

Dear Friends,

I've popped into the office briefly after two days with the Micah Women Leaders

Event lobbying politicians, from all sides of the political spectrum, on restoring Australian aid to 1% of the Federal Budget and delivering a \$110 million emergency package to Myanmar refugees.

Over many years Canberra Baptist has prayed and supported those living in the camps on the Thai-Myanmar border. Now, because of the cuts to USAID, 85% of people lost their food rations in those camps on the 31st July, and health services in seven of the nine camps were shut down. At Cox's Bazaar, another refugee camp that hosts 1 million Rohingya refugees, food distribution is projected to end by December (UNHCR).

Micah is asking the Australian government to provide an emergency package on \$110 million to avoid disaster for these desperate communities, and the increased danger that people will risk dangerous sea journeys to Malaysia, Indonesia and potentially Australia.

Please pray for this situation and this appeal.

On Sunday, we also prayed for Avalon Baptist Peace Church as they were meeting with representatives of the NSW/ACT Association Executive on that afternoon.

According to Sally Longley, one of their pastors, that meeting went as well as could be expected! They were very gracious, but very clear Avalon was not offering to withdraw voluntarily from the Association and that the Association would have to vote them out, as they did with us and Hamilton.

Some of you will know that at our church quarterly meeting Kerstin Wallace moved we send a letter of support to Avalon, knowing how important such support had been for us. This was enthusiastically endorsed by the meeting. John Higgins quickly sent them the letter below.

And Sally has also responded. Her response is also below.

Dear Sally

At our Quarterly Meeting this afternoon, the Church asked me to write to Avalon Baptist Peace Church to convey our support as you move through the NSW and ACT Baptist Association disaffiliation process.

Our experience with the same process taught us that, while it is challenging and there is sorrow in rejection, there is also joy in standing for the gospel as you know it, following Christ as you believe the Spirit is leading, and honouring the Baptist principles of freedom of conscience and the autonomy of the local church. Be assured of our prayers and solidarity.

Grace and peace to all of you at Avalon.

John Higgins

Secretary, Canberra Baptist Church

Many many thanks to all of Can Baps and in particular John and Belinda,

I am forwarding your letter to all our deacons, and some may also wish to reply.

It is wonderful to be part of such an embracing and supportive community as Open Baptists. We are deeply grateful for your care and support.

I offer a prayer from Ted Loder (Guerrillas of Grace) :

**Gentle me,
Holy One,
Into an unclenched moment,
A deep breath,
A letting go
Of heavy expectancies,
Of shrivelling anxieties,
Of dead certainties,
That, softened by the silence,
Surrounded by the light,
And open to the mystery-
I may be found by wholeness,
Upheld by the unfathomable,
Entranced by the simple,
And filled with the joy
That is you**

*It is indeed a time where we all are called into an 'unclenched moment' and instead are filled
with the 'joy that is You'
Blessings upon you,
Sally*