



**SIBURT
INSTITUTE**
for Church Ministry

*2022-23
Year in Review*

*Equipping and
serving church
leaders and other
Christ-followers
for God's mission
in the world*

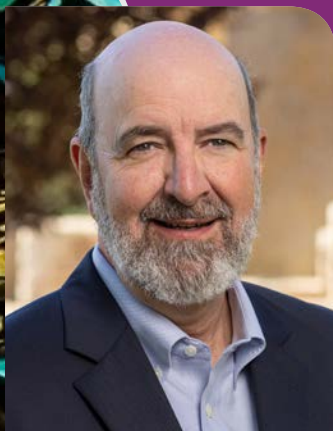


**ABILENE
CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**



**SIBURT
INSTITUTE**
for Church Ministry

*Equipping leaders,
helping churches thrive*



A Word From the Executive Director

Hello friends,

As another academic year comes to completion, we invite you to share in some reflection about the ways God has blessed the Siburt Institute's work and mission.

Our ability to be on the road with ElderLink and Equipping for Ministry events has returned. We have welcomed people back onto ACU's beautiful campus for Summit. We are also witnessing growth in the opportunities to consult and walk alongside more and more congregations as they face an array of challenges and opportunities! As you read through this Year in Review, you will get an encouraging glimpse into some of the many ways in which the Siburt Institute is making a difference in the lives of church leaders and in the mission of congregations. From the Pacific Northwest to Florida and from Boston to Arizona, the Siburt Institute is journeying with elder groups, ministers and other church leaders as they navigate a wide range of challenges and opportunities.

Whether through our online web-based resources, a scheduled Zoom call, a formal consultancy visit or one of our programs, the Siburt Institute brings collective wisdom, theological imagination, linkage to a wide set of networks and many significant resources into play.

So, thank you for the indispensable part that you play in the Siburt Institute. Your financial commitments, your prayers and your active networking and support matter! We believe that we partner with God in his gracious purpose and will for the local church. And you are a part of that great web of support as together we pray and work for lively, mission-focused communities of faith for the sake of the world. Share in the joy of what this report reflects about this good work, and please continue to partner with us for the health and well-being of congregations across the land!

Blessings,

Dr. Carson E. Reed ('95 D.Min.)

*Executive Director, Siburt Institute for Church Ministry
Vice President for Church Relations*

Chaplaincy Endorsement and Fellowship

For many years, the Siburt Institute has felt an increasing call to support those working in the growing field of chaplaincy. In late 2021 and early 2022, we established two programs for chaplains connected to the Churches of Christ or Stone-Campbell Movement.

The first is an ecclesiastical endorsing program for chaplains seeking professional certification. We are recognized by the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) and its affiliate, the Board of Chaplaincy Certification, Inc. (BCCI), as an endorser of candidates seeking professional chaplaincy certification through APC. Over the past year we have endorsed four candidates.

The second program is the Siburt Institute Chaplains Fellowship, an informal group designed to provide opportunities for professional education, spiritual growth, personal support and networking. Members include professional chaplains, chaplaincy candidates, students and allies. Along with endorsement and mentoring, one of the first services we instituted for the Chaplains Fellowship was a quarterly lunch-and-learn teleconference.

To date we have held four teleconferences with more than 65 total attendees. Initial response has been strong, and interest is growing. Plans are in the works for additional continuing education and networking opportunities at conferences such as ACU Summit and at professional gatherings such as the Association of Professional Chaplains Annual Conference.



“The Stone-Campbell tradition wasn’t mine in the beginning, but it has grown to become the tradition in which I find a home. Serving within this steering committee and helping to create this endorsement process validated the rich heritage and practice of faith in our tradition. But, critically, this opportunity has also validated the rich and meaningful servants and chaplains who have been doing and want to do God’s work in the spaces chaplains find themselves. That is a gift that I have appreciated alongside my colleagues in the Siburt Institute Chaplains Fellowship!”

James Denham ('10 M.Div.), BCC

*Chaplain, Heart Center, Texas Children’s Hospital
Houston, Texas*



“I welcomed the invitation to join the steering committee because I want chaplains to thrive, and I want chaplaincy as a profession to thrive. As interest in chaplaincy has grown within the Churches of Christ/Stone-Campbell Movement, the need for a pathway for ecclesiastical endorsement (required for professional certification) has also grown, as has the need for opportunities for professional education, spiritual growth, personal support and networking for chaplains from our faith tradition. I am proud to be part of the team that is helping the Siburt Institute support individual chaplains and chaplaincy as a profession by addressing these needs.”

