**Research Article**

# A NOVEL EVANGELISM MODEL FOR OUR LOCAL CHURCH'S NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP

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**Abstract**

It is no doubt that the spread of good news about human's saviour Lord Jesus Christ is the most important mission for all of the Christians in the World. However, the old model of planting another church from the mother one tend to be phased out. There is a need to set up a novel evangelism model for our Hong Kong local churches in the 21st century. At the same time, as the old pastors of local churches gradually retired, there is also a need to cultivate our next young and energetic church leadership. This author proposes that through the research of the model for Christian/non-Christian Israel visiting and the associated spiritual revival courses, new church leadership can be found and established. Indeed, the aim of these spiritual revival courses may lead some of the Christian Israel visitors willing to apply for the theological seminary and hence become a future church leader. Actually, this author also discovers that the novel evangelism model should programme for the minority population groups in Hong Kong. Thus, there will be a request to extend the cultural and literature course (both in Taiwan Chinese and English) for our seminary colleges. Then these theological courses will become even complete for the preparation of the Hong Kong local churches' role in the evangelism of after the pasted 20th century.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Mathematics, Sociology, Science, and Religion.

## INTRODUCTION

The spread of the good news is one of the most important and serious missions of Christian believers in Hong Kong. This paper discusses how the present research covering Christians visiting Israel – with regards to differential item response – may affect the change in the model of evangelism and church leadership. Moreover, there are also in-depth implications of such Differential Item Functioning (DIF) findings which imply the differences (or shift) in the thinking and actions of Hong Kong's local Christian population. Indeed, the decline of the 1980's model of evangelism and church leadership has also accelerated the need to change or reform local Christianity.[1] Such an event may sometimes lead to alternative action – group leadership or such thinking – where all believers can be turned into pastors, who may finally affect the DIF discovered in the present study. In reality, when politics crosses paths with Christianity (e.g., Daniel in the Old Testament), Christians should keep their religious baseline in trusting Jesus Christ instead of worshiping a man-made idol from a governing authority.

When Jesus died on the cross, he left us with a mission, which is clearly mentioned in the Bible:

"16 The eleven disciples went to Galilee and reached the mountain Jesus had appointed them. 17 When they saw Jesus, they worshipped him, but there were still doubts. 18 Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on Earth has been given to me. 19 So you must go and make all nations my disciples; baptise them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. [a] [b]; 20 Teach them to obey everything I command you. Behold, I will be with you every day until the end of this generation." (ESV, Matt 28: 16-20)

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## Literature Review

### Development model of evangelism and church planting needs to be transformed

With rapid changes in society and churches, the growth pattern of churches in Hong Kong from the 1970s and 1980s would be unsustainable today. For example, high property prices, high rents, as well as changes in the government and societal needs for welfare services has made it increasingly difficult for churches to find places for branch churches. The believers' requirements for diversification and high-quality services have also narrowed the living space of small churches. Churches tend to grow bigger and stronger, and they hesitate to split up and dilute resources. In the past 1980s and 1990s, a 200-member church for example could be split into two 100-member churches under the call of the elders of pastors, and quickly self-sustained. However, this planting church model [2] through letting alone a young pastor who led more than 10 brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ to an unfamiliar area to cultivate a new church. The model is now unsustainable today in 2021. As a matter of fact, church planting is difficult, and evangelism is not easy. The organisation of evangelism continues to hold large-scale meetings. It is also said that there are still thousands of people who have decided to believe in evangelism branch of Christianity. However, the number of church members in Hong Kong has not increased significantly over the years, making large-scale evangelism campaigns difficult to escape from the non-believers (or public) criticism [3]. In terms of church meetings, most pastors and believers no longer make evangelism the main theme of their ministry. Evangelistic meetings (or gospel Sundays) are still held two or three times per year, but most are filled with schedules and stories. As such, many congregations do not have high hopes for the outcomes of sermons. Friendship evangelism has often become an easy way of concealing the decline of enthusiasm for church evangelism. Those who like to criticise the church in Hong Kong for paying too much attention in evangelism,

are indeed mostly those who ignore the reality and try to attack the straw man [3]. The stagnating development of churches in Hong Kong in recent years negates a fallacy of some "prophets" who tend to be arrogant [4]. The non-believers have always criticised the church for pursuing numbers too much and not focusing on quality. However, the truth is that there is no such thing as focusing on quality or weight at all. If the church does not focus on seeking growth, and instead only works towards so-called deep pastoral care, whether it is more meticulous counselling or tedious spiritual exercises, the result will be a loss of quality [5]. The worst situation is to introvert the church and create space for believers to create more complicated personnel and administrative disputes. Churches that do not actively preach the gospel and do not take the recruitment of new people as their primary goal are considered hotbeds for breeding problems within the church community, and there are almost no exceptions for this situation. If there is no vision, the people will be presumptuous. The church continues to hold a large number of activities and ministries, but it rarely produces a sense of success and positive energy for pastors and believers, which gives people a sense of disorientation.

**Loss of focus due to leadership transition**

Also worthy of attention is the departure and succession of senior pastors in churches. In fact, there have been countless discussions in the past regarding the crisis of leadership succession. It is not intended to be repeated here. This author just want to point out that in the past, when the relationship between the pastor and the believer was more harmonious, the vision and direction of churches was often personalised on the leading pastor [6]. They became the embodiment of the vision, of which was revealed by the church. When evangelism co-workers and believers saw them leading, they felt that the church had a specific vision and direction. Yet, with the exit of these senior pastors – who have been leading for a long time – the successor pastors have failed to establish such a sense of trust with their followers, and within this context, there are divergent opinions and inconsistencies. Everyone acts under their own authority, making it difficult for churches to gather common development goals. As with parenthood, there is always an important connection for adult children [7]. For example, when parents pass away, the connection of the original family is more difficult, and it is not easy to find a new "backbone" within the family. In recent years, many people have urged that "believers are all priests": believers must get rid of certain priests and become equal priests and even vigorously advocate the decongregation of the church. No serious discussion on this topic can be set off here. However, if a church mainly relies on believers' leaders as administrative leadership and relies on "consensus" to maintain it, it can almost always result in maintaining the status quo – being conservative rather than aggressive – and it is difficult to make a leap of faith. This author believes in teamwork and division of labour, but I do not support the idea of collective leadership in the strict sense. Unless a church or organisation has been established for a long time, has established a solid spiritual tradition, and has become the culture or unspoken rule of the church or organisation, it does not need to be shaped by a leader. Otherwise, the shake (or the transition) of the leadership authority will inevitably bring about the direction of the group out of focus [8]. It is hoped that from the different types of church activities such as Israel Holy Land visiting, Hong Kong churches' followers can get revival together with

