

# Biblos in New Zealand

2005

by  
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and Karen Walshe*



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## **Independence of research**

The comments and opinions expressed in this report are the independent conclusions of the Biblos Project. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Hockerill Educational Foundation or the All Saints Educational Trust, nor did the sponsors expect us to conform to any particular view.

# Letter from the Director

When we completed Phase Three of the Biblos Project we had clearly established that how young people perceive biblical narrative relates to their cultural situation: home and family; faith community (if any); school curriculum – whether it includes or excludes biblical narrative and how such narrative is presented. How young people view biblical narrative relates potentially even to national or international trends such as secularisation.

After eight years of UK-based research it was therefore very desirable to explore in as similar a way as possible the situation of young people and biblical narrative in a different, but still English-speaking, culture. We chose New Zealand as our first international comparison. Culture and language differences between the UK and New Zealand mean that some comparisons cannot be made – but others can.

This report carries the results of that investigation. I believe it will be of use both to researchers and faith communities in New Zealand and also in the UK as we seek to explore how, in a shrinking world, young people experience and perceive these archetypal narratives which themselves emanate from another culture and another world.

Terence Copley  
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# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1. Research context

The University of Exeter School of Education and Lifelong Learning boasts an established Religious Education (RE) research team, currently comprising ten members of staff (not all full-time) and one Honorary University Fellow (a title bestowed in recognition of research eminence on a semi-retired member of staff). The team includes Professor Terence Copley as director of the portfolio of projects that have been developed over the last decade or so including:

- FARE (Forms of Assessment in Religious Education)
- WISSP (Worship in Secondary Schools Project)
- The Figure of Jesus in Religious Education

The most significant project undertaken by the RE research team (see Appendix XIV for a list of personnel) is the Biblos Project which was funded by the UK Bible Society from 1996 until 2004. The project was founded with the aim to investigate how the Bible is, and should be, taught in RE in England. The research was divided into three phases. Each phase resulted in articles in academic, educational and church periodicals based on research reports. The research reports were written and published thanks to financial aid from the All Saints Educational Trust (*Echo of Angels*, 1998 and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, 2001) and the Westhill Endowment Trust (*On the Side of the Angels*, 2004). A summary report of these first three phases was also published (*Teaching Biblical Narrative*, 2004). A full list of associated articles is included in Appendix XIII.

The first phase of the project tackled the problem of how to teach the Bible in a society variously labelled ‘plural’ and ‘secular’ and the role of narrative in this task. Empirical research was conducted in Ealing and Devon schools. Subsequently, classroom materials for Key Stage (KS) 2 and KS3 were published which advocated a new approach to teaching biblical narrative through the three selected themes of Encounter, Destiny and Vulnerability. Two key ideas were proposed: that the Bible is a multi-religious text (Jewish, Christian and Islamic) and that it should not be reduced in teaching to secular moralisms.

The second phase of the project tested the established Biblos approach in KS1 and KS4. The Biblos research team worked with schools mainly in Lancashire and Devon and approximately seven hundred children were surveyed through questionnaire. A parallel project was also conducted pertaining to *The Figure of Jesus in Religious Education* (2002) which set out

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to investigate the picture of Jesus being transmitted in RE and why RE did not seem to be presenting the Jesus of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Rastafarianism or the Jesus of state of the art New Testament scholarship.

In the third phase of the Biblos Project, the team worked with schools in the South West, the Midlands and the North East of England.

Questionnaires were completed by 1,066 students in Years 6, 9 and 12 to ascertain pupils' knowledge of, and attitudes towards, the Bible as well as what factors they believe influenced these attitudes. For instance, are they affected by age, gender or religious affiliation? Our questionnaire sample was an accurate reflection of the 2001 National Census categories of religious adherence. As part of this phase, the Biblos research team also conducted 98 semi-structured interviews of about 30 minutes with Year 6, 9 and 12 pupils from nine schools across England (South West, Midlands and North East). The research allowed us to assess to what extent children see the Bible as a 'problem' and what the origins of any problems might be. This provides us with evidence to support particular teaching strategies and emphases in the schools and churches in order to overcome common misconceptions or problems.

The completion of the first three phases of the Biblos Project in the UK marked the beginning of the next crucial component of our research project. This pertains to a programme of international collaboration and dissemination, in terms of research methods and outcomes, for which there are compelling reasons. There continue to be big regional and local variations in any attempt to define a UK-overview of religion. For example Anglesey, Bradford, Londonderry, Malvern (Worcestershire), Tipton (West Midlands), Truro, the Western Isles, and Wigan conjure up vivid pictures of cultural and religious diversity and divergence, which both impact on and reflect religions in these localities. But the people in these places watch largely the same TV channels and use the same Internet. Therefore, whilst the worldview of our young people is acquired from the surrounding UK culture(s), it is also acquired from the cultures of a global technology via the Internet, satellite television (TV), etc. This worldwide communication network affords the possibility for the rapid transmission of religious and secular beliefs. Yet this global cultural background has not always been taken into account in studies of British young people's attitudes and what might lie behind them, to the detriment of the resulting work.

It is important to consider the roots of the attitudes of young people in the UK to the Bible, and to learning about the Bible, in order to provide religious educators in the schools with a greater understanding of the causes of misconceptions, problems, attitudes and so forth. Moreover, it is also important to consider our own 'national' assumptions about religion, Christianity and the Bible for these heavily influence RE policy and practice.



In this way the Biblos research team can see more clearly whether the ‘problems’ concerning the Bible and biblical narrative which have been identified by the Biblos Project to date are really English, British, European or worldwide. For instance, it has recently been postulated by Davie (2000) that the society our children inhabit is – in terms of its attitudes to religions and religious observance – atypical of the planet and to a lesser extent atypical of Europe. But to those growing up in it, it is the *norm*. This has serious implications for our understanding of issues which are central to UK RE. Therefore, there is much to learn from a comparison with other cultures and it is for this reason that the research team began a fourth phase of the Biblos Project in New Zealand. It is hoped that this will be the first of several stages of international collaboration and dissemination throughout the English-speaking world (including Ireland, Australia and the USA).

## **1.2. Literature review**

This literature review discusses some extensive surveys in the field of attitudinal studies within RE, evaluates some of the most significant factors which influence children’s attitudes and explains why a new attitudinal study was needed for the purposes of the current research project.

### **1.2.1. Attitudinal studies in RE**

#### *Introduction*

Research into children’s attitudes has a long history in the field of RE. In his review of RE research, Francis (1996: 108–12) noted a number of major studies that are relevant for our present purposes. Firstly, Hyde (1965) developed an instrument to measure pupils’ attitudes towards God, the Bible, religion, the institutional church, the local church and churchgoing. Secondly, Cox (1967) sought to gauge the opinions of grammar school pupils on: (i) the existence of God; (ii) Jesus; (iii) life after death; (iv) the Bible; (v) the church; (vi) RE; (vii) personal religious behaviour; and (viii) moral behaviours. In 1970, he replicated the study to look at changes in attitudes towards RE and the Bible (Cox, 1971). Thirdly, Alves (1968) reported findings regarding pupils’: (i) knowledge of the New Testament; (ii) understanding of New Testament quotations; (iii) beliefs and attitudes about Jesus, the Bible and the church; (iv) moral choices; and (v) religious identity and practice. Fourthly, Francis (1996: 121) himself developed and improved this area of RE research by conducting approximately eighty published studies by 1996. These sought to provide a cumulative picture of the personal, social and contextual factors relating to children’s attitudes towards Christianity. The quality and quantity of Francis’ studies make him the leader in the field of attitudinal studies within RE. For this reason, his

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research methods and outcomes form the focus for the remainder of this review beginning with a review of his application of psychometrics to the study of children's attitudes towards Christianity.

#### *Psychometrics*

Francis (1989a: 76) defined the field of psychometrics as a branch of psychology concerned with the definition and measurement of specific aspects of human psyche often using questionnaires containing specific and precise questions. Psychometric tests attempt to chart a person's underlying stable attitudes by analysing the often ephemeral opinions which they express. This requires the development of instrumentation which ask participants to respond to opinion-statements. These will be specifically chosen, according to statistical criteria, because they best indicate a specific attitude (1979b: 46). Francis (1984:47) defined attitude as an evaluative predisposition to a positive or negative response of an affective nature, on the basis that it is possible to hold traditional beliefs about God, while at the same time holding unfavourable attitudes towards him (see Fishbein, 1967). Thus, he rejected theories which maintain that attitudes consist of cognitive (belief), affective (evaluative) and conative (behavioural) components (Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey, 1962) or both cognitive and affective components (Greer, 1983).

In terms of the use of psychometric measuring instruments, Francis (1979b: 45–46) noted that they have functioned in eight different ways: descriptive (i.e. charting development); prescriptive (i.e. prescribing a suitable educational environment); predictive (i.e. enabling prediction); as a monitoring tool (i.e. enabling observation); as a comparative tool (i.e. comparing characteristics); as an experimental tool (i.e. providing understanding of the relationship between multiple factors); diagnostic (i.e. drawing our attention to irregularities and abnormalities); and heuristic (i.e. enabling us to discover new knowledge). The Biblos Project primarily used psychometric instruments for descriptive and experimental purposes (Copley *et al*, 2004).

#### *Attitudes towards Christianity and the Bible*

Francis (1984: 46) conducted numerous studies into children's attitudes towards Christianity using psychometric tools. He used a 24-item (five point) Likert Scale to address the features which he believed characterise a pupil's concept of the Christian religion: God, Jesus, the Bible, prayer, the church and the Christian instruction and worship offered in schools (Francis, 1989a). The same instrument was administered to all pupils in Years 7–11 in two comprehensive secondary schools in Essex and Suffolk in 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990, 1994, 1998 and 2002. The Likert Scale items pertaining to the Bible were 'I find it boring to listen to the Bible' and

'I think the Bible is out of date' (1989a: 78). Francis (2000:166) stated that the quadrennial replication of his study enabled a profile to be constructed regarding the way in which young people's attitudes toward the Bible have changed over a twenty-year period. For instance, in 1974, 33% of secondary school pupils agreed with the statement 'I find it boring to listen to the Bible', but the proportion increased in almost every quadrennial replication since then (34%, 40%, 49%, 48% and 51%). Moreover, in terms of the frequency with which the Bible is read in England and Wales, Francis (2000: 170) noted in a different study, that only a very small proportion of young people read the Bible regularly. Around 5% read it at least once a week and a further 29% read it less frequently, but two out of three 13–15 year olds never read it.

In another study, Francis (2001) surveyed 33,982 young people between the ages of 13 and 15 from 163 schools of diverse types throughout England and Wales using the Centymca Attitude Inventory. He noted that in response to the statement 'The Bible seems irrelevant to life today', 31% agreed strongly or agreed, 41% were not certain and 28% disagreed strongly or disagreed (2001: 36–8). According to Francis (*ibid*: 39), there is a generation of young people who wish to retain the notion of being Christian and who accept their Christian heritage (including weddings and baptisms), but who are separate from the church and feel neutral about the contribution which the church, the Bible and the clergy make to life.

### 1.2.2. Factors influencing attitudes

Having discussed some major studies of children's attitudes within RE research, the next section highlights key factors which have been found to influence children's attitudes. These include gender, age, church attendance, school type and some other correlates.

#### *Gender*

Davies (2004) cited numerous studies that demonstrate that girls have more positive attitudes towards religion than boys (Hyde, 1965; Hyde, 1990; Turner, 1970; Greer, 1972b; and Francis, 1987). Similarly, Francis (1986b) noted almost unequivocal evidence during the past 40 years to suggest that females have recorded a more positive attitude to Christianity than males (Glassey, 1943; Garrity, 1960; Povall, 1971; and Kay, 1981). In his own work, Francis (1989a: 79) stated that females had more positive attitudes on every one of the 24 items in his scale of attitudes towards Christianity than males and that males were twice as likely as females to dismiss the Bible as old-fashioned, while a third of the males (34%) felt that the Bible is out of date compared with a sixth of the females (17%). This conclusion was supported by a later study by Francis and Greer (1999a: 177) in which they

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surveyed pupils from Years 9, 10, 11 and 12 from twelve Catholic (1,034 pupils) and twelve Protestant (1,095 pupils) grammar schools in Northern Ireland. Moreover, Francis (2001: 89) reviewed similar findings in two other studies. Firstly, Greeley (1992) reported significant differences in the proportions of men and women who expressed religious belief, experience, practice and affiliation. On all criteria females were more religious than males (e.g. 76% of females believed in God compared with 60% of males). Secondly, Roberts (1996) highlighted sex differences in religiosity, such as that young females were more likely than young males to regard themselves as belonging to a particular religious group (52% compared with 39%) and to believe in God (61% compared with 56%).

In his survey of young people between the ages of 13 and 15, Francis (2001: 100–1) noted that females held a higher level of religious belief than males and were more likely to express belief in God, belief that Jesus really rose from the dead and belief in life after death. He also reported that 36% of males agreed that the Bible was irrelevant to life today compared with just 26% of females. This is reflected in a previous study in which Francis (2000: 168) demonstrated that male teenagers are less likely to read the Bible than female teenagers, for instance, 70% of males said they would never read the Bible compared with 62% of females. Such a trend is also evident in a study by Harrison (1983) who revealed that reading the Bible is more common among women than men. In his survey of young people, Francis (2001: 109) noted a whole array of differences between males and females which may help to understand the variance between their responses, such as that females are more likely than males to: (i) long for someone to turn to for advice; (ii) derive support from talking problems through with friends and from mothers rather than fathers; (iii) worry about personal safety and relationships; (iv) express positive opinions about school; and (v) believe in the potentially positive aspects of the supernatural (e.g. horoscopes and fortune tellers) rather than the potentially negative aspects (e.g. the Devil and black magic).

### *Age*

Francis (1986b) noted clear evidence to suggest that younger pupils score more highly (i.e. more positively) in terms of their attitudes towards Christianity than older pupils (Glassey, 1943; Davies, 1959; Garrity, 1960; Jones, 1962; Johnson, 1966; Turner, 1970; Povall, 1971; Greer, 1972a; Hinchliffe, 1973; and Francis, 1976). In fact, Francis (1979b: 47) stated that there is a constant and persistent deterioration in the children's attitudes towards Christianity according to increase in age, but no specific change at a certain age, such as at the transition from primary to secondary school. As evidence of the former phenomenon, Francis (1989a: 80–81) reported that in Year 11, 36% of the pupils judge the Bible to be out of date, compared

with 26% in Year 10, 26% in Year 9, 22% in Year 8 and 17% in Year 7. In a later study, Francis (2001: 66–7) discussed other significant research which demonstrated similar findings. Firstly, Gibson (1989) found that between the ages of 13 and 15 interest in both science and religion declines and the perceived conflict between science and religion is sharpened. Secondly, Francis and Greer (1999b) noted a movement away from the creationist belief that God created the world as described in the Bible as they compared the responses of Year 9 and 10 pupils with those in Year 11 in Catholic and Protestant schools in Northern Ireland. They also noted that the proportion who accepted the idea of evolution creating everything over millions of years rose. Finally, in his survey of young people between the ages of 13 and 15, Francis (2001: 72–3) reported a general decline in religious beliefs with age, for instance, the proportion of pupils who believed that the Bible is irrelevant for life today increased from 29% in Year 9 to 32% in Year 10. This is reflected in a previous study in which Francis (2000) found that the Bible is less likely to be read by Year 10 pupils than by Year 9 pupils. This result also inter-relates with sex differences, for instance, the percentage of boys who never read the Bible progresses from 68% in Year 9 to 72% in Year 10, whereas among girls the increase is from 59% to 66%. Moreover, Francis (*ibid*: 81) noted a whole array of changes which occur between Year 9 and Year 10 which may increase our understanding of the wider changes which the young people are undergoing, such as: (i) a growth in self-confidence; (ii) a greater derivation of support from close friends and less from parents; (iii) a greater reluctance to discuss their problems with professionals; (iv) increasingly negative attitudes towards school; and (v) a less positive response to the role of the church in society.

### *Church attendance*

Francis (1979a) explained that those who attend church frequently score more highly on measures of attitude towards Christianity than those who do not (Garrity, 1960; Jones, 1962; Hyde, 1965; and Johnson, 1966). In terms of the influence of church attendance upon attitudes, Francis (1989a: 82–3) stated that only 9.8% of the pupils claimed to attend church most Sundays and the pupils who attended church weekly recorded a much more favourable attitude towards Christianity than those who did not. Only 9% of the weekly churchgoers felt that the Bible is out of date and only 16% said that they found it boring to listen to the Bible. In terms of the influence of church attendance upon Bible reading, Francis (2000: 169) noted that the Bible is *never* read by 89% of boys who claim never to attend church and by 42% of boys who attend church most weeks. Among girls, the Bible is *never* read by 84% of those who never attend church and by 39% of those who attend church at least once a month. Clearly, the higher the frequency of church attendance, the more likely a pupil is to read the Bible.