Dr. Paul Riddle

*Director of Spiritual Care, Lifeline Chaplaincy
Houston, Texas*



“Being endorsed through Siburt Institute in 2023 has been a leap for me in God’s calling on my life. As a little girl, I had always wanted to be a minister like my Uncle Doug. However, my context at the time did not encourage women in such roles. Fifty-plus years later, I have completed a Master of Divinity through ACU, I have become a chaplain, and am on track to become board certified. My endorsement is one of the requirements for certification. But, it is more than meeting a requirement; it means that I am in a context that endorses women to follow the calling of God to places unfamiliar to us in the past. I am so very thankful.”

Nancy Harbron ('20 M.Div.)

*Chaplain, Ascension St. Vincent
Fishers, Indiana*

ElderLink

We were so grateful for the opportunity to have connected with more than 300 of you at ElderLink gatherings this academic year. At each event, we work intentionally with local congregations to tailor the program to that region's needs and context. Over the course of the year, we partnered with Friendly Avenue Church of Christ in Greensboro, North Carolina; West-Ark Church of Christ in Fort Smith, Arkansas; and North Davis Church of Christ in Arlington, Texas.

Our mission at ElderLink is to equip, encourage and link congregational leaders. One of the ways we do that is by bringing in ministers, practitioners and scholars to guide our time together around a specific theme or to dive more deeply into a specific topic. Our keynote speakers this year included Dr. Don McLaughlin, Phil Brookman and Mitch Wilburn. Our breakout speakers this year featured a mix of professors from ACU, church leaders and elders from both Abilene and the event locations, and mental-health professionals. They spoke

on a wide range of topics, including "Growing Ministers and Leaders in Your Church," "Self-Care and the Church Leader," "The Church Victorious Amidst Struggle," "Leading from Your Thinking System" and "Spiritual Stamina for Weary Leaders."

Some of the key takeaways we heard from our participants was how meaningful it was to be able to interact with other church leaders. Whether over lunch in the church fellowship hall or gym, or standing in the lobby after the event, or in the rooms of our breakout sessions, these fellowship conversations are a crucial part of the ElderLink experience. This ability to connect led to the reminder that many leaders are facing similar things in their congregations. Additionally, many participants mentioned that the most helpful part of the event was being able to network and hear what is working in other churches. Thank you to each of our participants, speakers and hosts.



"ElderLink 2022 could not have come at a better time for ministers. As we are (hopefully) coming out of the global COVID-19 pandemic, churches are changing and moving in a lot of new and different ways, and as the youth ministry team at our church, there are so many things to consider as we serve the teenagers in our congregation. We really appreciated the conversations around mental health, the skills and ideas that each member and minister brings to the table, and the need to sometimes let go of the way things have always been done. One of the highlights was definitely worshiping together, since we are so often involved in worship services and can be distracted by our responsibilities. It was wonderful to connect with other ministers in the area, and we felt mentally, emotionally and spiritually encouraged."

Rebecca and Landon Klingaman

*Youth ministers, Cole Mill Road Church of Christ
Durham, North Carolina*



Ministers' Support Network

The Ministers' Support Network has been a haven for ministry couples for over 25 years. The founders of this ministry were Dr. Paul ('52) and Gladys (Shoemaker '52) Faulkner, Dr. Charles ('68) and Judy (Bailey '69) Siburt, Eddie ('73) and Annette (Pruett '73) Sharp, and Dr. David ('67) and Jeanne (Witherspoon '67) Wray. After Charles Siburt passed away, a new group of host couples continued offering this retreat. The retreat focuses on ministry couples who may be tired, wounded, lonely or just discouraged. Each cohort is encouraged to explore difficult questions in ministry such as:

- 1 Where does the minister turn when they have poured into the lives of others, but begin feeling empty?
- 2 How can you be surrounded by good people but feel so alone?
- 3 Have I forgotten my call to ministry, or does it feel like a job?
- 4 Is the pressure to feel competent causing me to feel depressed?
- 5 Can God still use me in ministry if I have fallen into sin?

