

ROLLING HILLS COVENANT CHURCH
Elder Council – Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2019 (Approved 2/4/19)

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Name	Position	Present	Absent
Mike Cochrane	Chairman	X	
Anthony Galante	Vice Chairman	X	
Byron MacDonald	Senior Pastor	X	
Shawn Hurley	Executive Preaching Pastor	X	
(Anthony Galante)	Elder – Children’s Commission	√	
Jerry Rilling	Elder – Congregational Care	X	
Guy Forest	Elder – Connect Commission	X	
Tom Miller	Elder – Finance & Property Commission	X	
Craig Knickerbocker	Elder – Global Outreach Commission		X
Mike DiLustro	Elder – Life Group Commission	X	
Hoon Dokko	Elder – Local Outreach Commission	X	
Jim Walter	Elder – Personnel Commission	X	
Richard Smith	Elder – Stewardship Commission	X	
Rod Lenders	Elder – Student Commission	X	
Ben Eroen	Elder – Worship Arts Commission	X	
Steve Bunyard	Associate Pastor – Outreach	X	
Lloyd Gilbert	Associate Pastor – Student Ministries	X	
Garrick Hanger	Associate Pastor – Adult Ministries	X	
Bob Cubillos	Business Administrator	X	
Jane Wallin	Secretary	X	

Chairman Mike Cochrane opened the meeting in prayer at 7:04 PM.

DEVOTIONAL – Psalm 119: 33 – 40

Elder Richard Smith began the devotional by reading through the 8 verses first. He recounted how his view of the law in general was really changed by reading about God’s law. God’s law is truly delightful and brings us joy. Having our hearts centered on His statutes, being directed by His commands, and understanding and obeying His laws will quicken our lives.

ELDER PRAYERS

The elders prayed for the needs of those in the congregation and for specific needs of those on the council.

MINUTES

Meeting minutes from the 12/03/2018 meeting were approved by acclamation.

COMPLEMENTARIAN CHURCH PRACTICES COMMITTEE REPORT

Elder Tom Miller first introduced all members of the CCP Commission to make sure they were all known by the EC, especially the newest member, Esther Currie. The report (which is attached) is the compilation of the interviews of 21 congregants across all ages, gender, groups, etc. and 5 churches. The committee centered their comments around Section 4. First the Themes were addressed. Re: Theme #3, there seems that there is a polarity re: differences rather than acceptance; re: Theme #7, exceptional sensitivity will be needed when this information is communicated. Overall, many were very glad that this topic is being addressed by the church and EC. Most on the committee were surprised and/or moved by both the positive and negative things that were found.

Next, Tom reviewed the Recommendations part of Section 4, all of which will be prayerfully considered by the EC. The committee felt #1 was of utmost importance; many on the EC felt the same. Recommendation #2 provides 16 times a year where the women’s perspective is given on all important topics of the church. For understanding Recommendation #3, many will need to be educated as to what complementarity actually is. #6 recommends that men’s ministries be fortified. Most don’t mind being led by men, but it’s much easier when they are strong spiritual servant-leaders. Nothing was found in Scripture precluding Recommendation #9. Recommendation #10 is an

area to deeply and carefully consider. The phrase “under the Spiritual authority of a presiding pastor” is of utmost importance. Recommendation #11 addresses the way we look at titles in this world. They tend to create bias in our thinking. For example, with Director being the highest title for a woman in the church vs. Pastor for a man inadvertently creates bias. Finally, with Recommendation #12 the committee is stating that they are done with their work on this topic and hopes that these recommendations will be implemented in whole or in part. The EC sincerely thanked this committee for their good work.

Chairman Cochrane informed the EC that he and Jane Wallin, Church Secretary, had just signed a new Corporate Resolution.

Tom Miller stated that at the next ECM he will give a summary of the decreased giving situation as well as a presentation of the new F&P projections.

Anthony reported that Children’s Ministries is currently reviewing new curriculum. He will give an update at the next ECM.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The EC then entered into Executive Session.

[Coming out of executive session, the Elder Council made a motion that they move forward to facilitate reconciliation between an elder and a congregant, as well as engage a source to conduct an independent personnel review. The motion carried by a show of hands, with one abstaining and one against.]