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### *School type*

Francis (1979b: 48–49) argued that the foundation of a school (i.e. Local Education Authority primary school, Church of England aided school and Roman Catholic aided primary school) affects scores on measures of attitude toward Christianity. For instance, Francis (1979a) noted that those who are educated in a voluntary church aided school rather than those who are educated in local authority schools (Turner, 1970; Taylor, 1970; Greer, 1972a; and Hornsby-Smith and Petit, 1975) and those who are educated in Roman Catholic aided primary schools rather than those who are educated in Local Education Authority schools (Francis, 1977) score more highly on measures of attitude towards Christianity. Francis also later demonstrated that Church of England aided schools have no additional influence on attitudes towards Christianity once sex, social class and the church attendance of parents and children have been controlled for. This is in contrast to Roman Catholic schools.

Francis and Greer (1999a), in a later study, supported the conclusion that school type affects pupil attitudes towards Christianity, but also considered this correlation in regard to the influence of sex. They surveyed pupils from Years 9, 10, 11 and 12 from twelve Catholic and twelve Protestant grammar schools in Northern Ireland. They concluded that males attending Catholic schools record a more positive attitude toward Christianity than males attending Protestant schools, but the same denominational difference does not occur among females (*ibid*: 177).

### *Other correlates*

Francis has investigated many other factors which affect scores on measures of attitude towards Christianity. Firstly, Francis (1979b: 48–49) notes that the form of Religious Education is an influence (i.e. post-1944 Agreed Syllabus Instruction, post-1966 Agreed Syllabus Instruction and no religious instruction). He argued that unfavourable attitudes towards Christianity were more associated with pupils taught according to the new post-1966 syllabus than according to the old style syllabus. Secondly, Francis (1989b) reported a correlation between pupil attitudes and parental religious attitudes and practices (Moreton, 1944 and Greer, 1971). Francis (1996: 121) undertook research to investigate the influence of home and parents (Gibson, Francis and Pearson, 1990; Francis and Gibson, 1993a; and Francis, Pearson and Lankshear, 1990). Thirdly, Francis (1996: 121) used psychometric tests to explore the influence of popular culture on children's attitudes towards Christianity (see also Francis and Gibson, 1993b). One study involved Francis (2001) researching the influence of watching TV upon young people's attitudes. He classified those who watch TV for more than four hours on a normal day as 'addicts'. He reported that, in comparison with other young people, TV addicts are less inclined to believe

in God and to believe that Jesus rose from the dead and are more inclined to think that the Bible is irrelevant for life today (*ibid*: 193–200).

### 1.2.3. Evaluation of Francis' research

By way of an evaluation of his research into attitudes towards Christianity, Francis (1989a: 86) noted that only one index of attitudes towards Christianity was employed and that only two schools from one geographical area were involved. Thus, the highly specific nature of his sample population made generalisations problematic. Greer (1983), however, has offered more fundamental criticisms of Francis' work. Firstly, he argued that 'it is difficult to see how a person's attitude to particular religious concepts, persons or objects can be divorced from his/her belief about these referents' (*ibid*: 22). The affective dimensions of attitude cannot be investigated separately from the cognitive dimensions. Secondly, Greer noted that Francis' scale is a valid instrument for measuring attitude only with respect to *one particular concept* of Christianity. Thirdly, he criticised Francis for producing conclusions which do not proceed from the findings. For instance, Francis compared pupils' mean attitude scores in groups of schools in order to make judgements about the effectiveness of different types of RE syllabus, but the validity of the findings would have been increased had Francis examined the influence of different types of syllabus on pupils at the same schools. This would allow for the influence of daily assemblies, occasional religious services and the possible influence of school ethos (*ibid*: 25). Overall, Greer called for much greater clarity about the meaning of attitude and the nature of its referent, as well as a greater degree of care in the interpretation of results.

Further criticisms of Francis' work have been made by Levitt (1995: 102–3) who noted that Francis' comparison between Church of England aided schools and Roman Catholic schools is unfair because both types of school have differing aims. Anglican aided schools no longer aim to produce children with knowledge of Christianity, to convince them of its truth or to train them in Christian practice through worship nor do they offer denominational RE and worship taught by practising Anglican or even Christian teachers. Furthermore, Levitt argued that some items in Francis' scale are definite statements of personal belief which Anglican aided schools are not seeking to inculcate (e.g. 'I know that God helps me'; 'I believe that God listens to prayers'; and 'I know that Jesus is very close to me'). Levitt also noted Francis' preference for *Christian education* which looks for positive attitudes to God, the Bible and prayer, as evidence in items such as 'The idea of God means much to me' and 'I want to love Jesus', rather than *Religious Education* which seeks to develop the ability to reflect critically on religion rather than to promote any particular viewpoint. Lastly, he argued

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that Francis' scale cannot 'provide the background knowledge of specific children, the influence of their families, schools, churches and communities which would help to explain the scores they produce' (*ibid*: 105). To achieve this, he recommended measuring the attitudes which particular schools aim to encourage together with a detailed case study of the children and their community through the gathering of a combination of qualitative and quantitative data (Levitt, 1993).

Kay and Smith (2002) also criticised Francis' work. Firstly, they noted that Francis does not assess the knowledge or skills base of pupils, but rather external factors which may affect their attitudes. Kay (1981) addressed this and demonstrated that teaching about the Bible was more likely to result in a positive attitude toward Christianity than the teaching of world religions and that this was the case in England, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and in most kinds of school. Secondly, they noted that Francis' attitude measures only pertain to Christianity and not any of the other world religions. Smith (1999) addressed this by developing attitude scales pertaining to Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism. To address these gaps in knowledge, Kay and Smith (2002) undertook a survey of 2,879 pupils from 22 co-educational comprehensive schools of diverse types in England. They reported that 13% of pupils state that they use the Bible often, 38% state that they use it sometimes, 21% use it seldom and 28% claim never to use it (*ibid*: 116–8). In terms of the multi-faith attitude scales, they argued that because the data obtained inter-correlates with each other, underlying pro- or anti-religious factors must shape young people's attitudes towards religion generally rather than towards any individual religion specifically (*ibid*: 119). Moreover, their most surprising finding was that use of the Bible in RE has almost as beneficial an effect on attitudes towards Islam as it does on attitudes towards Christianity, and the attitudinal effect in regard to Buddhism and Hinduism is not far behind. They explained this in two ways. Firstly, use of the Bible improves attitudes towards Christianity and because attitude scores inter-correlate, attitudes towards other religions also improve. Secondly, by using the Bible in RE, the pupils come to the conclusion that the weight of the biblical text tells in favour of religion generally (*ibid*: 120).

The Biblos Project had a narrower focus than Francis in that it wished to study pupil attitudes towards the Bible rather than towards Christianity as a whole. Unlike Francis, it did not accept that positive attitudes towards God, Jesus, prayer, the church and the Christian instruction and worship offered in schools, necessarily correlate with disagreement with the statements 'I find it boring to listen to the Bible' and 'I think the Bible is out of date'. Although statistical tests have demonstrated a correlation between all items in Francis' scale of attitudes towards Christianity, they cannot account for



the effect which the scale as a whole has on the way in which each item is interpreted. For instance, the item ‘God means a lot to me’ *could* gain positive assent from non-Christian theists, but when it is placed beside items pertaining to the Bible and the church, the positive assent might be withdrawn as the item clearly pertains to the Christian God. Similarly, atheists could hold very negative attitudes towards God (or the idea of God), but still enjoy listening to the Bible being read as part of their cultural heritage. For these reasons, the Biblos Project decided that attitudes towards the Bible needed to be studied independently from attitudes towards Christianity.

### **1.3. New Zealand context**

As a way of introduction to some of the points raised later in the report, a short series of key facts is presented for readers unfamiliar with the culture in New Zealand (NZ). Much of this information was kindly provided by the Bible Society in New Zealand and the Churches Education Commission.

#### **1.3.1. Education in New Zealand<sup>1</sup>**

Schools in New Zealand can be classed as state, integrated or independent/private. State schools are funded by the Government and are secular. Integrated schools were previously private but have since been ‘integrated’ into the state system. Independent or private schools have their own independent boards, but have to meet certain requirements to be regulated by the Ministry of Education. They charge fees but also receive some government funding. Both integrated and independent schools may have their own ‘special character’ (usually a philosophical or religious belief) in the school programme and such schools may offer RE as a curriculum subject.

All state and integrated schools in New Zealand are governed by Boards of Trustees, elected from parents and community volunteer workers. They also include the school principal and a staff representative. Secondary school boards must also have a student representative.

Schools are divided into primary (age 5/6 to around 10), intermediate (around ages 11–12) and secondary (age 12/13 to 16+). In rural areas, primary and intermediate schools are sometimes combined and known as composite schools. The Ministry of Education rates schools along a ten-point scale. This rating takes into account a number of factors, including the socio-economic status of the families of the pupils at the school. A low decile rating indicates a school with a significant number of disadvantaged children. Schools located in a wealthy region are often known as ‘Decile ten schools’.

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### **1.3.2. RE/Bible in Schools<sup>2</sup>**

The 1964 Education Act allows for 'Religious Instruction' to be offered in state schools for up to 20 hours per year. The decision to offer RE is made by the school's Board of Trustees, based on a survey administered to the school's parents. In schools where this decision is made, RE or 'Bible in Schools' takes place for half an hour per week, for up to 40 weeks a year. At this time the school is legally deemed to be closed. The lessons are taken by volunteers, credentialed, trained and accredited by the Churches Education Commission.

Roughly 61% of state primary schools offer Bible in Schools and attendance is not compulsory. If RE is offered, parents may request that their child does not attend, in which case, the school has a duty of care in providing supervision for these children. About 5–6% of children are withdrawn from RE.

There is no formal RE in state secondary schools. However, elements of religious belief might be touched on at times in Social Studies, Liberal Studies, History and the occasional school assembly. Scripture Union organises 'Scripture Union in Schools' (SUIS) groups in intermediate and secondary schools, providing prayer support and access to resources.

### **1.3.3. Churches Education Commission**

The Churches Education Commission is the official agency for the programme of RE in New Zealand and is made up of 15 member Christian churches. The volunteers are drawn from 27 Christian denominations and fellowships. Their aim is 'to stimulate, service and co-ordinate the concerns of member churches and related organisations for Christian and general education in New Zealand.'

#### *Policy statement*

'Religious Education means learning to understand and appreciate the beliefs by which people live, as an aid to the development of the student's own beliefs and values. While acknowledging that there are other views of life that would have a place in religious programmes, we believe it is appropriate in New Zealand to give particular emphasis to the Christian faith, the Bible, and the life and teachings of Jesus, because of their pervasive influence through our cultural heritage and history, and their continuing power and relevance.'

#### *Purpose*

- 'Sharing our love and knowledge of God with children so as to give them a framework by which to discern faith for their lives.'
- 'Providing a Christian role model.'

- ‘Presenting the Gospel.’
- ‘Stimulating children to think about critical issues and to understand they can have purpose and hope.’

*Aims and objectives*

The intention of the RE/Bible in Schools programme is not so much to teach the Bible, as to help children understand its relevance to their lives. The aim is not therefore to instil biblical knowledge, or to offer a Bible instruction course, but to share Christian beliefs and values.

*Curriculum*

The curriculum ‘Religion in Life’ tries to help students make a connection between their lives and stories and the beliefs and values from the Christian faith. It tends to focus on the life of Jesus rather than the Old Testament characters but during certain times of the year, pupils may focus on incidents from the life of characters such as Joseph, Moses or David. In some instances teachers are asked by the school to take the whole school for an assembly (rather than one teacher per classroom). In this case the ‘Life Focus’ curriculum is used, using material from the Children’s Bible Ministry stable with a greater focus on Old Testament material. The style of teaching here involves more ‘teacher talk’ and story telling. Many teachers set verses for children to memorise. The edition of the Bible used depends on the individual volunteer teacher. The Churches Education Commission recommend using modern translations such as ‘Good News’ or ‘The Bible for Today’.

### **1.3.4. Ethnicity<sup>3</sup>**

Ethnicity is defined by Statistics New Zealand as follows: ‘Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to.’ Using this definition, ethnicity is seen as self-perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group. This is reflected in the coding of the Census, which allows individuals to cite more than one ethnic group. In this way the high percentage of mixed race individuals are accurately represented. Children in New Zealand are more ethnically diverse than adults: 18% of children identified with more than one ethnic group in the 2001 Census, compared with 6% of adults.

# Chapter Two: Management and Methodology

## 2.1. Management

The preliminary stages of the project were conducted on a day-to-day basis by part-time Research Assistants. Regular meetings were held with the Director to determine methodology, revise strategy and make decisions at critical points in the research process. Full team meetings were also held approximately monthly to review the present project and all ongoing research work in RE.

In order to oversee practical affairs in New Zealand, the Biblos research team collaborated with representatives from the Bible Society, Churches Education Commission, Scripture Union, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa and Children's Bible Ministries. The New Zealand Bible Society was specifically responsible for administering the questionnaires in New Zealand (e.g. printing, distribution and collection). On receipt of the questionnaires an additional Research Assistant was involved in inputting and analysing the data.

## 2.2. Methodology

### 2.2.1. Research foci

There were three main foci for the research:

1. To test pupils' knowledge and understanding of biblical material.
2. To investigate pupils' attitudes towards the Bible.
3. To contrast the existing findings of the UK with those in another English-speaking culture, in order to begin tackling the question of whether the 'problems' concerning the Bible are really English, British, European or worldwide.

### 2.2.2. The central research questions

These foci were translated into three research questions:

1. What do young people in New Zealand know and think about the Bible?
2. What have these attitudes and perceptions been shaped by?
3. How do these results compare to the UK sample?

**2.2.3. The mainly empirically-based inquiry**

In order to answer these research questions an empirical investigation was undertaken using questionnaires adapted from Phase Three of the Biblos Project. This phase began by conducting a pre-pilot study to trial questionnaires with pupils in Years 6, 9 and 12 in two Devon (UK) schools. To account for this range of ages, the wording of some of the questions and the number of questions differed slightly from year group to year group. The questionnaires contained items relating to pupils’ hobbies, activities, attitudes to friends, family and religion, as well as their knowledge and understanding of biblical narratives. However, the main aim of the pre-pilot was to gather pupils’ opinions about the Bible which could then be used to construct attitudinal measures for use in future questionnaires. These would tell us what young people today think about the Bible. This was preferred to using statements generated by adult researchers.

Firstly, ten different opinions of the Bible written by pupil respondents were turned into ten sets of semantically differentiated statements (e.g. ‘The Bible is important to me’ and ‘The Bible is not important to me’). These were presented in a five-point Semantic Differential Scale for completion by Year 9 and 12 pupils only. Pupils were asked to tick which statements they ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with or whether they were not sure. See example below:

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	
The Bible is important to me						The Bible is not important to me

Secondly, another set of twenty statements of opinion about the Bible were turned into a five-point Likert Scale for completion by Year 6, 9 and 12 pupils. In regard to each statement, pupils were asked to tick one from the following responses: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘not sure’, ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’. It was decided to use two separate forms of measurement to test whether there was a correlation between pupils’ scores on one scale with those on the other. In this way the validity of the scales could be assessed. The statements in both scales were chosen because they correspond to the words which teachers in the first phase of the Biblos Project thought that secondary school pupils would attribute to the Bible: boring; old-fashioned; out of date; rubbish; uncool; weird; and irrelevant (Copley, 1997, p. 56). They also represent the main categories of opinion which pupils expressed in response to the Key Stage 4 questionnaire in the second phase of the Biblos Project (Copley *et al*, 2001, pp. 27–40): veracity;

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credibility; interest; personal and social relevance; importance; moral influence; and intelligibility. The scales were contained in revised versions of the questionnaires which were piloted in two schools in Dorset. After a final revision, the questionnaires were sent to the schools in our main sample.

The Biblos Phase Three questionnaires were sent to the Bible Society in New Zealand in order to ensure that they were suitable for use in another culture. Modifications were then made as part of an ongoing dialogue between the research team at the University of Exeter and the Bible Society.

