

35 years of creating safe space to connect with God, self, others, and creation for the sake of the world.

two-year Academy for spiritual

formation: Offers a place for spiritually hungry pilgrims, both clergy and lay, to spend forty days in residence (five days every three months) deepening their lives in Christ, engaging in spiritual practices of body, mind, and spirit in a supportive community, and focusing on outward aspects of faithful leadership in the world.

five-day Academy for spiritual

formation: A “taste” of the Two-Year Academy, the Five-Day Academy invites participants (both clergy and lay) to spend a week in a Christian retreat setting with worship at its center. Each Five-Day invites two faculty to present on a theme for the week and invites participants to respond to this theme through silence, written and spoken word, prayer, worship, and community sharing.

Academy pilgrimages: Contemplative pilgrimages to places of religious significance offer participants the opportunity to engage spiritual practices based in The Academy model, learn from Academy faculty, and fellowship with other pilgrims on the journey.

international growth: Since 2003, The Academy has expanded to seven countries outside the U.S. and continues to receive international inquiries monthly, demonstrating its international, multicultural, multiethnic emphasis for the future.

what's next? The Academy continues to explore new iterations of its model and is focused on increasing its accessibility and sustainability in the years to come. The Academy seeks to be a movement that helps reshape the way pilgrims conceive of and live out the Christian life—a way that is rooted in and flows from God's spirit and action in the world. Academy pilgrims (both Five-Day and Two-Year) are the leaven in the loaf of contemporary Christianity, helping lead the way into the next incarnation of the body of Christ. The Academy hopes to lead the way in forming Christian communities that embrace the multicultural, multiethnic, interfaith landscape of the 21st century for the transformation of the world.



The Academy
for spiritual formation®



May 17, 1983

First Two-Year Academy for Spiritual Formation begins at Scarritt Bennett Center and The Upper Room Chapel in Nashville, TN, after five years of research, prayer, and discernment by founding Director, Danny Morris, and an ecumenical advisory board of spiritual leaders.



Linda Heist becomes the first Academy Administrative Coordinator, working closely with Danny Morris on the first iterations of the ministry.

1988

Two-Year Academy #5 begins in Madison, Wisconsin, expanding the Two-Year to the North Central region of the U.S.

1989

A Closer Walk with God is held as an adaptation of the Two-Year Academy for African Americans.

1991

Jean Poenitske becomes the second Academy Administrative Coordinator upon Linda Heist's retirement.

1992

Two-Year Academy #7 begins in Burlingame, California, expanding the Two-Year to the Western region of the U.S.



2003

Academy receives Lilly grant to study impact of The Academy on clergy, which results in creation of a Lilly-funded program specifically for clergy called *Companions in Ministry*.

Two-Year Academy #21 begins in Marriottsville, Maryland, expanding the Two-Year to the East region of the U.S.

First Five-Day Academy in Puerto Rico takes place in partnership with the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.



This is the first Academy in the Spanish language and the first Academy outside the continental U.S.

First *Sedibeng* (South African adaptation of Academy) in South Africa and first Academy outside the U.S.

2009

Companions in Ministry #2 begins, funded by Lilly grant and includes first *Writing as Spiritual Practice* cohort.

The Academy hosts *A River Deep & Wide* conference in Nashville to explore being Christian in multicultural and interfaith contexts.



2010

First Five-Day Academy in South Korea.

Johnny Sears becomes third Director of The Academy for Spiritual Formation.

Im Jung hired as Academy Regional Coordinator.

2015

First Academy in Russia.



Academy launches monthly podcast based on recordings of faculty lectures from Academy events.

Academy begins offering regular contemplative pilgrimages to places of spiritual significance.

First Academy in Singapore/Malaysia.

2016

St. Paul School of Theology begins offering a Doctor of Ministry in Prophetic Witness and Service in partnership with the Two-Year Academy.

1983

1985

First edition of *Upper Room Worshipbook*, compiled and edited by Elise S. Eslinger, is published.

First Five-Day Academy held in Mitchell, South Dakota. The Five-Day Academy was created by Academy #1 participant, Kent Millard, as his second-year covenant commitment to offer a more accessible, short-term adaptation of the model.

Two-Year Academy #2 begins in Gallant, Alabama. This Academy was initiated by a group from Alabama that attended

Academy #1 together. This moves the Two-Year beyond Nashville and demonstrates it can be an ongoing ministry rather than a one-off event.



1992

1999

Jerry Haas becomes second Director of The Academy for Spiritual Formation upon retirement of Danny Morris.

2001

Two-Year Academy #17 begins in San Antonio, Texas, expanding the Two-Year to the South Central region of the U.S.

2002

First *Spirit Streams* (Three-Day Academy) held in California, further adapting the model to make it more accessible.



2003

Companions in Ministry #1 begins, funded by Lilly grant.

First domestic Spanish language Five-Day Academy held in Florida.

First Korean language Academy held in Illinois.

Second edition of *Upper Room Worshipbook* is published; launch event held in Nashville.

2008

Donna Bryant becomes the third Academy Administrative Coordinator upon Jean Poenitske's retirement.

2006

Two-Year Academy #32 begins in Leesburg, Florida. This is the first Spanish/English bilingual Two-Year Academy.



2011

First Five-Day Academy in Cuba, which grew out of bilingual Academy #32.

2014

2015

First Five-Day Academy in Bolivia.

First Five-Day Academy in the United Kingdom (N. Ireland).

Two-Year Academy #39 begins in Malvern, Pennsylvania, expanding the Two-Year to the Northeast region of the U.S.

Claire McKeever-Burgett becomes first Associate Director of The Academy.

2018

2018



The Academy celebrates 35 years of creating safe space for people to connect with God, self, others, and creation for the sake of the world!