

# **Alphacrucis College: The formation and development of the national training college of Australian Christian Churches (Assemblies of God in Australia)<sup>1</sup>**

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## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 1937, Australian Christian Churches (Assemblies of God in Australia AGA) has transformed from a small, fragmented sect, into a substantial denomination with far-reaching impact. Based on oral interviews, extensive archival research and analysis of secondary sources, this paper argues that the AGA national training institution, Alphacrucis College (formerly Commonwealth Bible College then Southern Cross College), has been integral to this outstanding vitality and growth. Modelled after flourishing Bible schools in the United States and Great Britain, the college served to bring national unity, Pentecostal emphasis, missional evangelism and focused stewardship. Despite a series of crises and severe financial constraints, growth and maturity came as popular, high-profile, alumni leaders and the churches of Australia supported the vision of the college. Its faculty provided quality education in an inspiring faith environment, while building an international reputation, pioneering innovative practices and reaching independent accreditation.

## HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

With a vision for growth, the AGA national college was modelled on missional-focussed 19<sup>th</sup> century Bible schools, with strong denominational connections.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Denise A. Austin, *Our College: A History of the National Training College of Australian Christian Churches (Assemblies of God in Australia)* (Sydney: Australian Pentecostal Studies, 2013).

Colleges such as: Andover Theological Seminary (1808),<sup>2</sup> Oberlin Collegiate Institute (1833),<sup>3</sup> Chicago Evangelistic Society (1886),<sup>4</sup> and East London Institute for Home and Foreign Mission (1873)<sup>5</sup> provided models for practical experience and grounding in the Bible, rather than academic theological education.<sup>6</sup> The AGA national college also followed the denominational pattern of colleges, financially supported through networks of local churches.<sup>7</sup> Further impetus came through the rapidly growing Assemblies of God in the United States of America (AGUSA) which established regional schools, such as: Glad Tidings Bible Institute, California (1919); North Central Bible Institute, Minnesota (1930); Northwestern Bible Institute, Washington (1934); and Southeastern Bible Institute, Florida (1935).<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Pentecostalism in the United Kingdom founded the Hampstead Bible School (HBS), London (1927) training in the gifts of the Spirit.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, anti-intellectualism was deeply entrenched in the Bible college movement and pedagogy focused on proof-texting to support inter-locking doctrines, supplemented with inspiring devotional lectures.<sup>10</sup> Globally, Pentecostal education retained the missional bent but valued Spirit-led theology more than academic rigor.

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<sup>2</sup> Michael-John DePalma, "Austin Phelps and the Spirit (of) Composing: An Exploration of Nineteenth-Century Sacred Rhetoric at Andover Theological Seminary", *Rhetoric Review*, 27, 4, 379-396 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07350190802339267>) (accessed 9 September 2011)

<sup>3</sup> Prospectus for the Oberlin Collegiate Institute (1833) (<http://www.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/Documents/OberlinProspectus.html>) (accessed 2 October 2011)

<sup>4</sup> David D. Parker, "Theological and Bible College Education in Australia: An Evangelical Perspective. 1. Historical Development", *Journal of Christian Education*, Papers 86 (July 1986), 17ff.

<sup>5</sup> Klaus Fielder, *The Story of the Faith Missions* (Oxford: Regnum, 1994), 22.

<sup>6</sup> Winston Terrance Sutherland, "John Nelson Darby: Scholarship that Influenced the Bible College Movement", *Christian Higher Education*, 9, 3 (2010), 278.

<sup>7</sup> G. Henton Davies, "Selection and Training of Candidates for the Ministry The Baptist Churches in Great Britain", *The Expository Times*, 73 (1962), 228 (<http://ext.sagepub.com/content/73/8/228.citation>) (accessed 10 September 2011)

<sup>8</sup> James T. Flynn and Wie L. Tjiong, "Fanning the Flames: How the Renewal Movement has Shaped American Theological Education", *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, 28, 1 (Spring 2006), 99.

<sup>9</sup> Darin D. Lenz, "'Visions on the Battlefields': Alexander A. Boddy, Early British Pentecostalism, and the First World War, 1914-1918", *Journal of Religious History*, 32, 3 (September 2008), 283

<sup>10</sup> William K. Kay, "Pentecostal Education", *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 25, 2 (August 2004), 231.

In Australia, small Pentecostal constituencies made denominational foundations a challenge, although early training endeavours were still marked by premillennial, missional urgency.<sup>11</sup> During the famous Sunshine Revival (1925-1926) in Melbourne, led by fiery Mexican evangelist, A. C. Valdez, nine students from the conservative Melbourne Bible Institute (MBI) were filled with the Holy Spirit and ultimately left MBI.<sup>12</sup> Valdez opened the Victorian Bible Institute (VBI), with 30 students, to equip and release Pentecostal ministers and counter emerging anti-Trinitarian and annihilationist teachings.<sup>13</sup> However, lack of numbers in the small Pentecostal Churches of Australia soon forced VBI to close.<sup>14</sup> In 1935, Howard Carter, Assemblies of God of Great Britain (AGGB) chairman and principal of HBS, was invited to open Summer Queensland Bible Institute (QBI) in Brisbane.<sup>15</sup> Following the historical pattern of anti-intellectual, practice-based training, it combined features of a revival camp meeting and a short term Bible college, with the Bible as the only textbook.<sup>16</sup> It was such a success that Carter's former student at HBS, Henry Wiggins, was invited to Australia to establish a permanent college.<sup>17</sup> Wiggins moved QBI to his pastorate in Toowoomba and renamed it Bible Training School (BTS).<sup>18</sup> Wiggins worked hard for BTS but it was a struggle to maintain numbers and it also closed after two years. Although Australian Pentecostals were eager to provide training for mission, remote, church-based colleges with a limited constituency were always going to be difficult to sustain.

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<sup>11</sup> Shane Clifton, "Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Methodological Proposal for a Diverse Movement", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 15, 2 (2007), 214.

<sup>12</sup> Barry Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: The Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia 1870-1939* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2011), 195.

<sup>13</sup> Philip B. Duncan, "Forming the Fellowship" in *Pentecost in Australia* (<http://aps.scc.edu.au/library/documents>) (accessed 16 September 2011)

<sup>14</sup> Merle Nugent, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Wishart QLD: 14 January 2012).

<sup>15</sup> "Great Summer Bible School and Camp Meeting", *Glad Tidings Messenger*, 1, 4 (February 1935), 8.

<sup>16</sup> A Student, "Summer Bible School", *Glad Tidings Messenger*, 1, 6 (April 1935), 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Brett, "[Armstrong, Maxwell \(1881-1959\)](http://webjournals.alphacrucis.edu.au/journals/ADPCM/a-to-d/armstrong-maxwell-1881-1959/)", *Australian Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (<http://webjournals.alphacrucis.edu.au/journals/ADPCM/a-to-d/armstrong-maxwell-1881-1959/>) (accessed 15 September 2011)

<sup>18</sup> "Bible Training School", 6.

