



MOVEMENT

WHAT, WHY & HOW TO PARTNER:

APPENDICES

MARCH 2026 VERSION

To keep the “A2 Movement: What, Why and How” from being too long, it was decided to create this separate document for its appendices.

March 2026: This is a first version that may have been updated by the time you read this. The latest version will be found on www.A2churches.com (once that website is up).

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Appendix: How God Directed Us to Initiate A Movement

After many nudges, direct words, and deep breaths, Julie and I have initiated the A2 Movement. We believe that this movement will consist of many churches that are planted from scratch, as well as many existing churches looking to join such a movement.

Perhaps most people will simply accept our claim that “God has put in the heart” of Julie and I to “begin this good work” (quoting Nehemiah 2:12, 18).

But others may want to know how we came to the firm conclusion that this is so. This appendix attempts to answer that curiosity. At the same time, we only include this as an appendix because we don’t want the movement to be about us, and don’t think most people need to know this at all.

There are many ways God has spoken to us about starting A2:

- *through what he is doing in our cities and world*
- *by reflecting on our ministry to date*
- *by noticing the need for a non-complementarian movement*
- *through the prophetic words of others*
- *through the feedback of others*
- *to me personally*

Observing What God is Doing in our Cities and World

As I look around the developed parts of the city of Cape Town, I’ve noticed that most of the church-planting in the last two decades originate from recently formed movements.

Different as their theology and emphases may be, what all of these churches have in common is that they have been planted by a relatively young church movement. These churches tuck into that tribe for ongoing motivation and resourcing, and partner with it for greater church-planting possibilities.

Reflecting On Our Ministry To Date

We have been blessed to plant and help multiple churches grow. Having had the privilege of serving in Common Ground Church over a period of 20 years (as it grew from 200 to 4000 in Sunday meetings), we planted and led two of its congregations within the Common Ground family. Both of these churches continue to thrive.

While still at Common Ground, I personally specialized in honing our team's teaching and theological depth, as well as sharpening its missional advance—helping our family of churches to continue to grow through reaching the lost.

After Common Ground, I took leadership of a Vineyard church based in the city centre. Over the five years we were there, we marvelled as God steadily grew the congregation, while depositing a new hunger for His presence in us, as well as a deep appreciation for smaller church. Having handed over that church toward the end of 2025, Julie and I have now embarked on planting Nova church.

In all of these churches, the grace to pioneer, to raise up other leaders, and to establish thriving churches that remain to this day has been the enduring fruit of our ministry.

The Need for a Mutualist Movement

Many (or most) movements that I know of have thrived in recent decades in my city tend to be exclusively male-led. While these movements have made a significant global impact, their complementarian frameworks have caused some churches to step away or drift to the margins.

For decades, I personally held a soft complementarian position. However, after an extended season of careful biblical, theological, and historical investigation, I became persuaded that Scripture supports a mutualist vision of leadership—one in which men and women bring their God-given, complementary differences into genuine partnership. This includes men and women serving together on preaching teams and leadership teams within the local church. I sought to articulate and document this theological journey in my book *How God Sees Women*. While I am personally persuaded of this position, I remain glad to fellowship with and partner alongside

churches and leaders who are not fully convinced, yet who hold different convictions in good faith.

I know of many churches and church leaders who find themselves in a similar place. They carry a deep conviction to be part of a world-impacting, gospel-advancing, church-planting movement that offers genuine space for the full partnership of men and women in leadership.

A2 will honour the fruit and legacy of other movements, while intentionally making room for gifted and qualified men and women to lead alongside one another.

As I explain in *Common Doctrine: What a Church Must Believe in A2*, A2 also makes space for soft complementarian churches that are, to a degree, *functionally* mutualist, in that women preach on Sundays, and eldership teams consist of couples.

Prophetic Words of Others

Over the period of a year, I received multiple prophetic words—many from people who didn't know me—confirming my call to play an apostolic role. Not in a title-driven sense, but in the sense of strengthening, planting, and connecting churches.

Here are three significant examples from 2024:

3 March—A visiting Indian prophet, after sharing highly accurate words of knowledge, said plainly: *“Terran, God has given you a groundbreaking anointing. You will oversee many churches.”*

7 August—I was unexpectedly invited to join five men from different churches to receive ministry from seven prophetic women from the US, who had felt led by God to come to Cape Town to call people into ministry. One striking word was spoken:

- *“You are a shepherd, but also a builder of a movement of churches.”*

6 November—At a small group gathering, during a prophetic activation exercise, a gentle older woman named Verna—who I didn't even know could prophesy—spoke these words:

- *“God has much more for you—far more than you realise. Your ministry will go global. Serving one church alone is too small a stewardship of your life. You’ll build platforms and establish churches. Much travel lies ahead. It’s part of your calling.”*

The Feedback of Other Churches

In my experience of working into churches beyond my own, we have found a special enabling by the Spirit to strengthen those churches. Moreover, in the period of a few months during 2024, three different leaders in different cities and nations said something unexpected: “If you started a movement, we’d consider joining it.” We didn’t ask for this, or indeed even desire it. But as others continue to see a grace on our lives to strengthen churches and catalyse things, it became increasingly hard to ignore.

What God Has Been Saying To Me Personally

During 2023–2025, I sensed a growing call from God—something I recorded repeatedly in my journal. Looking back over these entries, I can see a consistent thread in what I believed God was impressing on me at the time:

- On several occasions, I wrote that I believed God was highlighting a kind of pioneering grace on my life—positioning me at the front of something that would serve many others. I noted a strong sense of being called to build an Ephesians 4:11 team, focused on planting Jesus-centred, Spirit-empowered churches. Alongside this, I recorded a deep impression that God was inviting us to trust him for great fruitfulness—“as many jars as you give me, I will fill”—and to dream beyond what felt naturally possible.
- At another point, I wrote that I believed God was calling me to begin a movement, with the sense that there were already many churches poised to respond, and that our obedience might become a catalytic step for others.
- While Julie and I were in Antalya, Turkey—walking through ancient gates once entered by Paul—I recorded a strong impression that, just as Paul and Barnabas entered cities and saw communities of faith established, so there may be a call on our lives to go into cities with a view to seeing churches formed and strengthened. I wrote that I sensed this could have wider impact across multiple cities over time.

- In another entry, I reflected on the picture of David at the cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 22), and wrote that I believed God might gather to this initiative a number of leaders who feel discontented, disconnected, or displaced—and that I may be called to serve and lead them as they find renewed purpose together.
- Perhaps most significantly, I recorded a vivid impression that God desired to release something of the Acts 2 life and pattern into his wider church through this movement. I described a picture that came to mind of the nations as a kind of barren desert, and the movement as a city being built within it—similar to how Dubai was envisioned and rapidly established. At the time, I wrote that I believed this pointed to a call to build something that could serve not just a few, but potentially hundreds or even thousands of churches. (See the next Appendix, *Build for Me a City*, for further reflection on what I consider the most defining of these impressions.)

I hold these impressions with humility. I recognise that I may have misunderstood or misheard aspects of what I sensed. Yet there comes a point where it feels right to give voice to what, over time, we have come to believe may be God's call on our lives.

Taking Massive Action

In Acts 13, the Spirit said, *“Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”* (v2). That phrase—*“to which I have called them”*—suggests Paul and Barnabas already knew of their call, and they were just waiting for God to signal to them that the time had come.

