

Moral Lives Matter

Global Integrity for Global Citizens

Reflections and Resources for the Church-Mission Community

The only thing necessary for corruption to flourish is to do nothing about it—or to do some non-efficacious and non-resolute “thing” and then move on, often with our consciences placated and our livelihoods protected.

Kelly and Michele O'Donnell, Loving Truth and Peace:

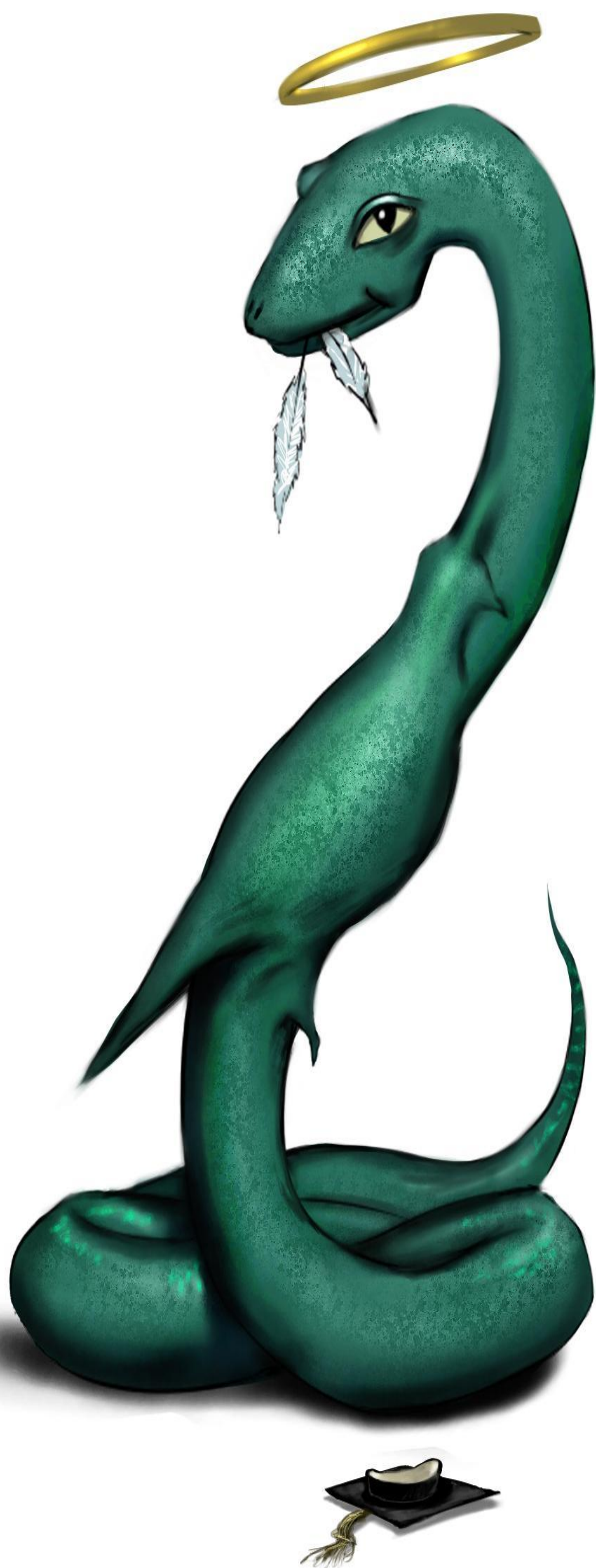
[A Case Study of Family Resilience in Dealing with Mission/Aid Corruption](#) (2013)

Integrity is moral wholeness/goodness—living consistently according to our highest values.

Corruption is moral rottenness: the distortion, perversion, and deterioration of moral wholeness/goodness which deceives, exploits, and harms people and the planet.

Global integrity is living consistently in moral wholeness at all levels--individual, interpersonal, institutional, international; across sectors/settings; local through global; systemic/structural.

How can we leverage our skills, character strengths, and relationships locally through globally in order to a) promote/develop integrity and b) prevent/confront corruption in all its forms?