STAFF ROUNDTABLE – See Appendix A

ELDER ROUNDTABLE – See Appendix B

CLOSING PRAYER

Elder Rod Lenders closed the meeting in prayer ending at 12:10 am.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Possible Sub-Teams to review commission structure:
 - a) Consideration of uniting Stewardship and F&P Commissions, and
 - b) Review of the three commissions that oversee adults

Next Elder meetings are on:

January 21, February 4, and March 4, **2019**.

(EC meetings are typically either on the 1st or 3rd Mondays of the month and sometimes both.)

CBM Dates: February 10, May 5, September 22, & November 10, 2019 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jane Wallin

Attachments:

Complementarian Church Practices Committee

Report to RHCC Elder Council

January 7, 2019

Section 1: PREAMBLE

Section 2: APPROACH

Section 3: FINDINGS

Section 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 5: OUT OF SCOPE DISCOVERIES

Section 6: FINAL THOUGHTS AND CLOSING PRAYER

Section 1: PREAMBLE

We acknowledge and are grateful for the extensive journey undertaken by the Elder Council to understand the Scriptures and craft an amendment to the Teaching Statement. We deeply appreciate the work and prayer that the Elders invested, and their decision to delegate the task of collecting information from other complementarian churches, RHCC Staff, and Congregants here at RHCC, and to make recommendations on potential areas of improvement including the roll-out and sustaining of this important discussion.

Bible verses for our Elders

1. Titus 1:9

a. "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

2. 1 Peter 5:2-4

a. "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."

As a task force, we have journeyed with God to glean best practices from other complementarian churches and we have learned from the significant experiences and perspectives of individuals at our church. We have learned that the issues surrounding how men and women relate well to each other and serve the Lord together is not a simple matter, but rather one that touches many aspects of church life. As a team we have sought the Holy Spirit's leading and worked to sideline our own personal agendas.

3. We believe there are additional opportunities at RHCC to live out our complementarian practices in a way that is obedient to Scripture and that honors and obeys God's perfect design for men and women.

4. We will share what we have learned from other churches and from listening to a variety of members of our own RHCC congregation.

5. We will highlight some of what we have heard from Congregants on both the positive and negative sides with regards to how successfully we live out complementarity at RHCC.

6. We will make recommendations on opportunities for increased leadership engagement for women within the RHCC complementarian position.

7. We will make recommendations on the roll-out of this very important topic to the Congregation and Staff at RHCC.

8. We submit to the authority of the Elder Council to accept, reject or alter any of the recommendations made within our report.

For the congregation and staff, their journeys will require that we take a holistic and sustained approach to this conversation. Care needs to be given to how we communicate with various audiences, and that includes increased teaching on this and other related topics from the Pulpit as well as other venues (e.g. Life Groups, Bible Classes, and the RHCC website), potential improvements to our organizational structures and processes, an increased presence and voice for women, and increased feedback loops to engage, educate, and process with the Congregation and Staff. This will necessitate love, humility, patience, and living in tension from time to time as this is a complex issue that warrants our best servant-hearted efforts - tying all this together in an effort to reinforce God's perfect design.

Bible verses for all of us

9. Galatians 5:13

a. "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather serve one another humbly in love."

10. Colossians 3:12-14

a. "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

11. Proverbs 18:12-15

- a. "Before a downfall the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor. To answer before listening- that is folly and shame. The human spirit can endure in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear? The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out."

Section 2. APPROACH

- CCP Team members: Esther Currie, Chris Davidson, Jeannine Hanger, Susan Johnson, Tom Miller, and Joe Storr
- Initial Elder approved CCP team scope of responsibility/activity:
 - Make recommendations to the Elder Council in two areas:
 1. How to better ensure the women at RHCC are thriving in their giftedness.
 2. How to better ensure the voices of women at RHCC are consistently heard and valued in church leadership.
- The CCP team developed the following success statement to guide its work, which was shared with and approved by the Elder Council: "A place where we all flourish in our giftedness as we seek to honor and live into God's design for interdependence among men and women in the body of Christ."
- Additionally, the team developed a statement to guide the formation of recommendations as to how we as a church achieve success: "Creating culture, structure and practices which enable us to become and sustain the church described in the success statement."
- The CCP team first met in July of 2018 (after a group of meetings starting in April of 2018 between various individuals including Mike Cochrane, Shawn Hurley, Susan Johnson, Byron MacDonald, Tom Miller, and Joe Storr) and over the course of the next six months we developed the enclosed report.
- Church interviews conducted with EV Free Fullerton, Bayside Covenant, Oceanside Christian Fellowship, Harvest Orange County, and Grace Community Church.
- RHCC "listening tour" interviews conducted with 21 RHCC individuals who have a demonstrated commitment to the church in both service and years attending. Individuals who participated were selected to represent the following groups: Female and Male Staff, Congregants, and Deacons/Deaconesses from various ministries including Adult Ministry, Children's Ministry, Church-wide Ministry, Connect & Equip Ministry, Japanese Fellowship, Life Group Ministry, Outreach Ministry, Spanish Fellowship, Stewardship Ministry, Student Ministry, Voyagers, Women's Ministry, and Worship Arts Ministry.

