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Jesus as the Good Shepherd in John's Gospel

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I know my own and my own know me,
Just as the Father knows me and
I know the Father. (John 10:14-15)

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Abbreviations

ANE	Ancient Near East
OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament
TDNT	Theology Dictionary of the New Testament
EDNT	Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament
Ezek	Ezekiel
Eph	Ephesians
Heb	Hebrews
1 Pet	1 Peter
Matt	Matthew
v	Verse
vv	Verses
cf.	Compare
FG	The Fourth Gospel

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Introduction

The study of the Biblical Foundation in the Sacred Theology is of great importance in today's world. As I began to write my dissertation paper, at first I was so much distracted with many ideas regarding the topic I have to choose. In fact, all the courses that I have taken were interesting. Finally, I decided to choose one topic from the syllabus given to us in Johannine class entitled: "Jesus as the Good Shepherd in John's Gospel."

One of the uniqueness in John's Gospel is the "I am saying" of Jesus. It is only there that we find Jesus identifies himself as I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). The issues that I want to discuss here are first to go back to the original sources of this idea of the good shepherd. What is the biblical foundation of the good shepherd? The second issue is to discuss on the Gospel of John how does it portray Jesus, how does John use the term of the Good Shepherd to portray Jesus? What is the relevance of being a Shepherd in today's world?

In order to tackle up with all these issues, I have decided to divide this paper into three chapters. The first chapter shall dwell on the Biblical Foundation based on three major things: Shepherds in the Ancient Near East, Shepherds in the Old Testament, and Shepherds in the New Testament. In the second chapter, I shall discuss on Jesus as the Good Shepherd in John's Gospel which is the main topic for my dissertation paper. Then, the last chapter will discuss on Shepherding in contemporary ministry.

Here I would like to begin with a simple way of identifying the good shepherd with the usual things we have in our society, our churches, country or state. The leaders of the church captured by Christ to lead God's people are called to protect and to guide the people they meet in their lives as the good shepherd does. Pope Francis recently in one of his homily says that "like shepherds living with the smell of the sheep."¹ With this pope, Francis reminded the priests to be close to the people that they are living with, especially to those who are poor and marginalized and to know their daily struggles.

This dissertation paper will limit itself to focus on John 10:1-21 where we read about Jesus the Good Shepherd. The main sources for this will be relying on the Bible, and other sources are on the online library books provided by the University itself, commentaries, and academic journals or online published articles. All the biblical citations in this paper are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

¹ Sandie Cornish, *Living with the Smell of the Sheep*, <http://spirituality.ucanews.com/2013/11/19/living-with-the-smell-of-the-sheep/>, Access , on July 17, 2015.

Chapter One: The Shepherd Imagery in the Bible

Introduction

In the Ancient Near East (ANE), where Palestine belonged, shepherding was considered one of the oldest of human occupations.² Cows, sheep and goats, including horses, asses, and camels were considered the herd animals in Palestine and other Near Eastern societies. But the principal animal, owing to its size, abundance, and usefulness, was the sheep.³ It is no wonder, then, that the shepherd imagery “was used in a figurative way throughout the ancient Near East and in the Hellenistic world; it is, therefore, quite natural that the OT and NT should also use shepherd imagery.”⁴ This chapter describes shepherding in the Ancient near East societies, and in both the OT and NT.

1. Shepherds in the ANE

Ancient Near East refers to places like “Mesopotamia, including the modern country of Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Iran.”⁵ This is what we call today, “Middle East.” In the ANE shepherding was considered not only as a human

² See Jack W. Vancil, “Sheep, Shepherd,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1187.

³ Ibid. Also Gerald L. Mattingly, “Shepherd,” *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins Publishers, 1985), 941.

⁴ Mattingly, “Shepherd,” 942.

⁵ Daniel C. Snell, *Regions of the Ancient near East* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2.

occupation, but also the economic foundation of these societies. Nomadic peoples (e.g., Amalekites and Midianites) were shepherds. Sheep provided for the ancient peoples meat, milk, fat, wool, skins, and horns.⁶ The economic importance of sheep, besides its being sacrificial animal, cannot be underestimated. Thus, as Timothy Laniak affirms, “Everyone who lived in the ancient Near East would have either lived in a household that owned flocks or seen shepherds who led their sheep to graze along the edges of settled areas.”⁷

While shepherds were predominantly men, it is an occupation not exclusively for them. It is said that among the Bedouin (desert-dwelling Arabian ethnic groups of the Middle Eastern deserts), a young girl of eight to ten years old begin herding as a trainee, and continue to herd until fifteen or sixteen by which time she would usually be married and begin housekeeping and childrearing.⁸ This can likewise be seen in the OT stories about Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, and Jethro’s daughters.

The shepherds herding the flock may not necessarily be owners of the flock. They could simply be hired by the herd owner (e.g., Gen 29-30 where Jacob was hired by Laban to pasture the sheep). It could happen that those hired to care for herds did not always care for them as an owner would.⁹ Thus, we have the distinction between the good shepherd and the bad shepherd. Shepherding could be a dangerous and demanding

⁶ Mattingly, “*Shepherd*,” 941.

⁷ Timothy S. Laniak, *Finding the Lost Images of God: Uncover the Ancient Culture, Discover Hidden Meanings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 109.

⁸ See Oded Borowski, *Daily Life in Biblical Times, Archaeology and Biblical Studies* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 48.

⁹ Moses Aberbach, *Labor, Crafts, and Commerce in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1994), 226.

occupation. Shepherds were always on the lookout for predators in the form of both wild animals and human thieves. Since sheep were easy prey for wild animals, shepherds had to constantly care and keep watch on their herds (see 1 Sam 17:34-35). Because of the dangers one had to face, hired shepherds sometimes chose to save their own skins rather than risk themselves for their flocks.¹⁰ We find in the Gospel of John an example of this: “The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves and runs away – and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired man does not care for the sheep” (John 10:11-13).

The good shepherd’s primary duties are to guide, provide food and water, protect and deliver, gather back to the herd those that were lost, and to nurture and provide security.¹¹ This is reflected in the first five verses of the famous Psalm 23: “He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he leads me in right path....” Shepherds had always to look for new grazing fields since low-lying ground vegetation is the primary means of sustenance of sheep. The shepherd in caring for the sheep sees to it that they are not overdriven. Thus, shepherd carries helpless lambs in his arms (cf. Isa 40:11), or on his shoulders. At the end of the day, the good shepherd counts each animal as it passed under his hand (Jer 31:13 – “flocks shall again pass under the hands of the

¹⁰ See Philip Gene Carnes, “Like Sheep Without a Shepherd: The Shepherd Metaphor and Its Primacy for Biblical Leadership” (Unpublished Master of Arts in Religion Thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2007), 21, http://www.rts.edu/site/virtual/resources/student_theses/carnes-sheep_without_a_shepherd.pdf. Accessed 23 January 2015.

¹¹ Vancil, “Sheep, Shepherd,” 1187; Thomas A. Golding, “The Imagery of Shepherding in the Bible, Part I,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163 (January-March 2006): 22; cited in Carnes, “Like Sheep without a Shepherd,” 22.

one who counts them...”). The shepherd kept his flock intact and sought for the lost ones.

Because predators were always a threat to shepherds, the ANE shepherds always had implement of protection, like a rod and staff at hand, a sling to scare small predators, and a pouch for food. The shepherd’s staff was important in traversing rocky terrain, while the rod was primarily used as a defense against threats.¹²

It was very natural then that because tending the flock was a routine of daily life among the ancients that an “extensive and complex stock of shepherd and flock imagery developed throughout ANE. It was one of human’s earliest symbols, and is used repeatedly in the Bible to picture God, or national leaders ruling over their people.”¹³ Indeed, the shepherd imagery was a common motif of ancient Near Eastern royal ideology. It was widely used for wise kings, and also often for kings at war, like King David.¹⁴

2. Shepherd in the OT

The OT correctly reflects the milieu of shepherds and their flocks. Shepherds are mentioned a dozen of times throughout the OT. The first shepherd mentioned in the OT was Abel. Principal characters of the OT such as Abraham, Moses, and King David were

¹² Oded Borowski, *Daily Life in Biblical Times, Archaeology and Biblical Studies* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 49-50; cited in Carnes, “Like Sheep without a Shepherd,” 24.

