

OUTREACH

Things we can do together that we cannot do apart **TODAY**

**FOR THIS IS WHAT THE LORD
HAS COMMANDED US:
“ I HAVE MADE YOU A LIGHT
FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU
MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE
ENDS OF THE EARTH.’ ”**

Acts 13:47

TAKING UNITY TO
THE NEXT LEVEL

THOSE WHO
TELL THE
HISTORY SHAPE
THE FUTURE

HOW TO THRIVE
IN A HOSTILE
ENVIRONMENT

LOSING YOUTH.
WHAT IF THEY
UNITED?

CHURCHES
UNITED
Celebrating
EASTER &
CHRISTMAS
NATIONALLY



TAKING CHURCH UNITY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

A growing unity among our churches

In December 2020 Taranaki churches combined for a first-ever 10am Sunday morning province-wide church service in the TSB stadium. While many could easily have taken the morning off to sleep in — they didn't. Hosts scurried around looking for every possible chair. 2300 gathered. God's people are somehow ready to unite right now — and this is true across our nation.

However, a town that had 11 churches and 16 'full time equivalent' church staff 20 years ago, today has just 9 churches and 7 'full time equivalent' staff. The need to unite more to be able to engage with the needs and conversations of our communities has increased too!

One church, unable to get a breakthrough in growth, decided to close its doors. They agreed together to all attend another church. They worked out that there was actually no net loss in the Kingdom of God if they all did this!

Arriving at their new church they found that the regular roles of rostering, welcoming, giving sermons and preparing cups of tea were all taken — so they ran the youth group and started a couple of outreach ministries. The ending of their previous church's identity had now produced a net gain!



"...but wait — there's more!" They still had a building! They offered its use to another church. Today that church has grown and is embarking on a building project to extend it!

A key question for our unity is: What could we do together that we could not do apart? But a harder question is this: What could we do better together? What if it is only people, and things that help people, that are really important? Might our buildings and various 'brands' really be just temporary tools — even if needed ones? How could we better achieve our mission across this nation?

In John 17:23 Jesus explains why he prayed for our unity: *"Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."* These words make it clear that Jesus prayed for our unity because it mattered for our mission.

Our unity matters for our mission! Let's consider these questions, and keep feeding this conversation together!

WE'RE MORE UNITED THAN WE THINK

In 2020, from Kaitaia to Invercargill, churches united to take the Hope Project Easter gospel booklets to all eligible letterboxes in their cities or towns while praying along every street.

This included both small towns and big cities — like Auckland, where grassroots churches and individuals united to deliver to an incredible 347,000 eligible letterboxes. It also included an enormous amount of adaption, as every volunteer juggled the limitations the coronavirus put on the delivery — all of which was handled amazingly, especially when noting the scale of the operation.

Our Shining Lights Trust team only believed this delivery possible by faith, due to a sense God was leading us to make it volunteer-based. It was God who then made it happen — and more! Not only did the gospel go to 1.37 million homes, more conversational outreach equipping took place through pulpits, unity was encouraged as churches worked together, prayer was enhanced — and many individuals were encouraged through their involvement.

If a vision is clear and sensible, and if processes are releasing and simple, God's people are ready to work together. We should be immensely encouraged!

Hope Project Reporting, Data and Comparisons

The Hope Project continues to be a unique and wide-reaching voice of hope within our nation. While it sits as only one part of a wider work, its media efforts are achieving unique outcomes.

The formal report on the 2020 effort can be found at AllTogether.co.nz/hopeproject, while some statistics can be viewed on the right of this page.

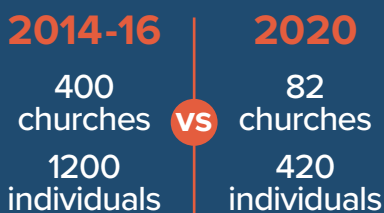


The only area in which the 2020 efforts did not go as well as hoped was finances. Costs were not covered. However, the project enjoyed increased church partnership, over 4000 extra volunteers for the delivery, and increased engagement with outreach equipping. We thank God.

The unity of churches displayed in these efforts, and the public reach of the media is of great encouragement.

