

KINGDOM TREASURE MINISTRIES

# TRUTH <sup>IN</sup> HISTORY

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"Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 28:31



*"And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."*

- Gen. 28:14

*Featuring...*

**ISRAEL - THE COLONIZERS OF THE EARTH**

**THE PLANTING OF ISRAEL IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**SOUTH AFRICA - THE LAND "BEYOND THE RIVERS OF ETHIOPIA"**





*"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes."* Psa. 118:8-9

This middle verse of the Bible and its admonition is sound advice in this unstable world in which we live. Once again our national leaders or 'princes' have created an economic and social debacle for millions of Americans by enacting the Affordable Health Choices Act.

Multiple problems plague its operation before it even gets off the ground, plus bringing serious hardship upon those whom it alleges to 'help.' This legislation is a major step in our nation's decline leading toward a socialist totalitarian hegemony in our once-Christian culture. While not endorsing the philosophies of Plato, it is worth considering what he said; "One of the penalties of not participating in politics is that you will be governed by your inferiors".

## SOUTH AFRICA

In this issue of *Truth In History*, our theme is the Christian establishment of the country of South Africa. Unfortunately, due to the anti-Christian and pro-liberal bias in our national news media, most Americans have a distorted view of the history, culture and social issues concerning the most highly developed country on the continent of Africa. The liberal and socialist press that controls and determines the news which most westerners absorb as being 'factual' and 'true' launched its campaign of lies and slander on the former white leadership of South Africa because of apartheid.

In order to weaken and eventually destroy the Dutch leadership which was responsible

for the country's establishment, growth and development, western governments including the United States, used economic boycotts against the country until finally the African National Congress (ANC) seized power in 1994. It didn't matter to the liberal establishment that the ANC had communist leanings and was/is incapable of governing and maintaining the high level of social culture, economic success and agricultural production which was present under the previous Afrikaner leadership.

In May 2013, my wife and I had the privilege of visiting Pastor and Mrs. Errol Kidwell and the Christian believers in the church located in Three Rivers, South Africa. It is a well-established group of Pentecostal saints who believe and understand the Christian Israel message of Scripture. Being of Dutch ancestry, they speak Afrikaans as their first language, which is a form of Dutch. There is a strong Christian element among the white people of the country who are the descendants of the settlers and Voortrekkers. Their ancestors braved the elements of nature and native tribal resistance in fulfilling God's promise to Jacob/Israel that his seed would spread abroad *"to the south"* (Gen. 28:14). It was/is through the Afrikaners, both Dutch and British that has been a blessing to *"all families of the earth"* in South Africa.

It is our purpose to inform our readers of the Christian/Israelite possession, settlement and development of South Africa in fulfilling this mandate as children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**Cover picture: Part of the wagons at the Battle of Blood River Monument in South Africa.**

*"Truth seeks no applause, bows to no human shrine, she only asks a hearing."*



*Charles A. Jennings*

# TRUTH <sup>IN</sup> HISTORY

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# **ISRAEL -** *by Charles A. Jennings* **THE COLONIZERS OF THE EARTH**

Throughout the history of the Israel people, they have traveled to and colonized distant lands once known as the "wilderness" places of the earth. They have also entered into leagues and covenants with God during epoch times of crisis and new beginnings.

## **THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISE**

Long before Israel became a nation, the Lord initiated an unconditional covenant with Abraham, the progenitor of their race. The Lord made it clear that this covenant was not only with Abraham, but with his offspring forever; *"And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee"* (Gen. 17:6-7). This irrevocable decree was made by the God who is faithful in keeping His promises.

In confirming the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob, the Lord included the promise that his seed would become a pioneering people who would colonize lands throughout the earth; *"And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be*

*blessed"* (Gen. 28:13-14).

## **THE DAVIDIC PROMISE**

God declared that the offspring of King David under covenantal authority would possess the legal right of civil rulership in the earth. The Lord said; *"I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations"* (Psa. 89:3-4). One promise included in the Davidic Covenant was the provision of a future homeland for the people of Israel other than in the land of Canaan. This divine mandate gave the legal right and spiritual motivation for future generations of Israelite families to settle yet unknown lands. The spirit of 'manifest destiny' was a driving force in the conquering and development of lands once known as a "wilderness" (Rev. 12:6). The Lord told David; *"Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime"* (II Sam. 7:10). Also referred to as an "ordained place" (I Chron. 17:9) and a "prepared place" (Rev. 12:6). When God, through His prophet Nathan gave this promise, David was residing in the city of Jerusalem, located in the land of Canaan, now known as Palestine. The promise is explicit in its terms that the Lord had appointed lands beyond the borders of Palestine in which He would plant His people Israel. God said He would





plant them in those lands and they would move no more. They would possess lands at the “ends of the earth” (Deut. 33:17) making it impossible to move elsewhere.

