

# News From South Pacific Bible College

Tauranga, New Zealand

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## Fusing Cultures *By: Veronica Gearhart, Publications*



Walking out of your family's home for that last time before entering a two year Bible College can have a life changing effect on a person. Our students literally wave goodbye to their loved ones, and arrive in our multicultural classroom that averages about 8-15 students per year. Each person arrives with their own worldviews and assumptions about humanity, but when they hit the SPBC scene they become witnesses of multiple cultures fusing together, including their own. This year students come from New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, China, The Philippines, and

Korea. That type of diversity in one classroom for 40 hours a week over two years is an experience in itself. Our students not only get a biblical education, but they also get a dynamic cultural immersion experience. The students get to share cultural practices and lessons with each other as well as share favourite dishes from their home countries, towns, and villages, as pictured above. We love our international feasts and the beauty of how God uses SPBC to fuse His many cultures together!

## Asian Mission Forum & Reunion 2017

SPBC will be hosting the 2017 Asian Mission Forum in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 29 July to 2 August. Local Thai graduates are helping to organise this annual gathering of missionaries, Asian church leaders, and Christians. The Forum will be followed by the 35th SPBC

Reunion, which will be held from the 2-4 August. **Please save the date! We hope to see as many graduates as possible at the reunion!** More details will be shared closer to these events.



*We appreciate our SPBC graduate, Kayla Robinson, for her continued commitment to teaching English & Writing each year!*



*We are thankful for Dr. Ken Cukrowski who is teaching Post Exile to New Testament Backgrounds. He comes from Abilene, Texas and is the Dean of College of Biblical Studies at ACU.*



*Dr. Tommy Gore is currently teaching Old Testament Theology. He is the preaching minister at the White House CoC in Tennessee. We appreciate the wisdom and influence he has had on our students.*

## **SOLD!** *By: Steve Raine, Principal*



One of the neighbours who lives next to the Bible College came knocking on our door. He said his home was for sale and asked if we'd be interested in purchasing the property. After having a look at the house, we decided not to move forward with that option, but God used the neighbour to get us thinking. The housing market is really high right now, which triggered the idea to sell one set of the student flats that the Bible College has owned for many years. The real estate agent said it should sell within 2 weeks, but it

was sold within 2 days! With some planning, prayer, and reviewing costs and options, SPBC has made plans to use that money to build accommodation units on our current school property. This will allow us to have a school campus where all of our students can live together, which will promote safety, closer community, and less transportation needs. Please keep this process in your prayers as it will be a time consuming and challenging process!

## **Moments** *By: Gill Raine, Student Affairs*

I was talking to Ofa (off-ah) a few weeks ago. She told me that when she came to SPBC over a year ago, it was really all about her. She has since realised that it is all about God and what He wants for her life. She now understands that her desires are secondary to His. Ofa has begun to look for ways God wants to use her upon her return to Tonga at the end of the year. Ofa cried and cried about this revelation. That is why we work here!



*"Ofa's 2,500 word 'Look at Herself' essay showed her transparency and honesty was way beyond what I expected. Her insight into who she was and who she is becoming was humbling for me. It was a testament to her courage and desire to grow as a person and a Christian."*

**-Mike Austin**

*"SPBC has helped me grow in every way, spiritually, personally, and socially. I just feel like a whole new person. The people in this environment have contributed to my growth."* -Ofa



## Michael's Baptism *By: Mike Austin, CFO*

Michael Osbourne is an honest hearted person who came to us with a passion to learn more about God, faith, Jesus, and Scripture. He is a first year student from New Zealand who googled Bible Colleges and picked the one closest to his home, SPBC! As the year has unfolded Michael has been learning and growing and wanted to continue his obedience to God by being baptised, and it was my privilege to be able to help Michael to fulfil that goal. Michael's openness and sincerity has been a great encouragement to both staff and students. His classmates rejoiced alongside of him as we all welcomed Michael into the body of Christ!



## My Life at SPBC *By: Merafe Defensor & Kaitlin King*



SPBC offers a gender-sensitive, organized, and scholarly educational environment. Sir Steve Raine's Personal Development class has been a highlight for me.

The lessons have touched every fibre of my spirit. I am so in love with this class. It has given me such a love for God that I want to put into action. It's shown me that the quest to be Christ-like is purposeful, enduring, and takes a lifetime.

**-Merafe**  
1st Year Student, Philippines



A highlight of studying at SPBC is the relationships with the other students. Over the last 6 months we have learned so much about each other and have had opportunities to pray, encourage, and build each other up in our studies, faith and life in general together. Doing life in New Zealand with my classmates is fun!

**-Kaitlin**  
1st Year Student, Australia

## Graduate News: Jowana Tukana, Fiji

Fiji has been a focal point for recruitment of potential students at SPBC. Over the years we have had many

encouraging brothers and sisters attend the Bible College and then return home to work in their

villages. Jowana Tukana was baptised right before she came to SPBC in 1997. It was during her time as a student that she was able to experience being in a church family. The surroundings were very special and unique to her because she had never experienced life, in the true sense, in the “body of Christ.” After graduating in 1999, she piloted a Children’s Bible Class curriculum in



Zealand friends and SPBC over dinner in Fiji when Kiwis would come and visit. She is currently

working in New Zealand as the Manager of the historical Waitomo Caves

Hotel. Jowana helps support other Pacific Islanders to be able to study at SPBC. She is passionate about them having the same opportunity to learn and grow in the Word of God. So, she makes a personal investment to keep encouraging as many people, especially Fijians, as she can to attend the Bible College. Jowana says, “Encouraging more young people from my Fiji Congregation has always been a desire. These are the kids whom Mary and I taught at Bible School and will continue the future of the church in Fiji.” This is one of the remarkable aspects and goals of the Bible College.



the churches in Fiji with the supervision of Mary Nelson, Otumoetai CoC Children’s Ministry Team. Since then, Jowana has travelled to different places and done many different things. She has been able to attend the Come Before Winter Retreat in Malindi, Kenya in 2007. She has maintained connections with New

We love seeing graduates return to their home countries where they promote their spiritual growth and the power of God’s transformation in their lives. It’s a real testimony to the power of God’s Word when graduates inspire their own friends and family to dedicate two years of their lives to studying the Bible. We are grateful for Jowana and her dedication to the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

## Our Mission

**To transform lives  
through the  
inspiration of  
God’s Word  
to multiply  
CHRIST-  
FOLLOWERS  
in the world.  
2 Timothy 2:2**