Our current team is comprised of Robert ('81) and Jenny (Linn '81) Oglesby (coordinators), Rick ('78) and Jamie (Lyda '81) Atchley, Chris ('88) and Stacie (Wetsel '89) Hatchett, and Jordan ('96) and Debbie Hubbard. While the host couples change, the original

mission has remained the same. Over the last 10 years, the team has worked with more than 160 ministry couples.

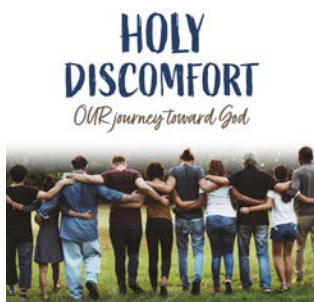
Recently, we reflected on the last decade and asked the question: Is this ministry making a difference? We looked at every couple who attended to see if they were still in ministry, left ministry or moved from ministry into retirement. We discovered that 85% of the ministry couples were still working in ministry or had successfully moved into retirement.

While that percentage is telling, we get feedback from the participants that says more than statistics could. One recent note tells the story.

"We were invited to a retreat this weekend. We knew nothing about it, except that it was for couples working in ministry. It was run by some well known ministry couples from Church of Christ circles. On the way there, I asked my husband, 'Are we going to have to get emotional at this thing?' I was not looking forward to being vulnerable and exposing my feelings. My friends, it was exactly what my heart needed. Sometimes I don't realize how tightly I am trying to hold it all together until I suddenly have a safe place to relax and FEEL it. I heard stories from couples in ministry that were so different than mine, though strangely familiar. I got to talk through all my fears and let people hug me while directing me toward God. I cried, I laughed, I comforted, I encouraged, I listened and I shared. It was real. I will think back on this weekend forever."



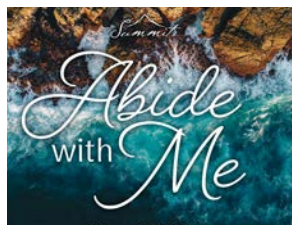
New Format for 2023-24



Fall 2023

One of the goals of Summit, and the Siburt Institute overall, is to listen to the needs of churches and church leaders. Over the past year, we have engaged in intentional listening sessions regarding Summit. We were hearing from you a desire for Summit to be a little longer. You also expressed the challenge of traveling to Abilene twice a year when coming from a farther distance. As a result, beginning Fall 2023, Summit will move back to once per year, and it will extend by an extra day. It will, though, remain paired with ACU's Homecoming so that anyone wanting to enjoy those festivities will be able to take part, but at the same time, it will also allow anyone needing to get back home for church responsibilities that flexibility. We appreciate the feedback you offered and your desire to help us continue to serve the kingdom of God in a way that supports, encourages and equips. Make plans to join us this fall, Oct. 11-13, as we explore the theme of *Holy Discomfort: Our Journey toward God*.

Growing with Each Other and with God



Fall 2022

We had opportunity to gather for Summit twice in 2022-23—once in the fall and once in the spring—and it was certainly good to be together. In the fall, we explored the theme *Abide With Me*, and the general interest community dove deeply into 1 Peter and the relevance it holds for the church today. As we listened to the College of Biblical Studies faculty examine what it means to preach, teach, worship and be spiritually formed by 1 Peter, we were able to imagine the text from multiple perspectives and be invigorated by the enduring Word of God.

together was our continued focus on ministry communities.

At both the fall and spring editions of Summit, we continued our rhythm of relationship building by hosting ministry communities in addition to the general interest session, and once again, we heard that being with each other in community, learning from each other and supporting each other was an immeasurable blessing. In the fall, we focused on children's ministry, Hispanic ministry, preaching, recovery ministry, small churches, and youth ministry.



Spring 2023

Our theme for the spring was *Living Word*, and this theme naturally drew our attention to the book of Hebrews where our speakers explored the powerful and piercing nature of the living word through each chapter of the text. Another highlight of our time

And in the spring, we centered Summit around family ministry, Hispanic ministry, preaching and worship ministry. Regardless of which timing of Summit or which ministry community a person chose to attend, it was evident that we were growing with each other and with God.