It was argued by the Bible Society that teachers were more likely to administer the questionnaire if it was less time-consuming than the UK version. The questionnaire was revised so that it was shorter in length and focussed simply on the key issues which emerged from Phase Three. The following modifications were made:

- Questions 4–7, which examined social and cultural factors such as interests and hobbies were omitted.
- Questions 13–15, which required pupils to explain the importance of the Bible, the Hebrew Bible and people in the Bible for Christians, Jews and Muslims respectively, were also omitted. It was argued by the Bible Society that these questions reflect the aims of the British education system and that New Zealand does not have comparable aims.
- A question was included to assess students' ethnicity. It was argued that there may be significant differences between ethnic groups in terms of their knowledge of the Bible and Christianity. The options for ethnicity were as follows: Pakeha (European)/Maori/Pacific Islander/Asian/Other. In accordance with Census practice, pupils who selected two or more categories were coded under each applicable group.
- Question 8 of the original questionnaire was prefaced by the question: 'Have you heard or read any stories/passages from the Bible?' Pupils were asked to select 'Yes' or 'No'. It was argued that in New Zealand this knowledge could not be assumed, as it was possible that a minority of pupils may not have heard any biblical narratives.
- References to Religious Education (as in Question 6) were changed to Religious Education/Bible in Schools.

The revised questionnaire (see Appendix XI) contains two sections: Section A was designed to test pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Bible and Section B was designed to explore what young people themselves think about the Bible.

### 2.2.4. Pupil sample

The following section presents basic information about the pupil respondents who completed the questionnaire.

#### *Schools*

The pupil sample was derived from 13 participating schools (see Table 1).<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1**

	Schools in	Decile rating	Year 6s (%)	Year 9s (%)	Year 12s (%)	Total (%)
Primary	Browns Bay, Auckland (has RE, mixed)	10	72 (28.6)	-	-	17.2
	Glenfield, Auckland (has RE, mixed)	6	26 (10.3)	-	-	6.2
	Te Puke, Bay of Plenty (has RE, mixed)	3	26 (10.3)	-	-	6.2
	Tawa, Wellington (has RE, mixed)	10	28 (11.1)	-	-	6.7
	Churton Park, Wellington (has RE, mixed)	10	22 (8.7)	-	-	5.3
	Linwood, Christch. (has a chaplain, mixed)	2	25 (9.9)	-	-	6.0
	Marchwiell, Timaru (has RE, mixed)	4	12 (4.8)	-	-	2.9
	Balclutha, South Otago (has RE, mixed)	4	24 (9.5)	-	-	5.7
	Gore, Southland (has RE, mixed)	5	17 (6.7)	-	-	4.1
Secondary	Wellington (has a chaplain, mixed)	3	-	28 (23.7)	-	6.7
	Queenstown, Otago (has a chaplain, mixed)	10	-	29 (24.6)	-	6.9
	Whakatane, Bay of Plenty (mixed)	5	-	34 (28.8)	33 (67.3)	16.0
	Oamaru, North Otago (girls only)	6	-	27 (22.9)	16 (32.7)	10.3
<b>Total</b>		-	252 (100)	118 (100)	49 (100)	419 (100)

As can be seen in Table 1, the sample schools fell within a range of decile ratings from 2 to 10. The number and percentage of respondents within each decile rating is noted in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Decile rating	Number of respondents (%)
2	25 (6.0)
3	54 (12.9)
4	36 (8.6)
5	84 (20.0)
6	69 (16.5)
10	151 (36.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>419 (100.0)</b>

It can be noted from the table that the majority of pupils were from the higher end of the decile range. All schools are state schools, i.e. not integrated or independent/private and none have a religious foundation (in view of the small number who attend such schools). The decision was made to work with schools in different geographical locations and across the decile range, in order to gain as varied a sample as possible. The procedure for selecting schools was as follows: seven lists of schools were made according to geographical area (Auckland metropolitan, Wellington metropolitan, Christchurch metropolitan, North Island rural, South Island rural, North Island provincial cities and South Island provincial cities). Each list contained a range of primary and secondary schools, with some offering RE and others not. Initial letters were sent to 74 schools. Out of 25 responses, 3 schools agreed and 22 declined. After a ‘back up list’ of schools was approached, 13 schools had agreed to participate. These were contacted again and asked to complete the survey within one class of the designated year group.<sup>5</sup> Questionnaires were provided along with a supervisor’s instruction sheet (see Appendix XII).

*Number, year group and gender*

There were 419 respondents in the New Zealand sample. These were derived from three year groups:

- 252 Year 6 pupils (60.1%)
- 118 Year 9 pupils (28.2%)
- 49 Year 12 pupils (11.7%)

There were 234 females (55.8%) and 179 males (42.7%).<sup>6</sup> The proportion of male and female pupils in each school year is noted in Table 3.



**Table 3**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Males (%)</b>	<b>Females (%)</b>	<b>Invalid response (%)</b>
Year 6	128 (50.8)	123 (48.8)	1 (0.4)
Year 9	36 (30.5)	77 (65.3)	5 (4.2)
Year 12	15 (30.6)	34 (69.4)	0 (0)
<b>Total</b>	179 (42.7)	234 (55.8)	6 (1.5)

Due to the low participation rate, the number of respondents was much lower than for Phase Three. It can be noted that the sample was skewed towards female respondents (55.8%). Although the gender ratio was weighted towards females in Phase Three of the Biblos Project (see Appendix I), this bias was stronger in the New Zealand sample. This was largely due to the presence of an all girls school in the sample. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 was also much higher in the New Zealand sample than in the UK and the proportion of pupils in Year 9 and 12 was lower. The proportion of pupils in Year 12 was particularly low, accounting for only 11.7% of the total sample. The relatively high proportion of Year 6 pupils was largely due to the fact that a greater number of primary schools were contacted at the outset. The Bible Society was keen to increase the number of students at the Year 6 level for two reasons. Firstly, the Churches Education Commission and groups working mainly with primary ages would be particularly interested in Year 6 results. Secondly, a larger sample in this age group would increase the reliability of conclusions drawn and also allow comparisons between children who receive RE at school with those who do not. Unfortunately of those primary schools that agreed to participate, all but one offered RE, preventing these comparisons being made.

### 2.3. Stages of analysis

Pupils' responses to the questionnaires were coded according to the categories devised during Phase Three of the Biblos Project. Every attempt was made to code responses in the same way to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons. However categories were altered when the existing categories did not accurately represent the New Zealand data and new categories were created when a sufficient number of pupils wrote a response not mentioned in the UK coding criteria.

The questionnaire data was entered into SPSS Version 11.0 (a statistical computer package for social sciences) and analysed using non-parametric statistical tests. The data did not meet the assumptions necessary to undertake parametric tests.

# Chapter Three: Questionnaire Findings

## Research questions:

1. What do young people in New Zealand know and think about the Bible?
2. What have these attitudes and perceptions been shaped by?
3. How do these results compare to the UK sample?

### 3.1. Information about the respondents

The following section presents basic information about the pupil respondents pertaining to their ethnic group, religious affiliation (if any) and frequency of attendance at a place of worship.

#### *Ethnic group*

Pupils were asked which ethnic group they belong to.<sup>7</sup> They were asked to choose from the categories listed in Table 4.<sup>8</sup> All categories relate to the definitions and coding procedures employed in the New Zealand Census (see Appendix II). This includes allowing individuals to cite more than one ethnic group. Therefore, the following percentages do not add up to 100%

**Table 4**

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Number of pupils (%)</b>
Pakeha (European)	255 (60.9)
Maori	87 (20.8)
Other	37 (8.8)
Asian	41 (9.8)
Pacific Islander	13 (3.1)

Alternative coding of these results according to European definitions and a breakdown of the results by gender and year group is presented in Appendix III and IV, respectively. As the table shows, the sample does not appear to be representative of the 2001 New Zealand Census. Europeans in particular appear to be under-represented. Closer examination of the results by year group reveals that in Year 6, Europeans were under-represented, whereas the proportion of pupils citing 'Other' was higher than indicated by the Census. The sample for Year 9 appeared to be fairly representative, however the Year 12 sample included a high proportion of Maoris and a low proportion of Asians.

*Declared religion*

Pupils were asked which religion (if any) they belong to, or identify with. They were asked to choose from the categories listed in Table 5.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 5**

Religion	Number of pupils (%)	
	NZ	UK
None	213 (50.8)	161 (15.1)
Christianity <sup>10</sup>	143 (34.1)	751 (70.5)
Other <sup>11</sup>	13 (3.1)	16 (1.5)
Buddhism	10 (2.4)	8 (0.8)
Hinduism	5 (1.2)	36 (3.4)
Islam	3 (0.7)	26 (2.4)
Sikhism	1 (0.2)	66 (6.2)
Judaism	0 (0)	2 (0.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>388 (92.5)</b>	<b>1066 (100)</b>

31 (7.4%) pupils gave an invalid response to this question, including 14 Year 6 pupils (3.3%) who wrote 'don't know'. The proportion of pupils in each year group, and the proportion of male and female pupils, who declared affiliation with each religion is noted in Appendix V. Appendix VI also shows the religious affiliation of members within each ethnic group category. It appears that the present sample were less likely to identify with Christianity and more likely to cite 'no' religious affiliation than the population surveyed in the 2001 Census. Differences were also noted between the UK and New Zealand samples, with a lower proportion of pupils in the New Zealand sample associating with 'Christianity' and a much higher proportion citing 'no' religious affiliation.

## Interestingly...

- Using the Chi-square Continuity Correction ( $\chi^2$ ) test for statistical significance,<sup>12</sup> females were more likely than males to belong to a Western (i.e. Christianity or Islam) rather than an Eastern religion (i.e. Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism)<sup>13</sup> and specifically females were more likely than males to identify with Christianity rather than another religion.<sup>14</sup> However, there was no significant difference between males and females in terms of whether they identified with a religion or not.<sup>15</sup>
- There was no statistically significant difference between pupils within each year group, in terms of whether they identified with a religion or not.<sup>16</sup>

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### *Attendance at worship*

Pupils were asked how frequently they usually attend a place of worship (e.g. church/synagogue/mosque, etc).<sup>17</sup> They were asked to choose from the categories listed in Table 6.

**Table 6**

Frequency of attendance at worship	Number of pupils (%)	
	NZ	UK
Never	157 (37.5)	165 (15.5)
Rarely	96 (22.9)	243 (22.8)
Sometimes	79 (18.9)	252 (23.6)
Very Often	54 (12.9)	201 (18.9)
Often	21 (5.0)	204 (19.1)
<b>Total</b>	407 (97.2)	1065 (99.9) <sup>18</sup>

The proportion of pupils in each year group, and the proportion of male and female pupils, who cited the different frequency categories is noted in Appendix VII. It can be noted that the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who claimed never to attend worship was very high and that pupils in the UK sample cited a higher frequency of attendance at a place of worship than pupils in the New Zealand sample.

## **3.2 Respondents' biblical knowledge and understanding**

This section of the questionnaire was designed to ascertain the source of, and extent of, the respondents' biblical knowledge. It also attempted to ascertain their understanding of the meaning and relevance of the Bible, as well as what they find problematic.

### **3.2.1. Frequency affirming specific sources of Bible knowledge**

Pupils were asked whether they had read or heard passages from the Bible. To which 351 (83.8%) pupils replied 'Yes' and 61 (14.6%) pupils replied 'No'.<sup>19</sup> Pupils were then asked to state the source of their biblical knowledge by choosing from the categories listed in Table 7.<sup>20</sup> As a multi-response question, pupils were allowed to tick more than one answer.

**Table 7**

Sources of Bible knowledge	Number of pupils (%)	
	NZ	UK
RE lessons/Bible in Schools	258 (61.6)	994 (93.2)
Place of worship	133 (31.7)	659 (61.8)
Family	129 (30.8)	333 (31.2)
Books/magazines	111 (26.5)	256 (24.0)
Media (TV/film/radio)	100 (23.9)	385 (36.1)
Friends	77 (18.4)	164 (15.4)
Other	30 (7.2)	51 (4.8)
Collective worship/assemblies	N/A	830 (77.9)

It can be noted that the proportion of pupils in the New Zealand sample who cited ‘RE lessons/Bible in Schools’, ‘Place of worship’ and/or ‘Media’ was lower than in the UK sample.

### 3.2.2. Frequency affirming specific characters who appear in the Bible

Pupils were asked to name five characters/people who appear in the Bible. The pupils were allocated five spaces in which to insert their names. Some students cited more or less than five characters/people. In that eventuality all those cited were included in the coding categories contained in Table 8. For categories which include a range of characters, e.g. ‘Other NT character’, the number and percentage refer to those pupils who named one or more character.

**Table 8**

Biblical character	Number of pupils (%)	
	NZ	UK
Jesus	334 (79.7)	975 (91.5)
Mary	186 (44.4)	479 (44.9)
God	186 (44.4)	274 (25.7)
Other Hebrew Bible/OT character	174 (41.5)	344 (32.3)
Joseph <sup>21</sup>	161 (38.4)	401 (37.6)
Evangelists <sup>22</sup>	136 (32.5)	438 (41.1)
Other NT character	126 (30.1)	526 (49.3)
Moses	115 (27.4)	408 (38.3)
Adam	68 (16.2)	112 (10.5)
Eve	62 (14.8)	99 (9.3)
Inaccurate/Irrelevant <sup>23</sup>	21 (5.0)	49 (4.7)
Abraham	19 (4.5)	115 (10.8)

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Interestingly, the most dramatic differences were that pupils in the New Zealand sample cited ‘God’ over 18% more frequently than pupils in the UK sample and ‘Other Hebrew Bible/OT characters’ about 10% more frequently. Similarly, pupils in the UK sample cited ‘Jesus’ and ‘Other NT character’ about 10% and 20% more frequently respectively than pupils in the New Zealand sample. In line with the finding that pupils in the New Zealand sample were more likely to cite God as a biblical character than pupils in the UK sample, there was also a strong tendency for pupils in the New Zealand sample to refer to God in the place of Jesus when describing biblical passages. Another interesting finding was the strong tendency to misspell the names of biblical characters. For example, 54 out of 334 pupils who cited Jesus gave an incorrect spelling. In total, 39 different spellings of Jesus were noted. These were mainly phonetic spellings, but with evidence that English was an additional language for some pupils.

The proportion of pupils able to name differing numbers of characters/people correctly is included in Table 9 below.

**Table 9**

Numbers of characters named correctly	Number of pupils (%)	
	NZ	UK
Named five	290 (69.2)	936 (87.8)
None <sup>24</sup>	39 (9.3)	9 (0.8)
Named four	36 (8.6)	51 (4.8)
Name three	24 (5.7)	22 (2.1)
Named two	12 (2.9)	15 (1.4)
Named more than five	10 (2.4)	22 (2.1)
Named one	8 (1.9)	11 (1.0)

Interestingly, the proportion of pupils able to name 5 biblical characters was lower in the New Zealand sample than in the UK sample. Also, using Spearman’s correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ), there was no significant relationship between the frequency with which pupils attend a place of worship and the number of biblical characters they were able to name.<sup>25</sup>

### **3.2.3 Identification of a passage from the Bible**

Pupils were asked to name one story or passage from the Bible. The number of pupils who identified each type of passage is presented in Table 10 below along with the results for the UK sample.

**Table 10**

Passage	Number of pupils (%)	
	NZ	UK
Invalid response <sup>26</sup>	176 (42)	75 (7)
Hebrew Bible/Old Testament	159 (37.9)	326 (30.6)
New Testament	67 (16.0)	647 (60.7)
Inaccurate/Irrelevant	17 (4.1)	18 (1.7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>419 (100)</b>	<b>1066 (100)</b>

In contrast to pupils in the UK sample, pupils in the New Zealand sample were more likely to mention Hebrew Bible/Old Testament passages and less likely to provide a valid response or to mention New Testament passages.

### 3.2.4. Meaning of a passage from the Bible<sup>27</sup>

Pupils were asked what meaning their selected Bible passage might have for people today. Their responses were coded according to the categories presented in Table 11.

**Table 11**

Meaning ascribed	Number of pupils (%)
Invalid response <sup>28</sup>	241 (57.5)
Theological	56 (13.4)
Secular ethical	44 (10.5)
Description	28 (6.7)
Not applicable	25 (6.0)
No meaning stated	15 (3.6)
Secular Other	10 (2.4)

It should be noted that the proportion of pupils who gave a valid response to this question was very low. These results must therefore be interpreted with caution.

These categories vary slightly from those used in Phase Three of the Biblos Project. For a full explanation of the coding criteria and UK results, please see Appendix VIII and Appendix IX respectively. Due to this recoding it is not appropriate to make direct comparisons between the UK and New Zealand data. However it is still interesting to note that for New Zealand pupils, the highest response was ‘Theological’, whereas in the UK it was ‘Secular ethical’.

