

Church Office Space: Congregational Restructuring

By Jack Hall

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CHARACTERS

Pastor Russ

Pastor Lumburgh

Sheila- Lumburgh's secretary

Barney- An old man and a greeter

Tone Deaf Tina- A woman who can't sing

Milton- A squirrely guy who sits up front

Spotlight on Pastor Russ on the side of the stage.

RUSS- I don't have to tell you all just how much God has blessed us here at Sunnyside Megachurch. We are all excited by the growth we've had in the last few years. But with that growth has come a time of restructuring. We know that all of you will join with us in making the necessary changes and sacrifices to further God's work in our community.

Spotlight off. Lights up on the stage, where Pastor Lumburgh and Sheila sit. Barney enters.

BARNEY- Hello, Pastor Lumburgh. You wanted to see me?

LUMBURGH- Yeah, hi, Barney. What's happening? Uhh... as you know, we've been going through some restructuring here at Sunnyside. Uhh, I understand you've been a part of our greeter's ministry for three decades?

BARNEY- That's right, Pastor. Shook every hand walk in this church through six presidents and twelve senior pastors.

LUMBURGH- That's just great, really, but uhh, we're going to have to ask you to step down.

BARNEY- You want me to step down?

LUMBURGH- Yeah. It's just that we're trying to put a younger face on the Sunnyside, and uh, we're going to be putting some younger people on the doors.

BARNEY- Younger folks? Well, can't I be there to shake hands with 'em?

LUMBURGH- Ooh, yeah, uhh, I'm not sure that's such a good idea. You see, we were needing you to take a new position in parking lot detail. Yeah, helping people keep traffic moving on the outer parking lot loop.

BARNEY- This is an outrage! I can't believe this.

LUMBURGH- Yeah, well, uh, before you say no, pray about it, mmkay? Because we really need help on the loop, and I'd hate to say we lost you because of, uh, pride.

Mmkay? Thanks!

Barney stands.

BARNEY- Yeah, thanks for nothing, pastor!

Barney exits.

LUMBURGH- Who's next, Sheila?

SHEILA- Next we have a long-standing choir member and soloist, Tina Strothers.

LUMBURGH- Tina Strothers?

SHEILA- Yeah, Tone-deaf Tina?

LUMBURGH- Oh yeah.

Tina enters, sits.

LUMBURGH- Tina! What's happening? Uhh, as you know, we're having to restructure some ministries here at Sunnyside, and, uh, we've decided that we need to talk about your contributions to the music program.

TINA- Yes, well, I know my new job has kept me from being at some rehearsals, but I am eager to do more special music and choral events.

LUMBURGH- Yeah, uh, actually, we were thinking of using your talents in some other areas.

TINA- You mean in addition to special music, you want me to lead the handbell choir?

LUMBURGH- Yeah, uh, actually, we were thinking of removing you from the music program all together.

TINA- What?

LUMBURGH- It's just that we're looking for vocalists who have more experience, talent, and frankly, wouldn't make the William Hung reel on *American Idol*.

TINA- You think I sound like William Hung?

LUMBURGH- Actually, uh, after your last performance of Twila Paris's "God Is In Control", most people said they would prefer William Hung.

TINA- I can't believe this. Why didn't everyone tell me?

LUMBURGH- Yeah, uh, people thought that politeness was more important than holiness. Those people have been removed from the ministry too.

TINA- And where will I go?

LUMBURGH- Yeah, uh, we've decided to send you to the junior high ministry.

TINA- No! No, no, no, not junior high!!!

LUMBURGH- Yeah, we figure you'll do more good than harm there. You see, most of those kids are going through some, uh, vocal changes, and uh, they'll never notice your tone deaf voice there. Mmkay?

TINA- I can't believe this! For ten years I've suffered my gifts for the Lord...

LUMBURGH- Yes, and we've suffered along with you. Buh bye.

Tina exits.

LUMBURGH- Who's next?

SHEILA- Well, Pastor, we have Milton Waddams, sir.

Milton enters.

MILTON- (*half muttering*) You wanted to see me, Pastor Lumburgh?

LUMBURGH- Hey, Milton. What's happening? Ah, we need to talk about your seating arrangements on Sunday.

MILTON- Yes, well, I've been complaining for months since they replaced the pews with the new seats, and the new seats are no good for my back.

LUMBURGH- Yeah, uhh, you see, we've noticed that the seat you're in is right down in front of the stage, and ahh, a lot of people find it distracting to have you right there.

MILTON- Well, you see I have this astigmatism, and I used to be able to see the children's choir, and they were merry, but now if I don't sit close—

LUMBURGH- Yeah, ahh, the thing is, we need that front pew for, uhh, the deacons and those whose tithes make up more than fifty percent of our annual budget, so... we need to move you to Balcony A.

MILTON- No, you see, I can't sit in the balcony because—

LUMBURGH- That way the VIP's can be seen by the whole community, and you won't frighten so many people who might otherwise come forward and join our congregation.

MILTON- But my vision is blurry, and if I am not up near the stage, I can't see the praise songs on the screen.

LUMBURGH- Yeah, so if you could just start sitting in Balcony A, that would be great.

MILTON- And I also have this fear of heights, and if I have to sit up in the balcony—

Pastor Russ enters.

RUSS- Bill! The vendor is here with the new cappuccino machine. Want to try it out?

LUMBURGH- Sounds good, Russ.

Lumburgh and Sheila exit with Russ as Milton mutters on.

MILTON- Excuse me? I was talking about the balcony?

Lumburgh turns the lights off.

MILTON- If you make me sit up there, I'll have this whole place condemned. I could take my tithe to a competing church. I could put strychnine in the juice and cookies for Sunday School. I'll set the flannel boards on fire.