

**EXPLORING ECUMENICAL CHARISM OF AN ANGLICAN AND UNITING
CHURCH COLLEGE THROUGH MEMBERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF ITS
ETHOS, CULTURE, CLIMATE AND LEADERSHIP**

Submitted by

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Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics and Safety Committees (where required).

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Collie', is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Trevor J Collie

Date: 5/4/2017

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Ultimately, I give praise and honour to my God for his sustaining spirit and blessing.

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
(Ephesians 2:8-10)*

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Abstract

The context of this research is an ecumenical college created by both the Anglican Church and the Uniting Church in Queensland, Australia. The advent of the modern ecumenical movement of the Christian Church has introduced initiatives from churches to demonstrate fuller unity by cooperating in ministry and mission through the establishment of ecumenical agencies such as ecumenical schools. The purpose of this thesis is to explore how members of one particular school understand and experience what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its ecumenical charism.

A review of current relevant literature generated the following research questions, which guided the conduct of the research:

How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?

Given the focus of this thesis, an interpretive approach was considered appropriate. Within a constructionist epistemology, symbolic interactionism (SI) has been adopted as the lens to inform the theoretical perspective of this study. The methodology adopted is case study. Data were generated from a review of documentation, and nineteen participants through focus groups and in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

This research generates conclusions that contribute to new knowledge, which emerge from the College members' experiences and understandings of ecumenism. A lack of guidance from the sponsoring churches generated a theological conceptual vacuum. College members addressed this lacuna by developing their own understandings of how to understand ecumenism and be ecumenical. This conceptual framework has been labelled "ecumenical charism". This concept incorporates an understanding of the community's life-giving strength from "a Spirit driven movement of the [members'] heart, mind and will" (Murray, 2007, p. 291). Such a framework became a theological "touchstone" to critique authenticity in the College's decision making.

Consequently, ecumenical charism offers justifications for the legitimacy of College practices by identifying the disparities between aspired articulated values and current practices. Often enough the reasons for such inconsistencies are the limited knowledge of the sponsoring churches' vision and mission for the College and the resulting lack of policy and procedural documentation. This is particularly the case in explaining inconsistencies in leadership decisions and behaviour.

Finally, contributions to policy include the need to generate policies consistent with the beliefs and values underpinning and sustaining the ecumenical charism. Without such a framework, decision making is too often based on authoritarianism or pragmatic philosophies inconsistent with the gospel values of ecumenical charism.

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Anglican	either a member of or abbreviation for the Anglican Church of Australia
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
charism	a distinct Christian essence emanating from a community, which gives it a particular character or quality
Church	total universal collective of Christian churches
church	an individual denomination or local representation
College	abbreviation for Woodland Brook College
college	synonymous for school
discipling	to teach or train
Educang	acronym for E ducation – U niting C hurch – A nglican
ecumenism	a movement seeking visible Christian unity
<i>koinonia</i>	communion (with God)
<i>oikoumenê</i>	the entire inhabited earth
school	synonymous for college
SI	symbolic interactionism
Uniting	either a member of or abbreviation for the Uniting Church in Australia
WBC	Woodland Brook College
WCC	World Council of Churches

Chapter One

The Research Identified

1.1 Introduction

This research concerns an ecumenical college, Woodland Brook College (a pseudonym), sponsored by both the Anglican Church and the Uniting Church. This evolving and unique college is the context of extensive discussion by educational leaders and teachers. What concerns many is its particular focus as an ecumenical Christian education institution.

This issue is compounded because the sponsoring churches of Woodland Brook College (WBC) have developed their own Christian identities, derived from historically different theological and ecclesiastical orientations. As WBC's community members endeavour to express themselves ecumenically, they do so with contrasting denominational expectations.

A preliminary reading of mission statements and other literature from other ecumenical church schools and agencies concludes that there is a paucity of information concerning the characteristics of an ecumenical school. Therefore, research in this area is addressing a lacuna in the academic area.

This chapter offers a rationale for this study, identifies the research context, research design and significance of the research, and provides the thesis outline.

1.2 Rationale for This Study

I have been involved in ecumenism through a range of endeavours in educational and community settings. During a middle leadership teaching role at WBC, I became concerned about how the supposed ecumenical principles influenced WBC's ecumenical charism. Little is known about how ecumenical principles influence the development of the practices of ecumenical agencies of the Church. I wanted to explore ecumenical charism to understand these developments.

1.3 Research Context

The research took place in an ecumenical P-12 Christian college jointly owned and sponsored by the Anglican and Uniting churches in Queensland: Woodland Brook College (WBC). The College was a unique new undertaking by the two sponsoring churches. It was established in the early 1990s in a new master-plan urban development. The churches' mission for the College was to be an outreach of the "Church" for the Woodland Brook community by offering quality education to that community. The College was to be a conduit to nurture students and parents or carers with the Christian Gospel. The Uniting Church has had a continual congregational presence in the area, with several families involved in both the church and WBC. In contrast, there has been no continual congregational presence by the Anglican Church. The College was not selective on church membership for students and their parents or carers, with many students having other Christian denominational backgrounds and memberships. It welcomed students from all faith traditions. In contrast, the College selected staff who were committed Christians and/or supportive of the aims of the churches.

1.4 Research Design

1.4.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework directs and structures the research design.

1.4.1.1 Epistemology

This research is based on a constructionist epistemology, which holds that “reality is socially constructed by and between the persons who experience it” (Darlaston-Jones, 2007, p. 19).

Through people’s assumptions and social interaction, “ways of knowing” are constructed by interactions through “life-world” experiences (Crotty, 1998; O'Brien, 2006). They are continually manifesting subjective meanings from individuals and agreed meetings of groups of individuals. Constructionism is appropriate for this research as it seeks socially derived meaning from WBC members’ understandings and experiences of ecumenical charism.

1.4.1.2 Theoretical perspective: Interpretivism and symbolic interactionism

Interpretivism is a suitable theoretical perspective for this study as its focus is on the direct lived experiences of people. Interpretivism explores the influences on people’s values, attitudes and beliefs that play out within their social context. This study adopts interpretivism through the lens of symbolic interactionism (SI). SI values how meaning is generated from social interaction.

Observable actions are studied, but the causes of actions are in the non-observable process of individual or “actor’s” interpretations. The interpretivist perspective through the lens of SI is suited for this research as it seeks to explore WBC’s ecumenical charism through members’ understandings and experiences of its ethos, culture, climate and leadership.

1.4.2 Research methodology

A research methodology is the conceptualised justification for the use and orchestration of the chosen data-gathering strategies. A methodology links the theoretical perspectives and the chosen data-gathering strategies (Aranda-Mena, Calder, de Quiros, & Edwards, 2007; Crotty, 1998).

1.4.2.1 Case study

Case study methodology is adopted for this study as it engages with the social context and the meanings constructed through the interactions of WBC members. The case for this particular study is ecumenical charism and the case is situated in a school (WBC). A case study is “an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community” (Merriam, 2002, p. 8). “There is a focus, or ‘heart,’ of the study” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 28). A case study offers the means of investigating the social units consisting of variables of possible importance to acquire new understandings from WBC members.

1.4.3 Participants

Those who participated in this research were purposefully selected (Patton, 1990). This study adopted selected purposeful participants based on organisational and strategic positions within WBC. Invited participants included the Chair of the Board, College Executive Principal (CEO/Head of College), College Chaplain, Deputy Heads of College, Coordinators of Schools, Human Resources Manager, a member of the Parents and Friends Association, staff (including teachers with added responsibilities) and senior school students. The Chair of the Board and

CEO/Head of College, although supportive of this research, declined to continue with the study.

In total, nineteen WBC members took part in this research, with fourteen participants involved in semi-structured one-on-one interviews and five participants in the student focus group.

1.4.4 Data-gathering strategies

Three strategies were chosen to gather data for this research:

1. review of documentation (paper and electronic)
2. semi-structured one-on-one interviews (n=14)
3. focus groups (n=5).

1.5 Significance of the Research

The study has potential significance for three reasons:

First, little research exists on how ecumenical Church agencies function. Exploring WBC members' understandings and experiences generates new understandings of the functionality of an ecumenical agency.

Second, this study explores the challenges of creating ecumenical charism. Some of WBC's members communicate experiencing difficulties in comprehending what is the College's ecumenical charism. WBC members indicate that a lack of guidance from the sponsoring churches generates a theological conceptual vacuum. Consequently, WBC members have developed their own frameworks of how to understand being ecumenical.

Third, the research promotes sophisticated understandings of developing ecumenical charism.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

This research explores ecumenical charism of an Anglican and Uniting Church P-12 Christian college through members' understandings and experiences of its ethos, culture, climate and leadership. A brief outline of the thesis structure follows as a means of familiarising the reader with the study.

1.6.1 Chapter One: The research identified

The purpose of this chapter is to present the rationale for this study, identify the research context, research design and the significance of the research, and present the thesis outline.

1.6.2 Chapter Two: Defining the research problem

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate and justify the research problem that this study addresses. Chapter Two gives an introductory overview of the ecumenical movement. Brief historical profiles of the Anglican and Uniting churches are presented, as well as their current "affirmations" and "commitments" to ecumenism. In addition, this discussion provides a contextual account of WBC. The chapter concludes by articulating the research problem and the major research question.

1.6.3 Chapter Three: Review of literature

This chapter generates a review of literature that illuminates issues underpinning the research problem. The undertaking of a literature review is to inform the research problem via the generation of research questions. The literature review is systematic, in that it endeavours to

glean from relevant and available literature to inform the research questions. A conceptual framework is generated that illustrates the literature review's major research issues, with each section of the chapter introducing the respective research question.

1.6.4 Chapter Four: Research design

Chapter Four explains and justifies the research design, which this chapter has previously outlined (see Section 1.4, Research Design).

1.6.5 Chapter Five: Presentation of new understandings

This chapter presents “new understandings” generated from exploring the ecumenical charism of WBC through members’ understandings that emerge from their experiences of the College’s ethos, culture, climate and leadership.

1.6.6 Chapter Six: Discussion of new understandings

This chapter discusses the selected “new understandings” generated from the research.

1.6.7 Chapter Seven: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations, and suggests possible future research emerging from this study. The chapter also demonstrates how the research contributes to scholarship.

Chapter Two

Defining the Research Problem

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate and justify the research problem that this study addresses.

It is important to establish a contextualisation of the Anglican and Uniting churches' fundamental structure, beliefs and history with the research problem, as this presents an underpinning of this study. A diagram of the churches' fundamental structures is presented in Figure 2.1.

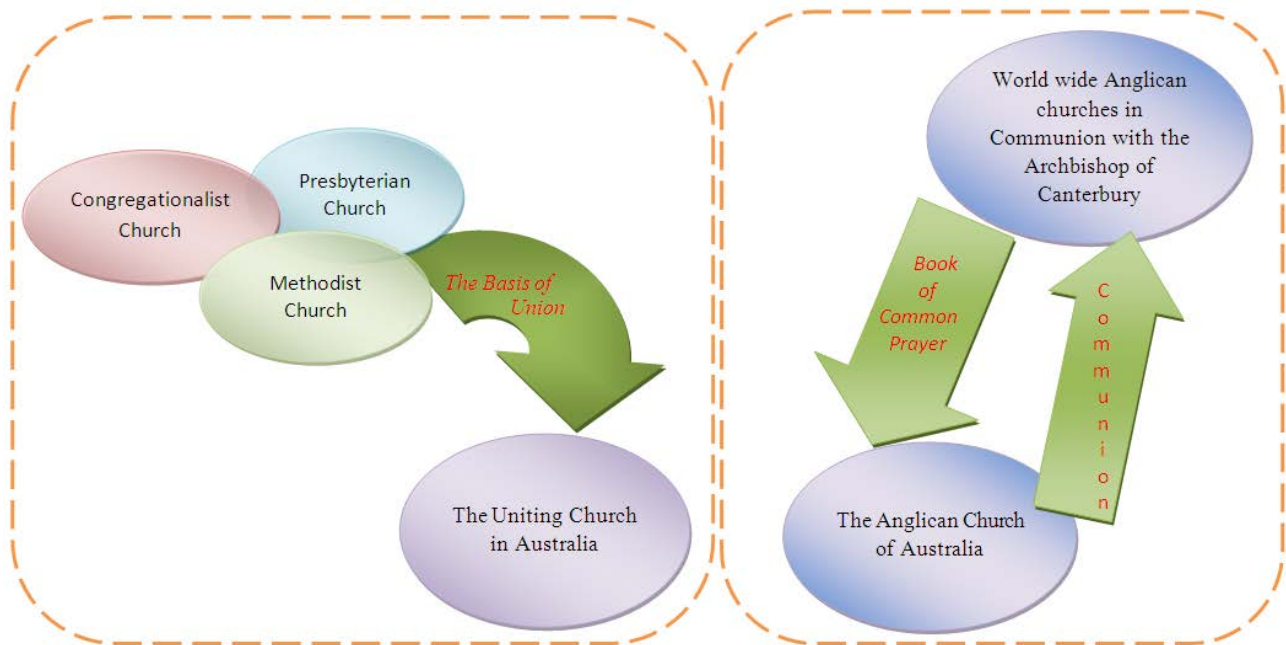


Figure 2.1. Fundamental Structures of the Anglican and Uniting Churches

2.2 Historical Overview of the Sponsoring Churches

In order to appreciate the complexities of this research, it is appropriate to offer a brief theological, ecclesiological and historical synthesis of the development of the Anglican Church of Australia (Anglican Church) and the Uniting Church in Australia (Uniting Church).

2.2.1 The Anglican Church of Australia

The Anglican Church has had a unique position in Australian history since English settlement. Like other Christian denominations, the Anglican Church has encountered challenges in reflecting a truly Australian Anglican identity. The Anglican Church's effort reflects its desire to create a unique social, cultural and religious identity. Traditionally, the Anglican Church has been identified with the privileged English upper class, "a position coveted by some Anglicans, but despised by others" (Justins, 2002, p. vi). Notwithstanding, the Anglican Church has never publicly sought any class uniqueness. However, it did seek to transplant the trappings from the "mother church", the Church of England, into Australia. The Anglican Church's desire to import the trappings from "home" was not exclusive. Other Christian denominations coming from Europe and the British Isles similarly sought to establish their "home" presence in Australia. As the influence of the British Empire declined in Australia, it left a distinctive impression of British culture, which is noticeable within the Anglican churches (Rayner, 1962). Appendix G presents a further historical background of the Anglican Church of Australia.

The historical picture of the Anglican Church (Church of England) in Australia reveals a diversity of theological and ecclesiastical traditions. The church has laboured to present a unified national presence (Nolan, 2007). The Anglican Church's story demonstrates that it has wrestled

with a desire to maintain facets of the English church traditions, while also attempting to reflect its unique Australian presence. Although holding similarities with the worldwide Anglican Communion, Australian Anglicans are re-evaluating what they consider as their key beliefs (Nolan, 2007).

2.2.1.1 An overview of Anglican beliefs

The Anglican Church is a worldwide fellowship of churches maintaining “Communion” with the Archbishop of Canterbury in England (Allison, 1984). Bishops throughout the fellowship hold the clerical position of Chief Officers of the church and archbishops or presiding bishops hold national or provincial responsibilities and administrative authority. Anglicans hold that their churches are reformed churches, keeping to New Testament and early Church teachings (Beckwith, 1988). However, Anglicans consider their churches as *via media* – middle way between Reformed and Catholic doctrines and practices. Anglicans seek the reunification of the entire Church, which influences their ministry and mission (Allison, 1984).

The Anglican Church’s authority rests in the Scriptures, Creeds and Sacraments of the Church, the “*Book of Common Prayer*” and “The Thirty-nine Articles” (Allison, 1984). Anglicans hold the Scriptures to be the Word of God and, as such, they contain all that is necessary for salvation. Anglicans accept the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds as confessions of faith. The “*Book of Common Prayer*” is foundational for Anglican belief as it articulates the distinctive embodiment of Anglican doctrine (Beckwith, 1988). The “*Book of Common Prayer*” prescribes the orthodoxy of the churches and it regulates the “Ordination of Orders” (Allison, 1984). “The Thirty-nine Articles”, although not explicitly required for membership within the Anglican Communion, are

regarded as an important historical document affirming the doctrines of the Trinity, justification by faith alone, rejection of transubstantiation in the Eucharist and acceptance of the personhood of Jesus Christ being fully divine and fully human (Allison, 1984).

The Anglican Communion throughout the world sustains a diversity of people, cultures and theological perspectives. The theological diversity covers a spectrum from Anglo-Catholic “high church” to conservative evangelicals’ and charismatics’ “low church”. Australia Anglicanism reflects this diversity; a pronounced conservative evangelical emphasis exists in the Sydney diocese, while other dioceses operate from an Anglo-Catholic perspective.

2.2.2 The Uniting Church in Australia

On 22 June 1977, after a seventy-six-year journey, the Uniting Church in Australia was formed. The road to the unification of the three Christian denominations brought new directions into an uncertain future (Uniting Church in Australia, 1992). The efforts of Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians saw the creation of a new church – the Uniting Church in Australia (Uniting Church in Australia, 1992). “The Basis of Union” was the forming document that the Uniting Church adopted. The creation of this document became the fundamental foundation for the new denomination’s theological beliefs and doctrines (Uniting Church in Australia, 1992). “The Basis of Union” changed the older independent theologies, church governance and worship of the three subscribing denominations (Uniting Church in Australia, 1992). Foundationally, the Uniting Church sought to integrate aspects from each of the three different denominations, to allow for diversity within a structural unity (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). Appendix H

presents further theological, ecclesiological and historical background of the three churches that joined as the Uniting Church in Australia.

2.2.2.1 The road to union

At the time of Australia's Federation in 1901, there was a strong movement to unite Protestant churches. Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians, along with other Christian denominations, actively engaged at different times and various levels to unite under one banner. The Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians were more eager about the prospect of unification and became the driving force working for a unified church with an Australian identity. The period after World War II (WWII) witnessed a renewed eagerness for unification from all three churches. A new ecumenical spirit for a common ground led this renewal. This new eagerness led the Congregationalist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches to renew unification discussions (Cook, 2003).

After years of discussion, the process of amalgamating the churches was abandoned in favour of a different approach to establishing a "new" church from the three "old" churches (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). This different approach focused on the "nature of the faith", those issues that are not negotiable and are the basis for amalgamation. The new approach became the basis of the proposed union (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006).

In 1971, the final version of "The Basis of Union" was presented to the three churches' members for voting (Uniting Church in Australia, 1992). Although the majority of the Methodist Church

members voted in favour of the union, the ultimate decision rested with its General Conference, which ultimately endorsed the membership's decision (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006).

The structure of the Congregationalist Church government demanded that each church vote on its own inclusion. The vote (ranging across the Australian States from 83% to 94%) was for unification (Cook, 2003). In contrast, the Presbyterian churches were relatively divided on the issue, with 64% deciding to be part of the Uniting Church in Australia (Cook, 2003).

The result of the process of forming the Uniting Church has generated an exceptionally diverse church across Australia. Each of the Uniting Church's State Synods in Australia has a particular individual character and theological bias, and these have led to challenges and divisive debates (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006).

2.2.2.2 Contributions of each church to the Uniting Church in Australia

The most obvious characteristics with which the Methodists gifted the Uniting Church were the structures of governance and ministry. The Methodist Church addressed issues of gender equality, as it had already ordained women in ministry. It also emphasised the need for increased ecumenism in the establishment of a uniquely Australian church. Additionally, the Methodists emphasised social justice issues and education (Cook, 2003; Uniting Church in Australia, 2006).

Although the Congregationalists were small in number, they honoured and increased the leadership role of the laity in Uniting Church affairs, particularly for women and the integrity of the local congregation. In addition, there was an emphasis on liberal intellectual scholarship.

The Presbyterians contributed a structural polity that united the other two denominational structures. They emphasised educational institutions and social justice initiatives exemplified by the Australian Inland Mission and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Cook, 2003).

The combining of Congregationalist, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations into the “new” Uniting Church in Australia is characterised by a liberal theology of the sacraments and an ecumenical and inclusive liturgy (Cook, 2003). The Uniting Church polity arrangement is on four levels (Congregation, Parish, State Assembly and National Assembly), where church members have specific responsibilities (Cook, 2003). The church assumes a prominent responsibility for issues of social justice. Considerable energy is being expended in social work initiatives, with the Uniting Church becoming a respected non-governmental organisation (NGO) involved in community and welfare programs throughout Australia, particularly focused on care for the aged, disadvantaged children and the marginalised in society. In addition, the Uniting Church has a large network of educational institutions throughout Australia and plays an influencing role in education. The challenges in forming the Uniting Church have been significant and at times painful for the individuals involved. Nevertheless, what has emerged is an Australian church with a unique identity that embraces the diversity of the Australian society.

2.3 An overview of the Ecumenical Movement

The ecumenical movement seeks to generate a shared spirit of Christian unity and cooperation. The word “ecumenical” derived from the Greek *oikoumenê*, “the entire inhabited earth” (Weber, 1984, p. 340). Ecumenism is the “organised attempt to bring about the cooperation and unity of

all believers in Christ” (Weber, 1984, p. 340). This movement has its origin in the nineteenth-century Protestant cooperation between evangelicals in the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Shelley, 1995). The movement was led by John Mott, the first honorary President of the World Council of Churches (WCC), who held the dictum: “Take your stumbling-blocks, and turn them into stepping-stones” (World Council of Churches, 2004a, p. 3).

By the end of the nineteenth century, with the dwindling growth of liberal Protestant theology, an important initiative occurred at the 1910 International Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh. Protestant Church representatives wanted to continue the unifying policies started at the Edinburgh Conference and they established three new structural organisations to continue this work – the International Missionary Council, Conference on Life and Work, and Conference on Faith and Order (Weber, 1984). “By 1937 the conferences on Life and Work, and Faith and Order agreed that a new, more inclusive organization was needed and proposed the establishment of a World Council of Churches (WCC)” (Weber, 1984, p. 340). WWII slowed the progress in forming this new council, and it was not until after the war that the WCC was established.

The formation of the WCC in 1948 attracted membership from many Protestant churches including “... 351 delegates, representing 147 denominations from 44 countries” (Weber, 1984, p. 442). The WCC:

... is a fellowship of churches, which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (World Council of Churches, 2009, para 1)

The WCC has a respected voice in world affairs, demonstrating exceptional leadership in initiating ecumenical endeavours. Further discussion on recent developments within the ecumenical movement is addressed in the next chapter (see Section 3.3, Ecumenism).

2.4 Anglican and Uniting Churches' current "Affirmations" and "Commitments" to Ecumenism

In 2010, after three decades of dialogue and presentation of joint church statements, the Anglican Church and the Uniting Church embraced an ecumenical covenant (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010). The covenant, a culmination of many years of discussion and dialogue seeks a shared commitment "for the sake of the gospel" (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2). The covenant is important for the churches as it unambiguously explains at the national level what they are seeking to promote at the local church level. Developed at a national level, a formal Covenant of Association (Table 2.1) between the churches is vital for endorsing ecumenical endeavours in ministry and mission at the local level.

Table 2.1
 An Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association

Under the leading of the Holy Spirit, heeding the Lord Jesus’ prayer that his disciples might be one, for the sake of the gospel and as the fruit of three decades of mutual dialogue, the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia make the following affirmations and commitments:

Affirmations	Commitments
1. We affirm that each of our churches stands in the continuity of the apostolic faith, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the ecumenical creeds.	1. Building upon our common confession of the apostolic faith, our common baptism and our participation in God’s mission, we commit ourselves to advance the visible unity of the Anglican and Uniting Churches in Australia at every level, as a contribution to the full visible unity of the Church of Christ.
2. Despite our failures and brokenness in discipleship, we see in each church a genuine desire to witness faithfully to the Gospel and to be engaged in God’s mission in the world. We recognise that each of our churches is a part of the one holy catholic and apostolic church.	2. We commit ourselves to continue to welcome each other’s baptised members to participate in the fellowship, worship and mission of our churches, and to offer eucharistic hospitality to members of each other’s churches.
3. We affirm that in both our churches the word of God is truly preached and the sacraments of baptism and holy communion are faithfully administered.	3. We commit ourselves to develop shared resources, to cooperate in mission, evangelism and our public witness to the apostolic faith.

Affirmations	Commitments
<p>4. We affirm that both the ordained ministries and other ministries of our churches are given by God as instruments of grace, to build up the people of God in faith, hope and love, and to share in God’s mission in the world.</p>	<p>4. We commit ourselves to listen to each other and to take account of each other’s concerns, especially in areas that affect our relationship as churches, and to develop ways by which our churches may regularly consult one another on significant matters of faith and order and life and work.</p>
<p>5. We affirm that ordained ministers in both churches have received the inward call of the Holy Spirit, and the commission of Jesus Christ given through the church, to provide for a ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral oversight.</p>	<p>5. We commit ourselves to overcome the remaining obstacles to a fuller visible unity, looking forward to the time when our life together will make possible a reconciled and interchangeable ordered ministry.</p>
<p>6. We affirm that personal, communal and collegial oversight (episcopate) is embodied and exercised in both churches in different and complementary forms, personal and conciliar, to serve the Church’s faithfulness to the Gospel.</p>	<p>6. We will take all possible steps to a closer fellowship in as many areas of Christian life and witness as possible.</p>
	<p>7. We make these commitments for the sake of the Gospel.</p>

(Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 4)

This covenant “offers a formal framework for cooperation and growing together through shared ministry and service, including what is already permitted and occurring at the local level in

parishes and other cooperative arrangements” (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2). The affirmations and the subsequent commitments from the churches encouraged both churches to seek ways of being ecumenical at all levels within each church.

2.4.1 The Anglican and Uniting churches ecumenical approach to education

Ecumenical cooperation between the Anglican and Uniting churches has resulted in joint and multiple denominational sponsored schools and colleges. During the 1980s and 1990s several ecumenical colleges were established under the sponsorship of the Anglican and Uniting churches throughout Australia: Pedare Christian College (1986) in South Australia, Kormilda College (1989) in the Northern Territory and Woodland Brook College (1994) in Queensland, the latter being the case study site for this study. Although this is an incomplete list of ecumenical colleges, the list offers examples of ecumenical endeavours across Australia. The home web pages of these colleges communicate information concerning the sponsoring churches’ cooperation and possible models of governance and ownership. However, there is limited information on ecumenical charism or a theological–philosophical rationale for the respective College ecumenical initiative. Furthermore, the sponsoring churches’ educational offices were unable to provide the researcher official justification for ecumenical endeavours. There is limited archival information from the Anglican and Uniting churches that identifies the rationale for establishing such schools. Likewise, a review of the Australian scholarly literature has not offered research concerning theological or educational rationales for creating ecumenical colleges. Subsequently, there appears to be little public acknowledgment or encouragement for creating ecumenical colleges.

2.5 Woodland Brook College Context

The Anglican and Uniting churches in Queensland entered into an agreement to establish WBC in one of Brisbane's new urban planned developments. WBC opened in 1994 with sixty-two students and three teachers. WBC enrolls students from Preparatory Year to Year 12 and currently has approximately 1150 students. WBC draws its students from the surrounding suburbs with the addition of international students from countries such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea. The College employs approximately 120 staff as teachers and support staff, who are from various Christian denominational backgrounds. When the College was established, there was an expectation that staff would be committed Christians able to demonstrate a church connection (Woodland Brook College, 1992). However, this expectation later changed, as staff are presently expected to be supportive of WBC's sponsoring churches' ethos and values.

The College's governance and leadership are exercised through the Board and the Leadership Team. The Board requires equal membership of Anglicans and Uniting Church members. The Leadership Team comprises ten people, including the CEO/Executive Principal, CFO, Chaplain/s, Human Services Manager and various deputy roles. Excluding the senior leadership roles – CEO/Executive Principal, CFO and Chaplain/s, where membership of either the Anglican or the Uniting churches is mandatory, people with other Christian denominational memberships who support the ethos and values of WBC are eligible for other leadership roles.

The ethos and values of WBC are based on mutually acceptable Christian principles, doctrines and practices of the sponsoring churches (Woodland Brook College, 1992). The Christian

concepts that engender WBC's ethos are "Respect, Trust, Fairness, Integrity, Honesty, Consistency, Service, Courtesy, Working together, Optimism, Compassion, [and] Tolerance" (Woodland Brook College, 1994, para 7). The values of WBC are stated in the values statement.

Our Values:

- faith – loving God and our neighbours as ourselves
- hope – fostering a positive, optimistic and empowering environment
- love – demonstrating support, encouragement and compassion
- courage – developing resilience, effort and determination to succeed
- community – respect, tolerance and working together in service to others
- justice – inclusively, equity, diversity and care for the environment (Woodland Brook College, 1994, para 6).

WBC's principles, doctrines and practices reflect a wide coverage of Christian beliefs and traditions.

The vision for WBC is: "To be recognized as a leader in ecumenical coeducation" (Woodland Brook College, 1994, para 1). Respect for diversity and inclusiveness underpins WBC's mission, for these are the "marks of the Christian mission of the Uniting and Anglican Churches" (Woodland Brook College, 2007, para 3). A ministry goal for the WBC community is to be a conduit between College families and the churches. WBC's mission is to become a "Christian faith community that nurtures life giving relationship and spiritual awareness" (Woodland Brook College, 2007, para 7).

Few members of WBC's community have experienced ecumenical charism or worked in ecumenical schools. In contrast, most members of WBC's community, including the Board and Leadership Team members have not had experiences in ecumenical ministries.

2.6 Research Problem

The research problem concerns the mission of WBC as an ecumenical agency. There is minimal information available concerning its foundational mission and those currently in leadership positions lack clarity about articulating or institutionalising its particular ecumenical charism.

2.7 The Research Purpose

Consequently, the purpose of this thesis is to explore how members of WBC understand and experience what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its ecumenical charism.

2.7.1 The major research question

How do members of WBC understand and experience what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its ecumenical charism?

Chapter Three

Review of Literature

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to generate a review of the pertinent literature that explains and amplifies issues underpinning this thesis, which explores how members of WBC understand and experience what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its ecumenical charism.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

A synthesis of the literature has identified five concepts: ecumenism, ethos, culture, climate and leadership, which structure the review. Each concept influences other concepts as they provide explanations concerning WBC members and their influence on the College's charism. Figure 3.1 offers a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework underpinning the literature review. These concepts provide a rationale for the articulation of specific research questions, which structure the conduct of the research.

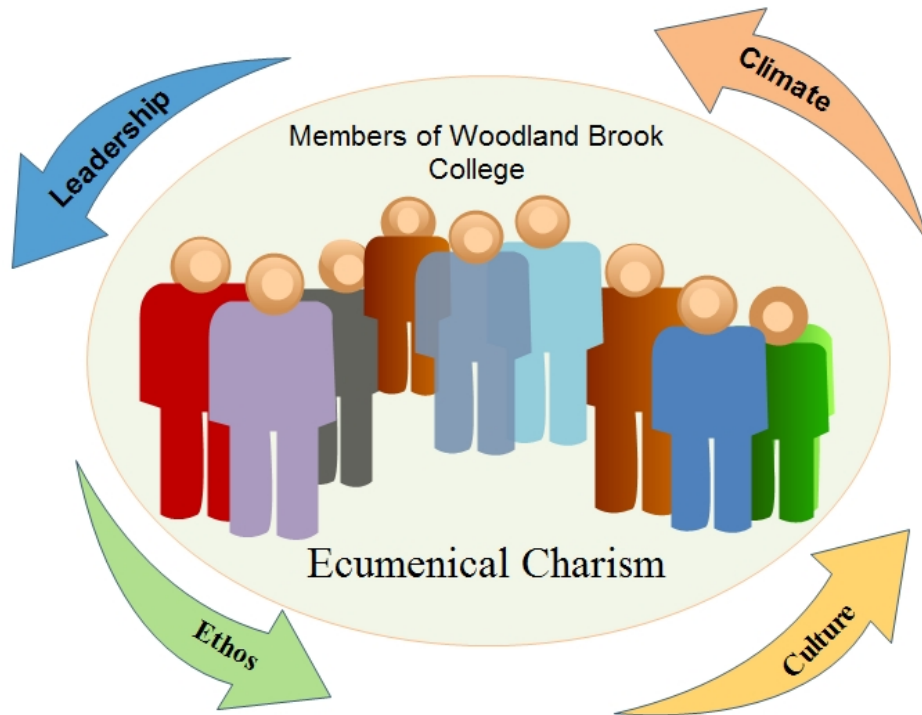


Figure 3.1. Conceptual Framework of the Literature Review

3.3 Ecumenism

The ecumenical movement is a response to Jesus' prayer to the Father for his disciples, "that they may all be one so that the world may believe (John 17:21)" (Jonson & Conti, 2005, p. 3). Jesus' request is not an earthly one, for the Church is "a gift of God, a creation of the Word and of the Holy Spirit" (Kinnamon, 2009, p. 342). The Church's fundamental aim in the ecumenical movement is for full visible Christian unity (Dulles, 2002; Jonson & Conti, 2005). A fundamental principle of the ecumenical movement is the belief in one Church with many members. However, the Church's fragmentation is the result of the action of its members (Dulles, 2002). Consequently, efforts in addressing visible Church unity are through the various ecclesial structures (Dulles, 1972, 2002; Kinnamon, 2009). A useful typology for understanding these various models of the Church is proposed by Dulles (2002), reconfigured in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Dulles's Five Models (Types) of the Church

Institution	The Church is a structured human society, where order and identity are created through hierarchy, rules and doctrine.
Community	The Church is a communion of grace where fellowship is central, focusing on people.
Sacrament	The Church seeks sanctification of its members through the sacramental processes of offering praise and worship to God.
Herald	The Church seeks to spread the "Good News" of the gospel through proclaiming the "Word", where a focus on preaching of Scripture that is "Biblical basis".
Servant	The Church is a community that cares for others, seeking to heal and unite all of humanity through working to transform the world for justice and peace.

(Dulles, 2002, p. 196)

According to Dulles (2002), none of the models "should be interpreted in an exclusivistic [sic] sense, so as to negate what the other approved models have to teach us" (p. 24). For it is not a question of choosing "between these ecclesiologies, for all of them incorporate valid insights, [but] to respect what is sound in each of the five approaches, and to reconcile these sound elements in some harmonious synthesis" (Dulles, 1972, pp. 209-210). Dulles' typology is distinctive, as it categorises ecclesiology types into understandable models. Consequently, a challenge for the ecumenical movement is to keep these categories in a dynamic equilibrium (Dulles, 2002).

A possible strategy to address this is appreciating the perspectives offered by Kinnamon. Kinnamon (2009) refines Dulles' label "servant", preferring to use the more contemporary term "activist" (p. 347). Moreover, Kinnamon's relabelling of the term for this ecclesiology model

more appropriately describes the current developments with people-centred ecumenism.

Nonetheless, the ecumenical goal “is not to create unity, but to address divisions of human origin in order that the unity God has given may be visible to the world” (Kinnamon, 2003, p. 9).

Church unity “is therefore a gift from God, and communion [*koinonia*] is not our achievement” (Byamungu, 2009, p. 8). Consequently, the central goal of the ecumenical movement is for a visible Church through Christian unity (Dulles, 2002). However, the interpretation of how and what type of ecumenism may achieve this has shifted from its original foundations (World Council of Churches, 2004a).

The pragmatic roots of the ecumenical movement lie in the missionary endeavours of the Protestant churches of the nineteenth century (Byamungu, 2009; Macek, 2000). After WWII, the “Faith and Order” movement within the World Council of Churches introduced doctrinal and deeper theological discussion in the quest for visible Church unity (Avis, 2010). During the second half of the twentieth century, various churches established different ecumenical organisations and structures at regional, national and global levels with the aim of promoting Church unity.

A re-examination of the meaning of “visibly unified” emerged with the rise of new and independent churches, along with established churches gaining greater autonomies, particularly in the Majority (Third) World. The traditional issues facing “visible unity” concern debates on western theology and Minority (First) World issues, which fail to address adequately the

challenges of Majority World churches. The ecumenical movement's priority shifted from focusing on issues relating to social justice on the micro level to those at the macro scale.

The shift was from just a theological interest in the Kingdom of God, to how it related to justice and peace of the world. This conformed to the dominant thinking of the time which viewed the Kingdom of God and the world, and not the Church, as being central to it. This new 1980's paradigm permeated the churches' approach and outlook on mission. (Daniel, 2010, p. 221)

This new emerging paradigm focuses on issues of people's freedom, justice, rights, peace and ecology.

By the 1980s, the changing spheres of ecumenism had encompassed a broader view from the visible unity of the Church and Christianity, to the unity of the "entire inhabited earth" – *oikoumene*. The changes drew churches into more social and political discussions of economic and ecological issues facing all inhabitants of the earth. Consequently, the WCC's Vancouver Assembly in 1983, deliberately focused on the importance of justice, peace and the integrity of ecology (Daniel, 2010).

The shift to this new paradigm became the key approach to the churches' attitude to mission. However, by the late 1980s, commentators both from within and outside the movement questioned the appropriateness of the new direction. Another paradigm shift was called for by Raiser (1991), who claimed ecumenism was in "stagnation if not resignation" (p. 1). According to Merrigan's (2008) observation of Raiser's warning, "the 'classical self-understanding' of the ecumenical movement was collapsing and that a 'new paradigm' for ecumenical reflection was emerging" (p. 173).

Raiser (1991) did not advocate a return to the old paradigm, which was characterised by four elements: “(1) a *Christocentric* orientation, (2) concentration on the *church*, (3) a *universal perspective*, and (4) *history* as the central category of thought” (p. 41). His reason for repudiating the old paradigm of “Christocentric universalism” was that it led to triumphalism in mission and viewing “history” from a salvific and teleological position. This theological position failed to address the contemporary global challenges (Raiser, 1991). Consequently, Raiser sought to replace the category of “universal salvation history” as the Church’s central image, with a revision of the concept of *oikoumene* from the unity of the entire inhabited earth, to that of unity of the “household of God” (Raiser, 1991, p. 41).

This perspective had its critics. Newbigin (1994) criticised Raiser’s interpretation of *oikoumene* and he sought to reaffirm the mission of the Church because he believed that without a Christocentric image, the Church’s mission “simply falls to the ground ... [W]hen the Church ceases to be a mission, then [it] ceases to have any right to the titles by which [it] is adorned in the New Testament” (Goheen, 2002, p. 368). For Newbigin, the Church is the only “human community that does not exist for itself; it exists for God [*missio Dei*] and for the world that Jesus came to save” (Goheen, 2002, p. 368).

Nevertheless, during the 1990s, the ecumenical movement became more aligned with Raiser’s position of *oikoumene*, with its championing of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Consequently, by the end of the twentieth century, the ecumenical movement had shifted considerably from its initial understandings of what visible Church unity might mean. The exponential growth of the world’s population and mass migration occupied a position of

important concern for the ecumenical movement (Daniel, 2010). Generally, the ecumenical movement has adopted a position of accepting the challenges of the world's social, political and ecological concerns as the Church's main responsibilities.

The beginning of the twenty-first century brought challenges of momentum for the ecumenical movement. Historically, the movement made observable progress towards a closer visible unity of the Church. Avis (2010) comments that a "century of ecumenical endeavour has seen many gains and achievements [and] ... transition from hostility and rivalry to respect and cooperation" (p. vii). However, the ecumenical movement's momentum "slowed noticeably in the last decade of the twentieth century" (Avis, 2010, p. 21). Arguably, Raiser's earlier 1990s paradigm shift had run its course and this momentum was no longer sustainable. Avis (2010) claims: "[I]nertia and apathy confront ecumenism on every side" (p. 21). This failure warranted a new vision for ecumenism with a renewal of the movement's theological understanding of the Body of Christ. Avis (2010) notes: "The eschatological hope of the full visible unity of the "Body of Christ" that has motivated the ecumenical movement for nearly a century is still valid, but the way that this is articulated theologically and practically is changing" (p. 21).

A further development occurred in 2003, when a diverse group of Christian leaders and professionals, some who had a connection with the WCC and some who were outsiders, met to explore a possible reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement. "This consultation affirmed the urgency of the issues and called for further discussions to re-vitalize the ecumenical movement and to ensure that our structures and our actions respond to the changing global realities" (World Council of Churches, 2004a, p. 1). The recommended reconfiguration of the ecumenical

movement was in three areas. The first was a broadening of the ecumenical movement to ensure greater participation of all churches. The second was the process of deepening fellowship between churches. The third was a strengthening of the relationships between existing ecumenical actors to ensure a greater coherence and effectiveness (World Council of Churches, 2004a). All three recommendations aim to draw the churches to a deeper shared communion (*koinonia*). The latter two recommendations particularly focus on developing *koinonia* through ecumenical reception.

3.3.1 Receptive ecumenism

Receptive ecumenism is an emerging practice in shared communion. “Reception” is not a new concept in Christian learning (Kelly, 2011). Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians states: “For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you” (1.Corinth.11:23 NET). Paul demonstrates the concept of reception, of passing on the teaching from Jesus to those at Corinth. The people are requested to receive the teaching and then to put it into practice in the context of their church community. Therefore, reception is actualised through first hearing and then contextualising what is heard, in a manner that creates concrete actions in transforming the community members’ faith, life and witness to God (Kelly, 2011).

The process of appropriating Christian learning through reception has continued to the present day (Tavard, 2006). Subsequently, receptive ecumenism is not a uniquely new process but a joining of two concepts of reception and ecumenism, producing a framework for a process of Christian learning. Kelly (2011) claims: “I am confident that this new methodology can serve us well – not just because it is new, but because it emerges out of the ancient idea of reception” (p.

6). Receptive ecumenism starts with the premise of asking the question: What can we learn from others? This approach is contrasted with the traditional perspective: What can other churches learn from our church? (Kelly, 2011). Hall and Rowell (2007) maintain that the all too “frequent ‘default instinct’ of conventional ecumenism [that] focusing on what others have to learn from us as a prelude to ecumenical progress [is] replaced by an attitude of receptive learning from others” (p. 248). Murray (2007), a pioneer of receptive ecumenism, states: “What, in any given situation, can one’s own tradition appropriately learn with integrity from other traditions?” (p. 288). The learning process could take churches beyond a simplistic step of trying to copy from other churches. A church needs to “chew over what it sees and hears, ponder what this could look like in its own, perhaps different circumstances, and use all of its own traditions and resources to develop something that is fitting for this particular community” (Kelly, 2011, p. 5). Hence, a fundamental premise of receptive ecumenism is to work towards a self-critical position of one’s own tradition. The self-critical process needs to be an honest attempt “to practical conversion, growth and development upon which all real ecumenical progress depends” (Murray, 2008a, p. 32). The question becomes one of willingness to be truly self-critical and to be open to change through receptive learning from other churches.

Receptive learning could take the Church to a new visible unity through self-critical processes that build on the past ecumenical outcomes and look for concrete expressions in the life of the churches. The desire for receptive learning is to appreciate the shift within the ecumenical movement to concrete actions rather than actions of shared mission, solving problems and minor agreements. The goal is for “long-term action of a programme of individual, communal and structural conversion driven, like the Gospel that inspires it, by the promise of conversion into

greater life and flourishing” (Murray, 2008a, p. 33). The aim is for each church tradition to become more than it presently is, through sharing from other churches and receiving their particular gifts. Receptive ecumenism, asks honestly, “What do *we* need to learn and what can *we* learn – or receive – with integrity from *our* others?” (Murray, 2008a, p. 32). Ecumenical dialogue alone, without receptive action, is incapable of delivering a self-critical openness to practical conversion, growth and development.

The focus in receptive ecumenism is not the same as traditional ecumenical dialogue, where the emphasis is on a grassroots, bottom-up approach. The principal aim of receptive ecumenism is to promote change within church traditions, instead of directly changing between church traditions. Consequently, the strategy is not to overcome the differences or to find common ground but to promote receptive learning “precisely *in face* of and *across* continuing difference and in such a way as implies not the forsaking and diminishing of diverse particular identities but their intensification and enrichment” (Murray, 2008a, p. 39). Receptive ecumenism draws out the spirit of unity of the Church and thereby displays visible Christian unity.

Through the efforts of people, a spiritual ecumenism has emerged from receptive ecumenism. Correspondingly, there has been the rise of post-denominational Christianity, where many Christians no longer perceive themselves as belonging to any specific denomination, but a sharing of spiritual life. Murray (2008a) emphasises that the continuing challenge for each generation of “Christian existence is to recognise that Christianity is not primarily a belief system but a practice – the practice of discipleship” (p. 36). At the heart of Christian life is the “life of Christ in the Spirit – that is lived into and lived out of. Similarly, the Church is not

primarily a concept, but a ‘life-world’; a living, breathing organizational reality” (Murray, 2008a, p. 36). The work of receptive ecumenism introduces vigour for a spiritual ecumenical movement of the heart, mind and will.

Receptive ecumenism evokes a desire for all Christians to become more fully, freely and richly what they already are through their spiritual union. Receptive ecumenism explicitly draws out both the interpersonal and structural-institutional relationships, which leads to a deeper spiritual ecumenism for Christians. Church unity is the work of the Holy Spirit and this puts receptive ecumenism “within the sphere of spirituality, and spiritual ecumenism is, indeed, the soul of the ecumenical movement” (Byamungu, 2009, p. 9). This places a responsibility on all Christians for visible Church unity and not exclusively any ecclesial orders (Murray, 2007).

All members of Christian communities equally hold a responsibility for visible Church unity. His Holiness Aram I (Keshishian) (2004) states that what is “needed is a holistic, balanced and interactive approach that will preserve the movement’s character of ecumenism and give due consideration to its institutional expression” (p. 39). A further part of the reconfiguration is a recognition that the movement belongs to all the people of God, which is larger than simply the institutional expression of the Church.

3.3.2 People-centred ecumenism

The rise of post-denominational Christianity, and increased communication, is contributing to a people-centred ecumenism. This phenomenon is communicated through online forums, advocacy groups, spiritual movements and general networking. Such a pastoral dynamic, devoid of

political agendas, is the primary catalyst for a “people-centred ecumenism, [which in turn] will create ecumenical agendas which are feasible and relevant to the grassroots” (Byamungu, 2009, p. 10). This has become particularly obvious over the last decade, because of unparalleled lines of communication, which have been spontaneous and more effective than those employed by traditional institutional ecumenism. Not surprisingly then, the emergence of a people-centred ecumenism has attracted more enthusiasm than the ecumenism of institutional churches. One explanation for this phenomenon is that ecumenism is changing its identity from “ecclesio-centric to people-centered [sic] paradigms within and outside the churches. Clergy-based ecclesiastical ecumenism is fading away” (Keshishian, 2004, p. 42). The undisputed conclusion is that new expressions and paradigms of ecumenism are becoming the model for ecumenical life.

People-centred ecumenism displays several key characteristics. Its expression goes beyond traditional narrow sectarian boundaries by creating dynamic models and alternative strategies of articulating evolving ecumenical visions. By exploring multiple ecumenical perspectives, people-centred ecumenism encourages diversity in ecumenical life and inclusiveness in ecumenical reflection and action. People-centred ecumenism creates interdependence between local, regional and global ecumenical initiatives. Additionally, it expands the understanding of the whole Church as the Body of Christ, so that governance is characterised more by “fellowship building” rather than organisational managerialism. This novel expression is often apparent at the local church level. Consequently, the ecumenical action becomes an integrated part of the life of individual Christians, if it is to become an experienced reality in organisations such as ecumenical schools.

To summarise, a shift is occurring concerning how ecumenism is understood and experienced. Once the focus of ecumenism was solely in the domain of the institutional churches; currently its authenticity emanates from the “life-world” needs and desires of Christians. Institutional ecumenism and people-centred ecumenism are not contradictory philosophies but complementary perspectives that assist Christians to orchestrate their energies for strengthening the “Body of Christ”. Indeed, if ecumenism is to reflect the needs of the local church community, it “ought to touch the life of people in all its perspectives” (Byamungu, 2009, p. 10). The hope is to develop an integrated ecumenical strategy and vision that promotes a holistic and people-centred perception of an ecumenical Church.

3.3.3 Ecumenical charism

The Spirit of God offers the gift of charism to the Church. Consequently, charism is fundamentally a spiritual power that underpins the mission and ministry of the Church. This spiritual charism gives authoritative power to the Church, enabling it to:

... continue to exist with the vitality it needs to renew its thought and to express it in a language that speaks to people’s minds by cutting through the opacity of reality and allowing them to act meaningfully in the midst of contradictions in a way that bears witness to the power of faith and the gospel. (de Santa Ana, 1998, p. 388)

Charism transcends the entire Church, with no particular denomination having any exclusivity over Christian charism (Fuchs, 2008). Moreover, ecumenism seeks to express charism through “fellowship building” in order to achieve authentic Christian communities.

Christian communities create interdependence through experiencing communion, *koinonia*, between each other and with God. These characteristics are vital dynamics for visible Church

unity. Christians are called to a continuing dynamic growth in *koinonia* within the Church, which is the working of “being made holy” (Hebrews 10:10-14) (Tavard, 2006). Kinnamon (2009) affirms: “The church is holy because God is the Holy One” (p. 342). The Church is the foretaste of total *koinonia* with God (World Council of Churches, 1991). Furthermore, the Church’s purpose is to “unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit, to manifest communion in prayer and action and thus to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the kingdom” (World Council of Churches, 1991, p. 1.1). The benefit of understanding the Church as *koinonia* is that the Church is perceived unambiguously within the context of God’s intention for creation, keeping the Church looking to God for all it does in worship and mission: this is its charism. According to Tanner (1994b), *koinonia* “is the most important theme of contemporary ecumenical theology resonating with contemplative experience and the experience of close human relationships” (p. 166). Consequently, the focus of *koinonia* is more on the given relationships found in the oneness in Jesus Christ than on the existing separations between Christian institutions (Dulles, 2002; Kinnamon, 2009). If *koinonia* is considered “seriously then the personal and relational life of the Church is fundamentally important. No individual and no local community is sufficient to itself. No individual, or no community, may say of others, ‘I have no need of you.’” (Tanner, 1994b, p. 94). The concept of Church as *koinonia* could be a promising approach to an ecumenical contribution to ecclesiology. Tanner (1994a) concludes: “[I]t is hard to contemplate the ecumenical movement relinquishing the goal of visible unity reinterpreted by *koinonia*” (p. 315). As a closer relationship emerges between *koinonia* and the ideas found in receptive ecumenism, an opening up for Christian charism in sharing the gifts of the Holy Spirit emerges.

