Dream it, imagine it, visualize it!
A JOINT CONGREGATION
is possible through the power of the Holy Spirit

Droom dit, verbeeld dit, visualiseer dit!
’N SAAMGEVOEGDE GEMEENDE
is moontlik deur die krag van die Heilige Gees
Church Law, Pastoral and Hermeneutical guidelines for understanding the purpose of the Provisional Order

by

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...we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues...Then Peter...addressed the crowd: No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days and they will prophesy.”

...They devoted themselves to the apostels’ teaching and to the fellowship and to prayer... they continued to meet together ....

“...ons hoor hulle in ons eie taal oor die groot dade van God spreek...Maar Petrus...het hulle toegespreek: Maar dit is wat deur die profeet Joël gespreek is: “En in die laaste dae, spreek God, sal Ek van my Gees uitstort op alle vlees, en julle seuns en dogters sal profeteer, en julle jongelinge sal gesigte sien, en julle ou mense sal drome droom. En ook op my diensknekte en diensmaagde sal Ek in dié dae van my Gees uitstort, en hulle sal profeteer.”... En hulle het volhard in die leer van die apostels en in die gemeenskap...en in die gebede... En dag vir dag het hulle eendragtig volhard.... (Hand. 2)
The Provisional Order

is an Invitation and Commitment to journey together
as heaven-favoureds towards reunification
in obedience to the Lord’s prayer: “I pray that they
all may be one.... I in them, and You in Me;
that they may be made perfect in one.” John 17

Die Tussenorde

is ‘n Uitnodiging en Verbintenis om as begenadigdes
saam met mekaar te reis op pad na kerkhereniging
in gehoorsaamheid aan Jesus Christus se gebed:
“Ek bid dat hulle een mag wees..... Ek in hulle en U in
My, sodat hulle volkome een kan wees.” Johannes 17
2. Phases to form a Joint Congregation

(The “phases” overlap or may even occur together.)

2.1 A written invite is send! Or the one church council reaches spontaneously out to the other.

2.2 The conversations and dialogue starts: Led by the facilitator, and supported by the actuarius.

2.3 Each of the church councils takes separately a decision to form a joint congregation;

2.4 The two church councils communicate the decision to their members for approbation.
2.5 Touch on “defining events” during the dialogues. Please facilitate exchange of memoirs, hopes, dreams, fears.

2.6 Is a multi-disciplinary approach needed? Systematic theology, pastoral care, practical theology, narrative therapy, change management, hermeneutics?

2.7 Assist the two congregations to commit to an Emotional Bank Account/‘n Vertroue Rekening, before going into the technical aspects of the Agreement. Let them make more emotional and spiritual deposits than emotional and spiritual withdrawals [S. Covey, 1989; Pieter van Jaarsveld, 2003]. Instil TRUST. Create a SAFE SPACE for sharing, listening, respect, caring.

2.8 Allow the stories, fears, hopes and dreams to zoom in on the priorities, goals, objectives, responsibilities which will be important sections in the Agreement.
2.9 The strategy should thus be: **Discover** by listening, seek to understand, and think proactive before you **Plan**. This would lead to missional goals. It will ensure objectives linked to need-based priorities. Then **Act** within realistic time frames. Commit to **Evaluate**.

2.10 The facilitator and actuarius should be sensitive for:

a) Pain on both sides whether the pain is in symmetry or not. Also Joy on both sides.

b) The kind of trauma / grief that was experienced;

c) Lack of consensus when interpreting the Provis- sional Order and Memorandum of Agreement.

d) Differences in theological insights;

e) Negative attitudes or resistance towards the process based on previous processes;

f) Energy levels for reunification on both sides.
2.11 **Now** can the **journey** be designed in an Agreement.

2.12 The Agreement must include, among others, stipulations on:

a) The name of the Congregation
b) Duration of the agreement
c) Worship service;
d) The vocation of ministers
e) The administration of Word and sacraments
f) The election of elders and deacons
g) The responsibilities/tasks of the joint church council
h) Properties and finances acquired from the date of becoming a Joint Congregation.
i) Membership registration at baptism, confirmation
2.12 The two presbyteries receive the draft Agreement.

2.13 The presbyteries consult with the Support Ministry for Judicial Matters (URCSA) and the Taakspan Regte (DRC) to approve the Agreement. These two Ministries may recommend some changes.

