

# Annual Report

## ICF 2019



### 1. Introduction

ICF is grateful to God for the developments in 2019, a year of building on the blessings of 2018. We saw how God leads and grows our church community. The vision God gave to ICF is that we are like a tree bearing fruit. In 2019 the branches got bigger and we saw beautiful fruits. The trunk also grew, with more than 30 new members and greater participation of members and visitors in core activities such as the Home Groups.



### 2. The trunk of the tree

#### 2.1 Members and Visitors

In 2019 ICF had 220 adult members and 161 children. In addition, there are approximately 100 regular visitors; not all are registered. In 2019, 33 new members were added, from 9 different countries. Nine people left mainly because of relocations. On an average Sunday there are about 350-400 people and children in a service. In 2019, 12 babies were born to ICF members and regular visitors. A woman, a former Muslim from West Africa, was baptized with her 10-year-old daughter. Two babies were baptized in 2019. Three ICF couples got married in 2019. There were no deaths.

## 2.2 Youth and children's work

The youth and children's work went well in 2019. The group of approximately 35 teenagers from different backgrounds met practically every Friday evening instead of once every two weeks. A few young adults (ex-teens) help organize sports and social activities, in addition to the bi-weekly Bible study evenings.

The annual youth camp, this time in a camping farm in North, attracted great interest and unfortunately not all the teenagers who had registered could join. Spending such a weekend together with personal conversations, Bible study, worship, prayer and also a lot of cheerful craziness is very stimulating for the development and faith life of the teenagers (see photo below: worship evening at the youth camp). The team of youth leaders was reinforced to ensure that everything runs smoothly. In 2019, the team started planning to better organize the youth ministry. We see many teenagers with concerns and problems, for which there was not always sufficient attention and pastoral care. This topic is followed up in 2020.



Children's work is always a large part of the trunk. For the past four years, ICF has been running five groups of children, based on school year. These groups vary widely in size, and this poses a challenge to the leaders. The number of children participating is fairly constant, approximately 100. Most vacancies for child workers could be filled, partly thanks some new members. On an average Sunday, 60-80 children participate. In the autumn of 2019, a meeting of child and youth workers took place with Chris Foundation, about recognizing and dealing with sexual abuse among children. This theme received more attention in ICF in 2019 through an initiative of the Municipality of Rotterdam.

## 2.3 Working on the trunk

At the trunk level a lot of hard work is done by many church members and regular visitors, as well as by the pastor, church workers, elders, deacons, and the different teams. Everything related to the Sunday service and care & education for the members, we consider as part of the trunk. New initiatives to further strengthen the trunk in 2019 included the restart of discipleship training. Once every two weeks, a group meets to delve into the Word of God and apply it to their own lives. The group may not be large, but it is highly motivated. Participants indicated that this deepens their faith and helps them to show more of God in their environment. Another initiative involved setting up a platform for singles in ICF. During the first evening approximately 25 people participated, not only from ICF but also from other churches. Every month the group organizes social and inspiring activities that strengthen mutual togetherness and faith building. The goal is for singles inside and

outside ICF, to support each other in living a full life in Christ; the advantage is also that singles have gained more visibility in the church community.

Pastoral work is also part of the trunk. Much of this work in 2018 and 2019 related to marital issues. It was therefore decided to focus more on preventing marital tensions. About 25 married men met in the first half of 2019 under the direction of the church worker to discuss the role of the man in marriage.



*Picture above: a group of men discuss marriage issues at the home of the church worker*

In addition to a discussion of what Paul teaches in Ephesians 5, the four evenings were about emotional needs of men and women and praying together as a married couple. This theme was also reflected in various sermons during the Sunday services. A group of female ICF members has been meeting regularly since 2019 to pray for their marriage. We hope that all of these efforts will lead married couples to experience more openness in discussing marital tensions. This may not make a difference in the short term, but the foundation was laid for broad participation of ICF couples in the Alpha marriage course in 2020.

## **2.4 Participation in ICF**

The majority of ICF members are active and contribute to the congregation. Among the new members, 70-80% participate in a team or a group, based on talents and gifts that God gave them to serve His body. ICF also encourages participation as a means of building personal faith. Of the approximately 300 adult members and regular visitors, approximately 140-150 people participate in a "Home Group" (Bible study & fellowship group of 10-20 people); this is slightly more than in 2018. The challenge is that many people have busy lives. About 50% of adult ICF members are between the ages of 25 and 40; they often have families with young children. Ad hoc calls for help with activities on the branches do not always deliver the desired response. Another challenge is the gender imbalance, that is, there are often many more women participating than men. This is most visible in the ICF prayer team, which is made up almost entirely of women. In 9 of the 10 Home groups, and in the Spanish and African groups, women are also in the majority.

