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The Mandate of Shepherding: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of Shepherding Metaphor Scriptures and Phenomenological Study of a New Shepherding Pastoral Leadership Model

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Abstract

Pastors are increasingly taking on a CEO style of leadership to lead their churches (Goodmanson, 2005; Maddox, 2012; Whitaker, 2013). Pastors have made this shift at the expense of a shepherd mindset, seemingly creating a dichotomy between styles (Tara, 2020; Whitaker, 2013). Consequently, scholars have identified an increasing trend in pastoral burnout (Fee, 2018; Hessel, 2015; Samushonga, 2021). The current study evaluated the pastoral role and its responsibility from a place of Scripture, while also considering popular current leadership trends. The findings revealed a clear shepherd metaphor arc throughout Scripture, beginning in Psalm 23 and ending in 1 Peter 5. The pinnacle of these passages is the Good Shepherd passage of John 10, where Jesus provided a contrast in leadership styles (Carson, 2015; Keener, 1993; Laniak, 2006; Whitacre, 1999). By using John 10 as a focus of the socio-rhetorical method made popular by Robbins (1996a, 1996b) and Henson et al. (2020), 10 critical characteristics of shepherding useful to the church today were identified: spiritual feeding, protection, care, inspection, familiarity, selflessness, willingness, modeling, stewardship, and leadership. Moreover, nine senior pastors were interviewed as part of a phenomenological study to compare their experiences with these 10 themes. The findings of this study provided a clear shepherding model, its foundation within Scripture, its ramifications and implementation within real-world experiences, and provided a firm argument that leadership should be secondary to the role of shepherding for the pastor. A thorough discussion of this new shepherd construct is provided as well as practical implications.

Keywords: burnout, leadership, pastor, shepherding, shepherd leadership, shepherd metaphor

Dedication

First, I dedicate this work to the great and Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. He has set the standard for shepherding and leadership. May I shepherd as He exampled and leave a positive impression in my pastoral call.

Second, I enthusiastically dedicate this study to my family. I thank my wife, Jennifer, who consistently encouraged and challenged me to stay the course with all the love possible in a human. I am also indebted to my sons, Wyatt and Weston, who unbegrudgingly gave up time with their dad as I completed this important task.

Third, I dedicate this work to the people of Alinea Church. They supported me through this work through their patience and understanding as the new church was launched. They also have allowed me to learn first-hand what shepherding entails and its positive impacts. May we create something truly unique that the world is craving.

Last, I dedicate this work to Ted Wilson. You will never know the impact you made on my life. You were a shepherd in the truest sense of the word. I can only pray that God would give me a double portion of what He has given you. Thousands of lives will feel your influence and yet not know your name. You are one of a kind.

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It is in our times of weakness that God shows Himself to be strong. I could not have completed this task without His continual strength.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Since the 1980s, many American churches have made a significant shift to a CEO-style leadership structure in response to the demand of culture (Goodmanson, 2005; Tara, 2020; Whitaker, 2013). Following the lead of the Western church, other countries are departing from the leadership style exemplified by Jesus (Ajayi, 2018; Resane, 2014). Although churches have contributed to the field of leadership and leadership development (Huizing, 2011a, 2011b), there is a tension in the pastoral field between the leadership aspect of the role and the shepherding mandate of Scripture (Cormode, 2002; Samushonga, 2021). More churches are embracing a top-down CEO structure for the sake of growing the church—not only numerically through membership, but also via building expansion and increased revenues (Maddox, 2012; Whitaker, 2013). Pastors find themselves having to decide between being a shepherd of the people or adhering to megachurch pastoral principles (Miller, 2006; Whitaker, 2013). Church leaders are straddling the precepts of secular business leadership principles and scriptural mandates for pastoral leadership (Bilezikian, 2007; Elkington et al., 2015).

Coinciding with the church leadership shift, studies have revealed an ever-increasing phenomenon of pastoral burnout (Fee, 2018; Grosch & Olsen, 2000; Hessel, 2015; Miner et al., 2009; Samushonga, 2021). During the COVID-19 crisis, more pastors have felt lonely, tired, and overwhelmed (Barna Group, 2020; Elkington, 2013; Greene et al., 2020). Moreover, churches struggle to balance discipleship, church growth, and leadership development (Budijanto, 2020; Huizing, 2011b; Hussey, 2014). Pastors may be torn between various aspects of ministerial leadership at the mercy of the situation (Cormode, 2002; Nauss, 1995). What is needed is an approach to pastoral leadership that begins and ends with the Scriptures (Ajayi, 2018).

When exploring Scripture, one of the critical figures of leadership is the person of Jesus (Debs, 1914; Huizing, 2011a; Kanagaraj, 2004; Mavis, 1947). When exploring Jesus' statements and those followed by Peter, however, never was there a mandate to lead (Wright, 2011). Instead, Jesus' pronouncement was that He

was “The Good Shepherd” (John 10:11–18, *Christian Standard Bible*, 2017). From this pronouncement, many studies have explored the concept of shepherding leadership (Gunter, 2016; Köstenberger, 2002; Resane, 2014; Wright, 2012). This shepherding leadership concept evolved because the Bible's mandate is for spiritual leaders to shepherd God's flock (Mein, 2007; Neyrey, 2001; Quasten, 1948a; Schwenk, 2020). Out of these observations, scholars have evaluated the efficacy of the shepherding model (A. W. Adams, 2013; Swalm, 2010) as well as the shepherding metaphor (Skinner, 2018a). The authors of these studies evaluated shepherding leadership and the shepherding metaphor, without challenging the preconceived notion that these approaches assume the Bible directs spiritual leaders to lead (Gunter, 2016; Hoehl, 2008).

Contrary to previous approaches, what is needed is an approach that excludes the assumption of leadership and instead builds a cohesive and holistic view of pastoral oversight. If the primacy of pastoral leadership resides in Scripture, then Scripture should dictate the posture of church leaders (Ajayi, 2018). For instance, it is unclear how the enacted values of a CEO church leadership style align with the espoused and biblically dictated values of shepherding (Goodmanson, 2005), or whether the departure of espoused and enacted values exacerbates the emergence of stress and burnout within pastoral professions (Doehring, 2013). It is possible to argue that pastors are experiencing stress and burnout because their circumstances force them to enact leadership principles that contradict their spiritual values as espoused by Jesus (Doehring, 2013; Grosch & Olsen, 2000; Samushonga, 2021). Previous sources have communicated shepherding through the lens of leadership (Gunter, 2016; Hoehl, 2008). Leadership, instead, must be filtered through the lens of shepherding (Gunter, 2016; Laniak, 2006). As Jesus identified Himself as the Good Shepherd, He ties Himself into the overarching shepherding metaphor, as opposed to a leadership metaphor (Iorjaah, 2014). In summation, leadership within the church must be held and understood within the shepherding metaphor described in the Bible and reinforced by Jesus in John 10.

Statement of Problem

CEOs and COOs aim to lead their churches by using technology, recording and evaluating data, adjusting strategies, and increasing attendance and revenue (Goodmanson, 2005; Maddox, 2012). Some scholars have posited that the focus of the pastor role may be misplaced:

> What I find is that anything worth calling 'leadership' happens, often without people thinking about it as such, when someone is so energetically and productively involved in whatever it is, whether making music or running a business, whether organizing a market stall or heading up a government department, that they communicate that energy and productivity, that enthusiasm and effectiveness, to those around them.
>
> Now of course the 'experts' might say, 'But that's what we mean by "leadership."' If it is, well and good. But let's study and practice the thing itself, not some abstract category removed from reality. What Peter is describing here is not 'leaders' but shepherds. And the point about 'shepherds' is that the best of them aren't thinking, 'How can I be a shepherd?' but, 'How can I best look after these sheep?' The focus of the good shepherd is not only on his or her own qualities but on the needs of, and potential dangers for, those they are looking after. (Wright, 2011, pp. 91–92)

Responding to Wright's observations I identified the problems in the literature around the subjects of pastoral leadership, shepherding leadership, and the scriptural shepherd metaphor.

Pastoral Leadership

Pastoral leadership refers to the act of leading a church at the local level by a senior pastor. Pastors are required to take on various roles such as a leader, shepherd, teacher, counselor, and manager (Litfin, 1982; Manala, 2010; Pickens, 2015). Moreover, pastors may find that different situations require different leadership styles or require different roles (Cormode, 2002; McKenna et al., 2007). This issue is what makes the pastoral leadership role challenging to study. Previous

research findings related to pastoral leadership either do not address the shepherding metaphor, do not establish the pastoral leadership role in a scriptural setting, or assume leadership as the primary role for pastors.

The study of pastoral leadership begins and ends with Scripture (Ajayi, 2018). Scripture details many Christian leadership concepts, such as the writings of Paul (Hiebert, 1976). Scholars have explored the theology of leadership to a great degree to provide a solid biblical foundation for pastoral leadership (Manning & Nelson, 2020; Strawbridge, 2009). God has called pastors to lead, and thus the church must understand the theology behind this calling (Manning & Nelson, 2020). Moreover, Strawbridge (2009) argued that leadership is by its very nature theological and biblically mandated. Missing in these theological approaches to pastoral leadership, however, is the concept of shepherding, the namesake of the pastoral role.

To study pastoral leadership, researchers have proposed several theories as to the effectiveness of various pastoral leadership styles (Carter, 2009; Crofford, 2014; Priester, 2018). Previous scholars have focused on leadership theories such as transformational and servant leadership as catalysts for effective pastoral leadership without involving Scripture (Carter, 2009; Gregory, 2020; Omogo, 2019; Priester, 2018). Moreover, models including servanthood, transformational, and transactional leadership do not exegete the Scriptures in a fashion that exhausts the meaning of the text, therefore laying a firm foundation (Carter, 2009; Gaston, 1987; Jensen, 2017; Omogo, 2019). Though helpful, the authors of such studies did not establish the role of pastoral leadership within the Scriptures. For instance, a recent study that explored the demands of pastors within the modern context avoided the inclusion of Scripture to define the role of the pastor leader (Pickens, 2015).

Last, the emergence of mega-pastors demonstrates an increasing shift in the identity of the pastoral role from the traditional understanding to a leader-centric entrepreneurial role (Tara, 2020; Whitaker, 2013). Existing studies tended to focus on leadership styles from the assumption that the pastor is first a church leader (Nauss, 1989; Priester, 2018). Moreover, pastors are chosen too often for their

charismatic attributes or looks rather than their character (Spruill et al., 2020). Scholars have called for pastors to lead, manage, and serve their congregations (Manala, 2010). Mizzell and Henson (2020) posited, "Far too many local churches are preoccupied with looking and feeling more like the world than the church. Preaching, teaching, worship, and fellowship have given way to pomp and circumstance" (p. 94). Likewise, many in academia have presented the pastoral leadership model as an overarching construct that includes shepherding instead of shepherding being the overall construct (Omogo, 2019; Pickens, 2015). Alternatively, if shepherding is a valid model to consider, it is discounted as something that cannot sustain the church in the long run (Nauss, 1995; Wagner, 1990). In sum, the current landscape of studies reflected a focus on leading, not shepherding, as the central concept (Britton, 2009; Crofford, 2014; Omogo, 2019; Pickens, 2015).

Shepherd Leadership

In addition to the pastoral leadership concept, researchers have explored the shepherding leadership model. The term *pastor* merely means *shepherd* (Manala, 2010). In current research on the topic of shepherding leadership, however, the investigators either did not approach the topic from a qualitative perspective, did not apply the shepherding concepts outlined in Scripture to practical applications, or did not use an exegetical approach to establish the position.

Pastors use shepherding leadership when leading churches (R. E. Hughes, 2015). This seemingly obvious statement is essential because current researchers have not explored the lived experiences of pastors in conjunction with the shepherding metaphor (Swalm, 2010). Some scholars have attempted to present a usable model for self-care, congregational care, and ethical leadership (Boloje, 2020; Gunter, 2016; R. E. Hughes, 2015; Resane, 2014). Popular literature has also presented shepherding as a means of leading people across all fields (Leman & Pentak, 2004; L. Osborne, 2018). The findings of these studies, however, did not reveal how these constructs operate within the real world of pastoral leaders.

The exploration of shepherding leadership should also include practical implications and a model from Scripture for pastors to utilize. For instance, Swalm (2010) developed a Shepherd Leadership Inventory (SLI) as a way for organizations to measure the level of shepherding leadership taking place. Included was an exploration of the shepherding metaphor throughout Scripture (Swalm, 2010). Needed within these studies, though, is a comprehensive and biblical model for pastors to utilize in their ministries and research findings of how pastors experience these model factors in the contemporary church.

Furthermore, current studies which have explored shepherding leadership among pastors and included a qualitative component did not establish via exegetical analysis the mandate of Scripture for the biblical metaphor (A. W. Adams, 2013). The servant-shepherd model may be helpful for pastors, but it does not include substantiation of shepherding leadership as a mandate from Scripture (Iorjaah, 2014). Moreover, one researcher explored the metaphor of the shepherd leader, proposed a model, but stopped short of understanding the implications of the model in the contemporary workplace (Gunter, 2016). The church requires a comprehensive exegetical exploration of the shepherding metaphor, leading to a usable shepherd model, which has been explored qualitatively with pastors in a real-world setting.

The Shepherd Metaphor

The shepherding metaphor has received limited attention within academic circles (Brodie, 2016). Much of this phenomenon has to do with the shift from pastoral identity concepts toward contemporary leadership models and understanding (Beeman, 2018; Ogereau, 2009; Tara, 2020). Laniak (2006) stated, “Metaphors may be novel, living and active, or they may be dead, frozen clichés” (p. 37). The investigators of existing studies dedicated to the shepherding metaphor either did not establish it as the primary model for pastoral leadership, did not thoroughly explore the shepherd metaphor arc throughout Scripture, or did not explore the shepherd metaphor implications within the contemporary pastoral setting.

Recent investigators have explored the shepherd metaphor through a thorough exegetical approach to Scripture (Schwenk, 2020). Researchers have identified the pastor as a completer (Lapsley, 1991). Nauss (1995) proposed that the shepherd metaphor is one among many metaphors pastors should use when evaluating their ministry. Sometimes the pastor is a leader, and sometimes they are a manager (Manala, 2010). These roles, however, are not framed within the overall mandate of shepherding. Likewise, Cormode (2002) described the metaphors of leader, builder, gardener, and shepherd in equal terms within Scripture and practical ministry. Others have categorized shepherding as one component of a larger mandate to pastor, instead of the reverse (Siew, 2013).

Additionally, the Bible includes the shepherding metaphor in various locations (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). For instance, Hylen (2016) and Pias Kahlasi (2015) explored the shepherd metaphor as understood by John's Gospel. Others have explored the Good Shepherd motif and the shepherding metaphor through John's gospel (Jooli, 2019; Köstenberger, 2002; Neyrey, 2001; Quasten, 1948a, 1948b; Skinner, 2018a, 2018b). Matthew is another location of the shepherd and the sheep metaphor (Heil, 1993). The starting place of the shepherd metaphor is Psalm 23 (Manning & Nelson, 2020; Rihbany, 1916); however, it is not the ending of the metaphor (Bailey, 2014). Ezekiel 34 is a valuable resource for understanding the shepherd metaphor within the Bible (Heil, 1993; Mein, 2007; Rodgers, 2010). So, too, does Zechariah illuminate the shepherd metaphor (Gan, 2010). Some recognize the shepherd metaphor as the prime imagery of the Bible yet do not use an exegetical approach to uncover the phenomenon (Aranoff, 2014). Moreover, Schwenk's (2020) extensive exploration of the shepherding metaphor only explores the concept through the lens of Acts 20 and 1 Peter 5. A vital omission within this field of study is a comprehensive and exegetical look at the shepherd metaphor throughout all of Scripture.

Some researchers, such as Bailey (2014) and Laniak (2006) have explored the arc of shepherd leadership and did so understanding its primacy. A critical problem within these studies, however, is that they stop short of exploring the practical implications of the metaphor among pastors. For instance, Kinnison

(2010) rebuffed Nauss's (1995) proposal that the pastor takes on many metaphors. In truth, each of Nauss's metaphors are included under the guise of pastor, and thus the shepherd metaphor is the prime illustration of the work the pastor accomplishes (Kinnison, 2010). Van Hecke (2012) also used the shepherding metaphor as a tool to criticize the church for its sexual missteps over the previous decades. Still, one is left wondering how a pastor should operate within this crucial imagery of the Bible. As Laniak (2006) stated, "Because of this remarkably persistent reuse of the shepherd construct in the ancient world, it should not be classified as dead, but 'retired'" (p. 37).

In sum, the field of church leadership tends to entail a scattered approach to the pastoral role and its position within the shepherding metaphor (Cormode, 2002; Nauss, 1989; Pickens, 2015). First, church leadership would benefit from credible research that presents the shepherd as the primary metaphor within Scripture, not as one of many. Second, researchers have tended to view shepherding through the lens of leadership, not leadership through the lens of shepherding (Beeman, 2018; Omogo, 2019; Tara, 2020). Third, researchers have articulated the shepherding metaphor throughout Scripture yet chosen to focus on one or two passages (Jooli, 2019; Nel, 2005; Rodgers, 2010; Skinner, 2018b). The field of study, however, needs to include an all-inclusive Scripture-wide approach to the topic so that one's biases do not interfere with the Bible's intentions on the topic. Fourth, when the shepherding metaphor is made clear to pastors, there is little understanding of how this practically applies to modern ministry (Bailey, 2014; Van Hecke, 2012). In other words, the field does not seem to include a helpful model or construct originating out of a comprehensive shepherding exegetical exploration. Last, literature does not seem to provide a study that defines the shepherding metaphor as the prime biblical leadership mandate by way of comprehensive exegetical analysis while at the same time presenting a usable constructed tested in the modern church.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was multitudinous and presented in two categories: a clarifying of the shepherding metaphor and presenting a usable and

tested model of shepherding. Concerning the former, the problems presented are the inconsistency of the shepherding metaphor among other metaphors presented by researchers (Cormode, 2002; Nauss, 1989; Pickens, 2015), a lack of a cohesive study of the arc of shepherding in the Bible, and a misunderstanding of leadership in relation to shepherding.

First, Beeman (2018) suggested the need for future study in the shepherding metaphor, emphasizing a thorough interaction of the biblical shepherding passages. Gregory (2020) also acknowledged the limits of his research to the pericope of Philippians. In this study, I explored the shepherding metaphor beginning in Psalms 23 and explored its continuation in Jeremiah 23, Ezekiel 34, John 10, John 21, and 1 Peter 5, among others. In doing so, I presented a cohesive thematic arc of the shepherding metaphor in Scripture. Answering the call of Gan (2010), I explored the entirety of the shepherd metaphor in Scripture. Simultaneously, this approach addressed a second problem from current research–a reframing of the shepherd-leader construct in that the research showed leadership as a component of shepherding, not vice versa. Tara (2020) and DeNeal (2019) called for a need to address these ecclesial issues in the pastorate. This research definitively positioned leadership in its proper context under the umbrella of shepherding. Third, this approach defined shepherding as the primary metaphor of pastoral leadership in the Bible, not one among many equals.

On the latter problem presented, a usable and tested model of shepherding, this study presented a case for a shepherding construct. As shepherding themes become distinguishable, I presented a shepherding model addressing Beeman's (2018) call in his suggestions for further research. In doing so, I addressed the final problem presented by Schwenk (2020) and Omogo (2019), which is a call for more qualitative research about shepherding and pastoral leadership. This study included a usable model and a comparison of the components of said model with the lived experiences of contemporary pastors.

The methodology to achieve the purposes of this study were three-fold. First, I executed an exegetical study of the shepherding metaphor across several biblical passages such as Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, Jeremiah 23, Zechariah, John 10,

John 21, and 1 Peter 5. Using the method of socio-rhetorical analysis established by Robbins (1996a) and expanded by Henson et al. (2020), I explicitly demonstrated an arc of the shepherding metaphor across Scripture. This method accomplished two other purposes. First, it demonstrated the primacy of the shepherding metaphor in Scripture, and second, it reframed the position of leadership versus shepherding.

Second, through the socio-rhetorical analysis of John 10, I presented a usable model of shepherding leadership. Third, as themes arise in the research, I created qualitative interview questions. The answers to the lived experiences of pastors were compared to the findings of the research. Moreover, I provided a discussion of the findings, including limitations and suggestions for further research.

Research Questions

The gaps in the current body of research are in two categories: the shepherding metaphor and the shepherding model. The shepherding metaphor gap includes the need for a comprehensive exegetical study of the shepherding metaphor across Scripture, an identification of the shepherding metaphor as the primary image of leadership in the Bible, and a reframing of the shepherding role and leadership tasks of pastors. The purpose of the current study was to reframe the shepherd-leader construct, identify the primacy of the shepherd metaphor, and explore the shepherd metaphor arc throughout Scripture. Additionally, I identified the themes necessary for the shepherd leader via John 10 and qualitatively explored these themes in the real-life context of contemporary pastors. Previous researchers have identified components that make ineffective leaders from John 10 (Atterson, 2019), but it is also important to consider how John 10 presents the characteristics of good leadership. The questions that guided this study were as follows:

RQ1: How is the shepherd metaphor portrayed in the New Testament model of biblical leadership? What biblical principles can be learned from an in-depth exegetical analysis of the shepherd metaphor?

RQ2: What is the role of leadership within the shepherd metaphor?

RQ3: How does the biblical metaphor of the shepherd compare with the lived experiences of contemporary pastors?

RQ4: How does the shepherd metaphor in John 10 inform the praxis of pastoral leadership?

RQ5: What are the implications of the shepherd metaphor within the New Testament on the constructs of pastoral leadership and shepherd leadership?

Significance of the Research

American churches now contain pastors who operate more like a CEO or COO (Goodmanson, 2005; Whitaker, 2013). Churches often expect pastors to operate their churches as businesses. In writing to the churches in modern-day Turkey, however, Peter stated,

> So, then, I appeal to the elders among you, as a fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of the Messiah, and as one who will share in the glory that is to be revealed. Do the proper work of a shepherd as you look after God's flock. (1 Pet 5:1–2, *The Bible for Everyone,* 2011)

Therefore, the significance of this research was two-fold. First, I aimed to articulate the shepherding metaphor as the primary lens by which pastors should view their role. In doing so, I also aligned leadership and shepherding within its proper context while showing the unique thread of shepherding existent from Psalm 23 through 1 Peter 5. Second, I took the findings and gave pastors a useable construct tested qualitatively among contemporary pastors of various sizes.

Of first importance is the primacy of Scripture (Ajayi, 2018). This research significantly contributed to the body of research by exploring the thread of the shepherding metaphor from the Old Testament to the New Testament. This step is essential, as the imagery of the shepherd—once prominent in the early church—has lost its meaning and effectiveness in the modern church (Bailey, 2014; Tara, 2020). Shepherding has given way to leadership, entrepreneurship, and various biblical images (Bailey, 2014; Tara, 2020).

Second, in revealing this thematic arc, the research aimed to accomplish two more tasks. Through the present study, I aimed to show the primacy of the shepherding metaphor as it relates to pastoral leadership from the exegetical research. The significance of this research was to extrapolate from the Scriptures the consistent shepherding metaphor given to the church and highlight its importance in creating healthy and vibrant church communities. This approach shifts the thinking of the pastoral role away from solely business-like metrics, as outlined by Maddox (2012). In relation, as I explored the theme of shepherding and presented it to be paramount to pastoral leadership, I aimed to place leadership in its proper place under the mandate of shepherding, not vice versa.

Practically, the significance of this research was to present a usable biblical model for pastoral leadership established by the mandate of shepherding via the Good Shepherd passage of John 10. As researchers have identified how John 10 elucidates the principles of bad leadership (Atterson, 2019), I attempted to do the same for good leadership. This research significantly added to the body of research in the areas of the shepherd metaphor in that it linked the metaphor to real-life application in the pastoral field.

Recent researchers have revealed the shift away from pastoral and shepherding imagery within the church pastorate (Tara, 2020). Much of this shift has emerged since 1970, as is seen in *Christianity Today* and *Leadership Journal* (Tara, 2020). Simultaneously, scholars have presented evidence regarding the phenomenon of pastoral burnout (Exantus, 2011; Francis et al., 2017; Greene et al., 2020; Hessel, 2015; Jackson-Jordan, 2013; Miner et al., 2009). Moreover, researchers have identified discipleship as a primary component of pastoral leadership and paramount to church growth (Budijanto, 2020; Manning & Nelson, 2020; Tara, 2020). As this study realigned the role of the pastor as a shepherd, I also aimed to correct some challenges that ail the modern church. Notably, researchers have tied burnout to a lack of training and understanding of the pastoral role (Cohall & Cooper, 2010).

For instance, Bailey (2014) noted that Psalm 23 provided the imagery of the shepherd leading the individual beside still waters. This author observed that this

method of guiding the sheep is in direct contrast to other shepherding methods where shepherds drove the sheep from behind and noted, “The good shepherd 'leads me'; he does not 'drive me' (Bailey, 2014, p. 41). Herein lies a clue that the shepherding metaphor may indeed contain within it the necessary components, imagery, and direction to equip pastors to lead as Jesus led. Shepherding acts as a root metaphor and informs pastoral imagery in a deep theological way (Laniak, 2006). Moreover, this thread of shepherding from the Old Testament to the New Testament mandates consistently the act of shepherding in the pastoral role (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006).

Furthermore, Jesus directed Peter to “shepherd my sheep” (John 21:16, *Christian Standard Bible,* 2017). Jesus has long been the epitome of leadership models (Belsterling, 2006; Debs, 1914; Huizing, 2011a, 2011b; Mavis, 1947). Over time, however, the imagery of the Good Shepherd has been replaced in the church (Bailey, 2014). During the first 2 centuries of Christianity, the image of the vine, the fish, and the Good Shepherd were prevalent within the church (Bailey, 2014). Likewise, the imagery of the Good Shepherd was consistent among protestants and Catholics after the reformation (Schaff, 2002). These images were slowly replaced with the omnipotent judge, crucified, sufferer, or infant in Mary's arms (Bailey, 2014). Previous scholars have called for a return to the original texts and imagery used successfully by the early church (Ajayi, 2018; Bailey, 2014).

Last, as I explored the thread of the shepherding metaphor, made clear its primacy, realigned it with the concept of leadership, and provided a useable model for pastoral leadership, I also evaluated the new model in the context of contemporary pastors. As the pastoral identity has diminished over time (Bailey, 2014; Beeman, 2018; Tara, 2020), this exegetical approach aimed to evaluate first the legitimacy of the shepherding constructs found in John 10. Second, this phenomenological approach revealed how the model’s characteristics compared with the experiences of pastors in a leadership setting. To summarize, I researched the shepherding metaphor, its primacy in Scripture, its relation to the leadership role, provided a useable construct for pastors, and evaluated that construct in the lived experiences of pastors. In doing so, I aimed to correct the misalignment of the

modern pastor role away from the ever-increasing leadership demands (Tara, 2020) and toward a more biblical model mandated by Christ himself.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study was to determine the mandate of Scripture of a pastor. In doing so, I attempted to lay a biblical foundation and extrapolate a model in which pastors could operate. Throughout this research, the three main conceptual frameworks were pastoral leadership, shepherd leadership, and the shepherd metaphor.

Oludele (2011) defined pastoral leadership as "the art of spiritually combining ideas, people, things, time, leadership, and faith to achieve predetermined objectives" (p. 85). This type of leadership entails the work of a pastor as the steward of what is entrusted to them (Beeley, 2009). Pastors are spiritual leaders who guide and direct the church, feeding the congregation through theology and doctrine (Beeley, 2009; Cohall & Cooper, 2010). Pastoral leadership can take on many styles, such as autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire (Oludele, 2011; Root, 1984). Simply stated, pastoral leadership is a field of activities performed by a pastor associated with shepherding God's people and "managing operational needs of the church" (Priester, 2018, p. 3).

Shepherd leadership refers to a specific theory (Swalm, 2010) or model (R. E. Hughes, 2015; Rummage, 2005) of pastoral leadership. Swalm (2010) sought to operationalize shepherd leadership into a "behavioral construct" (p. 6). Shepherd leaders care for the flock as entrusted to them by God (Gunter, 2016; Swalm, 2010). At the heart of shepherd leadership studies and critical to its understanding is the metaphorical use of the shepherd leader used in the Bible (A. W. Adams, 2013; Swalm, 2010).

The shepherd metaphor is prevalent throughout the Old and New Testaments of the Bible (Bailey, 2014; Gan, 2010; Keller, 1996; Kinnison, 2010; Laniak, 2006; Witmer, 2010). The Psalms contains the first mention of the shepherding concept, when David declared, "The Lord is my shepherd" (Ps 23:17; Keller, 1996; Nel, 2005). Jeremiah picked up the metaphor in chapter 23 (Bailey,

2014). Ezekiel 34 and Zechariah carried the metaphor even further in describing the leaders of Israel (Bailey, 2014; Heil, 1993; Mein, 2007; Rodgers, 2010). Jesus then used this shepherd metaphor to declare that He was the Good Shepherd and to reinstate Peter on the shores of Galilee (Bailey, 2014; Hylen, 2016; Jooli, 2019; Keller, 1996; Köstenberger, 2002; Quasten, 1948a, 1948b; Skinner, 2018a, 2018b). Last, Peter implored the elders to be good shepherds of God's flock in chapter 5 of 1 Peter (Bailey, 2014; Schwenk, 2020). The shepherd is the primary figure used in the Bible to indicate leadership and oversight of God's people (Aranoff, 2014; Bailey, 2014; Kinnison, 2010; Laniak, 2006; Tara, 2020).

Methodology

The methodology of this study was multifaceted. First, I explored the concept of the shepherd metaphor within Scripture via socio-rhetorical analysis. Socio-rhetorical analysis, as proposed by Robbins (1996a) and expanded by Henson et al. (2020), is a form of exegetical analysis that explores the inner texture, intertexture, social texture, cultural texture, and ideological texture of a chosen pericope. This form of analysis gives the reader multiple layers of evaluation, providing a richer understanding of Scripture (Gowler, 2010; Robbins, 1996a).

In relation, this study contained the bias that Scripture is the word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the primary means by which God speaks to the world. This research did not contain a discussion of authorship or authority, as it is understood within the bias that the traditionally accepted authors are indeed accurate. Moreover, the authority of the Scriptures in question, both the pericope and intertexture elements, are divinely inspired and authoritative to the church eternally through the work of the Holy Spirit. This understanding means that the pericope contains the same mandate for the church, both for those who originally received it as well as today's readers. Scripture is the primacy of all theological and ecclesial constructs (Ajayi, 2018).

Understanding that translation is commentary (Feldman, 1996), I chose to use the *Christian Standard Bible* (2017). Scholars have traditionally viewed the CSB as one of the more readable translations with concentration on optimal

equivalence (Strauss, 2019). To aid in helping understand the cultural implications of various passages, I include sporadic excerpts from *The Bible For Everyone* (2011), as the translators attempted to understand the text's original intent within its unique cultural context.

After the socio-rhetorical analysis, I moved toward a phenomenological emphasis. Phenomenological research focuses on the lived experiences of purposely selected individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). From the socio-rhetorical analysis of the pericopes, themes emerged about the nature of the shepherding metaphor and shepherding leadership. Moreover, I presented a model from the John 10 passage. From this John 10 foundation and other shepherd passages, the study presented interview questions for the phenomenological portion of the study. Before the interview phase of the study, I sought approval from Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) by identifying and outlining how I would mitigate potential ethical issues.

Interviews took place either in person, via telephone, or through video conferencing. Trint, a mobile application, was used to record the audio of each interview. This application is password-protected and can transcribe audio. An initial pass of transcription served to scrub and edit any mistakes while also adding any unintentional omissions by the program. This scrubbed data were analyzed using Saldaña and Omasta's (2018) methods of values, process, and in vivo coding with the assistance of MAXQDA. Additionally, the interviews received a fourth pass focused on the exegetical themes.

I anticipated that a phenomenological approach would present a "common meaning" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75) of the shepherding metaphor among the lived experiences of pastors. Specifically, I focused on transcendental phenomenology, an approach that aims to interpret the interviewees' experiences and not the researcher's experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, I took great care to bracket my experiences as a senior pastor for the sake of evaluating the subjects selected (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), for an adequate phenomenological study to be accomplished, the research needs to include the

experiences of three to 10 individuals. I chose nine pastors from the Protestant tradition in the United States with whom I had previously corresponded.

The phenomena, in this instance, were the role of pastoring a church, the feelings it conjures, and the actions the role requires of the pastors in question. The phenomenological study and evaluation presented themes from among the participants' feedback (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and analyzed in what ways these themes align with the presented shepherding model. As a final portion of this study, I presented the analysis of this comparison between the themes of the phenomenological study and the themes presented from Scripture. Also included is a section on findings and a general discussion of implications.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study was first limited to church leaders, specifically senior pastors of church congregations. Further limiting the scope of the study was the focus on U.S. evangelical churches in the Protestant tradition. Though the study may be helpful to secular leaders of various levels, the scope of the study may have applicability to only senior pastors. Ecclesial and lay leaders may also find the results useful, but this benefit may be incidental.

Additionally, the study's methodology limited the research to seven passages: Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, Jeremiah, 23, Ezekiel (various), John 10, John 21, and 1 Peter 5, among other ancillary or supporting passages. Therefore, the locus of the themes generated in the study emanated from these concentrations of Scriptures. Further, the model generated from the Good Shepherd passage rested primarily in John 10 with support from 1 Peter 5. Hence, I chose to limit my focus to only those specific passages to produce an actionable shepherd leadership model. As such, I excluded passages of pastoral leadership and eldership from this study in favor of passages specific to the shepherd metaphor.

Moreover, the phenomenological portion of this research was limited to the context of the pastors interviewed. This fact means that any deviations in responses from the pastors in question—be it socio-economic status, location, experience, or

gender—were coincidental and not the object of the exercise. Consequently, some denominations, church sizes, and geographic locations may be excluded.

Definition of Terms

The definition of terms for this study revolved around church leadership and biblical terms. First, pastoring in this study referred to the senior pastor of a congregation. As Priester (2018) stated, pastoring is the act of shepherding God's people and overseeing the operational needs of the church. In Greek, *Poimēn* is translated *shepherd* (*pastor* in Latin) and is used to denote the pastoral role in the church (Unger et al., 1985). Most likely, this pastoral role is interchangeable with the term *elder*, which occurs regularly in the New Testament (Overman, 1993). Peter referred to himself as a "fellow elder" (1 Pet 5:1). In the context of this study, the term *pastor* referred to the senior pastor of a church (assuming one), and the elder refers to a governing body of respected individuals, much like the traditional Presbyterian model (Elwell, 2001). Similarly, ecclesial leadership refers to the act and need for leadership within the church (Huizing, 2011a, 2011b; Serrano, 2017; Van Hecke, 2012). Pastoring is a form of ecclesial leadership, as is that of a deacon (Huizing, 2010).

Shepherd leadership may be the model of leadership utilized by leaders of both secular and religious organizations at any level of leadership (A. W. Adams, 2013; Brodie, 2016; Resane, 2014; Swalm, 2010). A shepherd is one who watches over a flock of sheep (Bailey, 2014). Thus, a shepherd leader views their role as a keeper and shepherd of a flock of people (Resane, 2014). The shepherd metaphor of the Bible is the basis for shepherd leadership and entails the care, leadership, and protection of people (Laniak, 2006; Resane, 2014; Tara, 2020).

An organizational leader is a person who takes control "over authority, reward and penalty, perpetuation, and other processes" (Argyris, 1955, p. 3). Thus, organizational leadership is the leadership of the entire organization, including but not limited to motivation, organizational processes, and the creation of direction (Kollenscher et al., 2018). In relation, Christian leadership is the act of facilitating

"the transforming and sanctifying journey of individuals and organizations from X^1 to X^2 in both material and spiritual ways" (Burns et al., 2014, p. 119).

Summary

In summary, the purpose of this study was to present a compelling argument for the existence of an overall arc in Scripture pertaining to the shepherding metaphor and to propose a useable and operational model for shepherding leadership out of the John 10 pericope. From this exercise, I intended to reveal this said scriptural arc, expose the primacy of the shepherding metaphor for all pastoral leadership positions, reorient the relationship between leadership and shepherding, propose a usable model, and evaluate that model with a phenomenological study of current senior pastors.

Scripture should provide the foundation of pastoral theology (Ajayi, 2018). In the history of the church, the shepherding metaphor was previously prevalent among church images (Bailey, 2014). Over the centuries, the metaphor gave way to other images of leadership (Bailey, 2014; Tara, 2020; Varhaug, 2019). For the sake of operating large entities, churches have embraced a top-down, CEO-style model of leadership (Burns et al., 2014; Goodmanson, 2005; Tara, 2020; Whitaker, 2013). It is the shepherd metaphor that Scripture uses to illustrate leadership, and that metaphor is still applicable today (A. W. Adams, 2013; R. E. Hughes, 2015; Swalm, 2010). Although there is overlap between a CEO-style leadership structure and the shepherd metaphor and leadership model, the church has gravitated toward the more business-like approach in operation of churches (Priester, 2018; Tara, 2020).

There are gaps in existing literature that need to be understood and answered. Ultimately, I postulated an actionable pastoral leadership model based solely on the shepherd metaphor while comparing that model through a phenomenological study. The basis of this model came from an exhaustive exploration of the shepherd metaphor as it related to leadership in the Bible using Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, John 10, John 21, and 1 Peter 5, among others. What is unique to this study is the three-step linking of the shepherding metaphor via strong

exegetical analysis, the presentation of an operational model of shepherd leadership, and the evaluation of that model against the lived experiences of senior pastors.

Through this study, I aimed to help reorient the focus of pastoral leadership styles to that of the shepherding mandate in Scripture. Churches are currently witnessing pastoral burnout like never before (Fee, 2018; Grosch & Olsen, 2000; Hessel, 2015; Miner et al., 2009; Samushonga, 2021). Pastors experience stress because of the need to morph between different styles of leadership based on the situation (Cormode, 2002; Nauss, 1989, 1995). Care continues to be a difficult responsibility to achieve by the local church (R. E. Hughes, 2015). Discipleship, church growth, and leadership development are all challenges faced by the modern American church (Budijanto, 2020; Huizing, 2011a, 2011b; Hussey, 2014).

The goal of this study was to help pastors ultimately understand their calling and the mandate of Scripture. As the U.S. church has increasingly embraced the leadership mindset dictated by secular and business circles, the precepts of Scripture have waned (Goodmanson, 2005; Tara, 2020). Scripture indeed requires pastors to lead within the church (Ajayi, 2018; Huizing, 2011a; Resane, 2014); however, it does so within the context of shepherding. In doing so, pastors should not posture themselves in such a way that damages the church or themselves (Bilezikian, 2007; Elkington et al., 2015). Instead, the need currently in the pastorate is a reorientation of Scripture's primacy, the mandate of shepherding, and a helpful model in which pastors can use to see their way through.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The concept of shepherding is expansive in its foundation and far-reaching in its ramifications. I begin the literature review of this study with a discussion of the shepherding metaphor. Several biblical references undergird the shepherding metaphor, and this review explored most of these passages. Second, previous scholars have used the shepherding metaphor to create a shepherding leadership construct. This model of leadership loosely finds its roots in the biblical concept of shepherding. Last, pastoral leadership, which this study enriched with a new perspective of shepherding, is a specific field of study about the oversight one has over a church body. Many of these studies overlap with each other regarding categorization. For instance, many shepherding leadership studies addressed pastoral leadership. In this literature review, I categorized studies that address shepherding leadership, though pastoral, into its namesake.

Theological Leadership Foundations

To clearly understand pastoral and shepherd leadership, an understanding of a theology of leadership is required. Scholars have worked to understand leadership from a theological understanding. These approaches previously have addressed either leadership from a theological understanding or the primary field of pastoral leadership.

Theology of Leadership

Some denominational traditions have neglected to explore a theology of leadership out of a concern of compromising held beliefs and lack of spiritual formation (Strawbridge, 2009). To rectify the situation, churches need to embrace a theology of leadership based on Scripture and tradition. The two elements of a theological foundation of leadership are mission and power. The church's mission must guide church leadership in what needs to be done, by whom, and when. The mission of the church is to save souls and reconcile them to God. The church operates within the power that Christ gave the church. This fact should be juxtaposed with the power of man, on which scholars have based many leadership

models. The problem experienced by many churches is their reliance on their own experience of leadership without pressing into the scriptural framing of pastoral leadership. The mission cannot exist without a proper understanding of the power of God. Strawbridge based her understanding of leadership theology on the Anglican formula of Scripture, tradition, and reason. The Pauline epistles serve as a theological foundation for the power of God in the leadership mandate. Gregory the Great provides the tradition aspect of a theology of leadership as his writings on pastoral calling provide helpful, practical application. In the current study, I presented a theology of leadership based on the mandate of Scripture for church leaders to shepherd the flock God has entrusted to them.

Scholars have had a difficult time presenting a theology of leadership because theology is considered the study of God, and leadership focuses primarily on manufactured constructs (Ayers, 2006). Ayers proposed a common language between the fields of leadership and theology. A common regret among pastors coming out of seminary was the lack of leadership training received. Ontology, methodology, and teleology make up the foundation of this common language between theology and leadership. Because theology is the study of God, it naturally contains ontology (self-contained nature), methodology (how God operates), and teleology (the purpose of God). Using this common language, scholars can then present leadership concepts within the framework of biblical theology. For instance, the application of Philippians 2 revealed that Paul's concern was how believers interacted with each other. Using the ontological argument, one would ask, “Who is God and, therefore, who should the leader be?” (p. 23). Likewise, within Philippians, what method is presented by God in how He wants to operate? The implication of such an approach allowed the author to apply biblical concepts to leadership models such as transformational leadership (Bass, 1985b, 1990). In other words, how do the concepts of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration compare with the character of Christ? Similarly, through this study, I attempted to illustrate the need for a theological foundation for leadership theories, including the assumption of

shepherd leadership as the overarching premise by which God wants to operate His church.

The Pauline epistles serve as a basis for Christian leadership compared to exclusively pastoral leadership (Hiebert, 1976). Neither Titus nor Timothy were pastors, and, therefore, the letters provide practical theology for the concept of leadership in general. The church contains many leadership positions, not just that of a pastor. Paul used many images to assist people of the early church in understanding their leadership roles. First, they were to be teachers, students of the Scriptures who teach publicly (as opposed to Gnosticism). Paul encouraged Timothy to entrust the message to individuals who could also teach others. Second, Paul instructed Timothy to be a soldier—not burdened by needless worries of everyday life, but committed to the rest of his company in accomplishing the church's mission. Third, the athlete's image communicated that the young leaders were to train diligently to attain a goal. Finally, Timothy took on the role of a farmer, planting, tilling, and reaping as God provided. This image reveals the difficult work of the Christian leader in the church. Paul also asked Timothy to be a workman and a vessel. These images relayed the importance of accountability, holiness, usefulness, and preparedness. Last, Paul asked Timothy to be a bondservant to Jesus. This image meant Timothy needed to embrace the idea of willingness and complete submission. Although these images are helpful to the church, in the current study, I instead used the image of the shepherd to communicate the concept of leadership in the Bible.

Broward (2019) posited that theology does not just establish the concept of leadership; it also establishes leadership development. The person of God and the concept of the Trinity is the foundation of leadership. A trinitarian view of leadership produces a more team-oriented style of leadership instead of a top-down approach. It is more inclusive of others, mutually affirming, and relational. Moreover, the person of Christ informs the concept of leadership further in that Christ was fully God and fully man, interacting with the world. Using Christ as a model, leader development should include followership, identity, wisdom training, service, humility, inclusivity, balance, reproduction, adaptation, and disruptive

transformation. In contrast with most leadership development models, which focus on skills or roles, Broward suggested a process that makes character prime. This process focuses on the internal growth of individuals in their character and ethics. One develops these attributes by helping individuals understand their identity and develop internal awareness. The object of this step is to help individuals separate what they do from who they are. To achieve the character development desired within this theology of leadership development, the author suggested creating a social learning environment where psychological safety is present. Some para-church leader development organizations embrace this idea of character development within a social construct. The object of the current study was to present a framework of pastoral leadership with the shepherding identity at its core.

Nelson (2020) argued that the current trends in U.S. culture present an opportunity to reimagine pastoral leadership theology. Current theological approaches to pastoral leadership tend to place the pastor as the head of a church and representative of the body. God created humans in His image, which included the ability to create. Pastors need to embrace leadership that maximizes creativity to address novel problems. Moreover, pastors need also to utilize the characteristic of resilience as they face new challenges. Using God as an example of how pastors should lead, Nelson presented that God was a "possibilizer," a planner, and an improviser. Therefore, a theology of pastoral leadership will jettison the idea of a pastor as merely a manager. Pastors should be creative in their field and strategic in their approach. In contrast, I focused on traditional views of leadership through the imagery of shepherding in this study.

Using the job demands-resource (JDR) model of organizational behavior, Miner and Bickerton (2020) proposed a trinitarian resources model of leadership, analyzing one's resources. Spiritual resources, such as one's relationship to God, are posited as a type of personal resource. A trait approach to leadership, though functional, has not been tested empirically in Christian contexts. Relational approaches to leadership, such as servant, authentic, and transformational leadership, are also helpful in a Christian context. Like trait approaches, they are not tested to reveal justification for their proposed leadership qualities. These

authors stated that no existing studies presented "justification of the outcomes indicative of 'good leadership'; and both theoretically and empirically established relationships between leader qualities and outcomes concerning particular organizational contexts" (Miner & Bickerton, 2020, p. 280). A trinitarian theology, however, puts into perspective the relationship of leadership to the character of God. For instance, Christ is self-emptying (*kenosis*); therefore, leaders should be self-emptying as well. Furthermore, trinitarian theology posits that God's creation is relational, and thus leadership should be exhibited relationally. God's purpose is communion with Him as He restores creation to its intended state. Therefore, the purpose of leadership is not "team-member well-being (as in servant leadership) or meeting organizational objective" (as in transactional leadership; Miner & Bickerton, 2020, p. 285). Instead, a trinitarian resources model of leadership uses a spiritually resourced leader who has a secure attachment to God, calling, collaborative religious coping style, and internal orientation to ministry. This leader influences the follower to produce honesty, respect, mutual caring, and spiritual well-being. Similarly, in the current article, I produced a model of leadership based on the metaphor of shepherding, established by God the Father in the Old Testament, and reaffirmed by God the Son in the New Testament.

The world is becoming more complex and requires a new approach to theology to establish complexity models within Christian leadership (Stanton, 2019). Organizations are complex responsive processes of relating (CRPR; Stacey, 2006). An aspect of Christian theology is that human beings are responsible social agents. Stanton argued that the reasoning behind CRPR and the implications of *imago Dei* are similar. Critics of some styles of church leadership have pointed to the fact that churches are not businesses with market share; however, CRPR is a valuable approach in helping churches understand how to engage in leadership decisions for God's purposes. Stanton (2019) stated, "Churches as forms of common human life are ongoing processes of local interaction between people. These communities work together in the purposeful joint action of testimony to the saving work of God in Christ" (p. 152). In answering arguments against CRPR considering God's sovereignty, this author suggested open theism and process

theology. The understanding that God's sovereignty rests in the promised future serves as the logic behind linking these concepts. Moreover, CRPR promotes an ecclesiology that is participative in the church body and affirms individual responsibility. The practical implications of this study are that pastors should pay close attention to those on the edges. Those overlooked are essential participants in a theology of leadership that promotes individual participation in a complexity model. The pastor can use conversation and dialogue to create meaning among congregants and move toward a preferred solution. Pastors should experience less anxiety and freedom by exercising this theological approach to leadership wrapped in complexity leadership. Because pastors do not have to bear the burden of all decisions in this model, they recognize greater participation among parishioners.

In response to the growing focus on leadership within society, including in the church, religious leaders need to establish a coherent theology of leadership (Beeley & Britton, 2009). The substance of such theology should answer the question of *why* and *what*. The church establishes a pastoral leadership theology by embarking on a discovering of ecclesiology. This exercise cannot be accomplished apart from the gospel of a crucified and risen Jesus. The church is to represent the crucified and risen savior. Beeley and Britton (2009) stated, “The church's thinking on the question of leadership is too often divorced from a clear articulation of the content of the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected” (p. 5). These authors speak of Christian leadership only in the context of pastoral leadership and the necessity to establish a firm theological footing. This footing can be found not only in the Scriptures but also in the traditions of the church. Using both Scriptures and traditions allows religious leaders to establish a theology of leadership that informs a pastoral leadership theology. Moreover, church traditions tend to affirm the use and study of widely accepted leadership concepts. Tradition and Scripture do not typically throw out modern leadership theories. Instead, the combined use of tradition and Scripture often affirm these leadership concepts. A theology of leadership should also make prime the exercising of the word and sacrament in the current context. Whatever the leadership principles one uses, they cannot sway from this foundation. Through the exercise in this study, I established a theology of

leadership using the totality of Scripture and the consistent overarching theme of shepherding leadership.

