

## **Chapter 6**

### **The results of Christian education in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek**

In chapter five, the most important characteristics of the Afrikaner nation were discussed. The enormous influence of religion and Christian based education on the nation was pointed out. The unique way in which both the country and the nation developed was the result of Christian based education. It directly influenced the development and functioning of the ZAR resulting in the forming of a Christian country with a Christian constitution and Christian based laws. The people running the country and those living in the ZAR shared Christian based education and they transmitted its influences into their work, achievements and legacies.

The focus in this chapter differs slightly from the previous ones. Here the object under investigation is not the Christian based education itself, but the results and impact that it had on the ZAR as well as on the Afrikaner nation.

It is, however, difficult to investigate the influence of Christian based education on the development of the ZAR because, unlike the political and economical history, spiritual, emotional and moral history cannot easily be traced or pinned down. Most of the physical results of the Christian based education, like the forming of the CNE system and nature conservation, as well as the numerous women's organisations, charity organisations and self-help organisations (cf

Stockenström sa:275-282) gained momentum only after the Second Anglo Boer War. The lack of formal institutions and measurable or factual data (from the time of the existence of the ZAR) that can be utilised as instruments of measurement forced me to look for alternative sources. The people living in the ZAR were the carriers of the influence of the Christian based education, and the stories of their lives still bear witness to the impact their education had on the development of the country and the nation.

The first part of this chapter focuses on the lives and work of a few prominent Afrikaners, individuals whose impact on society was directly influenced by their Christian based education and training. The last part of the chapter focuses on the single most important aspect of Christian based education, namely the development of a Christian nation living in a Christian country – the lasting result of Christian based education in the ZAR.

The first point that needs to be made regarding the selection of this particular group of people is the fact that all of them had either none or only minimal formal education. They are, to my mind, regarding this aspect of life, representative of the majority of the Afrikaner children of the time.

The second criterion used for choosing these individuals as typical examples of the Afrikaners living in the ZAR, is the fact that all of them had a long and intensive Christian education. ‘It is important to note that the faith taught to the children in the home had to be a personal, practised, active faith...’ (Staples

1980:36). Religious education shaped their characters and influenced their personalities. Everything that they achieved, as well as the legacies they left behind and the institutions they started or were part of, were either direct or indirect results of their childhood Christian based education. Their lives and work made an impact on the ZAR and the Afrikaners because their education enabled them to become leaders and heroes.

These individuals are chosen from a broad spectrum, representing the people who lived in the ZAR. Their influence was felt on all levels of society like politics, nature conservation, business, education, religion and services to the community.

The characteristics of the Afrikaner nation that were mentioned in chapter five can also be identified in the lives of these individuals. 'The Word of God formed the guideline in his private, social, political and religious life. He believed in it like a child and saw it as his book of comfort and his law book' (Postma 1944:19 – my translation). These words of Postma regarding Paul Kruger are also true of his countrymen, whose lives and words underlined their faith. Bosman used to say to his children: 'If someone wrongs or hurts you, it is an issue between that person and the Lord, not between him and you' (Bosman 1960:50,51 – my translation). He had to apply this advice to himself when the attempted union of the two Dutch Reformed Churches did not materialise, and he was blamed from both sides for the mess.

The firm faith of the Afrikaner that everything is in the hands of God, echoed in the words of Hendrina Joubert and Paul Kruger. The favourite sentence used by both of them when things were bad, was: *Alles zal rechkom* (everything will turn out well), probably taken over from President Brand of the Orange Free State (Rose 1902:14).

The attitude of the Church in the Cape saddened the Voortrekkers but they knew that the Church was under the jurisdiction of the government. They still had great respect for the ministers and did their best to establish a Church in the ZAR. The life and work of Engelbrecht showed the high regard that the people had for the Church and devotion, and the effort and commitment they put into establishing congregations in the young country.

The conservatism of the Afrikaners was legendary. Paul Kruger, a member of the most conservative of the three Afrikaans speaking Churches, often retreated to fundamentalism when confronted with things that he did not agree with. 'If what you say is true, then I will have to throw my Bible away!' (Engelenburg 1925:19 – my translation) was his usual defence. Engelbrecht, although not a member of the same Church as Kruger, was known and is still remembered today for his very conservative worldview.

Contrary to the characteristics of the nation that survived for more than a century, there are not many concrete institutions to measure the impact of Christian based education on the society living in the ZAR. Those that do exist were only really

recognised after the termination of the ZAR. The lives and work of the few leaders and pioneers stated below, initiated some of the most important institutions, traditions and heritages in South Africa that were results of Christian based education and training.

### **6.1 Leaders and pioneers**

Despite the troubles and hardship suffered during the Great Trek, the people settling north of the Vaal River, started with new hope and expectations to build a country where they would be free to live and practise their beliefs as they pleased.

Within fifty short years, the Afrikaners explored more than one quarter of South Africa, founded at least three new States and built more than 50 new towns and cities (Jonkheid 1897:8). A unique nation was formed, shaping the country around them according to the values and principles that they treasured.

The leaders who brought the Trek from the Cape, fought the battles, and conquered the land, were old and the younger generation took over. Those who were children during the Great Trek became the leaders who had a great influence on the shaping of society, politics and religion in the new country. They were again replaced by a generation who were born and grew up in the ZAR. Examples of the pioneers and leaders from three generations will serve to explain their influence on the shaping of the country. A unique society was formed with its own Christian based laws and customs that gave the South African community a distinctive Christian character and lasted for more than a century to come.

War against the tribes and nations that surrounded the borders of the ZAR occurred often and the young people were brought up in the same spirit as their fathers who survived the Great Trek. The boys were marksmen, their horses trained for battle and the hunting of wild animals (cf Du Plessis 1900:284). The young lads were excellent riders. They knew the veld, could trace and track footprints and knew the war tactics of the enemy. The continuous struggles and wars gave ample opportunities for young men to show bravery and cunningness (cf Rose 1902:13). Rewards were given in the form of military ranks and admiration by comrades in battle. There are numerous examples of men who became heroes and examples to the nation because of their great performances on the battlefields of South Africa (cf De Wilzem 1989, Grobbelaar 1980, Mackenzie 1899).

The women were used to see their beloved sons and husbands go to war. They knew how to take charge of the farms while the men were away.

If the Afrikaner man was indeed the instrumental agent who worked out God's will in Afrikaner history, the women provided a deep well of moral fortitude which complemented and even surpassed her husband's more practical exploits. In the struggle against the English oppressor, her strength of courage buoyed up the wavering will of her husband, urging him on to further feats (Moodie 1980:17).

They were the heroes who, like their Voortrekker mothers, taught the eternal values to their children and educated them as well as they could, to face an uncertain and dangerous future (Moodie 1980:17). 'They [the women] bred and fed the children, made their clothes, taught them the religion and traditions of the culture in which they were born, and faced death side by side with their men when

attacked by indigenous people or wild beasts' (Giliomee 2003:231,232). The respect that the woman earned from every one who met them and saw what they did and how they coped with life's struggles and pains, filled the pages of many books (see also chapter five).

As if the bloodshed between the tribes and nations living within the borders of Southern Africa were not enough, the people living in the ZAR had to fight the greatest Empire of the time twice, in order to try and save their country, their religion and every thing that was dear to them. They left the Cape to escape the British invasion in their lives, but fifty years later had to face them again, this time not with their ox wagons, but with their guns.

Britain tasted defeat in the First Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881), but still managed to trouble the young nation and nearly twenty years later tried to, for once and for all, '...crush the Afrikanerdom...' (Sir Alfred Milner in 1899) by putting women and children in concentration camps while burning the country to ashes in order to win the war and stop the Boers from fighting. In these two wars, the Afrikaners, both men and women proved themselves brave and true to their upbringing. Many heroes - men, women and children - were crowned with glory and an honourable place in the bloodstained history records of the country.

While it is true that the battlefields provided honour and glory to many a South African, one should realise that this is only one part of the history of the nation. Often people can be drawn into military or political issues and are so caught up in

it that other aspects of the history are lost. While the battles were fought and the political struggles acting out, it was the people living their lives and acting their convictions, who shaped and moulded the character of the country and its people.

In times of uncertainty and danger of losing all that is dear and prized, one tends to look into history to find guidelines and courage from those who suffered similar fates and succeeded in their visions and goals. The Afrikaner nation treasures and honours its heroes of the past and although the apologetic and political influences often cast a shadow over the facts and the interpretations of it, the history and achievements of past heroes form part of the educational curriculum in schools around South Africa. These people serve as examples for the younger generation to follow. Their achievements still guide the nation in modern times.

