

Story: The Wind

May 28, 2023

Numbers 11:24-30

Acts 2:1-21

I want to talk to you about the wind.

The wind made its way across the ocean. In the distance it could see the green slopes of Hawai'i Island and the great mountains rising. As it swept over the sea, it took water vapor that the sun had raised from the waters and pushed it ahead as growing clouds. As the clouds passed over Hilo, they showered the earth with rain.

The wind moved on, and now the clouds dispersed on the shoulders of the mountains, and the sun poured down in shimmering waves. The wind blew through the town and over the fields, and it cooled the stifling heat. As it did, it blew hard enough to pluck hats from heads and turn umbrellas inside out before they could be closed.

A nene near seaside turned into the wind and spread her wings. The flowing air began to lift her even before she swept them down in a powerful stroke. The wind helped carry her aloft until she turned to fly inland.

Not just birds, but seeds flew on the wind, so that new plants would grow.

In places the wind eased things, but in places I have to admit that the wind broke things. Nails in a roof popped loose. An old tree tumbled to the ground, where its trunk would nourish new trees yet to grow there. A sudden gust scattered a myna's nest over the ground, and the parents-to-be screeched and started building again.

The flowing wind swept over the summit of Kilauea, where fumes rise from the volcano's liquid heart beneath. It carried the sulfur and tiny flecks of glassy ash further along the island, dispersing them as it went. Oh, they smelled it and they frowned in Kona!

But when the sun set, those bits of glassy ash caught the light and glowed in red and orange and gold. The people and the creatures and the birds gazed at it with satisfaction. "It's a Kona sunset," they said.

The wind laughed to hear them say it, for the Kona sunset depends on the Kilauea wind.

And the wind blew on, far over the Pacific Ocean to lands far distant from our shores, blowing where it will.

It's an old, old thing to compare the Holy Spirit of God to the winds that blow across our planet. In the ancient languages of the Bible, and also in Hawaiian (but not in English) the words for "wind," "breath," and "spirit" are the same: Ruach. Pneuma. Ha. Like the winds of earth, the Holy Spirit brings the things of life, for the spirit as well as the body. Like the wind beneath the wings of the birds, the Holy Spirit can lift us up. Like the wind that brings down trees, the Holy Spirit will shake our ideas and assumptions and make us consider new things. Like the wind that creates a Kona sunset, the Holy Spirit creates, helps us create, and helps us appreciate, beauty.

The Holy Spirit is God's gift to the world, to the Church of Jesus, and most of all, to you.

by Eric Anderson