the Cape the burgher family on a farm was the basic unit out of which the Afrikaner people developed…The farm was a virtually autonomous social domain controlled by the owner, functioning as the patriarch. Travellers remarked on the strong and loving bonds in the burgher family’ (Giliomee 2003:37).

2.2.2 The Afrikaner nation

Not all members of Jan van Riebeeck’s expedition were Dutch because the DEIC was not in the least exclusive in recruiting its servants (Le May 1995:3). It was not long before the original settlers were joined by others, both free men and
women as well as slaves (Le May 1995:3). Settlers came from Sweden, Germany, Scandinavia, Flanders and France (Preston 1989:15). Here they soon formed part of a new nation.

Van Jaarsveld calls Simon Van der Stel, the tenth commander of the settlement at the Cape, the ‘father of the Afrikaner nation’ (Van Jaarsveld 1971a:27 – my translation). He was responsible for changing the refreshment post into a colony. Towns sprang up as the population grew. By 1685 people already spoke their own language – Afrikaans (Van Jaarsveld 1971a:27). A new nation formed and as early as 1707, Hendrik Bibault shouted: ‘Ik ben een Africaander!’ (I am an Afrikaner!) (Le May 1995:4).

Afrikaner ‘merely means African, with a strong presumption of uniqueness and would certainly not include the original inhabitants of South Africa or immigrants who spoke a different language’ (Le May 1995:5). ‘Afrikaner’ is sometimes used synonymous to the word ‘Boer’ (Farmer) or the other way round. WA van der Stel used the word ‘Boer’ as an insult but it became a name for the young nation (Ahlers 1954:16).

From the very first moments of its existence, the Afrikaner nation was under pressure. In the early years, the inter-ethnic pressure came from the other tribes and nations living in South Africa but from the end of the 18th century, it came from the outside influence of the British Empire (Coetzee 1977:155). Despite the pressure on culture, language, power and politics, the Afrikaners stayed true to
their own by clinging to their culture, religion, language and depending on their physical strength to overcome obstacles (Coetzee 1977:156).

Fourie says that before the impact of the industrial revolution was felt in South Africa, Afrikaners were a homogenous group of people (Fourie 1954:17), but Schonken distinguishes between two different kinds of Afrikaners: the laughing, cheerful and spirited wheat farmers of the Boland opposed to the much more serious Onderwelder – the cattle farmer, pessimistic and sorrowful, living in accordance with the traditions and customs of their forefathers (Schonken 1914:28).

HT Colenbrander wrote his monumental work De Afkomst der Boeren in 1902. The mission of this work was to show the different strains of origin within the Boers after the Second Anglo-Boer War (Bosman 1922-1923:206). In this study, I refer only to the main groups of Europeans that later formed part of the Afrikaner nation. Burton says that the ‘Afrikaner people combine three of the finest strains of European blood’ – that of the Hollanders from the Netherlands, the Huguenots from France and early Scotch and English Immigrants (Burton 1927:6).

The people from the Netherlands ‘…fire the blood of all liberty-loving people, and fill one with admiration’ (Burton 1927:14).

The Boer ancestor, when he left Holland, had carried with him a very vivid sense of the sentiment which was inspired by Alba and the Spanish Inquisition; another ancestor – the Huguenot – had brought very poignant memories of St. Bartholomew’s Night; and these impressions had been unconsciously
bequeathed by father to son for two hundred years! A tenacious race, and one slow to forget! (Jeppe 1906:74).

During the tempestuous period of the massacre of St Bartholomew and its accompanying terror...The Huguenots of North and West escaped as they could into Great Britain and into Holland, carrying their trades with them: and it is from these emigrations that the Huguenot strain in South Africa is largely made up. It is a widely known fact, that the majority of these emigrants were trades people and skilled workers, with an intermixture of professional people. Industrious and self supporting, they were an acquisition to the countries of their adoption (Burton 1927:18).

Simon Van der Stel successfully promotes the denationalisation of the Huguenots that came to the Cape (Van Jaarsveld 1971a:27). Their strong Calvinistic religion, shared by the people in the Cape, helped to pull them into the young nation and, within a generation or two, the only thing that was left of their French heritage, was their names (Vivier, Loots, Grobler 1996:57).