## THE SCATTERING

For their rebellious behavior, God used the Assyrian army to carry into captivity both the House of Israel and all the fenced cities of Judah making all thirteen tribes in dispersion (the true diaspora). In their scattered state they were known as the “*Lost Tribes of Israel*” (Matt. 10:6; 15:24). It does not mean that they could not be found, but “lost” meaning “put away and punished.”

## THE FULFILLMENT

This scattering was God’s way of sowing them (Hos. 2:23) for population increase and to establish the many nations that God promised Abraham his seed would become (Isa. 54:1-3). They founded and formed the nations of Northwestern Europe, Scandinavia and the British Isles, from whence they traveled to North America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Hundreds of Dutch of the Reformed Christian Faith left Holland during the 17th and 18th centuries. They went to South Africa for religious and cultural freedom and there colonized the “wilderness” of the **south**. The people of Holland are believed to fulfill the prophetic characteristics of the tribe of Zebulun (Gen. 49:13). 🏰



# THE PLANTING OF ISRAEL by Charles A. Jennings IN SOUTH AFRICA

*“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall” Gen. 49:22*  
*“And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Gen. 28:14*

## EARLY HISTORY

The early inhabitants of South Africa as indicated by rock drawings and other relics were the primitive tribes of Bushmen and Hottentots. In 1488, the first white man was the Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias who sailed around the Cape of Good Hope in search of a water route from Europe to India. Within ten years Portuguese ships had an established trade route around the Cape. In 1652, The Dutch East India Company sent a naval surgeon, Jan van Riebeeck with other Dutch citizens to establish a white settlement at the present site of Cape Town. Soon to follow were hundreds of French and German settlers who came to join the Dutch. As the European colonists travelled north

into the interior of the country during the 1700’s they encountered the powerful tribes of the Bantu which had migrated south from Central Africa. These tribes were not native to South Africa, but originally inhabited lands north of the Zambezi River. The Bantu tribes included the Zulu, Xhosa, Matebele and Ndebele. The British seized the Cape from the Dutch in 1806 in order to protect their sea route to the east. The Dutch resented the control of the British in their governing of the territory, plus the large number of English subjects that continued to settle in the Cape. As a result the Boers (Dutch farmers) began their historic Great Trek or journey into the interior in 1836. When the Dutch ‘advance pioneers’, known as Voortrekkers, reached the Orange River, they founded what they called the Orange Free State. Some Voortrekkers continued northward across the Vaal River and established the South African Republic.

## CHRISTIAN DUTCH PIONEERS

Much is known about the English pilgrims who left their homeland and sailed across the stormy Atlantic Ocean







and landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620. They were determined and resolute in their desire to embark on a new life in a new land away from a repressive religious system. To this day, those Pilgrim Fathers and their families are held in high esteem in the minds of Christians and most Americans at large.

Almost two hundred years later some of the descendants of those pilgrims of hardy and pioneering stock began a most unbelievable adventure across the American high plains and the Rocky Mountains in their trek to the Pacific Ocean. Traveling in their covered wagons pulled by slow moving oxen, they endured months of hardships, which included snakebites, disease, river-crossings, rugged mountains, Indian attacks, blistering heat of the summer and blizzards in the winter. Thousands died along the trails, yet the others pushed on in their westward bound determination to conquer the wilderness of the American continent. These pioneer men and women are also highly respected for their adventurous spirit and physical stamina to establish a new home while enduring the most adverse conditions.

While in our narrow focus of knowledge about our American pioneers, the Christian world has totally ignored the magnificent adventures of the Christian Dutch pioneers of South Africa. The Voortrekkers also wanted to enjoy the blessings of freedom from the oppressive civil and religious systems of the British. They also desired religious and cultural freedom, so they too gathered their earthly belongings with their families to face the direst hardships in conquering an untamed wilderness. They too travelled in slow moving covered wagons pulled by oxen and crossed the hot deserts and some of the most rugged mountain ranges of the African continent. They had to fight fierce battles against the most vicious African tribes at the cost of thousands of lives in the establishment of their new homeland. In all their struggles, they were fulfilling the Biblical mandate given by their ancient Hebrew forefathers in possessing the “wilderness” land in the southern hemisphere.

