THE ROLE OF A PASTOR:
AS A FAITHFUL AND AUTHENTIC SERVANT OF GOD

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THESIS PROPOSAL</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor as Shepherd</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor of a Shepherd</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King David (Type)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Characteristics</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position Description</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor as Teacher</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor of a Teacher</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus the Example</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function of a Teacher</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor as Servant</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosperity Gospel</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus the Example</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Washed His disciples Feet</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of a Servant</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of Godly Pastors</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietrich Bonhoeffer</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Choice</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonhoeffer’s Evolving Compassion for Others</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Seymour</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Humble Leader</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Through Preaching</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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I am reminded of the words of Jesus when He informs
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ABSTRACT

“The Role of a Pastor: As an Authentic Faithful Servant of God” examines how pastors should conduct themselves in the performance of their duties to God and to God’s people.

A prerequisite for a pastor’s service to God is love. Before an individual can render service to God’s people he or she must first love God. Without this love it is impossible for an individual to offer faithful, authentic service to God’s people. Moreover, it becomes impossible to humbly lead, nurture and care for God’s people.

The work of a pastor is noble and multi-faceted and often goes unrequited. Accordingly the author uses three metaphors to describe the office of pastor: Pastor as Shepherd, Pastor as Teacher, and Pastor as Servant.
THE ROLE OF A PASTOR: AS AN AUTHENTIC FAITHFUL SERVANT OF GOD

THESIS PROPOSAL:

A topic that should resonate within the church community that has not received sufficient attention is the role of the pastor in the church. This should cause concern because many pastors have exploited their role. One example of that exploitation is that of engaging in what is commonly referred to as a kind of “prosperity gospel.” The prosperity gospel at a minimum is a gross perversion of God’s word, and a deceitful manipulation of those who subscribe to it. Many well meaning Christians have been bamboozled by this pernicious and rapid spreading movement. It has been observed that: “The prosperity gospel guaranteed a special form of Christian power to reach into God’s treasure trove and pull out a miracle.”

In one sense there seems to be a type of mind over matter philosophy at work. Of course making frequent and large donations to these ministries is requisite for success. Frequently to certify the veracity of the tenets of this baneful doctrine, individuals may offer proof of their blessings by arguing that they, after a substantial donation to the ministry, received a hefty check in the mail and they have no idea where it came from. These types of claims abound. More often than not though, the only persons enjoying prosperity are the purveyors of the prosperity doctrine.

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Kate Bowler offers: The prosperity gospel centers on four themes: faith, wealth, health, and victory. It conceives of faith as an activator, a power that unleashes spiritual forces and turns the spoken word into reality. The movement depicts faith as palpably demonstrated in wealth and health. It can be measured in both the wallet (one’s personal wealth) and in the body (one’s personal health), making material reality the measure of the success of immaterial faith.²

The focus has moved away from the ideal, of God rewarding the faithful in the next life, and pumping up parishioners with the expectation of wealth on earth. Hanna Rosin of The Atlantic asserts, “Over the past generation, a different strain of Christian faith has proliferated—one that promises to make believers rich in the here and now. This new prosperity gospel claims tens of millions of adherents; it fosters risk-taking and intense material optimism.”³ In many cases, individuals are coaxed into living beyond their means. They are urged, “Instead of saying I’m poor, say I’m rich.”⁴ Oftentimes, on the strength of these types of statements many faithful followers find themselves deeply in debt and heartache.

Instead of the focus of worship being on the Lord Jesus Christ, money has become one of the preeminent pillars in the church. Sermons are replete with reference to money and how the wealth is there for all to access if you have faith.

