

The Battle of Blood River



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Psalm 46

1 YAHWEH *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of YAHWEH, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High.

5 YAHWEH *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: YAHWEH shall help her, *and that* right early.

6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

7 The LORD YAHWEH of hosts *is* with us; the ELOHIM of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

8 Come, behold the works of YAHWEH, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I *am* YAHWEH: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

11 The LORD YAHWEH of hosts *is* with us; the ELOHIM of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

Introduction

The Battle of Blood River, which took place on the 16th of December 1838, may be described as the single most important symbolic event for the Boer nation in Southern Africa today.

The commemoration of the Vow gives testimony to the oldest historical festival of the Afrikaner. Throughout the years there have probably been more writings and debates on and regarding the celebrations of the 16th of December, than on any of the other historical South African national holidays. There are those of whom who consider the subject as firmly researched and established, but since it has been such a prominent and even controversial subject for more than 170 years, it has been deemed necessary to constantly subject the events around this date to further investigation and scrutiny. In so doing the true meanings and implications of the Vow can be brought to light in the context of the current situation and times.

There is no shortage on unpublished and published information on the battle of Blood River and the Vow of 1838. The four monographs which probably hold the most useful information about the origin and honouring of the Vow, are probably D.W. Kruger (*Die viering van Dinganesdag 1838 – 1910*) which appeared in 1938, M. J. Swart (*Geloftedag*; 1961), P. H. Kapp (*Ons Volksfeeste*; 1975), W. Marais (*Geloftedag en die toekoms van die Afrikaner*; 1996). The first three publications specifically refer to the way in which the Vow was honoured, where the celebrations from 1838 onward are treated and arranged chronologically, but where Kapp discusses these things more thematically. Kruger, Swart and Kapp gave the impression that very few celebrations occurred between 1838 and 1910, but they focused more on the largest gatherings which took place in that period, e.g. Paardekraal's state festivals of 1881, 1886, 1891 and 1896, as well as the funeral of President S. J. P Kruger (1825 – 1904). Attention is sporadic with respect to legislation surrounding the celebrations of the 16th of December, and more was given to less prominent or decentralised festivities, and not much is said about the origin of Festive uses and perceptions about the meaning of the Vow. Marais work is not meant to be a historiographical deciphering of the Vow, but is rather an investigation into the meaning of the Vow for the Afrikaner in the immediate post-apartheid period after 1994.

Primary research in this regard nullifies the perception that the Vow was celebrated in a very limited scale in the period 1838 – 1910. So-called Dingane's Day usages and meanings which are generally associated with festivities in the 20th century, were often already manifested in the 19th century as well. Research regarding the commemoration of the Vow up to the year 1900, will hopefully lead to a deeper insight into the reasons as to why this commemoration has played such an influential role in the cultural life of the Afrikaner Boers. The numerous sources which through the years have repeated the determined points of views associated with the origins and meanings of the Vow, is proof that challengeable and wrong perceptions are not close to finally being laid to rest, and that certain questions surrounding this will probably never be fully answered.

The Great Trek up to the year 1838

The Great Trek may be considered as the first successful anti-colonial rebellion against British rule in Africa, but ironically it has been considered in recent times in the post-1994 regime as secondary-colonisation! There are differing opinions regarding the meaning of the Trek, but what is certain is that it had a far reaching influence on the history of Southern

Africa. Between 1834 and 1840 approximately 15000 people, mainly Afrikaner Boers from the eastern borders of the Cape colony, decided to leave the colony. There were a number of political, cooperative, economic, military and cultural reasons as to why the Trek took place. The trekkers were led by a few leaders and cannot be seen as a homogeneous group. Fewer than half of the Cape Afrikaners eventually took part in the Trek. In later decades most of the Afrikaners associated themselves with the ideals of the Trekkers, and this had a profound effect on the Afrikaner Nationalism. They were a source of Heroic inspiration which gave form to the republican ideals of the Afrikaner, ensured the preservation of their identity and determined their racial policies for a very long time.