2.14 Sign the Agreement. Celebrate the miracle. Sing songs of praises for the dream that became a reality in the power of the Holy Spirit.

How will you announce the joint congregation?
How will you celebrate it?
Where will you celebrate it?
3. What type of **Spirituality** will you grow?

3.1 The terms “mission”, “sent”, “missional” and “restoration” occurs in both the Provisional Order and the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). The third paragraph in section 5.2 of the MoA says that “*at the heart of reconciliation is spirituality.*”

3.2 Must we link “missional” to spirituality in this reunification process? For the importance of describing the journey on congregational level as part of *a much broader process*, read sections 2.1, 3.3 – 3.5 and 6.1 in the MoA, as well as paragraph 3 in the Preamble of the P/O.

3.3 The Book describing the journey and spirituality of the Israelites to Canaan is Exodus, ἔξοδος. This word is a
feminine noun meaning an exit, going out, departure from a place, out \((ex)\) on the Way \((hodos)\).

3.4 Jesus says: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” \((John 14:6)\). The first Christians were called people “of the Way” \((Acts 9:2)\).

3.5 Missional spirituality is the spirituality of Jesus Christ namely a spirituality on the road of the Kingdom of God, and on the road for the Kingdom of God. This type of spirituality is seen in His prayers on the mountain, in His genuine relationships, in providing food for the poor, in forgiving the sinners and forcing the unjust out the temple, in withdrawing into quiet places to meditate, in His joy at weddings, in his tears for those who suffered loss, in doing miracles across
racial and cultural boundaries, in challenging patriarchy, in comforting those who mourn, in calling blessed those who hunger for righteousness, who are merciful and peacemakers.

3.6 When Jesus appointed seventy-two of the *disciples* and sent them ahead of Him to every town and place, He have *set them on a spirituality of the road* [Luke 10].

3.7 The work of the Holy Spirit is also to *guide* (*hodegeo*) us into all the truth (John 16:13). The root of *hodegeo* is *hodos* – The Spirit will take us *on the road*. [C. Wepener, 2014:83]

3.8 A paragraph in the Preamble says: “Knowing that *walking this road* will ask us…..”.

3.9 Our journey and the interpretation methods requires a missional spirituality because such a spirituality is imperative during a transition period and changing landscapes. Both URCSA and the DRC are in a transition phase. The political,
economic, demographic and spatial landscapes in our Country have changed dramatically.

3.10 Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarsön affirms that missional spirituality “is a spirituality of the road, one that you can carry with you into the rough-and-tumble of everyday life”. (quoted in Nelus Niemandt, 2013:178)

3.11 Reformed theology is a theology that is always on the way, theologia viatorum, a pilgrim theology. We are the pilgrims walking the very pilgrimage of Jesus Christ.
3.12 This spirituality develops within a narrative of disciples who strives for transformation (Russel Botman).

3.13 Spirituality is influenced by our experiences. It is therefore fundamentally relational in seeking authentic relationships not only with God but also with other human beings. (Mark O’Keefe 1995:85-86).

3.14 Leepo J. Modise (2011) links spirituality to the Confession of Belhar. For him, this Confession is a “spirituality sense-making Confession” From an African Reformed perspective Modise sees spirituality as “the search for wholeness, meaning, purpose, connection and the resolution of those great existential questions the human race is faced with in life.”
Connection, Modise argues, is understood as connection with oneself, each other, work, home and church as well as that which is beyond the self. Belhar as spirituality has thus to do with interconnectedness (unity), peace and justice. Contextually speaking, spirituality is fundamental to the right relationships with our self, others, and God.

3.15 I argue respectfully that the perspective of Leepo J. Modise brings a crucial theological tenet for this journey to the front, namely the tenet that Christian spirituality is inseparable from Christian Ethics. The nature of our journey confirms this. It also confirms the necessity that spirituality together with ethics must be integrated in every aspect of our existence: our personal, church, professional and our social experiences.
3.16 The spirituality of Belhar is indeed linked to Ethics. On the 25th celebration of this Confession, Dirk J. Smit delivered the sermon: 25 Years after Belhar. In the introduction of the sermon he describes the fathers and mothers of 1982 Synod as follows: “They remembered that evening the words from 1 Pet 3. In many ways they recognized themselves in the people to whom Peter is writing – in the same way that the church has done this so often, again and again, in so many historical situations. Peter writes to “aliens” and “exiles,” believers who feel marginalized and insignificant, excluded and threatened, minorities without respect, victims of ridicule, having to deal with hardships and suffering – who therefore consider giving up their faith, losing their hope, failing the love to which they were called. Peter pleads with them, reminding them of who they are, of the hope they have inherited.”
3.17 Christian Spirituality for Stavridis (2001:12) “is the intrinsic image of God in each human being, which results in the capacity and hunger for God, the way we are shaped by our understanding of God’s love and justice revealed in Jesus Christ, and how we experience life in response to the Holy Spirit in the context of our relationship with people, society and the natural world.” (Kretzschmar 2005:42).