Take for example, Pastor Fernando Garay of Charlottesville, Virginia, who offered

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² Ibid 7
⁴ Ibid 3
to his parishioners. “God is the owner of all the silver and gold, and with enough faith, any believer can access the inheritance.”\textsuperscript{5} In other cases parishioners are lulled further into a sort of spiritual myopia as they are encouraged to sow a seed of faith. This concept allegedly goes back to the 1940’s when Oral Roberts began to encourage parishioners. “If people would donate money to his ministry, a seed offered to God, he’d say, then God would multiply it a hundred fold.”\textsuperscript{6}

There are a number of metaphors used for a pastor. Among them are shepherd, teacher, and servant. In addition to these three metaphors, I will use the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and leadership examples to critique the dishonesty and deception of the prosperity gospel. Without a doubt, the role of a pastor is a very special calling. These three metaphors each contribute to the thesis I am offering as response to the problems related to the prosperity gospel. The role of a pastor as a faithful and authentic servant of God is to humbly lead, cultivate, instruct, nurture, and care for God’s people. By definition, a pastor is one having spiritual care of a number of persons. Part of my positive critique of the role of a pastor is looking at examples of these qualities rooted in scripture for each of the metaphors. One aspect that drives this spiritual care is compassion. Jesus was oftentimes “moved with compassion.” On one occasion he observed a large crowd that followed him had become weary and were scattered like sheep having no shepherd. Jesus proceeded to have them sit down as he blessed five loaves and two fishes from which he feeds the entire congregation (Mt 9).

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid 2  
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid 4
The opposite of compassion is greed and or selfishness. Jesus was always focused on doing the will of his father. He therefore, had no time to engage in selfish motives. He gave no time to amassing wealth or worldly possessions. On one occasion he observed that the foxes have holes, the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no where to lay his head (Lk 9:58). Ben Witherington says:

It is one of the greatest tragic ironies imaginable that the teaching of Jesus has been used by affluent modern Christians to justify the lifestyles of the rich and famous. This is the same Jesus who said ‘blessed are the poor’ and warned ‘do not store up treasures on earth.” Simple phrases like ‘you have not because you ask not’ or ‘ask (in faith) and you shall receive’ have been turned into mantras that are thought to produce nearly instant material benefits.⁷

As we look more closely at the role of a pastor, I will explore how the three metaphors of Pastor as Shepherd, Pastor as Teacher and Pastor as Servant refute the preaching and teaching of the prosperity Gospel.

GOALS:
My goals in writing this thesis are twofold: to discover the qualities or absence of qualities that make one individual a true pastor and another individual a mere hireling; and to develop a model for future pastors where the church is a place to transform, heal and restore lives.

OBJECTIVES:
1. To investigate what allows some individuals to see a calling as a worthy charge while others view it as an office of opportunity.

2. Assess three metaphors used for a pastor to bring these images into sharper focus to reveal the role of a pastor.
3. Investigate how these three areas have been perverted, causing many pastors to manifest unchecked greed and misuse of power.

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One I will explore the role of a pastor as the shepherd of God’s flock. Focus will be placed on the essential aspect of love for God which is the source and driving force from which the role of pastor-shepherd is sustained. This is the inexhaustible love that continues when it is not reciprocated. It is the kind of love that never gives up. Without a love for God the pastor-shepherd cannot demonstrate love for the sheep or people of God. When the pastor—shepherd has the requisite love for God he or she can begin to serve the people of God providing the service that God has commissioned him or her to provide.

I will review the aspect of leadership that a pastor—shepherd provides to the sheep. The leadership provided by the pastor as shepherd is unique in that it occurs at the direction of God. It is not self-directed leadership, not leadership at the whim of the pastor. Additionally, I will examine the aspects of caring, feeding, and protection that the pastor as shepherd provides.

Finally, I will look at examples of individuals who demonstrated the love for God and as a consequence were able to provide the care, feeding and protection of the sheep.

In Chapter Two I address the role of pastor as teacher. A teacher is traditionally someone who leads and instructs his or her pupils in various
endeavors. I will explore the role of the pastor as teacher in terms of being the example for those under his or her charge. Further, I will look at the pastor as one who is concerned about ensuring the ongoing work of God. The work of God requires cooperation from all concerned as we work toward a common goal.

I will review Jesus’ life as the model life of a teacher who taught his disciples by example. He taught them faith and compassion and leadership. Among these are qualities that Jesus wanted his disciples to implement upon his leaving. Jesus knew that someone had to continue his work upon his departure.

