



NCOSS Conference Paper

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Relating faith to advocacy: a Christian perspective



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Some key questions

- What should we advocate?
- How do we decide?
- How can we relate to the public policy process?
- How do we find common ground with the policy makers and the electorate?
- How do we contribute to the public discourse in a way that others can hear?

A method

- Solidarity with people who suffer injustice
 - ❖ How do they describe the injustice that they experience?
 - ❖ What do they want to change?
 - ❖ What outcome do they want?
- Challenging the dominant discourse
 - ❖ Ideological suspicion
 - Recognising that there is injustice
 - ❖ Ideological critique
 - Human rights analysis
 - Structural analysis (use of power)
 - Policy analysis
 - Language analysis

- Theological critique
 - ❖ Critique of the dominant discourse, including the use of religious language
 - ❖ Critique of theology corrupted by ideology
 - ❖ Renewing theology
 - Revisiting the scriptures
 - Recovering the faith
 - Finding new concepts in the tradition

- Middle axioms (policy principles)
 - ❖ Translating faith language into policy language
 - ❖ Middle ground with other groups in society
 - ❖ Criteria for evaluating policy
 - ❖ Directions for appropriate policy

- Middle axioms
 - ❖ Conclusions from the analysis
 - ❖ Check out with those who suffer injustice
 - ❖ Best wisdom for the current circumstances
 - ❖ Tentative, not eternal

- Action
 - ❖ Lobbying
 - ❖ Persuading the electorate
 - ❖ Challenging the discourse
 - ❖ Protesting
 - ❖ Providing services

Some examples

- Examples of Middle Axioms in the Uniting Church NSW Synod
 - ❖ Health policy 2002
 - ❖ Church as employer 2001
 - ❖ Family policy 1997
 - ❖ Unemployment 1992

➤ Examples of middle axioms in the Uniting Church Assembly

- ❖ Asylum seekers 2002
- ❖ Economic justice 1988
- ❖ Unemployment 1994
- ❖ Rights of nature and future generations 1991
- ❖ (Nonviolence, nuclear disarmament 1982)
- ❖ Statements to the nation 1977 and 1988