

# RUC's "Presencing" Process

Cape Town, 23 August 2024

Dear Congregation,

Thank you for your patient commitment to what we have coined RUC's "visioning process". Our facilitator David Manne had warned us not to name things too quickly. This also applies to the process itself. After four meetings we realise that we should have rather called it RUC's "presencing process", a deeper listening to where God's Spirit is wanting to take us. The conversations have been choreographed by David in a way that distinguishes or makes present or brings forth that which is wanting to emerge for us. In order to accomplish this we have to set ourselves free from ourselves that is our discerning capacity. We let go in order to let come.

Lots of relevant themes were articulated in our discussions. But according to David those conversations were rather an exercise in "clearing" than in finding answers. Such "clearing" is about learning to let go of what we ourselves consider to be important and relevant. No wonder that Richard Rohr talks about spiritual practice as the invitation to release control and step aside in order to make room for the Spirit to move. It is along those lines that David offered us the following two questions to live into:

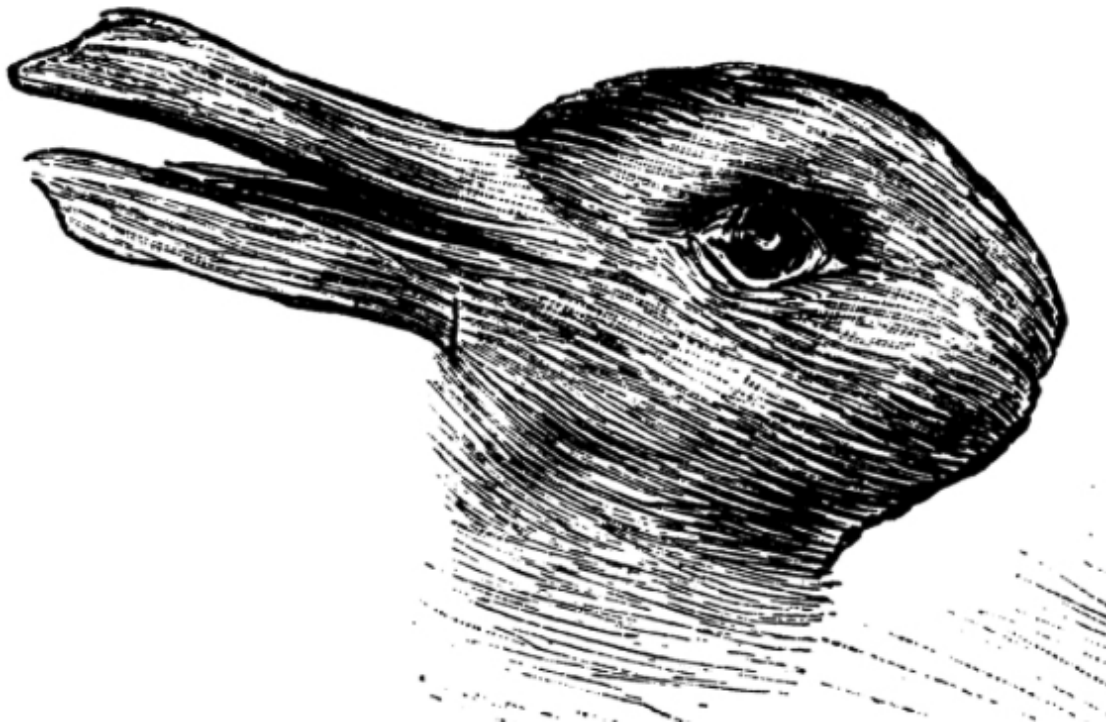
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To stay with those questions is a way of "sitting in the fire" together and allowing everyone to be seen and heard. It is about listening not only to what is said, but also to what is not said. For it is not easy to be really honest with oneself and with one another. There is always a degree of inauthenticity. And with it comes the danger that the more things change the more they stay the same.

You will also have noticed how David introduced a different language. He is not using the words vision or visioning. Instead he is speaking about context, because words like "vision" or even "transformation" have become used-up or contaminated.

The fundamental problem is that we all think and act from a particular context, which shapes and defines our answers. Very often we are not even aware of it. Optical illusions illustrate our difficulty to loosen our embedded context. What do you see? A rabbit or a duck?



Those optical illusions remind us of how easily one can remain stuck in one way of seeing. And we cannot see both animals at the same time, but rather have to keep switching between the two. It highlights the danger of naming and interpreting things too quickly without being aware of the context from which we see and speak.

We witness this dilemma in our increasingly polarised world and a widespread inability or even resistance to keep "switching" in order to be open to see things from another perspective and context. David rightly warned us in one of our discussions: "Give someone a hammer, and everything looks like a nail."

As we continue with our "presencing" process in September may we inhabit more boldly the very boundaries of our identity as individuals and as a congregation. I am excited to see what will emerge for us. May God's Spirit move within us and among us.

I have asked David to kindly outline the next stages ahead of us.

1. One more open dialogue on Sunday 8 September.

2. One Sunday session dedicated to generating a new context using an Integral Approach. (The output from this session needs to be documented and synthesised after in preparation for the final conversation).
3. One Sunday session dedicated to eliciting a commitment to a new context.

Warmest, Robert and David