3.3.4 Summary

This review of literature on ecumenism presents issues that have influenced the understanding and conceptualisation of ecumenism. A summary of the ecumenical concepts generated from the literature review is:

- the Church – a gift of God
- fragmentation – action and will of Christians
- five models (types) of the Church
 - institution
 - community
 - sacrament
 - herald
 - servant (activist)
- harmonious synthesis needed
- paradigm shift
 - receptive ecumenism
 - people-centred ecumenism
 - *koinonia* – a communion through God's charism for the Church.

3.3.5 Research question – ecumenical schools

There is a paucity of research on ecumenical schools, particularly in the area of rich-thick descriptive research. Hopefully, the research conducted for this thesis may contribute to this research area. This lacuna of scholarship offers the rationale for the first specific research question:

How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?

3.4 Ethos

3.4.1 Clarifying ethos

School ethos as a concept is difficult to define, as well as to distinguish from other concepts like culture and climate (Glover & Coleman, 2005; McLaughlin, 2005; Solvason, 2005; Tuite, 2007). One reason for this is that ethos is intangible. Indeed, ethos tends to be experiential and hence its appreciation is subjective. Martin (1998) confirms this conclusion: “[E]thos is a complex entity and no description of it will ever be exhaustive” (p. 15). Consequently, an institutional ethos is an intricate and multifaceted concept. “In every organisation however, there exists a dominant ethos which defines for individuals ‘how things should be done around here’” (Donnelly, 2000a, pp. 225-226).

Indeed, often the language associated with culture and ethos is used interchangeably, generating confusion (Donnelly, 2000a; Glover & Coleman, 2005). This confusion, in turn, generates uncertainty with language clarification. Nonetheless, while the concepts of culture and ethos are similar, there are important differences:

Organisational culture is the characteristic spirit and belief of an organisation, demonstrated for example in the norms and values which are generally held about how people should treat each other ... The ethos of a school, is a more self conscious expression of specific types of objective in relation to behaviour and values. (Torrington & Weightman, 1989, p. 18)

Consequently, seeking to define school ethos is a complex challenge. Though there may be difficulties in defining a school’s ethos, its presence has a considerable influence on the authenticity of schools (McLaughlin, 2005; Solvason, 2005). Schools invest in developing strategic plans that usually incorporate tangible organisational structures, with limited effort expended on the intangible social or organic structures. Consequently, this dynamic has a

considerable impact on the development of school ethos (Beare, Caldwell, & Milliken, 1989; Bracken, 2005; Habermas, 1987; Sergiovanni, 2000; Tuite, 2007). Although ethos in a school may often seem elusive, it is always present, influencing what is valued in an organisation. Not surprisingly, debate occurs as to whether a school's ethos is generated from institutional instruction (top down) or social interaction (bottom up). Research indicates that the latter has the dominant influence (Donnelly, 2000b).

The creation of a school's ethos is crucial to developing the qualities that encompass the school's beliefs, values, traditions, attitudes, aspirations and goals. The founding members of the school initially identify, honour and nurture the school's fundamental values. Literature affirms that ethos refers to the underlying qualities of a culture, the values that give life to culture and then direct the collective way of school life (Eisner, 1994; McLaughlin, 2005). Ethos then seems to be the very essence that sustains a school, its spiritual core (Martin, 1998; McLaughlin, 2005).

3.4.2 The language of school ethos

Ecumenical school ethos, in particular, invites member agreement of a common language. One way to achieve this is by appreciating the research generated by Paul Martin. Martin's (1998) literature review of the United Kingdom's Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), National Curriculum Council (NCC) and Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) concludes that there are three classifications of language types when addressing ethos in schools. The language of purpose (aims), values (beliefs) and relationships (rapport).

Commonly, the aim of the school ethos is captured in the language of written documents such as mission or vision statements. These statements tend to generalise the school's aims and ideals, seeking to give the reader an awareness of the school's attitudes to education, values, beliefs and goals. Mission and vision statements are useful in expressing the ideal towards which the school aspires. However, such statements do not presume to encapsulate totally the school's ethos. A distinction is evident when critiquing the intrinsic and extrinsic purposes of school ethos documents: The "former are those which are essential to the purpose of education; the latter have no logical connection with education" (Martin, 1998, p. 6). Such documents are fundamentally values and beliefs laden.

School ethos descriptors are intrinsically connected with the school's values and beliefs. It is the individual and collective beliefs of the school's constituency that form and influence the values to which the school bonds. These, in turn, nurture the school's ethos (Martin, 1998). For this reason, the language schools use in documentation reflects core values and beliefs – its ethos (Sergiovanni, 2000). This is particularly the case for a learning community and how it functions. For Sergiovanni (1992) learning communities, such as the school community, "are defined by their centers ... repositories of values, sentiments, and beliefs that provide the needed cement for bonding people together in a common cause" (p. 47). Therefore, the ethos of a school is related to the way in which a school "sticks together" as a community and the "atmosphere that prevails between all the stakeholders, but especially between student and student, student and teacher, and teacher and teacher" (Glover & Coleman, 2005, p. 253). Consequently, the language of relationships is linked explicitly to school ethos.

The language of relationships is a key concept for describing a school's ethos. Martin (1998) identifies "the relationships of people as the key indicator of a school's ethos" (p. 3).

Relationships play a role in manifesting an ethos within a school's community. Indeed, it is particularly appropriate to adopt the language of relationships in describing school environments.

Martin (1998) maintains: "It is this perspective which, in my opinion, makes the language of relationships the most appropriate, and most necessary, mode for discussing ethos" (p. 13).

Further, the core of school ethos is the interrelationships of people. The school ethos at its core is "a moving set of relationships within which different groups and individuals are constantly in negotiation" (Mearns, 1990, p. 77). In addition, school ethos is perceived as "inward attachments [that] are of considerable import" (Donnelly, 2000b, p. 152). Consequently, the conceptual substance of school ethos is identified in the personal and social relationships of the school community members. Further to the language of ethos is the notion of whether ethos is created by people's interactions or instilled through authority. This dilemma invites amplification.

3.4.3 The ideal or pragmatic school ethos

Mixed understandings emerge from literature on school ethos; it may be perceived either as a product (McLaughlin, 2005) or as a process (Donnelly, 2000b). However, what is clear is that school ethos is dynamic and operates on a number of levels. The paradox of "which came first, the chicken or the egg" assists in explaining the genesis of ethos. Is a school's ethos a created product instilled by authority, or a process developed by the social interaction of people?

Donnelly (2000b) affirms that each "level or dimension does not, of necessity, work in tandem with the other" (p. 152). If a school adopts an ethos from only one perspective, it soon becomes

problematic. The development of a school's ethos needs to take into account the dimensions of both processing and producing.

The development of a school ethos takes into account both the desired (ideal) and the experienced (pragmatic) ethos. Defining or creating a desired school ethos speaks to the aims and aspirations of the school's governing authorities. This is an important aspect of a school's ethos for it gives a reference point to the expectations and goals fundamental to the school (Donnelly, 1999, 2000b). Defining or explaining the ethos experienced in a school is more of a reflective concept, generated from a community reflection on long-standing policies, practices and celebrations. There are noticeable benefits in articulating the lived reality of the school's ethos as it captures the school's stories. Conversely, the process of capturing and conserving the school's stories influences the school's ethos. The school's honoured actors and celebrated stories reflect what the school accepts as its authentic values, beliefs and attitudes. Therefore, as the processes of developing a school ethos continue, tensions are evident through checking and correlating the school's stories with the desired school ethos. This negotiated process is akin to a debate where the tension in the debate concerns what sustains the fundamentals of the school's ethos. Donnelly (2000b) summarises it this way: "So ethos is a *negotiated* process whereby individuals come to some agreement about what should and should not be prioritised. Reaching this agreement has been shown to be remarkably difficult and herein lies the dilemma of ethos" (p. 150). Consequently, seeking to understand the dynamics of a school's ethos is a complex task.

A school's ethos is dynamic and never static; as change occurs this brings tensions and conflicts with the desired and experienced school ethos (Canavan, 2003). Tensions and conflicts may occur when a new set of values and beliefs compete with the official set of values and beliefs (Canavan, 2003). A constant review is always appropriate if there is to be congruency between a school's desired or promoted ethos and the experienced ethos that prevails in schools (Canavan, 2003). Eisner (1994) offers a simple observation to assess this congruency, or lack of it: "If you want to know what counts in a school, the last place to look is in the statement that is made in public about what counts in school. The most telling indicator is how much time is devoted to what" (p. 1). Notwithstanding, describing the desired ethos is useful simply in creating the tensions and conflicts in meaning.

The dissonance between the official (published) and the experienced school ethos is often one of perspective (McLaughlin, 2005). Donnelly's (2000b) research concludes that there are two broad groups, identified as positivist and anti-positivist. The positivist position asserts a prescriptive school ethos: "In this sense it is an objective phenomenon, existing independently of the people and social events in an organisation" (Donnelly, 2000b, p. 135). Viewing ethos from this prescriptive position signifies that ethos is imposed on schools and individuals. In a school setting this view of ethos "wields a certain amount of power to condition people to think and act in an 'acceptable' manner" (Donnelly, 2000b, p. 136). Donnelly (2000b) maintains an anti-positivist perspective, which believes that school ethos is generated from the process of social interaction. This perspective maintains that the genesis of school ethos is appreciated primarily from a descriptive rather than prescriptive dynamic. "Ethos emanates from individuals and group interaction and in this sense is not that which is formally stated or documented but is a process of

social interaction” (Donnelly, 2000b, p. 136). Consequently, a school’s ethos is more experientially driven and less cognitively instigated, as the creation of authentic school ethos originates from the honoured stories and actors that are preserved by the school in multiple ways.

3.4.4 Defining school ethos for this research

WBC’s community is a dynamic place of encounter. A place where relationships develop in the school’s academic, personal and spiritual dynamics. These relationships are coupled to the College’s ethos. It is through the person-to-person interrelationships that ecumenical ethos is most visible. Therefore, the quality of WBC members’ interrelationships is a valid indicator to assess the school’s ethos.

Seeking to define ecumenical ethos is problematic. However, there is a need to establish discernment. Ecumenical ethos is the relational qualities that encompass WBC’s beliefs, values, traditions, attitudes, aspirations and goals. Ethos is the underlying product and processes of WBC’s culture. Such an ethos provides the life-giving qualities for human relationships and purpose, the very sustenance of the WBC community.

3.4.5 Research question – ecumenical school ethos

There is limited research concerning the qualities of ecumenical ethos. McQuillan and Hutton (2007) critiqued the experience of school ethos in three ecumenical schools where Catholic education was involved. These schools adopted processes of ethos development suggested by the Brisbane Catholic Education Council and Commission for Ecumenism (1997):

In an ecumenical school the ethos, the lived expression of the school community’s shared core values and beliefs, would be shaped by the collaborative spirit of all involved in the

school. A special contribution to the ethos of the school would come from the traditions of the participating churches, and their effort to journey towards the unity Christ desired for all. In this way the ethos would be characterised by personal and communal prayer, reconciliation, openness to the spirit's gifted unity, and by love which underpins every effort to build and celebrate relationships in the school and its community. (p. 4)

The conclusions were tentative, as McQuillan and Hutton's (2007) comments are anecdotal and they called for further research. McQuillan and Hutton (2007) noted that all three ecumenical schools used the definition of school ethos from the Catholic Education Council and Commission for Ecumenism (1997).

Apart from this research, there appears to be a paucity of discourse on ecumenical school ethos. It appears that ecumenical schools have initially sought to borrow ethos statements from other schools and systemic denominational sponsored schools in forming their school ethos. The research conducted for this thesis may contribute to this meagre research area. This lacuna of scholarship offers the rationale for the second specific research question:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?

3.5 Culture and Climate

3.5.1 Clarifying culture

Not surprisingly, just as ethos is a challenging concept to define, so too is the concept of culture. In particular, school culture is a concept that is difficult to differentiate from other concepts, like ethos and climate (Glover & Coleman, 2005; McLaughlin, 2005; Solvason, 2005; Tuite, 2007). Although the research uses these in an interconnected manner, culture maybe explored distinctly. Ideally, the culture of an organisation reflects its ethos and how ethos influences an organisation's climate (Tuite, 2007). In addition, cultures and sub-cultures create diversity

wherever humans engage in social interaction. Diversity within culture reflects a collective sense of the social identity of specific participants. This diversity of culture, in turn, generates complications in communication and understanding within the organisation (Schein, 2000). Consequently, because of these complex dynamics, conceptualising school culture is problematic.

In addition, there are multiple contesting conceptualisations of school culture. Hinde (2004) argues that school culture is a pervasive part of a school and yet it “is elusive and difficult to define” (p. 4). Twelves (2005) claims that a school culture is understood more intuitively, as it is “perceived or felt ... It is a subtle and indescribable feeling, which pervades every school defying analysis and definition” (p. 47). In contrast, Solvason (2005) maintains that school culture has solidity and it is “school ethos that has a more elusive nature” (p. 86). The disagreement in conceptualising the peculiarities of “school culture” originates from researchers’ lack of precision in their understanding of the generic meaning of the concept “culture” (Hinde, 2004; Nias, 1989; Solvason, 2005). When defining a school’s environment, researchers from Europe, including the United Kingdom, tend to use the word “culture”, whereas American and Australasian researchers adopt the word “climate” (Glover & Coleman, 2005). Prosser (1999) has insightfully summarised this dichotomous phenomenon: “By the early 1980s the terms school ethos, climate, culture, atmosphere and tone were ubiquitous” (p. 2). Solvason (2005) has clarified this problem by insisting that school culture can be defined in operational terms. He believes school culture is the product of human interaction in the development of a “school’s history, traditions, rituals and artefacts” (p. 85). A useful summary of cultural typologies to assist in understanding school culture is proposed by Valentine (2006), reconfigured in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Summary of Culture Typologies

Researcher/s	Conceptualisation
Cunningham and Gresso	An informal understanding of the “way we do things around here”. Culture is a strategic body of learned behaviours that give both meaning and reality to its participants (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993, p. 20).
Deal	The stable, underlying social meanings that shape beliefs and behaviour over time (Deal, 1990, p. 7).
Bolman and Deal	Both product and process – as product, it embodies the accumulated wisdom of previous members of the organisation; as process, it is continually renewed and recreated as new members are taught the old ways and eventually become teachers themselves (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 250).
Hofstede	The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group from another group (Hofstede, 1997, p. 180).
Schein	A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group has learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1993, p. 12).
Barth	A complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, values, ceremonies, traditions and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organisation. Culture is the historically transmitted pattern of meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act (Barth, 2002, p. 7).
	(Valentine, 2006, pp. 3-4).

Although Valentine’s (2006), summary is useful in analysing culture, conceptual frameworks tend to create static features, which is problematic, as culture is dynamic. The development of a

school's culture involves proactive and reactive endeavours from both individuals and the collective school members (Stolp & Smith, 1995).

School members engage in proactive and reactive activities that are implicit and explicit on both personal and organisational levels. Culture is both implicit and explicit, for it pervades and affects all aspects and areas of school life. Indeed, there is no area of school life that is immune from school culture (Tuite, 2007).

Once a culture has some shared definition, the appropriate question with which to engage concerns the transmission and nurturing of culture. Organisational culture is imparted explicitly or implicitly from generation to generation through encoding the organisation's symbols, beliefs and values (Stolp & Smith, 1995). The explicit and implicit encoding develops, forming stories and myths of the school.

Schools, like other organisations, demonstrate underlying stories and myths that unify those schools with their foundational force. Peterson and Deal (1998) maintain that "this unifying myth details how this group came into being, why it exists, and what it holds most dear" (p. 23).

Foundational influences on a school myth are the norms, values, beliefs, traditions and rituals that build up over time. These features are given hierarchical value and worth, which maintains the created myth. Furthermore, a school's myth tends to be attached to the stories of the school's history, artefacts, traditions and rituals. Subsequently, the school's stories become cultural vessels that contain the explicitly and implicitly shared meaning of the school (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

School culture is complex and researchers have sought means to analyse and evaluate its complexity. Schein (1985) has constructed a conceptualisation of three levels of abstraction in organisational culture, reconfigured in Figure 3.2.

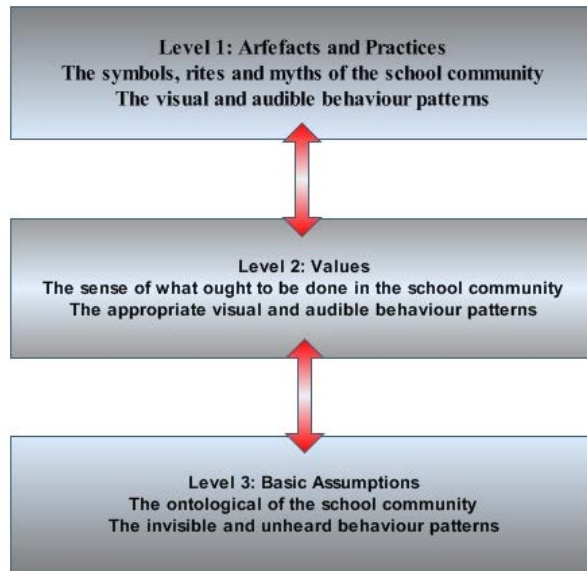


Figure 3.2. Three Levels of Abstraction in Organisational Culture

Stolp and Smith (1995) uphold Schein's model, for it offers "insight into the complicated meaning of culture ... [and] provides a valuable template" (p. 36). The benefit of Schein's model is that it allows culture to be clarified at different levels. Furthermore, a link is created between Schein's three levels of abstraction and that of the vessels containing the shared cultural meaning. Research illustrates the use of such modelling in nurturing a school's culture has a notable connection in achieving member support for the school's vision and mission (Valentine, Clark, Hackmann, & Petzko, 2004).

3.5.2 Nurturing school culture

As a school's culture develops, it grows into consistent patterns based on shared attributes of beliefs, values and assumptions. Schein (1997, 2000) maintains that, if these cultural attributes are congruent with the school's mission and vision, the school could be considered successful. The consistent behavioural patterns of the school's environment become relatively stable over time, as the behavioural patterns tend to exist outside the immediate consciousness of the school members (Schein, 1992a). According to Schein (1992a, 1993, 2000), over time the school's values, beliefs, norms and habits of thinking and acting become the accurate representation of the school's culture. However, there are differences of opinion concerning whether these cultural attributes are generated by mechanistic or organic processes.

Considerable debate has occurred as to whether the nurturing of school culture is entirely a mechanistic process or organic process (Habermas, 1987; Schein, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2001). Describing the features of culture mechanistically demands the use of language with static properties, reflecting that there is an objective reality. In contrast, the organic concept of culture offers an increased appreciation of the social human dynamics inherent in a culture; that is, culture is one explanation for humans negotiating survival in an ever-changing environment. Not surprisingly, a middle ground may be more desirable to explain the apparent dichotomy. Schein (2000) claims:

... conceptualizing "culture" seems to be whether to think of culture as a "state" or static property of a given group/organization, or whether to think of culture as a human process of constructing shared meaning that goes on all the time ... The answer is, of course, that both meanings have utility for theory construction. (pp. 3-4)

Notwithstanding, there are other approaches to conceptualising school culture.

A critical theory approach offered by Habermas (1987) is a useful perspective to explain school culture. Habermas (1987) constructed a critical theory of meaning and subsequently the terms “lifeworld” and “systemsworld” (p. 153). The lifeworld concept captures the micro understanding of human capital – the social, intellectual, aesthetic and all aspects of being human. In contrast, the systemsworld perspective captures the macro dynamics of life, in particular, organisational capital, and the financial, technological and all aspects that humans use to generate structure. The two “worlds” are interdependent perspectives of the “total *world of society*, from the individual organisation to the global organisation” (Habermas, 1987, p. 113). Therefore, a school’s culture incorporates both worlds:

Lifeworld is the foundation for the development of social, intellectual and other forms of human capital that contribute in turn to the development of cultural capital, which then further enriches the Lifeworld itself. This is a cycle of “cultural reproduction”. The Systemsworld is a world of instrumentalities, of efficient means to achieve ends. The Systemsworld provides the foundation for the development of management and of organisational and financial capital that in turn, contribute to the development of material capital, which further enriches the Systemsworld. This is a cycle of “material reproduction”. (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 5)

Furthermore, ethos, the underlying product and processes of culture, determines the dominant world. Consequently, there is a need for schools to plan their worlds.

A school is a planned community group and as such depends heavily on the dominant world in forming its identity. A school’s culture is pervasive, it needs to be seen, clearly recognised and owned by the community. Twelves (2005) claims that a school’s culture “reflects the distinctive character of the organisation, that everyone is proud to be a part of and passionately believes in”

(p. 47). This passion leads to the awareness of the school's identity. Tuite (2007) determines: "One of the outstanding features of highly effective schools is their outstanding culture, which gives them special character or spirit" (p. 65). Accordingly, this responsibility of establishing a school's identity lies with the school's leadership in developing a positive school culture. "The need for some leaders to step forward and take the necessary risks to build positive school cultures has never been greater" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 16). Not surprisingly, a tremendous risk for a school is a discord between the school's culture and the people within the school community. When a discord exists, schools usually seek to change their culture.

Seeking to change a school's culture is often problematic. Research (Gruenert, 2005; Hinde, 2004; Schein, 1997) indicates that as organisations seek to create a new culture, they run the risk of "throwing the baby out with the bath water". Donahoe (1997) warns: "[I]f culture changes, everything changes" (p. 245). "Articulating new visions and new values is a waste of time if they are not calibrated against the existing assumptions and values" (Schein, 1997, p. 16). However, if a school's culture is reviewed, it becomes apparent that there are elements in the culture that can be positively used to create new ways of "doing culture" (Schein, 1997, p. 16). It is better to build on what is working than to obsess about what is not working. Evolving a school's culture is often more successful than seeking to change the culture.

Adopting a culture of change that is an evolving process of learning rather than a culture of structural change is beneficial for a school's cultural identity. Ideally, changing a school's culture is more than reorganising structures (systemsworld). Tuite (2007) established: "[I]t is not possible to change the culture by merely changing the structure" (p. 63). Structural changes are

of little use if members do not believe in or commit their energy to the desired new school aims (Stolp & Smith, 1995). Therefore, changing the organisational structures cannot create an authentic school culture if people are not committed to the change (Tuite, 2007). Consequently, school leaders who are seeking success in organisational performance and effectiveness ought to “focus on the culture of excellence and the structures will evolve to support that culture” (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993, p. 24). Success comes from cultural excellence that flourishes in a cooperative collegial organisational setting. Schools that have a cultural identity saturated with dialogue and cooperation thrive (Tuite, 2007). Therefore, in a practical sense, it is apparent that an evolving organic school culture is the driving force behind the successes of a school’s cultural identity (Tuite, 2007).

3.5.3 Climate and culture

The apparent climate of a school’s environment is closely associated with the concept of culture. Commonly, the concept of climate has been referred to as the feeling, spirit or morale of a school. The interchanging use of the words “feeling”, “spirit”, “morale” and “climate” has led to confusion, as few researchers seem to agree on exactly what each word implies or means (Stolp & Smith, 1995). Just as researchers have disagreements defining school culture, the conceptualisation of climate lacks precision in definition (Deakin-Crick, 2002; Donnelly, 2000b; Glover & Coleman, 2005).

Culture, according to Schein (2000), is often incorrectly considered as emotive in nature, the way an environment feels, “how people feel about the organization, the authority system, and the degree of employee involvement and commitment, the ‘soft’ stuff” (p. 1). Schein’s (2000)

argument is that “all of this emotive expression refers to climate and not culture” (p. 1). In contrast, culture has more to do with the school’s consistent patterns of operation, which are generated from school members’ shared beliefs, values and assumptions. For Schein (2000), this is the “impact on the so-called ‘hard’ stuff” (p. 1). An alternative view to this perspective is offered by Stolp and Smith (1995):

Climate is the term typically used to describe people’s shared perceptions of the organization or work unit, whereas *culture* ... embraces not only how people feel about their organization, but the assumptions, values, and beliefs that give the organization its identity and specify its standards for behavior. When discussing *climate*, the focus is on the impressions, feelings, and expectations held by members of the school organization. (p. 15)

What is particularly helpful in this definition is that Stolp and Smith’s (1995) understandings simplify the interrelationship between school climate and culture. Figure 3.3 illustrates that culture envelops climate, while noting that climate does not encompass all aspects of culture. The diagram illustrates the porous nature of the boundaries.

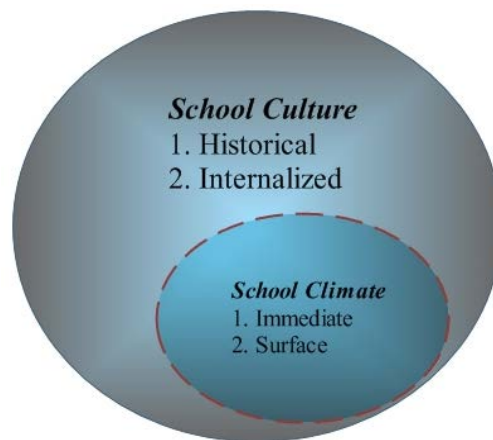


Figure 3.3. Dimensions for Distinguishing between Culture and Climate

A school’s cultural history is generated from the various and diverse relationships occurring within the school, whereas the school’s climate is appropriately appreciated as how people

perceive these relationships. Moreover, the boundary between these conceptualisations often becomes blurred.

Nevertheless, at some point, the historical culture becomes entrenched and is internalised by the school community (Stolp & Smith, 1995). Over time, the school's internalised culture is the process of the bona fide values, assumptions and behaviours that develop the school's authentic identity. Whereas the school's climate is based on people's perceptions of these values, assumptions and behaviours (Keefe & Jenkins, 2000; Stolp & Smith, 1995). Accordingly, this conceptual awareness sees climate in practice as one measure of culture.

As an indication of culture, climate is the observation of people's changing perceptions of the school's values, assumptions and behaviours. Climate changes positively if it is in keeping with the bona fide assumptions, the authentic culture of the school. Seeking to generate a climate that is based on teamwork and cooperation will not succeed where the underlying values, assumptions and behaviours are individualistic and competitive. Success will not occur, because the values, assumptions and behaviours will create "a reward and control system that encourages individual competitiveness" (Keefe, Schmitt, Kelley, & Miller, 1993; Cited in Stolp & Smith, 1995, p. 16). Consequently, endeavouring to generate a positive climate becomes counterproductive when there is an incongruent relationship between climate and culture.

3.5.4 Generating a positive collaborative school culture

Generating a positive, collaborative school culture is often problematic. Indeed, school culture can have either a positive or a negative influence on the performance of a school (Hinde, 2004).

Not surprisingly, schools that nurture a positive culture inevitably have positive outcomes for students, teachers and other stakeholders (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Fullan, 1998). This is affirmed by Gruenert (2005), "... as collaborative cultures seem to be the best setting for student achievement, what was once considered an intangible aura found in some schools can now be identified and quantified" (p. 50). Likewise, Deal and Peterson (1990; 1999; 1998) have long established that positive school cultures are places with a "shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn" (1998, p. 29). Reiterating, schools that plan to have this type of positive culture are effective, as they allow and encourage teachers and students to explore and take learning risks.

Effective schools do not happen by chance. Their development requires a tremendous effort from leaders and other school members. Generating a positive, collaborative school culture is paramount for the success of the school, and those who serve in it, students, teachers and leaders. Effective schools are schools where all members have a shared sense of the purpose of the school (Peterson & Deal, 1998). In order to achieve this, schools necessarily develop structures such as norms and rituals. The underlying norms of the school are collegial and educational so that all personnel seek to improve the school. In contrast, rituals and artefacts reflect the school's traditions and history. Indeed, rituals become the structures to celebrate the school's history and traditions. It is within such boundaries that students' and teachers' accomplishments are honoured and acknowledged.

3.5.5 Defining school culture and climate for this research

WBC's community has an established culture and climate, with underlying myths and stories that attempt to unify the school. At the base of the College's myths and stories are values and beliefs that contribute to the school's identity, which has been nurtured over time. The characteristics of the school's identity have hierarchical dynamics signifying what really matters. These contribute to the establishment of WBC's bona fide culture and climate (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Therefore, WBC's myths and stories are valid indicators to assess the school's culture and climate.

Seeking to define ecumenical culture and climate are problematic. Ecumenical culture is generated from WBC members' assumptions, behaviours, values and beliefs, which are expressed through the school's traditions, artefacts, symbols, customs and rituals. The ecumenical climate is formed by WBC members' core values and beliefs, as well as their changing understandings of the school's assumptions, behaviours, values and beliefs.

3.5.6 Research questions – ecumenical school culture and climate

The research concerning the qualities of ecumenical culture and climate is limited. An investigation of ecumenical school website home pages has identified statements pertaining to the culture and climate being "ecumenical". However, these statements fail to explain an ecumenical conceptualisation of culture. Indeed, there is a lack of discussion on how such schools are influenced by an ecumenical culture. Consequently, ecumenical schools have initially sought to borrow cultural statements from other schools, including systemic denominational-sponsored schools. In other words, they have failed to generate their own. The

research conducted for this thesis may address this deficiency and contribute to this meagre research area. This lacuna of scholarship offers the rationale for the third and fourth specific research questions:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?

3.6 Leadership

3.6.1 Clarifying leadership

What constitutes as beneficial leadership qualities have been a point of debate for researchers. The “great man” theory of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries believed that the qualities of great men determined the course of history. The “great man” concept of leadership centred on masculinity and dominated as the acceptable behaviour or style for leaders through to the latter half of the twentieth century. The focus was on three clear task-oriented behaviours of leadership, autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. Research over the last three decades has tended to revolve around the questions: What “really” makes a leader? Is leadership an innate quality or a learned skill? (Nivala & Hujala, 2002).

Not surprisingly, when we have a community, we have some form of leadership. Our social interactions and relationships tend to demand some form of leading. From a general perspective, our day-to-day interactions are mostly through personal relationships. However, when our interactions become more formal in an organisational structure, our relationships become less personal and more superior–subordinate associated (Cleveland, 2002). In either of these two settings, leadership continues to be present, albeit manifested in various behaviours or types.

Furthermore, a level of uncertainty arises as to whether individual leadership can operate in both settings, or if there are multiple leadership dimensions for leaders. According to Nivala and Hujala (2002), “there is not an overall agreement of how the concepts of leadership must be defined” (p. 13).

Research (Leithwood, 2005) carried out on school leadership can be categorised into two groups that usually serve two quite distinct purposes. There is a large body of empirical research, mostly quantitative, that describes what leaders actually do. Such studies, according to Leithwood (2005), provide “justification for [their] claims [to be] more or less consistent with the canons of normal science” (p. 20). In contrast, the second group typically “begins with attractive visions of schooling, school conditions, or approaches to the improvement of schools and then infers what leaders would need to do (or be) to help realize such visions” (Leithwood, 2005, p. 21). Leithwood (2005) is critical of this type of research and questions the legitimacy of research from Sergiovanni (2000), Deal and Peterson (1999) and Fullan (2003). According to Leithwood (2005), this second group of “literature should not be viewed as a source of evidence-based leadership practises, even though its creators may also publish evidence-based claims about leadership” (p. 21). Nevertheless, research has tended to focus on the impacts of leadership.

Research studies on leadership tend to remain focused on the impacts that leaders have on organisations, the management styles and effectiveness of leadership, and not on the qualities of leaders (Fullan, 2003; Leithwood, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2000). A focus of research remains on the product of leaders and not the qualities or behaviours of leaders. Indeed, leadership authenticity, as a quality of leadership, is a primary characteristic of moral and ethical leaders (Nivala &

Hujala, 2002). Starratt (2004) concurs with Nivala and Hujala (2002) and believes leadership as “ontologically relational ... something that I create through my culture” (p. 65). Komives, Lucas and McMahon (2013) advocate the approach of relational leadership, which provides a type of leadership as a relational process of people working together in attempting to accomplish outcomes collectively. Komives’ et al. (2013) model or framework involves a focus on five primary components:

This approach to leadership is purposeful and builds commitment towards positive purposes that are inclusive of people and diverse points of view, empowers those involved, is ethical, and recognizes that all four of these elements are accomplished by being process-oriented. (p. 94)

This model has utility as it can provide a framework of reference or an approach to leadership in teams and groups within the school setting. The model is stated to be “an aspirational model that we propose in developing and supporting a healthy, ethical, effective group” (Komives et al., 2013, p. 94). Arguably, leadership in a school is more than fulfilling a role in managing or administrating, it encompasses the school’s culture, and its moral and ethical qualities, and is unique for each individual school.

The role of leadership in a school setting is complex and has undergone extensive research in recent years, none more so than from Sergiovanni (1994b, 2000). According to Sergiovanni’s (1994b) research, leadership in education does not have its own authentic identity. The leadership models espoused in educational settings, including schools, are derived from leadership “models used in the corporate business world” (Sergiovanni, 1994b, p. 214). Sergiovanni (1991, 1992, 2000) argues that educational settings are not like business settings but are community settings. Therefore, schools are unique community settings that require unique

leadership. Even if there are successful leadership models in the corporate world, this does not mean they will or ought to apply in a school setting. Adopting corporate leadership models may appear to be successful. However, corporate models do not answer the questions that arise from the world of the school's uniqueness (Sergiovanni, 1984, 1991, 1992). Sergiovanni (1991, 1992, 2000) has continued to be critical of research that remains focused on the role of leaders and not their qualities and behaviours.

3.6.2 The influential and effective school leader

Acknowledging that schools are communities and not merely organisations influences leadership behaviours. It is fundamental in communities that relationships, values and attitudes be considered by leaders as core tenets of the school's life. For this to occur, schools need to acquire purposefully the values that nurture "community", namely the "structure necessary to develop a culture of empowerment, collegiality, and transformation" (Sergiovanni, 1994a, p. xix). Indeed, leaders in school communities do not need to rely on power over people but generate power through people as they seek their goal of achieving shared school visions and goals (Sergiovanni, 1994a). Accordingly, the relationship between leaders, staff and students is more appropriately described as one of influence, not power.

The influences that leaders build through their leadership have direct bearings on the school's nurturing of a moral purpose and cultivating values, in other words, success (Nivala & Hujala, 2002):

Successful leaders do much more than just deliver the basics. They are extremely responsive to the unique contexts in which they work, "context" here including, for

example, their roles, the policies framing their work, and the characteristics of their students. (Leithwood, 2005, p. 14)

Successful leaders are able to tailor their leadership to address the school context. This dynamic has been the focus of current researchers (Nivala & Hujala, 2002; Rouse, 2007).

The research has suggested the appropriateness of applying theoretical frameworks such as contextual growth theory and leadership theory as reflective heuristics in the development of school communities (Nivala & Hujala, 2002). Not surprisingly, there has been a shift in which leaders engage with their role holistically and do not just react to crises. This pastoral responsibility, as well as societal expectations, has resulted in school leaders being obliged to nurture cultural dynamics within the school (Leech, Smith, Green, & Fulton, 2003).

Consequently, the “praxis of school leadership is a dynamic process that must change as our society and the nature of schools change” (Leech et al., 2003, p. 9). Leadership is no longer thought of as “contingent upon situations: leadership styles are always dependent on a concept defined by personal relationships” (Leech et al., 2003, p. 3). Therefore, influential school leaders especially value relationship building among members of their local communities.

Building successful schools depends on effective community relationships channelled by influential school leaders. In practice, leaders encourage contributions from others members of the school and wider communities. Exceptional leaders no longer guide followers but create more leaders (Leithwood, 2005). This goal is achieved in the culture leaders nurture: “Most importantly, effective leaders create cohesive cultural and social structures in their schools” (Leech et al., 2003, p. 2). A useful typology for understanding leadership practices is proposed

by Kouzes and Posner (1995), tabulated in Table 3.3 (p. 12). Kouzes and Posner (1995) identify five effective leadership practices and claim that when employed they “will gain the maximum outcomes for schools” (p. 12).

Table 3.3
Leadership Practice Types

Leadership Practice	Description
Challenging the process	Leaders are seeking innovation, new ways to improve the school; they are open to being risk-takers.
Inspiring a shared vision	Leaders have a vision for the future and an image of the school’s possibilities. They inspire this same vision and image in their constituents; they are open to imagination.
Enabling others to act	Leaders facilitate collaboration and building inspired teachers who are actively involved. Leadership is a team effort and leaders promote mutual respect and create an atmosphere of trust.
Modelling the way	Leaders engage through personal example; they are clear about their guiding principles.
Encouraging the heart	Leaders celebrate the successes of teachers, staff, students and other community members; they promote people’s heroic feelings (p. 12).

Effective school leaders inspire and empower teachers, staff, students and members of the wider community. They engender meaningful relationships throughout their school community.

Influential school leaders operate interdependently with their school and the wider community; they are both agents and recipients of transformation.

3.6.3 Defining school leadership for this research

When entering a school environment, each member of the school community is not culturally void. Indeed, every person, including school leaders, have a preconceived idea and bias as to what a school's culture ought to look like. School leaders "must understand and analyze [their] own cultural influences before they can examine a school's culture" (Hinde, 2004, p. 4).

Consequently, by failing to acknowledge their own cultural, preconceived ideas and biases, school leaders may hinder the school community's future success (Hinde, 2004, p. 4). Hence, school leadership and culture are entwined.

A school community is underpinned by the bonding of leadership with culture. As culture is a social dynamic, there are multiple influences on its development, including leadership (Hinde, 2004). A special responsibility of school leaders is the deliberate nurturing of cultural leadership within the school community. If leaders fail to exercise cultural leadership, then they endanger the accomplishment of the school's vision or mission. Valentine et al (2004) comments:

In essence, the principal is probably the most essential element in a highly successful school. The principal is necessary to set change into motion, to establish the culture of change and a learning organization, and to provide the support and energy to maintain the change over time until it becomes a way of life in the school. Over time, the principal's leadership will shape the school, positively or negatively. Without high-quality leadership, high-quality schools cannot exist. (p. 112)

If the school culture does not align with the school mission, then the leader is obliged to lead cultural change by aligning the school culture with its known mission and values. The responsibility leaders exercise "is to develop a consensus around values that constitute an effective culture" (Stolp & Smith, 1995, p. 15). Indeed, the constant challenge for school leaders is to plan and nurture authentic school culture (Tuite, 2007).

Quality school leadership directed towards developing a school's culture can never be underestimated. Valentine (2006) states: "Leadership and school culture go hand in hand, in both the development and the sustainability of school reform" (p. 6). Research (Dawson, 2006; Leithwood, 2005; Tuite, 2007) illustrates that principals and other school leaders, whether formally or informally, help influence the nature of a school's culture.

This research maintains that WBC's leadership is a unique and multifaceted dynamic and not restricted to those who exercise formal administrative roles. Leadership includes individuals who shape, guide and influence the College's ethos, culture and climate. Effective leadership ultimately concerns the cultivation of positive relationships. This is particularly demonstrated in empowering people to achieve a shared understanding and acceptance of the College's mission, vision and goals. Therefore, leadership is not so much about managing people, but nurturing the College's ethos, culture and climate.

3.6.4 Research question – ecumenical school leadership

There is limited research concerning the qualities of ecumenical leadership. Indeed, a review of literature concludes that there has been no research undertaken on ecumenical school leadership. In contrast, several policy documents on this topic have been generated from Australian and Queensland church bodies and their associated educational agencies:

- Memorandum of Association of Queensland Anglican Schools System Limited (1996).
- Brisbane Anglican Synod 1996 (Coman, 1997, p. 40).
- Board for Lutheran Education, Australia (1999).

- The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod: Policy for establishing new schools (2000).
- Uniting Education Mandate (Uniting Church in Australia, 2001).
- Harkness (2003) Authentic and inclusive Catholic Schools: Some challenging contexts.
- Archdiocese of Brisbane, Catholic Education Council – Enrolment of students in Catholic Schools Policy (2004).
- Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations (2004), Practical strategies for the implementation of the Nine Priorities of the Synod Ecumenically.
- McQuillan and Hutton (2007), Leading Catholic Schools in an era of religious diversity, Australia.
- Brisbane Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane – Ecumenical Schools: A Roman Catholic perspective (2009).

Given this paucity of actual research, ecumenical schools have initially sought to borrow leadership statements from other schools and systemic denominational-sponsored schools. In other words, they have failed to generate their own because of a deficiency in research in the area. Hopefully, the research conducted for this thesis may address this deficiency and contribute to this meagre research area. This lacuna of scholarship offers the rationale for the fifth specific research question:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?

3.7 Conclusion and Research Questions

In concluding, this review of literature illustrates there is a body of research that addresses the study's conceptual framework. Nevertheless, the research concerning Christian ecumenical schools is narrow. This problem invites research in order to provide a scholarly foundation for the future development of ecumenical Church schools.

The next chapter offers and justifies the research design that addresses the research problem guiding this thesis.

Chapter Four

Research Design

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the research design used to explore how members of WBC understand and experience what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its ecumenical charism. The research design is “the logic that links the data to be collected to the initial questions of the study” (Yin, 2003, p. 19). The following are the specific research questions that structure the conduct of the research design:

How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?

Consequently, the purpose of the study invites a research design capable of guiding the researcher to assist the College members to reflect on their own experiences within the social construct of the ecumenical context, as they engage in the research process (Geertz, 1983; Wiersma & Jurs, 2008). As a result, this research adopts a constructionist epistemology.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is foundational, as it justifies, directs and structures the research design. The conceptualisation of the theoretical framework of this study seeks to identify the philosophical and ideological assumptions that underpin the research process. A clear

articulation of the researcher's perspective is important for the credibility of the research paradigm (Candy, 1989). The researcher's epistemological constructs and ontological beliefs guide and influence the chosen theoretical perspective. Candy (1989) highlights that the selection of one particular paradigm, itself being a construct, "must be based on its goodness of fit, or appropriateness to the subject of the inquiry, and moreover that any paradigm will have some 'blind spots' which could well be addressed by another approach" (p. 10). In order to understand WBC's ecumenical charism, the researcher adopted an epistemological framework of constructionism, within a theoretical perspective of interpretivism.

The researcher's epistemological position holds that humans build meaningful knowledge while investing in joint understandings of the world. The formations of human meaningfulness occur as people mindfully engage with and experience their reality. Constructionists presume that "what is real is a construction of the minds of individuals" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 83). For the constructionist, there "is no meaning without the mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed" (Crotty, 1998, pp. 10-11). For these reasons, the choice of constructionism is a justifiable epistemology for this research.

Interpretivism and specifically symbolic interactionism (SI) contribute to the theoretical framework. Interpretivism is a theoretical lens that seeks to "explore the values, attitudes and beliefs which influence people to act in a particular way" (Punch, 1998, p. 110). Within the interpretivist paradigm is the specific lens of SI, which offers an interpretation of "reality" through the created symbolic meanings that humans generate in their social interactions. Therefore, SI, within the interpretivist paradigm, is adopted in this research design.

Likewise, this study adopts a research methodology of case study, incorporating data-gathering strategies via a review of documentation and interviews (semi-structured one-on-one and focus groups), which complements the study's epistemology and theoretical perspective. The research framework is tabulated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Research Framework

Epistemology	Constructionism
Theoretical perspective	Interpretivism Symbolic interactionism (SI)
Research methodology	Case study
Participants	Purposeful selection
Data-gathering strategies	Review of documentation (paper and electronic) Interviews – semi-structured and informal Focus groups

4.2.1 Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief. It is concerned with asking questions such as: What is knowledge? What are the sources of knowledge? What are the structures of knowledge? How is knowledge acquired? Are there any limits of knowledge? The epistemological questioning refers to the assumptions about the “very basis of knowledge, its nature and form and the relationship between the knower and what can be known” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). What epistemology endeavours to explore is: How do we know what we know? Is there only one type of knowledge? How do we comprehend the concept of

justification? Is justification an internal or external reality? What makes justified beliefs justified? Epistemology understood more broadly explores perspectives adopted in the generation and dissemination of knowledge in areas of enquiry and research (Aranda-Mena et al., 2007; Crotty, 1998).

Defining and justifying an epistemological perspective is complex. Indeed, there can be no definitively “precise three-line definition of epistemology than of everyday words like ‘love’ or ‘justice’ – these are terms that will always be the subject of exploration, speculation and debate” (Gough, 2002, p. 1). Consequently, the logical conclusion is that “an explicit specification of epistemology is needed if the stable theories at the centre of a researcher’s world view are to be made transparent and amenable to scrutiny” (Hill, 2007, p. 98). It is apparent, then, that the differing perspectives have their origins in the individual’s ontological worldview.

The researcher’s ontological beliefs have a marked influence on this research. Establishing the researcher’s ontological position is a priority before considering the characteristics of the research. The theoretical foundation of the research has a strong dependence on the researcher’s answers to ontological questions. What is the nature “of being”? What does exist and what does it mean for something, or somebody, “to be”? (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Smith, 2004). Any research exposition is embedded in the researcher’s ontological assumptions (O’Brien, 2006). Indeed, this researcher assumes ontologically that God continually calls people into reciprocal relationships. This reciprocity is experienced in a three-way dynamic involving an individual, others, and God.

Ontological assumptions are often ignored, partly because of “their relatively unarticulated character and in part to a lingering anxiety, traceable to the logical positivists, that discussion of ontology is merely ‘metaphysical’, untestable, and therefore unscientific or even meaningless” (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, pp. 227-228). The responses given to “ontological questions will shape, guide and in the end attribute any worth or legitimacy to research” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108).

Interpretivists ontologically distinguish between multiple realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). “Reality in this case is completely subjective and need not be something that can be shared by anyone else but at the same time it is independent of the person living it” (Darlaston-Jones, 2007, p. 19). Therefore, a constructed reality is no more, or less, “real” or “true” than another constructed reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This research explores how members of WBC understand and experience what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its real ecumenical charism.

Constructionism offers a flexible lens to appreciate WBC members’ understanding of this phenomenon, in other words, the research design aims to engage with their collective “ways of knowing”.

Ways of knowing are socially constructed from WBC members’ “life-world” experiences. The fundamental theoretical premise underpinning constructionism is that “reality is socially constructed by and between the persons who experience it” (Darlaston-Jones, 2007, p. 19).

Constructionism rejects the existence of an objective truth that is waiting to be discovered. In

contrast, it asserts that meaning is constructed through assumptions and social interaction (Crotty, 1998; O'Brien, 2006). Hence, ways of knowing are never static, because they are continually manifesting subjective meanings generated from people's experiences (Creswell, 2003; Wiersma & Jurs, 2008). Furthermore, constructionism emphasises that, as individuals encounter phenomena, they do not generate meanings instantaneously or in isolation but through dynamic and vibrant social engagements.

Meaning construction is a complex process because experiences are influenced by the cultural, historical, political and social norms and assumptions that operate within a context and time (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). Therefore, ways of knowing are outcomes of the collected construction of the phenomena, which ought to be viewed holistically, not in a "mechanistic manner according to a set of laws" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). Clearly, then, constructionism is an appropriate epistemology for this research, as it seeks a social understanding of meaning from WBC members' understandings of ecumenical charism.

4.2.2 Theoretical perspective – interpretivism and symbolic interactionism

The researcher's theoretical perspective is the philosophical foundation that the research methodology is built upon. This foundation provides "a context for the process as well as grounding its logic and criteria" (Aranda-Mena et al., 2007, p. 4). For this study, a particularly appropriate theoretical perspective within the constructionist epistemology is interpretivism.

4.2.2.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism has its philosophical roots planted within the ground of a constructionist epistemology (Crotty, 1998).

Interpretivism focuses on evaluating the “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). Interpretivism explores the influences on an individual’s values, attitudes and beliefs that play out within their social context. There is a distinct focus on exploring the total social context in order to appreciate a particular phenomenon, in this case an ecumenical school. Consequently, the interpretivist perspective is appropriate for this study

As this study explores WBC’s ecumenical charism, it does so through the members’ shared understandings from their experiences. In this manner, idealist interpretivism maintains that there are no realities until human interpretations occur. Therefore, “reality” is a mental construct that evolves as meaningfulness is created (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Schnelker, 2006). “Reality” does not exist independently from “perspectives, feelings, motives, values, or experiences of it. As such, there can be no single, static, universal reality” (Schnelker, 2006, p. 45). The conceptual realisation of multiple realities can be problematic to apprehend, as it links directly to an individual’s ontological understanding of being (Schnelker, 2006).

There are several issues concerning idealist interpretivism that invite consideration. Researchers focus “on *how* people make sense of their worlds rather than on *what* people conclude about their worlds” (Schnelker, 2006, p. 45). Understanding this process is beneficial “within the context of the individual or event of interest” (Schnelker, 2006, p. 45). Not surprisingly, “there can be no

law-like properties that generalize across individuals, settings or time” (Schnelker, 2006, p. 45).

As individuals engage in the research and with the researcher, there are continuous interpretations occurring, “a continual ‘slippage’ of the concepts [are] constructed” (Giddens, 1993, p. 170). Interactions with the research and researcher change the individuals’ “frames of meaning” (Giddens, 1993, p. 170). This is a type of double hermeneutic, or double interpretation, as the research is “understood as an activity that involves interpretations by researchers of interpretations made by individuals in society” (Scott & Morrison, 2005, p. 124). However, such a double hermeneutic “does not work in any mechanistic fashion; ... new knowledge has the potential to change the world” (Scott & Morrison, 2005, p. 124).

This study generates “new understandings” from WBC members’ multiple experiences and understandings of ecumenism. This is undertaken by exploring and analysing symbols of language, behaviours and social interaction as “... different perspectives scrutinise specific aspects of the social story” (O'Brien, 2006, p. 45). As this research constructs meanings by exploring WBC members’ understandings, it does so through the lens of SI.

4.2.2.2 Symbolic interactionism

SI claims that social reality is constructed in each human interaction through the use of symbols of language and gestures (Blumer, 1986). Indeed, this “is so evident in the simplest observations that I [Blumer] find it difficult to understand why it is so generally ignored or dismissed by social scientists” (Blumer, 1986, p. 16). Consequently, Blumer (1986) asserts three fundamental premises that underpin SI:

1. Human beings act towards things [people, events and objects] on the basis of the meanings that [these] things have for them;
2. The meaning of such things is derived from, or arise out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows;
3. These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he [or she] encounters (p. 2).