During my tenure at Signal church, this calling became clear—as did the urgency of moving toward it in 2025. In fact, I started my year—January 1—by receiving a prophetic word from the seven prophetic women in Florida that I mentioned earlier: *“This is the year God gives you permission to take massive action.”*

Around that time, my wife, who often has prophetic dreams, dreamt that I was pregnant and going into labour. Instead of urging me to push, she told me to relax, play cards, and ignore the birth pains. In the dream, the result was a stillbirth. When she woke, she sensed the dream was prophetic. As she prayed and sought counsel, the meaning became clear: Terran is carrying something God has conceived, but it will not come to life through

passivity or waiting around for it to “just happen.” There is a moment that requires intentional effort, obedience, and decisive action. Her role, she realised, was to encourage me to discern the timing of God and make whatever adjustments are necessary to push when the time came—so that what God has divinely initiated is brought forth alive and kicking!

Together, we discerned that the baby being born was A2, and that the “massive action” involved handing over another precious baby, Signal church, which would remain in the Vineyard movement. This allowed us to then launch out and plant a brand new church, along with a new movement. Twins! Julie and I did this all with the blessing and endorsement of the Signal leadership team and other leaders we processed with at the time.

As a wonderful confirmation of the timing of this, within days of handing over and being released to plant, God miraculously provided a remarkable and large piece of land in a prime location in Cape Town: large enough to build a church campus on, as well as a retreat and training centre to serve the A2 Movement.

Partnering With Julie

One of the most significant developments in our marriage of more than twenty years has been our growing conviction that God is calling us both into full-time ministry, together. Although our previous church context (before Signal) was formally complementarian, it intentionally pushed the boundaries of male–female partnership. Julie participated in elders’ meetings and was regularly freed to preach, which, in hindsight, laid important groundwork for what God would later make clear to us.

As my own convictions have changed, I no longer view Julie’s role as one that tucks in beneath my calling. Rather, I now see us as equal partners who bring distinct and complementary gifts, and who, in our case, are called by God to labour together as one unified team. Julie’s leadership gift has been evident from a young age.

Within the Common Ground story, Julie led numerous women’s events with exceptional skill, preached powerfully, and carried a significant pastoral responsibility. For most of that season, she also worked primarily outside the church, which was both appropriate and life-giving at the time. However, over the past few years, we have sensed a clear invitation from

God for Julie to step more fully into ministry alongside me. This began with her serving two days a week at Signal, and has now culminated in both of us committing full-time to planting and leading Nova and initiating A2 together.

Alongside this, I have begun my doctoral research focused on Priscilla and Aquila, a New Testament couple whose shared calling and mutual ministry have become a deep source of inspiration for us. Their example has helped us imagine what genuine partnership in co-leadership can look like. Even now, we remain aware that we are still only in the shallow end of what God may yet unlock as we learn to work together more fully and faithfully in this shared calling.

Our Relationship With the Wider Church

With regard to our relational standing within the wider body of Christ, it is important to speak honestly and gratefully. Our tenure within Common Ground and Advance ended painfully, primarily as a result of my change in conviction regarding women in ministry and—two years after I left—my decision to articulate that theological journey publicly through writing a book about women in ministry. That season was costly, and not without sorrow. Yet with the passing of time, I find myself increasingly thankful to God for the restoration of meaningful connection with some of the leaders I had the privilege of working alongside for nearly two decades. Though we continue to differ theologically on this issue, many of the seniormost leaders within Common Ground have been gracious, magnanimous, and personally encouraging as Julie and I step into what we believe God is calling us into next.

In more recent years, we were privileged to serve within the Vineyard space. Leaders such as Costa Mitchell, Derek Morpew, and Colleen and David Pedersen have become valued inspirations to us. We are grateful for the way they have personally commended us—not only for our conduct within the Vineyard movement, but also for strengthening Vineyard South Africa through helping to grow and nurture a healthy local church that is now a genuine source of strength and encouragement within their movement.

Beyond this, we have continued to maintain and form healthy relationships across a broad spectrum of the South African church. These include Byron and Candice Chicken, who lead the vibrant AOG group in South Africa; Paul

and Marinette Van Coller who lead ARC Southern Africa; as well as some respected leaders within the NCMI movement, the movement we were in prior to Advance.

Julie and I have sought, imperfectly but sincerely, to love the wider church—to leave with honour, speak with restraint, and bless where we have been blessed. We are deeply grateful for the private encouragement we have received from leaders across movements as we step into this next chapter, and we remain committed to walking relationally, humbly, and generously within the wider body of Christ.

While we believe God has called us to start a new movement, we are not seeking to build anything in reaction to others. As relating churches within A2, we will always seek to speak well of the larger church, and build our movement without tearing others down, cognisant that we are just one brick in the wall. We love the church—all of her—so we reject cynicism, tribalism and any form of cancel culture that tends to permeate our wider culture.



Appendix: “Build for Me a City”

In August of 2025, I had a powerful experience of the Holy Spirit, in which God spoke to me about starting A2 and his promise over the movement.

I felt him say, “Through you I will release the Acts 2 genetic into my worldwide church. You are about to lead a movement. Think of the nations as a barren desert, and the movement as the city of Dubai. Like the sheiks who envisioned and rapidly built the city of Dubai in the desert, so build for me a city in the desert. There is a powerful anointing on you to do this. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of churches will be served by this movement.”

In my journal, I reflected on this encounter and wrote the following...

I sensed God say, “Build me a city.” Not a city of concrete and glass, but a movement of churches—alive in the Spirit, rooted in the gospel, and blazing with kingdom culture. The image he gave me was Dubai: a city built from nothing but sand, yet it’s now one of the world’s most influential hubs.

Dubai began as little more than sand dunes and fishing villages. But a Sheikh saw what others didn’t... a city that would mark the future. “By faith Abraham... made his home in the promised land like a stranger... For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:9–10).

Julie and my calling begins with invisible foundations and a God-given Acts 2 blueprint for the local church. Starting A2 is like laying bricks in a desert: nothing in place, yet everything is possible. The spiritual desert is not a problem—it’s potential. I’m not renovating something old, we’re building something entirely new.

Dubai is only possible because of invisible systems—desalination, power grids, and pipelines beneath the sand. Likewise, this movement is not to rely on human charisma or strategy, but on the Spirit of God. “I will make rivers flow on barren heights... I will turn the desert into pools of water” (Isaiah 41:18). So, let’s build prayerfully before visibly. We must let the Spirit run deep before the skyline rises.

Dubai is a message. It says something. Its skyline preaches innovation, possibility and global connectivity. So does this movement. “You are the light of the world. A

city on a hill cannot be hidden.” (Matthew 5:14) We must architect not just churches but culture, define the ethos that every A2 expression will radiate.

And let’s be global from the start. Dubai was never meant to be a local city. It was built with global DNA—multicultural and translatable and magnetic. “Go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19). I believe God will add some churches from the world over. We also need to train leaders who can thrive in diverse contexts. Let’s build for translation and translocation.

Let’s aim for a simplicity leads to scalability. Dubai grew fast because of modular frameworks—zones, hubs and scalable architecture. A movement like A2 will require the same. “By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder...” (1 Corinthians 3:10). So let’s plant churches, some of which become base churches—“Burj Khalifas”—base churches must become training centres. We mustn’t rush the skyline. Let’s follow Spirit-led sequencing, and build foundations with secondary attention to façades.

The Bible’s story moves toward a city. “I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy” (Isaiah 65:18). A2, too, is part of that story: an outpost of heaven on earth. We’re not just planting churches. We’re building previews of the City of God. This is eschatological architecture.

“The wealth on the seas will be brought to you... the riches of the nations will come” (Isaiah 60:5). I believe there will be no shortage of provision for this vision. Dubai was funded by oil and there was global investment. “The kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it” (Revelation 21:24). The churches in A2 are to be funded by something greater...

I believe God will stir entrepreneurs and givers—some inside the church, some outside. Provision will come from unexpected places. Let’s think big, and expect miracles. Let’s invite generous participation in God’s vision. Let’s build a generosity culture. And cast a vision worthy of investment.