Table 12 provides a selection of pupil responses to the questionnaire items which asked them to name one story or passage from the Bible and to explain the meaning which it might have for people today.

**Table 12**

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**Selected Questionnaire Quotations – (Where respondents' written answers are included in the report, their spelling is replicated exactly.)**

---

*Year 6. Pupil 15*

Name of story/passage: Joseph and the colourful cloak  
Meaning for people today: Be nice to others for who they are.

*Year 6. Pupil 30*

Name of story/passage: David and Golith  
Meaning for people today: God will help you to be strong in the heart.

*Year 6. Pupil 123*

Name of story/passage: David and Goliath  
Meaning for people today: Have courage to difeat your enemy like david did.

*Year 6. Pupil 139*

Name of story/passage: Danile and the lions  
Meaning for people today: If you belive in God you will be saved in a deadly situation.

*Year 6. Pupil 141*

Name of story/passage: Noahs Ark  
Meaning for people today: How Noah survived the flooding.

*Year 6. Pupil 147*

Name of story/passage: Jesus curses a fig tree  
Meaning for people today: Jesus cursed a fig tree to never make fruit again.

*Year 6. Pupil 180*

Name of story/passage: Jonah  
Meaning for people today: Do not diss repekt God.

*Year 6. Pupil 182*

Name of story/passage: Jonah and the fish  
Meaning for people today: Be helpful be grateful be nice.

*Year 6. Pupil 207*

Name of story/passage: David and the gient  
Meaning for people today: That gients mit have lived.

*Year 9. Pupil 254*

Name of story/passage: Joseph and his technicoloured coat  
Meaning for people today: That god will reward those who worship and trust in his love.  
That he is the true king.

*Year 9. Pupil 283*

Name of story/passage: David and Goliath  
Meaning for people today: To stand up for what you believe in and trust yourself.

*Year 12. Pupil 409*

Name of story/passage: Noah's Ark  
Meaning for people today: That people should be kind to animals.

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### 3.2.5. Influence of the Bible on modern society

Year 12 pupils only (49 respondents) were asked what aspects of modern life they thought had been influenced by the Bible. 28 pupils (57.1% of Year 12) provided an invalid response to this question. The results for the remaining 21 pupils (5.0% of the total sample) were coded according to the categories presented in Table 13.

**Table 13**

Influence ascribed	Number of pupils (%)
Other	6 (28.6)
Moral behaviour/Ten Commandments	4 (19.0)
None	4 (19.0)
The law	2 (9.5)
Not much/for religious people only	2 (9.5)
Holidays/festivals	1 (4.8)
Marriage/rites of passage	1 (4.8)
Education	1 (4.8)
Charities	0 (0)
Religious programmes on TV	0 (0)

It was not possible to compare these results with the UK sample or carry out any further analyses using the data due to the low number of valid responses.

**Table 14**

Selected Questionnaire Quotation	
What aspects of modern life do you think have been influenced by the Bible?	
<i>Year 12. Pupil 378</i>	Christmas, Easter & human morals. As well as movies & books.

### 3.2.6. What pupils find difficult about the Bible

Pupils were asked what one thing do they find difficult about the Bible. Their answers were coded according to the categories presented in Table 15.

**Table 15**

<b>Difficulty expressed</b>	<b>Number of pupils (%)</b>
Invalid response <sup>29</sup>	102 (24.3)
Language	79 (18.9)
Format <sup>30</sup> (e.g. size, font, lack of pictures etc)	56 (13.4)
Meaning	48 (11.5)
Credibility	47 (11.2)
Other	32 (7.6)
Reading it	27 (6.4)
None	25 (6.0)
Relevance	2 (0.5)
Contains contradictions	1 (0.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>419 (100)</b>

The coding categories for the New Zealand sample differed slightly from those used in Phase Three (see Table 16), which prevents direct comparison being made.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 16: UK Results**

<b>Difficulty expressed</b>	<b>Number of pupils (%)</b>
Language	218 (20.5)
Meaning	186 (17.4)
Other	161 (15.1)
Credibility	145 (13.6)
No response	108 (10.1)
Format (e.g. size, font, lack of pictures etc)	102 (9.6)
None	69 (6.5)
Credibility of Miracles	34 (3.2)
Relevance	24 (2.3)
Contains contradictions	19 (1.8)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1066 (100)</b>

Despite the difference in the coding categories, it is interesting to note that the most frequent response for both the New Zealand and UK samples was 'language'. The number of pupils mentioning miracles was lower in the New Zealand sample than in the UK sample, but the proportion of pupils citing 'format' was higher.

**Table 17**

<b>Selected Questionnaire Quotations</b>	
One thing I find difficult about the Bible is...	
<i>Year 6. Pupil 156</i>	How the good god can also be a fierce god to people who don't obey him.
<i>Year 9. Pupil 262</i>	To sit there for hours reading. Its thin pages trying not to rip them.
<i>Year 9. Pupil 305</i>	Some of the launguge in the King James version is a little hard to understand.
<i>Year 9. Pupil 353</i>	I'm not sure whether it's true or not. I'm confused.
<i>Year 9. Pupil 363</i>	I don't understand some parts, it really weird!

### **3.3. Information about the respondents' attitudes towards the Bible**

This section of the questionnaire was designed to ascertain the respondents' attitudes towards the Bible as well as what factors may have influenced those attitudes.

#### **3.3.1. What shapes pupils' attitudes?**

Year 6 pupils were asked what they thought had influenced their view(s) of the Bible. Year 9 and Year 12 pupils were asked what they thought had helped to shape their attitude towards the Bible. Their answers were coded according to categories presented in Table 18.

**Table 18**

<b>Influence cited</b>	<b>Number of pupils (%)</b>
Invalid response	232 (55.4)
Family <sup>32</sup>	35 (8.4)
RE lessons/Bible in Schools	23 (5.5)
Own beliefs <sup>33</sup>	22 (5.3)
Reading/Hearing it <sup>34</sup>	17 (4.1)
Nothing/Not much	17 (4.1)
Other	15 (3.6)
Place of worship	13 (3.1)
Bible teacher	13 (3.1)
Education/School	9 (2.1)
Other named person	6 (1.4)
Life experience (See Appendix X)	6 (1.4)
Friends	6 (1.4)
Not Reading/Hearing it	5 (1.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>419 (100)</b>

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Several of these categories are different to those used in Phase Three of the Biblos Project (see Table 19).<sup>35</sup>

**Table 19: UK Results**

Influence cited	Number of pupils (%)
Family	93 (27.4)
No response	57 (16.8)
Own beliefs	49 (14.5)
Other	32 (9.4)
Life experience	30 (8.8)
School (e.g. collective worship)	21 (6.2)
Friends	22 (6.5)
RE lessons	20 (5.9)
Place of worship	12 (3.5)
Other named person	3 (0.9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>339 (100)</b>

Although the difference in the coding categories again prohibits direct comparisons, it is interesting to note that family was mentioned most frequently in both the New Zealand and UK samples (excluding invalid responses). The percentage of pupils who provided an invalid response for this question was very high (55.4%). Of those pupils 80 (19.1%) wrote ‘don’t know’, 35 (8.4%) gave an irrelevant or inappropriate answer, 7 (1.7%) pupils explicitly stated that they did not understand the question and 110 (26.3%) provided no response. For this reason the results should be interpreted with caution.

**Table 20**

Selected Questionnaire Quotations	
What do you think has helped to shape your attitude towards the Bible?	
<i>Year 6. Pupil 79</i>	I think my bible teacher and one of my friends has influenced my views of the bible.
<i>Year 9. Pupil 262</i>	The fact that god is there helping me to follow the right path and be a better person.
<i>Year 9. Pupil 305</i>	My family my pastor and church my friends and my own experiences.
<i>Year 9. Pupil 333</i>	I think my friends did. I don’t believe in it fully and I don’t really apply what is in there to my life but I respect it.
<i>Year 12. Pupil 375</i>	Growing up and living life to my own plan. Realising there’s no such thing as ‘sinning’ only learning. Knowing you make your own fate.
<i>Year 12. Pupil 404</i>	I have formed my own opinions about the bible. I was a regular church-goer when I was younger but I choose not to go now.

### 3.3.2. Familial attitude

Pupils were asked to complete the sentence: ‘My family thinks the Bible ...’. Their responses were coded according to the categories presented in Table 21. The results for the New Zealand sample have been presented alongside those for the UK in order that comparisons can be made. It is important to note however that for the New Zealand sample it was necessary to create an additional category of ‘is good/positive comment’. This recoding was necessary to present the data accurately, but as a result, direct statistical comparisons between the UK and New Zealand data have been prevented.

**Table 21**

Attitude cited	Number of pupils (%)	
	NZ	UK
Is good/positive comment	77 (18.4)	N/A
I don't know/we don't talk about it	52 (12.4) <sup>36</sup>	53 (5.0)
Is important/respect it	47 (11.2)	344 (32.3)
Invalid response	44 (10.5) <sup>37</sup>	110 (10.3)
Is OK	39 (9.3) <sup>38</sup>	50 (4.7)
Is rubbish/negative comment	32 (7.6)	54 (5.1)
Other	28 (6.7) <sup>39</sup>	97 (9.1)
Is true/believe in it	28 (6.7)	84 (7.9)
Is not true/do not believe in it	17 (4.1)	26 (2.4)
Is not important/irrelevant	15 (3.6)	94 (8.8)
Different family members think different things	13 (3.1)	47 (4.4)
Useful as a guide for living/moral teaching	11 (2.6)	48 (4.5)
They don't live by it	6 (1.4)	23 (2.2)
Is boring	6 (1.4)	13 (1.2)
Is interesting	4 (1.0)	20 (1.9)
Is out of date	0 (0)	2 (0.2)
Has historical significance	0 (0)	1 (0.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>419 (100)</b>	<b>1066 (100)</b>

It can be noted from Table 21 above that the most frequent response for both samples was positive. In New Zealand this was ‘is good/positive response’, whereas in the UK the most frequent response was ‘is important’.

**Table 22**

<b>Selected Questionnaire Quotations</b>	
My family thinks the Bible...	
<i>Year 6. Pupil 31</i>	Is so Not true they say Bacteria created us.
<i>Year 6. Pupil 41</i>	Is The Best Book in the world.
<i>Year 6. Pupil 100</i>	Is real and God is true but we are still Moaris.
<i>Year 6. Pupil 159</i>	Is a waste of time.
<i>Year 9. Pupil 345</i>	My nana used to read it sometimes I think but then she died
<i>Year 12. Pupil 376</i>	I don't talk about the bible with my family. My sister has her own copy so I guess she agrees with it.

**3.3.3. Attitude of friends**

Pupils were asked to complete the sentence: ‘My friends think the Bible ...’. Their responses were coded according to the categories presented in Table 23. Again the data for the UK and New Zealand samples have been presented alongside one another to facilitate comparisons, but readers should be aware of the recoding noted previously.

**Table 23**

<b>Attitude cited</b>	<b>Number of pupils (%)</b>	
	<b>NZ</b>	<b>UK</b>
I don't know/we don't talk about it	69 (16.5) <sup>40</sup>	98 (9.2)
Is rubbish/negative comment	66 (15.8)	164 (15.4)
Invalid response	49 (11.7) <sup>41</sup>	122 (11.4)
Is good	43 (10.3)	N/A
Is OK	35 (8.4)	49 (4.6)
Different friends think different things	33 (7.9)	95 (8.9)
Is boring	27 (6.4)	96 (9.0)
Other	24 (5.7) <sup>42</sup>	99 (9.3)
Is important/respect it	20 (4.8)	122 (11.4)
Is not true/do not believe in it	14 (3.3)	23 (2.2)
Is not important/irrelevant	12 (2.9)	133 (12.5)
Is true/believe in it	12 (2.9)	17 (1.6)
Is interesting	7 (1.7)	11 (1.0)
Useful as a guide for living/moral teaching	5 (1.2)	15 (1.4)
They don't live by it	1 (0.2)	10 (0.9)
Is out of date	1 (0.2)	9 (0.8)
Contradicts itself/mixed messages	1 (0.2)	3 (0.3)
Has historical significance	0 (0)	1 (0.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>419 (100)</b>	<b>1066 (100)</b>

It is interesting to note that the most popular responses in terms of the attitude of friends were 'I don't know' and 'is rubbish'. The highest frequencies in the UK were for 'is rubbish' and 'is not important'.

**Table 24**

Selected Questionnaire Quotations	
My friends think the Bible...	
<i>Year 9. Pupil 305</i>	Most dont think its true, but respect that I do.
<i>Year 9. Pupil 367</i>	Is good but the don't read it. they know that it is important but some of them joke about it.
<i>Year 12. Pupil 376</i>	Depends which friends, my friends range from Christian to Athiest. Some think it is made up, others believe it is great.

### 3.3.4. Semantic Differential statements<sup>43</sup>

Year 9 and Year 12 pupils only were asked to consider two semantically differentiated statements. They were asked to tick which statement they 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with or whether they were not sure. Ten pairs of statements were used. The following describes the number and percentage of pupils who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' (SA/A) with each positive statement as well as the number and percentage of pupils who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the 'semantically opposite' statement. For ease, the latter pupils have been coded in Table 25 as those who 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' with the positive statement (SD/D). The remainder of pupils were 'not sure'.

**Table 25**

Semantic Differential Statement	SA/A (%)		SD/D (%)	
	NZ	UK	NZ	UK
The Bible is important to me	47 (29.6)	302 (33.7)	68 (42.8)	318 (35.5)
The Bible is relevant to today	65 (40.6)	482 (53.7)	39 (24.4)	162 (18.1)
The Bible is interesting	47 (29.6)	322 (35.9)	55 (34.6)	318 (35.5)
The Bible contains truth	65 (40.1)	430 (47.9)	26 (16.0)	153 (17.1)
The Bible can show people how to live	57 (35.4)	566 (63.1)	41 (25.5)	169 (18.8)
I look to the Bible for personal guidance	27 (17.0)	168 (18.7)	98 (61.6)	527 (58.8)
I believe in the Bible	60 (37.7)	355 (39.6)	56 (35.2)	253 (28.2)
The Bible should be respected	89 (55.6)	665 (74.1)	34 (21.3)	116 (12.9)
Science has not proved the Bible wrong	33 (20.5)	210 (23.4)	41 (25.5)	245 (27.3)
The Bible has important things to say to people today	60 (37.5)	429 (47.8)	42 (26.3)	222 (24.7)

**3.3.5. Likert Scale statements<sup>44</sup>**

Table 26 presents the number and percentage of pupils in the New Zealand and UK samples who ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with Likert Scale statements and the number and percentage of pupils who ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ with each statement. The remainder of pupils were ‘not sure’.

**Table 26**

Likert Scale Statement	SA/A (%)		SD/D (%)	
	NZ	UK	NZ	UK
The Bible is important because it tells us about God	271 (65.8)	692 (65.4)	60 (14.6)	155 (14.7)
The Bible is a waste of time	72 (17.7)	166 (15.7)	248 (60.9)	679 (64.4)
Most of the stories/passages in the Bible are true	180 (44.0)	355 (33.7)	73 (17.8)	243 (23.1)
The Bible is no longer important because people no longer believe in God	48 (11.8)	79 (7.6)	266 (65.4)	775 (74.1)
The Bible contains things that in real life would not happen	141 (35.3)	543 (51.6)	88 (22.1)	201 (19.1)
The Bible can help when times are hard	206 (51.0)	591 (56.0)	85 (21.0)	201 (19.0)
The Bible is not important because it is just a book	71 (17.8)	133 (12.6)	253 (63.3)	730 (69.3)
The Bible is important but I don’t read it	209 (52.3)	662 (63.1)	126 (31.5)	238 (22.7)
The Bible is the Word of God	235 (57.9)	550 (52.2)	61 (15.0)	195 (18.5)
The Bible is important if you are religious	289 (72.4)	824 (78.5)	43 (10.8)	118 (11.2)
The Bible is not important because it is full of myths	67 (16.4)	139 (13.2)	209 (51.2)	614 (58.4)
The Bible is exciting	152 (37.5)	181 (17.2)	147 (36.3)	548 (52.0)
I would never read the Bible	95 (23.3)	275 (26.2)	214 (52.5)	482 (45.9)
The Bible is not important because it was written so long ago	47 (11.6)	125 (11.9)	251 (61.8)	697 (66.3)
The Bible is important for other people but not for me	159 (39.3)	458 (43.6)	176 (43.5)	386 (36.8)
The Bible is uncool	80 (19.8)	321 (30.7)	228 (56.3)	430 (41.1)
I enjoy reading the Bible	137 (33.9)	168 (16.0)	158 (39.1)	608 (58.0)
I respect the Bible and its teachings but do not live by it	176 (44.1)	665 (63.1)	91 (22.8)	187 (17.7)
The Bible is important because it teaches right from wrong	226 (55.5)	659 (62.6)	66 (16.2)	132 (12.5)
The Bible has not influenced my life	147 (36.1)	452 (42.8)	130 (31.9)	334 (31.7)



### 3.4. Attitude Measures and Scores

#### 3.4.1. Attitude Measures

##### *Semantic Differential Scores*

In terms of the Semantic Differential statements, the overall message of our total sample seemed to be that pupils believe the Bible to be relevant; to contain truth; to be worthy of respect; and to have important things to say to people today, yet it is not something they look to for personal guidance or see as important to themselves. Similarly, in terms of the Likert Scale statements, the overall message of our total sample seemed to be that the Bible is important (especially if you are religious) but that it is not something which they would read or live their life by.