One of the most dynamic of the Trekkers was Pieter Retief (1780 – 1838). He was appointed as Governor of the Trekkers and on 6 June 1837 he posted his manifesto which initiated his time of service. He and his Trekker party planned to settle in Natal and to utilise Port Natal as their harbour. With these goals in mind Retief started to negotiate with the Zulu King Dingane to acquire land from the Zulu kingdom. Just after the agreement which included the terms of the transaction were signed, Dingane turned against Retief and his company on the 6th of February 1838 and gave his men the orders to massacre all of his men. They were tricked into attending a Zulu dancing show in Dingane's Kraal, and as a sign of trust their muskets were taken at the entrance. Suddenly Dingane's men forced the party of over 100 Trekkers out of the Kraal onto a nearby hill, where they were stabbed and bludgeoned to death, and their bodies left to rot in the open. The Zulu King also commanded his warriors to wipe out the other Trekker camps situated in the vicinity. Early on the morning of 17 February 1838 about 500 men, women and children were massacred in surprise attacks along the Bloukrans- and Boesmans River, and in approximately 2500 heads of cattle were stolen.

Counterattacks were organised by the Trekkers, but these failed and they suffered further losses. A second respected Leader, P. L. Uys (1797 – 1838), perished on 11 April 1838 at the battle of Italeni. The Trekkers accused A. H. Potgieter (1792 – 1852) of being a coward and thus was responsible for the defeat. He and about 160 families subsequently left Natal by May 1838 and pursued their aspirations for freedom on the Highveld. The winter of 1838 was especially cold, and sickness pestered the Trekkers. Morale hit a low point, especially when another one of their leaders, G. M. Maritz (1797 – 1838), fell ill and died on 23 September 1838. Of the most renowned leaders in Natal, only K. P. Landman (1796 – 1875) remained. In their moment of despair, the Trekkers turned to Andries Pretorius (1798 – 1853), and on 22 November 1838 he left the Cape colony and joined the Boers in Natal. Pretorius had already proven himself as an able explorer in the interior of South Africa, and had planned to eventually settle in Natal with his family. On 26 November he was appointed commandant-general of the Trekkers. He and the commando of Trekkers immediately organised and prepared to act against King Dingane. Pretorius realised that a cavalry-commando would in all probability be unsuccessful against the Zulu army, given the massive numerical superiority of Zulu warriors (30,000+) against the Boers (500). It was then decided that the fight against the enemy would be conducted from a reinforced laager.

In those days prayer was just as much part of the war preparations of the Trekkers as it was to cast bullets and to pack sustenance. Landman joined Pretorius and their numbers were

amplified by the addition of English Natal pioneers and some coloured servants. One of the commandos was J. G. Bantjes (1817 – 1887), the secretary of Pretorius, who held a diary during the campaign and thus had a first-hand report of the events to leave to the descendants of those Boers. Because it was written during the campaign, it is considered to be one of the most authentic sources of information, as opposed to the other versions given of the Battle of Blood River and the Vow.

At this stage the only hope for the Trekkers of survival in Natal, lay in the fact that either the Zulu forces had to be defeated, or an agreement would have to be reached between them and the Boers. The British rulers in the Cape colony had already on the 6th September 1838 placed a ban on the exporting of ammunition to the Boers. This was also followed by a ban on the export of food, clothes, medicines etc., and from 3 December 1838 British troops had blockaded the harbour of Port Natal. The Trekkers were thus completely isolated from the outside world and the commandos had then no choice but to stand up and fight against the huge Zulu forces. If this were to be unsuccessful, the Trek into Natal on a large scale by these Boers would fail, and the only way out would be for these pioneers to return to the Cape colony (if any were alive).

