

FACILITATION REPORT

CRUXIFUSION

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INTRODUCTION AND MANDATE

After five years in existence, the Cruxifusion Board of Directors approached ARC seeking a facilitation process to evaluate and further define its identity, purpose and focus. Kathryn Smith submitted a Four Phase Proposal on February 27, 2016.

Phase One: On March 14, 2016 Kathryn met with the Cruxifusion Board for a Skype consultation. Content from this consultation was used to develop a Questionnaire which was made available to the larger Cruxifusion community on the Cruxifusion website (March 29- April 5, 2016). Twenty-nine questionnaire responses were submitted. A Summary of Key Themes emerging from these responses was prepared for the Board to review.

Phase Two: Five questions were crafted from the Summary of Key Themes which were posted for the board to wrestle with, pray over and discuss, through a facilitated Facebook Group discussion.

Phase Three: Following Cruxifusion's Annual Conference and Board Meeting, April 18-20, 2016, these five questions were further engaged in order to solidify Cruxifusion's identity and purpose. Through prayerful discernment, Questionnaire themes and Cruxifusion's Purpose Statement, the Cruxifusion Board has laid a foundation for a two-stage Action Plan (six months and two years). Results from each phase of the Facilitation Process and some additional considerations are given in the report that follows.

Phase Four: A final meeting between Kathryn and the Cruxifusion Board is scheduled on May 13, 2016 at 2:30 Eastern Time. Delivery of this Facilitation Report and this final consultation via Skype completes the Facilitation Process.

PHASE 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Why did you join Cruxifusion?
2. What has been the significance of Cruxifusion to you?
3. Why does Cruxifusion exist now?
4. Do you see Cruxifusion as an association, a movement or both?
5. In your experience with Cruxifusion, what has given life?
6. In your experience with Cruxifusion, what has drained life?
7. In addition to facebook and our annual gathering, how would you like to see us making connections with each other?
8. What would you like to see Cruxifusion doing more of?
9. How will we succeed?

PHASE 2: KEY THEMES

1. Cruxufusion is a...
 - a. Christ-centred community within the United Church of Canada (UCC),
 - b. A safe space to share personal beliefs,
 - c. A forum for theological dialogue, wrestling and reflection,
 - d. A collegial community of supportive relationships and connections,
2. Cruxufusion's Conference is a place for...
 - a. Worship which nourishes ministers
 - b. Prayers of forgiveness, healing and hope
 - c. Becoming further equipped and sustained for ministry.
3. Online communications are both life-giving and life draining. While discussions are mostly seen to be positive and enjoyable, there times that they have drained life through "nit-picking", "bickering", judging and breaching confidences. Some find these interactions quite discouraging.
4. "Us and Them" identifications act as barriers to community.
 - a. Identity which is forged by negatively focusing on what the UCC is doing/not doing is seen to be negative. Based upon "Us and Them" categories, there are assumptions and judgments made about people's positions on particular political issues upon which the UCC is taking a stand and seeking to influence.
5. Expanding opportunities for networking and resource sharing. Suggestions for such networking are:
 - a. Meeting in regional gatherings for bible study and prayer
 - b. Developing resources
 - c. Online Bible studies
 - d. Pulpit exchanges
6. Cruxufusion respondents desire to have a thoughtful voice within the UCC. Having the UCC recognize, respect and value those who minister from a commitment to a Christ-centred faith and life of prayer. Having freedom to share without fear of reprisal and criticism would be seen as an indicator of Cruxufusion's success and influence on the wider church.
7. Many respondents have come to be a part of Cruxufusion because they were invited. Invitation/recruitment is a theme that is seen to be key to growth and greater influence within the UCC.

PHASE 2: QUESTIONS FOR FACEBOOK DIALOGUE & BOARD MEETING AGENDA

1. Based upon your prayerful reflection and your review of the survey results, what is the key identity of Cruxifusion today?
2. What is the core purpose of Cruxifusion today?
3. What are the most important actions for Cruxifusion to undertake in the next two years in order to accomplish its purpose?
4. What are the most urgent actions for Cruxifusion to undertake in the next 6 months to further its purpose?
5. What key values define/must define Cruxifusion as it seeks to live into its purpose? (Note: Values can be divided into three categories: Category 1 are those values that one would expect of most people; Category 2 are those values that are unique and defining for the Cruxifusion community as it is today; Category 3 are those values that define who the Cruxifusion community wishes to become.)

PHASE 3: FACILITATION OUTCOMES

KEY IDENTITY STATEMENT

Cruxifusion is a network of United Church of Canada leaders proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

CORE PURPOSE STATEMENT

Supporting, inspiring and connecting Christ-centred leaders and congregations within the United Church of Canada

CRUXIFUSION ACTION ITEMS

The Board chose a number of Action Items corresponding to Key Themes identified through Questionnaire responses. Action Items focus on Communications, Conferences, Board Development and Financial Sustainability. They follow and are classified as “Important” (action items to be implemented within two-years) and “Urgent” (action items to be implemented within six months).

TWO-YEAR ACTION ITEMS

Expand Means of Support, Inspiration and Connection

1. Many ministers who value the collegial friendship, safety and support they receive from Cruxifusion are requesting more opportunities for connection and support. The Cruxifusion Board will explore and discern a strategy for responding to requests for the following:
 - a. Regional gatherings for bible study and prayer
 - b. Resource development and/or a resource base
 - c. Online Bible Studies
 - d. Pulpit Exchanges

- e. Forums for theological reflection and discussion

Develop a Financial Sustainability Plan

1. Cruxifusion began, and has been financially sustained through one-time donations. As these funds decrease, Cruxifusion seeks to identify ongoing revenue generating streams. Planning for its financial sustainability Cruxifusion will...
 - a. Seek to grow its donor base through regular donors and online forums for donations such as Canada Helps
 - b. Brainstorm other ways Cruxifusion may wish to generate its financial resources.

