Northern Synod

TASK TEAM MINISTER ENRICHMENT

Report

1. Assignment

The task team's assignment was to expose as many ministers as possible to as many workshops as possible based on the newly created programme for minister enrichment. The aim was to guide ministers in the enrichment of their leadership potential and to equip them to further cultivate their calling and ministry in their respective contexts.

2. Task team

Task team leaders:

Paullet Grobler and Bennie Powell

Task team members:

Dewald Roux, Hannes Bezuidenhout, Francois Esterhuizen, Louis Pretorius, Dawie Rotteveel, Simon van der Heever en Paul Grobler

3. Execution of the assignment

After the remodelling of the course, the task team offered the course on two occasions:

- **3-4 November 2025** – DRC Montana
- **9-10 March 2026** – Pierneef Congregation

The current model of the course has been deliberately designed to not accommodate as many participants as possible, as the case is with more traditional courses. This approach ensures that there is a strong personal component in the course and that more in-depth attention can be paid to the unique context, challenges, and needs of every participant.

An important development was the decision to depict the **five meta-skills** concretely by means of an image of the **baobab tree**. The baobab tree is also symbolically linked to the logo of the Northern Synod. The image of a tree offers a

simple and meaningful way of explaining the interrelationship between the five meta-skills.

3.1 Spirituality—the roots

The roots of the tree represent **spirituality**. As the roots of the baobab search for water while anchoring and sustaining the tree, so spirituality is the source of the pastor's life and ministry.

Spirituality anchors us in storms and supplies the necessary strength to persevere in dry and challenging seasons.

3.2 Sensemaking—the earth

The earth in which the tree is rooted, represents **'sensemaking'**—our hermeneutic discernment in a specific context

Just as a baobab grows in a specific soil and environment, so every minister and congregation is placed in a unique context. Sensemaking helps us to understand the context and to glean meaning from it.

It prevents the creation of a vision that hangs 'in the air' and that shows no understanding of the reality in which people live and are ministered to. The vision must rather developed out of a thorough understanding of the context.

3.3 Vision—the trunk

The trunk of the tree represents **vision**—the prophetic direction one moves in and the one which shapes identity. The trunk is the most recognisable part of the baobab. In the same way, vision grows from spirituality (the roots) and sensemaking (the soil). It gives direction, bears weight, and offers stability, especially in difficult seasons.

A clear vision eventually becomes a recognisable landmark in the area where the congregation and minister live and work.

3.4 Relationships—the branches

The branches of the tree represent **relationships**. The branches reach outwards, connect different parts of the tree, and make space for further growth and life. Transforming leadership is never an individual enterprise. It takes place within relationships. Healthy relationships create an emotionally safe and wholesome

climate in which people can grow, change, and make the necessary internal transitions.

3.5 Implementation –the leaves and fruit

The leaves and fruit of the tree represent **implementation**. Leaves play an important part in the production of oxygen, while fruits bear seed and make new life possible.

In the same way, implementation is the ability to translate vision into **concrete goals, decisions and actions.** In the final instance, it is through implementation that vision makes a visible and tangible impact on the surrounding area.

Further development of the course

The experience of the task team is that the course **evolves** with every presentation because it is offered in different situations and to different course participants. The basic research and central content of the programme remain the same, but the emphasis and application of the respective themes can vary, because every participant's context, encounter with, and experience of, the ministry is unique.

This approach makes it possible to keep the course relevant and relevant and applicable, without sacrificing either the core of the programme or its research base. One of the developments is the suggestion that instead of talking about vision, the church context rather requires the term CALLING.

4. Recommendations

The task team recommends that the programme should continue to be presented in the year 2027.

It is specifically recommended that

- at least **two further courses** should be presented in the coming year, 2027;
- the smaller, more personal format of the course is retained;
- participants and task team members still give feedback after every presentation;
- the programme must be constantly refined and developed further on the basis of the feedback; and
- constant attention must be paid to the applicability of the programme within the various contexts in which ministers live out their ministry

5. Closing remarks

The task team is of the opinion that the programme for ministry enrichment has valuable potential for supporting ministers in the enrichment of their personal spirituality, leadership, calling and ministry.

The presentations have up until now confirmed that there is great value in a process that imparts knowledge and skills but also makes room for personal reflection, contextual discernment, and deeper conversations about the practice of ministry. These conversations raise awareness among participants of the reformed identity of the DR Church.

The task team would therefore like to go on developing and presenting this programme in order to help ministers in their ministry to live and lead with greater fruitfulness, from strong spiritual roots, from a more thorough understanding of their context, and from a clear vision, healthy relationships, and purposeful implementation.