

**Wellington Pacific Bible College 2006–2016**

**Teachings, Trials and Talanoa**

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## **Abstract**

### **Wellington Pacific Bible College 2006–2016:**

#### **Teachings, Trials and Talanoa**

This is the first academic study of the Wellington Pacific Bible College (WPBC), a distinctive adult educational institution in New Zealand, focussed on teaching the Bible in the languages of the Pacific. The thesis comprises: (1) a narrative history of WPBC based on primary sources and interviews; and, (2) a study of the College and its teachings by means of a questionnaire and follow up interviews of past and present students, staff and the Board. The thesis addresses the question of the contextualised meaning and significance of WPBC to its principal stakeholders and the major factors that have shaped its curriculum, ethos, and mission in its first decade.

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## **Introduction**

This thesis is the only academic study of a unique institution, Wellington Pacific Bible College (WPBC). WPBC is a tertiary institution based in New Zealand's capital city, Wellington, with campuses across the greater Wellington region and affiliated colleges in Auckland. WPBC has taught hundreds of Pacific students for a variety of qualifications in a number of different subjects. Its focus has been on the Bible as the foundation of education and WPBC has developed diploma and certificate courses based on the study of the Bible. Pedagogically, it is distinctive in that it utilises Pacific languages in two distinct ways: (1) the Bible is studied in English and in five Pacific Island languages; and (2) the Bible is the vehicle for those with other first languages to learn English. Pacific languages are also taught as a second-language, with the Bible being the vehicle for learning the language. In addition, WPBC started a new Bible in Music programme in 2015 which also is biblically based to teach music and hymn composition for use in religious settings; it incorporates the Trinity College (London) theory exams, from Grade 1 to 4.

WPBC is a religious institution, and a Christian ethos permeates the teaching, the staff, the programme and the ambience of the College. Students and teachers pray together before sessions and study is not understood to be for personal development alone but rather as Christian formation. This "spiritual" education, while formally measured by academic successes and achievements, is understood by WPBC to be the beginning of the application of these skills and learning within the Pacific churches and communities in the Wellington area, and beyond. The enhancement and development of these communities by means of biblical study and education is at the heart of WPBC's "mission". Over four hundred certificate, diploma and degree students have graduated from the College, in its various guises, and gone on to serve in the churches and communities of New Zealand and overseas, and this impact is worthy of research. WPBC has also held annual public events for the students, their families and friends, and members of their churches, focussed

on addressing the principle familial, cultural, and social issues facing Pacific communities in New Zealand, including violence, health, employment, and justice.

WPBC's history has been chequered, as have its relationships with funders, some Pacific churches and various Christian tertiary bodies. WPBC's history begins with the Wellington Bible College (WBC, 1979) which through a series of events became incorporated into the Auckland-based Bible College of New Zealand (BCNZ, 1993; now Laidlaw College), as BCNZ Wellington Centre. After a period of success and growth, administrative and financial issues led BCNZ to close its regional centres. WPBC, established in 2006, continued its role in Wellington.

The first part of this thesis presents a narrative history of this remarkable institution and examines the two pre-WPBC phases, but the main focus is on WPBC itself. This narrative is based on the primary documentary sources of the College itself and on interviews with students, staff and Board members.<sup>1</sup>

It is a fascinating history of the role of language in education and, of course, the biblical focus and practical outlets for knowledge and education. WPBC is unique in the range of its multi-cultural and multi-lingual focus and has had no other institutions to model itself on. WPBC chose at its inception to make a firm and deliberate commitment to teach in Pacific languages, to foster English language education for Pacific people, and to teach Pacific languages to a new generation of Pacific New Zealanders. Consequently, WPBC has had to develop its own extensive repertoire of new teaching materials and translations of teaching texts which it has trialled on its students. WPBC's leadership began with four European, and two Samoan Board members but now includes Board members from other Pacific Island cultures and languages. Significant efforts from the Board have established relationships within the Christian Pacific community in Wellington and Auckland, by offering to teach the Bible in the languages they best understand. This approach to Bible teaching is producing a generation of new leaders in Pacific Island churches and communities.

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<sup>1</sup> The primary sources for WBC and BCNZ are located in the archives at Laidlaw College, Auckland, and the WPBC sources can be found at WPBC, Hopper Street, Wellington.



WPBC has also consciously sought to foster appropriate contexts for “Pacific learning” that reflect the social networks and relationships in Pacific communities. Teaching is conducted face to face, in small supportive groups and familiar relational settings. There is also a high degree of attention given to individual and group student support. WPBC teaching and the Life Skills seminars (or workshops) have developed Pacific learning strategies and methods such as *Talanoa*, non-hierarchical discussions (see below for definition and discussion of *Talanoa*, 69-73).

WPBC in its present and earlier guises has attracted qualified and believing (“faithful”) staff, and committed and gifted students, many of whom have gone on to further study, or studied for degree entrance or degree courses at the College in Wellington.

The WPBC story is told via these interviews and sources and focusses on the programmes, language issues, and the search for a physical “home”. Even though the initial founder and funder envisaged such a development and provided funds for a dedicated building, this did not eventuate, but led to a trust fund being established (WBC Foundation), which has played a vital and central role in funding the College. Another thread of the narrative is the biblical studies library that was developed for students under the auspices of WBC, expanded under BCNZ, and that has now in part been secured for WPBC’s use. This also led to a dispute as to who owned the now-divided collection.

The narrative history is refined and deepened by the more empirical part of the thesis. Present and past students, staff, and Board members answered a questionnaire, some of whom were interviewed or took part in *Talanoa* discussion groups. These gave voice to different perspectives and enhanced, challenged, and sometimes subverted the “official” narrative history.

The College exemplifies creative and innovative resilience, and the support of a small number of dedicated individuals and of a much wider community. The thesis focuses on the history of WPBC during its first ten years of operation: its beginnings, the development of its curriculum, unique “language group” pedagogy, and its relationships with its stakeholders, staff, students, and Pacific

Island churches and communities. WPBC has taught more than two hundred students and awarded nearly one hundred and forty certificates and diplomas since 2006. Students have come from fifty-six churches in the Wellington region to study. And graduates were “commissioned” to serve in their churches and communities. Fifty graduate diploma students have so far been commissioned by WPBC and sent out with the “College’s blessing”.

The author of this paper is the current principal of the Wellington Pacific Bible College and has also studied, and taught the Samoan Bible class at the Bible College of New Zealand (BCNZ) Wellington Centre. She has also served on the Board of BCNZ Wellington centre as the Pacific representative.

## Chapter 1

### Wellington Bible College – Beginnings and Vision

“History is a story written by the finger of God.”<sup>2</sup> This chapter begins the account of the history of the Wellington Pacific Bible College. From its origins in the inspired vision of Dr William Percival Clyde Vautier<sup>3</sup> to its present day as an established college, teaching the Bible and other courses in five Pacific languages, the Wellington Pacific Bible College (WPBC) has experienced its share of ups and downs. WPBC began as Wellington Bible College (WBC) which was established, flourished and closed, only to be resurrected in a new and independent way. Clyde Vautier understood his inspiration that led him to start a Bible College in Wellington city in early 1979 to be based upon his ‘love for Christ and His Word’.) Vautier perceived a need in New Zealand’s capital city for a Bible-based educational facility that would train Christians to serve in their churches and communities. Under Clyde and Kath Vautier’s direction and with the energies of other supportive men and women in the Wellington region their vision took shape. Vautier was actively encouraged to develop the facility by Ashley Ardrey and the late Dr Will Miller.<sup>4</sup> With the guidance of Peter McKenzie and Harvey Rees-Thomas the venture began in 1980 in the classrooms of Elizabeth Street Chapel.<sup>5</sup> The WBC was to provide a foundation for forming and growing Christian faith through the academically-oriented study of scripture and theology<sup>6</sup>, leading to a certificate, or a diploma, in Bible Studies.<sup>7</sup>

Since that small beginning when this inter-denominational Bible College first opened its doors it has been some thirty-seven years and the Pacific Bible College continues to provide leaders and

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<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis quoted in C.T. McIntire (ed), *God, History, and Historians: An Anthology of Modern Christian Views of History*, 434.

<sup>3</sup> *With Christ: Dr Clyde Vautier*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ossie Fountain, Address, *An Outline History of the Wellington Bible College*, 1–2.

<sup>6</sup> *Invitation to the 2004 Clyde Vautier Memorial Lecture*.

<sup>7</sup> WBC Enrolment Form 1989.

persons of influence, based on their study of the Word of God, contributing to Christian churches and communities in New Zealand and beyond.

The word “vision” means “the ability to see; the area that you can see from a particular position”.<sup>8</sup> Clyde was very particular about what he understood to be his vision and that it led him to clearly “see” something that he felt bound to undertake. According to his relatives, Clyde miraculously woke up from a coma at Wellington Hospital while fighting cancer,<sup>9</sup> and found himself a completely changed man. He insisted to his relatives that he understood what had happened as his having been given a second chance in life to do something significant in the capital city. Vautier’s vision is part of the lore of the College and is integral to its narratives of self-understanding. His GP, Dr Max Stevenson reported that he was so struck by this ‘miracle’ that he became one of the first members of the WBC Board.<sup>10</sup> Peter McKenzie, who has been on the Board of WBC since its inauguration in 1979<sup>11</sup>, reflected on Vautier’s vision and energy in starting the College. According to McKenzie, Vautier approached him, Harvey Rees-Thomas, and Max Stevenson, to join in forming the first College Board of Trustees, with Rees-Thomas as the initial chairman. Vautier’s *Prospectus* referred to a Dean of Studies, a Faculty Bursar, and the Board. These high expectations and titles contrasted starkly with the reality of the first classes in the basement of Elizabeth Street. The College outgrew Elizabeth Street and moved to Central Baptist Church and later to other locations.<sup>12</sup> Based on his vision and with the help of his supporters, a college for Biblical Studies was duly established in the capital, and Vautier became the founding Director of the WBC<sup>13</sup>, a position that he held from 1979 to 1986.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Joanna Turnbull et al (eds), *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 1446.

<sup>9</sup> Dr Max Stevenson attended Vautier at the hospital and reported his being healed of cancer (*Chatter* July/Aug 1999).

<sup>10</sup> On Vautier’s close brush with death and becoming free of cancer, Dr Stevenson said to him, ‘God has healed you. He has spared your life for a purpose. What is it that God wants you to do?’, Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Peter McKenzie was a Board member from 1979, Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Harvey G Rees-Thomas, *100 Years on the Street. A story of God’s Grace*, 485.

<sup>13</sup> *Invitation to the 2004 Clyde Vautier Memorial Lecture*.

<sup>14</sup> Vautier was the WBC’s founding director, 1979-1986.

Vautier, a member of the Open Brethren church, brought his keenly-trained mind, planning skills, and enthusiasm for teaching to this retirement project and passion.<sup>15</sup> Beginning in 1979, WBC attracted a growing number of students. At that time, it and the Salvation Army Officer Training College in Upper Hutt were the only educational institutions for church leaders or those wanting Bible study in Wellington. WBC set up two streams in Wellington: (1) the certificate programme; and, (2) the diploma programme.<sup>16</sup> In 1990 WBC became an affiliate College of the Bible College of New Zealand (BCNZ)<sup>17</sup>, before officially becoming its Wellington Centre in 1994.<sup>18</sup>

This chapter will first discuss the external relationships of Wellington Bible College (WBC/BCNZ Wellington Centre), specifically in relation to its premises, finances, achievements, and, finally, the debates had and issues faced.

### **1. Location Relationships**

Many people and churches were very supportive of WBC/BCNZ, particularly by offering the use of their premises at minimal cost. There was a saying around the city that the Wellington Bible College was like the ancient Israelites wandering in the wilderness. It moved seven times from 1979 to 2006.

WBC's initial relationship was with the Open Brethren Church at Elizabeth Street Chapel<sup>19</sup>, Wellington, in 1980.<sup>20</sup> On the first night, Ewart McMillan, who is still involved with the WPBC, was one of four students, all from the Chapel.<sup>21</sup> The number of students grew and steadily expanded beyond its Brethren origins. After several years, the College moved to the Central Baptist

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> WBC became an affiliate college of BCNZ.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> WBC, *Statement of Faith*, 1989.

<sup>19</sup> WBC, Letter, Vautier to McKenzie, in London, 12 November 1982.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. The first WBC location in 1979 was at the Elizabeth St Chapel.

<sup>21</sup> McKenzie, in Harvey G Rees-Thomas, *100 Years on the Street*, 483; confirmed in conversation with Ewart McMillan, 2016.

Church, Boulcott Street. Vautier, in a 1982 letter to McKenzie<sup>22</sup>, highlighted the urgent need of a principal for the College.<sup>23</sup> The College recruited Murray Gow (later Rev Dr Murray Gow) who was appointed as the first principal.<sup>24</sup> Vautier's handing on of the reins allowed him to go to Australia to "seek guidance" for the college and make enquiries about the possibility of Wellington students working for a Divinity degree from Melbourne College of Divinity.<sup>25</sup> Vautier remained on the Board, resigning only when WBC merged with BCNZ in 1993. Murray Gow<sup>26</sup> served as the first principal from his appointment in 1984 until 1991.<sup>27</sup>

The next significant relationship was with Wellington Girls' College, Thorndon. The Principal, Elaine Barnett, provided spaces for WBC on its premises. Barnett was a former student of WBC and a Board member. She spoke at the twentieth anniversary of the College: "When I was Principal of the Girls' College I discovered these two gentlemen wandering around the college. Most strange for a girls' school! Dr Vautier and Murray Gow came to my office"<sup>28</sup>, and we discussed their proposal to hold evening lectures in our facilities.<sup>29</sup> The relationship with Wellington Girls' College lasted for several years. WBC paid rent for the lecture theatre, a number of classrooms, and a common room used for supper. The Thorndon location was convenient for students, as it is only a five-minute walk from the Railway Station and Bus Terminal. The evening sessions consisted of three fifty-minute lecture periods, with supper included after the second lecture.<sup>30</sup> WBC wanted a room for their growing library and was given a small room for this purpose. Drawing their inspiration from the biblical Book of Acts where it is reported that the first Christian communities grew because they were devoted to the apostles' teaching, the WBC Board considered that when the Bible was studied in-depth and meditated on daily, people would grow closer in their

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<sup>22</sup> WBC, Letter, Vautier to McKenzie, 12 November 1982.

<sup>23</sup> There is mention of the urgent need for a principal for WBC, Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Fountain, *An Outline History of WBC*, 2016, 1–2.

<sup>25</sup> WBC, Letter, Vautier to McKenzie, 12 November 1982.

<sup>26</sup> *Chatter*, BCNZ/WC, July/August, 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Murray Gow, 2<sup>nd</sup> Director, 1984-1991.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Fountain, *An Outline History of WBC*, 2016.

relationship with God and start to understand His will for them. They regularly spoke about the College and its students in this fashion and understood the growth in student numbers as being the result of their love of studying the Bible.<sup>31</sup>

Ossie Fountain<sup>32</sup> was first invited to WBC as a guest lecturer in 1986 and soon after become the Assistant-Director of WBC, on a part-time basis. The WBC office had outgrown its location in Murray Gow's home, and when Murray and Susan Darroch<sup>33</sup> offered a room in their home in Tinakori Road, the office moved there. This was used as an office by both Gow and Fountain. In 1989 the College rented rooms at 6 The Terrace, which provided WBC with both office space and a seminar room.<sup>34</sup> This site proved to be congenial for a number of years while evening classes continued at Wellington Girls' College. Fountain reported that, "Numerous books were bought from Dr Vautier's money and Murray Gow's consistent contributions"<sup>35</sup> and these were housed at Wellington Girls'. But there arose difficulties when WBC wanted students to have daily access to these library resources. Principal Elaine Barnett rejected this, first because it was a girl's school – which posed security issues, and secondly, caretakers would need to be employed to assist with the library's daily operations.<sup>36</sup>

Apparently to solve these issues with Wellington Girls', WBC moved its library to the Friendship House Centre on The Terrace,<sup>37</sup> which became the basis of the next important relationship. Murray Gow was a caretaker at the Friendship House, so students were able to have daily access to the library. However, it was not ideal having the library in one place and classrooms in another. In 1989, Gow took a period of leave to pursue studies toward a doctorate in theology.<sup>38</sup> During that time Acting-Director Fountain was appointed permanent Director. WBC staff and the Board began

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<sup>31</sup> Psalm 1:2, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." (NIV translation)

<sup>32</sup> On the decline in student numbers, see Fountain, *An Outline History of the Wellington Bible College* (2016).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 1–2.

<sup>34</sup> Books were purchased with Vautier's funding and Gow made additional contributions, Fountain, *An Outline History of WBC* (2016).

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Ossie Fountain, 2016.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Elaine Barnett, at her home in Tawa, 11 December 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Ossie Fountain, *An Outline History of the Wellington Bible College* (2016), 1–2.

<sup>38</sup> Acting Director Fountain was appointed, *Chatter*, BCNZ/WC, July/August, 1999.

discussions with the Bible College of New Zealand (BCNZ, now Laidlaw College) about a closer association. WBC became an affiliated College of BCNZ until in 1993 the two Bible schools merged and the College became a branch of BCNZ, with the WBC Director designated as ‘Dean of Studies, BCNZ Wellington Branch’.<sup>39</sup> Although WBC leaders supported this development as a way to ensure the ongoing study of the Bible, the question was raised: Was this the best way forward for the WBC? Would the founding vision be maintained with direction now from outside of Wellington?

The fourth notable relationship was with Lifepoint Assembly of God Church, Adelaide Road, in Newtown.<sup>40</sup> Lifepoint Church offered the BCNZ a floor of their building in Adelaide Road. The move afforded the opportunity of bringing together the office, library and lecture rooms to a single site. Fountain considers that while this new location proved to be a great asset, two things hindered potential growth.<sup>41</sup> First, it proved inconvenient for students living outside Wellington city who relied on public transportation. Second, several churches in Wellington had decided to pursue their own programmes and the opportunity for inter-denominational education and training declined. One exception, however, was the Salvation Army College in Trentham which sought cooperation with BCNZ in order to gain accreditation for their own training programmes. In the longer term the Trentham Salvation Army College became a second site for gaining BCNZ qualifications.<sup>42</sup> Despite these challenges the leaders continued to have faith in the future of the College.

Despite a decline in numbers, Fountain made a significant contribution to the College during his tenure as the Dean of Studies from 1996-1999: “He laboured diligently and sacrificially to raise the academic standards of the BCNZ Wellington Centre, and see the wider church addressing contemporary issues in New Zealand society. His wife Jenny<sup>43</sup> helped in the office with the

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<sup>39</sup>Ossie Fountain, interview, 2016.

<sup>40</sup> Fountain, Ossie, *An Outline History of the Wellington Bible College*, (2016), 1–2.

<sup>41</sup> WBC moved to Lifepoint Assemblies of God (AOG), Adelaide Road, Wellington.

<sup>42</sup> Ossie Fountain, interview, 2016.

<sup>43</sup> *Chatter*, BCNZ/WC, July/August, 1999.



administration, doing the College's finance.<sup>44</sup> The Fountains kept the Centre running smoothly during these years. He stepped down from his position to complete his Master's thesis, and later in 1999 felt called to undertake further (Christian) service in Papua New Guinea. Rev Allan Missen took on the role of Acting-Dean.

There was a six-week interval in 1999 between the Fountains' departure and the arrival of the new Dean of Studies, Rev Margaret Motion.<sup>45</sup> She was from the Hawkes Bay Centre of BCNZ and had previously had undertaken mission service in Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea. During 1999 three new members<sup>46</sup> were added to the Board: Joanne Horner, Elsie McDonald, and Roger Williams who became the new Chairperson.<sup>47</sup> The instability and turmoil of the times may well have contributed to the declining student numbers. In spite of this, staff at the College focused on their students' lives and learning. In September 2002, the College had to move out from the Lifepoint Church premises in Adelaide Road because they were selling their property. Thus, 2002 was a year of changes and challenges for the College, including the introduction of the teaching of the Bible in the Samoan language.

The College moved to its sixth location, St John's in the City Church, Willis Street, Wellington. The St John's site had a larger space for the library, and offices were set up for the College administration, including for the Dean of Studies. There was also one large and one small classroom, which the College rented, and rooms available upstairs (rent-free) for Tuesday and Thursday night classes. Margaret Motion<sup>48</sup> resigned in December 2002 to continue with her academic studies, and the fifth Dean, Gavin Drew, was appointed early in 2003.<sup>49</sup> Motion was asked by the Board to stay on for a further twelve months to assist Gavin, which she did. Canon Ian Bourne stepped down from the role of chairperson in 2003, but continued to contribute as a WBC

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<sup>44</sup> Jenny Fountain worked in the office. (BCNZ, Wellington Regional Branch News, February 1994).

<sup>45</sup> *Changes for BCNZ/WC* brochure, 1999.

<sup>46</sup> *Chatter*, BCNZ/WB, July/August, 1999.

<sup>47</sup> New Board members in 1999, *Changes*, 1999.

<sup>48</sup> *Wellspring* (BCNZ/WC News), "The New Dean of Studies", February 2003.

<sup>49</sup> Motion resigned in 2002 and was replaced by Drew; Fountain, Ossie, *An Outline History of the Wellington Bible College* (2016), 2-3.

Board member, and from 2008 until 2016 as a WPBC teacher. He was replaced by Rev Dr Graham Redding, senior minister at St John's in the City, with a view to reviewing his involvement at the end of that year. Reading resigned at the end of 2003 and Rev David Newton, Anglican Chaplain at Victoria University of Wellington, joined the Board, as did Kim Workman, Executive Director of the Prison Fellowship and is of the Ngati Kahungunu Iwi.<sup>50</sup> It was at this time that Drew invited a Pacific representative to join the BCNZ Board. Although it may have appeared unusual at the time, it was a “prophetic” move in relation to building for the future. At the end of 2003 the Dean reported that, “The second semester saw student numbers double in the diploma programme. While this is pleasing, the additional funding that such an increase creates is not great relative to costs, and because the increase is in part-time students the government funding is not significantly more.”<sup>51</sup> Drew resigned at the end of 2004 for health reasons. Rev Hamish Thomson was appointed the sixth Dean of WBC/BCNZ Wellington Centre.

The College remained at St John's in the City until December 2004 when the College first learned about BCNZ's financial pressures. The Head Office in Auckland made changes that affected the regional colleges, including the Wellington Centre. The Wellington Centre then made the decision to move back to Lifepoint Church in their new premises at 61 Hopper Street, Te Aro, in January 2005. This proved to be the only premises for the future WPBC. At this time, it was decided to close the seven regional centres of the BCNZ, including Wellington. The Wellington Centre's Board became an Advisory Council with reduced powers.<sup>52</sup> This transition meant Wellington no longer had the exclusive authority to make decisions about the College.

Peter McKenzie QC was then Chairman of BCNZ Wellington Centre Board, the Chairperson of the Wellington Bible College Foundation (WBCF), and had been the National President of BCNZ for eight years. Despite the challenges, McKenzie and the members of the Advisory Council expressed their solidarity, as they recorded it, “united in prayer”, to respond to the situation. The Wellington

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<sup>50</sup> *Wellspring* (BCNZ/WC News), “From the Dean, Changes and Achievements”, November 2003.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> The Board of BCNZ/WC was restructured as a BCNZ Advisory Council, *BCNZ Governance Issues*, 2005.

