

# The Living Pyramid of Relational Communal Discipling of BMBs

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Chapter 9 from

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*Houghton, June 7th, 2014*

*This paper is a largely unaltered excerpt from my forthcoming book. Please forgive the references to earlier topics covered without much explanation. During BtD I will be giving a short presentation adapted from Part 3 in this chapter. I encourage you to read the whole chapter to see how Part 3 fits with the rest, but if you only have a few minutes to read, then please read sections 3 and 4.*

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## The Living Pyramid of Relational Communal Discipling of BMBs

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence... For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Peter 1:3 & 5-8**

*The heart of being a disciple involves living in intimate union and daily contact with Christ. Discipleship... is about the immense value of God at work in one individual's life and the resulting impact on other lives.*

**Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship***

Community drives formation—either positively or negatively... We count on connections with other people for our own emotional stability and growth. *Healthy spiritual formation happens only in a communal context.*

**Bill Thrall and Bruce McNicol, in *Kingdom Life***

Godly character is essential to our effectiveness... because our ministry is essentially incarnational... *People need to see the gospel lived out in us if they are going to understand what it really is that we have to offer.*

**Jim Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship***

There is no other path to Christian spiritual formation than *through meaningful interaction with the Word of God...* Spiritual formation begins within, and its primary tool is to take a God-given desire to change and work to *reform a person's mind* with God's thoughts. *A renewed mind fueled by a Holy Spirit-birthered desire creates new actions, which become habits, and habits make our character.*

**Bill Hull, in *Kingdom Life***

When we live with an illusion that we don't have to be engaged in God's mission to grow to maturity, we believe that we can get everything we need for our spiritual development from our personal relationship with God and other Christians... *Jesus never gave the idea that we could walk in fellowship with Him and not be engaged with Him in mission... If we want to walk with Jesus and have fellowship with Him, we must go with Him, and He is bringing the good news of the kingdom to those who are outside.*

**Paula Fuller, in *Kingdom Life***

The descriptions of core elements in discipleship given in the five epigraphs above emphasize quite different though complimentary paths to spiritual maturity. Hull reminds us that it is about individual transformation through communion with Christ, but then Thrall and McNicol stress that individual transformation can *only* occur when believers live together in community. Petersen stresses life-on-life mentoring, whereas Hull, in the second quotation above, points to the vital role of the Word of God in transforming our minds, which leads to new actions, new habits, and ultimately, transformed character. Fuller, argues that, in addition to the above, one must be engaged *with Jesus* in mission for transformation to occur. In this chapter, I draw together many of the most significant insights from the theological, exegetical, biblical, historical and missiological reflections in chapters 1 – 8 in order to create what I hope will be an empowering visual representation of the dynamics and processes involved in fruitful discipling

of BMBs. What kind of foundation can we lay in order to respond adequately to the manifold challenge facing BMBs as they seek to live out their obedience to Christ in Muslim contexts around the world?

Perhaps a story might help us understand what all these perspectives look like in a ministry context in the Muslim world. As church planters in North Africa, at one point we had become rather discouraged and were at a loss as to how to move forward. For the second time in a decade, a growing house church, with increasingly mature local leadership, had completely collapsed and the local believers had not met together for regular worship in almost eighteen months! For seven or eight years several expatriate couples had labored together, encouraging, discipling and modeling, and had seen the development of what we thought was a strong, healthy house church, under the leadership of two national couples with the help of several expatriates. Yet, when the church was functioning well, and numbered almost twenty committed members, two crises one after the other, led the leaders to temporarily stop meeting—and that decision to stop meeting for “a few weeks” had expanded well beyond a year.