## THE BIBLICAL MANDATE

One of the most remarkable and astounding chain of historical events is the fulfillment of the promise of the

numerical increase of the Abrahamic family and their expansion through the earth as outlined in the sacred prophecies of old. The Lord told Abram; “*And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be*” (Gen. 15:5). He later affirmed that promise when He said: “*that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice*” (Gen. 22:17-18).

The blessing given to Rebekah, Isaac’s bride-to-be, was, “*Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them*” (Gen. 24:60). In Jacob’s encounter with God at Bethel, the Lord gave him an unfolding chronological promise concerning the mandate of the land that his offspring would possess. The initial limited land promise was: “*And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed*” (Gen. 28:13). This applied to the ancient land of Canaan. The greater expanded land promise was; “*And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south:*” (Gen. 28:14a). The Lord again reaffirmed that Jacob’s offspring in their expansion and possession of far off lands in the four corners of the earth would be a blessing to all people; “*and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed*” (Gen. 28:14b).

## THE PLANTING OF ISRAEL IN THE SOUTH

Early on in the history of mankind when God in His sovereign plan determined the land mass for each respective Adamic family, He predetermined the



boundaries according to the numerical increase of the family of Jacob. All these predetermined areas of the earth





that were divinely allotted and given to the families of Israel were “wilderness” areas when the promises were uttered. These areas include Northwestern Europe, the British Isles, North America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In due time all these areas have been possessed, civilized and developed by the Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and Germanic families who are the recipients of the promises given to our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses declared; “*When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD’S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance*” (Deut. 32:8-9).

To escape the religious oppression and political turmoil in their native Holland, hundreds of Dutch people of the Reformed Christian Faith left their homeland and sailed to the southern tip of Africa. There they formed their independent colonies within a tranquil social order with religious freedom to worship according to the Biblical dictates of their faith. These are the people whose offspring became the Voortrekkers of the 1800’s who considered themselves the bearers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and were willing to endure unbelievable hardships in possessing the land of the *south* in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

In the Voortrekkers Monument located in Pretoria, South Africa, a display panel describes the religious nature of

those Dutch Israelites and the legacy which they left for future generations. It reads:

“Nearly all the travelers who visited the Cape Colony before the Great Trek, made mention of the religious nature of the Pioneers in the interior. Despite the vast distances and the slow-moving ox-wagon, they attended church services as regularly as possible, baptized their children and attended Holy Communion.

According to the Dutch Reformed Church in the Colony, the Pioneers offered resistance against the legal government. As a result no minister was prepared to be associated with this ‘trek.’ The missionary Erasmus Smit was the only ordained Evangelist who accompanied the Pioneers. Family prayers and the reading of the Authorized Version of the Bible filled the gaps.

Parents were adamant that their children should be confirmed in the church. It was therefore important that children should attend school to be able to read the Bible. Before the confirmation of a son or a daughter, parents refused permission for them to enter into matrimony.

There is enough proof that the best-known Pioneer leaders such as Sarel Cilliers, Anna Steenkamp, Piet Uys and others, openly professed their religion. This had a great influence on the Pioneers’ outlook on life. They compared themselves to the Israelites and their exodus from Egypt. They believed that they were the chosen people on their way to a promised land.” 🏰

## **THE BATTLE OF VEGKOP -** by P. B. Botha and Pastor E.W. Kidwell

### **19 October 1836**

Hendrik Potgieter’s trip to the Soutpansberg in 1836 was in order to come into contact with Trichardt, but in the meanwhile his people in August 1836 who were at the Vaal River were attacked and overpowered by Mzilikazi the king of the Matabele tribe. The Matabele lived north of the Vaal, but the Trekkers with their huge flocks south of the Vaal, in the buffer zone, were an ideal prey to be attacked and robbed of their cattle. Potgieter returned at the end of August from Trichardt and found the destruction in the laagered camps at Liebenbergkoppie and Kopjeskraal that had been attacked by the Matabele on August 23.

Potgieter ordered the trekkers to withdraw to Thaba Nchu in the south. The withdrawing trekkers were relentlessly pursued by the Matabele. Potgieter decided to laager the trekkers and to wait for the advancing Matabele to thwart their southward movement. Potgieter and Sarel Cilliers in October 1836 laagered a camp at a longitudinal ridge between the Rhino and False River, later known as Vegkop near the present town of Heilbron in the Free State.