¹³ Vancil, “Sheep, Shepherd,” 1187-1188; P.L. Garber, “Sheep, Shepherd,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, eds. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerald H. Wilson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 20.

¹⁴ Lanlak, *Finding the Lost Images of God*, 111.

shepherds. Psalm 78 nicely describes David, God's servant, taken from the sheepfolds, "from tending the nursing ewes he [God] brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel, his inheritance" (vv. 70-71).

In the OT the metaphor of shepherd is portrayed with the leadership exercised by political and military leaders and by God. Rulers should act like a shepherd of his subjects.¹⁵ When leadership is poor or absent, Israel is likened to sheep without a shepherd. Like a good shepherd, the shepherd function of a leader includes gathering the dispersed, righteously ruling his subjects, and caring for the weak. The same metaphor is likely applied to God YHWH. According to Joachim Jeremias,

In the OT the description of Yahweh as the Shepherd of Israel is ancient usage, but the surprising paucity of references in which the title is used of Yahweh shows that this is not just a formal oriental divine predication. The application of the shepherd image to Yahweh is embedded in the living piety of Israel.¹⁶

There are a number of passages that use the rich imagery of shepherd vocabulary in reference to God. One good example of this is found in Isaiah 40: "He [God] will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep" (v. 11). Susan Ackerman thinks that this "image may have helped inspire Christianity's image of Jesus as the 'good shepherd' (see John 10:11-18)."¹⁷ Another example is the Shepherd Psalm, found in Psalm 23. Toni

¹⁵ According to Joachim Jeremias, "it is surprising that there is no single instance in the OT of shepherd ever being used in Israel as a title for the ruling king." There is no evidence that the term 'shepherd' ever served as a title for a reigning king of Israel. See his article, "poimhvn ktl.," *TDNT* 6 (1968; repr. 1988): 485-502, esp. 487.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Susan Ackerman, "Isaiah," in *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version With the Apocrypha* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 1008.

Craven and Walter Harrelson in their commentary on Psalms state, “The claim that God is *my shepherd* is unparalleled in Scripture. This familiar metaphoric title for God actually appears in only two other psalms (28:9; 80:1).”¹⁸ The shepherd God goes before his flock leading them to the pastures and to places where it may rest by the waters, who protects it with his staff and gathers the dispersed. The flock Israel is safely sheltered in God. Psalm 23 portrays the shepherd as meeting all the needs of his sheep: “Because the Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.” This divine shepherd restores my soul.

A true shepherd needs to know the condition of his flock for it brings the shepherd a lot of benefits. The shepherd metaphor is reflected in Proverbs 27:23-27 to teach people to be responsible stewards acting with foresight in what we do with our riches:

Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds; for riches do not last forever or a crown for all generations. When the grass is gone, and new growth appears, and the herbage of the mountains is gathered, the lambs will provide your clothing and the goats the price of a field; there will be enough goats’ milk for your food, for the food of your household and nourishment for your servant-girls.

The sheep needed constant protections there were plenty of dangers to the flock from the wild animals that came up from the jungle surrounding the Jordan River gorge. Lions and bears were common (Judges 14: 8; 2 Kings 2:25). The shepherd David is said to have protected his own flock from lion and bear (1 Samuel 17:34-36). In the Book of the prophet Amos, the Lord says, “As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who lived in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed” (Amos 3:12). The shepherd had to

¹⁸ Toni Craven and Walter Harrelson, “Psalms,” *The New Interpreter’s Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version With the Apocrypha* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 772. Italics are the authors’.

fight back, because he had to make good any losses' to the owners (Genesis 31:39; Exodus 22:10-13). His instruments of rod, a symbol of vigilant protection, and his staff, a symbol of care, reassure the flock.

In the midst of Israel's false leaders or shepherds who have exploited their positions to serve themselves, the prophet Ezekiel gave an assurance of the one shepherd God will provide, a messianic descendant of David who will feed his flock and be their shepherd (Ezek 34). The Lord God says: "I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness" (34:11-12).

In sum, the roles of the shepherd include feeding, watering, grooming, leading, and protecting the flock. He puts his life on the line for the sheep. The OT portrays God as a shepherd who does all of these roles.

3. Shepherd in the NT

The Greek word for shepherd is rendered as ποιμήν. In the NT, ποιμήν occurs eighteen (18) times, mostly in the Gospels. Outside the Gospel it appears only in Eph 4:11, Heb 13:20, and 1 Pet 2:25.¹⁹ In the Gospels, it is found thrice in Matthew (9:36; 25:32; 26:31), twice in Mark (6:34; 14:27), four times in Luke (2:8, 15, 18, 20), six times in John (10:2, 11 [twice], 12, 14, 16). Only in Eph 4:11 is ποιμήν translated as "pastor."

¹⁹ Horst Goldstein, "poimhvñ," in *EDNT* 3 (1993): 126-127, esp. 126.

In the book of Luke, the shepherds referred to are all animal shepherds and their mention surrounds the birth of Christ. The shepherds were among the first to visit the new-born babe at the stable. In the other Gospels, in every instance, “the shepherd,” “the good shepherd,” “the one shepherd” all refer to Jesus Christ. In the other verses in Hebrews and I Peter, “the great shepherd” (Heb 13:20), “the shepherd” (1 Pet 2:25), all refer to Jesus Christ. In Matthew 9, Jesus is portrayed as having compassion on his people as sheep without a shepherd and among wolves. In John 10, Jesus talks about himself as the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (vv. 7-18). In Jesus’ description of himself he adds to our understanding of what makes for a good shepherd. The good shepherd is sacrificial. The good shepherd is willing to ignore his own needs in order to meet the needs of the sheep. Over and over in the passage he states the good shepherd gives his own life for his sheep (vv.11, 15, 17, 18). At the end of John’s Gospel, Jesus challenged Peter to prove his love after his betrayal (21:15-17). After each admission of love on Peter’s part Jesus said, “Feed my lambs” (v. 15), “Tend my sheep” (v. 16), “Feed my sheep” (v. 17) Jesus entrusts his flock to Peter.

The Gospel of Luke presents the parable of the lost sheep where Jesus tells of the joy of a shepherd when he finds his sheep after a difficult search (Luke 15:4-7). This shepherd imagery is used to show the rejoicing that accompanies the repentance of the sinner. The shepherd would leave the ninety-nine who stayed on the right path in order to search for the one lost sheep. The shepherd’s care for the flock of Israel is expanded in

Luke to include “tax collector and sinners” (Luke 15:1; cf. Matt. 9:10), with whom he ate without condemnation.²⁰

The Gospel of Matthew uses the image of the shepherd and the flock to illustrate the execution of eschatology judgment. Like a scattered flock the nations are assembled around the glorious throne of the Son of Man (25:3ff.). Here the process of judgment is likened to the separation of the (white) sheep from the (black) goats.²¹

Finally, all the ministers of Christ are to be shepherds to their flocks. In Acts 20, the Apostle Paul exhorts the Ephesian elder to “keep watch over yourselves and over all the *flock*, of which the Holy has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son” (v. 28). In 1 Peter 5, the Apostle charges the elders at the churches in present day Asia Minor to “shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock” (vv. 2-3).

Conclusion

This chapter has given us a general survey of shepherd/ shepherding in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible. Our goal was to understand shepherding in its original context in order to fully appreciate Jesus who, in the Gospel of John states, “I am the Good Shepherd.”

²⁰ Lanlak, *Finding the Lost Images of God*, 117.

²¹ Jeremias, *TDNT* 6, 493.

We have seen that in both the traditions of the Ancient Near East and in the Scriptures, shepherds led their sheep to pasture and water. They protected them from wild animals and guarded their flocks at night whether in the open or in sheepfolds where they counted the sheep as they entered. They took care of the sheep and even carried weak lambs in their arms. They searched for the lost sheep. A good shepherd was willing to sacrifice his own comfort, even his own life, for the sake of his sheep.

