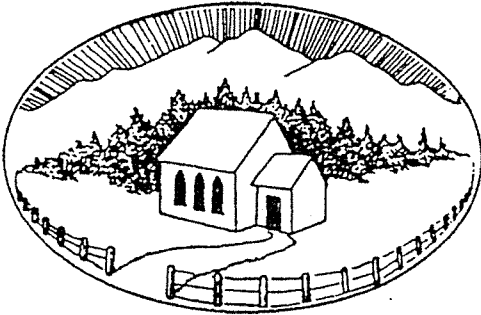


Rural Network News



No.19

October 2001

The story [by which most of our societies operate] we might call the Myth of Redemptive Violence. It enshrines the belief that violence saves, that war brings peace, that might makes right. It is one of the oldest continuously repeated stories in the world.

Walter Wink

Rural Network News aims to share ideas for good rural ministry, create a sense of belonging to a unique group and encourage one another.

Te kaitiakitanga, te manaakitanga, te kotahitanga.

Please share this newsletter with others you think may be interested. Feel free to make photocopies. Comments on any material are always welcome.

We Know It's Spring...

Because the flowers are growing
Leaves are coming
Buds on the trees
Grass is starting to grow
So are weeds and prickles
It smells nice in the garden
Ice blocks are nice again
We have to put sun block on
The sun is warm

Insights from the Junior Room at Lauriston Primary School, Mid-Canterbury, contributed in Community Worship to Celebrate Spring

Co-Partners With God

The fancy term might be "eco-theology". However you name it, many people who are close to the land are asking how they can show better stewardship for the land. They have taken seriously their commitment to be co-partners with God in creation. They fear the kind of thinking that regards land as an object, a resource to be mined, a space to be developed, or a commodity to be marketed.

Remember the Joni Mitchell song "We don't know what we've got till it's gone. / They paved over paradise, and put up a parking lot."

Conservers look on the land and its top soil as something of a miraculous gift that ceaselessly transforms death into life as it supplies food and water and anchorage to all that lives in it. They also remind us how important it is to manage and preserve the native growth as much as possible.

Small farmers look on the land as the place where they are called to exercise their farming skills with dignity and pride, where they accept responsibility for what they produce from start to finish. They speak of the importance of relationships: with the land, with the community, and with God who is both Creator and Sustainer.

There are those whose spirit is tied to a particular place, who are nurtured by their connection with that place. There are others who can no longer "go home", but for whom the memory helps them find connection with "the land" in other places.

So many individuals are profoundly affected by the land. If the land is parched by drought, scarred by abuse, threatened with development, they feel the pain. If the land yields its abundance, it is these same individuals who experience deep feelings of fulfilment.

This, I believe, is what it means to live as co-partners with God in creation.

Joyce Sasse, Pincher Creek Canada

Posted on www.agri-ville.com on September 22, 2001

A Rural Pied Piper

More on the Hugh Paterson Legacy

Continuing from the last edition of Rural Network News we need to complete the story told back in February this year, to try to do justice both to a great gathering of "old-timers" in Rural Ministry and to the people being honoured. Apologies to Pat McGloin that the June edition did not manage to include everything he wanted said.

Pat writes: "I have always loved the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. I am sure he existed. In time, when Rural Ministry is discussed or its history

written, Hugh Paterson will be seen as that pastoral leader, somewhat eccentric at times, who always persevered to bring *hope* to many."

Ready access to Hugh's example in ministry comes in the form of a video of the programme *Four Seasons in the Shadow of Torlesse*. This programme, produced by Chris Nichol, originally screened on TV1 on Sunday September 8 1996. As the study guide attached to the video puts it:

It is an attempt to show something of the complexity and rhythm of rural life, the ebb and flow of the several cultures which co-exist together in any rural district.

In the midst of these communities stands (or stumbles?) the Church. The rural Church manifests all the variety the Church shows anywhere, but with its own distinctive emphases and character.

Five years on this video is still very relevant, a matter which St John's Methven tested during worship in June this year. The video shows us Hugh's down-to-earth connectedness to his landscape and community with plenty of the eccentricity Pat McGloin describes and provocative ideas that viewers are likely to want to argue with. It is a video to engage with.

You can borrow the Canterbury Rural Ministry Unit copy of the video by contacting Garth Cant, 7 Owens Terrace, Christchurch 8004 (e-mail: garth@geog.canterbury.ac.nz).

