In the past few months, the Fanpage of Hanoi Evangelical Church (“HEC”) has posted a lot of articles about the troubles between HEC and the Evangelical Church of Vietnam – North (“ECVN”). However, this is incomplete, one-way communication; all opposing comments on the Fanpage are deleted. For this reason the Church of God is drawn into severe division. The collaborators of hoithanh.com who are present in Hanoi, after much consideration, would like to provide you the complete information about the whole situation so that the children of God everywhere are well-informed to avoid misunderstanding that causes great harm to the name of the Lord. Here are the developments in this conflict:

**Pastor Bui Quoc Phong joined ECVN:**

• In 2010, Pastor Bui Quoc Phong applied to join the ECVN and committed himself to comply with the Charter and Bylaws of ECVN [(see his Application to Join ECVN – ĐK1](https://hoithanh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/%C4%90K1-Don-Xin-Gia-Nhap-Cua-Ong-Bui-Quoc-Phong.jpg)).

• In 2012, Pastor Phong was introduced to HEC by the ECVN and was voted by HEC’s congregation to be HEC Senior Pastor.

**Pastor Phong started to oppose and refuse to cooperate with the ECVN**

• Among the Churches under the ECVN, HEC is the oldest and the most influential Church. In fact, it should have worked closely with ECVN to extend God's Kingdom, but Pastor Phong has led HEC into disrespect and non-cooperation with the ECVN.

• Head of the ECVN Pastor Nguyen Huu Mac had many one-on-one talks with Pastor Phong, but they worked for only a short time.

**Pastor Phong launched public charges against Head of the ECVN Pastor Nguyen Huu Mac and the ECVN during the 35th General Assembly**

• During ECVN’s 35th General Assembly, Pastor Phong and a number of HEC’s deacons accused the Head of the ECVN Pastor Nguyen Huu Mac of some offences ([see attachment ĐK2](https://hoithanh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/%C4%90K2-Bai-Dang-FB-Cua-HTHN.jpg)). The General Assembly investigated and concluded that these were not serious offenses, and they required no consequences; on the contrary, these offenses happened because of the kindness of the pastors’ hearts, so the ECVN considered the matter closed. ([see the Explanation for the charges attached](https://hoithanh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/DK-3.pdf)[– ĐK3](https://hoithanh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/DK-3.pdf)).

**The situation became tense after the 35th General Assembly. HEC stopped giving tithes to the ECVN and openly opposed the ECVN through sermons.**
• After the 35th General Assembly, the disobedience and opposition escalated more systematically.
• ECVN’s fund is modest and mostly comes from HEC’s tithes. Knowing this, Pastor Phong directed HEC’s Board of Deacons not to give the church’s tithe to the EVCN like other churches until the ECVN started using professional accounting software and provided HEC with an audited financial statement for the year 2018 (Pastor Phong knew that ECVN could not afford these expenses).

• ECVN tried to meet HEC’s requirements, but could only afford the financial audit service for Hanoi Bible College, and provided detailed financial reports in all the meetings of ECVN’s Executive Committee.
• Pastor Phong tried every way to avoid giving HEC’s tithe to the ECVN; so far ECVN’s fund has not received the tithes from HEC.

**\*\*\* Important note:**

– Pastor Phong is using the social media to say that he was pinned down by the authorities, but it is actually the opposite. Clearly Pastor Phong used the influence and finances of HEC to pin down the ECVN.

• The culmination of opposition was the sermon "I Will Build My Church" on 7 April 2019, in which Pastor Phong publicly denied the ECVN’s authority. Pastor Phong’s attitude made many HEC members "rivals" of the ECVN.

**The ECVN’s Executive Committee invited Pastor Phong to meet and relieve the stress, but he refused.**

• As the tension escalated, the ECVN’s Executive Committee invited Pastor Phong three times to meet to discuss his attitude towards the organization of the church, but Pastor Phong refused for various reasons.
• The ECVN’s Executive Committee sent a letter dated 18 June to invite HEC’s Board of Deacons to meet the ECVN, but HEC’s Board of Deacons declined in writing due to the intervention by Pastor Phong. Only on 11 July 2019 was the invitation by the ECVN’s Executive Committee accepted, and Pastor Phong requested the Board of Deacons to let him attend the meeting.

