

## ***The Dash***

**[19xx – 20xx]**

*A man spoke at a memorial service for a friend.  
He referred to the dates on her tombstone  
from the beginning to the end.*

**He noted that first came the date of her birth  
and mentioned the following date with tears;  
but, he said what matter most of all  
was the dash between those years.**

*For that dash represents all the time that  
she spent alive on earth ...  
and now only those who loved her know  
what that little line is worth.*

**For it matters not, how much we own;  
the cars ... the house ... the cash.  
What matters is how we live and love  
and how we spend our dash.**

*So think about this long and hard ...  
are their things you'd change today?  
For you never know how much time is left  
until that final day.*

**If we could just slow down enough  
to consider what's true and real;  
and, always try to understand  
the way other people feel.**

*And be less quick to anger, and show appreciation more;  
and, love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.*

**If we treat each other with respect,  
and more often wear a smile...  
remembering that this special dash  
might only last a while.**

*When you're eulogy's being read  
with your life's actions to rehash ...  
would you be proud of the things they say  
about how you spent your dash?*

## **WHAT IF - - - -**

This world were the promised Heaven and we are all there, and we didn't recognize it because of all the negative things like war and evil persons that we condone, encourage and tolerate - - - -

But, if we recognized the heavenly things such as:  
the love of some people, sunsets, sunrises, birds singing, the emotions aroused at the sight of surf on rocks, the quietness in a forest, the trust you feel from a small child's hand in yours, the answered daily small prayers said silently, the abundance of our gardens, the applause of friends for accomplishments, the embrace lovingly given in sorrow - - - -

### **WHAT IF**

almost too late we were told, "This is your Heaven,"  
how would we grasp at straws to change our world?

Then, we would look for some map, a guide, a set of directions on how to live in Heaven. As though we were visiting a foreign country for the first time, we would feel a need to know the customs, attitudes; yes, the language too!

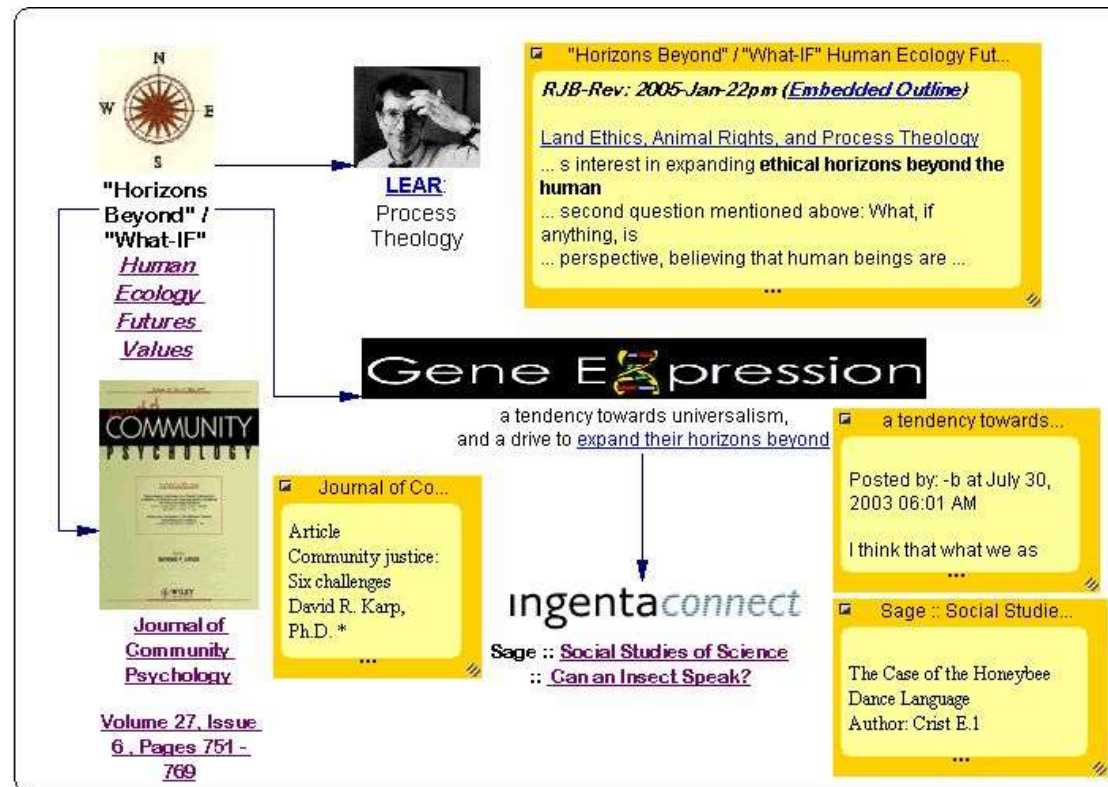
"When all else fails, read the directions"  
reads a sign posted over Jim's workbench.