Table 27 assesses the psychometric properties of the Semantic Differential Scale in terms of the alpha coefficients (Cronbach, 1951).

**Table 27**

Semantic Differential Statements	Corrected Item– Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
The Bible is important to me	.8590	.9330
The Bible is relevant to today	.7715	.9373
The Bible is interesting	.7032	.9404
The Bible contains truth	.7997	.9362
The Bible can show people how to live	.7445	.9386
I look to the Bible for personal guidance	.6416	.9430
I believe in the Bible	.8666	.9326
The Bible should be respected	.7651	.9377
Science has not proved the Bible wrong	.7023	.9403
The Bible has important things to say to people today	.8119	.9353
<b>Reliability Analysis Cronbach's Alpha = .9434</b>		

Table 27 demonstrates that there was internal consistency amongst responses to the opinion statements within the Semantic Differential Scale. Moreover, factor analysis produced an Eigenvalue of 6.657 and extracted only one component using principal component analysis (orthogonal solution selecting any factor with an Eigenvalue of more than one). Therefore, it was possible to generate a statistically reliable Semantic Differential Attitude Score (SDAS) between 10 and 50 for each pupil by adding the item scores together. In this sense, the instrument is a unidimensional measure of pupils' attitudes towards the Bible (Gardner, 1995).<sup>45</sup>

It should be noted that due to the large number of pupils in Year 6, the proportion of pupils who completed the Semantic Differential Scale was very

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low. The percentages presented in Table 28 below represent those pupils in Year 9 and 12 who gave valid responses to all of the Semantic Differential statements (36.3% of the total sample).

**Table 28**

Sample	Mean Score	
	NZ	UK
Year 9	29.65	28.07
Year 12	31.59	28.71
<b>Total</b>	30.24	28.30

Using the Mann-Whitney U test, pupils in the New Zealand sample were significantly more likely to show a more negative attitude on the Semantic Differential measure than those in the UK sample.<sup>46</sup> However the results revealed that this difference was only significant for the statements: ‘The Bible is relevant to today’;<sup>47</sup> ‘The Bible can show people how to live’;<sup>48</sup> and ‘The Bible should be respected’.<sup>49</sup> The implication of this will be discussed later. Also, analyses by year group revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between Year 9 pupils in the New Zealand and UK samples.<sup>50</sup> However, Year 12 pupils in the New Zealand sample were significantly more likely to express negative attitudes than Year 12 pupils in the UK sample.<sup>51</sup>

*Likert Scale Attitude Score*

Table 29 assesses the psychometric properties of the Likert Scale in terms of the alpha coefficients (Cronbach, 1951).

**Table 29**

Likert Scale Statements	Corrected Item – Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
The Bible is important because it tells us about God	.7788	.9214
The Bible is a waste of time	.7432	.9219
Most of the stories/passages in the Bible are true	.7063	.9230
The Bible is not important because people no longer believe in God	.5723	.9254
The Bible contains things that in real life would not happen	.4876	.9269
The Bible can help when times are hard	.7168	.9225
The Bible is not important because it is just a book	.7198	.9224
The Bible is important but I don’t read it	.1260	.9347
The Bible is the Word of God	.6610	.9236
The Bible is important if you are religious	-.1251	.9369

Table 29 continued

Likert Scale Statements	Corrected Item – Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
The Bible is not important because it is full of myths	.7560	.9217
The Bible is exciting	.7629	.9214
I would never read the Bible	.7667	.9212
The Bible is not important because it was written so long ago	.7597	.9220
The Bible is important for other people but not for me	.7924	.9205
The Bible is uncool	.6875	.9230
I enjoy reading the Bible	.8024	.9203
I respect the Bible and its teachings but do not live by it	.0594	.9350
The Bible is important because it teaches right from wrong	.6817	.9232
The Bible has not influenced my life	.6140	.9246
<b>Reliability Analysis Cronbach's Alpha = .9283</b>		

Table 29 demonstrates that there was internal consistency amongst responses to the opinion statements within the Likert Scale. However, factor analysis demonstrated that the Likert Scale instrument is a multidimensional measure of pupils' attitudes towards the Bible (Gardner, 1995). Principal component analysis (orthogonal solution selecting any factor with an Eigenvalue of more than one) and rotation varimax analysis, which maximises the number of zero and near zero loadings, extracted two factors. A finding that clusters of items load on distinct factors provides a clear indication that these various items should not be summed into a single total (*ibid*: 285).

#### *Factor One*

Likert Scale Factor One had an Eigenvalue of 9.794. It pertained to the Likert Scale statements in Table 30 and seems to relate to pupils' attitudes towards the importance and truth of the Bible as divine revelation, as well as the extent to which they find it enjoyable or personally relevant. By analysing the responses of those pupils who successfully responded to all the relevant Likert Scale statements (i.e. excluding those who did not respond to some statements), Table 30 also demonstrates that there was internal consistency in terms of the alpha coefficients (Cronbach, 1951). For this reason, the Biblos research team could generate a statistically reliable Likert Scale Factor One Score (LSF1S) between 17 and 85 for each pupil.

**Table 30**

General attitude towards the Bible: LSF1 Statements	Corrected Item –Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
The Bible is important because it tells us about God	.8211	.9489
The Bible is a waste of time	.7370	.9505
Most of the stories/passages in the Bible are true	.7625	.9501
The Bible is not important because people no longer believe in God	.6568	.9519
The Bible contains things that in real life would not happen	.5387	.9537
The Bible can help when times are hard	.7931	.9494
The Bible is not important because it is just a book	.7496	.9502
The Bible is the Word of God	.7258	.9507
The Bible is not important because it is full of myths	.7620	.9501
The Bible is exciting	.7433	.9504
I would never read the Bible	.8239	.9488
The Bible is not important because it was written so long ago	.7523	.9502
The Bible is important for other people but not for me	.7073	.9511
The Bible is uncool	.5808	.9533
I enjoy reading the Bible	.7888	.9495
The Bible is important because it teaches right from wrong	.6929	.9512
The Bible has not influenced my life	.6442	.9523
<b>Reliability Analysis Cronbach’s Alpha = .9535</b>		

*Factor Two*

Likert Scale Factor Two (LSF2) had an Eigenvalue of 1.802. It pertained to the Likert Scale statements in Table 31 and seems to relate to pupils’ attitudes towards the unimportance and irrelevance of the Bible to them personally. By analysing the responses of those pupils who successfully responded to all the relevant Likert Scale statements (i.e. excluding those who did not respond to some statements), Table 31 also demonstrates that there was *low internal consistency* in terms of the alpha coefficients (Cronbach, 1951). For this reason, the scale cannot purport to test any particular type of attitude towards the Bible and therefore will be excluded from further analysis.

**Table 31**

Unimportance and irrelevance of the Bible to the individual personally: LSF2 Statements	Corrected Item –Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
The Bible is important but I don’t read it	.4184	.4966
The Bible is important if you are religious	.3033	.6418
I respect the Bible and its teachings but do not live by it	.5318	.3095
Reliability Analysis Cronbach’s Alpha = .6034		

It was possible to compare the attitudes of pupils in the UK and New Zealand samples, in terms of the New Zealand Likert Scale Factor One Attitude Score (LSF1S), even though factor analysis extracted different factors using the UK Likert Scale results. Comparison was possible by generating attitude scores for UK pupils based on their responses to the same Likert Scale statements. Using the Mann-Whitney U test, there was no significant difference between the UK and New Zealand samples.<sup>52</sup> Analyses revealed no significant differences between Year 6 and Year 9 pupils in the UK and New Zealand samples.<sup>53</sup> However, Year 12 pupils in the New Zealand sample were significantly more likely to express negative attitudes than those in the UK sample.<sup>54</sup>

### 3.4.2. Attitude Scores

It was possible to use the statistically reliable attitude measures – Semantic Differential Attitude Score (SDAS) and Likert Scale Factor One Score (LSF1S) – in order to identify which factors affect pupils’ attitudes towards the Bible.

#### Demographic factors

##### *Gender*

- Using the Mann-Whitney U test for statistical significance, there was no significant difference between the attitudes of males and females in terms of the SDAS,<sup>55</sup> but females were significantly more likely to have a more positive attitude to the Bible than males in terms of the LSF1S.<sup>56</sup>

##### *Year group*

- The Kruskal-Wallis statistical test showed that there was a significant difference between the groups of pupils in Year 6, 9 and 12 in terms of the LSF1S.<sup>57</sup> The same tests showed that Year 6 pupils had the most positive attitudes to the Bible and that Year 12 pupils had the least positive attitudes.
- There was no statistically significant difference between Year 9 and Year 12 pupils in terms of the SDAS.<sup>58</sup>
- These results differ to the UK sample, where Year 9 held the least positive attitudes. However in both samples Year 6 were shown to be the most positive.

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*Decile rating*

- Using Spearman’s correlation coefficient (rho), there was no statistically significant relationship between a pupil’s school’s decile rating and their attitude score in terms of the LSF1S and SDAS.<sup>59</sup>

*Ethnic group*

- Using the Mann-Whitney U test for statistical significance, pupils who cited Pacific Islander<sup>60</sup> or Asian<sup>61</sup> as their ethnic group were significantly more likely to have a more positive attitude to the Bible than pupils who did not, in terms of the LSF1S. These findings were not significant using the SDAS.<sup>62</sup>
- Pupils who cited Pakeha (European) as their ethnic group were significantly more likely to have a more negative attitude to the Bible than pupils who did not, in terms of the LSF1S and SDAS.<sup>63</sup>
- There was no statistically significant difference between those pupils who cited ‘Other’ as their ethnic group and those who did not, in terms of the SDAS.<sup>64</sup>
- Pupils who cited Maori as their ethnic group were significantly more likely to have a more positive attitude to the Bible than pupils who did not, in terms of the SDAS.<sup>65</sup> This finding was not significant using the LSF1S.<sup>66</sup>

*Religious affiliation/identity*

- The Mann-Whitney U test for statistical significance showed that, in terms of the LSF1S (and SDAS when in italics), pupils were more likely to have a positive attitude towards the Bible if they *belonged to, or identified with: a religion rather than not;*<sup>67</sup> a ‘western’ religion (i.e. Christianity or Islam) rather than an ‘eastern’ religion (i.e. Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism);<sup>68</sup> and *Christianity rather than a non-Christian religion.*<sup>69</sup>
- The Kruskal-Wallis statistical test showed that there was a significant difference between the groups of pupils who declared affiliation with differing religions in terms of the SDAS and LSF1S.<sup>70</sup> Table 32 below provides the ranked order of these groups, from most positive to least positive.

**Table 32**

<b>Attitude</b>	<b>SDAS</b>	<b>LSF1S</b>
Most Positive	Christianity	Christianity
	None	Don’t know
	Other	Other
Least Positive		None

Please note that pupils' religious affiliations were recoded due to the low number of respondents within some of the groups.<sup>71</sup> Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh pupils were all recoded as 'Other'. They joined those pupils who were originally coded in this category. Although this negates direct comparisons with the UK data, it is interesting to note that in both samples Christianity is associated with the most positive attitudes.

#### *Frequency of attendance at worship*

- Spearman's correlation coefficient (rho) demonstrated that there was a negative correlation between the frequency with which pupils attend a place of worship and the LSF1S and SDAS.<sup>72</sup> Higher frequencies of attendance correlate with a lower score on the attitude measures and hence a more positive attitude score.

### **Factors concerned with biblical knowledge and understanding**

#### *Sources of biblical knowledge*

- Using the Mann-Whitney U test for statistical significance, pupils who cited *Place of worship*,<sup>73</sup> Media (TV/film/radio),<sup>74</sup> *Family*,<sup>75</sup> *Books/magazines*,<sup>76</sup> or Friends<sup>77</sup> as a source of their Bible knowledge were significantly more likely to have a more positive attitude to the Bible than pupils who did not, in terms of the LSF1S (and SDAS when in italics).
- Pupils who cited RE lessons were significantly more likely to have a negative attitude to the Bible than those who did not in terms of the LSF1S, but there was no statistically significant difference in terms of the SDAS.<sup>78</sup>
- There was no statistically significant difference between those pupils who cited 'Other'<sup>79</sup> as a source of their Bible knowledge and those who did not, in terms of their attitude scores.

#### *Biblical characters*

- The Kruskal-Wallis statistical test showed that there was no significant difference between the groups of pupils who were able to name varying numbers of biblical characters in terms of the LSF1S and SDAS.<sup>80</sup>

#### *Meaning of a passage from the Bible*

- The Kruskal-Wallis statistical test showed that there was a significant difference between the groups of pupils who provided differing types of meaning to Bible stories/passages in terms of the SDAS and LSF1S (excluding answers coded as 'Don't know' and 'Not applicable').<sup>81</sup>

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Table 33 below provides the ranked order of these groups, from most positive to least positive.

**Table 33**

Attitude	SDAS	LSF1S
Most Positive	Theological	Theological
	Description	Description
	Secular ethical	Secular ethical
	Secular other	Secular other
Least Positive	No meaning stated	No meaning stated

*What pupils find difficult about the Bible*

- The Kruskal-Wallis statistical test showed that there was a significant difference between the groups of pupils who cited differing things which they find difficult about the Bible in terms of the SDAS and LSF1S (excluding answers coded as ‘Irrelevant/Inappropriate’ and ‘Don’t know’).<sup>82</sup> Table 34 below provides the ranked order of these groups, from most positive to least positive.

**Table 34**

Attitude	SDAS	LSF1S
Most Positive	Meaning	None/Nothing
	None/Nothing	Language
	Language	Meaning
	Format	Format
	Credibility	Credibility
Least Positive	Other <sup>83</sup>	Other

The table shows that pupils who stated that they experience no difficulties with the Bible tended to have the most positive attitudes, whereas pupils citing ‘credibility’ and ‘other factors’ tended to have the most negative attitudes.

**Factors concerned with the attitudes of pupils, families and friends**

*What shapes pupils’ attitudes?*

- The Kruskal-Wallis statistical test showed that there was a significant difference between the groups of pupils who cited differing factors which shaped their attitudes to the Bible in terms of the SDAS and LSF1S (excluding answers coded as ‘Don’t know’, ‘Irrelevant/inappropriate’ and ‘I don’t understand’).<sup>84</sup> The attitude



scores for each group are ranked in Table 35 below, from most positive to least positive.

**Table 35**

Attitude	SDAS	LSF15
Most Positive	Place of worship	Place of worship
	Family	Family
	Education	Other
	RE lessons	Education
	Other <sup>85</sup>	RE lessons
Least Positive	Nothing	Nothing
	Own beliefs	Own beliefs

### *Familial attitude*

- The Kruskal-Wallis statistical test showed that there was a significant difference between the groups of pupils who cited differing familial attitudes in terms of the SDAS and LSF15.<sup>86</sup> Table 36 below provides the ranked order of these groups, from most positive to least positive.

**Table 36**

Attitude	SDAS	LSF15
Most Positive	Is true/believe it	Is true/believe it
	Is good	Is important/respect it
	Is important/respect it	Is good
	Is OK	Different family members think different things
	Different family members think different things	Other
	Other <sup>87</sup>	Is OK
	I don't know/we don't talk about it	I don't know/we don't talk about it
	Is not true/do not believe in it	Is rubbish/negative comment
	Is rubbish/negative comment	Is not true/do not believe in it
	They don't live by it	Is not important/irrelevant
Least Positive	Is not important/irrelevant	They don't live by it

### *Attitude of friends*

- The Kruskal-Wallis statistical test showed that there was a significant difference between the groups of pupils who cited differing attitudes of friends in terms of the LSF15, but not the SDAS.<sup>88</sup> The table below provides the ranked order of these groups, from most positive to least positive, according to the LSF15:

**Table 37**

<b>Attitude</b>	<b>LSF1S</b>
Most Positive	Is important/respect it
	Is not true/do not believe in it
	Is good
	Other <sup>89</sup>
	I don't know/we don't talk about it
	Is true/believe it
	Different family members think different things
Least Positive	Is rubbish/negative comment
	Is not important/irrelevant
	Is boring

*Attitude scores*

It was possible to compare SDAS and LSF1S using Spearman's correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ). Unsurprisingly, there was a strong positive correlation between the two variables, which was statistically significant.<sup>90</sup> This further demonstrates that our methods of measuring attitudes to the Bible were reliable.