Blumer builds upon the images of human interactions originating from Mead's reasoning that "people's selves are social products, but that these selves are also purposive and creative" (Denzin, 2009, para 1). SI adopts a particular concept of "self" that plays a role in shaping its overall understanding of human beings. The idea of the socialised self – "me", what is learned in interactions with others – and the unsocialised self – "I", what is learned by observing the responses of others. One way to appreciate Blumer's conceptualisation is through the following characteristics generated by Musolf (2003):

1. emphasis on the social development of self, mind, and consciousness
2. that self and society are inextricable
3. the importance of defining the situation or, more generally, minded activity
4. the centrality of meaning to human interaction
5. the argument that stimuli surrounding self are symbolic to humans
6. the necessity of understanding the subjectivity of the actor
7. the focus on indeterminacy, contingency, and emergence in human behaviour; and favouring of qualitative over quantitative research, especially development of participant observation (p. 103).

Symbolic interactionists have moved beyond the earlier three-pronged analytical conceptualisation, which is considered too narrow (Snow, 2001). This narrowing perspective hinders SI as it inadequately “addresses other cornerstone principles of the perspective ... failing to embrace the range of work that falls under the interactionist umbrella” (Snow, 2001, p. 368).

The four cornerstone principles include “interactive determination, symbolization, emergence, and human agency” (Snow, 2001, p. 374). None of the cornerstone principles essentially conflict with the earlier premises of meaning, interaction and interpretation. However, they do expand the conceptualisation or defining essence of SI, extending it beyond Blumer’s three premises, seeking to increase utility for researchers (Snow, 2001).

4.2.2.2.1 Symbolic interactionism – root images

Theoretically, SI embraces the perspective that beyond the physical reality where objects are tangible, there is a conceptual or abstract reality of social objects (Charon, 2004). Social objects are defined, as humans create definitions for them through social interaction (Sly, 2008).

Physical objects, for humans, “are pointed out, isolated, catalogued, interpreted and given meaning through social interaction” (Charon, 2004, p. 46). This process of defining social objects is always in a state of change, as the environment of interaction continues to change.

Nevertheless, symbolic interactionists recognise that humans limit these infinite possibilities of social objects by forming and preserving social boundaries that make life orderly and predictable (O'Brien, 2006). Social objects exist in a real environmental setting only through human interactions, as they form, reform and form again; every human action redefines the social object

in some way. SI asserts the existence of human commonalities that are clustered to form social objects, which Blumer (1986) labels as “root images” (p. 6).

SI considers root images as ways to view individuals, groups, cultures and society. Root images refer to and depict traits that are clustered together. Blumer (1986), categorises these clusters as “human groups or societies, social interaction, objects, the human being as an actor, human action, and the interconnection of the lines of action” (p. 6). As a result, symbolic interactionists seek to analyse the “importance of language, symbols, and communication in human group life” (Plummer, 2000, p. 197). These are located firmly within the social experiences of the individual actor. Researchers focus on the way “words and gestures bring forth responses in [the] other through a process of role taking; of the reflective and reflexive nature of the self; and of the centrality of the act” (Plummer, 2000, p. 197). Consequently, individuals as active agents build frameworks of operations.

Symbolic interactionists consider human groups as dynamic frameworks, “group life”. Group lives continually change as the processing of signs and symbols of communication are interpreted (Lindesmith, Strauss, & Denzin, 1999). Correspondingly, there are types of patterns of interaction among human actors, albeit fragile patterns that characteristically involve power relationships, affection, exchange and so forth, all give meaning to group life (O'Brien, 2006, p. 52). Human actors gather within their contexts and they render lines of action between each actor, these are in turn read by others, internally interpreted and meanings established (Blumer, 1986). The process of actors adjusting to lines of action is continual, although stable patterns of interaction among group life can be observed and constitute dynamic social structure (O'Brien,

2006). Therefore, studying group life suggests that the researcher needs to be aware that data gathering is from “a moving process in which the participants are defining and interpreting each other’s acts” (Blumer, 1986, p. 16). This moving process of defining and interpreting is via the succession of sustaining, undercutting, redirecting and transforming the manner in which the participants fit their lines of action together, added that these are observable patterns of interaction.

4.2.2.2 Symbolic interactionism – appropriate for this study

This study adopts SI as a theoretical lens because, from the contexts and interactions of the WBC members’ understandable meanings are generated to explore concepts of ecumenical charism and identity (O'Brien, 2006).

SI recognises that schools are human groups consisting of human beings engaging in action. For “an individual’s activities are carried on by them always with regard to the situations in which they have to act” (Blumer, 1986, p. 6). This is an important element of SI, the starting and return point of any social research is that humans exist in group actions and consequently need to be understood in terms of their actions.

WBC members individually engage in actions on a daily basis, with innumerable situations that demand their engagement in actions on many different levels. These actions may require them to act singularly, collectively, on the behalf of another or on behalf of the College. Accordingly, WBC members respond to the action of others by attaching understandable meaning to the actions. As a result, a reflective social process occurs, a type of double interpretation. The social

process that individuals within different groups engage with is a social process of interpreting actions to generate meaning for themselves and others within the context. Part of this social process is that WBC members as actors engage in an internalised interaction with themselves, which is more than a psycho-cognitive process, one where the social process of communication takes place (Blumer, 1986). Through the processes of WBC members communicating with themselves, interpretation becomes a matter of handling meaning (Blumer, 1986). Therefore, as WBC members use their signs and symbols in communicating interactively, these signs and symbols become ready for meaning interpretations (Lindesmith et al., 1999).

There are numerous approaches to studying human beings and their social life-world; in some ways, all have strengths and limitations. Despite the limitations involved in SI, there are, in the researcher's opinion, great strengths in its utility. SI gives primacy to social interaction.

Observable actions are studied but the causes of actions are in the non-observable process of individual or actor's interpretations. This aspect posits SI to be a useful theoretical framework for this study. As the WBC members create stories from their experiences and understandings, the premises of SI will allow for worthy analyses of the social phenomena under study, both the members' actions and the societal College patterns.

4.3 Research Methodology

A research methodology is "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcome" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Therefore, a research methodology represents the assumptions of the research designer's ontology, epistemology and theoretical perspectives (Aranda-Mena,

Calder, de Quiros, & Edwards, 2007; Crotty, 1998). The chosen methodology in this study assisted the researcher to undertake an in-depth investigation of WBC members' understandings and experiences of ecumenical charism.

Case study is the methodology adopted for this study. The appropriateness of case study methodology centres on it being an interpretive methodology.

4.3.1 Case study

The case study methodology explores human interaction as a phenomenon through an enquiry investigation of contemporary problems, within its real-life context (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 1989). Case study is “an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community” (Merriam, 2002, p. 8). Case study provides the means of investigating the social units, consisting of variables of possible importance to acquire new understandings from WBC members (Miles et al., 2014).

Studying a phenomenon in its real-life context does present the possibility of an unwieldy definition of the case. The case requires a specific “bounded system”, an identifiable though flexible matrix (Stake, 1994). The “case is specific. Even more, the case is a functioning specific” (Stake, 1994, p. 236). Despite possible difficulties in defining the case at the outset of the study, failing to do so may distort supposed new understandings because they fail to reflect the case's framework. The case for this particular study is “ecumenical charism” and the case is situated in a school (WBC), which identifies itself as an “ecumenical school” (Year Book 1996). A goal of the researcher prior to engaging in adopting research strategies is to identify the

boundaries of the case or cases in the study. A focus needed is “upon specifics in fairly clearly bounded settings that have some kind of internal coherence” (Hughes & Hitchcock, 1995, p. 319). Consequently, the logical conclusion is that the most defining characteristic of the case study approach to research lies in delimiting the case (Merriam, 1998b). The notion of the case as a bounded and integrated system defines the case study approach for this study (Merriam, 1998a, 1998b, 2002; Stake, 1994).

Building and justifying a workable case within boundaries allows the researcher to see, develop and generate a more sophisticated appreciation of the research. Although the boundaries may be difficult to establish, it is not the boundaries that are researched; they are in place to orchestrate the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Stake (1994), “‘bounded-ness’ needs to be a thing not an action” (p. 236). In addition, Merriam (1998b), cautions that “the phenomenon you are interested in studying is not intrinsically bounded, it is not a case” (p. 27). The “bounded system” for this case study is situated within a specific context (WBC) and timeframe of purposefully selected members of WBC, an ecumenical College sponsored by the Anglican and Uniting churches of Queensland.

Establishing the case study in a real-life situation results in the generation of narratives from which new understandings of the phenomenon (ecumenical charism) may be distilled (Stake, 1994). The researcher endeavours to establish the rich stories from the characteristics of the social unit in a particular setting and from factors influencing the situation.

Hughes and Hitchcock (1995) maintain that a case study generally encompasses the following six characteristics:

1. a concern with the rich and vivid description of events within the case
2. a chronological narrative of events within the case
3. an internal debate between the description of events and the analysis of events
4. a focus on particular individual actors or groups of actors and their perceptions
5. a focus on particular events within the case
6. the integral involvement of the researcher in the case (p. 317).

Clearly, then, case study is an appropriate methodology for this research, as it seeks a social understanding of meaning from WBC members' understandings and experiences of ecumenical charism.

4.3.1.1 Perceived problems with case study

There is a perceived problem in generalising from a single case study, thereby supposedly questioning the validity or trustworthiness of the research (Bassegy, 1999; Hughes & Hitchcock, 1995). The assumption that research findings ought to be able to be generalised to a wider population than those that generated the research is a general premise of the scientific method.

However, there is a substantial argument that this capacity to generalise is unnecessary or even impossible (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Researchers using case study methodology prefer the generation of unique rich-thick descriptions and naturalistic generalisations (Lincoln & Guba, 2004; Stake, 1994). Indeed, Stake (1994) emphasises the “uniqueness of the case study’s particularisation and not seeking generalisation” (p. 238).

Furthermore, a single case study can generate what Bassey (1999) calls “fuzzy generalizations” (p. 46). Fuzzy generalisations have a different composition from that of statistical generalisations, they come from the trustworthiness of the research and not necessarily any repeatability. Bassey (1999) explains that fuzzy generalisations underline “that something *may* happen, but without any measure of its probability” (p. 46). Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000) agree with this position by arguing that these types of generalisations “are qualified generalizations, carrying the idea of possibility but no certainty” (p. 259). Indeed, this type of trustworthiness of research is appropriate for this research design.

4.4 Participants

The justification for inviting participants to partake in this research is a purposive selection. Indeed, participants are selected purposively based on their particular knowledge and understanding that they have in relation to what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and the cultivation of its ecumenical charism. This approach is based on the principle that the researcher wants to understand and gain insights from particular people, as they are “information rich” (Patton, 1990, p. 169).

There are five stakeholder groupings of participants in this study (see Table 4.2, Purposeful Participants):

1. sponsoring churches
2. current WBC leadership
3. current WBC staff members

4. current WBC PFA member
5. current WBC students.

All members of the College and its wider support community have potential contributions to offer this study. However, only those persons who meet the inclusion criteria are invited to volunteer to participate. Participants are drawn from WBC and sponsoring churches (Anglican and Uniting). The participants for the study need to meet at least one of the following five criteria:

1. current or past member of the sponsoring churches' Educational Committees or a representative (N = 2)
2. leadership member who currently has a minimum of one year of experience in a leadership role with the College (N = 7)
3. staff member who has a minimum of one year of experience with the College (N = 125)
4. a current member of the Parents and Friends Association (PFA) or representative (N = 1)
5. student who is a Senior (Year 11 or 12) and has been enrolled at the College for a minimum of one year (N= 155).

Table 4.2
Purposeful Participants

Stakeholder Grouping	Stakeholder Role	Number in cohort	Volunteer Participants	Data-gathering Strategy
Sponsoring churches	Representatives of the Anglican and Uniting churches' Educational Committees	2	2	Semi-structured one-on-one interviews
	Chairperson of the Board	1	1	
Current WBC leadership	CEO/Head of College	1	1	
	College Chaplain	1	1	
	Deputy Heads of College	2	2	
	Coordinator of Schools	2	2	
	Human Resources Manger	1	1	
Current WBC staff members	Staff (includes support staff and teachers with added responsibilities PAR)	125	10	
Current WBC PFA member	Chairperson of the PFA or representative	1	1	
Current WBC students	Senior school students	155	5	Focus-group interviews
Total volunteer participants			26	

4.4.1 Sponsoring churches

The Anglican and Uniting churches' Educational Committees have a responsibility of monitoring the operations of WBC. A representative from each church's educational committees, who met the criteria, volunteered and contributed a particular denominational perspective on ecumenical charism, were invited (N = 2). Additionally, the Chairperson of the Board was also an invited participant (N = 1).

4.4.2 Current WBC leadership

All members of leadership, who meet the criteria, were invited to participate and volunteered (N = 7). WBC's leadership members have the responsibility of nurturing and implementing the College's ecumenical charism. Members of leadership teams are able to provide formal understanding of ecumenical charism.

4.4.3 Current WBC staff members

Current WBC staff members, who met the criteria, were invited to volunteer to participate as they have particular employee experiences and opportunities to observe the nurturing of WBC's ecumenical charism (N = 10).

4.4.4 Current WBC PFA member

Current WBC PFA members, who met the criteria, were invited to participate, as they have a particular volunteer experience and opportunity to observe the nurturing of WBC's ecumenical charism. (N = 1).

4.4.5 Current WBC students

Students are important participants who capture a range of learner experiences and understandings of the nurturing of WBC's ecumenical charism. Students meeting the criteria were invited to participate. The current WBC student body who meet this criteria number is 155. However, the Ethics Approval (Appendix A) requires parental consent, which limited the volunteered participants (N = 5).

4.5 Data-gathering Strategies

Case study methodology adopts data-gathering strategies that often engage a variety of techniques. The data-gathering strategies adopted for this research include a review of documentation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The fundamental reason for the adoption of multiple data-gathering strategies is the generation of rich-thick descriptive data. The strategy choices made in gathering data are consistent with the interpretative research framework. While the researcher is constantly involved in case study research, he or she orchestrates processes to assess this involvement (Silverman, 2006). In this study, several purposeful processes are employed to assist in research credibility (see Section 4.7.1, Credibility).

4.5.1 Review of documentation

Review of documentation was a valuable strategy of gathering initial data related to WBC. Documents were categorised into two different groups and reviewed. The grouping depended on whether the document under review was primary or secondary to the study (Creswell, 2008).

The primary group reviewed in this study included the following. The mission and vision statements, policies and procedures, annual reports, artefacts and symbols, Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, prospectuses, year books, the College website, College and student magazines, promotional material and curriculum documents. The secondary group reviewed in this study included the College's educational documents (Brochure, Application Packet), local newspaper editorials and advertisements.

This document review gathered data related to WBC's interactions with the Anglican and Uniting churches. Data were gathered on the College's approach to ecumenism, ethos, culture, climate and leadership.

Gathering and reviewing documents were the initial steps in gathering data. The review was a starting point to generate a story of WBC history, which assisted in forming the focus questions for the semi-structured one-on-one and focus group interviews.

4.5.2 Semi-structured one-on-one interviews

One-on-one interviews consisted of interviews conducted one person at a time. The interviewee could speak freely in an open, conversation-like manner with the interviewer. Data gathered from the interviewee's responses invited reflection and, if required, the interview questions could be modified for future interviews. Although demanding, this study made use of semi-structured one-on-one interviews as they are "a conversation with a purpose" (Marshall & Bossman, 1994, p. 80).

Sixteen participants agreed to be interviewed. Participants were invited to attend an information sharing meeting prior to their interviews. These meetings established rapport and generated cooperation among the participants. The research questions were provided in a timely manner prior to each interview. Each interview took between 60 and 90 minutes and were conducted from May to September 2010. All participants authorised the process to be electronically

recorded. Written transcripts were produced and participants were offered the option to critique transcripts for accuracy.

4.5.3 Focus-group interviews

The focus-group interview was adopted as a data-gathering strategy for this study. Focus-group interviews are based on a small-group discussion involving about eight participants, directed by the researcher. Focus-group interviews are a flexible strategy of generating data. This flexibility makes this strategy particularly useful for this study in gathering data.

The interviewees in the group (five senior students) mainly responded to a specific set of questions that had the purpose of obtaining the participants' understandings of WBC's ecumenical charism. The researcher adopted a *laissez-faire* approach to the discussion and encouraged all voices to be heard (Marshall & Bossman, 1994).

The focus-group interviews constructed a social voice for the senior students, one that may never have been available using other data-gathering strategies (Creswell, 2008). New meanings were generated by the interaction of the interviewees as they dealt with the focus questions. The use of open-ended questions elicited individual stories (experiences) and understandings from the social context while minimising the formation of group-thought synthesis. The goal of the group interviews were to "tap into human [student] tendencies where attitudes and perceptions are developed through interaction with other people" (Lewis, 1995, para 6). The focus was on continually identifying and refining emerging themes generated from each focus-group interview.

4.6 Analysis of Data

The generation and analysis of data were conducted simultaneously and iteratively (Creswell, 2008). WBC members' stories were analysed to identify emerging themes of WBC's ecumenical charism. The analysis design incorporated the following principles: relied on all the relevant evidence, took account of opposing interpretations and addressed the relevant aspects of the case study and the researcher's knowledge of the case study (Yin, 2003). The researcher utilised an open-source software program – QDA Miner (2012). This computer program enabled the researcher to work through the large volumes of data to classify, sort, arrange and examine relationships within data. Figure 4.1 illustrates an example of data coding of a transcript, the full transcript is presented in Appendix I.

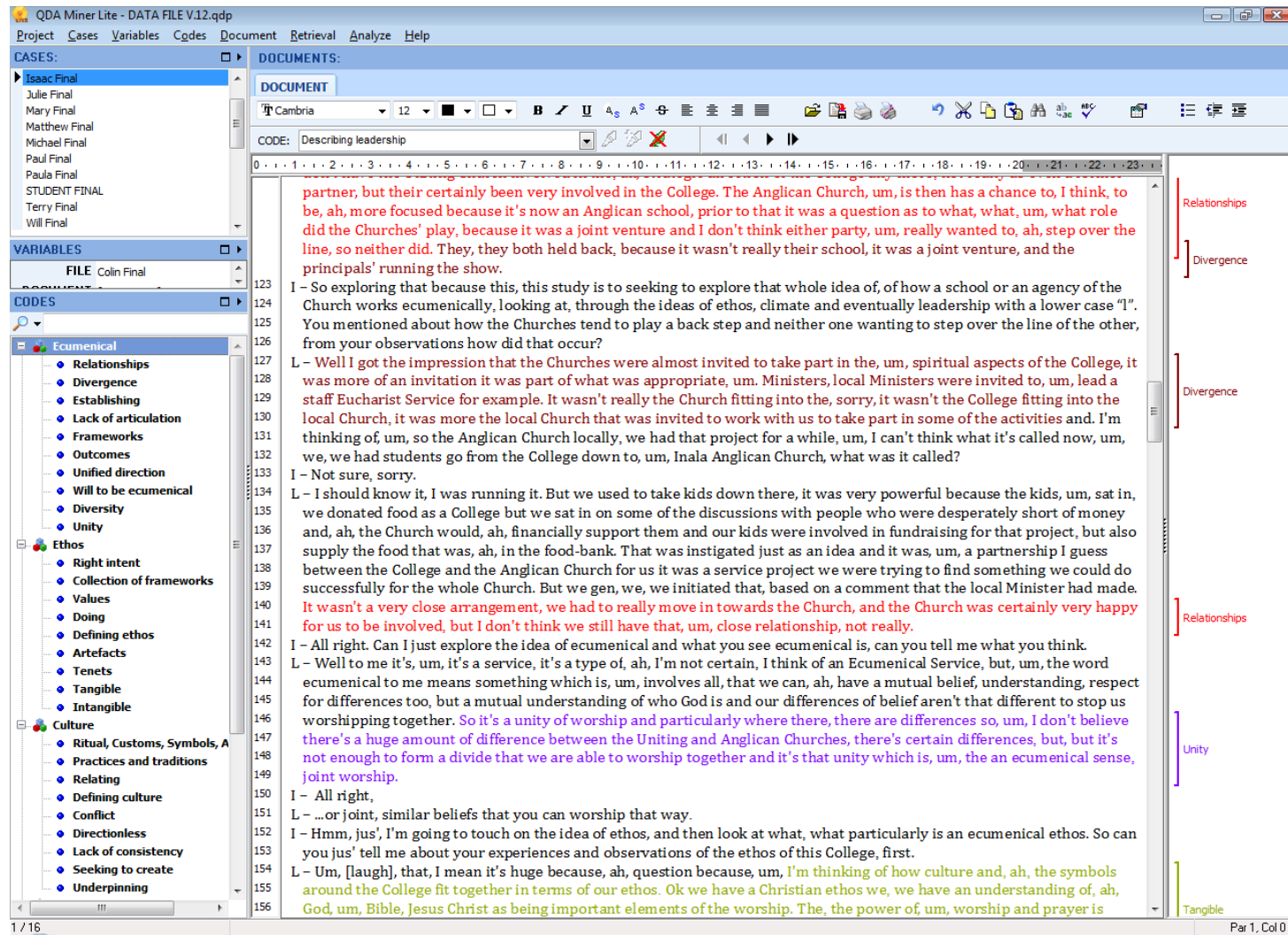


Figure 4.1. Example of data coding

The researcher worked thoroughly between interview transcripts and notes to identify important observations and statements from WBC members. During the second reading of the transcripts, an initial coding sequence was generated and interpreted. The method of analysis was Constant Comparative Analysis (Merriam, 1998b). The process of data analysis occurred within phases, as illustrated in Figure 4.2.

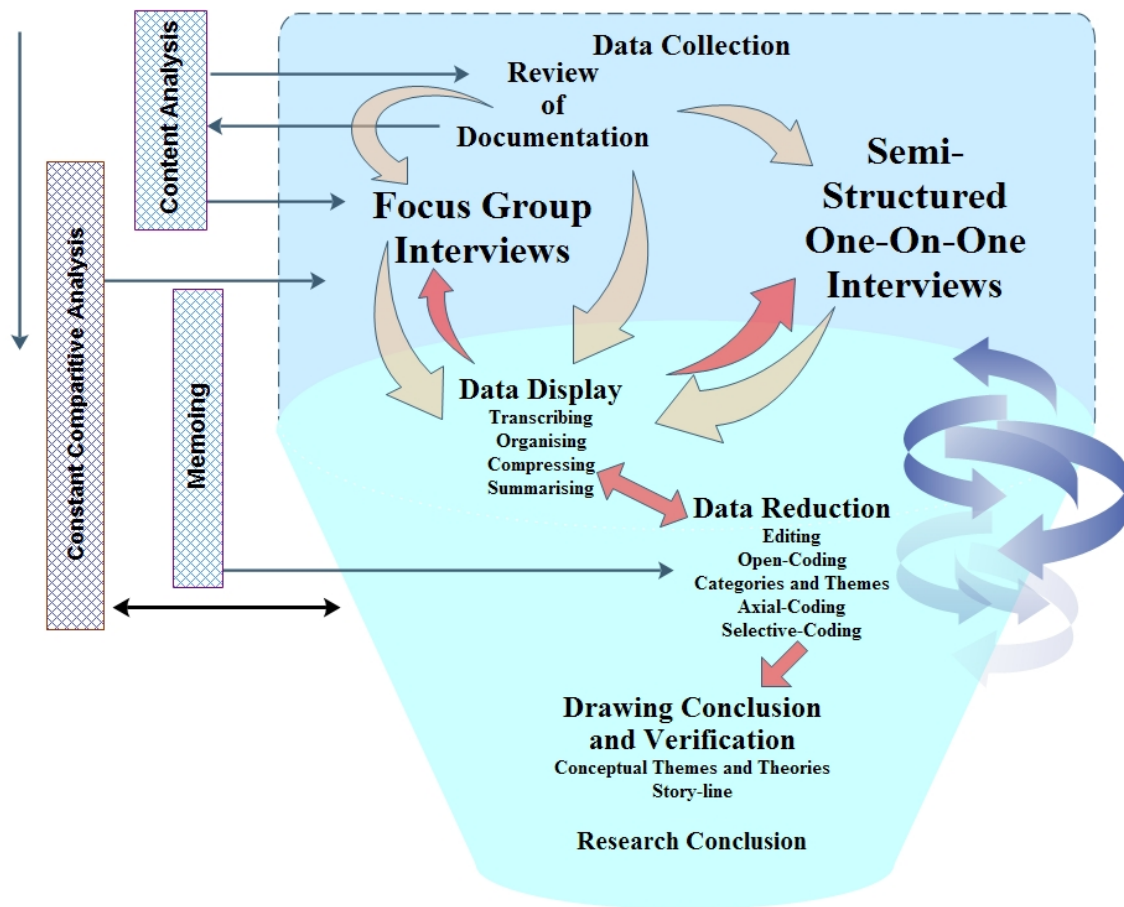


Figure 4.2. Process of Data Gathering and Analysis

4.6.1 The constant comparative method of data analysis

The processes involved in Constant Comparative Analysis (CCA) enabled the researcher to simultaneously code and analyse data in order to generate tentative propositions. Through this

process of analysis of data, categories and themes emerged “out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis” (Patton, 1990, p. 390). This inductive process consisted of three simultaneous flows of activity: data display, data reduction, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Simultaneous data gathering enabled the researcher “to focus and shape the study as it proceed[ed]” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 127). Through this inductive process, the researcher explored data critically, produced meaningful category codes and generated new meaning concepts from data. The researcher refined concepts through identifying and exploring the conceptual properties and interrelationships. Subsequently, an integrated, coherent and justified narrative is generated.

4.6.2 Exploring data and coding

Analysing data to generate codes is “the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data” (Creswell, 2008, p. 450). As labelling occurs, codes emerge that assist in offering tentative explanations for the various perspectives collected from interviews. Throughout this process, the researcher alternates between “the logical construction and the actual data in a search for meaningful patterns” (Patton, 1990, p. 411). This phase was conducted in a flexible manner, appreciating the changing interpretations that occurred in data gathering, data analysis and theme generation.

The initial process of “open-coding” was used to disassemble data into small segments to produce a collection of broad codes with conceptual meanings that related to the research questions. In conjunction with the use of open-coding, the segmenting process of memoing was used (see Appendix J). Utilising both of these processes facilitated a broadening of the codes

with conceptual content. As gathered data were “coded-up”, additional codes and integrating codes were needed. The continuation of this process was iterative, with further steps occurring in data reduction and display, summarising, creating ideas, making cluster groups and generating research categories.

A further phase in the process of data analysis was “axial-coding”. This process identified connections between categories and sub-categories of the initial open-coding phase. Axial coding was undertaken after the initial open-coding process was completed. This was done intentionally to generate links between the codes and categories with the “intention to deconstruct the data into manageable chunks in order to facilitate an understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 493). The process of axial coding generated a central focus that the codes related to, by means of categories (Creswell, 2008). The axial coding phase facilitated the synthesis of the categories into explanatory units, which generated the conceptual themes (see Section 5.1, Introduction).

Themes are an outcome of the coding process and give identification to the groupings of data. Themes were labelled with meaningful concepts that were refined through the CCA process. The CCA process called on the researcher to use inductive thinking in developing relational categories and themes. In addition, the researcher utilised deductive thinking to analyse discord between relational categories and themes. Subsequently, the relational categories and themes that were at a higher level of abstraction, being relevant to the research questions and justified with evidence from data, were selected from the generated codes.

The final phase of the process of data analysis was “selective coding”, which aims to write “a theory from the interrelationship of the categories in the axial coding model” (Creswell, 2008, p. 437). The relationships between a core code and other codes were examined and the “coding scheme [was] compared with pre-existing theory” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 493). Finally, a “storyline” developed, which integrated the prior research categories identified in the prior axial-coding phase (Creswell, 2008). The storyline generated reflects particular WBC members’ understandings and experiences of what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its ecumenical charism.

4.7 Verification

The verification of data relates to the amplitude to which the research account represents WBC members’ stories. To consider this study as legitimate, an acceptable means of verifying the research processes and product is appropriate (Bush, 2007). The confidence in the quality of data gathered rests in the trustworthiness of its accuracy and credibility (Creswell, 2008).

Not surprisingly, the reliability of the study is achieved by examining its trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003). Trustworthiness of “a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability” (Seale, 1999, p. 267). Indeed, the trustworthiness of this study does not follow conventional criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity. The conventional approaches to validity are inconsistent with an interpretative research framework.

This study's trustworthiness is established and assured through the four alternatives of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, which are a conceptual shift from that of the conventional internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is prudent not to consider each criterion as a discrete entity, but as overlapping principles, where each criterion, at any given time in the research process, shares possible characteristics with another criterion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, trustworthiness is continually flexible and "open-ended, not being a matter of final proof whereby readers are compelled to accept an account" (Seale, 1999, p. 468).

4.7.1 Credibility

The criteria for research credibility refers to establishing the reader's confidence in what has been interpreted, recorded and stated as believable from the research participants' perspective. Establishing credibility can be difficult, particularly for researchers using interpretive strategies, because of their typical descriptive and interpretive nature (Trochim, 2006). Nevertheless, establishing how the procedures used in data gathering have undergone rigorous processing to give laudability to the presented new understandings, supports the overall credibility of this research. Undertaking the following five practices supports the credibility of this research:

1. Member checking enabled credibility as participants were offered the opportunity to verify the researcher's records. Respondent validation was used to correct factual errors, improve participants' intentions, add further information and provide summaries, which checked the adequacy of the analysis (Trochim, 2006). Member checking was undertaken once transcripts were generated. Participants were provided with a copy of the transcript

pertaining to their contribution to the research and asked to validate its accuracy. Two participants (Isaac and Mary) gave further clarifications on parts of their contribution.

2. The researcher's research plan was authorised by Australian Catholic University's research committees.
3. Prolonged field engagement enabled credibility as the researcher-teacher's long period of engagement created rapport and trust with participants. In addition, this permitted the researcher to be able to appropriately respond to possible misinformation or misrepresentations.
4. Persistent observation enabled credibility as sustained observations by the researcher permitted the gathering of case characteristics and elements. This was possible by the adoption of focus groups and semi-structured one-on-one interviews.
5. A validation process was undertaken subsequent to the generation of new understandings, conclusions and recommendations. Participants, who were contactable, were provided with the following sections of the study: "Abstract", "Presentation of New Understandings" (Chapter 5), "Discussion of New Understandings" (Chapter 6) and "Conclusions and Recommendations" (Chapter 7). Participants were requested to confirm the validity of the researcher's interpretations and conclusions. Participants were asked to read and scrutinise particularly the "Abstract" and "Conclusions and Recommendations" (Chapter 7), and if possible the conclusion sections in Chapters 5 and 6. Two questions were provided to the participants to assist them with this process:
 - i. Do you agree with the researcher's interpretations of data and new understandings?
 - ii. Do you agree with the researcher's conclusions and recommendations?

To assist the participants in the validation process, Chapters 5 and 6 were provided in entirety. In doing so, the participants had the opportunity to investigate the “new understandings” (Chapter 5 and 6), which underpin the researcher’s conclusions and recommendations presented in Chapter 7. The participants who responded (Isaac, Mary, Paul and Will) made assenting comments corroborating the researcher’s interpretations, conclusions and recommendations (see Appendix K).

4.7.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the new understandings from this research can be relocatable for another context. Transferability is a desired outcome of this research. Researchers using qualitative strategies maintain that research is transferable, although readers of the research ought to apply the new understandings within their context. To this end, any generalisations from this research rest with the receiver, “the one doing the generalizing” (Trochim, 2006, p. 1). The fundamental premise of naturalistic research is the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of the research, that the study is not replicable, which is its strength rather than its weakness (Cohen et al., 2007; Le Compte & Preissle, 1993).

As this research adopts case study methodology, it did so from the foundation of the researcher’s epistemological position and the belief in the uniqueness of the case. The researcher rejects any suggestion that case study methodology limits the transferability of this research. Through the inclusion of rich-thick descriptions, and the adoption of purposive participants and specific data-gathering strategies, the readers of this research will be able to find a utility to determine whether transferability is possible. Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) advice to the naturalistic researcher is to

“avoid the trap of thinking that they must be able to generalise their research” (p. 316). It is not the researcher’s responsibility to provide the copious possibilities for transferability; indeed, any attempt to do so would be fatuitous. This research seeks to enhance transferability by completing a thorough presentation of describing the case context and the assumptions that are fundamental to this study.

4.7.3 Dependability

The criterion of dependability is closely linked to that of credibility, in that the researcher presents an account of the changing context of the research to support the study’s trustworthiness (Trochim, 2006). Dependability in naturalistic research seeks to convey the reliability of this research, looking for a form of external validity. Internal “reflexive auditing” and external “inquiry auditing” were used in this research (Golafshani, 2003). Internal “reflexive auditing” involved an approach of self-critical account of the research (Seale, 1999).

4.7.4 Confirmability

The criterion of confirmability is related to dependability and flows out of the auditing approaches that were adopted in maintaining the trustworthiness of this study. Confirmability in naturalistic research refers to the extent to which the new understandings are corroborated by other researchers (Trochim, 2006). Naturalistic research tends to assume the position that each researcher brings a unique perspective to their research and hence seeks to corroborate their analysis and the new understandings externally are somewhat problematic. Nevertheless, there is a need to ensure that the analysis and the new understandings emanate from data. Indeed, the

quality of data “can be assessed through checking for representativeness” (Punch, 2009, p. 347).

Four strategies were utilised for enhancing confirmability.

1. The researcher recorded the procedures for checking and rechecking the data during the study.
2. Research supervisors in peer debriefing played a critical role in respect to the generation of new understandings.
3. The researcher actively searched for and described negative instances that contradicted prior observations.
4. In conjunction with dependability checks, data auditing that examined the data-gathering and analysis processes and product procedures (Trochim, 2006).

Utilising the auditing “trails enable the research to address the issue of confirmability of results, in terms of process and product” (Golafshani, 2003, p. 601). Indeed, the use of the auditing approach was a useful tactic in supporting the confirmability of this research.

4.8 Delimitations and Limitations

The phenomena within the boundary of this research are delimitations and are within the researcher’s control, referred to throughout the Research Design and Ethical Issues (see Section 4.9) of this research. At the end of 2010, the teacher-researcher finished their employment with Educang (the trading name of Woodland Brook College) and disconnected his professional contact with the case study site.

Furthermore, the selection of the research methodology and strategies for data gathering are deliberate boundary choices in delimitation. The selection of a case study, site and participants

are by design and no claims for significances go beyond this context. This is in keeping with the researcher's epistemological position and theoretical perspectives.

The limitations of this research are phenomena that are beyond the researcher's control. Such things like participant withdrawal, sicknesses, bereavement and other unforeseen circumstances. Limitations can occur throughout this research, where the response required is one of managing the situation so that the least amount of negative impact occurs. At the end of 2010, Educang's ownership changed to The Anglican Diocese of Brisbane, with a subsequent change of name for the College. Any other limitations that arise are to be considered from a position of the ethicalness and trustworthiness of the research.

4.9 Ethical Issues

As this research involves gathering data from participants regarding their own understandings and experiences of WBC's ecumenical charism, ethical issues are present (Punch, 2005). Given that the researcher-teacher was employed at the case study site, deliberation needs to be given to any possible power position. The researcher, as a teacher, fulfilled a middle management position as the Head of Department – Humanities (Geography, History, LOTE (Mandarin and German) and Study of Religion). The researcher-teacher engaged in the teaching of all subjects in the Humanities department. In particular, he taught the subjects – Geography, History (Ancient and Modern) and Study of Religion, all Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority (QCAA) academic subjects. Teaching Study of Religion focused on the teachings and practices of the five major World Religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam). This QCAA subject is available to students and teachers irrespective of their religious

beliefs and affiliations, where the study is “about religion” and not “in religion”. Therefore, engaging in such a course of study has an inconsequential influence on WBC’s ecumenical charism. Furthermore, no participants involved in semi-structured one-on-one interviews were members of the Humanities Department. Students involved in the focus group interviews were not, at the time of data gathering, members of any of the researcher-teacher’s classes. By these actions, the researcher has sought to minimise his position of influence or power over the research participants. Notwithstanding, there is a need to identify particular ethical principles adopted in this research.

There are numerous and various codes of ethical principles, medical, business, social, political, academic and many more. Ethical codes are designed to regulate and guide individuals and the collective in their actions. These codes usually develop into ethical procedures for a profession or organisation, what is right and wrong for people in this context. Although there is a tendency to consider these as somewhat fixed rules, perhaps almost as absolutes, this understanding would not be congruent with a constructionist epistemology and an interpretivist theoretical perspective. Consequently, the following are general overarching principles and procedures that were adopted for this research.

The general overarching principles and procedures were ascribed to all participants. The fundamental ethical principles of individual rights and justice, described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), were upheld throughout the research. Altruistic principles and the protection of participants, their confidentiality, personal details and recorded data were secured, and only the researcher and his official appointed supervisors had

access to this information. The principle of informed consent was adhered to, which allowed the participants a position of endorsement of the research process.

In addition, the research adopted several ethical procedures. The rights of the individual participants were protected by written notification (Appendices D and E) of the research purpose, the researcher's role, ethical clearances (Appendix A), potential risks and benefits, the steps taken to ensure confidentiality, opportunity to review their contributions and by the fact that participants were under no obligation to start or to continue with the study. The acknowledgment of participants' involvement is via a letter of consent (Appendices B and C). Confidentiality was maintained by the use of pseudonyms for all participants. However, participants were informed in the initial "getting to know what this is all about" meetings that there was a potential risk of being identified via the roles that individual people fulfil within the case site (for example, Chaplain). To maintain personal details and data storage, all transcripts and correspondence (hard or soft copies) were securely stored until completion of the research, at which time all hard copies will be crossed-cut shredded and any soft copies that are stored will be via a passcode-protected computer. A strategic overview is tabulated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3
Data-gathering Strategies and Ethical Considerations

Data-gathering Strategies	Ethical Considerations
Review of documentation (paper and electronic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public documents – no consent needed; however, senior organisational site personnel notified of intent • Private documents – signed consent from relevant authorities to inspect research pertaining documents
Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each participant given a pseudonym • Letter of invitation sent to participants outlining the processes, procedure and purpose of the focus-group interviews • Reiteration and clarification of the expectations of the focus-group interviews in the “getting to know what this is all about” meeting
Semi-structured one-on-one interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each participant given a pseudonym • Letter of invitation sent to participants outlining the processes, procedure and purpose of the semi-structured one-on-one interviews • Reiteration and clarification of the expectations of the semi-structured one-on-one interviews in the “getting to know what this is all about” meeting

4.10 Overview of the Research Design

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the research design used in exploring purposive WBC members’ understandings and experiences of the ecumenical charism of Woodland Brook College. This is achieved through gathering WBC members’ stories (experiences) and understandings of the College’s ethos, culture, climate and leadership. The generation of research design was logically developed from the research purpose and the subsequent specific research questions:

How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?

Therefore, this chapter satisfies the overall design of this research by its explanation and justification of the chosen research design used to fulfil the research purpose. This chapter argues the congruency of the methodology of case study with the researcher's epistemology position of constructionism, with an interpretivist theoretical perspective through the lens of SI. Indeed, this chapter justifies this study's use of particular data-gathering strategies and the chosen instruments to generate data. A summary of the process of the research design and timeline is tabulated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Overview of Research Design and Chronology

Timeline	Interpretive Process	Data-gathering Instrument	Data Source
First phase January– December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identification of research problem ➤ Literature review ➤ Development of research questions ➤ Preparation of research design 		
First phase January– December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Completion of research design ➤ Design of data-gathering instruments ➤ Submission of ethical clearance 		
Second phase February– May 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Refinement of data-gathering instruments ➤ Direction and refinement for the focus-group interviews and the semi-structured one-on-one interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review of documentation (paper and electronic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mission and vision statements ➤ Policy and procedure documents ➤ School Yearbooks 1994–2009 ➤ Various prospectus over 15-year period ➤ Collection of College newspapers ➤ Several web page layouts ➤ Promotional material
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preparation for purposive sampling of participants for semi-structured one-on-one interviews and for focus-group interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Semi-structured one-on-one interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ College chaplain ➤ Deputy Head of College ➤ Coordinator of School ➤ Human Resources Manger ➤ College Registrar ➤ Member of the Parents and Friends Association and other members ➤ Heads of Department ➤ Teaching staff (including teachers with added responsibilities)

Timeline	Interpretive Process	Data-gathering Instrument	Data Source
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus-group interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Senior school students
Second phase May–October 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Data-gathering and analysis process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Semi-structured one-on-one interviews ➤ Focus group interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Semi-structured one-on-one participants ➤ Focus group participants
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Refinement of instrument in light of the data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continuation of semi-structured one-on-one and focus-group interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Semi-structured one-on-one participants ➤ Focus-group participants
Second phase October– December 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continuation of analysis of data processes ➤ Validation of data 		
Third phase January– December 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Data reduction ➤ Clustering to generate categories to themes 		
Third phase January– December 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Data display ➤ Definition and description of ecumenical ethos, culture, climate and leadership ➤ Description and reflection on Woodland Brook College’s ecumenical ethos, culture, climate and leadership 		
Third phase January– December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussion of research new understandings with relevant literature, drawing of conclusions 		

Timeline	Interpretive Process	Data-gathering Instrument	Data Source
Third phase January– December 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recommendations ➤ Review of research 		
Third phase January– July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction (Chapter 1) 		
Third phase August 2015 –August 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Final editing and proofing 		

Commencement of the second phase of research was dependent on the successful defence of the research proposal and ethical clearance in January 2010.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the research design, which was consistent with the purpose of the study; exploring how members of WBC understand and experience what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its ecumenical charism. The methodology used for analysing data is described and justified. Furthermore, a justification of the research paradigm, the research strategies and the selection of participants is provided. Due consideration of ethical issues and strategies are explained to establish the trustworthiness of the study. The following chapter presents the new understandings generated from the exploration.

Chapter Five

Presentation of New Understandings

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present new understandings generated from exploring the ecumenical charism of WBC.

The term new understandings is adopted in this chapter, rather than the traditional term “findings”. This is because new understandings are generated as the researcher engages in the activity of synthesising understandings from interpreting the multiple understandings of multiple College members. This process of analysis is identified as the “double interpretation, or double hermeneutic” (Scott & Morrison, 2005, p. 124). In other words, this chapter presents and justifies the researcher’s understanding of the multiple participants’ understandings of issues that are the focus of the research.

The following specific research questions structure the presentation of the new understandings.

How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?

Figure 5.1, Research Area of Focus, provides a conceptual illustration of the specific research questions.

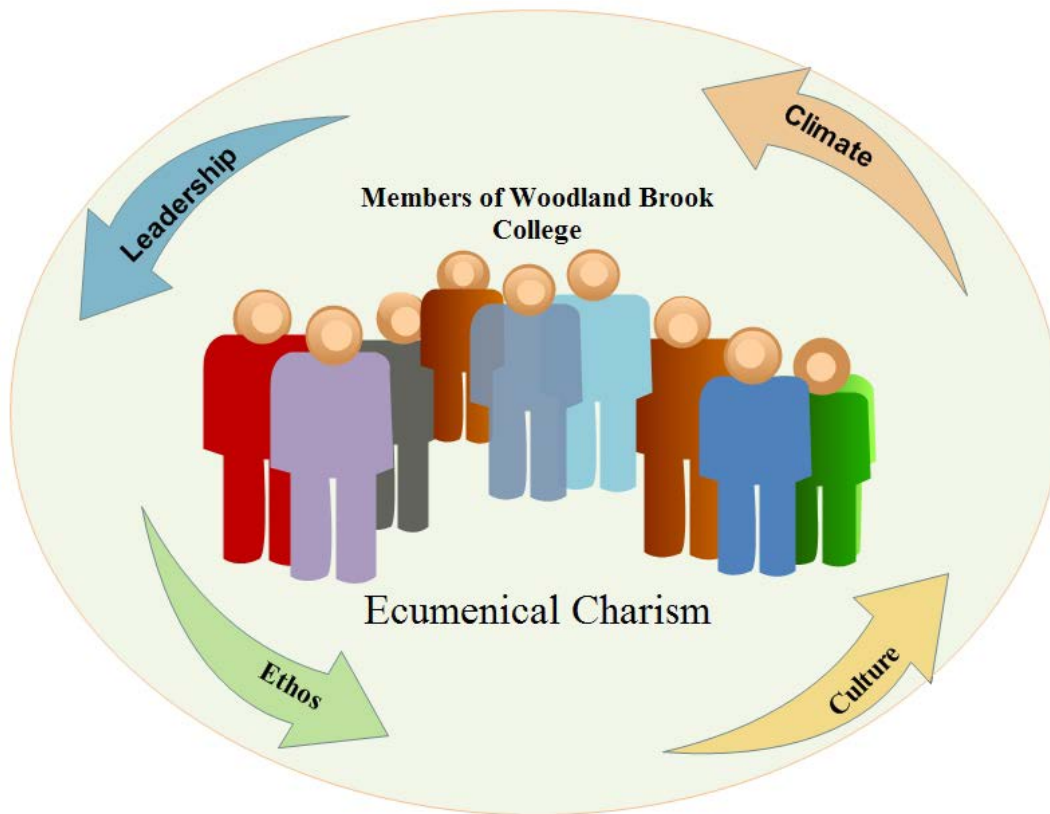


Figure 5.1. Research Area of Focus

Data were generated by utilising data-gathering strategies that included a review of documentation, semi-structured one-on-one interviews, as well as focus-group interviews.

In the first phase of the research process, a review of documentation was undertaken to establish historical understanding, which led to the development of interview questions for participants. Participants in the study were identified by using the process of purposive selection (Patton, 2002). Some possible participants who were initially approached declined the invitation to participate. In total, nineteen respondents participated, with fourteen respondents (N=14) involved in semi-structured one-on-one interviews and five respondents in the student focus

group (N=5). Confidentiality was maintained by the use of pseudonyms for all participants, as described in Table 4.3, Data-gathering Strategies and Ethical Considerations.

In the second phase of the research process, data were generated and analysed simultaneously, and iteratively. Participants' transcripts were analysed using Constant Comparative Analysis (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Merriam, 1998b) (see Section 4.6.1, The Constant Comparative Method of Data Analysis). The process of data analysis occurred within phases (see *Figure 4.2, Process of Data Gathering and Analysis*). This process consisted of three simultaneous flows of activity: data display, data reduction, and conclusion drawing and verification.

Through the second reading of transcripts, memoing and coding were generated. Open coding was used to disassemble data into small segments for comparing, examining and categorising. The process of coding-up produced a collection of codes with conceptual meanings that related to the research questions. The five research questions were used as the organisational construct in which coded data were clustered. Clustering of data continued, axial codes were assigned and the emerging categories refined. Figure 5.2 is an illustration of the process for one particular code "relationships", which is associated with the Specific Research Question 1 and relevant data relating to "ecumenical".

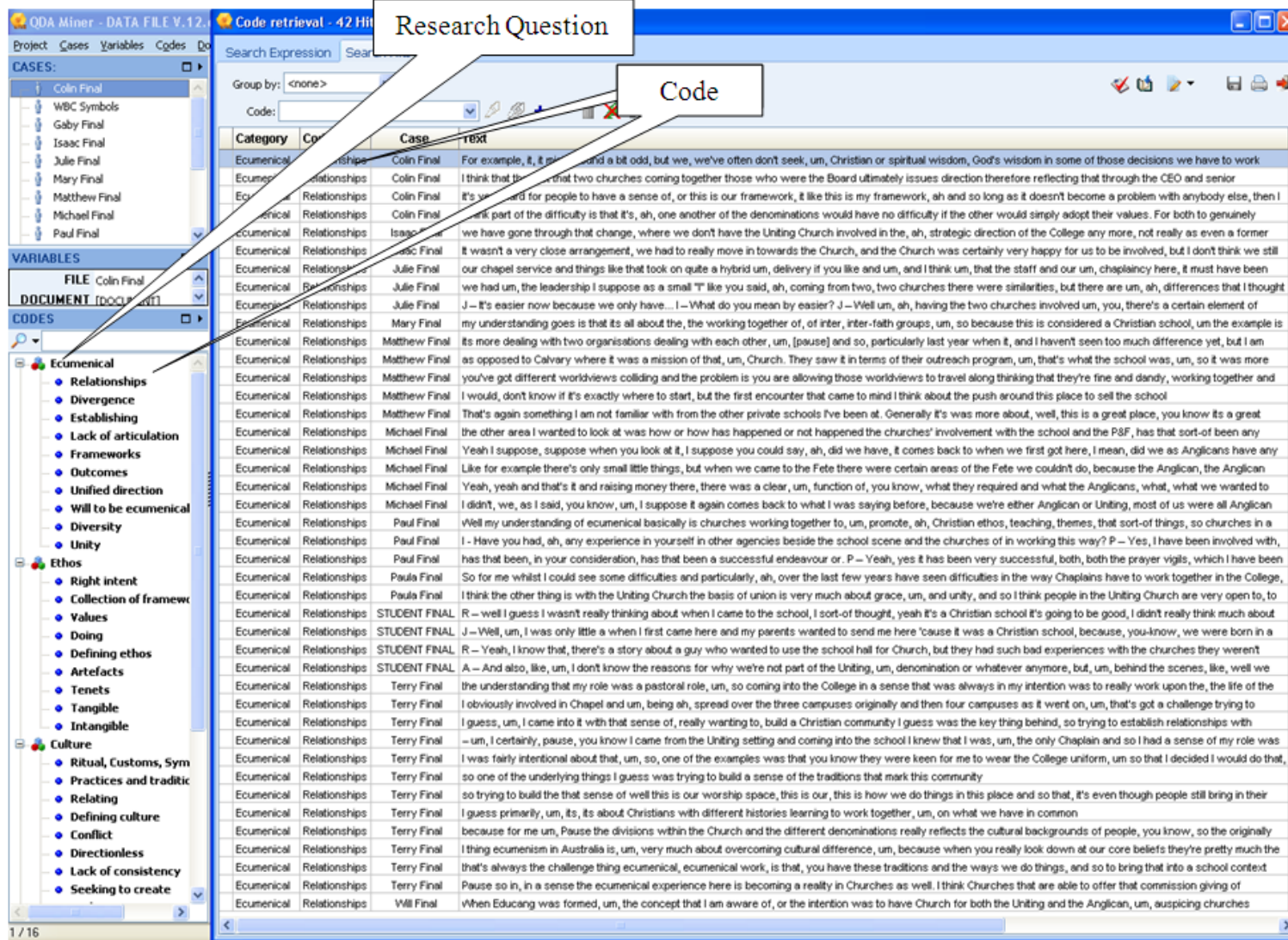


Figure 5.2. Example of “relationships” clustering

Data reduction continued with selective coding and the generation of emerging categories. The emerging categories provided the focus for continued data analysis.