Board pleaded with the BCNZ Principal in Auckland not to close the Wellington Centre, especially given the Pacific students who found it difficult to study by distance learning. However, this proved to be of no avail. After the Wellington Centre's graduation on December 6, 2006, the College was officially closed.<sup>53</sup>

## 2. WBC/BCNZ Wellington Centre: Achievements

The College's first achievement was its establishment in 1979 as the first inter-denominational Bible college in Wellington. WBC's first graduation was on Sunday November 28, 1982. Seven students received diplomas and seven received certificates.<sup>54</sup> Their early lecturers were: Dr Raymond Wilson and Allan Murray who taught courses for the Certificate; other lecturers included Kevin Osborne in Greek I and II, Gordon Junck on Homiletics, Murray Darroch in Church History, and Warren Cater in the Bachelor of Divinity courses.<sup>55</sup> According to Fountain, a number of the teaching staff had theology or divinity degrees. Murray Gow had an MA degree from Auckland University and a BD degree from Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD). Dr Clyde Vautier was himself a self-taught New Testament (NT) Greek scholar, and he and Kevin Osborne regularly taught NT Greek in the early years. Kevin Osborne had a BD degree from Serampore, India.<sup>56</sup> At the commencement of the College, there was a Bible interpretation course, a Greek Language course with about 30 students, and also internship training for leaders in the church. The degree course had Biblical Greek as a necessary component, with Hebrew as an option after Murray Gow arrived and taught that language. Later, Rabbi Michael Abraham of Temple Sinai, the Progressive Jewish community, taught Biblical Hebrew.<sup>57</sup> Abraham uniquely was exempted from the requirement to sign the *WBC Doctrinal Statement* but agreed to teach in such a way as not to conflict with it, as he had in his previous teaching of Hebrew and Bible to Christians.

<sup>53</sup> BCNZ/WC was officially closed in December 2006.

<sup>54</sup> WBC first graduation was on 28 November 1982.

<sup>55</sup> WBC, Letter, Vautier to McKenzie, 12 November 1982.

<sup>56</sup> Dr Vautier was a self-taught New Testament Greek scholar.

<sup>57</sup> *WBC, Statement of Faith*, 1989.

WBC's second graduation was on November 16, 1985, when more than fifty students received awards.<sup>58</sup> The College certificates were awarded to those students who had completed a satisfactory year's work and attendance and had evidenced a degree of spiritual maturity.<sup>59</sup> WBC held that the study of the Bible played an essential role in a student's maturity in their Christian faith: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Tim 3:16–17). Although the College had an emphasis on education in the basics of biblical faith and Christian discipleship, it also emphasized degree-level study and provided in-class preparation for MCD's Bachelor of Divinity papers. Those papers included Biblical Hebrew and Greek, Hermeneutics and Exegesis, and Biblical and Systematic Theology.<sup>60</sup> According to Elaine Barnett,<sup>61</sup> when she was a student at WBC, Murray Gow "stirred the hearts" of students like her and Rosemary Wallis and encouraged them to study for the BD degree from MCD via distance learning. The first WBC graduates of the BD programme from MCD were Elaine Barnett and Rosemary Wallis. Later, they became teachers of WPBC's Diploma of Bible Teachers for Pacific Nations programme, and also members of the Academic Committee. WBC supported Barnett and Wallis with books, and other resources for their degree, and Gow was very helpful in resourcing materials. A growing number of other students were awarded this degree through WBC tutorials taught by Chris Marshall, Ron Fountain and the College's other qualified Bible and theology teachers. The WBC proved to be attractive to many because it was an independent college with an academic programme based on the teaching of the Bible and consistent with "a focus on Jesus".

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<sup>58</sup> WBC 2<sup>nd</sup> Graduation brochure 1985.

<sup>59</sup> *List of graduates: College Certificates*: Vance Alderton, Philip Carew, Keith Calder, Margaret Graham, Edith Henderson, Sylvia Hendriksen, Simon James, Andrew McDonald, Gregory A. MacRae, John Riley, David Rutherford, David Sundgren, Colin Turney, Chappie Waaka, Sylvia Weinberg, Ruth Wilkinson, *Endorsed College Certificates*: John Dawson, Tony de Graaf, George Hughson, Joy Hughson, Alister Falconer, Denise Rauhihi, *Special Endorsement*: Allan Dalglish. *Letters of Attainment in special subjects: NT Greek*: David C. Gregg, Hudson Garrat. *Certificate*: Maryan Hughson, Robyn Mansfield, Garry Mansfield, Paul Vallach. *Systematic Theology*: Graeme Coppel. *Exegesis & Theology*: Gavin Drew, *Diploma I*: Deborah Adams, Lewis Andrews, David Hutchison, William Jenkins, Philip Pidgeon, *Hebrew*: Ewart McMillan, Ross Millar, Allan Murray, Dan Potts, Dennis Fountain (Audit). *Greek New Testament*: Keith Calder, Andrew McDonald, Gregory MacRae, John Riley, David Sundgren, Ruth Wilkinson, *1985 Prizes: Certificate Course*: Philip Carew, Sylvia Hendriksen. *Diploma Course*: Keith Calder, Gregory MacRae.

<sup>60</sup> BCNZ/WC brochure for the Clyde Vautier 2004 Memorial Lecture.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Elaine Barnett, Former Principal of Wellington Girls' College, Thorndon, 11 December 2016.

This inter-denominational Christian institution served and trained scores of people for Wellington regional churches and Christian communities. This represents a significant dimension of the College's achievement. WBC was very successful as measured by qualifications awarded and the growth in the number of students enrolling in, and attending, the two-hour evening classes once a week, or more.

The number of students at WBC was increasing each year before the merger with BCNZ in 1993. Elaine Barnett mentioned in her interview that when she joined WBC, the College was at Wellington Girls' and had about 200 students, with over 30 students attending the Greek class. McKenzie's letter of funding application stated, "For the last four years WBC's student numbers have averaged about 100."<sup>62</sup> This year, in 1992, we have 133 students enrolled at the time of this application."<sup>63</sup> Gow reported that the number of enrolments in his final year of 1991 was 170. A number of those interviewed considered that one of the reasons for the decline in numbers was because of BCNZ Auckland's involvement in the Wellington campus's affairs.

There were many WBC students who successfully completed their studies and were awarded diplomas and degrees who subsequently served in churches and communities in New Zealand and overseas. For example<sup>64</sup>, Rosemary Wallis who attended WBC while teaching at Wellington Girls' College, recalled that, "Kevin Osborne, Dr Keir Howard and Dr Murray Gow were among the outstanding teachers" she remembers with gratitude.<sup>65</sup> She moved to Christchurch in 1994 to become Assistant Principal of Middleton Grange School as well as co-pastoring with her husband at Cashmere New Life Church. They eventually returned to Wellington where she re-connected with WBC/BCNZ Wellington Centre, now reborn as Wellington Pacific Bible College. She is one of WPBC's longstanding Academic Committee members and teachers.

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<sup>62</sup> WBC, Letter, McKenzie, letter of application for funding to St John's Presbyterian Church, 6 May 1992. 133 students enrolled.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Rosemary Wallis interview, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

The National BCNZ Principal, Mark Strom wrote.<sup>66</sup> “Pacific Island students now make up nearly a quarter of the student body. The statistics surprised some, but it accurately reflects the population profile of the Auckland region, as well as the make-up of our stakeholder communities. It’s difficult to pinpoint when the change happened; perhaps it started in 2005.”<sup>67</sup> However, it would not right to give all the credit to Auckland BCNZ for the growth of the Pacific students at BCNZ, because the Samoan class in the Wellington Centre at this time had the highest number of students.<sup>68</sup> The Samoan Bible class started in 2002 at Wellington Centre,<sup>69</sup> and its first five students graduated in June 2005 with English students<sup>70</sup> at the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of WBC. The Samoan students who graduated in June 2005 under BCNZ Wellington Centre in June 2005 for the Certificate of Biblical Studies were Talimoli Molly Tuala, Kirisimasi Tuvalu, Siaki Tausilia, Seleisa Foa and Pele Asiata. The other Samoan students chose to continue studying for more credits rather than graduating early. The Samoan class reflected the foundational vision, as this was supported and developed by the Wellington Dean of Studies, Rev Margaret Motion, and the Board of the BCNZ Wellington Centre. The students of English programmes who graduated in 2005 with the Ministry Development Certificate were Jane Durbin and Diana Kiernan. The Diploma of Biblical Studies was awarded to Joanne O’Connor, and the Ministry Internship Diploma to Alison Camplin, Eseta Ioane Roach and Brenda Wong Too.<sup>71</sup> Nine BCNZ English diploma graduates, and 37 Samoans graduated at the final graduation in December 2006 with various certificates (Certificate of Biblical Studies with 20 credits; Certificate of Bible and Ministry with 40 credits; and, Certificate in Christian Studies with 60 credits). These students were forced to stop their studies due to the closure of face-to-face Bible teaching at the BCNZ Wellington Centre. In total,

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<sup>66</sup> Dr Mark Strom discussed the number of Pacific students at BCNZ, *Ten or So Years from Now: Introduction for National Governing Council of BCNZ*, February 24-25, 2006.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>68</sup> *Wellspring*, (BCNZ/WC News), 10 September 2003.

<sup>69</sup> BCNZ/WC, Graduation brochure, “Celebrating 25 years!” June 2005.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

52 Samoan students, about a quarter of the national student number, had studied at the BCNZ since 2002.

### **3. Financial Matters**

WBC was a well-managed institution from its foundation. In the early days, Vautier was personally very generous in providing financial resources to run the College. According to Ossie Fountain Vautier was a retired economist and in the initial stages of the College he managed the finances. Fountain recollected, “I believe the initial capital for the Wellington Bible College was his, but students paid fees and guest lecturers were paid a gratuity each term unless they refused it. When Gow became the Director, he wanted to ‘trust God for his income’. As a Brethren “full-time worker” he refused to accept the gratuity that Vautier wanted to pay him.”<sup>72</sup> Fountain knows of churches that made donations in support of WBC but does not have a full record of them: “When I became part of the staff at WBC, Titahi Bay Gospel Chapel (now Titahi Bay Community Church) made annual grants to the College. Porirua Gospel Chapel and Elizabeth Street Chapel also did. Income also came from individual donations and students’ fees. The College always worked hard to have enough students to be financially viable.” Vautier himself planned to purchase a property worth \$70,000<sup>73</sup> for the College but this did not occur. Instead, a Wellington Bible College Foundation Trust (WBCF) was set up after Vautier’s death and his legacy went into WBCF to support the College financially.<sup>74</sup> The Clyde Vautier Memorial Library was named in his honour. The WBC foundation initially consisted of four trustees:<sup>75</sup> Peter McKenzie, Kevin Osborne, Elaine Barnett, and Ewart McMillan; a fifth, Ian Simpson, joined in August 1997. The WBCF was the

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<sup>72</sup> Ossie Fountain interview, 2016.

<sup>73</sup> BCNZ/WC Letter, McKenzie to Morgan, February 1994.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Wellington Bible College Foundation, members and signatures, 1997.

major financial support for the BCNZ Wellington Centre. When there was not enough money to run the BCNZ Wellington Centre, the trustees would take a loan from the WBC Foundation.<sup>76</sup>

#### 4. Debates and Issues

People experience testing times and trials in their lives but what matters more is the love and respect, patience and peace they show at such times. One such trial for WBC involved a dispute over the wording of the *Statement of Faith*<sup>77</sup> that all lecturers and trustees were required to sign. It read: We believe, “The Bible is the inerrant Word of God, verbally inspired and the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice”.<sup>78</sup> The dispute involved Vautier and a number of the teachers of the College. Stephen Vautier reported that his father believed that there was “no error in the Bible at all” and he was unhappy when some teachers did not sign the statement. According to McKenzie, Vautier prepared it mainly with an eye to the Open Brethren but others wanted to include teachers from other churches. According to Fountain, initially the WBC had a very detailed wording for its *Statement of Faith*. He considered that while it was “evangelical” it read like a conservative fundamentalist document. A number of the lecturers were reluctant to agree to sign it as it could be understood in the latter way. The discomfort with the word “inerrant” was as part of a doctrine of scripture, so for example, “inerrant” was tied to the doctrine of creation as in literally six twenty-four-hour days. The dissenters considered that the Genesis account of creation allowed for much longer periods of time, depending on the meaning of the word “day.” Later, when WBC merged with the BCNZ, the Board members and staff were able to persuade Vautier that the words “infallible” and “totally trustworthy” were equivalent and not a barrier to merging.<sup>79</sup>

WBC members supported the College’s library through the gifting of resources. Vautier donated the initial library, supplemented by resources from other interested Christians. Peter McKenzie,

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<sup>76</sup> WBC Foundation Constitution, 1997.

<sup>77</sup> The discomfort was with the word “inerrant” in the *WBC, Statement of Faith*, 1989.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ossie Fountain, interview 2016.



Kevin Osborne (a retired missionary from India), Dr Allan Smith (a retired missionary from South America), along with other lecturers donated to the library. Gow was a bibliophile and collector of theological books and frequently bought books for the College, sourced in part from second-hand bookshops and the libraries of recently deceased or retiring ministers.<sup>80</sup> This helped the students studying for the MCD degree and grew to be a significant library enhanced by new books bought with Vautier's funds. The Clyde Vautier Memorial Library was named after the founder to honour him, his energy, and the support he put into starting the Wellington Bible College.

McKenzie, who retained the WBC vision, attempted to keep the Clyde Vautier Library in Wellington. Auckland BCNZ had contributed funds to buy some of the books and claimed all assets from the Wellington Centre, as the donations had no conditions attached. After debates, it was agreed that Wellington Centre would reimburse BCNZ for books purchased with BCNZ funds and keep the library in Wellington. The BCNZ National Principal agreed in principle that the books could remain in Wellington if housed in an existing library. Ramsey House, the Anglican Chaplaincy at Victoria University of Wellington, suited this arrangement well. An agreement with BCNZ stipulated that the library was to remain as a separate collection, now housed at Ramsey House in Kelburn.<sup>81</sup> In addition, one quarter of the original Clyde Vautier Library was donated to Wellington Pacific Bible College.

A sum of \$50,000<sup>82</sup> was required to repair and extend Ramsey House for the library and additional money was needed to fund on-going book acquisition. Two obvious difficulties included accommodating the library in a location that was home to a range of theological positions and working out the relationship with the Anglican Church as the owners of Ramsey House. There was an alternative. The WBC Foundation was approached by the Wellington Institute of Theology

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<sup>80</sup> Ossie Fountain, interview 2016.

<sup>81</sup> The Clyde Vautier Memorial Library.

<sup>82</sup> Ossie Fountain, interview 2016, one quarter of the Clyde Vautier Library was gifted to WPBC, 2006.

(WIT) in the Anglican Centre, Hill Street, with the offer of housing the library.<sup>83</sup> But Ramsey House's proximity to the university provided advantages for the Diploma Graduate programme. In particular, this could mean developing a relationship with Victoria University in Wellington and the possibility of synergies with the University's Religious Studies Programme and possibly other programmes. Although the BCNZ Wellington Centre ceased, the Clyde Vautier Collection stayed in Wellington<sup>84</sup>. A new trust was formed to hold what is called the Clyde Vautier collection at Ramsey House {to distinguish it from the existing collection at Ramsey House is now called the David Wylie library}, and this new trust look over the funding still held by WBC Foundation. BCNZ decided to close the regional centres and concentrate on the Auckland campus. Distance learning would be offered online only. Changed strategic direction led to discussions of restructuring with negative consequences. Peter McKenzie stated, "The College has struggled in part because of the history of how the regional centres developed. Wellington had a different origin beginning in 1979 as a separate Wellington Bible College which merged with BCNZ between 1992 and 1994." He also revealed, "In 1994 BCNZ was in strong financial health due to the printing press which made around \$200,000 profit each year. The profits were distributed throughout each region, plus Henderson covered other national costs. BCNZ Wellington Centre received approximately \$4000 -\$5000<sup>85</sup> each year."<sup>86</sup>

Primary sources confirm that the National Office expanded in 1997 and the increased costs were charged out to the regions. At the same time, national costs grew rapidly with increased national staff and activity. The regions found themselves now losing the allocations formerly received, as these were being used to meet the increased national costs. The college could have faced on-going financial difficulties had the government not introduced the EFTS system of funding tertiary

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<sup>83</sup> WBCF approached Wellington Institute of Theology (WIT) regarding the library. WPBC Letter, McKenzie to WIT, 2006.

<sup>84</sup> The library was to remain in Wellington.

<sup>85</sup> BCNZ *Governance Issues*, 2005.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

institutions. In the first 2–3 years of the government scheme BCNZ benefited significantly<sup>87</sup>. “Its incorporation as a single entity in law entailed being responsible for all debts of the College.”<sup>88</sup> McKenzie opined, “It was not right to reduce the regional Boards to Advisory Councils. It was important for regional Boards at that time to have authority to run things locally such as organising liaison with local churches, providing support structures for adjunct lecturers, or tutors, and students, maintaining and managing libraries, organising local events and special lecturers, Marae visits, and funding arrangements.” He continued to say that while these were more limited in character, they still involved decision-making and governance that would be important if the College was to have a national character. To refer to these Boards as having only an advisory function gives the impression that they have little value to contribute<sup>89</sup> and it will be difficult to recruit worthwhile people to such Boards.<sup>90</sup>

## 5. Wellington Centre Closure

The Wellington Centre’s fifth Dean of Studies,<sup>91</sup> in a letter stated his heartbreak at the decline and demise of BCNZ Wellington Centre, “I am rather sad that BCNZ Wellington Centre is shrinking to the point of disappearance. WBC/BCNZ Wellington Centre has served the capital city well for so many years, but the situation has gradually changed, BCNZ as a whole has not really adjusted well to those changes with NZQA [New Zealand Qualifications Authority].”<sup>92</sup> McKenzie considered that it was a mistake to regard the College’s main financial difficulties as arising from its regional structure. He insisted that, “Most regions were self-sustaining. There are of course hidden costs at the College, but these would remain even if there were no regions and if the College’s on-going financial difficulties are to be resolved they must principally be addressed at the national

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> BCNZ, Letter, Drew to McKenzie, 14 March 2006.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

campus.”<sup>93</sup> The Wellington Centre, unlike other centres had not been able to establish the same level of relationships with churches.

The people of the Wellington Centre were not only saddened about closing the branch but also about the way BCNZ handled the closing of the Centre. The Wellington Board’s authority was removed months before the closure when it was reduced to an Advisory Council. This created problems for the administration because they had no power to handle student matters. The office staff were unable to authorize anything to help with problems arising at the time of closing and in the end Wellington students suffered because of this. Pam Barnes<sup>94</sup> who worked in the Wellington Centre office right up until the closing wrote in a letter<sup>95</sup> that she anticipated some problems arising when prospective Samoan students were sent demand letters for outstanding fees from BCNZ in Auckland. A few Samoan students enrolled in the last year of the College in 2006 and had dropped out in the first two weeks but had not signed the withdrawal forms, which resulted in their receiving formal letters demanding payment. One Samoan student who enrolled in early 2006 attended only one class and then left for Samoa due to the death of a relative. Not having completed a withdrawal form she received a demanding letter by BCNZ; this was followed by referral to debt collectors. When she returned from Samoa she consulted her teacher at the Centre but nothing could be done from Wellington.

## 6. Conclusion

WBC/BCNZ Wellington Centre did significant work in preparing leaders to serve their communities. From 1979–2006 over four hundred students graduated from Wellington Bible College’s programmes and went on to serve their churches and communities in New Zealand and

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<sup>93</sup> BCNZ Governance Issues, 2005.

<sup>94</sup> BCNZ/WC, Letter, Pam Barnes to McKenzie, 27 December 2006.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

overseas. Some Wellington leaders who worked tirelessly for the College in the capital city since its inception in 1979 were deeply upset with BCNZ Auckland for closing the Wellington Centre.

## Chapter 2

### Wellington Pacific Bible College

Wellington Pacific Bible College (WPBC) grew out of the Advisory Board of the Wellington Centre of BCNZ. Two Board members prepared a proposal to establish a new Bible College serving Samoan BCNZ students wanting to continue to study on a face-to-face basis. Peter McKenzie QC, who was the chairman of the Board at the final year of BCNZ Wellington Centre, encouraged and guided the resurrection of the WBC's vision. The Board accepted the proposal. It was also agreed to use the name 'Pacific' instead of 'Pasifika' so that it would not be limited to Pasifika languages but include the languages spoken in New Zealand and the Pacific region. This was understood with reference to Acts 2 in the Bible, "Luke reports that the disciples speak in a multitude of languages."<sup>96</sup> Acts 2:4–11 highlights that, "All the nationalities represented recognized their own languages being spoken. But more than miraculous speaking drew people's attention, they saw the presence and power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>97</sup> One commentary elaborates as follows, "Here the gift of the Spirit is a remedy for the confusion of languages at Babel and the resulting dispersion of the human race (Genesis 11:1–9), the coming of the Spirit, the good news proclaimed by the Apostles can be understood and received by people of every nation on earth, who are consequently drawn in unity."<sup>98</sup> The Board chose as its Chairman Rev Perema Leasi, minister of the Presbyterian Pacific Island Church (PIC) in Porirua. He had assisted in the teaching of the Samoan Programme in 2004. 1. The WPBC Board consisted of experienced members who served faithfully on previous Boards. They were: <sup>99</sup>Peter McKenzie QC (WPBC lawyer and Vice-Chairman, holder of BD degree from Melbourne College of Divinity); Rev Margaret Motion (Programme Director);

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<sup>96</sup> Willimon, *Acts. Interpretation*, 32.

<sup>97</sup> *Life Application Bible*, 1946.

<sup>98</sup> Farmer, *The International Bible Commentary*, 1512.

<sup>99</sup> WPBC Board Minutes, 5 March 2007; see also Chairman's Acknowledgments *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine*. 2006-2016.

Joanne Horner (Secretary); Dr Chris Marshall (now Professor Marshall, who joined the Board in 2007); Hiraina (Chum) Te Whata (Treasurer); and Pastor Lawrence Lesa.

The inaugural meeting of the new College took place on the August 14, 2006<sup>100</sup>. WPBC was officially launched on October 30, 2006.<sup>101</sup> McKenzie prepared the Constitution<sup>102</sup> and Rev Motion assumed responsibility for the WPBC programmes. The Principal<sup>103</sup> spoke on the new vision<sup>104</sup> and the extension of the Programmes to include other Pacific Languages. This vision<sup>105</sup> was expressed as the intention to deepen the “study of God’s Word in the Bible” through teaching in different languages,<sup>106</sup> framed thus: “Acts 2:4 and the explanation in Acts 2:16–18 seem to envisage a prophetic gift with a missionary aspect. How helpful it would be if missionaries were simply given the ability to speak God’s Word in many languages!”<sup>107</sup>

At the end of 2006<sup>108</sup>, WPBC was established and registered as a charitable organization.<sup>109</sup> At the end of 2008 Lawrence and Hiraina Te Whata resigned from the Board and Ewart McMillan became the new Treasurer in 2009<sup>110</sup>. The Board Language Representatives were: Leuma Samoa, Taniela Vao & Keni Latu, Tanielu and Mary Koro and Rev Ioane Peleti.<sup>111</sup> WPBC commenced its programmes in February 2007.

The fluid organisational structure of the WPBC<sup>112</sup> resulting from the College’s growth and development over the last ten years is given below. As the College continues to develop and establish programmes, the organisational structure of the College develops accordingly.

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<sup>100</sup> WPBC Minutes AGM, 2007.

<sup>101</sup> Inaugural Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> Aug 2006. WPBC Launch 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 2006, *WPBC Samoan Prospectus*.

<sup>102</sup> *WPBC Constitution*, AGM Minutes, 2007.

<sup>103</sup> *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016*.

<sup>104</sup> Principal’s Report on the WPBC Vision, *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2016*, 24 November 2016.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid; the vision concerning ‘Languages’ refers to Acts 2.4 and Acts 2:11-18.

<sup>106</sup> Principal’s Report, *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016*, 6.

<sup>107</sup> Farmer, *The International Bible Commentary*, 1039.

