



THE PASTOR'S PEN

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“Perfect” Pastor Found to be Dead

I came across this story on the internet (Larknews.com) and after reading it, I knew that I had to pass it along. In this article is a lesson and a direction for any congregation that is having issues or concerns with their current situations and no, it isn't that you need to have a dead pastor. Read the story below and see what lessons you can find for growing a happy, prosperous congregation.

BOZEMAN, Mont. — An associate pastor and church sound man pulled a Weekend-At-Bernie's-style scheme, keeping their church's senior pastor in the pulpit six weeks after his unexpected death.

“I thought he was going through a personal renewal which mellowed him,” says one member after learning that pastor Lenny Dillon had been dead since July.

Dillon, 57, died of a stroke while vacationing with his wife in Canada. She went along with the scheme because she couldn't bear to let her husband go.

It “comforted me to see him preaching, even though I knew he was dead,” she says.

To the trio's amazement, the church flourished. Rancorous disagreements stopped. People felt ministered to and cared for.

“He seemed so happy all of a sudden,” says one woman. “That peace spread through the congregation.”

Barry and Linda Cox attended several counseling sessions with the dead pastor and said it vastly improved their marriage.

“He was such a good listener,” she says.

Embalmed and dressed in a three-piece suit, Dillon was propped against the pulpit every Sunday. The associate stitched sermons together from past sermon tapes. The sound man turned down the lights. After service the associate and sound man helped Dillon shake hands in the foyer. They put sunglasses on Dillon and made up a story about botched laser eye surgery.

Though the ruse has ended, some people in the church want the corpse back.

“Best two months this church has ever had,” said one man.

So what do you think was the secret of the “Best two months this church every had” really is? The one thing that was truly different after the pastor had died was the cooperation of the people in the congregation to make things work.

Before the pastor's death, apparently, there had been disagreements and everyone acting and doing things the way they thought it should be done. It also sounds like the pastor's guidance was being set aside as well which, no doubt, was causing him a lot of frustration. Perhaps that friction helped to bring on the stroke that killed him.

The lessons in this article for us here at First Christian are that for us to have a healthy, happy, thriving congregation, four things must take place. First, we all need to work together. Second, everyone has to do their part. Third, it does not matter who is getting the credit for what takes place. Lastly, we need to listen to each other more and fuss with each other a lot less. It is not the pastor that builds or makes the church, it is the people living and working in the congregation that make the difference. What difference are you making in our congregation by your actions?

Sitting back quietly for a moment or two,

James