



God found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

(Deuteronomy 32:10)



I began to blunder  
Off the true path. But when I came to stop  
Below a hill that marked one end of the valley  
That had pierced my heart with terror, I looked up  
  
Toward the crest and saw its shoulders already  
Mantled in rays of that bright planet that shows  
The road to everyone, whatever our journey.

The Inferno (excerpt), Dante Aligheri

In the delicious night,  
In privacy, where no one saw me,  
Nor did I see one thing,  
I had no light or guide  
But the fire that burned inside my chest.

The Dark Night (excerpt), St. John of the Cross



## LOOKING AT THE WHOLE

The development of adult faith is described in various ways, possibly most generally from pre-critical to critical to post-critical expressions. The critical tends to involve some form of darkness, dislocation or disorientation with metaphors such as desert, pit, wall, shipwreck used to describe the raw and often painful experience of transformation, for those who choose it.

This rough 3-fold journey into and through darkness has, writes Jamieson, a number of characteristics, some of which are:

- Colour: Theology and morality issues seen as Black and white then Grey then Black and white plus grey being "equally valued"
- Connection: Dependence to hyper-independence to interdependence resulting in humility and vulnerability.
- Posture: Accepting answers to allowing questions and onto embracing paradox, mystery and childlike wonder.
- Person: Doing (productivity emphasis) through diminishment and limitation to Being (presence and inherent value)
- Identity: Getting identity through role & place, onto formation of self-identity and onto the giving of true self to others.
- Voices: Guided by external authorities (voices) through to finding one's own voice and onto accepting both authorities.
- Discernment: Mentored or led, to explorations encouraged and sponsored to co-discerning of God's will and leading.

Such movements and invitations to journey will often be shunned due to fear or bewilderment, may be prolonged or sharp. Faith may be lost or become a 'shadow' or open up into a wider and more spacious place, of integration and deep connection. Whatever the journey there is grace.

See Alan Jamieson's Chrysalis, chapter 10

## REFLECTION: Cairns and markers

Where have I come from? Where do I suspect I am heading?

Am I arriving, processing, resting, leaving, going?

Is there a marker to put down just now to mark this place eg like a cairn to show me I am on my way or have reached somewhere?