3.18 Trevor Hudson (2007:xv-xvi) defines spirituality “as being intentional about the development of those connections, attitudes and actions which the Christ-following life is shaped and given expression in our everyday lives.” He furthermore describes spirituality as an expression of being friends of Jesus Christ.
3.19 In a Chapter “Spirituality and Transformation in Black Theology,” Dwight H. Hopkins refers to the Biblical story as subversive, vulnerable spirituality. He recalls the interpretation of Luke 4:18-19 by Martin Luther King, jr. and says King stresses two aspects of Black theological spirituality. “The first act of Christian Spirituality is not correct doctrine, but a freeing service to the poor, the homeless, unemployed, those victims of AIDS and rape, the immigrant stranger, the hungry and those without proper clothing. Christian Spirituality means confronting the everyday pain and humiliation that face the faceless in society. It means commitment to and standing with those who suffer.”

For Hopkins this spirituality knows no colour and boundaries.
Secondly Black Theology spirituality means the social transformation of structures and systems, especially the economic types. And to achieve this we must remember that we have been called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation.” (78 -79).

3.20 For Dietrich Bonhoeffer the authentic Christian spirituality is seen in disciples who exist for others.

3.21 Spirituality has also to do, as Coenie Burger writes in *Ontmoetings met die lewende God: Hoe God ons roep, nuut maak en stuur* (2013), with our encounters with God and the renewal of our lives as a result of these encounters.
In the Chapter “Verdiepte Spiritualiteit” in his book *Gemeentes in Transito* (1995) with the focus on possibilities for renewal, Coenie articulates the following with regard to spirituality:

3.21.1 “dat dit moeilik is om godsdienstige diepgang te bewerkstellig wanneer dit baie goed gaan met mense. Die hele Ou Testament is eintlik ‘n storie wat dit bevestig….Voorspoed het ‘n manier om ‘n mens weg te trek van werklike vertroue op God.”

3.21.2 True spirituality has a vertical dimension: to live truly in communion with God as the Reformer Martin Luther proclaimed: to live *coram Deo*. to live a deep,
better, nearer and more obedient life in the merciful face of God; and this *coram Deo* spirituality is important because it is the moments where hope, renewal and a re-discovering of our purpose in life is born. To live as such is a learning process, a growth process, with gratitude!

3.21.3 Spirituality is strengthen in Sunday worship, retreats, small groups, round table bible study, discussions.

3.21.4 True spirituality develops the *coram Deo* values of humility, integrity, transparency, obedience, teach ability and getting excited (verwondering) about God’s miracles, love, mercy and care for us.

3.21.5 People do not live this *Coram Deo* spirituality out in the same manner. God walks with different people a different way of life and thus their spirituality will differ.
3.21.6 And this hope forces us to get involved in the horizontal dimension of spirituality: our calling, vocatio:
a) reminding the world in a creative and evangelic manner of God's merciful presence;
b) calling the world to demonstrate the coram Deo values;
c) seek God not only in the “centre stage” but also on the margins where there is suffering, brokenness, chaos;
d) get involved in moral formation to create credibility;
e) Use discernment (geloofsonderskeiding) in making choices in meetings, for personal life, discussions, etc.

3.22 Richard O’Brien articulates his understanding of Christian spirituality in a similar manner: Spirituality has to do with our experiencing of God and with the transformation of our consciousness and our lives as outcomes of that experience" (in Kretzschmar, 2005:7).
3.23 Christian spirituality is a spirituality of the Cross and of the victory of the empty grave (Jon Sobrino).

3.24 Scripture readings about journey and spirituality:

a) *Old Testament*
   Ruth 1:1 – 21; Ezekiel 37:11;

b) *New Testament*

c) The voyages of St. Augustine (354 - 430) narrated by him in his Book: *Confessions.*
4. Interpretation methods for the Prov. Order

4.1 Description of each method

- **Linguistic method**
- **Structural Method**
- **Teleological method (purpose/values)**
- **Historical method**

A missional understanding of God, the Church, your *Vocatio*, Yourself.

