# Changing Childhoods in the Cape Colony

## Dutch Reformed Church Evangelicalism and Colonial Childhood, 1860–1895

S.E. Duff

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S.E. Duff
*Researcher, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa*

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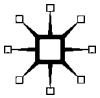


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*To my parents*

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| *CCM* | *Cape Church Monthly* |
| *CMM* | *Cape Monthly Magazine* |
| CPSA | Church of the Province of South Africa |
| DCSU | Documentation Centre, Stellenbosch University |
| DRC | Dutch Reformed Church |
| DRCA | Dutch Reformed Church Archive |
| HMS | Huguenot Missionary Society |
| HSC | Huguenot Seminary Collection |
| *JAH* | *Journal of African History* |
| *JHCY* | *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* |
| *JSAS* | *Journal of Southern African Studies* |
| KAB | Cape Archives Repository |
| LBS | Ladies' Benevolent Society |
| *SAHJ* | *South African Historical Journal* |
| SCUCT | Special Collections, University of Cape Town |

# On Terminology, Orthography, and Translation

Historians of South Africa need to work carefully around the traps and snares of racial terminology, being particularly mindful not to reify the race categories of the late twentieth century. Racial and ethnic identities are socially constructed and change over time. This is especially evident in nineteenth-century sources, which employ a far greater range of terminology to describe these identities. By 'African' I mean those people described as 'native', 'Aboriginal', or 'Kaffir' in colonial documents. When specific racial or ethnic identities are unclear, I employ the term 'black' to refer to all people – most of them of African, Asian, and multiracial descent – who were considered not to be white. I have attempted, also, to be as careful in referring to the people who are the focus of this book: those who described themselves as white or European. I have used the term 'Dutch Afrikaans' to refer to those people who spoke either Dutch or its creole forms – Afrikaans, Cape Dutch – and who were considered to be white. (Of course, not all people who spoke these languages were white.)

All translations are my own. A substantial proportion of my sources – colonial newspapers, Dutch Reformed Church publications, and ministers' letters – are in Dutch. This nineteenth-century language is, though, very different from the one spoken in the Netherlands today, and I have not corrected spelling and grammar to reflect current usage. Some sources are in the language which was called, variously, 'Afrikaans' or 'Cape Dutch', although it, too, is significantly different from the Afrikaans now taught, read, and spoken in South Africa.

# Introduction

In 1863 Andrew Murray jun. (1828–1917), the influential Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), published *Wat zal doch dit kindeken wezen?*, the first in a series of guides to Christian child-rearing. Although intended initially for a readership in the Cape Colony, it travelled along the networks which linked Protestant evangelicals around the world, and was read with interest abroad. In 1882 the book was translated into English and, as *Raising Your Children for Christ,* reached an even wider audience. Although *Raising Your Children for Christ* describes the purpose and content of the book – over 52 chapters it explains to parents how to bring up Christian children – the original Dutch title evokes the discussions which informed its writing. Directly translated, *Wat zal doch dit kindeken wezen?* means 'What will this child become?'

The DRC was, above all other institutions in the Cape Colony, preoccupied with this question during the second half of the nineteenth century. As an evangelical church, its ministers positioned the child at the centre of Christian society, believing that the future good of South Africa lay in the rearing of children to do God's work as teachers and as missionaries. Its ministers worked towards the conversion of children – initially with fairly little regard to race and ethnicity and, later, increasingly focusing on white children and young people – through the introduction of Sunday schools to the Cape, special children's sermons, days of prayer, and festivals, founding clubs and societies for children, and publishing guides to child-rearing and books, articles, and periodicals for children and families. During the final three decades of the century it created a network of girls' schools across the colony's interior and operated what was, effectively, a parallel education system in the Cape's rural districts. Faced by an apparently increasing number of whites living in poverty, the Cape's Superintendent of Education

called on the DRC for assistance in providing schooling and vocational training to poor white children.

The colonial state's interest in this question developed during the 1870s, and specifically in response to what became known in the twentieth century as the 'poor white question'. Unlike the DRC – whose ministers believed that children should be raised to become Christian workers – politicians and civil servants were convinced that the future stability of an industrialising Cape colony was intertwined with the education and proper upbringing of white children. However, despite their different views on how children should be raised and educated – despite their different answers to the question 'what should this child become?' – the state relied heavily on the DRC for assistance in educating poor white children and also, crucially, defined what should constitute a 'white' childhood in terms established by the DRC.

With a few exceptions, historians have thus far paid scant attention to the social and cultural histories of children, childhood, and youth in nineteenth-century South Africa.[1] *Changing Childhoods in the Cape Colony* begins to address this lacuna through the lens of the DRC's interest in colonial childhood. Although missionary societies were as interested in children and childhood, the DRC was the only significant organisation in the Cape which worked actively to convert and educate white children, and to provide parents with guidance on how best to raise them. This book locates the DRC's interest in childhood and youth in its transformation into an evangelical church in the middle of the nineteenth century, and also in ministers' own experiences of fatherhood in large families. The correspondence of these clerical families demonstrates how white middle-class childhood lengthened and changed during the second half of the nineteenth century. Not only does a focus on childhood help to open up early histories of attempts to address white poverty in the late nineteenth century, but it also provides an early history of institutional and state efforts to intervene in the ways in which children were raised. Moreover, histories of childhood and youth draw attention to the ways in which age categories are constructed – to the meanings attached to being a 'girl' or a 'boy' – and to how the experience of childhood and youth changes over time.

## I

The field of the history of childhood and youth owes its origins to the Annales school and, specifically, to Philippe Ariès's much debated little book *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, published in 1960

(it was translated as *Centuries of Childhood* in 1962). Ariès's achievement, as Hugh Cunningham notes, was that he managed to 'convince nearly all his readers that childhood had a *history*: that, over time and in different cultures, both ideas about childhood and the experience of being a child had changed'.[2] Although the field was only properly constituted – with a society, biannual conference, and journal – during the cultural turn of the early 1990s, it is really no coincidence that it developed initially during the 1960s: at a moment when the experience of childhood and youth changed, and when young people were particularly visible in the decade's social movements.

To some extent, recent interest in African childhood and youth stems from the same awareness of the struggles of young people on the continent. Since at least the late 1990s, historians of Africa have produced a rich scholarship on education, generational conflict, youth cultures, child labour, and youth participation in anti-colonial and post-colonial struggles.[3] For a region where contemporary 'youth' – never teenagers, and usually male – are usually figured as threatening and violent, or where children – usually female or small and malnourished – are depicted as the victims of war and bad governance, they have a peculiar visibility in the ways in which Africa is conceptualised. Writing against these powerful stereotypes, Jean and John Comaroff argue in their 2006 essay 'Reflections on Youth, from the Past to the Postcolony' for the necessity of acknowledging that 'youth' is a contingent, historically and socially constructed category. 'Youth', they write, 'are complex signifiers. The stuff of mythic extremes, simultaneously idealisations and monstrosities, pathologies and panaceas. This has been true for a very long time.'[4] Their point is that age categories are socially constructed, change over time and place, and are inflected by race, class, and gender. Multiple definitions of age can exist within particular historical eras.[5] As Stephen Mintz writes, 'these definitions can become the source of cultural conflict' partly because of the ways in which power operates through age categories: perhaps most importantly, it is used to create and reinforce social hierarchies.[6]

Echoing Joan W. Scott, Mintz suggests that – as a set of power relationships – age resembles gender as a category of analysis. It determines social status, and influences who wields and has access to power. Historians' interest in childhood and youth stems from the fact that these categories are usually placed towards the bottom of social hierarchies. African and female youth are doubly or triply marginalised on the grounds of race and gender. Indeed, the Comaroffs argue that, although African youth are usually described as existing

in apparently insurmountable predicaments – political, social, and economic marginalisation, government oppression – they possess the means to respond creatively and forcefully to a range of challenges. They conclude: 'the young remain a constant source of creativity, ingenuity, possibility, empowerment'.[7] This emphasis on the agency of African youth is by no means particular to the Comaroffs.[8] However, there are limits to histories which focus on agency. Deborah Durham observes that we need to understand youth 'neither as autonomous liberal actors nor as overdetermined victims'.[9] Ordinary notions and definitions of agency, which tend to stress autonomous, individualistic action, simply do not apply in the writing of the history of childhood. It is clear that children 'make history': they are historical actors as workers, as consumers, as pupils, and as members of families. But with very few exceptions, such as the 1976 Soweto uprising, children were 'acted upon': they were the cause and recipients of adult action. They 'have acted from positions of relative powerlessness, marginality, and invisibility'.[10] An overemphasis on agency defined in these terms would produce a very narrow and exclusive body of work. The history of childhood, like the history of women, requires historians to think about agency in more nuanced ways: to consider the creation of the inherently unequal relationships between parents and children, and also between siblings, and the impact of considerations related to race, class, and gender on the construction of the idea of 'childhood'. Put another way, as Sandra Burman argues in *Growing Up in a Divided Society* (1986), children should be studied '*as children*, not simply as future adults', on the grounds that as children and as youth they make a considerable impact on the functioning of society: governments devote significant resources to their welfare and education; most adults' lives are seriously affected by children; children's work – waged or unwaged – sustains households.[11]

Perhaps inevitably, then, the history of child*ren* has become a history of child*hood*. The histories of children and of childhood walk an uneasy path between social and cultural history: while frequently aiming to bring to light a history of children, they are also histories of changing ideas about childhood. As Peter Stearns writes, the history of childhood is 'mainly centred on what adults were doing or saying about this or that aspect of children's lives'.[12] Although a strategy which does not necessarily pay attention to the changing experience of childhood and youth from the perspective of these subjects, the history of childhood helps to illuminate the ways in which definitions of these categories themselves changed over time. Also, as a strong theme within recent

writing on the history of youth in Africa suggests, it provides a way of understanding the significance of the child to the modernising colonial state. Modernity and youth are, as the Comaroffs note, intertwined. Industrialisation made possible the postponement of adulthood, the long childhoods now dominated by education, instead of work. For the state, the child in school became a valuable resource. As adults of the future, the stability and prosperity of the state came, increasingly, to depend on well-educated and healthy children.[13] As Abosede George, Lynn Thomas, Paul Ocobock, and Corrie Decker have argued, colonial states in east and west Africa during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries viewed the control of African children and youth – their sexuality, labour, leisure time – as well as their education as crucial to their modernising agendas.[14]

*Changing Childhoods in the Cape Colony* also traces the colonial state's growing interest in childhood and youth, although in the Cape, as in other settler colonies, this interest was in white childhood and youth – and partly as a result of concerns that poor white children were at risk of racial degeneration. (This will be discussed in greater depth below.) Childhood changed in the Cape Colony during industrialisation – and, increasingly, the DRC and state were also interested in changing white childhoods.

## II

If the first half of the nineteenth century witnessed the transformation of the Cape from a colony best described as 'undercapitalised, sparsely populated[,] . . . lacking decent transport, [and producing] little for international trade'[15] to a British possession located firmly within imperial networks of trade and administration, then the second half saw its development into a politically self-confident and economically prosperous political entity. Much of this change was driven by the abolition of the trade monopolies of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC, the Dutch East India Company), entry into British trade networks, the injection of British capital and settlers, and industrialisation, which began with a wool boom during the 1840s and 1850s.[16] Diamond-mining in and around Kimberley pulled the colony out of a devastating depression which followed a slump in the international wool price. By 1872, the colony exported over £1,600,000 worth of diamonds a year.[17] Colonial revenue rose steadily during this decade – from £660,000 in 1870 to £3,500,000 by the end of 1882 – and imports through Cape Town trebled in value during the same period. While the Cape economy was still

characterised by cycles of boom and bust until the end of the century, the mineral revolution – the massive changes wrought to South African society, politics, and economics as a result of the discovery and mining of diamonds (1867) and gold (1886) – ensured its economic stability for the future.

This expansion of the Cape's economy fuelled the founding of new towns and villages in the interior of the colony.[18] From the 1870s onwards, the railway was extended; the telegraph network expanded; Cape Town's port and harbours were enlarged and modernised; towns were gradually electrified; and businessmen invested in Cape Town's manufacturing sector, multiplying the number of factories in the city and diversifying the goods they produced.[19] The Cape government encouraged and assisted more than 22,000 immigrants from Europe and St Helena between 1873 and 1884, and the population of Cape Town almost doubled from 45,000 in 1875 to 79,000 in 1891. It rose to 170,000 between 1891 and 1904.[20] The colony entered into British rule with a population of roughly 37,000 'Christian' (or settler) inhabitants, 17,000 'Hottentots', and over 30,000 slaves in 1815.[21] By 1865, the total population had risen to 496,381, slightly more than 54 per cent of whom were African, and in 1874 it was 720,984. This increase was due partly to the conquest of African polities: in 1866, for instance, the British annexed a substantial portion of the eastern Cape, bringing 86,201 Africans and white settlers under British rule.[22] By the 1891 Census, there were 1,525,739 people living within the Cape's borders. Reflecting the impact of assisted immigration, numbers of whites increased the most (by 42 per cent), but were still outnumbered 2:1 by the Cape's African population, which had grown partly because of the incorporation of East Griqualand, West Griqualand, and the Transkei during the late 1870s and 1880s, giving rise to fears that white rule in the Cape – indeed, in South Africa – was placed in jeopardy by the colony's changing demographics.[23]

The granting of Responsible Government in 1872, 19 years after the Cape gained its own parliament, boosted a colonial nationalism which had begun to emerge during the 1820s and 1830s.[24] After a brief tussle between the colony's western and eastern districts about the choice in 1865 of Cape Town over Port Elizabeth as the main city, Cape Town began to transform into a national, and imperial, centre.[25] Not only was Cape Town the seat of the colonial government, but the colony's biggest harbour, its university and a large proportion of its elite schools for the middle class, most of its printers and newspapers, the South African museum, gallery, and library, and, during the 1890s, most of

colonial industry were also all based in Cape Town.[26] By the end of the century, the city was, in Vivian Bickford-Smith's view, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in sub-Saharan Africa.[27]

The focus of this book is on the south-western Cape: on Cape Town, the colony's capital and the financial, social, cultural, and political hub of the colony, as well as on the towns and villages which form a wide semicircle around the Cape peninsula. These include: the Boland (or up-country) towns of Stellenbosch, Paarl, Franschhoek, Ceres, and Wellington; Worcester, Montagu, Robertson, and Tulbagh in the Breede River Valley; Malmesbury in the Swartland (black country) up the west coast; and Caledon and Swellendam in the Overberg, to the east of Cape Town. Here the economy was overwhelmingly agricultural, with the region producing primarily wine, fruit, and grain. In 1875, the populations of towns and villages were: Stellenbosch, 3,173; Paarl, 5,760; Wellington, 2,192; Malmesbury, 1,840; Tulbagh, 548; Ceres, 1,234; Worcester, 3,788; Caledon, 1,038; and Montagu, 1,176. More than half of the total population was black.[28]

Given the region's size in relation to the rest of the Cape and, after the middle of the century, its declining significance to the colony's economy – wool produced mainly in the eastern districts took over from wine as the Cape's chief export during the 1850s, and both were superseded by the export of diamonds from 1868 onwards – it exercised a disproportionate influence over the Cape, politically and socially. Writing about the expansion of white settlement in the eighteenth century, Hermann Giliomee argues that 'this rural Western Cape community … formed the epicentre of the norms the burghers took with them when they settled in the deeper interior'.[29] This was where the leadership of the DRC – the church of the majority of the Cape's white population – was based; the region's schools and, later, university trained generations of white politicians and businessmen; and the first forms of Afrikaner political consciousness emerged there in the 1870s.

The towns of the Boland, Breede River Valley, and Overberg nestle in fertile, picturesque valleys and rolling hills. Over the mountains – further north and into the interior – the landscape becomes flatter and drier. Winters are cold and rainy; summers hot and dry, and fires are a constant danger. For the settlers – drawn mainly from northern Europe, and largely of Dutch, German, and, later, French Huguenot extraction – granted permission by the VOC to plant wheat and fruit trees, and establish vines for wine to sell to passing ships, the region was, in terms of climate and landscape, reminiscent of the southern parts of Europe which border the Mediterranean. In Stellenbosch – the first town to be

established outside of Cape Town (1679) – they planted avenues of oak trees and throughout the area developed a style of vernacular architecture whose gables and pitched roofs referenced buildings in towns in northern Europe. A professional class of lawyers, doctors, and administrators took root in the towns and villages, with most of the region's wealth concentrated in farms and in the hands of a Cape gentry.

The region was profoundly affected by industrialisation. Farmers in the south-western districts struggled to turn a profit between the early 1870s and the outbreak of the South African War in 1899. International demand for Cape wine fell, and vines suffered recurrent outbreaks of phylloxera and oidium.[30] The boom and bust of the Cape's economy during the second half of the nineteenth century also led to greater social stratification among Dutch Afrikaners. By the 1870s, the DRC and colonial politicians began to express concern about an increase in the numbers of whites living in poverty in the colony's rural districts. This apparently ever-enlarging group of *bywoners* (tenant farmers), many of whom led a semi-nomadic existence, moving seasonally or as pasture deteriorated and water supplies dried up, was a cause of anxiety for the Dutch-Afrikaner middle class, who worried that their existence was a sign of Dutch-Afrikaans cultural degeneration.[31]

The founders of the Genootschap van Regte Afrikaners (GRA, the Society of True Afrikaners) – an organisation established in Paarl in 1875 to promote the interests of a rural petit bourgeois class and of *bywoners* – defined 'Afrikaners' as whites, or descendants of European settlers, and as speaking 'Afrikaans', a creole language that was increasingly distinct from formal Dutch.[32] This was an exclusive identity: it did not include people who were black, and it was profoundly critical of the region's elites. In their newspaper *Di Patriot*, and in collections of Afrikaans poetry, the leadership of the GRA – which was largely young and male, and employed as teachers and clergymen – accused the leadership of the DRC and other members of the same class of betraying their fellow 'Afrikaners'.[33] Indeed, some DRC ministers preached in English until the end of the century and the church segregated slowly, unevenly and, for its leadership, reluctantly. The powerful families of the south-western Cape – who included landowners, high-ranking civil servants, politicians, and DRC clergymen – may have understood and, occasionally, have spoken 'Afrikaans' or 'Cape Dutch', but they described themselves as Dutch speakers. They were also, in common with other colonial elites, fully bilingual, and were well educated and well travelled. Many saw themselves as imperial subjects.[34] In 1877 John Murray (1826–1882) – a member of the powerful Murray family and one of the founder-lecturers

at the DRC's seminary in Stellenbosch – explained to the readers of the *Cape Monthly Magazine* (*CMM*) that 'the term Boer is one of wide application in this country. Men who have been at school and have travelled in Europe are not ashamed of the title, while it is borne by numbers who can barely sign their names.'[35] Anna Bliss – an American teacher working at the Huguenot Seminary in Wellington, established by the DRC for Dutch-Afrikaans girls in 1874 – drew a sharp distinction between her urbane, well-travelled, bilingual hosts, whose houses were strewn with books and magazines from abroad, and those Dutch Afrikaners 'in the interior' who were 'of course . . . a different class of people'.[36]

At the same time, the black rural poor – on whose cheap labour the farmers of the south-western districts depended – chose rather to seek employment in Cape Town. The size of some towns in the colony's rural interior shrank. The population of Swellendam, for instance, fell from a total of 2,008 people in 1875 to 1,727 just 20 years later.[37] Indeed, the establishment of these towns and the creation of a white burgher society in the south-western districts had long been predicated on violence. On the slow expulsion and eradication, through disease and war, of the Khoe people, and on slavery. Even after the abolition of slavery (1834) and apprenticeship (1838), social mobility in the region was limited, and labour relations relatively unchanged.[38] Indeed, only a decade after the ending of slavery, the Masters and Servants Ordinance (1841) and Act (1856) were introduced to control the movement of black labour within the colony. In a region where settlers were able to form families relatively soon after their arrival in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and where there were low rates of manumission of slaves, a strict racial hierarchy developed. As Richard Elphick and Robert Shell write: 'A clear social distinction between Europeans and blacks was established soon after settlement. Prestige and local power became associated with land-holding, and almost all land-holders were European.'[39] These fairly rigid social divisions based on race should not detract, though, from the social construction of these racial and ethnic categories. Ann Laura Stoler has warned historians and anthropologists that 'Colonial cultures were never direct translations of European society planted in the colonies, but unique cultural configurations.'[40] Indeed, as Ellen Boucher remarks, 'colonial standards of "Whiteness" were fluid, open to reinterpretation, and never a matter of skin colour alone'.[41] Historians of empire have paid attention precisely to how this category of colonial whiteness was constructed and changed over time.[42] As the discussion of poor whiteism, above, demonstrates, white poverty undermined arguments that whiteness and power were indistinguishable, and

also drew attention to the difficulty of defining precisely who was white and who was not.[43] Describing his mission school in Cape Town, one Church of England minister reported in 1896:

> In my own school four-fifths are coloured. There are no natives, but there are lightly coloured children of all sorts . . . It is professedly a coloured school, but we take white children as well. It is impossible to draw a line, because in some families you will find white children and light coloured children; the gradations of colour are frequently very fine.[44]

The scholarship on imperial childhoods in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries suggests that white children were seen as particularly susceptible to the impact of living in colonial settings, because of the effects of warm climates on young white bodies, and as a result of their contact with colonised others – usually servants or schoolmates. In particular, children who were white and poor blurred the line between whiteness and blackness – between being civilised and not.[45] This book argues that the colonial state's interest in white childhood was produced partly by the view, shared by many including DRC ministers, that children could be more easily rescued from poverty, as well as by a desire to define precisely who a white child was. Put another way, in describing what should constitute white children's upbringings, the 1895 Destitute Children Relief Act created a definition for white childhood.

Since the 1980s South African scholars have produced a nuanced literature on the creation of white Afrikaans identities, and also on poor whiteism. As Robert Ross, Andre du Toit, and Hermann Giliomee have demonstrated, the idea of a distinct, white 'Afrikaner' identity was the product of an emergent nationalist politics in the south-western Cape during the late nineteenth century.[46] This book seeks to include children in the analysis of white identities in South Africa. Crucially, the DRC was central to this definition of white childhood. When colonial politicians began to express concern about white children in the 1880s, they did so in terms established by the DRC. When they formulated policies to eradicate child poverty and ameliorate white children's access to education, they did so with the assistance of the DRC. The DRC constituted a significant force both in articulating a set of concerns about children and childhood and in working to improve the circumstances in which children were raised and educated. The DRC's concerted efforts to convert, educate, and mould white children from the 1860s onwards made the 1895 Act possible.

In this case, the close links between the DRC and the colonial state stemmed largely from the Department of Education's reliance on the DRC from the 1870s in providing schooling to rural white children. Until the 1890s, the DRC's interest in colonial politics had been minimal. Even as the DRC began to identify itself as the church, specifically, of white Dutch Afrikaners in the 1890s,[47] its leadership remained ambivalent about the nationalism of the GRA and other organisations. The DRC owed its power in the Cape to its size, resources, and uniquely strong presence in the lives of rural Dutch Afrikaners. It was by far the wealthiest and biggest church in the Cape. According to census reports, in 1875, slightly less than a quarter of the Cape's total population belonged to the DRC, more than any other church – either settler or mission – in the colony. Two-thirds of whites belonged to the DRC, and, although they constituted 85 per cent of the DRC's membership, slightly more than 20 per cent of the colony's black population were members of the DRC too. Only the Methodist church had more black members (23 per cent of the black population).[48] In 1891, the highest number of Sunday schools (a third of the total number), baptisms, and marriages were conducted by the DRC. Additionally, the DRC had the highest income: in 1890, it raised £103,692, in comparison with the Church of England's £60,675.[49] Simply in terms of numbers, the DRC was by far the most influential church in the colony.

As a result of this, the DRC exercised an influence over the colony's rural districts that was, to some extent, second only to that of the state. This shift, though, from church to state interest in (white) childhood was not unprecedented in global terms. The international child-saving movement was a response to the social consequences of industrialisation. It was a coalition of diverse individuals and organisations, ranging from philanthropists and missionaries to feminists and doctors, and campaigned for the protection or saving of vulnerable children from exploitation and poverty. It fundamentally altered the ways in which governments understood their responsibilities to children. Steven Mintz identifies three phases in the American child-saving movement: from 1790 to 1840 philanthropists, missionaries, and charity workers founded child-specific institutions in which to house orphaned, destitute, and abused children; from the Civil War until the end of the century, child-savers extended this work by establishing societies to protect children from exploitation and neglect, campaigning for the state to regulate and abolish child labour and child prostitution, and to punish the abuse of children. Finally, from 1890 to World War I, 'child-savers greatly expanded public responsibility and professional administration of child

welfare programmes'.[50] Although not a precise template for all national child-saving movements, most across the world followed this gradual shift from private welfare to greater governmental involvement in the protection of children.

South Africa, did, though, lag behind other industrialising countries. On the one hand, it was not drawn into the network of imperial child rescue organisations which facilitated the emigration of poor and, often, orphaned British children to Canada and New Zealand.[51] (There had been a short-lived and ultimately disastrous attempt at settling poor children in the Cape in the 1830s, under the auspices of the Children's Friend Society.[52]) And, on the other hand, South Africa's industrialisation occurred later than that of the United States and western Europe. None of the social evils against which Britain's National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children or the Children's Friend Society in the United States campaigned were new or specific to the nineteenth century or to industrialised societies: children had worked, been prostituted, abused, neglected, and exploited long before the end of the eighteenth century. Industrialisation did certainly change the nature of children's work and increased the numbers of poor children living in cities, making poor and working children more visible than ever before, but ideas about childhood had changed too. The Enlightenment conceptualisation of the child as a rational yet malleable being, ready to be moulded into the kind of adult required by society, along with Romantic notions of children's inherent goodness and affinity to the natural world, and evangelical arguments about the centrality of the family and the innocent child to the functioning of society, gave rise to a fairly rigid notion of what should constitute childhood.[53] Campaigners positioned the child as an innocent, dependent on adults, who should be raised in the sanctified space of the home and carefully educated and nurtured until the late teens.[54]

Legislation introduced first in Europe and later in the United States progressively limited children's working hours and regulated what kind of work they could perform, and, by the end of the century, banned children, usually under the age of 15, from working full-time at all.[55] In Britain free, compulsory elementary education effectively brought mass child labour to an end.[56] Orphanages, asylums, and emigration schemes to Britain's settler colonies and the American Midwest were meant to reform juvenile delinquents and to teach poor children how to be 'childlike' once more. Other legislation empowered the state to remove children from their parents' care, and to define and limit parents' rights to punish and discipline their children. Child-savers also

argued for the raising of the age of consent for girls, and for the criminalisation of incest and child prostitution.[57]

The first South African child welfare societies were founded during a period of national reconstruction after the South African War, and partly out of concern about poor whiteism: the South African Society for the Protection of Child Life was established in Cape Town in 1908, and the Children's Aid Society in Johannesburg the following year.[58] The South African National Council of Child Welfare was formed in 1924, the same year as the Declaration of the Rights of the Child by the League of Nations.[59] In contrast, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children had been formed in London in 1884, a decade after the founding of the New York Society for the Protection of Children. In Britain, the first legislation to protect child workers was introduced in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In France the 1841 Child Labour Law protected working children.[60] The Union of South Africa's Children's Act came into force in 1913, almost a quarter of a century after the landmark British Children's Charter of 1889.

However, this book argues that the DRC and, later, the colonial state were interested in children and childhood during the second half of the nineteenth century – an interest produced to some extent by the social, economic, and political changes attendant on the mineral revolution. Childhood also changed during this period. Between *c.* 1850 and 1900, half of the Cape Colony's population was aged 18 years and younger, making it the youngest in the British Empire. In 1875, the English and Welsh population divided equally at 22 years, and in Bombay at 19 years. Even the colony's census-takers commented on the 'extreme youth' of the Cape's population.[61]

The Cape's adults were surrounded by children – in their families (around 8 per cent of the colony's population 'were members of families living together'[62]), on the streets, and, indeed, at work. Considering that the first legislation limiting child labour in the Cape was introduced only in 1905 – which made elementary education compulsory for white children between the ages of seven and 14, and made it illegal to employ these children during school hours – the employment of children was a feature of colonial life until well into the twentieth century. Children's work contributed to the colonial economy, and a proportion of the colonial budget was expended on children, and chiefly through the Department of Education.

But although adults were in constant contact with people aged 18 or younger, they did not define all of these young people as children or youths. This thinking was not peculiar to the Cape. Thomas Bull,

whose *Maternal Management of Children* was a child-rearing best-seller from its publication in 1840, noted that 'the line of demarcation made between infancy and childhood, both by ancient and modern writers, has always been arbitrary'.[63] The compilers of the Cape's 1891 Census observed that 'To obtain trustworthy answers to the simple enquiries in regard to age is one of the most difficult tasks of Census taking.' This was partly because there was a '[high] degree of ignorance of the people in regard to their ages', but it was also a result of frequent 'wilful misrepresentation ... especially on the part of women, some of whom return themselves, deliberately, as older, and some as younger than they really are'.[64] In other words, census-takers and the Cape's populations had different ways of conceptualising and categorising age.

For example, legislation introduced to prevent white farmers from kidnapping and enslaving African children in the 1850s took into account the fact that these children would not be able to state their ages according to Western calendars. The 1857 law decreed that magistrates

> should judge from the appearance of the child in question ... and also, if needful, from the opinions ... of persons skilled in ascertaining the age of such children, and from any other evidence which may be adduced on the subject, whether the child ... was ... under the age of 16 years or not.[65]

It is telling that age was to be set by examining the child's appearance and in consultation with 'skilled' people – probably missionaries – and not by questioning the child him- or herself.[66]

How, then, did the Cape's adults distinguish between themselves, young people, and children? Since 1829, the age of majority had been set at 21,[67] and it was legal for girls to marry at the age of 12, and boys at 14.[68] But, socially, these ages had very little meaning. Letters, diary entries, and newspaper articles from the period all refer to 'children', 'boys and girls', and 'youths', but these were not fixed, absolute categories. Nineteenth-century adults used different language to describe children and young people. The term 'adolescent' was popularised only after 1904, with the publication of G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence*. The idea of the 'teenager' emerged only during the 1930s and 1940s, and particularly in the United States.[69] Parents, and especially middle-class parents, acknowledged that the phase of development roughly between the ages of 12 and 18 differed from childhood and adulthood but, unlike twentieth-century parents, did not expect their children to behave in a way typical to teenagers.[70]

The compilers of the 1891 Census tabulated age according to categories 'usually accepted for the different stages of life'. These were: infancy (under one year); childhood (between one and five years); boyhood and girlhood (between five and 15 years); youth and maidenhood (between 15 and 20 years); young manhood and womanhood (between 20 and 30 years); middle-aged manhood and womanhood (between 30 and 50 years); and old manhood and womanhood (from 50 years upwards).[71] These stages of development were certainly linked to physical and mental development, but they were also shaped by a range of social and cultural expectations about age. Race, class, and gender were crucial in the making of age categories. Youth was both a phase of adult development and an indicator of legally and socially marginalised status. Only white males could achieve full adulthood in the eyes of the law; married white women were viewed as legal minors.[72] Signalling their diminished, dependent social status, black men and women were routinely referred to as 'boys' and 'girls' – and this practice had deep roots. As Robert Shell notes, slaves were seen as 'perpetual children'. Within Cape households they occupied the same status as the offspring of their masters and mistresses, possessed the same legal status as children and were also dressed as children (both went barefoot).[73] When Lachlan MacLean of the Castle Mail Packets Company gave evidence to the 1894 Labour Commission, he was asked to clarify what he meant when he said that employed 'sixty men' to unpack the steamers docked in Cape Town. He explained that his workers were 'what [were] known as Cape boys'. All of them had begun work as farm labourers and most had been 'working at the docks for years'.[74] They were, in other words, adult black men.

Similarly, when a farmer, for instance, advertised in Cape periodicals for a 'young lady' to teach at his school, he meant a white, educated, middle-class young woman. A factory owner seeking 'machinist girls' intended to employ poor black young women. These girls and young ladies would have been roughly the same age, but the former's subordinate class and racial status were indicated by the use of 'girls'.[75] However, the teachers at the Huguenot Seminary dubbed all their pupils – who ranged in age from five to 20 years – both as 'young ladies' and as 'girls'.[76] Here, these categories reflected the shifting nature of some nineteenth-century childhoods, both in the Cape and elsewhere, as the terms 'boyhood' and 'girlhood' were used to describe the gradually lengthening childhoods of middle-class youth. 'Girlhood' and 'boyhood' referred to a new period of development between childhood and adulthood – a phase described by Hall in 1904 as adolescence.

The census age divisions do not, though, reflect this change in the nature of white, middle-class childhood, identifying 'boyhood' and 'girlhood' as occurring between the ages of five and 15. (The two earliest phases of development were infancy and childhood.) From the age of five, boys and girls could begin to enter the world beyond the home: boys were 'breeched' – given their first pair of trousers – and both sexes could begin to attend school. At 15, boys, now 'youths', began to wear long trousers, and both youths and maidens, in the language of the census, were deemed ready to enter full-time employment.[77] As the Labour Commission's findings demonstrate, most agencies for domestic workers were willing to employ girls aged 14 and older as servants. Those who employed girls as young as eight years old conceded that older girls – or 'maidens' – made better employees.[78] The choice of the term 'maidens' for this age group is particularly telling. In Britain and the United States during the nineteenth century, the onset of menstruation tended to occur during girls' early to mid-teens, rendering them sexually available and eligible for marriage. While comparable information for the Cape is unavailable, it is reasonable to assume that most white, middle-class girls in the colony began menstruating at the same time. Poorer girls who were not as well nourished as their middle-class contemporaries would have taken longer to achieve the body mass needed for menstruation to begin. Olive Schreiner's first period occurred during her early teens.[79] It is significant that the phase between the ages of 15 and 20, when the majority of young women entered into relationships with men, was defined in terms of these women's sexual status.

Parents defined and thought about their children and their children's development in their own ways too. Mary Brown, the 25-year-old wife of a doctor in Fraserburg in the 1840s and 1850s, began a journal to record the 'early days of [her] little ones [*sic*] lives and their sweet sayings and doings'.[80] Like other mothers during the same era, she differentiated quite carefully between her older and younger children: while she mentioned three-year-old William by name, her daughter Rachel remained simply 'Baby' until her second birthday.[81] Parents had two reasons for doing this. If mothers breastfed their children and used no other form of contraception, birth patterns tended to allow for a space of around 18 months between each child. The youngest child would be called 'Baby' until its second birthday, when the next child would be born. The title described both the child's extreme youth – it was literally a baby – and also its position in the family.[82]

Secondly, the practice related to the precariousness of early childhood. It is impossible to ascertain how many children died in the Cape

Colony before 1894, when the Births and Deaths Registration Act was passed. The colony's doctors did, though, believe that the Cape's child mortality rates were unusually high in comparison with other British settler colonies, and this perception was vindicated by the initial report submitted to Parliament after the passing of the Act. In the first three months of 1895, of the total number of 3,950 deaths, 2,036 were of children under five, far higher than in other British colonies. Charles Simkins and Elizabeth van Heyningen estimate white infant mortality at 150 per 1,000 children born during the 1890s – in comparison with 118 per 1,000 born in Australia. Statistics relating to black children were so incomplete as to be almost useless. Children in urban areas were particularly vulnerable to early death because of poor sanitation and overcrowding.[83]

Mary Brown's third child was born in May 1875, but died five months later as a result of complications arising from whooping cough. Mary – the wife of a medical doctor – was acutely aware of the perilousness of a child's early years. By referring to her youngest as Baby and not by name – which would have been to bestow on it a personality and an individuality – she could attempt to minimise her anguish at the child's death. This is not to suggest that Mary Brown did not mourn the death of her baby – far from it – but in an age when even a doctor's son could die from a cold, it was a pragmatic strategy only to think about children as individuals after their second or third year.[84] In this way, age categories were also reflective of concerns around survival, death, and health.

