

## Reflections on Ordination



By Pastor Ivan Leung

I believe brothers and sisters are filled with thanksgiving and excitement as we await for the ordination of our three pastors on August 16. For the church and the three pastors, this is a very important celebration which holds significant meaning. We gather as a family in God's grace and witness those whom God has called upon for ordination to be His servants, taking upon them the responsibility to lead God's flock as a pastor within the church or as a missionary elsewhere as they share the Good News and build up God's kingdom. This is God's blessing for the church - all in His grace, so let us give all glory to God.

Through the studying of Biblical references, I hope to share and reflect with you, my brothers and sisters, the true meaning of ordination that

God intended for His people, inspiring us to love and respect each of the servants ordained in our church wholeheartedly. As Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13: "Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other."

### Misunderstandings of Ordination

If we are to understand the correct meaning of ordination, we must first clarify any misunderstandings towards it. Ordination is not an indication of a promotion or a salary raise; it is not a title for the purpose of gaining easier access at work; it is not a means of promoting a pastor's

status in front of others; it is not an indication of an increase in power; it is definitely not a status that is achieved by inviting a group of senior pastors to ordain oneself after a certain number of years of service within a church or an organization.

I believe that these misunderstandings were not what the Lord Jesus had in mind for His spiritual leaders. When the disciples argued who held greater power amongst themselves, the Lord took the opportunity to teach them the truth in spiritual leadership. Lord Jesus said: "Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." (Mark 10:43-44). He reminds the leaders that the true meaning of leadership lies in God's Word and not in worldly standards. As a leader, one must have a heart of humility, faithfully obeying God's Word, and serving those around you, because the Lord came not to be served, but to serve and sacrifice Himself in place of us. (Mark 10:45, Phillipians 2:6-8)

Learning to be a spiritual leader is equivalent to learning to become a person who serves others - this is the example and teachings that the Lord Jesus set for us. If we were to use one word to describe the works of Lord Jesus, I believe it would be none other than the word, 'serve'. His teachings and examples on earth prove that He is a spiritual leader that spans across time. Therefore, all positions mentioned within the Bible, regardless of pastor, elder, or deacon, the Lord does not use these titles as a hierarchy within the church, but as

an indication of the service that each holds. When God blesses us with a leadership role, it means that those that we are to serve increase; with this increase of service, it implies that the responsibility associated with serving becomes bigger.

## The Meaning of Ordination

### 1. Ordination is to show God's will towards the calling of His servant

Ephesians 4:11-12: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

Paul points out in this passage that God blessed five special spiritual gifts for building up the church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. God takes these unique gifts and blesses those that He has selected and called upon to serve in His ministry, so that they may take these gifts to teach and train brothers and sisters, evangelize to others, and build the church. However, God does not rely on these people to complete all of His works, but to supply them with the ability to serve others in order to enable others to also serve the Lord. The term, "to prepare", is a terminology frequently used by surgeons; its meaning is to repair severed limbs to the body. When Paul speaks of "to prepare" believers, he implies equipping, training, and providing the believers with the purpose of building the renewed lives and with the ability to serve the Lord. As a result, the body of Christ may be built up.

Therefore, the purpose of preparing believers is to build the spirituality of the congregation so that they may become spiritual adults, transforming them from someone who needed



1 Peter 5:2-4: "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..."



tending and care to a mature Christian who is capable of caring for others and building the church together. Because the will of God is to have the body of Christ mature as one, God especially calls upon some to accept the role of pastoral leadership and to take up the responsibility to make other believers become whole. Therefore, ordination is to display God's will towards the calling of His servant; it is the most tangible display of God's call for the ordained into lifetime ministry.

### 2. Ordination is a commitment to the Lord to being responsible for tending His flock

1 Peter 5:2-4: "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."

Peter points out that having the responsibility of being a pastor or an elder is like being a shepherd, tending to God's flock, guiding disciples to walk in God's will, and becoming examples for others to follow. To tend a flock has two main responsibilities: first, to feed the flock by teaching God's will and truth to the people so that they become spiritual adults (Acts 20:20, 27) and second, to protect the flock from harm (Acts 20:28-31).

Peter's words resonated a deeper meaning to the Israelites as their ancestors were shepherds. In the Old Testament, God's people often referred to God as a shepherd. An example of this is Jacob describing God as "the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day" (Genesis 48:15) as he passed away. David was also a shepherd and he says, "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want." (Psalms 23:1)

In the New Testament, Lord Jesus refers to Himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). More importantly, He appears to His disciples after His resurrection, asking Peter three times if he loves the Lord to which He follows with an important mission: "Take care of my sheep." (John 21:16) Peter engraved these words in his heart. As he became an elder, he used the Lord's words to encourage the servants who also became elders, ensuring that God's will is carried out through the pastoring of His flock. Therefore, ordination is for the ordained to commit to the Lord and to the church, to take up the responsibility to pastoring God's people.

