

Church-wide Information Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2018

A. Location: Church chapel

B. Meeting Agenda & Minutes

- a. Meeting started at 1:06 pm. Elder Yuguang welcomed attendees and opened in prayer.
- b. Question and answer with senior pastor candidate Juta Pan
 - i. Pastor Pan began by sharing with church members:
 1. His philosophy of service:
 - a. Follow after Christ's model: his servant heart. All the Gospels focus on how Jesus lowered himself.
 - b. Follow after God's Word
 - c. A need for more than just head knowledge, but also for having our lives transformed in our heart and will.
 2. Pastor Pan wants to emphasize the importance of husband and wife serving together.
 3. Regarding church conflict, we must stand firm on truth, but also find balance between truth and love.
 4. Our church mostly consists of professionals, so it's crucial to pair our faith together with our vocation in achieving God's Great Commission.
 - ii. Different ministries at our church (Chinese Ministry, Cross Bridge, Youth, Children) operate independently, and we do not often see teamwork/cooperation among these ministries. As the senior pastor, how will you address this issue so that we are one church under God?
 1. In our church history, the topic of unity has always been an issue. The root of the question is how we define unity. Unity does not necessarily mean we need to share the same policy and structure. Unity means loving one another, serving together, and collaborating together. I have taught the topic of unity in seminary. We respect that different churches have different ways, but my philosophy is "Unity in diversity". We need to recognize that different congregations have different unique aspects. To move towards unity, we must first learn to understand, accept, and respect each other. The actual implementation needs to be worked on, but the idea is to respect and accept.
 - iii. During the past 8-9 years, you have worked closely with international students and visiting scholars. What challenges do you see coming back to the mother church?
 1. The first challenge is the size of the mother church. The senior pastor needs to be a communications bridge between different congregations and ministries to enable collaboration. This is important at a ministry the size of City Outreach Ministry (COM), but is even more important when talking about a church the size of the mother church. This is especially true as there is more diversity in the mother church as compared to COM. I value and hope to have good communication with the pastoral staff, and want to encourage and foster good communication with core ministry leaders.
 - iv. Is it possible to steer clear from using a "Bible Study" format for preaching?
 1. I believe that the nature of preaching itself is Bible exposition. The problem often arises in how one bridges between the world in which the Bible was written and our modern context. If brothers and sisters are disappointed, it is because we as preachers are not bridging these two worlds effectively enough.
 - v. We've successfully planted many churches. As we gain more and more second generation church members, what is your perspective on Cross Bridge and are we considering planting Cross Bridge as a church plant.
 1. The relationship between first and second generation congregations in North America

Chinese churches has always been an issue. I go back to the idea of “Unity in diversity” and the need for both congregations to communicate well with each other. Regarding whether Cross Bridge ought to become a church plant, Chinese Ministry needs ministries that involve Cross Bridge. If Cross Bridge were to be planted, Chinese Ministry would need to start from scratch with an English Ministry. In Atlanta, there is a Chinese church structured as two independent congregations worshipping under the same building, but the churches are not truly independent, due to overlap in ministry and facilities. This is not an easy question, and a church plant will not necessarily allow both ministries to work well effectively.