**3.4.3. Construction of Hypothetic Pupil Types**

From the above analysis (LSF1S) it is possible to juxtapose factors which are associated with the most positive and the least positive attitudes towards the Bible.

**Table 38**

<b>Hypothetical pupil type one</b>	<b>Hypothetical pupil type two</b>
<b>Most positive attitudes towards the Bible</b>	<b>Least positive attitudes towards the Bible</b>
Female	Male
Year 6	Year 12
Pacific Islander or Asian	Pakeha (European)
Christian	None or other
Attends a place of worship very often	Never attends a place of worship
Recognises sources of biblical knowledge other than, or in addition to, RE lessons	Only recognises RE lessons as a source of biblical knowledge
Assigns a theological meaning to a biblical narrative	Assigns a secular other or no meaning to a biblical narrative
Feels that their attitudes towards the Bible have been shaped by place of worship	Feels that their attitudes towards the Bible have been shaped by their own beliefs
Finds 'nothing' difficult about the Bible or struggles with the language used	Finds the Bible difficult because of difficulties associated with 'other' factors including relevance and reading it and because it lacks credibility

Table 38 continued

<b>Hypothetical pupil type one</b> <b>Most positive attitudes towards the Bible</b>	<b>Hypothetical pupil type two</b> <b>Least positive attitudes towards the Bible</b>
States that her family believe the Bible to be true or to be important	States that his family do not live their lives by the Bible or do not believe the Bible to be important
States that her friends believe the Bible to be important or not true.	States that his friends believe the Bible to be boring or not important

As noted in Phase Three of the project, this dualistic presentation hides the complexity of the relationship between the attitude spectrum and the various factors under review. One should not expect pupils to be easily compartmentalised into one or other of the above columns.

# Chapter Four: Discussion

## 4.1. Attitudes and their determining factors

### 4.1.1. Age

The results show that Year 6 pupils tended to have the most positive attitudes towards the Bible, replicating a key finding of Phase Three of the research. However the most negative attitudes were held by Year 9 in the UK sample and Year 12 in the New Zealand sample. The fact that pupils in Year 6 were more positive towards the Bible in terms of the LSF1S may be attributed to a number of factors. It is possible that the Bible is perceived as something which is associated with childhood. In New Zealand pupils in state secondary schools do not receive RE, which may heighten this perception. In contrast, the negative attitudes of teenagers towards the Bible may be associated with a need for control. For example, in response to the question ‘What has shaped your attitude towards the Bible?’ pupil 299 from Year 9 wrote: ‘I realised I don’t want to be told what to do, I believe I can take the right path without a sign’. It has also been shown that pupils who cited their ‘own beliefs’ as a factor which shaped their attitude towards the Bible, tended to hold the most negative attitudes. This suggests that as pupils grow older and become more autonomous their attitudes towards the Bible become more negative. It could be argued however that attitudes expressed by teenagers in general tend to be more negative.

Francis and Greer (1999a) noted two main theories to explain the decline in attitude towards Christianity with age. These may shed light on our current findings. The first relates to the use of *developmental psychology* in RE research. Francis (2000) noted that Goldman (1964) conducted clinical interviews with pupils on three Bible stories (Moses and the burning bush, Moses’ crossing of the Red Sea and Jesus’ temptations in the wilderness) to explore how logical thinking develops with age in regard to the issues which these stories raise. He analysed their responses according to the Piagetian categories of pre-operational, concrete operational and abstract operational thinking. He concluded that the Bible should not be taught until the transition to formal operational thinking had been achieved because this leads to a critical reassessment of immature theology and hence to a decline in attitude toward Christianity. The second explanation of why there is a decline in attitude towards Christianity with age relates to the use of *social psychology*, such as that of Francis (1989b) and Kay and Francis (1996). The latter associated the decline in attitude with the socialisation process suggesting that as pupils get older they become closer to the world of adult attitudes and values and, since the general attitude toward Christianity in

the adult population is relatively low, this becomes the norm to which pupils are drawn (Francis and Greer, 1999a: 176).

#### 4.1.2. Cultural context

The results show that the attitudes of pupils in the New Zealand sample towards the Bible were significantly more negative in terms of the SDAS than those of pupils in the UK sample. However, there was no significant difference in terms of the LSF1S which measured the attitudes of pupils in all year groups. This is surprising because the New Zealand sample contained a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils. These pupils tend to express more positive attitudes towards the Bible than pupils in the other year groups. Results by year group revealed no significant differences between the attitudes of Year 6 and 9 pupils in the UK and New Zealand samples in terms of both attitude measures. However, Year 12 pupils in the New Zealand sample were significantly more likely to express more negative attitudes than those in the UK sample. In this regard, it is important to note the limitations of the data in that these tests only included those pupils who provided valid responses to all the Semantic Differential or Likert Scale statements and participants from Year 12 were recruited from only two schools. Despite this, we might speculate again about the possible perception of the Bible as being something ‘childish’.

#### 4.1.3. Gender

The results also show that female pupils tended to have more positive attitudes towards the Bible, in terms of the LSF1S, than male pupils. This replicates a key finding of Phase Three of the research and coheres with wider knowledge in the field. Davies (2004: 86) cited the five groups of theories about gender differences and religiosity as defined by Kay and Francis (1996) which may help to explain this phenomena: (i) *Sex-role socialisation* (i.e. men and women are brought up with distinct ideals and values which make them more or less religious); (ii) *Structural-location* (i.e. women see themselves as religious role models for their children or their differing role within the workplace provides them with more opportunities to become religious); (iii) *Gender-orientation* (i.e. feminine and masculine orientations of personality, rather than sex, affect religious behaviour) (see Francis and Wilcox, 1996 and 1998); (iv) *Depth-psychological* (i.e. differing gender responses to God can be explained by differing gender responses to the father figure with females being closer to their fathers than males); and (v) *Personality* (i.e. personality differences between males and females in areas indirectly related to religion affect religious behaviour, for instance, females are more predisposed to feelings of guilt, frustration, submissiveness and dependency which are answered by religion).

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According to Davies (2004: 87), Kay and Francis concluded that sex differences in religiosity are best explained by gender-orientation theories and personality theories. This means that the personality characteristics of masculinity, rather than being male, predispose an individual to more negative attitudes towards religion. For Davies, such a finding has important implications for teacher recruitment. Through his survey of 361 primary school headteachers in Wales, Davies (2004: 89–90) demonstrated that female headteachers were more likely than male head teachers to claim that RE lessons should make regular use of Bible stories and that pupils should be taught: (i) that the Bible is true; (ii) to say the Lord's Prayer; and (iii) that there is a God. Thus, gender differences influence teachers' perceptions of the aims and content of RE. In conclusion, Davies suggested that teaching must be made more appealing to people who are characterised by male gender orientation to ensure young people have sufficient role models from both sexes and that RE appeals to both gender orientations. Reflecting on Davies' research, we may question the extent to which primary schools and secondary schools are characterised respectively by females, femininity and religiosity, on the one hand, and males, masculinity and secularity, on the other. We may further speculate what effect these two hypothetical environments have on the spiritual development of boys and girls as they get older.

#### **4.1.4. Religious education**

Another key finding in Phase Three of the Biblos Project was that in terms of the attitude measures, there was no statistically significant difference between those pupils who did and those who did not cite RE lessons as the place where they had read or heard a passage from the Bible. This finding was replicated in the New Zealand sample in terms of the SDAS, but citation of RE lessons as a source of biblical knowledge was associated with more negative attitudes towards the Bible in terms of the LSF1S. This further supports the suggestion that whilst RE remains the most frequently cited source of biblical knowledge, other factors affect pupils' attitudes towards the Bible. Factors which were associated with the most positive attitudes included place of worship and familial influence. It is logical that pupils who have families who express positive attitudes towards the Bible, attend a place of worship regularly and are affiliated to a religion would be more positive towards the Bible themselves.

## **4.2. Secularisation of the text**

Pupils in the New Zealand sample were more likely to ascribe a theological meaning to a biblical passage than a secular ethical one. It may be that Bible in Schools lessons are less likely to emphasise the moral implications of biblical narratives. Whereas in the UK, secularisation of the text has been shown to be a particular problem, with a low proportion of pupils ascribing a theological meaning to a chosen biblical passage. This finding suggests that secularisation of the text is not such a big problem in New Zealand. It may be the case that because Bible in Schools is delivered by members of the Churches Education Commission that a more confessional approach is employed and that children are taught more often to interpret passages within a theological context. However, limitations associated with this data mean that further evidence would be required to support this claim.

Although attempts were made to devise a more stringent coding system, many of the responses were difficult to code and ultimately coding decisions were subjective. The revised coding system meant that the results for the two samples were not directly comparable. The number of pupils giving an invalid response or descriptive answers to this question was also very high. This may have been avoided if the question had been phrased as in Phase Three where pupils were asked to describe the biblical passage before ascribing a meaning.

## **4.3. A lack of personal relevance**

A key finding in Phase Three was that pupils in the UK sample did not see the relevance of the Bible for themselves. Pupils tended to believe the Bible to be important (especially to religious people); to be relevant; to contain truth; to be capable of showing people how to live; to be worthy of respect and to have important things to say to people today, yet it was not something they would read or look to for personal guidance. Each of these responses was replicated in the New Zealand sample, where more pupils agreed with the statements than disagreed, but generally the proportion of pupils who agreed tended to be lower than in the UK sample. It could be argued that the Bible lacks personal relevance to an even greater extent for pupils in the New Zealand sample, but it is important to remember that the pupils in this sample were less likely to be religious, which may account for these results. Nevertheless these findings provide further evidence to suggest that biblical narrative needs to be taught in an innovative way, which emphasises the relevance for people today.

## **4.4. Pupil difficulties**

### **4.4.1. Biblical literacy**

The results showed that for the New Zealand sample, pupils who had the most positive attitude towards the Bible tended to have problems with ‘language’, ‘meaning’, or stated that they experienced no difficulties. On the other hand, the least positive attitudes were associated with difficulties in terms of ‘credibility’, or ‘Other’ factors. These results are similar, although not identical to the findings in the UK sample. Pupils in the UK sample with positive attitudes tended to mention ‘meaning’; ‘language’ and ‘it contains contradictions’, whereas the least positive attitudes were associated with difficulties with ‘credibility’ and ‘format’. As argued in Phase Three, it appears that difficulties associated with negative attitudes including credibility and format do not necessitate knowledge of biblical text. Whereas the difficulties associated with positive attitudes (language, meaning and it contains contradictions) do necessitate knowledge of biblical material. Linked to this is the result that those who had a positive attitude towards the Bible were more likely to show greater knowledge of biblical characters, narratives and theological meanings, which was replicated in the present sample. The results therefore provide further support for the proposed reciprocity between positive attitudes and biblical literacy. This has implications for RE in both the UK and New Zealand, as pupils cited RE most frequently as the source of their biblical knowledge.

### **4.4.2. Format**

The fact that pupils in the New Zealand sample experience similar difficulties with the Bible to pupils in the UK sample suggests that the methods proposed for tackling these problems may also apply to Bible in Schools in New Zealand. The two big problems of language and meaning need to be addressed. However, format appeared to be a bigger problem for pupils in the New Zealand sample than it was for pupils in the UK sample. Many of the comments made suggested that an old edition of the Bible was being used. For example, pupil 1 cited difficulties with the ‘thees, thous and thys’ and pupil 305 wrote that ‘some of the language in the King James Version is a little hard to understand’. According to the Churches Education Commission, the edition of the Bible used varies with the teacher and so the small number of participating schools may have biased these findings.

### **4.4.3. Teaching styles**

It is interesting that pupils who expressed no difficulties with the Bible tended to have more positive attitudes towards the Bible, whereas in the UK, pupils who cited ‘nothing’ tended to express more negative attitudes. It



is possible that the expression of an uncritical, positive attitude is indicative of the style of RE provided in New Zealand. The Churches Education Commission describes their role as to 'share Christian beliefs and values' and not to offer a Bible instruction course. The pupils may be assimilating the positive attitudes of the Bible in Schools teachers with little or no independent critical thought. Alternatively, it may simply be the case that pupils with positive attitudes felt uncomfortable criticising the Bible if the survey was completed in the presence of church members, during a Bible in Schools lesson.

## **4.5. Cross cultural comparisons**

### **4.5.1. Knowledge**

The number of pupils who claimed that they had never heard a Bible story (14.6%) is very interesting and may reflect the fact that pupils do not receive compulsory RE in New Zealand. It could be argued that this is a form of secular indoctrination or a loss of entitlement by omission. It would have been useful to know how many of these pupils attend Bible in Schools, to know whether this finding reflects the teaching methods employed or the fact that attendance is not compulsory. It is interesting that even though the majority of pupils stated that they had heard a Bible passage, a much lower proportion could accurately name one. This finding may be due to the high proportion of Year 6 pupils, who may have experienced difficulty remembering specific passages.

### **4.5.2. Sources of knowledge**

In terms of sources of biblical knowledge it is not surprising that the number of pupils citing RE lessons/Bible in Schools was lower in the New Zealand sample than in the UK sample as many may not attend. Nearly twice as many pupils in the UK sample, compared to those in the New Zealand sample, cited place of worship. Again this is not surprising as these pupils attend a place of worship less frequently and fewer pupils claimed to have any religious affiliation. Interestingly, the proportion of pupils who cited the media was lower in the New Zealand sample than in the UK sample. Does such evidence reflect a more secular culture, where religion does not feature in schools?

### **4.5.3. Bible in schools**

The proportion of pupils able to name five biblical characters was lower in the New Zealand sample than in the UK sample. This can be explained according to the lower proportion of respondents with a religious affiliation in the New Zealand sample and the fact that RE is not compulsory in New

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Zealand schools. The frequency of misspelled characters' names may reflect the tendency of Bible in Schools teachers to focus on oral teaching. Pupils in the New Zealand sample were more likely to cite Old Testament characters and less likely to cite New Testament characters than those in the UK sample. Similarly, the Bible passages cited by pupils in the New Zealand sample tended to be from the Old Testament, whereas those cited by pupils from the UK sample tended to be from the New Testament. Pupils in the UK sample were also more likely to cite a difficulty with the credibility of miracles specifically rather than credibility in general. These findings may reflect the content of the Bible in Schools lessons at the time in which the questionnaires were administered, but the students' ability to recall Old Testament knowledge is surprising given the general emphasis in Bible in Schools on the life and teachings of Jesus. Lastly, it was noted during the coding process that specific verses, such as John 3:16, appeared very frequently. This reflects the tendency of the Bible in Schools teachers to ask pupils to memorise verses (as noted previously).

#### **4.5.4. Family and friends**

Pupils who cited 'is important' and 'is true/believe in it' as their family's attitude tended to express positive attitudes, whereas those who cited 'is not important/irrelevant' or 'they don't live by it' tended to hold the least positive attitudes. It is not surprising that pupils with more negative attitudes tend to attribute negative attitudes to their families and that positive pupils attribute positive attitudes. It is either the case that pupils project their own attitude onto others, or that mutual influences exist between pupils and their families. Similarly pupils with more positive attitudes tended to attribute positive opinions to their friends such as 'is important/respect it'. Whereas those with the least positive attitudes cited negative attitudes including 'is not important/irrelevant' and 'is boring'. This can be explained in the same way as the previous results, except that in this case it is likely that pupils actively choose friends who share their attitudes.

#### **4.5.5. Identity confusion**

Several examples of confusion over religious and cultural identity seemed to emerge during data analysis, including the pupil who wrote that their religious affiliation was 'South Africa' and the pupil who wrote in reference to her family's attitude that '[The Bible] is real and God is true but we are still Maoris'. However, this example might also be used to demonstrate the existence of a form of Christianity which has arisen out of Maori spirituality and culture. Fourteen pupils also stated that they did not know their religious affiliation. On further inspection, it appeared that thirteen of these pupils attended the same primary school (18.1% of the total number of

respondents from that school). It appears that this school was in some way eliciting confusion over pupils' own religious identity. One possible explanation is that pupils may not have recognised the names of the major world religions. For example, one teacher wrote a letter to explain that a pupil had asked whether 'Christianity' was the 'Christian one'. The teacher explains that the child could not understand this question because New Zealand RE is Christian. This suggests that pupils are not required to learn the terminology which separates one religion from another. This may also account for the high proportion of pupils who cited no religious affiliation.

