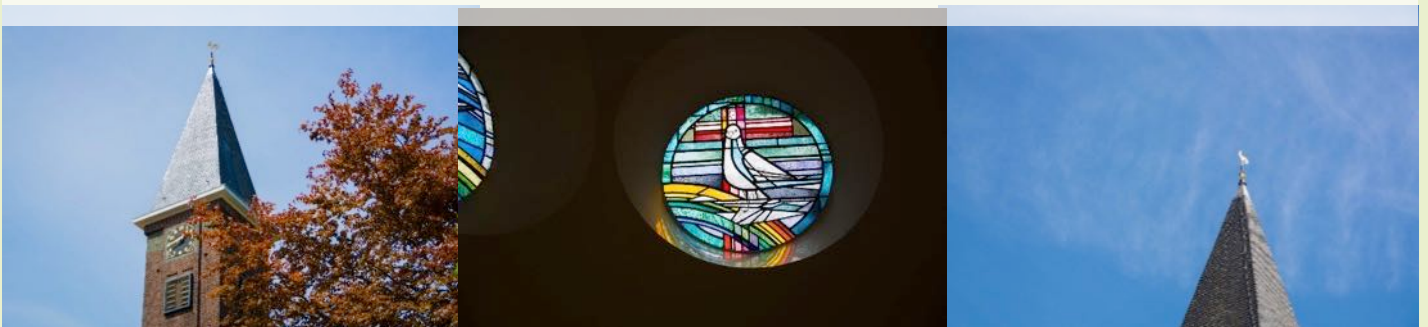




# Getting churches engaged in sustainability practices

How can GroeneKerken get more churches engaged in its social movement?

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**Master thesis**



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In cooperation with **GroeneKerken**  
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## Preface

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The copyright of the master thesis rests with the author, Emma Tomassen. She is responsible for its contents. Rotterdam School of Management is only responsible for the educational coaching and cannot be held liable for the content. GroeneKerken, Tear and KerkInActie are only responsible for providing the author with data and cannot be held liable for the content.



**Kerk  
inActie**



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To add a more personal note, I would very much like to thank my family and friends. Especially mom, dad, Sjoerd and Robin: thank you so much for all the emotional and mental support during conducting and writing this thesis and thinking along with me. Anne-Wil and Nicolette, thank you for handling my stressed-out moments at home. Thank you for all your trust in me. And finally, I would like to give thanks to my main source of inspiration: God. Thank You for putting this belief in me and for creating this beautiful earth.

## Executive summary

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Sustainability is becoming of increased importance. One of the aspects of a sustainable lifestyle is living in balance with nature, caring for the environment and ecological justice. These three aspects can be combined in 'care for the earth' which is by many Christians seen as a biblical task. They believe that God has created the earth and has given this earth to the people to work and keep it, and take a good care of it. When presuming this definition and biblical task, how can it be that there are so many churches in The Netherlands and only so little of them are seriously engaged with sustainability? Why are Christians not frontrunners in sustainability? These two questions were the start of designing and performing this research.

GroeneKerken is a campaign which is run by KerkInActie and Tear and wants to give sustainability a podium in Dutch religious institutions, mainly churches. The goal of this research is to determine how the GroeneKerken campaign can get more churches involved in its social movement. Therefore, the research question is: *"How can GroeneKerken get more churches involved in its social movement?"* This is researched by a combination of theory and practice. A literature research has been conducted around three themes: religion and sustainability, social movements and engagement in these movements, changing into sustainable behavior. The second and main part of this research was a qualitative case study with 22 in-depth interviews with different churches in The Netherlands, coming from different religious streams and with a varying level of engagement with the GroeneKerken campaign. The interviewees were either actively engaged, non-actively engaged or non-engaged with the social movement.

The results of the research are elaborated according to six aggregated dimensions, or main themes, coming from the interviews. These dimensions are: barriers for churches in joining the GroeneKerken campaign, incentives to do so, the process of implementing change and the outcomes of the changes, and finally the collaboration on different levels and the possible communicative role of GroeneKerken. It is highly beneficial for GroeneKerken to have these dimensions researched, especially the barriers and incentives to join the campaign. Besides, it is explained detailed how GroeneKerken can fulfil its role in the religious environment based on the insights gained from the performed interviews.

To summarize the research findings of this study, GroeneKerken should improve its promotion by adjusting the message of its campaign and broaden the communication channels. This conclusion is based on the literature and on the empirical research: it appeared that most churches either did not know GroeneKerken through the church but had heard from the campaign in their personal lives, or did not know about the existence of GroeneKerken at all while they were engaged in sustainability practices, which makes them potential new partners of the social movement of GroeneKerken. The combination of improving these two aspects (message and media) of the promotion strategy will eventually lower the barriers for individual churches to join the campaign, which implies that more churches will join the social movement of GroeneKerken. GroeneKerken should do so by 5 steps: local promotion by pioneer churches, automatically updating the website, changing the internal and external division within GroeneKerken, broaden its communication channels, become a facilitator. This way, the awareness of the existence of GroeneKerken will be increased which is the start of contact with new churches. Next, when these potential new churches are identified and triggered, GroeneKerken should adjust its message to potential barriers in joining the campaign. The combination of a broader promotion and adjusting the message to structural decrease the barriers for churches will lead to more engaged churches in the social movement of GroeneKerken.

There is a threefold contribution to the existing literature by this research. First, it combines different theories into one complete set of preconditions in joining social movements by groups. Second, thereby it especially focuses on groups, which has not been done extensively in the existing literature. Thirdly, the research provides empirical findings which demonstrate justify these theoretical set of preconditions. This provides us with many implications and especially the theoretical, societal, environmental and practical implications have been identified. Amongst others, five pillars for increasing engagement in social movement have been conducted and are discussed in the implications section: these pillars make the research more applicable for other social movements. Finally, a critical perspective on this research is taken and recommendations for further research are made.

**Key words:** social movements, engagement, church, GroeneKerken, religion, sustainability, change management

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## Introduction

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“Genesis 1:1 In the **beginning**, God created the heavens and the earth.”  
“Genesis 1:31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was **very** good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”  
“Genesis 2:15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **work** it and **keep** it.”  
“1 Peter 4:10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as **faithful stewards** of God’s grace in its various forms.”

When reading these verses in the starting chapters of the Bible, it appealed to me that God has given us, human, the task to work on and take care of the earth. Stewardship in the bible reflects taking care of (material) possessions and the earth in general. It is a key in sustainability from a Biblical perspective. From this point of view, it sounds logical that churches should be the frontrunners in sustainability practices. However, in practice this is often not the case. Many churches lack knowledge of and interest in sustainability. GroeneKerken is a campaign of KerkInActie and Tear to increase awareness of sustainability among churches in The Netherlands.

Personally, I am a member of the Pinkstergemeente Morgenstond Gouda, a ‘groene kerk’ (a sustainable church which is actively engaged in the GroeneKerken campaign). My church has very positive experiences with being engaged in the GroeneKerken campaign. I asked myself the question why there are so many churches in The Netherlands and why there are only so little of them connected to the GroeneKerken campaign. From this personal interest, I developed the aim of helping KerkInActie and Tear with getting more churches involved in the campaign, on a more academic level. Therefore, this thesis will be used to provide the GroeneKerken campaign with an advice on how to engage more participants in its social movement.

This study is focused on providing an advice to the GroeneKerken campaign, based on academic literature and qualitative research. First, a literature research was conducted consisting of three broader themes: religion & sustainability, social movements and engagement in these, changing into more sustainable behavior. All these three themes are believed to have a connection to the research question of this study. Second, 22 in-depth interviews were performed in three categories of (non)-engagers in the GroeneKerken campaign: churches with an active engagement, non-active engagement or non-engagement. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the combination of theory and empirical research. Based on these conclusions, an advice is provided to GroeneKerken.

GroeneKerken is a campaign which is run by Tear and KerkInActie, two Christian organizations. Tear is responsible for the external contacts and KerkInActie is responsible for the relationship management. GroeneKerken wants to be a connecting actor for the churches and wants churches to make one sustainable step per year. There is no contribution which needs to be paid, only the intention of being more sustainable needs to be shown. GroeneKerken is built around six ways to make a church more sustainable:

1. Nature and environment
2. Policy and process
3. Money
4. Belief and inspiration
5. Conscious purchasing
6. Energy and climate



Figure 1. Six steps to make a church more sustainable, source: GroeneKerken



## **Chapter 1**

Research question,  
objective and  
contribution

## 1.1 Importance of research

The practical importance of this study comes forth from a lack of resources at KerkInActie and Tear, the organizations behind the GroeneKerken campaign. There is the need and the aim to grow this social movement and research is needed to see how a maximum growth can be achieved. However, there are only few (financial) resources available to conduct research. Besides, as an outsider researcher there is a higher objectivity and authenticity (Kanuha, 2000, p. 444). Though, objectivity is not the main aim of conducting this qualitative research, but that the fact that the researcher is an outsider of the organization could give fresh and new insights. Therefore, it is important that an outsider with academic knowledge conducts research for the GroeneKerken.

As a social movement, one is convinced of its advantages to the earth and / or society which means that people engaged in the movement, will always have the aim to increase and further develop the movement. Sustainable social movements are needed because they provide a shift towards a more sustainable society, which is needed to live up to the needs of future generations. The advice coming forth from this research can be used for other social movements as well.

## 1.2 Research question

For this study, the research question is **“How can GroeneKerken get more churches engaged in its social movement?”**

There are four sub-questions which were answered throughout the research to conduct an answer to the research question. These questions cover the aspects of general social movements, the relationship between religion and sustainability, and an investigation of the current situation at GroeneKerken.

- What are ways of engaging more partners in a social movement in general?
- Is there a consistent relationship between Christianity and sustainability?
- What are current barriers of churches to join the GroeneKerken campaign?
- What are motivations of churches to join the GroeneKerken campaign?

In the case of GroeneKerken, partners are churches.

## 1.3 Research objective

**General objective:** To determine how the GroeneKerken campaign can get more churches involved in its social movement.

**Specific objective:**

- To analyze ways of engaging partners in social movements in general;
- To find out whether there is a consistent relationship between Christianity and sustainability;
- To determine current barriers of churches to join the GroeneKerken campaign;
- To create an overview of the motivations of current actively engaged churches at the GroeneKerken campaign;
- To analyze how Tear and KerkInActie are currently engaging new churches and interested parties and how they are communicating with already-engaged churches;
- To give a concrete advice on how to get more churches involved in the GroeneKerken campaign.

Since it is aimed that GroeneKerken will profit from an advice, which is grounded in academic literature yet practical and ready-to-implement, this is a practice-oriented research.

#### 1.4 Research contribution

The findings of this research contribute to the benefit to society with assessing how to increase the engagement in social movements. The more individuals, organizations and other parties get involved in social movements, the more sustainable our society will become. Research, mostly quantitative, on religion and ecology and sustainability has so far mostly focused on the individual and not very much on groups and institutes (Boyd 1999; Olofsson and Ohman 2006; Sherkat and Ellison 2007 cited in Berry, 2014). This research adds to the current literature by focusing on this collectivity in religion. Furthermore, the findings of this research will help GroeneKerken to expand its social movement amongst churches in The Netherlands.



# Chapter 2

## Methodology

First, the literature research sets the context. Besides, preliminary answers to the research (sub)questions were searched here. It provides us with concepts and frameworks which are relevant for this study. Combining theory and empirical data is a strong base for making recommendations to GroeneKerken.

Second, as a way of collecting empirical data a case study approach was chosen. This provides flexibility to the researcher regarding the uniqueness of special cases (Eisenhardt, 1989). There are various concepts defined in this research process:

- Engagement in social movements
- Religion and sustainability
- Changing into more sustainable behavior

The structure of this research looks like a funnel, starting at a general level and through the case study narrowing down more and more to finally provide GroeneKerken with a relevant, applicable advice.

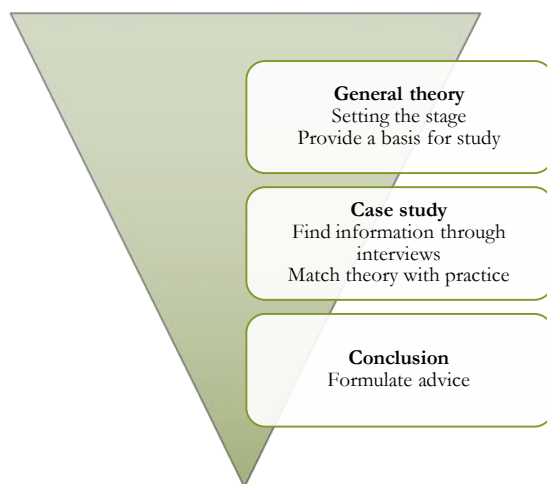


Figure 2. Structure of the research

## 2.1 Literature research

Research has been performed into the various theoretical concepts which are underlying the (sub) research questions. Subjects which are covered in the literature research are:

- Spirituality, religion, churches & sustainability
- Social movements and engagement in these movements
- Changing into more sustainable behavior

The literature research can be found in chapter 3.

## 2.2 Case study on Groene Kerken

A case study on Groene Kerken is performed. In this study, the current situation of GroeneKerken is analyzed to gain insights in the processes of churches within the social movement of engaging in the GroeneKerken campaign. The study consists of an internal and an external analysis.

- **Internal:** research on the processes of GroeneKerken. What does it currently do to attract new churches?

- **External:** research on the attitude of Dutch churches towards sustainability in general and the GroeneKerken campaign in specific.

Collecting data was done by performing interviews, as is often done when performing case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989). Internal data collection was done by interviewing employees/volunteers of the GroeneKerken campaign and through informal communication with the contact person of GroeneKerken. External data collection was done by performing interviews with churches in The Netherlands. These interviews are divided in three categories.

Finally, a conclusion was drawn upon the results of this research. The conclusion includes an advice for GroeneKerken to attract more churches for their social movement. The researchers' personal aim is that this research will have a practical contribution to a movement which she values in her personal life.

## 2.3 Data collection

There are three groups of interviewees, ranging from most to less engaged with the GroeneKerken campaign:

1. Actively engaged churches (actively engaged)
2. Churches which are familiar, but not actively engaged (non-actively engaged)
3. Churches which are unfamiliar (non-engaged)

This clear distinction is made because different levels of engagement require different questions which need to be asked. Thus, the interviewees can be categorized into three different target groups. Interview guides can be found in appendix A, B and C.

Hanna van der Horst, contact person of GroeneKerken, has provided all contact information from both churches which are actively engaged with the campaign (and are called a 'groene kerk') and contact information from newsletter recipients. A selection of 'interesting churches' was provided by Hanna van der Horst. These interesting churches fall into category 1. For category 2, a random selection from the database was made. For category 3, churches were searched through the personal network of the researcher.

In total 22 interviews have been conducted. An overview of the interview dates can be found in appendix D. Sections 2.3.1 until 2.3.3 represent the external data collection and section 2.3.4 represents the internal data collection.

### 2.3.1 Interviews among actively engaged churches (actively engaged)

GroeneKerken has agreed on full cooperation for this study. GroeneKerken has contact information of all the churches which are currently engaged in the campaign and has given the permission to use this contact information for contacting churches for interviews. All interviews vary from 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes and took place either by telephone or face-to-face in the church, depending on the location of the church and the available time of the interviewee. In total, ten interviews have been performed in this category.

Name	Church	Church type	Church size	Function within church
<b>Bert Wolters</b>	Protestantse gemeente Elst	Part of national protestant synod	2127 members of which a smaller part visits the church weekly	Deacon who is specifically focused on sustainability
<b>Cees van Rijswijk</b>	Maria Christinakerk, Den Dolder	Part of national protestant synod, merger of reformed and strictly reformed	329 members of which 60 visit the church weekly	Church steward and responsible for maintaining the building
<b>Cent van Vliet</b>	Binnenstadsgemeente Leiden	Does not want to think in religious streams	General protestant church Leiden has almost 12.000 members	Member of general church council Leiden + member of working group ‘investeren om te besparen – meer groen met minder poen’
<b>Dick Zwiep</b>	Protestantse gemeente Goes	Part of national protestant synod, middle position within synod	2800 members of which a smaller part visits the church weekly	Chairman
<b>Gees Hummel</b>	De Inham, Hoogland	Part of national protestant synod	1066 members	Chairman of committee for mission, development aid and world diaconate + member of working group ‘de groene Inham’
<b>Gert Olbertijn</b>	De Oostpoort Gouda	Part of national protestant synod, ‘right-confessional’ signature	750 people visiting on a weekly basis	Leader of sustainability working group ‘Groene Genade’ (green grace)
<b>Hans van der Spek</b>	Pinkstergemeente Morgenstond Gouda	Pentecostalism	400 members	Previous sustainability coordinator
<b>Harry Haverkamp</b> performed the interview with working group member <b>Piet Ribberink</b>	Gereformeerde kerk Bennekom	Reformed church which is part of the national protestant synod	1845 members	Elder, was chairman of the church council until January 2017, member of working group ‘church, environment, society’
<b>Janne van den Akker</b>	Keizersgrachtkerk, Amsterdam	Part of national protestant synod, liberal church	Large amount of interested and sympathizing people	Member of ‘klimaat-en geloofgroep’ and ‘groene kerk groep’
<b>Ton van Leur</b>	H. Catharinakerk, St. Maarten parochie	Roman Catholic church	1100 members, 250 regular visiting church members	Was part of church council, now part of several working groups, e.g. ‘groene Catharinakerk’

Table 1. Overview interviews among actively engaged churches

### 2.3.2 Interviews among newsletter recipients (non-actively engaged)

The second category of interviewees consists of people who receive the newsletter of GroeneKerken but are not actively engaged with the campaign. These institutions apparently know GroeneKerken, however they are not actively involved (they can/do not call themselves a ‘groene kerk’). Different questions need to be asked to these institutions, since they apparently are not



motivated (yet) to get actively engaged with the GroeneKerken campaign. These interviews were aimed at finding the blockades in fully joining the GroeneKerken campaign. All interviews vary from 20 to 45 minutes. In total, four interviews have been performed in this category.

Name	Church	Church type	Church size	Function within church
<b>Anne Gelderloos</b>	Hervormde gemeente Bennekom	Part of the national protestant synod	290 members and 40 sympathizers	Coordinator of the accommodation, responsible for the buiding, garden and renting out the church
<b>Dick Sybenga</b>	Bethlehemkerk Gieten	Reformed association within the protestant synod	Approximately 140 members	Was church steward until 2014, is now volunteer
<b>Kornelie Oostlander &amp; Frank Cornet</b>	Protestantse gemeente Bloemendaal en Overveen	Part of the national protestant synod	1140 members of which a smaller part visits the church regularly	Kornelie: part of church council. Frank: chairman of working group sustainability
<b>Rudy Volkerink</b>	Thousand Hills International Church, Hilversum	Independent church, close to evangelical or pentecostalism	650 members	Sacristan, leader of general and technical aspects of the church

Table 2. Overview interviews among newsletter recipients

### 2.3.3 Interviews among unfamiliar churches (non-engaged)

These interviews were aimed at finding out why churches are not engaged with the GroeneKerken campaign. This can have various reasons. Churches of this category were found through the personal network of the researcher. All interviews vary from 20 to 45 minutes. In total, seven interviews have bene performed in this category.

Name	Church	Church type	Church size	Function within church
<b>Bas van de Ruit</b>	Hervormde Kerk Papendrecht	Reformed association within the protestant synod	1580 registered members in 2 areas with 2 preachers	Chairman of the financial church council
<b>Bert Weerd</b>	Hervormde Kerk Huizen - Meentkerk	Former reformed association church which is now part of the national protestant synod	1100 members	Preacher
<b>Chris Noordzij</b>	Evangelische gmeente De Rank	Evangelical, part of the evangelical alliance but mostly self-supporting	90 members	Chairman of the foundation which is responsible for the building and finances
<b>Hein de Vries</b>	Hervormde Kerk Woerden	Part of the national protestant synod	3000 members of which less are active (+/- 600)	Church steward
<b>Joost Sonneveld</b>	Oosterkerk Zoetermeer	Former reformed association church which is now part of the national protestant synod	900 members of which 350 visit the morning service and 100-150 the afternoon service	Part of the missionary council, called Perron 61. Has been active in the church council until 2015

<b>Michel Demmenie</b>	Parochie St. Christoffel	Roman Catholic church, merger of 5 parishes	25000 of which 3500 are active	Has been chairman of all parishes, now churchwarden
<b>Nico van Gent</b>	Hervormde gemeente Klaaswaal	Dutch protestant, part of the national protestant synod	400 church members	Part of committee of churchwardens, who take care of the (investments on the) building

Table 3. Overview interviews among unfamiliar churches

### 2.3.4 Internal data collection in GroeneKerken

The internal data collection took place by an interview with Henk van der Honing. Henk works one day per week for GroeneKerken. Besides, he is responsible for sustainability within its own church in Nieuwegein. The interview took place focusing on his role in the organization and his view on sustainable development in Dutch churches in general. Hanna van der Horst, the contact person for the researcher, also provided the researcher with information during phone calls or meetings. This information has been collected through informal conversations. Finally, information was found on the website of GroeneKerken. This information is publicly available and the interested churches also use this information as a base to make their decisions in joining the campaign.

### 2.3.5 Minimalizing biases in performing case study

Attention has been paid to minimalizing two types of biases: the church type bias and the personal network bias.

#### Church type bias

There is the need to minimize a ‘church type’ bias, meaning that different types of churches might view sustainability differently. To minimize this bias, a survey sample has been used existing out of representatives from different religious streams for the second category of interviewees. Interviewees for the third category were selected through the personal network of the researcher, however special attention is paid to having a varied sample in terms of types of churches.

