Fruitful Practices Among Expatriate Workers in the Arabic-speaking World: A Mixed-Methods Study

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For more information about Fruitful Practice Research and their findings, contact info@fruitfulpractice.org

Executive Summary

Since 2007, Fruitful Practice Research has been using mixed methods research to study church planting in the Muslim world. Our primary findings have been expressed in 68 practices that are consistently observed among successful church planters in the Muslim world. This report is one of a series that will examine some of our recent findings in specific regional contexts; in this case the Arabic-speaking world.

The reasons for this regionally focused report are many, and events in the region are one of them. The Arab Bloc comprised almost a third of the Fruitful Practice survey respondents. The past few years have brought the Arab world is under the intense focus of international media. We pray this will translate into increased interest in ministry to this part of the Muslim world. With this in mind, we believe the time is right for a study on best practices which is focused specifically on the Arabic-speaking Muslim world. The contents of this report may be summarized as follow:

1. **The majority of the original Fruitful Practices are affirmed in this region.**
   Fifty-six of the original sixty-eight Fruitful Practices were found to be affirmed by workers in the Arabic-speaking world. Not only this, but of the 15 most highly affirmed practices, 12 were also "highly affirmed" in this region. Thus we can say that despite many regional differences, successful church planting among Muslim peoples has much commonality across its wide sociolinguistic range.
2. **A polarizing issue partly untangled**
   There has been much controversy over whether or not workers should use the Qur'an in their witness, and if so, how they should use it. Our latest round of research throws some important light on this issue.
3. **Regional difference in the way discipleship is done.**
   Responses to this category of practices demonstrated the widest statistical differences of workers' opinions of any in our study. However, two of these differences particular seem to have missiological significance.
4. **A lower value on reproducible mentoring**
   Workers in the Arabic-speaking world placed a noticeably lower value on the practice of mentoring leaders who would in turn mentor others. The implications of this need to be examined.
5. **The role of Bible study in witness**
   Generally speaking, workers in this region were less likely to use Bible study as part of their witness than workers in other regions. However, what stands out is that there was a very large difference in the responses of fruitful and not-yet-fruitful workers in the region.

We believe the findings in this report will encourage those already working in the Arabic-speaking region, as well as help inform those who God may be calling there at this critical time.

Contents

[Each of these are hyperlinked to content for ease of access]

Introduction

Since 2007, the Fruitful Practices Research team has studied practices across many dimensions of ministry in the Muslim world using mixed methods research[1]. One of the major results of that research was a list of 68 Fruitful Practices[2], activities that promote the emergence, vitality, and multiplication of churches[3] across the whole Muslim world.

This report will focus on Islam's most ancient physical territory and the motherland of qur'anic discourse—the Arabic-speaking world. Despite bewildering ethnolinguistic diversity, there has always been a deep bond between Islam and the language of the Arabs (Hourani 2002). For that reason, many Christians view this region as an archetype of the larger Muslim world.

This report is the result of our second round of research that was conducted 2010-12[4]. This second study was also a mixed-methods research project, using a survey instrument for quantitative data collection and a series of in depth interviews for qualitative data collection. There were three major goals of this round of research:

1. A wider validation of Fruitful Practices
2. Identify possible new Fruitful Practices
3. Understand how local contexts influence which practices are truly fruitful

Due to the nature of our data, the first research goal is what we will focus on in this report. That is, we will mainly explore if this sub-set, workers in the Arabic-speaking world, affirm the original Fruitful Practice statements, and to then consider the missiological significance of any Fruitful Practices that are not affirmed.

Something that needs to be stated at the outset of this report has to do with a limitation of the study—it is primarily a look at the ministry of expatriates from outside the Arabic-speaking region. Our team made significant effort to involve Arabic background workers in our survey. Yet, despite translation of the survey into Arabic and requests through appropriate contacts, few responded. However, we were pleased that some did choose to participate in the qualitative side of the study. This limitation was disappointing but as with all research it points toward the need of further research, as well as thoughtful interpretation of the data and application of our findings.

