

Fellowship Focus



The Academy for Spiritual Formation

The Academy for Spiritual Formation continues to provide space for people to be in communion with God, self, and others for the sake of the world. This year, 161 people participated in Two-Year Academies, and 22 Five-Day or Short-Term Academies were held worldwide. In addition, the Korean Academy community celebrated their 10th anniversary in South Korea and held a special Five-Day Academy for Korean-based missionaries.



Korean Academy for missionaries

Emmaus Holds First Walks in Argentina

In 2019, more than 260 Emmaus Ministries events were held around the world, including the first Walk to Emmaus in Argentina.

Men's and women's walks in Argentina



A New Invitation

Stephen D. Bryant, Publisher, *The Upper Room*

We take a giant step forward in Christian devotion when we see it more as a life to live than a time to be observed. —Steve Harper, *Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition*



Steve D. Bryant

Perhaps the season of Advent is God's way of offering us a time of soul reset. After all, Advent is the beginning of the Christian liturgical year, an annual time to reflect on God's plan

for renewal and restoration through the birth of our Redeemer.

It's been a reset year for The Upper Room. Upon adopting a new strategic plan to position us for long-term vitality, a fresh new mission statement emerged: "**The Upper Room invites people to create daily life with God.**" Yes, it's simple, and yet it is a statement of deep purpose, naming the very human need The Upper Room attempts to address and the single thread that weaves our broad ministry together.

Implicit in the new mission statement is our historic contribution—helping people with daily devotional time—as well as the creative nature of cooperating with the Holy Spirit, as Jesus did, in the shaping of a life with God for the sake of others.

We believe that creating daily life with God is at the heart of being healthy and whole. Through prayer, scripture, and other spiritual disciplines, whether it is knitting prayer shawls, exploring nature, or engaging in community service, each of us will discover the inspiration needed to make a positive difference in the world.

Are you finding time to meet with God on a daily basis? If not, I invite you to pick-up again *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide, participate in one of our spiritual growth programs like The Walk to Emmaus or The Academy for Spiritual Formation, or simply just be with God in whatever creative way restores and resets your soul. I promise it will make a difference.

We thank you for all the ways you have encouraged us and supported The Upper Room this year. We are grateful beyond measure.

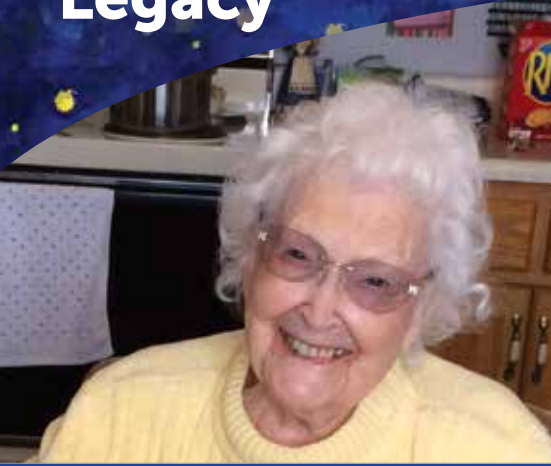
May you and your family experience the great love and grace of God...every day.

Soul Reset (def): a hard stop of chronic busyness; a deep look inward and an intentional look to God; and a new, more holistic journey forward that more closely resembles an abundant life into which Jesus calls his disciples.*

Do you need a soul reset for 2020? (See inside.)



Leaving a Legacy



In our spring newsletter, we profiled **Ms. Joy Love Johnston**, a longtime friend and donor of The Upper Room. We are sad to announce that she passed away in June. We give thanks for her life of 97 years and for her estate gift to The Upper Room.



The Academy of Spiritual Formation received an estate gift from the **Nancy Hood Trust**. Nancy attended her first Academy for Spiritual Formation in 1991 and was a graduate of Academy #9 in Wisconsin. We are grateful for her life and gift.

SOUL RESET

Somewhere along life's journey, all of us will experience burnout or weariness. Rev. Junius B. Dotson, the General Secretary (CEO) of Discipleship Ministries, shares his story in *Soul Reset* and invites us to look to Jesus for wholeness, to reset our souls:
"In order to reset our souls and experience the wholeness we

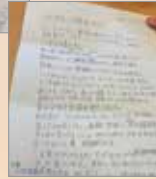
crave, we need only look to Jesus. He showed us how to be in ministry, how to work long hours, how to address the needs and expectations of many people, all while staying connected to God. He knows that it's all too easy to get burned out on religion. He knows that taking a real rest is rarely easy

to do. He knows that we need to recover our lives. He knows how we feel and what we go through because he has lived it. God came to us in Jesus Christ and walked our steps, felt our feelings, experienced everything that we go through. He is the path to wholeness."*

Look how you help of Christ around

Asia

In October, the Japanese edition celebrated its 70th anniversary. A special celebration service was held at the Yodobashi Church in Tokyo. At the end of the service, several readers shared how *The Upper Room* helps them to walk closer to God each day. One of the highlights of the celebration was Mrs. Matsushita's story. Her daughter, Ms. Junko Onodera, had written to the Japanese editor, telling how *The Upper Room* had played a role throughout her mother's 115-year-old life. Mrs. Matsushita recently passed away. She was the second-oldest person in Japan.



Europe

In August, the Estonian editor, Tarmo Lilleoja, and his wife, Lii, visited us in Nashville. They met with staff and discussed marketing strategies for the daily devotional guide in Estonia.



Lii, Tarmo, and Tia Runion, the Director of International Relations, Europe.

Latin America

Please join us in celebrating two milestones in Latin America.

- *El Aposento Alto*, the Spanish edition of *The Upper Room*, celebrated 100 years of being published in Mexico.
- The Portuguese-Brazil edition celebrated its 80th anniversary in June.