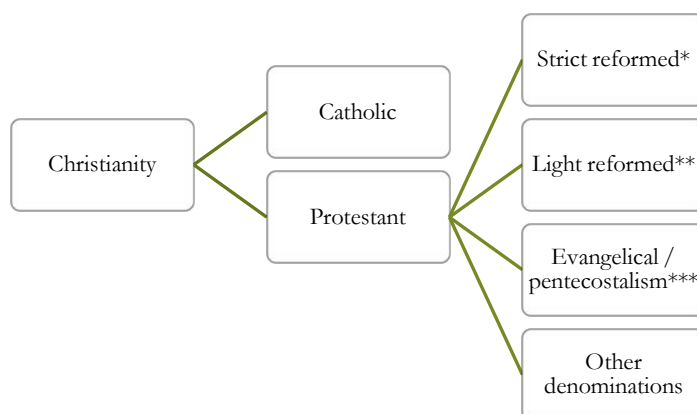


Figure 3. Different Christian categories

\* Dutch: ‘gereformeerd’

\*\* Dutch: ‘hervormd’

\*\*\* Dutch: ‘evangelisch’/ ‘pinkstergemeentes’

It is noteworthy that GroeneKerken has formed an agreement with both a Jewish and an Islamic collective, however, because of feasibility, this research only focused on Christian churches (when reading the word ‘church’ this can also be replaced by the Catholic parish).

### **Personal network bias**

Finding contact information of churches which are not currently engaged with the GroeneKerken was done through the researcher’s personal network. This makes the sample not completely random, since the researcher’s personal network has determined whether a religious institute will be asked to participate in the research. This bias is present, yet it is believed that it does not have an influence on the ‘church type bias’.

## **2.4 Data analysis**

The data analysis was done by transcribing and coding the interviews, starting from the raw data. All transcribed interviews were coded in *Atlas.ti*. In total, 861 quotations were processed in 175 first order codes. These first order codes were grouped in 28 groups, which finally were subsumed into 6 aggregated dimensions. An overview of the aggregated dimensions and the code schemes can be found in appendix H and I and will be discussed in chapter 4.

## **2.5 Validity and reliability**

In designing and performing this research, special attention has been paid to assessing validity and reliability. According to Golofshani (2003), in qualitative research validity and reliability are almost intertwined instead of treated separately. Therefore, these two concepts are discussed together.

### **2.5.1 Validity**

Whittemore and Chase (2001) distinguish between primary and secondary criteria in assessing the validity of qualitative research, based on various scholars which have contributed to their synthesis of validity criteria. Based on this perspective, which is built on the separate criteria, the validity of this research is assessed.

#### **Primary criteria**

The first two, **authenticity** and **credibility** are closely linked to each other and both refer to interpretive validity. Authenticity assesses whether the results of the qualitative research are a correct and believable reflection of the experience of participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001). This is more relevant in the phase of conducting the interviews. Credibility assesses whether the perceived meanings and experiences are correctly reflected in the description of the results of the research (Sandelowski, 1986 cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001) and whether this is done with a conscious effort (Carboni, 1995 cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001). This is more relevant in the phase of interpreting the interviews and writing the results section. Providing the reader with a correct and believable reflection of the experience of the interviewees has been done by coding whole sentences or even small paragraphs from the transcribed interviews. These full quotations are incorporated in the results-chapter, which eventually provides more context to the reader and provides a better reflection of what is truly said. Besides, this increases transparency. When only quoting small parts of the sentences, it might be easier to randomly include quotes and pull them out of the context in which they are said. Finally, Maxwell (1996, cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001) mentions the importance of interpretative validity. This is especially important in qualitative research as the researcher interprets the data which is collected. All interviews are fully recorded and transcribed and are available upon request. This also increases the authenticity and credibility: when there are uncertainties, a look can be taken at the original data.

The latter two, **criticality** and **integrity** are related as well. According to Marshall (1990, cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001) the reflexivity, open inquiry and critical analysis of the different interpretations, assumptions and knowledge background of the investigators can influence the validity in qualitative research. Especially in the critical reflection and the analysis of the results, integrity becomes important (Whittemore and Chase, 2001). As is the case with qualitative research, subjectivity of the researcher plays a large role. Therefore, integrity must be evidenced in the process through checks of interpretations (Ambert et al. 1995, cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001). These two aspects of validity are partly covered in the research. In chapter seven, the researcher takes a critical perspective on the conducted research. Special attention is paid to the role of the research as being a young, Christian person who studies 'global business and sustainability'. This background and knowledge influences the interpretations of the researcher. Please refer to chapter seven for a further elaboration on this. However, there have not been performed regular checks of interpretation by the researcher which means that integrity cannot be fully ensured.

### **Secondary criteria**

Even though these criteria are less broad than and do not directly map with the primary criteria, it is still believed important to assess them. Whittemore and Chase (2001) have identified these criteria from existing literature.

Firstly, **explicitness** represents how the interpretative effort of the researcher can be easily followed. It assesses whether the methods, decisions and analysis consistently and clearly reported and whether the results are presented explicitly with solid foundations in the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Ambert et al., 1995 both cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001). All the steps which were made in this research are clearly reported throughout this research. Besides, this report is written extensively and detailed which makes it good to interpret. This ligatures with **vividness** which represents the presentation of thick descriptions with amongst others imagination and clarity (Geertz, 1973 cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001). This is also reflected in providing rich data which makes consumers of the research almost able to personally understand and experience the subject of the research. The vividness is covered by interviewing churches from different Christian streams and by including extensive quotations of the interviews in the data analysis, namely in chapter 4. Almost all the interviewees were highly enthusiastic about the subject of the research and the fact that this research is taken place. With the thick descriptions in chapter 4 combined with the several examples material made and used by churches (which are included in appendix E, F, and G) this vividness has been tried to be guaranteed.

Third, **creativity** is represented both in the methodological design which is used to answer the research (sub-)questions and in the way of organizing the research paper and data analysis (Chapple and Rogers, 1998; Eisner, 1991; Patton, 1990, all cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001). The creativity of this research's methodology lies in the fact that both in- and outsiders of the social movement, namely engagers as well as non-engagers, have been interviewed. Besides, the researcher has combined several ways of analyzing data and presenting this analysis to the consumer of the research. This is most reflected in chapter four – results. There, the researcher has decided to discuss all six aggregated dimensions separately and make these the basis for the structure of this chapter, instead of arranging these dimensions under the research sub-questions.

The **thoroughness** of a qualitative research represents the sampling and data adequacy. Besides, it takes comprehensiveness of the research approach and analysis into consideration (Popay et al., 1998 cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001). Here, the connection between themes and ideas are assessed and it is often connected to completeness and consistency. To remain critical, it is believed that this research is not complete in the variety of interviewees. Only one person from within the

organization has been interviewed (Henk van der Honing). This can be experienced as a problem, because he only works one day per week and might therefore not be fully aware of all the developments in the organization. Furthermore, to create a stronger base for drawing conclusions and making recommendations, it would have been better to also have conducted interviews with people from a higher level in the Dutch religious spheres, for example the protestant synod. This is currently not the case.

The final secondary criterion in assessing the validity of this research is the **congruence** of the research. This means that there should be harmony between several aspects of the research. Marshall (1990, cited in Whittemore and Chase, 2001) has provided an overview of aspects between which congruency should exist.

- Research question, method and findings: Congruency is present here. To gain in-depth answers to the research (sub-)questions, a qualitative research method is chosen. The findings are also explained in-depth with attention to individual cases.
- Data collection and analysis: Congruency is present here. The right method has been chosen to analyze the data which is collected. Interviews were transcribed and coded.
- Current study and previous studies: Congruency is present because the current study provides empirical findings for the claims made in the previous studies.
- Findings and practices: Finally, congruency is present here, too. The findings of the study provide a good foundation for the practical recommendations which evolve from the study.

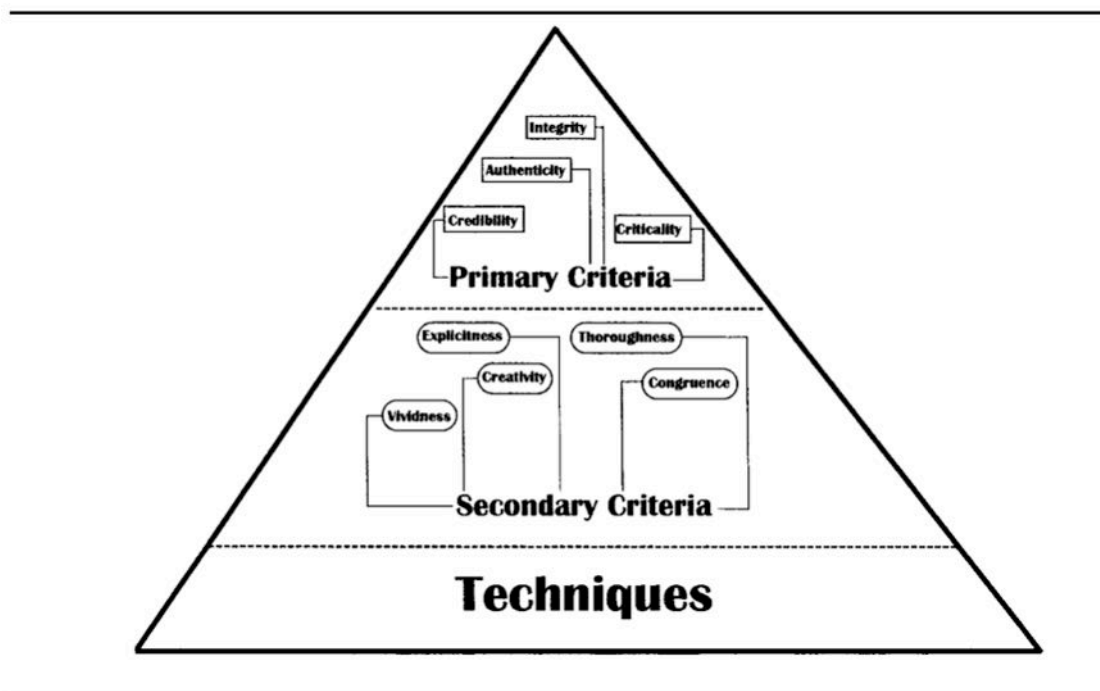


Figure 4. Validity criteria in qualitative research, source: Whittemore and Chase (2001)

### 2.5.2 Reliability

For ensuring reliability in qualitative research, especially examining trustworthiness is crucial (Golafshani, 2003). Trustworthiness is closely related to repeatability. Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Golafshani, 2003) even argue that there can be no validity without reliability. They argue that demonstrating the presence of validity is enough to establish reliability. As validity has been discussed extensively, this statement is brought into practice. Second, it is important to mention that the researcher has told all interviewees the purpose and methods of the research before

conducting the interviews. A context was provided about the research, so they all knew for which purpose they were participating. The interviews have been recorded which also adds to the trustworthiness; when there are doubts about quotations which have been used in the research, these can be checked on the recordings. A final part of reliability is repeatability. Since this is a qualitative research with attention for all individual cases, the results will never be exactly the same. However, as the processes and methods are explained detailed, the research can be repeated.



# Chapter 3

## Literature research

This literature review will cover three concepts or themes, based on the research question and accompanying sub-questions:

- Spirituality, religion, churches & sustainability
- Social movements and engagement in these movements
- Changing into more sustainable behavior, on an individual and collective level

### 3.1 Spirituality, religion, churches & sustainability

There is a difference between religion, spirituality and churches. This is a difference in terms of individuality versus collectivity, traditions, ethics and more. Religion is one of the hardest things to measure and empirical analyses of the relationship between government and religion are often ‘relatively crude’ (Fox, 2001). Even though it remains difficult to measure either religion or spirituality or provide one definition of a ‘church’, this section will try to provide definitions of these based on existing literature.

#### 3.1.1 Defining spirituality, religion and churches

It is important to verify the differences between these three facets, because they are sometimes used interchangeably. However, they are not the same and therefore clarification is needed. According to Schumacher (1997), spirituality is a higher-level human desire. People are searching for higher meaning and a purpose of their lives. Often people are motivated for spirituality because of the positivity it brings, e.g. love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatian 5:22, Bible). Ashforth and Pratt (2010) suggest that spirituality is composed of different factors: self, holism, harmony and growth.

However, is religion the same as spirituality? This is a matter of debate. As Petersen (1999) says, “religion is the formulation we give to a general order of existence”. This definition is very much in line with the previous mentioned one of spirituality – the search for a higher-level human desire. Hill et al. (2000, cited in Weaver and Stansbury, 2014) have tried to create a consolidated model for religion and spirituality. This model states that spirituality encompasses feelings, thoughts, experiences and behaviors and sacred goals. Religion encompasses spirituality and the search for non-sacred goals, like identity, belongingness, meaning, health, wellness together with the means and methods (Ashforth and Pratt, 2010). It is therefore important to make a clear distinction between religion and spirituality. Next to the search for goals, another distinction which can be made is the focal point: spirituality is personal and therefore more applicable to individuals. Religion adds to this that it focuses on the identification with others (ibid) and is more applicable to groups. Especially in the focal area of this research it is therefore important to mention that the focus lays on religion. Sherkant and Ellison (1999, cited in Obst and Tham, 2009) state that religion may affect both health and well-being through social integration and support, but also through positive emotions and healthy beliefs. Within the religious communities there is also often a discouragement of risky or aberrant behavior (Schmidt, 2005). This might as well result in a healthier lifestyle and better wellbeing. Within religious communities, individuals often stimulate each other to participate in spiritual activities (for example praying, meditation, worshipping) which leads to an increased well-being of the individuals (Poloma and Pendleton, 1989).

It is important to mention that there are also negative results from being engaged in a religious community. For example, individuals can feel judged or overburdened by expectations, or there may arise conflicts (Krause et al., 1998). It is therefore important to acknowledge that being engaged in a church may provide the individual with both positive and negative aspects of psychological sense of community (PSOC). A church can be a physical building where religious people come together, or the organization of these meetings, or a church is an organization where individuals can feel a strong sense of belonging and community (Obst and Tham, 2009). According



to them, being part of a church community fulfills the four dimensions of the PSOC developed by McMillan and Chavis (1986):

1. Membership: feeling of acceptance and belonging within the church
2. Influence: there are expectations towards church members
3. Integration and fulfillment of needs: church members provide and receive emotional support to each other
4. Shared emotional connection: the church members have a shared history and share experiences in the church

They state that there can be both an emotional and an instrumental support. Church members are often willing to help other members of their community. Obst and Tham (2009) found in their research that individuals with a stronger connection to a church and its members have a higher level of wellbeing. Besides, they found that religiosity (church attendance, prayer, experiencing presence of God, carrying religious beliefs into daily life) is positively related to the psychological well-being of individuals and negatively to feelings of depression and anxiety. This supports past research (Cook, 2001, Harris, 2002, Friedman et al., 2005, cited in Obst and Tham) and links to the shared identity which will be discussed hereafter.

**Spirituality:** Encountered by an individual, searching for a higher-level order of existence and the positivity it brings.  
**Religion:** Search for a higher-level order of existence, combined with the search for non-sacred goals like identification with others. Focuses on groups.  
**Church:** The organization of religious meetings of individuals, as well as the community where individuals can feel a strong sense of belonging.

Figure 5. Definitions of spirituality, religion and church

### 3.1.2 A shared identity

In churches beliefs are shared, standardized, imitated and this way moral uncertainty is reduced (Biscotti and Biggart, 2014). This applies to the identification with groups, as mentioned before. When an individual wants to identify him- or herself with a group, he or she is searching for the common identity of this group. This common religious identity can be highly influential towards individuals, as Weaver and Stansbury (2014) explain in their study. They claim that identity, schematic cognition and scripted behavior are three aspects which are present and even linked in religion (Weaver and Stansbury, 2014). All three aspects assess a different part of the process of influence. Our identity is influenced by different roles we take on in our lives, e.g. parent, employee, citizen, etc. Dependent on the situation, one or another identity can be more pertinent (ibid). The organizational context can have a strong influence on our identity, which is also the case with religion. There are potential tensions and conflicts, yet also a potential of a shared identity. Besides, there are guidelines or requirements provided to religious people, coming from the religious scripts, like the Bible. With schematic cognition, Weaver and Stansbury (2014) mean that there are ways of framing experiences, leading to differences in awareness and religious traditions. When practicing a religion, one will take over various ways of behavior or norms and values which makes him or her increasingly identified with the religion.

So, religion influences identity and through this influence it can affect other social aspects of life, such as the political preferences or movements (Weaver and Stansbury, 2014). This makes religion appropriate for encouraging engagement in various social movements, like the movement of sustainability and, more specifically, the movement of GroeneKerken. Social movements are movements of groups and very much applicable to religion.

### 3.1.3 Linking religion to sustainability

Religion is appropriate for engagement in social movements. In this study, there will be an emphasis on sustainable movements and sustainability. Various authors have performed research on this

relation and there is a large benefit which can be obtained when a religious organization engages in sustainable practices. As sustainability is a very broad concept, there are various focus areas. Here, there will be a focus on environmental and social sustainability. Furthermore, given ideas about how to engage in sustainability practices as a church will be provided, all based on academic literature.

First, there is a need to care for the earth. This fits in environmental sustainability, also named 'Planet' in the triple bottom line (people, planet, profit). Berry (2014) suggests that religious NGOs situate sustainability concerns within a broader moral framework. As mentioned in the introduction of this study, this is also the personal belief of the author. Because God has given us the earth to work on and to keep, it is important to engage in sustainability practices. Engagement in sustainability practices is in the broader moral perspective of taking care of the 'gift of nature' received from God.

Second, as Petersen (1999) argues, religion has a high aim for social justice which leads to the need of ecological justice – we want to share and sustain our world with current and future generations. This is a more social point of view and can also be placed in a broader framework. If we have received our lives and the earth of a higher power (God), we grant this life to others as well. "The concern for social and human health is as important as the general health, or sustainability, of the planet" (McMichael, 1999 cited in Petersen, 1999).

### **Changing the traditional point of view**

Why are churches not frontrunners on sustainability? Some evangelicals are hesitant towards climate change, since they fear negative implications for emerging economies (Koehrsen, 2015). Besides, traditional conservative churches often had the range of ideas that the environment was irrational, subordinate to the human species and in need of control (Merchant, 1980 and Ruether, 1992 cited in Biscotti & Biggart, 2014). In line with this view lies that the earth therefore needs to be rationalized and utilized, not conserved or protected. One explanation for this view can be; the idea that the earth is a gift from God and that the human species was assigned to rule over the earth and its animals, can also be interpreted more negatively. Traditional religious people can find the earth or animals subordinate to humans and therefore only rationalize and utilize them. This is an exact contrasting interpretation of the Bible verses quoted in the introduction of this study. Besides, it is sometimes difficult to align one's acts with its point of view and individualizing a point of view can be difficult as well.

However, churches are changing their attitude towards sustainability (Biscotti & Biggart, 2014). Religious groups are taking an increased positive stance towards sustainability, partly because of the efforts of social change organizations (ibid).

### **Defining eco-religious organizations**

Social change organizations which are based on religion are called 'eco-religious organizations'. These organizations differ from secular organizations since they have a clear religious motive. According to Biscotti & Biggart (2014), it is important for eco-religious organizations to refine theological boundaries. This is needed to engage religious with environmental activism, because these people often attach a lot of value to theology. Biscotti & Biggart (2014) also acknowledge that religious-environmental organizations engage in human care for the earth as a means of faith (Biscotti & Biggart, 2014). Therefore, the potential lies in convincing the religious communities that the natural world is very important to protect and conserve. Furthermore, Biscotti & Biggart (2014) emphasize how the religious-environmental movement is built on the ideas of social networks of religious organizations and on the recombination of traditional partners (ibid). Finally, Biscotti and Biggart (2014) say that, for churches, new ideas should be framed consistently with the community's beliefs to get them socially legitimate. This is in line with the first claim which

explains the need of clearly defining theological boundaries. Eco-religious organizations highlight collective changes instead of individual ones (Biscotti and Biggart, 2014). This makes these types of organizations suitable for social movements.

### **Practical implications for religious and eco-religious organizations**

After having identified the definition and potential of eco-religious organizations, one can get towards the more practical implications for this type of organizations. It is important to make a distinction between eco-religious organizations, created to stimulate religious organizations to engage more in sustainable practices, and religious organizations, being stimulated to engage in sustainable practices. Tear and KerkInActie, the organizations behind the GroeneKerken campaign, can be defined as eco-religious organizations, and the churches which GroeneKerken wants to attract are 'normal' religious organizations.

Koehrsen (2015) identifies three potential functions of religion as a subsystem in the local energy transition process:

1. Campaigning and intermediation in the public sphere
2. Materialization of transitions in the form of participation in projects related to sustainable transitions
3. Dissemination of values and worldviews that empower environmental attitudes and action

These three potential functions can also be interpreted more generally, not just in the local energy transition process. However, Koehrsen (2015) also places a critical note that religion is not the only or not even the strongest subsystem in encouraging people in eco-friendly behavior. This is an important note to make – eco-religious organizations carry a large potential but it is needed to acknowledge that these types of organizations are of course not the only ones in the path towards sustainability. Energy transitions require changes in both the technical, cultural and social domain (Koehrsen, 2015). Eco-religious or religious organizations can focus mostly on the latter two domains.

For religious organizations, one way to do this is by learning. Religion provides ethical teachings which orient human behavior, amongst others towards the environment and is expected to stimulate people to participate in environmentally friendly practices (Koehrsen, 2015). This can be done for example through education in Sunday schools (Clugston and Holt, 2012; Djupe and Hunt, 2009; Gottlieb, 2008 cited in Koehrsen, 2015). Another way to engage more in sustainable practices is by controlling consumption and stimulating members of a church to do so as well. Religious people often want to care for creation, as it is a gift from God. This cannot mean an uncontrolled consumptive lifestyle (Petersen, 1999). Petersen (1999) rather calls the appropriate lifestyle one in balance with the ecosystem.