During the long months that the church ceased regular corporate meetings, there was still quite a bit of informal communication and friendly relations among us. Several expat men continued in weekly small group meetings with a handful of younger men, some of whom had been members of the non-functioning church. We also continued in one-on-one discipling relationships with some of these men. Similar low-key relationship based activities were also continuing among the women. Some months into this period, we decided to do a thorough study of the church in the New Testament with our young men’s group. The outcome of this study exceeded our expectations. The New Testament study inspired several of the young men with a fresh and exhilarating vision of what they were called to be as members of the local church in their city and country. Pressed to action by this new vision, they approached the former leaders of the house church, challenged them, and together they re-launched the church. That was about twenty-five years ago, and that church has since planted several other churches and led a group of churches in church planting and social ministries in several cities across the country. Although it has had its ups and downs, it continues to be one of the stronger churches in the country. Several of the young men who caught a vision for the church through that Bible study are today among the main leaders in the national church.

Looking back on these events in the light of the perspectives gained through our reflections in the book, how do we account for what happened back in 1992 that turned a non-functioning church into a thriving house church that continues to see conversions and train leaders? The catalyst to this *third* restart of the church in the city was *vision*, which gave *motivation*. The means for transformation were already present—from then on they met together regularly, and for many years their key leaders continued to be individually disciplined and trained, and together they committed to living from the Scriptures and engaging in mission. The newly compelling vision of the church motivated them to use the means that they were already familiar with and God graced them with his Spirit and continues to do so as they press on in faithful obedience! In this book we have sought to expand our *understanding*. It is now time to assemble the primary lessons learned from the study and reflection on discipleship and the processes at work in spiritual growth of BMBs in Muslim contexts in order to create a model for BMB discipleship

that integrates the most important insights into a simple yet comprehensive portrayal of disciple making among Muslims.

### 1. Missiological insights from reflections on contextualization

The conclusion reached, in the last chapter, in our discussion of the challenges involved in discipling BMBs in Islamic contexts was that the discipleship objective should be the effective discipling of believers so that they are able to remain *within* their Muslim families and plant or join with local churches that are suitably adapted to their cultural contexts so as to flourish *within* Muslim societies. In distinct contrast, it is *not* appropriate to keep disciples inside the *religious institutions* and *traditions* that characterize Muslim communities. BMBs must have a clear identity as Christ's followers that is distinct from the *religious identity* of those who honor Mohammed and seek to fulfill the religious and legal obligations of the Qur'an and Islamic ideology and law. While not desiring that BMBs be *religious* insiders, every appropriate effort must be made to ensure that believers from Muslim families and communities continue to live and serve Christ within their families and as ongoing members of their Muslim communities.

Furthermore, efforts ought to be made to avoid actions that lead to the extraction of followers of Christ from their Muslim contexts. However, the often ideologically determined self-identification of Muslim communities as consisting only of those who can truthfully pray the Shahada, results in a natural tendency in the honor cultures of the Muslim world for a shame motivated rejection of all who apostatize. As a result, it is not surprising that many followers of Christ will be forcefully *expelled* from their communities. Nevertheless, the outcomes of my research point to a number of significant things that can be done, by evangelists, disciplers and the disciples themselves, to considerably defuse potential hostile response so that believers are more likely to be able to remain within their communities even after they are identified irrevocably with Christ, rather than Mohammed. Accordingly, for BMB discipleship to bear the desired fruit in maturity, witness and reproduction, disciplers must consistently strive to practice "insider discipleship" that integrates new believers successfully into *culturally* and *socially* "insider churches".



**Figure 1: The Missiological Foundation of the Living Pyramid Model**

This missiological conclusion serves as the fundamental context for what I am calling the *Living Pyramid Model*. In figure 1 this missiological conclusion is visually represented by the large blue-gray circular plane upon which the whole model rests, which I have labeled: “Living for Christ inside Muslim family and community”. Extraction is not the goal; *insider discipleship* is the normal intent. Yet, we must be realistic and understand that far too often, the ongoing residence and witness of BMBs within their own families and communities is impossible, at least in the short term, and disciplers must not force new disciples to carry burdens heavier than they can bear.

## 2. Insights from exegetical reflections on discipleship in the New Testament

Concerned that part of the reason for the frequent failure observed in BMB discipling may well be due to inadequate understanding of *biblical perspectives* on discipling, in chapters 2 – 4 we took a fresh look at discipleship and spiritual formation in the New Testament. Examining Galatians, Philippians and Luke-Acts in the order in which they were written, we sought to discover afresh how Paul and Luke, the two primary and representative writers in the New Testament, understood this vital topic. I believe that the conclusions reached contribute very helpfully to the unfolding Living Pyramid Model for discipling BMBs.

