

Wednesday, December 20

What is a Welcome?

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
Romans 15:7 (NIV)

Turtle Island, or Canada as we know it, has always been a welcoming country, extending beyond its 150 years as a nation. Canada's First Peoples welcomed explorers, settlers, immigrants and refugees through treaties that unfortunately were exploited.

Despite dark aspects of Canada's history, my heart has always been transformed by the grace, generosity and the warm welcome I receive from the people of the North. I have learned that it is not in the culture of our Indigenous friends to "other" people who are different from them. Instead, their belief is to welcome people, learn from one another, share resources and most importantly to walk hand-in-hand daily.

Being from the tropics, I will always remember times I've been welcomed to share a meal of smoked fish by the fire, to jig in front of a large crowd, or simply allowed to ask a million questions about the people in frames hung up in family homes. It is in these moments that I learn the most about the rich history of my new friends. These are also the times where I know for certain that I have been accepted.

During these important times of *Truth and Reconciliation* in Canada, I have made it a point more than ever to acknowledge and listen to Indigenous peoples. It is because of their welcome and acceptance through the treaties, hundreds of years ago, that many of us in Canada are able to thrive and lead a life full of abundant blessings.

Lord, we humbly thank you and are grateful for your grace in welcoming and accepting us. Despite being made in the image of your precious son, we constantly fumble and fall yet you are always there to catch us. We ask that you remind us daily of the acceptance of Christ and that we may do the same to everyone we meet in our daily lives. Amen.

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