

Join the Global Movement: “Partners in Accountability”

by Dr. Gary Hoag, ECFA International Liaison

Dan Busby, John Van Drunen, and I traveled to Melbourne, Australia to attend the second International Accountability Summit (IAS) on June 4-5, 2017. IAS 2017 was sponsored by ECFA and hosted by CMASC (Christian Ministry Advancement Standards Council), our Australian ministry partner in peer accountability.

IAS 2017 welcomed 64 delegates representing 20 countries around the world: Australia, Canada, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Uganda, Uruguay, and USA. All 64 delegates traveled to Australia at their own expense and committed time and energy to attend.

“Partners in Accountability” marked the theme of the summit. We gathered with four specific objectives in view: (1) to strengthen relationships with local champions; (2) to share wisdom and resources; (3) to discuss challenges linked to financial transparency in church and ministry settings globally; and, (4) to pray for each other.

IAS 2017 began on Pentecost Sunday. John Van Drunen, Executive Vice President of ECFA, noted, “The program was structured to position all 64 delegates to contribute, and people commented widely that it felt like the Holy Spirit knit our hearts together as one enabling us to accomplish these aims in a manner that exceeded all expectations.”

Leading representatives of peer accountability groups from 7 countries gave brief reports: Steve Kerr ([CMASC](#) – Australia), Curtis Towns ([CCCC](#) – Canada), Sanjay Patra ([EFAC](#) – India), Emily Chengo ([AfCAA](#) – Kenya), Angelito Gabriel ([CCTA](#) – Philippines), Ho Chan Hwang ([CCFK](#) – South Korea), and John Van Drunen ([ECFA](#) – USA).

Prominent panelists also spoke to various issues linked to ministry accountability. As most of the participants came from countries that do not yet have peer accountability groups, high-profile Aussies like Murray Baird, Assistant Commissioner and General Counsel of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC), urged them to pursue peer accountability, saying, “Bad things happen in the dark. Sunlight is the best disinfectant.”

The IAS program binder included the standards for faithful stewardship for the 7 peer accountability groups along with other helpful resources. This tool equipped delegates from the remaining 13 nations to work to enhance trust and transparency among ministries in their respective countries and to consider forming peer accountability groups.

Dan Busby, ECFA president, exhorting the delegates to “stay” and “go”. He passionately urged the delegates from nations with peer accountability groups, saying, “Stay the course!” He also challenged participants whose nations do not have such groups to “Go and do what they can to enhance trust!” In his closing remarks, he added this proclamation: “It is possible that God is allowing us to witness the dawning of the age of global accountability, transparency, and integrity for Christ-centered churches and ministries.”

Some IAS 2017 delegates have already taken action. For example, Rony Madrid of Guatemala gathered church and ministry leaders on July 27, 2017, in Guatemala City to form CONFIABLE (Concilio de Organizaciones No-lucrativas, Financieramente Integras, Auditables, Bíblica y Legalmente Establecidas or “Council of nonprofit organizations, financially integrated, auditable, biblically and legally established”). This marks the first fruits of IAS 2017.

How can you join this global movement? Here are three specific actions you can take to participate.

(1) Pray – I often remark that “God cares more about accountability than we do!” Join me in praying that God will continue to raise up national leaders around the world to champion the faithful financial administration of His work. My calendar reminds me each Saturday to pray for these peer groups and this movement. *Will you join me?*

(2) Network – If your church or ministry works in one of the 7 nations with peer accountability groups (listed above), urge your co-workers in these countries to check out the websites for the organizations in their countries and inquire about becoming an accredited member of that peer accountability group. *Can you spread the word?*

(3) Email – If you have questions or want more information, email me at gary@ecfa.org. I will respond personally. Also, with your permission, I will add you to an email list, a global network of stewards who value accountability. Feel free to let me know of others as well who may be interested in joining this movement. *Who might join with you?*

Why join today? God cares about accountability more than we do because our work with Him has His name on it!