

# DREAMLAND TV

## Church Council

Sometimes Pastor Anderson felt a little overwhelmed at the rapid passage of time. It only seemed like yesterday that he stepped into the pulpit for his last sermon. Yet Thursday evening had rolled around once again, and so he entered the inner sanctum of his den to prepare for the upcoming Sunday. Sitting in his comfortable office chair, he pulled up to the desk and opened the Bible. After late service, the congregation would elect a new slate of officers and committee members in the traditional potluck voter's meeting, so he thought perhaps something on the individual gifts and talents given to us would be a suitable sermon topic.

“Let's see,” said the reverend. “Perhaps something from Paul. Yes, Ephesians 4. 11 to, ah ... 16.” He continued to read aloud, “And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of

the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint ...”

Pastor Anderson did not finish reading the passage because he was, understandably, exhausted from the day. He laid his head down on his desk and fell into a deep slumber. What follows is all that Pastor Anderson could remember of a midnight excursion into the incomprehensible world of dreams.

“Good evening, ladies and gentlemen,” said Sam Slumber, in a hushed tone. “I’m reporting to you for Dreamland TV Network tonight. We’re interrupting your sleep for a special broadcast from the council chamber of St. Peter Church. We join the council now, already in progress.”

“Thank you for the reading of the minutes of last month’s meeting, Miss Rogers,” said Elmo, the chairman of the council meeting and a goofy-looking character wearing a tall green hat with floppy

black ears. “I think we’re ready for our committee reports ...”

Before Elmo could finish his sentence, Ted, the macho-looking Hardware Man, burst into the meeting and apologized, “I’m sorry I’m late, guys. The church just got that new riding lawn mower, and I had to make a few adjustments. It only had a puny twelve horse engine on it, but fortunately, I had a spare fifty horse Harley engine at home. Man, you can flat out mow some grass with that sucker now.”

Entering the council chamber behind the Trustees chairman, a deputy sheriff interrupted the meeting, “Excuse me. I need to speak with the person who was just operating that cool mower with the Harley engine.”

Before turning around, Ted proudly exclaimed, “All right, it’s about time someone recognized what I do around here.”

“Are you the operator of that souped up mower, sir?” asked the deputy.

After turning around, Ted answered a little less proudly, “That, ah ... would be me.”

“I got you doing forty in a five mile per hour mowing zone. I’ll need to see some ID, sir ... Thank you, sir. Just sign here. Have a good day.”

Slapping the ticket to his forehead, the Trustees chairman motioned for Elmo to continue with the meeting.

“Uh, Board of Elders, do you have your report?” the goofy-looking chairman asked.

“Yes, Mr. Chairman,” answered Vinnie, the Board of Elders representative. “On behalf of myself and my ... uh, associates, Sal, Bruno, and Vito, we would like to report that we made thirty-four calls on delinquent members of the congregation last quarter. It pleases me to no end to say that ever since they got out of the hospital, all thirty-four members have been very faithful in their attendance. Our goal for the upcoming months will involve a rather intense program for bringing those who have fallen behind in their pledges up to a level that, shall we say, more closely matches our needs. We don’t expect any, shall we say, opposition to our program.”

“Uh, thank you, Vinnie, for that encouraging news,” said Elmo. “Outreach, I believe you are next.”

“Yee-hah,” exclaimed Calamity, as she twirled the lasso over her head. “The Board of Outreach would like to report that we brought in fifty new ... excuse me one minute.” With lasso in hand, Calamity ran out the council chamber door onto the street bordering the church. Two minutes later she returned with a young man roped and tied in the finest of knots. “As I was saying, The Board of Outreach would like to report that we brought in fifty new member prospects last quarter. Unfortunately, we have one minor technical problem with our program we haven’t been able to solve yet.”

“And what would that be, Madam Outreach Chairwoman?” inquired Elmo.

“Once we untie the rope, the member prospect leaves,” replied Calamity. Pointing to the young man running out of the council chamber, she adds, “See, just like that one.”

“Perhaps Vinnie could give you some advice on their technique,” offered Elmo.

“We’d be happy to enlighten the members of the Outreach Committee on any tactical aspects required,” commented Vinnie.

“Thanks, Vinnie, but when you really get down to it, we can only bring them in,” said

Calamity. “It’s up to Pastor Anderson to keep ‘em here.”

“Uh, thank you, Calamity. Fellowship, you’re next ... Fellowship ... Fellowship.”

“Hey, genius,” yelled the chairman of the Board of Education, as he kicked Fellowship’s chair. “You’re up, Rip Van Winkle.”

“Make mine a double,” said the groggy Fellowship representative.

“Your report, sir,” said Elmo. “We need the report from the Board of Fellowship.”

“Yes,” replied Randolph P. Farnsworth, the chairman of the Board of Fellowship.

“Well,” pleaded Elmo. “What do you have to report?”

“Oh, my report. Yes, of course ... oh, here it is. Very good. We would like to report that we held our annual dinner dance last month.”

“And how many attended the event?” asked Elmo.