12. Draft Addition to the Teaching Statement as adopted by the Elder Council (Dec 2017/Jan 2018):

- a. We teach that God created man as male and female in His image and that He gave each unique strengths to complement each other in this life. (Genesis 1:22-31, Genesis 2:18-23)
- b. We teach that in Christ male and female are new creations indwelt by the Holy Spirit, members of the royal priesthood of God, joint heirs of the inheritance of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ and given gifts by the Holy Spirit to serve the church, the body of Christ. (1 Peter 2:9-10, Acts 2:17-18, Galatians 3:28)
- c. We teach that all (male/female) live in submission to the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ and are servants of one another. (John 13:20, Ephesians 5:18-21)
- d. We teach that in this life God has reserved for men the office of Elder/Overseer, the preaching of the Word of God in worship services, and spiritual headship in the home. (1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:18-33, 1 Corinthians 14:31-40)
- e. We teach that while in the New Testament only the Lord Jesus Christ has the title of Shepherd/Pastor, we affirm with the early church the office of Pastor for those men whom the church recognizes as spiritually gifted by God as pastor-teachers and who are called by the church to preach/teach the Word of God, and share with Elders the oversight of the church, the spiritual care of her members, and in seeking the lost. (1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Peter 5: 1-5)
- f. We teach that Elder/Overseers and Pastors are each to meet the biblical qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Section 3. FINDINGS

Part A. Other Complementarian Church "Best Practices" (what was best practice for that church, not necessarily for RHCC):

1. Leadership Team comprised of both men and women from the Congregation. This is set-up in order to provide women with increased voices and visibility into decision making within the church. Could be elected by the Congregation or selected by the Elder Council.
2. Leadership Council for the church comprised of men and women. Appointed by and reports to the Elder Council. Utilized a "best athlete" and balanced giftedness approach to the selection process. A troika of the Senior Pastor, Elder Chair and Leadership Council Chair decided which issues go to the Elder Council and which issues go to the Leadership Council. Leadership Classes established to create a pool of men and women that could serve on the Leadership Council. Recruit and disciple men and women utilizing a rigorous, systematic theological approach.

3. Impactful personal testimonies during Sunday services by women and men. Great modeling to the Congregation.
4. Significant teaching materials available for the Congregation on major theological positions (e.g. "The Role of Women at The Village Church").
5. Couples leading their respective Life Groups. Focused on both Scripture (Bible fellowship) and social fellowship albeit at separate times.
6. Women occasionally share from the Pulpit under the authority of the Senior Pastor and Elder Council. This is done with a Senior Pastor on stage along with the female speaker. In another church, a woman came in as the guest speaker for the week.
7. Decision making involves engaging with all groups who will be affected. Make decisions after conferring with ministry leaders - both men and women.
8. Discuss/teach on the topic of complementarian church practices during membership classes when speaking on the church's philosophy of ministry. Live it out and model that they stand under the authority of Scripture.
9. Be intentional about ensuring that all staff are flourishing in their respective giftedness.
10. Active and robust Women's and Men's Ministries.
11. Wisdom Council: Congregants (not necessarily Deacons or Deaconesses) that meet with Staff and Elders to leverage their giftedness and wisdom.
12. Developed a "fellowship of ministry" culture with the proper tone and posture. Always looking for the best gifting and then utilizing these gifts within the church body. "We're all in this together." Seen by the Congregation as a servant's attitude. Becomes the DNA of the church.
13. Vision team meeting every 12 -18 months: men and women comprised of ministry leaders, opinion leaders, and financial leaders. Facilitated by 3rd party. Ensures missional renewal, structural renewal, and cultural/relational development.
14. Weekly Bible teaching classes in addition to weekly Worship services. Foundational not topical in approach. Continuously grounding the Congregation in the Word of God, which leads to greater opportunity for spiritual growth and maturity."
15. "Continuity of ministries:" all ministries are touching and not isolated. Ensures that all perspectives are considered and are focused on the mission.
16. Job titles have been difficult for other churches too. One church we interviewed acknowledged that the title of "pastor" is well known in the community and people understand it immediately. That church has considered using the title of "minister" for men and women who function in similar capacities, but had not yet resolved the issue.

