

All Are Welcome – [the comprehensive certainty]

These words are used on many signs for churches and other groups who gather. I admire the seeming intention of these words because they not only reflect the extent of God's love for everyone but they echo the spirit of our United States Bill of Rights and our Constitution. It is almost natural therefore to see that All Are Welcome on so many signs.

It is not uncommon that many people say things that they believe they mean but too often neglect by their actions toward others. This malady is reflected in a popular statement that would remind us, "actions speak louder than words". Words are very important indeed since they are indicators of our intentions but are rather empty if there is no corresponding action to make them effective. It is important to say I love you to those for whom you care but it is more important that you show that love by tangible expressions.

Everyone basically understands the first two words, all are, but perhaps we need some help on the meaning of welcome. Here is an acronym that may help:

WELCOME – **W**illingly **E**ngage **L**imitless **C**are **O**pening **M**ore **E**quality

A true welcome requires CHANGE; a word that we understand but find hard to like and execute. It is especially difficult for those who are comfortable where and how they are. This is why it is easier for welcome to mean that the newer folk who join them will be expected to adapt and change to the existing demeanor of the group they are joining. **True welcome, however, will bring change to both the existing community and the new members.** The physical principle states, "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction". Perhaps this best describes why and how change will occur for both the older and newer members. **Since change is so hard for so many to accept we can see why a real welcoming community will feel stress and discomfort in the process.**

Only when both the community and the newcomers are willing to limitless engagement in a open and caring manner will the needed equality and true welcome be a result. Because "All Are Welcome" is so life changing to everyone involved is it so difficult to experience in fact. It is hard for people to be open enough to practice regularly and easily the function of all are welcome. It is always easier to welcome those who are placid and pliable and tend to "fit in" almost without notice. It is always more difficult for opposites to attract without a genuine love for the humanity that is there.

The fact is, as we often hear, that opposites attract. Two people who are basically alike cannot achieve as much as when two people who are not so much alike come together. The reason is simple. Two people with similar gifts and thought will not have the impetus for growth and development as two people with differing thoughts and talents! We know this to be a fact genetically so our laws do not allow inbreeding. Groups who primarily continue to propagate their heredity of unchanging tradition may not flourish well either. The best example of the value of inclusiveness is our own United States of America – the melting pot of many nations and peoples.

In short, it is far easier to say All Are Welcome than to live All Are Welcome, but if it is not our "lifestyle" then our chances of health and well being as a community is very slim.