The Laagered camp was set up in two circles. In the outer circle were forty wagons tightly drawn together with thorn

branches between the wheels and the openings between the wagons. In a smaller circle, wagons were covered with animal skins on the top and sides, as shelter for the children and women who did not help with the loading of the rifles. Between the two circles, there was room for the horses, and an opening through which the men and horses could ride out which then could be closed with two wagons quickly. The men also rode out when the main force of Mzilikazi, consisting of between 5,000 and 6,000 impis (warriors) led by the brave and experienced Mkalipi attacked.

About fifty yards from the Matabele, the trekkers stopped. A coloured man, who could speak the Matabele’s language, was sent to ask what evil they had done to be attacked. They just threatening and murmuring said only the word, “Mzilikazi.” To turn back, they would not. When the Matabele stormed forward, the trekkers shooting, returned to the laagered camp.

#### **A PRAYER BEFORE THE BATTLE**

Then approximately 33 of which returned safely went with Sarel Cilliers, one of the spiritual leaders and kneeling down with the women and children they





implored Almighty God for help with these words: *“that we worship the Holy God of heaven and earth, and that we here together humble ourselves before Him in prayer to ask Him, with all our hearts as we kneel together, with our women and children...”* Everyone kneeling down as he offered a simple but fiery prayer that God in His infinite grace, would look down upon their distress and if it is in His council, not to leave them, but that they in their weakness to be strong to overcome the great enemy. He then quoted God’s promise: *“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”* (Psalm 50:15) Then Cilliers requested Martha van Vuuren to sing Psalm 130:1-2, 7-8 *“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. . . Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”* The small number of trekkers arose refreshed and encouraged by prayer.

During the time the Trekkers held their service in the laager, the Matabele were busy killing at least 80 head of cattle outside the laager and devouring the meat raw. Then they waited around the laager and sharpened their assegais (spears) on the stones.

## THE BATTLE

After a time of almost unbearable tension, the attack began at about 12:00 with a deafening roar. The 33 adult men along with seven children of 10 years and older, waited for the more than 5,000 attackers, odds of 116 to 1, to approach within thirty yards from the laagered camp and then fired simultaneously. Each had two or more front loading rifles, and while the men were shooting, their wives or children were loading the rifles; the 11 year old Paul Kruger, later President of the South African Republic, was one of the children. Some attackers tried to crawl through the wagons, but the women with axes attacked those who entered.

The bloody battle lasted about an hour and the frustrated warriors threw more and more assegais over the wagons, with some women and horses being wounded. The noise and dust was compounded by the animals within the laager nervously milling around. The dead Matabele piled up outside the laager and eventually Mkalipi gave the sign for the impis to fall back with an ominous hiss. They stole all the cattle that they could get and a commando chased the retreating Matabele warriors, but failed to get the cattle back. Two trekkers were killed in the battle, Nicholas Potgieter (Hendrik’s brother) and Pieter Botha (Hendrik’s son-in-law), with fourteen of the trekkers (men, women and children) severely wounded. Sarel Cilliers was stabbed with an assegai above the knee. (A trekker pulled the assegai out and Cilliers put his attacker to death with the same assegai.) A young boy, who was herding his father’s sheep when the attack took place and could not get to the laager in time, arrived the next

morning unharmed. Around the laager 430 Matabele bodies were counted while a number were scattered over the flight path. A large number also died later of their wounds. The trekkers damage was great with one canvas covered wagon showing no-less than 72 assegai holes. In the laager 1,137 assegai were counted. The loss of 100 horses, 6,000 cattle and 41,000 sheep was a major disaster.

## A THANKSGIVING SERVICE

The blow was delivered, but the handful of trekkers were saved from extinction, their supplication was answered! Though in a lot of pain, Cilliers held that night a thanksgiving service for the victory as it was a miracle of the Lord’s grace! Therefore, he thanked *“the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for His love and mercy ...”* The service was a memorial for the two slain, prayers for the wounded and for the critical position both physically and emotionally the trekkers found themselves in after the traumatic events of the day.

The aftermath of the battle was immensely great. The trekkers were trapped for 15 days in the laager and food supplies had become exhausted. Eventually, Hermanus Potgieter and Nicolaas Smit were sent out to seek help. On arrival at Blesberg (Thaba Nchu) they were greeted by the Wesleyan missionary James Archbell and chief Moroka of the Barolong tribe. Gert Maritz’s trek, which recently arrived, put in a helping hand and between the people of Maritz and Moroka’s Barolong tribe, oxen, cows, wheat and other food supplies were quickly put together and sent to the laager in desperate need at Vegkop. The Vegkop Laager was escorted to Thaba Nchu to join the Gert Maritz’s trek.