Part B. Themes from Individual RHCC Interviews

Positive commentaries/learnings

1. Women feel reasonably well valued at the church, particularly congregants. When asked to rate on a 1 to 10 scale how well RHCC is doing in meeting the goal of the team's success statement, staff ratings averaged 6, and congregant ratings averaged 8.

a. Higher ratings (congregants and staff):

"My own personal experience as a woman at RHCC has been positive. [I see] healthy interdependency from [my] vantage point. [I have] always felt like in [my] volunteer and congregant roles/experiences that [my] voice has been valued."

"The commission structure is going well – a balance of male and female in the commission structure. There are men and women on staff. Yes, it's further weighted male, but I think people are listened to. I've spoken into issues and men listened."

"Based on [my] church involvement over the years... [I have] seen a lot of positive male/female participation" (SALT, Relational Center, Missions trips, Life Groups).

b. Lower ratings (congregants and staff): "How do you empower women to think they actually have something to offer, that it's valued, and that it matters. They don't speak up because they have been conditioned to believe it doesn't matter."

"[I] give significant time and energy to various ministries at the church, but struggle to feel valued and welcomed to engage in discussions that affect the whole church."

"I am concerned that women are not always heard. It is frustrating for women when their concerns are not really heard until a male voice conveys the problem."

2. Repeatedly people felt very positive that RHCC is a Bible-based church. People trust that leadership will take a biblical stance toward complementarity.

"This church wouldn't be here as long as it has been if it had not been following the Bible."

3. Repeatedly people expressed gratitude that the topic of how we relate well as men and women was being discussed. They were grateful for the opportunity to be heard. They appreciated the “shepherding” that took place during the listening tour.

4. Where gender bias has been experienced, it was generally acknowledged as “unintentional.”

“[I feel] that [my] experience is the result of unintentional bias which limits access to larger discussions.”

5. Student Ministries was repeatedly recognized as a department where men and women work together in a healthy way.

“...the way Student Ministries functions, everyone feels equal there regardless of gender or position...[they] bring in the admin as she has valid insight as a mom with kids in the ministry. [Lloyd] has set the stage of mutual respect and everyone feels valued.”

6. Commissions were acknowledged as a place for men and women to come together to work on church business. Positive and negative experiences of interdependence between men and women in decision making within their commissions were shared with the CCP team.

7. Life groups that are co-ed, led by couples, and those groups that break into gender-specific groups for prayer, were identified as positive assets.

“[I am in a] life-group that meets [and is led by a woman.] There are no problems or issues with this, and no one seems to have a problem.”

8. The Life Group team was acknowledged as “level-ground” for all participants.

9. Worship Arts is another area where men and women work well together (Choir and Pageant were specifically named) – talent is more important than gender.

10. There are multiple serving opportunities at RHCC that are not gender-specific, such as Greeters, Ushers, Children’s Ministries and Commissions.

“Women ushers, communion servers, the worship leaders, the service leaders – all these are women. So from my point of view I don’t see areas where women are not used.”

11. Positive input regarding SLT; both male and female voices are heard.

12. Positive that we have Women’s Ministries and a Women’s Director.

a. Programs were reportedly well done and fruitful

“[I like] that we put an importance on ministries such as women’s ministries. [In] some churches this is a side-thought (along with men’s ministries). [I like] that we put the care into this.”

13. Voyagers leadership team is comprised of both men and women and this was seen as a positive.

14. Having women on stage is seen as a positive, providing examples for healthy interdependency between men and women. The importance of having women on the stage was repeated; Service Leader, Worship Leaders, and giving Benedictions were suggested as positives that need to be continued.

