



**CHRIST EVANGELICAL
REFORMED CHURCH**

CHRIST-CENTERED, GOD GLORIFYING

SUPPORT - US NEWSLETTER

Issue 7, Easter 2020

COVID-19 AND CERC

Despite physical restrictions, CERC continues to do ministry throughout the pandemic.

As of the 18th of March this year, the Malaysian government enforced the Movement Control Order (MCO) as a measure to contain the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic that has been sweeping through many countries including our own. This led to a widespread shutdown of all public spaces which included places of worship, allowing only essential services to continue. It has now been 2 months, and the effects of the MCO are far reaching as lives and economies have been disrupted.

The reality is that many are struggling - with loneliness, financial strains, relationships, and more. In such times, there too are those who struggle with discouragement in their faith and temptation to withdraw themselves from the local church. It is a period like this that the church must remain resilient, caring for one another, spurring one another on and encouraging one another to remain faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ in light of this pandemic. We must learn to trust God, and depend on Him even more so.

Like many other churches together, despite not being able to meet physically, CERC has not stopped meeting online. Our pastors-in-training, elders, and Church Ministers' Apprentices have had the privilege to share the burden and responsibility of the pulpit. Every Sunday, CERC streams pre-recorded sermons

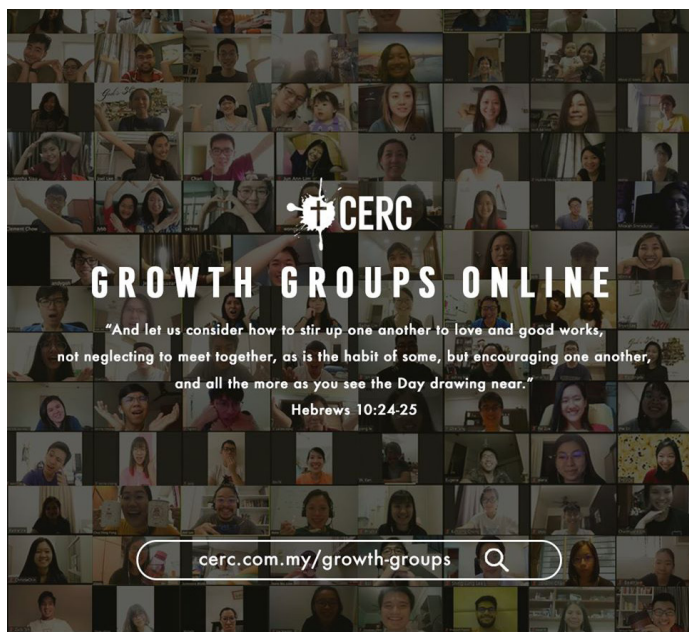
for both morning and evening gatherings [Join us at cerc.com.my/VirtualSundays], and Growth Groups meet up via online platforms for post-sermon discussions.



Pt Robin preaching on the books of Samuel in the midst of COVID restrictions.



Church members continue to serve in unique ways during this new normal.



state supporters and members to join us for these online sessions. We are also thankful to God for bringing more and more newcomers at such a time like this to hear the Gospel being preached faithfully. If you'd like to join any of our Growth Groups, head on over to our website and find the closest one to you!

On top of that, CERC's Sunday School team have been working hard to keep ministering to kids faithfully by producing Sunday School lessons online weekly. Sunday School lessons are uploaded onto YouTube every Sunday morning so that children can continue learning about God even as their parents tune in for Sunday sermons. These lessons are in-line with CERC's current sermon series: God's Story.

Many parents have expressed their gratefulness for our online children's ministry, and we too are thankful for the opportunity to reach out to those who are not Christians through this platform.

On Thursdays and Saturdays, all 27 Growth Groups and Tertiary Growth Groups continue to meet online. We have been blessed to have overseas and out-of-



LITTLE PEOPLE GOES ONLINE

Little People TV is an evangelistic channel for children. We provide content to help parents teach their children about God at home.