In a letter to his wife and young children written in 1862, Andrew Murray jun. demonstrated how he thought about his children's development. Upon his return from a long journey to the Transvaal, he hoped that while ten-year-old Andrew – an adopted son – would show what he had 'learnt at school', five-year-old Emmie, who was being taught to read at home by her mother, would 'sit still and hem a handkerchief'. Four-year-old Mary would be able to 'thread beads', while six-month-old Haldane 'must laugh very pretty'.[85] Not only did Murray have a clear sense of his children's physical and intellectual development, but he understood this in gendered terms: even though both Andrew and Emmie were involved in some form of education, only Andrew would be asked what he had learnt at school, while Emmie had to display the feminine accomplishments of sewing and 'sitting still'. These were, of course, middle-class children – their activities are not connected to any form of wage-earning. Emmie hemmed a handkerchief, not petticoats or sheets. When Murray and his young wife, Emma, lived in Bloemfontein

during the 1850s, the most basic domestic tasks – sweeping, cleaning fireplaces, fetching provisions from local shopkeepers – were performed by 'a little wild Caffre boy about twelve'.[86] Emma complained that he had been very badly trained: because he had previously been 'allowed to play about all day', he was chronically unreliable.[87] When her sons were 12 years old, they were in full-time education and were not expected to assist with household chores. When not at school, they were encouraged to play and make the most of their free time.

Several childhoods and different experiences of youth existed side by side in the Cape Colony during this period. Writing about Victorian Britain, Leonore Davidoff describes this evocatively:

> The unstable boundary between childhood and adulthood, determined by class rather than age, is evident in the composition of some households. A girl of 14 or 15, her undernourished body still far from puberty, was expected to do a full day's work, to put her hair up and lengthen her skirts. Yet she might be living under the same roof as the daughter of the house, of a similar age but still regarded as a child in the schoolroom, hair down her back, skirts still only at the knee, yet physically tall, well built and most likely past first menstruation.[88]

In the Cape, race played as great a role in the definition of who was – and who was not – a child as class and gender. Or, to invoke the title of Murray's child-rearing guide mentioned above, the answer to the question of what a child should become, depended on how that child was defined.

## IV

*Changing Childhoods in the Cape Colony* is interested in how childhoods changed after 1860, and how these changes – particularly in white, middle-class families – influenced the ways in which the DRC and its ministers perceived the significance of childhood. I have relied heavily on the personal collections of DRC ministers and their families in the DRC archive. These letters not only create a portrait of colonial family life over the course of the nineteenth century, but also demonstrate how middle-class childhood changed and lengthened over this period. Also, I draw on two diaries kept by white, middle-class youth in the Cape: one, in the University of Cape Town's manuscripts collections, by Caroline Molteno, the daughter of the Cape's first prime minister, provides rich and detailed insight into the thoughts and feelings of a

pious young woman negotiating the difficult path between childhood, girlhood, and womanhood in the late 1860s and early 1870s. The other, in Stellenbosch University's documentation centre, is a diary kept by young Charlie Immelman from Worcester, in the late 1880s. This altogether very different kind of diary – instead of a space for reflection and personal improvement, it is part of Charlie's attempts to make himself into an independent man-about-town – allows some understanding of how middle-class youth used their increasingly ample leisure time to try on new, grown-up identities. I have used a range of sources to explore the DRC's transformation into an evangelical church in the middle of the nineteenth century, and of the significance of the role played by children and young people in this process. Ministers' letters and official documents within the DRC's archives are invaluable here, as was a rare, unsigned account of the DRC's major revivals found in the Montagu congregation's papers.

Secondly, the book traces how this church and, later, the state attempted to change childhoods – particularly poor white childhoods. I have drawn on the child-rearing manuals, newspapers, periodicals, and other books published by the DRC over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century. Colonial publications such as the *Cape Times* and the *Cape Monthly Magazine*, as well as transcripts of parliamentary debates, were platforms where politicians and civil servants expressed their growing anxiety about the state of white childhood. Other than the census reports, some of the richest sources for this book are the records of commissions of enquiry into labour and education in the Cape during the 1890s. The evidence provided by a cross-section of, mainly, middle-class Cape society demonstrates the complexity of debates about colonial childhoods: from Church of England missionaries who argued that all children, regardless of colour, were deserving of education, to small businessmen who warned against the dire implications of schooling for all children, but particularly if they were black.

Because the DRC's interest in children was rooted in its transformation into an evangelical church, Chapter 1, 'A Changing Church: Childhood, Youth, and Dutch Reformed Revivalism', examines how the DRC shifted from being a socially and theologically moribund organisation to become a church at the very centre of white Dutch-Afrikaans society. The chapter pays particular attention to the role of children and young people in the revivalist movement which swept the DRC from 1860. Although initially alarmed by the apparently uncontrolled outpouring of religious enthusiasm among the church's youngest

members, DRC ministers soon initiated means – borrowed from evangelicals abroad – to harness this religiosity for the good of the church. Youth religious experience needed to manifest itself in ways that would not challenge church or social hierarchies.

In Chapter 2, I argue that ministers' views on what should constitute a 'normal' childhood were shaped by their own experiences of being fathers of large families. Because these clerical families wielded such power within the DRC and, through this, in colonial society, an analysis of their family dynamics becomes particularly significant. Although the changes undergone within DRC ministers' families were not unique to them, these changing childhoods influenced how the church advised parents to raise their children, and ultimately constructed notions of ideal childhood. Also, this chapter considers how families found new ways to mark important turning points in children's progress towards adulthood as these children remained at home and dependent on their parents for far longer than before.

Chapter 3 ('Raising Children for Christ: Child-Rearing Manuals, Sunday Schools, and Leisure Time') examines how the DRC worked to raise Christian children – and, more particularly, future Christian workers – outside of clerical families. The church did this in several ways. Firstly, its ministers published a slew of child-rearing guides which were read enthusiastically in South Africa and abroad. It also founded a range of organisations to bring more children within the ambit of the church, and introduced the Sunday school movement to South Africa. White, middle-class children's leisure time and disposable income were of particular significance to DRC work among children: white children were encouraged to see themselves as Christian missionaries, sponsoring missions abroad and ministering to black children at home.

These three chapters trace a narrowing of the DRC's focus: from an initial willingness to work for the conversion of all children whose parents were members of the church to an exclusive interest in white children, and particularly those who were poor. This was partly the result of the Department of Education's appeal to the DRC to assist in the provision of schooling to rural white children. Chapter 4 pays attention to the nature of the apparent crisis in education in the Cape in the 1870s. This was in some ways a crisis manufactured in colonial newspapers, reflecting widespread anxiety about the emergence of an increasing population of impoverished rural whites. Because the DRC was the only colonial institution which had a presence in the Cape's vast rural interior, it was mobilised by the colony's Department of Education to bring poor white children – particularly boys – into formal

education. However, the church and the department understood the crisis and its solutions differently: the department was anxious to push as many white children into school as possible, while the DRC, seeing education as part of its evangelical work, focused particularly on women's education.

Finally, Chapter 5 ('Saving the Child to Save the Nation: Poverty, Whiteness, and the Destitute Children Relief Act') examines debates about the persistence of white children living in poverty in the Cape Colony's rural areas, and the presence of, apparently, idle, or workless, children and young people on Cape Town's streets in the 1880s and 1890s. The chapter argues that these debates were strongly connected to the changing nature of work in the colony, but also to the emergence of an early Afrikaner nationalism during this period. Focusing on the 1895 Destitute Children Relief Act, the chapter suggests that this legislation explicitly connected the well-being and education of white children to the stability of the colonial state, and also began to define what should constitute a white childhood.

Between 1860 and the mid-1890s, childhood moved from being the concern of an evangelical church, eager to reform colonial society, to being at the centre of the Cape government's efforts to address white poverty. This book traces this trajectory.

# 1

# A Changing Church: Childhood, Youth, and Dutch Reformed Revivalism

In 1893 Andrew Murray jun., the moderator of the DRC, reminded his fellow clergymen that the future of the church '*grootendeels afhangt van het welslagen van den arbeid aan de jeugd!*' (depends largely on the success of work with the youth).[1] This observation was by no means unique among nineteenth-century evangelicals. After all, the American evangelical minister and author of several influential child-rearing texts John S.C. Abbott remarked to mothers in 1856: 'The brightest rays of the millennial morn must come from the cradle.'[2] Children and family life were not only central to the Christian society envisioned by evangelicals, but the conversion of children was also crucial to evangelical churches' work. Children could be made into the Christian adults of the future. Ideally, to paraphrase the title of one of Murray's best-selling books, children should be raised for Christ: parents should ensure that their children were brought up to be Christians. But children could also be converted through other means: in Sunday schools, at special sermons, or during revivals. However, as Murray and his fellow DRC clergymen discovered, children and young people could themselves cause revivals. Their involvement was crucial to the 1860 Great Revival, the first religious awakening to sweep nearly all of the DRC's congregations in the nineteenth century, and which had a transformative effect on the church.

It is for this reason that Murray's point about the future of the DRC being bound up with its efforts to evangelise among the Cape's youth is so significant. Children and young people were pivotal to the DRC's transformation into an evangelical church in 1860, and their involvement in later revivals was critical to the church's evangelical work in the second half of the nineteenth century. An analysis of why some children and young people became involved in these revivals also opens

up new ways of understanding how the social and economic change which produced the conditions in which revivals were likely to occur also impacted on the youth. As the following chapter will discuss, childhood and youth changed in the second half of the nineteenth century in the Cape. Revivals offer one way of thinking about this change.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the profound change that the DRC underwent during the early and middle parts of the nineteenth century: from a socially and theologically moribund organisation to a church at the very centre of, particularly, white Dutch-Afrikaans society in the colony's towns and villages throughout the colony. Beginning with an analysis of how a group of Scottish-born and American- and European-trained ministers set to work to remake the DRC in the image of Protestant evangelical churches abroad, the chapter then turns to a discussion of the role of youth in the 1860 Great Revival. Although initially alarmed by the apparently uncontrolled outpouring of religious enthusiasm among the church's youngest members, DRC ministers soon initiated means to harness this religiosity for the good of the church. As the final section argues, later revivals were more carefully controlled and patrolled by ministers. Youth religious experience needed to manifest itself in ways that would not challenge church or social hierarchies.

## I

The DRC's embrace of evangelicalism occurred within the context of the worldwide religious revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Revivalist or reform movements within Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism were a response, variously, to industrialisation, imperial rule, and the consolidation of state power.[3] In South Africa, missionaries offered societies whose ways of life were disrupted by conquest and industrialisation, a means of coping with this massive and often traumatic change. Similarly, the DRC's incorporation of revivalist preaching and other strategies borrowed from evangelical churches abroad – such as prayer meetings, visits to congregants at home, and missionary societies – in the middle decades of the century met with an enthusiastic response from the church's members. An evangelical DRC seemed to help its members to make sense of the disruption caused by the colony's economic expansion, urbanisation, mass immigration, disease, and drought. Put another way, DRC evangelicalism was both produced by and a response to the emergence of a colonial modernity in the Cape.

Ironically – for a church the majority of whose members were Dutch-Afrikaans – the DRC's evangelical turn was made possible by the advent of British rule at the Cape. Under the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC, Dutch East India Company), the activities of the DRC were limited. Unwilling to encourage the development of a colonial civil society, with the exception of a few missionaries, the DRC was the only church permitted to operate in the Cape under the VOC. It was entirely under the authority of the Amsterdam classis (governing body), and had only five churches which shared two or three ministers between them. Ministers were discouraged from taking active roles within colonial society, and levels of church attendance were low.[4] The primary function of the DRC was to act as a social boundary keeper and indicator of respectability. Being baptised into the DRC was as much a signifier of ethnic or cultural identity as it was a marker of individuals' religious beliefs.[5]

Under British rule, the DRC, Church of England, and other, smaller Christian denominations received small amounts of state aid. The Cape government contributed to ministers' salaries and paid for the upkeep of church buildings. Because of its size, the DRC was the major beneficiary of this arrangement, establishing new congregations and building new churches in the Cape countryside and, through this, becoming a uniquely powerful force among, particularly, white communities in the colony's interior.[6] In 1822 eight Scottish ministers arrived to fill the growing number of vacant livings in DRC parishes. In the absence of a local theological seminary, they were brought to the Cape as part of Lord Charles Somerset's Anglicisation policies. The DRC and the Church of Scotland stemmed from the same reformed tradition, and Somerset hoped that men like Andrew Murray sen., Colin Fraser, William Robertson, and George Thom would encourage their Dutch-Afrikaner congregations to learn English and to educate their children in the colony's government-funded schools, all of which were now English-medium.[7] Partly because these Scotsmen were sent to rural congregations, they were integrated into Dutch-Afrikaans society, learning to speak Dutch and marrying local women. Murray sen., for example, settled in the rural village of Graaff-Reinet with his Cape-born Dutch wife, Maria Stegmann.[8]

These men arrived at the Cape enthused with the evangelicalism that was sweeping Britain during the period, and slowly began to remould the DRC into the kind of evangelical church for which they had agitated in Scotland.[9] Like other Protestant evangelicals, they were theologically conservative, read the Bible literally, and positioned Christ's

redeeming work as the heart of Christianity, encouraging both ministers and congregants to participate actively in their congregations and their communities, and to seek out and convert the unsaved and the unbelieving.[10] They did not distinguish between private faith and public activity – between church attendance on Sundays and the everyday life of the working week – and insisted that congregants integrate their Christianity into every aspect of their lives. Even church members who had been christened at birth went through a process of spiritual conversion, and it was this public confession of faith that held evangelical Christians to account: their behaviour both within and without the church was under scrutiny from both ministers and fellow Christians.

To these ends, Murray sen. and his colleagues worked to grow the DRC, both in terms of the church's membership and in terms of the place it occupied within the lives of its members. They extended the reach of the church by founding 18 new parishes, encouraged regular church attendance, and opened Sunday schools. They strengthened and reinforced the DRC's tradition of *huisbesoek* (home visiting): ministers' regular weekly or monthly visits to each member of their congregation. *Huisbesoek* not only monitored the regularity of congregants' church-going, but also allowed ministers unprecedented power to comment on members' domestic and private lives. Ministers were required to fill out weekly ledgers which listed families they had visited, how many children of school-going age were present in each household, and which school and Sunday school they attended.[11] As the editor of the Church of England's *Cape Church Monthly* observed, this custom lent DRC ministers considerably more power than their colleagues from other churches. He grumbled that 'Dutch colonists have a respect, sometimes almost servile for their clergy that is entirely wanting in their English fellows.'[12] Indeed, to invoke E.P. Thompson on the appeal of Methodism to the English working class during the Industrial Revolution, the DRC 'was more than a building, and more than the sermons and instructions of its minister'. Unlike the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), whose congregations tended to live and work in the colony's towns, and, thus, closer to their ministers,[13] DRC ministers, similar to their Methodist counterparts in England, regularly 'tramped several miles after work to attend small functions at outlying hamlets'.[14] The church lived in the activities and work of its ministers and members. Although the CPSA did organise church-related societies, their impact on more dispersed urban populations was less than that on the DRC's mainly close-knit rural communities.[15] DRC ministers believed that, as they were bringing the faithful more closely

into the ambit of the church, they were also remaking the DRC. The immigrant ministers of the 1820s organised the church's first independent synod in 1824, signalling that the DRC itself was emerging as a more self-aware and socially engaged organisation. Importantly, this nineteenth-century evolution of the DRC was linked closely to the founding of new parishes – something made possible by the Cape's growing prosperity.

This expansion of the Cape's economy fuelled the founding of new towns and villages in the interior of the colony.[16] Each of these was built around a church, the vast majority of which belonged to the DRC. The DRC's original six parishes created in 1795, all of which were centred in Cape Town or the south-western Cape, had grown to 25 in 1840, 36 in 1850, and 64 by 1860.[17] Andrew Murray sen., moderator of the DRC between 1847 and 1862, oversaw a church which employed more ministers in more parishes than even 30 years previously, and which possessed the reach and the financial means to broaden its involvement in education, to sponsor missionaries, and to build its own theological seminary in 1859.[18] (Its first two lecturers were N.J. Hofmeyr and John Murray, the eldest son of Murray sen.) The DRC was also the Cape's biggest church in terms of membership: in 1875, roughly two-thirds of people categorised as white belonged to the DRC, and altogether almost a quarter of the total population described themselves as DRC congregants. Although the DRC only began to identify specifically as a *volkskerk* – as the church of an ethnically distinct Dutch Afrikaner nation – in the 1890s, before then it played an important role in defining a broad group of people who could best be described as Dutch-Afrikaans. The compilers of the 1875 Census included membership of the DRC among the criteria used to identify the 'Dutch' portion of the white population.[19] The DRC established schools – and mainly girls' schools for middle-class Dutch-Afrikaner children; Dutch-Afrikaner children and young people attended its Sunday schools and other children's societies; Dutch-Afrikaans women could join women's organisations from the early 1880s onwards and were responsible for organising DRC fundraising bazaars, a major feature of rural living.

Even if it was dominated by Dutch Afrikaners, the DRC's congregations – like most settler churches – were racially and ethnically mixed, and the church's shifting attitude towards race was linked closely to the profound social change occurring in the Cape. Although legislation ameliorating the lot of slaves and Khoe labourers – culminating in Ordinance 50 in 1828, which freed the Khoe from coercive labour, and the abolition of slavery in 1834 and 1838 – was rolled out in the 1820s

and 1830s, the Masters and Servants Ordinance (1841) and Act (1856) were introduced subsequently to control the movement of black labour within the colony. In the colony's eastern districts, a series of wars with the Xhosa and Khoe gradually extended the frontiers of the Cape – a process accelerated to some extent by the cattle-killing in 1856–57, a catastrophic movement which caused thousands to starve to death and radically weakened the Xhosa politically.

In the Cape's south-western areas – those most profoundly affected by the emancipation of the slaves – freed people flocked to Cape Town and to mission stations seeking shelter and to reconstitute fragmented families. As an evangelical church, the DRC was interested in mission work, an endeavour in which it lagged behind other Protestant and Presbyterian churches. One of the key questions for DRC ministers was whether new converts – most of whom were black, many of them former slaves – should simply be incorporated into existing parishes and congregations, or should be made to join a new missionary church. A complicating factor in this decision was the fact that, like other Cape churches, several DRC congregations were racially mixed. While black congregants possessed lower status than white members and some congregations required black members to remain at the back of the church during services, several churches had mixed membership until at least the 1880s.[20] The church's leadership was opposed to racial segregation and was far more preoccupied with a series of tussles between theologically liberal and conservative factions within the DRC in the 1840s and 1850s.[21] In 1829, for instance, the synod affirmed that all people baptised into the DRC had the right to worship in it and to receive communion, regardless of their status as free or unfree. However, in 1857 the synod approved a motion which allowed for the creation of separate chapels for black members. The push for segregation came from the church's membership, and in the end the synod voted in favour of a motion proposed by Andrew Murray sen., which declared 'that it was "desirable and according to the Scriptures to absorb members from the heathen population in existing congregations" wherever this was possible'. However, where ' "the weakness of some" hindered spreading the Gospel', then the synod approved the building of separate churches for black members.[22]

Significantly, this established the principle that, although congregations could worship separately, discrete parishes for black and white members of the DRC would not be allowed. Even after the creation of a *Sendingkerk* (missionary church) specifically for new 'coloured' converts in 1881,[23] some older congregations remained racially mixed. The

slow segregation of the DRC's congregations mirrored a process under way in other parts of colonial society. Immigration and the emergence of a more racially mixed society in Cape Town, with inner-city slums and city streets now crowded with a population drawn from Europe and southern Africa, along with a greater awareness of poor whiteism, concerns about labour shortages, and the development of a moral purity movement in the Cape, gave greater impetus to efforts to segregate public life in the colony.[24] In 1893 secondary schools were reserved for white children only, and prisons, the Cape's only reformatory, the public transport system, residential districts, hospitals, recreation areas, and workspaces were gradually segregated on racial lines throughout the 1880s and 1890.[25]

The DRC's race politics in the nineteenth century were complex, as the leadership pushed for integration, while some members – and increasingly towards the end of the century as a new white, Afrikaner identity began to emerge – demanded separate services.[26] In other words, the church was split over what to do with its multiracial membership, and these divisions deepened as the century progressed. This helps to explain the DRC's narrowing interest in white children towards the end of the century. DRC ministers' initial efforts to bring children within the ambit of the church were fairly broad and wide-ranging and not aimed particularly at whites, but from the 1870s onwards their work was gradually limited to pulling white children into the church and into school. Indeed, it was precisely because of the DRC's intense involvement in colonial education from the 1870s that its work began to focus on white children.

What propelled the church into this educational work and even greater involvement in colonial public life was a series of revivals, the first of which occurred in 1860. Ministers – especially those who had experienced revivals abroad – saw these periods of intense, ecstatic religiosity as a means of injecting new life into the church, and encouraged their congregations to pray for revival.[27] As André du Toit has argued, 'The incorporation of the revival movement into regular church practice unleashed a vital source of emotional and spiritual energy.'[28] The revivals had the effect of expanding the size of congregations, and also of drawing congregants into church activities, ranging from Sunday schools to philanthropic societies. But as much as the revivals revitalised the DRC, they were also dangerous: the 1860 revival posed a threat to the hierarchies within the DRC. In these moments of intense and unrestrained religious fervour, boundaries between black and white, male and female, and young and old seemed to crumble.

## II

The DRC witnessed major evangelical revivals during the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s. The '*Groot Herlewing*' (Great Revival) took place in the winter of 1860. Beginning in the villages of Montagu and Worcester, it spread gradually to larger towns, Wellington, Paarl, Stellenbosch, and then into the interior, to Ceres, Swellendam, Calvinia, Graaff-Reinet, and eventually up to Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, by the following year. Similar revivals, although more isolated and confined to smaller areas, occurred throughout the decade, followed by another two major revivals, one in 1874 and 1875, and the other ten years later.[29] These were not the first Christian revivals to occur in South Africa,[30] and revivalism was a feature of life on mission stations, but the DRC revivals were significant because they were sustained, region-wide events, involving a significant proportion of the colony's population, both white and black.[31] There was also no comparable revivalist movement in the Church of England – the second most powerful church of the Cape, in terms of size and income. The theologically anti-evangelical Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA), as it was from 1870, had 26,548 members in 1875, considerably more than the Roman Catholic (8,666), Methodist (7,960), and Lutheran (6,278) churches.[32] The close connection between DRC ministers and their congregations lent the church special power during times of crisis.[33]

Like Protestant revivals abroad, although DRC awakenings tended to occur at Pentecost, they also coincided with periods of social and political instability, and economic depression. Each of the DRC's revivals took place during the major economic downturns which characterised the boom-and-bust nature of the Cape economy during this period. The revivals were produced both by a particular confluence of circumstances in the Cape – mainly environmental and economic – and by the efforts of ministers themselves. Put another way, ministers' efforts to encourage revival were successful in 1860 and subsequent years because congregations were receptive to these strategies at those moments. This was a new generation of foreign-educated – if not foreign-born – DRC ministers who returned to the Cape in the 1840s and 1850s. These men – most notably the sons of Andrew Murray sen., John and Andrew jun., as well as J.H. Neethling, and N.J. and Servaas Hofmeyr – who went on to become the leaders of the DRC in the 1860s, had, like the DRC ministers before them, been deeply influenced by the forms of revivalist preaching they had encountered abroad, most importantly in the United States and northern Europe. The Murray brothers, for

instance, took part in the 1839–1840 Scottish evangelical revival in Aberdeen, which was led partly by their uncle, a prominent minister.[34] When Andrew jun. wrote to his parents in 1845 to inform them of his conversion, he added that the memory of his experiences in Aberdeen was a major factor in his decision to become reborn and, like his brother, to study towards ordination in Utrecht.[35] (The Murray brothers' education and conversion in Scotland and the Netherlands will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2.) Alongside J.H. Neethling, in the Netherlands they were influenced by the conservative, evangelical Réveil movement, which emphasised 'practical Christianity' and promoted Sunday schools, educational institutions, and mission and philanthropic work.[36] On completing his training in 1849, N.J. Hofmeyr spent the following year travelling '*om uit te vinden, how het in Nederland stond met het godsdienstig en geestelijk leven*' (to find out the state of religious and spiritual life of the Netherlands). He visited ministers and the recently saved to learn more about religious revival.[37] His cousin Servaas had travelled extensively in England, Germany, and Switzerland during his studies in Utrecht. But the journey which made the deepest impression on him was his visit to America in 1856. Not only was he struck by the deep social and cultural similarities between the south-western Cape and, especially, New England, but he was impressed by the strategies – discussed below – used by ministers to encourage revivals in their congregations.[38]

Most accounts of the Great Revival written by DRC ministers and members of the church from the nineteenth century to the present locate the revival's origins specifically to the DRC congregation in Montagu, a small village about 180 km from Cape Town. Established only in 1859 during the Cape's mid-century economic boom, the Montagu congregation's first minister, the well-travelled Servaas Hofmeyr, arrived late in 1860, six months after the beginning of the awakening.[39] The revival had started, apparently, spontaneously: within the congregation, and without the assistance of a minister. The church rushed to send ministers to conduct prayer meetings and lead services, but the revival itself was a product of prayer among members of the congregation. The agency of congregants themselves is partly the focus of an undated, unsigned document in the Montagu congregation's file in the DRC. Apparently written by the son of a white, Dutch-Afrikaans farmer, this detailed account of the DRC's major revivals in 1860, the mid-1870s, and the mid-1880s suggests that the first, scattered manifestations of the Great Revival were not in the village of Montagu itself but, rather, on the farms in the nearby Hex River Valley

and in the Blaauvlei area outside Worcester, where the author's father farmed.[40]

As Antoinette Burton has observed, the 'history of the archive is a history of loss'.[41] It is also a history of selective use: fragments, remnants, and the scattered ephemera of the past which do not fit easily into either useful narratives or into the kinds of sources – reliable, authoritative – historians should use are easily put to one side. This scrawled fragment in the 'Cape Dutch' spoken and written in the south-western Cape during the late nineteenth century – not the Dutch of the Netherlands taught in the colony's elite schools but, rather, the language that was to be identified as 'Afrikaans' by nationalist culture brokers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – does not conform to the DRC's official telling of the revivals, but it does echo other accounts of the 1860 *herlewing* which refer to the possibility of farm workers bringing the revival to Montagu.[42]

On a Friday afternoon in mid-1860, the author's family, neighbours, and servants gathered for the monthly *nagmaal* (communion) on the farm. The white family and their neighbours gathered in the dining room, with black domestic servants and labourers in the kitchen, while they awaited the arrival of the minister. The minister, though, never appeared. Instead of dispersing and returning home as they would usually have done, the congregation remained. The reason for this, writes the author, was that '*de geest des Herren, was reeds aan het werken*' (the spirit of the Lord was already at work).[43] Following a discussion of the recent revivals in the area, members of the group began to express their desire also to be saved, and succeeded in working up a frenzy of religious enthusiasm. The whole congregation – young and old, and both in the kitchen and the dining room – took turns reading Bible verses, singing hymns, and praying. At this moment of intense religiosity, the boundaries which usually would have defined the relationships between men and women, children and adults, masters and servants, momentarily collapsed. Indeed, it would appear that the need for the authority of the church had disappeared for the day. Would this pitch of religious enthusiasm have been reached had the congregation's minister been able to attend that *nagmaal*?[44]

This prayer meeting was similar in some ways to the special youth service in Worcester which is usually credited with bringing the revival to the attention of DRC ministers. The person who may have been responsible for transforming the fervent prayer and song of one localised awakening into a colony-wide phenomenon was an unnamed 15-year-old girl, employed as a servant, and described as 'coloured' in the

DRC's records, who had travelled from Montagu to visit her family in Worcester.[45] There she attended a DRC prayer service for young people to celebrate Pentecost. J.C. de Vries, a recently ordained graduate of the DRC's seminary in Stellenbosch who conducted the service, explained that the girl 'prayed in moving tones. While she was praying, we heard as it were a sound in the distance, which came nearer and nearer, until the hall seemed to be shaken, and . . . the whole meeting began to pray, the majority in audible voice, but some in whispers.' The noise was such that Andrew Murray jun., the minister for Worcester, was called to intervene:

> he . . . called out, as loudly as he could, 'People, silence'. But the praying continued. In the meantime I too kneeled down again. It seemed to me that if the Lord was coming to bless us, I should not be upon my feet but on my knees. Mr Murray then called again aloud, 'People, I am your minister, sent from God, silence!' But there was no stopping the noise. No one heard him, but all continued praying and calling on God for mercy and pardon. Mr Murray then returned to me and told me to start the hymn-verse . . . I did so, but . . . the meeting went on praying . . . [46]

Such was the intensity of the prayer that, as Robert Ross describes, 'at least one young woman, shortly to become a missionary wife, was overcome and fell into what some would describe as a trance'.[47] As André du Toit notes, the 1860 Great Revival seems to have caught the DRC leadership off guard.[48] Andrew Murray jun. was initially sceptical of reasons for the newfound fervour of the young people in his congregation. Other ministers were as suspicious of the shouting, wailing, weeping, fainting, and speaking in tongues which occurred at revivalist meetings. J.H. Neethling in Stellenbosch felt that this kind of manifestation of piety was unnecessary, as the real impact of the revivals should, he believed, be felt in people's private relationship with God.[49] These ministers were unsettled by their inability to control prayer meetings often begun and sustained by young people, many of whom were black. Reports of the Montagu revival mentioned the fervour of the village's children,[50] and the awakening was spread to Stellenbosch by a group of enthusiastic 'young men' who were soon helping to conduct five-hour-long prayer meetings.[51] However, having participated in and witnessed revivals abroad and aware of their usefulness for reinvigorating churches, the DRC's leadership chose to direct, rather than discourage, the 1860 awakening. The church soon sent missionaries

and ministers to Montagu and the surrounding area to preach revivalist sermons.[52] This was an attempt to channel the revivals' spontaneous religiosity into forms that the church's ministers recognised, and could control.

The 1860 Great Revival began during a moment of profound hardship, when there was widespread belief that God's wrath was being visited on the Cape, and particularly the colony's rural areas. While the revivals of the mid-1870s and mid-1880s also coincided with severe economic downturns and began in winter, a time of food scarcity in rural areas,[53] the 1860 revival occurred in the midst of a range of other crises.[54] In addition to a devastating economic depression,[55] there was a severe drought and, in the western districts, outbreaks of rust on wheat and oidium mildew on vineyards.[56] The majority of the Cape's farmers were declared insolvent, and farm labourers' wages plummeted.[57] All the water dried up in Swellendam, farmers lost their sheep and horses, and the land was too dry to plough;[58] there were allegations that farmers were stealing water from neighbouring farms' rivers in Ladysmith;[59] in Victoria West and Calvinia the cost of meat, groceries, and other household goods rose sharply, and transporting produce to Port Elizabeth was almost impossible as draught animals were in short supply. Finding freshly slaughtered mutton – the meat of choice in the Cape – was difficult.[60] By 1866 one commentator noted that groups of former farm workers could be found wandering about the countryside. Their misery, he wrote, was difficult to describe.[61] On top of this, the population, many of whom had already been weakened physically by food shortages,[62] was also subjected to 'unusually virulent' epidemics of measles, typhus, and 'white sore throat' (diphtheria).[63]

Despite that the fact that – as both the liberal press and the government acknowledged – better water management would have mitigated the drought's effects, and oidium could have been controlled had farmers sprayed the vines with sulphur instead of using a variety of home remedies,[64] many DRC ministers suggested that the drought was God's doing. As the editor of the liberal *Het Volksblad* wrote despairingly: 'From all the pulpits came . . . this declaration: that the drought was a sign of God's anger with the people; and that He required to be appeased, before His scourge would be taken away.'[65] Even the Cape's Governor did little to contradict this sense of the Cape being specially punished by God, by organising a day of fasting and prayer in April 1860. The DRC-supporting *Volksvriend* suggested that the colonial government was not providing farmers with enough support in the form of water, food, and other basic provisions.[66] If the Cape's drought was not a certain

sign of the coming end of the world, then, certainly, it demonstrated God's displeasure at the colony's population. There is no evidence to suggest that the ministers of the DRC – or, indeed, of any of the Cape's churches – were predicting the end of the world, but the colony was pervaded with a real sense of crisis. And the people worst affected by this crisis were those who were young, poor, and black.

Evangelical awakenings have exerted a youth appeal all over the world since at least the eighteenth century. The Methodist revivals in Britain were characterised by their high proportion of child and adolescent converts, and several of the preachers were barely into adulthood themselves.[67] The very earliest revivals in central Europe during the eighteenth century were caused by children: in 1708, groups of Silesian children 'held their own camp-meetings, gathering round their elected leaders in prayer and singing, often several times a day, and often against parental opposition'.[68] Similarly, the 1727 Moravian revival in Saxony began with the impassioned testimony of a group of pre-adolescent girls. In both cases, the revivals had followed prolonged periods of political uncertainty, and conflict in the case of Silesia.[69] The American Great Awakenings were the 'most intense in areas of Massachusetts and Connecticut where economic problems, land hunger, and limited prospects for young men spurred migration'.[70]

If there are similarities between this collection of very different revivals, they are that they allowed the children and young people who began and participated in them some form of agency in the midst of troubling change and uncertainty. Already socially marginalised on the grounds of their youth, most of these young people were doubly disempowered by their poverty or gender. It is striking how frequently revivals were begun by adolescent girls. Steven Mintz makes the point that three out of every four Americans who joined evangelical churches during the early nineteenth century were girls in their mid- to late teens.[71] By claiming a close connection with God via the Holy Spirit, these young people could achieve positions of some authority within their communities, and also make sense of difficult and painful experiences. Youth involvement in Cape revivals seems to have been fairly similar to that in the rest of the world. The revivals appealed to youth, rather than younger children. In practical terms, young people had the liberty to attend church and revivalist meetings without their parents' presence and permission – and this was as true of middle-class youth as it was for working-class young men and women. These were also young people whose livelihood was under threat from the depression of the 1850s and early 1860s: they were not the white, middle-class adolescents whose

period of dependency on their parents was lengthening until their late teens (a change explored in greater depth in chapters 2 and 3), but rather those, mainly black young people, who needed to work to support themselves. As Andrew Murray jun. commented, 'poorer and younger people' were often the first to convert during revivals.[72]

The 1860 revival, in particular, shows up the complexity of race politics in the DRC during the period. Although segregation occurred slowly and unevenly in DRC congregations,[73] what gave ministers pause was that the revivals appeared to have been partly fomented and then spread around the colony by young black congregants. Awakenings were originated not necessarily by respectable members of the white middle class but, rather, by the poor, the young, and the desperate. The young woman whose fervent prayer began the 1860 Great Revival ranked towards the bottom of the colonial social scale: as a servant who was possibly the daughter, and definitely the granddaughter, of former slaves, she was triply disempowered by her gender, race, and class. The *Kerkbode*, the church's official publication, emphasised the wide appeal of the revival: in some villages, the numbers attending church were so great that separate meetings for men, women, and children were organised, and masters as well as servants flocked to services.[74] Even more troublingly, revivals could occur without the presence of a minister.[75] As a result of this, the DRC revivals of the 1870s and 1880s were more carefully organised by ministers, who focused their efforts on Pentecost.

Before and during Pentecost, DRC ministers used a range of methods they had read about or witnessed abroad, including: segregating those members of the congregation who were saved from those who were not; organising big conferences for ministers as well as special, small prayer meetings to consider the plight of individual congregants; and travelling preaching tours across the countryside to spread word about revivals.[76] DRC publications discussed the significance of Pentecost and how revivals would reinvigorate the church,[77] and ministers preached about revivals from the pulpit. It was not guaranteed that congregants would be receptive to ministers' urging. These new ways of evangelising and preaching were not universally popular among DRC congregations. One disgruntled Capetonian complained to *Het Volksblad* that N.J. Hofmeyr, like the other young ministers trained in the Netherlands, spoke in a '*lanzamen dralenden*' (slow, drawling) manner.[78] Andrew Murray jun. developed a reputation for repeatedly thumping the great Bible of the Cape Town DRC for emphasis, causing clouds of dust to rise into the air.[79] However, if congregants did respond, then their enthusiasm would be carefully channelled into more prayer meetings, special sermons, and

the church's philanthropic activities.[80] There were limits to DRC ministers' abilities to start revivals, and it is telling that the mid-1870 and mid-1880 revivals coincided with recessions, droughts, and crop failures as a result of disease.

