

## Micah Paper

### General Background for Micah Papers

In preparation for our 6<sup>th</sup> Triennial Global Consultation we explored what would be the most effective outcome and all agreed that rather than publishing a Declaration we would set up **working groups** on thematic issues that were identified. The working groups would be tasked with developing what we will call a **Micah Paper**.

The concept of a **Micah Paper** is drawn from two types of known publications:

- **White Paper:** the purpose of a white paper is to help readers understand an issue, solve a problem, or make a decision. Types of white papers include:
  - A **policy document** often produced by governments that set out their proposals for future legislation and or strategy. They can be published as authoritative papers which may contain a draft Bill that is being planned. The paper would provide a basis for further consultation, discussions and actions.
  - A **guiding document** that informs readers in a concise manner about a complex issue and presents the issuing body's philosophy on the matter.
  - An **informational document** to promote or highlight the features of a solution, a product or a service.
- **Encyclical Letter:** the purpose of this circular letter was to inform churches about issues of concern and guide them in their response.
  - A **letter** sent out by the Pope to inform Bishops and the wider church (and even public), in which he lays down policy on religious, moral, or political issues.
  - A **doctrinal and/or theological reflection** to draw on to inform action.

Every generation faces challenges in their context and should be prompted to reflect with fresh perspectives both theological and practically, drawing on past learning and at the same time renewing perspectives, with an openness for new insights and transformational changes. Micah Papers seek to enable this reflection and encourage a Spirit-led response to the issues of concern faced by our generation.

**Purpose:** Micah papers should be seen as a **consultative tool** to enable development of reflective thinking and holistic action. They should play a dual role in presenting integral mission perspectives as well as inviting further opinions and discussions on the issues presented.

### Micah Paper – general outline

As each topic addressed may require different approaches, the outline below only seeks to create a working framework to enable working groups to start with an end goal in mind. The specific terms of reference per theme is then elaborated to guide the group further. The Papers should be rooted in biblical and practical perspectives, and used as tools of awareness raising, training and information exchange. They should be bold in their aspirations and challenging in their conclusions.

**Framework**

- Description of the Issue of Concern
- Reflection:
  - Ideological / philosophical / theological
  - Conclusion drawn
- Overview of current responses:
  - Examples / reference to case studies
  - Identifies gaps (based on reflection conclusion)
  - Contextual comparisons
- Strategic approaches
  - What responses are needed, by whom, where, when, how etc.
  - What specific niche can (should / could) Micah play
- Recommended action / outcomes / next steps
  - Activities, products, service
  - Advocacy, campaigning, lobbying
- Ongoing learning
  - References for further review
  - Recommended books and publications
  - Suggested training available
  - List of organisations / individuals working in this area
  - Establish a Community of Practice on the topic for Micah to continue as a learning / sharing platform

**Working Group Structure**

- *Geographical Scope*: Micah is a Global network and movement and as such all working groups would be open to all members. It is recognised that certain themes are more relevant and poignant in certain contexts so that the working group may not be made up of representatives from each region.
- *Size*: in order for the working group to be effective a core group will need to commit to the task and time frame agreed. This should be between 6-15 members. A wider group is welcomed as a participatory and consultative review group that can feedback into drafts and share insights.
- *Lead*: each working group needs to have a focal person who agrees to chair and lead and facilitate the working group. This person will be requested to take responsibility for delivery of the final outcome: the Micah Paper.
- *Discussion platforms*: financing working groups will be difficult but where needed a proposal can be drafted and submitted to possible funders for consideration. A majority of the discussions will be carried out through e-mail, conference / skype calls and if possible a face to face meeting of the core group (drawing on event schedules where possible so as to feed into a wider audience for participation).

The publication of the Micah Paper will be done by the Micah Global publication arm: **im:press**. All contributors will be formally acknowledged. It is planned that the Micah Paper will be translated into the international languages used by members.

**Specific Terms of Reference****Rethinking Church****Rationale**

What is the relationship between the church and the Kingdom of God?

We need to have a renewed look at what the church is based on our current integral mission perspective. New Testament and early Christians seemed to understand the church as part of God's dramatic action in Jesus Christ of reconciling all things to himself (Eph 1:10). As discussed in our recent Global Consultation in Lima, Shalom is about reconciliation – thus we could say that reconciling work is Kingdom of God work.

What does “success” look like for the church?

Do we need to rethink the doctrine of the church in light of integral mission?

- In order to do this we need to reflect on the biblical understanding of the church through our current missional lens
- Understanding the current view of the church which can be seen as static, organisational and institutional

Questions raised by René Padilla:

1. What is the church from a Biblical perspective?
2. What are the basic characteristics of the church?
3. What is the meaning of the priesthood of all believers?
4. What does Scripture teach about the gifts of the Spirit?
5. How do these gifts relate to the mission of the church?

Do we need to find a new missional language that enables practitioner, church leader, and community member to better see the characteristics and values of the Kingdom of God demonstrated through the church?

Biblically, neither evangelism nor social action make sense separated from the fact that the Christian community is the visible, earthly expression of the Kingdom of God. What does this mean for our understand of church and what needs to change.

During the Micah Global Consultation, Melba Maggay invited us to consider changing language that divides such as *parachurch* – do we need to re think the whole integral engagement of mission in light of this?

**Conclusion:** Develop a working group around the topic **Rethinking Church**, with the outcome being a **Micah Paper** with a title drawn from this?

**Working Group Focal Person:** Johannes Reimer

**Working Group – Core Group:** 6-15 participants




**Time Frame:**

Start Date: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015

End Date: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016

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