



Healthy outreach is the product of many things, not just one. This series looks at dynamics involved in building a healthy outreaching culture in a local church. Each article offers insights with practical action steps and support resources. This is about helping local churches to bear fruit.

Building an Outreaching Culture



The need for a minimum standard

If we don't establish a minimum standard for our outreach equipping and focus as churches, the natural tendency will be toward not having a standard. This has significant present implications.

A strange note: A minimum standard doesn't necessarily mean good

What if the standard we set for our churches is too low?

For a comparison, what might a 'good' or 'great' standard look like?

- In leadership, we get what we promote.
- The point of this update is that most churches and movements don't have even a minimum standard defined. What follows is a lack of action.
- This explains why the 'gospel temperature' of so many churches, ministries and church movements is so low.

What if we were to all now define at least a minimum standard - even if not yet a good or great standard?

A possible minimum standard for local church leaders

What if we were to agree together that the mission of the Church itself should get at least a month of focus by way of outreach motivation and equipping through every pulpit, small group and youth group - every year?

- This is one of the simplest possible standards.
- What might happen if this were done?

Until tried, many would likely not actually guess correctly.

What might this starting 'minimum standard' catalyse?

This has been done. If a first year of focus served to equip members on some basic gospel and conversational skills - and if sensible educational approaches were used in this, therefore achieving a measurable learning outcome - a second year would logically revise that content quite quickly - resulting in the discovery that considerably more content is needed!

- So, what could be taught in the second year - or third, or fourth?

What cannot be understood until tried is just how much can be learnt if discipleship is intentional, and done with awareness of learning theory.

If applied, this can literally TRANSFORM the outreaching focus of a church.



A possible minimum measure for members

What about the very simple idea that every church member (maybe considering age 8 up) know WHAT the gospel is and be ABLE to share it within one minute or less?

I personally think we could do better than this, but this is already a higher standard than most churches have.

...and what if our church movements / denominations were also to consider this - bringing leadership to our 'corporate' culture?

If a first standard could be accepted... ..what might we teach next?

A curriculum quickly falls into place.

If the above minimum standard were applied, many would quickly discover that the capacity of their members for learning across the 5 year period was far greater than they realised. Intentionality is the key!

As a framework

- A. Gospel skills
- B. Conversational skills
- C. Storytelling (evidence) skills

For a wider picture

- D. Teamwork (and associated invitational) skills

Data: Our own surveys of NZ churches have evidenced that intentionality in outreach equipping isn't yet the culture or practice of most NZ local churches. There isn't yet a shared view of a minimum standard.

STORY: A NZ church that set a minimum standard

A local pastor took on the challenge of ensuring every member, age 8 and above, could explain their faith in simply language. A minimum standard was needed.

So, one Sunday (this is about 10 years ago now) he demonstrated how to share the gospel message in 90 seconds with a drawing. (To note it, even without whiteboard or paper, if the drawing is remembered it prompts a person who is speaking with what to say - like here https://youtu.be/LY8jud6kmSo?si=MyR1HF_FObSkUzk4). On that very day he got someone aged about 80 – and someone aged about 8 – to come onto the stage to demonstrate. This showed that anyone could do this.

Knowing there would be no memory or sustained application without **REPETITION** he then prompted the same demonstration the following week – and a few weeks later – and a few weeks and months later... **ACHIEVING A MEASURABLE RESULT!**

The wider results that followed:

- There was now a context for wider learning.
- This church went on to become more outreach focused at every level.
- Their community engagement efforts increased.
- The engagement of the community with these efforts increased.
- The number of stories of conversations increased. Then the number of new believers increased.

The change wasn't dramatic, but the change was clear and evident – and it started with an acceptance that a minimum standard was needed.

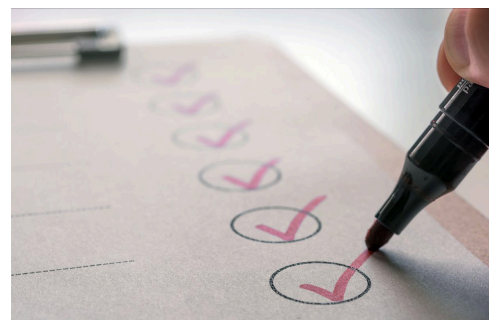
IDEA #1: What if every church, denomination and local pastors' group adopted this most basic of minimum standards?

(Freely choose a higher standard if you desire.)

The need for a FUTURE-LOOKING HABITS for the intentionally-outreaching leader:

If the idea of an 'outreaching culture' is of interest - which goes beyond the above minimum standard - here are some longer-term suggestions for visionary leaders.

Of note, everything suggested here sits within the scope of what a church leader does on a weekly and monthly basis. The key here is in bringing greater INTENTIONALITY to what we do - and through HABITS, knowing habits invariably out-perform programme-based models.