Rural Church: New Shoots Emerging

The latest edition of Ruminations, the Journal of the New South Wales Uniting Church's Rural Ministry Unit carries a report of their Conference 2001 held in August at Dubbo. As the editor Bruce Irvine puts it:

Perhaps the strongest message coming from the conference is that the viability of a congregation really has nothing to do with whether or not a congregation can support a paid ministry

Viability depends on the focus and determination of the congregation.

A focus outward to the community and a determination not to fall into dependency.

We include here some selections from the conference report. They can help keep us in touch with something of the Australian rural context, plus they have plenty to say that is relevant to our New Zealand scene.

How Far Have we Come?

Dean Drayton [*The Rev Dr Dean Drayton, President-Elect of the National Assembly of the Uniting Church, known to a number of Presbyterians in NZ through contributions to conferences*], having participated in the conference, expressed his excitement at the movement of the spirit he had seen in the conference.

The number of people attending churches peaked in 1966. In the next ten years the Sunday School attendance dropped by 75%, and attendance in mainline churches dropped annually until the late eighties.

What I have seen in this conference ... is like the first tiny shoot of a wheat plant emerging from the ground.

Dean Drayton

He began by describing how the nineteenth century saw the rapid growth of the Sunday School movement as the primary way churches recruited the young of the next generation into the life of the congregations. It was a strategy that worked and worked extraordinarily well. What was not realised that nearly all who joined the church, joined through the Sunday School.

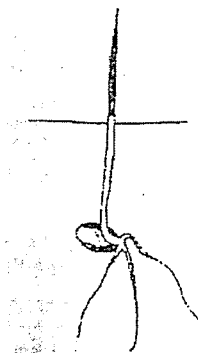
The failure of the Sunday Schools has therefore caused much anguish and soul searching. Most churches have desperately clung to providing a Sunday School in the hope that the strategy will come good. "*It worked in the past, it should work again now - if only we can do it properly.*" But throughout Australia there are now more children in church schools than in Sunday Schools.

For the last 30 years churches have wrestled to discover why the strategy failed. We have flogged a dead horse and wondered why it refused to work. Finally, the Uniting Church is exploring new strategies that might work.

One focus has been 'what can we do to recruit members to the church?' More and more, however, the focus is switching to 'how can we proclaim the Gospel?' The years of soul searching have produced many innovative ideas and seen many experiments.

Today, said Dean, I see evidence of light at the end of the tunnel!

The seed has been buried in the ground, quietly and unobtrusively changing and developing; extending some tiny, fragile roots into the soil.



Then the tender spike of the first shoot pushes up towards the light and appears as a tiny green toothpick bursting through the soil surface.

In this conference today, I have seen the tiny green and tender shoots of a renewal of confidence in our ability to proclaim the Gospel.

For more than a decade in our Rural Ministry Meetings we have been analysing the problem and looking at experiments in NSW and beyond, especially Victoria and South Australia.

But this time the time together has been structured so that we can hear what is happening in some places, how we can make the most of music, use the internet as a resource for the times groups meet together, and a number of other helpful 'this is the way we can do it' workshops.

The new initiatives described in the workshops, the excitement of the participants, the new found confidence of the rural church all give me a sense that, at last, that something new is emerging.

Then Dean went on to talk about his excitement about the Gospel itself. He spoke about a research project he was engaged in. He has been studying the Westminster Confession and its relation to the writing of John Calvin. Though it is commonly accepted that Calvin had a huge influence in the drafting of the Westminster Confession, Dean has been puzzled by the apparent contradictions between what Calvin states and the Westminster Confession.

For Calvin, repentance can only occur after a person has discovered the Grace of God. In the Westminster Confession, repentance precedes the discovery of the grace of God.

The focus had moved from Calvin's 'dependence upon the grace of God' to the Westminster Confession's need for 'perfect and personal obedience'.

Since the Confession in 1650 the shape of evangelism has been decisively affected by this reversal of emphasising first the need for repentance.

Throughout the 18th and 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century, the church in its evangelical task has assumed this. And many have come to know Jesus Christ as Lord as a result of this.

But as the twentieth century wore on, the emphasis on repentance focussed people inwardly and focussed the Church on a certain sort of religious experience.

In the late sixties for some reason, a new generation walked out of the church. Sunday School

had lost its power. The message the church was offering did not impact upon young families.