## NATIONAL UNITY

The AGA national college played a vital role in unifying diverse and fragmented regional groups into a cohesive denominational movement. In 1937, the Assemblies of God in Australia (AGA) was formed, with Charles Greenwood of Richmond Temple as general chairman (1937-1941), and a total of around 1000 people in 38 different Pentecostal assemblies across Australia.<sup>19</sup> It was decided unanimously that there was a “need of practical training of prospective Ministers and missionaries”<sup>20</sup> and goal of a national college was written into Article 21 of the United Constitution.<sup>21</sup> World War II stalled plans but, as Shane Clifton asserts, the creation of CBC eventually played a significant role in lifting AGA out of its wartime stagnation.<sup>22</sup> This was true across all denominations in Australia, with around 20 theological colleges opened over the next two decades.<sup>23</sup> Learning the cost of regional rivalries, AGA leadership determined to create a single, unified, autonomous college.

Ultimately, the college was established because of the AGA leaders’ determination, the availability of quality ministries from the US and Great Britain and the zeal of its pioneer students. At Richmond Temple’s first annual Beulah Heights Pentecostal Camp of Christmas 1947, American evangelists Francis (Frank) and Inez Sturgeon, and their musical director, Mildred Thompson, were invited to become leaders of the new “Commonwealth Bible College.”<sup>24</sup> The commencement was precipitated by eight bold young people who left Sydney Bible Training

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<sup>19</sup> Shane Clifton, “Pragmatic Ecclesiology: The Apostolic Revolution and the Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia”, *Southern Cross College* (<http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/journals/aps/issue-9/03-the-apostolic-revolution-and-the-ecclesiology-o/>) (accessed 12 August 2011)

<sup>20</sup> *Minutes of the United Conference of the Pentecostal Church of Australia and the Assemblies of God* (Queensland) (Sydney: 27-31 March 1937), 3.

<sup>21</sup> *United Constitution of the Assemblies of God in Australia 1943-1945*, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Shane Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 108.

<sup>23</sup> David D. Parker, “Theological and Bible College Education in Australia”, 16ff.

<sup>24</sup> Cited in Lloyd Averill, *Go North Young Man* (Brisbane: Triune Press, 1992), 56.

Institute (SBTI) when challenged on their Pentecostal beliefs, and pleaded with the AGA national leadership to begin an AGA college.<sup>25</sup> Superintendent of the AGA in New South Wales, A. T. Davidson, hailed the establishment of CBC as an “historical milestone” and the “greatest event in Australian Assemblies of God history!”<sup>26</sup> One attendee at the Beulah Heights camp was 20-year-old Evelyn Brumpton, who had grown up on a sheep property at Mitchell in south-west Queensland. In the ‘tent-cathedral’ on Christmas day, after the preaching, Brumpton “literally ran down the sawdust path to the front” to give her heart to the Lord.<sup>27</sup> The following evening, again Brumpton ran forward, breaking out for the first time into tongues before she reached ‘the altar’. She enrolled at CBC and ultimately became a long term missionary.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the earnest desire for unity and autonomy, the only viable option for the fledgling college campus was Richmond Temple, which had been birthed out of the Sunshine Revival in Melbourne.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Charles Enticknap and other Queensland pastors stressed “the emphasis was on the Commonwealth-wide nature of the College. No parochial outlook shall marr [sic] the unity.”<sup>30</sup> The total number of students in the 1948 inaugural class was an outstanding 34 men and 17 women from across all states.<sup>31</sup> Clearly, Charles Greenwood was thrilled with the college’s success, writing:

Words cannot describe my joy at the wonderful progress of the  
Assemblies of God Commonwealth Bible College. Money cannot buy

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<sup>25</sup> Harold and Joyce Bartholomew, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Moorooka QLD: 8 September 2011).

<sup>26</sup> Davidson, “Bible College Inaugurated”, 12.

<sup>27</sup> Cyril and Evelyn Westbrook, *Personal Interview with the Author*.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> “A Day at C.B.C.”, *Harvest Grain*, 5, 3 (May 1948), 26.

<sup>30</sup> Enticknap, “C.B.C. Commencement”, 10-11.

<sup>31</sup> Enticknap, “C.B.C. Commencement”, 11; Harold Morton, “Editorial: ‘Yukana’”, *Yukana* (1948), 11-13; “Commonwealth Bible College Student Enrolment”, *Harvest Grain*, 5, 2 (February 1948), 27.

the priceless treasure of yielded and sanctified Australian manhood and womanhood consecrated to the Saviour...Here is the move under the hand of God.<sup>32</sup>

It was projected that at least 100 students would enrol the following year. So, in May 1948, Richmond Temple purchased the fully furnished, 22-room Missionary Rest Home in East Camberwell, to accommodate the students and faculty of CBC.<sup>33</sup> The college was successfully launched and was achieving its goals in Melbourne.

However, according to the AGA constitution, the college needed its own campus and it was a continual sticking point in regional relationships that CBC was located at and resourced by a single local church. Therefore, in 1949, a one-acre property was purchased in New Farm, Brisbane, which could accommodate 100 students, faculty and staff.<sup>34</sup> To underscore its independence from any Australian assembly, Donald Gee, AGGB chairman, principal of the Kenley Bible school in Surrey and well-known international teacher, opened the campus.<sup>35</sup> One of the advantages of moving to Queensland was it allowed several indigenous students from northern regions access to enter the 1949 cohort, who ultimately became vital pioneers in regional Queensland and New South Wales.<sup>36</sup> Greenwood persisted with his own Victorian Bible College (VBI), until 1951, when the Victorian presbytery closed it down “in the interests of the unity of the Fellowship and to support in future the

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<sup>32</sup> The Editor, “Harvest Gleanings”, 15.

<sup>33</sup> “A Day at C.B.C.”, 26; “Missionary Rest Home”, *Harvest Grain*, 5, 3 (May 1948), 26; George Forbes, *The C.L. Greenwood Story* (Chirside Park VIC: Mission Mobilisers, 2006), 172.

<sup>34</sup> *Advance C.B.C.!: Assuring the Future of the Commonwealth Bible College* (Alex, King & Sons, Printers, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, 1949).

<sup>35</sup> Mark Hutchinson, “Duncan, Philip Brandon (1899-1990)”, *Australian Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (<http://webjournals.alphacrucis.edu.au/journals/ADPCM/a-to-d/duncan-philip-brandon-1899-1990/>) (accessed 2 September 2011)

<sup>36</sup> Nugent, *Personal Interview with the Author*.

Commonwealth Bible College”.<sup>37</sup> The AGA again had a single college that was to become the unifying focal point for the training, evangelistic and missionary efforts of the movement.