The data pool for the Arab-bloc sub-set included 125 valid survey responses and 28 in-depth interviews, with approximately the same male/female ratio as the larger data set, 60/40 percent.

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[1] In depth explanation of our research methodology is found in Appendix 3, including the study populations for both the most recent quantitative and qualitative studies.

[2] The complete Fruitful Practice descriptive list is found in Appendix 4.

[3] In the research process we generally used the terms "fellowship" or "fellowship of new believers" to describe local expressions of the biblical word *ekklesia*, and as synonymous to the English word "church." A further discussion of this subject can be found in Appendix 1.

[4] This is our team's second research report that focuses on the Arabic-speaking world. One of our earliest reports was published in 2009, "Practices that Significantly Correlate with Fruitfulness Among Peoples of the Arab World" (Fish, Allen and Adams).

Major findings

1. Fruitful Practices Affirmed

The Arabic-speaking world is unique in the Muslim world in a number of ways. Not only is it the geographic and linguistic heartland of Islam, but it is also has other distinctives, such as being one of the few places where Muslims have lived alongside ethnically similar Christians for centuries. Nearly a third of the respondents in the qualitative research minister to people in the Arab Bloc. Therefore, we find it significant that out of the original 68 practices discerned across the whole Muslim world, 55[5] were affirmed in this particular region. Also, this same degree of similarity with the wider Muslim world can be seen in the list of the most highly-affirmed practices from the overall study. Of these 15 Fruitful Practices (FPs), 13 are just as highly affirmed in the Arab block as in the Muslim world in general[6] (see Fig 1 below).

These affirmations indicate that the fruitfulness of those particular 56 practices is related to those points of commonality across the Muslim world, as opposed to cultural or regional factors, and they also argue strongly for the idea that the original set of fruitful practices are generally relevant to most Muslim contexts. Thus, despite important differences in the Arab context, this pattern of similarities strongly indicates that the fundamental practices of church planting here are quite similar to other parts of the Muslim world.

Fig 1: Idealized 'highly affirmed' response curve
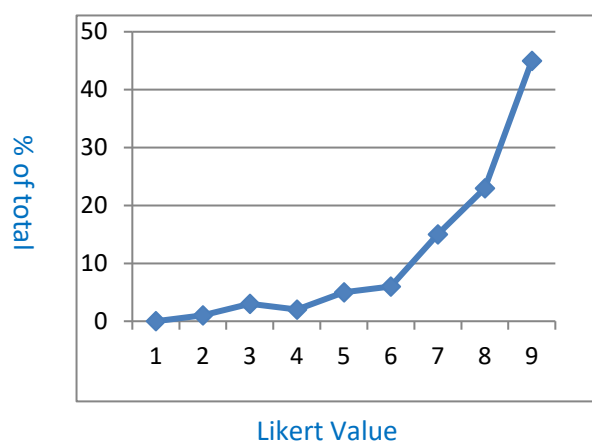
At the same time, our qualitative data reminds us that even with agreement on the importance of a FP statement, some practices can look different in different contexts. A good example of this is from the category of "Relating to Society" (RSO):

- RSO1 "Fruitful workers communicate respect by behaving in culturally appropriate ways."

In many of the settings we have studied this came through most clearly in habits of dress, eating, etc., or what we might say in the purely cultural realm. However, in the Arab world "behaving in culturally appropriate ways" clearly includes the way a worker behaves toward the religion of Islam and its key markers like Mohammad and the Qur'an.

> "Muslims have 2 fists they're holding up. Most of initial spiritual interest you see from people, they're testing you on these two fists. The two fists are: 'What do you think about Mohammed?' and 'What do you think about the Qur'an?'… Those are like the test issues, if you respond right to those things you can get an audience. *If you show that you have respect for who they are, for their people, for their faith then you have an audience with them."* (*emphasis* added) (GTFP, Interview 69 2007a).

This should not be surprising since in the Islamic/Arab heartlands religion and culture are deeply intertwined. In other words, communicating personal respect to people who have a high level of religious identity, such as many Arabs, requires expressing respect for their religion and its trappings.

