

Please mail me A
permissions-questionnaire

Thank you.

John P. Alexander, II

The Light Bulb

(With thanks to Thomas Edison & MLKjr)

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"The sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light"
Luke 16:8 (NASB)

When Jesus Christ of Nazareth died on the cross, He finished His work on the Earth (John 19:30). The Holy Spirit is still working but God expects us humans to do our parts in order to hasten the coming of His kingdom. This includes regular prayers, reading Scripture in order to acquire wisdom, being obedient to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, and going out into the world and metaphorically 'making it rain.'

There is no little irony in the fact that the catch phrase 'Protestant work ethic,' is connected to a branch of Christianity which currently is preaching that Christians should totally surrender to God and let go and get out of the way in order to allow God to solve all of our problems for us. The main difference which I notice between Catholics & Protestants at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman is that the Protestant preachers at Parchman are teaching that we are to surrender to the Lord and 'let go and let God' do all of the work.

If Thomas Edison were to have let go and let God, and had waited for God to do all of the work, we would have no light bulbs to light our houses and other buildings. If Martin Luther King, Jr. had done nothing but surrender to the status-quo, there would have been no Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, with its attendant freedoms from bondage.

When I first went to prison, my earthly father told me that 98% of whether or not I ever get out of prison will have to do with what goes on inside my own brain. This

includes the necessity for me to believe that I deserve to be out of prison, along with the ingredients of faith, determination, persistence and hard work which it now is taking in order for me to realize my physical freedom. While it is true that I cannot save myself, God has left me the tools which are necessary for me to use in order for me to be rescued from the very real and present bondage in which I now find myself. These tools include the Christian Church, the Holy Scriptures, my education and experience, reason, skill, human effort and gumption.

There is a story in the Gospels of Matthew (15:21-28) and Mark (7:24-30) about a Syrophenician woman who came to Jesus to ask Him for help because her daughter was grievously vexed with a mental illness. Jesus treats the woman abruptly and tells her---in so many words---that she is a dog, and that His mission does not include salvation and healing for people like this particular woman. However, the woman is undeterred. She pushes-back against the seeming reluctance of Jesus and obtains the healing of her daughter, along with praise from Jesus because of her faith and importunity. (Mt. 15:28). If this woman had metaphorically and literally surrendered to Jesus, she never would have obtained the healing of her daughter.

In my own personal journey, God has used the agencies of scientific medicine & pharmaceutical medication, and the disciplines of religious education and instruction, prayer, fasting and hard work in order to effect the healing of my mental illness. I believe that man-made agencies such as the law, education and instruction, and the human efforts of prayers and persistence are going to be necessary in order to bring about my release from prison. This is the lesson which I take from the Christian Gospel.

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