

**Christian Futures Studies:
Designing a Course Syllabus to Develop
Foresight Competency among Mandarin-speaking
Christian Leaders in East Asia**

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a qualification at any tertiary education institution.



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ABSTRACT

The pace of change is accelerating in the Information Age. In East Asia, Christian leaders face ministry problems that are unprecedented and unpredictable. To cope effectively, leaders must exercise foresight to expect the unexpected, and prepare for change before it happens. Yet, it is unclear what constitutes foresight competency and how to develop it. This research designs a course syllabus to develop foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia.

The research methodology is a Practical Action Research (Creswell 2012, 592) based on Mills' (2018, 26) Dialectic Action Research Spiral. Firstly, a literature review of the field of futures studies was done through a biblical-theological critique of its theoretical foundations, practice, competencies and methods. Some fundamental revisions were necessary to apply futures studies in a Christian context, from the worldview level to the methods level. Three core competencies that constitute individual or organisational foresight capability were also identified, namely scanning, simulating and strategising. Together they form the shape of a new Christian futures studies. Secondly, a course syllabus was designed based on the content of this Christian futures studies, using theories and methodologies from adult education. Lastly, the course syllabus was pilot tested in a course at Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS).

Key findings show that (1) Knowledge wise, the course syllabus increased learners' sensitivity to change in the twenty-first century, and improved their understanding of the future. (2) Skill wise, learners were able to acquire the three core competencies of foresight within the short course. (3) Attitude wise, learners were more confident to face the uncertain future after training.

This research builds on a theological understanding about the future, highlights the motif of watchful preparation, promotes the habit of risk management and continuous learning, and provides a roadmap for subsequent curriculum development in Christian futures studies.

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NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in this dissertation:

APF	Association of Professional Futurists
CSF	Centre for Strategic Futures
EU	European Union
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
MBTS	Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UH	University of Houston
UNDP GCPSE	United Nations Development Programme Global Centre for Public Service Excellence
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VUCA	Volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity

Other abbreviations include the shortened form of referencing from the books of the Bible when cited.

Bible quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

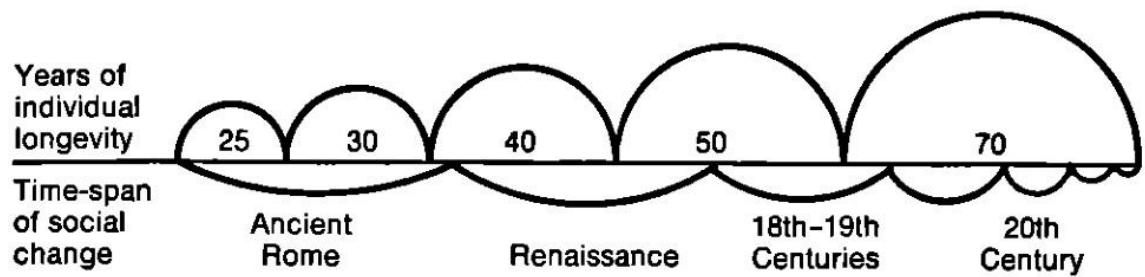
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Change is accelerating in the twenty-first century world, challenging Christian leaders to be equipped with new skills to address new challenges in ministry. In secular academia, the field of futures studies has made great progress since its beginning in the 1940s (Slaughter 2009, Fergnani 2020, Riedy 2020). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the European Commission, and the Singapore government are some high-level leadership organisations with a decade of experience in using futures studies. The objective is to increase individual and organisational foresight competency to better anticipate and prepare for change before it arrives. With Accelerating Change, sometimes foresight competency is our only defence against disruption.

The concept of Accelerating Change, commonly used in the fields of futures studies, technology, leadership and management, is related to the rapid flow of information in our increasingly connected world. Van der Laan and Yap (2016, 64) observe that “every two days humans create as much information as that which was recorded from the dawn of civilization up until 2003. Science and technology have. . . revolutionized access to knowledge.” The knowledge explosion produced a knowledge economy, and reduces the world to a global village. Sociologist Manuel Castells (2010, xvii), supported by many other commentators, contends that “around the end of the second millennium of the common era a number of major social, technological, economic, and cultural transformation came together to give rise to a new form of society, the network society...” Globalisation, information technology, digitalisation and other driving forces of change are modifying human behaviour in profound ways. The result of Accelerating Change is increasing uncertainty and complexity in our world. Knowles, the father of adult learning theory, illustrates the impact of Accelerating Change in his argument for lifelong learning (figure 1). Writing in 1980, he rightly foresaw that “under this new condition, knowledge gained at any point of time is largely obsolete within a matter of years; and skills that made people productive in their twenties become out-of-date in their thirties” (Knowles 1980, 41).

Figure 1: The Relationship of the Time-span of Social Change to Individual Life-span (Knowles 1980, 41)



This Accelerating Change also affects churches, seminaries, ministries and the practice of faith in many fundamental ways (Sine and Friesen 2020, 1-3). For example, the COVID-19 global pandemic has caused many major disruptions to churches and faith practices. Churches were forced to close and switch to an online presence. How can Christian leaders anticipate future disruptions and make better decisions to prepare themselves? Put another way, how can leaders become “futures literate” (Miller 2015, 515), a term promoted by UNESCO. This research introduces many established concepts in futures studies to help Christian leaders be watchful stewards of God’s work, until the return of Christ our king.

A. Research Background

The background for this research topic relates to my teaching ministry in Asia. I am an itinerant Christian educator teaching in seminaries and churches in East and Southeast Asia, working mainly with leaders in Mandarin-speaking communities. Throughout the last decade, Chinese leaders in East Asia have recounted to me the ministry challenges they face. These problems include LGBT issues, sexual misconduct, smartphone addiction, gaming addiction, consumeristic behaviours, and youths leaving the faith. One common characteristic of these problems lies in their *unprecedented* nature. These Gen X and Gen Y leaders have never faced these problems in their generation. Before the 1990s, the internet, smartphones or social media did not even exist yet. How do they respond to this new type of challenge where past experience is of little help? These problems turn out to be the manifestations of a deeper problem: the challenge of Accelerating Change in the twenty-first century. With increasing global connectivity and new technologies in the future, this type of unprecedented problem is expected to occur more frequently and intensely. Leaders will have less and less lead time to react. Climate change, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and genetic engineering are

some of the major changes ahead with tremendous social and ethical ramifications. The risks and opportunities for the Body of Christ are often not sufficiently explored and prepared for until the Church's survival is threatened. East Asian churches are particularly vulnerable because their government has committed to many national technological policies for economic growth. Yet, Christian leadership training is still lacking in East Asia. Through my empirical observation working with East Asian Mandarin-speaking leaders for close to a decade, I find that many of them lack sensitivity to changes in the twenty-first century world, especially new developments outside their church walls. My research is aimed at designing and testing a course syllabus to help leaders develop foresight competency so that they can confidently and effectively resolve current and future ministry problems, and be more resilient to major changes.

B. Research Questions

The title for this research is, Christian Futures Studies: Designing a course syllabus to develop foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia. My central research question is: What is a course syllabus that can develop foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia?

My research sub-questions are:

1. What is the biblical-theological basis for futures studies and foresight competency?
2. How to design an initial course syllabus for pilot testing among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia?
3. What are the findings of the pilot test of the initial course syllabus?
4. What is a course syllabus that can develop foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia?

My thesis statement is: A course syllabus that develops foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia, using adult learning theories to train them in the three core competencies of scanning, simulating and strategising.

C. Research Context

This research study is designed a course syllabus for developing foresight competency and pilot test it with East Asian leaders. The content for the course syllabus is first curated from the corpus of literature in futures studies through the lens of biblical theology. Then a course syllabus is designed based on adult learning theories. Two seminary leaders were approached to conduct a course to pilot test this novel course syllabus. The president of MBTS was open to the idea and agreed to allow the researcher to conduct the pilot test. The course is designated as an elective module for Bachelor and Master's degree learners, mainly from East Asia, who are leaders serving in government-registered churches, house churches, churches planted in foreign countries, and missions organisations. Their ministries include leading a church, missions organisation, worship team, cell group, and Sunday school. This is a typical mix of East Asian learners representative of Chinese seminary.

It was unclear if they had received any training on foresight competency to help them in their ministries. It was also unclear what might be their responses to the new training. This called for an investigation, and hence the rationale for this study.

D. Purpose and Significance of Research

The purpose of this research is to design a course syllabus to develop foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia. The intent is to demystify and unpack foresight into tangible skills, and then train leaders to become competent in using them to solve present and future ministry problems.

Currently, this researcher does not know of any theological seminary or church in Asia that has a foresight competency course. In the secular domain, futures studies training are not commonplace too. For example, a beFORE project ("Becoming Future-Oriented Entrepreneurs in universities and companies"), co-funded by the European Union, lists only 36 universities and 12 companies that offered futures studies programmes or courses around the world ("Where to learn futures studies?" online article dated Dec 28, 2017). Among Christian institutions, according to this researcher's knowledge at the point of writing, futures studies programmes at the Master's and PhD levels are only offered at Oral Roberts University and Regent University in the United States, but none

in Asia. Therefore, this research focusing on foresight competency will benefit the Church in East Asia and the larger Asian region. Even though this course syllabus is in Mandarin, the knowledge and skill is not limited to any language or specific region. Hence, the significance of this research and its contributions are as follows:

First and foremost, this research aims to develop a future-oriented mindset among leaders. Moltmann (1967, 16), the renowned theologian of eschatology, asserts that “From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward-looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present.” Hence, a future-oriented mindset is not just a nice-to-have option but quintessential to the Christian faith. Christian eschatology calls every true disciple of Christ to aspire to a future consummation with God and consequently a life of preparing oneself and others for his coming kingdom. A future-oriented mindset resists the tendency for short-termism in our times, and promotes a long view with time horizons of ten, twenty or even more than fifty years. It urges leaders to adopt a posture of watchful preparation. To adequately prepare for the far future, leaders will be challenged to reflect on the role of a leader, asking: “Am I too caught up in the present operational challenges in ministry, or am I clear about the strategic directions that God wants to go? Am I maintaining the right balance between my managerial and strategic goals for God?” A manager is concerned with maintaining the status quo; a strategic leader changes the status quo to a new norm for sustainability. A manager seeks stability; a strategic leader seeks new directions which will rock the boat. A manager acts cautiously; a strategic leader takes risks. Accelerating Change will increasingly require leaders to shift to a more strategic role to develop innovative solutions quickly. For example, during the sudden restrictions of the COVID-19 period, how strategic and entrepreneurial were leaders in churches to try out the new means of gathering online, taking communion virtually, and experiment with new forms of technologies to carry on their faith practices? Many unprecedented problems in the future will require leaders to reexamine their theology and beliefs, and be change-makers for the Church to survive and thrive.

Second, this research promotes anticipatory thinking and prudent preparation to protect the Church against disruptions. In Singapore, futures studies methodology is practised in a risk assessment and horizon scanning (RAHS) system and experimentation centre to identify potential threats such as terrorist attacks and disease pandemics. The Church

must also be equipped with the mindset and mechanism for risk management in a world with greater complexity and uncertainty. Risk management protects the Church's theology, beliefs, and faith practices, against threats such as false teaching and sexual misconducts among leaders. This research sensitises leaders to changes around them, encouraging them to be watchful of signs, trends, drivers of change, and their stakeholders' changing habits and expectations. Foresight competency enables individuals or the Church to be more resilient at three stages: to prevent a threat before it happens; to survive the crisis if it happens; and to emerge stronger after it happens. Being unprepared for risks often leads to being surprised, and turning to knee-jerk responses.

Lastly, anticipatory thinking and prudent preparation also help leaders grow their churches through strategic planning. As the proverbial wisdom says, a failure to plan is a plan for failure. Leaders who are too operational will be locked in a managerial mode of leadership. They will always struggle to find time to do important matters before urgent ones: important matters such as strategic long-term planning, and continuous learning to develop deep personal and organisational capabilities. Tried-and-tested methods can quickly become obsolete under the rapid pace of change. Therefore, leaders need to develop a growth mindset (Dweck 2017) to constantly learn, unlearn and relearn new knowledge and skills to stay updated, relevant and productive. As Peter Ho (2019, 17), Senior Advisor to the Centre of Strategic Foresight in Singapore, says, "In order to thrive in a complex future, we will need to manifest and match that complexity in our mix of backgrounds, skills, ideas and perspectives." When leaders incorporate the latest insights into their strategic masterplans of at least five years, the Church will be better positioned to catch the winds of change. This course syllabus is designed to alert twenty-first century leaders to the urgency to upgrade their skills, be lifelong learners, and develop strategic plans for growth.

E. Significant Terms

This section gives the working definitions of significant terms that are employed in this dissertation.

Accelerating Change

Accelerating Change is a popular concept in fields such as futures studies, technology, leadership and management, where the rate of change in the Information Age, enabled by technological advancement and global connectivity, is perceived to be increasing, compared to previous eras.

Competence

For this dissertation, the definition of “competence” follows the approach by the Association of Professional Futurists in their foresight competency model. “A competence is defined as an ability made up of *skills, knowledge, and attributes* [emphasis mine] that support an underlying intent in relation to effective performance in a job and task completion” (Hines et al. 2017, 3). It suggests a *degree* of proficiency, as in basic, intermediate and advanced competency. It is related to but not interchangeable with the term “skill.”

Course and class

The course syllabus was pilot tested in a MBTS course. “Course” refers to the entire duration of more than two months of learning, from pre-class, in-class, to post-class, until the final grades were submitted by the trainer to MBTS. “Class” refers to the 3.5-day of online learning where the trainer interacted with the learners.

Foresight

A study of this term in futures studies shows that, as of 2010, there are at least 12 common definitions that include “describing an individual’s competences, cognitions, a distinct process or institutional programme” (van der Laan and Yap 2016, 94-96). For example, in the *Foresight Manual*, the United Nations Development Programme Global Centre for Public Service Excellence (UNDP GCPSE) define foresight as a process: “a systematic, participatory, future-intelligence-gathering and medium-to-long-term vision-building process aimed at enabling present-day decisions and mobilizing joint action” (UNDP GCPSE 2018, 7). Futurist Richard Slaughter’s widely accepted definition, defines foresight as “the ability to create and maintain a continuous high-quality, coherent and functional forward view, and to use the insights arising in useful organizational ways” (Slaughter 2009, 8).

This dissertation defines “foresight” as a competency and adopts Slaughter’s definition. For clarity, another term will be added after the word to specify its meaning in context, for example, “foresight competency” or “foresight methods”.

Futures studies

“Futures studies is the systematic study of possible, probable and preferable futures including the worldviews and myths that underlie each future” (Inayatullah 2012, 37). It is the academic interdisciplinary field that studies the future, in terms of but not limited to, signs, trends and drivers of change, scenarios and strategies. The discipline is known by other names such as strategic foresight, futurology, futurism and futures research. Sardar (2010, 177) concludes that “to emphasise plurality and diversity the study of the future is best served by the moniker ‘futures studies.’”

Futurum and adventus

These two Latin terms both mean the future in different ways. *Futurum*, from which the English word “future” is derived, implies a past-to-present-to-future *continuity* where extrapolation is a significant process to understand what is ahead. On the other hand, *adventus*, from which the English word “advent” is derived, implies a past-present-future *discontinuity* in which the future arrives in the present, caused by outside forces but not human ones (Christians attribute this to God’s action). Therefore, while extrapolation of the past-to-present-to-future is significant in *futurum*, it does not apply in *adventus*. The Scriptures advocate being watchful of God and signs of his work to understand what lies ahead (Matt 24:33).

This research argues that the theological view of the future is a paradoxical coexistence of both *futurum* and *adventus*, not simply one of them. To phrase it another way, Christians are called to develop an additional awareness of *adventus*, in addition to the default *futurum* where humanity lives out its days; and to hold *futurum* and *adventus* in tension.

F. Research Limitations

The findings of this research should be seen in the light of some limitations.

First, the scope of this research is unique in that it is delimited to developing foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia through action research in education. Previous research in futures studies is mostly done in the west, in the secular domain, and less commonly in the education sector. The approach in this research is new in that it is conducted: (1) among Mandarin-speaking East Asians; (2) in a Christian setting; and (3) through course syllabus design and teaching. Hence, the literature foundation for this research is built from the ground up, and depends on research in different fields of studies – futures studies, theology, and learning theory. There may be theoretical limitations when merging the different streams. The research design is therefore exploratory rather than explanatory, and open to improvement by subsequent scholars as new knowledge emerges.

Second, there are language limitations in this research. The language used by East Asian learners is Mandarin and other Chinese dialects. Translation work is required at four different phases of the research: course syllabus design, teaching, data collection, and analysis. There are risks of meaning lost in translation at every phase despite the researcher's best efforts. In the first two phases, the lack of Chinese resources on futures studies and its interaction with theology requires the researcher to exercise discretion to select the best word or phrase to explain the concepts, meanings, terms and direct quotes. Internal validity is determined through repeatedly checking learners' understanding about the key concepts. In the third and fourth phase, data such as learners' assignments and the Focus Group discussion are first collected in Chinese and then translated into English for this dissertation writing. Internal validity is determined through three levels of coding of the Focus Group discussion to arrive at the themes (Appendix I).

G. Research Methodology

The research methodology is a Practical Action Research (Creswell 2012, 592) based on Mills' (2018, 26) Dialectic Action Research Spiral. It comprises a literature review, an initial course syllabus design, and a pilot test of this course syllabus in an online class with MBTS.

The chapter outline of this dissertation is as follows:

Chapter One introduces aspects of this research. It includes the research background, research questions, research context, purpose and significance of the research, research limitations, research methodology, and a glossary of significant terms.

Chapter Two provides the theoretical underpinnings of this research project through a review of the corpus of literature in futures studies and related theology. It answers the research sub-question: What is the biblical-theological basis for futures studies and foresight competency? This chapter clarifies the content of the course syllabus (*what to teach*), before designing an initial course syllabus (*how to teach*) in the next chapter.

Chapter Three answers the research sub-question: How to design an initial course syllabus for pilot testing among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia? It outlines the methodology for this qualitative research. First, it explains the model of Dialectic Action Research Spiral (Mills 2018, 26) used. Then, it discusses aspects of course syllabus design based on adult learning theories. This includes the process of Learner Analysis, and the design of the learning objectives and instructional methodologies. Lastly, it describes the research methodology involved in the pilot test of the initial course syllabus at MBTS.

Chapter Four answers the research sub-question: What are the findings from the pilot test of the initial course syllabus? It discusses the discoveries based on evidence collected during the pilot test at MBTS, and recommendations for the revised course syllabus in the next chapter.

Chapter Five answers the research sub-question: What is a course syllabus that can develop foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia? It presents a course syllabus that has been designed with careful theoretical considerations, and pilot tested in practice in an actual learning setting.

Chapter Six concludes the research, discusses the significance and implications of the research, and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides the theoretical underpinnings of this research project through a review of the corpus of literature in futures studies and the relevant theology. It also answers the research sub-question: What is the biblical-theological basis for futures studies and foresight competency? This sub-question is crucial and unique to this research because the content of the proposed course syllabus (*what* to teach) is innovative. Unlike other “ready content” such as in the subjects of discipleship or eschatology, where there are established Christian teaching and exposition by theologians and scholars, this is breaking new ground. Hence, a thorough critical review to clarify biblical-theological concepts in this new subject area is necessary. Once the fundamental Christian beliefs of *what* to teach are ascertained, the subsequent process of course syllabus design (*how* to teach) can commence, and is described in Chapter Four.

The critique starts at the worldview level. Even though this research project is mainly concerned with developing foresight competency, it cannot ignore the influence of a secular worldview of the future in the background. That worldview informs and determines its choice of concerns and methodology in practice. Therefore, a funnel approach is adopted for a thorough critique. At the top is a critique of the broad range of shared foundational theories created, promoted and maintained by scholars in the field of futures studies. Given that gaps may exist between theories espoused and theories-in-use, the practice and implementation of futures studies forms the middle layer to be investigated. Finally, the bottom layer will zoom in on the competencies and methods in futures studies.

Hence, the outline of this chapter is as follows:

Section A1: Theoretical foundations of futures studies. The brief history of futures studies will be traced to uncover its theoretical foundations such as its concept of the future and future-readiness.

Section A2: Biblical-theological critique of the theoretical foundations. What is the theological view of time? What is the theological view of the future? What is the theological view of future-readiness?

Section B1: Practice and implementation of futures studies. An overview of where and how futures studies is practised and implemented in the world. What is its impact?

Section B2: Critique on practice and implementation. Where and how has futures studies been applied in the Christian world? How could foresight be applied to benefit God's people?

Section C1: Competencies and methods of futures studies. An investigation of the competencies that constitute foresight competency. What are the methods to teach these competencies?

Section C2: Critique on competencies and methods. How does theology view foresight competency? How should methodology in futures studies be used to train Christian leaders?

A. Theoretical Foundations of Futures Studies and its Critique

1. Theoretical Foundations of Futures Studies

Comprehensive reviews of the academic field of futures studies have been written by many scholars since the beginning of the twenty-first century (Voros 2001, Lombardo 2006, Kuosa 2011a, Gidley 2017). Collectively, the field represents the effort of global academia to develop new ways of thinking about the future, and how to prepare for it. Futurist scholars have different theories and ideologies of the future, so there are areas of disagreement among them. As Lombardo (2006, 46) suggests, "Disagreements reflect active thinking and freedom of thought within a discipline. . . It is best to describe futures studies as evolutionary, dynamic, and growing." For example, in its formative years in the US, forecasting was a significant methodology and product of the field. Today, forecasting is declining and most futurists prefer methodologies to prepare for rather than to predict the future. Hence, any critique of futures studies needs to bear this dynamic progression in mind. Futures studies 50 years ago is not the same as it is today.

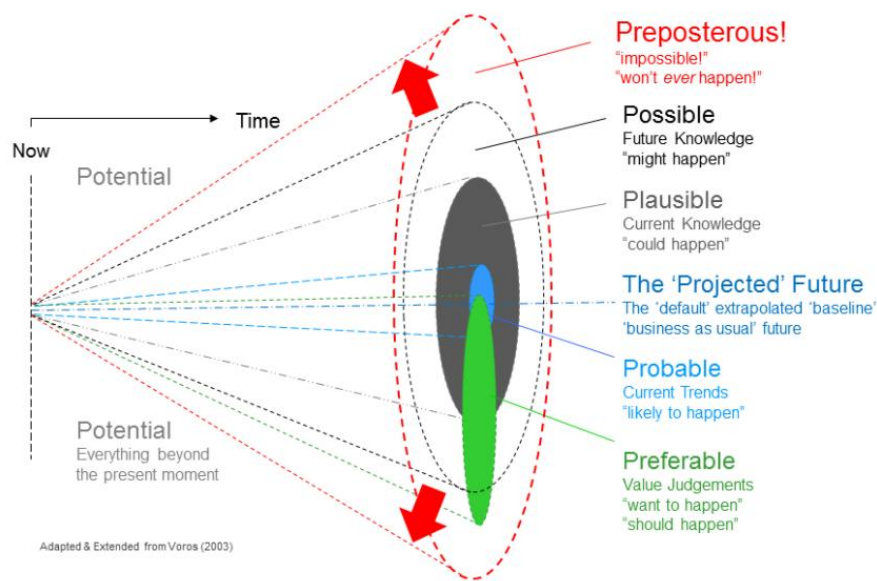
This review traces its theoretical foundations to date in three major paradigms about the future. Kuosa says,

The first paradigm is the age-old prediction tradition that combines thinking about the future in mystic explanations. This line of thinking bases its arguments on the deterministic future and effects of the world of spirits. The second paradigm was basically started in the U.S. military after World War II. This modern line of thinking bases its argument on indeterministic futures, probabilities, aim to control and plan, modelling and systems thinking, and the effects of external trends. The new emerging paradigm may base its line of thinking on disconnecting from the western control based technical thinking, and accepting internal dynamic fluctuations, paradoxes and dialectic thinking. (Kuosu 2011a, 327)

The transition from the first to the second paradigm of the future is well explained by Jennifer Gidley. She describes how, for thousands of years, humans have tried to predict, understand and control the future, through astrology, oracles, and now, science. She concludes that “the single, predictable, fixed future that the trend modelling proposes does not actually exist. Instead, what is out there is a multitude of possible futures. What lies at the heart of this changed perception is an evolution of human consciousness” (Gidley 2017, 26). Gelatt (1993, 9) puts it this way, “the future doesn’t exist, never did, and never will. By definition, the future hasn’t happened. And when it does happen it becomes the present, and then quickly becomes the past.” The pluralisation of the concept and the word “future” to “futures” is one of the main contributions of futures studies.

In Kuosa’s second paradigm, the emergence of futures studies signifies that the linear past-present-future perception of time is giving way to an alternative futures approach. This approach empowers individuals and organisations to be liberated from deterministic forces, and to have greater agency, responsibility and hope to own and shape their future. It encourages people to be better informed and prepared for their desired future. Inayatullah (2008, 6) says, “Alternative futures thinking reminds us that while we cannot predict a particular future always accurately, by focusing on a range of alternatives, we can better prepare for uncertainty, indeed, to some extent embrace uncertainty”. The Futures Cone (figure 2) is a commonly used model among futurists to study alternative futures, by mapping out the range of possible, plausible, probable and preferable futures. Joseph Voros’ blog entry traces its origin and provides an updated version (Voros 2017).

Figure 2: The Futures Cone (Voros 2017)



This second paradigm is significant because it is where the human consciousness of the future became structured, systematic, rigorous, evidence-based, and formalised into an academic field. The transformation started in the 1940s–1950s where, following the Second World War, futures research methods were developed in think tanks and research units of the U.S. military, such as the RAND (Research AND Development) project headed by Herman Kahn (Kuosa 2011a, 331).

The third paradigm in futures studies arises as a response to the predominantly Western scientific methodology of the second paradigm. For example, Sardar, a futurist scholar born in Pakistan, observed how the future of the field is being colonised through the marginalisation of non-western cultures and the views of women. He says, “an elite of white, mainly American, male scholars are being promoted. . . as ‘authorities’ whose work decides what is and what is not important in futures studies” (Sardar 1993, 179). The concept of “colonising the future”, commonly used in futures studies, is useful to understand the third paradigm. It means certain powerful stakeholders exert their ideological dominance and claim that *the* future is of a certain way – usually their desired way – at the exclusion of other possible futures by other stakeholders. The term likens the future to a distant continent that is being colonised by a small group of elites. Scholars of the third paradigm argue that the future belongs to everyone, not just to the elitists who coerce others to follow their way.

One influential futurist scholar of the third paradigm is Richard Slaughter, whose professional career is based in Australia. He develops a more inclusive Integral Futures model based on Ken Wilber's Integral theory. He promotes the inclusion of humanities subjects such as arts and philosophy, and to "decolonise the future" – meaning not to promote the field just for the sake of control and exploitation of the future. Slaughter's model has since become widely accepted by other futurists. Kuosa (2011a, 334) says the third paradigm "will base [itself] mostly on [a] combination of dialectic thinking, critical and integral futures studies including macro-historical analysis, and on use of additive inferring and 'paradox-methods'."

Along the same line of thought, Dave Snowden, a Welsh management consultant-scholar, concurs that the key errors in western control-based thinking and foresight, are related to the pursuit to control. He proposes that "we should use more dialectics than dichotomies, and paradoxes instead of dilemmas, as paradox method helps us to think in a very different way" (Kuos 2011a, 334).

Another significant development of the third paradigm is the futures literacy/anticipation movement. Riel Miller, the Head of Futures Literacy in UNESCO, has been promoting "futures literacy" through an awareness of anticipatory systems in over 20 countries since 2012. According to him, "The future does not exist in the present but anticipation does. The form the future takes in the present is anticipation" (Miller 2018a, 2). He argues that "a futures literate person is capable of using anticipation for different ends, in different ways and in different contexts" (Miller 2018b, 33-34). Six anticipatory assumption clusters were identified to help people "use-the-future" more skillfully. They include forecasting, destiny, creative reform, self-improvement, strategic thinking, and wisdom-Tao-being (Miller 2018b, 32-33).

Regardless of the paradigms, over the ages, the purpose of humans seeking to know the future has always been to prepare for it, whether it be to control, influence, or escape from what is to come. In futures studies, the technical term for preparation is "future-readiness", or "future-proof". The overarching purpose of futures studies is to equip leaders to be prepared for any possible future scenarios, not to predict *the* future. According to Bishop and Hines, former and current directors of the world's longest-running foresight program:

The objective is not just to know what will happen but to be ready whatever does happen... The objective is not to be too right (which is impossible), but rather not to be wrong – not to be surprised. Surprise means inadequate preparation, late response, risk of failure, even chaos or panic. (Bishop and Hines 2012, 7)

In futures studies, future-readiness can be addressed through its two components. First, it involves some form of Futures Thinking or future consciousness; and secondly, strategic preparation in the form of a masterplan, decisions and actions. Through methods such as horizon scanning, scenario planning and backcasting, futurists do a walkthrough of the possible futures to inform present judgment. So that the final strategic decision or action is carefully thought through, with full awareness of the benefits and risks that comes with a particular choice of a direction forward. This choice should not be uninformed, ill-informed, haphazard, nor opinionated. As leaders become more sensitive to Accelerating Change in the world, and its impact on them, the impetus to be future-ready will increase.

To sum up this section, the historical and theoretical development of futures studies can be described in three paradigms. The first is a prediction tradition used predominantly until the 1940s, and is based on a deterministic paradigm of the future. The second paradigm is futures studies, a systematic academic field of study, formulated since the 1940s, and is based on an indeterministic paradigm of the future. It promotes the concepts of alternative futures, and encourages individuals and organisations to exercise greater agency and responsibility for their future. The third paradigm emerged in the 1980s to counter the predominantly Western scientific approach to futures studies. It strives to include more humanities subjects such as arts and philosophy, to be more integral, and to embrace paradoxical thinking. Developments suggest that futures studies could become an “anticipation” studies in future. The three paradigms show the evolution of human consciousness about time and the future in the secular world. Futures studies signify that the linear three-part perception of time is giving way to an alternative futures approach. A deterministic view of the future is giving way to an indeterministic view, and humans are more empowered to control their futures. The purpose of futures studies is to empower people to be future-ready through informed judgment.

2. Biblical-Theological Critique on the Theoretical Foundations

This section critiques the theoretical foundations of futures studies to clarify the Christian stand on three aspects: What is the theological view of time? What is the theological view of the future? What is the theological view of future-readiness?

a) Theological view of time

Futures studies possesses a certain worldview of the future. Many Christian scholars suggest that the theological view of time differs from the secular view.

Buckwalter (1996, 774) asserts that “the significance of the biblical concept of time is unmistakably the way it uniformly presents God at work guiding the course of history according to his saving plan.” Three of his six main themes of time are relevant in the discussion here:

- 1) God as Lord over time: “Time is not fatalistic nor capricious, but according to Scripture, under God’s personal direction and control. Time began at creation and becomes the agency through which God continues to unveil his divine purpose for it.” (Buckwalter 1996, 774)
- 2) Humanity as subject to time: “In contrast to God and Jesus, humanity is limited by time in the cycle of birth, life and death.” (Buckwalter 1996, 774)
- 3) Time as redemptive history: “The revelatory nature of... divine in-breakings dispels any notion that time is merely cyclical, without purpose and value. . . Time is meaningfully forward-moving.” (Buckwalter 1996, 774)

N. T. Wright (2008, 122) points out, “the strongly held belief of most first-century Jews, and virtually all early Christians, [was] that history was going somewhere under the guidance of God and that where it was going was toward God’s new world of justice, healing, and hope.” The Bible records many instances of God’s intervention in the historical timeline through specific revelations, in the form of prophecy, visions and dreams, to prepare his people for the future. For example, Abraham’s vision (Gen 15:1-21), Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer 1:1-19), and Daniel’s dream (Dan 7:1-28). Along with the Bible’s emphasis on general and specific revelation is its attention to timely fulfilment. For example, the fulfilment of Joseph’s interpretation of dream (Gen 41:53-54), the

fulfilment of “Emmanuel” (Matt 1:21-23), and the fulfilment of the gospels being spread to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28).

Pinnock (1988, 852) cautions that “sweeping conclusions have been drawn from supposed contrasts between Gk *kairos* (time as event) and *chronos* (time as duration)”, and *aion* (age), because those conclusions were not based on biblical contexts, but on the linguistic method of treating words in isolation. He debunks many false concepts of biblical time by other scholars, by proving that “the OT has a wealth of words for time units (hour, day, night, week, month, year) but no abstract term for ‘time’ like Greek *chronos*” (Pinnock 1988, 852). He argues that “primarily, the Bible views time as the limited succession of days in which *human experience* [emphasis mine] of the world flows” (Pinnock 1988, 853). In essence, time is tied to human consciousness.

Moltmann agrees with Augustine’s view of time with a reference to human consciousness too:

In his psychological theory of time, Augustine relates past, present, and future to their perception by human souls: the human spirit visualised the past by the use of memory (*memoria*). This is visualised past, not the past itself. It visualises the future by means of expectation (*expectatio*). This is a visualised future, not the future itself. The human spirit perceives the present by means of observation (*contuitus*). This is immediate present. (Moltmann 2000, 31)

In other words, visualised past and visualised future, not the real past nor future, coexist in the human consciousness to inform present observation for decision-making.

Lutheran theologian Ted Peters writes extensively on the theological concept of time and future, and further elaborates on the human consciousness of time. “What we call the ‘now’ is really an abstraction, a mentally conceived discrete moment. The underlying actuality from which we abstract it is an ever moving frontier of time” (Peters 2000, 66). Peters (2000, 66) says, “the first thing God did for the universe was to give it a future. God bestows future by opening up the *possibility of becoming* something it had never been before and by supplying the *power to change* [all emphases mine]”.

Based on the views by the scholars mentioned above, a theological concept of time begins to take shape. Time is meaningfully forward-moving to serve God’s ultimate

purpose and plan of redemption. Time is essentially another tool in the Creator's toolbox to affect his will. God has intervened in historical time through general and specific revelations to prepare His people. Fulfilment points to God's faithfulness to his promises. A Christian worldview of time will need to incorporate time from God's otherworldly perspective. When time is viewed from the human perspective, theology does agree with futures studies in many ways. Pinnock speaks of time as human experience, similar to the earlier point by futurist-psychologist Gidley about the human consciousness of time. Moltmann's and Augustine's view of visualised future is similar to what futurists call "images of the future" (Dator 2014, 61) or "anticipation as the form of the future" (Miller 2018a). Peters' emphasis on the future as the "possibility of becoming" and "power to change" resonates with principles of alternative futures, and the exercise of human agency in futures studies. He asserts that "Christian eschatology has something distinctive to offer that enhances and deepens [the futurists'] strictly scientific and humanistic perspectives" (Peters 1975, 412). He cautions that "scientific futurology cannot stop with simply forecasting alternative futures; it goes on to challenge us to decide between them. Decisions depend upon priorities and priorities are ranked according to values" (Peters 1975, 409). Our worldviews and belief systems dictate which future we choose. If futures studies is to be applied in Christian ministry, it must incorporate the additional Christian worldview from God's perspective of time, while persevering with those aspects that it shares with theology.

b) Theological view of the future

Eschatology is the theological study of the biblical concept of "last things", and scholars have provided background and informed opinions on *what* will happen at the end of days. Examples are Christian beliefs in a coming judgment day, a blessed hope, heaven and hell. But how do beliefs about the *end of days* relate to a person's life *today*?

Moltmann, in his book *Hope and Planning*, showed an attempt to link eschatology to present-day preparation. He suggests how planning relates to hope: "[H]ope and planning represent the future in different ways. . . Without specific goals towards which hope is directed, there can be no decision about the possibilities of planning; but without planning, there can be no realistic hope" (Moltmann 1971, 178). Despite his attempt, it has not gained as much attention among scholars as Moltmann's other works on hope.

To date, theological discussion about the theology of hope is commonplace in eschatology, but exposition about a theology of preparation for that hope is rare.

N. T. Wright puts the gap in eschatology this way, “Is all this talk about God’s ultimate future, about ‘life after life after death,’ simply a matter of tidying up our beliefs about what will happen in the very end, or does it have any practical consequences here and now?” (Wright 2008, 189). His approach to eschatology in his book *Surprised by Hope*, is guided by two overarching questions: What are we waiting for? What are we going to do about it in the meantime? (Wright 2008, xi) For the field of eschatology, Wright’s second question is as important as the first, for it gives meaning and purpose to how Christians ought to live each day, up to their last day. For many lay believers, the end of days is too far off and too abstract to grasp. At the theoretical level, what is required is not just a focus on *the end*, but an equal emphasis on “future orientation” – how can people orientate themselves in their present-day contexts to approach their future. Future orientation has been defined by developmental psychologists in many ways, and comprises components that are “cognitive (e.g., the extent to which one thinks about the future), attitudinal (e.g., the extent to which one prefers long term, as opposed to short-term, goals), and motivational (e.g., the extent to which one formulates plans to achieve long-term goals. . .)” (Steinberg et al. 2009, 28-29).

To differentiate the concerns of eschatology and futures studies, it is useful to visualise them on a timeline. Eschatology has been largely concerned with a theology of *the end*, not a theology of *the future*. The emphasis of the former is a *point* (at the end) in a timeline, the latter emphasises the *movement* between two points (a point in the present and one in the future) in a timeline.

One fundamental question pertinent to, and underlying a theology of, the future is: what is the future? Is there only one future pre-determined by God (*the future*), or are there many different futures (possibilities) to choose wisely? What are the attitudinal and motivational implications of the two different ways of thinking about the future? These and many other theories of thinking about the future are known as *Futures Thinking* in futures studies. Futures Thinking has embedded fundamental beliefs that govern how people operate their lives to approach their future. It drives a person’s sense of self-efficacy, responsibilities, agency for change, locus of control, and positive or negative outlook for their future. Deliberate efforts to help people become self-aware about their

Futures Thinking can help them exercise greater agency and responsibility to create a desirable future, as opposed to being victims of change. In this chapter, section A1: Theoretical Foundations of Futures Studies, the brief history of futures studies shows that the first paradigm about the future has been held and unquestioned by many scholars and thinkers, until the second and third paradigms arose to challenge people to rethink their perception of the future.

A Christian worldview of the future has been essential for this researcher to have the right knowledge and content for his teaching. A framework is proposed by piecing together and building on the knowledge of the few Christian scholars who have engaged in Futures Thinking. This framework serves to inform his course syllabus design in Chapter Three.

The attempt to understand the theological view of the future consist of three movements: (1) to understand *futurum* and its implications; (2) to understand *adventus* and its implications; (3) to understand the relationship between *futurum* and *adventus*.

First, there are two different Latin terms for the word “future” in theology. As defined in the first chapter, *futurum* is the derivation of the English word “future”, and the future most commonly understood. It implies that past-present-future is a *continuity*, and hence, the future is essentially predictable, and extrapolation is the method to do so. According to Ray Anderson’s discussion (1986, 49), “In this sense of the word, the future cannot really be any more than the extrapolation of the present. Thus, the ‘future’ is already a ‘future past,’ because nothing can enter in that is not already present as some possibility.”

Extrapolation is effective because causality and potential is inherent in *futurum*.

Lutheran theologian Peters (2000, 61) says, “The idea of *futurum* entails the assumption that the future will be the result of causative forces coming from the past. Here the future actualizes a potential that is already present. . .” Hence, if the future is a continuity of past-to-present, then the pursuit of better methods *directly* influence the accuracy of extrapolating the future. For example, importing weather trends and data for the past hundred years into a supercomputer will be more accurate at anticipating the weather tomorrow, than the method of comparing weather charts through the naked eye.