In the following paragraphs, the spotlight will fall on a number of the people who helped to build the country into a world class entity. The most important factor that served as a guideline for picking these people from the hundreds that deserved space in a document like this, was their childhood years and the Christian based education that they received because it influenced their lives as well as their achievements. In spite of their 'uneducated' background in the eyes of the world, they became excellent leaders and examples that were followed by other Afrikaners. Because of their Christian formed character, they were able to perform their duties with distinction. The Christian based education and training can be seen, shining like a golden thread through the lives and works, deeds and



thoughts of all these people. They were of course not the only ones living by such high religious standards and had only the Bible to fall back on as their source of knowledge and inspiration, but they do, to my mind, represent the major part of the Afrikaner nation of that time in their thinking, attitude and worldview.

The books written on the life, politics, works and influence of Paul Kruger are enough to fill a few shelves in a library. Every aspect of his life is covered. Therefore, this study does not intend to bring new information to the attention of the reader. The reason why he is chosen to illustrate the influence of Christian based education on the ZAR is that he had an enormous influence on the government, the people around him and even the generations to come. His own Biblical based education serves as a great example and inspiration to many other Afrikaners. Another reason for choosing his life as an example is because he is one of only a few people living in the ZAR whose private as well as public life is available to investigate and he is seen as a 'prototype' of the Afrikaner nation.

Along with the person of Paul Kruger, a few other people will serve as examples to describe the influence that Christian education had on the people living in the ZAR. They were selected because of the educational background they shared. All of them received only minimal or no formal education. All of them reached exceptional heights in their careers or callings. All of them received basic Christian education starting when they were babies and reaching a climax when they did public confession of faith to be accepted as members of Church and State. Faith and the Bible played a major role in the lives of all of these people.

Paul Kruger claimed that he knew every family in the ZAR before the gold rush. The President's home was open to everyone, rich or poor and the hospitality to all who visited was the same (Krüger 1963:87). When the lives of the different individuals is studied, one tends to get the impression that they lived isolated lives, not knowing each other or not having an influence on one another. That is not true. The people chosen to illustrate the influence of Christian based education on the ZAR are all closely associated with the person of Paul Kruger and in most cases also with each other.

General Piet Joubert and Paul Kruger were comrades in arms and they went to London together (Krüger 1961:162). The President therefore knew Hendrina Joubert, the wife of Joubert well. After the success of the First Anglo-Boer War, Paul Kruger addressed the people, Piet Joubert prayed and Rev Bosman conducted a thanksgiving service (Krüger 1961:251). Joubert and Kruger both ran for President and Kruger won. In 1887 NJ Smit became vice President, replacing Joubert (Krüger 1963:99). Smit also accompanied the President on the third deputation to London in 1883 (Krüger 1963:7).

Hendrina Joubert was with her husband when the Tommies were spotted on Majuba Mountain and Smit was one of the volunteer leaders who attacked the English that morning.

Rev Bosman rented a room from the widow Joubert to use as a consulting room while the rectory was being built in Pretoria after the Second Anglo-Boer War (Bosman 1960:31).

Bosman and Kruger were friends. When Bosman was out of town, Kruger more than once held sermons in the Church in Pretoria (Bosman 1960:22). When Paul Kruger became President in 1883, Bosman said the prayer before the President took his oath (Krüger 1961:273) and Bosman also spoke at the Presidents' funeral service (Bosman 1960:34).

Bosman and Engelbrecht worked together to establish unity between the two Dutch Reformed Churches and Engelbrecht attended the meeting that Kruger held in 1891 to resolve the matter.

Meyer, a member of the *Volksraad*, was waiting for the President in 1890 when he arrived at the northern entrance to Johannesburg to speak to the people (Krüger 1963:107).

Grobler was related to Paul Kruger, served in the government and accompanied the President to Europe during the Second Anglo-Boer War where he and Bredell wrote the life story of the President.

There is no space to give full biographies of these people. The spotlight shines on the Christian based education they received as well as their characters that were

formed by this education that eventually made them the people they were and the impact that they had on the ZAR as well as the Afrikaner nation. The centre pillar of their lives was their faith. Both in their public and personal lives, the Christian faith dictated their words and deeds. The impact of this way of life was so great that it survived the fall of the ZAR and continued to influence the Afrikaner nation for the next century.

Under the first heading, the lives of four people are very shortly stated. All of them were children during the Great Trek and they received the education that was the norm and trusted guideline for those times: Christian based education with the Bible as main source of instruction. They were religiously instructed by their parents in the stern Calvinistic ways to obey and trust the Lord as the One and only God who reigns over everything. In order to enable them to read the Bible and learn the words and melodies of the spiritual songs they were required to sing, education consisted of lessons in writing, reading, spelling, singing and a little mathematics (see chapter three). The parents themselves provided most of this education, but fortunately, there were a few schoolmasters that were part of the Great Trek, who also gave lessons to the children. Despite the lack of formal education in school buildings by properly trained teachers, these people, and many others like them, who are not mentioned, lived to become leaders and heroes, pioneers and builders of the new country and nation. It was the firm foundation of their faith and the confidence given by secure family life and love that helped to form a clear vision and ability to do their best not only for themselves but also for the benefit of everyone living in the ZAR.

The second group of people focused on, are those who were born after the Great Trek, natives of the wild young country who, in many aspects (like the lack of education), were even less fortunate than their parents that took part in the Great Trek. Most of them were poor farmers, trying to make a living on isolated farms with no or few opportunities for formal education. They too, like their fathers and mothers, were trained in the ways of the God-fearing people to love and respect God. They trusted Him for guidance and help in all aspects of life. They used the Bible as source of knowledge and trusted guideline to help them in all aspects of life. They used the Bible as reference for all actions and decisions. Many of these children made a deep impact upon the nation.

When gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886, life changed for the Afrikaner nation. Those who were infants when the country started to develop saw a different ZAR from the one which their parents and grand parents were used to. Towns and cities sprang up. There were schools and teachers in most of the districts. The struggling insolvent government was able to stabilise the economy and the isolated ZAR was linked by rail both to Cape Town in the south and Delagoa Bay (now Maputo) in the east within two short years. The partly inhabited country suddenly overflowed with strangers from every corner of the world bringing with them different cultures, religions and habits that shocked the conservative Afrikaners. In spite of all these changes, developments and threatening circumstances, and their limited education (compared to the European or 'outlander' standards), these people earned themselves a place in the sun in the 'new' South Africa both before and after the Second Anglo-Boer War. They

became leaders in different circumstances, clinging to their Christian heritage even when it would have been much easier to adapt to the trends and customs that others called ‘progress’ or ‘improvement’.

### **6.1.1 The children of the Great Trek**

The children that were part of the Great Trek had wonderful and adventurous lives. They saw wild and wonderful things, did adventurous deeds, learned to cope with death and disappointment but above all, they lived near to God as a result of their education and training that prepared them for this life as well as their eternal destiny. Their parents, knowing that life could be short and abruptly ended, wanted to be sure that their children were saved and therefore taught and trained even the smallest children in the knowledge of the saving grace of God.

These children, despite their lack of formal education and because of their firm Christian based education, grew up to become great leaders in the young country, contributing to the development of the Christian spirit that became part of the South African society. Although the contributions they made cannot be seen in concrete institutions and other manifestations that are measurable in scientific terms, the spiritual, religious and nation building contributions are all treasures that still influence the life and worldviews of the Afrikaner nation.

First, the spotlight will fall on the life of one of the prominent leaders in South African history. Paul Kruger was a lion hunter who became involved in politics and ended up to be the four-time President of the ZAR. The Christian based

education that Paul Kruger received as a child, not only influenced his whole life, character and worldview, but also made a mark on the society, laws and government of the ZAR. He became an Afrikaner icon while he was still alive and remained a hero after his death.

The life of Hendrina Joubert, wife of General Piet Joubert, showed the strength, determination and clinging to religion, the most important characteristic of the women of the time, that had great influence on the forming of the nation. The old proverb states: 'Educate a man and you educate an individual, educate a woman and you educate a nation.' It is true of this woman. She was a living icon to the Afrikaner and a pillar of strength and faith to them because of her example of 'living faith' during the saddest part of the Afrikaner history.

The third example of a prominent person, who had to rely on his Christian education in later life, was Nicolaas Smit who became an honoured Field-General and vice-President of the ZAR. He had no formal education, but the religious education he received as a child was enough to make him a man who received several international awards. His brave actions on the battlefield and friendly manners in government, made a huge impression on the Afrikaner nation.

