

Accountability in Missions with Gary Hoag

When it comes to fundraising, accountability is everything. In this episode: what accountability is, the importance of the relationship between executive and board, how ECFA and GTP can help with accountability, and more!

Introduction

Narrator: Coming up on today's edition of When Money Goes on Mission, Rob Martin and Dr. Gary Hoag are talking about accountability.

What in the world is it? What's good about it?

And what does it have to do with fundraising and getting more money for your mission.

Rob: I'm here with Dr. Gary Hoag and we are going to discuss just some more interesting well for us this is a lot of fun.

Gary: It is we love it.

Rob: And it may be it may sound like a dry topic but we are going to launch into accountability right now.

Now what is good about accountability? And what does it have to do, what in the world does it have to do with fundraising? And getting more money for your mission?

If you're listening to this broadcast and you're wondering about that.

And whether you're an investor in mission, small or large with your dollars or just interested in what's working and not working, we're gonna talk about accountability and how that plays out.

And some of this may sound intuitive to you, but some of it's not going to be.



How Does Accountability Fit into the Communion of Giving and Receiving?

Rob: And so Gary, when we talk about the communion of giving and receiving, that thing that we're all looking for.

This place of equality at the cross so that there's no underdog. We get, they give, you know all of that: how does accountability fit in to the communion of giving and receiving?

Gary: Well first of all it's great to be back with you and I'm glad that you think accountability is a fun topic cause I think it's a fun topic.

Ultimately, the Apostle Paul would echo, he'd be the third one, cause he would say long before us, each of us has to give an account before God.

And so it's a good topic to talk about because all of us someday will have to give an account.

So it's kinda like preparing for that day. But why do I think it's important in this whole communion of giving and receiving?

Without accountability the whole communion would freeze up to a halt like an engine locking up.

Because if in the communion of giving and receiving, trust is broken because what someone committed to do, or said they would do, and then it comes to light they did not do it, it helps us stay on track and avoid being what causes the whole thing to collapse.

Rob: How does that work?



Accountability = Guardrails

Gary: Well I like to say it this way: accountability is like having guardrails for a road.

So think about a road and maybe on either side of the road is maybe a steep embankment right and so what do they put on that road? They put guardrails up right?

And they put those there to help us avoid having a crisis which could be like fatal. And when we are stewards of organizations for example we need guardrails we need accountability.

And without those guardrails, here's what happens: pastor receives a prison sentence for taking money from a large church.

Ministry raises money for one project spends it on another to the tune of millions. And the media outlets take these stories and they sow seeds of mistrust then all the sudden the whole world cries "we need some accountability."

Well I like to say to avoid all these crises so the communion of giving and receiving continues to happen in a beautiful flourishing way, we need three kinds of guardrails: number one ministry boards need accountability. So they need to have the administrators follow standards of responsible stewardship.

Now [ECFA](#) coined that term 40 years ago, and they said we need to follow these standards to do what's right before God in our administration.

So if you're on the board why do you want accountability? You wanna make sure that the administration between board meetings is following standards of faithfulness.

Now a lot of times people look at that and they say: "well this is just extra work." And the answer is you know what?

You put those guardrails up you're gonna ensure the ministry is gonna flourish long after you for days to come faithfully because you've put structures in place to keep people accountable to remaining faithful.

Rob: You know when I began in this work in 1983, a total novice in international missions and all of the structural things that you have to understand to be able to make useful grants. When I would do an analysis I hope this isn't boring you Gary

Gary: No no it's good.

Rob: By the way, on the guardrails before I do my answer. Please check out our website for further information.

And there is a wonderful seven-minute video there on the website called "Guardrails" by Gary, that takes what he just discussed and he uses it. Get it, download it, use it in your own settings, you'll find it helpful.



The Importance of the Relationship Between the Executive and the Board

Rob: So Gary I started out in this work and quite often it's almost like you're a doctor and they're coming to you and they've got some challenges.