In the third phase of the research process, emerging categories were conceptualised and labelled (see Table 5.1, Research Coding to Categories). Through scrutinising the categories with developing new understandings, literature and the theoretical perspective for this study, greater abstraction occurred and research themes generated (see Table 5.2, Research Categories to Research Themes). Through this process, a tentative research narrative emerged. Subsequently, five research issues emerged through critically interrogating selective new understandings (see Table 6.1, Relationship between Specific Research Questions, Selected Research Themes to New Understandings and Issues). As a result, an integrated, justified and coherent narrative was generated.

Table 5.1
Research Coding to Categories

Specific Research Question	Focus Questions	Coding	Categories
How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?	What does ecumenism mean?	relationship, divergence, establishing, lack of articulation, frameworks,	Common end (Section 5.2.1.1)
	What does ecumenism mean at Woodland Brook College?	outcomes, unified direction, will to be ecumenical, diversity, unity	Worship (Section 5.2.1.2) Building relationships (Section 5.2.2.1) Collective frameworks (Section 5.2.2.2) Struggling functionally (Section 5.2.2.3) Differing visions (Section 5.2.2.4)

Specific Research Question	Focus Questions	Coding	Categories
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?	What does ethos mean?	right intent, collection of frameworks, values, doing, defining ethos, artefacts, tenets, tangible, intangible	Right intention (Section 5.3.1.1)
	What does ethos mean at Woodland Brook College?		Values (Section 5.3.1.2)
			→ Sharing space (Section 5.3.2.1)
			Transmitting symbols and ceremonies (Section 5.3.2.2)
			Living relationships (Section 5.3.2.3)
			Infusing artefacts (Section 5.3.2.4)
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?	What does culture mean?	ritual, customs, symbols and artefacts, practices and traditions, relating, defining culture, conflict, directionless, lack of consistency, seeking to create, underpinning	Collection (Section 5.4.1.1)
	What does culture mean at Woodland Brook College?		Connecting (Section 5.4.1.2)
			→ Connecting interrelationships (Section 5.4.2.1)
			Creating symbols, artefacts and customs (Section 5.4.2.2)
			Conflicting expressions of worship (Section 5.4.2.3)
			Shifting contexts (Section 5.4.2.4)
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?	What does climate mean?	describing, values in climate, defining climate, church involvement, managing, controlling	Feeling (Section 5.5.1.1)
	What does climate mean at Woodland Brook College?		Seasons (Section 5.5.1.2)
			→ Creating connectedness (Section 5.5.2.1)
			Controlling interactions (Section 5.5.2.2)
			Accepting constant change (Section 5.5.2.3)
			Failing church influence (Section 5.5.2.4)

Specific Research Question	Focus Questions	Coding	Categories
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?	<p>What does leadership mean?</p> <p>What does leadership mean at Woodland Brook College?</p>	<p>describing, defining leadership, directing servant-hood, relational, church directing</p>	<p>Styles (Section 5.6.1.1)</p> <p>Modelling (Section 5.6.1.2)</p> <p>Understanding roles (Section 5.6.2.1)</p> <p>Forcing style (Section 5.6.2.2)</p> <p>Accommodating differences (Section 5.6.2.3)</p> <p>Compelling influence (Section 5.6.2.4)</p>

5.2 The First Specific Research Question:

How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?

5.2.1 The meaning of ecumenism

An analysis of the participants' understandings of the concept "ecumenism" generated two categories:

1. common end
2. worship.

5.2.1.1 Common end

Ecumenism is a concept that explains how Christians from different denominations cooperate because their belief in a common purpose supersedes individual histories or agendas. The ecumenical movement sought from its beginning a visible Christian unity (Dulles, 2002). The Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia both have affirmed their commitment "to cooperate in mission, evangelism and our public witness to the apostolic faith" (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010). For members of WBC's community, ecumenism is understood as churches working together to promote Christian ethos, teaching and ideas. Paul explains: "So it's churches working together to achieve an end by focusing on their common themes, their commonalities, their common message" (Paul, 30/7/2010). Gaby, a teacher and member of middle management who has been at the College for over six years, identifies the need for collaboration. She believes that collaborating in "[a helpful] ... mix and have it [community] that it's working, that we're not pulling against each other [is essential]" (Gaby, 21/6/2010). The WBC members believe that ecumenism provides the

motivation and energy for churches to work together to achieve a common end. The research theme of “collaboration” is generated from the category of “common end”.

5.2.1.2 Worship

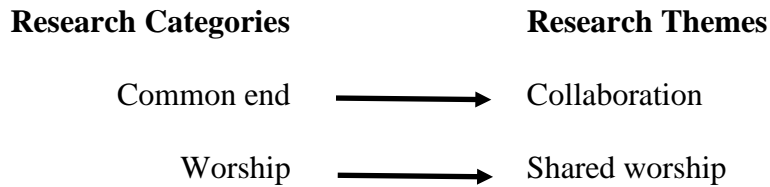
Worship plays a central role for Christian communities. Staff and students of WBC’s community engage in weekly worship and gather for worship on special days throughout the year. Julie, a staff member in administration for over eight years and parent of two past College students, identifies ecumenical worship as “a Christian celebration or how we celebrate our, the Christian element of what we do” (Julie, 20/9/2010). In addition, Isaac, a long-term member of the teaching staff with over fifteen years of service, indicates that ecumenical worship draws Christians of different traditions together into a single community. “It’s a unity of worship and particularly where there are differences ... there’s certain differences, but it’s not enough to form a divide that we are able to worship together and it’s that unity, which is the ecumenical sense, joint worship” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Another long-term member of the teaching staff, Will, who started in the foundation year of WBC, makes this observation concerning ecumenical worship:

Our functions, our events, our worship time was ecumenical, or took the flavour of Anglican, perhaps one or two worship services and then it alternated back to the Uniting. So, it was a culture I guess trying to expose us to both traditions of both churches, both doctrines, but at a fairly simplistic level. (Will, 11/6/2010)

Clearly then, ecumenism has a visible expression of unity through Christian worship, a view of sharing and celebrating what is honoured in common. The research theme of “shared worship” is generated from the category of “worship”.

5.2.1.3 Summary

WBC members' knowledge and understanding of ecumenism form a contextual framework for exploring the specific research questions. Analyses of the data have generated two research categories: "common end" and "worship". Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of "collaboration" and "shared worship".



These research themes contribute in generating meanings from WBC members' understandings of ecumenism. The next section explores how these conceptual meanings of ecumenism relate specifically to WBC's context.

5.2.2 Woodland Brook College's ecumenism

WBC is a Christian school established on ecumenical principles by the Anglican and Uniting churches. Both churches support the ecumenical principles of promoting religious liberty through denominational dialogue and cooperation, with the ultimate desire to achieve visible Christian unity. Indeed, the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010) affirms that both "churches continue to work together in formally constituted Cooperating Parishes and in many other ways, and may continue to explore further forms of cooperation in mission and service" (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 1). In collaboration, the Anglican and Uniting churches seek the "common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (World Council of Churches, 2009, para 1). From WBC members' experiences, a story is told of their understandings of how the College generated an ecumenical culture.

5.2.2.1 Building relationships

The formation of relationships within WBC's community has an influence on the College's ecumenical charism. The motivation for founding the College was to build relationships with the Woodland Brook community. The two churches formed the "Educang" model with "the intention ... to have church for both the Uniting and the Anglican, auspicing churches [to] promote connecting with communities through school ... So it was bringing church into the community" (Will, 11/6/2010). Terry, a chaplain at the College, who is an ordained Uniting Church Minister, came to the College with a sense of wanting to build a Christian community. This is "the key thing ... trying to establish relationships with people" (Terry, 22/3/2010).

The College community has a diverse range of people from a variety of Christian traditions. There are representatives from the Anglican and the Uniting churches, and other denominations such as Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Church of Christ, Lutheran and charismatic groups. Not surprisingly, Terry considers it important to act in an ecumenical manner:

...there's a whole mix of people and so for me, what I want to see is this sense of a community worshipping God together, drawing people from their own perspectives to try to build a sense of 'this is who we are'. (Terry, 22/3/2010)

Continuing to build the community through the relationships of such a diverse group of people is difficult, particularly as the College grew rapidly in numbers. This was especially the case when new people were employed in senior management roles. This initiative generated new dynamics: "... the flavour of the College relationships changed" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Colin, a senior staff member in administration, who has been at the College for over six years, speaking from his

experiences is “not sure whether the questions are or have been asked, certainly not in my experience of what does working in a Church school, particularly an ecumenical approach means in terms of relationships” (Colin, 2/6/2010). Accordingly, members of the College community consider that there is an undefined idea of what constitutes an “ideal” ecumenical relationship. The research theme of “undefined” is generated from the category of “building relationships”.

5.2.2.2 Collective frameworks

Given the lack of clarity over the ideal relationships that ought to exist in an ecumenical setting, a story emerges of individuals creating their own interpretive frameworks. Colin’s experiences are distinctive, as he is in a position of engaging new staff:

It’s very hard for people to have a sense of this is “our” framework. It’s like this is my framework and so long as it doesn’t become a problem with anybody else, then I stick to my framework, but it’s not this is “our” framework. (Colin, 2/6/2010)

A lack of an agreed framework is problematic. To acquire such a framework requires a commitment by the community to prioritise time and energy to generate such an outcome: “It’s probably more a collective of individual frameworks than a genuine combined ecumenical framework” (Colin, 2/6/2010). In contrast, Matthew, who is a relatively new member of the College community, believed the framework emphasises business priorities over values and beliefs. Indeed, the College has often been referred to as “the Company” (Matthew, 11/6/2010).

The insights of Terry are particularly relevant. At the time of the study, Terry was WBC’s only chaplain. He believed his role was primarily not “to promote the Uniting Church, but to enhance Christian community” (Terry, 22/3/2010). By adopting this position, Terry intentionally

advocates his own framework, which he assumes is being ecumenical. However, this orientation is not a direction given to Terry by the College community or the sponsoring churches. Terry is acutely aware of the structural issues within WBC, as he sought to promote “a Christian community rather than being Anglican or a Uniting community” (Terry, 22/3/2010). Consequently, the goal of ecumenical relationships, according to Terry, should be to bring together the different traditions. Terry believes the challenge is not a theological one but “the way we do things and so to bring that into a school context with Anglican and Uniting [traditions]. The actual practices in our liturgy are quite distinct and different, and that’s, I guess, one of the challenges” (Terry, 22/3/2010). There is a belief that members of the College community generate their own individual frameworks as a strategy to function within WBC. The research theme of “individualism” is generated from the category of “collective frameworks”.

5.2.2.3 Struggling functionally

There is a challenge in functioning ecumenically within the context of WBC. Creating an agreed liturgical practice within the College has been unsuccessful. The respective churches’ liturgical practices are symbolic of their denominational identity. The ecumenical context of WBC contributes to the complexity of maintaining the identity of each denomination.

Not surprisingly, staff question the willingness of the College’s commitment to function ecumenically. Michael, as a member of the Parents and Friends Association, speaking from this perspective offered this explanation: “... because we’re either Anglican or Uniting, most of us are all Anglican anyway, and we didn’t have too many issues with the United [Uniting] side. We didn’t really know too much about them [Uniting Church]” (Michael, 8/9/2010). Moreover, Isaac

is able to give a particular historical perspective, being one of the longest serving members of the WBC community:

I think one of the reasons why we got into financial stress is because it wasn't an ecumenical college, which didn't have a clear governance structure because it was split. We've got a very dominant leader with two churches who [sic] didn't really know their roles in the school. (Isaac, 26/7/2010)

Nevertheless, Julie, representing an administration perspective as well as being a parent, considers that there is increasing agreement among College members:

Synthesis! I think it has been more that than a clash. I really do and I think that's a lovely thing to have witnessed over these years, that two churches can get together. There are some differences in values, but they [have] worked harmoniously for how many years? Fourteen! Whether it did work harmoniously at a management level, I don't know because I wouldn't be in a position to comment on that. However, as an employee and a parent, I think we did have harmony. (Julie, 20/9/2010)

However, Paula, a member of senior leadership, having many years of experience in both independent and government schools, explains her experiences at WBC. "I could see some difficulties and particularly over the last few years I have seen difficulties in the way chaplains have to work together in the College and the way the two churches were almost forced together [to make it work]" (Paula, 13/8/2010).

The regular departure of College chaplains highlights the challenges that chaplains are invited to address in seeking not only to function ecumenically but also to fulfil their ordained ministry responsibilities to their respective denominations. WBC members' interview statements indicate that there is an unwillingness to function ecumenically. Whether this is intentional or the product

of poor planning invites further investigation. The research theme of “unwillingness” is generated from the category of “struggling functionally”.

5.2.2.4 Differing visions

The main challenge the participants identified was the phenomenon of two church organisations waiting for the other to adopt each other’s particular position. Will explains: “I think there was always a little bit of an issue between which church group had more influence within our own school” (Will, 11/6/2010). The Anglicans have a particular view and Uniting have a contrasting view on what ecumenical means within the context of WBC. Colin, who has worked closely with senior management and the College Board, offers this insightful explanation: “In terms of the two churches coming together, those who were on the Board ultimately issued directions, therefore reflecting that through the CEO [founding Executive Principal] and Senior Management Team” (Colin, 2/6/2010). Matthew, who has taught in other independent schools, including an ecumenical school, claims that: “... ecumenical schools seem to very quickly lose that concept of mission or connection to the Christian heritage that they come from” (Matthew, 11/6/2010). Terry believes this ecumenical “mission drift” has “its roots in the [churches’ broad] tolerance ... to diversity” (Terry, 22/3/2010). Subsequently, two parallel questions emerge. First, what happens within the College? Second, what happens with the churches’ involvement within the College? Isaac’s experiences led him to claim that:

I got the impression that the churches were almost invited to take part in the spiritual aspects of the College; it was more of an invitation. Local ministers were invited to lead the staff *Eucharistic service* for example. It wasn’t the College fitting into the local church, it was more the local church that was invited to work with us to take part in some of the activities. (Isaac, 26/7/2010)

The roles that the churches play are a challenge according to Isaac: “I don’t think either party really wanted to step over the line, so neither did” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). The sponsoring churches each have a unique contribution to WBC and their laissez-faire approach is unhelpful in generating an ecumenical community. Terry explains: “So that people [College members] had some sense that management had really nussed out what it meant to be ecumenical, rather than being on the edges of trying to set some genuine ideas rather than trying to really work out the mechanics of what it means” (Terry, 22/3/2010). A lack of an ecumenical vision for WBC has an influence on the College’s development as an ecumenical agency for the Anglican and Uniting churches. The research theme of “visionless” is generated from the category of “differing visions”.

5.2.2.5 Sub-conclusion

A number of sub-conclusions emerge from these perspectives. They are: “building relationships”, “collective frameworks”, “struggling functionally” and “differing visions”. Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of “undefined”, “individualism”, “unwillingness” and “visionless”.

Research Categories		Research Themes
Building relationships	—————→	Undefined
Collective frameworks	—————→	Individualism
Struggling functionally	—————→	Unwillingness
Differing visions	—————→	Visionless

These research themes contribute in generating meanings from WBC members' understandings of the College's ecumenical charism. These initial clarifications of ecumenism establish a contextual understanding.

5.3 The Second Specific Research Question:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?

5.3.1 The meaning of ethos

An analysis of the participants' understandings of the concept "ethos" generated two categories:

1. right intention
2. values.

5.3.1.1 Right intention

Acting with right intention is considered to be the fundamental basis for defining ethos. Gaby identifies a "seeded core belief [or] value" (Gaby, 21/6/2010) that materialises in the action of: "[T]his is why we interact in this way. This is why we may react in this way. [T]here's an essential theme that's running through who we are, and why we do what we do" (Gaby, 21/6/2010). Will confirms this concept in a more concrete way: "It's the block on which we build our foundations. I guess, at the end of the day I think you need to have the right tone, the right intention within your school" (Will, 11/6/2010).

Consequently, the concept of ethos incorporates acting with a "right intention". Ethos is more appropriately understood in terms of action than by definition. "[W]e tend to live it. We don't

actually. It's hard to really work out what that really means" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). However, this right action or intention is not understood as a constant phenomenon, as ethos "changes from situation to situation" (Mary, 2/6/2010). Members of WBC identify that to act with right intention may mean acting in a different manner within various situations.

Furthermore, ethos offers staff members an "overriding direction, a sense of what the place is about" (Matthew, 11/6/2010). Colin believes that ethos has the "personality of the organisation" (Colin, 2/6/2010). Similarly, ethos may also be understood as "that underpinning tone, the way that we operate, the way we conduct ourselves when we think someone [is] looking at us, perhaps when they're not looking at us" (Will, 11/6/2010).

In contrast, Terry understands ethos more in the ecumenical context as "a feeling of an openness to diversity. I think [this] is an important part of being ecumenical and actually validating other ways of leading worship, validating people in their particular perspectives and permission giving to try different things" (Terry, 22/3/2010). To summarise, a synthesis of the participants' understandings identifies that "right intention" is fundamental to understanding the College's ethos. The research theme of "attitude" is generated from the category of "right intention".

5.3.1.2 Values

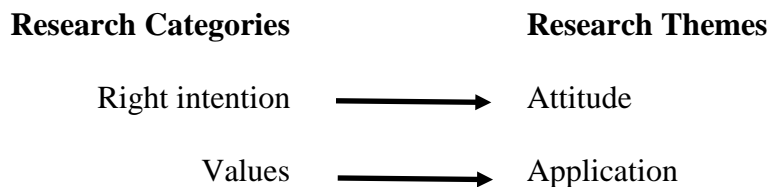
Communities adopt standards that they consider are important to underpin the vision of their community. These standards, often referred to as values, are in a particular way related to the community's ethos. Therefore, "ethos comes out of the values that are being established [and values are] ... behind the strength of ethos" (Julie, 20/9/2010). The relationship between values

and ethos is that values underpin ethos, for “... ethos is an intangible thing in many ways. I [Paula] think culture is part of ethos, the difference is the role of values” (Paula, 13/8/2010). Indeed, “ethos has more to do with shared values and conversations around those shared values and being explicit about those shared values” (Paula, 13/8/2010). Consequently, shared values generate “a common language to talk about the basics” (Isaac, 26/7/2010), and ethos offers a language to communicate values.

Paul, who has many years of experience in Christian ministry, believes that “ethos to me, in the ecumenical sense, would just be living out the Christian values or the Gospel values in terms of the way that we relate to other people, treat other people, in terms of what we see as important” (Paul, 30/7/2010). Accordingly, the values that a community share inform its ethos. The research theme of “application” is generated from the category of “values”.

5.3.1.3 Summary

Analyses of the data have generated two research categories: “right intention” and “values”. Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of “attitude” and “application”.



These research themes contribute in generating meanings from WBC members’ understandings of ethos. The next section explores how these conceptual meanings of ethos relate specifically to WBC’s context.

5.3.2 Woodland Brook College's ethos

An analysis of the individual participants' beliefs concerning ethos generates a community narrative that offers a shared meaning of ethos operating within the College.

5.3.2.1 Sharing space

Each of the sponsoring churches has a unique influence on WBC's ethos. This influence is often articulated through the respective churches' College representatives. Each church sought to have an ordained minister/priest on the College staff. Although this did not occur, the practice has been that at least one chaplain from one of the churches maintained a presence.

Paul, who has worked in church ministry prior to teaching at the College, believes that a lack of a consistent pastoral team of ministers/priests influenced the College's ethos:

In my time here, there has been very little time where we have had both Anglican and Uniting Church clergy persons here. In fact, out of eight years, I think that it has happened for six months. So, in terms of the input of both churches through those two people, it hasn't happened; at least while I have been here. In the six months, while the two of them were here, it tended to be a little bit of a struggle. (Paul, 30/7/2010)

Other members of the College perceive this struggle as a "competition between the churches" (Matthew, 11/6/2010). A belief in a church competition has influenced College members' opinions that the churches lack the commitment to act ecumenically. Moreover, Mary identifies the "questioning over who does what, when and why. I've been involved in conversations where they've said, no it has to go the Anglican way and another person has said, no that's not right we

have to follow the Uniting way” (Mary, 2/6/2010). Indeed, the churches’ representatives play a pivotal role in the development of the ethos of the College. However, there appears to be disharmony between the sponsoring churches’ representatives.

The role of the churches’ representatives (chaplains or spiritual coordinators) is pivotal in contributing to the College’s ethos. Paula believes that the “College’s ethos is particularly driven by the chaplains or the people from the church representatives” (Paula, 13/8/2010). Indeed, the ethos of the College has been affected by the infrequency and high turnover of the representatives from the sponsoring churches. Furthermore, Paul identifies the College’s ethos as dichotomous.

In terms of the underlying ethos and what happens here, they [churches’ representatives] seem to have very little influence and it’s probably because we have had so many of them coming and going over all of the years. We basically had to survive on our own pretty much. The underlying ethos and even the times when there hasn’t been anybody, we’ve been through times when there has not been anybody at all. Then the underlying ethos and who we are as people has then influenced the symbolic ethos. (Paul, 30/7/2010)

The frequency of the churches’ representatives leaving the College over the years is a major challenge in nurturing the College’s ecumenical ethos. Paul highlights that this is why the churches’ “symbolic ethos” has little effect on the “practical ethos”. As each new denominational representative came to the College, “they have affected more of the symbolic ethos, but it’s really not affected as much of the underlying [practical] ethos, because we have just kept going ourselves” (Paul, 30/7/2010). Further elaborations of these issues are explored in Section 5.3.2.3, Living relationships.

According to Paula, there is a reason for the frequency of the sponsoring churches' representatives leaving the College. She recalled a conversation she had with Michael Sky, a member of the Uniting Church, on his departure from the College:

When I spoke to him about why he chose to leave, and in the same way as Terry Sneed [the Uniting Church] when he chose to leave, it was to do with the fact that they couldn't ... they felt they had been called to a certain church and they had to keep compromising, which is why they chose to leave. So the whole concept I think of being ecumenical has inherent difficulties. I think it's a great vision but I think it can flounder on the human nature of everyone involved. (Paula, 13/8/2010)

This opinion explains the disharmony emerging between the church representatives, within the ecumenical context of the College. Each church representative was either an ordained minister or priest, having made a commitment to a particular denominational tradition. Indeed, church ministers or priests found the ecumenical context personally challenging their specific tradition's heritage.

A further explanation of the sponsoring churches' influence on the College's ethos emerges. An impression of a lack of Christian unity becomes apparent, as each of the churches seeks to promote its own traditions. Angela, a Year 12 student who has attended the College for six years, believes that the sponsoring churches promote their own traditions at the expense of a shared Christian vision: "... it's not really making a positive impact upon the school. It doesn't feel, in my opinion, very Christian. It feels really far away from that" (Angela, 7/9/2010).

One participant who appropriately explains this challenge is Terry. Terry has been particularly focused on promoting the idea that the College needs to be a “Christian community” in advance of any particular denominational tradition:

As a Uniting Church minister, I publicly have a fair degree of flexibility in the way I run the *Eucharistic service*. Working with Anglican clergy who come to the College, they have a far more regimented practice of the Eucharist, this is how it is, by the book so to speak, and this displays an obvious difference, which is never explained to the students and staff. (Terry, 22/3/2010)

Terry further amplifies his beliefs: “... so, I guess that should’ve created some theological discussions here about how we do things together and connect” (Terry, 22/3/2010). The paucity of an ecumenical theological discourse has generated divergent opinions that have influenced the unity of the College.

Indeed, the sponsoring churches’ challenge to develop a shared vision for WBC has had a deleterious influence on the College’s ethos. The research theme of “compromising standpoint” is generated from the category of “sharing space”.

5.3.2.2 Transmitting symbols and ceremonies

A strategy to communicate the WBC’s values is through the College’s ceremonies and symbols. WBC members’ understanding of the intended meaning of the College’s symbols and ceremonies differ. The sponsoring churches’ symbols and ceremonies are supported by a Christian foundation, according to Isaac:

... you look around the place, we have a Cross in the middle of the College grounds. The symbolisms of the Anglican and Uniting Church badges are still on display. We have the

Bible in the foyer, we have a Cross in the foyer, we have a lot of symbolism. (Isaac, 26/7/2010)

Nevertheless, WBC members question if other symbolic events may better demonstrate the ethos of the College. Will recalls an event that typifies this. Under “[the founding Executive Principal] we sought to establish rich symbolism and ceremonies. They once had Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture* with a real canon. I don’t know of any school that has done that” (Will, 11/6/2010).

This symbolism, according to Matthew, is governed by particular priorities:

I would say WBC’s ethos is tied up in that idea of wanting to be an elite private school and with all the symbolism. It wants to compete with the big boys, it wants to be seen as that; while it is recognised that it doesn’t at the moment, it’s still the underpinning philosophy that one day they will speak in a same sense of Churchie, BBC, John Paul [elite private schools] and Woodland Brook College. So that is the underpinning to me, what drives a lot of where we head in those sort of things. So in a sense, it’s a bit of a follower mentality. What are they doing, what can we do to match that? (Matthew, 11/6/2010)

Reflecting on his experiences, Isaac explains the relationship between the College’s choice of symbols and ethos: “I think it’s [the symbols] an indication of our ethos. We tend to live ethos. It’s hard to really work out what that really means” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). The College’s ethos is “more than just symbolic, which is an impression of the ethos. It’s part of the way that most people live out their lives” (Paul, 30/7/2010).

While the College’s symbols and ceremonies are tangible artefacts for transmitting the values representing the College’s ethos, what these values particularly are, and have been in the past, has been unclear. Nevertheless, the values that do underpin the College’s ethos are particularly demonstrated through the relationships of members of the community. Indeed, the qualities of

relationships are an indicator of how staff embrace the ethos. The research theme of “impressions” is generated from the category of “transmitting symbols and ceremonies”.

5.3.2.3 Living relationships

WBC’s ethos is influenced by the transforming relationships of its members. The dynamic relationships that develop exemplify the College members’ authentic living, though such unifying beliefs and values for an authentic living are unclear. Furthermore, the manner in which individual members live out their “Christian life” differs. Not surprisingly, as this diversity of experiencing Christian living is brought together within the College context, the ethos of the College is affected.

The ethos that does exist between the College members is generated when members interact with each other. According to Paul: “You can talk about what you want as an ethos and what you live as an ethos” (Paul, 30/7/2010). As the sponsoring churches seek to generate an ecumenical Christian community, the development of an ethos that reflects relationships with ecumenical principles is an important challenge that the College is yet to address. Speaking from her experiences, Paula wonders “whether we have managed as a Christian community to actually embed that [ecumenical ethos] in our daily work, I think we’ve not got there yet” (Paula, 13/8/2010). There are many potential reasons for the limited success in creating links to nurture members’ relationships with the development of the College’s ecumenical ethos.

Colin, reflecting on his role in Human Services believes that a “lot of people that may be at a different stage of their spiritual journey [and what] they tend to be is comfortable to be inconspicuous. They’ll not draw attention to themselves by asking questions about what is our ethos” (Colin, 2/6/2010). This perspective offers evidence that WBC’s community is fragmented, and this division has a detrimental influence on the College’s ethos.

Members of the WBC community identify that individual member’s beliefs and values frameworks influence the College’s ethos. Communities are a collective of individuals and as people interact, a process of synthesising beliefs and values occur. Throughout this synthesising process, certain dominant values and beliefs emerge, which typically are referred to as “how things are done”. Colin believes that ethos “is the description of ... how things are done” (Colin, 2/6/2010). Comprehending this knowledge of the way things are done is acquired through observations and experiences. With a lack of a unified understanding of “how things are done ecumenically”, College members individually interpret their observations and experiences, and establish independent understanding of how things are done ecumenically. Matthew, in some ways, refers to this when he considers that generally “ecumenical models don’t fit under any specific framework or ideals. They have no one who they’re accountable to” (Matthew, 11/6/2010). Indeed, for Matthew, the ecumenism model itself is the reason for creating the individual frameworks. This concept is reflected in a comment from Colin: “There are two levels. One is this is what some people think and believe how it’s done, and [on the other level] you’ve actually got reality, which is often a lot different. I think that notwithstanding, people here will operate within their individual frameworks” (Colin, 2/6/2010).

Furthermore, relationships between the sponsoring churches and WBC members have an additional effect on the ethos of the College. A limited experience of relationship building between the sponsoring churches and College members has affected the WBC's ethos. College members identify that the founding Executive Principal sought to orchestrate the relationship between the College and the sponsoring churches. The Executive Principal's relationship model relegated the churches to performing ceremonial roles, such as College year opening and closing ceremonies, and Easter and Christmas chapel services. Julie, who acted as the Personal Assistant to the founding Executive Principal, believes WBC's ethos at this time was "really [the Executive Principal's philosophy]. [He] created that [ethos] rather than the churches" (Julie, 20/9/2010). Paul amplifies Julie's opinion:

The ethos was quite oppressive because it was a very direct place under [the founding Executive Principal] and, although people were definitely affirmed and there was a positive feeling, it was very driven. A lot of that was undermined by a feeling of being personally just oppressed in the place itself, and so the ethos, the Christian ethos, the ecumenical ethos. Although the symbol of the way you saw it in terms of people being able to be affirmed and the Christian feeling that people cared, underneath it wasn't. It was taken away by the leadership itself. (Paul, 30/7/2010)

Paul believes that this restrictive practice has generated two contrasting paradigms that distort the development of an authentic ethos. Paul labels these two paradigms as "symbolic or ideological ethos" and "practical ethos" at the College (Paul, 30/7/2010). "The ideological ethos is what the churches have as a symbolic ethos. But the practical ethos comes out of management to a small degree and out of the interaction of teachers to a larger degree" (Paul, 30/7/2010). This concept of two paradigms within the College's ethos is juxtaposed with what Colin believes in the individual frameworks that people bring to the organisation and how individuals adapt within the organisation. The individual frameworks that members operate by may appear to be "acting

ecumenically” (Colin, 2/6/2010). However, it is questionable “whether it’s an ethos that is distinctively trying to be ecumenical” (Colin, 2/6/2010).

Most members of the College community consider the practical ethos, the relational lived experience, as having the major influence on the overall ecumenical ethos. The research theme of “collective of experiences” is generated from the category of “living relationships”.

5.3.2.4 Infusing artefacts

Artefacts are historical objects that gather meaning over time and are often spoken of as holding common meanings (Peterson & Deal, 1998). WBC’s artefacts are tangible objects that have inherent values, which represent the College’s ethos. However, what these values particularly are is unclear (see Section 5.3.2.2, Transmitting symbols and ceremonies). Some of the important artefacts at WBC are the four-metre-high courtyard Cross, sponsoring churches’ emblems, foyer Bible and College maze. According to Isaac, the College artefacts are not “driving the ethos of the College. It [is] trying to summarise what is the ethos. So it’s like a summary of what our ethos is, rather than the driving force” (Isaac, 26/7/2010).

As WBC’s artefacts gather meanings, they also generate divergent interpretations. As members of the College community interpreted artefacts differently, multiple understandings of what the artefacts represent developed. An example of such an artefact is the generation of the “Values and Expectations” documents and subsequent posters (Figure 5.3). Isaac identifies that prior to the College generating their “Values and Expectations”, the dictum that “define[d] ‘Our Values: Faith, Hope, Love, Courage, Community and Justice’ mean[t] different things to different

people” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Before this codification and production of the posters (Figure 5.3), College community members thought they “knew what the College was on about” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). There was an assumed understanding of what the College’s artefacts represented.

Indeed, the process of codification and production of the College’s “Values and Expectations” posters (Figure 5.3) introduced a challenge. Julie identifies the challenge in generating an ecumenical ethos, as it “was elusive; it seemed to continually change quite a lot” (Julie, 20/9/2010). With the changes in leadership, post-2005, WBC members formed a committee to re-evaluate the values and reasons for the existence of the College. “We didn’t actually have anything that was, certainly, in the public domain. There was nothing that was obvious, nothing clear, this is what we are on about” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). The generation of the “Values and Expectations” documents and resulting posters (Figure 5.3) became a visual explanation for members of the College community.

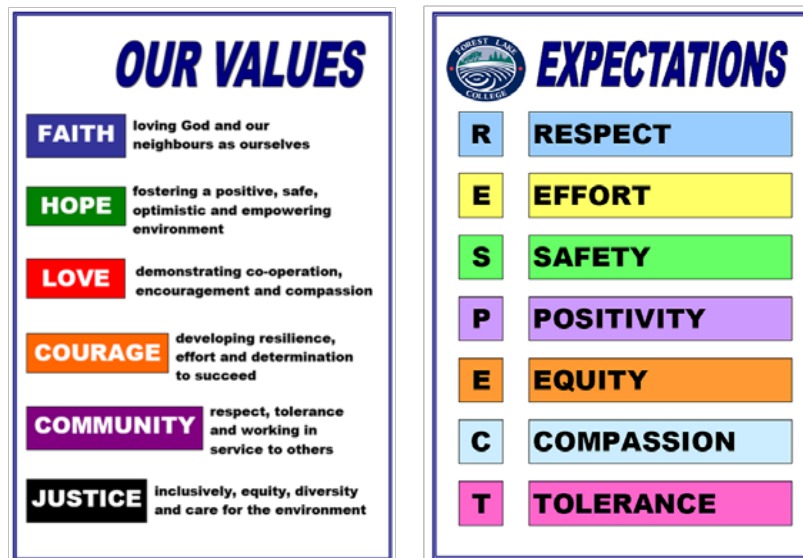


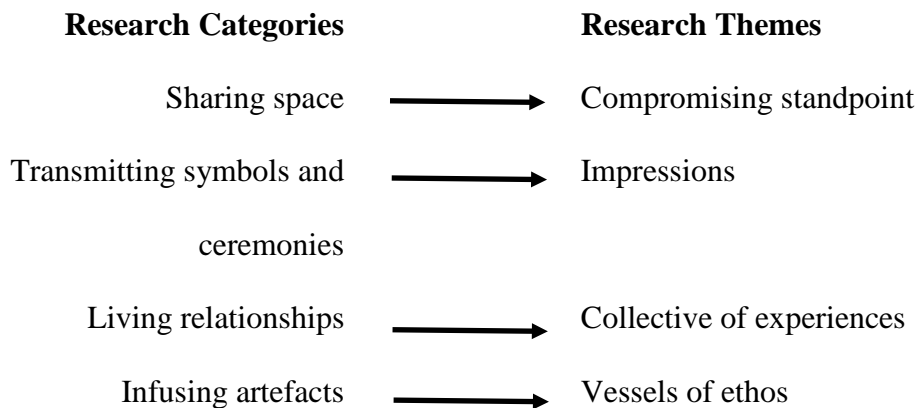
Figure 5.3. Values and Expectations

The posters were displayed in classrooms, libraries and administration buildings, and were included in promotional documents. “It gave us a common language to talk about the basics of what we stand for, the ethos of the College” (Isaac, 26/7/2010).

This seemingly small step of producing posters and documents introduced an agreed common set of values and expectations, which became a focus for connecting the members of WBC. “That’s why they exist. We lived and breathed it every day, but to actually put it on paper, to put it in writing was important and very powerful” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Consequently, creating these artefacts became a strategy to reflect the College’s ethos. The artefacts became a historical “vessel” for the shared values of the College. The research theme of “vessels of ethos” is generated from the category of “infusing artefacts”.

5.3.2.5 Sub-conclusion

A number of sub-conclusions may be generated from these perspectives. They are: “sharing space”, “transmitting symbols and ceremonies”, “living relationships” and “infusing artefacts”. Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of “compromising standpoint”, “impressions”, “collective of experiences” and “vessels of ethos”.



These research themes contribute in generating meanings from WBC members' understandings of the College's ethos.

5.4 The Third Specific Research Question:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?

5.4.1 The meaning of culture

An analysis of the participants' understandings of the concept "culture" generated two categories:

1. collection
2. connecting.

5.4.1.1 Collection

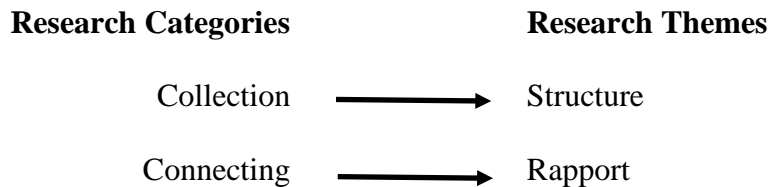
WBC's cultural norms are generated by the College members' interactions. (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Colin identifies that "culture is really just a grouping of the way things have been done, which might consist of rituals, it might consist of symbolism, it might just consist of practice, it might consist of customs" (Colin, 2/6/2010). The shared assumptions of the way things have been done are those "things that we consider worthwhile" (Paul, 30/7/2010). WBC members believe that the College's culture is formed by a systematic collection of positive events to form an acceptable structure in which to function. Indeed, the generation of the cultural structure gives meaning and worth to the community. The research theme of "structure" is generated from the category of "collection".

5.4.1.2 Connecting

Acceptable ways of doing things within a community involve negotiation between members (Schein, 1992a). The way members interact and relate to each other are a feature of culture. Colin identifies that culture is predominately describing interrelationships, as “all that we’re doing is describing how people relate to each other” (Colin, 2/6/2010). Paula illustrates this by stressing that culture “really comes from the way we interact with people” (Paula, 13/8/2010). How people interact with one another is often perceived as creating either a positive or a negative culture. What Matthew suggests is that “what you want is a culture that’s in line with the ethos and ... when that isn’t established ... through tradition or ... direct statements ... it has to be put together on the fly, which often then creates a negative culture” (Matthew, 11/6/2010). As traditions are created, they “can be part of your culture, just simply connecting to history is a part of culture. Practices and procedures, custom and practice, some of it inevitably becomes part of your culture” (Colin, 2/6/2010). The rapport that community members create together is an important aspect of culture. Primarily for WBC members, culture is the result of the interrelationship that members of the community have, which provides a rationale for the community’s behaviour. The research theme of “rapport” is generated from the category of “connecting”.

5.4.1.3 *Summary*

Analyses of the data have generated two research categories: “collection” and “connecting”. Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of “structure” and “rapport”.



These research themes contribute in generating meanings from WBC members’ understandings of culture. The next section explores how these conceptual meanings of culture relate specifically to WBC’s context.

5.4.2 **Woodland Brook College’s culture**

An analysis of the individual participants’ beliefs concerning culture generates a community narrative that offers a shared meaning of culture operating within the College.

5.4.2.1 *Connecting interrelationships*

Interrelationships occurring between community members, such as those of WBC, have an influence on the culture of such a community. Members of the College community identify how people relate to each other as being influential on the College’s culture. This is evident from Paula, who believes, “... culture can be I think, about the way we interact with people” (Paula, 13/8/2010). The practices of WBC members’ interactions become a driving force of the College’s culture. Although the forces that contribute to culture may originate from teachers and

students, they may also be generated from the leadership of the College community (Tuite, 2007).

The founding Executive Principal imposed his desired culture for the College. Isaac explains: “There’s a lot of key players and, whether they realise it or not, they’ve made an impression on the culture of the College. [The founding Executive Principal] obviously had a fairly important part to play in the highs and lows” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Much of the College’s culture is perceived as a result of decisions made by school leadership. Will offers an insightful observation from his reflection on various College principals:

When [the Head of College] took the reins [from post-foundational Executive Principal], I think the culture and the tone of the school changed, where people felt that he was more personable and people were happy having a conversation with him and feeling respected. I think the culture then changed to a situation now where [the new Executive Principal] is both Head of College and Executive Principal and I think she’s removed from that personal engagement with her staff. So, the culture has had peaks and troughs depending on who’s been driving it, and there’s been mixed messages here over my journey with the College. (Will, 11/6/2010)

Indeed, the quality of the relationships between leadership and other members of the College community has an influence on whether the culture is considered positive or negative. The research theme of “fundamental drivers” is generated from the category of “connecting interrelationships”.

5.4.2.2 Creating symbols, artefacts and customs

Communities create symbols, artefacts and customs to nurture cultural meaning. As communities create their symbols, artefacts and customs, they construct cultural “markers”. Cultural markers

are the accepted explicit and implicit encoding that is implanted as culture is nurtured from generation to generation (Stolp & Smith, 1995). WBC's symbols, artefacts and customs are key markers of its culture. College members experience WBC's culture through a shared meaning of those symbols, artefacts and customs. There are several prominent symbols and artefacts displayed throughout the College campuses. A prominent artefact is a stainless steel Cross, approximately four metres in height in the College's centre courtyard, with water flowing from and over the horizontal crossbeam. Additionally, the symbols of the Uniting Church and Anglican Church crests are mounted over the courtyard focusing on the Cross. The College crest and motto of "living faith" and "living water" have been promoted as College symbols of meaning, as the College sought to connect Christian faith with the wider community of Woodland Brook. This motto is a play on the land developer's motto for the newly establishing community at the time. It aimed to link the idea of "living woodland" and "water for life". There is a clear desire from the founding leaders' vision for the College to connect with the Woodland Brook community. "The vision and the commitment of the College's significant decision-makers to build up God's kingdom in Woodland Brook and surrounds by providing Christian witness through the vehicle of high quality, holistic education" (*Prospectus* circa 1999). The use of sharing and adapting symbols and artefacts to reflect the Woodland Brook community is evident. Early College Year Book publications identify "Woodland Brook College [as] a landmark development both for the Woodland Brook community and for the Uniting and Anglican churches – the first time the two churches had formed a partnership to operate a school together" (Year Book 2003). Later Year Books focus more on the College and less on the wider Woodland Brook community. *Prospectus* (approximately 2005–07), identify Christian values, rather than the joint Uniting and Anglican churches' values. These documents also highlight a difficulty that

the two churches developed in creating a shared understanding of symbols, artefacts and customs. Colin explains:

The mixture of different denominations and beliefs that are associated with those [symbols, artefacts and rituals is] being reflected in different ways. So, then we had a culture, which was suggesting that these rituals, these symbols, or these artefacts that exist around the place meant different things ... there's a bit of inbuilt tension" (Colin, 2/6/2010).

Indeed, with the creation of the College's cultural markers, difficulties exist in creating a shared ecumenical cultural meaning for the College's symbols, artefacts and customs. The research theme of "markers" is generated from the category of "creating symbols, artefacts and customs".

5.4.2.3 Conflicting expressions of worship

Creating a shared practice of Christian worship is important for an ecumenical culture. Members of the College identify the challenges the College community encounters in creating a shared practice of Christian worship. The difficulty in creating an ecumenical practice of worship in the Chapel services is a crucial issue in the development of WBC's culture. Terry, one of the chaplains, identifies the challenge he faced when coming to WBC. "[I]t was almost just like there was no overlap between the two [Anglican and Uniting churches]" (Terry, 22/3/2010). Terry believed there needed to be a "coming together of the two churches through worship" (Terry, 22/3/2010). He considered this united expression of worship to be beneficial for the WBC community. Therefore, Terry sought to change the format by "having a single Chapel service and I think [changing] that has helped build a sense of unity across the campus" (Terry, 22/3/2010). As the chaplain, Terry intentionally sought to create a unified Christian community through the introduction of a mix of worship traditions from both the Uniting and Anglican

churches. However, Terry's attempts were not considered successful. College members believe that the historical differences in worship were such that a harmonisation of both traditions to generate an acceptable single liturgy was not possible.

The College's history illustrates that the chaplains from the sponsoring churches introduced their own interpretation and expectations of Christian worship for the WBC community. Isaac, who is a member of the Anglican Church, explains:

The Uniting Church had a very positive influence on our kids by the style of worship that they brought. I think the Anglican type [of] service has a very powerful message, but both just do it in a different way. It's a different style that suits different people I guess.
(Isaac, 26/7/2010)

Julie, who is also an Anglican, expresses her view, "The Uniting Church would be much more interested in celebration through song and praise, where the Anglicans had more of an emphasis on celebration through the *Eucharist*" (Julie, 20/9/2010). The differences between the two churches' traditions of worship have created a challenge in forming a unified expression of Christian worship. According to Julie, because the churches' "core centres ... [are] different, there is a struggle" (Julie, 20/9/2010). The large turnover of chaplains over the years is illustrative of the tension between the two churches concerning the expression of Christian worship at WBC. Paula, who is a member of both churches, offers an explanation:

I think they [churches] don't always fit well together. I think there are certain ways of being Anglican or being Uniting that just don't fit. There is no overlap, and communion is one of those areas where there's not a lot of overlap between the two. (Paula, 13/8/2010)

Not surprisingly, College members hold contrasting perspectives concerning this phenomenon:

"[O]ne church will say: 'You need to be saying these sort of things about baptism and

communion’, the other one says: ‘Naaah it’s okay. That’s all cool. When they’re old enough, they [students] will make their own decisions’” (Paula, 13/8/2010).

Julie offers an explanation for the tension: “There was no round table conscious decision about what we’re going to pull from where and have we got this balanced or anything like that correct, the conversations never happened and that’s reflected in the lack of documentation” (Julie, 20/9/2010). Lamentably, the sponsoring churches’ laissez-faire approach to the development of a structure of Christian worship at WBC has created and continues to create tension and confusion for the College community.

Members of the College community have interpreted the lack of planning for an appropriate ecumenical worship as an example of discord between the sponsoring churches. Fundamentally, the churches appear to have competing perspectives on what constitutes as ecumenical Christian worship. The research theme of “competing positions” is generated from the category of “conflicting expressions of worship”.

5.4.2.4 Shifting contexts

Communities and organisations seek to create a culture that is consistent with their beliefs and vision. Members of WBC community suggest that the College leadership failed to deliberately nurture a particular College culture. It simply evolved. Julie illustrates this well: “I think this hybrid and hosh-posh was the result of evolution within this joint church venture” (Julie, 20/9/2010). Indeed, there appears to be no conscious decision by the churches and leadership to create a desired ecumenical culture.

Furthermore, members of the College community believe that the reason for the absence of an ecumenical culture was because of fear. Paula believes that under the founding Executive Principal's leadership, "[the] culture then was fearful. [Staff] were a very hurt group. [As] a group of people, [they] had been disempowered professionally [and] emotionally" (Paula, 13/8/2010). Paul confirms this opinion. He believed that the founding Executive Principal, created "a culture of fear" (Paul, 30/7/2010). Nevertheless, as the founding Executive Principal's Personal Assistant, Julie claims: "I don't even think that it [culture] was 100% [the founding Executive Principal] either. The culture that developed here, I think, it just all happened" (Julie, 20/9/2010). The abrupt departure of the founding Executive Principal in 2005 left the College disoriented. WBC's members entered a period when the College lacked clarity about its mission. Key staff left the College and the new staff who replaced them were unable to address the problem. A new leadership team, under the directions of the newly appointed Executive Principal, endeavoured to address the College's culture.

This new leadership attempted to change the College's culture by criticising the existing culture. They described the status quo as a "State School culture". Such an initiative became the rationale to justify a change of culture. Isaac explains: "There have been some comments recently made that ... we've moved from a 'State School model to an Independent School model' and that's a lot to do with culture" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Additionally, Paul insists:

I am actually not sure what she [new Executive Principal] means by it. [When] I've heard her say the comment, I said, "I'm not quite sure what you mean by that because I thought that at the time, we had always had a private school culture." It's her understanding of what a private school culture is and that is limited. (Paul, 30/7/2010)

The College community believed that the new leadership aimed to change the culture from one independent school style to another. Isaac explains this story:

We're moving to a different Independent School model that's slightly different. But I think that's because the people at the top are not used to the type of school we used to be and they're trying to change it to something they're used to. (Isaac, 26/7/2010)

Indeed, members of the College community consider that the culture is evolving to one that is reflecting the current senior leadership's expectations.

Members of the College community believe there has been a new policy to encourage the Anglican Church's influence in the College at the expense of the Uniting Church's. In support of this assertion, Colin comments: "We've seen some of those artefacts, some of those traditions from the Uniting side progressively diminish and become interpreted from an Anglican tradition" (Colin, 2/6/2010). The College has developed "more of an Anglican mindset rather than a broad Christian mindset" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Moreover, in a conversation with the Anglican Archbishop, Paula explains this aspiration for an increased Anglican identity. "The Archbishop said: 'We will continue to have Anglican schools because that's where you grow young Anglicans'" (Paula, 13/8/2010).

College members confirm that the College is no longer pursuing an ecumenical culture. Colin explains: "I think there will be a very overt shift to make us a single uni-culture, which will be Anglican. The ecumenical culture is actually somewhat perceived to be threatening to a single, in this case Anglican culture" (Colin, 2/6/2010). The new leadership has negatively associated the ecumenical culture with the founding Executive Principal's authoritarian leadership style.

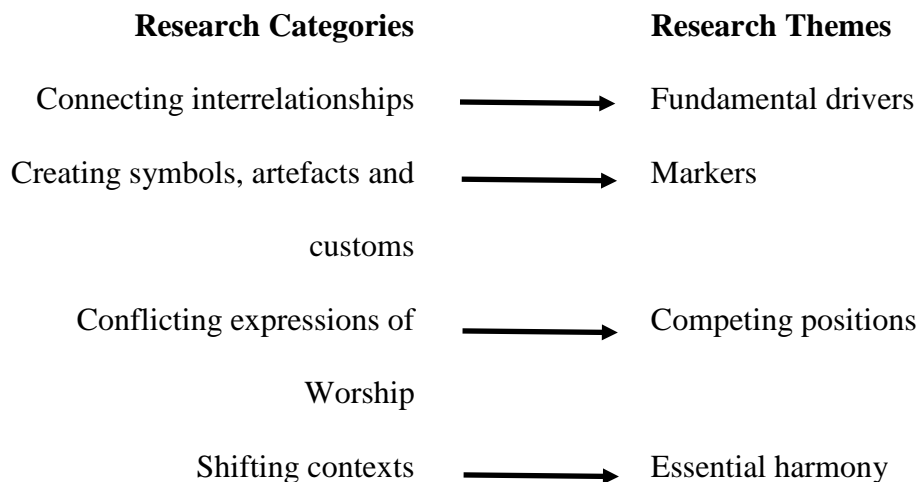
Accordingly, College members determine that the past culture has wrongfully been labelled, in

an attempt to detach the College from the founding Executive Principal’s tenure. Not surprisingly, the introduction of a distinctively Anglican culture conflicts with the College’s ecumenical beliefs and vision.