The last example from this period, is Gerhardus Engelbrecht who was a prominent leader. He had great influence on the community and Church management. Like Smit, he had no formal education. The Bible was his only handbook in life and he used it in his own as well as the lives of the congregation and the Church as the

only law and true guideline. The influence of the Church in the ZAR on the community grew tremendously under the guidance of people like Kruger and Engelbrecht. It grew stronger until Calpin claimed: 'The centre of all Afrikaner spiritual and social life is the Dutch Reformed Church...The degree and extent of its influence cannot be measured.' (Calpin 1944:17). It was the personal impact of people like Engelbrecht who gave the early momentum to the institution and started the great role the Churches played in the lives of people of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **6.1.1.1 Stefanus Johannes Paulus Kruger**

##### **a) Who was he?**

Paul Kruger was born on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1825 on a farm in the district of Cradock in the Cape into a family of nomad-farmers (De Kock 1976:464). His father joined the Trek of Hendrik Potgieter in 1836 and they became pioneer-settlers living in the land north of the Vaal River. He was only eleven years old when he fought at *Vegkop* and joined Hendrik Potgieter on commando when he was fourteen (De Wilzem 1989:1). He was also a 'great and fearless hunter' (Andrews 1983:36).

In 1842, when he turned sixteen and a 'burgher' on account of his public confession of faith and member of the Church, he received according to the customs of that time, a farm, located near Rustenburg. He got married in the same year, but his wife and baby died the following year of malaria. He married again in 1847.



By 1851 Paul Kruger was a field cornet, a member of the Council of War, and he took part in the negotiations between the leaders of the ZAR and the British, that resulted in the declaration of the independence of the ZAR on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1852 with the signing of the Sand River convention (Preston 1989:73). Three years later, he helped to draft the Transvaal Constitution.

By 1854, Paul Kruger was commandant of Rustenburg, and in 1863, he became Commandant-General and member of the Executive Council (Krüger 1961:74). In 1877 Kruger was elected vice-President of the ZAR. Kruger won the elections and became State President on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1883 (Preston 1989:73). At that time, the ZAR was in desperate financial trouble, but deliverance was soon to come with the proclamation of the gold fields of the Witwatersrand in 1886. The passionate work and effort of Kruger resulted in the opening of the long awaited and much desired railway line to Delagoa Bay in 1894, two years after the railway to Cape Town was opened.

War between the ZAR and Britain broke out on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1899. Kruger, by then an old man, was sent to Europe where he sought support for the cause of the Boers, but in vain. After peace was declared in 1903, he stayed in Europe, where he wrote letters to console his people. The words of his last letter, written on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1904, lived in the hearts and minds of the Afrikaner nation for the next century: 'If you want to build a future for yourself, you must never forget the past. Therefore, seek in the past all that is good and right and take that to build the future on' (Van Jaarsveld 1971b:174 – my translation, see also Appendix 10).

Although the life of Paul Kruger is often idolised, he had his share of problems and hardship. ‘All my horses are dead...My fruit lies rotting under the trees. I can hardly get any game and lung sickness has broken out among the cattle. I am pursued by my creditors. My son is overworked and no-one can look after my affairs’ (Alhadeff 1990:12). He and his family frequently suffered from malaria (Alhadeff 1990:12). The last years of his life, spent abroad, were not easy for the old President. He could not accept the fact that the country that he loved so much was in the hands of the enemy and that he would never see it again. He also had his faults and made mistakes in both private and public life. He was human and no saint. However, the emphasis of this investigation falls on the Christian based education he received and the influence it had on his life and work. Paul Kruger died on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1904 and was later buried in Pretoria.

## **b) Education**

As shown in chapter three, Paul Kruger had no formal education except for about three months during the Trek, given by Tielman Roos, the schoolmaster of the Potgieter Trek (De Wilzem 1989:1). As for the rest, he received education and training from his parents, in line with the stern and conservative Calvinistic Christian tradition (cf Carstens 1988:145). His father taught him the contents of the Bible and his sharp memory helped him to remember these lessons. He was well known for his love of debating theological issues (Engelenburg 1925:6,11).

He never read any book other than the Bible and frequently relied on a literal interpretation of the Bible as a guide (Giliomee 2003:177). It was on this stern

religious foundation that his whole life was built. The influence of religion and Christian based education was a central pillar in his life that became a central pillar in the life of the nation under his influence. Not only his personal life, but also his public life, the laws of the ZAR and even the decisions made by the Executive Council were influenced by the President's conservative Christian outlook upon life (cf Giliomee 2003:177).

### **c) Religion**

'The Boers have generally taken more interest in ecclesiastical than in secular politics' (Bryce 1900:321). Ecclesiastical matters were the cause of many fights and struggles in the ZAR (cf Spoelstra 1988:49-50). Kruger had deep religious views. 'In knowledge of Scripture he surpassed many a clergyman' (Jeppe 1906:160). His stern, conservative upbringing in the Calvinistic lifestyle led to him being one of the founder members of the Reformed Church (*Gereformeerde Kerk* or also called the *Doppers*) together with the Rev Dirk Postma in 1859 in Rustenburg. Throughout his life he remained a leading member of this Church.

Bryce commented on the members of this Church:

The Doppers are still more stringent in their adherence to ancient ways. They are in fact old-fashioned Puritans in dogmatic beliefs and social usages, and, as in the case of the extreme Puritans of the seventeenth century, their theological stringency is accompanied by a firmness of character, which has given them a power disproportionate to their numbers (Bryce 1900:322).

His firm religious character was transferred to his political life. Engelbrecht says that the Calvinistic worldview and character of the Afrikaner nation is summed up perfectly in the speeches of Paul Kruger (Engelbrecht 1977:55; cf also Postma 1944:21). 'In a series of speeches at Paardekraal he formulated a civil faith for the Transvaal Republic' (Moodie

1980:22). 'Kruger's civil theology thus amounted to a simple cycle of transgression, retribution, and reconciliation, well expressed in his favourite quotation from Psalm 89:31-34' (Moodie 1980:28): *Indien zijne kinderen mijne wet verlaten, en in mijne regten niet wandelen; Indien zij mijne inzettingen ontheiligen, en mijne geboden niet houden; Zoo zal Ik hunne overtreding met de roede bezoeken, en hunne ongerechtigheid met plagen. Maar mijne goedertierenheid zal Ik van hem niet wegneem, en in mijne getrouheid niet feilen – Statenvertaling.* (If they break my statutes, and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow my faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of my lips. – NKJV).

Everything he said and did was done in the light of Scripture (Postma 1944:21-27). His calling to the Presidency was tested against the Bible, and seen not as a calling by the people, but by God Himself. Judging himself unable and blind, he called on the Lord by exclaiming the words of Ps 25:2 (the words in the Psalm book). He also referred to the fact that not only people will judge his actions as President, but that he would have to give account to the Lord (Bredell, Grobler 1902:223). This naïve treatment of the Bible was laughed at by the English press (Bredell, Grobler 1902:251), but to the Afrikaners this was not strange or unexpected.

The Bible was used as an instrument to measure everything. Even the laws of the country and the monetary policy of the Banks were judged by the laws and guidelines of the Bible. Often, Kruger persuaded the Executive Council to act

according to Biblical laws and guidelines (Bredell, Grobler 1902:224,225). His outspoken and uncompromising Christian faith sometimes offended others. When he was asked to perform the opening ceremony of the synagogue in Johannesburg, he did it 'in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord' (Ellman 1914:23).

#### **d) Personality and worldview**

Paul Kruger was a 'prototype' of the Afrikaner living in the ZAR. He displayed all the major trends in his personality that were characteristic of the people that became known as the 'Transvalers' (Jeppe 1906:159). Knox-Little was a friend of CJ Rhodes. He did not like the Transvaal President but did admit that '[o]ne secret of Mr. Kruger's success is, as I have said, to be found in his thorough knowledge of the Transvaal Boers, and his being himself a concentrated representation of their character on its tougher and its better side' (Knox-Little 1899:62).

During the years of the Trek, one of the characteristics of the young man, actually still a boy, that became very clear and prevailed in later life, was his cunning and bravery. Many stories are told about his remarkable skills as a sharp shooter and brave actions against wild animals and enemies (Grobbelaar 1980:122). During the Makapan Campaign he distinguished himself by recovering the body of the fallen Commandant-General, Piet Potgieter, from the entrance of the caves in which the enemy had been cornered (De Wilzem 1989:5,6). This deed, accomplished at great personal risk to his own life, earned him the title of 'bravest of the brave' (Alhadeff 1990:13).

Along with the stories that are told about his bravery another outstanding characteristic of Paul Kruger - his irrepressible sense of humour - is always mentioned (Grobbelaar 1980:124). References to his mischievousness are always made. Not only during hunting parties, or when he challenged the runners of the Basothos to a race (De Wilzem 1989:2), but even in circumstances that are more serious, the humour always lurks: At choir practice, he often gave one or two members of the choir the wrong note as a cue, thoroughly enjoying the results (Alhadeff 1990:13). And when the joke was on him, he laughed and took it in his stride (Ellman 1914:6).