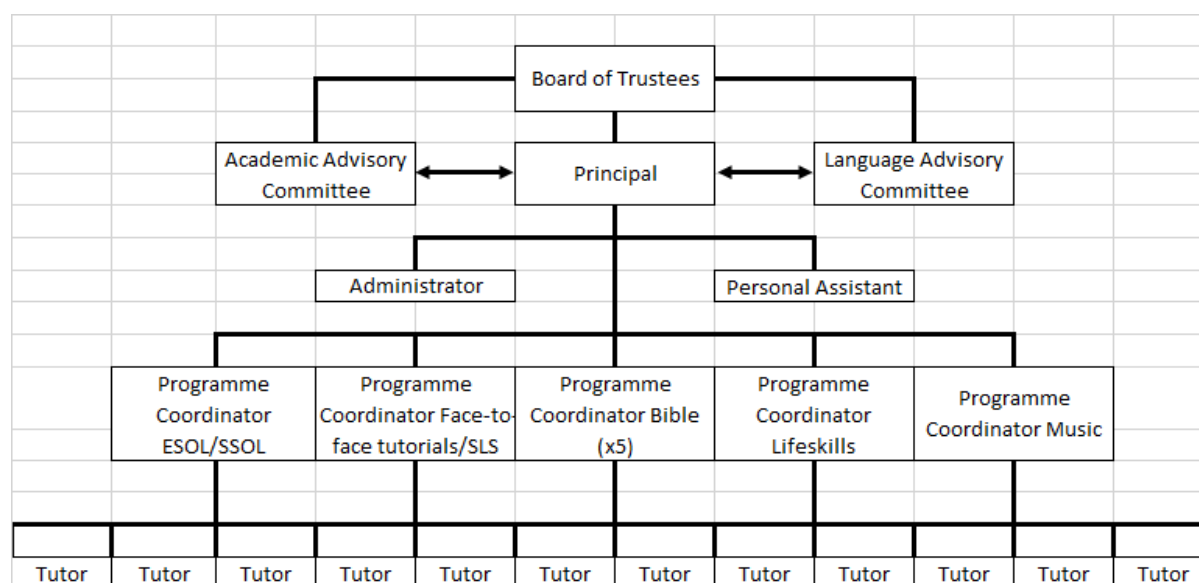
<sup>108</sup> *WPBC Board Minutes*, 13 August 2007.

<sup>109</sup> *WPBC Board Minutes* 5 March 2007; WPBC

<sup>110</sup> Reverend Perema Leasi’s Acknowledgment (Chairman of the Board), *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine*, 4.

<sup>111</sup> Board Language Representatives: Leuma Samoa (Samoa), Tanielu Vao & Keni Latu (Tonga), Tanielu Koro & Mary Koro (Tokelau) and Rev Ioane Peleti (Tuvalu), *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine*, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

<sup>112</sup> *WPBC Board Minutes* 2 April 2007; WPBC Organisational chart.

**Figure 1: Organisational Chart**

Thanks to the generosity of the WBC Foundation, the WPBC library started with many books, with approximately a quarter gifted from the Clyde Vautier Memorial library. Over the last decade many more books have been donated by many people, especially the WPBC English teachers.<sup>113</sup> WPBC now has extended library space and a growing collection. The rest of this Chapter discusses the external relationships, financial matters, achievements, disputes and issues of WPBC.

## 1. Location and External Relationships

The relationship with Lifepoint Church began in December 2006. The suitable facilities that had been used by the BCNZ Wellington Centre at 61 Hopper Street, Te Aro, were made available to WPBC and Lifepoint's Senior Pastors John and Karen Crawshaw<sup>114</sup> extended to WPBC a warm welcome. This relationship had extended beyond landlord and tenant. For example, they offered the same discounted rent to the new College (WPBC) for two rooms, the principal's office and the

<sup>113</sup> *List of Library donors*: Peter McKenzie QC, Rev Margaret Motion, Mrs Elaine Barnet, Eseta Ioane Roach, Mr David Cashmore, Mr Ron Fountain, Mr Ossie Fountain & Mrs Jenny Fountain, Miss Joanne Horner, Rev Rosemary Wallis, Br. Dr Kieran Fenn, Mr Stephen Vautier, Mr Wayne Fraser, Pastor Andrew Penhey, Rev Vic Lipski, Mr Charles Erlam, Dr Rod Thomson, Professor Chris Marshall & Professor Paul Morris (2006-2017).

<sup>114</sup> *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006–2016*, "Acknowledgements".



library. The rent for these two rooms was \$766 a month.<sup>115</sup> WPBC also used three rooms and the community room weekly, and the auditorium at no cost once a year for the College's graduation and Life Skills seminar/workshops which are open to the public. The relationship with Lifepoint has always been positive and some Lifepoint staff also teach at the College. In 2012, Lifepoint church offered nine months free rent for the College because the Community Adult Education funding<sup>116</sup> from the government through Wellington High School ended during this time. The Board expressed its view that the provision of resources for WPBC came in "miraculous ways". Those who supported the first college financially continued to support WPBC because they were committed to the Bible being taught. The relationship with Porirua East Gospel Chapel commenced in 2006.<sup>117</sup> This Open Brethren church has many leaders who helped establish WPBC and continue to support it. Porirua East Chapel started supporting the College financially in 2006, with donations twice a year. It also asked the College for a list of things that their Church could include in the prayers for the College. The first English teachers came from this church, such as Peter McKenzie, Ron Fountain and Dennis Fountain. The Church still continues its support. In February 2014, a small centre was opened in the church for Porirua students who were unable to get transport to Wellington. Feagiai Ioane, a Laidlaw College student who is studying for her Bachelor of Theology, helped coordinate this group of students every Wednesday evening. McKenzie and his wife Jocelyn have been regular financial supporters of WPBC and have encouraged their church to continue its support.

During the first five years of WPBC, the Bible Society of New Zealand (BSNZ) was very supportive. At WPBC's first graduation in 2008<sup>118</sup>, BSNZ donated over thirty Samoan Bibles, Bible dictionaries, Bible concordances, Bible commentaries, and other Bible resources as graduation awards. CEO Francis Burdett attended the graduation and presented the College

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<sup>115</sup> WPBC *Minutes* AGM, Principal's report, Lifepoint Church partnership with WPBC, 15 August 2011.

<sup>116</sup> WPBC Letter, Chairman's 'Thank You' to Lifepoint, 15 October 2010.

<sup>117</sup> WPBC *Minutes* AGM, Chairman's report regarding Porirua East Chapel Gospel church's financial support for WPBC from 2006, 16 December 2013; also, WPBC *Board Minutes*, 10 March 2008.

<sup>118</sup> WPBC first graduation in December 2008, relationship with the Bible Society of NZ in Wellington.

Perpetual Award to the best overall student (BSNZ has presented the award three times).<sup>119</sup> This relationship continued with McKenzie and Brother Kieran Fenn who were teachers at BCNZ and later WPBC (both were also members of the Board of BSNZ). BSNZ also donated Bibles as gifts for students through WPBC to Auckland Pacific Bible College's first graduation in Papatoetoe.

The relationship with Wellington High School started in 2008 when WPBC was looking for funding<sup>120</sup> for their English for Speakers of Other Languages Programme (ESOL). This funding was offered to pay for teachers of English as Second Language, through the Community Adult Education initiative in New Zealand. Ruth Davidson Toumu'a (now Dr Ruth Toumu'a) who was working at Victoria University Learning Support then, offered to coordinate and teach WPBC's ESOL Certificate Programme in 2007. ESOL teachers not only taught WPBC students who wanted to improve their English but also students who continued with the English Diploma from BCNZ (now Laidlaw College) who needed to strengthen their essay writing skills. Wellington High School also supported WPBC in providing grants to support its Life Skills seminars/workshops each year. This relationship ended when the government ceased funding Community Adult Education in New Zealand.

WPBC signed a partnership agreement with Wellington Theological Consortium (WTC) on April 9, 2008.<sup>121</sup> WTC was a consortium of Christian institutions for theological education committed to the intellectual exploration of the Christian faith as witnessed to by the two classical creeds.<sup>122</sup> In the early years of WPBC the Principal attended two of the WTC Board meetings and Peter McKenzie regularly reported on WTC to the WPBC Board.<sup>123</sup>

In February 2009, the Vice-President of the Wellington Council of Churches, and WPBC teacher, Dr Dennis Gordon, invited the Principal of WPBC to join the Wellington Council of Churches

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<sup>119</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, Bible Society CEO presenting WPBC Perpetual Award, 13 October 2008.

<sup>120</sup> WPBC *Minutes* AGM, 2008; WPBC relationship with the Council of Wellington Churches, 2008. Also, WPBC partnership with WTC.

<sup>121</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, 10 March 2008.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> WPBC/Wellington Theological Consortium (WTC) Covenant, 9 April 2008.

Board. In 2010, the Council invited WPBC to provide the “Bible Verses” to the Dominion Post newspaper.<sup>124</sup> This arrangement lasted for five years with WPBC alumni selecting the Bible verses and emailing them to the newspaper on behalf of the Wellington Council of Churches. Although this arrangement had formally ended, one WPBC graduate student, Taea Sa, has continued to offer daily Bible verses on his website.

Ossie Fountain, responding to WPBC’s need for teaching materials, initiated the relationship with the Christian Leaders’ Theological Training College (CLTC) in Papua New Guinea in 2008 with CLTC’s dean of studies.<sup>125</sup> The WPBC Board began to purchase materials from CLTC, establishing an official relationship in 2009.<sup>126</sup> A Partnership Agreement was signed between WPBC and CLTC to purchase English Bible courses and for permission to translate these materials into Samoan. The relationship provided WPBC with Bible resource materials and enabled the WPBC Principal to translate the courses into Samoan, which were then edited by WPBC Samoan language teachers.<sup>127</sup> CLTC was sent a copy of each Samoan translated course booklet. When Samoan Churches requested Bible materials in Samoan, CLTC would refer them to WPBC. WPBC owns the rights of these translated materials.

The relationship with the Emmanuel Christian Ministries in Auckland commenced in 2011,<sup>128</sup> when the President of this Church, Senior Pastor Mika Lagavale and Maria Lagavale came to Wellington planning to start a new church in Miramar. They were in Wellington in early October 2006 when they heard of WPBC. Mika and Maria became the first associate members of WPBC, two weeks before WPBC’s launch. Their strong interest in a Bible college for the wider Samoan Community in South Auckland was expressed to the WPBC Board. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Emmanuel Christian Ministries in Papatoetoe and WPBC

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<sup>124</sup> WPBC/CLTC agreement to purchase and translate resources materials, 2009, WPBC, AGM, Chairman’s report, 19 April 2010.

<sup>125</sup> CLTC Bible resources materials for WPBC.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> WPBC *Minutes* AGM, Chairman’s report, 19 April 2010.

<sup>128</sup> WPBC *Minutes* AGM, 4 August 2011, WPBC relationship with the Emmanuel Christian Ministries in Auckland.

Board on the day of the launch.<sup>129</sup> The Principal, Tala Burgess, of Auckland Pacific Bible College (APBC) opened classes to anyone who wanted to study the Bible in the Samoan Language and many students from several denominations joined the College. There have been three graduations since the inception of APBC and many students and Samoan pastors have attended that College as well. APBC is a separate entity from WPBC although there is cooperation on many levels. WPBC regularly supplies translated teaching materials in Samoan.

Laidlaw College has a presence in WPBC through its students studying their courses by distance learning. When WPBC commenced in 2006, some Samoan students enrolled for the BCNZ National Diploma in English. WPBC began face-to-face tutorials and the Student Learning Support (SLS) Programme to help these students. In 2011 a partnership relationship was formed to help Pacific students who graduated from WPBC and wanted to move on to Laidlaw degrees. WPBC paid their own English teachers to help these Laidlaw students. These students pay all their Laidlaw fees and WPBC charges them a registration fee of \$25.00 yearly. The WPBC Board Secretary coordinates this Distance Learning study relationship. There had been several visits from the Laidlaw College to WPBC for their students. Principal Dr Rod Thompson has also visited and generously donated books to the WPBC library.<sup>130</sup> Charles Erlam, Director of Distance Learning, has also visited WPBC with some of their team members and donated books, and money to purchase books for the library.

The relationship with Tuvalu Christian Church in Henderson began in September 2015,<sup>131</sup> when Rev Ioane Peleti, the minister of the Tuvalu Christian Church in Porirua, began to teach the Certificate Programme in Tuvaluan at WPBC and addressed the Board of his interest in extending this opportunity to other Tuvaluan people. He and the Tuvaluan students informed the Tuvaluan Christian Church in Henderson and the Church's Rev Tomasi Iopu. A Memorandum of

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<sup>129</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, October 2011; and MOU with Auckland Pacific Bible College, August 2011.

<sup>130</sup> WPBC relationship with Laidlaw College. Teaching Laidlaw courses through WPBC Face to face Tutorials: Diploma of Biblical Studies in English/Bachelor of Theology, the Principal's Report, WPBC *Minutes* AGM 7 December 2009.

<sup>131</sup> WPBC request for a relationship with Tuvalu Christian Church in Henderson., 2014

Understanding and a partnership agreement were signed when the Tuvalu Auckland Bible College (TABC) was launched on September 5, 2015. The WPBC Principal and members of the Board, and Tuvaluan students from Wellington attended the ceremony, as did the APBC Principal Tala Burgess, and APBC CEO, Pastor Mika Lagavale. Principal Rev Tomasi Iopu. The members of the TABC Board opened classes to anyone who wanted to study the Bible in the Tuvaluan language and about sixty students came, including some Tuvalu people from Whangarei. TABC and WPBC cooperate on several levels as WPBC regularly supplies translated teaching materials in Tuvaluan. The relationship with Moera Gospel Church in Lower Hutt began in 2016 in response to the WPBC students who came from Wainuiomata and the Hutt Valley areas.<sup>132</sup> Their need was for a closer and more convenient centre for these Bible courses to reduce regular travel to Wellington. There were also students from Wainuiomata studying for the Diploma of Bible in Music in Wellington who needed to take Bible courses to help in the biblical-based compositions. This relationship was initiated by Leuma Samoa, one of the elders of this Church. Leuma is also a Laidlaw student studying for his Bachelor of Theology and helped coordinate these students every Monday evening. The relationship with this Church was formalised on March 9, 2016 with an agreement for WPBC to use its premises for a rent of \$300 per term.

The final significant relationship to be discussed in this section is that between WPBC and the family of the late Dr Clyde Vautier at the end of December 2016.<sup>133</sup> Interestingly, this relationship started when this researcher commenced research for this dissertation and contacted Stephen Vautier for information about his father. The Vautier sons not only responded to requests for information about their father but were pleased to hear about WPBC and have since donated funds to support WPBC. Vautier's children Alistair, Stephen and Elizabeth have established scholarships

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<sup>132</sup> WPBC *Minutes* AGM, WPBC relationship with Moera Gospel Church in Lower Hutt, the Principal's Report, Highlight #7, 2016.

<sup>133</sup> WPBC relationship with the children of the Late Dr Clyde Vautier, two Scholarships offered by Trustees of the Clyde Vautier Trust, Agreement signed in April 2017 (WPBC Agreement with the Clyde Vautier Trust, April 2017).

for WPBC students, and two Clyde Vautier Scholarships were also offered to pay the fees of two Diploma students for the whole year in 2017.

## 2. Achievements

WPBC has had five graduations in its ten years of operation. The first graduation of Certificate and Advanced Certificate students was held in 2008, the second (in 2010) included its first Diploma students. Diploma students graduate and are commissioned. Commissioning is an integral part of training and education at WPBC. Diploma students have not only proved themselves academically but also apply their knowledge actively in their churches and communities. So commissioning is a special charge to “proclaim the Gospel”: “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instructions.”<sup>134</sup> WPBC commissions these graduates to go out to “make disciples for Jesus just as the Bible commands.” Forty-nine Diploma graduates <sup>135</sup> have been commissioned by WPBC in its ten years “to serve God in their Pacific churches and communities”. These students come from all over the greater Wellington region.

The next achievement to be considered is WPBC’s face-to-face tutorials/Student Learning Support (SLS) for Laidlaw students. In 2007, when seven Samoan students wanted to continue to study with Laidlaw College for the National Diploma in English, WPBC paid teachers to lead tutorials and provide learning support for them. The SLS for the Laidlaw students took the form of sessions

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<sup>134</sup> “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.” (2 Timothy 4:1–3)

<sup>135</sup> List of Diploma graduates 2006-2016 (49): Faasoo Taupau Asosi, Euini Vaasili, Esene Neli, Paula Afaie, Mafo’e Eric, Pualele Frost, Luse Rodgers, Fualilia Tuiletufuga, Naomi Tuitapa, Palepa Lemalu Tovio, Leonia Neli, Italia Minoi, Roslind Faaita, Meletaumoe Silva, Salaa Eleele, Patrick Filipaina, Fati Tapu, Mika Lagavale, Leuma Samoa, Feagiai Ioane, Mary Jansen Koro, Jeremiah Isopo, Leatiogie Fafo Aulalo, Faafolau Aiomata, Seneti Time, Patea Uluilelata, Tema Toilolo, Tacao Sa, Vinise Moananu, Lui Tele’a, Faatagi Faaita, Tanielu Koro, Muaau Lepou Tama, Sauilelei Laumoli, Paula Veniale, Esela Natano, Vione Natano, Tomasi Iopu, Ioane Peleti, Ifa Gobena, Faapupula Time, Luatala Uli, Tagata Uli, Vaine Bailey, Keni Latu, Elizabeth Tamati, Sara Vaai, Myra Tautau and Vevesi Leilua Toilolo (*WPBC Enrolment List 2007-2017*).

conducted in the Samoan Language. After a teacher's lecture, students can discuss the lecture or lesson in their mother tongue. Rev Oliver Tia'i, Magele Se'u Collins, and the Principal were the early facilitators of the Samoan SLS and led these discussions called *Talanoaga* (this is the noun form of which *Talanoa* is the verb). WPBC teachers supported the Pacific students for the Laidlaw English courses through face-to-face tutorials. Joanne Horner, the coordinator of this Laidlaw College group, generously gave of her time to support these students. David Cashmore, Rev Victor Lipski and Peter McKenzie are regular tutors for the Laidlaw degree courses at WPBC. These tutorials have been an important WPBC achievement because six students from WPBC's tutorials and SLS have graduated from Laidlaw College with National Diplomas in English. Two students, among others, have continued and are studying for the Bachelor of Theology, and Bachelor of Ministry degrees at Laidlaw College.<sup>136</sup>

WPBC has developed and written its own teaching materials in English, Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan and Tuvaluan. There were no appropriate resources available in the Pacific languages except Samoan (translated by the College's teachers). At the end of 2008, the Principal compiled PI language course materials resources based on the English teachers' course outlines and teachers' notes for the students. These teachers were Peter McKenzie, Ron Fountain, Elaine Barnett and Rev Margaret Motion.<sup>137</sup> There were also nine boxes of Bible resource materials in English written by Rev Murray Gow, former Director of WBC, which he sent from Poland early in 2009 for use by WPBC. This, together with CLTC Bible materials, enabled the writing of more WPBC courses and their translation into Pacific languages. Rev Rosemary Wallis, David Cashmore, Dr Dennis Gordon, Pastor Andrew Penhey, Major Roger Horton, Rev Ian Bourne, Br. Kieran Fenn, Rev Mark Moore, Father Kevin Connors, Rev Vic Lipski and Joanne Horner all wrote Bible courses in

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<sup>136</sup> 6 students graduated with the Laidlaw College National Diploma: Leuma Samoa, Feagiai Ioane, Esene Neli, Faatagi Faaita, Fualilia Tuiletufuga, & Elizabeth Tamati.

<sup>137</sup> WPBC Tutors for Laidlaw College Courses: Peter McKenzie, Rev Margaret Motion, Elaine Barnett, Rev Vic Lipski, David Cashmore, Wayne Fraser, Pastor Andrew Penhey and Joanne Horner, in *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2006-2016 Magazine*, 12.

English for the College to be translated into different Pacific languages. Also, course outlines and teachers' notes for students were translated in Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan and Tuvaluan.

An important achievement for WPBC has been the establishment of two colleges in New Zealand.

<sup>138</sup> The Board strongly believed that the Bible should be “studied and taught in every city in the contemporary world.” WPBC understood itself not to be bound to Wellington in its fulfilment of this mission but has extended it to Auckland. The opening of two colleges, Auckland Pacific Bible College (APBC) and Tuvaluan Auckland Bible College (TABC) that teach people in their own mother tongues achieved one of WPBC's long-term goals, that of expanding its horizon in establishing colleges in other New Zealand cities. APBC has held three graduations in five years. Tuvalu Auckland Bible College's first graduation was on November 18, 2017.

A further achievement was marked when WPBC established its Bible in Music Programme in February 2015.<sup>139</sup> This programme was initiated as part of WPBC's vision to provision the churches and communities with “faithful leaders.” This was articulated as the vision “to sing my Word,”<sup>140</sup> as an extension of the College's initial vision to teach the Bible in different languages to now include music. Students compose Bible-inspired songs based on topics, texts, and exposition. WPBC Diploma students graduate if they pass Music Theory Grade 4 and compose and perform their own Bible songs in the College's concert. To date, six students have passed Grade 1 with distinction; four students have passed Grade 3, one with distinction, two with merit, and one with a pass. The music teachers are Colin Daley (coordinator and the main teacher), Sonia Green, Fr Dr Kevin Connors and Hayden Thompson. WPBC's goal is understood to be sufficiently inclusive to include proclaiming the Gospel through music and song.

An integral dimension of WPBC's programme and achievements are their well-patronised and successful life skills seminar workshops. There have been nine of these. The Christian Life Skills

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<sup>138</sup> Two Colleges in Auckland: APBC for (Samoa) and TABC for (Tuvalu). *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2006-2016 Magazine*, 8 and 21.

<sup>139</sup> Bible in Music Programme, established in February 2015, *WPBC Bible in Music* brochure.

<sup>140</sup> *WPBC Bible in Music* brochure, February 2015.



seminar/workshops are free and open to WPBC students and their families and friends, and to the Pacific churches and communities. Chris Marshall (now Professor Marshall, coordinator and the main teacher for the Life Skills) has been the Bible teacher at these events and focused on highlighting new insights in understanding the Bible. The seminars reflect WPBC's decade-long commitment to directly address the needs of Pacific peoples through these seminars which are widely regarded as making an important contribution to Pacific communities in the Wellington area. More information and details are discussed in chapter 3 about Christian Life Skills seminars and workshops.

### **3. Financial Matters**

WPBC's total income was just over \$40,000 for the first 14 months of the College (30 October 2006-31 December 2007)<sup>141</sup>. In 2006, two large donations (total, \$18,000) by Board members and their families were given to help establish the College. This also enabled WPBC to start an investment fund. Associate membership fees were received and also several fundraising events were held during this period (including the fundraising concert on April 23, 2006 that launched the classes; fundraising events by Pioneer students such as the WPBC yellow t-shirts sold at the Porirua Creekfest and sausage sizzles, and at the College's first birthday celebrations in December 2007; the Tausala Dance raised funds and at this event a number of Pacific churches also made donations).<sup>142</sup> The highest expenses for the College at this time were rent and teachers' salaries. New desks for the students were purchased, a Post Office mail box was set up, and telephone costs and other resources all added to the total expenditure of nearly \$19,000. The financial statement for the year ending 31 December 2008<sup>143</sup> show income as approximately \$32,000 and expenditures of \$40,600. WPBC received donations and grants for two Life Skills Seminars, in Wellington, and in

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<sup>141</sup> WPBC *Financial Report* from Auditor, Chum Te Whata, 2007.

<sup>142</sup> Fundraising Tausala Dance, WPBC 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, 2 December 2007.