The perspective of futures studies complements the understanding of *futurum*. Futurists McKelvey and Boisot (2009, 17) argue there are three paths to the future, ordered by

foresight feasibility. The first two paths relate to *futurum* and the third to *adventus*. The first path claims that the future is uncertain only because the person lacks information. Gaining more knowledge, for example, about the weather or one's health, will provide clarity and a better future. The second path presumes the future path is a linear, unbroken predictability, in other words – continuity. Hence, the study of trends, cycles, and patterns will enable the discerning person to see the unfolding future sooner than others do. The focus of futures studies here is to analyse the past to infer the future. The premise of *futurum* is evident in the two future paths, leading to methods of extrapolation to prospect what is ahead.

Second, the other Latin term for the future is *adventus*, where the future is perceived as an arrival. As a verb, its English derivative advent is used generally today to mean “the fact of an event happening, an invention being made, or a person arriving” (*Cambridge English dictionary*). Historically, *adventus* was used by the gospel writers in references to the future to refer specifically to the glorious return of Christ. They borrowed the word from its use to describe Caesar's ceremonious entry to Rome after his military conquest. Peters (2000, 61) says, “With the term *adventus*, in contrast, we think of the appearance of something radically new. The new here is not merely the effect of past causes or the actualization of existing potential.” Some examples of these “radically new” events quoted by him include the birth of Christ and the coming kingdom of God. However, the term “radically new” may create an unintentional confusion and cognitive distance, that *adventus* is mysterious, or worse, that God is unfathomable or capricious. The term is better understood in light of a *discontinuity* of past-present-future. It is “radically new” because it is devoid of the effects of causality and potential. This discontinuity arises because certain events in human history are affected by God, and not due to human or natural causality. In other words, time is dependent on events of intervention by God:

Linear continuity (of time) in the Bible surrenders priority to the events themselves. Each time God acts decisively he virtually creates reality anew. He establishes what will be. God acts out of his freedom and power, evidently unconstrained by what has gone on before. God's interventions into history demonstrate the same newness as that demonstrated in the creation of the world at the beginning, *creatio ex nihilo*. (Peters 2000, 62)

From a Lutheran perspective, Peters considers Eucharist as *creatio ex nihilo*. From this researcher's Pentecostal perspective, supernatural healing constitutes another example of *creatio ex nihilo*. How can the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, simply through

prayer? These miracles are incomprehensible on the grounds of human causality. In supernatural healing, the execution of the divine will is at the fore of the healer's consciousness. To exercise healing is *to align and execute the will of God for that person in that context*. The healer proclaims the power of God – a glimpse of wholeness in God's future kingdom – to bear on the present reality, speaking it into being through a word of prayer pregnant with faith. The healed patient experiences a new alternative future, and often an increased faith in God that may or may not lead to salvation in Christ. The healing ministries and signs and wonders of Jonathan Edwards, John Wimber, Reinhard Bonnke, and other preachers attest to this temporal in-breaking of the future kingdom of God in the present reality for redemptive purposes. Healing is not the ultimate goal, redemption and trust in Christ the coming king is, because every healed person ultimately dies later in life. This temporal experience is a realised and inaugurated eschatology where the kingdom of God is already but not yet. Divine healing is a *creatio ex nihilo* event possible only through the will of God coming into effect. The researcher's view is that there are many other *creatio ex nihilo* events that are more subtle, when Christians follow the will of God. For example, a timely word or Bible verse of comfort, a chance encounter with a person of God, an answered prayer, or fulfilling the calling of God in life. Known generally as "divine encounters" in Pentecostal circles, the focus of these events ought to be on acting in alignment with the will of God.

Moving on to the response to *adventus*, if past-present-future is a discontinuity, then extrapolation of past trends and patterns *pertaining to the human or natural causality* does not apply, because God and his sovereign will is the source of the future. To know what is coming in a *discontinuous future* – a future filled with surprises, one cannot rely solely on extrapolation of the past, but should devote attention to the lookout, like a watchman in the Old Testament. The duty of the watchman was to watch out for God's judgment and message to the people, and to sound the alarm (Eze 33:1-9). Isa 56:10-12 describes the behaviour of watchmen who failed in their roles, being blind and ignorant, like mute dogs unable to bark, and always assuming "tomorrow will be like today, only more so" – a reference to the false assumption of continuity.

The motif of watchfulness (inclusive of prayerfulness) is expanded in the New Testament (Matt 24:42, 1 Pet 5:8, Col 4:2, 1 Cor 16:13, 1 Thess 5:6, Rev 3:3, Rev 16:15). In Jesus' Olivet discourse which centred on the subject of the future, a key

turning point occurs at the parable of the fig tree (Matt 24: 32-35), where Jesus switches from prophesying signs about the future, to a command for personal readiness. The disciples are commanded to (1) watch for outward signs, and (2) gain an inward realisation about God's movement (Matt 24:33). This two-step approach, expressed in terms of time, implies that disciples of all ages are to be alert to signs in their *present* realities, and then interpret them in light of God's *adventus* (what is to come, what he is going to do). Hence, the general and specific revelation of God becomes important as a future-oriented roadmap to know God's plan and purpose.

Yet, watchfulness can easily become guesswork or hunches if the observer is not careful. In some Christian circles, apocalypticism is thriving, and doomsayers are quick to link every phenomenon to end-time prophecies. For example, *The Washington Post* ("On social media, vaccine misinformation mixes with extreme faith," Feb 12, 2021) reports that some churches and Christian influencers in the US are promoting the misinformation that COVID-19 vaccination is the "mark of the beast". Such uncritical guesswork has led to much confusion in Christian circles, and even opposition to public safety and the common good, in the US and in Singapore. A theology of watchfulness is urgently needed to train Christians to watch in the right manner, being guided by sound theology and methodology.

The biblical mandate for watchfulness shows that the discontinuity of *adventus* is only radically new to the spiritually asleep, believers and unbelievers included. It should not be new to the spiritually alert, those who align themselves to the heart of God (biblically known as the "friends of God"). God is self-revelatory, he does not hide his character nor his thoughts from his friends (Gen 18:17, Exo 34:6-7, John 15:14-15, 1 Cor 2:11-12). For example, before the birth of Christ, God revealed his plan, and invited people to pay attention or be witnesses. This includes prophecies (Isa 7:14, Isa 40:3-5), a dream (Matt 1:20-21), an angelic visit (Luke 1:26-38), and witnesses at Christ's birth (Luke 2:8-20, 25-38). Today, Christians have the revealed written word of God to prepare for the coming kingdom of God. It would be "radically new" only to those who are not attentive to his word, or were not watchful of developments in the world. This motif will be further discussed in the next section on the theological view of future-readiness.

In closing this second movement of the theological view of the future, it is clear that futures studies shows why watchfulness is so important in times of discontinuity. It is the view of McKelvey and Boisot, that the third path to the future is fraught with discontinuities, and awareness of discontinuity is common among chaos and complexity theorists. “They see a world of aperiodic, nonlinear, coevolutionary, discontinuous events. Patterns here do not appear to emerge from historical trends; these cannot be inferentially derived or extended into the future” (McKelvey and Boisot 2009, 17-18). The method used by futurists to scan a discontinuous future, is to be watchful of “weak signals” and “wild cards” through near real-time monitoring. In technical terms, “Weak Signals are less advanced, noisy or socially situated indicators of change in trends and systems,” and “Wild Cards (or ‘Black Swans’) are low-probability but high-impact events that seem too incredible or unlikely to happen” (UNDP GCPSE 2018, 27). Near real-time monitoring implies “putting more eyes on the ground” to pick up signals as they occur. As an analogy, it means releasing weather balloons to get real-time data about today’s weather, as opposed to the study of past weather trends and cycles. Hence, this knowledge from futures studies helps Christians appreciate the rationales to adopt a posture of watchfulness in *adventus*.

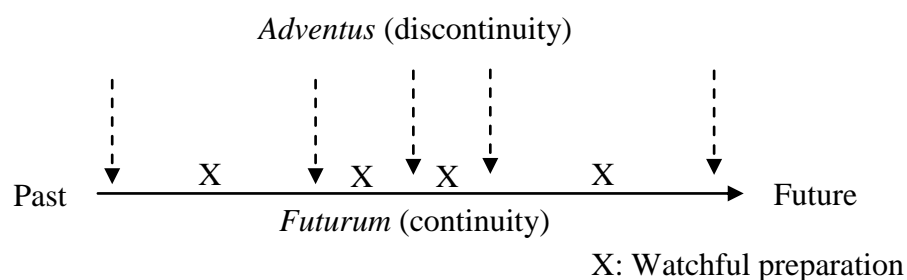
The final movement of the theological view of the future explores the relationship between *futurum* and *adventus*. From the first two movements above, it may seem that *adventus* is the theological view and *futurum* is the secular. Anderson (1986, 48) seems to hold this view, “The future, in a theological view, is both a purpose and a promise that has come to the present, rather than being extrapolated out of the present.” This researcher posits that the theological view is a paradox of *futurum* and *adventus* for several reasons.

But first, an understanding of paradoxical thinking is necessary. It is a characteristic of the third paradigm in futures studies, promoted by several leading futurists mentioned in section A1 of this chapter. In paradoxical thinking, two contradictory concepts are held together to make sense through the interdependencies of tensions. The goal is not to find the right answer in either this or that (thinking in dichotomy or polarity), but both this and that is correct, and the tension is appreciated. Paradoxical thinking is particularly useful in complex situations, such as life itself, or leadership in the VUCA world, where there are often no right answers. For example, even though death is a certainty in life, most people do not think about it until it is imminent. Paradoxical thinkers would view

life and death as happening at the same time. That is, at any moment in their lives, they are living and also dying. A sensitivity to personal death, once the effects of anxieties, fear and other negative emotions are resolved, can help one to live life with more gratefulness and purpose. So the tension in this paradoxical view complements each part, and provides greater wisdom. Similarly, paradoxical thinking about blessing and suffering, success and failure can help Christians better appreciate the will of God in life. The first reason why both *futurum* and *adventus* should constitute a theological view is because *futurum* is God's created natural order. When God created the heavens and the earth, he set *futurum* in motion through the cycles of the cosmos, of day and night, of life and death. *Futurum* and its implications (extrapolation and methods) should not be discredited or despised because everything God created is good (Gen. 1:31, 1 Tim. 4:4). Continuity is a fact of life, and humans extrapolate or infer unconsciously all the time. Benedictine monk Andrew C. Love (2019, 934) gave an example, "No scientist can prove that the sun will rise tomorrow. Our natural expectation of a future is purely habitual, having no experimental basis." He argues that even though it is theoretically impossible to prove anything will happen in the future, this irrationality does not impede people's ability to infer certain events in order to carry on their lives. Since *futurum* is God's created natural order, the imperative is to apply extrapolation and methods wisely in the right situation, and in the right manner for God's purpose.

The second reason comes from the new understanding about the future commonly held by scholars of futures studies. As McKelvey and Boisot have argued, the path to the future consists of continuity and discontinuity. The future is not entirely a linear unbroken predictability, nor totally fraught with discontinuous surprises. To say that *adventus* alone is the theological view would create an incomplete mental model. An alternative mental model is proposed in Figure 3 below to illustrate the paradoxical relationship between *futurum* and *adventus*.

Figure 3: The Paradox of *Futurum* and *Adventus*



A person's *futurum* is depicted as a horizontal arrow from past to future. This line is concrete, to represent *futurum* as continuity – always happening, every minute, every second. *Adventus*, being godly intervention, are distributed sparingly throughout one's life. These lines are dotted to represent *adventus* as discontinuity – they do not happen all the time. In between every *adventus* interventions, along the *futurum* of life, are “white spaces” (the “X”s) where the person respond to, or ignore, God. “X” also calls attention to the spot, where every person must focus on, to live life purposefully for God, as opposed to mindless living. Jesus used a motif of watchful preparation in Matt. 24-25, to command his disciples how to live their *futurum*. Hence, “watchful preparation” is the term for “X”, to show it is the desired Christian response.

This mental model can be explained using the life story of Abraham. God appeared to him at different points in his life with promises and invitations (discontinuity). In between these *adventus* interventions, *futurum* takes its natural course (continuity). These *futurum* intervals where God was silent were “white spaces” for Abraham to respond to God's promises: does he makes plans for the long journey to the promised land? Or does he live life-as-usual in the safety of his homeland? Does he trust and anticipate God's promised son, or does he fulfil the promised son in his own way? The silence of God in the *futurum* is a journey where a person explores, responds, and develops faith, hope, accountability and many virtues in the uncertainties and complexities of life. In Abraham's case, sometimes he did well, sometimes not so, but he was still remembered as the “father of faith” (Rom. 4:16). The grace of God does not fault us as long as we are trying, learning and experimenting in our journey of faith.

Quist illustrates how *adventus* and *futurum* work symbiotically in the Book of Revelation. In his argument, he describes how the apostle John shared his divine revelation with the Ephesian church, and then notices that,

John deals with the Ephesians from a futurology perspective as he tells them to examine their past success and their recent past trends that they might see the direction they are going. He then sets before them an alternative future scenario based on no change in their behaviour – that of Christ's removal of the church. (Quist 2008, 7)

Quist (2008, 7) recommends that contemporary Christian organisations “still require a model of foresight that combines *futurum* and *adventus*. We are still morally responsible

to examine our past and present to determine the needed adjustments for our intended future, just as the Ephesians were exhorted to do.”

In establishing a theological view of the future, a gap has been identified. Scholars in eschatology have focused on knowledge about the end but not on Futures Thinking. This is not surprising, as human consciousness about the future (the first paradigm) has remained largely unchallenged until futures studies emerged in the 1940s. Revolutionary ways of thinking about the future (the second and third paradigm) have only been gaining momentum globally in the last few decades. To fill the gap, a paradoxical view of *futurum* and *adventus* was proposed for this research, building on the views of Peters, Anderson, Love and Quist. Concepts and implications of the paradoxical view, such as continuity and discontinuity, methods, extrapolation, watchful preparation, are clarified and sharpened in dialogue with the latest knowledge from futures studies.

c) Theological view of future-readiness

The purpose of futures studies is to be “future-ready”, that is, ready and prepared for the future in order to make appropriate and godly decisions. Is there a theological view of what is now known as future-readiness? If so, what is the content of that view?

As mentioned in the previous section, the motif of watchfulness is central in Jesus’ Olivet discourse as personal readiness for the *adventus* of God. A theology of watchfulness is urgently needed to prevent apocalyptic abuses in sign-watching. Watchfulness is more than using methods intermittently, it is a posture of constant readiness to pick up signals. Jesus’ idea of watchfulness obviously involves more than mere observation, but includes some form of preparation, either inwardly and/or outwardly. In the relevant parables in Matt. 25, disciples are to take extra oil with their lamps (Matt. 25: 1-13), earn more talents rather than bury them (Matt. 25: 14-30), feed the hungry and thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in prison (Matt. 25: 31-46).

Anderson’s concept of preparation does not rule out extrapolation nor methods of planning:

‘Preparing the way,’ as a process of discerning God’s will, does not mean a neglect of the analytical task of forecasting and planning based on resources, needs, and the mission mandate of the organization – extrapolation may be a valuable tool in planning. Nor does it mean that one should despise past tradition or the present age in favor of a new order that is coming. (Anderson 1986, 56)

Love proposes a concept called “eschatological anticipation”:

. . . anticipation is twofold in character for it entails both awareness and action. We expect something (with our minds) and then we anticipate it (with our actions) . . . Christians expect a future in which Christ will come again in glory to bring in the end of time and His own eschatological triumph. The question for theology is: Do we find the twofold pattern of anticipation present in this Christian scheme of looking forward? (Love, 2019, 920)

Many believers mentally expect that Christ will come one day, but do they act in a corresponding reality of that expectation? Hence, for clarity, the term “watchful preparation” succinctly captures the two-fold emphasis of expectation and action. “Preparation” is a better word for “action”, because accounts from the Bible shows that sometimes, no action is required by God. Being can be more important than doing in certain situations. During those times, “doing” can in fact distract one from being still, and learning God’s intended lesson. For example, in the case of God’s promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 16-18), their responsibilities were to trust God despite their old age and barrenness. Their act of fulfilling God’s promise of a son through Hagar, failed to be accepted by God (Gen. 17:19). God reiterated his promise of a son again in Gen. 18:10, and specifically called out the lack of faith in Sarah in Gen. 18:13-15.

In other biblical accounts, preparation involves action. Nehemiah had to plan, strategise, and work with the Israelites to rebuild the wall (Neh. 2:7-9; 2:12, 16-17; 4:12-14). Non-action by the people was the problem, until Nehemiah rallied them. For John the Baptist, his means of preparing the way of the Lord involved announcing the kingdom of God was at hand (Matt. 3:1-2), bearing witness to Christ during baptism (Matt. 3:13-14), and giving way to Christ amidst his own rising popularity (John 3:25-30). Different actions were required at different stages of his ministry.

Hence, watching precedes and informs the preparation in different contexts. Watchful preparation involves first observing and discerning what God is doing presently in light of what is to come, and then understanding our roles and responsibilities in order to flow with him. Methods and extrapolation are not means to be discredited or shunned in the proposed paradoxical view of *futurum* and *adventus*. When methods and extrapolation are subsumed under watchful preparation, and use in service of God, they can be good tools to bring God’s desired future to bear. They are not good tools when

the means become the end, and faith to bring about one's desired future is invested in them rather than in doing God's will.

The role of imagination or images of the future also plays a big part in watchful preparation. Andrew C. Love highlights imagination in his concept of eschatological anticipation. "All anticipation depends on imagination, the faculty which enables us to envisage a future. This futural power of the human imagination becomes more potent the more spontaneously the imagination acts" (Love 2019, 935). Imagination is often done through simulating scenarios for sensemaking and decision making. In the gospels, Jesus often paints vivid imagery of the future to promote careful decision making. When a zealous scribe wanted to follow him, Jesus said: "The foxes have holes and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20). To another disciple, Jesus said, "let the dead bury their own dead" (Matt. 8:21). True disciples are also to "carry their crosses" (Matt. 16:24), no doubt a chilling scenario during that time of Roman occupation.

In futures studies, imagination is built into the process of scenarios simulation to help leaders make future-ready decisions. Single extrapolation is broadened into multiple extrapolations by inferring different outcomes. Different weightage is granted to different scenarios as the future unfolds, but no scenario should ever be ruled out as impossible, only less likely in that moment. Hence, multiple extrapolations, such as in the Futures Cone (figure 2 earlier), reduce dependence on a single extrapolation as the one and only future. Prediction becomes preparation when the future is a myriad of possible scenarios. Simulating scenarios can be very helpful for watchful preparation in practical ministry situations.

In closing, though the motif of watchfulness is a main theme in the Olivet discourse, it has not received enough attention from theologians. This review condenses the two-fold emphasis into the term "watchful preparation". Watchful preparation shares three similarities with the concept of future-readiness in futures studies: (1) They are anchored in the present with an eye on the future; (2) A two-fold emphasis on expectation and preparation; (3) Using imagination or scenarios as a way to visualise the future. The differences lie in: (1) Theology puts God and his work as the central focus, not the individual or organisation per se as in futures studies; (2) Christian preparation may or may not involve action, sometimes being is more important than

doing; (3) Christians have the Bible and the Spirit of God to guide them to approach their future.

Watchful preparation is not natural nor easy, it takes training to develop a strategic and eschatological outlook on life. The emphasis on future-readiness in futures studies brings us closer to that goal. It trains people to habitually think at strategic levels 5-20 years ahead. This will encourage, nurture, and condition Christians to think about eternity more often. In an era where short-termism and concerns for the immediate are prevalent, futures studies present a way for Christians to develop the art of the strategic long view.

To conclude this entire section A2 on the theological critique of theoretical foundations, historical emphasis in theology may not have offered enough knowledge or resources to critique the field of futures studies in the strict sense of the word. But the dialogue between theology, its sub-branch eschatology, and futures studies has certainly clarified knowledge about Christian perceptions of the future. Several gaps have been identified in theology where futures studies can illuminate understanding. To apply futures studies in Christianity, it must also incorporate established concepts from theology, and be transformed into a new field – Christian futures studies. For example:

- 1) The Christian worldview of time consists of two perspectives: human perception and God's perception. Secular futures studies is undergirded by a solely humanistic worldview of time. Christian futures studies must integrate God's perception of time, accounting for biblical concepts of God's plans and promises, general and specific revelation, preparation and fulfilment.
- 2) Christian futures studies must consist of a paradoxical view of *futurum* and *adventus*, not one or the other. Both belong to the theological view of the future. The priority therein is to discern the will of God, and act in alignment to that, not just for the self or the organisation to survive and thrive. Continuity and discontinuity inherent in the future should be appreciated. Extrapolation and the pursuit of methods must subsume under watchful preparation for the Lord.
- 3) Christian futures studies must promote a theology of watchful preparation for the Body of Christ living in the end times now. It can draw inspiration, knowledge and

methods, such as scenario-simulation, to formulate and establish the practice of watchful preparation. It must also point people to the Bible and the Spirit of God as resources to prepare for the future.

This researcher believes that Christian futures studies will promote more critical study and dialogue between futures studies, eschatology, and indeed wider aspects of theology, to uncover God's truth in the knowledge of the future. This research is an attempt in this direction.

B. Practice and Implementation of Futures Studies and its Critique

1. Practice and Implementation of Futures Studies

Where and how has futures studies been practised in the world? What is its impact? Many high-level organisations have recognised that Accelerating Change is happening in our Information Age. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental economic organisation with 37 member countries, opens with these words in its Education 2030 position paper: "We are facing unprecedented challenges – social, economic and environmental – driven by accelerating globalization and a faster rate of technological developments" (OECD 2018, 3). "VUCA" is a popular acronym used in the field of leadership and management to describe the impact of Accelerating Change on the world. Kraaijenbrink (2018) explained its four dimensions of change: volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. In essence, Volatility points to the speed of change, which is associated with fluctuations, turbulence and short response time; Uncertainty describes the unpredictability of issues and events; Complexity refers to the number of factors in an issue, their variety and the relationships between them; and Ambiguity refers to a lack of clarity for accurate interpretation, where information is incomplete, contradictory or vague. Against this background of time (Information Age) and space (VUCA world), the literature shows that futures studies is practised and implemented mainly in three sectors of society: governance, business and higher education.

In the government sector, research by Dreyer and Stang (2013, 29-31) identified 22 countries that possess a range of six foresight capabilities. Some of these capabilities include whether there is a central government foresight agency, whether foresight is

well-resourced and widely used in government, and whether there is an established regularity of programmes or reports. Seven countries were highlighted for achieving five out of six capabilities, namely Canada, Finland, France, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Singapore. Dreyer and Stang (2013, 19-20) also observed that foresight work by the European Union (EU) has grown significantly since 1993. Some of the EU projects include FOR-LEARN (2005-2008): a tool to support mutual learning between foresight professionals, stakeholders and policy-making organisations in Europe; the European Foresight Platform (EFP) (2009-2012), a global network to share knowledge about foresight; and European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS), an on-going inter-institutional project identifying global trends likely to shape the world towards 2030 and their implications for the EU. In Asia, countries known for using foresight processes in government policy-making include Singapore (Centre for Strategic Futures – CSF), Thailand (National Science and Technology Development Agency – NSTDA), and Malaysia (Malaysian Industry Group for High Technology – MIGHT). The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has also established a Center for Technology Foresight (CTF) in Thailand. In 2019 alone, the Asian Development Bank (2020, 27-94) conducted foresight workshops for government agencies and government-related organisations in seven countries, namely Armenia, Cambodia, People’s Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Philippines, and Timor-Leste. In Singapore, the value of foresight in organisational DNA was highlighted by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong:

Longterm thinking, complemented by the agility to adjust strategy and policies to meet future challenges and seize new opportunities, has long been in our DNA. Major projects and bold policy moves—moving our airport from Paya Lebar to Changi, land reclamation, adaptation to climate change, and our Water Story, to name a few—have only been possible because of the foresight of our leaders and our collective determination to launch and see through long-term projects. (Lee 2019, 5)

In the business sector, futures studies is more commonly known as “Strategic Foresight”. Futurist consultants often provide services to help corporations develop organisational foresight capacity to gain an edge in a competitive global market. These consultants often go beyond trendspotting and forecasting the future, to emphasise future-readiness for every possible future scenario. The Dutch Royal Shell company in the 70s is often quoted as a textbook example of successful foresight practice. A 2008 study of 152 European companies showed that one-quarter of the corporate planners surveyed had used foresight for up to three years, half of the corporate planners had used foresight for

approximately ten years, and eight percent of the planners used foresight for more than thirty years (Nash 2013, 31). The 2017-2019 beFORE project co-funded by European Union lists 54 businesses with regular foresight practices in 13 countries (Kononiuk et al. 2017, 31). Some academic studies have cited the use of strategic foresight in multinational corporations such as Audi (Hofmann 2015), Cisco (Boe-Lillegraven and Monterde 2015), Disney (Salvatico and Spencer 2018) and General Electric (Knab and Rohrbeck 2009). The value of strategic foresight in business is well summed up by the Asian Development Bank:

In times of slow or minimal change, futures thinking and foresight are luxury planning approaches. However, in times of rapid change, they are critical for not only the success but also the very survival of an organisation, a corporation, or an institution. Indeed, as the spread of COVID-19 demonstrates, early warning anticipatory systems for nations and the world economy are foundational requirements for the health of the entire system. (ADB 2020, 97)

In the higher education sector, the setting up of graduate programmes is driven by market demands. The World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF) is the leading international organisation that brings together futures studies academics, practitioners and future-focused institutions in over 60 countries. According to the WFSF, in 2003 there were over 40 tertiary education units providing studies related to futures research, and in 2010, there were about 20 doctoral dissertations related to futures research in Finland alone, and more than 50 around the world (Kuosa 2011a, 332). To date, arguably the two most established secular foresight programmes in the United States are Houston Foresight (University of Houston, Department of Human Development and Consumer Sciences) and Manoa School of Foresight (University of Hawaii, Department of Political Science). Oral Roberts University and Regent University (School of Business and Leadership), both Christian universities, offer foresight programme on their official websites. Tamkang University in Taiwan offers futures studies in Mandarin (originating from the University's Center for Educational Development). The diverse departments where futures studies is taught shows the transdisciplinary nature of the field.

To sum up this section, futures studies is practised and implemented mainly in high-level organisations in the government, business and higher education sectors. These top decision-makers are likely to experience the impacts of Accelerating Change earlier than middle-managers and lay people. Statements by Prime Minister Lee and Asian

Development Bank earlier showed they appreciate the value of Futures Thinking for its ability to help them make sound judgments for tomorrow's challenges. Some high-level organisations have even committed to building long-term organisational foresight capabilities because of its benefits.

2. Critique of Practice and Implementation of Futures Studies

Where and how has futures studies been applied in the Christian world? Some examples of application will be described below, follow by suggestions on how the revised Christian futures studies can serve the Christian community.

With regards to pastoral, congregational and societal issues, Christian scholars Van den Berg and Ganzevoort (2014, 167) lament that “we are constantly lagging behind, trying to solve today's (or often yesterday's) problems instead of preventing tomorrow's.” They “distinguish three attitudes toward the future that can play a significant role in practical theology”, namely: utopian, prognostic-adaptive, and design-creative (Van den Berg and Ganzevoort 2014, 177). In simple terms, the first, utopian attitude, focuses on self-examination of embedded values and beliefs. For example, at the individual level, the authors note that “our deepest desires may not always be realistic (or even probabilistic), but they propel us into a specific direction” (Van den Berg and Ganzevoort 2014, 178). They suggest that the exploration of alternative futures can examine these beliefs to set a new course. In the second, prognostic-adaptive attitude, the emphasis is to mitigate disruptions. For example, the authors note that churches often do not think through the consequences of demographic developments or secularization on their churches (Van den Berg and Ganzevoort 2014, 180). The aim of the third, design-creative attitude, is not so much to prepare for what may happen, but to envision and create a desirable future. For example, the authors quoted Florence Nightingale – the founder of modern nursing – to illustrate how God's kingdom can become concrete and visible in society (Van den Berg and Ganzevoort 2014, 182). Jay Gary (2004, 38), a Christian professor at Oral Roberts University, and chairman (2018-2020) of the Association of Professional Futurists, argues that “the global church desperately needs to develop a biblical theology of the future that goes beyond the impasse of apocalypticism or progressivism.” He proposes to use foresight in organisationally useful ways:

Useful ways in the context of faith could mean to act proactively in view of demographic changes in one's church, illuminating emerging issues in ethics, reinventing aging institutions, leveraging outreach through strategic alliances, reaching new generations, or introducing a more holistic paradigm for church leadership. . . At the least, it helps us prepare for the inevitable, preempt the undesirable and control the controllable; at the most it helps us climb from crisis to opportunity to risk management. (Gary 2004, 38)

Todd Johnson and David Barrett apply scanning and simulating to propose possible scenarios for the future of Christianity on a global scale. Their big data analysis of 238 countries or six major global regions suggests that “the dynamics of change in religious affiliations over time can be limited to three sets of empirical population data which together enables us to enumerate the increase or decrease of adherents over time.” (Johnson and Barrett 2004, 950). Based on these three sets of data: 1. Births minus deaths, 2. converts minus defectors, and 3. immigrants minus emigrants, Johnson and Barrett (2004, 956-959) develop four scenarios up to the year 2200, including scenarios such as a Muslim renaissance and a nonreligious resurgence.

Lastly, Catholic theologian Paul M. Zulehner has applied futures studies in pastoral theology. He dedicated the final volume of his four-volume “Pastoraltheologie” to pastoral futurology, in which he describes the future expectations of young people, engages with futurological theory, and develops a threefold approach (Van den Berg and Ganzevoort 2014, 168). Unfortunately, the German book has not been translated into English to date.

This literature review shows the practice and implementation of futures studies in Christian circles is very limited. Despite the attention futures studies has received by top-level leaders and organisations in government, business and higher education sectors in the secular world, only a handful of Christian scholars have promoted or applied futures studies in their research works. Despite the overwhelming benefits of futures studies in the secular world, so much so that many high-level organisations have already made long-term commitments to strengthening their foresight capabilities, many Christian leaders are still unaware of futures studies. Two possible reasons for this gap are explored and discussed as follows:

Firstly, part of the reason may be due to a tendency within Christian circles to adopt a dichotomous view of knowledge as either secular or spiritual. It is not uncommon to

hear church leaders and believers in East Asia designate certain knowledge – the Bible and Christian knowledge – as spiritual or sacred, and others as secular and therefore undesirable. For example, in East Asia, futures studies may be viewed as belonging to the money-loving business world, and hence has nothing to offer to the sacred Christian world. The fact is, the Bible promotes the pursuit of knowledge as a whole, not just specific knowledge (Prov 15:14; 18:15). Anderson (1986, 95) reminds leaders that there are “not certain methods and means that are intrinsically spiritual while others are basically secular. All are secular and powerless until they are brought into the service of the wisdom of God and become the manifestation of the work of God.” So Christian leaders must change their fixed mindset to a growth mindset (Dweck 2017), and be opened to all forms of knowledge to bring them into the service of God.

Secondly, another reason may be that Christian leaders are too caught up in their ministry work to notice the latest developments in the academic world. In East Asia, it is commonplace to find leaders with the impression that ministry is about always being busy at the operational level, rather than being discerning at the strategic level. It is not uncommon to find church pastors functioning in a managerial role more than a strategic leadership role. To them, learning for professional self-development is not a priority, and is always second to ministry work. Hence, they are not exposed to the latest leadership developments such as futures studies, much less know how to apply them. Good organisational leadership comes from good self-leadership. The lack of professional self-development greatly limits the capability of the leader in the long term. Many ministry problems require the leader to transcend the operational level to think strategically. Continuous lifelong learning must characterise the Christian leader in our VUCA world.

Admittedly, futures studies, as with all other forms of knowledge, should not be received uncritically by the Christian world. Hence the need for this systematic and thorough literature review, and a pilot-tested research-based course syllabus. Aspects in futures studies such as the tendency by certain scholars to emphasise prediction and point-forecast, and the tendency to colonise the future, should be resisted. Worldviews of the future that are not completely biblical should be adjusted. The proposed revised Christian futures studies is a step towards curating the best knowledge in this field for the service of God.

Christian scholars such as Van den Berg and Ganzevoort, Jay Gary, Johnson and Barrett have suggested that futures studies can be applied in areas like practical theology, Christian leadership, pastoral theology, and the future of the global Christian faith. It can be used to (1) examine embedded values and beliefs; (2) mitigate disruptions; and (3) envision and create a desirable future for God. Based on the researcher's observations of East Asian church leaders, one possible effective direction forward is to promote futures studies as risk management. This implies promoting futures studies alongside the four processes of risk management: risk identification, risk assessment, risk communication and risk mitigation. Risks that threaten the survival of the church or ministry often receive immediate attention. The Church cannot afford to be isolated from what is happening in the world. The impacts of Accelerating Change, the VUCA world, and the Information Age demand a leader's constant attention to be prepared in advance. Many existential crises for the Church loom over the horizon: mental health crises among youths, the porn pandemic that affects families and relationships, the rise of online gaming addiction, misinformation and disinformation in cyberspace that promotes radicalism. Christian leaders must be watchful and not fall asleep spiritually in these end times.

When Christian leaders fail to appreciate and practise futures studies for God's kingdom, they are not just missing out on opportunities for risk management nor growth. They are susceptible to futures as decided by governments and businesses in the secular world, who may not always have the best intentions. Attempts by powerful people to colonise the future for exploitation is a subtle and deadly threat. If knowledge is power, then foreknowledge is a greater power. "Strongmen" in politics and finance will always seek to monopolise the market and shape the future to their advantage, often without regard to ethical responsibilities and implications. For example, Robertson (2017, 24) observed there are "efforts to commodify higher education. . . and colonise higher education futures exclusively to serve the interests of economic investors." In another example, a BBC report dated 13 Mar 2020, quoted the response by Bob Chapek, the CEO of Disney company, on a question about LGBT characters in their films and pride events at theme parks. He said, "We want to represent our audience, ... We want to tell stories that our audience wants to hear, that reflects their lives." Unfortunately, his corporate vision of the future will create a future among children and youths around the world that the LGBT lifestyle is normative. When these younger generations become parents, it would be even harder to convince them otherwise. To resist such attempts to colonise

the future, church leaders must know that there is a war already happening to shape narratives, and gain top-of-mind awareness. They must act preemptively, either to speak out against such narratives, or to strengthen their Christian education programmes. If they are not sensitive to the intentions and plans by powerful actors to manipulate the narratives and dominate the tide of time, then Christian leaders will only become victims in that future, doomed to fight an uphill battle in their ministries. Christian futures studies is about the survival of our faith for generations to come, in a future bombarded by colonisers.

A pertinent question often asked by futurists is: Who owns the future? Is our future decided by political or corporate elites, or the masses? If leaders are making decisions that affect the future of everyone, how are their decisions made? A futurist will go on to ask: Are these decisions based on evidence from data and scenarios about the future? Were these leaders' preexisting assumptions and mental models about the future challenged? Did they engage people on the ground for meaningful conversations about the future? Among East Asian Christians, it is common to think that God owns the future. But this belief might be too simplistic, and with undesired ramifications. Based on the traditional unchallenged mental model of a deterministic God, there is little room left for personal self-responsibility and self-efficacy to change one's future. An updated mental model of the paradox of *futurum* and *adventus* reflects the complexities involved in how God shapes tomorrow through his people. God works in us to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose (Phil 2:13). Christians must own their choices for the future, and bear their own consequences before a just God. He has given us his Son, his Word, his Spirit, his Church, and many other gifts to help Christians choose and act on his will wisely. Hence the impetus is on Christians to work out their faith to create and prepare a future desired by God.

C. Competencies and Methods of Futures Studies and its Critique

1. Competencies and Methods of Futures Studies

There are many foresight frameworks designed and used by different scholars and organisations around the world based on their socio-cultural contexts. As a result, a huge variety of thinking tools and training methods exists in the field. The focus of this research project is to develop foresight competency among Christian leaders who are

new to futures studies. The outcome is a short training course for Bachelor and Master level seminary students in East Asia. Therefore, the goal in this section is to identify the essential and common competencies that constitute foresight (the what), followed by the methodology to develop them (the how) in a short course. Three well-known models in the field are analysed and compared.

The first model – the Foresight Competency Model – was curated by twenty-three futurists across four continents, and published by the Association of Professional Futurists (APF). It is the most well known and widely accepted competency model in the field to date. It consists of six competencies (Table 1).

Table 1: Six Competencies in APF’s Foresight Competency Model (Hines et al. 2017, 9).

1. Framing: Scoping the project, defining the focal issue and current conditions.
2. Scanning: Exploring signals of change as indicators of the futures.
3. Futuring: Identifying a baseline and alternative futures.
4. Visioning: Developing and committing to a preferred future.
5. Designing: Developing prototypes, offerings, or artifacts to achieve the vision and goals.
6. Adapting: Enabling organizations to generate options to alternative futures.

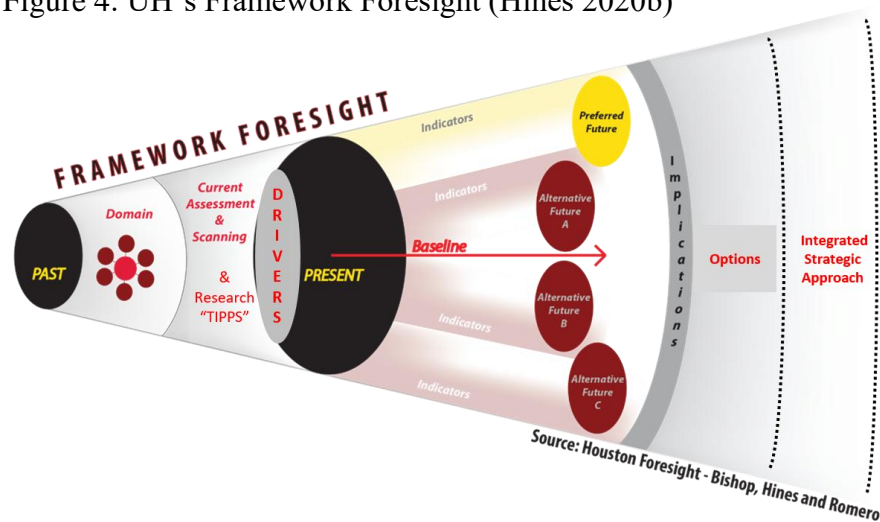
The above competency model is meant for aspiring and practising futurists to ensure their professional competence in practice. It is too complicated to apply in conducting a short training course for beginning Christian leaders with no prior knowledge about futures studies.

The second model – Framework Foresight – is a method developed by the University of Houston (UH) Foresight Program for its graduate students. The program, established in 1974, is the world’s longest-running foresight program that has produced a steady stream of futurists to date. The model was developed in the 1990s, and the latest revision occurred in 2020. In the words of its curriculum designer, “The method is a systematic way to develop a ‘start-to-finish’ future view of a domain or topic of interest, to explore its implications, and develop proposed responses.” (Hines 2020a, 2). Table 2 and figure 4 below show the key steps in the framework.