Kruger showed remarkable skills as a leader and one of his outstanding qualities was his way to negotiate and bring people together who are standing at the very extremes of a matter by persuading them to put their differences aside and work together for the sake of the nation as a whole. Examples of this gift can be seen in the reconciliation between the two Voortrekker leaders, Potgieter and Pretorius in 1852 in Rustenburg in which Kruger played a major part. He also helped to guide the leaders of the ZAR and the Orange Free State to settle their differences and prevent a civil war in 1857 (Spies, De Kock sa:19). He even talked the king of the Basothos into a peace treaty in 1858.

Not so successful was his attempt to mediate in the Church debate between the *Hervormde* and *Gereformeerde* Churches in 1886 (as discussed in chapter two). Maybe being a *Dopper* himself, he thought that he could help the two sides to set aside their differences and work together to make a success of the unification of

the two Dutch Reformed Churches. However, the frantic and nearly fanatical clinging to the 'true' religion, traditions and ways of worship that is one of the most powerful attributes of the Afrikaner, did not help in this case and the court eventually decided the outcome, with the two Dutch Reformed Churches going their separate ways to this day (cf Scholtz sa).

Another outstanding characteristic of Paul Kruger, that made him the formidable Statesman that he was, was his remarkable memory. During meetings with the Executive Council, he often recalled the exact wording of documents he had not seen for years (Alhadeff 1990:14). The remarkable memory of the Afrikaners living in the ZAR was the result of years of training while the children were still young. As part of their education, the children had to memorise parts of the Bible, recite songs by heart and had to do most of their mathematics and calculations without pen and paper. This resulted in a tendency that the Afrikaners were said to have the memory of elephants and in the case of Paul Kruger, this was true.

#### **e) Statesmanship**

As can be expected from a person who had such a great influence over a very long period of time on the government and public life of the young State, his manner of governing and handling of the political issues that was the focal points of the time, are well researched and well documented. Therefore the focus of this paragraph will only fall on two aspects that will serve to underline the President's actions and words regarding Christian education and a short reference to his formidable

Statesmanship when he persuaded the Executive Council to act as he saw right and just according to Biblical guidelines.

The 'liberal' educational laws that were imported under his predecessor (as briefly stated in chapter four) were a matter of great concern to President Kruger. He was strongly opposed to the educational system of President Burgers and even considered the option of taking part in the Thirstland Trek (Giliomee 2003:188).

Paul Kruger became President on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1883. In his inauguration speech, he spelled out his policy emphasising that the government would function on Christian values and principles (De Kock 1976:469). Paul Kruger aimed to found all the activities of the State, education included, on the Bible. He had great concern for education and warned the schoolmasters not to neglect their task because, according to him, education formed the foundation of both Church and State (Bredell, Grobler 1902:241).

He was elected State President of the ZAR for the fourth consecutive term in 1898 and with the war clouds casting dark shadows over the land, he focused in his inauguration speech (Thursday May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1898) on the Christian principles and values that had to form the backbone of the country:

Now dear children, stand firm by God's Word, in which your parents have brought you up. Love that Word. I shall endeavour with all my might to assist Churches and schools, to let you receive a Christian education, so that you may both religiously and socially become useful members of Church and State, and I trust that the teachers and ministers will also do their best. It is a great privilege that your Government has ordered a Christian education, and you are greatly privileged in



being able to enjoy a Christian education, and not you alone, for the object is to extend it so that all may have the opportunity of receiving it and turning it to account. It is a great privilege that the Government and the legislative power have thus laid down the law as to Christian instruction. (Kruger 1902 Vol 2:417).

To the teachers, he said:

You have, as it were, become the guardians of the children in the place of the parents who have given their children to God before the pulpit to be educated for the Lord, in His service and to His honour. You have taken them over to feed them, as Christ said, like lambs, to the honour of God. ...But if you, schoolmasters and mistresses, do not know the faith, how then will you bring the children to Christ through the faith? I trust, however that you do know it; and, therefore, never forget to bring the children to the Lord through the faith, and take care that religion is not left in the background and only educational subjects taught, Stand firm by the Bible and teach the children who are entrusted to you for that purpose. (Kruger 1902 Vol 2: 419).

Paul Kruger had firm beliefs regarding the education of the youth (Van der Schyff 1953:44). In the first place, education is not optional, but an essential instrument to build the nation. He quoted the words of Hosea 4:6 to stress this: *My volk gaan ten gronde weens 'n gebrek aan kennis* (My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge). Secondly, he constantly reminded parents that the task of education is their responsibility because of their promise to God, when the children were baptised, that they will instruct them in the 'knowledge of the Lord'. Finally, the education must be Christian based and national (Van der Schyff 1953:44), as seen in the above-mentioned quotes.

Paul Kruger devoted his life to religion and politics – leading his people where God directed (Alhadeff 1990:13). 'The Bible, as we have seen was his book, from the beginning to the end; but it was more than a book – it was his guide and

companion, ever influencing and directing him' (Nathan1940-1941:36). This showed in his handling of political, social and economical affairs by the Executive Council under his leadership. Jeppe (1906:215) supplies us with a picture of the remarkable insight of Paul Kruger on the matter regarding the Jameson raid. Kruger patiently discussed the matter for more than four hours with the Council, giving everyone a chance to speak his mind and putting all the options on the table. Then he had the last word on it. Eventually 'Jameson and his men were handed over to England to be dealt with as their conduct merited' placing the ball neatly into the opposition's court (Jeppe 1906:215).

Nothing can be finer or more dexterous than his retort when he was reminded by one of the members (of the Executive Council) of Slachter's Neck.

'Slachter's Neck!' he cried, 'where they hung our people! Slachter's Neck! Has not that been the cause of all the bloodshed for the last eighty years?'

'Yes, President, and that is why we should remember it!'

'Yes, remember it, indeed! You know all that has happened and yet you want me to start another Slachter's Neck now?'(Jeppe 1906:217, 218).

To the British, Kruger was an uneducated, filthy and sly old man, but they underestimated his complex personality and political skills (Preston 1989:73). To the Afrikaners he was a formidable leader, putting the Christian education and faith into practice with glorious success and an example for generations to come. 'He is justifiably remembered as the founder of the South African nation and the greatest of all Afrikaners' (Tingay, Johnson 1978:100). Well known for his Bible quotes, obstinate and dogmatic personality as well as his lack of tact there is no doubt of his devotion to God, to his people and to his beloved Transvaal (Tingay, Johnson 1978:100).

#### **f) A short word on Kruger's perception of history**

Van Jaarsveld (1961:201) says that Paul Kruger is one of only a few South African Statesmen who had a definite perspective on history.

Kruger's formidable memory was mentioned earlier. His public speeches were delivered without notes and the consistency of the issues in all of them, showed him true to his principles (Van Jaarsveld 1962:202). The contents of the history he reminded the people of, was that what he himself lived through with the First Anglo Boer War as the undisputed centre point. It is in the light of the War that the spotlight of the speeches fell on 'seeking liberty' (Van Jaarsveld 1962:202). He found substantiation in the Bible and coloured the history of South Africa with analogies from the Old Testament (Van Jaarsveld 1962:203), thus shaping the Afrikaner ideas of history further in the light of theology (cf Giliomee 2003: 177,178). The fact that he was in an influential position for a very long period of time and the strong way in which his religious convictions were brought into every aspect of his life and public actions, influenced the whole Afrikaner nation in their convictions and worldview.

#### **g) Impact on society**

Kruger was a child of the Great Trek in every sense of the word, since he had accompanied it as a boy '... at that time noted already for his sturdy self-reliance and prowess with the rifle' (Jeppe 1906:159).

Contrary to the custom people usually display by criticising people while they live and idolising them after their death, Paul Kruger was, while he was still alive, recognised and honoured, both by friends and enemies, as a symbol of the Afrikaner nation (De Kock 1976:475). He was a simple farm boy with very little formal education, who grew up to become one of the greatest icons of the Afrikaner nation.

The emotions of people, reflecting on the life and person of Paul Kruger tend to, as with most things in South Africa, split into two. On the one hand, there are those who respected and loved him and would turn a blind eye to any faults he had, opposed by those on the other hand, who would call him a coward and would not name any good qualities or good deeds that he had done in his entire life.

However, the world and even the British were on more than one occasion stunned by the unique statesmanship and insight shown by a man who had so little education and training. Not only his person, but also the country as a whole benefited from the Christian principles displayed by the man who had the power to do as he pleased. The Afrikaner nation was formed around religious-cultural unity (Erlank 1952:17). Kruger knew this and used it to give the nation self-esteem at the time when they needed it.