Dean Drayton raised the possibility that the way the message was preached may be at the heart of the issue. It is as if the framework of repentance inherited from the Westminster Confession was no longer effective and for most had lost its power.

...repentance only makes sense once the grace of God has been seen and experienced.

Today, he suggested people are more likely to respond to the Good News that in Jesus Christ God loves them and forgives them - and invites them to participate in his Kingdom here on earth and beyond.

Perhaps it is time to hear again Calvin's emphasis that repentance only makes sense once the grace of God has been seen and experienced.

This conference has encouraged rural congregations to proclaim the Gospel of God's unconditional love and acceptance to their communities - and offered tools to help them do it.

On the first day of Creation, God created the dog.

On the second day, God created humans to serve the dog.

On the third day, God created all the animals on earth to provide food for the dog.

On the fourth day, God created honest toil so that humans could labour for the good of the dog.

On the fifth day, God created the tennis ball so that the dog might, or might not, retrieve it.

On the sixth day, God created veterinary science to keep the dog healthy and the humans broke.

On the seventh day, God tried to rest but had to walk the dog.

Adapted from Ruminations, September 2001

Bible Studies

led by Lloyd Vidler



The two Bible Studies focussed on the book of Amos. Amos was a rural prophet of the eighth Century BC. He came from a town in Judah and preached to the people of the northern Kingdom of Israel.

In the first Study a careful reading was made of **Amos 7:10-14**. This passage explores the very negative reaction of the leaders of Israel to the prophetic word of Amos.

Then Lloyd quoted from three people he considered to be modern day rural prophets.

For example, Alex Sim has said:

Rural congregations need clear teachings on biblical grounds on sensitive and responsible environmental questions. These should fearlessly guide and judge personal behaviour as well as commercial and governmental policy.

A rural theology will need to return to the social gospel restated to confront current preoccupations with the acquisition of material things. There is a system of ideas in the world which is foreign to the sermon on the mount.

Carl Loeliger says:

At the political level there are questions of government policy and management, of priorities and issues of social justice. With the push for deregulation on all sides there seems to be a lack of real concern for rural Australia and its future.

The current crisis calls for significant reflection on other related issues. It calls into question our lifestyle, our attitude to the environment, our attitude to material possessions, our patterns of consumption.

We can confidently believe that God will provide, but we are also warned that God might not provide in the manner to which we have become accustomed.

Our theology is also called into question, not necessarily that which is preached and is the church's official teaching, but that which is held at gut level.

There exists a success or prosperity theology, the inadequacy of which becomes quickly apparent in times of financial and material stress. True theology is a theology of the cross, a theology that helps people to make sense of both abundance and poverty.

Lloyd challenged his listeners to consider the question:

What prophetic word does the rural church have to say to the nation?

The second Bible Study focussed on Amos 5, one of the sermons of Amos. The sermon begins with a dirge, which Amos may well have sung.

He then calls people to seek God:

v4b *'Seek me and live'.*

v6a *'Seek the Lord and live.'*

To seek the Lord is to care about him, to respond to his saving love, over against attendance at the

religious centres of the land: Bethel, Gilgal, Beer-Sheba. He contrasts direct and indirect religious experience.

References in the text to the many injustices Amos condemned were then identified. For example:

- the exacting of exorbitant rent from the poor;
- levies paid in wheat to rich landlords;
- bribery.

Amos moved on to condemnation of formal religion: *'I hate I despise your festivals, your solemn assemblies, your offerings, your songs and your music'.*

What a contrast with: v24 *'Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.'*

Amos was called from his everyday occupation to speak a prophetic word to 'my people Israel'. Lloyd ended with the challenge: *"If you were an Amos what content would you say in a sermon that arose out of the social context and was the word of God?"*

Godfrey Rust's book *Welcome to the Real World* has a poem entitled: 'An Exponent of the Prosperity Gospel Replies to the Beatitudes'... That's the title. The page is blank.

Comment from N.T.Wright during interview with Steve Tomkins posted on www.ship-of-fools.com

Music



Reporter: Gereldine Leonard

The workshop on music within the liturgy was conducted by the Rev Betty Stroud of Cowra.

Betty presented a varied programme of music for use in worship and for other times of reflection. She drew attention to the power of the unaccompanied and the solo voice and to the value of short sung responses in engaging people in worship. She presented examples from the John Bell collections and from Tricia Watt which are available on CD and Tape and in printed form.

