


Pilgrimage to unity

so that the world may believe





Pilgrimage

to unity
so that the world may believe

"A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society"
Eugene H. Peterson.

"“Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we’d better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we’re in” (Heb 12: 1-2)."



Wisdom of the Pilgrim

- Travel light
- Begin slowly
- Only walk to the next town
- Rest when you are tired
- Walk at your own pace

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Preface

Leepo Modise

Moderator of the general synod of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa



This is the results of the journey of more than forty years of DRC family that have pursue church unification based on the church orderly way. There is no better words to lay foundation to this manual other than the preamble of Provisional order. It states that: “We as the four churches have decided to journey together called by the Triune God to participate in His mission to the world, so that the world may believe that God has sent Jesus as Savior to the world. We therefore, envisage a new reunited church in the DRC Family, which is missional, committed to the Biblical demands of love, reconciliation, justice and peace. We realize this process will present many challenges and issues to contend with, but we accept the challenges in being obedient to our Lord and His Word. We are called to a life, ministry and ecclesiology of obedience and sacrifice. Knowing that walking this road will ask us to put all selfish ambition aside and to give ourselves as Christ did, we do this in active response to the gospel that Christ in His mercy poured out on us. We respond to Christ’s love and Spirit who unites us to Christ in a deep and eternal fellowship. We acknowledge that Christ already gained the victory over all opposing forces so that we can look forward in hope to that day when all knees shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 1:27 - 2:18). We are committed to accept all the gifts brought by the four churches to the reconciliation, restoration and reunification process”.

The purpose of this manual is to explain the practical ways on how to achieve this preamble, and how to use provisional order to assist congregations, presbyteries, regional and participating synods to unite as one legal entity.

This is the Christian journey (pilgrimage) to the envisage United, Holy, Missional church under the guidance of Christ the head of the Church and the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one father of all who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:3-6).

Nelis van Rensburg

Chairperson of the Moderamen
Dutch Reformed Church



“So that the world may believe.” These are the words of Jesus in John 17, praying for the unity of His disciples. Unity is about the authentic testimony of the church. It testifies to the Lordship of Christ who is the head of the church. It testifies to the power of the Holy Spirit who gives life to the church. It testifies to the one baptism with which we all became part of the one body of Christ. The unity of the church is indeed a Divine imperative so that the world may believe.

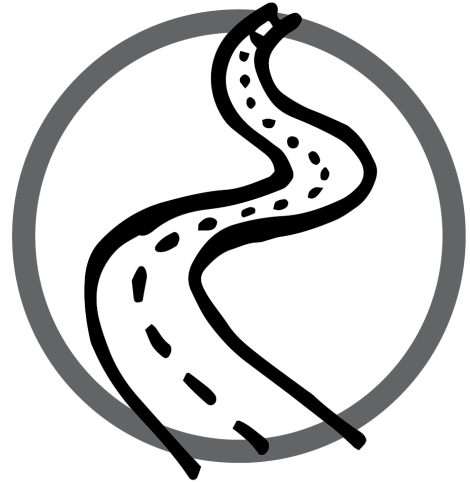
The commitment to unity between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa is a matter of urgency. We have to be a witness to the world of an alternative life in which the mercy, care, peace and reconciliation of Christ is the guiding light. We have to work towards restitution and justice. We were separated and have to be re-united for the sake of being authentic witnesses. We are the people who have to demonstrate how the dignity of all people is acknowledged and practiced.

The Provisional Church Order provides us with a wonderful opportunity to enter into relationships between two manifestations of the church in such a way that the world will believe that people can really be changed by God. We are already blessed by congregations who testified about the fruits of their unity, how they build new relationships, how they journeyed together, and how they utilized the Provisional Church Order to become one. When we listened to their stories we became aware of the movement of the Spirit in these congregations. We heard the stories of leaders, inspired by the Spirit who crossed the boundaries of division and created new spaces of understanding and love and growth. We became aware of the impact that it made on whole communities. We were deeply touched by the power of love.

We are all challenged now. We have to respond... to the prayer of Jesus... so that the world may believe.

Invitation and commitment to journey together

Based on a PowerPoint by
Rev DP Carelse



We are the people “of the Way” – Acts 9:2.

- We live out of a spirituality of the road as political, ecumenical, economic landscapes are constantly changing – Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarson.
- We are pilgrims, always on the way – Theologia Viatorum.
- With the Holy Spirit as guide Jesus sets us on the road – Luke 10, John 16:13, Cas Wepener.
- Our spirituality of the road is connected to transformative discipleship – H Russel Botman, 1993.
- We integrate our faith in a network of social, personal and congregational relationships – Helder Camara.
- Our lives or consciousness are renewed through our encounters with God – Coenie Burger.
- Our journey is about discernment, rooted in the Cross of Jesus Christ.
- We journey within ourselves, facing our own pain and joy, hurt and healing, success and disappointment, acceptance and exclusion; sweetness and bitterness and longing for an encounter with the God – Ruth 1; Judges 6; Psalms.
- We use our inner journeys to drive us, each with our own narrative, to a live of service – Nelus Niemandt.
- We are wounded healers, open to fellow human beings, making our own suffering hearts the point of service – Henry JM Nouwen.
- We are on a shared journey, working together in concrete ways.
- We journey together in the Scriptures – we interpret the God’s Word in communion and in dialogue – Luke 24:27, 32, Stephen E Fowl, L Gregory Jones.

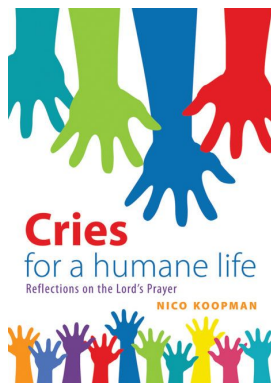
- Together we hear the voice of God and see the heart of God in deep connections with each other – David Tracy.
- We place ourselves and the reunification process under the authority of God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Word is the norma normans.
- We journey in communion with our prophets from the past – their lives influence our story.
- We journey in a world broken by individual and collective violence; a world in which the long-term effects of historical violence hampers the person's ability to live a life of fullness – Serene Jones.
- We covenant to work together, promoting the healing and wholeness for all of life.
- We covenant to work together, seeking and advocating justice for all.
- We covenant to work together, promote and embrace human dignity and gender equity.
- Our activities as a missional congregation mirrors God's liberative activity in history – Klippies Kritzinger, Willem Saayman.
- We are growing towards becoming the "voice and image" of the historical Saviour – John 5:36-37.
- We always remember that the broken people are crying for a dignified life – Russell Botman and Vujani Vellem.
- Like in the Psalms and New Testament we hear when the wounded cry justice.
- We find our calling where our greatest joy and the world's greatest need meet each other.
- Our journey is about bearing much fruit by remaining in the vine – John 15.
- We discover who we are by singing, praising, dancing, offering and praying.
- In the act of worship we affirm our covenants and contracts.
- We listen to the narratives of the other – trying to understand before we want to be understood – Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Denise Ackerman
- We know we have to unlearn before we can learn – Karin van Marle.
- By listening to the stories of others we are creating a semantics of co-existence together – Dirkie Smit.

- On our journey we treasure diversity and make it our source of strength to set common goals for a common future.
- We are searching for wholeness, meaning, purpose, connection and the resolution of those great existential questions the human race is faced with in life – Leepo Modise.
- We listen to the tone of voice, we interpret the silences, we even hear the unspoken words of pain – Elize Morkel, Isabel Phiri, Elna Mouton.
- We listen to rearrange our priorities – H Richard Niebuhr.
- We listen to each other with empathy to discover why we often have different versions of the same events.
- We are the singers of hope amidst the non-singers – Psalm 137, Isaiah 42:10-12; Jeremiah 23; 29:10-14, George Kinoti (1994) and José Chipenda.
- Our hope focuses on possibilities and yearn for mercy praying that the sun of righteousness will arise and bring a new day, healing, unity – Jürgen Moltmann.
- Sometimes we patiently “wait for the Lord”; other times we are “looking anxiously for God’s response” – Andries Daniëls.
- Our preaching and dialogue are always a language of hope and love – Johan Cilliers, Lucy Hogan.
- We confess and live a hope that motivates, guides and orientates us as human beings to our future – Elisabeth Grözinger.
- We encourage joint catechism and joint Bible study.
- Our hope breaks away from negative thinking born out of previous failures.
- On the road our eyes are opened. We see others like Jesus Christ sees them – as equal and infinitely precious in God’s sight and ours.
- On the road our hearts and minds are opened to judge events like Jesus judges it – John de Gruchy.
- We celebrate the gifts of the other church, discovering new and hidden treasures.
- We sacrifice our own perspective of reality and Scripture and rediscover ourselves and the past from the perspective of another’s lived experience.
- We know real truth is always liberative truth – Willem D Jonker.
- We trust that truth will always set us free – Gustavo Gutierrez, Leepo Modise.

- We seek dialogue that ensure a life-giving, healing and empowering faith.
- We value every person as made by God to be loved and to love, and believe that everyone shares in the divine image which is gifted to all human beings.
- We cultivate an ethics of friendship and recognition.
- We connect trauma and the incalculable grace of love – John 15:9-16.
- We create spaces for human flourishing – Nadia Marias.
- We focus on God’s promise of joy and laughter – Marianne Thompson, J Moltmann.
- We respect and protect the human dignity of all – Tshepo Lephakga, Rothney Tshaka.
- We move from exclusion to embrace – Miroslav Volf.
- We create an environment in which young and old can grow and glow – Psalm 1; 144:12; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; 1 Timothy 1:3–7.
- We develop the capability for new beginnings – Hannah Arendt.
- We encourage each other to show resistance to forces that prevent a quality life for all.
- Jointly we resist forces that block the flow of God’s love to the whole of creation – Hendrikus Berkhof.
- We live, listen and look to let all our different horizons merge to become God’s intended new humanity - Hans-Georg Gadamer, Ephesians 4.
- We journey accompanied by the Almighty Immanuel – Coenie Burger.
- We journey in the world.

“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” – John 14:6.

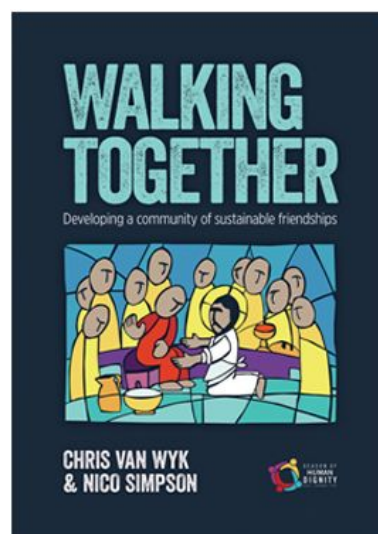
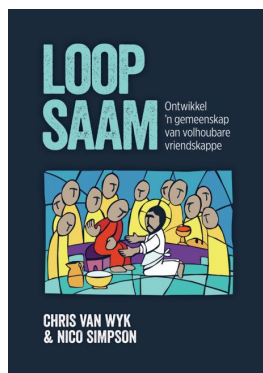
Season of Human Dignity



The Season of Human Dignity is a joint venture between the four sister churches of the DRC Family. The Season promotes the Biblical values of respect, listen, embrace and love. The moderatures of the four churches decided that the unity process must be accompanied by the work and influence of the Season of Human Dignity. Without a strong commitment to the dignity of all participants in the process of unity we will not be able to reconcile and establish a culture of peace and righteousness amongst our members.

The products of the Season focus on the embodiment of a life in Christ. A personal relationship with God is a prerequisite for the embodiment of the values and culture of the Season of Human Dignity because participation in the life of the Trinity is the essence of the Gospel. The products of the Season provides us with: practical tools to enhance relationships build on the four values of the Season; practical advice to bring people of different backgrounds together and embrace our diversities; advice about how to create spaces in which we can discern God's will; perspectives on the complexities of our societies and Biblical ways to address the challenges which come with it.

We strongly advise that congregations of the respective churches who journey together make use of the products of the Season of Human Dignity.



PRAYER GUIDE for the Season of Human Dignity



THE STORY

OF THE PROVISIONAL CHURCH ORDER

In 2012 the family of DRC churches embarked on a new road towards church unity. Prof Jerry Pillay was appointed by the World Communion of Reformed Churches as facilitator between the churches. Under his guidance we decided on a memorandum of agreement, accepted a roadmap towards unity and started the Season of Human Dignity. The intention with the Season was to promote the basic values of the Confession of Belhar as foundation for our efforts to establish unity between our churches.

At the beginning of 2015 the executives of the four sister churches gathered in Pretoria to discern the way forward. Some of the leaders were despondent after the Dutch Reformed Church General Synod failed to obtain a 2/3 majority vote in favour of the inclusion of the Confession of Belhar in its confessional base. The road ahead seemed to be blocked. But then the participants went back to the Memorandum of Agreement between URCSA and the DRC which was approved by the URCSA General Synod and the Moderamen of the DRC in 2013 and the Road Map to Church Unity which was agreed upon. The Road Map provides for a provisional church order which will make it possible for congregations, presbyteries and synods to unite without abolishing the juristic persons who enter into the contract provided for in the provisional church order.

In a footnote to this particular point in the Road Map the following is stated with regards to a Common Set of Rules.

- “1. The Common Set of Rules is provided to serve the process of reunification and represents an important phase in the process of the churches to know each other, while experiencing and growing together in unity, reconciliation and justice.*
- 2. The Common Set of Rules is a set of church orderly provisions which gives a legal base to cooperation between the churches on the road to reunification.*
- 3. The Common Set of Rules does not remove/abrogate the articles, regulations or rules of the churches. The articles, regulations or rules stated in the church order are applicable as they stand, except in case where the common set of rules specifically makes room for exceptions.”*

We decided to convene again to create a provisional church order. We also decided to invite Prof Leo Koffeman and Rev Evert Overeem from the Protestant Church in Netherland to guide and assist us in our deliberations on a provisional church order. The delegates of the four churches met from the 11th to the 13th of July 2015 at the Volmoed Retreat and Conference Centre near Hermanus. Rev Peter Langerman from the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa acted as chairperson. We had a profound discussion about the legacy of our past. We also thoroughly

discussed our understanding of organic unity and agreed upon the fact that we need congregations and presbyteries to journey together. We do not need artificial unity or tokenism, but a real embodiment of life in the Trinity of people who share the same faith. And we agreed that we have to be authentic witnesses of the Lordship of Christ at a local level. Within six weeks after the Volmoed meeting 9 representatives, including our 4 actuaries, gathered in the Strand in the Cape, again under the guidance of Prof Leo Koffeman. They wrote the Provisional Church Order which was subsequently approved by the general Synods of the DRC (2015) and URCSA (2016). Both Synods provided for the implementation of the Provisional Church Order in their respective church orders and regulations. The other two churches are still journeying with us, but chose not to adopt the Provisional Church Order for now. They have nevertheless given their blessings to the DRC and URCSA to proceed with the unity process we agreed upon. We are still having discussions with the RCA and NGKA and much have been done on the regional levels to promote our unity.