Table 2: Steps and Templates in UH's Framework Foresight (Hines 2020a, 3)

Step	Templates
Framing	1. Domain description 2. Current assessment
Scanning	3. Scanning & inputs 4. Drivers
Forecasting	5. Baselines & alternative futures
Visioning	6. Implications analysis
Planning	7. Options & strategic approach
Acting	8. Indicators

Figure 4: UH's Framework Foresight (Hines 2020b)



The first noteworthy point of this model is that it is the backbone that guides their post-graduate university students throughout their one (full-time) to five (part-time) years of studies. Compared to the scope of this research, there are significant differences in terms of learners' abilities and course duration. The second noteworthy point is that there are similar steps between the first and second models. This is because its director, Andy Hines, was also involved in the formation of APF's Competency Model. The differences in the names and definitions of steps are the result of several debates between futurists from Europe and the US. For example, the European team strongly oppose the term "forecasting" as one of the six core competencies (Hines et al. 2017, 15).

The third model for this review is the Scenario-Planning Plus (SP+) framework – designed and used by Singapore’s Centre for Strategic Futures (CSF) – to train government policymakers and public servants in Futures Thinking. Kuosa (2011b, 50), who has first-hand foresight experience in Singapore, says, “What is really significant about the Singaporean strategic foresight system is its strong centrally steered orientation, that is combined to pursue, to distribute and contextually differentiate foresight functions across all ministries.” For this research, this model provides an important Asian perspective to the two western models earlier. This model is also an applied foresight model in policy-making, as opposed to the more academic ones discussed earlier. As a Singaporean, this researcher has the added vantage point of a citizen to trace how foresight-informed policies can improve lives. The simplicity of this model fits the scope of this research too. Table 3 shows the six processes in the SP+ framework.

Table 3: CSF’s Scenario-Planning Plus (SP+) Framework (CSF 2020)

Key purposes (processes)	Tools
1. Defining focus: To establish the nature of a problem	Dave Snowden’s “Cynefin” Framework divides problems into five domains for problem-solving
2. Environmental scanning: To systematically examine the external environment to understand its nature and pace of change, and to identify potential challenges and opportunities.	Emerging Issues Analysis
3. Sensemaking: To use raw information to piece together a comprehensive and comprehensible picture of an issue	Driving Forces Analysis and Prioritisation, SWOT Analysis
4. Developing possible futures: To create narratives and models to understand plausible future states	Scenario Planning, Backcasting
5. Designing strategies: To craft strategies by taking into account insights into the future	War-Gaming
6. Monitoring: To track relevant indicators of anticipated futures or implemented strategies.	Early Warning Systems

A comparison of the three models shows that they have both similar and unique processes. Could they be further narrowed down to essential and common

characteristics to teach as competencies in a short introductory course? A 2017 beFORE project provided a hint. It was conducted among 10 universities and foresight consultancy groups across Poland, Germany, Italy and Spain. It concludes that short training could be offered in the field and “highlight a narrow set of foresight methods (most commonly: *trend scanning*, *scenario building*, *strategy building and implementation* [emphasis mine]; and to some extent: systems and complexity theories)” (Kononiuk et al. 2017, 19). Since processes are the means to achieve competencies, these three common processes suggest that they are indispensable core competencies of foresight practice in futures studies. “Trend scanning” can be generalised as a “scanning” competency to include the scanning of weak signals and drivers of change, not just trends. The second process of “scenario building” could be more appropriately rephrased as a “simulating” competency, since its emphasis is the *process* of simulating the future, not the *product* (the scenarios). The term “simulating” also highlights the aim of *learning* from the simulations, rather than just creating scenarios and stopping there. Just as in-flight simulators, scenarios are not the goals but the means to inform perceptual learning. The final process of “strategy building and implementation” can be summarised as a “strategising” competency, which should be broadened to include the subsequent monitoring of indicators too. For easy reference, these three core competencies that constitute one’s foresight will be known as the “3S competencies”: scanning, simulating and strategising. With a clearer idea of how to define them, all the processes in the earlier three models can be mapped onto the 3S competencies (Table 4).

Table 4: Mapping of Processes in Models by APF, UH and CSF into 3S competencies

APF’s Foresight Competency Model	UH’s Framework Foresight	CSF’s Scenario Planning +	3S competencies and their definitions
1. Framing 2. Scanning	1. Framing 2. Scanning	1. Defining the focus 2. Environmental scanning 3. Sense-making	Scanning: to define a focus, so as to scan thoroughly, with careful analysis and interpretation
3. Futuring 4. Visioning	3. Forecasting 4. Visioning	4. Developing possible futures	Simulating: to creatively imagine different possibilities, and learn from the simulated scenarios
5. Designing 6. Adapting	5. Planning 6. Acting	5. Designing strategies 6. Monitoring	Strategising: to set an overall direction, design macro-level strategies that inform an action plan, and monitor development

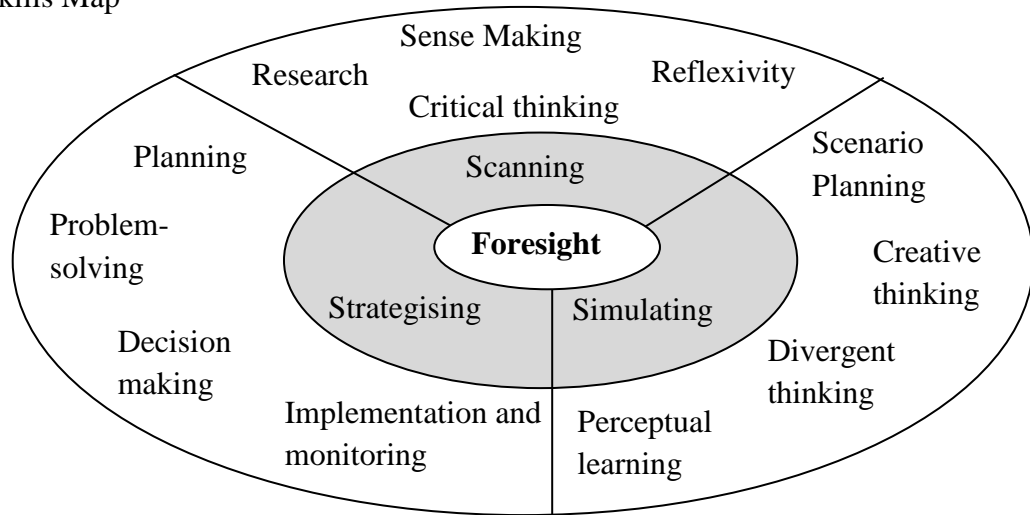
During mapping, attention was given to clearly understand what every process meant for that particular model. The definitions were worded in consideration of the projected East Asian novice learners. In the first competency – scanning, all three models highlight the importance to define the focus or frame the problem. They also agree on the next part about scanning material to broaden understanding. But the SP+ model isolates sensemaking from the scanning process to highlight it in its practice. Sensemaking or interpretation is inherent in the scanning process of models by APF and UH. Hence, the definition of scanning for this research should clearly indicate that interpretation is involved. During scanning, one should pay attention to uncover any hidden assumptions, heuristics and cognitive biases too.

For the second competency – simulating, even though “visioning” meant different things in APF’s model and UH’s model, their nuances are included in the definition used. What is essentially required is to (1) visualise or imagine usually at least four alternative scenarios (known as “futuring” in APF’s model, and “forecasting” in UH’s model); and (2) learn the implications from these scenarios to commit to a desirable future. The activity is like stepping into a mental simulator to be immersed in a scenario, and let that future world inform you as you roam around. Emphasis is placed on visualising the scenario from different stakeholders’ perspectives to have a more holistic understanding. Scenarios should be descriptive (what could happen), not normative (what should happen). This activity should free the mind to creatively imagine anything that is possible, plausible, probable, and then preferable. Withholding judgment about the future enlarges one’s perceptual and cognitive mental space to be prepared for whatever may happen.

Lastly, for the third competency – strategising, the principle is to (1) develop strategies for the desirable future, and (2) monitor indicators to adapt strategies as the future unfolds. The nuance here is the *macro-level* planning to set directions, which is different from planning at the tactical and operational levels. Strategising is the *action* of foresight, so that the mental endeavour finally translates into tangible strategies that can truly transform one’s future. Scanning and simulating without strategising will descend into a theoretical mental exercise with no practical outcomes. Strategising competency also encapsulates the post-strategising processes of “monitoring” (UH’s model called it “acting”), and “adapting” to alternative futures with options (as used in APF’s model).

The 3S competencies that form the core of foresight training in this research are derived from an investigation of the key processes in three training models. These core competencies share similarities with many skills in other disciplines. Figure 5 is a proposed skills map that encapsulates some of these commonly known skills. This will facilitate skills trainers to visualise the co-relation between skills, and teach more effectively.

Figure 5: Foresight Competency Skills Map



Having identified the 3S competencies, the next step is to find the relevant methods to teach them in the course syllabus. The Foresight Diamond (Popper 2008) is a popular diagram among futurists that consolidates most of the methods used by practitioners (Figure 6). However, it is too complicated for an introductory course for East Asian Christian leaders.

Figure 6: Foresight Diamond (Popper 2008)



The *Foresight Manual* (UNDP GCPSE 2018) presents a curated set of simple and easy-to-use methods that are suitable for beginners. Table 5 consolidates these methods and arranges them according to the 3S competencies. They are selected based on the abilities of the learners in this research project. More details on the Learner Profiles and the course syllabus design are available in Chapter Three.

Table 5: Simple Methods to Teach 3S Competencies

3S Competencies	Simple foresight methods with a brief description
1. Scanning	STEEP analysis (UNDP GCPSE 2018, 28): To scan an issue from five perspectives: socio-cultural, technological, economic, ecological, and political.
	Futures Triangle (UNDP GCPSE 2018, 25): To scan an issue from three perspectives: pull of the future (attraction of imagery of the future), push of the present (the pressure to change), the weight of the past (the resistance to change)
	Futures Wheel (UNDP GCPSE 2018, 30): To scan an issue for its first-, second-, and third-level implications
2. Simulating	Dator's Four Futures (UNDP GCPSE 2018, 37): Based on information from scanning, imagine four possible scenarios as vividly as possible: 1. Continuation scenario, 2. Collapse scenario, 3. Equilibrium scenario, 4. Transformed scenario
3. Strategising	Backcasting (UNDP GCPSE 2018, 34): Based on information from simulating, identify a preferred and desirable future and work backwards with milestones to the present. Keep asking, "what needs to happen to achieve that milestone?"

2. Critique of Competencies and Methods of Futures Studies

Two questions guide the critique in this section: How does theology view foresight competency? How should methodology in futures studies be used to train Christian leaders?

In Christian circles, the conventional way to know the future is not usually skill-based. Prophets are biblical archetypes in the Old Testament who can forecast the future, and prophecy is the means they communicate the future to God's people. Even today, prophecy is esteemed in Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations. There are schools

of the prophet to train and develop those who have the gift of prophecy, to function as a prophet to serve the Church, as one of the five-fold ministry (Eph 4:11-13). Other biblical means where the future is known, as mentioned earlier, include dreams, visions, and revelations. These avenues to know the future are not predominantly skill-based, in that one cannot train oneself to dream dreams, see visions, or receive revelation. In terms of the source, they are gift-based – gifts from God that can only be received. Some may consider prophecy to be the exception, as there are efforts to train even lay believers to exercise the gift of prophecy, especially in the Apostolic-Prophetic Movement. But the fact remains that the apostle Paul calls it a spiritual gift to be desired (1 Cor. 14:1). The content of biblical prophecy is messages from God. The training is to train one to hear from God, if God does not speak, the prophet hears nothing. This is why prophecy has and can be abused. In biblical times, many false prophets proclaimed messages that did not come from God (Jer. 14:13-16, 27:14-18; Jer. 28; 1 Kings 22:5-12). In contemporary times, many false prophecies are being spoken in Christian churches and mass media to grab attention in the shortest time. For example, a *New York Times* article dated 11 Feb 2021, reported the rise of false prophets during the 2020 US Presidential election. In the end times, the Bible warns us against the rise of false prophets (Matt. 7:15, 24:11, 24:24; 2 Pet. 2; 1 John 4:1-6).

The skill-based approach in futures studies provides an alternative avenue to understand the future, as a complement and a safeguard to the gift-based approach. “Alternative” implies that it does not seek to replace or undermine the role of God-inspired prophecy and revelation, but offers a different mindset and skill set to understand the future. In the process of scanning, simulating and strategising, believers must seek and converse with God, which opens up the possibility of receiving prophecy and revelation. Prophet Daniel’s experience was a good example. His revelation came as a result of his observation of the sacred books (Dan. 9:2-3 and 20-21). Secondly, the outcomes of futures studies is not *the* future but many futures, to prepare for every one of them. This spirit of preparation is in line with the purpose of biblical prophecy, where God’s intention is usually for his people to repent and change their ways, not to satisfy their curiosity about the future. Lastly, the ability to verify future possibilities in a transparent, systemic, and rigorous way, safeguards the Church against false prophecies. Since the methodology is subjected to peer critique and verification, the chances of abuse are lowered.

When knowledge about the future is liberated, every believer can develop their personal foresight to prepare the way of the Lord. Knowledge about the future need not be reserved for the “gifted, anointed few”. The chaos surrounding the craze for a certain anointed person of God for personal prophecy, or to impart the gift of prophecy can be reduced. In a skill-based approach, prophecy can function as an affirmation to what has already been studied, as an affective confirmation from God. Thus, skill-based foresight competency and gift-based prophecy are not at odds but function together to serve the Church.

Turning to the area of Christian leadership, scholars have recognised the value of foresight competency. Greenleaf (1996, 170), who popularized the term “servant leader”, esteemed foresight as “the ‘lead’ that a leader has, the possession of which is one of the bases of trust of followers, is that she or he cares more, prepares better, and foresees more clearly than others.” Spears (2010, 28) proposed foresight as one of the ten characteristics of a servant leader: “Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision for the future”. Peters (2000, 66) even argues that future-orientation is related to our being: “To be is to have a future... To lose our future is to die... The dialectic between future and present is the dialectic between being and nonbeing.” This line of argument suggests that future-orientation offers possibilities, and therefore the power to change. If a person perceives tomorrow will always look like the present or the past, for example, under authoritarian control or long periods of despair, the person may lack the impetus to improve the situation. If there is no reason to hope, there is no agency to act.

Although Christian leadership literature recognises the importance of foresight, it is largely silent on *how* to develop foresight. Among the few that do touch on this topic, Spears (2002, 7) at first suggested that foresight was “deeply rooted within the intuitive mind. As such, one can conjecture that foresight is the one servant-leader characteristic with which one may be born. All the other characteristics can be consciously developed.” Eight years later, Spears (2010, 28) revised his words to say, “Foresight remains a largely unexplored area in leadership studies, but one most deserving of careful attention.” To date, more than a decade has passed, and human knowledge about the future and foresight competency has increased through the field of futures studies.

When we cease to mystify foresight as belonging to intuition, and begin to explore the corpus of literature available, we find that it is a skill that can be learnt, developed, and mastered. Just as with the skills of counselling and pastoring, there is no mystery to it.

Admittedly, some are born more caring, more intellectual, or more imaginative. It simply suggests we need training in targeted aspects to enhance these qualities. The preceding section has identified that these targeted aspects are the 3S competencies: scanning, simulating and strategising. With reflection and practice, anyone can gain more foresight for the service of God. This is the premise and purpose of this research. How should methodology in futures studies be used to train Christian leaders? This question might seem redundant, but the critique of methodology is important for several reasons: (1) Christians must balance their response to methodology between ignorance and over-reliance; (2) Since the Christian worldview of the future includes an additional *adventus* view along with *futurum* view in the secular worldview, it follows that the methodology to teach foresight competency will need to address additional concerns and methods beyond those already mentioned in secular futures studies.

Firstly, for discussion here, “method” is defined as “a particular way of doing something” (*Cambridge English dictionary*). Hence, prayer is a method of communicating with God, and the 3S competencies is a method of developing foresight competency. Christian leaders should not ignore or reject certain methods because of a dichotomised view of spiritual versus secular. Anderson points out that methods are not intrinsically spiritual nor secular. He says, “Some managers of Christian organizations are uncertain about this, and may tend to give a higher priority to ‘faith alone’ over any action plan using a secular method” (Anderson 1986, 95). Ironically, he observed these leaders are not hesitant to use audiovisual technology to evangelise, or the postal service to receive payments. So the conclusion is all methods are secular until they are used for the service of God. To expand on his point further, one could say that the so-called “spiritual” methods can be used for unspiritual ends too. Prophecy can be abused to gain favours (1 Kings 22:13-14). Fasting can be self-glorifying (Matt. 6:16-18). Prayers can be self-righteous (Luke 18:9-14). So the point of focus to approach any methodology should be on its application rather than its nature.

This point of clarification safeguards Christian leaders against a naïve mentality that one can accomplish the works of God by faith alone, without the use of appropriate methods.

It cautions them against a sense of entitlement too, where the logic is: because I am Christian, therefore God will bless, and I do not need to work hard to find the best method, to use the correct method, and to improve the method. It should be noted that methods may change over time and context. On the other hand, while we should not discredit methods as secular, we should not over-rely on them, and miss our focus on God. After investing time and effort to use STEEP, Futures Triangle, Futures Wheel, Dator's Four Futures, and backcasting, it may be tempting to think that one has the future all figured out. Or that the strategic masterplan thus developed is foolproof. Many things could still go wrong in the implementation, or as the future unfolds. Christian leaders must humbly acknowledge that they still need the counsel of the omniscient God.

Turning to the second reason for this critique, the biblical-theological critique on the theoretical foundations of futures studies has shown that an additional view of the future – *adventus* as God's discontinuous intervention – needs to be added to complement *futurum* to adequately reflect a paradoxical Christian worldview of the future.

Consequently, the concerns when applying 3S competencies should be broadened.

Table 6 below lists the additional *adventus* concerns to compare and contrast with conventional *futurum* concerns in futures studies. These new concerns then drive the subsequent additional methods to address those concerns, on top of existing secular methods in futures studies. It should be reiterated that in paradoxical thinking, the goal is not whether this or that concern is correct, but which is useful and productive for problem-solving in the context. The two columns on concerns provide suggested questions to cycle through when thinking for solutions in practice. The list is not exhaustive but serves as a springboard for further research.

Table 6: Additional Christian Concerns and Methods added to 3S Competencies

3S competencies	<i>Futurum</i> concerns	<i>Adventus</i> concerns	Additional Christian methods
1. Scanning: to define a focus, so as to scan thoroughly, with careful analysis and interpretation	What are the weak signals, trends, drivers of change, and wild cards (low-probability, high-impact events)?	What is God's covenant, plan, promise, purpose, will or desire? What are the signs of fulfilment?	Wisdom and revelation (general or specific) through hermeneutics, prayer, reflection, prophecy and other forms of a close walk with God

2. Simulating: to creatively imagine different possibilities, and learn from the simulated scenarios	What are the possible scenarios? What are the possible threats and opportunities? What is the desired future?	What are the possible scenarios of fulfilment? What are the possible threats and opportunities in fulfilment? What is the desired Christian preparation?	
3. Strategising: to set an overall direction, design macro-level strategies that inform an action plan, and monitor development	What are the strategies to reach the desired future? What are the milestones or indicators we should monitor?	What are the strategies for the desired preparation? What are the milestones or indicators we should monitor?	

To elaborate on how to address the concerns and methods through a paradoxical view of *futurum-adventus*, an example of Christian parenting is used to explain how to apply 3S competencies in practice.

In scanning, Christians must be watchful for signs of fulfilment (Matt. 24:33) that may pertain to God's covenant, plan, promise, purpose, will or desire. For example, what is God's plan and desire to raise our children rightly? Are the children developing a Christ-like character? What are the signs of fulfilment in terms of behaviour? Switching to the *futurum* concerns, what secular trends are influencing the children? Are there wild cards, for example, the child's sudden addiction to smartphones? Thinking through both *futurum* and *adventus* concerns helps Christian parents observe the development of their children in the light of God's will. Apart from depending on methods such as reading parenting books, listening to experts, Christian parents can pray for God to open their eyes to really see their children for who they are, not what the parents want them to be. Sometimes, the parents' bias and aspirations may obstruct them from seeing the truth about their children.

Assuming the child is addicted to the smartphone, in simulating, Christian parents should visualise at least four possible scenarios. One scenario might be the child continues to be addicted but without harmful effects. Another scenario might be the child's addictive behaviour worsens with spillover effects such as violent reactions,

anti-social behaviour, or underperforming in school. A third scenario might be the child becoming self-aware of their addictive behaviour, and beginning to change, albeit with some struggle and resistance. A fourth scenario might be the child is transformed, rejecting their addictive behaviour, and even educating others about it.

What might God's fulfilment in these scenarios look like? The transformed scenario may be deemed as fulfilment in terms of God's intervention through a Spirit-filled encounter in church. The self-aware scenario may also be fulfilment through a subtle conviction of the heart. Through scenario simulations, parents learn to broaden their perspectives of the different ways that God might be fulfilling his plan, or intervening in the child's life. What are the possible threats and opportunities in fulfilment? For example, in the self-aware scenario, one threat might be that parents are fixated on their narrow thought patterns, and miss the subtle work of the Spirit. One opportunity might be for parents to affirm the child of their self-awareness, thereby strengthening their conviction to change. Another opportunity might be to educate the child to recognise that this self-awareness is the work of the Spirit, thereby increasing their personal knowledge of God.

What is the desired Christian preparation? Assuming the worst-case scenario two, the desired way to prepare for God's presence in the child's life would be for the parents to sow seeds of love in the child's life. For example, to spend more time bonding, empathetic listening, and constructive dialogue. Additional methods of simulating are available to Christian parents, including meditating in the Word of God, or praying for wisdom and revelation from God.

Finally, to apply strategising, Christian parents must decide on some strategies. For example, one strategy might be the parent's self-improvement, with tangible plans such as researching parenting skills, and sharing with each other regularly. Another strategy might be to set aside "sacred" time for a family gathering, with plans to have lunch after church every Sunday, and a week-long vacation once a year. What are the milestones or indicators we should monitor? For example, did any family member miss the scheduled deadline for whatever reason? Did relationships improve after the third sacred family gathering? Did addictive behaviour improve by at least 10% less time spent on the smartphone? The Christian parent can use additional methods of strategising apart from

secular ones, for example, to fast and pray for their children, to invest in a time of retreat and reflection with the Lord, or search the Bible for strategies to cope.

One final word about strategising. All strategies must be subsumed under God's revealed will. If God's explicit instructions are clear, then obedience should take precedence over strategising. For example, in Numbers 13:1-2, God commanded Moses to send spies to investigate the land of Canaan. The will of God and its fulfilment was clear and direct: God was going to give the land to the Israelites. The Israelites should trust God and devise strategies to advance courageously into Canaan, despite the dire report (Num. 13:28-30). In that situation, strategising should depend on faith in God, not on the circumstances. Unfortunately, the Israelites did not obey God. God changed his mind, and pronounced punishment on the Israelites except for Caleb and Joshua. The context changed, a new promise of fulfilment replaced the old, and now the Israelites should repent and stay put in their land. Instead, they decided to attack Canaan, and suffered the consequences (Num. 14:40-45). Hence, strategising in the paradoxical worldview involves a keen awareness of God's will in context, not just the circumstantial evidence. It must monitor the situation according to what God has said. If God has not spoken directly, then observation can be used to formulate decisions and strategies to determine the best course of action. If God has spoken clearly, then obedience is necessary, even when his strategies are not understood. Some examples include the military strategy of a week of circling the walls for the invasion of Jericho (Josh. 6), and the strategy of patiently waiting for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, even though it was dangerous for the Apostles to do so at that time (Acts 1:4-5).

D. Summary

This literature review lays the foundation for a biblical-theological critique of futures studies for Christian leaders. Christian futures studies is made necessary due to the difference in worldviews of the future between Christian and secular commentators. The biblical-theological view of the future is paradoxically both *adventus* and *futurum*. The human responsibility is to discern and act on a future that is aligned to the will of God. Watchful preparation is the purpose of Christian futures studies.

Granted that futures studies is practised and implemented in many high-level organisations in the government, business and higher education sectors, it is also

apparent that Christian futures studies will benefit churches, seminaries, missions organisations and other Christian organisations. Benefits include increased awareness of growth opportunities, risk management, and attempts to colonise the future.

Christian futures studies adopt a skill-based approach to develop foresight competency as an alternative to understanding the future, and as a complement and a safeguard to the gift-based approach of prophecy and revelation. Scholars of Christian leadership have recognised the value of foresight competency, but are silent on how to develop it. Christian futures studies suggests a way to develop it. It proposes that the foresight competency of an individual or organisation is made up of 3S competencies – scanning, simulating and strategising. The methods to develop these competencies expand beyond *futurum* concerns, to include additional *adventus* concerns and methods. Christians have an added avenue to gain wisdom and revelation (general or specific) about the future directly from God, through approaches in the spiritual disciplines.

For these reasons, it is asserted that Christian futures studies provides the necessary theological foundation to develop a short training course syllabus for Mandarin-speaking East Asian Christian leaders in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF THE INITIAL COURSE SYLLABUS

This chapter answers the research sub-question: How to design an initial course syllabus for pilot testing among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia? First, section A explains the methodology of this research, that is, the model of Dialectic Action Research Spiral (Mills 2018, 26), and how it was applied in this research. Then, section B discusses aspects of course syllabus design. This includes: (1) the process of Learner Analysis that informed the initial course syllabus, (2) the design of the learning objectives, and (3) the design of the instructional methodologies. Section C describes the research methodology involved in the pilot test of the initial course syllabus at MBTS. Lastly, section D summarises the key points of this chapter.

A. Dialectic Action Research Spiral

This section explains why action research was chosen as the research methodology for this research, the type of action research selected, and the specific model identified and applied.

Action research was chosen for this research due to its applied focus. In his book *Educational Research*, Creswell (2012, 577) highlights the “applied focus” of action research as that which “addresses a specific, practical issue and seeks to obtain solutions to a problem”. For this research, the practical issue is the problem of Accelerating Change for East Asian leaders. The proposed solution is the design of a course syllabus to develop foresight competency among these leaders, and many more leaders in future. Another definition of action research in education highlighted “the primary purpose for the improvement of an education professional’s own practice” (Gall, Gall and Borg 2003, 579). Improvement, in this research, takes the form of course syllabus revision after a pilot test in an actual learning setting.

There are many *types* of action research in education. Creswell summarises them into two main types:

The first design, practical action research, is an approach that involves educators examining a school situation with a view toward improving practice. Rather than

a focus on individual teachers solving immediate classroom problems or schools addressing internal issues, the second design, PAR [Participatory Action Research] (or critical action research), has a social and community orientation and places emphasis on research that contributes to emancipation or change in our society. (Creswell 2012, 592)

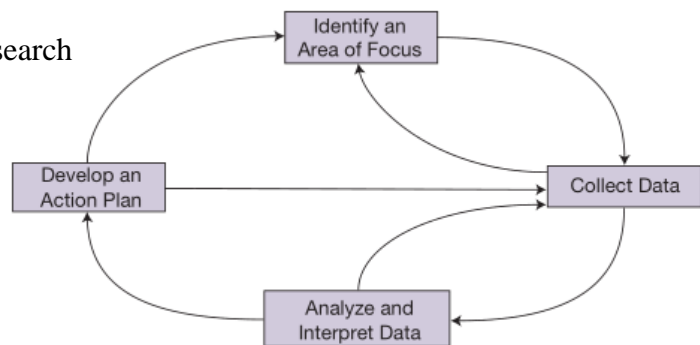
For Gall, Gall and Borg (2003, 580-581), action research is categorised into three types based on their purposes: personal, professional and political. According to the authors, action research that is personally motivated is concerned with improving the teacher-researcher's practice. Action research for professional purposes, extends their research beyond the classroom, and enables practitioners to study and influence their social and institutional contexts. Action research with a political purpose is intended to bring about fundamental social change toward the goal of greater social justice for all.

A comparison of the categorisation of Creswell, and Gall, Gall and Borg shows that the types of action research can either be the improvement of practice within the classroom context, or making improvement beyond that context. In this research, I have adopted Practical Action Research (Creswell 2012, 592) because of my ministry background. I am an itinerant Christian educator not based in any seminary, and travel and teach throughout East and Southeast Asia, usually in one-week classes, and seldom teach the same class in any institution. Making institutional change is therefore not within my sphere of influence, nor the primary concern for me. Social and political change are also not my immediate focus in this research. My hope, in the words of Gall, Gall and Borg (2003, 581), is "to promote greater self-knowledge, fulfilment, and professional awareness among practitioners".

Concerning the action research process, there are many existing models available. The model by Stringer (2007) – Action Research Interacting Spiral – is well-known and, according to Creswell (2012, 582-585), is representative of the Participatory Action Research. This model emphasises different *cycles* of looking, thinking, and action. In Creswell's (2012, 579-582) other Practical Action Research, of which this research is based upon, he references a model called Dialectic Action Research Spiral by Geoffrey Mills (Figure 7 below). This model highlighted the *dynamic process* involving the iterations of steps within the cycle. "The key idea is that the researcher 'spirals' back and forth between reflection about a problem, data collection, and action" (Creswell

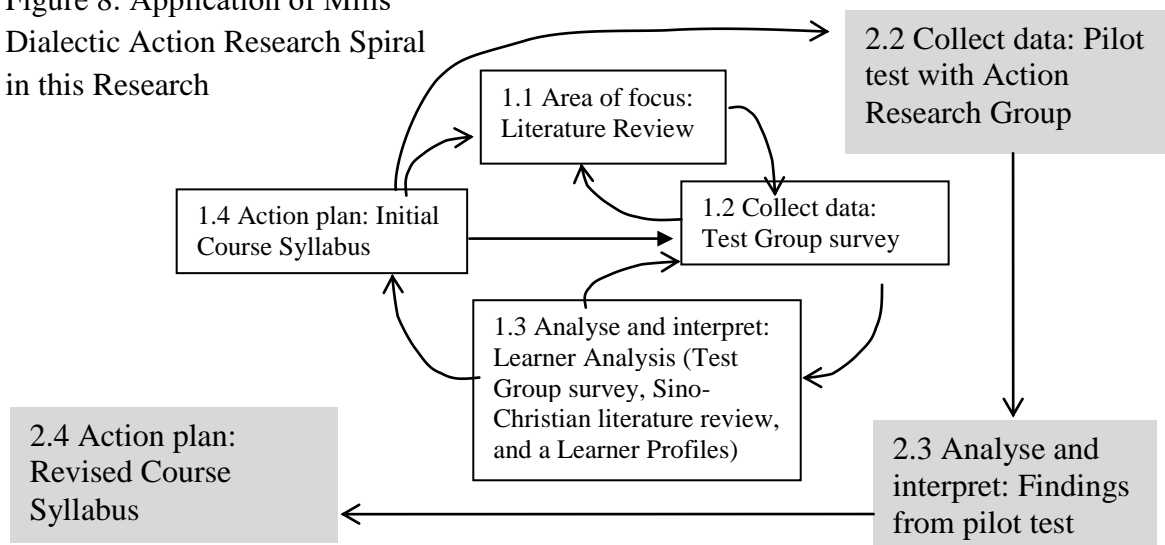
2012, 587). Mills (2018, 23-26) derived this four-step process as the common elements shared by eight models he examined.

Figure 7: Dialectic Action Research Spiral (Mills 2018, 26)



Since this research adopts Creswell's Practical Action Research, following his logic, the process model to adopt is Mill's Dialectic Action Research Spiral. It is a better fit for this research because Stringer's model is more suitable for seminary resident faculty members who can collect data over different cycles of intervention to the same group of learners. Whereas Mills' model allows me, an itinerant Christian educator, to pilot test the course syllabus in one setting, and collect data from one cycle of intervention. Hence, I applied Mill's model in the following manner (figure 8 below). The white squares (1.1-1.4) show the first phase of action research which culminated in an initial course syllabus. The grey squares (2.2-2.4) show the second phase of action research where this initial course syllabus was pilot tested in an actual learning setting, and culminated in an revised course syllabus. There is no process 2.1 since the area of focus has already been defined in process 1.1.

Figure 8: Application of Mills' Dialectic Action Research Spiral in this Research



Phase 1, step 1.1: The first step of Mill's model is to define an area of focus. Mills (2018, 57) describes four criteria in this step: (1) involve teaching and learning, and should focus on one's own practice; (2) something within one's locus of control; (3) something to feel passionate about; and (4) something one would like to change or improve. These four criteria are applied and explained as follow. My area of focus started with the burden for East Asian leaders who faced a myriad of *unprecedented* ministry problems. Over the past few years of my teaching practice, I heard how they struggled to address ministry problems such as smartphone addiction, pornography and LGBT ideology. I undertook a literature review which introduced me to the field of futures studies. It offers explanations to understand the changes that are happening in our twenty-first-century world. It turns out that the myriad of unprecedented ministry problems is merely manifestations of a more fundamental problem of our time: the challenge of Accelerating Change in the twenty-first century. The proposed solution by futures studies is to develop the foresight competency of leaders to be future-ready. A biblical-theological critique of futures studies was done to examine the secular and Christian worldviews about the future. It culminated in a Christian futures studies framework. The central research problem was finalised as a project to design and pilot test a course syllabus to develop foresight competency among East Asian leaders. Encapsulated within the term "foresight competency" is the mindset and skill set to be sensitive to change, to watchfully anticipate the risks and opportunities ahead, and to make early and informed preparation to position oneself or one's organisation for the future. The literature review further unpacks foresight competency, and narrow it down to three core competencies – scanning, simulating and strategising. I am passionate about developing leaders' foresight competency in my future teaching practice, and hope this course syllabus will improve their competency to address their ministry problems.

Phase 1, step 1.2 – 1.3: The second step of Mills' model is to collect data, follow by the third step of analysis and interpretation. My data collection and analysis was done in two phases. In phase one to design the initial course syllabus, since the actual class will not be formed until days before the class, the next best option is to select a Test Group of similar participants to provide some ideas about the Foresight Competency of East Asian leaders, rather than to have no idea about the learners' competency at all. A Test Group survey (Appendix A), that consist of fifteen simple Likert scale questions, was done as part of the Learner Analysis (also known as Situational Analysis or Training

Needs Analysis). Given that there was no way that the actual participants can be researched upon to inform the Learner Analysis, careful attention was given in research sampling to increase the validity of the Test Group. Details on research sampling will be explained in the relevant sections below. The data analysis and validity of Test Group Survey are attached in Appendix B. A descriptive analysis of this survey is shown in the divergent stacked bar chart in figure 9 (page 64). The responses provided an idea about the Foresight Competency of East Asian leaders. The Learner Analysis was further supported by a Sino-Christian literature review, and a Learner Profiles based on the trainer's experience. Together with other methodologies of course design, a course syllabus and content was designed and taught eventually.

Phase 1, step 1.4: The fourth step of Mill's model is to develop an action plan. In phase one, the action plan is an initial course syllabus. Mill's model described and allowed a dynamic process between the four steps. Indeed, in the case of this course syllabus design of a brand-new topic, it is not a one-way linear process. For example, I have to revisit my area of focus many times to sharpen the concepts in order to set good learning objectives. This initial course syllabus is carefully crafted based on the best theories, including adult learning theories, a process of Learner Analysis, theories from futures studies with a biblical-theological critique. The next phase involves putting these theories in practice to test the course syllabus in the rigours of an actual learning setting.

Phase 2, step 2.2 – 2.3: In phase two, the initial course syllabus was pilot tested in an online class with MBTS. I call this group of participants who received the teaching the Action Research Group. Data collected include the trainer's fieldnotes, learners' works (worksheets and assignments), and a Focus Group discussion. These data were analysed as a process of course syllabus evaluation. The findings from the pilot test contributed to the final revised course syllabus.

Phase 2, step 2.4: In phase two, the action plan is a revised course syllabus based on findings from the pilot test.

B. Course Syllabus Design

This section discusses the aspects of designing the initial course syllabus. This includes: (1) the process of Learner Analysis that informed the initial course syllabus. It

comprises a Test Group survey, a Sino-Christian literature review, and a Learner Profiles based on the trainer's experience. (2) The design of the learning objectives. (3) The design of the instructional methodologies, which starts with a discussion of andragogy in practice at the metacognitive level; then the use of active learning strategies at the instructional methods level; and finally, a sample lesson plan based on the nine events of instruction by Gagne et al. (1992, 238).

1. Learner Analysis

Learner Analysis is an important first step in course syllabus design. Smith and Ragan (2005, 58) say, "It is critical that you create instruction with a particular audience in mind, rather than centering design around the content and then searching for an audience for which it is appropriate." Learner Analysis can also guard against the designer's ethnocentrism. "For one thing, we are generally familiar with, or quickly become familiar with, the content for which we are designing instruction. Thus we are tempted to inadequately explain some things and overexplain others" (Smith and Ragan 2005, 58). Hence, course syllabus designers need to know as much information about the learners and their context of learning as possible before teaching.

Given the nature of my itinerant ministry, I had to arrange to pilot test the course syllabus in MBTS one year in advance. The course in MBTS was an elective module where any learners could sign up until days before class, so there was no prior information about the background of the learners or the demographics of the class to aid course syllabus preparation. An educated guess about the profiles of learners and their foresight competency learning needs was required. The process of Learner Analysis comprises three parts: (1) A Test Group survey and its findings, (2) A literature review of Sino-Christian Studies, and (3) A Learner Profiles based on the trainer's experience. For this action research in education, the experience of the trainer in teaching East Asia learners increases the validity of his educated guess, as opposed to someone without prior experience nor knowledge about East Asian learners. Hence, the experience is not just valid, but crucial, to draft up a "Learner Profiles".

a) Test Group Survey and its Findings

Research rationale: To anticipate the learning needs for the design of a course syllabus, I conducted a survey of a selection of parallel East Asian individuals. Given that details

of the learners of the MBTS class were unavailable before class, the goal of this survey was to gain from this separate group an understanding of the foresight competency needs of the researcher's eventual learners. The validity of this approach is supported by (1) The use of typical sampling, as explained below; and (2) A comparison of survey results of Test Group and Action Research Group (Appendix B), which show similar overall trend in their responses, in retrospect.

Research sampling: As Creswell (2012, 208) asserts, "Typical sampling is a form of purposeful sampling in which the researcher studies a person or site that is 'typical' to those *unfamiliar* [emphasis mine] with the situation." Gall, Gall and Borg (2003, 178) also affirm that "typical case sampling, as one might expect, involves the selection of typical cases to study. This strategy might be particularly useful in field tests of *new programs* [emphasis mine]."

Hence, I invited former students from my past teaching experience in East Asia to complete a Test Group survey. They had to meet two criteria:

- 1) They must be Mandarin-speaking East Asian. They can be serving in or outside East Asia;
- 2) They must be existing or emerging leaders, not lay believers. Leadership is broadly defined as exerting influence on a group of followers within a church, ministry, cell group, Bible school, missions group, or any Christian organisation. They can come from registered churches or house churches, in a rural or urban setting. Since Christianity in that part of East Asia is not demarcated along denominational lines as in the West – that is, not Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals or other denominations – this research targets the Protestants, not Roman Catholics.

In total, sixteen participants completed the survey. Table 7 below shows the profile of these sixteen participants. The locations of their ministry are anonymised due to political sensitivities. Age is cited to give an indication of the demographics of the leaders in the Test Group. When compared to the profile of the Action Research Group (table 11, page 86) on hindsight, it shows the sampling is indeed typical, and hence, validates the use of this Test Group.

