



I was really moved by the words Linda shared – on Sunday 3rd August - when she was welcomed into membership at our communion service.

What she said about CBC joining the Open Baptists – what that decision communicated to those who do not fit the NSW/ACT Baptist Association's definition of marriage – was incredibly powerful and I thought it would be encouraging to the wider Open Baptists movement so I shared the reflection (below) with them last week - along with the Open Baptists 2024/2025 Annual Report (*which I have also attached here for anyone interested in reading it!*)

Dear Friends,

Attached is our second Open Baptists Annual Report (2024-2025). I am reminded, reading through it, of a river my family visited in Kyushu, the southern island of Japan, while we were living there. The riverbed was solid rock and had been worn smooth and polished so that it looked like marble.

None of this had happened overnight, but the water had transformed that place, slowly and surely, flowing there for hundreds of years.

In the same way, the work we are undertaking is small and humble, but by continuing to allow the love of God to flow through us, beautiful channels of God's grace are being formed.

Last Sunday at Canberra Baptist we welcomed into membership a long-term church attendee, and she shared, very vulnerably, that her time at our church was in two parts. The first part was as a wife and young mum hoping - somehow – that her marriage would hold together. The second part, after some years in the wilderness, was as a divorcee. And she said - and this brought me to tears - that CBC joining the Open Baptists meant she no longer felt like a divorcee (i.e. less than what she'd been) but now she felt welcome as a whole person.

As I said earlier, small, slow, but beautiful channels of God's grace are flowing.

Grace and peace be with all of you!

Belinda