



Mission statement, vision and priorities for ICF Rotterdam

Mission statement: Passion for God, compassion for people

We are an intercultural Christian community in Rotterdam established to help people find Jesus, follow Him and share His salvation in word and deeds.

Vision

During the past years we have seen a mixed picture of stagnation and growth. We are grateful to God that we could welcome new people, start with new initiatives that fulfill a need. However, we see that corona has an impact on the congregation. Less fellowship and social interaction take its toll. Also the size of the ICF (400-500 members and visitors) raises new challenges. It makes it easier to remain passive as a church member. We want to be a church with active participation, and a safe place where people feel they belong and where they can serve and grow their faith. At the same time, we want to stay accessible and low threshold for non-believers and seekers. We offer a place where new believers can grow in their relationship with God. We want to encourage teaching, prayer, and Bible study in daily life.

In 2018, God brought us after fasting and prayer, to the image of the tree. This tree concept has been guiding the ICF from the very beginning. In the Bible, the tree is used in several places to represent growth. We believe that this image is still of importance to the ICF.

Roots: In Psalm 1 the tree is a sign of personal spiritual growth. When someone is rooted in the word of God, his life will bear fruit.

Branching: In Matthew 13: 31-32 the tree is a sign of the growth of the kingdom. Out of a mustard seed comes a branched tree. Someone who is attached to the tree like a branch, will get relationships with other people through this.

God is not asking us to make a very thick trunk out of the ICF, because the trunk is no goal in itself. The trunk's goal is for the the branches to bear fruit. That is why we will rather deepen our roots through discipleship, and strengthen our branches through closer connection to one another. More specifically this means: more attention to group work, reinforcement of the leadership, and through these things, growth in discipleship.

We did not want to put all the energy in the Sunday service, but during corona times, we had to manage the situation with livestreams, extra services, extra measures and team work. After corona times, we will rebalance our focus again, to avoid that too much attention is paid to the Sunday service and not enough on prayer, growth and fellowship. We want to restore damage that was done by corona, to the sense of fellowship, one-ness and mutual care.

Priorities

1. Building up our congregation

We need a spirit of prayer in our church to overcome the challenges of our times (impact of corona, post-modern social norms distracting from the Bible). We want to restore fellowship in the spirit of grace and love, overcoming differences, disagreements and rejection. We take our given talents seriously, and we work together to make most of it for God's Kingdom. We encourage people to be generous, and we aim to be more independent financially. We want to dedicate enough resources for members in need and missionary activities. We have motivated and qualified staff who support the leaders of the different teams and we want to make most of this capacity.

2. Committed to mission and outreach in Rotterdam

We want to be a church for people who do not (yet) know the church. We want to be a blessing to Rotterdam. We want to show Jesus through our own life. We encourage our members to be missionary, and to get involved in missionary/diaconal/voluntary initiatives in the area. We have set up several missionary initiatives as ICF, such as our church plants House of Light and Hart voor West, the missional work of Home for Kurds and our 'younger sister' ICF Rotterdam Noord. When someone decides to take a step back of the "trunk" of ICF, in order to serve in one of these branches we will not hold them back, but instead we will rejoice. Furthermore, we collaborate with network partners and like-minded churches and organizations (example with the Church of the Nazarene for Christmas outreach in the area). Our services and activities are low threshold and open to visitors. We equip the Home Groups and other groups to be missionary/outward minded and to be more intentional in bringing new people into their midst.

3. Intercultural community

We are an intercultural community and we want to take this seriously. We want to be aware of each other's background and different needs and preferences; we count on our Lord Jesus Christ to make us one. Together we are building a Christian culture in the congregation, by bridging our differences. We stimulate intercultural cooperation and communication among members and the teams. We integrate cultural diversity in the Sunday services. We love to see more flourishing ministries such as the African, Kurdish and Latino Ministries. We support members from a certain culture to have meetings for their own group and in their own language, but we always come together in the Sunday service, in church activities and in the different teams (for example children's work, Alpha course, church choir). We are aware that the strengths of the Dutch culture (organization, planning, clear communication and responsibilities) can have the downside of not offering enough space to other cultures. In the church council we make sure that the different cultures are represented.

4. Discipleship

We want every member to develop as a mature disciple of Jesus. We pay attention to the growth of young and older believers. We stimulate a lifestyle of prayer among members and obedience to the Word of God. We promote a service-oriented and active attitude in church members; we want everyone to flourish as they use their gifts in the Kingdom. This starts from young age. ICF dedicates much effort to children's clubs during the service (Sunday school). We aim to have always enough volunteers for the children's & youth work. We promote that everyone can take part in a bible study Home Groups and that Home Group leaders receive support. We offer discipleship programs every year; afterwards we stimulate participants to take on leadership roles or new responsibilities in church.

5. Strong families

Families are the building blocks of a society. When they are strong and stable, they can support people in need, offer community & fellowship, show God's love and help in building the congregation. Singles are also included in this concept, as 1-person-family units. We acknowledge their role in our congregation and keep an open eye for their needs. We promote strong marriages through (pre-)marriage counseling, Alpha marriage courses and frequent discussions with married couples. We support parents in raising kids, and make parents aware of their (spiritual) role. We invest in the teenagers in particular with youth work programs and pastoral care geared to their needs. We frequently open the Bible on family matters, during Sunday services and during Bible study Home Groups, to show that these are topics that touches everyone. Every couple with relationship issues can get counseling if they want and we try to make this offer as low-threshold as possible. We pay special attention to couples of mixed cultural backgrounds and to children and youth who are in between two cultures as they have additional challenges.