Because of the richness of the day-to-day experience of the shepherd, it became the primary metaphor for leaders and even God in the Bible. Both Israel's leaders and God himself are portrayed as shepherds of their flock/people. If Israel's leaders have failed their flock, the Lord God is their good and faithful shepherd. With him as their shepherd, they shall lack nothing. The OT had prophesied the coming of the Good Shepherd who will gather his flock. The Gospels, especially John, portrays Jesus as the Good Shepherd promised by God. Jesus had fulfilled this prophetic role in some measure in his first coming. He will complete it in his second coming when he comes in judgment to separate the righteous from those who did not know Him, and to finally care for and lead those that are his own.

Chapter Two: The Good Shepherd in John's Gospel

“I am the good shepherd. The Good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

Introduction

We have seen in chapter 1 that the motif of shepherd/shepherding is found throughout the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. The motif of shepherd /shepherding as found in the Bible reflects the socio-economic contexts of the times. Shepherding was, and still is to a certain extent, a very common occupation for those in the Middle East. The sacred authors of the Bible made use of the shepherd motif to portray God and Jesus. Hence, it is a very common theme in the Old Testament and New Testament. In the Old Testament, God was the shepherd of the sheep Israel. Time will come when God would raise up a new David to be shepherd over them: “I will set up one shepherd over them, and He will feed them, even My servant David. He will feed them, and He will be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them” (Ezekiel 34:23-24). ‘And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd’ (Ezekiel 37.24). In the New Testament, especially in the Gospel according to John, Jesus – the incarnate Son of God – is presented as the promised Good Shepherd (John 10:1-21).²² In contrast to Jesus’ good shepherding, the

²² Our text in John 10 is best introduced by this Old Testament text in Ezekiel 34.

Fourth Gospel exposes and accuses the Jewish religious leaders (especially the Pharisees) as wicked shepherds, who are not concerned for the hurting and troubled sheep and who abuse the sheep of God's flock for their own personal gain. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, showed the full extent of his selfless love for the flock by dying for them. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep' (John 10:11; cf. vv. 15, 17, 18). This is the first time in the Fourth Gospel that the topic of shepherding has been addressed as such. The theme will re-appear in the gospel in 21:15-17. At first sight, the subject of shepherd and shepherding unifies all of chapter 10. This chapter closely examines the characteristics and meaning of the good shepherd motif in John 10.

1. John – the Spiritual Gospel

Kenneth E. Bailey in recent book *The Good Shepherd: A Thousand-Year Journey From Psalm 23 to the New Testament* (2014) rightly says, "To enter the Gospel of John is to enter a world of theological and historical delights."²³ The Fourth Gospel has been called "the spiritual Gospel" by early church Fathers. Compared to the Synoptic Gospels, John is more reflective, profound, and indeed spiritual. Augustine of Hippo has likened John to the eagle who can soar higher than any other bird, because John's "spiritual understanding compared to the eagle, has elevated his preaching higher, and far more sublimely, than the other three."²⁴ The evangelist of the Fourth Gospel goes beyond the

²³ Kenneth E. Bailey, *The Good Shepherd: A Thousand-Year Journey from Psalm 23 to the New Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 210.

²⁴ Augustine of Hippo, *Harmony of the Gospels* 1.6.9, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1602106.htm> (Accessed on 31 July 2015).

literal message and historical facts to help readers understand the deeper spiritual meaning of Jesus himself – including his teaching, life, and miracles.

The Gospel of John is more concerned in portraying who Jesus actually is, that is, his divine origin and identity. The Gospel Prologue begins with the pre-existence of Jesus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2). In John 8:58, Jesus affirms: “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” These passages surely demonstrate the pre-existence of Jesus, the Word Incarnate. The pre-existent one is God, who, therefore, can reveal God. The “I am” statements recorded in the FG are a description Jesus gave of Himself and they help us to better understand the divinity of Jesus Christ. The evangelist carefully selected seven (7) statements each beginning with the declaration “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι):

1. “I am the bread of life” (6:35, 41, 48-51)
2. “I am the light of the world” (8:12, 9:5)
3. “I am the door of the sheep” (10:7, 9)
4. “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep” (10:11,14)
5. “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25)
6. “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6)
7. “I am the true vine” (15:1,5)

The “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι) statements of Jesus in John’s Gospel echo the very name which God revealed to Moses in the burning bush at the foot of Mount Horeb:

¹³But Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He said further, “Thus you shall

say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations (Exodus 3:13-15).

It is interesting to note that two of the seven "I am" sayings of Jesus in John's Gospel come from chapter 10 and they both pertain to the motif of sheep/shepherd: "I am the door of the sheep" (10:7, 9); "I am the good shepherd" (10:11, 14). There are three themes that can be identified from John 10: (1) as a good shepherd, I lay down my life for the sheep (10:11, 15); (2) My sheep hear my voice; I give them eternal life; they shall never perish (10:27-28); and (3) I bring my other sheep into the one flock (10:16).²⁵

2. John's use of Metaphors

According to George Bradford Caird, "Metaphor is a lens; it is as though the speaker were saying, 'Look through this and see what I have seen, something you would never have noticed without the lens!'"²⁶ Metaphors play a significant role in the Johannine Gospel.²⁷ Many of the great Johannine metaphors emerge in conversations. The usage of metaphors *per se* is neither a modern trend nor only limited to the theological domain. In fact, much of everyday language is metaphorical. According to J. Joubert, "the Johannine Gospel is well known for its wealth and depth of figurative language, metaphors, and symbols. John uses many different images. Some of the most

²⁵ Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 164.

²⁶ George Bradford Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 152.

²⁷ See B. J. Malina, *The Gospel of John in Sociolinguistic Perspective* (Berkeley: Centre for Hermeneutical Studies) 48th Colloquy of the Centre of Hermeneutical Studies, 1985.

prominent Johannine images are lamb, king, bread, sheep, shepherd, vine, eating and drinking, and so forth.”²⁸ In order for the evangelist to show the Christological focus of the Gospel, he uses the “I am” + predicate sayings. These seven sayings do not merely reveal Jesus’ essence but rather “reflect his dealings with humans. In each of these seven sayings what Christ does for human beings is identified with a metaphor.”²⁹

In the Old Testament, the political leaders of the people are described as the shepherd’s of God’s people and nation (e.g., Ezekiel 34; Jeremiah 10:21; 23:1-2). Brueggemann explains,

The term ‘shepherd’ is a conventional metaphor in the ancient world for king, indicating the responsibility of the king to guard, feed, nurture, and protect the flock: that is, the community over which he presides. With the use of this metaphor, we are now able to see how the entire narrative of David’s rise is staged from shepherd boy (1 Sam 16:11) to shepherd king.³⁰

This goes to show that in the OT the metaphor of shepherd and sheep introduces an entire theory of government and power. But power ought to be used in the spirit of service. Prophet Ezekiel has indicted false leaders who seek their own good rather than the good of the flock: “Ah. You shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? (Ezek 34:2). Even Jeremiah has this to say of the leaders of the nation: “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says

²⁸ J. Joubert, “Johannine Metaphors/Symbols Linked to the Paraclete-Spirit and their Theological Implications,” *Acta Theologica* 1 (2007): 83-103, here 83.

²⁹ Talbert, *Reading John*, 137. The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes a metaphor as: “The figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that to which it is properly applicable; an instance of this, a metaphorical expression” (1975:1315).

³⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 237.

the Lord” (Jer 23:1). It is no wonder then that Jesus in John 10 is presented to us as the ‘Good Shepherd/King’ whose death is interpreted as a complete sacrifice of the shepherd for the sheep: “the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Thus, according to Brueggemann, “the metaphor is pushed to its interpretive limit, a limit obviously not approached by David.”³¹ Raymond E. Brown states that “[i]n John there is a mixture of metaphors offering different ways of looking at the same reality: Jesus is the gate by which the shepherd goes to the sheep, and by which the sheep come into the fold and go out to pasture; and Jesus is the model shepherd who both knows his sheep by name and willing to lay down his life for them.”³² The identity of Jesus as the shepherd-king in the Fourth Gospel creates a struggle over authority with the Jewish leaders of his time, ultimately leading to his death. The character of Jesus as shepherd-king extends to the disadvantaged and marginalized, providing justice to the oppressed and indicating the uncaring ‘hired hands’ who neglect them and the ‘thieves’ and ‘robbers’ who oppress them. Kingly justice requires a response of just action and holy self-sacrifice for those who would listen to the Good Shepherd act like his sheep.³³

While the passage under scrutiny (10:1-21) has similarities with the immediately preceding chapter (John 9), still one can say that there is a great difference in the

³¹ Ibid., 238.

³² Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 348.

³³ Stovell, *Mapping Metaphorical Discourse in the Fourth Gospel*, 222.

symbolisms used by the author: “John 9 employs the symbol of light for Jesus while John 10 uses the symbol of shepherd for Jesus.”³⁴

3. The Immediate Context of the Shepherd Discourse (John 10:1-21)

Johannine commentators have different ways of structuring the Fourth Gospel (=FG). Bruce Milne, for instance, divides the FG as follows:

- A. The ministry of the pre-incarnate king (1:1-18);
- B. The ministry of the incarnate king (1:19 – 19:42);
- C. The ministry of the risen king (20:1 – 21:25)

In Milne’s structure, the Shepherd Discourse (10:1-21) falls under the ministry of the incarnate king. Raymond Brown in his 1997 book *Introduction to the New Testament* outlines the Gospel in this manner:

- 1:1-18 *Prologue*
- 1:19 – 12:50 *Part One: The Book of Signs*
- 13:1 – 20:31 *Part Two: The Book of Glory*
- 21:1-25 *Epilogue*

Here the metaphorical discourse on the Good Shepherd (10:1-21) belongs to the Book of Signs. It is called Book of Signs because it relates stories of remarkable things Jesus did, which are repeatedly called ‘signs’.³⁵ In Brown’s outline, the Shepherd Discourse belongs to a bigger unit (chapters 5-10) organized around Jewish festivals. “John 9:1–10:21

³⁴ Niceta M. Vargas, *Word and Witness: An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013), 196.

³⁵ Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 170.

brings Tabernacles to close: Jesus is the light, the living water and the messianic Good Shepherd.”³⁶ Gail R. O’Day situates the discourse under John 6:1–10:42 with the description, *Jesus’ Ministry Continues: Conflict and Opposition Grows*. Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa divide the Gospel of John into four parts:

Part One: The Incarnation of the Son of God (1:1-18)

Part Two: The Presentation of the Son of God (1:19—4:54)

Part Three: The Opposition to the Son of God (5:1—12:50)

1. The Opposition at the Feast in Jerusalem (5:1-47)

2. The Opposition during Passover Time in Galilee (6:1-71)

3. The Opposition at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (7:1—10:21)

4. The Opposition at the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem (10:22-42)

5. The Opposition at Bethany (11:1—12:11)

6. The Opposition at Jerusalem (12:12-50)

Part Four: The Preparation of the Disciples by the Son of God (13:1—17:26)

Part Five: The Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Son of God (18:1—21:25)

The Shepherd Discourse, for Wilkinson and Boa, belongs to the Opposition to the Son of God after the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles.³⁷ Despite commentators’ different ways of structuring and situating the Good Shepherd Discourse, one thing remains the

³⁶ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 302, n. 4.

³⁷ Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible*, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 340-343.

same. The passage is part of the growing opposition, confrontation and disbelief of the Jewish religious leaders that will culminate in Jesus' final rejection on the cross.

In the passage under scrutiny, Jesus is apparently still speaking to the Pharisees from John 9:40. In short, the metaphorical discourse on the good shepherd is directed to the Pharisees whom Jesus accused of being blind in 9:40-41. In this discourse, which uses different metaphors offering different ways of looking at the same reality, Jesus is presented as: "the gate by which the shepherd goes to the sheep, and by which the sheep come in to the fold and go out to pasture; and Jesus is the model shepherd who both knows his sheep by name and is willing to lay down his life for them."³⁸

4. Literary Context of John 10:1-21

A colometric presentation of the passage under scrutiny is in order:

- 1a "Truly, truly, I say to you,
- 1b he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door
- 1c but climbs in by another way,
- 1d that man is a thief and a robber;

- 2a but he who enters by the door
- 2b is the shepherd of the sheep.

- 3a to him the gatekeeper opens;
- 3b the sheep hear his voice,
- 3c and he calls his own sheep by a name
- 3d and leads them out

- 4a When he has brought out all his own,
- 4b he goes before them,
- 4c and the sheep follow him,
- 4d for they know his voice.

- 5a A stranger they will not follow,
- 5b but they will flee from him,

³⁸ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*. (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 348.

5c for they do not know the voice of stranger.”

6a This figure Jesus used with them,
6b but they did not understand
6c what he was saying to them.

7a So Jesus again said to them
7b “Truly, truly, I say to you,
7c I am the door of the sheep.

8a All who came before me are thieves and robbers
8b but the sheep did not heed them.

9a I am the door;
9b if any one enters by me,
9c he will be saved,
9d and will go in and out
9e and find pasture.

10a The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroys;
10b I came that they may have life,
10c and have it abundantly.

11a I am the good shepherd.
11b The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

12a He who is a hireling and not a shepherd.
12b whose own the sheep are not,
12c sees the wolf coming
12d and leaves the sheep and flees;
12e and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

13a He flees because for the sheep,
13b and cares nothing for the sheep.
14a I am the good shepherd;
14b I know my own
14c and my own know me,

15a as the Father knows me
15b and I know the Father;
15c and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16a And I have other sheep,
16b that are not of this fold;
16c I must bring them also,
16d and they will heed my voice.
16e So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.

17a For this reason the Father loves me,
17b because I lay down my life,
17c that I may take it again.

18a No one takes it from me,
18b but I lay it down of my own accord.
18c I have power to lay it down,
18d and I have power to take it again;
18e this charge I have received from my Father.”

19a Again the Jews were divided
19b because of these words.

20a Many of them were saying,
20b “He has a demon
20c and is out of his mind.
20d Why listen to him?”

21a Others were saying.
21b “These are not the words of one who has a demon.
21c Can a demon open the eyes of a blind?”

John 10:1-21 is very carefully organized. Milne divides the literary unit into two: “In the first, Jesus illuminates the distinctiveness of his ministry (1-18), and, in the second, reactions to his teaching are identified (19-21).”³⁹ Links to the immediately preceding section are clear. There is no break in the flow of the discourse at v. 1, and the reaction in v. 21 is specifically related to the healing of the blind man.⁴⁰ Niceta Vargas notes, “John 10:1, the beginning of the shepherd discourse, appears to be a continuation of 9:41, a saying of Jesus which is the end-part of the conclusion of the narrative of the man born blind.”⁴¹ In John 10:1-21 two comparisons are introduced: Jesus the Shepherd and Jesus the Gate. These two comparisons are closely bound together and continue the theme introduced by the preceding episode.⁴² In this pericope, Jesus contrasts himself

³⁹ Milne, *The Message of John*, 144-145.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴¹ Vargas, *Word and Witness*, 196.

⁴² Bruce Vawter, “The Gospel According to John,” in Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy (eds.), *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol. II: *The New Testament and Topical Articles* (Englewoods, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 444.

“with the false shepherds of Israel represented by the Pharisees, who have rejected rather than saved the man who was given his sight.”⁴³ Again, according to Vargas, “[t]he literary genre of John 10:1-18 is a parable. Considering, however, that John 10:1-18 is also a discourse, and that it is not closely similar to the Synoptic parable which is purely a narrative, one might doubt its identification as a parable.”⁴⁴

The content of vv. 1-5 is the closest thing to a parable in the Gospel of John. In fact, Brown refers to 10:1-5 as consisting of several parables while 10:7ff consists of allegorical explanations.⁴⁵ John Pointer prefers to identify the literary genre of John 10:1-18 as *paroimia* (a Greek word that appears in 10:6 which is translated in some English bible editions as ‘parable’). The figure of speech, *paroimia*, “seems to have been derived from the Old Testament traditions where God is portrayed as the shepherd of Israel, and the leaders of the people as true or false shepherds (Ezek 34).”⁴⁶

Thus, the structure of the Shepherd Discourse can be illustrated as follows⁴⁷:

1. John 10:1-5 The *Paroimia*

The *paroimia* describes the imagery of a sheepfold, with a shepherd and sheep. It seems to present a highly realistic picture

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Vargas, *Word and Witness*, 196.

