

2022

OUTREACH

TODAY

Things we can do together that we cannot do apart

**"...LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE
BEFORE OTHERS, THAT THEY
MAY SEE YOUR GOOD DEEDS
AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN
HEAVEN."**

Matthew 5:16

THREE REASONS
JESUS DIDN'T REPLY
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601% INCREASED
LINK CLICKS:
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Three reasons Jesus didn't reply to questions

HOW TO THRIVE IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

Many are aware that the perception the public have of us, as Christians, is declining. Our negative stories are told, but not our positive. The way we are spoken about by media often carries a bias, and this affects public opinion. There is a growing hostility toward Christians, and sometimes even an assumption of intolerance.

But there is good news. Jesus lived in a hostile environment too! While we've often viewed Jesus through the lenses of our free culture, the reality is that he lived under a brutal Roman occupation, with religious leaders wanting to see him executed. Did the hostility mean he couldn't thrive or fulfil his mission? No!

However, the hostility did mean Jesus had to be wise. For example, he sometimes replied to questions with questions, or told stories, or stayed silent!

Three reasons Jesus didn't reply to questions

Hostile motive (...he investigated the motive or deflected)

When asked by what authority he did what he did (Matthew 21), Jesus could easily have replied to their question. Were it his disciples asking, he might

have replied! However, he discerned their motives, and therefore replied with a question. 'Tell me, by what authority did John the Baptist do what he did? Answer my question and I'll answer yours!' He avoided answering their question!

Toxic topic (...he avoided a reply)

When asked about paying taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22), it was a toxic question and a trap. If he undermined Rome's authority, he could end up dead. Knowing their motive, he asked, 'Why are you trying to trap me?' He then deflected with profound wisdom, asking to see a coin, and then said, 'give to Caesar what is Caesars, and to God what is God's.'

Potential misunderstanding (...he avoided a reply)

When asked if he was the Messiah or Promised One, Jesus avoided replying because he knew they could not accept his reply. When demons cried out 'you are the Son of God' he told them to be silent for the same reason, as also on some occasions when he healed people (Like with the man healed of Leprosy in Mark 1.44, or with the family of the girl raised to life in Mark 5.43)

The Messiah was expected to be a military leader who would re-

establish God's Kingdom (Israel) by overthrowing the enemy (Rome).

In contrast to this, Jesus had come as the 'suffering servant' to die for the sin of the world (Isaiah 53). He therefore declined to engage with these questions publicly — until at his trials. It is of note that when he finally did answer this question publicly in Matthew 26:63, it got him killed! (There is a time to speak — but it can be costly!)

Jesus thrived despite the cultural prejudices and misunderstandings — and so can we!

Jesus said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). We might be in an increasingly hostile environment, but that doesn't mean we can't thrive. It just means we need to adapt!

What are the toxic topics in our society? Regarding which conversations are the public primed to misunderstand us? Jesus engaged with the interested, intrigued the disinterested, and deflected the hostile. Let's learn from him!

RESOURCES: Sermon series resources, small group discussion guides and short videos on 'conversational outreach' skills are available — all for free. See: AllTogether.co.nz/ATConsulting

TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

HOW DOES
UNITY WORK,
AND WHERE
TO FROM
HERE?



This article is strategic in nature, and for church leaders. Its five pages build brick upon brick to paint a single picture. It summarises thoughts coming from discussions with scores of pastors' groups across the nation over the previous few years, with a view to encouraging our unity and collaboration. Some simpler articles follow it.

While the prayer of John 17 seems on the surface to be a prayer for unity, it's more specifically about 'unity for mission'. Beyond being a prayer for believers, it was a prayer 'for those who would believe' through them (v20). The great hope of the prayer is that the world would believe (v21) — and the world would know (v23). Unity is not only about togetherness; it is about outreach!



Part 1: Foundations

Two types of unity

Philippians 1:27 talks about us 'standing firm in one Spirit...' and then, '...striving together as one...' for the faith of the gospel. Standing firm is maybe like our 'positional' unity. We have the same heavenly Father, we read the same Bible, and we serve on the same mission. We can be united without even meeting, and can quickly sense our unity when we do gather to pray or worship!

However, there is a second type of unity, and that is 'functional' unity — maybe like in the words '...striving together as one...'. God's desire is not only that we get on well and pray together; there are things we need to do!

One Church — not many

The Greek word for 'church' is ekklesia, and it simply means the gathering. Today, many use the word 'church' in two ways. Firstly, it is used in reference to individual gatherings of Christians, which we call a church. For example, "there is the Baptist one, the Elim one, and the Anglican one in our village". A small letter 'c' is often used for 'church' in this context.

The second way we use the word is in relation to God's united Church as a whole — which is 'Church' with a capital 'C'. This refers to everyone who loves Jesus in a place. There is only one Church in each city, and only one Church in our nation. Both the local church and the united Church are needed!

