

The Call to Pioneer NOVA (and A2)

By Terran and Julie Williams, 1 October 2025

About Us

Hi, we're starting a new church in Cape Town in 2026.

But, first a little about us.

We've been married for over twenty years, raising our five kids (ages 11 to 17) in Cape Town, South Africa, and carrying a shared passion for building the local and global church. For almost all our adult lives, we've been in church leadership. We're also fun-loving—family, laughter, and adventure matter deeply to us.

Terran, an avid surfer, came to faith as a teenager in a completely unchurched family—and has carried a lifelong commitment to and gift of reaching people far from God.

Recently embarking into his PhD, he loves studying the Bible and theology. He has written several books, including *Reach4Life* (Biblica), a youth-focused New Testament that has been printed more than two million times in 30 languages. He also created the Advance Church Planters Course, which equipped pioneering leaders across South Africa, the UK, and the US.

At Common Ground Church, we had the joy of seeing it grow from hundreds into thousands, planting two of its thriving congregations along the way. For many years, Terran led its evangelistic efforts and preaching team, while Julie led its ministry to women. For the last four and a half years, Terran has led Signal, a vibrant and growing Vineyard church in Cape Town's urban centre. Recently Julie joined the staff as co-leader.

Julie, gifted in leadership, prophecy and preaching, has also worked as a professional writer and strategic consultant, bringing creativity and clarity to many companies and organisations. Her work includes shaping *Orgamites*, the world's leading organ donation awareness school curriculum, which has been rolled out in seven nations. For years, she also wrote weekly articles that guided and inspired thousands of moms.

Having led in churches of many sizes—40 to 4,000—and across multiple movements, we love local churches of every shape, style, and size. Our favourite kind of church is always the one we get to lead or serve next. We deeply love Jesus, people and the Spirit's presence, and we are passionate about connecting God's Word to our world, and helping people and leaders rise into all that God has for them.

While we celebrate what God has already done, we believe it has all been preparation for what comes next—in early 2026:

- *planting NOVA Church,*
- *and pioneering a global family of churches.*

Our Calling to Plant NOVA: Haggai 1

The call of *Haggai 1:8* rings out for NOVA: “*Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and **build my house**, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured.*”

This is not passive dreaming but active faith. It is a summons to **prepare**—to climb in prayer, study, strategy, and obedience—to gather what God has already provided and put it to work.

It is a charge to **build**—not a monument to man or a church of convenience, but a dwelling place for God, a people filled with His Spirit, living stones built together into His house (*1 Peter 2:5*).

And it is a call with a clear **motive**—that God Himself would take pleasure in His church and that His glory would be put on display in Cape Town.

Haggai’s message also confronts complacency. Too many believers pour themselves into their own houses while God’s house lies neglected, and the result is frustration and spiritual dryness (*Haggai 1:4–6*). But when the people obeyed, “*the Lord stirred up the spirit*” of leaders, priests, and the whole remnant (*v14*). That is our promise too: as we rise to build, God Himself will stir hearts, empower leaders, and ignite His people.

We are not waiting for ideal conditions—the time is **now**. Nova Church is God’s idea for this moment. And while “*every house is built by someone, God is the builder of everything*” (*Hebrews 3:4*). Unless the Lord builds the house, we labour in vain (*Psalms 127:1*). So we step forward in partnership with Him to build a church filled with His presence, empowered by His Spirit, and devoted to His pleasure and glory.

Our Acts 2 DNA

As we have sought God about a blueprint to build according to, His direction has been clear: “*Release the Acts 2 genetic into the world.*” Our dream is to plant a church, NOVA, that captures the Acts 2 essence in a fresh and compelling way.