⁴⁵ Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 388; cited in Vargas, *Word and Witness*, 196-197. Brown defines parable as “a simple illustration or illustrative story having a single point”, while an allegory is defined as “an expanded series of metaphors where the various details and persons involved all have a figurative meaning?”

⁴⁶ Vargas, *Word and Witness*, 197.

⁴⁷ The structure is adopted from Vargas, *Word and Witness*, 198-199.

of Palestinian shepherding in ancient times. It focuses first on the gate (vv. 1-2) and then on the shepherd (vv. 3-5). The shepherd called his own sheep by name, gathered them and led them out. The sheep identified his voice and followed him. They would not follow strangers.

2. John 10:6-7a The Reaction

The listeners of Jesus did not understand the figurative language of Jesus, hence he had to repeat the *paroimia* in another form, by personifying the metaphors used. This section is composed of transition verses connecting the *paroimia* to its explanation.

3. John 10:7b-10 The Explanation of the Door

Jesus clarified the metaphor he presented: “I am the door of the sheep” (10:7c); “I am the door” (10:9a). He developed the theme of the door through which the sheep enter the fold, by identifying himself as the door through whom one enters and finds salvation. He is the door that leads to abundant life (10:10).

4. John 10:11-16 The Good Shepherd

Again, Jesus referred to himself in the metaphorical “I am” saying: “I am the good shepherd” (10:11a; 14a). The shepherd who entered by the door (10:12a) is the good shepherd. Jesus, the good shepherd, is the one who laid down his life for the sheep (10:11, 15). He knew his sheep (10:14) and his sheep knew him too.

In contrast, the hireling left the sheep and fled when the wolf came, since he does not care for the sheep. He is not the true shepherd (10:12).

¹¹For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹²As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountains heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountain of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

The first ten verses of Ezekiel 34 speak about the bad leaders/shepherds who are accused, found guilty and condemned. These bad “leaders of the community were part of the problem, not part of the solution.”⁴⁹ The bad shepherd is contrasted to the good shepherd, God, who will appoint leaders, tend, provides food, security, peace, blessing and freedom. God is the epitome of the true shepherd (vv. 11-16).

In John’s Gospel Jesus is portrayed as the good shepherd (10:1-21). Jesus is the embodiment of the good shepherd described in Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34. Although one finds similarities among the three good shepherd passages, “there are other qualities attributed to Jesus, the good shepherd, that were not listed in Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34.”⁵⁰ These qualities are: “he knows his sheep as they know him (10:14b–4c); he lays down his

⁴⁹ Kenneth E. Bailey, *The Good Shepherd: A Thousand Year Journey From Psalm 23 to the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 87.

⁵⁰ Vargas, *Word and Witness*, 201.

life for them (10:11b, 15c, 17b 18b); he also brings to his fold other sheep that are not of his fold (10:16:ab).”⁵¹

As seen in John 10:13b, Jesus as good shepherd is contrasted with the hireling who cared nothing for the sheep. The hireling who perhaps thinks that the sheep are not his anyway leaves and flees them when the dangerous wolf comes to snatch and scatter them (10:12cde). In the description of Schnackenburg, “Being a shepherd entails a constant living for one’s sheep. And the shepherd-status of Jesus the shepherd, in which all shepherding finds its true fulfillment, makes itself manifest in the sacrifice of his life, so that he may make his sheep the gift of true life.”⁵² In 10:16a-e we are given the hint that Jesus’ concern as the good shepherd goes beyond the chosen people. “The Gentiles, too, must be brought into salvation together with the sheep of the fold of Israel.”⁵³ Both Jews and Gentiles alike are invited into the way of salvation and both have to respond to the one Shepherd Jesus.

As the good shepherd, Jesus is willing to freely lay down his life (v. 17b) for the salvation of his flock and to take it up again (17c). In John’s gospel, “[t]he crucifixion and resurrection are the two aspects of the glorification of Christ. In his exaltation Christ takes up life not only for himself but also for all who live through the work of salvation.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge, 1990), 295.

⁵³ Vawter, “The Gospel According to John,” 445.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

The passage, which reflects the intimate relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, likewise hints the intimate reciprocal relationship between Jesus and the Father. Jesus the good shepherd knows his sheep and calls them by name. The sheep in turn recognize and heed his voice. Jesus who is eternally one with the Father is also the Son who always obeys the Father. Milne writes, “In that mutuality lies not only the mystery of the inner life of the Trinity, but also the secret of his mission.”⁵⁵ What the Son does is in complete obedience of faith to the will of the Father. “The condition of the efficacy of Christ’s work is the entire freedom of his obedience.”⁵⁶

In verses 19-21, considered a sequel, we see the division caused by Jesus. His opponents attribute to him demonic inspiration. This is not the first time in John’s gospel that he is described as possessed by demon.⁵⁷ The false accusations of Jesus’ opponents simply betray their increasing frustration. It is a resolute manifestation of closing their eyes to the light and to the truth.

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter Jesus as the Good Shepherd sent by the Father in loving obedience to him to offer the gift of salvation to all, Jews and Gentiles alike. The evangelist of the Fourth Gospel made use of a well-known OT metaphor of the shepherd to portray Jesus’ relationship to his flock. In the Old Testament, the metaphor “shepherd” was used to portray God’s relation to his people. As the true shepherd, God

⁵⁵ Milne, *The Message of John*, 150.

⁵⁶ Vawter, “The Gospel According to John, 445.

⁵⁷ See John 8:48.

seeks and gathers his people into one flock. In the New Testament, Jesus is called the good shepherd by the Johannine Christian community; it is he who will seek and gather the scattered groups into one flock. Moreover, as the good shepherd he offers abundant life to his disciples. He lays down his life for his flock so that they may live abundantly. This is the highest expression of his love for them.

Chapter Three: Shepherding in Contemporary Ministry

Introduction

We have mentioned in chapter two that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who leads, guides, cares, and lays his life for his sheep John 10:1-21. The sheep are the people. The sheep that live under the care of the good shepherd will never be led astray or lost. Jesus fulfilled his ministry as good shepherd in his earthly life by leading, caring, curing the people, and finds and saves those who are lost and needed. As Jesus commended Peter if he really loves him he has to tend and feed the sheep (John 21, 15-18). Following the model of Jesus Christ, Peter was the shepherd who continued to build the Church of Christ after his resurrection and ascension to heaven. Who are the shepherds in the Church now? The leaders of the Church are the shepherds such as the Pope, bishops and priests. The Popes as the successors of Peter leading the Church through the model of Jesus Christ to take care the God's flock. They are chosen to be shepherds of the people. Feeding the sheep does not mean merely giving them food but to guide, guard and light them spiritually to make a difference in the lives of the people that is to make them happy and feel loved. The good shepherd is to bring the people closer to God and to show the love of Christ for them.

So, Shepherding in the contemporary ministry means that the leader of the Church lays his life for the Church. To be a shepherd is to take care of the sheep; the leader of the church ought to take care and has responsibility toward his people. In the Church we need goods shepherds like Jesus because there are many lost, wandering and wounded sheep in

the Church. The diocesan priests and religious men and women dedicate their life to the church it means they have the responsibility to be shepherds as Jesus was in his mission. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11).