SIX-MONTH ACTION ITEMS

Develop a Communications Strategy

1. Develop and Adopt a Communications Guide

Several Communications related issues were identified through Board facilitated conversations and Questionnaires. Cruxifusion's Facebook Group is a forum where life-giving dialogue is enjoyed. At the same, participants note incidents that drain life. Some conversations are marked by "us and them" dichotomies and experienced as "discouraging" which is a diversion from Cruxifusion's purpose. A clear Communication Strategy is being sought to guide conversations, encourage participants toward disagreeing in love and address conflicts. Addressing these communication related themes, Cruxifusion will develop a Communications Guide to include...

- a. Keeping Cruxifusion's reason for being in focus (supporting, inspiring and connecting)
- b. Facebook Group communication guidelines
- c. Disagreeing in love / Holy Manners
- d. A procedure to address conflicts

2. Articulate and Communicate the Cruxifusion Message

Having experienced collegial support, shared faith and worship through Cruxifusion, newer participants say they wish they had known about the group sooner. To extend its network and invitation, Cruxifusion will...

- a. Develop a Communication Package that provides interested ministers and churches with Identity and Purpose Statements, ways to network with Cruxifusion participants and a Calendar of Events.

1. Conference Planning for Excellence

1. The Board of Cruxifusion wishes to hone its Conference planning and execution by developing a Conference Planning Guide with action items and accompanying timelines and guidelines for executing the Annual Conference. The Guide will cover such things as:
 - a. Conference Theme
 - b. Keynote Speaker
 - c. Worship Leaders
 - d. Location
 - e. Communications and Publicity
 - f. Evaluation and Debriefing

KEY DEFINING VALUES

During the post-Conference meeting, the Board sought to identify Cruxifusion’s defining values. Each Board member contributed three Core Values by which he/she believed the Cruxifusion Board and participants are guided. Contributions were as follows:

Theological conversation	Prayer	Gospel
Respectful lament	Love	Listen
Edification	Sanctuary	Support
Accountability	Kingdom building	Safe space
Fruits of the Spirit	Joy	Prayer
Holding confidence	Disagreeing in love	Zeal
Grace	Respect	
Being with and for each other in Christ-likeness		

From the above list, three were chosen. These are prayer, gathering and the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5: 22-23).

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Values and Strategic Anchors

The Consultant recommends further facilitation to examine values and strategies for success as the board’s choices could be considered Strategic Anchors rather than core values. (Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage*). For example, using the Board’s choices, Cruxifusion’s strategy statement could be as follows: With Christ as our centre, we will...

1. Pray for each another and the UCC
2. Gather Christ-centred leaders
3. Demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit

Cruxifusion Board Development

Although time did not allow a thorough discussion, intentionally developing the Cruxifusion Board was noted as a valuable goal for further success. The Consultant recommends the Board consider engaging a Gifts Discovery process; a means of identifying individuals who can serve in various capacities on the Cruxifusion Board and on other task groups the Board deems necessary for fulfilling its purpose.

Suggested focus areas are as follows:

- a. A Communications Officer or Team- A Communications Officer/Team, with the Cruxifusion Board would assist in developing Cruxifusion’s Communication Guide and give oversight to communications related issues.
- b. A Fundraising Coordinator or Team - This role would be developed by the Cruxifusion Board and would include approaching potential donors and identifying other means of generating revenue.
- c. Resource Development and Sharing - With the Cruxifusion Board’s guidance, develop and/or share a pool of resources which would provide support and inspiration to the network.

- d. Web Design and Management - An individual or individual(s) who with the Cruxifusion Board's guidance design and make necessary changes to its website and manage web postings.
- e. Conference and Event Planning - An individual or individuals who, guided by the Cruxifusion Board, Coordinate all Conference related planning and activities.
- f. Denominational Connectors - Individuals who demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit, are deemed wise and are able to foster good will, connection and points of dialogue with the United Church of Canada.
- g. Visionary Leadership - Individuals who demonstrate the creative, visionary leadership and are able to make active a vision.

The Voice of Cruxifusion within The United Church of Canada

There is great hope for Cruxifusion's Christ-centred "voice" to be communicated thoughtfully within the larger body of the United Church of Canada "without fear of judgment and/or reprisal". To nurture this hope, the Cruxifusion Board may wish to explore further how it deems best to enlist support and seek dialogue within the United Church of Canada.

CONCLUSION

Cruxifusion's first five years have brought solace to leaders as they have met, prayed and connected in various ways. Many have found true fellowship as safe spaces have been created for leaders seeking the Christ-centred way. There is a sacred sense of belonging, which sustains and provides hope for so many. This is great treasure in a field that is often lonely. There is huge potential for Cruxifusion as it prayerfully and intentionally continues supporting, inspiring and connecting Christ-centred leaders and congregations with such a foundation. Holding Cruxifusion's vision while being attentive to potential threats (communication) will be important as the Cruxifusion Board continues giving thoughtful leadership. I commend your Board for its intention in discerning and honing direction and look forward to hearing how you are growing by "keeping (y)our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith" (Heb. 12:2).