the cultivation of the future young and energetic local Christian group leaders for evangelism. Hence, it is worth for us to have a study in the affairs of Christian/non-Christian Israel visiting and the consequence implications in church evangelism in different population groups of people in Hong Kong.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This current research will first create a web survey from Google Cloud Platform. Then the principal investigator (PI) will mail an invitation letter to various local churches together with those located in countries such as Macau, Canada, and Australia, as well as Taiwan Chinese churches etc. to be the interviewees. Moreover, the author will recruit the interviewees from personal Christian networks, which will include pastors and university classmates. In the present research, the total interviewees' population is 102. The next step is to establish a hypothesised structural equation model for Christians/non-Christian travelling to Israel (see Figure 1) [9].
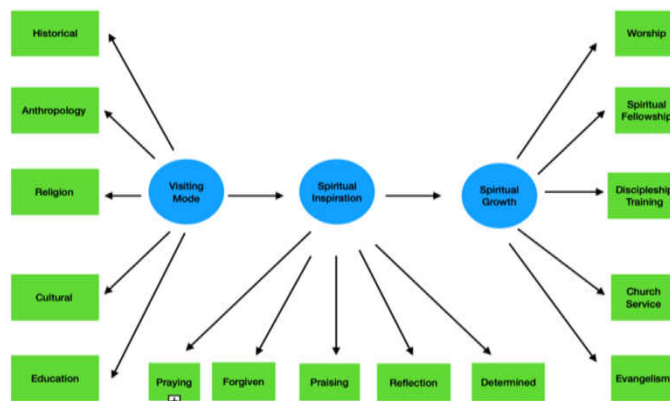


**Figure 1. Hypothesised SEM of Christian/non-Christian Israel Visiting**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data from the web survey was collated in a spreadsheet and then a number was assigned on a scale of 1–5, which is based on the expectations and likelihood of the event (according to interviewees' answer in the web questionnaire) to occur. The numbers were then input (using the variable mean for the null/zero entry) into JASP, R, and SpiceLogic for detailed data analysis. The steps for this are as follows:

1. Establish a corresponding Bayesian confirmatory factor analysis (BCFA) model using R programming to determine the relationships between the latent variables (constructs) and interviewed questions (items);
2. Use the JASP reliability test to examine the convergence. The number of Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) iterations can then be scrutinised for different question items;
3. Employ a multiple group confirmatory factor analysis to test for measurement invariance so that the significance of the survey questions can be individually compared;
4. Apply objective rules in SpiceLogic to determine the new typology in the survey group and to evaluate Cohen's theory, as mentioned in the literature review;
5. Perform logistics regression and k-nearest neighbours classification using a confusion matrix in JASP together with K-means clustering to identify any discrepancies in Christian holy land tourism.

**Bayesian confirmatory factor analysis model**

Before implementing BCFA, principal component analysis (PCA) must first be performed. This act is used for dimensionality reduction to eliminate the existence of any extra input variables. Hence, it becomes possible to project high dimensional data into the lower one. Furthermore, a Bayesian factor analysis (BFA) must be performed before BCFA in order to determine the number of hidden latent variables that may exist in the data. This event is used to aggregate those observable variables in a model to represent an underlying concept that makes it easier to understand the data. The outcome of the BCFA model running in R is shown below (Figure 2).

– the author has found a new mixed typology that comprises depression and curiosity. It is therefore necessary to test the number of iterations (for the convergence of individual breakdown sub-models since the full BCFA model in this research is a Markovian one). For the JASP software, the author has employed both of the Bayesian Scale Reliability Statistics for the three sub-models X1–X10, S1–S10, and Z1–Z10 of the full BCFA model. The results are shown in Figures 8–10 at the end of this section. The results tables show that all of the r-hat values (or statistics) for testing statistical parameters such as McDonald's ω, Cronbach'sα, Guttman's λ2,Guttman's λ6, etc. are all equal to one [15]. It should also be noted that these coefficients are with posterior means equal to 0.699, 0.698, 0.735, and 0.774 for X's sub-model, 0.855,
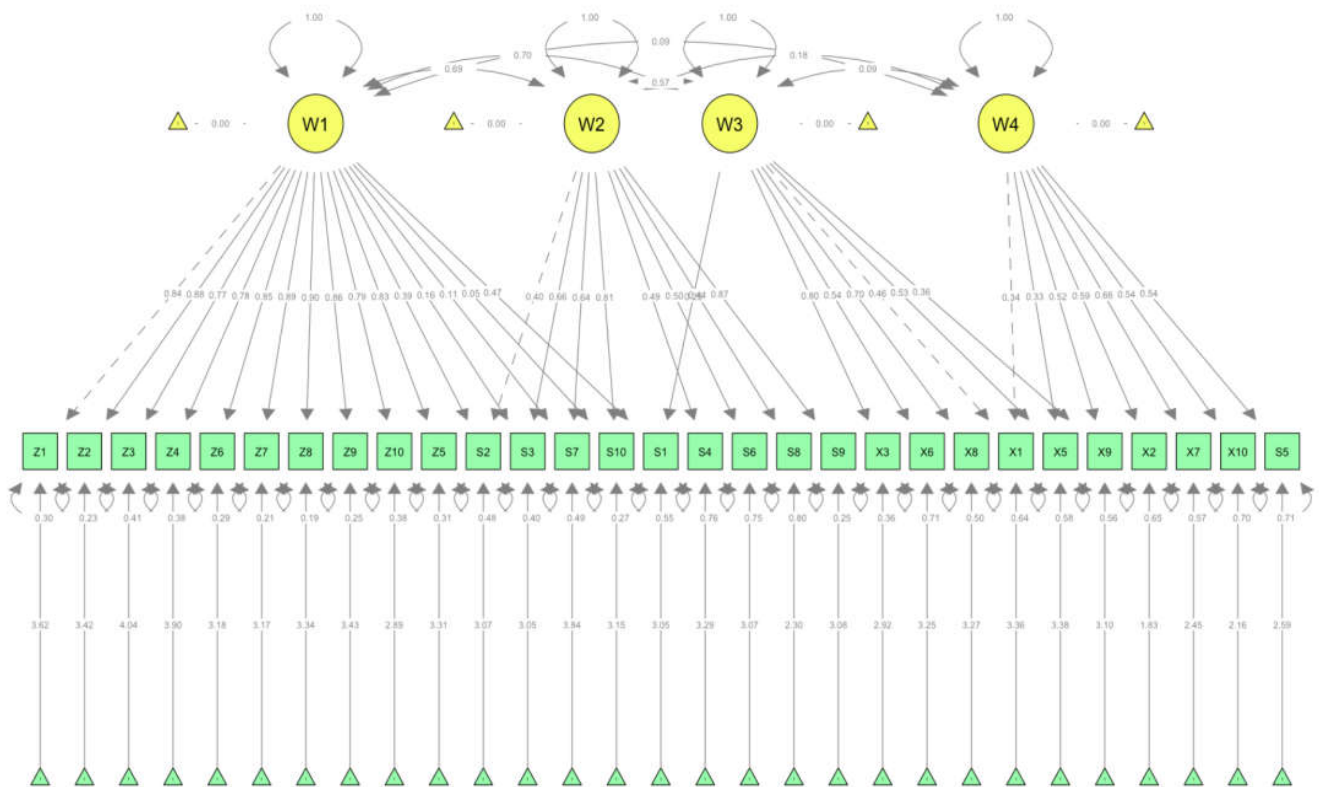