What unity isn't

Unity has sometimes been reduced to uniformity. We run a big event and think that is unity. Maybe we feel disappointed everyone didn't turn up — so we complain about disunity. But unity isn't uniformity! As Christian believers we are united whether we meet together or not. You could say that our larger combined church gatherings are 'extras' — though very good extras! God is surely pleased, just as a parent is when their children play well together. Psalm 139 certainly suggests this! These gatherings can also be very encouraging, and a part of our witness (John 13:35)!

But our gathering doesn't mean we're united — and we can be united without everyone gathering!

Why then might we need to come together in one place? The answer is principally in view of things we might be able to achieve together that we might not achieve apart! It's about 'functional' unity. There are things that need doing that require collaboration!



How many of us need to come together then? All of us, or just some? The answer is surely, 'enough'! Where a need or opportunity is identified, enough people need to come together to see the need met, or the opportunity enjoyed!



Part 2: Process

A key question for our unity

The primary purpose of our united efforts (beyond our worship and prayer) is therefore to enable outreach related things to happen that require more resources than one person or group can come up with by themselves.

To put it most simply. "What could we do together that we could not do apart?"

A second and more costly question for our unity

The second and more costly question is, "What could we do better together?" This is costly because the answer likely involves someone sacrificing something of 'their own' for the greater good. For example, three small youth groups combine and meet at one local church. That church is helped to grow because parents of teenagers start to attend there. Yet, if fruitfulness in our service is important, combining in various ways might be the right thing to do. What vision do we serve?

A third question for our unity — for church leaders

This question is a re-phrasing of the first question: 'What can we **be** together that we cannot **be** apart?' The answer is that we can be the creators of a culture or environment in which our members are free to unite in their areas of interest and influence!

Consider the role of a pastor in a local church. Is it to be like the CEO who knows all that happens and leads it? Or might it be more about facilitating a culture or environment in which the members are free and released to become all they can be for God?

The same is true for various church leaders when they gather in a city or town. Pastors can create an environment amongst themselves, out of which their members are released to unite in their areas of influence and interest!

Put differently, this means functional unity is for church members, not only for church leaders! A role of church leaders when together in a city is to enable their members to unite like this, for the well-being of the whole community.

Capital 'C' Church leadership is different to small 'c' church leadership

For context, all church leadership is about a servant model of leadership, not a power model. With that noted, the way that leadership works in the local church and united Church is different. While we have authority to prayerfully appoint local pastors/



leaders in a local church, most agree that we don't have the same authority to appoint capital 'C' Church leaders (Ephesians 4) who might lead something in the Church as a whole in a city or the nation. Capital 'C' Church leadership is discerned, not appointed! People sometimes feel a personal sense of calling to do something for the Lord. Sometimes what they feel to do is in service to the interests of the Church as a whole in a city or nation. Every believer gets to discern for themselves whether they believe this person or thing is from God, and to then support if they believe it is. Different people might discern and support different things — and God can be behind this, to enable many things to co-exist! The way united Church leadership works is as simple as that!

The easiest parallel for the New Testament paradigm is to look at the Book of Judges in the Old Testament. Israel was given authority to appoint leaders in cities and tribes, but not over the nation. God didn't want them to have a king! Instead, he was their King. He would then raise up Judges when needed to lead the nation. The stories of Gideon, Deborah, Samson, Ehud and Jephthah are the result.

To put this differently, *God will raise up different people at different times for different things.* The way our various churches interpret key words like those found in Ephesians 4 does differ. However, discussion across the nation has proven that nearly all seem to be united in the idea contained in the above sentence in italics — which is plausibly the real point! God can raise people up to serve the interests of the Church as a whole in various areas — and we need to be discerning.

God's Church — without hierarchy, is changing the world!