We now enjoy the first fruits of our efforts. The congregations which already entered into the unified position provided by the Provisional Church Order are witnessing to wonderful experiences of the works of the Holy Spirit on their journey. One of them is a united inner-city congregation, another a united congregation from the countryside, and others from suburban areas. They represent a spectrum of diverse contexts but are all committed to embody the church Christ has prayed for.

We are now looking forward to hear more and more testimonies of congregations and presbyteries who embark on the road to unity. The idea is to build profound and authentic relationships between churches. When the time comes for formal unification talks to start the actuaries of the respective churches will be available to assist and guide the two church bodies to unite. The Provisional Church order only provides broad outlines for a contract between churches. Much room was left for imagination and the practical conditions of the diverse contexts in which the church manifests itself.

Church unity is a matter of conviction and leadership, of prayer and discernment, of values and the pouring out of yourself way beyond whatever you could imagine. But it also is a matter of true discipleship, obedience, fulfilment and of being authentic witnesses to the Gospel... so that the world may believe.

Stories of respective Congregations

What follows is stories of the journey of congregation on their way to working together and eventually unity. The stories differ from each other reflecting different contexts. The stories are helpful to understand how the provisional church order allows for diversity. In some instances, the congregations involved is demographically far from each other and in other instances congregations share the same town or suburb.

URCSA Melodi ya Tshwane & DRC Pretoria

The Dutch Reformed Church Pretoria was started in 1854, a year before the founding of the city “Pretoria” in 1855. The congregation of today is the product of a series of mergers between congregations from the former Pretoria presbytery. The members live in the Pretoria inner-city area – CBD, Arcadia and Sunnyside. The congregation worships in multiple spaces on a Sunday morning, many of these being inside old age homes. There are roundabout 600 white Afrikaans members with an average age over 80. One of the worship services draws together a small but diverse group of younger members who are playing an increasingly important role in the church council. Furthermore, the FBO PEN developed from the congregation during the 1990’s, and are involved in a wide area of social, development, and youth work in the inner-city.

The URCSA Melodi ya Tshwane is a younger congregation that started as a ministry to domestic workers in 1992. Its main worship service is in the historic Bosman street church building in Pretoria CBD, but it has wards in suburbs around the city, and a smaller ward service in Silverton on a Sunday morning. It has 1350 members, with a high number of students and younger professionals among them, and an exceptionally high number of children. It was the first URCSA congregation in the historic “white” area of Pretoria, and already one further congregation has been formed among some of their members – in Centurion.

There has been a longstanding relationship between the two congregations, and this relationship was not always good. In 1995 an agreement was reached between the then DRC Pretoria (before the presbytery congregations were merged) and URCSA Melodi ya Tshwane to have shared ownership of the Bosman street church building and become partners in a trust responsible for its maintenance. While this relationship had its better and worse moments over the years, it was a formal place where the two congregations were forced to continue speaking together and making decisions together.

In 2016 the ministers of the two congregations started meeting together regularly to discuss possibilities for partnering more in ministry. There was a general recognition by the DRC ministers that we need URCSA if we are to continue to minister in a racially diverse area of the city. In early 2017 the ministers became convinced that what we should be doing is not merely partnering in ministry but working towards full unity between our congregations.

In the discussions following this conviction, there was a constant recognition that the 'difficult' issues of buildings and finances should not be put aside but placed at the heart of our deliberations. We also knew that in the same way that both these congregations are already spaces that carry very diverse groups of people, a united congregation will have to do that even more. We knew that we would have to accept the diversity in our congregations, and then commit to journeying with our members inside a united congregation. Over the period of discussions of the unification, we also became increasingly convinced that the relationships between ministers and the commitments of church councils are vital to this process.

In terms of the provisional church order we understand that unification imply that there will be a single church council overseeing and envisioning the work of a single congregation, even where this congregation continue to consist of multiple diverse parts. We don't think of this unification as the final step on a journey, but rather as a key step in our ongoing journey. The implication will be that this new unified church council will take responsibility for the work in predominantly Afrikaans old age homes as well as the youth, men's and women's associations, the worship at multiple spaces across the inner-city, and our joint witness throughout the city.

Where the provisional church order was immensely helpful was in giving a sense of comfort within our church councils. Based on this document they could clearly see this first step of committing to a single church council – not doing "too little" by just starting a joint project, and not trying to be too idealistic by insisting that we need to resolve all the complex social and cultural questions between our congregations before embarking on a process of unification. It assisted us to understand that this new church council will become the representative of both congregations, which will continue to exist as legal entities.

However, we are also starting to experience limitations in the provisional church order. Most importantly: we are unclear on what the legal requirements would be for this complicated system to have a single budget. How do we move between bank accounts, budgets, audited financial statements, and the continued existence of two legal entities represented by a single church council? We are also painfully aware that a key question facing this process is the ongoing divergence in salary scales between the two congregations, and we hope that our respective synods will give high priority to resolve this.

Andrew Murray / Alexandra

The journey together can be described in three stages.

The DRC Presbytery of Johannesburg called for informal meetings to be held between themselves and the URCSA Johannesburg Presbytery.

They had an informal meeting and started talking about unity. They felt that the tempo of the reunification process was not fast enough. They decided to break down the whole process. They formed a committee to manage the relationship. Three members of Andrew Murray and four members of Alexandra formed a committee to steer the working together process. The joint working group met on a regular basis to

start working through the challenges and overcome stumbling blocks. They also decided to manage the expectations.

Stepping stone

URCSA have long services. They started to work together on having regular combined services. A decision was taken on a building process. The first year they had one joined service, the second year twice and the third year three services. One or two voices in the churches raised minor practical issues like what was going to be sung. At some point the joint working group realised they needed to ignore all the noise and take baby steps. They set up the services and they manage the challenges.

- A phrase was adopted: *We are rebuilding the fallen Jerusalem.*

This became the motivation for everything that they started doing. They emphasise that is all about relationships

Lynnwoodrif / Nelmapuis Congregation in Mamelodi

Different languages, Afrikaans and English, are being used in the two The Mamelodi Nellmapius congregation is in the new township of Mamelodi. It is predominantly a coloured township, but the congregation is a black congregation. Demographics are very different. Nelmapuis has a lot of RDP settlements, single parents and other challenges. There are three other congregations between Nelmapuis and Lynnwoodrif.

It all started with a “listening weekends” in the DRC of Lynnwoodrif. During these weekends the congregation spent time to hear what the Lord is saying to the congregation. The Lord told Lynnwoodrif “to plough new land”. At that time rev Thobela from Nelmapuis approach Lynnwoodrif with the request to help with building a church. The council of Lynnwoodrif decided not to give money but instead get physical involved and started building relationships with the Nellmapius congregation. They signed a unity contract. They believe to walk behind the Lord and not in front of him. The ministers spent some time together during a week of listening.

They formed a committee and started to do a project together and that was how the whole journey started. Two committees worked together on different levels. After six months they combined to form one church council. Set up a unity contract which include activities of combined council, budgets, judicial matters, pastoral care etc. The request from these two partners is that the provisional church order must be more flexible.

Bredasdorp

Their relationship between the two congregations started 12 years ago – ministers came weekly together to hear each other's stories. After a period of listening the Church councils decided to come together on a regular basis. At first the DRC was worried about the assets being shared, the URCSA on the other hand was worried about the ministry. They started with issues that came easy. Celebrating together like Pentecost, Week of prayer, was important events. A unified church council was

established and a date for unification was set. They started to communicate to every member of the two churches about the unity process. This was done for a period of two months. Congregants had the opportunity to raise concerns or to mention things that they can celebrate. It was a spontaneous process and not a forced one.

There must be always an acknowledgement that the two congregations that are involved have different cultures and traditions. They then started doing the administration of their offices together. Staff started working together and praying together. They decided to have only one calendar. The ministers preach on the Belhar Confession on a regular basis emphasising the biblical call for unity. One church choir was established. The goal of the reunification process was to build strong relationships. There must be a need to be committed to the cause of unification. Church leaders must and take responsibility. Not everybody will be satisfied with the process and outcome. The next step must always be communicated. Pastors help each other with the workload. The Provisional Order was very helpful in the process of reunification. The two congregations emphasised the fact that communication is very important.

What was some of the common questions that the congregations wrestle with?

How do you call pastors?

How do you reconcile budgets?

How do you handle one bank account for both congregations?

How do you deal with the buildings?

Make less rules to create more opportunities.

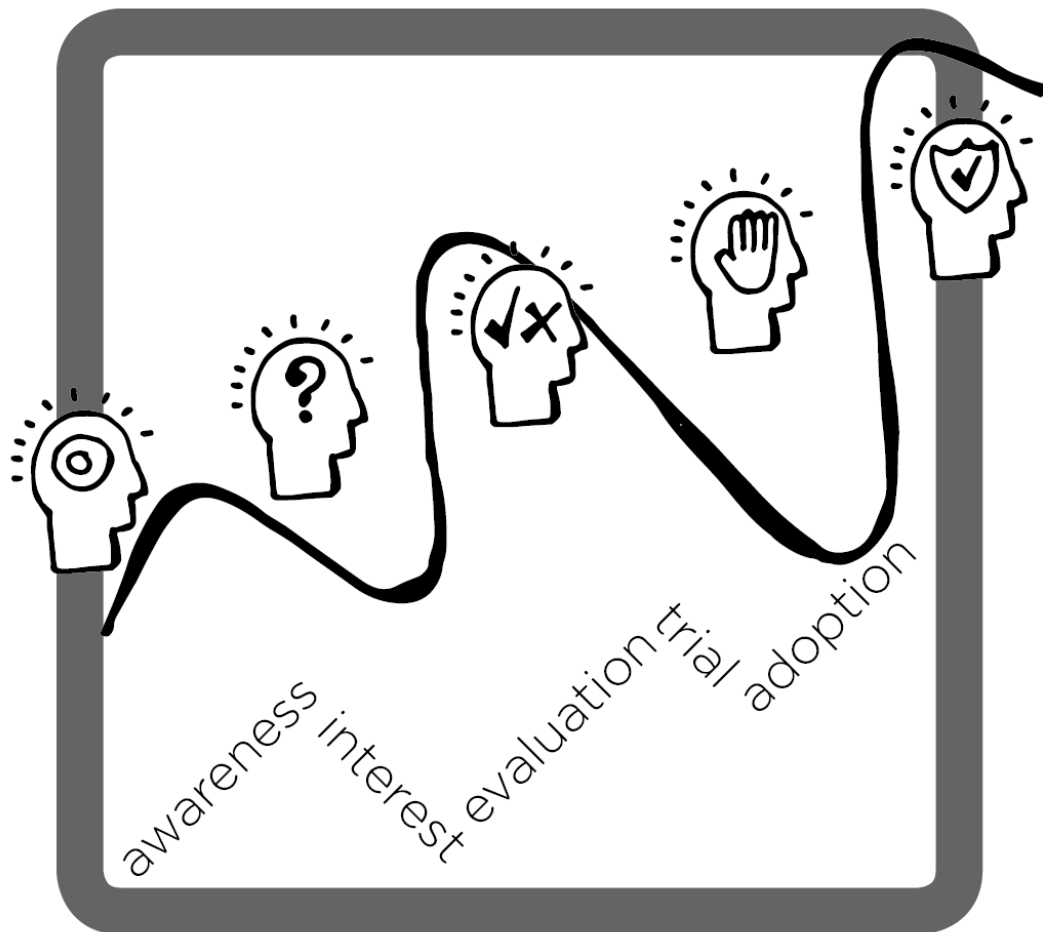
The congregations without exception stressed the importance of building relations, working together on commonalities in communities, celebrating together, sharing with each other, good communication, taking, if necessary, strong leadership decisions.

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Model of Change

Change rarely happens in a straight line, directly from Point A to Point B
In fact, it looks more like the path of a sailboat, riding the wind to get to its destination.

This is especially true as a whole culture changes.

Everett Rogers declares that there are even five different stages that members of a culture go through when they have met a change...



5 stages of decision-making

Knowledge – awareness and understanding of a new thing

Persuasion – favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the new thing

Decision – adopt or reject the new thing

Implementation – putting the new thing to use

Confirmation – seeking reinforcement or overturning of the decision

People's openness to change

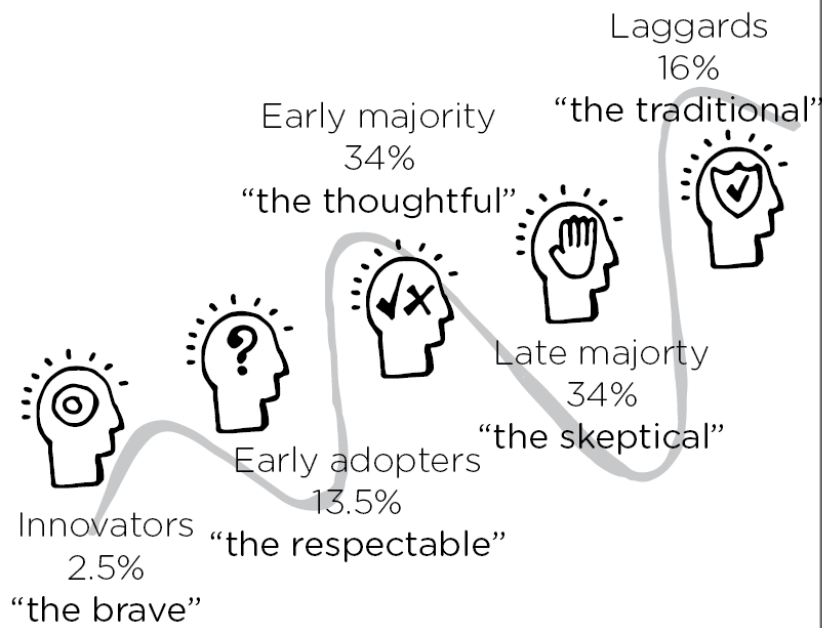
Innovators 2.5% "the brave"

Early majority 34% "the thoughtful"

Early adopters 13.5% "the respectable"

Laggards 16% "the traditional"

People's openness to change

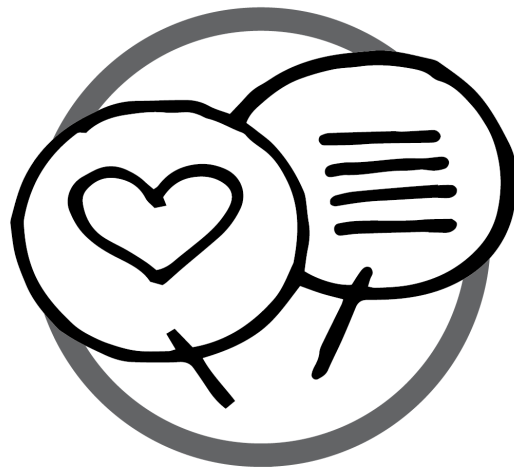


TELLING THE STORY

1. Introduction

To a large extent this course is built upon the understanding and interpretation of stories. Each participant represents the story of a particular group, community or organisation. Together we represent the story of the country and world in which we live and in particular the Christian Story and Vision that has shaped our lives and hopes.

