

As T.S. Elliot said in his poem *The Wasteland*:
"With the drawing of this love, and the voice of this calling
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time..."

What can I say about a spiritual journey that has taken such a long and windy road to end up pretty much where it began? What I can say with assurance is that the journey has defined my life choices. I've lived a life eager and expecting to encounter God. I've been willing to go anywhere, do anything and open ever more deeply to that experience, and to assist others to do the same. And God has never stopped presenting himself to me, no matter where I've gone or what I've done. It's been like the children's game: "You're getting warmer."

In brief, my journey has taken me from liberal Catholic spiritual roots in 60's Hollywood, through a young married life in Cape Town involved in a Christian/humanistic spiritual foundation, to 9 years of living in spiritual communities with my children in Cape Town, British Columbia and Colorado, then, after years in corporate Toronto during which I studied psychotherapy, back to Southern Africa, where I was initiated as a Sangoma in Botswana in 2000. Now I've come full circle to my ancestral Christian roots. I feel re-born and yet it is the space my ancestors prepared for me.

How do I frame this intercontinental, inter-cultural, inter-religious experience? I hope that for the most part, as keen as I have been, I've been a 'finder' rather than a 'searcher'. Because, what I know from experience is that God has presented him/herself to me at each step of the way. (From now on I'll use the common "he", if you'll understand that for me God is beyond gender.) I only needed the eyes to see and the ears to hear him in the many ways he presented himself to me through teachers and wise people, the simple joys of love and parenthood, the magnificent beauty of nature and directly through his voice speaking within me. I remember as a child being told by my mother to expect to feel God's presence and to hear his voice in my heart.

I feel no desire to convince anyone about my beliefs or experiences because what I also know for sure is that when God shows up in our life, he shows up as God—not as the myriad projections we impose on him/her. As Isaiah says, his ways are not ours, yet mercifully he introduces himself to us wherever we are. He invites us into an encounter with him and then shows us who and what he actually is. We have no excuses for alienation, but we can miss his calling by looking the other way. What I've done right is to 'find' him as he is, to be open to him when he shows up. The biggest mistake I've made is to respond to the restlessness and impulsivity of contemporary life and 'search' for a version of God that I think will satisfy my current needs or beliefs. He always comes all right, but in the best possible way—his way—to meet my deepest needs. And it may be just to say: "you're getting colder."

I remember at 17 years old, being asked by the great American psychologist Dr. Carl Rogers, when he facilitated 'encounter groups' for the student leaders and faculty in my convent high school, what I wanted to become as an adult. I told him then that I wanted to be like Jesus; always able to speak right into the hearts and minds of anyone he met, speaking in their 'tongue' and healing them on that basis. I've never deviated from that desire. I am still inspired by how God speaks *his* healing and creative ways but through our many languages.

I've spent my adult life learning ways to heal, to counsel, and recently to coach. All I've ever wanted to do is to help remove blockages in others so they can open their hearts to God's presence in their lives. I've studied many frameworks from modern theoretical physics to Jungian psychology to ancient shamanic practices, looking for languages and healing tools. To support our inevitable life changes, I've developed contemporary rites of passage to replace those that have lost their cultural currency in Western influenced society. All these have been useful arenas for the Holy Spirit to work within people.

Yet I am most inspired when the Bible shows Jesus using spit and mud, simple stories and the bold challenges of the beatitudes. He performed immediate and profound healings, he exemplified God's ways for human beings, and he showed a spectacular command of ritual processes as he gathered people into encounters with his Holy Spirit. He promised and even commanded that we do the same.

So in my journey, I've been led back full circle to a simple relationship with Jesus. I indulge daily in the childlike faith in the Holy Spirit with which my mother raised me. And as singer Katie Melua says: I've called off the 'search'.