Under the government of Willem Adriaan Van der Stel, the unity between the different nationalities in the Cape became clear. Frenchmen, Afrikaners and Hollanders stood united against the misconduct of the governor (Ahlers 1954:15). ‘We stand as one race, one people, with one faith, one privilege, one calling and one destiny; and together we will win the world for our one Lord Jesus Christ’ (Burton 1927:22).

After the Napoleonic wars, a strong English element began to migrate to Southern Africa. ‘From these latter the most virile and energetic of the South African people are proud to trace their decent; and these in course of time intermarried with the previous immigrants’ (Burton 1927: 20). According to Giliomee, four
thousand British settlers arrived at the Cape in 1820 (Giliomee 2003:193). De Kiewiet says that 5000 British settlers came to stay in the Cape.

The 1820 settlers said good-bye to depression in England and found depression to greet them at the Cape. From the beginning they had to struggle against all the adversities of the Eastern Frontier. Unfamiliar conditions made them poor farmers, and blight destroyed their wheat. In the middle of 1823 less than a third of the original 5,000 settlers remained on the land. Most of the rest had drifted to the towns. Thus was founded the significant distinction between the English in South Africa as mainly urban and the Dutch as mainly rural in character (De Kiewiet 1941:39).

2.2.3 The Great Trek

Years of record harvests accompanied by low prices, and years of drought and near starvation succeeded each other at the end of the 18th century in the Cape (De Kiewiet 1941:30). The search for land, grass, fuel and water as well as the natural disasters in the last part of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, were all contributing reasons behind the great bloodshed between the indigenous nations that left South Africa ‘wet with blood’ (Froude 1886:47).

When the English invasion of the Cape became permanent after 1814, the Afrikaners were very unhappy (Preston 1989:19). 26 000 Afrikaners were permanently cut off from the Netherlands and forced to adapt to the laws of the new government. ‘In response to conditions that were regarded as unbearable, thousands of disaffected early-Afrikaners in the Eastern Cape moved to territories to the north and in the process overcame considerable obstacles in the form of a hostile colonial government, wild animals, disease, virtually impenetrable mountain ranges and antagonistic indigenous tribes’ (Van Rooyen 2000:vii).
‘Individuals gave different reasons for trekking (cf Van Jaarsveld 1971b:54,59,70, Giliomee 2003:144-149), but most of the causes can be classified under one general heading, namely, ‘dissatisfaction with British Rule’ (McGill 1943:12). ‘Tactically the Great Trek represented a decision to give up the frontal attack and undertake an outflanking movement’ (De Kiewiet 1941:53).

‘The trek movement was therefore a natural movement with an instinctive strategy of its own. It was stimulated by the knowledge that plenty of good land lay beyond the official boundary’ (De Kiewiet 1941:54).

The Voortrekkers were unaware of the Industrial Revolution. In a sense the Great Trek was the eighteenth century fleeing before its more material, more active, and better-organised successor (De Kiewiet 1941:58). ‘The Boer trekker had no use for the industrial system of the nineteenth century. It was an unknown way of life to him, forced upon him by the scallywags of every nation under the sun’ (Calpin 1944:62).

The first Trek to the north ended in tragedy when Lang Hans Van Rensburg and his company were murdered and Louis Trichard’s trek was nearly wiped out completely by malaria in the Lowveld (Preston 1989:31). Hendrik Potgieter also trekked north and decided to make his new home on the banks of the Mooi River, later the location of present day Potchefstroom (Preston 1989:31). They were followed north, after the death of the Natal leaders like Piet Retief and Piet Uys, and also when the British annexed Natal in 1842 when coal was discovered there.
– a treasure much needed to keep the new fleet of steam ships afloat (Vivier, Loots, Grobler 1996:6). The second Trek began in 1843, the year that Britain occupied Natal (Patterson 1957:23). This Trek was completed by 1849 when most of the Natal and Free State Voortrekkers were resettled in the north (Tingay, Johnson 1978:46).

2.2.4 The Boer Republics

By 1844 the Voortrekkers declared their republics. In the south, the land between the Orange River and the Vaal River was known as the Republiek van die Oranje Vrystaat (Republic of the Orange Free State). In the north the land between the Vaal River in the south and the Limpopo River in the north soon become known as the Transvaal (meaning ‘across the Vaal River’).