At the end of November 1838, the commando embarked on their campaign under the banner “Eendrag maak mag” (Unity is strength). Some sources confuse this commando with the laager at Vegkop (1836). Contrary to popular belief, no woman and children were included in the fighting force of the commandos, they did however help with the reloading of ammunition, packing of gunpowder, etc. Contrary to what some sources indicate, it was not the intention of the commandos to take revenge against Dingane, but to destroy this enemy force, such that the Boers could live in peace and security in Natal. The fact that the commandos did not attack any other Zulu tribes on their way to confront Dingane is proof that the campaign was solely directed against the Zulu forces of Dingane. In his diary Bantjes recorded how Pretorius up until the 16th of December 1838 under the cover of a white flag sent messages to Dingane indicating that the commandos were willing to negotiate a peace deal, and if he did not agree, the commandos were prepared to wage war.

Laying down of the Vow

The spiritual leader of the commando was C. A. Cilliers (1801 – 1871). He and another preacher by the name of Erasmus Smit often had each other by the throat regarding the lack of formal spiritual education of Cilliers. However, Cilliers was a very dedicated Christian and a popular preacher. The idea arose in the minds of Pretorius and Cilliers that the help of the Lord would be needed for the coming clash against the Zulu forces, and this would have to be done in a special way. It was thus agreed upon that they would do so by means of a vow. Some sources attribute this to Pretorius, and this is supported by the fact that Cilliers was worried before the laying down of the vow that the vow would not be honoured in later years, and that it would mean the unleashing of the Lord’s fury upon those who laid it down. However, most sources indicate that Pretorius and Cilliers agreed on the Vow together.

The origin of the vow has been attributed to a number of sources, however, it can be accepted that Trekkers had the makings of a unitary- or covenant community. From this background, together with the fact that they drew parallels between their own situation and that of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, they considered the laying down of a vow to be a very fitting and acceptable action. The writers of the Nadere Reformation in the Netherlands also played an important role in the religion and general lives of the Trekkers. In his work, one of the writers called Wilhelmus Brakel promoted the laying down of a vow as an integral part of the life of any Christian. He was of the opinion that a vow is a personal connection with God that has to be made out of free will and out of gratitude to God and for the fostering of spiritual wellbeing; it has to be honoured at all costs. He warned that it is not to be taken lightly and furthermore said that a vow could be used in emergency situations. The scriptural references surrounding the laying down of a vow as Brakel considered it, were also quoted by Cilliers in 1838. (**Judges 11: 29 – 40; Psalms 50, 56, 60, 61, 66, 76, 116, 132; Ecclesiastes 5: 4 – 6; Deuteronomy 23: 21 – 23; Numbers 30: 2**). With knowledge of the above prescribed faith it would have been natural for the Trekkers to turn towards God in this manner in their hour of need. Pretorius regularly reminded his men that only with God's help alone could they succeed in their campaign against the Zulus, and the commandos took this to heart and on a daily basis participated in prayer and service together. Where and when the Vow was laid down, has been the subject of much controversy. One possibility is that it (according to Cilliers memoirs) was done on 7 December 1838 at Danskraal. A commemorative pile of stones was put at the exact spot where the vow was supposedly laid down. Some researchers trust the diary of Bantjes which indicates that the Vow was laid down at Wasbank on 9 December 1838. They argue that not all of the members of the commandos were present at Danskraal and that Cilliers alone as a witness cannot be taken as proof, and his memoirs were written in 1870, far too long after the event. In a letter Cilliers sent to Pastor H. van Broekhuizen in 1866, Cilliers gave the date as 13 December 1838, which further supports the notion that he had forgotten the exact date. For this reason, the most accepted date of the laying down of the vow is accepted as the 9th of December 1838. Even if the date cannot be pinpointed precisely, it is important to note that the Trekkers did not lay down the Vow in their immediate hour of strife, but they had already done it a number of days before the actual battle. The Vow was thus not a desperate cry for help, but a decision based on free will done beforehand.

Before the Vow was laid down, all of those present had to declare that they were willing to unite with God in such a concrete manner. The idea that the men accepted this all on their own sounds catchy and noble. The witnessing by Bantjes in his diary in this regard is vague, but a number of later sources indicate that this was the case, and also indicate that Cilliers was not the only one fearing retribution from God if the Vow was not honoured in future times.