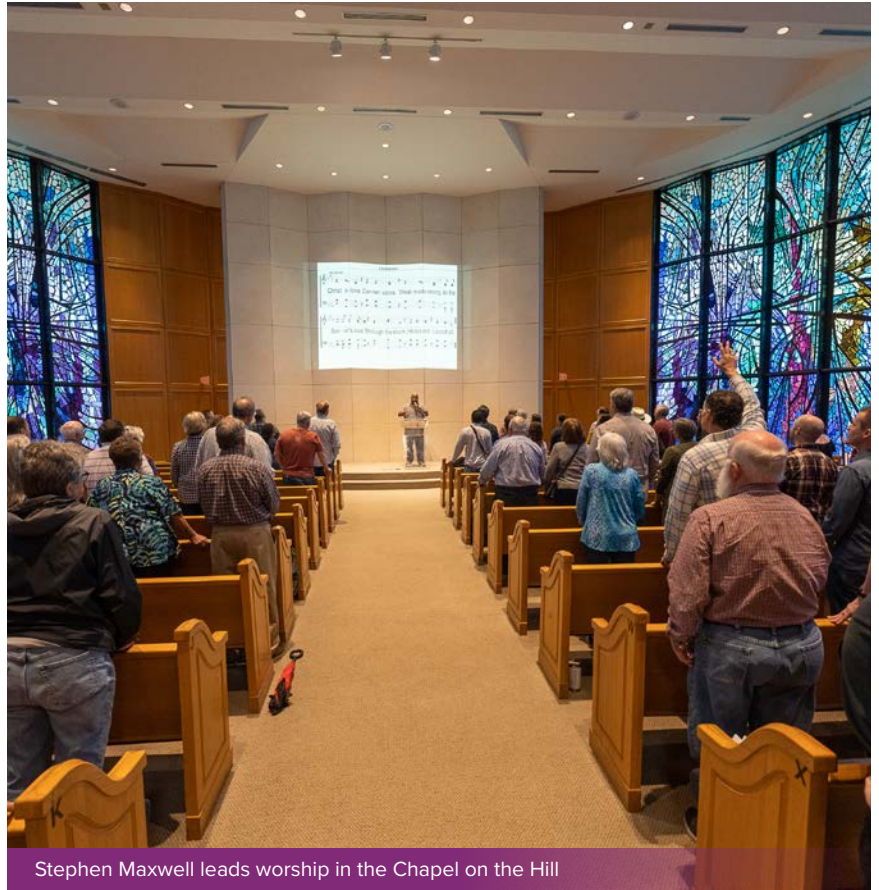
“Summit was a great opportunity to reflect and evaluate our ministry with other ministers and pastors. The family ministry community group was a great space to zoom out to see how our student ministry fits within our congregation while also being able to zoom in to see what areas in our ministry need attention. Not only did Summit create an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate our ministry, but it also gave an opportunity to refresh my soul. Summit was a great space to pause and spend time with Jesus.”

Jonathan Juarez

*Student Minister, MacArthur Park Church of Christ
San Antonio, Texas*



Summit attendees gather for worship in Chapel on the Hill



Stephen Maxwell leads worship in the Chapel on the Hill



Jeff Nelson and Michael Stanford facilitate the Summit worship community through a conversation about "Living Worship"



Summit attendees come together in song, Scripture and prayer



Nic Dunbar leads worship at the Anchor Point plenary session



Summit attendees enjoy a meal together at the Anchor Point dinner



Summit director, Jennifer Schroeder, welcomes Summit attendees to Anchor Point



Summit attendees fellowship at the Anchor Point plenary session



Panelists Theodore Francis, Candice Ortals-Wiser, Doug Foster, and Wes Crawford join keynote speaker, Kristin Kobes Du Mez (center), for the Anchor Point plenary session

Anchor Point

Anchor Point, the Thursday evening dinner and plenary session at Summit, has become synonymous with providing space where we can participate in deeper conversations that affect our churches and us in a variety of ways. In the fall, Dr. Andrew Root joined us to discuss how our inability to recognize the power and presence of God has led us to a place where our churches are actively in decline. In doing so, he urged us to consider what re-enchantment looks like and how it would impact our faith communities in ways that we could not even imagine.