**Fig. 2. BCFA model showing the survey data of local Hong Kong Christian/non-Christian tourism to the Holy Land**

From the BCFA model, we can see that most fitted path parameters are less than one; especially for the latent variables that are interconnected with path parameters. Therefore, the resulting model seems to be a hidden Markov model, implying that human intuition exists in the decision-making behaviour of Christian holy land tourism in the present study. Moreover, there are a total of four hidden latent variables (i.e., W1, W2, W3, and W4), which override the 30 question items. It is important to note that these items were equally divided (ten for each) among the groups. Although the Markov chain shows that travelling behaviour can be infinitely chained, the decision-making problem can still be solved using reinforcement learning and dynamic programming [10] in the current study to obtain the optimal expected policy (action) proposed for Christian holy land tourism.

**Reliability test (convergence) of the individual BCFA sub-models**

As mentioned in one of my previous papers, Lam [11] in the Decision Discovered and Policy (Action) section as suggested

0.849, 0.862, and 0.878 for Y's sub-model; 0.958, 0.960, 0.961, and 0.971 for Z's sub-model; the X values indicate they lay in the boundary to moderate level of the acceptable range; the Y values indicate that they lay in the good range; the Z values are in the excellent range, respectively. This implies all of the three sub-models are convergent through using the Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) method. In practical terms, the experiment is tested under the parameters of three chains with 1,000 samples and 10,000 iterations for the independent MCMC simulation. It is worth noting that MCMC diagnostics here can check whether the sampler is working or if the individual three BCFA sub-models adequately approximate the specified posterior distribution [16].

**Reliability test (internal consistency) for individual items (questions) investigated**

We must employ the Bayesian Single Reliability Test to determine the internal consistency measure of reliability (or the survey questions) that are being studied [17].

**Bayesian Scale Reliability Statistics**

| Estimate | | McDonald's ω | Cronbach's α | Guttman's λ2 | Guttman's λ6 | Greatest Lower Bound | Average interitem correlation | mean | sd |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Posterior mean | | 0.699 | 0.698 | 0.735 | 0.774 | 0.872 | 0.190 | 2.967 | 0.642 |
| 95% CI lower bound | | 0.612 | 0.611 | 0.666 | 0.715 | 0.832 | 0.132 | | |
| 95% CI upper bound | | 0.781 | 0.781 | 0.807 | 0.833 | 0.912 | 0.249 | | |
| R-hat | | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | | |

**Figure 3. Bayesian Scale Reliability Statistics for the X variables**

**Bayesian Scale Reliability Statistics**

| Estimate | | McDonald's ω | Cronbach's α | Guttman's λ2 | Guttman's λ6 | Greatest Lower Bound | Average interitem correlation | mean | sd |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Posterior mean | | 0.958 | 0.960 | 0.961 | 0.971 | 0.985 | 0.709 | 3.702 | 0.172 |
| 95% CI lower bound | | 0.945 | 0.948 | 0.950 | 0.962 | 0.980 | 0.647 | | |
| 95% CI upper bound | | 0.969 | 0.971 | 0.972 | 0.979 | 0.989 | 0.770 | | |
| R-hat | | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | | |

**Figure 4. Bayesian Scale Reliability Statistics for the S variables**

**Bayesian Scale Reliability Statistics**

| Estimate | | McDonald's ω | Cronbach's α | Guttman's λ2 | Guttman's λ6 | Greatest Lower Bound | Average interitem correlation | mean | sd |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Posterior mean | | 0.855 | 0.849 | 0.862 | 0.878 | 0.923 | 0.368 | 3.309 | 0.387 |
| 95% CI lower bound | | 0.813 | 0.807 | 0.824 | 0.848 | 0.897 | 0.298 | | |
| 95% CI upper bound | | 0.894 | 0.890 | 0.901 | 0.909 | 0.946 | 0.440 | | |
| R-hat | | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | | |

**Figure 5. Bayesian Scale Reliability Statistics for the Z variables**

Practically, for the JASP software, the author has used the aforementioned test for the individual research items, say X1 (McDonald's ω: 0.641, Cronbach's α: 0.643, Greatest Lower Bound: 0.845, Item-rest correlation: 0.545); X2 (0.703, 0.688, 0.851, 0.300), X3, X4, X5, X6, X7, X8, X9, X10, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, Z1, Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5, Z6, Z7, Z8, Z9, Z10. The outcomes are demonstrated in Figure 13A, B, and C at the end of this section. Based on the Bayesian Individual Item Reliability Statistics of the present research, items X4, X6, X2, X8, and X10 contain low item-rest correlation values that are smaller than 0.3. Additionally, they show a good sign of sub-scaling. Similar cases occur for items S4, S5, and S8 (< 0.3), while the minimum value for the Z items are Z3 and Z10 (< 0.76) when these items are dropped individually. They all show good signs of sub-scaling. Thus, the above evidences generate multiple dimensions, and hence a multidimensional measure. As such, one may apply Multiple Item Response Theory to explain the item response according to an individual standing across multiple latent dimensions, and finally assess the wanted Latent Factor Structures [18]. When considering Cronbach's alpha, only items X5, X1, X7, and X9 are slightly below the acceptable threshold value of 0.7. This shows that the scale has satisfactory internal consistency.