International perspectives also contributed to a theology of leadership. Branson and Martínez (2011) defined leadership as the act of "shaping learning environments and connecting with diverse resources so that a social group can engage in change" (p. 27). Others postulated an outline of practical theology, which informs a theology of leadership by using a specific approach to praxis. The current praxis of the modern church presents a pastor who is a subject matter expert and exerts a top-down managerial style. The church employs a marketing approach to gaining members and works to satisfy its customers. In the second step of the practical theology method, Branson and Martínez analyzed the praxis utilizing Freire's (1974) educational approach. Freire's approach to praxis informed the church that people are social beings who construct their relationships and power structures (Branson & Martínez, 2011). This approach means that the church members have helped to define the current praxis of the church. Moreover, the changing demographics of the church and the United States reveal that although European churches are declining, the United States enjoys an influx of primarily Christian immigrants. As the United States is experiencing a cultural shift because of this migration phenomenon, Pentecostalism has increased. Step 3 of the process is to reflect on Christian resources. The authors pointed to the work of Padilla (2004) and her views on integrative missional ecclesiology. Branson and Martínez (2011) stated, "The vocation of the church (and of the members) is to participate in God's ongoing work of drawing the world (society) toward full humanness as revealed in Jesus Christ" (p. 44). The last step of this practical theology process is to establish a new praxis. Therefore, the church needs to employ diverse points of view and diverse settings to bring the body toward that preferred end of the likeness of Jesus. Asian, Latino, Greek, and European influences can aid the church in understanding a theology of leadership that is holistic in its approach and which resists local cultural framing. In the current study, I relied heavily on Middle Eastern influences and traditions concerning shepherding to frame and establish a new model of shepherding leadership.

Paul presented a theology of leadership in his letter to the church in Philippi. Tangen (2018) noted that Paul's theology of leadership was rooted in the belief that the church body was to be in communion with Christ. The cultural context of Philippi informs an understanding of Paul's theology of leadership. The exploration of this culture revealed that the Roman quest for honor was prime. Coupled with the belief that believers were to be in communion with Christ, Tangen showed that leadership was to be one of service to each other in contrast to the Roman idea of oversight. Tangen (2018) stated,

> Paul's theology of leadership moves beyond imitation to a form of participation in the cruciform leadership of Christ through the Spirit. This participation occurs as modeling and facilitation of Christo-practices, such as preaching, teaching, service, peace-making, liturgical-charismatic worship, and new ways of moral thinking and decision-making, all in the form of faithful self-giving in the Spirit. (p. 288)

The paradox of this understanding of leadership is that it operates within a hierarchy, yet requires the leader to view others higher than themselves. Moreover, Christian leaders are to operate within the power of the resurrection while participating in the sufferings of Christ. Tangen described this phenomenon as cruciform leadership.

Horsthuis (2011) used the trinitarian theology of perichoresis to establish a theology of leadership. Perichoresis is a trinitarian theology that seeks to understand the "co-inherence" of the three Persons of the Trinity in community. For instance, Jesus stated that He is in the Father and that the Father is in Him. This statement is an example of perichoresis. It is an essential understanding of the concept of the Trinity. Horsthuis stated that many current authors place too high a hope on the concept of leadership. This author posited that "the exaggerated emphasis on leadership represented in the writings of Malphurs, Mancini, and many other evangelicals is there, in part, because of a lack of theological reflection on leadership and the assumptions and theories it brings with it" (Horsthuis, 2011, p. 85). In the context of perichoresis, however, leadership is a participative construct. Perichoresis invites others to the table of leadership in mutuality, just as

the Trinity recognizes the mutuality of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The grace and existence of the Trinity give forth an understanding of the spiritual gifts in the context of the church. The gift of leadership is on par with other spiritual gifts, in that it is for building each other up and the body of Christ. Therefore, leading is "a manifestation and means of God's grace" (Horsthuis, 2011, p. 102). Horsthuis put forth three pastoral models from this theological understanding: the shepherd, the wounded healer, and the wise fool. A perichoretic theology of leadership redefines the shepherd role of the pastor as a mutually participative role. In the current study, I advanced an understanding of shepherding that is participative and mutually submissive.

Additionally, Ellis (2020) argued for a theology of shared leadership based on an understanding of the Trinity. The act of sacrifice and submission presented by Jesus as the Lamb of God provides the most precise understanding of the trinitarian relationship. Ellis based his understanding of shared leadership on a view of the Trinity, which begins with God as three, not God as one. This starting point is not to say that he views God as three. God is still one, a belief that is in line with traditional perichoretic theology. This approach to a trinitarian understanding as it relates to shared power in leadership gives a unique understanding. First, shared leadership incorporates relationality. Leaders grow because they encounter God through others in a shared community. Because there is relationality, it means that individuals should focus on being present in these relationships. Third, shared leadership intuits that each person adds value to the group. Next, shared leadership means that one person is not domineering within the group. Each person has shared power with the others. In relation, this shared power requires unity within these groups. Last, shared leadership requires groups to value the uniqueness of each person. As groups embrace shared leadership structures, they experience varying degrees of results. They mutually influence each other to accomplish shared goals. They operate as a collective instead of a group of individuals. They exploit the unique skills of those in the team. Most importantly, each member dedicates themselves to the others in growing as a unit. They exercise the value of submission and genuine concern for others. In the present study, I described a

shepherding model that defines the characteristics needed for a pastoral leader, aligning well with a shared leadership model.

Another approach to a trinitarian view of leadership is for scholars to view the Trinity as a theocracy, not a democracy or autocracy (P. W. H. Shaw, 2006). The identity of a Christian leader rests in the person's identity and relationship with God. Upon examination, P. W. H. Shaw viewed the relationship of the Trinity as one where the persons of the Trinity delegate responsibility. The fall, however, makes a theocratic method of leadership challenging to attain. Sin corrupted man; therefore, sin corrupted man's innate theocratic delegative leadership potential. In place of this preferred model and based on fear, people took up autocratic or democratic models. The church can, however, redeem this preferred leadership method by embracing the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. Philippians 2:6–8 gives readers a new understanding of leadership, one based on humility and giving of self. This model of leadership, rooted in Scripture, poses itself as countercultural to the "business-style" leadership posited by many modern scholars. A theocratic model of leadership, redeemed by the cross, requires vulnerability from individuals with themselves and with God. P. W. H. Shaw (2006) stated, "Being free to serve and exercising empowering authority is the redemptive ideal modeled in Christ" (p. 129). When one realizes their position and identity in Christ, it allows them to exercise an empowering leadership style with vulnerability and integrity. This theological approach provides space for a servant leadership posture. Similarly, in this study, I used the person of Jesus Christ in the context of the biblical metaphor of shepherding to reveal a way forward for leaders.

Scholars currently struggle to find commonality within the field of leadership (Frank, 2006). Likewise, theologians have yet to assemble a cohesive view of leadership and administration based on practical theology. Typically, religious leaders take their scriptural assumptions and filter them through Western culture. Many have viewed leadership through the lens of heroism and liken leadership principles to those they see in high-profile individuals. Less popular in Western culture is the concept of administration. Scholarly have tended to bifurcate the concepts since administration is less attractive. Moreover, denominations are

not embracing a theological understanding, instead opting for newly formed leadership concepts, such as servant leadership. When authors embark on a theological framing of leadership, they tend to overlap cultural leadership traits upon theological foundations, such as "Jesus CEO" (Frank, 2006, p. 16). A proper theological method to establishing leadership principles runs the risk of ruling out many widely held assumptions, characteristics, and skills concerning leadership. Frank (2006) stated, "Through probing of and encounter with the biblical text is rare in this field" (p. 17). He also noted, "leadership is best developed conceptually through a continuous conversation between practice and reflection, between situations and concepts, between depth understanding of current circumstances and sophisticated perception of situations that faith communities have faced in the past" (Frank, 2006, p. 18). Through this study, I embraced Frank's call for a throughout theological understanding of leadership within the pastorate. I did so by eschewing Western presuppositions about leadership and building a framework that places leadership in the proper context of the shepherding metaphor.

The church has been in a leadership position for centuries and should strive for a solid theological foundation for leadership (Huizing, 2011a). A primary concern in the field is that most studies focus on leadership theory rather than a Christian theology of leadership. When biblical scholars do focus on a theology of leadership, they tend to be anachronistic. Scholars need to begin with theology to define leader instead of beginning with leadership to define theology. Instead of beginning with a list of traits and finding biblical justifications, scholars should allow Scripture to inform what those traits should be. Any attempt otherwise would produce a vague concept of leadership. Furthermore, scholars must pay close attention to the element of context. Because cultures can dictate successful leadership, Christians must decide what aspects of leadership are universal and contextual. Huizing (2011a) argued that "the very significance of Christian leadership is that it contains enough truth to make it relevant in any context and yet enough flexibility to use the inherent truths to build upon any context" (p. 12). Practically, a theology of leadership answers what the church can and should do and what secular paradigms answer these questions. Thereupon, the church can

mend the gaps that exist by possibly instituting a paradigm shift in leadership. Scholars should avoid splitting ecclesiological theology and leadership. Huizing (2011a) stated, “What becomes clear at this point is that Christians cannot simply rely upon general leadership theory to guide them to an expression of leadership that is Christ-like” (p. 17). The theology of the church and Christian leaders should naturally inform leadership practice. Helpful in this exercise are the traditions of the early church. Harkening to Huizing's call for leadership theology, this article began with Scripture and revealed how the early church used this mantra of shepherding leadership.

Leadership has theological, psychological, and sociological components (Kliuchnikov, 2011). Many scholars of leadership theories have proposed characteristics of good leaders. These behaviors, however, are a product of the human heart. Therein lies the need for a theological foundation for such leadership theories. As theology is the study of God and man's relationship to God, it answers the poignant question of how and why humans behave as they do and how to develop the characteristics desired by most leadership theories. Moreover, theories such as servant leadership and authentic leadership describe positive leadership attributes in their outcomes and practices. A proper theological approach to leadership determines what is favorable or not. Too often, scholars instead focus on the sociological or psychological aspects of leadership. Therefore, the field of leadership needs more articles written which first address the theological basis for leadership. Such an approach would address the heart of a leader first, including his inner motivation and desire. In the current study, I addressed such an approach to leadership, beginning with Scripture, and developed an understanding of leadership that addresses the human heart.

Theology of Pastoral Leadership

The current state of the United States and the disestablishment of mainline Protestantism requires a new approach to pastoral leadership theology (Manning & Nelson, 2020). Manning and Nelson did not provide solutions to the issue, but did present several observations and proposed questions that needed to be answered by

the modern church. Previous theologies of leadership warranted influence on social issues and the gathering of large crowds. Manning and Nelson posited a need for a new theology that produces resilient systems and protects parishioners from becoming victims of an outdated model. The context of North American Christianity requires new questions that are different from those of 100 years ago when poverty was rampant, and change was slower. The church exists now in a world of new partnerships with new contexts. This fact drastically changes the requirements of pastors and thus demands a new theology of pastoral leadership. No longer are pastors one of the most educated sects within society. The situation warrants more collaboration and dialog between pastors and civic leaders. As opposed to the 1900s, pastoral leadership affects and is affected more so by local conditions. In the present study, I suggested solutions to many of these problems in the shepherding metaphor and model.

Watkins (1991) proposed using the social sciences to establish a proper ecclesiology and understand church organization. For instance, Bonhoeffer (1963) presented a theology of pastoral leadership based on his understanding of sociological workings. This approach leads to an imperial construct of church leadership from Granfield (1973). Granfield posited a democratic approach to ecclesiology based on cybernetic theory. Peter Rudge's (1968) work in the field presented a more administrative view of church leadership. He filtered his understanding of ecclesiology through five social-science theories: the traditional, the charismatic, the classical, human relations, and the systemic; however, he relented from exploring scriptural doctrines when presenting this approach. Mady Thung (1976) also did not establish a solid theological basis for understanding ecclesiology, but instead presented a case for a new church on organizational theory and the sociology of religion. With these approaches, Watkins (1991) argued that the understandings of the church are, detached from a theological understanding of the organizational church and its leadership. He stated, "Every theologian who 'borrows' from, or enters into conversation with another discipline…runs the risk of either being seen as a 'theological imperialist,' or as an 'amateur' in the other field, and not properly a theologian" (Watkins, 1991, p. 710).

Instead of using Watkins's approach of borrowing from other sciences, the present study relied solely on Scripture and its presentation of shepherding as a framework for leadership.

Other scholars viewed Christian leadership as "fundamentally theological in its source" (Beeley, 2009, p. 11). Relying on Scripture and the teachings of Gregory of Nazianzus and Augustine of Hippo, Beeley identified theological principles of pastoral leadership and its role in establishing theology. Pastors model Christ to the church what He accomplished, acting as a representation to the body of how to act. Theology is the center of pastoral leadership in that the Christian leader is to shepherd God's flock and teach them the ways of God with integrity. The theological foundation of the pastorate finds its roots in God's character and His dealings with humans. Beeley (2009) stated, "Effective Christian leadership, then, is the direct consequence and the intended goal of the biblical covenants during the present time between Christ's first and second coming" (p. 20). Theology is the foundation for Christian leadership in the pastoral office and the pastor's responsibility. Christian leaders and pastors should establish and protect doctrine, as evidenced by the early counsels attended by the bishops of the day. Moreover, the pastor is tasked to use Scripture dutifully and exegete Scripture for the use of the ordinary person. Just as theology is the foundation for Christian leadership, so too is Scripture. Thus, pastors must study Scripture considering the church's rule of faith and communion. In this spirit, I used the foundation of Scripture and exegeted it to illuminate the primacy of the shepherding metaphor and the mandate of Christ to shepherd the church.

Ayers (2006) used the understanding of teleology to establish a theology of leadership. Similarly, Jeunnette (2010) coupled teleology with Bowen family systems theory to establish a theology of pastoral leadership and congregational care. Bowen family systems theory advanced the capacity to maintain self in relationship, or the differentiation of self. Ayers (2006) stated, "pastoral care and pastoral leadership of congregations hold in common the purpose of nurturing emergence in and of the congregation" (p. 44). Because God is about moving toward beauty (teleology), the pastor is responsible for aiding in this change.

Pastoral leadership is merely the leadership performed by a pastor and is the function of the office of a pastor. Ayers proposed the definition of pastoral leadership as "a process whereby a congregational pastor (*Theotokos*) influences a congregation to be *Theotokos*, bearer of God to each other, neighbor, and the world" (p. 77). The basis of pastoral theology is from the perspective of shepherding. If God's purpose is toward beauty, and if the pastor is the bearer of the image of God leading others to be the same, then there are several theological implications. First, the congregation should be motivated by God's draw to beauty. Second, this change is difficult and creates inhibitions in the congregation. The third assumption is that differentiation nurtures the congregation toward this new norm. The more a pastor can promote differentiation, the easier the congregation can move toward this desired outcome. The penultimate theological assumption is that the pastor's role is to nurture this emergence and assist the congregation in moving toward the beauty God desires. Last, as the pastor aids in this emergence, so does the congregation, creating an ever-growing and responding body of believers. Through this study, I advanced the proposition that the shepherding metaphor illustrated by Jesus underpins a theology of pastoral leadership.

Using the Bowen family systems theory and systems theory, Stevens (1994) explored the church as the family of God, the body of Christ, and the covenant community of Scripture. This author aimed to explore how systems theory and biblical theology are congruent. To accomplish this task, Stevens chose to focus on homology rather than analogy. In contrast to an analogy where the effects are similar, but the laws of operation between the compared are different, a homology compares to items where the laws of operation are similar. Thus, between a family and the body of Christ, "efficient causes" are different by the laws of operation are the same. The church is a family, in that it possesses family interdependence, family causation, and generational family transmission. The church is also a body, in that it possesses inside interdependence and inside corporate-ness. On the matter of inside corporate-ness, Stevens posited that Paul's ecclesiology is Christology. The church is also the bride of Christ in that it possesses covenant consummation and conditionality. These insights set forth a theology of pastoral leadership which

explains why things operate as they do within the church. For instance, Stevens (1994) stated, "biblical ecclesiology–family, body, and bride–deepens systems thinking by reflecting on both the divine and human constitution of the people of God, thus completing the synergistic interdependence" (p. 180). Although I did not explore systems theory as a basis for pastoral theology, I did put forth a concept of pastoral theology, which has the presupposition that shepherding should be the predominant filter in which pastors should operate.

A trinitarian view of God also establishes a theology of pastoral leadership (Davis, 2012). Davis (2012) argued that leadership within a Christian ministry is an

> activity by baptized Christians done in the presence of God and in partnership with God, for the purpose of bringing the people of God into deepening communion with God and with one another, and into right relationship with God's creation. (p. 115)

A pastoral theology must fit within the broader context of systematic theology. A trinitarian-ecclesial model for church leadership helps establish a shared ministry model and counter individualism in the United States and Western culture. The leadership of God's people has always been an exercise of cooperating with God and His principles. It is a partnership, just as the triune God operates in partnership and submission to each other. Christ is the image of God for man on Earth. Leaders must experience a union with Christ to exercise a genuinely theological understanding of pastoral leadership. Jesus prayed that believers would be one, and He and the Father are one. He also desired for believers to be one with Him. Communion with the Trinity is paramount to biblical leadership. Moreover, pastoral leaders must identify with the body of Christ. Davis viewed the body of Christ as interdependent, just as his view of Trinitarian theology. This approach works to counteract the Western ideal of individualism rampant in culture. A view of pastoral leadership rooted in the Trinity, union with Christ, and the body of Christ alleviates much of the risk of burnout. It also counters individualism, Pelagianism, and deism. Leadership is, therefore, a partnership with the Trinitarian God. In the current study, I juxtaposed this approach and focused primarily on the

person of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and the meaning of this leadership principle in the context of the shepherding metaphor in the Bible.

Other works noted the Trinity as the foundation of pastoral leadership theology (Akin & Pace, 2017). The role of the pastor harkens back to the character and nature of God. The pastor is a representative of God the Father. He is also a shepherd, in the sense that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. The pastor is also must show the compassion demanded of the Holy Spirit in Acts 20. God's desire for humanity helps to develop a theological understanding of the pastoral role. The pastor cares for the people, has compassion for them, organizes the church community, and leads them in their mission of accomplishing the great commission. Pastors exercise these requirements by being true to teaching the Word of God. Pastors are to minister to the congregation's needs and work to bring people into the new family of God.

Pastoral theology is a form of practical theology that determines the reasoning and function of the pastoral office (Oden, 1983). Oden (1983) stated, "As theology, pastoral theology is attentive to that knowledge of God witnessed to in Scripture, mediated through tradition, reflected upon systematic reasoning, and embodied in personal and social experience" (p. x). Pastoral disciplines, tradition, and biblical church offices all help to form a pastoral leadership theology. Scripture calls for pastors to hold a higher standard for themselves. Early church fathers used ordination to recognize the calling and qualifications of those desiring the office of pastor. Leaders can use the shepherding analogy as a helpful tool in fleshing out the pastoral tasks outlined in the Bible. Pastors are to teach, care, protect fellowship, and pray and lead others to pray for the furthering of the gospel. Oden viewed the roles of *diakonos*, *presbuteros*, and *episkopos* as all carrying the ministry of Christ differently. This three-fold division of labor aids the church in sharing the leadership of the people through oversight, pastoral guidance, and the immediate temporary needs of the church.

Kohl (2007) rooted his theological understanding of pastoral leadership in the person of Jesus. In response to the ever-growing demands of the great commission in an expanding world, Kohl posited the need for a new theological

approach to pastoral leadership. This approach would address church leadership, be mission-oriented, and put a more significant emphasis on spiritual formation. To establish this model, he looked at the person and example of Jesus. First, Jesus was a person of prayer. Thus, pastoral leadership must entail training on the spiritual discipline of prayer, and pastors should model it. Second, a theological understanding of pastoral leadership should include the concept of service, as Jesus came to serve. Third, Jesus modeled stewardship, in that he understood all belonged to God. Resources and people belonged to God and warranted care. Fourth, pastoral leadership must include a component of evangelism as that is the mission of the church. Jesus also stressed and prayed for unity, not just within the body of Christ, but with the Father as well.

Christian Approaches to Modern Leadership Theory

Practitioners have found modern leadership theories helpful in the workings of the church. Servant leadership, first posited by Greenleaf (1977) and expanded upon by Spears (1995), contains principles embraced by the church. Church leaders also tend to embrace spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003; Henson, 2014; Tourish & Tourish, 2010), authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; George, 2003; Henson, 2014), and ethical leadership (M. E. Brown & Treviño, 2006; Treviño et al., 2000). The following is a cursory exploration of Christian approaches to these theories.

Religious leaders have struggled with the concept of leadership framed in a biblical context (Kessler, 2013). Typically, practitioners and scholars move through four steps. First, they perceive a secular model of leadership to be of note. Next, they accept that the new model is acceptable to and can function within the church. The next step is assimilation, where scholars argue that the new model is visible within biblical contexts and leaders. Last, those in the field attempt to standardize the leadership model as a biblical norm. Based on their cultural context, reconstructionists can mistake taking a secular leadership model and declaring it the preferred way of leading. Kessler argued that scholars should use secular models, methods, and arguments to support the field of leadership instead of

biblical approaches. Standardizing leadership models from Scripture as the only way of operation should be avoided. The Bible does not indicate a preferred method of leading. In contrast to this article, I presented a new framing of leadership within the biblical metaphor of shepherding and made the case that this metaphor is the preferred leadership model in Scripture.

A theory receiving several critical responses is spiritual leadership theory (SLT; Mabey et al., 2017). Scholars have often coupled SLT with spirituality at work (SAW). Central to the critique of these paradigms is how scholars tend to apply Christian principles to SLT and SAW. In doing so, they misconstrue the teachings of Jesus. Too often, scholars have applied managerial characteristics to SLT. STL and SAW are better understood when one combines them with the learnings of ethical leadership. Mabey et al. (2017) offered five principles workplaces can take to embrace an ethically based SLT. First, individuals need to embrace resistance against unethical practices. This principle affects not only leaders but followers as well. Second, leaders must embrace work as a calling rather than a job. Looking to Jesus, people and organizations can embrace His example of seeking to do the will of His Father. Next, moving deeper into work as a calling, people should view situations at work through a theological lens rather than a material lens. Fourth, leaders of organizations should embrace ethical principles instead of allowing marketplace pressure to guide their decisions. Last, individuals should allow an inner transformation instead of relying on outside regulation to ensure ethical and spiritual behavior. Much like the approach of Mabey et al., I sought to understand shepherding leadership based not on the managerial pressures of today's society, but rather on the example given by Jesus.

Using the writings of Peter, Holmquist (2018) presented a new understanding of authentic leadership theory (ALT). This author stated, "ALT and Peter's instructions in 1 Peter 5:1–5 share many common elements regarding good quality leadership, such as valuing personal growth, building trust, staying true to internal standards, leading responsibly, serving willingly, sacrificing for others, and being an example" (Holmquist, 2018, p. 94). Holmquist showed how an exegesis of 1 Peter 5 heightened the characteristics of ALT to one of accountability before

God. Moreover, Peter offers additional insights valuable to ALT. Leaders are to be examples, instead of domineering over their followers. Peter implored the readers to lead in a way that maximizes shared responsibility within a community. ALT's focus is on the internal development of a leader. Peter went further to address external factors of leadership such as failure and perseverance. In each case, Holmquist pointed back to accountability and responsibility before God. In doing so, he connected a moral construct to ALT—a component previously lacking in the research.

Transformational leaders provide idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Son, 2003). Son believed that transformational leadership was superior to transactional leadership because of its embedded moral component. The transformational leader acts morally based on the social collective and at the individual level. Transformational leaders are willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of organizational and community goals. Son posited an integration of transformational leadership with biblical leadership. Jesus and Paul were examples of idealized influence as they acted as models for their followers. Joshua of the Old Testament and Paul of the New serve as examples of inspirational motivation. Jesus exampled intellectual stimulation by continually challenging the worldview of His listeners. Barnabas, whose name means son of encouragement, exemplified individualized consideration by promoting new leadership over old and encouraging participation in new opportunities.

Using an exegesis of Philippians, Gregory (2020) identified transformational leadership components coupled with biblical leadership precepts. Pastors are to be leaders of change and transformation in the people of the church. Christianity must be transformative in its power, or it is simply powerless religion. Moreover, pastors are to lead the people to ongoing transformation. Paul exemplified this type of leadership in his writings to the church in Philippi by exhorting them to personal transformation and equipping them to ongoing transformation. His letter is full of examples of vision (idealized influence) and inspirational motivation. He also intellectually stimulates the readers by

challenging them to evaluate previous teachings and their response to them. Transformational leadership has implications for pastoral leadership. Pastors are to be examples to the church. They are to exercise personal attention, or individualized consideration, to those under their care. Pastors should follow Paul's example of authenticity in their relationships with their followers. Paul modeled communicating a clear vision and giving corrective teaching to achieve an ideal reality. More importantly, Paul exuded a leadership posture that always relied on and looked to the person of Jesus. In the current study, I also focused on a construct of leadership that has the person and teachings of Jesus as the Good Shepherd at its core.

Scarborough (2010) looked more broadly at transformational leadership by evaluating Christian transformational leadership (CTL). Much like traditional transformational leadership theory, leaders employing CTL seek to transform followers by incorporating several theories such as connective leadership, courageous leadership, relational leadership, servant leadership, spiritual leadership, ternary leadership, and transforming leadership. In contrast with secular transformational leadership, by definition, CTL must be exercised by those who are of the Christian faith. Next, as with transformational leadership, CTL seeks to influence others utilizing persuasiveness. Leaders incorporating CTL should work to develop a sound strategy and cultivate shared long-term goals. Though transformational leadership integrates a moral element, CTL works to establish character within the leader. Scarborough also added vision to CTL, a component that is not consistently present in secular transformational leadership. Therefore, Scarborough (2010) presented the following as a definition of CTL:

> Christian Transformational Leadership is leadership that declares a Biblical or Christian foundation or is specifically directed to the church. It holds that a leader's vision, character, persuasiveness, and ability to strategize guarantee that he or she will be influential (or transformational) to achieve shared goals. (pp. 77–78)

Unlike Scarborough's approach, which established CTL through Christian leadership works, I focused on Scripture as the foundation of a leadership paradigm.

Building on his work, Scarborough (2011) deconstructed CTL by critiquing the facets of influence, persuasiveness, and the ability to strategize. The ability to influence others, a critical point of leadership, depends on an individual's skill in influence, persuasion, and strategic ability. Influence is complex because it arouses resistance to change or homeostasis. This resistance requires internal fortitude within the leader and elicits a high emotional cost. So, too, does persuasion stimulate struggle among a body of followers. This resistance can cause leaders to abandon pursuing that which they believe God has called them to accomplish. Unpreparedness and cessation pose the most significant external hazards for the ability to strategize. Where there is a God vision, there must also exist a God plan. Leaders must adhere to this divine strategy and not allow disorganization or the urge to quit to overwhelm their senses. Whereas Scarborough critiqued the elements of CTL that he defined, in this article, I presented elements of leadership that exist only within the construct and metaphor of shepherding.

Another popular modern leadership theory employed by Christians is servant leadership (SL; Jensen, 2017). Although SL is not a Christian-based leadership theory, scholars are quick to attribute the leadership model to that of Jesus. Specifically, the church needs to employ SL more so in the pastorate to recognize the wanted spiritual change it so desires. The Bible characters of Joseph (integrity), Moses (dedication), Nehemiah (service), Paul (faith), and John (love) exemplify a style of servant leadership the church can utilize. Moreover, Jesus demonstrated a servant leadership style by understanding people and their needs. In Matthew, Jesus stated that the greatest among the disciples must be a servant. In Mark 10:45, Jesus stated, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." Paul continued to shine a light on this characteristic of Jesus when he described how Jesus took on the form of a servant in Philippians 2. Based on his biblical observations, Jenson exclaimed that the role of the pastor needs to take up a servant leadership mindset. He stated, "Servant leadership, like shepherd

leadership, promotes a healthy relationship between the pastor and the congregation" (Jenson, 2017, p. 100). This author's observations of a pastoral servant leader include the disciplines of prayer, vision, integrity, spiritual formation, and employing the Holy Spirit. In sum, Jenson posited that servant leadership is a Christlike leadership approach. Jenson used a prominent leadership theory and attempted to validate it through scriptural references. In contrast, in this paper, I took scriptural references and extrapolated a biblical framework of leadership within the context of the shepherding metaphor.

Likewise, Omogo (2019) interviewed several pastors and found they tended to personified several servant leadership characteristics posited by Spears (1995). Those qualities they presented were commitment to the growth of people, foresight, listening, stewardship, conceptualization, healing, and building community. From this research, the author presented several implications. First, a pastor should focus on service. This quality is the hub of servant leadership in that pastors put the interests of others ahead of their own. The Good Shepherd story is about Jesus who put the flock's needs over His own. Omogo (2019) stated, "The picture of Jesus the good shepherd reminds priests constantly of the great task of service, guidance, empathy, humility, love, compassion as the great servant leader Jesus Christ demonstrated" (p. 42). The author mentioned this quality repeatedly as a component of the healing aspect of SL. Again, Omogo used a secular leadership model and used several biblical examples to justify its use. I used a different approach in this study by taking the story of the Good Shepherd, evaluating its placement in the overarching metaphor of the shepherd, and identifying leadership themes pastors can utilize.

Indeed, there exists a tension between leadership and the idea of service (Tidball, 2012). Tidball posited that the Bible is clear that leadership is needed. The Old Testament presented patriarchs, tribal leaders ruled for a season, and Moses was an "exceptional leader" (Tidball, 2012, p. 33). Moreover, the New Testament contains the Good Shepherd, the leadership of the apostles in Acts, Paul's appointment of elders, and other mentions of leadership language. At the same time, the Bible contains multiple mentions of servanthood in the leadership

position. The servant leadership model presented by Greenleaf (1970) does not entirely assuage the tensions between leadership and servanthood. For instance, leaders who make their highest priority the needs of the follower may do the organization harm. Instead, Tidball (2012) argued that the concept of a hierarchical paternal relationship is the best construct to use when rectifying the ideas of service and leadership. He noted, "The New Testament suggests that this 'parental' model is the model which should be adopted by servant-leaders" (Tidball, 2012, p. 47). Although this approach can be helpful to leaders, I utilized the consistent language of shepherding given by New Testament and Old Testament authors when referring to leadership in the current study.

Through an evaluation of Paul's letter to Titus, Henson (2018) identified the biblical values needed for ethical leadership as it pertains to the mission and vision of the organization. Paul provided a list of virtues to Titus, including prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice, love, piety, service, authenticity, integrity, and faith. Paul intended to provide a model of character for Titus to utilize in creating a healthy church culture. Above all, Paul wanted to address the character of the individual as it has profound effects on creating the organizational culture. These core values of the Christian faith embodied by the leader affect the vision and mission of an ethical organization.

The Shepherd Metaphor

Throughout Scripture, numerous authors used the metaphor of a shepherd to describe oversight or leadership in the church and the nation of Israel (Laniak, 2006; Nel, 2005; Schwenk, 2020; Skinner, 2018a). First mentioned in Psalm 23, the shepherd metaphor is one of the best-known metaphors in the Bible used to describe God and those He entrusts with His people (Nel, 2005). This concept continued in the New Testament as authors invoked the metaphor for church leadership (Gunter, 2016; Schwenk, 2020). This shepherd metaphor is only effective in describing leadership because of the innate understanding of God as a shepherd (Laniak, 2006; Nel, 2005). This next section contains a review of literature about the shepherding metaphor.

The shepherd metaphor is one of the most prevalent metaphors in Scripture, and it was widely utilized throughout the Middle East in biblical times (Bailey, 2014). God described Himself through King David as a shepherd in Psalm 23. Here, the reader learns that God or YHWY is a shepherd. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah all used the metaphor to condemn Israel's bad leaders and foretell a new shepherd that would lead Israel with justice. Jesus utilized the metaphor when speaking about Himself. Jesus was the shepherd who went after the one lost sheep in Luke 15. In Mark, He had compassion on the people and saw they were sheep without a shepherd. He described Himself as the Good Shepherd in John 10. In 1 Peter 5, Peter harkens back to the event of John 21, where Jesus asked Him to feed His sheep. Each time biblical authors used the shepherding metaphor; they align it with a component of the original Psalm 23 passage. This fact reveals that the shepherding metaphor is not just an occasional helpful analogy, but rather intentional strategic imagery meant to define the leadership of God's people. Much like Bailey's work, in this article, I illuminated the overarching shepherding metaphor in Scripture while also tying it to pastoral leadership and providing a helpful construct from the Good Shepherd passage of John 10.

Van Hecke (2012) stated that "metaphors play an important role in one's self-understanding and operative theology. Metaphors have the capacity to implicitly yet very powerfully shape human conceptualization, as cognitive linguistics have demonstrated" (p. 319). The central metaphor in understanding pastoral offices is the metaphor of the shepherd. How people view the shepherd metaphor in the context of pastoral leadership organizationally and theologically informs how they should behave. In the same manner, the lack of understanding of this shepherding metaphor in the context of pastoral leadership leads to several missteps within the pastorate. Likewise, the interpretation of the shepherd metaphor influences the role of the pastorate. For instance, the concept of pastoral charity places the metaphor in the role of service-like attitude exemplified by Jesus. In contrast, some have applied the idea of pastoral power out of the shepherd metaphor. Foucault proposed that pastoral power is concerned with all members of the flock and should be used to do good. Van Hecke observed how Foucault

interpreted pastoral power to be of caring for a flock in motion. Yahweh is a God who "walks with his people" (Van Hecke, 2012, p. 325). Furthermore, the Old Testament relies heavily on the shepherding metaphor to communicate the leadership of the people. In the New Testament, Jesus continued the metaphor by conceptualizing people as shepherds. In this article, I built upon Van Hecke's observations by doing a thorough examination of Old and New Testament passages, revealing the need to return to this biblical metaphor for leadership.

The metaphor of the shepherd was not only valuable for ancient Israel, but it is also valuable for today's culture (Laniak, 2006). Church leaders and scholars need to incorporate this biblical metaphor into church leadership models to develop a cohesive and faithful theology of biblical leadership. YHWH is a shepherd, as described by Psalm 23. These authors used the shepherd metaphor to describe leadership and kingship in the Bible and surrounding regions. Isiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah all wrote about the need for faithful shepherds to lead Israel diligently. All four gospels, in some way, referred to the shepherd. Mark addressed the sheep without a shepherd. Matthew noted that the shepherd would be struck, and the sheep would scatter. Luke wrote about the shepherds at the birth of Jesus. John included the Good Shepherd passage in John 10. Revelation described Jesus as not only the sacrificial lamb but also the shepherd of the people. In sum, the shepherd metaphor as it pertains to leadership is not only biblical but also theological. Laniak (2006) stated,

> We will find in the biblical passages discussed below more than a root metaphor of God or king as a shepherd. We will find a persistent, fully developed narrative of the divine shepherd who, with his undershepherds, looks after the needs of his vulnerable flock as they wander along the margins of settled society. (p. 41)

Like Laniak's work, I evaluated the "developed narrative" of the shepherd metaphor throughout Scripture and used the John 10 passage as the pinnacle of that metaphor in terms of pastoral leadership.

Metaphors allow one to think of a subject in terms of another (Nel, 2005). The metaphor of the shepherd in the Bible describes a shepherd/sheep or

leader/follower relationship. Nel posited that God is a shepherd, an understanding that establishes the metaphor and gives it meaning throughout Scripture. The first instance of God as shepherd and leader occurs in Psalm 23. David stated, "The Lord is my shepherd" (Ps 23:1). The author communicated a natural domain of shepherd and flock. In this case, and in other shepherd references in the Bible, the people are seen as the flock "guided by a designated leader or by God himself" (p. 88). The juxtaposition of people against the flock gives rise to "tender metaphors" of God's people. According to Nel (2005),

> The source domain entails aspects of the *status of the shepherd* as owner, head, leader, appointed/hired protector; *functions (transitive) of the shepherd,* e.g. feed, keep, pasture, water, protect, lead; *the flock itself* as asset, sheep, goats, cattle, asses, small stock; and the *actions of the flock (intransitive)* such as grace, pasture, sleep, rest, drink, be healthy, etc. (p. 90)

The shepherd metaphor does not occur in biblical isolation. The Ancient Near Eastern culture used it widely. Egyptian pharaohs held the shepherd's crook in sculptures and images. Greek tradition used the metaphor for leaders. Moreover, its wide use within the biblical context preceded the economic predominance of the shepherding role. When used to describe royalty, hearers understood the shepherd/king's role was to feed and care for the people. Thus, its use in Psalm 23 clearly indicated that God (*Yahweh*) was the shepherd and leader of the people. The crux of Nel's argument is that the Bible conceptualizes, especially in Psalm 23, God's leadership through the lens of the shepherding metaphor. In the same way, I built upon Nel's work and distinctly established the use of the shepherding metaphor throughout Scripture and its link to pastoral leadership in the New Testament.

It is important to note that the Bible specified the occupation of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve sons of Jacob, Moses, and David as shepherds (Aranoff, 2014). For Moses and David, shepherding was a preparation ground for their future leadership of the Israelites. Within Scripture and in Jewish rabbinic teachings, authors compared shepherding to the way God led the people. A shepherd is to

care, tend, feed, and protect the sheep. Sheep tend to run away. A shepherd still performs these acts despite the sheep's waywardness. So too, does God care for the nation of Israel. The Bible speaks much of shepherds offering the correct sacrifice to God from their flock. This mention elucidates the importance of worship and notes the posture of the shepherd's heart. Aranoff (2014) stated, “Emphasizing that many biblical heroes were shepherds is, fundamentally, a way of categorizing them as holy—individuals who were, in practice, capable of bringing the right kind of offering to God” (p. 38). Similarly, I used the overall metaphor of shepherding in this article to expound on why this metaphor is crucial to understanding the proper posture of leadership.

The word *pastor* merely means “to shepherd” (Kinnison, 2010). The contemporary usage of the word, however, has clouded modern understanding of what the metaphor historically meant. The modern church, especially in the west, has embraced professionalizing leadership in the pastorate. The New Testament took up the Old Testament patterns of the shepherding metaphor and applied it to the leadership of the church. Shepherds literally herded sheep. David, inspired by the Spirit, applied this metaphor to God when he stated, “Yahweh is my shepherd.” Repeatedly in the Old Testament, authors associated leadership with the shepherding metaphor, signifying that authentic leadership resided in God alone. Jesus made the declaration that He was the Good Shepherd, signifying that He was Yahweh incarnate. Moreover, the shepherd role applied to church leadership. Peter asked the elders of the church to be good shepherds. The implications of the consistent use of the shepherd imagery throughout the Old and New Testaments is that God is the true shepherd of His people. Leaders are merely under-shepherds in God’s economy. They are to be filled with the presence of God through the Spirit. Pastors are to be among the people of their congregation. Similar to Kinnison’s approach, I explored in much more detail the shepherding metaphor through the critical passages of the Old and New Testament. In addition, I presented a new model of leadership based on the John 10 passage, framed within the shepherding metaphor.

Jeremiah used the metaphor of shepherding to challenge the leaders of Israel in chapter 23 (Wessels, 2014). The term shepherd was used in daily life and a readily available image for the readers of the text. Wessels (2014) stated, "The purpose of using the shepherd metaphor is to incite the imagination of the people to think of leaders in terms of what they know shepherds do: shepherds lead, care, feed, and protect their flock" (p. 2). Old Testament authors used this metaphor because it appealed to the context in which they were writing, but it remains helpful in contemporary applications. Leaders acting as shepherds should care for the people under their protection and work to bring about righteousness and judgment. Moreover, the shepherding metaphor dictates that leaders are responsible for all leaders under their care and the structures in which they operate.

Ezekiel continued the metaphor of shepherding by addressing the leaders of Israel (Mein, 2007). Through the prophet Ezekiel, God communicated that He would restore the nation out of concern for His reputation and name. In contrast with the metaphor of shepherding in Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34 alludes to productivity and stewardship. God viewed the leaders of Israel as temporarily hired shepherds and expected them to care diligently for the flock. The accusations against the shepherds followed the model of Jeremiah 23, where God accuses Israel's shepherds of misconduct. As with the parable of the lost coin and sheep, the central character is God, who has lost something and is suffering the misgivings of bad under-shepherds. God must take control of His flock, not primarily because He cares for the sheep, but because He was concerned for His reputation. Regardless of the reasoning for God's need to restore the flock to proper order, in this study, I utilized the Ezekiel passages to reveal a continuum of the shepherding metaphor in Scripture.

Heil (1993) viewed Ezekiel's use of the shepherding metaphor as foundational for the Gospel of Matthew. Ezekiel claimed that God would shepherd His people. Matthew described Jesus as one who would shepherd the nation of Israel, and noted Jesus as having compassion for the people as sheep without a shepherd. Ezekiel laments that the sheep have been neglected and lacked care. Moreover, Jesus sent the disciples out to the lost sheep of Israel. At the same time,

the disciples went out as sheep among wolves. Ezekiel 34 declared the immoral leaders of Israel as false shepherds who acted more like predators than shepherds. Again, Jesus is sent to only the lost sheep of Israel and tells the parable of the lost sheep. Overall, the shepherding metaphor used by Ezekiel and first established by David is foundational for the understanding of the new kingdom that Jesus established.

Scholars have also applied the same treatment of the Ezekiel shepherd metaphor to that of pastoral care in the manner of Jesus (Rodgers, 2010). God had asked the prophets of Israel to care for the people as shepherds care for the sheep. The leaders broke this command; therefore, Ezekiel referred to the leaders and bad shepherds. The leaders broke their covenant with God, resulting in God establishing a new covenant and leadership over the people. God determined that He would be the shepherd of the sheep of Israel. Rodgers (2010) stated, "The promise of covenant is directly preceded by the promise of a new shepherd. God's shepherding nature, revealed here in Ezekiel is given a broader perspective in the incarnation of God's Son, the good shepherd" (p. 8). The shepherd metaphor of God applies to the person of Jesus as the God-shepherd incarnate. This view of God as a shepherd has direct implications on pastoral theology and its application. God shepherds His people and asks pastors to do the same. Christ cared for the lost sheep of Israel and asked His church to care for the sheep of His kingdom. Rodgers (2010) noted, "If we do not find a theology of pastoral care in the person and work of Christ, then we do not find a truly pastoral or Christian care" (p. 13). In summary, the metaphor of shepherding has its roots in the conception of God is a shepherd of His people. This metaphor became incarnate in Christ. Thus, any concept of pastoral care must find its bearings in the person of Jesus Christ. The shepherd metaphor is paramount to understanding pastoral ministry. In this study, I expounded on this understanding by revealing an overall shepherd metaphor arc in Scripture which culminated in the person of Jesus. Then using the person of Jesus, I revealed characteristics within the John 10 passage that can be actionable in pastoral ministry.

Zechariah continued to the shepherding metaphor when he contrasted a good shepherd and a foolish shepherd (Gan, 2010). Gan described Yahweh as the Good Shepherd who cares and tends for the sheep. Throughout the Bible, the shepherd metaphor applied to the shepherd-king and the shepherd-God. The shepherd-king metaphor described a person who is a leader of the people. He is to feed, provide, and protect the flock. This person could be a priest, prophet, or king. The shepherd-God metaphor described a God who delivered the people from distressing situations. The shepherd-God gave over the flock to poor shepherds, a portion of the shepherd metaphor that is difficult to incorporate into the overall metaphor. In this article, I was not interested in the specificity of the Old Testament metaphors in the sense of discovering shepherding characteristics. Instead, I focused on the fact that shepherding was and is the mandate for leadership and pull from the person of Jesus the characteristics required of the role.

Jesus used the shepherding metaphor to communicate His relationship with those who would follow Him (Köstenberger, 2002). This use of the shepherding metaphor, however, was made possible by an Old Testament foundation. The shepherd metaphor was first applied to God, as seen in both books of Samuel. Ezekiel addressed the bad and good shepherds of the nation of Israel. Zechariah prophesied about a Good Shepherd who would shepherd the flock doomed to slaughter. He spoke of a shepherd that would be pierced and smitten (Zech 12:12; 13:7). Moreover, the Apocrypha contains books that spoke of God as a shepherd. These pre-Messianic mentions of a shepherd leader came to a climax in the person of Jesus. Köstenberger (2002) stated,

> Jesus' appropriation of eschatological shepherd imagery regarding himself thus places him in an antithetical relationship with the irresponsible shepherds of Israel who were the cause of Israel's exile. Jesus' coming can be seen as the resolution and the final bringing home of the theological lessons that the exile was designed to teach the Jews…By employing scriptural shepherd motifs, Jesus uses typology along salvation-historical lines: Israel’s past shepherds are shown to correspond to the Jewish leaders

> of Jesus' day, while the Davidic deliverer of exilic prophecy finds its antitype in Jesus the Messiah. (p. 90)

This observation by Köstenberger illuminated the dire importance of returning to this shepherding metaphor when conceptualizing leadership within the church–a task I embraced in presenting this research.

Jesus continued the shepherding metaphor in John 10 when he declared Himself "The Good Shepherd" (Pias Kahlasi, 2015). Familiar in the socioeconomics of the times, shepherding would have communicated clearly to the hearers of Jesus' message. In the passage of John 10, Jesus was continuing his address to the Pharisees from John 9:40. The OT metaphor of the shepherd in Psalms and Ezekiel established a clear understanding of governance and power. Therefore, Jesus' use of the metaphor connected well to the hearers as an antithesis to the poor leadership of the current spiritual leaders. Jesus declared himself as the embodiment of the shepherd spoken of in Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34. Pias Kahlasi posited that the shepherd metaphor is also projected onto the church leaders as the bishop and priest are to act in a shepherd role. In this study, I continued applying the shepherd metaphor presented by Pias Kahlasi by revealing the metaphor's consistency across multiple passages and extrapolating actionable characteristics from the John 10 passage.

Jesus took the shepherding and applied it to Himself in John 10 (Quasten, 1948a). This passage has been challenging to interpret as there is controversy about whether it is a parable or merely allegory. Quasten refuted the allegorical assumption and argued a parable application based on the structure, translation, context within Scripture, and context within the culture to establish this argument. The hill country of Israel made it suitable for the occupation of shepherding. Each person within earshot of Jesus' teaching would have been familiar with the shepherding role based on their daily observations.

Quasten (1948b) continued his observation of the parable of the Good Shepherd by exploring its possible interpretation and application. First, the shepherd acts as a door and protector. This observation contrasts with the concept of the robber, who comes to destroy the flock. Second, there exists within the

pericope an intimate relationship between the sheep and shepherd. This intimacy is in direct comparison to the relationship between the people and the Pharisees. Jesus also contrasted Himself as the Good Shepherd to the hireling, who does not care for the flock. Moreover, the John 10 passage "must presuppose the existence of the later Christian community" (Quasten, 1948b, p. 166). Quasten (1948b) also stated, "The image of Jesus, the Shepherd, has ever been especially familiar to the world of Christian ideas from its very beginning" (p. 169). My exploration of the John 10 passage borrowed from Quasten's observations while also using various other shepherding metaphor Scriptures. In doing so, I aimed to establish a clear understanding of shepherding as a larger construct to place leadership.

In contrast, Skinner (2018a) identified the Good Shepherd not as a parable, in the sense of Synoptic parables, but rather a figure of speech. Whereas parables tended to leave hearers confused about the meaning, John's treatment of the gospel and preliminary passages leaves the reader no question that Jesus is the Good Shepherd and that He lays down His life for the sheep. Skinner noted, though, that the metaphor of the Good Shepherd has limits in that Jesus lays down His life. The point of the pericope would only leave the flock scattered and more at risk than before. Instead, Jesus wanted to contrast the ideas of thief versus shepherd, present Himself as the door for the sheep, and establish Himself as the Good Shepherd. Moreover, the socio-economic context in which Jesus declared these truths would have directly correlated to those hearing the message. These observations of Skinner were essential backdrops to the overall thrust of this paper, in that the Good Shepherd is indeed a metaphor continued from and established in OT teachings.