These videos allow for brief and meaningful screentime for children, and also for parents to initiate good conversations with them. Check out one of the episodes of Little People TV where kids are taught that following God's Word is not just good, it is also vital for living:



Little People TV Ep.17 | "No Recipe" Baking Disaster | #Godknowsbest #StayHome #WithMe Emma & Joy. [Watch here.](#)



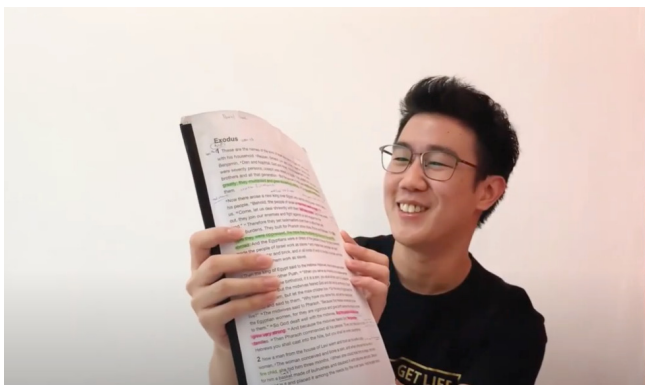
Members of the church have also come together and turned the camera around to give people a sneak peek into their lives. These videos form part of the #CERCStaysAtHome series that aims to encourage fellow Christians to use their time at home wisely. From teaching kids about God, reading good theological books, listening to sermons, to keeping fit and staying healthy for ministry, learning a new hobby, and even learning how to write sermons.



#CERCStaysAtHome - Staying Healthy and Fit for Jesus by Roger



#CERCStaysAtHome - Get Ready with Me Gone Wrong by Anna House Girls



#CERCStaysAtHome - How to write a sermon - by David Kuok



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The MCO gave us more time to spend together as a family and to teach the kids about the Bible. Children need to know the truths in the Bible from a very young age because they can easily absorb everything they hear and learn. We hope that teaching them the New City Catechism will give them a strong foundation that will be useful for them in the future.

Ken and Natalie Ooi
members of CERC,
and parents of 3 children



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This is one of the songs CERC wrote while we were going through the book of Hebrews a couple of years ago. This is about us being steadfast. It's a prayer to God to keep us faithful to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So, in this situation where things are now different and may worsen, where we're unable to meet as a church, let this be our prayer to remain faithful, and to continue trusting in God to help us do so.

Joel Lo
member of CERC
and ministry apprentice



THE GOSPEL & UNITY

CERC attends Fellow Workers' Conference (FWC) by the Gospel Growth Fellowship (GGF)

An important part of CERC's culture is the edification of the church through conferences. We look forward to annual conferences by the Gospel Growth Fellowship that focus on building healthy churches in Malaysia by equipping Christians with the necessary skills to handle God's word faithfully. In line with that vision, many leaders from CERC dedicate time and energy to support GGF ministries by helping in the organisation of these conferences, be it in Word ministry or operations.



Just before the MCO, over 236 people from CERC attended FWC from 27-29 February 2020 in Port Dickson. This year's participants had the privilege of working on the topic of 'The Gospel and Unity' with the main talks by Rev Dr Mark Thompson, who is also the current principal of Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia.

We have no business preaching any other gospel than the one given to us by Christ and his apostles

Having served as Principal of Moore College since 2013, and representing Sydney's Anglican Diocese as the Chair of the Sydney Diocesan Doctrine Commission, Dr Thompson has had to work out what it means to remain united under the truth of scripture. Part of what he teaches includes recognising that there are actually different gospels that are being taught! In his article on 'What is the gospel?', he writes

'In a world confused by a range of different gospels and in the churches where both clarity and boldness are all too often absent, it is good from time to time to ask ourselves this most basic of questions: what is the gospel? We have no business preaching any other gospel than the one given to us by Christ and his apostles. Sadly, the distorted but popular gospels I mentioned at the beginning all in the end underplay the seriousness of sin and how it relates to salvation.'