It is worth emphasising the link between the revivals and emergence of a colonial modernity. Much of the change that the DRC underwent during this period was the product of a modernising Cape colony. The expansion and instability of the Cape's economy, the development of transport and information infrastructure, the construction of new towns and villages in the interior of the colony, all shaped the development of this powerful evangelical movement within the DRC. Ministers used aspects of a colonial modernity to their advantage. As the following section will discuss, the growth of a reading public was particularly useful to the DRC, whose ministers relied increasingly on print to convey the church's thinking on revival, Christian living, and child-rearing. As a result of this, in Robert Ross's words, the 'Afrikaner religious experience' underwent a profound alteration during the second half of the nineteenth century.[81] Ministers worked to move the DRC from a social and theological dead end in the early nineteenth century to an organisation modelled on the evangelical churches they had encountered abroad, and one ingrained in the lives of its members. DRC activities – from Sunday schools, to fundraising bazaars, and from monthly ministers' visits to mission work – were soon a major aspect of, particularly, middle-class Dutch-Afrikaners' lives in the Cape. As Chapter 3, especially, discusses, the church became a focal point of social and cultural activity.[82]

## III

The DRC's leadership argued that, as missionaries worked hard to convert Africans, so the church's ministers and members had to exercise a similar influence closer to home. The DRC was interested in saving children's souls. Even those children who were baptised were still deemed in need of ministering from the church. Although baptism – during which parents pledged to raise their children as Christians – established the relationship between the child and God, this was only the beginning of a long road towards becoming a saved Christian.[83] Ideally, baptism marked the beginning of an upbringing which would – coming full circle – end with the child's own decision to be confirmed in the church, and to become spiritually reborn. The age at which this occurred shifted over the course of the nineteenth century, and is discussed in Chapter 2.[84] DRC ministers did understand that the baptism

of babies performed an important social function – so much so that one of the main objects of the rural *nagmaal* was baptism. On one day during a *nagmaal* held in Calvinia in September 1883, Rev. William Robertson baptised 95 children.[85] Baptism both allowed children entry into the DRC and also marked them as respectable members of Dutch-Afrikaner society. Perhaps most importantly, a DRC baptism certificate was a form of insurance against want during old age. Deacons' committees met monthly to dispense financial assistance to elderly members of the DRC's congregations, and this money was only granted on the grounds of church membership.[86]

Murray and his colleagues believed that children were more receptive to conversion than were adults, and that their conversion would lead their families to spiritual reawakening.[87] This section focuses on revivalist preaching aimed at children – the DRC's child-rearing guides and Sunday school movement will be discussed in Chapter 3. These efforts did not aim solely at producing saved child Christians. Ministers hoped to shape and to mould children into the kind of adult Christians who would be useful to the church.[88] Ministers' dual aim of both converting children *and* encouraging them to be Christian workers as adults produced a tension in the DRC's work. Young people were to convert, but in ways that were not potentially subversive of, or disruptive to, the hierarchies and power structures within the church.

In 1860 John and Andrew Murray jun., N.J. Hofmeyr, and J.H. Neethling founded the Christelijke Drukpers Vereeniging (Christian Printers' Society) to publish periodicals sympathetic to conservative theology and evangelicalism.[89] The church already had an official publication, *De Kerkbode* (The Church Messenger), founded in 1849, and in 1857 Servaas Hofmeyr published the first edition of the quarterly theological journal *Elpis*.[90] Their readers were mainly clergymen and their families and the leadership of the DRC wanted to reach a wider audience. In 1859 J.H. Neethling founded *De Wekker*, a relatively cheap monthly periodical aimed largely, but not exclusively, at young people.[91] Its articles were shorter and written in a livelier style than those in *De Kerkbode*, and its aim was overtly evangelical: *De Wekker* means 'alarm clock' but also, literally, 'the awakener'.[92] (The Afrikaans word for revival is *opwekking*.) It was followed three years later by *De Volksvriend*, a bi-weekly newspaper founded to counter the hostility of the relatively liberal and popular *Het Volksblad* and *De Zuid-Afrikaan*.[93] In comparison, the CPSA managed to sustain only one official church paper, the *Church News*, fitfully during the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, before re-launching it in 1892 as the *Cape Church Monthly*. As the publication's title would

suggest, the purpose of the periodical was to provide a summary of church activities.

Along with *De Wekker*, the Zuid Afrikaansche Christelijke Boekvereeniging (South African Christian Book Society) supplied the faithful with reading matter. Founded in 1853 by John Murray, the society was responsible for disseminating Christian literature among DRC congregations, and particularly those in far-flung rural areas. In 1863 it had a membership of 1,800 adults and 1,162 children, and had distributed almost 18,000 publications.[94] This literature was predominantly European and American, but was supplemented by a large and popular body of work by DRC ministers themselves. Some of these texts were part of the DRC's efforts to spread the gospel to new audiences: John Murray's *Kinderbijbel* (Children's Bible) sold over 40,000 copies in the Cape between 1851 and 1884, and became a standard text in Sunday schools and churches in the Netherlands.[95] Others were about evangelicalism and conversion, and here Andrew Murray jun. was particularly prolific and successful. His books – which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3 – were read both at home and abroad, and he attracted a large following in northern Europe and North America, who received him and his colleagues enthusiastically on their regular trips overseas.[96]

The DRC leadership's embrace of print as a means of fomenting revival demonstrates the ways in which Andrew Murray jun. and ministers of his generation embraced colonial modernity, as noted above. This was linked closely to the fast emergence of a colonial print and reading culture. In 1857, when the hugely popular *Cape Monthly Magazine* was launched, there were four newspapers published in Cape Town. The following year there were eight, with a combined circulation of 3,500. By 1875 Cape Town had five booksellers, 46 bookbinders, 121 printers and compositors, and nine newspaper proprietors.[97] Unlike their conservative predecessors in the DRC – most prominently, the influential and deeply eccentric Paarl minister G.W.A. van der Lingen, who boycotted trains after the extension of the railroad into the colony's interior, on the grounds that they spread immorality – these young men understood that a reading public and new forms of transport could be used to reach a greater number and range of members and potential members of the DRC. Publications were complemented by a set of more direct methods for fomenting revival which reinforced the presence of the DRC in the lives of their congregants.[98] Chief among these were home visits,[99] and ministers were also instrumental in founding societies similar to those with which they had come into contact in Scotland and

the Netherlands, to further evangelical causes. Some were as small and localised as the Ebenhaezer Society for young people in Wellington, dedicated to raising funds for mission work, encouraging prayer meetings, and providing '*onschuldig vermaak*' (innocent amusement) for young men and women.[100]

The institution of Sunday schools and special children's sermons, as well as regular prayer meetings, served to sustain congregations' interest in religious matters outside of regular Sunday sermons. While they were usually instigated by ministers, their wives, or older children, responsibility for these small weekly meetings of pious congregants would soon be taken over by church members themselves. The original instigators would then move on to create new groups.[101] Children's services had existed within the DRC before 1860, and particularly on mission stations. In 1852 J.H. Neethling became the first minister to preach a children's sermon in an attempt to provide children with some form of church-related activity during *nagmaal* services on farms and in far-flung villages. Ministers noticed that children and young people were particularly receptive to these services,[102] and began to introduce children's sermons to urban congregations as well. In 1860 John Murray published *De Kinder-Kerk* (The Children's Church), a collection of 52 sermons intended to be read to children by parents or Sunday school teachers. The sermons all focused on how, and why, children should go about becoming better Christians.[103] *De Wekker* reprinted several of these sermons and encouraged congregations to hold children's services.[104] Even after the introduction of Sunday schools in the 1860s, children's services remained an important feature on religious calendars.[105]

These sermons became significant social events. Held quarterly, they were augmented by a special annual children's day of prayer and a *kinderfees* (children's festival) on the last Sunday before Christmas. The day of prayer and *kinderfees* originated during the early 1870s in the congregations in and around Cape Town. They were days set aside for the inevitable children's sermon, usually exhorting children to become saved,[106] but also organised games, bazaars, and picnics. These were tremendously popular until the end of the century: most were attended by over a hundred children, with one in Cape Town attracting around 4,000 in 1872.[107] It is not difficult to see the attraction of the festival and day of prayer to children who would be given a day's worth of cake and entertainment at the expense of the church, but the children's sermons and other special days remained very popular among ministers as well. Unlike Sunday school, the purpose of children's services was not to

teach children catechism or about the Bible. They were, rather, directed at children as Christians in the making.

Children's sermons offered ministers the means to encourage children to participate in evangelical awakenings, but in an organised, carefully controlled environment.[108] As an article in *De Wekker* announcing the DRC's decision formally to endorse the children's day of prayer in 1872 noted, the day of prayer provided ministers with the opportunity to address children's '*eigenaardige behoeften*' (specific needs). This, believed the author of the piece, helped to account for why days of prayer for children tended so frequently to result in short-lived revivals.[109] These sermons also increasingly occurred in racially segregated spaces. Even after 1857, the DRC continued to preach children's sermons and hold children's days of prayer in all its congregations, but by designating black congregations as marginal to the church's interests, black children and young people would no longer be able to begin revivals within the DRC. Hierarchies within the church would not be undermined during the fervour of evangelical awakening. Ministers were interested in controlling white children's religious experiences as a way of channelling them into teaching and missionary work.

Partly as a result of this, DRC ministers and missionaries began to preach revivalist sermons in schools for white children. There is one account of such an awakening. Petronella van Heerden (1887–1975), the first Afrikaans woman to qualify as a medical doctor, attended the Huguenot Seminary – an institution for white, mainly Dutch-Afrikaans, girls founded by Andrew Murray jun. in Wellington in 1874 – during the South African War (1899–1902). She disliked the school, and particularly its intense religiosity. Resistant both to her teachers' efforts to encourage her to convert, as well as to the revivals begun by visiting clergymen, Van Heerden furnishes a critical view of one awakening. Assembled in the school hall, pupils listened to a minister, assisted by a couple of missionaries, describe the torments of Hell which awaited the unsaved. The passage is worth quoting in full:

> *Orals is duiwels, hulle spring op jou, steek jou met 'n vurk en braai jou lewendig oor 'n baie warm vuur. Daardie vuur gaan ook nooit dood nie, dit brand ewig, en jy self raak ook nooit uitgebrand nie. Net waar jy draai, loer die oog van 'n wraaksugtige God op jou, Hy lees jou gedagtes, Hy sien alles, maar wat hy raaksien, is net sonde en Sy Wraak sal vreeslik wees.*[110] (Devils were everywhere, they jumped on you, stuck a fork in you and roasted you alive over a very hot fire. That fire never went out, it burned eternally, and you were never entirely burnt out. The

> eye of a vengeful God watched you, He read your thoughts, He saw everything, but what He noticed were only sins and His Wrath was terrible.)

This continued for hours at a time, until an almost '*tasbare angs*' (palpable fear) settled over the hall, with many children crying and '*histeries*' (hysterical). At this point, the preacher began to pray and asked those who desired to become reborn to stand, and almost everyone stood.[111] Despite Van Heerden's scepticism as to the reasons for her fellow pupils' sudden interest in religion, even she was drawn into it, albeit reluctantly. Having been approached by two friends who pointed out to her that if they all were to die, they – having been saved – would go to heaven, but she would go to hell, she recalls that this was '*'n nuwe gedagte, om so alleen te wees weg van my maats*' (a new idea, to be so alone and away from my friends). The conversation became more serious, and they consulted one of the visiting missionaries, a Miss Sheasby, who asked Petronella to stay behind with her to pray:

> *Ek word benoud, ek het nooit hardop en voor 'n ander mens gebid nie. Ek weet glad nie wat om te sê nie. Hoe kan ek nou vir die Here hardop en voor hierde vroumens verduidelik dat ek bekeer raak net om by my maats te wees? Ek moet Hom tog die waarheid vertel? Ek word hoe langer hoe benouder. In my wanhoop onthou ek Miss Bliss begin altyd: 'Oh Lord,' en ek sê toe ook maar: 'Oh Lord'. Miss Sheasby steun hier langs my. Toe ek haar vra of sy siek voel, vererg sy haar en daar was dit uit met die bekering.*[112] (I became worried: I had never before prayed aloud and in front of another person. I had no idea what to say. How could I, in front of this woman, explain to the Lord that I had converted just so that I could be with my friends? And I had to tell Him the truth? The longer I knelt, the more anxious I became. In my desperation I remembered that Miss Bliss [her headmistress] always began, 'Oh Lord,' and so I said, 'Oh Lord.' Miss Sheasby moaned beside me. When I asked if she felt sick, she became irritable, and that was the end of the conversion.)

But that was the extent of Petronella's conversion – and, indeed, of that of her friends. Within a few weeks, their fear of damnation receded and everything went back to as it had been.

Van Heerden's account is useful because it describes how a child from a Dutch Reformed, but not especially pious, family responded to the church's revivalism. The daughter of a prominent Orange Free

State family, Van Heerden was accustomed to attending church, Sunday school, and DRC events for children, but resisted ministers and teachers' attempts to push her into conversion. While she draws out the comical aspects of the revival, it is clear that it had a profound effect on the girls at the Huguenot Seminary while it lasted. This was partly due to the potent combination of a powerful evangelical rhetoric emphasising a vengeful God of the Old Testament, with the social and personal dynamics of a girls' boarding school. Miss Sheasby and her colleagues' methods seem manipulative, but the speed with which the school reverted to normality after the revival shows up the limits of their power: that as soon as the anxiety caused by their sermons had receded, the girls forgot about the spiritual awakening that had so possessed them during the revival.

Nonetheless, there were some children who were moved by revivalist preaching, and who participated enthusiastically in the church's efforts to evangelise to a wider audience. This revival did not pose any threat to the authority of the DRC or its ministers. It was encouraged within the confines of the school, and by a set of methods employed by a minister who had a clear aim in mind: to persuade as many children as possible to confess a desire to become saved. Children's sermons permitted children to behave emotionally, irrationally, and noisily as they participated in the revival, but within a carefully controlled and patrolled space and with very particular aims.

In the middle decades of the century, the DRC altered from being a moribund social gatekeeper to the evangelical centre of congregrants' lives. This change was the product of a range of forces – the economic development of the Cape Colony, recurring droughts, the influence of foreign-educated ministers attempting consciously to encourage religious revival in the church – that had the effect of working the church into the fabric of everyday life in the Cape, particularly in rural areas. Ministers were able to wield far greater influence over the lives of the church's members than ever before. Put another way, the growth of a powerful, evangelical DRC was both a response to, and was made possible by, an emergent colonial modernity. One of the troubling features of this modernity was the presence of a poor, young people – many of them black – who were able to whip congregations into an ecstasy of religious fervour. The 1860 Great Revival may have been a long-needed and desired injection of vigour into the DRC, but it also represented a moment when DRC ministers feared that they had lost control over some of their congregations. As a result of this, later revivals, in particular, were carefully controlled and patrolled.

DRC ministers' views on what should constitute 'normal' childhoods, and appropriate child-rearing and child and youth behaviour, were shaped profoundly by their own experiences of being fathers of large families – and of children whose childhoods differed significantly from their own. The following chapter discusses the making of white, middle-class childhood and youth in the Cape during the second half of the nineteenth century.

# 2

# Changing Childhoods: Making Middle-Class Childhood and Youth in the Nineteenth-Century Cape

One of the most remarkable editorials of the *Cape Times* during the 1890s was devoted to youthful love. Or, more specifically, to the close, quasi-romantic relationships which could develop between cousins. Published in March 1893, 'Concerning Cousins' described the significance of female cousins to boys 'beginning to merge into the conditions of young manhood'. The author explained:

> A flirtation with a cousin has all the charm of a love episode with none of the disadvantages. You can take a cousin to the theatre; you can take her for a moonlight row; you can spend a whole day with her; . . . and while enjoying yourself, offend no-one.

Relationships between cousins created an 'arcadia' where young men and women could enjoy one another's company, flirt, and behave like lovers, but without the expectations and potential dangers to propriety of a real romance between unrelated lovers. The editorial warned against marriages between cousins, suggesting that they were the mark of 'weak character', and noted that these relationships should come to a natural end 'At the age of one-and-twenty, or thereabouts', when 'Life has become more real on both sides'. They were meant to last only between 'school-boy and school-girl age' and 'the higher "teens" '.[1]

The editorial made a range of assumptions: it assumed that its readers would understand that its subjects were white and middle-class, with the financial means and leisure time for theatre-going, picnicking, and boating. It assumed that this period between childhood and young man- and womanhood was a preparation for – and an initiation into – courtship, marriage, and family life.[2] I have carefully avoided the term 'adolescence' in this context, as the term was only popularised by

G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence* in 1904. Indeed, the idea of the 'teenager' is an even later concept, emerging only during the 1930s and 1940s, and particularly in the United States.[3] However, even without these terms to describe this period between school and the beginning of 'real life', in the words of the *Cape Times*, it is clear that this newspaper and its readership recognised that there was a distinct period between late childhood and the beginning of adulthood, when young men and women who remained financially and even emotionally dependent on their parents could begin to experiment with what it meant to be an adult. The emergence of this in-between phase of development – often called 'girlhood' and 'boyhood' – was not unique to South Africa in the late nineteenth century. Growing middle-class prosperity, the extension of education, and the increasing acceptance of the view that childhood and youth should be a time of play, learning, and development, free from wage-earning labour and full financial dependence on parents or guardians, contributed to a profound shift in the experience of childhood and youth, particularly for white, middle-class children and young people.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace this changing experience of mainly white, middle-class childhood and youth in the south-western districts of the Cape. It pays particular attention to a group of interconnected and interrelated Dutch Reformed Church clerical families. In comparison with other settler churches, the DRC was unusually interested in children and childhood. As Chapter 1 argued, this was connected strongly to its transformation into an evangelical church in the middle of the century. However, DRC ministers' concern for children was also closely linked to their own experiences of being fathers of large families of children. Surrounded by young children for most of their working lives, these ministers saw themselves as patriarchs both of their families and of their congregations. DRC ministers acknowledged that their work for children was heavily influenced by their relationships with their own young and very large families. As John Murray wrote to his brother Andrew, 'I know that you chiefly write for your children and their children, and how much your happiness is bound up in them.'[4] This blurring of family and religious life was typical of middle-class clerical families in South Africa and elsewhere.[5] But because the Murrays and the intertwined Hofmeyr and Neethling families wielded such power within the DRC and, through this, in colonial society, an analysis of their family dynamics becomes particularly significant. Although the changes undergone within DRC ministers' families were not unique to them, these changing childhoods influenced the ways in which the church advised parents to raise their children, and ultimately

constructed notions of ideal childhood. In other words, because these ministers attempted to influence their congregants' child-rearing and family lives, it is worth paying closer attention to how ministers raised their own children.

The final part of this chapter focuses on diaries kept by Andrew Murray jun. and Caroline Molteno, the daughter of a prominent colonial politician who was the same age as Andrew's eldest daughters. Although English-speaking and raised in Cape Town, Caroline was intensely pious and had some contact with local DRC congregations. Her wrangling with her status as a Christian, and as a young woman moving out of girlhood and into womanhood, echoed similar anxieties among girls within the DRC. These two diaries offer one way of understanding how evangelical Christianity was intertwined with young people's experiences of growing up. As they converted and attained spiritual maturity in the eyes of the church, so they moved from youth into maturity. However, because these two diaries were written two decades apart, they also demonstrate how childhood and youth had lengthened over the course of the century.

## I

The voluminous correspondence and other writings left behind by DRC ministers and their relatives opens a window on how the nature and conceptualisation of childhood and child-rearing altered between three generations of clerical families in the Cape. Although the Murrays, Hofmeyrs, and Neethlings were exceptional in the Cape in some ways – in their intense, evangelical piety, the power they wielded through the church, and the high levels of education that even women attained in each family – they were not the only families to change over the course of the late nineteenth century. As in other parts of the industrialising world, the changing nature of work and rising middle-class incomes in the Cape Colony entailed a gradual separation of work from the life within the home. This led to a change in the ways in which marriage, family, and children were valued.[6] Households were no longer sites of economic activity. Instead, middle-class homes were sustained by male labour in offices and businesses in commercial districts distinct from the new residential suburbs being built on the outskirts of towns and cities. Women's work was limited to the care of the young, sick, and elderly.[7] The domestic was increasingly feminised. Equally, children's labour was not needed to sustain their families anymore, so their work was replaced by a relatively long period of secluded play and nurturing, followed by

education:[8] the 'economic asset, the household worker, the diminutive adult, was transformed into the playful child'.[9] Middle-class homes were more and more child-centred, and the role of mothers in caring for these children amplified in significance.[10] The evangelical ideal of the home as a sanctified space overseen by a mother whose sole concern was the household and the welfare of her children was made possible by industrialisation.

Evangelical discourses on domesticity had circulated in the Cape before the 1850s and 1860s, and were instrumental in the construction of middle-class settler identities. Writing about the Cape Colony's urban, predominantly English-speaking, middle class of the first half of the nineteenth century, Kirsten McKenzie argues that 'British concepts of domesticity [emerging from evangelicalism] . . . achieved hegemony over the emerging colonial middle-class culture'.[11] The domestic was a space in 'which the white middle-class family could recreate itself.'[12]

On and near mission stations, a new educated black elite was encouraged to adopt the markers of respectable, Western family life. Houses had square instead of curved walls; meals were eaten with knives and forks; and families adopted Western modes of dress. Women worked inside the home, instead of raising crops, and men became breadwinners. Children's primary responsibility was no longer herding or helping their parents to maintain a homestead, but attending school and learning useful skills that would fit them for lives of Christian respectability.[13] For both these converts and members of the colony's white middle class, cleaving to evangelical modes of domesticity was intended partly to prove their civilisation and respectability.[14] In colonial settings, domesticity acted as a means of shoring up civilisation,[15] and children were central to this function. Properly brought up children were simultaneously signifiers of middle-class respectability and representatives of European civilisation and progress. Children needed to be prepared to maintain and perpetuate the values and morals of bourgeois Cape society.[16] Ann Laura Stoler has described how white children were perceived as being particularly vulnerable both to disease in exotic climates and to the social contamination posed by close contact with black servants.[17] There is a rich scholarship on the rearing of white children in colonial settings, particularly India and the Dutch colonies in south Asia.[18] There were, though, differences in the ways in which the colony's white population, both Dutch-Afrikaans and English-speaking, understood their families and their own position in the Cape. Dutch-Afrikaners, in particular, regarded the Cape – and not Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, France, or any of the many other

northern European nations from which they originated – as home. Put another way, the settler colonial project differed in South Africa from that in south-east Asia. Partly as a result of this, they – like the colony's white English-speakers – tended not to send older children abroad to be educated and to escape possible corruption in a colonial setting. When sons were educated in Europe, it was usually because of a dearth of local institutions. Once schools and a university were established in the Cape, white middle-class parents sent their sons and daughters to be educated there, rather than abroad. Relationships with black servants were also complex, and shaped by the experience of slavery, during which it was common for the children of slave-owners to be raised by slaves, and for slave women to nurse the babies of their masters and mistresses.[19] This is not to suggest that Dutch-Afrikaners did not monitor closely the relationships between black servants and white children – or to deny their anxieties about white racial degeneration, particularly in rural areas – but, rather, to argue that the contexts in which middle-class white children were raised in the Cape were different from those of other colonies.

What was crucial in both colonial settings – in the Cape and in colonies in south-east Asia – was the household.[20] Writing to Emma Rutherfoord before their wedding, Andrew Murray jun. argued that her most important duty was to 'make the *minister's home*'.[21] As new converts on mission stations were urged to adopt Western dress, and decorate their homes with tables and chairs, Murray was preoccupied with how his home was furnished. He reminded Emma to buy a piano and drawing room table, enough chests of drawers, more linen and chintz, and 'some nice tea and coffee of good quality'. He noted that a minister's house would need plenty of good chairs for visitors and asked that she bear in mind his 'old predilection for stinkwood chairs' because there were 'few things [he] now so abhor[ed] as common chairs'. Responding to Emma's protestations that they were in danger of living beyond their means, he wrote, '*You must not be afraid of buying good articles* . . . . Could we but furnish a fit house for our God to dwell in – where many a poor sinner can be welcomed and refreshed, and ourselves and our little ones prepared for the house not made with hands.'[22] Like evangelicals abroad, for Murray, an interest in money and 'things' – in furniture, crockery, books, and linen – was not antithetical to the contemplation of the spiritual. In his view, the two were mutually reinforcing.[23] A Christian home for his family and his congregants needed to be comfortably decorated to facilitate the contemplation of the eternal.[24]

However, unlike many white colonists in south-east Asia and India, these DRC ministers and indeed other middle-class, white families in the Cape expected for their children to remain within the home and in the Cape until their late teens and early 20s – until they were, in other words, ready for marriage. Most of the ministers of Andrew Murray jun.'s generation received significant portions of their schooling in South Africa. Both J.H. Neethling, born in Stellenbosch in 1829, and N.J. Hofmeyr, born a year later to a prosperous Cape Town family, attended the influential Tot Nut van het Algemeen school in Cape Town.[25] Although both Neethling and Hofmeyr left for Utrecht in their late teens to study towards ordination, they both remembered an upbringing in which their parents were closely involved in their education and leisure time. Hofmeyr, one of ten siblings, recalled his father's monitoring of his progress at school, as well as regular Friday duck-hunting expeditions.[26]

In these respects, the upbringings of the two eldest Murray sons differed both from other men of their class and generation and also, even, from their own siblings. John (born in 1826) and Andrew Murray jun. (1828) and their nine brothers and sisters were raised in the DRC parsonage at Graaff-Reinet, where their father, Andrew sen., was a leading figure in the town and district's social and religious life, as well as the Moderator of the DRC. In her memoir of her upbringing, Maria Neethling – Andrew jun.'s sister – emphasised the depth of their father's love for his children. He was, for instance, in an 'agony of grief' for months after the deaths in infancy of five children. He was also preoccupied with the well-being of their souls, impressing upon them that they were to 'give their hearts to Jesus' as a matter of urgency.[27] Part of the purpose of *Unto Children's Children* (1909), Maria's account of the Murray family's history, was to demonstrate how they had over several generations maintained a close bond with God which was mirrored in the relationships between parents and children. As the Murrays worshipped a loving God, so their father was an affectionate, but also stern, patriarch.

Although *Unto Children's Children* was circulated mainly among the Murray family, Maria Neethling was well aware that the family's size and significance within the DRC and colonial society meant that it would be widely read. It presents, thus, a portrait of the Murrays as they preferred to be remembered, in the same way that Neethling and Hofmeyr's reminiscences of their childhoods were coloured by memories altered over time. Existing as a kind of counterpoint to these narratives of kindly parents – of sternly loving fathers, and adoring, caring mothers – is the

remarkable diary kept by Andrew Murray jun. during his time spent at Utrecht in his late teens. As the final section of this chapter discusses, the diary paints a portrait of a young man made profoundly unhappy both by the pressure placed on him by his parents, his father in particular, and by the alienation he felt from those parents. Unlike Neethling and Hofmeyr, whose parents and grandparents had been born in the Cape, John and Andrew, the sons of a Scottish immigrant, were sent to be educated abroad specifically in preparation for careers in the church in the absence of a theological seminary in the Cape. In 1838, when John and Andrew jun. were 12 and ten years old respectively, they travelled to their uncle in Aberdeen to complete their schooling. They were separated from their parents and most of their siblings until 1849. Only William, a year younger than Andrew, joined them to complete his education in Utrecht. He had been actively discouraged from a career in the ministry, had been apprenticed to a business in Cape Town, but decided to become a clergyman anyway. Like Neethling and Hofmeyr, he had attended school in the Cape. Maria and Andrew sen.'s reluctance to send William abroad may well have been linked to the cost of an overseas education, but could also indicate their reluctance to be so long separated from another child. One story repeated frequently in Murray correspondence described the farewell between tearful parents and equally unhappy, bewildered sons: their father pointed out a whale to them at the Port Elizabeth harbour, and while the two boys gazed out to sea, their parents drove off in their wagon.[28] When 'the boys', as they were known, returned from Europe, they 'had to be introduced to the younger brothers and sisters who had been born during their absence, and of whom they only knew the names'.[29]

Both sides of the voluminous correspondence between John and Andrew and their family were carefully preserved – an indicator of the value that their parents attached to an extended exchange which replaced the contact they would have had with their sons at home. Andrew sen. wrote them long and detailed letters, mentioning often that he and their mother missed them, and demanding ever more comprehensive accounts of the boys' (his 'precious' children, as he called them) learning, thoughts, and daily activities. Journal letters – large sheets of paper divided into small sections – allowed each of their siblings to write to the brothers, providing them with some sense of life at home.[30] Yet John and Andrew's letters provide little sense of their feelings about this long separation. They formed a close bond with their uncle's family in Aberdeen, and continued to correspond with them after they had returned to South Africa.[31] Only one letter mentions

missing home and family life, and that was written by Andrew after his move to Utrecht. He commented: 'Altho' we feel ourselves very happy here yet we often feel a great want in having no family intercourse with parents and sisters, and we have not hitherto succeeded in finding a pleasant family in which we might be to a certain extent able to supply the want.'[32] This is a rare moment of reflection in John and Andrew's letters, which tended to be long but businesslike. They described religious revivals in Scotland and theological controversies in the Netherlands. Emotions were referred to only when both boys described their spiritual rebirth, in Scotland for John, and, later, in Utrecht for Andrew. Their education and, indeed, childhood and youth had been devoted to preparation to join their father in the DRC.

Although the next section of this chapter will pay attention to Andrew's diary, in which he gave full vent to his anxieties about his spiritual conversion, or lack thereof, it is worth noting here that this process of becoming a mature Christian was seen as a vital moment in all the Murray children's upbringings – and not only those destined for the church. As Andrew sen. wrote to his sons, their sister Maria 'became anxious about her soul' when she was only 13 years old.[33] She told him that she was 'seeking Christ and the things above in good earnest'. Andrew sen. rejoiced: 'what unspeakable joy for the heart of a Christian parent it is to have good grounds for believing that his children shall have an eternal inheritance in Heaven!'[34] Maria had written to her father while at boarding school. Reflecting both the development of colonial education and their parents' unwillingness to send more of their children abroad, the younger Murray siblings were educated at home and at local day and boarding schools.[35] Charles (1833) and George (1845), who also became ministers, attended the South African College in Cape Town and the DRC's theological seminary.

The only daughters to attend school for any length of time were the youngest members of the family, Helen (1849) and Eliza (1855). By the time they reached school-going age, not only were there a range of girls' schools established in the Cape, but white, middle-class girls' attendance of secondary school was widely approved of by colonial society. In fact, as the following chapters discuss, Andrew jun. was partly responsible for furthering the cause of women's education in South Africa. Eliza attended boarding school until her 17th birthday. Helen was educated in Cape Town, trained as a teacher, and became the headmistress of the Midlands Seminary for girls in Graaff-Reinet.[36] In contrast, the three elder Murray daughters spent comparatively little time at school. Maria, the eldest Murray daughter, born in 1833, was in charge of her parents'

household at the age of 14. She was taught to read and write by her mother, attended a local day school until her 12th birthday, and was then sent to a small boarding school for girls in nearby Somerset East. This stay was cut short after two years as a result of her mother's frequent pregnancies between 1831 and 1855. She and her sisters Jemima (born in 1836) and Isabella (1839) were needed at home to care for younger siblings and to run the household.[37]

There was a 29-year age gap between the eldest and youngest Murray siblings – John and Eliza – meaning that the childhoods of the youngest Murray siblings had more in common with John and Andrew jun.'s children, than they had with John, Andrew jun., and Maria. The changing childhoods within these families – in common with other white, middle-class families during this period – were a product of the Cape's increasing prosperity. Andrew jun. and his generation could afford to employ more servants to look after their large families, and also to support their children's relatively long period of financial dependency on them. But, and as suggested by Andrew jun.'s diary, their children's upbringings were also influenced by their own. Although this will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter, it is worth noting for the moment that the children of men like Andrew Murray jun. and J.H. Neethling were 'children' – emotionally and financially dependent on their parents – for far longer than were the previous generation.

## II

If there was one feature shared by families of both generations, then it was their size. Maria Murray – who married J.H. Neethling in 1852 – had 16 children, only one of whom died in infancy. They were raised largely in Stellenbosch where their father was a minister, a prestigious position which he held from 1858 until his death in 1904.[38] John Murray – married to Maria Anna Ziervogel, the daughter of friends of his parents, in 1850 – fathered 14 children, four of whom died young. They were also raised in Stellenbosch, where he was one of the two professors at the DRC's theological seminary from 1857.[39] Andrew Murray and Emma Rutherfoord, who married in Cape Town in 1856, raised 13 surviving children in Wellington.[40] As Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff write of nineteenth-century, middle-class women, '[m]otherhood . . . was a rigorous and time consuming business'.[41] Full-time motherhood, as was increasingly the norm in white, middle-class families in the Cape and elsewhere, involved not only the care and nurturing of infants and children but also almost constant pregnancy. These clerical wives had their

first child within a year of marriage, and then gave birth to children every 18–24 months, only ceasing at the onset of menopause in their early 40s. This was the best evidence that they did not hire wet nurses: nursing their young babies would have acted as a prophylactic.[42] There was a long tradition of employing wet nurses in middle-class families in the Cape, particularly under slavery, and there is some evidence to suggest that it continued afterwards. The Ladies' Benevolent Society, a philanthropic organisation in Cape Town, expected poor women who had recently given birth to advertise as wet nurses, for instance.[43] Emma Murray, Maria Neethling, and other women, particularly pious mothers closely associated with the church, breastfed as a marker of the closeness of their bond with their children. However, they relied on servants to assist them both in raising young children and in managing their large households: homes which existed both as private, secluded realms in which children were raised and as public spaces where their husbands carried out their duties as ministers.

As DRC ministers were patriarchs in their own homes, so they entered the households of their congregants, dispensing advice on child-rearing, marriage, and business, and monitoring church and school attendance. They raised their children while caring for the spiritual development of their congregants. Indeed, it is striking how closely engaged fathers were in the upbringing of the children. As evidence from other Cape sources demonstrates, these families were not unique in fathers' involvement in their families: despite being prime minister, John Molteno fetched his daughters regularly from school, and helped his sons' tutor to devise a suitable curriculum for them.[44] John Tosh's writing about nineteenth-century middle-class masculinities demonstrates convincingly that the distant Victorian father was something of a myth.[45] This is not to suggest that there were not fathers who were remote, neglectful, or cruel. In his memoir, the businessman M.M. Steyn, who was born in Cape Town in 1847, described a brutal father whose 'favourite place of punishment was a stone-paved cellar, a veritable dungeon . . . It had a small grated window fairly high up, which was level with the ground outside. My father would make his prisoner secure for the day and go off to business in Cape Town.' Steyn's father would 'thrash' him and his brother 'until he was weary', and insisted that the boys bathe in the sea each morning throughout the year, regardless of the weather. When, for unspecified reasons, Steyn and his brother were sent to live with their older sister and brother-in-law, the two boys were so inured to corporal punishment that their relatives' efforts to temper their 'naughtiness' with kindness and reason 'had no influence over our behaviour. We were

suspicious of any man who tried to be kind.'[46] Steyn's emphasis both on his and his brother's bad behaviour and on their father's violence appears to be designed to shock the reader. Even if his father's authoritarian regime was not terribly unusual, his writing seems to suggest that it was generally regarded by others as unacceptable.

