



Kia ora pastors' group convenors

Here is a Term 1 update, for possible reflection prior to your first pastors' group meetings for the year.

- This is sent to just one or two people from each city/town pastors' group. If the convenor changes, please let us know to add them.

There are four sections

- **In the calendar**
- **Spheres of influence**
- **In unison strategies** (change through group CULTURE vs programme)
- Then under the sign-off, **articles and ideas**

Please get your calendar out and take notes on what might be useful for your leadership - with the city and nation in view :-)

We note that the 'articles and ideas' found at the bottom are very encouraging - while easily missed due to length (noting again that this is intentionally only one update per quarter).

(i) In the calendar (vision and planning)

(a) To look back first

Possible brief discussion to encourage unity and engagement:

- How did Light Parties go in November?
 - How did various Christmas efforts go?
 - How did any New Year efforts go?
-

(b) Key festivals and opportunities

(Term 1: Pastors' group year-planning)

Regarding the coming year as a whole

- What **special events** do churches have planned?
- What **seasons** could be leveraged for beneficial wider connection / communication?

- Waitangi Day

- Valentines Day

- **Easter** - (Note: Hope Project booklet - while wide-reaching social media continues. Tens of thousands of prior booklets are available if desired for localised deliveries)

- ANZAC Day

- Matariki

- Mothers Day and Fathers Day

- **Marriage Week** - noting the idea of churches TOGETHER offering a plethora of courses that are promoted widely (like pre-marriage, marriage, parenting babies / toddlers / children / teens, divorce recovery, grief care etc.) Read a simple vision [here](#).

- **Halloween** - Light Parties are a valuable alternative and connection point. (The 'unknown history' + ideas [here](#))

- Christmas

- Other_____

...Any united prayer vision amongst pastors - or combined churches?

- What about a vision for mobilising members to unity - to see a prayer meeting in every workplace and school?
- Note also 'Gather25' - a global prayer initiative taking place on 1st March - details below.
- *Read an article on three distinctly-different approaches to 'unity and prayer' [here](#).*

...Any support planned to youth groups and their outreach?

The majority of those who come to faith from non-church families do so in their (early) teenage years. This is a strategically vital area.

- How could you enhance specifically (a) the unity of your youth groups, and also (b) the strength of their outreach, whether individually, connected with schools, and connected together?

...In what other areas might someone have a vision to engage in a representative way?

- **Schools/Education:** Relationship with local schools? Launchpad/Bible in Schools? Christian groups in High Schools?
- **Council/the Mayor:** Relationship? Support to local government or politicians? Mayoral Prayer Breakfast?
- **Iwi:** Relationship / connection? Have local church leaders heard the story of the land - and Christian faith on it, where you live?
- **Chaplaincy:** Rest homes, Hospital, Prison, Police, Workplace, Sports, School?
- **Support to parenting / marriage / family relationships?** (There is a simple vision for pastors' groups regarding this area in an article in this update)
- **Notable current social needs?**

Many things rise and fall upon vision.

What might you, your pastors and your many church members see as being possible or beneficial in your community?

(c) Term 1 calendar highlights FEBRUARY: Waitangi Weekend

Are there local opportunities churches could engage with?

How could this weekend be highlighted within our churches? What stories could be told?

(Some video and print resources from / collated by the SLT can be found [here](#) - while our late January pastors' update will highlight a myriad of resources, ideas and some articles from various sources - suiting church use)



FEBRUARY / MARCH: Open Heaven

Open Heaven is a series of combined church prayer and worship gatherings - with some also telecast through Shine TV.



2025 dates:

- Monday 10 February - Rotorua
- Tuesday 11 February - Tauranga

- Wednesday 12 February - Auckland
- Thursday 13 February - Taupo
- Thursday 13 February - Wellington
- Wednesday 26 February - Christchurch
- Thursday 27 February - Whangarei
- Thursday 6 March - Dunedin
- Wednesday 12 March - Palmerston North

Note: Some require booking / 'ticket purchase' due to limited seating.

See website via above image for details.

MARCH: "Gather 25" 1st March

Gather25 is a globally united prayer for a harvest. *"Every continent; every denomination; across 25 hours"*



The hope is the unity of 2.5 billion believers in one 25 hour period to gather where they are for prayer, worship, and repentance, so that we can go out powerfully and collaboratively to reach the world.

For application:

- On 1st March in each and every city and town, Christians are encouraged to gather to pray.
- Specific to Auckland: A gathering is planned that will also be telecast as part of the global initiative.
- For more details see gather25.com
 - In NZ: Contact Ps Sanjai Kandregula, 'Our City Church' Auckland, SanjaiK@ourcitychurch.co 027 6625 388



MARCH: NZ and Beyond Conference: 27-29 March

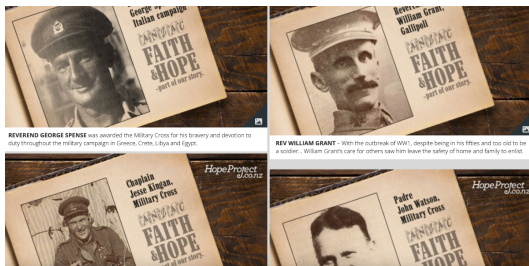
An annual conference focused on bringing motivation and inspiration to unity and outreach nzandbeyond.com



APRIL: Hope Project - Easter

While there is no 2025 booklet delivery, social media continues and prior booklets are available for localised deliveries.

