



## Integral Mission with the Poor and Marginalized

Excerpted from  
**Micah Declaration  
on Integral Mission**

**ISSUE:** Do we see a need for transformation in 'developed' countries?



**T**he poor like everyone else bear the image of the Creator. They have knowledge, abilities and resources. Treating the poor with respect means enabling the poor to be the architects of change in their communities rather than imposing solutions upon them. Working with the poor involves building relationships that lead to mutual change.

We welcome welfare activities as important in serving with the poor. Welfare activities, however, must be extended to include movement towards values transformation, the empowerment of communities and co-operation in wider issues of justice. Because of its presence among the poor, the church is in a unique position to restore their God-given dignity by enabling them to produce their own resources and to create solidarity networks.

We object to any use of the word 'development' that implies some countries are civilised and developed while others are uncivilised and underdeveloped. This imposes a narrow and linear economic model of development and fails to recognise the need for transformation in so-called 'developed' countries. While we recognise the value of planning, organization, evaluation and other such tools, we believe they must be subservient

to the process of building relationships, changing values and empowering the poor.

Work with the poor involves setbacks, opposition and suffering. But we have also been inspired and encouraged by stories of change. In the midst of hopelessness we have hope.

## **Integral Mission and the Church**

**G**od by his grace has given local churches the task of integral mission. The future of integral mission is in planting and enabling local churches to transform the communities of which they are part. Churches as caring and inclusive communities are at the heart of what it means to do integral mission. People are often attracted to the Christian community before they are attracted to the Christian message.

Our experience of walking with poor communities challenges our concept of what it means to be church.

The church is not merely an institution or organisation, but communities of Jesus that embody the values of the kingdom. The involvement of the poor in the life of the church is forcing

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us to find new ways of being church within the context of our cultures instead of being mere reflections of the values of one dominant culture or sub-culture. Our message has credibility to the extent that we adopt an incarnational approach. We confess that too often the church has pursued wealth, success, status and influence. But the kingdom of God has been given to the community that Jesus Christ called his little flock.

We do not want our church traditions to hinder working together for the sake of the kingdom. We need one another. The church can best address poverty by working with the poor and other stakeholders like civil society, government and the private sector with mutual respect and a recognition of the distinctive role of each partner. We offer the Micah Network as one opportunity for collaboration for the sake of the poor and the gospel.

See full Declaration at [Micah Statement on Integral Mission](#).