DRC ministers taught young children, wrote them letters when away from home, and nursed them when they were sick.[47] Hofmeyr built sandcastles with his children during seaside holidays, and in the evenings joined them in skating up and down the polished hallways of their home. On Sundays the children gathered in his study to sing hymns and learn Bible verses, for which they would be rewarded with dried fruit and nuts.[48] Neethling's daughter remembered him reading them stories from British periodicals such as the *Boy's Own Paper* at bedtime, having played a round or two of 'Here we go round the mulberry bush' with them.[49] Twelve-year-old Kitty Murray mentioned that her father, Andrew jun., 'played with [them] in the evening[:] first at ["]thus says the grand mufti["] and then at happy families'.[50] He was particularly careful to correspond with his children – however small they might be – during his long trips away. In an early letter to his four eldest children written in 1862 during a month-long journey into the Transvaal, he was at pains to explain why he had undertaken to travel so far north and why the mission station he planned to establish in the Transvaal was important to the DRC. He concluded by reminding them that 'Papa is longing for his little darlings'.[51] Even the more reserved John Murray was remembered by his daughters for his 'loving' nature and his interest in his children. It is worth quoting one of his daughters' reminiscences in full:

> He made them his companions, and very often took them, by turns, with him on his daily walk after his study hours . . . He taught them to read . . . He taught them, too, to appreciate the beauties of Nature around their village; . . . he climbed with them to the top of Stellenbosch Berg, of Simon's Berg, and walked with them to some of the beautiful fruit farms in the neighbourhood . . . His talks during the walks were of many things. Often he would begin by asking, 'What have you read to-day?' He was a great reader himself, and desired his children should have the joy in their lives of wide and good reading. There never was a lack of topics, suggested, perhaps, by a child's question, or a child's remark, or some incident in the ramble; the talk was spontaneous, and never failed to hold the interest of the audience and build up conversation.[52]

Fathers' time with their children, as these examples suggest, was limited to evenings, Sundays, and specially organised walks or other occasions. The children spent considerably more time with their mothers, the bulk of whose correspondence is taken up with concerns about their children's education, health, and religious life.[53] Nevertheless, there was a difference in the quality of relationships between parents and children of Andrew Murray jun.'s generation. One of the best examples of this is the correspondence between Andrew, his wife, Emma, and their two daughters, Emmie and Mary, over their decision to educate the latter two abroad. At the beginning of 1872, 15-year-old Emmie and 14-year-old Mary left the Cape for Europe. They were enrolled at a Moravian girls' school in Zeist, near Utrecht, and then moved to a similar, Presbyterian institution in Edinburgh the following year. The girls returned to the Cape in 1875. Like their father and uncle, Emmie and Mary attended Dutch and Scottish schools because of the dearth of suitable institutions at home. Murray had been interested in girls' education before their departure, but he acknowledged that his desire to found a secondary school and teacher-training institute for girls – which he did towards the end of 1873 – stemmed partly from his reluctance to be parted from his children for any long period of time.[54]

The degree to which the girls were missed – and, in turn, missed home – is evident in the volume of letters exchanged between them and their family between 1872 and 1875. In some ways, the correspondence was similar to that between John and Andrew and their family: the tradition of family journal letters was kept up by this younger generation. Emmie and Mary's younger brothers and sisters described outings to friends' farms, the births of new litters of puppies, their activities at school, and local gossip. But the correspondence differed in that the girls complained of homesickness and their parents devoted more space to comforting and advising them. Although Emmie and Mary's side of the correspondence has been lost, from their parents' responses it is clear that both daughters found the separation very difficult to bear. Indeed, their parents may have anticipated this. Writing to Emmie while they were still en route to Europe, Murray said: 'Dearest child, we have been asking the Lord this morning, if you perhaps feel somewhat sad and desolate, to let you feel that He is near.' He advised her to take comfort from her sister's company, despite the fact that 'their dispositions are very different'.[55] Emmie and Mary's complaints – ranging from the difficulties of making friends to the dullness of some of their lessons and to the intensity of the cold – were met with understanding and advice, with Murray drawing on his memories and experience to comfort his

daughters.[56] Murray's long and careful responses to his daughters' complaints suggest the extent to which he was interested in their lives, thoughts, and experiences. His letters to his wife written while he was on an extended and physically taxing preaching tour around the colony echoed his concerns about them. As it became obvious that Emmie and Mary were unhappy at their school in Scotland, Murray wrote that he felt 'anxious about them',[57] and admitted candidly, 'About our precious children in Scotland I am in a great strait and know not what to do.'[58] Eventually, he and his wife agreed that the girls should complete their training at the Huguenot Seminary, the girls' school Murray had recently established in Wellington, as soon as possible.

This comparison of two generations' experiences of relatively long periods of separation reveals something of the ways in which family life had altered in one family between the 1840s and the 1870s: although deeply missed by their parents, John and Andrew received parental care and affection from their uncle and aunt and not via their parents' letters. Expressions of unhappiness were kept to a minimum, and most of their correspondence was concerned with matters spiritual, theological, and practical. In contrast to this, letters to Emmie and Mary acknowledged the girls' homesickness, demonstrated an understanding of their complaints, and provided advice and suggestions for easing the pain of separation. There were a number of reasons for these differences. Firstly, evangelicalism had an impact on epistolary styles during the nineteenth century. Its emotional, deeply personal, language produced letters between parents and children, husbands and wives, siblings, and friends which were more intimate than correspondence of half a century earlier.[59] Secondly, not only had Emmie and Mary spent considerably more time at home than had their father and uncle before being sent away, but they were also girls, and this probably caused their parents to write to them in a closer, more emotional style than had they been boys. Thirdly, Murray himself knew what it was like to be away from home for extended periods of time while young. John Murray educated all his children in the Cape, and despite initial scepticism of the Huguenot Seminary's success, sent his daughters there to train as teachers.

Unlike their parents, John and Andrew Murray jun. and their colleagues did not educate their children with any particular career in mind. Some of the Murray, Hofmeyr, and Neethling children went on to work for the church – as ministers, missionaries, and teachers – but the majority did not. They entered the Cape's professional class as doctors, politicians, attorneys, architects, and farmers. The two eldest Murray sons were destined for the church and, as a result, their childhoods were

shaped by this goal. In contrast, neither Emmie nor Mary Murray was pushed in any particular direction. Neither daughter married, and both worked as teachers and missionaries for the DRC.

## III

How to mark the passage from childhood, to girl- or boyhood, and finally to adulthood? This intervening phase between childhood and adulthood was linked to class status, but some ages transcended social and racial categories. Fifteen years was particularly significant in the colony: this was the age at which the 1891 Census described young people as 'youths' and 'maidens', and no longer 'boys' and 'girls'.[60] The 1895 Destitute Children Relief Act described a 'child' as being any person under the age of 15.[61] Employers in the Cape regarded 15 as the age at which their employees could begin earning adult wages,[62] and many commentators warned against the dangers of educating black children beyond the age of 15.[63] Most of those white children who did attend school concluded their education at the age of 15.[64] One teacher noted that the 'Malay' parents who sent their children to the Wellington missionary school, removed their children once they had turned 15.[65] Fifteen signalled the end of childhood as it was defined culturally, socially, and, to some extent, legally, but did not necessarily represent full adulthood either: that, legally, was reached at the age of 21. For white, middle-class children it was the turning point of childhood and what could be dubbed 'youth'. Boys exchanged short for long trousers and could begin growing facial hair. Girls wore longer skirts and their hair pinned up.[66] Pious families expected their children to be confirmed in the church at around the age of 15.[67] For evangelicals, movement towards legal adulthood was matched by growing spiritual maturity.

A constant in the upbringings of members of DRC families, regardless of generation, was the expectation that children would convert. However, the age at which children professed themselves reborn moved: from the early teens or younger, to the mid- and late teens. As discussed above, Andrew Murray sen. reported enthusiastically his daughter Maria's conversion to his sons in the Netherlands. She was only 13 at the time. As parents, John and Andrew jun. also monitored the spiritual growth of their children. John wrote to Andrew that he sympathised with his brother's hope 'that the work of God's Spirit may this year be carried on [in his children's] souls and that they may give more and more decisive evidence of a desire to live for God'.[68] Andrew jun. wrote

to his daughters about their 'two cousins Minnie Neethling and Kitty Murray [who] both profess to be Gods [*sic*] children, and to have Jesus as their [saviour]'.[69] Maria Neethling described 'a delightful visit' from friends who announced that their 'eldest daughter found the Lord that same week'.[70] Maria's mother was overjoyed to learn that two more of her grandchildren had 'publicly proffered to belong to His Church on earth'. She added: 'what free love that four or five of my grandchildren confess Christ'.[71] These young people were all aged 15 and above.

For such a significant moment in the lives of pious young people, there are relatively few accounts of conversion in the Cape. In a letter to his grandmother, John Murray's 18-year-old son Andrew remarked simply that 'Last Christmas will long be remembered by our family, and especially by me; because baby was christened and I was presented to the congregation as a member of it. May I only be a true and living member of Christ's Church.'[72] This relatively short report is useful for two reasons. Firstly, it signalled that conversion and full membership of the church was – like the christening of a baby – both a significant moment in defining the relationship between individual Christian, church, and God, and a marker of maturation. Understanding the process of conversion offers some insight into how young people negotiated the pathway from youth to full independence – financial, emotional, and spiritual. Particularly as youth lengthened – as young people were 'girls' and 'boys' for far longer – conversion became a marker of a slow entry into adulthood. Secondly, the relative rarity of accounts of conversion – young Andrew's note is unusual in this regard – could also suggest an unwillingness to describe what appears to have been a fraught process for many young people. Even Maria Neethling acknowledged to her mother that children with particularly pious parents might confess to having found God as a result of parental pressure.[73] There are, however, two diaries which describe this process of spiritual maturation, one by Andrew Murray jun., and another by Caroline Molteno, a young woman of roughly the same age and class as his eldest daughters.

Writing about the United States, Mary Jo Maynes has warned against using children's diaries and journals as simply sources of 'snippets of empirical evidence'. They should be analysed, she argues, 'as documents of self-construction rooted in particular temporal, cultural, literary, social and political contexts'.[74] Andrew's diary is similar to other accounts by evangelicals of spiritual conversion, and Caroline's emphasis on her pathway out of girlhood and into womanhood – and the place of piety within this transition – echoed similar middle-class girls' journals in the United States and other parts of the British

Empire, for example. However, to reinforce Maynes's point, these are also two intensely personal accounts of a period of difficult and confusing change. Kept sporadically from the middle of 1845 while he was a student at Utrecht, Andrew's diary is a remarkably frank account of his spiritual and emotional state during this period, which belies his calm announcement to his parents in 1845: 'I am sure [you] will be . . . delight[ed] when I tell you that I can communicate to you far gladder tidings over which angels have refereed – that your son has been born again.'[75] The diary is an excoriating self-analysis, a listing of a litany of faults and shortcomings, and an anguished appeal for salvation. Its purpose was to note his sins so that he would be able 'more distinctly to confess them before God'. Over a period of five months he described in minute detail a litany of faults: he deplored his 'levity', his 'general deficiency of prayer. No groaning, crying, wailing "praying without ceasing" '; he had given in to 'sensuality' and has been 'eating too much'; he called himself 'unclean'. The sins of which he accused himself were connected to selfishness or a preoccupation with self – sensuality and gluttony provide pleasure to the self, and his levity prevented him from focusing wholly on God during prayer. He equated his salvation with a dissolution of self and a complete melding of his will with God's. He had to learn to 'make [him]self nothing'.[76]

This agony was no different from that experienced by grown-up evangelicals all over the world. Andrew's disgust at his inability to subsume his self in a full contemplation of God was part of a constant struggle described by other missionaries and evangelical ministers.[77] But read alongside his father's almost constant requests for a detailed description of his spiritual state, this agony takes on a specific meaning. Andrew sen. impressed upon his sons how important it was for them to convert, writing in 1843, two years before Andrew jun. began his diary: 'although I trust God will spare you long to be useful in the world, yet should he take one or other of you away in youth, the consolation to the bleeding hearts of parents would not be that you had excelled in human acquirements . . . but that there was reason to believe that you died in the Lord'.[78] For Andrew, this pressure translated into a period of intense unhappiness.

Caroline Molteno (1853–1937) was as preoccupied with the question of selfhood. Written over the course of the late 1860s and 1870s, Caroline's diaries self-consciously describe how she negotiated the passage from girlhood to adulthood. Her journal is a description and also an analysis of becoming: she thinks about her progress towards full maturity as a Christian and as a woman. In contrast, Andrew's diary focuses

on his spiritual development only. While this was a product of their individual circumstances, it also reflected broader trends. Writing about families in the American north-east during the second half of the nineteenth century, Nancy H. Hunter notes that girls of the period 'lived through the written word'. Not only were they avid readers of fiction, histories, essays, and periodicals, but they were enthusiastic writers:

> They spent long hours at writing desks producing pages of letters, composing poetry, copying passages from literature, keeping all manner of diaries and journals ... Like their reading, girls' writing emerged in the context of new leisure available when parents hired servants; like reading, its meaning was shaped by parental hopes for refinement and improvement ... Unlike reading, writing obliged girls to organize their daydreams or structure their self-scrutiny, to experiment with a voice that they could call their own.[79]

Diary-keeping could also be patrolled by parents anxious to ensure that their daughters were using their diaries constructively. It was not necessarily the case that a diary would be kept private. Nevertheless, diaries provided girls with a space in which to reflect upon and, as Hunter notes, to define and refine themselves. The act of writing a diary allowed girls to construct and interrogate their own ideas and opinions, and to develop a strong sense of self – Hunter connects nineteenth-century diary-keeping with the rise of the bluestocking New Woman of the *fin de siècle*.[80]

Caroline was, though, the very antithesis of the bluestocking. (Indeed, she condemned one of her aunts for 'becoming quite a bluestocking' as a result of 'taking quite a keen interest in politics'.[81]) The daughter of John Charles Molteno (1814–1886), the first prime minister of the Cape after it was granted Responsible Government in 1872, and sister of three of the colony's most prominent politicians, Caroline wanted desperately to fit into respectable middle-class society. This contrasted with the behaviour of her elder sister Betty (1852–1927), who, despite opposition from her family, studied at Newnham College, Cambridge, and was headmistress of Collegiate Girls' School in Port Elizabeth between 1889 and 1900. She was a vocal opponent of the South African War, campaigned for women's suffrage in the Cape, and was a confidante of both Olive Schreiner and Ghandi.[82] Raised in the wealthy, leafy village and later suburb of Claremont with her 11 siblings, Caroline had a comfortably middle-class upbringing. She attended a day school in Cape Town, was cared for by both her parents and servants, visited

friends and relatives, and attended parties, cricket matches, and picnics. As the following chapter will discuss, leisure time – that which was not taken up by school or church-going – was crucial to the production of middle-class girl- and boyhood. Like diary-keeping, this leisure time was increasingly conceptualised as an opportunity, particularly, for girls' self-development.[83] Far from being idle, these young women – in the Cape and elsewhere – were encouraged to use their ample free time to improve themselves through activities which included charity work, piano-playing and drawing, and exercise, chiefly walking.[84] Even if girls were required occasionally to assist their mothers in domestic tasks, these tended to be fairly light duties – mending linen, arranging flowers – which could be completed in the girls' own time.[85] These tasks socialised girls into women, allowing them a respectable means of widening their social circle and meeting potential husbands.

Caroline's diary, kept between 1868 and 1875, was in the service of becoming a good, Christian woman. Begun a few months before her 15th birthday, she explained that she had been inspired by the 'melancholy thoughts caused by the death of an old schoolfellow' – she hoped that she would be able to 'learn' from the keeping of the diary.[86] The diary's primary function was to allow her to reflect upon herself, her thoughts, and her activities. The quality of this self-scrutiny changed, though. In the first two volumes, written between 1868 and 1869, the following was fairly typical:

> if I were to tell some of the girls at school that I was very selfish they would laugh at me & think I wanted a compliment, but indeed I am *very* selfish. I have often proved it to myself. I only do kindnesses sometimes because they cost me nothing . . . .

She added, though, that it was only through being kind that she would be able to 'perfect [her] character'.[87]

This very act of keeping the diary set Caroline apart from her employed, working-class contemporaries: the fact that she, and not the Molteno family's black servant Ellen, who was around the same age as Caroline, was encouraged to keep a diary suggests that their selfhood was understood differently. Connected to this point, Caroline reiterated frequently the fact that she was 'unfinished' and in the long process of becoming an adult. The late nineteenth-century shift from calling middle-class young women 'young ladies' to 'girls' reflected the increasing length of their childhood and dependency upon their parents. With the onset of menstruation beginning earlier than ever before and

marriage occurring later, young women's youth was extended until their late teens.[88] Girls' diary-keeping emphasised their status as unfinished subjects still in need of the protection and guidance of their parents and teachers.

Caroline's life as a girl revolved around school and the family home in Claremont. She and her sisters attended a girls' school run by a Miss Hall in central Cape Town. Her diary placed particular emphasis on the rituals which marked young women's progress from girlhood to adulthood: confirmation, leaving school, courtship, and marriage. These were also, though, moments of precariousness. Caroline was deeply religious, and her piety was one of the main themes of her diaries. Her entry for her 15th birthday was focused on her status as a Christian: 'I felt sure that God would give me his blessing on my new year. It must have been God's voice speaking to my heart. Oh! I trust that this year may not be misspent.'[89] Here she linked her desire to improve herself with her piety: becoming a good Christian was, in her view, inextricably linked with becoming a good woman. Her confirmation – which marked her entry into the church as an adult – was a matter of deeply serious consideration, and she took a great deal of time choosing which minister of the Church of England would confirm her. She was sympathetic to the evangelical strand within the Anglican church, whose ministers had close connections with the DRC. In fact, her mother suggested that she be confirmed by Claremont's DRC minister.[90] DRC ministers preached in English until late in the nineteenth century, and there were some Dutch-speaking members of the Anglican church (most of them described as 'coloured') for whom the church printed its catechism in Dutch.[91] In the early 1870s the Church of England even suggested a merger with the DRC. This never came to fruition, mainly because of a distinct lack of enthusiasm from DRC ministers.[92] Although difficult to ascertain, it would seem that there was some fluidity in the members of these two churches, particularly before the emergence of an Afrikaner ethnic nationalism in the final two decades of the century. The point is that this might suggest that DRC activities for children and young people may not have been limited to its own congregations.

For Caroline and most of her friends, piety was not only an integral feature of their self-improvement but also part of their gradual entry into the world of respectable middle-class society. Confirmation in the church meant that their days of attending Sunday school were over – they were now fully fledged congregants with all the social responsibilities that position entailed. This new maturity was, though, achieved

with some ambivalence. Diarists feared the end of their schooling, as it meant that they would have to enter into a kind of marriage market where they would attend a range of social events aimed at finding them a husband. Leaving school – which meant leaving close friendship groups as well as abandoning studies – signalled more than anything else the end of their youth.[93] Caroline wrote that she was 'miserable' at the prospect of leaving school. The bulk of the first two volumes of the diary were devoted to her school friends, lessons, favourite teachers, and examinations. Caroline loved school, and shone academically. Whenever she had exciting news to relay, her first thought was to tell 'the girls at school'.[94] Yet there was a tension within the diary: while, on the one hand, she was angered by the fact that in 1869 she was not top of her year – and only in second place – because she felt that the marks were not 'added fairly',[95] on the other she wrote: 'I sometimes wish I could be very clever but after all what good will it do me in the end?'[96] She had to negotiate a contrary set of expectations around being a schoolgirl: she was expected to enjoy her lessons and to do well at them, but was not to be competitive or display too much interest in intellectual pursuits. There was an intense debate around the effects of higher education on young women during this period. Many doctors and educationalists, most notably the American doctor Edward H. Clarke in *Sex in Education; or a Fair Chance for Girls* (1873), argued that those women who indulged too much in the 'masculine' pursuit of learning would begin to think and behave like men.[97]

Caroline resolved this tension – between enjoying intellectual pursuits and not wanting to appear clever – by leaving school at the socially appropriate time, and also by reframing her studies more explicitly in the language of self-improvement. In a speech to Caroline and her fellow schoolgirls after their final examination, one of her teachers argued that 'the object of being in school was accomplished after [the pupil] was brought to a point which would enable her to carry on her studies by herself'.[98] Caroline found her teacher's advice comforting and decided to set aside a portion of each day to study, alongside 'plans about the children, reading, working, visiting'.[99] And Caroline did keep herself busy: she visited friends, cared for younger siblings, and taught the family's servants to read. In 1871 and 1872, she and Betty accompanied their father and uncle on a long trip to Europe. In all possible ways, she conformed to the model for young, middle-class women in their late teens and early 20s.

Betty, on the other hand, trained to be a teacher and never married, forming instead a lifelong relationship with Alice Greene, a fellow

Newnham graduate.[100] She was a committed Theosophist.[101] Caroline dutifully attended balls, croquet and garden parties, afternoon teas, and cricket matches, despite having described 'the nervousness almost dread' with which she 'always look[ed] forward to going out'.[102] Caroline reflected that as a child she had been 'so passionate and lively & excitable', but had managed to acquire the habits of 'steadiness & demureness' as she matured. She added that she 'seldom talk[ed] at the dinner & [was] not so easily excited as before'.[103] And possibly because she was able to negotiate these social contradictions, Caroline had, by her 21st birthday, received one proposal of marriage – from a Captain Shaw, whom she 'knew . . . very little & disliked . . . exceedingly' – and hoped for another from Dr Charles Murray, a ship's doctor whom she had met during a family holiday at Kalk Bay.[104] She and Murray – the future first president of the South African Medical Association, and no relation to the DRC's Murray family – married in 1875, and went on to become significant members of Capetonian society.[105]

To modify Judith Butler's argument that gendered identities are performed, Caroline Molteno and her contemporaries learnt how to perform age categories: womanhood and adulthood. The author of 'Concerning Cousins' would have approved: Caroline had used her leisure time as a young woman to try on and rehearse new gender and age identities. She had perfected the performance of middle-class youth and adulthood: how to behave in the ways deemed to be appropriate for a girl and, later, woman, regardless of her mixed feelings towards growing up. But she achieved adulthood later than had women of her mother's generation. As an analysis of three generations of clerical families in the DRC demonstrates, a combination of, among other things, increased disposable income and shifting attitudes towards education meant that youth extended until the late teens. For evangelicals, this meant that confirmation and conversion occurred later, and became markers of both emotional and spiritual maturation.

Leisure time was crucial to becoming middle-class youth. However, it was also a useful resource for the DRC: it could be used to mobilise a Christian workforce. This is the subject of the following chapter.

# 3

# Raising Children for Christ: Child-Rearing Manuals, Sunday Schools, and Leisure Time

In 1874 Andrew Murray jun. described a prolonged journey into the interior of the Cape Colony to the pupils of the Huguenot Seminary. The institution's headmistress, Abbie Ferguson, wrote about his talk to her sister, placing particular emphasis on Murray's references to the 'thousands and thousands of children who had no one properly to care for them' in rural South Africa.[1] Murray's argument was less that these children lacked parents and guardians to take care of their material needs, and more that they were without adequate spiritual guidance. 'Proper' care, in his definition, implied an interest in children's spiritual growth, as well as their physical, emotional, and intellectual development. His purpose was to encourage his audience to train both as teachers and as missionaries and, to some extent, his point was that the DRC needed to direct a kind of missionary work towards the Cape's rural white, as well as black, population. The DRC initiated its missionary activities formally at a synod in 1857, at least 50 years after concerted missionary work had begun in South Africa. Until the arrival of the Scottish ministers during the 1820s, the leadership of the DRC had been suspicious of missions and missionaries, partly because of its general antipathy towards evangelicalism.[2] But as an evangelical church, the DRC felt a particular urgency to make up for lost time.[3] Within 20 years, it had established eight mission stations – four in the Cape, three in the Transvaal, and one in the Orange Free State – and provided funds to three more in the Cape. Congregations in Graaff-Reinet and Richmond ran their own missions as well. But, as Murray noted in 1878, 'The work of the Dutch Church looks very small as the work of an organised body.' Recruiting people willing to do this work – each, in Murray's words, 'a life given up to Christ' – was crucial for the success of the DRC's missionary aims.[4]

One of the best means of ensuring a large and enthusiastic Christian workforce was to raise Christian children. Put another way, Christian upbringings would produce Christian missionaries and teachers. The purpose of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it looks at the ways in which the DRC attempted to fulfil the role alluded to by Murray in his speech to the pupils of the Huguenot Seminary: caring for the spiritual development of the colony's children. It was largely for this reason that the leadership of the DRC – and Andrew Murray jun. in particular – published a slew of guides to bringing up good Christian children. The DRC also founded a range of organisations to bring more children to the church, and extended Sunday schools into all of its congregations – the first church in the Cape to do so. In most, but not all, cases these activities were aimed at white children, and particularly those who were middle-class. Indeed, leisure time was crucial to the DRC's work for and among children in the second half of the nineteenth century. The final section of the chapter uses two examples to illustrate how young people themselves understood and used their leisure time, and also how the DRC exploited this middle-class free time. Youth leisure was a useful resource for the church. The first of these examples is a diary kept by 15-year-old Charlie Immelman in Worcester during the late 1880s, and the second is a Sunday school for Wellington's black children which was run almost entirely by white, middle-class girls in their free time. These two cases demonstrate the extent to which DRC Sunday schools and organisations for children helped the church to work itself into the fabric of everyday life in the colony. Even if children were not particularly devout – as in the case of Charlie Immelman – they were still brought within the ambit of the DRC through its clubs and societies.

## I

Like other forms of self-help literature, child-rearing manuals flourished during the Victorian period.[5] The same middle-class men and women who read *Self-Help* (1859) by Samuel Smiles also bought books such as Thomas Bull's *Maternal Management of Children, in Health and Disease* (*c*. 1840) and *Advice to a Mother* (1839), by Pye Henry Chavasse, to guide them through their children's childhoods. This concern about how children should be raised stemmed from the changes wrought to middle-class family life by industrialisation.[6] If women and children were no longer economic assets to the household – if their labour was no longer needed to sustain families – they had to be valued in new ways. Middle-class Victorian parents were anxious about how best

to raise their children: this new way of conceptualising the domestic space was equally new to those who inhabited it. As the numbers of the bourgeoisie swelled, parents from working-class or lower middle-class backgrounds also sought advice on how to live like the middle classes. Child-rearing guides demystified middle-class living in their minute descriptions of mealtimes, house decoration, the apportioning of rooms to specified activities, and the relationships between masters and servants.[7]

The centrality of evangelicalism within middle-class discourse also accounts for the popularity of child-rearing manuals.[8] Books on the religious upbringing of children had been written since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but the tone of evangelical child-rearing manuals began to change at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[9] While evangelicalism is popularly associated with a fairly heavy-handed attitude to child-rearing, some evangelicals in the United States and Britain, influenced by the Enlightenment and Romanticism, had begun to question the nature of infants' apparent in-born sinfulness during the revivals of the eighteenth century. In the 1830s and 1840s, a range of child-rearing advice books appeared which, while not questioning that all people are born bearing the taint of original sin, suggested that a loving and attentive upbringing could persuade children to recognise the need to be saved.[10]

What distinguished this evangelical upbringing was a focus on children's spiritual well-being and future. Writers such as John Abbott, Lydia Sigourney, Horace Bushnell, Jabez Burns, Heman Humphrey, and Horace Mann argued that child-rearing was an 'awesome responsibility':[11] not only was a new generation of Christians to be formed by parents, but this was to be done in a loving, pious atmosphere where adults would have no recourse to harsh punishment.[12] Christianity was not to be inculcated violently. Children's wills were not to be broken.[13] Horace Bushnell, whose *Christian Nurture* (1847) was probably the most influential child-rearing manual of the nineteenth century, argued that parents should 'train' children with 'gentleness' and constant watchfulness. Parents had to devote 'a most tender and wise attention, watching always for [children], and, at every turn or stage of advance, contributing what is wanted'.[14]

The purpose of this upbringing was to raise children who would be willing as adults to do God's bidding.[15] However much parents might love and value their children for simply being children and for being *their* children, they should, advised authors, never forget that these children belonged ultimately to God and, as a result, were to be raised to do

his work.[16] For evangelicals, children's value lay in their potential to do good in the future. While this may appear to contradict the increasingly child-centred nature of the middle-class home, evangelicals argued that the domestic sphere needed to be organised around children's needs and upbringing so that children would grow up to be effective adult evangelisers. This had important ramifications for adults: not only did parenthood become the most important role for any man or woman to fulfil, but those parents who did not raise good Christians were seen as having sinned against God.

However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, these carefully delineated gender roles were under review.[17] The slow waning of the power of the cult of domesticity – due partly to the lessening of Christianity's influence over public life and the dissipation of middle-class enthusiasm for evangelicalism – was reflected in the fact that very few evangelical child-rearing manuals were published in Europe and North America in the final decades of the century.[18] In contrast, DRC congregations were still profoundly influenced by evangelicalism after 1860 – and the books, articles, and sermons on children and child-rearing written by DRC ministers appeared from then onwards. Some of this writing was published overseas and was read enthusiastically by foreign audiences, probably because it filled a gap left by British and American authors. Although information relating to the sales of Cape authors' books both nationally and internationally has been lost, other evidence suggests that particularly Andrew Murray jun.'s books found an enthusiastic audience abroad. All his books were reprinted throughout the century, he was received frequently and enthusiastically by readers in northern Europe and North America in the 1880s and 1890s, and he conducted a voluminous correspondence with overseas readers.[19] It is also clear – from similarities in style and theme – that Cape authors read British, American, and German manuals. They were part, then, of a global circulation of ideas around how best to raise Christian children.

Between 1858 and 1910, a group of DRC ministers, missionaries, and devout congregants – most notably Andrew, John, and Charles Murray, Maria Neethling, Servaas Hofmeyr, N.J. Hofmeyr, and Andries Dreyer – published a range of books and articles both for and about children. They can be categorised into three groups. In the first were child-rearing manuals similar to those by Bushnell, with their emphasis on the spiritual nature of children's upbringing, rather than on the practicalities of everyday living. The best known of these were written by Andrew Murray jun., beginning with the publication of *Wat zal doch dit kindeken wezen?* (What will this child become?) in 1863 in both the Cape and

Europe. Translated into English as *Raising Your Children for Christ*, the book appeared in Britain and North America from 1882. Dutch, English, and, later, Afrikaans, versions went into several editions, and the book is still in print in the United States. Secondly, there were books which provided parents with guidance for celebrating the Sabbath. Murray's *Jezus de kindervriend* (Jesus the Children's Friend, 1858) is a collection of 12 lessons to be taught over successive Sundays on the life of Christ. John Murray's *De Kaapse Kinderbijbel* (The Cape Children's Bible, 1851) and *Zondag achtermiddag* (Sunday Afternoon, 1906), by Maria Neethling, provided parents and children with suitable reading matter for Sundays.

And, finally, there were articles written for young readers. These pieces tended to appear as articles in DRC religious papers, and most notably in the youth-oriented *Wekker*. Penned predominantly by Servaas Hofmeyr – the minister sent to the Montagu congregation after the beginning of the 1860 Great Revival – they covered a variety of subjects, from descriptions of particularly pious lives of good children, missionaries, and historical figures to meditations on the need to be good and to love one's parents. From 1881 onwards, the church produced a monthly paper for children called *De Kindervriend* (The Children's Friend) which was aimed at both Sunday school teachers and '*huizgezinnen*' (families at home).[20] Before *De Kindervriend* was launched, both the DRC's official publication, *De Kerkbode*, and *De Wekker* printed the fortnight's Sunday school lessons on their back pages. In contrast, the Anglican church's publications aroused little or no interest in children: their children's sections appeared only sporadically after 1893, and were reprinted from British periodicals. The majority of these were drawn from Aesop's fables and taught children morals and values without necessarily referring to God, Jesus, or the Bible.[21]

All of the DRC's publications described a uniform model of childhood and youth. This was most explicit in the child-rearing manuals which dealt with children's spiritual development. Evangelical childhoods were book-ended by baptism and conversion, two events which functioned both as spiritual and social milestones. It was parents' responsibility to ensure that their children were raised in such a way that they would experience spiritual rebirth. As alluded to in Chapter 2, the pressure that they placed on children – the letters reminding sons and daughters how much joy and relief it would give parents if they became Christians – was certainly a significant factor in causing young people to announce their conversion. However, DRC ministers' child-rearing manuals argued that stable, secure homes and gentle, loving upbringings were even more important to raising good Christians. These guides

described in some detail how parents should raise Christian children – beginning with the physical space of the home.

As Chapter 2 mentioned, the aesthetics of the home were imbued with profound religious meaning: separate rooms devoted to specific activities and individuals reinforced differences between genders – women's rooms were secluded and private, men's spaces were public – and between parents and children. A light and airy nursery, free of lead-based green paint, but soberly decorated and filled with toys deemed to be suitably improving (such as a Noah's Ark and alphabet blocks) created, literally, a child-devoted space, even sanctum, within the home.[22] The home, wrote Andries Dreyer in *Het Christelijk huisgezin* (The Christian Household, 1888), should remain '*rein*' and '*schoon*', two words which mean 'pure' and 'clean' as well as 'beautiful'. The home should be both physically clean and spiritually pure – indeed, these two forms of purity were simply two sides of the same coin. A dirty house could not be a pious home. But houses were not only to be clean; they were also to be suitably furnished. Dreyer advised husbands to spend their money on their households, '*Prenten aan den muur, eenige bloemen in het venster, een aangename leuning-stoel, nuttige boeken op het boekerak, strekken tot veraangenaming van een huis*' (Pictures on the wall, some flowers in the window, a comfortable armchair, useful books on the bookshelf, all contribute to making a house agreeable).[23]

Within this home, the relationship between parents and children was defined by the notion that the Christian family was meant to be a representation of ideal Christian society in miniature.[24] Like their overseas counterparts, DRC authors wrote that the basis of all interaction between parents and children should be love. On the one hand, loving relationships between parents and children were reflective of that between God and his believers, and on the other, they argued that child-rearing underpinned by love was simply the most effective way of raising selfless, kind, thoughtful, Christian children.[25] Indeed, most evangelical child-rearing manuals were preoccupied with selfhood. As both Andrew Murray jun. and Caroline Molteno strove to subsume self in a closer relationship with God, so the authors of these guides argued that only children raised to be selfless would convert in their mid-teens and, thus, become spiritually mature Christians and confirmed members of the DRC.[26]

Children would only learn these values, argued DRC ministers, if parents were deeply involved in every phase of their children's development and every aspect of their rearing. Mothers occupied a central role in the raising of children, leading by example through being loving,

gentle, pious, and self-sacrificing. But, clearly reflecting their own concern for, and interest in, their children, these manuals also described the significance of fathers to their children's upbringings. If mothers were to preside over the sanctified domestic space, then this home was to be maintained and patrolled by fathers. They were to take an active interest in their children's lives, knowing, for instance, with whom their children would come into contact '*in de kerk, op de school, in den winkel, op het kantoor, in het maatschappelijk verkeer*' (in church, school, shops, the office, in social intercourse).[27] They were encouraged to cultivate close, loving relationships with their children, and urged not to give 'way to anger and passion and a sharp reproof or hasty punishment'.[28]

In other words, parents needed to display self-discipline in rearing their children. After selflessness, self-discipline was the next most important trait for children to learn. DRC ministers were not unique in describing child-rearing as a form of training: other manuals of the period depicted children as plants to be cared for and trained by parents.[29] Training was the 'development of the abilities, both intellectual and moral, which help the child really do and be what the teaching has presented to him'.[30] Their insistence that the intellect be trained was also connected to their efforts to encourage children, particularly boys, to become ministers and missionaries. The mind had to be made into a 'sharp instrument' so that children would be 'better equipped for the work to be done'.[31] DRC guidebooks were, then, aimed as much at helping parents to raise Christian children as at increasing the size of an evangelical workforce – and this would be rounded off by schooling at good, Christian establishments to prepare children's intellect.

Parents, argued ministers, should be willing to give up at least one child to do God's work, as missionaries, teachers, or ministers. Ironically, though, in the Cape, access to the educational institutions which trained teachers and ministers was limited largely to the white middle class. Indeed, only white, middle-class parents would have had the means and the time to raise their children in the ways prescribed by these DRC manuals – and the childhoods described by DRC ministers were, recognisably, based on those which they attempted to provide to their children. These guides convey very little sense of place – they could as easily describe Sussex or Massachusetts – and display no interest in adapting this idealised understanding of childhood to the complexities of colonial society. Not even DRC ministers were able to devote themselves as completely and wholeheartedly to their children's upbringings as they recommended in their manuals.

One way of explaining this tension within the manuals is to consider them in the context of their authors' other writing. DRC ministers wrote extensively on adults' spiritual development as well. From the early 1860s onwards, Andrew Murray jun. published a series of books intended to assist adults who had recently converted to evangelical Christianity. They were so popular overseas that by the 1880s he began to publish books first in English, rather than Dutch, so that they could be published simultaneously all over the world.[32] Books such as *The New Life, Be Perfect!* (1894) and *Absolute Surrender* (1895) were written to help new Christians understand Christian living better, and to reinforce and strengthen existing Christians' faith. There were striking parallels between these books for adults and those about raising children. They were structured similarly – comprising 50 short chapters, one for every Sunday of the year – and were as lacking in local specificity as those on raising children. This helps to account for why Murray was able to write for an international audience so easily.[33] And most importantly, guides for adults were on the same themes as those on child-rearing: Murray warned his adult readers about the vicious consequences of selfishness. Again and again he reiterated that self had to be totally subsumed in the process of conversion,[34] and adults also had to learn, or think more deeply about, obedience and self-discipline.[35] Viewed in these terms, the DRC child-rearing manuals fitted into two genres: the child-rearing literature that was written and published all over the world throughout the nineteenth century, and guidebooks on the spiritual development of Christians.