**ECVN’s Executive Committee issued a warning to Pastor Phong**

• On 9 July 2019, the ECVN’s Executive Committee issued Decision 83/QD-BTSTH as a reminder to help Pastor Phong to recognize and correct his mistakes so that he could continue serving the Lord.
• On 14 July 2019, HEC’s Board of Leaders declared to reject Decision 83, instead of reading this Decision as proposed by the ECVN’s Executive Committee. This objections were later expressed in the Official Letter No. 28-2019/HTTL ([see attachment ĐK4](https://hoithanh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/%C4%90K4-Thu-Keu-Goi-Cau-Nguyen.pdf)).

**\*\*\* Important note:**

Currently HEC’s Board of Deacons has 10 members including 4 standing members (Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Treasurer, and Deacon in charge of External Affairs). Three standing members and the Deacon in charge of Technical Duties respect the ECVN’s Decision, while the remaining six deacons (including the Deacon in charge of Communications) strongly oppose ECVN’s decisions. The decisions recently signed under the name of 'HEC’s Board of Leaders' are not approved by the four deacons who submit to the church authorities.

**HEC’s Media Team uses social networks to exaggerate the matter**

• On 7 August 2019, the situation became serious after HEC’s Media Team posted the Official Letter 28-2019/HTTL on Facebook, which criticized and heavily denounced the Head of the ECVN, Pastor Nguyen Huu Mac, with the same charges they made at ECVN’s 35th General Assembly (see attachment ĐK2).
• In a Facebook post, HEC’s Communications Team accused the ECVN of posting Decision 83 on its website. To be honest, the ECVN’s website often provides updates on church activities and is very little known; the evidence is that very few people knew about Decision 83 on ECVN’s website until HEC’s Facebook posted the link to this Decision.
• Because there were so many negative comments harmful to the Church of God in general, many Pastors of all denominations urged both sides to stop publicizing the conflict on social media and take down the posts. The ECVN immediately removed Decision 83/QD-BTSTH on its internal website, but HEC’s Facebook continues to bombard and condemn the ECVN to this day. Everything you know about HEC today is posted by HEC’s Media Team.

**The ECVN’s Executive Committee issued the Decision to dismiss Pastor Phong**

• Based on the above-mentioned issues and Pastor Phong's stubbornness in refusing to meet the ECVN directly to discuss his own matters as member of the ECVN’s clergy, on 13 August the ECVN’s Executive Committee issued Decision 120/QD-BTSTH to dismiss Mr. Bui Quoc Phong as a pastor.
• On 18 August 2019, after the pastors on the ECVN’s Executive Committee read Decision 120 to HEC’s congregation, some individuals in the Church pushed and cursed these pastors.
• On 19 August 2019, the Government Committee for Religious Affairs sent the Official Letter 928/TGCP-TL to accept Notice 153/TB-THTL by the ECVN on the dismissal of Mr. Bui Quoc Phong from the pastoral position.

**HEC’s Media Team misled the public opinion about the “Stealing the Seal” incident**

• On 24 August 2019, Secretary Hoan brought HEC's seal to register with the government under Notice 153/TB-THTL. When returning to the church office, Secretary Hoan joined Ms. Thao, the office staff, to stamp on the baptismal certificates. Up on completion, Ms. Thao did not hand over the seal to Secretary Hoan, but ran around the table trying to keep the seal, so there was a struggle between the two (in Apprentice Preacher Nguyen Tuan Anh’s presence). Deacon Pham Huy Viet came in and held Secretary Hoan to prevent him from carrying the seal out of the office. After that, someone informed Mr. Le Sy Han, secretary of Thanh Xuan branch, who assisted Deacon Viet to latch the door from outside to lock Secretary Hoan in the office. A few moments later, deacons Nguyen Ngoc Thien Loc, Nguyen Thai Duong and Doan Minh Duong came together to ask the Secretary to return the seal to the office staff. Before returning the seal, Secretary Hoan requested to make a record of the incident and asked the signatories to commit not to use the seal in an illegal manner, after which Secretary Hoan handed the seal back to the office. However, HEC’s Media Team later extracted the security cameras, cut and posted a video of Secretary Hoan snatching the seal from Ms. Thao's hands. Then, the Media Team took the video down from the social network because of a strong reaction from the public (especially after the full video was released). This is one of many cases where the Media Team uses media tricks to deceive the public.