The Battle of Blood River



After the Vow was laid down, it was reaffirmed every evening, which shows how seriously the commandos considered it to be. They were still moving closer and closer towards Dingane's kraal, now only 40 km distant. On 15 December 1838 Pretorius and his wagons reached the Ncome river and his scouts reported sighting a large Zulu army. According to verbal reports from descendants of the Zulus associated with this battle, this force consisted of the cream of Dingane's army. They were commanded by Ndlela and Dambuza who were experienced generals from the legendary King Shaka (c.1787 – 1828). They were prepared for the battle, and in ceremonies which lasted 3 days before they left for battle, special warrior medicine was prepared which would make the warriors invincible. According to their traditions, the warriors also held a march to the graves of the kings and chanted songs of praise, where after more ceremonies followed. Pretorius found the perfect spot to set up laager, on the western side of a large hippo pool, about 50 meters long and a long dry donga set at about 90 degrees from the hippo pool. He formed the laager from 64 wagons between the pool and the donga. The wagons were formed in the shape of a "D" with the straight side along the donga and the rounded side facing the north-west. Wooden barricades were placed in front of the openings between the wagons to prevent direct invasion. The two cannons were placed in openings between two wagons. The 900 oxen and 500 horses were held in the middle of the laager. Late that afternoon Pretorius and a cavalry of 300 men galloped to nearby hills and came across the Zulu army of approximately 15,000 to 25,000 men. They

decided to return to the safety of the laager and let the Zulus advance first. Because of the darkness of the night the Zulus decided to attack at first light the next morning.

The front lines of the Zulu army took position about 40 meters from the wagons. The 16th December dawned a clear, sunny day. The Zulus made two crucial mistakes, positioning their front line only 40 meters from the wagons and waiting too long to give the attack command.



The commandos fired a first salvo which killed hundreds and immediately followed that up with a further two salvo's before the Zulus could start their charge. The Zulus were hampered by the fact that the front lines were so closely packed and also by the number of corpses which grew with every salvo fired by the commandos. Inside the laager the dense cloud of smoke made visibility near impossible and Pretorius gave the order to stop firing. At the same time the Zulus decided to retreat to about 500 meters from the wagons. This was a blessing for the Trekkers as this gave the guns time to cool down before the second charge. The second charge started and a wall of Zulu warriors descended on the laager. At short range the gunfire from the wagons was very effective as they were now firing 10 or more lead balls with every shot. A historian later said that the Battle of Blood River was the only battle in human history where more people were killed than there were shots fired. Hundreds of Zulu warriors forced their way into the donga and there they were mowed down as they stood so tightly packed together they couldn't throw their spears effectively. Once again the Zulus withdrew to about 500 meters from the wagons. With the third charge the Zulus used different tactics, they attacked in a dispersed formation, not so close together which resulted in the commandos wasting bullets and killing fewer attackers. But the Trekker defence held and the Zulus pulled back again.

As the fourth charge started, Pretorius changed strategy and aimed one of the cannons to shoot as far as possible into the back lines of the Zulus and aimed the other one into the centre of the front lines. The effect of this strategy was great; with the first shot two of the Zulu princes were killed. The Zulus now attacked en masse, those trying to cross the hippo pool had no defence and were killed in the water and the blood started to colour the water red. Pretorius' strategy was to sow confusion amongst the Zulus and he ordered his younger brother, Bart, to lead a mounted commando of 100 men to drive a wedge between the Zulu forces. Galloping between the donga and the Zulu forces, and firing from the saddle, they caused havoc amongst the Zulu warriors. At this stage the Zulu offensive degenerated into a blindfold charge of individual warriors. A second mounted commando caused more havoc and returning to the safety of the laager brought the Zulu army even closer to the laager enabling the marksmen to effect maximum damage. A third mounted attack shot a path open and they started an attack from behind Zulu lines. An attack by another commando of 100 men split the Zulu army into smaller groups and eventually the Zulu army fled. The number of Zulus killed at Blood River was estimated to be in the region of 3,500 while miraculously only 3 Trekkers were slightly wounded. Later on, surviving members of the Zulu forces reported that the total number of dead were as high as 10,000 as a result of Zulus dying later as a result of their injuries. On the very same day, 16 December 1838, a thanksgiving service was held by the weary commandos in the laager. This can be seen as the first commemoration of the Vow.



