

God's Breath

(from the last millennium – somewhere in the nineties)

“Dad?”

“What?”

“Why doesn't God's breath smell?”

You've got to be wondering what would prompt a question like that. Well, today I attempted a couple of things. One, I spent some time just playing with the kids. Two, even while playing, I never resist the chance to point out God stuff.

Often when the wind comes in from the West, a head will poke itself into my office and offer, “Dad! Waves are up! Let's hit the beach!”

One of the advantages, or disadvantages, depending on your point of view or how much you have, of living within a stone's throw of the great freshwater sea, is that it calls you incessantly. It even resorts to using your own children on you.

It is one of those days when I heeded the call.

It took a bit of searching. The first two spots we hit had chocolate water. Many of you know, when the lake gets rough, it eats away at the clay cliffs to the North, washing the chocolate milk colored clay into the great water and marching it down the shore. Foaming brown guk, we call it, milk texture, is not quite what we had in mind. Eventually, we ended up at the harbor they call Good.

The water color was perfect. Sea blue green, tipped with snow white froth. The water action was even better. Lots of roll, as in rollers, not so much chop. Perfect surfing, body style or boogie board. Wind, or breath, was a bit brisk, but this just made the water feel better, like warmer than the air. We rode the waves for the better part of an hour. Sometimes they road us, picking us up and crushing us into the sand. It is quite the thing to play with waves. There is unbelievable unpredictable action, many shouts, glee abounds, and just the right touch of danger. Us kids love them.

Eventually we began to drift out of the raging and beautiful roar of wind and sea and bright late afternoon sun. One by one we sought shelter on the sandy shore, in towels and blankets, and the presence of Mom. Two of the three huddled under a blanket, pressed close to their life giver. The third still challenged the miracle of the waves.

I watched as each wave lifted him up, momentarily suspending him as if in some sort of magical air, the water so translucent, you could see his body held up against the deep blue sky. Then he'd disappear in a crash of foam. Eventually he rode one in. We sat a few minutes and felt the power of the wind. This is when I mentioned how amazing was God's breath. I've told the kids many many times, the wind is the breath of God. I went on, talking about the great majesty around us, marveling at the work of the Creator, so powerful and fun and gorgeous. Deep now in mystical wonderfulness, we sat together.

That's when the question about God's breath came up. The questioner followed with, “After all, He said He made us in His image and likeness and our breath smells, at least yours does. It just stands to reason...”

While searching for a good answer, I smiled to myself. That question to me meant at least they are paying attention. And not missing all of it. The answer I gave?

“God's breath is all the good and grand smells. The smell of the sea, sun warmed pine, earth when it's really earthy, flowers - oh so many many sweet and soft flowers, babies and powder, all the good smelling things of life. Besides, I added, God is perfect and so is His breath!”

Clement