For eco-religious organizations, there are other methods to get more religious organizations engaged in sustainable practices. Berry (2014) makes four claims about sustainability and religion, especially focused on eco-religious organizations:

1. Motive: The most widely espoused claim is that religious and secular groups working on sustainability issues differ not so much in the actual work they do but rather in their 'orientation' or 'motive'. This minimizes the significance of the difference between religious and secular civil society organizations (ibid).
2. Constituency: "Representatives of religious NGOs are not of one mind about the role that religion has to play in the global movements towards a more sustainable future" (ibid).
3. Normative appraisal: "Religion is the deepest vehicle for ethical values in societies around the world and religious institutions are the most effective mechanisms for mobilizing these values" (ibid).

4. Radical view: Special roles can be assigned to religious organizations – from this perspective, religious NGOs serve a prophetic role (ibid).

Of course, there are also challenges in these social movements of eco-religion. Social movements face challenges in finding financial resources and mobilizing people (Biscotti & Biggart, 2014). This is also the case with eco-religious social change organizations. Members will be better engaged when they have the idea that the environmental actions are religiously appropriate and spiritually engaged (ibid). Biscotti and Biggart (2014) performed case studies on Club EcoFaith and EcoFaith Federation. From the performed case studies, Biscotti and Biggart (2014) notice four strategies on how to support interpretation of the natural world, including responsibilities towards the nature, as something divine:

1. Ecological Stewardship as a Restoration Movement: by posting for example suggested sermons and activities, churches can encourage members to make caring for the earth a part of their worship activities.
2. Personal Revelation and Narratives of Belief: individuals are encouraged to calculate their carbon footprint and eventually take their own responsibility. Besides, EcoFaith Federation, a U.S.-based interfaith social change organization, found out that it works better to let people think about why they want to be motivated for environmental change, rather than focusing on ‘facts and figures’ and immediately going to action.
3. Community Building and Isomorphism: success stories of local congregations are shared to promote the community building and to encourage normative isomorphism. Besides, conditional cooperation is fostered.
4. Ritual: use rituals to declare status, and include ‘nature’ in some rituals.

#### 3.1.4 Differences between religious and secular social movements

Religious actors can have a strong presence in and impact on the public spheres of modern Western societies (Casanova, 1994; Habermas, 2008; Willaime, 2008 cited in Koehrsen, 2015). However, there remains a large difference between religious and secular organizations/social movements. Secular social movements focus primarily on changing the world outside of the movement, while religious social movements are having a more inward focus: they want to encourage a reformulating of the landscape to include the natural world (Biscotti & Biggart, 2014). The imitation of spiritual capabilities (by secular organizations) is very complex, because they are holistic, socially complex and causally ambiguous (Stead and Stead, 2013). Churches are in an advantageous position because they do not have to imitate these capabilities – they already carry them.

For secular organizations, it can be beneficial to engage more deeply with religion. This is not the case yet: “Even though religion plays a significant role in the lives and interactions of individuals, societies, and nations, the management field has only lightly and narrowly explored how religion’s influence manifests in the workplace” (King, 2008, p. 214). There are multiple reasons why this is beneficial, however there are also some reasons why this has not been the case so far (Tracey et al. 2014): (1) Religion is a private affair and is separated from business and the government. (2) There is a myth that religion is of declining importance. (3) Religion is not an appropriate object of study, because many scholars see it as something unimportant they do not want to engage in.

The benefits of engaging more deeply with religion are shown by the potential when organizations engage more with religion. First, religion plays a crucial role with the fundamental questions of our identity (who am I? who are you?) and identity is also apparent in the organizational and management theory (Tracey et al. 2014). Identity is one of the key elements in understanding each other and a good understanding is key for a good operating organization. An organization can also aim for a collective identity which can often be intimately related to religion (Tracey et al. 2014).

Below, a schematic overview of this first part of the literature research is provided. As this study is working in a funnel model, the schematic overview narrows down as one goes further from left to right.

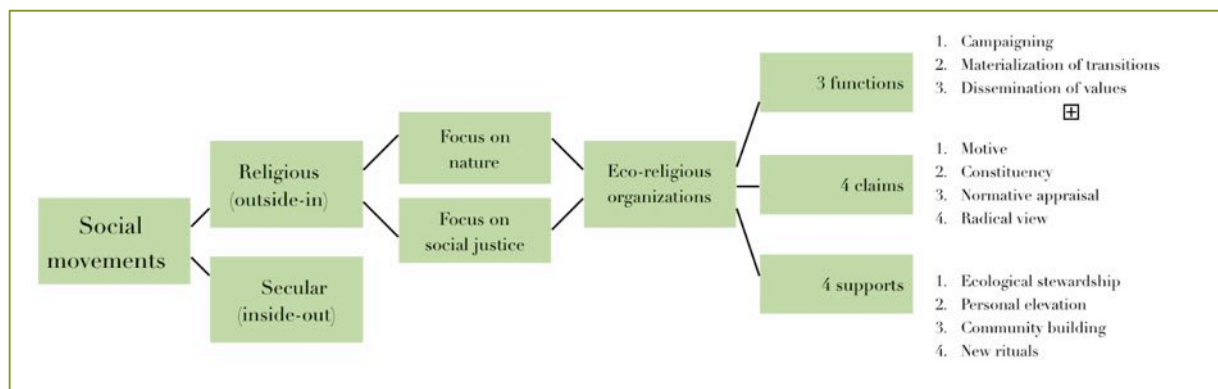


Figure 6. Overview and specifications of social movements

### 3.2 Social movements and engagement in these movements

Here, a description of a social movement and various aspects of such movement will be provided. First, it will be determined what a social movement is and afterwards other facets of social movements will be discussed.

#### 3.2.1 What is (not) a social movement

A social movement is a ‘distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action are involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents, are linked by dense informal networks and share a distinct collective identity’ (Porta and Diani, 2006). There are three parts which can be elaborated:

1. Conflictual collective action: Actors of a social movement are engaged in conflicts meant to promote or oppose social change.
2. Dense informal networks: A social movement is coordinated within the boundaries of specific organizations. A single actor, no matter how powerful, cannot claim to represent a social movement.
3. Distinct collective identity: The collective identity goes beyond specific events and initiatives and is strongly associated with recognition and the creation of connectedness (Pizzorno, 1996 cited in Porta and Diani, 2006).

There are different types of social movement organizations, of which one is the ‘grassroots organization’. This type of organization has a combination of a low level of formal structuration and a high level of participatory orientation (Porta and Diani, 2006). The participation is encouraged through different incentives, often ideological. The potential problems which grassroots organizations can face are a lack of commitment and cohesion of their members, because they stay too much in the ideologies. They often lack to make their actions concrete.

#### Separating social movements from other forms of collectivity

After having determined what a social movement is, it is important to distinguish this from other forms of collective actions / collectivity. Here, social movements will be set apart from four other forms: social groups, historical movements, consensus movements and collective actions. First, it is important to distinguish social movements from social groups (Shefner, 1995). Social movements are involved in a form of collective action and social groups do not need to be this per se. Second, Touraine (2002) acknowledges the clear distinction which needs to be made between historical and

social movements. This difference is made between studying movements within a societal type (social movement) and studying movements as reaction or part of a process of historical change (historical movement) (Touraine, 2002). Third, consensus movements are movements where broad coalitions of charities and other voluntary associations mobilize on consensus issues and refer to them as social movements (Porta and Diani, 2006). Consensus movement dynamics correspond to social movement dynamics in the fact that the actors share solidarity and an interpretation of the world, which makes them able to link specific acts and events in a longer time frame. The main difference between a consensus and a social movement is that the former does not incorporate a conflictual element (Porta and Diani, 2006). Fourth, there is a difference between social movements and collective actions (Porta and Diani, 2006). Porta and Diani (2006) say that collective action refers to individuals sharing resources to accomplish a collective goal – a goal that cannot be privatized to individual members. These goals can be produced within social movements and can also arise in areas where social movements are not common. The campaign of GroeneKerken is not a collective action, because the individual members (churches) are not initiating action – Tear and KerkInActie are. Besides, there is not one common goal which needs to be reached but instead it is a continuous process. Analyses on collective actions and social movements are sometimes inextricable related to each other.

### **1. Conflictual collective action**

According to the abovementioned definition of Porta and Diani (2006), a social movement starts with some form of conflict preceding a social change. This is confirmed by several other authors. Benford and Snow (2000) also acknowledge that social movements seek to cure or change an issue or an unsettled situation. One of the first steps in these social movements is probably the identification of the source(s) of causality, blame, or the responsible individuals (Benford & Snow, 2000). For social movements, there is the aim of attracting new individuals of groups to the movement, to increase its impact. Here the importance of correctly framing rises: the framing of the problem, the aim and the required social changes the social movement focuses on needs to be done correctly to attract the right (groups of) individuals. Paragraph 3.2.2 explains framing more deeply.

Next, also Touraine (2002) argues that a social movement starts with a conflict and that involved individuals want to defend their interests. He couples this with the resource mobilization theory and questions such as:

- How to get support?
- How to get material resources?
- How to build social or political alliances?
- What are conditions for good leadership?

Paragraph 3.2.3 explains the resource mobilization theory more deeply.

Lastly, also Jamison (2010) describes social movements as a collective form of social behavior organized for (political) action. It is a process of resource mobilization with the aim of affecting change (ibid). Social movements are often manifested through direct actions or protests, but these acts in themselves do not make something a social movement. For making them a social movement, they need to have a link or a connection to each other, for example through a platform or program (ibid). One could say that there needs to be a central coordination or a 'collective identity'. This is the case with GroeneKerken, which functions as a platform and a central coordination for the engaged churches.

### **2. Dense informal networks**

Social networks are both a facilitator and a product of collective action (Porta and Diani, 2006). Embeddedness in social networks works as a support to continued participation. The ties are

focused on the long-term and networks can 'count on' the individual participants. So, these individuals and the networks in which they are engaged have a crucial relationship, both for the involvement of people in collective action and for the coordination of action (Porta and Diani, 2006). According to Jamison (2010), many authors acknowledge the presence of some form of communicative action. Research can focus on various aspects of this communication, for example knowledge sharing or the role of passion and emotions. The cognitive praxis means that social movements are involved in linking ideas, ideologies and / or world view assumptions to specific actions or activities. This cognitive praxis is also acknowledged by Porta and Diani (2006).

The difference between movements, organizations and political parties is distinguished clearer and currently social movements are looked at as being 'networks'. Besides, movements provide new channels of communication (Porta and Diani, 2006). Passy (2003, cited in Porta and Diani, 2006) has clarified the difference between socialization, structural connection and decision-shaping functions of networks in mobilization processes. Networks operate to create predispositions to action, a sort of encouragement. Next, they create opportunities for transforming these predispositions into actual actions. Besides, networks are used to recruit new individuals in the network. Activists and target audiences interact when it comes to social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000). Besides, multiple audiences can be attracted. They can all have interest in a part of the social movement.

Finally, Porta and Diani (2006) come to three conclusions about networks in relation to (social) movements:

1. The role of networks can vary, depending on the costs and action.
2. Certain networks are more effective than others, which is often due to the extent to which the mobilizing messages and the cultural orientations of the movement differs.
3. The networks do not only differ in terms of contexts, but they also perform different functions. This ranges from socialization to creating concrete involvement opportunities.

### **3. Distinct collective identity**

In his book, *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*, Epstein (1991) states that movements are driven by what is widely felt together with the desire to create community. Besides, Epstein (1991) states that the characteristics of the process, together with the movement's willingness to build a new community culture with symbolic elements are of high importance. One of the reasons why this community is so important is given in the fact that new social movements are often not about material issues, but rather about the autonomous self-definition of community: people want to change behavior and they want to do this together.

There are two important consequences of the persistence of feelings of belonging (foregoing of identity building): The revival of mobilization will go easier and new movements/ solidarities might be developed (Porta and Diani, 2006). What is important to keep in mind when discussing the collective identity is that this assumes that actors engaged in the social movement are homogeneous. Organizations which are active in social movements have an important role because they are sources of identity (Porta and Diani, 2006).

#### **3.2.2 Collective action frames**

For understanding the character and course of social movements, there has been a proliferation of scholarship on framing processes, resource mobilization and political opportunity processes (Benford & Snow, 2000). Framing here means 'an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction' (Benford & Snow, 2000). The frames which flow from this process are 'collective action frames' (Benford & Snow, 2000). These collective action frames have two main characteristics:

- An action-oriented function
- An interactive, discursive process

As mentioned before, clear framing is important to attract the right (groups of) individuals.

There are numerous variable features of collective action frames. Benford & Snow (2000) name four of them:

1. Problem identification and direction: This is the most distinct way in which social movements vary. There is a variation in the problems or issues which they address and the corresponding course of action.
2. Flexibility and rigidity, inclusivity and exclusivity: Collective action frames can have a variation in the degree to which they are relatively exclusive, rigid, inelastic and restricted or inclusive, open, elastic and elaborated. This reflects the number of themes or ideas which are worked out and incorporated.
3. Variation in interpretive scope and influence: Most social movements have a specific scope and they are focused on the interests of a group or they are related to a specific problem. There are some 'master frames' which have a very broad scope. Master frames place movements in relation to a general orientation of a given period (Porta and Diani, 2006).
4. Degree of resonance: This addresses the question of effectiveness of the movement. The degree of resonance depends on two factors, namely the credibility of framing and the relative salience.

### 3.2.3 Resource mobilization theory

The societal support and the social movement pressure are both emphasized by the resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Several things are considered in this theory: the variety of resources which must be mobilized, linkages of social movements to other groups, a movements' dependence on external support for success, tactics of authorities to either control or incorporate movements (McCarthy and Zald, 1977).

Other authors classify social movement theory in three theoretical traditions as well (Johnston 2011, Schaeffer et al. 2005 cited in Gahan and Pekarek, 2013): resource mobilization, political opportunity structures, cultural-cognitive perspectives. The resource mobilization theory builds upon the rational choice theory and suggests the formation of Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) to have an efficient mobilization of resources, reducing the participation costs for activists and providing intrinsic benefits to them, like satisfaction coming from participation (Gahan and Pekarek, 2013). Next, the political opportunity structures emphasize the role of politics in shaping potential opportunities for social movements (Tarrow, 1998 and Tilly 1978 cited in Gahan and Pekarek, 2013). The third approach, cultural-cognitive perspectives, is mainly used by scholars to interpret behavior associated with social movements.

### 3.2.4 Social movements and climate change

Of course, there are various social movements which have 'climate change' as conflictual situation and on which change is opposed. According to Shove (2010) there are three slow-moving classic problems around which climate change revolves:

1. Construction and definition of social problems: The process of giving a definition to these social problems is complex and loaded, conveyed with for example political / cultural / economic power.
2. Relationship between nature and culture: This raises the question whether humans are part of nature or stand aside of nature.
3. Capitalism: Climate change and capitalism give certain tensions – what does climate change reveal and what does it mean for the current functioning of society?



There is currently a lot of media attention for climate change knowledge and there are often discussions going on about how to deal with climate change (Jamison, 2010). Jamison (2010) suggests that there are three main positions related to climate change knowledge which are all shaped by social movements:

- Dominant: Individuals who want to raise political awareness about climate change.
- Oppositional: Skeptical individuals who question the importance of dealing with climate change.
- Emergent: Individuals who are concerned with the issue of climate change, but who stress its importance mainly in ways connected to justice and fairness.

### 3.2.5 Social movement analysis

When analyzing social movements, there are various questions to ask and there is a social movement lifecycle in which social movements can be placed. According to Porta and Diani (2006) there are four core categories of questions for social movement analysis:

1. Relationship between structural change and transformations in patterns of social conflict
2. The role of cultural representations in social conflict
3. The process through which values, interests, and ideas get turned into collective actions
4. The influence of the social, political and cultural context on social movements' chances of success

Blumer (1951, cited in Porta and Diani, 2006) has identified a social movement lifecycle, consisting of four stages:

1. Social ferment: Unorganized, unfocused turbulence. Great attention is paid to the propaganda of 'agitators'.
2. Popular excitement: More clear definition of the underlying causes of discontent is made. There is a clearer objective of the action(s).
3. Formalization: There is a disciplined participation and a coordination of strategies on how to achieve the aims of the movement. A formal organization is created.
4. Institutionalization: The movement becomes an organic part of society. A professional structure is made.

It is notable that Porta and Diani (2006) mention that several authors have criticized this evolutionary lifecycle, because they question the necessity of such an evolution and propose a more radical change, and they also state that smaller movements rarely get institutionalized.

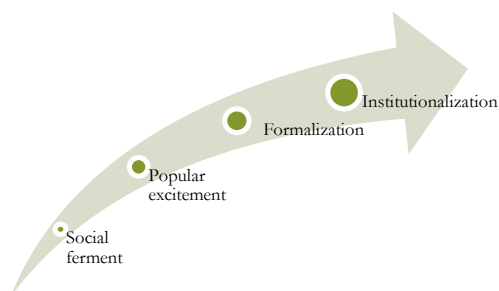


Figure 7. Social movement lifecycle

### 3.3 Changing into more sustainable behavior

There is a difference between changing one's individual behavior and initiating a change in group behavior. When looking at the GroeneKerken campaign, both types of change are needed. Individual change is needed in behavior and a point of view towards getting engaged in the GroeneKerken campaign. Besides, when expanding the sustainable movement, it is aimed that individuals see the church as an example for their private households. Simultaneously, change management is needed when a non-engaged church wants to get engaged with the GroeneKerken campaign. Therefore, these two types are elaborated on here.

#### 3.3.1 Changing individual behavior

##### **Influencing behavior**

According to Collins et al. (2007) values influence beliefs which in turn influence behavior. Collins et al. (2007) study the sustainable corporate performance (SCP) of companies and the beliefs of individuals influence both their individual behavior as how they feel about the capacity and the responsibility of the corporation. This means that strong positive beliefs regarding the environment can influence an individual's view towards the larger corporation. A side note which should be mentioned here is that this reflects for-profit corporations and that is not proven this will work the same with a non-profit organization. Besides, a second side note is that this is a very rational perspective. There are often multiple other factors involved in an individual's view towards the larger corporation.

Another aspect which is said to have an effect on behavior, is (perceived) influence and comparison. From the research of Leary et al. (2013) flows that when someone has the feeling that his or her behavior has an influence on others, it in turn impacts his or her own behavior. This is a so far unique conclusion in research, but very much in line with conclusions from previous research which show that individuals must believe that their actions influence the behavior of others and then their own behavior will already be positively changed. People want to make a difference.

Ferguson et al. (2011) discuss different types of comparison when it comes to sustainable behavior. Both inter- and intragroup comparison can lead to a more sustainable behavior. The type of comparison (comparing within the group or comparing an in-grouper with an out-grouper) is likely to influence the perception of personal or group norms (Ferguson et al. 2011). The extent to which a group defines itself as more or less eco-friendly influences the opportunities for personal or social change (Ferguson et al. 2011). Especially when groups are perceived as eco-friendly, an intergroup comparison can foster changes in beliefs, norms, values or behavior which will eventually have a more sustainable outcome (ibid). When the in-group is compared to a less sustainable outgroup, the in-group perceives itself as more sustainable and a smaller change will be present (ibid). Ferguson et al. (2011) also conclude that there can be a shift in who 'we' are (who is part of the group) and this shift can create new opportunities for influences and encourage both a personal and social change.

##### **Sustainable consumption**

Our society has a consumption problem and there should be a focus on smarter consumption (Kilbourne and Mittelstaedt, 2011 cited in Leary et al., 2013). Leary et al. (2013) define sustainable consumption as 'behavior intended to meet the needs of the current generation and benefit the environment without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs'.

According to Leary et al. (2013) there are three main questions which literature on environmental concern ask:

- Who is concerned about the environment?
- How does this environmental concern affect their behavior?
- Why are they concerned about the environment?

These three questions provide a fundament for changing one's individual behavior. Knowing why someone is concerned about the environment, can influence his/her behavior towards this environment.

### **Combining behavior and consumption: environmental mindsets**

There are three value orientations which influence environmental mindsets (De Groot and Steg, 2008 cited in Willis et al., 2017):

- Egoism: personal growth and aspirations → negatively correlated with pro-environmental behavior.
- Altruism: desire for equality between individuals → positively correlated with pro-environmental behavior.
- Biospherism: desire to live in unity with and to protect nature → positively correlated with pro-environmental behavior.

Willis et al. (2017) researched the relationships between 'Critical Thinking Disposition' (CTD) and 'Avoidance of Negative Emotions' (ANE) with pro-environmental behavior. Their results are that CTD positively and ANE negatively correlates with pro-environmental behavior. People who tend to think more critically about the results of their actions are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior. People who tend to avoid negative emotions, have a relatively higher egoistic value and therefore are less likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior (Willis et al., 2017). This is confirmed by several other authors cited by Collins et al. (2007): individuals with collective, society-directed values are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior. People who are motivated by power are also less likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior because they view the environment as inferior and focus more on their own personal advancement or development (Collins et al., 2007).

### **3.3.2 Changing group behavior**

#### **Resistance and cooperation**

When there is a top-down approach, where the leaders and / or managers initiate a change, they of course want the rest of the organization to engage in the proposed change. However, this is not always the case. Resistance to change often comes from the fear of the unknown by many people in the organization (Edmonds, 2011). Failure, potential loss and leaving one's comfort zone are also common reasons for resistance (Edmonds, 2011). According to Piderit (2000, cited in Simoes and Esposito, 2014) there are three components within the resistance to change: behavioral, affective and cognitive. Biscotti and Biggart (2014) also acknowledge the threat of resistance: the new ideas might be opposed to the traditional ideas (Biscotti and Biggart, 2014). The authors advice to not introduce the ideas as novel, but as a rediscovery of preexisting ones.

