

Address From Andy Moody, Sunday, February 1, 2009

1. Linda first asked me to read Radical Welcom a few months ago. Her latest request for me to speak to you today, meant I had to re-read it and furthermore, study the book so I would have something of importance to provide you today. Her instincts were right. I did get more out of it the second time. I'll have more to say about that later.
2. I'll not bore you with a book report, I haven't done one of those for about thirty years. Instead, I'll focus on one chapter.
The book is organized into three parts:
3. Part I Theology of RW,
Part II The Picture of RW,
Part III The Practice of RW.
I liked Part I, and a chapter called Living With Arms Wide Open.
4. It starts, and I changed some of the words: "I need to lay aside my preferences to make way for someone else's. It's no longer about me." If we think about that from the perspective of SMAA: "We need to lay aside our preferences to make way for someone else's. It's no longer about us."
5. Let me give you a little history about myself and why I came to SMAA. I was living down the street, had two babies 18 months apart, a stay-at-home wife, my first mortgage, and a difficult job. In short, I was dealing with what all young fathers had to deal with and took it too seriously. I came for silence and sanctuary. I found safety, comfort, repetition and tradition, sameness and the familiar.
It was good for me at that time of my life—but was it what I really needed to experience?
6. Reference p 42, second last para:
Most of us know the joke: You know how to make God laugh? Tell him what your plans are. In an age where we are told to plan for the week, plan for the future, if we don't plan, we won't achieve anything, it was such a shock to me to have my plans changed beyond my control. But looking back, the greatest changes in my life, were not planned. And so it can be with RW.
7. Reference p. 47, second para:...practicing RW.
Therein lies the essence of the difference in my understanding of the book between the first and second readings.

First time: RW encourages us to welcome strangers into our midst, to listen, to understand, to allow SMAA to stay alive and vibrant through acceptance of new ideas—not to be hip or trendy--but to evolve and at the same time, be true to our fundamental beliefs.

Second time: It's deeper than that. It's not only about evolution and change here at SMAA. It can also be about our own personal, spiritual transformation through these new relationships and experiences which thereby enhance our ongoing relationship with God. As Stephanie Spellers writes "leaping forward in faith".