As these manuals for adults described the development of the ideal Christian, so child-rearing manuals provided parents with an ideal of childhood to be aimed at.[36] Manuals were not intended to be a reflection of the kind of childhoods most children experienced – their very nature required them to describe ideal, perfect upbringings to which parents could aspire. It was as rare for American or British manuals to refer, for instance, to child labour, poverty, or homelessness. These authors' overwhelming interest in children's spiritual development, which they argued was a fundamental aspect of the success of evangelicalism's spread across the globe, precluded any deeper analysis of the connection between children's material surroundings and religiosity. This lack of specificity lent manuals their ability to be read and appreciated regardless of time and place. This did not mean that Cape writers were indifferent to the state of the colony's children. But ministers did believe that the colony's need for more clergymen and missionaries and to convert more Christians were as pressing problems as the low numbers of

children attending school, for example. DRC ministers did not feel that they were neglecting their duty to uplift the Cape's children by focusing exclusively on children's spiritual development – indeed, they believed that this was as important as building schools.

In this process of producing an idealised definition of childhood, DRC authors also normalised white, middle-class childhood. They made it the norm to which *all* childhoods were to conform. Writing about the invention of the middle-class child in early nineteenth-century America, Steven Mintz argues that modern childhoods were ordered and organised: increasingly, childhood – a subject of scientific and scholarly interest – was constituted of distinct phases of development, all of which required particular modes of behaviour from both parents and children. He writes: 'The invention of modern childhood represented an effort to contain the precocity and uncertainties that had characterised the process of growing up in the early nineteenth century.'[37] It was an attempt to create a carefully delineated and regulated path to adulthood. The growing belief that childhood should be supervised, and should proceed carefully from one developmental phase to the next, was hugely influential in the European and American child-saving movements. Campaigners described the apparently dysfunctional childhoods of poor, orphaned, immigrant or working-class children as chaotic and unstructured: what they needed were the rules and order provided by school and other organised, child-related activities.[38]

There is always a disconnect between child-rearing guides' descriptions of what normal childhood should comprise and the nature of the childhoods actually experienced by children. Yet over the course of the nineteenth century, middle-class childhoods, particularly in western Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia, did, increasingly, conform to the same pattern: children lived at home until their late teens; early childhood was spent in the company of their parents (more usually their mothers) and nursemaids and spent in play and various improving activities; boys – and, later, girls – attended school from around the age of five; and both genders tended to leave the home during their late teens and early 20s. This was as much as a result of the changing cultural and social understandings around children and childhood outlined above as it was due to increasing state intervention in the rearing of children: the extension of compulsory elementary schooling and the greater availability of secondary and tertiary education caused more children to go to school.[39]

This change was altogether slower and more uneven in the Cape. As the previous and following chapters discuss, white, middle-class

childhoods in Cape Town and surroundings did certainly begin to conform to this pattern during the second half of the century. The upbringings of Andrew Murray jun. and Maria Neethling's children, and the childhoods experienced by Caroline and Betty Molteno, were broadly similar to those of girls and boys in comparable financial and social circumstances in towns and cities from New South Wales to New England. But these childhoods were the exception, rather than the rule. The important point is that, although the authors of Anglican publications certainly believed in a similar, imported discourse around childhood,[40] only DRC ministers went as far as to publish books on how children should be raised. In this way, they disseminated a version of colonial (middle-class, white) childhood which they held up as the template which all childhoods should follow. Even those children whose parents had not read and been influenced by DRC publications would have come into contact with this model through the DRC's other child-related work. This understanding of childhood influenced other DRC efforts to convert children. As the final two chapters will argue, DRC work in schooling was underpinned by a belief that childhood extended to the late teens, and should not include any form of wage-earning labour. Instead, work was to be replaced by education and, to some extent, play.

## II

One of the best entry points into colonial childhoods is children's leisure time. Leisure was understood in racial and social terms. For most wage-earning adults in the Cape, Sunday was the only day of the week devoted to leisure. However, influenced by an international discourse on the physical and moral well-being of workers, from the 1880s, employers based in Cape Town and the colony's larger towns began to allow workers both weekly half-holidays and improving activities for their free time. Cricket matches and organised outings to libraries and reading rooms were intended to instil the kind of values – conscientiousness, fair play, sobriety – employers sought in their employees. In other words, leisure time was used for the construction of social identities. Similarly, for the colony's white middle class, respectable activities such as cricket, tennis, mountaineering, and music were intended partly to signal their Britishness – to affirm their links with Home.[41]

Relatedly, middle-class girls and boys' leisure time was crucial to the production of white, middle-class adulthood. White middle-class parents understood leisure to be part of the transformation of girls and boys

to young women and men. The DRC devoted part of each edition of *De Kindervriend* to how its readers could most productively make use of their spare time, from learning their Sunday school lessons to raising money for missionaries.[42] But, as chapters 4 and 5 will discuss, the leisure time of children who were black and who were poor was seen as potentially dangerous.[43] Partly as a result of this, the DRC was interested in activities and organisations which would serve to improve otherwise unemployed poor children, both white and black. These were introduced gradually, over the course of the century, usually in response to particular needs or changing circumstances. It is worth noting, though, that the popularity of some of these organisations and societies was partly due to the fact that they provided entertainment. DRC revivals and the sermons of travelling ministers appealed to rural communities in the same way as the regular visits of the circuit court or, even, touring minstrel groups, theatre companies, and circuses.

It is in the analysis of the DRC's organised activities for children that it becomes possible to identify the church's shifting race politics. As Chapter 1 demonstrates, children's sermons, special days of prayer, and the *kinderfees* were preached and organised for all children within the church, regardless of race. This was done partly to contain youthful religious fervour – especially if that fervour was in gatherings which included poor and black youth – and also because congregations segregated gradually. As the century progressed and as the DRC became identified increasingly as the church of the Cape's white, Dutch-Afrikaner population – despite its sermons in English, and despite the persistence of racially mixed congregations – the church's work for children was divided, increasingly, along racial and social lines. In this, the DRC reflected a process occurring throughout the colony, as racial and ethnic identities slowly crystallised. But this was a gradual and uneven disentangling of congregations. The DRC's first Sunday school, discussed in greater detail below, was established in 1844 to provide elementary education for poor children – mainly black, but many of them white – in central Cape Town. Only subsequently did the church found organisations explicitly for middle-class white children.

In many ways, the DRC's – and the Cape's – first Sunday school was identical in purpose to the first Sunday schools opened by evangelical churches in England during the mid-eighteenth century. These provided poor children with rudimentary instruction in the 'three Rs' and an introduction to Bible study, and tried to shape the children of a growing urban proletariat into productive, conscientious, pious Christians. Before the introduction of free elementary education in

1870 in England, Sunday schools were the main source of formal education to working-class children. By the 1790s, Sunday schools had been established in the United States, and by the middle of the nineteenth century, more mainstream – or non-evangelical – churches began to start their own Sunday schools. This was partly in response to the greater numbers of middle-class children attending Sunday schools during the 1810s and 1820s. Their presence caused some Sunday school curricula to shift their focus from elementary schooling to emphasising teaching catechism and stories from the Bible, for instance. In 1851, over 2 million children in Britain attended Sunday school regularly.[44] The first mass international children's movement, Sunday schools were:

> major social and recreational centres. Their libraries, teachers' meetings and conferences, 'charity sermons', Whitsun outings, 'treats' and prizes, processions ... galas, music, singing classes, Bands of Hope, anniversary festivities, football clubs, mutual improvement societies, needlework classes, sick, clothing, benefit and burial clubs, funerals and other activities played an exceptionally important role in many districts ... Through the Sunday schools children became closely involved in charitable activity and missions.[45]

Mirroring international developments, the numbers of children attending Sunday school in the Cape increased dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century. In 1860, most congregations of all denominations ran Sunday schools – 83 per cent in total, according to the colony's Blue Books – with 5,255 children on the books. By 1874, double the number of children – 9,253 – attended Sunday school, and this number jumped to 42,524 a decade later. This increase was connected partly to the growing number of church congregations and Sunday schools in the colony, but it was also the product of better record-keeping, particularly within the DRC, which had appointed a special Sunday school commission three years previously. Significantly, though, in the same year, only 39,102 children attended the colony's 1,004 schools regularly (there were 78,037 on the books, representing about a quarter of the Cape's total population under the age of 15).[46] These numbers must, though, be understood as an ideal representation of Sunday schools' membership. Not all of these children attended Sunday school regularly. The Church of England, for instance, admitted to having difficulty encouraging regular attendance, blaming teachers' poor skills and lack of organisation.[47]

As in Britain, in the absence of free or compulsory elementary education, Sunday schools in the Cape provided a substantial number of

children with a rudimentary education. The DRC opened the colony's first Sunday school in Cape Town in 1844 for precisely this purpose. Having been approached by the Superintendent for Education, James Rose-Innes, to address the numbers of poor children not in any form of education in the city, the DRC created a commission of enquiry and came to the conclusion that a Sunday school was the best solution to the problem. Poor children had time on Sundays to attend school, and those whose parents were already members of the church would have brought them along to the day's service regardless of the existence of the school. It opened with 126 pupils, and after six months its membership had quadrupled, attracting a racially and socially mixed collection of children.[48] The numbers of DRC Sunday schools increased after the revival of 1860: during the 1840s and 1850s, only three schools were established, and these were connected to large congregations with particularly energetic ministers (Graaff-Reinet, 1849, Tulbagh, 1856, Stellenbosch, 1858). But between 1860 and 1874, the numbers of children attending Sunday school swelled from 1,858 to 4,295, and then to 11,527 a decade later. It doubled again to 21,521 by 1894, when it ran a total of 706 Sunday schools. Only the Methodists slightly exceeded the DRC in terms of membership, at 11,817 in 1884. However, considering that most of the Methodist church's members lived on mission stations, the greatest number of children who did not live on mission stations but belonged to Sunday schools were members of the DRC. In contrast, the Church of England's Sunday schools had only 6,378 members in 1884.[49] Through its Sunday schools, the DRC was, then, a particularly strong force in the lives of least a quarter of the colony's children, black and white.

The main reason for the success of the DRC's Sunday schools was that the church's leadership considered them to be a key feature of their evangelical work. In 1881 oversight of Sunday schools was shifted from individual churches to the synod itself, and in the same year it launched a dedicated Sunday school periodical, *De Kindervriend*. A Sunday school commission, chaired by George Murray, Andrew Murray jun.'s younger brother and the influential minister of Graaff-Reinet, began to organise Sunday schools more systematically, creating a single curriculum to be followed by all DRC Sunday school teachers, raising money to fund the building of more schools, and, from 1890 onwards, holding annual Sunday school teachers' conferences.[50] Although all children attending DRC Sunday schools were intended to learn the same curriculum, there were, broadly, two kinds of Sunday schools within the church – and this division was reflected in other churches as well. Sunday schools whose members were predominantly white and middle-class taught children

about the Bible and prepared them for confirmation. Those with mainly poor and, usually, black pupils, most of whom were engaged in some form of wage earning labour, provided basic education. In this case, the purpose of Sunday schools overlapped with that of missions.[51] They aimed as much to teach children to read and write as to inculcate middle-class values.[52] As the Church of England's Sunday School Union noted, Sunday schools helped to 'keep lads out of mischief' and to 'promote the formation of strong character'.[53]

DRC Sunday schools for white, middle-class children were aimed at producing good, pious, obedient, selfless, and hard-working Christians who would consider seriously the prospect of becoming missionaries or other workers for the church. In an article celebrating the founding of a new Sunday school in Robertson in 1884, the author noted that the school's main purpose was '*de kinderen . . . voor Christus te gewinnen*' (to win children for Christ), and to encourage them to train as teachers and missionaries to continue this evangelical work.[54] Sunday school teaching attempted to mould children in much the same way as DRC child-rearing manuals.[55] *De Kindervriend*'s coverage of missionary work – which was extensive – emphasised what children could do to support the efforts to missionaries all over the world. Articles on Dr Livingstone's work in central Africa or the plight of the Chinese in San Francisco[56] explained to children why they were uniquely placed to become missionaries: no person was too young to begin spreading the gospel.[57] This information was then transformed into action during Sunday school lessons. Not only were missionaries invited to speak to children about their work, but children regularly raised funds for missions, donating their pocket money (another custom related to the emergence of middle-class children's leisure time), holding bazaars, or organising ticketed music evenings. While figures for the total amount of money collected by the members of DRC Sunday schools are unavailable, in the United States children financed the building of a series of mission ships, all of them named the *Morning Star*, for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions between 1856 and 1961.[58]

Regardless of whether children were given money by their parents or came up with it themselves – if fundraising allowed them some agency, in other words – Protestant evangelical churches throughout the British Empire and the United States encouraged children to believe that their support was vital to the future success of the missionary endeavour. In Britain, in particular, involvement in the missionary movement helped to shape, in F.K. Prochaska's words, 'racial and cultural attitudes in the young'.[59] White children at home became the saviours

of racialised others abroad. In the Cape, the DRC drew middle-class white children into missionary work through a range of organisations. In the early 1890s, DRC ministers brought the American Christian Endeavour Movement – founded by Presbyterian ministers in 1881 – to the Cape. As the Christelike Strewersvereniging, its branches in Graaff-Reinet (1893) and Cape Town (1894) trained children and young people to become missionaries at very young ages. It supplemented the work of the Christelijke Jongelingen Vereeniging (CJV, Christian Youth Society), which was established after the 1874 revival to capitalise on adolescent boys' interest in evangelicalism. The CJV's first branch was founded at the DRC's theological seminary in Stellenbosch and, in keeping with the seminary's aim to train ministers and missionaries, the CJV raised funds for missionaries and encouraged its members to become missionaries. But most of the CJV's day-to-day activities focused on children: encouraging schoolboys to become members of the Society, organising entertainments for Sunday school children, and raising funds for the education of poor children. The Stellenbosch branch ran a Sunday school for the town's black children.[60] Until 1911, when the DRC's missionary society for children, the Kinderkrans (Children's Circle), was founded, several of the church's Sunday schools also organised their own missionary clubs to encourage children to become more interested in mission work, usually by raising funds to support it.[61] The Ebenhaezer Society for young people in Wellington raised funds for missionaries and provided '*onschuldig vermaak*' (innocent amusement) for its members.[62]

Not all children's societies were dedicated to missionary work. Globally, one of the biggest and most successful children's organisations was the Band of Hope. Established in Leeds in 1847, and with over 3 million members in Britain by the end of the century, the purpose of the organisation was to encourage children to abstain from drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco, and also to encourage them to convert. For the Band, only spiritually saved children were truly immune to the temptations of drink, and all members were required to sign a pledge to become and remain teetotal.[63] It was a decentralised organisation, and individual Bands were usually connected to local temperance movements or to churches. Partly because of the dispersed nature of the organisation, it is difficult to ascertain the strength of its presence in the Cape, although it definitely did operate within the colony.[64] The local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, founded at the Huguenot Seminary in 1889, opened its own Band of Hope in 1893. Dubbed the 'Myrtle Branch', the club was run by a group of white, adolescent girls who were pupils of the Huguenot Seminary and were members

of the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union (YWCTU). As the Myrtle Branch's minutes reveal, its activities were as much educational as they were recreational. Children learned Bible verses, and speakers were invited to talk about mission work and the need to become reborn, and also about the physical and psychological side-effects of smoking and drinking. As the secretary noted of a meeting in 1896: 'Mrs Fehr spoke to us, she told us that strong drink leads to anger, debt, despair, destruction, and death and showed us how it leads on from one to the other.'[65] But they also sang hymns and songs, practised drill (believed to instil self-control), listened to stories, made scrapbooks, and played games. They collected pennies for missionaries, and sent flowers to local hospitals.

What differentiated the DRC children's societies was not only their particular emphasis on educating children about missionary work – and some non-DRC children's societies, such as the Band of Hope, also asked children to raise funds for missionaries – but also the way in which they encouraged children to become missionaries themselves. Like their contemporaries in Britain, when white, middle-class children in DRC organisations and Sunday schools raised funds for missions, this money tended to go to efforts aimed at evangelising or educating African children on or near DRC mission stations in southern Africa. In this way, Sunday schools and mission societies introduced a set of markers to distinguish between children in racial and social terms: those who were white and relatively affluent were in a position and, as a result, had a duty to assist with the furthering of the gospel, while those who were black were placed in a position where they could receive the gospel and the ministering of their white contemporaries. While this may seem to be a fairly crude distinction, it is borne out by examples of white children's work for their black contemporaries. The following section discusses a Sunday school run by white girls for Wellington's black children, but, using a diary written by a white, middle-class boy in Worcester during the 1880s and 1890s, it also pays attention to the multiple uses that middle-class children made of their leisure time. It was not only mobilised by churches for social or spiritual good: it was crucial, as Caroline Molteno also understood, to the making of white, middle-class adults.

## III

The success of the DRC's clubs, societies, and Sunday schools lay in the way that they became part of white, middle-class childhood. Even

those children without particularly pious parents were drawn into the church through membership of the CJV, Sunday school picnics, or confirmation classes. They mingled pious activities – such as raising funds for missionaries – with 'innocent amusement'. In many ways, Charlie Immelman (1870–1937) was typical of the young members of the DRC who participated in its activities and organisations, but who did not commit himself to becoming a teacher or a missionary. Christianity was a series of – important – social performances. Born Carel Pieter Immelman, he lived in Worcester with his widowed mother and siblings. His mother kept a shop and apothecary, which Charlie – as he called himself in the diary – helped to manage. His oldest brother worked on the diamond fields near Kimberley, two of his sisters were teachers in Paarl, and another two were enrolled at St Cyprian's Girls' School in Cape Town. The three younger children lived at home with him and his mother. The family seems to have moved from Cape Town during the early 1880s, possibly after the death in 1880 of his father (to whom Charlie never alluded in his diary), which accounted for why his sisters remained at St Cyprian's instead of moving to the local girls' school. He attended the Worcester boys' public school.

Kept regularly between 1885 and 1888, the purpose of Immelman's diary was both to chart his gradual entry into the world of adulthood – on his 15th birthday he noted that he 'was not the short-trousered chap any more', and that he was cultivating a moustache – and to fashion himself as a budding 'man about town'.[66] Although school – lessons, teachers, and fellow pupils – figures prominently in the diary, the bulk of the activities described in the diary occur in afternoons, over weekends, and during holidays. The diary implies that Charlie was at liberty to do as he pleased – that was he supervised neither by his mother nor by other adults. He stayed away from school if the shop needed tending, particularly after his older brother left for Kimberley.[67] He travelled to Paarl and Cape Town fairly frequently. Charlie's freedom and other interests, chiefly stamp-collecting,[68] were paid for by helping at the apothecary, and occasional odd jobs done for acquaintances in Worcester. Like other boys of his age and class, he could supplement pocket money by working part-time, in his case buying an 'aerated water machine' to sell fizzy lemonade.[69] Charlie also spent his money on girls. He began and ended the diary with references to girls, and often remarked how he much enjoyed the company of 'young ladies'. These included pupils of the Worcester Seminary and the Deaf and Blind Institute, cousins, and daughters of family friends.[70] To some extent, his interactions with his cousins echo the *Cape Times* editorial

'Concerning Cousins', referred to in the previous chapter. They wrote letters, attended tea parties, and went on long walks (on one of these, with his cousin Susy, they exchanged '*many evidences of affection*',[71]) but they never amounted to more than this. Charlie's behaviour seems to have fallen within the realms of respectability – something confirmed by the fact that he was invited frequently to Worcester Seminary picnics, meaning that he complied with the teachers' estimation of a well-behaved and decent young man.[72] In fact, Charlie's presence at these respectable gatherings rather undermines his diary's implication that he had a rakish reputation.

Indeed, his depiction of himself as a young man on the verge of successful manhood is not always entirely convincing. Put another way, the diary demonstrated how Charlie performed a particular masculine identity: at times this was successful, and at others it was not.[73] This was particularly evident in his dealings with girls. He was serially ignored, had his letters and gifts returned on more than one occasion,[74] and even confessed that he 'felt somewhat shy' in the company of lots of 'young ladies'. At one coffee-and-cake party at the Worcester Seminary, only the 'agreeable talk' of the girls encouraged him to 'creep out' of his '"*dop*" [shell]'.[75] Any news or new invention would be shared with the 'boys at school', and he took pleasure in activities less productive – and lucrative – than keeping shop for his mother. His hobbies and interests were fairly typical of other boys of his age rather than of adult men. He edited a popular spoof newspaper called the *Worcester Knobkirrie*. He swam in the river, played tennis, attended concerts and shows at the town hall, was particularly taken by a travelling circus of wild animals, and snuck into the public gallery of the circuit court.[76]

He was also a regular church-goer. He accompanied his mother to church every Sunday morning and evening, was a member of the Sunday school, attended church bazaars, and participated in child-oriented events such as the quarterly children's services and annual Sunday school picnic. But he underwent no spiritual crisis upon his confirmation as a member of the church. Membership of the DRC translated into participation in a round of church-related activities which culminated in conversion and confirmation into the DRC. This was an important social event – similar to finishing school – that signalled another step towards adulthood. In this way, an event loaded with enormous significance within clerical families was transformed into a marker of growing maturity in less pious households. For Charlie and his friends, church attendance was part of the fabric of ordinary, middle-class life, particularly in rural areas.[77]

Charlie and his friends were not under any real obligation to work. As he explained in a letter to a friend, his 'daily . . . routine' until his 18th birthday consisted of 'attending school; & in the afternoon after school to make soda water & lemonade (for which I get paid of course by my mater), & at other times just loitering about or reading'.[78] He did work, but only when it was absolutely necessary – such as when his brother left home – or when he wanted to make money. The family could afford not only for him not to work but to pay him when he did. Despite his best efforts to present himself as a successful, confident, and almost fully grown man, Charlie – unwittingly – demonstrated his status as a youth, and as a dependant of his mother. The diary also shows the extent to which these relatively new age categories 'girlhood' and 'boyhood' were limited to those whose parents and families possessed the resources to allow them to attend school, pursue hobbies, and not require them to contribute financially to the household. Because their leisure activities were so closely bound up with the process of becoming adults – they opened up opportunities to meet future husbands and wives, make friends within the same class, and rehearse the rituals and practices of middle-class adults – it was seen as productive. White, middle-class boys and girls needed this time in order to make themselves into adults.

But it could also be used to make others into respectable grown-ups. For the pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, leisure time was as crucial to the moulding of their identities as respectable, Christian women. Although the school encouraged girls to sew, read, walk, draw, and attend tea parties – all activities deemed suitable, even morally improving, for young middle-class women – they were also expected to use their free time in charity work. As mentioned above, the DRC urged its young white members to act as missionaries among their black contemporaries. This impulse was partly responsible for the seminary's decision in 1874 to establish a Sunday school for Wellington's black children. Huguenot had a long and abiding interest in missionary work, reflecting the fact that Mount Holyoke in the United States – on which Huguenot was modelled, and from which its first teachers and curricula were drawn – had a long-standing relationship with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In 1878, Huguenot's headmistress and Mount Holyoke alumna Abbie Ferguson founded the Huguenot Mission Society (HMS). Although she was president of the society and some teachers filled key roles – treasurer, secretary – the vice-president and most of the committee members were pupils. The purpose of the 51-strong society was to encourage girls to train as missionaries, and then to provide the funds to support them when working on mission

stations. It was an organisation of the school's pupils for its (former) pupils.[79] The HMS proved to be very successful: not only was it able to support at least ten DRC female missionaries financially over the course of the 1880s and 1890s, but it produced the first South African woman missionary of the nineteenth century, Johanna Meeuwsen, who worked on DRC mission stations in the Transvaal. Money from the society was sent to build a school for Meeuwsen's pupils and also to children on mission stations who wrote letters to the HMS, asking for financial assistance.[80] The HMS saw itself as part of the DRC's broader efforts to found mission stations and fund and train missionaries in South Africa. As Ferguson said at a meeting in 1883:

> Out of the 200,000,000 inhabitants of Africa, scarcely 100,000 are converted. The sight of such a scene once moved Jesus to come to the earth; does it not, or *should* it not, stir *our* hearts to help them? God only knows what these schools and societies of Wellington can do, by His grace and help.[81]

For girls who were too young or unwilling to train as missionaries, there were activities closer to home in which to become involved: the HMS encouraged and helped younger children to form mission circles – the incipient Kinderkrans movement – and also wrote and printed the HMS's official newsletter, the *Zendingbode* (Mission Messenger), from 1886 onwards. The publication eventually became the DRC's main missionary periodical, and had a circulation of around 200 by 1888.[82] The mission circles seem to have done particularly well. There were about 30 of them by the time of the society's tenth anniversary, and they were such a feature of the HMS's work that groups of children were invited to present accounts of their work to the society's annual meetings. By 1889, the HMS was so well established that some of its older members founded the Vrouwen Zendingbond (VZB, Women's Missionary Society), one of the most important Afrikaans women's organisations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Like the HMS, the purpose of the organisation was to galvanise white, Christian women and children to assist with the furthering of missionary work among black women and children.[83]

White, middle-class girls were, then, drawn into a national – and occasionally international – network of missionaries, and made to feel that they were vital to the success of missionary work. Their piety, training as teachers, and gender put them in an ideal position to evangelise to other women and children. Ferguson explained at the opening of Huguenots' Sunday school: 'It seems a pity that when our young ladies

are so much needing work and are anxious to do it, and the want is so great among these poor children that the supply should not meet the demand.'[84] These young women, in Ferguson's words, 'in need of work' were enrolled in full-time education. All their teaching at the Sunday school was done outside of school hours. The school opened in April 1874 with 30 children under the age of 12 on the roll. Within six months this number had increased to 500 (the children 'squeezed close together on the benches, so close that you couldn't put a knife between them'[85]), and after 20 years of regular Sunday school classes, it was formally taken over by the DRC as the Dutch Reformed Mission Church School, providing very high quality education to black children. Its most famous alumnus was Abdullah Abdurahman (1872–1940), the president of the African People's Organisation.[86]

The most striking feature of the Sunday school was that it was run entirely by the pupils of the seminary. While one of the teachers was principal, an older Huguenot girl usually studying to become a teacher was appointed as superintendent to supervise the weekly classes and to organise the curriculum. In this way, a girl in her late teens would be responsible for the education of a few hundred children, albeit assisted by a group consisting of around ten of her fellow pupils, all of them her age or slightly younger.[87] The purpose of the school was dual: the religious and academic education of Wellington's black children, but also the preparation of the Huguenot pupils for missionary work. As Lizzie Cummings, the principal of the Sunday school during the mid-1880s, noted, 'If the Sunday School did nothing for the children, it would be worth all it costs of prayer and effort, as a training place in Christian work for our girls.'[88] The school's success was heavily dependent on the continued commitment of both sides – black children, white girls – to attending every Sunday's classes. Pupils did not pay fees, although they were asked to donate small sums on the monthly Mission Sunday, and there was no way of enforcing their regular attendance. Equally, their teachers – all of whom were volunteers – were not paid, and did not receive any extra credit for the work in their annual reports. Unfortunately, neither side appears to have recorded why it enjoyed being at the Sunday school. So why the appeal?

Pupils received instruction in the 'three Rs', scripture, and basic introductions to history and geography. They were occasionally allowed treats – magic lantern shows were particularly popular – and had an annual feast.[89] These entertainments would have been attractive to any group of children, but these pupils also seem to have possessed a great eagerness to learn: most weeks, Sunday school consisted only of

book-learning, scripture, hymn-singing and prayer; pupils eagerly took home and read the children's papers distributed by their teachers and, from the accounts of the principals, were generally well behaved during lessons. Another way of accounting for children's enthusiasm would be to consider that, as in other DRC Sunday schools, they were encouraged to become spiritually reborn. Ferguson hoped to save these children in two ways: to save their souls, and also to save them from their parents. She wrote, 'We are wanting asking [*sic*] that *all* these children may be brought to the Lord, and become different men and women from their fathers and mothers.'[90]

The Sunday school pupils proved to be receptive to revivalist preaching, and within the first few months of the school's opening, all had been converted. This pattern continued with every intake of new pupils at the beginning of the academic year. It is worth noting that these young children converted far earlier than their teachers, most of whom arrived at the decision to become reborn during their mid- and late teens (when they attended the seminary, in other words). While this was probably a result of the pressure placed on these black pupils to 'give their hearts to Jesus', it is also reflective of their relatively truncated childhoods. Unlike their teachers, who were under no obligation to work and were considered to be girls by their parents and teachers, most of these children would have assisted in running households or would have been engaged in wage-earning labour. As reborn Christians, these children would have had a double bond with the Sunday school: it provided them with both an education and spiritual succour. More practically, children received a great deal of personal attention from their teachers, particularly if they converted – and possibly more than that which they would have received at home, among several other siblings and with busy, working parents. There appears to have been genuine affection between the girls and the children, with the former confessing to 'loving' their charges.[91] (This, though, was reported in teachers' letters. It is unlikely that teachers would have referred to those girls who loathed the work at the Sunday school.) For the girls teaching at the Sunday school, the work allowed them more power and authority than any other form of respectable activity open to middle-class adolescent girls. For those interested in becoming teachers, here they could practise what they had been taught in their teacher-training classes. Those who desired to become missionaries or who were particularly pious could emulate the work of the many missionaries who visited the seminary. The Sunday school was an opportunity to engage with missionary work, albeit on a fairly small-scale and part-time basis. They could become

useful for the missionary cause, thus fulfilling at least one of the aims of the HMS, and attracting the good opinion of their teachers.

In its child-rearing manuals, children's Bibles, guides to Christian living, and periodicals, the DRC began to construct a notion of what should constitute an ideal child and childhood. Recognisably based on DRC ministers' childhoods – and mirroring the extended middle-class childhoods of industrialised countries abroad – childhood, girlhood, boyhood, and youth occurred over an increasingly long period of time within the secluded space of the home, free of regular wage-earning labour, and carefully patrolled by watchful parents and – unmentioned in the manuals – servants. At the same time, the DRC's interest in children became increasingly complex. Although its children's sermons, festivals, and early Sunday schools were provided initially to all children whose parents were members of the DRC, regardless of race, from the 1870s onwards, its publications and, particularly, organisations were aimed more carefully at those children who were white, and who were affluent. These were leisured children, whose free time was put to use in making them into respectable adults. Despite his relative lack of interest in evangelicalism, Charlie Immelman was, nonetheless, drawn into the ambit of the DRC, and his membership of the church was a crucial aspect of his self-making. The Huguenot Seminary's Sunday school was a prime example of the productive ways to which white, middle-class children's leisure time – and particularly that of girls working to improve themselves – could be put to use. The DRC capitalised on the emergence of this free time, and, in doing so, it positioned white, middle-class children as potential saviours of children who were black and poor.

The question, though, was how to reach the majority of the Cape's white population, most of whom lived increasingly precarious lives in the colony's rural districts, beyond the reach of a modernising colonial state. They are the focus of the following chapter.

# 4

# The Crying Need: Dutch Reformed Responses to the Education Crisis of the 1870s

In March 1873 Langham Dale, the Cape's Superintendent of Education, appealed to the DRC in the *Cape Monthly Magazine* (*CMM*). In an article titled 'Our Agricultural Population' he asked the church's clergymen if they

> realise the fact of the children of Dutch-speaking, European parentage growing up with less care bestowed upon them than upon the beasts of the field; – without the ability to read or write even their mother tongue; without any instruction in the knowledge of the God that made them; having at their command no language at all, but a limited vocabulary of semi-Dutch, semi-Hottentot words, and these only concerning the wants and doings of themselves and the animals which they tend?[1]

This was not the first article published by the *CMM* on the apparently appalling conditions under which poor white children, the vast majority of whom were Dutch-Afrikaans, were raised in the colony's interior. Other authors had described the 'purely animal existence' which these children led, bemoaning the fact that so few of them had progressed beyond a basic grasp of literacy and numeracy.[2] But as the Superintendent for Education and one of the most powerful civil servants in the colony in terms of the influence he wielded over the Cape government and the resources he commanded, Dale's article elicited a swift response from the DRC. Although the church's leadership and Dale agreed that the colony needed to improve the provision of schooling to white children in the colony's rural districts, they perceived the problem and its solution in different ways. Andrew Murray jun. argued that while white children needed to attend school regularly, the real urgency was

in providing white girls with secondary education and teacher training so that they could help with the founding of small elementary schools in the colony's interior. He wrote: 'I feel more and more that the pleading for a girls [*sic*] education to secure the children of the country for Christ is a high privilege ... We cannot conceive of a higher object than securing all the schools of the country for Christ.'[3] As Chapter 3 suggested, for Murray, education and schools – like Sunday schools, DRC children's organisations, child-rearing manuals, sermons, children's festivals and days of prayer – were part of the DRC's broader evangelical project. Dale, on the other hand, feared mainly for the Cape's white boys. He and other commentators linked the Cape's future political, social, and economic stability and prosperity to the education of its young white men. Schools needed to produce the right sort of white men to govern the Cape.

To some extent, Dale and Murray's aims were similar: both saw the education of white children as absolutely vital to a modernising Cape. Both understood the primary purpose of education to be the moulding of the colony's future leaders. However, they were motivated by different concerns: although a religious man who supported the teaching of scripture and the Bible at school, Dale's chief interests were the Cape's economic prosperity and political and social stability: hence his emphasis on boys' education. Influenced by an emergent discourse on poor whiteism, he feared for the maintenance of white rule in the Cape. Dale was concerned about the presence of white children in missionary schools – in 1878, 5,000 of 21,000 white children enrolled in school attended missionary schools, which were intended to be used largely by black pupils.[4] Indeed, others were anxious about the implications of missionary school education for black children – would literacy render black youth intractable workers? Murray, while equally troubled by the poverty of the colony's rural districts, saw education as part of the DRC's efforts to spread the gospel, and also to bring more children into the church's fold. After all, the DRC ran many of the missionary schools which educated black children. As the Wellington Sunday school for black children described in Chapter 3 attests, there were certainly children who attended these institutions with enthusiasm, and whose hard work was encouraged and rewarded by teachers.

As the leaders of the two organisations which were responsible for the education of the overwhelming majority of children enrolled at school, the views that Dale and Murray held on childhood and education were highly significant. They were also aware of international debates over education. The 1870s were particularly important in the creation of

public education systems all over the world. Compulsory elementary education was introduced in Britain in 1870, for instance. The debates that occurred in the Cape during this period were part of a global conversation about the importance of schooling to national stability and prosperity. The Cape and other colonies differed, though, in that anxieties about education were overlaid with concerns about maintaining white power.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the nature of the apparent crisis in colonial education in the 1870s, and to account for why Dale and other colonial commentators were so concerned about the fact that so few white children – and particularly rural, Dutch-Afrikaans boys – were in school. It also explores how and why the DRC responded to Dale's appeal for assistance in 1873. Although other churches were equally exercised by the state of education in the Cape Colony and also ran their own schools, none took on the same degree of responsibility as the DRC. From the 1870s onwards, the DRC, above all other colonial churches, provided vital support to the Cape's education department, running what was, in many ways, a parallel department of its own. Ernst Malherbe, whose *Education in South Africa* (1977) remains the authoritative text on the history of South African education in the nineteenth century, argued that the Cape education system would have collapsed without the DRC's support during the final decades of the century.[5]

## I

During the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, contributors to colonial periodicals discussed with ever more urgency the apparently dire quality of education available in the Cape. The Church of England, for instance, first devoted serious attention to the crisis in the *Church News* in 1872, printing at least one article per edition on education from then onwards. Yet this crisis was neither particular to the 1870s – education did not deteriorate suddenly during this period – nor were the Cape's politicians, civil servants, educationalists, and other commentators interested in the intricacies of providing education to all of the colony's children. They were concerned about the education of white children, and then mainly poor children in rural areas. This was a crisis constructed in colonial periodicals, and reflected the concerns of the Cape's middle class. Schooling in the Cape had been in difficulties since long before the 1870s, and the education department was well aware of the lack of schooling available to rural children. Nor was this the first time that attention had been drawn to low rates of literacy and school attendance among rural whites.

Now, this discussion occurred within the public realm of newspapers and magazines, and not only among politicians and civil servants.

