

FRANKLIN GRAHAM
P.O. Box 3000, Boone, N.C. 28607

July 2, 2025

Mr. Michael Martin, President
ECFA
440 West Jubal Early Drive, Suite 100
Winchester, Virginia 22601

Dear Michael,

After much internal consideration, and in light of our conviction that ECFA has inappropriately ventured outside its founding mission, purpose, and practice, we have decided not to renew ECFA memberships for Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). We make this decision with no ill will toward you or anyone affiliated with ECFA, but with a firm belief and peace that this is the right position for our organizations to now take.

We will continue to adhere to the highest standards of financial accountability and to report effectively, timely, and transparently to donors as we seek to be good stewards of all God has entrusted to us.

When you recently wrote to ask me for a written contribution to an updated edition of ECFA's history book, you correctly recounted my father's role in the formation of ECFA over 45 years ago. As the CEO of two large ministries and a donor to these and other Christian organizations, I have long been a proponent of ECFA's efforts to encourage and monitor financial accountability of nonprofit ministries, and have remained an advocate for ECFA's Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship.

Yet, I, along with a consensus of the Boards of Samaritan's Purse and the BGEA, have strong objections and concerns, both in principle and practice, to ECFA's recently approved new standard, "Excellence in Leader Care," which puts ECFA into the role of trying to be the moral police of the evangelical world. While we support ECFA encouraging leader care within member organizations, we do not support ECFA instituting a new standard in this area, for reasons stated in this letter.

At first glance, who could object to efforts to support and care for ministry leaders? However, a deeper review of the new standard poses grave concerns about the appropriateness of ECFA addressing matters clearly outside its founding mission, scope, and expertise. As you know, ECFA was founded with a narrow purpose of enhancing *financial* integrity, and has largely maintained that focus for over four decades.

The Leader Care standard also deals with personal spiritual maturity and behavior, matters clearly outside the scope of ECFA's expertise. While ECFA has proven to have expertise in matters of financial practices of nonprofit organizations, it does not offer its members expertise in developing "care plans" for leaders. Certainly, there are clear standards governing financial accounting, but what are the generally accepted principles for leader care?

- Should a leader attend church weekly? More? Less?
- Should a leader spend 30 minutes a day in Scripture reading and prayer? An hour? Ten minutes?
- Should a leader take two weeks of vacation per year? What about four weeks, or six?
- What are the "appropriate intervals" for a board to offer the leader "opportunities for extended personal rest and spiritual growth"? Once a year? Twice? Quarterly?
- How many "supportive personal relationships with pastors or trusted spiritual leaders outside the organization" should the senior leader maintain? Two? Five? A dozen?
- Should a leader abstain from alcohol, or consume it in moderation?
- Should a Christian leader have meals alone with a person of the opposite sex? What about riding in a car alone together?

Without clear, agreed upon standards and guidelines, a new standard is essentially meaningless window dressing. The "Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship" that have been at the core of ECFA's existence are black and white, not subject to interpretation—an organization either meets them or it doesn't. There is no ambiguity about compliance. That simply is not the case with the new standard on Leader Care taking effect January 1, 2027.

We are also concerned that ECFA, after instituting its new Leader Care standard, could, in future years, add other standards outside the scope of financial accountability. What's to stop a future ECFA president and/or board from adopting standards attempting to monitor or regulate a leader's social media posting habits? Or whether a leader travels with his or her spouse frequently enough to protect their marriage? Might ECFA enact a standard addressing an organization's efforts to protect the environment? Or a standard for enacting so-called DEI policies?

Finally, this Leader Care standard seems to be a knee-jerk reaction aimed at preventing the kind of high-profile moral failures the world has witnessed in recent years in our evangelical ranks. However, there is a common denominator in all these cases that the new Leader Care standard does not address and certainly cannot prevent—*lying*. Virtually every leader who has fallen morally (and particularly by sexual sin) had become good at

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lying—lying to a spouse, family members, staff, board members, accountability partners, pastors, and so on. If a leader is living in sin and lying to the spouse about it, lying to board members about the time they are spending in the Word each day will be easy. This is ultimately a sin problem, with its root in the human heart, which only God can fix—not ECFA, even with a mountain of standards.

I believe we have presented our concerns about this new direction for ECFA in a Biblical way, addressing them directly to you and others on the ECFA Board over the past three years. We do not intend to make a public issue of our non-renewal and if asked, would merely provide the rationale offered in this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Franklin Graham', written over a horizontal line.

Franklin Graham, Chairman, President, and CEO
Samaritan's Purse
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

cc: ECFA Board of Directors