And of course they're looking for money and as I got into coaching, and trying to figure out why were good people, good ministries, and people with a lot of effort, and energy, and calling, why were they struggling with money and other things like that?

And as I would dig in, it wasn't about their techniques, it wasn't about where they were going for money, it might not have even been their fear of fundraising which is very pervasive and understandable when you're brand new how do you overcome that fear and begin to trust God in your fundraising.

I would look and what I would often find, was a **dislocation small or large between the board and the executive.**

A miscommunication and I can go into example, after example of good people, failing to protect the mission, from footholds that Satan can use, that our own human foibles can use.

And so I would start to look at this dynamic between the board and the executive, and I would find these disconnects and I began to understand that if you can bring these things together and get these disconnects ended, I believe fundraising starts with accountability.

And again if you go to our website, or you look in the book [*When Money Goes on Mission*](#), there's a whole section in there on accountability, and how it relates to fundraising at the center of the orbit. Because it attracts donors to you.

It's like God the Holy Spirit works in people, when they can trust. And trust comes from knowing that the executive you're working with is under a structure that holds them accountable but does it in a proper way, so that vision comes from the executive is tested. Because we all need to be tested.

Full disclosure I'm on a board that Gary's on that Gary is the executive director of the organization. Gary has vision, he brings that vision to the board, and we question him, and test him on that vision.

And he learns the human parts and the godly parts of that vision through our testing, sometimes we ask questions that help and sometimes they're already answered.

But what happens is the vision becomes authenticated as best we can ordained in a sense. And at that point, policy begins to develop. And that's the board's roll is to work with the executive and say okay these are the policies that fulfill that vision and this is where it goes.

And now you have this clear chain of authority and understanding all the way down to the proposal that's going out to whoever is giving whether you're asking them for \$25 to feed a child, or \$25,000 to launch a new effort in a new region.



No Board = No Accountability

Gary: Can I give an example of this that connects the communion of giving and receiving, the executive, and the board?

I want you to picture, in my international work as executive director, CEO, president of [Global Trust Partners](#), this international entity launched by [ECFA](#).

One of the biggest things I've found globally, is that the leading hindrance to generous participation the communion of giving and receiving, watch, is that most organizations and I'm finding this in the majority world and I know it's a generalization, but most of 'em don't have a board.

Okay watch if you don't have a board or if the board is just a rubber stamp, you have no what? No accountability.

And if there's no accountability what's gonna happen? You've heard the horror stories and I won't name one nation because I don't wanna put a black eye on one country versus another country cause these sins of corruption happen everywhere.

Rob: Including here.

Gary: That's right. If you don't have a board that is holding the executive accountable, then you are ripe for corruption and you're going to hinder the community of giving and receiving.

So this would be another I'm gonna send you another sample for the website here.

One of the biggest things that I'm sharing with people around the world to whether it's in my work with [Ministry Fundraising Network](#), or with [Global Trust Partners](#) is this: I'm saying to the executive, "do you have a board policy manual?"

And he looks at me and says, "what's that?" and I said, "you know it's only about a dozen pages, but it actually gives you the parameters for a healthy relations with appropriate accountability between the executive director and the board, it outlines everyone's responsibilities, so everyone knows what their roles are."

And when they play their roles guess what happens? It contributes to the flourishing, and the communion of giving and receiving, everybody's confidence and trust grows, more people give and participate, we see flourishing.

And so the "aha" that I'm finding globally Rob and I wanna hear your response to this. Is that if you don't have something like a board policy manual do you really have any structure for your relationship between the board?

Like you may have a board but it's just like rubber stamp. And so the last comment I'll make is, in America, which a lot of people might say, "Oh surely they have a sophisticated board."

I met with an executive just this last week, who said the nonprofit organization is 20 years old and it doesn't even have a board policy manual. And I said "how's it going?"