## **4.6. Limitations and methodological problems**

### **4.6.1. Language**

Many Year 6 pupils provided an invalid response to the following question: 'What do you think has influenced your view(s) of the Bible?'. In many of the cases pupils appeared to answer the different question: 'How has the Bible influenced you?'. For example, pupil 59 from Year 6 wrote: 'I must tell the truth. Don't steal. Be kind. And always help. This is some of what the Bible taught me'. Pupils may have experienced difficulties with the language used. One head teacher noted that pupils found the word 'influence' difficult. This problem may have been compounded by the presence of pupils for whom English was an additional language (EAL). The same head teacher wrote to explain that five pupils who completed the questionnaire had English as a second language and that one was also autistic. It would have been useful to have access to this data for all pupils, in order to compare the proportion of EAL pupils in each sample, as this may have affected the results. It may be more common for pupils to have English as an additional language in New Zealand than in the UK because of the high proportion of mixed race individuals. If this were the case, it may account for the high number of invalid responses in the New Zealand data in general. Of course, it may simply be that the presence of more Year 6 pupils increased the error rate.

### **4.6.2. Inappropriate questions**

Many of the questionnaire questions assumed that the respondents have read the Bible. For example, one of the Likert Scale statements was 'I enjoy reading the Bible'. Pupil 142 did not provide a response to this statement and wrote 'never read it'. In response to the question, 'Where have you read or heard stories/passages from the Bible?', pupils 306 and 315 ticked 'Other' and wrote 'I haven't'. These responses suggest that the pupils should not be answering these questions, as they have not read the Bible. The data may

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have been biased by respondents who attempted to answer questions on literature which they have never read. Ideally there would have been an option for pupils who answered 'no' to the question 'Have you heard any Bible stories?' to advance to the next relevant question.

#### **4.6.3. Bible: book or lesson?**

A difficulty associated with the research in New Zealand was the dual definition of the term 'Bible'. When coding the responses it was sometimes very difficult to tell whether the pupil was referring to Bible – the book, or Bible – the lesson. For example, pupil 83 wrote: 'My family thinks the Bible...Is not good at all and thinks I shouldn't do it!' The validity of this conclusion is supported by anecdotal evidence of children making statements such as 'We have Bible on Wednesdays'. In retrospect it would have been useful to make this distinction clear to pupils through the wording of the questions.

#### **4.6.4. Worship**

Pupils in the New Zealand sample claimed to attend a place of worship less frequently than those in the UK sample, which is not surprising as the sample contained a smaller proportion of pupils with a religious affiliation. It is also possible that schools in the UK with a religious foundation would include worship as part of the school day, which may have increased the frequency of attendance at a place of worship cited. However, it is possible that the results were affected by pupils' (particularly in Year 6) misunderstanding of the question. One head teacher of a primary school commented that pupils found this question particularly difficult and many did not understand the word 'worship'.

#### **4.6.5. Ethnicity**

As noted in the results section, the ethnic group ratios, across the total sample and by year group were not representative of the 2001 New Zealand Census. These results can be explained according to the low sample size, along with the geographical location of the participating schools. Ethnic group ratios tend to fluctuate according to geographical location, which means that each school has its own ethnicity biases. The results were particularly open to these biases in Year 12, as the participants were recruited from only two schools. The results also show that some ethnic groups are more positive towards the Bible than others so the unusual group ratios may have implications for some of the other results. The ethnicity biases may also account for the high proportion of non-religious individuals. Pupils in the New Zealand sample were less likely to identify with Christianity and more likely to cite 'no' religious affiliation than the

population surveyed in the 2001 Census. It is likely that this finding, as with the majority of the results, was affected by the small sample size and high proportion of Year 6 pupils.

## Chapter Five: Summary Conclusions

1. The position of RE/Bible in Schools lessons in New Zealand is voluntary: the school is not obliged to provide them, the parent is not obliged to enrol their children and teaching is by volunteers. 40% of primary schools have no RE/Bible in Schools provision. 100% of secondary schools have no provision. Our primary schools all offered RE/Bible in Schools. This must be presumed to have skewed the results.
2. In the UK and New Zealand, Year 6 produces the most positive attitudes. Has the Bible become 'stuck' in the primary school, perhaps perceived as a storybook?
3. It is difficult to be sure whether New Zealand children have more negative attitudes to the Bible than UK ones, but the major difference in school-based RE does not seem to be reflected in the results.
4. Secularism of the text by pupils seems to be more of a UK problem than a New Zealand one.
5. The New Zealand sample, weighted as it was towards schools offering RE/Bible in Schools, shows more pupils question the relevance of the Bible than in the UK. This may reflect a more secular society than the UK.
6. Although pupils in the New Zealand sample appeared to confuse their cultural and religious identities, the same may apply to pupils in the UK, where Christianity is cited as 'our religion' by virtue of Britishness or Englishness rather than choice.
7. The low school response in New Zealand to requests to participate meant that pupils were recruited from a small number of schools. This led to an unrepresentative sample and prevented some statistical tests being carried out. It would be interesting to find out why schools were unwilling to participate. Despite this problem, the study has been important in highlighting key cultural differences between the UK and New Zealand, as well as replicating some of the key findings from Phase Three of the Biblos research. The project has also been successful in identifying methodological flaws, which will help in future studies to design a more multicultural questionnaire, enabling further comparisons to be made.

# Appendices

## Appendix I: Demographic information (UK sample).

Year	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)	Total No.
Year 6	54.7	45.3	11	117
Year 9	51.1	48.9	57.2	610
Year 12	41.9	58.1	31.8	339
Total percentage	48.6	51.4	100	-
Total number	518	548	-	1066

## Appendix II: Coding categories according to the New Zealand Census.<sup>91</sup>

Ethnic group	Definition
Pakeha (European)	European is seen as a category that denotes being 'white'. Pakeha are New Zealanders of a European background. Includes pupils who cited 'New Zealand European'; 'South African'; 'American'; and 'Australian'.
Maori	Refers to the indigenous population of New Zealand.
Other	Includes respondents who wrote 'Iraqi'; 'African'; and 'Arab'.
Asian	Refers to countries within Asia. Includes pupils who cited 'Indian'; 'Japanese'; and 'Taiwanese'.
Pacific Islander	Refers to Pacific Islands including Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga.
Invalid response	Includes respondents who gave no response or provided an inappropriate answer.

## Appendix III: Alternative coding of ethnic group data using European definitions.

Ethnic group	Definition	% of total
Pakeha (European)	Refers to countries within Europe.	52.5
Maori	Refers to the indigenous population of New Zealand.	15.0
Other	Includes respondents who wrote Australia, USA, or more than one ethnic group.	12.9
Asian	Refers to countries within Asia.	9.3
Pacific Islander	Refers to Pacific Islands including Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga.	2.1
Pakeha and Maori	This category was added to this list due to the number of respondents who ticked both the Pakeha and Maori categories.	4.3
Invalid response	Includes respondents who gave no response or provided an inappropriate answer.	3.8

**Appendix IV: New Zealand Census results and ethnic group by year group and gender (NZ sample).**

Declared ethnicity of respondents	Year 6	Year 9	Year 12	Males	Females	Total sample	2001 Census % results for NZ		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	Total <sup>92</sup>	10-14 yr olds	15-19 yr olds <sup>93</sup>
Pakeha (European)	55.6	71.2	63.3	56.4	65.8	60.9	80	75.6	73.3
Maori	16.7	21.2	40.8	20.1	21.8	20.8	14.7	22.3	19.3
Other	13.5	2.5	0	10.1	8.1	8.8	0.7	0.9	1.0
Asian	14.7	3.4	0	12.3	8.1	9.8	6.6	6.9	10.6
Pacific Islander	2.4	3.4	6.1	2.2	3.8	3.1	6.5	9.3	8.4
Invalid response	4.4	4.2	0	3.9	1.3	3.8	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Appendix V: New Zealand Census results and religious affiliation by year group and gender (NZ sample).**

Declared religion of respondents	Year 6	Year 9	Year 12	Males	Females	Total Sample	2001 Census % results for NZ	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
None	47.2	56.8	55.1	53.6	49.6	50.8	50.8	29.6
Christianity	36.5	28.8	34.7	29.1	38.9	34.1	34.1	61.0
Other	4.0	0.8	4.1	3.9	2.6	3.1	3.1	0.9 <sup>94</sup>
Buddhism	2.0	3.4	2.0	4.5	0.9	2.4	2.4	1.2
Hinduism	2.0	0	0	1.7	0.9	1.2	1.2	1.1
Islam	0.8	0.8	0	1.7	0	0.7	0.7	0.7
Sikhism	0	0.8	0	0.6	0	0.2	0.2	0.1
Judaism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2
Invalid response <sup>95</sup>	7.5	8.5	4.1	5.1	7.3	7.4	7.4	6.9



**Appendix VI: Religious affiliation within each ethnic group (excluding invalid responses) (NZ sample).**

Religion	Pakeha (European)	Maori	Other	Asian	Pacific Islander
Buddhism	0.4	2.5	0	19.4	0
Christianity	39.4	28.4	30.3	38.9	38.5
Hinduism	0	1.2	3.0	11.1	0
Sikhism	0	0	0	2.8	0
Islam	0	0	6.1	2.8	0
Other	1.7	1.2	12.1	5.6	15.4
None	58.5	66.7	48.5	19.4	46.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Appendix VII: Frequency of attendance at place of worship by gender and year group (NZ sample).**

Frequency of attendance at place of worship	Year 6 %	Year 9 %	Year 12 %	Males %	Females %	Total sample %
Never	42.5	31.4	26.5	41.3	35.5	37.5
Rarely	15.1	30.5	44.9	22.3	23.9	22.9
Sometimes	19.4	18.6	16.3	19.6	18.8	18.9
Often	6.3	3.4	2.0	5.6	4.7	5.0
Very Often	15.5	10.2	6.1	10.6	15.0	12.9
Invalid response	1.2	5.9	4.1	0.6	2.1	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## **Appendix VIII: Coding criteria for biblical passage meaning (NZ sample).**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Invalid response	Includes pupils who gave no response or wrote ‘don’t know’.
Theological	Reference to: the nature of God and/or the relationship between God and humankind/God and creation.
Secular ethical	Reference to morals; how humans should behave.
Secular other	Secular thoughts/observations about life (e.g. the origins of festivals and practical/safety advice).
No meaning stated	States that the passage does not have a meaning; provides a vague or unspecific meaning (e.g. ‘lots’ or ‘not much’); or describes people’s feelings about a narrative (e.g. ‘it is interesting’ or ‘important’), but not what the narrative means or why it causes such feelings.
Not applicable	Did not provide an accurate Bible passage to ascribe meaning to.
Description	Describes narrative without assigning meaning. To meet the criterion for this category, the description does not have to be accurate. Also, if God is mentioned he is only referred to in terms of his action within the narrative. Furthermore, there is no attempt to describe the wider significance of the narrative or God’s action within it.

## **Appendix IX: Meaning attributed to a Bible Passage (UK sample).**

<b>Meaning attributed</b>	<b>Cited by (%)</b>
Secular ethical	36.3
Theological	22.9
No response	20.2
Literal	9.1
Irrelevant	5.8
Has no meaning	3.0
Other	2.7

## **Appendix X: Examples of life experience influencing pupil attitudes (NZ sample).**

‘Life and hard situations.’

‘Growing up and living life to my own plan. Realising there’s no such thing as “sinning” only learning.’

‘That I can read it any time I and it absolutely helps out with life.’

‘My culture. Background.’

‘People that believe.’

‘That so many people know about it. It tells me about God. I can learn about God and Jesus and their ways.’

## Appendix XI: Questionnaire for pupils in Year 6.

*(Please note that the original questionnaire included clip-art. The format has been adapted for this publication.)*

### THE BIBLOS PROJECT

This questionnaire has been designed by the RE team at the School of Education, University of Exeter (United Kingdom) for a research project investigating young people's knowledge, understanding of and attitudes towards the Bible.

To help us with our research, we would be very grateful if you would complete this questionnaire as carefully and as honestly as possible. We are interested in finding out what people *really* think.

No one else will read what you have written. There is no need to write your name on the paper, but please write the name of your school in the box below.

When you have finished, the questionnaires will be put into an envelope by your teacher, which will be sealed in front of you and sent to the Bible Society in New Zealand for immediate return to the University of Exeter.

If you are not sure about answers to some of the questions, then please say so. This is not a test, just a way of us trying to find out what people think about the Bible.

### About you

*Please tick one box for each question.*

Are you...?

- Male  Female

Which of the following ethnic groups do you belong to?

- Pakeha (European)  Asian  
 Maori  Other (please specify)  
 Pacific Islander

Which of the following religions (if any) do you belong to?

- Buddhism  Judaism  
 Christianity  Sikhism  
 Hinduism  Other (please specify)  
 Islam  None

*Biblos in New Zealand*

How often do you usually attend a place of worship outside of school (e.g. church/synagogue/mosque)?

- Never
- Rarely (e.g. once in the last few years)
- Sometimes (e.g. a few times a year)
- Often (at least once a month)
- Very often (at least once a week)

**What do you know about the Bible?**

Have you heard or read any stories/passages from the Bible? (please tick)

- Yes
- No

Where have you read or heard stories/passages from the Bible? (please tick as many boxes as you need to)

- Books/Magazines
- RE lessons
- Family
- School assemblies/collective worship
- Friends
- TV/Film/Radio
- Place of worship (e.g. church/synagogue)
- Other (please explain)

Name five characters/people who appear in the Bible:

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)

Name one story/passage from the Bible

---

What do you think this story/passage might mean for people today?

---

**What do you *think* about the Bible?**

In general I think.....(please tick **ONE** box for each of the following sentences)

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
The Bible is important because it tells us about God					
The Bible is a waste of time					
Most of the stories/passages in the Bible are true					
The Bible is not important because people no longer believe in God					
The Bible contains things that in real life would not happen					
The Bible can help when times are hard					
The Bible is not important because it is just a book					
The Bible is important but I don't read it					
The Bible is the Word of God					
The Bible is important if you're religious					
The Bible is not important because it is full of myths					
The Bible is exciting					
I would never read the Bible					
The Bible is not important because it was written so long ago					
The Bible is important for other people but not for me					
The Bible is uncool					
I enjoy reading the Bible					
I respect the Bible and its teachings but do not live my life by it					
The Bible is important because it teaches right from wrong					
The Bible has not influenced my life					

**Please complete the following sentences:**

One thing I find difficult about the Bible is \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think has influenced your view(s) of the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

My family thinks the Bible \_\_\_\_\_

My friends think the Bible \_\_\_\_\_

**The Year 9 and 12 questionnaires also included the following question:**

Please put a tick in the appropriate column. For example, if you agree strongly with the statement on the left, '*The Bible is important to me*', then put a ✓ in column 1. If you agree but have some doubts, put a ✓ in column 2. However, if you agree with the statement on the right, '*The Bible is not important to me*', then put a ✓ in column 5. If you agree but have some doubts, put a ✓ in column 4. If you are not sure what you think, put a ✓ in column 3.

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree	
The Bible is important to me						The Bible is not important to me
The Bible is relevant today						The Bible is not relevant today
The Bible is boring						The Bible is interesting
The Bible contains truth						The Bible is made up
The Bible can show people how to live						The Bible is not helpful for life today
I do not look to the Bible for guidance						I look to the Bible for guidance
I believe in the Bible						I do not believe in the Bible
The Bible should be respected						The Bible doesn't really matter
Science has proved the Bible wrong						Science has not proved the Bible wrong
The Bible is old-fashioned and out of date						The Bible has important things to say to people today

The wording of some of the questions on the Year 9 and 12 questionnaires was slightly altered.

The question ‘What do you think has influenced your view(s) of the Bible?’ was changed to ‘What do you think has helped to shape your attitude towards the Bible?’ and the question ‘One thing I find difficult about the Bible is...’ was changed to ‘Is there anything in particular that you find difficult about the Bible?’