Throughout the day successive groups took part in a simple meditation consisting of a piece of music and some accompanying pictures on overhead, drawing attention to the value of a variety of music for this purpose. One example of this was listening to the Carol King classic "You've Got a Friend" and looking at images of friendship.

The music workshop was concluded by the introduction of a variety of music which could be used in various parts of the liturgy as praise, confession, as doxology, as a response to the Word, intercession and as music to take us out to the worship of everyday life.

Sources for this segment included John Bell's "Come All You People" and "There is One Among us", as well as the hymn book "Together in Song", and "As One Voice", a collection of traditional and contemporary music from Willow Connection.

Our thanks to Bruce Irvine for supplying this material from Ruminations, September 2001.

Psalm 91:9-16

Let your faith be your umbrella;
Live your life under God's protection.



No rain clouds will ruin your picnic;
nor will thunderstorms drown your fondest desires.

The spirit of God will surround you
like a shimmering bubble.

It will deflect the slings and arrows
of outrageous fortune;

It will smooth your passage
over speed bumps and potholes.

Neither wind nor sleet nor hail nor snow—
nor stress nor illness nor peer pressures—
keep you from growing closer and closer to God.

For God says: "Because you trusted me,
I will give you more cause to trust;
Because you knew me enough to ask for help,
I will help you.

When you call, I will answer you.
When you fall down, I will pick you up.
I will accompany you through a long life;
I will never leave you lonely and afraid."

Jim Taylor

From: "Everyday Psalms." Wood Lake Books. For details, go to www.joinlands.com

Included with RUMORS email newsletter © Ralph Milton
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Social Glue and Canterbury Rivers

There are pluses and minuses to the change in society of recent decades. We have diversified into groups with different social values, economic expectations and work habits, and we have become multi-cultural and religiously diverse. The gains include options and opportunities for individual people to find their place to belong within society, as well as a new strength in cultural identities and recognition of the value of different gifts and perspectives. But we seem to have lost the glue that holds us together: fragments don't readily work together with a shared purpose. 'Community', in the past, meant a variety of people pulling together for the common good, but now 'community' simply means living in the same location, co-residents but competing for control and livelihood in what seems to be a shrinking space.

Religious communities are clearly on the social margins now, yet they exist to uphold the very qualities a society needs to glue it together: cooperation, attending to the needs of others, and compromise for the sake of ends larger than personal or group needs. Faith is an eye for what really matters in life and that is more than here-and-now comforts and advantages.

So, what is to happen to Canterbury's rivers? How are the local people to respond to proposed limits to irrigation use; information about degraded rivers close to unsalvageable and powerful group-interests competing for control? If there were enough glue to hold people together, how would they deal with these issues in a cooperative way, and what would be decided?

From within the Christian faith I find a confusing mix of things to consider:

1. The importance of individual livelihood because each here-and-now life matters to a God best known to us in the flesh and blood Jesus;
2. Commitment to well-being for everyone – not just the lucky ones, the top achievers or the political flavour-of-the-month; and
3. A call to see life from a wider perspective, beyond personal or own-group needs, to take a 'common good' approach to life (with no pre-set boundaries to who or what is included in the word "common").

But doesn't that make it very difficult, particularly for those of us who claim to be Christian and make a living directly or indirectly from the land in Mid-Canterbury? What should we do about river levels in the Rangitata, about fertilizer inputs and run-off, about restoration of the Ashburton River?

Do we have no option but to be fragmented into economic, social and cultural interest groups, with

our only point and purpose being to secure our own rights and acquire as much as we can? Or can be both support people in the struggle to get a living and promote the common good of this land and future generations?

Robyn McPhail, Methven

Building Community and Energising Church in Victoria

Australian Rural Church people have been a busy lot this winter. The Rural Minsitry Task Group of the Victoria Uniting Church Synod held two Forum days in Gippsland in July. Some excerpts of interest are included here – with thanks to Helen van Riet for supplying this material.

The Community Perspective

Helen Sheil is a Community Development educator and researcher with particular interest in the future of rural communities. Learning from practice and working on Monash University's Gippsland Campus she has developed a theoretical framework and methodology to achieve transformative change. It has led to an increasing awareness of the importance of locating learning within communities to ensure that a local perspective of place and people is incorporated into policy and planning across all sectors.

THE BRUTHEN COMMUNITY PROJECT

Background.

