



## Kia ora pastors' group convenors

These updates are sent to just a couple of people connected to the facilitation of the pastors' group in each geographic city/town to remind of and highlight various things related to unity - including national connections to various initiatives or seasons.

Please take to your pastors' group meetings whatever you feel God's Spirit prompts you to from these.

- (i) In the calendar**
- (ii) Spheres of influence** (quarterly discussion guide - for city engagement)
- (iii) In unison strategies** (things to encourage - for national change)
- (iv) For thought and reflection** (articles)

We hope this is useful - and some things maybe even occasionally inspiring and faith-building :-).

Looking to all God can yet do  
Dave Mann

---

## **(i) In the calendar**

### **Term 3 - key opportunities to steward together**

---

#### **Looking back**

- How did any ANZAC / Mother's Day / Matariki outreach efforts go?
- 'The Send - Experience Tour' - any highlights / update?

- Did any go to the Forum on the Family? Any highlights?

---

## Looking forwards

### JULY - SEPTEMBER

### Thinking Matters conferences

Thinking Matters is a NZ-based 'reasons' (apologetics) ministry. In 2024 they have six conferences.



**The importance:** We are still generally losing about two-thirds of all young adults from our churches, while a lack of KNOWN reasons for believing this faith to be true is an identified primary factor. Thinking Matters exists to help us change that.

### 2024 Conferences

- Dunedin 19-20 July
- Tauranga 26-27 July
- Christchurch 16-17 August
- Auckland 23-24 August
- Hamilton 20-21 September
- Wellington 27-28 September

### Quality speakers - including some well known names in apologetics globally:

- Dr Melissa Cain Travis (USA)
- Brendan Malone (NZ)
- Greg Koukl (USA)
- Alisa Childers (USA)
- Mary Jo Sharp (USA)
- Matthew Mittleburg (USA)

**Weblink:** [thinkingmatters.org.nz](https://www.thinkingmatters.org.nz)

**Note:** Monthly 'apologetics nights' now also happen (by various names) in numerous cities to reinforce the faith of your young and old.

---

**Marriage Week: Sunday 8 - Saturday 14 September**



This week exists in our calendar to REMIND US TO CELEBRATE MARRIAGE AS A CULTURE, to renew marriage vows, to attend a marriage seminar, arrange a special date night or weekend - or bless a younger couple who need encouragement.

### Big picture notes:

- In many Northern hemisphere nations this is celebrated in February, aligned with Valentines Day.
- 3 years ago this was shifted this to the second week of September for us in the south, because February is otherwise too busy with beginning-of-year activities.
- If any have fresh creative ideas and suggestions, this needs strengthening across our nation. New initiative is welcomed. For discussion on this - contact James Muir (Marriage Week facilitator/encourager) at [taurangamarriages@gmail.com](mailto:taurangamarriages@gmail.com)

### For local application:

- **Question for churches together:**
  - What support and or encouragement are we offering to our cities regarding marriage, pre-marriage, parenting toddlers/children/teens, or in divorce recovery... etc.?
  - **To make that practical:** Could the idea of a united approach amongst churches to offer to the community a 'wide compliment' of these options - promoted to all letterboxes / in the local newspaper? Read the idea in an article titled, 'Family relationships - an under-utilised gateway' [here](#).
- **Question for each church:** What resources and ideas exist from Christian ministries in NZ that could be utilised to help people - releasing individuals in our congregations for whom Marriage and Family is a primary passion - while we make new community connections at the same time?

For more information go to [facebook.com/marriageweeknz](https://facebook.com/marriageweeknz)

---

## (ii) Spheres of influence

### Quarterly discussion guide

This is a highly catalytic idea, if we want to foster a united 'city perspective' in the church leaders of our city or town.

### **The question:**

What are our churches and people doing in this area in our city? (2 areas + a season each quarter).

### **The purpose and benefits:**

These have been articulated in prior updates - so we won't repeat here.

## **TERM THREE FOCUS AREAS:**

### **1. The agricultural, farming and business sectors**

- Seasonally, spring represents the beginning of the agricultural season, and also of the start of the primary sales season for many businesses.

### **2. Family** - noting National Marriage Week is in Term 3...

- What services do churches provide in your city/town to support families / marriage / parenting / divorce recovery, etc.