CERC has truly been blessed by Dr Thompson's ministry and thanks GGF for their many years of faithful service in running conferences like FWC.



L to R: Pr. Robin Gan, Dr Mark Thompson, Dr Elden Pan

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FWC helped me understand that there is no bond of unity greater than that of Gospel unity because it's the blood of Christ that binds us together.

I learnt that unity is first and foremost vertical. If we emphasize the horizontal, that is, unity in human relationships, then we are setting ourselves up to fail because the conflicting schemes of man always do.

Rev. Mark Thompson's talks also opened my eyes to the level of theological precision needed to preach faithfully to a congregation. When we are obscure in our explanations it can easily be misinterpreted by the listener, and received as a gospel other than the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Small group sessions were helpful in that we could reflect and think about applying what we learnt in our own specific contexts. I loved the electives too - there were more than 20 electives to choose from across 4 days! These allowed me to see how the theme of Gospel unity had been applied in the context of history.

This has been my favourite GGF conference so far because the materials led us through thinking theologically from Scripture all the way to thinking ministerially in a Malaysian landscape.



Isabelle Khaw
FWC participant
from CERC

WELCOMING BACK PR. JEROME

After 4 years in seminary, Pr Jerome returns as CERC's newest Pastor-in-Training with his family. He reflects on his time as an apprentice, seminarian and now as CERC's youth pastor amongst other roles.

Pr. Jerome Leng was CERC's first apprentice in Church Ministers' Apprenticeship (CMA) back in 2010. Since then, CERC has had 13 apprentices with 27 more committed to doing the apprenticeship. CMA is a 2-year pastoral apprenticeship at CERC which seeks to train, test, and evaluate one's suitability for full time paid ministry (FTPM). Upon successful completion of his apprenticeship, Jerome went on to pursue theological education with the support of the CERC Theological Education Fund at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS), Louisville, Kentucky and graduated with a Bachelor's in Biblical and Theological Studies, and a Master's in Divinity (M.Div.). In January 2020, he and his family returned home to Malaysia to begin his new role as a Pastor-in-Training at CERC.



Jerome and Robyn Leng with their 2- year old son, Emmett.

An Interview with Pr. Jerome

Interviewer: Congratulations on graduating from SBTS, and on your new role as Pastor-in-Training at CERC! It's been 4.5 years since you and Robyn have left for seminary, and we're delighted and excited to welcome you back to Malaysia as you begin serving the church as a minister of God. This has been an almost 10-year preparation for a lifetime of ministry, so my first question is why did you decide to do FTPM?

Pr. Jerome: Thank you! We are thankful that God has brought us this far. Despite growing up in a Christian environment, I've always had unanswered questions about truth, God, and the Bible. Throughout those years as a teen, I talked to many pastors and ministers who could not help me with my questions, and that was a huge point of frustration for the longest time. When I met Pr. Robin, that was when he made clear to me the Gospel, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and how to read the Bible. Knowing that many Christians would probably be struggling the same way I did, I realized there was a dire need for faithful Word ministers to teach and preach in Malaysia.

What spurred me on even more to pursue FTPM was realising that God had gifted me for Word ministry during the days of serving my university Christian fellowship. From then on, I had a very strong desire to do FTPM more than anything else, and when Pr. Robin asked if I wanted to be an apprentice here at CERC, I just couldn't say no to that opportunity!

Interviewer: Well, we certainly are grateful that the Lord has called you to serve Him in this manner as Word ministry is most essential for the church's health and growth. Let's talk about the 4.5 years when you and your wife were in America. How was your time in Louisville, Kentucky, and in SBTS as a seminary student?