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[5] A list of the practices that were not affirmed in the Arabic-speaking bloc is found in Appendix 3.

[6] A list of these practices is found in Appendix 4.

2. A Polarizing Issue Partly Untangled

The mission world is no stranger to controversies, as we have wrestled with them since Acts 15. In our day a major issue is how, and to what extent, the Qur'an should be used in our witness. Based on our first round of research we used the following wording to express something we were finding in the "Communication Methods" of fruitful workers:

- COM8 "Fruitful workers use the Qur'an as a bridge to share the biblical gospel."

We doubt it comes as a surprise that this was somewhat controversial. That was not at all our intent, nor were we trying to promote a particular missiological viewpoint. Our desire was simply to accurately describe what we found in the data. However, in the second round this FP had a highly divergent, or bi-modal, response. What this means is there are many who agree with the practice, as well as many who disagree with it, but few in the middle (see Fig. 2 below). Particularly, the Arab bloc was even more divided on this issue than the Muslim world at large.

This pattern of response pushed us to dig deeply into our qualitative interviews by which we were able to bring clarity to the survey responses.

Fig. 2: Response curve of COM8 in Arab bloc
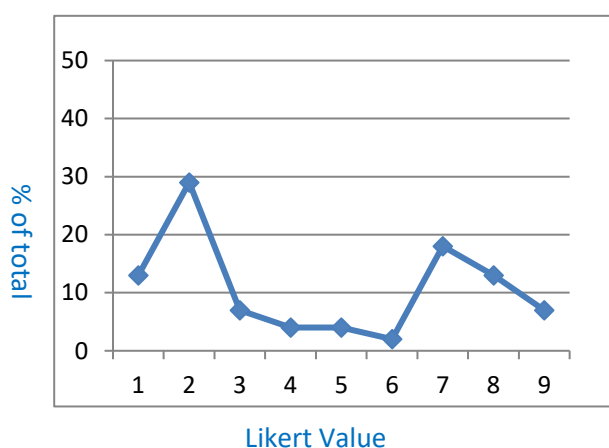
We have come to believe that while there is disagreement on using the *content* of the Qur'an, the language and concepts in it are widely used by workers throughout the Muslim world, with strong emphasis on their use in the Arab bloc.

Our intention is that all of our FP statements reflect what is widely affirmed by fruitful workers, therefore we have modified the original COM8 Fruitful Practice statement so it captures what we have learned in this round of research:

- COM8 (revised) "Fruitful workers are aware of Islamic terms and thought patterns and use as a bridge to sharing the biblical gospel."

Our qualitative data has shown us that many workers find it fruitful to draw on common expressions, terminologies and patterns of thought from Muslim culture. This helps them clarify the ways biblical truth parallels, diverges from, or completely counters traditional Muslim understanding. Fruitful workers may reference qur'anic passages in order to share the biblical gospel, but do not dwell unnecessarily on them.

3. Differences in Discipleship Patterns

In our second study we found that there are significant differences in the way workers approach discipleship, that is the practices in our "Relating to Believers" (RBE) category. The responses to these Fruitful Practice statements were more divergent than any other FP grouping. This was also true for the Arab bloc in particular where only 7 of the original 14 FPs were affirmed in the bloc. We believe there is missiological significance in the differences of two of these practices:

- RBE1 "Fruitful Workers are intentional in their discipling."
- RBE12 "Fruitful Workers use various approaches in discipling."

The responses to both of these FPs were significantly lower in the Arab bloc than among fruitful workers in the rest of the Muslim world. This was even more pronounced when Arab bloc responses were compared with those of workers in the culturally similar Horn of Africa bloc. This is reinforced by the fact that RBE1 appeared in only one of the in-depth interviews for the bloc, and RBE12 never did.

This is intriguing, particularly in light of our first major finding, that overall there is a great deal of similarity between the Arab bloc and the rest. This raises more questions than we as researchers can answer at this time, such as:

➢ Why do workers in the Arab affinity bloc not refer to these discipleship practices as their normal practice?
➢ Is this the result of contextual factors?
➢ Do workers in the Arab and non-Arab blocs have different ideas about when "discipleship" begins (at first sign of spiritual interest or only after clear conversion)?
➢ Does the fact that the Bible is being read in Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, negatively impact Arabs openness to engage with the Bible?