## **2.5 ICF in the media: Trouw: "believe together and sometimes separately" newspaper article**

ICF was positively in the news in 2019. Trouw produced a series on migrant churches in the spring of 2019 and visited ICF during a special service in May. In the article, Trouw called the ICF model

promising for the future: Reformed basis, rooted in Dutch church organization and at the same time a community of all kinds of cultures and Christian denominations. Several people were interviewed, which gave a good picture of the intercultural character, the open atmosphere and the importance of the diaconal work. Click on the link to read the article (in Dutch):

[https://www.trouw.nl/religie-filosofie/samen-geloven-en-soms-even-apart~b7b2e51d/?utm\\_source=link&utm\\_medium=app&utm\\_campaign=shared%20content&utm\\_content=free](https://www.trouw.nl/religie-filosofie/samen-geloven-en-soms-even-apart~b7b2e51d/?utm_source=link&utm_medium=app&utm_campaign=shared%20content&utm_content=free)



## 2.6 10-day prayer initiative

In May 2019, ICF had a ten-day prayer chain. During the day as well as at night, more than 100 ICF members formed a prayer chain, praying in the Bethel Church. (The Bethel Church is owned by Home for Kurds, and ICF rents space for the week's activities.) It was great to see many teens and young adults participating, as well as entire families praying. The newly decorated prayer room was decorated and provided with attributes in such a way that it became easier to pray in various forms. In the photo below, beautiful drawings inspired us to pray for all the work of ICF, knowing that God has to do it.



### 3. Branches of the tree

#### 3.1 Kurdish ministry

In 2019 Home for Kurds (Kurdish House) moved from Zuidhoek to the Bethel Church. Office space was set up, a prayer room and also an apartment was created, so that Kurdish families can come and stay there. Twice a month the Kurds also gather there during a church service. On average there were thirty-five Kurdish visitors per service and in total about 200 visitors were welcomed to the services. The core of regular participants is growing, as is the participation of the visitors. Faraidoun Fouad is the pastor and leader of the Kurds; in addition, three brothers are in training to share the Word. Bible study is done on "intermediate Sundays". The Kurdish House also attracts many children who participate in activities at their own level. In 2019, approximately 40 children were reached, and the plan is to expand this. Much effort is focused on prayer, education and discipleship. Discipleship material was translated and made available in 2019, including in audio, including via the Internet and on 10,000 memory sticks distributed in Kurdistan. Baptismal education was given to 15 new believers and 6 could be baptized in the Netherlands. Much of the work takes place in Kurdistan: people were baptized (secretly) there too. Home for Kurds provides pastoral and diaconal care to the persecuted Christians in Kurdistan, and coaches the local house churches. Kurds are reached all over the world via social media. Despite hacks and threats, hundreds of thousands of Kurds can learn about the gospel online. Home for Kurds is coaching a team of 16 people to make this possible. Although Home for Kurds has now become so large that it has its own church service and operates independently, the relationship with ICF is still strong. Some ICF members provide support and assistance. ICF is the "mother church" of the leaders of the Kurds, and also provides modest financial support. Faraidoun Fouad preaches in ICF and is an elder on the ICF church council. In addition, ICF rents the Bethel Church for its own activities such as the Alpha course, catechization, meetings of singles, 10-day prayers, etc. However, it remains a challenge to maintain broad involvement of ICF members. *Picture below: part of the Home for Kurds team at the wedding of one of their members.*



#### 3.2 African Ministry

African brothers and sisters met every Saturday afternoon in the Swaef; on average with 10-15 people. The group has grown to approximately 35 regular members. In addition to prayer, worship and Bible study, there are often parties around birthdays and births. During the first half of 2019, the group consisted partly of women who had fled, victims of human trafficking. We saw these sisters flourish through mutual love and attention and we are happy that ICF can offer them a (temporary) spiritual home. We see beautiful answers to prayers in the African group. Several people found work

or obtained residence permits. There is a considerable turnover among the participants, but new visitors always find connections easily. The mutual involvement is great. For example, around the 50th birthday of a Kenyan sister, everything was done to organize a nice party for her. Claude Mushikangondo, the church worker who leads the African group, visits group members at home as much as possible and provides pastoral care where necessary. *Picture below: 50th birthday of Eunice from Kenya, with the African group; Claude squatting in front and Coen Legemaate on the second row with son Jens.*



### 3.3 Spanish Ministry

The group of Spanish speakers gathered on Sunday afternoons for Bible study and prayer, after the ICF church service. The group led by Johan Villamil consists of 15 adults, mostly women. Participants live spread over the Rijnmond region, so meeting is practically only possible on Sundays after the service. Most of the participants have young children; it is therefore difficult to be in the Swaef almost all day. Participation in the Bible studies therefore decreased in 2019. The challenge is to attract new participants among the Spanish-speaking members and visitors of ICF. In the fall of 2019, the group organized a nice farewell for (former elder) Walter Figueroa and his wife Lixandra, who left for Peru as missionaries. The group continues to support them, materially and spiritually. In addition, the Spanish-speaking group also supports a Protestant pastor with his church in a poor area of Mexico.

