

September 22, 2013

To: VCBC Board of Directors
Council members
Nomination Committee members

Dear brothers and sisters:

We are deeply grateful to God for guiding VCBC throughout VCBC's history. We also deeply appreciate the many church leaders who have served VCBC faithfully for so many years. However, in the past few years, some church leaders have lost their spiritual bearing and have drifted away from the true meaning of serving God and serving God's people with a humble, servant attitude.

One of the reasons is many church leaders have served too hard and too long so they did not have enough time to rest and quiet down before God to let the Holy Spirit fill them and guide them. While we greatly appreciate these church leaders' desire to serve God, a critical Bible teaching is that the spiritual aspect comes first, and God looks at our hearts more than at our actions.

Our church is currently facing the most severe crisis it has ever faced—to the point where many long-time members who deeply love God and love our church have left VCBC out of frustration, anger, and dissatisfaction with our church leaders; and this trend is continuing.

If our current church leaders continue to lead our church along the same direction, God's good name will continue to be defiled and the future of VCBC itself is uncertain.

It is only too convenient to blame everything on the senior pastor or the past moderator. But in a democratic Baptist church, even the senior pastor or moderator cannot make all the decisions. Many church leaders have directly contributed to our current crisis.

Many of VCBC's most serious problems are caused by some church leaders who have lost their spiritual bearing and behave in an unethical and unspiritual way, act without proper consultation and authorization, and engage in power struggles with other church leaders.

From late 2012 to the present, some of the serious offences made by VCBC church leaders include:

- Releasing confidential and private meeting minutes and records by announcing to members that they can just ask and then they can see them.
Without consulting with or authorization from VCBC Directors, Deacons, or PC, Elaine Chan announced to all members at the May 26, 2013 MBM that all church records belong to the members and offered to release confidential and private meeting minutes and records to any member who requests them.
Without going into legalities, all VCBC leaders and members have always treated all personnel meeting minutes and records as confidential; and our church has always operated on that basis—until now. Everyone who speaks at personnel meetings have

always believed that what they say is confidential and will not be released to members just because members ask to see these records.

What Elaine did was to encourage members to ask to see confidential information. This is a serious ethical error and a breach of confidentiality and privacy.

Elaine herself has explained to PC members more than once that personnel files are strictly confidential, and that only the person himself/herself and the senior pastor can access personnel files. When Elaine emailed these records to the VCBC members who asked for them, she herself warned recipients not to redistribute them. This shows that she understands the principles of confidentiality and its seriousness.

This single act by Elaine Chan means that from now on, no one can be assured that any personnel issues or discussions are confidential, because any member can simply make a motion to see all confidential church records.

Church leaders who make serious ethical errors in releasing information that everyone in VCBC has always treated as confidential should take time off to reflect before God and tune their hearts towards God so that such unethical behavior will not recur in future.

- Pressuring and harassing the senior pastor to resign.

Many church members still question the legality of the members' meeting on June 9, 2013 and the resolutions from that meeting. Without going into whether that meeting was legal or not, and whether the resolution to have another meeting on June 11 was legal or not, the four church leaders—Ken Ip, Edward Li, Betty Yuen, and James Ng—who went to Rev. Kong to pressure him to resign, acted without authorization from VCBC Directors or VCBC Members.

When Ken Ip, Edward Li, Betty Yuen, and James Ng went to see Rev. Kong:

- There was no resolution or authorization from VCBC's Board of Directors or VCBC Members.
- There was no written letter or statement. These church leaders just went and verbally told Rev. Kong to resign effective July 1.
- There was no appointment or advance notice. When Rev. Kong finished a meeting at approximately 2:30 pm on June 12, 2013 at the Victoria Street office, he was basically ambushed by these church leaders without any notice and they pressured him to resign effective July 1.
- These church leaders pressured Rev. Kong to give a reply in two short days by June 14, 2013.

Church leaders who act without authorization from Directors and Members to pressure and harass any pastor need to take time off to quiet down and re-examine their motives and the way they serve God and conduct themselves.

- Unethically and forcibly removing an officially elected church moderator without giving him a chance to explain.

A serious motion such as removing an officially elected church moderator must be announced to members before the meeting.

Our church has a minimum notice period for major motions—they must be included in the agenda and distributed to members at least two weeks before the meeting. This gives members time to pray and think about the motion and to get more information about it before casting their vote. The moderator should also be notified in advance and given a chance to explain.

A motion of such serious consequences should not have been allowed as a floor motion. Even if someone makes a floor motion of such a serious nature, it should have been added to the agenda for the next meeting and not hastily passed at the same meeting.

At that meeting, members who questioned the ethics of the process—that it's wrong to allow a floor motion to determine such a serious issue—were ignored. Even when some members reminded Philip Mah after the meeting that what he did was unethical and wrong, he still ignored them.