Table 7: Profile of Sixteen Participants in Test Group

Participant	Age	Location	Designation
1	59	Province 1	Christian minister
2	25	Province 2	Sunday school teacher
3	37	Province 3	Christian minister
4	35	Province 2	Board member, youth ministry leader, church missions director
5	49	Province 2	Christian minister
6	37	Province 1	Cell group leader
7	26	Province 2	Sunday school teacher
8	23	Province 2	Family counsellor
9	50	Province 2	Elder
10	37	Province 1	Christian minister
11	47	Province 2	Cell group leader
12	25	Province 2	Christian minister
13	30	Province 2	Youth ministry full-time staff
14	24	Province 4	Church ministry full-time staff
15	42	Province 2	Elder
16	40	Province 5	Christian minister

With regards to sample size, Gall, Gall and Borg (2003, 181) say, “In qualitative research, determining sample size is entirely a matter of judgment; there are no set rules. Patton suggests that selecting an appropriate sample size involves a trade-off between breadth and depth.” By breadth and depth, Patton (2014, 470) meant that “with the same fixed resources and limited time, a research could study a specific set of experiences for a larger number of people (seeking breadth) or a more open range of experiences for a smaller number of people (seeking depth).” The ideal sampling procedure is to keep selecting cases until no new information is forthcoming from new cases (Gall, Gall and Borg 2003, 182). In this case, the point of redundancy was reached at the sixteenth case where results in their survey were more or less consistent. Sixteen is also a good balance between research breadth and depth since it mirrored the typical class size in MBTS.

From my past experience teaching a new course in MBTS, a class is usually around thirty people but with half of them coming from outside the geographical focus area, and hence, not eligible for the Action Research Group.

Research instrument:

The survey, entitled “Personal Foresight Competency” (Appendix A), comprised fifteen questions based on the three core competencies identified through the literature review in Chapter Two. There are five questions for each core competency. The definitions of these competencies are:

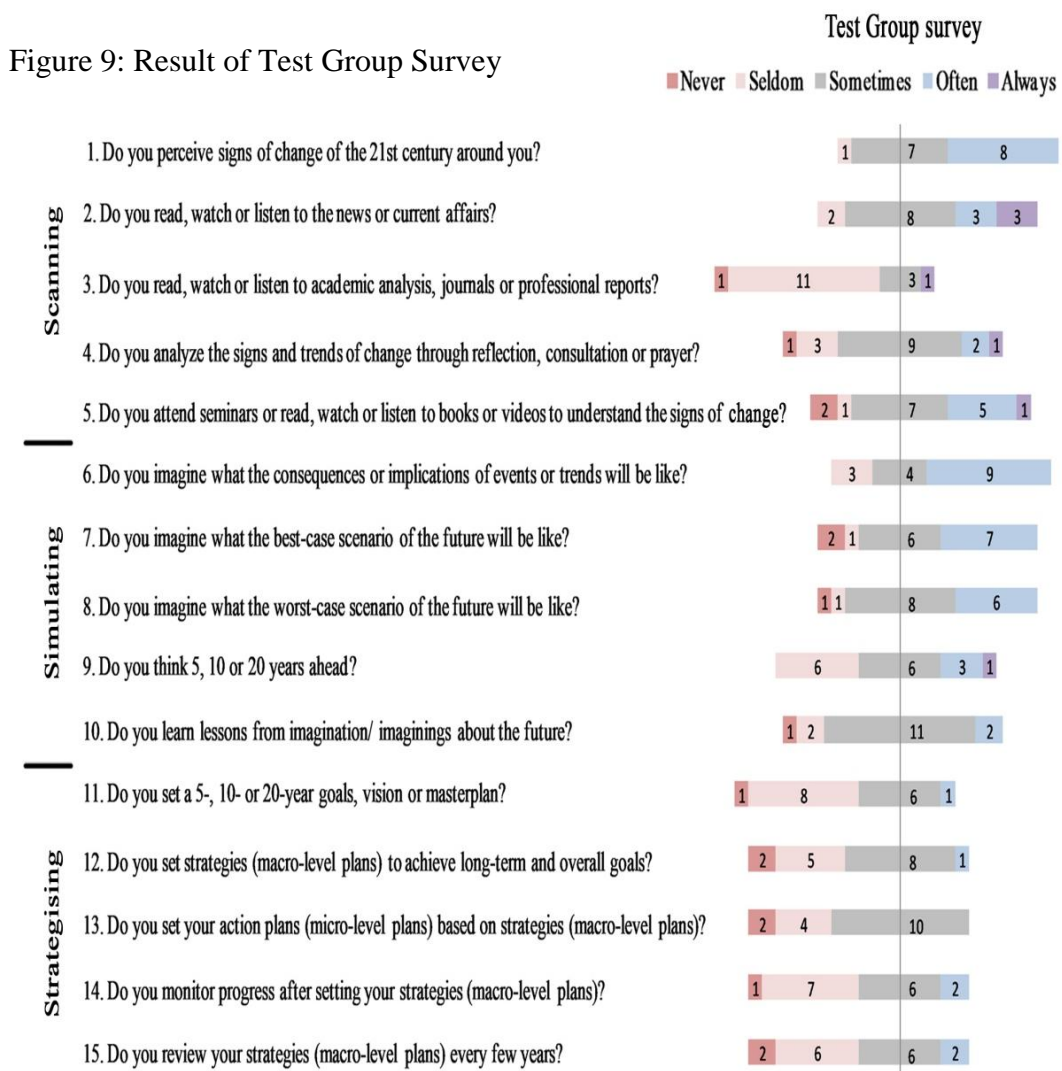
- 1) Scanning: to define a focus, so as to scan thoroughly, with careful analysis and interpretation.
- 2) Simulating: to creatively imagine different possibilities, and learn from the simulated scenarios.
- 3) Strategising: to set an overall direction, design macro-level strategies that inform an action plan, and monitor development

A Likert scale response (Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, Always) was chosen because competency correlates to frequency of actual practice or habit, rather than cognitive intention or affective inclination. The goal of this survey is to lead to a brief descriptive indication of the learners, hence, the range of values is not established in this survey.

Research procedure: The survey was emailed and collected between March to May 2020. In terms of permission for research, a letter of invitation (Appendix C), approved by the AGST Alliance Human Participants Ethics Panel, was provided to the participants, and consent was granted upon submission of response. Every effort was made to conduct the survey in the safest and most secure way. All online communication was reduced to a minimum. Anonymity was ensured, each learner was given a code that was used in research writings. Concerning data confidentiality on the researcher’s part, four levels of safeguards were in place: physical, administrative, technical and research design. To encourage voluntary participation, participants could request a copy of the summary of the survey at the end of the research project.

Survey results: The findings from the survey contributed to the design of the initial course syllabus. Divergent stacked bar chart are recommended by statisticians

Heiberger and Robbins (2014, 1) “as the primary graphical display technique for Likert and related scales.” Hence, a descriptive analysis of these data was presented in figure 9 below. Heiberger and Robbins (2014, 29-30) used software tools such as HH Package in R, and Tableau. For this research, as there are only fifteen questions, a formulated excel form was created by the researcher to create the charts. Since the focus is on understanding existing habits among East Asian Christian leaders, the analysis looks at the “often” and “always” responses unless otherwise stated. The implications for teaching the actual learners (Action Research Group) are also listed below.



Firstly, in terms of scanning (questions 1-5), half of the respondents often perceive signs of change in the twenty-first century around them. 6 out of 16 also tend to read, watch or listen to the news or current affairs. But only 1 of them always read academic analysis, journals or professional reports. When it comes to interpreting change, only 3 out of 16 have the habit to analyse the signs and trends of change through reflection,

consultation or prayer. 6 out of 16 often or always attend seminars or read, watch or listen to books or videos to understand the signs of change. Question 16 asked for further comments, and Respondent 7 (Appendix B) highlighted concerns about scanning in East Asia. He wrote, “I feel that the limitation in getting information, lack of freedom of the press, and ideological propaganda has an enormous impact on local church leaders to imagine, judge, and plan for the future.” Taken together, the implications for teaching the scanning competency are: (1) To affirm the Action Research Group in their existing habits of perceiving signs of change and following of current affairs, and lead them towards concepts such as Accelerating Change, Information Age, and the VUCA world. (2) To teach the Action Research Group to discern and distinguish good quality information from general information, misinformation, and disinformation. Hence, the need to read more journals and professional reports. (3) To affirm the Action Research Group in their habits of attending seminars to interpret change, and then encourage them to interpret change through reflection, consultation or prayer.

Secondly, in terms of simulating the future (questions 6-10), 9 out of 16 respondents often imagine what the consequences or implications of events or trends will be like. 7 out of 16 said they often imagine the best-case scenario of the future. 6 out of 16 often imagine the worst-case scenario. But only 4 out of 16 often or always think 5, 10 or 20 years ahead. Only 2 out of 16 often learn lessons from imagination/ imagining about the future. Respondent 3 (Appendix B) recognised the need to simulate the future in his comment: “When pastoring the sheep, one has to anticipate the situations they will face.” Hence, the implications for teaching the simulating competency are: (1) To affirm the Action Research Group in their habits of imagining how the future will be like, and expanding the types of scenarios to at least four, using Dator’s Four Futures model. (2) To teach and encourage long-term thinking of 5, 10 or 20 years ahead. (3) To help the Action Research Group develop a habit that moves beyond just imagining scenarios, to glean present-day lessons from their imagination.

Finally, in terms of strategising (questions 11-15), all areas surveyed in the Test Group are quite lacking. Only 1 of them often set 5-, 10- or 20-years goals, vision or masterplan. Only 1 of them often set strategies to achieve long-term and overall goals. None of them often set their action plans based on strategies. Only 2 of them often monitor progress after setting their strategies. And only 2 of them often review their strategies every few years. Respondent 5 (Appendix B) commented, “I have macro-

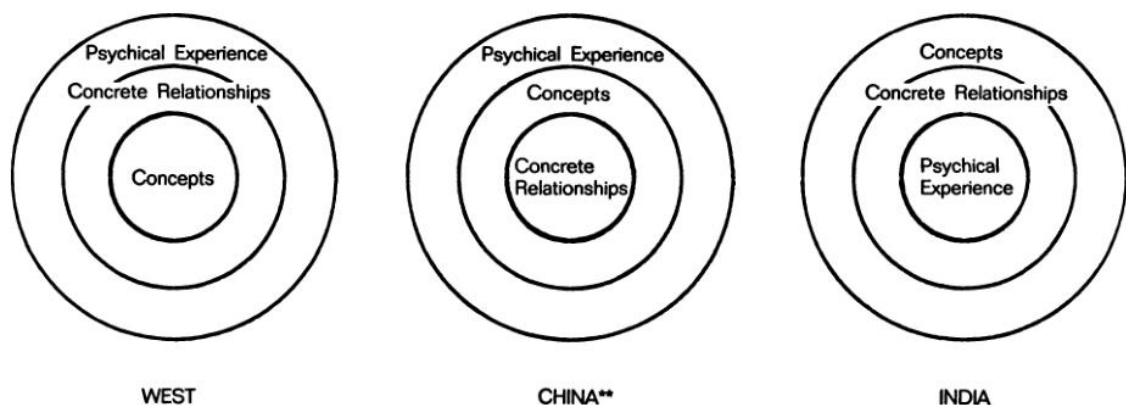
planning, but lack professional standards and academic resources in this aspect. . . my macro planning is always disrupted by events in daily living, and unable to progress for long.” Respondent 10 wrote, “This area of foresight competency is a weakness among a lot of Christian ministers in China. The reason is that they do not know how to plan, nor are they good at planning.” Taken together, the implications for teaching the strategising competency are: (1) There are too many areas of needs to be addressed, including the setting of strategies, translating them into action plans, monitoring and reviewing of strategies. A separate course may be necessary to teach all these concepts well. (2) For this introductory course, the focus should be on understanding the principles of strategising, such as the basic rationales and a simple “backcasting” method.

b) Literature Review on Sino-Christian Studies

The second part of the Learner Analysis was a short and focused literature review on Sino-Christian Studies to understand the latest Christian development in China in the twenty-first century, and the worldview of the Chinese people. This background information was necessary to update the trainer’s knowledge to engage the eventual learners. It also contributed to the Learner Profiles (Smith and Ragan 2005, 69-70) in the next section. Some key findings relevant to course syllabus design and teaching are discussed here.

Missiologist David Hesselgrave (1991, 303) asserts that the Chinese, unlike Westerners and Indians, are predominantly concrete relational thinkers, as shown in figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Three Basic Cognitive Approaches to Reality (Hesselgrave 1991, 303)



Some characteristics of concrete relational thinkers are:

- “In concrete relational thinking, life and reality are seen pictorially in terms of the active emotional relationships present in a concrete situation.” (Hesselgrave 1991, 302)
- “In verbal communication, the concrete relational thinker tends to express, inform, and persuade by referring to symbols, stories, events, objects, and so forth, rather than to general propositions and principles.” (Hesselgrave 1991, 325)
- “The response of many concrete relational cultures to Christianity is almost automatic: It is, for them, too deep, too dogmatic, too definite, and too difficult. It is too abstract, too ideological, too conceptual, too formalistic, too ‘unnatural,’ and too ‘unfeeling.’” (Hesselgrave 1991, 332)
- “Concrete relational thinking is particularly susceptible to idolatry, though the human tendency toward idolatry is present in all three types of thinking... The mind reaches out for something tangible on which to focus the senses.” (Hesselgrave 1991, 336)
- “Concrete relational thinkers think dramatically [sic]. Truth is perceived by them in terms of life experiences.” (Hesselgrave 1991, 338)

For an updated and contemporary understanding of the needs of East Asian Christian leaders, a literature review was done for Sino-Christian Studies books published after the year 2000. It shows there are three urgent needs. Inevitably, because of the size of East Asia, much of the analysis focus on mainland China, and Christian leaders there will be discussed as representative of East Asian leaders.

First, there is a need for the Chinese Church to serve society. Christian development in China is inevitably tied to social change in the twenty-first century. Klaus Mühlhahn, a Professor of Modern China Studies, observes that “domestically, China had to grapple with a profoundly changed and diverse society and unresolved issues that had accumulated over time. The party recognized that development had been, in the words of President Xi Jinping, ‘unbalanced’ (bu pingheng) and ‘inadequate’” (Mühlhahn 2019, 559). President Xi (2017, 10) was speaking at the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of China. Mühlhahn (2019, 605) notes that the economic reforms, along with a moral vacuum in society, provide “fertile ground for the revitalization of a wide array of religious practices, including divination, ancestor worship, temple festivals, going to

church or mosque, funeral rites, pilgrimages, sectarianism, sutra chanting, and printing and distributing morality books.” Paul Liu, a professor in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, asserts that the Chinese Church needs to move intentionally from the fringes of society into the centre. “Only by doing so will the church be able to provide a response to the crisis of faith left by a declining Communist Party and a lack of moral direction in society” (Bush et al. 2014, 26).

Second, there is a need to promote thinking skills among individuals. Yong Zhao, a professor of education at the University of Oregon, contends that China has the best and worst education system in the world. He says,

The most damaging aspect of Chinese education is its effectiveness in eliminating individual differences, suppressing intrinsic motivation, and imposing conformity. The Chinese education system is a well-designed and continuously perfected machine that effectively and efficiently transmits a narrow band of predetermined content and cultivates prescribed skills. Moreover, the system determines people’s livelihood. Because it is the only path to social mobility, people follow it eagerly. (Zhao 2014, 121)

Zhao recognises that China has launched a series of educational reforms over the past thirty years, but Chinese parents, students, teachers, and schools are unwilling to take the risky first step in any change for fear that the others will not follow suit. “In reality, the essence of Chinese education remains the same as it was ten years ago, twenty years ago, one hundred years, even one thousand years: the system prepares students to pass exams. . .” (Zhao 2014, 159). Unlike Western education, “Chinese education is more of a tool for social control than a process for self-enlightenment” (Zhao 2014, 160).

Third, there is a need to bridge the gap between theology with faith practice. Following China’s rapid urbanization, there emerged two new classes of Christians: “Cultural Christians” and “Boss Christians”. “Cultural Christians” are intellectuals who hold Christian ideology but may or may not be baptised or attend church. Historian Daniel Bays notes there is a disconnect between the theologising and practice of faith:

Universities, not the seminaries, are where the work on Christianity, including theology, is being done. Some leaders in this theological reflection openly discuss the creation of a “Sino-Christian theology.” Church representatives and seminary faculty members are seldom invited to academic conferences on Christianity, of which there have been at least two dozen in the past twenty years. (Bays 2011, 201)

Joseph Lee, Professor of History at Pace University, describes another emerging class of Christian known as the “Boss Christians”. They comprise entrepreneurs, executives, factory owners and contractors in urban areas, all of whom are involved in the private commercial sector, rather than in state-owned business enterprises. “As many as 400 boss Christians are reported in the city of Wenzhou along the East China coast. These believers have made a fortune in the market economy before their conversion and are active in local business circles” (Lee 2007, 279). Though they are not church ministers, these affluent Christians hold important positions inside the church, and exert significant influence among believers. There is a need to deepen the faith of this group of influential Christians before the prosperity gospel pervades them.

In summary, three urgent needs for East Asian Christian leaders have been identified in this short and focused literature review. First, there is a need for the Chinese Church to serve society. Second, there is a need to promote thinking skills among individuals. Third, there is a need to bridge the gap between theology and faith practice. They are incorporated into the course syllabus design and actual teaching.

c) Learner Profiles based on the Trainer’s Experience

The final part of Learner Analysis is a “Learner Profiles” based on the trainer’s educational background, and teaching experience in East Asia, for an educated guess about the Action Research Group.

The trainer’s academic training in Chinese Studies (a Master of Arts degree) equipped him with an in-depth knowledge of the history, philosophies and cultures of East Asia. His work experience, first as a Chinese language teacher in government schools, and later as a Chinese faculty in a seminary, provide him with a keen awareness of the Chinese mindset, and to know how it is different from a Western mindset. Finally, his ministry experience in East Asia, having taught in a variety of settings across seven provinces since 2013, give him a grounded knowledge about what types of learners to expect, and what works and does not work in engaging them in learning. The close relationships he has built with local pastors over the years has provided him well grounded knowledge about these East Asian leaders.

The trainer also taught in MBTS the previous year, in a “Pastoral Care for Youth” course that comprises Malaysian and East Asian learners. The experience there

facilitated a contextual understanding of the profile of learners in MBTS to be expected in the pilot test of the course syllabus.

A Learner Profiles adapted from Smith and Ragan (2005, 69-70) was constructed based on the above-mentioned background and experience. Inputs from the literature review on Sino-Christian Studies are integrated too. The term “Learner Profiles” comprises four profiles for a typical learner in the MBTS class/ Action Research Group: demographics, cognitive characteristics, affective characteristics, and social characteristics (Table 8).

Table 8: The Learner Profiles

<p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender: Male and female • Age: 20s-60s • Race: Chinese • Ethnic Group: Chinese • Job Category: Christian leaders or emerging leaders, e.g. Pastors, church workers, cell leaders, business or ministry leaders • Life Stages: Early to middle adulthood • Career Stage: Majority in the Mid-to Late-career stage, some in the Exploring-and Establishing-stage. • Special Needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A mixture of Malaysian and East Asia learners. - There are security concerns for East Asians due to Christian persecution. Some may be facing harassment. 	<p>Cognitive Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language ability: All learners will be Mandarin-proficient (spoken and written). East Asian learners will not be English-proficient • Educational level: At least a Bachelor level in theological education. The formal education of East Asians may not have encouraged individual critical thinking • Literacy and Numeracy proficiency: Able to read and write Chinese, including theological essays • Learning styles and preferences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual: prefer pictorial guides, handouts or ppt to understand concepts; - Auditory: accustomed to lecturing style with clear, concise verbal instructions; - Tactile: need opportunity to jot down their notes; - Kinaesthetic: learn through hands-on practices. • Prior knowledge and skills: They have basic knowledge of the Bible and Christian ministry experience. But there may be gaps between theology and faith practice
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<p>Affective Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude towards learning: Learners are usually curious about foresight • Motivation to learn: East Asian learners are keen to learn • Level of anxiety about learning: None expected • Barriers to learning: The online platform restricted physical interactions. The internet firewall will limit the options of Edtech tools that can be used. Slow Internet speed because of the firewall discourages the use of videos in class • Interests: Chinese learners are more interested in practical theology than theory 	<p>Social Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship with peers: Most learners do not know each other beforehand • Tendency to compete or cooperate: Chinese learners are usually more cooperative than competitive • Access to electronic resources: The internet firewall limits access to Christian resources. Learners should be grouped with a mix of East Asian and Malaysian learners so that the latter can surf the net for resources • Computer literacy: Students have basic IT literacy, e.g. Zoom, PC, mobile, ppt and MS Word • Social background: Learners from Malaysia and East Asia have vague ideas about each other's backgrounds. East Asian churches may be persecuted and ostracised. Churches may need to be encouraged to connect and contribute to society
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2. The Design of Learning Objectives

To design learning objectives, adult learning theorists are mindful to define learning and differentiate it from education. “Education emphasizes the educator, whereas learning emphasizes the person in whom the change occurs or is expected to occur.” (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson 2005, 16). The authors trace how learning theorists view learning differently:

The concepts of *control and shaping* [emphasis mine] lie at the heart of Skinner's treatment of learning. . . . Once we have arranged the particular type of consequence called a reinforcement, our techniques permit us to shape the behavior of an organism almost at will. (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson 2005, 12-13)

[Jerome] Bruner [moves] away from the perception of learning as a process of controlling, changing, or shaping behavior and [puts] it more in the context of *competency development* [emphasis mine]. (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson 2005, 14)

Maslow sees the goal of learning to be *self-actualization* [emphasis mine] . . . He conceives of growth toward this goal as being determined by the relationship of two sets of forces [safety and self-actualisation] operating within each individual. (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson 2005, 14)

Consequently, in this research, learning is understood not as a simple process of control and shaping by the educator at will, but a complex process that also involves the learner's responsibilities for self-development. This notion of self-development is more prominent in learning among adults than children. So when Knowles develops his adult learning theory, he draws distinctions between concepts of pedagogy and andragogy. "The pedagogical model, designed for teaching children, assigns to the teacher full responsibility for all decision making about the learning content, method, timing, and evaluation. Learners play a submissive role in the educational dynamics" (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson 2005, 71-72).

Learning objectives in course syllabus design are typically classified into three domains of learning, based on their instructional focus: cognitive (Knowledge), psychomotor (Skills), and affective (Attitudes). K-S-A is the acronym commonly used in the setting of objectives in adult learning.

In the cognitive domain, Bloom et al.'s (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives classifies cognitive ability into six categories: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Every category comes with its own set of action verbs to pinpoint the desired objective. For this course, the cognitive objective is set at the two lower levels of comprehension and application. This is because the subject of Christian futures studies is very new in Christian circles, and to East Asian learners. Hence, these learners are not required to engage in the higher levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The emphasis is on understanding the need to practice scanning, simulating and strategising. As such, the first course objective is: Knowledge wise: Understand the foundations of futures studies through a theological lens, including sensitivity to change in the twenty-first century, the purpose of foresight, and new ways of perceiving the future.

In the psychomotor domain, Harrow (1972) and Jewett and Mullan (1977) have developed a four-level classification system: fundamental movement, generic movement, ordinative (or skilful) movement, and creative movement. In this course,

skills acquisition is a key learning outcome. Ultimately, every learner should be able to exercise the skills of scanning, simulating, and strategising creatively in their personal and corporate lives to gain foresight. Yet realistically, in an introductory course with only 3.5-day of class time, the psychomotor objective must be reduced to a more manageable level. Hence, the second course objective is set as: Skill wise: Acquire three core competencies of foresight – scanning, simulating and strategising – to prepare their Christian communities for future surprises or opportunities.

In the affective domain, Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) developed a five-level classification system: receiving, responding, valuing, organising, and characterising by a value or value complex. For this course, the affective objective is to value the skills to be taught, which aims to nurture a sense of agency over one's future. This sense of confidence should not be apart from God, but anchor in eschatological preparation for the Lord. As such, the third objective is: Attitude wise: Develop hope in God, and confidence in one's newfound competencies to face the uncertain future.

In summary, the learning objectives are summarised as follows:

- Knowledge wise: Understand the foundations of futures studies through a theological lens, including sensitivity to change in the twenty-first century, the purpose of foresight, and new ways of perceiving the future.
- Skill wise: Acquire three core competencies of foresight – scanning, simulating and strategising – to prepare their Christian communities for future surprises or opportunities.
- Attitude wise: Develop hope in God, and confidence in one's newfound competencies to face the uncertain future.

3. The Design of Instructional Methodologies

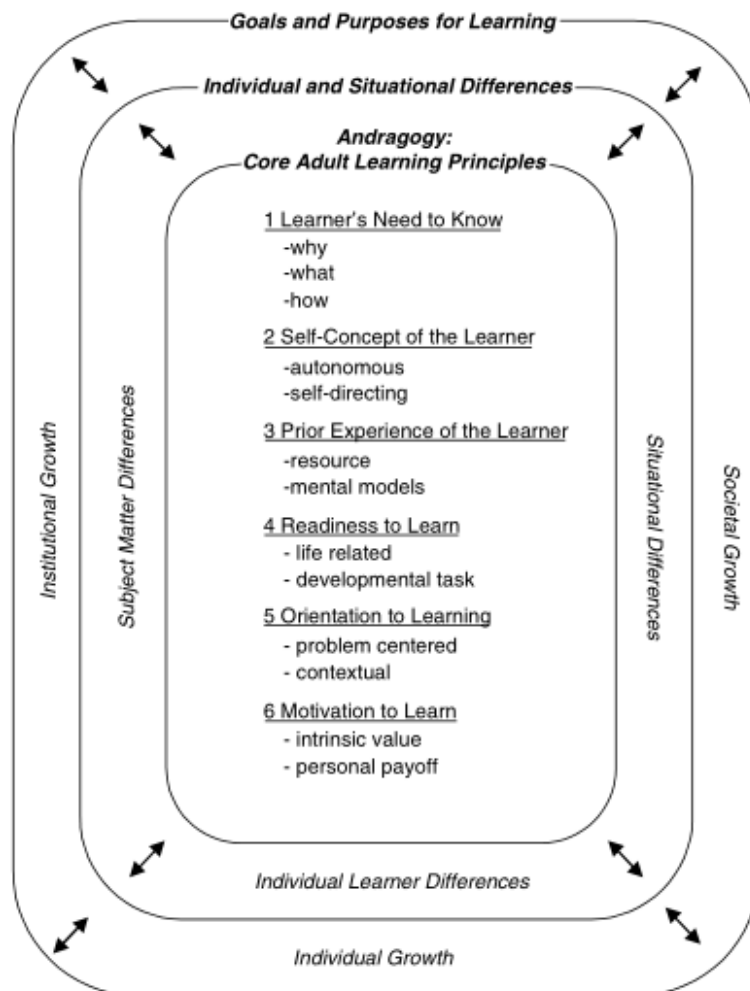
Learning objectives need to be supported by appropriate instructional methodologies. In *Effective Instructional Strategies*, Kenneth Moore (2014, 408) asserts that “a well-planned lesson consists of the content to be taught, as well as the instructional strategy to be employed in teaching it. The instructional strategy consists of two components: the methodology and the lesson procedure.” In fact, what precedes methodology is a metacognitive system of beliefs about one's methodology, and should be included as a third component that precedes the other two. Therefore, this section outlines the

instructional methodologies at three levels: a) Metacognitive level: Andragogy in practice; b) Instructional methods level: active learning strategies; and c) Lesson plans level: Gagne's et al. (1992, 238) nine events of instruction.

a) Metacognitive Level: Andragogy in Practice

This course syllabus design is underpinned by the andragogical model by Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005, 148). They proposed a conceptual framework (figure 11 below) where “the three dimensions of andragogy in practice. . . are 1. goals and purposes for learning, 2. individual and situation differences, and 3. andragogy: core adult learning principles.” The outer ring, also known as learning objectives, has been identified in the earlier section; along with the middle ring, also known as the Learner Profiles. This section focuses on the inner ring of the six core principles of andragogy that informs the teaching and learning methodology for the course.

Figure 11: Andragogy in practice (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson 2005, 149)



Principle 1: Adults need to know why they need to learn something before learning it. This principle aims to inform and involve adults before learning, and treat them as stakeholders in the learning experience. Hence, it is important to start the class by communicating the purposes of learning Christian futures studies, and their roles and responsibilities in preparing the way of the Lord. They are not passive spectators waiting for God to accomplish his plans. Some amount of time should be spent on relating how learning this course can benefit them personally in their ministries, churches, families and personal lives.

Principle 2: Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for self-directed learning. This principle aims to foster self-directed learning and autonomy as an adult educator. The trainer must be careful not to “educate” – to dump information, control and shape – but to inspire and arouse the curiosity of the learners. A popular quote by William Butler Yeats says, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” While some content transmission is necessary, equal effort must be expended by the trainer to promote learners’ self-directed learning. Even if East Asian learners are more accustomed to the lecture style, effective learning happens only when the self is activated, and engaged in learning. This implies the use of active learning strategies like questioning techniques, group work and peer discussions.

Principle 3: Adults’ prior experiences provide a rich resource for learning. This principle aims to tap on adult learners’ prior experience to promote learning in class. Learners in this class have rich ministry experience and testimonies that can value-add to the class. Instead of chalk-and-talk, the trainer can use good questioning techniques to draw out learners’ wealth of experience for the application of concepts. For example, instead of expounding on the impacts of changes in the twenty-first century, opportunities should be given to learners to share what they observed in their ministries. This makes the concept more relevant and localised in their context.

Principle 4. Adults typically become ready to learn when they experience a need to cope with a life situation or perform a task. This principle seeks to promote adults’ readiness for learning in class or outside of class. Readiness can be promoted in this class by alerting learners to the impacts of the Information Age and the VUCA world. Some examples of disruptions that can nurture a future-ready mindset include the porn pandemic, online game addictions, and youth mental health crisis. Learners should be

given meaningful learning tasks such as group presentations to attune them to the need to pursue knowledge after this class.

Principle 5: Adults' orientation to learning is more problem-centred in a real-life context rather than subject-based. This principle shifts the orientation to learning from subject-based to problem-centred. Content in futures studies should be framed in terms of ministry and family-based problems, rather than as a subject of study. Theories are quickly forgotten by pragmatic Chinese learners, but solutions to life's problems have longer learning retention. Framing futures studies as risk management for the next three to five years will resonate well with adult learners.

Principle 6: Adult learners are motivated intrinsically rather than extrinsically. This principle utilises inner motivators to promote adult learning. The trainer should help learners find intrinsic value in this class. For example, how can habitual scanning, simulating and strategising be useful for their church, ministry or family? How can these skills be enjoyable, fun and contribute to their personal growth? The trainer should promote intrinsic motivations in the class by recognising learning for the sake of Christian growth and kingdom-preparation, rather than for the sake of grades.

These six principles of andragogy in practice is the metacognitive system of beliefs that informs the rest of the instructional methodologies.

b) Instructional Methods Level: Active Learning Strategies

Active learning strategies engage the learner, not for fun and games, but for real learning to happen. Research by the Institute of Psychology in Erasmus University concludes that “[Lectures] do not promote critical thinking; student attendance tends to be low and so is cognitive engagement; furthermore, the idea that lectures should and can cover all essential subject matter is false” (Schmidt et al. 2015, 12). The study proposes an alternative solution: active learning. Silberman and Biech (2015, 17) contend that the “‘uncovering’ [or learning] process only happens by virtue of the learner’s own activity. Ultimately, [the trainer] – or a book or a computer – cannot do the work for the learner.” Therefore active learning strategies are solutions to help learners *discover and acquire* knowledge and skill for themselves rather than merely *receive* them. This section builds on the theories by Bonwell and Eison (1991), Eison

(2010), Silberman and Biech (2015) to incorporate active learning strategies as instructional methods in the initial course.

Bonwell and Eison (1991, 2) define active learning for higher education as involving learners “in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing.” According to them, the five characteristics of active learning are as quoted below, with the researcher/designer giving examples from his teaching experience to inform his course syllabus design:

- 1) “Learners are involved in more than listening”: The formal education system in East Asia has conditioned their learners to learn primarily by listening most of the time. They become passive and reactive in their learning, reflected in low comprehension and poor memory retention. It is usually challenging at the beginning of any class to get East Asian learners to share their views or ask questions. Methods of engagement such as group discussions, words of encouragement, and open learning space are needed to gradually nurture them to warm up to the teacher and their classmates as the course goes on. Thereafter, their comprehension and memory retention of concepts can then be expected to improve.
- 2) “Less emphasis is placed on transmitting information and more on developing learners’ skills”: The content of Christian futures studies will be curated into bite-sized information, so that more time can be devoted to coach the practice and application of foresight skills. At least two days should be dedicated to the practice of foresight thinking tools. The last day should be set aside for group presentation to allow learners to demonstrate their skills, and the trainer to critique and correct those skills.
- 3) “Learners are involved in higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)”: Active learning strategies enable learners to move from rote learning to higher levels of cognitive thinking. Therefore, group work should be incorporated to complement lectures to develop higher-order thinking through peer learning in smaller settings. There ought to be a group assignment to challenge learners to work together to define their ministry problem in a specific context, analyse the issues, and propose a ten-year strategic solution. This group practice can prepare

individual learners to repeat the process on their own in their final research paper.

- 4) “Learners are engaged in activities (e.g. reading, discussion, writing)”: Ways to get the learners involve in meaningful learning interactions includes: (1) prepare thought-provoking questions and case studies before class. (2) Get learners to respond during learning, for example, calling out individuals, peer discussions, or type the answers in Zoom chat. (3) Create opportunities for sharing ministry experience and testimonies using Zoom breakout rooms.
- 5) “Greater emphasis placed on learners’ exploration of their own attitudes and values”: Self-reflection should be incorporated as an assignment of this course syllabus. What concepts left an impression? Why? How could the concepts be applied in ministry or Christian living? These are questions that encourage self-examination to align learning content with one’s value system. The trainer can also encourage learners to examine their assumptions through questions like: Why do you agree with the statement? What assumptions did you make? What could be an alternative assumption by someone else?

Other active learning strategies promoted by Bonwell and Eison (1991, 33-50) include visual-based instruction, writing in class, problem-solving, computer-based instruction, cooperative learning, debates, drama, role-playing (simulations and games), and peer teaching.

Silberman and Biech promote another set of active learning strategies. For them, “an active training program is characterised by *activity, variety, and participation*. More specifically, eight qualities set it apart from other program designs” (Silberman and Biech 2015, 27-28):

- 1) Moderate Level of Content
- 2) Balance between Affective, Behavioural, and Cognitive Learning
- 3) Variety of Learning Approaches
- 4) Opportunities for Group Participation
- 5) Utilization of Participants' Expertise
- 6) Recycling of Earlier Learned Concepts and Skills

- 7) Real-Life Problem Solving
- 8) Allowance for Future Planning

They suggest eight alternatives to presentations, including demonstration, case study, guided teaching, group inquiry, information search, study group, jigsaw learning, and learning tournament (Silberman and Biech 2015, 112). For the context and constraint of this course, the researcher chose four active learning strategies with the following rationales:

Demonstration: Thinking skills are a learning outcome of this course. East Asian learners are not familiar with the tools for scanning, simulating and strategising. The trainer's demonstration is necessary to enable learners to observe how it is practised, and build learners' initial confidence to try.

Case study: The Learner Analysis suggests that the Chinese are pragmatic and concrete-relational thinkers. The case study helps to contextualise theoretical concepts into practical real-life scenarios that Chinese learners can relate to easily. The case study also promotes analysis at a safe distance – not too personally involved – and promotes higher-order thinking.

Group inquiry: This strategy encourages learners to formulate their questions independently as a group. It promotes self-directed learning among East Asian learners to counter the passive and less effective learning style they are used to. Group inquiry is also a safe space to make mistakes when they try asking questions, venturing out of their comfort zone of just waiting for answers.

Information search: This strategy promotes self-directed learning among East Asian learners, and works best within a group. Learners can cooperate during a scanning exercise to search for news reports, journal articles, or any other pieces of evidence online to justify their perspective. Any obstacles in information search can be addressed first in peer learning through resource sharing. Grouping East Asians with Malaysians ensures the internet firewall will not hinder learning.

Active learning strategies may not be welcomed by some educators. Eison (2010, 3-4) listed six reasons faculty members in higher education resist using active learning strategies:

1. You cannot cover as much course content in class within the time available.
2. Devising active learning strategies takes too much pre-class preparation.
3. Large class sizes prevent the implementation of active learning strategies.
4. Most instructors think of themselves as being good lecturers.
5. A lack of materials or equipment needed to support active learning approaches.
6. Students resist non-lecture approaches.

The fifth point is of special relevance to this course. There is always a struggle to find enough Chinese reading resources for East Asian learners. Generally, there are more books translated rather than written by Chinese Christian scholars. The translated works come from English resources, often many years after their initial publication.

Translation work is done by only a handful of publishers in Hong Kong and Taiwan, so the work is very slow. Besides, given that futures studies is a very new topic in Christian circles, even in the secular field, Chinese resources are very rare. And finally, Christian resources cannot be bought openly in East Asia as they are prohibited by the government. Most recently, an article by OpendoorsUK dated 22 Oct 2020 reports the incident of “Xiaomai Bookstore” owner being sentenced to seven years for selling overseas Christian literature. All these constraints limit the resources available for self-directed learning and critical thinking. However, the use of active learning strategies, in this case, is planned to facilitate the exchange of ideas in class to mitigate the lack.

In summary, the learning activities for the 3.5-day class are shown in Table 9 below. A detailed course syllabus is available in Appendix H.

Table 9: Learning Activities of Foresight Leadership Course

Day	Topic	Active learning strategies
1. Lecture Tue – Thu: Lesson 1-2: 0800-1145 Lesson 3-4: 1400-1700	Foundations of Futures Studies through a theological lens: 1. Brief Introduction to futures studies: landscape and definition 2. The context of foresight: Change in the 21 st century 3. The purpose of foresight: informed decision-making	Presentation Interactive lecture Didactic questioning Case study Discussion

	4. Overview of foresight competencies: Scanning, Simulating and Strategising	
2. Lecture and Experiential learning	Foresight competencies: 5. Foresight competency 1: Scanning: concepts and application 6. Foresight competency 1: Scanning: Practice 7. Foresight competency 2: Simulating: concepts and application 8. Foresight competency 2: Simulating: Practice	Presentation Interactive lecture Demonstration Skills practice Case study Discussion
3. Lecture and Experiential learning	Foresight competencies: 9. Foresight competency 3: Strategising: concepts and application 10. Foresight competency 3: Strategising: Practice 11. Topic of Family: Teacher demonstration 12. Topic of Porn epidemic: Student practice	Presentation Interactive lecture Demonstration Skills practice Case study Discussion
4. Group presentations and teacher's critique Fri: Lesson 1-2: 0800-1145	Group presentations based on a topic of the group's choice	Group inquiry Information search Skills practice Brainstorming Case study Discussion Presentation

c) Lesson Plans based on Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction

Lesson plans for this course were designed based on Gagne's et al. (1992, 238) nine events of instruction. It provides a systematic theory-to-practice approach to design lesson procedures for adult learning. A lesson plan of day two's scanning practice is provided in Table 10 below as a sample for reference.