“They will rebuild the ancient ruins... they will renew the ruined cities.” (Isaiah 61:4) If the world can build a shining city in the desert with oil and vision, how much more can the church build cities of light with the power of the Spirit? So rise up, builders of God’s city—Dubai was only a parable. A2 is the reality. Let the movement begin.

Appendix: Examples Of Movements

For examples of these kinds of movements, all of which are charismatically orientated, see:

- www.advancemovement.com/about/ – this is the one my previous church, Common Ground Church, is part of, for which I helped to create the church planters track.
- <https://ncmi.net/about> – this is the one Common Ground Church was originally part of, where I got my first experience of being in a movement.
- <https://four12global.com> – this is the one Andrew Selley, previously part of NCMI, started. It is 700+
- <https://catalystnetwork.org/> – this is the largest of the New Frontiers networks – 800+ churches.
- www.saltlight.org/uk/who-we-are/ – this one that started at the same time as New Frontiers in the UK.
- www.relationalmission.org/ this is another New Frontiers network of 75+ churches

Then there are other movements that are a bit different to the ones above:

- www.everynation.org – over 500 churches whose focus is planting churches and university campus ministries simultaneously.
- www.acts29.com – the one Mark Driscoll originally started with a commitment to reformed theology, a (mild) openness to the Spirit, and church planting.
- www.c3churchglobal.com – a church in New Zealand that has managed to plant 100s of congregations around the world, so that each church is thought of as part of the same church.

Appendix: Paul And The Philippians: A Model Of Local And Translocal Partnership

When Paul planted the church in Philippi, he didn't intend to hover over it forever. He laid a foundation with clarity and power—but then he entrusted the day-to-day leadership of the church to local elders and leaders. Still, he didn't simply walk away. What we see in the story of Philippi is a beautiful pattern of ongoing partnership between a local church and a translocal team.

Paul stayed in close relationship with the Philippians. He kept in touch with them and shared his heart deeply—Philippians is one of his warmest, most personal letters. He visited them more than once (see Acts 20:6), and expressed his desire to visit again (Phil 2:24). He recognised and affirmed their local leadership (Phil 1:1) and addressed local relational issues with care and urgency (Phil 4:2–3). This was no cold, top-down oversight. It was relational, respectful partnership.

The Philippian church also supported Paul practically. They gave generously to his ministry—one of the only churches to do so repeatedly (Phil 4:15–18). They didn't just send money; they sent people. Epaphroditus was one such trusted co-worker who nearly died serving Paul (Phil 2:25–30). Euodia and Syntyche, though in conflict at the time of writing, had been gospel partners with Paul as well (Phil 4:2–3).

Paul also sent team members like Timothy to strengthen the church from time to time (Phil 2:19–22). And when difficulties arose—such as the relational tension between Euodia and Syntyche—Paul didn't shy away. He stepped in, not to control, but to help resolve the conflict and strengthen the church's unity in Christ.

What emerges is a healthy rhythm: the local church with its own leaders taking responsibility for the flock, and a wider translocal team continuing to serve, strengthen, and partner with them. This isn't about hierarchy—it's about family. Churches like Philippi weren't isolated or independent in the modern sense. They were locally led and translocally connected. That's a pattern we would do well to recover.

Paul also connected the Philippians (and other Macedonian churches) into the wider body of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 8, he highlights how these churches—despite their own trials—gave sacrificially to support the struggling believers in Jerusalem. This wasn't just charity; it was koinonia—a tangible expression of gospel partnership across cultural and geographic lines. Paul's translocal team helped local churches see beyond themselves, strengthening unity and generosity across the global Church. That kind of interconnectedness is still desperately needed today.



Appendix: Why We Shy Away From The Terms “Apostle” and (Less So) “Apostolic”

I’m not comfortable being called an apostle.

Yet I am aware that in some quarters the word apostle is used of movement leaders, those with a global vision who are: gifted to work across many churches; and called to build translocal teams that serve to plant, connect and strengthen churches. If that is what apostle means, then I believe I am meant to be that.

The problem, however, with this definition is that it does not pay careful attention to the biblical data. On the few occasions someone has prophesied over me that I am an apostle, I have merely assumed that, though the Spirit may be giving them this message for me, the Spirit is being limited by the vocabulary and understanding of the messenger, and I need to check what the messenger’s definition is.

So, let’s understand Paul’s use of the word “apostle”. Paul uses the term “apostle” in three distinct ways:

Type-One Apostles: The Twelve (plus Paul). These are the original apostles chosen by Jesus during his earthly ministry (1 Corinthians 15:5). Paul, uniquely added later, is also given this foundational role, particularly as the apostle to the Gentiles and writer of much of the New Testament’s theological foundation (see Acts 14:4, 14; 1 Corinthians 3:10). Since the original and foundational apostles have died, there are no more type-one apostles.

Type-Two Apostles: Pioneering Leaders. This broader group includes Paul (in another sense), Barnabas, Silas, Timothy (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6), James the Lord’s brother (Galatians 1:19), and likely others like Apollos, Andronicus, and Junia (Romans 16:7). Paul even refers to unnamed apostles beyond the Twelve (1 Corinthians 15:7), indicating a larger pool of recognised, Spirit-sent leaders who established and strengthened churches.

In Ephesians, Paul says apostles and prophets form the church's foundation (2:20), and that apostles—along with other ministry gifts—are given by the risen Christ to equip the church (4:11–13). This I understand to refer to type-two apostles functioning after Jesus's ascension. Paul also sarcastically labels false apostles as “super-apostles” (2 Corinthians 11:5), suggesting some misused the title for personal gain. There is no biblical warrant for concluding there are no more type-two apostles today, however, I will make the case shortly that we need to be careful with this term.

Type-Three Apostles: Church-Commissioned Messengers. This nontechnical use refers to trusted delegates sent by churches on specific errands—such as Epaphroditus sent from Philippi to care for Paul in prison (Philippians 2:25) or the financial couriers to Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:23). The Greek word *apostolos* simply means “sent one.” In this sense, if one church sends anyone to another church or a gospel worker that person is “a sent one”—an apostle. By this definition, almost anyone could serve as a temporary apostle.

Since there are different definitions of the word apostle in the New Testament, to refer to someone as an apostle without clearly explaining which kind of apostle is meant, will inevitably create confusion. This is one reason to generally avoid the term altogether.

The second reason is that if we take Paul and Barnabas as examples of type-two apostles, very few movement leaders match up.

What Did Type-Two Apostles Do? Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13–14) reveals the typical activity of type-two apostles like Paul and Barnabas:

- Called by Christ and commissioned by the church
- Led by the Spirit to new regions
- Preach the gospel with signs following
- Suffer opposition and persecution
- Gather converts and form churches
- Teach doctrine and strengthen disciples
- Appoint local leaders (elders)
- Return to a sending church as a base (Antioch)

These apostles weren't just evangelists; they were *master builders* (1 Corinthians 3:10), establishing healthy churches and setting in order leadership and doctrine.

They also operated within assigned spheres (2 Corinthians 10:13–16), focusing their energy on churches they had planted and aiming to extend into unreached regions. Apostolic ministry thus combined deep commitment to existing churches with a drive to reach new frontiers.

Should any of us call ourselves apostles today? Now that we have a firmer grasp on what a type-two apostle is by New Testament standards is, I propose we need to be very careful to use the term.

As I said, it is common practice for those who start or lead a ground-breaking, church-planting movement to call themselves apostles. Perhaps for some, this would be appropriate. But what of those of us who:

- Have planted only one or two churches?
- Have never pioneered a work into a new area—beyond where we live?
- Do not preach the gospel to an unreached people—merely train others to do it?
- Do not plant the churches ourselves—merely train others to do it?
- Preach the gospel—but without miraculous signs following?
- Preach the gospel and plant churches—but do not suffer severely for it?
- Add more churches to our movement mainly by adopting existing disconnected churches into it?