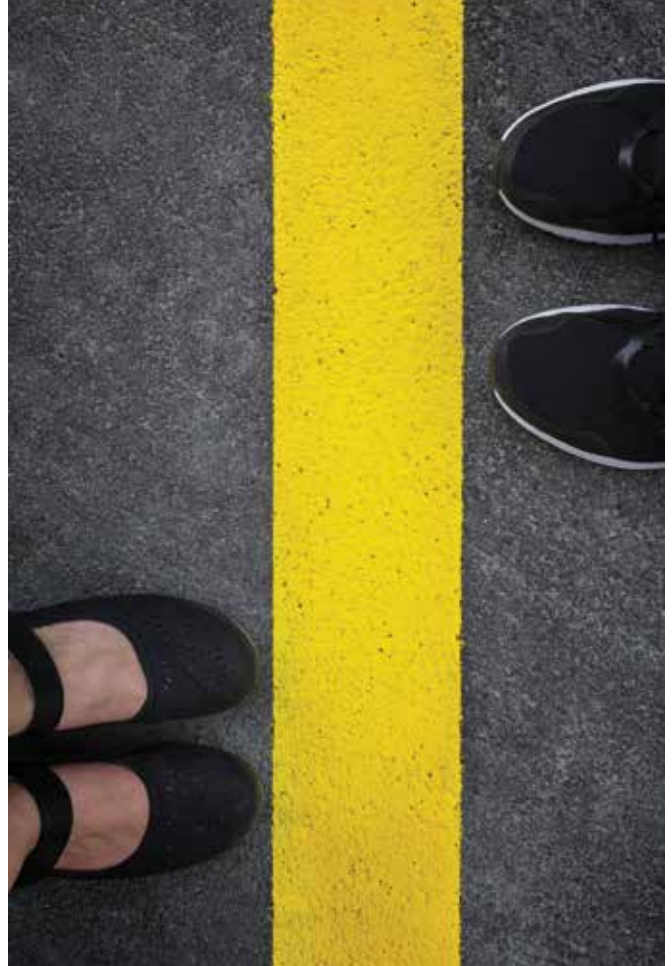
What's most remarkable is that this very organic, and non-structured, leadership system God has given the Church as a whole is working! The Christian Church was 120 people in an upper room, and then 3000. It is said that 1/360 people were Christian by AD100, 1/11 people by AD1900 and about 1/7 people today.

The followers of Jesus can also be rightly recognised as having brought many amazing blessings to our society — including beliefs in human value and freedom, equality of genders, an end to slavery and a belief in the equality of races, ideas of human rights, education and healthcare for all, concepts of charity and a lot more. The Church, as a whole, is a huge success story!



A key to increased freedom in our unity

How then has the united Church worked despite its lack of formal structure? The answer is, because we have shared beliefs as found in the Word of God, while also each being led by the Holy



Spirit! However, a lot could go wrong with this and divide us — and this is why clear boundaries are so important!

In our cultural context, the below two boundaries seem to be making sense to a lot of people.

Boundary #1: There is nothing wrong with independence

This boundary is implied by the goal: 'What could we do together that we couldn't do apart?' There is nothing wrong with doing things apart! In fact, it's good that we do!

Boundary #2: We don't all have to

This is the key boundary — and our breaking of it the main reason 'unity things' become difficult. 'We don't all have to', means that no one gets to tell anyone else what to do — or to even imply 'they should'! If leadership in the wider Church is discerned, each person therefore gets to discern who and what they will and will not partner with, without being judged for it!

It could also be true that God might enable three churches to discern a particular thing as important, while different five churches discern a different thing. What if we discern things differently because God is leading us differently? What if it really is God who is leading us, and he has provided enough people to come together to enable each thing?

These boundaries create health and freedom in the unity space — without need for judgement of others, coercion or pressure. The result is an environment conducive for increased collaboration and innovation — and that is the point!

An increased capacity — Part I: The releasing of members

Imagine 10 different ministry initiatives that could bless a city, yet that each needed specialist skills that go beyond the abilities of one congregation. Where individual churches could not achieve these, the collaboration of individuals from those churches could!

The capacity of a church's members to bring leadership goes far further than what might be applied in the context of their local church. What if we could 'let' our members deploy their leadership energies in service to our communities to a greater degree — in collaboration with others? Some are waiting for permission.

To consider the scope, some might be suited to engage with education, others with council, others with various combined city-level events in key seasons, others with Iwi, others amongst youth groups together, others between Sunday schools together, others between church worship teams together, others with the homeless, others supporting young mums with unexpected pregnancies, others redistributing excess food to those in need, others with those struggling with various addictions — and more.

So it is noted, this kind of collaboration and effort is already happening in numerous places, with multiple initiatives existing that are 'owned amongst God's people' — rather than by any one individual congregation. Tauranga and Te Puke are two examples, among many. Both places have various ministries 'for the city', run by people who are united in a vision, yet who attend various different congregations on a Sunday. It releases a new level of capacity from amongst us!

An increased capacity — Part II: The profound simplicity and effect of 'in unison' strategies

Imagine a challenge we face in common as churches. The challenge to engaging in Christian witnessing in an environment that is increasingly hostile toward the Christian faith might be an

example. How could we help church members to engage more confidently, nationally?

What if 1500 churches united in a shared vision to equip their members with 'the conversational skills of Jesus' through an annual pulpit and small group series on this topic? To consider the simplicity of this — each church could do it their own way. There is no need for uniformity or centralised control. This could be achieved simply by bringing intentionality to the pulpit, small group, and youth group discussion. No more work is required — just intentionality, and it could enable a nationally united goal to be achieved!

So it is noted, it's possible that as many as 1000 churches are already united in this particular goal across our nation — while each pursuing it their own way! 15 similar ideas have also been in discussion in many city and town pastors' groups — which the next article lists.

OUR UNITY CAN WORK TO DELIVER RESULTS!