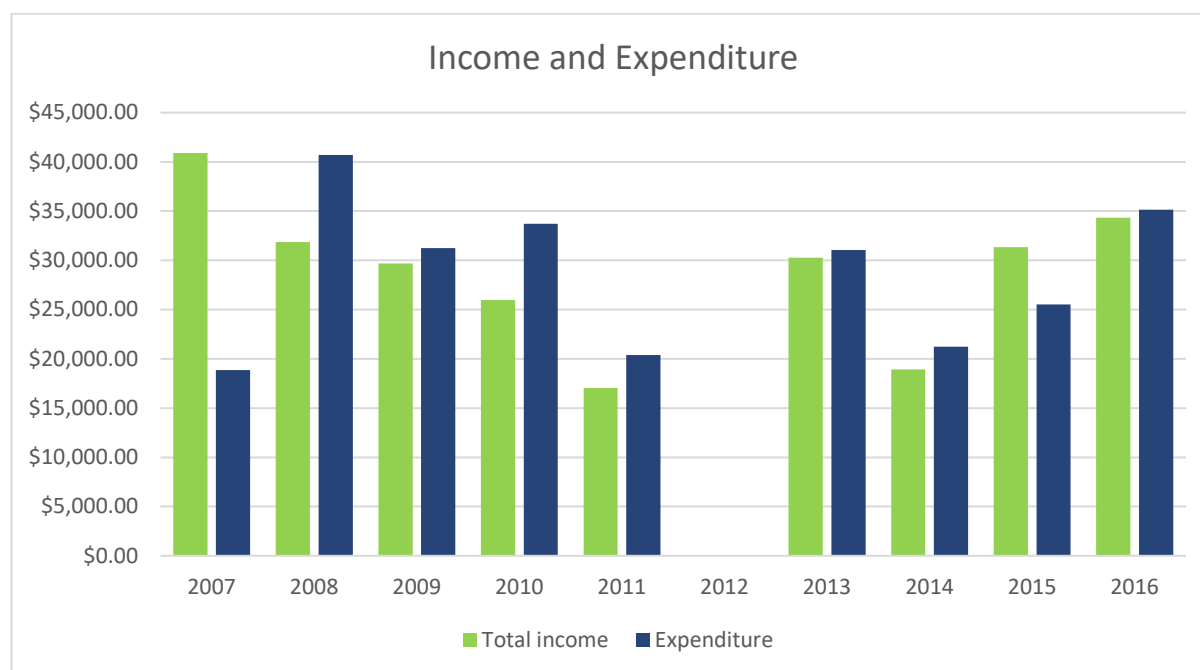
<sup>143</sup> WPBC *Financial Report*, 2008.

Auckland. A generous donation of \$10,000 was acknowledged as “received with gratitude” by the Board. Seminar costs were for speakers, resources, refreshments for 200 attendees per seminar. The usual on-going costs were rent, telephone, resources and teachers’ salaries in every year indicated below. The financial statement for the 12 months ending 31 December 2009<sup>144</sup> showed income of \$33,700 and expenditure of \$31,240. During this period there was still money remaining from the 2006 investment deposit. Grants of \$7,000 from Community Action and \$4,000 from Wellington City Council were received for the Life Skills seminars, and \$3,600 was received from Wellington High School for the ESOL programme. The financial statement for the year ending 31 December 2010<sup>145</sup> gives income of \$26,000 and expenditure of \$33,700.

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<sup>144</sup> WPBC *Financial Report*, 2009.

<sup>145</sup> WPBC *Financial Report*, 2010.

**Figure 2: WPBC Financial Summary 2006–2016<sup>146</sup>**

During 2010 the government cut Community Adult Education funding. Associate membership fees declined over the first 3 years of the College as this was not a relevant system for Pacific people who prefer social fundraising activities. Therefore, WPBC held a fundraising concert which raised over \$12,000 which included donations from Pacific churches. To offset reductions by government, Lifepoint gifted 9 months' free rent to WPBC.

<sup>146</sup> WPBC Financial Reports 2007-2016, Donors: Trustees & Organisations: Gedaliah Trust, Cotswold Trust, Community Adult Education Funding, Wellington City Council, Barnabas Funding, Wellington High School. Churches: Porirua East Chapel Gospel in Porirua, Lifepoint Church in Te Aro, Presbyterian Pacific Island Church in Cannons Creek, St John in the City, Presbyterian Pacific Island Church in Newtown, AOG in Upper Hutt, AOG in Castor crescent, Porirua, Emmanuel Christian Ministries Papatoetoe, Tuvalu Christian Church in Porirua, Methodist Church in Porirua, Samoan Methodist Church in Upper Hutt. Individual Donors: Peter McKenzie & Jocelyn McKenzie, Professor Chris Marshall, Rev Perema Leasi & Faaolataga Leasi, Ewart McMillan, Joanne Horner, Elaine Barnett, David Cashmore, Stephen Vautier, Eseta Ioane Roach, Tanielu Koro & Mary Jansen Koro. Abner Roach, Abraham Apineru Roach, Selau Ioane, Tupea Ioane, Talosaga Ioane, Iefata Ioane, Sasagi Faalavaau, Popo Washburn. Graduates' Big Fundraising: Luse Rodgers, Palepa Lemalu Tovio, Mary Jansen Koro, Fualilia Tuiletufuga, Pastor Lui Tele'a, Pastor Leatiogie Fafo Aulalo, Vinise Moananu, Feagiai Ioane, Tauilili Uelese, and Geoff White. WPBC Alumni Tausla Dance 2015: Pastor Faatagi Faaita, Roslind Faaita, Ezeni Neli, Leonia Neli, Feagiai Ioane, Paula Afiue, Mafo'e Eric, Pastor Euini Vaasili, Fualilia Tuiletufuga and Rev Faafolau Aiomata.

The financial statement for the year ending 31 December 2011<sup>147</sup> show income as \$17,000 and expenditure as \$20,400. Donations were received for the College's fifth birthday during this financial year. 2011 had the lowest income as after WPBC's 2nd graduation student enrolments reduced and ESOL and Samoan as Second Language (SSOL) programmes were cancelled. Students' fees remained the same but less external funding was received. Consequently, teachers' salaries were suspended and replaced by *koha* for expenses such as petrol. There are no figures for 2012 because the financial period was changed to run from December to June, so an 18-month financial report was produced for the following year.

The financial statement ending 30 June 2013<sup>148</sup> shows total income of \$30,250 and expenditure of \$31,000. Student fees for 18 months were \$13,880 which included Auckland Pacific Bible College's student fees of \$660 for resource materials. Some graduate students established regular giving by automatic payment to support the College. The largest expense for the year was rent.

The financial statement for the 12 months ending 30 June 2014<sup>149</sup> shows income as \$18,900 and expenditure as \$21,240. Donations were \$5,670 plus the graduate students' regular giving of \$4,255. The biggest expense for the year was again rent which also included rent for the new Porirua Centre.

The financial statement for 12 months ending 30 June 2015<sup>150</sup> shows income of \$31,350 and expenditure of \$25,500. Income from students' fees increased due to new enrolments for the new Music Programme. Fundraising resulted in \$14,320 from the Alumni Tausala Dance fundraiser (\$11,000),<sup>151</sup> sausage sizzles and food stalls, which went to the costs of building the music room/library extension. Added costs were due to this extension and also rent of this new large room.

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<sup>147</sup> WPBC *Financial Report*, 2011.

<sup>148</sup> WPBC *Financial Report*, 2013.

<sup>149</sup> WPBC *Financial Report*, 30 June 2014.

<sup>150</sup> WPBC *Financial Report*, 30 Jun 2015.

<sup>151</sup> Teachers and Alumni, *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016*, 12.

The financial statement for the 12 months ending 30 June 2016<sup>152</sup> shows total income as \$34,340 and total expenditure of \$35,150, including the Lower Hutt Centre rent. A total of \$21,400 was received in donations that year.

The Chairman's reports testified to WPBC's "dependence on God for everything, especially financially", since its inception and as a result the College "survived its first 10 years." The WPBC Board and staff understand this survival to be due to God's "miraculous provision", and that WPBC has remained "true to its calling" of offering low cost fees to support the education of those with limited financial resources. Scholarships were offered to churches through WPBC concerts.<sup>153</sup> Awards and discounts were also given to married couples who studied and additional discounts to other family members. The financial commitments of Pacific households are considered by WPBC and accommodations are reached. WPBC has formally acknowledged the role of Peter McKenzie in introducing the College to supportive trusts and charities which have "blessed the College" with donations and grants. Gedaliah Trust donated to WPBC on a number of occasions. WPBC has also been supported by its graduates who have donated to the College on a regular basis. Although WPBC's first ten years witnessed on-going financial struggles, the College has continued and even opened new colleges and new centres. This has involved churches and individuals, charities and trusts but behind this WPBC insists that "And my God will supply with all your needs according to His glorious richest in Christ Jesus."<sup>154</sup>

#### 4. Debates and Issues

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) caused the most important academic issue for WPBC because it grew out of a recognized and qualified College, the BCNZ Wellington Centre. At

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<sup>152</sup> WPBC *Financial Report*, 30 June 2016.

<sup>153</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, 7 May 2007.

<sup>154</sup> Philippians 4:19 (NIV translation).

the fourth Board Meeting<sup>155</sup> the possibilities of accreditation for WPBC was discussed. There was general agreement that a direct link with NZQA would be costly and time consuming.<sup>156</sup> NZQA had already raised some concerns with Board members (Margaret Motion had circulated an email detailing concerns about accreditation). She strongly cautioned against this path for several reasons, including: significant administration overheads; auditing requirements; potential loss of curriculum control; additional costs; the climate of capped PTE funding and limits on sub-contracting opportunities; increased technology and software requirements; and the difficult path of evidencing ‘strategic relevance’ to meet their criteria<sup>157</sup>. One option was for some tutors to gain accreditation as moderators for specific subjects.<sup>158</sup> In 2008, the Samoan Advisory committee raised the question again: Why not NZQA? They expressed their preference for WPBC to secure registration with NZQA and the issue was discussed again at the Board Meeting in March 2008. The Board recognized that this was a complex issue. An initial meeting between the Principal and other providers, including Praxis, the Salvation Army, and the Pacific Island Institute further explored the issues. It was determined that Praxis might be of assistance in shaping documents as they had experience in applying to NZQA. The Board would consider all the impacts, including funding, and whether the courses would need to change.<sup>159</sup> The Principal met with an NZQA adviser who supplied her with details of the requirements for registration. The registration and auditing fees were high. The Principal suggested that prior to any application, the WPBC Board should begin preparations by focusing on the application in defined and measured stages. This was agreed<sup>160</sup> and that the Principal would report progress back to the WPBC Board. In late 2008, the NZQA option was put “on hold” but an Academic Committee was established to produce the College’s Curriculum.

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<sup>155</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, NZQA discussions, 10 March 2008.

<sup>156</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, 7 May 2007; WPBC, *AGM, Principal and Chairman Reports*, 2007.

<sup>157</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, 10 September 2007.

<sup>158</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, NZQA discussions. 2007-2011.

<sup>159</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, 10 March 2008.

<sup>160</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, March 2009; WPBC, *AGM, Principal and Chairman Reports*, 2009.

The Academic Committee met late in 2008 to discuss WPBC's Curriculum and recommended that a framework be adopted to monitor how new courses fit into the overall structure. A new suggested framework for a "bridging course"<sup>161</sup> was also proposed for the beginning of 2009. The purpose was to prepare students for one year to enter the WPBC Diploma courses. There was debate as to the benefits of an English language "bridging course" for Pacific students. The course was approved and advertised for students in 2009. However, with no student enrolments for the bridging course this initiative lapsed.

Another early issue concerned the nature and extent of Samoan leadership of WPBC. The Samoan Ministers Fellowship Group (SMFG) had been invited by the WPBC Chairman Rev Perema Leasi to the launch. At that event the Secretary of the SMFG<sup>162</sup> remarked that he considered that the majority of the WPBC Board should have been Samoans rather than Europeans. The WPBC Principal and the Board disagreed based on the "vision" that the College was not exclusively for Samoan language education but Bible study in any of the languages of the Pacific region. In early 2008, the SMFG was invited by the WPBC Principal and Board to a dinner (at the Wesley Church, Taranaki Street, Wellington, to discuss relationships with the Samoan churches in Wellington. Again, the request from the SMFG Secretary was to pursue their "vision" of the WPBC being effectively run by SMFG.

The WPBC Board considered that to agree to this would mean WPBC potentially repeating the same mistake made by WBC in merging with BCNZ, which resulted in the compromise of their original Wellington vision, the loss of independent decision-making, and ultimately in the closure of the College. The Board members were certain that WPBC needed to be guided by the original vision. All members of the Board who attended this dinner counselled against the proposal. The Principal and the Board thus rejected it. There was no further direct interaction with this group.

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<sup>161</sup> WPBC *Academic Committee*, 2008, suggested a framework outline for a Diploma Bridging Course plan for 2009.

<sup>162</sup> Samoan Ministers Fellowship Group (SMFG) & Samoan Advisory Committee, *WPBC Board Minutes*, May 2007. 2008.

However, a Samoan Language Advisory committee was available for Samoan ministers to be involved in.<sup>163</sup> This is the model offered by WPBC to all of the Pacific language communities.

When this invitation was not taken up by a sufficient number of Samoan ministers the Samoan Advisory Committee disappeared after a year. There is still no relationship with the SMFG.

However, some Samoan churches like the Pacific Island Church (PIC) in Newtown and the PIC in Porirua strongly support the work of WPBC financially, primarily by donating money at WPBC concerts and other Pacific ways of fundraising such as the Tausala dance. Some of the students' churches also have supported WPBC events during the last ten years.

## 5. Tenth Year Celebration

At the tenth anniversary in November 26, 2016,<sup>164</sup> there was a thanksgiving service to celebrate the decade and five graduations. Longstanding members of the Bible College in Wellington spoke of their disappointment when BCNZ Wellington Centre closed. They had come to realise that it was not a final closure but the beginning of a unique institution. One spoke<sup>165</sup> of the WPBC as their child and the pleasure of watching this child growing to adulthood.<sup>166</sup> About 500 people were present at this service and a message of “joy” was preached by Chris Marshall<sup>167</sup> as all those present were invited to celebrate with WPBC and enjoy the celebration and “huge feast.”

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<sup>163</sup> Samoan Advisory Committee (2007-2008). WPBC *Board Minutes*, May 2007.

<sup>164</sup> Principal report on the *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*, 26 Nov 2016.

<sup>165</sup> Ossie Fountain. *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*; Principal, *Annual Report 1 July 2016 - 30 June 2017 to WPBC Minutes* AGM, December 2017.

<sup>166</sup> Ossie Fountain's Speech, *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*, 26 November 2016; also his *Outline History of WBC* (2016).

<sup>167</sup> Email from Professor Marshall's sermon on “Joy”, 9 November 2016; also the Principal WPBC AGM Reports, December 2017.



## **6. Conclusion**

WPBC has achieved significant things during the 2006-2016 period and has created sustainable external relationships with churches and other colleges. WPBC launched Auckland Pacific Bible College (APBC) in Papatoetoe for teaching the Bible in Samoan, and the Tuvalu Auckland Bible College (TABC) in Henderson for teaching the Bible in Tuvaluan. In addition, it has established and developed two satellite centres, one in Porirua, and another in Lower Hutt. Bible Courses have been taught in English, Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan and the Tuvaluan and Bible in Music programme is continuing. There were also support programmes such as ESOL, SSOL, SLS, and face-to-face tutorials, all of which have provided great help for students in reaching their academic and pastoral goals. However, despite all these achievements WPBC is still faced with funding issues and the need to secure solid financial sustainable stability.

## Chapter 3

### WPBC: Life and Teaching

Wellington Pacific Bible College is committed to teaching the Bible not only as an academic subject but also as a way of understanding its teachings to put them into practice. WPBC holds that one should, as the Bible puts it, “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”<sup>168</sup> This chapter focusses on the life of the College by opening with a description of its important symbols, social dynamics, and an account of its students and teachers. Second, it will examine the Christian Life Skills seminar/workshops and identify four reasons why these workshops are considered to be important and integral to WPBC’s “vision”. Third, there is a discussion of WPBC’s programmes, aims and teaching in the classrooms, key learning needs, support systems and practical work that is incorporated in the College curriculum based on the iconic outrigger canoe.

Choosing the logo<sup>169</sup> was one of the most important decisions of the College in its attempt to establish its identity and brand. The Board started work on the requirements for a logo in the early months of the College seeking a visual representation that would clearly communicate its focus and purpose. A student competition<sup>170</sup> was launched for the design of the logo and while seven fine designs were received, the Board decided to use the services of a professional designer. Emma Bevernage<sup>171</sup> from the School of Design, Massey University, designed the current logo according to the Board’s brief.<sup>172</sup> The logo displays<sup>173</sup> an open Bible with a cross in the middle, sitting on a tapa cloth, with the College motto underneath. Tapa cloths are valuable items to most Pacific Islanders, bearing a variety of distinctive patterns and styles.

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<sup>168</sup> Matthew 6:33 (NIV translation).

<sup>169</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, 5 March 2007, 8 October 2007, logo.

<sup>170</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, 5 March 2007.

<sup>171</sup> Logo designer: Emma Bevernage, School of Design, Massey University, 2008.

<sup>172</sup> WPBC *Board Minutes*, 8 October 2007.

<sup>173</sup> WPBC logo description.

The overarching aim of the College is spelled out in the motto: “To know God and to make him known.”<sup>174</sup> As Peter McKenzie elaborated in the Foreword to WPBC’s *10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine*, “... it makes me think of this, Psalm 67:1–3 and its exhortation, “Let all the nations praise God” ... “that we may know Jesus and make him known.”<sup>175</sup> This motto is written in English and one of four Pacific languages, depending on its usage, for example, on graduation certificates for specific languages. The Samoan version is: Ia iloa o Ia ma faailoa atu o Ia. The Tongan version is: Ke ‘ilo ia, pea ke fakailoa ia. The Tokelauan version: Ke iloa Ia ma fakailoa atu Ia, and, the Tuvaluan rendering is: Ke Iloa Ia Kae Ke Fai a Ia Ke Iloagina.

Flags play a role in the life of the College. Ten flags are used at important College events, such as concerts, the Life Skills seminars, commissioning and graduations ceremonies. These are the five flags of New Zealand, Western Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau and Tuvalu. Displaying these flags at large College events indicates the five languages that are already part of WPBC. The other five flags represent Pacific students in the College who study in English as their first language. They also remind the College of its goal to encourage other people of other languages to join; their flags are those of Niue, Fiji and Cook Islands. In a WPBC Magazine Foreword, Peter McKenzie wrote, “I like the way that at the commencement of a College gathering the flags<sup>176</sup> of all the Pacific nations are brought in and we acknowledge that all are coming under the sound of God’s Word.”<sup>177</sup> One goal of the College is to teach the Bible in ten languages. The Ethiopian flag was waved at 2016 graduation because three Ethiopian students were studying in the College’s Music Programme. The tenth flag is the flag of Israel. This Israeli flag is included because of the “chosen people of God’s as told in the Bible.”

Colours play a role in the life of WPBC. Yellow and black, WPBC’s colours are also Wellington’s official colours. The yellow is bright and shining. Like natural flames it brings light to things that

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<sup>174</sup> McKenzie, “Foreword”, *10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016*, 4.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ten flags are waved at WPBC events, Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

are in the dark and unclear: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”<sup>178</sup> WPBC’s t-shirts are yellow and the alumni uniform is a yellow shirt or blouse and black pants or skirt. WPBC flyers and the prospectus are printed on yellow paper, and students’ graduations sashes are also yellow.

A distinctive feature of WPBC is the energies and resources that it puts into teaching and studying in first languages. This is at the very heart of the College’s vision as reflected in the Bible’s charge to, ‘Go and make disciples of all nations’ (Matthew 28:19).<sup>179</sup> The Biblical word ‘nation’, which in Greek (*ethnos*) includes the sense of language group, is important. According to Hare, “The target of the commission is “all the Gentiles.” In most translations we find instead “all nations.” This does not correspond with the normal use of *ethnē* in the New Testament as a whole, or in Matthew. Greek-speaking Jews regularly used *ethnoi* (the plural form) as a way of speaking of non-Jewish individuals.”<sup>180</sup> With this explanation of the translation in context, the vision of WPBC using ‘language groups’ in such a diverse nation, is a large one. The aim is to “dig deeper into God’s Word<sup>181</sup> through teaching the Bible in the different languages of the nations.”<sup>182</sup> Language is at the core of the distinctive ways of teaching at WPBC. In WPBC’s curriculum documents it is articulated as, “The role of people’s languages in touching their lives and hearts and preparing them for ministry, as is mentioned in Acts chapter 2.”<sup>183</sup> Bible courses in Samoan first began in February 2002 under the auspices of the Bible College of NZ, Wellington Centre. This opportunity brought in more than 50 Samoan students who learned the Bible in their first language, giving them the ability to therefore discuss and share the Gospel in depth. Board members caught the vision of helping the Samoan students to continue their studies and as a result the Wellington Pacific Bible College was established in 2006. Tongan was added in 2009. As one of the students reported: “I am

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<sup>178</sup> Psalm 119:105 (NIV translation).

<sup>179</sup> Matthew 28:19, “Go and make disciples of all nations”.

<sup>180</sup> Hare, *Matthew. Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 333.

<sup>181</sup> Principal’s Report, *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016*, 6.

<sup>182</sup> Principal’s Report on WPBC’s Vision, *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine*, 6.

<sup>183</sup> *WPBC Curriculum Framework Draft Document*, 7: “All of us hear them speaking in our own languages about the great things that God has done!” Acts 2:11.

blessed to be in this course especially because it is taught in my mother tongue, that is, the Tongan language and by a Tongan tutor, with resources translated into the Tongan language. Therefore my learning is definitely accelerating!”<sup>184</sup> English courses were added in 2010, Tokelauan courses in 2011 and Tuvaluan courses in 2014. During the last ten years there were 106 students<sup>185</sup> whose first language is Samoan. There have been fifty-three students whose first language is English. There have been thirteen students who speak Tuvaluan fluently, ten students who speak Tokelauan fluently, and nine who speak Tongan. There were four Europeans (*Palagi*), three who speak Niuean, and two Indians, a Fijian, a Korean, a Persian, a French speaker, and four students who did not record their first language on their enrolment forms.<sup>186</sup>

Evening classes are the best time for those who are working or studying full time (the vast majority of our students). Classes offered at WPBC are on Monday evenings at the Lower Hutt Centre, Wednesday evenings at Porirua Centre, and on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in Wellington. The small centres in Porirua and Lower Hutt were established to provide opportunities for students unable to travel to Wellington. WPBC favoured face-to-face teaching because it brings Pacific people together and students are more attracted to social ways of learning and doing things together. Although the small teaching centres in Lower Hutt and Porirua provide advantages for some, many students prefer the greater social gathering in the city. Having Wellington as the main centre, however, means many students travel from Porirua, Lower Hutt, Wainuiomata, Upper Hutt, Plimmerton, and even Paraparaumu.

The College brings together Christians from various denominations, cultures and languages to experience “fellowship”. Students meet together at their coffee or tea break to have soup, buns, or biscuits provided by the College. Full assemblies are held two or three times per twelve-week term, when students and teachers come together for announcements, usually at the beginning and end of

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<sup>184</sup> Evesi Vao, “Testimonials”, former student 2012, *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016*, 24.

<sup>185</sup> *WPBC Enrolment List 2007–2017*, 1–17.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

each term. Every assembly starts with singing worship songs, students read at least one Bible passage, and a teacher will bring a devotional message, followed by prayers then supper. At the end of term assembly representatives from each class share the main lessons learned during classes and express thanks to their teachers. Important dates of Christian faith such as Easter are marked with special assemblies to reflect and focus on the occasion. WPBC has a sense of belonging, a real sense of community. The year always concludes with a meal together.

Concerts are significant cultural and social events for Pacific peoples. WPBC held fundraising concerts in 2007, 2008, 2010, and two singing competitions (2011 and 2014). On April 23, 2007, WPBC held a celebration concert to launch the commencing of classes. This concert also offered ‘spot prize’ scholarships, selected by special guests who picked names of students from a jar. There was entertainment by Pacific groups and churches, the Pioneer students from the Samoan class and their children. The Salvation Army Brass Band, Wellington South Corps, and the Ioane Brothers guitar band also took part. It was a large turnout with professional quality entertainment that raised funds for the College, reflecting the great generosity of Pacific people. The Pacific community also demonstrated the role of the College in their lives by bringing their families to support events such as concerts, Life Skills seminars, and graduations. Sausage sizzles to raise funds were also regularly held in the first five years of the College. The College’s first singing competition in 2011 was open for students, their churches and communities. A student reported that “The evening of the singing competition was a blessing. Although it was a competition, I felt the evening was much more than this. It was more a ‘family’ evening, filled with love, support and fun. It was nice to watch the College in a different light and also to meet the families of students.”<sup>187</sup> The second singing competition in 2014 was open only to the students’ classes and students’ families competing for the Principal’s Music Award. The students’ interest in the singing competitions led to a vision for a

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<sup>187</sup> WPBC Feedback from students for the singing competition, #9.

music programme being started in the College and this vision to “Sing my Word” came into being in 2015.<sup>188</sup>

Graduations, held every two years, are extremely important to WPBC as major celebrations. WPBC has held graduations in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016. Families come with colourful lei (garlands) to put on the graduating member as a sign of recognition of their accomplishment. During the graduation the families are thanked for their great support, encouragement and for allowing their graduating members to study and complete their qualifications; and all are welcomed to join in the graduation feast.