We are going to look at these stories through a variety of lenses in an effort to appreciate them, to understand them and to guide their ongoing development.



2. Why storytelling is important

It is of vital importance to be aware of the story of a group, be it a community, congregation or organisation. Story-telling brings to life:

- The development of a group's identity, culture and values
- The interrelatedness of a group within its broader context
- Perspectives on major changes and how the group dealt with it
- Dominant characters, heroes and scapegoats, that shaped the life of a group
- The presence and guidance of God in the midst of the story-in-progress

Furthermore, at SEED-courses we have discovered that storytelling has become an important vehicle to build bridges between people coming from diverse sectors of the South African society.

3. How to get the story told

Telling the story can be done in a variety of ways. For the purposes of this course we concentrate on two forms:

- Storytelling through case study writing
- Storytelling through constructing a story-wall: this is an exercise that the course facilitator(s) will do with the group as a whole.

4. When storytelling is appropriate

Storytelling is appropriate in any of the following scenarios:

- When a group is grappling with its sense of identity
- When a group is in need of revisioning its future

- When the context (e.g. demography) of a group is changing
- When a group experiences stuckness with regard to a particular problem or challenge
- When diverse groups in a community need a sense of mutual understanding

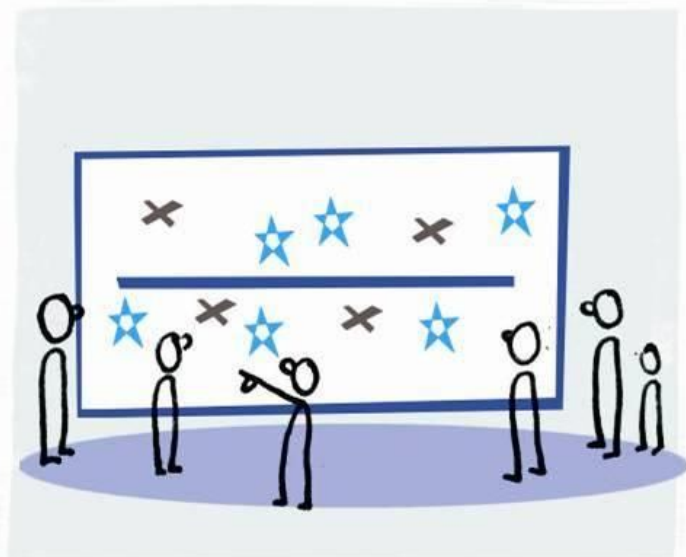
5. How to set it up

The following elements are needed:

- +/- 5m of clean wall space
- Flipchart sheets (+/- 20) to cover the wall space with
- Prestik
- A can of spray adhesive
- +/- 30 A6-sheets (1/4 of A4) per participant
- 1 koki pen per participant
- 1 flipchart stand

The steps in the process are:

- Step 1: Cover the wall with flip chart sheets. Spray the glue on. Provide each participant with A6-sheets and a koki.
- Step 2: Decide on how the wall should be divided in a timeline (particular periods of the story to be covered expressed in periods of months, years or decades).
- Step 3: Decide on what categories of storytelling to divide the story into. We normally put the story of the group as the spine running horizontally through the timeline. The second category normally represents the global story and may refer to the town/suburb/city, the region, the country, the world. The third category represents the personal stories of the participants.
- Step 4: Invite the participants to record their memories on the A6-sheets and to stick them to the story-wall according to the timeline and the subject they relate to.
- Step 5: After 15-20 minutes the facilitation of the storytelling can begin.



Here is an example of what a story-wall can look like:

	1970+	1980+	1990+	2000+
Global				
Group				
Individual				

6. How to facilitate the discussion

To facilitate the story-telling, the facilitator can make use of

- Open sharing: participants are invited to share their memories in an open forum. The facilitator normally takes the lead, identifying some cards on the wall and inviting their authors to share. The rest of the group will then participate freely and add to the richness of the sharing.
- Small groups: participants are divided into small groups and asked to share their memories with one another according to what they see on the story-wall. Feedback is given appropriately.
- Collating themes: participants are invited to collate themes on the story-wall after which an open discussion is held.

To aid in the interpretation of the development of the story the following can be done:

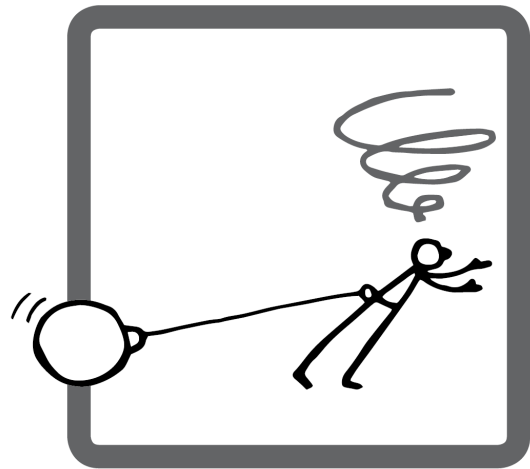
- To decide on a chapter heading for each phase in the story, almost as if the group is writing a book.
- To discover two particular story-lines, namely the problem-story (representing stuckness) and the alternative story (representing a sense of hope)
- To ask about God's presence and guidance in the midst of the story.

As a hint to the facilitator it should be said that this exercise requires a good balance between structure (telling the story chronologically) and flexibility (allowing participants to link up with the story in terms of what is relevant for them).

UNDERSTANDING STUCKNESS

1. What is stuckness?

Stuckness describes a particular situation where people experience an inability to make progress with things such as problem solving, conflict resolution, future planning, broken relationships, etc. It can be experienced by any entity be it individuals, families, groups, organisations, communities or nations.



According to Kenneth Halstead¹, stuckness relates to the way in which we try to solve the variety of problems with which life confronts us. In our attempts to solve problems, says Halstead,

- ... we tend to make use of well-intended solutions built into the rules and structure of the system – solutions that create life-draining feedback loops...
- ... we try to solve difficulties of living and working together in ways (usually the same old ways) that make things worse by creating self-reinforcing vicious circles...

Referring to congregations Halstead says: ... people experience stuckness when their congregation does not seem to hear and respond to needs, is unable to foster a maturing faith in its members, and is unable to grow and adapt its structure to change. Such a congregation frustrates many members and feels as if it is going nowhere or losing ground.

Of stuckness one can often say: The seeds of our stuckness are hidden in our past successes. Certain strategies, developed in the past, seem to work so well that we rely so much on them, and repetitiously apply them without questioning, that we become stuck.

Perhaps the most descriptive and shortest definition of stuckness is: The (attempted) solution is the problem.

¹ Halstead, Kenneth A. 1998. From stuck to unstuck: Overcoming congregational impasse. Alban Institute

2. Symptoms of stuckness

Halstead names a number of symptoms to be found in stuck congregations. Similar and/or unique symptoms of stuckness may be found in other types of organisations as well.

- Conflict and scapegoating that continuously repeats itself
- Absence of older youth and young adults from worship and other programs
- Inability to integrate new members of diverse backgrounds and to involve them in mission and ministry
- Declining membership, worship attendance, or giving
- General boredom at worship and lack of playful fellowship
- Cliquishness
- Lack of a clear sense of vision, mission, and church self-definition
- An inability to include and minister effectively to a wide range of ages; temperaments; and racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups
- Preoccupation with maintaining buildings and raising funds
- Continual comparisons to the way things used to be and attempts to recapture the past
- Clinging to traditions and methods that no longer work
- Lack of interest in adult education, especially Christian living and theologically based process skills.

People in a fluid and dynamic congregation, as opposed to a stuck congregation, experience (Halstead, 1998:2)

- An energizing effect from participating in and talking about their congregation
- Open communication with few restrictions on what can be talked about
- Confidence that leaders, fellow members, and the organization as a whole listen and respond to needs
- A sense of growing as a group toward maturity and greater faithfulness.
- Effective adaptation to a changing world.

3. Stuckness in our common story

Look at the story wall. Identify periods or situations in any of the three sectors (personal, church/community, global) that you would like to describe in terms of

- Stuckness

- Progress

What factors contributed to create these periods/situations that can be described with the terms

- Stuckness

- Progress

4. Stuckness in the case studies

Why is it important to identify stuckness and deal with it as a systemic phenomenon?

Three perspectives apply:

- Theological: Stuckness may point towards conditions that can be described by words like
 - Alienation
 - Disunity
 - Bondage
 - Destructive relationships.

Stuckness emphasizes the way in which prevalent evil conditions may endanger or block a community's potential to grow in truth and love.

- Strategic: Stuckness eliminates the potential of vision to become an inspiring and motivational force, rendering a community ineffective when it comes to being a positive and healing presence in society.
- Emotional: Stuckness creates a negative climate. It creates a force field in which opposing powers are at work. It drains relational energy. It stifles creativity.

Exercise

Take an opportunity to reflect on your case studies and identify the following:

- Evidence of stuckness
- Contributing factors
- Attempted solutions

5. Working with stuckness

5.1 The role of core beliefs

- How is the Spirit of God present and active in situations where His people experience stuckness?
- How do we integrate this conviction that God's Spirit is present and active in our situations of stuckness with the strategic processes that we apply in facilitative leadership?

Stuckness more often than not comes from our self-righteous behaviour. Many a situation becomes unstuck when grace is rediscovered.

5.2 The role of facilitative leadership

According to Halstead (1998:xi) the role of leadership amidst stuckness is to remove blocks and unleash bound-up energy and health. He applies the metaphors of freeing the flow and fanning the flame. In practical terms this means that leadership needs to act in accordance and cooperation with the Spirit of God.

The following framework should guide facilitative leadership

- Never be the rescuer, be a guide and let the system find its own way forward
- Be objective, do not take sides, elevate the process above the subjective-personal
- Always level the playing field and encourage diverse contributions
- Seek for unique outcomes by means of the process you apply and not in terms of the solutions you have to offer.

5.3 The value of appropriate questions

In situations of stuckness there are wrong/inappropriate questions to ask like:

- Who is to blame? How can we control or eliminate them?

Discuss: What are (normally) the outcomes of this kind of question?

The key is to find solutions through a process in which we externalize problems and get beyond blame and start working together. Therefore, more appropriate and helpful questions will be:

- What interactions and behaviours are getting us stuck? What will bring about positive change?
- How are we seeking to cooperate? How can this cooperative attempt be used to achieve our shared goals?

Discuss: What outcomes can we expect as the result of these kinds of questions?

Halstead's book is about congregations. Throughout his book he asks some probing questions to help readers reflect about stuckness in their own lives and those of their congregations. Some of these questions are very helpful as diagnostic tools to use in facilitative leadership and can be applied to other entities as well.

- In what ways is the emotional life of your church stuck? What role are you playing in keeping things stuck?
- How might your church be blocking the flow of God's Spirit by the way it deals with emotions and tries to solve problems?
- What are some of your church's favourite over learned solutions?
- What small relational or problem solving change might have the most reverberations throughout your church? How can you help make this happen?
- How is your congregation's emotional system responding to rapid change in society?
- How are old-paradigm and new-paradigm visions coexisting in your congregation?
- How can talk about sin and evil perpetuate stuckness in a congregation?
- How might a more systemic understanding of sin and evil help us get unstuck?

- How does your congregation handle anger and conflict?
- What role does scapegoating play in your congregation?

Exercise

Take another look at your case studies.

- What kind of probing questions will facilitate a better understanding of the situation described in your case study?
- What kind of approach will be helpful to exercise facilitative leadership in the situation?

6. Conclusion

Some useful quotes may serve at this point to help us understand what facilitative leadership in stuck situations is all about:

- Facilitating change then, is largely a matter of managing relationships – not only managing your own relationships with your clients, but also helping them to manage their relationships with each other more effectively.
(Cockman, Evans & Reynolds 1999. Client-centred consultation)
- Where any change ignores the people involved and concentrates solely on implementing a new structure or system, it will, in the long term, backfire, or at best, be seriously impaired.
(Cockman, Evans & Reynolds)
- Now I look carefully at how a workplace organizes its relationships; not its tasks, functions and hierarchies, but the patterns of relationship and the capacities available from them... What gives power its charge, positive or negative, is the quality of relationships... Love in organizations, then, is the most potent source of power we have available.
(Margaret Wheatly 1992. Leadership and the

New Science)



UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

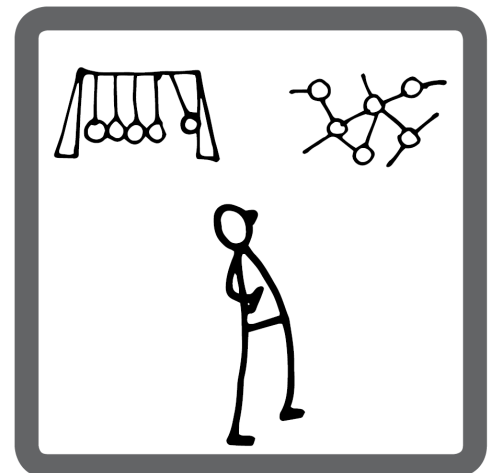
More often than not we enter into a process of change because our context is changing. If we are serious about mission we will want to “scratch where the community is itching” which will of necessity result in change. Generally the greater the mission focus of a congregation or organization, the more it embraces change.

Too often change is made for change sake rather than it being a response to God’s call to be faithful and effective in an ever changing world. This causes people to view change negatively or suspiciously and results in stuckness.

As we will see, there are enough intra-personal and inter-personal dynamics of change with which people struggle without us adding the complication of not being clear about why change is necessary.

1. Linear vs. non-linear or chaotic change

The greatest mistake we can make about change is to assume that we can always manage it using linear processes. A linear process is a process in which we identify the problem, develop a solution and then implement it. This works well when one is building something or when there is a simple problem to solve. It is not so effective when trying to resolve a complex situation such as the style of worship we should embrace in our congregation or how to get broad community buy in into a development process or how to enable a Black empowerment process to take place in a company.



