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# Executive Summary

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## The Challenge of Radical Islam: An evangelical response

John Azumah

For many evangelicals, jihadi groups are obscurantist, primitive, and ferocious, embodying all the prejudices associated with the supposed 'essence' of Islam.

There is no doubt that aspects of the ideology of radical Islamic groups such as IS are rooted in Islamic texts. However, quoting Islamic texts in itself does not necessarily make one's views and actions Islamic. Those who argue that jihadi groups represent the essence of Islam assume a scripturalist interpretation of Islam, imagining that we can draw a straight line between authoritative texts and the actions of jihadists.

The truth about religious lives is not so simple. A complex, shifting web of socio-political, geopolitical, racial, ethnic, cultural, sectarian, economic, historical, and existential realities inform the way all of us live out our faith.

There are seeds of violence in some Islamic teaching, but they need fertile ground to sprout and flourish, such as oppressive governments, weak and corrupt state institutions, illiteracy, blind imitation, and poverty, as well as historical memories, conspiracy theories, foreign policy missteps by Western governments, disillusionment with mainstream society, and alienation among Muslim youth in Western societies.

While some of the legal and doctrinal edicts the jihadists cite to justify their acts are integral parts of Islamic law, they violate that law by taking it into their own hands. For example, in Islamic law, only legitimate Islamic governments can declare a jihad, not individuals or non-state actors. Furthermore, contrary to claims that the battle tactics of Islamic terrorist groups are taken from Islamic legal textbooks, many of their atrocities are at odds with all four orthodox Sunni schools.

Given the clear consensus of Islamic tradition, it is not surprising that Muslim leaders around the world have repeatedly and publicly denounced al-Qaida, IS, and Boko Haram. While these statements may have little impact on jihadi groups, they play a significant role in delegitimizing jihadi ideology and therefore undermining their appeal to young Muslims. We should therefore do what we can to amplify their influence. Western critics overlook these voices and sometimes even discredit them.

While Islam is arguably not the main problem, Muslim societies clearly have problems. Christians have to engage with Muslims in frank and open dialogue on issues such as the tacit support for jihadi groups in the mainstream Muslim world and the blind eye turned to the largely contemptuous and belligerent teaching about non-Muslims in authoritative Islamic texts and popular consciousness.

Is it not time for Islamic scholars and leaders to reexamine doctrines that are so easily abused by extremists? My questions and others are not being ignored. A battle for the soul of Islam is underway. Disillusioned young Muslims are leaving Islam in huge numbers and either giving up on religion altogether or turning to other religions, including Christianity. We see also a growing progressive trend in Islam that is engaged in a critical re-reading of Islamic texts and history.

In recent decades, evangelicals have contributed to the invisibility of Christian presence and witness in Muslim lands. We have caved in to real and imagined threats from radical groups. Instead of openly challenging the criminalization of Christian missions and evangelism in Muslim contexts, we have engaged in undercover and underhanded missions.

We must also remain watchful and prayerful about the danger of radical Islam radicalizing evangelicals into re-defining our witness and values. The battle is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. We cannot win by resorting to the weapons our opponents wield, such as paranoia, conspiracy theories, propaganda, lies, and hatred. We are compelled to use the superior arms from Ephesians 6:14-17.

## Diasporas from Cape Town 2010 to Manila 2015 and Beyond: The Lausanne Movement and scattered peoples

Sadiri Joy Tira

According to the United Nations Development Programme, there are over 214 million international migrants—people living outside their country of birth. Caused by multiple factors, both voluntary and involuntary, diaspora is a complex issue that is changing world demography, economies, policies, cultures, and societies.

The current global phenomenon of diaspora is a God-initiated and God-orchestrated missional moment in contemporary history. The mass redistribution of people has profound implications for missions strategy. Recently, global diaspora movements have caught the attention not only of government policy makers and social scientists, but also of missiologists.

Global diasporas, particularly diasporas and missions, were a highlighted topic at the Third Lausanne Congress in Cape Town in 2010. One of the issues discussed was how to minister to, minister through, and minister beyond diasporas or *scattered peoples*. Global diaspora missions were embraced and integrated into *The Cape Town Commitment*.

Lausanne III highlighted ministering to and mobilising the diaspora people. However, this push came primarily from practitioners. Therefore, there arose a need for a collaboration of academics and practitioners in the study of diaspora and missions. Furthermore, informed discussion of diaspora and missions was also needed through a growing body of literature. In anticipation of the challenges and opportunities presented by this need, the Lausanne Movement leadership tasked the Senior Associate for Diasporas to form a wider organization.