“It’s important to see women doing announcements, benedictions, prayer to demonstrate women and men leading together... We need to make sure the stage represents who we want to be.... It says that there is room for men and women to serve the Lord and serve His people.”

15. Women are involved in teaching and speaking into certain subjects through the Relational Center.

16. Godly women in the church who are pursuing submission as a way of life are trusting that godly men are taking into account this sacrifice and are being intentional about using God-given authority. Submission recognizing that both men and women are submitting to the authority of God. Submission is modeled in the way that Christ submitted to the Father. It is modeled in service.

“There are limitations for females. But for the glory of God, women accept these.”

Negative commentaries/learnings

1. Unintentional bias against women is present (e.g., introducing men but not women to the group).

"It's [the gender bias experienced] not intentional, malicious, or cruel, but who has more clout, weight, value. But that is not scriptural."

"I think sometimes [bias] is unintentional and they [men] go about their work and default into process. This [our success statement] requires men to be intentional, to say, 'I really want to hear what you have to say.' That would be huge moving forward."

"Having more women in a room does not necessarily mean success. There is a dynamic (often unintentional) which conveys that women's voices don't carry equal weight."

2. Lack of women's voices at the highest levels of church leadership (Elders). How do we ensure that women's perspectives are heard?

"Concern that Elders need to hear from women who can represent single women (someone other than Elder wives): Elder board- there are no women. [Elders] have [their] wives who are speaking on behalf [of] a single woman. Can they represent [her]? Is anyone on the Elder Council thinking of [her] when they make decisions?" "I highly respect what the Elders do. I don't want the weight of what they deal with. I am grateful and have gratitude but I also hold in tension wishing someone would ask my opinion once in a while."

"Talk about what we can do; right now it feels like it's more about what we cannot do."

3. Women aren't hearing from women; men aren't hearing from women.

"Our view of complementarity is that we represent...the fullness of the image of God. We should be able to hear from the fullness of God."

4. Despite more women being added to the ministry team in recent years, some women still don't feel comfortable/safe sharing their views. It's a false positive to think that just adding female staff will solve it; it's about fostering interdependence and hearing alternate perspectives. Female voices need to be drawn out and invited.

"Even in the spaces where women are, there's not interdependence. Having a woman in the same room is not interdependence. Not the same as honoring. This is a misconception. Just because we have women in the room doesn't mean we are doing a good job. Women's voices don't carry equal weight; they get talked over."

"True interdependence cannot be achieved without humility and honor. Any relationship – allowing the other person to be who they are- that requires humility. Honor people for what they can do. Let them be who God made them to be. Acknowledge that people are weak in certain areas. We don't think of interdependence as including humility and weakness."

5. Some decisions are made without input from all (male and female) stakeholders.

"[With women not on the Elder Council,] it is up to the individual Elders to seek out the wisdom and heart of the women in the church. Women see things differently and clearly in certain ways that doesn't always get seen or heard by men unless they chase it. It's up to them to chase it."

"[Getting input from all stakeholders] would ensure the fullness of the image of God is represented in decision making."

6. There are those in our community who have life experiences of pain and abuse related to gender bias, gender abuse, poor examples of submission and leadership. Findings both internal and external to RHCC can confirm this: a. Internal: See Women's Ministry survey results (2/6/2015) b. External: See Jen Wilkin's* talk providing statistics: <https://vimeo.com/243476316> *Jen Wilkin- classes & curriculum director, The Village Church

7. Many acknowledged the need/desire to increase ministries specifically devoted to men.

"We are not doing anything to invest in men and help them learn how to lead and become good leaders. We are not doing much to help [people] understand their roles in the family. We need strong role models...we need to help people see others who model healthy male/female interaction so people can see and learn."

8. We need vision for the church that aligns ministries, reduces busyness, and creates relational space on the staff to dispel suspicion among staff and between staff and elders. Lack of clear church vision contributes to less than ideal structural issues that exacerbate gender issues. We need clarity in roles, responsibilities and decision-making authority for staff positions and for elders.

"We are doing so much, we don't have time to allow for relationships, investing in other relationships in other ministries, etc.... What would happen if we came together and prayed more often? Made an effort to have relationships. Without it,

creates space for the enemy to infiltrate. That is the hard thing that when we are so busy, reacting to so many things. We become more problem-solving focused, rather than relationships.”