Like Skinner (2018a), Hylen (2016) explored the limits of the Good Shepherd metaphor in John 10. John relied on the "conventions of culture" to establish the meaning of Jesus' words as the Good Shepherd (Hylen, 2016, p. 385). In doing so, John communicated that Jesus was, in fact leading the sheep and protecting them from outside predators. To the hearers of the metaphor, the story would have evoked images of the risks of shepherding. Hylen (2016) stated, "The shepherd metaphor is already an important expression of political and spiritual

leadership in Jewish tradition, which also contrasts the faithful shepherds with the bad one" (p. 389). The purpose of the article was to communicate an overall theme of risk to the shepherd. This approach applies the shepherd metaphor now upon the disciples. Just as Jesus laid down His life, He expected the disciples to do the same. Skinner's approach to the Good Shepherd metaphor is unique and helpful in understanding the John 10 passage. In this study, I incorporated a portion of this treatment of the John 10 passage while applying it to the concept of leadership.

Neyrey (2001) offered a slightly different approach to the John 10 passage by interpreting the Greek adjective καλός as "noble" instead of "good." Καλός can be translated as "noble," "ideal," "model," "true," or "good." The opposite of καλός is shame. This fact means that the true meaning of the word is noble, as it reflects the realm of honor and shame. The counter to this approach is the realm of good versus evil. Jesus is the noble shepherd because he laid down His life for the sheep, and He knows the sheep. Jesus died a noble death for the sake of His flock. There are seven criteria from Greek literature that identify a noble death. Jesus met all of these in the Gospel of John. Jesus then, in John 21, commissions Peter to be a shepherd of the people. Neyrey's treatment of John 10 does not affect my approach to this passage. In this article, I presented John 10 through the lens of the Old Testament shepherding metaphor and detailed how John 10 looks forward to the coming church.

Jooli (2019) also approached John 10 through the lens of Jesus, the noble shepherd, and presented a view of John 10 as an example of leadership for the modern church. Greek tradition communicated through funeral orations examples of a noble death. Jesus met these characteristics in His sacrifice on the cross. Jooli believed that the John 10 passage serves as a model for future leaders as the shepherd language continued in the latter portions of the book. These characteristics serve as a basis for the content for good leadership. Good leadership also requires character and competence. A good shepherd is visionary, relational, invested, sacrificial, providing, trustworthy, and an example. These leadership principles can apply to the modern context of Nigerian challenges. This approach from Jooli is similar in its thrust, yet different in its approach to the current study.

One should expect to find a more comprehensive establishment of the shepherd metaphor through a socio-rhetorical analysis. Moreover, I presented leadership in the context of shepherding, instead of establishing shepherding in the context of leadership.

The metaphor of shepherding communicated leadership and royalty for much of Israel's history (Varhaug, 2019). Throughout history, it waned from widespread use. In the context of the biblical passages, "to rule was to pasture" (Varhaug, 2019, p. 16). Shepherding was central in the historical contexts of Abraham, Moses, and David. David used "Yahweh is my shepherd" to indicate his relationship with His ruler. Not only was the shepherd metaphor prominent in Israeli culture, but it was also present in Egyptian and Assyrian culture. Moreover, it was a central metaphor to the "ruling class identify" (Varhaug, 2019, p. 16). Greek and Roman culture also used the metaphor, but not in the positive forms used by Scripture. As history progressed, the shepherding metaphor gave way to new and contextual metaphors for leadership. I put forth in this article the argument that this metaphor needs to be reexamined and reapplied to our modern culture of leadership.

In a recent evaluation of shepherding, Bell (2020) utilized the metaphor to understand the quality of administration in leadership. A prime biblical example of administration through shepherd leadership is in the person of Moses. Moses first had to begin with preparation and vision through a close personal relationship with God. He regularly met with God and listened and enacted the tasks that God wanted him to perform. Moses also partnered with Aaron in administrating leadership to the nation of Israel. He needed assistance in doing all God had asked of him to accomplish and utilized others with different skillsets. Moses had goals for the nation and made decisions according to those goals when facing the adversary of Pharaoh. Moses learned from Jethro that he needed to delegate responsibilities to others to spread his influence across the nation. Moses also embarked on succession planning by bringing in close Joshua and mentoring him to take over the leadership role over Israel upon his passing. Bell showed these examples to be characteristics of the administrative aspects of the shepherding role.

In contrast to Bell, I utilized John 10 to extrapolate shepherding principles as exampled by Jesus.

Over time, the pastoral identity has been waning in the United States within Protestantism (Tara, 2020). Previously recognized as an office that cares for the welfare of people, the modern pastoral role identifies more as a visionary entrepreneur running a corporation. This shift in identity has coincided with the evolution of the megachurch movement in the United States. These megachurches tend to emphasize pastors as leaders rather than shepherds. This focus presents several ecclesial issues, including a singular focus on evangelism instead of a holistic strategy toward pastoral care. The entrepreneurial approach produces pastors whose primary focus is managing and leading the organization. Instead, the pastor needs to have personal knowledge of the congregation's needs to inform the teaching preaching ministry of the church. Moreover, an entrepreneurial approach that focuses primarily on numbers growth can mask spiritual immaturity. In the present article, I embraced Tara's challenge for a shepherd-focused approach to pastoral leadership by presenting an actionable framework based on Jesus' John 10 passage of the Good Shepherd.

Pastoral Leadership

Many have viewed the office of the pastor as exercising needed leadership in the church (Litfin, 1982). Initially, elders held the responsibility of leading the congregation. Moreover, there are several roles that pastors need to embrace to be effective in ministry. Scholars have revealed that leadership, in general, can be situational (Hersey & Blanchard, 1974). Pastoral leadership requires adapting to situational roles to face situational challenges (Nauss, 1995). This fact also requires pastors to recognize the need for differing skills (Pickens, 2015). In this section, I review what defines the pastoral office, who may have held this office, skills, and styles needed, and the situational adaptation that the pastoral office requires.

Pastoral Office

Scholars have debated whether the church functions with two offices (bishop/elder and deacon) or three (bishop, elder, and deacon; Carson, 2015). Most

high church traditions hold to a three-fold construct of church governance. Modern vernacular tends to use bishop more of an office than a function. The terms overseer, elder, and pastor contain overlapping responsibilities. The qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3 defined the character of those who hold these offices. Scholars also debate the existence of a plurality of elders versus a singular entity and the legitimacy of women holding the role. Carson noted that church leaders tend to overlook the function of overseers in favor of these other debates. The elder/pastor/overseer can exercise leadership control over the church through the ministry of teaching and preaching. The key to this role is oversight. As Carson (2015) stated,

> As important and central as is the ministry of the Word of God, the thoughtful pastor/elder/overseer will devote time and energy to casting vision, figuring out the steps for getting there, building the teams and structures needed for discharging ministry and training others, building others up, thinking through the various ways in which the gospel can be taught at multiple levels to multiple groups within the church, how to extend faithful evangelism and church planting, how to engage the surrounding world as faithful believers, and much more. (p. 197)

In this study, I used the terms elder, overseer, bishop, and pastor interchangeably.

Pastoral leadership is a necessary function for successful church growth (Oludele, 2011). The pastor's role is to act as the spiritual head of the church and facilitate the congregation's spiritual growth and the expansion of the church. Pastors are to perform these functions without scheming to improve their advancement and prestige; however, many pastors act as demigods in their kingdom. Pastoral leadership is not a position of authority, a personality trait, or lording over others. Oludele posited that autocratic pastoral leadership shares qualities with the sheep-shepherd leadership style. Instead, pastors should be enablers, equippers, guides, and initiators. Pastoral leaders need to set achievable goals, accept responsibility, and lead the church in decision-making.

The concept of leadership in the early church primarily rested with the role of the elder (Elliott, 2001). The elder was a person who was not merely more aged

than their peers, but was more mature than their peers in their faith. Peter refers to these individuals in 1 Peter 5 as "fellow elders," communicating the brotherhood and cooperation Peter wished to establish. The Bible refers to the Christian community as the flock of God. Therefore, Scripture asks the elder to shepherd this flock entrusted to them. The elder was to exercise oversight, act as a guardian, and steward those entrusted to them. The idea of the role of pastor comes from the act (*poimainein)* that the elders (*presbyteroi*) performed in overseeing (*episkopous*) the flock of God. The combination of the books of 1 Peter and Acts provide evidence of an early tradition that the three words *presbyteroi*, *poimainein*, and *episkopous* were used synonymously to designated Christian leaders in the church. The Pauline letters of Titus and 1 Timothy reinforce this idea. Later in church tradition, Ignatius and the bishop of Antioch distinguished between roles, titles, and statuses and shifted the status and role of *episkopos* to chief among elders. Thereby, the term *episkopos* became "bishop" rather than "overseer." Still, elders are shepherds in that they are shepherding (*poimainein*) the flock that God has entrusted to them. The idea of the role of pastor has evolved in a process over time, as seen in 1 Peter, Acts, Timothy, Titus, 1 Clement, Hermas, Didache, and the writings of Ignatius. I presented the concept of shepherding as the primary means of communicating leadership throughout the Bible and the continued establishment of the metaphor in the senior pastor position.

Churches typically use ordination to confer recognized leadership abilities on bishops, pastors, and deacons (Toews, 2004). This act finds its foundation in the interpretation of 1 Timothy 4:14, where Paul spoke about confirming Timothy's calling via the laying on of hands. The gift that Paul highlighted within Timothy was brought about by prophecy, according to Paul. Toews believed that Timothy was, in fact, not the pastor of the church, nor was the laying on of hands deemed to be ordination. What is clear, however, is that Paul cautioned Timothy on selecting church leaders, ensuring they were qualified. Acts 6:6 and 13:3 indicate affirmation of ministerial leaders by community selection. The laying on of hands was a confirmation of a gift the community believed the individual already possessed. Christ gave to the church ministers, whose job was to organize the gifts within the

body, making the church as strong as possible. The gifts necessary to minister to the church were already present in the person, not transferred by others. In sum, Toews based his theology of pastoral leadership on the understanding that God calls the person, and others confirm their qualifications and gifts as necessary. He did not believe that ordination had any biblical foundation.

Johns (2004) differed from Toews (2004) by arguing that ordination is necessary based on the tradition of the church. Johns (2004) described, "Ordination for ministry through the laying on of hands as practiced in the church is a proper and legitimate extension of the biblical witness" (p. 38). Ordination is a formal process by which the church recognizes the gift of pastoring in a person. It is a means of setting apart one for the leading of the church. The different viewpoints rest in the opinion of the word *ordination*. Whereas Toews (2004) saw the word to hold sacerdotal connotations and should therefore cease in function, Johns (2004) argued that the early church must have had the means to vet potential church leaders. Both wish to eliminate a distinction between laity and clergy. Both agree that the idea of calling is out of step with Scripture because God calls all to ministry. The pastoral role is legitimate and needed. It is different from other gifts presented in the Bible; however, it is another gift among many. For the present article, the argument did not rest on how a pastor becomes the head of the church, but rather what posture and characteristics a pastor should embody.

There is a difference between calling and vocation (Christopherson, 1994). Some have recognized a tension between professionalizing the occupation of a pastor (vocation) and the need to improve pastoral skills. It is the calling that individuals use as a personal conviction to motivate and sustain themselves going forward. The church has no way of legitimately validating whether that calling on a person has occurred. It is a personal conviction, but it does provide "a kind of moral compass to guide" the pastor through a changing landscape (Christopherson, 1994, p. 222). It is transcendent. Christopherson (1994) also stated, "the immediate problem for clergy is that their vocation must be discovered and developed within a culture of professionalism, a milieu dominated by the secular norms and individualistic values of the middle-class career" (p. 223). The Bible does not

relegate ministry to only the clergy; however, the pastor does have ultimate responsibility and must exercise a clear division of labor within the church. A pastor must be relational, exercise good preaching, and exert authority over the flock.

Some scholars have questioned whether there is a specific ministerial office to which people can be called (Root, 1984). The difficulty in determining church offices and structures is that there is no specific New Testament church structure. What is known is that all church communities of the New Testament had some sort of leadership structure. The Bible entrusts leadership to apostles, prophets, teachers, bishops, and elders. Paul described himself as having authority. His authority, however, was not absolute. He encouraged instead of ordering. He focused his methods on exhortations, not demands. Root (1984) argued that there should not be exclusivity in authority, but rather "all ministry should be mutual ministry" (p. 162). The modern pastor should take up the activities required of all leadership offices of the New Testament: witness, leadership, and pastoral care. In the current study, one should find that the qualities entailed in the shepherding metaphor include these three elements.

In the early years of the church, overseers and elders emerged as the primary leaders of the church (Jones, 2009). Jones argued, though, that these were not the ones asked to lead as shepherds; this role belongs to bishops and presbyters. According to Scripture, all believers are "a holy priesthood" (1 Pet 2:5). Each person within that priesthood receives a special grace to operate with a spiritual gift. The pastors of the church operate within this grace to lead the people. The Episcopal church identifies these pastors as bishops through the act of ordination. These pastors are to proclaim the word, administer sacraments, and pronounce blessings on the church. Jones saw bishops and presbyters as leaders. In the current study, I presented the argument that God called elders to shepherd His people, and thus, should operate within a manner exampled by Jesus in John 10.

A different view of church leadership structure is that of congregationalism (Stricker, 2011). The early church did not operate with a sole pastor at the helm of local bodies. The church in Rome possessed a board of bishops, with Clement as a

member. The *Didache* showed a pattern away from a shared leadership system to a more hierarchal structure with bishops and deacons. Ignatius of Antioch described himself as a bishop. Cyprian of Carthage continued the drift toward a hierarchal system by claiming there must be a bishop or there would not be unity. By the time Constantine converted, the seeds were already present for a firm shift away from shared leadership to a hierarchal structure—a monarchic Episcopacy. Stricker's conclusion was that monarchic leadership was not always the case in the church. Instead, there needs to be a returning to leadership that aims to serve, not leadership that strives to gain more power. Through this study, I sought answers to the congregationalism versus monarchism debate. The model of shepherding presented by Jesus in John 10 and framed in the conceptual shepherding metaphor arc of Scripture seeks to serve, care for, and protect the flock.

Rosalita (2013) looked at the roles of pastors, leaders, and elders of the church. Individuals who accept the teachings of Jesus are grafted into the body through the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had concern for these individuals and asked Peter to feed the sheep. From that moment in John 21, a pattern of placing someone over a group of believers to care and lead them emerged. Paul appointed elders in several of the churches he founded. She viewed the role of the elder as one who was to shepherd the local church or pastor them. The church's leadership consists of pastors, elders, and the laity of the church. In essence, the elders and leaders are, in fact, pastors of the church. Rosalita (2013) noted, "Calvin uses the term *elder* synonymously and interchangeably to describe the positions of bishop, minister, pastor, and presbyter" (p. 54). In this study, I used this understanding to present a method of shepherding which applies to pastors and elders alike.

An exploration of 1, 2, and 3 John revealed some pertinent insights into the role of elder and pastor (Ogereau, 2009). John was an elder that provided care and oversight for the church. He took a balanced approach by showing gentle love while protecting the flock against heresies. The modern Western culture of church leadership views the pastor as a type of entrepreneur wielding tremendous power. Diotrephes possessed an autocratic attituded. John wished to contrast that leadership style with that of Demetrius. This juxtaposition seems to suggest that

John's position was not that Diotrephes had too much power, but instead that he wielded that power in an unholy way. Moreover, John wielded power in his dealings with the church as well. In this article, I proposed a model for leadership within the church, framed by an overall concept of shepherding—a model that addresses how to wield power possessed by church leaders.

Pastoral Skills and Styles

Jesus modeled a new way of imagining the Old Testament roles of priest, teacher, and prophet (Mavis, 1947). During the ministry of Jesus, the modern religious ministries were "dominated by impersonal attitudes" (Mavis, 1947, p. 357). Priests were too concerned about rites and less concerned about the people. The teachers, too, were more concerned about concepts rather than life-change. Jesus highlighted the failures of each of these groups and presented a new way forward for pastoral care. This new way forward entailed an emphasis on personal service and humility. It began with a love for people and a priority on surrounding Himself with those who needed healing and growth. Jesus did not seclude Himself from the common person, and actively considered how He could serve and meet the needs of others. Mavis presented a new model which imagines pastors as prayerful intercessors, teachers, prophets who determine God's will, and individuals concerned with the needs of others.

A pastor's theological understanding of pastoral leadership determines what leadership ideology they will embody (Shupe & Wood, 1973). Their denominational affiliations and affinity groups reinforce this theological understanding. They shared a leadership style with their close peers and group beliefs. Moreover, their personal-scriptural interpretations can lead to dissension between themselves and their peer groups. There also exists a schism between the clergy and laity, in that the clergy felt the congregation tended not to support their mission when the congregation felt they were largely behind it. In sum, if one wanted to understand the pastoral style of an individual, a good resource would be to evaluate their closest peers and denominational affiliation.

The pastoral role requires pastors to embrace several skills to be effective (Pickens, 2015). Some of these skills, such as self-care and balancing work-life demands, are required to prevent pastoral burnout and overexposure. Congregations expect their pastors to be a mouthpiece for God. This attitude prevents many pastors from feeling authentic in their walk with God before the church. Similarly, pastors found vulnerability difficult among a growing and diverse group of people. All these factors contributed to the aspect of burnout within the pastoral office. The skills presented were critical in helping pastors alleviate the stressors of the role and find a healthier balance between the vocation of pastor, personal health, and caring for their family. Pastors can exercise self-care by personal discipline in devotions, participating in personal hobbies, and embracing community in the form of close friendships, family relationships, and counseling. By definition, pastoral leadership requires an engagement and cooperation between the pastor and the parishioners. Pickens described this relationship as one between sheep and shepherd. Related to this relationship, the pastor requires skills such as pastoral presence, communication, and administration. The totality of these skills does not indicate successful ministry, however. Scholars have tended to measure the effectiveness of these skills by congregational size, growth rate, total revenue, and the pastor's tenure. In sum, consensus revealed that most pastors and counselors believed the professional success of a thriving church was secondary to the goal of a close and healthy family life. In the current study, I discussed the necessary skills to operate within the pastoral office.

The New Testament presented the roles of pastor and teacher in tandem (Aitken, 2009). Peter asked the elders to tend to the flock of God's people. Pastoral leadership requires a pastor to lead the congregation. Modern attempts at Christian leadership have posited the person of Jesus as an example of how leadership should look. The issue with this approach is that it can be anachronistic. Scholars have selected isolated examples from Jesus and used them to prooftext a particular style of leadership. Instead, approaches to pastoral leadership need to take up the texts within their cultural context. Paul's letters, however, do not give enough information to determine what is involved in leadership. What is known is that the

early church bodies, separated geographically, were devoted to Jesus's teaching, and supporting one another. Early church leaders relied on Jesus' teaching and attempted to embody His example of leadership. Hence, Peter asked the elders to shepherd the flock, and Paul noted that there were pastors and teachers. Pastoring involved shepherding and Jesus exampled this leadership motif well.

Good leadership is required to produce effective ministry outcomes. Just as leaders have a leadership style, so do pastors (Nauss, 1989). Certain functions require specific leadership styles. The ministry function survey (MFS) identifies the preacher-priest, administrator, evangelist, visitor-counselor, community involved, teacher, and personal model functions for pastors. Moreover, each function has a typical set of leadership behaviors that are common for that style. For instance, pastors can use "professional (persuasive and cool under pressure) and personal approaches (relations-oriented, integrative, and cool under pressure, mixed with a slight use of the public image presentation. He also serves as a manager in a minor capacity" (Nauss, 1989, p. 64). A more administrative pastor uses these functions, but in a different balance. The behaviors within these functions can include persuasiveness, an integrative approach, goal orientation, controlling, and task orientation. The most effective pastors utilize as many of the leader behaviors as possible, and the leader behaviors proved to be more predictive of overall ministerial effectiveness than did function. One should garner from this present research similar leader behaviors framed within the context of the shepherding metaphor.

The pastoral style of an individual has profound effects on congregational vitality (Wollschleger, 2018). Pastors who are decisive, but collaborative tend to lead healthier congregations. The counter-style to this approach is a hands-off approach. Pastors need to embrace the skill of motivating people to facilitate a decisive and collaborative approach. Pastors who embrace a hands-off approach, preferring instead to ask congregants to make decisions, experience lower levels of congregational vitality. Pastoral leadership can be entrepreneurial and evangelical, bureaucratic and liberal, or charismatic. Another approach to categorizing pastoral leadership includes four styles: top-down, collaborative, congregational, and

empowering. The difference between the congregational and empowering styles is that the pastor seeks to influence the congregational leadership structure and empower the lay leaders in the latter construct. The second style (collaborative) had the most significant impact on congregational health. The author of this study measured congregational vitality by congregational growth. In contrast, I presented characteristics of a shepherd-leader from John 10 instead of conceptualizing leadership from modern perspectives.

Among the skills needed for pastoral leadership is that of self-watch (St. John, 1998). St. John (1998) stated, "People long for a shepherd who can nurture them and point them to the Savior and the Savior's love" (p. 93). As a shepherd, Augustine understood the need to evaluate oneself and improve the inner spiritual condition. To accomplish this task, Augustine asked for a 3-month reprieve to evaluate, learn, and grow. He sought to be accountable to God, himself, and others. His example serves as a model for pastoral self-care. This framework includes spending time in prayer, investing in Scripture, confession to God, and others. These tasks enable a pastor to exercise their calling of a shepherd more effectively. To take care of the flock, the shepherd must first take care of themselves.

Pastoral Roles and Situational Adaptation

One of the most prominent roles that a pastor must assume is that of the primary communicator (Britton, 2009). To be a good communicator, one must first ask several questions. Britton (2009) proposed, "What do we want to say? What are the core convictions of our faith? How does it begin? To where does it lead" (p. 94)? Asking questions is an act of leadership. Doing so prepares the pastor to determine what comes forth from the pulpit. Jesus was a master questioner. For instance, Matthew wrote, "'But you,' he asked them, 'who do you say that I am?'" (Matt 16:15). God asked questions of Adam and Eve in the garden, "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9). Knowing the questions allows a pastor to prepare the people for the answer. Britton (2009) stated:

> Effective ministry is ultimately depending upon having something to say…A pastor has frequent if not almost continuous occasions to exercise

> leadership in the interrogative mode by taking advantage of every opportunity to speak thoughtfully and carefully about how people, both individually and corporately, might be shaped by the gospel message. (p. 102)

The role of having something to say links back to the interrogative model presented by Jesus. Thus, a pastoral role presented by the example of Jesus asks good questions and prepares careful messages that address those questions.

In the efforts of compiling the various and varied roles posited by scholars, Litfin (1982) proposed that the role of *completer* captures most aspects required. The pastor is a member of the congregation and should only lead in as his gifts and abilities enable him. Litfin argued that though the shepherd model is the biblical model, it is not a complete model for pastoral ministry, as Paul uses *elder* and *overseer*. Hence, Litfin believed the shepherd imagery is insufficient as a comprehensive model and opted for a secular model to supplement the pastoral role. His choice for inspiration is that of Schutz, who first proposed *completer* as the primary role leadership role. According to Litfin, as the congregational leader, the pastor is to complete what is lacking in the church members. This completing role includes leadership, diagnosis of areas lacking, knowing the state of the flock and where their strengths lie, equipping the flock, and empowering people to lead. The implications of this study stated that pastors should allow members to serve, raise up leadership, equip, and recognize and supplement areas that need buttressing within the church. In contrast with Litfin's findings, I presented shepherding as the primary model for leaders and a complete and sufficient model for pastoral leadership.

Scholars have described the pastoral role as shepherd-teacher (Siew, 2013). The shepherd-teacher posture was one that Jesus Himself modeled. Siew posited that Jesus' example divided into shepherd-leader and shepherd-teacher. As a shepherd-leader, the pastor should be focused on team-oriented leadership and be scripture-focused. As shepherd-leader, the pastor is responsible for the doctrine and culture of the congregation. In addition, the pastor must model worship to the congregation. They must also be relational with the congregation and be involved

in their lives. Moreover, a shepherd-teacher pastor teaches the gospel and the components of sharing their faith. Siew argued that the shepherd-leader and shepherd-teacher are the primary vocations of the pastor. This calling and vocation cannot be overshadowed by the daily demands of the pastor in running the church organization.

Recognizing the different roles pastors must take on in leading their congregations, Cormode (2002) suggested three primary roles: gardener, builder, and shepherd. This author's basic assumption is that in leadership studies, the leader makes difficult decisions to get things accomplished. Likewise, for pastors, there are leadership assumptions that one is either a builder and making decisions or a shepherd, empowering others to make decisions. The argument made is that these roles only work in specific situations and are not widely compelling enough. The gap between these two roles is where situations require adaptive leadership. Herein lies the need for a third role for the pastorate as a gardener. The first role, builder, is the decision-making entity that inspires participation and action by making decisions and building systems in which the church operates. In sum, the builder sets goals for the organization and leads toward those goals. The shepherding role inspires, not by making decisions and setting goals, but rather by empowering people. The individual in this role assesses people's gifts and trains them for their purpose. Cormode argued that these roles fail because of ambiguity and uncertainty. Adaptive change, however, is utilized when a pastor takes on the role of a gardener. A gardener is a meaning-making role that inspires by connecting people to the purpose of their role. A gardener is a "theological interpreter" who points people to God using rituals, stories, and culture builders. Cormode was not stating that builders and shepherds are not needed. Instead, he showed how each was biblically supported. This author revealed that the two roles alone are incomplete and need the third gardener role. In contrast with Cormode, I presented shepherding as a complete and sufficient role without need of other perceived pastoral metaphors in this study.

Continuing the theme of identifying different yet compilatory roles of pastors, Manala (2010) advanced the pastor as a leader, manager, and servant. The

author envisioned the pastoral role as a triad of roles, each like the other. Leader, manager, and servant are the primary roles of the pastor, and each must work in concert with the other. First, Manala proposed the pastor as a Christian leader. The pastor symbolizes the head of the local church body. As the leader, the pastor must share the stage and recognition, leadership responsibilities, the authority of leadership, and the control of the church system. This author also suggested the pastor as a leader through intentionality, risk-taking, modeling, enabling, and limit-setting, meaning setting boundaries for the church and church members. Last, as a servant leader, the pastor is meant to challenge the hierarchical view of leadership and personify the servant leadership principles conceived by Ogden (1990):

- People in the highest positions of authority have the greatest obligation to serve.
- Servant leadership is rooted in relationships, not coercion.
- Servant leadership naturally seeks to support, not to control.
- Servant leaders shine the spotlight of recognition on those with whom they share leadership.
- Servant leaders are embarrassed by titles and the trappings of status.
- Servant leaders' authority is recognized on the basis of their character in Christ, not on the position or office that is held. (p. 176)

Manala's (2010) intention was to communicate the necessity of each role within the pastorate, while also revealing that the pastor should not have a “monopoly of control over the church” (p. 5). As a church manager, the pastor helps plan, manage, lead, and control or evaluate organizational effectiveness. In the current article, I aimed to present shepherding as the main category and identifier of pastoral leadership—which, in turn, informs the roles such as Manala presented.

Situational awareness and learning are necessary for pastors to grow in their leadership roles (McKenna et al., 2007). Within a pastor's life, critical developmental events occur, providing opportunities for pastors to learn and grow. This assumption finds its basis in the ability of the pastor first to identify situational factors which provide learning opportunities. Based on the study of McKenna et al., these situational factors are drawing on God and others, learning from results,

stepping to the edge of comfort, managing the ministry, and creating change. Pastors who can learn from their environment most likely are embracing these situational factors in their careers. Moreover, personal factors play an essential role in capitalizing on these situational factors. The more the pastor embodies the personal strategies identified by McKenna et al., the more likely they can learn from their situations and adapt their leadership. These personal strategies are learning and development, establish and manage relationships, personal character and values, and relying on faith and calling. Coupled together, situational factors and personal implications are necessary for pastors as leaders to continue to develop. For instance, McKenna et al. posited that pastors must build and maintain a learning orientation, draw on others, recognize their identity, and understand God's role in their development. As a limitation of the study, the authors proposed that faith and God were under-represented. In the current study, I sought to rectify such gaps in the research and proposed how leadership, under the guise of shepherding, is God's calling on pastors.

Pastors need to adapt their skills to address the situation they are facing (Crofford, 2014). Crofford examined pastors of churches as they progressed through their tenure and evaluated their leadership styles. Pastors can possess clear and visionary leadership, which garners the church with wanted benefits. When pastors face circumstances that do not warrant that type of leadership, they also need to adapt. As the church in the 21st century faces new challenges, the pastoral leaders of these churches must adapt to the challenges. Paramount to this adaptation is the necessity of pastors to be self-aware of their leadership study. The pastors participating in this study tended toward a more collaborative and inclusive type of leadership in the early tenure of their pastoral role. The pastors also reluctantly agreed that they needed to change their leadership styles moving forward. This fact means that many of the pastors studied did not fully embrace the need to adjust their leadership style and assumed that one leadership style would suffice for most challenges. Though the pastors sensed the need to change, they did not enact the steps to change. Moreover, the challenges faced, not the training received, shaped the pastor's leadership style within their churches. Primarily, this author focused on

The 8 Dimensions of Leadership, an internet tool presented by Sugerman, Scullard, and Wilhelm. These dimensions included pioneering, energizing, affirming, inclusive, humble, deliberate, resolute, and commanding. In the present study, I evaluated the concepts of shepherding leadership and extrapolated the dimensions of this model, which included some of these leadership dimensions.

Pastoral leadership can directly impact the organizational effectiveness of churches. Using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) of Avolio et al. (2004), Priester (2018) quantified how a pastor's leadership style affects the church's metrics on different levels. In this study, the researcher considered transactional, transformational, and passive-avoidant leadership styles. The findings indicated that these styles affected church metrics such as membership, baptismal numbers, and financial giving. There existed a direct correlation between leadership styles and organizational effectiveness. Pastors must inspire and motivate others, and thus typically present themselves as transformational leaders. Churches with pastors that possessed a higher transformational leadership style also had higher church metrics in memberships, giving, and baptisms. This author focused only on Baptist churches and how the pastors of these churches operated within the context of the defined system. The assumption was that churches need to incorporate more of a "business-like reasoning" in their operations (Priester, 2018, p. 87). The results only reflected one person of 28 who practiced a transactional leadership style. In the current study, I presented a model of leadership which included transformational concepts, which, in turn, should positively correlate to positive church organizational metrics.

Other scholars have focused on the transformational leadership qualities of pastors and how they affect pastoral leader effectiveness (Carter, 2009). Using the reviewed Pastoral leadership Effectiveness Survey (PLES), Carter evaluated the effectiveness of pastors in correlation with the MLQ, the *Spiritual Transcendence Scale* (STS), and *The NEO Five-Factor Inventory* (NEO-FFI). The MLQ measures idealized influenced attributed and behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Of the MLQ, only individual consideration was a significant predictor of the PLES. Still, using the MLQ, this

scholar discovered that all transformational leadership scales had a positive and significant correlation with the PLES measures. In addition, both the NEO-FFI and the STS were positively correlated with the PLES scores. More importantly, the results showed that personality and spirituality contributed to pastoral leadership effectiveness. Despite a small sample size, the findings of this study indicated that transformational leadership is beneficial to pastor effectiveness, but so is personality. Therefore, in the current study on shepherd leadership, I sought out to present a set of characteristics that could positively correlate with transformational leadership styles.

The church is experiencing tremendous change, and culture is pressing upon it the need to adopt new leadership styles (Nauss, 1995). Many pastors embrace a leadership style that is people-oriented, as exampled by the person of Jesus. Others utilize a more task-oriented leadership style. Nauss posited that the size of the congregation might be the indicator that determines which leadership style to practice: directive or participative. The larger the church size, the more pastors will need to be intentional in their leadership style, instead of allowing the pressures to dictate their actions. Whereas a smaller church pastor may experience more effectiveness as a shepherd (i.e., participative), pastors of larger churches may want to take on a rancher role (i.e., directive). A rancher directs supervisors under his care. A shepherd, in comparison, maintains a personal relationship with the flock. Regardless, a pastor must adapt to the situation and utilize the leadership style (directive or participative) that is necessary in the moment. In this study, I established shepherding as the primary understanding of pastoral leadership and, in doing so, detailed how this metaphor contains both directive and participative aspects.

Shepherd Leadership

Shepherd leadership is an approach to leadership where the leader has a strong commitment to the care and wellbeing of the flock (Gunter, 2016; Laniak, 2006). The Hebrew word for shepherding can translate as “feeding” (Resane,

2014). This observation helps frame up the understanding of the shepherding metaphor and the concept of shepherding leadership.

Shepherding is a metaphor that establishes the understanding of leadership in the Bible, but it also can be taken further to understand shared leadership within the context of co-shepherding (Schwenk, 2020). Acts 20 and 1 Peter 5 both present an understanding of co-shepherding within the ecclesial leadership of the church. Schwenk identified the themes of teamwork, shepherding techniques, humility, mentorship, and perseverance from these passages. Moreover, Schwenk identified shepherding as the best metaphor for ecclesial leaders. The use of this shepherding metaphor should enable ecclesial leaders to embrace a more shared ecclesial leadership model. Doing so allows leaders to enjoy a shared workload and increased support. My opinion is that a clear understanding of 1 Peter 5 must come through an exegetical journey of John 10 and John 21, and this study involved a socio-rhetorical exploration of these passages and the shepherd metaphor passages that lead to their use.

The first Scriptural description of shepherd leadership in Psalms 23 (Witmer, 2010). The metaphor was such a profound idea within Scripture that Jesus used it when He described Himself as "The Good Shepherd." Continuing the theme, Peter asked the elders of the church to be shepherds of their local congregations. Over time, however, there grew a wider disparity between the congregation and clergy roles. This bifurcation led to pastors becoming more separated from their flock. Using the various references of shepherding in Scripture, Witmer (2010) proposed four tasks of shepherding leadership and seven characteristics of a shepherding ministry. First, shepherds should know, feed, lead, and protect the sheep. Second, a shepherd ministry must be biblical, systematic, comprehensive, relational, include the functions of shepherding, and include accountability and prayer. Utilizing a shepherding framework and strategy has implications on leadership within the church, church planting, training, and care of the congregation.

In the Old Testament, the idea of shepherding was not limited to the vocation of keeping sheep (Resane, 2014). The ancient authors labeled God,

national leaders such as prophets, and kings as shepherds. The shepherding role played such an essential part in biblical literature that shepherds were the first to receive the announcement of the birth of Jesus. The first significant aspect of shepherding that applies to shepherd leadership is that of caring. Shepherds care for their flock by restoring, feeding, watering, caring for their coats through grooming and shearing, protecting, and leading them. When leading the flock, the shepherd determines the direction and the path to take. On occasion, they must discipline the sheep to make them aware of pitfalls and dangers. Shepherds must also exude courage. They must have the courage to serve, challenge, and adapt to the changing forces. Last, shepherds must take on the role of guiding their flock. This act entails giving wise counsel and preventing the sheep from making harmful decisions. Resane posited that this style of leadership meets the criteria of the shepherd metaphor, stating, "The call is for leaders in the ecclesiastical community to emulate the shepherd-leader model for the advance and the effectiveness of the mission of Christ in the world" (p. 6). Moreover, the posture the shepherd leadership motif reveals is that of tenderness. God as a shepherd is tender toward His flock in Isaiah 40:11, Psalm 23, and Ezekiel 34:16. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is tender toward the sheep given to Him. In the current study, I embraced the call of Resane to return to a shepherding model of leadership. In contrast to Resane's study, I described leadership as a subset of the shepherding motif and presented a model from John 10.

Shepherding leadership is a leadership concept that is several millennia old, yet few scholars have attempted to operationalize it (Swalm, 2010). Such a task is necessary because pastoral leadership and shepherding leadership are integrally connected. Swalm identified three primary behaviors of shepherds using a thorough review of biblical literature and, in doing so, developed a Shepherd Leadership Indicator (SLI). First, shepherds guide the sheep. Leaders can apply this concept by helping their followers set appropriate goals and connect them to the value of their work. Shepherd leaders should present a humble attitude and set an example for their followers when guiding. Second, shepherd leaders provide for the flock by equipping them, training them, and being available to discuss needs. Swalm posited

that this behavior entails positive reinforcement for desired results and encouraging socialization among coworkers. Last, shepherd leaders protect their followers by designing a safe work environment, ensuring they have adequate rest, and protect them from unfair criticism and potential dangers. Whereas Swalm attempted to present shepherding leadership concepts via scriptural analysis, in this study, I presented a shepherding concept from the example of Jesus in John 10.

The shepherding metaphor can also produce shepherding models which address ethical components and combat leadership abuse (Boloje, 2020). The foundation of the shepherd metaphor is the fact that YHWH holds that title. God is the shepherd of the people of Israel. The author of Micah provided a helpful framework for understanding and exercising shepherding leadership in verses 2:12–13. Although the subject of Micah is foreboding with the language of judgment, the chapter 2 passage contains a glimmer of hope in that God is shepherd-king. Boloje posited that this presentation of God is a model for relationship and care for leaders. Genuine leadership occurs when the leader and follower are in a relationship together. There is a "profound atmosphere of caring, sharing and mutual submission" (Boloje, 2020, p. 5). Additionally, the shepherd-king protects the flock from outside threats and oppression. A leader is to protect the flock from destruction and vulnerable situations. The passage also contains a construct for restoration leadership within the shepherding praxis. Shepherding and leadership should have a redemptive goal, moving people to greater levels of growth in pursuit of God's restorative plan.

Some scholars have focused on shepherding leadership around the person of Jesus Christ (Gunter, 2016), who declared Himself as the Good Shepherd. Gunter posited that this declaration is more than just a fulfillment of messianic prophecy. The Good Shepherd also presents Himself as a model for leadership to the church community. Jesus used the word *kalos*, meaning "good," instead of *agathos*, meaning "righteous." This observation can support the notion that the passage is an example to future leaders. Within the shepherding leadership model, the leader should protect the flock (John 9:13–40). They should care for the people within their responsibility (John 11:17–44). They should be humble and willing to

sacrifice themselves for the sake of those they lead (John 13:3–17). A shepherd-leader should be able to unite those who are following (John 17:6–26). Last, a shepherd restores people that may walk away (John 21:15–19).

The shepherd metaphor is the appropriate construct to base a pastoral leadership theology (Gunter, 2018). The shepherd metaphor is prevalent in Scripture and well-established as the primary motif for leadership. The Good Shepherd is a model for pastoral leadership, and Jesus is the primary model for this leadership style. A shepherd-leader, then, possesses character. Gunter (2018) indicated that "This relates primarily to the development of a pastor's affections for and attitudes toward God, himself, and the people under his care" (p. 98). A shepherd-leader possesses an appropriate amount of adequate and necessary biblical knowledge. The content of the shepherd-leader is rich and deep in theological understanding. A shepherd-leader is competent in exercising the necessary skills to lead people and the church. Gunter used the passages around John 10 to argue that the shepherd leader should embody these qualities. Although I used the person of Jesus to model shepherd leadership in the current study, I primarily used John 10 as the source passage. I also incorporated the Old Testament passages which informed John 10, as well as the New Testament passages which revealed its necessity in church leadership.

The need to move organizations and people from one reality to a preferred reality requires leadership (Iorjaah, 2014). Jesus, however, presented a model of leadership that primarily cared for the wellbeing of the individual. Jesus' primary components of leadership were shepherding and service. Housed within this framework is the understanding that the leader-follower relationship needs to be robust. This fact requires both sides to exercise respect, trust, honesty, integrity, empathy, humility, openness, and accountability. This shepherd leadership model contrasts with the typical Western leadership models, which focus on individualism. The servant-shepherd model of leadership is an antithesis to sovereign top-down leadership models that champion charismatic leadership in favor of a relational style.

Anum and Quaye (2016) posited the shepherd metaphor of John 10 as a model for leadership and followership. A shepherd leader must be sacrificial—that is, willing to lay their lives down for the sake of the follower. Shepherd leadership requires a component of servant leadership at its core. These authors stated, "The service orientation ascribed to the shepherd-sheep leadership model makes Jesus, as "the good shepherd," the role model of such leadership (Anum & Quaye, 2016, p. 69). The shepherd goes before the sheep indicating that they are first leaders, and second examples to the flock. Shepherd leadership requires the leaders to forgo their interests for the sake of the follower. Shepherd leaders are to lead their flock to fertile feeding grounds and protect their best interests. In a leader-follower framework, the shepherd understands that the sheep are intelligent and can feed themselves as necessary. In the current article, I explored John 10 further as a shepherd leader construct while also clearly articulating the scriptural mandate of shepherding for pastoral leaders.

Shepherd leadership is not only for pastoral application but also for the contemporary workplace (Brodie, 2016). While some have assumed shepherding to be strictly service-minded, Brodie advanced that shepherding leadership is authoritarian and service-minded. At times, the shepherd leader must take control of the flock for their benefit and good. Moreover, Brodie went further than Swalm's (2010) guiding, providing, and protecting framework. He presented the Brodie ranking of shepherd leadership skills: trustworthiness, ethical behavior, listening, protecting the organization, leading by example, promoting values and morality, faithfulness, providing guidance and supervision, being fair, and caring for others (Brodie, 2016). Interviewed leaders also presented several common themes, including taking employee-centered actions, producing a conducive working environment, and setting employee goals. Shepherd leaders' actions are protective, transparent, and available. They guide the organization while at the same time correcting, protecting, and inspecting the flock. Shepherd leaders can accomplish these tasks because they build a relationship with the flock. Those interviewed in the study saw shepherd leadership as an act where the person is the decision-maker, guides people, walks with people, mentors potential leaders, takes

responsibility for others, and thinks sustainably. In contrast with this research, I compared the lived experiences of senior pastors with the shepherding construct derived from the John 10 passage.

Rummage (2005) defined shepherd-leadership as a means of tending, guarding, leading, and caring for the church's people. These acts include counseling, providing and, spiritual guidance. Above all, though, Rummage viewed shepherding as a means of showing and exercising the care of the church body. Pastors can accomplish these roles by using Psalm 23 as a model of shepherding, based on Keller's (1996) work. Rummage (2005) presented 10 components of shepherding leadership as exercised by the modern church: redemptive preaching, prayer, fellowship, ministry teams, discipleship groups, workshop opportunities, counseling, pastoral care, and training caregivers. These characteristics allow the modern growing church to ensure shepherding is occurring at every level of the organization. Whereas Rummage approached shepherding leadership from an organizational perspective, in this article, I presented shepherding leadership as a personal endeavor well-established by the biblical metaphor and exampled by Jesus.

Dunn (2018) viewed shepherding as a task exercised by the senior pastor and a board of elders. In his construct, elders and pastors are separate but must work together to lead the church in the vein of shepherding. Coupled with a corporate governance model, spiritual shepherding can be helpful in successfully guiding a church as it grows. Spiritual shepherds are to make decisions on behalf of the congregation and actively be involved in the sheep's lives. While working in tandem with the senior pastor, the elders are to be spiritual shepherds by feeding the flock and protecting their wellbeing. Dunn distinguished the senior pastor as the teaching elder and the ruling elders as spiritual shepherds. The act of spiritual shepherd leadership produces healthy church bodies and ensures the flock has adequate care and guidance. As spiritual shepherds, the elders are to guide, govern, and feed the flock.

Donelson (2004) used Bass' (1985a) transformational leadership work to establish the shepherding principles in the Bible into a cohesive construct.

Shepherd leaders are to be models for the flock (idealized influence) through accountability, character, courage, credibility, values, identity, and trust. A shepherd motivates the flock through a commitment to a purpose, communications, encouragement, and vision. Shepherds exercise intellectual stimulation through their attitude, as a change agent, through delegation, and conflict resolution. Last, shepherds utilize individual consideration through compassion, culture, empowerment, relationships, and modeling.

Shepherding leadership can be defined primarily by the act of caring for the flock (R. E. Hughes, 2015). A church model of shepherding leadership through the act of care occurs through counseling, affirmation through death situations, resourcing people through groups and prayer ministries, and equipping through discipleship programs. R. E. Hughes posited a second model of shepherding through care by seminary training, citing benevolence, church discipline, counseling, crisis management, bereavement, prayer, physical needs, and lay training as the areas in which pastors feel most ill-equipped. Shepherd leaders need these tasks to care for the flock and ensure a healthy congregation.

Beeman (2018) established shepherding leadership principles by evaluating the actions of Maasai shepherd pastors. The research contained how these individuals viewed the act of pastoring versus the act of shepherding sheep. The two roles of pastoring and shepherding share the concepts of provision, healing, keeping watch, and administration. Those interviewed saw guidance, prayer, and sacraments as a strictly pastoral action. Moreover, the roles of shepherding and pastoring possessed the shared tasks of keeping watching and providing for the flock. Thus, an evaluation of the literal shepherding vocation of individuals produced a shepherding leadership construct of provision, restoration, and production. Provision included feeding, protecting, guiding, and administering the flock. Restoration included seeking and healing. Production is the concept of producing and reproducing the flock.

Shepherd leadership possesses many similarities with servant leadership (A. W. Adams, 2013). Both shepherd leaders and servant leaders aim to serve the follower and meet their needs. The difference between the two is that shepherd

leaders are much more conspicuous than servant leaders, who are motivated to support others. Shepherd leaders are to increase the size of the flock, manage tensions, and create a conducive environment for health. Shepherding leadership has produced healthier congregations when measuring attendance and giving. Pastors who use shepherd leadership characteristics, priorities, and responsibilities saw improved ministerial effectiveness. A. W. Adams described these components as creating culture, relationship, duty, and vision.

Jesus was a profound model of leadership for the church (Bonnet, 2021). As a shepherd leader, he exemplified a loving leader's quality in how He cared for His flock. Shepherd leadership contains the critical quality of care, a quality Jesus exercised regularly. As a caring leader, Jesus was focused on the flock, protecting them from dangers and leading them to places of safety. As a caring shepherd leader, Jesus watched over the flock and asked church leaders to do the same as under-shepherds. Thus, as a shepherd leader, Jesus was an empowering leader who encouraged and equipped others to do as He modeled. Jesus showed His disciples the need for courage in acting against dangers and confronting adversity while also being gentle and loving.

Summary

In sum, the church requires leadership suited to the modern era (Akin & Pace, 2017; Mizzell & Henson, 2020; Nauss, 1989). Scholars have revealed both a theology of leadership (Ayers, 2006; Strawbridge, 2009) and a theology of pastoral leadership (Akin & Pace, 2017; Manning & Nelson, 2020; Nelson, 2020). The church ultimately finds its leadership in the Godhead (Akin & Pace, 2017) and those entrusted by God to lead the church (Oden, 1983). Whatever the leadership role or view of leadership offices within the church, each requires that shepherding be their mode of operation (Oden, 1983; Witmer, 2010). The use of the shepherding metaphor is unmistakably strong within Scripture as the primary means by which God describes leadership (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). In this study, I explored the scriptural instances of shepherding leadership to define constant themes evident in the John 10 passage of the Good Shepherd.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

When studying ancient Middle Eastern texts, scholars have either focused on the social description of the era or the social-scientific interpretation (van Staden & van Aarde, 1991). The crux of a social-scientific approach to passage interpretation is "what did the author mean" (van Staden & van Aarde, 1991, p. 58). The meaning of a text entails what the author said, as well as the culture and context in which they wrote it (Gowler, 2010). Thus, Robbins (1996a) developed a socio-rhetorical approach to the exegesis of Scripture. This type of social-scientific approach to interpreting Scripture is a blending of scriptural exegesis and the social-scientific approach (Henson, 2015).

Robbins (1995) had previously argued for a structured methodology to the interpretation of Scripture. This methodology includes an approach to Scripture that presents several layers the interpreter can utilize in understanding the passage (Robbins, 1996a). The socio-rhetorical analysis of Scripture typically includes the layers of inner texture, intertexture, social texture, cultural texture, and ideological texture (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). The socio-rhetorical approach of Henson et al. (2020) contrasted Robbins (1996a) in their view of Scripture. Henson et al. (2020) understood Scripture as applicable, spiritual, and possessing the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit. The current study contained the same assumptions that Scripture is "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Research Assumptions

With over 5,000 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament and more than 500 English translations of the New Testament in partial or whole, scholars may find it challenging to choose an appropriate Bible translation (Witherington, 2017). The role of the translator is complex, as thousands of years have passed, during which time words can lose or change their meanings (Pitts, 2020). The translators of ancient Greek and Hebrew make textual decisions that have cultural implications for the readers (Perry, 2020). It is challenging to assess accuracy for a Bible translation, as it can be either accurate in a word-to-word fashion (i.e., formal equivalence) or accurate in a thought-to-thought manner (i.e., dynamic equivalence;

Chapple, 2003). A third option that Price (2008) posited is that of an optimal equivalence. This method aims to use a word-for-word translation while also keeping the cultural meanings intact by using an approach of translation at the phrase, clause, and text levels. Optimal equivalence takes a similar approach to dynamic equivalence but aims to be less subjective (Kerr, 2011). In sum, it is a balanced approach between formal and dynamic equivalence approaches (Strauss, 2019). According to the Christian Standard Bible's website, the translators took an optimal equivalence approach in forming an English translation (Christian Standard Bible, n.d.). It is an improved translation based on the Holman Christian Standard Bible (Strauss, 2019). In this study, I primarily utilized the CSB translation for all Scripture to keep the literal meaning intact for interpretation while also acknowledging the problematic cultural disparities and euphemisms within language.