Part of the reason for this concern was an apparent increase in the numbers of poor whites (this will be discussed below). When commentators described the Cape's 'agricultural' or 'pastoral' population, they did not mean the wealthy, middle-class Dutch-Afrikaner farmers in the districts close to Cape Town – the wine farmers of Stellenbosch and Paarl, or the wheat farmers of Malmesbury. 'White' or 'rural population' could mean many things, but in discourse on agriculture, education, and the colony's economic development from the 1870s onwards, these terms were used to denote white people who lived in the Cape's interior, who were poor, and who spoke 'Cape Dutch' – Charlie Immelman's 'patriotic' language mobilised by proto-Afrikaner nationalists from the 1870s onwards. The *CMM*'s articles about rural white childhoods were part of a theme in the writing on poor Dutch-Afrikaners in the South Africa's interior. White poverty had long been racialised in travelogues and accounts of colonial society. In the same way that the Irish in Britain were depicted as savages, so whites – the overwhelming majority of whom were Dutch-Afrikaans – living in poverty became racialised others, thus complicating notions that whiteness and power were necessarily connected.[6]

Before examining why the Cape's middle classes became so deeply anxious about the education available to this group of people in the colony, it is worth considering the nature of education in the Cape during the nineteenth century. The Cape's education department was founded in 1839. Headed by a superintendent, the three men who were appointed to the position during the nineteenth century – James Rose-Innes (1839–1859), Langham Dale (1859–1892), and Thomas Muir (1892–1915) – wielded almost unparalleled influence over the colonial government, and commanded a significant budget. Rose-Innes instituted a system of non-denominational public schools, all of which taught a curriculum approved of by the department, and were, theoretically, open to any child, regardless of race or gender. Elementary education was free or very cheap, while secondary schools charged higher fees.[7] The numbers of children attending school and the numbers of schools themselves did certainly increase from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, but those who attended school regularly were still a fraction of the total number of children of school-going age in the Cape (between seven and 14 years). As Chapter 3's discussion of Sunday schools noted, there was also an enormous disparity between the numbers of children enrolled in schools and those who

actually attended. In 1843, 5,318 white children were enrolled in state-aided schools, and by 1860 this number had jumped to 18,757, partly as a result of the success of the colony's programme of funding mission schools. In 1878, of a total of 60,000 white children of school-going age in the colony, only about a third – or 21,000 – were enrolled in public and mission schools, and fewer than 8,000 were estimated to be attending private schools, which were not obliged to furnish the education department with statistics. In other words, in 1878, more than half of the colony's white children were not attending school. The proportion of white children enrolled in schools increased slightly by the end of the century: the 1891 Census suggested that 41 per cent of white children of school-going age were enrolled in government and private schools.[8] Similar statistics were not kept for black children, a disparity which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Of those white children in school at the end of the 1870s, only 17 per cent were above Standard II level (were reading and writing fluently, and receiving instruction in subjects other than the 'three Rs'). In 1883, the Inspector-General, Donald Ross, suggested that 80 per cent of poor and rural children were in Standard I or below, meaning that they could barely read or write. Although a comparison with England – which had instituted a system of compulsory elementary education 13 years previously – may not be absolutely fair, it is worth noting that in 1891, 80 per cent of 5–14-year-olds in England were enrolled in Public Elementary Schools, with an average attendance of 62 per cent.[9] The first significant enquiry into the state of Cape education, the Watermeyer Commission (1861–1863), described

> the lamentable state of gross ignorance in which the white children in the back districts . . . are growing up . . . The standard of education reached in the elementary schools of the Cape Colony appears from the evidence to be very low. Though the attendance averages only 65 per cent and is irregular, it is almost incredible that not more than 5 per cent leave school with the capacity of reading with tolerable fluency, writing a plain hand, and working correctly examples in the simple rules of arithmetic.[10]

The commission's report became the basis for the landmark 1865 Education Act, which aimed to create a uniform, adequately funded system of education. The department established a three-tier system of schooling consisting of first-, second-, and third-class schools. First-class schools consisted of elementary and secondary divisions; second-class

schools provided an elementary education; and third-class aimed to teach 'religion and a little reading and writing'.[11] This system was paid for on what was dubbed the '£ for £' principle: schools and the district commissions which ran them (and these commissions consisted typically of local clergymen, civil servants, and professionals)[12] had 50 per cent of their costs reimbursed by the education department. Predominantly rural third-class schools received extra funding from the department and did not charge parents fees.[13] By 1853 there were a dozen state schools in the Cape, mainly in towns and villages, and six years later there were more than 50.[14] The prime beneficiary of the extension of state education was the white middle class, who could choose from a range of well-funded schools based mainly in Cape Town and other significant towns: in Cape Town the Zuid-Afrikaansche Athenaeum, later the South African College, founded in 1829, and Diocesan College in 1849; St Andrew's in Grahamstown (1856); the Grey Institute in Port Elizabeth (1856); the Graaff-Reinet College (1860); and the Gymnasia in Paarl (1857) and in Stellenbosch (1866). The Rhenish Institute (1860) in Stellenbosch, the Huguenot Seminary (1874) in Wellington, and Cape Town's St Cyprian's School (1871) and Good Hope Seminary (1873) provided very high-quality girls' elementary and secondary schooling. The launch of the Board of Examiners in 1858 was the first step towards the creation of an examining university.[15] Wealthier inhabitants of the interior could send their children to boarding school in Cape Town or nearby towns.[16]

The conundrum that faced the Department of Education was how to increase the numbers of poor, rural white children in school. Its response was to introduce a range of measures that, inadvertently, produced a fiendishly complicated, easily exploited, and frequently ineffectual state education system. In addition to private schools and the existing three classes of state-funded schools, the department provided some funding to mission schools. In 1882, it introduced farm schools. These required a minimum of only five pupils to be established and receive aid from the state, a measure which the department hoped would encourage farmers to found schools for their own children, and those of their white labourers. Circuit – or itinerant – teachers were introduced in 1887 to travel rural districts, but were replaced by free poor schools in 1893.[17] This complex, and occasionally contradictory, system was badly policed. Anyone could start a school and receive state funding if the school passed a minimum of requirements, and schools could – and did – open and close according to the whims and interests of those of who ran them.[18] Until the 1870s, the only person in the colony qualified to

inspect all of these schools was the superintendent, which was, as he noted himself, unrealistic.[19] Farmers struggled to establish schools, and particularly in very isolated regions. Not only were they responsible for providing boarding facilities for local children and accommodation for the school's teacher,[20] but they were responsible for the initial financial outlay and the voluminous administrative work required by the department. There was also a shortage of properly trained teachers in the colony, and during times of drought or disease farmers simply trekked away from their farms, and their farm schools. Those few successful farm schools frequently excluded the children of poor farmers and of the growing *bywoner* (tenant farmer) class.[21]

The range of strategies employed by the department to encourage, cajole, or, less often, intimidate white parents into sending their children to school regularly failed, ultimately, because they did not address parents' reasons – many of them rooted in the realities of life in a vast, sparsely populated, and often poor region – for not valuing formal education focused on academic attainment. Even if schools charged little or nothing in the way of fees, parents in isolated areas could not necessarily afford for their children to board at school, or even for them to be transported over long distances every day.[22] Contrary to contemporary arguments that poor whites were 'indifferent to education' and 'did not care' about what became of their children, rural parents understood the purpose and nature of education differently from the Department of Education. On the one hand, they believed that their children received a more useful preparation for the lives that they would lead as adults, at home. Book-learning at school – in English until the introduction of Dutch-medium tuition in 1882 – did not seem immediately relevant to managing livestock and running a homestead.[23] Indeed, a high proportion of adults in the interior had received limited education themselves. In 1860, only 60 per cent of whites could read and write, a figure which rose only slightly to 62 per cent 15 years later.[24] And on the other, parents needed children's labour. One minister noted disapprovingly that, when he asked poor, white farmers why their children were at home, 'they said [their children] had to look after the donkeys, or something of that sort'.[25] Dr Kolbe of the Catholic Church was correct when he suggested that educating children deprived poor families of a significant portion of their income. The children of poor farmers were employed at home, helping their parents to tend crops and livestock and manage whatever produce the household sold.[26] Children were needed to assist with the day-to-day running of farms. Inspectors and others noted that the attendance of those rural children – black and white – enrolled in

school was determined by their parents' ability to employ labourers to take on the work that they would usually have done.[27]

What the Department of Education – and, indeed, the DRC – required parents to do was to rethink the ways in which they organised labour and the relationship between their families and their livelihood. Urban, middle-class families in the Cape – in common with middle-class families in the rest of the industrialising world – had succeeded, largely, in separating the functions of work and home. On rural farms, poor families relied on the contributions of both parents and children. The successful extension of education into the colony's interior was, thus, reliant as much on training teachers and building schools as it was on altering the ways in which parents thought about their children's childhood: it was now to be a period of education away from the home, instead of training within its bounds – this will be discussed in greater depth below.

There were a number of reasons why, beginning in the 1870s, this training on farms was no longer deemed an appropriate way of raising white children. To begin with, elementary schooling was being made free and, in many cases, compulsory all over the world during this period. The passing of the 1870 Elementary Education Act in England paved the way towards compulsory, free education: compulsory school attendance was enforced by an 1880 Act, and all children received free elementary schooling from 1891 onwards. The minimum leaving age was raised from ten years in 1876 to 12 in 1899.[28] Between 1870 and 1918, compulsory elementary education was slowly rolled out across the United States.[29] Some of Britain's settler colonies followed this trend closely: Victoria's 1872 Education Act made all elementary schooling for white children free, compulsory, and secular, and New Zealand passed similar legislation in 1877.[30] Cape educationalists, politicians, clergymen, and journalists were acutely aware of these overseas developments. Their own heightened interest in the future of the colony – and, increasingly, in the future of South Africa – was a product of both material and discursive forces. The granting of responsible government in 1872, and the expansion of the colony's economy during the early 1870s as a result of the discovery of diamonds in 1868, positioned South Africa as a significant territory within the British imperial network. For the colony's English- and Dutch-speaking elites, these developments were signs of the strength of the Cape's political structures and also its economic promise: a colonial nationalist discourse which had been in the making since the 1830s and 1840s 'reached maturity in the 1870s'.[31] As Saul Dubow notes, colonial nationalism promoted the interests and

prosperity of the Cape over that of the empire. Colonial nationalists 'were people who, by birth or adoption, came to identify not only with the metropole but also with the country in which they lived'.[32] Although some commentators did insist this was a nationalism which incorporated the views, hopes, and aspirations of all the colony's inhabitants, regardless of race or creed,[33] as the century progressed, colonial nationalism became increasingly racially exclusive. The future prosperity of the Cape – and South Africa – needed to be in white hands, and white boys needed to be prepared to exploit the future potential of an industrialised region. The following section pays closer attention to debates about the provision of education to white boys – and the danger posed, apparently, by the schooling of black children.

## II

F.W. Reitz, an expert on colonial agriculture, wrote in the *CMM* in 1871:

> But who can tell whether in a similar manner [to the Industrial Revolution in Europe] the discovery of diamond and gold-mines may not produce capital, directly and indirectly, which, by the additional influx of consumers may spur on enterprise, cause large and extended irrigation works to be erected to supply the additional mouths, and gradually turn many a barren desert into a land flowing with milk and honey? But without education, – without those higher qualities which the morality of the New Testament tends to foster, the most fruitful countries . . . may become a howling wilderness instead of life to other lands.[34]

Fears about low rates of white education were accompanied by concerns that black children were being educated too well. As Dale warned in 1870: 'the children of the Dutch-speaking Colonial farmers, who will in turn become employers of labour, enjoy much less [*sic*] facilities for education than the children of the labouring poor'.[35] Superficially, there were few grounds for believing this. The provision of schooling to black children remained largely in the hands of missionary societies and English-speaking churches. Moreover, those black children who were in school represented only a tiny proportion of the total number of children of school-going age. According to the 1875 Census, there were approximately 171,581 black children under the age of 15 in the Cape, but only 31,322 of these were in school.[36] In the same year, 5 per cent of black adults reported that they could read and write, in comparison with 62 per cent of whites.[37] Why, then, this concern?

In theory, white children were intended to attend either private schools or the three-tier state schools, where they would receive an academic education which would prepare them to become colonial politicians, professionals, businessmen, and employers of labour. Black children, on the other hand, were supposed to receive basic education and a little vocational training in mission and aboriginal schools, most of which were in the Cape's eastern districts, to fit them for lives of employment in manual or semi-skilled labour. Both these schools received a little state funding, but never the same amount as full government schools. However, education in the colony was never this clear-cut. As mentioned above, a large proportion of impoverished white children attended mission schools. In 1878, of the 21,000 white children enrolled in school, 15,000 of these were at mission schools. This number dropped to 10,654 in 1891, but still represented a third of the total number of white children in state-aided schools.[38] This was the reason for the education department's decision to provide some state funding to mission schools in 1841, but the presence of white children in mission schools remained a cause of grave concern for the department. It disapproved of children being taught in racially mixed settings, and was anxious that these white children were receiving an education intended for those whose destiny – the department believed – was to join the ranks of labourers and servants. Tellingly, in 1892 it encouraged those mission schools where most of the pupils were white to become third-class government schools, a transformation which affected only the name of the school and not necessarily the quality or the content of the teaching.

The presence of white children in mission schools upset the notion that whiteness and mastery, and blackness and subservience, were inherently connected. These binaries were further disturbed by the widespread belief that the quality of education for black children was better than that for whites. It was certainly true that some missionary and aboriginal schools – the contemporary term to describe schools specifically for African children – did provide very high-quality education. While vocational training for white children in the Cape was introduced only towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Colonial Office had provided industrial schools for African children since 1855. The aim of these industrial schools – of which there were 48 in 1870 – was to train an African artisan class, and, being generally well organised and with wider curricula than most schools for whites, these schools trained 151 skilled workers, including 59 agriculturalists, and 47 women for household work within the first five years of their existence. This schooling was expensive: between 1855 and 1861, the Colonial

Office granted them £46,000. In 1856, they received £10,000 – about the same as that given to white education by the colonial government.[39] For similar reasons, aboriginal schools could provide excellent academic and vocational teaching. Receiving a small amount of funding from the Cape government (in 1870, this was only £3,477, in comparison with £23,043 for government – or white – schools) and located in the colony's eastern districts,[40] most aboriginal schools were supported by missionary societies and churches, mainly the Methodist church, but also the Church of England, Free Church of Scotland, and Presbyterian church. Some of this financial aid was very substantial, and caused a few institutions, such as Lovedale, Blythswood, and Healdtown, to offer an education which rivalled schools for white middle-class children in colonial centres.[41] As Muir noted, the education department could not prevent teachers in these schools from teaching Latin or other academic subjects if they so desired – and it is very clear that many of the Cape's politicians wished that the department had the powers so to do.

Employers were suspicious of potential black employees who were well educated, and believed that too long an education rendered black children unwilling to work.[42] In an article about domestic service in the Cape published in the *CMM*, the author suggested that employers hire only 'heathen' servants who lacked 'the conceit and impudence of [those] who are taught to read and write' on mission stations.[43] As a result of this, missionary and aboriginal schools which did provide secondary education were criticised sharply on the grounds that they were educating black children to the same standard – and, thus, to fulfil the same purpose in adult life – as white children.[44] This inversion of roles – educated black employers, uneducated white labourers – not only challenged white social, economic, and political supremacy but also provoked fears of white racial degeneration.[45] These were particularly heightened towards the end of the century as the ranks of impoverished *bywoners* and rural petit-bourgeoisie were swelled by the boom and bust that characterised the colony's economy after the middle of the century. While a wealthier and larger middle class had benefited from the Cape's newfound prosperity, there seemed to be an increasing number of poor whites in the colony's rural districts.[46] Travellers and journalists had described rural whites in the Cape in unflattering terms since well before the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They depicted these Dutch Afrikaners as ignorant, lazy, dirty, and indifferent to the progress of the Cape's towns and villages.[47] But the descriptions of rural white youth in the articles of the 1870s display a shift in emphasis. The concern was now for the impact of poverty on children. Not only

did it deny them an adequate education, but, according to Dale, '*Jan* and *Piet*, as soon as they can toddle, slouch about the homestead, or lie about in the veld, in charge of a few goats or head of cattle . . . they drift on to puberty'. It was 'a long dull, monotonous youth'.[48] Lacking adequate parental supervision, these were not childhoods which prepared children for adulthood.

When, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Abbie Ferguson at the Huguenot Seminary remarked that she wished to save Wellington's black children from their parents' influence, she rehearsed a familiar refrain in thinking about the education of poor children, both in South Africa and abroad.[49] F.W. Reitz recommended: 'What we want is to get the lads away for two or three years from the unobservant, listless existence of a back-country farm, and to train them where all their faculties will be awakened and kept awake.'[50] Boys needed to be removed from their homes altogether:

> an agency . . . is necessary to bring the boys away from the farm and train them in the order and discipline of a well-regulated home; where by mutual contact, and by the daily intercourse with superior minds, they may develop those qualities which are not wanting to their race, – truthfulness, self-reliance, emulation. A boarding-school is required in every district . . . where farmers' sons could be maintained and fairly educated at a rate not exceeding £20 each per annum.[51]

Dale went on to point out that should Dutch-Afrikaner youth remain on their parents' farms, a generation would be left with 'their minds a blank, their powers of observation undeveloped, their life a mere animal existence, listless, objectless, and without any aspiration after or thought of a life to come'.[52] Rural farms became, thus, a site for corrupting the (male) white youth. This was similar to the tension in middle-class households – in the Cape and abroad – between sending sons away to school to become independent, and the apparently feminising, even emasculating, influence of the women-dominated domestic space.[53] While extended girlhoods did not call into question middle-class femininities – indeed they allowed girls a period of time in which to make themselves into women – the same was not necessarily true for boys.[54] Longer boyhoods meant a delay of fully fledged, independent adulthood: boys remained at home throughout their teens and even into early adulthood, after the completion of school and university. Early years of employment were usually poorly paid, so many young men lived at home, along with their parents and unmarried sisters,

until they were able to support themselves financially.[55] If full-time employment, leaving home, and marriage signalled the achievement of adulthood, then middle-class young men were in danger of remaining boys for too long. Writing about the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, Julia Grant describes the so-called 'boy problem' which exercised educationalists, psychologists, and doctors of the era: 'Middle-class boys were thought to be victims of over-civilization and nervousness due to the repression of their masculine impulses.' These 'sissy' boys were feminised by their long exposure to their mothers, sisters, and nannies.[56]

There was a range of masculine identities at work in the Cape. DRC child-rearing manuals depicted fatherhood as the most important role which any man could play, suggesting that fathers should be as involved in raising children as in earning the salaries which supported their households.[57] In her memoir of her son, 31-year-old Willie, who died working as a missionary in the Transvaal, Maria Neethling described a young man who exemplified this kind of evangelical manhood: he dedicated himself to a selfless life of helping and healing the heathen as a medical missionary; he was devoted to his family and 'delighted in children'; he even longed for flowers in the parched northern Transvaal.[58] But other masculine identities were available too. Cape Town businessman M.M. Steyn's memoir of his childhood was as much a record of a cruel upbringing as it is a description of competing masculine identities: the domesticated, pious, and unassertive manhood of his brother-in-law and the aggressive violence of his father, who beat him and his brother regularly.[59] R.W. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity – the dominance of one masculine identity over others within society – is useful here.[60] Robert Morrell has described the construction of a hyper-masculine white, middle-class identity linked to a strong support of Empire, and the maintenance of white power, in late nineteenth-century Natal.[61] In Britain the hypermasculinity associated with the New Imperialism was partly a response to the increasing numbers of middle-class women entering employment, and to the raft of legislation introduced to protect married women's rights to property and their children, and also to increase access to divorce. The incipient women's suffrage movement, the Oscar Wilde trial, and the criminalisation of homosexuality all seemed to threaten white, heterosexual, middle-class male privilege.[62]

But in the Cape, commentators do not seem to have feared that white women were undermining white masculine privilege. The colonial suffrage movement was as yet in its infancy, and progressive legislation

on divorce, child custody, and women's property was introduced only after 1902.[63] In the Cape, the threat to white privilege was seen in racial terms.[64] Within a colonial setting the rural dilemma of the presence of unsupervised white boys on farms took on overtly racialised tones: Dutch-Afrikaner youth were at risk of 'degenerating into the grossest ignorance',[65] of becoming like the animals they tended or, more worryingly, like the country's indigenous population. As noted above, these remarks about rural antipathy for, or suspicion of, education were also part of a broader discourse which positioned poor whites as lacking in all the characteristics which constituted civilised, rational, and progressive behaviour.[66] Even at the end of the 1870s, the Karoo – now more easily accessible because of the construction of hard roads and the extension of the railway – was still frequently characterised as a wilderness.[67] Fear and disdain of rural people were related in part to a set of concerns about the colony's untamed interior, which was, so believed colonial politicians and scientists, inadequately managed and exploited by ignorant farmers. A progressive, scientific movement emerged during the late 1870s and 1880s, which manifested itself both in local discussions about texts such as Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1871) among the colonial intelligentsia,[68] and in efforts to improve management of sheep and cattle stocks, water reservoirs, soil erosion, and plant and animal disease. Dutch-Afrikaner farmers were often described as being deeply resistant to many of these modern and improving measures, and were, thus, figured as backward and anti-modern.[69]

This anti-modernity was conceived in racial terms. Poor black and white rural people were described in the same ways. An article published in the *Huguenot Seminary Annual* in 1898 depicted a chaotic, foul interior of a Karoo farm: 'so thickly did the flies buzz around the kitchen' that '[i]t was hardly safe to open one's mouth to speak', and a 'bare-footed baby sister with tearstained face and clayey hands' was the 'next martyr' to be washed in the dirty washing-up water.[70] Writing about her domestic servants in 1879, a contributor to the *CMM* complained that her two African servant girls were 'slovenly and untidy in dress and person', and she 'frequently found that [her] dear little children were irritated by the presence of parasites that had come off the heads and bodies of these disgusting girls'.[71] Both of these articles were written by white, middle-class English-speaking women to whom the interior of the colony was a vast, foreign, and terrifying space, antithetical to the rational civilisation to be found in the colony's urban settlements.[72] Educators and other commentators argued that by removing white boys from rural areas and educating them in the Cape's urban

centres, they could be civilised. Within this context, rural domesticity became a site where boundaries between civilised and uncivilised – between coloniser and colonised – were dangerously fluid. Boarding schools, on the other hand, were able to maintain these distinctions. Education became, then, a means not only of producing a new generation of politicians, farmers, businessmen, and other professionals who would exploit the Cape's own industrial revolution and would lead it as an increasingly politically and socially independent entity within the empire, but also as a way of moulding and forming young white men into the kinds of leaders that educationalists and colonial commentators thought would be beneficial to the Cape. Removed from the apparently disorganised households of their rural, white, and impoverished parents – where racial boundaries were dangerously blurred – they could be transformed into respectable, progressive, conscientious, and middle-class male citizens of the future.[73]

Only in 1892, with the appointment as Superintendent of Thomas Muir, who radically reorganised the Cape's education system (discussed in the following chapter), was the department able to begin with a project of extending education intended for white children into isolated, rural districts. In the intervening period, the organisation which did, systematically, begin to establish schools, networks of inspection, and other measures to improve rural education was the DRC. The church, though, held very different views about gender and the purpose of education.

## III

In 'Our Agricultural Population' Dale made it clear that he felt that the DRC was at least partly to blame for the apparently dire situation of the colony's rural white population. Instead of arguing that it was the Department of Education, and not the DRC, which was ultimately responsible for educating the colony's children and young people, the church's ministers were, clearly, moved by Dale's article. It was translated and reprinted in *De Kerkbode*, which also published a series of serious and concerned responses to the issues which Dale had raised. How then to account for Dale's appeal and also the DRC's response? As the only major colonial institution with a strong presence and influence in the Cape's interior, the DRC was the sole organisation which could both mobilise Dutch-Afrikaners in these districts to send their children to school and also build, run, and inspect schools in the interior. The tradition of *huisbesoek* allowed ministers to monitor children's

school attendance.[74] Dale commented: 'Can the great and influential Synod of the DRC, within the pale of whose communion this benighted population is, originate no measure for the extension of sound elementary instruction among them?'[75] Additionally, as Dale noted, it was not 'too difficult for her to compel her State-paid clergy to labour for the instruction of those whom they are paid to instruct'.[76] Although other churches received state funding too, as the colony's largest church in terms of membership, the DRC was the beneficiary of the bulk of that money.[77] The DRC – above all other churches in the Cape – was felt to have an obligation to assist the state. Other churches were certainly very involved in the provision of education – and particularly as regards mission and aboriginal schools – but none established its own education department, and none was as integral to the success of the colonial education department's work as the DRC. This was not the first, or the last, appeal from the colonial government to the DRC for assistance: as noted in Chapter 3, the DRC established its first Sunday school in 1844 in Cape Town as a result of a request from James Rose-Innes, the then Superintendent of Education.[78] Similarly, in 1892, the Cape minister for agriculture, John X. Merriman, wrote to Andrew Murray jun. asking that Murray encourage the DRC's ministers to preach to the colony's farmers the necessity of using modern means of combating a plague of locusts then devastating their crops, and not simply to wait for the plague to pass as a result of it being a '*straf des Heere*' (punishment from God).[79] Dale's request for help with the extension of schooling in the Cape was not, then, unprecedented, but, to some extent, the level of the DRC's response was. Given that, before 1857, *De Kerkbode* had only published one article on education, and that was a report on schooling in the Netherlands,[80] the church's intense involvement in colonial education in the 1870s, does seem, at least superficially, surprising.

However, like its interest in children, the DRC's educational work was linked to its transformation into an evangelical church. From the eighteenth century onwards, evangelicals in Europe and North America had been responsible for the extension of education – mainly in the form of Sunday and elementary schools – to members of their churches, but also the poorest and most deprived sections of society.[81] With the coming of the 1860 Great Revival, the DRC's involvement in colonial education not only increased but became considerably more systematic.[82] The church's interest in education immediately post-1860 allowed it to respond efficiently to Dale's appeal in the early 1870s. The DRC's 1862–1863 synod created an education commission directly answerable to the church's own superintendent for education, who fulfilled much

the same role as the colony's superintendent. The DRC's official, the first of whom was Charles Murray, had at his disposal a network of district school inspectors who reported to him annually. In contrast, the Cape's department hired its first inspectors only in 1872. Each of the DRC's parishes was obliged to appoint an inspector, who was usually a minister, to inspect every school in the parish, assist with the establishment of new schools, encourage parents to send their children to school, raise funds for education, and also collect statistics around school attendance. This meant that DRC inspectors were given the right to inspect government schools, and, as a result of this, the colonial Department of Education relied heavily on the work of DRC inspectors. The closeness between the colonial and DRC education departments was such that in 1873, the DRC appointed a special education superintendent specifically to liaise with the Cape Department of Education.[83]

In response to Dale's appeal, the DRC organised a special synod on education in 1873, the first and only one of its kind. The synod was a public affirmation of the DRC's role in the colony's system of education. It slightly reorganised and simplified its systems for inspection, appointed three superintendents because of the growing burden of the work, increased the stipends paid to the church's inspectors, and, crucially, now published the amounts contributed by each congregation to the education fund in *De Kerkbode*. This emphasised the significance of the fund to the overall aims of the church, making the point that contributions were as important as collections made for missionary work or other causes.[84] The DRC also redoubled its efforts to establish schools, particularly in rural districts, and to train teachers. In 1878 the church opened a Normal (or teachers' training) school in Cape Town, after the failure of a succession of similar institutions in the Cape. This one proved to be highly successful, partly because it was better resourced than the earlier schools. Candidates for teachers' examinations were also obliged to work for three years in state-supported elementary schools after graduating. Those who did not were required to pay back their scholarships to the DRC.[85] Individual DRC ministers were involved in establishing schools, and often for their middle-class parishioners. In Stellenbosch, for example, J.H. Neethling was one of the founders of the Stellenbosch Gymnasium, a boys' school, which would become the nucleus for Victoria College and, later, the University of Stellenbosch.[86]

DRC ministers were not, though, preoccupied with the education of white boys alone: the church's work in education was aimed at improving the reach and quality of rural schooling, training teachers, and

converting children. While the focus of the church was on its own congregation, the DRC organised Sunday schools for black children, and also ran schools on its mission stations. Although DRC ministers did not object to the education of black children, as many other Cape employers, politicians, and commentators did,[87] the church's priority was, as discussed in Chapter 3, increasingly the education of white children.[88] Andrew Murray jun.'s daughter Mary Murray became a DRC missionary and was the principal of a series of mission schools for African children in the South African Republic during the 1880s. The schools were mostly for children under the age of 12, and her focus was as much on the conversion and civilising of these children – by teaching the girls to sew, for example – as it was on teaching them to read and write.[89] Children who had been converted were encouraged to plead with their friends to become saved: 'Once in a while she goes out with the children to the heathen kraals; they sing all the way there, then speak to the people concerning their soul's salvations, and finally return, singing as before.'[90] As she had been trained to save souls as a missionary, so Mary used her position as a teacher to persuade her young pupils to become child evangelists – although only to other African children, and, specifically, their peers.

Despite the fact that the 'tiered' or state-aided schools that the DRC ran were attended largely by white children, the DRC intended them for a similar purpose: the conversion of children, and then the spreading of the gospel. Ironically, though, the DRC's willingness to work within the colonial system of education meant that its opportunities to convert children were limited by the Cape's policies on religious education. The colony's non-denominational system stipulated that while an hour could be devoted to religious worship during the school day – and the colony did not limit this to one particular denomination or religion – parents were entitled to exempt their children from that lesson. (Missionary schools were, of course, not included in this legislation.) There are no statistics to indicate how many parents exempted their children from these classes, but evidence suggests that the vast majority of parents did not.[91] So children who attended DRC-run government schools did receive religious instruction, but teachers had to limit this to an hour per day. As a result of this, DRC ministers emphasised the need to employ pious teachers who could influence children to become Christians by leading through example.[92]

The DRC was as alarmed about the lack of properly trained teachers in the colony (and this was certainly a legitimate concern – one of the main reasons why it was so difficult to open rural schools was the dearth of

teachers) as it was about the extension of schooling. The DRC's conception of a well-trained teacher went beyond simply academic training: teachers needed to be missionaries as well. It was for this reason that during the 1870s and 1880s the DRC concentrated its efforts on the education of girls to become, effectively, teacher–missionaries. Women were believed to be uniquely suited to train as teacher–missionaries. This role was conceived as being an extension of mothers' work within the home. Ministers suggested that women could – even should – be educated to the same standard as men, and also for entry to the public sphere. The DRC's interest in girls' education coincided with an international movement to extend schooling for middle-class girls in the 1870s.[93] Before this period, girls' attendance of school – regardless of race or class – was substantially lower than that of boys. The Department of Education attempted to remedy this by funding girls' schools in the 1850s and 1860s which taught needlework and household management alongside the normal curriculum, but these proved to be less than successful.[94] By the 1870s, though, a discursive shift in the understanding of the purpose of girls' education meant that middle-class parents were more willing to send their daughters to school. Also, they could afford to replace their daughters' labour – either within or without – the household.[95] In the early 1870s, the *CMM* published a series of articles arguing for the better provision of good-quality secondary schooling to the Cape's middle-class girls, and it is striking that no commentators appear to have seen fit to counter these pieces with arguments to the contrary. This was because, as in the case of debates abroad, claims that academic learning rendered women unfit for marriage were countered with conservative arguments which reiterated women's roles as wives and mothers.[96] 'Paterfamilias' wrote:

> To be really civilised, we must get rid of our prevailing notion that women are inherently mentally inferior to men, and accord to them, equally with our sons, the means of acquiring substantial and valuable knowledge. They will still be women; and, what is more, they will become better companions, and more capable of bringing up their children.

Nevertheless, the 'two sexes cannot work together on terms of equality', and the educated woman 'cannot be occupied as he [the educated man] is in professional pursuits'.[97]

Like boys' schools, most of these elite institutions for girls were concentrated in Cape Town and larger towns. The majority were affiliated with churches, such as the Anglican Springfield Convent and

St Cyprian's School, and received state funding.[98] Also, like boys' schools, girls' schools often provided a rigorously academic education, but it was framed in terms of girls' preparation to serve and to be useful: to be wives and mothers, and, in the case of the schools established by the DRC, to be teachers and missionaries. Andrew Murray jun. explained that 'The chief consideration which has given birth to this undertaking is the need for efficient Christian instruction in our land. And in addition to the general dearth of capable teachers, it is clear to us that an institution in which young girls can be trained for educational work is absolutely indispensable.'[99]

The Huguenot Seminary in Wellington was modelled on the Mount Holyoke Seminary in Connecticut. Founded by Mary Lyon in 1837 in the wake of a major evangelical revival in the region, the purpose of the school was to train girls to be teacher–missionaries. Lyon developed a rigorously academic system, and encouraged pupils to convert and to become involved in missionary work.[100] She was closely associated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, for which Mount Holyoke eventually supplied 10 per cent of all its women missionaries.[101] The school's alumnae had a reputation for leaving with a 'pious zeal to change the world'.[102] Having read a biography of Lyon,[103] Murray appealed to Mount Holyoke for assistance in establishing a South African version of the institution. Named after the small community of French Huguenot refugees who had settled in the district during the seventeenth century, the Huguenot Seminary was, in many ways, a fulfilment of the principles on which Mount Holyoke was founded. Lyon had encouraged girls to begin seminaries similar to hers all over the world – in, among other places, India, Persia, Turkey, and Mexico.[104] Huguenot was run initially by two Mount Holyoke alumni, Abbie Ferguson (1837–1919) and Anna Bliss (1843–1925), and they brought with them the curriculum, rules, roster, traditions, even the architectural plans, of the Connecticut school. They met with resounding success: from its first year, the Huguenot Seminary – which in its first decade provided what was, essentially, a secondary school education and teachers' training to young women between the ages of 15 and 20 – was constantly in need of extra room to house its overflow of pupils, and the girls came near the top of the colony's teaching examinations from 1875 onwards. By the 1880s, Huguenot was a prominent and respected feature on the educational landscape, providing both elementary and secondary schooling. In 1898 it established the country's first, and only, college for women.

The reasons for the school's popularity were related to Murray's own personal connection to the school, and also to its founding in the

midst of the 1874 DRC revival. Murray's fundraising tour during that year collected more than £2,000, at a time when most congregations could not contribute to the church's education fund because of the economic depression.[105] In a special sermon to the seminary's pupils after returning from the tour, Murray

> showed the importance of the education of the children being a Christian education. He said that sometimes he had felt tempted to leave the ministry and become a teacher the work was calling so loudly, and then he showed them that the influence of the teacher was stronger than that of the pastor and the relationship a closer one. He spoke so earnestly of the responsibility, the blessedness and the glory of the work that the girls were thrilled by it, and some of who[m] [who] had not felt ready for the work before, were led to look upon it as a privilege.[106]

While Dale simply desired that girls passed their teaching exams at a Normal school, the purpose of Huguenot was to ensure that qualified teachers were of the correct character to impart both secular and spiritual knowledge to their pupils.[107] This model of girls' education seemed to speak to the Cape's middle-class, Dutch-Afrikaner parents and their daughters. Although girls received a rigorously academic education, this was not meant to prepare them for careers and professional training: on the contrary, it was for the benefit of others, and children, in particular. Such was the demand for places that Huguenot was able to establish a network of branch seminaries in towns and villages in the colony's interior, many of them run by Mount Holyoke and, later, Huguenot alumnae. The first of these, Bloemhof Seminary in Stellenbosch and the Graaff-Reinet Seminary, were established in 1875 and 1876, the latter opened by Helen Murray, the youngest sister of Andrew Murray jun. The last school to be acquired by Huguenot was the Paarl Ladies' Seminary in 1890. In the intervening decades, schools were founded throughout the Cape, as well as in Pretoria and Bloemfontein in the Boer Republics, and in the Natal Colony.[108]

In Wellington, Huguenot became the nucleus of a collection of DRC educational institutions: in 1877, the DRC established its own Mission Institute, under the leadership of Abbie Ferguson's brother George, for both men and women; a teachers' training college separated from the seminary in 1898, at the same time as the Huguenot College was created; and an industrial school for poor white girls was founded in 1899.[109] In addition to this, two of the biggest and most important

South African women's organisations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Vrouwen Zendingbond (Women's Missionary Society) and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (as well as the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union), were founded at Huguenot.[110] Via the branch schools, Mission Institute, teachers' training college, the women's organisations founded by Huguenot teachers and pupils, and because the seminary was the school of choice for the Dutch-Afrikaner elite, Huguenot, more than any other girls' school, exerted an influence within that community. Its branch schools offered a generation of middle-class, mainly Dutch-Afrikaans, young women an education of equal standard to that of their brothers. Moreover, the women who ran the schools became role models, providing an alternative vision of middle-class femininity. In her autobiography, *My Beskeie Deel* (My Modest Contribution, 1972), the influential writer and journalist M.E. Rothmann credited the American teachers at the Swellendam Seminary for making her aware that she could choose a life beyond marriage and children:

> *En met dit alles was onse onderwyseresse na die openbare mening net so belangrik en gesaghebbend as enige hoof van die jongetjies se skool, gelykstaande met die predikante, die magistraat, die doktor en wie ook al! Vir ons het dit duidelik geword dat 'n meisie omtrent alles kennis moet opdoen: ons kan opgelei word om 'n ewe belangrike baan te betree as onse onderwyseresse. Die wêreld het vir ons oopgegaan.*[111] (According to general opinion, our teachers were just as important and authoritative as any headmaster, equal to the minister, the magistrate, the doctor and whoever else! It became clear to us that a girl had to acquire nearly everything there was to learn: we could be educated to be as important as our teachers. The world opened for us.)