- **Systematic method**
4.2 Attributes of Church Law that guides the journey

4.2.1 It is *liturgical* because the Worship (liturgy) is the “Sitz”, and fountain of church law (Karl Barth, 1964; Hans Dombois, 1961, 1977, 1983)

4.2.2 It is *ecumenical* because it is a church law of grace (genade) that promotes the *unity* of the one holy, *catholic*, apostolic church (Hans Dombois, 1974, 1979; P.W. Brouwer, 2000; C. Link, 1987)

4.2.3 It is *living* because it is complete “*Evangelisches Kirchenrecht*” (Wolfgang Huber). It systematically channels the flow of life (the Good News/Gospel) as well as the flow of order (Karl Barth, 1964).

4.2.4 A *law of service* that regulates the responsibilities and objectives of Ministries, Executives, Taakspanne.
4.2.5 True Church law is *exemplary* law. It serves as a pattern for the formation and administration of human law generally (Karl Barth, 1964).

4.2.6 Church law provides Order *for* the Church and evaluates the order *in* the Church. Read 1 Cor. 14:40 (P. Coertzen, 2004 “*Decently and in Order.*”)

4.2.7 *African* Reformed Church Law (Leepo Modise)

4.2.8 Church Law is transformed by other sources, like:
   a) Customary law (P. Coertzen, 2014 in AHRLJ; Tom Bennett, 1994, 2002)
   b) Rules of natural justice (J. van der Vyfer, 1996)
   c) Court precedents (The *Theron* 1979 judgment)
   d) International reformed church law (Wolfgang Huber, 1994, 1996; M. Plaatjies-Van Huffel)
5. What are the dimensions of the pilgrim’s journey?

5.1 We journey within ourselves.

5.1.1 The inner journey! Die *innerlike reis, die persoonlike reis*. We journey with our personal pain and joy, our hurt and healing, our experiences of success and disappointment, of acceptance and exclusion; our sweetness and bitterness; of the longing for an encounter with the God of Zion, for his loving presence; of lamenting God’s absence (Ps. 22; 42 and 43 read with 84-89 – the Psalms with *travelling/pilgrimage* as its Theme).

5.1.2 This is the journey to your *inner intellectual world*, your *inner emotional world*, your *inner spiritual world*. Does a journey of *hurt* shape our image of God? *Naomi*?
5.1.3 The inner journey has the tendency to drive the person with his /her narrative to a life of service, to become missional witness (Nelus Niemandt).

5.1.4 The American pastor, theologian and *doctorandus* in psychology, Henry J.M. Nouwen (1972) says we must become wounded healers. It is Nouwen’s contention that pastors are called to recognize the sufferings in their own hearts and make that recognition the starting point of their service. For Nouwen, pastors must be willing to go beyond their professional role and leave themselves open as fellow human beings with the same wounds and suffering. In other words, we heal others from our own wounds. The pastor must become a member of an extraordinary fellowship - the fellowship of the broken.
5.2 Dit is ook ‘n gedeelde reis. A shared journey.

5.2.1 As a family of churches we have decided at Achterbergh to journey together. To embark on a shared journey. And in the process “of spreading the Gospel, we covenant to work together in concrete ways.” (2.1, 2.3 of the MoA). Essential aspects of this sharing is described in paragraph 2 of the Confession of Belhar.

5.2.2 The shared journey requires of us to journey together in the Scriptures like the Emmaus disciples journeyed in the Scripture with each other and later with Christ. We interpret (ερμηνευτική - Luke 24: 27, 32) the Scriptures in communion (Stephen E. Fowl & L. Gregory Jones, 1998) and in dialogue with one another.
(David Tracy, 1990) to hear the voice of God and to see “in verbondenheid” the heart of God. With this interpretation we want to 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*

5.2.3 We journey in communion with the drafters of the Provisional Order, the own Church Orders and of the MoA. Their hermeneutics of this *norma normata* sometimes becomes a guiding star.