Indeed, there is a lack of cultural harmony within the College, which is inconsistent with the College’s ecumenical foundations. The research theme of “essential harmony” is generated from the category of “shifting contexts”.

5.4.2.5 Sub-conclusion

A number of sub-conclusions may be generated from these perspectives. They are: “connecting inter-relationships”, “creating symbols, artefacts and customs”, “conflicting expressions of worship” and “shifting contexts”. Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of “fundamental drivers”, “markers”, “competing positions” and “essential harmony”.



These research themes contribute in generating meanings from College members’ understandings of the College’s culture.

5.5 The Fourth Specific Research Question:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?

5.5.1 The meaning of climate

An analysis of the participants' understandings of the concept "climate" generated two categories:

1. feelings
2. seasons.

5.5.1.1 Feelings

The concept of climate is understood as a feeling, tone or type of a community (Stolp & Smith, 1995). Members of WBC's community identify climate as a way of "feeling" the College's peculiar environment. Mary believes climate "relates to the impact on the people involved in what's going on. How they feel working within that environment, how they feel as part of that environment. So ... that's the climate, it's the general feel of what's happening" (Mary, 2/6/2010).

Attitudes that members of the community express in the community influence the feeling of the environment. As a chaplain, Terry often addresses the complexity of reacting to and influencing climate. Terry thinks "[this] has a lot to do with the attitudes of the individual staff ... I guess the individual attitudes really set the climate" (Terry, 22/3/2010). Other members of the College community confirm Terry's views. Paul believes: "Climate does reflect very much on what's

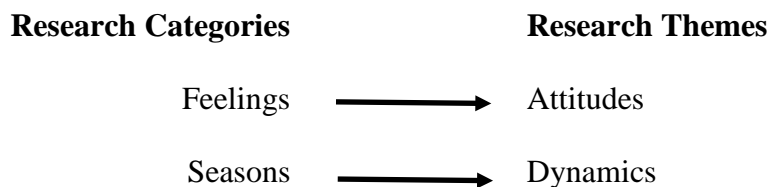
happened over time. It is also, I think, related to the staff and the way they feel” (Paul, 30/7/2010). Consequently, for WBC members, climate is the feeling of the community generated from its members’ attitudes to the environment. The research theme of “attitudes” is generated from the category of “feelings”.

5.5.1.2 Seasons

Communities are never static. The dynamics change as members leave and new members enter. This process has an influence on climate. Members of WBC’s community liken this process to the seasons of life. Colin understands climate this way: “We’re going through seasons and everything has its seasons, just as life does” (Colin, 2/6/2010). The daily dynamic of the community affects the climate of the community. It “is that everyday, sort of happening like the seasons, things always change” (Paula, 13/8/2010). Consequently, for WBC members, climate is perceived as dynamic, likened to the cycle of the seasons. The research theme of “dynamics” is generated from the category of “seasons”.

5.5.1.3 Summary

Analyses of the data have generated two research categories: “feelings” and “seasons”. Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of “attitudes” and “dynamics”.



These research themes contribute in generating meanings from WBC members' understandings of climate. The next section explores how these conceptual meanings of climate relate specifically to WBC's context.

5.5.2 Woodland Brook College's climate

An analysis of the individual participants' beliefs concerning climate generates a community narrative that offers a shared meaning of climate operating within the College.

5.5.2.1 Creating connectedness

Community members at WBC identify that their "connectedness" influences the climate of the College. Part of being a Christian community creates a sense of spiritual connectedness. Acting as a Christian community "is having that sense of spiritual connectedness that we are God's people here" (Terry, 22/3/2010). As a chaplain, Terry relates his deliberate attempt to establish spiritual connectedness for teachers, staff and students:

I tried to provide a daily devotion at the beginning of each day. I intentionally tried to make it the first email that people got, so hopefully they'd look at it, open it, read it perhaps, and then have a better attitude to connect with people for the rest of the day. (Terry, 22/3/2010)

Spiritual connectedness is an important contribution towards growing the College's climate.

Developing spiritual relationships through the pastoral care program for students and staff is an important expression in nurturing the College's climate. Terry believes that "the Home Groups are really important for setting the whole climate of the College" (Terry, 22/3/2010). Indeed,

Home Group teachers engage with spiritual connectedness by delivering the pastoral care program. This, in turn, influences the climate of the College.

However, members of the WBC community identify the challenges they face in implementing the College's pastoral care program. Mary believes that the quality of pastoral care has deteriorated: "... there is a degeneration in the pastoral life within the school, not only from staff to students, but management to staff" (Mary, 2/6/2010). Terry confirms this opinion: "... we've taken a couple of first steps in that journey, but there's a long way to go to lock in that sense of being a pastoral community, who care for each other" (Terry, 22/3/2010). From her position in senior leadership, Paula believes that the pastoral care program over-dependes on the initiative of individuals: "... we are not well resourced at this point. We rely here on the good will of people like yourself to step in, which can be a huge personal cost too" (Paula, 13/8/2010). WBC members believe that, as a College community, we "struggle" (Paul, 30/7/2010), pastorally to promote spiritual connectedness. The research theme of "struggle" is generated from the category of "creating connectedness".

5.5.2.2 Controlling interactions

College leadership micro-manages the College. Such behaviours contribute to low morale among staff. Not surprisingly, low morale influences the climate of the College. Paul explains: "[T]hey [leadership] would state, and they regularly [try to enforce] their desired climate, what [leadership believe] is important" (Paul, 30/7/2010). Leaders regularly initiate this through staff briefings and electronic communications.

Staff dialogue is a process that is rarely engaged in. Mary believes: “It’s very much a case of, I am the leader, I am the boss, this is what’s going to happen” (Mary, 2/6/2010). Notwithstanding the low morale of staff, teaching staff conversely strengthen each other collegially. Paul clarifies: “[Leadership’s objectives] are determined by where teachers are at, when teachers believe in what is actually [being] stated” (Paul, 30/7/2010). Consequently, leadership’s success in influencing the College’s climate is dependent on staff, in particular teachers, accepting leadership’s initiatives.

WBC members believe that leadership’s attempts to control the climate through micro-management are ineffective. Indeed, staff reactions generate a challenge to establishing a unifying climate. Matthew identifies that the College’s climate is influenced by “everyone deciding their own way and not determined by leadership” (Matthew, 11/6/2010). Will adds: “I think we’re not quite there yet [as a Christian community], as the climate does change with new aspects of [leadership’s] operational plan” (Will, 11/6/2010). Subsequently, there is a view that the challenges to generate a unifying climate evolved as the College increased in numbers.

There is a view that, as the College grew, leadership responded by imposing multiple accountability strategies. Staff believed they were not trusted by College leadership. Isaac, reflecting on his long association with the College, explains his experience of this climate:

It’s a fairly broad statement but, in the early days, we were able to have ceremonies and the day-to-day running of the College was tight. Not a lot went really wrong because we were able to steer it in the direction we wanted to steer it in, it was a very positive thing. Whereas, when it started to get larger, with so many extra people involved in the running of the place, it was a complex structure; that is, we’ve become reactionary in that, if

something goes wrong, we react to it rather than steering it in the first place. (Isaac, 26/7/2010)

As leadership developed a reactionary approach to daily issues, staff, particularly teachers, reacted negatively, which created a resistive spirit.

This resistive spirit influenced perception from College members of being devalued. Will identifies there have been limited opportunities where staff feel valued within the College community: “I think there’ve only been limited occasions where staff truly feel valued, as contributing to the College, rather than having things imposed on them or feeling like they’re under scrutiny all the time” (Will, 11/6/2010). Other WBC members identify similar experiences. In an emphatic manner, Mary tells of the staff’s perception in being devalued: “Staff are going around saying, ‘so they don’t care about us,’ ... and this is devaluing and negative to the day-to-day climate” (Mary, 2/6/2010). In a critically reflective manner, Colin believes that there is a lack of consistency between espoused values and experienced values. This incongruency is an explanation for staff believing they are devalued:

I think we have shifts in stating the values, which we move to the climate in terms of what we are espousing to do, how we operate, but I don’t believe that the practices are aligned with and progressing at the same rate. That, on the one hand, we will say we will operate on these set of values but, in actual fact, we don’t. At a variety of levels, we talk about the key values of love and compassion and acceptance and forgiveness, and yet [this is] probably one of the more unforgiving organisations I’ve ever worked in. (Colin, 2/6/2010)

Consequently, the more the leadership imposes an authoritative climate on the College, the more staff feel powerless and devalued. The research theme of “power” is generated from the category of “controlling interactions”.

5.5.2.3 Accepting constant change

Members of WBC's community believe the constant changes are unsettling and have generated a negative climate. Terry believes that "teachers may be a bit more resistant to what is going on ... because there's always been change since I've arrived" (Terry, 22/3/2010). Teacher resistance to the changes occurring has become a feature of the College's climate. Furthermore, Mary identifies that there is a level of mistrust between staff, as the climate is "very unsettled day to day. There is a level of mistrust amongst staff that impacts on day-to-day activities, day-to-day decisions that are made" (Mary, 2/6/2010). Other members of the community identify a climatic shift occurring:

I think it [climate] has shifted from the climate when I first started, from fear and the abuse of power in a very autocratic and dictatorial manner to an attempt to be far more open, but I think we still have some difficulties with what we say and what we do. (Isaac, 26/7/2010)

There is an additional view from members of the College community that the constant change has become the modus operandi for the College. Members believe that the College operates at an excessive pace, which is detrimental to the climate. This is conveyed by Matthew: "[T]he climate here I would say is one of ... a busy harassive [sic] type climate" (Matthew, 11/6/2010).

Similarly, Gaby believes the climate as "everybody is just tight, everybody's just, like 'flat-strap' and we've got to understand that and we might think that we're going a hundred and ten miles an hour, but so is everybody else" (Gaby, 21/6/2010).

Consequently, there is the view that the constant change is no longer solely an experience of climate, but a characteristic of the College's culture. As a result, WBC members consider that the College's climate is unsettling. The research theme of "unsettled" is generated from the category of "accepting constant change".

5.5.2.4 Failing church influence

WBC community members consider the sponsoring churches' influence on the College's climate as ineffective. WBC members consider the College Board members to be key representatives of the two churches. They believe the Board fails to communicate adequately to staff, which generates a deleterious influence on the College climate. Will, who is a long-term staff member in a senior role at the College and has seen many changes in Board membership, explains the lack of communication: "I think they [Board members] are a little too removed from the day-to-day operation" (Will, 11/6/2010). The lack of communication between the Board, as the churches' key representatives, and the WBC community suggests to members that the churches are removed and have little interest in the College community. Isaac conveys this in his comment: "I've always seen the Board as being very distant to the operational side of the College, always distant. I don't know if they have been or if that was what was intended" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). At a structural level, Mary believes that the College Board is incapable of engaging with the College community members other than the CEO (Executive Principal):

To be perfectly honest, at the moment, I don't think it [Board] has the mechanism to address it [College community], because the structure of the Board is still basically being unapproachable and unreachable by the general staff and having to still go through the [Executive Principal] who blocks it, blocks things from changing. The [Board] members haven't changed, but staff will say: "What is the point? I won't even bother, because I am only going to get hauled upstairs and spoken to." (Mary, 2/6/2010)

Subsequently, members of the College community have formed an opinion that the churches show little interest in engaging with the College community.

Furthermore, there is a belief that the sponsoring churches' vision for the College, to be "Church" for the community at Woodland Brook, has failed. College members believe that this is due to a lack of engagement from the churches within the daily activities at WBC. Will explains:

[I]f we talk [about] the vision that the churches would like us to be, the way that our community connects with the [Woodland Brook community], then I think we need to have more of a presence of our churches within our school. (Will, 11/6/2010)

WBC members are unsure what the "more of a presence" would be, although there is a shared opinion that the churches need to engage more actively with the community. Will believes:

I just think we're a little bit disconnected at the operational level. At the management level there may well be more links and opportunities but, at the operational level, I think we're just a little bit adjunct. (Will, 11/6/2010)

The WBC members' opinion is that the sponsoring churches are removed from the daily life and, therefore, their influence on the College's climate is inconsequential. The research theme of "removed" is generated from the category of "failing church influence".

5.5.2.5 Sub-conclusion

A number of sub-conclusions maybe generated from these perspectives. They are: "creating connectedness", "controlling interactions", "accepting constant change" and "failing church

influence”. Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of “struggle”, “discord”, “unsettled” and “removed”.

Research Categories		Research Themes
Creating connectedness	→	Struggle
Controlling interactions	→	Power
Accepting constant change	→	Unsettled
Failing church influence	→	Removed

These research themes contribute in generating meanings from College members’ understandings of the College’s climate.

5.6 The Fifth Specific Research Question:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?

5.6.1 The meaning of leadership

An analysis of the participants’ understandings of the concept “leadership” generated two categories:

1. styles
2. modelling.

5.6.1.1 Styles

There are various conceptualisations of “leadership”. Current research undertaken on school leadership suggests that the “behaviour” of leaders is considered a more appropriate conceptualisation than the traditional “style” of leaders (Komives et al., 2013). Notwithstanding,

WBC's members identify leadership with the traditional conceptualisation of styles. Indeed, community members identify two complementary styles of leadership. The styles of "servant" and "relational" leadership are considered appropriate for an ecumenical school.

Members of WBC's community consider that for an ecumenical school the leadership style of "servanthood" aligns with biblical principles. Isaac explains: "Servant leadership is something that I think is in step with what our Christian values [are] all about" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Other members of the College community confirm Isaac's views. Colin believes: "Good leadership is always, and I believe the biblical model, sacrificial servant leadership, [which] is about leading for the good of the group" (Colin, 2/6/2010). Furthermore, Isaac identifies that "the idea of servant leadership is great if people really understand what that means. [It] needs to be relational" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Members of WBC's community consider the concept style of servanthood (servant-relational) leadership as an appropriate form of leadership for WBC's community. The research theme of "servanthood" is generated from the category of "styles".

5.6.1.2 Modelling

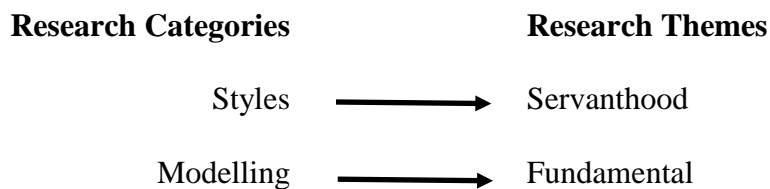
Leadership qualities are often taught through the processes of modelling. Research undertaken by Kouzes and Posner (1995) identified "modelling the way" (p. 12) as an effective leadership behaviour. Members of WBC's community identify that the qualities of leadership ought to be taught by means of modelling. Matthew considers: "For me I find it hard to disconnect the leadership from the modelling structure because, to me, in the end, it determines everything that's possible, viable within the [College]" (Matthew, 11/6/2010). Modelling the qualities of leadership is considered beneficial. Mary explains: "Setting examples, setting up the framework

... to work in and the people who are setting it up, while they may be visionaries, they've got to be able to lead by example" (Mary, 2/6/2010). Genuinely nurturing the College's culture through leaders modelling the desired values and behaviours is considered fundamental. Colin explains: "A part of the culture is [to] set the fundamentals, because what they [leadership] say and what they do as individuals [will reflect] a very different leadership model" (Colin, 2/6/2010). Members of WBC's community consider modelling leadership qualities as a fundamental responsibility of being a leader. The research theme of "fundamental" is generated from the category of "modelling".

5.6.1.3 Summary

Analyses of the data have generated two research categories: "styles" and "modelling".

Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of "servanthood" and "fundamental".



These research themes contribute in generating meanings from WBC members' understandings of leadership. The next section explores how these conceptual meanings of leadership relate specifically to WBC's context.

5.6.2 Woodland Brook College's leadership

An analysis of the individual participants' beliefs concerning leadership generates a community narrative that offers a shared meaning of leadership operating within the College.

5.6.2.1 Understanding roles

People in leadership usually introduce strategies of managing the conduct of the members of the community. Members of WBC's community identify that leaders of the College integrate their role of both managing and leading the College community. For this reason, Julie identifies: "You can have a great leader, [however, they are] not necessarily a great manager" (Julie, 20/9/2010).

There is a view that managing the community overshadows leading the College community.

Matthew explains: "I don't actually believe this place currently is being led. I believe it's managed with a capital 'M', [which] comes down to ... vision" (Matthew, 11/6/2010).

Consequently, the distinction between leading and managing invites clarification:

I don't believe that [ecumenical leadership] has been defined in a manner that allows people to know what they are heading towards. So, we've got these [roles in a] vacuum, and people lead or exercise influence to achieve things, which may not necessarily be what we're seeking to achieve. (Colin, 2/6/2010)

Members of WBC's community express the opinion that middle management ought to be managing the College, where senior leadership ought to be leading and less involved in managing the College. Despite College members' opinion that Board members (being the churches' representatives) ought to become more visible in the daily life of the College, there is a concern that leadership's micro-management is the basis of mistrust. Paula explains: "At the

moment the small 'I' leadership [managing] is being delivered by the large 'L' leaders, which is creating mistrust" (Paula, 13/8/2010). For this reason, Isaac believes:

Senior leadership are the leadership, we should be leading the College and middle management managing the College and together that means that you've got to have really good communication, you've got to have a common direction and you have to have trust in each other. (Isaac, 26/7/2010)

Mistrust between middle management and senior leadership is exemplified by Mary: "From my experience, the biggest impact is that the leadership has been separated from the people" (Mary, 2/6/2010). Colin's identification of a "vacuum", due to the lack of a defined ecumenical leadership style, to some extent has generated this "mistrust". Mary believes: "None of the leaders at senior management level have [built trust with] ... middle managers to form any sort of relational leadership" (Mary, 2/6/2010). Indeed, members of WBC's community believe that leadership has gravitated towards managing the College at the expense of leading, which has introduced misunderstandings of roles. The research theme of "misunderstood" is generated from the category of "understanding roles".

5.6.2.2 Forcing style

The adopted behaviours of leadership have a considerable influence on the ethos, culture and climate of a community. Members of WBC's community believe that autocratic leadership at the College has had deleterious influences on the College's morale. WBC members have a shared opinion that the autocratic leadership adopted by the founding Executive Principal was detrimental to the development of the College. Paul, upon reflection, identifies: "This school has a history of being very top end driven, more so when [the founding Executive Principal] was here. So everything was determined by senior leadership then and really people had very little

input” (Paul, 30/7/2010). Indeed, there is also an opinion that leading by example was reflected through “leading by bullying” (Mary, 2/6/2010). Nevertheless, Mary believes the “initial leadership that was here very much spoke of the philosophy or the idea of working together and working as an ecumenical group, but the leadership was very autocratic” (Mary, 2/6/2010). This behaviour is explained by Colin:

I believe that his [the founding Executive Principal] own view around his spirituality was something he put on to achieve something specific. This shifted depending on which church was in front of him. I didn’t have a sense that it was some deeper belief that he had actually worked through. I think he adopted it because it was beneficial to adopt it in his style of leading. (Colin, 2/6/2010)

Consequently, ecumenism as the basis of the College’s culture is a façade. Not surprisingly, staff challenge leadership’s policy as “hollow” rhetoric.

The tone of leadership changed when the founding Executive Principal departed and the new Executive Principal took responsibility in 2005. Members of the College community identify an initial openness and dialogue with the new Executive Principal. However, College members currently believe that the new Executive Principal exercises leadership autocratically. Mary explains: “When the changes in leadership happened, leadership again was very forceful” (Mary, 2/6/2010). Paul contrasts the leadership behaviours of the two Executive Principals:

The main distinguishing difference between the two leadership styles was that, although both of them were driven from the top, at least if you disagree with [the new Executive Principal], in terms of what she says, she is at least open enough to meet with you and you can tell it straight to her face and she will at least take it on board to some degree, depending upon what she thinks of it personally. Whereas [the founding Executive Principal] would never consider even talking to you about [sic]. He would absolutely tear you to shreds ... So, in that sense, it’s still a very driven [autocratic] leadership, but

there's not quite the oppressive aspect to it and there's a little more freedom in terms of middle management. (Paul, 30/7/2010)

Indeed, members of WBC's community perceive that over the history of the College, leaders have adopted a forceful autocratic leadership. The research theme of "forcefulness" is generated from the category of "forcing style".

5.6.2.3 Accommodating differences

Leadership in ecumenical church schools requires leaders to operate within divergent contexts. The ecumenical context at WBC invites substantial accommodation in celebrating the different heritages of the Anglican and Uniting churches. Therefore, members of WBC's community identify the need for the College leadership to be open to difference and to honour the diversity of the sponsoring churches' doctrines, beliefs, practices and traditions. Colin identifies the need for leadership to accommodate this difference and diversity:

If people can't by the very nature of differences come together to expand positively, share where we come from in our journeys, why I value what I value, why somebody else values something different, then we will never truly be ecumenical. (Colin, 2/6/2010)

WBC members believe that the College's leadership has been unable to accommodate the differences and diversity. Consequently, the College's leadership is unable to develop an "ecumenical style" of leadership that accommodates differences and diversity without feeling threatened. Julie comments on this conclusion:

There is always a bit of a, not a struggle, but a kind of a holding pattern. We're a joint venture here and we're not this and we're not that so you're not really getting a particular leadership that is ecumenical ... [The College's] ecumenical leadership I don't think to this point has been particularly strong. (Julie, 20/9/2010)

Members of WBC's community identify the need for a unique style of ecumenical leadership. Questioning the initial model and style of leadership, Mary explains: "It [leadership model] was set up because, when they made an ecumenical school, they set it up as a CEO [Executive Principal] at the top, and that model of leadership has stuck throughout the years" (Mary, 2/6/2010). However, a "servant-relational" style of leadership is considered more beneficial for an ecumenical context:

There needs to be more of a coming down to a lower level leadership in terms of building some sort of relationships with staff. At the moment, there's an enforced respect because this is the CEO [Executive Principal]. This, this is the senior management. You will respect them and respect their decisions, but there is no earned [sic] respect. (Mary, 2/6/2010)

WBC members consider the servanthood (servant-relational) leadership style to be appropriate for College leaders. However, this has not occurred because the very ecumenical nature of the College impedes its development. Terry explains this opinion:

I think that's probably been one of the big challenges for management of [the] College, because each church has its own structures and its own accountabilities and styles of doing leadership; and from what I know of the history of this place in a sense neither got that involved in creating the ecumenical setting as perhaps they should have, which in terms of leadership has led to some of the problems. (Terry, 22/3/2010)

Consequently, WBC members consider that there is a need for the creation of a unique style of servanthood leadership for a context such as an ecumenical school. The research theme of "uniqueness" is generated from the category of "accommodating differences".

5.6.2.4 Compelling influence

The vision or mission of a church community presupposes a compelling influence on leadership. Members of WBC's community consider the governing body, the sponsoring churches, to be ineffective in influencing the leadership of the College. In her role of senior leadership, Paula has a distinctive insight into the churches' involvement. She explains: "I don't know that I've seen a lot of church involvement; I think, in terms of leadership within the school [church involvement], it is not very strong here" (Paula, 13/8/2010).

This opinion is confirmed by Gabby, a middle manager: "... as for the churches I couldn't say they do anything really to help in that situation [leadership style]. What would they know, really?" (Gaby, 21/6/2010). There is a view that the churches have not contributed to developing an ecumenical leadership style within the College. Colin conveys this when he identifies his first impressions when coming to WBC: "I don't think the churches contributed to the leadership and I don't understand why that is" (Colin, 2/6/2010). This perspective is confirmed by Matthew: "I don't know what they've [churches] done, I don't really know what has occurred of any significance. But it [leadership] needs strong[er] direction. It needs to know where it's going and the churches don't do that" (Matthew, 11/6/2010). There is an overwhelming view that the sponsoring churches exercise minimal influence in developing an "ecumenical leadership style".

WBC members consider that the churches should ensure increased accountability from leadership. College members identified the need for "a mentoring program for leaders and potential leaders and this is something the churches should be doing, but it doesn't happen" (Mary, 2/6/2010). Gaby believes that the churches rarely engage with staff: "They always rely on

senior management people to let them know who their next in line sort of are, rather than going straight to the source themselves” (Gaby, 21/6/2010). Paula confirms this opinion:

There’s a lot of talk around, for example [the new Executive Principal] talked about the fact that those people [potential leaders] could be trained and empowered. I don’t think it’s been there; I mean, I don’t know about you, but my observations would suggest that it’s not there and this is perhaps just to please the churches. (Paula, 13/8/2010)

The sponsoring churches’ ineffective influence in developing an ecumenical leadership style for the College has impeded the establishment of an authentic ecumenical agency of the churches.

Terry conceptualises the problem: “[The ecumenical leadership style] needed an active relationship involved in the College from both churches so that people had some sense that leadership had really nussed out what it meant to be ecumenical” (Terry, 22/3/2010). Indeed,

WBC members consider that the sponsoring churches are ineffective in developing an ecumenical leadership culture for the College. The research theme of “ineffective” is generated from the category of “compelling influence”.

5.6.2.5 Sub-conclusion

A number of sub-conclusions maybe generated from these perspectives. They are:

“understanding roles”, “forcing style”, “accommodating differences” and “compelling influence”. Underpinning these research categories are the generated research themes of “misunderstood”, “forcefulness”, “uniqueness” and “ineffective”.

Research Categories		Research Themes
Understanding roles	—————>	Misunderstood
Forcing style	—————>	Forcefulness
Accommodating differences	—————>	Uniqueness
Compelling influence	—————>	Ineffective

These research themes contribute in generating meanings from College members' understandings of the College's leadership.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter identifies a number of new understandings generated from the research categories, leading to the research themes, which are tabulated in Table 5.2, Research Categories to Research Themes.

Table 5.2
Research Categories to Research Themes

Specific Research Question	Focus Questions	Research Categories	Research Themes
How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?	What does ecumenism mean?	Common end (Section 5.2.1.1)	→ Collaboration
		Worship (Section 5.2.1.2)	→ Shared worship
	What does ecumenism mean at Woodland Brook College?	Building relationships (Section 5.2.2.1)	→ Undefined
		Collective frameworks (Section 5.2.2.2)	→ Individualism
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?	What does ethos mean?	Right intention (Section 5.3.1.1)	→ Attitude
		Values (Section 5.3.1.2)	→ Application
	What does ethos mean at Woodland Brook College?	Sharing space (Section 5.3.2.1)	→ Compromising standpoint
		Transmitting symbols and ceremonies (Section 5.3.2.2)	→ Impressions
		Living relationships (Section 5.3.2.3)	→ Collective of experiences
		Infusing artefacts (Section 5.3.2.4)	→ Vessels of ethos

Specific Research Question	Focus Questions	Research Categories	Research Themes
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?	What does culture mean?	Collection (Section 5.4.1.1)	→ Structure
		Connecting (Section 5.4.1.2)	→ Rapport
	What does culture mean at Woodland Brook College?	Connecting interrelationships (Section 5.4.2.1)	→ Fundamental drivers
		Creating symbols, artefacts and customs (Section 5.4.2.2)	→ Markers
		Conflicting expressions of worship (Section 5.4.2.3)	→ Competing positions
		Shifting contexts (Section 5.4.2.4)	→ Essential harmony
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?	What does climate mean?	Feeling (Section 5.5.1.1)	→ Attitudes
		Seasons (Section 5.5.1.2)	→ Dynamics
	What does climate mean at Woodland Brook College?	Creating connectedness (Section 5.5.2.1)	→ Struggle
		Controlling interactions (Section 5.5.2.2)	→ Power
		Accepting constant change (Section 5.5.2.3)	→ Unsettled
		Failing church influence (Section 5.5.2.4)	→ Removed

Specific Research Question	Focus Questions	Research Categories	Research Themes
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?	What does leadership mean?	Styles (Section 5.6.1.1)	→ Servanthood
		Modelling (Section 5.6.1.2)	→ Fundamental
	What does leadership mean at Woodland Brook College?	Understanding roles (Section 5.6.2.1)	→ Misunderstood
		Forcing style (Section 5.6.2.2)	→ Forcefulness
		Accommodating differences (Section 5.6.2.3)	→ Uniqueness
Compelling influence (Section 5.6.2.4)	→ Ineffective		

5.7.1 New understandings of ecumenism

The research indicates that the WBC members recognise that establishing an ecumenical grounding is difficult. There are challenges in functioning ecumenically and creating a unified vision of ecumenism. Creating a commonly acceptable liturgical practice within the ecumenical setting of the College has been unsuccessful. This is because:

- The sponsoring churches’ differing liturgical practices act as symbols of identity for each denomination.
- The ecumenical context of WBC adds a complexity in maintaining the identity of each denomination.
- The regular departure of College chaplains highlights the challenges that chaplains faced in seeking to function ecumenically while honouring their responsibility to ordained ministry within their respective denomination.

The research concludes that the sponsoring churches appear incapable of promoting the College to function ecumenically. Whether this is intentional or the product of poor planning invites further exploration. A lack of an ecumenical vision for WBC has a major influence on the College's development as an ecumenical agency for the Anglican and Uniting churches. The reality appears that each denomination wants the other to surrender its identity and be subsumed by the other. An ecumenical dynamic has yet to develop.

5.7.2 New understandings of ethos

The research indicates that the members of WBC's community acknowledge that there is a need for a mutually acceptable ecumenical ethos. Not surprisingly there are challenges in generating such an ethos. This is because:

- The sponsoring churches are indifferent to creating an authentic ecumenical ethos.
- Subsequent competing understandings of ecumenical ethos are generated by WBC members.
- Tension is then generated by the College chaplains' differing interpretations of what constitutes as an ecumenical ethos.

Indeed, an ecumenical ethos is absent. This absence has a deleterious contribution to WBC's overall ethos.

The research concludes that the College's ethos is not conducive to fellowship building between the sponsoring churches and members of WBC's community. There is a dichotomy between an ideological ethos and a practical ethos at the College. The research concludes that the College

members consider the practical ethos that is generated from their interrelational experiences is the major influence on the College's overall ethos.

5.7.3 New understandings of culture

The research indicates that the members of WBC's community form the opinion that planning for a successful ecumenical culture is essential. The research identifies challenges in generating an ecumenical culture. This is because:

- The sponsoring churches' historical differences in worship are such that a harmonisation of both traditions to generate an acceptable single liturgy is not possible.
- College chaplains generate their own interpretation and expectations of ecumenical worship.
- A lack of planning from the sponsoring churches and College leadership has failed to nurture an ecumenical culture.

Indeed, no conscious decision by the sponsoring churches and leadership to generate an authentic ecumenical culture has occurred.

The research concludes that the sponsoring churches' laissez-faire attitude in developing the College's ecumenical culture has generated tensions and confusion for the members of the College community. WBC members believe that tensions emerged as a result of the confusion over what constitutes as an authentic ecumenical culture. Indeed, members of WBC's community have interpreted the lack of planning for an ecumenical culture as a discord between the sponsoring churches, which appears to the members as sectarianism. Furthermore, the College community, under new leadership, is undergoing a change in culture. New leadership's

attempt to change the College's culture has involved considerable criticism of the existing culture. Leadership have described the status quo as a "State School culture". Not surprisingly, current College members do not support this and have resisted the changes. New leadership has negatively associated the concept of "ecumenical" with the founding Executive Principal. Accordingly, College members believe that the past culture has been prejudicially criticised.

5.7.4 New understandings of climate

The research indicates that the members of WBC's community believe that it is essential to have an effective ecumenical climate. Not surprisingly, there are challenges in generating such a climate. This is because:

- College leadership's micro-management contributes to low morale among staff.
- The constant directional changes are unsettling.
- There is inadequate nurturing of a spiritual connectedness.
- Members consider the sponsoring churches' influence upon the College's climate as ineffective.

Indeed, the current College climate is negative. Staff, particularly teachers, have reacted negatively to leadership's directives and generated a resistive spirit.

The research concludes that College leadership's strategy in controlling the climate has generated a belief from members of being devalued. College members' experience of being devalued is underpinned by their belief that the sponsoring churches' lack interest in being engaged within the life of the College. Furthermore, the research indicates that WBC members consider the College Board to be the main representatives of the sponsoring churches and they

identify shortcomings in communication between the Board and College members. This lack of active communication has a negative influence on the climate of the College.

5.7.5 New understandings of leadership

The research indicates that the members of WBC's community affirm that a servant-relational style of leadership is considered appropriate for the ecumenical context. There are challenges in generating such leadership behaviour. This is because:

- Leadership has gravitated towards managing the College at the expense of leading.
- There is mistrust between middle management and senior leadership.
- Historically, College leaders have adopted an autocratic style of leadership.
- There has been an inability to develop an ecumenical style of leadership that can accommodate the differences and diversity without being threatened.

Indeed, ecumenical leadership is fictional. To be authentically ecumenical, a unique style of leadership is invited.

The research concludes that there is a need for the development of a unique servant-relational style of leadership to appropriately reflect the ecumenical context. WBC members consider this unique style of leadership aligns with biblical principles. Furthermore, College members believe that the lack of developing such leadership behaviour has a negative influence on the sponsoring churches' mission for WBC, to be "Church" for the Woodland Brook community.

Chapter Six

Discussion of New Understandings

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how members of WBC understand and experience what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its ecumenical charism.

This study explores WBC members' understandings of the ecumenical charism through their experiences of the College's ethos, culture, climate and leadership. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the selected new understandings generated in Chapter Five.

Five issues structure the discussion in this chapter. How these were generated is presented in

Table 6.1. The five issues are:

1. establishing an ecumenical grounding for shared vision (Section 6.2)
2. nurturing a mutually acceptable ecumenical ethos (Section 6.3)
3. planning for an authentic ecumenical culture (Section 6.4)
4. seeking a meaningful ecumenical climate (Section 6.5)
5. generating a relational ecumenical leadership (Section 6.6).

These issues have emerged through synthesising the new understandings generated in the previous chapter (see Table 5.2). Subsequently, Figure 6.1 illustrates the relationship of the new understandings to the initial conceptual framework (Figure 3.1).

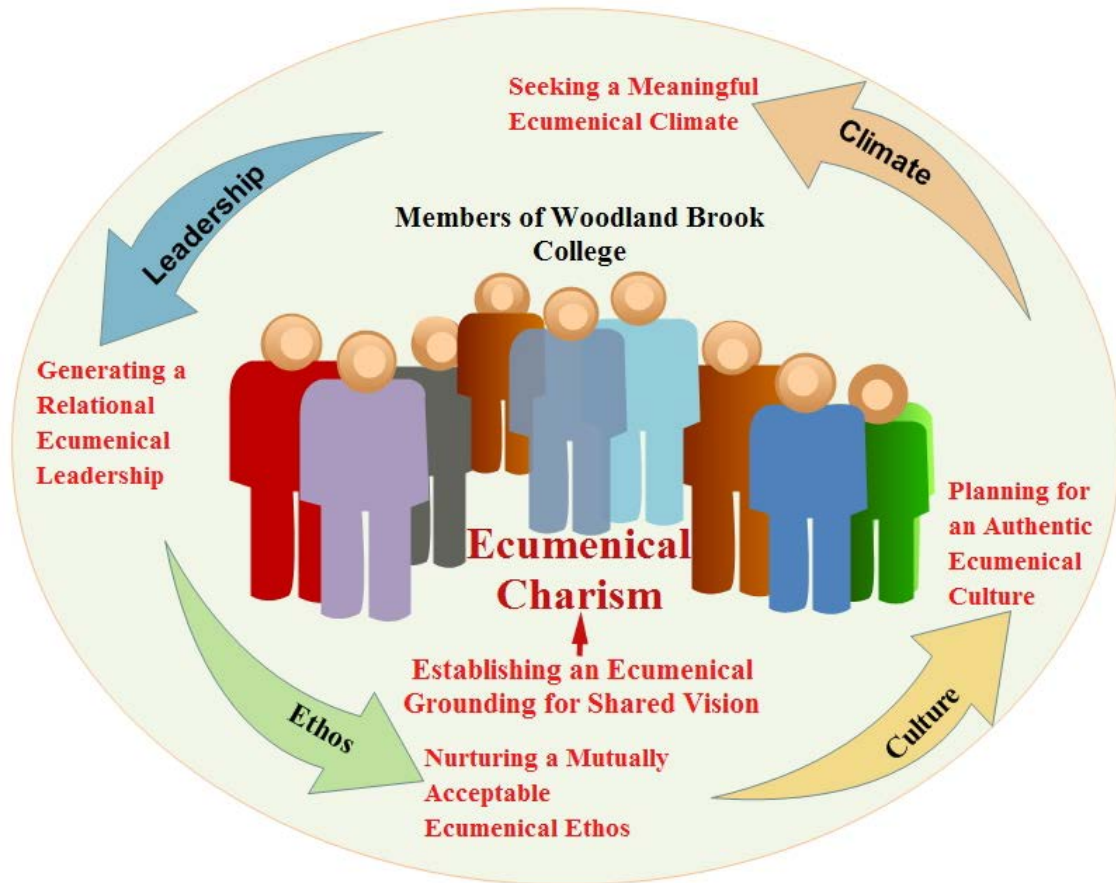


Figure 6.1. Conceptual Framework for Discussing New Understandings

Although numerous research “understandings” have been generated from this research, a discussion of all understandings is inappropriate and unnecessarily repetitious. Therefore, this chapter discusses issues from the new understandings that offer new contributions to research in this area (see Table 6.1 Relationship between Specific Research Questions, Selected Research Themes to New Understandings and Issues).

Table 6.1
 Relationship between Specific Research Questions, Selected Research Themes to New Understandings and Issues

Specific Research Question	Origins of Issues from Selected Research Themes		New Understandings	Issues
How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?	Unwillingness (Sections 5.2.2.3, 5.7.1)	→	A call to a <i>koinonia</i> inspired “life-force” (Sections 6.2.1, 6.7)	Establishing an ecumenical grounding for shared vision (Section 6.2)
	Visionless (Sections 5.2.2.4, 5.7.1)	→	Learning from <i>our</i> others (Sections 6.2.2, 6.7)	
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?	Compromising standpoint (Sections 5.3.2.1, 5.7.2)	→	Quest for unity (Sections 6.3.1, 6.7)	Nurturing a mutually acceptable ecumenical ethos (Section 6.3)
	Collective of experiences (Sections 5.3.2.3, 5.7.2)	→	Seeking one story (Sections 6.3.2, 6.7)	
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?	Fundamental drivers (Sections 5.4.2.1, 5.7.3)	→	The “life-blood” (Sections 6.4.1, 6.7)	Planning for an authentic ecumenical culture (Section 6.4)
	Competing positions (Sections 5.4.2.3, 5.7.3)	→	Christian identity (Sections 6.4.2, 6.7)	
	Essential harmony (Sections 5.4.2.4, 5.7.3)	→	Missed opportunity (Sections 6.4.3, 6.7)	
How do Woodland Brook College members understand climate?	Power (Sections 5.5.2.2, 5.7.4)	→	Relationships matter (Sections 6.5.1, 6.7)	Seeking a meaningful ecumenical climate (Section 6.5)
	Unsettled (Sections 5.5.2.3, 5.7.4)	→	Atmosphere of resistance (Sections 6.5.2, 6.7)	
	Removed (Sections 5.5.2.4, 5.7.4)	→	Lack of purpose (Sections 6.5.3, 6.7)	

Specific Research Question	Origins of Issues from Selected Research Themes		New Understandings	Issues
How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?	Uniqueness (Sections 5.6.2.3, 5.7.5)	→	A call for relational leadership (Sections 6.6.1, 6.7)	Generating a relational ecumenical leadership (Section 6.6)
	Ineffective (Sections 5.6.2.4, 5.7.5)	→	A need for churches of influence (Sections 6.6.2, 6.7)	

6.2 Establishing an Ecumenical Grounding for Shared Vision

The first issue is “establishing an ecumenical grounding for shared vision”, which is generated from the first specific research question: How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism? There is unanimity from the various participants’ perspectives that establishing an ecumenical grounding should be foundational for the College to generate an authentic ecumenical shared vision. “I think if they [leadership and College Board] haven’t got a common sense of what their values and Christian framework is, I think it’s very hard for the rest of the organisation to take on board [a unifying ecumenical vision]” (Colin, 2/6/2010).

What constitutes a foundational “ecumenical grounding” is elusive, and consequently invites further scrutiny. However, before this is initiated, a brief theological reflection on the concept of “ecumenism” is appropriate. Such an initiative offers a matrix of understandings for a more informed discussion.

The fundamental premise of ecumenism is the belief that it is God’s will for Christians to unite as “the Church”. The Church’s purpose concerning ecumenism is to “unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit, to manifest communion in prayer and action and thus to point to the

fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole [of] creation in the glory of the kingdom” (World Council of Churches, 1991, p. 1.1).

Members of WBC’s community recognise that establishing an ecumenical grounding consistent with the belief in the “unity of the Church” is a prerequisite to fulfilling the churches’ vision and mission for WBC. It is a priority that the members of the community recognise the College’s role in demonstrating visible Christian unity. The culminating aim of churches in the “ecumenical movement is full visible Christian unity” (Jonson & Conti, 2005, p. 91).

In the context of WBC, the Anglican and Uniting churches collaboratively seek the “common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (World Council of Churches, 2009, para 1). As a result, the Anglican and Uniting churches support the ecumenical principles of promoting religious liberty through denominational dialogue and cooperation, with the hope of achieving visible Christian unity (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010).

Through dialogue and cooperation at the national level, the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association unambiguously endorses what the churches are seeking to promote at the local church level, specifically the sanctioning of ecumenical endeavours in ministry and mission (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010). This Covenant challenges the churches through the “affirmations” and “commitments”: “[T]o advance the visible unity of the Anglican and Uniting Churches in Australia at every level, as a contribution to the full visible

unity of the Church of Christ” (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2).

Consequently, several new understandings invite discussion between the sponsoring churches. Such communication may lead to an ecumenical grounding for WBC. The following two new understandings are discussed:

1. a call to a *koinonia* inspired “life-force”
2. learning from *our others*.

6.2.1 A call to a *koinonia* inspired “life-force”

The previous chapter, “Presentation of New Understandings”, identified a dissonance between the stated intent of the churches and the actual practices occurring within the ecumenical context of WBC. Colin “cynically” claims that each of the “denominations would have no difficulty if the other would simply adopt their values” (Colin, 2/6/2010). Similarly, Matthew believes: “It’s more like two organisations dealing with each other, each almost waiting for the other to act the same as them” (Matthew, 11/6/2010). According to Commitment 4 in the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010) both churches confirm:

We commit ourselves to listen to each other and to take account of each other’s concerns, especially in areas that affect our relationship as churches, and to develop ways by which our churches may regularly consult one another on significant matters of faith and order and life and work. (p. 2)

Not surprisingly, dissonance has emerged from the challenge of “listening to each other”.

Actively listening requires a commitment from members of each church to respectfully engage

with others' concerns. Indeed, this invites accepting that each church respects the other's interests.

One way of achieving mutual respect is through Christian communion (*koinonia*). It is vital that such a communion at WBC be empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's empowering gives WBC its "life-force" (Murray, 2008a). Such a life-force enables WBC's members to meet the challenges of relating ecumenically.

Furthermore, emerging new paradigms within the ecumenical movement may be of benefit to church agencies like WBC as they seek to offer an ecumenical mission. In order for this to happen, the concept of "receptive ecumenism" offers insight: "What do *we* need to learn and what can *we* learn – or receive – with integrity from *our* others?" (Murray, 2008a, p. 32). With regards to the members of WBC, the aim is for individuals to grow interrelationally in such a manner that they accept each other's challenges and barriers. Indeed, willingness emerges from members to share spiritual gifts from each other to meet such challenges and barriers. Not surprisingly, this requires individuals to engage in self-critical processes to generate personal growth and communal conversion (Murray, 2008a).

The principles of receptive ecumenism have relevancy for the members of WBC in this situation, as they introduce a spiritual (charism) ecumenism of the heart, mind and will. This calls for a willingness from all WBC members, both churches and individuals, to be authentically self-critical to embrace spiritual change (Kelly, 2011).

This inability to engage with spiritual change is a particular challenge for the members of WBC. One way to understand this inability is to further explore the concept of “life-force” (Murray, 2008a) and its influence on the spiritual change in church agencies like WBC.

Within the context of WBC, authentic ecumenical growth may occur if members of both the Uniting and Anglican churches accept spiritual change by engaging with the development of a new charism of shared ecumenism (life-force). Seeking to promote separate denominational traditions through the College’s organisational structure has been detrimental to the growth of authentic ecumenism. While participants acknowledge change is occurring, they are not convinced it is authentically ecumenical. Colin accepts the College is operating “ecumenically because we are here, but is it healthy, is it positive, is it growing? I don’t believe that it can be” (Colin, 2/6/2010). Clearly then, both WBC’s sponsoring churches need to be receptive to change. Indeed, there is support for this change through the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010). This being the case, the question to ask is: Why isn’t an ecumenical charism being honoured at WBC? The challenges in accepting “our other” to form an ecumenical charism appear to be insurmountable.

Colin assists with an explanation. He claims: “I don’t believe that it [WBC] can be [ecumenical]” (Colin, 2/6/2010). At the heart of Christian living is a “life of Christ in the Spirit – that is lived into and lived out of” (Murray, 2008a, p. 36). In other words, the Christian relationship with Christ, of living into and living out of the Spirit, the “life-world” that Murray (2008a) refers to, does not seem to be entertained by the WBC’s community. Murray’s (2008a) understanding of a life-world is underpinned by honest attempts to understand one another. Such a dynamic

supposedly leads to individual renewal, growth and development. This is not occurring at WBC. There is no “positive debate taking place to help us all genuinely come together and say: ‘Well, does that mean that this is what we are seeking to be and we are going to actually display our shared beliefs within an ecumenical Christian context?’” (Colin, 2/6/2010).

One way to approach this challenge is through ecumenical spirituality. An ecumenical spirituality may generate shared vision among WBC’s members. Again, receptive ecumenism may offer such change as it explicitly develops a deeper spirituality within WBC members (Byamungu, 2009). Spirituality that generates authentic Christian fellowship ensures shared ecumenical vision. As Christian fellowship offers unifying practices, it may overcome the challenges of denominationalism. Indeed, many Christians no longer perceive themselves as belonging to any specific denomination. They consider themselves as sharers of a spiritual life (Murray, 2007). Consequently, for WBC members to be authentically ecumenical fellowship building or, as Murray (2008a) contends, “the practice of discipleship” (p. 36) has a priority over denominational doctrines and beliefs.

Not surprisingly, WBC’s community members are challenged in expressing unified ecumenical Christian worship. Colin’s description of a College Eucharistic Service illustrates the challenges to experiencing a shared communion. “The Anglican minister at that stage [consecration] would not take the elements [sacramental bread and wine] from the Uniting Church minister, so much so it became an awkward couple of moments”(Colin, 2/6/2010). In contrast, authentic ecumenical communities may create interdependence through experiencing Christian *koinonia*, between each other and with God, which is fundamental for visible Church unity. “The Church is

a communion, of humans with God, of humans among themselves” (Tavard, 2006, p. 123).

According to the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010), the struggle experienced in the Eucharistic Service that Colin experienced ought not to occur. The Covenant’s Affirmation 3 states: “We affirm that in both our churches the word of God is truly preached and the sacraments of baptism and holy communion are faithfully administered” (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2).

Indeed, the concept “faithfully administered” affirms the unity in Eucharistic practice. The Covenant’s (2010) Commitment 2 affirms the churches’ desire: “We commit ourselves to continue to welcome each other’s baptised members to participate in the fellowship, worship and mission of our churches, and to offer [E]ucharistic hospitality to members of each other’s churches” (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2).

Furthermore, WBC’s members have a mission as an agency of the churches to the Woodland Brook community. Therefore, understanding the College as *koinonia* ensures that both churches, through the College, focus on the ecumenical mission in worship and mission.

The challenge for WBC’s community members is to commit to *koinonia*. As this commitment increases, it is likely that more staff may engage in “giving relationships” (Kinnamon, 2009). Such a dynamic originates from individual members’ commitment to a unity in Jesus Christ, in contrast to belonging to separate Christian institutions. As members of WBC’s community consider *koinonia* seriously, then the personal and relational life of the College becomes fundamentally important. “No individual and no local community is sufficient to itself. No individual, or no community, may say of others, ‘I have no need of you’” (Tanner, 1994b, p. 94).

There is support for a unity of mission through the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010) as both churches draw inspiration for shared ecumenical Christian worship.

6.2.2 Learning from *our others*

Chapter Six, “Presentation of New Understandings”, identified a perception from College members of a visionless ecumenism within the WBC community. As a result, the College community experienced challenges to engage in a shared ecumenical vision as an agency of the Anglican and Uniting churches. A comment from Isaac offers a plausible rationale for this lack of ecumenical vision: “They [churches] both held back because it wasn’t really their school, it was a joint venture and the Principal [is] running the show” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Similarly, Will believes: “I think it didn’t quite ‘gel’ as well as it could and I think there was always a little bit of an issue between which church group had more influence within our own school” (Will, 11/6/2010). The conundrum for WBC is that the sponsoring churches are unable to generate a clear unified purpose. This challenge invites further exploration.

According to Commitments 3 and 6 of the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010), both churches affirm:

We commit ourselves to develop shared resources, to cooperate in mission, evangelism and our public witness to the apostolic faith. (p. 2)

We will take all possible steps to a closer fellowship in as many areas of Christian life and witness as possible. (p. 2)

While both churches have made joint commitments, there appears to be an impediment by WBC to embrace these commitments. An explanation for this impasse is offered by Dulles (2002) in his understanding of ecclesiological models.

The Anglican and Uniting churches have contrasting understandings of what it means to be “the Church”. The Anglican Church, according to Dulles’ (2002) typology is a “sacrament” model. The sacrament model acknowledges the Church as a historical sign of God’s grace, and it seeks to “sanctify its own members, it offers praise and worship to God [through the sacraments]” (p. 196). Whereas, the Uniting Church appreciates a “servant” model, or “activist” model, (2009) in which the Church is understood as a faith-full community that cares for others, seeking to heal and unite all of humanity through working for “justice and peace on earth” (Dulles, 2002, p. 111). Consequently, the probable reason for the tension between the two churches is that each church understands its own role from competing paradigms of “Church”.

This fundamental difference between the churches is exemplified by Matthew’s comment: “You’ve got different worldviews colliding and the problem is you are allowing those worldviews to travel along thinking that they’re fine and dandy, working together, and they’re not” (Matthew, 11/6/2010). Matthew does not elaborate on particular characteristics of these competing worldviews. Nevertheless, the churches’ contrasting perspectives originate from differing ecclesiological ontologies.