In practice, the item-rest correlation explains how individual items on average correlate with each other. We can also observe how the reliability changes when individual items are dropped from the scale. Furthermore, this helps to determine whether some items have a large influence on the overall consistency, as with those previously mentioned in the present section. Furthermore, it might be worth investigating whether the internal consistency measures of these several items will produce a similar score under the measurement of the same general construct.

For the case of the survey answer:

"I like to ride bicycles" and "I've enjoyed riding bicycles in the past"– Agreement
"I hate bicycles"– Disagreement
Then, this is a good indication of internal consistency.

Lastly, with reference to the Chi-squared Test (see Figure 11 and Figure 12) and as previously mentioned by Osteen in 2010 [18], the author concludes that the latent constructs for the present model should be four. Based on the JASP Exploratory Factor Analysis, this current study found that the Chi-squared Test for the goodness of fit values to three-factor and four-

factor models are: 677.314 and 567.050, respectively. In other words, there is a decrease in $X^2$ values ($\Delta X^2$) with difference (the change) equals to 110.264. Moreover, the degree of freedoms are: 348 and 321, respectively with difference – the change ($\Delta$ df) equals to 27. The models fit error RMSEA are: 0.110 and 0.101, respectively with ($\Delta$ RMSEA) difference in the change equals to 0.090. Hence, the hidden latent variables should be four factors, which is consistent to the proposed BCFA model, as suggested to be the result in the former section.

**Figure 6A. Chi-square for four-factor model**

| Chi-squared Test | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Value | df | p |
| Model | 567.050 | 321 | 6.897e -16 |

**Figure 6B. Additional fit for the four-factor model**

| Additional Fit Indices | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| RMSEA | RMSEA 90% confidence | TLI | BIC |
| 0.101 | 0.075 - NA | 0.812 | -917.566 |

**Figure 7A. Chi-Square for three-factor model**

| Chi-squared Test | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Value | df | p |
| **Model** | 677.314 | 348 | 2.052e -23 |

**Figure 7B. Additional fit for the four-factor model**

| Additional Fit Indices | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RMSEA** | RMSEA 90% confidence | TLI | BIC |
| **0.110** | 0.086 - NA | 0.761 | -932.176 |

## Measurement invariances and latent means

The measurement invariance and latent means are now studied among the collected data sets. For the JASP software, this study will perform a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis to determine the fittest of the four-measurement invariance (MI) models (i.e., con-figural, metric, scalar, and strict). Additionally, the collected data of this study are multi-dimensional, and therefore the investigated case should be multidimensional, together with the multi-group confirmatory factor analysis. According to Dubravka and Rutkowski in 2017 [12], in some cases, typical or newly proposed recommendations were not suitable in a large-group, varied sample size, or multidimensional context. Hence, there is a need to call for a new invariance. More specifically, this author will study the data's MI with respect to the X variables (with sub-variables $x_i$ where i = 1 to 10), S (with sub-variables $s_j$ where j = 1 to 10), and Z (with sub-variables $z_k$ where k = 1 to 10) separately instead of a unified BCFA model, as found previously. It is also important to mention that the grouping variable is "year_test", which only consists of Christian believers (over a belief period of 0–16 years) and non-believers. Furthermore, before the presentation of JASP computed data and their analysis, one should first check carefully and select suitable model fitting criteria such as estimator etc., together within different MIs. Moreover, the models that were found are only the best approximated models, but not the exact ones. For Jackson in 2009 [13], all models were indeed wrong, with only some of them being useful. Thus, it is necessary to employ statistics that recognise the closest fit instead of exact fit. This study intends to test this practically, such as the case in the root mean square error (RMSE) indices. The following are the MI model fitting results that were retrieved from the collected data:

| Bayesian Individual Item Reliability Statistics | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | McDonald's ω (if item dropped) | | | Cronbach's α (if item dropped) | | | Greatest Lower Bound (if item dropped) | | | Item-rest correlation | | | | |
| Item | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | mean | sd |
| X4 | 0.716 | 0.633 | 0.796 | 0.721 | 0.637 | 0.798 | 0.874 | 0.834 | 0.914 | 0.029 | -0.164 | 0.218 | 1.666 | 0.829 |
| X5 | 0.628 | 0.509 | 0.734 | 0.644 | 0.538 | 0.740 | 0.834 | 0.782 | 0.883 | 0.548 | 0.411 | 0.680 | 3.403 | 0.974 |
| X6 | 0.702 | 0.616 | 0.788 | 0.692 | 0.601 | 0.776 | 0.867 | 0.824 | 0.909 | 0.264 | 0.084 | 0.441 | 3.451 | 1.037 |
| X1 | 0.641 | 0.539 | 0.740 | 0.643 | 0.539 | 0.740 | 0.845 | 0.795 | 0.894 | 0.545 | 0.407 | 0.677 | 3.382 | 0.992 |
| X2 | 0.703 | 0.618 | 0.785 | 0.688 | 0.596 | 0.772 | 0.851 | 0.805 | 0.897 | 0.300 | 0.125 | 0.472 | 2.180 | 1.146 |
| X3 | 0.655 | 0.557 | 0.751 | 0.640 | 0.537 | 0.741 | 0.834 | 0.780 | 0.884 | 0.551 | 0.413 | 0.678 | 3.240 | 1.063 |
| X7 | 0.661 | 0.560 | 0.752 | 0.656 | 0.551 | 0.748 | 0.842 | 0.791 | 0.890 | 0.463 | 0.313 | 0.616 | 2.813 | 1.100 |
| X8 | 0.692 | 0.598 | 0.776 | 0.689 | 0.599 | 0.775 | 0.861 | 0.816 | 0.905 | 0.285 | 0.110 | 0.462 | 3.610 | 1.067 |
| X9 | 0.642 | 0.537 | 0.742 | 0.645 | 0.542 | 0.744 | 0.841 | 0.789 | 0.887 | 0.530 | 0.393 | 0.667 | 3.343 | 1.035 |
| X10 | 0.723 | 0.640 | 0.797 | 0.717 | 0.634 | 0.794 | 0.872 | 0.832 | 0.912 | 0.139 | -0.054 | 0.320 | 2.577 | 1.157 |

