

Something to think about: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2009-12-02

### **Catching up to our neighbour, or, what do we want?**

Do we want to be little Australia? It has never seemed that modelling Aotearoa-NZ on Australia was part of the plan for a distinctive identity. Rather standing tall as a people with a covenant binding two different peoples to work justly in caring for each other, seems a significant foundation on which to build a nation. It provides for a broader goal to pursue than a GDP that matches that of our neighbour. It is true we could make the changes to our economic structure that pushes our GDP along the same trajectory as Australia, but we know from experience this is likely to widen the gap between the wealthy and those who struggle to make their way in a system that has \$\$\$ on its eyeballs. As Christians, and especially at this time of year, we will read the signs of our times with dismay at the perseveration on the GDP and the need to match Australia. I am earnestly looking for the signs of God's commonwealth that will offer reassurance we are sharing equitably the resources we have to care for one another. Jesus said "for as much as you do for the least amongst you, you do for me." I guess that we can be glad that we have one reassurance that family homes will be exempt from the capital gains tax that is one amongst a number of measures proposed to fund the closing of the gap! This gap is, unfortunately, not the gap between rich and poor in our communities, but rather between Aotearoa- NZ and Australia. There has been enough published this year that tells us the sense of wellbeing and happiness we desire is not in the number of dollars we have , beyond enough, rather it is in neighbourliness and health and a sense of belonging.