



Placement Handbook

Tools for Candidates and Search Committees

Academic Year 2021-2022

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SHEPHERDS SEMINARY PLACEMENT SERVICES

The STS Placement Office offers placement 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 to facilitate requests.

There is no fee for this service. Included in this guide are the documents applicants will need to initiate the placement process and also other tools that may be helpful to both candidates and search committees.

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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

Single Elder + Deacons / Congregational Polity

Many local churches operate under the “Single Elder + Deacons / Congregational Government” model. These churches employ the candidating method for pastoral placement. Typically, these churches without a pastor form a pulpit committee to seek candidates. After a candidate has completed the steps required by the church, he is presented to the congregation for a formal vote.

Elder Led / Congregationally Governed Polity or Elder-Rule Polity

A growing trend in church polity is “Elder Led” or Elder Rule,” in which the plurality of elders is seen as the biblical model. In this model, a plurality of elders is given leadership of the church. In “Elder Led / Congregationally Governed” churches, the elders oversee the placement process and then the candidate is presented to the congregation for a formal vote. In “Elder-Ruled” churches, placement decisions are the domain of the governing elders. Vocational staff may be chosen and placed by the elders without or 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 only able to successfully place fifty percent of the applicants seeking ministry placement
- Discouraged ministers are leaving the ministry because of placement delays
- The placement process needs 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 often experience placement delays. 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 in Johnson’s survey 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 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

⁴ Robert Ratzliff: “The Pastor’s Call” (Diss., Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986), 106.

⁵ The General Association of Regular Baptists and IFCA International 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.

¹⁰ Green, 65.

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

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.

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

¹³ Johnson, Diss. 54.

INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION FOR PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

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

Email _____ Blog _____ Website _____

Marital Status: Married ___ Single ___ Divorced ___ Separated ___ Engaged ___ Widowed ___

Please provide some background if you were you previously married _____

Spouse's Name _____ Date Married _____

Children's Names & Ages _____

EDUCATION

Currently enrolled in Seminary Yes ___ No ___ Degree Program _____

Graduation Target Date _____ Further Education Planned _____

RECENT EMPLOYMENT OR MINISTRY HISTORY

Church or Company	Position	Dates
--------------------------	-----------------	--------------

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THAT POSITION

When are you available to assume this position? _____

REFERENCES

#1 Name _____

Relationship _____

Phone _____ Email _____

#2 Name _____

Relationship _____

Phone _____ Email _____

ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS

___ Doctrinal Statement

___ Philosophy of Ministry

___ Resumé

RESUMÉ PREPARATION

The purpose of the resumé 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 resumé. List undergraduate degrees but not necessarily your high school education. Specialized training and/or 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 lay ministry experience.
- **Honors, interests, and activities** – Be honest and do not exaggerate.
- **References** – List those who will give a candid evaluation. Three to four references with a mixture of teachers, ministers, and lay people is recommended.
- **Personal statement** – Your spiritual sojourn succinctly stated will help personalize your resumé 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 RESUMÉ

Here are some tips to produce a superb resumé.

Make the resumé visually appealing and easy to read. Use standard business-type fonts such as Arial, Times Roman, 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 resumé more readable.

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

Resumés for Dummies by Joyce Lain Kennedy.

The Resumé Handbook by Arthur D. Rosenberg.

Knock 'Em Dead Cover Letters by Martin Yate.

RESUMÉ CHECKLIST

- ✓ Allot enough time to prepare your resumé
- ✓ Emphasize qualifications relevant to the ministry role you are seeking
- ✓ Clearly list your qualifications
- ✓ List your education entries 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 resumé
- ✓ Make certain of good print and copy quality

Other Leadership Experience

On-Campus University Ministry

- Dormitory ministry-team leader for Calvary Baptist Church, Sanford, NC
- North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

President – Shepherds Theological Seminary, Student Leadership Council 2020–2021

- Promoted community-building events and activities and coordinated student move-ins
- Regularly made announcements and wrote emails to student body and faculty
- Instituted student activities calendar and redesigned leadership council handbook

Overseas Missions – Slavic Gospel Association, Rockford, IL, Ukraine 2010–2012

- Designed, promoted and ran evangelistic soccer camp for youth in city of Kiev, Ukraine
- Teaching small groups, and street evangelism through an interpreter

Skills & Recognition

- M. Div Award, STS (2021)
- Merit Award Scholarship for student committed to full-time ministry, STS (2020)
- Zondervan Academic Outstanding Hebrew Scholar, STS (2020)
- Proficiency with Greek and Hebrew languages for study and sermon preparation
- Proficient with Planning Center, Microsoft Office & Web/Marketing tools
- Multi-instrumental proficiency with worship leading (guitar, piano, vocalist/soloist)

References

Dr. J.D. Edwards

Senior Pastor, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC
pastor.edwards@cbcraleigh.org

Pastor Charles Carey

Senior Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Sanford, NC
cbc Carey@gmail.com

Dr. Peter Goeman

Professor, Shepherds Theological Seminary
goemanp@shepherds.org

Additional references available upon request

Doctrinal Statement and Philosophy of Ministry Statement are attached

PLACEMENT WEBSITES

christiannet.com

christiancareercenter.com

christianplacements.com

churchjobs.net

churchstaffing.com

gospel.com

ifca.org

ministerconnection.net

ministryjobs.com

ministrylist.com

ministrysearch.com

nextgenchurches.com

pastorsearch.com



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CHURCH APPLICATION FOR PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

Church name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Website _____

Denominational affiliation _____

Contact person _____ Position at church _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Ministry position you seek to fill _____

Full-time ___ Part-time ___ Temporary ___ Long-term ___

When did this position open and why?

Name & contact information of the church's leaders

CHURCH INFORMATION

Form of church government (Pastor as the Single Elder + Deacons? Plurality of Elders + Deacons?)

Describe worship and music style

What 3-5 words would best describe what you are looking for in this ministry position?

Other full-time staff members at church

Annual budget _____ Missions budget _____

Briefly, how would you describe the community where your church is located?

Attachments

Doctrinal Statement

Constitution

Position Profile

Church History (if available)

Upon completion of this form, email to placement@shepherds.edu

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. In addition, here are several warning flags listed on 9marks.org which a church should heed when considering potential candidates:

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 to serve others.
13. A feeling of entitlement to the office.

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- Granroth, Davin. "Clergy Statistics and Resources." www.yearofjubilee.org.
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