LEADERSHIP HABIT #1 – EVERYONE HAS THEIR “5”

Five people are identified by each believer who they desire to encourage toward faith. Concurrently their interests and possible hindrances are listed.

- Interests are listed to note possible connection points for individual and small group/youth group efforts to connect with them.
- Possible hindrances to faith are listed for both prayer and conversation.

This isn't a difficult habit. (How many churches consistently do this?)

LEADERSHIP HABIT #2 - PULPIT:

[Goal] With a desired minimum standard embraced that

(a) everyone can share the gospel concisely and also

(b) communicate evidences through stories and testimony, while

(c) then asking some good questions to open a conversation

[In the programme] ...the habit of **ONE MONTH** of the pulpit being given to an outreach equipping annually is embraced. We are choosing to ensure our members are equipped for their mission - as our habit.

LEADERSHIP HABIT #3 - SMALL GROUP:

All church small groups and youth group are then concurrently asked to give that one month to discussing our sermons / to an outreach equipping focus – intentionally deepening the learning, while also engaging in ‘role play’ activities so things taught can be practiced. This is done knowing people remember about 10% of what they hear, 40% of what they say and 60 – 70% of what they do.

LEADERSHIP HABIT #4 - TESTIMONY:

While this habit is often overlooked because it seems too simple, it is vital to SUSTAINED RESULTS. The habit is of a testimony being found and released every single month through both weekend Sunday services and in each small groups / youth group is highly powerful. The desired testimony is one either of someone engaging a witnessing type of conversation – or of someone telling of their own coming to faith (and of the person who witnessed to them).

A wise leader then leverages the ‘good vibe’ created to reiterate points or skills taught earlier in the year. The purpose is therefore two-fold. (1a) The outreach focus is encouraged, (1b) as also prayer for each person's ‘five’, while (2) lessons earlier taught about conversational and other outreach skills are SHIFTED INTO LONG-TERM MEMORY AND APPLICATION through their intentional repetition.

LEADERSHIP HABIT #5 - MODELLING:

The local church leader then models good gospel preaching – with simple explanations, stories and evidences at least TWICE each year through the pulpit. (The good leader also shares some of their own witnessing stories / testimonies, so their own example can speak - even if likewise struggling in witness at times, as many church members are also.)

The same gospel focus/preaching is likewise expected of the leaders of each small group and the youth group – communicating the gospel with testimony in support at least twice a year at their own events. With gentleness, wisdom and creativity this can be widely achieved.

THE BIG PICTURE: When we don't have a minimum standard we inadvertently tell our church's leaders or church members that these things aren't actually that important.

- In leadership, we always get what we promote.
- In all things, we always have time to promote what we value.

Were we to set a minimum standard, it would change things!

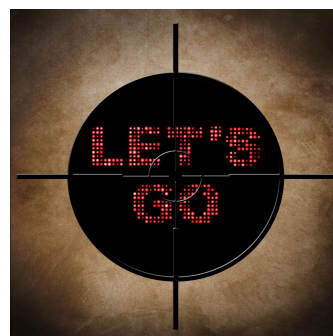
A BRIEF NOTE ON EDUCATIONAL THEORY - RELEVANT TO PULPITS :

A measurable equipping standard (with basic gospel, conversational and storytelling skills included) is **UNLIKELY** to ever be achieved through a pulpit or seminars alone. **It needs leadership** - which requires intentionality and habits!

- Repetition is necessary for **LEARNING** to take place.
- Intentionality in this single thing is the primary learning point of this update.
- **HABITS** create culture because habitual repetition and encouragement alone catalyse actual learning and sustained application.

APPLICATION: People need Jesus! What could you now do?

May God make us effective in making our MEMBERS effective!



Outreaching Culture videos:

Videos to help you build an authentic 'Outreaching Culture'
Go to AllTogether.co.nz/atconsulting

'Reviving the Art of Gospel Preaching':

Clarifies WHAT the gospel is in very simple terms - This brings motivation and vision.
Can be found at AllTogether.co.nz

'Because We Care' series:

The Because We Care 5min outreach equipping video series has two relevant videos. These suit play during Sunday church services like during offering time – or in small groups using the provided discussion guides.

Series 1 – Video 2 – “This is the gospel” (Four points – explain them each in a sentence, and you have the message summarised in 30 seconds).

Series 1 – Video 4 – “How to share the gospel” – with a simple drawing that can serve as a memory tool, enabling a simple message in about 90 seconds. Find these videos at AllTogether.co.nz/equipping-videos-members/

Culture Building:

A wider-looking 'cultural building' approach for local church leaders, including sermon / powerpoint / small group and other resources, see AllTogether.co.nz/atconsulting . The five habits outlined in this update is drawn from this resource.