‘Within fourteen years a thin layer of Dutch settlement had spread over the most desirable parts of the interior…’ (De Kiewiet 1941:56). During those years, the white settlement spread from the Cape to the Zoutpansberg, about 2 400 km (Van Jaarsveld 1962:197).

The British governor of the Cape, Sir Harry Smith, proclaimed in February 1848 that the land between the Orange River and the Vaal River formed part of the British colony and would be called the ‘Orange River Sovereignty’ (Preston 1989:45). The Afrikaners tried to free themselves but were defeated at Boomplaats (Preston 1989:45). Pretorius and his followers were obliged to flee
north, to the Transvaal (Tingay, Johnson 1978:63). He soon built up a new following near the modern day city of Pretoria (Giliomee 2003:173).

The Basotho nation grew strong and caused a great deal of trouble stealing cattle, killing people and burning farms in the Orange River Sovereignty. The rifles and horses that the Basothos received from the English as gifts, were now used in war against the British soldiers resulting in defeat after defeat by the British army (cf Giliomee 2003:174). By 1854 the Bloemfontein Convention was signed, giving the land between the Orange River and the Vaal River back to the Afrikaners (Preston 1989:46), withdrawing from the Basotho problem and leaving it to the Afrikaners.

After intense negotiations, the independence of the land north of the Vaal River was accepted by Britain in 1852. With the signing of Sand River Convention (the Sand River is a small river running into the Vet River) the country became officially known as the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR), with its own constitution that was made official at Potchefstroom in 1856 (Preston 1989:46).

In the face of threatening dangers the community united to clear for itself habitable regions where marauding natives should not trespass. When they believed this to have been accomplished, and after they obtained recognition of their independence, the different localities that had been settled by various parties at different times drew away from each other, with the result that five years elapsed before a satisfactory constitution could be established (Eybers 1918:1xvii).

Potchefstroom was the capital city of the ZAR. The ZAR included the districts of Potchefstroom, Rustenburg and Pretoria (Barnard 1935:11). The districts of Lydenburg and Zoutpansberg rejected the constitution and formed their own
republics in 1858 (Barnard 1935:11). There were now three independent republics north of the Vaal River. In 1858 the Republic of Zoutpansberg united with the ZAR and the Republic of Lydenburg followed two years later (Barnard 1935:11). The capital city then moved to Pretoria (Barnard 1935:11).

2.2.5 The Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek

The Great Trek was officially terminated with the signing of the Sand River Convention (Patterson 1957:22). A new country started to develop in the northern part of South Africa.

The fact that the Christian faith formed part of every aspect of life in the ZAR, led to a unique government system in the ZAR with elders playing a major part in public life (Spoelstra 1988:47). In this government system the following were welded together: the Calvinistic faith, democratic principles regarding the sovereignty of the people, distribution of authority, as well as the Afrikaner characteristics of strong leadership and organisational skills, backed by the trusted Roman-Dutch law system (Coertze 1977:267).

The Maatschappij van Potchefstroom (Company of Potchefstroom) was the first settlement of the Voortrekkers on the banks of the Mooi River (Goldman 1927:138). The Raad van Potchefstroom (Council of Potchefstroom) was the governing body until October 16th, 1840 when it was replaced by the Adjunkraad van Potchefstroom (Adjunct Council of Potchefstroom). This was a combined governing body from both Potchefstroom and Natal (Goldman 1927:139). The
Potchefstroom-Winburg *Volksraad* promulgated a 33-article constitution in 1844 (Tingay, Johnson 1978:62). After the annexation of Natal by Britain, this body was dissolved and the *Volksraad* took the responsibility of governing the ZAR (Goldman 1927:139).

In 1845, when some of the Voortrekkers moved to Andries-Ohrigstad to be closer to the harbour, a few of the Natal-Voortrekkers also arrived and a new *Volksraad* was chosen (Goldman 1927:139).

A few years later, in 1849, a meeting was held at Derdepoort and the people decided to form the *Algemene Bond of Vereeniging* (General Union or Association) (Goldman 1927:139). Six of the 20 representatives were from Andries-Orighstad and this union later became known as the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (Goldman 1927:139). The legislative body of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) was the *Volksraad* and in 1891 this body split into two divisions, the *Eerste en Tweede Volksraad* (First and Second *Volksraad*) that co-existed until May 1900 (Goldman 1927:139).