5.2.4 We journey in communion with our prophets from the past. The story of their life influences our story. They have shown that scriptures are not something to look at but rather to look through; that chapters in the Bible are lenses, spectacles of faith. We find strength in their faith.
5.3 We journey in the world.
5.3.1 The journey does not occur in a vacuum. *It takes place in concrete circumstances, in the world.* Serene Jones writes in *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (2009) that we live 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.

5.3.2 The MoA echoes in section 2.3 this brokenness. The DRC and URCSA have covenant to deal with this brokenness as part of its calling in concrete ways such as:

a) promoting of healing and wholeness for all of life;
b) seeking and advocating justice for all;
c) promoting human dignity and gender equity.
5.3.3 Should the activities of a missional congregation therefore mirrors God’s activity in history as liberative? as an activity that wishes to free people from the life-threatening problems? Klippies Kritzinger (1988a:6) and Willem Saayman (1991:5 -7) answers this question in the affirmative. They say the *Missio Dei* in John 20:21 must not be read in isolation from the Jubilee mission of Jesus in Luke 4:18–21. (Read herewith Lied 486, DRC)

5.3.4 A missional congregation has to grow towards becoming the “voice and form” (stem en gestalte) of the historical Saviour, by taking the emotions and context of the people very seriously (John 5:36-37).

5.3.5 Vujani Vellem (2016:1-7) and also H. Russell Botman (2003a: 375-384) speaks of “A Cry for Life”.
5.3.6 In *Spirituality of the Third World* Bernadette Mbuy-Beya writes that the cry for life comes from those on the fringe of society, the cry knows no colour and is uttered in prayers, songs, poems, sermons and paintings.

5.3.8 John W. de Gruchy (1986:23-46) wrote a series of essays. In the essay “*Christian spirituality and social transformation*” he says the wounded cry justice.

5.3.9 Dietrich Bonnhoeffer said Calling (Roeping) is the place where your greatest joy and the world’s greatest need meet each other. (Sing 284 in the Liedboek)

5.3.10 Louise Kretzchmar (2005:2) writes that we must embark on this “journey of the mind, heart and soul, a journey that by God’s grace, may have wonderful consequences in our life and ministry.”
6. Make Worship the **fountain** of church law

6.1 Paragraphs 1.4 and 4.1 – 4.3 of the Provisional Order refers to Worship, the sacraments, liturgical order, hymns, preaching, etc. These paragraphs indicates that Church law orders the liturgy and find its source in it.

6.2 The Sunday *worship* service of singing, praising, dancing, offerings and praying is described as the main source of our knowledge of Church law. It is in the act of worship that church law was originally found and known. In the Worship of the joint congregation church law will emerge in the covenants made during licensing of theological candidates, induction of elders/deacons, of executives, of the ordination of ministers of the Word.
6.3 From its liturgical root Church law must be understood as a law which is continually to be found again in it and has itself the task of ordering our worship (Karl Barth, 1964:789). From the 12 Articles via the Stipulations to the Regulations the emphasis in URCSA is on the worship service as the *fountain of Church law* (Leo Koffemann, 2012:105-106).

6.4 The members of the joint congregation will come to the worship, Holy Supper and baptism and other worship services to meet God; listen to the Word and to speak to the Lord in prayer, singing and offerings; to strengthen their faith in Him; to meet fellow worshippers. (338, 354 en 377 in Nuwe Sionsgesange)
6.5 They come to worship the sending, missional God. The liturgy is both for healing their needs and for equipping them for the task that awaits them when they leave the building. The joint congregation must understand worship as food for the liturgy in public after celebrating the liturgy in the church. What they will say and do from Monday to Saturday must stem from their joint encounter at worship, in meditation and in the Eucharist (Desmond Tutu, 1994:74).

6.6 Article 4.2 of the URCSA Church Order links the lex orandi - lex credendi – lex convivendi. Lets hear it:

“Service of God has a bearing on the whole life of the congregation and therefore includes service to one another and the world. The essence of this service of God is found where the congregation meets round the
Word of God and the sacraments. There God is worshipped and praised, his Word listened to, the sacraments received, and all needs brought before Him in order to strengthen the believers in their faith and to prepare them for their service to one another and the world.”

6.7 The DRC Church Order articles have the same emphasis: Article 48 (Worship service), article 49 (The sacraments), article 53 (Witness) and article 54 (the services of the disciples and the Missio Dei). All of these link worship, faith and public life.