**Wise doves and innocent serpents?
Truth without grace may be brutal
but grace without truth can be lethal.**

What a mess!

A respected international organization is losing lots of its staff. Folks are confused and disillusioned. Some say the departing staff are insubordinate and not a good fit. Others say there are serious organizational problems.

Friends try to stay neutral and are baffled. The governing board wants to maintain the organization's public image, but is also concerned about what is happening

There are no written policies for grievances, dismissal, or discipline. No safe forums exist to share personal and work-related concerns. No exit interviews are done. No internal or independent reviews happen.

A few well-meaning folks plead for forgiveness and reconciliation. But no one seems capable or willing to do anything. And over the next several months, the toxins continue to take their toll, as unresolved relational discord, accusations, and gossip, spread maliciously.

Eventually the real issue comes out: lots of money is missing. Two whistleblowers have been dismissed. Nonetheless, staff and donors are asked to be loyal and support “the proven integrity and contributions of the hard-working leaders in the face of this spiritual attack.”

What a mess!

Read the full article:

[Wise Doves and Innocent Serpents?](#)



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MCA is based in Geneva and USA. We work internationally and across sectors to support the wellbeing of staff and their organizations, global mental health, and integrity.

Kelly O'Donnell, PsyD & Michele Lewis O'Donnell, PsyD

“Sunday he prayed for me—Monday he preyed on me.”



**Corruption deceives.
Including “Christian” corruption.
It’s all an intentional, dangerous illusion.**

Major fraud and other forms of corruption are a fact of life. No one is immune to being duped and disabled by corrupt people whose deviant end game is to exploit others for their own advantage. This includes people and organizations in the faith-based community and other “affinity groups” where mutual trust abounds.

An estimated 53 billion US dollars are stolen around the world through “ecclesiastical crime.” This figure is more than the estimated \$47 billion US dollars of income for “global foreign missions!” (Zurlo *et al.*, *International Bulletin of Mission Research* January 2020, p.18).

Global Integrity Day, 9 June 2020: Moral Lives Matter

Be the people we need—Build the world we need.

Be global citizens: our common sense of belonging, identity, mutual responsibility as humans.

Five Tactics of Deception

Catalysts for Corruption—Local through Global

1. Deny. The first tactic of deception is to conceal itself. "Don't ask about problems, don't tell about problems" is a pervasive, core, unwritten rule. In short, distort and deny reality.

2. Downplay. A second tactic of deception is getting folks to minimize it by downplaying its negative impact, stating that it is probably “normal.” Relational unity/conformity takes precedence over truth/real relationships

Distract. A third tactic of deception is to distract from the real issues, “feign pain” and get sympathy; or admit that something is “not exactly right” and refer to problems as being largely a matter of having different perspectives/preferences--a need to agree to disagree. There is little commitment to acknowledge real issues.

Discredit. A fourth tactic of deception is to discredit those who point it out, no matter how sensitively they try to do so. An atmosphere of fear and subtle intimidation are usually part of dysfunctional/authoritarian systems. Fear of reprisal prevents people from speaking up and advocating for healthy change.

Destroy. If none of the above are effective then demolish people’s reputations, work contributions, relationships, and wellbeing by half-truths, spin, lies, rumors, threats, harassment, false accusations, and dismissals. Cover up and do all that is possible to maintain secrecy, control, positions of influence, respect, the status quo, and revenue streams. This fifth tactic of dysfunction stealthily poisons relationships and networks.



Global Integrity

[Summons for a Global Integrity Movement](#)

Lausanne Global Analysis (March 2018)

[Following Jesus Globally](#)

Lausanne Global Analysis (January 2020)

See all our [Global Integrity Resources](#).



Christian Scripture warns of the designs and dangers of deviant people. They are not just “out there” somewhere but in our midst and even part of us. (NASB, *The Message*)

Ravenous wolves.

(Matthew 7:15)

*

False christs. Anti-christs.