### 3. Ordination is where the church approves and accepts the ordained individual to take on a leadership role within the church

1 Timothy 4:14: "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you."

Paul points out that it was not he who personally laid his hand on Timothy or that Timothy had suddenly attained the status of 'elder' on his own (now known as pastor). This passage reflects that at that time, the church gathered together and laid their hands on Timothy in public to indicate that the church approves and accepts his calling and gift of pastoral leadership to be the one to carry out the important duty of pastoring the flock of God's church.

Therefore, the act of ordination is not a personal choice that is self-driven. In addition to God's calling and accepting God's calling to be ordained, the pastor must attain the approval from the church body which includes the acceptance of the pastor's spiritual gifts and the

confirmation that the pastor is equipped to serve God's church. Therefore, ordination is a God-centered solemn celebration. The Lord is praised to the highest and the pastoral role of the ordained is confirmed in the process of the ordination. A pastor emphasizes that ordination is a thanksgiving meeting to the Lord as the body of Christ, thanking Him for His guidance throughout all times and His unfailing answer to the calling of servants to teach the truth and build the church. Ordination is a church testimonial meeting to God, witnessing Him caring for the needs of His church and sending His servants out to harvest as the Lord of Harvest (Matthew 9:38). Ordination is also a dedication meeting of ourselves to the Lord as we support the servants of God,

allowing the church to know the truth and follow God's will.

In this ordination, believers celebrate and witness God's servants being called to a life of pastoring and building the church in truth; in addition, this is a time where believers gather to rededicate their commitment to the Lord to love and protect His servants and to serve as one in heart and mind as we build the church together.

"To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:21)

**Blessings,  
Pastor Ivan Leung**



Pastors to be ordained in August: Pastor Abe Chan (Deb), Pastor Bill Wong (Linda), and Pastor Lawrence Kong (Esther)

# Upcoming Ordination Service

You are cordially invited to the Ordination Service of Pastors  
**Abe Chan, Lawrence Kong, Bill Wong**

2:00 pm on Sunday August 16, 2009

VCAC - Fraser Lands Church  
3330 S.E. Marine Drive

*Reception to Follow*

## Transformed by God

Sharing by Pastor Lawrence Kong



**A**s I began serving in ministry at Vancouver Chinese Alliance Church, I always thought of the Ordination process as something I was obligated to do as a worker in the Christian and Missionary Alliance, which it is, but God has led me and taught me about maturing in my faith as I moved further along in the ordination process. I have to admit, it was not something I really desired at first, but God softened my heart and helped me realize that the Ordination process was a symbol of my growth in Christ, and His work in me.

In our Ordination Manual, it stated that I was to complete the ordination process within two years of starting full-time ministry. For me though, I felt that the official process really began two years into my service at VCAC. My first two years gave me the time to grieve the loss of my father due to cancer. Two years gave my now-wife and I time to know each other and move towards our wedding day and marriage. Two years of ministry hardship due to my own inexperience, overconfidence, and misplaced zeal. Two years where my life was in the midst of total transformation by God. Two years of God working out His calling in me. I finally began to understand that God was showing me that being called to the work of a shepherd required more than

what I had to offer alone. 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. (Zechariah 4:6)

Feeling grounded in my calling as a pastor, with the blessing of my senior pastor, Pastor Ivan, and the encouragement of my mentoring pastor, Pastor Paul, and my two co-labourers, Pastor Abe Chan and Pastor Bill Wong, I was able to complete all the assignments and effectively study for all the questions in preparation for the Ordination Interview. After successful completion of the ordination interview, with my wife beside me, and the interviewing pastors surrounding us with prayer, I realized that a pastor is not merely one person, and not only God working through one person, but rather God shaping a pastor through family, church and community, and I would not want to have it any other way.

I would like to thank my wife, Esther for walking with me throughout this process. We are ministers together! Many thanks to Abe and Bill! Journeying together is always better! Gratitude goes out to my brothers and sisters at VCAC and beyond for all the prayers and support. God has worked through you all to shape me into who I am, and I am certain God will continue to do so. To God be the glory. ■

# Life After Ordination

Sharing by Pastor Bill Wong



**W**hy did I choose to go through with the ordination? As I looked back at my life, I saw my ordination as part of a process that began back in 2002, when I was studying at Regent College. At that time, I sensed God's calling for me to serve in ministry - particularly in the marketplace. Up to that point in time, I was quite satisfied to remain in my engineering job and perhaps retire from it in 10 years' time. I had been with the firm for about 15 years and enjoyed the work very much and the great pay. But it seemed God had a different plan for my life. It was at Regent that I caught up with Paul Stevens, who was Professor of Marketplace Theology and advisor for my MCS thesis. It was he who led me to Christ, baptized me, and married Linda and me - many years ago. God would use him again to encourage me to consider serving in the marketplace.