Gilbert Rendle (1998) suggests that there are fundamental differences between linear and chaotic change processes. They can be summarized as follows:

Linear Change

- o The problem is clear and not complex
- o There is a low level of conflict
- o The approach would then be:
 - Identify the problem
 - Brainstorm solutions

- Choose from the alternatives
- Implement

Examples of linear change

- o Choosing a colour for the church roof
- o Deciding on the type of surface for the church parking area

Chaotic Change

- o The problem is less clear with few if any obvious solutions
- o The problem is complex and there is disagreement (perhaps even conflict) to the extent that people don't know how to find a solution
- o The process would then look something like this

The pain of the situation

PLUS Possibility

MINUS The box of linear thinking

EQUALS Chaos or the wilderness experience



Creative and Faithful Choice

Heifetz (1994: 76) casts further light on the differences by suggesting three situational types requiring three different responses:

Situation	Problem definition	Solution and implementation	Primary locus of responsibility for the work	Kind of work
Type 1	Clear	Clear	Technical expert	Technical
Type 2	Clear	Requires learning	Technical expert and client	Technical and adaptive
Type 3	Requires learning	Requires learning	Client > technical expert	Adaptive

A type 1 situation would be one in which the problem and the solution are clear and we can go to a technical expert to get it fixed

e.g. the roof of the church is damaged during a hail storm and needs repair

A type 2 situation would be one in which the problem is clear but the technical expert identifies various ways in which to solve it - all of which require the participation of the client. This requires a level of mutual cooperation and negotiation between the technical expert and the client

e.g. How do we make our church premises more secure given the fact that there are some opposed to an armed response security system

A type 3 situation is one in which it is not possible to clearly identify the problem or the appropriate solution. This requires the client to engage with the many aspects of the problem on a number of levels. The technical expert adopts the role of facilitator allowing space for experimentation and even chaos recognizing that the process itself is a large part of the solution

e.g. A church experiencing declining numbers

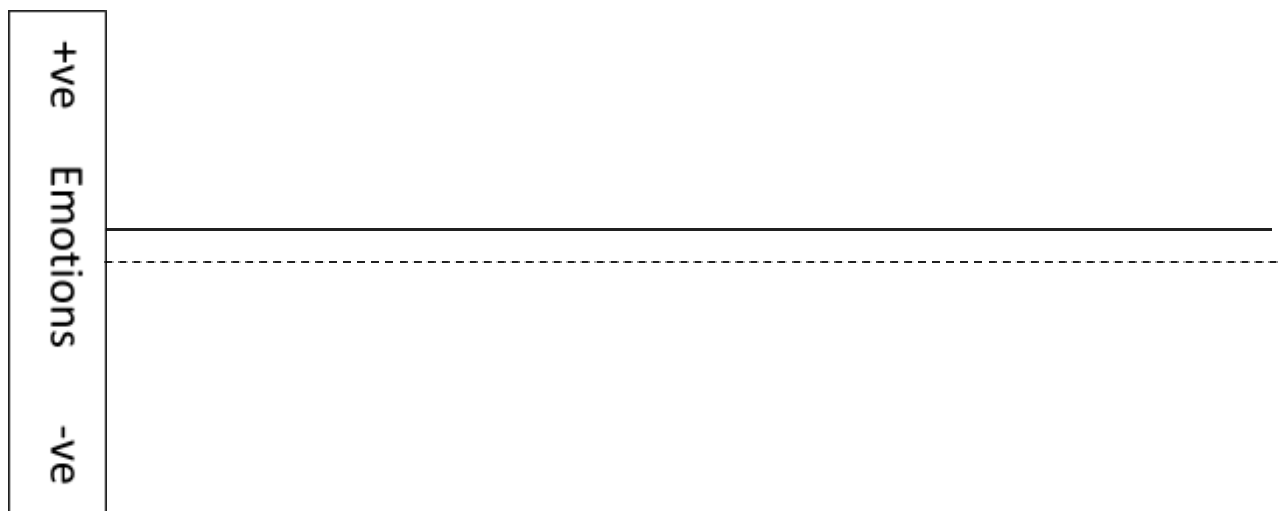
It would be true to say that through the disciplines of project management etc, many of us are well equipped to cope with linear processes (type 1 and some of type 2) but few of us with chaotic processes (such as in type 3). Unfortunately in today's world little of the change with which we have to deal is linear in nature. We need the lenses to understand chaotic change and we need the tools to manage chaotic change. Heifetz helps us see the type of work that needs to be done.

2. Intra-personal dynamics of change

Personal exercise (for your eyes only)

Reflect on a period of change in your own life. On the y-axis plot the time that elapsed in coming to terms with the change (You may need to plot it in months or in years) On the x-axis plot the intensity of what you understand to be positive and negative emotions (the dotted line indicates the dividing line between positive and negative emotion)

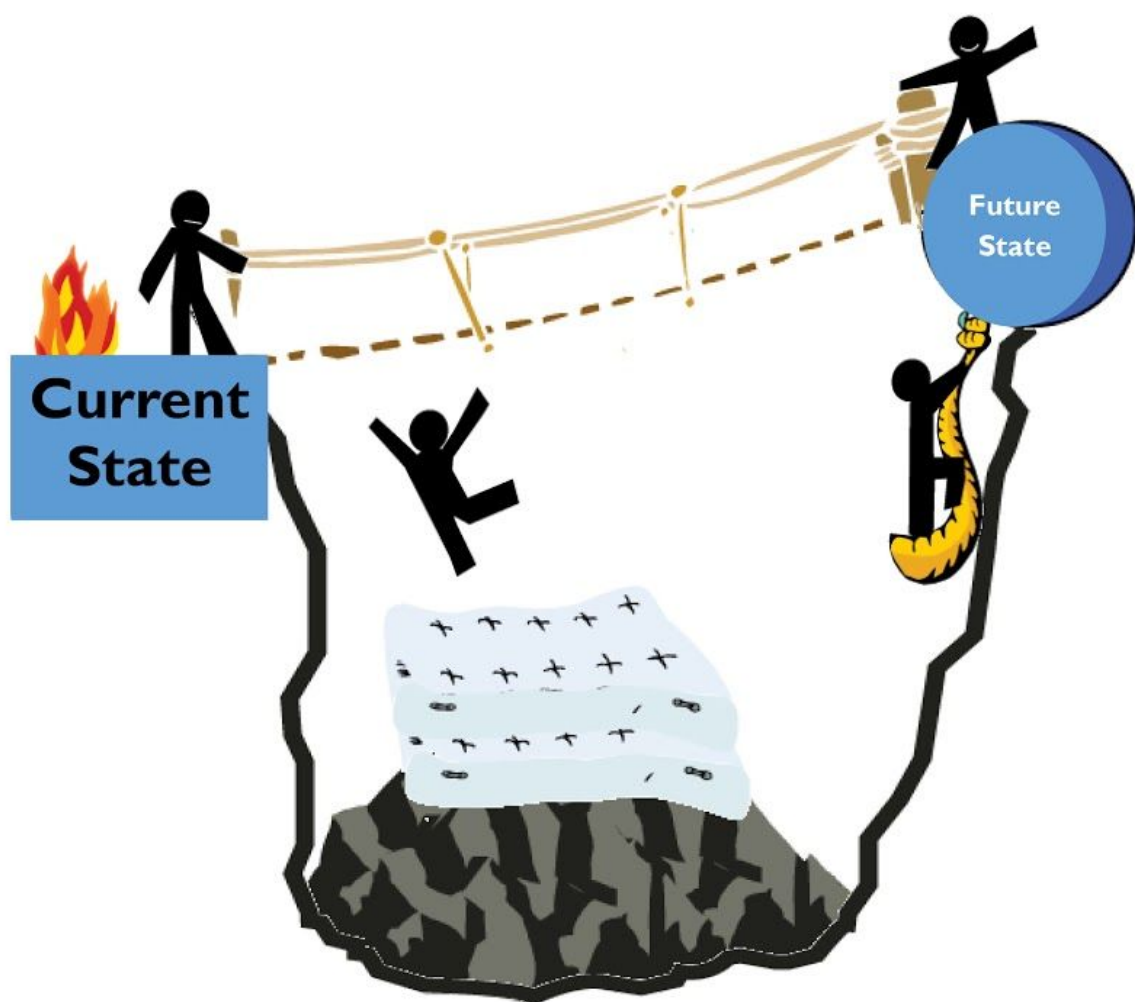
X



Y

Time

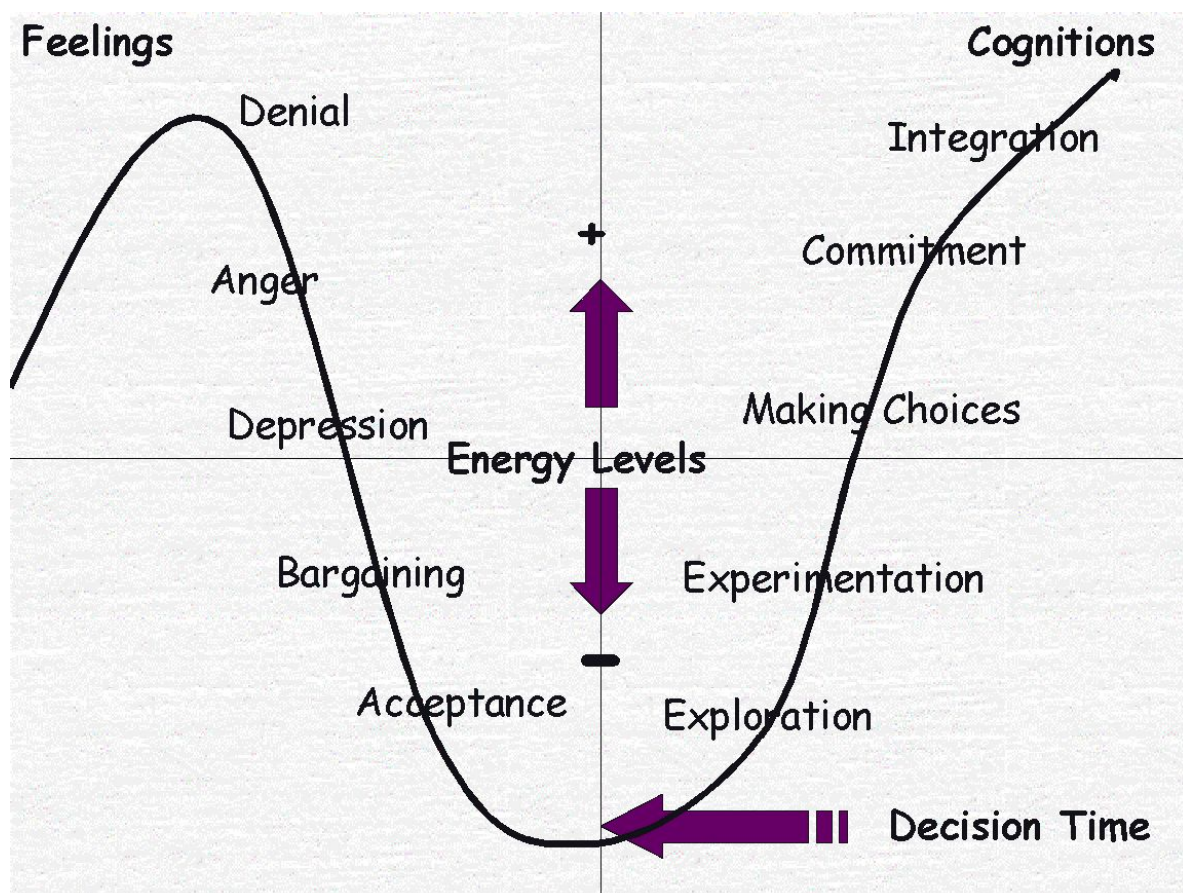
As we can see from our own personal experience of change, it is not a linear process. Most change processes resemble something closer to a roller coaster. In the graphic below the change process is portrayed in a humorous way. The current state refers to the burning platform – the reason why things MUST and will change. On the opposite side is the future state. A very tenuous bridge offers the way across but few are able to negotiate it without falling off. The threat is the fall into uncertainty with the dangerous rocks below that can inflict injury on both the individuals and the organisation itself. Leadership has the task of cushioning the fall and mitigating the damage. The upward journey is also precarious but we want to give people “ropes” that can assist them to the future or desired state.



Rendle (1998:110) suggests the following as a more appropriate description of the process people go through in a change process.

He uses the x axis to represent energy levels and the y axis to represent time. It may not be accurate to refer to energy levels as many of these emotions require high levels of energy. It may be more helpful to refer to this axis as “level of feeling of connectedness with the community”. Even this is not enough because in chaotic change there are numerous factors operating all the time that cannot be accurately reflected in a 2 dimensional diagram. It would also be true to say that the line far from being smooth contains many mini roller coasters on it. Nevertheless Rendle’s image of a roller coaster is a very helpful lens to understand the intra-personal dynamics of change.

The graphic below may remind some of the work of grief therapist Elizabeth Kubler Ross (who worked with patients who were terminally ill and with families experiencing loss) The process is similar as they both describe processes associated with dealing with loss. We have developed this as a simpler version of the rollercoaster that introduces certain dynamics evidenced in organizations and organizations facing traumatic change such as those facing closure or mergers



One should not understand the rollercoaster as a conveyor belt of emotions that one moves along consecutively and inexorably. Jeanie Daniel Duck (2001:124) also refers to the dynamics of this roller coaster: "Like the dynamics of the Change Curve itself – which are dynamic, overlap and seesaw back and forth – individuals will be upbeat one minute and down the next. They will experience change differently and inconsistently. They are likely to feel multiple, often conflicting, emotions at any given time". We need to remember this as we examine the different stages of the rollercoaster.

The change is announced

The initial surge in energy levels after the change is announced can be attributed to the way in which people put a positive spin on things in order to cope with the immediate anxiety that change elicits. Some mistake this for a positive response to the change whereas it is, in fact, a short-lived burst of positive energy that precedes the slide into difficult feelings.

Denial

This is followed by a period of shock and disorientation in which people find it hard to accept that the change has or is about to happen. A form of denial develops in which people live as though nothing has changed. On the one hand, significant energy may be put into continuing with routine and working hard to ensure that the consequences of the change are not felt whilst on the other people may retreat to familiar territory where they are not exposed to the realities of the change

Anger

Eventually the attempts at denial wear thin and people are confronted with the realities and consequences of the change. This often leads to anger. The anger may be turned outward in looking for a scapegoat or someone to blame. It may be turned inward into feelings of guilt as people berate themselves for not doing more to prevent the change from happening. In both cases it is experienced as a resistance to change.

Grief

When the venting of anger has run its course and people realise that it has not prevented the change, it is common for people to slide into a period of grief and even depression as they come to terms with the reality of the change and the profound sense of loss that it brings. Energy levels plummet and a heaviness and sadness pervades peoples' involvement in the community.

Bargaining

An observation in many inner city congregations experiencing decline is a stage following a period of grief in which people attempt to resuscitate the old through a process of bargaining. Trade offs are negotiated such as sharing the building with other groups, introducing a service for younger members, inviting a member of a marginal group in the church to serve on the leadership. These attempts recognize that change is happening but they are attempts to reduce the impact of that change by trading small innovations in exchange for the retention of large parts of the status quo. They are last ditch attempts to stave off the process of change and they sometimes succeed in prolonging the status quo. Sometimes they serve only to introduce a new rollercoaster and before long people are back facing the reality that always confronted them.

The point of acceptance that things have changed

A critical time is reached in the process where people accept that things have changed and will never be the same again. This point marks an emotional low but it also marks the beginning of an openness to change. The anger and the bargaining subside and resignation sets in. This is often a place of deep sadness and should not be trivialized or seized upon as a moment to coerce, persuade or gloat with an “I told you so” attitude. Instead it is important to be present to what has happened recognizing that important decisions will soon need to be made.

