THE INCARNATION: LESSONS FROM A SPRINGER

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Category: Observations

My dog thinks Iâ€™m wonderful. When I get home after a day in the office, she greets me as though I had just returned from a long sea voyage, rather than a short drive up the A40. She wags her tail so furiously that the whole dog vibrates: itâ€™s a great welcome after a long day of emails and meetings.

Bassam (thatâ€™s her name) also listens to every word that Sue and I say. Sometimes she gazes at us as we talk, her head cocked on one side and an intelligent look in her eyes. At other times, she lies down half asleep and looks completely disinterested; but we know she is listening. If one of us happens to say some magic phrase such as â€˜take the dog for a walkâ€™ or â€˜dog biscuitâ€™ she will leap to her feet and start to look expectant. At first sight, the way she listens and responds is very impressive, but the truth is that Bassam is pretty thick. She has no idea about grammar: she canâ€™t distinguish between â€œletâ€™s take the dog for a walkâ€ and â€œIâ€™m far too tired to take the dog for a walkâ€ . She can respond to a few phrases, but despite the intelligent look in her eyes she doesnâ€™t really know what we are talking about. If I tried to explain to her what I did on an average working day, she would stare at me, happy that I was talking to her but not understanding a word. I would be bored of the process long before she was. The gap is just too large for meaningful communication.

Then again, the gap between Almighty God and me, is far greater than the gap between Bassam and me. God has to cross a far greater gulf if he is to communicate meaningfully with me, than I do if Iâ€™m to communicate with Bassam. And he does so! In Christ, God came down to our level and revealed himself to us in a way that we can understand. He crossed the huge communication barrier between us and made it possible for us to come to know him. It really is remarkable that he should be so patient as to communicate with people who are so much less intelligent than he is.

Now, if only I could learn to listen as attentively as Bassamâ€¦

Every month I have to write a short note for my Wycliffe Bible Translators colleagues around the world. This was this month's offering - though they didn't get the photos!