

The James Wallace Memorial Library - Alphacrucis College

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James Wallace
CBC President 1951-1961

2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the naming of the James Wallace Memorial Library at the Sydney campus of Alphacrucis College.

James (Jim) Wallace was the 4th President of the Commonwealth Bible College (CBC), the national training institute of Assemblies of God in Australia (AGA – later renamed Australian Christian Churches or ACC). Wallace had come from Scotland to assume the position in New Farm, QLD. He was pastor at Glad Tidings Tabernacle (Qld), and was in demand as a guest speaker all over the country. Under Wallace's leadership, CBC's impact on church planting in Australia resulted in church numbers almost doubling between 1951-1969. (Austin, 2013, 67-69, 76)

Wallace held the position of College President from 1951 until his premature death from a sudden and fatal heart attack in mid-January 1961. He was just 53 years old. Almost an entire issue of *The Australian Evangel* (v18(2) 1961) was dedicated in tribute to James Wallace and the admiration and love that flowed in remembrance for a man described as *a giant for God* is touching.

It was just prior to his wife, Margaret (Meg) Wallace, leaving Australia and returning to Great Britain, that his personal library was donated to CBC, presumably as part of the estate settlement (Hovey, 2020). The CBC library was named in memoriam. Wallace's leadership had aimed to instil in the students the importance of lifelong learning; sought to have CBC in a position to have a separate library building; and to provide proper study facilities for students (Read, 1971, p. 19), so naming the library in his honour seemed fitting.



Photo from: Australian Evangel 28 (10) 1971 p19. Margaret Wallace imposed front right, students studying in the library at rear.

The influence of James Wallace has been significant on the college, the AGA/ACC denomination and the wider Australian Pentecostal movement. Alphacrucis College (AC), so named since 2009, began as the CBC in 1948 and was later known as Southern Cross College (SCC) (1993-2009).



Photo supplied by and used with permission from Denis Smith: L-R Molly Duncan, Irene Read, Pastor Ralph Read, Pastor Phil Duncan. Ralph Read was CBC President after James Wallace. Photo of the library entrance from the early 1970s.

The library started in Brisbane and quickly grew to over 3,000 volumes largely due to generous donations from Australia and beyond. The library was one of the first rooms evacuated in the devastating 1974 Brisbane floods, with everyone on location assisting with the urgent task. The initial location used for storing the evacuated books was soon also facing rising floodwaters, meaning the collection had to be moved a second time. Remarkably, not a single volume was lost in the emergency (Austin, 2013, pp. 108, 118-119).

In 1975, the college moved to a property that was previously a derelict hotel called *Palais Royale* in Katoomba, NSW. After significant renovation and outfitting, the property served its purpose and the library became Australia's leading Pentecostal collection. By 1991, the collection consisted of over 18,000 volumes. In 1996, the college moved to Chester Hill and it was the location of the college and library until 2012. The first trained librarian joined the library in 1998 and a computerised catalogue system was introduced in 1999 (Austin, 2013, pp. 127, 129, 141, 216, 237, 255, 258).

Over the years, the library (and college) has expanded across several campuses around Australia, in New Zealand, and has partnerships with colleges in Australia, the Philippines and Finland!



Brisbane

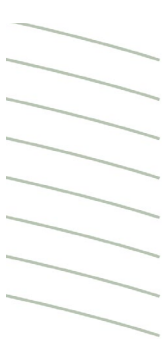
Ironically, devastating Brisbane River floods again threatened the Brisbane campus library in 2011, requiring the several-thousand volume library to be packed up and relocated by carloads in the middle of the night (Austin, 2013, p. 291). The Brisbane campus is currently located in Woolloongabba.

Sydney

In 2012, the James Wallace Memorial Library, along with the entire Sydney campus, moved to Parramatta, its current location. A Korean language collection had begun in 1996 when the Korean program was first developed (Austin, 2013, p. 242), and it now numbers over 8,000 titles. Since 2001, the James Wallace Memorial Library has been home to the Australasian Pentecostal Studies Centre (APSC), a physical and digital Pentecostal archive invaluable in supporting research into the history and impact of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Australia. To date, around 32,000 archives have been digitised for preservation and research purposes. The APSC collection also includes over 200 oral history recordings. As such, it is one of the largest Pentecostal archival collections in the Oceania region and has been deemed by the National Library of Australia as a collection of national significance to the history of spirituality in Australia.



Sydney Campus Library



Perth

In 1996, SCC expanded its external campuses to include Perth which had a 6,000 volume library. A few years later the campus withdrew from SCC and associated itself with Harvest Bible College (Stockley, 2007, p. 84). When Harvest merged into AC in 2018, the Perth library returned to AC. The collection is currently too large for the library space with approximately 3,000 volumes available at any one time. The majority of the collection (over 11,000 items) is housed in off-site storage. Selected resources are rotated between storage and the campus library each semester to ensure students have access to what they need.

Auckland

In 2007, a formal partnership was initiated between AC and Assemblies of God NZ. Phlair International College (previously known as New Covenant International Bible College) became ACNZ in October 2009 (Lottering 2020). That library collection was incorporated into the AC library catalogue in October 2014 (Lau 2020).

Hobart

The AC Hobart campus library was formerly the library of Tabor Tasmania. That collection became the Hobart campus of the AC Library in 2016 (Hattrell 2020).

Melbourne & Adelaide

In 2018, Harvest Bible College, and its campus libraries also merged into Alphacrucis College. This brought a significant collection from Melbourne into the expanding AC library collection. The Melbourne collection is currently split between the campus library and off-site storage due to space restrictions. Retrieval of titles from storage is easy and titles can be available in as little as 15 minutes of a request being made. The former Harvest Queensland campus collection had been shipped to Melbourne for sorting prior to the merge, after which it was shipped to supplement the library collection at the newly established AC Adelaide campus in 2019.



Melbourne Campus Library

Higher Education Third Party Arrangements (HETPAs)

Since 2015, the Alphacrucis Libraries have also worked in conjunction with a number of colleges who hold HEPTAs with AC, themselves with library collections numbering over 47,500 items in total. These partnerships include Hillsong College, Planetshakers College, the National Institute for Christian Education, Iso Kirja College (Finland), and Asia Pacific Theological College (Philippines).

Today (2020), the James Wallace Memorial Library is one of 7 campus libraries (Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Auckland); has 4 dedicated library staff plus numerous others who assist in the libraries; and is comprised of a collection of over 85,000 physical resources, not to mention hundreds of thousands of digital resources (e-books and journal articles) used to support research and study from VET to doctoral level.

Early history of the James Wallace Memorial Library showed a commitment to developing a collection to support students in their studies and to cultivate a love of lifelong learning. More recent history has been one of great expansion and continued growth and development of collections and campus locations. The future is bright as Alphacrucis College moves towards becoming a global Christian University. A university needs a world class library to support both staff and students in their research, and the James Wallace Memorial Library, in conjunction with all Alphacrucis campus libraries, is ready to fulfil that need!



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