Giving Small Groups Big Potential:
An Evaluation of the Small Group Ministry at
Ichtus Pinkstergemeente Zaandam

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Written by: **Adriane Michelle Pasterkamp**
                                            Student, GPW. (student number: S1051713)
                                                Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim
                                                             (Azusa Curriculum)

Project Supervisor: **Dr. Cees van der Laan**
                                                Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim

Second Reader: **Drs. Eduard Groen**
                                                Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim

Organization Supervisor: **Pastor Jan Barendse, Jr.**
                                                   Ichtus Pinkstergemeente Zaandam

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FOREWORD

Over the past few years I've heard announcements of a small group being started, but after a while the invitational announcements stopped, and no one heard anything about it anymore. It never really occurred to me that the small group had been stopped altogether. To be honest, I'm not currently in a small group and I have never been a part of the small group ministry at Ichtus. This project didn't really apply to anything I was involved in, other than the fact that it caused me to question why I wasn't in a small group. Looking into the reasons why church members didn't attend a small group intrigued me. They work well in so many churches, why not ours? What is it about our church that can't get small groups off the ground? After the fact, I am glad I took on this project because it gave me a good look into the dynamics of our church. We're full of young families; I myself am a mother of two small children, and many of my church friends also have small children. This project allowed me to look at ways small groups (and in my own personal time my own ministry) may not be as effective as they could be. I think that this project provides some good reading material for all the leaders in the church who struggle with their ministries, not just those involved with the small group ministry. Better understanding the dynamics of our church will help prepare for a longer lasting, more fulfilling ministry.

I want to take the time to thank some very important people who have helped me in the journey of this project. Firstly the church board. I would like to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to make an impact on your small group ministry, whether directly through this project or through ideas we have shared together in various board meetings. I understand that some issues dealt with may be delicate. Thank you for giving me your trust to handle any "uncomfortable" situation. I hope you find this project useful. Also, a special thank you to all those who participated in the project: interview and survey participants alike. Without you there would be no project. By sharing your knowledge, feelings and ideas I was able to unlock some key issues in the small group ministry, and I was able to formulate an alternative model for the church board based on your feedback. Thank you. Your time is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank my project supervisor Cees van der Laan, for sharing your wisdom with me and for helping me try to organize my thoughts into a logical, coherent project.

Writing this project proved at times very difficult because, as mentioned earlier, I am the mother of two small children (my oldest, Mikaelah, is three and my youngest, Aubrey, is eighteen months). A huge thank you to my loving husband, Sebastiaan who spent countless weekends and

evenings taking care of and entertaining our children so that I could spend my time interviewing, analyzing and writing. And most of all for listening to my frustrations, being my sounding-board, and keeping me from crumbling to pieces when it was all too much to handle. And thanks for being my computer genius. Sorry for all those hours of waisted time because of my perfectionism in formatting.

And to my mother-in-law Nicolette, who is always so willing to lend a helping hand and came to my rescue countless times when I was stressed out or panicked because I wasn't getting any work done, or couldn't go to class because I had no babysitter. And to the best neighbor in the world, Mieke. On multiple occasions she rescued me from my babysitting worries. I still don't know how she managed entire days with four children under the age of three, and a course load of her own.

INTRODUCTION

Small groups (SG)'s are an important and seemingly vibrant part of church life. Ichtus Pinkstergemeente in Zaandam, among other ministries, also has a small group ministry (SGM),. According to the church leadership it is not a very successful one. This project is an attempt to sort out where the problems lay in the past and present SGM's at Ichtus, in the hope that it might be an inspiration for church leadership to rethink their SGM.

What is an SG exactly? Why, if at all, are SG's important for the church? Is an SG a necessity or a luxury for a church of Ichtus' size? Why have some SG's succeeded and others failed at Ichtus? Does the SGM need to be re-launched, or should time and energy be focused on other aspects of church life? This project will attempt to shed some light on these questions.

The Problem

According to the church board (CB) the first SGM was launched in 2006. Apart from one group, the initial launch was unsuccessful. Several more attempts to start SG's under various leadership produced even more failures, causing the CB to question the effectiveness of having an SGM. SG's, according to the CB, are important to the church for in-depth spiritual growth, pastoral care and relationship building, all of which cannot be done on the Sunday service or by the pastoral leadership alone with a church of its size. They are a necessity to the church and function well in many other churches, so what went wrong and why don't many of the SG's at Ichtus stay afloat?

This Project

Based on the questions raised by the CB, this project seeks to answer the following research question:

> Given that the leadership of Ichtus would like to give more attention to her SG's and the reasons why they have not functioned well in the past, what are/have been the possible problems with the SG's, and is there an alternative form/model that will meet the needs of her congregants that could be used?

Further questions that will be dealt with in this project, relating to the above question are: (1) which SG's are there / have there been at Ichtus and what is the purpose of these groups? (2) What form/model does Ichtus currently use for her SG's? (3) What are/have been the possible problems

with Ichtus' SG's? (4) What are the needs of the congregation regarding SG's? And finally (5) what is an alternative form/model that Ichtus could use for their SGM?

Methodology

This project is an evaluation. It evaluates the former SG's and SGM's and the current status of the SGM. In order to answer the above questions posed by the CB two forms of research were conducted. First, literature research was conducted from both published texts and books, as well as church documents and reports in order to gain background information of SG's in general, as well as the SG's at Ichtus. Secondly, a mixed research method, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, was used for the evaluation.[1] For the evaluation, information was gathered first by means of interview. The pastor, several members of the CB, current and former coordinators of the SGM,, several current and former SG leaders, and several current and former SG participants were interviewed. In addition to this, several members of task-groups that have not officially been labeled as SG's were interviewed to determine if those groups meet SG criteria.

Once information was gathered by means of interviews a church-wide survey was conducted and the results of that survey were analyzed. The purpose of this survey was two-fold: First, it was held to determine the quality of former and current SG's for those who attend or have previously attended an SG. By doing so, a comparison was made between the quality of former groups and current groups. Secondly, the purpose was to gain a better understanding of the reasons many church attenders are not currently involved in an SG. By doing so an idea of how many church attenders were previously, but are no longer involved in an SG, was gained.

Content

The first chapter aims to give the reader a clear understanding of what an SG is, and what it entails, in the context of the Church. In doing so, SG's are first defined and examples of SG's in society and the Bible are given. Further in this chapter the purpose of SG's in the context of the Church is discussed and categories of SG's in the context of the Church are listed. Finally, small groups in their current state at Ichtus are discussed.

The second chapter lays the foundation for the research work, discussing the qualitative and quantitative research methods. The reasoning behind the interview questions and participants, and survey questions, are also presented in chapter two, along with the result each has provided. The third chapter evaluates the research results in attempts to relate it to some of the problems that were

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[1] Johnny Saldana, *Fundamentals for Qualitative Research: Understanding Qualitative Research.* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011 Kindle Edition). Location 102. A mixed method was chosen because this project uses both open interviews (qualitative) and a survey (quantitative).

found as a result of the survey and interviews. This chapter discusses both issues seen in the former SGM attempts and problems that may not directly have to do with the former SGM's but do need to be dealt with if the CB further pursues an SGM re-launch.

The last chapter combines all the information presented in the first three chapters and provides the CB with an alternative model to SG's based on the research gathered. The motivation this chosen model is discussed and the model is presented along with its implications.

Important for the reader

In essence, this project is bilingual. Most of the literature research, with the exception of church documents, has been English. The above-mentioned church is a Dutch-speaking church. All of the interviews, as well as the survey, have therefore been conducted in the Dutch language. Because this project has been written in English, it is important for the reader to realize that there are various citations made throughout the project that are in Dutch. All citations in the Dutch language are *italicized*, and, from this point on, conclude with a "T" (Translation) followed by a number (ex. T1, T2, etc.). Approximate English translations will be provided in Appendix A, listed according to their number. Many of the attachments at the end of this project are also in Dutch (for example the interview question, the survey and several church documents provided as attachments) and are not provided in English because they are only relevant for the church or the school, both of which are Dutch-speaking.

CHAPTER 1: DEFINING SMALL GROUPS

In order to evaluate the SGM at Ichtus, SG's must be defined. In the interviews that took place (which will be discussed further in chapter two) each person was given the question *"In uw mening, wat is een kring?[T1]"* Answers were quite similar to each other but they almost always began with *"een kring is een groep mensen die samen bij elkaar komt... [T2]"* Answers then varied from: to build relationships, to build each other up spiritually or to study the word of God. It is important to understand that each church and each church member will have their own understanding of what an SG is and how it should function. SG's come in all varieties, shapes and sizes. What works well for one church may not work well for another. Below is a general description of what SG's consist of: their definition, examples of SG's and their purpose in the context of the Church. Thereafter, various categories of SG's and the current state of SG's at Ichtus will each be handled in this chapter.

Defining Small Groups

The larger a church grows the more difficult it is for its members to create meaningful relationships and the less oversight a pastor has on his congregation. For this reason, many churches opt to implement an SGM. An SG must be defined before it can be understood within the context of the Church. There are various definitions that have been noted regarding SG's; one definition from Johnson and Johnson defines an SG as " Two or more people in a face-to-face interaction, each aware of positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals, each aware of his or her own membership in the group and each aware of the others who belong to the group"[2] Another definition given by John Cragen and David Wright is as follows: "A few people engaging in communication interaction over time, usually in face-to-face settings, who have common goals and norms and have developed a communication pattern for meeting their goals in an interdependent manner."[3]Different approach in grasping the definition of an SG, is given by Harley Atkinson in his book *The Power of Small Groups in Christian Education*. Here he refers to adult education expert Malcom Knowles who lists the six basic elements of an SG in order to define it. These six elements are important because not only do they provide a definition of what an SG *is*, but they define what

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[2]David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson, *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills, 8th edition,* (Michigan: Allyn and Bacon, 20026tth ed). 12.

[3]John Cragen and David Wright. *Communication in Small Group Discussions. 4th ed.* (St Paul, Minnesota; West, 1997). 7.

an SG *does*. These six elements are size, group consciousness, purpose, interdependence, interaction, and cohesiveness. [4]

In regard to the *size* of an SG the most effective size will vary from group to group depending on their purpose, but researchers commonly agree that they start with three people and should not exceed twelve to fifteen members. If the size of the group becomes too large, members tend to lose themselves and their interest in the group. *Group consciousness* is knowing who you are as a group. Atkinson states that in an SG "group members should be able to identify themselves as members of a particular group because they share certain characteristics, interests or values that help define the group."[5]

A collection of people becomes an SG when they have a *purpose.* It is important for an SG to know where they are going; without any clear goals or purpose the group will quickly diminish. An SG also forms where there is a strong level of *interdependence* on one another: members of an SG should help each other accomplish something or attain a certain goal. Along with this comes *interaction.* In order for a crowd to be an SG they have to interact with each other in a face-to-face manner. A final element that defines an SG is *cohesiveness*. The group needs to be able to stick together. Johnson and Johnson give a clear definition to what cohesiveness in an SG is: "[it is the] mutual attraction among the members of a group and the resulting desire to remain in a group."[6] In order for a group of people in a church to label themselves as an SG they must have all six of these elements.

Examples of Small Groups

Examples of SG's can be found in the Bible and well as in society. SG's are a very effective means of building relationships. Our entire lives function in the context of SG's: in the work place, at our schools, our friend circles, in our families. We are creatures of communication and this is best done in a smaller setting, or SG's. They are a very important part of the sociological structure of our society because nearly everything functions within an SG setting.[7] Because of the breakdown of the family in the last few decades, people have been looking for a sense of community that was once found in the home and in the neighborhood. Media has not helped this situation; it has only caused individuals to become more isolated. Loneliness and a longing for community is a big part of our world today and SG's within the church can help with these issues. Atkinson states that "the

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[4]Harley T. Atkison *The Power of Small Groups in Christian Education.* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 2002). 27-36.

[5]Ibid. 29.

[6]Johnson and Johnson. 113.

[7]Atkinson. 9-10.

advance of the small group ministry is rooted in the disintegration of these long-lasting support structures and our innate desire for communities."[8] We are meant to have a sense of community. The SG provides us with a sense of belonging because we are social creatures. SG's provide a sense of lasting connectedness that has been lost. Apart from providing a closer connection with God, the SG also provides connections within the group setting, eventually resulting in connections outside the group; both scenarios tend to lessen the isolation of the people in today's society.[9]

SG's can also be seen in the Bible. God himself can be seen as existing in and of himself as an SG. This is later explained further in the New Testament as the trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one, but the communicate with each other. It has been suggested that we should recognize that "our own use of small groups and our need for community, to a certain extent, is a logical extension of the fact that God exists in the divine form of a small group."[10] In the very beginning God created man to have relationship with Him, and he created Eve so that Adam would have a companion. (Gen 2:20-23). The first time we see SG's in the OT is in reference to management. Moses set up SG's because he could no longer watch over all of the people himself. (Exodus 18:13:17).[11] Setting up SG's allowed for more oversight and individual attention for each Israelite.

In the NT we see two prototypes for SG's: Jesus and His disciples and the functioning of the Early Church.[12] Not only do we see Jesus functioning and teaching in large crowds, but very often in the small community of His disciples. The most important lessons that He taught were in the smaller confines of His SG. His disciples were able to learn on a deeper level by Jesus investing in them as an SG, and in this manner some of the greatest revelations the disciples received were realized.[13] We see on various occasions that Jesus uses the advantages of His SG for rebuking (Matt 6:30), for explaining His parables (Matt 13:36), teaching them how to minister (Luke 9:1-6), teaching them how to pray (Luke 11:1-4), for teaching them about the Kingdom (John 14-16) and most importantly, He prepared them for leadership (Matt 10:2)[14]

Aside from Jesus and His disciples we see that the early Church was flooded with small house churches. After Pentecost the church began to spread like wildfire. The apostles needed a way to keep the spread of the Gospel going and to maintain the growing church. Acts 5:42 tells us that

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[8]Ibid. 12.

[9]Ibid. 58-59.

[10]Ibid. 68.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.. 68-69.

[13]See for example Matthew 16:13-20 where Peter declares that Jesus is Lord.

[14]Atkinson. 83-84.

they did this not only by teaching in the Temple but by going house to house. We can classify these house churches as SG's because of their size, their life and activities, and by the fact that they possessed a sense of community. They also were not exclusive to themselves but were a part of the larger body of Christ[15]

The Purpose of a Small Group in the Context of the Church

Defining the purpose of an SG is very important because no SG can be successful without knowing *why* they exist. An SG without purpose lacks a sense of direction and has no means of measuring their success. Harley Atkinson explains that an SG's purpose in the church is to provide a sense of community, a context for spiritual formation, a point of entry for the church, a safe environment for learning, a way to apply scripture to the daily life and to mobilize the body to ministry. [16] According to Atkinson, every SGM should be aware that it should fulfill all of these elements. But how? And why? This approach to the purpose of SG's, while very good, is not complete: There are elements missing that explain its motivation.

In their book *Making Small Groups Work,* Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend give another approach to the purpose of SG's. They explain that due to the Fall, man has suffered many consequences. They list six: (1) Disconnection from the source of life, (2) a duel loss of relationship: to God and to each other, (3) Shame, (4) Disobedience, (5) A loss of knowledge of God's ways, and (6) A loss of control.[17] They further state that "Because Adam and Eve passed on to us the art of going our own way, we all encounter fallen spiritual, relational, psychological, emotional and functional dynamics."[18] It is then the purpose of the SG to deal with these dynamics.

Based on these six consequences Cloud and Townsend conclude that the sole purpose of SG's in the context of the church is reconciliation: to reconcile the relationship between God and the fallen man. Since man has become disconnected to the source of life, SG's are to help reconnect him with God. Teach group members that God is the giver of life and we are to rely on Him in all aspects of our lives. Secondly, because relationship has been lost, the SG is to help reconnect man to God and to one another through a real relationship. A third means to assisting reconciliation is to substitute shame for providing an experience of total grace. Fourth, to counteract disobedience, SG's help teach, through experience, the value of obedience to God. Fifthly, SG's teach God's ways and help to apply them to everyday life. Finally SG's demonstrate submission by showing members how

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[15]Ibid 85-90.

[16]Atkinson. 11.

[17]Cloud and Townsend. 33-34.

[18]Ibid. 33.

to relinquish control to God and to take responsibility for themselves.[19]

This approach is also very well presented, but in and of itself is also not complete. While these authors very clearly stated the how's and why's of the purpose of the SG, it lacks its connection to the entire church body. While the first approach was too broad, this approach seems too concentrated. Each is missing elements that the other possesses. A combination of the two is needed. While an SG's purpose is reconciliation based, including all the six elements listed by Cloud and Townsend, its purpose is also practical: for providing things such as a point of entry to the church, or mobilizing the body for ministry as mentioned by Atkinson. Keeping in mind both approaches to the purpose of an SG in the context of the church will provide a more adequate understanding.

Categories of Small Groups

There are endless types of SG's. Categorizing SG's can be quite difficult. Various authors have various opinions and classifications. Each church will then, in turn, apply various categories of SG's to their SGM. This project will once again refer to Harley Atkinson's *The Power of Small Groups in Christian Education* because it provides a thorough listing of the possible categories of SG's.[20] Atkinson explains that:

> Any number of types or varieties of groups can fit within the above criteria [referring to the purpose] of small groups: a prayer group, a Bible study group, a bowling team, a church elders board, or a unit of Christian volunteers who work in a soup kitchen. However, almost all of them can be further classified into one of four categories based on the primary focus or central reason for which the Christian education group exists. Most Christian education small groups can be classified as (1) process-oriented, (2) content-oriented, (3) task-oriented, or (4) need-oriented.[21]

With each group description Atkinson provides several types of groups that may fall under its prospective category.

Process-oriented groups are groups that primarily focus on being a group. It includes the friendship or contact group, which is a group that is meant for establishing relationships, usually between people with common interests or age categories. In this type of group the group members set the pace for how it further develops. Spiritual development comes later, after the relationships are built. Another group that falls into the process-oriented category are Fellowship or Share groups. These groups focus on building relationship and fellowship. Contrary to popular belief these groups

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[19]Ibid. 34-40.

[20]Ibid. 37-50.

[21]Ibid, 37.

do not necessarily have to be Bible study groups: they can be prayer groups, groups where members share from their daily lives or special interest groups

Content-oriented groups are groups whose purpose is to learn about or gain a better understanding of a subject matter(s) that the group is interested in. This category includes Bible study groups, and discussion groups (where the Bible and other Christian resources such as books, history, politics, movies etc. are used as points of discussion).

The task-oriented group is a group that has the purpose of completing a specific job. They include committees (groups with the task of making decisions and solving problems), long-standing work groups (groups that include church boards, and the Christian education committee), evangelism groups (groups dedicated solely to winning the lost), and ministry groups (which consist of groups that participate in a certain ministry such as soup kitchens or prison ministry).

Need-oriented groups are comprised of people who are aware that their lives are in need of some kind of change and are willing to do something about it with the help of the SG and its members. The first type of group in this category is the encounter or personal-growth group. This group helps its members realize their full potential in various aspects of their lives. The second type is the growth group, which is similar to the encounter group but is broader in nature and include groups like marriage enrichment or preparation groups, spiritual growth groups or focused study groups. A third group that falls under need-oriented groups is the support group. Support groups are, "those groups designed to allow participants to share experiences that they have in common."[22] They include entities such as single-parent groups, parents of teenagers or toddlers, mid-life crisis groups, etc. The twelve-step recovery group also falls under need-oriented groups and includes Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and other addiction or recovery groups. As their name suggests, these groups follow a twelve-step program that helps them through the recovery phase of various problems or addictions. The last group that falls under need-oriented groups is the spiritual formation group which is dedicated to enhancing the spiritual life of the group.