In summary

- There are things we can do together that we cannot do apart.
- Our combined capacity is probably larger than we think it is.
- While we are probably already more united than we think we are, might it also be possible that our unity is even more important than we think it is?
- As the world gets darker, our light needs to shine brighter (Matthew 5:15-16).
- Our unity is a key to this!
- Let's keep this journey going by talking about it!



JOHN 17

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world... (v15)

...As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. (v18)

I pray... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (v21)



Ideas we could embrace in common to make a difference

This article lists 4 goal areas, with 14 applications which each church could do their own way — yet that could make a broad impact in our nation if these were to become the habits of 1500 churches.

What if in 20 years...

1. *Our core messages were still being heard — despite cultural hostilities*
2. *Our members were better equipped to engage difficult conversations confidently*
3. *Our members were engaging with increased cultural wisdom, knowledge and story*
4. *The Church as a whole was stronger in prayer?*

These are worthy goals, and here are some ways we could achieve them together — without requiring uniformity, or even a whole lot of work!

How could we work ‘in unison’ — yet in our own way, to achieve these things?



- i. **Protect key seasons:** What if we united in simple efforts to keep Christ visible in the public square in Easter and Christmas? The freedoms of speech and religion are a matter of ‘use it or lose it’. Creativity is a bridge. We can protect platforms for our hope and faith-filled messages together.

Examples: Combined events in cities and towns, Hope Project Christmas and Easter, Christmas floats, Nativity displays at Christmas, Christmas dramas in schools, etc.

Links: AllTogether.co.nz/hopeproject,

List of ideas at AllTogether.co.nz/Christmas — **Get creative!**

- ii. **Deliberately sharing Christian messages:** What if we were all intentional to initiate or support efforts purposed to keep Christian messages visible in the public square, whether through web-media, TV, literature or events. Wisdom is needed — but a lot can be said by someone who has tact! The hearing of these messages protects our freedom to speak them!

Examples: Wisely worded messages at all possible Christian-run events and programmes, noting Light Parties and children’s carnivals, plus messages on Christian TV, Christian Radio, Public TV programmes for public audiences like Life TV, combined billboard / web efforts, etc. Where could we say something sensitively and wisely — yet clearly?

Links: ShineTV.co.nz, LifeFM.co.nz, Rhema.co.nz, star.net.nz, RhemaMedia.co.nz, LifeTV.co



Resources:

Books: *God Space*, Doug Pollock; *Tactics*, Gregory Koukl; *Conversational Evangelism*, David and Norman Geisler.

Videos and small groups:

AllTogether.co.nz/equipping-videos-members

There are various topics of conversation that are increasingly difficult to engage with in our nation. Basic Christian witness can be difficult. A useful area for learning is 'the conversational skills of Jesus'. What if we united to see the following:

- i. *Conversational outreach training in every pulpit, every year.*
- ii. *Conversational outreach training in every small group, every year.*
- iii. *Conversational outreach training in every youth ministry, every year.*

For youth: Godtalk.nz

Sermons with studies:

AllTogether.co.nz/sermons-studies



The freedom of information precedes the freedom of conscience. Put differently, if people don't have access to both sides of a matter, they cannot discern what is true. When public media becomes increasingly one-sided, we have a 'freedom of information' problem. Giving people access to information is important — but, as another point, so is a knowledge of history! Where freedoms are lost, increasing care is needed with words. Making quotable statements can become unwise. How could a person express a point without making a statement? The answer is, by telling a story! Jesus said to be 'as wise as serpents, yet as harmless as doves' (Matthew 10:16). We are blessed in Aotearoa-New Zealand with a history that is full of amazing stories. Story-telling from history is an approach that can work on all public platforms!

- i. **Access to a balance of news:** Let's encourage our members to be aware of news feeds that can give a balance of information on some topics, like Family First, New Zealand Christian Network, or similar.
- ii. **Apologetics conferences:** Let's support apologetics conferences run in various parts of our nation — like by Thinking Matters. These create a platform from which thinking individuals can be heard, which lifts us all.
- iii. **Pulpits:** What if we all also preached on a current issue from our pulpits maybe three times per year — though wisely, while connecting members to sources of information they can investigate? (Better to teach a man to fish than to only give him a fish).
- iv. **New media platforms:** Our nation has many people attempting to speak up for conservative perspectives and values. What we lack is platforms from which they can be heard. Let's be ready to support new innovations in this area.
- v. **Bicultural history:** Let's all read, research, write and tell history stories related to the influence of Christian faith in our bicultural history. It is profound and influences perspectives of our faith.
- vi. **Values history:** Let's likewise learn and talk about where our amazing cultural values came from — as these stories are powerful, and Christianity is central to the story!