The battle of Vegkop succeeded in stopping the Matabele hordes and thereby granting the opportunity for the Great Trek to proceed by removing the Matabele risk between the Orange and Vaal and the opening up of that region for white settlement. The fact that 33 able-bodied men together had prevailed against more than 5,000 chosen impis of the Matabele king was a Wonder of God no less meaningful than what would take place two years later at Blood River. The feeling among the trekkers arose that the world beyond the Vaal River to the Limpopo River; **“By God’s hand was insured for civilization”** was due to the victory at Vegkop.

## SYMBOLISM OF THE MONUMENT

The stacked stones of the base symbolize the encompassing threat to the past and to the present. The total onslaught against Christian civilization. From this hostile situation there arises the powerful figure of a leader. Although one foot is rooted in conflict, he has unflinching faith in victory. In his left arm he holds the Holy Bible and in his right hand a fire-arm, which in noble submission to God points downward and against which hostile assegais (spears)





break and snap. Embodied in the monument are the words of Ephesians 6:16. 🏰



*“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”*

by P. B. Botha and Pastor E.W. Kidwell

## **THE BATTLE OF BLOOD RIVER 16 DECEMBER 1838**

Year of Affliction 1838

One of the most dynamic Trek leaders was P. (Pieter) Retief (1780-1838). He arrived early in 1837 with his trek consisting of several thousand trekkers and hundreds of wagons at Thaba Nchu. He was elected governor of the trekkers and on June 6, 1837 took the oath of office.

He and his company were planning to settle in Natal and utilize the port of Port Natal. With this goal in mind, Retief entered into negotiations with King Dingane to obtain ground from the Zulu people. Shortly after the treaty was signed, Dingane however, on 6 February 1838 instructed his warriors to kill Retief and his party of 70 men. The Zulu king also sent his warriors to wipe out the trek laagers. Early on the morning of February 17, 1838, about five hundred men, women and children (including other coloured workers) along the Bloukrans and Bushmans River in surprise attacks were killed. About two thousand five hundred head of cattle were stolen in the process. Reprisal attacks by the trekkers were organized, but they failed and suffered further losses. A second respected leader, P.L. (Piet) Uys on 11 April 1838 during the Battle of Italeni was killed.

The trekkers accused A.H. (Hendrik) Potgieter, the commander at Vegkop, for the defeat at Italeni because he was supposedly cowardly unlike the stubborn Uys in the Zulu ambush at Italeni. He and about one hundred and sixty families left Natal by May 1838, in their pursuit of their freedom on the Highveld, the area between the Orange River and the Limpopo River. The winter of 1838 was cold and diseases harassed the trekkers. Morale was low, especially when a third leader, G.M. (Gerrit) Maritz (1797-1838) died on 23 September 1838 with a severe illness.

### **ARRIVAL OF ANDRIES PRETORIUS**

The trekkers in their need reached out to Andries Pretorius and on 22 November 1838 he joined them from the Cape Colony in Natal. Pretorius had already shown himself as a capable scout of the interior. By 26 November 1838, he was appointed as commander-in-chief. He and the commando of trekkers under his command made immediate preparations to move against Dingane. Their quest was not for revenge against Dingane and his followers, but to eliminate this hostile power, so peaceful existence in the region could be assured. Pretorius realized that a horse commando against the Zulu warriors would not succeed. It was decided that a fight would be conducted against the enemy from a fortified laager.

At this stage, the trekker's only chance of survival in Natal lay in that the Zulu's had to be defeated or an agreement had to be reached with them. The British Government in the Cape Colony had already on 6 September 1838, placed a ban on the export of ammunition to the trekkers. This was followed by a ban on the export of food, and from 3 December 1838, the harbour by British Troops in Port Natal was blockaded. The trekkers were thus cut off from the outside world and the commando's action against the Zulus was a final act. If it was unsuccessful, the trek to Natal as a mass enterprise failed the pioneers only option was (if they did not survive), was to return to the Cape. At the end of November 1838 the commando under the motto "Unity is Strength" departed on their campaign. The fact that the commando did not attack Zulu settlements on the way to Dingane's headquarters proved that the campaign was directed only against Dingane. In his diary, Bantjes recorded how Pretorius up to and before 16 December 1838 sent a message under the cover of white flags to Dingane that the commando was committed to peace, but if he would not agree, they were ready for battle, even if it is ten years long.