A COMPARISON

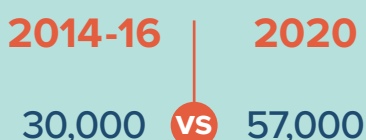
Financial participation



Partner churches



Equipping members



Project budget: \$540,000.00
 Project Income: \$455,000.00
By May, 2020
 Total Expenses: \$520,000.00

638,000

 AUDIENCE

2.08 MILLION TOTAL

 TV campaign audience:
 54% of 18-54yr olds
 an average of
5.6 TIMES

BOOKLETS

1.37
 MILLION
 HOMES
 Spare booklets:
160,000
 Spares remaining:
 Approx 20,000

892 PASTORS
 FROM
 680 CHURCHES

People receiving MONTHLY PRAYER updates:
1920

4000 DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS
 COVERING **1,080,000** HOMES IN **70** CITIES & TOWNS

2020 FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION
 82 churches + 420 individuals



2019 FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION
 74 churches + 386 individuals



PARTNERING CHURCHES

Intentional outreach-equipping in Feb/Apr 2020: **65%** of partnering churches. Number equipped: **57,000**
(an estimate — not counting efforts by non-partnering churches)

CREATED



NZ 'Christian heritage' RADIO SPOTS: **15**



RADIO ADS TO ENCOURAGE OUTREACH AND EQUIPPING: **20**

Church digital ENGAGEMENT



WEBSITE: AllTogether.co.nz
(Data reflects church-audience interest and participation)

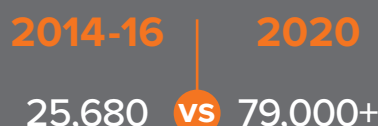
PAGE VISITS **80,170**
 Nov 2019 - May 2020:

BOUNCE RATE 2.89%
(reflecting high level of engagement)

INDIVIDUAL users **10,063** Sermon/Study resource users: **1560**

'BECAUSE WE CARE' **1346**
 equipping video page visitors:

AllTogether.co.nz web sessions



INFORMATION

AllTogether.co.nz/hopeproject
AllTogether.co.nz/Christmas

Monthly updates — Pastors or prayer updates available. See bottom of web page at AllTogether.co.nz

To donate — AllTogether.co.nz/donate

Time to become students of history

From 2022 the teaching of New Zealand history will become compulsory in New Zealand schools. It has been said that those who write the history, write the future. Might learning and telling stories from history actually be more important to our witness and future than we've given it credit for?

History is important because the stories we hear shape our perceptions. As George Orwell explained in his 'doomsday' book, 1984, "Those who control the past control the future, and those who control the present control the past." History is important!

For example, in New Zealand our history is distinctly 'Christian'. However, the public are largely unaware of this. What might happen if we changed that perception by telling the stories again — joining the 'dots' between the actions of our various Christian forebears and cultural values like charity, education, health care, equality of genders, equality of races and the freedoms of speech and religion?

Secular historians like Tom Holland (in Europe) now declare our culture 'Christian' — whilst not believing the Christian faith himself. Why — and what effect might it have if we learn from what he can see, and told that story?

For example, here in New Zealand we've been told we are 'secular' — as if secular meant 'of no religion'. The irony is that 150 years ago the word 'secular' meant to be 'of no particular Christian denomination'. Back then there was no tension between being 'secular' and 'Christian'!

The debate of our first sitting of Parliament¹ also illustrates this well. It was about who would open in Christian prayer. They wanted church powers separate from

governmental powers — so religious power wasn't compromised.

But also, if an Anglican prayed, would that make us an Anglican nation? So a man was sent down the street to find the first Christian minister he could — who was brought back to open in prayer!

What New Zealanders believe about our history does shape their perceptions. Those perceptions are then our starting point for all conversation related to God, values and religion. So it matters!

Some talk as if Christianity were an imposition of colonisation. What difference would it make if they became aware that the first missionaries were actually invited by Māori?

Consider: Is this faith an irrelevant relic of our past — or might it be intrinsic to the very values that make us who we are? Also, what about the completely unique way this faith can give people hope?

We aren't one of the most free, prosperous and equality-based places to live on planet Earth for no reason. There is a history to this — and the footprints of Jesus are all over it!

What if we all chose to deliberately learn and tell more of these stories? We could tell stories in conversations, on social media, in sermons and in various

classrooms or discussion groups. Some easily accessible resources are below.

Bicultural history stories

- Hope Project booklets — HopeProject.co.nz/ebooks/ / admin@shininglights.co.nz
- *Te Rongopai* (DVD), Dr Stuart Lange — connect@nzchristiannetwork.org.nz
- *The Chronicles of Paki* illustrated history series — BigBook.nz
- *The Years Before Waitangi*, Patricia Bawden
- *Bible and Treaty*, Keith Newman
- *Te Rongopai 1814 'Takoto Te pai'*, Many contributors.