Philip Mah, as the chairperson of that meeting, should have added this floor motion to the agenda for the next meeting instead of allowing it to be hastily passed at the same meeting.

Even worse, Philip Mah should have rectified this mistake when he found out that his action is unethical, and added this motion to the agenda for discussion at the next MBM.

Philip Mah's behavior as chairperson of that meeting not only violates the basic spirit of our church By-Laws and Society Act, it also gives every appearance that he is in an unspiritual power struggle with the officially elected moderator and hastily passed this floor motion to take over the moderator position.

Church leaders who engage in unspiritual power struggles under the guise of democracy, and use unethical ways to forcibly remove officially elected leaders need to re-examine their motives behind holding any leadership position. They need to remove themselves from church leadership positions, quiet down before God, and let the Holy Spirit cleanse their hearts and their spirits.

While these church leaders may try to claim that they acted legally by following the letter of the law, even the basic legality of some meetings and the resolutions from these meetings are still being questioned and debated. Aside from legality issues, these church leaders failed to follow the spirit and intent of how God's church ought to operate.

The Pharisees and chief priests of Jesus' days also followed the letter of the law, strictly obeying every letter of Moses' laws. No one can say that they broke any law, but Jesus used His harshest words to rebuke these leaders. In the same way, any church leader who tries to claim that they didn't break any laws or rules but fail to follow the spirit and intent of God's law, they will receive the same rebuke that the Pharisees, teachers of the law, and chief priests received from Jesus.

Church leaders who behave unethically, unspiritually, and act without proper consultation and authorization need to take a sabbatical time away from their church leadership duties, including positions as Directors, Deacons, on Council, or any department or committee chair or member.

This time off from church leadership positions is not a punishment.

This sabbatical time away from church leadership positions is to give these church leaders a time of rest and relief so that they can:

- Rest in quietness and return to God so as to regain their spiritual strength and bearing. As God told Isaiah: in returning and rest you shall be saved, in quietness and in trust shall be your strength (主耶和華以色列的聖者曾如此說: 你們得救在乎歸回安息, 你們得力在乎平靜安穩, 你們竟自不肯。) (Isaiah 30:15).
- Wait upon the Lord in prayer, retreat (退修), and reflection to allow God to renew their strength so that, after their sabbatical, they will be able to mount up with wings as eagles (Isaiah 40:31).

- Remove themselves from the temptation of power. Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Many church leaders have been in powerful positions for so long that they're drunk with power. They need time off to examine their own motives, and to show to themselves, show church members, and show God that they're pursuing God and not pursuing power. A sabbatical helps them to rediscover that serving God in His church is a joy and an honour and a privilege. A leadership position with power is not something to fight for or to hang on to (不是自己強奪的) (Phil. 2:6).

If their motive is pure, they would understand that whether they serve in a powerful position or devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4), both are equally worthwhile and pleasing in God's sight.

- Promise God's people that they will defend, protect, and support the weak and the victims; that they will follow the example of the first Deacons in Acts 6 to defend the oppressed and prevent people from being bullied, cheated, or defrauded. As God told Isaiah in 1:16-17:

賽 1:16 你們要洗濯、自潔,從我眼前除掉你們的惡行;要止住作惡,

賽 1:17 學習行善,尋求公平,解救受欺壓的,給孤兒伸冤,為寡婦辨屈。

If they obey these words, God promises forgiveness in the very next verse:

賽 1:18 耶和華說: 你們來,我們彼此辯論。你們的罪雖像硃紅,必變成雪白;雖紅如丹顏,必白如羊毛。

- Renew their desire to serve God above everything—above all personal gains, grudges, and allegiances; and to uphold God's righteousness and God's good name above everything.
- Turn and tune their hearts and attitudes towards God again, knowing that God judges teachers and church leaders with greater strictness (ESV) and condemnation (KJV) (要受更重的判斷) (James 3:1).

The sabbatical for these church leaders is also critical for the spiritual health of VCBC and the long-term viability of VCBC as a God-fearing and ethical church.

For VCBC's spiritual health and standing before God, and for these church leaders' own spiritual health and standing before God, we strongly urge VCBC Directors, Deacons, and Council to give the following church leaders a sabbatical time away from all church leadership positions for at least two years.

- Philip Mah
- Elaine Chan
- Ken Ip
- Edward Li
- Betty Yuen
- James Ng

We await your response to this request.