The *Uitvoerende Raad* (Executive Council) was formed in 1857 and existed until 1902. This body consisted of the highest officials of the State and a fewburghers who were chosen by the members of the *Volksraad* because of their exceptional skills and/or knowledge (Goldman 1927:180).
Jan Van Riebeeck brought with him the Roman-Dutch law and everyone living in the Cape, including the non-Dutch settlers had to abide by it (Joubert 1977:281). This law was brought with the Voortrekkers to the Transvaal. ‘The laws of the Transvaal (1865) were upon the whole as good as those of any other country, but for want of a police it was impossible to enforce justice in all cases, yet great crimes were exceptionally rare, for nowhere in the world was the moral law of greater force than among the farmers of the SA republic’ (Nixon 1880:208).

In the Cape, as in all of the colonies of the Netherlands, the authority of the government was decentralised to the person of the magistrate who was responsible for keeping law and order in the district assigned to his authority. He had to protect individuals and property, see to the wellbeing and prosperity of the district, and act as judge in both criminal and civil cases. The magistrate also conducted marriages, handled finances, and distributed new farms (Van der Merwe 1926:146,147).

The districts were divided into wards and each ward was under the jurisdiction of a field cornet, serving under the magistrate of the local district. In the absence of the magistrate, all his powers and responsibilities rested on the shoulders of the field cornet and his helper, the assistant-field cornet (Van Jaarsveld 1949:202).

When Britain took over the Cape, this system was not altered and the Voortrekkers took it with them and implemented it to govern and protect the lagers (Van Jaarsveld 1949:204). The duty of the field cornets during the Trek
was to know and enforce the laws. They helped with the planning of the Treks. They also provide information to the people regarding the procedures in and around the lagers like hunting, religious services and measures to be taken in case of sickness (Preller 1940:447).

After the Trek, the field cornet developed into an all-rounder civil, administrative and military officer who represented order and security to the local communities (Van Jaarsveld 1949:207). The ZAR was divided into districts and wards. At the head of each ward served a field cornet, elected by the residents of the ward for a period of three years.

A commandant, also elected by the burghers but for a period of five years, was in charge of each district. In charge of all the commandants, was the commandant-general, who was elected for a period of five years. During times of war, the soldiers were commanded, not by the commandant-general, but by the Council of War, consisting of all the commandants and field cornets. This basic structure had to be adapted and extended in the War against Britain (Bakkes 1977:307).

In the centre of the military system stood the commando system. Every man had the duty to see to it that law and order was kept both on his farm and in the district where he lived. The men could be called up at any given time to serve the country as soldiers (Bakkes 1977:306). ‘Every man in the Transvaal is supposed to be a soldier when the need arises for him. Every burgher or colonist between eighteen
and sixty years of age could be called upon to serve on a commando’ (Garrett-Fisher 1900:46).

When gold was discovered in Eastern Transvaal at the Mac-Mac falls in 1873, and later in 1886 on the farm Langlaagte on the Witwatersrand, the rustic poor country changed overnight (Preston 1989:82). Fortune-seekers and businessmen, good and bad, poured into the country in their thousands looking for new opportunities. ‘Never before in world history had a mineral discovery so suddenly and dramatically, and so utterly, transformed an obscure rural backwater. Gold became the foundation of the monetary system of the industrialized nations and was to dominate the South African economy and its politics for the next sixty years’ (Giliomee 2003:236).

The nearly bankrupt ZAR soon grew wealthy on the taxes imposed on the mines (Patterson 1957:27). ‘The adjustment from an ox-wagon to a machine economy would have been difficult enough in a homogeneous society. Here the new economy and the new ideas were brought by aggressive and impatient outsiders, most of them speaking the language of the old oppressors’ (Patterson 1957:27).

Britain soon changed its mind about the independence of the ZAR and took over the government on April 12th, 1877 without a single shot being fired (Preston 1989:60). The Afrikaners sent two deputations to London to try to get the British to leave, but with no success (Preston 1989:73). In twenty-five years the
Afrikaners had not only created a home but a country that was worth taking from them (Aylward 1881:19).

