

On Installation Thanksgiving Ceremony: Rev Lancelot Tong

(By Pastor Raymond, 8/23/2009)

You may have already gotten all the details regarding the Installation Thanksgiving Ceremony in the afternoon of Sunday Sept 20. I am not wasting ink on that but instead here I am to explain what it is that we are doing in that afternoon. Of course, I urge you to make a commitment to attend as well.

I realize many of us may have gone to similar secular events when a new leader is introduced to a group or to other clients in the hope of getting a wider social recognition for the new guy and eventually leading to bigger returns. I do not wish to lie to you that there isn't a bit of that in this ceremony. There is. But there is more, and a different take.

First, it is a *Thanksgiving*. We thank the Head of the Church our Lord Jesus Christ for superintending the process whereby we arrive at where we are. We recognize with gratitude that the Spirit guides us in our encounter with, selection and calling of Rev Tong. Ever since Rev Wing So left, SFEFC has been waiting for this person, and God saw fit to lead him to us in 2009. As we gather the afternoon of September 20th, we pause to acknowledge Him.

Second, it is an *Installation*. It stands on two legs. One, it is God who installs Rev Tong, and it is from God Rev Tong's authority to lead is derived. Both we and Rev Tong should be fully aware of that. Second, we as a congregation have an indispensable role in installing Rev Tong as the Senior Pastor. We acknowledge that God has worked through us who would henceforth dedicate our submission to the leadership of this individual whom we are installing. We work with God to bring about His will in His own people. There will be no installation if God is not acknowledged. Neither will there be any installation if there is no congregation willing to submit to the leadership as installed.

Finally, it is a *Ceremony*. Like a wedding, a ceremony inexplicably creates something new. A new relationship takes place. This is the relationship we as members of SFEFC will have with our new Senior Pastor. This new relationship is also witnessed to and it will take on an effect amongst God's churches. In a wedding, when the priest says, "I now pronounce you husband and wife," all those who are in the wedding ceremony will henceforth know this new couple as Mr. and Mrs. ABC. Likewise, all the guests who are not of SFEFC, are all witnesses to this new relationship. And, as a result, these guests will also henceforth recognize Rev Tong as the Senior Pastor of SFEFC in their future co-operation with him. Only here that our ceremony shares with the secular ones like I mentioned in the beginning. Co-laborers in Christ in other churches and Christian organizations will work with our Senior Pastor in future for the Kingdom.

I therefore request your presence and commitment. Plan to be at church that Sunday and plan to stay for the ceremony. I am confident that we all consider ourselves part of SFEFC, and as such will attend as a contracting partner of the ceremony, not as witnesses. We are not guests. We are the hosts.