Furthermore, these different understandings of ecclesiology influence the churches’ concept of being ecumenical. The benefit of Dulles’ typology for ecumenical agencies of churches is that it categorises ecclesiology models into paradigms, which can lead to a clearer understanding of “our others” (Murray, 2008a, p. 32). According to Dulles (1972), it is not a question of choosing “between these ecclesiologies, for all of them incorporate valid insights, [but] to respect what is

sound in each of the five approaches, and to reconcile these sound elements in some harmonious synthesis” (pp. 209-210).

Subsequently, members of WBC’s community may cultivate sensitivities towards the sponsoring churches’ ecclesiology models. By encouraging this, each church may benefit in appreciating the differing perspectives. Hopefully, such processes may lead to deeper and authentic theological communication.

Cautiously assimilating appropriate approaches originating in receptive ecumenism may contribute to an increased fulfilment in Christian learning. Undertaking such a challenge honours Murray’s (2008a) appeal for Christians to ask honestly from within their traditions: “What do *we* need to learn and what can *we* learn – or receive – with integrity from *our* others?” (p. 32).

Indeed, the dilemma the sponsoring churches experience, waiting for their respective other to adopt their position, may become an earnest seeking to learn from the other and a willingness to be self-critical, “for the sake of the Gospel” [Commitment 7]” (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2).

6.2.3 Summary

An ecumenical grounding in the belief of the unity of the Church is of paramount importance to fulfilling the sponsoring churches’ shared vision and mission for WBC. Members of WBC’s community recognise that establishing an ecumenical agency for the two churches is challenging. Nevertheless, they recognise that they have a responsibility to do so and a role to play in demonstrating visible Christian unity. There is a need to adopt receptive change from

within the sponsoring churches' traditions within the context of WBC. Furthermore, a shared ecumenical vision creating interdependence through experiencing Christian communion (*koinonia*), between each other and with God, is a priority for the WBC members as they seek to fulfil their role in being an agency of a unified visible Church. There is support for change through the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010) for such a coming together so that a charism of working ecumenically may emerge.

6.3 Nurturing a Mutually Acceptable Ecumenical Ethos

The second issue inviting discussion is “nurturing a mutually acceptable ecumenical ethos”, which is generated from the second specific research question: How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos? There is unanimity from the various participants' perspectives that generating an authentic ecumenical ethos is demanding and elusive. It is this tension that invites further scrutiny.

There are several new understandings that invite discussion. Honest communication between the sponsoring churches may lead to nurturing a mutually acceptable and authentic ecumenical ethos for WBC. The following two new understandings are discussed:

1. quest for unity
2. seeking one story.

6.3.1 Quest for unity

Chapter Five, “Presentation of New Understandings”, identified that the chaplains' role, and the manner in which they engage with WBC's community, influences the College's ethos. Indeed,

the chaplains also have responsibilities to represent their respective denominational interests at the College. A comment from Paula illustrates the importance of the chaplains' influences: "[The] College's ethos is particularly being driven by the chaplains or the people from the church representatives" (Paula, 13/8/2010). Consequently, the chaplains play a fundamental role in influencing the College's ethos.

Nevertheless, this research identifies a lack of policy influencing processes for the training of chaplains. There was no evidence of chaplains being trained in the responsibilities, attitudes and skills needed to nurture the ecumenical ethos underpinning WBC. Consequently, chaplains are considerably challenged in their contributions to generate an authentic ecumenical ethos. One particular challenge chaplains experience is fulfilling their respective denominational expectations while simultaneously promoting an ecumenical College ethos. In other words, chaplains believe they have two contrasting, and at times contradictory, expectations to address in their roles.

The reality at WBC is this: the College's governing Board expects the chaplains to contribute to the promotion of an ecumenical ethos, but the theological foundations of the Anglican and Uniting churches are interpreted by chaplains as prohibiting such an aspiration. Research (McQuillan, 2007) concludes that "in an ecumenical school the ethos would be shaped by the collaborative spirit of all involved in the school. A special contribution to the ethos of the school would come from the traditions of the participating churches" (p. 4). Negotiating a "collaborative spirit" is a serious challenge for WBC's chaplains. Consequently, the chaplains' inability to resolve this challenge has had a profound influence on nurturing WBC's ethos.

Indeed, comments from chaplains to WBC members illustrate the dilemma of competing loyalties between honouring the traditions of their own denomination and sponsoring an alliance with another denomination. This issue is identified in Mary's comment: "I've been involved in conversations where they've [chaplains] said, 'no it has to go the Anglican way' and another person has said, 'no that's not right we have to follow the Uniting way'" (Mary, 2/6/2010).

According to the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010), this problem may be addressed by following the advice of Commitments 6 and 7:

We will take all possible steps to a closer fellowship in as many areas of Christian life and witness as possible. (p. 2)

We commit ourselves to develop shared resources, to cooperate in mission, evangelism and our public witness to the apostolic faith. (p. 2)

Not surprisingly, the new understandings identify that chaplains believe they continually have to relinquish their denominational obligations to fulfil their role as a chaplain at the College. What is established in this study is the chaplains' perceive a need to consolidate their denominational interests ahead of generating an authentic ecumenical ethos. Indeed, the chaplains' perceptions became catalysts for the conflict between chaplains. This dissonance may well be the reason for the high turnover of chaplains at WBC.

Another challenge to generating an authentic ecumenical ethos is the influence of the sponsoring churches' particular denominational traditions. In reality, the sponsoring churches advocate denominationalism at WBC. This practice has a detrimental influence on the development of an authentic ecumenical ethos.

Indeed, each sponsoring church has generated a perception that they are reluctant to engage seriously in nurturing an ecumenical ethos. The sponsoring churches' reluctancy originates from their belief that WBC "wasn't really their school" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). As a result, WBC members believe the respective churches are not committed to ecumenism and that their behaviours may be best interpreted as barely "accommodating" to the ecumenical agenda. What ecumenism that has developed is the result more of the churches' obligation than commitment.

This conclusion has its basis in appreciating the influence exercised by the College's founding Executive Principal. A comment from Julie illustrates the issue: "It was really [the founding Executive Principal's philosophy] that created that [ethos] rather than the churches actually actively combining together ecumenically and saying this is what we want to achieve" (Julie, 20/9/2010). Certainly, the reluctance by the churches to actively generate an ecumenical ethos for WBC offers a rationale for the founding Executive Principal's powerful influence over the College and its members.

Controlling the development of WBC's ethos became a powerful strategy for the founding Executive Principal. According to Donnelly (2000b), such a strategy "wields a certain amount of power to condition people to think and act in an 'acceptable' manner" (p. 136). Furthermore, the apprehensiveness of the sponsoring churches to generate an authentic ecumenical ethos is understood by members of WBC's community as endorsing the founding Executive Principal's "contentious" conception of an "ecumenical ethos". As this research was conducted after the

departure of the founding Executive Principal, members of the WBC community were free to discuss past experiences and to reflect on this ethos and the subsequent changes that occurred.

Change in WBC's leadership presented new issues. This period introduced a re-examination of the College's values and expectations (Figure 5.3, Values and Expectations). Since 2005, through to 2010, the College lacked direction in being an ecumenical agency for the churches. Paula brought this to the fore: "[During] 2005–06, I thought were very hard years; I don't think we knew what we were. I don't think we were reflective of either of the churches' ethoses [sic]. I don't think we were ecumenical at all" (Paula, 13/8/2010). Whether this situation occurred because of the leadership change is debatable, and further research may be undertaken for this to be ascertained. However, what WBC members understand is that by 2010 the College's identity had a sense of "emptiness".

Nevertheless, the sponsoring churches found it challenging to appreciate what they were contributing to the WBC's community. Indeed, much of the churches' energy was focused on their own financial issues arising from the GFC (Global Financial Crisis). Apart from minor involvement, the churches gave all other responsibilities to the new CEO (Executive Principal) and Board. The identity issues deepened from being that of an ethos issue to a cultural one (see Section 6.3, Planning for an Authentic Ecumenical Culture). Gaby exemplifies the feeling of emptiness at this time with this opinion:

It's a place without a soul, what I find ... I think the school just really struggles to find out who we [are] catering for and why we [are] doing what we're doing. Come to an understanding of this is who we are and it's probably something to do with being young

and it's had two churches trying to work in together and obviously not working so well. So it's had a few issues I believe, and it's really soul-less. (Gaby 21/6/2010)

6.3.2 Seeking one story

Chapter Five, "Presentation of New Understandings", identified that, as WBC members create and transform relationships, they influence the College's ethos. Members' interrelationships play a unique role in generating the College's ethos. WBC members' experiences and "acting out of life" are idiosyncratic and, as a collective of interrelational experiences, influence the College's ethos (Measor, 1990). The "acting out of life", that is, WBC members' relational rapport is what Martin (1998) identifies "as the key indicator of a school's ethos" (p. 3). Indeed, relationships are authentic signposts to critique what constitutes WBC's ethos.

Consequently, the process of conserving WBC members' relationship stories is a powerful strategy to influence the College's ethos. Indeed, the College's authentic ethos originates from the interrelationships of WBC members (Martin, 1998). According to Measor (1990), ethos at its core is "a moving set of relationships within which different groups and individuals are constantly in negotiation" (p. 77). Hence, the College's "ethos is a *negotiated* process whereby individuals come to some agreement about what should and should not be prioritised" (Donnelly, 2000b, p. 150). Therefore, WBC's authentic ethos predominantly originates from members' interrelational rapport, and continues to evolve through a process of negotiation.

One way to approach this negotiation is through processes developed from contemporary ecumenical understandings that reinforce the need for WBC members to generate relational interdependence. As discussed previously (6.2.1, A call to a *koinonia* inspired life-force), it is

through members experiencing God's communion (*koinonia*) that the process of negotiation may be accomplished (Tavard, 2006). As a result, a negotiated ethos evolves by College members choosing the College's common good before individual church traditions. Furthermore, this process assists WBC members to reflect and evaluate their own beliefs to a developing ecumenical life-force.

In addition, developments in people-centred ecumenism have implications for WBC members' interrelational qualities (Byamungu, 2009). Adopting a people-centred approach strengthens members' interrelational qualities to generate fellowship building. People-centred ecumenism is grounded in the life experiences of each of the members of the College. This experience establishes the negotiation of authentic ecumenical qualities to emerge from individuals, as well as from the sponsoring churches (Hall & Rowell, 2007).

Indeed, applying people-centred ecumenical principles may establish an ownership of the College's ecumenical ethos, as the ethos emanates from the life-world of members of WBC's community (Habermas, 1987). Therefore, through using principles in people-centred ecumenism, WBC's ethos may reflect the life-world qualities of members' intentional interactions in relationship building, the very life-giving sustenance for an ecumenical College.

Another challenge to generating an authentic ecumenical ethos is the influence of the honoured "actors" and "stories". Research (Donnelly, 2000b) concludes that honoured actors and stories conserve schools' genuine ethos. WBC's honoured actors and stories are the teaching staff, who are known to "go the extra mile" for the College community. An indirect term, "teacher", is

adopted instead of specifically identified people. Paul explains this differentiation: “The ethos, I think, has been shaped primarily by staff and ... by the personal convictions of staff” (Paul, 30/7/2010). The lack of personally and clearly identifiable actors and stories has led to the generation of a synthesised collective of College members’ life-world experiences, which contribute to the genuine ethos of WBC.

Nevertheless, there are noticeable benefits in articulating the lived reality of WBC’s ethos, as it captures the authentic College’s actors and stories (Donnelly, 2000b). In this way, Paul identifies two perspectives in understanding ethos: A separation between a symbolic or ideological ethos and a practical ethos at the College. “The ideological ethos is what the churches have as a symbolic ethos. But the practical ethos comes out of management to a small degree and out of the interaction of teachers to a larger degree” (Paul, 30/7/2010). It is this latter, the practical or “real” ethos, that Paul and other members of the College community consider as the authentic expression of ethos.

Not surprisingly, this study identifies that the actors and stories promoted by the sponsoring churches and senior leadership may not reflect those genuinely honoured by WBC’s community. The College patrons (actors), such as those expressed through the names of sporting Houses, and the foundational stories have little influence on promoting the College’s authentic ethos. This acceptance of a conservative process generates a missed opportunity to incorporate ecumenical principles through honoured stories and role models for WBC’s community members.

The reality at WBC is this: as the sponsoring churches hesitated to generate an ecumenical framework, WBC members addressed the void by introducing their own life-world framework, a form of individual “root image” of operating and adapting within the social context of the College (Lindesmith et al., 1999). This became the catalyst for College members to generate multiple understandings to explain how things are “done ecumenically” (Blumer, 1986).

The individual root images (multiple understandings) generate an interrelational “space of tension” to function ecumenically. As discussed previously, WBC members perceive that acting with a “spirit of accommodation” is an appropriate ecumenical behaviour. Therefore, WBC members consider that this “space of tension” is the place where they are “acting ecumenically” (Colin, 2/6/2010).

Members of WBC’s community believe they are “acting ecumenically” (Colin, 2/6/2010). This concept is different from the concept of “being ecumenical”. This is the point that Colin refers to as the College is operating “ecumenically because we are here, but is it healthy, is it positive, is it growing? I don’t believe that it can be” (Colin, 2/6/2010). As a result, the ideals emanating from the ecumenical discussion on *koinonia* may offer a strategy to develop “being ecumenical”, which “... is the most important theme of contemporary ecumenical theology” (Tanner, 1994b, p. 166). This phenomenon is a powerful challenge for members of the WBC’s community to generate, if they are indeed pursuing an authentic ecumenical ethos.

One approach to address this challenge is based on building a receptive learning process, a catalyst for generating a life-force of *koinonia*. The benefit of generating an ethos instilled with

koinonia is that the College may become a visible unified agency of Church. Indeed, acting in this way may initiate the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant’s Commitment 1:

We commit ourselves to advance the visible unity of the Anglican and Uniting Churches in Australia at every level, as a contribution to the full visible unity of the Church of Christ. (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2)

Indeed, an ethos based in a life-force of *koinonia* is a new understanding generated from this study. This dynamic invites further research.

6.3.3 Summary

The research confirms that there is a need for a mutually acceptable ecumenical ethos. There is support from literature that the concept “ethos” is difficult to define. This study identifies the concept that dynamic interrelationships are at the core of nurturing ethos. A defensible conclusion is made that interrelationships generated in an ecumenical setting are to be influenced by *koinonia*, so that fellowship building through receptive learning may occur.

The study affirms that WBC’s current ethos is not conducive to fellowship building between the sponsoring churches and members of the College community. The College’s promoted actors and stories have not contributed to its ecumenical values and principles, and as a consequence have little influence on the College’s ethos. A lack of authentically honoured actors and stories has led to the collective of WBC members’ life-world experiences becoming the major influence on the College’s ethos. The College members’ life-world experiences and beliefs influence the values the College aspires to cultivate, which become the fabric of WBC’s ethos. The void in establishing a College ecumenical framework has created dissonance between the multiple members’ life-world frameworks. A possible strategy to address this dissonance is through the

developing a life-force of *koinonia*. A benefit of WBC's ethos instilled with *koinonia* is that the College and its members become a visible unified agency of the Church. The sponsoring churches' apprehensiveness in establishing a mutually acceptable ecumenical framework for WBC's ethos has resulted in the generation of a visionless concept of being ecumenical.

6.4 Planning for an Authentic Ecumenical Culture

The third issue inviting discussion is "planning for an authentic ecumenical culture", which is generated from the third specific research question: How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture? There is agreement from the various participants that planning for a successful ecumenical culture is of paramount importance.

Research (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Hinde, 2004) concludes that a successful school culture needs to be planned, be clearly recognisable, pervasive, and be owned by the community members. Planning for a positive culture inevitably has positive outcomes for students, teachers and other community members. A positive school culture is a prerequisite for a school to engage authentically with its mission. Such a culture allows and encourages teachers and students to explore and take learning risks (Hinde, 2004).

The previous discussion on ethos (Section 6.3) identified fundamental challenges confronting WBC's community. One key issue inviting further discussion is the discord generated by the College members' life-world frameworks. Indeed, this form of individual root image also influences the College's culture. As previously suggested, a possible strategy to address this dissonance is by generating a life-force of *koinonia* (sharing) for the community members. Such

a strategy has implications for the College's ecumenical culture. This initiative invites further scrutiny.

There are several new understandings that invite discussion among the sponsoring churches. Such communication may lead to planning for an authentic ecumenical culture for WBC. The following three new understandings are discussed:

1. the "life-blood"
2. Christian identity
3. missed opportunity.

6.4.1 The "life-blood"

Chapter Five, "Presentation of New Understandings", identified that teachers are predominantly the driving force of WBC's culture. As previously discussed in Section 6.3.2, Seeking one story, the interrelationships of community members of WBC considerably influence the College's ethos. Not surprisingly, the interrelationships of members also influence the College's culture. Paul explains his understanding: "Culture is primarily driven by the people [teachers] and the students that are here" (Paul, 30/7/2010).

Therefore, the foundation of the College's authentic culture arguably originates within the dynamics of teacher and student relationships. Research (Lindesmith et al., 1999) suggests that the authentic values and beliefs with which schools identify for themselves as foundational originate predominantly from teachers. Indeed, teachers negotiate values and beliefs through

their life-world experiences. As teachers undertake this process, they generate a vibrant dynamic that becomes the life-blood of the College's culture.

Furthermore, as WBC's culture evolves through members' life-world, it reflects the genuine "human capital" that is the social, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual characteristics of WBC members (Habermas, 1987). Research (Habermas, 1987) identifies that the "... [l]ifeworld is the foundation for the development of social, intellectual and other forms of human capital that contribute in turn to the development of cultural capital, which then further enriches the lifeworld itself. This is a cycle of 'cultural reproduction'" (p. 5).

WBC's cultural reproduction is enlivened by the life-giving energy (life-blood) of the College members, in particular, teachers. Research (Habermas, 1987) concludes that at any given point in the cycle of cultural reproduction, a school's culture may be determined as either a positive (high) or a negative (low) culture. Indeed, WBC members believe the highs and lows in the cycle of cultural reproduction are the result of the actions of leadership. Isaac believes: "[T]he culture of the place has waxed and waned a little bit depending on who's in charge" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Notwithstanding, WBC members believe that teachers are the dominant influence on the College's genuine culture. Nonetheless, WBC's members have an expectation that leadership develops and solidifies the College's cultural identity. Consequently, WBC members' responses appear to be incongruous. This phenomenon invites further scrutiny.

Indeed, exploration of WBC members' expectations leads to increased understandings of this identity issue. The responsibility of establishing the College's identity belongs to leadership.

WBC members expected the founding Executive Principal to initiate an ecumenical cultural identity for the College. However, the founding Executive Principal sought to establish a particular “corporate” cultural identity that College members resisted. WBC members believe that such an initial culture was a “culture of fear” (Paul, 30/7/2010). This dynamic is explored further in Section 6.4.3, Missed opportunity.

It would be reasonable to expect College leadership to give direction to the members of WBC’s community on what constitutes as an ecumenical College. As an ecumenical endeavour, the College’s leadership is obliged to provide clear direction underpinned by values, beliefs and principles of being ecumenical in an education context. Notwithstanding, because all members of Christian communities equally hold responsibility for visible Church unity, WBC’s leaders are obliged to listen to staff and generate policies for visible unity (Murray, 2008a). Indeed, leaders in church agencies are challenged to do more than build positive cultures. They are expected to act with “discipleship” (Murray, 2008a, p. 36). They are obliged to build cultural identities embedded with ecumenical principles. Research (Peterson & Deal, 1998) identifies that cultural identity is generated from the school’s “unifying myth” (p. 23). The unifying myth for WBC originated in its initial ecumenical principles (Peterson & Deal, 1998). What the contemporary unifying myth for WBC is a question inviting further exploration.

Indeed, WBC has its genesis as an ecumenical institution governed by ecumenical principles it holds as valuable (Peterson & Deal, 1998). How this is currently understood by the members of WBC is a focus for this research.

Under the direction of the founding Executive Principal, the unifying myth may be appropriately understood by the use of the term “the Company” (Matthew, 11/6/2010), a title often used by that Principal to instil corporate discipline. The myth of “the Company” is also referred to in the acronym “Educang”. This term failed to be accepted as a unifying myth for establishing an ecumenical identity. Indeed, members of WBC’s community used the term “the Company” as a derogatory code word. Consequently, because leadership sought to create a unifying myth of the Company, staff became unwilling to expend energies to develop what they believed to be the basis of an ecumenical culture.

Therefore, this research identifies, from WBC members’ experiences, that the apparent unifying myth lacks a distinctive ecumenical foundational contribution. Subsequently, the fundamental driving force (life-blood) of the College’s authentic culture, which is specifically generated from the interrelationships of the members of WBC’s community, lacks identifiable ecumenical values, beliefs and principle. This issue invites further research.

This research generates the new understanding of WBC members’ interrelationships being the life-blood of the culture. However, there is an expectation that WBC’s leadership creates an ecumenical cultural identity. Members expect that leadership generate such an ecumenical culture through “discipling” College members. Indeed, this research identifies WBC members’ unfulfilled expectations of leaders generating a cultural identity grounded in ecumenical values, beliefs and principles.

6.4.2 Christian identity

Chapter Five, “Presentation of New Understandings”, identified that the WBC community encountered challenges in creating an ecumenical form of Christian worship. An ecumenical form of worship is a crucial issue in the development of WBC’s cultural identity. Julie identified this as a fundamental issue: “[The churches’] core centres being different, there is a struggle [in worship together], which is perceived from people’s judgements as being a struggle between those two [churches]” (Julie, 20/9/2010).

Indeed, understanding the two ecclesiological paradigms of WBC’s sponsoring churches is helpful, as it presents the perceptions of the churches’ view on Christian worship (Dulles, 2002). Research (Dulles, 2002) identifies that ecclesiological modelling is effective in understanding the sponsoring churches’ perspectives on “being Church”. A possible Anglican understanding would consider worship as essentially promoting the Church’s traditions of doctrine, sacraments and ministry through worship. In contrast, a Uniting Church response may consider worship as an expression of the local Christian community of the Church. Supporting this evaluation is a comment from Julie: “The Uniting Church would be much more interested in celebration through song, through praise, where the Anglican had more of an emphasis on celebration through the Eucharist” (Julie, 20/9/2010). The ecclesiological paradigms of the two churches present challenging theological and doctrinal issues, which invites further research. Emerging from this study are two competing positions on what constitutes as a bone-fide expression of Christian worship for the College community.

Not surprisingly, the emergence of two competing expressions of Christian worship influences WBC's culture. This study identified no systematic attempt to create these competing positions, rather it occurred because there was a lack of a strategic response to the ecumenical context that generated the situation. Presuppositions on what constitutes appropriate Christian worship are the foundations to the generation of actual ecumenical worship. The lack of a mutually shared understanding of Christian worship reflects the differences found in ecclesiological paradigms (Dulles, 2002).

Furthermore, as previously discussed, WBC's culture is encoded by a process of "meaning making". The College's symbols, beliefs, values and worship, all generate meaning for WBC members (Stolp & Smith, 1995). Indeed, the responses from members of WBC on the explicit meaning of Christian symbols, beliefs, values and worship indicate inconsistency in understanding. Remarkably, both sponsoring churches of WBC presume that the WBC community has a mutual understanding of these core Christian concepts.

Consequently, the sponsoring churches' presumptions led to an underlying implicit devaluing of the "process of meaning" (Stolp & Smith, 1995, p. 12). This is illustrated by Terry, one of the chaplains, who recalls the challenges he encountered when coming to the College: "Sometimes we'd have an Anglican service and sometimes a Uniting service ... there was no overlap between the two" (Terry, 22/3/2010). Indeed, Terry is acutely aware of the competing positions in expressing a Christian identity through worship, so he intentionally sought "about being Christian rather than promoting the Uniting Church specifically" (Terry, 22/3/2010). Terry has an ecumenical vision for unifying the College community, through re-creating a "Christian

myth”. However, the challenge Terry encounters is in gaining the support to interpret Christian worship, symbols, traditions and values in an ecumenical manner for the College context (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

The two sponsoring churches’ vision and mission for WBC is to be “Church” for the community at Woodland Brook. The actions undertaken by Terry in seeking to create a Christian community offers a unifying image and a confidence to fulfil the sponsoring churches’ vision and mission. Terry’s attempt to create, through the process of meaning making, a unifying myth for the College is supported by the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010) Commitment 6: “We will take all possible steps to a closer fellowship in as many areas of Christian life and witness as possible” (p. 2). Therefore, considering such support, it is perplexing why such a challenge exists. Indeed, this dynamic invites further research.

Furthermore, the College’s cultural artefacts, that is, the tangible objects require a shared collective meaning. The success of WBC’s mission, to be “Church” for the Woodland Brook community, requires a unified understanding of what the College’s artefacts mean. Such a unified understanding, underpinned by the concepts of *koinonia*, may contribute to achieving the College’s mission. Indeed, implementing this strategy may generate “visible unity”, thereby contributing to an authentic ecumenical identity for the WBC community. According to Commitment 5 of the Covenant, the Anglican and Uniting churches’ affirm: “We commit ourselves to overcome the remaining obstacles to a fuller visible unity” (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2). There are indisputable challenges in nurturing an authentically unified Christian identity for WBC. This study has identified that the

fundamental beliefs of the sponsoring churches have not been negotiated in a manner that is conducive to building an ecumenical community.

The reality is this: members of the Uniting Church consider the universal Church's mission is to bring "Believers" together to fulfil Christ's commandment.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35).

In contrast, Anglicans consider the universal Church's primary mission is the continuation of the essential orders of doctrine, sacraments and ministry. The two perspectives illuminate how the College's worship, symbols, traditions and values are interpreted differently. Indeed, as much as Terry seeks to nurture a shared ecumenical Christian community, the fundamentals for such a community lack synchronisation or at least a harmony.

6.4.3 Missed opportunity

Chapter Five, "Presentation of New Understandings", identified that the sponsoring churches have been unsuccessful in negotiating a shared conceptual understanding of being ecumenical. Indeed, the churches failed to harmonise their understandings to generate a unifying foundational ecumenical myth for the WBC community. In addition, there has been an overt attempt to change the College's identity to a specific Anglican identity.

The harmonisation of an ecumenical identity with a foundational myth is a key issue in regard to the success of the churches' mission and vision for the WBC community. Research (Peterson &

Deal, 1998) identifies that school leaders are obliged to develop a school's cultural identity. Similarly, WBC's foundational leaders were likewise expected to generate a College vision that incorporated a unifying "ecumenical myth" (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Nonetheless, Julie identifies the paucity of a foundational ecumenical vision: "I really don't think that there was a whole [unity] there [from the foundation]" (Julie, 20/9/2010). Additionally, as a foundational employee, Will's contributions are valuable. He believed the churches' intentions for establishing the ecumenical College were genuine. The vision for a school was born out of a desire for Christian ministry within the new Woodland Brook community.

The vision of the churches in the initial days of the beginning ... was about bringing [Christian] ministry to the community through school; [pause] as time has gone on, I think they needed to continue to look back and say are we meeting that vision. (Will, 11/6/2010)

Consequently, this opinion illustrates that the creation of the College was not the churches' primary vision. The College was to be a vehicle for Christian ministry to the community. In other words, the churches' aim was for Christian mission in the community and the College was to be the conduit for this mission. Indeed, this dynamic invites further research.

Nevertheless, the characteristics of the foundational myth that does exist for WBC community emerged from the College's norms, values, beliefs, traditions and rituals. As previously discussed, this study has identified that although the characteristics of the College's myth were acknowledged, they were interpreted differently by the two sponsoring churches. One possible rationale for this divergence of interpretation is found in the churches' ecclesiological models (Dulles, 2002). Research (Dulles, 2002) identifies that each of the "Church models" incorporate

sound elements, which are indeed ecclesiologicaly orthodox. However, within an ecumenical initiative, like WBC, there is a need “to reconcile these sound elements in some harmonious synthesis” (Dulles, 1972, pp. 209-210).

Indeed, the sponsoring churches’ inability to meet the challenge to create a “harmonious synthesis” (Dulles, 1972) has generated a vacuum. This vacuum is filled by leadership and by staff. Leadership (particularly the founding Executive Principal) instilled their understanding of what constituted as ecumenical norms, values, beliefs, traditions and rituals. Whereas staff (particularly teachers) resisted leadership’s interpretations. A comment from Paul illustrates his perspective:

I think that the unofficial [authentic] culture is very much affirmed by the customs we [teachers] do as people. In terms of the practical culture [synthesis of staff and leadership], that is partly affirmed by teachers and the symbols that are here (Paul, 30/7/2010).

This perspective, identified by Paul, is related to his beliefs that are previously discussed, concerning the College’s ethos (see Section 6.3.2, Seeking one story).

The reality at WBC is this: the sponsoring churches’ inability to implement a harmonised vision for an ecumenical culture has generated a two-tiered culture. Leadership believed they nurtured the College’s culture (labelled symbolic). In contrast, staff believed it was their responsibility to resist the leadership’s directions to nurture a (labelled unofficial) culture. As a result, this study identifies the inability of the Anglican and Uniting churches to harmonise a vision for an ecumenical culture for WBC, thereby failing to be a “Christian witness” to the Woodland Brook community.

Indeed, the Anglican and Uniting churches have adopted “ecumenical” initiatives with the all too “frequent ‘default instinct’ of conventional ecumenism – focusing on what others have to learn from us as a prelude to ecumenical progress” (Hall & Rowell, 2007, p. 248). A possible alternative strategy may be for the churches to ask the question: “What do *we* need to learn and what can *we* learn – or receive – with integrity from *our* others?” (Murray, 2008a, p. 32). Consequently, instead of the College adopting a unified vision, an atmosphere of competition for WBC’s cultural identity has resulted.

Chapter Five, “Presentation of New Understandings”, identified that WBC members believe the College’s culture was unplanned. The College’s culture is believed to be evolutionary and not planned. This is illustrated by Julie: “... the culture that developed here I think it just all happened” (Julie, 20/9/2010). Julie’s comment is not so much cynical, but reflecting the lack of endeavour in planning for a successful ecumenical culture.

Research (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Hinde, 2004) identifies that successful school communities are those that plan for an organic culture. Planning for an evolving organic ecumenical culture, saturated with human dialogue and cooperation, may lead to the College’s ecumenical success (Tuite, 2007). Conversely, Matthew believes WBC is in “... a confused state. I can’t tell whether it’s just that no one [is] exactly sure of where it’s meant to be, [or] that’s the way it [has] always been, but it does generally seem that there is an unknowned [sic] Woodland Brook culture” (Matthew, 11/6/2010). Matthew’s observation, as a relatively new member of staff, demonstrates a lack of cultural awareness that has occurred since the founding Executive Principal’s tenure.

One possible strategy to address this issue is to commit to an attitude of receptive learning (Hall & Rowell, 2007).

As discussed previously, receptive learning does not focus on overcoming the differences between the sponsoring churches of WBC, but rather on promoting learning from *our* others. Receptive learning is “precisely *in face* of and *across* continuing difference” (Murray, 2008a, p. 39). Through the process of receptive learning, the College community may enter a new visible unity, via the sponsoring churches engaging in a self-critical process.

The new Executive Principal introduced changes aiming to shift the College’s cultural identity. When the founding Executive Principal left the College, the new leader made derogatory comments concerning previous policies and practices. These were considered “... the older ways of doing things” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). Not surprisingly, College members resented such remarks and believed them to be a misplaced rationale to justify non-consultative changes related to the College’s identity.

WBC members identify a shift occurring as the new leadership labelled the existing culture as a “State School culture”. Through this action, leadership stressed that this type of culture is not the cultural identity the new leadership wanted to embrace. This action is an admission that either an ecumenical culture does not exist or the new leadership is unable or unwilling to recognise WBC’s existing ecumenical cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the churches have publicly stated in the affirmations and commitments that their aim is "... to advance the visible unity of the Anglican and Uniting Churches in Australia at every level, as a contribution to the full visible unity of the Church of Christ" (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, p. 2). Given such a willingness by the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010), the action of WBC's new leadership appears incongruous. This perplexing dilemma invites further research.

Indeed, members of WBC's community do not accept the label of a "State School culture". College members are offended and consider this initiative as counterproductive to developing an authentic ecumenical cultural identity. Research (Schein, 1997) identifies that such actions do not influence cultural change. Indeed, WBC members do not believe in or commit their energies to support school leadership's change of emphasis. "Articulating new visions and new values is a waste of time if they are not calibrated against the existing assumptions and values" (Schein, 1997, p. 16). Paul's comment exemplifies this: "Our present culture does not fit into [the new Executive Principal's] framework, so in her thinking it must then be a 'State School culture', which is somewhat naive" (Paul, 30/7/2010). Similarly, Isaac claims:

The current leadership is looking at tinkering with some of the things we do and the way we operate as a College, and strategically they're moving towards the traditional Independent School model. I don't think that's necessarily a good thing. We had our own model that just needed reworking. We're moving to a different Independent School model that's slightly different. But I think that's because the people at the top are not used to the type of school we used to be and they're trying to change it to something they're used to. (Isaac, 26/7/2010)

Seeking to change WBC's culture is problematic. This initiative results in creating antagonism between the College leadership and staff members. Research (Donahoe, 1997; Gruenert, 2005; Hinde, 2004; Schein, 1997) concludes that organisations that seek to create a new culture risk "throwing the baby out with the bath water, [and] ... if culture changes, everything changes" (Donahoe, 1997, p. 245).

Consequently, the College's new leadership seeks to change the existing culture, whether it is or is not ecumenical, because they associate this type of culture with the previous leadership. Therefore, it is justifiable to conclude that the College's new leadership is "throwing the ecumenical baby out with the bath water" as it seeks to change WBC's culture to reflect an Anglican cultural identity.

Chapter Five, "Presentation of New Understandings", identified that WBC members believe there is a deliberate attempt to transform the College's culture to an "Anglican identity". College members believe there has been an undercurrent in recent years leading to the strengthening of the Anglican influence in the College to the detriment of an ecumenical culture. Colin identifies this: "I think there will be a very overt shift to make us a single uni-culture [sic], which will be Anglican. The ecumenical culture is actually somewhat perceived to be threatening to a single, in this case, Anglican culture" (Colin, 2/6/2010). Colin's claim raises the question of the churches' commitment to ecumenism. Again considering the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association's (2010) encouragement for the churches to be ecumenical, the actions of WBC's leadership contradicts the stated ideals of the Covenant.

Indeed, WBC members question the sponsoring churches' commitment, in particular, the Anglican Church's commitment, to the College's ecumenical foundation. Mary claims, "I don't think it [College] is ecumenical anymore and I think that some of the practices and standards of the one denomination [Anglican] are then being forced onto staff and students" (Mary, 2/6/2010). Similarly, Isaac believes that the College culture has "... more of an Anglican mindset rather than a broad Christian mindset" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). This mindset is something that Terry actively resisted while he was chaplain at WBC. He sought to promote "a Christian community rather than being Anglican or a Uniting community" (Terry, 22/3/2010). Terry was aware of the tensions that a single denominational mindset would have on the College's cultural identity and the mission within the Woodland Brook community.

Furthermore, the College's artefacts, symbols and traditions, according to members, are being reinterpreted with a particular Anglican doctrine and theology. The Uniting Church's theological understandings are, according to Colin, "... progressively diminished and [becoming] interpreted from an Anglican tradition" (Colin, 2/6/2010). Similarly, Paula offers this opinion: "I think as a College we will see a clearer Anglican identity in the future, whatever that might be" (Paula, 13/8/2010).

Likewise, Paula offers an insightful opinion as to why there is a shift to a singular Anglican cultural identity for the College. Paula explains that the Anglican Archbishop's underlining drive is to have schools that have an Anglican identity.

The Archbishop said: 'We will continue to have Anglican schools because that's where you grow young Anglicans.' So, if that is his belief, as leader of the church in this area,

then you can see that's what he wants. He wants to grow young people in the Anglican faith, not an ecumenical faith. (Paula, 13/8/2010)

In her conversation with the Archbishop

Therefore, the new College leadership is attempting to fulfil the Archbishop's desire, to be Anglican in identity and not ecumenical. This conflicts with the Anglican Church's stated affirmations and commitments in the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010). This new understanding generates deeper questioning and more authentic responses.

6.4.4 Summary

The research confirms that planning for a successful ecumenical culture is of importance. There is support from the literature that school communities that plan to have a positive culture are effective (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Hinde, 2004). This study affirms the need for WBC's culture to be planned, be clearly recognisable, pervasive, and be owned by the community members. Additionally, the research supports the scholarship that asserts that school culture depends on what Habermas (1987) describes as the dominant *world* paradigm to form "cultural identity" (pp. 113-115). Connected with Habermas' "life-world" is the "life-blood" of WBC's culture, which becomes enlivened through the interrelationships of members of the community.

Additionally, there is an expectation from WBC members that leadership develops and consolidates the College's cultural identity through a unifying ecumenical myth. The research concludes that the sponsoring churches' vision of the foundational ecumenical myth for the College has evaporated. This is a new understanding emerging from this study that demonstrates that there has been a failure to harmonise the two sponsoring churches' visions for an ecumenical charism. A lack of planning from leadership and the sponsoring churches has generated a

cultural identity dilemma for the WBC community. Interrogating the ecclesiological models of the Anglican and Uniting churches offers a possible understanding for the cause of this cultural dilemma. The competing agendas for cultural identity within an ecumenical setting is unique to this study and invites further research.

Indeed, as the new College leadership sought to transform WBC's culture to a singular Anglican identity, it has generated conflict with the Anglican Church's commitment to the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010). This study identifies missed opportunities to establish an authentically ecumenical cultural identity for WBC's community.

6.5 Seeking a Meaningful Ecumenical Climate

The fourth issue inviting discussion is “seeking a meaningful ecumenical climate”, which is generated from the fourth specific research question: How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate? There is agreement from the various participants that having an effective ecumenical climate generates meaningfulness for the community.

As previously discussed, through WBC's members “negotiating” their interrelationships, the College's authentic culture is generated. The nurturing of the College's culture is a process of negotiating the authentic values, assumptions and behaviours, which in turn generate the College's authentic identity. In contrast, WBC's climate is from members' understandings of these values, assumptions and behaviours (Keefe & Jenkins, 2000; Stolp & Smith, 1995).

Research (Stolp & Smith, 1995) concludes that climate is one indicator of culture, as it

contributes to the complex dynamic that informs culture formation (see Figure 3.3). Therefore, a climatic atmosphere at some point in time is likely to become part of the cultural identity.

Furthermore, research (Schein, 2000) defines school climate as "... how people feel about the organization, the authority system, and the degree of employee involvement and commitment, the 'soft' stuff" (p. 1). Therefore, if climate is the "feeling" that members of WBC experience, then members' feelings may be a litmus test to reliably interrogate WBC's climate (Stolp & Smith, 1995)

There are several new understandings that invite discussion among the sponsoring churches. Such communication may lead to an authentically meaningful ecumenical climate for WBC. The following three new understandings are discussed:

1. relationships matter
2. atmosphere of resistance
3. lack of purpose.

6.5.1 Relationships matter

Chapter Five, "Presentation of New Understandings", identified that WBC members believe that the College's leadership, through its authority, seeks to micro-manage the staff, which affects the College's climate. Ironically, research (Sergiovanni, 1994b) concludes that schools often become meaningful communities, as long as leadership generates the "structure necessary to develop a culture of empowerment, collegiality, and transformation" (Sergiovanni, 1994b, p. xix). This

study has identified that WBC's culture lacks an ecumenical unifying myth, resulting in a cultural identity dilemma (see Section 6.4.1, The "life-blood").

Consequently, the cultural identity dilemma affects WBC's climate. Climate is one indicator of culture, and the cultural context created by leadership influences WBC's climate. As previously discussed, members of WBC have an expectation that leadership develops and consolidates the College's cultural identity. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that leadership seeks to influence the climate of the College. This being the case, the question to ask is: How should leadership influence the College's climate?

WBC's history indicates that the College's leadership behaviour has been authoritarian and based on managing WBC. Research (Starratt, 2004) concludes that leadership is more than managing or administering the College's structures. Indeed, leadership is relational, and leaders ought to understand their own biases by cultivating self-awareness. Moreover, authentic leadership is "ontologically relational" (Starratt, 2004, p. 65). Therefore, leadership that predominately uses managerial and administrative structures in leading communities is incapable of transforming their organisation's (school) culture and climate (Sergiovanni, 1994b).

Notwithstanding, what is identified in this study is that WBC members believe that the College's leadership lacks relationally ecumenical qualities, which in turn affects the College climate.

Mary explains: "I think one of the biggest impacts is that leadership has been separated from the people. There's no relational leadership here now" (Mary, 2/6/2010). This dynamic is explored further in Section 6.6.1, A call for relational leadership.

Nevertheless, College members believe that leadership exerts its power to influence the climate. As such, WBC members believe that leadership's influence on the College's climate is negative.

A possible approach to this challenge is through contemporary people-centred ecumenism. As previously suggested, using principles in people-centred ecumenism may generate an "ownership" of the College's ecumenical ethos. Not surprisingly, the College's climate may be positively influenced by fellowship building through receptive learning. As people-centred ecumenism is grounded in the life-world of WBC's members, it becomes empowering (life-blood) for all of the College community (Hall & Rowell, 2007). Furthermore, as values embedded in cultural reproduction enliven the College's climate, WBC's members may engage in new ways of acting ecumenical. Indeed, people-centred ecumenism encourages diversity in ecumenical life and inclusiveness in ecumenical reflection and action (Hall & Rowell, 2007), which are the ecumenical principles that the sponsoring churches encourage in the affirmations and commitments in Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010). However, the action of WBC's leadership in seeking to exert an authoritative control on the climate has resulted in WBC members feeling that their contributions are not valued.

Chapter Five, "Presentation of New Understandings", identified that WBC members feel devalued. A comment from Terry conveys this:

I think people sometimes feel like they're just not, not valued and in an ecumenical school, in a Christian school, that's a sad statement to perhaps portray because we should all feel like we are contributing to the vision, the mission of the church in our community. (Terry, 22/3/2010)

Research (Dawson, 2006; Leithwood, 2005; Sergiovanni, 1994b; Tuite, 2007) identifies that the valuing of staff plays a critical role in the development of a school's culture and climate. A possible strategy to address this challenge for WBC is presented in contemporary ecumenism. Contemporary ecumenism presents the view that the Church needs to consider itself as communion (*koinonia*) (Kinnamon, 2009). As an ecumenical agency of the sponsoring churches, WBC's community similarly may consider itself as *koinonia*. Understanding WBC in such a manner may allow College members to be in "communion" together, and equally valued. Indeed, research (Tanner, 1994b) concludes: "No individual and no local community is sufficient to itself. No individual, or no community, may say of others, 'I have no need of you'" (1994b, p. 94). Therefore, if one WBC member experiences being devalued, then all members are devalued.

This study identifies that WBC's members believe that the leadership had engaged in sustained processes of devaluing staff. Mary is one such member who particularly expresses feelings of isolation and being devalued when she says "staff are going around saying, 'So they don't care about us,' ... and this is devaluing and negative to the day-to-day climate" (Mary, 2/6/2010). WBC members' feelings of being devalued have a direct influence on the College's climate, as well as the generation of low morale. Not surprisingly, a way to address this challenge is through members appreciating the WBC community as *koinonia*. Indeed, viewing the WBC community in such a way encourages the dynamic growth in *koinonia*, which ultimately is the action of the community "being made holy" – its ecumenical charism.

Nevertheless, College members' feelings of isolation influence WBC's climate. Comments from College members exemplify this situation. Matthew believes: "The College's climate is influenced by everyone deciding their own way and not determined by leadership" (Matthew, 11/6/2010). Similarly, Paul claims: "Teachers will basically take out what they will hold to personally and they will then transfer and make that a part of their climate" (Paul, 30/7/2010). A plausible rationale for this is presented by Will. "I think, we're not quite there yet [ecumenical charism] and the climate does change with new aspects of our operational plan or whoever's now in that management role or restructure or whatever the case is" (Will, 11/6/2010). Therefore, WBC's climate is inadequate.

The reality is this: the College's leadership cannot force "feelings" onto members of the College (Stolp & Smith, 1995). Indeed, exerting "power over people" has produced a negative College climate. Staff feel devalued and isolated, such feelings are not conducive to generating a meaningful ecumenical climate.

A possible strategy to address this challenge is to encourage relationship building (Sergiovanni, 1994b). Relationship building may offer an alternative to power over people to one of influential leadership. Indeed, attempting to impose a climate through power over people is futile. WBC members may comply with leaderships' directives, but their attitudes will remain resistive.

6.5.2 Atmosphere of resistance

Chapter Five, "Presentation of New Understandings", identified that WBC members believe there is an unsettling "feeling" to the College's climate. As previously discussed (see Section

6.5.1, Relationships matter), leadership exerted its power to influence the College's climate. Not surprisingly, staff members resisted such intrusions by becoming resistive to leadership initiatives.

The conflict between College leadership and staff has generated an unsettling climate. Matthew believes: "I think it [negative climate] is again linked to where the place has been in the past. I know other schools where they're all over you just as much, yet the perception [unsettled feeling] isn't there ... I think it's because of the constant change of what's expected" (Matthew, 11/6/2010). These constant changes, which failed to involve staff, generated hostile responses from them. Not surprisingly, members resisted constant changes.

WBC members' resistance to the constant changes may be a direct reaction to leadership's attempt to shift the College's culture. Terry identifies this negative resistance: "... teachers may be a bit more resistant to what is going on [shift in culture] in the life of the College and the changes that happen because there's always been change since I've arrived" (Terry, 22/3/2010). College leadership's action in labelling the existing culture as a "State School culture" has offended staff members, and as a result generated an increased resistance to change. Staff member have responded by seeking to justify the existing ethos, culture and climate, labelling this as "WBC identity".

Indeed, either intentionally or not, leadership's actions have resulted in College members generating mistrust between each other. Mary identifies this mistrust: "[Staff] are very unsettled day to day, there is a level of mistrust amongst staff that impacts on day-to-day activities, day-to-

day decisions that are made” (Mary, 2/6/2010). As a result, the College’s climate is divisive. This dynamic invites further research.

Notwithstanding, one way to approach this challenge is again through engaging with people-centred ecumenism. Such an approach seeks to move beyond divisions and build relationships (Kinnamon, 2003). Correspondingly, WBC’s members may generate richer community experiences of fellowship building through receptive learning of each other’s life-world experiences (Hall & Rowell, 2007). Generating a positive and meaningful ecumenical climate may occur when all members share a desire for fellowship building for the College’s common good (Valentine et al., 2004).

6.5.3 Lack of purpose

Chapter Five, “Presentation of New Understandings”, identified that WBC members believe that the sponsoring churches have little interest in engaging in College life. Indeed, members believe the sponsoring churches appeared reluctant to actively communicate their own vision and mission for the College, to bring “church” to the Woodland Brook community.

The WBC community considers the Board members to be the representatives for the two churches. WBC members acknowledge that the Board members are responsible for orchestrating the churches’ vision and mission. However, the Board members are responsible for the governance of the College as a legal entity. As the College has the legal status as an entity (Educang Limited), WBC Board members, not the sponsoring churches, are ultimately

accountable for the College. Research (Hillman, 2002) identifies that board or governing representatives are responsible to:

... the Council [Board] and its constitution, to the Laws applicable to the operation of the Incorporated Association, to Civil Law in general, and to both the stakeholders they represent and those other groups with a legitimate interest in the well being of the School.” (p. 2)

In other words, WBC’s Board members cannot solely represent the churches’ interests. Indeed, the diligence of Board members’ accountability raises questions regarding the structure of the governance and leadership established for WBC if it is to fulfil the churches’ vision and mission. This dynamic invites further research.

Notwithstanding, what emerges from this study is that WBC members identify the Board members to be the sponsoring churches’ key representatives. Indeed, the lack of communication between Board and College members has generated the opinion among staff that both churches’ interest in the College has substantially declined. Isaac offers this observation: “I’ve always seen the Board as being very distant to the operational side of the College, always distant. I don’t know if they’ve been [directed], [or] if that was intended [from the churches]” (Isaac, 26/7/2010). This opinion is supported by Will:

There have been limited occasions where we have had the opportunity to talk with Board members, who are representative of the churches. Information doesn’t filter down, that involvement is unknown to the majority of people. I think they are a little too removed from the day-to-day operation. (Will, 11/6/2010)

WBC members' expectations that Board members should be more involved in the day-to-day operations of the College raises the question: What should be the Board members' role within the operations of the College? Board members need to negotiate between the interest of the shareholder (churches) and the stakeholders (school). There has been much debate on whether the role of governance (Board's actions) is for the sake of the immediate shareholder or the wider stakeholders (Carrillo, 2007). School boards have to fulfil conformance, compliance and performance indicators (Hilmer, 1999). The development of such structures usually occurs from principles that the Board initially adopts from their philosophical and theoretical appreciation of the role of governance (Hilmer, 1999). Nonetheless, emerging from this study are WBC members' misunderstandings of the Board members' role within the life of the College. However, members' misunderstandings of the Board's role originate in the organisational structure that the churches adopted for WBC. This issue invites further research.

The sponsoring churches' lack of engagement in the day-to-day life of the College exemplifies their limited influence on WBC's climate. Not surprisingly, WBC members have had limited contact with church representatives (clergy and lay). As a result, members feel the churches are distant from the College. Furthermore, College members have a limited understanding of the churches' vision and mission for the College. The reason for this is because it is either an oversight in procedural planning or the result of leadership (including the Board) policy. What this study concludes is that WBC members are uncertain as to the purpose of the College.

The lack of WBC members' understandings of the purpose of the College influences its climate and cultural identity. Historically, "... the vision and the commitment of the College's significant

decision makers [churches' representatives] to build up God's kingdom in Woodland Brook ... by providing Christian witness through the vehicle of high quality, holistic education"

(*Prospectus* circa 1999). Isaac, a long-term employee, concludes that initially the churches' vision and mission had a "... daily presence within the College community under the former Executive Principal" (Isaac, 26/7/2010). However, since 2005, with the founding Executive Principal's departure and the changes introduced by the new Executive Principal, the College's vision and mission became less identifiable in daily events. This is evident in the comments made by Will:

... the vision that the churches would like us to be, the way that our [College] community connects with the [Woodland Brook community], then I think we need to have more of a presence of our churches within our school. (Will, 11/6/2010)

As the sponsoring churches' vision and mission become less noticeable in the day-to-day operations, the College's climate reflects this, leading to a sense of purposelessness. As Gaby comments: "It's a place without a soul ... I think the school just really struggles to find out who we [are] catering for and why we [are] doing what we're doing" (Gaby, 21/6/2010). Gaby's candid comment implies that the College's supposed mission and vision have minimum influence on the College's policies and practices.