In preparation, we have spent countless hours meditating on Acts 2:1–47, asking the Spirit to show us what He wants to stir up in a new church. Acts 2 describes the very first church plant—the outpouring of the Spirit, the bold proclamation of Jesus, and the gathering of people into an authentic, multiplying community. So steeped in what he has discovered, Terran is soon to release a book called *I Will Build: Discover the Acts 2 Vision For The Church Is Building*

The three meanings of the word *nova* captures the Acts 2 vision:

- *new*
- *new star*
- *dramatic release of energy and light*

At the same time, we want to seed Cape Town and the world with churches that carry—yet diversely express—similar DNA.

Part of a Global Movement

NOVA is not only about one local church. We believe we are stepping into a global explosion of church planting that will sweep the world. In our calling, God has made it clear that we are not only to plant NOVA, but also to pioneer a global family of churches—which we have called A2 (short for Acts 2).

The metaphor God gave us for this double task is that of being pregnant with twins. Each “child” is unique—one is NOVA, the other is A2. Yet they share the same genetic material: Acts chapter 2. Both the church and the movement are to be seeded with the DNA of Acts 2.

A2 exists for more than addition; it exists for multiplication. It will:

- **Plant churches** – collaborating with partner churches to give birth to new Acts 2 communities across cities and nations.
- **Strengthen churches** – helping existing congregations recover and uniquely express their Acts 2 DNA, so they are Spirit-filled, Jesus-centred, mission-driven, and healthy in every dimension.
- **Connect churches** – gathering a global family that shares resources, encouragement, and vision, so that no church stands alone but all advance together.

As we step into this, we want to honour and learn from the wider church and other movements. Our desire is not to compete, but to contribute—to join hands with the wider body of Christ even as we pursue the fresh expression He has entrusted to us.

This is the value of a new global movement: not just one bright star in Cape Town, but a constellation of Acts 2 churches lighting up the world.

Planting Strategy

Our specific call for NOVA is to plant one church that soon enough seeds Cape Town with many smaller NOVA churches. Each of these has the potential to grow strong in its own right. Like Acts 2, our planting will unfold in two stages:

1. **Gathering a launch team**—like the 120 in the upper room—fully prepared, devoted, and committed to the mission.
2. **A public launch**—like Pentecost Sunday, when the doors were opened and thousands were added to the 120 who were ready to receive them.

We are trusting God for a suitable venue in the southern suburbs or city centre, and we feel faith to launch on...

Pentecost Sunday, 24 May.

We long for that day to be a mini re-enactment of Pentecost: the Spirit poured out, Jesus proclaimed, the gospel preached with power, 100s of men and women, young and old, children and teenagers immediately drawn in. Like Normandy on D-Day, this launch day will be a dramatic taking of ground, setting the stage for all that comes afterwards.

A Church for Adults, Teens, and Children

As we prayed about keys to unlock those we are called to reach and disciple, the Spirit pointed us to *Acts 2:17, 39*—“*your sons and daughters will prophesy... the promise is for you and your children.*” From the very start, NOVA must be a church for children and teenagers as much as for adults.

We do not want to be a church that centres on adults with kids’ ministry on the side. We want to be a church where children and teenagers feel that God set this all up for them, too. One friend’s daughter even had a prophetic dream of NOVA as a lush wonderland—a multi-storey adventure structure with slides, animals, rides, and a sense of wonder and safety. Our prayer is that every child and teenager who walks into NOVA would feel, “*God must really love me to give me this church.*”

Identity in Christ: Rooted in Ephesians 1

Another key the Spirit is impressing on us for NOVA is the key of identity in Christ. In a world where people build their identities on shifting sands—career, success, sexuality, appearance, politics—there is deep confusion and angst. Everyone is told they are “special,” but the world has no foundation to prove it. The gospel gives us solid ground: in Christ we are sons and daughters of God, chosen, adopted, redeemed, and seated with Him in the heavenly realms. This is not wishful thinking but the deepest truth about us, revealed supremely in Ephesians 1.

