

# Jeff's Jottings

## *Which one of these is not like the other?*

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There was a segment on Sesame Street decades ago, when I watched with my children, when we as viewers were shown pictures of, usually, four objects and asked, Which one of these are not like the other? Here's a simple example:



Here is, perhaps, a more difficult example.



You might say, that tall guy in the back doesn't look like the rest of the people in this photo. Or you might say that the gentleman in the second row, in the suit and tie, has a different profession than the rest of the people in the photo, because he's a banker. I suppose both might be right.

But it also might be right to say that, in both examples, that there is more in common among what you're seeing than there are differences. In the first example, for instance, all the objects are fruit, and fresh-looking, and healthy to eat. In the second photo, all the people are devoted followers of Jesus, read the Bible, pray.

The second picture is of the pastor and just some of the participants in Nutifafa Nyanyui Hame, the newest gathering of worshipping Christians under the umbrella of a PTCA congregation — in this case, Peace Presbyterian Church in St. Louis Park. These Christians hold a west African language in common with each other and a faith in common with all of us. This past Sunday, Peace Presbyterian celebrated this new worshipping community and the \$7500 grant they received through the Presbytery from a program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (<http://bit.ly/2tU93dX>) that encourages the formation of new collections of Christians.

I want you to hear a portion of what I heard from Kodjo Gagnon, the leader of Nutifafa Nyanyui Hame. (He's the other gentleman in the photo wearing a robe and stole.) I was inspired by his words, and I think you will be too. And I was inspired as well by the generosity of the Peace Presbyterian congregation — the one who worships in English — and by their obvious love and care for their brothers and sisters in the Nutifafa community. Here is a bit of what Mr. Gagnon said on Sunday:

*In the language of Ewe (the language of Togo, Ghana, Benin—the countries on the west coast of Africa), “Nutifafa” means, literally, “Peace.” So you are Peace Presbyterian Church (PPC) and we are Peace Presbyterian Church. In short, we call ourselves “Nutifafa” in the same way that you call yourselves “Peace.” Nutifafa is a new worshipping community that is independent of PPC, but we are in partnership together. Nutifafa will hold its own worship services, organize its own finances, take in its own members and care for our people who are sick and in need. And, of course, we will form our own committees. Yes! Having committees means that we are Presbyterian!*

*Nutifafa Nyanyui Hame currently holds worship services every Sunday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the parlor. Today we are receiving a grant from the national Presbyterian Church to help us grow. We are so happy to have these funds because that means that we will be able to reach out to more people. We will be able to advertise with printed materials, develop a website, and maybe post the worship service on You-Tube. Please pray for us. We seek to grow in faith and in numbers. There is so much work to do in the Togolese immigrant community — there are over 2,000 Togolese in the Twin Cities area. There is much worship we can do, so much education we can do, so much love we can share.*

*Thank you, Peace Presbyterian, for your support. Thank you, Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, for your support. And thank you to the national Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for this grant of \$7,500 to help us to grow. But most of all, we thank God for his blessing upon us.*

In the eyes of some, this new worshipping community may look different than most of our others. Just think, then, how much there is we can learn from them, just as we can — and should — learn from our Kenyan and Anuak worshipping groups.

*Akpe Mawu. Thanks be to God.*