One function of a pastor as teacher is to ensure that disciples are prepared to be examples for others to follow; to impress upon disciples that the work of God extends beyond any one person. The work of God is ongoing. Just as the Lord ensured that his disciples were properly equipped to do his work, even so the pastor teacher must by example lead and prepare the people of God.

Finally, in chapter three I will highlight the role of pastor as a servant. Particular attention will be paid to the mindset of a servant of God. The predominant theme is an attitude of humility. The pastor as servant must first come to serve—as Jesus said of himself—that he came to serve and not to be served. This is the very attitude that he exemplified while he walked the earth. We are informed through scripture that he went about doing good. Again I explore with scriptural support that service to God is rooted in the servant’s love for God and this enables him or her to carry out service to God’s people. Also I examine the fact that the true servant of God must subordinate his or her will to the will of God.

**CHAPTER 1**
Pastor as Shepherd
In Chapter 21 of John we observe Jesus after his resurrection, meeting one final time with his disciples prior to returning to heaven. The disciples had gone back to their former professions. For most of them this was fishing. They had been fishing all night long. Early the next morning they observed Jesus on the shore. Jesus inquired as to whether they had caught any fish. They had not! Jesus instructed them to throw their nets on the right side of the ship. Throwing their nets on the right side of the ship they proceeded to haul in a great cache of fish—so large that they needed extra help to pull the fish into the ship. Jesus then invites Simon Peter to bring some of the fish that they had caught, whereupon Jesus proceeds to cook them on coals of fire. After the fish are cooked Jesus invites the disciples to come and dine. Upon finishing their meal Jesus proceeds to question Peter.

“Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me more than these?” (Jn 21:15). Peter in a state of incredulity, responds that the Lord knows the extent of his love. As a consequence of this love Jesus instructs Peter to feed His lambs. Jesus, after hearing Peter’s response, puts the question to him again; instead of lambs Jesus substitutes the word sheep. Perhaps even more puzzling to Peter is when Jesus puts forth this question yet a third time—as if Peter is hard of hearing or slow to grasp the meaning of his words. It is here that we see Jesus seemingly urging Peter to take note of the enormity and importance of the assignment that he is giving him. The enormity and importance of this question that Jesus puts to Peter may in part be reflected in the word that he uses for love.
The word for love that Jesus uses is \textit{ἀγαπάω} (agapao). The word that Peter uses in response is \textit{φιλέω} phileo.

What we describe as love is differentiated in Greek by various expressions. \textit{Phileo} is the most commonly used word, indicating a general attraction towards a person or thing. In phileo we see the meaning of love for one’s relatives and friends (cf. the typical formation of Philadelphia, love for a brother; brother, art. adelphos) but the whole area of fondness is also included with gods, men and things as possible objects. \textit{Philia} accordingly, denotes love, friendship, devotion favor; and \textit{philos} is a relative or friend. By contrast \textit{eros} is love which desires to have or take possession. \textit{Agapao}, originally meaning to honor or welcome, is in classical Greek, the least specifically defined word; it is frequently used synonymously with \textit{phileo} without any necessarily strict distinction in meaning.

In the NT, however, \textit{agapao} and the noun \textit{agape} have taken on a particular significance in that they are used to speak of the love of God or the way of life based on it.\footnote{Colin Brown, \textit{The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology} (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 1986), 538.}

Phileo is the love that is shown from brother to brother; it is therefore entirely a human love. God is not calling Peter to serve out of human love because
human love is wholly inadequate for the task that is before him. Human love is exhaustible and soon gives up when burdened with challenges. When Jesus calls Peter to feed his sheep—flock it is a calling which can only be completed with the sustaining love of God and commitment to his people. Jesus, in presenting this assignment to Peter likens him to a shepherd who has to provide tender loving care to helpless sheep.

As we think of sheep in a fundamental sense, it is interesting that Jesus likens the care of his people to feeding sheep. Just as sheep require tender loving care in a natural sense, God’s people must be dealt with in a loving and caring manner. In the natural sense when we study sheep we come to understand that they are very delicate animals. They are unique from most other animals. They are unique in their makeup in that they are docile, opposed to aggressive; they are unique in the care they require—they are prey rather than predator. Dealing with sheep requires patience.