Table 10: Sample Lesson Plan based on Gagne's et al. (1992, 238) Nine Events of Instruction

Duration	Instructions for Trainer	Instructional Methods	Resources
Introduction			
Learning Objective 1: Understand the concepts of scanning and apply them in ministry			
5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome the class back. 	Presentation	Ppt slides

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite learners to recap yesterday's key concepts and their learning points. • Shows an overview of today's topics and how it relates to the "big picture" 	Sharing Presentation	
10 min	<p>Gagne's Event 1: Gain Attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a comic (of 2 people standing on opposite ends of the number "6", so that the other person sees it as "9") and solicit learners' responses on their learning points • Conclude on the importance of scanning and its factors: context, point of view, empathy, differentiated perspective 	Presentation Reflection	Ppt slides
5 min	<p>Gagne's Event 2: Inform Learners of Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the objective of scanning • Explain what scanning is and is not, with biblical illustrations 	Presentation	Ppt slides
20 min	<p>Gagne's Event 3: Stimulate Learner's Recall of Pre-requisites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite learners to reflect on what constitutes good and poor scanning (example: the credibility of a source, fact vs opinion, expert/ experienced opinion, the logic of argument) • Do a quick think-pair-share 	Reflection Peer Review	ZOOM breakout room in pairs
Body			
20 min	<p>Gagne's Event 4: Present the content</p> <p>Content to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scanning tool 1: STEEP analysis, that is, approaching a ministry problem from 5 perspectives of Socio-cultural, Technological, Economic, Ecological, and Political • Demonstrate how to apply STEEP to the question: What are the challenges faced by today's youth? • Share some challenges based on news articles and reports 	Presentation Role modelling Case study	Ppt slides

10 min	<p>Gagne's Event 5: Provide learning guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight the key is a <i>myriad</i> of perspectives, not just 1 or 2 lenses of interpretation. Show possibilities of switching the lens to societal norms, hermeneutics, discipleship, counselling, missions (as long as there are at least 5 <i>different</i> lenses) 	Presentation	Ppt slides
20 min	<p>Gagne's Event 6: Elicit Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign learners into breakout rooms to practice STEEP analysis on the question: What are the 21st century challenges faced by your church? Invite a group representative to share their discussion. Invite questions and comments from others during sharing 	<p>Skills Practice</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Peer review</p>	ZOOM breakout rooms in 5s
10 min	<p>Gagne's Event 7: Provide Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarise the strengths and areas for improvement base on learners' performance Remind learners they need to demonstrate scanning competency in their assignment. Invite learners to clarify any doubts about this tool Assure learners they can still practice within their group during their preparation for a presentation on the last day. Assure them they can still clarify any doubts that arise later 	Discussion	
Repeat Event 4-7 for scanning tool 2 (Futures Wheel) and 3 (Futures Triangle)			
Conclusion			
10 min	<p>Gagne's Event 8: Assess Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite some learners to evaluate which of the 3 tools they feel most comfortable applying and why. Clarify any misunderstanding about the tools 	Peer sharing	
10 min	<p>Gagne's Event 9: Enhance Retention & Transfer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show a summary of the key points of the 3 scanning tools Ask a series of questions to test understanding 	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Didactic questioning</p>	Ppt slides

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite learners to write down their reflections on scanning tools in their Reflection journals 	Reflection	
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C. Research Methodology of the Course Syllabus Pilot Test

After the initial course syllabus has been designed, it is pilot tested in phase two of the action research. This section discusses the research methodology involved in the pilot test in MBTS. The outline for this section is: (1) Action Research Group Sampling; (2) Research Instruments and Procedures of (a) Trainer's Fieldnotes, (b) Focus Group Discussion, and (c) Learners' Works, which comprise Pre- and Post-class Worksheets, Reflection Journal, and Individual Research Paper.

1. Action Research Group Sampling

A total of 29 adult learners from Malaysia and East Asia signed up for the course, including five audit learners. The learners that constituted this class is beyond the researcher's locus of control, so careful attention is given in research sampling to select only East Asian leaders for my Action Research Group.

Sampling in *qualitative* research needs to be *purposeful* to select cases that are *information-rich*. As Patton (2014, 401) points out, "The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry. . ." There are many types of purposeful sampling for qualitative research. Gall, Gall and Borg (2003, 178-181) list fourteen of them. Homogenous sampling was used to select the Action Research Group participants. As Creswell (2012, 208) mentioned, "In homogeneous sampling the researcher purposefully samples individuals or sites based on membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics." The defining characteristics for my participants are the same two criteria mentioned in the sampling of the Test Group. Essentially, they must be Mandarin-speaking East Asian, and they must be existing or emerging leaders.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the sampling, I had to address my conflicting dual role as researcher and trainer in the class. A research assistant was engaged, trained, and to invite participants for the research, so that I was not personally involved in the invitation. A confidentiality agreement (Appendix F) was signed with the research assistant. The invitation briefing for research participants was conducted on the second last day of class, and participants had half a day to consider, and clarify any doubts with the research assistant about participation in the research. The research assistant collected and counter-signed the consent forms at the end of the day. At any time up until one month after participants submitted their response, they were able to request that their information not be used. They were free to withdraw their participation, and any of the data provided.

In terms of field issues and ethical considerations, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured for the East Asian participants. Attention was given to convey to participants that they were participating in a study, along with the purpose of the study. Hence, there was no deception about the nature of the study. The letter of participation (Appendix E) also stated that their participation or non-participation in the research would not affect their grades in MBTS.

In total, ten learners participated in the Action Research Group research study (Table 11 below). The locations of their ministry are anonymised due to political sensitivity. Furthermore, as a measure of random sampling, lots were drawn to randomly select seven participants for a Focus Group discussion. Gall, Gall and Borg (2003, 181) and Patton (2014, 470) asserts that in qualitative research, determining sample size is entirely a matter of judgment that involves a trade-off between breadth and depth. Hence, there is no magic number or set rules. In this case, seven persons was appropriate to ensure “breadth and depth” in the quality of their discussion. Random sampling in qualitative research also ensures the sampling procedure is not biased:

Purposeful random sampling involves selecting a random sample using the methods of quantitative research. Nevertheless, the purpose of the random sample is not to represent a population, which would be its purpose in quantitative research. Rather, the purpose is to establish that the sampling procedure is not biased. (Gall, Gall and Borg 2003, 181)

Table 11: Profile of Ten Participants in the Action Research Group

(* participated in the Focus Group discussion)

Participants	Age	Location	Designation
1*	34	Province 1	Christian minister
2*	39	Province 2	Sunday school teacher
3*	38	Province 2	Church board member
4*	37	Country 1	Missionary director
5*	36	Province 1	Cell group leader
6*	52	Country 2	Cell group leader
7*	28	Province 3	Christian minister
8	30	Country 3	Missionary
9	56	Province 2	Worship leader
10	48	Province 2	Church deacon

With regards to sample size, judgment is to be exercised by the researcher to maintain breadth and depth in qualitative research (Gall, Gall and Borg 2003, 181; Patton 2014, 470). In this case, ten is a good balance between research breadth and depth. Breadth wise, ten participants is around one-third of the class of 29 learners, and sufficiently represents the population. Depth wise, it is a manageable number for research analysis with enough diversity in the participants' ministries and their locations. All the participants were non-audit students, and had to avail all their assignments for research analysis.

2. Research Instruments and Procedures

With regards to the types of qualitative data to collect, Creswell (2012, 233) says, "Researchers collect one or more of the four basic categories of qualitative data: observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials." Following his categorisation, three sources of data were collected in the second phase:

- (1) Observation: Trainer's fieldnotes
- (2) Interview: Focus Group discussion
- (3) Documents: Learners' works (Pre- and Post-class Worksheets, Reflection Journal, and Individual Research Paper)

Unless specified, all research material was translated and conducted in Mandarin for the participants. An ethics clearance form was submitted, reviewed and approved by the AGST Alliance Human Participants Ethics Panel. The following sections explain the rationale, instrument and procedures for each category.

a) Trainer's Fieldnotes

Research rationale: Creswell (2012, 213) defines research "observation" as "the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site." Keeping a trainer's fieldnotes in this research helped to record observations of learners' responses to the course syllabus in class. It provided feedback on the effectiveness of the course syllabus, and learners' foresight competencies from the trainer's perspective. The first advantage of making fieldnotes was that the researcher was able to record learners' feedback as it occurred in the online class. The second advantage was that the researcher could observe the learners' natural behaviour in class, albeit online during COVID-19 restrictions. The face-to-face interface of the Zoom software allows attentive researcher to observe learners' expressions, tone of voice, speed of responses, content of speech, and other behaviors. For example, some of them were not at ease in expressing their views during the Focus Group discussion. One disadvantage of observation is that in an online class, it may hinder the development of rapport with the learners. So care was taken to plan for quick note-taking to avoid distraction. Observing in online class also requires good listening skills, and careful attention to visual detail over the Zoom software.

Another purpose of the fieldnotes was to address the conflict of interest due to my dual role as trainer and researcher. Even though the researcher did not know who the learners were beforehand, his relationship with the research participants is a trainer-learner power relationship, from pre-class till the day when the researcher hand in their final grades to MBTS. As Wong (1995, 25-27) points out, the dual role of a researcher and a teacher suggests a conflict of purpose and conduct that will impact the classroom dynamics. Yet, ". . . teaching cannot be understood fully from the perspective of an

outsider. The inextricable relationship between action and understanding is central. Only by doing, by trying to teach another person, can the practice of teaching be understood” (Wong 1995, 24-25). To minimize the conflict, fieldnotes were written throughout the pre-class, in-class and post-class periods so that the role of the researcher did not interfere with the role of the trainer during class and student interactions. In class and other interactions with learners, the role of the teacher is prioritised (priority is to help learners learn).

After the final grade had been submitted to MBTS three months after the class, the role of the researcher came to the fore to analyse the research data. In response to the advice by AGSTA Ethics Panel, a research assistant was engaged, trained and to invite participants, to address this researcher’s dual role conflict.

Research instrument: Creswell (2012, 217) suggests that fieldnotes should record descriptive and reflective data: “Descriptive fieldnotes record a description of the events, activities, and people (e.g., what happened). Reflective fieldnotes record personal thoughts that researchers have that relate to their insights, hunches, or broad ideas or themes that emerge during the observation. . .” For this research, the trainer’s fieldnotes record my observations of noteworthy events that happened in class, and same-day reflections about them. These events include class discussions, group presentations, interactions, and conversations with learners in and out of class during the 3.5-day online class. It also captures the trainer’s thoughts and reflections on the learner’s performance in their post-class Individual Research Paper.

One highlight of the fieldnotes is the observation of learners’ group presentations on the fourth day, where learners demonstrate their foresight competency through a group project. The fieldnotes provide data about how competent learners were in their first autonomous group practice of scanning, simulating and strategising. Observations about their peer learning in the groups also give an idea of how engaged learners were with the new content.

Research procedure: Creswell (2012, 214) highlights the value of a participant observer: “To truly learn about a situation, you can become involved in activities at the research site. This offers excellent opportunities to see experiences from the views of participants.” To ensure the validity and reliability of fieldnotes, the researcher had to

address his conflicting dual role as researcher and trainer in the class. An observational protocol was thought through before the online class via Zoom. Care was taken to ensure a balance between timely note-taking, and how to deliver the lesson well. Technically, the researcher set up his Zoom software in a manner so that he could alternate between Zoom and MS Word document quickly. This way, whenever there are noteworthy moments throughout the 3.5 days of class, the researcher could jot down notes quickly, without interrupting the lesson. Observations were recorded in English as the researcher type faster in English than in Chinese. The researcher also ensured the Zoom chat box was always visible for him to observe in-class conversations. Whenever the researcher posted a question, he switched off his presentation screen to observe the learners' responses by cycling through the gallery view. This setup allowed him to make good use of short moments in class, usually during their responses to questions, discussions, and one-hour lunch breaks. The timeliness of note-taking ensured that the researcher capture thoughts and emotions as they happened, and then added his reflections later before the end of every day. When the researcher marked their Individual Research Paper a few months later, he also repeated this protocol of jotting down thoughts as they occurred to him during marking, and reflecting thereafter.

In terms of permission for research, a formal letter of request (Appendix D), approved by the AGST Alliance Human Participants Ethics Panel, was sent to MBTS President, and permission obtained for this research.

b) Focus Group Discussion

Research rationale: Creswell (2012, 218) lists "Focus Group interview" as a type of interview in his research methodology. However, as pointed out by the AGST Alliance Human Participants Ethics Panel, the proper term should be "Focus Group discussion" as members in the group get to talk among themselves, and interact with one another. The inclusion of a Focus Group discussion in this research complements the trainer's fieldnotes as it provides additional information through specific questions asked by the researcher. Secondly, interaction among group members during the interview will likely yield richer information.

One disadvantage of an interview through a Focus Group is that information is filtered through the views of the researcher summarising the interview in his writing. Secondly, the presence of the researcher may affect how the interviewee responds, especially in a

power relationship. To address these concerns, the researcher was mindful to practice active listening, withholding judgment, encouraging participants to talk, and managing the focus of their responses and emotions.

The Focus Group discussion was conducted on the last day of class. The purpose was to capture evaluation of the course syllabus and foresight competencies from the learners' perspective, while their experience was still fresh from the class. Data from Focus Group complements the trainer's fieldnotes which otherwise are solely from the trainer's perspective.

Research instrument: The Focus Group comprised seven participants from the Action Research Group, and lasted slightly over an hour. This semi-structured interview comprised seven questions that are open-ended and general. The purpose of the question is indicated in the brackets.

- 1) (Learning objectives) Do you think the course syllabus achieved its objectives? Why or why not? (With reference to the syllabus)
- 2) (Content) What do you think about the content of the course syllabus? Was it too difficult/ easy/ much/ little? Was it helpful to your ministry? Why or why not?
- 3) (Learner's learning) What are your key takeaways from this course?
- 4) (Learner's learning) From your observations throughout the course, do you think the learners demonstrated competency in *scanning*? Why or why not?
- 5) (Learner's learning) From your observations throughout the course, do you think the learners demonstrated competency in *simulating*? Why or why not?
- 6) (Learner's learning) From your observations throughout the course, do you think the learners demonstrated competency in *strategising*? Why or why not?
- 7) Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

Research procedure: The seven participants were selected randomly from among the ten research participants. The group interview was conducted on a separate Zoom session a few hours after the end of the whole class. Audio recording was done via Zoom software, and also separately using a smartphone app. Transcription of the Mandarin conversation was done via Google Voice, and then verified manually. Coding was done manually on the Chinese texts to avoid any loss in translation. English translation was

added at the end of the coding process. Appendix I lists the hierarchical coding frame for the Focus Group discussion.

To address the issue of power-relationship, the researcher limited his talk time during the group interview to ask questions, and encouraged participants to respond. Given that they were evaluating the course syllabus, the researcher resisted the urge to defend himself when comments were negative or unjustified. He simply says words such as, “Thanks, can you share more?” or “Thanks, what do others feel?”

Internal validity and reliability of the data from the Focus Group discussion was addressed through triangulation using multiple sources of data (Merriam and Tisdell 2015, 245). Data from the interview was checked against observations recorded in the trainer’s fieldnotes, and documents such as the learners’ works. During the invitation for research, the research assistant explained to research participants aspects of the discussion. In terms of field issues and ethical considerations, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured for participants as mentioned earlier.

c) Learners’ Works

Research rationale: Creswell (2012, 223) defines qualitative research “documents” as “public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants in a study, and they can include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals, and letters.” In this research, worksheets and assignments were collected from the Action Research Group.

One advantage of research documents is that they are written in the language and words of the participants, who have given thought to them in writing, especially in their post-class Individual Research Paper. These documents were also ready for analysis without the need for transcription that is required with observational or interview data.

One disadvantage of learners’ works as research documents is that the researcher have to acquire them indirectly through MBTS administration personnel, rather than directly from the learners. Hence, accuracy, authenticity and completeness need to be examined before they can be used in research. For example, he has to establish and verify with MBTS that the assignments originated from the learners. Also, that the submitted

assignments were complete based on the class list; and as they were, without any alternations.

In this research, the works of ten research participants were available for analysis. The purpose was to evaluate whether learners demonstrated the desired learning objectives intended by the course syllabus. This was particularly important for this research given that the goal of the research is competency-based, not solely head knowledge, but also involves skills mastery. The data also helps to verify if there is congruence between what is espoused and enacted, whether what they claim in class, and the Focus Group discussion, is in harmony with what they exhibit in their work. For areas that are congruent, this data serves as validating evidence; for areas that are incongruent, it serves as suggestions for further examination.

Research instruments: The data include three types of the learner's work: (1) Pre- and Post-class Worksheets, (2) Reflection Journal, and (3) Individual Research Paper.

- 1) Pre- and Post-class Worksheets: Learners completed these self-assessment worksheets at the start and end of the class. The Pre-class Worksheet is the same as the Test Group survey (Appendix A), and the Post-class Worksheet is adapted from it (Appendix G). They served to assess changes in the learners' skills in foresight competency before and after the training. Appendix K lists the analysis of Pre- and Post-Class Worksheets.
- 2) Reflection Journal: In this individual assignment, learners reflected on the key concepts that mattered to them in the first three days of class. The open-ended nature of this assignment presented data to compare perceptions between learners and the trainer about what content is viewed as important. Short five-minutes intervals were also provided during the class for learners to jot down quick thoughts at the end of every topic. They were encouraged to elaborate on those thoughts after class, and develop it into their Reflection Journal. This assignment was handed in on the last day of class. Appendix J lists the analysis of Reflection Journals.
- 3) Individual Research Paper: In this individual assignment, learners selected one real major problem in a church or family context, and drafted a ten-year Foresight Strategic Plan. This data investigates if individuals could demonstrate foresight competency autonomously in their own ministry context. This assignment was handed in two months after the class. The interval of

time was an indicator of learning retention, and whether learners could still demonstrate foresight competency after a period. Appendix L lists the analysis of Individual Research Papers.

Research procedures: The learners' works were collected by MBTS together with that of other learners in class according to the assignment deadlines. Among the ten participants, each was given a code that was used in the research writing. The Individual Research Papers were marked, and returned to MBTS with their grade in early October. Research analysis of their works commenced after my role as a teacher was completed. The validity and reliability of the learners' works were addressed. During the invitation for research, the research assistant explained to research participants that their work would be made available for research analysis. In terms of field issues and ethical considerations, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured for participants as mentioned earlier.

D. Summary

In summary, this chapter answers the research sub-question: How to design an initial course syllabus for pilot testing among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia?

Firstly, the methodology chosen for this research is a Practical Action Research (Creswell 2012, 592) based on Mills' (2018, 26) Dialectic Action Research Spiral. Explanations were provided on how the model was applied in this research. Secondly, aspects of course syllabus design were discussed. The Learner Analysis, also known as Situational Analysis or Training Needs Analysis, comprised an educated guess based on three parts. The first part was the findings from a Test Group survey of sixteen East Asian Christian leaders who were not learners in the course. The second part was a short and focused literature review of Sino-Christian Studies to understand the latest Christian development in East Asia in the twenty-first century, and the worldview of the Chinese. The last part was a Learner Profiles based on the trainer's background and experience in East Asia, which further provided a grounded understanding of the East Asian mindset and worldview.

To design learning objectives, the notion of learning is first understood from the perspectives of adult learning theorists such as Knowles, Holton, and Swanson. Learning is not a simple process of control and shaping by the educator at will, but a complex process that also involves the learner's responsibilities for self-development. The learning objectives were crafted based on the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains, using taxonomies by Bloom et al. (1956); Harrow (1972), Jewett and Mullan (1977); and Krathwohl et al. (1964). More updated sources on designing learning objectives in the context of East Asia were also consulted (Fu 2016, Cen 2015, Wang and Farmer 2008).

The instructional methodologies were underpinned and informed first by the conceptual framework of andragogy in practice (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson 2005), with its six core principles of adult learning. Secondly, instructional methods were based on active learning strategies by Bonwell and Eison (1991), Eison (2010), Silberman and Biech (2015). Lastly, lesson plans were designed based on the nine events of instruction by Gagne et al. (1992).

Finally, this chapter addresses the research methodology involved in the pilot test of the course syllabus. In terms of the research sampling of participants, homogenous sampling was used for the Action Research Group. Random sampling was further applied to randomly select participants for a Focus Group discussion.

The research instruments, procedures, permissions, field issues and ethical considerations involved in data collection were also explained. Data collected were divided into three domains based on Creswell's (2012, 233) categorisation: (1) The trainer's fieldnotes, (2) A Focus Group discussion, and (3) Learners' works, which comprise Pre- and Post-class Worksheets, Reflection Journal, and Individual Research Paper.

The findings of the pilot test for the evaluation of the initial course syllabus are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF PILOT TEST OF COURSE SYLLABUS

This chapter answers the research sub-question: What are the findings of the pilot test of the initial course syllabus? This pilot test in MBTS is phase two of the action research. The findings are discussed in light of the course syllabus evaluation to assess if the course syllabus delivers on its expectations. Recommendations are derived from the findings to modify the course syllabus and present it in revised form in the next chapter.

Christian educators Estep and Estep (2012, location 3585) propose six dimensions of curriculum evaluation “as forming a cumulatively exhaustive basis for curriculum evaluation.” Since this foresight course syllabus is focused on teaching the new topic of Christian futures studies, and ultimately intended to have wider applicability beyond MBTS, three specific dimensions are more pertinent than the others. They are: theory and purpose, student learning, and instructional methodology (Estep and Estep 2012, location 3511-3827). Dimensions that are more context-specific, that is, program facilities and resources; materials; and teacher ability, are omitted from this evaluation because every context is different. Hence, the key questions in this evaluation are: Are the theoretical basis and purpose of the foresight course syllabus consistent with the needs of East Asian learners? To what degree have learners achieved the intended objectives of the course syllabus? Are the instructional methodologies appropriate to facilitate the development of foresight competency?

The outline for this chapter is as follows. Section A discusses the findings on the theory and purpose of the course syllabus. Section B evaluates the three objectives and learning outcomes. Section C examines the aspect of instructional methodology. Section D summarises all the above findings and evaluations.

As mentioned earlier under Chapter 3 section C2: Research Instruments and Procedures, Creswell (2012, 233) asserts there are at least three categories of research data: observation, interview, and documents. Hence, evidence for the findings in this research is drawn from these three categorisations: (1) the trainer’s fieldnotes; (2) a Focus Group discussion; and (3) learners’ works, which comprise of Pre- and Post-class Worksheets, Reflection Journal, and Individual Research Paper. The three categories also serve as

three domains of data to triangulate evidence from three different perspectives for a qualitative evaluation of the course syllabus. Namely: inputs from the *trainer* (what the trainer observed, including group presentations in class), inputs from the learners' *feedback as a group* (what learners say in a group), and inputs from the learners' *performance as individuals* (what learners do or behaved individually). Inputs from the trainer constitute an important component for course evaluation because, as Wong (1995, 24-25) says, “. . . teaching cannot be understood fully from the perspective of an outsider. The inextricable relationship between action and understanding is central. Only by doing, by trying to teach another person, can the practice of teaching be understood.” Inputs from learners as a group and as individuals are also necessary to differentiate between what learners say (espoused theory) and what they do (theory-in-use), especially in the collectivistic culture of East Asia. As Fatehi et al (2020, 11) assert, “In collectivist cultures, groups are of primary importance — individuals are secondary . . . They may sacrifice self-interest to promote the interest of the collective . . . Most Asian countries, such as China, Japan, and Korea, are considered collectivists.” Hence, this course evaluation necessitates that learners' works be investigated to know what individuals really think about the course. But, given that there are many details to discuss in evaluation, for the sake of brevity, the most representative type of learners' works will be selected to represent that domain when discussing the findings. Readers can refer to other relevant appendices for more supporting evidence.

Data collection was administered at different points: (1) at the outset and during the class, (2) immediately at the end of the class, and (3) two months after the completion of the class. Hence, this course syllabus evaluation approach is both process- and product-oriented. The research methodology and rationale for these data have been explained in the previous chapter.

A. Evaluation of Theory and Purpose of the Course Syllabus

With regard to the dimension of theory and purpose, the main concern in evaluation is to ascertain whether (1) the ultimate purpose, and (2) the theoretical basis of the course syllabus are consistent with the context of learning (Estep and Estep 2012, location 3590 – 3596).

1. Findings on the Purpose

The ultimate purpose of this course is to prepare East Asian leaders to be future-ready, also known as the motif of “watchful preparation” in Christian terms.

Firstly, evidence in the Focus Group discussion is investigated to hear what learners say as a group. The responses from the Focus Group discussion were carefully transcribed into Chinese. The hour-long audio recording was played back several times and reviewed against the 16,256 Chinese character transcript for accuracy. Inductive coding, also called open coding, was done manually on the Chinese texts. No coding software was used in the coding process as the audio recordings were in Mandarin. The process of open coding broke down the data into discrete parts. Focused coding was subsequently performed to identify similar concepts. These similar concepts were further grouped into themes, through a process of thematic or axial coding. These themes were organised into a hierarchical coding frame based on how they relate to one another (Appendix I). English translation was only added at this final stage to reduce any substantive loss in meaning during translation.

In question three, participants were asked: *What are your key takeaways from this course?* Analysis of their responses (Appendix I) showed that the two most common themes were: (1) It gave leaders a sense of direction and security, and (2) Scanning competency. Other themes from individual responses include: it moves leaders from laziness (passivity) to breakthrough (proactivity), Christian hope must go through trials, and foresight competency can be applied flexibly. For theme 1 above, participant 5 described a sense of direction and security because he felt that when faced with major trends, one can do scanning to prepare. Participant 6 said there can be order in chaos. Participant 1 said leaders are able to have sense of commitment even when they feel pessimistic. For theme 2 above, participants felt scanning competency was a major takeaway from the course because it broadened their horizons for preparation (participant 5), it helped them manage information systematically, and moved them from being subjective to objective (participant 6). Hence, learners, collectively as a group, expressed that they valued the motif of watchful preparation.

Secondly, evidence can be gathered from the Reflection Journal of individual learner. This assignment required learners to reflect on the key concepts taught in class for the

first three days of learning (for example: What concepts left an impression? Why? How could I apply it in ministry or Christian living?). Content from the ten assignments ~~are~~ was first broken down into key concepts expressed, and then organised into themes (Appendix J). The themes that received learners' attention are namely (the number in the brackets indicate the times it was mentioned as a key concept): Accelerated Change (4), Foresight–agency (10), Foresight–knowledge (8), Leadership (8), Scanning competency (19), Simulating competency (5), and Strategising competency (3). The theme “Foresight–knowledge” meant learners mentioned foresight as a form of knowledge, whereas “Foresight–agency” goes further to show this knowledge was converted into a personal sense of agency. These seven themes centred around the motif of “watchful preparation”, and none of them wrote off point, all evidence that shows the learners understood the purpose of this course.

Learners' exact words in the Reflection Journals reflect the degree of value they gave to the purpose of this course. For example, participant 5 wrote, “Learning futures studies is not to predict the future, but to be fully prepared for it. It is based on Jesus' teaching on preparation and other biblical principles.” Participant 4 wrote, “To prepare for the future, the first thing is to research how major current trends evolve and affects the future. Through simulating scenarios, we can learn and prepare ourselves with greater focus and effectiveness.” Participant 1, who faced harassment from the authorities, wrote, “As a leader, I can only avoid certain obstacle only if I can see what is coming. When I see the bigger picture, my mind will be renewed. Though God did not tell me what to do nor how to choose, he gave me the time to prepare and choose, so I must learn to plan and not be pessimistic.” Hence, the themes and writings in the Reflection Journals showed that individual learners understood and value the motif of watchful preparation – the purpose of this course,

Lastly, observations from the trainer's fieldnotes captured anecdotal evidence otherwise missing from learners' interview and documents. After the morning session on day one of class, some learners gave feedback to the trainer about their first impressions of the class. One elderly pastor said, “Pastors must recognize the era we are in. Foresight leadership is a timely help for churches.” Another learner noted, “Leadership needs foresight, this is very important for team development and team building.” Throughout the course of their class, the trainer also observed the learners were engaged in their learning, asked good questions, and were motivated in their group work (one group said

they worked till 4am for their group presentation). High level of learners' engagement and motivation in class, stems from them valuing what was taught. Valuing and boredom are inversely related, as the research on boredom in the developmental education field shows, "The combination of low control and low value will often result in boredom" (Weinerman and Kenner, 2016, 22).

Taken together, evidence from the three domains of data show that learners find the purpose of the foresight course syllabus as relevant and valuable for their ministries. It was consistent with their faith belief, and their need to prepare for the future.

2. Findings on the Theoretical Basis

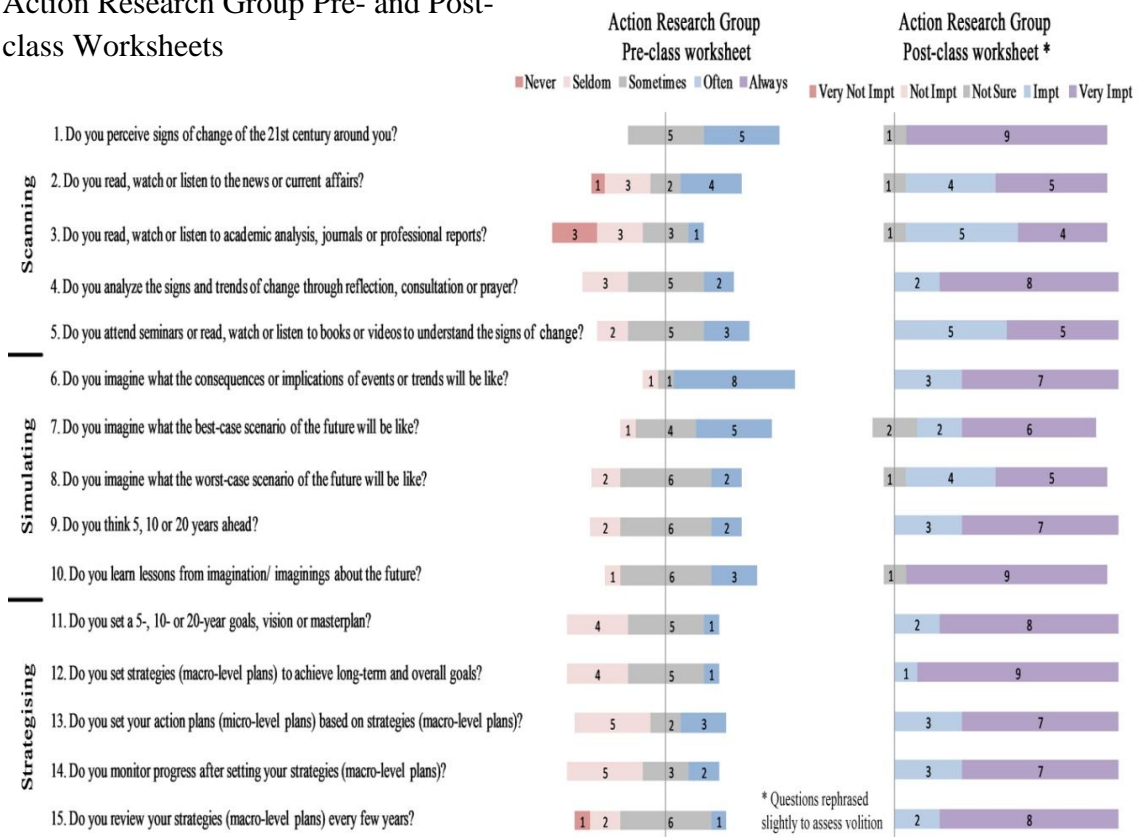
The theoretical basis of the foresight course syllabus, as explained in Chapter Two, is essentially: (1) The biblical-theological view of the future is based on a paradoxical view of both *adventus* and *futurum*. (2) The human responsibility is to discern and act on a future that is aligned to the will of God. (3) Foresight competency of an individual or organisation is made up of three core competencies – scanning, simulating and strategising.

Firstly, learners in the Focus Group discussion articulated how they view this new teaching. Question 2 asked: (Content) What do you think about the content of the curriculum? Was it too difficult/ easy/ much/ little? Was it helpful to your ministry? Why or why not? Seven themes emerged from their responses (Appendix I): (1) Very practical, (2) Need to practice and follow up, (3) Limitations in scanning, (4) Need improvement in planning, (5) Information overload, (6) The theological foundation of Hope, and (7) Suggestions for improvement. Theme 1: Practicality was mentioned and implied prominently. Participant 4 said the theories are very practical, and hoped more people from his organisation will attend the course. Participant 6 said that skills were taught, apart from just (head) knowledge. Participant 2 said she can relate the theories to raising her kids. Theme 2: The need for further practice and follow-up was expressed by participant 7, who said, "Once you know the knowledge is good, you will devote time and cost." This need was supported by participant 2. What followed in the discussion was a concern related to practice: limitations in doing scanning on their own, back in their homeland where foreign information on the internet is blocked (participant 2). Participant 4 expressed that the theories helped him realised he is not macro enough in

his planning, there is a need to balance planning with data, and to improve his planning. Participant 7 felt there was information overload, that is, too much new knowledge that needed time to digest. One evidence that showed learners needed time to digest the new theories of this course emerged during the discussion – the relation between hope and planning. Participant 6 felt it was a bit far fetched to link hope and planning theologically, because he already had faith in God prior to this course. Participant 4 defended this course by saying that it does not talk about hope in a vague sense, but talked about preparation through better judgement. He quoted examples from his personal experience in the mission field, to show that hope in God can be too abstract in the practicalities of ministry, and the theories in this course are the practical side of hope, and hence, very helpful. From all the evidence above, participants clearly valued the theories, felt the theories were practical, engaged with the theories, and were concerned about how to apply them in the practicalities of ministry.

Secondly, evidence from the learners' works, in particular, their Pre- and Post-class Worksheets, showed that learners' attitudes were changed by the teaching. Data from the Action Research Group Pre- and Post-class Worksheets are presented in Appendix K and presented here in a divergent stacked bar chart. This form of graphic is recommended by statisticians Heiberger and Robbins (2014, 1) "as the primary graphical display technique for Likert and related scales." Hence, a descriptive analysis of these data is presented in figure 12 below. Heiberger and Robbins (2014, 29-30) used software tools such as HH Package in R, and Tableau. For this research, as there are only fifteen questions, a formulated excel form was designed by the researcher to create the charts. As the graphic representation shows in figure 12, the pre-class results across all fifteen questions consist of negative responses ("never" and "seldom") and neutral responses ("sometimes"), but post-class results showed no negatives at all, and many positive responses ("Important" and "Very Important"). This change of attitude after the training was significant, as it appears in all fifteen questions. Their willingness to change, as measured immediately after the class, indicates positive reception of the theories being taught.

Figure 12: Comparison of Results from Action Research Group Pre- and Post-class Worksheets



Beyond the comparison of overall results above, additional remarks (Question 16) in the Post-class Worksheet (Appendix K, section 2) indicated the degree of reception towards these theories. Altogether, seven participants left their remarks. Some remarks are edited for brevity and shown as evidence here. For example, participant 8 wrote, “In the past I always thought foresight is a gift, through the class I learnt that it can be cultivated and practised. I hope this course can bless more and more church leaders!” Participant 9 wrote, “This course helps me to gain a holistic understanding, more about the Church, society, politics and other religions. For example, in the group presentations, topics include Sunday School, East Asian churches, LGBT ideology, and artificial intelligence.”

Furthermore, when remarks by the same participant in the Pre- and Post-class Worksheets were compared, the transformation is noticeable. One example was participant 2. In the Pre-class Worksheet (Appendix K), she described herself as a mother of two and a Sunday School teacher, faced with pressure imposed by the national education system on her children. She shared that the prevalent culture among parents in East Asia is a fear that their child will lose out at the starting line, which

creates a pressure to complete endless school assignments and attend numerous extra-curricular enrichment classes. Her words expressed her anxiety about the future, “This is my journey to let go of my anxiety and entrust my child and my future totally in God. It is also the reason I enrolled in this class.” In her Post-class Worksheet, her remarks expressed a new sense of agency and confidence after training:

The skill of scanning is an unexpected gain for me in this course. . . I am determined to learn, enrol in classes, and keep up with the times. . . The commitment to learning, to leave my comfort zone, and to change myself are the best gifts to prepare for the future.

In the case of participant 6, he changed from “hoping that God will intervene to move things in His desired direction” (Remarks in the Pre-class Worksheet), to “I need to pay attention to learn from outstanding individuals like Jack Ma, Peter Drucker, Deng Xiaoping, and Lee Kuan Yew. I must not be distracted by impulsive information and lose the insight to understand truth” (Remarks in the Post-class Worksheet). His remarks reflect a new-found sense of self-responsibility and self-efficacy. In the case of participant 10, he wrote: “I do not have major and farsighted strategies, only an attitude of getting through day by day” (Remarks in the Pre-class Worksheet), to “Planning depends on people, it is the Lord who builds the house” (Remarks in the Post-class Worksheet). Though his degree of self-efficacy is not as great as participant 6, he acknowledged the responsibility of human planning.

Lastly, observations recorded in the trainer’s fieldnotes showed learners’ reaction to the theories. In their groups, group leaders reported that their members enjoy cordial discussion on how to apply the theories, and members actively contributed to their discussion. Many groups asked to stay behind on the Zoom platform for an extra hour after class to continue discussion. Observations of learners’ interaction in their breakout room showed that they are actively thinking and discussing how to apply the appropriate tools for their ministry problems in context. All these are signs that showed they are highly engaged with the theories.

Seen as individual learners, there were observations throughout the duration of the class, where learners verbalised their learning breakthroughs. One learner shared that she was so pre-occupied with urgent present matters in ministry, that she was totally clueless when asked what her 10-year plan was. It prompted her to shift her focus to be more forward-looking. Another learner spoke about being struck by the case study of porn

pandemic, and felt a sense of urgency to take action. Another learner shared with the class that he used to think foresight is mysterious and unknowable, and how this course changed his perceptions.

Taking all three domains of data about the theoretical basis together, findings indicated that the theories were well-received by the East Asian learners, who were ready to apply them in practice. The theories were consistent with their theology and faith belief. No learner rejected the new theories of Christian futures studies.

To sum up section A on the evaluation of theory and purpose, findings showed that the East Asian leaders find the purpose of the foresight course syllabus relevant and valuable to their ministries. The theoretical basis of the foresight course syllabus was also consistent with their theology and faith belief, and well-received by them. Consequently, one recommendation coming from this section is that trainer *must* do a thorough preparatory analysis for every class. The favorable response by learners towards the theory and purpose of this course, is due to the effort invested in the preparatory phase. This includes a thorough familiarity with the content and the learners. Specifically, future users of this course should do as the researcher did, undertake a literature review of futures studies for Christian application; a Learner Analysis that comprises a Test Group survey, a Sino-Christian literature review, and a Learner Profiles- All learners are not alike and they are not necessarily similar to the curriculum designers (Smith and Ragan 2005, 58). For every new class, course trainers must reassess the theory and purpose of the course in light of the new context and demographics of that class. The degree of planning and preparation for the class directly contributes to the outcomes of teaching and learning. This is particularly important for a class on foresight.

B. Evaluation of Objectives of the Course Syllabus

There were three learning objectives in the foresight course syllabus. To what degree have learners achieved these intended objectives? The following sections discuss the findings and evaluation of each objective in detail.

1. Findings on the Knowledge Objective

The first learning objective was for learners to understand the foundations of futures studies through a theological lens, including sensitivity to change in the twenty-first century, the purpose of foresight, and new ways of perceiving the future.

