

Glimpse

Spring

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Spring has made a dramatic entrance on to our Creighton-campus stage recently. Buds, birds and un-bundled students are appearing for what they all do best, showing up and showing off.

I was walking along our central mall one afternoon and was greeted in stereo by three female students resting from their labors on a park bench. After a few clever observations about the weather and such, I suggested that I knew what they were up to. "You're fishing!" They laughed in stereo after which they coyly resuggested that it might be good for me to move along, seeing that some prospective "catches" were making their way down stream toward them. I did not want to obstruct spring fishing and spring's process so I recommitted myself to the single life and gladly paddled off.

In spring and the other three seasons as well, courting is the favorite sport on our campus, except during basketball season. I am not one hundred percent sure about the accuracy of that statement. We elder observers refer to this as "Heing and Sheing". It takes place in many places and in various forms. There is the beginning with ambiguity moving through doubt and wondering-if, to some form of boldness resulting in revelations of various kinds. Just in case you haven't heard, there is a stage of she-he relating called "Hanging out". It is not dating, (that's too much like commitment), but it moves in that direction. It is casual, flavored with possibilities, but all quite implicit, safer that way.

Dating is serious business and involves gestures such as buying meals, tickets, flowers and just the correct things. Now here's the process' problem. The "he" usually, has to advance just this far to allow the "she" to have receptivity, but remaining free. "He" cannot force the issue. "He" has to do the appropriate courtishy dance to attract a response, but not demand it. "She" does not assume a false passivity either. "She" makes gestures of acceptance, such as smiling or laughing at "his" attempts at humor. "She" reels "him" in very carefully so as to allow "him" his sense of freedom. It is quite an ancient interaction which results in a lively campus as well as fond memories.

God has a similar pattern of relating. God is love and the nature of love is the revelation through gestures. God's problem is the same as with "he" and "she". God does the initiating. God has to advance slowly respectful of human boundaries and human freedom. God has to get our attention by gestures which are meaningful and sensible. That is, God has to come to us according to the ways we get come to. God comes right up to the same kind of line "he" does. We, like "she" are left free to smile, even laugh, but moved always to notice and be attracted.

The big question of course is why doesn't God just come right out and say it. That would be bold, a commitment, not just "hanging out". The answer is the same as with "he" and "she". Love and faith are quite similar. Sooner or later, after much courting, a dating-leap takes place. That leap is an act of faith in the other based on the revelation and reception of gestures. God, in God's eternal now, gestures and does not wait for a response. God never stops dancing, singing, waving, blowing bubbles or whatever might get our attention. As "he" comes to "She" according to how "she" likes to be come to, so this courting, but mysterious God, makes funny faces, quiet noises, offers special gifts and always just on the other side of certainty.

So as with "he" and "she" attentiveness is the beginning. Awareness of just how we need to be come-to is our first step toward the ever-stepping-forward God, but always just to that line which allows for a leap, a date, a life.

It is just a glimpse.