Edmonds (2011) says that there is a correlation between the 'readiness for change' and a successful organizational change. This implies that there needs to be a proper preparation of the change. One of the most important things mentioned by Edmonds (2011) is clarity. According to him, clear goals and a clear direction will lead to an increased motivation and a greater task accomplishment. Simoes and Esposito (2014) also acknowledge that communication is a very relevant dimension in a successful implementation of change.

According to Edmonds (2011) there are 4 categories of characters in dealing with change:

1. Blockers: they try to prevent change – their energy and power should be reduced.
2. Sleepers: they are not aware of the change – they need to be ‘waken up’ to get them on board.
3. Preachers: they are in a position of power, but do not give priority to change – inform them about the change and keep them focused.
4. Champions: they advocate change and want to implement it actively – keep them fully involved always to maintain momentum.

With their study, van Riel, Berens and Dijkstra (2008) show that there are three stimulating factors for strategically aligned behavior by employees:

1. Stimulate employee motivation to contribute to the strategy: develop a communication climate, consisting of supportiveness, openness and participation in decision making
2. Stimulate development of capabilities to implement the strategy: provide training and other stimulating activities
3. Inform employees about the strategy: do this both about their specific roles and in general

This implies that members of the organizations should be continuously informed and engaged with the proposed change.

### **Types of collective changes**

In their research, Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) address the question how organizations can align their change type with the most appropriate change method. Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) distinguish different aspects of change from existing literature. These are mostly focused on for-profit organizations, however also mostly applicable to non-profit organizations, like churches are.

- Change type
  - Change scale: this can be either large or small. This is the degree of change needed to get to a desired outcome.
  - Change duration: this can be either short or long. This is the period in which the change takes place.
- Change enablers
  - Knowledge and skills: This should be combined with a systematic orientation.
  - Resources: There should be enough resources to facilitate the change.
  - Commitment: The organization needs to be committed to work towards the change.
- Change methods
  - Systematic change: There are various change methods to help the management start, stop or continue decisions.
  - Change management: These methods are more broad and conceptual compared to the systematic change methods.
- Change outcomes
  - Achievement of project objectives
  - Customer satisfaction about the outcomes

An alignment model which combines the change type and the change method to come to the desired change outcome, is suggested (Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015).

### **Leadership**

When undergoing change, there is a difference between managers and leaders. Managers focus on the systems and structures, leaders on innovation, development and challenging the status quo (Edmonds, 2011). However, in a non-governmental organization (which churches are) it might be challenging to exactly determine which people in the organization are the ‘manager’ and which are the ‘leader’. These churches often function as a community. Often the individuals who are

responsible for the sustainability differ from the individuals who are leaders, e.g. the preacher. Northouse (2007, cited in Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015) describes leadership as the 'process whereby a person influences and directs others towards others to accomplish a certain objective or achieve a common goal'. In line with this description, a leader is the person who guarantees the organization is going in the right direction (Winston, 2004 cited in Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015).

Simoes and Esposito (2014) also mention the importance of sense making – individuals of the organizations need to understand whether change is needed and if so, why the change is needed, and especially why it is an improvement. This can be done by leaders and it is important here to focus on what is expected from change leaders as well.

### **Practical implementation**

Communication is of crucial importance in managing and organizing change. Several authors acknowledge this. Ramanathan (2008, cited in Sridarran and Fernando, 2016) had stated four steps in the process of change:

Step 1: context – external and internal factors prompting the change

Step 2: diagnosis and planning – investigate the need for change

Step 3: implementation – implementing the plan

Step 4: institutionalization – regulate the change

Sridarran and Fernando (2016) present a common framework which specifies the process which, according to them, needs to be followed per step.

Step 1: develop a SWOT or PEST analysis.

Step 2: Make an execution plan, implement continuous training, define a response mechanism, and make sure there is enough professional capacity.

Step 3: Communicate the scope, encourage team work, develop loyal relationships, examine indirect monitoring, ensure compatibility of the organizational culture.

Step 4: Demonstrate success of change, organizational learning, change in norms and leadership.

Frahm and Brown (2007, cited in Simoes and Esposito, 2014) have applied the five dialogic communication principles of Kent and Taylor (2002, cited in Simoes and Esposito, 2014) in an organizational change setting:

1. Mutuality: Collaboration towards the same goal, participants are not viewed as objects but as actual participants.
2. Propinquity: There is an actual engagement of the participants in the decision making.
3. Empathy: There is an atmosphere of supportiveness, communal orientation and confirmation of acknowledgement.
4. Risk: Participants can openly recognize what they do not know, and there is some extent of uncertainty with respect to the results of the dialogue.
5. Commitment: This applies to the dialogue and the interpretations.

Simoes and Esposito (2014) acknowledge the difficulty of a dialogic communication, because one must recognize the interpretative right of others and value the opinion of the participants. An open atmosphere is the key to a good dialogue.

Engaging in sustainable corporate performance (SCP) requires a corporation to balance its economic, social and environmental performance (Ranganathan, 1998 cited in Collins et al. 2007). It is not very clear how a SCP is determined; one of the theories to do so is according to the stakeholder theory, which states that a company can ensure that it is taking care of its responsibilities by acting in line with stakeholders' demands (Collins et al. 2007).



# Chapter 4

## Results

The results of the interviews are categorized into six aggregated dimensions. These dimensions will be discussed below and will eventually be used to provide an answer to the research question and to conduct recommendations for GroeneKerken. The dimensions will be discussed going from a single church level and will flow to a broader collective level.

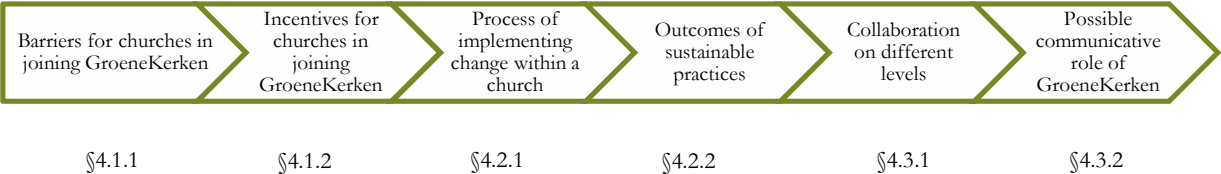


Figure 8. Overview of aggregated dimensions of coding process

First, both barriers and incentives for joining GroeneKerken will be discussed. Second, the process of change will be discussed along the dimensions ‘process of implementing change within a church’ and ‘outcomes of sustainability practices’. Finally, a broader point of view will be taken and a look will be taken at ‘collaboration on different levels’ and the sixth dimension is the ‘possible communicative role of GroeneKerken’.

4.1 Single church level – starting point

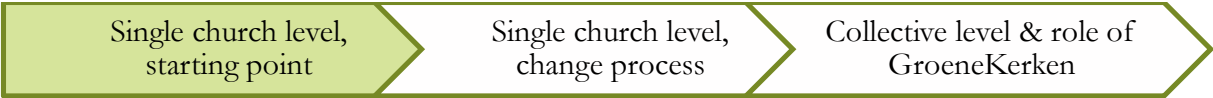


Figure 9. First phase of the aggregated dimensions

4.2.1 Barriers for churches in joining GroeneKerken

It is important to map the barriers which churches can experience in joining GroeneKerken. The second order codes which are combined in this aggregated theme are shown in figure 9.

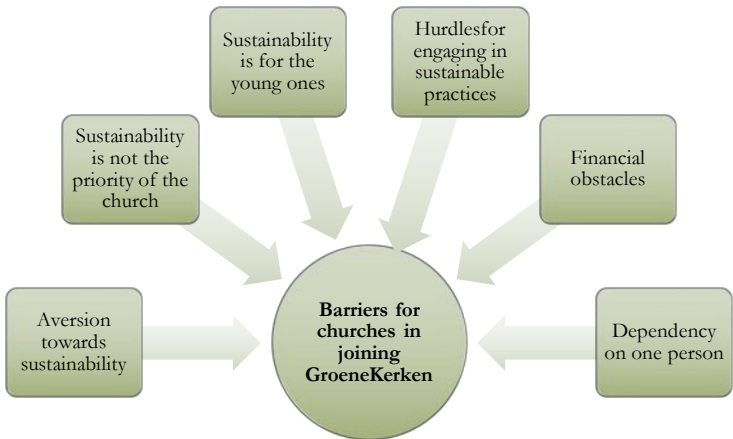


Figure 10. Barriers for churches in joining GroeneKerken

Firstly, some churches experience a general **aversion towards sustainability**. When this is the case, it is as a logical consequence that these churches are not interested in joining a campaign

which is focused on sustainability in churches. Aversion towards sustainability can come from the fact that the churches believe that focusing too much on sustainability can be distracting from the core of the gospel, which is the relationship between yourself and God and this is acknowledged by other churches:

*“Well, initially we are a little bit hesitant with such themes. People often get scared that it is too horizontal and that we it’s not about your relationship with God, but more about your relationship with each other” (B. Weerd).*

*“Well, you should be honest. Our reformed bond churches, which are also part of the PKN, are not frontrunners. They have just unlearned to do that. They’re walking, that’s at least something” (H. Haverkamp).*

Another often-mentioned reason for the aversion is that sustainability is experienced as ‘too leftist’, especially by the more traditional churches. Some interviewees mentioned that this might be a reason why more right-oriented churches would be less interested in it.

*“I know from Sjoerd what within KerkinActie, and even more within the national protestant synod (PKN) this piece (note: ‘maat, moet, mystiek’ from Lisette van der Velde) was considered ‘dangerous’. They were like – do we want to assign this? It was considered as very left and vague. Yes, then you can feel the resilience” (J. van den Akker).*

Something that falls in line with the aversion towards sustainability is the second barrier: **sustainability is not the priority of the church**. This can have various reasons, for example the fact that the church is meant to lead people to Jesus. But another often expressed reason for this non-priority is the fact that there is so much out there for churches. There are various actions, organizations, initiatives, both on local and national scale, which churches can join. Besides, there is both the focus on either growth of the church or the focus on merging churches. The growth is experienced in young churches in the cities. The need for merging churches is experienced in churches in smaller villages. People are getting older, moving away from the villages or not going to church anymore. All of these happenings distract the church’s focus on sustainability.

*“Sustainability is number 15 on the list of what we must do, so it doesn’t always have the highest priority” (K. Oostlander).*

*“We are a young and dynamic church where a lot of people start to believe in Jesus. That is of course fantastic and the goal of the church” (R. Volkerink).*

*“We went to the GroeneKerken day and said to each other: we should start this, but it’s currently not proficient. We’ll park it for 2 years, and when the merging trajectory is finished and the church is completely rebuilt, we’ll get started with it” (D. Zwiep).*

A third barrier is the fact that it is considered that **sustainability is for the young ones**. This can be a problem for churches where obsolescence is a problem. Their church members are getting older, no new and young members assign and therefore sustainability seems less relevant for them. This is not only a barrier for engaging in sustainability, but for implementing change in general. People, either within or without a church, can experience resistance to change. Especially when long traditions should be changed, it can be a large barrier.

*“Yes, for young people there is just more potential for change. The older you get, the more difficult it becomes to change your behavior and habits” (H. van der Spek).*

However, this does not only provide churches with a barrier but also with a potential. Having a ‘GroeneKerken’-sign on your church, can be very attractive for young people, as they are more



oriented towards sustainability. Maybe it is something they take into consideration when choosing a church to join. It can be said that this is a barrier at first, but when the barrier is overcome, a large potential is out there.

*"I was hoping that the younger generation would take up this theme, so I am very pleased that you are being active for this within the church. I am 58, I can give it a boost but the real change should come from your generation. The generation of my children. Fortunately, you see the drive to do and change things, that's very good. And there it is also needed to tell people about it, convince them and show the effects" (H. van der Spek).*

*"They are definitely not unimportant, but for the sake of continuity you should engage more with the younger people. That would also help to set up some more renewing things" (H. van der Honing).*

Fourthly, there are more general practical **hurdles for engaging in sustainable practices**. Here, the same holds as for the 'aversion towards sustainability': if a church experiences hurdles in engaging in sustainable practices in general, it is difficult to become a 'groene kerk'. The most common hurdle is: it takes time. This problem is experienced in all three categories of interviewees. For Janne, it took a year to assign the church to GroeneKerken (actively engaged category). For Rudy, it is still taking time to become a 'groene kerk' (non-actively engaged category). And Hein is reluctant to the amount of work it takes (non-engaged category).

*"Eventually it took a year to become a groene kerk, just because we were so busy" (J. van den Akker).*

*"It takes time, getting people to reflect" (R. Volkerink).*

*"It is absolutely not a conscious decision not to join GroeneKerken. But I have to say that it takes a lot of time" (H. de Vries).*

A fifth barrier is the **financial obstacles** it takes to make sustainable investments. This argument is mostly expressed by interviewees taking part in the financial or technical church council – a possible reason for coming up with this possible barrier is the fact that they are thinking in terms of large investments in the building. For example, putting solar panels on the roof can be an expensive sustainable investment.

*"Because it costs money. We have 72 solar panels here, that costed 21.000 euro. For churches in this time, that is a lot of money" (G. Hummel).*

Finally, there is the **dependency on one person**, which means that sustainability is often not yet embraced by all church members; not all individual church members are convinced of the importance of sustainability. Initiatives must come from one person and if he/she is not taking action, nothing happens. This can make the support for sustainability very fragile. Even though there are different ways of stimulating individual or group behavior, this barrier shows that eventually a strong individual is needed to bring up the proposed change. If this does not happen, change will eventually not be initiated.

*"You're often attached to individual people. And that is a problem, I also experience that with Kerk&Milieu Gouda. If the initiator falls out, it often tends to fall apart" (G. Olbertijn).*

*"There are so many things where you're asked for. To be honest, there are enough tasks" (B. van de Ruit).*

#### 4.2.2 Incentives for churches in joining GroeneKerken

There are 4 second order codes which are determined as incentives for joining GroeneKerken.

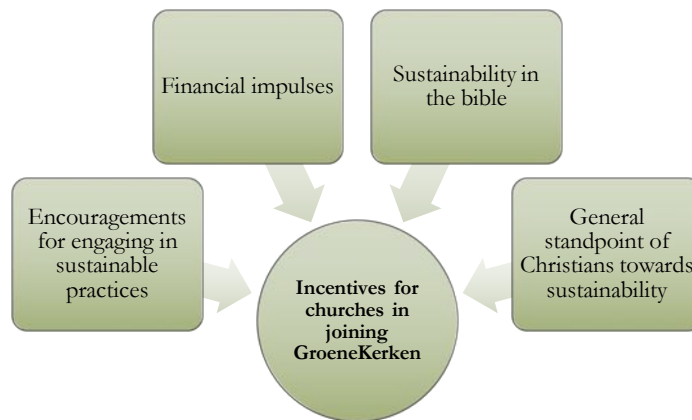


Figure 11. Incentives for churches in joining GroeneKerken

Contrary to the barriers which have been explained in chapter 4.1.1, there are also various clear incentives for joining GroeneKerken of which the first is **encouragements for engaging in sustainable practices**. These encouragements are experienced as a requirement for joining GroeneKerken, because a church needs to be somewhat motivated for being engaged in sustainable practices, otherwise it would not have an incentive to join a campaign with the focus on sustainability. There are several motives for engaging in sustainable practices, for example: not living at the expense of next generations, getting inspired by external factors like Laudato Si, pressure from society, willing to be a frontrunner, hearing a positive sound from churches, responsibility for the earth, social responsibility, love for the nature and working from the spirit of God. All of these encouragements have a (somewhat) ideological perspective. No strong or specific relationships between the church type and type of encouragement were observed.

*"We find it a task, coming from our view of life, to deal with our environment respectfully. With the nature. From that vision, we have investigated all sorts of practices within the church" (J. Sonneveld).*

*"It seems to be a practical subject, but in fact it has a deep spiritual dimension. Your belief and education, from the vision you have as a church, that's where it should be secured" (H. van der Spek).*

*"And, the social sustainability is important. I always say: if you're somewhat a 'normal' church, you should also be a sustainable church. A little bit of attention for the creation of the world, a little bit of attention for the people around you, just make a small step each year and you're good" (H. van der Honing).*

Second, there are some **financial impulses** for joining GroeneKerken. As is the case with the financial barriers, these have been brought up mostly by people having a task which is connected to either the technical or the financial part of the church. They are more focused towards making larger investments. What is interesting here, is the fact that the same investments are experienced by some churches as a barrier and by other churches as a motive. A possible explanation for this contradiction can be the term of orientation. A short-term orientation can make the investments look like a barrier: they are expensive. A long-term orientation can make the investments look like an impulse: they save money.

*"It was very justifiable to purchase these things, because after 8–9 years the costs are earned back and everything after that moment is profit. This gives you double profit" (B. van de Ruit).*

*“If you purely financially look at the budgets, there will always be tension in the future. Costs are rising and receiving’s are slowly decreasing. So purely from a financial perspective we decided to start investing, to eventually save. The subtitle is: ‘meer groen met minder poen’ – greener with less money” (C. van Vliet).*

A third motivation for joining GroeneKerken is **sustainability in the bible**: it is mentioned seven times that interviewees see it as a biblical task to take care of the earth. Besides, they mention three times that Jesus uses agrarian examples in the bible. These biblical examples come forth from the fact that Jesus lived in an agrarian economy, yet they also show that Jesus tells us how important nature can be. As the bible is the starting point of many Christians, this is believed to be a logical incentive or motivation to join the GroeneKerken campaign. Joining a campaign like this, or being engaged in sustainability in general, can be a practical implementation of being loyal to the bible.

*“When I look at the Old Testament, it is very much focused on the community of people, animals and farming lands. And on the other hand, when I look at Jesus in the New Testament, I see him speaking about the earth and the importance of it. He uses many examples coming from the agrarian life” (H. van der Honing).*

*“It is the task to take care of the earth and I strongly believe that there is a task for the church as well” (T. van Leur).*

Finally, there is the **general standpoint of Christians towards sustainability**. This describes the common feeling that the interviewees have towards the society and the earth. This common feeling is expressed as a feeling of ‘we have to do it together’ and ‘we have something to offer’. Furthermore, it is mentioned seven times that the church should be a frontrunner in sustainability, based on the abovementioned biblical task to take care of the earth. It can be interpreted that some of the interviewees want to bundle their strengths, create a more collective communication and make sustainability part of being a Christian. Finally, it is mentioned three times that churches are not taking responsibility enough. This should be increased more, when becoming an incentive to become a ‘groene kerk’.

*“But if you are a good Christian, you’re also involved in the nature and sustainability and things like that. That’s part of it” (H. de Vries).*

*“And I believe that the church acts as an example. That’s just the case. Therefore, I believe that you should act like that, not only with words but also with acts” (H. de Vries).*

*“We must be the initiators” (H. Haverkamp).*

*“You have different norms and values and a different experience of life. And in all the insecurities of life, that definitely gives peace. We can be valuable for the society and for people around us” (H. van der Honing).*

*“We want to think along, we are a team on this world and we will have to do it together” (G. Hummel).*

## 4.2 Single church level – process

Once having decided to join GroeneKerken or not, or at least engage in sustainable practices, some sort of change is needed. The next two aggregated dimensions describe the process of change and the outcomes of change.



Figure 12. Second phase of the aggregated dimensions, source: author

#### 4.3.1 Process of implementing change within a church

When churches have decided to join the GroeneKerken-campaign, the process of implementation follows. This is something which has extensively been discussed in the interviews, as this was one of the most concrete things where the interviewees had to do with in their own churches. The process of implementing change within a church grasps a broader concept than only implementing sustainable changes. There are six elements which fall under this dimension:

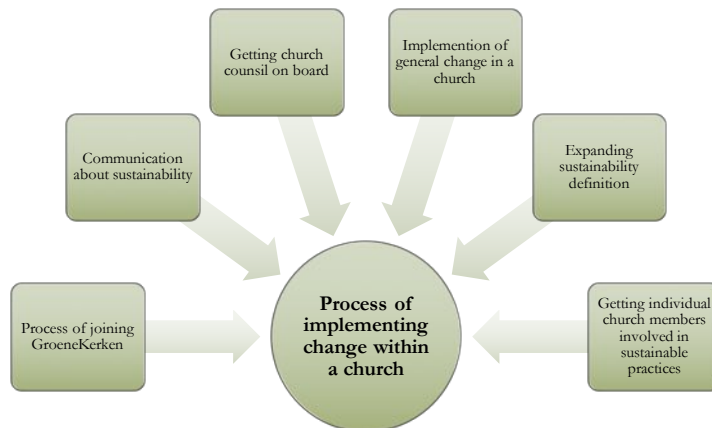


Figure 13. Process of implementing change within a church

First, one must know about the existence of GroeneKerken. Without knowledge about this existence, a church will eventually not join the campaign. The **process of joining GroeneKerken** goes in a similar way in different churches. There is often one person who makes the initiative. Sometimes they know about the existence of GroeneKerken through KerkInActie, sometimes they know them through a personal interest. For example, they are interested in putting solar panels on the roof and start to conduct research online. Then, they run into GroeneKerken. However, it stands out that none of the interviewees have heard about the existence of GroeneKerken through Tear, while Tear is officially responsible for attracting new churches and KerkInActie is officially responsible for maintaining contacts with churches which are already a ‘groene kerk’. Something else which comes back in various interviews is the research at other churches in which they collected information from other churches. Churches want to hear tips and tricks from each other. Lastly, when a church has decided to join GroeneKerken, almost in any case a plan has been made. What steps is the church going to make in what period. Making such a plan often starts with making an overview of sustainability practices in several levels within the church.