## PENTECOSTAL DISTINCTIVES

A key feature of the growth of the college in its new location was the life in the Spirit. The work of ‘spreading Pentecost’ begun at the Richmond Temple campus, continued at New Farm, under the careful guidance of college staff. CBC president, Philip Duncan, forcefully reminded the students that the “eyes of the fellowship” and the “eyes of the Christless” were watching, so: “Don’t fail us! Don’t fail them! Don’t fail [Christ]!”<sup>38</sup> The second American principal, Leonard Palmer, further challenged: “Think of those hundreds of towns we surveyed in Pastoralia where there is yet no Assemblies of God witness. Let it drive deeply into your soul, and send you ever onward as a Courier of the wonderful Message...”<sup>39</sup> Students held open-air rallies in the city and ministered at various churches, aged homes and hospitals around Brisbane.<sup>40</sup> Unashamedly Pentecostal, the AGA conducted Sunday school marches of more than 2000 people through the streets of Brisbane city, finishing with a concert at city hall. At times, students travelled substantial distances to lead services in remote rural towns across Queensland.<sup>41</sup>

In 1950, Philip Duncan temporarily left his Sydney congregation to become CBC principal. He was described as an encouraging, faith-building, father figure who was “effervescent”, “enthusiastic”, “dynamic” and “very pentecostal”.<sup>42</sup> Tarrying

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<sup>37</sup> James Wallace, “Amalgamation of the VBC and the CBC”, *webjournals.alphacrucis.edu.au* (<http://webjournals.alphacrucis.edu.au/journals/AEGTM/1952-february/12-amalgamation-vbc-and-cbc/>) (11 December 2011)

<sup>38</sup> P.B. Duncan, “Students! You are Being Watched”, *C.B.C. Yukana* (Brisbane: R.G. Gillies & Co, 1949), 4.

<sup>39</sup> Leonard Palmer, “A Message from the Acting-Principal”, *C.B.C. Yukana* (1949), 6.

<sup>40</sup> *C.B.C. Yukana* (1949), 23.

<sup>41</sup> *Australian Evangel* (November 1950), 30.

<sup>42</sup> Cyril and Evelyn Westbrook, *Personal Interview with the Author*.

meetings for baptism in the Holy Spirit were often held under the New Farm building.<sup>43</sup> In fact, over 30 people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the college that year, including a Brisbane policeman, a Perth magistrate, a Cairns Bachelor of Economics student and a Melbourne scientist with a Master's degree.<sup>44</sup> Holy Spirit empowerment continued to be a feature of CBC's Pentecostal distinctive.

The college also grew because of and despite attempts to maintain an atmosphere of holiness. Following traditional Pentecostal morality, rules were enforced through a demerit system and strict adherence to 13 different categories of regulations. Things forbidden included: "Note passing and whispering" in class; "undue familiarity between the sexes"; the "singing of choruses in the worldly, irreverent spirit"; and breaking of the 10 pm curfew, "except when engaged in prayer or tarrying in the church prayer room".<sup>45</sup> Head students were often viewed as watchdogs, ensuring that discipline was maintained.<sup>46</sup> However, there was a light-hearted side to college life. One day, the college was presented with a mascot – a baby whip-tail wallaby: "Wally" happily took up residence on the tennis court.<sup>47</sup> Practical jokes also abounded – jugs of water were thrown on those who slept in late and some fellows raised one lecturer's car up on bricks, so in retaliation he hid a fruit bat carcass under one of the culprits beds until it stank out the dormitory.<sup>48</sup> CBC reflected the strict morality of AGA Pentecostalism but also maintained a family atmosphere. At the end of the year, Philip Duncan returned to Sydney.

## EVANGELISM

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<sup>43</sup> Bartholomew, *Personal Interview with Ben Clark*.

<sup>44</sup> Philip B. Duncan, "Unity at the C.B.C.", *Australian Evangel* (November 1950), 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Commonwealth Bible College of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (1950).

<sup>46</sup> Alec and Pauline Alcorn, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Buderim QLD: 5 October 2011).

<sup>47</sup> "Our Wallaby", *Australian Evangel* (November 1950), 31.

<sup>48</sup> Bartholomew, *Personal Interview with Ben Clark*.



In line with the over-arching vision of AGA evangelistic expansion, CBC began vigorous church planting, outreach and overseas missions campaigns, under the principalship of experienced Scottish church planter and pastor, James Wallace.<sup>49</sup> The evangelistic vision in Australia was fuelled by highly-charged crusades led by revivalists, such as Oral Roberts (1956)<sup>50</sup> and Billy Graham (1959).<sup>51</sup> Wallace envisioned CBC to be “a Soul-Winning College”,<sup>52</sup> with young people “trained, prepared, equipped, anointed, on fire for God.”<sup>53</sup> At a time when there were just 59 churches in the whole AGA movement, CBC students pioneered 11 churches in Brisbane alone.<sup>54</sup> Some of those churches later grew into thriving megachurches.<sup>55</sup> The popular indigenous islander alumnus, Nicey Sambo, planted several churches in north Queensland.<sup>56</sup> CBC’s impact on church planting in Australia was truly remarkable. In fact, AGA doubled from 50 to almost 100 churches between 1951-1969, most growth occurring during the decade of Wallace’s ministry.<sup>57</sup> While this growth was no doubt fed by the rapid urbanisation of the Australian population, Wallace’s passion for the lost infused his students with an intense motivation toward outreach and the rapid expansion of the AGA movement.

Another evangelistic legacy of the Wallace years was in the area of missions. In one of the most successful and divinely-inspired strategies of AGA missions, the

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<sup>49</sup> *Official Minutes of the Eighth Biennial Conference of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (16-20 November 1950), 11.

<sup>50</sup> David Edwin Harrell, *Oral Roberts: An American Life* (New York: Harpercollins, 1987), 75.

<sup>51</sup> Stuart Piggins, “Billy Graham in Australia, 1959 – Was it Revival?”, *Lucas: An Evangelical History Review*, 6 (October 1989) (<http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/journals/Lucas/no6-october-1989/02-billy-graham-in-australia-1959-was-it-revival/>) (11 March 2012); John Pollock, *Billy Graham: An Authorised Biography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966), 249.

<sup>52</sup> “C.B.C. is a Soul-Winning College”, *Australian Evangel*, 16, 6 (1959), 14-15.

<sup>53</sup> James Wallace, “A Message from the Principal”, *Australian Evangel*, 14, 1 (1957), 4.

<sup>54</sup> Andrew Evans, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Carindale QLD: 1 September 2012).

<sup>55</sup> “C.B.C. is a Soul-Winning College”, 14-15.

<sup>56</sup> Fred and Betty Evans, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Albany Creek, Brisbane: 17 September 2011).

<sup>57</sup> Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition*, 111.

national executive chose to focus the majority of its missionary attention on the field of New Guinea.<sup>58</sup> Two of the stated objectives of CBC were:

To train pastors, evangelists and missionaries by giving ministerial students suitable courses of instruction and opportunity for actual ministry.