### 2.1. Galatians: Living in mutual dependence on the Holy Spirit.

As we saw in chapter 3, the picture of the spiritual life given in Galatians is of a life of corporate dependence on the Holy Spirit for everything that is needed for godliness and fruitful living. For Paul, it is only as we learn to walk *by the Spirit together* that we will experience power over the flesh and a flowing of the fruit of the Spirit into our lives, our homes, our churches and our communities. Paul’s understanding of how we are to live as believers in Christ is that of Holy Spirit enabled and guided life lived together in community. In Galatians in particular, Paul is alarmed that anyone could think that one becomes more mature or more holy by obeying Torah. In many Muslim contexts, where conformity to a religious legal code is the norm, effective discipleship must be grounded in radical dependence on the Holy Spirit for all believers living in community together rather than on a new “Christian” legal code. This central Pauline lesson



**Figure 2: Spiritual lesson from Paul in Galatians – Living in mutual dependence on the Holy Spirit**

from Galatians is represented visually in figure 2 by the blue circular plane labeled: “Living in Mutual dependence on the Holy Spirit.” This circular plane represents this *life giving* spiritual truth that all discipleship involves radical dependence on the Holy Spirit as disciples live together a transformed supernatural life in step with the Spirit, who alone gives life. All discipling is properly built upon this foundation of individual and corporate life in and of the Holy Spirit.

**2.2. Philippians: Living in cruciformity to Christ.**

Another vital aspect of the Pauline vision of the Christian life is expressed in Philippians. Not only are we to live in conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit, but the Gospel itself is to shape our core identity as people who are redeemed by and devoted to our crucified Lord. The supreme example of Christ and his self-sacrifice not only bought us salvation and new life, but it also provides a model for us to emulate as we seek to conform our life to that of the crucified Savior. Seeking to express clearly how Christ’s crucifixion shapes our identity, Gorman coined the term ‘cruciformity’ and defines it as “conformity to the crucified Christ” (2001, 4-7). Living one’s entire life in conscious imitation of and conformity to Christ, who, in love, sacrificed all and died on the cross for us, is living in ‘cruciformity’ to Christ. Furthermore, such *cruciform living* is only possible as disciples live together in committed community. The story of the Gospel, of Christ crucified, was a central shaper of Paul’s identity and his spirituality, and of the lives of the early Christians. In the *Living Pyramid Model*, this central Pauline understanding of conformity to Christ is placed at the *heart* of the pyramid in an effort to show that BMBs’ central *new identity* is strengthened through living in *cruciformity* to their crucified Lord. In figure 3, this



**Figure 3: Spiritual lesson from Paul in Philippians – Living in Cruciformity to Christ**

statement of new identity in Christ is represented by the sphere, which represents the *heart* of the *living* pyramid. This core discipleship identity is labeled “New Identity: Living in Cruciformity to Christ.”

### 2.3. Luke-Acts: Trusting in the Heavenly Father sustains corporate discipleship to Christ.

Our study of discipleship in the Gospel of Luke and in the book of Acts in chapter 4 explored a number of rich discipleship themes. Discipleship to Jesus in Luke is a radical commitment to live life under the loving care of the heavenly Father in such a way that every attitude and perspective is turned on its head. Following Christ means a journey of faith in which we learn to live in self-denial, loving others, serving others, forgiving others, and trusting God to provide all that we need so that we do not need to be anxious about our security, wealth, health or reputation. Such discipleship is characterized by prayerful trust in the heavenly father which empowers the disciples into lives of self-sacrificing service and self-giving, even unto death.