*“It started in September 2015. There was an 82-year-old man who said: ‘I don’t understand why this church doesn’t have solar panels on the roof.’ He asked me and somebody else to help him to get that done. I replied: ‘Of course I want to help you with that.’” (T. van Leur).*

*“And at that moment we visited the Paaskerk in Baarn with our working group. We asked them to inform us about how they became a ‘groene kerk’. They already were a ‘groene kerk’ at that moment. How did they do that? What do we need to take into consideration? What are the bottlenecks? They gave the advice to start with engaging in conversations with the church council, because they administer the money. If you want for example solar panels, you’ll need to get money from them. That was very important: first go to the church council” (G. Hummel).*

*“We chose for the method of first gathering information – what do we currently in the sustainable area?” (K. Oostlander).*

*“Then we said: ‘okay, this question is out there, how are we going to tackle it’. And Jan–Willem [another working group member] said that we should have a kind of triptych. These are the things the church should do, for example when it comes to making purchases. Then there are the things we should do together as church members, for example workshops. And third there are things that individual church members could do. We worked for a long time according to this canvas” (G. Olbertijn).*

*“Before we officially joined the GroeneKerken campaign, we took a good look at the website and created our own plan of approach” (G. Hummel).*

Second, **communication about sustainability** is always important, as it is one of the key elements in the process of change implementation. Communication makes the church members feel involved in the change and it creates transparency. A church is a community and it is important that all, or at least most, members are aware of the planned change. This is acknowledged 24 times in the interviews: interviewees communicate about sustainability or proposed sustainable changes through (digital) newsletters or through personal communication. What stands out here is the repetition of communication. Another aspect of the communication is the proposed idea of incorporating paragraphs about sustainability in policy reports, both of churches and on a national level in the synod. Through these policy reports, people can be kept up to date about the sustainable practices. Besides, adding such a paragraph in a policy report is a way of making sure that something happens.

*“Keep the fire warm and burning, for example by continuously posting something in the newsletter” (G. Hummel).*

*“One tip that came from the liturgy working group was the request to have a weekly post about a sustainable prayer. Or an inspirational text about sustainability in the liturgy” (T. van Leur).*

*“With repetition, you keep trying to create consciousness among the people” (B. Wolters).*

*“It is logical that there are national church magazines to communicate about anything within churches. And there are policy reports. And here, in our local working group, I’ve always said this: make sure you get into the policy reports. Every few years you [as a church in the national protestant synod] are obliged to make a policy report. Make sure that there is a paragraph about sustainability included there” (H. Haverkamp).*

**Getting the church council** on board already came up in the first point of this dimension. Yet, it was mentioned over 40 times in the interviews to get the church council on board, which is therefore put into a separate code group. It seems to be very important to get the leadership on board, to implement the proposed (sustainable) change. This support is needed because of the required investments which should be made, because of the changes in policy reports which need to be made, and because the sustainability implementers want to feel the support of the leadership. They want to make sure that sustainability is something the whole church, represented by the leadership being on board. Some interviewees expressed difficulties in getting the church council on board. It took a while before they were convinced that sustainability is relevant for churches. However, the interviewees were always dedicated to hold on and continue engaging in conversations. Some interviewees expressed their tactic: don’t only talk about the money, talk about the ideological incentives. This makes it easier to get everybody on board.

*“Eventually we went to the church council and there was aversion. But when you start talking from the ideological perspective, that eventually becomes the starting point. I engaged in the conversations with this point of view, which gets everybody in the same direction way quicker. It’s easier to get them on board, when you start from the ideological perspective and not from the financial” (N. van Gent).*

*“Yes, and at a certain moment you go to the financial church council. Those are often a little skeptical, do we really need to do that... but if you continue for years, eventually you’ll get them on board” (H. Haverkamp).*

*“We started with getting informed, because the church council wants to know everything. The more knowhow you’ve already collected, the easier it is to get them on board” (G. Hummel).*

*“We managed to get sustainability as one of the core elements of the policy report. Everybody agrees on that” (C. van Vliet).*

*“It is also very important to have support within the church council. Of course, there will be questions coming from the church, but when that happens it’s really important to feel supported by the church council” (G. Hummel).*

*“It gets broader and broader, like oil in the sea. I also have a pastoral team which supports this. That’s very nice, that they also pay attention to sustainability” (T. van Leur).*

*“And making them conscious, which of course can be done from the bottom up. However, it’s important to have support from the church council, otherwise it becomes an impossible task” (H. van der Spek).*

When the proposed change is accented, the next step is the **implementation of general change in a church**. This is the fourth point which falls under the dimension of the ‘process of implementation of change within a church’. What stands out here is the rigidity of a church. As this is a community, everybody wants to feel involved and wants to share their thoughts about the proposed change. Furthermore, it is acknowledged by interviewees that implementing any type of change, not just sustainability, faces resistance.

*“But a church is a rigid organization where a lot of people want to share their thoughts about all sorts of ideas” (R. Volkerink).*

*“But every process within a church is so slow. I suppose that the aim is to become a ‘groene kerk’ in autumn 2017, but that will probably be January 2018 (K. Oostlander).*

*“But you always have, when trying to incorporate new things, a group of people who is resistant” (B. Wolters).*

Fifth, there is the need for **expanding the sustainability definition** by not only focusing on one aspect of sustainability (for example ecology) but also incorporate more aspects, for example the social aspect. This is a step before the sixth step, getting individual church members involved. Expanding the sustainability definition makes sustainability more relevant for all churches and its members. For example, when a church does not have its own building it can focus more on incorporating social sustainability in its policies. This is more relevant for them than sustainable investments on the building.

*“If you broaden the definition, you also become relevant for other people” (H. van der Honing).*

*“And I use a fourth P – Pneuma. The Spirit. We, from GroeneKerken, can add that to the People, Planit, Profit. Eventually, I look at faith and gratefulness, which are more vague subjects which could be placed within the Pneuma. Those are very important, especially for churches (H. van der Honing).*

*“Yes, but sustainability is not only decreasing CO2 but also investing in people” (G. Hummel).*

Finally, there is the process of **getting individual church members involved**, which is crucial in the theory of social movements. It has to grow and attract more people. What comes out of the interviews is the aim of inspiring individual church members to change their individual behavior

towards more sustainable options. This is in line with the previously mentioned argument that a strong individual is needed to initiate the change and inspire others. Get inspired by the church, and implement it in their private households. This way, the effect of becoming a ‘groene kerk’ can increase exponentially. Furthermore, the interviewees express difficulties in getting individual church members on board. Some of them simply do not care, which makes them a difficult target to inspire. Something else which stands out is the fact that interviewees mentioned five times that they do not want to give their church members an overkill, and mentioned eight times that they do not want to force church members. Eventually this is something which must come from within a person – the church can facilitate practical sustainable changes but it cannot change the mindset of individual church members. Finally, some interviewees mention the fact that they want to combine different channels of communication within a church. They want to inspire individual church members by engaging in conversations with them personally, they want the preacher to spread the message as well and they have different other actions to create consciousness among the church members. It is striking that some churches are still working on creating consciousness, which is believed to be the beginning of the process.

*“We don’t force them, you know. It has to come from within” (B. Wolters).*

*“So, we don’t want to push our own ideas, but it has to come from the different working groups themselves” (F. Cornet).*

*“Sometimes the outcome is not even very important, but the most important is the fact that there is a discussion about” (A. Gelderloos).*

*“In 1991, I started with Kerk&Milieu Gouda and with writing some things in our newsletter. And then I think: ‘It has been 25 years now, everybody will know about what is happening’. But they are still asking for more information – how, what. It’s often a mix of actively doing actions and creating consciousness and providing information” (G. Olbertijn).*

*“It makes a large difference if you have a ‘green’ preacher which has some good ideas about that. That’s a great advantage” (H. van der Honing).*

*“We’re very conscious about the fact that one should not introduce it as something very revolutionary. Not too tight, not too dogmatic. Slowly make them aware: we just have to do it” (P. Ribberink).*

#### 4.3.2 Outcomes of sustainability practices

The process of change into a sustainable church can have different outcomes. Below, two outcomes and two ways of getting to these outcomes are discussed:

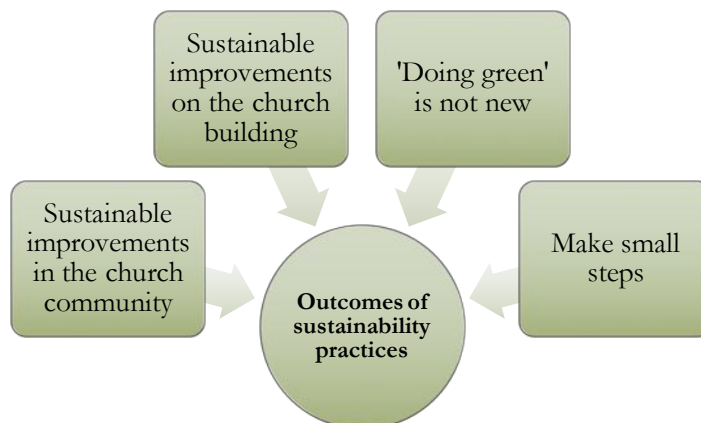


Figure 14. Outcomes of sustainability practices

First, there are **sustainable improvements in the church community**. This includes switching to sustainable liquids, sustainable paper, cooperating with the Voedselbank, purchasing green products, having a vegetable garden, praying for sustainability, passing around a green bible and incorporating sustainability in Sunday services. These are often believed to be the smaller steps and are easier to be taken. It starts with the internal analysis which is discussed in ‘knows about the existence of GroeneKerken’ and ‘making a plan’. One must know what the current practices are, to see where improvements can be made.

*“We just had new facilitative leaders, so I thought that this would be a good idea to switch cleaning liquids. It’s something small, yet very nice” (J. van den Akker).*

*“With a vegetable garden it’s easier to support people in need with fresh food. I can imagine that there are people in our church who would like to work on such a project” (M. Demmenie).*

*“In every Sunday service we have a prayer for sustainability and we pay attention to a part of Laudato Si” (T. van Leur).*

*“Furthermore, we are working on a green purchasing policy, with more products being purchased sustainably. Coffee, tea, stuff like that but for example also cleaning liquids. And we communicate that to the church members” (D. Zwiep).*

*“And we started with Sunday services about the creation and the climate. We involved the preacher in that, too” (H. Haverkamp).*

Second, there are also **sustainable improvements on the church building**. These improvements include more technical changes and often require larger investments. As mentioned before, these changes can be either a motivation or a barrier. This is due to the financial investments it requires. Often mentioned changes are: changing lights into LED, changing energy supply into sustainable or green energy, rebuilding the garden and incorporating religious elements in that garden, putting solar panels on the roof. Overcoming the (often financial) barrier which comes with these improvements is by some churches tackled in a similar way. Six churches have mentioned a financing action to collect the money for the solar panels. This was often done with providing individual church members with the possibility to sponsor a solar panel or a part of a solar panel. Such a financing action has multiple advantages: it increases consciousness and support among church members, it makes it easier for the church council to give agreement on the investment because they have to invest nothing or less (depending on how much money is raised with the financing action) and it gives them the opportunity to acquire the solar panels.

*“There are three parts. This is meeting, this is reflection and this is repenting. There is also a walking route available, and if you’re walking in the right direction, you’re walking along the Irish travel blessing. The one of: God is before you, to lead you the way, et cetera. And there in the back is a meditation corner. That was finished last year” (B. Wolters).*

*“And then we also changed the lights outside, so we replaced them with either LED lights or with energy efficient lights” (A. Gelderloos).*

*“We raised money for the solar panels. We organized a fundraising and people could see where their money was going. This way it did not have to come from the regular budget” (D. Zwiep).*

*“We want to put solar panels on the roof and we need to search sponsors for that” (C. van Rijswijk).*

*“So, we searched for architects who could do something with our very specific criteria: fit with domestic plants, have a green character, easy in maintenance, little use of water and don’t use poisoning. With this, the garden has gotten a total boost” (A. Gelderloos).*



Thirdly, it is worth mentioning that for several churches **‘doing green’ is not new**. This was mentioned over 18 times in the interviews. Often, churches already were in some way interested in sustainability and were focused on this. However, some of them did not know about the existence of GroeneKerken or wanted to reach a certain ‘level of sustainability’ before joining the campaign. This means that they were already doing green when joining the action. What also was outstanding is that almost all churches in the non-engaged category were in some way engaged in sustainability. However, they were not familiar with the GroeneKerken campaign or did not feel the need to engage in the campaign. This shows that there is not a 1-in-1 relationship between engaging in sustainability and joining the GroeneKerken campaign.

*“Look, we’re drinking Fairtrade coffee and tea since ages. We have since a very long time biological wine at the Lord’s Supper. For an even longer period, we’re using eco cleaning liquids. It’s embedded for longer, but to make it more concrete...” (G. Hummel).*

*“Separating waste is something we’ve already been doing for a very long time. We’re also collecting old paper, since aaaages” (T. van Leur).*

*“Yes, I believe we’re pretty green already. It should not be too difficult to become greener” (F. Cornet).*

*“For me, it’s normal. We’re all doing it. We’re also doing it at home” (R. Volkerink).*

Fourthly, there is the need to **make small steps**. This is needed to keep it manageable, to convince the church council and members and to make it concrete. Eventually, the churches express that they want to engage the whole community in the process of becoming greener. Making small steps is needed to not scare the community members. It was mentioned over 19 times though that interviewees want to make it concrete. What gets the attention, what works, how do you ensure that individual church members forward the sustainable mindset to their private homes.

*“And I think that it indeed should stay as easily accessible as possible” (J. van den Akker).*

*“People are getting enthusiastic about what is happening. That you can do something. Sometimes it’s small, but at least it’s something” (G. Olbertijn).*

*“You have to do it step by step, and don’t over rush it” (T. van Leur).*

*“It doesn’t always have to go in one time. Choose some things for a year and do them. Then you’re also on a good way” (G. Olbertijn).*

*“Try to implement very concrete things in your community, get the wheel spinning” (C. van Vliet).*

### 4.3 Collective level and role of GroeneKerken

The previous four aggregated dimensions all looked at individual churches. How do they know GroeneKerken, what hinders or motivates them to engage in sustainable practices and/or to join GroeneKerken, how do they handle resistance to change, and what are their change processes and –outcomes. Here, a broader perspective will be taken. Data from the interviews is analyzed and interpreted in the broader context of all churches in The Netherlands or a certain region and finally these insights are combined with possible communicative roles of GroeneKerken.



Figure 15. Third phase of the aggregated dimensions, source: author

#### 4.4.1 Collaboration on different levels

With collaboration on different levels it is meant collaboration within a church and between churches. There are four aspects of this dimension:

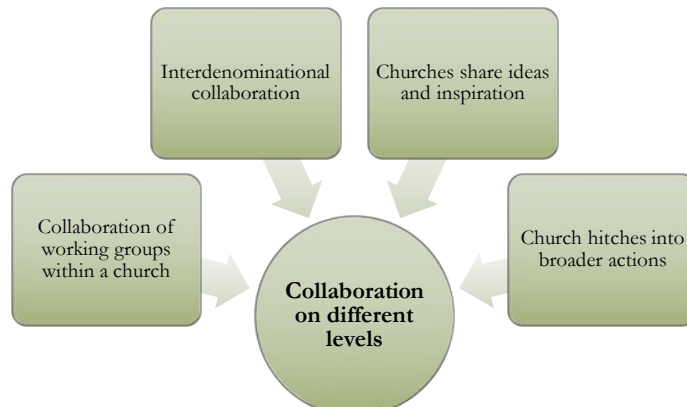


Figure 16. Collaboration on different levels

First, many interviewees have discussed the **collaboration of working groups within a church**. This subject came across over 20 times. Most important is the need for a group of enthusiast people, coming from different fields or areas within a church. Interviewees were often the initiative-takers regarding sustainability. They mentioned that did either could not or did not want to do it alone. Besides, some interviewees mentioned that all church members are focused on themselves or on their working group too much. This creates a loss of overview and it makes it more difficult to collectively organize activities or implement change.

*“At first, I was planning on doing it on my own, but eventually I brought together a group of people” (F. Cornet).*

*“I believe that within a church, and preferably between multiple churches, you should have a group who is taking the lead. Not the church council, or the financial church council, but just regular church members” (H. Haverkamp).*

*“Yes, and it’s sooo much fun! You know, you are part of a group. And within that group you’re all very enthusiastic. You have to be, you have an ideological drive. And with this, I have the feeling: spread the word, spread the word!” (G. Hummel).*

Second, there is the **interdenominational collaboration**. This is considered a very important part of the results. When joining forces, churches can get more things done. There is a broader support, a broader public and more resources. Besides, there are so many different denominations, but thinking about a more general theme (like sustainability) can decrease these differences. A collaboration focused on sustainability might even decrease the experienced differences and bring churches together. This is a large benefit which can be obtained with an interdenominational collaboration. Some interviewees are already collaborating with other churches. Finding a common theme lets you focus on the similarities, rather than the differences between churches. This is expressed in several interviews.

*“And if you get in touch with each other, you suddenly see the differences decrease. Unknow, unloved. That’s still how it works” (H. van der Honing).*

*“I am a member of the diaconate platform Zuidas, where actually all churches are part of. Protestant, reformed, liberalized, catholic. It’s a partnership where we talk about collaboration. How can we, within the Zuidas, pay attention to our neighbors” (M. Demmenie).*

*“The project has worked very connecting between the 5 churches, especially when we made the decision to take the time. The working group looks at the possibilities and what motivates” (C. van Vliet).*

*“Then we started the working group ‘sustainable believing’ within the whole region and with that we have developed all kinds of things to get churches enthusiast and inspire them to become a ‘groene kerk’ too. And how can we support each other, learn from each other, how can you get our knowhow and how can we get yours, do things together, and so on” (T. van Leur).*

A third part of the higher-level collaboration is that **churches share ideas and inspiration**. This mainly comes forth from the thought it would be a pity if everybody invents the wheel itself. It is more efficient and helpful if churches help each other and share ideas. What went right, what went wrong. An exchange of tips and information can be helpful in the process of becoming a GroeneKerk or at a later moment in the process.

*“And what I said, a wheel has already been reinvented. You should not do that yourself. And within my working group I get a newsletter of KerInActie, then you read something in that. And you think: wow, this is interesting. Subsequently you go to the yearly GroeneKerken day” (G. Hummel).*

*“I believe that we, also in churches in general, reinvent the wheel too much ourselves. There is already a lot of knowledge and experience out there. Make use of that” (D. Zwiep).*

*“Recently four churches in Rotterdam got in contact with me, they wanted to do a similar thing as we did. I talked with them for 1,5 hours about how we did it and where are obstacles. Which things should they do and which not” (C. van Vliet).*

*“It’s also nice, sharing that knowledge” (G. Olbertijn).*

Fourth and finally, there is the fact that the **church hitches into broader actions**. These actions are national actions which are not specifically focused on churches. It stands out that both some churches which are already a ‘groene kerk’ and churches which are not, participate in these actions. Apparently, this has a broad support within various churches. Especially the climate run stands out; eight times something about this climate run is mentioned.

*“The warm sweater day was on a Thursday, but we wanted to link it to a Sunday. That was special. I asked if people wanted to come in a warm sweater and a lot of people did that” (B. Wolters).*

*“Well, what was concrete... tomorrow there’s the climate run in Amsterdam and we did an appeal for participation” (A. Gelderloos).*

*“Let me say: with the yearly day for prayer for crops and land we always mention it [sustainability and taking care of crops and land]. Those are some of those yearly moments” (B. Weerd).*

#### 4.4.2 Possible communicative role of GroeneKerken

Finally, the possible communicative role of GroeneKerken will be discussed here. This dimension exists of two parts, focused on individual churches and focused on the collectivity of churches. Awareness of the existence of GroeneKerken and the website of GroeneKerken is focused on individual churches. Do churches know about this campaign, what is the online visibility of GroeneKerken, what will grab the attention of a church to join the action. Secondly, there is the matter of centralizing versus decentralizing. This aggregated dimension exists of four aspects:

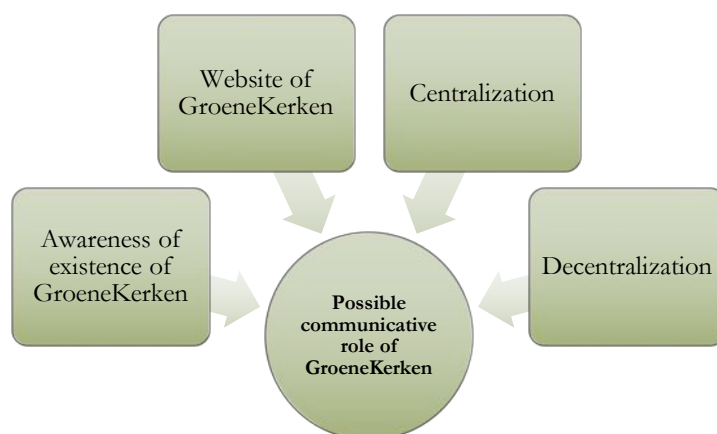


Figure 17. Possible communicative role of GroeneKerken

First, there is the **awareness of existence of GroeneKerken**. For individual churches to engage in the campaign, this is again a precondition. It stands out that no interviewees have mentioned that they know GroeneKerken through Tear, which is officially responsible for increasing awareness of the campaign. Some interviewees have mentioned that they know GroeneKerken through the newsletter of KerkInActie, in which the campaign was mentioned. It's a risk that often one individual church member receives or reads the newsletters coming in. If this person is not interested on or focused at sustainability, there is a higher chance that that particular church will not get to know GroeneKerken. Besides, it also stands out that most of the churches which were categorized as 'non-engaged' were actually engaged in sustainable practices, but they just were not involved in the GroeneKerken campaign. Except for one, all of them mentioned that GroeneKerken would be 'something for them', but they simply did not know about the existence of GroeneKerken.