The *Global Diaspora Network* (GDN) was organized during the conclusion of Lausanne III in order to broaden the diaspora network and project the diaspora agenda beyond the event. The GDN headquarters/secretariat office was established in Manila.

The GDN has been instrumental in the formation of Diaspora Institutes at various theological training institutions. There are also increasing numbers of evangelical students in doctoral programs of various seminaries who are writing diaspora-related dissertations. Their research and writing will be major contributions to the growing body of diaspora missiology literature.

The GDN will convene the Global Diaspora Forum (GDF) from 24–28 March 2015 in Manila. The purpose of this global gathering of diaspora missiology scholars and practitioners is to assess and advance diaspora missiology five years after Cape Town 2010. The vision of the GDF 2015 is: *to gather the key evangelical leaders to engage, discuss, and mobilize the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world, specifically to the people on the move*.

The Lausanne Movement and GDN are hoping that more than half of the key evangelical seminaries around the world will offer a course on diaspora missiology as a result of GDF 2015, thus catalyzing the global church to embrace diaspora missions. More information about the forum may be found on the Global Diaspora Network website, [www.globaldiaspora.net](http://www.globaldiaspora.net).

In particular, after GDF 2015, the GDN will be publishing a comprehensive compendium on diaspora missiology to promote it as a respectable academic field, alongside other existing disciplines.

While many agencies are responding slowly to the realities of diaspora, there is a gradual realization of the strategic value of diaspora missiology for reaching the ‘global peoples’.

Diaspora mission is likely to accelerate as academics and practitioners implement diaspora missiology following Cape Town and the Manila Global Diaspora Forum. Diaspora mission is a *kairos* opportunity. I am thankful that the Lausanne Movement’s embrace of diaspora missiology is stimulating the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world, particularly to the diasporas—the scattered peoples.

## Micah Challenge International: A voice of evangelical advocacy

Joel Edwards, Geoff Tunnicliffe

In 2000 a small miracle occurred. Some 189 nations agreed to halve extreme poverty by the year 2015. The UN formulated eight *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) to achieve this audacious plan, each one with measurable targets.

*Micah Challenge*, birthed by the *World Evangelical Alliance and Micah Network*, recognized that this was a moment in history of unique potential, when the stated intentions of world leaders echoed something of the mind of the biblical prophets and the teachings of Jesus concerning the poor. We also recognised that we had the means and capacity to reduce poverty dramatically. In the words of the *Micah Call*, we committed ourselves, ‘as followers of Jesus, to work together for the holistic transformation of our communities.’

What was really new about the Micah experiment was the emphasis on advocacy. We called international and national decision-makers to account, to fulfil their promise to achieve the MDGs. We wanted to be agents of God’s hope and to put justice at the heart of the church. Micah Challenge helped more evangelical Christians understand that bad policies or corruption negatively impact every day the grassroots work of many of our churches and agencies and that, if we are to help raise the poor out of poverty, we must do advocacy.

From the very outset, Micah Challenge built its identity on Micah 6:8 with its emphasis on justice, mercy, and humility. Its mission was to prompt evangelical communities around the world to respond to the challenges set by the goals, in order to reduce extreme poverty. As a global evangelical movement we were clear from the outset that, while the focus of our work was political advocacy, our mandate was entirely biblical. We presented biblical concerns which demanded political responses.

Christians of all shapes have partnered with Micah. Together we are discovering that advocacy works. Over the past ten years, Micah Challenge campaigns in diverse countries have advocated to power, going from the holy ground of church to ‘worldly’ seats of power.

The result has been a range of activities, partnerships, and events with global movements in our campaign drawing together high-profile partnerships across the Christian communities and civil society, such *Blow the Half-time Whistle on Poverty, 10. 10. 10.*, and, last November, *EXPOSED* (the first-ever global Christian response to corruption).

The brief story of Micah Challenge suggests that there is a lot to celebrate. If nothing else, extreme poverty has been halved in the last 25 years, millions have been lifted from poverty, and child mortality and primary education have improved considerably. However, in seeing the kind of justice, mercy, and love the Bible describes, we still have a long way to go.