The Volksraad and more than 8 000 men gathered at Paardekraal on December 13th, 1880 after a dispute when the government tried to collect overdue taxes from a Potchefstroom farmer (Preston 1989:75). The people decided to restore the Republic and three leaders were identified – SJP Kruger, PJ Joubert en MW Pretorius (Goldman 1927:183). The result of this was the First Anglo-Boer War that started two days later on December 16th, 1880, on the anniversary of the battle of Blood River, and ended on March 23rd, 1881 (Goldman 1927:52).

The peace treaty was signed in Pretoria on August 3rd, 1881. The Afrikaners were not happy with the conditions but they knew that they could not go to war again, so they signed the treaty and the ZAR became officially known as Transvaal. Further negotiations followed and by 1883, the name was changed back to the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek. Paul Kruger became State President (Preston 1989:73).

The liberal views and laws that were imported by President Burgers (who was the predecessor of Paul Kruger), the war, the constant interference of Britain, the influx of foreigners, the development and civilisation – that were results of the discovery of gold – left the Afrikaners ready to pack their wagons to wander off again (Van Jaarsveld 1971a:87).
The Thirstland Trek claimed many lives. It started forty years after the Great Trek in 1874 (Coetzee sa:5). Some of the Trekkers were in severe protest against the leadership of Burgers (Coetzee sa:9). They were conservative and refused to accept his ‘liberal’ views on religion and education (see also chapter four). Although Burgers was responsible for some remarkable achievements like the establishing of an educational department with its own educational system, a museum, the first Supreme Court and the commissioning of the anthem (*Kent gij dat Volk*), opposition to his authority played a major part in the Thirstland Trek (Giliomee 2003:188).

The Thirstland Trek got its name from the terrible suffering of those people due to the lack of water in the regions that they moved into (cf Coetzee sa:13-15). They trekked into the desert areas of Botswana and Namibia as well as the southern part of Angola. People continued to trek until after the Second Anglo-Boer War (Coetzee sa:49). Between 1874 and 1880, 500 to 600 people left the ZAR but between 250 and 300 of those people either perished or turned back (Giliomee 2003:188).

After the First Anglo-Boer War, people (like the Adendorf Trek) also wanted to leave the country, moving further north into the interior of Africa, but this dream had to be abandoned even before it got to life because of the closing of the northern border with the proclamation of Rhodesia in 1889, that was reserved for English settlers (cf Blok 1927).
‘The Transvaal had been subjected simultaneously to an industrial revolution, a population invasion, an advanced form of capitalism and a partial occupation by foreigners’ (Le May 1995:94). Johannesburg and its environments became an English-speaking enclave within the ZAR (Le May 1995:94). The biggest problem was the influence of the outlanders. Soon they numbered 75 700 as opposed to the 150 000 of the Afrikaner population (Alhadeff 1990:14).

Rhodes, the Cape Governor, tried to unite the whole of Southern Africa under the British flag but the Afrikaners did not go along with this plan. In order to force the Afrikaners to become British subjects, a coup d'etat was planned (Preston 1989:87). The invasion was stopped near Krugersdorp on January 1st, 1896 under the leadership of General Piet Cronje (Preston 1989:88). The Jameson raid failed and Rhodes was forced to resign (Patterson 1957:29). This did not stop him from trying to get the ZAR under British control. Eventually, the Second Anglo Boer War broke out on October 11th, 1899 (Alhadeff 1990:14).

Britain started the conflict with about 27 000 soldiers in South Africa and thought that the war would last about six months. By the end of the war there were 250 000 British soldiers in South Africa (Vivier, Loots, Grobler 1996:77). When it became clear that the war would drag on for years, the British decided that the destruction of the country would be the only way to put an end to the war (Preston 1989:105). ‘I want to crush Afrikanerdom,’ Sir Alfred Milner said in 1899.
Lord Roberts proclaimed the annexation of the Transvaal in September 1900 (Le May 1995:115). He then warned that he would take any means necessary to bring resistance to an end (Le May 1995:117). This meant farm burning and it was the beginning of what was called ‘camps of refuge’ by the army but soon came to be known as ‘concentration camps’ (Le May 1995:11). Between 30 000 and 38 000 people of all races died in these camps (Le May 1995:118). By November 1901 the camps were transferred from military to civilian control. The mortality rates dropped dramatically from 344 per 1000 in October 1901 to 20 per 1000 in May 1902 (Le May 1995:119).