The reality is this: as an ecumenical agency of the Anglican and Uniting churches, WBC community is called to be "Church" for the Woodland Brook community. The failure of the College members to be consciously aware of the churches' vision and mission questions the purpose of WBC. This issue invites discussion from leadership, governance and the churches on the fundamental organisation of WBC.

6.5.4 Summary

The research confirms that having an effective ecumenical climate generates meaningfulness for the WBC community. There is support from the literature that the College's climate is generated from members' understandings of "the impressions, feelings, and expectations ... of the school organization" (Stolp & Smith, 1995, p. 15). Additionally, this study supports research that a climatic atmosphere at some point in time is likely to become part of the cultural identity.

A lack of initial planning for the College's ecumenical culture has led to challenges, particularly as the present leadership seeks cultural changes. This has resulted in resistance from members of the WBC community. This study identifies that planning for relational leadership behaviour is considered important in establishing a positive climate, where members of the College community feel valued.

The sponsoring churches' behaviours in orchestrating the structure of the College's governance and leadership have led College members to form the opinion that the churches are not interested in being involved in the day-to-day operation of WBC. Furthermore, members of the College community have a limited understanding of how to implement the churches' vision and mission. The limited understandings of the churches' vision and mission ultimately influence WBC's identity.

6.6 Generating a Relational Ecumenical Leadership

The fifth issue inviting discussion is “generating a relational ecumenical leadership”, which is generated from the fifth specific research question: How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership? There is agreement from the various participants that having a relational style (behaviour) of leadership is considered appropriate for an ecumenical context.

As previously discussed, this study identifies that planning for an ecumenical leadership model is considered pivotal to generating the College’s ecumenical climate, culture and ethos. Research (Komives et al., 2013; Leithwood, 2005) concludes that leadership may be categorised into two groups: what leaders actually do and what leaders need to be. Sergiovanni (2000, 2001), a well-respected researcher on school leadership, exemplifies the necessity to prioritise what leaders need to be (1994b). This priority is to focus on the development of appropriate behaviours and qualities needed by individuals for leadership.

Chapter Five, “Presentation of New Understandings”, identified that there are challenges in generating authentic leadership behaviours and qualities for leaders of the WBC community. Indeed, this study identifies that WBC’s ecumenical leadership is fictional.

There are several new understandings that invite discussion among the sponsoring churches. Such communication may lead to an authentic ecumenical leadership for WBC. The following two new understandings are discussed:

1. a call for relational leadership
2. a need for Churches of influence.

6.6.1 A call for relational leadership

Chapter Five, “Presentation of New Understandings”, identified that WBC members believe that a particular ecumenical type of relational leadership is necessary for the College. WBC members have identified two complimentary styles of leadership that they believe align with biblical principles. The styles of “servant” and “relational” leadership are integrated to form the concept “servanthood”, which is considered appropriate for an ecumenical school.

As previously discussed (see Section 6.5.1, Relationships matter), leadership exerted its authority to influence the College’s culture and climate. The College’s leadership behaviour has been authoritarian in managing the College community. Research (Komives et al., 2013; Starratt, 2004) identifies that authentic leadership is more than managing the College; it is relationship building.

WBC’s unique ecumenical context challenges leadership to go beyond their organisational and structural responsibilities. It may be self-explanatory, but leaders at WBC need to have a passion “to advance the visible unity of the Anglican and Uniting Churches in Australia at every level, as a contribution to the full visible unity of the Church of Christ” (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2). Therefore, if WBC’s leadership is to be authentically ecumenical, leaders need to possess an ecumenical vision and commitment. Ecumenical leaders need to be committed to being “ontologically ecumenical”.

Leadership in an ecumenical setting requires leaders to operate within spheres of divergence, as leaders require some way of accommodating the sponsoring churches' divergences. According to Colin, WBC's leadership is unable to accommodate these differences and diversities. "[I]f people can't, by the very nature of differences, come together to expand positively, share where we come from in our journeys, why I value what I value, why somebody else values something different, then we will never truly be ecumenical" (Colin, 2/6/2010). Indeed, an insightful comment from Julie demonstrates the lack of any conceptual framework of an ecumenical leadership style. She alleges: "You're not really getting a particular leadership that is ecumenical" (Julie, 20/9/2010). The questioning of the initial style and framework of leadership led Colin to conclude:

Leaders need to genuinely value the fact that people think differently than they do and part of what we should develop as a skill [in leadership] is to not be threatened by the fact that people do think differently. Because we can have a healthy debate if we need to or simply express it and move forward together, knowing that bringing that together the goal is achieved. (Colin, 2/6/2010)

This study is unable to identify if this challenge has been seriously addressed. This dynamic invites further research.

Furthermore, WBC's leadership structure is based on a corporate hierarchical approach. Leadership in school settings typically lacks authentic identity. Indeed, more often than not, leaders adopt behaviours (models and styles) from the corporate business world, which is problematic, according to research from Sergiovanni (1994b). There is a suspicion that the initial choosing of the corporate model of a CEO (Executive Principal) and CFO was due in part to there being no ecumenical model to adopt at the time. Mary offers an explanation:

That was set up because when they made an ecumenical school they set it up as a CEO [Executive Principal] at the top and that model of leadership has stuck throughout the years and made it leadership with a capital L and I think this was the wrong model.

(Mary, 2/6/2010)

The sponsoring churches entered into a mutual ownership, utilising a corporate company entity (a registered trading company); hence, the establishment of a corporate hierarchy accompanied the adoption of this structure. There is a warning from Sergiovanni (1984, 1991, 1992) for this type of leadership at the College. He argues against adopting a corporate style of leadership, even if it seems to be successful, as the style does not address the desired world of WBC's uniqueness.

Nevertheless, a corporate model was established and thereafter, "successful leaders" were aspiring leaders who were able to adapt appropriately within a company structure. Therefore, leading the College community ecumenically to realise the churches' vision and mission of being Church for the Woodland Brook community became inconsequential. The very corporate structure that Sergiovanni (1984, 1991, 1992) warns against, even if it may be successful in managing and administering, became the norm for succeeding WBC leaders.

A possible response to this challenge is through developing relationally ecumenical leadership that establishes a vision for the unity of WBC's community. Such a vision generates interdependence through experiencing communion (*koinonia*). Indeed, the principles of relational leadership are harmonious with ecumenical principles through cooperation and the desire to achieve visible Christian unity. As a result, WBC's community may realise the

covenant established by the Anglican and Uniting churches (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010).

Contemporary ecumenism identifies the need to generate new ways of being ecumenical and receptive ecumenism explicitly draws out the interpersonal and structural-institutional relationships that are needed for ecumenical leadership (Byamungu, 2009). A clear understanding of an ecclesiological framework ought to be used as a structural basis for “skilling” leaders within the ecumenical context. Additionally, openness to self-critical processes needs to be developed, so diversity and differences are not perceived as threatening. Conversely, this study identifies that WBC’s leadership style has not been and is not consonant with ecumenical principles.

One way to approach this challenge is to develop leadership that promotes ecumenical principles of “discipling” WBC’s members. Indeed, leadership that prioritises communion (*koinonia*) building among WBC’s members may be considered appropriate. Consequently, an effective ecumenical leader focuses on discipling WBC’s members through positive relationship building. Such ecumenical leadership is relational. Therefore, leadership is the practice of empowering WBC’s members through discipling to achieve a shared College vision and mission.

The purpose of the College is to realise the vision and mission of the sponsoring churches, and building positive purpose is a function of leadership. A possible strategy to evaluate leadership in an ecumenical setting is offered by Komives et al:

Leadership is purposeful and builds commitment towards positive purposes that are inclusive of people ... [with] diverse points of view, empowers those involved, is ethical,

and recognizes that all of these elements are accomplished by being process-oriented. (p. 94)

This study identifies that dissonance has occurred between the historical style of leadership at the College and the members' expectation of an authentic ecumenical leadership style. An aspiring leadership style (behaviour) based on relational qualities that incorporate ecumenical principles emerges as a new understanding from this research. Indeed, issues with the College's leadership style and operational structure invite further research.

6.6.2 A need for churches of influence

Chapter Five, "Presentation of New Understandings", identified that WBC members overwhelmingly believe that the sponsoring churches exercise minimal influence in developing an ecumenical leadership style. Indeed, previous discussions on the College's ethos, culture and climate illustrate a lack of intent from the sponsoring churches in the pursuit of this goal. WBC's members believe the churches should ensure increased accountability from leadership.

This study identifies that WBC's ecumenical leadership is non-existent. A possible rationale for this outcome is the adoption of a corporate leadership model by Executive Principals (see Section 6.6.1, A call for relational leadership). With both active and passive encouragement from the sponsoring Churches, College Executive Principals have institutionalised a corporate leadership model with a hierarchical operating structure. Ecumenical values are unable to be entertained in such a model. Terry offers an explanation for the decline of ecumenical values:

The fact that both [churches] were a bit hands off was probably not that helpful. In a sense, almost letting Educang make their [churches'] decisions, without holding them

responsible for their actions. It needed an active relationship involved in the College from both churches ... so that people had some sense that leadership had really nussed out what it meant to be ecumenical. (Terry, 22/3/2010)

The ineffectiveness of the sponsoring churches to influence the development of an ecumenical leadership model is a considerable shortcoming. Indeed, the sponsoring churches' vision and mission ought to have a compelling influence on the style of leadership adopted for the College.

Terry, from his position as a chaplain, explains:

I think that's probably been one of the big challenges for management of [the] College, because each church has its own structures and its own accountabilities and styles of doing leadership and from what I know of the history of this place, in a sense neither got that involved in creating the ecumenical setting as perhaps they should, which in terms of leadership has led to some of the problems. (Terry, 22/3/2010)

Additionally, several other members' observations, from different perspectives within the College, serve to illustrate the sponsoring churches' ineffectiveness. Gaby, in her role in middle management, adds this observation: "[A]s for the churches, I couldn't say they do anything really to help in that [leadership] situation. What would they know, really?" (Gaby, 21/6/2010).

Matthew responds from a teacher's position: "I don't know what they've [churches] done, I don't really know what has occurred of any significance. But it [leadership] needs a strong[er] direction. It needs to know where it's going and the churches don't do that" (Matthew, 11/6/2010). Finally, Colin, from his role in Human Relations, suggests: "I don't think the churches contributed to the leadership and I don't understand why that is ... From what I have observed, I don't think the churches have, do a great deal in leadership" (Colin, 2/6/2010). The

comments serve to illustrate the belief that the churches' ineffectiveness is widespread among WBC members.

As discussed previously, a way to respond to this challenge is through developing a leadership style that is ecumenically relational. There is support for the two churches to create such an approach to the College in the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010), as Commitment 6 affirms: “We will take all possible steps to a closer fellowship in as many areas of Christian life and witness as possible” (p. 2). The challenge for the churches is what and how they “take all possible steps” (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010, p. 2).

The reality at WBC is this: the sponsoring churches failed to establish an ecumenical leadership model that could purposefully lead the College members in implementing their vision and mission – to be “Church” for the Woodland Brook community.

6.6.3 Summary

The research concludes that there is a need to generate a relationally ecumenical model (behaviour) of leadership. School culture is underpinned by appropriate leadership. Consequently, successful schools prioritise the development of leaders' behaviours and qualities (Komives et al., 2013; Leithwood, 2005). Such a priority engages leaders less in directly managing people to nurturing the College's ethos, culture and climate. This study concludes that it is crucial for the success of the churches' vision and mission for WBC that leadership be ecumenically relational.

Nevertheless, there is a belief that the sponsoring churches exercise minimal influence in developing an ecumenical leadership style. As the churches supported the College's corporate leadership model and its hierarchical operating structure, an ecumenical identity was unable to grow. The sponsoring churches' negligible influence in developing an ecumenical leadership style for the College has impeded the establishment of an authentic ecumenical agency of the churches.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has interrogated selected new understandings identified in Chapter Five, "Presentation of New Understandings", with the scholarly literature. As a result, four conclusions have been generated.

The first conclusion concerns how conflicting ecclesiological perspectives have generated conflicting responses to developing an ecumenical ethos, culture, climate and leadership. This lack of a shared vision has had a debilitating influence on the nurturing of an ecumenical charism in the College. Notwithstanding, both the Anglican and Uniting churches nationally have affirmed that they will support a unified approach through the adoption of the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (Anglican Church of Australia & Uniting Church in Australia, 2010). Nevertheless, this divergence of views raises fundamental issues relating to compliance with policies and practices by the respective churches' education agencies.

The second conclusion concerns the Anglican and Uniting churches' influences on the College. The paucity of theological guidance from the churches had curtailed the growth of an authentically ecumenical charism. Subsequently, WBC members have addressed this lacuna by developing their own understandings of being ecumenical. However, such initiatives have minimised the possibility of a shared vision to develop an ecumenical mission. The research concludes that the sponsoring churches are incapable of promoting the College to function ecumenically.

The third conclusion concerns how relationships between WBC members are nurtured. College staff members' feelings of isolation and devaluation have generated low staff morale. In addition, chaplains find negotiating a "collaborative spirit" challenging, believing they have to relinquish their denominational obligations to fulfil their supposed ecumenical role. Such beliefs have been catalytic for relationship conflict between chaplains, staff members and leadership. The research identifies that the interrelationships of WBC members are not conducive to fellowship building, which inhibits the generation of an authentic ecumenical charism.

The fourth conclusion concerns how leadership behaviour accommodates the differences and diversities of the ecumenical context. The College's charism is underpinned by appropriate leadership, and the College's authoritarian model has not been beneficial to the development of an ecumenical charism. This study concludes that to be authentically ecumenical, a servant-relational model of leadership is a prerequisite dynamic that invites cultivation among WBC leaders.

A discussion of these conclusions and recommendations emerging from this study are addressed in the final chapter.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions and recommendations, and suggest possible future research emerging from this study. This chapter also demonstrates how the research contributes to scholarship.

7.2 Research Design

The purpose of this study is to explore how members of WBC understand and experience what it means to be involved in an ecumenical school and how they cultivate its ecumenical charism.

The conceptual framework synthesises the literature into five areas: ecumenism, ethos, culture, climate and leadership. The research design focuses on five specific research questions:

How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?

This study adopts a constructionist epistemology, which holds that “reality is socially constructed by and between the persons who experience it” (Darlaston-Jones, 2007, p. 19).

Through people’s assumptions and social interaction, “ways of knowing” are constructed by interactions through “life-world” experiences (Crotty, 1998; O'Brien, 2006). Therefore, an

interpretivist approach, through the lens of symbolic interactionism (SI), is adopted as a suitable theoretical perspective for this study.

This is the theoretical perspective used to understand how WBC members understand and experience ecumenical charism. As this study explores this phenomenon within a particular setting, a case study is used as the orchestrating rationale for this research. The case study is bound by the purposive selected participants from the WBC community. Three strategies were chosen to gather data for the research:

1. review of documentation (paper and electronic)
2. semi-structured one-on-one interviews (n=14)
3. focus groups (n=5).

The data-gathering processes, participant selection and conduct of the study conformed to ethical clearance granted by the ACU Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A).

7.3 Limitations of the Research

This research is conducted within an ecumenical P-12 Christian college (WBC) jointly owned and sponsored by the Anglican and Uniting churches in Queensland. This study's trustworthiness (see Section 4.7, Verification) is established and assured through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, any transferability to another context is made by readers through their engagement with the discussion and understandings of the applicability of the research (Trochim, 2006).

Possible limitations of the research are the professional and personal relationship that exists between myself as both a staff member (head of department) and researcher, and with the research participants. Such an influence is acknowledged as a limitation and is discussed in Section 4.9, Ethical Issues.

7.4 Research Questions, New Understandings

This section addresses each of the specific research questions that focused the conduct of this study.

7.4.1 Specific research question one:

How do Woodland Brook College members understand ecumenism?

This study concludes that the members of WBC's community understand they have a particular role and responsibility as an ecumenical agency of the Anglican and Uniting churches. However, there is a lack of clarity in identifying and defining precisely what these roles and responsibilities are.

In order to work collaboratively, to embrace a shared vision and to worship as a community, College members appear to understand ecumenical principles that supposedly underpin the College's ethos and culture. What they fail to understand is how to implement these principles at the College. As a result, the goal of WBC being an authentic ecumenical school is regrettably at the aspiration stage.

7.4.2 Specific research question two:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical ethos?

This study concludes that the members of WBC's community understand that members' interrelationships are at the core of the College's ethos. However, the research affirms that the College's ethos is not conducive to "fellowship building" between the sponsoring churches and members of the College community. The College's sponsored "actors" and "stories" have failed to contribute to its ecumenical values and principles, and as a consequence have had little influence on the College's ethos. This has led to WBC members' "life-world" experiences becoming the major influence on the College's ethos. Consequently, there is dissonance between what the College leadership understands as an ecumenical College and that understood by the community. Clearly, there are two contrasting life-worlds at play. A possible strategy to address this dissonance is through developing a "life-force" of *koinonia*. The sponsoring churches' reluctance in establishing a mutually acceptable ecumenical framework for WBC's ethos has resulted in a major lack of clarity of what constitutes "being ecumenical".

7.4.3 Specific research question three:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical culture?

This study concludes that the members of WBC's community understand that culture needs to be planned, clearly recognisable and pervasive, and be owned by community members. Research (Habermas, 1987) confirms that school culture is underpinned by the dominant "*world* paradigm" to form "cultural identity" (p. 115). Indeed, this study affirms the dominance of the

life-world paradigm in forming the College's authentic cultural identity. Indeed, staff negotiate their values and beliefs through their life-world experiences. As staff undertake this process, they generate a vibrant dynamic that becomes the life-blood of the College's culture.

In addition, the research establishes that there is an expectation that leadership develops and consolidates the College's cultural identity through a unifying "ecumenical myth" created by the churches. However, the research concludes that the sponsoring churches' vision of the foundational ecumenical myth for the College has evaporated. Therefore, this study concludes that there has been a failure to achieve some compatibility between the two sponsoring churches' visions for WBC. This has been the primary explanation for WBC's failure to generate an ecumenical charism.

A lack of planning by leadership and the sponsoring churches generated a cultural identity dilemma for the WBC community. Interrogating the ecclesiological models of the Anglican and Uniting churches offers a possible understanding for the cause of this cultural dilemma. Subsequently, the initiative by the new leadership to promote a singular denominational identity in the College has generated discord between the Anglican Church's stated affirmations and commitments in the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010). The aspiration that WBC be ecumenical is no longer entertained.

7.4.4 Specific research question four:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical climate?

This study concludes that in order to establish a climate where members of the College community feel valued, the adoption of a servant-relational leadership model is necessary. As the new leadership changes WBC's existing culture, resistance from members of the community has occurred. Indeed, the organisational structure of the College has led members to believe that the sponsoring churches have little interest in engaging in College life. This study concludes that College members have little understanding of the College's purpose.

7.4.5 Specific research question five:

How do Woodland Brook College members experience ecumenical leadership?

This study concludes that the members of WBC's community advocate that the preferred model of leadership be a servant-relational ecumenical model. WBC members recommend a leadership that incorporates servant-relational and ecumenical principles. WBC's leadership has not been able to accommodate the differences within the ecumenical context. The research confirms that the College cannot be authentically ecumenical without a relational ecumenical model of leadership. The success of the sponsoring churches' vision and mission for the College is dependent on the adoption of this model of leadership.

WBC's community members believe the sponsoring churches exercise minimal influence in developing an ecumenical leadership model. Consequently, the sponsoring churches have failed

to generate an authentic relational ecumenical model of leadership. What emerges from the research is the churches' failure to establish a College leadership model that could fulfil their vision and mission, to be "Church" for the Woodland Brook community. This research concludes that the problems arising with WBC's leadership practices and operational structure invite further research.

7.5 Conclusions of this Study

This study concludes that an authentic ecumenical charism may be cultivated by a planned engagement from the sponsoring churches in the life of the College. Through this engagement, community members may become empowered by a spirit of *koinonia*. A representation of this dynamic is presented in Figure 7.1.

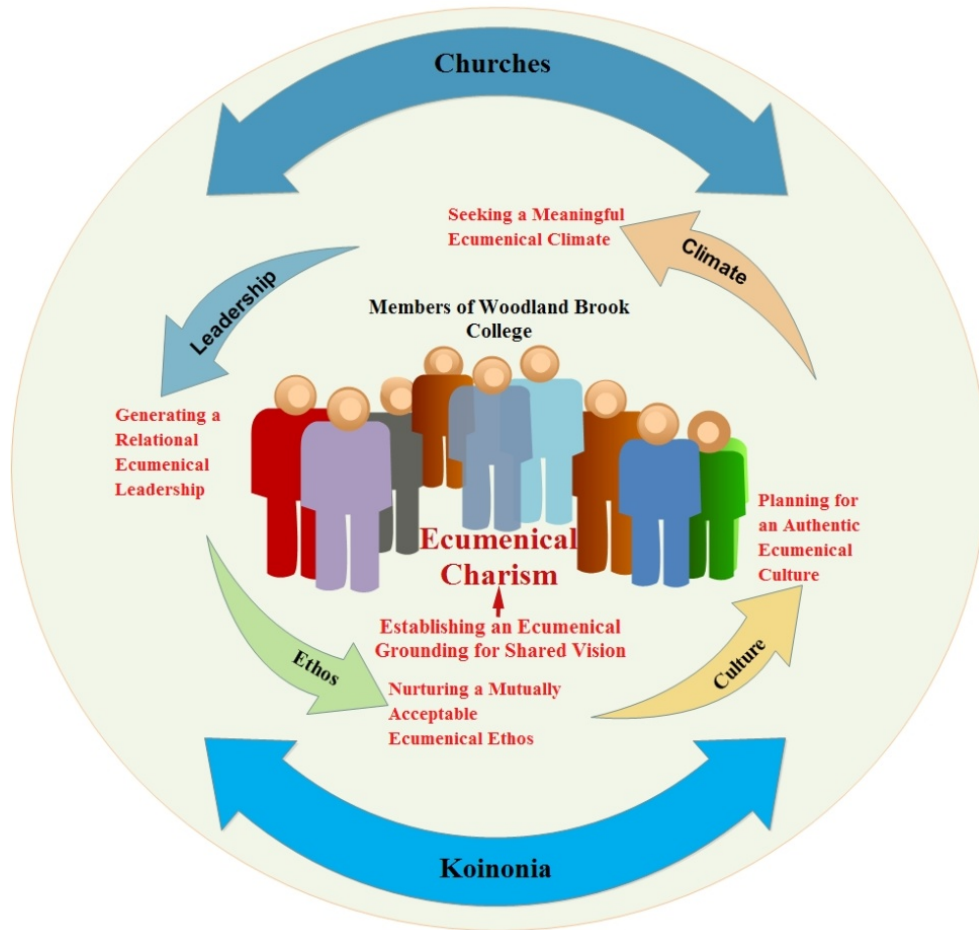


Figure 7.1. Conceptual Framework of New Understandings

7.5.1 Contributions to new knowledge

The research generates two conclusions that contribute to new knowledge:

1. acting and being ecumenical
2. fellowship building.

7.5.1.1 Acting ecumenical and being ecumenical

The initial contributions to new knowledge are the two concepts of “acting ecumenical” and “being ecumenical”. These concepts are influenced by two interrelated dynamics. The

development of multiple individual “root images” of understanding ecumenism generates a “space of tension” between members of WBC’s community. This space of tension is where WBC members believe they are acting ecumenical. Consequently, acting ecumenically is interpreted as seeking to resolve challenges in the spirit of the Gospel, while respecting individual church traditions.

Such interpretations inadequately propose that being ecumenical is the result of resolving the community’s challenges. These challenges are exemplified by the sponsoring churches’ failure to generate shared ecumenical Christian worship, symbols, ceremonies and artefacts.

One way to approach this challenge is through the self-critical principle emerging from receptive ecumenism (Kelly, 2011). Through WBC members’ willingness to embrace a critical attitude to what constitutes an ecumenical school, an ecumenical spirituality may mature. Moreover, such an ecumenical spirituality may generate a shared vision among WBC’s members. Spirituality that generates authentic Christian fellowship is foundational for a shared ecumenical vision. As Christian fellowship offers unifying practices, it may address the challenges of individualism and denominationalism.

7.5.1.2 Fellowship building

The second contribution to new knowledge is the concept of “fellowship building”. This concept is underpinned by the dynamic interrelationships of people, who are the life-force of ecumenical communities. Consequently, fellowship building occurs as people strive through “receptive learning” to be grounded in people-centred expressions of ecumenism. People-centred

ecumenism emanates from the life-world of members of the ecumenical community. As such, the purpose of such an ecumenism is to address that community's needs and desires. People become enlivened to creative, new ways of expressing ecumenism on a person-to-person basis. Through people-centred ecumenism, people may become empowered with a life-force of *koinonia*, generating the vital influence nurturing a visible unified agency of the Church. As members of the community commit themselves to *koinonia*, more giving relationships emerge. This dynamic originates from their oneness in Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, the generation of an ecumenical framework based on fellowship building is not individualistic, as people-centred ecumenism circumvents multiple life-world experiences of individuals, becoming the prime influence in generating an ecumenical framework.

Consequently, people-centred ecumenism encourages diversity in ecumenical life and inclusiveness in ecumenical reflection and action. These are ecumenical principles that churches encourage.

7.5.2 Contributions to practice

The research generates two conclusions that contribute to practice:

1. ecumenical charism
2. relational leadership.

7.5.2.1 Ecumenical charism

The first conclusion that contributes to practice is establishing an ecumenical charism to inform identity. There is an expectation that leadership develops and consolidates the College's cultural

identity through a unifying ecumenical myth generated by the churches. However, this research concludes that the churches' vision of the foundational ecumenical myth for the College has largely evaporated. A lack of planning by leadership and the sponsoring churches generated a cultural identity dilemma for the WBC community. The cultural dilemma and failure to integrate the two churches' visions, through the foundational ecumenical myth, resulted in an inauthentic ecumenical charism. Consequently, there is a need to build up a life-force of spiritual ecumenism of the heart, mind and will through receptive learning, grounded in people-centred expressions of ecumenism.

7.5.2.2 Relational leadership

The second conclusion that contributes to practice is the necessity for the adoption of a relationally ecumenical leadership model. This study concludes that to be authentically ecumenical requires a servant-relational model of leadership. Indeed, the success of the churches' vision and mission is dependent on the development of such a model. There is a need to develop a model of leadership that incorporates both relational qualities and ecumenical principles. This model of leadership accommodates the differences and diversities of the ecumenical context. Consequently, it is a prerequisite that the sponsoring churches influence the development of such a model of leadership. What emerges from this study is that the sponsoring churches have failed to establish an ecumenical leadership model that could successfully lead the College members in implementing their vision and mission – to be “Church” for the Woodland Brook community.

7.6 Recommendations from the Research

This research offers three policy recommendations. The recommendations are grouped as:

1. sponsoring churches
2. church agencies
3. suggested future research.

7.6.1 Ecumenical sponsoring churches

1. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be developed from the affirmations and commitments in the Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association (2010). The MOU becomes the foundation on which a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is developed. This, in turn becomes and remains foundational in developing the necessary organisational structures (Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.4.2, 6.4.3, 6.5.3, 6.6.2).
2. A Role of Responsibility policy be developed that defines the role of the chaplains, ministering in an ecumenical school (Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.4.2, 6.5.1).
3. A Being Ecumenical policy be developed to address “ways of being” an ecumenical worshipping community (Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.4.2, 6.5.3).
4. An Orientation for Ecumenical Leadership procedure and training model be developed that addresses the adopted ecumenical principles for the ecumenical context, developing skills in ecumenical discipleship and fostering a commitment to being ontologically ecumenical (Sections 6.5.2, 6.6.1).
5. A Role Description for Local Churches be developed to articulate clearly the responsibilities and the role of the local sponsoring churches’ involvement within the agency (Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2).

7.6.2 Ecumenical church agencies

1. An Ecumenical Vision Statement be cooperatively developed to address the mission of the agency, stating the ecclesiological understanding of the sponsoring churches (Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2).
2. An Ecumenical Monitoring Group be organised from members of the agency and local sponsoring churches. Its role is to review, monitor and advise sponsoring churches' leadership. This group would act as the conduit between the churches and support the chaplain/s. (Sections 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.2, 6.5.3).
3. A Community Relationship Framework be developed based on receptive learning processes to support the community in maintaining a *koinonia* community (Sections 6.2.1, 6.6.1).
4. A Discipleship Program be developed, grounded in the principles of people-centred ecumenism for members of the community (Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.4.2, 6.5.1).
5. The Honoured Actors should be identified to embody the desired agency's ecumenical charism (Sections 6.2.1, 6.3.2).

7.6.3 Suggestions for future research

1. Chaplaincy in an ecumenical context requires chaplains to accommodate different Christian practices. Further research may explore the functions chaplains play within the agency and associated support mechanisms needed for them to successfully minister (Section 6.3.1).
2. Leadership in an ecumenical context requires leaders and principals to operate within spheres of divergence, as they respectfully explore accommodating sponsoring churches'

differences. This dynamic of ecumenical leadership invites further research (Section 6.6.1).

3. Ecclesiology in an ecumenical context informs the foundational structural principles that are crucial for the ecumenical success of the agency. Further research may explore ways of overcoming ecclesiological, theological and doctrinal difficulties within developing organisational structures of operation (Sections 6.5.3).
4. The Anglican – Uniting Church Covenant of Association demonstrates the desire of the two churches to act and be ecumenical. However, the failure of implementing WBC's mission and vision as an ecumenical agency raises a perplexing disconnection between the desires and responses of the churches. Further research exploring why this disconnection is invited (Section 6.4.3).

7.7 Closing Comment

Australia's social and religious composition has changed in recent years (Bouma, 2006).

Christian churches have responded to this change by undertaking new ecumenical ministries and missionary endeavours (Bouma, 2006). Australian Christian churches are to be encouraged to further engage in developing ecumenical policies, like the Anglican and Uniting Church churches' Covenant of Association (2010). This research has generated new understandings that enhance existing understanding of ecumenical endeavours and identifies fundamental issues in developing an authentic ecumenical charism. The recommendations generated from the research seek to address these fundamental issues and thereby assist in the success of future ecumenical endeavours.

Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Professor Peta Goldberg Brisbane Campus

Co-Investigators: Dr Maurice Ryan Brisbane Campus

Student Researcher: Mr Trevor Collie Brisbane Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:

Exploring how the ethos, culture, climate and leadership influence an ecumenical Uniting - Anglican Church P-12 College. (Exploring ethos, culture, climate and leadership in an ecumenical college.

for the period: 22 February 2010 to 31 August 2010

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: Q2009 56

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (2007)* apply:

- (i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
 - security of records
 - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
 - compliance with special conditions, and
- (ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
 - proposed changes to the protocol
 - unforeseen circumstances or events
 - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than low risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of negligible risk and low risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

K. Pashley

Signed: Date: 22 February 2010
(Research Services Officer, McAuley Campus)

Appendix B: Consent Form – Adult Individual Interviews

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



CONSENT FORM – ADULT INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Exploring how the ethos, culture, climate and leadership influence an ecumenical Uniting – Anglican Church P-12 College.

SUPERVISOR: Professor Peta Goldberg

RESEARCHER: Mr Trevor Collie

I (*the participant*) have read and understood the information provided in the letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, (an interview that will take approximately one to one-half hours to complete). I am aware that I can withdraw my consent at any time without any consequences in respect to my relationship with the College, College community members, or auspicing Churches. I acknowledge and agree that research data collected for this study might be published or could be provided to other researchers in a manner that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

SIGNATURE: DATE:

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR: DATE:

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER: DATE:

Appendix C: Consent Form – Student Focus Groups

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



CONSENT FORM – STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Exploring how the ethos, culture, climate and leadership influence an ecumenical Uniting – Anglican Church P-12 College.

SUPERVISOR: Professor Peta Goldberg

RESEARCHER: Mr Trevor Collie

I (*the parent/guardian*) have read and understood the information provided in the letter to the Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree that my child, nominated below, may participate in this activity (a student focus group which will take approximately one hour to complete and will be audio taped only). I am aware that I can withdraw my consent at any time without any consequences for my child in respect to their academic, co-curricular or extra-curricular College activities. I acknowledge and agree that research data collected for the study might be published or could be provided to other researchers in a manner that does not identify my child in any way.

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN:

SIGNATURE DATE:

NAME OF CHILD

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR: DATE:

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER: DATE:

ASSENT OF PARTICIPANTS AGED UNDER 18 YEARS

I (*the participant aged under 18 years*) understand what this research project is designed to explore. What I will be asked to do has been explained to me. I agree to take part in the student focus group, which will take approximately one hour to complete and will be video and audio recorded. I am aware that I can withdraw at any time without needing to give a reason for my action.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT AGED UNDER 18:

SIGNATURE:..... DATE:

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR: DATE:

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER:..... DATE:

Appendix D: Information Letter to Adult Participants – Individual Interviews

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



INFORMATION LETTER TO ADULT PARTICIPANTS – INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Exploring how the ethos, culture, climate and leadership influence an ecumenical Uniting – Anglican Church P-12 College.

SUPERVISOR: Professor Peta Goldberg

RESEARCHER: Mr Trevor Collie

PROGRAMME ENROLLED: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project that explores how the ethos, culture, climate and leadership influence an ecumenical school ([redacted] College). The purpose of the project is to understand the stakeholders' perspectives and expectations of an ecumenical Uniting – Anglican Church P-12 College. Trevor Collie is currently seeking to complete an Educational Doctorate Degree and this research is part of the requirements of the degree.

A rationale for this project is that there is a distinct lack of research on what constitutes as a joint-ecumenical Church college. This research seeks to form and fulfil an important part for critical reflection and strategic future planning for the significance and success of joint-ecumenical Church colleges. By providing an opportunity for you, a stakeholder, a voice in the research it is anticipated that the stories generated will tell of the uniqueness of the ethos, culture, climate and leadership of an ecumenical College.

The research will seek your perspectives and expectations of the ethos, culture, climate and leadership of the College. This project makes use of the individual interview method of data collection and you have been purposively selected to participate. The individual interviews are to be recorded and measures (pseudonyms) will be put in place to ensure that participant's names remain confidential in the research reporting and any subsequent publication of the research findings.

In agreeing to participate in this project, a time commitment is required. Individual interview sessions are estimated to range from one to one and a half hours. Session times will be at a convenient time for participants, conducted in normal work hours and will be at the College. A subsequent post-interview review will take place for participants engaged in individual interviews to allow for verification of the discourse.

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In the process of video and audio recording of the individual interviews, the identity of participants will not be disclosed. The research procedures allocate a pseudonym and code to protect all participants, and the researcher uses such pseudonyms and codes in relation to data after transcribing. Any report or publication arising from the project will not identify individuals. It may be the case; however that individuals involved in the individual interviews could have their identity discovered. Any risk that this may occur will be discussed with those participants at both the interview and the post-interview review to ensure that any sensitive issues are managed to the participants' satisfaction.

If you have any questions or queries regarding this project, you can direct these to either the Research Supervisor or the Researcher. Contact details are:

Professor Peta Goldberg (Research Supervisor)
Ph: 07 3623 7303; Fax: 07 3623 7247
E-Mail: peta.goldburg@acu.edu.au
ACU School of Religious Education Brisbane Campus
PO Box 456
Virginia, Qld 4014

Mr Trevor Collie (Researcher)
Ph: 07 3878 3879; Fax 07 3878 3879
E-Mail: trevor.collie@virginbroadband.com.au
1 Spinkbrae Street
Fig Tree Pocket
Qld, 4069

The Research Supervisor and Researcher offer to provide feedback to all participants, upon request, on the results of the project and findings drawn.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign both copies of the Consent Form, retaining one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Researcher in the prepared envelop provided. If you do not wish to participate in this project, please return this letter the associated Consent Form unsigned in the prepared envelop. The decision you make, whether to accept, not accept or withdraw consent at any stage will not prejudice your future treatment, or employment with the College (Educang), likewise with the auspicing Churches. We appreciate your willingness to consider participating in this project.

Appendix E: Information Letter to Student Participants – Focus Groups

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



INFORMATION LETTER TO STUDENT PARTICIPANTS – FOCUS GROUPS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Exploring how the ethos, culture, climate and leadership influence an ecumenical Uniting – Anglican Church P-12 College.

SUPERVISOR: Professor Peta Goldberg

RESEARCHER: Mr Trevor Collie

PROGRAMME ENROLLED: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project that explores how the ethos, culture, climate and leadership influence an ecumenical school ([REDACTED] College). The purpose of the project is to understand the stakeholders' perspectives and expectations of an ecumenical Uniting – Anglican Church P-12 College. Trevor Collie is currently seeking to complete an Educational Doctorate Degree and this research is part of the requirements of the degree.

A rationale for this project is that there is a distinct lack of research on what constitutes as a joint-ecumenical Church college. This research seeks to form and fulfil an important part for critical reflection and strategic future planning for the significance and success of joint-ecumenical Church colleges. By providing an opportunity for you, a stakeholder, a voice in the research it is anticipated that the stories generated will tell of the uniqueness of the ethos, culture, climate and leadership of an ecumenical College.

The research will seek your perspectives and expectations of the ethos, culture, climate and leadership of the College. This project makes use of the focus group method of data collection and you have been purposively selected to participate in one of the focus groups. The focus groups are to be recorded and measures (pseudonyms) will be put in place to ensure that participant's names remain confidential in the research reporting and any subsequent publication of the research findings.

In agreeing to participate in this project, a time commitment is required. Focus groups sessions are estimated to take approximately one hour. Session times will be at a convenient time for participants, conducted in normal College hours over lunch and will be at the College.

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



In the process of video and audio recording of the focus groups, it will be requested that each participant's identity not be disclosed by any other participant to any third party. The research procedures allocate a pseudonym and code to protect all participants, and the researcher uses such pseudonyms and codes in relation to data after transcribing. Any report or publication arising from the project will not identify individuals. It may be the case, however, that individuals involved could have their identity discovered. Any risk that this may occur will be discussed with those participants prior to any focus group session. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that any sensitive issues are managed to the participants' satisfaction.

The researcher (Trevor Collie) is to uphold to guidelines that differential his role as researcher and teacher. These guidelines distinguish the role of researcher, therefore seeking to address any perceived power relationship between students and teacher-researcher.

If you have any questions or queries regarding this project, you can direct these to either the Research Supervisor or the Researcher. Contact details are:

Professor Peta Goldberg (Research Supervisor)
Ph: 07 3623 7303; Fax: 07 3623 7247
E-Mail: peta.goldburg@acu.edu.au
ACU School of Religious Education Brisbane Campus
PO Box 456
Virginia, Qld 4014

Mr Trevor Collie (Researcher)
Ph: 07 3878 3879; Fax 07 3878 3879
E-Mail: trevor.collie@virginbroadband.com.au
1 Spinkbrae Street
Fig Tree Pocket
Qld, 4069

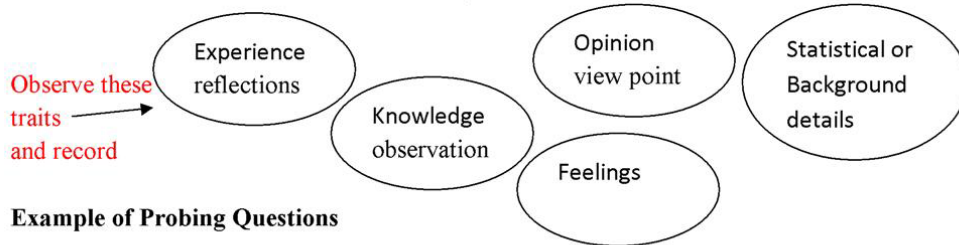
The Research Supervisor and Researcher offer to provide feedback to all participants, upon request, on the results of the project and findings drawn.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign both copies of the Consent Form, retaining one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Researcher in the prepared envelop provided. If you do not wish to participate in this project, please return this letter the associated Consent Form unsigned in the prepared envelop. The decision you make, whether to accept, not accept or withdraw consent at any stage will not prejudice your future treatment or academic progress with the College (Educang), likewise with the auspicing Churches. We appreciate your willingness to consider participating in this project.

Appendix F: Interview and Focus Group Questions

Interview and Focus Group Questions

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups are conducted with an open framework, which allow for focused conversational and two-way communication.



Example of Probing Questions

This research is seeking to explore the ecumenical ethos, culture, climate and leadership of Woodland Brook College.

Can you explain to me your current role with the Woodland Brook College? And has this role changed over your time at Woodland Brook College?

From your knowledge, can you explain what Ecumenical means?

From your experiences and perspective, how has ecumenism manifested itself at Woodland Brook College?

Exploring your point of view, what would be the particular qualities of an ecumenical ethos?

Reflecting on these particularities, have they played a significant part of at Woodland Brook College?

Exploring your experiences and perspective, what would be the particular features of an ecumenical culture?

Reflecting on these particularities, have they played a significant part of at Woodland Brook College?

Exploring your experiences and perspective, what would be the particular atmosphere of an ecumenical climate?

Reflecting on these particularities, have they played a significant part of at Woodland Brook College?

Exploring your experiences and perspective, what would be the particular characteristics of an ecumenical leadership?

Reflecting on these particularities, have they played a significant part of at Woodland Brook College?

Appendix G: Anglican Church – Australian historical background

The birth of the six English colonies in Australia brought with it the Church of England, the “Established Church”. The Anglican Church, or Church of England, was integrally involved with European colonisation. Each of the colonies shared threads of traditional similarities. However, intense and spiteful rivalries were often the norm. Therefore, the colonial churches maintained a less than edifying and encouraging expression of Christian unity. Denominational sectarianism and intercolonial enmities were the norm.

The Anglican Church (Church of England) began its life in Australia as an outpost of the Established Church of England. The assumption was that the church would play the same role within society as it did “at home” in England, of a close Church–State relationship.

Subsequently, the colonial administration had the responsibility to make sure provisions were available for the church, and the church could provide its contribution to civil structure. Even with the support of the state, the foundation period for the Anglican Church in Australia was, like those of the colonies themselves, a difficult time (Rayner, 1962). The succession of the church changing its name reflects the church’s struggle. Initially known as the Church of England (The Established Church) until 1872, when a unification of sorts occurred, the church became the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania. The church maintained this name until 1962, then a move to reflect a broader national identity, Church of England in Australia. The church finally adopted its present name, the Anglican Church of Australia, in 1981 (Justins, 2002).

The early nineteenth century was a time when the Church of England was struggling to be more than a societal support of the old order. The cultural desire of the laity to have “a little piece of England” in the colonies was the sustenance that maintained the Anglican Church in Australia; without this it is questionable if the church would have survived past the early colonial days. A problem for the church lies in the issue that the early clergy were chaplains fulfilling the role of both civil and ecclesiastical officers (Rayner, 1962). Although the cultural yearnings and government support maintained the church, these very aspects became its future hindrance or, as Nolan (2007) suggests, the “demon haunting Australian Anglicanism” (p. 309).

As the Anglican Church aligned itself with the governing authorities and as the authorities sought to impose an English class society throughout the colonies, the church became complicit. The old conscious class distinction of the English society, one mirrored in the established church, was quickly fading with the shift from rural to urban societies. The new bourgeoisie and urban workers strongly objected to the aristocratic order that was associated with the church. Rayner (1962) states, “The fact was that the involvement of the established church in the old order of society that was passing away made it the object of dislike to the urban workers” (p. 5). The numbers of freed convicts and settlers in the Australian colonies grew and so did their distaste for a pretentious class society. The vast majority of convicts and settlers to Australia were from the poor lower classes in the British Isles, and they had new hopes and dreams for a new classless society in Australia. Rayner (1962) highlights this aspect:

The upper classes were hardly represented among the immigrants; there were some of the middle classes, often younger sons who hoped to make their fortune; but the great number of immigrants were from the rural or industrial poor. In short, a very large

proportion of the Anglican immigrants to Queensland came from just those classes with whom the church in England had least contact. (p. 5)

Although convicts and immigrants may have identified themselves with the Church of England in heritage, many found little identification with the church in colonial Australia. This situation intensified when new clergy coming from England sought to implement renewal, like that of the Evangelical Revival. Strong resistance occurred from the established church order which sought to maintain their control over the church. The church in Queensland was strongly resistant to any change in the social church order. Many influential church members sought to maintain closer links with England than other colonies, something that continued at least until the twentieth century.

Appendix H: Uniting Church – Historical background of the three joining churches

An historical overview of the Methodist Church

Methodism started as a renewal movement within the Established Church of England in the eighteenth century by John and Charles Wesley (Mickey, 1984). The Wesley brothers never intended for the renewal movement to move out of the Established Church and, in their own lifetimes, the movement was contained within the Established Church (Cook, 2003). The Wesleys and fellow students at Oxford University started a religious academic group, which was coined by others students as the “Holy Club” (Mickey, 1984, p. 714). In 1738, John and Charles were at a small meeting at Aldersgate Street in London where their hearts were deeply moved; they had the evangelical experience that would soon sweep across all of England and beyond (Mickey, 1984).

The evangelicals stressed a personal experience of salvation by faith alone and this became the foundation for the Methodist movement. The Wesleys’ goal was to make the Church relevant and real to the vast populace; they had a burning passion for all people to come to faith in Jesus Christ (Wood, 1988). Wesleyan doctrine upheld an Arminius’ theological position of personal free will, hence putting them at odds with the Calvinistic predeterminism of other evangelicals (Wood, 1988). Wesleyan theology affirms that every person has a free will to choose to believe the Christian Gospel or to reject it, God’s grace allows the individual to see and respond, but the response is a totally personal one (Mickey, 1984). Methodism was an extremely emotive evangelical revival; John, Charles and others would go out in the fields and parks to preach passionate sermons calling on the vast working classes to faith in Christ. Many responded to the call. However, the problem for the Wesleyan revival was that the Established Church was unable

to respond to the number of converts. The church of the day was unable to deal with the heartfelt passion of those coming to worship. Indeed, the church's spiritual awareness being so disconnected from the revival that its response was negligible. Thus, many of the converts found their spiritual solace in going to open-air rallies and small group meetings of like-minded converts. It was from these small group meetings that the Methodist Church would eventually evolve (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). By the time of John Wesley's death, in 1791, the Methodist movement was so far from the Established Church of England that by 1795 they were clearly a separate denomination (Mickey, 1984).

Methodism appeared in Australia in 1812 with class meetings being conducted by new settlers in Sydney and the first minister, Reverend Samuel Leigh, arrived in Sydney in 1815 (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). By the turn of the twentieth century following the spirit of Australian Federation, the Methodist factions of the nineteenth century came together and formed the Methodist Church of Australasia. Although there was a steady numerical decline of Christians who identified as being Methodist, the church maintained its unity, that being the major motivator for the ecumenical movement (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). The polity of the Methodist Church led to the requirement that the total church become a member of the Uniting Church in Australia at the time of "The Basis of Union" (Uniting Church in Australia, 1971).

An historical overview of the Congregationalist Church

Unlike the eighteenth-century renewal movement of Methodism, Congregationalism started as a dissenter movement in England at the time of the Reformation (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). The Reformation period of the sixteenth century incorporated both political and spiritual movements; in the British Isles, the Puritan movement was a typical fervent spiritual movement that led to later political outcomes. Many in the Puritan movement sought to transform the State–Church relationship (Kirby, 1988). One such action sought a reorganisation of the Church’s structure minus any episcopal control, opting for a presbytery structure (Kirby, 1988). Nevertheless, others Puritan groups sought a total separation from episcopal and state control of the Church; they called for a “gathered church” of individual congregational control (Morris, 1984). The Congregationalists claimed that this model was in keeping with Luther’s teaching on the seen (physical) and the unseen (the elect) Church. Furthermore, the Congregationalists desired a more physical Church of “the elect” and this meant that the church governed itself without state interference.

Congregationalists were passionate for a Church that comprised only of those who had personally responded to the Christian Gospel. Such a desire in turn led to strong individualism and personal commitment to live as one of Christ’s disciples (Cook, 2003; Kirby, 1988). The church was to have only one central figure and that was Christ Jesus. There was to be no hierarchy, no bishop or magistrates, and the ordained ministry was in the hands of the whole congregation (Cook, 2003; Morris, 1984).

Congregationalist churches have a history of passionate independence and divergence (Kirby, 1988). There is no one set statement or creed of belief pertaining to Congregationalist churches, although most hold to the Savoy Declaration of 1658 (Kirby, 1988). Notable numbers of Congregationalist churches started throughout the British Isles. However, their divergences led some into Unitarianism and others into isolation. The Evangelical Revival of the nineteenth century saw new life sweep through the churches and a Congregational Union was formed in 1831 (Kirby, 1988). This loose connection of the churches saw a fellowship of independent local churches seeking mutual support and edification. Many of the Congregational churches founded in Australia came about as a direct result of the English evangelical movement (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). Since the liberal movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century and early-twentieth century, there has been a steady decline in Congregationalist churches in both the British Isles and Australia (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006).

The steady decline in Congregationalist churches saw many churches move into various mergers with other Christian denominations throughout the world (Kirby, 1988). In the Australian context, some Congregational churches maintained their independence, recoiling from joining the Uniting Church (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). The churches that turned away from joining (approximately 15%) mostly had a strong evangelical and locally independent tone and believed they could not subscribe to both the theological and ecclesiastical premises in “The Basis of Union”.

An historical overview of the Presbyterian Church

Presbyterianism, like Congregationalism, started as a dissenter movement based on the issue of governance of the Church. John Calvin (Jean Cauvin), a leading Reformist in Geneva, established a church government structure and a particular determinist scriptural doctrine where church governance was based on elders or presbyters of the local church (Clowney, 1988; Morris, 1984). John Knox, influenced by Calvin's approach in Geneva on return to his native Scotland, went about the process of reforming the Church of Scotland on the lines of Presbyterian theology and governance (Morris, 1984). The church governing structure incorporated the minister of the word or teaching elders and others with the gift of administrating, the ruling elders (Clowney, 1988). Consequently, church governance does not rest in any episcopal authority or in the total congregation; it rests with the presbyters (elders), both teaching and ruling. Advocates of Presbyterianism claim this church structure fits with the local, regional and universal Church (Morris, 1984).

