

Oct. 15, 2017

Eden: so close and yet so far

The other day I was driving through Oklahoma, looking out at all the trees and rolling hills, when I had an epiphany.

I pulled out a pencil and a piece of paper and quickly wrote it down. I read it over and checked for errors. I took out a dictionary, just in case, and checked several words. Granted, I probably should have pulled over first.

I smiled, retook the wheel, and maneuvered back onto the road from the pasture I was driving through.

What I realized was this:

The most difficult thing about being expelled from the Garden of Eden isn't the high cost of quality clothing, having to work for a living, or even the pain of child-birth, although I imagine that child-birth is a *very* close second.

The most difficult thing about being expelled from the Garden of Eden is that we can see it from here.

So close, yet so far.

While living in Colorado, to get home from work I drove through a paradise of green foothills before turning into the Rocky Mountains, the gentle curves of the road slowly giving way to hairpin turns amid a thick forest of pines before reaching our little A-frame cabin deep in the woods. It was beautiful!

Cut to a few decades later:

A few weeks ago I was driving from my folks' place in Denver to Manitou Springs, Colorado for my niece's wedding. Manitou is like a little European village snuggled just inside the base of the Rocky Mountains. For the first time in a decade I experienced the beauty of the mountains once again.

Only this time, having lived in Spearville for 17 years, I had this sad realization: I paid more each month for a studio apartment in Colorado 20 years ago than I pay for my house in Spearville today. In fact, my house would cost probably five times as much if it were even within 200 miles of Denver. People in Colorado squirm when they learn how low the cost of living is here in Kansas. Literally. It's fun to watch. Sometimes they twitch. It's like they're inventing a new dance move or something.

When I think about it, those majestic mountains are relatively close to us here in Kansas. Yet, they're so far, far away.

Eden is like that, in a way.

I can see Eden in my beloved Colorado mountains, but I see it in Kansas, too. Have you ever just stopped to look at the sky, reaching from horizon to horizon with hardly a man- or woman- or combination man/woman-made object in sight?

Have you seen the beauty of the wafting waves of wheat as they waft wavily in the wind? Well?

Have you noticed that, except for the occasional combine lumbering down the highway, or the road crews that are endlessly repaving our roads for no reason, the highways are free from traffic?

With all these blessings, isn't it like we're living in a sort-of Garden of Eden right here in Kansas?

Well ... no.

See, darn if that ol' apple doesn't still exist -- the one that Adam and Eve munched on.

We can see the beauty of the Garden in many places, we can reach for it, but before it is the fog of war. And hate. And horrible violence. How can we reach such beauty through such ugliness? It seems that human-kind will go on biting that apple, distancing us from Eden.

The teachings of Christ -- that's our true Garden of Eden! When Christ came, he pulled it from its geographic location and put it into each of us. And if we can't live in the Garden, it's nice to know the Garden lives within us.

-- Dave Myers