

5 Scary Dangers of the Church Cartel

The pastor did not see it coming.

Sure, there were some hints and signs, but nothing to prepare him for the meeting on Saturday with the personnel committee.

He was told he needed to resign. There was no explanation given. He had only been given positive reviews to this point. Some of the people on the personnel committee had been his supporters and friends.

He was shocked.

The pastor was leading change in the church. The church was growing and vibrant. But a couple of weak staff members didn't like the direction and expected accountability. They teamed with the known church bully and went before the personnel committee. They presented their perspectives.

The pastor never was asked his perspective. He could have fought the weak personnel committee and likely won. But he didn't want to tear apart a church he loved.

He resigned.

For the sake of the church he loved, he resigned.

He was yet another victim of the church cartel.

A church cartel is an alliance of bullies, bully-followers, carnal Christians and even non-Christians in the church. Its ultimate goal is to get its way. It feeds off selfish power.

We don't like to talk about church cartels. After all, it's not the Christian thing to do. But they exist in too many churches. And if they are not exposed, they will continue to

wreak havoc.

Here are five of the very dangerous realities of the church cartel:

1. **When a cartel is allowed power, the church is already unhealthy.** The cartel is, by its definition, self-centered and power-driven. A church is already very sick if members remain silent and do not confront this evil directly.
2. **A church cartel leaves carnages of wounded and dying people.** If you have any doubts about this danger, please see my post on "Autopsy of a Deceased Pastor." See the comments. See the pain and questions and defeat the cartel leaves behind.
3. **Church cartels drive away healthy leaders.** Some of these leaders are driven away by the cartel. Others leave on their own accord because they want to be in a joyous and healthy church. Their departure exacerbates the problems in these churches.
4. **Church cartels cause church leaders to work from a posture of fear.** Instead of moving forward in faith, church leaders often spend more time worrying about how their decisions will impact the cartel. These leaders know the cartel will come after them if they go contrary to the carnal group's wishes.
5. **We are told in Scripture to manifest the fruit of the Spirit; the church cartel causes the church to do just the opposite.** Galatians 5:22-23 is clear about the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control. Church cartels bring hate, discord, anxiety, impatience, evil, fear, brutality and chaos.

Churches that have cartels usually know they are present. They know who the bully is. They know who the bully followers are. They see them. They hear them. And they often fear them.

Courageous leaders must confront and stop church cartels. If no one is willing, the church is already on a path toward decline and death. {eo}

Thom S. Rainer is the president of LifeWay Christian Resources.

This article originally appeared at .