A substantial majority of the Church in Scotland (Presbyterian Church outside of Scotland) supported the Calvinist theology of salvific predestination. Calvinistic presbyterian doctrine sought to maintain God's sovereignty and held that all of creation was for the glory of God and even the salvation of human beings was for God's glory (Clowney, 1988; Cook, 2003). Hence, humanity is "totally depraved" and unable to respond to the Christian Gospel; it is only through the work of God's grace through salvation that humanity can respond. Therefore, Calvinistic Presbyterianism denies that human beings have a free will to choose God. Salvation comes as a gift from God – "justification by grace alone through faith alone" is the Calvinistic Presbyterian affirmation (Cook, 2003; Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). The "free gift" of Jesus Christ

accomplishes salvation and it is by His perfect obedience that eternal life is merited to God's "elect". The Holy Spirit comes to those who God has elected and regenerates them so that they are persuaded and enabled to embrace Christ as a "free gift" (Clowney, 1988). Calvinistic Presbyterians hold to the firm foundation that God is sovereign and acts totally in humanity's salvation. Human beings are lost in sin and sinners can only choose Christ because he has first chosen them before time began. Calvinistic Presbyterianism adopted the doctrines of the *Synod of Dordt* (1618), the acrostic of TULIP: Total hereditary depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace and Perseverance of the saints (Morris, 1984). Confessions of faith (namely the *Westminster Confession of Faith 1647*) played a central role in maintaining the fabric of Presbyterianism (Clowney, 1988; Morris, 1984).

The arrival of the First Fleet to Australia in 1788 brought large numbers of Presbyterian convicts (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). By the turn of the nineteenth century, Presbyterian settlers arrived and the first congregations emerged across Australia from 1830 onwards (Cook, 2003). Throughout the history of the Presbyterian Church in Australia, fractions and divisions have plagued it; such divisions have been frequent, reflecting that of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland (Cook, 2003). State-based unity occurred in the latter half of the nineteenth century and, along with the political Federation of Australia in 1901, a national union formed in July of that year (Bardon, 1949; Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). Since the liberal movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century and early-twentieth century, there has been a steady decline in Presbyterian churches in the British Isles and Australia (Morris, 1984).

The steady decline in Presbyterian churches raised the idea of a merger with the Methodist and Congregational churches, since their own union in 1901 (Cook, 2003; Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). However, continual internal squabbles meant that the central role the Presbyterians initially played was lost and their influence dwindled. By the time of the final unification under the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977, there were still Presbyterian churches that actively resisted the thought of union. Consequently, approximately 30% of the churches recoiled from joining the Uniting Church (Uniting Church in Australia, 2006). The churches that turned away from joining claimed that the theology of scripture and church order inherent in “The Basis of Union” was not satisfactory (Cook, 2003). Today, these Presbyterian churches claim that their churches are more reflective of the true reformed faith that the Calvinistic Presbyterians of the Reformation sought to achieve (Cook, 2003).

Appendix I: Example of Data Coding

QDA Miner Lite - DATA FILE V.12.qdp

Project Cases Variables Codes Document Retrieval Analyze Help

CASES: Isaac Final, Julie Final, Mary Final, Matthew Final, Michael Final, Paul Final, Paula Final, STUDENT FINAL, Terry Final, Will Final

VARIABLES: FILE Colin Final

CODES: Ecumenical

- Relationships
- Divergence
- Establishing
- Lack of articulation
- Frameworks
- Outcomes
- Unified direction
- Will to be ecumenical
- Diversity
- Unity
- Ethos
 - Right intent
 - Collection of frameworks
 - Values
 - Doing
 - Defining ethos
 - Artefacts
 - Tenets
 - Tangible
 - Intangible
- Culture
 - Ritual, Customs, Symbols, A
 - Practices and traditions
 - Relating
 - Defining culture
 - Conflict
 - Directionless
 - Lack of consistency
 - Seeking to create
 - Underpinning

DOCUMENT: Cambria

CODE: Describing leadership

1 L = Isaac
 2 I (interviewer) = Trevor
 3
 4 I - First of all, thank you, thank you for giving me the time and ah, I know that everybody is busy and got lots to do and all
 5 the rest of the stuff, thank you for that. First point can you jus' explain your role and how that role has changed over your
 6 period of time here.
 7 L - Ok, well, I am a teacher, a Science teacher and, um, Head of House for Delbeta, the Mighty Delbeta, ...
 8 I - I believe they won, did they, or...
 9 L - Who knows, we went from first to third, last score count, I don't know how, anyway. Ah, so Head of House is the middle
 10 management role that I play; would you like me to elaborate on both roles or?
 11 I - Yeah if you wouldn't mind, yeah.
 12 L - Ok, well, traditionally I'm a Maths Science teacher, that is I teach up to Year Twelve. Ah, went away from the College,
 13 came back, did a job swap with my wife, ah, so I end up, ah, in Year Seven, which was something I never thought I would
 14 be teaching. I was teaching full time Year Seven until this year where I'm teaching Year Seven Maths and Science as well as
 15 Year Eight Science and Year Nine Science. So it's affectively a half time load, timetable and, um, the other half is my Head of
 16 House role, which is more of a pastoral role, I, um, I oversee the pastoral needs of the, the students in Delbeta House, so
 17 that's affectively just short of 150 students, um, six Home Groups, three middle school, three senior school, have a vertical
 18 system as you know, so Years Seven, Eight and Nine as a middle school Home Group, have three of them and, um, same
 19 with the Years Eight, so Years Ten, Eleven and Twelve,, um, three senior Home Groups . But it's the, all the extra things
 20 that come with the job people probably don't realise, so the Athletics Carnival, nearly finished it [laugh], um, so that's
 21 about it trying to organise the nominations, ah, Chapel coming up, so I've got to Chapel Service to organise, um, liaison
 22 with, um, students to make sure that everyone has, well Athletics their name down for as many events as we can,
 23 maximum participation and, um, giving them the pep talks to try and get everyone do to their very best on the day. Um, I
 24 think our lead up to the carnival was, was excellent, we hardly had anybody who really wasn't committed to getting
 25 involved carnival, so whether we win or not we most certainly, we, we've shown that, um, the kids can get involved, that's
 26 part of the, um, program. Always student matters, I come away jus' in, in here, always on duty, ah, there was a student who
 27 had, um, had an issue with his hair, he need to have a haircut and over the weekend he did, so there was the, the just the,
 28 ah, acknowledgment that I recognised that he had done what he was suppose to do and, um, business as usual. Um, ah, on,
 29 on a daily basis you need to follow up on students and, um, sometimes that's informed way, where there might even be a
 30 detention, a Head of House detentions, um, where other times it's just a quite word in the ear, which is generally the way I
 31 operate, I don't usually make a big song and dance act of things and stomp around the College, but I talk to students on the
 32 quite and, um, and teachers where necessary to get things done.
 33 I - Hmm, so jus' going back, when was it that you first became involved with the, Forest Lake College.
 34 L - um, [laugh]
 35 I - Can you remember back that far?
 36 L - I can [laugh] because, um, I meet Naomi then, my wife, um, fifteen years we've been involved in the College, fifteen
 37 and half years. Ah, I stayed with the College for, it would have been about eight or nine years and then got a job somewhere
 38 else, but that didn't work, didn't like it, um, at the same time, we did a few swaps, my wife and I, um, we're both teachers,
 39 we meet here at the College and, ah, been through various roles, um, I was the Middle School Maths Science Coordinator
 40

1 / 16 Par 1, Col 0

QDA Miner Lite - DATA FILE V.12.qdp

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DOCUMENTS: DOCUMENT

CODE: Describing leadership

48 we meet here at the College and, ah, been through various roles, um, I was the Middle School Maths Science Coordinator
 49 there for a while, with Chris Green, he left, I left, we came back doing different jobs, but, um, I was the Year Eight
 50 Coordinator so I had a pastoral role tried to leave and then when I finished a MBA I came back to the College, um, and that
 51 was a strange sort-of situation occurred because Naomi was working at the College and she was pregnant with, um, Holly,
 52 our third daughter, at the same time I'd finished the course and, um, needed a job and it just made sense that the College
 53 knew me and I came back in and Naomi left and looked after our kids again, so it's been a matter of convenience, but, um,
 54 it's handy, I like the place, it another job, so they were happy to give me the, ah, Head of House job when it came up, they'd
 55 just restructured to a House system at that stage, that was, um, five years ago, started back a little bit soon after that I was
 56 Head of House for Delbeta House

48 I - So you've travel quite a long journey, almost one of the longest journeys, even though the interrupt there, but you've
 49 travelled one of the longest journey with the College. The, the changes that you've seen in the College over those years, can
 50 you speak a little bit about where it was.

51 L - um, well yes, I've not been continuous service but even when I was, um, away from the College that was actually, ah,
 52 doing a supply work while Naomi was working so, didn't really loose contact. Over the time was about fifteen years, um, I
 53 joined the College when it was very young, rapid expansion stage, um, there was a lot of excitement and people could see
 54 that, ah, was a whole lot of growth in the school, we, um, with a small staff originally it was, um, a matter of everyone just
 55 basically getting in and doing the job, it, it was a team feel to it. It was also on the, um, Primary Campus, which really did
 56 have a primary feel to it. Ah, I remember just being on play ground duty with the Preps every week, they did that as a joke
 57 actually [laugh] here's this big Science teacher we'll put you with the Preps, um, but that was a lot of fun and, ah, but it was
 58 are very close-knit group of staff. We changed campuses with the, um, building of the College Avenue, and that meant new
 59 resources, new facilities, a lot of, um, preparation was required to, um, get programs up and running, so the Senior School
 60 was just being launched and a lot of work had been done there, so again we went through another stage of rapid growth,
 61 but also a lot of hard work and, um, I think in the initial stages we were all very, very busy, but we were at least, um, we
 62 were acknowledged, we were given RDOs, rostered days off, and, um, that was, ah, in part because of the, the enormous
 63 amount of work in starting the school we were, putting the time in to developing. So the College continue to grow and, um,
 64 more staff came on board, ah, I think, with every, um, growth period there's always, um, discussions of restructuring that
 65 is a school of a certain size has a certain structure and then the next structure comes through, it meant that the number of
 66 people, myself included, were swapped and changed around and, um, we, we had a number of new people on board in
 67 senior management roles and I think the flavour of the, um, College relationships changed, that because we were no
 68 longer a small staff and, um, when we got to becoming a much larger staff, I don't know if you'd call it a large staff, but
 69 much larger staff, it meant that we had, ah, department that were quite large that became an important tier in the
 70 structure, but it also meant that we weren't as, um, close-knit, we, we didn't have that contact, different departments
 71 wouldn't see, um, each other as much as we use to. So that also meant that, um, some of the things we took for granted,
 72 um, and even the ceremonies changed, um, I remember the, ah, Foundation Day Fancy Dress Ball, which, um, we, we use to
 73 love, but we use to hate it too, because, um, the staff had to get up and dance and I'm not a dancer, but that was part of the
 74 close-knit arrangement and, um, when we became a large staff we barely fit on the stage and it was a bit of a, a tall order to
 75 try and get everyone to rehearse and that's just one aspect and it's some which I guess a lot people wouldn't even know it
 76 happen, but, but some of those sort-of traditions, picnic races went by-the-bye, but I don't think we could've sustained that
 77 with, um, with so many, it's a very dynamic place, there's a lot of things happen and, um, some of the extras have gone
 78 by-the-bye.

Ecumenical

- Relationships
- Divergence
- Establishing
- Lack of articulation
- Frameworks
- Outcomes
- Unified direction
- Will to be ecumenical
- Diversity
- Unity

Ethos

- Right intent
- Collection of frameworks
- Values
- Doing
- Defining ethos
- Artefacts
- Tenets
- Tangible
- Intangible

Culture

- Ritual, Customs, Symbols, A
- Practices and traditions
- Relating
- Defining culture
- Conflict
- Directionless
- Lack of consistency
- Seeking to create
- Underpinning

Divergence

Establishing

1 / 16 Par 1, Col 0

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Project Cases Variables Codes Document Retrieval Analyze Help

CASES: Isaac Final, Julie Final, Mary Final, Matthew Final, Michael Final, Paul Final, Paula Final, STUDENT FINAL, Terry Final, Will Final

VARIABLES: FILE Colin Final

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DOCUMENTS: Describing leadership

79 I - Can you, while you're thinking back to that, that period of time, can you talk a little bit about the Churches' role, the
 80 Anglican and Uniting's role or input in those earlier years.
 81 L - um, well there's, I think probably two parallels stories, what happened within the College and what happened with the
 82 Churches involve within the College. Um, ah, initially, ah, very small staff, the, um, the ministers, um, that would, the local
 83 ministers were fairly actively involved in running the services, ah, once a term, they came in and had Eucharist Services
 84 and so forth. We also had a number of staff who were, um, had a calling, they were employed in some other role, but they
 85 also, um, I'm thinking of a fellow called Simon Gomersall in the, um, first year or two that I was here, he was, um, the ITD
 86 teacher, but he, um, he had a passion for, um, leading the pastoral side of the College. So first of all, with the, the way the
 87 College, um, grew and its structure and size, ah, it started small, we kept growing, we changed to a two campus school and,
 88 um, some of the, the ceremonies and things got bigger and, um, and the frequency changed too. There were lots of
 89 different decisions on timetabling do we have one Chapel a week, two Chapels a week? When do we have it in the week
 90 and, um, and what format. When we started getting full-time, um, Chaplains on board they all bought their own ideas of
 91 what we should do and everyone had a very distinctive, um, style, which was unique to that person. Um, I think of, um, the
 92 Uniting Church Ministers we've had through, um, a lot of them were into youth ministry and, ah, and, um, singing and
 93 music was a big part of, of what they bought to the Chapel Services. And I think the children responded very well to that.
 94 The, um, some of the Anglican, um, Ministers we've had, Rev Jenks, when Jenks came on board, very academic background
 95 and, um, perhaps a lot of students who didn't really twig to, to what he was on about, but he bought a very a depth to the,
 96 the Chapel, the Chapel Services that I think was, ah, hard to describe, but I would say more a mature approach. Now that's
 97 mature from a spiritual perspective, in that he was dealing with some of the heavier issues and, and the significance of the
 98 stories in the Bible that is way beyond what others had bought, but that was his speciality, he'd travelled extensively and
 99 studied to a doctoral level, so to, to be recognised he had, um, that sort of input. Um, we'd had, um, you-know, the time of
 100 trouble when, you-know we had, um, leadership changes, dramatic leadership changes and, um, the school in a fairly
 101 precarious position I'd say, and, um, I think from a from the perspective of the Churches that was interesting, because as
 102 members of staff, we didn't really see a lot of the, the executive leadership side of the school, I'm talking about the Board.
 103 The Churches had an involvement, but it was always in the background. Tony Watt, um, the former College Principal,
 104 Executive Principal, um, was, ah, very much in control, had the power, and I never attended a Board meeting, but I suspect
 105 that, um, he ran the College as if it was his school. In fact I remember a comment being made about, ah, Tony, Tony actually
 106 came to a meeting and said, he, he wondered who owned the school? It was to do with, ah, a discussion on debt, if,
 107 if they've got, had problems with the debt who actually had the ultimate control of the school, and I thought well that's
 108 interesting because, um, I was always under the impression that it was for the Churches that we were running the school,
 109 but he, he wasn't sure, and, um, I, I think he felt it was his school, he ran it as his school and I think the Board, um, went
 110 along with that and, um, we're digressing a little bit. What I'm saying is that the Church didn't have a lot of involvement in
 111 the running of the school and I think, um, when trouble brewed they actually realised that they should have had more of
 112 an interest in the operational mode of the school, even the strategic leadership was, um, questionable that we'd gone
 113 through a very successful stage of the College's growth in terms of the making the school, making it run, but when it got to
 114 a certain size, um, the, ah, power base should have been different and, um, and the changing of the guard was, was, um,
 115 fairly dramatic, bit like a political [laugh] situation just occurred, but, um. But, then successive, ah, Head's of College and
 116 Executive Principals have bought their own ideas and, um, and currently we, we have gone through that change, where we
 117 don't have the Uniting Church involved in the, ah, strategic direction of the College any more, not really as even a former

1 / 16 Par 1, Col 0

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Project Cases Variables Codes Document Retrieval Analyze Help

CASES: Isaac Final, Julie Final, Mary Final, Matthew Final, Michael Final, Paul Final, Paula Final, STUDENT FINAL, Terry Final, Will Final

VARIABLES: FILE: Colin Final

CODES: Ecumenical

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- Underpinning

DOCUMENTS: Describing leadership

123 partner, but their certainly been very involved in the College. The Anglican Church, um, is then has a chance to, I think, to
 124 be, ah, more focused because it's now an Anglican school, prior to that it was a question as to what, what, um, what role
 125 did the Churches' play, because it was a joint venture and I don't think either party, um, really wanted to, ah, step over the
 126 line, so neither did. They, they both held back, because it wasn't really their school, it was a joint venture, and the
 127 principals' running the show. Relationships Divergence

128 I - So exploring that because this, this study is to seeking to explore that whole idea of, of how a school or an agency of the
 129 Church works ecumenically, looking at, through the ideas of ethos, climate and eventually leadership with a lower case "l".
 130 You mentioned about how the Churches tend to play a back step and neither one wanting to step over the line of the other,
 131 from your observations how did that occur? Divergence

132 L - Well I got the impression that the Churches were almost invited to take part in the, um, spiritual aspects of the College, it
 133 was more of an invitation it was part of what was appropriate, um. Ministers, local Ministers were invited to, um, lead a
 134 staff Eucharist Service for example. It wasn't really the Church fitting into the, sorry, it wasn't the College fitting into the
 135 local Church, it was more the local Church that was invited to work with us to take part in some of the activities and. I'm
 136 thinking of, um, so the Anglican Church locally, we had that project for a while, um, I can't think what it's called now, um,
 137 we, we had students go from the College down to, um, Inala Anglican Church, what was it called? Divergence

138 I - Not sure, sorry.

139 L - I should know it, I was running it. But we used to take kids down there, it was very powerful because the kids, um, sat in,
 140 we donated food as a College but we sat in on some of the discussions with people who were desperately short of money
 141 and, ah, the Church would, ah, financially support them and our kids were involved in fundraising for that project, but also
 142 supply the food that was, ah, in the food-bank. That was instigated just as an idea and it was, um, a partnership I guess
 143 between the College and the Anglican Church for us it was a service project we were trying to find something we could do
 144 successfully for the whole Church. But we gen, we, we initiated that, based on a comment that the local Minister had made.
 145 It wasn't a very close arrangement, we had to really move in towards the Church, and the Church was certainly very happy
 146 for us to be involved, but I don't think we still have that, um, close relationship, not really. Relationships

147 I - All right. Can I just explore the idea of ecumenical and what you see ecumenical is, can you tell me what you think.

148 L - Well to me it's, um, it's a service, it's a type of, ah, I'm not certain, I think of an Ecumenical Service, but, um, the word
 149 ecumenical to me means something which is, um, involves all, that we can, ah, have a mutual belief, understanding, respect
 150 for differences too, but a mutual understanding of who God is and our differences of belief aren't that different to stop us
 151 worshipping together. So it's a unity of worship and particularly where there, there are differences so, um, I don't believe
 152 there's a huge amount of difference between the Uniting and Anglican Churches, there's certain differences, but, but it's
 153 not enough to form a divide that we are able to worship together and it's that unity which is, um, the an ecumenical sense,
 154 joint worship. Unity

155 I - All right,

156 L - ...or joint, similar beliefs that you can worship that way.

I - Hmm, jus', I'm going to touch on the idea of ethos, and then look at what, what particularly is an ecumenical ethos. So can
 you jus' tell me about your experiences and observations of the ethos of this College, first.

L - Um, [laugh], that, I mean it's huge because, ah, question because, um, I'm thinking of how culture and, ah, the symbols
 around the College fit together in terms of our ethos. Ok we have a Christian ethos we, we have an understanding of, ah,
 God, um, Bible, Jesus Christ as being important elements of the worship. The, the power of, um, worship and prayer is
 Tangible

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something that comes through in, um, traditions, our ceremonies and, um, by that, things like the, the hymns, the College song, um, the prayers that we say, the Chapel Services, that's an important element of what we believe is important. I think it, um, it drives the foundation of the education system that we run within the College. So as a school we have a Christian ethos, which is sometimes unseen but it is how we operate, ah, the day to day things, I think we have an advantage, this came through my studies, we have an advantage over other schools that don't have that sort of foundation because um, when we, um, say well, um, we'll act this way we'll do those things it's with that fundamental basis of being a Christian school, and now particularly we can say an Anglican school, and what that actually means I think is probably more, a later question you're asking. Um, so our ethos, you look around the place, we have a cross in the middle of the College. Obviously it's a Christian cross and, um, the symbolisms of the Anglican and Uniting Church badge still on display. The, um, we have the Bible in the foyer, we have a cross in the foyer, we have, um, a lot of symbolism, you-know, it's always surprised me, I've mentioned this at a meeting, um, at the start of the year I think it was, our College badge doesn't actually have a cross in it, it's peculiar. I, I, I know of no other school that has a badge that's Christian, but the Christian school doesn't have that.

170 I - Hmmm

171 L - But anyway, that's an aside, there's a lot of symbolism and, um, ceremonies support our Christian basis.

172 I - Hmmm, so we, you talk about those symbols being the things that the ethos is wrapped up in,

173 L - Oh, no, I think it's an indication of our ethos.

174 I - An indication of ethos? So.

175 L - Cause ethos is a very, its a hard topic to really, it's so nebulous, you-know, to try and explain what your ethos is, we tend to live it, we don't actually, its hard to, to really work out what that really means. But I think it's best when you sort of compare our school with another school as to well what differences and, and the obvious things are, well we have expectations of the students that are really basically linked to the Christian ethos, faith, hope, love um, should be up on the wall here, here it is, our expectations, um, define 'Our Values: Faith, Hope, Love, Courage, Community and Justice' mean different things to different people. For some they become more than symbols. And that's an expec, I mean, keeping expectations are listed there too, respect the effort, safety, positivity, equity, compassion, tolerance, um. It was interesting 'cause I was, the one, sort-of, lead driving that, um, we didn't have anything that said, that linked what our Christian ethos was, to what we actually did in the College, and I said, you-know, lets put something on paper and the process of coming up with that um, made a lot of people aware that there was a missing link and, um, when we put it together it showed that, that's the reason we exist we're, we're passionate about all these values.

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186 I - Do you remember when they came out? When you did that?

187 L - I'm guessing three years ago, probable four. It was since I came back, and, um, actually it came about the same time we did the Habits of Mind, Dimensions of Learning stuff, because [laugh] Glenn and I were both doing posters at the same time.

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190 I - Can you speak about what you, why do you think that needed to occur?

191 L - A lot of us just thought we knew what the College was on about, but, then we started talking about, um, the real reason the College is here and what we're trying to do, and what we stand for, we didn't actually have anything that was, certainly in the public domain there was nothing that was, um, obvious. And when we, when we were talking about the idea of putting up our values and our expectations, um, it gave us a common language to talk about the basics, of what we stand for, the ethos on the College. That's why they exist. To me though, they were just the obvious things that were already, we

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Artefacts

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Values

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201 already did. We lived and breathed it everyday, but to actually put it in paper, sorry, on paper, to put it in writing was, um,
 202 important, because then it lead to, um, really talking about, um, the expectations for students you-know, we expect
 203 students to behave in certain way, so in my role as, um, a Head of House it gave us the opportunity to sit down with
 204 students and say, well no, no, this is, this is what we believe, it wasn't something which was just an idea out there, it was
 205 actually in writing we could talk about the, um, the key areas.
 206 I - Was that an easy task to achieve, by taking those ideas, the ethos and putting it into these values, which eventually
 207 becomes the culture. Was it a difficult task for staff who were involved in doing it?
 208 L - It was 'cause, um, nobody had ever really talked about it before and because we hadn't talked about it, there were
 209 differences, differences of opinion. Um, they weren't major differences of opinion, but I think if you, if you working at the
 210 College you get to understand what we're about, but we hadn't discussed it, not properly anyway. We had some discussion
 211 as to what the key words should be and, ah, when it came down to it, it, um, some of it came, 'cause so many of the key
 212 players, you-know, and we all had to agree on something. And ultimately the staff came up with the main ideas and it went
 213 to the Board and, um, and, and everyone. It was a collective thing too, it wasn't just one person saying no, no it should be
 214 this. Ah, we had a sub-committee, we came up with some options, some ideas and reasons why we proposed certain key
 215 words and even the, ah, wording, the Board and, ah, Executive Principal also had input. They tried to marry that, because
 216 it was trying to marry things together too, it wasn't just a stand alone document something that truly linked a whole lot of
 217 policies and, ah, it took a long time. Not so much arguing whether things should be in or out, but discussion, it took a lot of
 218 time to discuss. It must have taken six months or something just to come up with that poster. I would have thought you
 219 know you could do that in an afternoon, but it was important that we, um, really had that conversation, it was a very
 220 meaningful conversation with many, many people.
 221 I - And from your experience now, does that, how is that driven, the ethos of the school? post-posters?
 222 L - Ah, see I don't think that's driving it, the ethos of the College, what it was, was trying to summarise what the ethos was.
 223 So it's like a summary of what our ethos is, rather than the driving force. Um, so with that twist on it, it's a summary, does
 224 it drive the College now? Well, I don't think the ethos has changed. I think that's still the ethos of the College. Ah, I think
 225 what has changed though is that with time I think we've forgotten the conversations we had four years ago, three years
 226 ago, however long it's been, and whether probably, that's not in the forefront of our discussions with students as much as
 227 it was.
 228 I - Hmmm. Well speaking to that, let's just look a little bit at the idea of ecumenical ethos, is there such a thing?
 229 L - Well I think that, that generally Christian values and because there were two, ah, auspicing Churches, I, I don't believe
 230 there's any, um, problem from either Church. So, but there are the two Christian Churches, I think if, if you go broad sense
 231 of what ecumenical, sorry, Christian ecumenical means, my limited knowledge of other denominations would say that's,
 232 that would sit very well with, um, all Christian Churches that I'm aware of. Beyond Christian Churches, I think most people
 233 would say, main faith, the main religions of the world most would be fairly comfortable with, [pause], faith is interesting,
 234 loving God and your neighbours as yourselves, [pause] in community, respect and tolerance um, well there's a lot of
 Christians have a lot of difficulty accepting, um, anything other than a Christian belief system. It's acceptance and
 tolerance, the respect that, um, I think is, probably ajar with how some people see the world, but the people I would, I
 would, um, have discussions on a faith level from other main Churches would also be fairly comfortable with the list, you
 could put that in a Jewish school, I don't think there would be too many problems, um, yeah, I'm not sure how far to go
 with that 'cause it's ...

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236 I - Hmm

237 L - ...on a surface level, I think, most people say it's pretty good, but when you get deeper, I think, there might be some, some awkward points.

238 I - All right. So, so just touching, lastly on the idea of ethos with ecumenical, from your experiences over the years here, have you ever seen the Churches seeking to, to, provide leadership, to provide input to that on a day to day basis? Seen them actually acting, can you speak about that?

240 L - Well no, um, I don't know what happened at a governance level, not really, not in the board room, I think, I think, um, the Churches, ah, they had a role to play in the governance of the College and I, I don't know really the dynamics, I can guess, I don't think it was a really healthy dynamic, but I think there was probably political pressure from Churches to be involved in the College. But that's guess work, really. Um, within the day to day operational side of things, um, I, I believe that, ah, probably the local Churches um, have an interest in being involved in the College and, ah, where possible they were, but I don't think it was um, I think a lot of the Churches are likely under staffed and that, um, it's probably, ah, it could have been a matter of not feeling comfortable within the College, but I don't think so, I think it's probably more of a case of, um, this was one situation, this is one aspect of the local, um, diocese for a better term, um, where there are already people doing work and that um, they had their hands full, it's probably a case of not, um, having the time or the energy to, to be able to move in and try and be more involved in the College life.

250 I - All right, Ok just turning, attention to culture and seeing culture as, as the deeper values that becomes solid, ah, values, things that we hold as, as core. Can you speak a little bit about how that has been from your experiences and observations?

252 L - Hmm, um, one thing I, I have said this a number of times, to a various people. When I first joined the College, I remember another staff member, ah, Bobby Wilson who's still on staff, also went away and came back, he described the very positive culture of the school by saying "If you're driving behind a school bus, you'll get a wave from the kids, they're a nice bunch of kids." Most schools you drive behind the school bus you'll get a signal too, but it won't be a very pleasant one. Um, it was, it was a very friendly place. I think when it grew, it became less friendly, less personal, because of size. Um, the fact that we split the two campuses I think also made a difference. **The culture of the place, um, has waxed and waned a little bit depending on who's in charge and the pressures** you-know, in terms of staff, we saw that when, um, and when the school was going through a very rocky stage we had, ah, redundancies, we had um, a change of, you-know we weren't even sure of our financial future. Who was going to be next, and that was very unpleasant. The culture of the place reflected to some extent it, it reflected, um, some of those pressures, um, every time we go through an EBA Agreement and something doesn't go usually our way, I can't say too many things haven't gone the way of the, um, the Executive. Um, you-know, that's been uneasy as well, we, we tend to have gone through some rough patches, but we've tend to come back on an even keel. Is there any aspect of culture that you particularly want me to talk about though? It's very broad.

266 I - I think it's more, I think I'm trying to look at this idea of how are these things being played out? How are they being made? I, I think of the present leadership, is seeking to make a culture, whether we agree with it or not is different, but there seems to be this driving, trying, this is how we're going to do things and trying to make that deep rooted culture, and what I'm trying to look at is in the journey that we've had so far at the College, how is that being made and obviously trying to get to the ecumenical, what's it actually from your experience and observations, was it a, a obvious driving thing that they were trying to achieve? Or was it something that just allowed itself to be created?

272 L - **I think, um, there's a lot of key players that come to the party and whether they realise or not, they've made, ah, they've made an impression on the culture of the College. Um, Tony Watt obviously had a fairly important part to play in the highs and lows and one of his strengths was that he recognized the value of um, symbolism. He did a whole lot of things that I**

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made an impression on the culture of the college. Um, Tony Watt obviously had a fairly important part to play in the highs and lows and one of his strengths was that he recognised the value of, um, symbolism. He did a whole lot of things that I have to say I'm not impressed with, but he was able to build the school in a certain way. Um, there have been some comments recently made that we have we've moved from a State School model to an independent, independent school model, and that's a lot to do with culture. Um, I, I think that's a bit naive on what really we've, we've gone through and what really did, did have. I don't think we had a State school culture or that Tony Watt's background was in State Schools and, um, and I guess that's what you bring with you. But, but he was very clever about the way that he tried to set up the school. It was um, um, a difficult task, are Vivian Anthon, played a very important role and ah, she, she, she had, was very astute, um, head on how people were behaving, acting when, when there was trouble brewing she was able to put a different slant on it, not always positive, but she was able to give a lot of operational direction to our staff and students. Um, so the tone of the College was set by key players. Especially in the early days when it was much smaller. Then when more people got involved in the running of the school um, you-know, we're talking about Deans and Heads of this and that, then within their sphere of influence they would, um, certainly put their angle on how the tone of the College was, um, being driven. Ah, so, that changed and it has always changed ever since. I think, um, the current leadership is looking at, um, tinkering with some of the things we do and the way we, we operate as a College, and strategically they're, um, you-know, they're, they're moving towards you-know, the traditional independent school model. Um, I don't think that's necessarily a good thing, and we had our own model that was working very, very well. Ah, we're moving to a different independent school model, that's slightly different but, ah, I think that's, um, because the people at the top are not used to the type of school we used to be, and they're trying to change it to something they're used to. Now in terms of the ecumenical model, well in fact I think we're probably moving down away a little bit from what was more ecumenical because we had two Churches, now we've got one, and when you have more influence from one Church, well it's, it's not as wide as it used to be. Um, I'm just using the word wide instead of ecumenical, I guess. But, um, there's more of an Anglican, Anglican mindset rather than a broad Christian mindset. I, I thought that the balance in fact between the Uniting and Anglican Churches was, was quite a nice one. Um, no disrespect to either Church, I thought that, um, both Churches or at least the, um, the staff that have come from both Churches, had, um, their own strengths, and as I said before the Uniting Church were very strong youth ministry and, um, and, and the type of worship was, was more about hymns and songs of praise and clapping and singing, where in the Anglican, ah, system you don't get a lot of clapping, um, and that sort-of style of open worship it's, it's more of, um, more of, ah, I'm trying to think of a word that even describes it, but, um, more, more academic really, it's more of a thinking process more than a feeling process. Maybe a clapping...

302 I - More head than heart, perhaps

303 L - More head than heart. I, you-know, cause I, I'm an Anglican, I don't think it's more head than heart. What I think is it's more visually head than heart, um, I don't believe that there's, um, a huge amount of difference between, I mean

304 spiritually what happens with any style of worship, it's just a style. Um, I'm just thinking now, because I don't want to

305 sort-of be misquoted by, my intension is saying the Uniting Church had a very positive influence on our kids by the style of

306 worship that they bought. I think the, the Anglican type service has a very powerful message more, but, but both just do it

307 in a different way it's a different style that suits different people I guess too, in different ways.

308 I - Just going back to the statement you made, actually that was quoting others about this idea of it being a State school

309 culture. I just want to explore that a little bit, in a sense saying would that be, what do they mean by that, and is that a

310 misreading, what I hear you saying is it's a misreading of what the culture we actually had.

311 L - Oh, I think it's completely mis, misreading and misleading it too, um, I know from discussions with parents and students

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Seeking to create

Conflict

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... I think it's completely misreading and mislabeling it, you know from discussions with parents and students and teachers, ah, particularly involved in, um, Forest Lake State School, right next door, so in terms of, um, the general, ah, demographic ah, sort of basis they're similar they are not the same. I, I don't think that the students the families the families that come, ah, send their kids to our school, we're not really in competition with the State School to say that they're the same group is, is not true, but every now and then you do get families who have been to one then the other and there's obviously a big difference in culture, and they tell us that, it's quite stark. Um what sort of differences there are. I think that's fundamentally because the ethos of the College and that's not something that is just recent, it's always been there, um, we've always had that Christian foundation to the way the College runs, State Schools don't, and because they don't, their motivation, even staff, motivation for someone to be employed at the State School is perhaps a little overlapping, but it, it's different to, ah, member of staff at the school. Um, it's a fairly broad statement, I'm sure you'd find lots of exceptions, but the way the school operates, the reason for it operating is different and, um, ah, that flows through the way everything runs.

324 I - So could that be seen as, that misreading, could that be seen as an inability to see what ecumenical is? By labelling it, or is that, or is that, was there a political reason behind that statement?

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326 L - I don't know, I suggest there's probably a few possibilities, I've never had that conversation with the Principal and Executive Principal, who've made those comments. Um, if you're trying to say that the College is moving from one to another, hey what's the political jargon for that? Moving forward ...

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329 I - Moving forward, yes.

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331 L - ..., um, we're not really, we're changing, we're changing from one style to another, and, um, it's not really moving from, ah, State School to Independent School structure or anything like that. It's a matter of changing from this style to that style, because I think the people at the top have more experience in some other style, and want to model the school on something that they think will work better than the one that's currently running. However, I mean when you're on a ship and you're changing it's direction, it, um, could be useful to say well we're in the wrong place, we need to be over there. But what you're really saying is I don't really like that direction your taking and we're changing direction, it's not as though we're in the wrong place at all. You-know, schools can have lots of different structures, styles, but ...

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337 I - Hmm,

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339 L - ... I think it's just a change in style, um, completely different to a State School, it's not, there might be some similarities, but that's I think, because the people that have come on board in the early days had that experience and they took the good stuff out of schools, not necessarily State Schools, and tried to implant it here, and it worked. We had a rapidly expanding College, um, it was successful, it was going well, um, obviously some decisions that were made were poor decisions in hindsight, ah, I think one of the reasons some of the, I'm getting off topic here, I think it's probably related to the overall topic, one of the reasons why we got into financial stress is because it wasn't an ecumenical College, which didn't have a clear governance structure because it was split. We've got a very dominant, um, leader with two Churches who didn't really know their role in the school. Um, but affectively, we had that rocky period and, um, and come out of it with new leaders in place who have a different idea of what the style should be.

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347 I - Hmmm, Ok, thanks for that. Just turning your attention to the idea of climate and how climate is that, that day to day, the way, the way the seasons change. Um, how is it that the College has managed that climate? How is it from your experience?

348

349 L - Ah, well I think, in fact one of the things, I think has changed is the larger we grew we were reacting to the climate more than we were driving the climate of the College. Ah, it's a fairly broad statement, but, ah, in the early days, um, we were able to have ceremonies and the day to day running of the College was, um, was tight, not a lot went really wrong, because

350

351

Right intent

Seeking to create

Will to be ecumenical

Managing

1 / 16 Par 1, Col 0

QDA Miner Lite - DATA FILE V.12.qdp

Project Cases Variables Codes Document Retrieval Analyze Help

CASES: Isaac Final, Julie Final, Mary Final, Matthew Final, Michael Final, Paul Final, Paula Final, STUDENT FINAL, Terry Final, Will Final

VARIABLES: FILE: Colin Final

CODES: Ecumenical

- Relationships
- Divergence
- Establishing
- Lack of articulation
- Frameworks
- Outcomes
- Unified direction
- Will to be ecumenical
- Diversity
- Unity
- Ethos
 - Right intent
 - Collection of frameworks
 - Values
 - Doing
 - Defining ethos
 - Artefacts
 - Tenets
 - Tangible
 - Intangible
- Culture
 - Ritual, Customs, Symbols, A
 - Practices and traditions
 - Relating
 - Defining culture
 - Conflict
 - Directionless
 - Lack of consistency
 - Seeking to create
 - Underpinning

DOCUMENTS: Describing leadership

DOCUMENT: Cambria

CODE: Describing leadership

355 we were able to steer it to the direction we wanted to steer it, it was a very positive thing. Whereas when it started to get
 356 larger with so many extra people involved in the running of the place, it was a complex structure. That um, we've become
 357 reactionary in that if something goes wrong, we react to it rather than steering it in the first place, um is that what you ...

I - Yeah, I want to look at that ideas about how climate the, the, the feel the instantaneous the day to day I think of the
 358 example is how would the school react or how has it reacted to bad news. Um I think of one just recently when there was
 359 staff member that, ah, had a heart attack and how, how that was dealt with, and how it was moved that the college, how
 360 did the community know about that, and how, what was the reactions to that and how did the College was the College
 361 involved in that? Um, particularly say in leadership and the rest of those that were involved.

L - Um, as an example based on what I've just said um, I don't know, I don't know, because the College is of that size where
 362 you'd expect, well individuals would perhaps react in a certain way, respond, but as a College, ah, left hand, right hand
 363 stuff, I'm not sure that the left hand or right hand are up to. Um, whereas when we were smaller, um, College and smaller
 364 in staff, we were able to say, this is what the College is doing some one would do it, but you know what's going on. Um, I
 365 think, our communication internally is, um, lacklustre. We might have briefings in, every, we have two briefings in the
 366 morning, that sort-of thing, but um, I mean that's an incident that happened over the holidays, which is got extra questions
 367 over what happens when something happens, ah, we rely on email a lot, but emails an impersonal thing and you don't
 368 have the closeness that we used to have when everyone used to same staff room. We'd all be in a meeting every week. At
 369 this place we are flat out getting staff to a meeting every week, um we're often faculty meetings and house meetings and
 370 we don't have that closeness ...

I - Hmm.

L - ... and when things happen at a College level, when a member of staff is very ill, we don't have that, I don't think as a
 371 College we probably provide that same level of support, but that's a matter of not knowing. That's what I think. It's hard to
 372 coordinate and therefore often doesn't get done as well as it was done. I think it has shifted from the climate when I first
 373 started, from fear and the abuse of power in a very autocratic and dictatorial manner to an attempt to be far more open, but I think
 374 we still have some difficulties with what we say and what we do.

I - Hmm. Well, I think of that as an example only in that I know that at a CEO level there was a connection and some sort of
 375 reaching out to the family involved. But at a Board level there wasn't, so I sort-of think if the Board are the representatives
 376 of the Churches or Church in this case now, how do they speak to the, what involvement do they have in the climate of the
 377 school?

L - Hmm.

I - ...And from my experiences I'd say there has been none. That I've never seen, and this last experience sort-of adds to that
 381 idea. So I suppose what I'm asking from your experiences do you see that climate being actually driven by the Churches in
 382 any, any way? Or is it always just been something that the people here have done?

L - Ah, well, a few things. Um, we've always seen the Board as being very distant to the operational side of the College, always
 383 distant, I don't know if they've been, um, if that was intended. I know that the Board has made a number of, um, efforts to
 384 try and become more engaged in the College, but it's been very short lived, um, might turn up to a BBQ or something but,
 385 you-know, you don't see the Board members very often. But then even if you did, you wouldn't even know who they are.
 386 So, they're always distant in my opinion, and therefore if something happens whether they think well it's not my role
 387 because we are not a Board that's very visible. You think of the College, um, maybe when something happens an incident
 388 they don't feel like they should do anything. Um in terms of the Church, well, I mean, again the Churches are a fairly

390

Managing Controlling

Describing

Managing

Church involvement

Managing

1 / 16 Par 1, Col 0

The screenshot displays the QDA Miner Lite interface. The main window shows a transcript of a conversation with the following text:

nebulous thing, you-know, who is the Church and, ah, when it comes down to individual members of the Church we have contact through the people who are on staff and the families who, I guess we are the Church, Um, everyone's beginning to get scatty sort-of thing, [outside distraction from students coming out of class] but, I think we can be very critical of the Church if it's not doing what we like, but it depends who we mean by the Church. If it is the, the executive or higher up in the Church, I'm not sure that they have a role really, in that sort-of level, whereas if it's the Church, "us" well I think we do have that level of contact and not always plan, I bumped into Farny, he came in on a weekend I was in, and, ah, we chatted for a while and we had that contact, but I, I wouldn't consider myself as the Church and have the contact with staff quality. So it depends on whether we see the Church as a distant thing or something else having contact or whether we take the ownership of the Church, ah,

I - Alright, Ok, um, just the last thing, ... do you have a class?
L - I have a supervision

I - Alright, Ok, well very briefly, um, just looking at this idea of leadership with a lower case l, not the hierarchical leadership. I just want to touch on, from your experience briefly how that has been developed or how that's been spoken to. I know its a big ask.

L - Well this is my thesis, I wrote 70000 words on this one. Um, my passion is shared leadership I, there, there's been token, no, token gestures, maybe not just token gestures. We were put through a leadership program here at the College, Middle Management, I've done lots of leadership programs stuff, and that was put upon us, we weren't invited to take part, which probably would've been a better way to approach it. But on a day to day it's, there's not a lot of opportunity to have real leadership, little l. I read share leadership into that, ...

I - hmm,

L - ...um, people who're delegate jobs to do, it's a long way from leadership, and the College has a lot of work to do, if they want to, um, my two cents worth on shared leadership though. There're two styles; can distribute the leadership or you can have joint shared leadership, collaborative shared leadership I call it, and we're not very good at collaboration at all. Um, it's very disjointed, we have faculties and departments and houses and there's not a lot of shared leadership in that sense. Um, it's not entirely missing um, I think from my point of view, Head of House, we do a lot of joint stuff together, three or four of us are in the same room, we work together quite honestly I think so we'll take the slack when someone is doing something we'll fit in, we'll discuss ideas. I can't see too much of that happening at other levels.

I - From your study then, the idea of ecumenical which we started with which model of leadership and I think its the shared leadership do you see that as the model that should be adopted within an ecumenical approach?

L - Ah, well I mean it depends on your perspective on what aspect of leadership you're looking at, um, the idea of servant leadership great, if people really understand what that means, I think it's an over, over used term, very little understanding of the term, um, in terms of what that really means on the ground, um a servant leadership is something that, I think, is in step with what are Christian values all about. However, this idea of shared leadership, which overlays itself with servant leadership, it's not different, it's jus' a different perspective on what that could mean, um, effectively means that we work together leading something so you-know there's a group of people leading something. So, I think, staff, middle management, senior leadership we are the leadership, we should be leading the College together and, um, that means that you've got to have really good communication, you've got to have common direction and all that sort-of thing. That's awkward in a school this size, shared leadership I think, is a very important aspect, collaborative shared leadership we have had some distributive form of shared leadership that's true, um, but I, I see that, um, it's, it's

The interface includes a left sidebar with a tree view of codes under 'Ecumenical' and 'Culture'. The 'Ecumenical' code list includes: Relationships, Divergence, Establishing, Lack of articulation, Frameworks, Outcomes, Unified direction, Will to be ecumenical, Diversity, and Unity. The 'Culture' code list includes: Ritual, Customs, Symbols, A, Practices and traditions, Relating, Defining culture, Conflict, Directionless, Lack of consistency, Seeking to create, and Underpinning. The main window has a toolbar with various editing and analysis tools. The status bar at the bottom shows '1 / 16' and 'Par 1, Col 0'.

- I enets
- Tangible
- Intangible
- Culture
 - Ritual, Customs, Symbols, A
 - Practices and traditions
 - Relating
 - Defining culture
 - Conflict
 - Directionless
 - Lack of consistency
 - Seeking to create
 - Underpinning

430 relationship we have had some alternative form of shared leadership that's a bit, um, but, I see that, um, it's a

431 **higgledy-piggledy**, there might be some middle management who have a very good understanding of how that works. But

432 it's also very awkward to, to, um, have teams tossed together, where the leader has really no input on who's on that team

433 and expected, ah, a group of people to work when you don't have all the resources, I'm talking resources: time resources

434 and financial resources and all the other bits and pieces that go with that to make it work, that's something which doesn't

435 fit perfectly with your question ...

436 I - hmmm

437 L - ... but, it's a bit lacking.

438 L - All right, maybe, maybe I might grab a copy of your work and have a read and take some out of that, because, sorry about

439 the time.

440 I - that's fine

441 L - I appreciate that, thank you very much.

442 I - I'd better run, to PA something a rather.

1 / 16
Par 1, Col 0

Appendix J: Example of Memoing Comments

Text	Codes
For example, it, it might sound a bit odd, but we, we've often don't seek, um, Christian or spiritual wisdom, God's wisdom in some of those decisions we have to work through, so it's like, ah, we, we will sit with exercising our own minds our own capacities without working on a genuine relationship in seeking God's guidance, genuine guidance, we, may pray the odd prayer in some of the meetings, but that's where there, there's disconnect between ah, going through the motions of a Church school to genuinely having Christian framework in what we do.	Relationships [!]
I think that the fact that two churches coming together those who were the Board ultimately issues direction therefore reflecting that through the CEO and senior management team. I think if they haven't got a common sense of what their values and, and, and Christian framework is, I think it's very hard for the rest of the organisation to take on board and I think, from what, from what I've heard, um, there always been some tensions built in between the two churches. Um, the Anglicans have a certain view, I think the Uniting have a slightly different view and it has created some tensions and those tensions have been expressed at different stages,	Relationships
It's very hard for people to have a sense of, or this is our framework, it like this is my framework, ah and so long as it doesn't become a problem with anybody else, then I stick to my framework, but it not, this is our framework and, it's probably as I'm thinking as I am talking, its probably more a collective of individual frameworks than a genuine combined ecumenical framework.	Relationships [!] Frameworks
I think part of the difficulty is that it's, ah, one another of the denominations would have no difficulty if the other would simply adopt their values. For both to genuinely compromise creates a dilemma. I actually saw this at um, Eucharist service in, um, Springfield several years ago, where, it, it was relatively relaxed, which is good for the students, but the Anglican minister at that stage would not take the elements from the Uniting minister, ah, so-much-so, it became an awkward couple of moments, because it, it was a very public display of not taking it. Yet we just had this, this, ah, presentation of a message, ah, liturgy with praying of tolerance and accepting diversity and these things, and suddenly the denominational, um, theology and doctrine got right in the way of being practiced	Relationships [!]
we have gone through that change, where we don't have the Uniting Church involved in the, ah, strategic direction of the College any more, not really as even a former partner, but their certainly been very involved in the College. The Anglican Church, um, is then has a chance to, I think, to be, ah, more focused because it's now an Anglican school, prior to that it was a question as to what, what, um, what role did the Churches' play, because it was a joint venture and I don't think either party, um, really wanted to, ah, step over the line, so neither did.	Relationships (overlaps Divergence)
It wasn't a very close arrangement, we had to really move in towards the Church, and the Church was certainly very happy for us to be involved, but I don't think we still have that, um, close relationship, not really.	Relationships
our chapel service and things like that took on quite a hybrid um, delivery if you like and um, and I think um, that the staff and our um, chaplaincy here, it must have been very hard for	Relationships

Comment for Relationships

Reflections

lack of clear articulation understanding of spirituality between people

Comment for Relationships

To further discuss

collective frameworks, different positions - point to be followed up on

Comment for Relationships

Need review

singular "mono" framework the intereaction with relationships - needs to be reviewed/investigated

Memo labels

Reflections OK

To keep Cancel

To further discuss

Need review

Warning

Miscellaneous

Appendix K: Participants' Validation

	Do you agree with the researcher's interpretations of data and new understandings?	Do you agree with the researcher's conclusions and recommendations?
Isaac	"Yes, the section on leadership and the churches' involvement, or lack of, is very true."	"Yes, I think the whole idea of being authentically ecumenical was missing at WBC and Trevor's recommendations [if applied] would go a long way to addressing this."
Mary	"Yes, particularly the section on relational leadership [Section 6.6.1]. I always thought that this was the key issue with making the College ecumenical."	"Yes, I think the idea of fellowship building 'hits the nail on the head', there was never a sense of trust. I think the recommendations go somehow in dealing with this."
Paul	"Yes, I agree."	"I only briefly read over them but the conclusions, I think are true and the recommendations appear to make sense."
Will	"Yes, the idea of the College being a missed opportunity [Section 6.4.3] for both the churches is very true. It's sad that it never really became ecumenical. I think the ecumenical spirit [charism] just never got going."	"Yes, perhaps if the churches' leadership could read this and take some of these on-board, then perhaps ecumenical schools could work. I am still a little sceptical that they [ecumenical schools] will work. The churches appear to have their own set agendas."

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