IF YOU WANT A JOB DOING WELL...

Posted on July 25, 2017 by Eddie

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Category: Observations

I'm sure you know the saying that if you want a job doing well, then you should do it yourself.

I learned this morning that Napoleon Bonaparte was, apparently, the first to come up with the saying. Â The history geek in me says that this was clearly the case in the Peninsula War, when Wellington gave the runaround to a whole succession of Napoleon's generals, though it doesn't quite work for Waterloo. Anyway, I digress.

What I find fascinating is that this is a saying that God really doesn't take very seriously. There are all sorts of jobs that he could do himself, but which he passes on to people who are really quite incompetent; us!

Let me give a few examples. God created the world and it was good and then he handed it over to humanity to look after it on his behalf. The world is still amazingly beautiful, but you have to admit that we are making a bit of a mess of it.

Then when he started to announce himself to humanity, he didn't do so by painting signs in the sky or sending armies of angels around the world. He chose one man and his descendants to be a light to the nations, to show God's character to the world in such a way that the nations would be drawn to him. Except it didn't work out that way, Paul tells us that people cursed God because of his people.

Which bring us to today. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, God charged his disciples to take the Good News around the world. To demonstrate the love of God in Christ through words and actions to every corner of the globe. Well, it's sort of working out. We are pretty slow and all too often the message is compromised by the actions and attitudes of believers, but the message is getting out.

It goes without saying that God could look after the planet better than we can, he could also have prepared the way for Jesus and got on with worldwide mission better than us, but he didn't do any of them.

It would appear that having a job done well isn't God's highest priority.

There are a couple of things I'd like to highlight from this. The first is the amazing way in which God makes himself, his reputation and his work vulnerable to humanity. God is willing to let us mess things up; he obviously thinks that the advantages of having us involved outweighs the downside. The second thing to highlight is the amazing privilege of being human. God has invested in us from the start of creation; he delegates us to do things he could do far better; it's incredible.

> *â€œYou come of the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve," said Aslan. "And that is both honour enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on earth. Be content.â€ C.S. Lewis: Prince Caspian*

What this demonstrates is the incredible way that God loves human beings. He loves us so much that he would rather achieve things with us than without us. His love runs through the whole biblical narrative, even when we don't notice it.

Of course, the fact that having a job done well isn't God's highest priority shouldn't discourage us from doing our best in all aspects of our service. However, we do need to remember that even our best efforts fall short of his standards.