



Christianity and the Modernisation of South Africa, 1867-1936: A Documentary History, Volume II (Hidden Histories Series)

John W. De Gruchy

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Some churches and Christian traditions have been far more influential in shaping South African society than others. Working from some 3,500 primary documents relevant to understanding the role of Christianity in forming South Africa, this book looks at the final three decades of the 19th century and the beginnings of modernization in the first part of the 20th century. During this time, the country was transformed from a primarily rural and traditional society into one which was increasingly urban, industrial, and capitalist. This was also a moment of transition for Christian missionary endeavor and the formation of the colonial churches. The book considers the way in which theology functioned in the construction of modern South Africa. The most salient theological dimension concerns ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the church. Ecclesiology functions at the interface of theological conviction and social reality. It describes both what the church should be and what it is in day-to-day experience. This gap between faith and reality is nowhere more evident than in the account presented in this volume. But more so, one of the most remarkable aspects of South African social history has been the interaction and parallels between ecclesiological praxis, on the one hand, and social and political formation, on the other.

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