*"I was chairman of all the parishes, but I've never heard of this. Nowhere. So, it is not a conscious choice" (M. Demmenie).*

*"Yes, at first there was someone who picked it up in the newsletter of KerkInActie. That person invited a few people to join him to the GroeneKerken-day" (D. Zwiep).*

*"At least it did not reach us through the churchgoing channels. More through the personal way" (F. Cornet).*

Second, there is the **website of GroeneKerken**. What comes out of the interviews is that the interviewees who mention something about the website, believe that it is looking good. With that, they mean the aesthetics of the website. However, it is mentioned four times that the website is not up to date. As they express, when a church makes a sustainable improvement it does not come to mind to also proactively e-mail that to GroeneKerken. This is the current process. Because of this lack of proactively informing GroeneKerken, not all information about the current 'groene kerken' is shared. Besides, it is expressed multiple times that the interviewees have the need for a more systematic way of sharing ideas and inspiration. They would for example like to have a clear overview of which church has solar panels, which one has a sustainable garden, which one organizes climate services, and so forth. If this would become clearer, the sharing of information would be facilitated better.

*"But I took some looks at the website and it just looks very good" (K. Oostlander).*

*"I would like to mention the steps we make at the website of GroeneKerken, but that doesn't get published on the website" (T. van Leur).*

*"But if there would be more information available on the website, that would be very helpful. The content doesn't get refreshed very often" (B. Wolters).*

*"The site could give a better overview – who's good in what, who has information about what? That's not very easily accessible yet, let me phrase it that way" (D. Zwiep).*

After having reached the individual churches, there is the more national role which GroeneKerken can take on. However, it seems as if they must make a tradeoff between centralization and decentralization. Stimulate local actions or facilitate central actions. It seems that a combination of both would be best.

There are three main arguments for **centralization** coming from the interviews. First, KerkInActie faced some difficulties at the national protestant synod regarding sustainability. There was aversion towards sustainability and it was not a priority. Centralization would focus the attention of GroeneKerken which might have a stronger influence on the synod. Second, focusing on central institutions is considered as more effective by some interviewees. If GroeneKerken gets the protestant national synod, but also the evangelical alliance and more national churches enthusiastic about sustainability, these institutions can pass this on to their churches. GroeneKerken focuses on the national level and these individual groups pass on the information to their 'own' churches. This system would be more efficient. Third, GroeneKerken can facilitate churches to join forces. It can organize central actions, in which churches can participate.

*"They say that sustainability is not the subject with the highest priority among the people going to church, and that they are not willing to donate a lot of money to that. So it's a pragmatic choice. It doesn't bring in money and it isn't a top priority. I don't agree with that, but that's how it goes" (F. Cornet).*

*"I have been in the synod for a while. It helps if it gets pushed there" (H. Haverkamp).*

*"On the other hand, I'm thinking: if you would cover all the roofs in The Netherlands with solar panels, we would generate so much more energy than we use. You could make a deal with Vandebron and sell the energy. Or use it for people in need, for example families with financial problems. Something like that. I'm also thinking big. But I see that that's always difficult" (G. Olbertijn).*

Fourth and finally, the other side of the tradeoff is **decentralization**. Some interviewees believe that it should come from above, meaning they stimulate centralization. However, even more interviewees believe it should come from the bottom. The people must believe in something to get them engaged. Besides, what stands out here is that it is mentioned 14 times that churches want to attract other churches in the region themselves. This is striking because they are proactive in taking other churches with them in the process of becoming more sustainable. This is something where GroeneKerken can jump into: when developing material which the individual churches can share, they can stimulate these churches to reach out to the churches in their physical environment. Often these churches already have good connections because they have some regional collaboration programs. It would be advisable for GroeneKerken to make use of the regional networks between churches which already exist.

*"I find that an important step to make. It brings you closer to the base, that helps. People experience it as being something of their own" (H. van der Honing).*

*"Broadening, making it deeper, decentralization. These three aspects are important in making the next step" (H. van der Honing).*

*“On the other hand, you see a movement in society that gets back to regional and local. People want to do something in their direct environment. For example, here people want to have more contact with the local farmers” (G. Olbertijn).*

*“It has to come from within” (D. Sybenga).*

*“You can mail and spam the churches, and write beautiful pieces in national church magazines. But to truly reach the individual church members, yes that is very difficult” (F. Cornet).*

*“Yes. That was a vanguard. At a certain moment, you’re a ‘groene kerk’ and that should not stop. You have to take up one or two things in which you put your energy. We found it important to share everything we did with other churches” (G. Hummel).*

*“We’ve also been working on getting other churches enthusiast” (T. van Leur).*



## **Chapter 5**

### Conclusion

The general objective of this research was to determine how the GroeneKerken campaign can get more churches involved in its social movement. This goal has been reached by answering the research question: **“How can GroeneKerken get more churches engaged in its social movement?”**. Through a qualitative research consisting of a case study with 22 in-depth interviews, an answer to this question has been searched. First, an answer to the research sub-questions will be provided. Second, the research question will be answered.

## 5.1 Answering research (sub-)questions

The answers to the research sub-questions can be found in the literature research and the interpreted results of this empirical research. The first sub-question **“What are ways of engaging more partners in a social movement in general?”** is a theoretical question and is therefore answered based on the literature research and can be summarized in three steps:

1. New partners need to acknowledge that there is a problem for which change is needed and that they can promote change.
2. New partners must be attracted through the network of the social movement where information can be shared and continuous action can be promoted. A social movement can include more partners into its network by increasing its ‘brand awareness’.
3. New partners must feel connected to the collective identity of the social movement to actively engage with the movement.

The second sub-question **“Is there a consistent relationship between Christianity and sustainability?”** is both a theoretical and an empirical question and is therefore answered based on a combination the literature and empirical research. There is not a consistent relationship between Christianity and sustainability. The literature provides us with different points of view from Christians regarding sustainability, for example Petersen (1999) who argues that religion has a high aim for social justice which leads to the need of ecological justice. This is contradictory to a more traditional view which some Christians have, described by Merchant (1980) and Ruether (1992), both cited in Biscotti & Biggart (2014): traditional conservative churches often had the range of ideas that the environment was irrational, subordinate to the human species and in need of control. This contradiction of points of view is supported by the interviews, in which it stands out that the practical and ideological incentives and barriers are for a large part completely opposite to each other. The same holds for biblical interpretation: one part of the interviewees leans on the fact that the gospel is something between you and God of which whom should not get distracted. Another part of the interviewees claims that Jesus uses agrarian examples in the bible and that the bible begins with God giving the earth to us.

The third sub-question **“What are barriers for churches in joining the GroeneKerken campaign?”** is an empirical question and the answer to this question is fully based on the performed interviews. Resulting from the interviews, six main barriers can be identified:

1. Aversion towards sustainability
2. Sustainability is not the priority of the church
3. Sustainability is for the young ones
4. Hurdles for engaging in sustainable practices
5. Financial obstacles
6. Dependency on one person

The fourth sub-question **“What are motivations for churches in joining the GroeneKerken campaign?”** is an empirical question and the answer to this question is fully based on the performed interviews. Resulting from the interviews, four main motivations can be identified:

1. Encouragements for engaging in sustainable practices
2. Financial impulses
3. Sustainability in the bible
4. General standpoint of Christians towards sustainability



## 5.2 Answering the research question

The research question is “**How can GroeneKerken get more churches involved in its social movement?**”. It can be concluded that the current campaign is not effective, as many of the interviewees of this research have mentioned that they did not know GroeneKerken through Tear, which is currently responsible for the external communication. Besides, a large part of the non-engaged interviewees is interested in sustainability, but did not know about the existence of the GroeneKerken campaign. Therefore, GroeneKerken can get more churches engaged in its movement when improving its promotion strategy. The promotion should be improved on two aspects: content of the message and channels of communication. With this improved promotion strategy, GroeneKerken can increase its brand awareness among churches in all denominations. As flows from the literature research and the analysis of results of this research, new churches need to know about the existence of GroeneKerken to be able to join the social movement.

Improving the promotion strategy should have two focal areas:

1. **Message.** GroeneKerken should bear in mind the barriers which have been identified throughout this research. The design and content of the message should be adjusted to these potential barriers.
2. **Media.** GroeneKerken should broaden the channels of communications which are used for promoting the campaign.

### 5.2.1 Recommendations for GroeneKerken

As this research is a practical research, some recommendations for GroeneKerken are provided below. These recommendations explain how improving the promotion strategy can be brought into practice.

First, the message. GroeneKerken will not be able to tackle the barriers which have been expressed by churches, because these churches are all on their own responsible for overcoming these barriers. However, GroeneKerken can adjust its message so it will become more appealing to the churches who might have certain barriers in mind. GroeneKerken should therefore adjust the design and context of the message. For example, it can put more focus on how easily accessible sustainability can be, so new partners will learn that engaging in sustainability practices is way broader than making a large investment in solar panels on the church’s roof. Another important aspect in adjusting the message is making churches aware of the urgency of the issue. Now, some churches do not take their responsibility. By expressing the urgency, churches can eventually become frontrunners in sustainability.

Second, the use of media. This can be improved through five steps, which are all based on either the literature research, analysis of results or a combination of both:

1. **Local promotion by pioneer churches.** At this moment, ‘groene kerken’ are sometimes so enthusiastic about sustainability that they want to spread the message amongst churches in their geographical or religious environment. For examples, see appendix E, F, G. GroeneKerken can stimulate this local promotion by developing materials, flyers, or inform these churches on how to organize this. However, a critical note with this structure of pioneer churches is that the internal motivation to spread the message should stay the main driver for the churches. It should not be imposed on them by GroeneKerken.
2. **Automatically update the website.** When churches are interested in sustainability, an online search often brings them to the website of GroeneKerken. However, the website is not up-to-date. This makes the social movement look less appealing to new. Besides, sharing information

between churches can be made easier when an up-to-date database exists in which an overview is provided of the sustainable practices per church.

3. **Change the internal and external division within GroeneKerken.** Currently, Tear is responsible for attracting new churches, however none of the interviewees knew GroeneKerken through Tear. KerkInActie is stronger embedded in the protestant synod, which means that it can reach new partners through its own network easier. It would be advisable to change the division and make Tear responsible for external contacts with other denominations and some relationship management. They should make KerkInActie responsible for external contacts with churches from the protestant synod and some relation management.
4. **Broaden communication channels.** Next to starting communication through social media, it is highly advisable to engage in interviews or advertisements in various specialist magazines and religious magazines. This makes GroeneKerken apparent to a broader audience, which in turn will tackle the dependency on one person. A larger awareness of its existence is created this way. Participating in more religious events is also advised. A larger target group can be reached.
5. **Become a facilitator.** GroeneKerken is currently only facilitating that churches share ideas and inspiration. However, to strengthen their position in the religious environment they should become a facilitator of ideas and actions. They can for example set up a collective purchase of sustainable energy or solar panels and lead such processes.

Finally, something which GroeneKerken should focus on during its overall operations is the combination between centralization and decentralization. Choosing the right focus per situation can eventually help the organization to attract more churches for its social movement. For example, an important insight of this research is the need for interdenominational collaboration. When joining a social movement, the subject of that movement can become one of the focal areas of that church. Differences between various churches can decrease when interdenominational collaboration takes place. Here, GroeneKerken can take on a role in the process of centralization. It can help churches with this interdenominational collaboration and stimulate churches to do so. Furthermore, it can organize central actions where churches can hitch into, as was discussed in chapter 4.3.2. The decentralization is closely related to the local promotions mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Decentralization gets closer to the individual church members, who are difficult to reach from above. This makes it a good strategy to change individual attitudes towards sustainability and towards the GroeneKerken campaign.

To conclude, GroeneKerken can attract new churches in its social movement by increasing and strengthening the promotion of its campaign by choosing the right communication channels for this promotion. This way, the awareness of the existence of GroeneKerken will be increased which is the start of contact with new churches. Next, when these new churches are identified and triggered, GroeneKerken should adjust its message to potential barriers in joining the campaign. The combination of a broader promotion and the structural decreasing of barriers will lead to more engaged churches in the social movement of GroeneKerken.



# Chapter 6

## Implications

## 6.1 Five pillars for increasing engagement in social movements

This research combined existing theories on religion and sustainability, social movements and changing behavior with empirical research on churches which are either actively engaged, non-actively engaged or non-engaged in the social movement of GroeneKerken. Flowing from this research, a set of five pillars for increasing engagement in social movements has been created. These pillars provide us with implications of this research and provide an overview on the practical implementation of this research. This is considered important, because it broadens the conclusions of this research, which are focused specifically on GroeneKerken. The implications are more broadly interpretable which makes them also relevant for other (religious) social movements.

The five pillars have been created by first conducting research into the existing theories. Afterwards, support for these pillars has been searched in the empirical results of this research. The pillars can be found in figure 18 below. It is worth mentioning that 'new partners' can also be interpreted as 'potential new partners', as the pillars are relevant in the phase of deciding to join a social movement and makes the partners sometimes still potential.

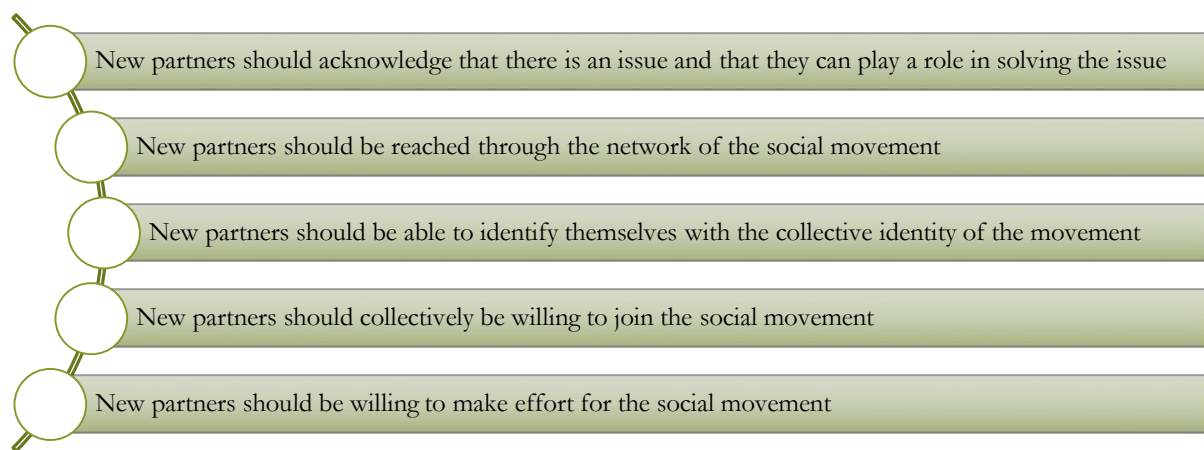


Figure 18. Five pillars for increasing engagement in social movements

### 6.1.1 New partners should acknowledge that there is an issue and that they can play a role in solving the issue

Porta & Diani (2006) argue that a social movement starts with a conflictual collective action and Benford & Snow (2000) argue as well that a social movement starts with the acknowledgement that there is an issue. This is also in line with what Collins et al. (2007) argue: values influence beliefs which influence behavior. The individuals which are attracted to the movement should acknowledge the importance of the issue and their role in solving the issue, to join the movement. They should value sustainability which will finally influence their behavior towards solving the issue. This is confirmed by this research. There are broadly speaking two categories which can be identified among the interviewees. One category expressed a general aversion towards sustainability, or mentioned that sustainability is not the priority of the church. They do not acknowledge that there is an issue (the issue here is the degeneration of the earth) and that they can play a role in solving the issue (by engaging in more sustainable practices with their churches). On the other hand, interviewees of this research have also expressed that they have large ideological motivations to join the GroeneKerken campaign, which are mainly grounded in the bible. Besides, some of them mention that Christians should be frontrunners on sustainability. Jesus uses agrarian examples in the bible and the creation narrative comes in danger with the current consumption standards of our society. They acknowledge that it is our job as Christians/ churches to set an

example. These barriers and motivations show and explain the importance for new partners to acknowledge that there is an issue and that they can play a role in solving this.

### 6.1.2 New partners should be reached through the network of the social movement

The second pillar is built upon the presence of both some form of communication and a network. The social movement should be able to reach new partners through its network. This should be done by a good and strong communication. Porta & Diani (2006) also argue that social movements even provide new channels of communication and reaching new partners should be done through this movement. The conclusions of this research draw largely on improving this pillar for GroeneKerken, because what turned out is that almost all ‘non-engaged’ churches were engaging in sustainability practices; they simply did not know about the existence of GroeneKerken. This is empirical evidence for this pillar, because without reaching the new partners through the network of the social movement, they will not join the social movement. GroeneKerken is a campaign which is initiated by Tear and KerkInActie. First, Tear is officially responsible for the external contacts and contacts with new churches, however it is outstanding that none of the interviewees mentioned that they knew GroeneKerken through Tear. Second, KerkInActie is connected to the national protestant synod. This makes them able to reach churches which are included in this network. However, churches from denominations (Catholics, reformed, evangelical or other denominations) which are not connected to this synod are overall less familiar with KerkInActie and thus with GroeneKerken. These churches are less easily reached through the network of the social movement.

### 6.1.3 New partners should be able to identify themselves with the collective identity of the movement

Jamison (2010) argues that the different individual actors in the social movement should have certain things in common which connects them and which builds the collective identity. The need for this collective identity is also again acknowledged by Porta & Diani (2006), who argue that organizations which are involved in social movements are sources of this identity. When the church leadership stimulates sustainability, this can as well be more incorporated in the shared identity of the church members, as is mentioned in the literature research based on Weaver and Stansbury (2014). The identity of the social movement will influence the identity of the church which in turn will influence the identity of the church members. This is both expressed in the literature as by the interviewees. So, religion influences identity and through this influence it can affect other social aspects of life, such as the political preferences or movements (Weaver and Stansbury, 2014). This makes religion appropriate for encouraging engagement in various social movements, like the movement of sustainability and, more specifically, the movement of GroeneKerken. They will, in the ideal situation, value sustainability more in their personal lives. This way, the range of the social movement will increase exponentially. Support for these claims can be found in this research. For example, in chapter 4.1.1 the barrier of ‘sustainability is for the young ones’ while church public is often growing old and in some obsolescing churches there is not even a Sunday school or a children’s educational program. This creates a lack of identification with the collective identity of the social movement. Older people can experience GroeneKerken as something with a too young public. On the other hand, churches which have joined the GroeneKerken campaign in the previous years, and churches which are engaging with sustainable practices in general, often expressed that ‘doing green is not new’. With this, they acknowledge that they identify themselves with the collective identity of the movement because their actions were already in line with the social movement. The movement represents sustainability and they are already involved in sustainability practices for a long time.

#### 6.1.4 New partners should collectively be willing to join the social movement

For GroeneKerken the new partners are churches. A church is a collective group of people and should collectively be willing to join the movement. A group, especially a church, often has certain traditions and joining a sustainable movement might change these traditions or change other aspect of being a church. Therefore, the link is made here between the social movements and changing into sustainable behavior, two out of three themes coming from the literature research. Here, resistance and cooperation can be present. Edmonds (2011) argues that resistance often comes from the fear of the unknown and Biscotti & Biggart (2014) also acknowledge the threat of resistance. However, an individual cannot join the GroeneKerken campaign on behalf of a church so this potential resistance should be tackled. There is a need for the leadership in promoting the proposed change within a church. This is also expressed in the literature, for example by Edmonds (2011) who expresses the difference between managers and leaders. In situations which require change, leaders are needed. The need for strong individuals who initiate the change is also expressed in chapter 4.1.1 and 4.3.1: the church is a collective institution, however one of the findings from the research expresses the dependency on one person as a barrier in joining the GroeneKerken campaign. As explained in the results chapter, sustainability should be embraced by all church members which is currently not always the case. The initiatives are often organized by one person or by a small group of people, however they should be able to involve the whole church. An important aspect of getting the church on board is communicating about sustainability and about the willingness to join a social movement. This is also acknowledged by multiple interviewees. When keeping the church members more informed, there is a larger chance of getting them 'on board'. Another very important aspect of joining a social movement as a group, in this case as a church, is getting the leadership of that group on board. A very large part of the interviewees mentioned the importance of getting the church council on board. This church council can then incorporate sustainable practices 'officially' in the church' policy reports or year plans. Besides, most interviewees mention that it is crucial to get individual church members involved. This exactly expresses the fourth pillar and the addition to the existing literature. When a church joins a social movement, this should be embedded in the collectivity of the church members. This is acknowledged by the interviewees of this research.

#### 6.1.5 New partners should be willing to make effort for the social movement

According to Biscotti and Biggart (2014), religious social movement mostly have an outside-in approach and focus on encouraging a reformulation of the landscape to include the natural world. This expresses that religious social movements focus on how the own organizations need to change – and reaching this change often asks for making an effort. This is supported by several barriers and parts of the process of implementing change within the church. There are two large barriers which have been expressed by the interviewees in joining the GroeneKerken campaign. These are time and money. When investments need to be made, the church should believe that the (goal of the) social movement is worth the investment. Overcoming this barrier is done by convincing the church members about the ideological motives: the earth is a gift from God, we need to take good care of it and that requires some investments. The time it takes to earn back the investment matters less when working from an ideological motivation. The other often-expressed barrier is time. People need to be willing to put their time into engaging in sustainable practices. They should make the decision whether their time is worth it to put in this social movement. This is also seen in the main incentive which is expressed by interviewees of the research: they believe that it is their task to take a good care of the earth and experience that being part of GroeneKerken is a good way of making this practical. However, showing this willingness does not necessarily needs to be extremely intense. This is also highlighted by GroeneKerken very often: they want to keep it easily accessible. Whenever a church shows that it is going to make one sustainable step per year, GroeneKerken already sees this as showing the willingness to make effort for the social movement. This need to make small steps is also expressed by various interviewees.