Pr. Jerome: It was a most eye-opening experience because we saw how God works among our fellow Christian brothers and sisters in America. We formed close relationships with many mature godly people in the Christian community there and we have been greatly encouraged to see their lives committed to

godliness and truth. We have also seen how different ministry contexts can be in different countries. With seminary, I had the opportunity to be exposed to the academic Christian world which pushed me on multiple levels, showing me how much I had to learn, to pick up tools that would help me in ministry e.g. the original languages (Hebrew and Greek), and to interact with professors and fellow students who have studied the Bible deeply. At the same time, we can't just fly American preachers and professors here to teach us more. You see, we aren't just asking for content as there exists an epistemological (how we arrive at knowledge or truth) and preaching gap between the preacher and the congregation - the context matters. That's why it is more beneficial for Malaysians to learn from the Westerners in their context, and translate that to the Malaysian church. Part of the value of going overseas to study seminary is to learn from other Christians who are in a better position than us (eg. better resourced, longer history of biblical rootedness and faithful professors) and have gone way ahead of us. It is also learning to be contextual in all that we do when we've gone overseas, and not to become parochial in ministry.

Interviewer: So, I heard that a lot happened during your time in SBTS. You worked on campus, interned, and served at Clifton Baptist Church. On top of that, you were named recipient of the 2018 Clyde T. Francisco Preaching Award (which received a special mention by Albert Mohler on Instagram)! You and Robyn both had your firstborn son, Emmett, so you were both raising a child while Robyn also pursued her MA in Biblical Counselling (on top of her medical degree). And as if that wasn't enough, you graduated with a 3.97 CGPA. My only question is, how?!

Pr. Jerome: It certainly wasn't easy. Just to put it into perspective, each week I was doing 20 hours of work, 12 hours of classes, 25-35 hours of studying and doing homework, serving in church in different departments (usher, nursery care, pianist, ran ministry training classes for adults). I tried to give my family time on a daily basis, even if it's just an hour or so. Night times were for family and studying. We tried to go out during the weekends, but mostly just for grocery shopping which was better than nothing!. At the end of the day, it's really being intentional and making the best use of your time, which is my philosophy of time. People talk about having

"balance" in our schedules, but to be honest, I don't think balancing our time works. Rather, we should be centred on who we are, on what roles God has called us to, and focus on what we need to be doing in specific seasons of our lives. The preaching award was to remind seminary students of the value of preaching faithfully. It was a competition of sorts, where typically the final year students apply for it. My brothers at Clifton Baptist Church encouraged me to submit one of my sermons they heard me preach at a prayer service because they were greatly edified by it, so I didn't really have to do something beyond my schedule to prepare it.

(You can watch Jerome's sermon on 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16 which won the 2018 Clyde T. Francisco Preaching Award [here](#))

Seminary not only expands your knowledge, it teaches you to speak and preach better, think more critically, and form relationships with people.

Interviewer: How has all that helped to prepare for ministry here in CERC?

Pr. Jerome: My time in America helped prepare me for ministry in CERC by broadening my thinking, learning new skills (e.g. reading the bible in Hebrew and Greek), forming relationships with people, understanding Christianity as a culture there, and building bridges so our Malaysian churches can partner with American churches in the Gospel. It was also an introduction to good Christian resources which are so much more accessible in America. Connections to seminary professors are also something I value and see as a privilege. In fact I just emailed Tom Schreiner to ask him a question! So, in a nutshell, seminary not only expands your knowledge, it teaches you to speak and preach better, think more critically, and form relationships with people.



Behind-the-scenes of a sermon recording: top left picture shows Jerome using an iPhone 7, a clip-on mic, and a monitor for notes. Top right picture shows Robyn, Jerome's wife, as his entire recording team. Bottom photo is the final product before they sent off the recording for video editing.

Interviewer: What are some roles or ministries you are involved in here in CERC?

Pr. Jerome: As a Pastor-in-Training, I'm largely involved in the word ministry of the church as a preacher and youth pastor, ensuring the quality of our small groups (Growth Groups), training and encouraging the Growth Group leaders, writing Growth Group studies, and training and preparing current apprentices for seminary. Church planting is also in the picture at some point. For the areas of work ministry, I'm involved in the MC and music team for Sunday gatherings, and I'm in an advisory role for our church's fundraising team. Aside from all that, I'm also very much involved in the parachurch ministries that our church is active in.