- New media will be created July 2025 onward with the next decade of these efforts in mind.
- Copies of most prior booklets are available (10,000 to 25,000 of each) if a localised delivery is desired. These are free. Reply this email to request information.



APRIL: ANZAC **(25 April, 2025)**

Many churches enjoy opportunities in this season. We are wise to steward opportunities well in view of the wider cultural trend to remove Christian references from cultural festivals / holidays. (If short stories of chaplains in the wars are useful, click on the image).

Wider calendar highlight:

"Pray As One"

This is a weekly 8pm Monday united NATIONAL prayer meeting - hosted by NZ Christian Network via zoom. It is a significant connection point, enabling awareness of both national and regional needs, dynamics and happenings.

(Click image for weblink)



(ii) Spheres of influence

The purpose of this second section in this quarterly update is to encourage a brief but very intentional quarterly discussion amongst pastors in each location - considering just two of the 'spheres of influence' each quarter.

- This enables brief discussion of all eight spheres across a year.
- The resulting knowledge empowers pastors to represent God's Church in the city, rather than only their own (local) church. This can be a significant dynamic change - and catalytic for more.

TERM ONE SPHERES + SEASONS

1. Biculturalism

What are churches or their members doing in this space? (Affirm and pray for every initiative)

2. Keeping Christ in 'Easter'

What are churches or their members doing individually or together within the wider community? (Affirm and pray for every initiative)

3. Education (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary)

What are churches and/or their people doing in this space? (Affirm and pray for every initiative)

Note:

- Kindergartens
- Launchpad
- Chaplaincy
- After-school care
- Christian school groups (youth-initiated but needing support to sustain)
- Tertiary campus ministries and support.
- Christian principals and teachers

To discuss:

- 1 - What are churches and their members doing in these arenas?
- 2 - Pray blessing on each church / initiative / person.

(iii) 'In unison' unity

Unity by way of shared goals, not shared methods

A culture of unity will yield more results than busyness.

There are goals we are wise to pursue as churches nationally - yet which can only be achieved inasmuch as we as church

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.

leaders nationally embrace similar values and ideas. This is already happening.

In application, 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
3. Our members were engaging with increased cultural wisdom, knowledge and story
4. The Church as a whole was also stronger in prayer?

[Here](#) are 14 habits to help us to better achieve these goals nationally together?

New example: A more recent example of a suggested 'in unison goal' is of prayer meetings amongst believers in every workplace and school nationally. If we all cast vision for this, many gatherings would result - *with their unity and prayer naturally then catalysing new initiatives.*

Leaders build culture. Culture will deliver more results than programmes can.

Please note there is considerable 'treasure' in the **unity articles and ideas below.**

The next update will be sent prior to the start of Term 2.

Too much information? Digest this content 'one thing at a time' by subscribing to and following the 'Mahi Ngatahi (working together)' FaceBook group [here](#).

We pray blessings on your term ahead together

Looking to all God can yet do

Dave Mann

(Director - Shining Lights Trust)

AllTogether.co.nz/pastorsgroups

(iv) UNITY articles and ideas

Here are:

- TWO unity articles suiting the start of a year
- THREE NZ unity ideas to consider (Te Hahi / a united community service day, / a community-wide promotion of support to marriages and parenting)
- ONE warning: Churches are still losing their OWN Christmas events (as also charitable efforts) to 'secularism'. How do we avoid this so we represent Christ?
- ONE point of celebration: The Gospel of John to be gifted to over one million NZ homes. (Simply amazing!)

What will your pastors' group achieve this year?

Here are some thoughts from ourselves - the SLT - suiting the start of a year.

1. 'Unity and outreach' - a comprehensive article

Written as part of our 'topical outreach series' for NZ pastors, this article covers theology, terminology, denominations, 3 levels of unity, 5 key attitudes/values for health in unity, then in application 3 things pastors' groups can do within this picture (with resources then noted).



This can be read as a printable PDF [here](#) or via the image.

2. 'Fresh vision for the new year'

1. Engage in a way that connects you through ONE INITIATIVE TOGETHER
2. Work out how you could tell your own story as churches
3. Position your PEOPLE to engage in their community beyond your own oversight



- Written January 2024.
- Ideas from around the nation are referenced.
- The question and objective : How could we engage more winsomely, to be 'back at the table' more as churches, involved in the conversations of our cities?
- Regarding values: This is about leading SIMPLY - yet in a way that can deliver RESULTS. This is about leading in a way that EMPOWERS and POSITIONS both pastors *and also members* to take initiative as (united) Church leaders/servants in your city - rather than an approach based in 'important people' and busyness.
- (A 12min video option of Dave presenting this simple 3-point vision in an online zoom meeting is included).

Read or watch 'A fresh vision for local church unity' [here](#).

