

### Scripture

*“Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.” ~Romans 12:4-5 (NLT)*

### Observation

Believers in Jesus are all part of the same unit, the same body. We’re all different, with various responsibilities and propensities, but none of us are independent. Like instruments playing in symphonic harmony, each of our gifts and talents are intended to work together as an intricate offering to God for the greater good of the world.

This means we need each other. We need to work together as an orchestra does, as parts of a human body do. In a particular moment, western believers may have what their Asian brothers and sisters need. Or Indian followers of the Christ may have what their western counterparts need to complete a specific role or task. But God doesn’t see Indian or Asian or American followers of His Son. Instead, He sees His children, who when working together, accomplish the most beautiful and meaningful work in expanding His kingdom.

During recent earthquake relief in Indonesia, Christians and Muslims worked together to help rebuild devastated communities. Indonesian followers of Christ saw this tragic time as one that might offer more than rebuilding of demolished villages. It was a chance to perhaps form lasting relationships.

What ensued was a thing of irrefutable beauty. Christ followers from the west began to help and connect with Muslim villagers. The villagers rightly assessed the support was coming from Christians, but their need was so great, the aid was nonetheless welcomed. As Muslims and Christians worked side by side with the common goal of rebuilding destroyed homes, perspectives changed. Before long, Muslim villagers began to see Christians as friends and supporters. Our western team acted as hands opening doors for rebuilding – and our Indonesian brothers and sisters in became both feet and mouths – bringing aid and sharing the ancient story of God’s love and grace.

For more on the different parts of Christ’s body, see 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

### Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do the members of your church perform individual functions as a single, complementary body of Christ?
2. How can the parts of your church help each other to function as a more unified body of Christ?
3. On the global scale, can you and your fellowship become a more active part in Christ’s body? Can your church do more help the head and foot across the globe?

### Practical Steps

1. Pray for empowerment of indigenous Christians.
2. Form a partnership with a sister church or group in another culture. Plan a mission trip to encourage and help indigenous believers.
3. Educate yourself or your group on persecution in Sumatra or the needs of believers in Java (Indonesia). Do this in other areas of the world as God’s Spirit leads.

Written by: Mark and Jennifer Storm: ServLife staff in Asia

For more information on the work of ServLife International, Inc. visit: [servlife.org](http://servlife.org)

### Scripture

*"...Take a good look, but you may not cross the Jordan River. Instead, commission Joshua and encourage and strengthen him, for he will lead the people across the Jordan. He will give them all the land you now see before you as their possession."* ~Deuteronomy 3:27-28 (NLT)

### Observation

God spoke these words to Moses more than three thousand years ago. Moses had an Egyptian education. He was a prophet, the recorder of God's Ten Commandments and hailed as perhaps Israel's greatest leader. Yet despite his impressive resume, Moses still lived with limitations. Though integral to Israel's exodus from slavery and trek toward the promised land of God, Moses would not be the one to lead his people into Canaan. Instead, he was told to encourage and enable another leader.

God has not called any of us "to do it all. He knows our limitations. And yet despite them, He's called each of us to help reach the lost around the globe. So how does this happen with so many cultural barriers amid our limited time on the earth?

His plan is simple yet complex: multiplication in the kingdom happens as the base of believers in Christ expands. And just as good managers equip their employees with the necessary tools to accomplish their work, Christians must continue to help equip other followers of Christ. Moses was commanded to encourage and strengthen Joshua, we, too, must do this for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Perhaps God has asked you to lead His people in some way although you are not yet equipped to do so. Count on this: If God's people are made for the shape of being encouragers and enablers, they will help accomplish His plan of seeing that you get the tools and training to get His work in the world done.

### Discussion Questions

1. Who was the first person to help equip you for a specific role? What impact did they have in your life?
2. Do you know of other examples in the Bible of someone who encouraged another?
3. What impact did the encourager and leader have on history?

### Practical Steps

4. Join a mentoring program at work, school or within your community.
5. Identify a pastor of a different culture, perhaps with ServLife, who you can encourage and enable to lead his flock effectively.
6. Every day, you can find someone who needs encouragement. Identify these people. Encourage them.

### Scripture

*“When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality” ~Romans 12:13 (NLT)*

### Observation

God’s people are spread across the globe – and so many of them face constant need. In Marpad, Chhattisgarh, India lives a man named Kamal Daud. Kamal grew up in a Hindu family and first learned of Jesus through a woman named Shrimila. Kamal believed the good news of Christ – and later married Shrimila!

Shrimila encouraged her husband’s new faith. Through her influence, Kamal introduced the gospel to his friend, Samuel. Samuel became a follower of Jesus, too, and because of their faith in Christ, these men were ostracized from their families and communities. They became God’s people in need. And though Samuel and Kamal remained committed to spreading the Good Word across India, they were ill-equipped for the job.

A teacher at ServLife Training Institute in Raxaul, India heard about these two men and invited them to join the pastor training program. This teacher was “ready to help” and “eager to practice hospitality.” In 2004, Kamal and Samuel completed their training and were ready to plant a church in their home community. These men know the road is hard and rife with persecution, but they say the challenges only strengthen their faith.

There are many more Kamals and Samuels throughout India ready to become living sacrifices to God, and they need help to do it. Read more in Romans 12.

### Discussion Questions

4. All leaders need support to be successful. Can you think of an example in your sphere of life?
5. Can you think of a biblical example of a leader who needed support?
6. How have supporters been valuable in your life as you lead a team, a meeting or a company?

### Practical Steps

7. Pray that God would introduce you to a leader in need of your help.
8. Educate yourself about the lives and persecution of pastors in India. Find ways to be their supporter through prayer, encouragement or finance.



# Study-Discussion Guide

Indigenous Empowerment Series: 4 of 4

Aug 2006

## Scripture

*“When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I, too, live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.” ~1 Corinthians 9:21-22 (NLT)*

## Observation

Though the apostle Paul speaks of nimbly becoming all things to all people, not everyone has this gift. Not everyone can strike up conversations that build bridges or move with dexterity in foreign contexts.

Almost always, the best way to reach a people is not to impose western theology or culture, but to equip a local believer to further share Christ’s love. Of course, the Holy Spirit can reach anyone through whatever channel He chooses, but most communities are much more open to communications that come from within rather than the outside.

Throughout history, many missions have failed for the lack of cultural sensitivity. What works and is desirable in one culture may be wholly rejected, or even considered taboo, in another. To reach global cultures, we must start by coming alongside the culture we’re aiming to reach and serve. Today’s effective mission agencies are practicing this by training, encouraging and equipping indigenous leaders.

## Discussion Questions

1. How would your culture respond to a foreigner’s teaching vs. a local’s teaching?
2. What does it mean to become all things to all people?
3. In what ways do you see yourself helping to equip and encourage indigenous Christians in countries where the gospel is little known?

## Practical Steps

1. Pray for the empowerment of local leaders
2. Engage in a fundraising effort to help equip and send a local worker

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