

THE PROTESTANT ETHOS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EDUCATION IN CERES: A CASE STUDY OF THE EVANGELICAL EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION (1947-2017)

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SUMMARY

The present research seeks to analyze education and its contributions to the city of Ceres-GO in light of the Protestant ethos evidenced in the praxis of the Evangelical Educational Association (AEE) from 1947 to 2017. The **objective** of the research is to address the following issue: how did the pioneers who participated in the birth of the National Agricultural Colony of Goiás (CANG), and subsequently the city of Ceres, contribute to the development of education in the region, based on the Protestant ethos, through the AEE, despite the challenges of the new reality with its lack of road, school, medical, and social infrastructure as a whole? The **methodology** is based on Weberian sociology of meanings and history (WEBER, 2001). It involves qualitative-quantitative research conducted through documents such as books, letters, minutes, theses, and interviews with people who experienced this history. As a **result** of the present research, the aim is to collect documents and store them at CEDOCH/UniEvangélica/AEE for future research; it is expected to deepen the historical debate on this topic through a scientific perspective; to reinforce the contributions of the Protestant ethos in the formation of what is today the city of Ceres, based on parallels with what has occurred in various places around the world, and to motivate people towards a rational action based on values for the transformation and sustainable development of society. As a **partial conclusion**, the influence of AEE in the city of Ceres and the Vale de São Patrício is verified, offering an education aimed at the formation of agents of social transformation based on a

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system that takes into account the awareness directed towards sustainable development.

Keywords: Evangelical Educational Association; Ceres; Education; Protestant Ethos.

INTRODUCTION

The present research seeks to analyze education and its contributions to the birth of the Agricultural Colony of Goiás and the subsequent city of Ceres-GO, based on the Protestant ethos and evidenced in the praxis of the Evangelical Educational Association (AEE), from 1947 to 2017. The promoters of education and health in the Agricultural Colony of Goiás, similar to the pioneers of Protestantism in Brazil, worked based on the tripod of education, health, and evangelism.

The pioneers in the region were largely missionary doctors. The Protestant ethos directed them towards social action based on values, which means they were not bound by the results of their actions but were guided by their principles. This proactive stance and action, understanding work as a vocation, positively influenced Ceres society and, to some extent, the São Patrício Valley, in the areas of education, health, social and religious transformation.

According to Weberian sociology of meanings, in addition to the vocation for an intramundane action, the Protestant ethos underpinned social action in values (WEBER, 2000). Souza (2015) traces the ideas of Martin Luther to show that in his worldview, the Christian should have religious and social engagement, forming and being formed for the "polis." In the same vein, Gracino (2021) wrote that "until the advent of the Reformation, the dominant church preached that man should have heaven as the target of his ethics; however, for Luther, ethics consisted of the preservation of divine creation, the investment in individual improvement" while on earth (GRACINO, 2021, p.33).

The vision that we serve God by serving our neighbor, in the midst of the polis, instead of isolating ourselves from society to sanctify ourselves, combined with the idea that everyone is called to act in the world aiming for its transformation, was a

fundamental factor for the prosperity of nations. Another essential factor was the perception of the pioneers of Protestantism that education should be for boys and girls, free and mandatory, a central element in the transformation of the human being, making each of them a priest (WEBER, 2001; MANGALWADI, 2012). They were motivated by vision similar to that of the first missionaries who arrived in the city of Ceres, Goiás, starting in the 1940s.

METHODOLOGY

Given the above, this project aims to address the following issue: how did the pioneers who contributed to the birth of CANG, grounded in the Protestant ethos, through the Evangelical Educational Association (AEE), contribute to the development of education in the region, despite the challenges of the new reality, such as the lack of road, school, medical, and social infrastructure?

To adequately answer the question, a qualitative-quantitative research was conducted using documents such as books, letters, minutes, theses, and interviews with people who experienced this history. The theoretical foundation is based on Weberian sociology, where the subjectivity of individuals can be perceived in the objectivity of their relationships, actions, and institutions created by them. In cultural history and in the realm of education from the Protestant ethos, elucidated in the studies of the philosopher Vishal Mangalwadi regarding the democratic vision of education, stemming from the fathers of Protestantism Martin Luther and John Calvin (WEBER, 2000, 2001; MANGALWADI, 2012; CHARTIER, 1990).

The pioneers who worked in the city of Ceres in education and health were: Dr. Jair Dinoah, Dr. Isaac Barreto Ribeiro, Dr. Álvaro de Melo, Dr. Domingos Mendes da Silva (1915-2015) and his wife Eudméia Hassel Mendes, and Rev. Arthur Wesley Archibald among others, to some extent influenced by Dr. James Fanstone, a

pioneering missionary doctor, who made Anápolis the hub for spreading Protestant principles to the interior of Goiás (CARVALHO, 2021). The results of their actions led to the birth of the Evangelical Educational Association (AEE), which became the maintainer of Álvaro de Melo College (1947), as shown in figure 01 below, and dozens of colleges. These, in addition to the AEE, also initiated the school

Bernardo Sayão (1950) and Escola Bandeirante (1956); the Escola Goiana de Auxiliares de Enfermagem (1953), Escola Batista de Horticultura e Granjas B. H Foreman (1968), and in the Catholic sector, the beginning of the Centro Educacional Franciscano – Colégio Imaculada Conceição (1968).

Figure 01. Álvaro de Melo School, photo from the 1950s



Source: <https://ceres.go.gov.br/galeria-historica-de-reliquias-da-colonizacao/>

EXPECTED RESULTS

As a result of the present research, it is expected to deepen the historical debate on this topic (DUTRA AND SILVA, 2017) from a scientific perspective, indicating what they are, how they were initiated, and their impact on the region; to reinforce the contributions of the Protestant ethos in the formation of what is now the city of Ceres, based on parallels with what has occurred in various places around the world; to collect documents related to this history and archive them at CEDOC/UniEvangélica/AEE and promote new research; to publish articles and books; and to motivate people to rational action based on values for the transformation and sustainable development of the society where they operate.

CONCLUSION

Knowing and publishing what has been done in the city of Ceres and in the São Patrício valley through the education provided by the Evangelical Educational Association (AEE) is a historical debt. With this, one can perceive the subjective reasons and objective actions taken that generated social transformation and sustainable development in the region. The pursuit of knowledge enriches those who seek it and those who will hear and read about it through lectures, symposiums, articles, newspapers, books, and documents. In addition to honoring the Protestant pioneers who left this legacy that contributed to the transformation of so many stories.

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