This is a very thorough depiction of the categories of SG's: but there are some difficulties with it regarding the SG *ministry*. Process, content and need-oriented groups fit into the ministry in regard to the purpose of an SG, but task-oriented groups are questionable. Task-oriented groups are indeed SG's in terms of definition, but they don't serve the purposes mentioned in the above section, or at least not all of them. Task-oriented groups focus on the needs of the church or how to serve the church, and not on the needs of the church member him/herself. If someone is involved in a task-oriented SG, they are not usually involved in personal spiritual and relational development. In order for a task-oriented group to become part of the SGM it should make this one of its priorities.

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[22]Ibid. 46.

Small Groups at Ichtus

There are various SG's that now function at Ichtus, although not all of these SG's function as part of the SGM. The SGM currently consists of five SG's: the 18+ group (which could be classified as a fellowship or share group in that members of the college and career age group not only learn God's word but also speak into each other's lives through personal experience), the Poelenburg-Zuid group and the Poelenburg group (which are both content-oriented Bible study groups), The Senior group (which is a need-oriented, support group in that those over the age of 55 gather to help each other and minister to each other as they reach their advanced years), and the women's group (which is also a need-oriented, support group in that it seeks to establish relationships specifically with women of the church who struggle with anonymity in the church).

To give an idea of other SG's that exist at Ichtus, a few should be mentioned. These groups are primarily task-oriented groups and include: the CB (task-oriented, committee) and various other committees or teams such as the youth leadership, the IchtusKids leadership, the KidzArk[23] team and the worship team[24]. As mentioned above, the placement of these groups in an SGM context is questionable and will be discussed further in chapter four.

This chapter provided some fundamental information regarding SG's necessary for understanding the following chapters. Understanding the definition of SG's and some examples of SG's helps understand what makes an SG; the very basis of this project. Being aware of the current SG's at Ichtus sets the foundation for much of the information presented in this project, especially concerning the research gathered which will be presented in chapter two. Understanding the purpose of SG's will help draw important conclusions in chapter three and four, and understanding the categories of SG's will help in understanding any alternative model presented in chapter four.

Now that the foundation has been set, the next chapter will present the research methodology and the research gathered.

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[23]Kidzark is a ministry for primary school-aged children that meats every first wednesday of the month

[24]The worship team is questionable. It does serve the church, as a task-group does, but it is al a highly relational group, and could also be classified as a process oriented, friendship group. It is list under task group because it has not yet be defined as an SG by leadership.

CHAPTER 2: EVALUATING SMALL GROUPS AT ICHTUS

This chapter will explain the research methodology for this project, including why specific interview and survey questions have been chosen and why specific groups of interview participants have been selected. This chapter will also present the results of both the interview and the survey.

The Research Question Elaborated

Before diving into the research and its results, it is important to understand why the research was done. In the introduction of this project, the main research question was stated.[25] This question can be further divided into two parts, the first dealing with what the possible problems that are/have been concerning the SG's at Ichtus. This question comes from the idea that many attempts at SG's have produced more failures than success stories. Especially important here is determining what, if anything, can be learned from past mistakes and how these lessons can be implemented into any possible re-launch of the SGM.

The second part of the question deals whether or not there is an alternative model to the SGM that would adequately fit the needs of the congregation. Important when considering an answer to this question is whether or not leadership should relaunch their SG ministry or focus their attention on other aspects of church life. This needs a bit more elaboration: It comes from two proposals made by various CB members. The first proposal states that the church should become a SG-oriented church.[26] It suggested that church leadership should invest its time in launching a better SGM where each member would be part of some type of SG or task-group, and therefore any other activities should be temporarily stopped in order to avoid time problems caused from multiple ministry or other church commitments. A responding proposal suggested that the church should become church-centered, seeing the church building as the focal point of activities and attention rather than the SG. In this proposal it was suggested that rather than placing each member in an SG, which has subsequently failed, the church should be open for all kinds of activities. Then, rather than being put into an SG, the congregation could pick various planned activities to attend. When someone needs any kind of pastoral care, the church could be open daily with various leadership

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[25]See Introduction, under "This Project."

[26]See Appendix C.1: SG-Oriented Church

present and available.[27] Each of these models has its benefits and pitfalls, however, both are worthy of consideration, and will be taken into account and discussed further when presenting an alternative model for the SGM in chapter four.

Research Methodology

In order to gain a better understanding of current and former SG's at Ichtus, both interviews[28] and a church-wide survey[29] have been conducted. The interviews were primarily open interviews and were conducted face-to-face (with the exception of three interviews that were filled in digitally because of time scheduling or distance problems).[30] Each interview varied from person to person within each group, but the interview questions helped keep the data to a specific flow that could be more easily compared. The survey was a questionnaire that was distributed to the entire congregation of approximately 100 people.

The Interview Participants

In total, 18 interviews were conducted. In order to gain a more complete understanding of past and present SGM attempts, various groups have been chosen. Before discussing these groups, it is important to note that not every possible participant of each possible group has been interviewed because of time constraints. The number of participants for each group varies.[31] Various participants were also interviewed twice. Because of the reasonably small size of the church many members are involved in more than one ministry. For example, one current SG leader was also a former SG coordinator. Participants were also chosen from various age groups and genders. When possible one of each gender was chosen from within each group. Age also varied in order to assure that the data gathered was not based only on one age group or gender.

The first group interviewed was the CB in order to gain an understanding of how they view SG's, including: their idea of what an SG should look like, what their vision for SG's is, and their opinion of how SG's function(ed).[32] The second group that has been interviewed was the SG coordinators (SGC)'s including both the current SGC and former SGC's. The current SGC was interviewed in order to gain a better understanding of the present state of SG's at Ichtus: including

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[27]See Appendix C.2: Church-Centered Church.

[28]See Appendix B.1: Interview Questions.

[29]See Appendix B.3: Survey.

[30]Participant (P) 7, P15, P16.

[31]For a further explanation see Appendix B.2: List and Summary of Interview Participants.

[32]The reasoning behind the questions of each interview will be discussed further in the next section.

their idea of what an SG should look like, their vision for SG's, the current status of SG's, and, in their opinion, the reasons that any SG's may have failed during their leadership. The former SGC's were also interviewed. This group was chosen in order to gain a better understanding of why, in their opinion, any group(s) under their leadership had failed and to identify any problems that might have triggered its breakdown.

The third group that has been interviewed consisted of various former and current SG leaders (SGL)'s. The current SGL's were interviewed in order to obtain an understanding of how their group currently functions, including its members, structure and pastoral care. The former SGL's were interviewed in order to get a glimpse of what their SG looked like and why, in their opinion, their group was unsuccessful.

Another group interviewed was several SG participants belonging to various above mentioned former and current SG's. These interviews were conducted in order to understand how they perceive(d) their SG: including the structure, the pastoral care and their relationship with other participants of their group. In the case of former SGP's why, in their opinion, their SG had failed. Not all participants from all groups were interviewed due to time constraints. Unfortunately due to time constraints of this project as well as difficulties contacting various SGP's because many no longer attend the church few SGP's were actually interviewed. Therefore conclusions for which the SGP's were vital could not be drawn.

In order to further answer some of the questions raised by the CB, several other interviews were conducted. In considering an alternative model for SG's it was important for the CB to discover if some regularly scheduled groups already function as an SG. There are two groups that meet on a regular basis (weekly or biweekly); the worship team and the CB itself. The two previously mentioned CB members were also asked various questions about their group during their interview in order to determine if it functions as an SG. The same was done for two worship team leader and members. In regard to the SG-oriented or church-centered proposals mentioned earlier in this chapter, the two leadership members that purposed these ideas were interviewed in order to better understand the ideas behind these proposals.

The Interview Questions and Results

Numerous questions were asked in each interview.[33] Each interview was different from the other, but the basic interview questions served as a guideline for various topics that needed to be addressed. Because there was such a variety of questions, interview questions will be addressed per topic, rather than per individual question, for each group of participants and its result pertaining to

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[33]For a list of interview questions, see Appendix B.1: Interview Questions

that topic will be stated.

Each interview participant was given the question *"In uw mening, wat is een kring? [T1]"* in order to get a better understanding of how the church members and leaders viewed SG's. In addition to this, each leader was asked the following two questions "W*aarom vindt u kringen belangrijk? [T3]"* and *"Hoe passen kringen in de visie van Ichtus? [T4]"* With these questions the leaders were given the opportunity to interrelate the SG's into church life. All of the interview participants suggested that an SG is a group of individuals that gathers together. Each interview participant had their own spin on what that group gathers for. Some put the emphasis on Bible studies, others emphasized spiritual growth, while others emphasized relationship building. Very few participants were able to link the SG's directly into the church vision. While some were able to make the link between the SGM and the vision of the church (though sometimes vary vaguely), many stated that they do not know how they fit into the vision of the church.

Apart from the above three questions, the CB interviews varied from member to member, based on their particular ministry, except for the questions that reflected their CB group as a possible SG. Similar to this, members of other questionable SG's (including both the worship team and the CB) were given questions that helped clarify whether or not these groups possessed the characteristics of an SG.

In regard to the CB as a possible SG the CB participants did not view their group as a SG because it did not fulfill the purpose of an SG. The group is focussed on the needs of the church (both practical and spiritual) and was not meant for personal spiritual growth.[34] CB participants also did not see any of the groups to which they are responsible for as SG's for the same reason, and because they do not meet often enough for any type of serious relationship building.[35] Worship Team participants varied in how they viewed their group. One participant said that it had all the aspects of an SG and felt that it was an SG,[36] another felt the exact opposite,[37] and the third was stuck in the middle not entirely sure how to answer the question, saying that it possessed many of the qualities of an SG, but lacked others.[38]

Former and current SGC's were given interviews that were similar to each other. They were asked to list the groups, and their history, that fell under their leadership as well as which groups had begun and which groups had ended under their leadership and why they felt this happened.

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[34]P1, P4, P11.

[35]P4, P11.

[36]P12.

[37]P2.

[38]P14.

From these interviews it has been noted that there are currently five SG's at Ichtus (as mentioned in chapter one) and three unsuccessful former SG's (not including groups such as the Alpha Course or other evangelistic type groups). All of the SGC participants said that any former SG had been stopped because of lack of attendance. They all agreed that the SGP's of the unsuccessful groups were too busy. Some found this an acceptable reason, while others did not, questioning the priorities of the SGP's.[39] Finally this group was asked questions regarding the support and resources given by the CB. Both former SGC's felt that the CB lacked motivation and vision for the SGM, while the current SGC was satisfied with the support and resources offered by the CB.

Former SGL's and current SGL's were again given a fairly similar interview. They were both asked about the history of their SG, including the vision and target group of their SG, in order to get a more complete history of how the SGM functioned as a whole. A further series of questions for both former and current SGL was in relation to the All but one participant indicated that there had been nor type of training provided to prepare them in becoming an SGL.[40] All stated that communication with or support from the leadership lacked in one way or another. Each participant was also asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the group. While weaknesses varied from time issues, leadership qualities to the variety in the life statuses of the SGP's within a group, all noted that the strength of the group, among others, was that they provided a real opportunity for relationship building, and they felt that the SGP's greatly valued that aspect. Finally, former SGL's were asked why their group had stopped. Each said that It was due to lack of attendance. The decision to stop the SG came in both cases from the initiative of the SGL supported by the SGC.

Former SGPs and current SGP's, again, were given a similar interview, asking them about their leaders, their fellow participants, the structure and the quality of their SG's. By doing this, the former SG's could be compared to the current SG's. In addition to these questions, former SGP's were asked why, in their opinion, their SG was stopped and how they felt about the outcome. [41]

The Survey

On Sunday, 29 April 2012, a church-wide survey was held[42]. Everyone present - visitors, regular attenders and church members alike - were given a survey to be filled out and turned in at the end of

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[39]P13, P15.

[40]All participants but P16

[41]Because there was not enough data gathered from this group of individuals no valid conclusions on this group could be drawn.

[42]A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix B.3: Survey. Analysis of the survey results can be found in Appendix B.4: Survey Results: Specific Results per Individual, and Appendix B.5: Survey Results: Categorized by Age-Group.

the service. There were approximately 100 congregants present (a normal gathering for a Sunday morning service) and 90 were submitted. Two additional surveys were submitted later by email. In total, 92 surveys were submitted. Unfortunately, nine of those surveys were invalid due to the following reasons: six of them came from first-time-visitors who only filled out the personal information section. These six surveys would have been very valuable had the participants filled in any of the other questions regarding what they would like in an SG. Unfortunately, because they did not answer these questions they provided no relevant information and were discarded. Three other surveys were submitted by teenagers. While these may have been relevant, the survey only focused on participants of eighteen years and older. Anyone younger than eighteen would fall into the youth ministry which has its own weekly meeting. As this might skew the results these surveys were discarded. Therefore only 83 relevant surveys were evaluated.

The purpose of this survey was two-fold. First, it sought to find out how much of the congregation does not currently attend an SG and secondly, it sought to find what the needs of the church members were in relation to time, subject, frequency, etc. of their ideal SG's. Each question and its results will now be stated, and when important, the reasoning for the question will be mentioned. Several of these questions will be demonstrated by graphs and charts.[43] Results will not be discussed in this chapter, they are only stated. A discussion of these results can be found in the next chapter.

Survey Questions and Results

a. Personal Information.

This section was important in determining the age groups, and the family status and church status of the participants. This was very important because, according to the CB, the church is mostly comprised of young families. Those families are very difficult to get into an SG because of their hectic lives. By doing so each category of people could be further related to other questions.

Of the survey participants: 48% where male, 52% were female. 74% were married and 26% were single. Next was age: 24% of participants were ages 18-29; 37% were ages 30-44; 13.5% were ages 45-54; 13.5% were ages 55-64; and 12% were ages 65+ (see figure 2.1). Figure 2.2 helps relate age group to church status. In this figure each category (member, regular attender and visitor) shows how many surveys of each age group were submitted.

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[43]In regard to graphs and charts, the first figure (figure 2.1) is show in variables of percentages, all other graphs are shown in variables of the number of surveys submitted. This is done because a better visual comparison can be made.
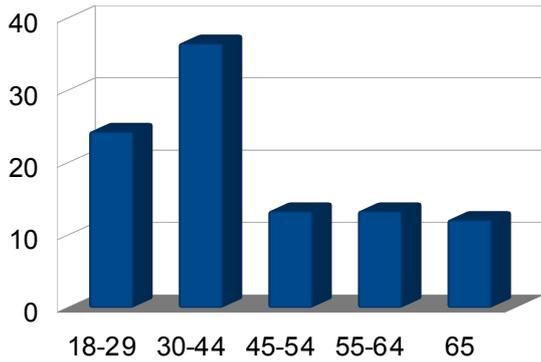
Figure 2.1: Age Group of Survey Participants
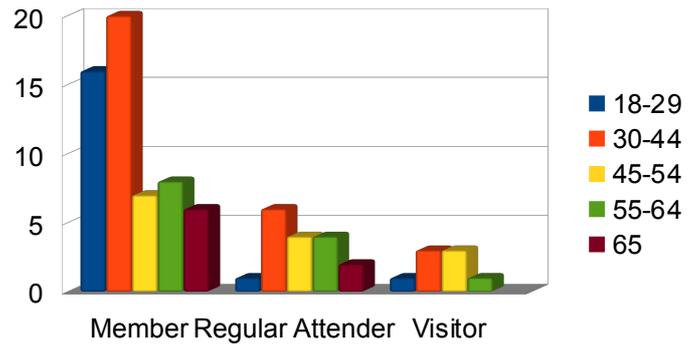
Figure 2.2: Church Status of Survey Participants by Age Group

Finally, is the relation of age group to family status. Figure 2.3 shows how many of each age group falls into each category (having no children, young children, teenage children or grown children).
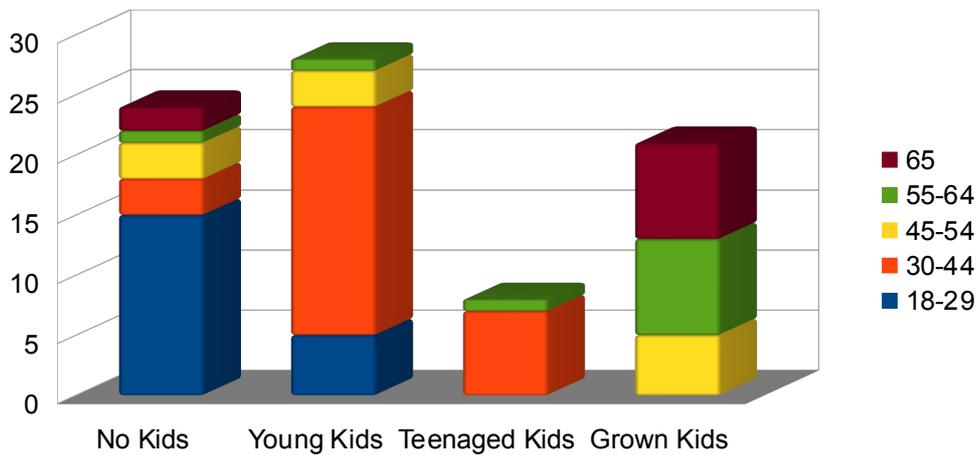
Figure 2.3: Family Status of Survey Participants by Age Group

b. Contact

This section was meant to discover whether or not the participants had enough, or would like to have more, contact with other church attenders. Seventy-two percent of participants said they had enough contact with their fellow attenders, 28% stated they did not. Furthermore 80% of participants desired more contact with church members outside of the Sunday morning service, while 20% said they were comfortable with its present state.

c. Involvement in SG's at Ichtus

Here, participants were asked if they had previously been in an SG, and if they are currently in an SG. This is important for two reasons: first, because it gives an idea of how many people are currently involved in an SG, and secondly, because it shows how many people were previously, but no longer are, in an SG. Sixty-three percent of participants have previously been in an SG, and 45% are currently in an SG. Twenty-eight percent of survey participants have never been involved in an SG at Ichtus at all.

d. Assessing Various Aspects of SG's at Ichtus

This section was meant specifically for those who are/have been involved in an SG. Here participants were asked to rate their SG's. The quality of both former and/or current SG's, the SG activities, the subjects of the SG and the pastoral care given by the SGL's were listed and participants were asked to rate them from low (1) to high (5) or mark it as not applicable (N/A). Table 2.1 demonstrates the results of this study

Rating	Current SG	Former SG	Activities	Subject	Pastoral Care
N/A	16	18	15	0	2
1	0	0	2	1	4
2	0	2	8	5	4
3	7	12	10	9	13
4	9	8	6	20	10
5	18	10	7	11	12
Average Score	*4.32*	*3.81*	*3.24*	*3.76*	*3.51*

Table 2.1: Assessing Various Aspects of SG's

Here the ratings for each aspect has been tallied and the average has been calculated.

e. Reasons for not Attending an SG at Ichtus

These set of questions were specifically for those participants that are not currently involved in an SG, including both those who have never been part of an SG and those who have previously been a part of but are no longer SGP's. They were asked the reason why they currently do not attend an SG. They were given five choices and were allowed to circle all that applied. They were also given the option to fill in any other reason that was not mentioned in a space provided. Figure 2.4 shows these reasons which are demonstrated by age group.
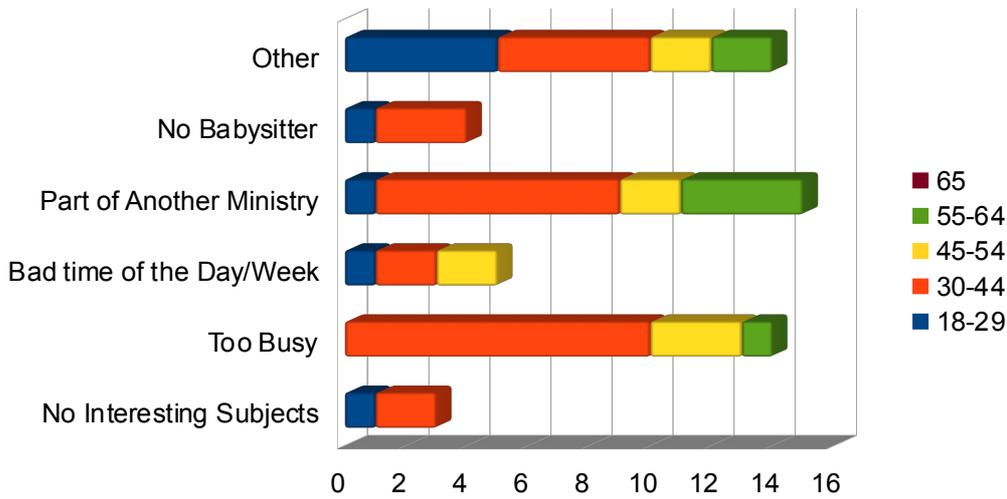
Figure 2.4: Reasons for Not Attending an SG by Age Group

The second highest reason given fell under the "other" category. Table 2.2 lists the reasons that were mentioned here, and the number of participants that gave that reason.