This picture of disciples living out a radical trust in their heavenly Father seen in the Gospel of Luke is fleshed out further in the lives of the believers in Acts. Their lives were characterized by deep fellowship and profound love, selfless sharing of their resources, care for the needy, the powerful presence and working of the Holy Spirit in their midst in healings and proclamation, and zeal to share the truth and reality of the gospel. In Acts, this picture of radical discipleship empowered by trust in God as a loving heavenly Father yielded deep mutual commitment in the new body of Christ, the church. This understanding of discipleship in Luke and Acts is put in the banner at the top of the *Living Pyramid Model* declaring that ‘Trusting in God the heavenly Father sustains corporate discipleship to Christ’. Placing this spiritual reality as a banner over the



**Figure 4: Lesson from Luke–Acts –  
Trusting in the Heavenly Father sustains corporate discipleship to Christ**

Living Pyramid intends to suggest that BMBs’ entire individual and collective lives are lived oriented in this direction—looking up in trust to the Father in order to persevere in faithful, radical discipleship to Jesus in community.



#### 2.4. The missiological and biblical foundations of the Living Pyramid Model

Our reflection on the New Testament vision for discipleship and discipling yields a perspective that is far richer and fuller than simply that of an individual disciple privately reading a Bible, praying and witnessing, helped by a personal mentor. Discipleship, according to the life of faith taught by Paul and Luke, is a corporate life in which everyone lives together in complete dependence on the Spirit. Such disciples trust profoundly in the love of their heavenly Father revealed to them in Christ, and they in turn live lives of sacrificial love and service to their fellow believers and in their communities, empowered by the Holy Spirit for Christ's sake. This New Testament vision of discipleship provides the foundation and central core of the *Living Pyramid Model* that is portrayed in figure 5.



**Figure 5: The missiological and biblical foundations of the Living Pyramid Model**

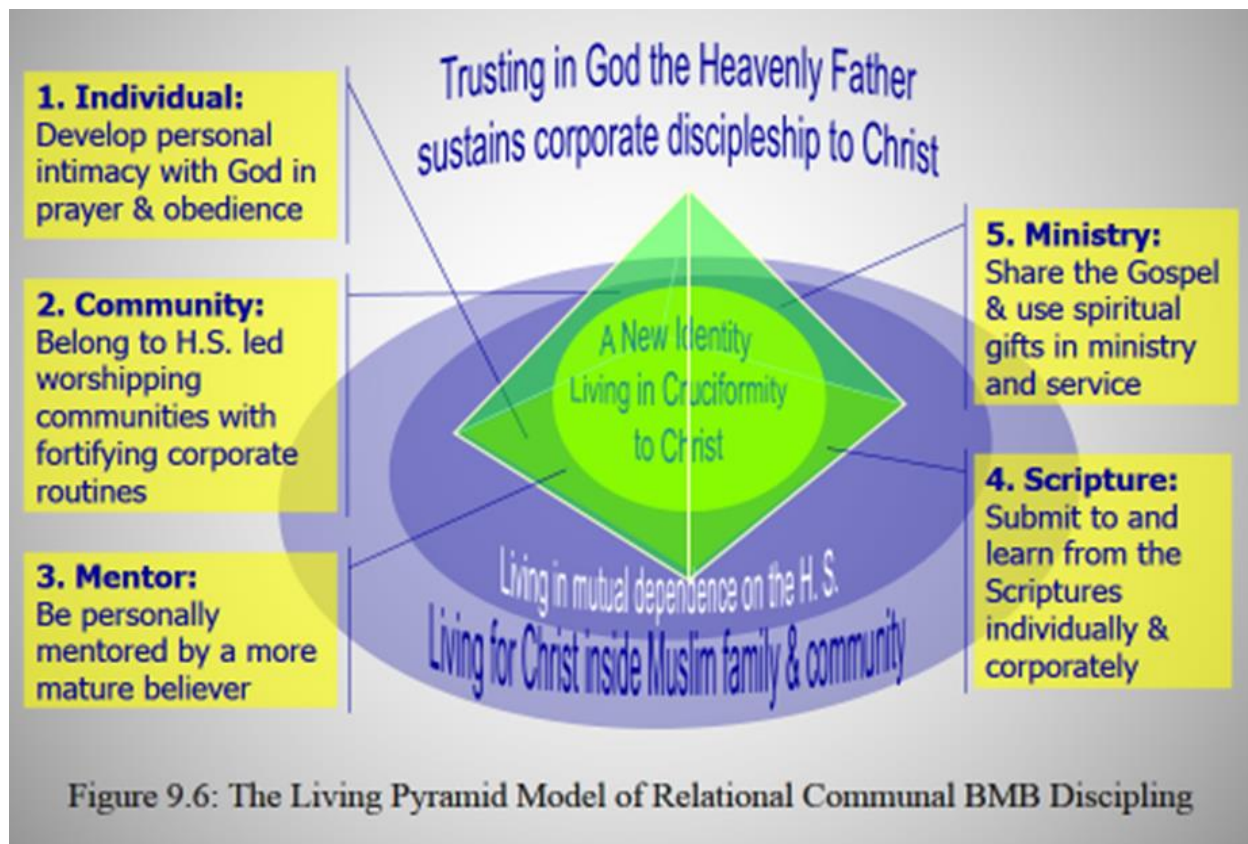
### 3. The Living Pyramid Model of Relational Communal Discipleship