We often hear the phrase that patience is a virtue—patience is of utmost importance and required when working with sheep. Not only does patience produce positive natural outcomes, but we are reminded by the Apostle Paul that it is a fruit of the spirit (Gal 5:22-23). “With time and patience sheep can be trained to come to their name and be led by halter.”

Through the process of time the caretaker or shepherd is able to glean the satisfaction of seeing the fruit of his or her labor and patience. Sheep are naturally skittish; without patience the shepherd could never progress pass the point of being a stranger to them. As the shepherd

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spends time with his sheep, they become familiar with him and a bond of trust is built—without which no relationship could exist. “Keep in mind that trust is one of the foundational bases that allow the shepherd to begin to lead his sheep.”

“Accordingly as the shepherd spends more time talking softly with the sheep they become familiar with his voice.”

As the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep is nurtured, the confidence that the sheep develop toward the shepherd grows respectively. Sheep, as alluded to earlier are vulnerable and very defenseless by nature and are at the mercy of numerous predators which run the gamut from coyotes to bears to wolves. “Not one of the sheep’s natural defenses is a match for any of their sharp-toothed and hungry carnivorous adversaries.” Generally the only thing that sheep may be disposed to do when attacked is run or group together and crouch in fear. “Predators are a potential problem for all shepherds.” For this reason the shepherd must constantly be on the lookout for any and all predators of the sheep. In the process of protecting his sheep the shepherd puts himself at risk on numerous occasions as he is likely to encounter wolves, bear or lions. He therefore must be willing to sacrifice his life for the sheep.

When it comes to feeding sheep it must be done with care. The shepherd is vigilant and discerning about where he allows the sheep to graze. They can consume a wide assortment of vegetation, such as leaves, grain, and straw among other foods. “Since they eat such a wide variety of vegetation and are curious

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10 Ibid 160
11 Ibid 160
12 Ibid 157
about their surroundings, they are not aptly capable of discerning a good plant from a toxic one.”\(^\text{14}\) There are many plants among those that sheep should avoid such as wild lupine, horse chestnut, horsetails, mistletoe, and many others. Because of this potential for the sheep getting into a feeding area which might prove harmful, the shepherd must be proactive and physically survey the pasture in an effort to ensure safe feeding. This now moves us to providing water for the sheep.

The shepherd must be on the lookout for dirty, contaminated and fast moving waters because they all pose a danger to the sheep. This was oftentimes the case with the shepherds in ancient Israel as they led their sheep through the desert. “The same waters that give life in the desert may also take life in the desert when sheep reach it suddenly in raging torrents spilling down from the hills.”\(^\text{15}\) In addition to the danger posed by the raging water we can well imagine the collateral confusion among the sheep which could certainly lead to a stampede. Because sheep are naturally nervous, the shepherd must seek out waters that are more serene and calm. We get a picture of the shepherd’s actions in a spiritual sense as the words of the Psalmist are echoed: “He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.” (Ps 23:2 NAS). The shepherd is concerned with maintaining a state of restfulness among his sheep so he leads them to waters that promote rest or peace. The psalmist uses the word מְנוּחָה menuwchah, which means a resting place, a place of ease—restful waters. Just as the psalmist mentions

\(^{14}\) Ibid 167

\(^{15}\) Nogah Hareuveni, Desert and Shepherd in Our Biblical Heritage. (Tel Aviv, Israel: Neot Kedumim-The Biblical Landscape Reserve in Israel, 1991), 82.
leading the sheep to a place of rest, the ancient shepherd of Israel led their sheep to restful waters—waters to refresh and promote peace.

As Jesus invites Peter to feed his sheep—to feed his lambs—he offers him a noble position of overseeing God’s people—an assignment not to be taken frivolously. Jesus was the ideal shepherd. Jesus embodied all of the positive characteristics of a shepherd. The Greek word for shepherd or pastor is ποιμήν (poimen). It means him to whose care and control others have committed themselves, and whose precepts they follow; additionally it means the overseers of the Christian assemblies. The Hebrew word for shepherd and pastor is: "רָעָה {raw-aw‘} It means to pasture, tend, graze, feed, keep, and companion."

