

High Jacking a Congregation

This chapter taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg © 1998-2006

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I would like to take a moment here and describe what I see as another problem in religion today. I see pastors that are “high jacking” whole congregations. They are taking over whole churches and setting themselves up, as absolute rulers of the congregation, just like the Old Testament high priest. To question their doctrine or authority is considered the same as questioning the authority and Word of God. How do they do this? It is basically very simply done. I have purposefully stayed out of organized church polity and focused on exhorting and serving other believers because of my personal relationship with Jesus, but I see abuses coming because many people do not understand the true role of a pastor. Let me explain.

If I were going to “highjack” a local congregation, the first thing that I would do is gradually change the reference term used for the local congregation. Example: I would start referring to **Green Pastures Baptist** as **Franklin Whittenburg Ministries**.

By making this simple reference, I take a whole congregation that is ministering to the community and make it “MY” ministry to the community, but now I have the congregation helping and supporting me and my vision for ministry. In effect I set myself up as the “head” of the congregation instead of Jesus Christ. I can then operate it like a business to win souls; only now I become the president of the company, the “One Set Man”. Since Green Pastures Baptist is now Franklin Whittenburg Ministries, I can wipe out any “authority” of the deacons or elders to sit in oversight. What right do the deacons have to tell me what to do or preach; after all, it’s now MY ministry? Just like in any business, what employee has the right to question how the president of a company runs his business? In like manner, no one in the congregation is allowed to question the pastor on his doctrine. The only recourse a member of that congregation has is to submit or leave. Hearin lays a trap. If they do not submit to the authority and question the pastor’s doctrine, then they are usually accused of having the spirit of rebellion, which the Bible says is the same as witchcraft. If they try and stay and correct it they are accused of “sowing discord among the brethren”. When they leave the congregation, then they are told they are out from under “the covering” and protection from God. If you actually believe that that local congregation or ministry is your “covering” then I can see where the thought of leaving could cause great emotional distress.