And he said, "it's really struggling." And so I would say out there tap into resources like getting a board policy manual, so that you can put accountability structures in place which will contribute to the communion of giving and receiving.



What is the ECFA? Why Was it Formed?

Rob: Well let's talk where people can go for this. So why don't you explain briefly what [ECFA](#) is for our listeners just in case they don't know.

And then let's talk a little bit about [Global Trust Partners](#) for our international listeners, who may be looking at their own country and saying, okay how do I build trust between ourselves and the investors in our country that are gonna invest in mission locally and internationally?

And how do I fulfill what Paul teaches in 2 Corinthians, when he talks about taking up this great offer. 2 Corinthians 8:9, he's doing fundraising, he's raising a lot of money to take back to Jerusalem, he spends a year on this, puts his best people on this.

And then there's this statement in 2 Corinthians 8, in which he says "and I'm putting my best people on this so that we can show ourselves approved before you and God." Before man and God.

So right there he sets up the fact that we've got these elders, and our best people on this so that you can trust us, with this offering and that it will go as it we said it will go from us directly to the church in Jerusalem that is struggling that helped birth you.

Gary: Sure well let me unpack that cause I love that you used 2 Corinthians 8 cause that was actually the founding Bible verse that Billy Graham, World Vision and others 40 years ago: 1979.

The context was something like this: television evangelist were raising money for this, and spending it on that instances of corruption went to the highest the attention of the highest people in American government.

So actually as the story goes, a couple senators called Billy Graham and said "look unless you regulate yourself in the charity sector, we're gonna regulate you cause someone needs to hold you accountable cause this nonsense can't happen in our country."

And so they adopted ECFA was formed, [Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability](#) by Billy Graham and other foundation partners like World Vision and others.



EFCA: 7 Standards of Responsible Stewardship

And they came together and said "we as organizations need to follow seven standards of responsible stewardship and we need to hold each other accountable."

And so to have the seal, the [ECFA](#) seal on, its on over 2,400 ministries in America, to have that seal it's gotta be verified annually that you demonstrated compliance with those seven standards.

And the standards link to:

1. That you have a doctrinal statement you're remaining faithful to
2. That you have an independent board
3. That you have audited financial statements by the independent financial auditor
4. You're complying with laws
5. You're avoiding conflicts of interest
6. You have fair compensation
7. You are handling gifts with integrity you're not raising money for this and spending it on that

And so in America, ECFA has grown over 40 years, to 2400+ accredited organizations and through those organizations this year some 27 billion that's billion with a B will flow, now that's confidence because there's built in it's called peer accountability.



How the Global Trust Partners Was Formed

Well the story of [Global Trust Partners](#) actually goes back about five years. It was about five years ago that Dan Busby president of [ECFA](#), got the vision that we've got all these inquiries coming in.

Imagine a phone call Rob coming from South Korea and they said "Dan Busby we would like to be ECFA members." And Dan chuckled and he said, "I can't verify your compliance with Korean laws." And they said "well if we send a delegation will you help us set up an ECFA type organization in our country?"

True story they send a delegation over. When ECFA asked me to moderate the meetings cause I actually had preached at this large church that was a member of the delegation.

And no kidding at that meeting Dan Busby said, "these people are incredibly skilled they have PhDs, CPA degrees, we need to just give them" we called it Rob we called it "we're gonna give them the recipe to frosted flakes."

We gave them all the policy manuals, and everything that ECFA did and you know what they did?

They went over to South Korea, and with some encouragement and help from us, they set up a peer accountability group like ECFA so that in a context where one, watch this, one church had falsely handled money, so it caused the media to question the integrity of every church.

So at the core, they realized, accountability is about all of us if you forget everything else I've said about accountability here this listeners.

Accountability is about all of us working together, to preserve God's honor.

Because when one ministry handles money corruptly what's a watching world say? "Oh well we think maybe all of you are crooks."