Henson et al. (2020) stated that Scripture has the power to transform the human heart. As Dockery (2003) posited, "The purpose of Scripture is to place men and women in right standing before God and to enable believers to seek God's glory in all of life's activities and efforts. It is above all a book of redemptive history" (p. 1453). The church is becoming more inundated with secular references (Henson, 2014). Over time, the concept of *sola Scriptura* has waned (Tara, 2020) and is being "hacked to pieces" (Tickle, 2008, pp. 79–80). In contrast, I held a high view of Scripture with the understanding that all assumptions of leadership styles, offices, roles, characteristics, and goals within the Christian church must find their root in Scripture alone (Ajayi, 2018).

The design of this research included a focus on the office of the senior pastor. The term *elder* occurs regularly in the New Testament and indicates an office that handled the teaching and preaching (Oden, 1983; Overman, 1993). The term pastor is from the Latin translation of the Greek word *poimēn*, meaning shepherd (Unger et al., 1985). Many churches are structured much like a Presbyterian model, in which a pastor is the lead decision-maker of the church while having a board of elders to hold them accountable and assist in the decision-making process (Elwell, 2001). As pastoring is a form of ecclesial leadership

(Huizing, 2010) and scholars have recognized ecclesial leadership as the oversight of functions of the church, I focused on the skills and attributes of pastoral leadership in this study.

Research Design and Questions

The purpose of this study required several methods of research. First, I conducted a socio-rhetorical analysis to study Scripture and extrapolate pertinent themes of shepherding. Additionally, I applied a phenomenological approach to understand how the lived experiences of senior pastors compare with the themes derived from the socio-rhetorical analysis. The design of the study was such that socio-rhetorical analysis first provided the findings needed to inform the phenomenological research phase.

Research Questions

The methods of socio-rhetorical analysis of the principal biblical passages allowed me to exegetically explore the layers of the text to answer several of the research questions. This socio-rhetorical analysis answered research questions RQ1, RQ2, and RQ4. First, RQ1 asked, "How is the shepherd metaphor portrayed in the New Testament model of biblical leadership? What biblical principles can be learned from an in-depth exegetical analysis of the shepherd metaphor?" RQ2 asked, "What is the role of leadership within the shepherd metaphor?" RQ4 asked, "How does the shepherd metaphor inform the praxis of pastoral leadership?" RQ5 asked, "What are the implications of the shepherd metaphor within the New Testament on the constructs of pastoral leadership and shepherd leadership?" Through this research, I sought to answer these questions through the exegesis of Scripture, using John 10 as the primary passage and utilizing other biblical passages to reveal an overall shepherding arc in Scripture. Moreover, John 10 is the primary passage where Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11), and where the metaphor of shepherding finds its climax and fulfillment, bringing all other passages into focus.

The phenomenological research provided the data to answer RQ3, which asked, "How does the biblical metaphor of the shepherd compare with the lived

experiences of contemporary pastors?" This research question informed my conclusions of whether and how the shepherding metaphor provided in Scripture is lived out. In sum, I first answered RQ1 to understand the shepherding metaphor and how it is presented in Scripture. Second, I aimed to understand leadership in relation to shepherding. Third, the answer to RQ3 provided a clear understanding of how the shepherding metaphor is being lived out. Therefore, the questions derived for the interview portion of the research (RQ3) focused on determining "what it is like" for the pastor in question to operate in their role (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Saldaña and Omasta (2018) posited that researchers should frame phenomenological research questions as "what is/are" (p. 152). A sample question might include, "What does it mean to shepherd?" Next, answering RQ4 provided a shepherding framework from the example of the Good Shepherd. Last, RQ5 explored the practical implications of this new construct.

Socio-Rhetorical Analysis

The socio-rhetorical analysis is a method of interpretation based on the historical-critical approach of understanding Scripture (Robbins, 1995). This discipline of study is rooted in the understanding of social and cultural dynamics of scriptural passages (Robbins, 1996b). The socio-rhetorical method is interdisciplinary, borrowing from several fields of research methods (Gowler, 2010). The purpose of the socio-rhetorical approach is to present layers of inner, inter-, social, cultural, and ideological texture, each with the potential to help the reader understand the passage in question (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a).

Inner Texture Analysis. The first layer of the socio-rhetorical critique is inner texture analysis. Later advanced by Henson et al. (2020), inner texture analysis includes identifying textual units, repetitive and progressive patterns, opening-middle-closing patterns, argumentative patterns, and sensory-aesthetic patterns. Inner texture analysis is an exercise of exploring the text within the pericope to find patterns, structure, and stylistic textures (Robbins, 1996a)**.**

According to Henson et al. (2020), textual units allow the reader to differentiate flows of thought without identifiable paragraphs, chapters, or

punctuation. Scholars can accomplish the analysis of textual units by looking for transitionary words that identify the pericope as a new narrative unit. Henson et al. (2020) stated, "This means that the divisions that assist us in understanding changes in themes were embedded by ancient writers into the text" (p. 84).

The successive layers of inner texture analysis are repetitive, progressive, and narrational patterns. These patterns allow the reader to recognize specific themes and the development of these themes in the pericope (Henson et al., 2020; Loubser, 2005; Robbins, 1996a). Repetitive patterns help the reader identify themes that the author thought were theologically significant (Loubser, 2005; Robbins, 1996a). Progressive patterns are closely associated with repetitive patterns, but differ in that they build on previous themes (Henson et al., 2020). Authors develop the theme of the pericope through literary tools such as chiasm, encapsulation, or connection (Henson et al., 2020).

The opening-middle-closing patterns of texts allow readers to identify particular structures and plot features in the pericope (Robbins, 1996a). Researchers use this layer of analysis to explore the purpose, plot, and structure of a passage (Henson et al., 2020). The patterns of repetition, narration, and progression often help form the opening, middle, and closing (Robbins, 1996a). This structuring is much like the structure of the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Argumentative patterns are styles of persuasion used by the author to reason a particular point (Robbins, 1996a). In essence, this layer of exegesis seeks to understand the argument the author sought to present and how they presented it (Henson et al., 2020). A typical argumentative pattern would include a thesis, rationale, contrary, restatement, analogy, example/testimony of antiquity, and conclusion (Robbins, 1996a).

According to Robbins (1996a), emotion-fused thought, self-expressive speech, and purposeful action are types of sensory-aesthetic patterns in inner texture analysis. Authors may employ language that elicits strong emotion or causes one to think deeply about a topic (Henson et al., 2020). Scholars use this approach to identify and understand idioms used by the writers. In summary, the

author utilizes the senses, such as smell, sight, or hearing, to communicate an idea (Robbins, 1996a).

Intertexture Analysis. The second layer of socio-rhetorical analysis is intertexture analysis, in which one identifies relationships between the text and other mediums outside of the pericope (Robbins, 1996a). Several intertexture analysis methods include oral-scribal, cultural, social, historical, and reciprocal intertexture (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). Henson et al. (2020) stated, "Central to the relationship between a text and outside sources is the communication of meaning" (p. 105).

Oral-scribal intertexture is the use of other passages outside of the pericope in question (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). Robbins (1996a) stated, "One of the ways a text configures and reconfigures is to use, either explicitly or without reference, language from other texts" (p. 40). An author might use external sources in several ways. The first of these methods is recitation, where the author directly quotes another text (Henson et al., 2020). Second, recontextualization occurs when an author uses a different work without referencing the original source (Henson et al., 2020). Finally, an author may reconfigure a passage to fit a new context or elaborate a previously established theme (Henson et al., 2020).

Cultural intertexture allows the reader to examine how the text relates to the culture in which it was written (Henson et al., 2020). Robbins (1996a) identified three ways in which a text can interact with the culture: a reference, an allusion, or an echo. A reference is merely a mention of someone or something existent in the culture that is known (Robbins, 1996a). Robbins (1996a) also stated, "An allusion is a statement that presupposes a tradition that exists in textural form, but the text being interpreted is not attempting to 'recite' the text" (p. 58). Last, an echo is a word or passage that subtly evokes the thought of a cultural phenomenon.

Social intertexture is very similar to cultural intertexture (Henson et al., 2020). Social intertexture differs from cultural intertexture in that it examines commonly held social norms that would be held by society, no matter their culture (Robbins, 1996a). Robbins (1996a) identified four categories of social intertexture: social roles, social institutions, social code, and social relationships.

Historical intertexture examines the events surrounding the pericope (Henson et al., 2020). Robbins (1996a) noted that historical intertexture differs from historical criticism in that this layer notes events and not how historical is commonly used when discussing social and cultural observations. Historical events in this manner may include political happenings, economic conditions, and significant events surrounding the writing. This historical information can be sourced from historical manuscripts or literary discourse and is strengthened by the existence of multiple sources.

Reciprocal intertexture allows the interpreter to explore how the primary text interacts with other texts in Scripture (Henson et al., 2020). Henson et al. (2020) stated, "Moving from a unidirectional approach to intertexture, reciprocal intertexture views the flow of interpretation as bidirectional" (p. 120). This method is a primary means of interpreting Scripture, as it considers the entire canon of Scripture (McConville, 2002). It allows the reader to better understand the pericope by utilizing the entirety of Scripture in a reciprocal nature (Henson et al., 2020).

Social, Cultural, and Ideological Texture. According to Robbins (1996a), social and cultural texture is how interpreters investigate a text by examining the writer's world and the receiver of the pericope. The world of the text can include the writer's worldview, their perception, and share social and cultural topics (Henson et al., 2020). Moreover, the reputation of the text over time, how it was received, and the interaction with Scripture is an exercise in analyzing the ideological texture of the text (Henson et al., 2020). Whereas social and cultural texture refer to the writer and reader of the text, ideological texture analyzes those interpreting the text (Robbins, 1996a, 1996b).

The social texture layer assesses the worldview of the writer (Henson et al., 2020). Robbins (1996a) identified seven possible worldviews from which the writer could have written. A conversionist believes that by changing people, one can change the world. A revolutionist believes the destruction of the world is the only solution to rebuild as it should be. An introversionist posits that removal from an evil world is the only way a soul may be purified. A gnostic-manipulationist focuses on relationships (Henson et al., 2020). Instead of removing oneself from

the world, this view focuses on special knowledge of overcoming evil. A thaumaturgical world view focuses on relief of the present for the individual via special dispensations (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). A reformist worldview attempts to change the social structures so that the behaviors which cause a corrupt society can ultimately be changed (Robbins, 1996a). Robbins (1996a) stated of a utopian worldview that it "seeks to reconstruct the entire social world according to divinely given principles, rather than simply to amend it from a reformist position" (p. 74).

Understanding the cultural texture of the environment in which an author wrote their text helps the interpreter avoid ethnocentric and anachronistic interpretations (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). Both Robbins (1996a) and Henson et al. (2020) posited several layers of cultural texture, including honor; guilt and rights cultures; dyadic agreements (the need for someone else to define your worth); dyadic and legal contracts; riposte; economic exchange systems such as agriculturally, industrial, or technologically-based; the supply of goods (limited, abundant, or insufficient); and purity codes. Henson et al. additionally posited economic exchange systems and the presence of Old Testament law.

Ideological texture analysis allows the interpreter to focus on the recipients' location when analyzing passages (Henson et al., 2020). Robbins (1996a) stated that the "primary subject of ideological analysis and interpretation is people" (p 95). In this layer, the interpreter would ask, "Where are the recipients located?" Additionally, this layer examines the recipients' relationships to groups such as cliques, gangs, action set, faction, corporate group, or historical tradition. This layer also examines the modes of intellectual discourse (Henson et al., 2020). In other words, it determines how the interpreter is approaching the pericope (Robbins, 1996a). These approaches can be historical-critical, social-scientific, history-of-religions approach, or new historical discourse.

Sacred Texture Analysis. Sacred texture analysis is a unique exploration of the text's relationship to deity, holy persons, spirit beings, divine history, redemption, human commitment, community, and ethics (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). In sum, Robbins (1996a) stated that sacred texture explores "the

relation between human life and the divine" (p. 120). The text includes four occurrences of sacred texture: between the text and God the Son and God the Father, the text and the diving history of Christ's sufferings, the text and community and commitment, and the text and redemption. Each layer of analysis provides the researcher with a better understanding of how the text interacts with its environment.

The socio-rhetorical method is extensive and valuable (Henson et al., 2020). Not all layers were necessary and pertinent to each passage. Using a similar method as Henson (2015), I utilized the layers necessary for each passage selected in this study.

Source Passages

The purpose of this research was to identify shepherding as the primary mandate of Scripture and to extrapolate an actionable shepherding construct from John 10. Therefore, I focused only on passages that utilize the shepherding metaphor and examine how they relate. I used John 10 primarily and incorporated Old Testament passages and several New Testament pericopes.

John 10. For this study, the Gospel of John was the primary source while pulling into context the use of other shepherding passages. Concerning the Gospel of John, Wright (2004) wrote,

> At one level, it is the simplest of all the gospels; at another level, it is the most profound. It gives the appearance of being written by someone who was a very close friend of Jesus, and who spend the rest of his life mulling over, more and more deeply, what Jesus had done and said and achieved, praying it through from every angle, and helping others to understand it. (p. x)

It is within this Gospel that Jesus declared He was the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) and where Jesus reinstated Peter to ministry while asking him to "feed my sheep" (John 21:17). Thus, it is the keystone to the entire supposition that Jesus' request of pastoral leaders is to primarily shepherd those entrusted to them. Thus, I used a

reciprocal treatment to the John 10 passage as I moved back and forth between pertinent contextual passages.

Authorship. The Gospel of John does not declare authorship (Kruse, 2003; Wright & Bird, 2019). This fact is not unique to John, as all four gospels omit authorship (Burge, 2000; Carson, 2015). The church traditionally accepted that John was the author of the writing as early as the last quarter of the second century (Kysar, 1992). The Gospel of John contains internal hints to confirm the Apostle John's authorship (Barton et al., 1993). John was a Palestinian and Galilean, which coincides with the familiarity of the geographical area in John's Gospel around the Sea of Galilee (Barton et al., 1993; Milne, 1993). It is clear from the writings that the author was an eyewitness to the events of Jesus and familiar with Jewish culture, himself being a Jew (Barton et al., 1993; Gangel, 2000; Milne, 1993). The author was present at the supper in the upper room (Milne, 1993). The early church fathers such as Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian all attributed the Gospel to John's hand (Barton et al., 1993; Gangel, 2000; Kruse, 2003; Milne, 1993). Theophilus also attributed the work to John as early as 180 CE (Gangel, 2000). Moreover, the Gospel does not mention the Apostle John, giving scholars one more clue that he was the aptly named "disciple whom Jesus loved" (Milne, 1993; Whitacre, 1999).

Scholars have identified various problematic elements of the Gospel. Some have perceived the "disciple whom Jesus loved" moniker as odd (Milne, 1993). Others, however, have used it as a clue to John's authorship (Whitacre, 1999). Researchers have found it difficult to distinguish between John the elder and the Apostle John (Milne, 1993). Regardless, the church widely accepted John as the author of the Gospel by *The Muratorian Canon* during Irenaeus' time around 170 CE (Kruse, 2003; Milne, 1993). Borchert (1996) summed up the authorship issue as follows:

> When all of the arguments, both internal and external, are set together, there seems little reason to reject the idea that the son of Zebedee was the towering figure and the authentic witness involved in the writing of this Gospel. I would not think it necessary that he himself was the actual scribe

> of this work nor that he himself would have had to refer to himself by the designation of the beloved disciple. (p. 90)

Dating. Although some may have assembled John's Gospel in edited stages, it is generally understood to be early and historically reliable (Burge, 2000; Carson, 2015). Scholars have dated the book as early as 40 CE and as late as 110 CE (Kysar, 1992). No scholars have dated the book any later than 100–110 CE, as several discoveries in Egypt indicate that it was widely circulated in the area around the middle of the second century (Kysar, 1992). In general, the Gospel has broad agreement in dating among liberal and conservative scholars alike (Elwell, 1988). Moreover, the discovery of Ryland's Papyrus 457 also dates around the middle of the second century (Barton et al., 1993; Kysar, 1992; Wright & Bird, 2019). A second finding, the Egerton Papyrus 2, quoted portions of John and was reliably dated to the mid-second century (Borchert, 1996). This dating must be the latest date attributed to the work (Burge, 2000). The earliest date is more difficult to ascertain. The omission of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE leads some to believe that John wrote the Gospel in the late 60s while he was still able to refer to locations in the present (Milne, 1993; Whitacre, 1999). While most scholars have concurred that the author penned the work between 80–100 CE because of evidence of re-working (Whitacre, 1999), an acceptable thesis is that it was written before 70 CE, as there is very little synoptic material (most likely written simultaneously). Moreover, early traditions placed John in Ephesus during the authorship, which would date the scroll between 80–100 CE (Burge, 2000; Kruse, 2003).

Purpose. Clement of Alexandria referred to John's Gospel as a Spiritual Gospel (Borchert, 1996; Carson, 2015). Several scholars (Barton et al., 1993; Borchert, 1996; Carson, 2015; Kruse, 2003; G. R. Osborne, 2007) have posited John 20:30–31 as the purpose statement of the text:

> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

John (see also 1 John 5:13) wanted to communicate truth so that the readers would know the truth (Carson, 2015; Kruse, 2003). John's purpose is the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah (Burge, 2000). The question of whether John was aiming to evangelize the gentile or the Jew (Carson, 2015) is a matter of difference in the scholarly community (Barton et al., 1993; Whitacre, 1999). It is likely a combination of both; as Barton et al. (1993) stated, "John wanted to win the lost as well as strengthen the believers" (p. 6). John wanted to evangelize the lost and build up the Jewish believers in the church who were experiencing persecution (Kruse, 2003; Milne, 1993; G. R. Osborne, 2007; Whitacre, 1999). John wrote his Gospel not for a specific audience, but the world (Gangel, 2000). Moreover, John wanted to give special mention to John the Baptist and give attention to the deity and humanity of Jesus (Barton et al., 1993; Burge, 1989).

Old Testament Metaphors. The shepherding metaphor is prevalent in the Bible and has its beginnings in the Old Testament (Bailey, 2014; Köstenberger, 2002; Nel, 2005; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; Skinner, 2018a). In the Old Testament, the biblical authors lay out explicit imagery that shepherding is the primary way God looks at spiritual leadership in the Bible (Bailey, 2014). The primary Old Testament passages that lay the case for shepherding are Psalm 23, Jeremiah 23:1–8, Ezekiel 34, and Zechariah (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006)

Indeed, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jacob's 12 sons, Moses, and David all held the occupation of a shepherd (Aranoff, 2014). Psalm 23 is the first mention of the shepherding metaphor in the Bible (Bailey, 2014; Nel, 2005). In this passage, David stated that YHWY is a shepherd (Laniak, 2006; Nel, 2005). The Psalm 23 passage was used reciprocally with John 10 to understand the true meaning of Jesus' statement, "I am the Good Shepherd."

Jeremiah picked up the shepherding metaphor to challenge the leaders of Israel in verses 1–8 of chapter 23 (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006; Wessels, 2014). Through Jeremiah, God stated, "'Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!' This is the Lord's declaration" (Jer 23:1). Jeremiah used the metaphor to elicit the people's imagination in that they understood shepherds care for, feed, and protect their flock (Wessels, 2014).

Ezekiel and Zechariah continued the metaphor in their writings (Bailey, 2014; Gan, 2010; Mein, 2007). In Ezekiel 34, the author issued a scathing rebuke of Israel's leaders (Laniak, 2006; Mein, 2007). In this chapter, God stated that He would take up the shepherding responsibilities the leaders had neglected (Bailey, 2014; Heil, 1993). This chapter is also an important passage to which Jesus alludes in John 10 (Rodgers, 2010). In Zechariah, the author contrasted the Good Shepherd versus the Foolish Shepherd (Bailey, 2014; Gan, 2010). Moreover, Zechariah contains a prophecy about a Good Shepherd who would shepherd the flock which was bound for slaughter (Köstenberger, 2002).

These Old Testament passages set the foundation for what was to be declared by the Messiah Jesus (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). Concerning Jesus' incarnation of the Old Testament shepherding motif, Köstenberger (2002) wrote, "By employing scriptural shepherd motifs, Jesus uses typology along salvation-historical lines. Israel's past shepherds are shown to correspond to the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day, while the Davidic deliverer of exilic prophecy finds its antitype in Jesus the Messiah" (p. 90). This shepherd motif finds its climactic peak in the person of Jesus (Pias Kahlasi, 2015).

Later New Testament Uses. The primary New Testament passage for the shepherding metaphor for this study was John 10. The New Testament contains numerous uses of the metaphor in other passages. Both Bailey (2014) and Laniak (2006) see the shepherd motif from Psalm 23 lived out in Matthew 18:10–14 and Mark 6:7–52. I did not utilize these passages in this study. Instead, I focused on Peter's interaction with Jesus in John 23 and his continued use of the metaphor in 1 Peter 5.

The use of 1 Peter 5 is critical to the purpose of this study, as it occurs in a passage where Peter asked for a particular type of behavior from the elders of the church (Culpepper, 2010; Krentz, 2010; Shepherd, 2010). Peter wanted the hearers of his instruction to desire to be an elder, not to embrace it as something to begrudge (D. Brown, 1984; Raymer, 1983). Peter was employing the warnings of Ezekiel 34 to remind the church leaders to be good shepherds (Exell, 1978b; Schreiner, 2003). Peter's authority to ask these requirements of the church leaders

rested on the fact that Jesus asked Peter to do the same in John 21 (Shepherd, 2010). As a "fellow elder," Peter understood what it took to be a shepherd of people in a difficult time (Bailey, 2014). Thus, the 1 Peter 5 passage finds its link to John 10 through the event of John 21. In essence, Peter asked the leaders to be shepherds in the manger of Jesus the "Good Shepherd", as was asked of him in John 10 (Marshall, 1991; Schreiner, 2003; Shepherd, 2010).

Phenomenological Research

Phenomenology is the discipline of qualitative research in which scholars seek to understand the lived experiences of subjects who share a common event (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). It is a heuristic process by which the researcher determines a conceptual link between the real experiences of the subjects (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenon is merely the perception of the one who experienced an event (Moustakas, 1994). Merleau-Ponty (1956) defined the method as "the study of essences and accordingly its treatment of every problem is an attempt to define an essence, the essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness, for example" (p. 59). A phenomenon is that which appears in the consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). The participants possess a shared experience, yet can view their experiences differently (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Thus, phenomenology is the study of a phenomenon (or shared experience) as viewed by various subjects (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019; Smith, 2018). The purpose of this approach is to help the researcher and those reading the final study to understand what it would be like to experience what the participants experienced (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019).

The phenomenological research method is not based on any specific theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is based on philosophy and psychology and considers heuristic research, hermeneutics, grounded research theory, and ethnography (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Using this method, researchers attempt to discover the meaning of experiences of the subjects in question (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). A phenomenological research project seeks to understand the meaning behind shared

experiences (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). A phenomenological researcher seeks to understand the insider view of the participants as they experience the phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019).

Creswell and Poth (2018) proposed seven characteristics that are typical of a phenomenological study. The characteristics are (a) an emphasis on the phenomenon phrased as a single concept, (b) an exploration of the phenomenon with a group of individuals, (c) a philosophical discussion about the ideas, (d) bracketing of the researcher's ideas and preconceptions, (e) data collection through interviews, (f) data analysis that aims to determine significant themes or statements, (g) and a section which discusses the overall experience of the individuals. A critical component of the phenomenological research method is lengthy interviews (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). They require the interviewer to skillfully guide the participants through carefully crafted interview questions about a particular subject (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). It may be necessary to pose follow-up questions, as the participants may find it challenging to articulate their experience's meaning clearly.

Researchers analyze the interview data differently depending on the type of phenomenological research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). They can choose a transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) or a hermeneutical phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Hermeneutical phenomenology is "oriented toward lived experience" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 77). Whereas hermeneutical phenomenology contains the interpretations of the researcher of the phenomenon in question, transcendental phenomenology is focused "more on the description of the experiences of the participants" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 78). Moustakas (1994) used portions of the hermeneutical approach in his phenomenological approach; his transcendental framework asks the researcher to remove all biases, collecting the data, and distilling the information into significant statements or themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Concerning biases, Moustakas (1994) proposed *epoché*, or "setting aside prejudgments and opening the research interview with an unbiased, receptive presence" (p. 180). With hermeneutical phenomenology, the researcher also needs to set aside preconceived thoughts about the topic in question or bracket their biases (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Leedy &

Ormrod, 2019). Because I aimed to understand the participants' lived experiences, I chose to utilize a hermeneutical phenomenological approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach gave me the latitude to engage in an interpretative process (Creswell & Poth, 2018) instead of merely stating the pastors' experiences. These interpretations were useful, as I compared their experiences with the exegetical themes.

Participants. The sample size of phenomenological research can range anywhere from five to 25 individuals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Creswell and Poth (2018) proposed pool sizes of three to four individuals to 10 to 15. Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested a sample size of three to 10 persons. Each of these persons must have experienced the phenomenon in question to understand their conscientious personal experience of it (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this study, each of the participants were current senior pastors of congregations. Because the purpose of the phenomenological portion of the study was to understand the lived experience of senior pastors as it pertains to the act of shepherding people, pastors were purposefully selected. The criteria in the selection process were to first give a wide range of church sizes. The pastor of the smallest church interviewed leads a congregation of 250. The largest church has nearly 10,000 people in attendance. Moreover, the ages of the churches range from 2 to 50 years old. My hope was to understand whether the size and age of the churches determines a pastor's beliefs about shepherding. The selected pastors had a personal connection to me, and each pastor is an active senior pastor of a Protestant denomination. For the purpose of this research, I asked nine senior pastors to participate in the study. Each pastor was required to read and agree with an informed consent form prior to the interviews. Internal Review Board (IRB) approval was also sought and received for this portion of the study.

Data Collection and Analysis. The phenomenological portion of this study required nine senior pastor interviews. These interviews consist of questions derived from themes discovered during the socio-rhetorical portion of the study and questions derived from the John 10 shepherding construct. A preproduced interview protocol contained the 13 questions produced, as well as the time of

interview, date, place, interviewer, interviewee, and position of the interviewee (see appendix A for questions). Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour and was conducted through a Zoom video interview call. I conducted follow-up interviews as necessary. Additionally, I recorded the audio of the call through the Trint mobile app. This portion of the interview required verbal permission to record the call.

The Trint audio recording and Zoom video recording were password-protected and stored on my personal devices. The Trint application produced an automatically generated transcription of the audio dialogue. After an initial pass of the audio, the transcription was scrubbed and edited for any mistakes and omissions made by the program. A password-protected version of the transcription was stored as a Word document. I performed qualitative data analysis using Saldaña and Omasta's (2018) description of process coding, value coding, and in vivo coding with the assistance of MAXQDA. Process coding looks for "-ing" words, seeking to identify actions taken by the participants (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Value coding identifies the values, beliefs, and attitudes underlying the participants responses (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Through in vivo coding, I identified codes as they naturally occur in the transcripts (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). I used a fourth and final coding pass to focus on the themes presented in the exegetical portion of the study. Moustakas (1994) posited listing significant statements and grouping them into broader categories, or themes. To achieve this task, I exported a coding report from MAXQDA into an Excel spreadsheet to sort, group, and look for "clusters of meaning" to emerge (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.79). These clusters were identified as significant codes under each exegetical theme, and are discussed in Chapter 4 by comparing them against the findings of the socio-rhetorical analysis.

Summary

The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, I hoped to prove through Scripture how the shepherding metaphor has always been the primary way the Bible has described leadership. This metaphor did not end with the conclusion of the Old Testament, but continued through the explicit usage of Jesus (via John) and

Peter (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006; Pias Kahlasi, 2015). This exercise is intended to refocus the church's use of leadership, so individuals view it through the lens of shepherding, not vice versa. Second, given the presence of so many leadership books within the church (Tara, 2020), my goal was to provide an alternative and actionable framework based on the person of Jesus and primarily through His discourse in John 10.

Five research questions accomplished the purposes of this research. First, is the shepherd metaphor the primary mandate of pastoral leadership in the New Testament? If so, what biblical principles can be learned from an in-depth exegetical analysis of shepherd as described in John 10? Second, what is the role of leadership within the shepherd metaphor? Anecdotally, what are the lived experiences of senior pastors compared to this shepherd mandate and construct? Fourth, how does the shepherd metaphor inform the praxis of pastoral leadership? Last, what are the implications of the shepherd metaphor as the primary mandate of New Testament leadership on the constructs of pastoral leadership and shepherd leadership?

Through this study, I accomplished the purposes of this research and the research questions through several steps. Initially, using socio-rhetorical exegetical analysis, I explored all passages concerning shepherding leadership through a reciprocal approach to John 10. From this passage, I moved forward and backward intertextually to examine the ramifications of Jesus' words in their fulfillment of prophecy and their mandate for leadership. Using John 10, I presented a usable construct that finds its foundations in the biblical metaphor of shepherding. Last, I conducted interviews with nine senior pastors to compare and contrast their lived experiences in a phenomenological study of pastoral leadership.

Chapter 4 – Findings

The central passage for this study was John 10:1–15, known as the Good Shepherd passage (Bailey, 2014). Here, Jesus declared that He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and calls for shepherding. A second primary passage is 1 Peter 5:1–4, where Peter exhorted the church's elders to shepherd God's flock. This passage is given prominence via John 21, as Jesus reinstates Peter for ministry. The Old Testament mention of shepherding establishes a foundation on which these passages can rest. Therefore, in this study, I used the socio-rhetorical method on John 10 and visited other passages through reciprocal intertexture posited by Henson et al. (2020) as a final step.

Exegetical Analysis

Through an exegetical process, the reader makes the text their own (Young, 1997). It is a process by which the reader attempts to interpret Scripture to hold the original meaning intact while understanding the modern implications for today (Henson et al., 2020). Hayes and Holladay (2007) wrote, "The term 'exegesis' comes from the Greek verb *exēgeomai,* which literally means 'to lead.' Its extended meaning is 'to relate in detail' or 'to expound'" (p. 1). The discipline of exegesis serves as a suitable scientific and applicable process that adheres to the believer's spiritual convictions (Henson et al., 2020). Specifically, the socio-rhetorical method provides a plethora of layers exegetes can analyze to understand the meaning of the pericope (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996b).

John 10

The Gospel of John sets itself apart from the synoptic Gospels because of its diverse content from the Synoptics and its inclusion of various themes (Carson, 1991). Scholars have noted that this Gospel is the simplest but most profound, teaching deep theological truths in understandable ways (G. R. Osborne, 2007; Wright, 2004). Until the 18th century, scholars deemed it the most accurate of the four Gospels (Burge, 2000). Most have agreed that John's purpose of writing the

Gospel was so that the reader would "believe that Jesus is the Messiah" (John 20:31; Carson, 1991; Kruse, 2003; Whitacre, 1999).

Background of John 10. John 10 continues a narrative of the healing of the blind man in chapter 9 (Barton et al., 1993). Jesus uses the Pharisees' disdain for the act of giving sight to the blind man to illuminate their poor leadership by stating, "'If you were blind,' Jesus told them, 'you wouldn't have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains'" (John 9:41; Keener, 1993). The parable of John 10 begins in a negative tone because Jesus is tying the illustration to the poor leadership of the Pharisees (Michaels, 2010; Schaff, 1888). In essence, the parable of the Good Shepherd is not an isolated passage, but rather a contrast to the poor leadership exampled by the Pharisees in the previous chapter (Laniak, 2006). This placement is an important fact as the characters of *thief* and *robber* in the John 10 parable are analogies for the Pharisee leadership (Laniak, 2006).

The author of the Gospel also noted the Feast of Tabernacles, "The Jewish Festival of Shelters was near" (John 7:2). It is unclear if the events of chapters 9 and 10 happened immediately after "On the last day of the most important day of the festival" (John 7:37). Some scholars have interpreted the story as separate as there is no clear indication of how much time elapsed after Jesus left the temple and his passing of the blind man (Michaels, 2010). Some saw the events as chronologically seamless, where Jesus leaves the temple (John 8:59) and passes by the beggar (John 9:1; Kruse, 2003; Whitaker, 2013). Others viewed the connection between chapters 8 and 9 as an intentional fluid integration from the book's author or editor, regardless of the timeline (Borchert, 1996; Burge, 2000; Milne, 1993; Newman & Nida, 1980; Whitaker, 2013). There does appear to be an intentional thematic connection between the Feast of Tabernacles and the healing of the blind man (Carson, 1991). Moreover, John was most likely referring back to chapter 9 events in chapter 10 as a way to link the entire festival cycle of tabernacles and dedication together as a seamless unit (Borchert, 1996).

Jesus linked the two chapters when He mentioned "the light of the world" (John 9:5; Carson, 1991). Although there is a festival of lights that occurs during the Feast of Tabernacles which may tie the imagery of light to the present scene

(Burge, 2000; Keener, 1993; Milne, 1993; Newman & Nida, 1980), the timing does not line up with the last day of the feast, and the understanding of "light of the world" must be understood within the context of the Gospel of John itself (Michaels, 2010). The imagery of light does contrast with the behavior of the bad shepherds in John 10 and is linked to the Feast of Dedication in John 10:22 (Carson, 1991). Moreover, Jesus may have been referring to the outpouring of water during the Feast of Tabernacles when on the last day of the festival, He stated, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37; Köstenberger, 2007). Moreover, Jesus referred back to the blind man in John 10:21, further linking chapters 9 and 10 together (Burge, 2000; Kruse, 2003).

Like the Feast of Tabernacles, Jews celebrated the Feast of Dedication with a festival of lights (Borchert, 1996; Burge, 2000). This feast, also known as Hannukah, occurred in the December timeframe, setting the scene after the Good Shepherd passage apart from the previous section (Kruse, 2003). The celebration marked the temple's rededication by Judah Maccabees after its recapture from Syrian forces (Borchert, 1996; Michaels, 2010). The Jewish people recognized the Feast of Dedication as similar to that of the Feast of Tabernacles in duration, in remembrance, and its use of lights (Carson, 1991; 2 Maccabees 1:9, 10:6, *Good News Translation,* 1992; Kruse, 2003; Michaels, 2010; Milne, 1993). Whereas the first celebration occurred in Jerusalem, Hannukah occurred in the people's homes (Carson, 1991). Jesus would have traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles and remained there for 2 months to attend the Feast of Dedication (Köstenberger, 2007).

The context of John 10 is essential as it occurs between the two Jewish celebrations, each understood to be fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ (Carson, 1991; Gangel, 2000). Köstenberger (2007) stated, "The festival seems to speak of the joyful restoration of Israel and the ingathering of the nations. Here Jesus presents himself as God's agent to make these end-time events a reality" (p. 454). John most likely was making an editorial decision to closely join the events occurring at the Feast of Tabernacles and Dedication (Carson, 1991; Wheaton, 1994). Although John was moving the narrative along with the phrase "Then the

Festival of Dedication took place in Jerusalem" (Carson, 1991; Michaels, 2010), it continues a previous theme of addressing the Jewish leaders (John 7–9) and rebuking their practices and posture (John 10:22–39, *Christian Standard Bible,* 2017; Köstenberger, 2007). Jesus began the Good Shepherd passage with "Truly I tell you," indicating the audience was the same as in chapter 9 when Jesus was chastising the Pharisees for poor leadership (Burge, 2000; Köstenberger, 2007, 2013). Borchert (1996) summed up the significance of the John 10 placement in between the two festivals when he stated:

> Accordingly, I believe chap. 10 represents a new theme that builds upon the inadequacy of the Jewish leadership and the rejection of Jesus' messianic calling evident throughout the Tabernacles section of John (chaps. 7–9). But, the Festival of Dedication (which is the focus of chap. 10) also has a messianic aspect because that festival had been celebrated as a memorial to the rejection of false rulers, epitomized in Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), who, among other things, desecrated the temple by slaughtering a pig on the altar of sacrifice and also erected a statue of Zeus (Jupiter) in the most holy place, the inner sanctuary of the temple. The subsequent victory and expulsion of the Syrians from Israel in 164 B. C. under Judas Maccabeus and the accompanying reconsecration of the temple were thereafter established in the Jewish calendar as a national religious freedom festival, which at that time definitely implied messianic expectations. (p. 328)

Inner Texture. The first layer of analysis in the socio-rhetorical method is inner texture. Inner texture is much like the anatomy of the pericope, where the reader examines the structure and patterns present (Henson et al., 2020). Instead of seeking meaning within the words, the scholar used the words themselves to identify the texture of the passage and its assembly (Robbins, 1996a).

Textual Units. Ancient Greek does not contain paragraph markers. Thus, the use of certain makers in the text serves as indicators of textual units. (Henson et al., 2020). In John 9:41, Jesus was addressing the blindness of the Pharisees. John 10:1 begins with "Truly I tell you." This statement sets off the passage from chapter 9, though scholars are uncertain if the timeline is concurrent with chapter 9

or belongs to the latter dialogue during Hannukah (Borchert, 1996; Burge, 2000; Carson, 1991; Keener, 1993; Köstenberger, 2013). There is strong evidence that the passage is a continuation of the rebuke of the pharisee's leadership in chapter 9 by contrasting good leadership (shepherding) with bad leadership (Carson, 2015; Keener, 1993; Whitacre, 1999). Whether the John 10:1–21 belongs to chapter 9 or John 10:22–40, John was most likely making an editorial decision to include the account sequentially with the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication (Borchert, 1996; Burge, 2000; Milne, 1993; Newman & Nida, 1980).

John 10:22 begins with, "Then the Festival of Dedication took place in Jerusalem, and it was winter." This description is a clear marker that a new scene is about to occur along with a new season (Borchert, 1996; Burge, 2000; Carson, 2015). John 10:22–40 differs from the previous section because a new festival is occurring and the weather has grown colder (Gangel, 2000; Kruse, 2003). The location is also different, as now Jesus is walking Solomon's Colonnade (Borchert, 1996; Carson, 1991).

These previous markers reveal that the pericope in question, John 10:1–21, is a separate unit with essential connections to passages before and after in the festival cycle (Borchert, 1996). Regardless of the debate on inclusion with previous or proceeding passages, scholars agree that John 10:1–21 is a textual unit (Anum & Quaye, 2016; Carson, 1991; Kruse, 2003). John wrote the passage to include a discourse from Jesus with audience reaction (Milne, 1993). John 10:1–5 includes Jesus describing the sheep, the shepherd, and the gatekeeper, offset by John 10:6, describing the reaction of the audience: "Jesus gave them this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them."

John 10:7 includes the previous declaration of "Truly I tell you." John even wrote that Jesus was being repetitive when he wrote, "Jesus said again" (John 10:7). Jesus is now explaining His previous "figure of speech" (v. 6) by stating He is the gate He was speaking of in verse 3 (Carson, 1991). Jesus used an "I am" statement (v. 7) and continued that pattern in verses 11 and 14. These instances can also be used as textural markers to identify structure within the pericope. The pericope concludes with a response or commentary of the posture of the hearers:

> Again the Jews were divided because of these words. Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and he's crazy. Why do you listen to him?" Others were saying, "These aren't the words of someone who is demon-possessed. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" (John 10:19–21)

These markers and "I am" statements provide a clear structure to John's Good Shepherd passage. The textual units of John 10:1–21 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Textual Units of John 10:1–21

Scripture	Passage Introduction	Element
John 10:1–5	"Truly I tell you"	Discourse 1
John 10:6	"Jesus gave them this figure of speech"	Response/Commentary
John 10:7–10	"Jesus again said, "Truly I tell you, I am"	Discourse 2
John 10:11–18	"I am the good shepherd"	Discourse 3
John 10:19–21	"Again the Jews were divided"	Response/Commentary

Repetitive Patterns. Authors used repetition in ancient writings to communicate critical theological truths (Henson et al., 2020). The pericope begins with *Amēn, amēn,* or "truly, truly" (Borchert, 1996). Again, John quotes Jesus using the same lead-in as in verse 7. The *Christian Standard Bible* (2017) quotes these passages as "Truly I tell you" (John 10:1). It would be more advantageous to utilize the original Greek and its repetitive pattern of *Amēn, amēn.*

Another repetitive tool of John quoting Jesus is the crucial and predicative "I am" statements (Keener, 2003). Twice Jesus noted that He was "the gate" (John 10:7, 9). Twice, again, Jesus proclaimed, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14). In connection with these "I am" statements, Jesus included the role of the shepherd, occurring six times. In three of these instances, Jesus accompanied the role of the shepherd with the adjective *kalos* (good). John's account of this story also includes the presence of "sheep" a total of 10 times as subjects and twice in the description of the sheep pen (vv. 1, 16). John also included interactions between the shepherd or gatekeeper and the sheep, mentioned four times.

The antagonists in the passage are described by the thief, mentioned three times, once as a plural (v. 8). Connected to the thief is the character of the robber, mentioned once as a singular (v. 1) and once as a plural (v. 8). They are both described as a stranger, mentioned twice in verse 5. Moreover, Jesus mentioned the wolf twice as a threat to the flock. In all, the concept of the thief and robber, along with their descriptions, occurs four times throughout the pericope (Keener, 2003). Jesus positioned the "hired hand" opposite the wolf, mentioning them twice in the third discourse. Of note, the interaction of the thief and robber to the sheep is through the medium of voice—a word mentioned four times, three times as the voice of the gatekeeper or shepherd, and once as a voice of the stranger.

In the third discourse, Jesus mentioned the presence of "the Father" four times and His role in the story. Also in the third discourse and intertwined with "the Father" is some form of the verb *tithēmi*, or "lay down." Five times Jesus noted that the shepherd lays down his life and that He must lay down His life for the sheep. Jesus shifted His posture in the third discourse to focus on His role as the shepherd and His sacrifice to the sheep. The presence of more "I" and "me" pronounces reveals Jesus is taking a more central role in this analogy. Jesus is declaring Himself to be that which the nation needed—a Good Shepherd (Köstenberger, 2013). These predicative statements raise the ire of the Pharisee leadership because they interpret Jesus' posture as blasphemous (Köstenberger, 2013; Whitacre, 1999). Table 2 summarizes the repetition of phrases and words used in the John 10 Good Shepherd passage.

Table 2

Repetition of John 10:1–5,7–18

Verse	Intro.	Inanimate objects	Players	Verb	Predicative
1	Amēn, amēn	Sheep pen, gate	I, Thief, robber		
2		Gate	Shepherd, sheep		
3		Voice	Gatekeeper, sheep, sheep	Hear, calls, leads	
4		Voice	Sheep	Brought, goes, follow, know	
5		Voice	Stranger, strangers	Run, know	
7	Amēn, amēn	Gate	Sheep		I am
8			Thieves, robbers, sheep	Listen	
9		Gate		Enters	I am
10			Thief	Steal, kill, destroy	
11			Good shepherd, good shepherd, sheep	Lays down	I am
12			Hired hand, he, shepherd, sheep, he, wolf, wolf, them	Leaves, runs away, snatches, scatters	
13			He, hired hand, sheep	Care	
14			Good shepherd, I, me	Know, know	I am
15			Father, me, I, Father, I, sheep	Knows, know, lay down	
16		Sheep pen, voice	I, sheep, I, one flock, one shepherd	Have, bring, listen	
17			Father, me, I, I	Loves, lay down, take it up	
18			Me, I, own, I, I, I, Father	Takes, lay it down, have, lay it down, take it up, have, received	

Progressive Patterns. Robbins (1996a) stated, “Progressive texture resides in sequences (progressions) of words and phrases throughout the unit” (p. 9). Progressive patterns, which are closely related to repetitive patterns, reveal structure and advancement within the pericope (Henson et al., 2020). The most notable progression in the pericope is the advancement of the “I am” statements (Michaels, 2010). Jesus progressed from claiming He was the gate (vv. 7, 9), responsible for letting the sheep in, to declaring He was the “Good Shepherd (vv. 11, 14). Although seemingly unrelated, the imagery of the gate and the shepherd is a progression of the relationship of God with the sheep (Keener, 2003). As the pericope progresses, Jesus takes an increasingly declarative stance as to His identity. Jesus' primary choice is to use third-person language as the metaphor begins. By verse 7, Jesus has identified Himself as the gate. This shift continues until it climaxes in verses 14–18, where Jesus exclusively identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd, the possessor of the sheep in the story, and a personal acquaintance with the Father.

Atterson (2019) also identified a progressive pattern in the pericope, which highlights Jesus' intent to call out the poor leadership of the Pharisees. “Them” of verse 6 are the Pharisees in John 9:40. Therefore, Jesus was using this “figure of speech” (v. 6) to warn the poor shepherds of the day. The passage progresses from identifying the “sheep pen” structure of the relationship (v. 1), to warning of thieves and robbers (vv. 1, 5, 8, 10), to giving the people a preferred shepherd relationship personified in the person of Jesus Christ (vv. 11–18). Table 3 summarizes the progressive patters of John 10.

Table 3

Progressive Relationship of John 10:1–5,7–18

Verse	Personal Identifiers	Subjects	Interaction	Poor Leaders
1	I	Anyone	Enter	Thief, robber
2	The one, shepherd	Sheep		
3	Gatekeeper, him, his, he, his	Sheep, sheep	Opens, hear, calls, leads	
4	He, his, he, him, his	Own, them, sheep	Brought, goes ahead, follow, know his voice	
5		They	Never follow, run away, don't know the voice	Stranger, him, strangers
7	I, I am, the gate	Sheep		
8		All, sheep	Came, listen	Thieves, robbers
9	I am, the gate, me	Anyone, he	Enters, saved, come in, go out, find	
10a			Comes, steal, kill, destroy	Thief
10b	I	They	Come, have, have	
11	I am, good shepherd, good shepherd, his	Sheep	Lays down	
12		Sheep	Does not own, leaves, runs away, snatches, scatters	Hired hand, Wolf
13		Sheep	Doesn't care	He, hired hand
14	I am, good shepherd, I, my, my, me	Own, own	Know, know	
15	Me, I, I, my	Sheep	Know, lay down	
16	I, I	Sheep, they	Bring, listen	
17	Me, I, my, I		Lay down, take up	
18	Me, I, my, I, I, I		Lay down, lay down, take up, received	

Opening-Middle-Closing Patterns. Evaluating the opening-middle-closing pattern of a pericope allows the reader to understand the beginning, body, and conclusion (Robbins, 1996a). The John 10 passage resides in John's third festival cycle "because the Jewish feasts are the foundational settings for the evangelist's message in this segment of the Gospel (Borchert, 1996, pp. 223–224). Scholars have disagreed on the structure of this portion of the Gospel. Borchert (1996) presumed the festival cycle to last from John 5:1 to John 11:57, treating John 7–9 as the third stage, John 10 as the fourth stage, and John 11 as a fifth and final stage. Carson treated the festival section in two parts: chapters 5–7 and chapters 8–10. Keener (2003) focused on chapters 7–10 as a unit, narrowing in on the Feast of Tabernacles and Hanukkah. Using this latter structure, the John 10:1–21 fits into an overall middle section of John 9–10:21 (Keener, 2003). Table 4 shows the organization of the open-middle-closing patterns of John 7:1–10:42.

Table 4

Open-Middle-Closing of John 7:1–10:42

Section	Passage	Theme
Opening	John 7:1–8:59	Temple discourse
Middle	John 9:1–10:21	Healing of blind man and response
Closing	John 10:22–42	Hanukkah conflict

This portion of Scripture can be further organized into a tighter construct by focusing on the middle section. John 9:1–10:21 begins with the healing of the blind man and the controversy that this act stirred. Although this act relates thematically to the Feast of Tabernacles in chapter 8 (Carson, 1991), the act itself set up the public conflict with the Pharisees. Both Köstenberger (2013) and Guthry (1994) organized this section as a unit, noting that conflict sparked by the healing setup a confrontation and theme lasting till the end of chapter 10. This structure reveals the specific purpose of the passage—addressing poor pharisaical leadership. Table 5 is a layout of the open-middle-closing pattern of John 9:1–10:42.

