

Rube Goldberg... Know the name?

he was an engineer, reporter, and Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist  
best known for illustrating ridiculous ways to perform simple tasks.

Like the one inside the front cover of this week's bulletin  
Sunlight strikes a magnifying glass which burns a hole in a bag...  
Dropping water into a ladle, which then lifts the gate,  
Releasing a heavy ball, which then plunges down the chute  
The rope tied to the ball lifts the bed into a vertical position  
And drops you into your shoes...  
Not only that... you can't catch a few more winks...  
because there's no place to lie down!

There are lots of other examples...  
The opening credits on the CBS show Elementary...  
Or the old board game Mousetrap

There is even an annual Rube Goldberg Machine competition  
With prizes for hammering a nail or pulling a zipper

15 years ago, Honda produced a two-minute TV ad.  
They made a working rube Goldberg from a disassembled Honda Accord

A transmission bearing rolls into a synchro hub, which rolls into a gear  
wheel cog, which falls into a camshaft and pulley wheel.  
The complexity grows from simple collisions to ziplines made from a  
hood release cable, scales and see-saws constructed from engine blocks  
and batteries, a cooling fan blows a swinging mobile of window glass.  
Automated water sensors send wiper blades crawling across the floor,  
and a side door lowers the window to let a part pass through.  
When a metal part touches the battery dashboard lights up and the CD  
player comes to life. When the button of key fob is pressed  
hatchback closes. The car rolls off the carefully balanced trailer

and the announcer says,  
***Isn't it nice, when things just... work?***  
 And it is, isn't it  
 It's ***really*** great, when things just work.

Now If you're wondering, ***where's I'm going with this...***  
 Look at today's Epistle... Paul's first letter to the Corinthians

Like those pieces and parts of a Rube Goldberg contraption  
 That seem to have little or no value...  
 We... the people of God... are the common elements  
 that come together to make up the Body of Christ... the Church!

It's easy to say... ***Well my part's not that important...***  
 But you are! Every single one of you is ***essential*** to the church!

Paul explained...  
 You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works  
 by looking no further than your own body.  
 Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—  
 but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body.  
 It's exactly the same with Christ.

By means of his one Spirit,  
 we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives.  
 We each used to independently call our own shots,  
 but then we entered into a large and integrated life  
 in which *Jesus* has the final say in everything.

This makes you more significant, not less.  
 A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge.  
 It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together.  
 If Foot said, "I'm not elegant like Hand, embellished with rings;

I guess I don't belong to this body," would that make it so?

If Ear said, "I'm not beautiful like Eye, limpid and expressive;  
I don't deserve a place on the head," would you want to remove it

If the body was all eye, how could it hear?

If all ear, how could it smell?

God carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.

You may think you're somewhat irrelevant...

But you're not! You're significant!

Another benefit of being part something as huge as the Body of Christ...

Is how it prevents you from blowing up with self-importance.

For no matter how significant you are...

it is only because of what you are a *part* of.

An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster.

What we have is one body with many parts,  
each its proper size and in its proper place.

No part is important on its own.

Can you imagine your Eye telling Hand, "Get lost; I don't need you"?

Or your Head telling your Foot, "You're fired; your job is phased out"?

As a matter of fact... it works the other way...

the "lower" the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary.

You can live without an eye... but not without a stomach.

In your own body... it makes *no* difference  
 whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower.  
 You give it dignity and honor just as it is, without comparisons.

If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher.  
 Wouldn't you a healthy heart to lustrous hair?

The way God designed our bodies is a wonderful model  
 for understanding our lives together as a church:

every part dependent on every other part,  
 the parts we mention and the parts we don't  
 the parts we see and the parts we don't  
 And if one part hurts... every other part hurts too  
 And If one part flourishes, every other part is exuberant.

That's us... God's Rag Tag Army...

Here's how Martin Bell described God's Rag Tag Army...

*I think God must be very old and very tired.  
 Maybe he used to look splendid and fine in his general's uniform,  
 but no more.  
 He's been on the march a long time, you know.  
 And look at his rag-tag little army!  
 All he has for soldiers are you and me. Dumb little army.  
 Listen! The drum beat isn't even regular. Everyone is out of step.  
 And there! You see?  
 God keeps stopping along the way to pick up one of his tinier soldiers  
 who decided to wander off and play with a frog, or run in a field,  
 or whose foot got tangled in the underbrush.  
 He'll never get anywhere that way.  
 And yet, the march goes on.*

*If God were more sensible he'd take his little army and shape them up.  
Why, whoever heard of a soldier stopping to romp in a field?*

*It's ridiculous.*

*But even more absurd is a general who will stop the march of eternity  
to go and bring him back. But that's God for you.*

*His is no endless, empty marching. He is going somewhere.*

*His steps are deliberate and purposive.*

*He may be old, and he may be tired.*

*But he knows where he's going.*

*And he means to take every last one of his tiny soldiers with him.*

*And he won't go on without us.*

*And that's why it's taking so long.*

*Listen! The drum beat isn't even regular. Everyone is out of step.*

*And there! You see?*

*God keeps stopping along the way to pick up one of his tinier soldiers  
who decided to wander off and play with a frog, or run in a file,  
or whose foot got tangled in the underbrush.*

*He'll never get anywhere that way!*

*And yet, the march goes on...*