Identity in Christ is crucial for both evangelism and discipleship. Once we grasp who we already are in Him, obedience is no longer a burden but flows naturally—or better, supernaturally—from that identity. We are not trying to become someone new; we are living out who we already are in Christ. The discovering and living out of our extraordinary new self in Christ, celebrated in Ephesians 1, will be a cornerstone of NOVA’s life together.

Nine Distinctives: A “Spectacle” of God’s Work

As we studied Acts 2 closely, we realised that an Acts 2 church is a **spectacle** of God’s work in the world. Each letter of the word *spectacle* captures a key distinctive of NOVA:

- **Spirit poured out:** A church alive with God’s presence, power, and gifts.
- **Passionate praise:** Delighting in and drawing on the Father’s goodness and greatness.
- **Empowered mission:** Reaching the lost through “go and tell” and “come and see.”
- **Christ centrality:** Focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- **Transformed lives:** Disciples leaving the world’s ways for Jesus’ ways.
- **Authentic community:** Loving each other as a diverse family of care and encouragement.
- **Compelling preaching:** God’s Word declared with clarity and conviction.
- **Leaders multiplied:** Shepherd leaders who stand and lead.
- **Everyone contributing:** No spectators, but all playing their part in God’s work.

See the Appendix at the end for how these distinctives are evident in the Acts 2 church.

These are not random values; they come with dynamic tensions that keep the church healthy:

- **Preaching & Praise:** God speaks to us, and we speak back to Him.
- **Mission & Discipleship:** breadth and depth, growing wider and deeper at the same time.
- **Leadership & Contribution:** leaders multiply, while everyone plays their part.
- **Spirit & Lordship:** Jesus is lifted high, while the Spirit is poured out.

The Threefold Tension: Spirit, Mission, Discipleship

It is our experience that, out of all the Acts 2 distinctives, three often come into greatest tension in local churches:

- The **Spirit poured out**,
- **Compelling mission**, and
- **Transformed lives** (i.e. discipleship).

Picture them as three interlocking circles. Most churches are tempted to emphasise one or two while neglecting a third. The result is that a church will lack either impact, depth or power:

- Spirit + Discipleship without Mission → secluded spirituality lacking impact.
- Spirit + Mission without Discipleship → shallow ministry lacking depth.
- Discipleship + Mission without Spirit → social activism lacking power.

NOVA longs to be a church that holds all three—living in the tension and synergy that results:

- Spirit + Discipleship + Mission → power + depth + impact → An Acts 2 church.

Our Fishing Ground: The Blue Waters

When Jesus first called Peter and his companions, he told them to “*launch out into the deep water*” and let down their nets (Luke 5:4). It was a foretaste of Pentecost—when Peter’s single cast of the gospel net would draw in thousands.

We celebrate every church God has raised up in Cape Town. We do not plant churches to compete with others. Our call is not to fish in the crowded “red waters,” where churches compete for the same 20% of people who already attend church.

Instead, we want to launch into the deep open “blue waters”—the 80% of people in Cape Town who do not yet follow Jesus. This takes faith, courage, and an abundance mindset. Our heart is to reach those families and individuals who have yet to discover the glory of God in Christ and the wonder of belonging to an Acts 2 church—and those churchless believers who want to see Pentecost unfold afresh in our day.

In Short

In short, NOVA is a new church in Cape Town, born out of our call from *Haggai 1* and shaped by the explosive DNA of *Acts 2*.

We believe God is raising up a church—a *new star in the sky*—that will:

- launch on Pentecost Sunday with a re-enactment of its power,
- shine with His Spirit,
- proclaim Jesus with power,
- embrace adults, teens, and children together,
- ground people in their Ephesians 1 identity in Christ,
- hold the vital tension of Spirit, Mission, and Discipleship,
- be cast as a net into the blue waters of those far from God,
- multiply into many fresh expressions across the city,
- and help to spearhead a global explosion of Acts 2 churches.

