

"What the Real World Looks Like"

By Bill Stevens

Like most of you, I've been looking at the present state of the world and pondering, *"Is this for real?"*

Even for us who claim hope, being "filled with joy and peace in believing" (Romans 15:13), the present level of crisis around the globe gives us pause. War, economic instability, morality gone amuck, Covid comings and goings, mask madness, media manipulation of information, and a general sense of untruth in society. The apostle Paul said it best, that man has suppressed the truth of God, exchanging it for a lie, thus serving the creature rather than the Creator.

Over the span of my forty-two years in Christian schooling, the response I've received the most for not attending a Christian school is, ***"We want our children to be in the real world."*** Now, perhaps more that ever in those forty-two years, I respond, ***"And you believe this is the real world?"*** It certainly is not the reality God set at creation for us and is not the kingdom He set in motion with the Advent, Passion, and Resurrection of His only begotten Son!



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What does this real world look like in real life? Jesus taught us about the real world...the Kingdom of God...in parables. Most of these were about the little things that grew mighty; lost things that were found, and planted things that yielded one hundred-fold. The Kingdom God established **IS** the real world, and it is this Kingdom that forms the basis of a Christian school education. It's passing on the workings of this world, in relation the Word, to the students of this next generation. It's not real without the reality of the Word of God in their hearts and mind. It must be placed there, nurtured there, and established there. It just will

not work any other way...yet we continue to look away or go our own way (Jeremiah 6:16)

Well, I had a personal experience of this important truth this past month. MACSA hosts our annual Bible Quizzing event. It is like nothing else I have ever been a part of. Started by Amos and Kate King, over thirty years ago, it is a dynamic competition of Biblical memorization and application, where schools (predominantly Mennonite) come together for this unique opportunity. The students prepare for months in advance, focusing on several passages of Scripture. Then, working as a team (in many cases, several teams from the same school), they compete in a tournament over three months and in a number of locations, culminating in a "championship" retreat in the beginning of March. Continuing the rich heritage of his parents' legacy, Nate King, along with his super team of "Quiz Masters," carry on this amazing event...all for the furtherance of, yes you guessed it, the Kingdom of God!

So, I am sitting on this hillside in central PA, thinking about all the things I mentioned in the opening paragraph, asking the Lord to show how we might affect this crazy world situation for His Kingdom...and He says, "**Look around!**" God reminded me of the several hundred young people, compressed together in this "small" camp setting, sharing fellowship, and healthy competition around the precious Word of God. I "pondered anew, what the Almighty can do," through this group of students and their coaches in the years to come, by His Word. This is the real world as it was meant to be. May we continue to foster this in the coming years. Thank you, Amos, Kate, and Nate!

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