- vi. If you are to be senior pastor, what is your vision for City Outreach Ministry (COM)?
 1. The vision for COM did not start with me. The vision was created In 2002 by church elders. When we moved back and joined CBCGB in 2005, we took this vision and implemented it. We’re not really leaving COM to join CBCGB, but are rather changing roles. Over the past 8-9 years, COM’s vision has matured. My hope is for the new COM pastor to take the lead with the established vision. As senior pastor, my role is to help the new COM pastor to further implement and fulfill its vision.
- vii. What’s your view on discipleship training and what is your approach on growing disciples? Do you have any particular burden in this area?
 1. Making disciples is the Great Commission. There is no church that can avoid this. However, discipleship training is composed of different elements, not just a course. Discipleship training is through various different channels which are already in place at our church, such as Sunday School, fellowship groups, Sunday worship services, individuals’ morning devotional time. I’m not against having a discipleship training course, but we should also have a wider perspective when approaching discipleship training. Over the years in COM, we’ve developed a discipleship training program. There’s a distinct difference between our program and other popular materials available. Our program does not just emphasize the importance of Bible Study and prayer but also on faith. It’s easy to tell people that prayer is important, but actually praying is more difficult. The means to push people into action is to get at the their hearts.
- viii. What are the biggest conflicts among elders and pastoral staff?
 1. Elder Yuguang: There are no fundamental conflicts, but there are different styles and ways of doing things. By and large, we are united. Everyone grows through resolving differences and growing in unity.
 2. Pastor Pan: The most important thing is to have mutual respect between elders and pastors. Pastors should respect the authority given to elders, and elders should respect the spiritual insight and training that pastors have received from God. More blatantly, we should not approach conflict as a power struggle. If we interpret conflict as a power struggle, then we should go back to my sermon from this morning. Of course, the other side is just to communicate more and develop better relationships.
- ix. How do you implement discipleship-training in a more practical sense? What are ways to more practically move our church towards faith in action in surrounding communities?
 1. We need to empower people to live out their lives. As a pastoral staff, our responsibility is to encourage the congregation to act and live according to God’s will. It’s also crucial for people to have support from their peers.
- x. What are the top three changes needed at our church?
 1. It seems like I’m really familiar with our church, but the reality is that I’ve been focused on serving at COM. Because of this, I dare not claim that I truly know what are the needed areas for change. If I were to say anything, I would be irresponsible. If I was to become senior pastor, I will try hard to communicate and understand all the different ministry and fellowship groups, so I need everyone to share that information and I will need time to organize and process that information. Currently, our church has opportunities to reach out to ethnic Chinese intellectuals and professionals (whether

first, second, or third generation). He has seen the importance of this as he has served with COM. We shouldn't just see this as our opportunity but also our responsibility. Another challenge for our church is to take root and stand firm in the Word.

- xi. How do you play the role of the senior pastor in the Board of Elders?
 - 1. According to our church's bylaws, the senior pastor is one member of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders should function as a team. The senior pastor's role on the team is to contribute his training and spiritual insight to help inform the group. Another role is to support and foster other pastoral staff to also provide their spiritual insight for the team. A third role is to practically implement the higher-level vision established by the Board of Elders. There are many other roles, but these are ones in relation to the Board of Elders.
- xii. Is your application to be our senior pastor a burden from God?
 - 1. I have to honestly admit that I didn't proactively apply. The senior pastor search committee approached me to ask me if I would be willing to consider the position. My wife and I pursued this process after praying and discerning God's guidance. There was not a dramatic experience where God gave him a specific Bible verse directing him to apply to be senior pastor, but if you want an answer, I'll say that the entire Bible played a role.
- xiii. What is your input regarding the future relationship between Chinese Ministry and Cross Bridge?
 - 1. I don't want to just jump in and make a selfish decision. It takes appreciation, respect, and mutual understanding.
- xiv. Do you support the idea of more Cross Bridge representatives on the elder board and church building expansion team?
 - 1. I value the importance of both congregations, as well as representatives from youth, children's, and family ministry on these teams. The crux of the issue is how we do this. Since 2005, Cross Bridge's involvement with the Board of Elders has increased. In 2005, all the elders were from Chinese Ministry. Elder Terry Yang was the first Cross Bridge elder, followed by Elder Bryan Che and Elder Loren Shih. I fully support this direction, but it is not just my decision to make. In terms of other committees, I have the same attitude, and we will see how it develops.
- xv. As senior pastor, how would you strengthen the spiritual growth of youth, especially regarding society's temptations?
 - 1. I'll start by talking about the youth, but I think it applies to all our congregations. For youth ministry, the most important thing is to help the youth develop their spiritual walk. We can't avoid the social environment that they are facing daily. On the contrary, we need to discuss these social issues in our fellowship groups. Many of these challenging issues are not black and white. We need to have a rich understanding of both the social issues and biblical understanding to respond. This is something we all should strive for. Parents need to walk and work together with your youth. Issues like this must be faced by the entire family, from church to youth to parents. This takes us back to the adult congregation. None of us can avoid taking on the issue of how to respond to current issues. Taking on these issues are not easy, because they're not black and white. We need to have a rich understanding of the social issues themselves and to reflect and have a full understanding of biblical teaching. Some issues are relevant to family values or related to gender issues, but they are also intertwined with human rights. Another complexity is how church and state relate to one another. Our answer is often not just a simple "yes" or "no". We should all spend time to build ourselves up in our knowledge and understanding. It's not just a youth problem; it's a challenge for all of us.
- xvi. Currently, there are two female deacons. What is your view on encouraging more sisters to pursue being deacons, or even elders?
 - 1. There are certain biblical teachings that are fundamental on this issue. There are certain

questions that are more traditional, related to how you interpret the Bible. In approaching this question about female elders and deacons, I have my personal stance, but if other people have their own views, I will also respect them. I see this as a biblical interpretation issue and not foundational to Christian faith. Personally, I don't think there is any conflict in the Bible to sisters serving as deacons or elders. I think the Bible is open in this sense. In fact, our bylaws take this stance too, but perhaps there are other elders or pastors who hold a different view. According to our bylaws, we support female deacons and elders, but there are other subjective factors that play into this. I'm very honest about where our stand.