Bruthen is a small rural town with an interesting pioneering history. It is a town where there are many people who give their time willingly as volunteers to services and where there are 32 different community organisations. But there are very few employment opportunities which has led to most residents commuting to Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance for work. These people often do all of their shopping in Bairnsdale or Lakes Entrance and their social lives are often concentrated in those towns where their workmates are. They do not get the opportunities to catch up on local news.

There was no formal communication system in Bruthen other than the local shop windows and notice boards. Residents of Bruthen could easily be unaware of local community activities, local achievements and local events, etc. Many were also unaware of the history of Bruthen.

For many people there was a lack of a sense of community spirit.

Awareness

In 1998 the Bruthen Community Health Project ran a study circle produced by the Centre for Rural Communities called *Building Rural Futures Through*

Cooperation. It was this study circle that sparked a desire in the participants to work at overcoming this problem. They became aware of some of the projects other towns had successfully taken on and they identified some of the problems in Bruthen. Many ideas were discussed but it was the issue of community spirit and a lack of communication in the town that they felt they could do something about.

Action

The Bruthen and District Citizens Association was approached and asked to auspice a local newspaper for the town of Bruthen. They agreed and consequently the *Tambo Rambler* was launched in June 1999. The paper was well received and attracted sponsorship from a number of local businesses in the form of advertising.

Initially the paper was produced on volunteer's home computers and photocopied on the school photocopier. But grants were sought and used for a photocopier and other office equipment. A computer was donated and use of a small office secured. The office now opens every Friday morning for the public to drop in articles.

Achievements of the Tambo Rambler

- 450 copies produced every month.
- Sparked interest and response throughout Bruthen and District.
- Increased awareness of what is happening in town.
- Accepted as way of spreading information throughout the town.
- Forum for discussion on matters of interest and importance to the community.
- Many new skills learnt by volunteers.

Building Community Spirit Dinner

In 1999, after several meetings and a great deal of discussion and thought, it was decided to run a community dinner. This *Building Community Spirit Dinner* resulted from invitations to representatives from groups most active in the community. Fifty people attended the dinner.

During the dinner people were divided into small groups and given the following set of questions to discuss and jot down their findings. The outcome of this exercise was an exciting list of suggestions to improve interaction within the town's community groups. Apart from a number of suggested activities new liaisons were created which have led to cooperative efforts from some groups.

The questions

1. What benefits can you see from working with each other?
2. What resources does your town/community have that could benefit the community?

3. How can we improve communications and links between different clubs, associations and businesses in your town/community?
4. How can the community show recognition as to the value or work of individuals and groups in your town/community?

Outcomes from Community Spirit Dinner

- o A well attended town Christmas Eve party was held in the Main Street gardens with several service groups helping to run the evening.
- o The Christmas decoration competition had the best response ever.
- o The Blues Festival saw more volunteers from more clubs helping than in previous years.
- o The Tambo Rambler committee have taken on the challenge of running a social event every three months in Reponses to the strong demand for more social events.
- o There has been better communication between clubs.
- o We believe: **an improved community spirit.**

Helen Sheil, Mirboo North, Victoria

CHALLENGING THE CHOO CHOOS

A new theology for a New Day - the Ministry of the laos, of all the People of God.

Clive Cook has spent 22 years in seven rural parishes covering 20 congregations and has always been involved in the local community. Currently he is developing new models of ministry for rural congregations with the emphasis on Lay Ministry Congregations and Lay Leadership Teams. The following comes from his presentation to the Gippsland Forums.

The Church in Western Society is in decline. Many have no idea what to do about it. **CHANGE!**

Changes, changes everywhere,

But if we sit and stare

We stay the same,

We sit and stare. Song from PlaySchool

All ministry is exercised in a social context. All theology was and is written to express new understandings of God, the gospel, the church, ministry and practice in changing social and cultural circumstances.

The church has always written **new theology** to explain the Gospel in times of change.

FIRST CENTURY

The Christians went out proclaiming a **new theology**, a new view and understanding of God, Jesus, the resurrection and the Kingdom of God.

FOURTH CENTURY

Constantine becomes Emperor of Rome AD312; Christianity becomes the dominant religion of the Empire; the church begins to write a **new theology**,

to express the new relationship between church and state, to explain, as they saw it. God's new activity through the church.

LATE FORTH AND EARLY FIFTH CENTURY

The Roman empire is falling apart; Saint Augustine writes a **new theology**, "the City of God": the beginning of Christendom.