Firstly, from the domain of the learners as a group, Question 1 in the Focus Group discussion asked: (Learning objectives) (With reference to the syllabus) Do you think the curriculum achieved its objectives? Why or why not? Four participants (1, 3, 4, and 7) stated that Objective One had been achieved (Appendix I). They verbalised several key concepts during the group interview, for example, foresight is not prediction, it broadens their thinking, its purpose is to benefit others, and the need to equip themselves. Participant 4 recounted how he was initially puzzled with the term “Foresight” in the course title. He said, “Many people spoke about the future. I do not understand. But from the course, I learn that the foundation for foresight is that we are to hope for the future, not to predict it, not to pinpoint our forecast.” Participant 7 said, “Why do we learn foresight? On the first day, what benefitted me the most was to learn that learning foresight is to benefit others. It is not to make ourselves proud, nor to intimidate others.” Participant 1 spoke about how the new knowledge has nurtured a sense of self-responsibility for her to own her future:

The time and events of the past are beyond our control because they have happened and passed. But the future is different. Even though I cannot control the future, I can do my best in terms of time, effort and sacrifices, and perhaps change the outcome. This is my biggest takeaway.

These responses articulated by learners as a group, showed they had understood the teaching of this course. They were able to recollect the relevant knowledge to explain their points during the Focus Group discussion.

Secondly, from the domain of individual learners, writings from the Reflection Journals showed the degree to which learners have met the Knowledge Objective individually. As mentioned earlier, seven themes emerged from their writing (Appendix J), with key concepts that expressed their grasp of the new knowledge taught. For example, for the theme of Accelerated Change, participant 2 mentioned that the Information Age has fundamentally changed peoples’ habits and expectations, so the church must adapt. For the theme of Foresight–knowledge, participant 10 said that through learning, he

discovered a lot of his shortcomings. He grew up in a traditional Chinese church, and realised he had developed many preconceived ideas, and often wears colored glasses to judge matters. For the theme of Scanning competency, participant 7 mentioned that the Futures Triangle (a scanning tool) has enlightened him to see how he can push for change in future, to avoid setbacks and hurts.

Further evidence in the learner's own words in their Reflection Journals also showed that they comprehend the rationale for learning the three core competencies of foresight: scanning, simulating, and strategising. For example, participant 6 reiterated, "Scanning requires the scanner to be disciplined in delaying judgment and let the data speak. This emphasis on reliable statistics and professional reports can avoid bias to make a good quality decision." Participant 4 wrote, "In simulating, I learn not to just see the good and bad in any situation, but to challenge myself to boldly imagine what may happen." Participant 9 wrote, "The trainer said that strategising is different from planning. Leaders must have macro strategies." Hence, the themes, key concepts and words from the Reflection Journals showed that learners met the Knowledge Objective individually and competently.

Thirdly, observations of the group presentations as recorded in the trainer's fieldnotes showed that learners were able to apply their knowledge satisfactorily. Effectiveness is measured by an assessment rubric (Appendix H, section H) which specifies clear performance indicators for competencies in scanning, simulating and strategising. Table 12 below shows the group presentation topics and the trainer's observations based on the assessment rubric. There were five or six learners in each group, including non-research participants and audit learners. Group six consisted of only three learners since they came from a different time zone, and could only attend class in the afternoon.

Table 12: Group Presentation Topics and the Trainer's Observations

Group topic	Trainer's observations of the group presentation
Group one: The politicising of a church in East Asia	Scanning: the use of the Futures Wheel was well done. The content has depth and is of urgent need. Simulating: Lessons learnt from simulating can be organised more clearly. Strategising: Backcasting was done appropriately.

Group two: The challenge of Sunday School in East Asia's education system	Scanning: The use of the STEEP tool is thorough and has depth, but more can be elaborated in one of the lenses. Simulating: Rightly suggested that the church needs to focus on creative teaching to engage children and youths. Strategising: Has a ten-year plan for the holistic development of a person
Group three: The cell-group transformation of a church	Scanning: Futures Triangle was used with good details Simulating: The Transformation scenario sounds like strategies, it should be descriptive, not normative. Strategising: Milestones for year 3 and 5 can be more differentiated.
Group four: Internet addiction among youths in church	Scanning: STEEP was used appropriately. Simulating: Be careful not to treat the four scenarios as sequential steps. They should be parallel possibilities. Strategising: Appropriate use of backcasting
Group five: Church harassment by the authorities	Scanning: More evidence needs to be included in the Futures Triangle. Simulating: More lessons can be gleaned from the simulations. Strategising: Has a basic understanding of backcasting
Group six: Youth attrition in church	Scanning: The use of Futures Triangle was thorough Simulating: The Continual scenario was very clear, which shows an attention to detail in your thinking Strategising: You should present backcasting first, then your proposed strategies.

The table shows that learners were able to apply their new knowledge in six different ministry challenges and contexts. These include: The politicising of a church in East Asia, the challenge of Sunday School in East Asia's education system, the cell-group transformation of a church, internet addiction among youths in the church, church harassment by the authorities, and youth attrition in the church. The trainer's observations and critique of the group presentations detail the points where learners did well, and the room for improvement. Some of the evidence that show learners achieved the Knowledge Objective are presented here. For example, the critique for Group one, in terms of their scanning competency was: "The use of the Futures Wheel (a scanning tool) was well done. The content has depth and is of urgent need." The group was able to apply the Futures Wheel to postulate the first and second degree of consequences when politics enters the church in East Asia. The critique for Group four, in terms of their simulating competency was: "Be careful not to treat the four scenarios as sequential steps. They should be parallel possibilities." Though this group knew the

theory that justified the use of scenario planning, they struggled with the finer points of imagining future scenarios of internet addiction among youths in a church. This implied a lack of practice in forward-thinking, rather than not knowing how to do it. The critique for Group five, in terms of their strategising competency was: “Has a basic understanding of backcasting.” This group met the basic requirement to do backcasting, even though it was a totally new way of thinking for them. They were more familiar with forecasting, planning from the present, rather than starting from the desired future outcome and working backwards. Again, this was not because the group did not know how to do it, but simply a lack of practice in this new way of thinking. Ultimately, the fact that no group failed this assignment shows that all learners had sufficiently understood the new knowledge enough to apply it. Whether they are skillful or not, will be discuss in the evaluation of the next Skill Objective.

Taking all three domains of data together, findings show that the Knowledge Objective has been met. During the Focus Group discussion, learners acknowledged they learnt and benefitted from the teaching. They were also able to recollect the relevant knowledge to explain their points during the discussion. Individually, the themes, key concepts and words in the learners’ Reflection Journals showed that they understood the content competently. Observations by the trainer of the group presentation show that learners were able to apply their new knowledge in six different ministry challenges and contexts, to a satisfactory level according to the assessment rubrics of the course.

One recommendation from this section to improve the course syllabus, is to curate knowledge and content to nurture a healthy crisis-ready mindset. This was the design of the original course syllabus, and it achieved its intended results. A crisis-ready mindset is one that is constantly engaged with developments and trends, as opposed to a state of complacency and inattention. This implies helping learners realise they are living in a crisis of their times. A healthy crisis-ready mindset is well-informed about the dangers, risks, and threats over the horizon. It is not alarmed nor crippled by knowledge of potential future shocks. For example in Singapore’s post-COVID response, a crisis-readiness mindset was recommended as a national-level policy for a whole-of-society approach to pandemics to minimise social panic (Tan 2020, 11). To achieve this intention, the trainer has to connect the dots between current affairs and independent events to present the trends and driving forces behind these changes. Then the trainer needs to provide learners some time to engage in personal sensemaking for their crisis-

ready mindset to take shape. Taking time to show, not tell, the crisis of the Information Age is a necessary invitation to activate the minds of learners. It shifts them from passive to active learning, and to own their learning for the rest of the course.

2. Findings on the Skill Objective

The second learning objective was for the learners to acquire the three core competencies of foresight – scanning, simulating and strategising – to prepare their Christian communities for future surprises or opportunities.

Firstly, several questions from the Focus Group discussion (Appendix I) were dedicated to understanding how learners felt about the Skill Objective. Question 1 asked: (Learning objectives) (With reference to the syllabus) Do you think the curriculum achieved its objectives? Why or why not? The majority felt it was achieved, as articulated by Participant 6 and 4.

In the area of scanning, Question 4 asked: (Student's learning) From your observations throughout the course, do you think the students demonstrated competencies in scanning? Why or why not? Participant 7 from the Focus Group discussion considered the entire class has achieved a breakthrough in understanding how to use the three scanning tools of STEEP, Futures Wheel and Futures Triangle. He also credited the value of allocating learners from different regions into groups to complement each other during their group scanning. However, participant 2 felt incapacitated in searching for information online because of internet censorship. She worried that Bachelor level learners may feel inadequate to do scanning individually after the class. These two obstacles are minor because, in the first case, there are many ways to access the internet in East Asia. For the second case, more practice and consultations will increase the learner's confidence level. Participant 6 suggested letting learners practice individually first, then practice again in groups. Participant 3 corrected him that this was indeed the trainer's arrangement: practice individually, then within the group. Participant 6 may have brought up this suggestion because he missed the morning classes where the individual practices occurred. He had attended class from a different time zone, and was excused by the principal of MBTS from the morning session.

In the area of simulating, Question 5 asked: (Student's learning) From your observations throughout the course, do you think the students demonstrated competencies in simulating? Why or why not? Participant 2 commented, "I felt everyone in the class has acquired it. And I felt the impact of this course to everyone is quite huge." A large part of the discussion at that point revolved around practice and application. Participant 4 felt a lack of practice, and hoped the class duration could be extended for more practice. Participant 2 said she has understood the concept, but is not confident about how to apply it in daily living. Participant 3 expressed his understanding that the purpose of simulation is to avoid reaching collapse scenario.

In the area of strategising, Question 6 asked: (Student's learning) From your observations throughout the course, do you think the students demonstrated competencies in strategising? Why or why not? Participant 3 reiterated that his group members had demonstrated strategising ability through the practice of backcasting during their group work. He rightly pointed out that the essence in strategising is to grasp the big direction in planning. Participant 1 said she felt rusty when applying strategising. She acknowledged it was due to a lack of confidence, and felt that doing a ten-year plan was beyond her capability.

In sum, the responses from the Focus Group discussion showed that learners themselves unanimously agreed that the course had equipped them with these three skills. The need for more practice was expressed frequently during the discussion.

Secondly, from the domain of the trainer, his observations of the learners' performance at the group presentation were recorded in the trainer's fieldnotes. Table 12 above lists the topics, observations and trainer's critique of the groups' performance. All the groups completed this assignment satisfactorily, according to the assessment rubrics of this course. None failed this assignment. On the finer points, some groups did well in some competency, and not so well in others. Without repeating the evidence mentioned in the Knowledge Objective earlier, an analysis of the trainer's critique in all six groups showed that: (1) Groups performed well in scanning competency; and (2) Groups needed more practice to improve on their simulating and strategising competencies.

This confirms that 3.5 days is too short for the course to sufficiently let learners practice simulating and strategising competencies. During the trainer's teaching, the class took

longer to complete the scanning practice than expected, and simulating and strategising practices had to be combined into one day instead of initially designed. The trainer's initial plan was to let learners practise three scanning tools in the morning of day two, and two simulating tools in the afternoon. However, he observed many learners were mentally tired from the practice in the morning session. These East Asian Bachelor and Masters degree learners needed more time than he anticipated to be acquainted with the new scanning tools: STEEP, Futures Triangle and Futures Wheel.

This unexpected longer time for practice presented a major learning obstacle. Some explanations for the deficiency include: (1) The lack of exposure to higher-order thinking among East Asians. Many scholars have criticised China's education systems for not promoting higher-order thinking. For example, a longitudinal study led by a researcher from Stanford University found that China university students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education do not gain critical thinking skills in their four years of study (Loyalka et al. 2021, 1). Zhao (2014, 160) asserts that China's education system "is more of a tool for social control than a process for self-enlightenment". This lack of exposure to higher-order thinking skills implies that future trainers need to allocate more time and effort in foresight thinking practices. (2) East Asians are generally more concrete relational thinkers than conceptual thinkers (Hesselgrave 1991, 303). More time was needed for them to digest the new concepts, and be proficient enough to apply them. Hence, it is crucial that future courses be extended to five full days at least. This recommendation is important to allow the trainer to support learners in their individual practice, helping them gain confidence, before letting them try in their Individual Research Papers.

Thirdly, from the domain of individual learner, evidence from the Individual Research Papers showed nine out of the ten participants were able to apply the three skills after a time interval of two months (Appendix L). This assignment required learners to individually select one real major problem in a church or family context, draft a Ten-year Foresight Strategic Plan, and demonstrate their competencies in scanning, simulating and strategising. The participants were able to apply the 3S competencies in their own unique ministry context, in topics such as, "The implementation of church cell-groups under COVID-19" (participant 3), "The phenomena of 'leaving church' (kirchenaustritt) in German Protestant churches" (participant 6), "The challenge of internet (addiction) in Sunday School" (participant 7), and "Strategies for church

worship ministry” (participant 10). Their individual performance was assessed by the trainer using a rubric (Appendix H, section H). Analysis in Appendix L shows that, (1) in terms of the scanning competency, only participant 1 did not select one appropriate scanning tool, and only participant 1 and 4 did not provide relevant data to analyse the problem. (2) In terms of the simulating competency, only participant 1 did not select one appropriate simulating tool, and only participants 1 and 8 did not sufficiently described four possible scenarios with creativity and validity. In terms of the strategising competency, only participant 1 applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) inappropriately, and only participant 1 did not provide clear nor appropriate strategies and milestones. All in all, participants did not always remember the name of the 3S tools, or forgot to write about the lessons learnt from simulating. Nonetheless, all learners, except participant 1, were able to complete this assignment with average to high competency based on the assessment rubrics.

Regarding participant 1 who was not able to apply the three skills after a time interval of two months, three possible reasons seem relevant. (1) This was her first module in MBTS, after many years away from formal learning. As such, she has yet to grasp the requirements of academic study. (2) She shared in class about her personal lack of motivation to study. She enrolled in this course for her husband’s sake, not on her own accord. (3) The third and most important reason was that her church was in the midst of harassment by the authorities, and she was preoccupied and discouraged by the problem. It was a period of despair for her, which distracted her from adhering to the writing requirements spelled out in the syllabus, and ultimately failing her Individual Research Paper. Despite that, her overall performance in other assignments and activities amounted to a passing grade.

This isolated case suggests another major learning obstacle observed in this field research: a sense of despair can cripple a person’s learning. This claim is supported by several scholars: Firstly, Hulme’s (2001, 49) research on a group of college learners concludes, “Hope appears to function as a central element in the learning process, whereas despair seems to be detrimental to learning.” Commenting on the concept of self-efficacy and a person’s locus of control, psychologist-futurist Lombardo (2009, 88) says “external locus of control means that. . . it is external factors that have determined his or her life conditions. If pessimists feel powerless, then they are operating within a mindset of external locus of control.” Consequently, the recommendation for the trainer

is to identify learners showing early signs of despair, and provide immediate intervention to reinforce optimism, hope in God, and an internal locus of control that leads to self-efficacy. This sense of self-responsibility for improvement is a virtue of future consciousness too. Lombardo (2009, 93) says, “Self-responsibility is the cardinal virtue, for without it a person does not believe that he or she can improve anything in his or her life.”

In the Individual Research Papers, another major learning obstacle was observed among the learners who showed average or low competency (Appendix L). The main problem lay in a reversion to their patterned thinking despite gaining new knowledge and skill in class. For example, participant 4 indicated he used the STEEP scanning tool, but his writings showed a typical East Asian pattern in thinking: origin, biblical analysis, ethical considerations, implications. Participant 8 indicated she use Dator’s Four Futures tool, but her scenarios were mostly normative instructions based on the present, instead of descriptive imaginations of future possibilities. Participant 7, who scored average competency, did not fully adhere to the STEEP scanning tool, but resorted in part to a traditional pattern of thinking. Patterned thinking is a form of stereotyping or habit-bound behaviour. Patterned thinkers are comfortable in their tried-and-tested way of problem-solving. But the reality of Accelerating Change in the VUCA world requires leaders to exercise versatility in paradigm-shifting to meet ever-changing demands. If leaders are not risk-takers in disrupting their own thinking patterns, their analysis and solution options will be greatly limited. To address this third learning obstacle of reversion to patterned thinking, self-awareness is a necessary first step. The next step is to exercise self-conscious effort to sustain the change. Motivation and practice during learning will facilitate this two-step process of personal transformation.

To sum up the findings on the Skill Objective, evidence from the three domains of data showed that Objective Two has been accomplished. All but one participant were able to achieve the three core skills (scanning, simulating and strategising) at an average to high competency level within this short course. One participant was the exception rather than the norm, because she faced major external and internal struggles in her church during the course.

With regards to recommendations to improve the course, three major learning obstacles were observed, and the corresponding recommendations were made as follows. (1) The

lack of exposure to higher-order thinking among East Asian learners implies that trainers need to allocate more time and effort for practices sessions. (2) A sense of despair can cripple a person's learning, hence trainers are recommended to identify learners showing early signs of despair, and provide immediate intervention to reinforce optimism, hope in God, and an internal locus of control that leads to self-efficacy. (3) Some learners tend to revert to their patterned thinking, so trainers need to help learners be self-aware, and make self-conscious effort to sustain their new paradigms of forward-thinking. Trainers need to constantly motivate learners during learning, and give them lots of practice in class.

3. Findings on the Attitude Objective

The final Attitude Objective was for learners to develop hope in God, and confidence in one's newfound competencies to face the uncertain future.

Firstly, from the domain of what learners say in a group, Question 1 in the Focus Group discussion asked (Appendix I): (Learning objectives) (With reference to the syllabus) Do you think the curriculum achieved its objectives? Why or why not? Participants 1, 4, and 7 said it had been achieved. Participant 1 said, "Before the course, I felt quite inadequate in foresight. After attending the 3 day course, there was a special feeling, I had more confidence in what I learnt." Participant 4 expressed it, "This course helped me to improve, to anticipate the future in a better and more holistic manner. So I personally felt it has achieve this objective." Participant 7 said, "Through the case studies, indeed, in some cases, it was God's sovereignty. And there were also some instances where we humans could make small changes, and God is happy that we do so." However, participants 6 and 3 said the Attitude Objective was only partly achieved, because they already had hope in God before the course. Participant 6 said, "Half of this third objective has been achieved. The part about confidence in one's acquired skill has been achieved. But to develop hope in God, of course I had hope in God, but not from this course." Participant 3 said, "The course objectives benefitted me a lot. But the third objective, to develop hope in God, I felt we already had hope." One reason for this perception is that participant 6 and 3 may have viewed "hope in God" as a fixed and stable entity, rather than a dynamically changing psychological process. Hence, they may have perceived "hope in God" as something one have or have not, rather than psychologically waning or increasing over time or circumstances. Based on their logic,

if one already has hope in God before the course, it is a zero-sum game, and not available for developmental increase through the course. This interpretation of hope in God suggests a recommendation for improvement in the course, to be discussed at the end of this section. Apart from this aspect, there was no doubt that participants 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7 agreed they had more self-confidence from their newfound competencies.

This issue about self-confidence emerged further during the Focus Group discussion, when specific questions about the 3S competencies were asked. In question 4, participant 2 said she lacks the confidence to do scanning on her own due to internet censorship in East Asia. She was also concerned that Bachelor level learners may not have mastered skills of research. In question 5, participant 2 reiterated that she has heard and understood the simulating competency, but did not know how to apply the skill in daily living. Along with participants 3 and 4, they expressed the need for more practice, a sign of waning confidence. In question 6, participant 1 express a lack of self-confidence in applying strategising, and felt strategising a ten-year plan was beyond her capability.

Taking the above comments together, the opinions may be due to a problem of confidence rather than capability. Apart from participant 1, who failed her Individual Research Paper because she was experiencing a period of despair, all the other participants were able to complete their Individual Research Papers with satisfactory performance. Affective needs are an important driver for self-change, and should be properly addressed. Therefore, a possible solution for the improve course syllabus is to invest more class time in affective nurturing and morale-boosting through hand-holding targeted practices. The cognitively inclined trainer must resist the tendency to allocate this extra time for more content. A skill-based course syllabus necessitates a learner-centred approach to assist learners to build confidence during the class. For this course, a short-term solution would be to extend the duration from 3.5 to five days, and a long-term solution would be to provide support to sustain learners' enthusiasm after the class. Support could come in the form of building peer support networking groups during the class, or trainer showing concern for learners' skill development, thereby encouraging learners' self-efficacy. Foresight is a skill, and all skills require sustainable practice to develop into a lifelong habit.

Secondly, from the domain of individual learner's performance, evidence from the Reflection Journals showed the theme of Foresight–agency was prominent, being mentioned ten times as a key concept (Appendix J). A person's sense of agency stems from a confidence about one's ability to effect positive change. For example, participant 2 wrote, "In the past, when I face the uncertain future, I only felt anxious and helpless. Today's lesson helped me to exercise foresight to gather information to better develop my child's character, to learn to listen, communicate and collaborate." Participant 4 wrote, "In the past I felt the future is mysterious and unknowable. Today's lesson taught me the future depends on how we prepare today. This include researching trends and changes, postulating scenarios, and a focus on learning and preparation." Participant 6 wrote, "Growing up in church, I was naïve in this area. The trainer used data to show the depth and scope of the porn problem. I felt a sense of urgency to pray to resist the devil's work." These words showed the learners' confidence to improve their future for the Lord.

Thirdly, from the domain of the trainer, as recorded in his fieldnotes, two participants showed tremendous improvement in confidence towards their future. The first anecdotal evidence was participant 2, a mother of two and a Sunday School teacher. Earlier on (page 102), her story was told through her Reflection Journal. She wrote about her anxiety for her children's future, due to academic pressure imposed by the national education system. She wrote also about her transformation through the course, which empowered her to exercise foresight to gather information to better develop her child's character, to learn to listen, communicate and collaborate. Beyond these writings, the trainer witnessed her confidence grow over the duration of the class. She spoke up and asked more questions in class. She asked about ways to gain foreign knowledge and information over the internet. Out of class, she shared with the trainer her subscription of an online book channel, as a show of commitment to develop a habit of scanning.

The second anecdotal evidence of increased confidence was observed in participant 6. He was inspired in class by a case study about German churches, and wrote his Individual Research Paper on the phenomena of 'leaving church' in German Protestant churches. Even though the syllabus only required a Master's level learner to write 3000 words, he wrote over 10,000. For East Asian learners in general, writing more than required is a sign of high motivation. Participant 6 is an East Asian who recently migrated to Germany. The language barrier did not deter his motivation to do this

particular research project. After the assignment, he went on to do a presentation at Hamburg University, and eventually published his paper in a Christian journal. This anecdotal evidence demonstrated how this course syllabus can empower individuals to create their alternative future.

To sum up findings on the Attitude Objective, evidence from all three domains of data showed that learners were more confident to face the uncertain future after the course. They experienced a sense of liberation and agency when they understood that God is not fatalistic, and that God's people have a responsibility to co-create desirable futures for his kingdom. Though some learners expressed a lack of confidence after the class, it is a problem of confidence rather than capability, because most of them could complete their papers with satisfactory performance. The boost in confidence was most noticeable in participants 2 and 6.

Arising from this analysis of the findings, there are three recommendations about the Attitude Objective to improve the course syllabus. Firstly, the phrase "hope in God" should be omitted from the Attitude Objective, putting the focus on building self-confidence from the newfound competencies. East Asian learners may have a different understanding about the concept of "hope in God", which requires detailed explanation that may not be accomplished within the time constraint of this course. Unless follow-up courses are pre-arranged where the concept of "hope in God" can be sufficiently explained in a subsequent course, it is better to simply focus on self-confidence in this introductory course. Secondly, the course duration should definitely be extended from 3.5 to 5 days, allowing the trainer to invest more class time in affective nurturing and morale-boosting through supportive targeted practices. Thirdly, since foresight is a skill, and all skills require sustainable practice to develop into a lifelong habit, long-term support should be provided in the form of building peer support networking groups during the class. Also, the trainer should show constant concern for the learners' skill development during and after the course, to encourage learners' self-awareness, self-responsibility, and self-efficacy.

C. Evaluation and Findings on the Instructional Methodology

The instructional methodology in this foresight course syllabus was informed by adult learning theories. Many active learning strategies were employed, for example, teacher demonstration, skills practice, case study, group discussion, information search and student presentation. Were they appropriate to facilitate the development of foresight competency? The high level of engagement in class and learners' writing showed that active learning strategies have achieved their goal. Evidence has been presented in the previous sections that shows learners were highly engaged. One particular finding deserves attention. It shows that group work was the *most* significant active learning strategy that contributed to their development of foresight.

Firstly, from the domain of individual learner's work, evidence from their Reflection Journals shows that group work was particularly helpful for them to learn the 3S competency. Commenting on the scanning competency, participant 7 wrote, "Splitting learners into groups is powerful. We were grouped with people from different regions and cultures, maximizing our distinctiveness. My greatest takeaway from the entire class is grouping, which broadens my horizon." Participant 3 noted, "During group discussion, I learn that the individual is limited, we need to think as a group, even in church too." Commenting on the simulating competency, participant 7 recounted, "Initially I did not understand how to do simulation. Later we figured it out in our group. Actually, we had understood the concepts, but lack practice."

Secondly, from the domain of the trainer, observations from the trainer's fieldnotes concurred that group work facilitated the learning of foresight. During discussions in class, when the researcher roamed around their breakout rooms, he observed cordial discussion and a high level of engagement with the content. There was good peer learning as learners clarified with each other the concepts and tools for scanning, simulating and strategising. Many groups were so motivated that they asked to stay back after class for at least an hour to continue their preparation for the presentation. One group said some members even worked until 4 am to prepare the PowerPoint for the presentation, an evidence of their motivations. Motivation and encouragement were observed within the groups as they spurred one another to complete the task.

Thirdly, from the domain of the learners as a group, evidence from the Focus Group discussion affirmed that working in groups contributed to their learning. Participant 7 said, “I felt the best arrangement in this class was to put people from different places and regions in the same group . . . People with different perspectives can complement one another.” Participant 3 said, “We had a group member outside of East Asia. She was able to scan and find good resources when we could not. Even though she is the oldest in our group, I feel I should learn from her.” Participant 6 made a suggestion for improvement that highlighted a concern about cooperative learning. He said, “If someone in the group was not assigned to do scanning, he would not have the opportunity to practice it in the group.” His comment implies that group members were not sufficiently discussing with each other, as intended by the trainer. They were simply delegating work, and working individually. This suggest that East Asian learners need more support to work collaboratively.

Taking all three domains of data together, findings about the instructional methodology of cooperative learning in this course present two important points: (1) Cooperative learning is particularly crucial for the East Asian context of learning; (2) It is particularly crucial for the learning of foresight competency.

Firstly, given that “students in more authoritarian educational systems are . . . less likely to question the authority – the teacher – than students in more democratic educational systems” (Zhao 2014, 177), cooperative learning becomes the crucial instructional methodology to help East Asians ask questions, and learn from each other. Against the context of an East Asian education system, cooperative learning becomes a safe learning space where the high power distance between teacher-student can be mitigated. A pertinent research finding on Chinese international students in three New Zealand tertiary institutes indicates that, “there is a strong cultural conflict in the conceptualisation of collaborative learning between Chinese students with little prior experience of collaborative learning and New Zealand lecturers who are often not fully prepared to help Chinese students to bridge the gaps” (Clark , Baker and Li 2007, 1). The researchers recommend that Chinese students be given “adequate preparation” in working collaboratively, for instance, “practice in the techniques of questioning others’ views and of giving feedback” (Clark , Baker and Li 2007, 9). They also recommend training for lecturers “to help them understand the educational cultural differences of their current international students . . . in structuring collaborative learning assignments

effectively and in assessing collaborative assignments logically and fairly” (Clark, Baker and Li 2007, 9). Hence, with regards to cooperative learning, there is a need to acknowledge the cognitive dissonance of cooperative learning between East Asian learners and non-East-Asian trainers.

Secondly, while cooperative learning has generally been accepted as beneficial for any form of adult learning, group work is particularly valuable and crucial in the field of futures studies. This finding affirms the many theories and practices in futures studies that insist foresight activity must be participatory with varied stakeholders. For example, there are calls to promote a ‘participatory environment’; implement ‘participatory planning’; use ‘participatory methods’; stimulate ‘participative foresight’; and organise foresight activities as a ‘participatory process’ (Nikolova 2014, 1). One recent research showed that participatory foresight contributes to reflexive innovation (Rosa et al. 2021, 4). Another research study uses participatory scenario planning as a learning tool to enable innovation (Brown et al. 2016, 1). The consensus among futurists is that the future is too complex for any one individual to anticipate. The inclusion of more stakeholders “can expand the visibility of the future and promote firmer engagement with it” (Nikolova 2014, 1).

Consequently, based on the two important points above, it is recommended that cooperative learning be perceived as cardinal in the foresight training of East Asian learners, not just a good-to-have learning option. Group work should be reframed as a critical participatory foresight process. A future trainer using this course should be aware that, while cooperative learning may be a common instructional methodology in non-East-Asian learning contexts, East Asian learners do not have such learning experience. Adequate preparation must be put in place, prior to releasing learners to collaborate on their own. For example, explanation of the rationale for group work, alignment of mindsets and expectations, and the introduction and enforcement of ground rules within the group. To affect a productive cooperative learning experience, trainers should not just allocate and leave learners in groups without preparation, and then expect them to deliver results. Care and nurture have to be afforded to monitor group dynamics, and keep them on-task. For example, trainers need to: (1) ensure diversity in the grouping for a range of perspectives; (2) constantly remind learners to learn from one another with an open mind; (3) monitor discussions closely to keep

conversations moving, and on-task; and (4) timely recognition to boost group morale and momentum.

In this field research, efforts were made before the class to distribute learners into groups with a diverse mix of gender, the program of studies, and geographic backgrounds. It was especially challenging to ensure every group consisted of members from different provinces, and from at least one foreign country. To promote rapport among group members, the groups were maintained throughout ad-hoc discussions in class. At the end of every day, half an hour was allocated for groups to discuss and practise what they learnt throughout the day. Every group had to do a presentation as an assignment on the last day. The course syllabus design intention was to allow learners to practise as a group before they wrote their research papers individually. In hindsight, this finding shows that the success of participatory foresight is not a result of chance, but intentional care and effort.

In sum, the high level of engagement in class and their writing showed that active learning strategies achieved their goals. Among these strategies, findings show that group work was the *most* significant active learning strategy that contributed to learning. Further theories support the notion that collaborative learning is particularly crucial for East Asian learners, and as a participatory foresight process within futures studies. A recommendation is to reframe group work as a critical participatory foresight process. It means the care and nurture of group dynamics have to be intentional.

D. Summary

This chapter answers the research sub-question: What are the findings of the pilot test of the initial course syllabus? The answer is derived from three dimensions of course syllabus evaluation: theory and purpose, objectives and learning outcomes, and instructional methodology (Estep and Estep 2012, location 3511-3827).

Recommendations derived from the findings were used to revise the course syllabus presented in the next chapter.

In the first dimension, findings affirmed that the theory and purpose of the course syllabus were consistent to the theology and faith belief of East Asian leaders. The learners deemed the purpose of the foresight course syllabus as relevant and valuable to

their ministries. They embraced the theories of Christian futures studies. The recommendation is that trainers must do thorough learner analysis for every class, without compromise.

In the second dimension, findings showed that all three learning objectives were achieved.

The first objective was for learners to understand the foundations of futures studies through a theological lens, including sensitivity to change in the twenty-first century, the purpose of foresight and new ways of perceiving the future. Taking all three domains of data together, findings show that the Knowledge Objective has been met. The recommendation for this objective is to curate knowledge and content in such a way as to nurture a healthy crisis-ready mindset. The onus is on the trainer to show-don't-tell. The trainer has to connect the dots between current affairs and independent events to present the trends and driving forces behind these changes. Then the trainer needs to provide learners with some time to engage in personal sensemaking for their crisis-ready mindset to take shape.

The second objective was for learners to acquire three core competencies of foresight – scanning, simulating and strategising – to prepare their Christian communities for future surprises or opportunities. Evidence from the three domains of data showed that the Skill Objective has been accomplished. All but one participant were able to achieve the 3S competencies at an average to high competency level within this short course. The sole participant who showed low competency, was the exception rather than the norm, because she faced major external and internal struggles in her church during the course. Three recommendations were suggested for this objective, based on the three major learning obstacles observed. (1) The lack of exposure to higher-order thinking among East Asian learners implies that trainers need to allocate more time and effort for practices sessions. (2) A sense of despair can cripple a person's learning, hence trainers are recommended to identify learners showing early signs of despair, and provide immediate intervention to reinforce optimism, hope in God, and an internal locus of control that leads to self-efficacy. (3) Some learners tend to revert to their patterned thinking, so trainers need to help learners be self-aware, and make a self-conscious effort to sustain their new paradigms of forward-thinking. Trainers need to constantly motivate learners during learning, and give them much practice in class.

The final objective was for learners to develop hope in God, and confidence in one's newfound competencies to face the uncertain future. Evidence from all three domains of data showed that learners were more confident to face the uncertain future after the course. They experienced a sense of liberation and agency when they understood that God is not fatalistic, and that God's people have a responsibility to co-create desirable futures for his kingdom. Though some learners expressed a lack of confidence after the class, it was a problem of confidence rather than capability, because most of them could complete their papers with satisfactory performance. The boost in confidence was most noticeable among participants 2 and 6. Three recommendations were suggested for this objective. Firstly, the phrase "hope in God" should be omitted from the Attitude Objective, putting the focus on building self-confidence from the newfound competencies. Secondly, the course duration should be extended from 3.5 to 5 days, allowing the trainer to invest more class time for affective nurturing and morale-boosting through hand-holding targeted practices. Thirdly, long-term support should be provided in the form of building peer support in networking groups during the class. Also, the trainer should show constant concern for learners' skill development during and after the course, to encourage learners' self-awareness, self-responsibility, and self-efficacy.

In the final dimension of instructional methodology, the high level of engagement in class and their writings showed that active learning strategies have achieved their goals. Among these strategies, findings show that group work was the *most* significant active learning strategy that contributed to learning. Further theories support the notion that collaborative learning is particularly crucial for East Asian learners, and as a participatory foresight process within futures studies. A recommendation for instructional methodology is to reframe group work as a critical participatory foresight process, not just a good-to-have learning option. It means the care and nurture of group dynamics have to be intentional.

CHAPTER 5

REVISED FORESIGHT COURSE SYLLABUS

This chapter answers the research sub-question: What is a course syllabus that can develop foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia? Based on the findings and recommendations in the preceding chapter, the course syllabus used in the pilot test (Appendix H) is revised as follows. In addition, some minor aspects, though not specifically indicated in the findings, are changed too. This is because the course syllabus designer has invested further time and thought in this revised version. For example, the course was deemed to be not suitable for learners below Bachelor level, given the cognitive demands of foresight thinking. Other minor changes include the title of the course, textbooks and other areas. Aspects of the course syllabus that have been revised have been bolded.

Course Title: Christian Foresight Competency (Introduction) **(3 credits, 5 days)**

A. About the teacher

Gary Goh is the founder of Foresight Society in Singapore. He is also an itinerant Christian educator, holding credentials with Assemblies of God Singapore. He teaches in seminaries and churches across East and Southeast Asia. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Education (EdD) studies at AGST Alliance. His other academic qualifications include Masters of Arts in Chinese Studies from the National University of Singapore, MDiv from ACTS College (formerly known as Assemblies of God Bible College), and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education from the National Institute of Education, Singapore. His academic interests include adult education, thinking skills, futures studies, leadership and practical theology. He currently worships at Paya Lebar Methodist Church with his wife.

B. Course description

This course develops foresight competencies in Christian leaders, from the perspective of futures studies and theology, so that students can be future-ready in a rapidly changing world. Students will be sensitised to changes in the twenty-first century, and

acquire the three core competencies of foresight: scanning, simulating and strategising. They will develop the confidence to face the uncertain future.

C. Course Objectives

At the end of the course, the learner will be able to:

- 1) Knowledge wise: **Understand the foundations of foresight competency, namely its premise, purpose, and process.**
- 2) Skill wise: Acquire three core competencies of foresight – scanning, simulating and strategising.
- 3) Attitude wise: **Develop a sense of agency, responsibility and confidence for the future.**

D. Textbooks (Bachelor learners must read the first two books < 600pages; Master learners to read all three books < 750pages)

1. 吉姆.贝尔彻 (Jim Belcher) 著, 李望远 译《教会的大未来: 发现一种更 DEEP 的教会生活》台湾: 校园书房, 2014。(288 页, 作者反思传统和新兴教会模式, 提倡第三种模式: 更深的敬拜、福音、讲道等。英文版获得 2010 年两项书评奖) (Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional)
2. 邓建邦、陈瑞贵等《未来学: 理论、方法与应用》台湾: 淡江大学出版中心, 2014。(265 页, 本书由目前世上唯一一所中文教导未来学的大学出版) (Futures Studies: Theory, Methods and Application)
3. 谢木水《信仰的大未来: 人类需要的 20 个信念》“第三部分: 迎向未来的社会信念, 第四部分: 迎向未来的教育信念”(137-276 页) 台湾: 校园书房, 2020。(两部分共计 139 页, 作者是新加坡神学院院长) (The Beliefs that Reinvent the Future)

E. Learning activities: Online ZOOM sessions

Day	Topic	Active learning strategies
1. Lecture and Experiential learning	Foundations of foresight competency: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The premise: Faith in a World of Accelerating Change 2. The purpose: Better perception, planning, and preparation for the future 3. The process: Scanning, Simulating, and Strategising 4. Case study: The Porn Pandemic 	Presentation Interactive lecture Didactic questioning Case study Discussion

2. Lecture and Experiential learning	Foresight practice: 5. Scanning tool and practice: STEEP 6. Scanning tool and practice: Futures Triangle 7. Scanning think-pair-share: Application in one's ministry context 8. Scanning group practice and discussion	Presentation Interactive lecture Demonstration Skills practice Case study Discussion
3. Lecture and Experiential learning	Foresight practice: 9. Simulating tool: Dator's Four Futures 10. Simulating practice: Dator's Four Futures 11. Simulating think-pair-share: Application in one's ministry context 12. Simulating group practice and discussion	Presentation Interactive lecture Demonstration Skills practice Case study Discussion
4. Lecture and Experiential learning	Foresight practice: 13. Strategising tool: Backcasting (goal setting and KPIs) 14. Strategising practice: Backcasting (monitoring and adapting) 15. Strategising think-pair-share: Application in one's ministry context 16. Strategising: group practice and discussion	Presentation Interactive lecture Demonstration Skills practice Case study Discussion
5. Group presentations and trainer's critique	Group presentations based on a topic of the group's choice	Group inquiry Information search Skills practice Brainstorming Case study Discussion Presentation

F. Course assessment

On-campus assignments (40%)

- 1) Reflection journal (20%): Reflect on the key concepts taught in class for the first three days of learning (for example: What concepts left an impression? Why? How could I apply it in ministry or Christian living?). Hand in the assignment on the last day of class. (Masters: at least 400 words per day, BTh: at least 150 words per day).

- 2) Group presentation (20%): Within your group, discuss and select one real major problem in a church or family context, draft a Ten-year Foresight Strategic Plan, and present it on the last day of class (everyone must be involved in the presentation). The proposal must integrate all that you have learnt, and demonstrate the group's competencies in scanning, simulating and strategising. Refer to "Group presentation.ppt".