This last question might also be connected to the bloc's lower scoring on one FP in the category, "Relating to Seekers" (RSK)

- RSK5 "Fruitful workers begin discipling seekers as part of the process of coming to faith."

Regardless of how these questions are answered, it is clear that workers in the Arab affinity bloc approach discipleship differently than their coworkers in other parts of the world. This also forms a connection to our next major finding which is about a worker's relationship with emerging leaders.

4. Low Value on Reproducible Mentoring

Hidden in the category "Relating to Leaders" (RLD) is something that is well worth consideration for workers in the Arab bloc, specifically about this FP:

- RLD2 "Fruitful workers mentor leaders who in turn mentor others."

At first glance this practice did not stand out in our data from the second round of research. However, it appeared to take on missiological significance when we conducted an analysis accounting for different contextual variables.

Of primary interest to readers of this report is that that we found a large statistical difference between the responses of fruitful workers in the Arab block and those in the rest of the Muslim world. There was an even larger difference comparing all Arab bloc workers (Fruitful and not-yet) to all non-Arab bloc workers (fruitful and not-yet). In other words, workers in other parts of the Muslim world were much more likely to state that reproducible mentoring of leaders is their "normal" practice. But that was not all.

RLD2 also had a statistically significant relationship to several variables our team analyzed. Of particular interest to this report is the positive relationship it has to longevity of service, evangelism impact and several practices related to believers and fruitful churches. By way of brief explanation:

- The longer a worker has been on the field the more likely they are to state that mentoring leaders is their normal practice. This may be due to natural factors such as increasing age or more experience. However, we would propose that it is also possible that longevity on the field causes a worker to think beyond their own ministry toward the future of the church on that field.

- When compared to other regions, the Arab bloc had a lower affirmation of the practice of intentional discipling, practicing the Lord's Supper and the use of funds (RBE1, CFC8 and CFC14). This may indicate the church in the Arab world is less spiritually mature than in other regions of the Muslim world.

Taken individually, these differences may or may not be important. However, when looked at together we believe that "mentoring leaders who mentor others" emerges as a significant variable between those who are more fruitful and those who are less. While there may be very good contextual reasons for this, it would be a good idea of workers in the Arab bloc to carefully consider why they as a whole do not practice this to the same degree as their colleagues in other parts of the Muslim world.

5. The Role of Bible Study in Witness

It would seem obvious that using the Bible is a foundation of ministry in any part of the world, but we found a very unusual data point concerning a practice in our "Communication Methods" (COM) category:

- COM6 Fruitful workers use Bible study as a means of sharing the gospel.

Generally speaking, workers in the Arab affinity bloc were less likely to state this FP as their normal practice. This could be the result of contextual factors such as greater local aversion to the physical book. Since the Bible will be read in the language of the Qur'an, there might be less openness to engage with a text that is more readily compared to what is in their own Holy Book and in the holy language of Arabic.

We also believe this is related to the overall finding of a positive correlation between higher reported evangelism impact and higher rating of COM6. The reduced practice of using the Bible to share the gospel negatively influences evangelism impact and fruitfulness in relation to planting churches.

Conclusion

The implementation of fruitful practices in the Arabic-speaking world is crucially significant in this region that houses the epi-center of Islam. This paper highlights the status quo and challenges workers in this region to attempt to pro-actively pursue some of the practices that have been proved fruitful in other areas but are, for whatever reason, less used in the Arab Bloc.

The great majority of the mostly highly affirmed fruitful practices are also highly affirmed in the Arabic-speaking world. Redefining COM8 to a broader definition of using Islamic terms and thought patterns brings together the previously divergent attitude toward this fruitful practice.

There are significant differences in discipleship practices in the Arab bloc compared to the non-Arabic speaking regions. Lower rates of mentoring mentors (RLD2) and the relatively lower affirmation of practices related to the intentional mentoring of believers (RBE1), the Lord's Supper and dealing with church-related funds (CFC8 and CFC14), might indicate a comparatively younger church, but it definitely indicates a less mature church.