Descriptions of the President varied widely, depending on the viewer's political standpoint or country of birth. Mrs Lionel Phillips, one of the conspirators of the Jameson Raid, wrote of his 'clumsy features and small, cunning eyes set high on

the face with great puffy rings beneath them, his lank straight locks worn longer than usual' (Alhadeff 1990:12). Engelenburg, editor of *Die Volkstem*, described Kruger's harsh voice and abrupt gestures, which 'were like those of a man who owes his success to swift action after mature consideration' (Alhadeff 1990:12).

When he died, the *Fremdenblatt* newspaper in Vienna commented: 'Only a peasant, but a great peasant whose name history will preserve in honour'(Alhadeff 1990:14). Speaking at Kruger's funeral in Pretoria, General Louis Botha read the words from Kruger's last letter. Jeppe who was for a short time a neighbour of Commandant-General Paul Kruger, had great respect for him and gave a fair summary of the man: 'Paul Kruger was the archetype, possessing all the characteristics, the virtues as well as the defects, of that race in a concentrated form' (Jeppe 1906:159).

#### **6.1.1.2 Hendrina Susanna Johanna Joubert**

##### **a) Who was she?**

Hendrina Botha was born on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1830 in Richmond. Her mother died a few days after her birth and she grew up with her grand parents who joined the Great Trek to Natal (Beyers, Basson 1987:420). She was only eight years old when she witnessed the murders at *Bloukrans* and the Boesmans River (*Pretoria News* January 15, 1962:6)

After the British annexation of Natal, the family moved to the ZAR and settled in Marico where she did public confession of faith to become a member of the

Church in 1849, when the Rev Robertson visited the district (Beyers, Basson 1987:420). She married Piet Joubert in 1851 who later became Commandant-General and a candidate for State President. The couple first stayed in Wakkerstroom and later moved to Pretoria. Hendrina always joined her husband on his military and political wanderings, taking care of the wounded and driving the ox wagon to fetch supplies for the commando (Beyers, Basson 1987:420).

After the death of her husband in 1900, she went back to her house in Pretoria and wrote letters to the British government complaining about the terrible conditions in the concentration camps. She also corresponded with the soldiers in the field, encouraging them not to lose faith or hope (Beyers, Basson 1987:421).

After the rebellion of 1914, already aged 84, Hendrina Joubert was the main driving force behind the women who marched to the Union buildings on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1915 to hand a petition to the Governor-General pleading for the release of the rebels (Beyers, Basson 1987:421).

She died in Pretoria on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1916 (Beyers, Basson 1987:420).

## **b) Education**

When she talked about the Great Trek, she referred to the schooling by their parents and teachers during the times when they were not moving (Rompel-Koopman 1916:13). She also spoke about the high priority given to the singing of

spiritual songs (Rompel-Koopman 1916:44), even in times of danger (see chapter three).

### **c) Religion**

Religion played a major part in her life and when asked how she managed to cope with all the terrible things she had seen and lived through, she replied that she had always put her trust in God ‘who helped us through the darkest hours of our lives’ (Beyers, Basson 1987:421 – my translation). Religion helped her to stay positive, one who comforted others and always encouraged people to live with hope and a positive attitude even in times of grave danger, death and hardship during the years of the Second Anglo-Boer War. While mourning the loss of her husband, she stayed positive and reached out to others in need.

### **d) Personality and worldview**

Although she was still a child when the turning point for the Trek came with the *Bloukrans* and Boesmans River murders, she heard and saw the strength of the women who refused to turn back and said that they trusted the Lord for the souls of the dead, and that they would carry on, to give their children freedom (cf Giliomee 2003:232). This declaration of faith was the motto of the Voortrekker women and part of the personality and faith of Hendrina Joubert.

Hendrina was a woman who stood by her husband under all circumstances. Whether he was on the battlefield or running for President, she was there with her uplifting spirit to encourage and comfort him. On more than one occasion, her

love for her husband and country urged her to brave and cunning deeds. Before the first Anglo-Boer War, she and her son had to cross the Vaal River with a wagonload of guns. There were soldiers at the fort and the oxen had to swim through the deep water. These guns were later used against the British soldiers (Grobelaar 1980:179-181).

She had a vivid sense of humour that showed in her eyes and conduct, but stood in contrast to her rigid body and features (*Pretoria News* January 15, 1962:6).

**e) Impact on society**

‘During the South African War her calm assurance that all would end well made a great impression upon many to whom she was the embodiment of spiritual strength’ (*Pretoria News* January 15, 1962:6). One of her great contributions to the building of the nation was her attitude towards education and training. After the war, her house became the home of many young men who could not afford to pay board and lodging but wanted an education. Of these men, she asked ‘diligence and behaviour becoming of a gentleman’ (*Pretoria News* January 15, 1962:6). Some of them became leaders in South Africa (one became a teacher, another a senator and a third became Master of the Supreme court - *Pretoria News* January 15, 1962:6).

Charity organisations, such as the orphanage in Langlaagte that was opened in 1903 also benefited from her hard work and unstoppable efforts to serve. She



visited the orphanage every year during its festival and brought presents for the children (Beyers, Basson 1987:421).

Words cannot do justice to the formidable contribution of this remarkable ‘...woman of few words who believed that help for those who needed it should be practical’ (*Pretoria News* January 15, 1962:6) to state her influence on the shaping of people and the building of the Afrikaner nation on the foundation of faith and positive thinking. Her funeral service ended with these words: ‘She was a lioness, in very truth a lioness’ (*Pretoria News* January 15, 1962:6).

### **6.1.1.3 Nicolaas Jacobus Smit**

#### **a) Who was he?**

Nicolaas Smit was born in the district of Graaf-Reinett on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1837. His parents moved to Natal in 1840 but after the annexation moved to the Transvaal and settled on the farm *Leliefontein* in the district of Ventersdorp in 1846 (De Kock, Kruger 1986:688). As a young boy, he was an excellent horse rider and a good marksman, joining military expeditions when he was only fifteen years old. During one of the expeditions, he was badly wounded and later became blind in his left eye (De Kock, Kruger 1986:688).

Nicolaas Smit began his public service in 1864 when he became field cornet in Potchefstroom. By 1876, he was Lieutenant General, second in command under President Burgers during the war against Sekhukhune (De Kock, Kruger 1986:688).

During the First Anglo-Boer War, Smit earned great honour with acts of bravery, leadership and military strategy as Field-General (De Kock, Kruger 1986:688): On February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1881, when he was in charge of a small commando, the Boers gave the forces of General Colley a hiding at Schuinshoogte in Natal. A few days later, on February 26<sup>th</sup>, Hendrina Joubert spotted the British soldiers on Amajuba at daybreak (*Pretoria News* January 15, 1962:6). Smit, with the help of about 200 volunteer-burghers, as well as Commandant JJ Ferreira and field cornets SJ Roos and D Malan, stormed the mountain and by eleven the morning, had Colley killed and the mountain secured.

In 1882 Smit became a member of the *Volksraad* in Middleburg and joined the President (Kruger) the following year as member of the ‘Transvaal deputation’ to Europe (De Kock, Kruger 1986:688). In 1887 he became vice-President and held this position until his death on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1896. Smit served on important government committees, among them the

- Committee regarding the goldfields of Barberton in 1886,
- Committee regarding the training regulations of pharmacists in 1887,
- Committee regarding the incorporation of the Republic of Vryheid in Natal into the ZAR in 1888,
- Committee regarding the railway between Pretoria and Delagoa Bay,
- Committee regarding Swaziland (De Kock, Kruger 1986:688).

In 1892, Nicolaas Smit was one of the founders of the first agricultural society in Pretoria (De Kock, Kruger 1986:689).

## **b) Education**

In contrast to the two people mentioned above, who were part of the official parties of the Great Trek, Nicolaas Smit had no formal education at all (De Kock, Kruger 1986:689). The only education and training he received was the Christian based education by his parents that was aimed at bringing him to confession of faith and making him a member of the Church. This education and training had a great influence on his life and helped him to become a leader not only in South Africa but also in the eyes of the world (De Kock, Kruger 1986:689).

## **c) Personality and worldview**

General Smit was a friendly gentleman, one who loved people and always tried to help others in need in a practical way. His soft manners and willingness to listen to others made his house a harbour of refuge for all who were in need of help, be it a rugby team who needed a field to play on or more serious matters that were to be addressed by the *Volksraad* (Behrens 1955:324).

## **d) Impact on society**

A patriot, uncompromising and consistent, this was Nicolaas Smit (De Kock, Kruger 1986:688). Despite the fact that he received no formal education, he contributed on the highest level to the development of the ZAR from a modest start to prosperity and esteem in one short lifetime (De Kock, Kruger 1986:689). He was honoured both within South Africa and in Europe. He received several international special merit awards from Prussia, Portugal and Holland (De Kock, Kruger 1986:689).