Africa

Africa Upper Room is being restructured and reshaped. We hope to share more about this new direction in 2020.



and to spread the light the world in 2019!

Because of generous donors like you, we are able to produce two new language editions in 2020: Batak/Indonesian and Kiswahili! *The Upper Room* will now be available in 37 languages and 97 formats and distributed in more than 100 countries.

United States

As an Upper Room donor, you make a difference in so many lives, to people you will never meet and know, and in ways that may surprise you.

Because of your generosity, we are able to supply Miriam, a ride-share driver in El Paso, Texas, with donor-sponsored copies of *El Aposento Alto*. She shares the magazines with people who ride with her, many of whom are asylum seekers. Here is one of her stories:

One day this summer, I received a ride request from a young man. When I picked him up, he was holding a large pizza and soda and asked me to take him to Roswell, New Mexico. Upon discovering that he didn't have a tourist visa, I told him that I couldn't drive him; but I offered to take him to the ICE office to get his permit. That's when he told me he was an asylum seeker. When I asked if I could pray with him, he told me that his father was a Presbyterian pastor in Venezuela and that his parents wanted him to come to the States to escape the persecution in that country. He said that he felt like meeting me was no coincidence. As he was exiting my



car, we exchanged phone numbers, and I gave him a copy of *El Aposento Alto*. Later that day, he texted me, letting me know that he had arrived safely and pointing out one of the meditations that had touched his heart.

A few weeks later, on June 13, I forwarded him a copy of *The Upper Room* meditation for that day; the prayer focus was for "People displaced from their homes." I assured him that on that day millions of people were praying for him and for others like him.

I have shared copies of *The Upper Room* in English and Spanish with soldiers being deployed, people of other faiths, passengers struggling with addiction issues, and many others who need a reminder of God's love.

Because of you and your commitment to ministry, I am sure many hearts are being restored and lives are being changed.



Donors Make a Difference

Name: Ron Melzer
City & State: Tucson, AZ
Year of First Gift: 2016
Giving Fund: The Fellowship Circle

Ron Melzer has been an ordained United Methodist minister since 1983 and always made sure that copies of *The Upper Room* were available at the entrance to the sanctuary. He lives with his wife, Bonnie, in the midst of beautiful cacti in a desert mountain valley.

When asked why he gives to The Upper Room, Rev. Melzer said: "I began using *The Upper Room* in college, and today I take advantage of the daily email version. A few years ago, I read about The Upper Room's Fellowship Circle and decided I wanted to say "thank you," so I joined the group of monthly supporters. I'm so glad to be a part of a ministry with eternal significance. Is it time for you to help out? I hope so. I can assure you that you'll be glad you did."

What a great invitation for all of us to look to Jesus to reset our souls. To order *Soul Reset*, please visit bookstore. upperroom.org or call 1.800.972.0433.

*Excerpted from *Soul Reset: breakdown, breakthrough, and the journey of wholeness* by Junius B. Dotson. © 2019 Upper Room Books. Used by permission.



It Has Been a Great Giving Year Thanks to You!

Stats based on Oct. 2018 through Oct. 2019.

DONORS ARE FROM

Around the World

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- Singapore
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Virgin Islands (U.S.)

DONORS GAVE

\$807,290
to support the ministries of
The Upper Room.

30%
of gifts were from new donors!

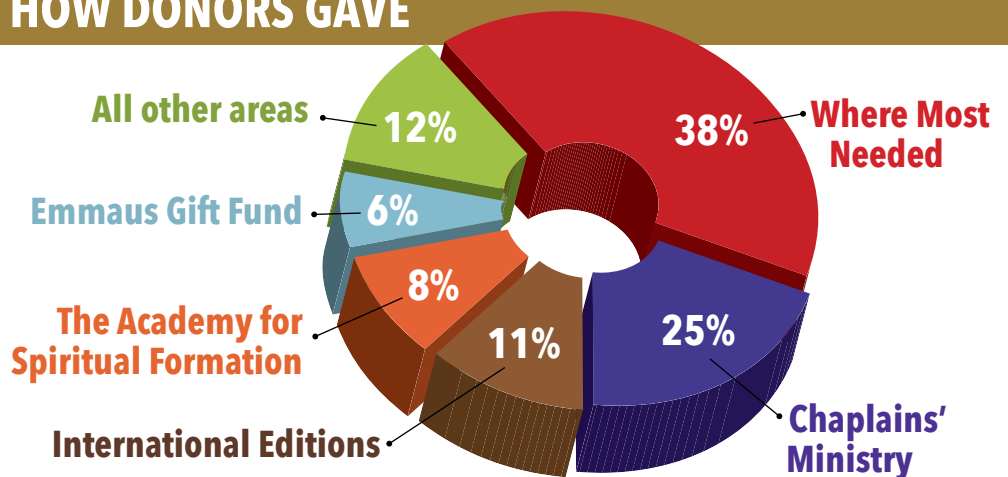
94%
of all donations were \$100 or less.

181
donors are now active
Fellowship Circle members
giving a monthly gift. Help us to
reach our 2019 goal
of **200** members.

JOIN TODAY!
www.upperroom.org/fellowship
or call 1-877-899-2781, ext. 7212.



HOW DONORS GAVE



*May the love and peace of the Christ Child
be yours at Christmastime and always.*



Merry Christmas
from the staff at The Upper Room.

The Upper Room covers all its ministry expenses from product sales, participants' fees, interest income, and the generous support of donors. We do not receive any apportionment funds from The United Methodist Church or any other denomination. Donations are needed to help sustain and expand the reach of our ministries so others may experience God more fully.