The reduced use of the Bible as a means of sharing the Gospel (COM6) may be influenced by the Arabic Bible's more easily obvious comparison to their holy book. However, the negative impact on fruitfulness is evident and creative ways to address this weakness must be prayerfully developed. .

Hopefully, you have found this report helpful and enlightening. The FP research team is still looking for qualified missiologists who are willing and able to invest the time to produce these kinds of in depth studies. If you, or someone you know, might be interested in working with the Fruitful Practice team on this type of research, please info@fruitfulpractice.org

Bibliography

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Methods

As a mixed-methods research project, it included quantitative and qualitative data collection. Below is a brief background to the project.

Quantitative

The quantitative team was led by David Greenlee, PhD, International Research Associate with Operation Mobilization. David has served with OM since 1977 and has been involved in mission research for many years. He has published widely and coordinated consultations focused on how Muslims are coming to faith in Jesus Christ.[7] "Bob Fish," PhD, was also fully involved from the inception of the project. Bob served with Frontiers in South Asia for 10 years and currently works in the International Office, and added expertise not just from his personal ministry experience but from his analytical insights and statistical skills. Mike Baker, MS (statistics) joined the project team as we prepared to launch the survey, and was instrumental in the web-based delivery of the survey to the respondents. Mike's analytical expertise and creativity, developed in his career as a senior statistician at Intel Corporation, were vital to the analysis phase of the work.

This quantitative module was carried out by means of a survey centered on the Fruitful Practice statements and questions regarding important demographic and contextual factors potentially impacting the respondents and their ministry. The project was designed to build on the Fruitful Practices survey

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[7] See for example, David Greenlee's edited *From the Straight Path to the Narrow Way: Journeys of Faith*, (Atlanta: Authentic 2006) and *Longing for Community: Church,* Ummah*, or Somewhere in Between?* (Pasadena: William Carey, forthcoming 2012).

undertaken at the 2007 Global Trends and Fruitful Practices consultation.[8] The survey used a 9-point Likert scale that evaluated respondents' actual ministry practices, priorities in ministry, or levels of agreement. This allowed us to sharpen the definition of some terms, move from binary (or other limiting) answer choices to scaled answers, and in general to enhance the possibility of rigorous statistical analysis.

Participation was invited of all workers serving with Vision 5:9 network agencies that are, or recently were, involved in ministry among Muslims that at least indirectly contribute to the process of church planting. The survey was made available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Indonesian, French, Korean, and Arabic, and offered over a secure Internet connection, and as an Excel or Word file, which could be filled out electronically or on paper.

For the overall survey we received 433 valid survey responses from members of 32 Vision 5:9 agencies. These hail from 38 home countries and serve in 70 nations. The respondents ranged from 25-60 years of age with a gender ratio of 59% male, 41% female, and married people making up 78.5% of participants. All participants had been in active ministry among Muslims for at least one year, and the mean length of service was 8.9 years.[9] An acknowledged weakness is that two agencies were responsible for 48% of all survey responses, and the top eight agencies accounting for 75% of all responses. The sub-Saharan Africa data sub-set consisted of 77 respondents.

For those so inclined, there is a complete, very detailed report on the quantitative module that is available by contacting info@fruitfulpractice.org .

Qualitative Module

Qualitative data collection was the collaborative effort of dozens of researchers on four continents, all either members of the Fruitful Practice Research Taskforce or those trained by them. This effort was co-led by James Nelson and Gene Daniels, both Senior Research Associates with Fruitful Practice Research. James is Vice President of GMI (gmi.org), which provides strategic research and mapping for the mission community, and leads their research services department. He has served on field teams in Eurasia and Southeast Asia, where he helped establish a business-as-mission enterprise. James also serves as Mission Research Consultant for *Missio Nexus.* He holds degrees in Journalism and Marketing Research. Gene is an ethnographer and missionary with RUN Ministries who spent over 10 years in Central Asia involved in ministry among unreached Muslim people groups. He holds an M.A. in International Development and a doctorate in religious studies.

