

## Evangelism and social justice

Trey Hall, the Methodist Church's Director of Evangelism and Growth, says that speaking our faith and living out justice are not opposites. He defines them as indivisible "Gospel partners" and notes that "Jesus loves people into relationship with God at the same time as he challenges systems that keep people hungry, locked out and oppressed":

"As we do social justice, we should ask ourselves if we're connecting it to Jesus. When we talk about Jesus, are we connecting our beliefs to justice for all people?"

Do we really want to say that one is more important than the other? In a ten-point ["prayer list for our \(God's\) Church"](#), Neil Richardson (a former president of the Methodist Conference) expressed his desire for "a Church which lives in Christ and speaks of Christ"

It is true that we have different strengths as Christian disciples. Some of us are at ease organising for social justice but find it awkward to speak openly about God and faith commitment. Equally, some of us are confident articulating our beliefs publicly but are less confident explaining how justice activities relate to our personal commitment to Christ.

Trey argues: "We should be challenging institutions that hold power and provision, to try to free people trapped in systems that benefit those institutions." Just like evangelism that takes the form of public speech or conversation, this "can feel uncomfortable and scary", he acknowledges, "but that's OK too."

## Being authentic about wholeness

In the podcast [Hope & Anchor](#), Trey asked Walking for Micah coordinator Rachel Lampard how evangelism and social justice relate to each other. As a starting place, Rachel offers the idea of "wholeness" – "the idea that God longs for us to live life in all its fullness". She suggests that, if you love somebody, it's not possible to be disinterested in certain parts of their life. "If you care about somebody, you care about the whole." If that's the case in human relationships, "imagine how much more so that must be for God".

Rachel argues for authenticity "in how we are talking about the wholeness of God's love for all of us".

"I don't believe God's love for us discounts or underplays any part of us when we are suffering. The Good News for somebody who is oppressed or experiencing the effects of climate change has to be the whole Good News. . . If we're talking about justice, justice may be of God, but it's also a route to God, not an end itself. So if we're thinking about wholeness, we've got to think about what the whole looks like."

We all have different longings, desires and needs, adds Trey – we are all "heart, body, soul, strength". Our task is "to be pro-whole people", treating each other as whole individuals and communities.

A short video produced by the [InterVarsity Christian Fellowship](#) / USA 2012 illustrates Rachel's point neatly. It closes with the tagline: "Faith lived out is both word and deed. Don't settle for just half."

### Keeping going

If you are committed to change and justice, how can you avoid burnout and fatigue? Rachel offers four tips that work for her to keep going as a whole person and try not to become depleted.

1. **Be part of a group.** Be alongside others who will share the burden – hold each other up and celebrate the highs together as well as the lows.
2. **Remember God is bigger than you.** You're not going to do it all; so what is your to do?
3. **Find what feeds you.** What community, or what practice nourishes you, spiritually and physically? Put it in the diary.
4. **Stay authentic.** If you care about an issue, how do you know you're still talking about what's real? What are you doing (e.g. volunteering) that grounds your campaigning in the reality of the situation?