WPBC has been “blessed” by people who offered their gifts and talents to help with administration work without pay.<sup>189</sup> The late Makerita Samoa, who was a graduate of the Samoan class under BCNZ Wellington Centre, became the first administrator from 2007 until her death in August 2008. May Ioane stepped in at this time and worked in the office from 2008–2009. Lynnaire Millar took over the role of administrator in 2009 and is still working at WPBC in this capacity.<sup>190</sup>

## **1. WPBC Students and Teachers**

WPBC is an inter-denominational college. The students have come from fifty-six different churches reflecting a geographical and institutional diversity from the Wellington region. During the decade, 199 students had a church affiliation, and only nine did not.<sup>191</sup> The records show<sup>192</sup> that 99 male and 109 female students enrolled from 2007–2016.<sup>193</sup> There were 74 students between the ages of 51 and 75 years, 110 between 22 and 50 years old, and 24 students between 16 and 21.

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<sup>188</sup> WPBC *Bible in Music* brochure, 2015.

<sup>189</sup> WPBC *Principal & Chairman Reports*, 2009 and 2010 in WPBC *Minutes* AGM, 2009 and 2010.

<sup>190</sup> WPBC Singing Competition, 2011.

<sup>191</sup> WPBC *Enrolment List, 2007-2017*.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

Ninety students dropped out during these years. Research indicates that there were two main reasons for leaving, particularly in the first four years of the College (2007–2011). First, there were no relevant courses in English for New Zealand-born Samoan students while some who had enrolled in the Pacific language streams dropped out within the first two weeks of the term after realizing fluency in Samoan was assumed and required. Second, it was evident that although there were Samoan teachers scheduled for the Samoan as Second Language programme, there was not a term when a permanent teacher taught the full programme. While the College tried to be flexible and responsive to students this programme did not do so. WPBC is committed to shaping its programmes to meet their needs, especially for those who work in the church so that they would be able to use their gifts better.

In its ten years WPBC has had teachers who have been passionate about teaching the Bible, languages, and music. Well qualified, they are also “strong in faith and love for God” and have responded to “their calling”.<sup>194</sup> There have been forty-two teachers from 2007–2016<sup>195</sup> with the following qualifications: five PhDs; three Masters with Honours; twelve Masters; eight Bachelor with Honours; nine Bachelor degrees; and five with diplomas.<sup>196</sup> The English Bible teachers<sup>197</sup> have written the majority of the courses for the College, and the Principal has compiled their materials and created courses to be translated into other languages. When WPBC’s Programme Director, Rev Motion resigned in May 2008, a new curriculum was mooted<sup>198</sup> to be prepared by the

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<sup>194</sup> *WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016*, 12.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> List of teachers’ names.

<sup>197</sup> List of Teachers & Programmes: Life Skills Seminars/Workshops: Co-ordinator & Main teacher: Professor Chris Marshall. EAP/ESOL: Co-ordinator & Main Teacher: Dr Ruth Davidson-Toumu’a. English Bible: Peter McKenzie, Ron Fountain, Elaine Barnett, Petrea Medland, Br. Dr Kieran Fenn, Rev Ian Bourne, Rev Mark Moore, Dennis Fountain, Dr Dennis Gordon, Rev Rosemary Wallis, Father Dr Kevin Connors, Paul Alforque, Major Roger Horton, and Pastor Andrew Penhey. Laidlaw College Courses / WPBC Face to face Tutorials: Rev Margaret Motion, Elaine Barnett, Peter McKenzie, David Cashmore, Wayne Fraser, Rev Vic Lipski and Joanne Horner. Pacific Languages Bible Teachers: (Samoan), Rev Perema Leasi, Eseta Ioane Roach, Rev Oliver Tia’i, Roslind Faaita, Leuma Samoa, Feagiai Ioane, (Tongan) Taniela Vao, (Tokelauan) Rev Elder Tui Sopoaga, Fati Tapu, Mary Jansen Koro. (Tuvalu) Rev Ioane Peleti, Dr Esela Natano and Vione Natano. Student Learning Support: Vevesi Leilua Toilolo, Magele Seu Collins and Luse Rodgers. SSOL: Myra Tautau, Popo Theresa Washburn, and Lotofoa Tia’i. Bible in Music: Colin Daley, Major Paul Jarvis, Father Dr Kevin Connors, Sonia Green, Hayden Thompson and Solomone Ngauamo.

<sup>198</sup> *WPBC Curriculum Framework Document*, 2009.



Principal and the Academic Committee for 2009, which began by reviewing the College's existing curriculum. The first members of the Academic Committee were: Ruth Toumu'a (now Dr Toumu'a), Elaine Barnett, Rosemary Wallis, Ron Fountain, Myra Tautau and the Principal.

## 2. Teaching Curriculum Framework Design

This section will explore the WPBC curriculum framework. The College has a three-part vision for the holistic development of the student. In keeping with the WPBC's belief that every student can learn if given the right support, and its commitment to holistic and practical learning, the WPBC Curriculum <sup>199</sup> is designed to incorporate three key learning areas.<sup>200</sup>

- Biblical studies;
- Language and Study Skills, *Talanoaga* in groups;
- Practical, Ministry and Life-Skills seminars for Christian Living.

The three key learning areas govern the Curriculum Framework design which includes three strands:

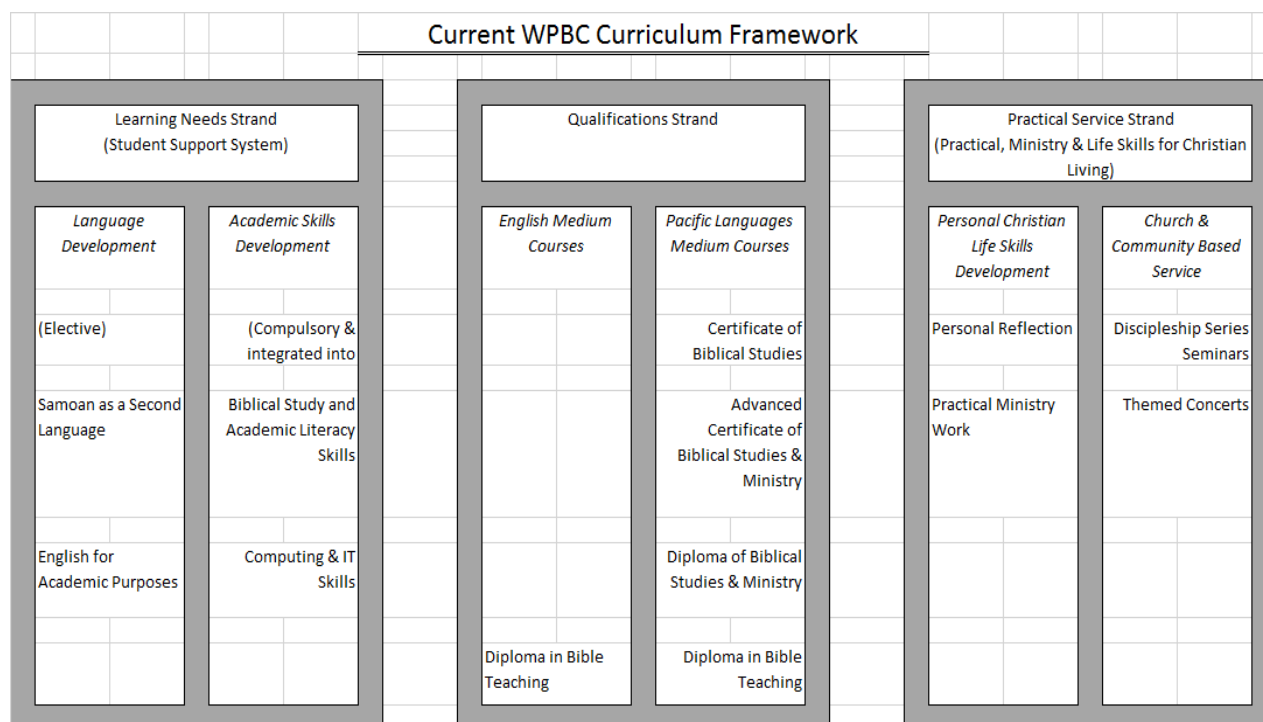
- The Learning Needs strand;
- The Qualifications strand;

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<sup>199</sup> WPBC *Curriculum Framework Document*, 2009, 8.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

- The Practical Service strand.



The three curriculum strands are designed to work together in the manner of an outrigger canoe.

The central “Qualifications strand” delivers biblical studies qualifications and corresponds metaphorically to the Pacific-wide icon – the canoe. The other strands, “Learning Needs” and “Practical Service” correspond to the two outriggers of the double outrigger canoe. The outriggers act as floats and are fixed parallel to the main canoe. They support and stabilize the canoe, enabling its successful, safe and effective use by the sailor or fisherman.

**The Outrigger Canoe Model** – how the three curriculum strands work together.



(Sourced from <http://outriggersailingcanoes.blogspot.co.nz/2007/11/double-outrigger.html>)

The programmes and courses within the two “outrigger” strands are designed to support and complement the central strand. Some parts of the “outrigger” strands stand alone, while some of their elements are integrated into the fabric of the central canoe strand to allow for its successful accomplishment (aspects of “Learning Needs”) and to provide opportunity for the practical experience and outworking of the learning in the central strand (aspects of “Practical Service”). The canoe was used in the Pacific for transportation from one island to another and was the only way of taking the Gospel through the Pacific in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Allan Tippet writes, “The use of the deep-sea canoe steadily transported missionaries from one island group to another. They spread the Gospel message beyond their own reefs right across the Pacific.”<sup>201</sup> Therefore, using the Pacific icon for students key learning areas significantly shows the College’s commitment in preparing their students to serve their churches and communities.

<sup>201</sup> Tippet, *The Deep-Sea Canoe: The Story of Third World Missionaries in the South Pacific*, ix.

One of WPBC's central and most distinctive programmes has been the series of Christian Life Skills Seminars<sup>202</sup>. These are offered at no cost to students and to the wider Pacific communities every year. One of these programmes was titled, "Creating Peaceful Families: A discipleship in daily life seminar series." These seminars are designed to address some of the pressing social and family problems facing Pacific communities in New Zealand. The topic, "Overcoming Anger and Violence" was selected in response to a survey of WPBC students at the end of 2007 in which a significant majority nominated "anger" as the first life-skills issue that they would most like to see addressed.<sup>203</sup>

*Rationale for Christian Life Skills*<sup>204</sup>

(1) To hold seminars on sensitive topics and create a safe environment as a way of promoting debate and social development.

Since WPBC was established the College has been committed to addressing some of the most pressing social and family needs of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. Given the prominent role the church still plays in many in Pacific communities, a practical way of promoting social development is through the churches. WPBC maintains that programmes integrating practical instruction with Biblical teaching and spiritual practices, where appropriate, in the Pacific languages, are more effective than those that focus only on social issues. WPBC intended to create a safe space where confronting discussions can take place and participants can tell their own stories. The seminars were facilitated by Pacific Island leaders, fluent in their Pacific language and English. Each language group discussed and reflected on the issue and brought ongoing concerns back to the speakers at the final gathering. The discussion in Samoan is called *Talanoaga*, and is intended to foster an open, free, but respectful discussion. The first seminar included groups in English,

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<sup>202</sup> For convenience, seminars will be referred to as seminars, even though some included a workshop element - (1) *Overcoming Anger and Violence* 18 November 2009; (2) *Equal to Serve* 19 July 2008; (3) *Learning to Succeed* 26 June 2010; (4), *Improving your Health* 1 December 2012; (5) *Healthy Eating* 5 October 2013 (and *Weight Loss Competition* beginning May 2013).

<sup>203</sup> WPBC *Application for Financial Assistance*, 2008, 3.

<sup>204</sup> Speakers (brochures) *Life Skills Seminars/Workshops*.

Tongan, Tokelauan, and Samoan. There were also smaller language groups including Fijian, Cook Islands, and Niuean.

(2) To address the social and family needs of Pacific people.

WPBC wanted to focus on the most pressing topics facing Pacific peoples, including its own students. The Christian Life Skills seminars were compulsory for WPBC students and they were encouraged to attend with their families, friends and church members. Students<sup>205</sup> later undertook reflective essays with many expressing their positive appreciation. DVDs of the first seminar, “Overcoming Anger and Violence” were made and sold out.<sup>206</sup>

(3) To incorporate broad perspectives on the topic.

WPBC invited other perspectives on the topics, convinced that this would enhance the discussions. For example, one of the speakers in 2009 was the police detective, Terry Fraser. He set a context for a comparative appreciation of the scale of family violence in this country by presenting statistical data on the ethnicity of offenders.<sup>207</sup> Speakers who brought various perspectives included Dr Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop and Rev Pona Solomona, a chaplain in Rimutaka prison and a member of Ministry of Justice Pacific Reference Group. Speakers included ex-prisoners, victims, and perpetrators of violence. The “Improving your Health” seminar/workshop<sup>208</sup> was addressed by Sera Tapu-Ta’ala, an accredited diabetes nurse specialist; Henry Faafili, a personal trainer; Louise Beckingsale, a community dietician for the Well Health organization; and, Dr Mary Toloa, a General Practitioner from Porirua.<sup>209</sup>

(4) To contribute to WPBC’s strategy for future recruiting.

WPBC tried to develop seminars on topics that mattered most to the students based on the yearly evaluation of students and their family needs. WPBC understands this to be a valuable opportunity

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<sup>205</sup> Fati Tapu, Reflection essay on *Wise Parenting*, 29 August 2009.

<sup>206</sup> WPBC *Overcoming Anger and Violence* DVD, 2009.

<sup>207</sup> Detective Terry Fraser presented a statistical analysis of family violence, 25 August 2009. Wise Parenting Life Skills Seminars/Workshops.

<sup>208</sup> Life Skills Seminars/Workshops on *Improving Your Health*; Lose Weight competition.

<sup>209</sup> Seminars brochures and names of speakers.

to liaise with churches and their members focused on important and shared individual, family and community concerns. The content of the seminars was integrated with the College's teaching, and courses and programmes are promoted.

The seminar topics were carefully selected from the student surveys in the attempt to ensure that they addressed real community issues. In addition to the "Overcoming Anger and Violence", seminar (which was repeated in Otahuhu Salvation Army, as have been a number of the others in Wellington), other seminars have included "Wise Parenting"; and "Equal to Serve: Men, Women and Christian Equality"<sup>210</sup> and "Learning to Succeed". "Improving your Health" began with a weight-loss competition six months before the actual session with prizes for those who lost the most. Exercise activities were arranged at WPBC venues for students, such as walking, gym, and Zumba dancing at the College during supper times. The weighing was done on Healthy Eating Day. Forty people, including students, joined the weight loss competition and all except two lost weight. The final topic, "Restorative Justice" was open only to WPBC students on November 29, 2015 in the evening at the College, as there was insufficient funding to hold it as a public event.

The seminar/workshops required funding for advertising, translations costs, equipment hire, travel expenses, honoraria for speakers and interpreters, workshop materials, refreshments and lunch for 200 people. WPBC secured supporters and sponsors for these nine Life Skills seminars and consider them a most important part of their "mission" to their students and the wider Pacific communities.

The "Overcoming Anger and Violence" seminars were funded by the Christchurch Domestic Violence Funding; Community Adult Education Funding; Wellington City Council; and, Family Violence in New Zealand. "Improving your Health" was sponsored by Cotswold Trust Board, the

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<sup>210</sup> *Creating Peaceful Families: Equal to Serve Life Skills Seminar* brochure, 26 June 2010.

New Zealand Heart Foundation, Child Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes, and the Capital and Coast<sup>211</sup> District Health Board.<sup>212</sup> There were other financial supporters of these seminars.

Verbal feedback and written evaluations for each seminar/workshop clearly indicated that students and attendees deemed them valuable<sup>213</sup>: “I learned so much about family conflicts and problems.”<sup>214</sup> “The ‘Learning to Succeed’ seminar was quite inspiring the whole day”; “I have learnt how important it is to set goals ability [sic] to achieve.”<sup>215</sup> However, the question about impact on lives is less clear although there were follow up reviews for the WPBC students who had attended. Students had the option of writing a reflection essay on the seminars, were given guidance to do this, and could gain three credits,<sup>216</sup> the only proviso being that they had attended the entire seminar. The reflection essays confirmed the value and gave some indication of impact of these seminars.<sup>217</sup>

### *Language Programmes*

The Samoan as a Second Language (SSOL) and the English as a Second Language (ESOL) were the first programmes offered when WPBC started in 2007. Readings and lessons were based on the Samoan and English Bibles. Topics covered included: identifying and learning the language alphabets (pronunciation); understanding and forming the patterns of Samoan/English sentences; and understanding the sounds and patterns of spoken languages. One of the SSOL students reported, “Now I can speak some Samoan to my grandma who is unable to speak English.”<sup>218</sup> The ESOL course introduced students to the International Phonetic Alphabet as a tool for assessing and

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<sup>211</sup> WPBC *Improving Your Health: Life Skills Seminar*, brochure, 5 October 2013.

<sup>212</sup> List of Life Skills financial supporters: Church Christian Worldwide Funding (Violence), Gedaliah Trust, Wellington City Council; Community Adult Education through Wellington High School; Cotswold Trust.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Evaluation form, *Wise Parenting Seminar #2*.

<sup>215</sup> Evaluation form, *Learning to Succeed Seminar/Workshops #6*.

<sup>216</sup> Student’s reflection essay, *Life Skills Seminars/Workshops*.

<sup>217</sup> Life Skills Seminars: Reflection essays, *Wise Parenting and Successful Families*, 19 August 2009.

<sup>218</sup> Abraham Apineru, *Testimonials: Previous Students WPBC 2007, WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016*, 24.

recording correct English pronunciation and provided strategies for improving presentation and public speaking skills.<sup>219</sup>

### *Student Learning Support*<sup>220</sup>

The Student Learning Support programme forms the first thirty minutes of every week's class. The aim is to provide students with effective strategies on how to plan and manage their times for study, and to develop skills in reading, document formatting, and constructing and writing essays using relevant readings and articles. They are taught to identify their individual strengths and areas to develop further with professional support from the tutors, "My most heartfelt gratitude goes to WPBC for offering tutorial classes in Samoan language and an English Tutorials that help students like me to cope with the workload of English assignments. They also provided qualified English tutors delivering class lessons for us Diploma students."<sup>221</sup>

### *Face-to-Face Tutorials*<sup>222</sup>

Face-to-face tutorials began when BCNZ English diplomas and degrees were taught at WPBC. The small group discussion method was used to teach the Bible. *Talanoaga* in small group discussion was also used at Student Learning Support for Samoan students taking English courses. WPBC Samoan students who undertook diplomas in English joined the face-to-face tutorials led by European (*Palagi*) tutors.<sup>223</sup> This *Talanoaga* was an opportunity to raise difficulties and issues arising in the courses, conducted in the students' first languages and were open sessions lasting half an hour. The students' essays were written in their first language. WPBC contends that this is to give students the best opportunity to express themselves and develop their learning, "The learning ... in my language is a blessing when it's understood in my own first language."<sup>224</sup>

<sup>219</sup> Feagiai Ioane, *Testimonials: Previous Students*, WPBC 2011, 24.

<sup>220</sup> Feedback on *Improving your Health* seminar; Student Learning Support (SLS) reports.

<sup>221</sup> Leuma Samoa, *Testimonial*, WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016, December 2007.

<sup>222</sup> WPBC Face to face Tutorials in English for Laidlaw College reports.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>224</sup> Faasoo Taupau, *Testimonials: Previous Students* WPBC 2010, WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016, 24.



In 2011 Samoan students who studied for a Laidlaw degree were supported by WPBC and its *Talanoaga* sessions. This group discussion began with singing worship songs then praying before sharing. Students shared details about their course in Samoan and what they understood about it, and asked questions about the topic, including review of their tutorials and ensuring that they understood the arguments in the readings or teaching resources. The *Talanoaga* coordinator allowed time to explain in the Samoan context in order to facilitate their understanding of particular points. The students report finding these sessions to be helpful, particularly as they opened up how to use debates, arguments, and critical thinking in their studies. The *Talanoaga* in Samoan enabled these Laidlaw students to extend their appreciation and thinking about topics. Using exercises and methods that matched student's experiences in dealing with everyday living helped tackle the difficulties in English courses, for those for whom it was their second language. All WPBC students in these Student Learning Support group discussions graduated with their English language National Diploma from Laidlaw College, and a small number continued on to study at Degree level.<sup>225</sup> Laidlaw College's Bachelor of Theology and the Bachelor of Ministry students receive significant support and assistance from WPBC through face-to-face tutorials in English.

### *Bible in Music*

Since 2015 the Bible in Music programme has aimed to prepare students to write songs and music based on the Bible. Students have studied music theory through Trinity College, London and have sat their examinations for Grades 1 to 4.<sup>226</sup> Students were also introduced to pitch, harmony, tonality, aural ear training, performing and creative tasks. In the second year, students were taught composition, writing melodic and rhythmic patterns and other creative endeavours. Students report having enjoyed this programme very much and of having developed their musical capabilities. According to Reinhold, one of the Bible in Music students, "Looking back the past 10 years, we

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<sup>225</sup> WPBC Graduation Ceremony list of Laidlaw College graduates, 2016, in WPBC Graduation brochure, 26 November 2016.

<sup>226</sup> *Grade 3 Music Certificate*, Trinity College, London for WPBC students in WPBC Graduation brochure, 26 November 2016.

have come a long way. We not only gained a lot of knowledge in music but also it helped strengthened our Christian faith as well. It is indeed a life changing experience being able to do a lot more in church when playing an instrument and also worshiping and praising and most important of all is being able to start writing songs utilising the word of God. Hence, the title 'Bible in Music.'<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Reinhold Tale'alo Hagedorn. *Testimonials: Current Students 2016, WPBC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine 2006-2016*, 26.

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

#### 1. Introduction: Pacific Ethnicities and Religious Affiliation in New Zealand

This chapter describes the participants and the methods that were selected and utilised in the research for this thesis. The thesis employs multiple methods to accumulate reliable data that can be productively analysed to offer an accurate and accessible portrayal of WPBC, its students, staff, Board and its work in the Wellington region. The significance of employing a number of discrete methods is that each one yields different results and emphases. That is, data and information not generated by the use of one method is discovered by the use of another. The four methods utilized were: (1) the use of textual WBC/BCNZ and WPBC archival sources and follow up interviews; (2) the written, anonymous questionnaire about aspects of WPBC and their experiences (which was given to students, staff and Board members); (3) the follow up in-depth interviews with staff, students and Board members; and, (4) the *Talanoa*<sup>228</sup> method and sessions.

As WPBC has a unique profile of Pacific students, this chapter begins with a definition of “Pacific” and provides a context for its usage in the thesis, including Pacific ethnicities and religious affiliations of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. This section provides background information on the participants in this research.