The duties of the leaders are to care and protect the people in the Church because they are chosen by God to continue the ministry of Jesus as shepherd. As Patrick M. Maliti points out that “A good shepherd is one who is with the sheep seven days a week; thirty days a months and twelve months in a year in imitation of Christ the good shepherd who knows His sheep (John 10:4) accompanies them and leads them (John 10:4), loves them and lays down His life for them (John 10:11).”⁵⁸ The role of a shepherd on a pasture based farm is to guide the sheep to the place where they graze. God’s design for the church is based on a pasture- based model of a shepherd pastor leading the people to feed themselves on the pasture of God’s Word, rather than the building based feed of model.⁵⁹ God desires a shepherd style pastor who really cares for the needs of the flock. God’s design for the church is that most of the spiritual food comes from the people gathering it themselves and meditating on it and that the pastor’s messages be a significantly smaller portion of their total spiritual food.⁶⁰ Therefore in chapter three the author will focus on the relevance of shepherding in contemporary ministry especially on the role of the

⁵⁸ Patrick M. Maliti, “Priesthood: A call to imitate Christ, the good Shepherd,” *After* 39, no.2 (April 1997), 87-93, Esp. 88.

⁵⁹ Myron Horst, *The Sheep of God’s Pasture*, <http://spirituality.ucanews.com/2013/04/23/the-sheep-of-god%E2%80%99s-pasture/>, Access on July 13, 2015.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

leaders of the Church as shepherds such as bishops and priests and the importance of pastoral ministry.

1. Leaders of the Church

In the contemporary time the leaders of the church are called to minister the people following the model of the ministry of Jesus. In our Church the Pope, the bishops and the priests are leaders the ones who lead and guide the people as the good shepherd. As the leaders of the church they are captured by Christ to lead God's people. Through the sacraments of holy orders the bishops and priests are appointed as leaders of the Church in their ordination.

The meaning of ordination is found in the word itself. It is said that being ordained means entering to an order. The term *ordo* in the Roman Empire referred to a defined civil body, often a governing body. The Church adopted this term to refer to a defined group of people set aside for a particular ministry. Ordination is not primarily the conferral of special powers upon the individual but entering an order of ministry.⁶¹ It is said that one does not "receive" an order but one "enters" an order, a concrete group of people who are chosen and recognized by the Church for a particular ministry.⁶² Lawrence E. Mick denotes that "Ordination is the affirmation of a leadership role in the

⁶¹ Lawrence E. Mick , *Understanding the Sacraments: Holy Orders*, (Collegeville, Minnesota Liturgical Press, 2007), 15.

⁶² Ibid.

community. Leadership can be exercised in various ways, but each of these orders exists in the Church to provide leadership and guidance for the community.”⁶³

There are different ministries that each one engages to follow. Ministers in each of the orders also serve as sacraments themselves because they make Christ visible in their ministries; they also proclaim the nature of the Church. Seeing ordained ministers as sacramental symbols can help us understand what we mean by their leadership function.⁶⁴ They are called to know and follow Jesus as they prepare to live the sacrament of the holy order, which configures them to Christ the head and shepherd, the servant and spouse of the Church.⁶⁵

In John 21, 15-19 shows that, even within the Johannine community itself, this reflection on the relation between Jesus the Good Shepherd and the leaders of the Christian communities as “shepherds” had already begun.⁶⁶ Jesus Christ tells his apostles about the model of the good shepherd with whom Jesus identified Himself as the Good Shepherd as we see in the Gospel of John 10:1-16. The shepherd must be clear and direct in guiding the flock, but he must also love and be gentle in asserting what are the right

⁶³ Mick, *Understanding the Sacraments: Holy Orders*, 16.

⁶⁴ Mick, *Understanding the Sacraments: Holy Orders*, 16-17.

⁶⁵ Paul II, *Post- Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no.4, 1992. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis.html.

⁶⁶ Nicholas Cachia, *The Image of the Good Shepherd as a Source for the Spirituality of the Ministerial Priesthood* (Italy, Rome Gregorian Biblical BookShop, 1997), 224.

and the good, in accord with God's law and the example of Jesus Christ.⁶⁷ Jesus is the model of the Good Shepherd (John 10, 11) and the ministers of the Church are asked to follow and imitate him. Through this call, the Popes, bishops and priests are called to participate in his being as the Shepherd of the Church. They should strive to conform their way of shepherding to his. United in him they learn what it means to love, to love without self-interest, to love to the end. He is their ultimate measure.⁶⁸

The leadership of the Church was to do the work of a shepherd. Dr. Steven L. Highlander writes "The shepherd was to lead, feed, and protect the flock. Church leaders are under-shepherds, serving the flock under the ministry of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus."⁶⁹ They become leaders of the Church as Shepherds to minister the people of God. Their role as bishops, priests and pastors should signify the work of Jesus as the good shepherd. Leaders of the Church are chosen to be shepherds of the Community. Nicholas Cachia says "Christ, the Shepherd of the ecclesial community, has chosen and continues to choose some to take care of his sheep while on earth."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Rev. Raymond L. Burke, "The Bishop as Shepherd" *From the Oct 1999 Issue of Lay Witness Magazine*. <http://www.cuf.org/1999/10/the-bishop-as-shepherd/>.

⁶⁸ Cachia , *The Image of the Good Shepherd as a Source for the Spirituality of the ...*, 224.

⁶⁹ Dr. Steven L. Highlander, *Authentic Church Government: A Biblical Look at Leadership Roles in the Church* (Bloomington IN, Booktango, 2014), 34.

⁷⁰ Cachia , *The Image of the Good Shepherd as a Source for the Spirituality of the ...*,237.

a. The role of the Bishop as Shepherd

As Christians the bishop or the priest are the ones that most resemble Christ especially in the ministry of Christ as Shepherd. As we know “a bishop is the leader or shepherd of his local church, his diocese. As a bishop, his primary responsibility is to his local flock, the diocese he ministers to and governs.”⁷¹ What is the office of a bishop? It is a noble one Thomas J. Reese says,

The primary teacher of the faithful, charged with the task of preaching the Gospel with authenticity, the bishop bears a grave responsibility for the spiritual comfort of the priests and people of the diocese. He is their shepherd, leader, directing them on the road to holiness through the priestly ministry of the sacraments, and guarding them against evil.⁷²

In order to shepherd the people of God “Bishops are ordained, as their name suggests (*episkopos* means “overseer”), to guide the work of the church, to govern the community, and to coordinate the various ministries of the body.”⁷³ Canon 375 §1 mentions the vital role of bishop in the Church are, “ Bishops, who by divine institution succeed to the place of the Apostles through the Holy Spirit who has been given to them, are constituted pastors in the church, so that they are teachers of doctrine, priest of sacred

⁷¹ Thomas J. Reese, *A Flock of Shepherds: The National Conference of Catholic Bishops* (Woodstock: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992), 2.

⁷² Joseph O’Callaghan, “*Electing Our Bishops: How the Catholic Church Should Choose Its Leaders*” (Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 1.

⁷³ Callaghan, *Electing Our Bishops: How the Catholic Church Should Choose Its Leaders*”, 155.

worship and ministers of governance.” (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 20). As Rev. Raymond L. Burke writes,

The ministry of governance flows directly from the bishop’s service of teaching and sanctifying God’s flock. The bishop, who teaches the doctrine of the faith with integrity and celebrates the sacred liturgy for the salvation of God’s flock, also assists and guides the flock in following Christ faithfully, whom they have come to know through the teaching of the faith and with whom they have communion through the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.⁷⁴

The minister should always remain as a disciple of the Lord as he answers to the Lord’s call and given the divine mission that was entrusted by Christ to the apostles. The Gospel which they are to teach is the source of all life for the Church. And for this reason “the apostles, appointed as rulers in this society, took care to appoint successors.”⁷⁵

As being shepherd of his own diocese Bishops also become part of the worldwide college of bishops, sharing responsibility with all other bishops for the welfare of the universal church. The new bishop’s acceptance into the college of bishops is symbolized by the presence of at least three bishops for his ordination and the imposition of hands by all the bishops celebrating.⁷⁶ As the synod of Bishops states,

⁷⁴ Canon 375 §1, *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, ed. John P. Beal; James A. Cariden; Thomas J. Green (New York: Pauline Press, 2007), 512.

⁷⁵ Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium*, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964, (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1965), No. 20.

⁷⁶ Lawrence E. Mick, *Understanding the Sacraments: Holy Orders*, 17-18.

