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Micah Network

ENGLAND AND WALES CHARITY REG NO 1103048

## Micah Network 4<sup>th</sup> Triennial Global Consultation on Creation Stewardship and Climate Change

### Declaration on Creation Stewardship and Climate Change

#### Foreword by René Padilla, International President, Micah Network

The Declaration on Creation Stewardship and Climate Change, which synthesizes the findings of the Fourth Triennial Global Consultation held in Kenya by the Micah Network from 13-18 July 2009, may perhaps in time be regarded as the most significant document coming out of the evangelical movement on a subject that has hardly received in the past the attention it deserves from people who confess the triune God as the God of Creation.

Drafted by an international network that managed to organize very active participation in group discussion on the part of the people attending the Consultation, this document is a superb summary of the ecological concerns of a global evangelical network fully committed to God's integral mission, conceived as the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel. The hope is that the Declaration will not only serve as an agenda for the members of the Micah Network but that it will also encourage Christians everywhere to take seriously the global environmental crisis resulting from "ignorance, neglect, arrogance and greed," to overcome the traditional dichotomy between evangelism and socio-ecological responsibility, and to become actively engaged in practicing and promoting the care of God's creation.

Established in 1999, the Micah Network has grown into a worldwide movement of over 500 Christian relief, development and justice organizations churches and individuals. It includes over 330 active members and 230 associate members from over 80 countries. Its primary objective is to encourage the practice of that, according to the text from which it derives its name, God requires of his people: "To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

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## Declaration on Creation Stewardship and Climate Change

We, members of the Micah Network<sup>1</sup>, gathering together from 38 countries on all 5 continents, met at Limuru, Kenya from 13–18 July 2009 for its 4th Triennial Global Consultation. On the matter of *Creation Stewardship and Climate Change*, we sought God's wisdom and cried out for the Holy Spirit's guidance as we reflected on the global environmental crisis. As a result of our discussions, reflections and prayers, we make the following declaration:

1. We believe in God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit in community – who is the creator, sustainer and Lord of all. God delights in His creation, and is committed to it.<sup>2</sup>

2. In the beginning, God established just relationships amongst all of creation. Women and men – as image-bearers of God – are called to serve and love the rest of creation, accountable to God as stewards. Our care for creation is an act of worship and obedience towards the Creator.<sup>3</sup>

3. We, however, have not always been faithful stewards. Through our ignorance, neglect, arrogance and greed, we have harmed the earth and broken creation's relationships.<sup>4</sup> Our failure to be faithful stewards has caused the current environmental crisis, leading to climate change, and putting the earth's ecosystems at risk. All creation has been subjected to futility and decay because of our disobedience.<sup>5</sup>

4. Yet God remains faithful.<sup>6</sup> In Christ's incarnation, life, death and resurrection, God is at work to reconcile all of creation to Himself.<sup>7</sup> We hear the groaning of creation as in the pains of childbirth. This is the promise that God will act, and is already at work, to renew all things.<sup>8</sup> This is the hope that sustains us.

5. We confess that we have sinned. We have not cared for the earth with the self-sacrificing and nurturing love of God. Instead, we have exploited, consumed and abused it for our own advantage. We have too often yielded to the idolatry that is greed.<sup>9</sup> We have embraced false dichotomies of theology and practice, splitting apart the spiritual and material, eternal and temporal, heavenly and earthly. In all these things, we have not acted justly towards each other or towards creation, and we have not honoured God.

6. We acknowledge that industrialization, increased deforestation, intensified agriculture and grazing, along with the unrestrained burning of fossil fuels, have forced the earth's natural systems out of balance. Rapidly increasing greenhouse gas emissions are causing the average global temperature to rise, with devastating impacts already being experienced, especially by the poorest

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<sup>1</sup> Micah Network is a global network of Christian agencies and churches involved in relief, development and advocacy, and responding to poverty and injustice.

<sup>2</sup> Colossians 1:15–16, Romans 11:36

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 1:26–30, Genesis 2:15

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 3:13–24

<sup>5</sup> Romans 8:20

<sup>6</sup> Romans 8:21

<sup>7</sup> Colossians 1:19–20, Philippians 2:6–8

<sup>8</sup> Romans 8:22, Revelation 21:5

<sup>9</sup> Colossians 3:5, Matthew 6:24

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and most marginalized groups. A projected temperature rise of 2°C within the next few decades will significantly alter life on earth and accelerate loss of biodiversity. It will increase the risk and severity of extreme weather events, such as drought, flood, and hurricanes, leading to displacement and hunger. Sea levels will continue to rise, contaminating fresh water supplies and submerging island and coastal communities. We are likely to see mass migration, leading to resource conflicts. Profound changes to rainfall and snowfall, as well as the rapid melting of glaciers, will lead to more water stress and shortages for many millions of people.

7. We repent of our self-serving theology of creation, and our complicity in unjust local and global economic relationships. We repent of those aspects of our individual and corporate life styles that harm creation, and of our lack of political action. We must radically change our lives in response to God's indignation and sorrow for His creation's agony.

8. Before God we commit ourselves, and call on the whole family of faith, to bear witness to God's redemptive purpose for all creation. We will seek appropriate ways to restore and build just relationships among human beings and with the rest of creation. We will strive to live sustainably, rejecting consumerism and the resulting exploitation.<sup>10</sup> We will teach and model care of creation and integral mission. We will intercede before God for those most affected by environmental degradation and climate change, and will act with justice and mercy among, with and on behalf of them.<sup>11</sup>

9. We join with others to call on local, national, and global leaders to meet their responsibility to address climate change and environmental degradation through the agreed inter-governmental mechanisms and conventions, and to provide the necessary resources to ensure sustainable development. Their meetings through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process must produce a fair, comprehensive, and adequate climate deal. Leaders must support the efforts of local communities to adapt to climate change, and must act to protect the lives and livelihoods of those most vulnerable to the impact of environmental degradation and climate change. We recognize that among the most affected are women and girls. We call on leaders to invest in the development of new, clean technologies and energy sources and to provide adequate support to enable poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups to use them effectively.

10. There is no more time for delay or denial. We will labour with passion, persistence, prayer and creativity to protect the integrity of all creation, and hand on a safe environment and climate to our children and theirs.

For those with ears to hear, let them hear.<sup>12</sup>

17 July 2009

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew 6:24

<sup>11</sup> Micah 6:8

<sup>12</sup> Mark 4:23