Links: FamilyFirst.org.nz, NZChristianNetwork.org.nz, fsu.nz, ThinkingMatters.org.nz,

History resources showing the Christian connection:

Books: *Who Is This Man?* John Ortberg; *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?* D James Kennedy; *The Rise of Christianity*, Rodney Stark; *How Christianity Changed the World*, Alvin Schmidt. *Bible and Treaty*, Keith Newman; *Te Rongopai 1814 'Takoto Te Pail'*, many contributors; *The Years Before Waitangi*, Patricia Bawden

Truly concise stories found in booklets: Hope Project booklets currently tell 50 key NZ history stories — HopeProject.co.nz/ebooks (Free copies from admin@shininglights.co.nz)

Children's stories: *Chronicles of Paki* (illustrated history stories), Alison Condon and Gina Taggart (BigBook.nz).

DVDs: *Te Rongopai*, Stuart Lange (NZ Christian Network); *Jesus the Gamechanger* (series), Karl Faase.

Radio pieces: 100 x 1min NZ history stories — HopeProject.co.nz/a-minute-in-history

Small group discussion guides to help build historical knowledge: For use with the above booklets — on the left at AllTogether.co.nz/sermons-studies

Various audio messages (incl. print material, from *Shining Lights Trust*): AllTogether.co.nz/nzhistory

**GOAL # 4 .
TO INCREASE
A SPIRIT
OF PRAYER
AMONGST
US ALL**



- i. **Let's strengthen prayer in our local churches** — whether individual prayer, small group prayer, or local church prayer.
- ii. **Let's strengthen prayer in unity with others** — whether pastors' group prayer, combined church prayer, every-street prayer or national online prayer.
- iii. **Let's encourage and catalyse what does not yet exist as strongly in our praying:** School group prayer and work place prayer.

Links: Pray As One — PrayAsOne.nz, pray-for-the-nation.org (Intercessors For New Zealand).

A potential to consider

Because these ideas can be applied by each church its own way, this doesn't offend our individuality.

Because these ideas can be applied through what we already do, by becoming more intentional, this doesn't need to make us any more busy!

Churches could therefore potentially embrace ALL of these ideas — their own way!

Additionally, if 1000 churches did this (which is plausible), we could generate a broad effect together.

We estimate that anywhere from 200 to over 1000 churches might be applying each of these ideas already — which is very encouraging.*

ARE THE OVERARCHING GOALS SENSIBLE?

ARE THE IDEAS FOR ACHIEVING THOSE GOALS SIMPLE AND REALISTIC?

HOW ABOUT IT?

* One of the lowest might be the number of churches that preach on current societal topics and issues related to the wellbeing of people. Our data and networking suggests that a goal like 'conversational outreach equipping through pulpits' is reaching a point of broad acceptance, now promoted through various church networks. As another example, the bicultural value took the same journey in just the past decade, resulting in new thinking, innovation and initiative across the nation as a result.

Connection precedes collaboration

Before ideas like those in the prior article can be embraced, they must be heard. Networks can come about that share ideas in a broad way. The most sensible or timely ideas then rise to the surface, and are embraced by many.

Please connect through our monthly e-updates

We network nationally, and these e-updates, combined with meetings with gatherings of church leaders in cities and towns across the nation, enable communication lines regarding a range of unity and outreach things. This includes promotion of the work of about 20 organisations and individuals by various means — though only in relation to unity and outreach.

Without communication lines, collaboration amongst many is not possible.

Go to AllTogether.co.nz/updates

Three options:

- ▶ Pastors' updates (for the key church leader only)
- ▶ Prayer updates
- ▶ Youth/youth leaders' updates (called Godtalk.nz).



The Shining Lights Trust is a strategic think tank, existing to identify gaps in the outreaching efforts of the NZ Church as a whole, to see innovation coming into those spaces by some means. Shininglights.co.nz/our-team, AllTogether.co.nz, Godtalk.nz, 10DayChallenge.co.nz, HopeProject.co.nz, EngageConference.nz.



Helping youth thrive in a hostile environment

Youth leaders who unite achieve more!

If you can feel a growing prejudice against the Christian faith in our nation as an adult, can you imagine what this might be like for our youth? Times are changing, youth leadership really is harder, and adaptation is needed.

One thing youth leaders can do, that is known to help, is to unite with other youth leaders in their city or town. It doesn't take long to see how the support and teamwork this enables can make a difference, including to their outreach!

Here are four good things that can come from youth leaders uniting:

- 1. The leaders last longer** — because they have an extra support network from amongst their own peers
- 2. Youth are equipped to engage** — Youth leaders can work together to ensure all their youth are equipped in conversational skills for their witness (including for hostile environments — noting free resources exist for this)
- 3. Youth are encouraged to unite so they are strengthened** — Leaders can agree to encourage their youth to unite as one, to pray together in their schools
- 4. Larger youth events** — Together, youth groups can run a few larger events, to gather a crowd and add momentum to other personal and youth group outreaching efforts.

What if we all encouraged or helped to enable this?

