

Search for Pastor Who Mysteriously Vanished Ends in Tragic Discovery

A frantic search for the missing Rev. Warren Beard has come to a devastating end for his family and community.

Beard, 53, was the assistant pastor at New Israelite Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago, as well as a Sunday school teacher and father of five. He was found dead after mysteriously vanishing on July 2, heading home from visiting friends.

On Tuesday evening, July 11, Will County Coroner Laurie Summers confirmed that it was Beard's body that was discovered in his vehicle, a black Honda HR-V, at the bottom of the Des Plaines River.

"This is a devastating loss for us all, a devastating loss for his family, for our church," shared Senior Pastor Chenier A. Alston at a press conference. "We lost a man who loved his wife, loved his children, loved his family. A man who loved God with everything in him, a man passionate about his faith, as his son stated, a man who would give the shirt off his back, always encouraging, always trying to help the least of us.

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"I've never known the man to be hostile or be violent, just a great guy. He's one of the greatest persons I ever met in my life, and that was one of the reasons in helping make sure that he was the assistant pastor of our church. Words can't even begin to describe how we feel."

Video footage of the vehicle plunging into the river was discovered by the lock master with the Army Corps of Engineers.

But Pastor Alston does not believe this was an accidental mishap or suicide on the part of Beard, but that there was foul play involved in the pastor's death.

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"What I want answered is, 'Who did this,'" Pastor Alston stated. "I don't believe this, I may be jumping the gun, but ... Warren was not, he was not suicidal. The fact that his car launched off that bridge that were barricades there that had to be driven around.

"And we know how passionate he was about his job, his wife, his children, so we just want answers. And whatever those answers are, we are going to get justice for him ... He was the greatest person, one of the great men I ever met in my life, and this is painful."

While the investigation into foul play is ongoing, there is a family and church community grieving over the sudden and tragic loss of a father, leader and servant.

Take a moment to lift up in prayer those hurting and that the Lord's will be done in the aftermath of a tragedy no one saw coming.

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