And so what happened after helping birth a peer accountability group in South Korea? I had the privilege of helping do it as ECFA International Liaison helping birth peer accountability groups then like ECFA not only in South Korea, but in Philippines, in Australia, in Kenya, in Guatemala, in Egypt, in India.

And so it was after five years, seven new peer accountability groups that ECFA's board met and they this is it was so beautiful as I understand how the meeting went this is accountability before God.

The board prayed and they said "God you are doing something bigger than we ever dreamed what should we do?" And you know what they felt led to do? They needed to let go of it. But let a new organization birth.

And so it was late in 2018, [ECFA](#) filed the papers to launch Global Trust Partners. And this organization I'll conclude about [GTP](#) with this statement.

GTP has this purpose statement: "In obedient service to Jesus Christ, GTP multiplies disciples of faithful administration, and mobilizes peer accountability groups, to increase gospel participation in every nation."

You see going back to the Apostle Paul. Paul's desire was they need to handle the money in every country with integrity, so that everyone would want to participate in God's work.

And so what accountability in every country does, is rally local people to have confidence to participate in Christian mission.



How to Get Started with Accountability

Rob: Okay I'm in a in a country which does not have ECFA. Let's say I'm in a Southeast Asian nation, we've got an emerging church like in Laos let's say.

And the government's starting to look at some of our nonprofit stuff and I hear this broadcast what do I do?

How do I get started? I'm a giver, you know I love to give the mission I'm generous, or I'm a mission leader and or I'm a church guy, what do I do?

Gary: Well first of all I love this because I got that question yesterday from the Czech Republic of all places. I confess Rob I had to look on the map to find it you know like I'd be like okay where's Laos? Where's Czech Republic?

Now here's what's beautiful. Go to gtp.org and I wanna encourage you to send us an inquiry. But here's what's beautiful: you're gonna see that we have regional facilitators in each of these regions.

So if you're in South Asia, you're gonna look and you're gonna say "wow there's a guy named Anand Joshua in my region, that probably understands my regional scenario better than Gary Hoag does."

Rob: Knows our laws.

Gary: That's right understands our laws, our cultural dynamics right. And so here's what you're gonna do I mean and you can email me at gary@gtp.org you can but here's what I'll do then.

I'll connect you with your regional facilitator, and what he'll do is set up a call with ya whether it's a Zoom, or a phone call, and he'll ask you about what's going on and what's your situation.

And this is what's gonna surprise you, you ready? There's probably already people that have reached out to us in your country. Cause when the guy from Czech Republic goes "hey I'm interested" I got to reply back and say, "well guess what there's six others in your country who are interested in this."

You know what he said? He's like "oh my goodness I know two of those people."

And so watch: what people start realizing, is **that God cares more about accountability in these countries than we do.**

And so what GTP is really doing is connecting like-minded people, whom God has raised up to care about it.



What the Steps Look Like

Gary: So first is we connect 'em together. And then what we do is we ask them what are the issues in your context and we just listen.

We just listen. Cause there's really nothing new under the sun, there's similar things happening in other places around the world.

But we just listen and Rob haven't you noticed Rob, before I elaborate on the steps. Haven't you noticed that just listening to people in their crisis is the first way to helping 'em?

Rob: Yes. Cause often it's the first time they get to hear it out loud, and understand its impact on someone else. You have to be a good listener to make that happen.

Gary: Right so we start by listening. And then we suggest to them do you wanna know what people in other countries have done? and they're like "yeah I do." And so we show 'em standards, we show 'em the [Lausanne](#) Standards. We show them standards of different countries.

And you know what they tend to resonate with standards of countries that are closer to them you know and they read 'em. And then so connect 'em to standards and we connect 'em to people.

And then we've come to realize that we can't do the hard work of claiming what standards should look like in their country for them we can't do it. And what we say is you need to pull together and this is the list I always say.

