

# CHAPTER 5

## Intentional habits key to sustainable outreaching culture

For a few decades 'evangelism training' in NZ was relegated to the Saturday seminar – which even the pastor didn't attend. Something was clearly wrong. Our understanding of our God-given mission had become strangely disconnected within our changing culture. The training content was also primarily about how to share the gospel while the felt need of many Christians was for conversational skills to even start an authentic two-way spiritual conversation. However, the methodology of our equipping also needed addressing.



Somehow we had justified shifting the equipping of Christian believers for their God-given mission to Saturday seminars that were attended by only a few – when the mission of the Church is logically a needed central focus for our pulpits. These trainings were also one-off events – so what was taught was soon forgotten. What then is the solution – *and how could it be made easy?* The answer is in *understanding that habits build culture, not programmes!*

People are said to remember 10% of what they hear, 40% of what they say and 60 to 70% of what they do. A habit-based rather than programme-based approach is needed!

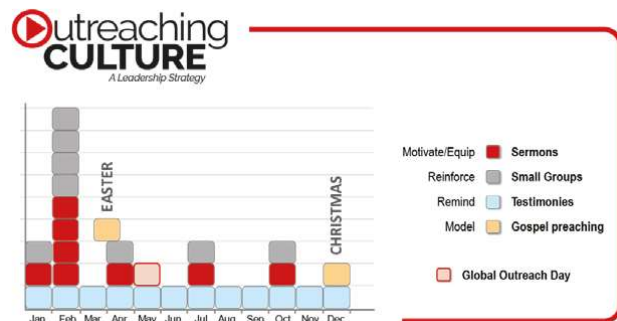
Educators in our public schooling system could teach our churches a thing or two here. Consider a Primary School teacher who has had to study for three or more years in Tertiary training – to teach 7 and 8 year olds *things they already knew themselves when they were just 10 years old*. Why is all that extra education needed? It is principally to understand educational theory, because there's a difference between telling people things and actually teaching them. Discipleship is no different.

### What a habit-based approach to member mobilisation might look like

1. What if members were motivated and equipped **annually** through a pulpit series focused on equipping for local mission?

2. What if these teachings were **intentionally reinforced** through the church's small group discussions?
3. What if the telling of testimonies (where someone engaged a conversation with the intent of encouraging faith) were shared **once per month** in Sunday services – as a habit? The leader or MC then briefly reiterates an equipping point made earlier in the year to help it shift into longer-term memory.
4. What if we gave effort to **reviving dynamic, creative and compelling** gospel preaching from our pulpits?

Applied consistently, these four habits could build an outreaching culture into the life and witness of the members, achieving more than any number of programmes – and this is worthy because it always has and always will take people to reach people!



### Resources:

- **Web:** Church and small leaders are encouraged study the vision, videos and other resources found at and via [AllTogether.co.nz/pastors](http://AllTogether.co.nz/pastors) – which connects to [AllTogether.co.nz/small-groups](http://AllTogether.co.nz/small-groups). For youth leaders see [Godtalk.nz](http://Godtalk.nz)
- **Reading:** The above habits are articulated in 'Elephant in the Room' by Dave Mann. A free pdf can be downloaded at [AllTogether.co.nz/ebooks](http://AllTogether.co.nz/ebooks)
- **Reading:** Consider also the book *Organic Outreach*, by Kevin Harney.