So we seek directions in our Bible by turning to the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer. We engage in Bible study for answers.

The Spirit within us stirs and we recognize in our friends and neighbors kindred spirits and minds. The feelings we have for birth and death emerge; and, we know at last the meaning of life:

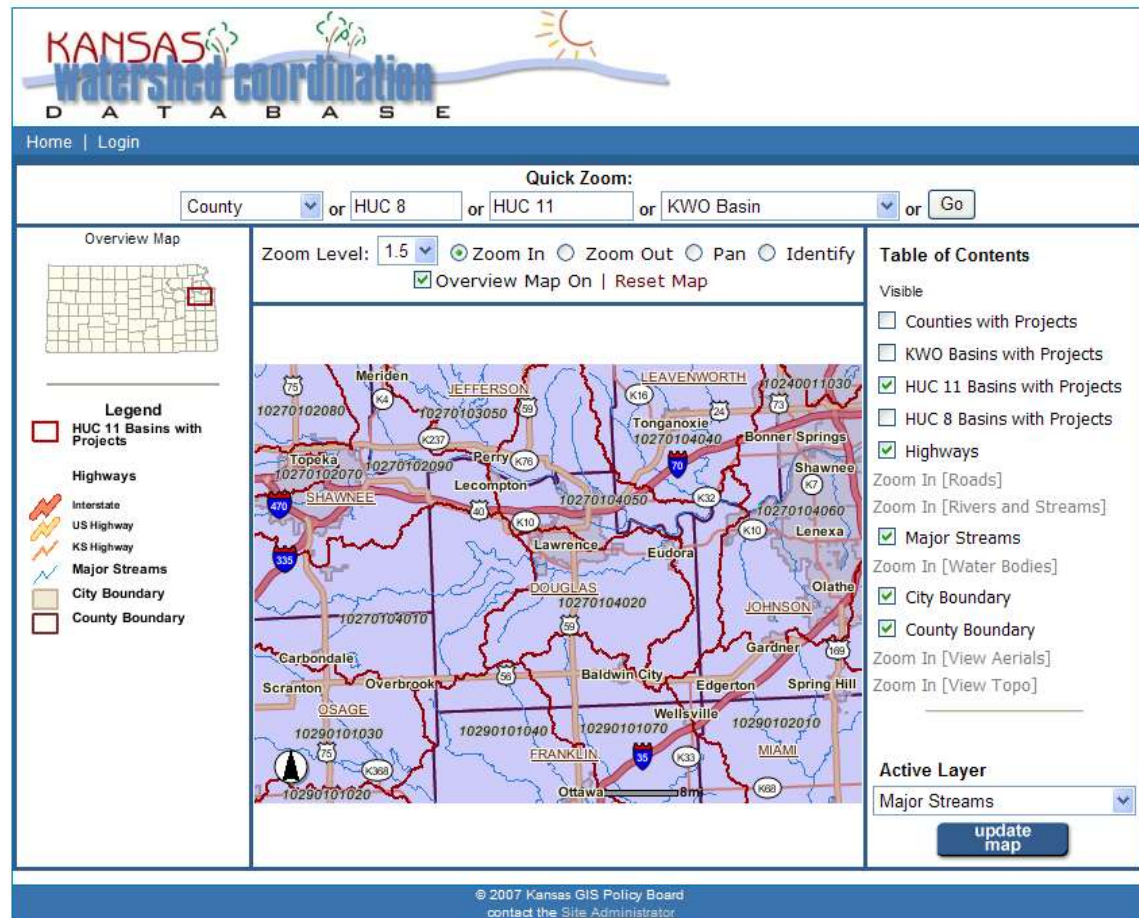
Its essence is Pure Love.  
October, 1980

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