

# 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](https://AllTogether.co.nz/hopeproject),

List of ideas at [AllTogether.co.nz/Christmas](https://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](https://ShineTV.co.nz), [LifeFM.co.nz](https://LifeFM.co.nz), [Rhema.co.nz](https://Rhema.co.nz), [star.net.nz](https://star.net.nz), [RhemaMedia.co.nz](https://RhemaMedia.co.nz), [LifeTV.co](https://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](http://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](http://Godtalk.nz)

**Sermons with studies:**

[AllTogether.co.nz/sermons-studies](http://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](http://FamilyFirst.org.nz), [NZChristianNetwork.org.nz](http://NZChristianNetwork.org.nz), [fsu.nz](http://fsu.nz), [ThinkingMatters.org.nz](http://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](http://HopeProject.co.nz/ebooks) (Free copies from [admin@shininglights.co.nz](mailto: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](http://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](http://AllTogether.co.nz/sermons-studies)

**Various audio messages** (incl. print material, from *Shining Lights Trust*): [AllTogether.co.nz/nzhistory](http://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](http://PrayAsOne.nz), [pray-for-the-nation.org](http://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](http://AllTogether.co.nz/updates)

*Three options:*

- ▶ Pastors' updates (for the key church leader only)
- ▶ Prayer updates
- ▶ Youth/youth leaders' updates (called [Godtalk.nz](http://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](http://Shininglights.co.nz/our-team), [AllTogether.co.nz](http://AllTogether.co.nz), [Godtalk.nz](http://Godtalk.nz), [10DayChallenge.co.nz](http://10DayChallenge.co.nz), [HopeProject.co.nz](http://HopeProject.co.nz), [EngageConference.nz](http://EngageConference.nz).*