Number	Reason Given
4	Never been asked
1	No connection to same age group and lifestyle
1	Tried it before
2	Distance
2	Family circumstances
1	Just rejoined the church, maybe In the future
1	Not much energy
1	The language

Table 2.2: Other Reasons for not Attending an SG

This group of participants was then asked whether or not they would be interested in attending an SG if the church leadership developed a form that would fit their situation and needs in a more convenient manner. Of the 41 participants that answered the question, 90% said that they would.

f. Idea Time and Frequency of an SG

The next type of questions asked were in relation to the ideal time and frequency of an SG. The participants were given choices for how often their ideal frequency of an SG meeting would be. Of the four choices (weekly, biweekly, monthly or every six weeks) the results were 13%, 57%, 11% and 0% respectively.[44] Regarding time of day, participants were given several choices and were

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[44] Nineteen percent of participants did not answer this question.

allowed to circle all that apply. Figure 2.5 shows the answers given categorized by age group.
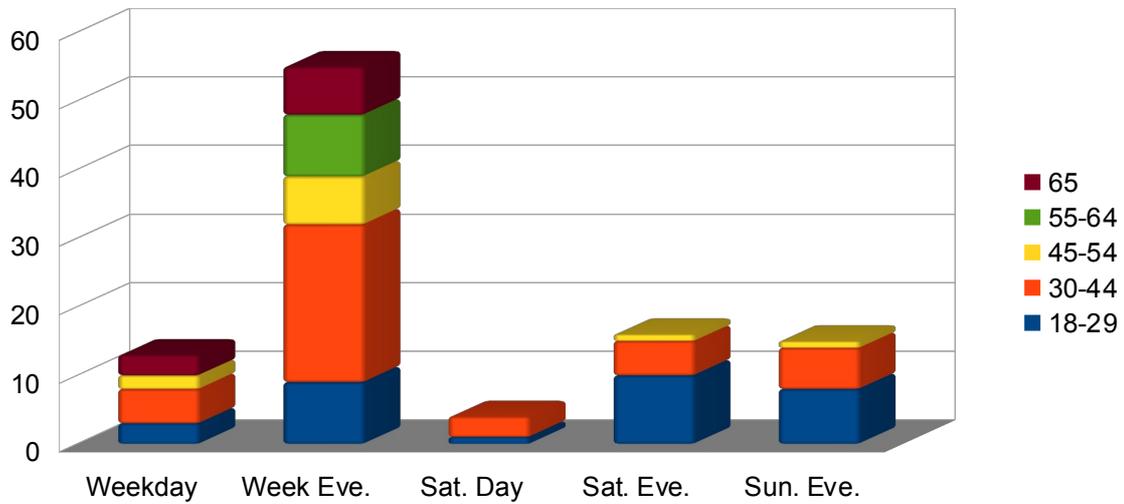
Figure 2.5: Ideal Time for SG Meetings by Age Group

g. Desired Types of SG's

The last category of questions given to participants were four choices (Bible study group, young-moms group, support group or marriage group) as well as a space to fill in any particular kind of themed or miscellaneous group that had not been mentioned of personal interest. Figure 2.6 demonstrates the answers categorized by age group.
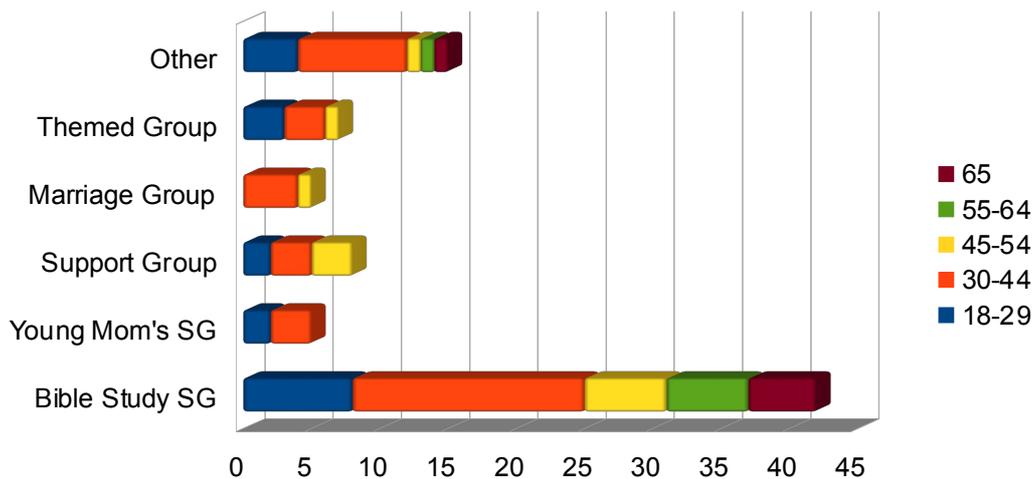
Figure 2.6: Desired Types of SG's by Age Group

Tables 2.3 and 2.4 list the themed-type SG's and other type of SG's that were listed.

Number	Theme
1	who Jesus is
2	Not sure, but are interested in a themed-Group
1	Horseback riding group
1	Mixed themes
1	Singing
1	Dutch Class
1	Evangelism
1	Diaconate

Table 2.3: Other Desired Theme-based SG's Mentioned

Number	Type
3	Mixed type
1	House Group
2	Don't know
2	Young adults (18+)
3	Young Adults (25-35)
1	Womans Group
1	Daily Christian Life
1	Dutch Class
1	Parenting Group

Table 2.4: Other Miscellaneous Types of SG's Mentioned

Each of the above mentioned results and respective table or figures should be kept in mind and will be taken further into consideration in the next chapters.

This chapter sought out to present the research and state the results gained from that research. Without this information no further observations or conclusions can be drawn. The next chapter will analyze these results and relate them to the questions this project has raised as stated in the introduction and the beginning of this chapter.

CHAPTER 3: EVALUATION RESULTS ANALYZED

In this chapter the information gathered and presented in chapter two will be further analyzed in an attempt to point out some possible problems found in the SGM at Ichtus. As mentioned earlier in chapter two, the questions and the information provided by the participants in relation to those questions varied in each interview, but various themes appeared repeatedly. These themes will be looked at in this chapter, supported by the survey results, and will be divided into two groups: possible reasons why some former SG's have failed and various problems that need to be addressed before any consideration of a re-launch is made by the CB.

The Problem Presented

Before any problems found in the SGM are presented, it is important to note that in the process of tracing possible problems the results of this research indicated that the problem with the SGM does not appear as severe as it had been suggested in the first place. There currently are several well-functioning SG's at Ichtus.[45] Through several interviews with SGP's and SGL's and shown in the results of the survey, it would seem that current SGP's are generally satisfied with the quality of their SG.[46] There are also only three mentioned failures: the 35- group, the Westerwatering group and the Purmerend group. There are, therefore, more success stories than failures.[47]

The fact that all the current SG's are either for the college and career age target group (ages 18-29) or consist of those who are middle-aged and older (45+) is interesting. There are no current groups for those aged 30-45 which comprises the largest group of the church's congregants.[48] Another interesting fact is that all three of the failed SG's at Ichtus were aimed for this age-group. The problem then, is more specific: It should not be seen as why SG's at Ichtus do not seem to work, because this is not true. Rather the question should be asked: "why don't SG's for the young-middle-aged group of attenders seem to work?" Figure 3.1 shows a further look at the consistency of those who are not current SGP's. Here, the majority of the church attenders that do not currently

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[45]See Chapter 1, under "Small Groups at Ichtus."

[46]See Table 2.1. In regard to the interviews, this assumption can not be made based on interviews with SGP's alone due to the inadequate number of SGP interviews. This assumption is made primarily on the survey and the current SGL interviews.

[47]This does not include any attempts to begin an Alpha Course or other evangelistic-type groups. This assumption is made purely on SG's specifically for its current church attenders.

[48]See Figure 2.4.

attend an SG are those aged 30-44.
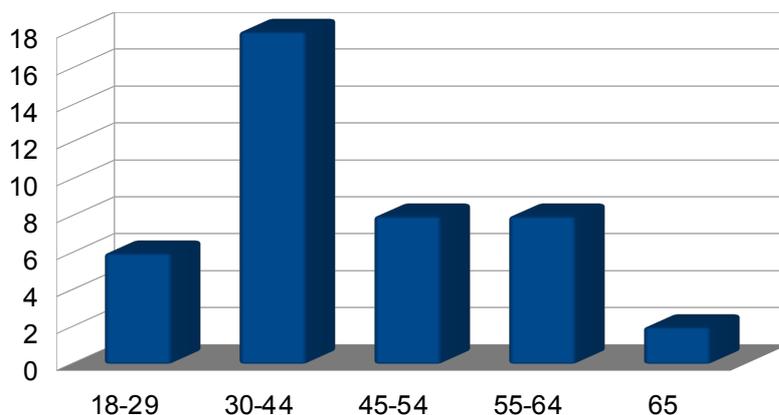
Figure 3.1: Church Attenders not Currently SGP's by Age Group

Why then, is this age group so difficult to reach, and what can the CB do about it?

Possible Reasons Former Small Groups Have Been Unsuccessful

Taking a further look into the reasons why the three former SG's have failed, two themes appeared regularly: A lack of time (of both SGP's and SGL's) and the appointment of an unsuitable person to become an SGL.

a. Time issues

Time issues became evident in both the interviews and the survey. The survey showed that the main two reasons (apart from the "other" option) for not attending an SG were being too busy and already being part of another ministry. It also showed that the largest group that gave these two answers were those in the 30-44 age-group.[49] The interviews showed similar results: when asked the reason one of the former SG's had been stopped, one former SGC gave the following answer:

> *"Voordat de kring voor jonge gezinnen begon, was er veel animo voor. In de praktijk bleek het helaas erg lastig voor iedereen om kring in te plannen in de drukke agenda's. Aan het begin het seizoen liep de kring vaak redelijk (maar ook niet geweldig) en tegen het eind van het seizoen zakte de kring vaak helemaal in. Er moest vaak afgezegd worden, omdat er maar zo weinig mensen konden komen. Als we mensen vroegen of ze nog wel zin hadden in kring en of we er nog wel mee door moesten gaan, wilden ze wel doorgaan. Maar in de praktijk bleek dit toch erg lastig. [T5]"[50]*

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[49]See Figure 2.4.

[50]P7.

One former SGL stated that their former SG was stopped because the target group (young-middle-aged) did not attend and produced a different consistency and the group quickly lost its enthusiasm leaving the SGP's and the former SGL frustrated.[51] The current SGC said that the problem with young families is that they are busy with so many other things in the church. A last comment in this section worth sharing comes from the current SGC regarding young families:

> *"Heel veel mensen van deze groep, ouders van kinderen, zijn heel actief in verschillende soorten van kerkenwerk. Van kinderwerk, van muziek, met allerlei dingen die gebeuren. Ze hebben aardig hun tijd [vol] en [geen] energie meer over voor een kring. En ze hebben op die manier hun behoefte om in een kring te passen een beetje verplaatst naar de bediening waar ze in staan. [T6]"*[52]

Apart from the time problems of the SGP's, the interviews also presented time problems with the SGL's as well, both former and current, mostly having to do with being involved in various other ministries. One current SGL, when asked if various other ministry involvement affects preparation for the SG, said that it had a very clear negative effect: *"Het zou ideaal zijn om alleen de kringbediening te hebben, maar in de praktijk werkt dat gewoon niet.[T7]"* and one former SGL was honest with themselves[53] admitting *"Ja. Vooral in de tijd dat ik [meerdere bedieningen] deed. Toen merkte ik dat ik aan [hun allemaal] niet echt toe kwam. Dat ik alles een beetje half-half deed... [T8]"* later in the interview this same SGL admitted that this was probably one of the reasons the former SG had not been successful.[54] In closing it is interesting to note that two out of the three former SGL's also fell into this 30-44-year-old age-group.

b. *The Wrong Type of Leader*

Choosing the right leader for an SG is very important. Without the right person to stimulate the group, the group will likely fail. When inquiring about the reason that one of Ichtus' other ministries has not been incorporated into the SGM one CB participant said simply that the leaders of the ministry were educators, not appropriate SGL's in that: *"[Zij] zijn niet echt gezelligheidsmensen. Ik zou bijvoorbeeld dat ook niet voor elkaar krijgen. Als [persoon X] dat doet, met [bediening X of Y] komen de mensen dan wel, omdat [die persoon] die eigenschap wel heeft. [T9]"* The current SGC affirmed this by saying that some people can get members to commit and participate better than

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[51]P16.

[52]P13.

[53]A plural pronoun was chosen here (they) rather than a singular pronoun (he/she). This project will continue to use the plural pronoun, though grammatically incorrect, in order to keep the interview participant anonymous. Disclosing the participants gender would cause some readers to draw conclusions on who the interview participant is, breaking promises of anonymity this project has made to its volunteers.

[54]P8.

others.[55] These two statements show that leadership is aware that there are "right" and "wrong" characteristics for SGL's, and yet they continue to choose, as will be discussed below, inadequate leaders.

When asked how the SGL's were chosen, one former SGC admitted that *"Je zou hopen dat een kringleider ontstaat uit een bestaande kring en dan wat vaardigheden op zou doen die je kunt zien van tevoren, maar dat is niet zo gegaan. Dus dan moet je ergens beginnen en dan... ja, dan zoek je iemand op die bereid is, waarvan je hoopt dat die het ook op kan pakken.[T10]"* A former SGL said the reason they became a SGL was:

> *"Ik zag het belang daarvan en dat iemand het moest doen, merkte dat ik het kon doen dus ik deed dat. Maar ik deed het uit noodzaak en niet omdat ik daar roeping voor had. En dat heeft duidelijk beïnvloed hoe goed ik dat gedaan heb.... Ik vond het voorbereiden een ramp. Maar dat was ook omdat ik het echt als een verplicht nummertje [ervoer]. Ik deed het omdat ik moest en niet zozeer dat ik [het] zelf leuk vond om in de duiken. Wat dat betreft ben ik lever een kringlid.[T11]"*

This same person gave another example. They admitted that they did not possess enough patience to encourage members to attend the SG evenings: something that the group apparently needed. At times, this resulted in an inadequate number of participants.[56]

Choosing the right type of leader can be very difficult, especially because the church works primarily from a pool of volunteers (with the exception of the Pastor who was only recently appointed as a full-time paid worker).[57] In their book *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries* Michel J. Anthony and James Estep Jr. present some very important information the CB should take into consideration when appointing their volunteers in the future. They state that one of the problems in maintaining volunteers is that they often are an inappropriate match for the ministry they are appointed to. They suggest that church leadership assess the spiritual gifts of its members and let them choose a recommended ministry based on their spiritual gifts.[58] Work the person into the ministry by means of mentoring or coaching and allow them to "test the waters" before making any long-term commitment. They also suggest giving an end-date to their ministry: volunteers have a hard time committing to something that may seem to never end.[59] A final comment they made which is worth mentioning, especially in relation to the above-mentioned problem with the Ichtus'

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[55]P13.

[56]P8.

[57]Ichtus Pinkstergemeente Zaandam, "Notulen extra ledenvergadering, zondag 10 juli 201.1" (Zaandam, Netherlands; Ichtus Pinkstergemeente Zaandam, 2011).

[58]Michael J. Anthony and James Estep, Jr., *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries*.(Nashville TN; Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2005). 249-251.

[59]Ibid 247.

SGM is that they ask church leaders to consider the following question: "Do we present the work of ministry as a task to be accomplished or as an act of spiritual service? We are not to pray only to fill positions but to seek to help equip people for spiritual growth and service."[60]

It seems that the current SG's function well because their SGL's are passionate about what they do. One current SGL stated that leading an SG may not be their "calling" but they enjoy what they do thoroughly. Another, when asked about their study preparations became very enthusiastic showing their passion for the type of group they lead. *Christianity Today* suggests when searching for volunteers, to perform the Passionate Eye Test. They suggest leadership share their vision with those they suspect might be good leaders and pay close attention to their eyes: if they glaze over they are not passionate about the vision, but if they light up, the person may be a possible leader for the group.[61] This is a quick test that can be very effective when the longer assessment, presented by Anthony and Estep, has not yet been completed and a leader is necessary.

Other Issues that Need Resolving

While the following issues may not directly deal with why former SG's have failed, they have the potential to cause future failure and should be dealt with before any possible re-launch is considered.

a. There is no Clear Vision, Mission or Motivation for SG's

The CB lacks a clearly defined vision and mission statement for their SGM, and in turn lacks motivation. For clarity, consider the following distinctions between vision and mission statement.. Anthony and Estep state "some have described [vision] as foresight. It means seeing that which is yet to be and putting a plan together to make it a reality."[62] This is a reasonable definition of vision, but it confuses vision and mission. In his book dedicated to coaching individuals on areas such as vision and mission development, Gary B. Collins makes a very clear, easily understood distinction between the two. Vision can be seen as a noun. It is the end product that will be achieved. It differs from mission in that mission is the verb explaining how you want to get there.[63] The first statement combines vision and mission whereas the second makes a distinction between the two.

It seems that the CB has a reasonable vision for their SGM, but it needs to be more clearly defined. No one could provide an exact vision statement for the SGM, but merely a vague concept.

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[60]Ibid.

[61]SmallGroups.com "Re-Launching a Small Group Ministry." (Christianity Today Inc., 2007). 19.

[62]Anthony and Estep. 67.

[63]Gary B. Collins, *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential Into Reality. 2^C edition.* (Colorado Springs, CO; NavPress, 2009$^{2nd\ ed.}$). Kindle Edition, Location 173, 191.