The other two researchers who worked specifically on this project are Mary James and Boutros Al Bustani. Mary James has been part of a few CP teams over her 20+ years in one of the more affluent countries of the Arab world. She has degrees in engineering, theological studies, and counseling. Boutros Al Bustani has a doctorate in science and has spent his career at the intersection of high tech and higher education. He is passionately interested in e-learning, missiology, and the deeper Christian life, as well as how cultural background affects all these pursuits. Boutros and his family lived in the Arabia Peninsula for 10 years; they now live in the West.

The qualitative research module consisted of in depth, semi-structured interviews that were designed to test the validity and nature of the original Fruitful Practice statements in light of a larger and more diverse study population. Because of the large number of collaborating researchers, all interviews were based on a standard protocol, recorded for accuracy and transcribed for analysis. Whenever possible, interviews were

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[8] See Woodberry, *Seed to Fruit*, etc.

[9] This refers to the length of ministry of the team the respondent serves on, not necessarily their personal ministry tenure.

conducted in the worker's native language and later translated into English for analysis. The overall qualitative study included a total of 188 workers, 76 women (40%) and 112 men (60%). Of these, 34% were Western expatriate, 18% were non-western expatriate, and 49% were national church planters, more than two dozen of whom were BMBs. Besides English, interviews were also conducted in Korean, Hindi, Indonesian, Spanish, Swahili, Russian, and Amharic.

Other Considerations

A few other definitions and explanations concerning the overall study are in order.

First, a couple other definitions are in order:

1. **Church**. During our field research we generally used the terms "fellowship" or "fellowship of new believers" when discussing local expressions of the biblical term *ekklesia.* We made a conscious choice to use these as synonymous with the English word "church." We choose the term "fellowship" to take into account the range of terms, and many various languages, used by members of the Vision 5:9 Network in their church planting efforts among Muslim peoples. Therefore, in this report the terms "fellowship" and "church" are used interchangeably as needed for clear English syntax, all the while recognizing that some readers do not recognize the terms as fully equivalent.

2. **Team**. For many this has become a fundamental building block of church planting. However, teams can take many and widely varied forms, particularly as it concerns non-western mission agencies. Our working definition of a "team" is *a group of two or more working together to establish multiplying fellowships of Jesus-followers.* Therefore, we asked study participants to think in terms of those with whom they intentionally, regularly, and with shared purpose work toward this goal. It may be just people from your own organization, but it may also include people from other groups as well as believers from the country where you are working.

3. **Fruit**. Our primary definition of "fruit" is encapsulated by survey question Q28, asking about "the number of fellowships planted in which [the respondent's] team played a significant part." We were explicit that for the purposes of our research, fruit is gatherings of believers, not evangelistic results.

As for limitations of our findings, there are a few we wish to recognize:

1. **Our findings are *descriptive,* not *predictive.*** By this we mean that our findings should not be viewed as a methodology for church planting, but rather a picture of what God has been doing. We encourage workers to reflect on their own ministry in light of these findings rather than simply attempting to repeat the practices of those we studied.

2. **The etic verses emic question.** The responses we collected and studied were, for the most part, the perceptions of those who contributed to the church planting process (etic), rather than of those who received the gospel (emic). We understand that the perceptions of workers and the members of the churches they helped to plant may be very different. Also, our respondents may simply be unaware, or not fully understand, so of the social, psychological, spiritual, and other factors that played a role in the formation of the church.

3. **The changing nature of the Vision 5:9 network.** The network increased significantly during the period in which the survey was being conducted, especially among Global South ministries. This made it very difficult to maintain a representative balanced demographic profile of our respondents. While the overall mixed methods participation was drawn from a fairly broad representation of the Vision 5:9 Network, we recognize that the quantitative module was dominated by Anglo-American workers who made up 69% of all respondents.

4. **And finally, there is always the "God factor"** of his *kairos* moments and sovereign, loving intervention in ways we may never fully comprehend. We would never attempt to be so arrogant as to "explain" these wonderful moments.

