

The living Church of Jesus Christ is like a coral reef. . .

Last Sunday, during the service while working in Peace River, I was called out because of being on duty at the hospital. As I left the sanctuary, just as the Pastor began to preach, I went to the back of the foyer to take a call and to make another call.

While sitting there between calls, I believe the Lord spoke a word to my spirit.

The thought came to me like this:

“The Church (the living Church of Jesus Christ) is like a coral reef.”



I had never ever had such a thought before, I have never heard of such a thing.

As I have meditated on this thought, many things flood to mind. What is considered here is only a brief, cursory series of observations. There is much more than ‘meets the eye’!

The following appears to me to be true. Coral reefs are mostly invisible, indiscernible to the naked eye for most people. Many have never ever seen or encountered a coral reef. They may have seen photos of one; they may have studied about them. They may have knowledge but not experience, and their knowledge can be in part accurate.

Coral reefs are living structures. They are solid, in fact very rigid and structurally unique. They are polymorphic. That is, the structure while solid, reliable and trustworthy is varied in its appearance and presentation. A living reef grows. It is reproducible only as its component parts reproduce. It can be transplanted or broken. It is formed of a multitude of small, somewhat insignificant (on their own) organisms. In its corporate effect, it is the basis and foundation for a very diverse ecosystem, allowing predators and prey to live in proximity, providing protection and moderation of the local environment, providing safe havens for the weak and small, and upon which many other structures are founded and thrive. A healthy reef is an amazing thing.

To quote Wikipedia, Coral reefs form complex marine ecosystems with tremendous biodiversity. Without the infrastructure of the reef, sponges, fans, urchins, starfish, and a host of fish species have difficulty to be maintained. What is provided in the reef is life sustaining, and proliferating.

But underneath, is the reef. The reef even influences the behavior of the sea, its currents and its wave forms.

My thoughts in regards to the church, is that this is exactly the type of structure it is. It is polymorphic. It 'lives', yet seems so rigid and unchanging. It never appears exactly the same in every place you look. Even when segments of it die, and it becomes stagnant, it may continue to exert its influence. It is mostly out of sight to the general populace. Its remnant and residue remains long after life has gone. The general societal comprehension of the church is some outmoded unreality of a former age (to those who have not experienced the transforming life of Jesus). It is hidden, out of touch with 'reality', and irrelevant. That may also be said of dead coral. But on the whole, it begs the lie to be exposed.

Nothing could be farther from the truth about the living church of Jesus Christ.

I believe the word that the Lord placed in my spirit, is a powerful word of encouragement to Christians. You are significant. Your gathering and assembling into local congregations is powerful, and offers an infrastructure that has more influence than you (in your restricted level of comprehension) can imagine. We are often (?always) limited in our understanding of the 'bigger picture'.

Our comprehension of the extent of influence is affected by so many things.

We often have a sense of isolation and insignificance. We individually (like the small organisms that together make up coral) feel like we are not much. Individually and corporately we seem so imperfect. Yet, as we grow together we provide solidity through the adherence of the many parts, our communities, our families, our societies, and our nations are impacted. Our influence can lend protection to the weak. However, many people try to throw off the influence of the church.

Unfortunately, the strength of the church and its solidity can also provide protection for predators. Many life forms seem to 'attach' themselves to the church. They influence its appearance. They also provide for a fear factor, when persons consider becoming involved with a church. "Did you see the shark?" What have you heard about some preachers? Do you paint all with the same brush?

Here is both protection and vulnerability. To truly encounter the church seems like you have to leave the safety of the 'air and sunshine' and submerge yourself into something that is deep and threatening. Undersea is inhospitable, in that special equipment is needed to sustain life. Entering into the church is sometimes inhospitable. The church has a language all its own. "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" The taste is worth the risk. He is SO GOOD!

How could Jesus, knowing what he knows, have introduced the 'church' to the world?

He is also the creator of the reef. It is His. It is what it is. Demean it if you want. Identify the dead portions if you want. But you cannot deny its viability, its value or its beauty, unless you have never experienced it. Or you choose to build your house on sand.

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