They also have no mission statement. Though vaguely stated, in essence the church wants to bring its attenders to a place where they can grow spiritually and relationally with God and those around them, but the problem is they have no idea how they need to get there (the verb). Because of this, their motivation has become substantially weak. Consider the following statements provided by the interview participants:

- *"En hoe [kringen] dan bij de gemeente passen is niet helemaal duidelijk... We zijn altijd maar een beetje aan het zoeken: hoe kan het blijven bestaan. Dan wordt je al snel nederig.[T12]"*[64]

- *"Als leider van de kringleiders had ik het idee dat er niet genoeg visie binnen de gemeente was voor de kringen om het kringwerk ook echt ergens naartoe te kunnen leiden. [T13]"*[65]

- *"Wij zoeken in de gemeente een manier waar we mensen bij elkaar kunnen brengen, alleen we hebben nog geen goede vorm gevonden die gemeente breed aanslaat. Dus je ziet dat iets hier en daar aanslaat, maar dat is allemaal maatwerk. Dus ik weet nog niet hoe ze passen in onze gemeente. [T14]"*[66]

- *"We moeten kijken: waar richten we onze energie op? Gaan we onze energie inzetten op nog meer kringen en daar heel veel energie insteken, of kun je zeggen van dat niet werkt. Laten we de kerk zo veel mogelijk organiseren... Anders heb je misschien een aantal slecht functionerende kringen terwijl je met dezelfde energie een goede activiteit in de kerk zou kunnen hebben.[T15]"*[67]

- *"Maar ik denk niet dat we er veel energie in moeten steken. Bepaalde groepen in de kerk hebben er niet veel belangstelling in. Zodra een kring opstart – prima! fantastisch dat je dat wilt doen, maar we gaan er niet in voor, als leiding, om iedereen in een kring te stoppen. We zijn geen kringgeoriënteerde kerk, in mijn mening. We zouden dat wel willen, maar we gaan daar niet aan beginnen. In ieder geval dat is mijn mening. [T16]"*[68]

- *"Persoonlijk had ik in 'mijn tijd' het gevoel dat er door de gemeente geen prioriteit werd gegeven aan het kringwerk. [T17]"*[69]

Through the interviews it seemed apparent that because of previous failures the CB and other leadership are afraid, or lack the motivation, to invest in re-launching their SGM. While their reasonings may or may not be valid, it is important to keep in mind Proverbs 14:4: "Where no oxen *are,* the trough *is* clean; but much increase *comes* by the strength of an ox. (NKJV)" where there are no mistakes there is no mess, but mistakes produce growth and learning experiences. Whether or

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[64]P15.

[65]P7.

[66]P12.

[67]P11.

[68]P4.

[69]P7.

not to pursue a re-launch is left entirely up to the wisdom of the CB, but they should not be discouraged by mistakes.

b. Communication and Training Problems

The following two concerns come primarily from those currently involved in the SGM. There are two main issues that arose when asked about the adequacy of the CB and SGC leadership in regard to the support they offered. The first problem that arose is a lack of communication between groups and the leadership. Most current and former SGL's state that there was seldom time taken to evaluate. One current SGL stated that this is also the case in many of the other ministries they are responsible for. There is no one to hold them accountable. This SGL also expressed concerns with the communication between the SG and other church ministries. On one occasion a youth member was not part of any group for some time because no one knew which group he was attending.[70] A former SGL when asked if they had enough support from leadership said, *"Nee, er werd wel regelmatig vergaderd maar ik miste een stukje coaching, sturing hierin. [T18]"*[71] While nearly everyone said that the leadership is always available to help them, many expressed a desire that the leadership would take their own initiative.

Training new leaders is also a problem. Nearly all participants said they received no formal training from leadership. A serious concern from one participant was expressed, *"Ik heb wel eens dat de jongeren komen met problemen waarvan ik niet weet wat ik er mee moet doen. Dan vind ik het fijn als je iemand hebt die daar meer van weet van hoe je daarmee om kan gaan. Maar dat hebben we eigenlijk niet.[T19]"*[72] Another SGL says they had no previous training in developing Bible studies: *"Dat zou wel beter zijn denk ik, maar niemand heeft het aangeboden. Ik heb er ook niet om gevraagd. Ja, dat zou wel prettig zijn. [T20]"*[73]

These are serious concerns presented in this chapter by the interview participants, including the CB themselves. Time is a key factor and a problem that needs to be creatively resolved. Picking the right leader is crucial to maintaining a fruit-bearing group. Vision, mission and motivation are the very core of why an SGM exists in the first place and, whether the CB decided to re-launch or invest in other ministry forms, these must be re-evaluated and clearly defined if only for the sake of the existing SG's. Finally, the church leadership, including the CB, should work on effective

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[70]P6.

[71]P15.

[72]P6.

[73]P5.

communication and training materials for both current and future (SG) leaders. The following chapter will present some suggestions regarding a possible SGM re-launch but all of the above mentioned issues must first be seriously addressed and prayed about.

CHAPTER 4: ICHTUS CONNECT: AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL FOR THE SGM

Ichtus CONNECT is an alternative model of SG's that will be presented in this chapter. Before doing so, some information must be discussed. The responsibility of deciding to re-launch the SGM at Ichtus or to invest time and energy in other ministries at Ichtus rests entirely on the CB and what they feel the right step for the church is. This chapter will give the CB some information that needs to be taken into consideration when making their decision. It will present a suggested alternative model that may fit the needs of the church in a different way than the current SG model at Ichtus. This model is not a guaranteed success or an easy fix to the problems that lay in the SGM, but simply a form based on the research data gathered as presented in previous chapters.

What is Ichtus CONNECT?

Based on the previous observation that the young-middle-aged group (primarily those with young families) is the most difficult group to reach, Ichtus CONNECT is a model that primarily focusses on reaching these individuals on the basis of shared interests. Ichtus CONNECT seeks to connect its congregation to one another and to God, on a deeper, more intimate level, and at the same time making SG's fit into the lives of its target group. This model makes various practical suggestions (discussed later in this chapter) that will make the SG's more easily accessible and appealing to individuals of this age-group hopefully causing the SGM to gain more momentum.

Below are two images. The first is Ichtus' logo. Next to it is a variation of that logo that could be used for the Ichtus CONNECT ministry.

Figure 4.1: Original Church Logo

Figure 4.2: Ichtus CONNECT logo

Models Used in the Development of Ichtus CONNECT

When developing Ichtus CONNECT, careful consideration has been offered to the SG-oriented and Church-centered model proposed by the CB. Ichtus CONNECT uses a combination of the two. As leadership has mentioned themselves, they do not seek to push each church attender into an SG: the church has tried putting everyone into a SG or a task-group before and it has failed.[74] Also task-groups do not fall into the category of the SGM. Based on interviews with task-group participants (the worship team and the CB themselves) the majority of these participants do not view their group as an SG because their purpose is for serving the church body and not for personal spiritual development. SG's should remain optional.

This does not mean however that the church should completely pursue a church-centered model. It also presents pitfalls:

- There are clear advantages to having SG meetings or activities in the home: they are indefinitely expandable, unlimited geographically, and they facilitate closer relations.[75]

- Planning various activities without a common thread can work against relationship building. The CB should be careful to plan events, if choosing to use this model, that continuously appeal to the same groups of people in order to draw a reoccurring crowd. An SG should have the six elements listed in chapter one (size, group consciousness, purpose, interdependence, interaction, and cohesiveness). Without the same reoccurring crowd these six elements cannot be developed, and relationship-building will be hindered.

With the presentation of the Ichtus CONNECT model the CB is advised not to focus on one or the other. Only having church based activities runs the risk of not stimulating strong relationship building. However, the planning of regular church activities can allow for the development of SG's by stimulating natural contact groups. If church attenders would like an extra amount of Bible study for example (as the survey indicated), this model could provide church-wide seminars such as training or Bible study when church attenders have no time to attend a regularly scheduled SG.

Ichtus CONNECT Presented

The current SG's function well and do not need any serious changes. It is up to the CB to decide if any of the following changes should also be made to existing SG's, but this project does not feel that this is necessary. Ichtus CONNECT suggests that any future re-launch of the SGM should move away from the "huiskring" mind-set (discussed below), and presents ways this transition can be made. How many, and the implementation of these adjustments made, is left up to the wisdom of

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[74]P7, P11. Ichtus Pinkstergemeente Zaandam "Jaarvergadering 11 maart 2009." (Zaandam, Netherlands, 2009).

[75]Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan, 1995). 326-227.

the CB.

a. Move Away from the "Huiskring" Mindset.

Gleaning from the information presented by the interviews and information read in various church documents, it can be observed that the church may need to move away from the traditional *"huiskring[T21]"* mindset. In 2006 the SGC produced a document that explained what a SG should look like. When asked where the information came from (because it was obvious it was outdated) the former SGC reported that the information was gleaned from a book written in the 1960's, already more than a half century ago.[76]

Consider the following statement made about SG attendance thirty years ago by the above mentioned former SGC: "*Het is niet zo dat mensen naar een kring komen zoals ik, ik denk 30 jaar geleden [dat] zelf ervaarde, dat vanzelfsprekend vond om naar een kring te gaan. Dat zie je niet meer. Mensen komen niet meer zo uit vanzelfsprekendheid. Dat zie je ook op de zondag. Vroeger werd je gevraagd waar je was als je op zondag niet naar de kerk komt, maar nu is het heel gewoon dat je niet meer zo vaak komt. [T22]*" According to this statement, culture was more social and less individualistic thirty years ago, which was also observed in the first chapter. While culture is changing so rapidly, SG's should be changing as well. The typical *"huiskring"* model may not work in today's fast paced, individualistic society.

The former SGL continued this thought later by saying that today "*Men vindt het dan toch te druk om er naar [de kring] toe te gaan. Ja, men kiest ergens anders voor. De ware reden is mij altijd onduidelijk. Ik zeg altijd: mensen komen wel naar een kring als ze het attractief genoeg vinden; aantrekkelijk genoeg, maar wat de basis daarvoor is, dat is echt een raadsel voor mij. [T23].*" Many churches, as will be discussed later in this chapter, are moving their SG's away from the typical Bible study group into newer forms of SG's that seem to meet the needs of today's generation in a different, possibly better way. SG's are not limited to a Bible study evening: they can be anything from a soccer team, a recipe club, a men's breakfast, or even a toddler-parent playgroup.

This idea does not deny that the SG's should have some kind of Bible study or devotional. Even the survey showed evidence that there is a great desire for further Biblical knowledge.[77] SG's should, as mentioned in chapter one, stimulate spiritual growth and reconciliation, but the entire group does not have to be focused on a Biblical exegesis. The SG's at Ichtus seem to stay in the "huiskring" model: while it obviously works well for some, it is not suitable for all. If that were the

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[76]P8.

[77]See figure 2.6.

case the Wednesday evening "Leerhuis" or "Levende stenen" courses would not be so empty.[78] This is also evident in the difference between 18+ group and the Poelenburg-Zuid group. The latter is a typical Bible study group, which seems to work best for its older-generation SGP's. The 18+ group (which is coincidentally the only current SG with SGL's under the age of 40) has developed a different method. Although the SG was meant to be a Bible study group, its SGL's admit that because of lack of proper training in Bible study development the Bible studies, while important, are not the strongest aspect of spiritual development in the group. They grow spiritually by encouraging each other through common grounds rather than having a typical Biblical exegesis' group.[79]

b. A New Campaign

When considering a re-launch, this project suggests a "pull" campaign and warns against a "push" campaign. A "push" campaign is when members are urged to join SG's from the pulpit. Announcements from the pulpit could and should be made; however, several possible negative consequences should be considered. First, constant requests to join SG's give people the idea the ministry has no attenders, and no one wants to attend an already poorly functioning ministry. Secondly, each person has their own idea of what an SG is, which may be different from what the church is providing. Each person relates their experiences (good or bad) to the idea of being part of another SGM. Bad experiences cause potential SGP's to shut down and immediately decide not to be a part of an SG. Finally, announcements can cause unmet expectations when making the ministry appear to be something that it is not.[80]

A "pull" campaign on the other hand focusses on a type of word-of-mouth marketing that drops subliminal messages of the importance of the SG, pulling potential SGP's interest toward the group. The two best ways to put the "pull" campaign to practice is by leadership example and eliminating competition.[81] Leadership (especially the CB) should get involved, because if church leadership is not visibly involved in your SGM it will be very difficult to get other people to join it. The CB currently takes no part in the SGM other than general oversight of the ministry. Everyone's agenda is understandably full, especially that of the CB, This would call for cutting out various church activities, either temporarily or all together. (Although leadership and the CB should always try to stay away from the "do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do" mentality of encouraging church attenders with

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[78]P4. "Leerhuis" and "Levende stenen" are Bible study groups that the CB uses to bring all church attenders up to the same level of fundamental knowledge of the Bible and Christian Faith.

[79]P5, P6.

[80]SmallGroups.com. "Small Group Assimilation Strategies." Christianity Today Inc. 2008). 8 7.

[81]Ibid.

busy schedules to join a SG without participating in some kind of SG activity themselves).

Many interview participants also claimed there were too many other church activities going on which caused time problems for the SG's, both for the SGL and the SGP.[82] Cutting out the competition would help lessen leadership and SGP time problems giving congregants more freedom in their busy agendas to join an SG.

c. New Types of Groups

Implementing what *Christianity Today* calls Shared-Interest groups, the focal point of the CONNECT model, might help stimulate SG attendance. Shared-Interest Groups (falling into the process-oriented category mentioned in chapter one) are based on common activities or hobbies (for example: painting, cooking, nature walks etc).[83] While there are currently several groups focused around a common status, what *Christianity Today* calls Affinity-Based Groups[84] (18+ group, women's group and the senior's group) there are no groups based around a common activity or hobby. Bible study groups may not be as appealing as they were in the past, as one former SGC mentioned earlier in this project. Making them more attractive is the best way to get people to join.[85] Preparing for a group will also be less of a task for a leader who is genuinely interested in the group. Asking someone to host a computer game event may be easier than asking them to lead a Bible Study group.[86]

Keep in mind, however, that when planning these groups they should stimulate some kind of spiritual growth, and they should always enable reconciliation. This does not have to happen in a strict Bible study fashion as the "huiskring" model has done. Sharing common life experiences through casual conversation can be a great way to challenge one another growth and fostering reconciliation. The SGL should then be trained in facilitating group discussions in order to make this possible.[87] The SGL should also create, some type of short devotional (or be provided with if they are not capable of preparing their own) that is relevant to the groups topic or activity in some way and could be shared at the beginning or the end of the group in order to help stimulate further discussions about various aspects of the Christian faith or the Bible.[88]

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[82]P7, P11. Ichtus Pinkstergemeente Zaandam. "Gemeentevergadering 28 maart, 2007." (Zaandam, Netherlands, 2007).

[83]SmallGroups.com "Small Group Assimilation Strategies." 3.

[84]Ibid.

[85]P15.

[86]When searching for activity type groups that may be interesting for church attenders the survey results section may be useful for further information.

[87]Atkinson 268.

[88]Cloud and Townsend. 157-158.

d. A Trial Period

Trial and error is not something that should be frowned upon. Of course, the SGM should always strive for success, but practically this is not always going to happen. Try a new group out first for six weeks (or if the group meets less frequently, for three to four sessions). If the group doesn't work out, accept it, thank the SGP's for their time, suggest a new group for any interested SGP's, reconvene and try again later (either in the next calendar year or the next season) with the same or a different type of SG.[89]

e. A New Frequency

While the survey showed the most common desired frequency was biweekly, the interviews indicated, especially in the 30-44 age group, this has not worked in the past. This raises the question, "Did participants fill the surveys in based on what was practically achievable or what they thought they should do?" This is not to say that participants do not want to come to an SG biweekly, but it is likely based on trial and error experiences that this will not work.[90] This is where the church-centered model has its benefits. Members have shown to attend a seminar or a special event more than they do, say for example, the biweekly Leerhuis evenings. According to the current SGC and a former SGL, many church attenders of the young-family age group have a great need in contact building because of their busy lives, especially those who perviously attended an SG.

f. A Life Cycle

An SG works best if the group doesn't last too long. According to *Christianity Today,* an SG reaches its peak of effectiveness somewhere between nine and eighteen months, after which members lose interest, it stops growing, and eventually dies out.[91] The Ichtus CONNECT model suggests that each group be given a life cycle of one year (a September to July season). At the end of a life cycle, the group can decide to continue giving its members the choice of moving to something else or taking a break from the SG if their lives become too hectic.[92] Not only does this help with the commitment issues mentioned above, it keeps the SG alive and moving, like any other living organism. Long-term commitments can scare both potential SGP's and SGL's away.[93] The current SGC pointed out that courses, such as the marriage course, work well because they are short-term

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[89]SmallGroups.com "Assimilation Strategies." 9.

[90]See Chapter Three: Time Issues.

[91]SmallGroups.com "Assimilation Strategies." 6.

[92]Ibid.

[93]Anthony and Estep. 247.

commitments.[94] No one knows what their life will look like a year, six months or even a month from now. Give them a shorter time frame to commit to and it may help SG attendance not seem so daunting.

g. *Keep in Mind the Church-size-SG-ratio*

According to church records, the church currently has 95 adult members.[95] As mentioned in the previous chapter there are currently five well-functioning SG's at Ichtus. Consider the following information:

- The research of Lyle Schaller suggests that a church body of 100 members should have six to seven SG's for its attenders to participate in.[96]

- "For a small group ministry to [impact the DNA of the church] it has to first reach critical mass. In most cases that will be somewhere between 40 and 60 percent of your average *weekend attenders* (which is a different number than all of the people who attend your church on a regular basis)."[97]

Given that there are approximately 100 members and five current SG's, if the CB pursues further action regarding their SGM, there could be one or two more SG's than what now exists. Also, assume that on the average Sunday morning service there are approximately 100 attenders (including members, visitors and regular attenders), then 40 to 60 people should be involved in some type of SG. Assume again that each SG has a minimum of five to seven SGP's. In this case scenario there would be a minimum of 25 to 35 church attenders involved in an SG. These numbers are slightly less than the above-mentioned ratios but are not so far off that the SGM should be deemed "poorly functioning." Ichtus CONNECT suggests that at least two new groups be started, aimed at the young, middle-aged group.

Final Thoughts

Chapter 1 provided some basic preliminary information on SG's setting the foundation for later observations. Knowing the definition and the purpose of SG's, as discussed in chapter one, helps the Church to know when a group can be labeled an SG. Understanding the categories of SG's will assist in finding out which type of SG will work best at Ichtus. Chapter 2 set the framework for the

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[94]P13. The Marriage Course is a biweekly seminar for married couples that lasts only for seven sessions (a total of three months). The same course is repeated each year in order to provide other couples with the opportunity to follow the course that have not previously attended the seminar.

[95]Ichtus Pinkstergemeente Zaandam "Leden op Leeftijd." (Zaandam, Netherlands; 2012).

[96]Wanda Vassallo, *Church Communications Handbook: A complete Guide for Developing a Strategy, Using Technology, Writing Effectively, and Reaching the Unchurched.* (Grand Rapids Michigan; Kregal Publications, 1998). 64.

[97]SmallGroups.com "Small Group Assimilation Strategies" 8.

research that was done in order to better understand its results. Chapter three spent time analyzing the results of the research and pointing out various problems that, though not as worrisome as they had been presented, should be resolved before any pursuit of a SGM re-launch. All of the information of these three chapters was brought to practical use in this final chapter. This chapter suggests an alternative model to the CB, Ichtus CONNECT, which is a model geared at the young-middle-aged (especially those with young families) by implementing shorter, less frequent activity groups), and laying out its implications. Whether the CB decided to re-launch its SGM or not, SG's have already become a part of its church. This project can be a useful tool for any direction the CB chooses.

CONCLUSION

As discussed in the introduction to this project and in chapter two the main question the project sought out to answer can be split up into two parts. The first, coming from the idea that there were more unsuccessful than successful SG's at Ichtus, asked, "what have been / are the problem with the SGM at Ichtus?" Chapter three was able to successfully identify several problems: First, the church is too busy. Apart from the busy schedules of the church's congregants and leadership's personal lives, there are too many other ministries which have affected attendance and the ability for the SGL to prepare. Secondly, the church seems to be filling roles based on filling a need and not on the ability or interest of the SGL which had significant effects on the SG. Addressing these issues by cutting out some unnecessary church activities (which, granted, is easier said than done) and looking more closely at the potential leader's spiritual gifts rather than a quick fix solution to a vacant ministry might help solve some of these problems.