Unity idea: Te Hāhi

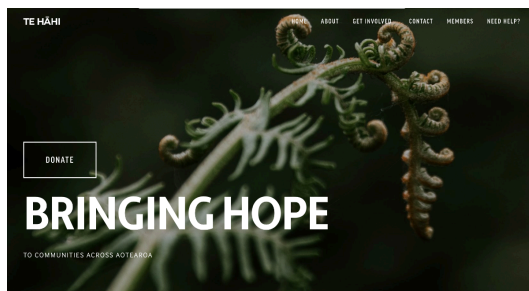
Te Hāhi means 'the church'.

Te Hāhi Aotearoa is a faith-based volunteer organisation that provides care and support to people impacted by family harm and hardship. It's about collective impact and an opportunity to work redemptively together in your town/city.

A partnership: Currently in 9 locations across Aotearoa (Gisborne, Napier, Hastings, Morrinsville, Rotorua, Kapiti, Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt and Porirua), each location is made up of a collective of churches that partner with Police and other local community organisations in providing support.

Doing what? Trained volunteers visit families on behalf of the Police, and offer awahi (support) in many ways - through kai, practical help around the home, or simply a listening ear. Making a difference one visit at a time, whilst seeing the profile of churches positively affirmed before the community, council, police and families / whanau who are helped.

To talk to someone running it: You can find the key person running Te Hāhi in these places, to talk with them, via tehahi.org.nz/contact



More info:

- Find a great printable (PDF) introductory flyer to read and share [here](#) (includes data)
- or check out the website
- or pick up a phone and give Teri or Debbie in the office a call.

tehahi.org.nz

Unity idea: Community Service Day

(A continuing Invercargill story)

With a vision to engage more widely in the community, Ps Keith Harrington of Invercargill Central Baptist proposed a day given to serving the community with practical hands - on a Sunday.

Why a Sunday? Church members are available!



[Invercargill's Community Service Day – a unity story](#)

Now engaged with Council, Schools, Iwi, environmental trust and other charities - not only are they making a difference; the reputation of all of the churches is being built!

Strategic bullet points:

- It is only one day of activity.
- In 2024 the effort involved only 2 churches, with 250 volunteers, *achieving 28 concurrent projects* on one Sunday morning (4 hours) - with broad favour as a result
- It can grow quickly - as illustrated by half a dozen other Invercargill churches who are now looking to join the effort this year.
- The idea could easily be duplicated to a city or town.
- Various benefits have come about as a byproduct of finding and meeting practical needs.

Click the image or [here](#) for a summary of what Keith most-recently facilitated.

Unity idea: Family relationships - an underutilised gateway

What if we were to engage more wisely and pro-actively as UNITED churches around family / marriage / parenting needs? This article imparts a simple idea that could generate a wide-reaching effect, benefitting the community - and your churches! Click [here](#) for a compelling and simple vision you could achieve together.



Family relationships – an under-utilised gateway

(Most churches have someone in them for whom marriage / parenting is a #1 passion. How could you - as pastors - find, release and support those people?)

WARNING: Do not go silent about Christ in YOUR OWN Christmas events! (*How not to lose your event*)

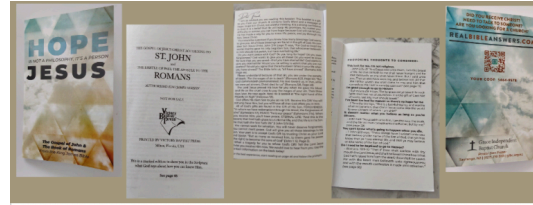
A concerning trend continues in which Christians are silenced in Christian events/charitable efforts they initiated. It is important that we LEARN how to communicate Christian messages in SECULARISED spaces - while being applauded for it! (Click [here](#) to read)



A point of celebration: The Gospel of John + Romans to be gifted to over a million NZ homes

I simply love how God sometimes works WITHOUT us.

Potentially unknown to most who are receiving these pastors' group convenors updates, a young American missionary to NZ, who has some great connections, undertook an effort to get the gospel to most NZ homes.



Applauding a new national gospel effort

The images show the front and back covers - and 3 inside pages (the info, greeting and gospel explanation pages).

- The publication includes the Gospel of John + Romans + gospel explanation.
- These Scriptures are in the process of being delivered (via paid post) to over a million NZ homes.
- The website does NOT promote or seek to bring credit to those behind the effort - instead singularly sharing the gospel with a 'chat' option if a person has questions.
- The effort is remarkably generous.

We made contact with those behind the initiative to learn about it while applauding their effort.

For more, read our own summary article regarding their effort [here](#).

For pastors' groups: [HERE](#)

SLT articles on unity: [HERE](#)

SLT Messages / Q&A related to pastors' groups: [HERE](#)

SLT FB page for city pastors' groups 'Mahi Ngatahi (working together)': [HERE](#)

City by City FB page for city pastors' groups: [HERE](#)

Book on unity: Free download of Dave's book 'In One Spirit' - free pdf - [HERE](#)

Book on unity: Free download of Colin Shaw's book 'A House for His Glory' - free pdf - [HERE](#)