“Including the band?” asked Randolph.

“Yes.”

“We had two,” answered Randolph.

“Two hundred,” said Elmo. “That’s pretty good.”

“Uh, no, just two.”

“Well, how many were in the band?” inquired Elmo.

“Two.”

“What plans do you have to increase attendance next year?” asked the meeting chairman.

“We’re going to hire a larger band,” stated Randolph, proudly.

“Sounds reasonable,” declared Elmo. “Uh, thank you. Education, I believe that brings us to you.”

“Yeah, man,” said Rocky, the leather-clad chairman of the Board of Education. “The Board of Education is pleased to report that the entire Sunday School felt greatly rewarded by the field trip we took to Daytona last week.”

“Uh, I’ve had several concerned parents comment on the timing, it being Bike Week and all,” said Elmo.

“Man, you know that same thought struck me when we got there. All I can tell you, man, is God works in mysterious ways sometimes.”

“Uh, yes,” said Elmo. “Mr. Chairman, I’ve had several parents question the apparent lack of actual Bible study going on during the Sunday School hour.”

“Man, there you go with that again. People are always on my case about Bible study. Look, I tell you what, if we take a book of the Bible and devote an entire year to intense study of it, will that get you off my back?”

“That seems reasonable,” answered Elmo. “What book did you have in mind?”

“Man, the only way to go is Obadiah.”

“Yes ... ss,” continued Elmo. “Uh, Stewardship, are you ready?”

“Yes, sir,” answered Lenny. “Stewardship would like to report, uh, excuse me one minute while I get this phone call. Hello. Envelope 43?” Pulling out a well-worn notebook, Lenny looked up envelope 43 and replied, “Okay, #43 is 10 to 1 to stay at the same rate or less than last year. Uh, huh. I gotta tell ya, their third teenager just got his driver’s license and the wife just got laid off from her job. You want a hundred on them going up this year? Got ya covered, babe.”



“You were saying about the stewardship program this year?” asked Elmo.

“Oh, yeah. We want to say that, uh, excuse me while I get this call. Hello. #84?” Looking up #84, Lenny then said, “Okay, #84 is 2 to 1 to go up this year. Yeah, sure. Well, you know their last kid graduated from college and Jim just got a big promotion. Fifty to stay the same? ... Got ya covered, babe.”

“Uh, Lenny, uh, there have been some rumors that the District may not approve of this stewardship program,” stated Elmo.

“I seriously doubt, uh, hang on. Hello. What are the odds of the District approving our stewardship program?” Again, checking his notebook, Lenny answered, “Right now, we’re at even money, but I think as time goes on that could change to 2 to 1 that they will approve. Okay, you want five hundred that they’ll reject it? ... You’re on, Monsignor O’Reilly.”

“Uh, Trustees, I guess we’re ready for your report now,” said Elmo.

“Well, you already know about the new lawn mower,” said Ted. “I installed a new mega-power booster in the main electrical box.” As it suddenly

got very dark in the council chamber, Ted said, “Hold on, let me have a look at that.”

As Ted checked out the malfunctioning lights, he expressed several inaudible phrases and then let out a rather boisterous, “Ye ... ow!” The lights continued to flicker as those remaining in the council room detected a slight odor of burning flesh. Eventually, the lights returned to full working order and Ted, shaking his hands somewhat vigorously, returned to the council room.

“Mr. Chairman, what about that additional air vent above us?” asked Elmo.

“No problem,” answered the Trustees chairman. “I’ll mark it out right now. Just let me get a ladder.”

A ladder in Ted’s hands brought forth scant good news. Before Elmo could even check to see if the church’s insurance policy had been updated, Ted managed, in surreal slow motion, to knock out everyone sitting in the council room with the ladder. When he realized what he had done, Ted laid down the ladder and pulled out his cell phone. Strangely enough, he had the emergency room of the local hospital pre-programmed in his cell phone, so the ambulance arrived in short order. When he went to open the door for the EMTs, he

tripped on the ladder, fell, and hit his head on a table. As they loaded him into the ambulance, the EMT's exchanged money as if there had been a wager of some sort. Just before the ambulance door closed, Ted looked back and said, "It was Pastor Anderson's fault."

With a jolt, Pastor Anderson's head came up off the desk.

"Wow, what a nightmare!" the good reverend exclaimed. "Where was I? Oh, yeah." Picking up his Bible, he began reading aloud once more, "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint ..."

Pastor Anderson did not finish reading the verse, as his mind could not let go of his dream. Instead, he pulled out some notepaper and a pen and began writing, "Dear Bob, just a note to let you know that I love you, man, and I really appreciate the job you're doing as President of our congregation." He tore off another sheet of paper and continued writing, "Dear Mort, just a note to let you know that I love you, man, and I really appreciate the job you're doing as chairman of the Board of Elders." He tore off yet another sheet of paper and

continued, “Dear Mary, just a note to tell you I love you, and I really appreciate the job you’re doing as chairwoman of the Outreach Committee.”

The reverend eventually got back to writing his sermon with a whole new perspective.