6.9 In his discussion of above-mentioned CO Article 48 of the Dutch Reformed Church, Strauss (2010:89) affirms the inseparable connection between the worship and our *vocatio*. He argues that General Synod 1998:520 echoes the view of Barnard in its decision that “die inhoud van die gereformeerde karakter van die NG Kerk direk in verband staan met die wyse waarop daar in die kerklike lewe, liturgie, prediking en onderrig aangesluit word by die verstaan van die evangelie.”

6.10 Strauss (2010:89) finds further support for this view in the 2007:11-17 General Synod decision that the liturgy or ordering of the worship services reflects the reformed identity and is also an “uitdrukking van hoe ‘n kerk die evangelie verstaan.”

6.11 The Orthodox theologian Ion Bria (1996) refer to our *vocatio* in the world as “the liturgy after the liturgy.”
6.12 Klaus-Peter Jörns (1988) discusses the *lex orandi - lex credendi – lex convivendi*: what we worship becomes our doctrine of faith, the doctrine of faith determines our *vocatio* in the public life. Or put otherwise: we live what we believe, and we believe what we have heard in worship.

6.13 Manfred Josuttis (2005) describes the worship service as the place where the King’s directives for the week are heard and where nourishment for that task in the week is thus received. (Lied 311 in die Liedboek)

6.14 Nicholas Wolterstorff (1989, 1991, 1992, 2011) says that our lives assembled are instrumental to our lives as dispersed because the significance of worship is lying in its enabling of authentic work. Worship transforms us by renewing our minds (Rom. 12:1 – 2; Acts 2; Titus 3:5).
7. The road requires a theology and hermeneutic of listening and embrace.

7.1 We must listen to the *narratives* of the [significant] Other. We must first try to understand before we want to be understood (Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Denise Ackerman). Especially to *stories on the border* or assisting someone to find his/her narrative voice in multiple, overlapping and (sometimes) conflicting stories of the same tragic event (Jacqueline J. Lewis). We sometimes have to unlearn before we can learn (Karin van Marle). There is power in stories.

7.2 Dirk J. Smit says that listening to the stories of others helps us to create together a semantics of co-existence /ˈn grammatika van saambestaan.
7.3 A hermeneutic and theology of listening, embrace, love and respect enables us to hear with openness as well as receptivity and to adopt each other’s stories as our own. We thereby are changed in our present existence and become a healed body of Christ but at the same time also a healing body (Elna Mouton). We listen to the tone of her/his voice, we interpret the silences, we even hear the unspoken words of pain (Elize Morkel, Isabel Phiri). Read here section 6.1 of the MoA. Empathetic listening leads to re-arranging of priorities.

7.4 H. Richard Niebuhr says that as we listen to each other with empathy we began to understand why two persons or two groups (congregations) have different versions (internal stories/the stories of their life) of the same external event. What is the task of the facilitator or actuarius if such different stories hampers the establishment of a joint congregation?
8. An Agreement describing preaching as re-imagination, preaching as hope

8.1 We have to journey as singers of hope amidst the non-singers [Ps. 137 read with Is. 42:10-12; Jer. 23; 29:10-14]. Walter Bruggemann writes: Preaching is re-imagination!

8.2 Hope focuses on possibilities and yearning for mercy, argues Jürgen Moltmann (2010:45). Yes, hope as prayer that the Sun of Righteousness will arise and bring a new day, healing, unity. Sing Lied 270 in die Liedboek. NGK.

8.3 Hope as “wait”, as “wait for the Lord” (Ps. 130 in die Liedboek, T.T. Cloete beryming; ook Gesange 299 en 306 in die Nuwe Sionsgesange). Also “looking anxiously out for God’s deliverance”, according to Andries Daniëls.
8.4 But also hope in the sense that God too hopes. God “waits anxiously” to reap a crop of good grapes (Church unity maybe?) from His vineyard, the church.

8.5 Elna Mouton encourages us to reinterpret for our context the New Testament texts that refer to God as ultimate source of hope [Rom. 15:4,13; 1Pet. 1:21; 3:15; Eph.1:12; 1 Tim. 5:5; Heb. 6:18-19; 10:23; 1:17].

8.6 Johan Gilliers and also Lucy Hogan (2007) writes that our preaching must always be a language of hope and love. The hope of the Triune God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit must be declared to the Church by means of the sermon. (Lees hiermee Lied 488, 503, 516, Liedboek)

8.7 And Cas J.A. Vos (2007) adds to this by saying that.
the sermon is a vessel of hope under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of life gives hope in many different, surprising ways. Cas Vos concludes: The Holy Spirit makes words spark, love spark! Hope carries people during their journey.