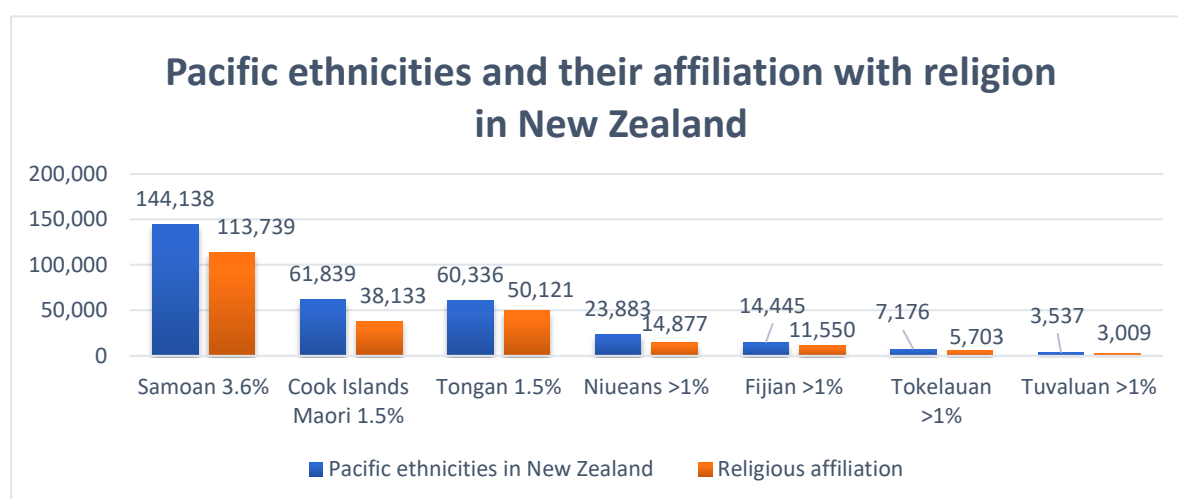
Pacific means peaceful. Ferdinand Magellan, the Portuguese explorer, referred to the ocean as “Pacífico” because after sailing through the stormy seas of Cape Horn in 1519, he came upon calm waters. By 1900 nearly all the Pacific islands were ruled by colonial powers. In the second half of the twentieth century many former colonies in the Pacific became independent states. The islands in the Pacific can be divided into three main groups: Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. The largest of these is Polynesia, stretching from Hawaii in the north to New Zealand in the south. Polynesia includes the island nations from which most of WPBC’s students are drawn: Tuvalu;

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<sup>228</sup> This term will be further discussed below.

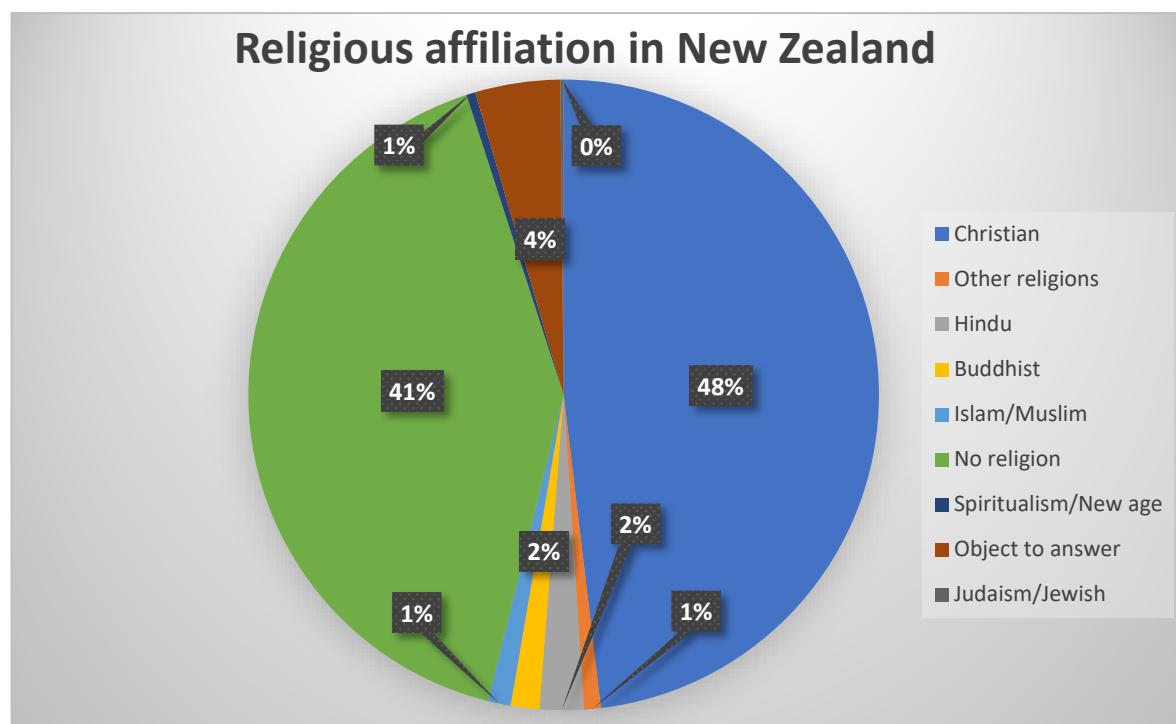
Tokelau; Samoa; and, Tonga. Many Pacific people have migrated to New Zealand and continue to do so. New Zealand at the 2013 census had 315,354 Pacific people or 6.7% of the total population. Samoans are the largest Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand. The Pacific population is made up of the ethnicities as shown in the graph below.<sup>229</sup>

Census statistics also show that the major religion of the Pacific Islands is Christianity with a total of 155,829 Christians recorded for those from the seven Polynesian Islands (Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands Maori, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau and Tuvalu). The common denominations are Roman Catholic with 55,299 members; the Combined Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Reformed churches with 45,960; Methodists with 22,950; Latter-day Saints with 6,108; and Pentecostals with 1,464. The total for Pacific Island Christians not further defined is 24,048. The number of people who said they have no religion is 47,370 and 17,997 objected to answer the Religion question.<sup>230</sup>



<sup>229</sup> NZ Census 2013, <https://stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-Census/profile-and-summary-reports/ethnic-profiles.aspx>.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.



The graph (on page 61) confirms that the largest Pacific group in New Zealand are Samoans and that they are highly religiously identified as Christian, as are all the Pacific identities, these account for the majority of the students at Wellington Pacific Bible College.

The pie chart gives the overall picture of the religions of people in New Zealand. The two graphs together help to contrast the high number of Pacific people who are Christians among the bigger picture of religious affiliation in New Zealand as a whole. The high percentage of Pacific Islanders with religious affiliation in the first chart shows that although a large proportion of New Zealanders are unaffiliated with any religion, Pacific people do not reflect the nationwide situation. This clearly is a significant factor. WPBC understands the rationale for its existence in large part is to meet this perceived need in the Pacific community.

A quotation from a Pacific research study revealed that ‘Pasifika’ is a heterogeneous term and refers to the migrants and New Zealand born Pacific peoples – mainly from Tonga, Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tuvalu and Tokelau, who are living in New Zealand.<sup>231</sup> Pasifika people are very

<sup>231</sup> Seiuli Luama Sauni, “Samoan Research Methodology: The Ula – A New Paradigm”, *Pacific-Asian Education* 23/2 (2011) 55.

connected with their faith and cultures. Four quotations about Pasifika values from some Massey University students helped the researcher to understand more about the Pacific participants in this study. (1) “For many Pasifika students spirituality, in particular the Christian faith, is a vital part of their lives and identity. How this is manifested in individual students’ lives is varied but church activities can take up a lot of their time and energies.” (2) “Reciprocity and relationships are significant as they are to all people, relationships are of the utmost importance to Pasifika students.” However, as Anne Fitisemanu (2015) points out, Pasifika people connect with others “through our hearts before we connect through our heads.” (3) “Love for Pasifika is manifested in our actions particularly in the way we are expected to put others before ourselves”; and, (4) “Pasifika societies are collective; an individual will always identify themselves within the context of their families and wider communities. This is demonstrated in the way that many Pacific students put the interests of their families before their own. Indeed, spirituality is a widely-held cross-cultural phenomenon across the Pacific, whilst its expression varies between, and within, cultures” (Toso, 2011).

## **2. Methodologies**

### *Participants*

The research participants were Samoans, Tongans, Tokelauans, Tuvaluans, Niueans, *Palagi* and Indians. These included former and current WPBC teachers and students, students who had dropped out, and Board members, a total of fifty-five participants. The intention behind including former and current students, teachers and Board members, was to obtain rich information that would allow explorations of their different perspectives on their experiences of WPBC.

Additionally, a subset of these were selected for more extensive in-depth loosely and openly structured interviews around the questionnaire questions. These included former Diploma students who had graduated and had considerable experience with WPBC ranging over a number of years

spent at the College, current students, Board members and teaching staff. These people were selected for one-on-one interviews with the expectation that their responses would enhance and deepen our understanding of their knowledge and experience of WPBC from their various perspectives and would highlight dimensions of WPBC's operations, its strengths and weaknesses, and other issues not found in the written records and questionnaire data. The current students' perspectives were also essential to compare with the former students to try to identify any patterns, changes over time, and differences. Different methods were used to help add weight to a balanced evaluation of the College and its activities and of deficiencies and strengths. The interviews explored what graduates had achieved in their communities after WPBC and how their studies did (or did not) impact on their lives and their communities. Asking graduates questions on how they understood and fulfilled WPBC's vision and asking supporters why they support WPBC generated new information for the researcher. Students reporting on how they put WPBC teachings into practice in their churches and communities highlighted new information. The perspectives provided by the four methods and the participants provided rich knowledge and insights about developments in the first decade of WPBC and revealed significant information and details.

The methods selected brought different voices to this research to contribute to a more comprehensive picture of the history of WPBC. The questionnaire, for example, had been designed to include open-ended questions to prompt thought and ensure that useful, ramified data was collected. According to Storm, "Needless to say, the purpose of mentioning these issues is not to discourage use of quantitative data. However, it is a cautionary note about the importance of questionnaire design."<sup>232</sup> It was intended that these twenty-one open-ended questions would generate sufficient data for analysis. The many perspectives provided by the four methods were to provide a balanced and comprehensive account of the past and present and to suggest possible futures of WPBC.

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<sup>232</sup> Ingrid Storm, *Researching Religion Using Quantitative Methods*, 5.

*Survey/Questionnaire*

This method was chosen to focus on experiences to add to the documentary history of WPBC. “The advantage of primary data gathering is that you can tailor-make your own survey questions, research site and sampling to suit your particular research questions.”<sup>233</sup> The aim of the survey’s anonymity was to ensure confidentiality so the participants could confidently supply answers without identification. The expectation was that allowing people to have their own voices would supplement, complement and subvert the “official” history in the first three chapters. This gap between official versions and experiences on the ground, so to speak, was considered important in the attempt to provide a comprehensive narrative that reflected the widest possible range of WPBC voices. Anonymity was also relevant and suitable when answering personal questions. The survey proved useful in gaining access to the participants’ experiences, particularly those who are fluent in English, because they responded clearly and expressed their individual perspectives about WPBC. The questionnaire was also helpful in gaining some insight into the understanding of the relationships between WPBC and the wider Pacific Island community. The survey was completed by current students, staff and Board members of the WPBC to obtain different perspectives, appreciation and understanding regarding their experiences of WPBC covering a range of issues. The survey was introduced by the Board’s student representative to all the current people of WPBC. Participants were requested to submit their surveys by, or on, December 6, 2016, which was WPBC’s graduation and tenth anniversary. This survey/questionnaire was designed to gain an insider’s view from inside a special institution.

The twenty-two surveys completed and returned account for approximately one third of the then students and staff. In assessing the surveys, some details were not fully completed, and some participants neglected to answer all twenty-one questions. The twenty-two participants consisted of ten men, three women, and nine who did not specify. Ten participants were aged 51 to 75 years, four aged from 26 to 50, one was between 16 and 25, and seven did not specify. Eight had a

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid.



university education, four had other tertiary study or training, two had secondary school education, and eight did not specify. Five participants reside in Wellington, six in Porirua, three in Lower Hutt, one in Paraparaumu; seven did not specify. Eight participants identified Samoan as a first language, four English (this included two Europeans), two used Tuvalu, one used Tongan, and seven did not specify. All twenty-two participants answered questions 1, 6, and 11 in full and all responded to the question as to whether WPBC was meeting their language needs. These questions were more fully addressed in the anonymous survey than in the interviews.

Tabulating the survey responses revealed that only participants numbered 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17 and 21 fully completed all twenty-one questions. It was interesting to note how all participants answered question (xi). While most responded to questions about the language programmes and role of language in the College's activities, in particular the learning issues of using a first language, others did not answer this question. The other ten participants partially completed some questions and left some questions unanswered, which may well have impacted on the data's overall consistency. Seven participants did not answer the Life Skills seminars questions: 17, 18; and 19. Those who attended the seminars and answered these questions were positive about this programme's usefulness to students and their families. As WPBC 's Life Skills seminars were held only once a year and the last seminar was in 2015, it is possible that participants who did not answer the seminar questions had not attended one and therefore were unable to contribute. Seven participants also did not answer question 21. This question was difficult to answer as it dealt with the administration and governance of WPBC. Despite the unanswered questions this survey generated data for the thesis that will be discussed in the next chapter.

### *Interviews*

The expectation for the fifteen one-on-one interviews was that the researcher would gain a fuller understanding of the respondents' positions in relation to different questions. The interviews

contributed depth and complexity to the responses and added to the researcher's more detailed and complex understanding of many issues. The format of the interviews allowed the interviewer to pose follow up sub-questions and pursue particular lines of enquiry in order to clarify points that were not clear, and afforded the opportunity to delve deeper into the issues relating to the twenty-one questions. In addition, the face-to-face nature of the interviewing ensured that participants understood the questions before answering when they requested that the researcher elaborate regarding the questions. Questions were asked with the aim of providing a comprehensive picture of WPBC and also a baseline for further research. Interviews also provided the opportunity for participants to relate frank and personal stories and reports.

Fifteen one-on-one interviews were conducted with eight women and seven men. The interviews with a Niuean woman, an Indian woman, two Tongan men, two European male teachers, two European women, four Samoan men and four Samoan women generated rich and varied perspectives. Participants who were selected included age, ethnicity, language, and gender differences; they were contacted first by phone and when they agreed, a letter was sent out with the questionnaire together with the consent form. Some interviews went over an hour but most were approximately an hour, and all interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews were conducted in English, with the exception of an older Samoan participant. The experiences of WPBC by different people who entered the college in different years and at different ages created a broad view. The importance of the answers about their different locations and transport arrangements highlighted the issues and importance of their travelling to study at WPBC.

The students who had dropped-out were interviewed to explore the experiences of those who chose not to continue at WPBC, the main factors in their leaving, and other concerns. These four all reported significant personal events behind their decision. One was too ill to continue; a second had a motor car accident; the third lost their job; and, the last left following the passing away of a close

relative. Interviewing of the teachers, past and current, especially the European teachers led to interesting insights about their Pacific students learning in relation to their languages and cultures. Thirteen participants answered question 21(a), that is, everyone except two interviewees. The brief responses to Question 21 indicated that for many their WPBC experience did not extend to views on WPBC's overall structure and governance. The questions on Programme and Courses and Teaching Approaches were the most fulsomely addressed. Eleven participants answered all 21 questions with full accounts. Questions 17, 18, and 19 about the Life Skills seminars were answered by eleven interviewees with the remaining four having not attended this programme. Four participants attended the *Overcoming Anger* seminars and provided helpful information, as did the three who attended the *Improving your Health* seminar and weight loss competition. Three had attended the *Wise Parenting* seminars, and three also had attended *Learning to Succeed*, and one talked about the *Restorative Justice* seminar. The four European participants all provided details of their experiences of WPBC and its work. Through the interviews they provided valuable cultural insights from a non-Pacific perspective. One European woman shared her emotions and experiences as one of the participants who dropped out after one term because of illness. Participant number 10 was also a European student who dropped out from her Samoan as Second Language class and she didn't answer questions 10, 13, 17, 18, 19, because she left the College due to the death of her close relative. Two of the four interviewed who dropped out were European students.

One-on-one interviews enabled the researcher to discuss participants' concerns, experiences and issues. The two participants who did not answer most of the questions were two European students: one undertook the English Bible programme, and one the Samoan as second Language programme. Interviewee #4 reported that she was now a leader in her church and that this had arisen out of her studies and experiences at WPBC. In interviewing participants numbered 1, 3, 4, 9, 14, and 15, all confirmed that WPBC had impacted on their Pacific churches and communities. Many of the diploma graduates had subsequently been ordained in their churches as pastors, some worked as lay

pastors or lay preachers, others had become cell group leaders or leaders of prayer ministry or pastoral care ministry, and a number had become Bible teachers at WPBC. These graduates expressed themselves more fully on questions 4 and 9. Apart from the three Life Skills seminar questions and the overall governance questions, the interview participants provided information pertaining to all 21 questions.

### *Talanoa*

The intention of the *Talanoa* method was to find patterns in responses as repetitions were common in group discussions which were vital for uncovering the history of WPBC. *Talanoa* brought about the opportunity to share experiences together when answering important questions such as the significance of WPBC to the Pacific Island churches and wider communities, and also participants' expectations for WPBC in the future. *Talanoa* binds together views especially when the majority embraces and agrees upon these views. Patterns can be easily identified in *Talanoa* discussions through verbal and non-verbal affirmations, such as body language. The participants of the five *Talanoa* sessions were selected from different Pacific students who were fluent in their first language and also in English. This bilingual element was important for them to convey ideas from their own language perspective when there were gaps in English.

The meaning of the word *Talanoa* according to Timote M. Vaoleti is as follows: “the word *Tala* means to inform, tell, relate and command, as well as to ask or apply. *Noa* means common, old, of no value, without thought, without exertion, as well as dumb (unable to speak), and ‘talking about nothing in particular)’”.<sup>234</sup> Vaoleti has identified the two parts of the word and clearly described the meaning of each part. However, the *Samoan Dictionary* offers a second meaning of *Noa* which was not considered above. For the purpose of this thesis, the second meaning of *Noa* is important, because of its connection to the concept of *Talanoaga*, which is based on this second meaning of

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<sup>234</sup> Vaoleti, Timote, M., “*Talanoa* Research Methodology: A Developing Position on Pacific Research”, *Waikato Journal of Education* 12 (2006) 23.

the word *Talanoa* given in Milner's *Samoan Dictionary*:<sup>235</sup> *Noa* is a verb which means to “tie”, or “bind”<sup>236</sup>, “the cultural synthesising suggested here implies the bringing together, as in the act of weaving together, as suggested by Tamasese et al., in their *Faafaletui*, the various strands of ‘talk’ that emerge from the *Talanoa* session.”<sup>237</sup> The word *Noaga* means to make it tighter which expresses the seriousness of a *Talanoaga*, as a formal or informal meeting or discussion, bringing their stories together, or binding together, or weaving together).

*Talanoaga* is undertaken seriously between two people or in a group. A serious or a formal *Talanoaga* is more like a *Faafaletui*, “For researchers applying the *Faafaletui* as a research method, it makes most sense in the Samoan context, culturally speaking, to do this when more formal discussion is favoured.”<sup>238</sup> This seriousness in a *Talanoaga* involves emotions and empathy, where Samoans (in this case) bring mind, soul and heart to the discussion, generating new knowledge and helping to bring new insights and perspectives.

Five *Talanoa* sessions were conducted at the College, three in English and two in Samoan. These sessions were all voice-recorded and transcribed. The first session consisted of four current and former students and lasted forty minutes. Although participants had read all 21 questions this was not the focus in the *Talanoa* session, because at least formally *Talanoa* has no agenda. However, a topic was given: “What is the significance of WPBC to you and PI people/church/communities and what are your hopes for WPBC in the future?” There were three Samoan women and one Tongan man for the first *Talanoa*. They were grouped together because they knew each other, and all work in the same company, which helped make the preliminaries easy and the *Talanoa* easy going. This group did the session in English, not their first languages. The second *Talanoa* session was the Tuvaluan class consisting of six people, all with the same first language. Three Tuvaluan students

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<sup>235</sup> Milner, *Samoan Dictionary*. *Samoan-English / English-Samoan*, 232.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid. 157.

<sup>237</sup> Suaalii-Sauni, Tamasese and Saunimaa Ma Fulu-Aiolupotea, “Decolonising Pacific Research, Building Pacific Research Communities and Developing Pacific Research Tools: The Case of the *Talanoa* and the *Faafaletui* in Samoa”, *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 55/3 (2014) 334.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. 335.

were fluent English speakers while the other three less so. They chose to *Talanoa* in English for forty minutes. The Tuvaluan session consisted of a teacher with five students. English was used so that the researcher could understand them better. The third *Talanoa* session consisted of three Tokelauan people speaking Tokelauan fluently. Their *Talanoa* lasted an hour at the College and each related their own personal stories of their time at WPBC and how this had been applied in their churches. The fourth *Talanoa* session was with a married Samoan couple. Both had studied at WPBC and graduated with a Certificate of Biblical Studies in Samoan. The husband also studied at WPBC for a Diploma of Bible Teachers for Pacific Nations in English. The fifth *Talanoa* session focused on the College's future. *Talanoa* sessions were significant for this thesis because they have a particular cultural salience and familiarity for the participants who comfortably opened up to tell their stories in mutually supportive ways but always conveying the strong impression of honesty and authenticity.

The women participants of the fifth *Talanoa* are regular supporters of WPBC. These three women had already had a Tongan *Talanoa* session (Session #1). This was their second time together but with a different focus and they were clearly comfortable with each other, and in terms of language they made encouraging, challenging and meaningful contributions that conveyed their experiences and generated interesting perspectives. Their *Talanoa* focused on looking at the role of WPBC in the Pacific churches and communities. Also, the understanding that *Talanoa* as having no fixed, artificial or arbitrary boundaries fostered the range and openness of the group discussions.<sup>239</sup>

This thesis included *Talanoa* methodology and sessions because it was considered culturally appropriate for Pacific people. These creative and free-flowing sessions allowed the participants to express their views and to have these safely challenged or confirmed, prodded and elaborated. The positions were tested, questioned and confirmed by the participants and came not to be just one person's view but a view owned by the group: "The concept of meaningful engagement was

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<sup>239</sup> Mo'ale 'Otunuku, "How Can *Talanoa* Be Used Effectively as an Indigenous Research Methodology with Tongan People?" *Pacific-Asian Education* 23/2 (2011) 51.

observed when the participants knew the researcher, not only as a researcher and a student, but also by connecting on a personal level.”<sup>240</sup> “Meaningful engagement with the participants was an integral part of the research which include respecting the participants as individuals as well as social group.”<sup>241</sup>

*Talanoa* can be a useful tool for researching Pacific social culture and proved to be so in contributing to knowledge about WPBC.<sup>242</sup> “It is within the cultural milieu of *Talanoa* that knowledge and emotions are shared and new knowledge is generated.”<sup>243</sup> *Talanoa* is a reliable method to obtain opinions and views from Pacific people: “*Talanoa* research methodology is ‘ecological’, oral and interactive’, it is personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and inspirations. This researcher is aware that the small numbers raise methodological concerns for mainstream social science researchers: “The number of participants in a focus group is small, so critique of such intensive, qualitative data collection is its weak basis for generalisations and for detection of differences at the group level, however, regardless of the weakened ability to generalise from the results, a focus group has real strengths.”<sup>244</sup> In this research *Talanoa* is understood as a “focus group”<sup>245</sup> in the above sense, and that the “results” from the *Talanoa* sessions were worthwhile and provided insights and perspectives that were not evident from the interviews or questionnaires, or the textual research.<sup>246</sup> According to Eteuati, “The *Talanoa* method is widely used where researcher and participants share not only their time and interest, but

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid. 48.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. 51.

<sup>242</sup> Trisia Farrelly and Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, “*Talanoa as Empathic Apprenticeship*”, *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 55/3 (2014) 319-330.

<sup>243</sup> Mo’ale ‘Otunuku, 48.

<sup>244</sup> Vaiioleti, Timote, M., “*Talanoa Research Methodology: A Developing Position on Pacific Research*”, *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12 (2006): 45.