The war dragged on. Lord Kitchener now turned to what a later generation called the tactic of ‘scorched earth’ (Le May 1995:118). This meant burning or blowing up farm houses, destroying dams, burning crops and killing or driving off livestock – several million horses, cattle and sheep (Le May 1995:118). Later this was supplemented by the building of barbed wire fences totalling nearly 4 800 km, with blockhouses every few hundred meters (Le May 1995:118).

The War cost Britain £223 000 000 (Calpin 1944:60). According to Andrews, there were 449 000 British soldiers in the field during the War and they suffered 97 500 casualties (Andrews 1983:7). Only 21 000 British soldiers died as result of the battles itself (Preston 1989:110). About 6 000 Afrikaner soldiers lost their lives in the Second Anglo-Boer War (Calpin 1944:60).
It was the British, after some prodding from the Dutch government, who made the first move towards negotiations. Peace making was a complicated and protracted business (Le May 1995:121). Eventually peace was made on May 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1902, resulting in the termination of the existence of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (Preston 1989:109).

2.3 Religion in the ZAR

In the Netherlands the Reformed Church, based on the Calvinistic doctrine, was the official denomination, but it was not the State Church (Giliomee 2003:5). ‘At the Cape the Reformed Church for more than a century would be the only Church’ (Giliomee 2003:5).

The state kept a close watch over the Church, both at home and at the Cape. It remunerated some Church employees and owned the Church buildings. In the Netherlands it instructed the Church not to criticize the government, and, at the Cape, ministers as paid officials of the Company were expected to be obedient and respectful towards it (Giliomee 2003:5).

The ecclesiastical court at Batavia, which was in charge of the colonies, was instructed on matters of faith and policy by the classis (synod) of Amsterdam (Hattersley 1969:57). According to the Church Ordinance of the DEIC the local Church councils had to see to it that good teachers were appointed who had a calling, not only to teach the children to read and write and do arithmetic, but also to teach them the catechism and faith (Lubbe 1942:16). It was not good enough just to learn the words of the catechism; they had to practise this in everyday life. Children were taught to pray and sing spiritual songs. Above all, it was their duty to teach the children in the ‘fear of the Lord’ (Lubbe 1942:16). ‘The Reformed
religion became the single most important force behind the creation of the new nation in South Africa’ (Malherbe 1925:21 – my translation).

The sick comforters did an examination before the Church council to prove their knowledge and fondness of the Bible and dogma before entering into the service of the DEIC. They also had to sign the three Formularies of Unity and promise to be faithful in their work (Van Broekhuizen 1922:7). According to the report of the sick comforter at the Cape, Willem Barendts Wijland, to Amsterdam in 1655, the people were religious and no one was excused from religious meetings without a proper reason (Jooste 1946:42). Every evening a prayer was said and two to three spiritual songs were sung. On Sundays a sermon was read (Jooste 1946:43). Attendance of all sermons was compulsory and stern laws existed to punish those who did not comply (Jooste 1946:242). The laws regarding activities on Sundays were extended when a comet showed in the sky in 1665 because ‘we are being threatened by the wrath of the Lord in the form of stars with long tails that appear threatening in the sky at night’ (Jooste 1946:243 – my translation).

Although the character and religion of the Afrikaners in the early years of the settlement at the Cape, stayed firmly rooted in that of the Netherlands of the 17th century, the culture and customs showed a different colour after about one hundred years (Ahlers 1954:36). By 1691 there were three congregations in the Cape; Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Drakenstein (Giliomee 2003:11). Churches and preachers were few and far in between, and the isolation due to bad roads,
poor transport and great distances had a negative influence on the work of the Church in the 18th and 19th centuries (Grobbelaar 1974:158).

The records of the Church councils showed that the people lived orderly lives, in accordance with the Biblical laws. In 1778 the residents of Camdebo drew up a petition and asked for new congregations, judges and preachers (Ahlers 1954:32). Only one account of fornication was mentioned in the records of the Swartland congregation between 1746 and 1824 (Ahlers 1954:30). In more than a century (1700-1804) in the Stellenbosh congregation, 15 cases of fornication were recorded (Ahlers 1954:30).

During the short years of the Batavian rule at the Cape, the laws regarding religion changed dramatically. De Mist was a liberal statesman and he did not consult with the Church before implementing the new laws (Jooste 1946:90). The Church Ordinance made provision for other denominations and religions next to the Reformed Church (Jooste 1946:90,91). For the first time the Islamic religion was recognised and allowed to practise as a religion in South Africa. It was the start of ‘freedom of religion’ in South Africa. ‘To read Janssen and De Mist is to read the text of the next generation of South African history’ (De Kiewiet 1941:33).