Andries Wilhelmus Jacobus Pretorius
(27 November 1798 – 23 July 1853)

Significance and meaning of the Battle

Blood River has been described as the largest battle to have occurred between white and black in South Africa. It however was not the end of the battle against Dingane. On 27 December 1838 the commando of the Trekkers were lured into an ambush at the White Umfolozi River and a number of commandos were killed, but the final resistance of the Zulus was broken and this meant the end of Dingane's rule. On 15 March 1840 Dingane was killed by warriors from the Nyawo tribe, possibly assisted by Swazi warriors. After Blood River the immigration by whites into Natal increased. Thousands of blacks who hid in isolated cliffs and caves from the tyrannous and despotic reign of Dingane, could also return to their original places of residence. Nevertheless, members of the Zulu tribes declared a century later: "For us Zulus, the sun has long since set at Ncome (Blood River)...". Never again would they be the sovereign rulers of Natal.



Charl (Sarel) Arnoldus Cilliers
(7 September 1801 – 4 October 1871)

For the Boers, the significance and uniqueness of the battle was manifested in the laying down of the Vow. For Cilliers and most of the commando members there was no doubt that the outcome was handed down from God alone. Through the years it has been increasingly considered as a miracle. The defeat suffered by the British against the Zulus at Isandlwana on 22 January 1879, even when being in possession of shotguns, cannons, rocket bombs, etc., contributed to the view that Blood River was a supernatural occurrence. Even Zulu warriors told of spirits which were keeping guard above the laager in the night.

Arguments in favour of the miracle, state that firstly the Trekkers had 'voorlaaiers' (crude gunpowder muzzle-loaded rifles or muskets) which were slow to load and unpredictable w.r.t. their fire power, yet they did not suffer a single fatality against such an overwhelmingly massive Zulu force. Secondly, the Zulu forces did not attack in the night, which made the

defence of the laager easier. The mist had cleared by daybreak, and even though December falls in the rainy season in Natal, it did not rain during the battle, which would have rendered their muskets useless. Also, the animals in the laager remained calm during the terrible and deafening sounds of the battle; otherwise the laager could have been damaged had the horses and cattle become restless and uncontrollable.

Wording of the Vow

A fundamental knowledge of the contents of the Vow is necessary to gain insight into the way in which it has been celebrated over the years. The Vow of 1838 has nowhere been recorded on paper, or did not remain preserved in its original form. According to the majority of primary historical witnesses, when one takes into account that it was laid down in the form of a prayer, then it makes sense that nobody wrote it down during the first laying down of the Vow. A prayer out of praise very rarely, if ever, noted down. Different versions of the Vow have well been written down by eyewitnesses. The oldest of these is recorded in the diary of Jan Bantjes, and was possibly noted down, on, or just after the 9th December 1838:

“This Sunday morning, before the service began, the Head Commander allowed those who were to participate in the service, to congregate, and proceeded to speak to the congregation, that they should vigorously in spirit and in truth, pray to God, for his help and guidance, in the fight against the enemy; That he will make a vow to the Almighty (in case everybody wishes to), - ‘such that if the LORD would afford us the victory, to found a house in His Great Name in remembrance, wherever it shall please him’ – and that we shall beg and pray, for the help and assistance of God, to surely full bring this vow, and that we on the day of the victory, shall record in a book, to reveal these things, even to our last descendants, that this be celebrated by praising God”.