Table 5

Open-Middle-Closing of John 9:1–10:42

Section	Passage	Theme
Opening	John 9	Healing of blind man
Middle	John 10:1–21	Shepherd discourse
Closing	John 10:22–42	Hanukkah conflict

Finally, organizing the pericope should reveal a clear open-middle-closing pattern reveals itself (Atterson, 2019). First, Jesus introduced the concept of the sheep pen, gate, shepherd, sheep, thief, and robber in John 10:1–6. The section concludes with the audience confused by what Jesus was saying. Jesus then deepened the imagery of the shepherd and sheep by contrasting the behavior of the thief and robber with the Good Shepherd, simultaneously claiming the title as His. Last, the audience has progressed. Some have accepted the words, while others have rejected Jesus' claims: "Again the Jews were divided because of these words" (John 10:19). Table 6 is a layout of the open-middle-closing pattern of John 10:1–21.

Table 6

Open-Middle-Closing of John 10:1–21

Section	Passage	Theme
Opening	John 10:1–6	Introduction and response
Middle	John 10:7–18	Deepening imagery and explanation
Closing	John 10:22–42	Response and conclusion

Argumentative Patterns. Robbins (1996a) noted that argumentative patterns could be logical or qualitative reasoning within the pericope. The author may use analogy and contrasting language to make their argument (Henson et al., 2020). Throughout the Good Shepherd passage, Jesus used contrasting language and analogy to argue against and condemn the poor leadership of the Pharisees. The reader is introduced to the thief and robber in verse 1 and contrasted with the shepherd in verse 2. Verses 3 and 4 tell the story of sheep who know the shepherd's

voice and follow accordingly. Jesus used this imagery to contrast the stranger in verse 5, whose voice the sheep do not recognize.

Jesus continued this argumentative pattern in the middle section of the pericope. He contrasted Himself as the gate versus the thieves and robbers who came before Him in verses 7–8. In John 10:9–10, Jesus compared Himself, who saves those who enter by Him, to the thief whose objective is to "steal and kill and destroy." Jesus then compared Himself as the good sacrificial shepherd, willing to lay down His life for the sheep, to that of the hired hand who runs away from conflict. The shepherd cares for the sheep, whereas the hired hand does not (v. 13). Thus, the central premise of the pericope is that Jesus is the gate and Good Shepherd appointed by God. The rationale is that He, as the Good Shepherd, cares for the well-being of the sheep in contrast with those who have come before (such as in Ezekiel 34; Carson, 1991). The thesis is that Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, will care, protect, and lead the sheep in a God-honoring way. Borchert (1996) wrote concerning this shepherd leadership imagery,

> The image of the shepherd is an extremely important biblical picture of a "leader" (Num 27:17) because it implies not only an intensely personal relationship between God's people and their leaders, but a style or model of leadership exemplified by Jesus (cf. Mark 6:34). The very word "leadership" is developed from the shepherd imagery, where the shepherd goes before the flock and encounters the problems of the flock first. The shepherd does not issue commands in a pyramid fashion down to subordinates who carry out his wishes like a general or admiral who stays back out of range of the conflict; nor is a shepherd a whip-carrying organizer who drives the sheep into the pen or to a particular pasture. But the shepherd knows the setting, leads the sheep, and they follow him (cf. John 10:4). Sometimes "leaders" today are like the strangers of this text, whose voices are unknown to the sheep, and they wonder why there are problems in their organizations! (p. 323)

Sensory-Aesthetic Patterns. When an author uses thought, emotion, sight, sound, touch, or smell, they are utilizing sensory-aesthetic techniques to illustrate a

point (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). The primary use of this method is Jesus' regular imagery of calling and hearing. In verse 3, the sheep hear the voice of the shepherd. The shepherd calls the sheep by name in verse 4, and the sheep respond to this calling by coming out. Contrasted with this fact is the voice of the stranger, which the sheep do not recognize. They do not respond to voices with which they are not familiar. Again in verse 8, the sheep refuse to listen to thieves and robbers. Jesus used this language to illustrate the intimacy the sheep have with a shepherd that cares and protects them (Borchert, 1996; Carson, 1991; Keener, 2003; Kruse, 2003). Moreover, this intimacy of knowing the voice of God harkens back to the covenant motif of Exodus 6:7, Jeremiah 24:7, and Jeremiah 31:33–34 (Keener, 2003).

Summary of Inner Texture. This inner texture exercise can produce several vital points. First, the textual placement of the pericope is an editorial choice by John connecting the festival cycle within a larger framework (Carson, 1991; Keener, 1993). This placement connects the poor leadership of the Pharisees in John 9:39–41, the Good Shepherd passage, and the Feast of Dedication together (Carson, 1991; Keener, 1993, 2003; Köstenberger, 2013). The latter linkage is vital because the Feast of Dedication celebrated the removal of corruption in the temple and its cleansing (Burge, 2000; Whitacre, 1999). Thus, the placement of the pericope is in between poor Pharisaical leadership and the Feast of Dedication celebrating the ouster of poor leaders.

The repetitive and progressive pattern of the pericope revealed how John's account of the Good Shepherd discourse established Jesus' identification as that which Old Testament promised. The repetitive pattern of the Good Shepherd passage includes many predicative “I am” statements. Jesus established himself in the “messianic portrait” of Ezekiel 34 (Köstenberger, 2002, p. 108). The progressive nature of the pericope and the argumentative juxtaposition of the Good Shepherd and the thieves and robbers further undergirds this fact. Moreover, Jesus progressed in the pericope to contrast himself against the Pharisees who heard the discourse (Atterson, 2019).

The open-middle-closing analysis revealed the purpose of the Good Shepherd passage. Jesus was refuting the poor leadership of the Pharisees as exampled in John 9. Further, Jesus established Himself as the Good Shepherd in contrast to the poor leadership imaged by the thief and robber in the pericope. John thematically placed the passage during the Feast of Tabernacles and before the Feast of Dedication, the latter celebrating the removal of poor leadership.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus used the argumentative technique via the imagery of the gate, shepherd, hired hand, and the thief and robbers. Jesus repeatedly juxtaposed the attitude of the thief and robber to that of the Good Shepherd (Atterson, 2019). The hired hand did not care for the sheep in comparison with the caring and protecting shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd of Ezekiel 34, whom God promised would lead, care for, and protect the sheep of Israel (Borchert, 1996).

Last, the sensory-aesthetic patterns used by Jesus in the pericope revealed an intimacy not experienced by previous shepherd leaders of Israel (Keener, 2003). The sheep "know" the voice of the shepherd. Jeremiah 31:33–34 stated,

> "Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days"—the Lord's declaration. "I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them"—this is the Lord's declaration. "For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin."

Jesus declared that He fulfilled this promise in Himself as Israel's rightful leader and shepherd (Keener, 2003).

Intertexture. As the prefix "inter-" communicates, this layer of analysis explores the relationship the pericope has with outside sources (Henson et al., 2020). There are four main types of intertexture: oral-scribal, cultural, social, and historical (Robbins, 1996a). Henson et al. (2020) posited reciprocal intertexture as a fifth element. As scholars have agreed that Jesus was claiming the shepherd qualities of Old Testament scriptures (Bailey, 2014; Carson, 1991; Laniak, 2006), I

explored the reciprocal nature of John 10 with various Old Testament passages as well as its relationship with the cultural, social, and historical norms of the day.

Psalm 23. Laniak (2006) stated, "The direct personal reign of God over his people and his king is affirmed most eloquently in Psalm 23" (p. 110). Psalm 23 is foundational to the shepherding arc throughout Scripture as it communicates who God is and how He tends to His people (Bailey, 2014). Previously the Bible contained stories of God's chosen leaders occupying the vocation of shepherd (Laniak, 2006). Now in this passage, God Himself chose to describe Himself as shepherd (Nel, 2005). It is Psalm 23 that gives the subsequent Old Testament shepherd references their foundation, setting up the Messianic fulfillment of Jesus, the Good Shepherd (Bailey, 2014).

David described YHWH as his shepherd in Psalm 23 (Bailey, 2014). This statement is a nod to the understanding that God is the true shepherd and the responsible power behind the throne of David (Wilson, 2002). In using this description, David gave the reader an idea of how God interacts with His flock (Laniak, 2006). Psalm 23 is universally understood to describe a God who cares for His flock through careful guidance, protection, and provision (Davis, 1979; Glowasky, 2019). The Psalm gives the reader a confidence in God that He will provide and gives peace to the Jewish nation that He is a God that can be trusted (Wilson, 2002). The shepherd metaphor was meant to not only communicate a pastoral function, but also a royal designation (Longman, 2014). This shepherd metaphor was consistently used within the culture to describe those who held a royal office (Nel, 2005; Varhaug, 2019).

Not only does God employ the traits of a shepherd, God is described as a shepherd (Nel, 2005). The metaphor of shepherding does not find its gravitas because that is how God operates, it finds its gravitas in that it is God's identity (Morgenstern, 1946; Nel, 2005). Although Psalm 23 is a personal Psalm, the author described God as a shepherd to the entire flock, of which David is a member (Illman & Illman, 2001). This Psalm has been universally accepted, especially in the early church, to describe a God who gently guides His flock, provides for their

needs, and protects their wellbeing (Glowasky, 2019). It must be interpreted against the current background of the times Psalm 23 was written (Nel, 2005).

Psalm 23 is a poem which uses structure and metaphors to communicate a sense of hope, peace, and security to the Israelite people (Illman & Illman, 2001; Morgenstern, 1946). This small chapter has a simple structure with an introduction, body, and conclusion (Nel, 2005; Tappy, 1995; Wilson, 2002). Bailey (2014) posited the presence of seven cameos with an intentional use of first-, second-, and third-person language. Each of these cameos contains a specific theme which can be found in subsequent Old Testament shepherd references. Table 7 is a description of the structure of Psalm 23.

Table 7

Structure of Psalm 23

Cameo	Verse	Person Usage	Theological Elements
1	1	First	The Lord is my shepherd.
2	2	Third	The quiet water and the green pastures.
3	3	Third	He brings me back–for his own name's sake.
4	4a	First	The valley of the shadow.
5	4b	Second	You are with me with your rod and staff.
6	5	Second	You prepare a table.
7	6	First	Goodness and mercy–all the days.

Note. Adapted from Bailey (2014).

Its central theme can be found in the structural introduction and closure of verses 1 and 6, respectively (Tappy, 1995). The introduction in verse 1 is, "The Lord is my shepherd; I have what I need" (Ps 23:1). David wrote in the closure, "Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live" (Ps 23:6). Nel (2005) posited that these two verses form an inclusion, whereas the former is a statement of confidence and the latter a reemphasis of that confidence.

Although the Psalms contain other references to shepherding and God as a shepherd (e.g. Psalm 2, 23, 78, & 95; Laniak, 2006), it is Psalm 23 that is carried thematically by other Old Testament authors when describing the leadership of Israel (Bailey, 2014). It established the principle that God is the true shepherd and that David, a shepherd in his own right, was guided by Yahweh, the true

King/Shepherd (Cooper, 1994; Wilson, 2002). Therefore, when Jesus declared to be the Good Shepherd, Psalm 23 may have been on the minds of the listeners and in the mind of Christ. Kruse (2003) stated,

> There are also possibly allusions to Psalm 23, in which God is again depicted as the good shepherd. So Jesus' claim to be 'the good shepherd' was more than a claim to do what the national leaders of his day failed to do. It was also a claim to be one with God the Father, who is 'the good shepherd' of his people. (p. 234)

Underlying the text of John 10 are the Old Testament shepherd texts such as Psalm 23 which described God as the true shepherd of Israel contrasted with the false shepherds (Borchert, 1996).

More specifically, Psalm 23 provided the reader clues as to how the shepherd watches over his sheep. A shepherd pays close attention to his sheep and always knows the count of what is in his flock (Gangel, 2000; Pias Kahlasi, 2015). Psalm 23 described God as one who leads His sheep to "abundant life," provides for His sheep, and blesses his sheep (Wilson, 2002, p. 431). The shepherd is always responsible to provide the sheep with good grazing land and rich green pastures (Nel, 2005). The shepherd provides peace, abundance, and renewal for the sheep of the flock (Motyer, 1994). Psalm 23 provided an understanding that God is a shepherd, He provides for the basic needs of the sheep, leads to them to abundance, and protects them from harm (Illman & Illman, 2001; Longman, 2014). The shepherd protects the sheep when they travel through deep gorges and a "shadow of deep darkness" (Bailey, 2014, p. 33; Kidner, 1973; Motyer, 1994; Pias Kahlasi, 2015; Tappy, 1995). The shepherd heels the sheep, as presented by David when he stated that God anointed his head with oil (Morgenstern, 1946). These statements foreshadow the prophecies of Isaiah where God promises salvation for the nation of Israel (Tappy, 1995).

A prominent theme of Psalm 23 is that the shepherd leads the sheep out into greener pastures (Bailey, 2014). Leading from the front is unique, as Egyptian shepherds tended to drive the sheep from behind (Bailey, 2014). Instead, the God-shepherd leads them out from up front, going first and exercising gentleness

(Bailey, 2014; Carson, 1991; Illman & Illman, 2001). The motive of the shepherd is to refresh the sheep before leading them out instead of driving them to green pastures (Tappy, 1995). The shepherd can accomplish this task because familiarity allows the sheep to recognize the voice of the shepherd (Laniak, 2006; Skinner, 2018a). Bishop (1955) wrote of a story of a young shepherd who was able to call out his few sheep from hundreds simply by the sound of his voice.

Additionally, scholars have revealed that the phrase "He renews my life" (Ps 23:3) can be translated "He causes me to repent" (Bailey, 2014, p. 45). In other words, it is the shepherd who initiates repentance in the sheep, or the turning back from the wrong path (Bailey, 2014). The shepherd has the ability to restore the sheep back to righteousness and experience a conversion from their old ways to the shepherd's ways (Kidner, 1973). This verse is a picture of the shepherd seeking out the lost sheep and bringing them back to the fold—a picture of restoration (Morgenstern, 1946; Tappy, 1995).

Robbins (1996a) described the intertexture analysis form of thematic elaboration:

> An alternative to narrative amplification is elaboration. Elaboration is not simply an expansion or amplification of a narrative. Rather, a theme or issue emerges in the form of a thesis or chreia near the beginning of a unit, and meanings and meaning-effects of this theme or issue unfold through argumentation as the unit progresses. (p. 52)

Based on this definition, John 10:1–18 can best be described as a thematic elaboration. Jesus presented the thesis in John 10:11: "I am the good shepherd." Jesus then presented His rational by juxtaposing the posture of the shepherd versus the hired hand, thief, and robber (Atterson, 2019; Borchert, 1996). This theme of shepherding does not end with Psalm 23, but is developed throughout the Old Testament as other authors described both good and bad shepherds (Atterson, 2019; Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). Moreover, the shepherding theme that God is a shepherd who protects His flock, first developed in Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34, is revealed in John 10:16 when Jesus stated, "Then there will be one flock, one

shepherd (Michaels, 2010). Indeed, Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd of Psalm 23 (McGee, 1991).

Jeremiah 23:1–8. Jeremiah continued the shepherd motif of Psalm 23 into Jeremiah 23 (Borchert, 1996). In contrast with Psalm 23, Jeremiah introduced the concept of bad shepherds (Bailey, 2014). This language is new compared with Psalm 23 where God is the Good Shepherd while there is a noticeable absence of bad shepherds (Bailey, 2014). This portion of Scripture contains three distinct sections (vv. 1–4, 5–6, 7–8; Huey, 1993). Verses 1–4 detail the actions of the poor shepherds and why they are being punished (Dearman, 2002; Harrison, 1973; Lalleman, 2013). Jeremiah wrote, "'Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!' This is the Lord's declaration" (Jer 23:1). Coupled with Ezekiel 34, God condemned the poor leaders of Israel by labeling them as bad shepherds (Laniak, 2006). Akin and Pace (2017) wrote that God "classified their negligence as 'evil deeds' and assured them that he would punish them" (p. 219). Moreover, it was the leaders' actions, not the people's, which would lead God to scatter the entire nation of Israel (Lalleman, 2013; Wiersbe, 1995). Verses 1–4 are chiastic in nature and emphasize the point that God will "tend" to the poor leaders of Israel (Laniak, 2006).

Additionally, the chiastic structure of verses 1–4 builds toward the resolution in the second section (Laniak, 2006). Verses 5–6 detail the Messianic "Righteous Branch" that God would establish to care for Israel while the previous branch through Jehoiachin has now been cut off (Dyer, 1983b). God promised in these verses a new Davidic King that would exercise justice and righteousness (Dyer, 1983b; McConville, 1994; Walton et al., 2000). The name of this new king will be "The Lord is Our Righteousness" (Jer 23:6). This wording is a clear foreshadowing of Jesus Christ and the righteousness He will bring to the world (Dearman, 2002). The wording, though, is also a pun on the name Zedekiah ("Righteous is Yahweh"; Dearman, 2002). The promise of a new king to make right the poor leadership of the shepherds in verses 1–4 is also contrast to the king who came before and ruled poorly (Dearman, 2002; Lalleman, 2013). Also chiastic,

verses 5–6 contain a central theme that this new Messianic king will "administer justice and righteousness in the land" (Jer 23:5; Laniak, 2006).

The last section of this pericope hints at a new creation that is coming (Laniak, 2006). There is a greater salvation and savior to come (McConville, 1994). As in Psalms, Jeremiah provides a sense that God is the one who will cause the people to return (Bailey, 2014; Harrison, 1973). This return will be greater than the first and will overshadow the previous exodus in the minds of the people (Bailey, 2014; Huey, 1993; Lalleman, 2013).

Jeremiah expounded upon the Psalm 23 narrative by turning the lost sheep in to a lost flock and highlighting bad shepherds instead of death (Bailey, 2014). This author introduced the Messianic covenant of a new shepherd who will return the people back to the land (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). The theme of righteousness appears in the text and its importance in leading the people (McConville, 1994; Wiersbe, 1995). Moreover, Jeremiah communicated several critical concepts to the bad shepherds of Israel. First, "leadership failure is a serious matter" (Bailey, 2014, p. 76). God promises to "take care" of the false shepherds because they did not "take care" of the people (Lalleman, 2013). Second, the entire nation is in jeopardy, not because of their behavior, but because of the behavior of the leaders (Bailey, 2014; Lalleman, 2013; Wiersbe, 1995). Next, the flock belongs to God and not to the shepherds (Bailey, 2014). And last, God Himself become the shepherd of the people, just as He is the shepherd of David in Psalm 23—a promise fulfilled in the person of Christ (Bailey, 2014; Dyer, 1983b; Harrison, 1973). God, as shepherd, will feed the sheep by leading them back to their grazing lands, much like the shepherd in Psalm 23 leads the writer to green pastures (Bailey, 2014; McConville, 1994). Moreover, Jeremiah used this shepherding imagery to communicate God's judgement on the bad leaders in Jeremiah 25, 31, and 50 (Laniak, 2006). Dearman (2002) stated, "The criticisms of the prophets who are misleading the people are manifold. The rest of the chapter concerns their culpability in failing their office and the people" (p. 218). In sum, although the leaders have led the people astray, God will make right what is wrong through a new shepherd who leads in righteousness (Laniak, 2006).

According to Robbins's (1996a) definition of intertexture analysis, Jesus was employing thematic elaboration in the Good Shepherd passage of John 10. Jesus described the thieves and robbers in verse 8, an allusion to the poor leaders in Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 34 (Kruse, 2003; Milne, 1993). Borchert (1996) stated,

> Behind the Festival of Dedication and its messianic emphasis, then, one can easily sense in John the importance of shepherd texts such as Ezekiel 34, Jeremiah 23, and Psalm 23, which identify the Lord as the true shepherd in contrast to the false shepherds of Israel. It would not be hard then to recognize that this chapter on the shepherd was contextually very relevant to the concerns of Hanukkah. (p. 328)

Thus, when Jesus claimed to be the Good Shepherd, He was recalling to the mind of the listeners this passage of Jeremiah 23:2–4 where "God himself promises to gather the scattered people of Israel" (Kruse, 2003, p. 234).

Ezekiel 34. Ezekiel continued the subject of poor leadership by condemning the shepherds of Israel (Bailey, 2014; Huey, 1993). Laniak noted, "Ezekiel's most theologically developed leadership exposé is his *māšāl* on sheep and shepherds in chapter 34" (p. 151). Ezekiel shared in Jeremiah's pessimism that the Jewish people would heed their warnings and return to Yahweh (Cooper, 1994). Whereas Psalm 23 proposed the idea that the shepherd returns the sheep to the flock (Bailey, 2014), Ezekiel expanded that idea in that the shepherd will make new men out the Jewish people for His name's sake (Kidner, 1973). Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and explained the catastrophe as a ramification for the behavior of the Jewish leaders (Laniak, 2006). Ezekiel saw fit to borrow the shepherding imagery of Jeremiah to condemn those who had abused their leadership (Mein, 2007; Rodgers, 2010).

The structure of Ezekiel 34 reveals itself in four parts: condemnation of bad shepherds (vv. 1–10), promise of a Good Shepherd (vv. 11–16), condemnation on the sheep and messianic shepherd imagery (vv. 17–24), and closing with a new age (vv. 25–31; Cooper, 1994). The issues God has with the shepherds are multitudinous. In verse 2 and 3, the shepherd leaders were selfishly meeting their own needs instead of the needs of the sheep (Cooper, 1994). The shepherds have

used the sheep to their own advantage, as Ezekiel used the language of sheep and goat byproducts (Walton et al., 2000). God sees this behavior as exploitation of the flock He loved (Dyer, 1983a; Wiersbe, 1990).

Verse 4 describes how they have not measured up to the standards God set for them. They "have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost" (Ezek 34:4). The contrast between the Good Shepherd of God and the exploitive shepherds provides clarity as to what a shepherd should do (Van Hecke, 2012). God as shepherd will seek out the lost sheep, gather them, heal the sick, protect the strong, and rescue them (Cooper, 1994; Van Hecke, 2012). He compares the poor shepherds with foreign kings whose people strain under the weight of poor leadership (Laniak, 2006). Moreover, the poor shepherds have turned a blind eye to the abuse of the fat sheep over the weak sheep (Duguid, 1999). The kings' poor leadership, poor shepherding, and abuse of power leads God to remove them from their position and scatter the flock in exile (Hamilton, 1989; Rodgers, 2010).

The pericope shifts to the promise of God taking the role of shepherd in place of the poor leaders. Now that God has fired the poor shepherds, He must take on the shepherding responsibility (Rodgers, 2010; Taylor, 1969). God determined that He was the best option to shepherd the flock now that He has chosen to remove the poor shepherds from their role and hold them accountable (Dyer, 1983a; McGregor, 1994). Just as God brought back the people from Egypt, He would take His rightful position as the shepherd and guide them out of captivity and into the promised land (Wiersbe, 1990). Ezekiel juxtaposes the diligent care of Yahweh with that of the corrupt leaders (Cooper, 1994). He declares that He will seek out the lost sheep and deliver them into safety (Fausset, 1984).

God turns His attention in verse 17 to the sheep. He promises to judge between those who need His healing attention and those who take advantage of the weak (Cooper, 1994). Whereas God intends to judge the oppressive shepherds, He also intends to hold accountable the powerful and prosperous who have taken advantage of the situation (Taylor, 1969). Greed, selfishness, and abuse will not be tolerated in the flock (Hamilton, 1989). To solve the problem, one shepherd from

the line of David will be appointed over the people (Cooper, 1994). He is a Messianic prince under the line of David who will usher in a new season of peace and prosperity (Taylor, 1969). Unlike previous Davidic rulers who were full of corruption, this new ruler will shepherd as God intends, reconfirming the Davidic covenant (Cooper, 1994).

Ezekiel finally described a new age beginning in verse 25. Concerning the Messianic prophesies of verses 23 and 24, Taylor (1969) stated, "The context is the consummation of the present age and the opening of the new age" (p. 217). This season of time is marked by peace, security, and provision. Ezekiel described a "covenant of peace" under this Messiah, a promise given in Leviticus 26:6 (Fausset, 1984). This language corresponds to Jeremiah's declaration of a "new covenant" in Jeremiah 31:31 (Cooper, 1994).

There is a clear correlation between Ezekiel 34 and Psalm 23 (Bailey, 2014). In Ezekiel's prophecy, he stated,

> I will tend them in good pasture, and their grazing place will be on Israel's lofty mountains. There they will lie down in good grazing place; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will tend my flock and let them lie down. This is the declaration of the Lord God. (Ezek 34:15–16)

Herein, Ezekiel is alluding to Psalm 23 in that the sheep have no want (Ps 23:1), no worry (Ps 23:2), no weakness (Ps 23:3), no wickedness (Ps 23:4), no death (Ps 23:4), no fear (Ps 23:4), no defeat (Ps 23:5), no deficit (Ps 23:5), no judgement (Ps 23:6), and no end (Ps 23:6; Cooper, 1994). Ezekiel communicates the existence of a Good Shepherd and how He takes care of His flock (Bailey, 2014).

Again, Jesus utilized thematic elaboration in John 10. Köstenberger (2007) stated,

> Jesus' statement "There will be one flock, one shepherd" represents an allusion to Ezek 34.23; 37:24. The notion of one flock being led by one shepherd as a metaphor for God's providential care for his united people is firmly rooted in OT prophetic literature (Jer 3:15; 23:4–6; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:15–28; Mic 23:12; 5:3–5) and continued in later Jewish writings (see *Pss. Sol. 17:40; 2 Bar. 77:13–17;* CD-A XIII, 7–9). (p. 463)

Concerning John 10, Köstenberger (2007) also stated, "The discourse contains a whole web of OT allusions and echoes, with those to Ezek 34 and 37 being particularly pronounced" (p. 462). Ezekiel 34 serves as a backdrop for Jesus as He pronounces He is the Good Shepherd (Bruce, 1983; Thompson, 2010). The correlation between Jesus' words and the condemnation and promise of Ezekiel 34 are "unmistakable" (Gunter, 2016, p. 13). Jesus in John 10 was embodying the metaphor of the Good Shepherd from Psalm 23, Jeremiah 23, and Ezekiel 34 and using the *bad shepherd* argument as a tool to establish the fact that He was the Good Shepherd promised in this OT prophesies (Barton et al., 1993; Borchert, 1996; Burge, 2000; Duguid, 1999; Gunter, 2016; Heil, 1993; R. K. Hughes, 1999; Köstenberger, 2007, 2013; G. R. Osborne, 2007).

Zechariah. Zechariah contains some familiar components of the shepherding metaphor as well as a new component. Bailey (2014) noted that this portion of Scripture includes references to the Good Shepherd (God), bad shepherds, gathering the people, a future shepherd, a returning, bad sheep, and a future glory. It also is a minor component of the Old Testament shepherding metaphor, and yet important, as it is referred to in later New Testament mentions (Carson, 1991).

Zechariah noted how the sheep are scattered because they do not possess a shepherd (Zech 10:2). He reiterates the condemnation of the poor shepherds in Zechariah 11:17 (Carson, 1991). God calls the Jews the "flock of his people" and states that He will be their shepherd (Zech 9:16).

These are common themes already seen in previous passages. A new theme arises in Zechariah 13:7 when God states, "Sword, awake against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate—this is the declaration of the Lord of Armies. Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones." Now, the shepherd metaphor includes the theme of a suffering shepherd (Laniak, 2006).

As Jesus spoke in John 10 about laying down His life, He was referring to this concept of the shepherd being struck, scattering the sheep (Keener, 2003). This is similar to the scene from Mark 14 where Jesus specifically refers to the shepherd

being struck (Michaels, 2010). With the Zechariah shepherding passage of chapters 9-12, there is also the mention of the one who will be pierced (Zech 12:10). Köstenberger (2013) stated,

> John probably has the contrasting images of the prophet Zechariah in mind as he pens this discourse (as Jesus probably did when he delivered it). On the one side is the worthless shepherd who deserts his flock; on the other is the shepherd who is stricken for the sake of his sheep, pierced publicly and eliciting great mourning and grief. (p. 106)

There is a continuous contrasting between the bad shepherds and the Good Shepherd who will suffer but ultimately shepherd the sheep of Israel (Blum, 1983). Zechariah clearly contrasted two shepherds, a worthless shepherd (Zech 11:17) and a messianic shepherd who will be rejected and struck down (Whitacre, 1999; Zech 13:7).

Additionally, the Good Shepherd discourse is set against the backdrop of the Ezekiel 34, Jeremiah 23, and Zechariah 11, where God stated, "Woe to the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock" (Zech 11:17). Zechariah is an important piece of the shepherd metaphor as it echoes all the Psalm 23 motifs (Bailey, 2014) and introduces in concept of the suffering shepherd in clear eschatological terms (Laniak, 2006). It strengthens the Christological aspect of shepherding along with the other Old Testament passages (Bailey, 2014). Whereas Israel has suffered under failed leadership, God, acting as the true shepherd, will bring back the people and rescue them from their plight (Bailey, 2014).

Cultural, Historical, and Social Intertexture. At the heart of the John 10 passage is the vocation of shepherding (Bailey, 2014). Cultural intertexture explores the "insider knowledge" people possessed at the time of the passage (Henson et al., 2020, p. 117). Social intertexture, instead, looks at the broader knowledge held by a region (Robbins, 1996a). The use of shepherding as Jesus' metaphor, can therefore be identified as both social and cultural.

First, as a social intertextual metaphor, Jesus was appealing to the understanding of the people that shepherding is synonymous with leadership (Aranoff, 2014; Bailey, 2014; Gunter, 2016). Shepherding was regularly used to

describe the royal duties (Varhaug, 2019), but was also equated to the religious rulers (Köstenberger, 2007). Shepherding described ruling in the ancient world, with references to shepherd leaders in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Israel (Aranoff, 2014; Borowski, 1998; Laniak, 2006). Shepherds were responsible for protecting the sheep, and would often carry a sling and shepherd's crook (Borowski, 1998; Laniak, 2006; Resane, 2014; Tara, 2020). Thus, shepherds are required to fulfill a role, just as the royal leaders are to fulfill their role (Laniak, 2006).

Not only was shepherding well understood to be synonymous with leadership in the mid- and near-east, but it was one of the primary economical components of Israel (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). Herein lies a distinction between the region and Israel, marking a cultural intertextual component. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons, Moses, and David were all described as shepherds (Aranoff, 2014). Egyptian shepherds and Jewish shepherds operated differently (Bailey, 2014). Shepherd leaders of Israel lead their sheep from the front compared to Egyptian shepherds who would drive their sheep from the rear (Bailey, 2014).

The backdrop of Hanukkah also is a cultural intertexture component. This fact is why the claim to be the Good Shepherd is so controversial:

> In fact, the statement was as dangerous a claim as Jesus could have made. 'Shepherd' was a regular image for 'king', and when Jesus declares that all his predecessors were thieves and robbers he presumably indicates at least the Hasmonean dynasty (alluded to from the fact that this takes place at Hanukkah, commemorating the rededication of the Tempe in 184BC) and, more specifically, the House of Herod. (Wright & Bird, 2019, p. 670)

The presence of Hanukkah (Festival of Dedication) and the Festival of Shelters as a cultural backdrop give a clear picture of how the cultural festival cycle influenced the reception of the John 10 passage (Borchert, 1996).

The cultural intertextual layers have value because they are based on historical events. The Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah), which occurred immediately after the John 10 passage, celebrated the rededication of the temple by Judah Maccabees (Borchert, 1996; Michaels, 2010). Previously, the temple had

been taken over by Syrian forces leading to the "abomination that causes desolation" (Borchert, 1996; Exell, 1978a). The celebration of Hanukkah would conjure up memories of the failed leadership during the Maccabean period and the Ezekiel 34 (poor shepherds) passages would be used as a liturgy during the celebration (Burge, 2000). The historical failure of the Jewish leaders leading to the people's exile would also be of mind (Cooper, 1994). The people would have known the historical and prophetic writings of Ezekiel and Jeremiah as well as the Psalms. As a result, they would have been looking forward to the one shepherd who would come and unite them as the prophets had foretold (Duguid, 1999; Taylor, 1969; Thompson, 2010).

Summary of Intertexture. Gunter (2016) stated, "Broad scholarly support exists for the assertion that Jesus fully intended that His description of the 'Good Shepherd' should be understood as a template for future leadership among God's people" (p. 10). This perspective is bolstered by the editorial setting of the John 10 passage between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication (Borchert, 1996; Carson, 1991; Köstenberger, 2007). Jesus was also clearly harkening back to the shepherd metaphors of Psalm 23, Jeremiah 23, and Ezekiel 34 (Borchert, 1996; Burge, 2000; Duguid, 1999; Gunter, 2016). Jesus presented Himself as the Good Shepherd from Psalm 23 (Bruce, 1983; Thompson, 2010; Wiersbe, 1995).When Jesus declared in John 10:16 that "there will be one flock, one shepherd," He was referring to Ezekiel 34:23 when God said through Ezekiel, "I will establish over the one shepherd, my servant David, and he will shepherd them" (Barton et al., 1993; Köstenberger, 2007, 2013; Michaels, 2010). Jesus juxtaposed the poor leadership of previous Jewish religious leaders with that of Himself (Borchert, 1996; Quasten, 1948b). In sum, the purpose of John 10 was to make a leadership statement (Borchert, 1996; Gunter, 2016).

Social and Cultural Texture. The social and cultural texture method utilizes sociological and anthropological theory to understand the meaning of the text (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). In John 10, Jesus is taking a conversionist approach in condemning poor leadership and declaring Himself the Good Shepherd. A conversionist worldview believes that the world and people are

corrupt yet can be changed (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). Although there are references to prophetic and eschatological events typical of a revolutionist view (Henson et al., 2020; John 10:16), Jesus is giving a recipe for a preferred way to lead going forward (Gunter, 2016). Some believe the "thieves and robbers" may refer to false messiahs who typically took on a revolutionary role, but the most likely subjects are the Pharisees from John 9 (Borchert, 1996; Keener, 2003). Therefore, in the anticipation of the new age prophesied by Ezekiel and Jeremiah when the true shepherd takes his place, the religious leaders must be held to a higher standard of leadership (Borchert, 1996).

Sacred Texture. Sacred texture analysis explores the ideology behind the text and its reference to God and humans (Henson et al., 2020). John 10:1–18 is full of allusions, eschatological projections, and prophetic fulfillment (Borchert, 1996; Carson, 1991; Kruse, 2003). Jesus took advantage of divine history by claiming the prophetic declaration of a true shepherd who would rule from the line of David (Borchert, 1996; Burge, 1989; Köstenberger, 2007). Jeremiah 23:5 prophesized, "I will raise up a Righteous Brand for David. He will reign wisely as king and administer justice and righteousness in the land." Ezekiel 34:23 stated, "I will establish over the one shepherd, my servant David, and he will shepherd them. He will tend them himself and will be their shepherd." Jesus is taking on the role of the messianic Good Shepherd who will bring out, feed them, tend to them, bind up the injured, and administer justice (Carson, 1991; Kinnison, 2010; Köstenberger, 2013; Whitacre, 1999). This passage also alludes to the chastisement of the religious leaders in Ezekiel and Jeremiah's day (Burge, 2000; Carson, 1991; Keener, 2003; Milne, 1993). Therefore, not only do the prophetic statements of Jeremiah and Ezekiel provide the foundation to the fulfillment Jesus claimed, so too do the anti-type leaders condemned in Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and John 10 (Blum, 1983; Borchert, 1996; Milne, 1993).

Reciprocal Intertexture. The interpretation of Scripture is not a unidirectional exercise (Henson et al., 2020). Therefore, reciprocal intertexture allows the scholar to study the pericope within the context of the entire canon.

Though a subset of intertexture, it is included herein as a tool to explore 1 Peter 5 via John 21.

1 Peter 5:1–5. As the new church began to take shape, the writers of the New Testament worked to bring order and structure by addressing the leaders of the church–the elders (Schreiner, 2003). Writing to the churches in Asia minor, Peter had concern for the persecution the new congregations were experiencing and wanted to address the leadership (Marshall, 1991; Schreiner, 2003; Wheaton, 1994). He wrote,

> I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Pet 5:1–5)

Peter's letter is not just a call to something greater; it is a warning against the poor leadership exemplified in Ezekiel 34 that doomed a people (Schreiner, 2003). Whereas the shepherds of Ezekiel lacked character, Peter aims to correct this problem by giving the leaders a framework in which to think (Helm, 2008). Moreover, Peter alludes to the Psalm 23 image of a shepherd by asking the elders to lead, feed, comfort, strengthen, and correct (Walls & Anders, 1999).

In these passages, Peter appealed to the leaders of the church and doing so in the same way Jesus appealed to him–through the imagery of shepherding (Clowney, 1988; Schreiner, 2003). Peter would have remembered Christ's use of the imagery in John 10 and undoubtably would have remembered the words Christ used towards him in John 21 (J. E. Adams, 1996). The view that Peter's words were inspired by the calling of Jesus on his life at Galilee has wide agreement (Clowney, 1988; Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003). The same word Jesus used in John 21:16 (*poimainō*) is used here in 1 Peter 5:2 (Grudem, 2009; Kruse, 2003; Wheaton, 1994). Peter is inspired by the words of Jesus during his reinstatement and calling (Grudem, 2009; Mason, 1928). Fresh from the denial of Jesus during

the Passion of Christ, Peter hears the call of Jesus and is restored to full discipleship (Flower, 1922). Hoehl (2008), wrote, "Three times, symbolic of Peter's denial, Jesus asks Peter if he truly loves him. With each of Peter's affirmative responses, Jesus gives Peter a command to feed his lambs, take care of his sheep, or feed his sheep" (p. 10). Peter's reinstatement mirrors his denial, as Jesus methodically brings Peter back to full use (Culpepper, 2010; Guthry, 1994).

John 21:15–19. John 21:15–19 is intertextually connected to John 10:1–21, and John 10 is intertextually connected to the Old Testament metaphors of shepherding, such as Ezekiel 34 (Culpepper, 2010). John 21 must be interpreted through the lens of John chapters 1–20 and the Old Testament foundation of shepherding (Culpepper, 2010; Shepherd, 2010). The scene in John 21:15–19 conjures up images of "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15; Michaels, 2010). The passage also harkens to the Old Testament passages of a need and desire for shepherds who will care for God's sheep (Köstenberger, 2007). Jesus' call for Peter to feed His sheep is recalling of the 'my sheep' reference in John 10:27 (Kruse, 2003). Moreover, Keener (2003) stated, "Although the shepherd image is natural for leadership, in any case, it may appear particularly appropriate in a Gospel that compares the disciples with Moses beholding God's glory" (p. 1236).

There is symbolic meaning in Peter's conversion as well. Until John 21:14, Peter is still a fisherman. Keener (2003) posited that there is significance in that Peter becomes a shepherd in verse 15. Humiliated at his fall, Peter chose to go back to what he understood best—fishing (Gangel, 2000; Köstenberger, 2013). Jesus uses shepherding language to bring Peter back into the fold, calling to mind His use of the image in John 10 (Carson, 1991; Keener, 1993).

Summary of Exegetical Phase

In this socio-rhetorical exercise, I focused on the shepherding metaphor in Scripture using John 10 as a foundation. Themes emerged through the use of the socio-rhetorical analysis, especially the intertexture and reciprocal intertexture analysis. Consistent themes emerged providing clarity in understanding the

shepherding metaphor and its application and ramifications. These 10 themes were spiritual feeding, protection, care, inspection, familiarity, selflessness, willingness, modeling, stewardship, and leadership. A succinct definition of terms can be found in Table 8. This next section includes thorough description of each theme.

Table 8

Definition of Exegetical Themes

Theme	Definition
Spiritual Feeding	The responsibility of guiding the flock to sources of spiritual nourishment and delivering the nourishment consistently.
Protection	The act of protecting the flock against outside threats and maintaining the unity of the flock.
Care	The act of seeking out those who have strayed and actively working to restore and heal those who are not whole.
Inspection	A state of knowing the flock's condition for the purposes of care and stewardship.
Familiarity	Being familiar enough to the flock that they know the voice and heart of the shepherd. It involves proximity and availability.
Selflessness	The motive of the shepherd that allows them to make decisions for the flock at their own expense.
Willingness	A shepherd's eagerness to perform the duties called upon by God.
Modeling	Living out biblical principles so that the flock could model their life after the shepherd.
Stewardship	The realization that the flock is not the shepherd's possession but rather God's and the act of shepherding the flock as God would.
Leadership	The calling out of the flock to new areas of grazing with the posture of Jesus. It involves a gentle and humble attitude and recognizing the need to dutifully lead the flock while caring for the individual.

Spiritual Feeding

In John 21, Jesus asked Peter to "feed my sheep." Throughout the shepherding metaphor of the Bible, there is a theme of providing spiritual food for the people (Bailey, 2014; Resane, 2014). In Psalm 23, David said his shepherd causes him to lay down in green pastures. The imagery is a sheep amid abundance

and provision (Bailey, 2014). Moreover, David declares that food is set out before him in the presence of adversity by a generous host (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). This role seems to be one only God can fill; however, Jesus asked Peter to feed and tend to the sheep. What makes up spiritual feeding?

God stated in Jeremiah 23:2 that he would return the people to their grazing lands (McConville, 1994). In Ezekiel 34, God chastised the bad shepherds for feeding off the flock instead of feeding the flock (McGregor, 1994). Instead, God would feed the sheep as the chief shepherd (Cooper, 1994). In John 10, Jesus promised that His sheep would find pasture (v. 9). Therefore, *spiritual feeding* is the act of leading God's flock to God's provision through His word. Exell (1978a) and Resane (2014) agreed that feeding the people comes through preaching the word of God and training people in righteous living. Moreover, Luther believed that shepherding happened by preaching the gospel (Schreiner, 2003). The pastor's responsibility is to feed the people by preaching, and the sheep's responsibility is to eat when led to the truth.

Protection

Each of these themes is dependent on the other. *Protection* is required so the sheep feel safe enough to partake in the provision the shepherd provides through leadership. Within the shepherding metaphor, there is a clear theme of protection against the dangers that threaten the flock (Bailey, 2014). Scripture symbolizes these dangers through the characters of the thief, robber, and wolves in John 10 (Whitacre, 1999). In Jeremiah 23, a good shepherd causes fear to dissipate (Lalleman, 2013). In Ezekiel, the sheep are susceptible to attack because they have scattered due to the lack of a shepherd (Cooper, 1994). There is a sense of disjointedness in the sheep in Zechariah because they have no shepherd.

Therefore, shepherding entails protecting the sheep against outside forces and maintaining the flock's unity (Borowski, 1998). Working in reverse order, the shepherd works to maintain the unity of the flock because the sheep feel safer when they are with those of their kind (Laniak, 2006; Resane, 2014). Sheep are communal animals, and are vulnerable when left on their own (Borowski, 1998).

Second, in some instances, the shepherd must take a forceful stance against outside threats. Jesus noted that a good shepherd does not run away. David declared in Psalm 23 that he would fear no evil. Shepherds clearly understand the world around them and what threatens the flock's health, safety, mental attitudes, and unity. They work actively to keep those threats at bay by speaking the truth.

Care

One of the primary responsibilities of a shepherd is the care of the sheep (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). *Care* goes beyond providing for the needs of the sheep and providing safety by returning sheep to the fold, binding up their wounds, and working to heal the sheep (R. E. Hughes, 2015; Kinnison, 2010). In Psalm 23, David declared that his shepherd causes him to return (Bailey, 2014). Jeremiah prophesied against the poor shepherds because they did not tend to the flock. The oil mentioned in Psalm 23:5 is a "traditional medicinal treatment for animals and humans in the ancient world" (Laniak, 2006, p. 112). More clearly, God chastised the shepherds in Ezekiel by declaring, "but you do not tend the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost" (Ezek 34:3–4). He continued,

> For this is what the Lord GOD says: See, I myself will search for my flock and look for them. As a shepherd looks for his sheep on the day he is among his scattered flock, so I will look for my flock. I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and total darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own soil. I will shepherd them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the land. (Ezek 34:11–13)

There is a sense of seeking out and gathering the people (Jooli, 2019). Zechariah, too, spoke of tending to the sheep and bringing them back: "I will bring them back from the land of Egypt and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them to the land of Gilead and to Lebanon" (Zech 10:10).

The theme of care, for the shepherd, entails seeking out those who have wandered away from the flock (Jooli, 2019). A good shepherd works to heal spiritual wounds that have been imposed either by outside forces or self-induced (Laniak, 2006). Care involves a sense of empathy and desire to see the sheep return to their full potential (A. W. Adams, 2013; R. E. Hughes, 2015). Moreover, a shepherd knows who the weak are and works to strengthen them before they get to the point of needing bandaging.

Inspection

To accomplish the task of care, shepherds need to practice inspection and accountability (Beeman, 2018). Good shepherds regularly inspect the flock to assess its health and numbers (Bleie & Lillevoll, 2010). This theme presents itself in several of the shepherd metaphors throughout Scripture. In Jeremiah 23:4, God stated that when He brings the people back, "They will no longer be afraid or discouraged, nor will any be missing." Through diligent accounting, the shepherd knows who is missing, sick, and needs tending (Laniak, 2006). In Ezekiel 34:16, God as shepherd said He would bandage the injured (Cooper, 1994). He knows his flock well enough to understand how healthy they are. Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, stated that He knows the sheep (Carson, 1991; Kruse, 2003).

The theme of inspection for the shepherd requires them to pay close attention to the flock (Borowski, 1998; Laniak, 2006). A shepherd who inspects must have a system of accounting that lets them know who is in the flock and if they are healthy (Brodie, 2016). A shepherd is not able to tend to the sick and injured without first having a proper feedback system to know they need attention (Beeman, 2018). Therefore, as a theme, inspection requires a shepherd to diligently measure the flock, both in quantity and in health. This theme allows the shepherd to exercise the other themes of care, protection, and feeding correctly.

Familiarity

The shepherd-sheep relationship is one of trust, care, protection, and provision (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). In Scripture, there is an evident theme of familiarity and relatability through proximity between the sheep and shepherd

(Beeman, 2018). In Psalm 23:4, David stated that "you are with me" (Bailey, 2014). God reiterated that He would be with the people in Ezekiel 34 (Cooper, 1994). Several times Jesus declared that His sheep know His voice (Carson, 1991; Kruse, 2003). There is a familiarity built upon the relationship between the sheep and shepherd (Beeman, 2018). The sheep know the shepherd's voice compared to other competing voices and only follow it. Peter also asks the elders to be examples in their shepherding (1 Pet 5:3). Underlying this command is that the elders are visible to the people so that the flock can see and replicate the shepherd's model.

This theme of familiarity requires the shepherd to be among the sheep. In the Middle East, shepherding traditions speak of a familial relationship that allows the sheep to trust the shepherd and follow their voice (Borchert, 1996). The shepherd's voice must be one that can be trusted (Bishop, 1955). Their speech is full of truth. They are reliable in their direction and have proven themselves to be trustworthy. The sheep hear the shepherd's voice enough that they can recognize it among competing threats (Bishop, 1955; Borchert, 1996). The shepherd is close enough to the sheep that they can hear, learn to recognize, and respond to the voice of the shepherd (Borchert, 1996). This fact means that the shepherd has not isolated themselves and can be observed and looked to as one to follow.

Selflessness

The theme of selflessness begins early in the shepherding metaphor in Psalm 23:5: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." The shepherd shows selflessness to David by providing a lavish banquet at a high cost to the shepherd (Bailey, 2014). The antithesis of selflessness is selfishness and greed, which God condemned in Ezekiel 34 (Cooper, 1994). In verse 3, God noted through the prophet that the shepherds were greedily taking advantage of the sheep by eating the fat, wearing the wool, and butchering the fattened animals (Taylor, 1969). Jesus, in the act of selflessness, declared in John (vv. 11, 15) that He would lay His life down for the sheep (Skinner, 2018a). Peter also cautions against leading from a motivation of greed, instead urging the elders to focus on the needs of the sheep (1 Pet 5:2;

Wright, 2011). This theme carries an element of humility, as any sense of pride would be disastrous for the Christian community (Whitacre, 1999).

Shepherds must exude selflessness, focusing instead on the needs of the sheep (Swalm, 2010). A shepherd must guard against the temptation to profit at the expense of the sheep (Wright, 2012). The motive of the shepherd is not their interests, but rather to serve the needs and interests of the sheep (Iorjaah, 2014). The recurring theme of selflessness in Scripture requires the shepherd to be willing to sacrifice for the sake of God's flock (Brodie, 2016). The onus is on the shepherd to tend to the flock out of a selfless and sacrificial heart and a desire to see the flock flourish (Beeman, 2018; Brodie, 2016; Iorjaah, 2014; Swalm, 2010; Wright, 2012).