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour. For if one falls down, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to help him up!”
— Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Links: Godtalk.nz, Unashamed.nz, SUNZ.org.nz/youth, Catalyst Youth (FB), and all the denominational youth support structures.

Seen the Godtalk Leadership videos yet?

Our research revealed that youth ministries are attending about 25-40% of what they were 25 years ago — while 85% of those who come to faith still do so before the age of 20.

Godtalk is a response. It is a national youth initiative, seeking to help youth become effective in reaching youth again — so youth ministries can grow!

NEW RESOURCE: The amazing new 'leadership' series has twelve 5-minute videos in it, with youth leaders and young teachers helping to present the teaching. It covers topics including our mission, how to mobilise youth, what to teach, how to make teaching effective, outreach events, clear gospel communication, follow up of interested people, school groups — and more.

What would happen if all Kiwi youth leaders were equipped with these 12 short videos when they started?

> Pastors > church leaders > youth leaders

These are free online (and Kiwi-made)

Check them out now! Godtalk.nz/leadership



KEEPING CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS AND EASTER IT'S IMPORTANT!

HOPE PROJECT 2022

Christmas and Easter were established as public holidays in our nation because it was believed that the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus were important. Today, celebrating these seasons with joy and vigour, creativity and even some noise is not only fun; it might be wise!

Easter 2021 — report on our united effort together

The volunteer effort to prayer walk all residential streets while delivering the Easter 'Hope For All' booklet nationally was amazing. The effort spanned 80 cities and towns — while a paid delivery covered the rest of the country. Thanks goes to all pastors' groups, churches and individuals who participated. God's Church truly is united in its heart and desire to serve each community!



Easter 2022 — partnership invited

The same prayer walk and delivery is planned for Easter 2022. Churches are invited to again unite in their city or town, to pray along streets while delivering the new 2022 booklets.

We note that financial participation is not high for these efforts — while volunteerism for the delivery is outstanding. Increased participation with finances would be appreciated.

- For more see AllTogether.co.nz/hopeproject or AllTogether.co.nz/donate

Amazing outreach equipping opportunity for pulpits, small groups, and youth groups

The weeks before Easter are a great time to equip ourselves afresh to engage in selfless conversations that encourage faith.

Christmas 2022

It is rare to find actual CHRISTmas decorations in shops these days. Most only promote Santa, snow, reindeer and the like. Our efforts together to ensure that nativity imagery is within the public view do matter. Well done to every person who got creative, and did something!



- A growing list of your stories and ideas can found at AllTogether.co.nz/Christmas
- Hope Project Statistics page 13



HOPE PROJECT:

What does a 601% increase in link clicks tell us?

For one highlight from our data, we had a 601% increase in 'link clicks' in our public social media last Easter. A 'link click' is the one thing a person can do invisibly — as contrasted to a share, 'like' or comment. People are interested to know more!

This represents a pattern that a few churches and Christian ministries have been noticing in their web data the past 2 years.

As the world gets darker, the light shines brighter!

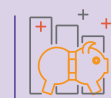
For a fuller report on the work of the Shining Lights Trust / Hope Project, including testimonies, stories and images, click the purple report cover image at AllTogether.co.nz/hopeproject.



HOPE PROJECT 2021 STATS



Project budget: \$594,514
 Project Income: \$593,540
By May, 2021
 Total Expenses: \$595,873



FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION
 60 churches + 385 individuals
 ↓-26.8% ↓-8.3%

2.12 MILLION TOTAL
SEE TV ADS

TV campaign audience: 40% of 18-54yr olds
 an average of **3.7 TIMES**

TV OnDemand Impressions: **231,361** 150% ↑

BOOKLETS
1.37 MILLION HOMES

Church booklets: **160,000**
 Spares remaining: Approx 30,000



890 PASTORS FROM **721** CHURCHES

People receiving MONTHLY PRAYER updates:

1785



4000 DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS
 COVERING **1,100,000** HOMES IN **80** CITIES & TOWNS

Church digital **ENGAGEMENT**

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

UNIQUE **13,175** users
 Sermon/Study resource users: **1310**

PAGE VIEWS **119,581**
 May 2020 - May 2021:

Hope Project **13,199** | Christmas **7,591**

BOUNCE RATE **3.12%**
(reflecting high level of engagement)

'BECAUSE WE CARE' Total Plays **17,048**



SOCIAL MEDIA



Reach **710,131**
 Engagement **250,810** 149% ↑

Easter
 Link Clicks up 601%
 Reactions up 20%

Christmas
 Engagement up 71%
 FB Frame used: 1,205x
 Shares up 23%

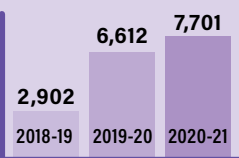
Alltogether
 Total FB Reach **25,000**



PAGE VIEWS ALL OTHER WEBSITES



10 Day Challenge
 10dayChallenge.co.nz



HopeProject.co.nz **14,176** ↑ 39.3%

shiningLIGHTS.co.nz **7,658** ↑ 27.3%



PARTNERING CHURCHES

Intentional outreach-equipping: **57%**
People equipped: 50,700
(estimate — not counting efforts by non-partnering churches)

Played Videos



23,710
67% increase

CREATED



NZ 'Christian heritage' **RADIO SPOTS: 17**



BECAUSE WE CARE VIDEOS: 10
YOUTH EQUIPPING VIDEOS: 10

SOME GREAT STORIES

I'VE BEEN PRAYING LATELY — THIS BOOKLET WAS A SIGN!