The moment of truth – The point of decision

The point of decision is the turning point of the graph. It does not necessarily imply the resolution of all the feelings but rather that people will be brought to a point of decision with their feelings of concern owned and acknowledged.

The key decision being made is whether to stay with the congregation in the midst of change or whether to leave or withdraw. The decision to stay is a decision to journey with those on the rollercoaster and a commitment to working through the process on the right hand side of the roller coaster

Exploration

We should not imagine that when people have made a decision to stay with the process that they are now ready to commit to a new vision. We should note that they are still at a very low point on the rollercoaster’s energy axis. There is often a reticence to commit and a tentative exploration of the possibilities that the change offers. Most of this is done at an intellectual and conceptual level by weighing up scenarios. It is a little like putting one’s toe into the swimming pool to test the water rather than just diving in.

Experimenting

People begin to move from the exploration of different scenarios to actually trying a few out. There is normally a fair amount of cynicism and a reluctance to give anything too much credit. But it is a stage further on from exploration as it signifies the first attempts to try something

Choosing

As trust grows and the change begins to take root in people they become dissatisfied with their own cynicism and indecisiveness. They move from the place of experimentation to that of choosing between options. In doing so they are still vulnerable and whilst they have made choices we should not assume that this implies they have committed themselves to the whole process of change. They have in fact merely chosen between different options often in isolation from the wider change process

Committing

After making choices and developing a trust in the process people begin to shift towards wanting to commit to the change more fully. This is expressed in more faithful giving, attendance and involvement. It is also expressed in the willingness to risk in relationships to the extent of disagreeing with others and in volunteering to set up a new initiative

Integrating

At this point people are able to look back maturely and embrace the pain of the left hand side of the rollercoaster as a necessary part of the whole journey. They are able to see that during this period the new was being shaped and that it has enriched the process to the extent that the energy levels are higher than when the change was first announced. This is not the place of triumphalism but rather the place of deep humility in which we realise that God has fashioned something wonderful out of the cauldron of pain.

The roller coaster demonstrates very clearly that in most change processes we are dealing with multiple human emotions at the same time and these have to be managed if we are to effect change.

3. Playing a facilitative role in the change process

I. Understanding the situation

Many institutional changes fail because leaders pay attention to the changes they are facing but not to the transitions people must make to accommodate the changes

(Rendle 1998:107)

- Know where you are on the roller coaster of change
- Know where the leaders are
- Know where the congregation or organization is

Typical responses to resistance to change

Maurer (1996: 36 – 42) suggests a number of typical responses to resistance to change:

- Use power
- Manipulate those who oppose
- Apply force of reason
- Ignore resistance
- Play off relationships
- Make deals
- Kill the messenger
- Give in too soon

Why typical responses don't work

Maurer (1996:38-42) suggests why these responses don't work

- They increase resistance
- The win might not be worth the cost
- They fail to create synergy
- They create fear and suspicion
- They separate us from others

II. Understanding resistance

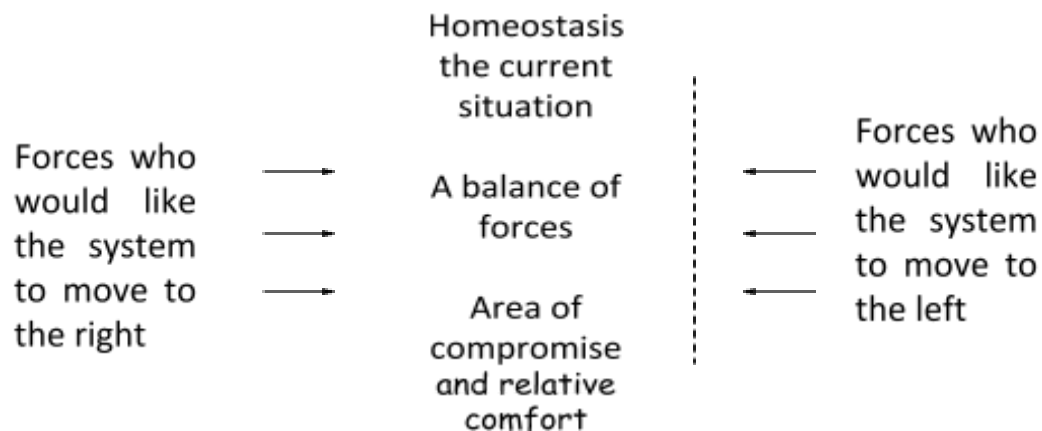
Level 1 – Based on Information “I Don’t Get It!”	Level 1 may come from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Lack of information➤ Lack of exposure➤ Confusion
Level 2 – Physiological and Emotional Reaction to Change “I Don’t Like It!”	Level 2 is an emotional and physiological reaction based on fear: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Loss of power or control➤ Loss of status➤ Loss of face or respect➤ Feeling of incompetence➤ Feeling of isolation➤ Sense that they can’t take on anything else
Level 3 – Bigger Than the Current Change “I Don’t Like YOU!”	Level 3 may come from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Personal history➤ Cultural, ethnic, gender differences➤ Significant disagreement over values➤ Transference – the person being resisted represents someone else such as a mother, father, former boss, etc.

Source: From Beyond the Wall of Resistance: Unconventional Strategies that Build Support for Change, Bard Books, Inc, Austin, Texas, 1996.

Force field analysis

- Another useful tool in managing resistance to change is Force field analysis. Essentially Force field analysis seeks to identify the forces for change and those opposed to it. It goes on to show that instead of increasing forces supportive of change it is better to reduce the forces opposing change by addressing some of their real needs and concerns. When the strategy of increasing the forces supportive of change is employed it only serves to mobilize additional energy of those opposed to change and a standoff or stalemate ensues. When resistive forces are reduced, progress is made.
- The theory behind force field analysis comes from the work of Kurt Lewin. He suggests that “organizations are rarely, if ever, at a point of total consensus about how they are and how they should operate. Instead, organizations are in a state of organized compromise, where the forces for change and the forces against change are in equilibrium.”

- It can graphically be portrayed in the following way:



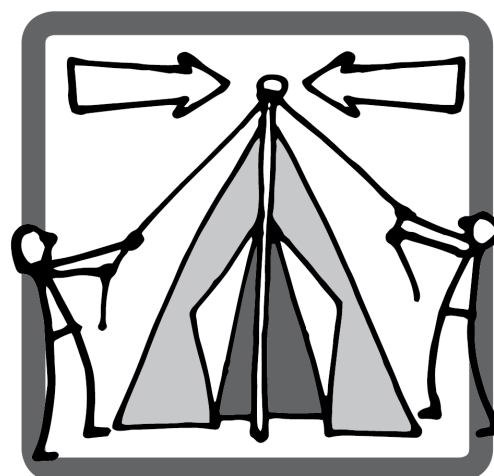
- This tool can typically be used in situations where two sides of the same phenomenon need to be explored, where the dynamics for and/or against change need to be explored, where hopes and fears call for a deeper understanding, etc. It is especially helpful to give perspective on situations where gains under a certain style of leadership were wiped away by a backlash during a change of leadership.
- A flipchart/newsprint is all that is needed to conduct a force field analysis. The forces on both sides are identified and discussed. The exercise concludes with action plans about how to deal with the positive and negative forces. Remember negative forces are not eradicated through eliminating the bearers thereof. They are much better managed through welcoming their contribution to the greater good of the system.

III. Developing appropriate responses to resistance

Returning to the roller coaster, we could summarise it and then draw a line through the middle

The left side of the roller coaster

- Tend to be seen as the more negative responses to change
- Strategies such as being positive or persuasive will be counterproductive as they tune in to logic and reason rather than feelings
- The key task is to listen and empathize rather than convince
- It must be clearly demonstrated (i.e. openly and transparently) that people's concerns have been heard, considered and taken into account in the planning.



This is best done by responding personally to people, assuring them that they have been heard.

- To listen does not imply agreement
- When travelling through the “wilderness” of change it is not helpful for preaching and worship to focus on the promised land but rather it should explore what it means to be faithful as a community whilst travelling through the wilderness
- Sermons from the right side of the roller coaster addressed to members on the left side are experienced as manipulative and insensitive
- Thomas Merton observed that in truly creative times which prompt new behaviour and new forms of ministry, what we often need from our God, and what our congregations often need from their leaders, is not a quick map to the final destination, the promised land, but “bread for the wilderness” – sustenance and strategies to help us find our ways.
(In Rendle 1998: 2)

The right hand side of the roller coaster

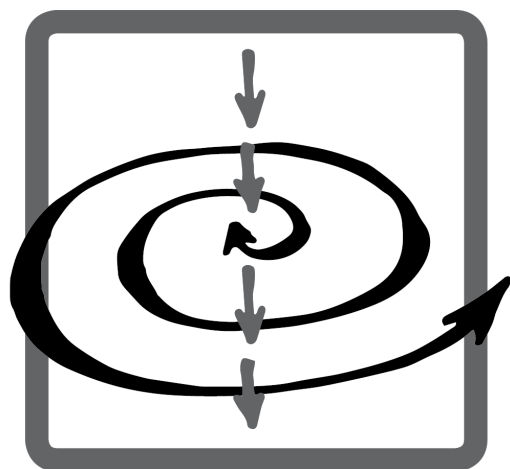
- This involves envisioning the new future, exploring options, committing to action and integrating the change into the life of the congregation.
- People need information at this stage
- Now is the time for persuasive argument and strong vocal leadership

Moving on

- It is not possible to please all of the people all of the time
- Bringing people sensitively to a place of decision is a critical part of ministry. Ultimately the choice is theirs and we need to allow the space for these decisions to be made in the safe place of unconditional acceptance even if it means a parting of the ways

Another angle on things

Whilst the roller coaster gives helpful insights it is not adequate on its own to describe the intra-personal dynamics of change. It gives the impression that we move irrevocably through a process and that there is no turning back. Reality tells us that we return to issues and feelings many times in our lives even though we have moved on. The image of a spiral may be another useful lens to place alongside the roller coaster to describe our experience of change.



Close to the experience of change we feel intensely and revisit feelings and issues regularly. As time passes we revisit issues and feelings but from a greater distance and less frequently. The spiral reminds us that we are not on a predictable conveyor belt of emotions that will one day deliver us safely to the other side where we no longer remember the pain and difficulty. Instead we incorporate these experiences (and our memories of them) into our life journey eventually embracing them as friends and teachers.

Theological insights

- The Christian life is about pilgrimage and journey. It is important therefore to recognize that every aspect of the roller coaster is part of God's activity in our lives. Sometimes we may be tempted to see the left side as being part of sinfulness and the right side as part of God's will. This is far from the truth. Every part of life (including the dark and difficult feelings) is to be lived fully conscious of God's activity in it.
- If we were to reflect on the life of Jesus and the birth of the church, then we may see the proclamation of the Kingdom as the right side of the roller coaster. From the moment Jesus enters Jerusalem we see indications of the pain of the left side. Not even the resurrection propels his disciples out of the left side. The ascension elicits another roller coaster and it is only Pentecost that helps them to move to the right hand side. The experience of Jerusalem where the King is crucified is as much a part of Gods activity of salvation as the experience of Galilee where the Kingdom is proclaimed or of Jerusalem where the Church is established.
- Similarly if we reflect on the Exodus, then we can see that the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness (the left side) were needed to prepare the people for living in the Promised Land (the right side). The left side shapes the kind of community that is born on the right side. All are part of God's saving activity.
- We can see therefore that God has been involved in humanity's roller coasters throughout history. If we were only to focus on the outcomes of each roller coaster we would reduce the Biblical narrative to just a few chapters. God meant for us to engage actively with the struggles, choices and outcomes related in scripture and to draw strength from those who have gone before as we journey on our own roller coasters of struggle, choice and outcome.

Other points to remember and tools to use

- Leading a change process is about journey and this implies time. Speeding up a process by ignoring the reality of the roller coaster or attempting to introduce shortcuts may prove to be counterproductive and cost you more time in the end. At the same time a journey needs momentum. If we are continually

setting up camp to wait for stragglers to catch up, the journey loses its impetus and energy is lost. Engaging with people's concerns and fears must be part of the journey forward. It helps us to clarify the kind of community we are going to be in the future.

- The leadership of an organization or congregation tends to move through the roller coaster before anyone else. Often they are already on the right hand side moving up when the change is announced to everyone else. It is crucial that they understand the roller coaster that they themselves have been on and that they consciously prepare themselves to accompany those who are about to embark on the roller coaster.
- A key issue in a change process is trust. Leaders should draw up a "Trust Account". Every time a change is announced this amounts to a withdrawal from the Trust account. Every time a fear or concern is addressed, these amount to a deposit in the Trust account. It is good to reflect on what the balance is at the outset of the process and how the "books can be balanced" throughout the process.

