

# About the Forum of Bible Agencies International

## Why the Forum of Bible Agencies International Exists:

We believe that there is a need for Bible agency Leaders to be part of a trusted community of like-minded peers where they can critically reflect, engage and collaborate around an agenda that members designate as vital for the future of international Bible ministry.

## How We Do This:

The Forum is able to make this kind of community a reality by facilitating activities that result in the three-fold benefit of membership - relationships, growth and knowledge:

**Relationships** with Bible agency leaders who are passionate about spreading God's Word around the world.

Through formal and informal gatherings, the Forum aims to encourage and strengthen inter-agency understanding and relationships among members' strategic leadership.

In the words of one member:

*"Inter-agency understanding and relationships have been strengthened by opportunities for personal, face-to-face interaction."* - Bryan Harmelink, Translation Development Group Chair, 2020.

Entire new movements have been catalysed through the strong trusting relationships built among Forum members.

Two examples are:

1. The Deaf Development Group, which started as a Faith Comes By Hearing initiative, has now become an increasingly global enterprise as part of the Forum family.
2. The *Every Tribe Every Nation* strategic alliance of member agencies and resource partners was connected to the Forum initially through ABS and UBS and has grown to embrace a number of the members.

These initiatives might not have grown to their current stature without the relationships that were originally forged at the Forum.

## **Growth Opportunities** through collaborative projects and partnerships.

The forum is a place where members can identify growth opportunities arising from working with others.

*“FOBAI represents not only a community of potential collaborators, but a way to learn about the different ways that collaboration might happen as well as collaboration best practices.” - Paul Richardson, FOBAI Chair - 2020*

*“After struggling with an attempt to organize themselves over a decade ago, it was at the FOBAI Annual Meeting in New York in 2016 that the Deaf Development Group was born. This time, they wanted true legitimacy as an organization representing Deaf translation interests. So after the FOBAI meeting in Israel, they went on to encourage the increased cooperation of regional associations that represent Deaf translation projects within each region! Another outcome of the Deaf Development Group’s evolution was the inclusion of the Sign Language Bible Translation Standards and Best Practices into the Basic Principles and Procedures for Bible Translation standards document for the first time in 2017.” – Deaf Development Group Memo, 2018*

*“The Media Development Group is excited about the opportunities for greater collaboration that God has provided through our group and through FOBAI.” - Tom Meiner, Media Development Group Chair, 2020*

*“The meetings of the Translation Development Group have helped agency representatives understand the distinctives of their agencies, which has contributed to increased collaboration among the member agencies”. - Bryan Harmelink, Translation Development Group Chair, 2020.*

## **Knowledge** of established and emerging practices that form the basis for fruitful cooperation.

Every year, the Forum engages subject matter experts to share new insights and learning. The first Chair explains that this effort has been intentional and strategic since its inception:

*“Over the years, The Forum has helped chart a common course for the various Bible agencies of the world: in 1994, the forum decided agencies should pursue greater cooperation at regional and national levels, as well as better connections with churches; in 2002, there was a decision to be more strategic through data gathering, advocacy, performance standards, and training; and in more recent years, development groups have been formed around Scripture Engagement, Deaf needs, and media”. – Fergus MacDonald, Forum of Bible Agencies International Chair Emeritus, 2019.*

By sharing knowledge the Forum has been instrumental in forming standards and definitions that bring members into alignment and provide a mutually agreed and globally authoritative position. An example of this in action is the Forum’s Bible translation standards that have:

- Eliminated contention about the quality of Scripture translation by establishing a common set of principles for translation practice.
- Created a model through which other aspects of Bible ministry can establish shared standards and definitions.

Knowledge sharing and transfer around aspects of the Bible cause means that members can derive efficiency gains for their agencies. And this is all made possible by the cooperative spirit among the membership.

The Forum members' commitment to building relationship, seeking opportunities for growth and sharing knowledge is a rare combination. There is no other organisation for international Bible ministry leaders in the world you could be part of that offers the scope, depth and reach than that provided by the network.

## What We Do:

The Forum is a unique setting for international Bible ministry leaders designed to benefit member agencies individually and through the partnerships they create.

The Forum brings together the world's leading international Bible ministries as a member driven network of CEOs and next level leaders.

Once a year, and away from the normal pressures of organisational life, the network meets for the purpose of relationship building, catalysing collaboration and sharing knowledge and strategy.

In the process of engaging in these tasks, attention is focused on four domains of international Bible ministry:

1. The availability of Scripture through translation
2. Engagement with Scripture as an outcome of accessibility
3. Advocacy for Scripture that builds relevance and credibility
4. Innovation using channels and content that render Scripture more meaningful to audiences.

Development Groups currently consisting of Translation, Scripture Engagement, Media and the Deaf lead the work across each of these domains. Each group is comprised of committed Forum members who work together to contribute relevant research and subject matter expertise; look for ways to avoid duplication of effort; and monitor and report on developments, innovative practice and emerging trends.

Each group convenes at the Annual Meeting and maintains contact as necessary to take their initiatives forward.

Looking ahead, the Forum expects to continue with the rich and distinctive variety of initiatives surrounding the Bible cause and is committed, in particular, to hearing more from *Global Voices* in its meetings and interactions.

The Forum's future success is not predicated on network growth or business deliverables but on the quality of the discourse, engagement and relationships that is built among all its stakeholders.

Most importantly, the Forum adds value by enhancing the worldwide Bible cause in ways that no one agency could accomplish alone!