* **The 5 Thresholds As They Play Out In The ISM Context[[1]](#footnote-1)**
* **TRUSTBUILDING**
* The ISM community is a very important component of trustbuilding.
  + “Belonging Before Belief”
    - Most I-students are from community-oriented cultures and they will have sensitivity about the community of the person who is taking the role of a spiritual guide.
    - The metaphor is “community influence” instead of “individual influence”.
    - The student will need to go through a conversion into the chapter community before they can move forward in their faith.
    - Because community is so important, special care must be taken to include those from closed cultures (i.e. Hindu, Muslim, etc...)
  + We need to be thoughtful and strategic in how we configure community in our ISM chapters.
    - We need to give our friends who are not yet following Jesus dynamic, not stagnant, roles in our chapters.
    - Give status to those who have been in the chapter longer.
    - Typically, American evangelism starts focusing seriously on community and follow-up after a commitment is made.
* **RAISING CURIOSITY**

To raise curiosity, the ISM community needs to be a safe place for students to ask their questions and share their views.

* + Discernment about the intent of students’ questions is important here.
    - Questions will surface about Jesus, Christianity, etc…, but do not necessarily mean that they are open or seeking to follow Jesus.
    - We need to exercise a higher consciousness to shame-based cultures.
    - Give slack to periods of silence and not be so quick to put out their questions.
  + Spiritual discussions are good here, but it is not the place for a persuasive argument.
    - It helps to respond in ways that raise the level of intrigue.
    - Critical thinking skills are more toned down in age-based, high group-oriented, authoritarian cultures.
    - Closing a Bible Discussion by asking students what questions were raised is helpful.
    - Survey of the Bible type of GIGs raise curiosity.
* **PROMOTING OPENNESS**

As the I- student moves toward openness, they become very aware of a felt need for God, although they maintain a passive reaction towards the felt need.

* + Now the issues tend to be more spiritual.
    - Prayer is crucial from this threshold forward.
    - The first two thresholds deal primarily with social and cultural barriers. When students become open, anticipate significant worldview differences that could lead to disconnect and lost opportunities.
  + Helping students who are open.
    - One key observation question to ask is: What are the fears or concerns about following Jesus? Be ready to pray over their fears.
    - Cultural expectations, obligations, and pressures:
      * The fears and concerns of the I-student will correspond to the cultural pressures of the home culture, not the American culture.
      * For example, when they express fears about converting because of family concerns, find out what that really means:
        + Are they saying: “Jesus is a great person and Christianity is a wonderful religion, but I just don’t want to rock the boat in my family right now.”
        + Or are they saying: “I really want to follow Jesus, but I have some questions on how to do that without dishonoring or causing disunity in my family.”
* **ENCOURAGING THE SEEKER**

Students who are seeking conscientiously take every opportunity to learn more about God.

* + Nudge from Openness to Seeking
    - Create opportunities to experience following Jesus.
    - The goal is to be intentional about guiding your students to action, change, or growth.
      * Carefully build in calls to “next steps” at every GIG.
      * Not all calls or next steps are to follow Jesus.
      * Some are calls to faith in Jesus’ power over Nature; faith in Jesus’ power over physical ailments; faith in Jesus’ authority to forgive; kindness to the poor; calls to recognizing a growing spiritual awakening or hunger and to respond to it.
  + Seeker question: How can I believe in Jesus?
    - It may be a question on the level of experiencing God rather than an intellectual answer.
    - An experience or encounter with God is the most powerful force toward total transformation.
    - A possible response: Jn 7:17 Experiment of Faith

**DISCIPLE**

* A decision, a change in life direction, a change in allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.
  + Crossing the line into faith
    - The student should feel like this is a natural next step.
    - Limiting conversion to the one big decision may overemphasize a dividing line between followers of Jesus and non-followers and give those who are open or seeking a sense of only a marginal place in our chapter communities.
  + How might you help a new disciple?
    - A strong need for validation from their heart or mother culture.

1. Much written here was taken from a lecture of Dan Gonzaga. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)