Related to this, this project has also come to the conclusion that the assumption that SG's at Ichtus do not work is not true. As presented earlier there are five well-functioning SG's at Ichtus. The SGL's are enthusiastic that their SGM is creating a concrete SG environment. There may have been mistakes made in unsuccessful SG's but this is not enough to constitute the branding of the SGM with the label "poorly functioning." Trial and error is not something that should be looked down upon.

The second half of the project question asks if there is an alternative model that could be used to fit the needs of the congregation. As chapter four presented, "yes." Ichtus CONNECT provides an alternative model for the CB that may fit the needs of the congregation, especially of those in the 30-44-year-old age-group.

Should the CB invest time and energy in re-launching the SGM or should they invest their time in other ministries? After listening to all of the interviews and evaluating the surveys, it is safe to say yes: the CB should invest its time and energy into re-launching their SGM, although the final decision should be left up to the them alone. As the survey showed, supported by the interviews, church attenders *are* interested in SG's but they have not yet been provided a practical way to fit them into their lives more easily. Therefore investing in the SGM would be beneficial to the needs and desires of the church. However, if the CB should pursue a re-launch they will have to make some serious adjustments starting with creating a clear, concise mission and vision statement and

take into consideration all of the other points mentioned in chapter four (cutting out some less-important church activities, taking a part in the SGM themselves, etc). A different model should be considered, whether it be the Ichtus CONNECT model presented in chapter four or any other model they see fit. As explained earlier the traditional "huiskring" model (which Ichtus currently uses) which works for the older generation is no longer appealing for the younger generation. If the church does not move away from this model SG's will become one more thing to do by church attenders instead of being something refreshing and interesting that appeals to their interests. The SGM will more than likely continue to produce unsuccessful SG's for the young-middle-aged congregants.

This project can serve as a very useful tool in understanding the dynamics of the church on a deeper level, grasping a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding the SGM. Hopefully this project and the conclusions drawn from it can assist the CB in making any further decisions regarding their SGM.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA   Alcoholics Anonymous

CB   Church Board

N/A   Not Applicable

P   Participant

SG   Small Group

SGC   Small Group Coordinator

SGL   Small Group Leader

SGM   Small Group Ministry

SGP   Small Group Participant

T   Translation

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ABSTRACT

Ichtus Pinkstergemeente Zaandam has made several attempts at her small group ministry since the ministry was first launched in 2006. Unfortunately, the small group ministry has not proven very effective, especially to those with young families, who make up a large number of the church's congregation. Any small groups aimed at this age category have failed, but why? And is there an alternative model that would reach the needs of the church that could be implemented? Both interviews (with small group leaders, coordinators, participants, and with church board members) and a church wide survey were conducted in order to shed some light on these questions.

While there have been unsuccessful small groups the ministry seems to still be effective for the younger (18-29) and older (45+) generations. All unsuccessful groups are those formed for those in the young-family age-group. This project discusses that problems in the former small group ministries have been two-fold. First due to the appointing of leadership solely in order to fill a need, causing leaders to be unhappy with the ministry. Secondly due to time issues for both the leaders and the small group participants, making the small group a burden. Other problems that need attention before any consideration of a re-launch exist from a lack of vision, mission and motivation for small groups by church leadership and poor training for and communication with small group leaders.

Though there are several problems with the ministry, it is still valuable for the church board to invest time and energy into the small group ministry and implement a re-launch, rather than to abandon the small group ministry altogether because of repeated unsuccessful attempts. Ichtus CONNECT is a model aimed at that hard-to-reach, young family group and suggests some practical ways of making the small group ministry something that everyone can take part of, if they so desire. Moving away from a more traditional model Ichtus currently uses, Ichtus CONNECT suggests giving the small group ministry the right campaign, more activity based groups, a shorter life cycle, a new frequency and a trial period to help make small groups more easily accessible.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF TRANSLATIONS

LIST OF TRANSLATIONS

1. In your opinion, what is a small group?

2. A small group is a group of people that come together...

3. Why do you feel small groups are important?

4. How do small groups fit into Ichtus' vision?

5. Before the small group for young families began there was a lot of enthusiasm for the group. But putting it to practice became quite difficult for everyone to schedule the small group evenings into their busy agenda's. At the beginning of the season the small group functioned reasonably (but not great) and towards the end of the season the group collapsed. The group evenings were canceled because so few people could attend. If we asked people if they were still interested in the small group and if we should continue the small group, they wanted to keep going. But the practicality of the group was still too difficult

6. Many people of this group, parents of children, are very active in various sorts of church-work. From children's work, to music, with all kinds of things that happen. They don't have much energy left over for a small group. And because of this they have placed their need for a small group into their other ministry work.

7. It would be ideal to only be responsible for the small group, But it just doesn't work that way.

8. Yes. Especially during the time that I was involved in [multiple ministries]. I realized that I didn't really have time for [any of them]. That I was doing everything half-way.

9. [they] are not really social/cozy people. Ik wouldn't be able to do something like that either. If [person X] does it in [ministry X or Y] them people show up because [that person] has that characteristic.

10. You would hope that a small group leader arises from the existing small group and gains some skills that you can observe beforehand, but that isn't how it worked. So then you have to begin somewhere and then... yeah, then you have to look for someone who is willing, and in which you hope has the ability to take it on.

11. I saw that it was important and that someone had to do it, realized that I could do it, so I did it. But I did it out of necessity and not because I had a calling for it. And that had a clear influence on how well I did it... I didn't like preparing for the evening. But that was also because I saw it as something obligatory. I did it because I had to and not because I liked doing it. With that said, I'd rather be a small group member than a small group leader.

12. And how [small groups] fit is not really clear... we have always more or less been looking for how it can continue to exist. This is easily discouraging.

13. As leader of the small group leaders I had the idea that there wasn't enough vision within the church for small groups in order to get the small group ministry to go anywhere.

14. We're looking for a way in the church that we can bring the church attenders together but we haven't found any good form that fits church-wide. So you see that something works here and

there but those are all group-specific solutions. So I don't know how they fit in our church yet.

15. We need to look at what we put our energy into: will we invest our energy in setting up more small groups or can you say that doesn't work, let's organize as much as possible in the church... Otherwise you may have a number of poorly functioning small groups while you could, with the same amount of energy, plan a good activity that could take place in the church.

16. But I don't think that we should invest a lot of energy in it. Some groups within the church don't have much interest in it. Once a small group starts – great! It's fantastic that you want do, do it, but as leadership we do not strive to put everyone in a small group. We are not a small group oriented church in my opinion. We would like to be, but we are not going to try. At least, that's my opinion.

17. Personally in "my time" I had the feeling that there was no priority given to the small group ministry by the leadership.

18. No, we did have regular meetings but I missed a bit of coaching, support in this area.

19. Every now and then a young person comes to me with problems that I don't know how to handle. In those situations I'd like to have someone who knows more about how you can handle it. But we don't really have that.

20. That would be better I think, but no one has offered it. I haven't asked for either. Yes. That would be nice.

21. House group.

22. It's not like people come to a small group like I, I think thirty years ago, experienced myself. It was assumed that you would attend a small group. I don't see this anymore. People come out of their own initiative. You can see this on Sunday too. In the olden days you were asked were you were if you didn't go to church. But now it's very normal not to come to the Sunday service.

23. People are too busy to come to [the small group]. Yeah. People choose to do something else. The reasoning behind that isn't clear to me. I always say: people come to a small group if they find it attractive enough, interesting enough: but what that is a riddle to me.

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH GATHERED

For each group, the guideline of questions used for the interview is provided. Each individual interview was different from the other, and questions were also presented in a different order due to the natural flow of the conversation. These questions provided the researcher with the ability to stay within the perimeter of the project and helped with keeping data somewhat confined and comparable.

Questions will be listed per group. It will be indicated when the questions differ between the current and former type of participant.

At the beginning of the interview, each participant was given the following two questions.

In uw mening wat is een kring?

Waarom zijn kringen belangrijk?

All leaders were then asked the following question:

Hoe passen kringen in de visie van de gemeente?

B.1.1: Interview with the Pastor

This interview was given as a preliminary interview. It was meant to gain more understanding of the circumstances surrounding the SGM and to answer any question the researcher had regarding various church documents. Its questions are therefore somewhat scattered.

Bent u bekend met het document "Kringen in de Ichtus gemeente" geschreven door Jan Neefjes? Wat vindt u daarvan i.v.m. uw persoonlijke visie voor kringen in de gemeente?

GESCHIEDENIS VAN DE KRINGEN

Kunt u in het kort uitleggen hoe u bij Ichtus bent gekomen?

Heeft u het concept van kringen geïntroduceerd, of bestond het al? Als de gemeente al kringen had, wat was er al en wat hebt u zelf veranderd?

Kunt u mij een richtlijn geven over wie wanneer de verantwoordelijkheid voor de kringen had?

Hoe is het met elke leider verlopen? Wat is er goed gegaan en wat niet?

In het jaarverslag van 2006 las ik dat de kringen zijn opgestart en niet goed hebben

gefunctioneerd. Toen zei u dat het kwam door alle andere activiteiten: bent u het daar nog steeds mee eens?

KRINGEN IN DE NIEUWE STRUCTUUR

Waar komt de oude Karel Appel structuur vandaan?

Hoe heeft deze structuur invloed gehad op de kringen in de gemeente?

Waar komt de Mondriaan structuur vandaan?

Hoe heeft deze structuur invloed gehad op de kringen in de gemeente?

In uw mening, wat vinden de leden en vaste bezoekers van het instroomtraject (PLUG Ichtus)? Werkt deze structuur goed binnen uw gemeente?

Ik las dat er in het afgelopen jaar veel veranderingen in de gemeente zijn geweest i.v.m. sabbaticals en het neerleggen van taken. Onder welk DB-lid vallen de kringen nu?

Wie heeft onder het DB-lid de verantwoordelijkheid van de kringen?

KRINGEN IN 2012

Welke kringen zijn er nu?

Hoe vindt u die kringen lopen?

Wat zou u willen zien veranderen i.v.m. kringen in de gemeente?

Hoe zou u dit willen aanpakken?

Wat is uw ideale vorm van kringen voor uw gemeente?

Wat kan dit project specifiek voor uw visie betekenen?

B.1.2: Interview Questions for the Church Board

The CB interviews varied because each of their ministry teams differed from the other. Each was given a set of questions to determine if their CB group functioned as an SG, and if any of the groups they are responsible for function as an SG. The general questions are listed below.

LEEFTIJD:
FUNCTIE:

UW BESTUUR TEAM

Hoe vaak komen jullie bij elkaar als team?

Wat zijn de redenen hiervoor?

Wat is de inhoud van de avond?

Zijn er momenten waar de leden persoonlijk of geestelijke dingen/problemen kunnen delen?

Voelt u zich vrij om dingen vanuit uw persoonlijk of geestelijke leven te delen in uw groep?

Waarom of waarom niet?

Zijn er momenten waar uw geestelijke leven gestimuleerd wordt door middelen van bijbelstudie, getuigenis enz.)?

Heeft u vriendschappen binnen uw groep en doen jullie dingen samen buiten de groep om?

Hebben jullie andere activiteiten samen als groep buiten de vergaderingen om?

In uw mening, investeert Pastor Jan genoeg tijd in jullie als groepsleden buiten de groep en zakelijke leven van de kerk om?

Is die groep, in uw mening, een kring?

Heeft u er behoefte aan uw groep te ontwikkelen als kring.

HET TEAM WAAR U VERANTWOORDELIJK VOOR BENT

Voor welke groepen bent u verantwoordelijk en wie is de leiding van die groepen?

Hoe vaak komen jullie samen als groep?

Wat zijn de redenen hiervoor?

Wat is de inhoud van de avonden waarop jullie als groep bij elkaar komen?

Zijn er moment waarop de leden persoonlijke of geestelijke dingen/problemen kunnen delen?

Is er een moment waarop u uw groep geestelijke dingen aanleert?

Helpt uw groep met de geestelijke groei van de leden, in uw mening?

Investeert u in de persoonlijke levens van uw groepsleden buiten de vergaderavonden om?

Hebben jullie andere activiteiten samen als groep buiten de vergaderingen om?

Ziet u één of meerdere groepen die onder u vallen als kring functioneren? Waarom?

B.1.3: Interview Questions for Current and Former Small Group Coordinators

PERIODE ACTIEF:
LEEFTIJD

Was is (was) uw visie voor kringen binnen de gemeente?

KRINGEN

Voor welke kringen (was) bent u verantwoordelijk (geweest)?

Geef een korte omschrijving van elke kring waar u verantwoordelijk voor bent (geweest) en vertel hoe die kring op dit moment functioneert (heeft gefunctioneerd) naar uw mening.

NIEUWE KRINGEN:

Welke kringen zijn begonnen onder uw leiding?

Hoe kiest u een kringleider uit (heeft u een kringleider gekozen) voor een nieuwe kring?

Hoe zijn de nieuwe leiders voorbereid (geweest) om kringleider te worden?

BESTAANDE KRINGEN

Welke kringen heeft u van een andere coördinator overgenomen?

Zijn er kringen die gestopt zijn onder uw leiding? Welke kringen?

Wat zijn de redenen hiervoor?

Heeft u evaluatie momenten van de kringen samen met de kringleiders (gehad)?

Gaat (ging) u wel eens een kringavond bijwonen om te evalueren?

Heeft (had) u regelmatig trainingen voor de kringleiders?

GEMEENTELEIDING

Heeft u regelmatig evaluatie momenten van uw bediening met de leiding van de gemeente (gehad)?

Heeft u genoeg ondersteuning en middelen van de leiding van de gemeente?

Voelt u zich vrij (heeft u zich vrij gevoeld) om de problemen die u tegen komt te delen met de leiding van de gemeente?

VOORMALIGE LEIDING:

Geef een korte samenvatting van wie vóór u de kringcoördinatie heeft gehad.

Waarom heeft u de leiding (toen) overgenomen?

Hoe is (was) de manier waarop u de kringen aanpakt(e) anders dan die van de voormalige leiding?

Zijn er dingen (goed of slecht) die u heeft geleerd en heeft meegenomen van de voormalige leiding over hoe kringen wel of niet aangepakt moeten worden?

Zijn er dingen (goed of slecht) die u (tot nu toe) van u eigen bediening heeft geleerd over hoe kringen functioneren?

Heeft u verder opmerkingen die ik mee moet nemen in mijn verdere onderzoek?

Questions specifically for current SGL's

DE TOEKOMST

Zijn er dingen die u zou willen zien veranderen in verband met kringen?

Heeft u lange- en- kortetermijnplannen voor de kringen?

Zijn er specifieke dingen die u graag wilt zien gebeuren met het onderzoek van dit project?

Questions specifically for former SGL's

Bestaan er nog steeds kringen die onder uw leiding opgestart zijn?

LEEFTIJD:
KRING:
ACTIEVE PERIODE:

Wat is (was) de visie van uw kring?

GESCHIEDENIS:

Welke bedieningen heeft u eerder gedaan in de kerk?

Bent u ook nu (was u tijdens uw leiderschap) deel van andere bedieningen in de gemeente (geweest)?

Zo ja, heeft dit invloed (gehad) op de tijd die u steekt (stak) in alle bedieningen?

Bent (was) u deze kring begonnen, of heeft u deze kring overgenomen?

Indien van toepassing, van wie heeft u de kring overgenomen en geef een korte geschiedenis van de kring.

Wanneer bent u begonnen met deze kring?

Hoe bent (was) u kringleider van deze kring geworden?

Heeft de gemeente een soort trainingstijd voor u gehouden voordat u begon(en was)?

Onder wie bent (was) u verantwoordelijk?

Heeft u genoeg ondersteuningsmiddelen van uw leiding (gehad)?

Zijn er evaluatie momenten met die persoon (geweest)?

Krijgt u genoeg ondersteuning en/of hulp middelen van de gemeenteleiding?

Heeft u een specifieke roeping voor dit soort werk?

KRINGLEDEN

Wie bepaalt (bepaalde) welke leden mogen komen naar u kring?

Is er een speciaal systeem hiervoor?

Welke leden heeft u nu (gehad) en wat zijn de leeftijden van de kringleden (geweest)?

Komen (kwamen) alle leden uit de gemeente (Ichtus)?

Zo niet, hoe zijn ze bij de kring gekomen?

Zijn er onbekeerde mensen in u kring (geweest)?

Is uw kring gegroeid sinds de start van de kring? En zo ja, hoe?

KRING STRUCTUUR

Zijn er regels voor aanwezigheid, start- en eindtijd, deelname etc. (geweest)?

Hoe vaak vindt (vond) uw kring plaats?

Waar komt (kwam) uw materiaal voor de studie / avond vandaan?

Werkt(e) u met thema's of heeft (had) u een bepaald systeem voor hoe u onderwerpen aanpakt(e)?

Hoe ziet (zag) een avond eruit?

Hoe vaak houdt (hield) u een speciale activiteit apart van een studie avond?

Krijgt (kreeg) ieder groepslid speciale aandacht buiten kringavonden om? Bijvoorbeeld dat u bij hen op bezoek gaat (ging)?

Zo ja, hoe vaak gebeurt (gebeurde) dit?

Wat zijn de zwakke punten van hoe de kring functioneert (heeft gefunctioneerd)?

Wat zijn de sterke punten?

Questions specifically for current SGL's

Zijn er dingen die u zou willen veranderen in de vormgeving van uw kring?

Questions specifically for former SGL's

Was er een bepaald moment waarop de groep niet meer groeide?

Zo ja, wat denkt u dat de reden hiervoor was?

Zijn de leden van uw groep nu deel van een andere kring, zo ver u weet? Wie en welke (bestaande) groep?

Waarom is de kring uiteindelijk gestopt?

Was u het daar mee eens?

PERSOONLIJK:

Hoe was over het algemeen uw ervaring als kringleider?

Zou u nog een keer kringleider willen worden?

B.1.5: Interview Questions for Current and Former Small Group Participants

LEEFTIJD:
KRING:

Hoe bent u lid van uw kring geworden?

Wat zijn de dingen die u motiveert (heeft gemotiveerd) om naar de kring te komen?

LEDEN

Zijn jullie (kringgenoten) vrienden onder elkaar buiten de kring om (geweest)?

Heeft u goede vrienden gemaakt vanwege de kring?

Wat vindt (vond) u van de aanwezigheid van andere kringleden?

In uw mening, nemen (namen) de kringleden de kring serieus? Waarom wel of niet?

Wat vindt (vond) u van de ledenbijdrage tot de avond?

Wat vindt (vond) u van het aantal leden van de kring? Zijn er te veel, of te weinig (geweest)?

Is de kring gegroeid, bleef het constant, of hebben jullie leden verloren?

In uw mening, wat zijn de redenen hiervoor (geweest)?

STRUCTUUR

Zijn er duidelijke regels voor aanwezigheid, deelname, etc. voor uw kring (geweest)?

Kunt u voor mij die regels noemen?

Hoe vaak vindt (vond) uw kring plaats?

Is (was) dit genoeg? Zou (had) u het vaker of minder vaak willen hebben?

Wat vindt (vond) u van de dag en tijd waarop de groep bij elkaar komt (kwam)?

Zou (had) u dit willen veranderen? Waarom?

Zijn er dingen in de kring die u graag anders zou (had) willen zien gaan? (denk aan activiteiten, thema's, inhoud van de avond, etc.). Wat zijn die dingen (geweest)?