Our earlier discussion of the spiritual formation process concluded by identifying five vital elements in the discipleship and spiritual growth processes that appear to be of vital significance. These elements were initially identified through our review of ancient and modern perspectives on spiritual transformation. We then fleshed out these elements in Muslim contexts through analysis of the way the experienced BMB disciples whom I interviewed across the Arab world understood the spiritual transformation process. It is now time to complete our picture of the *Living Pyramid* by adding these five indispensable processes that are vital for ongoing spiritual transformation.

This BMB discipleship graphic of a *living pyramid* is inspired by the Apostle Peter's description of believers as *living stones* joined together into a spiritual *living house* (I Pet 2:4-10). The



*pyramid* is also a familiar Middle Eastern structure that endures, despite the pressures and stresses of its environment, and stands strong for countless generations. This combination of the central outcomes of our study of the nature of discipleship is displayed in the graphic given in figure 6, called *The Living Pyramid Model of Relational Communal BMB Discipling*. Though no diagram can ever adequately depict the living spiritual dynamics of BMB discipleship, my hope is that this image of *a living pyramid set solidly at the heart of Muslim society* will inspire us to strive towards implementation of sounder discipleship that adapts appropriately into Islamic contexts.



Discipling BMBs from within the conceptual framework provided by this model can help BMBs grow and endure amidst all of the pressures and opposition encountered *inside* their families and communities. As you can see, we now add *a pyramid shape* to the circles and spheres of the model, which are the missiological and biblical foundations of the discipleship model. The pyramid shape portrays the five most important elements that, when exercised in the lives of BMBs and their communities, go a long way towards ensuring solid spiritual fruit that endures the test of time. I will now quickly walk through these elements that create the pyramid that rests in the center of figure 6.

### *3.1. Developing personal intimacy with God in prayer and obedience as individuals*

The first element is the *olive green base* of the pyramid—this is the foundational importance of each individual BMB developing a meaningful *personal* walk with God. Vital to New Testament Christian experience is *individual* faith and experience of God gained through Holy Spirit

empowered obedience to Christ. This personal individual faith must be expressed in the corporate context of the local church. Many BMBs come to Christ within societies and cultures that are influenced significantly by a sense of corporate identity and responsibility. Though all four surfaces of the pyramid stress the *corporate* nature of discipleship to Christ, it is vital to begin by stressing that, in a profound way, New Testament faith in God is also personal and individual. Unless believers from Muslim background learn, over time, to nurture their personal faith in Christ, to become sensitive to the working of the Spirit in their own hearts, and live in ongoing personal obedience to God, the corporate experience of their faith will be insufficient to sustained perseverance over the long haul. Thus, the personal walk of faith is the foundational spiritual transformation process upon which the other four dimensions or faces of the Living Pyramid rest. In the diagram, this base is labeled, “Individual: Develop personal intimacy with God in prayer and obedience”.