None of this makes light of what fruit we do bear. Our ministry of helping to start, establish or incorporate churches may be powerful, effective and crucial—but without ticking all the boxes that are realistically expected in a type-two apostle, I suggest we should not accept the term for ourselves.

To re-iterate, though we do not fancy ourselves as apostles, we do try to imitate something of the early church apostles' pattern: every church within A2 is encouraged to live outwardly focused lives, working in step with translocal teams to plant and strengthen new churches and, in doing so, advance the gospel.

That said, how wonderful if in our movement many on the Translocal team rise up to be apostles by these descriptions. If and when that happens, we

will happily designate them as apostles, with a small a, with the emphasis not on their title, but their function.

Why we avoid describing ourselves as an “apostolic” movement.

When a movement describes itself as *apostolic*, the term is commonly heard in one of two ways.

First, it can mean it is a movement **led by apostles**—that is, a movement in which recognised apostles function as the primary leaders, carrying unusual authority and responsibility for planting, overseeing, and shaping churches.

Second, it can simply mean a movement that is **outward-facing and sent**—focused on going, pioneering the gospel in new places, planting churches, and extending the mission of Jesus into new territory. By this definition, A2 seeks to be an apostolic movement. Though we do not claim to replicate the New Testament pattern of Paul and Barnabas planting churches and then handing leadership over to local elders in an identical or prescriptive way, we seek to reflect something parallel in spirit, even if not identical in form.

The difficulty, however, is that the word *apostolic* realistically carries *both* of the above meanings at once. If we describe ourselves as an apostolic movement, those who assume the first meaning will naturally expect to find apostles at the centre of our leadership. Where that expectation is not met, confusion is created.

If, however, the term were universally heard in the second sense—missionally sent, pioneering, and church-planting—there would be little problem. But because the word no longer lands clearly, for the sake of clarity, humility, and shared understanding, I propose we generally avoid the language of *apostolic* when describing ourselves. That said, if ever we do use the term, we should offer a definition to clarify what we mean.

It may be better to use language that plainly communicates what we are actually committed to being missional, sending, pioneering, global. These terms describe our heart and our practice without creating unnecessary assumptions or distractions.

Appendix: Become A Healthy Person

Every leader in the A2 Movement carries responsibility not only for what we build, but for how we build it. There are four gifts each of us can contribute to the health and strength of this movement... to become:

- a **healthy person**,
- a better friend,
- a better leader, and
- a better team player.

When we think about what we bring to a church or movement, it's easy to focus on skills: leadership ability, strategic thinking, or being a reliable team player. But the most important gift we offer is not a skill—it is ourselves. Our first contribution to a church, team, or movement is to be **healthy, whole people**.

Behind many unhealthy churches and movements are leaders and participants who are themselves struggling—overstretched, burnt out, or carrying unresolved pain. Growth without health is unsustainable. In fact, unchecked growth in a person or an organisation, like unchecked growth in the body, can become destructive. Thriving, in God's design, flows from health: in our personal lives, relationships, families, and ministries.

Being a whole person means embracing **holistic health**, the ongoing care of your spirit, soul, body, relationships, and the rhythms that structure your life. Holistic health is not about perfection or doing more—it's about cultivating sustainable practices that allow life to flow from the inside out. It is about aligning your internal world with the external demands of ministry, so that growth in your work emerges as the overflow of your well-being.

Here are the key priorities of being a whole person:

1. Spiritual Formation. At the heart of holistic health is your relationship with God. Spiritual formation isn't just a foundation for ministry—it's the source of life and strength for everything you do. Practices like prayer, Scripture engagement, worship, and fellowship help you plug into the Holy Spirit, your source of energy, guidance, and transformation.

The danger comes when these practices become a checklist for performance or earning God's approval. When we serve out of obligation rather than reception, burnout is inevitable. Thriving leaders, however, receive from God first, and then serve. Like an apple tree, fruit flows naturally when life is nurtured from the roots. Spiritual formation fuels all other areas of life, making ministry sustainable and abundant.

2. Soul Care. Soul care is about stewarding your inner life—your mind, will, and emotions.

- **Mind:** How you think shapes your life. Scripture calls us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Healthy thought patterns help us engage the world wisely, respond to challenges with grace, and discern God's direction.
- **Will:** Your capacity to choose and act must remain free and directed, not enslaved to fear, insecurity, or reactive habits. A well-formed will allows you to pursue what matters most intentionally.
- **Emotions:** Emotions are not enemies; they are signals. Anxiety, frustration, and doubt often tell us where growth or healing is needed. Learning to listen, interpret, and respond appropriately is a key part of emotional maturity.

Soul care also includes joy and fun. Enjoying life is not indulgent or selfish—it restores the mind and body, replenishes energy, and sustains long-term ministry. Ask yourself: *What do I want to see formed in my spirit and soul?*

3. Physical Health. Your body is the vessel through which you live, work, and serve. Exercise, nutrition, and adequate sleep are not optional—they are essential forms of stewardship. Stress, anxiety, and tension are stored in the body; without healthy outlets, they accumulate and can manifest as burnout or illness.

Even moderate, consistent care for your body—like regular movement, proper sleep, and attention to nutrition—has profound effects on energy, mood, and capacity to lead well. Stewarding your body is not self-indulgence—it is enabling you to live and lead with strength.

4. Relational Health. The quality of your relationships profoundly shapes your life and ministry. Relational health is about **connection and commitment**.

- Connection brings life: presence, listening, celebration, and shared experiences nurture your family, friends, and ministry team.
- Commitment brings safety: setting boundaries, following through on promises, and cultivating trust allow relationships to flourish.

Forgiveness and sexual integrity are also vital. Ministry inevitably involves disappointment and unmet expectations. Forgiveness frees you to love and lead without bitterness, while attention to marital and sexual health sustains intimacy and strength at home—foundations that ripple into your ministry.

5. Environmental Health. Your environment—your home, workspace, and the spaces you inhabit—reflects and affects your inner world. Clutter, disorder, or neglect in your surroundings can increase stress and diminish clarity. Stewarding your physical spaces brings relief, clarity, and energy to your life, creating a foundation from which you can thrive.

6. Lifestyle, Resources and Growth. Life rhythms, financial stewardship, and personal development are all part of holistic health.

- **Life Rhythms:** Ministry is rarely “balanced.” Seasons vary, and the idea of work–life balance can create unnecessary guilt or anxiety. Healthy leaders adopt sustainable rhythms that allow each area of life to function in harmony, even if one area requires more attention in a season.
- **Resources:** Stewarding finances, time, and energy wisely supports stability and clarity.
- **Growth and Engagement:** Lifelong learning, leadership development, and engagement with the world around you cultivate resilience, insight, and character. Thriving leaders continue to grow, not just in knowledge but in wisdom, perspective, and capacity to serve.

Holistic Self-Care as Strategy. Self-care is not selfishness—it is stewardship, worship, and self-leadership. By caring for our spirits, souls, bodies, relationships, and rhythms, we equip ourselves to serve others effectively. Holistic self-care also participates in the ongoing work of sanctification, shaping our lives into the likeness of Christ.

Healthy leaders build healthy churches. Healthy churches shape thriving communities. By committing to holistic health first—before the pressures of planting, leading, or expanding—you create a foundation from which everything else flows. Your first gift to the church and the movement is **the healthiest version of you.**



Appendix: Become a Better Friend

Every leader in the A2 Movement carries responsibility not only for what we build, but for how we build it. There are four gifts each of us can contribute to the health and strength of this movement... to become:

- a healthy person,
- **a better friend,**
- a better leader, and
- a better team player.