The Bishop in communion with the Pope is called to fulfill this task together with all members of the church. Though each is to be a witness of the Gospel of Christ in the World, the bishops, as successors of the apostles, have ‘the noble task of being the first to proclaim the ‘reason for hope’; that hope which is based on the promise of God, on fidelity to his word and which has its unshakeable certitude the resurrection of Christ, his definitive victory over evil and sin.’⁷⁷

During the ordination of the new bishop, he is told that “In the Church entrusted to you, be a faithful steward, moderator, and guardian of the mysteries of Christ”.⁷⁸

Lawrence E. Mick clearly explains,

As one chosen by the Father to rule over his family, be mindful always of the Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep and is known by them and who did not hesitate to lay down his life for them.....Never forget that you are joined to the College of Bishops in the Catholic Church, made one by the bond of charity, and therefore you should have a constant concern for all the Churches and gladly come to support of Churches in need (no.39), one symbol of this order’s ministry is the crozier, signifying the bishop’s role as a shepherd.⁷⁹

For by divine institution and the rule of the apostolic office, each one together with all the other bishops is responsible for the Church. They should especially be concerned about those parts of the world where the word of God has not yet been proclaimed or where the faithful, particularly because of the small number of priests, are in danger of departing from the precepts of the Christian life, and even of losing faith

⁷⁷ Synod of Bishop, *X Ordinary General Assembly: Instrumentum Laboris*, (Vatican city, 2001), no. 4. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20010601_instrumentum-laboris_en.html Access on July 28, 2015.

⁷⁸ Lawrence E. Mick, *Understanding the Sacraments: Holy Orders*, 17.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 18.

itself. The bishop needs to follow the parable of Jesus as the good shepherd, who lays his life for other people, even it's not easy way to work, but bishops should realize that they are bound together and should manifest a concern for all the churches.⁸⁰

Understanding what a bishop was in earliest times was different from what we understand as a bishop in our contemporary times. Joseph O'Callaghan writes,

In earlier times the bishop was chosen from the community by the clergy and people who knew him just as he knew them. As a faithful servant, he usually remained in their midst until death. Just as Christ was described as the spouse of the Church, so the bishop was said to be wedded to his see. The ring given to him at his consecration symbolized that union, and his pastoral staff signified his role as shepherd and manifested his care for his flock.⁸¹

Looking at the bishop of our contemporary time there are a lot of differences. The bishop does not know each one as Jesus the Good Shepherd knows each one of the members of the flock. As we see the model of the modern bishop often seems to be the corporate executive of the world of business, moving from company to company, these images clash with the reality of being a shepherd. The traditional notion of the bishop as shepherd is the one who know his flock and who is known by them.⁸² The bishop lives at a very distance from the parishioners how can he be a Good Shepherd like Jesus?. It is a

⁸⁰ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Christus Dominus*, (28, October, 1965), No.6.

⁸¹ Callaghan, "Electing Our Bishops: How the Catholic Church Should Choose Its Leaders", 155.

⁸² Ibid.

challenge for a bishop to take up a responsibility for the spiritual welfare of hundreds of souls to be a shepherd who knows his sheep.⁸³ Hamilton states,

The question arises then is whether the Pope's vision of mission and governance will shape the Catholic future, or whether his image of church leaders coming back from the badlands smelling like lost sheep will give way to sheep waiting in line in the designated paddock where their shepherds can feed them on sharp food and protect them from danger.⁸⁴

In our catholic churches, we know that the whole rite of ordination of Bishop is replete with the image of the bishop as the true shepherd of the flock as mentioned in the Canon Law that the bishop governs most of all through example and exhortation, through teaching and counsel. When misunderstandings or abuses creep into the life of the portion of God's flock entrusted to his care, he must set forth publicly the teaching and discipline of the Church. It generally tells us that the diocesan bishop is to protect and to care for the unity of the universal church.⁸⁵

The bishops are called to imitate the way of Jesus Christ as the good shepherd by offering their life for the flock confided to him. Through the pastoral ministry of Jesus, the Bishop humbly serves God's people, helping them to follow the way of Jesus Christ.

⁸³ Ibid, 1-2.

⁸⁴ Hamilton S.J., *The Pope as Shepherd*, <http://spirituality.ucanews.com/2015/05/22/the-pope-as-shepherd/>

⁸⁵ Canon392 §§1-2, *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, ed. John P. Beal; James A. Cariden; Thomas J. Green (New York: Pauline Press, 2007), 529; and see also Burke, *The Bishop as Shepherd: Lay Witness Archive*, (Magazine Oct 1999), <http://www.cuf.org/1999/10/the-bishop-as-shepherd/>.

The bishop must govern the local Church in such a way that it expresses faithfully its unity with the universal church. The most important way for a bishop to fulfill his responsibility for God's flock is by providing worthy priests who, by virtue of their ordination, serve in the person of Christ the good Shepherd in every local community.

The bishop is a shepherd of all those entrusted to his care, but he carries out his pastoral ministry on their behalf through his co-workers, the priests. Therefore, the bishop must be constantly attentive to promote and foster vocations to the priesthood, and to provide for those who respond to the call to the priesthood a sound and fitting preparation for their future priestly ministry.⁸⁶ It is important to build up good shepherds in the Church as John Paul II writes, "The formation of future priests, both diocesan and religious, and lifelong assiduous care for their personal sanctification in the ministry and for the constant updating of their pastoral commitment is considered by the Church one of the most demanding and important tasks for the future of the evangelization of humanity."⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Canon 385, *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, ed. John P. Beal; James A. Cariden; Thomas J. Green (New York: Pauline Press, 2007), 523; and see also Burke, *The Bishop as Shepherd: Lay Witness Archive*, (Magazine Oct 1999), <http://www.cuf.org/1999/10/the-bishop-as-shepherd/>.

⁸⁷ John Paul II, Post- Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, (1992), No. 2. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis.html Access on July 15, 2015.

b. The role of the Priest as Shepherd

The priests are also chosen to be the leaders of the Church as shepherds. The priest performs the functions of the bishop with other communities when the bishop cannot be present to all the assemblies under his care.⁸⁸ The priest, then, seems to symbolize the same aspects of ministry that the bishop does, but in the local community rather than the whole diocese. One can say that the priest is a “sub-bishop”. His role as a pastor in a parish is seen as revolving primarily around three areas, preaching the word of God, presiding at Mass and the sacraments, and fostering the growth of the Christian community.⁸⁹

In the context of the priest’s call to imitate Christ, as the good shepherd, Pope Francis’s urges in his homily at the Chrism Mass to be “like shepherds living with the smell of the sheep.”⁹⁰ With this Pope Francis reminded the priests to be close to the people they are living with, especially to those who are poor and marginalized and to know their daily struggles. As mentioned above that a good shepherd is the one who is with the sheep seven days a week, thirty days a month and twelve months in a year in imitation of Christ the good shepherd who knows his sheep (John 10:14) and accompanies them (cf. John 10:11).

⁸⁸ Lawrence E. Mick, *Understanding the Sacraments: Holy Orders*, 17-18.

⁸⁹ Lawrence E. Mick, *Understanding the Sacraments: Holy Orders*, 18-19..

⁹⁰ Sandie Cornish, *Living with the Smell of the Sheep*, <http://spirituality.ucanews.com/2013/11/19/living-with-the-smell-of-the-sheep/>, Access on July 17, 2015.

As shepherds, priests ought to realize the need for them to acquire holiness by performing their pastoral duties sincerely and tirelessly in the spirit of love and service. Christ, the Good Shepherd, who has mandated them to continue His mission in the world will accompany them until the end, in fulfillment of His promise, like in the Gospel of Mat 28:20 “I am with you always; yes to the end of time”.⁹¹ When someone becomes a priest he does not any more belong to himself, to his family, or to a selected group of people, but a priest belongs to all people, especially to those who are directly entrusted to them by the bishop, for instance in the parish, school, hospital, prison, seminary, and the poor. The priest has been called to be visible and living sign of the good shepherd to the people that they live with. The priest, as the sign of the good shepherd’s love for his people, should strive for holiness through his commitment to pastoral work or to his duties. For example like the twelve Apostles, he leaves everything so that he can fully belong to Christ and take up his mission of evangelizing the whole world. He has been called to be Christ the good shepherd’s visible sign.⁹²

The priest is another Christ, is the visible sign of Christ’ to the people especially in performing the Sacraments. The Sacraments are the visible sign of God’s invisible presence includes people as well as things, thus taking God’s people as a sacrament makes every person living any vacation: marriage, single, priest or religious a sign of Christ’s presence. A priest as a shepherd is a sign of Jesus Christ when he lives, acts and

⁹¹ Patrick M. Maliti, “Priesthood: A call to imitate Christ, the good Shepherd,” *After 39*, no.2 (April 1997), 87-93, Esp. 88.

