



## NURTURING NEW BELIEVERS

*The situation is that there are a few people who have come to faith as a result of the work of Global Interaction missionaries – in Thailand, or Malawi or Bangladesh. The issue for those who work with the new believers is how best to empower them to be authentic followers of Jesus who express their faith, worship and service in thoroughly Thai, Malawian or Bangladeshi ways.*

**Participants:** Two individuals or two couples as the “missionaries”, and a handful of people as the new believers.

One missionary/missionary couple go to the group and tell them what they need to do to become “proper” Christians (that is, imposing “the way we do things” onto people of another culture).

Here are some examples:

### Prayer

Thailand: The group starts to pray standing with their hands held together in front of their faces in Buddhist style.



Malawi and Bangladesh: The group starts to pray using typical Muslim stances (See [http://www.islam101.com/dawah/HowToSalah\\_files/frame.htm](http://www.islam101.com/dawah/HowToSalah_files/frame.htm), <http://muslim-canada.org/salaat.html>, <http://www.mozster.com/salaat.doc>).



Missionary 1 says: No, no, no. You must sit down, shut your eyes, and have your hands held out with palms upward. That’s the way we do it.

Missionary 2 asks the meaning of the prayer stance, and encourages them to use this in their believing prayer.





### **Forming the “church”**

Thailand, Bangladesh and Malawi: The group begins to follow their own style of forming an organisational structure for their group – maybe recognising the oldest males in the group as the natural leaders (as is the case in many cultures) and reaching decisions by discussion and consensus, with the “elders” in the group having great influence.

Missionary 1 says: No, you need a chairperson and a secretary, and it would be good to have one of them a female (totally inappropriate for many cultures, at least until gospel transformation has taken place). The secretary and treasurer must know English (which probably means choosing a young person, which is very counter-cultural in many places), and the secretary will note carefully all decisions made, and those decisions will be made by taking a vote in which everyone is equal.

Missionary 2 explores with them how groups operate within their culture (for example, in Malawi, there would be a chief of a region, and he or she would have advisors to advise him or her). The missionary then learns about how decisions are made, and who has authority, and asks the group to decide how this new group of believers will operate.

### **Building a church building**

The group grows too big for the house in which they meet, and start talking about other options.

Missionary 1 says: Let’s build one like this – pulling out a photo of a church from home, with people sitting in pews, with the preacher up the front, etc.

Missionary 2 allows the group to consider the best option – they may decide to meet under a tree; they may divide into several groups; or they may build something that is similar to their own houses.