At its core, a family of churches is relational, not organisational. Movements may be expressed through structures, but they are sustained through friendships. When relationships are weak, movements eventually fragment, hollow out, or harden into something impersonal.

In A2, partnership is never merely functional. We do not partner first because of usefulness or alignment, but because we are choosing friendship. Structures exist to serve relationships, not replace them.

This movement will thrive only as leaders intentionally commit to friendships—with other church leaders, with those serving on the A2 Translocal team, and with church strengtheners. Not merely networking. Not just strategic alliances. Friendship.

Friendship Is the First Commitment. The strongest friendships are formed when leaders give themselves together to something larger than themselves. Shared mission does not diminish friendship; it creates the context for it, and deepens it. Walking together in prayer, responsibility, obedience, and sacrifice for the sake of the Church creates bonds that cannot be manufactured by strategy.

“A man who has friends must himself be friendly” (Proverbs 18:24, NKJV). If you want friends in this movement, do not wait for others to initiate. Be the friend you are hoping to find. Take responsibility for relationship. Movements weaken because leaders relate only when it benefits them.

Working Through Misunderstanding and Hurt. Every family this side of eternity experiences misunderstanding, disappointment, and relational pain. A family of churches is no exception. Leaders will misread one another. Expectations will go unmet. Words will land poorly. These realities do not signal failure; they reveal our shared humanity.

What distinguishes a redemptive community is not the absence of hurt, but the refusal to dispose of relationships when strain appears. In A2, we commit to taking the high road of relational restoration. We will resist withdrawal, bitterness, and quiet disengagement. Instead, we will pursue honest conversation, patient listening, forgiveness, and reconciliation—believing that relationships are worth the hard work required to heal them.

How to Be a Bad Friend (and Slowly Kill a Movement)

- Talk mostly about yourself.
- Subtly project your greatness—your church, your vision, your success.
- Check in on no one.
- Initiate contact only when you need something.
- Fail to celebrate the success of other churches.
- Try to impress rather than to know and be known.

None of this feels dramatic, but over time it produces distance, distrust, and isolation.

The Cost of Isolation. Leaders who fail are often not immoral or incompetent—they are isolated. They stop listening. They carry burdens alone. Beneath it lies a familiar lie: *You are on your own*. Isolation is never neutral. Friendship keeps leaders grounded, humble, and resilient.

Practising Friendship in a Family of Churches

- Learn to celebrate churches that are different from your own.
- Refuse comparison and competition.
- Make relational deposits more often than withdrawals.
- Stay relationally warm, especially when things are strained.

Friendship is not a soft value. It is a spiritual discipline—and one of God's primary safeguards for the health, longevity, and fruitfulness of a family of churches.



Appendix: Become a Better Leader

Every leader in the A2 Movement carries responsibility not only for what we build, but for how we build it. There are four gifts each of us can contribute to the health and strength of this movement... to become:

- a healthy person,
- a better friend,
- **a better leader**, and
- a better team player.

As with all movements—Christian or otherwise—much rises or falls on the quality of its leadership. Over the years, I have listened to hundreds of messages on leadership development, yet one teaching in particular has stood out for its clarity and usefulness. It was a message by John Siebeling—founder of *Life Church* and the *Make Room Network*—on the four levels of leadership. While few of the ideas were entirely new, the framework itself offered a fresh and compelling grid for me to evaluate both personal leadership growth and the development of others.

In this adaptation—which follows—I also explore Jesus as the ultimate model of leadership, using His life and ministry to illuminate and enrich each level.

John Siebeling: Four Levels of Leadership

- Be a leader others want to follow. The greatest deterrent to the church is often the leader—if your life implodes, the whole thing can collapse.
- The majority of leadership is about the **leader's inner life**.
- Skills and opportunities matter, but **character and self-leadership** matter more. *J. Robert Clinton, The Making of a Leader*: Most leaders don't finish well because they lack self-leadership.
- Two kinds of authority:
 1. **Positional authority** (people have to follow).
 2. **Moral authority** (people want to follow).
- Character makes trust possible. Trust makes leadership possible. Don't over-rely on positional authority. Always **work on yourself**.

- **Exodus 18:21**—leaders chosen were competent, God-fearing, trustworthy, hating dishonest gain.
- **Acts 6:3**—leaders chosen were full of wisdom and the Spirit.

Four Levels of Leadership (Or Twelve Traits of a Jesus-like Leader)

Imagine leadership as a building. Each level builds on the one below it. The lower floors are foundational; weaknesses there eventually affect everything above.

Each level consists of three traits.

Level 1—A Godly Leader: Integrity, Seeking God, Humility.

1. Integrity

Jesus said, “Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’” (Matthew 5:37). He lived without sin (John 8:46) and was the same in private as in public—His words and actions aligned perfectly. Integrity was not something Jesus performed; it was who He was.

For leaders today, integrity grows when private decisions consistently match public words. Start with the small, unglamorous promises—return the call, keep the appointment, follow through when no one is watching. Over time, integrity becomes the quiet force that makes trust—and therefore leadership—possible.

2. Seeking God

“Very early in the morning... Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” (Mark 1:35). Again and again, Jesus withdrew to be with His Father (Luke 5:16). Though fully capable, He chose dependence.

Leadership strength flows from communion, not pressure. Leaders grow in this trait by protecting a daily, non-negotiable rhythm with God—even if it is short. Direction is rarely found by trying harder; it is received by slowing down and listening.

3. Humility

Jesus said of Himself, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (Mark 10:45). He washed His disciples’ feet (John 13:14–15) and gave His life for others. Authority, in Jesus’ hands, always moved downward in service.

A revival of humility is urgently needed in the church. Leaders practise humility by choosing service over status—doing unseen work, sharing credit freely, and remaining teachable. Humility does not weaken leadership; it stabilises it.

Level 2—A Disciplined Leader: Financially Astute, Focused, Consistent.

4. Financially Astute

Jesus taught stewardship, responsibility, and foresight. “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost?” (Luke 14:28). He also affirmed financial responsibility within God’s order (Mark 12:17).

Leaders honour God by treating money as a spiritual tool. This means knowing your numbers, living within your means, planning ahead, and building margin so generosity is intentional rather than reactive. Financial discipline protects both credibility and mission.

5. Focused

Jesus said, “My food... is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). He consistently refused distractions, even good ones, in order to remain faithful to His assignment.

Leaders grow in focus by clarifying one or two priorities for a season and saying no—kindly but firmly—to what dilutes their calling. Focus is not about doing more; it is about doing what matters most.

6. Consistent

“Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives” (Luke 22:39). His steady habits of prayer, teaching, and care formed the backbone of His life and ministry.

Consistency beats intensity. Leaders express this trait by establishing simple, repeatable rhythms they can sustain when motivation fades. What you practise consistently shapes who you become.

Level 3—A Strategic Leader: Compelling Vision, Drive to Achieve, Empowering Others

7. Compelling Vision

Jesus invited people into something far bigger than themselves: “Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people” (Matthew 4:19). His vision was clear, relational, and outward-facing.

Leaders steward vision by receiving it from God and then articulating it simply and repeatedly. If people cannot repeat the vision—or see themselves in it—it has not yet landed.

8. Drive to Achieve (Godly Ambition)

A holy urgency marked Jesus’ life. “As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me” (John 9:4). He later “set his face toward Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51), resolved to finish His work.

Godly ambition serves obedience, not ego. Leaders grow here by measuring success through faithfulness rather than comparison, celebrating what God has already entrusted to them while still pressing forward with expectancy.

9. Empowering Others

Jesus entrusted others with real authority: “He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority...” (Matthew 10:1). He trained them, released them, corrected them, and multiplied His mission through them (Luke 9:1–2; 10:1).

