

# THE *Beauty* OF THE EARTH

*I have learned firsthand that all things bear record of the Creator.*

By J. Tyler Bates

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). I know this simple scripture to be true. I have been blessed to travel the world and learn about the amazing creations of God. Through these travels and my hobbies of scuba diving and backpacking, I have gained a testimony of the supreme creation of the earth.

When people ask what proof there is of God, I think of Moses 6:63: “Things which are in the heavens above, and things which

are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me.”

My father’s work has taken our family to a variety of places in the world. As I have traveled with my parents, the Spirit has whispered strongly to me about the glory of God. The feeling I get from the Spirit is overwhelming when I contemplate the creation of the universe, whether I’m exploring Idaho’s mountains or scuba diving in Palau.

As a biology major, I have looked through a microscope and marveled at the complexity of life exhibited by even one-celled microorganisms. All creatures, from the tiny phytoplankton, which produce over 70% of the oxygen that we breathe, to the blue whale, which is the largest living creature on earth, were created by God.



*Underwater photography is part skill and a lot of luck, and this is a really lucky shot that I got in Palau.*



THINGS WHICH ARE IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE,  
AND THINGS WHICH ARE ON THE EARTH, AND  
THINGS WHICH ARE UNDER THE EARTH, BOTH ABOVE AND  
BENEATH: ALL THINGS BEAR RECORD OF ME.

MOSES 6:63

I became interested in photography because both of my parents like to take photos, and I took many pictures as I was growing up. After I had been scuba diving for a year, I got a digital underwater camera and took a picture of every fish I saw in the ocean. My skills increased with every dive trip I went on, and I also continued to take topside photos and capture the vivid colors of nature.

Not everyone will have the opportunity to see some of these locations firsthand, so I share some of my best photographs with you in hope that you may feel the divinity of God's masterpiece. **NE**

*Tyler is currently serving in the Cauayan Philippines Mission.*

**Left:** Coral reefs are among God's most beautiful and amazing creations. Little animals known as polyps grow in clumps. When the previous generation dies, the new generation grows on the remains. These coral clumps grow to form reefs. Coral reefs contain the most species and organisms in the world.

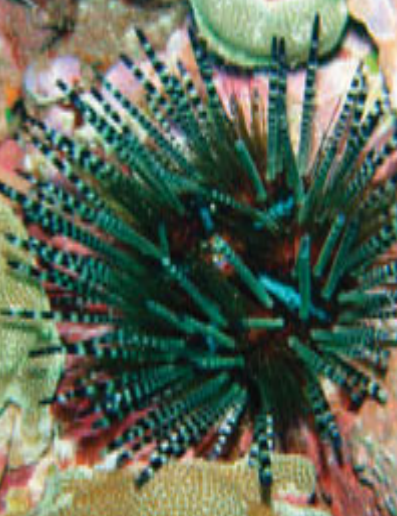
**Top right:** I like this photo because it shows the shark in a nonthreatening and mysterious view.

**Center:** An estimated six million of these stingless jellyfish live in a landlocked lake in Palau. With no predators in the lake, the jellyfish have lost their sting and are fun to swim through.

**Bottom left:** Friendly butterfly fish swarmed my camera. The vienna sausage I baited them with helped.

**Bottom right:** Three heads of different hard coral and the two flatter corals show the diversity of corals on Guam. It is awesome to see the diversity of the coral reefs.





**Top left:** I was testing a new underwater camera on objects that didn't move. When I finished my dive and reviewed the photos on the computer, I noticed the narrow field of focus deep within the urchin and the bright blue streaks. It is one of my favorite photos because of the abstract view of an ordinary sea creature.

**Bottom left:** I have spent many weeks in the backcountry among the rugged mountains carved by God. Azure blue lakes sit perfectly still, surrounded by pine trees. Jagged white peaks protrude from the green forests. When the light is right, the mountains and trees are reflected perfectly, creating the illusion of an upside-down earth.

**Top right:** There was a large ball of these fish on the top of a reef in Palau. I like how this photo has a group of identical fish with one oddball in the middle. It could be symbolic of including others who are different from us.

**Bottom center:** On a trip to Arizona I discovered how to take macro photos with a narrow depth of focus. I took photos of almost every type of cactus using this technique, and this one looked the best.

**Top center:** Taken on a trip to Arizona.

**Far right:** A mountain meadow with the rugged peak rising in the background.

**Right center:** One of my favorite mountain pictures. My camera is waterproof to 30 feet without housing. I put the camera into the lake and aimed it at the mountains. I was able to capture the cool water level photograph.



THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND THE FULNESS THEREOF;  
THE WORLD, AND THEY THAT DWELL THEREIN.

PSALM 24:1