#### **6.1.1.4 Gerhardus Jacobus Engelbrecht**

##### **a) Who was he?**

Gerhardus Engelbrecht was born in the Smithfield district in the Orange Free State on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1840 and grew up as a Voortrekker child (Engelbrecht 1928:189). The family settled in the district of Potchefstroom when he was ten years old. In 1874 he moved with his parents to the Standerton district (Beyers, Basson 1987:256).

He served from 1877 until his death on the Church council and became a well-known community leader (Engelbrecht 1928:189). In 1897 he became a member of the second *Volksraad* (Engelbrecht 1928:190).

During the Second Anglo-Boer War he served under his oldest son in the Standerton commando. He was wounded in Natal during a fight at *Banghoek* and died a few days later, on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1901 of his wounds (Engelbrecht 1928:191).

##### **b) Education**

He had absolutely no formal education (Beyers, Basson 1987:256). The only education he received was the instructions by his parents who used the Bible as their handbook (cf Van der Walt 1938:70). This made him a person that set his Christian beliefs above everything else. He taught his children to fear God and to follow his example as Church and community leader. Three of his sons followed in his footsteps and became well-known Church leaders (Engelbrecht 1928:190).

### **c) Religion**

Engelbrecht was only 23 years old when he became a deacon in the Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk*) of Heidelberg. His leadership qualities, knowledge of the Bible and his stern religious principles earned him a place in the highest Church councils. He played a major part in the attempted unification of the two Dutch Reformed Churches in 1885 and attended the meeting summoned by President Kruger in 1891 to try to resolve the matter. After the failure of these negotiations, Engelbrecht continued to serve as an elder in the congregation of Standerton till his death and played an important role by always putting the conservative point of view on the table when it came to Church Council and Synod meetings (Engelbrecht 1928:190).

### **d) Personality and worldview**

While serving in the *Volksraad*, he was tempted to partake in a plot, but chose to be honest and set everything in the open, much to the disgrace of the parties offering the huge bribe. This incident showed his stern, conservative personality, and emphasised his honest living by the norms and laws of the Bible. Afterwards he was praised in the newspapers, even by the opposing side for his trustworthiness and honesty (Engelbrecht 1928:190).

### **e) Impact on society**

As a child of the Voortrekkers, Engelbrecht inherited the belief that the Church and service to the Lord were the most important things in life (Engelbrecht 1928:191) and that the building of and caring for the Church and the Church

members was an honourable duty in which he, and all Afrikaners, had a major part to play. He served as a typical example of a stern Church-bound community leader who earned respect from others with his straightforward, uncompromising personality, firmly rooted in the Christian tradition. Without any formal education, but with the Bible as his guide, he managed to be a community and Church leader, one who established and kept the moral values of Church and nation intact by always standing for the stern Biblical conservative side in every matter (Beyers, Basson 1987:257).

### **6.1.2 The first generation**

The second group of people, who serve as examples of the impact of Christian based education on the forming of the country and its people, are those who were children during the first difficult years of the existence of the ZAR.

Two men serve as examples of this era. The first person is Manus Bosman, who was a minister of religion and had great influence on the ecclesiastical matters in the ZAR (Gerdener 1951:164). He also devoted his life to the implementation of the Christian National Educational system. Not only an advocate for this system that he firmly believed held the future of the country, he put his money where his mouth was and gave up his house in order to help this dream become reality. After the Second Anglo-Boer War, Afrikaans speaking teachers relied on the pillars of Christian National Education in the old ZAR to establish the institute for Christian National Education that became the law regarding education in South Africa, spelled out very clearly in the later laws of 1953 and 1967 (Staples 1980:37).

Jan Meyer, on the other hand serves as an example of an Afrikaner who saw the opportunities in the 'new' country, with the discovery of gold. He grasped these opportunities with both hands, becoming one of the first Afrikaner business giants, proving that the Afrikaner, when given the opportunity, even with no formal education, could successfully implement his skills and Christian values in the world of business. His firm Christian principles and acts of 'living faith' was a shining light in the dark world of business and gold fever. He was an example to the modern society where money and faith often do not walk hand in hand.

#### **6.1.2.1 Hermanus Stephanus Bosman**

##### **a) Who was he?**

Manus Bosman was born on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1848 in the Victoria West district. The family moved to Potchefstroom when he was four years old (De Kock 1976:107), where he attended school for a short time. In 1862 he moved with Andrew Murray to the Cape where he completed his studies and became a minister of religion in 1875, after teaching mathematics for 18 months at the Stellenbosch Gymnasium (later known as the Stellenbosch University) and a study tour in Europe (Gerdener 1951:168). From 1876 to 1926, he served as minister of religion (Gerdener 1951:164).

After the death of Lyle in 1879 to 1881, Bosman was made acting Superintendent of the Department of Education in the ZAR (Pienaar 1968:226). He developed a plan of 'payment by results' and this formed part of the law on education in 1880 (Keyter 1968:226). He had a great influence in establishing the Christian National

Educational system in the ZAR and the Union of South Africa, binding the two key issues of this system, namely Christianity and education in the home language of the child together (De Kock 1976:108).

Bosman was, even before the first Anglo-Boer War and the resulting feeling of unity and loyalty among the Afrikaners, the first to suggest that the two Dutch Reformed Churches (*Nederduitsch Hervormde* and *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke*) should put their differences aside and become one Church (Gerdener 1951:171). When this great attempt failed after a few years, he suffered much criticism and blame from both sides (De Kock 1976:108).

He was chosen as scribe of the Synod of the Church in 1892 and he served as moderator of the Church from 1903 to 1912. He also served as chairperson of the Federal Council in 1909 and 1923 (Gerdener 1951:172).

In 1892 he started *De Vereniging* - a magazine for the Church - and carried on with the publication until it was taken over five years later by the Synod as official paper of the (*Nederduitse Gereformeerde*) Church (Gerdener 1951:173).

He died in Pretoria on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1933 (De Kock 1976:107).

## **b) Education**

Manus Bosman attended the school of Hendrik van der Linden at Potchefstroom in the Church that also served as school building (Gerdener 1951:165). Van der



Linden was one of the first three schoolmasters who came from the Netherlands to the ZAR. This education lasted two to three years and was the only formal education he received as child, as he was declared 'fully trained' when he was thirteen years of age. He started to work as a shop assistant, but on commendation of Van der Linden, he accompanied Andrew Murray in 1862 to the Cape for further education (Gerdener 1951:165).

For a period of eight years, he became part of the Murray household and attended the well-known school of AN Rowan in Worcester where he had to start all over again, because he was put in the first class. In Cape Town, with financial help from the Murray Bursary Fund, he enjoyed 5 years of training at the South African College, where he graduated and went to the theological seminary in 1870 (De Kock 1976:108).

During a study tour to Europe, he gained valuable theological knowledge (Gerdener 1951:168). Back in the Cape, he was ordained as a minister of religion on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1875 and became minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Pretoria (Gerdener 1951:168).

### **c) Religion**

Although Manus Bosman received religious instruction from his parents, the meaning of the words that his mother taught him to use when praying, only made a real impact on him during his journey to the Cape, with Andrew Murray, when he sought the Lord and gave his heart and life in His service (Gerdener 1951:167).

‘There, in the corner of the old kraal, I prayed for the first time in my life in my own words and the Lord assured me that I am His child’ (Bosman 1960:11 – my translation).

The small town of Pretoria grew into the capital of the State and with it grew the congregations and the schools that Bosman had under his care (De Kock 1976:108). He worked hard, preached with passion and lived by his teachings. During the half century of service in the Church, he baptised 15 000 children, married 3 000 couples and guided 6 800 young people to openly confess their faith in the Lord and become members of the Church (De Kock 1976:108). His faith and example served as an inspiration not only to the children and congregation but also to all who met him (Gerdener 1951:174).

#### **d) Personality and worldview**

Contrary to the usually formidable statures of the ZAR men, Bosman was of small built. His personality and way with words made up for what he lacked in muscles. He was a man who acted according to his beliefs and by so doing gained great respect from friend and foe (Gerdener 1951:174).

His willingness to listen to others and to work in a team also made him a loveable person who was able to persuade people to act. On his way to Pretoria, JN Boshof, the former President of the Orange Free State gave him advice to be patient under all circumstances, and this advice was taken to heart, making him a formidable example of practical Christianity (Gerdener 1951:174).

People remember Bosman as a peace loving person. He was often called upon to make peace in congregations of the ZAR.