## 6.2 Implications of research

First, this research provides theoretical implications, which are extensively discussed through the five pillars in chapter 6.1. It adds to the existing literature because it has extended the theories on how to get more engaged partners in a social movement by working out these five pillars for increasing engagement in social movements, which can be found in figure 18. Besides, it has put emphasis on the rigidness of churches and groups which will also be discussed in chapter 7.1.2. Churches are rigid organizations where the start of ideas often comes from one or two individuals, however when making a decision about these ideas a larger part of the church has to decide on this. For example, this research has shown that when attracting churches in a social movement, it is very important to get the church members and the church council on board. This can be achieved by adjusting the message to fit what the churches need to hear. In the specific case of GroeneKerken there were various barriers expressed by interviewees and it is advised to adjust the message in such a way that it will tackle the barriers in the minds of church members. The churches as religious groups or communities have been subject to this research and the theoretical implications explain how to get these 'on board' on a social movement. The outcomes of this research are therefore an addition to the existing literature and the theoretical implications can be used by other (religious) social movements which want to attract new partners, too.

Second, there are societal implications. As stated in the beginning of this research, social movements eventually have the aim to improve or resolve an issue in the society. When more social movements learn how to grow and expand their social movement, this will eventually have implications for society. The issues in the society can decrease because of the incentives from social movement and this will improve the circumstances in our society. Next to the important positive role of social movements, religious also still plays a large role in the Dutch society. Churches combining their forces and insights will influence the individual church members which in turn will have an influence on their own environments.

Thirdly, this research has some environmental implications. When GroeneKerken gets more churches involved and these institutions will make a sustainable step per year, this will eventually be beneficial for the environment. Especially because churches are a group and they can make larger steps, this will have a larger impact on the environment. Besides, when other social movements get inspired by this research and will attract more partners, a chain reaction will arise, as is mentioned in the societal implications. These will do continue in the environment. Other social movements can be inspired by seeing the growth and impact of GroeneKerken, for example through interviews in various types of media.

Fourth and finally, there are some practical implications for GroeneKerken. When the social movement gets more churches involved, its power and influence will increase. This will give GroeneKerken the opportunity to create more awareness about sustainability and the social movement can have a larger impact on the religious environment in The Netherlands. The practical implications can be reached through implementing the recommendations for GroeneKerken, which can be found in chapter 5.2.1.



# Chapter 7

## Discussion



## 7.1 Discussion of research

### 7.1.1. Addition to existing literature

This research is believed to be an addition to the existing literature. In chapter 1.4 it was mentioned what this research contributes to society and to the GroeneKerken campaign. There, it is also stated what this research adds to the existing literature. Research, mostly quantitative, on religion and ecology and sustainability has so far mostly focused on the individual and not very much on groups and institutes (Boyd 1999; Olofsson and Ohman 2006; Sherkat and Ellison 2007 cited in Berry, 2014). This research adds to the current literature by focusing on this collectivity in religion. That is not the only reason why this research adds to the literature, because eventually it is experienced that this research contributes to the existing literature on three aspects:

1. It combines different theories into one complete set of preconditions in joining social movements by groups. It is believed that this is a strong point of this research because it provides a thicker base for making recommendations to GroeneKerken. The first three pillars show a large overlap with the three aspects of Porta & Diani's (2006) definition of a social movement, however it of course strengthens this definition when these aspects are acknowledged by other authors. Besides, with the addition of the fourth and fifth pillar it provides a more complete view for social movements which focus on groups instead of individuals.
2. Thereby it especially focuses on groups, which has not been done extensively in the existing literature yet. It is believed that this is important, because this is something new in the academic literature.
3. The research provides empirical findings which support the set of pillars derived from theory. This support gives validity to the existing theories. Besides, the correspondence with existence literature makes that the research falls within the broad lines of expectations. All five pillars have been discussed in chapter 6.1.

### 7.1.2 Surprising or outstanding outcomes of the research

The aim of this research was to find an answer to the research question. However, some phenomena stand out and even though they are not directly relevant for answering the research question, are believed to be a valuable addition to this research and will therefore be discussed here. These three appearances were not explicitly expected when starting this research, therefore the literature research does not fully connect to these outcomes. Therefore, some new theories have been included and a critical perspective is taken.

Something which stands out from this research is that individuals are capable of initiating small-scale initiatives, for example maintaining a vegetable garden or organizing a clothing swap. This is considered both as a potential and as a limitation when placing it in the larger scope of the social movement of GroeneKerken. The potential lies in the fact that there are so many small-scale initiatives which can be employed. The theory in chapter 2.3.1 on changing individual behavior is supported by this, for example the environmental mindsets of De Groot and Steg (2008) cited in Willis et al. (2017). Most interviewees have either a mindset of altruism or biospherism. They aim for equality between individuals and want to live in unity with nature, based on the Biblical thoughts that we have to take care of the earth and that all individuals are equal for God. Collins et al. (2007) argue that values influence beliefs which influence behavior and this is brought into practice by these small-scale initiatives. Weaver and Stansbury (2014) also acknowledge that religion influences identity and through this influence it can affect other social aspects of life, such as the political preferences or movements. Individuals adjust their values on sustainability, which eventually result in a concrete change in their behavior. The limitation of initiating small-scale initiatives lies in the fact that none of the interviewees expressed that they can implement the change by themselves. The small-scale initiatives will not become large-scale initiatives, unless the individuals start to

cooperate within the church. They express the need for collecting a group of enthusiastic people, a working group around them. This implies that the individuals experience it as too difficult to mobilize a whole church to implement a (sustainable) change.

Interviewees have also mentioned the need for getting the other individual church members involved, next to finding this group of enthusiastic people. It is striking that these individuals sometimes experience so many difficulties in getting other church members engaged, sometimes even when the church council is already on board. Interviewees mentioned the importance of first getting the church council 'on board'. But with a top-down approach like this, resistance can arise. According to Edmonds (2010) this resistance comes from the fear of the unknown. Also, Biscotti and Biggart (2014) argue that resistance can arise and they give as an explanation that new ideas might be opposed to the traditional ideas. However, it is not believed that these church members are for example blockers (in the model of Edmonds, 2011) who are preventing change. They are not necessarily against the change, because they value sustainability as well. They are just afraid of the unknown and do not want to give up their traditions and habits. Especially the traditions are believed to be a large driver for the resistance to change – some churches have built up their services around the traditions which makes it very difficult to change these. The difficulties of implementing 'modern' changes in a traditional environment are also acknowledged by Gusfield (1967), according to him tradition is of all times and is closely related to ideologies and aspirations. However, eventually there is the possibility of change to be implemented.

What is also interesting to see is that the idea of getting involved in sustainable practices, or joining GroeneKerken, is often initiated from the bottom. An individual church member brings up this idea. To actually get the change implemented, it is expressed very often by the interviewees that is important to get the church council on board – a top-bottom approach as mentioned in the previous paragraph. This is supported by Epstein et al. (2010) who argue that the leadership of an organization needs to emphasize sustainable benefits in order to stimulate other people lower in the organization to engage in sustainable practice, because they know that the leaders are supportive towards the subject. Edmonds (2011) also argues that clarity should be present in the formulation of clear goals and clear direction, because this will eventually lead to an increased motivation and greater task accomplishment. As the leadership is often responsible for formulating the motivations and goals of an organization, and in this case a church, this is in line with the statement of Epstein et al. (2010).

In short, the individuals who bring up the subject 'sustainability' in a church can achieve various different small-scale initiatives, but an individual will eventually lack the abilities to fully implement the required change when a church eventually wants to join the social movement. In a church, internal centralization, cooperation and adjustments of values are needed, implemented from top to bottom.

Next to the dependency on one individual and the rigidity of churches, the need for interdenominational collaboration stands out. This is mentioned by various interviewees. They express the need for this type of collaboration as a way of decreasing the difference between different churches in a certain geographical area. Besides, less people are visiting churches and therefore churches have to collaborate more. Some of the interviewees also expressed sustainability as a way of stimulating this interdenominational collaboration – even though different churches can have different interpretations of God or the gospel, sustainability can work connecting. When different churches have the same action point, they can use their separate networks to eventually come closer towards a distinct collective identity (based on Porta and Diani, 2006).

All in all, this shows that changing group behavior requires other strategies compared to changing individual behavior, but one should keep in mind that a group is also a composition of all individuals – it is therefore considered important to get the individuals on board, too. Besides, in most churches people have certain ideologies or are open to certain ideologies, but they are stuck in traditions and habits. This especially holds for churches as there are often certain traditions in these churches, for example during the services. Implementing change is difficult because of these traditions and habits. When a church wants to join the GroeneKerken movement, it has to make some sustainable steps which can be experienced as a difficult change by the church members. It is interesting to see that there is a gap between ‘preach’ and ‘practice’. There are various possible ways of bridging this gap. When bridging the gap between theory and practice in learning, Merrill (2002) argues that knowledge should be applied and integrated in the real world. Church members hear a preaching in the Sunday service or learn something from reading the Bible, but when are they encouraged to immediately put these new insights into practice? This is a question which churches can ask themselves when starting to make the transition into becoming a ‘groene kerk’.

### 7.1.3 Consequences

What can be concluded from chapter 7.1.2 is that the Biblical task can fail because of the rigidness of churches, church councils or the synod. This can in turn frustrate the initiator of the change, often an individual. Furthermore, sustainability is currently not binding churches while it has the opportunity to do so. The interdenominational collaboration is an example of the binding power of sustainability. Yet, sometimes even estrangement takes place. Together Christians are the body of Christ, as is stated in 1 Corinthians 12:17 “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it”. When Christians are getting into differences of opinion about sustainability as well, this can lead to diffusion for out- and insiders of the church.

When connecting religion, sustainability and social movements it can actually be expected that the Bible itself will initiate a social movement within churches, yet this is not the case. An external organization, namely GroeneKerken is needed for promoting sustainability in churches and for providing a translation of this Biblical task (which can be perceived as vague or abstract) into something practical. What GroeneKerken does can be viewed as framing the social movement, which Benford and Snow (2000) call the active process which implies agency and contention in reality construction.

## 7.2 Strengths and limitations

Every study has strengths and weaknesses, as has this one. The strengths and weaknesses are elaborated below.

A large strength of this research is the cooperation with GroeneKerken. This has provided the researcher with contact information for collecting data, information, inspiration and motivation. It is considered as a large strength that GroeneKerken is willing to receive an advice: this gave the researcher the idea that this research truly matters. Besides, it was a practical research. The combination of theory and practice provides a strong base of drawing conclusions and making recommendations. However, the weakness which is closely connected to this focus on practicalities in the research is the fact that it is focused very much on the single church level. Sometimes the interviews took too much depth about a specific sustainable aspect of the building, which was less relevant in the larger picture of the research. This is experienced as a problem because these details did not necessarily contribute to answering the research question. The researcher did not interview representatives of national religious organizations. As this came to the forefront during the coding process, the researcher could not change the interviews anymore.

Next, a large strength is the high response rate and a strong willingness to cooperate with the research. There was one person who did not reply to the invitation to cooperate and one person who did not have the time to participate in the research, but forwarded the message to someone else in his church. However, this happened too late in the research process which means that this person is excluded as well. 24 people were invited to participate in the research and 22 participated, which gives a response rate of 91.67%. Such a response rate is very high and therefore considered as a strength, besides it reflects the support of interviewees in this research taking place. This high response rate is believed to have two main reasons:

- People are willing to help the researcher.
- Most interviews took place via the telephone, which decreases barriers to engage in the research. This was especially the case for churches which were not involved with GroeneKerken. However, this is at the same time considered as a weakness, because by interviewing through the telephone, the non-verbal communication plus the experience of the environment are missed.

Thirdly, collecting the data took place in a clearly defined short period of time. This made the data better comparable, as no outstanding events took place which could have influenced the opinions of the interviewees and is therefore considered as a strength. The personal network of the researcher and the database provided by GroeneKerken made it relatively easy for the researcher to collect representatives of churches who would be willing to cooperate with the researcher. However, the researcher was therefore not able to minimize the 'personal network bias'. This might have led to a less complete picture of the religious landscape in The Netherlands.

A large weakness is the fact that only Christian churches were interviewed. This decision was made because of feasibility reasons. It would be too complicated to both compare different churches within the Christian streams and discover barriers and motivations for other religions to join GroeneKerken. Another weakness which is closely connected to the choice of only incorporating Christian churches in the research is the bias of the researcher being a Christian herself. On the one hand, this provided her with some basic insights and knowledge about how a church functions. On the other hand, this might have made her view colored when looking at the other churches.

Though only focusing on Christian churches, it is considered as an advantage that all main Christian church streams are incorporated in the research. This provides a solid base for drawing conclusions and making recommendations. There can be large differences between different streams in how their churches are practically organized and in how they implement the bible in their daily lives. These differences are covered by incorporating the various streams in this research.

Finally, the personality and characteristics of researcher were both a strength and a weakness. Compared to the interviewees, the researcher was relatively young. This gave them fresh insights and they experienced this age mostly positive, with the researcher being enthusiastic and determined. However, sometimes there was also a generation gap between the researcher and the interviewees, which were almost all above 50 years old. This generation gap is considered as a weakness, because it made it sometimes more difficult to understand each other when using certain specific terminologies. The time pressure of the researcher is considered as a final weakness. Because of extracurricular activities and master electives, the researcher could not give her full attention to conducting this research. This is considered as a weakness, because this provided both stress and not a full usage of opportunities for the research.

### 7.3 Recommendations for further research

During the research process, some recommendations for further research came up. These are connected to the six weaknesses which are discussed in the previous sub-chapter, as the weaknesses should be overcome to perform a better research the next time.

First, the researcher should focus more on the broader level. It is a pitfall to get lost in detail about individual churches, when searching for an answer to a broader question. Some details may provide relevant information for answering the research question, however it turned out that some interviewees were focused too much on an irrelevant aspect of their own church which is less applicable to the broader picture. Finding answers to a broader question can be achieved by incorporating some more general questions in the interviews and by interviewing other people than only representatives of churches. Interviews with representatives of synods or professors at the theology education institutions can be interesting to incorporate in the research, too.

Second, the interviews should only take place face-to-face. As this is more time consuming both for the researcher and for the interviewees, the research should make a tight planning. This way, the non-verbal communication and the experience of the environment can be included in the research as well.

Third, it would be advisable to let further research be performed by a researcher who is not actively engaged in this religion. This would help to decrease both the bias of being a Christian, and the personal network bias because this researcher would probably not have a large Christian network. Having a researcher who is not actively engaged in religion might lead to different questions being asked.

Fourth, this research focused only on Christian churches. It would be interesting to investigate the differences between different churches in terms of their engagement with sustainability. However, it would be advisable to reserve a longer period for the research as this would increase the complexity of the research. This would also tackle the issues with time pressure. Full focus can be given to the research and a broader research can be performed. Something else which can be an interesting variation to this research is conducting research to 'the other side' and frame the research question and objective from a church's point of view.

Finally, further research should be performed by a researcher who is slightly older than this researcher. This could decrease the generation gap. However, it should be taken into consideration that this researcher should possess the same amount of energy and enthusiasm as a young researcher would do.

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## Appendices

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### Appendix A. Interview guide for actively engaged churches

**Heeft u een speciale functie binnen de kerk welke te maken heeft met duurzaamheid?**

Do you have a special function within the church, which is connected to sustainability?

**Per wanneer bent u aangesloten bij GroeneKerken?**

Since when is your church part of the GroeneKerken campaign?

**Hoe kent u GroeneKerken?**

How do you know GroeneKerken?

**Waarom heeft uw kerk besloten om zich aan te sluiten bij deze campagne?**

Why did you or your church decide to join the GroeneKerken campaign?

**Hoe ervaart u het netwerk van GroeneKerken?**

How do you experience the network which GroeneKerken offers you(r church)?

**Op welke punten is uw kerk ‘verduurzaamd’?**

At which aspects did your church become more sustainable?

**Merkt u dat er in uw kerk veel draagvlak is voor duurzaamheid?**

How much support is there for sustainability?

**Wat zou u als tip willen geven aan GK, bijvoorbeeld om meer actieve betrokken kerken te krijgen of meer optimaal gebruik te maken van het GK-netwerk?**

Do you have any tips for GroeneKerken?

### Appendix B. Interview guide for non-actively engaged churches

**Hoe kent u GroeneKerken?**

How do you know GroeneKerken?

**Per wanneer bent u ingeschreven op de nieuwsbrief van GK?**

Since when have you subscribed yourself to the newsletter of GroeneKerken?

**Waarom wilde u uzelf inschrijven op deze nieuwsbrief?**

Why did you subscribe yourself to the newsletter of GroeneKerken?

**Heeft u een speciale functie binnen de kerk welke te maken heeft met duurzaamheid?**

Do you have a special function in your church, which is related to sustainability?

**Wat weerhoudt u/ uw kerk ervan om een Groene Kerk te worden?**

Which barriers do you experience in officially becoming part of the GroeneKerken campaign?

**Wat zou u/ uw kerk over de streep trekken?**

What would give you(r church) the final impulse in joining GroeneKerken?

**Hoe ervaart u het lezen van de nieuwsbrief?**

How do you experience reading the newsletter?

**Heeft u nog tips voor GroeneKerken?**

Do you have any tips for GroeneKerken?

### Appendix C. Interview guide for non-engaged churches

**Bent u momenteel bezig met duurzaamheid, zo ja hoe?**

Are you currently involved in any type of sustainability practices, if yes, how?

**Bent u bekend met de GroeneKerken actie van Tear en Kerk In Actie?**

Are you familiar with the GroeneKerken campaign of Tear and Kerk In Actie?

**Heeft u er weleens over nagedacht om uw kerk bij deze actie aan te sluiten?**

Have you ever considered to join his campaign?

**Verwacht u dat er draagvlak is voor duurzaamheid in uw kerk?**

Do you expect that there is support for sustainability?

### Appendix D. Overview of the performed interviews

**Category 1: actively engaged churches.**

These churches are a 'Groene Kerk'. Total number of interviews: 10

Name	Church	Interview date
<b>Bert Wolters</b>	Protestantse gemeente Elst	19.04.17
<b>Cees van Rijswijk</b>	Maria Christinakerk, Den Dolder	16.05.17
<b>Cent van Vliet</b>	Binnenstadsgemeente Leiden	18.04.17
<b>Dick Zwiep</b>	Protestantse gemeente Goes	17.04.17
<b>Gees Hummel</b>	De Inham, Hoogland	10.04.17
<b>Gert Olbertijn</b>	Oostpoort Gouda	04.05.17
<b>Hans van der Spek</b>	Pinkstergemeente Morgenstond Gouda	18.04.17
<b>Harry Haverkamp</b>	Gereformeerde kerk Bennekom	16.05.17
<b>Janne van den Akker</b>	Keizersgrachtkerk, Amsterdam	06.04.17
<b>Ton van Leur</b>	H. Catharinakerk, St. Maarten parochie	10.04.17

**Category 2: semi-actively engaged churches.**

These churches have subscribed themselves to the newsletter of GroeneKerken, but are not (yet) officially a 'Groene Kerk'. Total number of interviews: 4

Name	Church	Interview date
<b>Anne Gelderloos</b>	Bennekom	28.04.17
<b>Dick Sybenga</b>	PKN Gieten	19.04.17
<b>Kornelie Oostlander &amp; Frank Cornet</b>	PKN Bloemendaal en Overveen	09.05.17
<b>Rudy Volkerink</b>	Thousand Hills International Church, Hilversum	21.04.17

**Category 3: non-actively engaged churches.**

These churches are currently not engaged with GroeneKerken. Total number of interviews: 7

Name	Church	Interview date
<b>Bas van de Ruit</b>	Hervormde Kerk Papendrecht	18.04.17
<b>Bert Weerd</b>	Hervormde Kerk Huizen	24.04.17
<b>Chris Noordzij</b>	De Rank	15.05.17
<b>Hein de Vries</b>	Hervormde Kerk Woerden	28.04.17
<b>Joost Sonneveld</b>	Oosterkerk Zoetermeer	10.05.17
<b>Michel Demmenie</b>	Christoffel parochie	08.05.17
<b>Nico van Gent</b>	Protestantse gemeente Klaaswaal	08.05.17

**Interviews with GroeneKerken.**

This person is working for GroeneKerken. Total number of interviews: 1

Name	Works at	Interview date
<b>Henk van der Honing</b>	GroeneKerken	03.05.17

Appendix E. Promotion material of 'De Inham'

'De Inham' organized a regional day for churches which are interested in sustainability.

# ***Hoe maken we onze kerken groen?***

***Uitnodiging voor kerkbesturen en -leden***

***Zaterdag 20 mei 2017, 09.30 – 12.30 uur***

***Locatie: De PKN De Inham, Hamseweg 40, Hoogland***

***Sprekers o.a.:***

***Marijke van Duijn, Raad van Kerken Nederland***

***Henk van der Honing, Groenekerken Nederland***

***Praktijkervaringen:***

***De Inham en de Johanneskerk***

***Gespreksleider:***

***Huib Klamer, Secretaris Raad van Kerken Amersfoort***

***Organisatie: De Inham en de Johanneskerk***

***i.s.m. de Amersfoortse Raad van Kerken***

***Aanmelden uiterlijk 15 mei 2017***

***[groenekerkerk@inham.net](mailto:groenekerkerk@inham.net)***

***Programma en nadere informatie: [www.inham.net](http://www.inham.net)***

***Voor koffie, thee en lunch wordt een vrijwillige bijdrage gevraagd***

## Appendix F. PowerPoint presentation of the 'H. Catharinakerk'

Example of a PowerPoint presentation which can be used for raising money for solar panels. This one of from the 'H. Catharinakerk'.