STUDIES

Wat vindt (vond) u van de studies (thema's, onderwerpen, inhoud)?

Hebben de studies impact op uw persoonlijke leven (gehad)?

Zo niet, waarom is dat zo. Zo ja, geef een reden en/of voorbeeld.

GEESTELIJK

Helpt (hielp) uw kring met uw dagelijkse leven en met u wandel met God?

Zo niet, waarom? Zo ja, geef aan hoe en geef reden en/of voorbeelden hiervoor?

Voelt(de) u vrij om persoonlijke en geestelijke dingen te delen binnen u groep?

Zo niet, waarom?

KRINGLEIDERS

Vindt u dat de kringleiders goed voorbereid zijn voor de kringavonden (geweest)?

Krijgt (kreeg) u genoeg persoonlijke aandacht van de leiders buiten de kring om?

Voelt (voelde) u zich vrij om persoonlijke en geestelijke problemen te delen met uw kringleiders (binnen of buiten de kring om)?

Zo niet, waarom

Voelt (voelde) u zich vrij om buiten de kring om op bezoek bij de leiders te gaan?

Questions specifically for former SGL's

Waarom was u kring uiteindelijk gestopt?

Bent u nu lid van een andere kring?

Zo niet, is hier een reden voor?

B.1.6: Interview Questions for Task Group

GROEP:
LEEFTIJD:
FUNCTIE:

In u mening wat is een kring?

Is de groep waar u deel van uitmaakt, in u mening, een kring en waarom vindt u dat zo?

Hoe vaak komen jullie samen als groep?

Wat zijn de redenen hiervoor?

Komt u regelmatig naar de groep?

Wat is de inhoud van de avonden dat jullie als groep bij elkaar komen?

Zijn er momenten waar de leden persoonlijke of geestelijke dingen/problemen kunnen delen?

Voelt u zich vrij om dingen vanuit uw persoonlijke of geestelijke leven te delen in u groep?

Zo niet, waarom?

Heeft u vriendschappen opgebouwd binnen uw groep?

Heeft u relatie met de leden van uw groep buiten de kring om?

Zo niet, zou u dat wel willen?

Is er een moment waar u geestelijke dingen leert in uw groep?

Helpt uw groep u met uw geestelijke groei?

B.2: List and Summary of Interview Participants

Below are the lists of the Interview participants per group. Names are not given. Each participant is assigned a number. That number coincides with the order that the participants were interviewed in. Each interview is not discussed in full detail, but a summary is given to each discussed topic.

B.2.1: The Pastor

The Pastor was not put in summary form. This interview was meant to put together some broken pieces. It was too scattered to put into summary form. In the project he is listed as P1.

B.2.2: Church Board Interview Participants

The CB is in the process of some changes due to various sabbaticals and resignations. The two CB members, apart from the Pastor, that have been active CB members the longest per were chosen because they could provide relevant, more complete information regarding the history of the SGM.

	P4	P11
Personal Information	A 37-year-old male, responsible for the christian education department of the church. The ministries that fall under his leadership are: the Fundamenten Cursus and het Leerhuis (both are church-wide Bible study evenings), the Children's ministry, the youth ministry and the nursery.	A 49-year-old female, responsible for the Pastoral Care department of the church. The ministries that fall under her leadership are: the head pastoral care team, the SG's and the welcome team

SG's and their purpose	SG's come together to learn about God's Word as a group. SG's are important because they keep the Christian Faith alive during the week, and they stimulate contact amongst church attenders.	SG's come together so that a small number of people can get to know one another better and can be more responsible for each other. They are important in the church because without them a church attender could become lost in a sea of people: they help keep everyone connected.
SG's and the vision of the Church	SG's are not really an effective part of the church. They don't work well and the CB should not put their energy into them. If a group starts on its own of course it's supported but he doesn't think they should try. People should also not be forced into a group. It won't work, and it hasn't worked in the past.	SG's fit into the church because the church really wants to be there for one another. The church is made up of many large families. In order to keep those outside the big families connected SG's are needed.
The CB as an SG	The evenings vary depending on the agenda, but there is room for sharing of personal/spiritual problems amongst group members. He does not feel comfortable to share very personal things with people in the group besides the pastor. The group does hold a few elements of an SG (Bible reading, sharing, encouraging), but in his opinion the CB does not entirely function as an SG because they do not meet regularly enough (only once every three weeks) and their goal is to serve the church, not to be served.	The evenings vary depending on the content of the evening. They open with prayer, followed by a short word from Pastor Jan. Then there is a time for personal announcements followed by proceeding through the evening's agenda. In her opinion the CB does function as an SG because these are the people that she has the most contact with within the church, though it is missing some elements. There are limitations to the amount of spiritual growth and personal sharing (she herself feels uncomfortable to share certain personal problems with her fellow CB members).
The CB members own team of leaders as an SG	There are no regular meetings with his entire team of leaders. Each team member does not have much involvement with the other. Their ministries are separate, and it is not necessary to meet as a group. Of the four groups he's responsible for, only one of them (the youth leadership team) comes the closest to being an SG, though not entirely because the don't meet frequently enough (once a month). The rest meet much less often. The Bible Study evenings at the Church unfortunately do not function as an SG, but in theory they should. These groups don't	Her team of leaders does not function as an SG. They only meet once every six weeks and the evenings function as a meeting, not as a SG setting. For this same reason she does not see any of those individual teams functioning as an SG.

	have the right leaders: these leaders are better at education than discussion stimulation.

B.2.3: The Current Small Group Coordinator:

The Current SGC is also an SGL. She has not been listed under the SGL's because she was not interviewed as an SGL, however she made a few comments about her SG. These comments are mentioned in this section as well.

	P13
Personal Information	62-year-old female who has been the current SGL for two years.
SG's at Ichtus	An SG is a group of people who come together to share their spiritual lives, thoughts about the bible and their daily life with one another. They are important because they give attention to the individual which cannot be done in the context of the larger congregation. SG's fit into the vision of the church on one hand, but on the other hand they don't. People don't have time for SG's and she's not sure if and how they can fit into the church's vision sometimes. Her vision for SG's is that they become a micro-organism in the church.
SG's under SGL's Leadership	The SG's that now full under her leadership are the Senior's SG, the Women's SG, the 18+ group, the Poelenburg group, and the Poelenburg-Zuid group. The women's group and the Poelenburg-Zuid group are two new SG's that have been started under her leadership. The woman's group she leads herself together with her co-SGL. The only group that has been unsuccessful under her leadership is the 35- group, which was stopped because its participants were too busy and hardly anyone attended the group. No formal training has been given, and not much work is needed. Each group functions more or less on its own and as far as she can tell the SGL's are happy with communication.
Other Comments	The women's group, started in January 2012, has been very successful. The SGP's are very happy with the way they are made to feel accepted and at home. She and the other SGL feel that it has been a move of God from the start. The group has no ending date, but she is not sure if it will be a long-term or short-term SG.

It was very difficult for any participants to remember who was the SGC at during which period. This project can still not state for certain how many former SGC's there have been. It is understood that there have been various short-term former SGC's but finding out who these SGC's actually were has proven to be quite difficult. Two of the three major (longer-term) former SGC's were chosen.

	P8	P7
Personal Information	53-year-old male. He was not exactly sure when and for how long he had the responsibility of SGC, but he started in 2006, and held the position for two to three years.	A 36-year old female who had the leadership for a bit over one year
SG's at Ichtus	An SG is a group of people that gather together based on their Faith. They are important because it gives its members the chance to see each other apart from the Sunday service and to provide more spiritual depth. SG''s work best if there's a click with its members and if it's interesting enough. He finds it difficult to describe interesting- each person has their own interests and, in his opinion, those interests are difficult todescover.	An SG is a group of people that come together to spend time together and share their faith together. An SG is important because it leaves no room for anonymity and they provide a way of sharing their Faith with non-christians who are not yet ready to come into the church. She feels that the CB didn't have any motivation for SG's, that they would rather put their time and energy into other areas of church life. Her vision for the SG's at Ichtus was to give a higher priority to the SG's where everyone had a place they can fit into in the church, but she was not able to achieve this. She feels the CB did not support her.
SG's under SGC's leadership	All the SG's except for one still exist. The 35- group. This group ended after he had passed his leadership on. But at the time, there were not many others: just the young adults (18+) and the Poelenburg SG. The 35- SG was eventually stopped because its members didn't come anymore. They were too busy.	There were no new SG's started. Under her leadership the 35-group had faded out. She felt that she was too young to lead the older more experienced SG leaders so she handed her SGC to the current SGC. She continued her ministry by leading the 18+ group, which she did until she moved to another city.
Other Comments	SG's are not what they used to be, and he found it	Her idea for SG's were to have each member put into an SG,

	difficult to discover the needs of the younger generation. The CB also didn't seem to be motivated enough to do something about it.	her experience was that the CB disagreed with her vision for the SG'sso she did not move forward with this idea.

B.2.5: Current Small Group Leader Interview Participants

There are five (5) current SG's at Ichtus. Two of which are led by the same SGL, leaving four current SGL participants. Two have been chosen, representing half of the current SGL's.

	P5, P6	P15
Personal Information	A couple, both aged 36. They have had the leadership over their group since Christmas 2010.	A 53-year-old male who has been the SG leader since September 2010.
SG's at Ichtus	SG's come together to talk together about each other lives and experiences, and about God. They are important because people need to learn about God and apply it to their stages of life with people of similar experiences. They are not sure how SG's fit into the vision of the church and are not even entirely sure of what the vision of the church is.	SG's are groups that gather together to learn about God, the Bible and its relation to the world and practical life. SG's are important because they allow members develop Christian life in a social and cognitive way. SG's fit into the vision of the church because it's the leadership's desire that every Sunday-attender be part of an SG or task-group. Task-groups are not SG's in his opinion.
Vision of their SG	They are not entirely sure of their vision, but their goal is for SG members to build a bond with each other and learn how God works in their stage in life.	The SG exists to give spiritual food for the more mature in age.
Current Ministry Involvement	They are both involved in other ministries, and their various ministries sometimes take a toll on their SG, and the other way around.	He has previously been a part of various ministries in the church, but is only involved in leading his SG at the present time.

Brief History of the SG	They were asked to take it over from the previous couple who moved away. They are not sure if they do anything differently from the previous leaders because the transition of leadership did not go over very well. It was badly communicated on both sides. They were asked because they already had a strong connection with the young people of the church. They like what they do, but they don't have a specific calling for SG's.	He was asked to take it over from the previous leader who was moving to set up a second group in the area. The former leader thought he would be the best choice for the groups new leader. He feels that he has a calling to the SGM.
Training, Evaluation and communication	There has been no training for them, but they are satisfied with how the group is going. They would be interested in some type of Bible study training, but if they need help leadership is always there for them. There are no evaluation moments with the leadership. They see this as a problem within more ministries that they work in. The transition between the teenagers and their group is also poorly communicated.	There has been no training from the church, but he feels it is not needed. He has a degree in theology. He has enough evaluation moments with the SGC and enough help, if he should need it.
Members	Once a teenage turns 18 they are welcome. There's not an end age limit, but they group isn't meant for married couples or people with children. It's specifically geared at the College & Career age group. There are about 15 members, though not every member comes to every meeting. If that were to happen, the group would be too big. The group has grown because of the transition from the teenage group once a teen turns 18. There are no unsaved members. In their opinion they gave their group members enough individual attention.	Everyone who would like to come is welcome. His group correctly has 10 members. He would like to see groups that mix and match members to gain more contact amongst each other, but there aren't enough groups. The group has grown slightly because members moved closer geographically to the group, but it exists for a long time with more or less the same members. He does not feel that he gives each member enough personal attention as they may need, but he does strive to visit each member at least once each season.
Structure	The group meets once every two weeks on Sunday evening. There are official start and end times, but there are no rules or official framework other than that they expect to be informed if a member cannot attend because of meal preparation. They want everyone to feel accepted	The group meets once every two weeks on Monday evening. There are official start and end times. It is a typical Bible Study SG. Everyone is free to share their ideas and thoughts no matter what they are, and no one is allowed to make fun of anything anyone has to say. The Bible studies and themes are developed

	no matter what. The bible studies are based on themes and they just finished the Alpha Course. They let everyone to develop at their own tempo. The majority of the night is discussion instead of a traditional Bible Study group. They are very interested in the structure that Volle Evangelischgemeente Zwolle uses: each SG handles the topics that are discussed on the Sunday morning.	by himself, and he often shares his materials with other groups.
Strengths and Weaknesses of the Group	They would like to have more in-depth themes, and they are disappointed that they did not have a time of evaluation at the end of last year. They strongest aspect of the group is that there is a strong bond between the group members. They genuinely care for one another.	He would like to see the group gain at least four younger members: this is its weakness. The strength of the group is that its members are loyal to the group and to one another: they have developed a strong bond with each other.

B.2.6: Former Small Group Leader Interview Participants

Up until the writing of this project only two former SG's were mentioned in all of the interviews. Later it was discovered that there was a third SG that had failed but by this time the project was already well underway and it was too late to interview those former SGL's. Questions regarding those SG's were posed to the Pastor in order to glean a last-minute bit of information about the groups.

	P8	P16
Personal Information	A 33-year-old male who was an active SGL from 2006-2008.	42-year-old male. SGL for one year in 2007-2008.
SG's at Ichtus	SG's are groups that gather together to share, to build one another up and to talk about life from the Biblical perspective. They are important because they help keep the personal Faith alive. SG's fit into the vision of the	An SG is an extension of the church meant for spiritual growth and friendship-building. They are important because they can give more focus on the individual: allowing for more interaction, depth and growth. They fit into the vision of the

	church because the church's vision is to be a light to Zaandam, and the SG's help develop individual relationships with God":ights"	church because they are an extension of the care the church should give to its congregation.
SG Vision	The vision of his group was to provide more spiritual stimulation and contact for the hectic lives of the "young family" group in the church.	The vision of his SG was to to provide a place for friendship-building and a spiritual learning environment.
Ministry Experience	He has been involved in other ministries at Ichtus which impacted his effectiveness as an SGL. The evenings were not as well prepared for as they could have been. He did not have a calling to be an SGL. He was asked and accepted because of a need, and this had a great impact on the group and may have been a contributing factor to why group had been unsuccessful. He would not like to be an SGL again.	He was the youth leader, and he was part of the music team. After the SG was stopped he and his wife took over the children's ministry at the church. He does not feel that his ministries impacted his preparation for the SG. If given the chance he would lead an SG again, but he would rather work with younger people.
Members of the SG	He was asked by the church board to start the group, and recruited the members himself. The group was specifically aimed at young families. Other people were welcome, but they would not have been able to participate in many of the conversations, which pertained mostly to young families. Including the SGL there were 12 members.	The SG was based on age and geographic location. The members were middle-aged, and after a while they SG became a men's group. This was not the intention, but only men attended. In total there were only four members.
Structure of the SG	The SG met every other week and handled various books of the Bible: it was primarily a Bible study group but had an emphasis on sharing personal applications of the scripture with each other. The Bible studies were usually prepared by the SGL himself. There was no framework or ground rules. It would not have fit with the desired group of people. There is a need to reach this group still, and many have expressed interest in a "family day" once a month on a Saturday, but no one has taken the time or	The group was a Bible study group, and it included many elements of a Sunday morning service (such as Communion and worship), but it allowed more time for interactive discussion. The studies were prepared by the SGL himself. The only expectation of members was that they were expected to let the SGL know if they were not coming. Each evening had a begin and an end time.

	initiative to look into it.	
Stopping the SG	At the end of the first year the group stopped early. They tried again the second year. At first, attendance was reasonable, but about four months into the season it started to die down again. Eventually it was decided that the group wasn't going to work because everyone was just too busy. Reaching the busy young families proved to be more difficult than anticipated.	The SG was put to an end because they SGL was moving into another ministry and because there was not much enthusiasm with the group. There were very few members. The decision to shut the group down was made by the SGL, supported by the CB. The leadership was helpful sometimes, but he missed a bit of coaching in his ministry.
Strengths and Weaknesses of the SG	A weakness was that there wasn't anyone to keep the group members accountable for attendance. He was not good at it, nor did he like it. Another weakness was that he had not prepared the group as well as he could have because he lacked enthusiasm. He was not the right person to lead the group. The strength in the SG was the contact with each other. Members understood what another member was dealing with without needing a lot of explanation because they were all in the same phase of life.	The strengths of the group were that everyone felt at home and accepted, and the level of the education. The weakness was the composition of the group, the various intellectual and spiritual levels of the group. A second weakness of the SG was that it began to function less successfully as time went on.

B.2.7: Current Small Group Participant Interview Participants

Due to time constants of this project only one current SGP was interviewed. This project primarily focussed on problems found in former SG's, therefore it seemed better to invest any remaining time the project had in the former SGP's.

	P3
Personal Information	A 20 year old male who is a member of the 18+ SG. He is also involved in working in the nursery one Sunday a month. He became a member of this SG because he was too old for the teenage group. The transition between the two groups

	went reasonably, but communication is not his strong point. That is the largest part of the group. He enjoys his SG very much.
What is an SG?	An SG is a place where you can learn things about God and the Bible, and where you can learn things from the personal experiences of other SG members. He sees his group as an SG because they learn about God and the Bible and because there is a lot of time spent in sharing from your personal life and prayer for one another.
Fellow SGP's	He has good contact with the other SGP's in and outside of the SG evenings. He feels that everyone is generally committed to the SG and, as far as he knows, everyone is happy with the way the SG runs. Everyone feels free to share things from their personal lives, and this is a big benefit to the group.
The Structure of the SG	The group meets once every two weeks and has a set begin and end time. Every member knows what is expected of him (that each member has a turn preparing dinner and they are expected to inform the SGL if the cannot attend the group). The group meets biweekly on Sunday evening and he is happy with the time and frequency. The Bible studies are interesting and applicable to his life.
Spiritual Aspects of the SG	The SG does stimulate spiritual growth and causes him to take more time for Bible reading and prayer in preparation of the evening or because of an interesting study he has heard and would like to know more about. He feels free to share from his own personal life in order to encourage others, though he is not good at communicating his thoughts to others; so he listens more often than he shares.
The SGL	The SGL's are very well prepared for the evening. He would appreciate more personal attention and pastoral care from the SGL's but he knows that their door is always open and feels welcome. If there is a problem or anything he is struggling with in his personal life he feels free to share it with the SGL's.

B.2.8: Former Small Group Participant Interview Participants

Two former SGP's that were interviewed were from the 35- SG. The other two SG's (Westerwatering SG and the Purmerend SG) had very few members, all of which no longer attend Ichtus.

