

General André Cox  
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It is said that there are events of such significance that almost everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing when they first heard the news. I would think that, in my own lifetime, the assassination of the United States President John F. Kennedy in 1963 was among these, probably followed by the first moon landings in 1969, the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, and the 2001 terror attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

An event of particular significance occurred this past week in the land of my birth, and the country where Commissioner Silvia and I served for some years as Salvation Army officers, with the somewhat unexpected and abrupt ending of 37 years' rule in Zimbabwe by President Robert Mugabe. Few people in that land, and several million of the Zimbabwean diaspora around the world, will forget the moment when they heard news of the resignation, nor the scenes of jubilation that resounded on the streets of the capital city long into the night. There was a palpable sense of release, together with a sense of optimism for the future.

It would be my hope and earnest prayer that the people of that nation unite together - as perhaps at their independence in 1980 - and determine a new way forward that affords all people justice, equality and opportunity. But what of those significant events, those other occasions where the magnitude of the moment makes an indelible mark in history? Sad to say, the euphoria of a particular moment has a tendency to dissipate - perhaps a reflection of our humanity and that the pressures and concerns of the everyday somehow wrestle their way back into our consciousness. This is perhaps reflected in the media; the significance of an occasion can be measured by the number of days that the event dominates the front pages of an average daily newspaper.

It's the same with the many personal significant moments in our own life journey; a moment of elation - or, perhaps, extreme sorrow - closely followed by the challenge of moving forward in the sometimes harsh light of reality. It might be marriage, a birth, a graduation, the death of a loved one, or something equivalent. For those of faith, it might include an occasion of commitment, of dedication, of celebration. But for each of these, despite the occasion being memorable, the magnitude of impact has an inevitable tendency to diminish over time.

Perhaps that is why, particularly in the scriptures, the writers bring to reminder the importance of keeping alive and holding on to those special moments, and challenge when that first flush of enthusiasm begins to wane. Paul, for example, reminds young Timothy not to neglect the gifts within him (1 Timothy 4:14), culminating in John's challenge to the church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-5) that they had abandoned the love they once had.

But there is a significant difference between those other occasions we remember and those moments associated with our spiritual journey; and that is the spiritual impact on our lives may remain a living, bright reality through our relationship with the Lord Jesus. Just look at Paul's three testimonies of his conversion as contained in the book of Acts. In Acts 9:1-9 Paul meets Jesus on the Damascus Road and his life is totally transformed. Many years later in Jerusalem Paul recounts that occasion (Acts 22:6-16), and shortly afterwards again in Caesarea (Acts 26:12-23). But it is in the third testimony that Paul attributes the enduring impact of his conversion, which we find outlined in verse 22, that throughout Paul has had the help that comes from God.

Our prayer today is that we might each remember and cherish again those moments of particular importance in our spiritual journey, then ask that the Lord will bring his help to our remembrance so that the impact of that occasion might again inspire and motivate us in the coming days. And, in doing so, that we might be among those with him who are called, and chosen, and faithful (Revelation 17:14).

I am reminded of an old chorus we don't seem to sing much these days:  
O touch me again, Lord, touch me again! This moment I feel afresh thou canst heal, So touch me again, Lord, O touch me again!

Commissioner Silvia joins me in prayer that the Lord will touch us each again this day, and that this encounter might remain for us a living, bright reality.