### **THE TAKING OF THE VOW (COVENANT)**

The religious leader of the commando was S.A. (Sarel) Cilliers (1801-1871). He and Rev. Erasmus Smit often crossed swords because Cilliers's lack of formal spiritual training, but the latter was a devout Christian and popular preacher.

Sarel Cilliers and Andries Pretorius originated the idea that the Lord's help for the coming battle had to be asked in a





particular way. They decided to make it through a vow. Cilliers was concerned that the Covenant would not be met in later years and that God's judgment would be brought about if not upheld.

The origin of the Covenant has been attributed to a variety of sources. Although there are doubts about the trekkers pronounced Calvinism, the orthodoxy of the faith of the majority of them leaves us in no doubt. Pretorius, reminded the men regularly that they alone with God's help would succeed with their campaign. The commando took it to heart and held daily evening devotions. It is important to note that the Covenant was repeated although the commando was not in immediate danger, but the battle was still in a planning phase. The Covenant was not a desperate cry for help, but an act of will by the commando. Before the Covenant was repeated, all those present had to declare if they were prepared in such a real way to connect to God. The idea that the men unanimously accepted in such an undertaking was noble.

There is a fair degree of certainty about how the completion of the Covenant went. The whole commando was assembled and the idea of the Covenant was already known to all. Cilliers spoke. First they sang Psalm 38, verses 12 to 16, after which Cilliers fervently prayed to God and read the first 24 verses of Judges 6. This passage deals with Gideon and his small commando going up against a superior force of the Midianites, which Gideon miraculously won. Cilliers also referred to Jephthah's vow in Judges 11, verses 30 to 40. In a post-prayer meeting Cilliers repeated the Covenant on behalf of the commando and they with a collective "Amen" showed their agreement in the Covenant. Finally, Psalm 38, verses 12 and 21, and Psalm 134 were sung. *"Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD. The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion."*

## WORDING OF THE COVENANT

The Covenant of 1838 is not preserved in the original form in writing, as it was in the form of a prayer.

"HERE WE STAND BEFORE THE HOLY GOD 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."

## AFRIKAANS

"HIER STAAN ONS VOOR DIE HEILIGE GOD VAN HEMEL EN AARDE OM 'N GELOFTE AAN HOM TE DOEN, DAT, AS HY ONS SAL BESKERM EN ONS VYAND IN ONS HAND SAL GEE, ONS DIE DAG EN DATUM ELKE JAAR AS 'N DANKDAG SOOS 'N SABBAT SAL DEURBRING; EN DAT ONS 'N HUIS TOT SY EER SAL OPRIG WAAR DIT HOM BEHAAG, EN DAT ONS OOK AAN ONS KINDERS SAL SÊ DAT HULLE DAARIN MOET DEEL TOT NAGGEDAGTENIS OOK VIR DIE OPKOMENDE GESLAGTE. WANT DIE EER VAN SY NAAM SAL VERHEERLIK WORD DEUR DIE ROEM EN DIE EER VAN OORWINNING AAN HOM TE GEE."

## DUTCH

(Original language of the Covenant)

"MIJNE BROEDERS EN MEDELANDGENOTEN, HIER STAAN WIJ THANS, OP EENE OGENBLIK VOOR EEN HEILIGE GOD VAN HEMEL EN AARDE, OM EEN BELOFTE AAN HEM TE BELOVEN ALS HIJ MET ZIJNE BESCHERMING, MET ONS ZAL WEZEN EN ONSE VIJAND IN ONZE HANDEN, ZAL GEVEN DAT WIJ DIE DAG EN DATUM, ELK JAARALS EEN VERJAARSDAG EN EEN DANKDAG, ZOO ALS EEN SABBATH EN ZIJNE EERE, DIENEN ZAL, DOORBRENGEN EN DAT WIJ HET OOK AAN ONZEN KINDEREN ZAL ZEGGEN, DAT ZIJ MET ONS ERIN MOETEN DEELEN, TOT GEDACHTENIS, OOK VOOR ONS OPKOMENDE GESLAGTEN, EN ALS IEMAND IS DIE ER ONDER BEZWAARD BEVIND, DAT DIE DAN DEZE PLAATS WEG MOETEN GAAN, WANTDE EERE VAN ZIJN NAAM DAAROOZ ZAL VERHEERLIJK WORDEN DAT DE ROEM EN EER VAN NOORWINNING, AAN HEM ZAL WORDEN GEGEVEN."

