

Some thing to think about. 6 June 2010

What should we expect?

“To whom much is given much will be expected” says a paraphrase of a familiar Biblical quote from Luke 12: 48b. It came to my mind in considering the recent budget when I was confronted with the inequality of the disposable income that would be left in the hands of individuals in the wake of the recent tax cuts. It left me wondering what it is we expect from our leaders...and in particular what we can expect from our Prime Minister who ranks in the list of the 20 wealthiest world leaders. My cynical self tells me to expect nothing from these wealthy people except self-interest and preferment flavoured with entitlement. The me I like better reminds me that it is from amongst those with the privilege of leisure time that some of the great innovations in science and memorable literature has come. Clearly the thread of Biblical challenge to those who have positions of privilege and plenty is to turn their concern to the wellbeing of those with less. Research in our time shows that social harmony and personal wellbeing is more readily achieved when the gap between the most wealthy and the poor is narrowed. So it seems to me that we can reasonable expect to see leadership that works to narrow that gap. Political approaches and leaders that see the wealth primarily in terms of individual acquisition works to keep this gap wide. On the other hand leaders and political approaches who see wealth as a national resource to be shared in the interests of the whole population function to narrow this gap. Our heritage as Christians is unambiguous about what we should be demanding of our leaders.

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