



Well we've finally arrived! We've worked our way through chapter and verse of the Acts of the Apostles. It's played out like some epic drama where the players appear and disappear - fading into the background, while others remained the focus of our attention. But for me, at least, there's one event and one person which stands head and shoulders above the rest and that's the circumstances surrounding Paul's conversion.

It has been suggested that to understand Paul and his writings you have to look at them through the lens of his encounter with the Risen Lord on that Damascus Road. Paul's conversion not only changed him; it changed the world and gave it a new way of thinking. Paul was willing to break away from his former lifestyle and to accept the challenges of living the converted life even though it came with more than its own fair share of difficulties and challenges. He continued steadfast on the path he had taken – faithful to his calling.

I believe, in different ways, we've all had our conversion moments, probably not as spectacular as Paul's, but none the less somewhere along life's road opportunities occurred, and suddenly our interior landscape began to change. It may have been a chance encounter, or a conversation which unexpectedly challenged you in some way and made you view life and the world from a different perspective. Personal moments of God's grace.

It often seems to happen when one door closes and then a window opens which you'd never even considered looking through - and that made all the difference. We may not always recognise these mysterious beautiful moments as 'conversion' and yet they touch us deeply and speak directly to our heart.

Conversion moments usually have a common thread - they ask us to let go. We can never hold anything different unless we're willing to release what's already in our hands. The status quo can all too often give us the false illusion of security, of stability. Conversion challenges us to rethink the future, not to escape reality – but to reshape it.

All last week Radio 4 hosted a programme simply called 'Rethink'. A variety of speakers from different platforms shared their views on how the coronavirus pandemic has created an opportunity to reshape our world for the better. Has this awful disease paradoxically created the conditions necessary for a radical change in

our societies, economics and international relations? Could this be our collective Damascus Road moment?

President Clinton once famously said, "it's the economy stupid", well yes, perhaps, up to a point. But it's also about our shared humanity and our stewardship of creation, it's about our fragility and interdependence, it's about our need of repentance for past mistakes in order to receive God's forgiveness, it's about justice and equality between people and nations. Conversion is about how we start to en-flesh God's dream for a better, fairer, more hopeful tomorrow. Pray God we don't waste it.

Every blessing, Linda