And, in the spring, Dr. Kristin Du Mez challenged us to examine ways that popular culture has influenced the church, and as a result, the effect it has had on Christianity. She closed out

her plenary session by joining a panel discussion with ACU faculty members in the fields of church history, political science and history.

Both Root and Du Mez offered thought-provoking sessions that gave our ministry communities the opportunity to come together as a large group and reflect on the intersection of the world and the church. Anchor Point would not be complete, though, without good food, good fellowship and good singing, and it had all three. Each Anchor Point evening opened with dinner and fellowship and closed with a time of praise and worship where we prayed together, read Scripture together and lifted our voices to God to praise the steadfast and faithful presence of God—“for the Lord is good” (Psalm 100:1-5).



“It was an honor to be a part of such an impactful event that focused on equipping and encouraging church leaders. The sessions were informative and practical, and I have no doubt that they will have a positive impact on all who attended. In addition to the sessions, the worship was a highlight of the event for me. It was clear that a lot of effort went into creating a meaningful and authentic worship experience, and it helped set the tone for the entire event. ACU Summit Spring '23 was informative and inspiring, and I came away with a renewed sense of energy and purpose for my ministry.”

Rosalyn Miller

*Children's Education Coordinator
Church of Christ on McDermott Road, Plano, Texas*



“I attended the preaching track, which focused on the idea of an open pulpit. It was amazing to watch very traditional ministers who haven't taken a Sunday off in years consider another way of doing ministry – a way that would not only benefit them but more importantly, help the congregation grow as well. I loved hearing about it because it offers another way for more people to have space at the table and use the gifts God gave them. It was also perfectly timed as the information I learned from this impacted my thesis. I am so grateful I was able to attend and learn from the speakers. ... The lectures are great, the worship is beautiful, but the thing that makes Summit is the people. I am so thankful I could gather and meet with other ministers, resting in each other in those two days.”

Ariel Bloomer

Graduate student in ACU's Graduate School of Theology



Visit our website at siburtinstitute.org to register for events and access resources



EVENTS

Summit

Historic, flagship event in Abilene to gather congregational leaders and other Christ-followers for conversations about faith and life for ministry throughout the world.

ElderLink

Weekend conferences in various places around the country to equip, encourage and connect leaders in Churches of Christ.

Equipping for Ministry

Regional gatherings over a meal to provide continuing education for ministers and other church leaders.

Contemplative Ministers' Initiative

Two-year program of retreats to help ministers encounter and embrace the contemplative life.

Ministers' Support Network

Weekend retreats to offer ministers and spouses encouragement, fellowship and renewal in a safe and supportive environment.

Intersection

Series of online webinar conversations hosted by Randy Harris and Dr. Carson Reed on a variety of topics.



CONNECTIONS

Chaplaincy Endorsement and Fellowship

Opportunity for endorsement for chaplains seeking professional certification in addition to fellowship of chaplains.

Looking Team

Group that facilitates connections between churches seeking new ministers and ministers seeking new positions.

Consulting

Team of consultants for churches and Christian organizations, each with particular specialties and experiences related to congregational leadership.



ONLINE RESOURCES



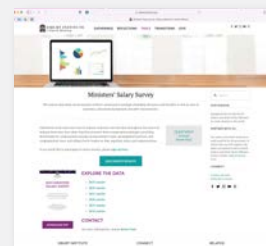
MinistryLink

Online ministry job board where churches can post publicly accessible job openings for ministers to view and answer.



Church Health Assessment

Robust and statistically reliable survey of congregational members' perceptions to provide feedback to leaders on church health.



Salary Survey

Annual nationwide instrument that reports minister compensation packages along with other relevant demographics.

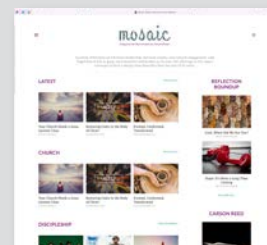


PUBLICATIONS



Discernment

Peer-reviewed digital journal that encourages effective ministerial practice by making practical theology accessible to the church.



Mosaic

Blog platform that curates reflections from a wide variety of authors on Christian leadership, spiritual vitality and cultural engagement.



Live from the Siburt Institute

Podcast interviews with ministers, church leaders and scholars, engaging issues facing Christians and church leaders today.