By 1898 only 51 of the, roughly, 1,000 pupils who had attended the Huguenot Seminary had worked or were working as missionaries. In contrast, in 1895 it was estimated that 400 girls had received teachers' certificates, while 500 had taught.[112] For Ferguson and her colleagues, the fact that only a tiny proportion of former pupils became missionaries represented a failure of the Mount Holyoke system. Yet the much larger number of alumnae who taught pointed to a significant success. Huguenot submitted more pupils than any other school for the teachers' and matriculation examinations.[113] Of the 1,222 of the pupils who left the seminary between 1874 and 1897, only 565, or slightly more than 40 per cent, married. (A similar proportion of

American university-educated women also did not marry.)[114] As an analysis of Huguenot's school annuals demonstrates, by the 1890s, a discourse associated with the ideals of the *fin-de-siècle* New Woman was jostling for space alongside that of the teachers' vision of an evangelical womanhood.[115]

Despite Huguenot's association with emergent colonial feminist and suffrage movements (as in Britain and the United States, the Cape's women's suffrage organisation grew out of the activities of the WCTU and other temperance and moral purity societies),[116] in the view of its founders, its purpose remained the education of girls to further the DRC's evangelical aims. Their conversion was, in the views of DRC clergymen, as important as – or even more important than – their more formal, academic education. Murray noted that education should be 'subservient to the conversion of the children'.[117] The DRC's interest in schools for disabled children stemmed from this conceptualisation of the purpose of education: no child, ministers argued, should be excluded from education and, thus, conversion on the grounds of disability. In 1881 the DRC established the Institute for the Deaf and the Blind (the colony's second school for the deaf, and its first for blind children) in Worcester, a school which was funded and organised entirely by the church.[118]

The DRC's ministers were not uninterested in the education of boys. Far from it: almost as soon as the Huguenot Seminary was founded, Murray began raising funds for a boys' school in Wellington. But this school never materialised, and the DRC's efforts to establish boys' schools were never as successful as its work for girls' education. This was partly because schools for white, middle-class boys were more plentiful than those for girls. In Wellington, for instance, the existing public school for boys and the Blauwvallei School were well-established institutions by the time that Huguenot was founded in 1874. But, perhaps more importantly, the DRC's views on boys' education were out of step with those of the colony: it wanted to train teachers and missionaries. It is telling that when Murray seriously considered founding a boys' school in Wellington, he wrote that he wanted 'a Mt. Holyoke Seminary for boys'.[119] He intended to extend a model of girls' education to boys. Like Dale, he proposed that it should be 'a boarding school for boys where they can be under earnest influences and trained for Christian work'.[120] In Dale's view, boarding schools removed white boys from the disorder of rural upbringings and brought them into the civilised world of educated, urban white society. On the contrary, the model of education proposed by Murray placed boys in a domestic, family-like school

setting. Huguenot functioned rather like a family, with the teachers as parents and the girls encouraged to see each other as sisters.[121] Dale was suspicious of domesticity; Murray embraced it.

Despite the fact that the Department of Education relied on the DRC's extensive involvement in, particularly, the education of rural whites, the two institutions viewed the significance of colonial education in different ways. For Dale and other commentators, schools were needed to pull rural white children, particularly boys, into progressive, rational, and civilised modernity. For Murray, schools were sites where future Christians and workers for the church were to be moulded. This is not to suggest, though, that the DRC was unconcerned about rural white poverty – something which will be explored in the following chapter. The point is that Dale's appeal to the DRC signified a shift in the colonial state's conceptualisation of the value of white children. Increasingly, their rearing and schooling were seen as crucial to the region's future prosperity. Nonetheless, the department still appointed the DRC to address the problem of rural white poverty. Ironically, then, this attempt to extend schooling to rural whites was done on the DRC's own terms.

However, partly because the success of the DRC and the department's work to enrol more rural white children depended on parents radically revising the ways in which they lived and worked, colonial education remained chaotic and only sporadically effective. Anxiety about rural whites was renewed in the 1890s.

# 5

# Saving the Child to Save the Nation: Poverty, Whiteness, and the Destitute Children Relief Act

In June 1894 Sir Thomas Scanlen, member of Parliament for Cradock and former prime minister of the Cape, gave evidence to the committee on the Destitute Children Relief Bill. When asked by the chairman if he thought it 'a very hard case for a poor European if his child were forcibly taken away from him to a school for three years, and afterwards indentured, perhaps to a stranger, up to its twenty-first year', he responded:

> There you have to consider and come to a determination between what you call a hardship to the parent and the interests of society. I take it it is not in the interests of society that any children should grow up uneducated, and probably swell the criminal classes. . . . When a parent neglects that duty I think the State is quite justified in stepping in, and that the inconvenience, or supposed inconvenience, to the parent ought not to stand in the way of the interests of the State and the interests of the child.[1]

Although Scanlen's views were more strident than most of the other witnesses called by the committee,[2] his point that the interests of the Cape's white children intersected with those of the colonial state was shared by nearly all of the committee members and the individuals who gave evidence before them. Scanlen's argument that the colonial government had a right – even a duty – to remove white children from destitute or negligent parents was also picked up in discussion on the introduction of compulsory education for white children. The 1896 Report of the Select Committee on Education argued that 'evidence . . . conclusively proves that in consequence of irregular attendance at school such a very large number of children are allowed to grow up in ignorance and vice'.

As a result, 'we have come to the conclusion that a law to provide for compulsory school attendance has become not only desirable but necessary if Education is to be extended in an adequate manner in this Colony'.[3] Forty years previously, Bishop Gray of the Church of England had stated that he 'should not wish to see a compulsory system of education introduced into this colony' partly because he felt that many of the children who did receive free schooling were those 'who least require[d] it' and 'that they are carried on at a very needless expense to the Government'.[4] Even in 1872 – in the midst of the education crisis discussed in Chapter 4 – the Department of Education declined to investigate the potential for introducing free, compulsory elementary schooling as suggested by the DRC.[5]

During the 1890s children were at the centre of debates around poor whiteism, the so-called labour question, and of at least three parliamentary commissions of enquiry into childhood destitution, education, and labour. Colonial periodicals from all sides of the political spectrum, from the proto-Afrikaner nationalist *Patriot* of the Genootschap van Regte Afrikaners (GRA) to the English-language and pro-British *Cape Times*, expressed a deep concern about the predicament of the Cape's poor children. The crisis which so exercised Langham Dale, educationalists, clergymen, and other commentators in the 1870s was not resolved by the end of that decade; rather, it moved from being the almost exclusive concern of the DRC and the Department of Education to being widely discussed and analysed within the broader public realm in the colony. Chapter 4 argued that during the 1870s the better education and rearing of white children were seen increasingly as the best means of lifting the colony's white, rural population out of poverty and a backward way of life deplored by the Cape's progressives. From the late 1880s onwards, not only was this interest in children amplified, but the colonial state was more willing to take on responsibility for caring for and educating children. The 1895 Destitute Children Relief Act represented the moment at which the colonial government replaced the DRC as the institution most responsible for, and interested in, the colony's impoverished white children. This heightened concern for poor childhood was reflective of international trends, but was also shaped by the political, economic, and social circumstances of the colony. Nineteenth-century interest in poor children, and especially in those living in city slums, was related to industrialisation, urbanisation, and immigration. Although anxiety about children was frequently a reflection of middle-class worries about the nature of this change rather than about these children themselves,

industrialisation did alter the nature of childhood, both in South Africa and elsewhere.

This chapter's focus is twofold. Firstly, it examines increasing anxiety about the presence of apparently idle, or workless, young people on Cape Town's streets in the 1880s and 1890s. It positions the debates around what to do with these children and young people in the context of the changing nature of work in the colony, and particularly for young workers. Secondly, the chapter looks more closely at the 1895 Destitute Children Relief Act. Although its purpose was to lift poor whites out of poverty, the Act was introduced in the midst of a wider set of discussions on what to do with poor children, white or otherwise.

## I

Cape Town faced the same problems as any rapidly industrialised city: a dearth of housing, the expansion of slums, the difficulties of waste removal, and the expense of maintaining public buildings and spaces. Also, the city's population grew significantly. Partly as a result of assisted immigration, the population of Cape Town almost doubled from 45,000 in 1875 to 79,000 in 1891. It increased to 170,000 between 1891 and 1904. Immigrants came from Australia, Britain, and Europe, and a sizeable proportion came from within the colony. These were from the city's surrounding agricultural districts, the eastern region of the colony, Mozambique, and from what became German South-West Africa. Many – both black and white – were poor and in search of work.[6] Concern about the physical state of the city – its cleanliness, the upkeep of buildings – was linked to interest in the moral condition of its residents. The Clean Party, which contested municipal elections in Cape Town partly on the platform of improving the city's sanitation, drainage, and waste removal,[7] was linked to a coalition consisting of the Citizen's Law and Order League, the Anglican Church, the Anti-Gambling and Temperance League, and the Purity Society, which campaigned for the raising of the age of consent for girls from 12 to 14 years, and also for the better control, or eradication, of brothels and prostitution.[8] They, as well the large and influential South African chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WTCU), voiced concern about the apparently increasing numbers of poor children on the city's streets.[9]

Campaigners' interest in poor, urban childhood was part of a wider set of debates about the employment – and unemployment – of children and young people. Child labour was controlled by the colony's legal system, in the form of the Masters and Servants Acts. Apprenticeship

in the Cape allowed for the indenture of children, including destitute and orphaned children, until the age of 16.[10] Records are scanty as to detailed statistics around children's employment. According to the 1891 Census, 26 per cent of all the Cape's children aged 14 and younger were employed, and 16 per cent were enrolled at school. Most children in school were described as white and coloured. Forty per cent of white children, and 15 per cent of children described as coloured were enrolled at school. About 37 per cent of African children and 24 per cent of coloured children were employed, in comparison with only 8 per cent of white children.[11] These statistics, though, must be read with caution: they include those who would have been too young to work or to attend school, and the categories into which the census divided children were vaguely defined. Attendance at school, particularly weekly Sunday school, did not preclude employment, and, as Chapter 4 demonstrated, parents removed their children from school when their labour was required at home. Employment in rural areas was seasonal, and children seem to have worked during part of the year, spending the remaining months at school. As in Britain, children tended to enter employment at around 11 years.[12] Most girls under the age of 14 would have been domestic servants, or else seamstresses or washerwomen. The 1891 Census listed a total of 73 apprentices, some of whom must have been boys under the age of 14, and it is likely that many other boys entered into less formal apprenticeships with local artisans.[13] Boys could be newspaper sellers, fruit pickers, messengers, boot cleaners, chimney sweeps, and assistants in colonial businesses. At least a third of classified advertisements in Cape newspapers advertised simply for 'a boy', who would probably act as a general factotum. Although 'boy' could also refer to adult black men, it would seem that these advertisements sought boy children: some asked for 'boy apprentices', which would appear to indicate young apprentices, rather than black apprentices.[14]

Like most forms of employment in South Africa, child labour was raced. Most of the children who worked were black. It is worth noting that the colony had witnessed the mass employment of black children under slavery and the apprenticeship system as recently as the 1830s. This was in living memory of many colonial commentators. Mary Lancaster, the proprietor of a servants' registry office, believed that the 'best servants' were the 'daughters of slave parents'.[15] Black children did not cease working after 1838.[16] Indeed, there was a widespread expectation that they would work, as the 1891 Census remarked: 'the children belonging to the Aboriginal Races [are] naturally expected to earn, or to assist in earning, their own livelihood at a much younger age than those

of European birth or descent'.[17] The employment of black children fitted them for the roles which they would fulfil as adults: as labourers and workers.[18] But as Linda Chisholm argues, employment and the Cape's system of apprenticeship also controlled the movement of children and youth, particularly within rural areas. With urbanisation, greater numbers of young people flocked to Cape Town, giving rise to concerns about their behaviour in the city. The report of the Education Commission (1896) noted that 'one great and increasing deficiency in education in this Colony seems to be the want of instilling reverence for authority. The rising generation should be taught to be civil, courteous and respectful.'[19] Articles in colonial periodicals argued that children were not being suitably respectful of their parents' authority.[20] These concerns were not particular to Cape Town: the child-saving movement worried about the effects of urban living in the newly industrialised cities in late nineteenth-century Britain and the United States.[21] In the early and mid-twentieth century, colonial administrators in Lagos and Dar es Salaam worried about the politically and socially destabilising implications of the presence of children and young people on those cities' streets.[22] Significantly, in Lagos, even young women engaged in wage-earning labour were labelled 'delinquents', the term signalling administrators' view that any child operating in the city without adult supervision was somehow involved in criminal activity.[23]

Similarly, officials, politicians, philanthropists, and others were preoccupied both with how to employ apparently idle children on Cape Town's streets and with the kinds of work that some children and young people were doing in the city. These concerns were related particularly to girls. Anxiety about the urbanisation of young women was not particular to the Cape in the late nineteenth century.[24] In the 1920s and 1930s, concern about unmarried African girls working in Johannesburg caused missionaries to establish hostels which attempted to inculcate moral behaviour in their residents.[25] At the same time, middle-class city dwellers saw the increasing numbers of poor white young women in Johannesburg both as a chaotic, noisy, and socially disruptive force and as vulnerable to exploitation.[26]

In Cape Town in the 1880s and 1890s, commentators worried that young women were leaving domestic service for factory work. Indeed, there was a widespread perception that middle-class employers' difficulty in finding well-trained servants was because young women were choosing to work in factories instead. Annie Clegg and Mary Young Lambert, both servants' agents, reported to the 1894 Labour Commission, part of whose remit was to investigate an apparent shortage of domestic servants, that they had lost many servants to 'match and

cigarette making . . . everlasting flowing sorting, rough feather sorting' and to 'jam and matchstick-making'.[27] However, this belief was not borne out by the statistics gathered by the 1891 Census. During that year, it counted 62,584 domestic servants in the Cape Colony. Just over 90 per cent of these servants were female, and black women made up 84 per cent of the total domestic servant workforce.[28] Although this predominance of female domestic workers was unremarkable in European eyes, within southern Africa it was fairly unusual.[29] In Johannesburg most domestic workers were African and male at the turn of the nineteenth century.[30] The Cape's largely female workforce was the legacy of slavery, where female slaves tended to be domestic workers.

In contrast, only a tiny number of women were employed in the colony's industries in 1891: out of a total of 15,934 industrial workers, 2,851 were women – considerably fewer than the 57,531 women in service.[31] Since the 1870s, when the printing firm Saul Solomon & Co. hired women in the place of men as bookbinders and typesetters, increasing numbers of women were employed by workshops and factories in a range of activities from cigar-rolling and boot-making to upholstering and clerical work. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the numbers of female domestic workers had declined since 1875.[32] The majority of young women entering service in Cape Town were economic migrants. Aged between 14 and 15 years, most young women were employed as maids-of-all-work who, as the title suggests, were responsible for cleaning, some cooking, and, perhaps, occasional childcare.[33] Very few of these young women were white, as the doctor Jane Elizabeth Waterston explained in her description of a group of 20 young women, all of whom had travelled to Cape Town in search of work but been trapped into prostitution:

> Five were from Cape Town, fifteen from the country . . . There was one Malay. Some were Dutch Reformed, others were of the English Church. All had been baptised in a Christian Church. One was the grandchild of a slave. Others could not give their nationality. Some said they were Hottentots. The smartest one referred to was half-white. Others were of a Hottentot-Mozambique mixture. Not one had the slightest touch of the Kaffir. They generally called themselves Cape girls. One informed me that her mother was a Mozambique, her father a Hottentot. All were coloured except one, and she was half-coloured.[34]

As Charles van Onselen has noted about the Witwatersrand in the 1890s, 'in town and country alike poor Afrikaner women were

notoriously averse to going into service'.[35] While some poor white girls had been trained and employed successfully by the Girls' Friendly Society in Cape Town, it was still very rare for them to seek employment as servants.[36] (Only a very small number of white girls were employed in factories as well.) White domestic servants were certainly paid more than their black counterparts, and there was some demand for foreign labour,[37] but this, as the Cape Town agent of the Girls' Friendly Society made the point, caused many employers to prefer an 'ordinary rough coloured girl, who does not give herself airs' precisely because they could pay her the going rate.[38] The basic pay for a young woman in her first position as a domestic servant was about 25s. a month. In contrast, newly employed female factory workers received half this amount, at 12s. 6d. per month. Most girls earned around 15s., although those who were exceptionally fast and efficient could after 'several years' earn £1 15s. As W. Dieterle, the manager of J.H. Sturk's, a cigar manufacturer, commented, girls working in factories 'live three times worse than when in service'. Despite this, around 12 girls applied for every position advertised by Sturk's, and Dieterle was at a loss to account for this.[39] But there was some truth to the view that young women preferred factory work.

In their evidence to the Labour Commission, Thomas Lightfoot and Henry Osborne, both Church of England ministers and missionaries sympathetic to young women in service, explained that servants' work was characterised by long hours and was physically demanding and lonely.[40] Lightfoot commented that the 'attractions to [factory work] are that [servants] are not confined to the kitchen, as in domestic service, frequently without companions, or with an unsympathetic mistress'.[41] Osborne added: 'domestic servants hours are too long . . . They have to get up at perhaps 5.30 in the morning and keep up to ten or 11 at night, where they are the general servants in a family.' Most had one afternoon off a month, and were permitted to attend church only every second Sunday.[42] In contrast, girls working in Sturk's matchstick factory began work at seven o'clock, took an hour at midday for dinner, and finished at five o'clock in the afternoon. Domestic servants lacked privacy and had little control over their free time. Not only did the shop or factory girl have the opportunity 'to make her own dresses', but her evenings and Sundays were free, and she did not run the risk of being sacked if she had to miss work due to illness or another emergency (she would, though, lose the day's wages). In addition to this, domestic workers' living conditions were notoriously bad. Unpleasant living conditions were the main reason for immigrant domestic servants leaving

their employers. Osborne mentioned that he knew 'two white girls who were in the Somerset Hospital with typhoid fever. They were housed in a ruinous outhouse, with a dam or pool of water under the floor.'[43]

This would have been an exhausting, lonely, and precarious existence for any person, but for a girl in her mid-teens away from home for the first time it would have been particularly difficult. She had little or no job security: she had no legal recourse if her employers mistreated her, refused her wages, or denied her medical assistance. The colony's Masters and Servants Acts were weighted heavily in favour of the former.[44] Also, servants were at risk of sexual exploitation from their employers. In a rare letter to the *Cape Argus* in 1893, a domestic servant wrote that servants in Cape Town were 'over-worked, ill-fed, granted a day off from drudgery with ill grace, and provided with sleeping accommodation fit for a dog sometimes'. The author complained: 'A few months after my arrival my master . . . made overtures to me which were calculated to put me on a level with the unfortunates of the gutter.' Tellingly, she noted that servants were 'contemptuously called slavies [*sic*] to their faces'.[45] Fewer than 60 years after the abolition of slavery, it continued to frame interactions between masters and servants. Indeed, for this reason, it is likely that black parents viewed the employment of their daughters with some nervousness, even displeasure.[46]

What makes the 1893 letter so remarkable was that it acted as a corrective to the view that young, female domestic servants were responsible for leading white middle-class husbands astray.[47] Indeed, factory girls were also accused of 'looseness and immorality',[48] and several argued before the Labour Commission that there was a strong link between factory work and prostitution. They did so in the context of heightened concern about the increasing numbers of prostitutes on Cape Town's streets, many of them recent immigrants from Europe.[49] It was certainly true that many of the local women who worked as prostitutes had arrived in Cape Town in the hope of finding places in domestic service. This anxiety about girls' dangerous sexuality points to a wider set of concerns about the presence of young women in Cape Town who were not under the supervision of parents or husbands. Factory girls, in particular, had both leisure time and disposable income, which they could choose to spend as they pleased. Although characterised by Osborne, Lightfoot, and others as members of the deserving poor – as people who worked to pull themselves out of relative poverty – factory workers still upset notions of what kinds of work were appropriate for young women to perform. Although in wage-earning employment, at least domestic workers remained within the feminine space of the home.

None of the debates over factory work or domestic service questioned whether it was appropriate for children or young people to work. In contrast, partly as a result of restrictions on child labour, the number of children in work decreased in Britain during this period. In the industrial centre of Bradford, for example, nearly 40 per cent of children were employed between 1861 and 1871, but this dropped to 8 per cent after elementary education was made compulsory.[50] Without such restrictions, and with expanding industry seeking employees, the numbers of children in work in the Cape could only increase – and with the approval of the colonial state.[51] It is important, though, neither to overstate the opposition to the employment of children abroad nor to conflate approval of child labour with the endorsement of children's exploitation. It was certainly the case that children and young people were exploited, and even enslaved,[52] by employers in South Africa, but Cape politicians believed that work would teach children and young people discipline, self-sufficiency, and conscientiousness. Until at least the middle of the nineteenth century, this was the dominant view in Britain, particularly as regards the children of the poor:

> Pamphleteers and others who aimed to influence official policy towards the poor shared a triple concern that the children of the poor should not be idle, that they should acquire habits which would stand them in good stead as adults, and that they should contribute as much as possible to their own upkeep. The first two objectives could be met by a suitable structuring of the children's time, whether in education or in productive labour, the third only by productive labour. In either case children would be considered to be employed; only if their time was unstructured would they fall into the category of the unemployed.[53]

When colonial commentators described the numbers of poor children in Cape Town at the end of the century, their chief concern was that these children appeared not to be engaged in any form of productive activity. Unlike middle-class children whose free time, as discussed in Chapter 3, was integral to the making of middle-class adulthood, poor children's leisure time was understood as potentially dangerous. Cape Town's politicians, ministers, and missionaries believed that the city was overrun by poor children. Osborne noted that walking the short distance of a third of a mile between St Mark's and St Philip's missions in District Six, one of the most impoverished and racially diverse parts of Cape Town, he 'counted 123 children between the ages of 4 and 12 in

the street'.[54] Echoing fears that children were increasingly unwilling to submit to adult authority, Osborne suggested that street children contributed to the disorder of the slum. The children were 'Mostly playing marbles or sitting on the stoeps, perhaps taking care of younger children. A few of them were running errands, as they had baskets, but for the most part they were just idling about and playing marbles.'[55] Osborne was not the only witness called before these commissions who described poor, urban children as 'idle'. Edmund Powell, the editor of the *Cape Argus*, referred to 'simple, worthless, idle' children.[56] James Crosby, Cape Town's resident magistrate, agreed that there were 'numbers of boys about town' who were 'running about', and 'doing nothing, leading an idle life'.[57]

Implicit in these fears about idle children was that children were mixing across social and, particularly, racial boundaries. Osborne suggested that the 'one-fifth' of the children on District Six's streets were white, and were just as idle as their black counterparts. He described 'four white boys, aged from 9 to 13, playing the whole day from morning till night, without anybody with them'.[58] Thomas Fuller of the Union Shipping Line noted that there were 'certain numbers' of white 'gutter children' who had contracted 'lazy loafing ways'.[59] Crosby explained that the majority of boys who ran 'about the Docks' and slept 'in tanks and cases' were under the age of 15, and were mostly black, but 'occasionally' white.[60] 'Laziness', 'idleness', and 'loafing' represented a threat to social order: not only were these children not being prepared to be useful colonial subjects, but in the absence of productive activity they were turning towards crime. Servant girls who became 'lazy' were believed to be at risk of falling into prostitution.[61] Osborne argued that idle children 'turn out to be curses to themselves and scourges to society'.[62] The 1891 Census provided, ostensibly, the statistical backing for assertions that the majority of the Cape's children were idle. It described at least 60 per cent of children under the age of 14 who were 'returned as of no occupation'.[63] But like the employment figures discussed above, this number of unemployed children was not necessarily reflective of children's and young people's lived realities. It is likely that these children were employed in activities which could not be described as waged labour, such as keeping house, caring for younger siblings and older relatives, gathering firewood and collecting water, tending and driving livestock, or assisting in family businesses.[64]

While some commentators suggested that most of the boys sleeping rough in Cape Town were runaway apprentices, or blamed parents for inadequately disciplining their sons, the reasons for children's presence

on the city's streets were complex. The records kept by the Ladies' Benevolent Society (LBS), a non-denominational philanthropic organisation founded in 1822, shed some light on the lives of impoverished families in Cape Town.[65] By far the greatest number of people who applied for pensions and small grants from the LBS were abandoned wives or widows with small children, destitute families with unemployed parents, and the sick and disabled. All of these applicants relied heavily on the children's wage-earning labour.[66] Children who were too young to work or could not find employment were sent out to beg. Babies and very young children were a financial burden, and were frequently given to friends to look after, sent to relatives in the countryside, offered up for adoption, or placed in an orphanage.[67] Home was not necessarily a secure space for children, and particularly for those who were too young to work. The children who occupied Cape Town's streets would have come from these households, where parents or older siblings were unable to care for them during the day, or where there was neither adequate food nor living space. Streets became playgrounds. They were a refuge from crowded households and, occasionally, a source of income. Osborne accused boys of gambling, and begging was perceived to be a growing problem.[68] However, many may have worked for part of the day, and then spent the rest of their time playing on the streets. Lightfoot believed that the demand for 'errand and newspaper boys is so great that they can obtain employment for a few hours a day and earn an appreciable addition to their parents' income, and for the rest of the day rove about the streets'.[69] Streets were dangerous places too, and much of Lightfoot and Osborne's concern for street children stemmed from a fear that they were at risk of physical danger, as well as moral corruption. Osborne described one boy who was 'exceedingly troublesome', and who had been recently imprisoned for attacking and robbing another boy at a Church of England mission school. He had a long history of bad behaviour, and 'his mother can do nothing with him. Lately he has played truant and his mother said she "dressed him naked"; but he ran off to play in a naked state.'[70]

As is evident in their use of terms such as 'street Arab', 'waifs and strays', and 'urchins', colonial commentators were aware of international discourses which conceptualised the city as a dangerous space for children.[71] However, Timothy Gilfoyle argues that city streets 'offered a separate world for children with its own distinct milieu. The street proved more formative than either educational or municipal institutions, ultimately compelling youths to place their primary loyalty and identity with their peers.'[72] For Cape Town's poor children, the street

was a playground, a source of income, and a refuge from overcrowded households. Yet these childhoods – on filthy, busy streets – were also violent and dangerous.These urban childhoods were also anything but idle. Idleness did not necessarily mean not working at all. It referred also to engagement in illegal and unproductive activity. It is striking that Osborne described playing games such as marbles as idle behaviour. These children's play was not viewed approvingly because it was not part of a generally productive childhood, like that of middle-class children. In the language of the day, the deserving and respectable poor were marked out by their willingness to work – idle children fell into the category of undeserving poor. Additionally, not working took on racial overtones. Black adults who did not work were described as idle. White employers complained that residents on mission stations were lazy and 'hung about'.[73] As Chapter 4 argued, the education of black children was believed to be detrimental to the prospects of white children. However, this did not mean that white children should be excluded from work. Far from it: although white children, particularly poor white children, needed to be educated to a higher standard than their black counterparts, their entry into employment was absolutely vital to shoring up white supremacy. All children should work – the difference was in the kind of work they performed.

It was in this context that a number of institutions and organisations attempted to impose some order on poor urban children. In 1882 William Porter, the colony's attorney-general, founded the Porter Reformatory in response to a perceived rise in rates of crime and begging in Cape Town. The Cape did not possess a juvenile justice system during the nineteenth century, and children were punished alongside adults. The Porter Reformatory was the first instance of children being kept separate from adult offenders. Like the British institutions on which it was modelled, its existence was underpinned by a belief that even children convicted of crimes had the potential to be made good.[74] It removed juvenile offenders from the surroundings and the circumstances which caused them to break the law in the first place, and attempted to mould them into productive, hard-working adults.[75] It complemented existing colonial models of regulating child labour: its inmates were enrolled as apprentices, and were taught a variety of skills – basket-weaving, animal husbandry, sewing – which assisted with the financial upkeep of the institution. It housed black and white boys and girls between the ages of around eight and 16 years, but it was only after the reformatory was taken over by the colonial government in 1889 that work and living spaces were segregated, reflecting a broader

process underway in colonial society during the period.[76] White boys were allowed more personal freedom, and were provided with industrial training and a better standard of elementary education. Black boys were given only manual work.[77]

The Porter Reformatory was not the only organisation which attempted to reform urban children. Some of these societies were church-based, such as the Anglican Church Lads' Brigade. By 1895 the brigade had three branches in Cape Town, each with a membership of between 80 and 120 white, adolescent boys, and hoped to form new companies in Kimberley and Salt River, a working-class suburb of Cape Town.[78] The brigade's purpose was to mould working-class boys into disciplined, obedient, and hard-working young men. Like Sunday school, the brigade was an attempt to control and contain a white, male, working-class group which middle-class observers believed to be potentially disruptive. The brigade also instilled a particular gendered identity. This lads' brigade was part of an international network of boys' brigades which emerged during the 1870s and 1880s. Modelled on the chivalric model offered by Arthurian legend, and serving as a precursor to the Boy Scout movement, the brigades 'sought to help young men navigate the teen years' by promoting a kind of muscular Christianity that would, organisers hoped, prepare boys to be the kind of adventurous, hardy, risk-taking men who would be of future benefit to the nation.[79]

Running through the discourses on the employment and unemployment of poor children and young people in Cape Town was an anxiety about race and, more specifically, about the extent to which poverty cut through (often vaguely defined) racial categories. This was particularly clear in Osborne's point that there were 'lightly coloured children of all sorts' in his school 'because in some families you will find white children and light coloured children'.[80] In the context of emerging colonial nationalisms and an increasing concern in the midst of industrialisation about how best to retain political, economic, and social power within white hands, being able to distinguish between who was – and who was not – a white child became crucial to shoring up white power. Part of the purpose of the 1895 Destitute Children Relief Act was to do precisely this.

## II

Debates about what to do with Cape Town's street children in the 1880s and 1890s overlapped with a widespread discussion about how to end the cycle of white poverty. But, although there were certainly greater

numbers of impoverished whites on Cape Town's streets by the end of the century, the discovery of poor whiteism in the 1890s was, like the education crisis of the 1870s, more of a reflection of white, middle-class concerns about the future of South Africa than a response to any real changes in the nature of colonial poverty. Rates of white poverty had certainly increased during the middle of the century. Recurrent droughts and the sharp commercial recessions which punctuated the Cape's rapid economic expansion and industrialisation during the second half of the nineteenth century had a disproportionate impact on small, rural farmers. Rural insolvencies were a feature of the economic downturns in the late 1870s and early 1880s, swelling the numbers of white farmers who had lost both their land and their livestock. They became tenant farmers, engaged in poorly paid rural activities, such as prickly pear eradication and wood-gathering.[81] In periodicals, the colonial middle class agreed that poor, rural whites were responsible for their own misfortune.[82]

However, attitudes towards poor whites changed in the 1890s. Firstly, decades of poor education meant that a generation of impoverished whites was unemployable. Those who moved to Cape Town and other urban centres in search of work found that employers favoured better-trained black labourers, whose wages were lower, or newly arrived immigrants from Europe.[83] Secondly, both in South Africa and in the rest of the world, poverty was racialised during the 1880s and 1890s. The existence of unemployed and unemployable poor whites challenged the association of natural supremacy and the exercise of power with whiteness. The term 'poor white' no longer referred only to white people who lived in poverty, but, rather, it invoked a set of fears around racial mixing and white superiority.[84] Finally, and connected to this, the emergence of an early Afrikaner nationalism and the entry of middle-class Dutch-Afrikaners into Cape politics contributed to the shaping of a distinct Afrikaner ethnic identity towards the end of the century. The majority of poor whites were Dutch-Afrikaans, and had been viewed with a certain amount of disdain by middle-class Dutch-Afrikaners in the 1860s and 1870s. By the end of the century, the middle class expressed a sense of responsibility for this poor underclass on the grounds that they were all Afrikaners. Addressing the Afrikaner Bond in 1893, Rev. A.J.L. Hofmeyr suggested that 'we must take these poor people by the hand' to 'save Africa for the Afrikanders'.[85]

The language used to describe poor, urban children and poor whites was, occasionally, strikingly similar. Both groups were accused of being idle. As J.M. Coetzee has argued, the idea of idleness as a marker of

uncivilisation has a long genealogy in South Africa. The indigenous peoples with whom Dutch settlers came into contact in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were also described as idle. Along with a clutch of characteristics such as not washing with soap, living in impermanent structures, and nomadism, idleness constituted savage behaviour and thus helped to justify colonial conquest. 'Hottentots' were idle; Dutch settlers embodied the Protestant work ethic. In this way, white idleness was seen as a betrayal of the civilising mission, and as a retreat from European values.[86] Even by the end of the nineteenth century, as discussed above, white idleness was interpreted as a form of colonial crisis. This is particularly evident in the descriptions of white poverty compiled by the Department of Education's inspectors in the 1890s. Haldane Murray, credited by Ernst Malherbe with coining the term 'poor white' to 'designate a class' of people,[87] wrote the first of these reports in 1893: a detailed description of the lives of poor white children in Willowmore. As the son of Andrew Murray jun., Haldane Murray had long been aware of the numbers of poor white members of DRC congregations. He argued that their poverty was partly the product of out-of-date farming methods: they were 'wedded to the soil, to their cattle, to their hovel, to their hand-to-mouth existence'.[88] They had been reduced to 'laziness' by the 'evil custom' of dividing farms over several generations into ever smaller pieces of land. These plots could not be farmed for profit, and acted 'as an inducement to cousins to marry' ('and in several cases the evil effects of too close intermarriage are only too apparent').[89]

As in the 1870s, education was held up as the best means of ending the cycle of white poverty. Haldane Murray summed up this view when he wrote: 'The hope lies with the children; a thorough elementary education will enlarge their mental horizon and help to create that divine discontent so absolutely necessary for the progress for any individual or class, while industrial training . . . will enable them to find new openings for their present dormant energies.'[90] (There were some who clung to the view that education was bad for most people. One MP recommended 'more flogging and less education'. This seems, though, to have been a minority opinion.[91]) However, the circumstances of poor whites had still not changed to the extent that it was possible for them to send their children to school regularly. The DRC minister for Prince Albert, A.J.L. Hofmeyr, wrote of the poor white farmers in Namaqualand:

> The nature of the country and the circumstances of the people are unfavourable to the spread of education among the farming population. The farmers are poor. They live in tents or 'Matjes' houses

> (houses made of twigs and reeds), or in their wagons. Their circumstances compel them to lead a wandering life. Owing to the scarcity of native labour their own children herd their flocks.[92]

Not only did these poor white families operate on the fringes of colonial society and economy, but they seemed to resist efforts to bring them within the ambit of civilised urban living. Inspectors complained that parents of poor white children were loath to accept the authority of teachers. One reported that 'more than one' school in his district had been closed during the year because of 'improper interference' from parents. Parents, he wrote, were quick to remove children for a variety reasons: one pupil was withdrawn 'because he was not allowed to have a light in his bed-room', while others were taken away from school because their parents objected to them being punished or not being promoted to the next standard.[93] The wealth of information generated by, particularly, school inspectors and DRC ministers on rural white poverty was partly the product of a range of measures directed at finding ways of removing white children from poverty. Poor white adults, it was widely believed, could not be saved, but children certainly could. One Cape Town businessman remarked: 'the adults are irreclaimable. You must let them die off, and teach the young ones to work.'[94] Indeed, poor white adults were characterised largely as 'careless' and incompetent parents: Thomas te Water agreed that poor white children needed to be 'rescued' from their parents.[95] The Department of Education's efforts to collect information about poor white children – a strategy borrowed from the DRC – were the result of the comprehensive overhaul of the department after the appointment of Thomas Muir to the position of superintendent in 1892. He appointed 13 inspectors, one for each of the colony's magistracies, in the place of the original two inspectors-general. Like DRC school inspectors, the department's inspectors were charged with collecting statistics, assisting their districts to establish schools, and identifying the reasons for low school attendance. The information they collected indicated that the reasons for the low numbers of poor, rural white children at school were similar to those during the 1870s: there were too few trained teachers; poverty and drought caused small rural schools to close down when parents ran out of money or moved away; state-aided schools were expensive, complex, and time-consuming to run; and parents did not appear to see the worth of allowing their children to attend school full-time and over an extended period.[96]

There were, though, differences in the responses to efforts to encourage more white children to attend school. One of the first measures

introduced by the department in the early 1890s was actively to limit well-funded education to black children. The report of the 1896 commission on education noted with approval 'that no public money is given for the instruction of Aboriginal Natives in higher branches of education'. It explained that 'state-aided education for Aboriginal Natives should be of a purely elementary character'. Similarly, it commented that 'coloured children are frequently allowed to remain too long at school – certainly it is not desirable that they should remain after they have passed the third standard or attained the age of fourteen years'.[97] The department also began to publish attendance statistics 'arranged according to the colour of the pupils' in 1894, discouraged white children from attending mission schools (and renamed these schools 'third-class' schools), and reserved first-class schools for white children.[98] Secondly, all inspectors recommended that compulsory elementary education be introduced, and advised that rural white children attend industrial schools to train them to be skilled artisans and productive farmers. They had to be removed from their parents to learn 'working habits' and to become integrated into white, middle-class colonial society.[99] In 1893, John X. Merriman wrote to Andrew Murray jun., requesting – for the same reasons that Langham Dale had in the 1870s – that the DRC assist in establishing industrial schools for poor whites.[100] The DRC had certainly instituted a range of measures to address rural white poverty long before 1893. A few parishes had encouraged local schools to accept poor white children for low or no fees, and compiled lists of white children of school-going age to gauge the extent of their school attendance.[101] But the church which responded to Merriman – and, as in the 1870s, it swiftly convened a special conference on the education of poor white children – had changed in some significant ways, partly in response to the Cape's shifting political landscape.