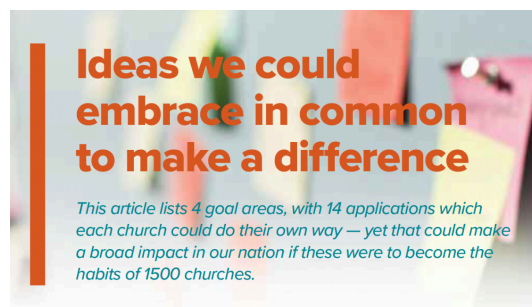
Hearing what churches and their members are doing will encourage and inspire.

All who hear will be empowered to speak for what God's Church (united) is doing in the city - in that area. This knowledge and perspective *SHIFTS the thinking and standing of that leader in the city!*

---

## **(iii) 'In unison' strategies** **(Things to encourage in view of wider vision)**

The most effective unity efforts will be those in which we unite in common goals *rather than specific methodologies - even while big events feel more spectacular.*



But how can 2500 pastors be mobilised 'in unison' to shift something nationally? The answer is 'through someone encouraging them to do so' - like you.

**Four optional starting areas of national vision:** See four overarching national goals - with 14 associated leadership habits or values that can be encouraged - by clicking on the image.

- There is a level of momentum in each area listed.
- It only grows in as much as people in leadership positions like your own see the vision - thereby 'feeling' when momentum in an area of practice is low

amongst a group of churches, *thus bringing a small word of encouragement to change that!*

**Resource:** A message by Dave that includes 'in unison' unity: '*Cultural change and what a united Church could do*' Conference message, 2019, on YouTube [here](#) (42mins).

***What could you 'breathe life into'  
through your 'by the way' encouragements  
when next meeting with your local pastors?***

---

Below the 'sign-off' here are details of a new book about 'unity' from Ian Shelton, and a couple of recent articles related to the unity space.

The next update will be prior to the start of Term 4.

We pray this is useful for clear vision and ideas that bring life to your churches together.

Looking to all God can yet do  
Dave Mann  
(Director - Shining Lights Trust )  
[AllTogether.co.nz/pastorsgroups](https://AllTogether.co.nz/pastorsgroups)

---

## **(iv) For thought and refection - related to unity**

---

New book on unity:

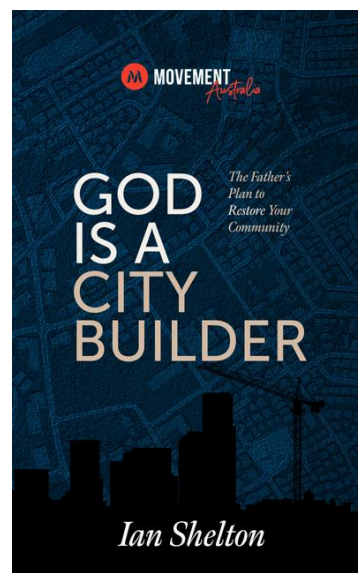
***God is a City Builder***

By Ian Shelton

Ian Shelton is a long-term advocate for and 'guru' in the unity spaces of Australia - and well known across NZ also, especially through the work of Colin and Grace Shaw with City by City.

He's finally written a book directly on the topic. Purchase the book from Ian (at 'Movement Australia') [here](#).

- Print and Kindle options available.



---

New unity article from Dave:

### **Attitudes that can SUSTAIN (or UNDERMINE) unity**

Unity is fragile. In fact, unity is very fragile. *"So much as whisper it, and it can be gone."*

What then is the key to sustaining unity?



It is surely in our hearts and the way we think - more than any skill by which we might lead. It is about values and attitudes - and here is a reflection upon this 'fragile' yet so-important pursuit.

The article suggests five brief keys:

1. Pride
2. Words
3. Functional unity
4. Denomination
5. 'Church'

[AllTogether.co.nz/sustainingunity](https://AllTogether.co.nz/sustainingunity)

---

New unity article from Dave:

### **To further unity there is a needed CONTEXT**

Because unity is fragile, there are conversations that - if we don't have them - can hinder us from being able to progress any further than we already have. Conversations are therefore a context for change - but what is it that we might need to discuss in our pastors' groups?



[AllTogether.co.nz/contextforunity](https://AllTogether.co.nz/contextforunity)

#### Application

The above two articles give pastors' groups some great topical questions to start enjoyable and meaningful conversations together when you meet.

---

Repeated article - on a current matter:

### ***What is a wise response to The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in (State and Church) care?***

The inquiry was a good and needed thing - but also very unfortunate for our reputation as churches!

How can we respond wisely when 'attacked' - *yet where the criticism is merited?*



This article was written to empower your preparation of your church members for this unavoidable conversation, so they respond wisely.

[AllTogether.co.nz/abuseincare](https://AllTogether.co.nz/abuseincare)

---