

Thought for the Day 1st July - John Reed

Read Romans 11:33-12:2

Have you noticed how birds turn their heads to use either one eye or the other to look at things? Obviously, since birds' eyes are on the side of their head, they can only look at something with one eye at a time. However, scientists have identified that for certain kinds of observation, birds will prefer one eye over the other: as if one eye sees certain things differently to the other. It had been assumed that this had something to do with the different functions of the left and right hand side of the brain. But recent research on the European starling ["Retinal asymmetry in birds", *Current Biology*, Volume 10, Issue 2, 15 January 2000, Pages 115-117] has discovered that there is actually a difference in structure between the left and right eyes. The left eye contains a large number of cells which detect colour, while the right eye has more movement detecting cells. So they truly do see things differently, depending on which eye they use.

Nobody is suggesting that the same is true in humans. But have you ever heard it said that someone looks at the world "through rose-coloured glasses"? What that means is that certain assumptions (about things being good and working out for the best) "colour" the way they look at things. Just as the varying cells affect the way birds see things, so two people can look at the same events and come to quite different conclusions, depending on what "coloured glasses" they are looking through. A number of things influence our perspective on things (or the colour of our glasses); our background, our past experiences, our beliefs, and our values.

The Germans have a word to describe this unique perspective that each of us has of the world: "Weltanschauung". Weltanschauung literally means "world view." My worldview is my "big picture," the sum of all my beliefs about the world, my way of understanding reality. And my worldview becomes the basis for my daily decisions and actions.

I take it that a truly Christian worldview would be to see the world through God's eyes: to understand things as he understands them; to love the things he loves, and hate the things he hates. And the "integration" of this worldview would be to learn to think and act consistently with this God-shaped mindset.

Paul in Romans 12:2 urges us as Christians not to be conformed to this world, "but to be transformed by the renewal of your mind," and that in so doing we will "discern what is the will of God." This is basically a call to take off the worldly glasses we are used to wearing – and that everyone else around us is wearing - and put on God-shaped glasses. To learn a new way of looking at things, a new way of thinking about things, a new set of values.

It is no easy matter to overcome our own experiences, prejudices, and culture, and learn to see things through God's glasses. But this is what he asks us to do, and we embrace the challenge.