

Brief Overview of the Connections Project

Connections: Embedding Regional Resourcing in the CRCNA

Purpose: to create a model of resourcing congregations at the regional/classical level.

The project in a nutshell

- Three regions—each with 3 to 4 classes—will be invited to participate.
 1. Canada: Hamilton, Huron, Niagara, Toronto
 2. U.S. Midwest: Central Plains, Lake Superior (U.S. side only), Northcentral Iowa, Wisconsin
 3. U.S. West Coast: Greater LA, Hanmi, Ko-Am, CA South
- The Grand Rapids-based Connections Project team will work with local and classical leaders from the three regions to identify and invite individuals to apply for two different positions—catalyzer-consultants (1 per region) and coaches (2 per region). These leaders will be working two days a week for the length of the project (3 ½ years).
- Catalyzer-consultants (CC) (will host annual gatherings in which 15 or so church teams (pastor and 3 ministry leaders) will learn about and discuss topics that interest them, choose a project/topic to explore, join other teams with a similar project/topic (or continue as an individual church) and create an 18 month learning plan, supported by both the CC and coaches.
- The coaches will form relationships with, and walk alongside, congregations as they explore their chosen project/topic. Coaches will offer and help connect congregations to a wide variety of resources—CRC, other denominations, secular, and local—depending on the request.
- The projects will last about 18 months. At the end of the 18 months, the church teams will gather together to share learning.
- This process will take place three times in each region during the 3 ½ year Connections project.
- Any church in the regions may contact the CC or coaches at any time for any questions they have regarding ministry. (IE: What conferences are offered for youth ministry? What are some good books/websites for conflict in the church? Who might be able to speak to our council about children at the Lord’s Supper? How can we better train Elders and Deacons?)
- Evaluation of the entire project will be ongoing and will inform the Connections Advisory Team and staff on how best to resource regionally.
- The hope is that a “model” of regional resourcing can be shared with others—not only within the CRC but also with other denominations.

Goals:

1. Develop and/or identify a **training program**—focusing on learning in community—for regional catalyzer-consultants and coaches that will enable them to effectively resource, and connect with, congregations.
2. Host **regional gatherings** where congregational teams gather for learning, connecting, and the formation of cohorts.
3. Engage with cohorts and individual congregations to **meet resourcing needs**.
4. Create and foster **relationships** between congregations and catalyzer-consultants and coaches.
5. Resource congregations so that they experience **enhanced ministry**.
6. Intentionally **disseminate ongoing learning** with the goal of replicating the resourcing model in additional, and ultimately all, classes.

What the project is not:	What the project is:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a governance endeavor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a way to resource congregations regionally.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the denomination “telling” congregations how to do ministry/what ministry they should be doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an invitation to congregations to explore a topic/ministry that interests them, and to network with other congregations as they engage the topic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • something that will “compete” with existing opportunities. (IE: Faith Formation or Renewal Lab) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an opportunity to integrate with the good things already in place within classes/congregations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only for the benefit of the CRC denominational offices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potentially a “model” that will enrich resourcing for all CRC congregations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inflexible and “written in stone”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adaptable for different classes and their congregations.

Funding:

A one million dollar grant has been received from Lilly Endowment for the project.

Staff:

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