IV. Windows of opportunity for transformation

It is very important that we develop a positive attitude towards change and that we become sensitive to transitions that may allow us windows for transformation. A transition often presents an opportunity for a transformation process to be initiated and can move an organization out of a place of stuckness if handled correctly. These are energy points in the life of any congregation or organization. The energy can either be channelled negatively or positively but energy is guaranteed! Here are a few examples of transitions that may offer such an opportunity:

- A change in leadership
- When the building becomes too small to accommodate the activities of the organization or congregation
- When a large development affecting the demographics of the neighbourhood takes place (e.g. a home for the aged, a high density housing complex, a shopping mall)
- A significant anniversary for the congregation or organization
- A substantial donation or bequest
- When the income of the organization or congregation declines to the extent that its sustainability (in its present form) is in question

In addition there are other transitions that whilst not obvious may be helpful to us. In the next section we deal with the impact of size transitions in congregations

4. Leading Change

Much of what we have dealt with refers to how to manage people during change. But what if we have to initiate change and lead it from the front? Kotter (1996) identifies 8 stages that need to be managed in change processes. Whilst we do not have time to explore them in depth, they provide helpful guidelines to leading change processes

1. Establish a sense of urgency

We have to create enough urgency to prompt action. Leaders generally underestimate how hard it is to drive people out of their comfort zones. Effective leaders are willing to have awkward conversations about painful facts. Kotter suggests that when 75% of leaders are convinced that the status quo is no longer viable then there will be sufficient urgency to facilitate change

2. Form a powerful guiding coalition

Any change process needs a group of people convinced of the need for change. In terms of composition ask the questions: Who cares? Who knows? Who can? A team of 3-5 is generally needed to keep the process going and they need to have a vision of continually growing the number of convinced people

3. Develop a vision and a strategy

Successful transformation depends on a picture of the future that is relatively easy to communicate and appeals to customers, stockholders and employees. A vision helps clarify the direction in which an organization needs to move. Kotter (1996:72) identifies the following characteristics of an effective vision:

- Imaginable: Conveys a picture of what the future will look like
- Desirable: Appeals to the long term interests of employees, customers ... and others who have a stake in the enterprise
- Feasible: Comprises realistic, attainable goals
- Focused: Is clear enough to provide focus in decision making
- Flexible: Is general enough to allow individual initiative and alternative responses in the light of changing conditions
- Communicable: Is easy to communicate; can be successfully explained within 5 minutes

4. Communicate the Change Vision

Kotter suggests that leadership should estimate the amount of communication required to communicate the vision and strategy and then multiply it by ten!!! Kotter (1996) suggests 7 principles of effective communication

- Keep it simple
- Use metaphors, analogies
- Use many different forums
- Repeat, Repeat, Repeat -
- Walk the talk – start living the vision
- Explicitly address seeming inconsistencies
- Listen and be listened to

5. Empower employees for broad based action

Kotter (1996:102) identifies the 4 most important obstacles that need to be overcome

- Remove structural barriers that obstruct change and make sure that they are compatible to the vision
- Provide the training needed to drive the change
- Align information systems and personnel systems to the vision
- Confront supervisors who undermine the need for change

6. Generate short term wins

In leading change we need to ensure that the long term vision produces some short term results. These add credibility and momentum to the change process. Kotter (1996: 121) sees 3 characteristics of a good short term win

- It's visible: Large numbers of people can see for themselves whether the result is real or just hype
- It's unambiguous: there can be little argument over the call
- It's clearly related to the change effort

7. Consolidate gains and produce more change

Be careful not to declare victory too soon. Resistance is always waiting to reassert itself or put another way if you give people half a chance they will revert to the status quo. The following are important to remember at this stage:

- Use the credibility gained by short term gains to tackle bigger change issues and projects
- Bring in additional people and promote people to help with the changes
- Senior managers need to keep the urgency levels up
- Lower level managers need to provide leadership for specific projects within the change process

8. Anchor new approaches in the culture

This is the last step in the change process but is often attempted first. Attitudes and behaviours change first but only when their successes become obvious does the

change become part of the new culture of the organization. Anchoring the change in the culture may require

- Lots of verbal instruction and support
- Changing key people who are obstructing change
- Building in succession processes (particularly personnel) that are compatible with the change

We should not understand this as a linear process. Sometimes we will have to go back in order to move forward and we will have to manage many changes at the same time and much of the mess that emanates from this.

Too often in change processes, we fail to build on momentum and attempt short cuts. Kotter reminds us that we underestimate the importance of each of these steps at our peril. Sustainable change requires a consistent determination to see it through.

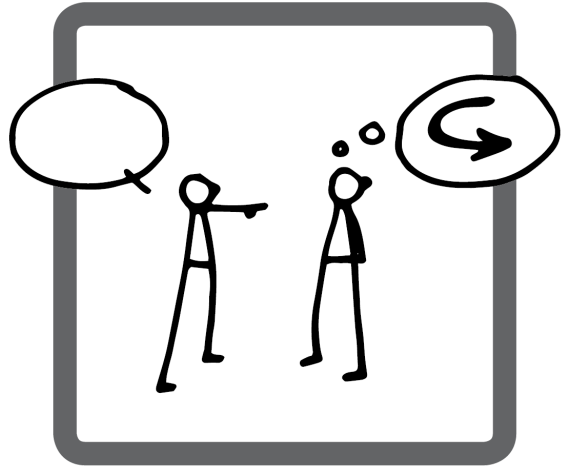
Reflection

Reflect on the kind of change you will need to lead in your case study. Where are you in the 8 step process? Which step do you need to pay most attention to right now? How would you go about doing it?

CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. PERSUADING

Persuasion, attempts to change another's point of view, way of thinking, feeling or ideas using "rational" deductive, inductive arguments. When using a persuading strategy in conflict one assumes that the other is incorrect or ignorant and needs to be changed in order to improve the situation, relationship, organisation or individual.



HOW TO PERSUADE

- Try specifically to meet the needs of the other - know what they want /need.
- Present both sides – don't downplay opposition, don't enhance your position over the others views.
- Present your favoured viewpoint last – people tend to respond to and remember what they heard last.
- Be "for", not "against" e.g. you are asked to buy a new car; "be for" finding the best reliable transport, and "be for" making the best use of your financial resources.

WHEN TO PERSUADE

Persuasion is most successful when-

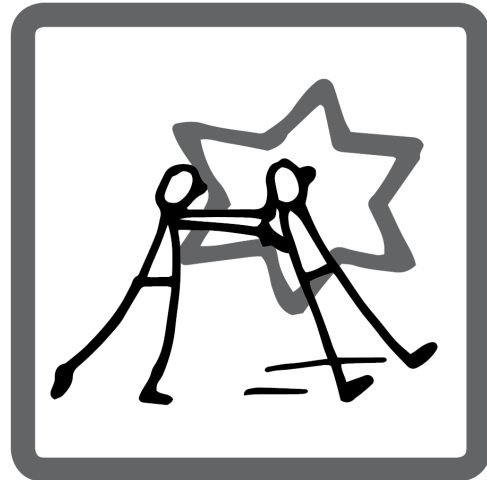
- The other trusts you /your motives
- The other does not have strong feelings or opinions on the subject
- The other is unclear about what they want

2. COMPELLING (OR FORCING)

To compel is to give no other choice. Leas, defines it as the use of physical or emotional force, authority or pressure to oblige or constrain one party to do something the other party wants done

People can be compelled to act according to the wish/ wishes of those with authority, power, or force. When compelling strategies are not used appropriately relationships deteriorate, people suffer and rebellion occurs. Leas says

“Compelling is like the use of certain drugs: in short term emergencies they are called for.” e.g. a parent compels a three-year-old to “leave the house immediately”! – The house is on fire.



HOW TO COMPEL/FORCE

- Avoid qualifying words like: I hope, I wish, perhaps, in my opinion.
- Use clear statements to get clear responses (The response may not always be what you want, but it will be clear)
- Clarify to see if you have been understood by requesting some kind of statement that indicates to you that the other knows how to comply.

WHEN TO COMPEL/FORCE

- Infrequently- regular use of the strategy creates problems
- When you or others are under attack
- When rights are being violated- When there is no clear justice system operating it will avoid injury
- When you are able to monitor performance that can be evaluated properly.

AVOIDING, IGNORING, ACCOMADATING OR FLEEING

All four of these strategies supports and/or tolerates the status quo

Avoiding	To stay away from, procrastinate or put off dealing with conflict.
Ignoring	To say one thing and do another or act as though the conflict does not exist.
Fleeing	A passive strategy of removing oneself from the arena in which the conflict exists
Accommodating	To go along with the other, often when the relationship is more important than the issue. A “give in”

HOW TO:

- Procrastinate, put off seeing the people involved. Don't bring up the issue (keep it off the agenda).
- Get on with the things you are asked to do.
- Resign; walk away; physically remove yourself.

WHEN TO:

- When the cost of working out the problem exceeds the value of working it out.
- When people need time, space and or distance to cool down or think.
- When there is conflict on many levels involving many people about many issues, avoiding can help bring focus.
- When lives are at stake.

3. COLLABORATING

To collaborate is to 'co-labour'. It seeks a win – win strategy that works together with others (with whom you disagree) to resolve difficulties. In essence, it is mutual problem solving.

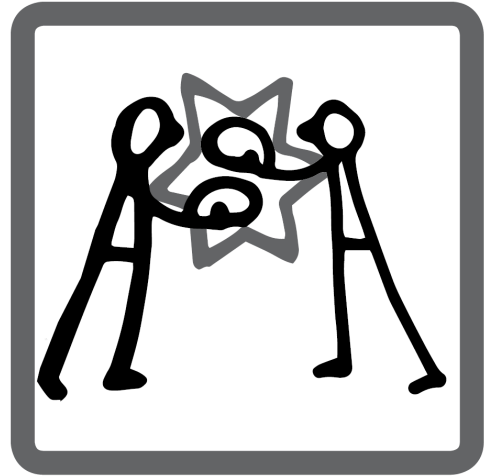
HOW TO:

Leas suggests that at least the following need to take place:

- Both jointly acknowledge the problem exists
- Both jointly define the problem
- Both jointly identify shared interests
- Both jointly agree on ground rules
- Both jointly agree on the solution

WHEN TO:

- When you have time for it to take as long as it will take
- When solutions exist that will satisfy all the parties involved and affected by the decisions.



4. NEGOTIATING OR BARGAINING

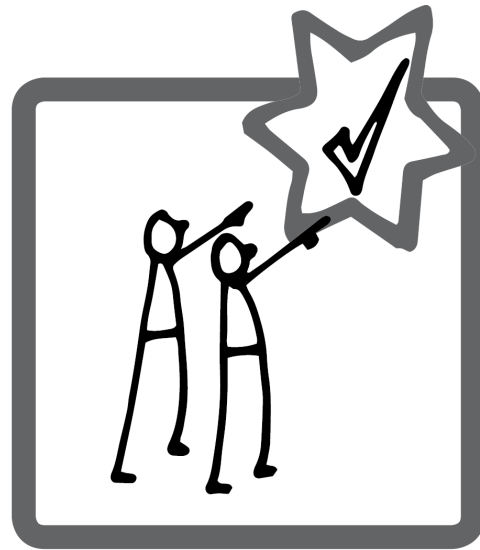
This is a “win a bit, lose a bit” strategy. It is to manage discussions and convey different views on one subject. The expectations of the parties are low in this conflict arena. People aim to get as much as they can, assuming they won’t get everything they want.

HOW TO:

- Negotiating or bargaining, is the act of “backing off”
- Share information (not all) but don’t withhold information that is needed by both parties.
- Start with the easy issues
- Stress the similarities by using positive language
- Avoid using innuendos, vague and ambiguous language.

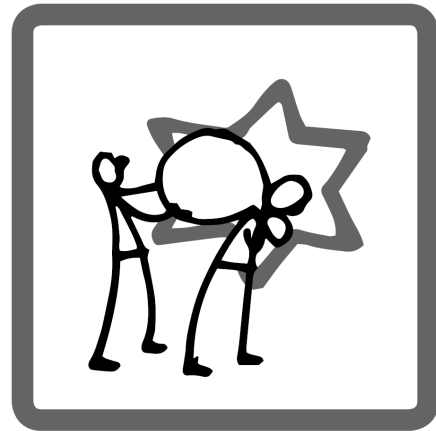
WHEN TO:

- This strategy can be used at all levels of conflict
- When goals are not mutually exclusive.
- When the power is balanced between all parties.



5. SUPPORTING

This strategy assumes the problem belongs to 'the other'. Ownership and responsibility for the problem is only on one side. The problem is shared between two parties only to the extent that the "supporter" offers resources, encouragement, empowering and equipping. This strategy seeks to help others feel strong enough to deal with difficulties without getting you to do the work of 'fixing'.



HOW TO:

- Encourage the regular expression or description of the problem and the feelings being experienced.
- Explore whether there are other issues being triggered.
- Find the real or root cause of the person's stress.

WHEN TO:

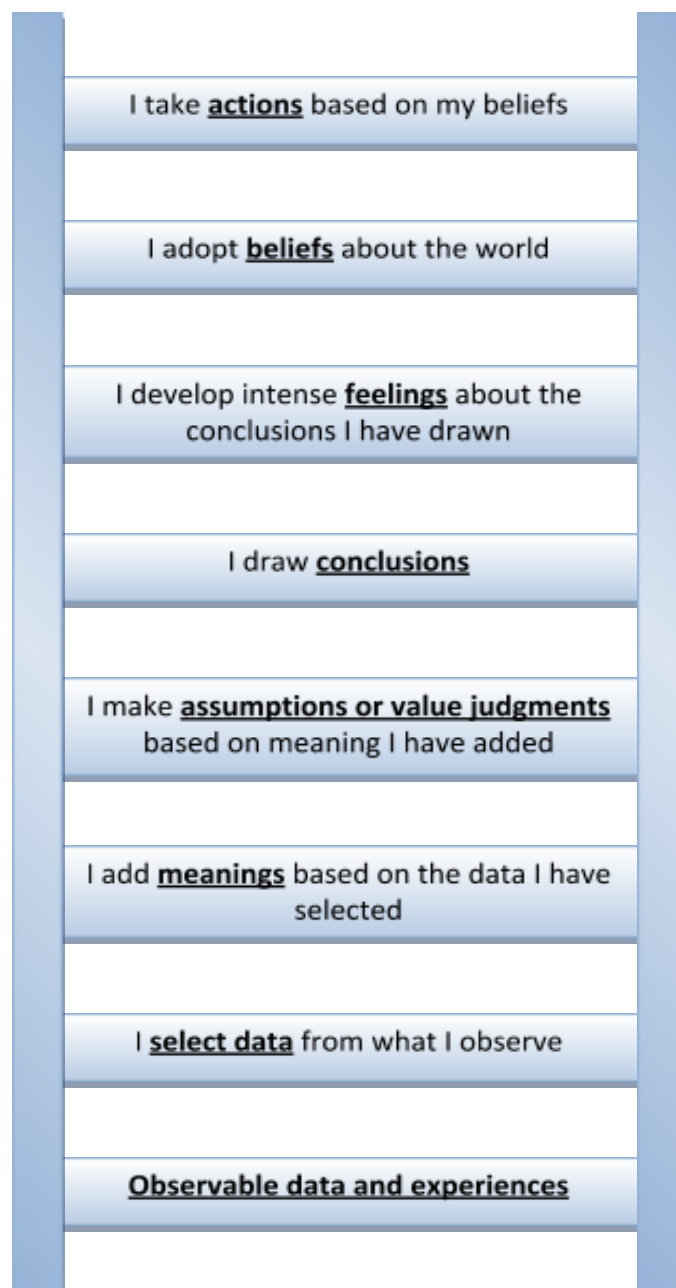
- ONLY when it is not your responsibility to deal with the issue
- When the issue and its solution does not benefit you in a direct way.
- When you are in a conflict situation and the other is unwilling to 'come to the table' and you need to be supported by a third party. (You receive support)