<sup>245</sup> Tafili Utumapu-Mcbride, Epenesa Esera, Siaoloa Fa’atafao Toia, Lina Tone-Schuster, Funeali’i Lumäava So’oaemalelagi, “*Saili Mo Le Lumana’i: Research on Samoan Students’ Learning Perspectives and the Impact on Their Achievement*”, *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 4/1 (2008) 149–172.

<sup>246</sup> Seiuli Luama Sauni, “*Samoan research methodology: The Ula – A New Paradigm*”. *Pacific-Asian Education* 23/2 (2011) 60.

also their emotions. This has to be done into cultural appropriate procedures for it to be effective.”<sup>247</sup>

### *Textual Sources*

The textual sources were documents from WBC and BCNZ Wellington Centre from 1989–2003 now held at library archives of BCNZ Auckland (now Laidlaw College). The archives contained the WBC *Statement of Faith* and provided historical framework and evidence for the issues between the director and a number of the WBC teachers, as narrated in Chapter 1. This in turn provided the background for WPBC’s own *Statement of Faith* for teachers. Other textual sources included enrolment information, students’ details, their courses, and their qualifications (whether achieved or not). Archival records also include Board reports and minutes, staff information, WBC programs (Certificate and Diploma of Biblical Studies, Diploma of Christian Studies,) and the securing of WBC provision and preparation to provide the Bachelor of Divinity from Melbourne College of Divinity. This proved to be the precursor to WPBC’s encouragement of preparation for higher qualifications for their students that led to WPBC’s partnership agreement with Laidlaw College for degree courses. Other sources consulted were articles, newsletters, other documents giving details of the WBC-BCNZ merger in 1994 and other major developments.<sup>248</sup> Available WPBC documents from 2006 to 2016 were examined.

Documentary sources also provided details about fund-raising, donations, student fees, costs, and other financial information, and also the debates over finances and the attempts to ensure financial stability. Sources included legal, contractual and other documents, including constitutions, charitable registrations, and extensive details about the library and the travails in finding it a home. Other documented topics were those detailing the establishment of the Auckland Pacific Bible

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<sup>247</sup> Niusila Faamanatu-Eteuati. “Se’i tatou ‘alega: Samoan Educators’ Insights into Inclusive Education Development.” *Pacific-Asian Education* 23/2 (2011) 65–77, 71.

<sup>248</sup> *With Christ: Dr Clyde Vautier.*



College in Papatoetoe<sup>249</sup> and the Tuvalu Auckland Bible College<sup>250</sup> in Henderson.<sup>251</sup> The researcher also consulted flyers<sup>252</sup>, promotional materials, teaching schedules and resources and College magazine<sup>253</sup> organisational charts and diagrams, and photographs and graduation flyers.<sup>254</sup> In addition, Board members, past principals, directors and College officials and staff were consulted over specific issues.

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<sup>249</sup> Auckland Pacific Bible College was launched at Papatoetoe Emanuel Christian Ministries, 4<sup>h</sup> August 2011 by the WPBC, to teach Bible programmes to Samoan people in Auckland.

<sup>250</sup> Tuvalu Auckland Bible College was launched at Henderson Tuvalu Christian Church, 5 September 2015, to teach Bible programmes to Tuvalu people in Auckland.

<sup>251</sup> WPBC *Programmes* brochures, 2007-2016

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> WPBC *10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine*, 2006-2016, 24 November 2016.

<sup>254</sup> WPBC *Graduation brochure*, 26 November 2016.

## Chapter 5

### Research Results

#### 1. Introduction

The research results offer a comprehensive picture of WPBC at the end of its first ten years of operation. This chapter reports on the results from the questionnaire (21 questions) as the framework for the application of three different methodological approaches (survey, in-depth interviews, and *Talanoa* sessions), and involved fifty-five WPBC participants (students, past and present; teachers; and, Board members). A total of 22 participants took part in the survey, 15 people were interviewed, and 18 participated in the *Talanoa* sessions. This chapter will report the results of each of these three approaches then analyse them.

The 55 participants included 22 current students (40%), 11 graduates (20%), 11 teachers (20%), 3 Board members (5%), and 7 students who dropped out (15%). The analysis proceeds focusing on gender, age, educational attainment level, location and language. This will be followed by an analysis of the results. A number of themes highlighted in these results are then subjected to further analysis and commentary.

#### 2. Survey

Seven survey participants did not provide their details. The remaining responses included ten men and five women. Six participants live in Porirua, five live in Wellington, three live in the Hutt Valley, and one in Paraparaumu. There were ten participants from 51 to 75 years old, four 26 to 50 years, and one from the 16- to 25-year band. Eight participants had a university education, four had other tertiary education and three participants had secondary level as their highest form of education. Eight participants gave Samoan as a first language, four had English, two had Tuvaluan, and one participant gave Tongan as their first language.

What follows are indicative edited responses from the survey.

**Q.1: Why did you study with/teach at/support WPBC? And also, if you did not complete your course, please state why?**

“I studied because I needed to have spiritual feeding; I felt I was getting into a place of spiritual dryness and was led to the College”; “Because I want to learn more about music theory and develop more skills for the piano”; “It is local to my home. It is also very affordable. I have always enjoyed the teaching environment. I relate to the teachers and topics taught”; “I regarded it as vital work-encouraging training and developing leadership in a neglected community.”

**Q.2 What do you believe that WPBC is good at? Explain.**

“WPBC I believe excels at being diverse in languages especially my native Samoan language. I believe that because of this I am able to understand the teachings and the message delivered”; “The curriculum covers a wide range of Bible courses and provides an environment conducive to individual and family learning”; “Face-to-face as opposed to e-learning provided in different languages does cater for students.”

**Q.3: What is the significance in your experience and your considered opinion of the value of WPBC to the wider Pacific communities and churches?**

“In my own experience the significance of WPBC in studying and understanding the Holy Bible is of utmost value. It is of great significance to the wider Pacific communities and churches”; “It helped me with increasing my depth of knowledge of the Bible and also gave me tools to use and interpret to the people. This opportunity and especially in your own mother tongue with teaching in PI community in developing good teachers, preachers and pastors”; “WPBC is the wider broad experience and consideration value in the Pacific communities and churches especially in Samoan churches to speak and get more confident in the Word of God, especially to work together in the leadership team in churches.”

**Q.4: What has happened in your ministry/church/life/as a result of WPBC?**

“I am confident teaching in the Sunday school, youth groups and leading services.”

**Q.5: Why do you consider that WPBC has created the links that it has, and are there others that might be developed?**

“It creates a link where I have a foot into biblical study which opens my eyes into continuing into further education and hopefully doing a degree in connection with the Laidlaw.”

**Q.6: How important is the College to you, and why?**

“The College has increased my confidence and my spiritual life”.

**Q.7: How important was face-to-face learning in the online context? Why?**

“Very important. Access to computer or even the understanding of how to use one limits others learning and supporting each other as a community. Many have only learning in this way”; “Face to face learning is always important as there is the social contact and allows sharing and discussing matters with colleagues. This builds good relationships with teachers and colleagues”; “It is important because it enables me to hear, as well as experience the emotion of the person teaching. This stimulates my spiritual learning and increases my eagerness to learn”.

**Q.8: What reasons explain the members’ support of the WPBC and how do you think they feel about it?**

“I believe it is backed by Scriptures to teach others also”; “There are many members whom I’ve noted that rarely miss any classes. It’s easy to see that they are committed to their studies”; “I think they are given their great full support. WPBC is great opportunity to share their knowledge and their visions.”

**Q.9: Do you think that graduates are fulfilling the vision of WPBC and if so how?**

“Absolutely they are because they take part in every duty in their churches and preach the Word of God and lead prayer meetings. Helping a lot to children to achieve their goals spiritually and physically”; “Yes. Many I know are now lay preachers in their local churches. Some teach within

the College and we have an Alumni which provides Prison ministry”; “I would love to think that the graduates are fulfilling the vision of WPBC”.

**Q.10: What is your understanding of the role that WPBC plays in Pacific churches and communities?**

“They act and serve as a facility catering to build and strengthen and encourage Pacific people’s spiritual relationship with God. Pacific people gain all sorts of knowledge from the College and knowledge on the origins of Jesus and the Word”; “My understanding of the role that WPBC plays in the Pacific churches and communities is vital for the strengthening of their language. It brings communities together when sharing the Word of God”; “WPBC creates the pathway for those individuals who want to take biblical studies to another level”; “Encourages churches to provide more stimulating teaching and greater attention to the Bible”.

**Q.11: Do WPBC programmes meet the language needs, and how?**

“Definitely. The availability of programmes in different languages is important. It also caters for people of different levels of education”; “Yes, Samoan is my first language that’s why I enjoyed to join WPBC because courses were doing in Samoan, and other Pacific languages, like Tuvalu, and Tokelauan, it makes it more interesting”; “A point would be that more language classes were needed as there are now provision in the Hutt, Porirua and Auckland”.

**Q.12: Were the assignments set according to the needs of Pacific students? Elaborate.**

“They are set with instructions, timeframes and assignment can be translated from English to help the student. Students are also encouraged to seek help as required”; “The assignments were set to test whether the students really understood the lessons. Fortunately, most students are able to complete their assignments”; “Yes, there outline and specific topics for each lesson explained in clear and simple to understand ways in your own language.”

**Q.13: What are the aims of the WPBC and do you think that these are being met? Why (or why not)?**

“The motto spells out the aims of the College which are being met, essential among the Pacific communities in Wellington and also other centres of New Zealand”; “The College has inspired and trained Pacific students to become leaders of churches, youth and families, through the teaching of the College. There are many leaders now amongst church communities as a result of WPBC”.

**Q.14: What do you regard as the key milestones in WPBC’s development?**

“Additional language classes, additional music classes, 10 years of ministry and Laidlaw College graduates”; “The commencement of classes in a Pacific language and the reaching out to other Pacific language groups, e.g. Tokelau and Tuvalu, and the reaching out to Auckland which is a major Pacific centre”; “Spreading to Auckland – Samoan, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan and it still going after ten years”; “Delivering the resources in the native language”.

**Q.15: How different is WPBC compared to other Bible Colleges you know? Why?**

“WPBC is different, because for me the College is straight forward in their teachings, also it comes straight from the Bible not outside and they brought forth the Word”; “WPBC continues to use face to face teaching while others increasingly use electronic communication and teaching”.

**Q.16: Why do students travel to Wellington city when there are alternative Bible Colleges and online studies?**

“There are many benefits of studying at WPBC over alternative Bible Colleges, the quality of teaching and the opportunity to interact with teachers and other students in a face-to-face environment”; “I made a commitment to WPBC and I intend to follow it until completion. I didn’t like online”; “To me this is the best way, I can’t study online at home because is too much distraction”.

**Q.17: Were WPBC Life Skills seminars helpful to you and why?**

“Very helpful in bringing a different perspective to the Word and with it different challenges. Also, different speakers sharing their experiences and relating closely to a Pacific context”; “Yes, very helpful. The given discussions and panels gave insight into thinking of Pacific people on topics

important to them e.g. discipline of children, food, and learning experiences”; “They were useful and important. A great understanding of Life Skills would promote understanding of healthy life style choices”; “Very helpful, a shame the funds have been reduced or ceased- an opportunity for student and families, communities to share and to witness quality Biblical based teaching”.

**Q.18: What was the most valuable aspect of the Life Skills workshops?**

“Mixing with others in the group work. All different ages, genders, ethnic backgrounds, and learning from each other”; “The most valuable aspect is teaching what we are learning biblically and how much these teachings are related to what we do in life”; “Grouping people in small groups, helped put ideas on paper and working in unity and harmony with one another”.

**Q.19: Comment on the Bible teaching for WPBC Life Skills seminars. Does your Church provide Biblical teaching for these types of topics? Please elaborate.**

“Striking a balance between health and well-being and spiritual well-being are also encouraged in my church. Sermons on Sundays and other times bring these topics up. WPBC Life Skills seminars have provided the platform upon which we promoted it to our church”; “Bible teaching is usually led by the main speaker. The teachings I found informative, convincing and the speakers definitely knew their subjects and were well prepared. My church generally does not provide Bible teaching outside of the Sunday message”.

**Q.20: What are your hopes for WPBC in the future?**

“To be accredited as other colleges and that graduates will return to teach and prepare others (if it is their calling, in a college catering to all Pacific ethnic groups to learn the Word through their own mother tongues”; “It is my sincere hope that WPBC will continue to flourish for God’s purpose for many more years to come. I would love to see WPBC being accredited with NZQA”; “My hopes for WPBC in the future to build up and grow in many languages according to God’s Will and purpose”.

**Q.21: Please make further comments you wish on the following:**

**(a) Overall structure and governance**

“Very well structured. The Board is represent [sic] of the all ethnic groups within the College and there are representatives from Alumni, an external representative for financial activity, and also a separate group for the teaching faculty”; “A more active Academic Committee clearly into Pacific needs. Better finance, resources are always a problem. Pacific people have to work very hard at fund raising”.

**(b) Programme and Courses**

“Courses are very interesting and vary accordingly. Very challenging”; “Appropriate to the level taught”; “I would love to see WPBC develop Samoan courses to cover all books of the Bible”; “I would like to see the WPBC to link courses to Victoria University”.

**(c) Teaching Approaches**

“Good visual and practical and for me all the teachers I have had are passionate in the way they teach and it captures my attention and makes me just as excited and passionate”; “We had a helpful teachers’ day recently. More training days especially with greater Pacific focus would help”; “Perhaps up-skill teachers and look at ways to develop teachers”; “Lack resources, e.g. certain books like commentaries on various books, such as the prophets.”

**(d) Management and Administration**

“The current management set up is good, but we need more money to employ an administration assistant to the principal”; “It is ok, but student fees should be managing well”.

**(e) Mission and Practical Outreach**

“Mission assigned by the Board as well as the practical outreach where other students from the College become leaders and pastors of churches that mostly the Pacific people we are belong to”; “The College could develop a course on Word mission in the Pacific and encourage mission outreach in the Pacific. We have tended to neglect Word Mission”.



### 3. Interviews

There were fifteen interview participants, seven men and eight women. Thirteen participants were from 51 to 75 years of age, and two between 26 and 50. Three had a university education, nine had other tertiary education, two participants had secondary level, and one primary school level as their highest form of education. Samoan was the first language of eight participants, English of four, one Tongan, one Niuean, and one participant had an Indian language as their mother tongue. Nine participants live in Wellington, four live in the Hutt Valley, and two were from Porirua.

The following are indicative edited responses from the interviews:

**Q.1.** “I have always had this longing to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, to know Him as true and real to me. I tentatively expressed my interest to study and was hugely encouraged. I was committed right there and then”; “Because I was invited to teach and I love teaching the subject matter, e.g. Genesis and Hebrew biblical books”; “I was influenced by one of our Sunday school teachers at church with so much knowledge of the Bible she had, so I came to the BCNZ in 2003 to study the Bible in Samoan. I was a pioneer student for WPBC and I am still doing my Bachelor degree at Laidlaw through WPBC face-to-face tutorials.”

**Q.2.** “WPBC is good at a variety of things but what stands out its nurturing. All who come seriously seeking God regardless of race, status Bible knowledge (or lack of it) are welcome and accepted. ... We were blessed with teachers with discernment of our individual’s strengths and weaknesses. The teachers went out of their way to do or provide whatever is needed to make our learning a joy. And that same love and joy is evident in the whole College.” “Recruiting teachers and students and inspiring a passion for learning about the Bible.”

**Q.3.** “The value of WPBC in the Pacific communities and churches I need only to look at lives, fruit bearing lives of some amazing students/graduates who truly demonstrates the vision of WPBC.” “While I cannot comment on the impact at the wider level of church and community, I have confidence that many of the students in ministry would have an appreciation of the depth to

the Word of God and a sound understanding of exegesis methodology.” “WPBC educates Pasifika students to be more competent students of Scripture and more discerning concerning competing viewpoints – plus to be more effective Christians in community.”

**Q.4.** “In my own life and ministry as a result of WPBC, my life was never the same again! I serve God in my church as part of the pastoral and prayer team and lead a women’s bible study group that meets weekly.” “Very important to me as God called me to come to WPBC because I would take over our church when our minister was sick. WPBC prepared me for this work and I was ready and confident in doing it.” “I use the material that I teach at WPBC as the basis of sermon material at church. I also benefit personally from interacting with Pasifika.”

**Q.5.** “I believe the links facilitate the spread of teaching opportunities for WPBC and help WPBC improve the quality of its teaching and courses.” “It has trained disciples of Jesus and developed Pacific leadership.” “It’s about the vision, so follow it and will create good links.” “I like the range of teachers at WPBC, the ecumenical and scholarly flavour, the range of students.”

**Q.6.** “The College is very important to me because of what it is. What it represents, its goals and its purpose. WPBC is very encouraging even to people who couldn’t finish, they are encouraged to come back to study.” “It’s huge for me. The salvation I found in the understanding of the Bible. I always feel the Holy Spirit when we studied and I miss the College.” “Very important, not just for me, but for the generation to come as it keeps our language alive.” “WPBC helps me to stay motivated in improving my own knowledge of Scripture through in-depth study of scholarly sources and up to date publications.”

**Q.7.** “I am a firm believer in face to face. The personal interaction with students is vital. The love for the Word of God is contagious that can be only partially imparted in on-line teaching and learning.” “I did online courses at Laidlaw and failed. The motivation was not there. Missing the interaction, not feeling the Holy Spirit. It is lonely.” “It so valuable in small classes, or one on one,

and there's personal help." "Face to face is very important, but I like online learning. It's handy to do a paper from home."

**Q.8.** "Because they saw the fruits of the College, it changes people's lives. I feel WPBC must be supported, many pastors had been trained by the College." "They want the Word of God to stay alive. The teachers feel that the Word to spread, the more they heard about the Word, people spread it too." "Because WPBC is unique, bringing many languages together to study God's Word." "It's a very first Bible College for Pacific people, and probably people want to support it." "Because WPBC is doing a lot of good work for PI communities. Funds are hard to get. I felt good supporting WPBC because they give up their time to do good. I see good work in most teachers are voluntary and work behind the scene."

**Q.9.** "I'm speaking as a WPBC graduate, and yes, I am fulfilling WPBC vision by teaching and preaching God's Word in my Samoan church. WPBC's motto is to know Jesus and make Him known. I evangelize on the street every Saturday proclaiming the kingdom of God to people." "Yes, by teaching and preaching God's Word. It is good to graduate and have a big celebration but we all have to proclaim Jesus." "Yes, my church has been blessed because of me and what I learned from WPBC." "Some of the graduates use the materials in their own ministries. Jesus is the focal point of the classes and it shows."

**Q.10.** "The role that WPBC plays in Pacific churches and communities is what our Lord Jesus has called us to do Matthew 28:19." "Equipping and building stronger communities of faith. Take ownership and take responsibility and growing in the Word." "WPBC up-skills students and empowers them, making them more effective apologists, and ambassadors for Christ." "Through training leaders and performing their work in churches and open up the sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to communities and other individuals."

**Q.11.** "Yes, WPBC programmes meet the language needs. The College has teachers from different island nations who provide for and meet the needs of their fellow national students to enable them

to understand God's Word and grow deeper in their faith and Christian lives and share the Gospel confidently to their families and communities." "I was fortunate to have with me a close friend, fluent in Samoan who often helped me as I spoke only English." "I was grateful for the English course. We are not left out as PIs. WPBC always welcomes everyone."

**Q.12.** "Yes. The assignments were set according to the needs of the students, e.g. we always do oral presentations or preaching. Pacific people are more oral and practical. Doing these assignments helped me with my sermons and preaching in my church." "Well-weighted assignments, not too much to handle. Due to my presentations, I am very comfortable with my sermons at my church now. Standing up a lot to speak in front of a small group in WPBC classes gave me confidence." "Course outlines were easy to read and understand. Not just for PI but also for Europeans. I'm European but it was easy to read the Samoan and understand." "Yes, preaching is OK, but I struggle with essays."

**Q.13.** "Yes, the aims of WPBC have been met, and there are many WPBC graduates who are now leaders, teachers, ministers, lay preachers, lay pastors for the Word of God." "Clearly the name of the institute gives central aim, both understanding the Word of God and putting it into practice. A variety of active involvement of students in the welfare of the wider community were a significant part of the agenda of WPBC."

**Q.14.** "The key milestone in WPBC's development are the many students who studied and graduated to serve God in various ministries nationwide and overseas. Other programmes launched and running in Auckland, Hutt Valley and Porirua. The music programme with its new music room and all the instruments, amazing. Praise God!" "Key milestones: courses for the wider community. The tenth anniversary celebrations." "WPBC is coming up for 10 years. There have been many graduates over this period, and the graduation ceremonies have been celebratory and affirming."

**Q.15.** "The difference between Laidlaw College and WPBC is huge. WPBC is very cheap to give more opportunities to students to study in their own first language and own culture. WPBC offered

face-to-face tutorials for helping online students. WPBC is not about money, but is about helping their students succeed. WPBC offered what PI people are looking for.” “Its uniqueness is in providing for the needs of Pasifika students.” “The difference between WPBC and other Bible Colleges is that it’s in Wellington city.”

**Q.16.** “Because different teaching that WPBC offered for Pacific needs and what they are looking for.” “I think WPBC has a real community feel. A good base and enough structure. People feel safe and the need of face to face.” “I suspect many appreciate face to face studies. Also being a Pacific Islander is an asset; it is your identity you share with others and is part of the ethos of the College.” “It’s a very unique College, it’s one of a kind.”

**Q.17.** “Very helpful e.g. ‘Overcoming Anger’ and ‘Violence Life Skills’ seminar. The Bible teaching helped with my anger and opened my eyes to more Bible verses about anger.” “The WPBC Life Skills seminars were very helpful and taught me how to eat healthily and to live longer to serve God.” “Biblical, valuable, and informative.”

**Q.18.** “The Bible teaching and the good things at the workshop because it all discussed in my own language.” “Most valuable aspect of the Life Skills workshop was the Bible teaching, e.g. that our bodies are the temple where God lives. So is vital that we look after our bodies by eating healthily.” “Discussing the topic in small groups in my own language.”

**Q.19.** “No, no one is able to teach Life Skills at my church.” “My church does not provide life skills seminars.” “Teaching me to be healthier.”

**Q.20.** “Get NZQA and higher qualifications. I have been growing up in a Christian family – they were well-known for their love for God and people. I want to be confident to help people come to believe in God.” “Grow larger and bring degree qualifications. Do NZQA.” “Pray that WPBC grows solid Christians who able to touch their own people.” “I’d like to see WPBC continue and be independently funded.” “To be a well-known College, to win souls for Jesus.”

**Q.21 (a).** “It’s good that WPBC also includes non-Pacific people.” “While I value highly the driving force and vision of the principal, every institution requires a solid foundation. The vision and energy of St Paul was foundational; he was the missionary but then elders and servants had to keep the operation going. The vision is in place.” “Effective, given limited financial resources.”

**Q.21 (b).** “WPBC is appropriate for our needs. They cater for everyone.” “Excellent programmes for Bible interpretation.” “The programmes set up as not hard to follow.” “Impressively varied, given limited resources.”

**Q.21(c).** “Excellent teachers taught me a lot and became friends and mentors. I’m very blessed and it got me to where I am now as a leader.” “It’s good that WPBC provide different teachers in the year.” “Our Samoan language class is often short of teachers.”

**Q.21 (d).** “No problem, everything runs smoothly as expected of any well-run organization”, “Enthusiastic and genuinely committed.” “Advertise among the churches, get website updated often and send notices to Radio Rhema noticeboard.”

**Q.21 (e).** “I really appreciated the Bible verses that WPBC advertised in the Dominion Post daily.”

#### **4. *Talanoa***

The researcher considered it essential to include *Talanoa* in this research as Pacific people are the main focus of the thesis. All eighteen participants in the *Talanoa* sessions were Pacific Islanders, six were men and twelve were women. These participants took part in five *Talanoa* sessions according to their first language, and they were asked to address only questions 3 and 20. *Talanoa* sessions #1, #2, and #3 used the English language so the researcher could understand, and *Talanoa* #4 and #5 used the Samoan language as the researcher is a native speaker of that language. There were eight Samoan participants, six Tuvaluan, three Tokelauan and a Tongan man. Four *Talanoa* participants were between 26 and 50 years old, and the remaining fourteen were aged 51 to 75 years. Seven participants had university education, eight had tertiary level studies, two secondary

and one primary school level education. Seven participants lived in Wellington, ten came from Porirua and one from Paraparaumu.

