

Body Language

By Andy Smith

The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

I Corinthians 12:25-26 (The Message)

Paul's words to his friends in Corinth echo loudly throughout the church today, "If one part of the body hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing..." We are all connected to one another in the church, "the ones we see and the ones we don't see." Many of us at *Sew Powerful* have had the privilege of walking with the poor in Zambia, Africa. We have seen our brothers and sisters who are suffering. We continue to suffer with them even though we live on the other side of the world. When one part of his church is suffering, we all suffer. When one part is rejoicing, we all rejoice.

Paul is writing his letter to believers in Corinth who are suffering at the hands of one another. They are locked in quarrels and disputes about their leaders. They are taking one another to court. After their board meetings, they are having parking lot conversations about one another. Their church is a mess. Paul addresses these quarreling believers by describing the diverse parts of the human body as a metaphor for the church. The church is one body with many parts: hands, ears, eyes, feet, and the heart. All the parts function together as one body called to make a difference in a hurting world. Each individual part celebrates its unique function. God's heart breaks when the parts of his body are at odds with one another. His heart rejoices when his people listen to one another, forgive one another and do the hard work of preserving unity in his church. Mission flourishes when the body is unified.

Paul concludes his challenge with a word of hope, "If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance!" Many of our new friends in Zambia taught us how to rejoice even in the midst of their suffering. They were especially grateful that we had come to visit. Our presence reminded them that they were loved by millions of brothers and sisters living 10,000 miles away whom they had never seen. Two very different parts of the body of Christ from opposite sides of the world came together in unity and we all danced in celebration, even this Presbyterian minister!

Please join with me in listening in on the Body Language shared among the different parts of the body in this creatively written modern-day parable, "**Rule of Thumb**". You will laugh, sigh and rejoice as the body stumbles its way toward unity...

Questions for Thought:

1. How do you see yourself fitting into the body of Christ?
2. What are some of the things that can affect the unity of the body?
3. What are some ways that all parts of the body can feel included and appreciated?