

Sunday, 2nd April, 2017

Dear Chris,

On the road from Johannesburg to Pretoria there rises a lonely monument on a hilltop. This beige granite cube crowned with a cupola commemorates the Voortrekkers (Dutch pioneer settlers) Great Trek (1835-54) from the Cape to the interior of South Africa. The external simplicity of this edifice belies what waits inside: the world's longest marble frieze, consisting of 27 bas-reliefs, These depict historical scenes from the banal to representations of utter butchery, with the defeat of the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River being the key highlight.

On the eve of this battle, the voortrekkers took a public vow, a covenant with God for their success; victory was duly granted when 470 voortrekkers defeated a Zulu force of 10,000. This established the key 'foundation myth' of the new nation - that their rise is ordained. The erection of the monument proclaims and showcases how the new nation viewed itself, its foundation myth now manifest.

Why are voortrekkers or their monument important today? It makes us consider what are the key foundation myths of our and other nations. How do we distinguish ourselves from those around us? And how our current economic circumstances re-ignite past embers, bringing these

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foundation myths back to life.

Let's begin with Brexit, Britain is an island nation, 'a precious stone set in a silver sea'. The defeat of the Spanish Armada embodies our foundation myth, it cemented Protestantism and our position as a global seapower. Brexit = single nation but with a global outlook.

If we move across the Atlantic, Don I is fanning old longings of a self reliant powerhouse. An America neither needing, nor being responsible for others; an America of the 1800's, focusing on its own plentiful frontiers. Make America Great Again + America First = Special Nation but looking inward.

Foundation myths reappear at times of economic uncertainty and that they are currently gaining traction around the world exposes the global financial patchwork that links us all, plunging us towards our own Great Trek.

See you in the office tomorrow - Mustafa