

PLACEMENT HANDBOOK

2017



SHEPHERDS
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

TOOLS FOR CANDIDATES AND SEARCH COMMITTEES

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SHEPHERDS SEMINARY PLACEMENT SERVICE

The STS Placement Office provides assistance to students, graduating seniors, alumni, churches, and Christian ministries. We welcome inquiries from those seeking to fill positions with seminary-trained candidates. A current listing of candidates and ministry opportunities is kept in a database in order to facilitate requests. There is no fee for this service. Included in this guide are the documents applicants need to initiate the placement process and other tools that may be helpful to both candidates and search committees.

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Shepherds Theological Seminary
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SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IN PLACEMENT

Placement is the task of assisting candidates and ministries in search of the right ministry match for both the church and the candidate. Pastoral placement is a vital aspect of church life since the office of pastor is the most significant and influential position in a local church. Charles Spurgeon said that the church with an empty pulpit faces its time of greatest danger. Wesley Johnson concluded "[I]t has become evident that the effectiveness and the tenure of a pastor is directly related to the procedure of calling a pastor."¹

CHURCH POLITY AND PLACEMENT

Congregational Polity

A large number of local churches operate under the “Congregational Government” model. These churches have employed the candidating method for pastoral placement. Typically, pastorless churches form a pulpit committee to seek candidates. After a candidate has completed the steps required by the local church, he is presented to the congregation for a formal vote.

Elder-Rule Polity

A significant trend in church polity is “Elder Rule,” in which the multiplicity of elders is seen as the biblical model. In this model elders are given leadership of the church. In elder-rule churches, placement decisions are the domain of the governing elders. Vocational staff may be chosen and placed by the elders without congregational endorsement or vote.

¹ Wesley Johnson “The Development of a Manual for Pastoral Search Committees Adhering to Congregational Polity”, (Diss. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1957), 21.

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS IN PLACEMENT

Survey Data from Churches, Pastors, and Placement Professionals²

- A vast over-supply of pastors for available pulpits
- Pastor/church mismatches are epidemic in proportion
- Forced terminations are a serious problem
- Placement professionals are pessimistic about placement trends
- Bible colleges and seminaries are able to successfully place only fifty percent of the applicants seeking ministry placement
- Discouraged ministers are leaving the ministry because of placement delays
- The placement process is in need of serious modification
- There is no known theology of placement

PASTORAL TENURE

Rob Green documented the phenomenon of short pastoral tenure:

According to recent statistics, there is significant turnover of clergy within evangelical circles. George Barna reports that clergy move every four years. Ten years after the Barna study, Thomas Rainer, in his book *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, concluded, "Our surveys of pastors across America indicate the average tenure of a pastor to be 3.8 years." Joseph Miller argues, "Most pastorates last two to three years." Regardless of the exact figures, it is clear that many churches face the possibility of looking for a new pastor, and pastors look for a new church on a fairly regular basis. Research suggests that the negative impact caused by pastoral turnover is devastating to all parties involved.³

² William Waddell Barber, "Pastoral Placement in Independent Churches" (Diss. Temple Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992), ii.

³ Rob Green, "Passing the Baton: A Theological Look at Pastoral Turnover" *Journal of Ministry and Theology*, Vol. 10:1 (Spring 2006), 54.

DEFICIENCY IN SEARCH COMMITTEES

In a survey of 515 Independent Baptist pastors, Robert Ratzliff reported that only thirty-two pastors said that church boards know in an unqualified sense what they are doing and are asking the right questions.⁴

PLACEMENT DELAYS

Well-qualified candidates with respectable résumés find placement delay a common experience. The imbalance between the candidate's difficulty and the church's is striking. National offices for two of the largest Independent church groups report that it takes two to four times longer for a candidate to secure placement than it takes a church to call a pastor.⁵

CHURCH PROBLEMS

Wesley Johnson writes, "At least fifty percent of all churches are vacant because the pastor left under troublesome conditions."⁶ Further, "Six of every ten pastors leave under some kind of stress."⁷ Forty-four percent of the pastors he surveyed reported that church trouble was the cause of their leaving.⁸ Sixty-six percent of pastors from the Great Lakes District of the Evangelical Free Church left because of trouble.⁹ Rob Green said that Lloyd Rediger's volume *Clergy Killers* marshaled evidence that many pastors leave churches because their congregations made their ministry miserable. Approximately twenty-three percent of pastors say they have been fired at least once and forty-three

⁴ Robert Ratzliff, "The Pastor's Call" (Diss., Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986), 106.