Values history stories

- Hope Project booklets — HopeProject.co.nz/ebooks/ / admin@shininglights.co.nz
- *A Minute In History With The Hope Project* (audio stories) — Rhema Media or HopeProject.co.nz/a-minute-in-history
- *Jesus the Gamechanger* (DVD series), Karl Faase
- *What if Jesus had Never Been Born*, D James Kennedy
- *The Rise of Christianity*, Rodney Stark
- *Who Is This Man?*, John Ortberg
- *How Christianity Changed the World*, Alvin Schmidt

1. The wrongful absence of Māori and Māori governance within the formation of this Parliament is noted.



Conversational skills: How to thrive in a hostile environment

Given the pace of change in our nation's values, and increasing bias in public media, it's not difficult to see why so many Christians struggle to know how to engage in various conversations. This includes our Christian witness. What is the way forward?

What if we were to consider more carefully not only Jesus' conversational skills — but also the reality that Jesus lived and ministered in a hostile environment too? His audiences included people who were interested, disinterested and hostile — and he related differently to each.

- Jesus engaged the interested
- but only intrigued the disinterested
- and deflected the hostile.

Consider: Was Jesus always open and honest? No! While he was always honest, his openness depended on who was in the audience! The presence of 'hostile people' didn't stop him from talking though. For example, he found ways to tell stories that had a meaning people could later reflect on to understand. Telling stories from our New Zealand bicultural history, and values history, can work in the exact same way!

Despite opposition, Jesus learnt to thrive in his environment. The point of studying this topic is to discover the truth that we could too!

What difference might it make if we made 'conversational outreach' an intentional point for discussion and learning in all our churches across the next decade?

RESOURCES

BECAUSE WE CARE

Free concise 'Conversational outreach' equipping videos

The 'Because We Care' series videos can be played during church services — or used in small groups with the provided discussion guides. Sixteen 5 minute videos currently exist.



AllTogether.co.nz/equipping-videos

Titles include:

- If we don't, who will?
- How to start a conversation
- How to start a NORMAL conversation
- How to share the gospel in 2 minutes
- The power of prayer
- Disciples, not converts
- Conversations move at the speed of trust
- How to disagree without disagreeing
- The power of a testimony
- Answering questions with questions
- Avoiding the quotable quote

Subscribe for free monthly Shining Lights Trust/Hope Project prayer updates at AllTogether.co.nz or email admin@shininglights.co.nz

Godtalk.nz — for youth

A full resource package on the same things — but for youth. **NZ-made, and free!**

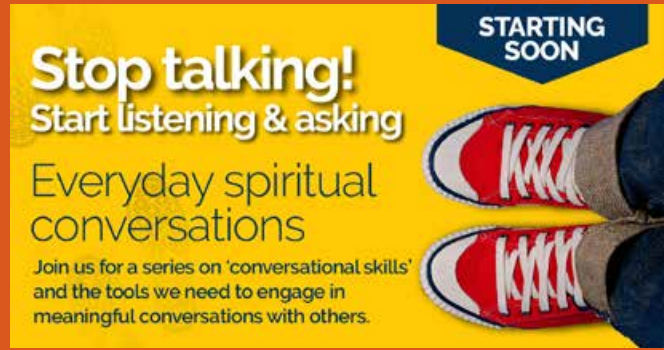
Subscribe for free monthly updates at Godtalk.nz or email team@godtalk.nz

Conversational Outreach sermon series

Four-part sermon series with both message outlines and matching small group discussions:

- Teamwork Makes the Dreamwork
- Everyday Spiritual Conversations
- Conversations that Connect
- Gospel series
- The Holy Spirit in our outreach
- Conversations in a Hostile Environment
(Coming soon)

Download for free at AllTogether.co.nz/sermons-studies



Books on conversational outreach

- **Tactics**, by Gregory Koukl
- **God Space**, by Doug Pollock
- **Elephant in the Room**, by Dave Mann
- **Because We Care**, by Dave Mann



Resources to help churches build authentic outreaching CULTURE

- **Organic Outreach**, by Kevin Harney
- The two books by Mann above.
- Video resource for pastors and elders' boards:
AllTogether.co.nz/ATConsulting
- Video resource for youth leaders and their youth:
GoddTalk.nz/leadership



HOPE PROJECT 2020 FEEDBACK

BOOKET RECEIVED WITH GRATITUDE BY SICK

A non-believer who was offered a booklet received it with gratitude. His partner was terminal with cancer, and he wondered if he had been placed in her life to help.

CHURCHES UNITED IN DELIVERY

A pastor emailed to share his joy. When asking churches in their town if they would help, participation quickly came from the Brethren, Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, New Life, Salvation Army, Baptist and another non-denominational church. With a united Church the delivery was not only quickly sorted and done, the process was easy!

RESPONSE EVEN BETTER THAN EXPECTED

A volunteer told us this story. "I finished my deliveries – and the response was so positive. One lady even got out of her car to call after me because she worked out I was giving away these booklets and she wanted one." Many others likewise commented on how positive their delivery experience had been. People who were met along the way and offered booklets were consistently pleased to receive them.