You need to pull together about 20 to 40 pastors, ministry administrators, accountants, and attorneys. And they always laugh on the accountants and attorneys and I'm like look if you don't have those technical experts in the room, you're not going to map out beautiful standards.

But if you don't have the pastors and ministry administrators in the room, you're not going to map out standards that are gonna be applied by churches and ministries in your country.

So what ends up happening is if they all are willing to connect with these people, connect with these standards, and then start to chip away and map out what they think might work in their country, that's when [GTP](#) pays a visit.

We come meet with that group we call it a Coalition of the Willing. We meet with them and then that's when the sparks start flying.

I share from scripture from the scripture you mentioned from Paul's Corinthian correspondence in 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Romans. I show them that Paul wanted credentialed people handling money, financial control, standards, even a seal affixed to gifts Romans 15:28.

Why? So that people would be inspired to participate locally in every nation with God's global mission.

Gary: So whether you're listening in Laos, or your listening Czech Republic, reach out to us cause we just wanna connect you with our regional facilitators, connect you with each other, connect you as standards and maybe even come in and do a training we call Empowerment Journey.

Because we wanna show you and your colleagues, you may be the Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther that God has raised up to deliver your people from bribery, corruption, captivity, to these difficult situations that are real, oppressive, and have kept the church in captivity too long.

You could be God's person to set your people free.



Out of Dependency to Discipleship

Rob: A [recent Lausanne paper](#), defined corruption in the global setting at more than 50 billion dollars.

And that cuts into everything and so if you're an investor in mission listening to this or considering being an investor in mission, don't stop. Just ask good questions of who you're giving to.

Including even if it's a small gift that you think well you know I just wanna show my appreciation or this is as much as I can give. Bless you, because the small giver is the strength of all missions.

And what we're looking at here when we talk about accountability, is encouraging the small giver in a nation that doesn't know how to trust yet the missions that are around them because the tradition isn't there yet.

And they're building their trust in that mission that's coming to them to work with the street kids or whatever or evangelization in their settings.

And what we need to see, and we'll be discussing this at a later program when we've got a little better definition to it cause we mentioned this in the last show that we're struggling with giving a real good definition to sustained interdependence which is grabbing.

I just found out that it's part of the five-year plan now of the [Lausanne Movement](#) so we really do have to get this defined Gary and we'll do that in another broadcast not this one.

Because my boss wants to weigh in on it as well before we go officially with the term since it was launched in my book, but this idea that we can help develop boards and accountability structures that encourage local giving and take us out of dependency to discipleship that's what we're talking about here.

That's the real secret sauce. That's the frosted flakes if you like to go off the reservation and eat sugared cereals every once in a while. That's what we're talking about.

That's why we're excited this isn't a bunch of well it is a bunch of accountants and works in one sense but in another sense this is a very real way of the gospel spreading and strengthening and the organization's being strengthened.



The Solution: Become People of Prayer

Gary: I wanna give one final word. When I took this role CEO you know of [GTP](#). I cried, then I fasted and prayed, for actually two days a week for a couple months.

And what I came out of it was that God's church it was the Lausanne Article too was huge for me. It was called ["Do We Care About Corruption"](#) I said yes I care.

Rob: It'll be on our website.

Gary: And I read that article and what I came to grips with is that the only way God's people got out of captivity in the Old Testament wasn't brilliant strategies, wasn't big gift of money.

It was ordinary people named Ezra the school teacher, Esther the orphan girl, and a house slave cut bare by the name of Nehemiah who were willing to pray, and confess, and fast.

And when they did that, God worked powerfully and then I studied the prophets during the captivity narrative and guess what I found? They called God's people to be people of prayer, and fasting, and confession.

And so if you're sitting you're feeling all alone, don't just reach out to GTP cause we're not the saviors. **The solution is prayer, fasting, and confession**, and reach out to us and we'll join you in that posture, and connect you with others in your region.

Rob: Thank you Gary.