

Ex-church minister details horrific abuse in explosive new book *Pigs in the Pulpit*

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There is a dirty little secret in the church world today. What is truly perplexing, while literally millions of well-meaning and trusting believers and church members have been devastated by its aftermath, *no one really wants to talk about it.*

A compelling and powerful new book entitled *Pigs in the Pulpit* does talk about it, and exposes pastors and other church leaders who spiritually violate the trust placed in them by their vulnerable followers.

What these “leaders” are guilty of is *spiritual abuse of authority*...and it is rampant in epidemic proportions among Bible-believing Christians. It is often concealed and subtly sold to honorable people under other, more palatable terms such as, “shepherding,” “standing under authority,” “submission to leadership” and many other catchphrases.

For almost seventeen years, J. Michael Wittman, author of *Pigs in the Pulpit*, his wife and children were part of a fundamentalist Christian church. Slowly over time, they were shocked to realize that what they were supporting was controlling and spiritually abusive.

"It's an oxymoron," says Wittman, "The terms 'spiritual' and 'abuse' certainly seem at odds with one another. But in the religious system and Christian church world today, there are countless trusting, hurting members of the Body of Christ who have been deceived and victimized by systematically abusive church leaders and organizations."

In their own lives, including a time when they were appointed and served as assistant pastors of a small church in Pennsylvania, the Wittmans were told who to befriend, where to live and work, what cars to drive and clothing to wear, when to donate money, how much money to give and who to give it to...the list went on and on. Any questioning of “the leadership” or deviation from the “rules of membership,” were dealt with brutally and without appeal.

When they finally stood up and objected to the harsh treatment and rigid, controlling environment they and others were experiencing, their lives became a terrifying ordeal and living hell. The Wittmans’ opposition to the manipulative system, and attempt to escape the church leader's influence and control, ultimately turned into a confrontation that included threats against their health and safety.

"I, for one, have been sickened by church scandals and horrific stories of child abuse, sexual immorality and even murder in the headlines, all 'in the name of God.' Before I started writing *Pigs in the Pulpit*, I asked myself, 'How could intelligent seekers of spiritual truth allow such things to happen to them?' I strongly feel, through my story, that some long-awaited answers will be brought to light.

"We've all seen the extreme examples of Jim Jones and the People's Temple in Guyana; David Koresh and the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas; Tony Alamo and more, and said to ourselves, 'That could never happen to us.'

"Then along comes another Jimmy Swaggart, Jim Bakker or Ted Haggard, who publicly fall from grace, and we realize that the lies, manipulation and deceit are more subtle and run far deeper than we've imagined.

"It is my heart's desire to see the 'spiritual Bernie Madoff' type of church leaders, who damage, deceive and rip-off believers, exposed and replaced by loving, nurturing servants who truly want to be Christ-like examples to God's people.

"Through this book, I attempt to provide some clarity to the abused, suffering and confused Christian convert, who asks, 'How could this happen to me?' and 'Does Jesus still love me?' I want them to know that what they've endured wasn't their fault, and they can have a fulfilling and vibrant life with God, outside the small and narrow confines of the religious system."

REVIEW – "There is no greater abuse of trust than those who use the illusion of spiritual leadership to manipulate people. J. Michael Wittman points a powerful and incisive light into this dark underbelly of our religious landscape, and offers hope and healing to its victims."

Wayne Jacobsen

Collaborator & Publisher of the New York Times Bestseller *The Shack*

Author, *So You Don't Want To Go To Church Anymore*

PURCHASE THE BOOK – Written for Christians who have been manipulated in a church, group or home fellowship setting, *Pigs in the Pulpit* provides a "road map out" for victims. It shows, step-by-step, how people can get hooked into a fraudulent and deceptive system, the impact of controlling leadership, and how the abused follower of Jesus Christ can find peace and recovery.

Pigs in the Pulpit is available as a paperback through www.Amazon.com and their associated retailers. It is also available as an e-book (Adobe Acrobat PDF format) download through the author's website at www.pigsinthepulpit.com.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR – J. Michael Wittman has served church and home fellowships across the country as a teacher and pastor, with over 25 years experience behind the pulpit and behind the scenes. He is founder of Honest Faith Ministries.

His life experiences have prepared him to not only speak authoritatively on the topic of spiritual abuse, but to make an immediate, positive impact in the lives of victims seeking answers. A dynamic public speaker, he has witnessed to audiences both large and small, ministering the Gospel in churches, home groups, maximum-security prisons and other institutions.

He has been married almost 25 years to his best friend Laura, and they have three children: Jacob, Leslie and Chloe. They reside and work in north central Pennsylvania.

J. Michael Wittman is available for public speaking events. These include seminars on Christian topics of spiritual abuse of authority, developing skills of discernment, financial giving, the power and effects of secular music and the Kingdom of God.

He is also available for radio and television interviews.

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