We kindly request that other researchers and writers contact us before using our findings, and especially before referring to them in published form. This will help ensure that the most up-to-date analysis is used (as in any research project report, errors will inevitably be found and corrections needed) and open the door for exchange of insights and ideas that may help us move even further forward our missiological insights and ministry application stemming from this work.

Appendix 2: Complete FP descriptive list

Relating to Society

RSO1   Fruitful workers communicate respect by behaving in culturally appropriate ways.

RSO2   Fruitful workers address tangible needs in their community as an expression of the gospel.

RSO3   Fruitful workers relate to people in ways that respect gender roles in the local culture.

RSO4   Fruitful workers mobilize extensive, intentional, and focused prayer.

RSO5   Fruitful workers pursue language proficiency.

RSO6   Fruitful workers take advantage of pre-field and on-field research to shape their ministry.

RSO7   Fruitful workers build positive relationships with local leaders.

Relating to Seekers

RSK1   Fruitful workers are bold in witness.

RSK2   Fruitful workers pray for God's supernatural intervention as a sign that confirms the gospel.

RSK3   Fruitful workers pray for the needs of their friends in their presence.

RSK4   Fruitful workers share the gospel through existing social networks.

RSK5   Fruitful workers begin discipling seekers as part of the process of coming to faith.

RSK6   Fruitful workers encourage seekers to share what God is doing in their lives.

Relating to Believers

RBE1   Fruitful workers are intentional in their discipling.

RBE2   Fruitful workers disciple in locally appropriate and reproducible ways.

RBE3   Fruitful workers disciple others in settings that fit the situation.

RBE4   Fruitful workers help seekers and believers find appropriate ways to identify themselves to their community as followers of Jesus, without imposing their own preferences.

RBE5   Fruitful workers help believers find ways to remain within their social network.

RBE6   Fruitful workers encourage believers to develop healthy relationships with other believers.

RBE7   Fruitful workers model following Jesus in intentional relationships with believers.

RBE8   Fruitful workers encourage believers to follow the Holy Spirit's leading in applying the Bible to their context.

RBE9   Fruitful workers encourage believers to share their faith.

RBE10   Fruitful workers prepare believers to explain why they believe.

RBE11   Fruitful workers model service to others and teach believers to serve others as well.

RBE12   Fruitful workers use various approaches in discipling.

RBE13   Fruitful workers encourage baptism by other believers with a Muslim background.

RBE14   Fruitful workers deal with sin in biblical ways that are culturally appropriate.

Relating to Leaders

RLD1   Fruitful workers acknowledge emerging leaders early in the process of building a community of faith.

RLD2   Fruitful workers mentor leaders who in turn mentor others.

RLD3   Fruitful workers encourage leadership based on godly character.

RLD4   Fruitful workers are intentional about leadership development.

RLD5   Fruitful workers use the Bible as the primary source for leadership development.

RLD6   Fruitful workers prefer to develop leaders locally.

Relating to God

RGD1   Fruitful workers practice an intimate walk with God.

RGD2   Fruitful workers engage in regular, frequent prayer.

RGD3   Fruitful workers persevere through difficulty and suffering.

Communication Methods

COM1   Fruitful workers use culturally appropriate Bible passages to communicate God's message.

COM2   Fruitful workers communicate the gospel using the heart language, except in situations where it is not appropriate.

COM3   Fruitful workers use a variety of approaches in sharing the gospel.

COM4   Fruitful workers share the gospel using tools or methods that can be locally reproduced.

COM5   Fruitful workers sow broadly.

COM6   Fruitful workers use Bible study as a means of sharing the gospel.

COM7   Fruitful workers share the gospel in ways that fit the learning preferences of their audience.

COM8   Fruitful workers use the Qur'an as a bridge to sharing the biblical gospel.

Fruitful Teams

FTM1   Fruitful teams are united by a common vision.

FTM2   Fruitful teams build one another up in love.

FTM3   Fruitful teams have effective leadership.

FTM4   Fruitful teams employ the various gifts of their members to serve the task.

FTM5   Fruitful teams adapt their methods based on reflective evaluation and new information.