Appendix: Nine Distinctives of an Acts 2 Church

(SPECTACLE)

S – Spirit poured out: a church alive with God’s presence, power, and gifts.

An Acts 2 church is marked first and foremost by the Spirit’s outpouring. “*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them*” (v4). This was no ordinary gathering—it was God Himself filling His people with power, presence, and gifts. Without the Spirit, the church is just another human organisation. With the Spirit, it becomes the dwelling place of God on earth.

P – Passionate praise: delighting in and drawing on the Father’s goodness and greatness.

An Acts 2 church lifts its voice in praise and prayer. At Pentecost, the Spirit enabled them to “*declare the wonders of God*” (v11), rejoicing in His greatness. The believers were also “*praising God*” (v47). They also “*devoted themselves ... to the prayers*” (v42), drawing on His goodness. Prayer is the heartbeat of a people who need God’s grace; praise the heartbeat of those who have tasted it.

E – Empowered mission: reaching the lost through “go and tell” and “come and see.”

An Acts 2 church is not inward-looking but outward-reaching. The Spirit’s outpouring drew a crowd from every nation, and the gospel was proclaimed in their own languages (v5–11). The result was astonishing: “*about three thousand were added to their number that day*” (v41). And this momentum didn’t stop there—Luke concludes, “*the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved*” (v47). Empowered mission is not a one-off event but an ongoing reality, where God Himself continually brings new people into His family through the active witness of His church.

C – Christ centrality: focusing on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

An Acts 2 church exalts the Lord Jesus above all. Peter’s sermon climaxed with the declaration: “*God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah*” (v36). Everything revolves around His death, resurrection, and exaltation. In Acts 2, the Spirit is poured out so that Jesus may be proclaimed, known, worshipped, and obeyed. The centre is not a programme or personality, but the risen Christ.

T – Transformed lives: disciples leaving the world’s ways for the ways of Jesus.

An Acts 2 church is a discipling community where lives are changed. “*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching*” (v42), and this devotion reshaped their thinking, their living, and their priorities. Discipleship in Acts 2 is not a course but a way of life—abandoning the world’s “*corrupt*” (v40) ways to follow the ways of Jesus—“*the paths of life*” (v28)—being transformed from the inside out.

A – Authentic community: loving each other as a diverse family of care and encouragement.

An Acts 2 church embodies genuine, sacrificial fellowship. “*They devoted themselves ... to fellowship*” and “*all the believers were together and had everything in common*” (v42, v44). This was not surface-level friendliness but authentic community—getting into each other’s homes and lives, sharing meals, possessions, and hearts. In a world of isolation, an Acts 2 church shines as a family where everyone welcomes, encourages and cares for others.

C – Compelling preaching: God’s word declared with clarity and conviction.

An Acts 2 church proclaims God’s word with boldness and authority. On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and explained what God was doing, anchoring it in Scripture: “*This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel*” (v16). His sermon was not clever opinion but Spirit-empowered truth, and the result was “*they were cut to the heart*” (v37). The Word preached in power brings conviction, repentance, and faith.

L – Leaders multiplied: Shepherd leaders who stand and lead.

An Acts 2 church is led by catalytic leaders who release others into ministry. The apostles stepped up with courage and clarity—Peter stood with the Eleven to preach (v14)—but their leadership did not create dependency. Instead, the whole community was mobilised in mission, fellowship, worship, and service. Leadership in Acts 2 equips and multiplies, setting others ablaze for God’s purposes.

E – Everyone contributing: no spectators, but all playing their part in God’s work.

An Acts 2 church is not a stage with performers and an audience; it is a body where everyone plays their part. “*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit*” who “*enabled them*” (v4). Ministry was not reserved for a few, but flowed through the whole community—men and women, young and old (v17). Every believer steps into Spirit-filled service: giving generously (v45), showing radical hospitality (v46), and bearing witness to Jesus (v47). Everyone carried a flame, contributing to the life and mission of the church.