**Q.3.** What is the significance in your experience and your considered opinion of the value of WPBC to the wider Pacific communities and churches?

**Q.20.** What are your hopes for WPBC in the future?

*Talanoa #1.* This session comprised three Samoan women and a Tongan man and all were aged between 51 and 75. Three lived in Wellington and one in Porirua. These participants worked as support carers for the same firm. The Tongan participant who had a university education, had also studied and graduated with an Advanced Certificate of Biblical Studies in the Tongan language and is now studying music. Another Samoan woman had a university education and had taken a number of Bible courses at BCNZ Wellington Centre and is now a supporter of WPBC. The two women with tertiary education were the first graduated students of WPBC, who later studied with Laidlaw College through WPBC's face-to-face tutorials and graduated with National Diplomas of Biblical studies (English language). One Samoan woman was studying for a Bachelor of Theology with Laidlaw College through WPBC face-to-face tutorials. The members of this *Talanoa* session had experience of WPBC from its commencement, as they studied at BCNZ in the Samoan language Bible courses and were students when the BCNZ Wellington Centre closed. T1/#2: "WPBC is significant because of its music." T1/#2: "... hopefully Grade 5–8 for a degree and exploring the Pacific Music for another four years." T1/#1, #3, #4 "WPBC is significant because of the language, teaching with more programmes for them."

*Talanoa #2.* This session consisted of six Tuvaluan participants. Three were males and three females; five were from Porirua and one from Paraparaumu. Two participants were aged 51 to 75, and 4 were between 26 and 50 years old. Three had university education and three had a secondary education. They discussed in English the significance of WPBC to the wider PI community and

also expressed their hopes for WPBC in the future. T2/#3: “There is nowhere else to find support to know God and make Him known.’ T2/#4: “We need more hours of study.’ T2/#2: “We need more practical work, so we can learn how to do our ministries in our church.”

*Talanoa #3.* This included three Tokelauan people living in Porirua, two women and one man, all of whom were between 51 to 75 years old. The participant who had a university education had already graduated from WPBC with a Diploma of Bible Teachers for Pacific Nations and was one of the Tokelauan teachers. The two participants who had secondary school education also are recent WPBC Diploma graduates from the Tokelauan programme. Two of these participants have experience with WPBC because they are Tokelauan representatives on the Board and are also financial supporters of WPBC. This group discussed in English, the significance of WPBC and their hopes for WPBC in the future. T3/#2: “WPBC needs to do outreach and visit rest homes and hospitals.” T3/#3: “WPBC needs to develop courses on chaplaincy and Bible courses for youth training, and the Music programme will be important for the Tokelauan people in using lyrics in the Tokelauan language to continue to keep the language alive.”

*Talanoa #4.* This was a Samoan married couple, both aged 51–75 years old, living in Wellington. The man had tertiary education and his wife had a primary school education only. This couple had experience with WPBC from its commencement. The man studied at the Bible College of NZ Wellington Centre and graduated with a Certificate of Bible and Ministry in the Samoan language and was also a pioneer student of WPBC. He enrolled later in the Diploma of Bible Teachers for Pacific Nations in English but later dropped out due to his night shift work. His wife also joined WPBC and has since graduated. This group spoke in Samoan of WPBC’s significance and their hopes for it in the future. T4/#1: “My hope is to see all the languages of PI people being a vehicle for going out to become missionaries for Jesus in the Pacific nations.”

*Talanoa #5.* This *Talanoa* comprised the same women who participated in *Talanoa #1*. They were asked in this *Talanoa* session to discuss in Samoan things that had not been discussed before. They



were to focus on the future of WPBC and new proposals that would make WPBC more significant to the wider PI community. T5/#2: “One significant programme of the College its Life Skills seminar. This really challenged my thinking and the way I walk in my life and will certainly challenge the thinking of the PI people.” T5/#1: “... the “Overcoming Anger and Violence” seminar gave me lots of Bible verses for anger that have helped me a lot. The significance of these seminars that are run by the Bible College and WPBC need to continue to help PI people as churches don’t do these Life Skills teachings.” T5/#1: “For WPBC to be more significant, WPBC needs to educate PI people to use new technology and computers in class in their own language, so students can do their assignments. I hand wrote my assignment because I did not know how to use a computer. The computers are useful in my church to put up the Sunday theme for the service.” T5/ #1: “It is significant that the work of WPBC has grown, but there is a need to do more work such as developing new Bible resources in Samoan for the College and the Samoan churches. There are many Samoan NZ-born people who cannot read the Bible in Samoan and ... it is significant that WPBC initiate making these resources available to help the Samoan church and other Pacific churches.” T5/#3: “WPBC needs to involve more in the community, at Pasifika events and especially those students who are doing their training in practical ministry.”

## **5. Analysis of results (Survey, Interviews, *Talanoa*)**

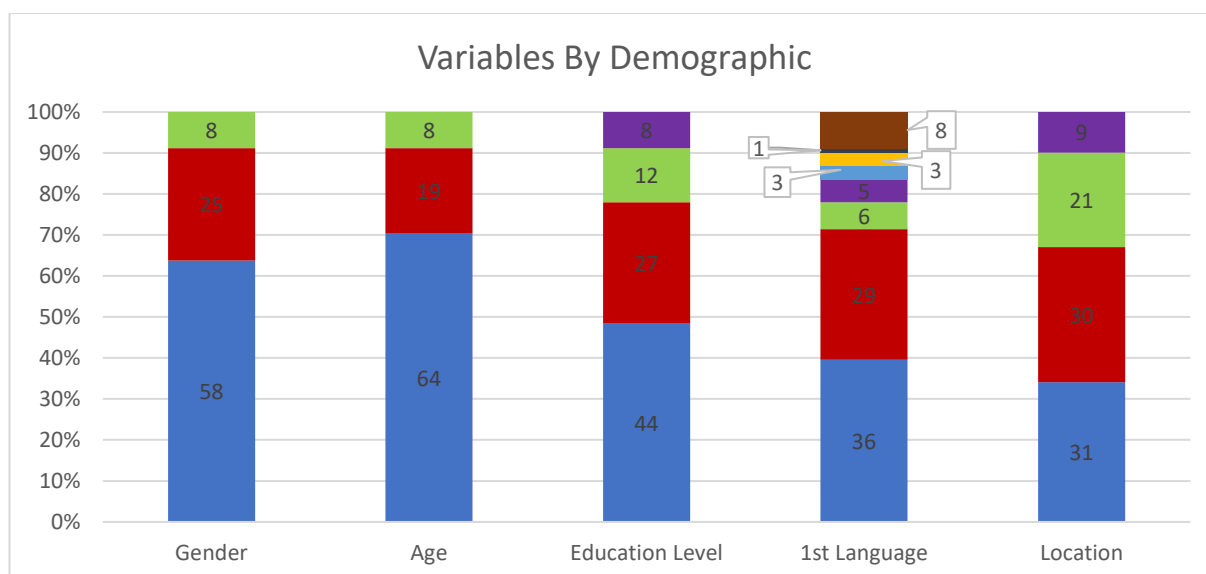
There are four different perspectives identified in response to Q1 from survey. Survey #2 (S#2), a Samoan male participant aged between 26–50 years old, discussed how he came to WPBC because it was local, affordable and the environment was enjoyable. Survey #9 was the youngest member of WPBC, a Samoan man, 16 years old, who came to learn music theory and piano skills. Survey #7 was a European Board member who experienced the importance of the previous Bible Colleges in the city and understood the need to develop leadership for the PI community. Survey #22 was a

participant who came to study because she needed to have “spiritual feeding” as she was experiencing “spiritual dryness” and felt led to WPBC.

Interview participants also brought four different perspectives on this question. Interview participant #4 (I#4) came to WPBC because she was longing to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. She studied and graduated with her Diploma of Bible Teachers for Pacific Nations. Participant I#11 came because he was invited to teach his favourite subjects and I#14 was a Pioneer student of WPBC. He studied the Samoan Bible courses at BCNZ Wellington Centre in 2003 and he is still at WPBC participating in face to face tutorials for his Bachelor of Theology at Laidlaw College.

*Talanoa* #1 also brought different perspectives on the importance of language, teaching, and music programmes as their reasons for studying at and supporting WPBC.

There are 4 patterns from these different perspectives. The first pattern is the need for spiritual strengthening identified by S #22 and me #4 which lead them to study God’s Word at WPBC. The second pattern is seen in S#9 and *Talanoa* 1#2 (T1#2) who came because they wanted to learn music. The third pattern emerges from the two European males (51 to 75 years with university level education) who understood the importance of advanced teaching of the Bible to PI people. The fourth pattern is seen in I#14 and T#1 who were all WPBC pioneer students who studied at BCNZ Wellington Centre. They came to study because of the opportunities and programmes available to them at WPBC, and also wanted to support WPBC financially.



Gender	Age	Education Level	1 <sup>st</sup> Language	Location
<div>Male = 63.73% 58</div> <div>Female = 27.47% 25</div> <div>Unknown = 8.80 8</div> <div>Total = 91</div>	<div>1.51-75yrs = 64</div> <div>Male=48.35%</div> <div>Female=21.97%</div> <div>2.26-50yrs 19</div> <div>Male=15.38%</div> <div>Female=5.50%</div> <div>Unknown=8.80% 8</div> <div>Total = 91</div>	<div>1.University (48.31) 44</div> <div>Male=47.15% 43</div> <div>Female=1.09% 1</div> <div>2. Tertiary (29.67%)</div> <div>Female=20.87% 19</div> <div>Male=8.80% 8</div> <div>3. Secondary (13.18%)</div> <div>Male= 7.70% 7</div> <div>Female=5.50% 5</div> <div>4.Unknown=8.80% 8</div> <div>Total = 91</div>	<div>English(Palagi) 39.56%) 36</div> <div>Male=36.26%</div> <div>Female= 3.29%</div> <div>2.Samoan (31.86%) 29</div> <div>Male=16.48%</div> <div>Female= 15.38%</div> <div>3.Tongan (6.60%) 6</div> <div>1 male</div> <div>4.Tuvaluan (5.50%) 5</div> <div>Female=2.19%</div> <div>Male=3.30%</div> <div>5.Niuean =3.29% 3</div> <div>6.Indian=3.29% 3</div> <div>7.Tokelauan=1.10% 1</div> <div>8.Unknown=8.80% 8</div> <div>Total = 91</div>	<div>Wgtn 31</div> <div>Male=14.28% 13</div> <div>Female=19.78% 18</div> <div>Porirua 30</div> <div>Male=25.27% 23</div> <div>Female=7.70% 7</div> <div>Hutt Valley 21</div> <div>Male=23.07% 21</div> <div>Female=0% 0</div> <div>Paraparaumu 9</div> <div>Male=1.10% 1</div> <div>Unknown=8.80% 8</div>

## 6. Conclusion

What was the range of responses? In analysing the responses from participants of surveys, interviews and *Talanoa* sessions, different patterns of responses were highlighted. These patterns range from major to minor responses on: WPBC Teaching, Language, Learning Environment, Life Skills seminars, Practical Work, Finances, Resources, Leadership, Problems in Traditional churches, and Vision.

**1. WPBC Teaching:** Teaching features in responses by forty-two participants, especially in the *Talanoa* sessions. Ten responses address two main areas: (i) Participants noted the need for more teaching days for the students, more teaching to be made available, and for language teachers to be up-skilled; (ii) The inconsistency of teachers was also an issue in a Samoan Second Language class (SSOL) which resulted in only two students from the class graduating for the last ten years. Low graduation numbers result in classes being cut from the curriculum. From the responses on teaching, question 21c had 7 varied responses, mainly from men. Survey and Tuvaluan *Talanoa* participants also supported more training hours because some Tuvalu students arrived late to class due to their work commitments (Q2: I#1/ Q3: I#2, I#3, I#7, I#8, T1, Q4: I#2, I#8, Q5: S#11, I#2, I#8, I#11, Q6: I#8, I#11, Q8: I#10, S#3, I#8, Q9: S#10, S#12, Q10:S#7, Q12: S#7, S#21, I#11, Q14: S#17, S#16, S#3, I#4, T2/#3, Q17:T5/#1-2, Q20:T1/#2–T3, Q21a: S#7, Q21e: I#2, Q15: I#9, Concerns: Q21a: S#1/ Q21b: S#12/ Q21c:S#7/ S#12, S#13, Q21c: T2/1–6).

**2. Language and culture:** Language is mentioned as an issue in thirty-one responses, while culture is mentioned nine times across all three methods. Participants reported that including English classes is essential for those PI students who are native English speakers. In the five questions which relate to language, question 21c had the most varied responses (7). Most of these responses were from female participants who saw a need to strengthen both PI and English language skills

(Q10: S#10, S#14/Q.11: S#21, I#5, I#8, / Q20: S#6, T1/#1, T3/#1,2,3/Q21b: S#1, / Q21c: S#7, I#10, T1,2,3,4,5).

Europeans and Samoans supported ‘culture’. (Q3: I#8/Q4: S#20/ Q6: I#13/ Q7: S#7/ Q14: S#15/ Q21a: S#22). Of 6 varied questions, question 21c has the majority.

**3. Learning Environment:** This topic was raised thirteen times by survey and interview participants. Of the five questions that addressed this theme, question 16 had four responses, showing the most variation. The majority of the 13 responses were from male students with reasons that online teaching did not suit them; this included one teacher who understood that online learning did not fully convey God’s Word (Q2: S#21, Q6: S#5, S#11, Q7: S#7, S#21, I#3, Q15: S#7, I#4, S#20, Q16: S#2, S#15, I#8, I#3).

**4. Practical Work:** This was addressed twelve times by participants. Of the three questions relating to this topic, question 21e had the highest number of responses (9). The majority of responses were from female graduate students who now preach and teach in their own churches. These students see the importance of extending WPBC Practical work beyond the church. One male participant suggested that WPBC could develop more of a focus on a “Word mission”, particularly in the Pacific Islands (Q15: S#15/Q20: I#15/ Q21e: S#7, S#21, T5/#1,2,3, T4/#1, T3/#1-2-3).

**5. Life Skills Seminars:** Twelve participants responded to this over the three methods. For the four questions that address this theme, question 19 had the most responses (one man and four women). The women’s answers were based on having attended all the Life Skills Seminars and acknowledged the importance of continuing them, especially the Bible teaching, as they addressed relevant community issues. S#7 mentioned that WPBC is the only Bible College that has taken an interest in needs specific to PI communities through Life Skills seminars (Q17: S#13, S#6, T5/#2, T5/#1/Q18: S#17, I#3/Q19: S#7, I#4, T5/#1-2-3/Q14: I#8).

**6. Finance:** Finance was raised eleven times. One participant (S#10) mentioned that student fees should be better managed and suggested electronic payment (EFTPOS) facilities. Of the five questions below, question eight regarding members' support had the highest number of varied responses (7), with the majority by women who are supporting the College financially and in other ways. Survey, Interview and *Talanoa* #5 all mentioned the need for additional WPBC funding. One man who is a longstanding financial supporter also spoke about funding and a number of participants noted the College's need for increased funding to be able to provide more resources. This participant's observations support the account of the College's finances in Chapter 2 above (Q6: S#11, Q8: T5/#1, S#7, I#6, I#10, S#11, T5/#1, I#2, Q20: I#10, Q21a: S#7 (concern: Q21d: S#10)).

**7. Resources:** This theme came up ten times across all methods and focuses on three different types of resources: (i) Library books. One survey participant (S#10) reported that there was a lack of commentaries for various books of the Bible; (ii) Classroom resources. An English-class teacher had to resort to bringing in a friend to interpret his class into Samoan as two of his Pacific students were struggling to understand the English content and there were no support resources available; (iii) New technology resources. *Talanoa* #5 participants recommended that WIFI be available in WPBC classrooms and that students be taught to use the new technology in their WPBC work. Of the six questions that relate to resources, question 21a had the most responses. *Talanoa* #5 called for resources for PI churches and also technology resources for the College. These women had studied and graduated with the Diploma of Biblical Studies from Laidlaw College and had experienced the need for additional resources at WPBC (Q.2-S#1, Q4. I#11, Q9: I#11, Q18: S#17, Q21a: S#7, T5/1-2-3, Q21c: S#10).

**8. Leadership concerns:** One participant reported that, "it's disappointing that ordained ministers have not supported WPBC", which represents a perspective that some Pacific ministers have led

their people away from studying at WPBC. This tension is a complex, ongoing concern to WPBC and may reflect broader tensions within the wider community.

**9. Problems in the traditional churches and need of WPBC:** This theme is raised nine times by survey, interview and *Talanoa* participants. One unknown survey participant, two Tongan men and a Samoan man responded similarly to this theme. These participants understand the strong culture in the PI churches and the need of WPBC. Interviewees expressed frustrations experienced within their churches, some of which they did not realise existed until they had attended WPBC. In some instances, the skills gained at the College awakened students to false attitudes or teachings in their own churches. Also, three Samoan women in *Talanoa* #5 now appreciate the strong traditional culture in churches. They pointed out during their sessions that WPBC's focus on a Biblical culture of serving God, and that everyone is equal before Him, ran counter to the ethos in a number of the traditional PI churches who have their focus on serving the minister and the church. (Q2: S#6, Q3: I#2, I#3, Q4: I#2, Q19: S#7, S#4).

**10. Vision:** This theme is mentioned eight times by survey, interview and *Talanoa* #2 participants, the majority being graduate students. Participants understood the vision of the College, and all seven graduate students interviewed stated they were fulfilling the vision by making God known to others. Of the five questions relating to the theme of vision, question 9 asked about graduates fulfilling the vision; it attracted the most responses. A survey participant (S#2) differed only in the first part of the question by stating that 'some are, and some are not'. Of the two European male teachers who responded, one said that he received hope from many of the students and felt privileged to be involved with them. Another respondent said that the resources allow the students to fulfil its vision. (Q3: T2/#3, Q5: S#10, Q9: S#2, I#8, I#11, I#5, Q21a: I#8, Q21e: I#2).

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

The history of the first decade of WPBC provides a fascinating insight into an institution and to people who are not usually highly visible or have a high profile in contemporary New Zealand society. New Zealand is a very secular, or perhaps more accurately, religiously de-institutionalised, society with nearly 50% of the residents of the capital city, Wellington, declaring in the most recent census, that they have “no religion”. The world of the Bible College is a view into very different sub-culture. First WBC, then BCNZ Wellington Centre, and then WPBC, is a sub-culture within this sub-culture, the believing Christian “Bible” world, with a Pacific focus. It is distinct across a range of usual sociological variables, for example, those involved are older than the wider Pacific community, many have stronger links with PI cultures and languages, and they represent particular socio-economic categories.

WPBC operates within a very different discourse than mainstream New Zealand society and it tends to do so in an uncompromising fashion. Whereas many believing Christians use different language registers to speak in different contexts, for example, in church or among Christians, versus “out there”, as it were, in the wider educational, business, commercial or administrative worlds, those involved in WPBC, as reflected in this study, tend to restrict themselves to a single register that makes extended reference to God and Jesus, and uses the language of calling, vision and mission: “Bringing the Word of God to the capital city”. Further, they exhibit values, priorities and concerns that can be seen as distinctive ways of approaching the issues of education, empowerment, personal and community development in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is hoped that this thesis has given an insight into this particular community and unique educational institution. As can be seen above, it is a specific marriage of two traditions and constituencies. First, the older biblical tradition of the evangelical, conservative, Christian churches in New Zealand with their focus on biblical education for life, equality, and communal



responsibility. These were almost exclusively European. Secondly, the communities from the Pacific Islands with their strong Christian faith and traditions. WPBC has developed out of these two traditions to create something genuinely innovative and distinctive.

WPBC is committed to an egalitarianism and an intimate coupling of study and service in churches and communities. Its constituency is mainly but not exclusively first and second generation New Zealanders from the Pacific, and it seeks to address their biblical and spiritual education, broadly conceived to include music, English language development, and study and life skills, within a committed Christian non-denominational, evangelical setting. This differs both from the first iterations of WBC and also from many of the Pacific churches.

The research reveals that beneath the surface there are continuing tensions between more “island” versions of church leadership and authority and the teachings of WPBC and while there are clear evidences of support from a number of the churches and pastors and ministers, and that WPBC graduates play leadership roles in these very churches, there are still difficult issues to be resolved, that arise in part from the very particular history, and pre-history, of WPBC.

WPBC has developed a “family” ethos that seeks to support students acknowledging the realities of their manifold commitments. The College has created a community of different students and teachers united in their religious and spiritual commitments to God and WPBC. College graduates have been empowered in taking up roles in their churches and communities, extending their enhanced self-worth arising from their WPBC studies.

The research strongly supports the notion of WPBC as a success on a number of fronts. In spite of ongoing financial concerns, the College continues to attract students and supporters, largely via a network of clearly good personal contacts. The central Wellington base for WPBC continues with satellites in the greater Wellington region, and it has spawned two independent Pacific colleges in Auckland, with which it has excellent relations. It has also maintained an effective working

relationship with Laidlaw College, Auckland. WPBC has shown itself to be responsive to student demand, economic realities, and has clear plans for the future.

WPBC has developed its own teaching materials for teaching its biblically driven syllabus and also other teaching materials both in Pacific languages and in English. It has also developed a distinctive pattern of student support and modes of teaching reflecting its student backgrounds. It also has provided pathways for students to continue their studies at degree level and directly supported those who have chosen to do this at WPBC. The pathways for further study have worked well, both within WPBC, and beyond.

The empirical combined with the textual research hopefully provides a rich and nuanced picture of a small and marginal institution engaged in a series of struggles in a rapidly changing world. The researcher had to look closely at the issues and concerns, sometimes concealed by the seeming conformity of the positive, confessional, religious language of faith. The responses of the participants (staff, students and Board) reflect their feeling of being part of a spiritual community and the existential and physical commitments of that belonging. The uniformity of vision and faith is coupled with the many different views and experiences of those involved as reflected in the results.

WPBC is inspired by a biblical vision that has proved to be constantly re-applied in changing circumstances. It is clear that WPBC is at a time of continuing transition but still animated by its vision of Christian education, formation and service.

Chapter 1 traced the establishment of the first Bible tertiary institution in Wellington from its driving “vision” in 1979 to the merger with the BCNZ in 1993. WBC was financially sustainable and offered certificate and diploma courses, taught only in English by qualified, to between 170 to 200 students weekly. WBC also taught papers externally for the Bachelor of Divinity from Melbourne College of Divinity. The WBC library was established as a resource for students. A “home” for WBC was a major concern in this first phase of its history.

This narrative continues in 1993 when WBC became the BCNZ Wellington Centre introducing NZQA accredited programmes and government funding. BCNZ Wellington Centre introduced Bible studies in the Samoan language in 2002, which attracted an increasing number of Pacific students. In 2003 a Pacific representative joined the Board. The flexibility of evening courses was also a boon to students. BCNZ Wellington Centre was increasingly limited in its decision making and independence and was officially closed in December 2006.

Chapter 2 begins in 2006 with WPBC Board's committed itself to a focus using native languages to study the Bible and the subsequent establishment of WPBC. Starting with Samoan courses it has extended its teaching to a further four Pacific languages, and developed its library resources. The WPBC Board has been extended to include members to represent the Pacific languages (Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan and Tuvaluan representatives along with four European members). There are also Language Advisory Committees to advise WPBC about the needs of different languages groups. WPBC also teaches ESOL and SSOL courses.

Chapter 3 included deliberations on WPBC's values, motto and emblems, teachings, the student body and the curriculum, the new music programme and the Life Skills seminar/workshops. WPBC's explicit and distinctive vision is biblically-driven studies leading to service in churches and communities.

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