When Britain took over the government of the Cape, the shortage of preachers was used to anglicise the people. Lord Charles Somerset imported Scottish preachers and teachers to help in this process (Jooste 1946:124). Actually, the
English influence in religion in the Cape came from more than one source. Preachers who came from the Netherlands also brought the English influence with them. The Pietism, called the *Reveal* in the Netherlands, was originally an English movement and this was carried into the Church at the Cape (Schutte 1943:30). The missionaries of the London Missionary Society brought the English Methodism to the Cape (Schutte 1943:31).

The behaviour of people on Sundays was a matter of constant irritation. At the first synod meeting that was held in 1824, concern was expressed about the unnecessary buying and selling of goods, the noise in the streets and the playing, gambling and open pubs on Sundays (Jooste 1946:242).

In 1828, a new law forced the Superintendent of the police to see to it that no trading was allowed and all places of recreation had to be closed on Sundays (Jooste 1946:247). In 1837 the law prohibited field labour and no one was allowed to handle a fire arm on Sundays (Jooste 1946:248).

When the Great Trek started, both State and Church tried to stop it and gave no support to the Voortrekkers (Grobbelaar 1974:158). The result was that the Voortrekkers started to look to the Netherlands for support regarding religion, education and commerce.

The Voortrekkers soon became divided in all aspects of life, including religious matters. The reasons behind the religious division were more political than
religious (Schutte 1943:30). Within one country and one nation, three different Churches, all based on the Calvinistic principles, were formed within less than three decades. This disunity caused many problems in all aspects of life and divided the people into fanatic groups willing to fight to prove themselves right (cf Pont 1968:197).

The Adjunct Council of Potchefstroom elected the Church council in February 1842 and soon afterwards they were ordained by the preacher Daniel Lindley (Engelbrecht 1938:169). Knowing that they cannot expect much from the Church in the Cape Colony, the people living in Potchefstroom asked the Church of the Netherlands to send preachers and teachers to the ZAR (Schutte 1943:31).

The Volksraad of Potchefstroom formally broke with the Church of the Cape Colony in 1852. In 1854 the congregation of Lydenburg announced that they were no longer part of the Church of the ZAR. They wanted to rebuild ties with the synod of the Cape (Schutte 1943:32). Some political leaders, who remembered the link between Church and State in the Cape, saw this as an opportunity for the British to get involved in political matters in the ZAR and were opposed to any connections with the Church in the Cape. The result was strife and bitterness that divided the people in the ZAR into small groups.

At the beginning of the 18th century, Liberalism caused a spilt in the Church in the Netherlands (Schutte 1943:32). The Separate Christian Reformed Church opposed the theological liberalism of the main Reformed Church, the weakening of the
traditional confessional standards and the use of hymns in Church services (Giliomee 2003:178). The secessionist preacher Dirk Postma, became the first minister of this conservative arm of the Church in the ZAR that was called the Enkel Gereformeerde Kerk (Giliomee 2003:178).

‘Church schisms racked the Transvaal burgher community, and the three Reformed Churches in the ZAR watched each other with suspicion’ (Giliomee 2003:179). The Reformed Church (Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk) sang hymns and was accused of being liberal (Schutte 1943:32). Due to the English influence on the Church in the Cape, the congregation of Lydenburg (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk) was accused of Methodism. The third Church (Enkel Gereformeerde Kerk) was founded in the ZAR in 1859 in Rustenburg (Schutte 1943:33). The members of this group were accused of being fundamentalists or Doppers and very orthodox (Tingay, Johnson 1978:75). ‘In the Transvaal, the remaining decades of the century were occupied by inter-Church bickering and abortive reconciliation. The general outcome in all parts of South Africa was for seventeenth-century orthodoxy to triumph over nineteenth century liberalism’ (Patterson 1957:187).