- xvii. Pastor Pan closed the question and answer session in prayer.
- c. New proposal for church building expansion project (Elder Ke-chieh Chu)
 - i. The Church Building Expansion Team (CBET) has come up with a new proposal for building expansion. This proposal is only a proposal; nothing is final. Feedback from the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons, and the congregation will be solicited before generating a final plan.
 - ii. Elder Ke-chieh gave four reasons for church building expansion
 - 1. Our church sanctuary is at full capacity. To invite more seekers, we need more space.
 - 2. We also hope to grow other ministries through church building expansion, because we need more Christians and more resources to help local outreach and global missions.
 - 3. The reason for doing this now, is because the CBE team are the same people who built the original church building thirty years ago and hope to see it implemented while they still have strength.
 - 4. 30 years ago, if the church did not have a vision for building the current building, we would not be able to accommodate the explosive growth of Chinese scholars and intellectuals. Our church expansion now is for the next generation.
 - iii. Regarding finances: currently, the church has one million in reserve that could be used for church building expansion. We have a around \$320,000 in surplus in this year's general fund. Our capital fund also has \$430,000. The CBE fund has \$320,000. The plan still requires \$3.5 million, which could be funded through member loans with an annual interest rate of 1.5-3% and through fundraising cash pledges. If we fund completely through 10-year or 15-year member loans, our annual financing expenses will be around \$300,000 per year which can be covered by our current projected yearly general fund surplus.
 - iv. Brother Thomas Wang described the church building expansion process:
 - 1. The church leadership proposed a vision and the church congregation already approved church building expansion.
 - 2. The Board of Elders gave CBET a list of requirements for building expansion in February. The current proposal was created based on the requests of the church after a one month study. The requirements were:
 - a. Multi-purpose room / Gym
 - b. Classrooms
 - c. Chapel for English service or Chinese service extension
 - d. Rough square footage for construction cost
 - e. Rough layout of each floor
 - f. Original budget: \$4.6 million
 - 3. Currently, the process is at a stage in which CBET proposes conceptual master plans and the church decides whether to approve or request modifications to those plans.
 - v. CBET has done analysis regarding the land between the main church building and the church office.
 - 1. The constraints of the property are:
 - a. The slope, retaining wall which requires excavation,
 - b. Cut and fill imbalance
 - c. Structure: steel vs. wood
 - d. Carriage house is in the way
 - e. Pedestrian and vehicular accessibility

- f. Internal linkage with the main building and church office
 - g. Daylight exposure
 - h. Visibility from the street, especially the new chapel.
 - 2. The opportunities:
 - a. Grades (elevations)
 - b. Ease of connectivity
 - c. Size of potential land
 - d. Potential new identity from Old Spring Street
 - e. Ease of construction accessibility (no interruption of regular Sunday services)
 - f. Meet the needs of the church
- vi. Given the space constraints, there is not any room for a basketball court unless parking spots are sacrificed. The current proposal consists of:
 - 1. A 75 foot-55 foot chapel that seats 390 people
 - 2. A multipurpose room that is large enough for 60 foot by 30 foot volleyball court
 - 3. A classroom block with 6,078 square feet across two floors (6-8 new classrooms)
 - a. This includes a two-story extension of the sanctuary lobby to allow for more breakout space.
 - 4. An office block with 2,423 square feet across two floors.
 - 5. Total new square feet: 15,606
 - 6. Estimated cost: \$3.9 million
 - 7. Estimated cost/sq. ft: \$250
- vii. This proposal is still in its early stages. CBET awaits ideas from the rest of the church to better meet its needs.
- viii. For feedback or questions, please email cbe-project@cbcgb.org.
- ix. The CBET members are:
 - 1. Kiang Tei Huang
 - 2. Chiway Hsiung
 - 3. Ke Chieh Chu
 - 4. Shin Jong Chen
 - 5. Thomas Wang
- d. Elder Yuguang closed the meeting at 3:13 pm