(Signed by more than 100 members of VCBC)

(此乃中譯本，一切以英文版本為準)

親愛的溫浸董事會、議會及提名委員會成員：

我們深深感謝神由溫浸成立至今一直帶領我們的教會，我們亦深深感謝眾多教會領袖，在過去多年一直忠心事奉溫浸。然而在過去數年，一些教會領袖迷失了屬靈方位，失去了以謙卑役人的態度去真正服事神及其子民。

導致這個問題的其中一個原因，是很多教會領袖事奉了太久和工作過勞，以致沒有足夠時間休息和在神前安靜下來，結果未能讓聖靈充滿及帶領。我們雖然很欣賞這些領袖服事主的熱誠，但卻不能忽略聖經極其重要的教導：即屬靈層面先行，神看我們的內心過於我們的行為。

我們的教會面臨從未遇過的危機，很多加入溫浸多年、非常愛主、愛教會的會友，由於對教會領袖失望、憤怒、不滿，已經離開溫浸，人數且不繼增加。

若現行的教會領袖繼續循目前方向帶領溫浸，神的好名聲會繼續受到玷污，溫浸的前景亦難以預測。

要追究責任，把一切問題推給主任牧師或前任議會主席實在太方便了。然而在民主的浸信會裡，主任牧師或議會主席不能決定每一件事，很多教會領袖也要為目前的危機直接負起部分責任。

溫浸很多最嚴重的問題，是由一些迷失了屬靈方位的教會領袖造成的，他們採取了不道德、不屬靈的方式辦事，沒有進行正式諮詢及獲得正式授權，又向其他教會領袖發動權力鬥爭。

二零一二年底至今，溫浸教會領袖所犯的嚴重過犯包括：

- 發放保密的會議記錄。有領袖向會友宣布，他們只要提出要求，便可以取閱有關記錄。

陳孔綺玲於二零一三年五月廿六日會友雙月會中，向全體會友宣布，教會所有記錄都是屬於會友的，任何會友只要提出要求，她便會發放保密的會議記錄給他們。陳孔綺玲作出上述宣布前，並沒有諮詢溫浸董事、執事或人事委員會，也沒有獲得授權作出有關宣布。

姑勿論其合法性，所有溫浸領袖及會友一向視所有人事委員會的會議記錄為機密文件，在發生此事之前，溫浸一直按此原則辦事，任何出席人事委員會會議者，一向都相信其於會上的發言都會得到保密，不會單單因為會友要求取閱便發放給會友。

陳孔綺玲的做法是鼓勵會友取閱機密文件，這是嚴重的道德失誤，違反了保密原則。

陳孔綺玲不只一次向人事委員會成員解釋，人事檔案屬絕對機密文件，只有當事人及主任牧師有權取得有關文件。陳孔綺玲把記錄電郵給要求取閱的會友時，也警告收件者不要再轉發給其他人，證明她明白保密原則及其嚴重性。

陳孔綺玲今次一舉的後果，是從今以後，沒有人可以肯定任何人事問題或討論都會受到保密，因為任何會友只要提出動議，便可以取閱教會所有保密記錄。

把溫浸所有人一向視為機密的文件發放出來是嚴重的道德失誤，犯了這種錯誤的教會領袖應該放休假，以便在神面前反省，並且調校內心，從而更加接近神，以免將來再次道德失誤。

- 向主任牧師施壓滋擾，迫使其辭職。

很多會友仍然質疑二零一三年六月九日的會友會議以及該會議的決議是否合法。姑勿論該會議是否合法，亦姑勿論有關在六月十一日再開會的決議是否合法，四位當面迫江牧師辭職的教會領袖（葉承謙、李國熙、袁林慕秀、吳守仁）是在未得溫浸董事或會友授權的情況下去見江牧師的。

葉承謙、李國熙、袁林慕秀及吳守仁往見江牧師的時候：

- 溫浸董事或會友並沒有通過任何決議或發出任何授權。
- 這幾位教會領袖並沒有任何書面信件或聲明，他們只是前往江牧師那裡，口頭通知他由七月一日起辭職。
- 他們並沒有預先約見，亦沒有預先通知。當江牧師於二零一三年六月十二日下午二時三十分左右在域多利街辦事處開完會後，基本上是在毫無通知的情況下受滋擾，遭這幾位教會領袖迫他由七月一日起辭職。
- 這些教會領袖只是給江牧師短短兩日期限，迫他最遲二零一三年六月十四日答覆。

教會領袖在未得董事或會友授權的情況下向任何教牧施壓或作出滋擾，實有需要放休假，以便靜下來檢討其動機以及服事神的方式。

- 以不道德及強橫的方式解除議會主席的職位，並且完全不給予該正式當選的議會主席任何解釋的機會。

任何重大提案，例如要把正式當選的議會主席革職，必須於開會前通知會友。

溫浸對重大提案設有最低限度的通知期：有關提案必須刊登在會議議程，並且最少於開會前兩星期發放給會友，以便會友有時間祈禱、思考，以及在投票前搜集更多資料。有關的議會主席亦應獲得預先通知及解釋的機會。