*Picture next page: the entire Spanish group with Johan and Vanessa Villamil on the far right*



### 3.4 'Home in West' (Thuis in West)

'Home in West' is a diaconal project in Rotterdam-West and also has a pastoral component: Heart for West. ICF is the pastoral home of the Hart for West team members. Every other week Hart voor West has Sunday services. This went so well that at the request of visitors, they have now switched to weekly meetings.

In April 2019, Heart for West became an official pioneering place and the team started participating in the PKN / CGK pioneering learning community. Heart for West is reaching more and more people with the gospel. A missionary teen club has even been started: Youth4Life. The children's work is well attended because there are many children in the neighborhood (see photo on the right).

At the end of 2019, the HfW team built 140 "meaningful relationships," with whom faith can be shared, through the Connect services, ministry, the Alpha course, the Home Groups and other activities.

*Picture right: children's work Heart for West*



### 3.5 ICF North

The preparations for ICF Noord started at the end of 2018, but this young church plant really started in spring 2019. ICF Noord can be seen as the young sister of ICF Rotterdam, but falls under the responsibility of the Reformed Church Rotterdam Center. ICF Noord received support from ICF Rotterdam (South) in the form of intervision and guidance from pastor Legemaate. In addition, several ICF members provided practical services such as business cards, website, translations. ICF Noord focuses on people in the Crooswijk / Oude Noorden neighborhood. The pioneer team led by Fred Kappinga has meanwhile built up a network of regular participants. On Sunday about 20 people come together in the service in the Rehoboth Church on the Noordersingel. Four Bible circles meet

during the week. In addition, there are social activities such as picnics, brunches and barbecues, and people like to help each other when there are odd jobs or relocations. It is not visible in the photo, but about 40% of the visitors to ICF-Noord are children!



### 3.6 House of Light

House of Light became an official pioneering place (church plant) of the PKN and ICF in mid-2019. This cooperation in the areas of capacity building, strategic development and finance is progressing very well. ICF pastor Coen Legemaate is the pastor of House of Light. PKN Charlois (Oude Kerk) is directly involved in spiritual leadership in the person of Rev. Bert Davelaar; he is also a member of the pioneer team (i.e. the leadership team). The biweekly Sunday meetings are always very lively and are attended by a group of approximately 40-50 people. Some of them come from the Middle East, the Antilles, Suriname. During 2019 people got to know each other better and relationships deepened. The participation from the group was considerably strengthened in the second half of 2019. Partly on the advice of PKN pioneer guidance, the pioneer team was expanded with three people from the participants. They were chosen on the basis of their commitment and capabilities. This step boosted the team and generated new ideas and energy. The expanded team meets regularly to pray, seek God's guidance, and discuss progress.

House of Light is part of the ICF budget, and in 2019 received donations from external funds, such as the Mustard Seed Foundation in the US, Grace Foundation, Maatschappij van Welstand and Agathon Ergon Foundation. At the end of 2019, House of Light could close the year with a beautiful Christmas party. Of course there are plenty of challenges on the path of this fledgling church plant. For example, the involvement from ICF can be further strengthened.

*Picture next page: fellowship moment during the Sunday House of Light meeting*





### 3.7 Other outreach and evangelism

ICF organized a Christmas walk together with the Church of the Nazarene on December 24. The aim was to reach non-religious residents of Rotterdam South with the Christmas message. Hundreds of people participated, church members and non-religious residents of the area. They saw various scenes from the Christmas story at ten locations in the Carnisse / Zuidplein neighborhoods. The ICF choir acted as an angel choir. At the final destination in the Swaef, participants could look into the manger, where baby Emir Erdogan, 3 months old, interpreted the baby Jesus (see photo below). Several non-religious visitors were visibly impressed. ICF also provided Christmas lunches for some 40-50 lonely and vulnerable neighborhood residents, together with House of Hope. All in all, this formed a special "outreach" that is worth repeating.

*Picture below: baby Jesus (Emir) with Maria (Emir's mum) and Joseph on Christmas night in the Swaef*



### 3.8 Alpha course

In 2019 two episodes of the Alpha course were organized. Participants come from different backgrounds and do not always speak Dutch. The Alpha team is therefore always challenged to have sufficient language skills and a good male-female ratio. We see that the Alpha course has a major impact on faith building of people who doubted or were non-believers. Of the participants, 1 woman went on to the classes for baptism preparation,



4 to an ICF Home Group and 1 is now a regular visitor to the ICF church services. Two participants have found another church. Unfortunately, for a number of participants it is not known whether they took the next step in faith. *Picture above: the Alpha team and 5 Alpha students on the closing night of the spring episode 2019*

For more information about the activities of ICF, write to: [churchworkers@icfrotterdam.nl](mailto:churchworkers@icfrotterdam.nl)

-----