

# Transforming Traditions

Re-imagining church organization for religious wanderers

Thesis showcase

By Noah Josse

Strategic Product Design  
Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering  
Delft University of Technology

Supervisory team

Dr. Ir. M. Bos-de Vos (Chair)

Ir. S.S. Mulder (Mentor)

Company

Protestantse Kerk in Nederland

## Protestantse Kerk in Nederland is losing members

I've seen the challenges facing the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN). Every year, we're losing 3% of our 1.6 million members, especially those under 40. It's a critical moment. This research focused on young religious wanderers, which are those who have Christian faith yet do not attend church. The research question was: How can we meet the needs of young religious wanderers and our current members?

## Strategic design & church?!

I've taken a fresh approach, focusing on design rather than theology. My goal is to reimagine church organization. By combining Value-Sensitive Design and Research through Design, I've been paving the way for change. Through three research cycles, I've uncovered insights that can reshape the future of the church.

### Cycle 1: Setting the Scene

I started by understanding the current church landscape. Interviews and value exploration session helped me see the bigger picture.

### Cycle 2: Value Exploration

Working with youth and church innovation experts, I discovered a critical

challenge: balancing individual needs with a sense of belonging to a community. My solution? An infrastructure for exploring in a community garden representing different church organizations.

### Cycle 3: Engaging the Religious Wanderers

At the Graceland Festival, I discussed perspectives and values with religious wanderers. Their diverse preferences underscored the need for flexibility and exploration.

## A roadmap for exploration

I've created a roadmap for building an exploration infrastructure. It's all about fostering relationships among organizations, building trust, and encouraging exploration for religious wanderers. In this roadmap different organizations are metaphorically represented as gardens. This roadmap is meant as inspiration for church innovation and local congregations.

My approach not only addresses the needs of members and religious wanderers but also showcases how design principles can drive church renewal. Let's collaborate for this systemic change together with theologians

## VISION *An infrastructure for exploration*

To help those young religious wanderers on their journey toward finding a community that matches them.