### *3.2. Belonging to a Holy Spirit led worshipping community with fortifying corporate routines*

The first corner of the Living Pyramid is *community*. In chapter one I stressed that the twofold entry point into this community is repentance and baptism. It is crucial that baptized BMBs learn to live together with others, as committed members of a local believing community that functions with appropriate fortifying corporate routines. One of the strengths of the monastic traditions, and of some of the Orthodox and Benedictine traditions examined in chapter six, is that they recognize the power of good community habits and the role of corporate spiritual disciplines in bringing about spiritual transformation of individuals. As BMBs gather *together* regularly, it is important that they develop patterns of corporate worship (including vital elements such as worship in song, engagement with the Scriptures, and practicing the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper) and prayer that strengthens their understanding and practice of their faith. Regular *corporate disciplines* play a huge role in keeping believers’ hearts and minds focused on Christ and obedient and open to the leading of the Spirit.

Many ancient Christian traditions called these church centered patterns of corporate and individual life and devotion a “Rule”. My phrase “fortifying corporate routines” seeks to express the idea that the pattern of local church life together needs to be consciously shaped so that it empowers our obedience and renews our faith. How to accomplish this is rightly something to be shaped by each local church. The important thing is that it be done together in sensitively shaped rhythms of community life under the guiding and empowering of the Spirit. This vital element of BMB discipleship express the fundamental need BMBs have of a supportive local community. In the *Living Pyramid Model* this critical role of community in empowering spiritual growth is the first *face* of the pyramid: *Community: Belonging to a Holy Spirit led worshipping community with fortifying corporate routines*.

### *3.3. Being personally mentored by a more mature believer*

In contexts in which believers often have few or no human models of what it looks like to live as Christians, we can readily understand the importance of the second cornerstone of the *Living Pyramid*—having a personal mentor or discipler. This point was emphasized repeatedly in the books I read on ministering to Muslims and it was stressed with even greater regularity by those I interviewed. The consensus of the disciplers interviewed was that effective one-on-one discipling of BMBs means the whole life involvement of the discipler with the disciple. Discipling best happens when there are strong and intimate personal relationships between new

believers and more mature believers. Disciplers must walk alongside disciples, caring for them and teaching, mentoring and modeling authentic Christian discipleship. They often need to do life-on-life mentoring that can often be quite intense, especially at the beginning. This personal mentoring is the second face of the Pyramid: *Mentor: Be personally mentored by a more mature believer* (see point 3 in figure 6, above).

#### ***3.4. Submitting to and learning from the Scriptures individually and corporately***

The fourth essential element in fruitful discipling is that believers must learn individually and corporately, to obey Christ, the *living Word* through study of and submission to the *written Word*. It would perhaps seem natural that former Muslims would instinctively understand the importance of coming to know and understand the Scriptures given the prominence given to the Qur'an in Islam. However, as those who live among Muslims know, for most Muslims it is far more important that the Qur'an be honored and that the correct ritual forms of prayer and devotional practice be followed, than that one *understand* the Qur'an. For Muslims generally, understanding of truth is very much secondary to conformity in ritual practice and to community norms. It is therefore natural that new believers coming out of Islam typically want to be told what to do rather than helped to understand. They initially want to know what is the "Christian" way of praying, of fasting and of doing pilgrimage. Their Muslim instincts expect that being a Christian will include a new set of religious practices to follow.

This is one of the reasons why experienced disciplers, and especially those who have themselves been Muslims, stressed the importance of learning and understanding the Bible. Since all Muslim cultures with which I am familiar are much more oral than literate cultures, it is no simple task for a new believer to learn to live out of understanding and obeying the truth as it is found in the Scriptures. Most BMBs have never had habits of reading and of learning through reading on their own. Yet, many writers on spiritual transformation have stressed that permanent change in behavior begins in the mind. Bill Hull, in the quotation that begins this chapter, ties a changed mind to learning to know the Scriptures:

There is no other path to Christian spiritual formation than *through meaningful interaction with the Word of God...* Spiritual formation begins within, and its primary tool is to take a God-given desire to change and work to *reform a person's mind* with God's thoughts. *A renewed mind fueled by a Holy Spirit-birthing desire creates new actions, which become habits, and habits make our character.* (Bill Hull 2010, 117, 118, emphasis added)

In the interviews, three of the most often mentioned keys to growth stressed the importance of BMBs understanding the truth through personal and corporate study and application of the Word of God. It is only as BMBs live in *mutual* submission to the Scriptures, that a biblical worldview can replace the Qur'anic worldview of their heritage. This vital principle is the third face of the pyramid: *Scripture: Submit to and learn from the Scriptures individually and corporately* (Refer to point 4 in figure 6 above).

#### ***3.5. Sharing the gospel and using spiritual gifts in ministry and service***

Anyone that has done teaching knows that the best way to learn something well is to teach it to others. Jesus himself said that if anyone wanted to know whether his teaching was from God or not, they simply had to obey God (John 7:17), and the truth of his message would be made clear.

I often find that every new attempt to explain the amazing truth of the gospel to a non-Christian gives me fresh insights into the nature of the gospel. Paula Fuller, in the quotation at the beginning of the chapter, stressed that it is *as* we are engaged with God on his mission of proclamation and kingdom service that we grow to maturity.

When we live with an illusion that we don't have to be engaged in God's mission to grow to maturity, we believe that we can get everything we need for our spiritual development from our personal relationship with God and other Christians.... *Jesus never gave the idea that we could walk in fellowship with Him and not be engaged with Him in mission.... If we want to walk with Jesus and have fellowship with Him, we must go with Him*, and He is bringing the good news of the kingdom to those who are outside. (Paula Fuller 2010, 216-7, emphasis added)

This important spiritual principle came out in the interviews as well. My sense is that those who stressed this the most were those who were also the most effective in discipling BMBs who persevered in the faith. As soon as someone comes to faith they are exhorted to go and share their new discovery with someone they know, or meet. This principle is also central for those who are helping launch Church Planting Movements. They call it "obedience-based discipleship". In their discovery Bible studies, right from the start, enquirers are taught to obey whatever they find to be true in the Bible. They are to apply what they learn. Furthermore, they are exhorted to share what they have learned with someone else the very same week, and then to come back to the group and share what happened when they told someone else about the truth they had just learned. In obedience-based discipleship, people are taught to learn spiritual truth in order to obey it. Jerry Trousdale describes obedience based discipleship:

Jesus didn't tell us to teach all the things that He has commanded us; He commanded us to teach others to obey these things. There is a big difference between teaching knowledge and teaching obedience. A disciple is taught to obey what Jesus commanded. Knowledge without obedience creates a spiritual dichotomy between knowledge and obedience. This, tragically, is a toxic brew... However, knowledge combined with obedience disciplines and draws them closer to God... Knowledge alone never produces spiritual growth and maturity because it doesn't transform life. Obedient discipleship does. (Trousdale 2012, 100-101)

In my interviews, a parallel emphasis was made on the importance of BMBs learning what their spiritual gifts were, and exercising them as much as possible from the beginning. The principle is clear and it is vital to effective discipleship. If we want to see BMBs grow to maturity and flourish in their faith, then we must both model and teach obedience to all that is learned, as it is learned. This is the fourth, and final face of the pyramid: *Ministry: Share the gospel and use spiritual gifts in ministry and service from the beginning* (See point 5 in figure 6 above).

#### 4. The Living Pyramid Model portrays a robust vision for discipleship

This entire dynamic ongoing spiritual individual and community reality, which I have sought to represent in the *Living Pyramid Model*, is meant to be lived out in authentic cultural and social expression in the *midst* of Muslim families and societies for the glory of God. Fitting in culturally, these maturing BMBs and BMB communities are accepted as belonging in their social setting, while at the same time raising above the limitations of their cultural and religious environment so as to, through the power of the Spirit, transform and transcend the surrounding Muslim community. No diagram can ever come close to adequately expressing the vision for