Another record of the Vow appears in a letter which head-commander Andries Pretorius presented to the Nation Council:

In spite of the controversial opinions, there remains a relatively certain manner in which the Vow was delivered: The entire commando gathered together, and the idea of the Vow was already known to everyone. Cilliers led the prayer session, and first they sang Psalm 38 verses 12 - 16, where after Cilliers prayed in a fiery manner toward God, and then read the first 24 verses of Judges 6. This relates to Gideon, of course. Cilliers also referred to the Vow of Jefta in Judges 11 verses 30 - 40. In a concluding prayer, Cilliers laid out the Vow to the commandos:

“Here we stand before the Holy Elohim of heaven and earth, to make a vow to Him that, if He will protect us and give our enemy into our hand, we shall keep this day and date every year as a day of thanksgiving like a sabbath, and that we shall erect a house to His honour

wherever it should please Him, and that we also will tell our children that they should share in that with us in memory for future generations. For the honour of His name will be glorified by giving Him the fame and honour for the victory. AMEN.

After this, all commandos acknowledged this Vow with Ámen. In closing, Psalm 38 verses 12 and 21, as well as Psalm 134 were sung.

A closing prayer

The Boer nation calls out to the eternal and almighty ELOHIM.
O Father YAHWEH, we call unto you for your power and guidance;
To bless our fellow Boers and countrymen with courage and fortitude,
to remain steadfast in their faith, to remain vigilant and unrelenting.
That they can overcome the darkest of times
which is shortly to befall this besieged nation of Israel.
Let us celebrate today as a day of thanksgiving
and praise to our heavenly Father YAHWEH,
knowing that with the everlasting power of the almighty ELOHIM,
we will prevail over our enemies.
The blessings and peace of our Lord Jahshua Messiah
be with all of true Israel.
AMEN

An addition for you, Terry, in absolute remembrance and what HE hath done for us, this and the above is dedicated to our Lord Jahshua Messiah:

Declaration of Independence for the Boer people in South Africa, had this failed it would have meant the end for the boers in South Africa.

In a nutshell, the 3 core points are:

- The covenant between YaHWeH and true Israel in context with the historic position of the boers in SA.
- The absolute symbolic significance of the battle wrt the Apartheid practised by the true boers in SA who are in CI.
- The vow made which is never to be broken, similarities of prosperity and failure among the boers who respectively obeyed/disobeyed the vow, and also the proceedings of the vow, giving psalm 46 as an introductory prayer. The significance of the number 14376 given by Siener Van Rensburg, which parallels the 7 times punishment explained as the silver tried in a furnace of fire 7 times.

Visions of Siener van Rensburg related to the Vow

Just like Moses and Aaron, these Boer leaders were men of God. God made a Covenant with Israel to deliver them from their enemies (Egyptians), and lead them into their promised land

on condition they keep that specific day (14th day of Nisan) from generation to generation as a remembrance of their delivery, and that it must be a feast day in honour of their God. In turn the Voortrekkers prayed to God and asked Him to deliver them from their enemies, the Zulus, at Blood River and made a Covenant with God that if He helped them, they would keep this day as a Sabbath from generation to generation and would build a temple in His honour. This was the battle of Blood River which occurred in the 16th of December 1838.

On their arrival in the promised land, Israel built a temple in honour of God. The Voortrekkers, when they arrived in their promised land, also built a Church and monument. (the Church of the Covenant in Pietermaritzburg and Voortrekker monument in Pretoria). Since the battle of Blood River the Day of the Vow (covenant) has been kept by the Boers. This Holy day has now been abolished to appease the heathens in the "new South Africa." During the Anglo-Boer War an incident occurred which was so identical to the Israelites' exodus from Egypt that it became known as "Pharaoh's Red Sea" among the burghers. Today there are many Afrikaners (the Seer called them 'jingoos') who, under foreign pressure, agree that the Day of the Covenant should be abolished. Nicolaas van Rensburg have foreseen this happening in one of his visions on 28th February, 1922. In this vision he saw that one of our future Governments would hand over power to aliens and that it would happen as a result of the fact that this future Government would succumb to pressure from the West instead of following the Will of their God.