FIFTEENTH CENTURY – REFORMATION

A **new theology**: Salvation is by Faith, not just through sacramental process.

A **new theology**: The Free Church.

Each finds its authority in the New Testament.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A **new theology** - "The Gospel to the whole world" - begins the great missionary movement, which continues until the mid-twentieth century.

MID-NINTEENTH CENTURY

Charles Darwin's "Origin of Species" published 1859); in a little over 100 years Western Society moves from Christendom to a **secular** society.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

A **new theology**: the Pentecostal Charismatic movement.

LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Decline in the Western Church: the death of Christendom; the continuing secularisation of society; multi-culturalism, alternate religions, New Age syncretism, an emerging "Spirituality?"

Many **new theologies**: liberation, feminism, social justice communities, church growth, house church, spiritual warfare, etc. The Rural Church finds itself adrift in a changing society ...

What is God doing!? What does it mean for the people of God?

A new theology for a new day must be:

- ❖ Biblically based
- ❖ Theologically valid
- ❖ Adaptable to different Ecclesial forms
- ❖ Culturally relevant
- ❖ Socially sustainable

The new theology is the ministry of the laos, of all the people of God and its objective is *mission*. In the past 50 years the church has failed to address the task of *mission at home*.

The old theology divided ministry between *clergy*, set apart through their ordination and the *laity* who did *lay* ministry, as if it were non-ordained ministry.

In the New Testament, ministry is seen as belonging to the baptised community. Paul imagined it as one body, many parts, one spirit, many gifts; Peter wrote of believers being built into a spiritual temple. That is, both used corporate imagery to focus discussion and practice of ministry.

By contrast the Christendom habit has been to focus on individuals, to define the church by clerical order and to locate ministry in specific individuals.

"Missionary Methods, St Paul's or Ours" (1912)

Roland Allen claimed that every congregation:

1. Has within its own membership sufficient gifts for its life and mission.
2. Is to be trusted with the bible, creeds, ministry and sacraments.
3. Is responsible for recognising the spiritual gifts and needs of its members, and calling forth those ministries.
4. Will share its message and life with neighbouring communities not yet evangelised.

Any Christian Community that can't do these things is not a church but a mission field.

There will be difficulty owning the theology and practice of *the ministry of the laos* until one accepts

- ❖ The concept of "Christendom" is no longer valid.
- ❖ The so-called "Christian community" no longer exists.
- ❖ The place and role of The Church, any church in western society and culture has changed.
- ❖ The Minister, paid to do ministry for the local church, is a less than effective model in changing culture.

But a theology of laos ministry that is imposed upon a Christendom heart and mind-set may simply become *expediency* to sustain the local church structure as it is, rather than a commitment to explore new ways of Mission and Ministry under the guidance of the Holy spirit.

As Brian Robins, a UCA Resource Minister in South Australia puts it:

God is doing something in the church through Lay Ministry. What is going on here is not community development or people empowerment. This is different; this is the work of the Spirit of God.

Clive Cook, Mallee, Victoria

New Book

It's "Seasons of the Land" by Bill Bennett and can be purchased from Church Mouse Press, 38 Joseph St., Palmerston North, or from church bookshops, at a cost of \$18. It is in similar vein to "Listen to the Shepherd" with *prayers, litanies and liturgies that reflect the thanksgivings, anxieties and hopes of the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand.*

In simple robust and often poetic language, illustrated with the author's own drawings of rural life, this is a prayer resource which clergy and lay ministers will find invaluable both for individual prayers (a very full index helps in their selection) to meet a particular need or situation, and in the planning of special services.

THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL

Then there was the congregation, which decided to have four worship services every Sunday. There was one for those new to the faith, another for those who liked traditional worship, one for those who had lost their faith and would like to get it back, and another for those who had a bad experience with church and were complaining about it.

They have names for each of the services:

Finders, Keepers, Losers, Weepers.

From RUMORS email newsletter © Ralph Milton.

Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young, a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Ps. 84:3

There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you Exod. 25:22

Break feeding
is plodding work.
A strip of clover
to satisfy hungry cattle.
The tape straight
to satisfy pride
in prosaic work;
agreeable work
in fair weather.

And in the work
a visitation
of twelve swallows.
Arcing and swerving
they fill all space.
The earth has passed away
and the air has passed away
and I am breathing swallows
in the holy place
between the wings.

Rob List, Wairarapa



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