(Matthew 24:24; I John 2:18)

*

Evil men. Imposters. Deceivers.

(2 Timothy 3:13)

*

Frauds. Snakes. Reptilian sneaks.

(Matthew 23: 29,33)

*

Professional liars.

Deceitful/crooked workers.

(I Timothy 4:2; 2 Corinthians 11:13)

*

False brethren.

So-called brother—wicked man.

(Galatians 2:4; I Corinthians 5:11-13)

*

False prophets. False apostles.

False teachers.

(Matthew 7:15; Matthew 24:1,24; 2

Corinthians 11:13; 2 Peter 2:1)

*

Deceived hypocritical liars

with seared consciences and depraved minds.

(I Timothy 4:2; 2 Timothy 3:8)

*

Hidden reefs, waterless clouds,

fruitless trees, wild waves,

wandering stars.

(Jude 12-13)

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Don't be naïve. (Matthew 10:1)

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Don't be naïve. (Mark 14:37)

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Don't be naïve. (2 Timothy 3:1)

Learn about Integrity and Corruption

Education, Advocacy, Research, Practice

Leaders in the **Church-Mission Community** can play key roles in educating themselves and the public about the dynamics of both integrity and corruption.

• What can foster corruption? Our propensities to self-justify, bend the “rules,” slant the “facts,” and overall lack of “moral humility” (recognizing our need for moral development). Cognitive dissonance, confirmation bias, selective perception, bystander effect, group think, affinity group trust, greed, fatigued empathy, ethical sub-standards, leadership hubris, and poverty. (e.g., Tavis & Aronson, 2007; Bennis *et al.*, 2007)

• Some therapeutic issues for recovering from corruption: shame, guilt, humiliation; relational distrust, depression, and anger; forgiveness and revenge; and existential doubts and confusion. The issues overlap with other types of abuse and trauma.

• Promote the [Gyeongju Action Plan on Education for Global Citizenship](#) (UN, 2016) to encourage the “integrated development of the whole person emotionally, ethically, intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually; imbued with an understanding of our roles, rights and responsibilities for the common good in service to humanity and the advancement of a culture of peace, non-violence, freedom, justice, and equality; ...”

• Review [contributions in Positive Psychology](#), emphasizing character strengths/ virtue.

• Support [Global Integrity Day](#) (9 June) and [International Anti-Corruption Day](#) (9 Dec.). **And join with others as part of relevant projects, organizations, and networks!**

Tools to Foster Integrity and Fight Corruption *Developing Transparency and Accountability*

1. Yourself. Examine your transparency-accountability practices. How do you practice self-reflection and self-evaluation. List the main values that you want to guide your life.

2. Colleagues. Discuss this topic with colleagues. How are you accountable with one another? Identify personal, group, and organizational vulnerabilities and safeguards for ethical action.

3. Managers. Managers manage, model, and mentor. They can consider how they express moral values in the work place, especially reflecting on how peoples’ private morality can differ from their workplace morality.

4. Leaders. Leaders model/mentor transparency-accountability. Admit mistakes. Welcome feedback. Encourage colleagues to share difficult information with you. Know and review relevant good practice codes.

5. Ethos. Cultivate an organizational “culture of integrity.” Intentionally weave transparency and accountability into “how we do things:” our thinking, strategies, policies, and procedures. Normalize and reward it.



Developing Resilient Virtue

At times our work/life may require us to deal with the causes and consequences of corruption. Big or small matters, no one likes to do this. Our reticence to tackle tough stuff is even more apparent when it is risky.

Neither risk nor fear are the main criteria to determine “ethical” action. ‘Do not fear intimidation, discrediting, loss of livelihood, or even loss of life. **Your task is to be true, not popular.** I will care for you.’ (MT 10/LK 6)

Governments and civil society, including the church, are responsible to prevent and confront evil. Corruption’s deception (collusion), distortions (cover-ups), and avoidance (cowardice) resolutely resist being exposed.

The world will not be any more safe—or virtuous—until people with resilient virtue act to make it so.

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