Apparently since the time that Jesus charged Peter with the role of shepherding his people Peter had grown in years and wisdom when he comes to write 1 Peter 5. Ostensibly with much experience and a sharper revelation of Jesus’ words, Peter offers a bit of sage advice to pastors. In verse 2-3 of this chapter he urges pastors to: “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (NIV). In verse two of this same chapter Peter uses the Greek word ποιμαίνω (poimaino) which carries the meaning of: “to feed, to tend to a flock, to furnish pasture, nourish, to serve the

body and finally to supply the requisites for the soul’s need."\textsuperscript{17} We see here the delicate love and care that a pastor must employ in dealing with God’s people. As we look closer at what the Lord was calling Peter to do Peter soon realizes that it was a colossal task that leaves no room for greediness or self-indulgence.

The role of a pastor may be seen from many different perspectives. One of those is a shepherd. On one occasion Jesus declares himself to be the shepherd of the sheep. In John 10 he gives us a closer look at the office of a shepherd; at some of the characteristics of a shepherd versus those who might attempt to impersonate the shepherd. Jesus tells us that the thief or robber attempts to enter the sheepfold by climbing up or gaining entrance in an unauthorized way. The impersonator or intruder doesn’t enter by the door. The robber is an intruder and impersonator of the real shepherd.

Jesus, on the other hand, enters by the door as the authentic shepherd of the sheep. In verse 3 of this chapter we are told that the porter opens the door to the shepherd and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. This text suggests to us that there is a special relationship that has been developed between the shepherd and his sheep. The shepherd is one who has spent time with the sheep teaching, training, caring, protecting, and feeding them. As a consequence of this time spent, there is a bond of trust between the shepherd and his sheep. This bond of trust and companionship is so strong that the sheep know the voice of their shepherd. By virtue of having heard their shepherd’s voice so often they have become fully acquainted with it. Moreover, because of this

\textsuperscript{17} ibid
extraordinary relationship, the shepherd knows each of his sheep by name. This relationship between the shepherd and his sheep is so strong that the sheep will not follow strangers or imposters. The voice of the stranger or imposter is unfamiliar to them. Timothy S. Laniak offers this observation:

The legitimate shepherd brings all of his sheep out (cf. John 18:9), and then they follow (αkoloutheo) behind him (v.4).

Following is an important emphasis in John, as in all the Gospels. It is the appropriate response of those who recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God (Jn 1:36-43). In this chapter it is the familiar voice of the shepherd that inspires “fellowship” (Jn 10:4, 5, 27).¹⁸

There have been many instances where imposters or impersonators attempted to mislead the sheep. Jesus makes reference to this in John 10:10. He offers in John 10:5 that the sheep will not follow a stranger, but will flee because they do not know his voice.

The scribes and Pharisees presented themselves as the religious leaders of God’s people; they sought to have people follow them. Perhaps they were among those referred to as thieves and robbers who attempted to mislead God’s people. In Matthew 23 we observe Jesus indicting the scribes and Pharisees for their miscreant behavior. We see Jesus denouncing them for wanting to sit in the places of honor, desiring to be called Rabbi, and generally exalting themselves. Further,

they made laws that bound and ensnared the people—laws they would not obey themselves. Jesus finally pronounces them—‘hypocrites,’ or imposters. They were blind guides leading the blind, Jesus pronounced. The scribes and Pharisees were not shepherds in any sense of the word. They were only concerned about themselves—they cared nothing for the welfare of the people whom they were misleading. Their character reflected only self preservation!

John 10 again provides yet a different view of the character of the shepherd. Jesus tells us in verse 11 that he is the good shepherd and as such he gives his life for the sheep. This verse reveals the love that the shepherd has for his sheep as he is willing to demonstrate it to the extent of offering protection at the expense of his own life. The shepherd’s motive for the protection of his sheep grows out of an undying love for them. This love is so strong that he is willing to forfeit his own life for the sheep. I am reminded of Jesus on one occasion where the scripture tells us that: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16 KJV). The shepherd is willing to lay down his life for the sheep, but the hireling who doesn’t care for the sheep flees when he sees danger afar off.