Willingness

Peter wrote his epistle to the church leaders because they were experiencing extreme persecution (Marshall, 1991; Schreiner, 2003; Wheaton, 1994). Peter asked the shepherds of the early church to have a willing heart (1 Pet 5:2). The role of shepherd requires a person to be willing to take on the role because the journey is difficult (Marshall, 1991; Schreiner, 2003; Wheaton, 1994). All shepherds need the theme of willingness because God wants people who want the role, not those who feel obligated to the role (Schreiner, 2003). Those who feel forcibly compelled to take on a shepherd's task are more likely to fall away when the road becomes difficult.

Bailey (2014) posited that this theme of willingness began with the character of God as a shepherd in Psalm 23. He stated, "'As God would have you do it' rings with the references to God the Good Shepherd that appear through the tradition. How does God the divine shepherd carry out his task?" (Bailey, 2014, p. 263). Peter asked the shepherds to willingly lead or "according to God" (Clowney, 1988). The theme of willingness underlies all shepherding themes because the concept of willing service is prevalent in the Old Testament (Laniak, 2006). It communicates the idea of incarnation in that they are leading as God would do it, echoing back to "You are with me" from Psalm 23 (Bailey, 2014). Borchert (1996) stated,

> Leadership in the Christian church should not be a matter of obligation or oughtness but of a willing desire. It should likewise not be from a goal of achieving personal gain but from a sense of calling to serve others. And it should not be because one wishes to dominate others but because one is willing to model the way of Christ in serving God's flock. Seeking power and personal aggrandizement should not be any part of the goals among Jesus' disciples. (p. 336)

Modeling

Peter asked the early church elders to shepherd the flock and be examples to those they were leading (1 Pet 5:3). The theme of modeling means that shepherds live out their lives so the flock can utilize their example. Utilizing Psalm 23, Bailey (2014) stated,

> The good shepherd does not direct his sheep with a stick and a bag full of stones gathered to arm his sling and drive them in the desired direction. Instead, he leads them from the front with a gentle call, inviting the sheep to follow him. (p. 265)

Shepherd leaders, as examples, live their lives so they can ask the flock to follow them as they follow Christ (Laniak, 2006). Paul, too, asked his readers to follow his example: "Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

Modeling for a shepherd requires them to live a life worth imitating (Grudem, 2009). The requirement to be an example comes as a juxtaposition to lording it over the sheep. Instead, the shepherds should model character and give good advice to those they lead (Wheaton, 1994). The shepherds should live so that they would be pleased if the sheep lived the same (Marshall, 1991). Shepherds are accountable for how the sheep behave because the sheep assume that they are to follow the shepherd's path (Laniak, 2006). The example of the shepherd is not in their teaching; instead, it is in their actions (Arichea & Nida, 1980). The shepherd's example should be that of the chief shepherd, in that they exemplify humility and sacrifice (Helm, 2008).

Stewardship

The theme of stewardship means that the shepherd understands those they are tending are not theirs but rather God's (Manala, 2010). God, speaking through Ezekiel in chapter 34, made it clear that the flock was His (Cooper, 1994). God uses the phrase “my flock” 15 times to refer to the people of Israel (Bailey, 2014). Jeremiah uses the phrase twice. Zechariah refers to the flock as belonging to the Lord of Armies. Peter was clear when he stated the flock belonged to God in 1 Pet 5:2 (Schreiner, 2003).

The flock does not belong to the church's elders but rather to God (1 Pet 5:2). Therefore, the shepherds have no rights to the flock but must lead them as God would lead them (Cooper, 1994; Laniak, 2006). The sheep are protected by wrongdoing because ultimately, God will rescue them from any poor leadership they may experience (Bailey, 2014; Cooper, 1994; Laniak, 2006). Stewardship requires the shepherds to operate and lead so that when the Chief Shepherd appears, He will approve of the conduct and the actions they took. It means the shepherds lead as God would lead (Bailey, 2014). Stewardship necessitates the shepherds to give up their rights (Laniak, 2006) and instead rely on God to provide for their needs and take responsibility for the outcome of the flock—assuming that the shepherd has tended as God has instructed.

Leadership

Scholars have previously studied shepherd leadership as a construct (A. W. Adams, 2013; Donelson, 2004; Gunter, 2018); however, leadership is only one theme among many within the shepherding metaphor. Initially, leadership is seen in Psalm 23 as the shepherd leads the writer beside drinkable and still water. Shepherding has always been a metaphor for leaders in the ancient world (Aranoff, 2014; Laniak, 2006; Nauss, 1995; Tara, 2020; Taylor, 1969; Varhaug, 2019). Ezekiel used the metaphor to address the leaders of Judah in chapter 34 (Cooper, 1994; Mein, 2007). God alluded to the lack of leadership when He bemoaned that the flock was lost and scattered (Taylor, 1969). Jesus spoke of the Good Shepherd going ahead of the sheep and leading them out by the mere sound of his voice

(Carson, 1991; Kruse, 2003). This posture contrasted with the typical method of driving the sheep from behind (Bailey, 2014; Borchert, 1996; Carson, 1991).

The leadership style presented in the shepherding metaphor is one of gentleness and familiarity (Bailey, 2014; Borchert, 1996; Kruse, 2003; Laniak, 2006). The leader-shepherd of John 10 knows each of the sheep by name, going beyond simply having a familiar voice (Carson, 1991; Kruse, 2003). This quality is counter to how many view leadership; as Wright (2004) stated,

> The answer is that in the Bible, the picture of the shepherd with his sheep is frequently used to refer to the king and his people. In the modern world, we don't think of rulers and leaders in quite that way. We think of people running big companies, of the presidents of banks and transnational corporations. We think of people sitting behind desks, dictating letters or chairing meetings. Often such people are quite removed from most of those who work in the organization. (pp. 148–149)

This type of leadership is better understood when taken in context with the other themes of shepherding found in Scripture. The shepherd's purpose is to lead the sheep to places where they can feed, drink, and be safe from predators (Laniak, 2006). Moreover, this leadership is at the benefit of the sheep, not that of the shepherd (Laniak, 2006).

Interview Questions Derived from Exegesis

One of the purposes of this study was to understand the shepherding themes in the lived experiences of senior pastors. RQ3 asked, “How does the biblical metaphor of the shepherd compare with the lived experiences of contemporary pastors?” I incorporated a phenomenological research approach to accomplish this purpose by interviewing pastors to understand their experience compared with the shepherding themes. Phenomenology is a qualitative exercise that seeks to understand the meaning of concepts among participants (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). This method presented a conceptual link between the perceptions of shepherding among the pastors chosen (see Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

The use of interview questions helped me to identify and explore each theme discovered through the exegetical exercise. The previous themes from the exegetical portion of the study revealed 10 shepherding themes. I formulated 13 questions to ask active senior pastors in an approximately 1-hour interview from these themes. I asked an overall question on pastoral leadership to begin the interview and established rapport as described by Saldaña and Omasta (2018):

Question 1: How would you define your role as a pastor?

Table 9 includes a list of each theme along with the questions derived to explore said theme. More comprehensive descriptions of each theme and question are provided next.

Table 9

Interview Questions According to Exegetical Theme

Theme	No.	Interview Question
Introductory Question (No theme)	1	How would you define your role as a pastor?
Spiritual Feeding	2	What do you perceive to be spiritual food for those within the church?
Protection	3	How do you protect the church against outside forces and/or inside division? What do you define as an outside threat to the flock?
Care	4	How do you know someone from your congregation has walked away from the Christian faith?
	5	How do you define a spiritually healthy individual?
Inspection	6	What methods (if any) does the church's leadership team utilize to measure the spiritual health of individuals?
Familiarity	7	Within your congregation, you have layers between yourself and an attendee. How do you feel this affects your relationship with them, and how do you mitigate those layers?
Selflessness	8	In what ways have you made decisions that benefited the congregation at your expense?
Willingness	9	How would you describe your eagerness to operate within your calling as a pastor? What motivates you to continue in the role?
Modeling	10	How would you rate your satisfaction with your congregation if they modeled their life after your public and private life?
Stewardship	11	When you think about stewarding your congregation, what principles guide you in making decisions?

Theme	No.	Interview Question
Leadership	12	How would you describe the concepts of leadership, biblical leadership, and shepherd leadership? Do you think there is a difference?
	13	How would you describe your style of leadership?

Question on Spiritual Feeding

Spiritual feeding is the theme that describes how pastors achieve the command given by Jesus in John 21 to Peter to provide spiritual nourishment (Kruse, 2003). The shepherd's responsibility is to provide good food and lead the sheep to abundant fields (Bailey, 2014). The shepherd is a generous host who provides for the people entrusted to their care (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006).

Question 2: What do you perceive to be spiritual food for those within the church?

Question on Protection

The protection of a flock involves gathering the sheep, protecting the unity of the sheep, and guarding against outside forces (Borowski, 1998). The shepherd must correct the behavior that jeopardizes the integrity of the flock (Resane, 2014; Van Hecke, 2012). Moreover, the shepherd must protect the flock against threats (Hylen, 2016).

Question 3: How do you protect the church against outside forces and/or inside division? What do you define as an outside threat to the flock?

Questions on Care

Care is the act of seeking out those who have wandered away and leading them to restoration (A. W. Adams, 2013; R. E. Hughes, 2015). A shepherd has an empathetic heart for those who have strayed away and seeks them out (Jooli, 2019). This theme fulfills the desire of God expressed in Psalm 23, Jeremiah 23, and Ezekiel 34.

Question 4: How do you know someone from your congregation has walked away from the Christian faith?

Question 5: How do you define a spiritually healthy individual?

Question on Inspection

The theme of inspection for the shepherd allows them to understand the state of the flock, so they understand the right next steps (Beeman, 2018). The shepherd knows the flock and recognizes when one sheep is missing (Kruse, 2003; Laniak, 2006). Thus, shepherds must have clear inspection systems to ensure the flock is healthy and inform them on what steps they must take to restore health.

Question 6: What methods (if any) does the church's leadership team utilize to measure the spiritual health of individuals?

Question on Familiarity

Shepherds must be familiar with their sheep to be effective (Beeman, 2018; Borchert, 1996). The familiarity between shepherd and sheep builds a component of trust and allows the sheep to recognize the shepherd's voice (Borchert, 1996). The shepherd spends time with the sheep so that they know the sheep and the sheep know them (Wright, 2004).

Question 7: Within your congregation, you have layers between yourself and an attendee. How do you feel this affects your relationship with them, and how do you mitigate those layers?

Question on Selflessness

As opposed to the example of the poor shepherds in Ezekiel 34, God calls shepherds to be instead sacrificial and selfless (Brodie, 2016; Cooper, 1994; Swalm, 2010). Shepherds should operate within their function without any desire for personal gain (Borchert, 1996). Instead, shepherds must focus on the needs of the sheep, often making decisions that are not beneficial to their interests (Beeman, 2018; Wright, 2011).

Question 8: In what ways have you made decisions that benefited the congregation at your expense?

Question on Willingness

Willingness is a theme present from Psalm 23 onward (Bailey, 2014). God asks His shepherds to be eager to do the work He asks of them without a

begrudging attitude (Schreiner, 2003). Moreover, this theme requires the shepherd to lead in a way God would lead (Clowney, 1988).

Question 9: How would you describe your eagerness to operate within your calling as a pastor? What motivates you to continue in the role?

Question on Modeling

The shepherd lives their life in such a way that they can confidently ask the sheep to follow their example (Grudem, 2009). Peter asked the elders of Asia minor to be examples to God's flock (Donelson, 2004; Swalm, 2010) and to serve as role models for those they lead (Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003).

Question 10: How would you rate your satisfaction with your congregation if they modeled their life after your public and private life?

Question on Stewardship

Scripture is clear that the people of God belong to Him (Schreiner, 2003). Therefore, God asks the shepherds to lead the people as He would lead them (Bailey, 2014). Stewardship implies that the shepherds understand they are caretakers of what God has entrusted to them and act accordingly (Manala, 2010).

Question 11: When you think about stewarding your congregation, what principles guide you in making decisions?

Questions on Leadership

A small portion of the shepherding metaphor is the theme of leadership. Pastors should lead their congregations from the front and not drive them from the rear (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). The leadership style implied by Scripture includes humility and gentleness (Borchert, 1996; Kruse, 2003). It runs counter to the typical leadership paradigms presented by the world (Wright, 2004).

Question 12: How would you describe the concepts of leadership, biblical leadership, and shepherd leadership? Do you think there is a difference?

Question 13: How would you describe your style of leadership?

Findings of Phenomenological Analysis

I recorded each of the nine interviews for future transcription. I scrubbed each interview to correct any mistakes and ensure clean and accurate transcripts. Using MAXQDA, I performed four coding passes to evaluate the commonalities and differences between the interviews. First, I performed an in vivo pass to understand the pastors' experiences in their own words. Second, I searched for "-ing" words through process coding, which identifies actions performed by the pastors. Third, I used a value coding pass to understand the underlying beliefs, values, and attitudes. Last, I performed a pass according to each identified exegetical theme, producing an overall codebook sorted by the interview sections. The exegetical thematic findings gave structure to these interview sections.

I used MAXQDA to sort the codes into similar categories and further reduced these categories into major themes. These themes are discussed in the overall findings of the interviews. Additionally, each exegetical theme contains codes from the interviews, whereas the experiences of the senior pastors are compared and contrasted with the original presented data.

Pastoral Demographics

This study involved nine senior pastors actively overseeing congregations. The churches are all located in the southeastern United States. Three pastors are in their 30s, four are in their 30s, one is in their 50s, and one is in their 60s. The church sizes ranged from 300 to 7,000 attendees. The mean attendance of churches studied was 1,760, and the median was 1,350. The churches studied ranged from 3 to 60 years old, with a mean and median ages of 28 and 19 years, respectively.

Two of the pastors interviewed were part of the Southern Baptist Convention. One pastor was of the Presbyterian (PCA) tradition. Six of the pastors were nondenominational. Five of the pastors interviewed were part of the Association of Related Churches network (ARC). One of the churches is a predominately Black church. The remaining churches are either majority White or diverse in their attendance. Table 10 contains a complete breakdown of the pastoral

demographics and church dynamics. The results of this portion of the study are presented in the following sections.

Table 10

Pastoral Demographics

Participant Number	Pastor's Age Range	Church's Age	Church's Attendance	Tradition/ Affiliation
1	30s	3	500	ARC, Non-denom
2	30s	6	1350	ARC, Non-denom
3	30s	40	500	ARC, Non-denom
4	40s	14	300	Non-denom
5	40s	17	2600	ARC, Non-denom
6	40s	20	3100	ARC, SBC
7	40s	36	1500	Non-denom
8	50s	60	500	SBC
9	60s	56	1600	Presbyterian, PCA

Interview Observations

A phenomenological study revealed the lived experiences of nine senior pastors regarding the discovered themes from the exegetical analysis. These themes are spiritual feeding, protection, care, inspection, familiarity, willingness, selflessness, modeling, stewardship, and leadership. These 10 themes produced questions proposed to the nine senior pastors to understand their experiences with these themes compared to the exegetical findings. The results of the interview phase of the study follow, along with tables illustrating the breakdown of the exegetical themes, categories associated, and codes attributed to each.

Spiritual Feeding. For the first theme, Interview Question 2 asked, "What do you perceive to be spiritual food for those within the church?" The two primary categories under spiritual feeding are *communicating the word* and *obedience and fruit*. The first category, *communicating the word*, contains the codes of *gathering* (3), *teaching to feed* (4), *doctrine* (5), and *Scripture* (15). Table 11 contains a breakdown of these categories. This category addresses the pastors' vehicles by which they feed the people and the components of what they believe they need to feed. Nearly every pastor mentioned the Word of God as the primary diet to feed congregants. Pastor #4 said,

> I would say that we are desiring the word [*Scripture*] as babies desire milk. And it is there that we grow. That's not a direct quote. It is paraphrased. But you know, there's some good content there because I believe that the instruction in the word of God is our primary task [*Scripture*].

Pastor #7 said that the pastor's responsibility is to "feed through preaching and teaching." Pastor #9 noted,

> So, like the synagogue or our mothers and fathers in the synagogue in ancient Israel, you gather to hear the word [*gathering*]. So, the Bible is a heard document first before it's a personally read document, right? Historically. So, I think that has to be born in mind. The scriptures [*Scriptures*] were given largely with very rare exceptions in the context of a community and to a community and for the benefit of a community.

Pastors are to use the Scripture as a foundation for teaching doctrine. Pastor #5 mentioned teaching theology. Pastor #6 talked about teaching the "core doctrines of Christianity." Pastor #8 detailed some of these doctrines:

> They're going to have an understanding of grace, forgiveness, you know, salvation, who Jesus is, who God is, who the Holy Spirit is. And so I'm going to look throughout the year to make sure that we're covering those things, and I cover those same things over and over again. What are the foundations of faith [*doctrine*]? What is tithing? What is baptism?

Additionally, seven of the nine pastors focused on *spiritual feeding as an act of producing obedience through discipleship* (4) and *Christian disciplines* (12). This is the category of *obedience and fruit.* For instance, Pastor #1 replied, "It's a great question. Spiritual food for me again is not as much knowledge as it is, you know, as Jesus would even say, it's for me, it's doing what he's commanded [*Discipleship*]." Pastor #2 added the disciplines of worship and prayer as a way to feed the congregation. Likewise, Pastor #3 stated, "I would gravitate towards probably spiritual disciplines as food [*Christian disciplines*]. Obviously, God's word would be the given is the food. But what are the spiritual disciplines that allow me to apply it?" Pastor #6 also drew this connection between knowledge and action, "I think obviously, yes, feeding through preaching and teaching, but also

creating an ethos where we're helping people actually act on the truth that they're receiving. You know, so I see it really twofold [*discipleship*].” Pastor #7 used the example of Jesus to illustrate the need for this two-pronged approach. When asked what he perceived to be spiritual food for those within the church, he answered,

> Scripture [*Scripture*]. Service in the Kingdom [*discipleship*]. You know Jesus said when the disciples came back to the well, he talked about a food that you know not. I think it was just the fact that he was ministering to that woman and reaching out to her, and that was nourishment, that was spiritual food.

Table 11

Codebook for the Theme of Spiritual Feeding

Exegetical Theme	Categories	Codes	Occ.
Spiritual Feeding	Communicating the Word	Gathering	3
		Teaching to Feed	4
		Doctrine	5
		Scripture	15
	Obedience and Fruit	Discipleship	4
		Christian Disciplines	12

Protection. Interview Question 3 asked, “How do you protect the church against outside forces and/or inside division? What do you define as an outside threat to the flock?” The exegetical theme of protection had the three categories: *threats*, *empowering leadership*, and *unity.* Table 12 illustrates this theme, as well as its categories and codes. The category of *threats* contains two codes: *outside threats* (8) and *sin* (5). According to pastors, outside threats—consisting of cultural, social, and political unrest—were the overwhelming issue. Pastor #2 noted that he has had to preach a message in response to the social unrest: “Jesus over our political idea. Jesus over our, whatever. Jesus over all of it [*outside threats*].” Pastor #3 said, “I think the church leadership and shepherds have a lot more to think about today from an external front.” Concerning *threats* from the outside, Pastor #4 said,

> Yeah, you see it, even you see it even today all across social media. Typically, that stuff manifests outside of the church. When I see outside of

> the church, I'm talking unbelievers, people who are critical of the church, people who are trying to prove something against the church. And you know, they may be getting the ear of those who are trying to attend church in that kind of trickles in most of the criticism that we see against Christianity or the Kingdom of God comes from individuals who don't attend or individuals who are not believers [*outside threats*].

Pastor #5 deemed heresy as an additional outside threat. Pastor #7 reported a different approach to outside threats:

> I feel like with me, whatever I make a big deal becomes a big deal. And so, I feel like one of my jobs is to protect, and my role in protecting people from outside forces is to make sure that it's actually a legitimate threat before I lend my voice to it. Because a lot of people are just looking to use our platform, you know, because they have no influence, so they're looking to use yours or mine. And the moment we either acknowledge it or start to participate in it, then it starts to matter [*outside threats*].

Pastor #8 experienced the political, social, and cultural unrest as a particularly difficult outside threat. He said, "It has been a challenge to recognize as the shepherd what they hear from the outside; what they are getting fed from the outside world and the media [*outside threats*]."

In conjunction with outside threats, pastors saw evil as a threat to the sheep. Pastor #5 said, "Obviously sin, temptation. All the things that would pull people away from their relationship with God [*sin*]." Pastor #9 also saw sin as a threat. He said,

> So, whether it's whether it's sex or money or power or whatever, we're all subject to these kinds of things and we need to keep turning to the lord. And when you hear people summoning you to take up these idols of power and then greed or sexuality, then make them make the these licit issues into illicit loves. Then you need have the have the equipment to deal with that [*sin*].

Pastors also protect the flock by devoting a significant portion of their energy to maintaining the unity of the congregation. *Unity* provides cohesiveness

making it easier to protect the people. The category of *unity* contains the codes of *culture and modeling* (7), *accountability* (2), and *focus and vision* (47). Pastor #9 stated that to counter outside threats and opposing messages, "It's not just false ideas, but also a false posture of the heart. So, I think I would start there and say the very first thing that a good shepherd has to do is model a posture of trust in authority and humility [*culture and modeling*]." Pastor #7 stated that a large part of keeping unity in the congregation was the concept of culture. He said, "We've got a culture where the people just kind of deal with divisive people on their own. I'm not having to call people into the office [*culture and modeling*]." Pastor #7 addressed the need for healthy growth and how that affects a culture of unity in the church. Concerning fast-growing churches, he stated,

> Their main goal is to get more people. I'm not against getting more people. If you build a culture that can multiply, you build that way for people. So, you're just trying to gather people, and you realize you may have gathered a bunch of people who have a different agenda from what you're actually trying to accomplish [*culture and modeling*].

Pastor #4 stated, "I think eventually with a healthy dose of the Word of God, with an accurate culture, with the presence of the Holy Spirit, those kind of people [divisive] will weed themselves out." This concept of culture aided the pastors in the fight against threats, both inside and outside.

Pastor #5 noted that keeping unity sometimes requires accountability. He stated, "Guarding against inside division requires is as clean as Matthew 18 when it's done right [*accountability*]." He continued,

> You know, at some point in the way, sometimes you have to remove people. And I think, you know, that's a whole other thing like depending on the offense, depending on the response, depending on repentance, depending on, you know, a whole lot of factors that play into it [*accountability*].

Alongside culture, pastors emphasized creating a singular vision and keeping the congregation focused on the vision. Pastor #1 stated, "As a pastor, as a shepherd, my job is to keep the vision out in front of everybody. Make it plain.

Write it down on tablets. Keep it out in front of us because there's nothing to me [*focus and vision*].” He also noted, “In making sure to protect our church, the main thing is to keep their eyes on the vision but also protect the unity of the church by keeping the vision as well.” Pastor #2 took a more forceful approach to unity, noting several times that it was a “fight.” He said,

> Unity is a fight. And it shouldn't be surprising that it's a fight…I think it's keeping the church focused on Jesus. That sounds super simple, but the temptation is to focus on everything else. The temptation is to focus on whatever's happening in the news, whatever theological thing somebody is passionate about, or some type of groundswell of some sort happening [*focus and vision*].

Pastor #3 focused on making sure there was unity in the vision of the leadership. He stated, “In our governance structure, you can have division there. The flock becomes vulnerable. So, unity among them is important [*focus and vision*].” Pastor #5 stated clearly,

> But I think you foster unity better, not just by putting out all the fires, but by casting a vision great enough that we all can get it. So, like parenting, instead of just always telling my kids what we don’t’ do, what they can’t do, I’d rather paint a picture of who they can become [*focus and vision*].

Pastor #6 said, “When you talk about division, that’s two visions. So, I think some of that again is the way I see Scripture and who we are. I think the first thing is we’re very clear up front, this is who we are, this is what we’re trying to accomplish [*focus and vision*].” Pastor #7 replied, “The greatest fight you’ll ever have are fights for the vision because there’s going to be a lot of people who come, even people with good intentions who are going to want to pull the vision one way or another [*focus and vision*].” He stated, “A lot of my work to protect the flock is really by teaching, training, equipping the staff and elders of the church. Pastor #9 noted that the church's mission was a big part of helping fight against division:

> I think the biggest one in the church right now is an us versus them mentality, a siege mentality. Well, I think that's the biggest problem. I think we have a withdrawal siege mentality, and we view the world as an enemy

> to be avoided rather than a neighbor to be loved. I think that's deeply, deeply embedded in American evangelicalism, and it is incredibly problematic. It has its roots in some views of dominionism and some views of pietism, which are withdrawal-oriented. We don't want our kids infected with this or that kind of thing. I do think that's the biggest issue right now. So, helping the church understand its place in the world as a vibrant living, present faithful witness rather than either a militaristic threat to try to take dominion or a community in withdrawal and fear is the biggest challenge, helping people understand how to be a Christian in the world rather than either seek to be a hostile opponent of it or a fearful person who abandons it is the biggest problem [*focus and vision*].

To these pastors, a primary weapon against division and outside threats is the exercise of regularly casting a unifying vision that the people can rally around.

The final category in the theme of protection is *empowering leadership*, containing the singular code of *empowerment* (11). To mitigate the various threats, the pastors interviewed relied heavily on the concept of empowering and delegating protection to others within the church. Concerning keeping people's eyes on the vision, Pastor #1 stated, “I can't do that on my own. I've got to have brothers and sisters with me. I've got to have people with me [*empowerment*].” Pastor #2 noted that getting the right leaders and vetting them was a large part of keeping unity. Pastor #3 said the same:

> I think having the right people training, equipping leaders within the flock to obviously protect it, to watch out for wrong attitudes, wrong behaviors, these sorts of things, and obviously in the context of loving people. So, a lot of my work to protect the flock is really by teaching training, equipping the staff and elders of the church [*empowerment*].

Pastor #5 noted that when guarding against division,

> There’s a whole lot of factors that play into it. So, you’ve got to be listening. For us, the size of our church, we must listen on the ground level by trusting the team to look for what is going on. Asking them what they are seeing and hearing [*empowerment*].

Table 12

Codebook for the Theme of Protection

Exegetical Theme	Categories	Codes	Occ.
Protection	Threats	Outside Threats	8
		Sin	5
	Unity	Culture and Modeling	7
		Accountability	2
		Focus and Vision	47
	Empowering Leadership	Empowerment	11

Care. Two questions explored the theme of care. Question 4 asked, "How do you know someone from your congregation has walked away from the Christian faith?" Question 5 asked, "How do you define a spiritually healthy individual?" The exegetical theme of care had the five categories of *preferred end, restorative culture, relationships, and valuing people.* This category contains the codes of *spiritual disciplines* (43) and *emotional and spiritual maturity* (12). This question helped the pastors to explore how care and restoration attempt to bring back a person to the desired result. It also helped them to understand when someone was veering away from spiritual health. Table 13 details the *care* theme and its associated categories and codes.

Most pastors identified the *preferred end* of a believer as someone who embodied the fruit of the Spirit and practiced spiritual disciplines. There was an emphasis on faith lived out. Pastor #1 stated, "If my life does not project love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, if it's not, there is something in me that I need compared to the Holy Spirit and God's word [*spiritual disciplines*]." Pastor #2 also noted that a spiritually healthy individual had "fruit in their life [*spiritual disciplines*]." Pastor #4 stated, "I think you see a spiritually mature person when you see an emotionally mature and healthy person, which means I go back to the fruits of the Spirit [*spiritual disciplines*]." When asked the question, Pastor #5 similarly said, "My mind immediately goes to their displaying the fruits of the Spirit [*spiritual disciplines*]."

Pastor #6 indicated, "It's obviously the evidence of the fruits of the Spirit, the nature of Christ [*spiritual disciplines*]."

These pastors and others went on from the fruit of the Spirit to mention specific spiritual disciplines. All but one pastor mentioned the act of serving others. Pastor #1 stated, "I think you're never more like Jesus than when you're serving [*spiritual disciplines*]." Pastor #3 wanted to know if those attending are "serving in some capacity in the body of Christ [*spiritual disciplines*]." Pastor #4 noted a difference between confession and demonstration: "And if people aren't serving, I don't see how you can have a heart for ministry since the Greek word for minister is serve [*spiritual disciplines*]."

Along with serving, Pastors mentioned generosity as well. Pastor #8 stated, "I think, are they faithful in their serving? Are they faithful in their attendance? Are they giving [*spiritual disciplines*]?" Pastor #7 also noted that giving was an easy thing to measure against health:

> Some of the instructions of Scripture you can actually see that's one where money comes into play. Serving comes in play and money. Then they're more visibly evident. You know, it's black and white. You can pull up a giving and serving record. The harder ones are things like pride or humility [*spiritual disciplines*].

Pastor #5 said, "I think that bleeds into some of our spiritual disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, fasting, worshiping, evangelism, serving others, building the church [*spiritual disciplines*]."

In addition to fruit, pastors mentioned emotional and spiritual maturity as a *preferred end*. Pastor #2 stated,

> I guess it's the posture of the heart. You know, our vision, I'm sure many of the guys he interviewed, you know, the four purposes of know God, find freedom, discover purpose, make a difference. I think those do ring true. For aspects of what a healthy disciple looks like, you know, knowing God, in other words, just this ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit, this growing, you know, knowing of who God is. Finding freedom, getting free from whatever junk you are hiding out in your Spirit; that process of being

> authentic and accountable and experiencing deliverance. Then discovering, "God, what are you calling me to do?" Then doing that with other people [*emotional and spiritual maturity*].

Pastor #7 noted self-control as a marker of a mature believer. He said, "I think that [attitude] would be the biggest indicator of the spiritually healthy person–do they have self-control? If you have control, I think that would be a key indicator of spiritual maturity [*emotional and spiritual maturity*]." Pastor #4 defined it as being emotionally mature, noting, "It is impossible to be spiritually mature and be emotionally immature [*emotional and spiritual maturity*]."

Once a spiritually mature person could be identified, the pastor's responsibility is to restore people to that desired end if they have walked away. This act is the category of *restorative culture,* which contains the codes of *culture of care* (5), *empowered to care* (7), and *modeling care* (2). Pastor #9 was reminded of the Anglican tradition when he said,

> In the Anglican tradition, they have ministers who are called curates. The curate was called that because their responsibility is the cure of souls. I think that's a phrase that has largely been lost to use and needs some recovery. If we think of our work as the cure of souls, helping people grow towards sainthood, then I think that's an important place to start [*culture of care*].

The church's mission could reveal a restorative culture, and the identification of leaders helped aid in the process. Pastor #2 stated, "I think the church's flavor should be restoration [*culture of care*]." He defined a culture of restoration as indicative of the example of the prodigal son noting, "All he did was when the son came home, the culture of the house was so strong that it was ready for a party when he came back [*culture of care*]." He continued, "The way you create culture is the way you treat people once they leave. It's not necessarily even for them. It creates something in the church. That is when you start to see people returning [*culture of care*]." Pastor #8 said, "I think part of that is creating a culture that's redemptive, not judgmental [*culture of care*]."

Pastor #1 immediately harkened back to the need for pastors to identify leaders to help identify people who have walked away and needed restoration. He stated, "Obviously if we're doing our job as shepherds, what we need to be doing is training leaders as well [*empowering care*]." He went on to say,

> So, if that's the case, obviously, we need to do a good job of making sure that we know that people are loved and valued. And if they're not there, we need to know that. And so, for me again that that job of the leadership and the leadership team is to make sure that we don't just have core values. So people are our heart, but we really mean it [*empowering care, modeling care*].

Pastor #5 also stressed the need for a team approach: "If I pastor the team, they'll pastor the church [*empowering care, modeling care*]."

Care and restoration also happen through the category *relationships*. The codewords for this category are *relationships* (17) and *conversation and accountability* (15). Pastors depend on healthy relationships to identify spiritual concerns and communicate truth. Pastor #1 stated,

> If you have a relationship with your team, with your people, then you're going to know when they're not there. You're going to recognize that, and you're going to reach out. You're going to follow up because that, to me, encompasses the whole idea that people are our heart, so this is one of our core values [*relationships*].

He also noted,

> If you have a communication scheduled with them every week, you're communicating with them; you're going to recognize when something is off. You're going to recognize it. There's going to be that discernment. You're going to say, "OK, something is not right, something is not keeping up. Their attitude is different." Whatever it might be [*relationships*].

Pastor #3 noted, "It's about connection. When somebody relationally isolates—that, to me is the first warning sign. Sometimes I know it because I'm close enough to the person or, you know, have enough of a relationship [*relationships*]." Pastor #4 emphasized the concept of discipleship and taking people along a spiritual journey.

Pastor #5 stated, “I think it’s got to be highly relational and I don’t think there’s a system for that [*relationships*].” Pastor #6 said, “If you build a relational and sticky church, you have a better opportunity to know when people walk away from the faith.”

These relationships allow the church to have hard conversations. Pastor #2 said, “I want to be the pastor that has the real conversation [*conversation and accountability*].” Pastor #6 stated,

> I think you have these ways in which you create connections. It's not easy, though, because even though you desire to be connected to people, I find that the majority of people (it's a small percentage, psychologically three percent of the population or are more dominant personalities that don't mind confrontation). But the average person, rejection is such a big deal that they probably are going to, more times than not, try not to deal with the issue. Even if you desire to know and help and talk, I think, psychologically, the average person is going to try to disappear and vanish from any kind of conversation or accountability [*conversation and accountability*].

Pastor #9 noted,

> I think one of the things we have to do is ground people in that we're constantly turning back to the Lord and away from idols. If we teach them that, then they're not going to be shocked when we say to them, “Here are some of the idols. Here are some of the idols of power, greed, envy, militarism, you name it. You go through a list of idols that are common to the human heart. They manifest themselves in different ways across history and cultures [*conversation and accountability*].

At the heart of this theme of care and restoration is the category *valuing people*. This category contains the two codes of *love for mankind* (6) and *genuine concern* (5). Pastor #1 discussed this value:

> I don't want to just have “People Are Our Heart” on a wall and then treat our team like they're just there to do a job. And that's it. So, we say it a lot: you're not *like* family, we *are* family. So, for me, family checks on each

> other. Families are there for each other as part of care. I think relationship leads to care [*love for mankind*].

Pastor #4 referred to Galatians and Paul's challenge to restore each other in love. He said, "It is in love—that attitude in which we should do it is in love, with the consideration that it could be my child or me [*love for mankind*]." Pastor #5 said, "You know, we're in the ministry of reconciliation or the ministry of restoration. So, we cover people. We do everything we can [*love for mankind*]."

Pastors do not just love the people they serve; they have a genuine concern for their welfare. Pastor #2 texted a member he had not seen in a while over the holidays saying, "I'm thinking about you today. I miss you so much, brother. Christmas services aren't the same without you." He continued to explain an analogy of a sculpture and a chisel:

> If the sculpture is the masterpiece, you'll use the chisel to create it. Likewise, if the church is the masterpiece, you'll use the people to create it. In contrast, if you believe the people are the masterpiece, you'll use the church to build the people.

Pastor #5 lamented that "they're hurting, regardless of their life's own choices. They find themselves wounded and it is our responsibility to pursue them [*genuine care*]."

Table 13

Codebook for the Theme of Care

Exegetical Theme	Categories	Codes	Occ.
Care	Preferred End	Spiritual Disciplines	43
		Emotional and Spiritual Maturity	12
	Restorative Culture	Culture of Care	5
		Empowered to Care	5
		Modeling Care	27
	Relationships	Relationships	17
		Conversation and Accountability	15
	Valuing People	Love of Mankind	6
		Genuine Concern	5

Inspection. Inspection is the act of knowing the condition of the flock through diligent accounting (Bleie & Lillevoll, 2010; Laniak, 2006). Question 6

asked, “What methods (if any) does the church’s leadership team utilize to measure the spiritual health of individuals?” The categories identified in this theme are *community* and *systems*. Table 14 provides a breakdown of these categories and their assigned codes. Much like the code of category of *relationships* in care and restoration, pastors use *community* to know the flock's condition. The codes assigned to this category are *community* (7), *conversations* (6), and *trust* (3). This knowledge can happen through regular communication from leaders and cultivated community. Pastor #1 stated, “Our leadership team is communicating every week with their directors that are underneath them [*conversations*].” Pastor #2 turned to the church's various environments to measure if people were staying involved. He said, “In these environments that are created, in these teams that are created, hopefully, conflict happens. Hopefully, we see somebody not measure up, and we are able to have a hard conversation [*community, conversations*].” Pastor #5 described that he relies on a process to get them into groups: “Are they moving from isolation to healthy community [*community*]?” Pastor #9 noted that relationships and community are necessary to ask people good questions. He said,

> Now I'm not discounting the pulpit. I do think that is one way of shepherding. I just don't think it's all that's necessary. I think you have to be able to craft some good questions to ask people. And we do have to have pastoral elders who are engaged with people because inspection involves proximity; presupposes a relationship [*community, conversations*].

Pastor #9 also addressed relationships and the need for trust to adequately inspect the flock. Pastor #9 spoke to the importance of building trust in order to appropriately inspect the flock. Using a shepherd metaphor, he said, “So if I don't have proximity and I don't have intimacy…if you’re going to run your hands through somebody's wool, you better have some kind of relationship and permission [*trust*].” He continued the thought with an analogy of a doctor, drawing attention to the fact that trust trumps relationships:

> If I go to the doctor, the doctor is going to put rubber gloves on and put his hands places that I really don't want it to go. I'm going to give him permission, and that doesn't mean I'm going to have coffee with him on a

> regular basis. It doesn't mean that I'm going to go play golf with him. In fact, I probably won't. But it does mean that I trust his competency. So I think the relationship thing needs to be gauged a little bit. It doesn't necessarily mean that I'm best friends with this person, but it does mean that they have trust in my competencies so that when we talk about the things which are pertinent to this issue of their faith and how it impacts their life and so on, then at least we have that [*trust*].

Structure is a category by which pastors used the code of *systems* (9) to measure the health of individuals. The code occurred whether pastors admitted to having no system, a loose system, or a rigid system. Pastor #3 stated, "Our measurement ends when people walk out of a structured environment. We are an organization to a certain point, and then it becomes an organism [*systems*]." He relied heavily on participation in these various environments to measure health. Pastor #4 was more structured in his approach. He said, "What we try to do is we try to analyze everyone's health on a quarterly basis. We have in our quarterly leadership meetings what we call health checks and simply ask them, how are they doing [*systems*]?" Pastor #8 relies on attendance in their small group structure. Pastor #9 indicated that he relies on a more traditional approach:

> I do think some form of pastoral visitation, of meeting with people, at least in less formal settings like cell groups, home groups, those kinds of things, does assist us in that regard. Christians who aren't open to a visit or aren't involved in some kind of community where their lives are a bit more open, that's a real problem. Pastors have to be trained to look and to listen [*systems*].

Pastor #5 stated, "We would think steps, not programs. Are people taking steps in their journey, or are they moving from one level of health to another? Are they moving from no generosity to generosity [*systems*]?" Pastor #7 warned that although systems may be in place, they are only as good as people are willing to be vulnerable and ask for help.

Pastor #1 did not have a structured system to gather metrics and relied, instead, on the code of *community*. Pastor #6 struggled with the concept of putting

a metric on spiritual health because "their lives are dynamic; their lives and scenarios change." For them, they rely on the things they can measure, such as groups, serving, and giving.

Table 14

Codebook for the Theme of Inspection

Exegetical Theme	Categories	Codes	Occ.
Inspection	Community	Community	7
		Conversations	6
		Trust	3
	Structure	Systems	9

Familiarity. The theme of familiarity addresses the aspect that the sheep know the shepherd's voice. It requires the shepherd to be among the sheep. The question related to this theme asked, "Within your congregation, you have layers between yourself and an attendee. How do you feel this affects your relationship with them, and how do you mitigate those layers?" The categories identified in this theme of *familiarity* are *access, transparency,* and *empowerment.* Table 15 provides the codebook for the theme of familiarity. First, the pastors discussed their levels of availability. *Access* is the concept that a pastor is accessible if needed and works to be among the people on a regular basis. The codes for the category of *access* are *availability* (16) and *proximity* (28). Pastor #2 stated, "I'm here. If you want to get coffee, I'll figure out a way to get connected [*availability*]." He continued,

> I just try to make people aware there are no layers. If somebody wants to meet, like it doesn't take a million years to me, I'll figure out a way to meet with you on Zoom or whatever. And you know, that's getting a lot more difficult because I realized I was a lot better at pastoring, like 200 people, and I enjoyed it. I'm a youth pastor at heart. I love that. I love hanging out with people, and I always resented going to like these larger pastoral training-type things because I didn't feel like I fit that mold at all. I felt like, "man, I'm not super analytical." I'm not type-A. I don't want to just be by myself. I study best after I spend time having lunch with people. I get my best sermons talking to people. I process things while I talk. I always felt

> like I never really fit that mold of the untouchable, unapproachable pastor that kind of walks in like the man of God [*availability*].

Pastor #3 said, “My contact information is wide open. I don't know if that's mitigation to that. I think if people wanted to get a hold of me, they could [*availability*].” Pastor #7 stated, “I'm in the office every day. I'll meet with anybody that calls and setups up an appointment [*availability*].” Pastor #8 indicated, “If you want to come see the pastor, call the church and set up an appointment. A lot of times, I'm out anyway because of my leadership style. But I'm available that way [*availability*].” He also noted having an open-door policy and adjusting as the church grew:

> I initially had an open-door policy to show up any time. That didn't work for long because I couldn't get anything done, and people would just do that—rural environment, a pastor's cars there. I got to the place where I started parking my car around back so people couldn't see my car from the highway. They would just come in. And so now we have an entrance to the church in our new building, and it's a glassed-in area. You walk in, and there's a door that's blocked, and there's an assistant behind the glass, and you go to her, and she says, “Hey, hold on a second pastor's in the back and call him,” or “he's not available. He's studying.” They just can't walk in on me, you know, so we had to create that.

Similarly, proximity identified how often the pastors mentioned their commonality among the church and how often they were among the people. Pastor #1 reported,

> But for me, that's why I'm always out in the parking lot when I'm outside. A lot of times, I'm high-fiving people, or I'm in the lobby. The receiving line at the Old Baptist Church back in the day where the pastor would stand at the front door and shakes hands on the way out. I used to kind of laugh a little bit at that. Now I see someone's value in that. That, to me, is one of those things; we don't have a green room in our church. We just spent $650,000 on a renovation project in our church, and we didn't put a green

> room in. Do you know why? Because I think the people need to see, we are just like everybody else [*proximity*].

Pastor #2 also mentioned being outside before and after services and in the lobby. This habit was a common thing among the pastors. Pastor #3 said,

> I just walk as slowly as I can. I think it's based on the scale and size of the church, but our church is at a size in which I can walk the halls on a Sunday, 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after, and I can probably touch every life that's there [*proximity*].

Pastor #4 stated, "My wife and I every Sunday after church, we're out in the back hugging and shaking hands [*proximity*]." Pastor #5 stands at the bottom of the sanctuary at the end of the last service each week. He also focused on staying in proximity with leaders. He said,

> We are bringing back some things this year, so I can be around leaders more so I can stand at the door, see people, high-five somebody, touch somebody, shake a hand. I think to help mitigate some of the layers that create this, that just the size naturally creates [*proximity*].

Pastor #7, who leads the largest church interviewed, also stands in the foyer after services. He explained his experience as follows:

> I'll routinely get someone to say, "Hey, I have this going on. Would you pray for me?" So, I'll let them, "Hey, let me shake everyone's hand, and then afterward, I'll pray with you." That's a simple way. It opens you up to, in a calendar year, three to four scenarios that probably aren't pleasant. But I'm going to have, you know, thousands of scenarios that I think break down the barrier of accessibility between the congregation and me [*proximity*].

Pastor #8, a self-proclaimed introvert, stated,

> I come down after every service. I stand in the front, and I'm accessible. I pray with people. And even though we have multiple services, we've had three services before. I do that because I know that if I'm in that moment, then I'm just going to give everything [*proximity*].

The second way a few pastors allowed people to get to know them was to build trust and familiarity via the category of *transparency*. The code for this

category was *personal stories* (5). For instance, Pastor #5 said that although accessibility and proximity can be difficult, "I'll say this, I think this has to do with preaching style and storytelling and how I involve my personal and family a lot of what I preach, that I would say they feel like they know me better than I know them [*personal stories*]." Pastor #7 said that he speaks openly about his misgivings: "I think if it's true and genuine to who you are, I think they can understand it. I talk about it a lot from the pulpit about how preaching is like, so contrary to my natural leanings [*personal stories*]."

Last, pastors relied heavily on relationships between the congregation and leaders through the category of *empowerment*. The codes that compose empowerment are *layers of familiarity* (6) and *shared leadership* (6). Layers of familiarity identifies a philosophy of the pastor that not all congregants have equal access. Pastor #4 embraced the gap in availability by saying, "So, I think that's what I've tried to do is create an extension of myself with my leadership team. And so, yes, there is a gap in my personal opinion [*layers of familiarity*]." He did not believe everyone should have the same level of access and used Jesus' model of choosing 12 and having an inner circle of three. Pastor #1 stated, "Jesus invested in 12 and really invested in three [*layers of familiarity*]." Pastor #2 distinguished that he saw "layers of information but not layers of access [*availability*]." Pastor #5 noted, "For us, there's lots of layers and even some multi-site campus layers as well [*layers of familiarity*]."

The pastors relied on shared leadership to maintain familiarity within the congregation. In this instance, the familiarity is between the delegated leader and the congregant. Pastor #2 stated,

> We have some amazing people that are leaders that do that kind of stuff. I just try to tell people I'm a triage nurse. I'm not the doctor all the time. Sometimes I know enough to just be dangerous, so I can talk to you about anything at church. But I don't always have all the information. I'll listen and counsel you, but we have a counselor on staff that's his calling. I'm happy to sit down with you, but I'm probably not the person that can help you with everything [*shared leadership*].

Pastor #9 said,

> But what's important is that there are pastors who have that relationship with them. In our context, we have a church of multiple pastors. And if you have a church with multiple pastors, then it is possible for people to be in relationships that are meaningful and helpful for them [*shared leadership*].

Pastor #1 explained,

> We only have the capacity as human beings to be able to handle so much. The goal a lot of times of shepherding for me is making sure that I am taking care of the people that I have put in leadership positions that I'm calling them to care for other people.

Pastor #3 said, "There's less and less of that (counseling) because I've delegated that out to other pastoral team members." Pastor #5 spoke of assigning under-shepherds, "I have to rely and empower. Yeah, for this conversation under-shepherds for sure [*shared leadership*]."

Table 15

Codebook for the Theme of Familiarity

Exegetical Theme	Categories	Codes	Occ.
Familiarity	Access	Proximity	28
		Availability	16
	Transparency	Personal Stories	5
	Empowerment	Layers of Familiarity	6
		Shared Leadership	6

Willingness. Peter asked the church elders to be eager and willing (1 Pet 5:2). Question 9 asked, "How would you describe your eagerness to operate within your calling as a pastor? What motivates you to continue in the role?" The categories found in the question regarding willingness were *calling* and *gratitude.* Table 16 reveals the breakdown of these two categories and their associated codes. The category of calling includes the codes of *faithfulness of God* (7) and *purpose* (15). Pastors overwhelmingly returned to their perceived calling of God to take on the role as a pastor. Pastor #1 stated,

> He has called you to this, and calling is one of those funny words that people put so much into it. But really, it's just being available is all the call

> is. It's being available. We had to move our town back a little bit because you weren't available for the call. So for me, calling is just availability. The guys, when Jesus called them, "come follow me," you know what they did? They became available to Jesus [*purpose*].

Pastor #3 said, "I am very eager to operate in that calling [*purpose*]." Pastor #4 indicated, "This is what I've been called to do." Pastor #5 agreed,

> At the end of the day, it is calling. You know, God spoke to me, and this wasn't my bright idea. This is something God invited me to do, and that is what sustains and keeps me. At a real foundational level, it is a calling [*purpose*].

Pastor #6 mentioned that God called him from an early age. Pastor #7 noted, "So I'm willing, but I'm also joyful because I know that this is, I know without a shadow of a doubt like this is what I'm supposed to do [*purpose*]." When answering the question of willingness, Pastor #8 said, "The primary is the faithfulness of God. I know he called me to do this. And I trust him. I believe he called me to do this, and therefore he will sustain me in this [*faithfulness of God*]."

Pastor #8 linked the calling with the faithfulness of God. Other pastors made the same link. Pastor #1 spoke of God healing him when he was a child and remembering God's faithfulness during that season. Pastor #6 reflected on Jesus' promise for the church that "the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Likewise, Pastor #9 said, "The only thing that really keeps me going most of the time is this idea that Jesus has prayed and the Father has promised [*faithfulness of God*]."