The division of the Church in the ZAR into three different Churches gave birth to very confusing and contradictory accounts of the South African Church history. The beliefs, traditions and doctrine of the Church they were members of, coloured South African Church historians and writers’ accounts of history. As an example one can refer to the strife that SP Engelbrecht had with other Church historians.
such as C Spoelstra (1905), JV Coetzee (1945) and GD Scholtz (1957) (Beyers, Basson 1987:258). This controversy between Church historians of the different Churches was carried forward to the next generation when scholars like AD Pont (1968) and PB Van der Watt (1987) opposed each other.

One point of controversy is the proper name of the Church. To this day, there are different opinions regarding the ‘correct’ name of the Church between the members of the different Churches in South Africa. On the one hand, the historians of the Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*) claimed that this was the original name of the Church and it was brought to the ZAR by the Lydenburg congregation (Bosman 1923:11). On the other hand, Church historians of the other Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk*) claimed that this was the name of the Church brought to South Africa in 1652 by the original settlers and that the name was changed to *Nederduitse* in 1842 in the Cape (Engelbrecht 1953:13).

After the success of the First Anglo-Boer War, the Afrikaner nation felt a sense of unity and nationality. The leaders wanted to extend this into their religious lives. By 1885 some of the Church leaders tried to end the ecclesiastical dispute by uniting the two Dutch Reformed Churches, but this did not work out and another split took place ending in a court case and the three different Churches that co-exist to this day (Scholtz sa:80).
Secondary sources on the Great Trek often referred to ‘the desire to spread Christian civilisation in the wilderness’ (Tingay, Johnson 1978:43) as one of the major reasons why Afrikaners left the Cape (cf Cachet 1875:234; Spoelstra 1915:8). If this statement refers to missionary work, carrying the Gospel to the indigenous tribes and nations, it is not true. The South African Missionary Society was founded in 1799 (Gerdener 1959:55) but missionaries from outside South Africa did most of the early missionary work. The Voortrekkers and their children, although they saw themselves as the ‘chosen people of the Lord’ did not do missionary work (Van Jaarsveld 1962:245).

The Hervormde Kerk…firmly opposed all missionary work. The Dopper majority accepted missionary work as long as it avoided common worship…The pro-British DRC [Dutch Reformed Church or Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk] tended to be much more liberal in their attitudes towards blacks but, while in principle in favor of missionary work, did very little in practice (Giliomee 2003:179).

Van der Westhuizen says that although the Dutch Reformed Church (Hervormde Kerk) did not actually do much missionary work, it was not opposed to missionary work (Van der Westhuizen 1969:10). Although these opinions cannot be tested here, it is true that none of the three Churches in the ZAR had missionaries in the field before 1899 (Van Jaarsveld 1962:245).

If the above mentioned statement refers to the Afrikaners’ clinging to their religion despite the fact that the Cape Church gave no support, and the cruel prediction that they would become barbarians in the wilderness (Venter 1985:23), they indeed managed to bring the light of Christianity into the interior of the country. The ‘living faith’ practised by the Voortrekkers, was carried from one
generation to the next within the small circle of the household and family and the Afrikaners became a nation focused on itself regarding it’s religion and education.

The influence of religion on the lives of Afrikaners in the ZAR cannot be over emphasised. The biggest impact of religion was seen in the functioning of the household and marriage (Grobelaar 1974:159). Marriage was seen as a sacred ritual and divorce was not an option. Many children were a blessing from the Lord and the promises made at the baptism of the babies were taken seriously – it was the task of the parents to look after the education of their children and the foundation of this education was the Christian faith (Grobelaar 1974:160).

2.4 Conclusion

The words of Mark Twain, capturing the difficulty one encounters when South African history is investigated, serve as conclusion:

When Mark Twain visited South Africa, he was asked by an eminent Africander what he thought of South African affairs. “Well,” replied Mark Twain, “after I had been in Cape Town a week and had heard both sides of the question, I thought I had mastered it. Then I went to Kimberley, and met with a totally different view. Up in Bulawayo there was quite another story, and in Johannesburg a different opinion was heard, while in Pretoria I might as well have been in another country. When I reached Bloemfontein – ” “Yes?” said the eminent Africander, “what conclusion did you come to?” “Well,” said Mark Twain, “the only conclusion I could arrive at was that the South African question was a very good subject for a fool to let alone” (Ellman 1914:36).

In the next chapter the focus will fall on the origins and underpinnings of the Christian education in South Africa. The educational system as well as the
philosophical schools of thought that influenced the educational system and the character of the young Afrikaner nation will be investigated.