BURSTING INTO TEARS – "HOPE, THAT WOULD BE NICE!"

A pastor told of a lady who, when she saw the title of the booklet, burst into tears and said, "Hope, that would be nice"! She confided that she had had a rough few weeks, and was in need of encouragement. Those who passed her the booklet told us they remained in contact with her, and as part of that, intended to extend an invitation to visit church when the coronavirus lockdown ended.

I DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING WITH MY LEFT-OVER BOOKLETS... WOW!

A volunteer who had 4 or 5 booklets left over after their delivery decided to try knocking on the doors of a couple of 'no circulars' houses. They offered them this booklet 'about hope and NZ history'. At the first door a lady answered who had clearly just been crying; who she said a sincere 'Thank you' when offered a booklet. At another door the person revealed that they were just out of prison – and had started reading the Bible and doing "Word for Today" studies. They were pleased to receive the booklet. The volunteer was encouraged – and we can only wonder how much more God might already be doing in the hearts and homes of New Zealanders.

ELDERLY COUPLE CONSIDER THE REALITY OF LIFE AFTER DEATH

An elderly couple aged 75 and 88 contacted us for a copy of the New Testament. They said "We want to know about Jesus and the reality of life after death. Thank you so much for this offer."

DISCOVERING A NEW FAITH JOURNEY

A young lady who contacted us requesting a hard copy of the New Testament shared her excitement that she could now, "...start learning about Jesus and his teachings and how to apply them in my life". We thank God!

LOVING THE VIDEOS AT 10 DAY CHALLENGE – THANK YOU!

One person who requested a New Testament from us told us they had also started their way through the 10 Day Challenge. They commented that they loved watching the "amazing videos of whanau" giving their testimonies. "They are awesome. Thank you very much!"

TV ADS A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

"My TV recorder died, so I was stuck watching all the TV ads. I wasn't impressed with what I saw – but then your ad appeared on the Prime channel. It was like a light in the darkness. Well done!"

LOSING YOUTH!

MIGHT IT BE TIME FOR YOUTH LEADERS TO UNITE AS WELL?

With youth ministry attendance now at about 1/3 to 1/4 of what it was 25 years ago, new initiative is needed.

Godtalk.nz was created in response to the feedback of hundreds of pastors, which revealed this decline. Today 1200 different youth and youth leaders engage with the webs-resources each month. But it is not enough!

Beyond the outreach equipping that is now happening, the vision is to see youth leaders becoming united in their mission together in their cities and towns. There are many things they could again achieve together. Might we be ready for this?

Step 1: Youth leaders unite

They last longer. They share resources. They are encouraged.

Step 2: Youth leaders equip youth for conversations

They agree together to do this. Resources like Godtalk.nz — and various speakers and trainers, help. Youth gain the wisdom needed to stand tall in conversation with their peers in what is becoming a very difficult environment!

Step 3: Youth unite in their schools

They unite, pray, and ask God for wisdom. They then do what they believe God has called them to do to bless the school — while various older ones support wherever possible. Spiritual thoughts, interests and hope are triggered amongst their friends.

Step 4: Youth groups run fun outreach events together again

A crowd attracts a crowd, and so larger groups of youth again gather, while testimonies about the hope Christ brings are heard — bringing hope to a generation who are known to be in need of hope.

How our unity works

The role of some nation-wide Church ministries is to support the work of the united Church, but not to run it. Ministries like Godtalk.nz only have value in as much as they really do help! They can bring clarity to the vision, resources to help many — and maybe an occasional anointed preaching of the gospel. Whether it's Godtalk.nz, UNASHAMED, Catalyst Generation or Scripture Union — these works are the same. They are here to serve and equip the Church. What is needed in all cases, if we want results, is a Church that is locally united for its mission, and ready to innovate!

What if we worked together to help our youth leaders to unite in each place — with goals like the above? What difference might that make?

GODtalk.nz

Please support our innovation in outreach

DATES TO REMEMBER KEY OUTREACH DATES FOR 2021

HopeProject GRACE EASTER AMZING 21

FEBRUARY

- Rally volunteers for Hope Project national booklet delivery

MARCH

- Great time to equip all church members on conversational outreach
- New Zealand and Beyond Conferences
nzandbeyond.com

APRIL

- Easter
- Hope Project media effort, delivery, prayer walk — AllTogether.co.nz/HopeProject

MAY ONWARDS

- Thinking Matters Conferences —
ThinkingMatters.org.nz

MAY TO SEPTEMBER

- Shining Lights Trust 'Unity Tour' —
AllTogether.co.nz/unitytour2021

DECEMBER

- Hope Project Christmas:
Returning natiivities to visibility —
AllTogether.co.nz/Christmas

