

## Fraud in the Workplace Lasts 18 Months Before Detected (This includes church!)

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The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) publishes a biannual report regarding embezzlement committed by employees in the workplace. It recently released its 2016 report. The information, gleaned from 2,400 cases submitted by certified fraud examiners, is eye-popping. Consider:

- The median loss for all cases was \$150,000;
- The median duration of fraud was 18 months; and,
- In 95 percent of cases, the perpetrator attempted to conceal activities, usually by creating and altering physical documents.

But one finding—one that gives me hope—is this: one policy consistently leads to the detection of fraudulent activity by employees (and it outpaces the next-closest detection method by a two-to-one margin).

What is it? A whistleblower policy.

Such a policy, and the protocol to support it, can be created by any church that wishes to foster a culture of transparency. Just knowing that someone may be watching, and has an easy way to report something suspicious, may deter many from even attempting a fraudulent act in the first place.

A recent study by ECFA, though, suggests not many churches have this policy. If your church doesn't, then don't miss this recent [Feature Article](#) in *Church Finance Today*. It makes the case for a whistleblower policy and it provides some help for creating one.