

*Scripture* | “Clap your hands all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great king over all the earth!” — **Psalm 47:1-2**

In Western cultures, we like to have an emotional connection to our faith. Occasionally, I recall those wonderful times singing around campfires with my best friends, laughing and shouting while we praised God. My strongest faith experiences are not campfire songs, though. My strongest faith experiences are times that drove me to tears: tears of joy, tears of sorrow, tears of relief, etc. American Christians like to cry. That is why most songs on K-Love are incredibly emotional. It is what we respond to best.

I had the incredible opportunity to do research on young adult Methodists in Zimbabwe last December. Not only did I learn about my peers across the Atlantic, ocean, I also learned about what faith looks like across cultures. I learned what remained the same and what changed.

Today, I would like to highlight the Zimbabwean art of celebration. I took this term from the title of Rend Collective’s amazing album, “The Art of Celebration.” This title accurately describes how Zimbabwean people live out their faith, with a posture of jubilation. They sing, dance, clap, and shout for God’s love! On my trip, every church service had uplifting music, people stepping in time and singing, and children laughing, running, and dancing around one another.

Though it is not inappropriate to shed tears over God’s incredible sacrifice for us unworthy humans, it is also appropriate to dance in the sun’s rays as a thanks to God’s goodness. Unfortunately, this kind of practice is minimal in American Christianity.

Today, I challenge you to find some way that God has blessed you (sunshine, health, family, friends, love, joy, etc.), and celebrate it with joy in whatever way God made you to celebrate! You can have a campfire and sing super happy songs with friends. You could dance with your significant other. You can throw a BBQ and invite others to just share fellowship and joy. I love to sing my joy, so I grab my guitar or sit at a piano and sing until I am full. Let’s celebrate all that God has done for us!

*Practice* | Think about a way God has blessed you and then do something tangible to celebrate!

*Prayer* | I come to you humbly, but also with exuberance. Thank you for all that you have done in my life. I am so blessed, and it makes me want to celebrate! Make your blessings shine today, so that I may notice them and sing joyfully in response. A thousand years a thousand times is not enough, but I will give it my all to praise you today. Hallelujah! Amen!