Interviewer: You've been in this role for about 3 months now. What are some of the encouragements and challenges so far?

Pr. Jerome: It kinda feels like way more than 3 months! But I've definitely been greatly encouraged by the maturity shown by the congregation here in CERC. The people show that they are not just knowledgeable in the Word, they are also servant-hearted and wholly dedicated to God's ministry. Working in a community of Christians like this makes me deeply grateful for my fellow brothers who are in this with me. As for challenges, to be honest, my family and I are still trying to settle down here. It hasn't been easy, and my schedule has been intense. Preaching has been particularly challenging

for me, as it is a huge task to deliver God's Word to His people. Knowing that the Bible is God's truth means that preachers such as myself have to speak it in a way that resonates deeply with the truth itself, and that takes a lot of effort. It definitely isn't easy to be a minister of God and there have been some disheartening times, but that's why I'm grateful for my fellow brothers who can help spur me on.

Interviewer: With the COVID-19 pandemic and Movement Control Order (MCO) in place by the Malaysian government here for 2 weeks now (and possibly longer), what has it been like preaching and doing ministry during this time?

Pr. Jerome: My schedule hasn't changed that much, actually. We have just been forced to use technology to continue ministry. Of course, that does mean that we're limited in our meetings and what we're able to do, but I've still been able to meet students online and do Bible studies with them. The frustrating thing is that we don't see each other in person, and it can get tiring staring at screens all day. We're still constantly trying our best to figure out how to care for the people on the ground. For example, in youth ministry, instead of just producing entertainment, we want to produce good content with our online resources and also still be able to evangelise the youth. With the university students, we're figuring out how best to do Bible studies online because the medium does affect what you teach in a way. So, we're pretty much figuring things out on a daily basis. My wife, Robyn has had to learn to be a tech person and she was the one who recorded my Sunday sermon last week. I'm just grateful for her, and of course for technology in this trying time so that God's ministry can carry on because it must.

Interviewer: In the face of COVID-19 and also in the long run, what is your hope for CERC and the churches in Malaysia

Pr. Jerome: I hope that the church will not lose sight of the matters of importance, to continue to contend for the gospel, to fulfill the mission, and make disciples. COVID-19 isn't a time when we can take a break from ministry! We must continue to get the gospel out in creative ways. I hope that the church will respond in love instead of fear because isolating ourselves from people can make us forget that Jesus has called us to love people, so we should be mindful of how we can love the body of Christ, and figure out ways to be merciful in caring for those who are suffering (both physically and economically). In the long run, I hope that churches in Malaysia will take the Word and truth of God seriously. There is a tendency for us to be distracted and tempted by "success" (e.g. producing bigger churches, appealing to society, etc.), but those aren't the measures of success according to Scripture. The church must understand ecclesiology or what it means to be a people of God based on Scripture because the threat of individualism is looming over us. Today, there is an unhealthy lack of rootedness as we decide that we are free to travel whenever and wherever we like, with no commitment to our local church communities. That kind of lack of commitment is unhealthy because, at the end of the day, we must take truth seriously, and see that Jesus is worthy of our obedience.

Interviewer: As you undertake this role of Pastor-in-Training, how can we pray for you and your family?

Pr. Jerome: Please pray for me to become a man of God whose entire devotion is to Him, who won't compromise the truth, and who will be dedicated to God in the ministry He has given me. Pray that I will work diligently and sacrificially, and to be wise about it as well. For my family, please pray that the Lord would strengthen their faith as they serve with me in ministry. Pray also for my son to be a Christian, and that my family will be outward in mindset, not insular, and that they will form strong relationships in church. People don't know that being a ministry family is a lifestyle, a whole way of life, and it can put a lot of pressure on them when I'm busy with ministry. So, please do keep us in your prayers. Thanks!



Bible study meeting online with university Christian Fellowship students.

You can also follow Pr. Jerome's blog [here](#) for regular ministry updates.