Micah Challenge exists to challenge governments to deliver our promises to the poor. However, we also lament, recognizing that the church—with all its amazing work—still has a long way to go to shape the world God wants. It is a world in which Jesus Christ is lifted to full view and where justice is at home with politics and our economic systems.

Such a world sounds utopian, but is possible. Christians who live in that reality between the now and the not-yet are called to yearn for a world which brings future *shalom* into the present.

This experiment in advocacy has merely been a prelude in our long-term commitment to the poorest of the poor. In 2015 *Micah Global* will take up the challenge to work across our churches and NGOs to promote justice, mercy, and humility.

## Europe's Crisis: God's opportunity

Jim Memory

Europe faces crises on many different levels—economic, political, social, environmental, and religious. As the only continent where the church has not seen growth over the last 100 years, perhaps today's crisis in Europe will turn out to be God's opportunity.

The state of Europe's economy remains perilous. Many southern European countries struggle with high levels of debt. Unemployment remains stubbornly high. In the Eurozone, individual countries are no longer able to devalue their currencies to regain competitiveness; so the only alternative is savage public sector cuts. Economically it might be better for there to be a breakup of the single currency, but politically this is unthinkable; so Europe may well be condemned to 10–20 years of very low economic growth.

The strict economic measures applied on some Eurozone countries have generated a significant change in attitudes to the EU. Nationalist, populist, and xenophobic movements are on the increase in many parts of Europe. It is also likely that pro-independence movements across Europe will get stronger.

Integration of migrants is proving to be a real challenge. Europe is also in the early stages of another social crisis: the ageing of its population. Meanwhile the economic crisis has left environmental concerns way down the political agenda.

Christians face two clear challenges: secularism, which predominates in the public sphere and relegates religion to the private domain, and Islam, which is ever more evident in parts of Europe that have not previously had a Muslim community. At the same time, sociologists of religion have observed the resilience of religious belief in many places around Europe. Some are even talking about a re-sacralisation of Europe.

Chronic unemployment will mean that 'business as mission' becomes a primary means of communicating hope and demonstrating love to tomorrow's Europeans. Social justice, simplicity, and sustainability will become key values of Christian community. Politically, the Christian voice in the public square will be vital to speak for peace, justice, and solidarity.

Intergenerational tensions will increase as an indebted younger generation rails against the wealth of the elderly and the costs of pensions and healthcare. This will make the church one of the few intergenerational communities in Europe and a powerful demonstration of the truth of the gospel.

As liberal secularism proves incapable of providing the existential security it once promised, Islam and Christianity will compete in offering hope to a re-sacralised Europe.

Today most Europeans hope not for the return of the Lord Jesus but for the return of economic growth. Even if it were possible, is economic growth really the hope for Europe? Surely only Christ can truly satisfy the hopes and aspirations of Europe's peoples.

We have become so accustomed to the peace and prosperity of the last 60 years that they are seen as Europe's normal setting. In fact they are a historical anomaly. For most of Europe's history, crisis has been the normal context for the church's life and mission. In crisis after crisis, the churches of Europe have survived and in many cases thrived. If Christians have to adapt to a new context of long-term crisis in Europe, we can do so in the confidence that previous generations of European believers have done so.

To do this we need to reject the secular eschatology of economic progress. Christians have an extraordinary message of hope at times of crisis. So the churches of Europe have a tremendous opportunity. For the first time in a generation, Europeans are questioning the hope and security that this world offers. It is the moment for churches to regain their confidence in the gospel as the hope for Europe. Europe's crisis is God's opportunity.

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*Lausanne Global Analysis* seeks to deliver strategic and credible information and insight from an international network of evangelical analysts to equip influencers of global mission.

Editor's Note: The Lausanne Movement connects influencers and ideas for global mission, with a vision of the gospel for every person, an evangelical church for every people, Christ-like leaders for every church, and kingdom impact in every sphere of society. Our three foundational documents are *The Lausanne Covenant*, *The Manila Manifesto*, and *The Cape Town Commitment*.

The Lausanne Movement is a global network of individuals and ministries from a wide range of denominations, nationalities, theologies, and strategic perspectives that shares an evangelical faith and commitment to global mission. Articles in the *Lausanne Global Analysis* represent a diversity of viewpoints within the bounds of our foundational documents. The views and opinions expressed in these articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the personal viewpoints of Lausanne Movement leaders or networks.

Articles use either American or British English conventions, according to the author's preference.

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Further information about the Lausanne Movement may be found at [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

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