To foster missionary interest and help missionary candidates prepare for their fields of calling.<sup>59</sup>

Not surprisingly, two of the first AGA missionaries to New Guinea were CBC alumni, Don Westbrook and Morris Hovey, who helped to pioneer a mission in Maprik, in the East Sepik Province.<sup>60</sup> Evelyn Brumpton married fellow-alumni, Cyril Westbrook and they spent 40 years as AGA missionaries in New Guinea.<sup>61</sup> Donald Badham served for 24 years as principal of Maprik Bible School.<sup>62</sup> Previously considered a dependent territory of Australia, on 16 September 1974, Papua New Guinea (PNG) became an independent nation.<sup>63</sup> Melvin L. Hodges argues that Pentecostal missiology played a major role in the empowerment of indigenous believers on the field and became a key to the success of the Assemblies of God in Papua New Guinea (AGPNG).<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, more than 60 CBC

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<sup>58</sup> *Official Minutes of the Seventh Biennial Conference of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Brisbane: 29 April-3 May, 1949), 5.

<sup>59</sup> *Commonwealth Bible College of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (1950).

<sup>60</sup> George Forbes, *A Church on Fire: The Story of the Assemblies of God of Papua New Guinea* (Mitcham VIC: Mission Mobilisers International, 2001), 25.

<sup>61</sup> Cyril and Evelyn Westbrook, *Personal Interview with the Author*.

<sup>62</sup> Don and Pearl Badham, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Redland Bay QLD: 16 September 2011).

<sup>63</sup> Hank Nelson, "Liberation: The End of Australian Rule in Papua New Guinea", *Journal of Pacific History*, 35, 3 (December 2000), 273.

<sup>64</sup> L. Grant McClung, Jr, "'Try To Get People Saved': Revisiting the Paradigm of an Urgent Pentecostal Missiology" in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made To Travel*, Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen, eds (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), 42.

graduates gave their lives to the work there, confirming the strong evangelistic impact of the college.

#### FOCUS OF STEWARDSHIP

By the 1960s, CBC had consolidated its place as a central focus of the AGA movement and assemblies across Australia gave generous financial and material support. After Wallace succumbed to a fatal heart attack in 1961, the theological-trained Harold Bartholomew oversaw the enormous task of establishing the college at the new, purpose-built campus at Verney Road, Graceville, in a southern suburb of Brisbane. There were three classrooms, a 58-bed student accommodation, staff quarters, dining room, administration block and common room.<sup>65</sup> This building effort required a substantial lift in financial support from the Australian assemblies. Advertisements pleaded: "...the assets of the CBC and the Fellowship are your guarantee. Make your money work for the Kingdom of God...the training of Missionaries and Ministers is urgent and pressing. You can have a real part."<sup>66</sup> Through AGA magazine, *Australian Evangel*, Davidson urged: "And give, my brother, give! Time is short! We are in the last days! Give sacrificially for there is no greater investment for God than the training of young men and women for His service..."<sup>67</sup> College treks throughout all states were also helpful in fund-raising and promotions.<sup>68</sup> These strategies helped keep AGA assemblies focused on the vision of CBC.

After a brief principalship by retired school principal, Chris C. W. Harrison,<sup>69</sup> AGA's first 'general superintendent' (1969-1977), Ralph Read took on the role, in 1969.<sup>70</sup> With unreserved support of the college, he wrote:

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<sup>65</sup> Harold Bartholomew, "The New C.B.C.", *Australian Evangel*, 18, 3 (1961), 7.

<sup>66</sup> "College Camera", *Australian Evangel*, 21, 5 (May 1964), 15.

<sup>67</sup> Alec T. Davidson, "Heart to Heart", *Australian Evangel*, 19, 1 (1962), 14.

<sup>68</sup> "College Camera" (November 1963), 5.

<sup>69</sup> *Yukuna* (1971), 4.

<sup>70</sup> Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition*, 139.

...Our Bible training programme is the heart beat of our Movement...Should the Lord tarry many of these present C.B.C. students will stand to minister in the 21<sup>st</sup> century...Our bounden duty is to support the Bible training programme of C.B.C. and assure that we are ministering to the 21<sup>st</sup> century through others.<sup>71</sup>

The AGA national college provided a focus of training that spurred on further expansion across the movement.

Unforeseen calamities even provided an opportunity for the AGA movement to focus its unified forces to assist the national college. On 25 January 1974, only days after the arrival of Welsh-born principal, Aeron Morgan, a devastating flood hit Brisbane and the Graceville campus was completely destroyed – with no insurance compensation.<sup>72</sup> Glad Tidings Tabernacle, a leading church in Brisbane, provided a temporary campus, until Morgan eventually found a property in Katoomba, New South Wales, in the mountains west of Sydney. Once again, the assemblies gathered financial donations to purchase *Palais Royale* on Katoomba Street and the new campus was officially opened in April 1975.<sup>73</sup> Just 11 days before the fall of Saigon, there were, no doubt, mixed emotions of anticipation and apprehension about the future. Indeed, college advertising read: “Meeting the Demands of Today’s ‘World in Crisis’”.<sup>74</sup> With enrolments reaching 125 students, further properties were soon purchased on Katoomba Street, including *Homesdale* and *Delmar Flats*.<sup>75</sup> The seemingly insurmountable challenge of a devastating flood had only served to strengthen the resolve of the AGA movement in supporting its national college.

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<sup>71</sup> “C.B.C. and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, *Australian Evangel*, 26, 8 (September 1969), 6.

<sup>72</sup> Read, *Personal Interview with the Author*.

<sup>73</sup> “This Could Be C.B.C.”, *Assemblies of God in Australia* (Mitcham VIC: 7 August 1974), 1.

<sup>74</sup> “Commonwealth Bible College”, *Australian Evangel*, 33, 7 (August 1976), 14.

<sup>75</sup> Morgan, *Commonwealth Bible College, Australia, Principal’s Report* (1979), 15.

## LEADERSHIP

By the 1970s, over 60% of AGA leaders were CBC graduates, revealing the integral role of the college in the development of the movement. Alumnus Andrew Evans became AGA general superintendent (1977-1997), having grown the South Australian suburban Klemzig assembly (later renamed Paradise) from 200 to 4000.<sup>76</sup> Paradise was one of several rapidly growing assemblies which enjoyed an influx of charismatic “switchers” from mainline denominations which accounts, in some part, for the apparent “apostolic revolution” within the AGA movement.<sup>77</sup> The prime movers in this leadership swing (such as Andrew Evans, David Cartledge and Reg Klimionok) were largely James Wallace’s former CBC students and lecturers. During the first five years at Katoomba, under Morgan’s leadership, CBC alumni pioneered and pastored in around 40 different assemblies across Australia. It is clear that CBC was vital in shaping the AGA, as well as influencing the broader Pentecostal movement.

The college continued to grow despite times of change and increased competition. James T. Flynn and Wie L. Tjong have found that the charismatic renewal closed the gap between the laity and the clergy, leading to an increased demand for theological education for all believers.<sup>78</sup> Several charismatic schools began to emerge, such as: Life Ministry Bible College (1975) in Melbourne and Vision Bible College (1976) in Sydney.<sup>79</sup> The AGA dedication to local church autonomy also led

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<sup>76</sup> Andrew Evans, *Personal Interview with the Author*.

<sup>77</sup> Clifton, “Pragmatic Ecclesiology”.

<sup>78</sup> Flynn and Tjong, “Fanning the Flames”, 101.