Questions for reflection

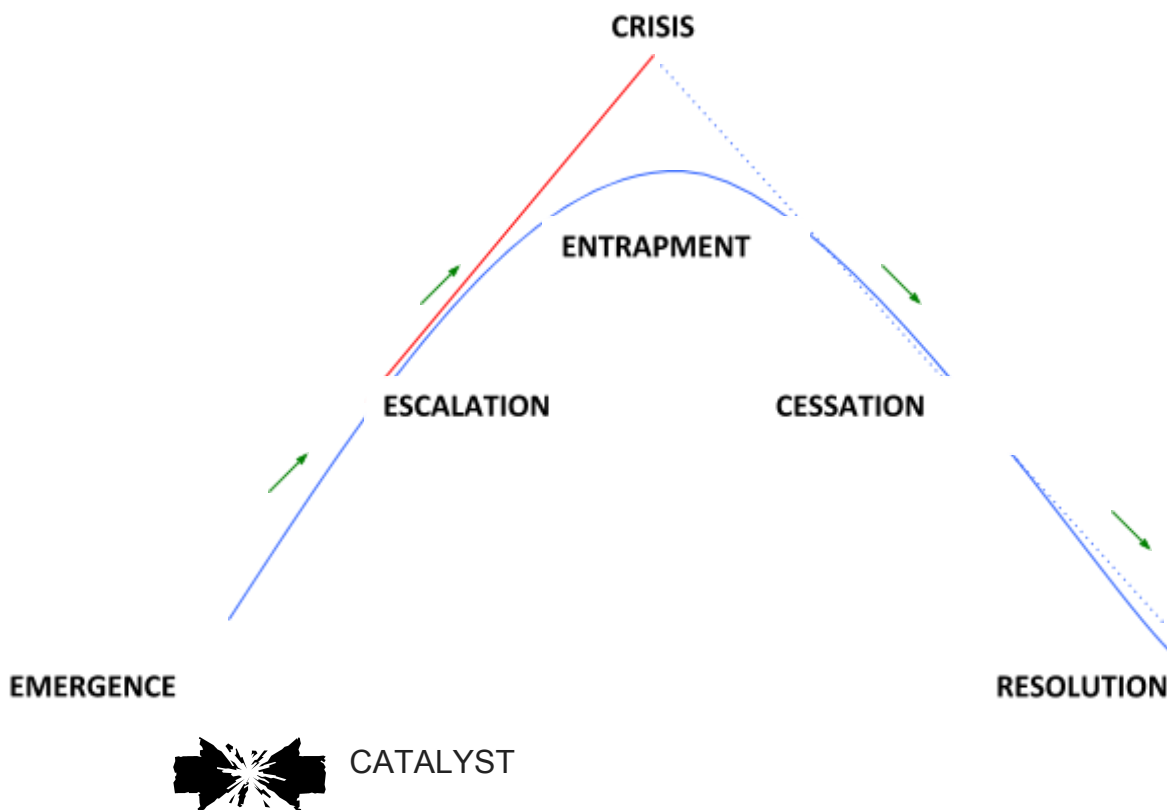
1. What have you learned about your style of managing conflict?
2. How different do you think your style might have been in another setting?
3. What are the areas you will have to work on if you are going to manage conflict more creatively?

6. The Ladder of Inference

Very often we will find that a conflict has its root in a misunderstanding or a misinterpretation. A very helpful tool to help us understand this is the ladder of inference based on the work of Chris Argyris. Here we see how we start with some information or an experience and move up the ladder drawing certain inferences from what we saw or experienced. This becomes our “truth” about what happened and it ends up shaping our beliefs and actions. The danger of this is that we begin to believe that our perception of reality is the only valid one and we draw others in to support our beliefs. This is how many conflicts are born and as leaders or facilitators we sometimes need to take people back to the original data and experiences and expose them to other perceptions of what happened so that they can develop a more comprehensive and balanced version of what really happened. As we have learned in the change process and as we will learn in the material that follows this is a complex process. The ladder is a helpful tool along the way.



Stages of conflict development²



CATALYST:

- ☐ Events/ actions which act as a trigger

EMERGENCE:

- ☐ The conflict begins to manifest and people begin to take sides
- ☐ Differences between the parties become more central in how they relate to each other

ESCALATION:

- ☐ Openly expressed hostility. Communication becomes difficult
- ☐ Increased polarisation i.e. conflict parties move further away from each other
- ☐ Other people are drawn into the conflict
- ☐ Positions become increasingly adversarial and violence becomes a real option for retaliation
- ☐ Perceptions of self, the other and the conflict become distorted

ENTRAPMENT & CRISIS

- ☐ Destructive expressions of conflict increase
- ☐ Conflict parties are caught in a cycle of violence

² Adapted from International Alert Model

- ☐ Crisis point is reached and for many there is no resolution in sight

CESSATION

- ☐ Conflict parties begin to open themselves up to alternative methods for resolution
- ☐ Opportunity is created for third party intervention
- ☐ Levels of violence decrease or end totally

RESOLUTION

- ☐ Agreements reached through intervention are implemented
- ☐ Rebuilding of the society, relationship, trust etc. begins

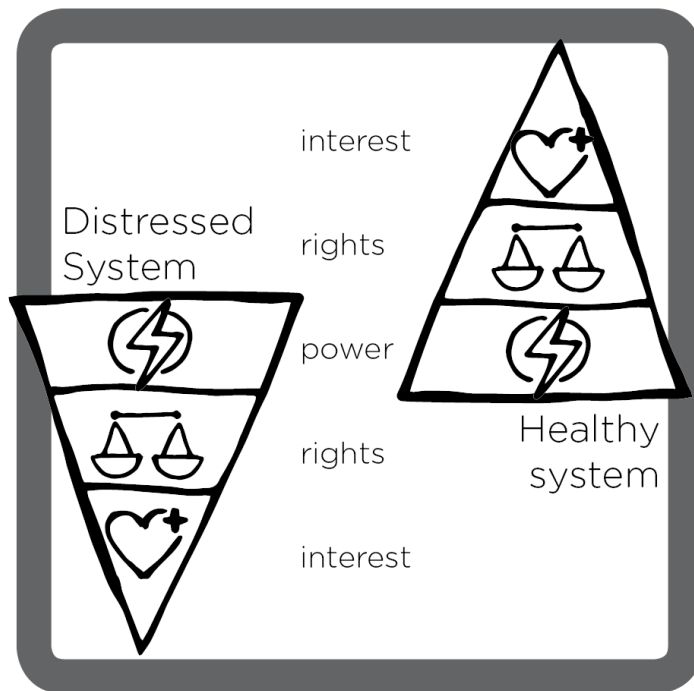
7. Methods used to resolve conflict

In the development of the conflict, the conflict parties will attempt to find a resolution through one or all of the following methods.

-
- Power-based procedures: conflict parties rely on power techniques in order to determine who is stronger. The assumption being that the more powerful person/ group will determine the outcome of the conflict.

Rights-based procedures: these methods are based upon the society's laws, norms and values. In a given situation, the decision is reached by devising an independent set of criteria in order to determine fairness.

Interest-based procedures: the conflict parties focus on their needs and concerns in order to resolve the conflict.



The approach the conflict parties will use is often determined by the power relationship that exists between them.

It is important to note that as the conflict progresses, the conflict parties can move through the 3 methods i.e. they may move from interest-based to rights-based to power-based techniques in order to make their point.

The key is to move them from power-based methods to interest based methods.

8. Concluding thoughts

This has been a very basic introduction to Conflict Transformation. It has been aimed deliberately at the intra-personal dynamics of conflict. Should you want to develop a deeper understanding of conflict and appropriate conflict interventions we would encourage you to enrol for either the one day or the 3 day SEED Conflict resolution and peace building course.

DEVELOPING AND GUIDING A PROCESS

1. Points of Departure

By now it should be clear that we try to steer away from helping people to make plans and manage programmes. We are committed to developing and guiding processes.

What then constitutes the difference between these two approaches? The following points of departure are definitive of the way in which we at SEED prefer to approach facilitation processes:

- **Systemic:** to work in a holistic and inclusive way. This means that we, to the best of our ability, exercise the discipline of being sensitive to and aware of all the people and environmental dynamics at play in a given situation and to use that to the benefit of the process.
- **Process-orientated:** to learn from what we do and to do in the light of what we have learned. It is one of our beliefs that each group of people that we work with have the potential and capacity to deal with their own particular situation provided that they are able to adopt and foster a learning attitude and culture.
- **Dialogical:** to maintain a culture of open dialogue where listening and sharing are essential ingredients of communication. The nature of communication and conversation in facilitation processes should be of such a nature that the discovery of new meaning becomes possible. Common ground is found and new visions are discovered when real dialogue starts to happen.
- **Biblical:** to ensure that we promote an approach that is rooted in the faith community's Story and Vision as conveyed to us in the Biblical narratives.

In summary we can say that we prefer a process that is EMERGENT in nature. This means that we do not favour the enforcement of strategic blueprints and/or ready-made models onto a community. We prefer to come to a deep understanding and to stay in touch with a community's story, identity, culture and dynamics, whilst we, together with others, discern the way forward.

2. Examples of typical processes

Groups, communities, organisations and congregations tend to ask for facilitation when they experience the need to

- Renew their sense of purpose
- Reconnect with the social realities impacting on them
- Regain balance with regard to the development of their core activities
- Unravel organisational and/or relational patterns that got stuck
- Heal broken or destructive relationships
- Reshape their models of leadership and organisation

Exercise:

Where does your case study fit into the examples stated above? Why?

3. Developing a process

A process that fits

When requests for facilitation occur, the challenge is to develop an appropriate process, i.e. a process that will fit the demands of the situation and that will deliver helpful outcomes.

A facilitation process may be quite simple and short-termed. Or a facilitation process may become very complex and run over the long term. It may also be that what at first seemed to be short and simple may become prolonged and complex.

Irrespective of the length and complexity of a process, we recommend that a process be viewed from four different but complementary angles. These four angles are summarised in the following table. In SEED's advanced course for facilitators these four angles are worked out in detail.

The process from the facilitators point of view	The process as it dynamically unfolds for the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving a request to facilitate • Gathering information about the need for facilitation • Gathering information about the client • Preparing a proposal <p>Key question: What does the process look like from the facilitator or leader's point of view?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for the facilitation • Growth in knowledge and understanding • Growth in discernment and vision • Clarity about priorities, process and strategy • Implement and maintain the change <p>Key question: How will the process be experienced from the community's point of view and how will they be involved?</p>
The process dynamics as an experience of emergent understanding through the use of lenses	The process as a guided journey through the application methods, tools and techniques
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story-telling • Stuckness • Roller-coaster • Force field • Size transitions • Polarities • Triangulation • Emotional space • Phases of conflict <p>Key question: What lenses to apply for thorough and deep understanding?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to design and sensitivity for the flow of an emergent process • Means to gather relevant information, e.g. story-telling, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, etc. • Tools to help with the sorting of information, e.g. forcefield analysis • Techniques to promote effective decision-making, e.g. Particplan/ OutComm • Techniques to promote participation, e.g. nails exercise, clay work, Jenga, trust walk <p>Key question: What to apply to promote flow and progress?</p>

Exercise: Case Study Presentation

Start working again on your case study and prepare for a presentation to the training group in which you attend to the following:

- The issue to be dealt with in terms of
 - o Background
 - o Contributing factors and
 - o Role players involved
- The process that you plan to follow in terms of
 - o Desired outcomes

- o People to be involved and
- o Lenses, methods and tools that seem appropriate to apply

Do not prepare a complex proposal. Take the table in 3.1 as point of departure and work with what is necessary.

PREAMBLE

We as the four churches have decided to journey together called by the Triune God to participate in His mission to the world, so that the world may believe that God has sent Jesus as Savior to the world.

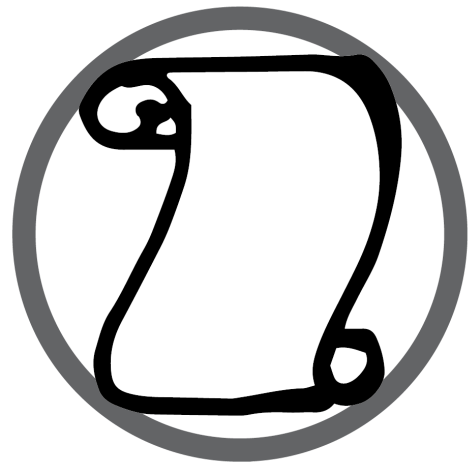
We therefore envisage a new reunited church in the DRC Family, which is missional, committed to the Biblical demands of love, reconciliation, justice and peace.

We realize this process will present many challenges and issues to contend with, but we accept the challenges in being obedient to our Lord and His Word.

We are called to a life, ministry and ecclesiology of obedience and sacrifice.

Knowing that walking this road will ask us to put all selfish ambition aside and to give ourselves as Christ did, we do this in active response to the gospel that Christ in His mercy poured out on us. We respond to Christ's love and Spirit who unites us to Christ in a deep and eternal fellowship. We acknowledge that Christ already gained the victory over all opposing forces so that we can look forward in hope to that day when all knees shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 1:27 - 2:18).

We are committed to accept all the gifts brought by the four churches to the reconciliation, restoration and reunification process.



STATEMENT OF INTENT

We intend to become a faith community that will express the new humanity and identity in Christ in Southern Africa.

We recognize that we are part of one holy catholic and apostolic Church sustained by the Holy Spirit, hearing and proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ and glorifying God our Father.

The intention of this provisional order is to facilitate and encourage in practical ways our churches' visible reunification at all levels while being constantly informed primarily by the following issues:

1. the broadening confessional basis
2. the socio-historical challenges
3. the historical pain and suffering
4. our divided and unreconciled past
5. injustices
6. racism

PROVISIONAL ORDER

This provisional order deals mainly with those joint ventures which need special arrangements. Many other things which can and should happen between members of our churches, congregations, presbyteries and synods are not mentioned here. Together believers must discover in their different contexts what the Lord wants them to do. The intention is that in this new phase of our journey together towards unification the door is open for each member and each meeting for that which the Lord makes possible for them.

SECTION I. CONGREGATIONS

Joint congregations (saamgevoegde gemeentes)

1. The agreement

1.1. When two or more congregations, belonging to at least two different churches within the DR church family, want to form a joint congregation, each of the competent church councils separately takes a decision to that effect. These decisions as well as the related stipulations are included in a written agreement.

1.2. A joint congregation can also include a ward (Afrikaans: wyk) of a congregation of one of the churches within the DR church family. In that case the decision as mentioned above will be taken by the church council of the congregation the ward is part of. The rights and duties – both in their original congregation and in the joint congregation – of the members of the latter congregation that participate in the joint congregation are written down in the aforementioned agreement. Any stipulation in this Provisional Order applies to them analogically. Such members can only be eligible for elder or deacon in one of the congregations, as laid down in the agreement.

1.3. A decision as meant above requires the approbation of the members of the congregation as well as the approval of the presbytery or its mandatory, to be obtained according to the rules of the relevant church order.

1.4. The agreement includes among others stipulations on:

- worship services,
- the administration of Word and sacraments,
- the vocation of ministers,
- the election of elders and deacons,
- the functioning of the joint church council,
- properties and finances
- membership registration

1.5. The agreement is made either for a limited time or for an unlimited time. If the agreement is made for a limited time, and none of the congregations involved has ended it by termination, it is silently prolonged for a similar number of years.

1.6. The agreement ends by termination. Termination is only effective one year after the decision to terminate is taken, unless the majority of the members of the joint church council as well as the majority of the church council members from each of the constitutive congregations separately agree on a shorter term.

1.7. The agreement can only be changed afterwards with the approbation of the members of the joint congregation.

1.8. In the official designation of the joint congregation the official names of the constitutive congregations have to be included.

