



**PASTORS +
PLANTERS
ACADEMY**

Sovereign Grace Australia

Sovereign Grace Churches Australia – An Overview

We are a highly relational denomination with a passion to see planters trained, pastors cared for, and enduring churches built across Australasia. Born out of the 70's Jesus Movement in the US, Sovereign Grace Churches is now a global family united by a shared confession of faith, theological values, and cultural distinctives, with one consuming passion: the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

The SGCA Pastors and Planters Academy exists to teach men how to build their lives, families, and churches upon the gospel of Jesus Christ here in Australia so that we can reach more people and plant more enduring churches.

When the gospel is consistently and faithfully applied, it produces a particular kind of pastor—and you know it when you see it. They become joyful, humble, grateful, encouraging, servant-hearted shepherds.

Such pastors display the beauty and power of the gospel they proclaim. They are infectious, resilient, and steadfast—in a word, faithful. And these are the kinds of pastors whose own joy in Christ creates cultures of joy, humility, servanthood, and grace in the churches they lead.

Our ambition for the lives of our academy graduates is captured by these 10 traits—men who:

- Savor the beauty of Christ above all else
- Pursue the exaltation of God's glory in all things
- Marvel that their sins are forgiven
- Trust fully in the power of God's Word to change lives
- Rely wholly on the power of the Holy Spirit
- Delight in loving and leading their families
- Count caring for God's people a staggering privilege
- Love and pursue the lost
- Value the strength, joy, and humility that team ministry brings
- Find steadfast resolve in Christ's promise to build his church

The Pastors + Planters Academy

The Sovereign Grace Churches Pastors and Planters Academy is a process designed to train future Sovereign Grace Pastors and Planters to serve in and plant Sovereign Grace Churches, the Sovereign Grace way.

The Academy involves a relational process of training, caring for, assessing, and deploying qualified men. Paul instructs Timothy to “watch your life and doctrine closely” (1 Tim. 4:16) and over the course of the academy we will aim to develop your life and doctrine by focusing on four key areas:

1. **Convictions:** “what you believe and why you believe it”
2. **Character:** “who you are”
3. **Competency:** “how you pastor”
4. **Compatibility:** “where you’re deployed”

Our academy is designed to transfer the theological principles and practices we use to build a church and induct you in the DNA, culture, distinctives and fellowship of Sovereign Grace Churches. We recognise that the SGC way is not the only way but it’s one way which we believe is biblical, healthy, and has shown much fruit over decades. We welcome all who are interested to come and learn and engage with us.

There are three Phases to the program:

1. **Phase 1:** Application
2. **Phase 2:** Academy
3. **Phase 3:** Deployment

PHASE 1 | APPLICATION

1 | Expression of Interest

Register your interest by filling in the expression of interest form [online](#). We will then send through a follow-up email with a small packet of resources we'd like you to read through and some questions for you to answer to help you begin to discern whether the Academy would be a good fit for you.

If you are keen to go ahead, you can then book a follow-up interview.

2 | Follow Up Meeting

If you request to a follow up meeting, we will then make a time to grab a coffee or a Zoom chat and get to know you in more detail, as well as: your hopes and plans, discuss how you found the materials, and begin to look at next steps.

3 | Application

If this will be a good next step for you, you will then be sent an Application Package which helps us explore together your character, convictions, competencies, and compatibility with Sovereign Grace Churches. This will help us to determine your **next steps**:

#1 – Ready to Join the Academy

#2 – Further Development Needed Beforehand

PHASE 2 | ACADEMY

1 | Academy Program

The Academy involves a 1-year program, with a flexible intake, comprised of:

- a) **Monthly Learning Modules:** Class every Wednesday 9-5pm in person, plus reading, study, and assignments to be completed at home.
- b) **Monthly Leadership Link Up:** with a Sovereign Grace Pastor globally who will meet with you via zoom for teaching, leadership, and fellowship.
- c) **Leadership Cohort nights:** Tuesday Nights, monthly.
- d) **Practical Ministry Experience:** in a local SGC Church, with coaching and feedback
- e) **Discipleship:** fellowship, and care within a local SGC church

The monthly learning modules will include the following elements:

- **The Convictions of a Pastor:**
 - o Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry
 - o The Priority of a Gospel Centered Church: Knowing, Applying, and Proclaiming the Gospel
 - o SGC Foundations: Our Theology, Values, Polity, Practice

- **The Character of a Pastor:**
 - o Personal Devotion + Worship
 - o Holiness
 - o Family Life

- **The Competencies of a Pastor:**
 - o Preaching
 - o Leading
 - o Pastoral Care
 - o Biblical Counselling
 - o Equipping the Saints
 - o Interdependence: Team Ministry

- **The Compatibility of a Pastor**
 - o Finding your God-given Place of Ministry
 - o Managing Your Life, Time, Energy, Gifting

The monthly learning modules topics are:

1. The Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry (February)
2. Reformed Theology Part 1: Scripture Alone (March)
3. Reformed Theology Part 2: Doctrines of Grace (April)
4. Gospel Centered Doctrine and Preaching Part 1: The Main Thing (May)
5. Gospel Centered Doctrine and Preaching Part 2: We Preach Christ Crucified (June)
6. Gospel Centered Doctrine and Preaching Part 3: It's All About Jesus (July)
7. Continuationist Pneumatology: Pursuing and Practicing the Gifts (Aug)
8. Complementarian Leadership in the Home and In the Church (Sept)
9. Church Planting, Outreach, and Global Mission (Oct)
10. United in Fellowship, Mission, and Governance (Nov)
11. Church Planting 101: Introduction to Planting a Sovereign Grace Church (for Planters only)

2 | Leadership Cohort

One of the most powerful ways to learn is from those who have been in the game a long time. The Leadership Cohort is designed around getting you time with Dave and Emma Taylor. Dave is on the Leadership Team for Sovereign Grace Churches serving across 33 nations and has been a pastor for over 20 years. These nights will be a chance for you to grow in your marriage, parenting, and leadership through conversation, study, and mentorship.

3 | Pastoral Care

We highly value fellowship and care as a biblical priority and will walk with you and your family throughout the program. You will be integrated into the life of the church, joining a small group as your primary mode of care, with access to the Pastoral team whenever you need. The Academy students will participate in a growth group that will meet monthly to grow in their character and to run the race together.

4 | Coaching

Over the course of the Academy program, there will be ongoing coaching based on the 4 C's (Conviction, Character, Competency, Compatibility). This is designed to help you grow and develop as a man of God and servant of the church. In August we conduct the Ministry Readiness Assessment.

Ministry Readiness Assessment

This is an opt-in future oriented assessment for you as a couple, as gospel partners. It's designed to assist us as we determine your readiness to pursue serving in Sovereign Grace Churches as a church planter, pastor, or missionary. It will give you an outside perspective of your strengths and weaknesses and hopefully provide clarity on your next best steps going forward.

There are four elements:

1. **Pework:** short online assessment tools to be completed in advance
2. **References:** taken from work, family, friends, and church to give all-round external review.
3. **In-Person Assessment:** a discussion with yourself and your wife to go through all the material, ask further questions, and to see how you're going as a couple.
4. **Report:** we will then put together a reflection report as a follow up to all of this to summarize our thinking and provide recommendations on your next steps of development and growth.

The Academy can be completed in two ways:

- 1) **Academy Internship:** placement within a local Sovereign Grace Church in Sydney
- 2) **Academy Intensive:** participating locally doing intensive units, whilst living out of the area

PHASE 3 | DEPLOYMENT

We have a passion to see planters trained, pastors cared for, and enduring churches built across Australia. To do this, we are going to need to raise up many men for the task. It is God who equips his Church with various skills, gifts, and callings to achieve His ends. And so, our hope is that by God's grace we'll be able to deploy you into an area of ministry where He has called, gifted, and equipped you. Below is an example of some of the possible future pathways:

- #1 – Pastoral Internship
- #2 – Further Training - Pastor's College (US) / Bible College (AUS)
- #3 – Pursuing Sovereign Grace Ordination
- #4 – Church Planting or Pastoring
- #5 – Other Ministry Opportunities
- #6 – Global Mission

As a family of Churches, we want to serve in close partnership together, believing that no pastor or church should minister alone. We aim to reflect the highly relational dynamic of the New Testament churches who worked together, sending, supporting, and striving together to complete the mission of God. And so, as you complete the Academy and are hopefully deployed, we want to continue in our fellowship and partnership together.

