



Wayne's Words

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 **StMichael's**
ANGLICANBEAUMARIS

The Thought is Father to the Deed

'As a man thinks, so is he' is one traditional translation of Prov 23:7(NKJV)

I think it was 9/11/2001 that brought that home to me - the power of ideology to motivate a person to do the unthinkable. Our thoughts determine our levels of anxiety and fear or the degree of confidence and courage with which we face challenging situations. Our thoughts determine our emotions of hope or despair, but what determines our thought-life? Many factors of course - our upbringing, experience of life, environment, education, genetic disposition, personality ... the list could go on, including our diet, sleep and exercise, which all effect mood and wellbeing.

Yet the Bible insists, and at heart we know, that we are responsible beings and not simply ruled by factors outside our control. As psychologist Victor Frankl discovered when imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps in WWII, his choice to think and hope and find meaning in his life was the one freedom that could not be taken from him.

Yet which thoughts are worth investing in? Belief systems that include reincarnation tend to be fatalistic, concluding that people get what they deserve, so don't interfere with the outworking of a person's karma. Similarly, beliefs in an all-powerful but remote God, who is the determiner of all that happens to us, also leads to fatalism. Belief in a God who is demanding, without grace or relationship and intolerant of difference, can lead to extreme and destructive (and self-destructive) actions.

Christians believe in a God who is both loving and holy, who exists in community as Trinity, and in whose image we are made, male and female. They believe in a God who seeks relationship with us (as shown most wonderfully in his Son Jesus) and who calls us to a life of truth and compassion.

We are told to love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind! As we come to God we are entreated to 'not be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds' (Romans 12:2). How do we cooperate with such mind renewal?

Several keys: Let the word of God dwell in you richly ... take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ ... I have laid up your word in my heart so that I might not sin against you ... the mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. (Col 3:16, 2 Cor 10:5, Ps 119:11, Rom 8:6)

Our part is to choose to submit our minds to the Spirit of God through immersion in and retention of the word of God. St Paul can have the last word:

'Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things ... [and] put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.' Phil 4:8-9

God bless you,

Wayne