Post-campus assignments (60%): Based on requirements and deadlines by the seminary

- 3) Individual Research Paper (60%): Individually, select one real major problem in a church or family context, draft a Ten-year Foresight Strategic Plan, and demonstrate your competencies in scanning, simulating and strategising. Word requirement: Masters: at least 3000 words, BTh: at least 2000 words. Writing style requirement: Argumentative (except when describing scenarios), not narrative. Your purpose is to convince the reader with evidence.

Content requirement:

- 1) Introduction (problem and background): State your one real major problem (church or family context), briefly introduce some relevant information about the context, and definition of key terms (10% of the whole paper)
- 2) Content section 1 (Scanning): Gather statistics and data, indicate whether they suggest weak signals, trends, or driving forces. Demonstrate your competency in scanning (30% of whole paper)
- 3) Content section 2 (Simulating): Describe 4 possible scenarios in the next ten years. Demonstrate your competency in simulating (30% of the whole paper)
- 4) Content section 3 (Strategising): Based on your 4 possible scenarios, devise and explain 2 macro-level strategies (not micro-level planning). Demonstrate your competency in strategising (20% of the whole paper)
- 5) Conclusion: Summarise key points in your content (key points in scanning, simulating and strategising), do not introduce a new argument (10% of the whole paper)

Learners are encouraged to contact the teacher, and clarify any doubts about their topic before writing.

G. Reading List:

A. 视频资源

- 1) “什么是未来学？”新加坡国大博士生 Alex Fergnani 的 3 分钟视频
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bv-Mnf5BjvQ> (What is Futures Studies?)
- 2) “社会未来：何谓未来学？”1 小时淡江大学开放式课程。
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ncu88FNJZGw> (全系列共 12 课)
(The Social Future: What is Futures Studies? 1-hour lecture from Tamkang University, Taiwan)

B. 教外书籍/未来学

- 1) 阿尔文·托夫勒 著，蔡仲章 译《未来的冲击》北京：中信出版社，2006。
(*Future Shock*)
- 2) 邓建邦、陈瑞贵等《未来学：理论、方法与应用》台湾：淡江大学出版中心，2014。(Futures Studies: Theory, Method and Practice)
- 3) 顾镜清《未来学概论》贵阳：贵州人民出版社，1985。(Introduction to Futures Studies)
- 4) 欧崇敬《未来学方法论》台湾：新视野图书，2001。(Futures Studies Methodology)
- 5) 庞景安《现代未来研究理论方法及其应用》北京：科学技术文献出版社，2008。(Contemporary Futures Research: Theory, Methods and Practice)
- 6) 秦麟征《预测科学：未来研究学》北京：方志出版社，2007。(The Science of Anticipation: Futures Research)
- 7) 苏哈尔 (Sohail Inayatullah) 著，吴姿莹译《六个核心架构：达到转变的未来化思考》(Six Pillars: Futures Thinking for Transforming by Sohail Inayatullah)
- 8) Wendell Bell 著，陈国华等 译《未来学导论—历史、目的、与知识》台湾：学富文化，2004。(Foundations of Futures Studies: History, Purposes and Knowledge)
- 9) Wendell Bell 著，陈国华、廖德智 译《未来学研究—价值、客观与良善社会》台湾：学富文化，2008。(Foundations of Futures Studies: Values, Objectivity, and the Good Society)

B. 教内书籍/终末学

- 1) 邓绍光《盼望·神学：莫特曼》香港：基道出版社，2014。(Hope-Theology: Jurgen Moltmann)
- 2) 邓绍光《终末·教会·实践：莫特曼的盼望神学》香港：基道出版社，1999。(Eschaton, Church, Praxis: J. Moltmann's Theology of Hope)
- 3) 哈维·考克斯 (Harvey Cox) 著，郭腾杰 译《信仰的未来：宗教的兴衰与灵性时代的复苏》台湾：启示出版社，2016。(The Future of Faith)
- 4) 吉姆·贝尔彻 (Jim Belcher) 著，李望远 译《教会的大未来：发现一种更 DEEP 的教会生活》台湾：校园书房，2014。(Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional)
- 5) 李日堂《系统神学：末世论》香港：播道会文字部，2012。(Systematic Theology: Eschatology)

- 6) 梁家麟《唯主是盼：从彼得后书看基督再临与末世圣徒》香港：宣道出版社，2013。(*The Lord is our Hope: The Return of Christ and Saints in the Last Days from 2 Peter*)
- 7) 林鸿信“结束就是开始：莫尔特曼神学思想简介”《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第34辑·2015秋，页3-25。(*The End is the Beginning: An Introduction to Moltmann's Theology*)
- 8) 莫尔特曼(Jürgen Moltmann)著，王玉静译《盼望伦理》香港：道风书社，2015。(*The Ethics of Hope*)
- 9) 莫尔特曼(Jürgen Moltmann)著，曾念粤译《盼望神学：基督教终末论的基础与意涵》香港：道风书社，2007。(*The Theology of Hope*)
- 10) 区祥江、周伟豪、区颖珩 著《改写未来的9种生存力》香港：突破出版社，2015。
- 11) 区祥江、周伟豪、区颖珩 著《改写未来的9种生存力》香港：突破出版社，2015。(208页，阐述3方面的技能：搜索资讯、锁定方向、建构人际关系)(*9 Essential Abilities for the New Generation*)
- 12) 斯托得(John Stott)著，李秀全等译《没有上帝，就没有未来》台湾：校园书房，2018。(*No God, No Future*)
- 13) 唐佑之《末世与盼望：启示神学与伦理》香港：真理基金会，2005。(*Eschatology and Hope: Apocalyptic Theology and Ethics*)
- 14) 谢木水《信仰的大未来：人类需要的20个信念》台湾：校园书房，2020。(*The Beliefs that Reinvent the Future*)
- 15) 叶先秦“五旬宗的终末论对现今的意义”《华文五旬宗研究期刊》台湾：神召神学院，创刊号·2017秋，页34-44。(*Contemporary Significance of Pentecostal Eschatology*)
- 16) 杨慧林“政治神学及当代中国：莫尔特曼北京高级专家对谈会实录(上)”《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第34辑·2015秋，页26-59。(*Political Theology and Contemporary China: Moltmann at a High-level Talk in Beijing, part 1*)
- 17) 杨克勤“保罗的末世神学”《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第3辑·2000，页47-78。(*Paul's Eschatology*)
- 18) 杨牧谷《末世天机：启示录四至二十二章今释》香港：更新资源出版社，2014。(*Secrets of the Last Days: Revelation 4-22*)
- 19) 杨庆球 编《中国神学研究院期刊》“二十一世纪神学趋向(一)：文化篇”，第28期，2000年一月。(*The Trend of 21st Century Theology: Cultural*)
- 20) 杨熙楠“盼望神学与中国未来：莫尔特曼北京高级专家对谈会实录(下)”《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第34辑·2015秋，页60-87。(*The Theology of Hope and the Future of China: Moltmann at a High-level Talk in Beijing, part 2*)
- 21) 张芳“布洛赫：希望的神学”《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第22辑·2009秋，页92-119。(*Bloch: The Theology of Hope*)

H. Assessment Rubrics

	High	Average	Low
Introduction	Defined the ministry problem clearly. The problem is real and major.	Defined the ministry problem vaguely. The problem is real and major.	Did not define the ministry problem. The problem is not real nor major.
	Defined the context of ministry problem clearly. Provided sufficient relevant background knowledge.	Defined the context of ministry problem vaguely. Provided some relevant background knowledge.	Did not define the context of ministry problem. Did not provide relevant background knowledge.
	Provided simple and appropriate definitions for key terms in the ministry problem.	Provided simple but inappropriate definitions for key terms in the ministry problem.	Did not provide definitions for key terms in the ministry problem.
Scanning	Selected 1 appropriate scanning tool, and used it appropriately.	Selected 1 appropriate scanning tool, but used it inappropriately.	Did not select 1 appropriate scanning tool.
	Provided sufficient and relevant data to clarify the problem.	Provided some relevant data to clarify the problem.	Did not provide relevant data to clarify the problem.
Simulating	Selected 1 appropriate simulating tool, and used it appropriately.	Selected 1 appropriate simulating tool, but used it inappropriately.	Did not select 1 appropriate simulating tool.
	Described 4 possible scenarios with sufficient creativity and validity	Described 4 possible scenarios. Creativity and validity can be improved	Described 4 possible scenarios. Creativity and validity were insufficient.
Strategising	Applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) appropriately.	Applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) somewhat appropriately.	Applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) inappropriately.
	Provided clear and appropriate strategies and milestones	Provided clear but inappropriate strategies and milestones	Did not provide clear nor appropriate strategies and milestones

Conclusion	Reiterated the gist of the research methods and key points of the main body of content thoroughly.	Reiterated the gist of the research methods and key points of the main body of content vaguely.	Did not reiterate the gist of the research methods nor key points of the main body of content
Writing style	No word errors; no grammar mistakes; clear formatting; high readability.	Some word errors; some grammar mistakes; some untidy formatting; average readability.	Many word errors; many grammar mistakes; untidy formatting; low readability.

Following suggestions by research participants for follow-up courses, a possible 6-module Christian Futures Studies Programme for seminaries could be as delineated in Table 13 below. This proposed programme is based on three parts: (1) the Houston Foresight Master's programme and Regent University's Doctor of Strategic Leadership Degree; (2) the needs of Asian seminaries; and (3) the trends of the organisational leadership sector. The change in futures thinking effected by the foresight course syllabus proposed in this dissertation, can be better sustained for the long term, with a full-fledged programme suggested below.

Table 13: Christian Futures Studies Programme (36-credit programme at Master's level)

	Module	Purpose
1)	Christian Leadership: theory and practice	The purpose is to expose learners to different leadership theories and examine their practices in the twenty-first century Christian context.
2)	Eschatology: theory and practice	The purpose is to expose learners to the different themes in eschatology and examine their own belief about the end times.
3)	Social Change and Change Management	The purpose is to expose learners to the different theories of how organisations, societies, and other human systems change over time. The emphasis is on managing change.
4)	Christian Foresight Competency (Introduction)	The purpose is to introduce learners to the knowledge and skills in Christian futures studies and foresight competency. Skill emphasis: scanning.
5)	Christian Foresight Competency (Intermediate)	The purpose is to reinforce and deepen learners' knowledge and skills with more tools and practice in ministry contexts. Skill emphasis: simulating.
6)	Christian Foresight Competency (Advance)	The purpose is to reinforce and deepen learners' knowledge and skills with more tools and practice in ministry contexts. Skill emphasis: strategising.

7)	Practicum: Foresight in ministry	The purpose is to enable learners to apply foresight competency in a ministry context for at least six months.
8)	Thesis/ Dissertation	The purpose is to enable learners to conduct independent research in a foresight-related project.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary of the Research

Change is accelerating in the Information Age, causing our twenty-first-century world to be more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA). Globalisation, climate change, technological advancements and changing demographics are some key driving forces that will shape our future. This Accelerated Change affects churches, seminaries, ministries, and the practice of faith in many fundamental ways. To prepare for more frequent and unexpected disruptions in a VUCA world, Christian leaders need to increase their capability to anticipate the future. In other words, to be future-ready, leaders need to develop foresight competency.

This research was aimed at designing and testing a course syllabus to help Mandarin-speaking leaders in East Asia develop foresight competency so that they can confidently and effectively resolve current and future ministry problems, and be more resilient to rapid changes. The central research question was: What is a course syllabus that can develop foresight competency among Mandarin-speaking Christian leaders in East Asia?

A literature review of futures studies was done to identify its theoretical foundations, practice and implementation, competencies and methods. A biblical-theological critique of its theoretical foundations suggested that to teach and practise futures studies in Christian contexts, these secular theories must integrate God's perception of time, accounting for concepts like God's plans and promises, general and specific revelations, preparation and fulfilment. Two theoretical gaps were identified in the Christian understanding about the future: (1) the lack of future orientation and Futures Thinking in eschatology and the wider theology, and (2) the lack of a theology for watchful preparation for God's kingdom. These two gaps are related but different in emphasis.

Gap one is the overarching theoretical basis to understand the future; gap two is the theory in practice. Christian understanding about the future should not just be head knowledge, but to lead towards a lifetime of applied knowledge for watchful preparation. Both gaps can be met by introducing futures studies into theology to form a

new field of study known as Christian futures studies. Christian futures studies complement eschatology to develop a fuller understanding of the future. Some Christian scholars have made efforts to practise and implement futures studies in areas like practical theology, Christian leadership, pastoral theology, and the future of the global Christian faith. This critique argued that implementation must start and be based on a Christian worldview of the future, not just at the level of methodology. A further critique of the methods and competency in futures studies showed foresight competency comprises three core skills: scanning, simulating, and strategising. These skills formed the basis for the design of a skill-based course syllabus for this research. The literature review culminated in endorsing Christian futures studies as the theological foundation for training purposes.

The research methodology is a Practical Action Research (Creswell 2012, 592) based on Mills' (2018, 26) Dialectic Action Research Spiral. An initial course syllabus was designed in phase one, and pilot tested with adult learners in a course at MBTS in phase two. To design the initial course syllabus, Learner Analysis was conducted. It includes (1) a Test Group survey of a wider group of East Asian leaders; (2) a short and focused literature review of Sino-Christian Studies to understand the East Asian worldview in the twenty-first century; and (3) a Learner Profiles based on the trainer's experience in East Asia.

Learning objectives for the initial course syllabus were crafted using taxonomies by Bloom et al. (1956); Krathwohl et al. (1964); Harrow (1972) and Jewett and Mullan (1977). Finally, the instructional methodologies of the initial course syllabus were underpinned by the conceptual framework of andragogy in practice (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson 2005). Instructional methods were based on active learning strategies by Bonwell and Eison (1991), Eison (2010), Silberman and Biech (2015). Lesson plans were designed based on the nine events of instruction by Gagne et al. (1992).

In phase two, the course syllabus was pilot tested in MBTS. Data was collected from three domains: a trainer's fieldnotes, a Focus Group discussion, and learners' works which comprise Pre- and Post-class Worksheets, Reflection Journals, and Individual Research Papers. The course syllabus was evaluated in three dimensions: theory and purpose, learning objectives, and instructional methodology. In the first dimension, findings affirmed that the theories and purpose of the initial course syllabus were

consistent with the theology and faith belief of East Asian leaders. They were relevant to East Asian learners, and valued by them. For the second dimension, taking all three domains of data together, findings show that the Knowledge Objective, Skills Objective, and the Attitude Objective have been met. So in the third dimension, it could be said that the instructional methodology had served the learners well. Cooperative learning was highlighted as the most useful active learning strategy to develop foresight competency.

B. Significance and Implications of the Research

The significance and implications of this research are outlined in three aspects: theological, ecclesial, and educational.

1. Theological Significance and Implications

This research proposes a Christian futures studies following a biblical-theological critique of its secular counterpart. The theological significance of this new field of study is that it closes two gaps in Christian understanding about the future: the lack of future orientation and Futures Thinking in eschatology and theology in general; and the lack of a theology of watchful preparation.

Firstly, Christian futures studies updates the Christian mental model of the future. It clarifies a long-term misconception of seeing *adventus* as “radically new”, but rather to view it as a “discontinuous future”. Building on the works of previous scholars, it promotes a paradoxical view of *futurum* and *adventus*, where the future comprises both continuity and discontinuity. This view provides theoretical clarification for the role of humans in the future of God. God is sovereign but he has chosen to shape the future in and through humans. Christian futures studies provide the much-needed justification for human responsibilities and efficacy in God’s plan. It provides the legitimacy for planning, learning, capacity-building, and other efforts of preparation.

Secondly, Christian futures studies promotes a posture of watchful preparation, just as its secular counterpart promotes anticipatory preparation in general. This motif is derived from Jesus’ Olivet discourse (Matt 24-25) with a dual emphasis on the eschatological future as well as present preparation. Previous scholars of eschatology

have focused on clarifying our beliefs about the end times, but not enough on what to do in the meantime. In the past, watchfulness was perceived as important but often not a priority concern. It also lacked a well-developed theology to inform Christian living. Christian futures studies meet this gap by first situating faith practice in the context of Accelerating Change in the twenty-first century to promote a crisis-ready mindset. This crisis-ready mindset then redirects and sustain attention to being God's watchful stewards in a rapidly changing world. At the other extreme, doomsday scenarios and false prophecies are rampant today. Christian futures studies correct this narrow focus on apocalypticism through the academic rigours of a formal discipline of study.

The long view of time – in decades and even centuries – promoted by Christian futures studies ensures that Christians are not agitated by the slightest hint of doomsday signs. It broadens end-time concerns beyond a narrow interpretation of signs, to focus collective thinking on the more impactful trends and driving forces in our world. Christian futures studies complements eschatology to complete the theological view of the future. It has contributed to overcoming two theological gaps so far. Further research and investigation will certainly uncover more truth about human future consciousness.

2. Ecclesial Significance and Implications

At the ecclesiastical level, Christian futures studies alerts church leaders to Accelerating Change in the Information Age and the VUCA world. Christian futures studies inculcates an organisational culture to devote more time and effort to thinking about the future. Church leaders need to be equipped with the right vocabulary, mindset and skill set to do so. This has two significances and implications.

Firstly, it promotes the mindset for risk management in the Church. Christian futures studies alerts leaders to changes in trends, demographics, expectations and behaviours. Leaders must resist a myopic view of their church, and be strategically sensitive to developments around the world in this Information Age. Threats such as the global push of the LGBT movement and the porn pandemic are ideological in nature. They spread like wildfire in cyberspace, being unconstrained by geographic boundaries. The impacts of climate change are more subtle and slow, but the effects may be irreversible. A future-oriented mindset enables leaders to have more lead time to prepare for the future,

even if the crisis is inevitable. It enables leaders to spot opportunities in crisis, for example, to teach Christian sexuality classes to prepare the younger generation to stand firm in a porn-prevalent or LGBT-legitimised world; or to explore technological options earlier to carry on church services under extreme weather. A longer preparation time increases the chances of the Church emerging stronger from a crisis.

To enable the Church to be more resilient, Christian futures studies advocates the setting up of future-focused research institutions at the denominational level, by mega-churches, or any institutions with the resources to do so. The Barna Group in the US is a good example of how future-focused research on faith matters can better inform churches and seminaries of emerging issues, threats and opportunities five, ten or fifty years ahead. As more and more secular governments and businesses invest in foresight capability, they are also acquiring foreknowledge to colonise the future. The Church must be aware it is in a battle of mind for Christ (Rom. 12:2, Rom. 8:6, 1 Pet. 1:13).

Secondly, Christian futures studies promotes a growth mindset (Dweck 2017) of continuous learning and professional development among leaders. It challenges peoples' assumptions that the future will be like the past. Accelerating Change implies that many future ministry problems will be without precedence. Past experience will be less helpful and church leaders have to develop a habit of continuous upskilling. Hence, continuous lifelong learning needs to be a hallmark of next-generation leaders. A fixed mindset must be challenged and resisted. Leaders also need to know when to switch from a managerial role to a strategic leadership role to adapt to changing times. To survive and thrive in the VUCA world, they need to be comfortable working with uncertainties and new norms. They need to be more open to technology, innovation, and the latest fields of knowledge to upgrade themselves. They need to embrace creative solutions to carry on faith amidst disruptions. The Church must keep up with the pace of change, or risk becoming irrelevant and obsolete to the people it serves. Christian futures studies promote a necessary first and primary paradigm shift – the development of foresight competency. Unless church leaders are sensitised to the crisis of Accelerating Change in our times, and increase their foresight competency, the habits to develop a growth mindset, lifelong learning, and innovative thinking will only be peripheral and deferrable.

3. Educational Significance and Implications

In the area of Christian education, Christian futures studies demystifies foresight and unpacks it into three core competencies of scanning, simulating and strategising. Foresight is no longer limited to a gift of nature reserved for the anointed few, but a skill that can be nurtured by anyone willing to commit to this lifelong endeavour to better serve God's people. Foresight skills, similar to thinking skills and design skills, can be taught, honed, and mastered. Two significances and implications are discussed.

Firstly, Christian futures studies highlights the urgency for self-development in the Information Age. Its emphasis on Accelerating Change in this VUCA world implies that the speed of learning must match the rate of change. So that responses to disruptions and crises are timely and appropriate. To handle the increasingly complex situations in our VUCA world, leaders need to access and develop more up-to-date knowledge and skills. Learning is no longer a luxury, but crucial for survival. The speed of learning and applying the knowledge, will determine whether the individual or organisation survive and thrive in our VUCA world. The person who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn fast enough, will be easily disrupted in future.

The second significance of this dissertation is that it provides the content and methodology to teach foresight competency. Its research is based on the leading thinkers in the field of futures studies at the time of writing, and consolidated the academic discussion in that field to date. It also initiated a dialogue between theology and futures studies on how to perceive and prepare the future. It presents the necessary content for a research-based course syllabus that employs adult instructional methodology for optimal teaching effectiveness. Hence, this foresight course syllabus offers a direction and a roadmap forward for seminaries and church training departments to design course syllabus in future. Christian educators who share the same vision to equip leaders with foresight competency can take the offered course syllabus and teach it directly, or build on the content to design a better course syllabus.

C. Recommendations for Further Research

Some recommendations for further research are suggested as follows.

Firstly, future researchers may want to approach foresight research from the theory of insight learning. If foresight is insight about the future, then a deeper understanding of how insight happens will enable people to generate even more foresight. This would be a unique research approach in the field of futures studies. Many theories of insight assert that insight consists of at least a representation phase and a restructuring phase (Ash and Wiley 2006, 66). How we represent a problem in our minds determines the solution-possibilities space, which may or may not result in an impasse. Restructuring involves the re-interpretation of the entire problem (Ohlsson 1984, 122). Restructuring opens up the cognitive solution space to break the impasse, resulting in what insight theorists described as an “Aha” experience. Compared to the foresight core skills identified in this research, restructuring is what scanning and simulating strives to achieve. Broadening one’s perception through information research and scenario imagination opens up the cognitive space for alternative novel solutions. Further research along this line of inquiry will certainly yield significant results on how to teach foresight competency more effectively.

The second recommended research direction is to investigate foresight from the perspective of human consciousness to understand the correlation between foresight, faith and hope. Neuroscientist Mark Changizi (2009, 109) argues that the human visual system is inherently future-seeing. It compensates for neural delays by generating images of what will occur one-tenth of a second into the future (Changizi et al. 2008, 459). Futurist Thomas Lombardo has written extensively on the concept of future consciousness, and asserts that it “involves all the major capacities of the human mind” (Lombardo 2009, 85). His works relate future consciousness to the development of character virtues such as wisdom, courage, and responsibility. These are virtues esteemed in the Bible. Theologian Ted Peters has also written some works that relate future consciousness to faith, values, and ethics. Further inquiry can uncover insights into how God builds future orientation into human nature, and could reveal novel ideas of how faith, hope and foresight connect at the deeper level of human consciousness.

Finally, other possible research could strive to formulate foresight as a leadership theory, alongside established theories such as situational leadership, transformational leadership, and servant leadership. In addition, researchers could also investigate the “teach the future” movement, started by Peter Bishop, that teaches futures studies to secondary and primary school students. Empowering our next generation with foresight competency at a young age will have longer-lasting impacts.

D. Concluding Remarks

“We can’t change much from a place of ignorance: only from a place of awareness” (Gidley 2017, 175). The lack of knowledge about the future – What is the future? How does it come about? Where is it going? – limits people to exercise agency to influence and control their future. God is not fatalistic. He invites humans to play a part in shaping the future of his kingdom. What a privilege and responsibility his people have. God has called every faithful steward – parent, educator, pastor, leader – to create a better tomorrow for those they serve. Not simply a future that is comfortable, but one that must prepare them to give a good account to Christ when they meet him on the day of judgment. May God’s people be watchfully prepared. May they be like the leaders of Issachar, to be people who understood the times, and knew what they should do (1 Chron 12:32).

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APPENDIX A

Test Group Survey/ Action Research Group Pre-Class Worksheet

Personal Foresight Competency Survey

Name: _____ (Code provided by researcher: _____)

Age: _____

Country and province currently ministering: _____

Designation in church or Christian organisation: _____

(Instruction for Test Group survey: The purpose of this survey is to understand your current practice of personal foresight. The information you give will be kept confidential – only the researcher and his supervisor will have access to the results and information on participants. In any report, none of the information you give will identify you. There are no right or wrong answers, just give your honest answers to the following questions in terms of **actual occurrence**. Choose one of these answers.)

(Instruction for Action Research Group Pre-Class Worksheet: The purpose of this survey is for your self-assessment about the learning outcomes of your foresight training. There are no right or wrong answers, just give your honest answers to the following questions in terms of **actual occurrence**. Choose one of these answers.)

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. Do you perceive signs of change of the 21st century around you?					
2. Do you read, watch or listen to the news or current affairs?					
3. Do you read, watch or listen to academic analysis, journals or professional reports?					
4. Do you analyze the signs and trends of change through reflection, consultation or prayer?					
5. Do you attend seminars or read, watch or listen to books or videos to understand the signs of change around you?					

6. Do you imagine what the consequences or implications of events or trends will be like?					
7. Do you imagine what the best-case scenario of the future will be like?					
8. Do you imagine what the worst-case scenario of the future will be like?					
9. Do you think 5, 10 or 20 years ahead?					
10. Do you learn lessons from imagination/ imaginings about the future?					
11. Do you set 5-, 10- or 20-years goals, vision or masterplan?					
12. Do you set strategies (macro-level plans) to achieve long-term and overall goals?					
13. Do you set your action plans (micro-level plans) based on strategies (macro-level plans)?					
14. Do you monitor progress after setting your strategies (macro-level plans)?					
15. Do you review your strategies (macro-level plans) every few years?					

16. Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

Thank you

APPENDIX B

Data Analysis and Validity of Test Group Survey

Data of Foresight Competency Survey (Test Group Survey). Divergent stacked bar chart are recommended by statisticians Heiberger and Robbins (2014, 1) “as the primary graphical display technique for Likert and related scales.” These data are input into a formulated excel form created by the researcher, in place of other software used by statisticians Heiberger and Robbins (2014, 29-30), to create a divergent stacked bar chart in figure 9.

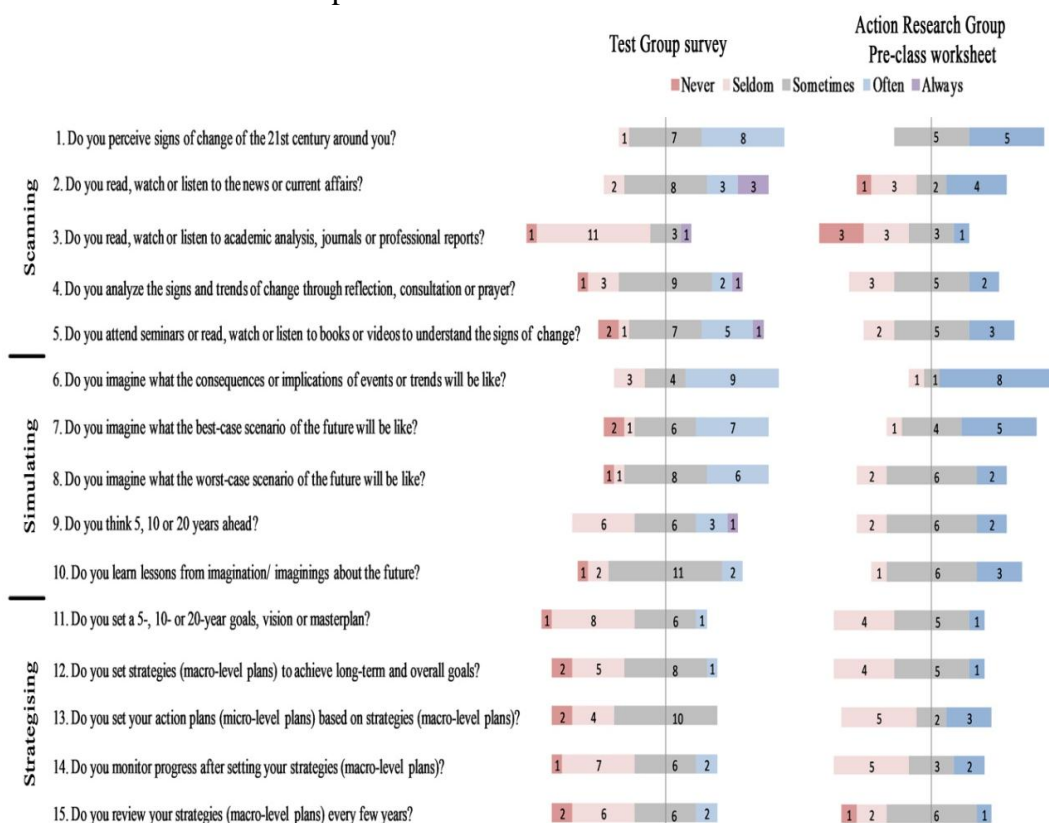
	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Qn 1	0	1	7	8	0
Qn 2	0	2	8	3	3
Qn 3	1	11	3	0	1
Qn 4	1	3	9	2	1
Qn 5	2	1	7	5	1
Qn 6	0	3	4	9	0
Qn 7	2	1	6	7	0
Qn 8	1	1	8	6	0
Qn 9	0	6	6	3	1
Qn 10	1	2	11	2	0
Qn 11	1	8	6	1	0
Qn 12	2	5	8	1	0
Qn 13	2	4	10	0	0
Qn 14	1	7	6	2	0
Qn 15	2	6	6	2	0

Qn 16

Respondent #	Remarks
3	When pastoring the sheep, one has to anticipate the situations they will face. And when events happen around us, one must think about how God is guiding us in the human world. God is in charge of human history, whether in the past, the present or the future. Therefore, through the teachings of the Bible, one must view trends in the 21st century world, to strategise pastoral plans, and to understand the people we face. One must adapt to the context, God's leading is different in different contexts, so that one will not be unaccustomed.
4	Foresight thinking is an excellent way of thinking. It will greatly benefit personal ministry and service.
5	I have macro-planning, but lack professional standards and academic resources in this aspect. I did not put enough emphasis on this area. As a result, my macro planning is always disrupted by events in daily living, and unable to progress for long.
6	In the past, I did not ponder in detail how to plan my future! When I saw this survey, I felt very interested! I hope it will change my future!
7	Base on my understanding of the church leadership (church senior pastor and zonal pastors) in my hometown (My church is a church in province 6, there are 2

	branch churches with over 50 members, and 3 with over 100 members), these leaders get all their information, news and foreign knowledge from state media. Therefore, the information they received is most likely to be manipulated (It is well known that media awareness is quite high in East Asia). This results in a huge limitation in leadership judgment about events that happen around them, and their assessment of future development. I feel that the limitation in getting information, lack of freedom of the press, and ideological propaganda has an enormous impact on local church leaders to imagine, judge, and plan for the future (Just some of my thoughts).
8	This survey gave me a great awakening. In the university students' fellowship that I lead, I need to plan my pastoral ministry (using a four-year plan for a start)
10	This area of foresight competency is a weakness among a lot of Christian ministers in China. The reason is that they do not know how to plan, nor are they not good at planning. And they lack guidance and inheritance from their fathers.
12	The research topic by teacher Gary is truly the weakness of the contemporary Chinese church. The revival in the 80s-90s brought "quantitative" growth to churches. But the lack of "quality" limited the influence of the church. In my view, the "qualitative" growth of the church is very related to church leaders. I sincerely hope the fruits of this research can bless churches in Asia and East Asia.

When the results of the Test Group Survey is compared with that of the Action Research Group Pre-class Worksheet (same questions by two different groups) as shown below, they show similar overall trend (s curve) in their responses. Hence, in retrospect, the Test Group had served as an good gauge of the foresight competency of the Action Research Group.



APPENDIX C

Invitation to Participate in a Research Project (Test Group)

Dear ministry leader,

As part of my EdD program with AGST Alliance, I am undertaking research for my dissertation on “designing a foresight course syllabus to develop future-ready competencies among Mandarin-speaking Christian ministry leaders in East Asia”.

My research involves surveying the views of East Asian leaders or emerging leaders in churches or Christian organizations (missions organization, Bible school, Christian non-profit organization or Christian business). This letter is to invite you to take part in this survey. It will take about 15 minutes to complete and participation is completely voluntary. You may return the survey as an attachment to the email address below. You may choose to decline this invitation.

The information you give will be kept confidential to me and my supervisor. Your name and personal details will not be revealed in any of my research writing, and none of the information you give will be able to identify you. At any time up until one month after you submitted your response, you may request that your information not be used. If you are interested to receive a summary of the findings of this preliminary survey, please indicate your email and/ or Wechat, and I will send the summary to you when it is available.

If you would like more information before you make your decision about whether to participate, or you have questions about this request, please contact me at email: _____ or the wechat I contacted you. If you would like to discuss aspects of this research with someone not directly involved, please email the Chair, AGST Alliance Human Participants Ethics Panel (email ethics@agstalliance.org), which is responsible for reviewing and approving my study.

Note that submission of your response via email implies that you have consented to participate in my research.

I am grateful for your valuable time and hope that you will agree to participate. Thank you.

Gary Goh

APPENDIX D

Letter of Request to President of MBTS

Dear Rev Dr John Ong,

Re: Permission to pilot test a foresight course syllabus and collect the students' responses in a research project

I am a candidate in the Doctor of Education (EdD) program of AGST Alliance. My supervisor is Dr Jennifer Turner. As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a research project on “designing a foresight course syllabus to develop future-ready competencies among Mandarin-speaking Christian ministry leaders in East Asia”.

This project involves pilot testing a foresight course syllabus and collecting the students' responses. I would like to conduct this research in a class at MBTS in July 2020. East Asian students in this class who are ministry leaders or emerging leaders will be invited to participate in the research by granting permission for their assignments to be perused for research. Participation will be voluntary. The information provided by students will be kept confidential: their names and personal details will not be revealed in any of my research writing, and none of the information they give will be able to identify them. At any time up until one month after students submitted their responses, they may request that their information not be used. Data from the students to be used include their worksheets, assignments and evaluations. After the last day of teaching, a Focus Group discussion will be conducted, with a maximum of 7 people in a group. It will last around 30-45 minutes. I also seek your permission to allow me to work with one of your admin staff as a research assistant on aspects of administering the research, the chief of which is to brief, conduct and collect consent forms and surveys on the fourth day of class.

You will have the right to withdraw your permission at any time for me to use the MBTS class and participants for my research. If you allow me to use the class, I would appreciate an assurance from you that the students' participation or non-participation in my research will not affect their grades or relationship to MBTS.

If you would like more information, or you have enquiries about this request, please contact me at email: _____, or the Wechat “_____”. If you would like to discuss aspects of this research with someone not directly involved, please email the Chair, AGST Alliance Human Participants Ethics Panel (email ethics@agstalliance.org), which is responsible for reviewing and approving my study.

If you would like to receive a summary of the results of my research, I will be happy to send it to you at the conclusion of my research.

I am grateful for your consideration of this request, and I look forward to your response.

In Christian Fellowship,
Gary Goh

APPENDIX E

Letter of Invitation and Informed Consent to Participate in a Research (Action Research Group)

Dear participant of the Foresight Leadership course,

Re: Invitation to participate in a research project

As part of my Doctor of Education (EdD) program with AGST Alliance, I am undertaking some research for my dissertation on “designing a foresight course syllabus to develop future-ready competencies among Mandarin-speaking Christian ministry leaders in East Asia”.

This research involves pilot testing a foresight course syllabus and collecting the students’ responses. East Asian students who are leaders or emerging leaders in this class will be invited to participate in the research by granting permission for their assignments to be perused for research, and possibly being part of a Focus Group discussion. Participation will be voluntary. Data to be collected include students’ worksheets, assignments and evaluations. After the last day of class, you will be invited to participate in a Focus Group discussion, with a maximum of 7 people in the group. This will last 30-45 minutes.

The information you give me will be kept confidential to me and my supervisor. Your name and personal details will not be revealed in any of my research writing, and none of the information you give will be able to identify you. At any time up until one month after the end of the course, you may request that your information not be used. If you take part in the Focus Group and wish to withdraw, it will not be possible to exclude your individual data once the Focus Group session has commenced. Also, if you participate in the Focus Group, confidentiality with respect to your identity and your views expressed in the discussion cannot be guaranteed. The president of MBTS has given his assurance that participation or non-participation in my research will not affect your grades or relationship to MBTS.

If you would like more information before you make your decision about whether to participate, or you have questions about this request, please contact me at email: _____ or the wechat “_____”. If you would like to discuss aspects of this research with someone not directly involved, please email the Chair, AGST Alliance Human Participants Ethics Panel (email ethics@agstalliance.org), which is responsible for reviewing and approving my study.

If you are interested to receive a summary of the results of my research, please indicate your email and/ or Wechat in the consent form. I will send it to you at the conclusion of my research.

I am grateful for your consideration of this request, and I look forward to you giving your consent to participate in this research.

In Christian Fellowship,
Gary Goh

Informed Consent Form
For Gary Goh's EdD Dissertation research
AGST-Alliance

I agree to participate in the study on the foresight course syllabus by Gary Goh for his AGST Alliance Doctor of Education (EdD) dissertation research. The procedures required for the research and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the research have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand my participation is completely voluntary.

I understand that at any time during the research data collection, I can continue in the course but not be a research participant. And after the data collection is completed, I can request that my data be withdrawn from the research, up until a month after the data collection is done.

I understand that the information and views I provide in the assignments and Focus Group discussion will be kept confidential, and my name and personal details will not be revealed in any of the research writing.

I understand that I can stop my participation in the Focus Group at any time if I do not wish to continue. However, as it is a Focus Group discussion it will not be possible to erase my participation in the discussion up to the point that I withdraw.

I agree to not disclose to other people anything discussed in the Focus Group.

Name and signature of participant:

Signature of researcher:

Date:

Please fill in your email and/ or wechat if you are interested to receive a summary of results at the conclusion of my research.

Email:

Wechat:

APPENDIX F

Confidentiality Agreement with Research Assistant

Confidentiality Agreement

This agreement is between: Gary Goh and (name) _____ for
“Research to develop a foresight leadership course syllabus”

Summary of the job description:

Before the course:

- 1) Sign the confidentiality agreement

During the course:

- 1) On day 4 of on-campus class (just before lunch), to 1. brief all students in class about the research; 2. Issue Invitation letters and consent forms to students. The researcher will provide you instruction and a script for briefing;
- 2) Avail yourself to answer queries by students about their participation and the research;
- 3) On day 4 end of class, collect the forms in class, and counter-sign all consent forms handed in. Provide a name list of consented participants (just their names) to the researcher.

I agree to:

- 1) keep all the research information shared with me confidential. I will not discuss or share the research information with anyone other than with the Researcher(s) or others identified by the Researcher(s).
- 2) keep all research information secure while it is in my possession.
- 3) return all research information to the Researcher(s) when I have completed the research tasks or upon request, whichever is earlier.
- 4) destroy all research information regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Researcher(s) after consulting with the Researcher(s).
- 5) comply with the instructions of the Researcher(s) about requirements to physically and/or electronically secure records (including password protection, file/folder encryption, and/or use of secure electronic transfer of records through file sharing, use of virtual private networks, etc.).

Research Assistant

Researcher

Full name/ Signature/ Date

Full name/ Signature/ Date

APPENDIX G

Action Research Group Post-class Worksheet Personal Foresight Competency Post-training Self-assessment

Name: _____

The purpose of this survey is for your self-assessment about the learning outcomes of your foresight training. Please rate the following statements in terms of **importance**.