	P17	P18
Personal Information	A 29-year old female who was part of the 35- SG. She became a member of her SG because she was asked to join by the SGL. She regularly attended the SG but sometimes her work schedule interfered and she could not attend. She is not currently a part of an SG and has no specific reason for not being a part of one. She is also currently a part of the worship team: where she is responsible for the overhead projector.	A 36-year-old female who was part of the 35- SG. She became a member of the SG because her peers of the same age-group were a part of the group. She and her husband rotated attending the group because of babysitting issues and other church or family responsibilities. She is currently not part of another SG but she and her husband are the leaders of the 18+ ministry. She is also responsible for the book table at the church and takes part is various theater production the church hosts.
What is an SG?	An SG is a group of people who gather together for a specific purpose, in this case to learn about the Bible and to build contact with other church members. Her SG was geared to those with young families	SG's are groups of people who come together to learn about God and to speak into each others lives.
Fellow SGP's	She was friends with other SGP's but they didn't have much time to see each other outside of the SG. The SGP's that attended regularly were committed, but there were not enough people on a regular basis. Everyone participated and enjoyed the SG evenings when they were there. There were no moments where the SG grew, as the SG progressed more members were lost.	She would not call her fellow SGP's "friends" but more "acquaintances." It was difficult to build any real contact because there was no consistency in the member's attendance. Many, like herself, also had small children, so it was always one or the other parent who came. Participation was not great either. The group didn't grow because there was no consistent attendance.
The Structure of the SG	There were no set rules for attendance but everyone was asked to read the chapter that would be dealt with in the next SG meeting. The group met biweekly, but the evenings varies because it was difficult to find an evening that everyone could attend.	The only "rule" there was, was that there was a beginning time. The time and day of the week was not ideal for her and her family.
Spiritual Aspects of the SG	The Bible studies focussed on books of the Bible (for example one series was on the book of Romans). These studies gave her more in-depth knowledge about the	She found the Bible studies to be one-sided. There was little interaction between members, and it seemed as if the SGL was doing all of the talking. The Bible studies didn't have much

	book they were studying.	impact on her spiritual life because they were not chosen by the members themselves and were not always applicable.
The SGL	She feels that the SGL was well prepared for the evenings and they made sure that there was a cozy atmosphere. She was satisfied with the amount of personal attention and pastoral care she received from the SGL outside of the SG.	The SGL was reasonably prepared for the group evenings. There wasn't much pastoral care, but neither the SGL or she had much extra time for it. It wasn't necessarily missed.
Shutting Down the SG	She's not entirely sure why the SG was shut down. She assumes it was because there were too few regular attenders and the members decided it was better not to have the SG if the evenings were not producing attendance results.	The SG was shut down because all of its members had small children. It was too difficult to find a time where everyone could come.

B.2.9: Task-Group Participant Interview participants

This group includes the CB and the Worship Team. The CB has been discussed in section B.2.2. This section will only deal with the Worship Team.

Here, the leader and two Worship Team Members are summarized.

	P12	**P2**	**P14**
Personal Information	35-year old male.	33-year-old male	28 year-old male
SG's at Ichtus	SG's are meant for personal attention and relationships, and they are important because relationships are important.	SG's are groups that gather together to share and build up and talk about life from the Biblical perspective, and they are important because they help keep	SG's are meant for fellowship and building each other up spiritually.

		the personal Faith alive.	
Reason for Group Meetings	The groups purpose is to practice, but also to build relationships: to invest in one another relationally and musically, building each other up in music and in Faith.	To practice the technical aspects of the worship for the Sunday service. Also to learn to work together as a team and to give each other room to grow technically and spiritually.	To practice for the Sunday morning service and to develop the ical and spiritual gifts God has given.
Aspects of an SG	The group posses all aspects that a SG should have, some more than others, but they are all there.	It does not have all aspects of an SG buy not all and therefore does not function entirely as an SG. Relationship building outside the group could be better and the group needs to work on making its new members feel welcome. Pastoral care is good but there is not too much time given for Bible study, though there is always room for it.	There is a lot of time given for relationship building. Prayer needs are met well. There is good contact among members, the group stimulates friendships and he feels cared for by the group leader. There is not enough time given to Bible study or spiritual growth.
Group as an SG?	He feels this group is an SG because it especially focusses on relationship. The friendship aspect of the group is very high. There's a great amount of concern from one another and respect for one another, spiritually and musically. The evening never begins right away with practice. The time before practice shared with each other is the most valuable part of the group	Though it does function like a SG he's not entirely sure that he would call it an SG. It lacks spiritual depth sometimes, and its purpose it so serve the church, not necessarily for personal gain. He wouldn't mind seeing this change, but isn't entirely sure how that would work out.	He does not feel that this group functions as an SG because its purpose is to serve the church. He does not feel the need to develop this group into an SG. It's fine the way it is.

pinkstergemeente zaandam

ICHTUS

KRINGEN IN DE GEMEENTE: ENQUETE

Omcirkel het antwoord dat het beste bij u past. Omcirkel meer antwoorden indien van toepassing.

PERSOONLIJKE GEGEVENS

1. Wat is uw deelname in de gemeente?	Ik ben lid	Ik ben een vaste bezoeker	Ik ben een bezoeker		
2. Wat is uw leeftijd	18-29	30-44	45-54	55-64	65+
3. Geslacht	Man	Vrouw			
4. Burgerlijke staat	Single	Getrouwd			
5. Wat is uw gezinssituatie	Geen kinderen	Ouder in jong gezin	Ouder van tieners	Ouder van volwassenen	

CONTACT

6. Heeft u, voor uw gevoel, genoeg contact met andere mensen in de gemeente?   Ja   Nee

7. Zou u meer contact willen hebben met andere gemeenteleden buiten de zondagochtend dienst?   Ja   Nee

KRINGEN

8. Bent u ooit lid van een kring binnen onze gemeente geweest?   Ja   Nee
(zo niet, ga door naar vraag 11)

9. Bent u op dit moment lid van een kring binnen onze gemeente?   Ja   Nee

10. Beoordeel het volgende, van laag (1) naar hoog (5)

De kwaliteit van uw huidige kring (indien van toepassing)	n.v.t.	1	2	3	4	5
De kwaliteit van uw voormalige kring (indien van toepassing)	n.v.t.	1	2	3	4	5
De activiteiten van de kring buiten de kringavonden om	n.v.t.	1	2	3	4	5
De onderwerp(en) of studies van de kring		1	2	3	4	5
De pastorale zorg van de kringleiders		1	2	3	4	5

(ga door naar vraag 13)

11. Als u geen deel uitmaakt van een kring, wat zijn de redenen hiervoor?
   0 Er zijn geen interessante onderwerpen
   0 Ik heb het te druk
   0 Ik kan niet komen op de tijdstippen die nu beschikbaar zijn
   0 Ik ben al deel van een andere bediening
   0 Ik kan geen oppas voor mijn kinderen vinden
   Anders, namelijk_____

12. Als er een vorm van kringen zou komen die beter bij uw situatie   Ja   Nee
    past, zou u dan gaan?

13. Als u deel van een kring zou uitmaken, hoe vaak zou u naar die kring willen gaan?
    Als u al lid van een kring bent, geef dan aan wat uw ideale frequentie is om als kring bij elkaar te komen.

    Wekelijks   om de twee weken   maandelijks   om de zes weken
    Anders, namelijk_____

14. Welke tijdstippen zouden voor u het beste uitkomen om naar een kring te gaan?

    Door de week: overdag   's avonds
    Zaterdag: overdag   's avonds
    Zondagavond

15. Wat voor soort kringen zou u interessant vinden?

    Bijbelstudie kring   jonge-moeders- kring   support kring   marriage kring
    Themakring, namelijk_____
    Anders, namelijk_____

16. Andere opmerkingen die u graag met ons zou willen delen rondom kringen:

Hartelijk dank voor het invullen!

Adriane Pasterkamp

B.4: Survey Results: Specific Results per Individual

The rows highlighted in yellow signify the unreliable surveys as discussed in chapter two.

1_CStat	2_Age	3_Gender	4_MStat	5_FStat	6_CurContact	7_PrefContact
memb	30-44	F	Married	Kids	yes	no
Regvisit	30-44	F	Married	NoKids	no	yes
memb	30-44	M	Married	Kids	yes	yes
memb	30-44	F	Married	KidsTeens	yes	yes
memb	55-64	F	Married	Adultkids	yes	yes
memb	30-44	M	Married	Kids	yes	yes
memb	18-29	F	Married	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	18-29	M	Married	NoKids	yes	yes
Regvisit	30-44	M	Single	Teens	yes	yes
Visitor	45-54	M	Married	Adultkids		
Visitor	45-54	F	Married	Adultkids	yes	
Visitor	55-64	M	Married	Adultkids	no	
Visitor	18-29	M	Single	NoKids	yes	
Visitor	55-64	F	Married	Adultkids	yes	
Visitor	18-29	F	Single	NoKids	yes	
memb	30-44	F	Married	Kids	yes	no
memb	30-44	M	Married	Kids	yes	yes
memb	30-44	F	Married	KidsTeens	no	yes
Visitor	45-54	F	Married	Adultkids	no	yes
Visitor	45-54	M	Married	Adultkids	yes	yes
memb	30-44	M	Married	Teens	yes	yes
memb	55-64	M	Married	Adultkids	no	yes
memb	55-64	M	Married	Adultkids	no	yes
memb	30-44	M	Married	Teens	yes	yes
Regvisit	65	M	Married	Adultkids	yes	yes
memb	30-44	M	Married	Kids	yes	no
memb	18-29	F	Married	Kids	yes	yes
memb	55-64	F	Single	Adultkids	yes	yes
Regvisit	65	M	Married	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	65	F	Married	NoKids	yes	
memb	55-64		Single	NoKids	yes	yes
Regvisit	18-29	F	Married	Kids	yes	yes
Visitor	30-44	F	Married	Kids	yes	yes
Regvisit	18-29	M	Single	NoKids	no	yes
memb	65	M	Married	Adultkids	yes	yes
Regvisit	65	F	Married	Adultkids	no	yes
memb	Teen	F	Single	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	45-54	M	Married	Adultkids	yes	no
memb	18-29	M	Single	NoKids	yes	no
memb	18-29	M	Single	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	18-29	F	Single	NoKids	yes	no
memb	45-54	M	Married	KidsTeens	yes	yes
memb	30-44	F	Married	KidsTeens	no	yes

memb	18-29	F	Married	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	18-29	M	Married	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	Teen	M	Single	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	65	F	Married	Adultkids	yes	no
memb	18-29	F	Married	Kids	yes	yes
memb	65	M	Married	Adultkids	yes	yes
Memb	Teen	M	Single	NoKids	yes	yes
Visitor	30-44	M	Married	Teens	no	yes
memb	18-29	F	Single	NoKids	yes	no
memb	18-29	F	Single	NoKids	yes	no
memb	45-54	M	Married	KidsTeens	yes	yes
Regvisit	55-64	M	Single	Adultkids	yes	yes
memb	18-29	M	Single	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	65	F	Single	Adultkids	yes	no
Regvisit	55-64	F	Single	Adultkids	yes	no
Regvisit	45-54	F			yes	no
Regvisit	45-54	M	Married	Kids	no	no
Visitor	30-44	M	Single	NoKids	no	yes
memb	30-44	F	Married	Teens	no	yes
Regvisit	65	F	Married	Adultkids	yes	no
memb	65	F	Single	Adultkids	yes	yes
memb	55-64	F	Single	Adultkids	yes	yes
memb	55-64	M	Married	Teens	yes	yes
memb	55-64	F	Married	Adultkids	no	yes
Regvisit	30-44	M	Married	Kids	no	yes
Regvisit	30-44	F	Married	Kids	no	yes
memb	45-54	M	Single	NoKids	yes	
Regvisit	30-44	M	Married	Teens	yes	yes
Visitor	18-29	M	Single	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	45-54	F	Married	Adultkids	yes	yes
Regvisit	55-64	M	Married	Kids	yes	yes
Visitor	18-29	M	Married	NoKids	yes	no
memb	18-29	F	Married	Kids	no	yes
memb	30-44	M	Married	Kids	yes	yes
Regvisit	30-44	M	Married	Kids	yes	yes
Visitor	30-44	F	Single	NoKids	no	yes
memb	30-44	F	Married	Kids	no	yes
memb	30-44	F	Married	Kids	yes	yes
memb	30-44	F	Married	Teens	no	yes

memb	30-44	F	Married	Kids	yes	yes
memb	45-54	F	Married	NoKids	no	yes
memb	18-29	F	Married	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	45-54	F	Married	Adultkids	no	yes
memb	30-44	F	Married		no	yes
memb	30-44	F	Single	Kids	no	yes
memb	30-44	M	Married	Kids	yes	yes
memb	18-29	M	Single	NoKids	yes	yes
memb	18-29	F	Married	Kids	yes	yes

8_FormerMemb	9_CurMemb	10_CurQual	10_FormerQual	10_Activity	10_Subject	10_Pastoral
yes	yes	4	3	3	4	3
no	no					
yes	yes	4	0	3	4	4
yes	yes	4	0	2	2	3
yes	no	0	4	4	4	4
yes	no	0	4	3	4	3
no	yes					
no	yes	5	5	0	5	5
no	yes	0	0			1
no	no					
no						
no						
no						
no	no					
yes	no	0	0	0		
yes	yes	4	3	3	4	3
yes	yes	5	5	5	5	5
no						
no						
no	no	0	4	3	4	4
yes	no	0	3	1	3	1
yes	yes	3	3	2	2	2
yes	yes	5	2	5	4	3
no	no					
no	no					
yes	no	0	2	2	2	2
yes	yes	5	3	4	4	4
yes	yes					
yes	yes					
no	no					
yes	yes	0	0	0	1	0
yes	yes	5	5	5	5	5
no	no					
yes	yes	5	5	3	2	5
yes	yes	5		0		
yes	yes	4	4	4	4	4
yes	yes	3	0	0	4	3
yes	yes	5	0	4	5	3
yes	yes	4	4	0	3	4
yes	yes	5	0	5	5	5
no	no					
no	no					

yes	yes	5	3	4	4	5
yes	yes	5	3	4	5	5
no						
yes	yes	3	3	3	3	0
yes	no	0	4	0	4	3
yes	yes					
no	no					
			3			
yes	yes	3	0	2	3	2
yes	yes	4	0	3	4	5
yes	no	0	4	2	3	4
no	no					
yes	yes	4	0	0	4	4
yes	no					
no	no					
no	no					
yes	no	0	4	2	4	4
yes	no	0	3	0	4	3
no	no					
no	yes	5	0	0	5	
yes	yes	5	5	0	5	5
yes	yes	5	0	1	4	2
yes	no	4	0	4	2	
no	no					
no	no					
no	no					
yes	yes	5	5	5	5	5
no	no					
yes	no	0	3	2	3	3
yes	no	0	0			1
no	yes					
yes	no					
yes	no	0	5	0	4	1
yes	yes	4	4	3	4	
no	no					
yes	no	3	0	0	4	4
no	no					
yes	yes	3	5	2	3	3

no	no					
yes	no	0	3	0	3	3
yes	yes	5	5	5	5	5
yes	no	5	5	5	5	5
no	no					
yes	no	3	0	0	3	3
no	no					
yes	yes	5	0	3	4	4
no	no					

11_Interest	11_Busy	11_BadTime	11_OtherMin	11_Sitter	11_Other	12_ConvenForm
					Never been Asked	yes
			yes			yes
	yes		yes			yes
					visitor	
					visitor	
					visitor	
					visitor	
					visitor	
					visitor	
	yes					yes
				yes		
					no connection to same age group and Lifestyle	yes
	yes		yes			yes
						yes
			yes			yes
					distance	yes
			yes		tried it before	yes
				yes		yes
					Never been Asked	yes
						yes
						yes
						yes
					Never been Asked, distance	yes
		yes			Never been Asked, distance	yes

	yes				part of a Different Group	no
						yes
			yes			yes
	yes					no
						yes
	yes	yes	yes			no
					Family circumstances	
	yes					yes
					just rejoined the church, Maybe In the Future	yes
yes	yes					yes
						yes
			yes			yes
			yes			yes
	yes		yes			yes
						yes
	yes		yes			no
						yes
		yes			not much Energy	yes
	yes		yes			yes
	yes					yes
	yes					yes
	yes		yes			yes

			yes		yes
		yes			yes
				Family Circumstances	yes
				the language	
yes					no
	yes	yes		yes	yes
			yes		
yes			yes	yes	yes

13_PrefFreq	14_WeekDay	14_WeekEve	14_SatDay	14_SatEve	14_SunEve	15_BibleGroup
biweekly		yes				
		yes		yes		yes
weekly		yes				
weekly	yes	yes				
biweekly		yes				
biweekly		yes			yes	yes
biweekly				yes		
biweekly		yes				yes
monthly		yes				yes
weekly		yes				
biweekly		yes				
biweekly					yes	yes
biweekly		yes				yes
biweekly		yes				yes
biweekly		yes				yes
weekly		yes				
monthly		yes				yes
biweekly		yes				yes
biweekly		yes				
biweekly		yes				yes
monthly				yes	yes	
biweekly		yes				yes
biweekly		yes				
biweekly		yes				yes
		yes				
monthly				yes		yes
weekly		yes		yes		
biweekly		yes				yes
weekly		yes				
weekly		yes	yes		yes	
biweekly					yes	
biweekly		yes			yes	yes
biweekly				yes	yes	yes
biweekly		yes		yes		yes
biweekly		yes		yes		yes

biweekly		yes		yes		
biweekly				yes		
weekly		yes				
biweekly		yes				yes
biweekly	yes	yes				yes
	yes	yes				
biweekly	yes		yes			
biweekly					yes	
biweekly		yes		yes		yes
biweekly		yes				
		yes				
biweekly		yes				yes
biweekly		yes			yes	
		yes				yes
monthly		yes				
biweekly		yes	yes			yes
monthly				yes		yes
biweekly	yes					yes
	yes					
biweekly		yes				
monthly		yes				yes
biweekly		yes				yes
weekly		yes				
biweekly		yes				yes
weekly					yes	
weekly					yes	yes
biweekly	yes	yes				yes
monthly				yes		yes
biweekly	yes					yes
		yes				yes
weekly	yes					yes
biweekly	yes	yes				yes
biweekly	yes	yes				yes
biweekly		yes				yes
biweekly		yes				

biweekly			yes			
biweekly					yes	yes
					yes	
weekly	yes	yes				yes
biweekly		yes			yes	yes
biweekly	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
weekly		yes				
biweekly				yes	yes	
monthly	yes	yes	yes	yes		

15_MomGroup	15_Support	15_Marriage	15_Themed
		yes	
		yes	
	yes		
	yes		
	yes		who Jesus is
			interested
			interested

			horseback riding
yes			
	yes		
		yes	
			mixed
	yes		
	yes		
	yes		
		yes	
		yes	
	yes		
yes			

yes			
	yes		
	yes		singing, Dutch class
	yes		
yes	yes		evangelism, diakonie
yes			

15_Other	16_Remarks
mixed	
mixed	
house group	
	First time visitor
	First time visitor
	First time visitor
	First time visitor
	First time visitor
	First time visitor
don't know	
	Wed/Thu best days
	First time visitor
Young adults 30 years old	
don't know	
young adults	

youth		
womens group		
Young adults 30 years old		
Young adults 30 years old	more group activities	
young adults		
mix between bible and support		
	doesn't want to take any more Evenings away from her kids	
	all groups can be work Oriented as well	
	all church campaign where all groups focus on the Same theme	
	young adults group didn't Work very well	
daily Christian life	there are no other parents with teenagers in her group And she misses that	

	94
Dutch class	
parenting, norms and values, addiction, creative arts	there's not enough community and ministry Opportunities