<sup>79</sup> *Vision Magazine*, 13 (January–February 1975), 32; Alan Langstaff, “Vision Bible College”, *Vision Magazine*, 16 (July–August 1976), 25; *Australian Evangel* 40, 11 (November 1983), 14; A.E. Banton, *Pentecostal Pioneering with the Foursquare Gospel in Australia* (1989) (<http://webjournals.alphacrucis.edu.au/journals/EB/pentecostal-pioneering-in-the-foursquare-church/pentecostal-pioneering-17-life-bible-college-strat/>) (1 July 2012); Barry Chant, “Avenues for the Eighties”, *Australian Evangel*, 36, 11 (November 1979), 14.

to new competition schools within the small constituency – the majority founded by former CBC staff and students:

Assemblies of God Western Australia Bible College (1976) – Perth  
Maranatha Bible School (1976) – Adelaide  
Rhema Bible College in Townsville (RBC 1978)  
Garden City School of Ministries (1982) – Brisbane  
Calvary Bible College (1982) – Melbourne  
International Institute for Creative Ministries (1983) – Sydney  
Liberty Bible School (1984) – Brisbane  
Harvest Bible College (1985) – Melbourne  
Power Ministry School (1988) – Sydney  
Renewal Ministry Training College – Brisbane  
Teen Challenge Training Institute – Brisbane<sup>80</sup>

Such schools locked capable young leaders into the local assembly, provided an income stream and tax-deductibility on often otherwise under-utilised buildings, as well as creating a stable, energetic volunteer workforce. It was widely believed that the emergence of church-based colleges was a key reason for AGA growth over the next two decades.<sup>81</sup> However, growth was seen across the spectrum, with over 135 theological schools also being established in various other denominations.<sup>82</sup> This increased competition brought necessary challenges, yet senior AGA leadership

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<sup>80</sup> Stockley, Frank with Mike Keating, *A Story Worth Telling: History of the Assemblies of God in Western Australia 1922-2000* (Perth: Australian Christian Churches, 2007), 81; Reginald Klimionok, “Institute and Degree Studies in Garden City School of Ministries”, *Australian Evangel*, 38, 5 (May 1981), 15; Frank Houston, “Christian Life Centre Darlinghurst, Sydney”, *Australian Evangel*, 39, 5 (May 1982), 12; Alun Davies, “A Vision for a College” in *Harvest Bible College: The First 20 Years*, Brendan Roach and Kerrie Stevens, eds (Dandenong North VIC: Harvest Bible College, 2005), 2; *AE*, 42, 11 (November 1985), 28.

<sup>81</sup> Andrew Evans, “Biographical History of Andrew Evans”, *Personal Interview with Mark Hutchinson* (Sydney: Pentecostal Heritage Centre, September 1999).

<sup>82</sup> Parker, “Theological and Bible College Education in Australia”, 5.

continued to support CBC wholeheartedly. College directorate secretary and CBC alumnus, Denis Smith wrote:

We believe that the future of CBC is vitally linked with what God is doing in the world today...We believe CBC has an unparalleled opportunity to become the 'school of the prophets' for men and women to learn efficiently and effectively how to become a 'good and faithful servant'.<sup>83</sup>

As an evidence of its growing maturity, CBC influence was indelibly stamped on AGA leadership, who established healthy competition colleges, while remaining supportive of the national college.

#### ACCREDITATION

Traditional anti-intellectualism made AGA leaders wary of government interference associated with accreditation, despite admiring their AGUSA role model which already had six universities, catering for around 8500 students.<sup>84</sup> Meanwhile, the broader Australian theological education landscape followed global trends away from informal Bible schools to government-accredited institutes, such as: Colleges of Divinity in Adelaide (1979), Brisbane (1983), Sydney (1983) and Perth (1985).<sup>85</sup> The cost of accreditation, and the decline in some mainline constituencies, saw theological colleges dwindle from almost 60 in the 1960s, to only 33 in 1985, with a total enrolment of over 2500 students in various categories.<sup>86</sup> This shift toward tighter industry oversight and peer review inevitably began to catch up with church-based Bible institutes.

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<sup>83</sup> Denis Smith, *Commonwealth Bible College Australia Biennial Report (1979-1981) to Commonwealth Conference June 1981* (Katoomba: CBC Press, 1981), 19.

<sup>84</sup> Kay, "Pentecostal Education", 236.

<sup>85</sup> Geoffrey R. Treloar, "Towards a Master Narrative: Theological Learning and Teaching in Australia Since 1901", *St Mark's Review*, 210 (November 2009), 40.

<sup>86</sup> Parker, "Theological and Bible College Education in Australia", 8.

While still not requiring formal qualifications for ordination, the AGA did begin to warm to the concept of more recognised certification. After Aeron Morgan resigned to accept a UK-based pastorate, in mid-1981, and following a brief interim by Lloyd Averill from Glad Tidings Tabernacle, David Brydges of the Assemblies of God in New Zealand (AGNZ), became CBC principal.<sup>87</sup> In 1984, Brydges was invited to become national director for AG-affiliated International Correspondence Institute (ICI) (with the national office on the CBC campus). This meant that CBC diploma graduates could complete a fourth year distance program to receive a US-accredited Bachelor of Arts in Bible-Theology, with the option to continue on to a Master's program through Wheaton Graduate School, Fuller Theological Seminary or Gordon Conwell Seminary. The CBC directorate cautiously consented, directorate secretary, Rob Dunk writing: "The anointing must never be sacrificed upon the altar of academic achievement. However, the Directorate has also recognised that academic excellence and the anointing can be partners of the highest order."<sup>88</sup> By 1987, the CBC-based ICI had 16 extension learning centres in churches across Australia, with 674 students spread across the Bachelor of Arts course (194); ministerial training course (35); Christian service course (413) and Christian life course (32).<sup>89</sup> The trail-blazing endeavours of Brydges and others began the long process of breaking down antagonism toward Pentecostal academia.

While the broader theological education landscape continued its dynamic course of change, colleges wanting to raise standards faced the ongoing challenge of overcoming the anti-academic sentiments among their constituencies. Byron Klaus and Loren Triplett spoke of Pentecostalism's "tenuous relationship" with

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<sup>87</sup> David and Pamela Brydges, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Eight Mile Plains QLD: 15 June 2012).

<sup>88</sup> Rob Dunk, *Commonwealth Bible College Biennial Report 1983-194 Commonwealth Conference* (April 1985, Melbourne), 12.

<sup>89</sup> Brydges, *Biennial Report 1985-1986 Commonwealth Conference*, 6.



theological training, and a “dead intellectualism” that “stifles the Spirit-filled life”.<sup>90</sup> In 1989, after a critical illness Brydges resigned and Morgan returned as principal.<sup>91</sup> The following year, the Australian government advised CBC that its international links were insufficient to issue legal awards. So, CBC joined the Anglican-founded Australian College of Theology, which necessitated intentional investment in resources, qualified faculty and quality assurance procedures.<sup>92</sup> In 1993, CBC was also granted approval from the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) of New South Wales to offer its own Advanced Certificate (1year), Associate Diploma (2 years) and Diploma of Ministry (3years), with Austudy eligibility.<sup>93</sup> CBC also became a founding member of the Pentecostal Charismatic Bible Colleges Association (PCBC) of Australia and New Zealand to foster inter-collegial activities, such as annual conferences.<sup>94</sup> Certainly in the eyes of broader educational communities, the alignment with national protocols helped move the AGA college from an extended ‘camp meeting’ toward becoming a genuine theological institution.