有關提案後果嚴重，不應獲准以臨時提案方式提出，即使有人提出性質如此嚴重的臨時提案，有關提案理應納入下次會議議程，不應匆匆於該次會議通過。

在該次會議中，有會友質疑有關程序是否合乎道德，即容讓臨時提案決定如此重大問題是錯誤的做法；但這些意見遭到漠視。即使有些會友於會後提醒馬偉立他的做法是不道德的、是錯誤的，他仍然置諸不理。

身為該次會議的主席，馬偉立應把臨時提案列入下次會議議程，不應讓其匆匆在該次會議通過。

更嚴重的是，當馬偉立發覺其行為是不道德的時候，本應採取補救措施，把提案列入下次會友雙月會討論。

馬偉立作為會議主席的行為，不但違反了溫浸章則和社團法的基本精神，而且著著顯得他向正式當選的議會主席展開不屬靈的權力鬥爭，為了接管議會主席職位而匆匆通過有關臨時提案。

任何教會領袖，若借民主之名展開不屬靈的權力鬥爭，以及用不道德的方式把正式當選的領袖革職，都需檢討其擔當任何領袖職位的背後動機，他們要放下教會的領袖職位，在神面前安靜，以便聖靈潔淨其內心和靈性。

雖然這些領袖可能嘗試聲稱其行為符合法律條文，但是部分會議及其通過決議的基本合法性現時仍然受到質疑。除了合法性的問題，這些教會領袖沒有遵守管理神教會應該跟隨的精神和意義。

耶穌時代的法利賽人和大祭司亦遵行律法的條文，嚴守摩西律法的每項條文，沒有人可以說他們違反任何律法，但耶穌卻以最嚴厲的說話責備這些領袖。同樣地，任何教會領袖若嘗試聲稱他們沒有違反任何法律或規則，但卻沒有跟隨上帝律法的精神和意義，他們將好像法利賽人、律師和大祭司般遭耶穌責備。

教會領袖若有不道德、不屬靈的表現，又在未經正式諮詢和授權的情況下辦事，需以安息休假形式放下教會領袖職務，包括董事、執事、議會成員、任何部門和委員會的主席和成員的職位。

這個以安息休假形式放下領袖職位的做法並非懲罰。

這個做法讓教會領袖放下繁重的職務，有時間休息，以便：

- 在平靜安穩中休息，回到神那裡，以便重獲屬靈能力及方位，好像神向以賽亞說：主耶和華以色列的聖者曾如此說：你們得救在乎歸回安息，你們得力在乎平靜安穩，你們竟自不肯（賽 30:15）。
- 在禱告、退修和反思中等候神，讓神重新加添力量，休假回來可如鷹展翅上騰（賽 40:31）。
- 脫離權力的引誘。權力使人腐化，絕對的權力絕對使人腐化。很多教會領袖由於在大權的職位太久，所以沉醉於權力之中。他們需要放假，以便檢視自己的動機，並且向自己、向會友、向神表明他們追求的是神，不是權力。安息休假有助重新發現在神教會的事奉是喜樂、光榮和特權。有權的領袖職位不是要爭取和自己強奪的（腓 2:6）。

若他們的動機是純正的，他們會明白，無論是在有權的職位事奉，或是專心祈禱、傳道（徒 6:4），兩者都是神所喜悅的。

- 答應神的子民：他們會救助、保護及支持弱者和受迫害者，並且效法使徒行傳六章中最初的執事的榜樣，解救受欺壓的，保護人免受凌辱、欺騙，正如神告訴以賽亞：

賽 1:16 你們要洗濯、自潔，從我眼前除掉你們的惡行；要止住作惡，

賽 1:17 學習行善，尋求公平，解救受欺壓的，給孤兒伸冤，為寡婦辨屈。

若他們遵守這些說話，神赦罪的應許就在下一節：

賽 1:18 耶和華說：你們來，我們彼此辯論。你們的罪雖像硃紅，必變成雪白；雖紅如丹顏，必白如羊毛。

- 更新那凌駕一切的服事神的熱心—凌駕一切個人利益、妒嫉和其他效忠對象；高舉神的公義和神的好名聲，超過萬事。
- 心意和態度要回轉調校，要重新更加接近神，明白教師和教會領袖要受更重的判斷（雅 3:1）。

溫浸的屬靈生命是否可以保持健康，溫浸是否可以長期成為敬畏神和有道德準則的教會，亦繫乎這些教會領袖的安息假期。

為了溫浸的屬靈生命可以保持健康，以及溫浸可以在神的面前站立得住，同時為了這些教會領袖的屬靈生命可以保持健康，以他們可以在神的面前站立得住，我們懇請溫浸董事、執事和議會成員給予下列教會領袖至少兩年的安息休假，讓他們不用擔當任何教會領袖職位。

- 馬偉立
- 陳孔綺玲
- 葉承謙
- 李國熙
- 袁林慕秀
- 吳守仁

我們祈望你們回應我們的要求。

(來自 100+溫哥華華人浸信會成員)