God has made a Covenant with only two nations, Israel of old and the Boer nation. Is it therefore a coincidence that Israel of old and the Boer nation of today were and are the two most hated nations in history? Africa and the West have been more lenient towards evil Communism than towards the Boer nation.

Record of the Rebellion

(As told by Boy Mussmann):

Most important is the journey we had to undertake in 1914 to German South West to negotiate treaties. I described how, during this journey, 'Oom' Klasie told us day and night where our enemies were and where we could safely pass through their lines. A symbolic trek! In the same manner 600 000 Israelites trekked through the desert, so 600 of us (poorly armed) had to do the same. General Smuts controlled the entire Defence Force, as well as all the cannons and battle equipment. They went out of their way to stop us, capture us or shoot us to prevent us from reaching German South West, but it was all in vain.

Now I'm planning to take my manuscript about the Rebellion to Die Vaderland (a national daily newspaper) to ask what the cost would be to print 30 or 50 booklets... They refused and so I published the booklet myself.

This piece of history is just as important in the history of our people as that of the solemn Vow made at Danskraal (Blood River) on the 16th of December 1838...

At the end of 1923 'Oom' Nicolaas wrote to Boy Mussmann: "If you will fetch me here and bring me back, I will celebrate Dingaan's Day with you this year. (Dingaan's day, renamed Day of the Vow and even more recently, Day of Reconciliation under ANC rule, is a public holiday established on December 16th 1838, in commemoration of the victory of the Voortrekkers over Dingane and his Zulus at the Battle of Blood River. The Voortrekkers made a vow with God that should they win, they and their generations to come would celebrate this day as a Sabbath.

During such times, strong leaders and God-fearing people rose from the nation to lead them to freedom—and without exception that freedom was gained through Divine intervention. Think of Moses, Samson, Gideon, David, Andries Pretorius and Charl Cilliers. No other modern nation in the world has the testimony of a Blood River or Vegkop (to name but two) in their history. And as was the case with Israel, it was the spiritual leader, Charl Cilliers, rather than the warrior, Andries Pretorius, who armed the ill and trapped Voortrekkers in preparation for the looming battle against the advancing Zulus.

Blood River Recalled

Prompted by a question why these people were fleeing, Van Rensburg replied in an interesting, but strange way: "It will be because of the Spectre of Terror which God has created in their hearts. (As it happened at Blood river on that day [16th December 1838]). Humanly speaking, they have just as many brave people as we do, but we must remember: nobody is brave before God. In reply to the question why they were fleeing to Vereeniging, the Seer said: We had to sign the humiliating Treaty at Vereeniging, as well as give up our freedom—this, after thousands of lives had been sacrificed and our country literally turned into a wilderness. Go read Isaiah 14.

Van Rensburg also issued a clear warning that before this Spectre of Terror came over the enemy, the Boer nation would have to kneel in genuine reconciliation and renounce the world as they did at Blood River. We must pray that our sun does not set (26th February 1922). Lev. 26: 15-17: And if ye shall despise my statutes or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I will also do this unto you: I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of the heart; and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies; they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. (Virtually everything the Boer sows and plants today is eaten by his enemies).

As though he sat watching a movie, Van Rensburg described to Mr. Boy Mussmann what lay in store after reconciliation of the nation: They (the enemy) burst out of the east and flee to Durban, and even when they are on board the ships, they still shoot back at us. It is interesting that he sees them fleeing to Durban. Since early days it has been the seat of the Englishman, the Indian and Zulu, all enemies of the Boers; furthermore, it is a very liberal

city that will welcome the enemies of the Boer with open arms and try to assist them. The great and final battle will take place there, but eventually our enemies will sound the retreat and leave the country, he said. Van Rensburg said he opened his old State Bible at Exodus 14:13: And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew to you today, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

AMEN