## FAITH

While raising academic standards, the college still remained on the cutting edge of faith. After a second fruitful season, Morgan left again to take on another pastorate, CBC alumni, David Cartledge and Jeremy Griffiths became in-resident principal and principal respectively.<sup>95</sup> According to one student, the new leadership “really

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<sup>90</sup> Byron D. Klaus and Loren O. Triplett, “National Leadership in Pentecostal Missions” in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, Murray A. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen, eds (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 226.

<sup>91</sup> “Profile”, *AeronMorgan.org* ([http://www.aeronmorgan.org/index.php?p=1\\_28](http://www.aeronmorgan.org/index.php?p=1_28)) (6 March 2012).

<sup>92</sup> Parker, *Personal Interview with the Author 2*.

<sup>93</sup> *Letter from Jeremy Griffiths to Robert McQuillan, Australian Evangel* (29 September 1993); *On Being Training for Service Guide*, 17.

<sup>94</sup> Mark Hutchinson, “The Getting of History”, *Southern Cross Student Yearbook* (Chester Hill: 2005), 4-5.

<sup>95</sup> Andrew Evans, “Winds of Change at CBC”, *Supplement to September Evangel* (1992): *Commonwealth Bible College*.

changed the whole atmosphere of the college”.<sup>96</sup> At the May 1993 AGA national conference, CBC was renamed Southern Cross Bible College (SCBC) to reflect Australia’s distinctive feature and spiritual destiny (according to charismatic understandings of ‘the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit’).<sup>97</sup>

This college revitalisation occurred almost simultaneously with the much-publicised “Toronto Blessing”.<sup>98</sup> John Lovelace cleverly describes this interdenominational renewal as the “jet-age version of the frontier camp meetings”.<sup>99</sup> Spiritual manifestations, such as laughing, falling over, shaking and shrieking were displayed by Christians all over the world, including Germany, France, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Japan, the United States – and Australia. Never shy of controversy, the Cartledges visited the various epicentres of Toronto, Pensacola and Sunderland, to “bring back the fire” to SCBC and AGA churches.<sup>100</sup> Marie Cartledge comments: “The Lord broke forth in the chapel services and nights of seeking. Students were touched and slain by the Spirit. It was really wonderful”.<sup>101</sup> The campus community was divided, with some embracing the move and others openly hostile – a handful even withdrawing from college altogether. The move petered out in Australia after a few years but it had definitely rejuvenated many at the national college.

At a time when AGA constituents still only totalled less than 110,000,<sup>102</sup> the epic story of SCBC’s move to Sydney and the associated “Chester Hill Miracles”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Jeremy Hodson, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Parramatta NSW: 17 May 2011).

<sup>97</sup> *Southern Cross Bible College Relocation Proposal*, 12.

<sup>98</sup> Margaret M. Paloma, ‘The “Toronto blessing” in postmodern society: Manifestations, metaphor and myth’ in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A religion made to travel*, Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen, eds (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 375.

<sup>99</sup> Cited in Bruce Hindmarsh, “The ‘Toronto Blessing’ and the Protestant Evangelical Awakening of the Eighteenth Century Compared”, *Crux* (1995), 13.

<sup>100</sup> David Cartledge, “Waves of Glory”, *Australian Evangel* (May 1995), 33-35.

<sup>101</sup> Marie Cartledge, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Nambour QLD: 7 February 2012).

<sup>102</sup> David Cartledge, *National Church Planting Department: Report to the 31<sup>st</sup> Biennial Conference of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (1996), 12.

became a symbol of inspiring faith across the movement. The century-old buildings in Katoomba were constantly deteriorating, with exorbitant annual maintenance bills and heating costs.<sup>104</sup> Cartledge also envisioned an Oral Roberts University-type institution in Australia and the Blue Mountains was no place to attempt such a venture. So he searched and found the seven hectare (17.29 acres) former Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) complex at Chester Hill, which included: 258 single accommodation rooms; 21 flats; a house for married quarters; 300-seat dining room, industrial kitchen and recreation areas; administration block; sporting oval, tennis courts, squash court and swimming pool.

While many were enthusiastic, such a daunting commitment was initially viewed by the national executive as an idealistic “fantasy”.<sup>105</sup> Never before in the history of the movement had such a mammoth financial undertaking been attempted at a national level. Understandably, the AGA national executive demands resulted in “extensive reports and lengthy debates” regarding the viability of the project,<sup>106</sup> with multiple “rubbery” financial plans rejected.<sup>107</sup> In December 1994, a postal ballot was held of over 800 AGA ordained ministers who voted overwhelmingly in favour of the purchase of Chester Hill (with only 19 votes against). Over \$4 million was raised for the purchase, including over \$2.5 million from AGA members<sup>108</sup> – making it the largest united effort in AGA history to that point.<sup>109</sup> The sale was finalised in October 1996 at a cost of \$8,160,161.<sup>110</sup> The movement had stepped out in faith to support its national college.

## REPUTATION

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<sup>103</sup> David Cartledge, *The Chester Hills Miracles* (Chester Hill: Paraclete Institute, 2000).

<sup>104</sup> *Southern Cross Bible College Relocation Proposal* (December 1993), 4.

<sup>105</sup> Cited in Cartledge, *The Chester Hill Miracles*, 33.

<sup>106</sup> *Southern Cross Bible College Principal's Report to the Directorate* (15-19 April 1996), 1.

<sup>107</sup> Evans, *Personal Interview with the Author*.

<sup>108</sup> Cartledge, *The Chester Hills Miracles*, 111.

<sup>109</sup> Cartledge, *The Chester Hills Miracles*, 111.

<sup>110</sup> Jones Condon Chartered Accountants, *Southern Cross College 1996*, 1.

A further milestone for the AGA national college was in sight as it developed a world class reputation as a leading Pentecostal education provider. The renamed Southern Cross College (SCC) established a Korean campus, in 1996, as the first in Australia to offer fully accredited Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Ministry delivered totally in the Korean language.<sup>111</sup> This ultimately developed into accredited Bachelor's and Master's degrees. SCC expanded to seven external campuses in Sydney, Perth, Melbourne (Richmond and Knox City), Geelong, Darwin, Newcastle and Ipswich, as well as 16 SCC night schools around Australia.<sup>112</sup> The new 'president' of AGA, Brian Houston (1997-2009), enthused: "Southern Cross is a great school with an excellent track record in training men and women for effective and fruitful Christian ministry. I highly recommend it as the place for you to pursue your destiny."<sup>113</sup>

After Griffiths returned to pastoring, in 1998, CBC alumnus Stephen Fogarty became the first principal with formal post-graduate academic qualifications – holding a Master of Arts (Theology) from Moore College.<sup>114</sup> The archaic SCC rule book was replaced with a more student-focused college handbook, in line with university models of adult education and live-in became optional.<sup>115</sup> Fogarty invited Mark Hutchinson, of Macquarie University's Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity and member of ACT academic board, to join the staff. Hutchinson helped scaffold CBC's higher education aspirations, established the interdisciplinary journal, *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* and founded the Pentecostal Heritage Centre (PHC) to physically and digitally store Pentecostal archives and scholarship on a web-based framework, called *Webjournals*.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *Southern Cross College NewsUpdate*, 2 (April 1999), 3.

