

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

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Since my trip to the UWD Consultation¹ I regularly receive WhatsApp messages from sisters across our Provinces. It is easy to spot the differences – different clothes, landscapes, weather and church buildings.



It is important to both celebrate differences and to share experiences. When we went to church on the Sunday in Arusha all the Tanzanian sisters wore white, as did most of the women in the regular congregation at the church. We looked quite different.



On the Thursday we were ALL in black to show our support for the World Council of Churches campaign against violence to women and girls. No differences, all the same.

During the consultation music, hymns and songs were sung each morning. The differences were the languages and often

we knew different tunes, and yet we all know the hymns and songs. Apparently, as Moravian hymns travelled the oceans the words remained, once translated, but the music often changed.

Since my return, thanks to WhatsApp, I have seen Moravian churches in many different countries. They look different and yet we soon realise our differences are small and insignificant compared to our shared faith. In Uganda a new church building was recently celebrated with a Lovefeast being prepared outside in large pots over an open fire – not a raisin bun or chocolate biscuit in sight! But, a Lovefeast being celebrated for the same reasons we celebrate that service: giving thanks for peace, harmony and renewal.

On Palm Sunday I received the Hosanna chorus being sung in many languages. You didn't need to know the language to recognise it; the joy and faith are shared and it was ringing out across the oceans. It was also an example of how modern communications can bring us together.

In our own country we have many differences. Sadly, some need to be challenged. However, let us look around and identify those differences that we can celebrate, the ones that can unite us.

My next paper will offer an overview of our Away Day and charities we will support in the coming year.

Sr Mary Holmes

¹ UWD: the Consultation was in Arusha, northern Tanzania in February this year.