**Figure 8A. Bayesian Individual Item Reliability Statistics for X variables**

**Bayesian Individual Item Reliability Statistics**

| Item | McDonald's ω (if item dropped) | | | Cronbach's α (if item dropped) | | | Greatest Lower Bound (if item dropped) | | | Item-rest correlation | | | mean | sd |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | | |
| S1 | 0.836 | 0.788 | 0.881 | 0.830 | 0.782 | 0.876 | 0.907 | 0.876 | 0.935 | 0.604 | 0.477 | 0.719 | 3.469 | 1.121 |
| S2 | 0.831 | 0.783 | 0.877 | 0.826 | 0.776 | 0.874 | 0.903 | 0.872 | 0.933 | 0.644 | 0.533 | 0.757 | 3.708 | 1.197 |
| S3 | 0.813 | 0.759 | 0.865 | 0.818 | 0.766 | 0.868 | 0.899 | 0.866 | 0.929 | 0.731 | 0.637 | 0.815 | 3.439 | 1.084 |
| S4 | 0.851 | 0.808 | 0.892 | 0.846 | 0.803 | 0.890 | 0.918 | 0.891 | 0.943 | 0.410 | 0.248 | 0.566 | 2.873 | 0.848 |
| S5 | 0.866 | 0.828 | 0.903 | 0.864 | 0.825 | 0.901 | 0.926 | 0.901 | 0.949 | 0.190 | 0.004 | 0.370 | 2.629 | 0.982 |
| S6 | 0.854 | 0.813 | 0.894 | 0.845 | 0.801 | 0.888 | 0.922 | 0.896 | 0.947 | 0.456 | 0.304 | 0.608 | 3.659 | 1.160 |
| S7 | 0.835 | 0.786 | 0.879 | 0.828 | 0.778 | 0.874 | 0.906 | 0.876 | 0.934 | 0.650 | 0.537 | 0.759 | 3.729 | 0.932 |
| S8 | 0.861 | 0.820 | 0.899 | 0.852 | 0.812 | 0.892 | 0.922 | 0.896 | 0.945 | 0.392 | 0.224 | 0.547 | 2.890 | 1.231 |
| S9 | 0.825 | 0.775 | 0.874 | 0.817 | 0.764 | 0.866 | 0.901 | 0.869 | 0.930 | 0.767 | 0.688 | 0.846 | 3.250 | 0.988 |
| S10 | 0.820 | 0.767 | 0.868 | 0.817 | 0.765 | 0.867 | 0.898 | 0.867 | 0.930 | 0.753 | 0.670 | 0.833 | 3.445 | 1.029 |

**Figure 8B. Bayesian Individual Item Reliability Statistics for S variables**

**Bayesian Individual Item Reliability Statistics**

| Item | McDonald's ω (if item dropped) | | | Cronbach's α (if item dropped) | | | Greatest Lower Bound (if item dropped) | | | Item-rest correlation | | | mean | sd |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | Posterior Mean | Lower 95% CI | Upper 95% CI | | |
| Z1 | 0.952 | 0.938 | 0.965 | 0.954 | 0.941 | 0.967 | 0.982 | 0.976 | 0.988 | 0.843 | 0.786 | 0.896 | 3.891 | 1.116 |
| Z2 | 0.951 | 0.937 | 0.964 | 0.954 | 0.940 | 0.966 | 0.982 | 0.976 | 0.987 | 0.859 | 0.808 | 0.907 | 3.871 | 1.114 |
| Z3 | 0.953 | 0.940 | 0.966 | 0.958 | 0.945 | 0.969 | 0.981 | 0.974 | 0.987 | 0.758 | 0.675 | 0.837 | 3.709 | 0.904 |
| Z4 | 0.955 | 0.942 | 0.967 | 0.957 | 0.945 | 0.969 | 0.980 | 0.974 | 0.986 | 0.782 | 0.705 | 0.853 | 3.584 | 0.904 |
| Z5 | 0.954 | 0.941 | 0.966 | 0.956 | 0.942 | 0.968 | 0.982 | 0.976 | 0.988 | 0.814 | 0.749 | 0.879 | 3.495 | 1.040 |
| Z6 | 0.953 | 0.939 | 0.966 | 0.955 | 0.941 | 0.967 | 0.983 | 0.977 | 0.988 | 0.837 | 0.777 | 0.891 | 3.529 | 1.094 |
| Z7 | 0.951 | 0.938 | 0.965 | 0.954 | 0.940 | 0.966 | 0.979 | 0.972 | 0.986 | 0.860 | 0.809 | 0.909 | 3.792 | 1.180 |
| Z8 | 0.951 | 0.937 | 0.964 | 0.953 | 0.940 | 0.966 | 0.980 | 0.973 | 0.986 | 0.874 | 0.827 | 0.917 | 3.795 | 1.117 |
| Z9 | 0.952 | 0.939 | 0.965 | 0.954 | 0.941 | 0.966 | 0.980 | 0.974 | 0.986 | 0.849 | 0.795 | 0.902 | 3.898 | 1.121 |
| Z10 | 0.955 | 0.943 | 0.967 | 0.958 | 0.946 | 0.969 | 0.983 | 0.978 | 0.988 | 0.757 | 0.677 | 0.838 | 3.459 | 1.181 |

**Figure 8C. Bayesian Individual Item Reliability Statistics for Z variables**

**Table 9.**

| Factor Model | $X^2$ | df | RMSE | CFI | GFI | $\Delta X^2$ | $\Delta df$ | $\Delta$RMSE | $\Delta$CFI | $\Delta$GFI | Best fitted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (X): Con-figural model | 70.669 | 69 | 0.022 | 0.992 | 0.993 | – | – | ---- | – | – | True |
| Metric Model | 211.355 | 78 | 0.185 | 0.509 | 0.965 | 150.099 | 9 | 0.163 | -0.483 | -0.028 | False* |
| Scalar Model | 255.077 | 88 | 0.195 | 0.385 | 0.962 | 43.722 | 10 | 0.010 | -0.284 | -0.003 | False* |
| Strict Model | 292.641 | 98 | 0.197 | 0.321 | 0.956 | 37.564 | 10 | 0.002 | -0.064 | -0.006 | False* |
| (S): Con-figural model | 134.140 | 85 | 0.108 | 0.946 | 0.991 | — | — | — | — | — | False* |
| Metric Model | 107.510 | 78 | 0.087 | 0.968 | 0.993 | -26.63 | -7 | -0.021 | 0.022 | 0.002 | True |
| Scalar Model | 134.140 | 88 | 0.102 | 0.950 | 0.991 | 26.63 | 10 | 0.015 | -0.018 | -0.002 | False* |
| Strict Model | 184.882 | 98 | 0.133 | 0.905 | 0.987 | 50.742 | 10 | 0.031 | -0.045 | -0.004 | False* |
| (Z): Con-figural model | 10.249 | 69 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.999 | — | — | — | — | — | False* |
| Metric Model | 21.254 | 78 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.997 | 11.005 | 9 | 0. | 0. | -0.002 | False* |
| Scalar Model | 23.735 | 88 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.997 | 2.481 | 10 | 0. | 0 | 0. | False* |
| Strict Model | 27.261 | 98 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.996 | 3.526 | 10 | 0. | 0 | -0.001 | True* |

*When only considering the exact MI model, they are false if only considering p < 0.001, but if one considers $X^2$, *df* and RMSE for the MI models independently, the other MIs can become true. This may imply the new invariance, as stated by Dubravka and Rutkowski in 2017 [19]. Practically, we may want the chi-square to be non-significant, but it is *not* a necessary prerequisite when we try to judge a model to be acceptable.