Most of the pastors expressed genuine *gratitude* for the role, and often spoke of loving what they do and loving the people. The codes for *gratitude* are *love for the people* (13) and *love for the role* (11) Pastor #2 said, "I love it, man," and "Thank you, Jesus, I get to do this [*love for the role*]." He went on to say, "I'd rather be the guy like at the hospital with somebody seeing their kids going through something and knowing that that's a person I'm going to be able to like walk with for a long time." Pastor #3 said, "There's certainly joy in that. But I think I'm more eager to do this because I love him than anything, and I'm not cynical towards people [*love for the people*]." Pastor #4 reflected on a prayer he prayed in his past:

"Lord, I love people. I love leading people. It's obviously something you've put into my life. I would be honored and privileged to shepherd a flock [*love for the people*]." Pastor #5 also noted the love for people: "It's life change. I mean, that's at the end of the day; that's what fires me up [*love for the people*]." Pastor #6 said, "And I have to say, I can't believe I get paid to do what I do. I love our church. I love our people." Pastor #7 replied, "I would never want to do anything else [*love for the role*]." Pastor #8 stated, "I loved it. It has been a tremendous joy." Pastor #9 also noted the joys of the role:

> And when the lights come on for someone in their heart, there's just nothing like that. So as a teacher, when I see people become aware of how beautiful the scriptures are, you know, "open my eyes, and I behold the wonders of your word." And suddenly, the Bible is very alive to them, and they're living by the word that that is something which I cherish [*love for the role*].

Table 16

Codebook for the Theme of Willingness

Exegetical Theme	Categories	Codes	Occ.
Willingness	Calling	Faithfulness of God	7
		Purpose	15
	Gratitude	Love for the People	13
		Love for the Role	11

Selflessness. The eight question explored the theme of selflessness by asking, "In what ways have you made decisions that benefited the congregation at your expense?" The theme of selflessness had two categories: *personal weight* and *family weight*. Table 17 provides a detail of this theme, its categories, and associated codes. *Personal weight* entails the mental strain and sacrifices made for ministry. The codes associated with this category are *mental weight* (9) and *financial weight* (9). Pastor #1 said, "Obviously time, energy, and effort. We believe in it so much in the vision of what God has given us that again; we were willing to make those necessary sacrifices, whatever they may be [*mental weight*]." Pastor #3 said,

> Most of this at the deepest sacrifice is the one-on-one time that you invest in people as you care for them from a shepherding standpoint. Really, that's

> just the kind of office hours type of thing where you almost feel like a doctor some time, like you're on call, and that's okay [*mental weight*].

Pastor #7 stated, "I think the biggest thing that we do that maybe hurts us, that helps other people is just continuing to love people, even though we've been severely hurt by people [*mental weight*]." He went more in-depth on the weight he carries:

> Like yesterday, I was in the middle of a full-blown, fighting off… I started having panic attacks about 2 years ago out of nowhere. I was in California on vacation had one, and it made no sense at all. And I've had moments where I'm just like, I get in my office before Sunday. I just sit in a chair, and I can't get out of the chair, and I have to force myself to get out of a chair. And yesterday was kind of one of those days where it's just like, I just I had to fight that off that heavy breathing in my chest feeling tight and just want to cry, you know, I did it anyway. And then when I'm done preaching, I'm like, It's the greatest thing ever [*mental weight*].

Pastor #8 said, "Pastoring is the most rewarding, terrifying, exhilarating, frustrating, heartbreaking, encouraging job I've ever had [*mental weight*]."

The weight of pastoring can be mental. It can also be material. Pastor #4 described his sacrifice in more concrete terms:

> I can walk you around on that stage and literally point out thousands of dollars of equipment that I personally bought. Let me say this: If I tallied from year one until now, I could probably buy a house cash in [my town] right now [*financial weight*].

Pastor #6 also brought up tangible sacrifices, stating, "I make a lot less money than I could. I have a phenomenal team. I've sacrificed a lot financially because I wanted to hire a great team [*financial weight*]." Pastor #7 also mentioned pay cuts:

> Through the years, we've taken pay cuts, just us, not even the staff. They won't let me do that anymore. It's been a few years since we've done that. Somebody found out I was doing that, and they told the compensation committee people that are responsible for my pay, and they were not too

> happy with me or that. I thought I had that authority, but I guess I didn't [*financial weight*].

Pastor #9 had made a physical move to take a different church job in the past. He said,

> It is something that they [the church] recognize as a willingness on our part to put aside what we would most want and put ourselves in an uncomfortable position. Then the other side of that is just uncertainty. I think the cost of living issues and things like that are much higher. So, you know, we're going to make sacrifices from a lifestyle standpoint here; not that we have some grand lifestyle, but it is very different. I see pastors do that all the time. They'll take a much lesser, comfortable comfort level in order to serve people where they are. And yes, we've done that, we've done that a couple of times [*financial weight*].

Pastors were also keenly aware of the strain and sacrifice pastoring had on their families. The category of *family weight* contains the codes of *hospitality* (5), *creating boundaries* (5), and *family sacrifice* (9). Pastor #1 stated,

> I never feel comfortable necessarily saying that I have given up all amenities to serve the church or whatever. Obviously, there's been many times of time, energy, and focus. I mean, even in times of crisis where, you know, I don't want to do this, and it doesn't need to be the norm, but even my family. At certain times of having to give up just dad being around at the moment or mom or whatever it might be to be able to serve the church better and again in moderation [*family sacrifice*]. It doesn't need to be a norm by any means. My goodness, you lose your family; that's not even good for your church. Let's be honest; you don't need to be leading.

On the same topic, Pastor #3 said, “You certainly have to balance that. But there is emergencies that just demands your attention and it costs you something with your family [*family sacrifice*].” Pastor #4 reported, “You know, the sacrifice has been on me and my children. I've missed games. I've missed events. You know, wisdom taught me past year eight or nine, don't do that [*family sacrifice*].” Pastor #5 noted how the family is part of the overall mission:

> What's best for the church. What's best for the people? Hopefully not, what's best for me today? But how do I best serve them today? So I don't know, I can't compartmentalize it down because I think it's just "life." Like it's we're here to build the church and, you know, that's what our family does, what we do. It's not a career [*family sacrifice*].

Pastor #7 said, "I was telling somebody there are a lot of other things I could have done that would have put less pressure on my wife and less pressure on my kids [*family sacrifice*]." Pastor #8 noted, "I have put people in the church first and in a bad way that hurt my family to this day. I think there's a residual of that that I've had to work through [*family sacrifice*]."

Consequently, many pastors spoke of the sacrifice on their family and mentioned the lessons learned and the need for healthy boundaries. For instance, Pastor #9 followed up his thought with,

> I got to tell you because churches are a people business, so to speak, if you want to use those terms. There are times when as a family, to actually have health and to actually have more to give to people, you have to pull back from people. Right? So I think it's always hard for pastors and their wives to establish boundaries. You know, where the church stops and family has a certain sense of protection. People can't just barge in and out. An old friend of mine used to live in a parsonage when he was a kid. His dad was a Baptist pastor, and his dad called it the pastorium. He said that's where people drive by, and they can see the pastor [*healthy boundaries*].

Pastor #4 warned about confiding in too many people. Moreover, he noted learning the lesson of not missing his children's games and being more present in their lives. Pastor #7 said,

> From the beginning, I really tried to make my family the priority of my life. I even told our leadership when I started, when we took over the church, I was just like, "Listen, I'm not going to miss my kids' ballgames or meetings. I'm not going to. I'm not going to sacrifice my family time for the church. I can't do every wedding. I can't do every funeral. I can't be at every hospital visitation." That was early on, and that was when we were about a third of

> the size we are now because we've about tripled since we took over. So it's good to set that precedent because then it was possible, maybe to some extent, but now it's just impossible [*healthy boundaries*].

Pastor #6 described the struggle between shepherding and protecting his family:

> I think Jesus said the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, I think. I think we have misinterpreted that to some degree. I feel like. Sometimes I have done that to my own detriment and to the detriment of my family [*healthy boundaries*].

The pastors do not set these boundaries in an attempt to seclude. Rather, as Pastor #9 stated, they set them to give more to the congregation.

Pastors also open up their homes for the benefit of the church. This, too, is a sacrifice on the pastor and their family. Pastor #5 spoke of how they started the church in their home. More recently, they were forced to open up their home due to COVID. He said, "If we've learned anything over the past 2 years, we've had to do church at home and we've had to find alternative ways of doing church [*hospitality*]." Pastor #9 drew attention to the long-term effects of pastoring and hospitality:

> I think hospitality is a critical issue. I think having a home which is open for people to visit with you and sharing food with people. I think it is at a cost. It's a very basic thing. It's not a great cost to make a pot of soup and a good loaf of bread [*hospitality*]. But there's a bit of cost if you invite some people over, right? And that can be multiplied out over time if you do it pretty frequently [*family sacrifice*]. But having people in your home means you're not, you know, sort of king on a hill somewhere sort of separate from everybody.

Table 17

Codebook for the Theme of Selflessness

Exegetical Theme	Categories	Codes	Occ.
Selflessness	Personal Weight	Mental Weight	9
		Financial Weight	4
	Family Weight	Family Sacrifice	9
		Healthy Boundaries	5
		Hospitality	5

Modeling. The theme of modeling entails a pastor living their life in a way that would be replicable by the congregation with positive benefits. Question 10 asked, "How would you rate your satisfaction within your congregation if they modeled their life after your public and private life?" This theme contains two primary categories of *aware of shortcomings* and *modeling life.* Table 18 provides the theme, categories, and associated codes for each category.

First, the pastors were hesitant to answer the question, "How would you rate your satisfaction with your congregation if they modeled their life after your public and private life?" They seemed to initially pause when attempting to reply. The reason for this response is found in the first category for the theme, *aware of shortcomings*. This category entails only one code, *awareness* (7). An example of this conundrum was Pastor #5. He mused, "So if I say a 10, I sound really arrogant. If I say, say, a 1, I sound unfit [*awareness*]." Pastor #1 said, "Have I had struggles? Absolutely, I have [*awareness*]." Pastor #2 stated, "There's been times where I'm like, you know, and I'm a wreck right now [*awareness*]." Pastor #5 replied, "I'm content in all things, but I'm not happy with where I'm at [*awareness*]." Pastor #7 recently had to correct some of his behavior, saying, "I had to really step up and go first and apologize for. Neglecting some areas with some of my team or some very response that weren't Christlike [*awareness*]." Pastor #9 echoed these sentiments, noting, "I don't know. I think I'm out of balance in so many ways [*awareness*]."

Even though the pastors were aware of their shortcomings, they still felt they were living a life worth modeling. This is captured in the category of *modeling life,* which contains the two codes of *modeling Jesus* (4) and *modeling pursuit* (14). Several pastors wanted to embody the example of Paul when he said, "Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Pastor #1 said, "I hate to say you look at me and imitate me. As Paul said, obviously, that's what he said. I imitate me as I imitate Christ. And so, I'm not going to get it right every time [*modeling Jesus*]." Pastor #2 also stated, "I want to be able to say, follow me as I follow Christ. And I'm kind of going to say that right now, like, I'm far from perfect [*modeling Jesus*]." Pastor #7 replied,

> So, it's like it's kind of one of those things. But I do think I can say to people, whether it's personally or privately, "Hey, follow me as I follow Christ." I really do feel like I've been faithful to my spouse, I've been faithful to my kids, I don't have... I'm not worried about skeletons in the closet [*modeling Jesus*].

Pastor #5 said, "I serve people outside of my platform as I have opportunity. I do for one what I wish I could do for everyone. So, I feel like I would be happy if they were following me as I follow Christ [*modeling Jesus*]."

Overall, pastors were comfortable saying that they would be satisfied in allowing people to model their lives after them because of their example of pursuit. Pastor #1 replied, "You know what? In a humbly in a humble way, yes, I would like for everybody to. Not because of me again. Not that I get it right every time because I don't [*modeling pursuit*]." Pastor #2 said, "I'm far from perfect. I got my own personality. I'm not saying you have to be my personality. But I'm going to seek the Lord." Pastor #3 indicated,

> So, here's my answer. I would be very satisfied. I think there was a day I had a turning point about 4 and a half years ago, and a lot of things shifted for me in my heart as I learned. It was several years into being a lead pastor at that point, and I really think I discovered what it was about. I thought I knew, but I didn't. And you know what gets in the head gets everywhere else. And I would be satisfied if people were living the way that I'm living today. I think the motives are correct. I think the fulfillment is anchored in the right place. I certainly am not pleased with everything I do. I would honestly say to you I would be satisfied [*modeling pursuit*].

Pastor #4 said, "I think imitation is the highest form of flattery. I would say the core group of individuals that I pastor who know my heart and they're close enough to see my life, I'd be very pleased [*modeling pursuit*]." Pastor #8 stated, "I think we'd be a lot better off in some ways, and that's not an arrogant statement." Last, Pastor #9 summed up the idea of pursuit:

> I think if it came to endeavor, though, or intention. Okay, I could speak to endeavor and intention. Did I endeavor to be a good father? Did I intend on

> that? Did I? You know, my wife and I have been married now for 41 years, and so that I. Have I failed as a husband? Yes. Miserable. But have we loved each other through all our failures? Yes. So, could we say we love each other through all your failures? You know, hang in there. Yeah. So, I think on that front. Yes. I think intention and posture [*modeling pursuit*].

Table 18

Codebook for the Theme of Modeling

Exegetical Theme	Categories	Codes	Occ.
Modeling	Awareness of Shortcomings	Awareness	7
	Modeling Life	Modeling Jesus	4
		Modeling Pursuit	14

Stewardship. Stewardship of the flock entails the pastor understanding that the flock is not the pastor's possession, but rather God's. Question 11 asked, "When you think about stewarding your congregation, what principles guide you in making decisions?" The three categories evident in this theme are *posture, understanding ownership,* and *the example of Jesus.* Table 19 outlines the theme's categories and codes. The first code of *posture* contains the codes of *gratitude* (4) and *humility* (2). Pastor #1 spoke of people who were only at the church for a season:

> A principle that I've put into play is when they were building our church, how was I talking about them, and how thankful was I for them? But when they left our church, what was my conversation like about them? So that's the thing for me is like "honor is our posture" is I'm going to honor them whether they're here for 6 months or for life. I want to honor people no matter what, at the at the end of it again, Jesus spoke blessing to the people that were cursing him. So, whether people are leaving or coming or going or whatever it might be like, let's be people of honor. And let's be people that say, Hey, you know what? Thank you. Thank you for serving. Thank you for giving. Thank you for believing [*gratitude*].

Pastor #4 also said, "I'm happy when they come and I'm happy when they go [*gratitude*]." Pastor #3 stressed the need to act in humility and own mistakes:

> Be an honest person in your leadership. Be a repentant person in regard that sometimes when you repent or you apologize for something or you say "I've changed my mind." I think leaders maybe deal with the insecurity that it'll undermine people's trust in them. I think it does the opposite [*humility*].

He added, "Keep your congregation focused on the things that's going to make the biggest impact in eternity: Honoring God, honesty, a spirit of humility, and repentance as a leader and focused on the eternal essentials [*humility*]." Pastor #8 said, "I get that I am going to be responsible to the Lord for these people. And I get that. But there's just something on the inside of me that understands that these people are a gift to me [*gratitude*]."

Additionally, the pastors leaned on the principle of *understanding ownership*. Pastor #9 replied,

> They are his. They're bought with his blood. John the Baptist. John Chapter three. Says, you know, I'm the friend of the bridegroom, the bride falls to the bridegroom, I'm just the front of the bridegroom. He must increase; I must decrease [*understanding ownership*].

Pastor #8 said, "It is my responsibility to steward them well. It's not my church [*understanding ownership*]." Pastor #7 explained, "These are God's people. None of this is mine. My body doesn't even belong to me [*understanding ownership*]." Pastor #6 noted,

> I think first and foremost when I think about stewarding God's flock, I realize they're not mine, you know? I'm happy when they come, and I'm happy when they go. And so that's one thing I think pastors who don't pastor in that kind of freedom will pastor in fear [*understanding ownership*].

Pastor #3 echoed these sentiments: "From the flock standpoint, it's not my flock. It's not I'm being granted the permission to lead and to guide, move consistently from temporal things and move always consistently towards eternal things [*understanding ownership*]." Pastor #1 stated,

> We've had some people that have left that aren't a part of the church anymore. And honestly, I would be remiss to say that that didn't affect me

> because it did. And again, as a shepherd of a specific flock that I'm called to, when you lose a sheep of any kind, obviously, it hurts a little bit. I'm not the Shepherd. Obviously, it's God's sheep [*understanding ownership*].

Last, the pastors used the *example of Jesus* as a principle in stewarding people. This category includes the codes of *loving people* (5) and *grace and truth* (3). Pastor #2 replied to the question of principles as follows: "You know, I don't know—the example of Jesus? That's what I would say. The example of Jesus. Jesus was full of grace and truth [*grace and truth*]." He continued,

> Jesus is our example. Who did He love? Who did He care for? How did He live? You know? What did He do? How did He model? What type of leaders did He build? What kind of conversations did He have? Who did He spend time with? And so, I would say Jesus would be the model [*grace and truth*].

Pastor #5 said,

> Well, what honors the Lord? I know that's subjective. But what honors God? Does it align with what I believe He called us to do? I always said this area doesn't need more churches. But I think they need what we've been called to do and staying true to that. Am I staying true to The Word? Am I loving people well and not using people? [*loving people*].

Pastor #9 also relied on the example of Jesus:

> John the Baptist said in John 3, he says, "I'm the friend of the bridegroom. The bride belongs to the bridegroom. I'm just a friend of the bridegroom. He must increase, and I must decrease. That friend of the bridegroom motif is really critical. And when I teach on John the Baptist as a model for ministry, I really go there that he saw himself as the messenger of the bridegroom. But that's it. And so they do belong to him, and it's his blood they're bought with. So, I think the first thing you have to do is. Be willing, to tell the truth. About situations. Not spin narratives [*grace and truth*].

Table 19

Codebook for the Theme of Stewardship

Exegetical Theme	Categories	Codes	Occ.
Stewardship	Posture	Gratitude	4
		Humility	2
	Understanding Ownership	Understanding Ownership	9
	Example of Jesus	Loving People	5
		Grace and Truth	3

Leadership. The last questions in the interviews explored what the pastors thought about various leadership styles and what they believed was their style of leadership. Question 12 asked, "How would you describe the concepts of leadership, biblical leadership, and shepherd leadership? Do you think there is a difference?" The final question asked, "How would you describe your style of leadership?" The pastors disagreed on the first question centering on the various styles of available leadership. The categories for the theme of leadership are *similar*, *disparity*, and *Jesus-centric*. Table 20 provides a layout of the categories in theme of leadership and their codes. The initial categories of *similar* and *disparity* indicate that pastors thought that the various leadership styles were all similar or had nothing to do with biblical-centered leadership.

First, when pastors described their opinion of the various available leadership styles, pastors thought they were all *similar*. The code associated with this category is *universal leadership* (7). Pastor #5 stated,

> I wouldn't separate them. I think scholarly work does. But I think leadership is leadership. I think spiritual leadership is good leadership. Would I give it the nomenclature of transformational leadership or servant leadership? You know, all the different models that are out there at the end of the day, I would go no. It's just good leadership [*universal leadership*].

Pastor #6 went back to the calling of *leadership* in the same way as the call of pastoring. He said, "I don't really think so [that they're different]. I think it's the calling. It's the call we have [*universal leadership*]." He continued, "Maxwell said

leadership is influence. I want to lead to influence, which is a pastoral characteristic [*universal leadership*].” Pastor #8 also thought the styles were similar:

> The leadership styles, regardless of the organization, overlap. I feel like you can be a good shepherd and, as a CEO of a corporation for profit, still find that those principles overlap. I feel like biblical leadership, spiritual leadership, and leadership in general, those concepts overlap. There's maybe more overt biblical principles that I'm going to relate to in a church setting. But those principles overlap into a corporate setting or a nonprofit police department as an example [*universal leadership*].

Other pastors saw a stark difference either in the available leadership styles and what Jesus is calling pastors to do or their effectiveness. This category of *disparity* contains the codes of *five-fold ministry* (6), *needed differences* (6), *shared leadership* (4), and *poor examples* (3). Several pastors mentioned the need for the various five-fold ministries in a healthy church. Pastor #6 stated,

> It is the calling, you know, it is it is the call that we have, you know. I don't really know what to do with Ephesians 4:11. I mean, there's five-fold ministry leadership. I don't really know how you combine those or is there a combination of those gifts? Do you have the apostolic people with a pastoral bent [*five-fold ministry*]?

Pastor #7 said,

> I think there's a big difference. I need to do a better job of recognizing the different gifts that God gives the church: apostles, profits, evangelists, pastors, teachers. I've not really delved into that because we have elders and youth pastors. But who are the teachers? Who are the prophets in the church? I think those differences are real. I think they're just as important as the difference between a man and a woman in the church. I think if we don't understand roles and functions, then we'll start putting too much on. We'll start assuming that you're the pastor, you're also the prophet, you're also the teacher, and you're the evangelist [*five-fold ministry*].

Pastor #9 noted, “Christ ascended and gave apostles prophets, evangelist pastor teachers for the equipping mending of the church [*five-fold ministry*].” He continued,

> Some guys are more prophetic, have a ministry which is more stirring and build up, cheer up and so on from First Corinthians 14. Then you prophecy. The stirring of individuals. Pastor and teachers are pretty self-explanatory. Evangelist can pretty self-explanatory. So I think we need all of those going on in there, and I think we have to help people find how they function best in those areas [*five-fold ministry*].

Pastor #3 thought the leadership styles differed in their approach and effectiveness. He said:

> Yeah, there might be nuances and differences. I do think that for sure. When I think about biblical leadership, I think about leaders who make decisions for the glory of God and the betterment of the people, which is not always about the personal pastoral care of the people. I see a lot of biblical leadership through this filter. It could actually be the best thing and the most God-honoring thing, but actually, be a negative consequence for the people [*needed differences*].

He continued discussing difficult and unpopular decisions:

> No, this is the right God-honoring decision, and it's going to have fallout. But that's part of honoring God is sometimes it's kind of like a purging of some negative things. I think about the shepherding principle or leadership from a shepherding standpoint. I think the difference would be that it's more, from my perspective, more one-on-one. When I think of a shepherd, that's just what I think of. I'm not backing that up with Scripture. I'm saying it's more of the care of the person and the individual. I guess that principle I described in biblical leadership could still apply, but it just translates differently. When you're caring for a person of the flock, a sheep in the flock that's maybe injured, it looks different than sometimes the corporate leadership decisions that are made. That's a little difference I see between the two. I think John Maxwell is the person who gets credit for it, but my

> favorite definition of leadership is the word influence. It's all influence. You're either a good leader or a bad leader, depending on how you leverage your influence. Everybody has a different capacity of leadership, and it scales up and down [*needed differences*].

Pastor #4 viewed the different leadership styles as necessary, though not entirely popular. He described,

> I do think that there are several forms of leadership. There are people who have dictatorial style leadership, very commanding. They're just going to come and say, do it my way. How many people will look at that and be like, "Well, that's not servant leadership." But if you look in Scripture, there are leaders who were effectively doing that [*needed differences*].

He summed up his thoughts by stating, "I do think there are some cases and there are sometimes and there are some moments where that kind of leadership is necessary [*needed differences*]."

Pastor #9 approached the question from the position that not everyone is a leader. He said, "Biblically, leadership is a gift in the spirit. I don't think everybody has it. I think there is this kind of mythology out there that everybody's a leader. I don't think that's true." He explained his belief that different leadership styles fill the needs of different spheres of influence. For instance, someone gifted to lead 200 people may not have the ability to lead 15,000 people. He emphasized that modern leadership models do not embrace the need for shared leadership. He noted,

> Leadership in the church has to be shared, has to be multiple, even at a small church. It doesn't mean everybody's vocationally in the ministry. But you've got some gifts that are coming into that church. They may not be all in that church, but they can come into that church and salt and pepper and influence it and help it. But ideally, in a congregation, you have multiple kinds of ministries [*shared leadership*].

One pastor in particular did not view the leadership models presented favorably. Pastor #2 addressed the fact that much of popular leadership presented in the marketplace is not the role of pastors:

> I think much of secular leadership and whatever the popular thing is, I think most of it is not biblical at all. I think most of it is not servant leadership. It's selfish depending on what kind of trend is happening in culture. You have people that have been a voice of leadership, like John Maxwell. I mean, I think he's just been consistent, giving biblical leadership values for a lifetime. But much of your secular business books are more of tweaking what you have. It's hustling. It's some good, some bad. I don't know that it's necessarily a model for church leadership. Personally, there are good things we can take. But I see a lot of pastors that become something that looks nothing like a nothing like Jesus, let's just say that because of some of that stuff [*poor examples*].

Many pastors also wanted to return to the topic of *Jesus-centric leadership*. This category includes the codes of *Jesus' model* (6), *shepherding* (11), and *servant-minded* (4). Pastor #1 said, "I go back to Jesus leadership. How did Jesus lead? How did he respond? How did you see him lead the so many times he led [*Jesus' model*]?" He continued,

> But for me, at the end of the day, the best leader that ever has lived has been Jesus. The best thing that I can do is to study his life and how he did that. Let's just go back to Jesus and what he said and listen to him, do what he says. That's the leadership that I think we need to be leaning into a little bit. And I know that's not philosophical [*Jesus' model*].

Pastor #2 posited, "I think we don't use Jesus as a model because we're afraid it's not going to work, or we're afraid that we're so desperate for a template and there really is no template for Jesus style of leadership [*Jesus' model*]." He noted, "Jesus lived an interrupted life. Jesus embraced this interrupted life [*Jesus' model*]."

Pastor #2 also viewed Jesus' leadership style as shepherding leadership which is not popular to embrace. He stated,

> I think when people think of the word shepherding leadership, I think they automatically think that it's that's used many times as an excuse to not have a growing church. It's like I'm just shepherding these people, right? I kind of push back against that a little bit because I feel like we hold in our hands

> two contrasting ideas. We have a great commission that is great and a call to disciple the entire world. But we also have the call of stewarding people's spiritual journeys. One pushes you in this direction of the masses. The other one kind of pulls you small, in the relational [*shepherding*].

Pastors also saw Jesus' model as servant-minded. Pastor #4 noted, "You had to submit yourself. You have to serve first and then humble yourself first. So, Jesus, he starts teaching a whole different model for leadership [*servant-minded*]." Pastor #5 replied,

> It's good leadership is modeled by Jesus, whether you're a believer or a nonbeliever. I think it's servant leadership: the first will be last. It's the whole thing he's telling the disciples where he's going to turn the org chart upside down as a philosophy [*servant-minded*].

Pastor #4 then pointed to Jesus' diversity of leadership, "Any man who is humble enough to pick up a towel and start washing his disciples' feet, but then authoritative enough to begin to command things to happen, he is modeling for us [*servant-minded*]."

Table 20

Codebook for the Theme of Leadership

Theme	Category	Code	Occ.
Leadership	Similar	Universal Leadership	7
	Disparity	Five-fold Ministry	6
		Needed Differences	6
		Shared Leadership	4
		Poor Examples	3
	Jesus-centric	Jesus' Model	6
		Shepherding	11
		Servant-minded	4

The last question asked the pastors what they perceived their leadership style to be. Table 21 provides an overview of their styles. Pastor #1 saw his leadership style as "visionary leadership." He said, "I can throw ideas out there, but connecting the dots is not my strong suit." He also returned quickly to his perception of servant leadership modeled by Jesus:"I want to serve people well. I want to love people. I think you're never more like Jesus than when you're serving."

Pastor #2 viewed his leadership style as "stewarding people." Pastor #3 described his leadership style as a "methodical, administrative style of leadership." He said, "I have a tendency to be a little slow but very clear. I'm a processor." Pastor #4 stated that he was a transformational servant leader, explaining,

> I love to see people's lives changed. I love to see people who walk in our church or partner with our ministry or allow me to disciple them shy, timid, standoffish when they first come. And now boldly proclaiming the word of God, that's transformational.

Pastor #5 aspired to be an empowering leader in the spirit of servant leadership. He said, "I would say my style is empowering, is lifting. I would hope I would be in the servant leadership model." Pastor #6 didn't define his leadership by what he wanted to be; instead, he defined it by what he did not want to be. He stated, "I don't want to be a positional leader. I want to lead to influence." Pastor #7 described his style of leadership as empowering and protective. He said, "My style is more even if the church doesn't grow, I'd rather protect the people." Pastor #8 defined his leadership as "charismatic leadership," based on the definition of House (1976). Pastor #9 said of his leadership style,

> I'm more of an apostolic pastor. Which means I'm very concerned about planting. I'm very concerned about apostolic doctrine. And I'm very concerned about making sure that the church is focused outwardly on the mission. Now, if all this church had, it would be desperately out of balance. I need all these other people, and all these other people have different gifts and different things. Together, we can kind of work to help the church to grow and mature. Apart from that, it would get really out of whack, really out of balance, really fast. So, I'll preach three Sundays, and then I have somebody else preach. So that's even on preaching, and that's not even talking about the other areas of ministry that they're more particularly doing. Our church needs to hear from those other leaders. I don't think it's like one superstar pastor preaching every Sunday. I just think that's part of our celebrity culture, and it's really dangerous. Yeah, I see some idolatry stuff. So, I'm an apostolic pastoral leader."

Table 21

Pastoral Leadership Styles

Pastor	Leadership Style
Pastor #1	Visionary Leader
Pastor #2	Stewarding Leader
Pastor #3	Administrative Leader
Pastor #4	Transformational Servant Leader
Pastor #5	Empowering Servant Leader
Pastor #6	Influencer
Pastor #7	Empowering and Protective Leader
Pastor #8	Charismatic Leader
Pastor #9	Apostolic Leader

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are two-fold. First, a thorough exegetical study of Scripture evaluated the shepherding metaphor construct. A focus on the Good Shepherd metaphor of John 10:1–15 and the use of a socio-rhetorical method allowed me to evaluate the layers within the passage while also exploring its relationship to other shepherding metaphor passages throughout Scripture. This exercise produced 10 shepherding themes found throughout Scripture: spiritual feeding, protection, care, inspection, familiarity, selflessness, willingness, modeling, stewardship, and leadership.

The exegetical portion of the study successfully answered RQ1, RQ2, RQ4, and RQ5. First, RQ1 asked, "How is the shepherd metaphor portrayed in the New Testament model of biblical leadership? What biblical principles can be learned from an in-depth exegetical analysis of the shepherd metaphor?" My findings revealed that the shepherding is not merely an Old Testament ideal, but a biblical ideal carried by New Testament authors. This study also resulted in the identification of 10 themes or principles that one could utilize in their pastorate. RQ2 asked, "What is the role of leadership within the shepherd metaphor?" The results showed that leadership is merely a tiny element of the shepherding construct. It is needed to exercise the 10 principles. Scripture communicates this leadership principle drastically less than the other nine themes. RQ4 asked, "How does the shepherd metaphor in John 10 inform the praxis of pastoral leadership?" One can see that John 10, with the intertextual study of other passages, provides

these 10 themes or principles in the person of Jesus. The shepherd metaphor provides pastors with an active framework within which to operate. RQ5 asked, "What are the implications of the shepherd metaphor within the New Testament on the constructs of pastoral leadership and shepherd leadership?" The exegetical exercise shows that the themes of shepherding are directly applicable and necessary for pastoral leadership. Moreover, my findings revealed that shepherd leadership should be pastoral leadership. These 10 themes are paramount for a God-honoring and successful pastoral ministry.

Seeking to understand the relationship between these shepherding themes and the experiences of active senior pastors, I performed a phenomenological study, interviewing nine senior pastors, using questions produced from the exegetical themes. This portion of the study answered RQ3, which asked, "How does the biblical metaphor of the shepherd compare with the lived experiences of contemporary pastors?" I briefly compared the pastors' experiences with the results found in the exegetical study. There were similarities and differences between the pastors' experiences and the exegetical themes. In the following chapter, I discuss the practical implications of these five research questions in depth.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

In this study, I explored the shepherding metaphor from exegetical and phenomenological perspectives. A thorough socio-rhetorical analysis provided the much-needed understanding to answer the research questions. The themes provided by the exegetical exercise informed the second phase of the research. In this phenomenological portion of the study, I sought to understand the lived experiences of pastors compared to the exegetical themes from Scripture.

In the final chapter of this project, I discuss the exegetical portion and its clear mandate for a shepherding construct. Moreover, I compare this shepherding construct with the lived experiences of pastors from the phenomenological portion of the study. I answer each of the research questions succinctly, giving a clear path for understanding the magnitude of the shepherding metaphor and Scripture's call for a shepherding construct. Furthermore, by answering RQ4, I present a new model for the pastoral office. This new praxis offers insights into the implications of the shepherd metaphor on pastoral leadership for the church today.

Answers to the Research Questions

Through this research project, I aimed to clarify the shepherding metaphor while also providing a usable model for future use in the pastorate. I achieved this purpose through a robust socio-rhetorical analysis of Scripture to reveal the shepherd metaphor arc while also using John 10 as a foundation for the shepherding construct. Moreover, I tested the shepherding themes that I discovered through a phenomenological analysis of the lived experiences of senior pastors. The five research questions that I asked to achieve these purposes were:

RQ1: How is the shepherd metaphor portrayed in the New Testament model of biblical leadership? What biblical principles can be learned from an in-depth exegetical analysis of the shepherd metaphor?

RQ2: What is the role of leadership within the shepherd metaphor?

RQ3: How does the biblical metaphor of the shepherd compare with the lived experiences of contemporary pastors?

RQ4: How does the shepherd metaphor in John 10 inform the praxis of pastoral leadership?

RQ5: What are the implications of the shepherd metaphor within the New Testament on the constructs of pastoral leadership and shepherd leadership?

The first question sought to understand the shepherding metaphor within the New Testament model of biblical leadership. The shepherding metaphor presents itself as an arc throughout all of Scripture. Even though I relied on John 10 as a foundation by which to understand shepherding in this study, its practical implications to this particular research question lie in 1 Peter 5:1-5. As the church began to take shape, Peter authored his letter to the church elders in Asia minor (Schreiner, 2003). He wrote,

> I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Pet 5:1–5)

This passage is ripe with meaning, as it pulls on two threads within Scripture. First, Peter uses the same imagery of shepherding to encourage the leaders of persecuted congregations as Jesus used at the sea of Galilee during Peter's restoration (J. E. Adams, 1996). Scholars have agreed that this usage of the shepherding metaphor finds its origin in the person of Jesus and the calling of Peter to shepherd the flock (Clowney, 1988; Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003). Peter uses the same word, *poimainō* (shepherd), that Jesus used in John 21:16 (Kruse, 2003; Wheaton, 1994). This language choice is not unique to Peter. Paul also used the same metaphor to frame the responsibility of the overseers in the new church. He stated, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Therefore, the New Testament concept of

biblical leadership for the pastor was to shepherd the flock. This metaphor choice is a simple mandate with profound implications, which I discuss at length in this chapter.

Additionally, Peter would have had the Good Shepherd image from John 10 in mind when he wrote 1 Peter (J. E. Adams, 1996). If Peter recalled his restoration in John 21 and the Good Shepherd imagery from John 10, then there needs to be a thorough understanding of shepherding via the entirety of the Old Testament. This exercise answered the second portion of RQ1. The principles derived from the exegetical analysis are the provided themes of spiritual feeding, protection, care, familiarity, selflessness, willingness, modeling, stewardship, and leadership. These themes are intertwined throughout Scripture from 1 Peter 5 through John 10 and into the Old Testament passages, ending in Psalm 23. They provide the reader with an understanding of what Jesus was referring to in John 10 and establish a complete backdrop of cultural relevance from the time of Jesus that readers today lack. As scholars have said in the past, shepherding is still applicable today (A. W. Adams, 2013; Bailey, 2014; R. E. Hughes, 2015; Swalm, 2010). Table 22 provides an overview of the 10 shepherding construct themes and the Scriptures that contain them.

Table 22

Shepherding Construct and Associated Passages

Theme	Ps 23	Jer 23	Ezek 34	Zech	John 10	John 21	1 Pet 5
Sp. Feeding	X		X	X	X	X	
Protection	X	X	X	X	X		
Care	X	X	X	X	X		
Inspection		X	X		X		
Familiarity	X		X		X		
Selflessness	X	X	X	X	X		X
Willingness	X	X	X		X		X
Modeling							X
Stewardship	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Leadership	X	X	X	X	X		X

RQ2 explored the role of leadership within the shepherd metaphor. Leadership is existent in the metaphor of a shepherd. Some pastors suggested in their interviews that leadership is a spiritual gift that not all people possess (Rom.

12:8). In the grand shepherding metaphor arc of the Old and New Testament, there are limited mentions of leadership. Only through careful exploration of John 10 can one find that Jesus refers to the shepherd as he "leads them out" (John 10:3). Leadership is a portion of the shepherding construct, but it is not *the* construct; rather it is a piece of the larger construct. Moreover, the leadership proposed by Jesus in the passage is one of familiarity, care, and safety. These themes are explored further in the model of shepherding.

The biblical metaphor aligned well with the lived experiences of senior pastors. Through the phenomenological phase of the study, I answered RQ3, which asked, "How does the biblical metaphor of the shepherd compare with the lived experiences of contemporary pastors?" Each of the themes presented by the exegetical phase were evident in the pastors' answers. Several themes—such as spiritual feeding, protection, willingness, and stewardship—were straightforward in their application and experience of the pastors. Other themes—such as familiarity, care, inspection, and leadership—were more difficult to conceptualize. Pastors found that size, scope, and the pressures of ministry challenged their perceived notion of how to exercise each theme.

RQ4 sought to discover if there was indeed a shepherding model evident in John 10. John 10 does indeed inform the praxis of pastoral leadership. This passage can be best understood when intertwining both Old and New Testament intertextual passages. For instance, the Good Shepherd lays his life down for the flock. Previous scholars have struggled with this passage and assigned unrealistic expectations to this imagery (Anum & Quaye, 2016, p. 10; Hylen, 2016; Skinner, 2018a). Using reciprocal intertexture, however, John 10 can now present the theme of selflessness in the vein of Peter as he demands the overseers not to pursue dishonest gain (1 Pet 5:2). This phrase connects with the previous Old Testament passages of Ezekiel 34 and the selfish shepherds (Helm, 2008). A complete model is presented based on these findings.

RQ5 asked what the implications of the shepherding metaphor are for current pastoral leadership. Practically, the daily act of pastoring a church will most likely remain essentially unchanged. What will change significantly is perspective.

Recently, pastors have eschewed a shepherding mental model in favor of more secular- and business-focused leadership principles (Goodmanson, 2005; Tara, 2020). This fact may be why pastors struggle with leadership in a biblical context though business contexts use leadership widely (Kessler, 2013). Whereas many scholars have employed a secular leadership model and attempt to fit it into a biblical perspective (Omogo, 2019), this study began with a biblical perspective and revealed that leadership was not the primary model for pastors. Instead, pastors should utilize leadership through the lens of shepherding, not vice versa.

Discussion of Interview Questions

I determined that this study required a two-phase approach. First, a socio-rhetorical analysis provided 10 exegetical themes around the shepherding metaphor. Second, I formulated questions out of the themes to evaluate their usage in pastoral leadership while also seeking to understand the experiences of pastors. This phase provided valuable insight into the struggles and success of implementing shepherding activities.

Spiritual Feeding

If feeding the sheep is the act of teaching for the sake of righteous living (Exell, 1978a; Resane, 2014), then indeed, there is a two-pronged approach to feeding the sheep. Spiritual feeding contained the two primary categories of *communicating the word* and *obedience and fruit*. In comparison, these two categories fall in line with the scriptural findings from the exegetical analysis. The pastors overwhelmingly agreed that preaching the Word of God was the primary means of feeding the sheep, as was stated by Luther (Schreiner, 2003). Moreover, the category of obedience and fruit aligns well with the concept of making the sheep lie down among abundance and provision (Bailey, 2014).

The category of *obedience and fruit* attempted to achieve this righteous living. Pastors were keenly aware that they aimed to produce something in the people they shepherded. Moreover, pastors saw the very act of *obedience and fruit* as a source of nourishment in addition to Scripture. As Pastor #7 noted, Jesus referred to serving the woman at the well as a type of spiritual food that the

disciples had not yet recognized. It was surprising how quickly many of the pastors shifted to the purpose of transformation in the believer in addition to *communicating the word*. These pastors understood their responsibility to teach, but also the need to do so in a way that produces fruit.

Protection

The theme of protection contained the three categories of *threats*, *empowering leadership*, and *unity*. In comparison with the exegetical theme of protection, the experiences of the pastors are similar to the biblical findings. Pastors were keenly aware of the threats facing the church, as many of them alluded to the outside pressures they experienced over the past few years. Social, cultural, and political unrest posed a formidable threat to the church's focus. Pastors struggled with keeping the flock focused on the mission, as they were constantly distracted by competing outside interests.

In Ezekiel and Zechariah, the sheep are scattered because of a lack of leadership and direction (Cooper, 1994). The pastors interviewed indicated that they are attempting to provide that direction. Pastors relied heavily on *empowering leadership* to keep the unity of the flock intact. They realized they could not alone keep disunity, division, and factions from forming and needed the help of capable and willing church members. This strength helped many pastors avoid the stresses of threats and divisions.

Cooper (1994) mentioned the dangers of disunity and how the flock can become susceptible. The pastors' focus on unity, addressing division through clarified vision, and ensuring good leadership addresses these issues. Moreover, the pastors interviewed are standing their ground against outside threats from a divided culture, social challenges, and criticism. This posture aligns with the imagery provided in Scripture that a shepherd does not run away, but rather protects the flock in the face of dangers (Aranoff, 2014; Borowski, 1998; Nel, 2005).

There is one last observation about threats. Effectiveness can be a threat to the church. This concept was only mentioned by Pastor #9, who stated, “I always tell people the greatest danger to the church is Jesus. He's got the power to snuff out

candlesticks. Our greatest danger is that we lose our first love." This pastor not only saw threats from the outside and threats via division on the inside, but also anticipated the threat of not achieving the church's mission and losing love for Jesus.

Care

Scholars have repeatedly noted the act of care as a shepherd's primary responsibility (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). This act includes providing for the needs of the sheep and restoring them when they have walked away (R. E. Hughes, 2015; Kinnison, 2010). Psalm 23 contains the phrase "He restores my soul," which can be translated as "He causes me to come back" (Bailey, 2014). God reprimanded the shepherds in Ezekiel by stating, "but you do not tend the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost" (Ezek 34:3–4). Eight out of the nine pastors mentioned their primary role was to care, pastor, or shepherd the congregation. The ninth stated that pastoring was making decisions that were best for the church and the people. For the pastors interviewed, their answers provided the five categories of *preferred end*, *restorative culture*, *relationships*, and *valuing people.*

The first category of *preferred end* entailed pastors seeking to understand to what end they were restoring people. The primary marks of a true believer, in their opinion, were the fruit of the Spirit and spiritual disciplines. Pastors wanted to know if their people were giving, serving, praying, worshiping, and embodying the fruit of the Spirit as outlined by Galatians. The pastors would describe these aspects of Christian living as a mark of Christian health. This view aligned with the findings in the exegetical portion that the shepherd's responsibility was to help heal the sheep and make them whole (R. E. Hughes, 2015; Kinnison, 2010).

Moreover, the shepherd's responsibility is to help people return to the flock (Bailey, 2014). Ezekiel wrote that God was angry that the shepherds of Israel had not "Brought back the strays, or sought the lost" (Ezek 34:4). Zechariah also wrote of this concept of bringing people back (Zech 10:10). These concepts align with the category of *restorative culture*. Pastors sought to care for the flock by creating an

environment where the people understood they were in the restoring business, and those who walked away knew it was a safe place to be restored. The church empowered the people to be a part of the care and restoration process. More than other concepts, how pastors treated those who left their churches helped create this desired *restorative culture*. They modeled it to their people. As one pastor stated, while speaking of the prodigal son, "the culture of the house was so strong that it was ready for a party when he came back."

Relationship was a critical category that pastors relied upon to know the condition of their flock. The theme of care requires shepherds to seek out those who are lost. Most pastors relied heavily on their internal relationships to know if people had walked away from the church. Pastors spoke of the need for "highly relational" environments. These relationships allowed pastors to have accountability conversations, which they saw as a component of restoring people to a preferred end. Whereas the shepherd knows which sheep are missing, overwhelmingly, the interviewed pastors relied solely on relationships or empowered leaders to maintain these relationships and recognize missing sheep.

In contrast, what was missing in the interviews compared to the exegetical findings was the idea of seeking out. Scripture implies that the shepherd should seek out and gather people (Jooli, 2019). Two pastors believed the lost sheep's circle of involvement determined how the pastor was to seek them out. For instance, one pastor spoke of the "committed and core" versus the "community and crowd." A second pastor viewed his responsibility to create a restorative culture for those returning by illustrating that the prodigal son's father never left the house. This pastor saw that his responsibility was to leave the house only for people who had yet to believe. If Scripture asks the shepherds to seek out those who were once a part of the flock but are no longer, there was no broad agreement or practice among the pastors. If the intent is for the shepherd to seek out those not yet part of the flock, there was uniform agreement; however, Scripture infers that the act is seeking out the lost of the current flock. Ezekiel 34:11 says, "For this is what the Lord God says: See, I myself will search for my flock and look for them."

The category of *value people* aligns with the understanding that care requires a sense of empathy. The pastors saw the need to maintain truth, grace, and a loving attitude through these relationships. If shepherding requires a level of empathy (R. E. Hughes, 2015), the pastors questioned communicated genuine care for their flock. This care theme is seen in Psalm 23, where the shepherd consistently acts in a manner that benefits the wellbeing of the sheep. The shepherd acts with compassion and genuine concern. The shepherd is caring for people who belong to Jesus. A component of shepherding is love for the chief shepherd. Jesus asked Peter to feed His sheep if he truly loved Him. Peter loved Jesus and, therefore, loved the flock that God gave him.

Inspection

The theme of inspection was difficult to ascertain. Overwhelmingly, the interviewed pastors relied heavily on a relational component and the category of *community* to know if people are missing or in need, much like the theme of care. The larger the congregation, the more difficult this theme was to enact. Smaller churches had pastors who knew everyone in the church. Thus, relationships were the key to knowing how the people were doing. Larger churches understandably did not have this luxury and instead relied on the environments created to ensure spiritual health. Only Pastor #9 mentioned the need to train leaders and undershepherds in the skill of seeing, asking, listening, and observing. This disparity could translate to larger churches having difficulty maintaining the health of individuals even if they were consistently in community environments. Leaders of these environments may not know what to look for or how to address the issues if recognized.

The category of *structure* dealt with the concept of set systems established to measure the condition of the church. Some pastors mentioned measuring measurable statistics such as serving roles, giving (generosity), and group attendance. Few pastors had a regular system of checking in on the health of individuals. Regular feedback systems are needed to understand the flock's

condition (Beeman, 2018). If the theme of inspection is needed to care, protect, and feed properly, it may be an area in the church that could use bolstering.

Familiarity

The exegetical theme of familiarity requires the shepherd to be recognizable (Beeman, 2018). The pastors interviewed varied on their approach and ability to be familiar with their congregation, which presented itself through the categories of *access, transparency,* and *empowerment*. All pastors sought to be accessible. They emphasized a posture of proximity, regularly standing in public spaces before and after service. The layers of familiarity were deeper with the larger congregation. Pastors of smaller congregations, such as Pastor #8, were working through the challenge of availability and proximity during the week. All pastors seemed to embrace proximity on Sunday mornings. Most pastors mentioned the ability to reach out and set up an appointment if necessary.

Overall, the pastors were working to assuage the perception of untouchability by being available when most people were present. Adding to this posture, they desired to be transparent to their congregations. They sought to appear normal and approachable to the congregation, used personal stories in their preaching, admitted their shortcomings, and allowed people to see their human side. This transparent preaching posture allows the congregation to learn and recognize the pastor's voice. As Pastor #9 stated, the theme of familiarity in the form of *proximity* allows the pastor to build trust to do the actual work of shepherding. It builds the trust needed by a shepherd (Bishop, 1955).

Pastors worked hard to empower their leadership to take on this role of familiarity. Their purpose was to create a familiar relationship with someone in leadership if it could not be them as the senior pastor. Pastor #2 bifurcated proximity between layers of information and layers of care. He rejected layers of care, but embraced layers of information. He wanted to be accessible to all but empower leaders to disseminate information. Pastor #9 took an opposing position and worried that the desire to be the caregiver at all times meant he was being

selfish. Instead, he wanted to pull other leaders into the circle to share leadership and ensure people connected within the church.

