

Creative Initiatives 2015-2018 – Overview

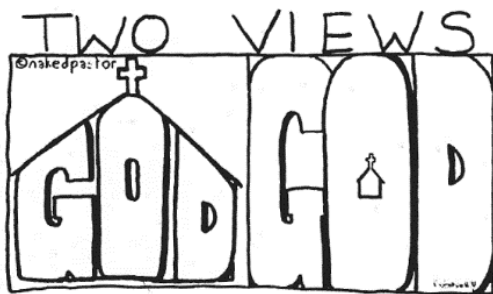
Synod of Alberta and the Territories

Background:

At the February 2015 meeting of the National Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF), the following adaptive challenge was articulated: *Despite our desire to use the CECF fund faithfully, creatively and effectively, we are unsure how to participate in God's mission today in our changing local contexts. Hence we do not know how to best steward the use of the CECF resources (formerly used to buy land and mortgage new buildings).*

This ELCIC, CECF fund provided a total of 200K for use in 2015 – 2018 in support of activities in this Synod which are experimental in spirit and genuinely seek to explore what it means to participate in God's mission in the world today.

Creative Initiatives overview:



Funds are intended to **support or create learning opportunities** as people join in the work God is already doing in our neighbourhoods and communities, *not for solution based fixes to problems or those with a known and measureable end point, like more people in worship, more youth, or financial success.* Instead these experimental activities are intentionally relational and open, with the expectation of learning along the way (listening, attending, discerning, experimenting and reflecting)

New Creative Initiatives missional formation learning opportunities are guided by a statement of the challenge we face for which we don't know a solution; We want _____ but we don't know how to _____.

Characteristics of Creative Initiatives:

- Discernment of the work of the Holy Spirit is central
- Focussed on learning about God's planned future
- Localized, contextual and relational
- Collaborative in nature, joining in with other groups in the neighbourhood

Experiment Challenges:

Challenge One: When there are no answers or sure outcomes in sight, how do we create environments where we can re-imagine ways to navigate into this new space? How do we get comfortable with the open-ended processes of experimenting so that we become learners rather than those in control of pre-set outcomes?

Challenge Two: Experiments require the confidence to test things about which we are not sure. They involve a willingness to try and fail; in this cycle of trying, failing, reflecting, adjusting and trying again we learn new ways of acting. Our church systems are risk averse. How, therefore, do we create cultures of experimentation in systems that minimize risk?

CECF grant expectations:

Creative Initiatives Experiments will include activities that foster discernment of God's mission and how to faithfully join in God's redemption, restoration and reconciliation of the world. These experiments facilitate a learning opportunity about how to join in in the work of the Holy Spirit in our local context.

Annual reports will be made in January via the Missional Consultant to the annual CECF Advisory Board. These reports must include financial accounting and reflection on what is being learned and discovered about how to participate in God's mission in our changing context. Funds must be used by June 2018 or returned to the CECF.

More information and application forms are available from Julianne Barlow, Assistant for Mission, julianne@albertasynod.ca 587-439-1937