Choose one of these answers.

	Extremely Important	Important	Unsure	Unimpo rtant	Extremely Unimpor tant
1. Perceive signs of change of the 21st century around me					
2. Read, watch or listen to the news or current affairs					
3. Read, watch or listen to academic analysis, journals or professional reports					
4. Analyze the signs and trends of change through reflection, consultation or prayer					
5. Attend seminars or read, watch or listen to books or videos to understand the signs of change around me					
6. Imagine what the consequences or implications of events or trends will be like					
7. Imagine what the best-case scenario of the future will be like					
8. Imagine what the worst-case scenario of the future will be like					
9. Think 5, 10 or 20 years ahead					
10. Learn lessons from imagination/ imaginings about the future					

11. Set 5-, 10- or 20-years goals, vision or masterplan					
12. Set strategies (macro-level plans) to achieve long-term and overall goals					
13. Set my action plans (micro-level plans) based on strategies (macro-level plans)					
14. Monitor progress after setting my strategies (macro-level plans)					
15. Review my strategies (macro-level plans) every few years					

16. Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

Thank you

APPENDIX H

Foresight Leadership Course Syllabus for Pilot Test

(A revised version is available in Chapter Five)

A. About the teacher

Gary Goh is the founder of Foresight Society in Singapore. He is also an itinerant Christian educator, holding credentials with Assemblies of God Singapore. He teaches in seminaries and churches across East and Southeast Asia. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Education (EdD) studies at AGST Alliance. His other academic qualifications include Masters of Arts in Chinese Studies from the National University of Singapore, MDiv from ACTS College (formerly known as Assemblies of God Bible College), and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education from the National Institute of Education, Singapore. His academic interests include adult education, thinking skills, futures studies, leadership and practical theology. He currently worships at Paya Lebar Methodist Church with his wife.

B. Course description

This course develops foresight competencies in Christian leaders, from the perspective of futures studies and theology, so that students can be future-ready in a rapidly changing world. Students will be sensitised to changes in the 21st century, and acquire the three core competencies of foresight: scanning, simulating and strategising. They will develop confidence and hope to face the uncertain future.

C. Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

Knowledge wise: Understand the foundations of futures studies through theological lens, including sensitivity to change in the 21st century, the purpose of foresight and new ways of perceiving the future;

Skill wise: Acquire three core competencies of foresight – scanning, simulating and strategising – to prepare their Christian communities for future surprises or opportunities;

Attitude wise: Develop hope in God and confidence in one's newfound competencies to face the uncertain future.

D. Textbooks (Masters: 500 pages, BTh: 400 pages. Book 1 is compulsory reading, book 2 is selective reading based on your requirement)

- 1) 杨庆球 编 “二十一世纪神学趋向（一）：文化篇” 《中国神学研究院期刊》，第 28 期，2000 年一月（*The Trend of 21st Century Theology: Cultural*. 180 pages, this issue of the theological journal explores issues such as virtual reality and genetics）

- 2) 迈克斯·泰格马克 著，汪婕舒 译《生命 3.0》浙江：浙江教育出版社，2018。
(413 pages, Max Tegmark's seminal book entitled *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial*)

E. Learning activities: Online ZOOM sessions

Day	Topic
1. Lecture Tue – Thu: Lesson 1-2: 0800-1145 Lesson 3-4: 1400-1700	Foundations of futures studies through theological lens: 1. Brief Introduction to futures studies: landscape and definition 2. The context of foresight: Change in the 21 st century 3. The purpose of foresight: informed decision-making 4. Overview of foresight competencies: Scanning, Simulating and Strategising
2. Lecture and Experiential learning	Foresight competencies: 5. Foresight competency 1: Scanning: concepts and application 6. Foresight competency 1: Scanning: Practice 7. Foresight competency 2: Simulating: concepts and application 8. Foresight competency 2: Simulating: Practice
3. Lecture and Experiential learning	Foresight competencies: 9. Foresight competency 3: Strategising: concepts and application 10. Foresight competency 3: Strategising: Practice 11. Topic of Family: Teacher demonstration 12. Topic of Porn epidemic: Student practice
4. Group presentations and teacher's critique Fri: Lesson 1-2: 0800-1145	Group presentations based on a topic of the group's choice

F. Course assignments (2 credits)

On-campus assignments (40%)

- 1) Reflection journal (20%): Reflect on the key concepts taught in class for the first three days of learning (for example: What concepts left an impression? Why? How could I apply it in ministry or Christian living?). Hand in the assignment on the last day of class. (Masters: at least 400 words per day, BTh: at least 150 words per day)
- 2) Group presentation (20%): Within your group, discuss and select one real major problem in a church or family context, draft a Ten-year Foresight Strategic Plan, and present it on the last day of class (everyone must be involved in the presentation). The proposal must integrate all that you have learnt, and demonstrate the group's competencies in scanning, simulating and strategising. Refer to "Group presentation.ppt".

Post-campus assignments (60%): Based on requirements and deadlines by MBTS

- 3) Individual Research Paper (60%): Individually, select one real major problem in a church or family context, draft a Ten-year Foresight Strategic Plan, and demonstrate your competencies in scanning, simulating and strategising. Word requirement: Masters: at least 3000 words, BTh: at least 2000 words. Writing style requirement: Argumentative (except when describing scenarios), not narrative. Your purpose is to convince the reader with evidence. Content requirement:
 - 1) Introduction (problem and background): State your one real major problem (church or family context), briefly introduce some relevant information about the context, and definition of key terms (10% of the whole paper).
 - 2) Content section 1 (Scanning): Gather statistics and data, indicate whether they suggest weak signals, trends, or driving forces. Demonstrate your competency in scanning (30% of whole paper).
 - 3) Content section 2 (Simulating): Describe 4 possible scenarios in the next ten years. Demonstrate your competency in simulating (30% of the whole paper).
 - 4) Content section 3 (Strategising): Based on your 4 possible scenarios, devise and explain 2 macro-level strategies (not micro-level planning). Demonstrate your competency in strategising (20% of the whole paper).
 - 5) Conclusion: Summarise key points in your content (key points in scanning, simulating and strategising), do not introduce a new argument (10% of the whole paper).

Please refer to the end of this syllabus for the assessment rubrics.

G. Reading List:

A. 教外书籍/未来学 Secular fields/ Futures Studies

- 1) 阿尔文·托夫勒 著，蔡伸章 译《未来的冲击》北京：中信出版社，2006。
(*Future Shock*)
- 2) 顾镜清《未来学概论》贵阳：贵州人民出版社，1985。(Introduction to Futures Studies)
- 3) 迈克斯·泰格马克 著，汪捷舒 译《生命 3.0》浙江：浙江教育出版社，2018。
(*Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial* by Max Tegmark)
- 4) 庞景安《现代未来研究理论方法及其应用》北京：科学技术文献出版社，2008。(Contemporary Futures Research: Theory, Methods and Practice)
- 5) 秦麟征《预测科学：未来研究学》北京：方志出版社，2007。(The Science of Anticipation: Futures Research)
- 6) 苏哈尔 著，吴姿莹译《六个核心架构：达到转变的未来化思考》(*Six Pillars: Futures Thinking for Transforming* by Sohail Inayatullah)

B. 教内书籍/终末学 Christian studies/ Eschatology

- 7) 邓绍光《盼望·神学：莫特曼》香港：基道出版社，2014。(Hope-Theology: Jurgen Moltmann)

- 8) 邓绍光《终末·教会·实践：莫特曼的盼望神学》香港：基道出版社，1999。(*Eschaton, Church, Praxis: J. Moltmann's Theology of Hope*)
- 9) 郭义宏《始于盼望的责任伦理学：论莫特曼的盼望伦理学》台湾：台湾神学研究部，2016。(*Responsibility Ethics of Hope: On Jurgen Moltmann's Ethics of Hope*)
- 10) 哈维·考克斯(Harvey Cox)著，郭腾杰 译《信仰的未来：宗教的兴衰与灵性时代的复苏》台湾：启示出版社，2016。(336 页，作者认为基督教历史的第 3 个时期：圣灵时代，是 21 世纪出现的新潮流，正走向忽略教条、打破不同宗教藩篱的未来)(*The Future of Faith*)
- 11) 吉姆·贝尔彻 (Jim Belcher) 著，李望远 译《教会的大未来：发现一种更 DEEP 的教会生活》台湾：校园书房，2014。(272 页，作者反思传统和新兴教会模式，提倡第三种模式：更深的敬拜、福音、讲道等。英文版获得 2010 年两项书评奖)(*Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional*)
- 12) 李日堂《系统神学：末世论》香港：播道会文字部，2012。(*Systematic Theology: Eschatology*)
- 13) 梁家麟《唯主是盼：从彼得后书看基督再临与末世圣徒》香港：宣道出版社，2013。(*The Lord is our Hope: The Return of Christ and Saints in the Last Days from 2 Peter*)
- 14) 林鸿信“结束就是开始：莫尔特曼神学思想简介”《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第 34 辑·2015 秋，页 3-25。(*The End is the Beginning: An Introduction to Moltmann's Theology*)
- 15) 莫尔特曼 (Jürgen Moltmann) 著，王玉静译《盼望伦理》香港：道风书社，2015。(*The Ethics of Hope*)
- 16) 莫尔特曼 (Jürgen Moltmann) 著，曾念粤译《盼望神学：基督教终末论的基础与意涵》香港：道风书社，2007。(*The Theology of Hope*)
- 17) 区祥江、周伟豪、区颖珩 著《改写未来的 9 种生存力》香港：突破出版社，2015。(208 页，阐述 3 方面的技能：搜索资讯、锁定方向、建构人际关系)(*9 Essential Abilities for the New Generation*)
- 18) 斯托得 (John Stott) 著，李秀全等译《没有上帝，就没有未来》台湾：校园书房，2018。(112 页，出版社将作者 1974 年针对人的价值、权威、自由、平衡和环保议题的讲道结集成书)(*No God, No Future*)
- 19) 唐佑之《末事与盼望：启示神学与伦理》：真理基金会，2005。(*Eschatology and Hope: Apocalyptic Theology and Ethics*)
- 20) 叶先秦“五旬宗的终末论对现今的意义”《华文五旬宗研究期刊》台湾：神召神学院，创刊号·2017 秋，页 34-44。(*Contemporary Significance of Pentecostal Eschatology*)
- 21) 杨慧林“政治神学及当代中国：莫尔特曼北京高级专家对谈会实录（上）”《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第 34 辑·2015 秋，页 26-59。(*Political Theology and Contemporary China: Moltmann at a High-level Talk in Beijing*)
- 22) 杨克勤“保罗的末世神学”《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第 3 辑·2000，页 47-78。(*Paul's Eschatology*)
- 23) 杨牧谷《末世天机：启示录四至二十二章今释》香港：更新资源出版社，2014。(*Secrets of the Last Days: Revelation 4-22*)
- 24) 杨庆球 编“二十一世纪神学趋向（一）：文化篇”《中国神学研究院期刊》，第 28 期，2000 年一月。(*The Trend of 21st Century Theology: Cultural*)

- 25) 杨熙楠 “盼望神学与中国未来：莫尔特曼北京高级专家对谈会实录（下）”
《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第 34 辑 •
2015 秋，页 60-87。(*The Theology of Hope and the Future of China: Moltmann at a High-level Talk in Beijing, part 2*)
- 26) 张芳 “布洛赫：希望的神学” 《基督教文化学刊》香港：中国人民大学基督教文化研究所，第 22 辑 • 2009 秋，页 92-119。(*Bloch: The Theology of Hope*)

H. Assessment Rubrics

	High competency	Average competency	Low competency
Introduction	Defined the ministry problem clearly. The problem is real and major.	Defined the ministry problem vaguely. The problem is real and major.	Did not define the ministry problem. The problem is not real nor major.
	Defined the context of ministry problem clearly. Provided sufficient relevant background knowledge.	Defined the context of ministry problem vaguely. Provided some relevant background knowledge.	Did not define the context of ministry problem. Did not provide relevant background knowledge.
	Provided simple and appropriate definitions for key terms in the ministry problem.	Provided simple but inappropriate definitions for key terms in the ministry problem.	Did not provide definitions for key terms in the ministry problem.
Scanning	Selected one appropriate scanning tool, and used it appropriately.	Selected one appropriate scanning tool, but used it inappropriately.	Did not select one appropriate scanning tool.
	Provided sufficient and relevant data to analyse the problem.	Provided some relevant data to analyse the problem.	Did not provide relevant data to analyse the problem.
Simulating	Selected one appropriate simulating tool, and used it appropriately.	Selected one appropriate simulating tool, but used it inappropriately.	Did not select one appropriate simulating tool.
	Described four possible scenarios with sufficient creativity and validity	Described four possible scenarios. Creativity and validity can be improved	Described four possible scenarios. Creativity and validity were insufficient.

Strategising	Applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) appropriately.	Applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) somewhat appropriately.	Applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) inappropriately.
	Provided clear and appropriate strategies and milestones	Provided clear but inappropriate strategies and milestones	Did not provide clear nor appropriate strategies and milestones
Conclusion	Reiterated the gist of the research methods and key points of the main body of content thoroughly.	Reiterated the gist of the research methods and key points of the main body of content vaguely.	Did not reiterate the gist of the research methods nor key points of the main body of content
Writing style	No word errors; no grammar mistakes; clear formatting; high readability.	Some word errors; some grammar mistakes; some untidy formatting; average readability.	Many word errors; many grammar mistakes; untidy formatting; low readability.

APPENDIX I

Hierarchical Coding Frame for Focus Group Discussion

Question	Axial coding (themes)	Focused coding (concepts)	Participant code #
1. (Learning objectives) (With reference to the syllabus) Do you think the curriculum achieved its objectives? Why or why not?	所有目标达成 All objectives achieved	所有目标达成 All objectives achieved	4
	目标 1 达成 Objective 1 achieved	远见并非预测 Foresight is not prediction	4
		开拓了思维能力 It broadens our thinking	7
		目的是造就别人 Its purpose is to benefit others	7
		装备自己 To equip ourselves	7
		收获很大 Benefited a lot	3
		我不能改变过去，可以改变未来 I cannot change the past, but I can change the future	1
	目标 2 达成 Objective 2 achieved	目标 2 达成 Objective 2 achieved	6
		目标 2 达成 Objective 2 achieved	4
	目标 3 达成 Objective 3 achieved	目标 3 达成，提升了预测能力 Objective 3 achieved, improved ability to forecast	4
		对能力有自信 Confidence about my competencies	1
		即便是上帝主权，我们也可以做出改变 Even though God holds the future, we can make changes	7
	目标 3 未达成 Objective 3 not achieved	目标 3 达成一半，本来就有盼望 Objective 3 is half-achieved, I already have hope in God before the course	6
		本来就有盼望 I already had hope in God	3
	课程名字吸引人 Course name is attractive	课程名字好 Course name is good	7
		课程名字吸引人 Course name is attractive	1
	改进建议 Suggestions for improvement	建议强调“应用 Suggest to emphasise application	3
		缺乏时间应用 Lack time to apply	1

2. (Content) What do you think about the content of the curriculum? Was it too difficult/ easy/ much/ little? Was it helpful to your ministry? Why or why not?	实用性高 Very practical	实用性高 Very practical	4
		知识以外有技能 Taught skills besides knowledge	6
		能跟养育孩子挂钩 I can relate it to rising my kids	2
		期望机构内更多人来上 I hope more people from my organisation will attend	4
	需要操练和跟进 Need to practice and follow up	知道东西好，就会花时间和代价 Once you know the knowledge is good, you will devote time and cost	7
		需要操练 Need practice	7
		要有动力才能操练 Need motivation to practice	7
		需要有后续的跟进 Need to have followup	7
		扫描需实践练习 Scanning requires practice	2
	扫描方面的限制 Limitations in scanning	（东亚）获取信息有局限 Limitation to acquire information within (East Asia)	2
		看见自己的局限 I see my own limitation	2
	策划方面的提升 Need improvement in planning	学会用数据平衡策划 I learnt to balance planning with data	4
		策划方面自己不够大体 I'm not macro enough in my planning	4
	知识轰炸 Information overload	先知识轰炸 Information overload at first	7
	“盼望”的神学基础 The theological foundation of Hope	“因为盼望所以预备”有点勉强 It's a bit far fetch to link hope and planning theologically	6
		盼望与课无关 Hope has nothing to do with this course	6
		盼望的实质帮助 This is the practical help of hope in God	4
		不讲虚浮的盼望，而是通过判断来预备 Does not talk about hope in a vague sense, but talk about preparing through better judgement	4
	改进建议 Suggestions for improvement	对小组报告要求不清楚 The requirements for group presentation was not clear	3
		建议先让人看见全面 Suggest to let learners see the big picture	6

		建议不以作业导入 Suggest not to lead in with group assignment	6
		建议开办初阶、进阶、高阶课程 Suggest to start basic, intermediate and advanced courses	4
		期望往后再进修 Hope to further study in future	4
3. (Student's learning) What are your key takeaways from this course?	让领袖有方向 and 安全感 It gives leaders a sense of direction and security	给领袖方向感 It gives leaders a sense of direction	1
		面对大趋势可以做扫描 When faced with major trends, one can do scanning	5
		乱中能有序 There can be order in chaos	6
		消极之下，立定心志 Able to have sense of commitment even when they feel pessimistic	1
	扫描的技能 Scanning competency	开阔视野，进行预备 Broaden horizon for preparation	5
		能有系统处理资讯 Able to manage information systematically	6
		从主观变客观 From being subjective to objective	6
	从懒惰到突破 From laziness to breakthrough	从懒惰到突破 From laziness to breakthrough	1
	盼望需要磨练 Hope must go through trials	盼望需要磨练 Hope must go through trials	5
	可灵活应用 Can be applied flexibly	可以应用在个人和家庭 Can be applied in personal and family life	5
		应用可大可小 Application can be scaled up or down	5
4. (Student's learning) From your observations throughout the course, do you think the students demonstrated competencies in scanning ? Why or why not?	有扫描的概念 Has developed the concept of scanning	有扫描的概念了 Has developed the concept of scanning	7
		组员互补 Group members complement each other	7
		大家都努力尽量搜资料，国外扫描有帮助 Everyone works hard to search for information, scanning from outside East Asia was helpful	3
	环境的局限 Limited by environment	大陆搜资讯的局限 Limitation in searching for information in China	2

	学士的局限 Bachelor students' limitation	学士没掌握搜寻能力 Bachelor level learners may not have mastered skills of research	2
	改进建议 Suggestions for improvement	建议先让个人练习 Suggest to let individual learners practice first	6
		老师的安排：个人操练，小组再操练 The trainer's arrangement: practice individually, then within the group	3
5. (Student's learning) From your observations throughout the course, do you think the students demonstrated competencies in <u>simulating</u> ? Why or why not?	震撼强烈 Big impact	掌握了，震撼强烈 Has demonstrated, and deeply impacted	2
	需要操练 Need practice	缺乏操练 Lack practice	4
		希望延长课程时间来操练 Hope the course duration can be extended for practice	4
		听懂但不懂得应用在生活中 I heard and understood, but do not know how to apply in daily living	2
		模拟的就是说，不会达到崩溃这种情况 Simulation is to avoid reaching collapse scenario	3
6. (Student's learning) From your observations throughout the course, do you think the students demonstrated competencies in <u>strategising</u> ? Why or why not?	展现了策划能力 Has demonstrated strategising ability	由远至近 From far to near	3
		组员都是这样思考 Group members thought in the method taught	3
		就是把握大方向 To grasp the big direction	3
	策划能力生疏 Rusty during strategising	应用时生疏 Was rusty while applying	1
		缺乏自信所以生疏 Rusty due to a lack of confidence	1
		十年计划，自己力不从心 Ten year planning was beyond my capability	1
7. Is there anything else you would like to comment on?	受益很多 Benefitted a lot	受益很多 Benefitted a lot	6
		领袖要他培养远见 Leaders must develop foresight	4
		我做了很多笔记 I jotted down many notes	4
	起初的学习障碍 Initial learning barrier	起初却步 Apprehensive initially	4
		未看见课程大纲 Did not see the syllabus before enrolment	4

	改进建议 Suggestions for improvements	模拟和策划技能太仓促 Simulating and strategizing was too hasty	6
		先个人操练再小组报告 Should practice individually, then in a group	6
		神学基础，与盼望挂钩太牵强 Theologically, too far-fetch to link hope with foresight	6
		轻神学重实际会更吸引人 It would be more attractive to have less theological theory and be more practical	4
		建议扫描时用“六顶思考帽”During scanning, can use De Bono's “Six Thinking Hats”	6

APPENDIX J

Analysis of Reflection Journals

Reflection Journals required learners to reflect on the key concepts taught in class for the first three days of learning (for example: What concepts left an impression? Why? How could I apply it in ministry or Christian living?). Content from the 10 assignments are first broken down into concepts expressed, and then organised into themes as follow.

Theme	Key concepts expressed	Participant #
Accelerated Change (4 mentions)	Trends in the 21st century are constantly changing, so the church and disciples must prepare ourselves.	1
	Information Age has fundamentally changed peoples' habits and expectations. The church must adapt.	2
	The Internet has changed our way of life, now we must acquire lifelong learning and continuous learning to adapt to changes.	2
	The times and the world are changing, the church needs to pursue new knowledge, renew and adapt. The key is not whether we have a plan for renewal, but whether the rate of renewal can keep up with the times.	5
Foresight–agency (10 mentions)	In the face of persecution, I cannot change the past, but I can change the future which is in God's hand	1
	Though God did not tell me what to do nor how to choose, he gave me the time to prepare and choose, so I must learn to plan and not be pessimistic.	1
	In the past, when I face the uncertain future, I only felt anxious and helpless. Today's lesson helped me to exercise foresight to gather information to better develop my child's character, to learn to listen, communicate and collaborate.	2
	The trainer's case study on porn pandemic that integrated scanning, simulating and strategising was very impactful. He emphasise the importance of applying these skills in church and Christian living.	3
	During COVID-19, my church did not have the foresight to do online broadcast, and had to rely on other forerunners. Pastoral care suffered as a result. It shows the importance of foresight.	3
	The second lesson I learn is about knowing the future. In the past I felt the future is mysterious and unknowable. Today's lesson taught me the future depends on how we prepare today. This include researching trends and changes, postulating scenarios, and a focus on learning and preparation	4
	Before this lesson, I never realized I have the capacity for foresight	4
	On day 3, the case study on porn pandemic shock me deeply. Growing up in church, I was naïve in this area. The trainer used data to show the depth and scope of the porn problem. I felt a sense of urgency to pray to resist the devil's work.	6
	I spend a large part of my time to manage daily work, when I had to make a ten-year plan, my mind went blank. I must upgrade myself in foresight.	8
	What do Christians do after being saved? We have not prepare the way for the Lord.	9

Foresight– knowledge (8 mentions)	The three principles of knowing the future: 1. To value information; 2. To value trends from the past; 3. To value real-time data and weak signals	2
	Learning futures studies is not about prediction but preparation. Recent years, people have become more curious about the future, even asking for prayers whether their child will go to good school.	5
	What the trainer taught us is a whole new system of thinking, it was a wonderful learning experience. And challenging to do presentation tomorrow.	7
	They say Christians must be spiritually sensitive, but never taught us how to do so. Today's lesson taught us the three principles to know the future, and how to manage information.	8
	Foresight course gave the church a new perspective.	9
	The SP+ model by the Singapore government make me realized that often my church strategies lack depth. We skipped some steps in scanning and sensemaking.	9
	Secondly, in the past I often predict outcomes based on personal experience and subjectivity. The course help me to learn that preparing for the future is more important.	10
	Through learning, I discovered a lot of my shortcomings. Firstly, growing up in a traditional Chinese church, I develop many preconceived idea and often wear colored glasses to judge matters. For example, I hesitated whether the church should become a cell-group church or a church with cell groups.	10
Leadership (8 mentions)	As a shepherd, I can avoid certain disasters only if I can foresee what might happen in the future... So I need to learn to view a problem more holistically from different perspectives.	1
	A leader must be clear and committed about her direction. I must constantly reflect: what are my goals?	1
	I learn there are two types of leadership: managerial and entrepreneurial.	3
	We must be entrepreneurial leaders, not just managing daily affairs and fire-fighting. We must observe signs and make strategic decision to build trust and unity	5
	When I enter full-time ministry, it is so easy to be occupied by trivial matters and turn to fire-fighting. It seems everyone like this type of minister. But I think a leader should lead with clear direction, not a fire-fighter concerned with the present.	7
	The foresight course is revolutionary, to be able to extrapolate a problem to a collapse scenario, and yet visualize a turn-around to provide renewal and hope. This relates to church leadership capability	9
	Thirdly, traditional church thinking is to take care of the sheep within, with little time left for those “unbelieving gentiles”. But if we do not reach out, how do we win the souls for Christ?	10
	The first thing I learn is that a real leader need to spend more effort in planning for the future. In the past, my impression of a leader was to be a role model, which did not have any deep influence on others.	4

Scanning competency (19 mentions)	After the class, I subscribed a book channel online and hope to apply VPN to circumvent the national information restriction. Continuous learning is the way to go.	2
	We must manage our perception and develop habits of scanning. Not just to receive information but to discern their accuracy and reliability.	2
	The trainer taught us a lot of scanning tools and techniques that are very useful and opened up our horizons.	2
	During group discussion, I learn that the individual is limited, we need to think as a group, even in church too.	3
	The trainer taught us three tools of scanning which really opened my eyes to the need to approach issue from more than one perspective. I also benefitted a lot from his sharing about the primary, secondary and tertiary sources of information.	3
	I learn some very important principles in scanning: let the data speaks for itself; approach from many perspective; delay judgment and change my point of view.	4
	The third lesson I learn is scanning. In the past, I rely on my subjective opinion for judgment, and lack professional data and research.	4
	Scanning really changed some of my views. In the past I am not mindful of things happening outside of church, so my view on some issues are narrow and subjective. I decided to change my habit, to learn how to use VPN to search for information and current affairs. I benefitted a lot from the scanning tools and group discussion.	5
	Scanning requires the scanner to be disciplined in delaying judgment and let the data speak. This emphasis on reliable statistics and professional reports can avoid bias to make good quality decision.	6
	Scanning is to broaden one's horizon, adopt multiple perspectives, and approach a problem through deep research.	6
	Futures Triangle enlightened me to see how I can push for change in future to avoid setbacks and hurts.	7
	Splitting learners into groups is powerful. We were grouped with people from different regions and cultures, maximizing our distinctiveness. My greatest takeaway from the whole course is grouping, which broaden my horizon.	7
	Scanning is to expand one's horizon and minimize subjectivity.	7
	Today I learn three tools of scanning, a huge breakthrough for me to move beyond my blindspot in thinking	7
	All scanning tools help us manage information holistically, not just focusing on what has passed, but the present situation and future possibilities. So that when we make decision, it is justified, persuasive, and correct.	8
	The advantage of futures wheel is to think through three layers of influence from an issue. This course is useful for family conflict and other ministry.	9
	Scanning requires us to broaden our horizon to analyse a problem. In the past I only read the Bible and seldom read other books or news. STEEP is a holistic tool to open up the mind.	9

	The three scanning tools are very useful to analyse and address problems.	10
	STEEP is a holistic scanning tool that help us appreciate not just church concerns, but also societal issues. It can help Christians to mature with a better life testimony.	8
Simulating competency (5 mentions)	In simulating, I learn not to just see the good and bad in any situation, but to challenge myself to boldly imagine what may happen.	4
	Simulating the future reminded me to do scenario planning of Christian living under persecution and COVID-19.	5
	Initially I did not understand how to do simulation. Later we figured it out in our group. Actually we had understood the concepts, but lack practice.	7
	School education paints a beautiful future of hope, that cause us to habitually think that everything is positive. Generic futures teach us to consider and imagine from more perspectives, and be cautious in decision-making.	8
	I will suggest my church to develop the habit of simulating the future in my church workers meeting, cell groups and families.	9
Strategising competency (3 mentions)	Strategising reminded me to pay attention to goal-setting in ministry, family, and personal life.	5
	It is not that we do not know how to plan, just that we did not do such long term strategizing. To rise to a high point and circumvent many minor problems for a better solution.	8
	The trainer said that strategising is different from planning. Leaders must have macro strategies	9

APPENDIX K

Analysis of Pre- and Post-Class Worksheets

Divergent stacked bar chart are recommended by statisticians Heiberger and Robbins (2014, 1) “as the primary graphical display technique for Likert and related scales.” Data from section 1 (Pre-class results) and section 2 (Post-class results) below, are input into a formulated excel form created by the researcher, in place of other software used by statisticians Heiberger and Robbins (2014, 29-30), to create a divergent stacked bar chart in figure 12 (page 100).

Section 1. Data of Foresight Competency Survey (Action Research Group Pre-Class Worksheets).

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Qn 1	0	0	5	5	0
Qn 2	1	3	2	4	0
Qn 3	3	3	3	1	0
Qn 4	0	3	5	2	0
Qn 5	0	2	5	3	0
Qn 6	0	1	1	8	0
Qn 7	0	1	4	5	0
Qn 8	0	2	6	2	0
Qn 9	0	2	6	2	0
Qn 10	0	1	6	3	0
Qn 11	0	4	5	1	0
Qn 12	0	4	5	1	0
Qn 13	0	5	2	3	0
Qn 14	0	5	3	2	0
Qn 15	1	2	6	1	0

Qn 16

Participant #	Remarks
1	Life is short, can I fulfill what I have been entrusted by God?
2	As a mother of two and a Sunday School teacher, I sense the pressure from the national education system. Parents are afraid their child will lose out at the starting line, which is causing me to be anxious, lacking self-confidence, and unable to trust God. To trust Him who created the heavens and the earth, who created me and watches over me. I attended a leadership course last semester. Mindset change needs continual learning and internalising. This is my journey to let go of my anxiety and entrust my child and my future totally in God. It is also the reason I enrolled in this class.

6	I often discuss and analyse future possibilities and strategies with my friend. I pray for the future with my spiritual partner, hoping that God will intervene to move things in His desired direction.
10	I do not have major and farsighted strategies, only an attitude of getting through day by day.

Section 2. Data of Foresight Competency Survey (Action Research Group Post-Class Worksheets).

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Qn 1	0	0	1	0	9
Qn 2	0	0	1	4	5
Qn 3	0	0	1	5	4
Qn 4	0	0	0	2	8
Qn 5	0	0	0	5	5
Qn 6	0	0	0	3	7
Qn 7	0	0	2	2	6
Qn 8	0	0	1	4	5
Qn 9	0	0	0	3	7
Qn 10	0	0	1	0	9
Qn 11	0	0	0	2	8
Qn 12	0	0	0	1	9
Qn 13	0	0	0	3	7
Qn 14	0	0	0	3	7
Qn 15	0	0	0	2	8

Qn 16

Participant #	Remarks
2	The skill of scanning is an unexpected gain for me in this course. I heard about it in the past, but not so specifically. Thank you, teacher, for your sharing. I had some difficulty in applying what I learnt, perhaps because of my environment or IT knowledge. But it has made me determined to connect with the outside world. I am determined to learn, enrol in classes, and keep up with the times. I plan to proactively attend courses, complete my assignments, and apply the knowledge in my ministries. The comforts of life make a person forget her mission. The commitment to learning, to leave my comfort zone, to change myself are the best gifts to prepare for the future.
3	After learning the core competencies of scanning, simulating and strategizing, I felt the importance of a holistic approach in starting a ministry. Applying what the teacher taught in various ministries in the church can surely bring about revival. I need to acquire a foresight mental model.

6	To know the times and what should be done. The quality of knowledge is more important than the quantity of time spent on it. Therefore, it is important to cultivate the ability to understand the essence and truth of the matter. I need to pay attention to learn from outstanding individuals like Jack Ma, Peter Drucker, Deng Xiaoping, and Lee Kuan Yew. I must not be distracted by impulsive information and lose the insight to understand truth.
7	Foresight is one of the gifts of God, using it well can help us emerge from difficult situations into a better place! Second, foresight is a special gift. After we learn it, we must be cautious of our every plan and decision, to bring blessing and not chaos to the church!
8	A leader must possess many qualities. In this class, I learnt that foresight is one of those indispensable qualities. In the past I always thought foresight is a gift, through the class I learnt that it can be cultivated and practised. I hope this course can bless more and more church leaders!
9	This course helps me to gain a holistic understanding, more about the Church, society, politics and other religions. For example, in the group presentations, topics include Sunday School, East Asian churches, LGBT ideology, and artificial intelligence. All these require our scanning. The course helps me to see that everyone has to take part in the presentation, and there was mutual interaction. Even though it was a bit stressful, but it motivated us to develop our potential. In sum, I benefitted a lot. Just as the teacher said, "As long as today, I become more mature than yesterday."
10	Planning depends on people, it is the Lord who builds the house.

APPENDIX L

Analysis of Individual Research Papers

This Individual Research Paper assignment requires learners to individually select one real major problem in a church or family context, draft a Ten-year Foresight Strategic Plan, and demonstrate your competencies in scanning, simulating and strategising.

Word requirement: Masters: at least 3000 words, BTh: at least 2000 words. This assignment was intentionally designed to come after a Group Presentation with the same content requirement. So that learners have a chance to practice the competencies within a group, receive feedbacks from the trainer, before doing it individually within two months after class.

The following table lists the topic chosen by the ten research participants, a summary of their description of the ministry problem, and observations by the trainer after marking.

Participant #	Topic and ministry problem	Trainer's Observations
1	<p>"My personal growth as pastor"</p> <p>Ministry Problem: Her church faced internal and external challenges. Externally, there is harassment from authorities and difficulty in securing a place for worship. This caused internal problems where believers grumble, worry, and affected their spiritual growth.</p> <p>Chapter headings: I am helpless; overcoming myself; confirming God's will; and committing to serve</p>	<p>Participant 1 did not get a passing grade in this assignment as her writing did not adhere to the requirements spelled out in the syllabus. She also did not exhibit satisfactory competence in all 3S. Possible reasons include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This was her first module in MBTS, after many years away from formal learning. As such, she has yet to grasp the requirements of academic study. 2. She shared in class about her personal lack of motivation to study. She enrolled in this course for her husband's sake, not on her own accord. 3. Her church was in the midst of harassment and she was preoccupied and discouraged by the problem.

2	<p>“Challenges faced by Sunday School in the context of the national education system”</p> <p>Ministry Problem: An exam-oriented education system led to a general emphasis on grades among Sunday School parents. In turn, parents engaged in a blind pursuit for extracurricular tuition. This shaped parents’ mentality in a way that caused children and youths in her church to be under heavy academic stress, and often skipped Sunday School.</p>	
3	<p>“The implementation of church cell-groups under COVID-19”</p> <p>Ministry Problem: The church has no systematic preaching of God’s Word, no Bible study, an ageing population, and youths are leaving the church. Church visitation is only limited to simple prayers for believers, and lack deeper pastoral care.</p>	
4	<p>“Feasibility of transition from a traditional missions model to a ‘business as missions’ model”</p> <p>Ministry Problem: Increasing political pressure faced in the mission field. Financially unsustainable for the long term. Personal safety of missionaries are at stake.</p>	Even though participant 4 said he chose the STEEP scanning tool, he continues to analyse and write in traditional pattern of thinking, and has not applied scanning correctly.
5	<p>“Case study of internet addiction among youths in church”</p> <p>Ministry Problem: Number of youths in church has fallen, compared to 40-50 five years ago, to around 10 this few years. Lots of youths are attracted to internet games and videos on weekends and skipped church.</p>	
6	<p>“The phenomena of ‘leaving church’ (kirchenaustritt) in German Protestant churches”</p> <p>Ministry Problem: As an East Asian missionary who recently migrated to Germany, he seeks to research and understand the phenomena of “kirchenaustritt” in Germany. The term is defined as a Christian declaring to the government as officially leaving the church, hence excused from paying a church tax. It does not imply a person leaving the faith. Believers worshipping in house churches are not required to declare and pay their church tax.</p>	<p>Participant 6 demonstrate signs of being highly motivated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He wrote more than 10,000 words, even though only 3000 words were required. 2. He wrote that he spend three weeks to research the phenomena, enlisting his German friends’ help for government statistics and translation.

		3. After the final grade, he seek the trainer's help to review this research presentation for a conference in Hamburg university
7	<p>"The challenge of internet (addiction) in Sunday School"</p> <p>Ministry Problem: Most of the parents in this rural church leave their kids in the hands of their grandparents, in order to work in the city. In July, he handled more than ten cases of handphone disputes between youths and their grandparents, with three cases asking for church's direct intervention.</p>	Participant 7 did not analyse according to his stated scanning tool, but resort to a traditional pattern of thinking.
8	<p>"Missions work in a Muslim region"</p> <p>Ministry Problem: The church was set up 20 years ago by Korean missionaries with over 200 attendees. But over the last ten years, growth has stagnant, there is a lack of vision and mission, and attendees have dwindled, and are ageing.</p>	Scenarios in Dator's Four Futures tool lacked creativity and validity
9	<p>"Impacts of sinification by the government on the church"</p> <p>Ministry Problem: The policy of "five entries and five transformations" forced the church to serve political agendas by the government.</p>	
10	<p>"Strategies for church worship ministry"</p> <p>Ministry Problem: How to rethink and reorganise worship service to cater to the needs of youths and faith seekers in this era.</p>	

An assessment rubrics (Appendix H, Section H) was used to assess the 3S competency level and provide feedback to learners. The table below lists the participants' choice of tools, and their performance.

	High competency	Average competency	Low competency
Scanning	<p>Selected one appropriate scanning tool, and used it appropriately.</p> <p>5: Participant 3 (Futures Triangle), 5 (STEEP), 6 (STEEP), 8 (Futures Triangle), 9 (STEEP)</p>	<p>Selected one appropriate scanning tool, but used it inappropriately.</p> <p>4: Participant 2 (STEEP), 4 (STEEP), 7 (STEEP), 10 (Futures Triangle)</p>	<p>Did not select one appropriate scanning tool.</p> <p>1: Participant 1</p>
	<p>Provided sufficient and relevant data to analyse the problem.</p> <p>5: Participant 3, 5, 6, 8, 9</p>	<p>Provided some relevant data to analyse the problem.</p> <p>3: Participant 2, 7, 10</p>	<p>Did not provide relevant data to analyse the problem.</p> <p>2: Participant 1, 4</p>
Simulating	<p>Selected one appropriate simulating tool, and used it appropriately.</p> <p>7: Participant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9</p>	<p>Selected one appropriate simulating tool, but used it inappropriately.</p> <p>2: Participant 8, 10</p>	<p>Did not select one appropriate simulating tool.</p> <p>1: Participant 1</p>
	<p>Described four possible scenarios with sufficient creativity and validity</p> <p>5: Participant 4, 5, 6, 7, 9</p>	<p>Described four possible scenarios. Creativity and validity can be improved</p> <p>3: Participant 2, 3, 10</p>	<p>Described four possible scenarios. Creativity and validity were insufficient.</p> <p>2: Participant 1, 8</p>
Strategising	<p>Applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) appropriately.</p> <p>9: Participant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</p>	<p>Applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) somewhat appropriately.</p> <p>0</p>	<p>Applied the strategising tool (Backcasting) inappropriately.</p> <p>1: Participant 1</p>
	<p>Provided clear and appropriate strategies and milestones</p> <p>8: Participant 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9</p>	<p>Provided clear but inappropriate strategies and milestones</p> <p>1: Participant 10</p>	<p>Did not provide clear nor appropriate strategies and milestones</p> <p>1: Participant 1</p>