The hireling is there only for the money; and because there is no love for the sheep he leaves at the first sign of danger. The sheep are left exposed to danger. As a result of this exposure many are caught by the wolf and destroyed. The wolf here could be a metaphor for all of the things that are spiritually detrimental to God’s people. The hireling shepherd is only there to enrich himself, he leaves off
protection, he leaves off repairing the wounded in spirit, he leaves off caring for the sick and broken hearted. Because the hireling is more concerned with self preservation and doesn’t care for the sheep he commits many transgressions in performing his duties.

In Ezekiel 34:1-12 the Lord chides the kings of Israel for failing to properly shepherd his people. He accuses the feckless and wayward shepherds for feeding themselves instead of his people. The Lord observes that the sheep are diseased and the shepherds have failed to strengthen them, and have failed to heal the sick. They have failed to bind up that which was broken; neither have they brought again that which was driven away, neither have they sought that which was lost. These shepherds have made grave transgressions by failing to properly care for God’s sheep. In contrast to these ill behaving shepherds we get another picture of a loving caring shepherd in (Lk15:3-6).

Jesus puts forth a parable about a shepherd who had 100 sheep and one of the sheep wandered away and became lost. The shepherd demonstrated loving kindness and care when he left the ninety and nine and searched for the one lost sheep—until he found it. We can only imagine the anxiety that the lost sheep was experiencing while the shepherd was searching for it. No doubt it was out in the dark of night, frightened and alone, wondering how it had gotten so far from the sheepfold. I am sure that this lost sheep, because of the relationship that it enjoyed with the shepherd had confidence in the shepherd, knew that the shepherd was searching for it. This lost sheep had confidence in its shepherd like King David had confidence in his shepherd.
Metaphor of a Shepherd

In Psalm 23 which is widely attributed to King David he begins by stating that “the Lord is his shepherd and he shall not want.” As such, he reveals another characteristic of a shepherd. King David uses the Hebrew word חָסֵר (chacer) which means to not lack, not be without, not to decrease, not to diminish, and not fail. King David here informs us that since the Lord is his shepherd he shall not want or lack any of the things necessary in this life. King David is confident that the Lord will supply all of his needs. This king more than most, no doubt, was able to draw on his own experiences as a shepherd of his father’s sheep. When Samuel was sent from the Lord to anoint David as the future king of Israel, we are told that he puts the question to Jesse, David’s father: “are all the young men here?” Jesse responds, “there remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep” (1Sm16:10-11).

As a shepherd, David was acquainted with leading his sheep to the best places to graze and satisfy their hunger. A proper diet would ensure them having strength to sustain themselves as they traveled from place to place. Additionally, insufficient and improper nutrition would invite diseases and other sicknesses. David exercised tender loving care for his sheep—always on the lookout for their best interest. While the sheep were in the field with him they lacked nothing. David was attentive to their every need. David as a shepherd was acutely aware of every aspect of the shepherding process. “Obviously, David, in this Psalm is speaking not as the shepherd, though he was one, but as a sheep, one of the flock.
He spoke with a strong sense of pride and devotion and admiration. It was as though he literally boasted aloud, “Look at who my shepherd is—my owner—my manager!” He thus draws from his own considerable experience as a shepherd.

Therefore, he asserts his confidence in the Lord—his shepherd. The Lord is the ultimate Shepherd! Perhaps David is hearkening back to another of the earlier times of his life when he had come to know God as his protector. On one of those occasions, David was sent to take supplies to his brothers as they engaged in a standoff with Goliath, the Philistine giant. We are told that Goliath had been presenting himself before the armies of Israel for forty days. He was quite an imposing and threatening figure.

Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath was measured at six cubits and a span or over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels or one hundred and twenty five pounds, on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver’s beam, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels or fifteen pounds.  