A man emailed to thank us for the booklet, saying he'd been praying recently because of a family matter. To him, the arrival of this booklet was a sign of encouragement from God. He saw that as he had reached out to God — God had reached back to connect with him.

PARTNER READ THE BOOKLET THEN ASKED, "HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?"

A Shining Lights Trust board member was out delivering booklets to help see the Auckland delivery completed. Needing a break he took shelter from the drizzle in a cafe in Royal Oak. A young lady sat near him with her coffee — and was chatty. He mentioned he was delivering Hope Project booklets to which she replied, 'I'm a Christian but my partner isn't. He read that booklet two weeks ago, and afterwards asked me how to become a Christian, and then he committed his life to following Jesus!'

BOOKLET CONVINCED ME IT REALLY IS TIME TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD

A lady contacted us to say that she found the people in the booklet to be such an inspiration that she would like a copy of the New Testament, and intended to renew her faith in God after having walked away from it many years ago. To understand her situation, she shared about marriage challenges, disability they live with within the family, and of grown children they had who were in abusive relationships. She shared — "We are good people and can stand a lot of hurt but..." these challenges, and the pain, is real and are not fixed easily. "Thank you for the booklet that has come just at the right time!"

MY NON-CHRISTIAN RELATIVE HAS KEPT ALL THE BOOKLETS

A couple fed back to us that their non-believing relative in the Manawatu had told them she was so intrigued by these booklets each year that she had kept them all. They were sitting there in her house — ready to be read again when she felt ready!

BOOKLET HELPING OUTREACH IN MANY PLACES

Many have contacted us to share how the booklets have helped them with their outreach. "We have used the booklets in our Saturday market outreach, and they have been received well." "We use these when visiting the prison." "We've been giving the booklets out with our food parcels..." "We include your booklets in our welcome packs for visitors to our church." "We gave them out at the local Market — and many people at a large city event were pleased to receive them."

FINISHED 10 DAY CHALLENGE — BIBLE PLEASE — I'M RECOMMITTING MY LIFE TO GOD!

A lady contacted us to ask for a New Testament to help her continue in her Christian walk. She said, "I have just finished the 10 Day Challenge and I am recommitting my life back to God!" With that decision she had started at an Alpha course — with the first night completed, and also told us she intended to reconnect with a local church she'd been to before. We thank God!

THE BOOKLET MADE ME THINK. I'M GOING TO CHANGE!

A lady called our office requesting a new booklet because, while hers was wet from the rain, she was already so touched by it that she'd decided to get her life right with God. She said she hadn't been to church in a long time — but was going to go back. She then asked for a New Testament — and also for a few copies of the booklet, and some more copies of the Scriptures, because she wanted to share this with some of her friends also. "The booklet in the post has made me think and I want to change and refocus on God!"

Are the FREEDOM issues important?

There is a 2000 year history behind our cultural freedoms, and history also shows that these freedoms can be lost a lot easier than they are gained. The establishing of these freedoms in history has served to protect the poor and vulnerable. Freedom matters matter!



Who says human life is valuable?

Our cultural ideas about human rights are based on the Biblical idea that people are created special ('in the image of God', Genesis 1:27). It is this idea and value in our history that paved the path for the freedoms, equality, charity and prosperity we enjoy today. But what happens if you cut the root of the tree?

Discomfort: Standing in defence of the rights and wellbeing of others is highly inconvenient. Jesus faced this challenge with the religious leaders. Their abuses of power were hurting the people. Protecting and helping the vulnerable is an obligation of love. As Jesus put it in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, "It tell you, whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me" (Matthew 25).

Discernment and knowledge: However, it is also true that we can only protect what we first understand. Without knowledge, we might discern something incorrectly, and act foolishly.

Application: One aspect of that knowledge is a knowledge of our own cultural history. Have you ever considered the Biblical and historical basis for our cultural views on human rights?

Some simple resources that could help

- It was with intent that the previous four 'Hope For All' booklets deliberately covered six areas in which the Christian faith gave our nation its values.
- Small group discussion guides have been created to go with each topic — considering both the Biblical and historical basis of these values in our nation.
- The 2021 booklet, 'Hope For All — Now Made Free' was specifically about the history of our cultural views on 'Human rights and freedoms'. What if we all did this study — and then maybe even read a book?