**Multidenominational pastors expressed their absolute support for ECVN and held a multidenominational prayer meeting**

• On 12 September 2019, pastors from many denominations met to have an opinion on what happened at HEC. In this meeting, 100% of the Pastors from different denominations expressed their disagreement with Bui Quoc Phong's behavior, especially HEC’s dissemination of information on social networks, doing harm to Christianity. At first, the Pastors intended to write a candid letter to Mr. Phong, but then decided to hold a multidenominational prayer meeting.
• On 20 September 2019, the churches from all denominations in the North had a meeting to pray for HEC, and called for their obedience to authority (see attachment ĐK4). Mr. Bui Quoc Phong also came to the meeting and asked to make a speech, but the organizers refused. At the end of the prayer, the organizers invited Pastor Nguyen Huu Mac to speak. Once again, Pastor Nguyen Huu Mac apologized to the denominations for the impact that HEC issue had on the entire Christian community.

**Mr. Phong deliberately rejected the decision that dismissed him and still went to church to preach, being prevented by members of the Adult Ministry**

• On Sunday 29 September 2019:
o During the first service, Mr. Phong went to the pulpit to preach. A large number of adults gathered in front of the pulpit and sang hymns to drown him out. At the same time, they raised banners with the words "HEC members do not accept fraud, division and illegal behavior" to protest against Mr. Phong’s preaching. In the church the struggle between two sides lasted more than 30 minutes. Finally, Mr. Bui Quoc Phong left the church. The Secretary and Head of ECVN Pastor Nguyen Huu Mac had a few words inside the church.

o At the second service, Mr. Bui Quoc Phong and his followers worshiped in the yard outside the church. The church was divided into two groups, one following Mr. Phong in the yard, the other in the church listening to the sermon by Pastor Hoang Van Duong from Thai Binh province. Mr. Bui Quoc Phong still preached in the yard. The sound resounded on both sides of a wall in a tragic atmosphere.

**Mr. Phong and 6 deacons hired security guards to block ECVN pastors and believers who did not support him from the church**

• On Sunday 06 October 2019:
o Six deacons who supported Mr. Phong hired security guards from Bao An Security Company for HEC. The ECVN pastors, Bible students (who were boarding on the HEC campus), believers who did not support Phong or non-members of HEC were blocked outside the chapel. The number of people allowed inside was about 80. When the worship service began, the security guards and receptionists closed the front and back doors of the chapel. Pastor Pham Ba An preached and gave the Lord’s Supper. During the service, Mr. Bui Quoc Phong was still called HEC’s Senior Pastor, and went to the pulpit to give blessings at the end of the service.
o The ECVN pastors and many believers had to stand in front of the chapel from 6:30 am until 11:30 am.

**The Government got involved**

• Up till then the government only advised the both sides to cool down, preserve unity and limit posting information on social networks. However, on 6 October the right to freedom of religion and belief was violated when security guards were hired to block believers from the church. The Committee for Religious Affairs of Hanoi City met 7 ECVN pastors and 10 HEC deacons and warned them on the violations by some deacons, especially the illegal use of HEC seal to sign a contract with the security company.
• And according to the regulations, the Committee for Religious Affairs of Hanoi City decided that they only allowed preachers proposed by the ECVN, and requested the ECVN to prepare the preaching schedule for HEC together with HEC’s Board of Deacons.
• The Sunday services after this day seemed to be “peaceful”.

**The meeting between ECVN and HEC’s Board of Deacons, and “the attack” by believers**

• On 24 October 2019, the ECVN invited HEC’s Board of Deacons to meet and discuss how to stabilize HEC, but only 4 deacons came; the 6 deacons who supported Mr. Phong did not attend the meeting.
• On 31 October 2019, once again ECVN invited HEC’s Board of Deacons to a meeting. This time all the deacons came, but 6 deacons who supported Mr. Phong quietly called about 60 believers to the venue to confront the ECVN’s Executive Committee. The meeting room became a mess. The ECVN’s pastors said that the believers’ presence was not part of the meeting schedule between ECVN and HEC’s Board of Deacons. Therefore, the pastors kept quiet and did not answer the believers’ inquiries.
• The believers occupied the meeting room from 20:00 to nearly mid-night.
• The HEC Media Team filmed the whole incident, and later edited and trimmed away the disrespectful words by those "believers" and posted the video on Facebook in order to push the message that ECVN pastors kept quiet because of their wrongdoings.