<sup>112</sup> Jeremy Griffiths, *Reports to the Thirty-first Biennial Conference of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Adelaide: 1997), 5.

<sup>113</sup> Andrew Evans, "Southern Cross College", *National Conference Manual* (2003).

<sup>114</sup> *Southern Cross College NewsUpdate*, 2 (April 1999), 3.

<sup>115</sup> *SCC President's Report to Directors and Board of Management* (27-28 November 1997), 4.

<sup>116</sup> Stephen Fogarty, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Brisbane Airport QLD: 31 May 2012).

Building a prosperous 21<sup>st</sup> century college necessitated making some dramatic changes, without losing what Allan Anderson calls the “fury and wonder” of Pentecostal/charismatic education.<sup>117</sup> With a view toward offering higher education degrees, SCC joined Sydney College of Divinity (SCD) in 1998, which had the advantages of mutual moderation and support, as well as more autonomy to create a Pentecostal curriculum.<sup>118</sup> This enabled SCC to offer Bachelor of Theology (BTh), Bachelor of Theology (Korean) (BTh Korean), Master of Arts (MA) and Master of Theology (MTh), with lecturers facilitating higher research degrees: MTh (Honours), Doctor of Theology (ThD) and Doctor of Ministry (DMin).<sup>119</sup> As the national college of a movement without an indigenous intellectual tradition, the significance of this innovation cannot be overstated. Students also had the option to combine studies with the University of Western Sydney, Sydney University, Australian Catholic University or Edith Cowan University in joint degrees.<sup>120</sup> This followed similar trends in Europe where Pentecostal colleges sought out alliances with secular universities.<sup>121</sup> SCC invited prominent international scholars to hold intensives, including: Russell Spittler of Fuller Theological Seminary; Stanley Grenz of Regent and Carey Colleges; and Gordon Fee of Regent College.<sup>122</sup> All these measures continued to enhance SCC’s international reputation.

## INNOVATION

After Cartledge moved to the USA as an advisor on church structure and leadership, Fogarty was empowered as chief executive officer and saw the potential

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<sup>117</sup> Allan Anderson, “The ‘Fury and Wonder’? Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality in Theological Education”, *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, 23, 2 (Fall 2001), 302.

<sup>118</sup> Neil Ormerod, “Pentecostal Theological Education: The Australian Context”, *Unpublished paper presented by the Global Consultation on Pentecostalism* (Oxford: June 2012), 1.

<sup>119</sup> “Southern Cross offers Postgraduate Awards”, *SCC News Update* (July 2002), 2.

<sup>120</sup> *SCC Joint Degree Advertising Brochure*

<sup>121</sup> Allan Anderson, *Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality and Theological Education in Europe from a Global Perspective* (European Pentecostal Theological Association Conference, Brussels, 23-27 July 2002), 7.

<sup>122</sup> Shane Clifton, *Email Correspondence with the Author* (28 January 2013).

for SCC finally to become a viable business proposition. Clearly, if SCC was to survive as the national college of AGA – a movement which rebranded itself as the Australian Christian Churches (ACC) in 2007 – it was time for a radically innovative approach. Changing demographics, tighter government compliance and evolving church structures meant nurturing a more online, transitory student body, learning to be salt and light in the ‘market place’. The synergy of sovereign guidance and government compliance came into play once more with the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Act (2003) and the subsequent introduction of the government loan help system called FEE-HELP (2005).<sup>123</sup> As Don Saines affirmed among Anglicans, Australians were studying theology for personal development, rather than as a result of a specific calling.<sup>124</sup> Fogarty took advantage of these shifts, adjusting marketing strategies from being personality-driven to education-driven.

In 2003, therefore, SCC developed an innovative course which followed national trends in VET accreditation. The Local Church Certificate IV in Ministry (LCC) was designed to be run within local churches, with lectures via DVDs, facilitated discussion and 25% supervised ministry training.<sup>125</sup> By 2010, LCC had been adopted by 136 churches with 568 students. All VET courses were rolled out in distance mode following the model developed for higher education, with DVDs and lecture notes posted to students right across Australia. A practical course delivered in local community contexts, it revolutionised Pentecostal ministry training in Australia. Directly addressing the heartbeat of the movement, a Certificate IV in Church Planting, was actively promoted by the NSW state executive.<sup>126</sup> By 2004,

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<sup>123</sup> Charles Sherlock, *Uncovering Theology: The Depth, Reach and Utility of Australian Theological Education* (Hindmarsh: ATF Press, 2009), 13.

<sup>124</sup> Don Saines, “Toward redemption in theological education: teaching and learning theology”, *St Mark’s Review*, 209 (September 2009), 10.

<sup>125</sup> David O’Keefe, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Mt Gravatt QLD: 19 August 2011).

<sup>126</sup> *Academic Board Minutes* (1 July 2004), 3.

SCC was delivering 20 different vocational and higher education awards, in English and Korean, to over 330 students.<sup>127</sup>

In 2004, another daring initiative was launched with the Master of Arts (Leadership) – MA(Lead) – along the lines of the Harvard Business School cohort model, to provide professional development for experienced pastors.<sup>128</sup> The response was phenomenal, with almost half of the AGA national executive enrolling in the first cohort, as well as many other prominent pastors.<sup>129</sup> The program was so popular that there were calls to run it with cohorts in Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane.<sup>130</sup> Assemblies of God in New Zealand (AGNZ) national superintendent, Ken Harrison, enrolled in the distance program in 2005, along with his future successor, Samoan-born Iliafi Esera.<sup>131</sup> International pastors even travelled to Sydney for intensives, including: Michael Dissanayeke, national president of the Assemblies of God in Sri Lanka; and Lukas Targosz, national youth director in the Czech Republic. The postgraduate program became so significant that, combined with its undergraduate program, SCC students made up nearly half the total enrolments of the SCD, and a significant proportion of its total research output.<sup>132</sup>

With many Pentecostal mega-churches creating multiple campuses,<sup>133</sup> SCC adapted its previous extension campus model into networking partnerships with Hillsong Church at Baulkham Hills (2004),<sup>134</sup> Christian City Church at Oxford Falls (2006)

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Mark Hutchinson, *Personal Interview with the Author* (18 April 2012).

<sup>129</sup> John and Val Lewis, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Ferny Hills QLD: 4 February 2012).