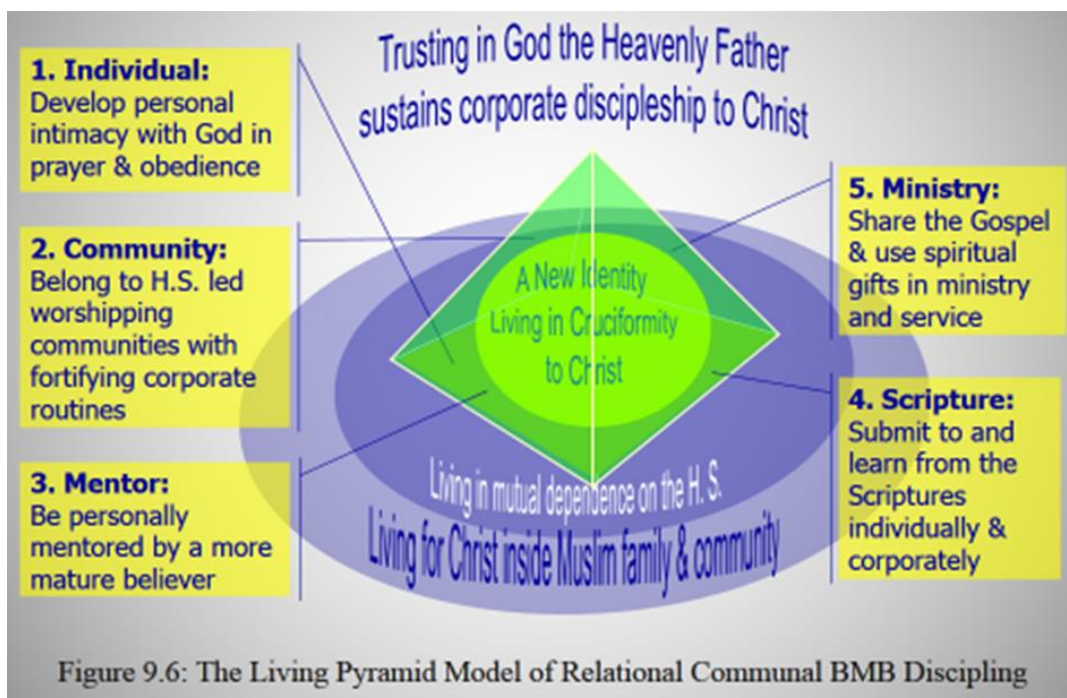


discipleship that this study is seeking to portray. Yet I hope that this figure representing a sacred and living pyramid effectively captures some of the central dynamics involved in fruitful discipling of believers as they follow Christ in Muslim communities.

A robust vision of discipleship that is biblically, psychologically and socially compelling leads to effective discipling practices. If you aim at nothing, you will be sure to hit it. Much of the reason for our failure in discipling BMBs has been, I am convinced, due to both an inadequate understanding of what we are trying to accomplish and invalid perceptions of the processes that lead to spiritual transformation. For example, starting with the goal of simply discipling *individual* BMBs is bound to fail since such an inadequate objective itself undermines success. In his PhD dissertation studying Muslim convert groups in France, John Leonard argues that *individualized approaches* to ministry are ineffectual for both evangelism and discipleship. Leonard’s stress on working with community is crucial, especially for those of us from cultures which idealize the individual:

You cannot reach a communal people using individual methods of evangelism. We must demonstrate that becoming a Christian is to become a member of a community that is closer than the family.... To have a group you need to start with a group. This does not mean that there is not a lot of individual attention given to each person in the group—that is a necessity. It means, for communal people, you do things together. (2006, 300).

Having a biblical understanding of discipleship objectives and processes that is spiritually, socially and psychologically valid, and then seeking to adapt it to the culture of the people with and to whom you minister, will go a long way towards helping us see fruitful discipling. The *Living Pyramid Model of Relational Communal BMB Discipling* attempts to provide such a biblically rooted experimentally valid vision of the discipling objectives and processes that will help us disciple BMBs and churches of BMBs that will flourish and multiply within and throughout the Muslim world.



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