Empowerment means more than encouragement—it means delegation with trust. Leaders practise this by giving responsibility early, coaching patiently, and allowing room for growth, learning, and even mistakes.

Level 4—A Magnetic Leader: Enjoyment, Hospitality, Magnanimity

10. Enjoyment

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a feast (Matthew 22:2), and His first miracle kept a wedding celebration alive (John 2:1–11). Joy was not peripheral to His ministry; it was part of its power.

Joy is leadership strength. Leaders grow in enjoyment by lightening the atmosphere—smiling more, celebrating progress, avoiding unnecessary intensity, and letting people feel that following Jesus together is life-giving, not heavy.

11. Hospitality

“The Son of Man came eating and drinking” (Matthew 11:19). Jesus shared tables with outsiders, sinners, and the overlooked (Luke 19:5–7). People felt safe and seen in His presence.

Leaders practise hospitality by creating emotional and relational space—remembering names, inviting stories, listening well, and making room for others to belong before they believe or behave.

12. Magnanimity / Generosity

Jesus said, “Freely you have received; freely give” (Matthew 10:8). He healed, taught, served, and ultimately laid down His life (John 10:11). His leadership was profoundly open-handed.

Leaders express magnanimity by giving credit, opportunity, time, and resources freely, trusting God to replenish what they release. As Jesus taught, “Give, and it will be given to you” (Luke 6:38).

If you're strong in three but weak in one... that weak floor becomes the crack in the foundation that sabotages your impact.

1. Strong in Levels 2–4, Weak in Level 1 (Godly Leader)

- **What you're good at:** You're disciplined, strategic, and magnetic. You're efficient, visionary, inspiring, and people want to be around you.
- **What you're weak at:** Without integrity, humility, and daily dependence on God, your inner life collapses. Charisma may carry you for a season, but hidden flaws will surface.
- **How it sabotages impact:** Eventually, lack of godliness erodes trust. When your character fails, the whole building caves in—your leadership implodes, and people are hurt.

2. Strong in Levels 1, 3–4, Weak in Level 2 (Disciplined Leader)

- **What you're good at:** You're godly, visionary, inspiring, generous, and relationally magnetic.
- **What you're weak at:** Without discipline—financial wisdom, focus, and consistency—you lack the structures to sustain what God gives you.
- **How it sabotages impact:** You rise quickly and draw others in, but disorganisation and poor stewardship slowly undermine the ministry. You may start well, but things unravel because the “engine room” is weak.

3. Strong in Levels 1–2 and 4, Weak in Level 3 (Strategic Leader)

- **What you're good at:** You're godly, disciplined, joyful, hospitable, and people love following you.
- **What you're weak at:** Without a compelling vision, holy drive, and ability to empower others, your leadership lacks direction.
- **How it sabotages impact:** People enjoy you and trust you, but they don't know where they're going with you. The church or team stays comfortable but stagnant—lots of warmth, little forward momentum.

4. Strong in Levels 1–3, Weak in Level 4 (Magnetic Leader)

- **What you're good at:** You're godly, disciplined, visionary, hardworking, and empowering.
- **What you're weak at:** Without enjoyment, hospitality, and generosity, you become intense, unapproachable, and exhausting to follow.

- **How it sabotages impact:** Your team may respect you but not *enjoy* you. Over time, people burn out under your leadership. The mission continues, but relational life feels heavy and brittle.

Jesus—The Ultimate and Exemplar Leader

Jesus' godliness was not a mask—it was His foundation. His entire life was anchored in holiness, integrity, and obedience to the Father.

Jesus modelled a disciplined life that stewarded resources well, stayed laser-focused on mission, and remained consistent in practice.

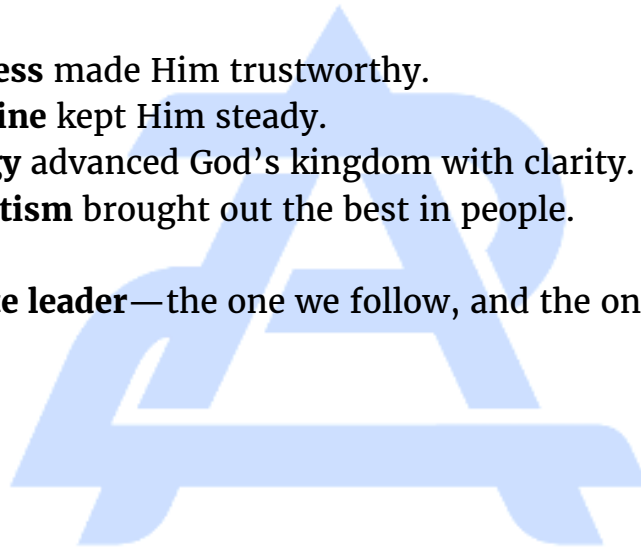
Jesus wasn't vague—He had a world-changing mission, pursued it with holy urgency, and multiplied His impact by raising others into it.

Jesus drew people with joy, warmth, and generosity. The crowds were magnetised not just by His power, but by His approachable spirit.

When you line up the **four levels of leadership**—godly, disciplined, strategic, magnetic—Jesus embodies them all perfectly.

- His **godliness** made Him trustworthy.
- His **discipline** kept Him steady.
- His **strategy** advanced God's kingdom with clarity.
- His **magnetism** brought out the best in people.

He is the **ultimate leader**—the one we follow, and the one who shapes how we lead.



Appendix: Become a Better Team Player

Every leader in the A2 Movement carries responsibility not only for what we build, but for how we build it. There are four gifts each of us can contribute to the health and strength of this movement... to become:

- a healthy person,
- a better friend,
- a better leader, and
- **a better team player.**

A2—its Translocal team and the leadership teams within local churches—is not built around exceptional individuals but around healthy teams. While God occasionally uses singular figures, His normal pattern is communal: plural leadership, shared responsibility, and mutual dependence. Again and again in Scripture, fruitfulness flows not from the brilliance of one, but from the alignment of many.

A team of moderately gifted people, united in trust, humility, and shared direction, will consistently outperform hyper-gifted people who operate alone. Lone-ranger leadership may look impressive, but it is fragile. Teams create resilience, wisdom and longevity.

To be part of A2, therefore, is to learn not merely how to lead—but how to cooperate. And cooperation is far more than being agreeable. It is the cultivated ability to play in a team.

Teaming Is a Spiritual Discipline. Teaming is not merely a leadership strategy; it is a spiritual formation issue. To function well in a team requires submission, patience, generosity, adaptability, emotional maturity, and reliability—virtues that are forged, not assumed.

The earliest church leaders modelled this instinctively. Jesus sent His disciples out two by two. The church in Antioch was led by a team of prophets and teachers. Paul travelled with companions and established leadership plurality in every church he planted. Scripture does not romanticise solo leadership—it normalises shared leadership.

Many leaders affirm team in theory. Far fewer are shaped for it in practice.

The Inner Work of Being a Team Player. Good team players are not those who speak the most or drive every initiative. They are those who can carry responsibility without control, influence without ego, and disagreement without division.

Healthy teaming expresses itself in several consistent ways:

Collaborative Without Possessive. They share ideas, credit, and resources freely. They seek input rather than assuming superiority. They value collective wisdom more than personal preference.

Clear and Constructive in Communication. They speak honestly, listen actively, and clarify misunderstandings early. Feedback is given and received without defensiveness. They do not weaponise silence, nor do they process disagreement outside the room.

Adaptable in Role and Season. They adjust to what the team needs. Sometimes they lead from the front. Sometimes they strengthen from the side. They do not cling to position, title, or visibility.

Reliable and Accountable. They follow through. They meet deadlines. They show up prepared. When wrong, they own it quickly and correct it. Trust deepens when consistency becomes normal.