“We currently have a relationship deficit that fuels ongoing suspicion. There is no unifying vision at the church that aligns ministries, reduces reactionary busyness and creates space/margin for people on staff to actually know each other (and other ministries).” (Summarized)

9. Concerns were voiced by women regarding Nominating Committee proceedings that were biased against women who served on the committee. Other concerns were raised that male voices also went unheard.

“We look for Elders from the pool of Deacons, so appointing people to commissions leans toward having more men on the Deaconate. This may also sometimes influence having more men on the Nominating Committee. These are all stepping stools to get to Elder, so naturally it pulls more men. Unintentional bias toward male leadership means that if we want to uphold women’s voices and gifting, it will need to be an intentional move on our part...”

10. Single women often feel overlooked.

“[As a single woman] I don’t have any covering. I don’t have a male to go home to complain to or ask to fight on my behalf.... there’s lots of single women in our church or a lot of women who are ‘single in church’ (their husbands don’t come). What can we do? It would help so much if I knew I had a voice somewhere or [someone who spoke] on my behalf.”

11. Sermons include illustrations that can be offensive to women or illustrations women don’t relate to. Use illustrations that intentionally address women’s experience. 11

Concern over sermon prep – are women’s perspectives considered when only men are preparing to teach from the pulpit. “You have women who have education and life experience that could feed into sermon prep. When your life doesn’t get represented on the front of the stage it says something.”

“Get women’s perspective for sermon preparation. Found a recent sermon to be offensive. Think that a female perspective in careful sermon preparation could have added wisdom and discretion to prevent offensive content.”

12. Several expressed that we need more opportunities to platform women who have teaching gifts. RHBI and SALT were previous structures that provided women a chance to teach. A small number of those interviewed wanted to see a woman in the pulpit under the approval and authority of our Senior Pastor & Elders (other complementarian churches are including women in the pulpit for guest appearance: Oceanside Christian Fellowship, Bayside Covenant, EV Free Fullerton)

13. Not enough testimonies from men and women during the services.

“Need more intentional balance of women and men on-stage. Should be at least 50/50 to reflect the +50% female attendance. Need more on-stage testimonies including from women and men.”

14. Women never counsel couples.

“Women never counsel couples. Only men [do this counseling]. Not necessarily intentional, but unconscious bias and bad theology.”

15. Organizational issues may perpetuate unintended gender bias. Three of those interviewed commented that all administrative assistants are women, which has created an unintentional “pink ghetto.” There is a reported bifurcation between the ministry team and the support staff; reports that the contributions of the support staff were undervalued and they have been excluded from decision-making and information sharing. Because the admin assistants are all women, this can be seen as a gender issue/unintentional bias. Recognize this is tricky given that most have been made part-time.

“It’s a positional power issue...we don’t hire male assistants so it becomes a gender issue and we don’t hire female pastors so power and gender get mixed together. It’s never malicious in intent and no one is trying to put someone down, but it happens by default.” “It’s not normal to ask a part-time person their opinion. And most part-time people on staff are women. They have good observations and we should be excited to have other perspectives and consider if what a person says has value. Do we ever ask the maintenance staff for their opinions? They have a lot to say about things. The pastors are not the only ones who have to deal with difficult people.”

“I feel like there is a division between men and women...don’t know if it’s cultural or just how we are organized...such a division between support staff and ministry team and so many women on support staff.”

16. Commissions: Even though there are a lot of positive experiences, there were concerns voiced by some women regarding various commission experiences in which a woman’s voice was not valued and therefore not heard.

One woman congregant reporting feedback she has received: “When there is a woman on a commission, several said that their opinion is not as sought after or esteemed as that of a man. Or, in some cases a woman’s voice is not even heard.”

“There was a time when [a man] apologized to me because of how I was treated in a meeting. It was obviously a male/female issue.”

17. Job titles are troubling. At RHCC, women on staff have “Director” as a final/peak position job title. We have heard other churches who have also wrestled with the issue of job titles regarding men and women, not wanting to bestow the title of “Pastor” to women. This speaks to the sensitive and complicated nature of the issue. How can we be intentional about creating teams which reflect giftedness, contributions being heard and respected?

“Every box on the org chart should have clarity for responsibility and decision-making authority. Regardless of whether a man or woman fills that box, the decisions that incumbent makes should be upheld by those who have delegated the decision-making authority.”