SUPPORTING ANOTHER APPRENTICE FOR SEMINARY

Dr. Elden Pan, our latest CMA graduate looks to begin seminary in January 2021 - here's an update on the support needed.

As of the end of 2019, Dr. Elden Pan, our 9th Church Ministry Apprentice (CMA), completed his 2.5-year program. Together with his wife Jou Ee, his son Ethan, and number 2 currently on the way, the Pans will be heading off to Sydney, Australia to begin seminary life at Moore College by next year.

Here is what Elden has to say about his time in CMA and his expectations of seminary:

“To be a church minister is to sit at the feet of the Master shepherd, Jesus.”

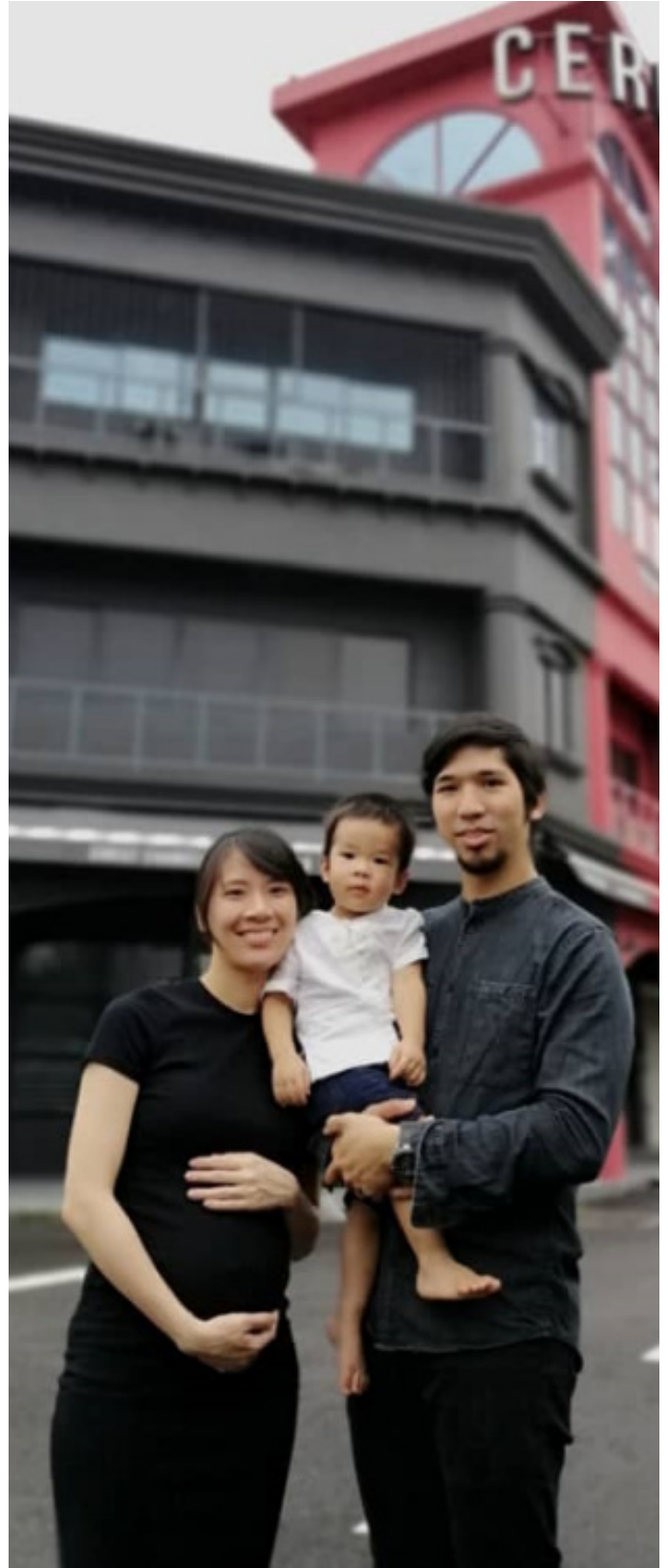
The past 2 years of apprenticeship has really taught me so much, in that it has

(1) shed light into how much effort and expertise is needed to shepherd God's church faithfully;

(2) it has exposed me of my inadequacies and shortcomings in carrying out this task; and

(3) whilst working (constantly) on these weaknesses and incompetencies, it has built deep godly convictions, character and commitment to the work of the Gospel here in Malaysia.