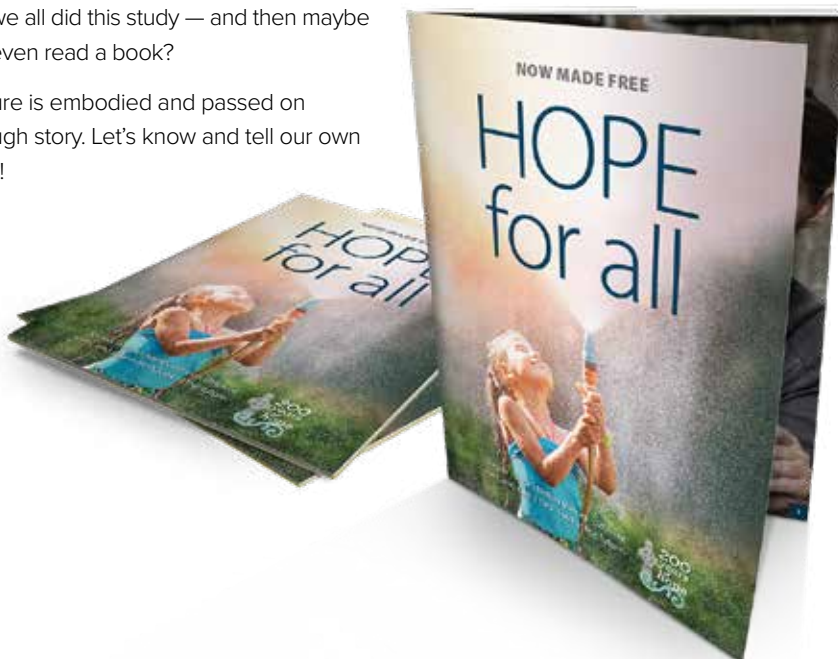
Culture is embodied and passed on through story. Let's know and tell our own story!

Booklet — online: HopeProject.co.nz/ebooks. Booklet title 'Hope For All — Now Made Free'.

Booklet — hardcopy: Request any number of any booklet for free via AllTogether.co.nz/products/#free

The discussion guide: Find the topical studies on the left at AllTogether.co.nz/sermons-studies

Other resources: A range of books, DVDs, audios and more on Christian influence in our history can be found under goal 3 in the 'ideas we could embrace in common' article on page 9.



Free concise 'Conversational outreach' equipping videos and discussion guides

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.



ONLINE: AllTogether.co.nz/equipping-videos

There's never *not* a good time to equip your members

'Conversational Outreach' & 'Teamwork' sermon series to build faith and enable engagement

Full outlines, powerpoints, social adverts and small group discussions come with these four-part sermon series.

Changing church culture is hard!

Here's a video series for pastors and their leadership teams outlining a simple and practical leadership strategy to help church leaders build an authentic outreaching culture.



ONLINE: AllTogether.co.nz/atconsulting

Stop talking!
Start listening & asking
Everyday spiritual conversations

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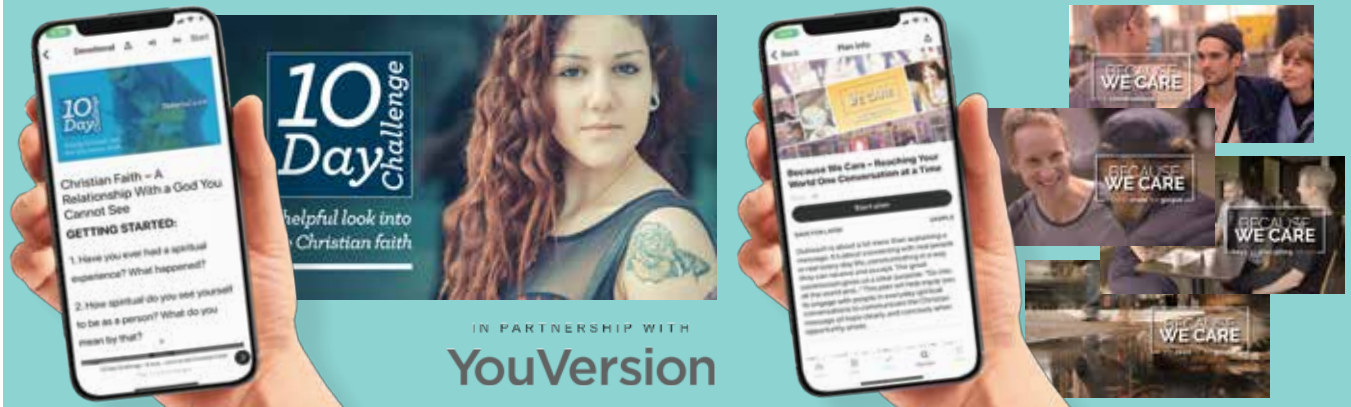


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