Emotionally Mature. They manage their emotions rather than exporting them. They are aware of how their tone lands. They notice tension early and address it carefully. They encourage rather than drain morale.

Solution-Oriented. They move toward resolution rather than blame. They care about the best outcome, even when it requires compromise.

At its core, cooperation is maturity under pressure.

Three Inner Commitments

Beneath behaviour lie deeper commitments.

1. Submission without Diminishment. Healthy teaming requires the ability to yield without feeling erased. Submitting to shared leadership does not negate calling; it refines it. Team players trust that God can lead them through others, not only directly to them.

2. Loyalty without Blindness. Loyalty does not mean silence. It means raising concerns honestly in the right forum—and then standing with the team once decisions are made. Undermining decisions afterwards corrodes trust and fractures unity.

3. Confidence without Insecurity. Comparison is poison. Insecure leaders compete, protect territory, or withdraw when not central. Secure leaders celebrate others' strengths and find joy in shared success.

Teams Run on Trust, Not Talent. Teams rarely fracture over theology or strategy. They fracture when trust erodes.

Trust grows when leaders are predictable, transparent, generous with credit, and consistent in follow-through. It grows when:

- Failure is handled without shame.
- Disagreement is welcomed without fear.
- Information is not withheld as leverage.
- Diversity of perspective is valued rather than tolerated.

High-trust teams move faster, think clearer, and enjoy the journey. Low-trust teams move cautiously—even when gifted people are present.

A Helpful Lens: The Ideal Team Player

Patrick Lencioni summarises healthy teaming in three virtues: Humble, Hungry, and People Smart. These are not corporate traits alone; they are evidence of spiritual formation.

- **Humble** – Not status-driven. Shares credit. Admits mistakes.
- **Hungry** – Takes initiative. Carries responsibility. Brings energy and follow-through.
- **People Smart** – Relationally aware. Understands how words land. Adjusts approach for unity.

When one is missing, patterns emerge:

- Humble + Hungry, but not Smart – the Accidental Saboteur.
- Humble + Smart, but not Hungry – the Lovable Slacker.
- Hungry + Smart, but not Humble – the Skillful Politician.

Healthy teams name and address these patterns with clarity and grace.

Playing Your Part Well. Every team requires different roles in different seasons. Maturity is shown not by insisting on a role, but by embracing the role the team needs now.

Ask regularly:

- What does this team need from me right now?
- Am I adding clarity or complexity?
- Am I strengthening trust or quietly draining it?
- Am I prioritising shared success over personal recognition?

How to Slowly Weaken a Team

- Need to be consulted on everything.
- Interpret disagreement as disloyalty.
- Bring energy to meetings but resistance afterwards.
- Withhold information.
- Protect personal profile over shared mission.
- Confuse influence with control.

None of this looks dramatic in the moment. Over time, however, it produces mistrust, fatigue, and fragmentation.

The Cost of Going Solo. Leaders who resist team often justify it with efficiency or calling. Over time, isolation narrows perspective, amplifies blind spots, and concentrates pressure on the individual. What feels faster initially becomes unsustainable later.

Teaming distributes load, sharpens discernment, and guards the soul.

A2 Is a Teaming Movement. A2 will rise or fall not on the charisma of its strongest leaders, but on the health of its teams. Movements stall when leadership becomes performative rather than collaborative. They flourish when leaders genuinely prefer one another, protect one another, and build together.

If you want to strengthen this movement:

- Show up prepared.
- Speak honestly.
- Stay teachable.
- Carry shared decisions faithfully.
- Encourage others consistently.
- Play your part with joy.

Being a great team player is not about shrinking yourself. It is about bringing your full self—gifts, convictions, energy, humility, and maturity—into something bigger than you, and trusting God to multiply what no individual could ever accomplish alone.



Appendix: Raising Elder-Level Leaders

In the trenches of local church leadership, few things shape the future of a church more decisively than its ability to raise up suitable and adequately prepared elders.

Preaching can gather a crowd. Vision can mobilise momentum. Strategy can create movement. But over time, nothing strengthens—or destabilises—a church like the quality of its elders.

Speak with leaders who have walked this road for decades and a pattern emerges. Very few regret being too careful in appointing elders. Many regret moving too quickly. Shortcuts taken in the name of urgency often resurface later in the form of avoidable strain, relational fracture, or doctrinal drift.

There is now a growing body of pastoral wisdom on this subject—lessons written not in theory but in lived experience. What follows reflects that accumulated learning.

This is not a checklist designed to disqualify. Very few leaders embody every trait perfectly. Rather, this framework helps us discern two things:

1. *Is this person suitable for elder-level leadership?*
2. *If not yet, what must be formed, strengthened, or tested before they are ready?*

Much like a premarital process surfaces conversations that need to be had before vows are made, so the pathway to eldership must surface the conversations, convictions, and character that sustain long-term leadership.

What to Look for in (or Train into) a Potential Elder

1. Christ-Centred Life

Before gifting, before competence, before influence—there must be a settled life in Christ.

Is this person secure in God's goodness toward them?
Are they anchored in grace rather than driven by approval?
Is their devotion to Jesus visible, consistent, and self-sustaining?

Eldership cannot compensate for spiritual immaturity. It will expose it.

2. Commission-Driven Conviction

An elder must love not only the church as it is, but the mission of Christ to expand it.

Are they committed to the Great Commandment—loving God and loving people?
Are they committed to the Great Commission—making disciples who make disciples?
Are they committed to partnering the church in A2 to see more churches planted and strengthened?
Do they carry both evangelistic urgency and discipling patience?

Elders must guard the church from mission drift as much as doctrinal drift.

3. Proven Character

Scripture places overwhelming emphasis on character.

Are they humble, reliable, and integrous?
Do they remain steady in hardship?
Have they endured misunderstanding or disappointment in the church without becoming cynical or breaking relationship?

Unproven character is one of the most common shortcuts in leadership appointment.

4. Doctrinal Depth and Scriptural Fluency

Elders must live in Scripture.

Do they handle the Word carefully and faithfully?
Is their theology aligned with the church's convictions?
Are they self-feeding rather than dependent on others for spiritual input?

A church will rarely rise above the biblical depth and doctrinal clarity of its elders.

5. Authentic Calling

*Do they possess a genuine, Spirit-shaped desire to serve in this way?
Or are they stepping forward because of pressure, recognition, or opportunity?*

Calling does not eliminate difficulty—but it sustains leaders through it.

6. Spiritual Vitality and Fruitfulness

*Are they Spirit-filled and responsive?
Do they minister effectively as the Spirit leads?
Is there observable fruit in other people's lives as a result of their ministry?*

Eldership is not honorary; it is functional and fruitful.

7. Self-care, Capacity and Season

Not every good leader is ready in every season.

*Do they presently have the emotional, relational, and practical capacity for the weight of eldership?
Are they emotionally robust?
Do they manage their own replenishment well?*

A stretched life cannot carry additional spiritual responsibility indefinitely.

8. Marriage, Family, and Closest Relationships

The closest relationships often reveal the truest maturity.

*Is their marriage healthy and supportive?
Is their spouse genuinely aligned with this calling?
Are their family dynamics stable enough to sustain the demands of leadership?*

Eldership cannot be built on private instability.

9. Tested and Faithful

Have they completed prior assignments well?
Have they been entrusted with responsibility and proven faithful?
Have they demonstrated consistency over time?

Faithfulness in smaller spheres is often the clearest indicator of readiness for greater weight.

10. Teachable and Correctable

One of the main ways God prepares us is through feedback from others.

Are they open to feedback?
Do they receive correction without defensiveness?
Can they change their mind when necessary?

