What role does the church have in promoting the SDGs?

David McNabb – Unitec, Aotearoa New Zealand

ACDA and IACD Community Development Conference
The Church and SDGs

• Staff member at Unitec since 2010, registered SW, now academic leader.
• President Council for SW Education and NZ rep on IASSW.
• Member of St Luke’s Presbyterian Church, Remuera, Auckland, 18 years, now lay leader.
• Christian theology graduate.
Why talk about the Christian church and the SDGs?

- John S wanted people to address the SDG’s - present on a different area more linked to my lived experience!

- Why the church doesn’t promote the SDG’s – moralistic, conservative, Western, reactionary, judgmental and abusive, archaic..
SDG 16:
(UN, 2015)
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Christianity:
- One of the major religions in the world
- As with all major religions has a traditional role in supporting and promoting human welfare.
- Church as part of the broad NGO social development coalition at the global and local levels.
- The church is a ‘broad institution’ that can be part of the solution and part of the problem simultaneously – history of abusing children in their care and within church life – also being a protector and defender of children’s rights.
World Council of Churches

• global expression of the Christian Church - active in pursuing justice, peace and development.
• Tveit, WCC leader - how religious groups, and others, can advance the SDG’s (quoting Nabarro) - seven characteristic roles:

Seven characteristic roles of Churches advancing SDGs:

- Promoting the **inclusion** of different groups;
- Offering peaceful channels for **conflict resolution**;
- Upholding **human rights** of the most vulnerable;
- Reminding political leaders: **rights for all**;
- Helping ensure that investment takes place in communities, at the **local level** where people use their own resources;
- **Mobilizing** people, especially young people;
- Sharing expertise, services for the **hardest to reach**.
The Church and SDGs

The Community of St Luke
- Presbyterian church,
- Member of the leadership team,
- A case study for this presentation

Key areas of CSL commitment:
1. Progressive worship and liturgy
2. Social Justice
3. Progressive theological education
4. Community care and outreach
5. Youth and children

http://www.stlukes.org.nz/
What’s so **scary** about a head cover?

Muslim Woman

Jewish Man

Hindu Woman

Catholic Woman

Sikh Man

Mary, Mother of Jesus

The Church and SDGs

**CSL Values:**

- Spiritual well-being and contemplation.
- Respect for others, hospitality, and communal care.
- Including ethnic/cultural, economic, gender diversity.
- Integration of the church with the wider community,
- Resistance to the ideologies that support poverty, inequality, militarism, & unsustainability.
- Recognition of beauty, creativity, visual arts, & music.
- Inquiry, pursuit of truth[s], & theological scholarship.
The Church and SDGs

Social Justice Commitment @ CSL:

• Aotearoa Development Cooperative (micro finance in Myanmar, Malawi) & global development.
• Inter-faith programme – visits & public issues.
• Restorative Justice programme - partnership with Ngati Whatua O Orakei tribe.
• Presbyterian Support programmes – stopping domestic violence & women in prison.
• Sexual and gender identity rights – challenging PCANZ, inclusivity.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi

- Justice for indigenous Maori - truth and reconciliation
- Upholding Te Tiriti through partnership - PCANZ has a relationship with Te Aka Puaho, the Maori synod.
- CSL has been developing its relationship with Te Aka Puaho; Maori language and culture.
- CSL has developed a relationship with local tribe Ngati Whatua through its Restorative Justice programme.
The Church and SDGs

Sorry. There's no room.
The Church and SDGs

16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence (SDG Indicator)

• The Church is mixed: pro war & pro peace!
• Presbyterian Support - response to family violence, partner with a local FV response agency called Shine.
• Restorative Justice – addressing violent crime.
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, & trafficking

- The UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, the World Council of Churches and the KAICIID Dialogue Centre, co-organised "Bearing Witness: Combating Human Trafficking and Forced Migration", 23 September 2016

The Church and SDGs

16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making.


• Christian World Service, linked to the global ACT Development is the development agency of New Zealand churches, working to “Fund groups tackling poverty and help people build decent livelihoods in their own communities.” http://www.cws.org.nz/about-us
16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

- Common ground and differences of view between the Bretton Woods Institutions (IMF and World Bank) and the WCC, 22 October 2004.

- “Improvements are needed in the distribution of votes, representation, and voice among the member countries of the Fund and the Bank, particularly to strengthen the representation of developing and emerging market countries” WCC.
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms.

- WCC Statement on Syria, 9 August 2011, “All governments have an obligation to protect the lives and dignity of their citizens, and to protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms.”
  
The Church and SDGs

"I don't like losers."