Next Steps

If you are interested, you can apply today at:

<https://anz.sovereigngrace.com/academy>

If you need more information, please contact Riley Spring, Director of Church Development:

rs@sgparra.org.au

If you know someone who'd love this, please send it on ahead!

Leadership

Academy Director: Riley Spring



Riley joined Sovereign Grace after spending his teen years listening to C.J. Mahaney sermons joining the Sydney church shortly after it began. After sharing a sense of calling to pastoral ministry and church planting he was mentored, coached, tested, and sent to the US Pastors College with a view to preparing him to plant. In 2019 he planted Sovereign Grace Church Parramatta with a team of 28 adults from the Sydney Church. He is married to Maddie and they have four children. He will lead the Academy, providing oversight and direction for the year.

Leadership Cohort: Dave + Emma Taylor



Over 10 years ago, Dave Taylor, along with his amazing wife Emma, left their church, family, friends, and home in the UK to pioneer a new church and denomination here in Australia. They have 5 children and have been used by the Lord in extraordinary ways. They will meet with the Academy students regularly over the year for marriage, parenting, and leadership training. Time with Dave and Em is an invaluable investment.



Training Coordinator: **Brendan Willis**



Brendan first came into contact with Sovereign Grace Australia whilst living as a missionary in Indonesia. After returning home, he joined Sovereign Grace Church Sydney whilst completing his Bachelor of Theology at Moore Theological College and training to become a Pastor. He now serves as an Associate Pastor, is married to Charlotte and together they have two boys. He will be facilitating the coursework and modules for the Academy.

FAQ's

How much does the Academy cost?

We've designed the Academy so that people can work bi-vocationally whilst completing the program. The Academy Course and materials are sponsored by SGC Australia. You would need to fund your personal and family requirements. Please contact us to find out more information.

Where is the Academy located?

The Academy will be run out of Sovereign Grace Church Sydney located in Sydney's North. They currently gather in Wahroonga, at the Fox Valley Community Centre and their head office is in Thornleigh. SGC Parramatta is also connected with the program and is a possible site for residency.

Who will the instructors be?

Because this is a Pastors and Planters Academy the instructors will primarily be Pastors and Planters from within Sovereign Grace Churches Australia and Sovereign Grace Global. The primary teaching will come from the Pastors of Sovereign Grace Church: Dave Taylor, Brendan Willis, Riley Spring, and there will also be units drawn from the Sovereign Grace Pastor's College in the US.

What does the Academy program look like week to week?

We pursue our vision by following the Apostle Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." ([1 Timothy 4:16](#))

These twin priorities—life and doctrine—inform every facet of the Academy. Our program combines three primary components:

- Theological Study for Ministry
- Intentional Discipleship and Care
- Practical Training in Ministry

You will complete the modular-style courses over a 10 month period, covering a range of theologically informed topics to prepare you and equip you for Pastoral Ministry. These modules will be made up of direct teaching, reading + listening assignments, as well as conversations over many cups of coffee!

Along with the training program, the students and their wives participate in a rich community of fellowship and discipleship situated within the local church. Wives will be cared for and supported whilst being trained in how to best support and help their husbands in the task of ministry.

We highly value fellowship and care as a biblical priority and will walk with you and your family throughout the program. From beginning to end, our ecclesiology informs both the format and context of our program, precisely because our students are being equipping to serve the local church which Jesus obtained with his own blood" ([Acts 20:28](#)).

How much time will be required?

This will depend on your study mode. For the **Academy Internship** you'll need at least 1-2 days per week plus Sunday. Currently, we run our Academy Day on Wednesday, and our nights on Tuesdays. For the **Academy Intensive** this will be more flexible but will require coming on site for blocks of time.

What if I have already completed theological studies or am ordained in another denomination?

Our program is designed to complement theological education and develop you further for pastoral ministry, with particular focus on ministry within Sovereign Grace Churches. It is not intended to replace but rather complement theological study.

What if I haven't completed any theological studies?

Our program is focused on instilling and transferring a theological and practical vision for pastoral ministry that is rooted in the bible. Though a background in studying theology would be helpful, it is not a requirement for our course and could be taken up before, during or after the Academy.



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