My expectations for seminary are that it will be a similarly intense 4 years dedicated to further equipping myself so that I can be used more effectively (by God) for the work here in the long-term. I also hope to learn as much as possible from the work there in Sydney and beyond as I interact with lecturers, seminarians and Christians from different parts of the world.





They are currently still raising funds for seminary studies as there is much to plan for in moving their little family overseas for the next few years. With a total of RM231,650 to raise by the end of this year and subsequent years, the Pans are still needing to raise RM89,000 more as they prepare for their first year of seminary in Australia. CERC is grateful and excited to be commissioning Dr. Elden as he leaves for seminary, as we are looking forward to him equipping himself better for God's ministry in Malaysia.

If you would like to support CERC's ministry in sending more apprentices like Dr. Elden Pan and Pr. Jerome Leng for seminary studies, please consider

contributing to our Theological Education Fund. If you would like to support Dr. Elden and his family directly, please indicate so in your bank transfer. This is a fund set aside for seminarians, with the goal and purpose to provide them with the opportunity to study, learn, and grow in some of the best theological seminaries around the world, in order to raise more faithful pastor-teachers for churches all across Malaysia.

Thank you for your support in ministry to our Lord and His church in Malaysia. We are grateful and privileged to have ministry supporters who are concerned for His kingdom purposes.





CERC THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FUND

Funds to support Elden & his family in seminary:

RM231,650 Total Per Year


RM89,000

FOR ELDEN'S FIRST YEAR

39%

OUTSTANDING FOR FIRST YEAR

8 MONTHS TO GO




| Year | Amount |
|--------|-----------|
| Year 0 | |
| Year 1 | RM231,650 |
| Year 2 | RM463,300 |
| Year 3 | RM694,950 |
| Year 4 | RM926,600 |

Bank: RHB Bank

A/c name: CERC Theological Training Trust

A/c no.: 2-14062-0010147-0



For more info, visit:

www.cerc.com.my/support-us/

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| Fund | Account Name | Account No. | Bank |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| General Fund | CERC Trust | 2-14062-0010148-8 | RHB Bank Berhad (Malaysia) |
| Theological Education Fund | CERC Theological Training Trust | 2-14062-0010147-0 | |
| Building Fund | CERC Properties Trust | 2-14062-0010145-3 | |
| Overseas Contribution | c/o: Vivian Ming Wing Yang & Anna Hu | 473245403 | St George Bank (Australia) |
| | c/o: Foo Yuk Yee & Calvin Ow Yong | 401-58913-9 | POSB Savings (Singapore) |

PRAYER POINTS

1. The churches in Malaysia and all around the globe as we stand in the face of COVID-19. Pray for faithfulness and perseverance for all Christians that they will not stop doing God's work.

2. Those who are struggling with being in lockdown and those who are directly affected by COVID-19. Pray that they will be comforted by the knowledge that God is sovereign and that their only hope in life and death is in Jesus. Pray for God to continue working in the hearts of many, drawing more to Himself in this time.

3. Governments in countries affected by COVID-19, that they will implement measures with wisdom and clarity. Pray that they will also have foresight in leading their countries wisely in the months of recovery post-pandemic.

4. CERC, that we will continue producing online content that is faithful and edifying. Pray that our love for God and His church will be preserved. Pray for God's providence financially amidst economic uncertainties so CERC can continue our ministries in the Klang Valley.

5. All FWC participants, that they will apply what they have learnt from the conference back in their own churches. Pray that they will strive to preserve true Gospel unity and stand firm against false unity that is man-centred.