**e) Contribution to Christian National Education (CNE)**

His great contribution to the growth of the country is not only to be found in his work as minister of religion, but he is remembered for his mammoth contribution to the development of Christian National Education in South Africa. Only two months after his arrival in Pretoria, he realised the great need for education and he started a school in the vestry of the Church, later moving the class into the Church building (Gerdener 1951:171). By 1881 he helped to establish the *Ebenhaeser* boarding school where 300 children were housed. He pleaded for education in the home language of the children (Afrikaans and not Dutch) and that education must be based on the Christian religion (Gerdener 1951:171).

The liberal spirit that he saw in the young people of the Transvaal troubled him a lot (Bosman 1960:16). The school was one way of countering the influence of liberalism and in 1883 Bosman founded the *Christelijke Jongelings-Vereniging* (Christian Youth Society) (Bosman 1960:21). The credo of the society was: 'Rejoice in hope, be patient during oppression, persevere in prayer' (Bosman 1960:21 – my translation).

After the Second Anglo Boer War, he and his wife moved from the rectory in order to establish the *Eendracht* School in the building. This Christian National Educational school was opened on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1904. He was the chairperson of

the school committee and served as chairperson of the chief committee of the CNE movement.

Bosman paved the way for a Theological Seminary in the Transvaal and in 1913 he formed part of the Laurence-committee regarding higher education in the Union of South Africa (De Kock 1976:108). He worked closely with the congregation to establish the *Sonop* boarding house for male students at the University of Pretoria where he also served from 1916 to 1920 as the first chairperson of the board (De Kock 1976:108). In 1920 Bosman was awarded a doctoral degree for his contribution to education (Bosman 1960:47).

#### **f) Impact on society**

Bosman gave absolute priority to his Christian values. This made him a man who was respected not only by those who supported him, but also by his enemies and opposing parties. For more than half a century, he focused his life around the two pillars of education and religion.

The words of the Church council of Pretoria handed to Bosman when he was invited to become minister of the congregation in Stellenbosch, spell out the feeling of the Pretoria congregation regarding his work and influence on the people. 'We are convinced that your leaving us, will have very negative consequences, not only for our congregation but also for our Nation, our Church and the huge and sacred issue of education – and that the hands of all who look up

to you as head of the Church and leader of the country in these dark days of trouble and danger, will surely become lame' (Bosman 1960:31 – my translation).

The members of the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde* Church remember Manus Bosman as the 'father of the Church in the Transvaal'. At his funeral J Du Plessis of the Stellenbosch University said that Manus Bosman was to the Church in the Transvaal, what Andrew Murray was to the Church in the Cape (Gerdener 1951:164). Although not everyone, especially the members of the *Nederduitsch Hervormde* Church, would approve of these words, he did have a great influence on the development of both religion and education in the ZAR and the Transvaal.

#### **6.1.2.2 Johannes Petrus Meyer**

##### **a) Who was he?**

Jan Meyer was born in Prince Albert in July 1842. When he was two years old, the family moved to the Witwatersrand (Beyers, Basson 1987:540).

In 1881 he was elected field cornet of the ward Klip River in the district of Heidelberg (Beyers, Basson 1987:540). He helped to discover the main gold reef of the Witwatersrand, and after 1886 he was appointed mine commissioner who issued certificates for gold claims (*The Star* December 3, 1919:5). In the same year he founded the 'Meyer and Charlton Mine' with his partner John Charlton, becoming one of the first mine owners on the Witwatersrand (Beyers, Basson 1987:540). The 'Meyer and Charlton Mine' was the only pure Afrikaner Company that survived the early years and crises of the mining industry (Stals

1978:22). This made Meyer a wealthy man. He was managing director of the 'Elandsfontein Estate Company' and founder of *Meyerskamp* that later became known as *Natalkamp*, a settlement of miners on the farm called *Doornfontein* (Stals 1978:44).

Meyer was elected a member of the *Volksraad* and served on a number of government committees, most importantly the committee that revised the constitution of the ZAR in 1891 (Beyers, Basson 1987:540).

As a farmer and one of the largest landowners in the country, he was a recognised leader who paved the way for the use of modern technology and science to the benefit of agricultural development in the country (*The Star* December 3, 1919:5).

An accident with a rifle on his farm ended his life on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1919 (*The Star* December 3, 1919:5).

## **b) Education**

After his father died when Meyer was still a small child, the family was left very poor and there was no money or opportunity for education. The only education he received was the basic Christian education that his mother provided with the Bible as handbook (Beyers, Basson 1987:540).

### **c) Impact on business and community**

Not much is known about his personal life and at his death, he was simply called the ‘...first government official on the Goldfields...’ (*The Star* December 3, 1919:5). Meyer probably was the most successful Afrikaner in the early gold mine industry in the ZAR.

Part of his task as field cornet was to study the laws of the country and to assist others with this knowledge. Meyer knew the laws regarding mining very well and always advised other people not to sell their farms because of the great benefits that the owners could get from the mining activities (Stals 1978:24). Sadly, no one listened to him, seeing only the immediate money paid for the land and thus putting the ownership of the land into foreign hands.

Meyer was elected as the very first member of the Transvaal Goldfields to the *Volksraad* in 1888 (*The Star* December 3, 1919:5). He had a clear vision of what his tasks were. He committed himself to do everything in his power to see to the following:

- An own municipality for Johannesburg,
- The completion of the Delagoa Bay – Pretoria railway, via Johannesburg,
- The creation of the Second Executive Council (Stals 1978:108).
- He also pushed for the best possible laws regarding the gold mines and the Afrikaner interests (Stals 1978:109).

His duty as field cornet also included the practise that his house was used for religious meetings. Earlier, in chapter five mention was made of the difference between the religious character of the Afrikaners and the 'outlanders'. The Afrikaners started a town by building the Church in the centre while the fortune seekers did not even care to build houses or any other building but would stay in tents or even without shelter while devoting all their time and effort to seeking gold.

On January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1887 Rev Van Warmelo conducted a Church service in the house of Jan Meyer on his farm *Klipriviersberg* (Stals 1978:139). At this meeting a decision was made to build a Church in Johannesburg and the first financial contributions for this purpose were gathered (Stals 1978:139). On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1887 the congregation was officially formed and the first Church council was elected.

Jan Meyer contributed to the development of the Transvaal goldfields, always protecting and helping the Afrikaners in the best possible ways and also helping to give the Church a platform of operation in the strange mining environment while becoming a wealthy community leader, although he was in the eyes of the world, an 'uneducated' person.

### **6.1.3 The second generation**

On the one hand, the gold discovery helped the staggering finances of the young country, but on the other hand 'outlanders' and fortune seekers swept the country.



Britain changed its mind about the independence of the young State and war clouds gathered.

The last group of people, who influenced the ZAR, were the people born in the ZAR after the discovery of gold. They lived through the Second Anglo Boer War and the formation of the Union of South Africa.

Pieter Grobler's passion for nature and his enormous contribution to nature conservation were only fully appreciated in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His eagerness to learn and his love for politics paved a path to great influence in the later political development of the country, still felt today.

### **6.1.3.1 Pieter Gert Wessel Grobler**

#### **a) Who was he?**

Pieter Grobler was born in Rustenburg on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1873 on the farm of Paul Kruger, to whom he was related, and he grew up on a farm in the Pilansberge (Kruger, Beyers 1977:367).

In 1891 Grobler began to work at the Department of Education while studying part time (*Die Transvaler* August 24, 1942:6). He was appointed editor of the weekly magazine called *De Pers* (Kruger, Beyers 1977:367). In 1898 he was appointed vice-secretary at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Kruger, Beyers 1977:367). When the Second Anglo-Boer War broke out, he joined in the fighting, but was called back to Pretoria to accompany the President as his

secretary on his journey to Europe (*Die Transvaler* August 24, 1942:6). While in Europe, he and HC Bredell wrote the memoirs of Paul Kruger (Kruger, Beyers 1977:367).

Back in South Africa, he became director of the *Landbank* and chairperson of the *Transvaalse Landraad* (Kruger, Beyers 1977:367). In 1910 he became member of the *Volksraad* for Rustenburg (Kruger, Beyers 1977:367). In 1924 he became Minister of Countries and in 1929 leader of the National Party in the Transvaal (Kruger, Beyers 1977:368). By 1938, he was a senator (*Die Transvaler* August 24, 1942:6).

He had a heart for nature conservation. He proposed the law to expand the Sabie Nature Reserve, and changed the name to the Kruger National Park. He was responsible for the proclamation of other nature reserves such as the *Kalahari Gemsbok* Park, the *Bontebok* Park and the *Addo* Elephant Park (Grobler 1961:17).

He died on Augusts 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1942 (*Die Transvaler* August 24, 1942:6).