8.8 Should the Agreement state that we commit ourselves in these studies to be role models and teachers of a pedagogy of hope? (H. Russell Botman)

8.9 The facilitator might be challenged to link hope to the human body. Elisabeth Grözinger (in Cas J.A. Vos ed. 2007:224), a psychologist lecturing at the University of Basel in Switzerland, writes that:

8.9.1 Hope is not only spiritual;
8.9.2 Hope is also emotional and - under specific circumstances – serves as a motivating and guiding orientation for a human being to his future. In hoping, the human being reacts positively to the temporal state of his/her existence.

8.9.3 The English word “hope” and the German word “hoffnung” are (unlike the Greek word “elpis”) she says, developed from “hopen” - hüpfen” which means “jumping restlessly by expectation, to fidget”.

8.9.4 This root of hope Grözinger concludes, must always remind us that hope has a somatic aspect: hope changes your body, your neuro-transmitters, and your patterns of movement. There is no successful psychotherapy without hope: hope within the patient and hope within the therapist.
8.10 The psychiatrist Elizabeth Kübler-Ross writes that hope emerges as growth or mature faith from out five stages in grief like denial or anger. Mature faith emerges when you grief not only for your own suffering (mother who is sick) but also for the grief of the other (children’s grief because Mommy will pass away). Is the URCSA willing to grief for the suffering of the DRC and visa versa? Hope becomes the bridge between loss and recovery. Hope is healing the grieving heart (G. Adams).

8.11 As actuarius I would encourage the two Church Councils to consider joint senior Catechism and joint Bible Study for the Youth, e.g. Spirituality for Youth Disciples on self-esteem, making choices, hope, prayer.

8.12 Hope is linked to our energy levels. A journey can
tap our energy and enthusiasm. Soms is dit op die ashoop waar lidmate hunker na hoop (Lamentations 3:20–26).

8.13 How will we refill our energy tanks to renew our strength and soar on wings like an eagle?

a) Contemplation as silence before God?

b) Retreats; surrender in prayer and faith?

c) Praise and worship?

d) Listening to music (alone/in groups) to nurture your spiritual hunger and emotional self-consciousness?

Karl Barth found comfort in Mozart’s music. He often used it in his sermons to preach hope. Especially after the earthquake in Lissabon.

e) Break away to the ocean or to nature to free yourself from negative thoughts born out of failed previous processes?
9. **Lead** with right brain (heart, soul), and **manage** with the left brain (mind, strength)

“For God so love the world….,” John 3:16

Does the *local* and *global* landscapes determine the type of leadership required of you?

- Charismatic Leader
- Healing Leader
- Navigating Leader
- Situational leader
- Transformation Leader
10. **See** others and events from the perspective of God’s gracious reign.

10.1 The journey becomes a celebration of the gifts of the other church. We become scuba divers of faith who discover these gifts in one another as a scuba diver discovers with amazement new “coral reeves” and “hidden treasures.”

10.2 On the road our eyes are opened to see fellow members like Jesus Christ sees them -- as equal and infinitely precious in God’s sight and ours. Also our hearts and minds are opened to judge events like Jesus judges it. *Seeing things differently* is the title of a volume of sermons by John W. de Gruchy, 2000. He writes that disciples are able to see others and problems from the perspective of God’s gracious reign. Through the hearing of sermons we learn to see differently and to understand pain differently.
10.3 This process involves hermeneutical relocation whereby we then see, hear and understand (discover) ourselves anew and relive the past anew from the perspective of another’s lived experience. It may calls for the sacrifice of our own perspective of reality and Scripture up to that point as the only normative truth.


10.5 Truth will always set us free [Gustavo Gutierrez 1990:45-47; Leepo J. Modise, 2014 ].
11. What **ecclesiology**, **anthropology** or **soteriology** will the Agreement contain?

The URCSA and the DRC “Envisioning Church Councils” must believe prayerfully that the Holy Spirit of Pentecost can still work miracles and wonders. In His power, men and women, young and old, will reach mutual understanding for a **life-giving** (lewegewende), **healing** (helende) and **empowering** (bemagtingende) ecclesiology, anthropology and soteriology, that:

11.1 values every person as made by God to be loved and to love, and that he/she shares in the divine image (**imago Dei**) which is gifted to all human beings;

11.2 cultivates an ethics of caring friendship, as articulated in the following paragraph:
• “When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.”