**Charges repeated by Mr. Bui Quoc Phong and HEC’s Media Team to mislead the public opinion:**

• **There is no authority between the church and the Lord Jesus, so HEC is not under anyone**

**The truth:**

o Yes, there is no organization or individual or saint standing between the Lord Jesus and His church which He had shed blood to buy. But this is the invisible church including all the chosen ones over the ages. In the invisible church, the Lord Jesus is the head.
o The visible churches could be closed down, persecuted or dispersed (including the early church in Jerusalem), but the invisible church could never be closed down, nor could anyone overcome it.
o HEC is a visible church in which there is a hierarchy with a Senior Pastor and deacons…
o Mr. Bui Quoc Phong was not the pastor of the invisible church; only Jesus is the head of that church.

\*\*\* There are only two cases here: either Mr. Bui Quoc Phong knew this truth but deliberately guided the church in the wrong direction, or he did not understand the Bible well.

• **Out of envy, other pastors in the ECVN tried to refrain HEC from rapid expansion through new branches of the church.**

 **The truth:**

o Mr. Bui Quoc Phong became HEC’s Senior Pastor when the church had all the resources. Recently HEC opened three more branches: My Dinh (by Assistant Pastor Hoang Van Huy), Thanh Xuan, and Long Bien, with 80, 30-40 and about 30 believers respectively.
\*\*\* My Dinh branch, the biggest branch, did not agree with Mr. Phong and requested to be independent from HEC, as voted by 96% of its members.
o Take a look at the Community Church (under ECVN) which started from scratch but now has opened 3 branches, the largest of which has over 100 members, and the second branch has 70-80 members.
o Since 2009, the ECVN has developed from 14 churches/ meeting points of Kinh people to 58 churches/ meeting points. At the same time churches in ethnic minority communities also increased from 700 to over 1,150 meeting points.

• **The hot trend now is the multi-site church model.
The truth:**

o The multi-site church is nothing new. For example Ezekiel Church has nearly 70 sites (including rehabilitation centers). The Source of Blessings Church is similar to Ezekiel Church with about 70 sites and rehabilitation centers.
o Living Word Church also developed from scratch to more than 100 sites.
o Actually the ECVN has about 1,200 churches/ sites. Isn’t it a multi-site church then?
o Three newly-opened sites of HEC do not seem to match its abundant material resources in contrast with the above-mentioned churches.

**• The majority of HEC congregation support Pastor Phong.**

**The truth:**

o Up to now about 150 out of 800 HEC’s regular members support Mr. Phong.

**• ECVN’s warning decision dated 9 July 2019 was issued because Pastor Phong did not sign the decision to hand over the land at 2 Ngo Tram Street to ECVN under ECVN’s name.**

**The truth:**

o The site at 2 Ngo Tram Street is where HEC gathers and the ECVN’s headquarters has been located for a long time. ECVN has never issued any request or lobbied Mr. Phong informally to hand over the land to ECVN. Mr. Phong made up this case to create division between HEC and ECVN.

• **ECVN hired believers at VND 500,000 a person so that they attend the worship service at HEC.**

**The truth:**

o This is a blatant lie. Bible students are staying within the boundaries of HEC, and they go to HEC to worship God every Sunday.

HEC needs intercession by believers all over the world. Please share and call more people to pray for the church.

God is doing great work in the North of Vietnam. Drug rehabilitation is flourishing. Hundreds of thousands of ethnic minorities have converted to the Lord. More and more people who studied abroad put their trust in Jesus, and come back to Vietnam to build the churches. People who worked in other countries in Asia received the Lord Jesus and return home. May God have mercy on HEC so that they will not be left behind in the revival while they are very close to the heart of that revival.

To avoid arguments on social networks that stain the name of the Lord, please do not leave your comments here. For all concerns and inquiries, please contact the editors, and we will answer important and constructive questions as soon as possible.

The Editors

\*\*\* For more information, please read more articles written by believers in HEC:

[Chi tiết vụ việc 1 tỷ 4:](https://hoithanh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Bai-viet-Vu-1-ty-4-VN-1.pdf)

[Quyết định 120](https://hoithanh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Bai-viet-QD120-Ban-full-1.pdf)

[Tài liệu tham khảo quyết định 120](https://hoithanh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Bai-viet-ve-QD120-Tai-lieu-tham-khao-Ban-full-1.pdf)