## **b) Education**

Pieter Grobler was a clever boy, eager to learn, but his first education lasted only three months (*Die Transvaler* August 24, 1942:6). By then, he knew everything that the schoolmaster could teach him (*Die Transvaler* August 24, 1942:6). There was no money to pay for further education, so he decided to act as schoolmaster himself and used the money he earned to go to Pretoria, where he stayed in the

Kruger house and attended school at the well-known schoolmaster W Louis (*Die Transvaler* August 24, 1942:6).

### **c) Impact on society**

Pieter Grobler never let problems and circumstances get in his way or prevent him from achieving his goals. He was someone who invented plans and put them to practice in order to see results. Even as a young boy, this can be seen in the plans and the success of the plans that he made to get himself educated. His eagerness to learn and his love for politics helped him to find his way up to the highest positions of Minister and Senator where he did all he could to help the poor pioneers (Kruger, Beyers 1977:368).

His concern for nature conservation, when others had no vision or passion for it made him a man whose very special insight would only be appreciated by the generations to come (Grobler 1961:17).

## **6.2 The influence of Christian education on the development of a Christian nation and a Christian country**

It has been said earlier that it is difficult to measure the impact of the Christian based education taught to the children in the ZAR because of the lack of institutions and other visible or traceable evidence and heritages from that time. The Christian faith that lived in the hearts of the people and influenced their lives is not something that could be captured and stored for the coming generations to

see. It was a living spirit that was passed on from one generation to the next and this formed the backbone of the Afrikaner nation.

There is no room for a critical analysis of the development of the different nations on the different continents, but a quick simple overview can be helpful to brighten the real impact made by Christian based education in the ZAR.

It is true that the Voortrekkers and their children were strong-minded individualists. Engelenburg notes that 'sick touchiness and self-centredness' also formed part of the character of the crusaders, the Spanish *conquistadores*, the 18<sup>th</sup> century English colonists in North America and the 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement in Australia (Engelenburg 1925:8 – my translation). Much has been written about the political issues, leadership struggles, *dwarstrekery* (disunity) (Giliomee 2003:190), and wars in South Africa, but Engelenburg thinks that malaria fever could also be blamed for the strange behaviour of the Afrikaners of the ZAR (Engelenburg 1925:8). There was disunity and backstabbing, bloodshed, lack of discipline and many other things that no Afrikaner can be proud of but the trials and problems of the Voortrekkers and the ZAR pioneers were not unique.

Between the exodus of the Boers and other colonizing movements in the nineteenth century similarities are easily discerned. The thrust of Australian sheepmen into the interior grasslands, the land rushes of the American West, the Old Testament character of the Mormon treks – these are full of reminders of the Great Trek. In all unsettled regions there was the same eagerness for cheap or free land, the same impatience of the demands and delays of government, whether in Washington or Downing Street, Sydney or Cape Town (De Kiewiet 1941:57).

There were also definite distinctions between the pioneers in Africa and that of other continents. Nepgen quotes Henry Cust on this: 'The historical and racial factors in South Africa have combined to evolve organic and social and political types which are to be found nowhere else in the world' (Nepgen 1938:47).

However, others see the distinction in something else:

Elsewhere, too, of course, pioneers have dared much, have taken their lives in their hands and have suffered, as here, untold privations. But elsewhere they had some succour to fall back upon; they knew that they would be followed by other bands, to avenge even if they came too late to save them. Here often the 'trek' had no hope of help from others, no one to rely upon except themselves – and their God. The religious sentiment in the Boer has been often scoffed at; it certainly sometimes verges on cant, and naturally it is not equally sincere in all individuals; but upon the whole it is unfeigned and deep-seated; and if proof were wanted of that, no better need or could be adduced than these very 'treks'; for no mortal man could have faced the certain, and still less the uncertain and therefore doubly-dreaded, terrors of the wilderness without absolute reliance on the Lord of Hosts (Jeppe 1906:75,76).

The Afrikaner pioneers were idealists, searching for a new homeland where they could practise their political and religious beliefs (Engelenburg 1925:6). The one thing that made the Afrikaners into a unique nation was their shared faith. The Bible, not the Church or any other institution or even ideology, kept them a unit that became a nation (cf Wichmann 1941:3).

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the interior of North America was opened by the 'gold rush to California.' The force behind this was the search for riches that drove tens of thousands of people into the wilderness (Engelenburg 1925:6). In sharp contrast to a country like America that developed during the same time as South Africa, (and also experienced wars with indigenous tribes, an ox-wagon

migration and a gold rush), the society in South Africa developed along the stern lines of the conservative Calvinistic faith. Therefore the typical American western life style of strong liquor, women in bars and firing of guns does not form part of the South African history. Instead, religion based laws and customs as well as Christian based education developed into standard practice in the country. Shops, bars, cinemas and theatres were all closed on Sundays; special days on the Christian calendar were public holidays and people believed that missionary work needed to be done in foreign countries because South Africans all know the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason for South Africa's different development lies in the Calvinistic religion of the pioneer Afrikaners. This led people to conclude, quite correctly, that the one outstanding factor in the lives of Afrikaners was their religion; that they cannot be understood if their religion is not taken into account. Religion determined South African history as well as the development of the Afrikaner nation and their educational system.

Meyer says that the Afrikaner nation is the only nation that came into being as a Calvinistic nation. From the very first moments of the birth of this nation and all through its development, the Afrikaner nation was formed, in every aspect of life, by Calvinistic faith (Meyer 1940:27). This is why religion and religious based education played such a major part in the life and existence of the Afrikaner nation living in the ZAR as well as their descendents. The result of the high regard of Christian based education to all children growing up in the ZAR, was the

forming of a unique nation with a very special outlook on life. The character of steadfast religion was built into every child and became part of their every-day life and work, resulting in the nation, government, educational system, and every other aspect of life in the ZAR being coloured by the Christian religion.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

In a nut shell, it can be said that although the people living in the ZAR were poorly educated in the eyes of the world, the basic Christian education that formed part of their daily lives, provided a sound basis upon which their personalities and characters were built. ‘The home is, and always has been, the primary educational influence in the bringing about [of] faith in man’ (Staples 1980:36). This education proved to be enough to make these people leaders in their communities, and even world class leaders that influenced not only the people living with them in the ZAR, but also set the stage for the building of an unique Christian nation after the fall of the ZAR.

In all aspects of life, the religious influence and the basic Christian education taught to the youth had great influence. The Bible was the handbook by which they lived from the time that they were infants to the day that they died. Even at the height of their careers or callings, the Bible stood firmly in the centre of their lives.

The achievements of the Afrikaners in all aspects of life, be it politics, the Church, business, culture, history, education or nature conservation, all can be covered by

the umbrella of faith and Christian education. The impact they made on the country and its people is coloured by their commitment to the Lord. It was the force behind their lives and work.

The impact made on the ZAR and its inhabitants by devoted Christians culminated in the forming of a unique Christian nation. The real impact cannot be seen in institutions dating from the time of the ZAR, but the 20<sup>th</sup> century Christian based institutions like the CNE and the influence of the Church on the worldview and politics of the nation were all direct results of the input of the Christian orientated lives of the ZAR pioneers and their children.

The examples given above show the impact of the Christian based education on the lives of people that lived in the ZAR. The centre pillar of their lives was their faith. Both in their public and personal lives, the Christian faith dictated their words and deeds.

The influence of this Christian based society lasted much longer than the ZAR. The ZAR was terminated at the end of the Second Anglo-Boer War in 1902, but a century later, the Afrikaners are still conservative, Calvinistic Christians bearing the fruits of the legacy they got from the early pioneers living in the ZAR.

One can get an impression of the impact of Christian education on the forming of the ZAR and the later South Africa, when one compares the history of the ZAR to that of other nations which developed at the same time and under similar



circumstances. The very different characteristics are obvious and serve to show that the Christian based education had an enormous impact on the building and forming of the nation, the country and its people.

It is clear that although many of circumstances that the pioneers had to face were the same on all the continents, the one distinctive factor that was part of the Voortrekkers and later development into the unique Afrikaner nation, was their uncompromising faith in God and their commitment to give the same religious based education they received from their parents to their children.

The people living in the ZAR all received the same basic Biblical education. Their characteristics and personalities were shaped by their faith and education and the influence they had on the country and its people was so great that the Afrikaner nation developed into a unique, Christian nation that stood firmly on Christian based education for a century to come. The backbone of the ZAR as a whole as well as the outstanding characteristic of the people living in the country and their descendents, was the Christian based education that was done with the Bible as the most important handbook and guideline.

The last chapter summarises the conclusions drawn in the previous chapters and concludes with a reflection on the impact of Christian based education on the ZAR.