Uncorrectable leaders eventually become unsafe leaders.

11. Alignment and Cultural Embodiment

Do they understand and embrace the church's vision and values?
Do they embody the culture rather than merely affirm it?
Are they culture-carriers who reinforce direction and strengthen unity?

Clarity and alignment prevent internal fragmentation.

12. Relational and Emotional Maturity

Eldership is team leadership.

Do they build community naturally?
Do they gather rather than divide?
Are they emotionally intelligent and relationally aware?
Do they add encouragement and faith to meetings rather than tension or competition?

Competence without relational maturity eventually fractures teams.

13. Ability to Raise Others

An elder should not merely lead people; they should multiply leaders.

Are they identifying and developing others?

Do people grow under their influence?

Do they celebrate others' emergence rather than feel threatened by it?

A church's future depends on leaders who reproduce.

14. Transparency and Integrity

We have all made mistakes, and some of those mistakes will taunt us in the future.

Have they appropriately disclosed past matters that could surface later as accusation or confusion?

Hidden histories often become public distractions. Transparency builds trust.

15. Ability to Follow

Before someone leads at elder level, they must be able to follow well.

Can they follow the team leader?

Do they trust the leader's heart, gift and vision?

Can they defer without becoming passive—or resist without becoming oppositional?

Healthy elders are neither people-pleasing “yes-people” nor reflexive “no-people”. They are “maybe-people” or mature collaborators—open to be led but also able to speak candidly in the room, while standing united outside it.

16. Cooperative Teaming

Finally, can they truly play in a team?

Eldership is shared leadership. It requires:

- Sharing credit freely.
- Communicating clearly and directly.

- Adapting roles for the sake of the whole.
- Prioritising team success over personal influence.
- Protecting unity without suppressing honest dialogue.

A brilliant solo leader can destabilise an eldership. A cooperative leader strengthens it.

Training Into Readiness

Where these qualities are present but underdeveloped, the goal is not exclusion but formation.

The list of questions is not meant to disqualify people, but to help you qualify them by revealing weaknesses that need shoring up.

Some areas require time.

Some require testing.

Some require intentional mentoring.

Some require hard conversations.

The process toward eldership should include:

- Meaningful theological engagement.
- Real responsibility with real accountability.
- Exposure to conflict and its healthy resolution.
- Observation of how they handle disappointment.
- Ongoing character formation.

Raising elder-level leaders is slow work. It is often quieter than platform ministry and less visible than growth metrics. But in the long run, it is among the most strategic investments a church can make.

Churches rarely regret taking time to prepare elders well. They often regret appointing them prematurely.

If we are to build churches that grow in health, size, and mission, we must build leaders who are not only gifted—but suitable, tested, aligned, and formed for the weight they will carry.

Appendix: Mixed-Gender Eldership Teams

Most complementarian churches function with all-male eldership teams.

This is not the A2 way, however. To be clear this does not arise from cultural pressure, but from theological conviction: that the Spirit distributes leadership gifts to both men and women (Acts 2:17–18; 1 Corinthians 12:7), and that the church is strengthened when those gifts are recognised and stewarded wisely.

As stated in the document *Common Doctrine: What A Church Must Believe To Be In A2*, we envision that many soft complementarian churches who are, to a degree, functionally mutualist, will still fit in A2 where “eldership couples” effectively lead the church (even if only the men are formally recognised as elders).

A third approach for mutualist (non-complementarian) churches in our movement is to embrace full male–female mutualism, the formation of mixed-gender eldership teams, without resorting only to eldership couples. This Appendix provides some thinking for how this can be done.

Moving Beyond a One-Size-Fits-All Marriage Template

One limitation of many complementarian frameworks is their implicit assumption that there is only one healthy pattern for married couples in ministry. The dominant template—what we might call the “**Peter-and-wife**” model—features a husband who leads publicly, while his wife (whose name we never read) supports faithfully behind the scenes.

There is nothing inherently wrong with this. For many couples, it works beautifully. But it is not the only biblical pattern.

Scripture presents other possibilities of married couples who “functioned” alongside each other in a variety of ways:

- **Deborah and Lappidoth (Judges 4:4).** Deborah exercised national leadership in Israel, while her husband is mentioned quietly in the background. The text does not portray tension—only calling. Some

marriages reflect this pattern: the wife carries the primary public leadership mantle, with her husband gladly strengthening her from behind or alongside.

- **Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:24–26; Romans 16:3).** Here we see a husband-and-wife team functioning together in business, hospitality, theological instruction, and church planting. They appear as co-labourers. Many contemporary ministry marriages resemble this shared-leadership dynamic.
- **Esther and Xerxes (Esther 4–5).** Though I am not positing that Xerxes was a godly man, Esther exercised courageous leadership within a distinct sphere, calling on her husband's support at decisive moments. In modern terms, both spouses may have strong public leadership gifts, yet expressed in different domains.

When we step back, it becomes clear that the Bible does not impose a single ministry-marriage blueprint. A mutualist vision does not reject the Peter-and-wife model; it simply refuses to make it normative for all.

Applying This to Eldership Teams

If married couples can reflect diverse ministry patterns, eldership teams can reflect similar diversity.

In a mutualist church, no two leadership teams will look identical. Each team will be shaped by the particular gifts present in that local body. But we can anticipate several kinds of contributors:

- **Single women and single men (e.g., Lydia, Timothy).** The New Testament assigns equal dignity and calling to the unmarried (1 Corinthians 7:32–35). Marital status alone should neither qualify nor disqualify someone from eldership-level leadership. Indeed, singleness can bring unique perspectives, focus and availability.
- **Shared-calling couples (Priscilla-and-Aquila pairs).** In some marriages, both spouses clearly carry elder-type leadership gifts and calling. Both may serve on the eldership team.
- **Married men whose wives are not elders (Peter-type scenarios).** Some husbands carry elder-level responsibility, while their wives either prefer supportive roles or invest their leadership energy elsewhere—perhaps in marketplace leadership, mercy ministry, or

another sphere. It is neither wise nor fair to assume that every elder's spouse must function as a de facto elder.

- **Married women whose husbands are not elders (Deborah- or Esther-type scenarios).** Similarly, some wives may carry clear elder-level gifts and calling, while their husbands either prefer supportive roles or have leadership gifts but are fully engaged in other arenas. Mutualist churches make space for this reality without suspicion.

The Pastoral Challenge

The most delicate dynamic in mixed-gender eldership is not theological but relational: how to care well for the spouses who are not on the team.

When one spouse carries formal eldership and the other does not, it is vital that the non-elder spouse is neither marginalised nor pressured. They should not feel excluded from the relational life of the pastoral circle, nor coerced into responsibilities for which they lack desire, gifting, or capacity.

Practical steps may include:

- Inviting spouses to certain social gatherings or prayer retreats.
- Cultivating genuine friendships across the wider pastoral family.
- Communicating clearly about expectations and boundaries.
- Regularly checking in to ensure the marriage itself is flourishing under the weight of leadership.

In this way, inclusion is relational rather than structural.

Strength in Diversity

Every leadership configuration has strengths and vulnerabilities. A team consisting of “eldership couples” may enjoy simplicity and clarity, but risk blind spots. A mixed-gender team may require more intentional communication and maturity, but brings its benefits.

Rather than defaulting to a structure because it feels straightforward, mutualist churches embrace the complexity of shared leadership between men and women. They trust that the same Spirit who distributes gifts also grants wisdom for how those gifts are best arranged in a particular church, in a particular season (James 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6).

The goal is not novelty. It is health. If Christ gives shepherding gifts to both sons and daughters (Acts 2:17–18), then the question for each local church is not, “What is the simplest model?” but “How do we faithfully recognise and steward the leaders Jesus is actually raising up among us?”