⁵ The General Association of Regular Baptists and the Independent Fundamental Churches of America submitted data in the project survey as shown in the previously referenced dissertation of William W. Barber.

⁶ Wesley Johnson, "The Development of a Manual for Pastoral Search Committees Adhering to Congregational Polity" (Diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1957), 29.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁹ Gerald W. Gillaspie, *The Restless Pastor* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 12.

percent said a faction forced them out. This is made worse by the fact that “clergy killers” are small in number. They are identified by their aggressive and determined effort to injure or destroy pastors.¹⁰

Rediger iterated, “There is little concern at leadership levels for the devastation the ‘clergy-killer’ phenomenon is causing to the mission and spiritual energy of churches and pastors, and to the personal lives of pastors and their families.”¹¹

PASTORAL QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Gerald Gillaspie, in his respected volume *The Restless Pastor*, stated that churches today desire their pastors to have seminary training and that laymen want their ministers to be informed about life, about the institutions, resources, and distinctive problems of community life.¹² Wesley Johnson emphasized that churches expect personal integrity, personal heart, ability to preach, ability to counsel, the establishment of a successful track record, ability to love people, and spiritual maturity.¹³ One of the emerging needs for candidates and churches is the formal statement of a philosophy of ministry which expresses the *what*, *why*, and *how* of ministry. The statement should affirm orthodoxy, distinctive doctrines, contemporary theological and ecclesiastical issues, and one’s view of leadership.

¹⁰ Green, 65.

¹¹ G. Lloyd Rediger, *Clergy Killers* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 7.

¹² Gillaspie, *The Restless Pastor*, 24-25.

¹³ Johnson, Diss. 54.

CANDIDATE APPLICATION FOR PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Telephone (H) _____ (C) _____ (O) _____

Email _____ Blog _____ Website _____

Marital Status Married Single Divorced Separated Engaged Widowed

Were you previously married? Yes No Comment _____

Spouse's Name _____ Date Married _____

Children's Names & Ages _____

EDUCATION

Currently enrolled in Seminary Yes No Degree Program _____

Graduation Target Date _____ Further Education Planned _____

EMPLOYMENT OR MINISTRY

Church or Company

Position

Dates

POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING

Qualifications for position

When are you available to assume this position? _____

REFERENCES

Name

Relationship

Telephone

Email

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Attachments

___ Doctrinal Statement

___ Philosophy of Ministry

___ Résumé

MINISTRY APPLICATION FOR PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

Organization name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Denominational affiliation _____ Website _____

Contact person _____ Position _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Telephone _____ Best time to call _____

Ministry position you seek to fill _____

Position open since _____ Full-time__ Part-time__ Temporary__ Long-term _____

Job Description

Distinctives of your organization

Attached are the following:

____ Doctrinal Statement

____ Philosophy of Ministry

____ Position Profile

CHURCH INFORMATION

Reason this position is open

Form of church government

Position on Bible versions

Affiliation with ecclesiastical groups

Church practice on evangelism and missions

Position on church discipline

Position on separation

Describe worship style

Describe ideal pastor attributes

Other full-time staff members

Name & contact information of church leaders

Annual budget _____ Missions budget _____

Contacts and references for your church

Attachments

___ Doctrinal Statement

___ Constitution

___ Philosophy of Ministry

___ Position Profile

___ Church Questionnaire (available on request from STS Placement Office)

WARNING SIGNS FOR SEARCH COMMITTEES

In general, a church should not affirm any man as an elder who does not meet the biblical qualifications laid out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Here are several warning flags listed on 9marks.org which a church should heed:

1. A contrarian spirit – If you say *black*, he'll say *white*. An elder must build unity, not stir up division.
2. A lack of spiritual fruit – If a man is not already shepherding the flock, he won't begin doing so just because you give him a title. An elder should be a man who is already hard at work building up the body.
3. An unsupportive wife – Pastoring well is a demanding task. It takes time to teach and disciple and exercise hospitality. Is the man's wife happy to further her husband's ministry even when that requires a considerable sacrifice on her part? If not, it would be unwise to appoint this man as an elder.
4. A record of broken relationships behind him.
5. A "me" focus – Every time he opens his mouth, whether in a Sunday school classroom or at a restaurant table, he seems to have his own interest in mind and not everyone else's. An elder must be a man who's always looking out for the good of the body.
6. An inability to encourage others.
7. An inability to show compassion and tenderness – A man may be rigorously strong and biblical, but if he can't be tender and compassionate, he'll make a poor shepherd.
8. A tendency to exaggerate and embellish – An elder should be a man whose word is utterly trustworthy.
9. A tendency to prize creativity and innovation over biblical faithfulness – This is not to say that creativity and innovation are bad things, but they must always be servants to faithfulness to God's Word.
10. An inability to admit he's wrong.
11. An inability to submit to other leaders.
12. A refusal to be inconvenienced or make sacrifices in order to serve others.
13. A feeling of entitlement to the office.

RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

The purpose of the résumé is to introduce you to a prospective ministry and should lead to an opportunity for a personal interview. It should set forth the ministerial gifts and skills you possess.

Assess your current understanding of the areas of ministry for which God has called and prepared you and provide relevant information including the following:

- **Personal data** – Give name, address, telephone number, and email address.
- **Marital Status** – List names of wife and children, children's birth date, and explain any matter that may be of concern to a search committee.
- **Education** – List your highest level of theological education first. Spell out the name of degrees, since abbreviations are not always familiar to recipients of your résumé. List undergraduate degrees but not necessarily your high school education. Specialized training such as Evangelism Explosion or National Association of Nouthetic Counseling certification should be included.
- **Experience** – List in reverse chronological order positions, titles, places, and dates of service with concise descriptions of responsibilities and accomplishments. Give employment history, positions held, volunteer service, and ministry experience as a layman.
- **Honors, interests, and activities** – Be honest and do not exaggerate.
- **References** – List those who will give a candid evaluation. Three to six references with a mixture of teachers, ministers, and lay people is recommended.
- **Personal statement** – Your spiritual sojourn succinctly stated will personalize your résumé and make it valuable those who review it. This is to be written in a narrative style. A substantive paragraph should suffice.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF A GOOD RÉSUMÉ

Here are some tips to produce a superb résumé.

Make the résumé visually appealing and easy to read. Use standard business-type fonts such as Arial or Calibri fonts in the size range of 10-12. Make the headings stand out by upsizing and bolding. Double spacing between sections makes the résumé more readable.

Guard against grammatical mistakes, misspellings, or punctuation errors. Have someone with editing skills review your résumé. The quality of paper and the clarity of copies are very important. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms (IFCA, SBC, NANC, etc).

Give a brief description of accomplishments related to your professional pursuit. Action verbs are to be employed in descriptions of experience and duties. Be certain you use the correct verb tenses. Avoid repetition of verbs by using a reputable thesaurus.

Include a recent photo of you and your spouse.

Place your name at the top of each page and confine your résumé to two pages unless you have extensive experience that warrants a third page.

The following volumes are on reserve at the Jackson Library of Shepherds Seminary:

Résumés for Dummies by Joyce Lain Kennedy.

The Résumé Handbook by Arthur D. Rosenberg.

Knock 'Em Dead Cover Letters by Martin Yate.

RÉSUMÉ CHECKLIST

- ✓ Allot sufficient time to prepare your résumé
- ✓ Highlight qualifications relevant to the ministry role you are seeking
- ✓ Clearly list your qualifications
- ✓ List your education background in reverse chronological order
- ✓ Make sure contact information is updated
- ✓ Obtain permission for references used
- ✓ Give accurate contact information for references listed
- ✓ Use short summary phrases instead of complete sentences
- ✓ Use bolding, bulleting, underlining, and italicizing where appropriate
- ✓ Use white space in margins and between sections
- ✓ Avoid personal pronouns, abbreviations, and acronyms
- ✓ Use a competent proofreader to review your résumé
- ✓ Make certain of good print and copy quality

RÉSUMÉ EXAMPLE

DAVID WILLIAM CLELAND

5 OLD MILL COURT • SAVANNAH, GA 31419
C: 912-398-4357 • H: 912-335-1117
DWCLELAND@GMAIL.COM



PERSONAL

BORN : JANUARY 23, 1974, IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

FAMILY: MARRIED APRIL 13, 2002, TO ERIKA [BOOKMAN] CLELAND

- BA in Christian Ministry, The Master's College
- Currently a mother and homemaker

