

Friday, September 23, 2022

My brothers and sisters in Christ at Rolling Hills Covenant Church,

Lynda and I love you and have missed you very much. We hoped and prayed for the best in the ministry of Dan Burgoyne as Senior Pastor. We are saddened with his resignation and all the trauma that is involved. We have deliberately remained apart from RHCC in a plan agreed on with the Elders so Dan's ministry could succeed and hopefully blossom. We have been concerned with what we have heard in the last 15 months but we have left it before the Lord in prayer.

I believe for your understanding and encouragement I can address two key issues that have emerged. One is the quality of the current Elders. I know each of these men and I can attest to the soundness, humbleness, and servant heart of each of them. None of these are driven by ambition. These are not, as I saw in one comment, hard hearted Pharisees. These are humble servant elders in whom you can have complete confidence.

These Elders, at various times and ways, became concerned about Dan and not just the style of ministry, but the controlling spirit that seemed intent on prevailing. Dan was strong with the Word of God but he never seemed to offer a path to reconcile. It always seemed that those who didn't like things should leave. Truth needs grace or it is only a hammer to be used against those who don't conform. Too many have felt the hammer and have either left or withdrawn.

As has been described in the notes that Dan himself made public, multiple efforts have been made to help Dan hear and understand the wounds he is causing. Elders have encouraged congregants to talk with Dan and hear their concerns. They have addressed the concerns with him themselves. This was not just style it was the missing message and practice of grace. These concerns were not just by congregants but by ministry team and ministry staff as well. Elders could not continue as Elders before the Lord without responding to these concerns.

It reached the point that Elders felt it could not continue without change on Dan's part. This is a very hard step for Elders who are only servants who love the church, and love Dan and want him to succeed. Every effort was made to do this in confidence so that the Dan's reputation was preserved, and the problems addressed. We have learned in the last week, this is a pattern of Dan with other churches. There is the realization of how important this was for Dan and his future ministry, not only at RHCC, but other potential churches. Dan needs to hear and respond to the concerns. If you truly love Dan, you need to encourage him in genuine submission and seeking the Lord to transform him and his ministry. He has enormous gifts but they will be self-defeating if he does not grow.

There is a question Jesus asked to a man paralyzed by the pool of Bethesda as described in John 5:1-9. Jesus asked the paralyzed man, "Do you want to be healed?" To me that seems such an obvious answer, but the reality is it isn't an obvious answer. It was the question of the Elders to Dan, "Do you want to get better as a Pastor?" There was a plan to do that. If Dan didn't want to be helped, there was a one-year generous offer if he resigned. This was not manipulation or a got-you trap, but a decisive statement that things cannot go on as they are.

Dan's publication of the notes and his cry to all who could hear to rise up and resist the Elders is the very illustration of his fundamental problem. It is not only the worst possible and most divisive action by Dan, it also reflects the very problem Dan has. Dan would not even submit in keeping things confidential. He has shared all the information which in my opinion only illustrates the parts of his character that need to change.

I have seen in the Elders the agony that this conflict has caused them. Yet they have remained gentle and strong. Pray for them and encourage them.

I also want to address another concern Dan has raised. His latest video suggests there is financial corruption at RHCC and he has been turned upon because he tried to bring it to the light. Few things are potentially more devastating to a church than suggesting there is fraud with monies given to the Lord Jesus through the church.

It is to this question I bring almost 27 years of experience. There is an important division of financial authority between the Business Office and the Senior Pastor. This is wise and important for all concerned. In my years of ministry at RHCC I made it my goal to fully understand the budget and financial resources of the church. I wanted to know as much as anyone else. I can tell you by close observation the Business Office has handled funds with the highest integrity, and I think important to note, with full transparency.

Every week a Financial Secretary's Report gives the exact amounts of money given to General Fund and other funds. Every month a Treasurer's Report is issued that accounts for every dollar given or spent. You can go line by line to each of the accounts. Nothing is hidden, all is transparent. Full audits are done at least every three years, and partial audits in other years. A full audit is over \$40,000 and in the opinion of many, myself included, not needed every year. Every time there was an audit I as Senior Pastor was given a copy of the audit. I can tell you our Business Office has continually met the highest standards. Never has there ever been a whisper of question of integrity. This is an office that handles easily up to 10 million dollars a year with biblical and industry standard excellence.

It is grievous without any substance in fact to question the integrity of the Business Office. Even the language of calling for a "forensic" audit creates the sense of that something wrong that will be discovered. I pray this allegation is immediately withdrawn.

Thanks for letting me address these concerns of the character of the Elders and the integrity of the Business Office. I wish it were different but Jesus honors those who minister with grace and truth together. The Elders in a severe test have done that. Uphold them and pray for them. And trust that Jesus has this. As you walk with Jesus He will protect and move. This is His church the rest of us are just temporary stewards. Look up church, Jesus has this.

In love and respect,

Byron MacDonald
Pastor Emeritus