While at Regent, I began serving part-time with City In Focus ([www.cityinfocus.ca](http://www.cityinfocus.ca)), a Christian non-profit organization which has been ministering to the Vancouver business community for over 20 years. I was inspired by a colleague to consider serving as a workplace chaplain. He attends Peace Portal Alliance Church and was ordained by the C & MA District to serve as a chaplain to emergency response personnel in the Lower Mainland for several years. He encouraged me to go through with the accreditation and ordination process, not to add another title to my name, but to affirm my ministry and for accountability. Accountability is important because ministry involves teamwork, especially when it comes to chaplaincy work.

In April this year, I attended an Alliance District Chaplains' retreat, along with about 25 other chaplains from the District. Many are also pastors in a church, but several served solely as chaplains outside the church - in prisons, hospitals, workplace, and with youths. Rev. David Hearn, the District Superintendent, spoke to the attendees

about the District endorsing the chaplaincy movement and encouraging chaplains to be the leading edge of the missional vision - to engage in bringing the Gospel to those who are outside of the church community. Chaplains are essentially ministers of God who are called to serve in places that the church traditionally do not or cannot reach.

After I shared with Rev. Hearn about my current ministry and plans, he encouraged me to go through with the ordination, as an affirmation and anointing of my call to the chaplaincy ministry. He also encouraged me to continue serving in my home church, but my main focus would be on my chaplaincy work. In serving as a workplace chaplain, I am essentially a missionary sent out by VCAC to serve in the "corporate jungle."

As a chaplain in the marketplace, my ministry takes place in the offices and boardrooms, in restaurants and coffee shops, in the malls and other public places, in our downtown ministry office, or any place where people feel comfortable to meet me. My main role is to provide a ministry of presence to those in need of spiritual care. I build caring and trusting relationships with non-believers, and allow the Holy Spirit to provide me the opportunity to share the life changing Good News of Jesus Christ with them in a non-threatening manner. I also engage with believers, praying with them and helping them to live out their faith in their workplace. I am also mentoring some younger generation professionals and will continue to do so.

So, in completing my ordination, I pray that it will strengthen me as a servant-leader in my ministry and also spur me to be a lifelong learner of His Word - until I see Jesus Christ face to face. May all honour and glory be given to Him! ■

# My Journey of Faith

Sharing by Pastor Abe Chan



**A**s I reflect on my journey of faith in the past 6 ½ years, I realize that this is exactly what it has been - a journey of faith! Since being called by God to go into pastoral ministry in February 2003, I have been trying to follow the Lord as best as I could. This has meant: discerning the voice and the will of God along with my wife and son; leaving my career after working as an architect for 15 years; going back to school at 41 years of age and getting a seminary education; serving the Lord as a pastor at our church these past 5 ½ years to seek further confirmation and clarity; and going through the ordination process this last year in order to allow the Holy Spirit to continue to transform my mind and heart so that I can understand and know more fully the mind and heart of our Savior and Lord. Through all this, there have been various things I have learned and heard from our God.

The call to be a pastor is not something that we choose for ourselves, but it is a call that we have to receive and embrace. We receive it because it is from Him, and we embrace it because it is our desire to follow Him wholeheartedly. It is a call to service; it is a call to submission; it is a call to full surrender - not a call to privilege, power, and prestige. It is a call to a life of holiness and humility to reflect the beauty of Jesus Christ in each and every way by dying to self, loving our enemies, praying for those who mistreat us, and blessing those who curse us. It does not raise oneself up; but rather, it builds others up in the Lord. These are

some of the lessons I have been learning, and continue to learn, from the heart of our intimate God who speaks to us in quietness, in silence, in solitude, and in rest. The Apostle Paul's words have become words of affirmation from the Lord as I sought a verse from Him that would clarify His call for me to pastoral ministry: "On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts" (1 Thess. 2:4). This verse has become my life verse for ministry; the Lord's personal promise to sustain me in ministry.

The process of my ordination has definitely been a testimony of God's faithfulness and provision. Without Him, and without the body of Christ, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this event would not take place. It is only the Lord Himself who can take a proud, stubborn, and uncompassionate architect and allow him, by God's grace and mercy, to be transformed in order to serve as a pastor and shepherd of God's flock. The presence of the faith community in the life of our family fills our heart with unspeakable joy for it is you who have formed us; it is you who have prayed into us; it is you who have allowed us to minister to you in Jesus' name. So, thank you for your prayers. Thank you for your encouragement. Thank you for your faithfulness in God and partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We rejoice together not because of anything we have done but because of what the Lord has done among us. May all glory and honor and praise be given to Him! ■