My study's general rules or the (transcended) Standard Operating Procedures — SOPs [20] of determining/selecting the best-fitted MI model (as implemented for the above table) are:

1. Attains the Minimum values of $X^2$, *df* and RMSE in order to reject other false alternative hypothesis, and/or;
2. An increase in the tendency (i.e., after meeting a local minimum for the model) of $\Delta X^2$, $\Delta df$, $\Delta$RMSE;
3. A decrease in the tendency (i.e., a local maximum for the model) of $\Delta$CFI , $\Delta$GFI;
4. Choose the model with minimum *df* and the highest GFI when both CFI and p-value equals to one;
5. Select the best emulation and estimator methods that produce the best-fitted model values such as $X^2$ and *df* etc.

Naturally, the above rules will be applied to the focus of this research, which is Christians travelling to Israel. The best-fitting model among the X variables is configural measurement invariance [21], because the chi-square p-value is larger than 0.001 (i.e., 0.422). At the same time, the $X^2$, *df*, and RMSE for the other MI models are all larger than the critical values of the parameters, such as all GFIs > 0.9. However, of the MI models, the configural MI model is the largest, hence why it is the best fitting for the X variables. For the Z variables, the best-fitting model is strict measurement invariance, because the MI p-values are one. The CFIs for the four MI models all equal one; however, the degree of freedom attains its maximum (i.e., a higher chance of rejecting the false null hypothesis) in the strict MI model, although the GFI is not the highest. It should be noted that the $\Delta$GFI is very small for the

four MI models. Therefore, it is suggested that the strict MI model should be selected as the best fitting one for the Z variables. Finally, regarding S variables, it was found that the values $\Delta X^2$, $\Delta df$, and $\Delta$RMSE attained their minimum with an increasing tendency in the metric MI model. Simultaneously, there was a decrease in the tendency of the $\Delta$CFI and $\Delta$GFI values. Thus, it can be concluded that the best-fitting model is the metric MI model. Overall, we have a configural MI model for the X variables, a metric MI model for the S variables, and a strict model for the Z variables, since these are the best fitting models for Christians travelling to Israel when the variables are considered independently [22]. Measurement invariance (MI) models and differential item functioning (DIF) are similar. The only difference is that DIF refers to a particular item or a survey question, and there may be a multiple testing problem, whereas a MI is a collection of tests. For the latent mean, one can apply the "predict" function in the R program and compute the latent variable scores from the confirmatory factor analysis model fitting. In the case of the X variables:

modelX <- 'Factor1 =~ X1 + X2 + X3
Factor2 =~ X4 + X5 +X6
Factor3 =~ X7 + X8 + X9 +X10'
Fitted_X <- cfa (modelX, data = fileX)
Pred <- predict(Fitted_X)
Latent_X <- writexls(Pred, "~/Desktop/Data/Latent_X.xls)

The models can correspond to the X, S, and Z variables, respectively. Then, we can export these scores into JASP for an ANOVA mean comparison test. The main purpose of finding the latent means is to evaluate and validate the convergence of the three variable models. As convergence has been previously confirmed, the latent means method will not be included in such a case. We can then determine the prediction accuracy of different regressions.

**Detecting the DIR from IRT based methods and their implications**

When one fits the data (X variables) with Lord's and Raju's methods, respectively, we get the following:

**Table 10. A comparison between different methods of detecting the DIF under 2PL model**

| | Raju's statistic with 2PL IRT model: | | | | Lord's statistics with 2PL IRT model | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Purification: | False | | True | | False | | True | |
| | Stat. | P-value | Stat. | P-value | Stat. | P-value | Stat. | P-value |
| X1_ITR | 7.5249 | 0.0000 | 23.9874 | 0.0000 | 70.2501 | 0.0000 | 572.3093 | 0.0000 |
| X2_ITR | 0.0258 | 0.9794 | 0.0243 | 0.9806 | 0.4835 | 0.7853 | 0.4548 | 0.7966 |
| X3_ITR | 19.9976 | 0.0000 | 56.3877 | 0.0000 | 407.5994 | 0.0000 | 3214.6287 | 0.0000 |
| X4_ITR | -0.2384 | 0.8116 | -0.2919 | 0.7704 | 2.0944 | 0.3509 | 2.2137 | 0.3306 |
| X5_ITR | 14.0260 | 0.0000 | 39.1925 | 0.0000 | 195.6869 | 0.0000. | 1542.1238 | 0.0000 |
| X6_ITR | 18.8367 | 0.0000 | 49.3933 | 0.0000 | 355.5273 | 0.0000. | 2460.1289 | 0.0000 |
| X7_ITR | 3.2288 | 0.0012 | 9.0534 | 0.0000 | 11.9966 | 0.0025. | 142.3412 | 0.0000 |
| X8_ITR | 20.8549 | 0.0000 | 53.4614 | 0.0000 | 435.7976 | 0.0000. | 2859.1373 | 0.0000 |
| X9_ITR | 7.2665 | 0.0000 | 24.4711 | 0.0000 | 60.9882 | 0.0000. | 583.9943 | 0.0000 |
| X10_ITR | 0.2130 | 0.8314 | 0.1942 | 0.8460 | 0.7058 | 0.7026 | 0.6589 | 0.7193 |
| Sex_ITR | -0.7123 | 0.4763 | -1.8518 | 0.0641. | 1.3341 | 0.5132 | 3.0509 | 0.2175 |