2. The joint church council

2.1. In every joint congregation there is a joint church council, constituted of the ministers, elders and deacons – as far as they are members of the church council – of the joining congregations. When at the moment of joining other members of a church council are in place, they complete their church orderly term in the joint church council.

2.2. In case of vacancies the joint church council elects new office-bearers. The members of the joint congregation will be given the opportunity to nominate persons for election. Only those members of the congregation are eligible who qualify in terms of the church order and stipulations of the church they originally belong to.

2.3. The approbation of the election and the confirmation of the elected elders and/or deacons will take place according to the stipulations and with use of the form of any of the churches involved.

2.4. The joint church council decides on the term of service of its elders and deacons, and on the possibility of re-election. The maximum term of service of an elder or deacon, including a re-election, is four years. A longer term is only possible with the permission of the competent presbytery.

2.5. The agreement contains stipulations regarding the procedure for the election of ministers. These stipulations cannot be in conflict with the church order and stipulations of any of the constitutive churches.

2.6. The calling, the approbation, and the confirmation of an elected minister will take place in accordance with the church order and stipulations of the church the elected minister belongs to.

2.7. A consulent for a joint congregation is appointed by the joint presbytery, or – if the congregation is not part of a joint presbytery – by one of the competent presbyteries, as agreed upon between these presbyteries. Preferably the consulent is not a minister of the same church to which the minister(s) of the joint congregation belong(s).

3. Responsibilities and tasks

3.1. Life and work of a joint congregation are fully integrated, except where it is excluded in the agreement, where it is not possible or where the joint church council decides otherwise. In such cases the specific church order stipulations apply.

3.2. The joint church council acts with the authority and accountability of the church council of each of the congregations involved.

3.3. The agreement can imply, or the joint church council can decide, that issues of church discipline and issues that are directly related to the legal personality of one of the congregations will be dealt with by the church council members from that particular congregation, who – only in that case, or as agreed by the joint church council – act as the church council of that congregation and act in accordance with the church order and stipulations of that church.

3.4. If it is agreed that issues of church discipline will be dealt with by the (entire) joint church council, this council will keep to the procedural rules as given in the church order of the church to which the church member under discipline belongs, including the rules for appeal. No disciplinary action can be taken without the approval of the majority of the church council members from that particular church.

3.5. The joint church council meets at least four times a year.

3.6. One of the ministers acts as the chair of the meeting. In case of a vacancy the consulent/interim minister chairs the meeting. It is only with the approval of the competent presbyteries that an elder can be appointed chair of the joint church council.

4. The ministry

4.1. In order to administer the Word and/or the sacraments, the church council can invite any person who is authorized to do so in one of the churches participating in the joint congregation, unless it is agreed differently. No person can be invited that has no authorization in any of the churches.

4.2. Within the possibilities as given in the church orders and decisions of the competent churches, the church council makes decisions regarding the liturgical order, liturgical forms, songbooks, Bible translations and other aspects of worship to be in use in the worship services of the congregation.

4.3. A common policy with regard to the admission to Holy Supper will be part of the agreement on which the joint congregation is based.

4.4. Issues regarding the ministry of the ministers will be dealt with according to the church order stipulations of the church he/she originally belongs to. Decisions in this respect can only be taken with the consent of the majority of the members of the joint church council that belong to the same church as the minister. In case this

majority is not found, the issue will be referred for decision to the competent presbytery.

5. Membership registration

5.1. The joint congregation maintains the existing membership registration of the constitutive congregations. The membership registration of the joint congregation includes for each member a reference to the constitutive congregation he/she belongs to.

5.2. New members of the joint congregation choose for registration as members of one of the constitutive congregations.

5.3. Baptized children are registered as members of the constitutive congregation of their mother, unless both parents decide otherwise.

SECTION II. PRESBYTERIES

Joint presbyteries (saamgevoegde ringe)

1. The agreement

1.1. When two or more presbyteries, belonging to at least two different churches within the DR church family, want to form a joint presbytery, each of the competent presbyteries separately takes a decision to that effect. These decisions as well as the related stipulations are included in a written agreement.

1.2. Before a decision as meant above is taken, the presbytery gives all congregations in its constituency the opportunity to express their opinions in writing. Such a decision requires the approval of the (regional) synod(s) or its mandatory, to be obtained according to the rules of the relevant church order.

1.3. The agreement includes among others stipulations on:

- the functioning of the joint presbytery,
- the specific tasks of the presbytery,
- properties and finances.

1.4. A joint presbytery includes all congregations that are part of the respective separate presbyteries. After consultation of the competent presbyteries, the competent (regional) synod(s) or its mandatory can allow a congregation, on its request, to become part of another presbytery.

1.5. The agreement is made either for a limited time or for an unlimited time. If the agreement is made for a limited time, and none of the presbyteries involved has ended it by termination, it is silently prolonged for a similar number of years.

1.6. The agreement ends by termination. Termination is only effective one year after the decision to terminate is taken, unless the majority of the members of the joint presbytery as well as the majority of its members from each of the constitutive presbyteries separately agree on a shorter term.

1.7. The agreement can only be changed afterwards with the approval of the (regional) synod(s).

1.8. In the official designation of the joint presbytery the official names of the constitutive presbyteries have to be included.

2. Responsibilities and tasks

2.1. The responsibilities and tasks of a joint presbytery include all responsibilities and tasks a presbytery has according to the church orders and stipulations of the constitutive churches. Where applicable the joint presbytery – in executing its responsibilities and tasks with regard to congregations and office-bearers – acts according to the rules as laid down in the church order and stipulations of the church the congregation or office-bearer belongs to.

2.2. Life and work of a joint presbytery are fully integrated, except where it is excluded in the agreement, where it is not possible or where the joint presbytery decides otherwise. In such cases the specific church order stipulations apply.

2.3. The joint presbytery acts with the authority and accountability of each of the presbyteries involved.

2.4. If a joint presbytery is part of two (regional) synods that have not themselves formed a joint (regional) synod, the presbytery sends delegates to both (regional) synods. Such delegates only have voting rights in the (regional) synod if they are members of the particular church this (regional) synod is part of. Delegates that do not meet this requirement, can only have an advisory role or act as an observer, in accordance with the rules of that particular (regional) synod.

2.5. The agreement can imply, or the joint presbytery can decide, that issues of church discipline, appeals and issues that are directly related to the legal personality of one of the congregations or presbyteries – including property issues – will be dealt with by the presbytery members from that particular church; only in that case, or as agreed by the joint presbytery, the latter act as the presbytery of that particular church and act in accordance with the church order and stipulations of that church.

2.6. If it is agreed that issues of church discipline (Afrikaans: tug en dissipline) will be dealt with by the (entire) joint presbytery, this presbytery will keep to the procedural rules as given in the church order of the church to which the office-bearer under discipline belongs, including the rules for appeal. No disciplinary action can be taken without the approval of the majority of the presbytery members from that particular church.

2.7. If it is agreed that appeals and issues that are directly related to the legal personality of one of the congregations or presbyteries – including property issues – will be dealt with by the (entire) joint presbytery, this presbytery will keep to the procedural rules as given in the church order of the relevant church.

2.8. The joint presbytery meets at least once in two years.

2.9. If a joint presbytery is part of two (regional) synods that have not themselves decided to cooperate intensively or to become a joint (regional) synod – as stipulated below –, appeals against decisions of that presbytery will be filed with both (regional) synods, and these synods or their mandatories will decide on it together.

SECTION III. (REGIONAL) SYNODS

1. The agreement

1.1. In view of the unification of the churches of the DR church family, and taking into account the present legal status and competences of the (regional) synods of these churches, such synods are challenged to cooperate to the best of their abilities.

1.2. When two or more (regional) synods, belonging to at least two different churches within the DR church family, want to cooperate intensively, each of the competent (regional) synods separately takes a decision to that effect. These decisions as well as the related stipulations are included in a written agreement.

1.3. If two (regional) synods, belonging to two different churches within the DR church family share the same geographical boundaries, they can decide to form a joint (regional) synod. In that case each of the competent (regional) synods separately takes a decision to that effect. These decisions as well as the related stipulations are included in a written agreement.

1.4. Before a decision as meant above (par. 2 and 3) is taken, the (regional) synod gives all congregations and presbyteries in its constituency the opportunity to express their opinions in writing. Such a decision requires the approval of the general synod(s) or its mandatory, to be obtained according to the rules of the relevant church order.

1.5. The agreement includes among others stipulations on:

- the functioning of the cooperating (regional) synods/joint (regional) synod,
- the specific tasks of the cooperating (regional) synods/joint (regional) synod,
- properties and finances.

1.6. Cooperating (regional) synods as well as joint (regional) synods include all presbyteries that are part of the respective separate (regional) synods.

1.7. The competent (regional) synod(s) or its mandatory can allow a (joint) congregation or a (joint) presbytery, on its request, to become part of another (regional) synod, if at least a two-thirds majority of the church councils of the congregations in that (joint) presbytery express their approval.

1.8. The agreement is made either for a limited time or for an unlimited time. If the agreement is made for a limited time, and none of the cooperating (regional) synods or joint (regional) synods involved has terminated it, it is silently prolonged for a similar number of years.

1.9. The agreement ends by termination. Termination is only effective one year after the decision to terminate is taken, unless the majority of the members of each of the cooperating (regional) synods or joint (regional) synod agrees on a shorter term.

1.10. The agreement can only be changed afterwards with the approval of the competent general synods.

1.11. In the aforementioned agreement the cooperating (regional) synods or joint (regional) synod specify which of the responsibilities and tasks that they have,

according to the church order and stipulations of the respective churches, will be executed together.

1.12. Appeals against (ratified) decisions of cooperating (regional) synods or joint (regional) synod will be filed with both general synods, and these synods or their mandatories will decide on it together.

2. Cooperating (Regional) Synods

1. Responsibilities and tasks

2.1.1. Cooperating (regional) synods meet jointly as often as required from the perspective of the responsibilities and tasks they execute together.

2.1.2. Decisions as taken in a joint meeting of cooperating (regional) synods, only have power if ratified afterwards in separate meetings of all competent (regional) synods.

2.1.3. The moderation/executive and/or the moderamen/ synodical commission of the cooperating (regional) synods meet jointly; they only deal with a separate agenda if that is necessary for reasons of legal responsibilities.

2.1.4. The committees of the cooperating (regional) synods meet jointly; they only deal with a separate agenda if that is necessary for reasons of legal responsibilities.

2.1.5. The joint meeting of moderatures/executives prepares the joint meeting of the cooperating (regional) synods. Together the moderatures/executives take responsibility for the implementation of decisions as taken in a joint meeting of cooperating (regional) synods.

2.1.6. If it is agreed that appeals and issues that are directly related to the legal personality of one of the congregations or presbyteries – including property issues – will be dealt with in a joint meeting of the cooperating (regional) synods, this joint meeting will keep to the procedural rules as given in the church order of the relevant church.

3. Joint (Regional) Synods

1. Responsibilities and tasks

3.1.1 In the official designation of the joint (regional) synod the official names of the constitutive (regional) synods have to be included.

3.2.1 The responsibilities and tasks of a joint (regional) synod include all responsibilities and tasks a (regional) synod has according to the church orders and stipulations of the constitutive churches. Where applicable the joint (regional) synod – in executing its responsibilities and tasks with regard to congregations and presbyteries – acts according to the rules as laid down in the church order and stipulations of the church the congregation or the presbytery belongs to.

3.3.1 Life and work of a joint (regional) synod are fully integrated, except where it is excluded in the agreement, where it is not possible or where the joint (regional) synod decides otherwise. In such cases the specific church order stipulations apply.

3.4.1 The joint (regional) synod acts with the authority and accountability of each of the presbyteries involved.

3.5.1 The joint (regional) synod elects its moderation/executive and its moderamen/synodical commission according to the stipulations as written down in the aforementioned agreement. It has its joint committees, and it appoints the members of such committees.

3.6.1 The joint (regional) synod sends delegates to both competent general synods. Such delegates only have voting rights in the general synod if they are members of that particular church. Delegates that do not meet this requirement, can only have an advisory role or act as an observer, in accordance with the rules of that particular general synod.

3.7.1 The agreement can imply, or the joint (regional) synod can decide, that issues of church discipline, appeals and issues that are directly related to the legal personality of one of the congregations or presbyteries – including property issues – will be dealt with by the members of the joint (regional) synod from that particular church; only in that case, or as agreed by the joint (regional) synod, the latter act as the (regional) synod of that particular church and act in accordance with the church order and stipulations of that church.

3.8.1. If it is agreed that issues of church discipline (Afrikaans: tug en dissipline) will be dealt with by the (entire) joint (regional) synod or its mandatory, this joint (regional) synod will keep to the procedural rules as given in the church order of the church to which the office-bearer under discipline belongs, including the rules for appeal. No disciplinary action can be taken without the approval of the majority of the members of the joint (regional) synod or its mandatory belonging to that particular church.

3.9.1. If it is agreed that appeals and issues that are directly related to the legal personality of one of the congregations or presbyteries – including property issues – will be dealt with by the (entire) joint (regional) synod or its mandatory, this (regional) synod will keep to the procedural rules as given in the church order of the relevant church.

3.10.1 The joint (regional) synod meets at least once in four years.

4. Provincial convent

4.1. If all (regional) synods of two or more churches of the DR church family within the boundaries of a province of the Republic of South Africa or in a neighboring state agree, they can come together in a (provincial) convent, in order to witness to, to celebrate and to enhance the ongoing unification of the churches in the political and social context of that particular province/country, and to further our common service and witness.

4.2. The convent will elect its own leadership.

SECTION IV. GENERAL SYNODS

1. The moderatures/executives and/or the moderamens/synodical commissions of the general synods of two or more of the churches of the DR church family can meet jointly and take joint decisions.
2. These joint decisions only have power if ratified afterwards in separate meetings of the competent moderatures/executives and/or the moderamens/synodical commissions.

SECTION V. JOINT MINISTRIES

1. Joint ministries must be encouraged, in accordance with existing agreements between the churches in the DR church family.
2. New ministries should only be undertaken after consultation with the other churches in the DR church family, with the explicit aim to do it together as far as possible.
3. Congregations, presbyteries, (regional) synods and general synods can establish joint ventures or joint legal entities (companies, NPO's, etc.) in order to enhance the joint ministries, as long as all relevant church assemblies agree.

SECTION VI. PARTICULAR STIPULATIONS

1. A congregation of a church within the DR church family that is part of a presbytery that transcends the geographical borders of one of the (regional) synods of the other churches within the DR church family, can apply for participation as an associate member in the presbytery and/or the (regional) synod in its geographic area. Such application can only be granted with the consent of the presbytery, the (regional) synod respectively the general synod of the church to which the congregation belongs. Such a congregation also continues its participation in its own ecclesial structures.
2. As pertaining to the RCA, the RCA can be awarded, on its request, a particular kind of participation in any of the general synods of the other churches within the DR church family, according to the church order and stipulations of each particular church.

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