DAUGHTER, LUCY, BORN DECEMBER 5, 2005
SON, HENRY, BORN SEPTEMBER 15, 2007
IN PROCESS OF ADOPTING A BABY BOY FROM ETHIOPIA, BORN OCTOBER 2010

EDUCATION

MASTER OF DIVINITY THE MASTER'S SEMINARY	MAY 2001 SUN VALLEY, CA
MASTER OF ARTS, BIBLICAL COUNSELING THE MASTER'S COLLEGE	IN PROGRESS SANTA CLARITA, CA
BACHELOR OF ARTS, PHILOSOPHY, EMPHASIS ON RELIGIOUS STUDIES GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY	MAY 1997 ATLANTA, GA
TWO YEARS AT MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE	CHICAGO, IL

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH PASTOR JANUARY 2009 – PRESENT
FERGUSON AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH SAVANNAH, GA

Developing and implementing a biblical ministry to students that starts with God's Word, prayer, and godly, qualified leadership. Teaching, discipling, and counseling students and their families. Preaching frequently in the Worship Service, teaching an adult Sunday School class and a weekly young adult Bible Study, counseling, and shepherding the flock along with the other two pastors.

HIGH SCHOOL PASTOR SEPTEMBER 2004 – AUGUST 2008
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL

Led high school ministry consisting of 150 students and 25 volunteer staff. Primary responsibilities were preaching and teaching, discipling, counseling and developing staff. Ministered to parents of teenagers as part of the Family Ministry Team and occasionally preached to the entire congregation.

STUDENT PASTOR SEPTEMBER 2003 – MAY 2004
PLEASANT VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH CAMARILLO, CA

Oversaw high school and junior high ministries and developed a college ministry. Responsibilities included preaching and teaching, discipling, counseling and developing staff. Also periodically preached to the whole congregation.

JUNIOR HIGH PASTOR

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

MAY 2001 – AUGUST 2003

SUN VALLEY, CA

Developed a biblical ministry to Junior Highers that focused on teaching them to love God's Word and love being a part of the body of Christ. Preached and taught, disciplined students, counseled students and their parents, developed a staff of more than twenty adult volunteers, planned summer and winter camps for up to 350 students.

MINISTERIAL RESIDENT, HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRIES

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

1999 – 2001

SUN VALLEY, CA

Disciplined students, preached, counseled, planned camps, and assisted the high school pastor.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE**BIBLE TEACHER**

PLEASANT VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

2003 – 2004

CAMARILLO, CA.

JUNIOR HIGH BASKETBALL COACH

PLEASANT VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

BASKETBALL SEASON, 2004

CAMARILLO, CA

JUNIOR HIGH BIBLE, SPEECH, AND VOCABULARY TEACHER

GRACE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

2000 – 2001

SUN VALLEY, CA

ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES**FUNERAL HOME PASTOR**

FAIRHAVEN FUNERAL HOME

DECEMBER 2008 – PRESENT

SAVANNAH, GA

MISSION TRIP LEADER

Led mission trips to Romania, Portugal, inner-city Chicago, South Africa, Mexico, and Germany.

ORDINATION

Ordained by Ferguson Avenue Baptist Church

JUNE 2009

CONVERSION AND CALLING

Having been raised in a Christian home I don't recall a time when I didn't know about Jesus' death and resurrection. At the age of six I made a profession of faith and was baptized. I believe that as much as a child can, I understood my own sinfulness and need for a savior. As a teenager I became aware that God was calling me to serve Him full time in ministry. Godly men affirmed that call, which led me to seminary. I've committed myself to a philosophy of ministry best summarized by Paul's words to the Colossians in 1:28-29, and I am seeking to shepherd a community of Christ-followers who desire to be increasingly complete in Him so that we can be effective ministers of the gospel together.

INTERESTS

Writing, reading, golf, basketball, music, traveling, and history.

REFERENCES

Bob Dimmitt
Pastor, Ferguson Avenue Baptist Church
10050 Ferguson Avenue
Savannah, GA 31406
912-398-4363

Mike Hurley
Lay volunteer, AHEFC
718 North Eastman Drive
Mount Prospect, IL 60056
847-818-0484

PLACEMENT WEBSITES

christiannet.com

christiancareercenter.com

christianplacements.com

churchjobs.net

churchstaffing.com

gospel.com

ministerconnection.net

ministryjobs.com

ministrylist.com

ministrysearch.com

nextgenchurches.com

pastorsearch.com

sbts.edu

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