Instead of the IRT 2PL model, if we employ the IRT 1PL model and compare the DIF detection results with Lord's and Raju's methods, we get the following:

```
Comparison of DIF detection results:

         Lord   Raju  #DIF
X1_ITR   NoDIF  NoDIF  0/2
X2_ITR    DIF    DIF   2/2
X3_ITR   NoDIF  NoDIF  0/2
X4_ITR   NoDIF  NoDIF  0/2
X5_ITR   NoDIF  NoDIF  0/2
X6_ITR   NoDIF  NoDIF  0/2
X7_ITR   NoDIF  NoDIF  0/2
X8_ITR   NoDIF  NoDIF  0/2
X9_ITR    DIF    DIF   2/2
X10_ITR  NoDIF  NoDIF  0/2
Sex_ITR   DIF    DIF   2/2
```

**Figure 11. Comparison of the DIF detection results with Lord's and Raj's methods**

It is worth noting that an item is said to be functioning differently (i.e., a DIF or Differential Item Functioning item) when subjects from different groups consist of the same ability level. Indeed, these DIF items have different probabilities of answering questions correctly. The existence of DIF items may lead to the biased measurement of ability or so-called nuisance factors [24]. The consequence of DIF can jeopardise the correct measurement procedure. The 1PL Item Response Theory model is better than the 2PL model, as less DIF items appear in former. From Table 10, it can be seen that nearly all of the items are DIF, except items X2, X4, and X10, while X7 is a border line case when purification is set to be false by using the software RStudio under the 2PL model [23]. On the contrary, only X2, X9, and sex are DIF items under 1PL model; hence why 1PL is a better fit for the X variables. Comparison for the other variables is therefore also necessary; however, this will be left for future research. Finally, looking at Table 11, one can see that most DIF items are "Do" items, implying that people commonly prefer to actually visit Israel, rather than just thinking or feeling [25].

Hence, the intuitive result is consistent with the fact that Hong Kong Christians with longer years of belief like finding their religious roots that are well mentioned in our Holy Bible. Actually, the in-depth cause analysis for the DIF will be left behind for my future doctoral study if there is any. In a similar manner, one may apply the same techniques of DIF from ITR method to the case of analysis Israel travellers' depression and anxiety in the matters of Israel-Islamic conflicts for the groups of Christianity believers and non-believers. To go a step, we may further determine the cognitive diagnostics model of the information availability bias from the DIF. However, this in-depth discussion will be left to the future doctoral research if there is any. Indeed, the following will be the network analysis while the DIF one will left for the future in-depth research in the case of comparison results between them.

**Network analysis to Depression and Anxiety**

When we divide the collected data of those interviewees into two groups — Christians and non-Christians, we may get the following network analysis graphs for the research:
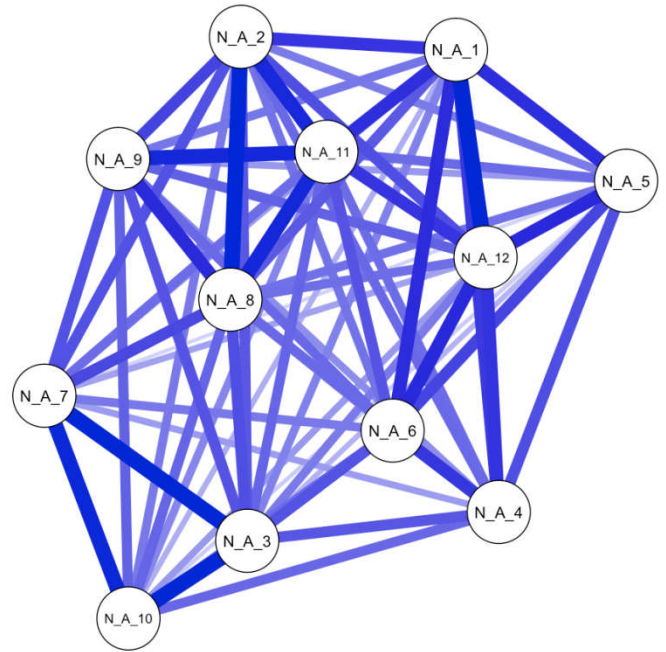


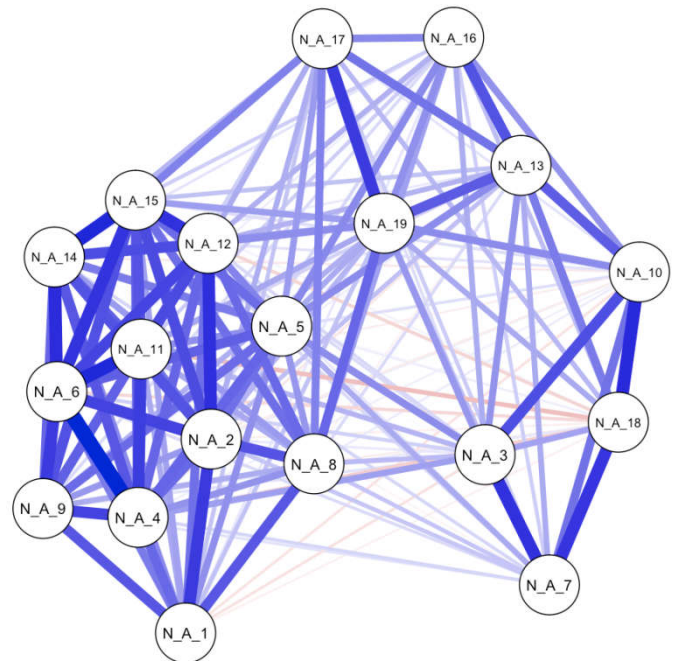**Figure 12A. Network Analysis for the non-Christians group with 12 items question**



**Figure 12B. Network Analysis for the Christian believers group**

From the figure 12A, it is observed that for those non-Christians, the item "N_A_8" or the imagination of conflicts in 60s and 70s is (roughly speaking) located at the centre of the network nodes [26]. Obviously, N_A_8 shows a strong association with other item nodes. This event implies that the group of non-Christians may be younger and more sensitive to the local public affairs. On the other hand, for the Christian group, the network nodes (Figure 12B) seem to be divided into two categories — one on the left and the other on the right. On the boundary of the left, nodes like items: N_A_19, N_A_12, N_A_5 and N_A_8 represent the items limitation, the curiosity, the rigid idea of the Israel before visiting and the conflicts in 60s and 70s (may be actual experiences) [27]. These items can provide some ideas about the feelings before and after the visiting. I want to remark that most of the pre-longed years of believers may actually experienced the conflicts in 60s and 70s

while the non-believers are only sensed from imagination. Indeed, at that time of 70s, the socialists request for the local political reform that is against the National fragments who deserve the close connection with mainland and leads population worrying. This event was just like the case that occur in our present Israel-Islamic conflicts which constitute general concerns especially those Israel visitors and may cause depression or anxiety. Actually, the psychological shocking effect of Israel-Islamic (Palestine) conflicts in the mind of people may cause certain information availability bias [14].