(Henry J.M. Nouwen, Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life)

11.3 promotes human flourishing as integral part of God’s promised *shalom* (Nadia Marias, 2015; David Kelsey, 1990);
11.4 focuses on God’s promise of joy and laughter; (Marianne Thompson, 2012; J. Moltmann, 1972)

11.5 respects and protects the human dignity of all (Tshepo Lephakga, 2012; Rothney Tshaka, 2014);

11.6 embrace those previously excluded and bring them to the centre stage of recognized members (Miroslav Volf; Victor Frankl);

11.7 creates an enabling environment in which the potential and gifts of the youth and adults can grow [Ps. 1, 144:12; 1 Cor. 3:5-9] and glow [1 Tim. 1:3–7];

11.8 assists those who are hurt to start a new beginning, a natality, and a needful freedom (Hannah Arendt);

11.9 convinces the church to show resistance to forces...
that prevents a quality life for all. Will the joint congregation resist the opposing forces that block the flow of God’s love to the Presbytery? *Die opstanding van Jesus maak ons opstandig, en die opwekking van Jesus maak ons opgewek!* (Hendrikus Berkhof)

11.11 ignites and stimulates happiness about the various gifts of grace in URCSA and the DRC (1 Pet. 4:10-11, Rom. 12:3-8; Gal. 5:22] (opgewektheid: *Jesus se opwekking*); Cheerful about the skilled, spiritual mature and intellectual mature members on both sides.

11.12 Cheerful about the vehicles that will assist joint congregations to be strong and courageous on this journey; cheerful about the capacity to be good and to do good (Ps. 119:68); to be prosperous and successful!
Yes, happiness about the following four vehicles that can fuel the **process**. These vehicles must take the lead to start programs for **doing theology** (interplay of action/praxis and reflection) on local level and at synodical levels (L. Modise, 2014, 2017):

A question to the actuarius, facilitor, moderature:
Where do you want to take the congregation from here?
12. Let the two **horizons** fuse

12.1 The aim of seeing, listening, accepting is “a fusion of horizons,” as Hans-Georg Gadamer, explains in *Truth and Method* (1960). The horizon (seeing from the own background, culture, experience, education, tradition, etc.) of the DRC member(s) and the horizon of the URCSA member(s) gradually… gradually starts to fuse.
12.2 Then new attitudes, acts of solidarity, new self-understanding, re-describing of reality, visualising new opportunities, re-imagining other’s experiences occurs.

12.3 The new attitudes include new insights into grief and pain on both sides whether the pain and grief are in symmetry or not. The fusion let us realize that those who have experienced multiple wounds and losses (sometimes in succession), suffer from complicated grief that is all-encompassing and at times life-threatening.
12.4 Demanding of them during the exchange of stories and memoirs to “get into the acceptance stage immediately”, or “move on”, or “don’t cling onto the past” is not only insensitive but can also be extremely wounding (Gemini Adams, 2009).

12.5 The “must move on” approach in systematic theology anthropology and in practical theology anthropology do not just break ties but also hearts, lives and congregations. The nurturing of an on-going connection and bond provides a source of great comfort and solace, enabling the

12.6 Therefore we ought to read the Bible, and the Provisional Order, also in communion with those who suffered complicated grief and are maybe not with us any more.

12.7 In taking the joint congregation on its way to fusion the actuarius/facilitator must lead the members to:

a) Develop new ways of becoming a caring community;
b) Apply imaginative listening to discover the other’s horizon with the aim to build the new humanity in Christ;

c) Find common meanings for crucial terms in the Provisional Order and Memorandum of Agreement and create so a binding humanity language /ˈn gemeenskaplike menslikheids-taal.

d) Speak in metaphors that market the journey,

e) Draw pictures that illustrate the growth of the pilgrimage and the togetherness in activities.

f) Understand life-history ontological as structured and qualified time (St. Aurelius Augustine, H. Richard Niebuhr).
Conclusion

In conclusion, dear actuarius/facilitator, you and the two congregations will journey coram Deo (voor die aangesig van God). You will journey in the face of, and in conversation with the listening, calling God.

Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged by the workload and challenges, because you will journey accompanied by the Almighty who is Immanuel.

Julle reis, soos Coenie Burger sê, vergesel van die Almagtige!