1 DEZE PRESENTATIE WORDT VERZORGD DOOR DE WERKGROEP  
DUURZAAMHEID GROENE CATHARINAKERK  
TON VAN LEIJF, FRANS VAN DER SCHOT EN HARRY VAN ROSSSEN

2 De presentatie dragen wij op aan  
**Henk van Wijk**  
als dank voor zijn geweldig initiatief om de H. Catharinakerk te **vergroenen** en te verduurzamen

3 **Zonnepanelen**  
OP HET DAK VAN DE H. CATHARINAKERK

4 De H. Catharinakerk is onlangs een **groene kerk** geworden  
• Dat is een kerk waar blijvend aandacht is voor de schepping...en  
• Waar in haalbare stappen wordt gewerkt aan verduurzaming en klimaatverbetering

5 Een volgende belangrijke stap is het plaatsen van **16 zonnepanelen** op het dak van de **groene Catharinakerk**

6 **Waarom zonnepanelen op het dak van de kerk?**  
• Wij zien het als een grote stap op weg naar meer duurzaamheid en milieubewustzijn in onze kerk  
• Het is een schone en duurzame energiebron  
• En misschien voor de toekomst: We zouden kunnen kijken of we de besparingen die we realiseren door duurzaam bezig te zijn kunnen investeren in duurzame ontwikkelingsprojecten. In dat geval is onze kerk zeer duurzaam bezig

7 **Wat zijn de totale kosten van de aanschaf van panelen?**  
Op basis van verschillende offertes gaan wij uit van een bedrag van ongeveer 6000 euro  
Er is echter één maar...

8 **De financiële positie van de H.Catharinakerk is niet rooskleurig**  
Onze kerk heeft niet voldoende middelen om de zonnepanelen te plaatsen. HELAAS

9 **Dan maar geen panelen op het dak ?**  
Of kunnen en willen wij als parochianen helpen ?  
Dat wordt dan wel puzzelen

10 **Het energiesysteem kost ca. € 6000**  
•Laten we eens kijken of we met elkaar een aanzet kunnen geven om € 4000 bijeen te vergaren  
•De overige € 2000 kan misschien op een andere manier worden gefinancierd

11 **We willen kijken of we met uw steun 4000 euro bij elkaar kunnen vergaren**  
Het project wordt daarmee kansrijk  
**Hoe ?**  
• Door middel van sponsoring  
• Door op andere manieren geld in te zamelen voor dit groene doel

12 **Met tangram kunt u al uw ideeën om geld in te zamelen kwijt**

13 **Als we uitgaan van 4000 euro, dan kost een paneel € 250**  
**Adopteer een stukje tangrampaneel**  
Grote driehoek € 55 x2  
Vierkant € 35  
Parallelogram € 30  
Kleine driehoek € 15 x2  
Middelgrote driehoek € 45  
Totaal € 250 x 16 = € 4000

14 **Als we 1 tangrapuzzel vol hebben dan kunnen we 1 paneel kopen**  
Wij houden nu even pauze en delen u de stukken uit voor het maken van een tangrapuzzel:  
De opdracht luidt: maak met elkaar een vierkant.  
**GEDURENDE DE VOLGENDE MAANDEN HOUDEN WIJ U OP DE HOOGTE VAN DE VORDERINGEN VAN DIT PROJECT**

15 **Wat valt er naast dit adoptieproject nog meer te organiseren ??**  
Zijn er ideeën of suggesties ?  
Wij zien vele mogelijkheden

16 **Een (vrij)markt voor opnieuw te gebruiken spullen**

17 **Een sponsorloop in de bossen bij Austerlitz**  
• Voor klein.....  
• En voor GROOT  
Kassa

18 **Een kaartmiddag**  
In de kerk

**Verkoop of veiling van eigen kunstwerken**

- Schilder- en of teken stukken
- Bloem/zijde kunststukken
- Beeldhouwwerken
- Borduurwerken
- Zelfgemaakte kralenkettingen
- Andere kunstwerken



19



**Een zonnige en gezellige fietspuzzeltocht langs groene plekken**



20



**Een zonnige wandelpuzzeltocht door en langs groene plekken**



21



**Een benefietconcert ??**



IN DE KERK

22



**Of....een benefiet uitvoering zangkoor**



23



**Of....een benefiet uitvoering van de harmonie**



24



**Wat dacht u van een BINGO ??**



Ik ben geen praktiserend katholiek maar dank zij de BINGO ga ik nog steeds eens in de week naar de kerk

25



**Een speciale groene viering of een viering over duurzaamheid**

Groen is de kleur van de hoop, van de toekomst

Bestemming collecte: Voor de panelen



26



**Een duurzame barbecue ?**

WEEKEND ! Deze keer niet gratis



27



**Of...een uitgebreid biologisch buffet met duurzame streek of speciale producten uit de eigen moestuin**



28



**Heeft u misschien andere ideeën of tips voor ons?**

Wij houden ons aanbevelen



29



**We zoeken ook mensen om activiteiten te organiseren**

Gezocht W/V

Bij de werkgroep Duurzaamheid groene Catharinakerk

Aanmelden als vrijwilliger



30



## Appendix G. Sustainable bucket list of Gert Olbertijn

Gert has made this bucket list with the aim of making it easier for people to make sustainable steps.

# Duurzame bucketlist

Bij een duurzaam leven komt veel kijken. Er zijn 101 mogelijkheden om aan de slag te gaan. Op deze Duurzame Bucketlist vind je de belangrijkste. Ga ermee aan de slag en maak duurzame stappen. Waarschijnlijk kun je met deze bucketlist wel even vooruit. En wie weet haal je de eindstreep!

Je vindt hieronder 8 categorieën met een korte toelichting en een paar voorbeelden. De volgorde bepaal je zelf. Heb je iets voor elkaar? Zet een vinkje met een datum. Voeg eventueel andere duurzame stappen toe. Ga je voor maximaal effect? Stuur deze Bucketlist door naar je vrienden en bespreek geregeld je voortgang met elkaar. Succes!

- 1. Duurzaam consumeren. In de dingen die je koopt en consumeert kun je duurzame en eerlijke keuzes maken. In de winkel, webshop, kledingwinkel, op de markt etc.** **Gestart/gedaan op:**
  - Eet voortaan groente en fruit uit het [seizoen](#). \_\_\_\_\_
  - Koop biologische of fairtrade producten (uit Nederland) óf koop min. 3 productsoorten biologisch (bv. Groenten, fruit en koffie). Doe je dit al? Kies 3 nieuwe producten. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Eet max. 3x in de week biologisch vlees [www.milieucentraal.nl/klimaat-en-aarde/klimaatverandering](http://www.milieucentraal.nl/klimaat-en-aarde/klimaatverandering) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Nieuwe telefoon nodig? Koop een [Fairphone!](#) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Koop kleding gemaakt van [eco-katoen](#). \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Duurzaam bankieren. Ook op het gebied van geld kun je duurzame keuzes maken. Je kunt al beginnen met de keuze voor een 'duurzame bank' of door je geld op een duurzame manier te besteden.**
  - Kijk op [www.eerlijkebankwijzer.nl](http://www.eerlijkebankwijzer.nl) hoe jouw huidige bank scoort op duurzaamheid. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Is jouw huidige bank niet zo duurzaam? Stap over op een duurzamere bank! Bijvoorbeeld [ASN](#) of [Triodos](#). \_\_\_\_\_
  - Geef jaarlijks minimaal 10% van je inkomsten weg als giften. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Bel of stuur een e-mail naar organisaties die jij steunt om te vragen wat ze doen omtrent duurzaamheid. \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Duurzame Energie. Wat voor stroom komt er uit je stopcontacten en hoe verwarm je je water? En wel eens nagedacht hoe duurzaam je elektrische apparaten zijn?**
  - Vervang kapotte lampen door A-label spaar- of LEDlampen. Tot alles vervangen is. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Investeer in zonnepanelen op eigen dak of via een [collectief](#). \_\_\_\_\_
  - Stap over op [groene stroom](#). \_\_\_\_\_
  - Koop je nieuwe apparaten? Koop ze met het A-label of zelf A+++! \_\_\_\_\_
  - Maak je huis [energieneutraal](#). Stap voor stap of in één keer! \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Afval. Wist jij dat we ongeveer 500 kilo afval per persoon per jaar produceren hier in Nederland? Dit kan minder!**
  - Neem altijd een eigen tas mee met boodschappen doen. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Haal je brood in [broodzakken](#). \_\_\_\_\_
  - Koop je groente en fruit in [groentenetjes](#). \_\_\_\_\_
  - Scheid je afval. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Repareer kapotte apparaten. Wellicht een [Repair Café](#) in de buurt? \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_



## Duurzame bucketlist

- 5. In de Tuin. Juist in je tuin, kan je duurzaam aan de slag. Ook als je maar een klein lapje grond of een balkon hebt.** **Gestart/gedaan op:**
- Gebruik natuurlijke bestrijdingsmiddelen tegen plagen en ziekten. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Sluit een regenton aan voor beregening van je tuin. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Maak een compost bak of wormenbak. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Kies voor gras/beplanting in plaats van tegels. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Kies voor insectvriendelijke planten en plekken in je tuin of balkon. \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Vervoer. Er komen steeds meer mogelijkheden om ons zelf duurzaam te kunnen vervoeren. Het één is iets makkelijker te realiseren dan het ander. Maar mogelijkheden zijn er genoeg.**
- Doe je boodschappen op de fiets. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Ga op de fiets of met het OV naar je werk. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Nieuwe auto? Rij elektrisch of hybride. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Ga dichtbij op vakantie zonder gebruik van het vliegtuig. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Compenseer de CO2 uitstoot van je vliegvakanties of dienstreizen. \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Werk. Juist op je werk kan je samen met anderen een slag maken in duurzaamheid. Ook als je ondernemer bent. Stimuleer dus juist ook je collega's en je werkgever.**
- Wat doet je bedrijf op het gebied van duurzaamheid? Vraag het! \_\_\_\_\_
  - Lees je e-mail en stukken voor vergaderingen digitaal. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Print dubbelzijdig en twee pagina's per blad. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Maak je hard om de koffie en thee fairtrade en biologisch te krijgen. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Ondernemer? Maak een plan om je bedrijfsvoering te verduurzamen. En voer dit uit! \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. In je kerk of club. Duurzame stappen maken is leuker en effectiever wanneer je het met elkaar doet.**
- Ga in je kerk/gemeente aan de slag met: Groene Kerken, A Rocha of doe de Micha Cursus! \_\_\_\_\_
  - Hoe duurzaam zijn ze bij je (sport)club? Help ze op weg! \_\_\_\_\_
  - Geef zelf het goede voorbeeld! \_\_\_\_\_
  - Schrijf een stukje of een blog over de duurzame stappen in bijvoorbeeld het nieuwsblad van je kerk, gemeente of club en inspireer ook anderen. \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

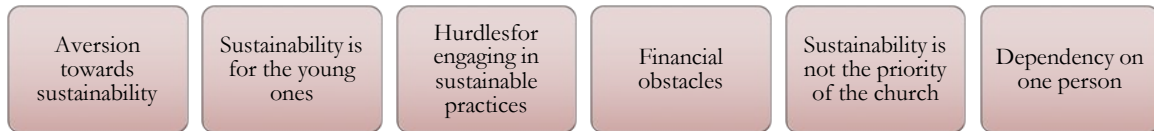
Micha Nederland  
10 JAAR



## Appendix H. Aggregated dimensions of thematic analysis (coding)

### Barriers and incentives on an individual church level:

#### Barriers for churches in joining GroeneKerken

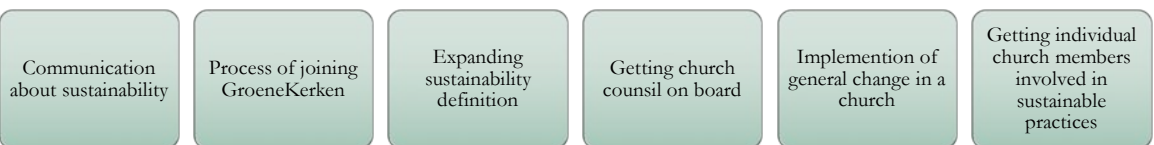


#### Incentives for churches in joining GroeneKerken



### Process and outcomes of implementation of sustainable changes on an individual church level:

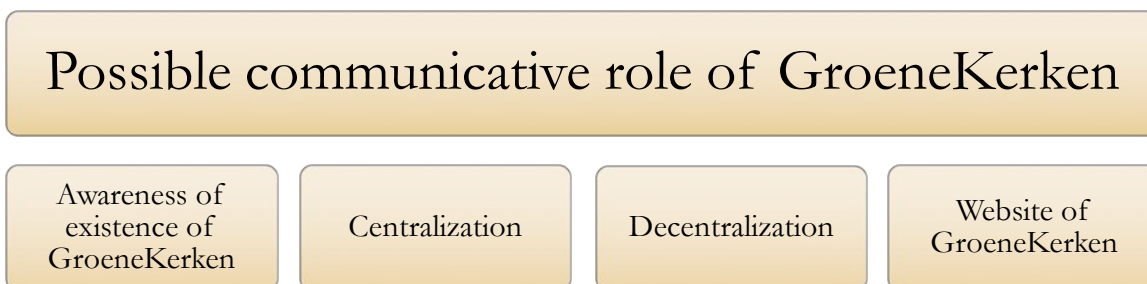
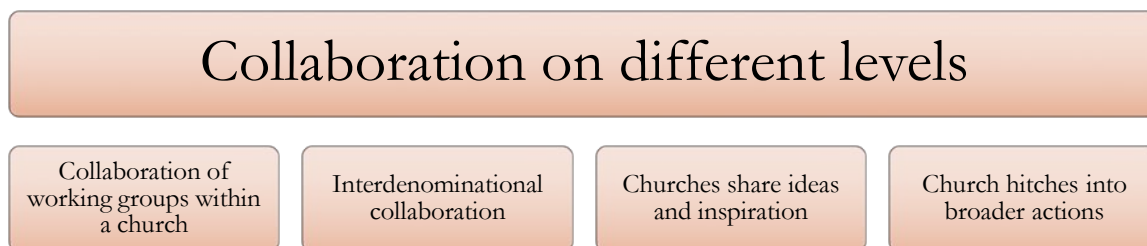
#### Process of implementing change within a church



#### Outcomes of sustainability practices



## Collaboration and communication on a collective level:



### Appendix I. Code schemes

The number behind the 1<sup>st</sup> order dimensions represents the amount of times the code has been used.

#### Appendix I.1 Barriers for churches in joining GroeneKerken

2 <sup>nd</sup> order code	1 <sup>st</sup> order dimensions	
Aversion towards sustainability	Church is awaiting about such themes	4
	Church members are having difficult questions	2
	Joining GroeneKerken is a step too far	1
	Maybe I am too awaiting	1
	Sustainability is too 'left'	5
	Sustainability is too complex	1
	Sustainability was considered as being for older people	2
	The goal of the church is bringing people to Jesus	2
	The gospel is between you and God	7
	There has not yet been a preaching about sustainability	1
	There is scepticism	2
They are not interested in sustainability	4	
We are a former reformed 'bondsgemeente'	3	
Sustainability is for the young ones	GroeneKerken can be attractive to young people	4
	Include climate in children's and teenager programs	16
	It's easier to change young people's behavior	2
	People are getting older	4
Hurdles for engaging in sustainable practices	Does not see the added value of GroeneKerken	4
	Don't talk about it, just do it	2
	It takes time	12
	It's difficult to make it concrete	5
	Not many 'groene kerken' in the north and south of The Netherlands	2

	People are selfish, that's part of the society	4
	The word church can be a barrier	3
	There are limited resources at Tear and KerkInActie	4
Financial obstacles	It costs a lot of money	5
Sustainability is not the priority of the church	Churches have other things to worry about	6
	Current focus of the church is growth	3
	Currently focusing on merging churches	7
	Focus on merging churches first, then start with GroeneKerken	6
	It's not a conscious decision to not join GroeneKerken	6
	People are getting older	4
	There are so many 'things' and actions in the religious landscape	5

### Appendix I.2 Incentives for churches in joining GroeneKerken

2 <sup>nd</sup> order code	1 <sup>st</sup> order dimensions	
Encouragements for engaging in sustainable practices	Don't live at the expense of next generations	6
	Getting inspired by Laudato Si	7
	Ideological motives	25
	It keeps them on the right track	1
	It's a mindset	1
	It's fun	9
	Loss of biodiversity is the main problem	2
	Making contact with people outside of the church	7
	There is a lot still to win	2
	There is pressure from society	16
	They want to give meaning to being a 'groene kerk'	4
	Use GroeneKerken to indicate that there are sustainable intentions	4
Financial impulses	Financial motives	22
Sustainability in the bible	It's a biblical task to take care of the earth	7
	Jesus uses agrarian examples in the bible	3
	To which part of the Bible can sustainability be connected	1
Central standpoint of Christians towards sustainability	Churches are not taking responsibility	3
	Churches should have a stronger political voice	1
	Create a stronger collective communication	2
	Creating consciousness amongst churches	3
	Sustainability is part of being a christian	1
	The church should be a frontrunner	7
	The church sometimes has a negative image	2
	We, as christians, have something to offer	3
We, as churches, have to do it together	2	

### Appendix I.3 Process of implementing change within a church

2 <sup>nd</sup> order code	1 <sup>st</sup> order dimensions	
Communication about sustainability	Church could take a standpoint towards sustainability	1
	Communicating about sustainability to church members through (digital) newsletter	24
	Include sustainability in policy reports	6

Process of joining GroeneKerken	Became a 'groene kerk'	8
	Collect information within church about what's already done sustainably	1
	Inventorizing current sustainability practices within the church	3
	Investigating at other churches	7
	Making a plan	17
	Phase of investigation	1
	Read a newspaper article	1
	Read an article	3
	They made a sustainability quickscan	3
	Wants to consider joining GroeneKerken	2
Expanding sustainability definition	Broadening of sustainability subjects	3
	Don't only look at ecological sustainability, but also social	7
	Sustainability consists of 3 P's	2
Getting church council on board	Difficult to get church council on board	5
	Engaging in conversations with church stewards and -counsel	22
	Forwarding information to relevant people	1
	Getting support from church council	22
Implementation of general change in a church	A church is a rigid organization	3
	Resistance to change among church members	1
Getting individual church members involved in sustainable practices	A certain sense of sensitivity is needed	4
	Change personal attitude of church members	11
	Contact church members personally	1
	Creating consciousness amongst church members	15
	Difficult to get church members on board	6
	Don't force church members	8
	Don't give them an overkill	5
	Don't introduce sustainability as something new	1
	Make church members conscious about effects of climate change	2
	Not aware of individual church members' point of view towards sustainability	3
	Pass on to individual church members	17
	Support for sustainability within the church	18
Use preacher for spreading the sustainable message	7	

#### Appendix I.4 Outcomes of sustainability practices

2 <sup>nd</sup> order code	1 <sup>st</sup> order dimensions	
Sustainable improvements in church community	Change to sustainable cleaning liquids	4
	Change to sustainable paper	4
	Collecting clothes for refugees	1
	Cooperating with Voedselbank	5
	Having a vegetable garden	6
	Organize social activities for older people	2
	Organized more broad activities, like climate services	5
	Pass a sustainable bible along the church members	2
	Pray for sustainability	5
	Purchase 'green' and sustainable	7

	Reposable investments	1
	They organise theme nights	5
	Use biodegradable plates and cutlery	2
Sustainable improvements on church building	Change energy supply	13
	Changing the lights	9
	Financing action amongst church members for solar pannels	13
	Gaining insights into energy usage	6
	Garden contains religious aspects	5
	Not using poisoning for the garden	4
	Put solar pannels on the roof	6
	Replace things on a natural moment	1
	Solar pannel yields are shown on a TV screen	4
	Sustainable investments	4
Sustainable rebuilding	13	
Waiting on municipality for changing church' usage	1	
'Doing green' is not new	In the seventies there was an environmental group	1
	It's normal to do green	8
	People vote GroenLinks and "doing green" is normal	3
	We are already green	10
Make small steps	Have to do one thing per year as a 'groene kerk'	1
	It should stay easy accessible	7
	It's a continuous process	8
	Keep it simple	2
	Make a small start	7
	They want to make it concrete	19

### Appendix I.5 Collaboration on different levels

2 <sup>nd</sup> order code	1 <sup>st</sup> order dimensions	
Collaboration of working groups within a church	Collecting a group of enthusiast people	20
	Different people within the church have their own projects	4
	Purchase together	6
Interdenominational collaboration	Advantages of cooperating with other churches	9
	Cooperation with A Rocha and / or Micha	5
	Created sustainable network within the city	4
	Finding similarities among churches	3
	Preconditions for cooperation amongst churches	1
	Sustainability as a common interest brought us together	2
Churches share ideas and inspiration	There is a collaboration between churches	12
	Getting inspired by other 'groene kerken'	7
	It's a pity if everybody works for itself	5
	Not reinventing the wheel	9
	Practical tips for GroeneKerken regarding timing	2
	Provide inspiration to each other	10
	Share ideas with other churches	12
	Use the checklist / toolkit of GroeneKerken	3
Visiting yearly GroeneKerken day	6	
Church hitches into broader actions	Participated in broader climate actions	3
	Participated in climate run	8

	Participated in warm sweater day	4
	Participates in yearly day of prayer for crops and land	2

### Appendix I.6 Possible communicative role of GroeneKerken

2 <sup>nd</sup> order code	1 <sup>st</sup> order dimensions	
Awareness of existence of GroeneKerken	Did not know about the existence of GroeneKerken	5
	Did not know GroeneKerken through KerkInActie	2
	Knowing GroeneKerken through KerkInActie	2
	Knows about the existence of GroeneKerken	2
Centralization	For an outsider it is difficult to reach individual church members	4
	GroeneKerken can organize central actions	6
	Have someone supporting then when going to the synod	1
	It has to come from above	6
	KerkInActie faced difficulties at synod PKN	9
	Look at sensitive subjects within church streams	1
	PKN wrote a letter to all churches about sustainability in 2016	2
	Reformed churches have a different organization, not KerkInActie	1
Decentralization	Church is focused on itself toomuch	4
	Decentralization is important	9
	It has to come from the bottom	12
	Self first, then entangle other regional churches	24
Website of GroeneKerken	GroeneKerken should publish a database with activities per church	1
	Increase accessibility and clarity of the website	2
	Keep website up to date	4
	No response at the website of GroeneKerken	2
	Website is looking good	5