WORKING TOGETHER CAN WORK

Posted on June 8, 2016 by Eddie

Probably the most important mission partnership that you have never heard of!
Category: Methodology

When I publish this blog post and start to get on with what I should be doing today, I will be reading and writing about the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in Manila in 1989. I suspect that quite a few Kouyanet readers will have never heard of this meeting and even fewer will have read the document which emerged from it, the Manila Manifesto.

For some reason, the Lausanne Manila meeting hasn't achieved the same level of recognition as its predecessor in Lausanne (1974) or its successor in Cape Town (2010). Â However, in some ways, the Manila meeting has had a much longer lasting impact than those other meetings; especially if you are interested in Bible Translation.

During the Manila meetings, a number of people who worked with different Bible translation organisations realised that it would be good to combine their efforts in a number of areas. Out of this, the Forum of Bible Agencies was born.

The Forum doesn't blow it's own trumpet and is hardly known outside of the Bible translation world, but it is an incredibly important organisation and a great example of the sort of working together in mission that I'm always banging on about.

> *The Forum of Bible Agencies International is an alliance of more than 25 leading international Bible Agencies and other missions organizations with a shared vision: â€œworking together to maximize the worldwide access and impact of Godâ€™s Word.â€ This vision conveys that the Forum is not only concerned with delivery of Scripture but also, most importantly, with engaging people in the Word of God so that lives may be changed.*

One of the key things that FOBAI (Forum of Bible Agencies International) does is to set standards for translation.

> *The Forum has adopted standards on basic procedures and principles for Bible translation and qualifications on translation consultants. These standards enable cooperation and collaboration among agencies. Members are considering developing standards in other areas, such as guidelines for collaborating in translation projects, collaboration with churches (providing best practices on engaging with churches locally, nationally and missionally in Bible translation); standards in audio and video presentations; and the place of storying and orality.*

In practical terms, this means that in order to be a translation consultant, Sue has to meet a number of requirements in terms of education and experience. Likewise, the translations teams she works with need to follow a number of agreed procedures in terms of checking and testing their work. This means that translators and consultants who work with different organisations are able to collaborate relatively smoothly and also helps to ensure that translations are of good quality.

You really should think twice about supporting a Bible translation project if the people doing it are not members of FOBAI.

Fobai have also sponsored a couple of excellent spin-off website:

- Find a Bible: does what it says on the tin and allows you to find Bibles and other resources in various languages.
- Scripture Engagement: this site has a mass of resources for people trying to help others get to grips with the Bible. Its origins are in cross-cultural mission work, but it is increasingly useful in the post-Christian, screen-based culture of the West.

Giving people access to the Bible in a language and a medium that they can use and then helping them to engage with its message is key to all Christian mission. It doesn't matter whether you are in an industrial city in England or a village in Cambodia, the problem is the same - though the solutions may be different. I reckon that far more people should be aware of FOBAI and the work they are doing and to be honest, this blog post is little more than a thinly disguised advert for their Facebook page. Please visit it an like it and get an idea of what God is doing through his Word around the world. Bible engagement is too important to be left to geeks like me!