18. RHCC struggles at times to deal with differences in healthy ways: male/female, young/old, theological differences, political leanings, ethnicity, etc.

“We tend to polarize and villainize people who are different rather than doing the hard work of understanding them. This is true for theology, for ethnic diversity, for ageism, for musical tastes, for preaching topically or preaching verse-by-verse.”

Section 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

We have heard significant feedback, and we have grouped it according to the following themes.

Themes

1. There’s a presence of unintentional bias, and RHCC needs to be intentional to seek out female voices at all levels of church life, especially when it seems unnecessary.
2. Women aren’t hearing from women, and men aren’t hearing from women.
3. RHCC struggles at times to deal with differences in healthy ways: male/female, young/old, theological differences, political leanings, ethnicity, etc.
4. RHCC is a Bible-based church, and that is greatly appreciated.
5. It is significant that RHCC is having this conversation. It has been healthy to provide opportunities for people to articulate their thoughts, for them to have been heard, and for us to have listened.
6. This is an important issue, and we have a great opportunity to do this well! This roll-out must be seen as more comprehensive than a one-time event. A number of churches recommended we not rush it. Instead, this is the continuation of an ongoing, sustained growth opportunity as we encourage each other to live into our complementarity to the glory of God and for the honoring of Christ’s body.
7. There are those in our community who have life experiences of pain and abuse related to gender bias, gender abuse, poor examples of submission and leadership.

Recommendations

We advise implementation of this package of recommendations. We believe that to reach the success statement that we have been operating under, each of these recommendations need to be implemented together as a package. They don’t all have to be done at the same time.

1. Make both “Counselor to the Senior Pastor” appointments women. (Themes 1, 2)
 - a. Non-voting attendees at Elder meetings.
2. Create a Leadership Advisory Council. (Themes 1, 2)
 - a. Purpose: helping to ensure women’s voices are heard on important issues at the highest levels of leadership in the church.
 - b. Addresses significant topics of the church (e.g. women in leadership, spiritual formation, diversity, vision, etc.).
 - c. Comprised of 4 women, 4 men (including Senior Pastor and Church Chairman).
 - d. Meets quarterly.
3. Teaching statement “roll-out.” (Themes 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
 - a. This is new territory for our church. We need a holistic approach to this conversation that includes teaching, review of organizational processes, presence on stage, etc. - tying all this together in an effort to reinforce God’s design. This will necessitate humility and living in tension.
 - b. Do an in-depth study of the theology of complementarity and interdependence, co-taught by men and women, as a Bible study or teaching series on Sunday nights (Congregants may consider gender to be a social justice issue and may react strongly).
 - c. Have a paper ready that goes into depth on how the Council understands the Scriptures on this topic (see 10a above).
 - d. Incorporate into the sermon series adequate repetition/emphasis for continuity since some congregants attend church erratically or infrequently, for example, every other week.
 - e. This issue will likely land in sensitive areas with some of our church family. For those who have life experiences of

pain and abuse related to gender bias, gender abuse, poor examples of submission and leadership - we need compassion. We need compassion and to be ready to shepherd those in our community who will need it in response to what we present.