⁹² Maliti, “Priesthood: A call to imitate Christ, the good Shepherd,” *After 39*, no.2 (April 1997), 87-93, Esp. 89.

speaks in Jesus name.⁹³ According to St. Gregory of Naxiazen speaking on the integrity of the priest says,

We must really walk in the King's highway (Num 20, 17), and take care not to turn aside from it either to the right hand or to the left (Prov 4, 27), as the Proverbs say. For such is the case with our passions, and such in this matter is the task of the good shepherd, if he is to know properly the souls of his flock, and to guide them according to the methods of a pastoral care which is right and just , and worthy of our true Shepherd.⁹⁴

Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the Holy Spirit empowers the priest to be Christ's manifestation, His aroma (2 Cor 2:15) and His witness (John 15:27; Acts 1:8), priests are, therefore, called to extend Christ's presence in the world. The Synod Fathers made this point very clear when they declared:

In the Church and on behalf of the Church priests are a sacramental representation of Jesus Christ, the Head and shepherd, authoritatively proclaiming his word, repeating his acts of forgiveness and his offer of salvation, particularly in Baptism, penance and in the daily Eucharist, showing his loving concern to the point of a total gift of self for the flock, which they gather into unity and lead to the Father through Christ and in the Spirit.⁹⁵

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ St. Gregory of Nazianzen, Oratio 2, 34: Cited in Nicholas Cachia, *The Image of the Good Shepherd as a Source for the Spirituality of the Ministerial Priesthood*, 256.

⁹⁵ John II — *I will give you shepherds* — part II no. 1. <http://www.catholicliturgy.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/documentText/Index/2/SubIndex/11/ContentIndex/465/Start/454> .

Referring to a priest as a shepherd after the example of Jesus Christ, especially in his pastoral responsibilities, Vatican II Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests describes a priest in the following way:

Their ministry itself, by a special title, forbids, that they be conformed to this world, yet at the same time it requires that they may live in this world among men. They are to live as good shepherds that know their sheep, and they are to seek to lead those who are not of this sheepfold that they, too, may hear the voice of Christ, so that there might be one fold and one shepherd.⁹⁶

This message is relevant not just for priests, bishops, and deacons, but for any of us who have leadership positions in church organizations, or who are the face of the church for others. We live with the smell of the sheep. We meet people where they are and we accompany them through all their ups and downs. We have direct experience of their lives and hopes. We know the people whom we serve, and they know us. Many of you are familiar – literally and figuratively – with the smell of poverty, the smell of illness, the smell of death, but it is only through living with and knowing these smells that you are able to advocate authentically and effectively for the dignity and aspirations of people who are poor or living on the margins of our modern societies. The leaders of the Church when they are ministering the people they should be like Jesus as Richard Innes writes,

When Jesus, the Good Shepherd, sees you and me in a crowd, he doesn't see the crowd. He sees every one of 'his sheep' as individuals and knows each one of us by name. He knows our

⁹⁶ Decree on the ministry and life of Priest, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*: Promulgated by his Holiness, Pope Paul VI, (on December 7, 1965), No. 3.

joys, our sorrows, our gains, our losses, our successes, our failures—and he loves each one of us devotedly. We are not a crowd to him. We are his individual children.⁹⁷

The development of the spiritual life and ministry of the priest is important so as to become like Christ who is the ultimate Shepherd, He knows the flock, leads, provides protection for, loves and encourages His sheep.

Conclusion

To conclude, bishops and priests by virtue of their calling as shepherds have responsibilities to care for the spiritual welfare and also concern for the needs of the lives of God's flock. Jesus himself is the "Good Shepherd" because of his merciful concern and leading his flock to living waters. Jesus fulfills in his person the prophetic expectations of the Good Shepherd and institutes for certain of his followers a pastoral office in the believing community by different spiritual gifts (1Cor 12).

One thing that we need to consider is that in doing pastoral ministry in the parish or diocese it is not only the ministry for bishops and priests but religious men and women and lay ministers also helping in pastoral ministry. It is also the work of all people who are called to serve the Church under the authorization of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church leadership in a particular area of ministry, collaborating with the pastoral

⁹⁷ Richard Innes, *The Sheep of God's Pasture*, <http://spirituality.ucanews.com/2013/04/23/the-sheep-of-god%E2%80%99s-pasture/> Access on July 10, 2015.

ministry of bishops, priest and deacons, and at the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them. David Fisher writes, “Pastoral ministry whether in the first century or the twenty-first requires those of us who have been captured by Christ to lead God’s people by climbing up on an altar as way of life.”⁹⁸ The ministry that happens in their parish, for instance, pastoral associate, parish catechetical leader, youth ministry leader, school principal and director of liturgy. The lay ministry is a participation in the threefold ministry of Christ, who is priest, prophet, and king. The ministry is to serve, means that work with the church members continues the mission ministry of Jesus Christ within her and the whole world.⁹⁹ This ministry is applied by the bishop, priest, and deacon, and also by lay people, all who are continuing the salvific ministry of Jesus Christ.

⁹⁸ David Fisher, *The 21st Century Pastoral: A Vision Based on the Ministry of Paul*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1996), 103.

⁹⁹ *Ecclesiae de Mysterio, The Common Priesthood of the Faithful and the Ministerial Priesthood*, Part I-II, (Vatican City 15 August 1997),

<http://www.catholicliturgy.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/documentText/Index/2/SubIndex/11/ContentIndex/460/Start/454>.

Conclusion

To be a good shepherd is to guide and to protect the sheep, this statement is very significance and important for us Catholics, it is one of the cores for our Christian's leaders to follow the way or the example of the good shepherds as Jesus said "I am the good shepherd." This image of the good shepherd is present in the Scripture.

The good shepherd's primary duties are to guide, provide food and water, protect and deliver, gather back to the herd those that were lost, and to nurture and provide security. This is reflected in the first five verses of the famous Psalm 23: "He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he leads me in right path...." Shepherds have always to look for new grazing fields since low-lying ground vegetation is the primary means of sustenance of sheep.

The mutuality of the shepherd and the sheep moves beyond the recognition of the shepherd to doing the shepherding. This suggests that being in a relationship with Jesus is not only following Jesus, as a sheep follows its shepherd, but taking on the shepherding and doing the work and the works that Jesus does.

Jesus the shepherd is not only descriptive of the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep but means becoming shepherds, caring for the sheep, and even laying down one's life for the sheep. Interpreting 10:16 ("I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also") from this perspective suggests that it is not simply about

the identity of the other sheep, but about the activity of discipleship itself and the mission of the gospel.

Jesus as the good shepherd will fulfill the promises of 10:16, not only with his own actions as the good shepherd, but also in the ongoing activity of the shepherd by the disciples the sheep toward greater works than these. This changes the reading and meaning of Jesus as the good shepherd because, in this way, the care of the sheep and the abundance of life (10:10) that Jesus promises reach beyond the narrative itself and reveal beforehand the truth of the narrative's final words: "But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (21:25).

So the relevance of the good shepherd is not only for the leadership position of organizations of the church but it will be also for every one of us who live with the smell of the sheep. This means that we meet people where they are and we accompany them through the ups and downs. We have direct experience of their lives and hopes. We know the people whom we serve, and they know us. As in the chapter three mentions Pope Francis encouraging us 'to embrace people in their reality in order to transform that reality through loving service to be the fragrant oil of anointment.'

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