MINISTRYLINK AND LOOKING TEAM 2022-23



126
posts on
MinistryLink



106
churches on the
Looking Team List



79
ministers on the
Looking Team List

MOSAIC IN 2022-23



102
posts on
Mosaic



27,000+
clicks, a
10% increase
year over year



458
subscribed email
addresses for our weekly
email campaigns,
25% growth over
the prior year.



99
countries
represented by
visitors to the website

EVENTS: SUMMIT, EFM, ELDERLINK AND INTERSECTION

1,285

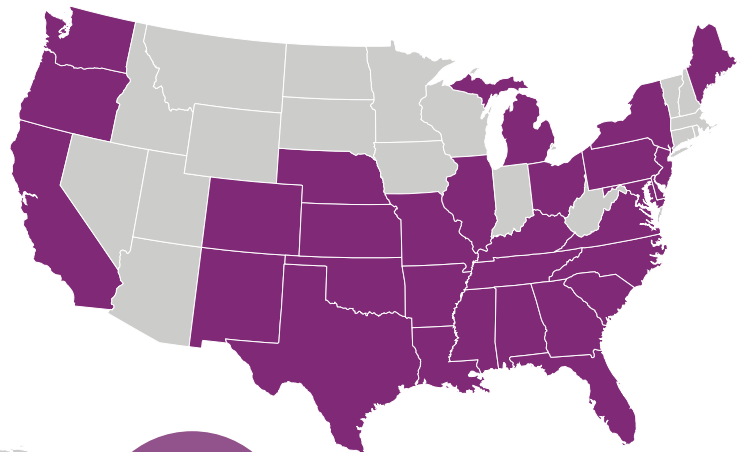
total participants
in 2022-23

296

unique churches
participated
in 2022-23

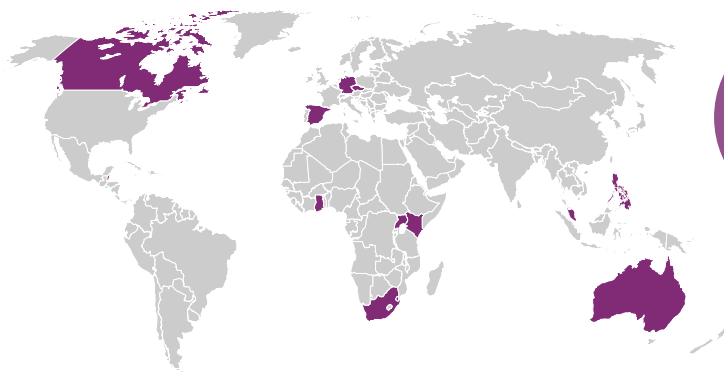
32

states
(including Hawaii
and Alaska)



13

countries



Australia
Belize
Canada
Czech
Republic

Eswatini
Germany
Ghana
Kenya
Malaysia

Philippines
South Africa
Spain
Uganda

Live from the Siburt Institute Podcast



In spring 2023, we launched a podcast as another way to connect ministers and church leaders with the vast resources available through the Siburt Institute. Called “Live from the Siburt Institute,” our podcast is available on all online platforms, and it features a variety of conversations relevant for Christians and church leaders, reflecting the ways that the Siburt Institute and the College of Biblical Studies lie at the intersection of teaching, scholarship, church life and leadership.

The podcast launched with a slate of episodes on youth ministry, children’s ministry, Hispanic ministry and conflict communication, and it features not only people serving in ministry but also educators at ACU and other Church of Christ institutions. New episodes have continued to appear with a variety of guests, including interviews with Dr. Carson Reed (’95 D.Min.), our executive director, and Dr. Royce Money (’64), our founding director.

This audio format is exciting for us because it allows us to make content available online, so that subscribers can access the content at their convenience. In the past, in order to connect with ACU professors or Siburt speakers, folks have usually had to wait until we came back to their area with another event, or hope that someone they want to hear appears on a webinar. Now, though, podcast episodes are always present, and we are sending out new episodes twice each month. It truly is an amazing opportunity to make valuable content easily available for our audience.

As the podcast grows, we will continue to interview scholars, ministers and other practitioners in God’s kingdom as we seek to resource churches and church leaders. Check us out at any time to access old and new episodes. And you can share this resource with people you know by simply giving them this website link: siburtinstitute.podbean.com.



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