



HOW TO MAKE AN OFFERING OF LETTERS

Micah Challenge encourages you to use your words on behalf of the poor as an act of worship to God. All you need is a pen, 15 minutes and the desire to see our world transformed into a picture of how God wants it to be. You can take part as an individual or as a group.

Each year thousands of Christians in Australia write letters as part of the Micah Challenge 'Offering of Letters' campaign and our message is being heard in the halls of Parliament. Every major denomination and over thirty different Christian aid and mission groups are supporting the campaign and we want to make sure these issues stay on the minds of our leaders – asking them to act with urgency and compassion to help meet the basic needs of the poorest communities.

In 2009, the Prime Minister's office made an official response to the Offering of Letter campaign. It states in part: "...Thank you for the encouraging words from Micah Challenge for the Government's policies to address global poverty. The Government remains committed to increasing the Official Development Assistance... as part of global efforts to make poverty history."

"The global economic crisis is making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) more difficult. The impact of the crisis is especially severe in developing countries, and therefore the role of donor nations in protecting the poorest and most vulnerable is critical. In London in April 2009, Australia and all other G20 member states reaffirmed commitment to the MDGs and to achieving ODA pledges..."

The Australian Government has acknowledged the need for citizens to keep speaking out on behalf of the poor, especially in the face of a difficult economic climate. Taking part in the Offering of Letters campaign is one way Christians can respond to God's call to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute" (Proverbs 31:8).

you will need:

- Approx 15-20 minutes in your service/group time
- Blank Paper
- Pens
- Powerpoint from Micah Challenge website
- Copies of the sample letter in hard copy or on a screen
- Copies of the children's letter if required (also on website)

*Remember to collect and post letter to Micah Challenge by 1 Sept

PLEASE take the time to personally hand-write a letter to The Honourable Wayne Swan MP Deputy Prime Minister, Treasurer. Some suggested wording is given over the page, but please feel free to use your own words and speak of your personal concern for the poor. This shows you have put time and thought into the issue and your letter will be more powerful.

- HAND WRITE clearly and print your name and address at the end.
- BE POSITIVE and encouraging.
- PRAY that our leaders will act.
- This activity is best done with a group, such as part of a worship service. For more information including a powerpoint presentation, visit the Micah Challenge website.

Thank you for taking part in Offering of Letters campaign. Your effort is much appreciated.

Micah Challenge is an international campaign calling for people of faith to speak up for justice and mercy for the world's poor and vulnerable. Only when individuals, communities and national leaders work together can we tackle the big issues set out in the MDGs such as reducing child and maternal deaths, ending hunger, and helping poor nations adapt to the damaging effects of climate change. Visit The Micah Challenge website to find out more.

Dear Treasurer,

I am writing because... [add your personal thoughts here]

I believe Australia has a vital role to play in the global effort to halve poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. This date is not too far away.

Thank you for keeping your commitment to increase Australia's overseas aid to 0.5% of national income by 2015, even in the face of difficult economic times. The increase in aid funding we saw in the 2011/12 federal budget indicates to me that your Government places importance on achieving the MDGs. This will make a very real difference to our global neighbours, people experiencing the crippling effects of poverty.

Tough economic times are having the deepest impact in developing countries. In light of this, we must seek to ensure that our aid is spent as effectively as possible on poverty reduction measures. At times such as these, we must hold firm to our commitment to do all we can to protect the poorest and most vulnerable in our world.

I therefore ask that you once again maintain your commitment to the existing timetable for increasing aid in the next federal budget. I also ask, that as you consider forward estimates for future budgets, you outline a timetabled commitment to reaching your aspirational goal of an aid target of 0.7% of national income.

I pray that you will have wisdom as you make significant financial decisions and courage in your leadership role in our nation.

Yours faithfully,

[Sign the letter and neatly print your name, address and postcode]

1. HAND-WRITE and personalise the letter. Please be neat. Hand written letters are more effective than photocopied form letters.
2. Consider sending someone from your group to Voices for Justice 2011.
(For more information see www.micahchallenge.org.au/voices-justice)
3. Collect all your letters and send in with your completed form below

Response form for Offering of Letters



Please complete this response form and send it with your letters to:
Micah Challenge, Level M, 134 William St Potts Point NSW 2011 by September 1, 2011.

Name of Church/school/group:

Contact person:

Phone:

Email:

Address:

Federal electorate (where the group is located):

Member of Parliament (where group is located):

(You can find out this information at www.apps.aec.gov.au/esearch)

Number of letters written to Mr Swan:

Please add me to the list to receive Micah Challenge monthly e- updates on the campaign

For more information contact the Micah Challenge office: info@micahchallenge.org.au