<sup>130</sup> Ian Jagelman, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Seventeen Mile Rocks QLD: 12 February 2012).

<sup>131</sup> Jack Zoutenbier, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Sydney: 19 January 2012).

<sup>132</sup> Hutchinson, *Personal Interview with the Author*.

<sup>133</sup> Robbie B.H. Goh, "Hillsong and 'megachurch' practice: semiotics, spatial logic and the embodiment of contemporary evangelical Protestantism", *Material Religion*, 4, 3 (November 2008), 300; Bill Easum and Dave Travis, *Beyond the Box: Innovative Churches that Work* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2003), 85.

<sup>134</sup> John Scott, *Personal Email Correspondence with the Author* (6 December 2012).

and Metro Church in Brisbane (2007).<sup>135</sup> Part of this strategy was to resolve the tension between church- and college-based training, highlighted by scholars, such as William Kay.<sup>136</sup> As operational costs of VET accreditation grew increasingly beyond the capacity of local churches,<sup>137</sup> SCC offered programs which could be tailored to local needs, formed partnerships with: Sydney Training Institute (NSW); Macquarie Leadership College (NSW); Rainbow Cross College (NSW); Calvary Leadership College (QLD); King's Training College (QLD); Edge Church (SA); Spring Street Training College (QLD); METRO College of Theological Studies (QLD); South West Bible College (VIC); and Advance Ministry Training Centre (New Zealand). This bold new direction of multi-campus partnerships soon led to an explosion of growth, including well over 1000 SCC students.

## INDEPENDENCE

In 2008, SCC was granted a directly-accredited Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry (BCM), including registration for FEE-HELP and the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). The BCM was particularly popular with Hillsong International Leadership College graduates, one explaining: "I want the knowledge foundation in my life before I lead other people".<sup>138</sup> Another felt that through the BCM, "the amount of time I've been in church has been fast-forwarded".<sup>139</sup> A popular worship stream was also developed by music technologist, Daniel Thornton. With approval of the BCM, SCC became an independent Higher Education Provider (HEP) and this landmark achievement positioned SCC to be part of the mission of the wider church and oriented it on its desired course toward self-accreditation.

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<sup>135</sup> Denise Austin, "Alphacrucis Brisbane: New Campus", *Alphacrucis Emagazine*, 1 (2009), 10.

<sup>136</sup> Kay, "Pentecostal Education", 235.

<sup>137</sup> Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition*, 159.

<sup>138</sup> Elisabet Giske, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Parramatta NSW: 16 April 2012).

<sup>139</sup> Dalton Miles, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Bella Vista, NSW: 30 September 2012).



Recognising the need to tap into a wider market, some Christian liberal arts colleges were seeing substantial success, including: Australian Catholic University; Avondale College; and Tabor College, Adelaide.<sup>140</sup> The number of theologs in the country was not expanding, although it was becoming decidedly more Pentecostal in nature. If the AGA national college was to keep growing, it had to move beyond traditional offerings. So, in 2009, SCC introduced VETAB-accredited courses in Business, English (ESL), Hospitality and Information Technology – all firmly embedded within the Christian worldview.<sup>141</sup> In 2011, SCC received accreditation for its first non-ministry higher education award – a Master of Teaching (Primary) following market trends toward multi-disciplinary offerings.<sup>142</sup>

Considering the vision for the future and increasing confusion with ‘Southern Cross University’, the college was renamed Alphacrucis College, in 2009, after the brightest star of the Southern Cross constellation.<sup>143</sup> Fogarty explained: “Alphacrucis is the brightest star in the Southern Cross, and it’s at the foot of the cross...we want our students to shine brightly at the foot of the cross...that they’ll live their lives in a way that’s attractive...that they will shine for Jesus”.<sup>144</sup> In a further progression of independence, SCC withdrew from SCD in January 2010.<sup>145</sup> Soon, a Master of Arts (Christian Studies), Bachelor of Applied Theology (Korean) and Master of Arts (Christian Studies) in Korean LOTE (Language Other Than English) were added to the offerings.

The ACC national college had not been financially dependent on the movement for over a decade but, as Samuel Dunn accurately predicted, the residential campus

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<sup>140</sup> Ormerod, “Pentecostal Theological Education”, 1.

<sup>141</sup> “What’s New?”, *Alphacrucis Emagazine*, 1 (2009), 15.

<sup>142</sup> Jim Twelves, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Sydney: 20 January 2012).

<sup>143</sup> Jacqueline Mees, *Personal Email Correspondence with the Author* (4 February 2013).

<sup>144</sup> Stephen Fogarty, “Why Alphacrucis?”, *Alphacrucis Video Presentation* (<http://ac.edu.au/news/general-alphacrucis-news/2009/nov/05/why-alphacrucis/>) (19 November 2012)

<sup>145</sup> Lindsey Fuchs, *Personal Interview with the Author* (Parramatta NSW: 20 April 2012).

model had become increasingly outdated in an age of high speed technology and transitory populations.<sup>146</sup> Consequently, the aging Chester Hill campus was sold for an incredible \$23 million and AC purchased a four-storey (8000m<sup>2</sup>) building in Cowper Street, Parramatta for \$20,025,000, as well as receiving ongoing rental income from the first and third floor tenants.<sup>147</sup> On 14 March 2012, AC Central was officially opened by newly inducted ACC national president, Wayne Alcorn, and the NSW Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, who paid tribute to the important role Alphacrucis has played in the Australian community over the course of its 65-year history.<sup>148</sup> An International Conference on Pentecostalism in the Marketplace in July 2013 at AC Central – with guest speakers Amos Yong and Vinson Synan, plus 24 other conference paper presentations – further positioned the college as a key player in nurturing ongoing independent research.

## CONCLUSION

This historical survey has shown that CBC was integral to the formation and development of AGA and that its alumni have been the harbingers of Australian Pentecostalism and denominational expansion. Through the unwavering support of AGA leaders and their congregations, SCC has negotiated the delicate balance between traditional ‘Spirit-led’ training and meaningful academic engagement. Alphacrucis College ranks among the most valuable assets in ACC – a movement which now includes 1000 churches with over 2800 pastors in Australia and overseas.<sup>149</sup> With almost 2000 current student enrolments and around 20 doctorates and doctoral candidates on staff, AC is well positioned for an exciting future, serving the ACC movement and wider body of Christ at national and international levels. Over 6000 alumni across the world are serving in churches, religious

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<sup>146</sup> Samuel L. Dunn, “The Coming Obsolescence: A Scenario for Residential Colleges”, *ERIC*, 12 (1978), 21.

<sup>147</sup> Greg Cortese, *The Parramatta Story – Presentation at Alphacrucis Staff Camp* (January 2012).

<sup>148</sup> Wayne Alcorn, *Email to ACC Pastors* (16 March 2012).

<sup>149</sup> Wayne Alcorn, *Email to ACC Pastors* (27 March 2012).

organisations and other professional fields. Clearly, AC is continuing to make an outstanding impact for the kingdom of God, through utilising state-of-the art facilities, increasing social engagement and leading academic research.

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