What is important is that all versions speak of the same reverence towards God and state that the honour of the victory should go to Him alone and that this is to be celebrated by future generations.

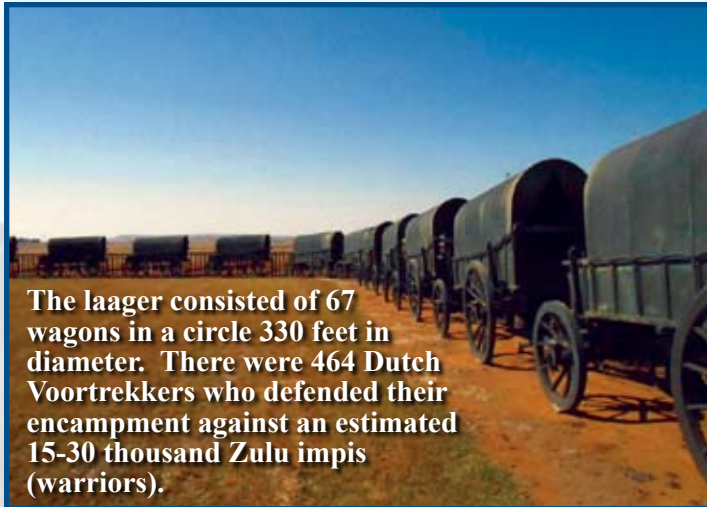
## THE BATTLE OF BLOOD RIVER (16 December 1838)

After the Covenant was first vowed, it was reaffirmed every night, during daily devotions. Still they moved closer to Dingane's headquarters while Pretorius and his men were on the lookout for a suitable place to laager if the enemy would attack. On Saturday, 15 December 1838, the scouts encountered a large Zulu army near the commando. Pretorius ordered the commando to laager





at the Ncome River. Veghekke (gates to close the gaps between the wagons) was drawn up between the wagons and the commando was ready. Evening prayers were held as usual. They were ready for battle.



The laager consisted of 67 wagons in a circle 330 feet in diameter. There were 464 Dutch Voortrekkers who defended their encampment against an estimated 15-30 thousand Zulu impis (warriors).

Ndlela, a Zulu military leader, tried to draw the commando into an ambush at first, but eventually realized that it would not succeed and that he and his men would have to attack the laager. The night was dark and dense fog also descended. Zulu warriors were painstakingly set up around the laager. When the fog on Sunday morning, 16 December 1838 lifted, the commando saw the largest Zulu army ever seen in history was gathered around them. Exact numbers are uncertain, but in the laager was less than five hundred able-bodied men compared to fifteen to thirty thousand Zulu warriors. A relentless battle was fought as the Zulu warriors rushed and retreated. It was not just a series of random stampedes, but a finely planned strategy of attack. Often after a rush they reviewed the situation and regrouped to attack them more effectively, but their strategy was not good enough to overpower the laager.

By the end of the fight, a horse commando left the laager time and again to pursue the Zulu warriors to enhance the firepower of the Voortrekkers in the laager. Eventually the Zulu warriors fled. Both sides had a fanatical spirit prevailing during the fight and bravely fought the battle, but finally the trekker's faith and courage gave them the victory. After the battle subsided, it was found that three trekkers (including Pretorius) were wounded. The Zulu warrior losses by the commando reckoned at about three thousand five hundred. Among the dead were two half-brothers of Dingane. The blood of the Zulu casualties coloured the Ncome River red and gave rise to the origin of the name of the Battle (The Battle of Blood River). Zulu survivors would later claim that about ten thousand of their warriors died during the campaign. Many of them were seriously wounded at Blood River and later died. There were still skirmishes that followed after the Battle at Blood River.

Still on the same day (16 December 1838), just after the battle, a thanksgiving service was held by the weary trekkers in the laager and is regarded as the first Covenant Memorial. Since that day up till now that day is remembered by the Afrikaners (Dutch) of South Africa, as the Day of the Covenant. 🏰

by A.J.P. Opperman

## THE MIRACLE OF BLOOD RIVER

The miracle of Blood River not only lies in the human factors which contributed to the victory, viz. good leadership, strategic position of the laager, entrenchment with "veghekke", accurate fire from the muzzle-loaders, and all the other preparations by the Voortrekkers, but the victory was made possible by factors over which the Voortrekkers had no control.

If the Zulus had attacked during the pitch-dark, misty night – which they easily could have done – the Voortrekkers would not have been able to withstand the attack. The fact that the mist cleared early helped them, because the gunpowder could be kept dry and they could use their muzzle-loaders. If it rained they would have been defenseless against superior numbers.