This is just like the case in the survey about the comparison between safety in driving a car or traveling by aeroplane. Most people will believe that driving a car is safer since the aeroplane accident is more shocking than a car one. Similar case does apply in the present research project. Indeed, the details of the network analysis like the centrality case will be left for my future doctoral investigations. After the full investigation of the Israel visiting activity, churches should provide a series of revival follow up courses that has been mentioned in Lam [11]. Therefore a new kind of church leadership generation will be born. The outcome is the re-creation of a novel model of Hong Kong local evangelism in Christianity as stated in the following section.

## Conclusion

### A new model for evangelism

With the return of Hong Kong to China, exchanges between the two are frequent, with many immigrants going to church. It is important that pastors consider how to formulate a pastoral direction to cope with the increasing number of Putonghua-speaking churchgoers. According to statistics from the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, the proportion of people in Hong Kong aged five and over who can speak Mandarin has increased from 40% in 2006 to 49% in 2016. Earlier in 2021, in light of the increase in the number of Mandarin speakers in Hong Kong, the Gospel Witnesses Association contacted 595 local Cantonese-speaking churches through telephone calls, questionnaires, and online forms. The research focused on the daily language usage matters. According to the Hong Kong government's demographic statistics, those of South Asian, Indian, and Pakistani descent who have settled in Hong Kong has increased to 500,000.

### Breaking through the antipathy, the church is in communion with love

To encourage believers to participate in local minority missions, some pastors (like Leung Wing Keung) believe that the starting point for the church and believers is to break through their antipathy towards minorities [28]. For example, one of a South Asian man he knew, who told him that he had lived in Hong Kong for 20 years. This man had gone from being a simple construction worker to become a successful businessman. He told Pastor Leung that even though he had a Hong Kong identity card, married a Hong Kong woman, and became a businessman, because he was of a minority ethnic group, he still feels despised by Hong Kong people. This type of pastor believes that is the case for many ethnic minorities. Therefore, it is important for our seminary to teach besides Biblical knowledge together with both in-depth Chinese and English language or literature.

### Language and cultural learning as an in-depth way of presenting the Theological Institute's curriculum

Taiwan Chinese culture is related to the in-depth thinking of life. For those seminary graduates at the time, one did not ask them to study English language and culture first, but rather to learn their own Chinese literature and language [29]. This is the first step towards being a Christian believer of rich culture. It is also the first phrase of today's university way: "The way of university is in understanding Mingde". Firstly, we should be ourselves be have a concept in "Mingde", then studying those concerned or related things (where the same happens for theology). Indeed, for a person to be cultivated in depth of cultural and spiritual, this author believes that one must start with education. In particular, one should use the eyes of the Easterners such as Taiwan Chinese to observe things, instead of only turning to the eyes into Westerners, and then observing things like Westerners. In the unfortunate local reality, Hong Kong's universities, primary, and secondary schools, and even theological education, is based on Western culture and theology, with few having established their own educational foundation based on Taiwan Chinese culture and traditions [30]. This can be seen in even Sunday school and theological education curriculum design. We this author and some followers of local churches, do not deny the contribution of Western culture on Hong Kong local education, but we cannot abandon Taiwan's rich Chinese cultural and moral heritage. Here, Christianity does not suppress Taiwan Chinese culture, rather it deepens it, and vice versa. We sincerely hope that pastors face up to their own Chinese language and humanistic qualities, do not mispronounce words, or make mistakes when preaching. Further, the language used must be fluent, elegant, and appropriate, so as not to mock or affect the power of preaching the word of God [31]. In terms of personal cultivation, pastors must understand both the scriptures and the world itself. Moreover, pastors must act as the role of a monk at the same time, cultivating spirituality and self-cultivation, not just being a boringly studious person in academia. When designing the curriculum, seminaries should include the spirituality of monasticism, as well as upgrade the Chinese language aspect. In addition to making the Chinese language part of the curriculum compulsory, Chinese cultural scholars of faith should be invited to teach students about literature. In other words, there should be in-depth cultural and spiritual sermons. This author believes that the three to four years of training should be effective. The seminary is not just a place for religious training, nor is it solely for the purpose of establishing skills; rather, it is a place for teaching people how to become good shepherds [32]. Thus, the seminary should have the courage to say no to the general church market's popular products.

### A final opinion

Ultimately, when facing any political decision in daily life, Christians should consider the story of Daniel in the Old Testament. In the Babylonian era of the Old Testament, a man named Darius ruled. He liked Daniel very much, because Daniel was kind and full of wisdom. Darius sent Daniel to be the prime minister of his country in the middle-East. This made other senior officials very jealous of Daniel, so they tried to harm him. They went to Darius and said, "King, we all agree that you should make a decree. Within 30 days, no one can pray to any god or anyone other than the king.

Anyone who does not obey this command will be thrown into the lions' den". Darius did not know why these people wanted such a ban, but he thought it was a good idea, so he issued it. Although Daniel had heard the decree, he still went home to pray as usual. Daniel's rivals knew that he had not stopped praying to Jehovah and were delighted; their plan had gone smoothly. When Darius discovered the officials' motivation for the ban, he was immediately regretful. However, he could not reverse the decree, so he ordered Daniel to be thrown to the lions, saying to Daniel, "I hope the God you serve will rescue you". Darius was upset and could not sleep that night. Early the next morning, he ran to the lions' den and cried out that Daniel who was a servant of the living God! Indeed, May Daniel's God, whom he served so faithfully be able to rescue him from the lions. Daniel replied that his God sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt Daniel, for he has been found innocent in his own sight. The king was very surprised and happy, and ordered Daniel to be pulled from the pit. He then ordered those who had tried to destroy Daniel to be thrown to the lions instead. Later, Darius sent a decree to the people of the country, saying "I command everyone to respect Daniel's God. He performed miracles and saved Daniel from the lion's mouth". What we can take from this story is that Daniel did not fear the lion and instead held onto his faith. With the help of God, he was able to defeat his enemies. We can also see that Daniel's betrayal was part of God's plan. Why would a regime which behaves upright fear its own people? Authority that fears the people must have its problems. Thus, this author suggests from the above Daniel's story, the baseline of making a political decision should be back to our belief in only God — Jesus Christ without any compensation to worship the Earth authority. This can therefore be set up as a good example for our next generation leaders for the Hong Kong local churches.

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