Willingness

Peter asked the church elders to be willing instead of feeling obligated to serve (1 Pet 5:2). All nine pastors interviewed claimed to be eager in their role as a pastor. Overwhelmingly, the pastors recalled God's call on their life. This calling linked closely with the recognition of the faithfulness of God–that He would fulfill what He promised. Throughout Scripture, there is a consistent theme: God asked the shepherds to perform their role. God established them in their positions. These pastors recognized God's hand in placing them in their role and were eager and willing to fulfill the role as God instructed.

Additionally, they communicated genuine joy and *gratitude* for what they got to do. They loved the role of pastor. They loved the people that they were tasked to serve. They loved the benefits of seeing people changed by God. Moreover, each of these pastors had to pastor through the COVID pandemic of 2020–2022. This fact means that though things got complicated, they persevered through the struggle because of *calling* and *gratitude.* They did not possess a begrudging posture to their role or appear jaded in their responses. These experiences line up with the theme of willingness and the concept presented by Borchert (1996):

> Leadership in the Christian church should not be a matter of obligation or oughtness but of a willing desire. It should likewise not be from a goal of achieving personal gain but from a sense of calling to serve others. (p. 336)

Selflessness

The shepherds of Ezekiel were selfish, greedy, and used the flock for personal gain (Cooper, 1994). Peter wanted to prevent this posture from occurring in the shepherds of the new church and asked the elders not to be greedy for money (1 Pet 5:2). The interviews provided two categories: *personal weight* and *family weight*. Through these interviews, the pastors did not communicate a posture of greed and selfishness. Their purpose was to focus on the needs of the sheep instead

of their own needs. Several pastors mentioned paying personal financial costs. Several pastors took pay cuts to accomplish the mission. Pastors spoke of feeling an emotional weight, having panic attacks, dealing with anxiety, and being frustrated. Their roles were demanding, with a heavy price to pay.

Furthermore, some pastors learned the hard way that there was an inevitable weight on the family. Pastors spoke of missing their children's events, attending to church emergencies, and struggling to find a balance between church needs and family needs. Pastors learned through experience that though they sacrificed with a posture of selflessness, they had to guard against their family paying the same price. Pastors began to set boundaries as they matured and as the church matured. In sum, most of the pastors seem to embrace the shepherd mantra from Psalm 23:5 and Ezekiel 34 to resist selfish gain and provide for the sheep.

Modeling

If pastors are to be examples to those they lead (1 Pet 5:3), the pastors that I interviewed believed they had a mixed personal and public life. Overall, they agreed they were worth modeling. They struggled, however, knowing they were not perfect. The category of *awareness of shortcomings* helps to explain this problem. They were hesitant to give themselves a passing grade.

In contrast, they were entirely comfortable asking someone to model their intent and pursuit, captured in the category of *modeling life*. Therefore, encouraging people to model their pursuit and their desire to imitate Jesus aligns with the statement given by Bailey (2014):

> The Good Shepherd does not direct his sheep with a stick, and a bag full of stones gathered to arm his sling and drive them in the desired direction. Instead, he leads them from the front with a gentle call, inviting the sheep to follow him. (p. 265)

The pastors are leading the sheep to pursue the person of Christ. Pastor #9 stated it this way:

> I'm so aware of my sins and shortcomings that I would be deeply hesitant to put myself out there as a model. I like John the Baptist and Mary. You

> know, in the Orthodox tradition, they, at the iconostasis at the front of the sanctuary, the two icons around the center doors are Mary and John the Baptist. And they're both pointing to the center door, which you go through the center door to see Christ. And so, they're on either side of the door, just Mary and John the Baptist, and they're pointing. And I'm like, Yeah, that's the job, really, pointing to Jesus.

Stewardship

The theme of stewardship involves pastors as shepherds to realize the ownership of the congregation belongs to God and act as such. The interviews provided three categories in this theme: *posture*, *understanding ownership*, and the *example of Jesus*. Pastors reflected the theme of stewardship by possessing characteristics of humility and gratitude. Many pastors made statements that they had to repent to staff and leaders. They possessed genuine gratefulness for the people that God had entrusted to them. This gratitude stemmed from the fact that they understood ownership. They chose to be thankful when people arrived and when they left because the pastors understood that people were not their possession. Pastors reflected on sheep walking away and going to a different church. Within this principle, they realized that the sheep were still part of the larger flock—God's flock.

Finally, pastors exemplified stewardship because they led via the example of Jesus. Bailey (2014) stated that the shepherds should lead as God would lead. These pastors are attempting to lead with a posture of humility exampled by Jesus. Grace and truth were common themes mentioned by the pastors. Caring for people requires showing extreme grace and yet communicating hard truths. They rely on the model of Jesus as the Good Shepherd and live with their hands open.

Leadership

Of the 10 themes explored through the interviews, leadership was the theme that had the most diversity of opinion. Words and phrases like *lead*, *leadership*, *give direction*, *vision-casting*, and *provide clarity* all informed their opinions of what leadership entailed. Pastor #9 described the necessity of leadership to do the

primary task of "administrating the word of God faithfully." He stated, "If I think of feeding, protecting, and governing, those are the three primary components that I would say are primarily my job. Now the cultural intersection means I have to lead an organization." Within the overall interviews, the concept of leadership was profound as the pastors regularly described the necessity of creating systems, structure, and building culture within the organization. It tended to permeate the other themes within the interview process.

Many scholars have viewed the shepherding leadership style as one of gentleness and familiarity (Bailey, 2014; Borchert, 1996; Kruse, 2003; Laniak, 2006). Responses to the leadership question revealed that pastors want to lead as Jesus led. The interviews also reflected the difficulty of "leading an organization," as Pastor #9 stated, and caring for the flock. Pastors must make complicated decisions that God but may be difficult for the sheep to accept, as was stated by Pastor #3. Pastors found it challenging to balance leading like a shepherd via caring for their individual needs while simultaneously caring for the entire flock or organization. Whereas Pastor #4 believed that sometimes you need to be authoritarian and directive to get things done, Pastor #7 was more concerned about protecting the flock regardless of its impact on growth. Moreover, Pastor #9 understood his need to lead an organization, yet also noted he needed to build trust enough with the sheep to "run his hands through their wool to find problems." Though pastors understood and executed many—if not all—of the shepherding themes, none of the pastors identified their leadership style as that of shepherding. They still perceived that their main objective was to lead. Of the nine pastors interviewed, all but one identified a personal style of leadership which contained "leadership" in the description. None saw "shepherd leader" as their identifying style. This phenomenon reinforces the notion that most pastors are still viewing their roles through a more secular lens of leadership.

Much of the secular perception of leadership would view the Old Testament and New Testament shepherding metaphors as examples of leadership, and they may be correct. John's positioning of the Good Shepherd passage indicates that he was connecting the poor leadership in John 9, John 10, and the Feast of Dedication

together as a unit (Carson, 1991; Keener, 1993, 2003; Köstenberger, 2013). In essence, this section in John's Gospel was a commentary of good and bad leadership. This observation could be anachronistic and possibly ethnocentric, as the idea of leadership is not the central concept in Psalm 23, Jeremiah 23, or Ezekiel 34. Instead, shepherding is the thrust of these passages. A better description is that the section in John between 9:13 to 10:30 is a commentary of good shepherding in contrast with poor shepherding. Thus, there is a need for a new approach that resists the temptation of epitomizing leadership at shepherding's demise.

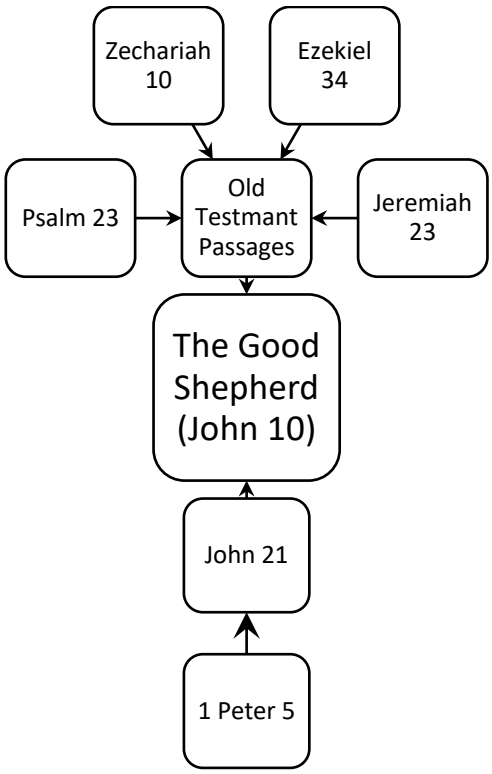
The Model of the Good Shepherd

The model of the Good Shepherd presents itself throughout Scripture. Peter exhorts the church elders to “shepherd God's flock among you” (1 Pet 5:2). Other versions translate this portion as “be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care” (1 Pet 5:2, *New International Version*, 2011). In this address, Peter appealed to the elders in the same manner that Jesus appealed to Peter (Clowney, 1988). Most likely, Peter also remembered that moment on the shores of Galilee as Jesus asked him to feed the flock (J. E. Adams, 1996; Clowney, 1988; Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003). Jesus' request for Peter to feed the sheep refers to Jesus' declaration in John 10:27 that they were “my sheep” (Kruse, 2003). Working backward from 1 Peter 5 to John 21 leads the reader to John 10 and The Good Shepherd passage. Here, Jesus positions himself as one who will shepherd as God intended in contrast with the poor shepherds of Jeremiah 23, Ezekiel 34, and Zechariah 10. As Gunter stated, “Broad scholarly support exists for the assertion that Jesus fully intended that His description for the 'Good Shepherd' should be understood as a template for future leadership among God's people” (p. 10). Thus, a logical correlation can be made by tracing these themes through Scripture, as seen in Figure 1. Each of these Old Testament and New Testament passages reinforces the need to understand and apply John 10 and provides a better understanding of what shepherding entails. The following is a proposed model for shepherding construct, which includes the concepts so far discussed. Additionally, each theme

impacts other themes. Each section contains information on how these themes interact and their ramifications.

Figure 1

Anatomy of Scriptures in the Arc of Shepherding



Familiarity, Inspection, and Care

The theme of familiarity has a profound impact on the entire shepherding model. Scripture illustrates the shepherding construct through the guise of familiarity and relatability (Beeman, 2018). It requires the shepherd to be among the sheep—not just in availability, but also in proximity (Beeman, 2018). Familiarity directly impacts the building of trust in the shepherd/sheep relationship. This trust directly impacts the themes of inspection, leadership, modeling, and care. Figure 2 illustrates how familiarity, inspection, and care interact.

Familiarity directly impacts the theme of leadership. In the biblical construct of shepherding, the sheep hear, recognize, and follow the shepherd's

voice (Beeman, 2018; Carson, 1991; Kruse, 2003). The sheep are in tune with the voice of the shepherd; they trust the voice, they understand the voice, and they follow the voice. They recognize the voice and put their faith in its direction (Borchert, 1996). I discussed this metaphor for leadership further in a dedicated section.

The theme of familiarity is needed if the shepherd is to model for the flock. Peter asks the elders to be examples to those they oversee (1 Pet 5:3). Familiarity and modeling are intertwined because the sheep need to recognize and know the shepherd to the extent that they can model the shepherd's actions. The sheep cannot model a shepherd they do not know, recognize, or trust. Modeling is also an essential aspect of leadership. Pastors can utilize modeling as a leadership principle to display how they want the congregation to act.

The shepherd and sheep relationship requires familiarity in order to establish a bond of trust (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). This trust is needed for inspection to happen as it should. Pastor #9 stated that proximity was required to establish trust so that the shepherd could "run his finger through their wool" to look for defects. Healthy inspection needs an element of trust where the sheep are willing to be evaluated for their benefit. It does not necessarily mean that the sheep and shepherd have a personal, familial relationship, as Pastor #9 pointed out. It does, however, require a level of confidence in the shepherd's abilities and intentions. Jeremiah 23:4 stated that the flock would no longer be missing anything. Inspection requires not only trust, but also adequate methods, systems, and environments. The shepherd is diligent in knowing which sheep are missing and which are sick (Beeman, 2018; Brodie, 2016; Laniak, 2006). Just as the Good Shepherd knows the sheep (John 10:14; Carson, 1991; Kruse, 2003), the shepherd should know who is in their purview of care. It requires careful attention to the flock's needs (Borowski, 1998).

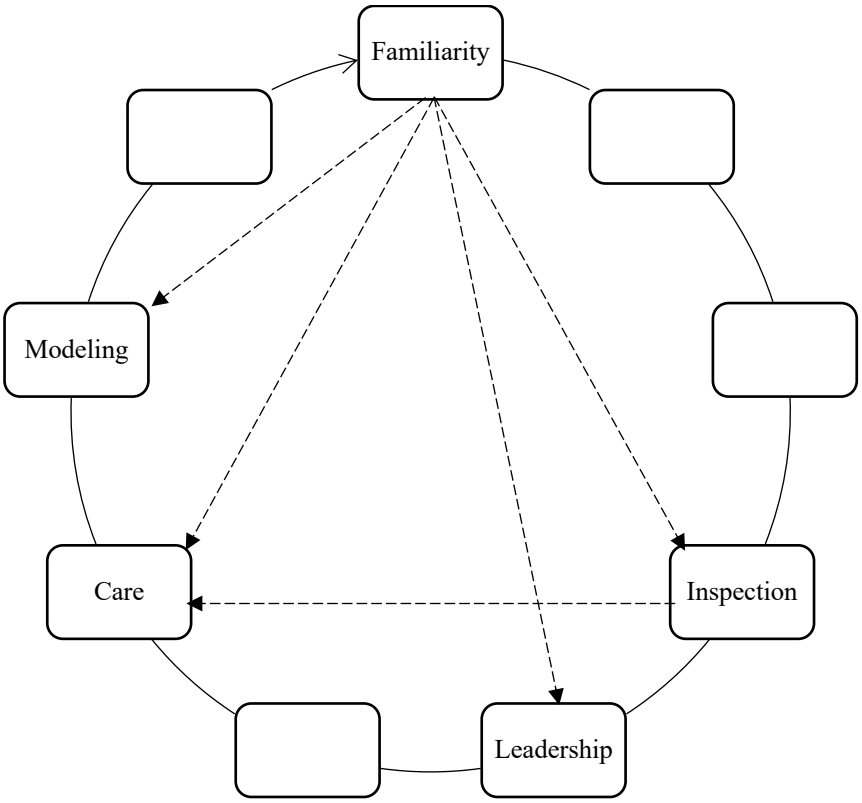
Familiarity also aids in the theme of care*,* which, in turn, requires inspection. Care is one of the primary responsibilities of the shepherd (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). God was angry with the shepherds of Ezekiel and stated, "but you do not tend the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick,

bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost" (Ezek 34:3–4, *Christian Standard Bible,* 2017). Care requires the shepherd to seek out the lost sheep, bring them back to the fold, mend their wounds, and restore them to the relationship of the flock (Bailey, 2014; R. E. Hughes, 2015; Kinnison, 2010; Laniak, 2006). David noted that the shepherd caused him to return (Bailey, 2014). Care in this construct requires the shepherd to seek out the lost and restore them gently (Jooli, 2019).

Practically, a pastor who desires to be a shepherd should find ways to be in proximity with the sheep regularly. Larger churches should strive to empower leaders to maintain relationships with smaller clusters of attendees. Senior pastors and key staff must strive to maintain availability in their schedules and hear the concerns and needs of the congregation. Pastors can also work to make their lives more visible for their congregation by sharing personal stories, admitting faults and deficiencies, and utilizing social media. The shepherd cannot tend to the needs of the sheep if they have not built trust, and the shepherd cannot build trust unless there is a level of familiarity in his voice, actions, and intentions. Pastors must work to create and maintain diligent feedback systems to remain aware of the flock's condition. Adequate inspection will allow them to care as needed. Churches with strong restorative cultures understand that their collective responsibility is to restore people to health.

Figure 2

Interaction of Familiarity, Inspection, and Care Within the Model



Stewardship

The stewardship theme means the shepherd understands that the flock is God's flock (Manala, 2010). The seriousness of the theme is found in Ezekiel 34, where God speaks through the prophet that the people are His flock (Bailey, 2014). This theme impacts nearly every other theme as the shepherd strives to act them out as God would desire. This theme primarily impacts the shepherding themes of protection and leadership. Figure 3 is a visual representation of how stewardship impacts these other two themes.

The theme of protection requires a heart of stewardship. Stewardship is a continual understanding that the flock under the shepherd's responsibility is not their own. Therefore, shepherds must work to protect the flock while understanding that they are protecting someone else's possession. Ultimately, God will rescue the

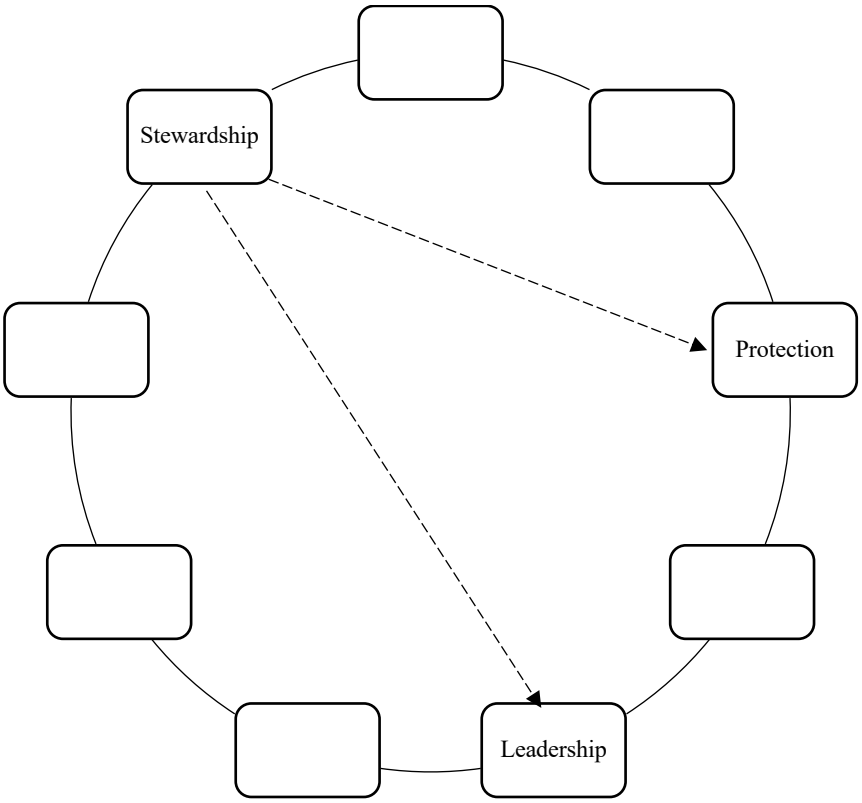
sheep, regardless if the shepherd embraces this theme and acts in the protection of the sheep (Bailey, 2014; Cooper, 1994; Laniak, 2006).

Much like the theme of familiarity, stewardship means that the shepherd will lead as God would lead (Bailey, 2014). Pastors must make leadership decisions through the lens of what God would want for the sheep, not for personal gain, expediency, or ease. There is a sense that if the shepherd leads as God would want them, He will be responsible for the outcome, regardless of the difficulty ahead. Leadership to new pastures of grazing, new levels of growth, and new realms of protection is stronger when performed through a stewardship mindset.

Pastors must continually correct a possessive mindset when thinking about the sheep. The theme of stewardship is for the sake of the sheep and the shepherd. If pastors can embrace stewardship in their roles, it should help lessen anxiety, frustrations, and burnout. Pastors should remind themselves that they are part of the flock as much as the larger congregation. As such, they are God's desire. Making decisions with this understanding may not be easy; however, it comes with the covering and approval of God.

Figure 3

Interaction of Stewardship Within the Model



Leadership, Spiritual Feeding, and Modeling

Once the shepherd understands familiarity and stewardship, they can better embrace the theme of leadership under this construct. The theme of leadership presents itself in the first mention of God as a shepherd in Psalm 23. The shepherd leads the sheep to drinkable waters and new pastures for grazing (Aranoff, 2014; Laniak, 2006; Nauss, 1995; Tara, 2020; Taylor, 1969; Varhaug, 2019). Once the sheep know the shepherd's voice, they can follow where the shepherd leads (Bishop, 1955; Borchert, 1996). The leadership decisions made by pastors include facilitating accountability, creating systems and structures, establishing culture, and determining direction and vision for the church, among other tasks. This theme, in contrast with secular themes of leadership, occurs under the general construct of shepherding. This type of leadership occurs with a spirit of gentleness and

familiarity (Bailey, 2014; Borchert, 1996; Kruse, 2003; Laniak, 2006). Whereas some leadership styles drive people from behind, a shepherd's leadership style in the vein of Scripture leads people from out front with the familiar sound of their trusted voice (Bailey, 2014; Borchert, 1996; Carson, 1991).

The theme of leadership can profoundly impact many of the themes within the construct. Spiritual feeding and modeling are two effective methods through which shepherds can lead their flocks. Figure 4 illustrates how leadership interacts with the other themes in the shepherding construct. Leadership determines what type of spiritual feeding occurs within the congregation. Leadership in the shepherding construct requires the shepherd to wisely decipher what the sheep need for their health (Laniak, 2006). Pastors noted that one of their roles was to lead the sheep to new grazing pastures. Jesus said the Good Shepherd "leads them out" of their pen (John 10:3). This passage corresponds with Psalms 23:2, where the shepherd "lets me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside quiet waters." Though Peter had the example of Jesus from John 10, spiritual feeding is the one act Jesus asked of Peter in John 21. Therefore, part of leadership within this construct is adequately leading people to places they can spiritually feed.

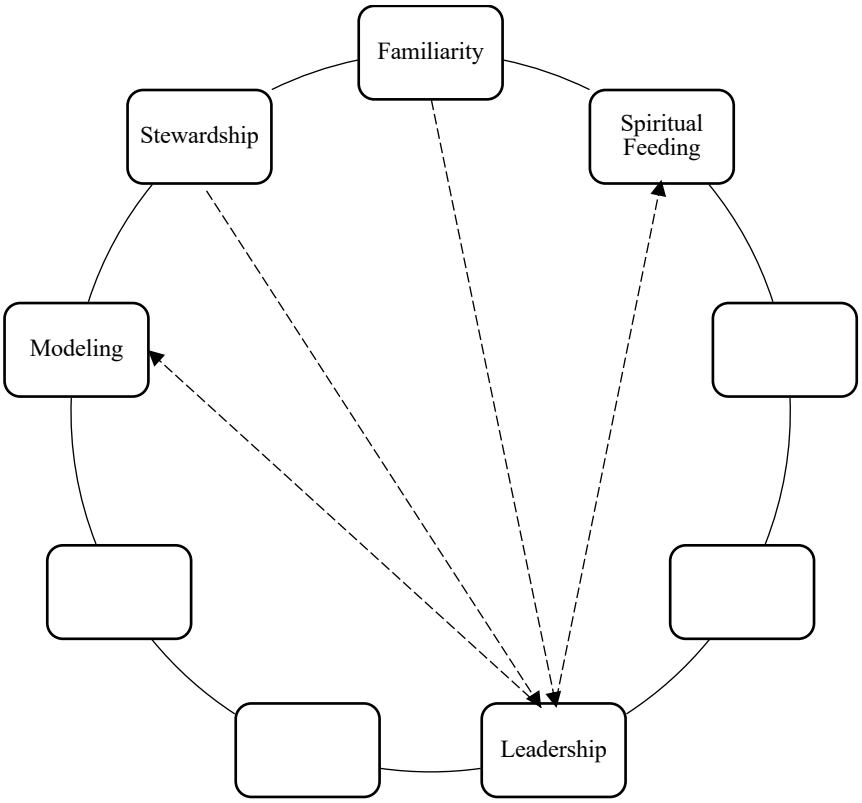
Moreover, Peter asked the elders to be "example to the flock" (1 Pet 5:3). Shepherds lead, not just by what they teach but by how they live. This understanding is the theme of modeling. Jesus infers this concept in John 10:4 when he states the shepherd goes ahead of the sheep. Modeling requires the shepherd to live a life that can be imitated (Grudem, 2009). The shepherd goes first in living out the desired result Scripture prescribes, and the sheep follow. The act of modeling contrasts with the poor shepherds exampled in the Bible, which lord over the people (1 Pet 5:3; Wheaton, 1994). Therefore, the shepherd must live a life that matches their teaching. Paul even asked those he led to "imitate me, as I also imitate Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). Modeling means that the shepherd asks the sheep to follow their lead (Bailey, 2014).

Pastors should evaluate their leadership styles and ensure their agreement with the principles within the shepherding construct. The pastor must exude an attitude of gentleness, trust, and familiarity. As previously stated, they must lead

with an understanding of stewardship. Pastors should lead through diligent spiritual feeding via sound doctrine and teaching Scripture. Likewise, pastors need to match their preaching by living an exemplary life worth imitating. Spiritual feeding and modeling must align for this type of leadership to succeed. Pastors do not have to be perfect; however, they can lead by how they pursue the person of Jesus.

Figure 4

Interaction of Leadership, Spiritual Feeding, and Modeling Within the Model



Selflessness and Protection

Peter asked the shepherds in Asia not to be greedy for money (1 Pet 5:2). Jesus noted that the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). Shepherding requires a posture of selflessness and sacrifice. Figure 5 illustrates how an understanding of stewardship informs selflessness, which impacts protection. Bailey (2014) posited that selflessness is also a posture of generosity and extravagance. The shepherd provided David with a lush banquet which did not

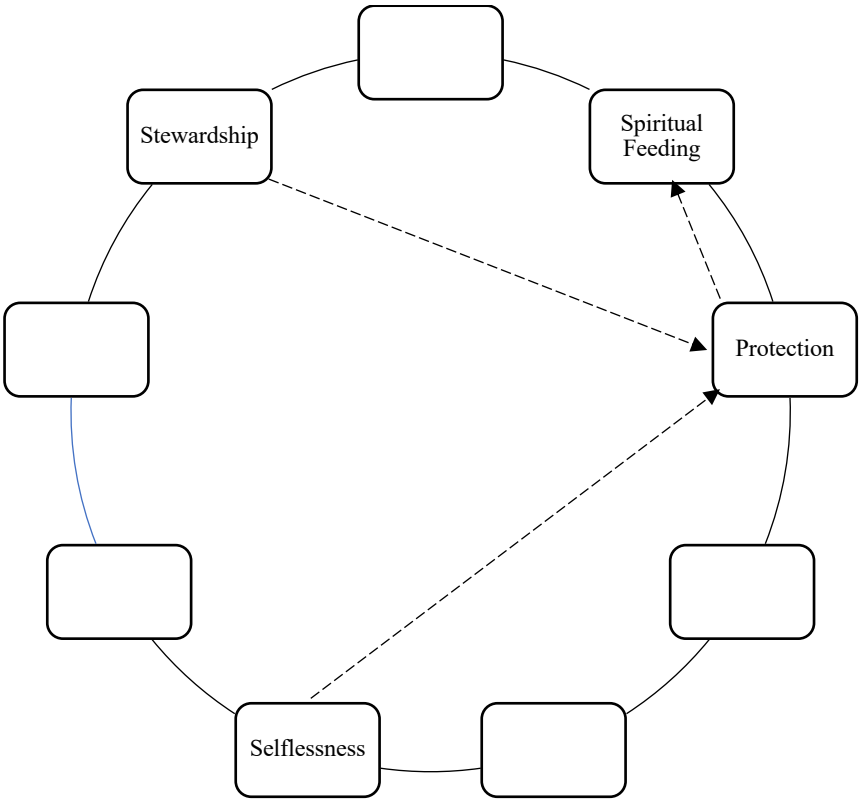
cost the shepherd little (Ps 23:5). Selflessness requires the shepherd to focus on the needs of the sheep instead of their own needs (Iorjaah, 2014; Swalm, 2010). A selfless shepherd models the sacrifice and selflessness of Jesus. The shepherd has a genuine desire to see the sheep cared for and fulfilled, even if it is at their own expense (Beeman, 2018; Brodie, 2016).

Selflessness allows the shepherd to exercise the theme of protection. Protection allows the sheep to feel safe to feed when the shepherd arrives at the desired pasture. Protection involves two aspects. First, the shepherd keeps the sheep together because they are communal animals (Borowski, 1998). They feel safer when they are with their kind. The sheep in Ezekiel 34 are susceptible because a lack of leadership has left them scattered (Cooper, 1994). Second, the shepherd must exert selflessness to protect the sheep from outside threats, even at a risk to the shepherd. The entities threatening the flock are dangerous and must be dealt with forcefully (Bailey, 2014). The theme of protection involves acting to counter to the enemy, which wants to rob and kill the flock (Whitacre, 1999).

Pastors who want to embody the shepherding construct in their church must embrace a posture of selflessness and resist the temptation to profit unjustly from the people. Materialism, fame, and other worldly desires are constantly at odds with the character of God. Pastors must work to stay aware of these threats and seek out feedback to ensure they are staying selfless. Moreover, a pastor must take on the demanding responsibility of protecting the flock against the dangers that may destroy it. This act is at risk to the pastor and requires a selfless mentality. Pastors must be aware of both the outside threats that want to destroy and the inside threats that want to divide. Pastors must work diligently to keep the flock unified by keeping the Gospel in front of the people and the Scripture as foundational.

Figure 5

Interaction of Selflessness and Protection within the Model



The Necessity of Willingness

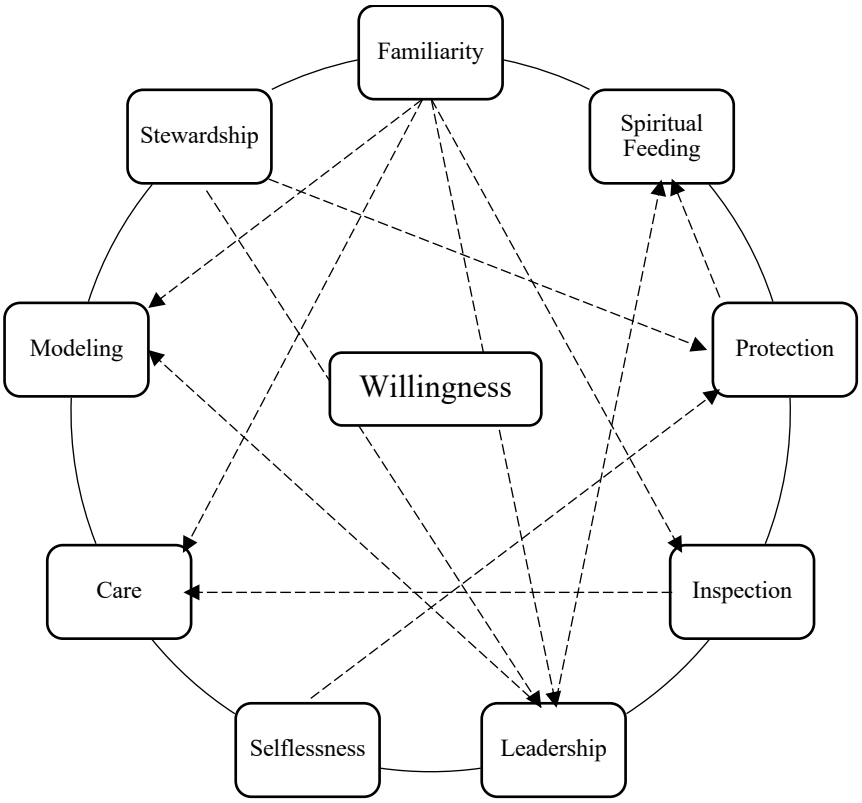
Peter asked the elders of the churches in Asia to have an attitude of willingness or eagerness (1 Pet 5:2). Shepherding is difficult, and the shepherd must be willing to embrace the struggle that the task requires (Schreiner, 2003). The theme of willingness means the shepherd performs their task as God would (Clowney, 1988). This theme precludes all other shepherding themes because the concept of willing service is prevalent in all shepherding scriptures (Laniak, 2006). When one is willing, they are present with the sheep as if God Himself was with them (Bailey, 2014). It rings of the phrase “You are with me” from Psalm 23, and assures the flock that the shepherd will perform each of the other components with integrity and holiness.

Borchert (1996) stated that leadership in the Christian church should be performed from "a sense of calling to serve others" (p. 336). Pastors regularly returned to the concept of calling as they reflected on the theme of willingness. Knowing that God has asked the pastor to shepherd the flock informs how they model, lead, feed, steward, care, sacrifice, inspect, protect, and invite the flock into their personal lives. In sum, the entire shepherding model cannot stand unless the person enacting it has a heart of willingness as one called by God. This posture ensures that the pastor will return to the calling of God when circumstances grow difficult. In this vein of perseverance through difficulty, Peter wrote his words to the elders in Asia (Marshall, 1991; Schreiner, 2003; Wheaton, 1994).

Figure 6 details the shepherding model in its entirety. I must also explain two crucial points about the model. First, the model is not linear. It is not a process of working through 10 steps to become a shepherd as prescribed by Scripture. This observation leads to the second: the themes cannot stand alone. There were many attempts at organizing the 10 themes in neat subcategories. When I attempted to group themes into three sets of three or two sets of four, the attempt lost the interactions between the themes. The model does not allow themes to be grouped succinctly in segregated subsets. In sum, all themes are related to the others in some way. All themes strengthen the other themes, either directly or indirectly.

Figure 6

The Model of Shepherding



Practical Implications

There is a tendency to adopt secular ways of understanding leadership when exploring the purpose of pastors as overseers of the church (Tara, 2020). The basis of this study was Scripture, which I used as the sole source for understanding pastoral leadership in the New Testament. The research findings for this study have practical implications in three areas: exegetical understanding, pastoral leadership understanding, and phenomenological understanding.

Exegetical Implications

First, the exegetical phase of the study reveals the use of the shepherding metaphor throughout Scripture. Scripture weaves an unmistakable shepherding metaphor arc from Psalm 23 to 1 Peter 5 (Bailey, 2014). Peter's command for the elders to shepherd the flock under their care provides a strong argument for how pastors should approach their profession. Peter did not ask the elders to lead the

church. The argument proves more robust when understanding how 1 Peter 5 relates to Peter's reinstatement in John 21, where Jesus asked Peter to feed His sheep, not to lead the church. In both instances, Peter and Jesus used shepherd imagery to communicate the task needed in the church (Clowney, 1988; Schreiner, 2003).

To further strengthen the case for shepherding, scholars have concurred that Peter recalled the John 10 event where Jesus declared He was the Good Shepherd (J. E. Adams, 1996; Clowney, 1988; Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003). John used an editorial decision to place the Good Shepherd passages between the poor shepherding of the Pharisees in John 9 and the Feast of Dedication in John 10:22 (Carson, 1991; Keener, 1993; Wheaton, 1994). The latter celebrated the restoration of good leadership and the removal of poor leadership (Burge, 2000; Köstenberger, 2007; Whitacre, 1999). Borchert (1996) stated, “Accordingly, I believe chap. 10 represents a new theme that builds upon the inadequacy of the Jewish leadership and the rejection of Jesus’ messianic calling evident throughout the Tabernacles section of John” (p. 328). Furthermore, the “I am” statements in the John 10 passage are the messianic fulfillment of the shortcomings of the poor shepherds in Ezekiel 34 (Köstenberger, 2002).

Ezekiel is just one of many Old Testament passages that contains a shepherding metaphor. Psalm 23 declared that YHWY is a shepherd (Bailey, 2014). Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah are all damning passages that criticize the Jewish leadership through the framework and understanding of shepherding. In sum, God always uses shepherding to detail leadership to anyone tasked with leading His people (Laniak, 2006; Nel, 2005; Schwenk, 2020; Skinner, 2018a). The New Testament provides the opportunity to use the word leadership, such as Romans 12:8 when Paul stated,

> According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one’s faith; if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching; if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

Therefore, for those who answer the call to lead those belonging to God, the mandate is to shepherd, not lead (John 21:15-17; 1 Pet 5:2). Not included in the exegetical phase, but just as important, Paul bolsters this argument when he stated, "Be on guard for ourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Paul did not say "to lead the church of God." These points of argument coalesce to provide the reader with a mandate of shepherding. Despite the attractiveness of leadership theories to get things done, God chose shepherding to accomplish the task of church leadership. Some may argue that this is ineffective; however, Jesus also declared that the first would be last, the last would be first, and the meek would inherit the Earth. His kingdom view was always vastly different from the cultural norm.

Pastoral Leadership Implications

This mandate of shepherding has pastoral leadership implications. First, it provides the reader with a shepherding construct in which to operate. The exegetical phase provided themes all present in the shepherding construct required by Scripture to oversee the church. These themes are spiritual feeding, protection, care, inspection, familiarity, selflessness, willingness, modeling, stewardship, and leadership. This construct is a usable model that pastors can utilize to faithfully and effectively shepherd their congregations.

The second pastoral implication is the need for pastors to "reverse the lens" of leadership and shepherding. Shamir (2007) posited the need to "reverse the lens" of leadership and explore the role of followership in influencing leadership. I propose the same need regarding leadership and shepherding. As demonstrated by the shepherding construct, shepherds need to take on the task of leading their flock to new areas of grazing. Church leaders have sought adequate models to lead as Scripture demands (Kessler, 2013). Mabey et al. (2017 explored spiritual leadership theory. Other scholars have explored transformational leadership through a Scriptural lens (Gregory, 2020). Though not a Christian-based leadership theory, servant leadership has garnered much support from religious circles (Omogo, 2019;

Spears, 1995). The approaches fall short, however—not because they do not offer novel solutions to leadership, but because they make leadership the guiding priority.

Instead, the shepherding construct "reverses the lens," in that it posits leadership in its proper context. Shepherding provides the vision for leadership by conceptualizing a holistic context in which leadership operates. Many have viewed Jesus as the quintessential leader (Ajayi, 2018; Resane, 2014). Many of the pastors interviewed in this study confirmed this thought; however, Jesus did not say He was "The Good Leader." He said He was "The Good Shepherd." Thus, fulfillment in the shepherding construct produces leaders in the manner of Jesus. Whereas the church has strayed from its original mandate of shepherding (Tara, 2020), it is time for it to reclaim the primary role of shepherding without jettisoning the necessary elements of leadership. When viewed correctly in the overall context of shepherding, leadership becomes one of many elements that are needed to oversee the church properly.

By "reversing the lens," the church can steadfastly shift its focus to the metaphor of shepherding and claim that role as its primary calling. Metaphors do not merely serve illustrative purposes. Van Hecke (2012) stated that "metaphors play an important role in one's self-understanding and operative theology" (p. 319). The metaphor of shepherding should not only inform the mental model of pastors. The shepherding metaphor should inform the "operative theology" of pastoring. It is a shift in perspective that is needed in the church today.

Therefore, pastors must practically exercise this perspective shift by changing their language. If the most important thing religious leaders can do is shepherd, then the disparity between leadership language and the remaining nine themes must be addressed. Pastors should rephrase what they do as pastoring or shepherding, not leading. When the pastors were given the opportunity to define their style of leadership, none of the pastors used the word "shepherding." The lack of this descriptor is a prime example of how pastors can shift their language. Moreover, when empowering their pastoral staff, they should communicate the imperative of shepherding. Then, as they mention leadership, they also tie in the

remaining nine themes in a cohesive construct. Again, leadership is not a negative theme, but a theme among many.

Phenomenological Implications

The interviews with the nine chosen senior pastors provided valuable phenomenological implications for the church and the shepherding construct. First, the interviewed pastors embraced and utilized all of these shepherding themes. There was no theme presented that none of the pastors exercised in their roles as senior pastors. Specific themes were very straightforward in their approach. Pastors unanimously embraced spiritual feeding, selflessness, protection, willingness, modeling, stewardship, and leadership.

Second, some themes were embraced by pastors yet caused difficulty in their practice. Pastors understood that their role was to care for the flock. Only a few pastors embraced the restorative aspect of care, where the shepherd's task is to bring people back to their original state. None of the pastors indicated that they had a precise method of seeking out those who walked away from the church. Those who walked away from the church were no longer in their purview in most of their minds. Pastors also struggled with inspection. They found it challenging to quantify spiritual health. Instead, they regularly used giving, serving, and group attendance metrics. The participants' overall attitude to such metrics was that they did not tell the entire picture. Pastors should examine their inspection methods and work to clearly understand the spiritual health of individuals and use those to identify people in need of restorative care. Most pastors struggled with familiarity, realizing the need for healthy boundaries. They felt the tension of leading the church and leading their families. They understood that as pastors, they were called to be familiar with the church, and yet their families needed protection.

Although not an exegetical theme, relationships appeared regularly in the phenomenological phase. Pastors relied heavily on relationships to operate the themes of protection, care, inspection, and familiarity. In place of rigid systems and structure, pastors utilized relationships to cover the gaps in these themes. For instance, a relationship in a small group would aid in identifying someone who was

going through difficulty or was possibly leaving the church. Senior pastors utilized senior leaders and their natural relationships with congregants to build familiarity.

In relation, pastors leaned heavily on empowered leadership to see many of the shepherding themes exercised within the body of the church. This strategy aligns with previous research findings showing that shepherding is not a solitary office (Dunn, 2018; Schwenk, 2020). As churches grow, the ability of pastors to solely perform these duties diminishes. The pastors of churches of 300 were already feeling the struggle when interviewed. Therefore, empowering other shepherds is an important practical implication that churches must embrace.

Empowered leadership leads to the last practical implication. If pastors need assistance in exercising the shepherding construct, and if they will need to empower other shepherds, then pastors will need to develop a thorough training curriculum and system. As Pastor #9 explained,

> I think we want to train good elders and deacons to be aware to be seers. Episcopacy that Paul uses in Acts 20 calls the presbyters of the church. Among which the Holy Spirit has made you an Episcopal way of overseeing–to Shepherd. So, I think that the seeing aspect is what's largely lost. A lot of church leaders look deeply. I think the first thing we want to do is train people to look and listen.

He continued, "If it is a big church, then I'm going to have to have really well-trained pastoral leaders doing that job." Training is paramount for empowering other shepherds. They need to understand what each of these themes means and how to successfully operate within each theme. As Pastor #9 stated, they will need to learn how to see people, listen to people, and care.

Limitations

Every research project possesses a limiting factor by its very nature. This current study is no different. Several limitation considerations are listed here: one in the exegetical phase and three in the phenomenological phase. First, in the exegetical phase, the design of the study limited the scope of research to only the shepherding passages of Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, Jeremiah 23, Zechariah, John 10,

John 21, and 1 Peter 5. Bailey (2014) analyzed additional shepherding passages such as Luke 15, Mark 6:7–52, and Matthew 18:10–14, none of which were included in this study. Laniak (2006) explored Isaiah, Mark, Matthew, Luke, and Revelation. Likewise, I did not consider a socio-rhetorical analysis of Romans 12:8.

Second, the pastors that I interviewed offered their perceptions of their abilities within each theme. For instance, there was no attempt to validate their evaluation of their conduct concerning care. A pastor may have felt they have lived a selfless life, but congregants may have believed otherwise. Even if the pastors were self-aware, there is no discernable way to measure the efficacy of their awareness. Moreover, none of the participating pastors mentioned any type of feedback loop or intentional methods of accountability. In contrast, many felt mixed about their ability to be modeled. Congregants may have felt strongly that the pastors lived an exemplary life worth imitating. Thus, the pastor's self-perception during the phenomenological phase limited my understanding of how these themes are lived out. Third, this study contains the phenomenological findings of pastors primarily in the southeast United States. The pastors were also overwhelmingly a part of the Association of Related Churches in the United States. A sampling of a broader range of pastors from across the country could have provided different findings.

Last, I did not explore the health of the churches in which the pastors led. A pastor may have felt that they lived out all 10 themes in an extraordinary fashion, and yet their church may have been struggling financially, dipping in attendance, or experiencing high turnover. I did not explore these topics, nor was it my intention to understand how shepherding correlated with church health.

Suggestions for Future Research

The following suggestions for future research may help alleviate the limitations mentioned. Although I evaluated a majority of the shepherding scriptures, future researchers could solely focus on all shepherding passages and how they are related. The church would benefit from a study that strengthens the

case for shepherding and how it interacts and intersects with leadership across all vocations mentioned in Scripture.

Second, future scholars could focus on the quantitative aspect of the shepherding construct. One such approach could be to formulate a measurable and validated instrument to measure each of the 10 shepherding themes presented in this paper. Churches would benefit from a test that can provide a self-perception evaluation and a 360-degree evaluation. The lack of self-awareness was a previously stated limitation within the study. These tests would allow pastors to understand better how well they are operating within the construct.

A validated instrument would also allow future researchers to determine how this shepherding leadership construct correlates with church health. They could also consider whether operating within the shepherding construct causes healthier organizations or congregations, and whether there is a correlation between the shepherding construct and church size, giving, community involvement, spiritual development, or evangelism. A study designed to help pastors understand how the shepherding construct correlates with results would help its adoption in a results-driven society. This study would answer a simple question, “Yes, it is scriptural. But does it work?”

Pastors tended to struggle with the theme of inspection because they found it challenging to quantify spiritual health. Future research efforts should be devoted to clearly identifying spiritual health within the body of the church. Pastors would be able to use this research to better strategize how to move and guide people toward a desired result.

The disparity between leadership and shepherding is a notable gap in this study. Future investigators should further explore the availability of leadership models, methods, and characteristics versus the available shepherding constructs. They could explore how religious leaders reconcile the desire to focus on shepherding with the abundance of religious leadership models available. Moreover, if leadership is a theme among many, scholars could devote more energy to exploring the other nine themes.

Lastly, I believe that the field would benefit from a more in-depth phenomenological study on shepherding with a broader sampling of pastors. It would behoove the field to understand the thoughts and experiences of pastors according to size, denomination, and geographical area. For instance, the responses from Pastor #9, a seasoned Presbyterian minister, were vastly different from the remaining group. Scholars may determine whether there are significant differences according to age or denominational affiliation, and identify the causes of these differences if so. An international study would also provide interesting results.

Conclusion

After the sexual revolution, the American church sought to regain its influence (Tara, 2020). To return to a level of prominence and influence, it turned to the promising field of leadership (Tara, 2020). The church has slowly embraced a secular leadership posture in the face of mounting challenges to growth and scaling issues (Maddox, 2012; Whitaker, 2013). The Christian community has provided valuable insights into the field of leadership and worked hard to implement the best leadership styles that align with biblical principles (Gregory, 2020; Huizing, 2011a, 2011b; Kessler, 2013; Scarborough, 2010). This shift has simultaneously witnessed a letting go of traditional Christian themes of shepherding (Tara, 2020). These movements within the Christian church have come at a cost, however. Pastoral burnout continues to increase (Fee, 2018; Samushonga, 2021), and many pastors feel overwhelmed and unfit for the challenges they face (Elkington, 2013; Greene et al., 2020). In sum, a focus on leadership has not provided the answers that the church needs in the new millennium.

In this study, Scripture provided a foundation for understanding what was being asked of pastors as they lead their churches. A two-phased approach provided the structure needed to understand this mandate and its impact on senior pastors. First, the socio-rhetorical method provided a suitable tool to exegete Scripture. Through this exercise, the shepherding metaphor arc arose as prominent and demanding attention as the mandate for church leadership. This exegesis also

provided the 10 central themes to the shepherding construct. These themes gave a framework for interview questions leading to the study's second phase. Nine senior pastors agreed to interviews as part of this phenomenological study seeking to understand the lived experiences of senior pastors regarding shepherding. This phase proved helpful, as it illustrated the shepherding construct already in use—yet undefined—within most churches.

This two-step approach had several practical implications. First, I presented a useable model for pastors to employ within their churches. If pastors seek a new leadership model without the secular baggage associated and one that embraces biblical principles, the shepherding construct provided is more than suitable. It reveals to pastors the needed aspects to successfully shepherd the people as God would for His flock. It also does not "throw the baby out with the bathwater." Leadership is still present in the shepherding construct; however, the model places it within the appropriate relationship with shepherding. As Wright (2011) stated in response to objections to Peter's call to shepherding,

> Now of course the 'experts' might say, "But that's what we mean by 'leadership.'" If it is, well and good. But let's study and practice the thing itself, not some abstract category removed from reality. What Peter is describing here is not 'leaders' but shepherds. And the point about 'shepherds' is that the best of them aren't thinking, "How can I be a shepherd?" but, "How can I best look after these sheep?" (pp. 91–92)

Through this study, I accomplished what Wright is asking. I studied the practice of shepherding and not an "abstract category removed from reality." Shepherding, not leading, is the calling of a pastor.

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