The Battle of Blood River thus has a far greater significance than the mere victory of a few hundred Voortrekkers against thousands of Zulus. The evening after the battle, Sarel Cilliers attributed the victory to the Vow they had made to God.

### A BATTLE WITH A COVENANT

The Blood River incident has a special significance, because a Vow was made before the battle. The Covenant and the battle are so closely connected that you cannot speak of the one, without mentioning the other.

After Dingane was overpowered, the Voortrekkers built their capital at Pietermaritzburg and kept their Vow "to raise a house to the memory of His great Name, wherever it might please Him".

According to Pretorius the day of their victory also had to be made known to their descendants, by holding it as a day of thanksgiving to the Lord. The events at Blood River are still remembered in many places in our country and it is the only battle in our history for which a day is set aside by law, namely the Day of the Covenant. 🏰

*From: The Battle of Blood River, Roodepoort, Pretoria, South Africa.*





# SOUTH AFRICA - THE LAND "BEYOND THE RIVERS OF ETHIOPIA"

*"From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering." Zeph. 3:10*


Those of us, who recognize the old commonwealth of Israel, will have one particular country in our minds. That country is one of the chambers where the Anglo-Saxon people have settled. As the text indicates we must consider just what the land is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia and establish which rivers we are talking about. God has established the bounds of all His nations. *"When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."* (Deut. 32:8) That verse reminds us that boundaries must be observed. The necessity of these boundaries is and was to give God's people protection from their enemies as long as the people and their elected authorities obey His word. He will grant to them peace and prosperity in the areas that He has given them.

Now the land of Ethiopia is not just the area that we have seen in recent news programs. The land of Ethiopia, according to Scripture is an area stretching from the Euphrates River down through the continent of Africa to the Zambezi River. If you follow the Zambezi River and its tributaries on a map, you will see that it does not flow in a straight line from east to west. The boundaries which that river makes, which has been violated by governments flows from the south Atlantic Ocean on the west, winds its way along in a reasonably straight course as it reaches the Rhodesian borders. Then moves to the north and it continues to flow westward through the heart of what we know as Mozambique. It soars southward again into the east to the Zambezi Delta in the Indian Ocean on the far east coast. Mozambique or parts of it was known, not too long ago as Portuguese East Africa, because there were settlers there from Portugal. The port of Beira is the main port in that area of great importance as it has opened up the way of trading with the northern part of the continent of Africa. If the Israel people would colonize the area beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, the boundaries set by man would have to revert to God's specification and include southwest Africa now known as Namibia, Rhodesia, part of Mozambique and the whole of South Africa.

Reputable historical records will show that the area which is known as South Africa and the area going up to the Zambezi River was uninhabited when the early

settlers arrived. There was nobody there. The early settlers were in the first place made up of the French, Dutch and German people, with the Portuguese to the north in Mozambique and later on the British settlers arrived. Now the early settlers were Christian people, and very strong in the schools of Luther and Calvin. The Huguenots from France were also very evident. These early settlers discovered a green and fertile land. They found this beautiful country when they discovered a place to rest in the Cape Province on their long voyages to other lands. Gradually these settlers began to set up governments. South Africa at one time had many governments and they were formed as these territories were being claimed by the early settlers.

The black heathen nations came down from Ethiopia and soon many battles were raging in the Ethiopians' attempt to overthrow the settlers and claim the land. The heathen who were defeated soon realized if they were prepared to work for the established settlers, they would be treated well and some of them became an integral part of the South African household. The farmers and others in the white populations maintained the Christian principles as they prospected and mined for gold and other precious metals. They sought the Word of God in all their decisions. The Bible was prominent in every home and it was read. God's Word was their bond. They consulted the Book on everything before they made any decision. The people of South Africa are surely *"the daughter of my dispersed."* God has some of His family settled in that beautiful land and they are mentioned here in the Bible.

God has a plan for His "daughter" just as He has for all His people, whether they be in the chambers or in the Islands. The settlement of God's people in South Africa puts a seal on the land that it also belongs to God. The Lord declared, *"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."* (Psa. 2:8) The uttermost parts of the earth in the Cape of South Africa will be the God-given borders of the land, not the man-made borders. The early settlers knew that they were the Israel of the last days. Is "mine offering" referred to in the text that the daughter of my dispersed shall bring to the Lord and to the motherland of Israel, the turning back of God's people there, to the God of Israel and His precious Word? 





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