*The Year 12 questionnaires also included the following additional question: ‘What aspects of modern life do you think have been influenced by the Bible?’*

## **Appendix XII: Instructions for supervisor for completion of questionnaire.**

1. Please ensure that students are given the full 30-minute time allocation for completion of the questionnaire. It is important that the questionnaire is completed in one session.
2. It is important that students do not copy each others’ answers as we are keen to find out the opinions of each individual student.
3. Please encourage students to complete as much of the questionnaire as they can in the time given. We would like them to reach the end rather than spend too much time on any one question. If they do not have a response to a question, they should omit it, and move on to the next.
4. It is important that the responses are the students’ own, but they may need some help. Feel free to help if they have problems understanding instructions, individual words, or the meaning of questions.

## Appendix XIII: Biblos Project and related publications.

### Biblos Project publications

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- Walshe, K. (Summer 2003). The Jesus Factor. *Teaching Thinking*. Issue 11.
- Copley, T. (29<sup>th</sup> November 2002). Jesus in the world. *Times Educational Supplement*.
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## Appendix XIV: Biblos personnel over the duration of the UK phases.

Hannah Baker (Phase 4)	Sarah Lane (Phases 1 – 3)
Catherine Bowness (Phase 1)	Colin Phillips (Phase 1)
Claire Copley (Phase 3)	Heather Savini (Phases 1 – 3)
Terence Copley (Phases 1 – 4)	Sue Sharples (Phase 1)
Rob Freathy (Phase 3 – 4)	Karen Walshe (Phases 2 – 4)
Phase 1: 1996–1998	Phase 3: 2001–2003
Phase 2: 1998–2000	Phase 4: 2004–2005

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## Appendix XVI: Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Additional sources of information: <http://www.malcolmpacific.co.nz/nzeducation.html> and [http://www.enerprisens.org.nz/education/ed\\_system.html](http://www.enerprisens.org.nz/education/ed_system.html)

<sup>2</sup> Quotations have been taken from the CEC website: <http://www.cec.org.nz/about.asp>

<sup>3</sup> Additional sources of information: [www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/031DDDA8-890C-4509-A0z4-F59F6BC4FF8C/0/Table3a.xls](http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/031DDDA8-890C-4509-A0z4-F59F6BC4FF8C/0/Table3a.xls) and [www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/pasfull/pasfull.nst/web/Media+Release+2001+Census+Snapshot+13+Children](http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/pasfull/pasfull.nst/web/Media+Release+2001+Census+Snapshot+13+Children)

<sup>4</sup> One pupil failed to answer a sufficient number of questions and was therefore excluded from the data analysis.

<sup>5</sup> One school in Auckland included two classes, resulting in a high percentage of respondents from this school.

<sup>6</sup> 6 pupils (1.4%) provided invalid responses to this question. Responses were coded as invalid when pupils ticked more than one box, gave no response, wrote 'don't know', or gave an inappropriate answer. These coding criteria apply to all questions within the report. Invalid responses were included in all frequency analyses, but were coded as missing data for the statistical analyses (unless otherwise stated). All percentages quoted, refer to the proportion of respondents within the total sample (unless otherwise stated) and therefore some percentages do not add up to 100%.

<sup>7</sup> 16 pupils (3.8%) gave an invalid response to this question.

<sup>8</sup> All the results in this report are presented in the order of the popularity of the responses rather than in the order in which they appeared on the questionnaire.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that in the New Zealand Census, respondents can be coded under more than one religious affiliation. This coding strategy was not employed here as the proportion of respondents citing more than one religion was very low.

<sup>10</sup> Includes pupils who wrote: Jehovah's witness, Mormon, Catholic, Christadelphian and Ringatu (a Maori Christian group).

<sup>11</sup> Includes respondents who wrote 'Witchcraft' and 'Buddhism and Christianity'. The remaining pupils did not specify a religion.

<sup>12</sup> This provides evidence of statistical significance in terms of whether a larger difference exists between variables than one would expect to occur by chance.

<sup>13</sup>  $\chi^2(1)=6.817$ ,  $p<0.01$ .  $n=162$ . In all cases, 'n' refers to the number of respondents remaining after all exclusions have been made. All analyses comparing Eastern and Western religions exclude pupils whose response to the question of religious affiliation was 'Other' or 'None'.

<sup>14</sup>  $\chi^2(1)=9.950$ ,  $p<0.01$ .  $n=175$ . All analyses comparing Christianity with all other religions, exclude pupils whose response to the question of religious affiliation was 'None'.

<sup>15</sup>  $\chi^2(1)=0.239$ ,  $p>0.05$ .  $n=387$ .

<sup>16</sup> Yr6/Yr9:  $\chi^2(1)=3.149$ ,  $p>0.05$ .  $n=341$ ; Yr6/Yr12:  $\chi^2(1)=0.407$ ,  $p>0.05$ .  $n=280$ ; and Yr9/Yr12:  $\chi^2(1)=0.129$ ,  $p>0.05$ .  $n=155$ . Analyses comparing Western or Eastern religion, or Christianity or other religions could not be carried out due to the low sample size within some of the categories. This would have involved breaking an assumption of the Chi-square test (see Pallant, J. (2003). *SPSS Survival Manual*. Maidenhead: Open University Press. p.259)

<sup>17</sup> 12 pupils (2.9%) gave an invalid response to this question.

<sup>18</sup> 1 pupil (0.1%) gave an invalid response to this question.

<sup>19</sup> 7 pupils (1.7%) gave an invalid response to this question.

<sup>20</sup> 3 pupils (0.7%) gave an invalid response to this question.

<sup>21</sup> There was no means of differentiating between the OT and NT Joseph characters.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

- <sup>23</sup> This includes respondents who stated one or more inaccurate/ irrelevant character: 3.3% cited one inaccurate/ irrelevant character; 1.0% cited two inaccurate/ irrelevant characters; 0.2% cited three inaccurate/ irrelevant characters; 0.5% cited four inaccurate/ irrelevant characters.
- <sup>24</sup> This includes participants who gave no response, stated that they were unable to answer the question, or wrote ‘don’t know’.
- <sup>25</sup>  $\rho(371)=-0.026, p>0.05$ .
- <sup>26</sup> Of those pupils who gave an invalid response, 121 (28.9%) gave no answer and 55 (13.1%) wrote ‘don’t know’.
- <sup>27</sup> In all cases where pupils were required to write a response, the coding related to the first answer given.
- <sup>28</sup> Of those pupils who gave an invalid response, 40.1% gave no answer and 17.4% wrote ‘don’t know’.
- <sup>29</sup> Of those pupils who gave an invalid response, 33 (7.9%) wrote ‘don’t know’, 6 (1.4%) gave an irrelevant or inappropriate answer and 63 (15%) did not provide a response.
- <sup>30</sup> Including 8.1% of respondents who specifically referred to the length of the Bible.
- <sup>31</sup> The categories of ‘Credibility in general’ and ‘Credibility of Miracles’ have been combined, because only two pupils specifically referred to miracles in their response. The category of ‘Reading it’ was created to account for those pupils who described their difficulty reading the text, but did not explicitly state whether this was due to the language, format, or problems of understanding the text.
- <sup>32</sup> Including 3.1% of respondents who explicitly referred to parents.
- <sup>33</sup> Refers to pupils who made reference to their own atheism or religious beliefs.
- <sup>34</sup> Includes pupils who stated that their attitude had been shaped by reading the Bible (some of whom referred to specific passages) and those who expressed a personal response to the content.
- <sup>35</sup> The category of ‘RE lessons’ was altered to include ‘Bible in Schools’ and a new category was created for pupils who explicitly made reference to their Bible in Schools teacher. A category was also added for those who felt that ‘nothing’ had influenced their views of the Bible. In the Phase 3 report, pupils who wrote ‘reading it’ were coded under ‘life experience’, however in the New Zealand sample there were sufficient numbers of pupils who gave this response to warrant the creation of a new category. A category was also added for pupils who wrote ‘not reading it’.
- <sup>36</sup> It was impossible to separate respondents who did not know their families’ attitude towards the Bible and those who did not know the answer to the question.
- <sup>37</sup> Of those pupils who gave an invalid response, 2 (0.5%) gave an irrelevant answer and 42 (10.0%) gave no response.
- <sup>38</sup> Includes respondents who wrote ‘alright’ and those who were not overtly positive or negative.
- <sup>39</sup> Includes respondents whose responses fell under the following sub categories: ‘is educational’; ‘they don’t read it’; ‘uncertain about validity’; ‘ambivalent attitude’; and ‘literal response’.
- <sup>40</sup> It was impossible to separate respondents who did not know their friends’ attitude towards the Bible and those who did not know the answer to the question.
- <sup>41</sup> Includes respondents who gave an invalid response, 3 (0.7%) gave an irrelevant answer and 46 (11.0%) gave no response.
- <sup>42</sup> Included New Zealand respondents whose responses fell under the following sub categories: ‘they don’t read it’; ‘hard to understand’; ‘problems with format’; ‘is only for religious people’; ‘ambivalent attitude’; and ‘literal response’.
- <sup>43</sup> Between 5 (3% of Year 9 and Year 12) and 8 (4.8% of Year 9 and Year 12) pupils provided invalid responses to these statements and therefore were coded as missing data.
- <sup>44</sup> Between 7 (1.7%) and 20 (4.8%) pupils provided invalid responses to these statements and therefore were coded as missing data.

- <sup>45</sup> Gardner, P. L. (1995) Measuring Attitudes to Science: Unidimensionality and Internal Consistency Revisited. *Research in Science Education*. 25(3), pp. 283-289.
- <sup>46</sup> U(152,897)=59681.000, p<0.05.
- <sup>47</sup> U(104/644)=29354.000, p<0.01.
- <sup>48</sup> U(98/735)=29228.500, p<0.01.
- <sup>49</sup> U(123/781)=41888.000, p<0.01.
- <sup>50</sup> U(106,572)=27523.000, p>0.05.
- <sup>51</sup> U(46,325)=5929.000, p<0.05.
- <sup>52</sup> U(320,936)=138890.500, p>0.05.
- <sup>53</sup> Year 6 (U(181,97)=8590.000, p>0.05) and Year 9 (U(99,534)=24592.500, p>0.05).
- <sup>54</sup> Year 12 (U(40,305)=4929.500, p<0.05).
- <sup>55</sup> U(46,104)=2327.500, p>0.05.
- <sup>56</sup> U(185,133)=10366.500, p<0.05.
- <sup>57</sup>  $\chi^2(2)=21.681$ , p<0.01 (n=320).
- <sup>58</sup>  $\chi^2(1)=1.558$ , p>0.05 (n=152).
- <sup>59</sup> LSF1S (rho(320)=0.051, p>0.05) and SDAS (rho(152)=0.133, p>0.05).
- <sup>60</sup> U(12,300)=986.500, p<0.01.
- <sup>61</sup> U(30,282)=2946.000, p<0.01.
- <sup>62</sup> Pacific Islander (U(146,4)=142.500, p>0.05) and Asian (U(147,3)=122.000, p>0.05).
- <sup>63</sup> LSF1S (U(202,110)=9004.500, p<0.01) and SDAS(U(108,42)=1718.500, p<0.05).
- <sup>64</sup> LSF1S (U(23,289)=3262.000, p>0.05) and SDAS (U(3,147)=189.000, p>0.05).
- <sup>65</sup> U(41,109)=1762.500, p<0.05.
- <sup>66</sup> U(65,247)=7848.500, p>0.05.
- <sup>67</sup> LSF1S (U(134,167)=4844.500, p<0.01) and SDAS (U(56,88)=1177.000, p<0.01).
- <sup>68</sup> LSF1S (U(13,113)=324.500, p<0.01) and SDAS (Z(5,49)=-1.733, p>0.05).
- (The Z value is quoted instead of the U value, where there were ties in the ranks. See Pallant, J. (2003) *SPSS Survival Manual*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, p.261).
- <sup>69</sup> LSF1S (U(111,23)=698.500, p<0.01) and SDAS (Z(48,8)=-2.720, p<0.01).
- <sup>70</sup> LSF1S ( $\chi^2(3)=83.275$ , p<0.01. n=311) and SDAS ( $\chi^2(2)=35.910$ , p<0.01. n=144).
- <sup>71</sup> Categories which contained less than 5 respondents were recoded to avoid violating one of the assumptions of the Chi-square test, concerning the minimum expected cell frequency. (See Pallant, J. (2003) *SPSS Survival Manual*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, p.259).
- <sup>72</sup> LSF1S (rho(315)=-0.593, p<0.01) and SDAS (rho(146)=-0.629, p<0.01).
- <sup>73</sup> LSF1S (U(103,217)=4260.500, p<0.01) and SDAS (U(52,100)=1188.500, p<0.01).
- <sup>74</sup> LSF1S (U(78,242)=7406.000, p<0.01) and SDAS (U(37,115)=2039.500, p>0.05).
- <sup>75</sup> LSF1S (U(97,223)=5514.500, p<0.01) and SDAS (U(45,107)=1342.500, p<0.01).
- <sup>76</sup> LSF1S (U(85,235)=6906.000, p<0.01) and SDAS (U(30,122)=1258.500, p<0.01).
- <sup>77</sup> LSF1S (U(57,263)=5440.000, p<0.01) and SDAS (U(23,129)=1136.000, p>0.05).
- <sup>78</sup> LSF1S (U(199,121)=10300.000, p<0.05) and SDAS (U(72,80)=2394.500, p>0.05).
- <sup>79</sup> LSF1S (U(20,300)=2747.000, p>0.05) and SDAS (U(12,140)=650.500, p>0.05).
- <sup>80</sup> LSF1S ( $\chi^2(5)=4.914$ , p>0.05. n=292) and SDAS ( $\chi^2(5)=8.351$ , p>0.05. n=136).
- <sup>81</sup> LSF1S ( $\chi^2(4)=26.531$ , p<0.01. n=122) and SDAS ( $\chi^2(4)=21.810$ , p<0.01. n=58).
- <sup>82</sup> LSF1S ( $\chi^2(5)=26.303$ , p<0.05. n=245) and SDAS ( $\chi^2(5)=14.766$ , p<0.05. n=107).
- <sup>83</sup> Recoded to include answers originally coded as 'Relevance' and 'Reading it/hard to read'.
- <sup>84</sup> LSF1S ( $\chi^2(6)=24.083$ , p<0.01. n=150) and SDAS ( $\chi^2(6)=15.504$ , p<0.01. n=85).
- <sup>85</sup> Recoded to include answers originally coded as 'Bible teacher'; 'Friends'; 'Other named person'; 'Life experience'; 'Not reading it'; and 'Reading it'.

<sup>86</sup> LSF1S ( $\chi^2(10)=81.048$ ,  $p<0.01$ .  $n=287$ ) and SDAS ( $\chi^2(10)=51.834$ ,  $p<0.01$ .  $n=127$ ).

<sup>87</sup> Recoded to include answers originally coded as 'Is interesting'; 'Is boring'; and 'Useful as a guide for living'.

<sup>88</sup> LSF1S ( $\chi^2(9)=43.206$ ,  $p<0.05$ .  $n=284$ ) and SDAS ( $\chi^2(9)=10.277$ ,  $p>0.05$ .  $n=125$ ).

<sup>89</sup> Recoded to include answers originally coded as 'Is OK'; 'Useful as a guide for living'; 'Is out of date'; 'They don't live by it'; 'Contradicts itself'; and 'Is interesting'.

<sup>90</sup>  $\rho(128)=0.898$ ,  $p<0.01$ .

<sup>91</sup> Source: [http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/BE3F9D81-9E16-48FB-970043B70F0A548E/0/issues\\_main.pdf](http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/BE3F9D81-9E16-48FB-970043B70F0A548E/0/issues_main.pdf)

<sup>92</sup> Source: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/098C85DC-F6E6-4074-AD14-B521553474DE/0/Table2.xls>

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.stars.govt.nz/NR/rdonlures/DD7D2D20-C8BD-463F-AD88-52C255CC8EF1/0/Table3b.xls>

<sup>94</sup> In the New Zealand Census, Sikhism is included in the category of 'Other' religions. To facilitate cross-sample comparisons, the total presented here excludes those who cited Sikhism.

<sup>95</sup> Refers to the proportion of pupils giving an inappropriate answer or no response. For the Census results, this refers solely to the number of people who did not respond.

# The Biblos Project

Biblos in New Zealand is the fourth report of the Biblos Project. Each phase resulted in the publication of a research report.

The first report, *Echo of Angels*, examined the need for research into teaching about the Bible, outlined the project's approaches and detailed its findings in Key Stages 2 and 3.

The second report, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, covered research into teaching the Bible in Key Stages 1 and 4.

The third report, *On the Side of the Angels*, covered research into what young people think about the Bible and what factors have shaped these attitudes.

The first three reports were summarised in *Teaching Biblical Narrative*.