- i. Our team has not reviewed comprehensive data in this area, but preliminary review suggests that a very disturbing number of congregants (conservatively 1 out of 4 and possibly more) have experienced abuse, whether emotional, verbal, physical, sexual.
- f. The goal of the series is to explain the Council's understanding of the Scriptures and resolve to be united in love. We can believe differently on this issue, and still be united in love.
 - i. There are very devoted believers who see this issue differently and firmly believe their view is solidly rooted in Scriptures. Our goal is to humbly explain why RHCC teaches and holds to complementarianism as its understanding of the Scriptures. This is an opportunity for us to live into the witness of the church described in Ephesians- the world will know the truth by the way we love one another. This is a shepherding time.
 - ii. Specific consideration should be given to teaching younger people the biblical premise and positive examples of male/female relationships, as they are more immersed in our society's cultural value that is drifting toward gender irrelevance. "The group that will benefit the most about teaching about men and women and interdependency will be the youth for sure. You have boys and girls who are being bombarded with ideas and they need the Christian base to understand it or they will go opposite of Christ."
4. Develop teaching and training in three primary areas: (Themes 1, 2, 3)
 - a. Learning how to respect and hear differences. How we handle issues between men and women can help us to learn ways to handle other differences.
 - b. Facilitating meetings in such a way that draws out and encourages women's voices and opinions (recognizing unintentional bias). This would apply to any group setting: Commissions, Committees, Life Groups, etc.
 - c. Christ-like submission, self-sacrifice and humility, and servant leadership - infuse into meetings
5. Consider revising the Teaching Statement without changing or diluting the theology of our position, but creating a more positive and celebratory tone toward the roles of women, and/or prepare a positional statement that more thoroughly describes our theology and distinctives on the topic of complementarianism. (Themes 1, 3, 4, 6, 7)
 - a. Example: The Village Church Role of Women "Short" paper:
<https://thevillagechurch.net/Content/ExternalSite/Documents/Beliefs/Institute%20-%202017%20-%20The%20Role%20of%20Women%20at%20The%20Village%20Church%20-%20Condensed%20Version.pdf> 15
6. Develop robust Men's Ministries: (Themes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6) a. Possibly consider a Pastor, Director or lay leader to lead Men's Ministry. Be intentional.
7. Expand the opportunity for women to have a voice into sermon preparation. This gives the speaker access to a greater variety of others' own examples or testimonies to discover implications pertinent to the congregation. (Themes 1, 2, 3, 6)
8. Continue to expand women's presence on stage: announcements, prayer, benedictions, and increase the presence of testimonies (women and men). (Themes 1, 2, 3)
9. Include women in praying over Communion elements. (Themes 1, 2, 3)
10. Further explore the biblical basis for women baptizing under the spiritual authority of a presiding Pastor. (Themes 1, 2, 3)
11. Dialogue and discern how we organizationally create job titles and processes which uphold each member of the team according to their important voice, contributions and giftedness. (Themes 1, 3, 6)
12. Create a task force to strategize how best to implement the recommendations that are adopted. (Themes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Section 5. OUT OF SCOPE DISCOVERIES

1. Reconsider how we build vision for the church that aligns ministries, reduces busyness, and creates relational space among the Staff and Elders.
2. There are pockets of lack of safety and trust- between Staff/Staff, and Staff/Elders. People are not being heard because their voices are not invited and they don't otherwise feel safe to share their perspectives. People need time to build relationships. Some interviewees felt that, given more intentional time, some of the unintentional hurts and overlooks could have been avoided.
3. We need to be more intentional about developing future leaders in the church.
4. Bifurcation between ministry team and support staff must be addressed. Support staff are overwhelmed and feel unheard.
5. Find more opportunities in existing church-wide events where Japanese, Spanish and English congregants all work together and are featured as equals (e.g. Harvest Festival, Art of Worship tables, Missions Celebration).
6. Improve on-boarding process of Elders, Staff, Deacons/Deaconesses (job description, roles and responsibilities, mentors, and training...see Recommendation #3).

7. Consider the possibility of creating "Wisdom teams" (mentoring and/or lay-counseling). a. Older men and women mentoring younger men and women. b. Partner with Congregational Care.

Section 6: FINAL THOUGHTS AND CLOSING PRAYER

As Byron concluded (a partial excerpt) in his paper to the Elder Council on 7/17/17:

"All leadership in the body of Christ is about servanthood, never power or control. The authority belongs to Jesus and His Word, all the rest of us are servants."

Closing prayer excerpt from Jen Wilkin at Advance 2017 General Session Acts 29 US Southeast:

"I ask, Lord, that each church represented here is a place where the voices of women are heard, where they are seen visibly, and where our daughters and our sons understand that the priesthood of all believers means we all find our place in the mission."

Closing Scripture:

Jesus said, "You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

-Matthew 20:25

APPENDIX A – STAFF UPDATES

Byron

Shawn

Steve

Lloyd

Garrick

APPENDIX B – ELDER UPDATES

CHAIRMAN (Mike Cochrane)

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES (Anthony Galante)

CONGREGATIONAL CARE (Jerry Rilling)

CONNECT (Guy Forest)

FINANCE & PROPERTY (Tom Miller)

GLOBAL OUTREACH (Craig Knickerbocker)

LIFE GROUP (Mike DiLustro)

LOCAL OUTREACH (Hoon Dokko)

PERSONNEL (Jim Walter)

STEWARDSHIP (Richard Smith)

STUDENT MINISTRIES (Rod Lenders)

WORSHIP ARTS (Ben Eroen)