	1_CStat			18-29	30-44	45-54	55-64	65
memb		57	69.51	16	20	7	8	6
Regvisit		17	20.73	1	6	4	4	2
Visitor		8	9.76	1	3	3	1	0
			100					
	2_Age							
18-29		20	24.39	20	0	0	0	0
30-44		30	36.59	0	30	0	0	0
45-54		11	13.41	0	0	11	0	0
55-64		11	13.41	0	0	0	11	0
65		10	12.2	0	0	0	0	10
			100					
	3_Gender							
F		43	52.44	11	16	5	5	6
M		39	47.56	9	14	6	6	4
			100					
	4_MStat							
Married		61	74.39	11	26	10	6	8
Single		21	25.61	9	4	1	5	2
			100					
	5_FStat							
NoKids		24	29.27	15	3	3	1	2
Kids		28	34.15	5	19	3	1	0
Teens		8	9.76	0	7	0	1	0
Adultkids		21	25.61	0	0	5	8	8
			98.79					
	6_CurContact							
yes		59	71.95	18	17	7	8	9
no		23	28.05	2	13	4	3	1
			100					
	7_PrefContact							
yes		66	80.49	15	27	7	10	7
no		16	19.51	5	3	4	1	3
			100					
	8_FormerMemb							
yes		52	63.41	14	17	6	7	8
no		30	36.59	6	13	5	4	2
			100					
Former/Current								
yes/yes		32	39.02					
no/no		23	28.05					
yes/no		19	23.17					
no/yes		5	6.1					
			96.34					
	9_CurMemb							
yes		37	45.12	14	11	1	3	8
no		42	51.22	6	18	8	8	2
			96.34					
	10_CurQual							
0		16	19.51	3	6	4	3	0
1		0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	7	8.54	1	3	1	1	1
4	9	10.98	3	5	0	1	0
5	18	21.95	7	4	1	2	4
Current Qualit	0	60.98					
10_FormerQual							
0	18	21.95	7	6	1	3	1
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2.44	1	1	0	0	0
3	12	14.63	2	4	2	3	1
4	8	9.76	2	3	2	1	0
5	10	12.2	2	5	1	0	2
Former Qualit	0	60.98					
10_Activity							
0	15	18.29	5	5	2	0	3
1	2	2.44	0	0	0	2	0
2	8	9.76	2	2	3	1	0
3	10	12.2	2	6	0	0	2
4	6	7.32	3	0	0	3	0
5	7	8.54	2	4	1	0	0
Activity	0	58.55					
10_Subject							
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1.22	1	0	0	0	0
2	5	6.1	1	1	0	2	1
3	9	10.98	2	2	3	1	1
4	20	24.39	5	10	2	3	0
5	11	13.41	5	3	1	0	2
Subject	0	56.1					
10_Pastoral							
0	2	2.44	1	0	0	0	1
1	4	4.88	0	2	0	2	0
2	4	4.88	2	0	0	2	0
3	13	15.85	2	8	3	0	0
4	10	12.2	3	3	2	2	0
5	12	14.63	6	3	1	0	2
	0	54.88					
11_Interest							
yes	3	3.66	1	2	0	0	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3.66					
11_Busy							
yes	14	17.07	0	10	3	1	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		17.07					
11_BadTime							
yes	5	6.1	1	2	2	0	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		6.1					
11_OtherMin							
yes	15	18.29	1	8	2	4	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

		18.29					
	11_Sitter						
yes	4	4.88	1	3	0	0	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4.88					
	Anders						
yes	12	14.63	5	5	2	2	0
no	70	85.37	15	25	9	9	10
		100					
	11_overig						
Never been a	2	2.44	1	1	0	0	0
visitor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
no connectio	1	1.22	0	1	0	0	0
distance	1	1.22	1	0	0	0	0
tried it before	1	1.22	0	0	0	1	0
Never been a	2	2.44	1	1	0	0	0
Never been a	2	2.44	0	1	1	0	0
part of a diffe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family circun	2	2.44	1	0	0	1	0
just rejoined	1	1.22	0	1	0	0	0
not much ene	1	1.22	1	0	0	0	0
the language	1	1.22	0	0	1	0	0
		17.08					
	12_ConvenForm						
yes	37	45.12	9	17	4	6	1
no	4	4.88	0	2	2	0	0
		50					
	13_PrefFreq						
weekly	11	13.41	2	7	1	0	1
biweekly	47	57.32	13	18	5	6	5
monthly	9	10.98	3	3	1	2	0
		81.71					
	14_WeekDay						
yes	13	15.85	3	5	2	0	3
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		15.85					
	14_WeekEve						
yes	55	67.07	9	23	7	9	7
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		67.07					
	14_SatDay						
yes	4	4.88	1	3	0	0	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		4.88					
	14_SatEve						
yes	16	19.51	10	5	1	0	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		19.51					
	14_SunEve						
yes	15	18.29	8	6	1	0	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		18.29					

15_BibleGroup							
yes	42	51.22	8	17	6	6	5
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		51.22					
15_MomGroup							
yes	5	6.1	2	3	0	0	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		6.1					
15_Support							
yes	12	14.63	2	3	3	3	1
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		14.63					
15_Marriage							
yes	5	6.1	0	4	1	0	0
no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		6.1					
			3	3	1	0	0
15_Themed							
who Jesus is	1	1.22	1	0	0	0	0
interested	2	2.44	0	1	1	0	0
horseback ri	1	1.22	1	0	0	0	0
mixed	1	1.22	0	1	0	0	0
singing, Dutc	1	1.22	1	0	0	0	0
evangelism,	1	1.22	0	1	0	0	0
		2.44					
			4	8	1	1	1
15_Other							
mixed	2	2.44	0	2	0	0	0
house group	1	1.22	0	0	0	1	0
don't know	2	2.44	0	2	0	0	0
youth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
young adults	2	2.44	2	0	0	0	0
Young adults	3	3.66	2	1	0	0	0
womens grou	1	1.22	0	0	0	0	1
mix between	1	1.22	0	1	0	0	0
daily christia	1	1.22	0	1	0	0	0
Dutch class	1	1.22	0	0	1	0	0
parenting, no	1	1.22	0	1	0	0	0
		18.3					

APPENDIX C: IMPORTANT CHURCH DOCUMENTS

C.1: SG-Oriented Church (Kringgeoriënteerde Gemeente)

This is a document written by a CB member who proposed that the church become a SG-oriented church.

Kringgeoriënteerde gemeente
geschreven door Sytze de Haan

Het laatste jaar is er veel gebeurten zijn we als gemeente bijzonder gegroeid vanuit een buitenkerkelijke doelgroep. Dit is altijd ons gebed geweest maar hier lijkt nu wel een doorbraak in te hebben plaats gevonden. Nu staan we met elkaar voor de uitdaging om deze mensen te discipelen en verder in te spelen op de behoefte van velen. Een aantal zaken zijn al zeer voortvarend opgepakt maar de vraag is hoe we dit op lange termijn gaan borgen en bewaken zodat we niet achteraf hoeven te repareren maar juist tijdig bijsturen.

Ik denk dat we als gemeente altijd zoveel mogelijk geprobeerd hebben om alles te combineren en tegemoet te komen aan vele wensen. Hierdoor zijn we ook een dynamische gemeente geworden en hebben hier zeker veel profijt van gehad. Wel heeft het ons ook vaak laten zien dat het onmogelijk is om alles goed en volledig te doen en hier ook nog eens een goede respons vanuit de gemeente op te krijgen.

Mijn idee is dan ook vooral gebaseerd op het kiezen van een richting met elkaar en ons hier aan te committen. Dit zal dus ook betekenen dat hierdoor andere zaken zullen vervallen of anders worden ingevuld, maar dat is inherent aan het maken van een keuze en bepalen van richting.

Ik zou willen voorstellen om het volgende seizoen in te zetten op de kringen en dit zo vorm geven dat we een kring georiënteerde gemeente worden. Dit zal dan dus de basis vormen van het gemeenteleven. Deels is dat natuurlijk al zo maar vormt dit niet als zodanig de basis. Vanuit onze huidige groei en de duidelijk behoefte om mensen verder te brengen, in te pluggen en te werken aan de onderlinge relaties zou dit een goede en duidelijke basis kunnen vormen.

Hoe ik het zie zouden we het seizoen met een gemeente avond kunnen starten waarin alle kringen samenkomen en richting ontvangen dmv woord, worship en gebed voor de komende tijd. De weken hierop komen de kringen dan bij elkaar om dit thema met elkaar uit te diepen en is er veel ruimte voor relatie, onderwijs en gebed. Dit zou een serie van 8 weken kunnen zijn en wat mij betreft wekelijks waarna er weer een gemeente avond volgt. Ik denk dat het belangrijk is dat er continuïteit wordt geboden maar dat de blokken ook overzichtelijk zijn.

De uitvoering moet natuurlijk verder uitgewerkt en praktisch bekeken worden. Wel is het idee hiervan dat dit komt ipv de huidige gebeds- en onderwijsavonden zodat iedereen de kans en gelegenheid krijgt om de kringen te bezoeken want naast elkaar zal het niet gaan werken. Mensen zullen altijd keuzes maken en prioriteiten hierin stellen, ook als wij dit niet doen.

Wel kan er op specifieke behoeften worden ingespeeld door bijvoorbeeld onderwijsdagen in te stellen waarin mensen een soort mini bijbelschool op een aantal zaterdagen zouden kunnen volgen. Ook kan tussen de blokken in een break worden ingelast die op verschillende manieren ingevuld kan worden. Verder is denk ik vrijwel alles in een kring in te passen waarbij verschillende accenten zeker mogelijk zijn maar de richting wel duidelijk moet zijn. Dit zal dus op de gemeenteavonden gegeven moeten worden.

Ik kan me ook zo voorstellen dat we bijvoorbeeld op een zondag een vasten afkondigen waarbij dit op een woensdag gemeenteavond gezamenlijk wordt afgesloten. Zoals je kunt merken houdt dit me behoorlijk bezig en geloof ik dat dit een sleutel voor ons kan zijn in de komende jaren. Als je hier ook enthousiast van wordt kun je de mail doorsturen aan het DB/AB en zouden we dit met elkaar kunnen bespreken en overdenken en vooral over bidden.

Van oudsher spreken we over kringen maar het zou denk ik goed zijn hier een andere, meer toepasselijke, naam voor te kiezen. In andere gemeenten wordt bijvoorbeeld de naam "connect groups" gebruikt die meer aangeeft wat het doel van zo'n groep is.

Dit alles is natuurlijk helemaal niet nieuw maar misschien wel het juiste moment om te schakelen.

C.2: Church-Centered Church (Kerkgecentreerde Gemeente)

This is a response to the document above, made by another board member who proposed the church-centered model.

Respons: Kerkgecentreerde Gemeente
door Christa Neefjes

Ik heb tijd nodig gehad en genomen om op dit idee te reageren. De vasten- en gebedstijd en de voorbereiding daarop waardoor ik 'gedwongen' werd steeds weer na te denken en te bidden over allerlei gemeentefacetten hebben hierin erg geholpen.

Als ik het zo lees komt jouw voorstel voort uit zorg voor het inpluggen en discipelen van *nieuwkomers*. De uitkomst is echter voor *alle* gemeenteleden: een gemeente waarbij kringen de basis van het gemeenteleven vormen.

Je spreekt over 'inspelen op de behoefte van velen' en dat we als kerk met het aanbieden van veel verschillende activiteiten hebben geprobeerd om tegemoet te komen aan 'vele wensen'.

Misschien is dat onze fout want zouden we niet veel meer moeten kijken naar 'de behoefte en wensen' van God? Wat Hij wil is namelijk ook het beste voor ons. Bovendien twijfel ik er aan hoe groot die behoefte van mensen is; de opkomst in kringen of betrokkenheid bij gemeente-activiteiten valt vaak tegen. Uiteraard is er wèl een keuze van een richting nodig en is er bij iedereen gelukkig wel een verlangen te groeien in discipelschap en gemeenschap.

In de politiek zijn er twee uitersten: 'de overheid zorgt voor alles' (socialisme) en 'iedereen zorgt voor zichzelf' (liberalisme). Het mooie van de ChristenUnie vind ik altijd haar standpunt dat iedereen een eigen verantwoordelijkheid heeft (met een overheid die ruimte schept/faciliteert) maar dat de overheid een verantwoordelijkheid heeft voor diegenen die dit zelf niet aankunnen (met een overheid die de zorg voor hen regelt).

De kerk is niet gelijk hieraan, maar de uitgangspunten zijn wel te herkennen in hoe we de gemeente benaderen. Jouw voorstel lijkt een beetje in de richting te gaan van 'de kerk zorgt voor alles'. In het verleden hebben we al eens een poging gedaan om iedereen in de gemeente in te delen in kringen en hen daarvoor uit te nodigen. Ik denk ook nu dat mensen zich niet in een kring laten plaatsen ook al doen wij nog zo ons best om uit te leggen hoe goed het is en hebben we geweldige kringleiders. En met onze drukke werkroosters en gezinnen is het ook niet eenvoudig om iets gezamenlijks te plannen en het dan ook vol te houden. We merken dat zelf ook bij het plannen van onze vergaderingen.
Kringen hebben ook iets *kunstmatigs*: je komt bij elkaar omdat je dezelfde leeftijd hebt of in dezelfde buurt woont. Dan zijn de 'bedieningsteams' nog beter omdat je daar dezelfde interesse deelt en een gezamenlijk doel nastreeft. Daarmee zijn de contacten *natuurlijker.*

Daarbij komt nog dat als ik naar de huidige kringen kijk dat mensen wel groeien door het onderwijs

maar de huiskringen hebben niet het effect dat men buiten de kringbijeenkomst méér contact en zorg voor elkaar heeft.

Als het gaat om *ontmoeting/zorg* dan gebeurt dat vooral in de kerk, en daarbuiten bijv. bij het Schatrijk en vooral ook via social media zoals Facebook. Als we dit erkennen dan kunnen we elkaar ook aanmoedigen om elk moment van contact te zien als een mogelijkheid om 'kerk te zijn' dus ook te gebruiken om elkaar te bemoedigen, voor elkaar te bidden en met elkaar te leren van God.
Het *onderwijs* dat in een kring plaatsvindt kun je ook op een andere manier organiseren.
Waar de kerk *wel* een zorgende rol in speelt is het organiseren van een kring voor *nieuwkomers*. Dat werkt wel goed en zo hebben we de flowchart ook ingericht: een Alphacursusgroep, een wie-wat-waar-groep, een fundamentengroep. Maar ook daar zien we doorstroom naar een nieuwe huiskring niet lukken omdat de nieuwkomers in die fase al merken dat de groep uit mensen bestaat die heel verschillend zijn, er is dan geen aanleiding meer om samen als kring verder te gaan. Nieuwkomers zijn dan al aardig ingeburgerd, er ontstaan vriendschappen en zij stromen door in een bediening en zo in een team. Ik denk dat we de flowchart daarop moeten aanpassen.

Mijn keuze voor de *overige gemeenteleden* zou zijn: de kerk faciliteert: bestaande kringen houden en als mensen zelf een kring willen opstarten, prima! We moedigen dat aan en ondersteunen dat. Maar zoals je merkt zie ik een gemeente met kringen als basis niet zitten.

Als het bestuur wel deze keuze maakt, (en dat is niet onmogelijk want jij hebt er ook over gebeden) dan is het voorstel dat je schrijft om dit te introduceren wel een goed idee. Elly heeft hier misschien ook nog gedachten over en zij zou dan moeten gaan uitwerken. Andere kerken gebruiken nog termen als celgroepen of groeigroepen.

De gemeente-gebedsavond hiervoor helemaal te laten vervallen lijkt me overbodig: als je het voor de kringen moet hebben van de kleine groep mensen die hier gebruik van maakt dan zijn dat er nog niet veel.

Deze aanpak zouden we ook bij wijze van proef kunnen doen. Werkt het niet dan weten we dat ook (nog een keer). Het bestuur moet dan het goede voorbeeld geven door zelf ook kringlid te worden.
Een alternatief voorstel: **de kerk wordt het centrale punt in het gemeenteleven**.

De gedachte hierachter volgt uit onze visie om 'een kerk te zijn die zichtbaar is en bekend staat in Zaandam als een Huis van God, een Huis van Gebed, waar iedereen die een toevlucht bij God zoekt, weet waar hij of zijn naar toe kan gaan en welkom is. Voor de glorie van de Naam van Jezus.'
Dat kan niet met een leeg gebouw en een gemeente die verspreid is over vele huiskringen.
Wanneer we het gemeenteleven concentreren op één plek en de kerk is de hele week open dan kan iedereen die daar behoefte aan heeft komen op de momenten dat hij kan en wil. Gemeenteleden zowel als nieuwkomers en bezoekers. We leggen niets op, dwingen mensen niet in een kring, maar bieden iets aan en mensen maken zelf een afweging om hier wel of niet aan deel te nemen. Degenen die een behoefte of interesse hebben zullen hier zeker op af komen. Anderen zullen zich vrij voelen om thuis te blijven zonder schuldgevoel.

Dit is een plaatje:
Zondag een geweldige dienst vol lofprijs en aanbidding en een preek waarin alles op Jezus Christus gericht is. De kinderen hebben hun eigen versie. Na de dienst volop tijd voor gesprekken, gebed, ontmoeting. Er is koffie en Bert werkt een plan uit zodat er ook samen gegeten kan worden. Iedereen die dat wil kan heel lang in de gemeente blijven hangen. (ik kan zo een aantal mensen noemen die nu al bijna niet weg kunnen komen en tot het laatste moment blijven).

Maandagochtend is nu al een vast punt in de week van schoonmaak maar mensen komen nu al 'meehelpen' vanwege de gezamenlijke koffie en de ontmoeting. Dit kan breder gemaakt worden.
Dinsdag is nu 's ochtends taalles en 's middags Bijbelstudie/fundamentencursus. Waarom zouden we dit niet voortzetten en verbreden naar iedereen die dinsdag overdag graag naar de kerk wil komen?
De kerk kan standaard van 10 – 12 uur open zijn, mensen kunnen meedoen met de les en we zorgen dat er altijd iemand is (voorganger, oudsten, diakenen, pastoraal team) voor een gesprek, gebed, kopje koffie, praktische hulpvraag.
Naar behoefte kan er dan ook overdag een Alphacursus of Fundamentenles worden gegeven.
Woensdag: eens per maand Kidzark, maar de andere woensdagen is de kerk open vanaf 16.00 uur. Wie dat wil kan komen (ook met kinderen), er is altijd iemand aanwezig. Om 18.30 uur is er een gezamenlijke eenvoudige maaltijd voor wie zich daarvoor heeft aangemeld (kostprijs zelf betalen) en om 20.00 uur is er een gebedsavond of cursus.
Donderdag: eens per twee weken seniorenochtend maar ook de andere week is de kerk open van 10-12 uur. Er is altijd iemand aanwezig. Er kan een cursus worden gegeven.
's Avonds is muziekoefenen. De kerk is dan ook open. Er is altijd iemand aanwezig. Mensen kunnen komen om te luisteren of mee te helpen als dat mogelijk is. Nieuw talent wordt ontdekt.
Vrijdag: elke week jeugdavond. De kerk is dan ook open voor gebed of gesprek.
Als het even kan moet de kerkzaal een stille, rustige plek zijn waar je God kunt ontmoeten. De rest van het gebouw mag voor alles gebruikt worden.

Het zou fantastisch zijn als je naar de kerk kunt komen als je door de week een verlangen hebt naar een ontmoeting met God en je medebroers en –zussen. Of als je een geloofsvraag hebt of een nood die je wilt delen dat je weet dat er daar iemand is die je kunt spreken hierover en niet tot zondag moet wachten.

Omdat je weet dat de kerk toch open is, kunnen er onderling afspraken gemaakt worden om elkaar dan in de kerk te ontmoeten, of om een vergadering of overleg te hebben.
Ik weet dat het nu nog niet zo'n gezellige plek is maar dat kan veranderen.
Ik weet ook dat er inzet van mensen nodig is, maar dat kan komen en voor een deel is die er al.
Bijkomend 'voordeel' van een intensiever gebruik van het gebouw is dat het gebouw ook echt 'eigen' wordt, mensen raken meer betrokken, gaan zien wat er verbeterd kan worden en gaan het ook zelf aanpakken. Er zullen ideeën komen en/of men zal ontdekken dat het gebouw hiervoor te klein is.
Samengevat zou ik dus niet de richting van een kringengemeente kiezen maar (nieuwe) activiteiten in het gebouw laten plaatsvinden zodat de kerk een bruisend centrum wordt.

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