The same forces which invigorated colonial nationalism – Responsible Government, and the economic boom caused by the early years of the mineral revolution – also caused the emergence of the first manifestations of an Afrikaner nationalism. This nationalism was rooted in the south-western Cape. The first nationalists were drawn from the educated, middle-class Dutch-Afrikaners of these districts whose participation in colonial politics had been, before the 1870s, very limited. Responsible Government made political representation possible, and competition over the control of increasing state revenues made political involvement ever more desirable. Unlike other industries in the Cape, wheat and wine farmers had not benefited from the colony's economic

development to the same extent: a combination of droughts, diseases, and fluctuating prices meant that many of these farmers were facing financial ruin by the end of the decade. This served to mobilise farmers as an interest group within Cape politics, and throughout the 1870s and 1880s they coalesced into a collection of organisations representing the interests of farmers.[102]

The two most prominent of these were the Zuidafrikaanse Boeren Beschermings Vereniging (BBV, South African Farmers' Protection Society), founded in 1878 by the prominent politician 'Onze Jan' ('Our Jan') Hofmeyr, and the Genootschap van Regte Afrikaners (GRA, Society of True Afrikaners), which was established by the DRC minister S.J. du Toit in Paarl in 1875.[103] The two organisations merged in 1880 as the Afrikaner Bond. Although the BBV represented the interests of a group of people who were overwhelmingly Dutch-Afrikaans, it was not, at the outset, an exclusively Afrikaner nationalist organisation. The GRA, on the other hand, set out to promote the cause of people whom they dubbed 'Afrikaners': those white inhabitants of the colony who spoke a language called Afrikaans and who identified themselves as Afrikaners first and foremost. Hermann Giliomee describes the differences between the two organisations' membership and aims: the GRA 'was a predominantly populist movement which attracted the middling and small farmers. It urged cooperative shops, consumer boycotts, nationalist banks and an aggressive assertion of language and other ethnic claims. In contrast, Hofmeyr's BBV represented the progressive wheat and wine farmers and the middlemen in the towns.'[104] The GRA also claimed to represent the interests of the most disenfranchised section of the colony's white population: its poor, rural whites. Its work to draw attention to Afrikaans as a language in its own right – to reclaim what was dismissed by Dale as 'no language at all' – was part of its broader efforts to bring this group into colonial politics. Two of the GRA's founders, Arnoldus Pannevis and C.P. Hoogenhout, were schoolteachers in the Paarl area, and both agitated for the Bible to be translated into Afrikaans for the benefit of impoverished, rural whites who did not understand Dutch.[105]

Indeed, education was one of the GRA's major platforms. In its manifesto, it expressed concern that the English-medium government schools – which frequently taught Dutch to Dutch-Afrikaans children in English – were causing Dutch-Afrikaans children to become Anglicised, or to lose out on education altogether.[106] It was certainly true that many white, middle-class Dutch-Afrikaners chose to Anglicise their names. Like other colonial elites, middle-class Dutch-Afrikaners were bilingual,

speaking both their mother tongue and the language associated with power and colonial progress.[107] Indeed, Dutch was widely believed to be on the decline.[108] Karel Immelman renamed himself 'Charlie', and while aware of the GRA – he read the GRA's Afrikaans newspaper *Di Patriot* and referred jokingly to the 'Colonial Dutch' spoken by him, his family, and friends as the '*patriotse*' (patriotic) language – he chose to express himself in English. The future journalist and researcher M.E. Rothmann and her friends gave their children English first names, and corresponded in English, a language associated with learning, gentility, and sophistication.[109]

*Di Patriot* and the GRA's two volumes of poetry were critical of the DRC's girls' schools. Besides the fact that the fees for the Huguenot Seminary and its branches would have been too expensive for most of the GRA's supporters,[110] in common with other nationalist organisations it objected to the education of women beyond what was necessary for training them to be wives and mothers.[111] The GRA censured the schools for turning out Anglicised young women, whose loyalty to their *volk* was compromised by their long and academically rigorous education. Instead of being happy to be farmers' wives, wrote the poets affiliated to the GRA, the graduates of DRC schools preferred to marry ministers, write letters, and play the piano, rather than the more homely harmonium usually found on rural farms.[112]

GRA poets contrasted the strong, vigorous masculinity of rural Afrikaner life with the rarefied intellectual pursuits of DRC ministers. Indeed, the GRA was suspicious of the church's leadership's political loyalties, suggesting that Andrew Murray jun. and others were not fully committed to the upliftment of the Afrikaner *volk*.[113] Although less overtly critical of the DRC, the Bond's vision of education for the Cape also differed from that of the church. Like the GRA, the Bond argued that education should be used to shape a generation of whites who identified as Afrikaners, and whose primary allegiance was to South Africa, not to the Empire. It campaigned for Dutch-medium education and the introduction of a South Africa-centric curriculum aimed at instilling in Dutch-Afrikaans children a sense of shared ethnic identity rooted in a particular history, landscape, and culture.[114] Unlike a younger generation of Cape-trained ministers who were often sympathetic to this emergent Afrikaner nationalism, Murray and his fellow senior colleagues were ambivalent about it. Murray wrote in 1881: 'A more strongly developed national life in our half slumbering Dutch population will afford a more vigorous stick for the Christian life to be grafted on. If we cannot influence the movement directly,

we must try and put in the salt abundant by which we can save it from corruption.'[115] He and other ministers also understood themselves as loyal subjects of the British Empire. Helen Bradford's point that Dutch-Afrikaner society at the turn of the nineteenth century was divided between those dubbed 'Boers' (petit-bourgeois farmers) and 'Afrikaners' (urban, middle-class, professionals, and businessmen) is useful here.[116] Murray and his colleagues were part of the Cape's well-educated and well-travelled, bilingual white elite. These 'Queen's Afrikaners' voted in 1871 to allow all DRC clergymen to preach in English, if they preferred, and many conducted English services up until the late 1890s, despite sharp criticism from the *Patriot* and some members of the Bond. Nonetheless, in 1881, the DRC established a mission church specifically for its coloured members, meaning that this section of its congregation was no longer the primary responsibility of the mother church – which focused its interests specifically on its white members.[117]

In response to this criticism from nationalist organisations and also reflecting the politicisation of its own ministers, the DRC's 1894 synod, which affirmed its plans to establish industrial schools, stated explicitly that the DRC was the church of the Afrikaners – that it was a *volkskerk* (the church of the nation). One minister argued that the predicament of poor whites was a '*beroep op ons patriotism. Zij zijn één met ons in den bloede, één in geloof, één in doop, één in de hope op de zaligheid*' (call to our patriotism. They are one with us in blood, one in belief, one in baptism, one in the hope for salvation).[118] The synod concluded: '*Laat ons dankbaar zijn dat onse kerk nog naar waarheid landskerk heeten mag en dat de Afrikaners nog gebonden zijn aan haar*' (Let us be thankful that our church remains truly of the country and that the Afrikaners are still bonded to her).[119] This language was far closer to that of supporters of the Afrikaner Bond and the GRA than to that of the less politicised leadership of the church. Indeed, at a Bond meeting in 1893, the Rev. A.J.L. Hofmeyr of Prince Albert asked his audience to 'Reflect for a moment [on] the danger to the State to have such an army of what might be termed "White Barbarians" '.[120]

The church described its industrial schools as being part of a wider strategy for ending the cycle of white poverty.[121] The purpose of industrial education, wrote one minister, was to mould '*de kinderen van ons eigen volk*' (the children of our own nation) into '*nuttige en werkzame leden van kerk en maatschappij*' (useful and hard-working members of our church and society).[122] However, despite the fact that the industrial schools received generous government grants, the DRC's institutions

were not a success. Its first industrial schools were founded in Cape Town (1894) and Uitenhage and Stellenbosch in 1895 (the latter was an agricultural school). Its schools for girls, in Wynberg and Wellington, followed later in the decade.[123] Of these, the Cape Town school had the most promising beginnings. It opened with 19 boys between the ages of 12 and 18, and soon needed extra space to accommodate the demand for places. Boys did not pay fees,[124] and spent their days as apprentices in Cape Town businesses, learning carpentry and other trades.[125] This contact with local business was the reason for the Cape Town institution's short-lived success: it trained boys specifically for the market. Mr R. Rothkugel, the proprietor of a furniture maker and upholsterer, was 'very well satisfied' with his apprentices' work, but he complained of a lack of contact between DRC clergymen and tradesmen.[126] The school did not outlast the South African War. Similarly, the Uitenhage institution – which trained its pupils within the school instead of sending them out to learn from artisans and tradesmen – also closed by the end of the century. The Stellenbosch agricultural school limped on with a small number of pupils until it was amalgamated with Victoria College in 1917.

The problem was that, as Malherbe noted, these industrial schools 'were conceived in charity and with the idea of redemption'.[127] The DRC described its efforts to found industrial schools as '*liefdadig werk*' (charitable work), and not – as the Department of Education intended – as a means of supplying colonial industry and business with trained white workers.[128] The instruction at the schools was described as 'amateurish'; links with business and industry were not maintained; and the railway and mining industries were also beginning to establish their own schools, such as the South African School of Mines in Kimberley in 1895.[129] Perhaps one of the best indicators of the divergence between the DRC, the Department of Education, and also the Afrikaner nationalist movement was a letter to the Bond-supporting *Patriot* in which DRC ministers described the need for '*goedkoope Lovedales voor arme blanken*' (cheap Lovedales for poor whites).[130] The DRC's suggestion that white children needed to be sent to institutions modelled on a mission-run school for African children – and one considered to be particularly subversive by colonial politicians for the quality of schooling it provided – points to some political naivety within the DRC leadership.[131]

But industrial schools were not the only strategy employed to reach poor white children. Partly as a result of the Bond's entry into politics, poor whiteism became a political issue in the 1880s and 1890s. One of the products of this was the Destitute Children Relief Act in 1895.

## III

Having entered politics almost as soon as it was established in 1881, the Bond formed a coalition with the mining magnate and arch-imperialist turned colonial politician Cecil John Rhodes (1853–1902) between 1890 and 1895. This was an odd pairing that helped to politicise poor whiteism. Rhodes's political ambitions were driven by a vision of an Africa united under British rule. Although the Bond's definition of an 'Afrikaner' was inclusive to the extent that it referred to all whites whose political and social loyalties were to South Africa, it represented the interests of a group of people who were increasingly aware of themselves as 'Afrikaners' and who spoke Dutch, or Afrikaans. Its interest in poor whiteism – as a hindrance to the future of Afrikaners, and as a threat to white supremacy in the colony more generally – led to the introduction of the Destitute Children Relief Bill in 1894. Before then, regional meetings of the Bond had alluded repeatedly to the need to educate poor white children, and even to introduce compulsory education.[132] The Bond's interest in education as the best way of eradicating poor whiteism went beyond simply providing white children with the skills to become employable workers. As noted above, schooling in industrial and boarding schools was also intended to prepare white children, and particularly boys, to become adults who would participate actively in the colonial economy, to be employers of black labour, and to be the leaders of the colony in the future. Thomas te Water, the MP for Graaff-Reinet,[133] explained that he would like the education of 'Europeans' to be privileged above that of other groups, because he 'would like to see that the future of this country is in the hands of Europeans; that is why (when I find that a section of our European population is gradually falling back in the race) I say let us come to their help.'[134]

The Destitute Children Relief Bill was also introduced in the context of increasing state involvement in the lives of the colony's residents. Formulated explicitly 'to benefit the poor whites',[135] the Act required clergymen and justices of the peace to report cases of destitute white children to magistrates, who were authorised to take custody of these children and then place them in public schools or, after the age of 14, to apprentice them. As Colin Bundy, Linda Chisholm, and Vivian Bickford-Smith have noted, this legislation was not unprecedented.[136] The Act complemented existing laws regulating the apprenticeship of white children, and reflected the DRC and Department of Education's concerted attempts to eradicate poor whiteism through the better provision of elementary education in rural areas. Also, the Act was passed in 1894, five

years after the creation of a Department of Public Health, which allowed the state to prosecute parents who did not vaccinate their children during epidemics.[137] In 1895, the Deserted Wives and Children Protection Act forced husbands who deserted their wives to maintain their families financially.[138] In 1896, an education commission recommended that compulsory elementary education be implemented for white children. The committee appointed to gather evidence for the bill focused quite narrowly on the question of whether education or apprenticeship was the best way of training white children to become productive adults. Almost as a rule, the only witnesses who objected to apprenticeships were clergymen, schoolteachers, and members of the Cape's more politically liberal circles, such as the medical doctor Jane Elizabeth Waterston. These witnesses tended to argue that the longer poor children stayed in school, the better. Waterston suggested, for example, that all parents should be legally compelled to send their children to school, and that this education should be free. It was these same witnesses who had the fewest objections to the education of black children. The Church of England lamented that the Department of Education ignored the need for the 'simple and proper education' of black children, the colony's future 'workers and . . . toilers'.[139]

The commissioners and most of the witnesses agreed that white children should go to school, as Arthur Vanes, the MP for Uitenhage, noted: 'white children are more or less dependent on education. Coloured people can do more or less without education, and earn their living in the sphere of life to which they have been called.'[140] A commissioner added that it was 'just as necessary that . . . children should not only be sent to school, but that they should be taught to become useful members of society according to their position'.[141] For white children, this position was easily defined: 'the white population should maintain the ruling position in the county'.[142] But not all white children should receive a fully academic education. They needed, as the editor of the *Cape Times* argued, a 'plain simple' schooling to fit them for apprenticeships and semi-skilled work.[143] Industrial schools – at which most children would have boarded – suited the needs of poor white children ideally. Not only would children receive precisely the training they needed to work, but they would do so in an environment which would, as Thomas Lightfoot said to the labour commission, teach them 'habits of discipline, order and regularity'.[144] Indeed, these schools would remove poor white children from the semi-nomadic existence of their parents, whose days and years were divided according to the rhythms of seasonal labour. Bells and timetables closely regulated life in boarding schools. Clocks

represented the order and regularity of modern, civilised living.[145] Children would live in permanent structures, their day-to-day activities overseen by strict, but fair, teachers in *loco parentis*. Indeed, unlike some rural white parents, children would display due deference to the authority and superior training of their teachers. They would be taught the progressive, scientific farming methods which their parents shunned.

Implicit in this education was that poor white children should work. However, the question was, what kind of work was appropriate for white children to do? The Act made provision for destitute and neglected children to be apprenticed. This was in keeping with earlier legislation which allowed for the apprenticeship of white children until the age of 16. The Masters and Servants Acts were colour-blind to the extent that they did not presume that masters would be white and servants would be black, even if, practically, it was usually the case that masters were white and their employees were black.[146] The 1891 Census listed 53 out of the total of 73 apprentices as white.[147] What concerned the commissioners was that the Act, which allowed white girls to be apprenticed until the age of 20 and boys until 21, did not stipulate the varieties of work white children could perform.[148] Manual or unskilled labour 'would have a degrading effect' on white children.[149] Vanes suggested that it was 'demoralising' for 'white and African children' to sell 'newspapers side by side'.[150] Magistrates were instructed to use their discretion when choosing where to apprentice white children.

In other words, work was absolutely central to establishing children's racial status.[151] Yet it was, as commissioners and witnesses agreed, often impossible to distinguish between who was, and who was not, white. Arthur Vanes, the MP for Uitenhage, said that there was a 'theoretical difficulty' in defining who was and who was not white, but there was 'no practical difficulty'.[152] Muir explained: 'I find in the country that suppose you have two children of the very same colour, the public make a distinction.'[153] Because race was socially determined – because physical appearance was only one of several markers of racial identity – then other ways had to be found to distinguish between white and black children. One of these was the work that black and white children performed. Another was how white children were raised. The Act defined a white child as 'any child of European parentage' aged 15 years or under. Scanlen suggested that the commissioners include a clause specifying exactly what parents' duties towards their children were: he proposed 'It shall be the duty of the parent of every child to cause such child to receive sufficient elementary instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic.'[154] Although the Act did not in the end include this

clause, it implied that the most important feature of white childhood was parents who could afford to support their children financially and send them to school until their 15th birthday. The Act expected white parents to provide their children with upbringings that would mould them into working, productive, and useful adults.

Also, mirroring legislation passed abroad, the Act attempted to protect neglected and abused white children. It empowered ministers and magistrates to remove white children found 'habitually begging', 'wandering and not having any home or settled place of abode', or without 'possible means of subsistence' from their parents or guardians. The Act included children who lived in brothels or with prostitutes, and who associated or lived with adults who were thieves, 'drunkards', or convicted of vagrancy. Children would be returned to their parents only if they could prove that they were able to educate and support their children.[155] The Act enforced this particular understanding of white childhood by allowing the state to intervene in what was formerly considered to be the wholly sanctified space of the white home. When parents were unable to fulfil their 'parental duty of maintenance', the law was allowed to step in.[156] Scanlen argued: 'When a parent neglects that duty . . . the State is quite justified in stepping in, and that the inconvenience, or supposed inconvenience, to the parent ought not to stand in the way of the interests of the State and the interests of the child.'[157]

As the Act distinguished between black and white children, so it, more subtly, distinguished between those who were poor and those who were not. Both commissioners and witnesses' agreement that poor white children could be educated too much and that, ultimately, they should be put to work – primarily as artisans and even as semi-skilled labourers – drew a line between these children and white, middle-class children and young people who attended school until their late teens and who were not obliged to earn wages. This was particularly clear in the commissioners' rare references to girls. Even though the Act referred to both genders, its emphasis on industrial education and preparing children for the labour market made it clear that its primary interest was in boys. When witnesses were asked if they objected to girls being trained for domestic service, most did not. Muir, Scanlen, and Te Water would have been scandalised by the thought of white middle-class girls – like their daughters – entering service. The existence of white children who begged, were unemployed – in the broadest meaning of the term – or were exposed to 'immorality', in the language of the period, posed a threat to the maintenance of white power. The Act not only defined what a white childhood should consist of – particularly in

the absence of clear-cut means of determining 'white childhood' on the grounds of children's appearance – but it legislated for the maintenance of 'whiteness'.

The significance of the Act lay not, ultimately, in its implementation. In 1895, as a result of the Jameson Raid, an event which foreshadowed the outbreak of war between Britain and the Boer Republics in 1889, the Bond–Rhodes alliance fell apart. The Act was passed, but there is little evidence to suggest that it had any effect on white poverty. Its envisaged network of industrial boarding schools never materialised and, partly as a result of this, few ministers and magistrates attempted to remove white children from their parents. However, the Act was indicative of the colonial state's recognition that the education and welfare of white children were primarily its responsibility. A process begun by the DRC in the middle of the nineteenth century was completed when MPs agreed that it was in the interests of the state to take over the raising of white children from parents deemed to be incompetent or abusive.

But the Act was also an attempt to crystallise racial categories and hierarchies. Although mirroring similar debates in other industrialising countries, in the Cape concerns about the employment and unemployment of children and young people were partly a product of anxiety over the maintenance of white rule. During a period when racial identities were still relatively fluid, it become crucial to distinguish between white and black children, particularly when the good education of black children was seen to pose a threat to the employment and prospects of whites. In this way, the Act actually drew attention to the constructedness of racial categories. If, as MPs admitted, race was a social construct, then different ways had to be found to identify a white childhood. They turned, then, to a model of normalised, middle-class white childhood developed over the course of the century by DRC ministers.

# Conclusion

White South African children entered the international imagination during the South African War. After several years of escalating tension between Britain and the independent Zuid-Afrikaanshe Republiek (ZAR, the South African Republic, or 'Transvaal'), Paul Kruger, the president of the Transvaal, declared war on Britain on 11 October 1899. The Orange Free State soon entered into the war on the side of the ZAR. The conflict lasted until 1902 and was, as Bill Nasson argues, a war which 'belonged simultaneously to two different eras'. On the one hand, 'it was a traditional countryside war of movement, with cavalry and mounted infantry carrying the fight over enormous spaces', but on the other, it was an industrial war fought over control of the gold mines of the ZAR. British and Boer fighters used modern weapons, railways, telegraphs, and various forms of censorship and propaganda. It was also a total war, as British forces rounded up civilians – Boer and black women and children – into concentration camps.[1]

Photographs of white, Dutch-Afrikaner – or Boer – children from the ZAR and Free State suffering and dying in concentration camps, as well as the accounts of British mismanagement of Boer refugees written by the campaigner Emily Hobhouse, transformed these emaciated, desperate children into symbols of the barbarism of the conflict.[2] For many Boer men, these photographs served as a reminder of their inability to protect their women and children during the war. During the twentieth century, Boer children became central to the ways in which the conflict has been remembered.[3] White children were useful to Afrikaner culture brokers during the 1920s and 1930s as they constructed narratives of Afrikaner victimhood and heroism during the South African War.[4] They quoted the numbers of Boer women and children who perished in the camps – 27,000, more than 20,000 of whom were under the

age of 16 – to unite the *volk* in a memory of shared persecution and suffering. Children's usefulness lay in their mutability: the pictures of their suffering or their involvement in the conflict could be used to suggest both the cruelty of the British and the suffering and resilience of the Afrikaner nationalism.

This myth-making constituted of Boer children's misery in the camps has, necessarily, obscured the full range of children's experiences, both in the camps and in the conflict. It ignores the even worse conditions in which children lived in black camps. Between June 1901 and October 1902, it was estimated that of the 6,345 deaths recorded in black camps in the Transvaal, 5,160 – more than 80 per cent – were children.[5] In the camps for blacks established in the Orange River Colony between September and December 1901, 3,093 of the 3,832 reported deaths were children.[6] Moreover, while children did sicken and die in the camps, they also fought in the conflict, took sides and celebrated and mourned losses and victories, played, worked, and went to school. British officials were particularly interested in the children incarcerated in the camps. Elizabeth van Heyningen has described the camp hospitals as part of a strategy to pull Boer society into modernity.[7] Similarly, Alfred, Lord Milner, British High Commissioner for South Africa, who oversaw a significant part of the reconstruction of South Africa after 1902, understood the presence of large numbers of white and, to a lesser extent, black, children in the camps as an opportunity to shape loyal subjects of a future South African state firmly positioned within the British Empire.

Children in black concentration camps were put to work. Superintendents of camps near Johannesburg were notified of the need for servants in the city, and girls and boys were sent to two agencies established precisely to channel these children from the camps into domestic work. In all, 276 boys and 133 girls were supplied for housework.[8] Putting black children to work was to prepare them for the lives they would lead as adults. One official commented: 'our first duty should be to instil in them a sense of the value of labour'.[9] As befitting their future station in life, white children were sent to school. From February 1901, schools were established in the majority of camps in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, as well as in two Cape and six Natal camps. The numbers of children in the Transvaal camps more than doubled in the six months between November 1901 and May 1902: from 7,689 to 17,213. In the Orange Free State, almost 10,000 of the 13,000 Boer children in the camps were attending school. Across South Africa, more white children attended the camp schools than had been enrolled in education before 1899.[10] Milner understood education in the same terms as did the Cape's

superintendents of education: as a means of bringing Dutch-Afrikaners or Boers – and particularly those who were poor – into rational, ordered, progressive civilisation. Although the education system in the Cape – and, for that matter, in the rest of the country – did not improve immediately after the conclusion of the conflict, after 1910, in particular, the Union government channelled greater resources towards education, particularly for whites.

Lawrence Richardson, who visited the country after the war on behalf of the Society of Friends, observed that there was 'a desire on the part of many to "capture the children" ' to mould them to fit into a variety of visions for a post-war South Africa.[11] The South African child-saving movement was motivated partly by this desire to lift, particularly, white children out of poverty in preparation for Union in 1910. The Union of South Africa needed well-educated, hard-working, young white citizens. In some ways, the Destitute Children Relief Act foreshadowed the provisions made by the 1913 Children's Act and the campaigns – for the protection of children from abuse, for the regulation of children's employment – run by the child welfare movement during the 1920s and 1930s. Also, it heralded the increasing regulation of white childhood: the health, welfare, and education of white children were progressively monitored by charitable and state agencies.

The slow shift of interest in children and childhood from churches and philanthropic organisations to the state – from the DRC to the Cape government – was unique neither to South Africa nor to the Cape Colony. But in the Cape it occurred within a context where industrialisation not only changed the nature of childhood – lengthening white, middle-class childhoods, bringing more poor children into Cape Town and on to the city's streets and into its businesses and factories – but also gave rise to anxieties around the maintenance of white control over economic and political systems. Put crudely, by the 1870s and, more particularly, in the late 1880s and 1890s, politicians and others believed increasingly that white children and childhood needed to be mobilised in the service of the state.

I have tried to demonstrate that this process was complicated by the DRC's own extensive work among children. The church, deeply influenced by ministers' experiences as fathers, desired to bring ever greater numbers of children – especially white children as the century progressed – within its fold. Its organisations, clubs, Sunday schools, and, even, parallel system of education were aimed at evangelising children. The church worked towards channelling children's religious enthusiasm – so frightening to DRC ministers during the 1860 Great

Revival – into working for the church. It was only with the gradual politicisation of the DRC – its transformation into a *volkskerk* in the 1890s – that it began explicitly to work towards the uplifting of the children of its *volk*. In fact, the church's views on children and childhood help to illuminate its evolving attitudes both to its status as the church of the Dutch-Afrikaners (and of the Afrikaners) and, linked to this, its understanding of race. As criticisms from both the GRA and the Bond suggested, the leadership of the DRC was, towards the end of the century, out of step with many of its congregations' attitudes towards the emergent Afrikaner nationalist movement. While it is true that the DRC tried to minimise the ways in which revivals disrupted racial and social hierarchies within the church post-1860 and introduced a separate, racially segregated *Sendingkerk* in 1881, it is also true that many ministers were loath to give up English sermons, and saw themselves as loyal imperial subjects.

DRC ministers – like so many men and women of their class – were outward-looking. Not only was the DRC's revivalist movement and its evangelicalism the product of the influence of Scottish ministers seeking to remake the church in the image of Europe's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century evangelical churches, but its leadership at the end of the nineteenth century understood itself to be part of an international network of like-minded ministers, missionaries, and evangelicals. The church's views on children and education were part of a global circulation of ideas on childhood and youth. This book has provided what is in some ways an early history of the twentieth-century welfare movement in South Africa. It has shown that the model of normal childhood held up, particularly, in the first half of the twentieth century was based on the childhoods of affluent white, middle-class parents living in and around Cape Town. Although it is difficult to gauge the extent to which parents moulded their child-rearing techniques to the advice provided by DRC ministers in a slew of pamphlets, articles, books, and sermons, this notion of a long, innocent childhood – made possible by the colony's industrialisation – was worked into everyday life through the centrality of the DRC in the lives of a significant proportion of the Cape's population. Ministers' regular visits to homes, the growing number of DRC schools and teachers trained in these institutions, and the church's societies and events all served to popularise the ways in which the DRC conceptualised childhood, and believed children should be raised.

Ironically, though, this understanding of what should constitute a normative white childhood was one of the reasons for the failure of

both the DRC and the Department of Education's efforts to extend education to rural white children. White families farming in the colony's interior needed to change the ways in which they organised labour and understood the role of their children on farms, for them to be able to send their children to school regularly. Responses to poor whiteism in the 1880s and 1890s continued in the same vein: the uncivilisation of rural living needed to be replaced by the order and regularity of urban middle-class life. Although there is a voluminous literature on, particularly, poor whiteism in the early twentieth century, thinking about rural white poverty in the late nineteenth century through efforts to educate and reform white children helps to explain how and why the colonial state was able to justify its increasing intervention in white family life. Understood as a drain on the state and as a threat to future stability, poor white families were, according to the provisions of the Destitute Children Relief Act, opened up to the scrutiny of ministers and magistrates, representatives of two of the most powerful institutions in the colony. Even if the Act was never implemented, this was a significant conceptual shift.

It was matched by a similar shift in attitudes to what should constitute a white childhood. The same Act argued that all white children should be supported financially by their parents until at least the age of 15, and raised to be productive, independent adults. Both education and work – although work deemed suitable for whites – were crucial to the production of these men and women of the future. However, running through debates over who was, and who was not, a white child, were ideas about class. Put simply, the childhoods prescribed for poor white children by middle-class MPs, ministers, and other commentators tended to differ radically from what they deemed appropriate for their own children. In some ways, the Destitute Children Relief Act was aimed not at raising poor whites to the same level as the affluent colonial elite, but at creating a white artisan class. Notions such as 'boyhood' and 'girlhood' – the recognition of a period of development between childhood and adulthood when young people were at leisure to try on identities, explore relationships with the opposite sex, and prepare for the future – were concepts limited, largely, to the white, colonial middle class.

Indeed, the study of the history of childhood draws attention to the constructedness of childhood and youth as categories: to the ways in which their meanings are inflected by considerations related to race, class, and gender, and how they change over time. It is possible for multiple definitions of childhood and youth to exist at the same time. But the construction of these categories is linked to the material

circumstances of children and young people. Middle-class childhoods in the Cape, and elsewhere, became more and more regular over the course of the century, and largely as a result of the extension of education: punctuated by important religious and social milestones – baptism, confirmation, beginning and leaving school – middle-class childhoods tended to conform to the same pattern. At the same time, childhood was increasingly understood as a carefully patrolled and orderly progression from immaturity and dependence, both financial and emotional, to independent adulthood. Anything else – any other kind of childhood – was dismissed as chaotic and negligent. It is the instability of these categories which gives rise to adult anxieties about childhood and youth.

As this book has demonstrated, attempts towards the end of the nineteenth century to define childhood accompanied a slow crystallisation of definitions of racial identities. In other words, understanding how notions of childhood and youth were created also demonstrates how racial categories were developed. In this way, as Steven Mintz has argued, age becomes a useful category of historical analysis too. Like gender, for instance, definitions of age are connected to biological development but age 'categories are not natural': they 'are imbued with cultural assumptions, meaning, and values.'[12] Although there are marked physical, emotional, and intellectual differences between a two-year-old, an 18-year-old, and a 40-year-old, the categories in which we place these individuals – and the expectations that we have of them according to these categories – are socially constructed. Nevertheless, these categories are immensely powerful: they determine social status. They influence who wields and who has access to power. This is not, though, to reduce the history of childhood and youth – and age – to an analysis of children and young people's agency, or lack thereof, but, rather, to suggest that in a region where definitions of, especially, race and gender are so closely intertwined with notions of age (where black men and women were routinely referred to as 'boys' and 'girls'), the history of childhood and youth opens up new ways of understanding the working and maintenance of power in nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Africa.

Given contemporary debates around childhood and youth, it is clear that histories of these categories have significant contributions to make to the ways in which children's sexual identities, corporal punishment, schooling, and relationships with adults are conceptualised. South African education systems, for instance, have always been skewed in favour of the white, urban middle class. Recent attempts to criminalise

any form of sexual contact between young children – including kissing – and suggestions that parents and schools should thrash and beat children into respecting their elders hinge on the beliefs that childhood is naturally innocent (and that it is possible to use legislation to enforce innocent childhoods) and that there was a time in the recent past where the young were happily obedient and deferential to their elders.

Historicising childhood and youth shows up the ways in which these categories are used to shore up power – and usually not the power of those people defined as children and youths – and also the extent to which adult anxieties about children and youth are usually reflective of wider concerns related to social, political, and economic change.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. There is one article which deals explicitly with nineteenth-century childhoods: E. Bradlow, 'Children and Childhood at the Cape in the 19th Century', *Kleio*, 20 (1988), pp. 8–27.
2. H. Cunningham, 'Histories of Childhood', *The American Historical Review*, 103, 4 (1998), p. 1195.
3. See, for instance: L. Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), and 'The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930s South Africa', *JAH*, 47, 3 (2006), pp. 461–490; B. Carton, *Blood from Your Children: The Colonial Origins of Generational Conflict in South Africa* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000); B. Grier, *Invisible Hands: Child Labour and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe* (London: Heinemann, 2005); P. Ocobock, 'Joy Rides for Juveniles: Vagrant Youth and Colonial Control in Nairobi, Kenya, 1901–1952', *Social History*, 31, 1 (2006), pp. 39–59; A. George, *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labour, and Social Development in Colonial Lagos* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2015); S. Aderinto, 'Researching Colonial Childhoods: Images and Representations of Children in Nigerian Newspaper Press, 1925–1950', *History in Africa,* 39 (2012), pp. 241–266; L. Fourchard, 'Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria, 1920–1960', *Journal of African History*, 47, 1 (2006), pp. 115–137; R. Waller, 'Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa', *Journal of African History*, 47, 1 (2006), pp. 77–92; A. Burton and H. Charton-Bigot (eds.), *Generations Past: Youth in East African History* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010); A. Burton, 'Urchins, Loafers, and the Cult of the Cowboy: Urbanisation and Delinquency in Dar es Salaam, 1919–1961', *JAH*, 42, 2 (2001), pp. 199–216; C. Decker, *Mobilizing Zanzibari Women: The Struggle for Respectability and Self-Reliance in Colonial East Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); C.J. Lee, 'Children in the Archives: Epistolary Evidence, Youth Agency, and the Social Meanings of "Coming of Age" in Interwar Nyasaland', *Journal of Family History*, 35 (2010), pp. 25–47; S. Marks, *Not Either an Experimental Doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women* (London: The Women's Press, 1987); P. Scully, *Liberating the Family? Gender and British Slave Emancipation in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823–1853* (London: Heinemann, 1997); S. Burman and M. Naude, 'Bearing a Bastard: The Social Consequences of Illegitimacy in Cape Town, 1896–1939', *JSAS*, 17, 3 (1991), pp. 378–381; D. Gaitskell, '"Wailing for Purity": Prayer Unions, African Mothers and Adolescent Daughters, 1912–1940', in *Industrialisation and Social Church in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture, and Consciousness*, Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone (eds.) (Harlow: Longman, London, [1982] 1987), pp. 338–357; C. Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935–1976* (London: Heinemann, 2000); G. Groenewald, '*Een Spoorloos Vrouwpersoon*': Unmarried Mothers, Moral

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## Conclusion

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