FTM6   Fruitful teams have at least one person with high language proficiency in the heart language.

FTM7   Fruitful teams engage in corporate prayer and fasting.

FTM8   Fruitful teams expect every team member to be involved in sharing the gospel.

FTM9   Fruitful teams value their female members as essential partners in ministry, facilitating their active involvement.

Characteristics of Fruitful Churches[10]

CFC1   Fruitful churches use the Bible as the central source for life, growth and mission.

CFC2   Fruitful churches worship using indigenous forms of expression.

CFC3   Fruitful churches practice baptism.

CFC4   Fruitful churches value networking together.

CFC5   Fruitful churches are committed to one another as extended family, practicing the biblical "one another" commands.

CFC6   Fruitful churches redeem traditional festivals and ceremonies.

CFC7   Fruitful churches share meals and practice hospitality.

CFC8   Fruitful churches share the Lord's Supper in culturally appropriate ways.

CFC9   Fruitful churches seek to bless their wider community.

CFC10 Fruitful churches involve women in culturally appropriate forms of ministry.

CFC11 Fruitful churches involve their children in worship and ministry.

CFC12 Fruitful churches equip their members to share their faith in effective and culturally appropriate ways.

CFC13 Fruitful churches govern themselves.

CFC14 Fruitful churches have local accountability structures for the use of funds.

CFC15 Fruitful churches generally meet in homes or other informal settings.

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[10] In the original Fruitful Practices Descriptive list, this domain was called, "Characteristics of Faith Communities." However, due to unanticipated miscommunication this caused, we have changed the domain name. Please refer to Appendix 1 for further discussion about our use of the term "church."

Appendix 3: Fruitful Practices not affirmed in the Arabic-speaking World

Relating to Seekers

RSK1   Fruitful workers are bold in witness.

RSK4   Fruitful workers share the gospel through existing social networks.

RSK5   Fruitful workers begin discipling seekers as part of the process of coming to faith.

Relating to Believers

RBE1   Fruitful workers are intentional in their discipling.

RBE2   Fruitful workers disciple in locally appropriate and reproducible ways.

RBE3   Fruitful workers disciple others in settings that fit the situation.

RBE5   Fruitful workers help believers find ways to remain within their social network.

RBE10   Fruitful workers prepare believers to explain why they believe.

RBE11   Fruitful workers model service to others and teach believers to serve others as well.

RBE12   Fruitful workers use various approaches in discipling.

Relating to Leaders

RLD2   Fruitful workers mentor leaders who in turn mentor others.

Communication Methods

COM6   Fruitful workers use Bible study as a means of sharing the gospel.

COM8   Fruitful workers use the Quran as a bridge to sharing the biblical gospel.

Appendix 4: The 15 most highly affirmed practices from the overall study.

Relating to Society

RSO1   Fruitful workers communicate respect by behaving in culturally appropriate ways.

RSO3   Fruitful workers relate to people in ways that respect gender roles in the local culture.

Relating to Leaders

RLD5   Fruitful workers use the Bible as the primary source for leadership development.

Fruitful Teams

FTM1   Fruitful teams are united by a common vision.

FTM6   Fruitful teams have at least one person with high language proficiency in the heart language.

Characteristics of Fruitful Churches[11]

CFC1   Fruitful churches use the Bible as the central source for life, growth and mission.

CFC2   Fruitful churches worship using indigenous forms of expression.

CFC5   Fruitful churches are committed to one another as extended family, practicing the biblical "one another" commands.

CFC7   Fruitful churches share meals and practice hospitality.

CFC9   Fruitful churches seek to bless their wider community.

CFC10   Fruitful churches involve women in culturally appropriate forms of ministry.

CFC12   Fruitful churches equip their members to share their faith in effective and culturally appropriate ways.

CFC13   Fruitful churches govern themselves.

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[11] In the original Fruitful Practices Descriptive list, this domain was called, "Characteristics of Faith Communities." However, due to unanticipated miscommunication this caused, we have changed the domain name. Please refer to Appendix 1 for further discussion about our use of the term "church."