On one of the many visits that Goliath presented himself before the armies of Israel, David happened to overhear the giant’s challenging and vilifying

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remarks. Goliath proposed a challenge: provide one Israelite to engage him in a one on one contest and the winner would garner the victory for their respective country. When Goliath approached the men of Israel they scattered in fear. It was incredulous to David that this Philistine would dare to defy the armies of the living God without any fear of retribution. None of the men of Israel was courageous enough to fight against the giant. They all stood about quaking in fear! All except David—who let it be known that he would fight the giant. After approval from King Saul, David was given the king’s blessing to go forward against the giant. In the course of his conversation with King Saul, David relates how the Lord had protected him at other times. He recites two different instances: in one instance a bear rose up against him and he grabbed it by its beard and slew it; additionally, in another instance he slew a lion that challenged him (1Sm 17).

David here argues that the Philistine would be no different from the lion and the bear. Just as God protected him from them, so the Lord would protect him when he went out against the giant. In preparation to meet the approaching giant, David, equipped with a sling, chose five smooth stones from the brook and ran to meet the giant. As Goliath approached, David slung one of the stones, hitting the giant in the forehead with the stone sinking into his head killing him. This was one of the prominent incidents where David came to experience God as his protector, (1Sm 17).

David further remarked that: “the Lord maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me besides still waters,” (Ps 23 KJV). David was not unfortunate to have an inattentive shepherd. David offers that the Lord is an
attentive Shepherd who allows him to lie down in green pastures. The Lord does not leave him to forage for himself in inhospitable dry, brown and depleted pastures. Instead the Lord provides green fertile pastures from which he feeds. David was fed from the pastures of the sweet communion with God—from the pastures of the sweet word of God. David remarks of this sweetness as he offers in one of the psalms: How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Ps 119). David realized that feeding from the green pastures of God’s word provided him with a closeness that he could not otherwise enjoy. It provided him with strength when it may have been difficult to continue during times of distress.

In a spiritual sense, inhospitable, dry, and depleted pastures are akin to a shepherd allowing his sheep to partake of unsound doctrine or listen to false teachers who turn them away from the truth. Paul offers to Timothy, his son in the gospel, to be on the lookout and combat such tendencies. He tells Timothy to:

> Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season;
> reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.
> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths (2Tm 4:2-4 NAS).

Timothy had the responsibility to ensure that the sheep who were under his charge fed from the rich unadulterated sincere word of God. Otherwise they would drift
away into fables and falsehood which would summarily weaken their faith in God. Feeding from the false doctrine of inhospitable, dry and depleted pastures produces sheep that are confused, weak and gullible prey to the ravenous wolves seeking to devour them. Timothy is being charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the people of God are fed from green pastures—from the green pastures of the word of God. Feeding on false doctrine or unsound doctrine is tantamount to sheep when they inadvertently invade a patch of mistletoe or some other poisonous plant.

Additionally, David submits that he leadeth me beside the still waters. “In spite of the fact that sheep are accustomed to surviving in dry and unproductive areas, they still need water. They are unlike some of the African gazelles which can survive fairly well on small amounts of moisture contained in natural foliage.” Even though the sheep are able to survive without water for some time, their dependence is upon the shepherd to lead them to still waters. Water is such a vital commodity that it is important in maintaining normal body operations. “It determines the vitality, strength, and hardiness of the sheep and is necessary for their health and general well being.” It becomes apparent when the sheep are in need of water. They become weak and impoverished and begin to show signs of sluggishness. As a result they may become distressed and begin to wander off in search of water to satisfy their thirst. Without the expert guidance of the shepherd, the sheep are apt to wander off into contaminated waters, ingesting such harmful parasites, such as liver flukes, nematodes, and lungworms. Just as sheep have a desperate need for natural water which is essential for the proper function and

\[21\] Ibid 48  
\[22\] Ibid 48
maintenance of their bodies, our souls are in need of spiritual sustenance. As the sheep need to have their thirst quenched; the thirst of our souls need to be quenched. Unlike the sheep which can have its thirst quenched by natural water the thirst of our souls can only be quenched by one source. The only source which is able to quench our souls is Jesus Christ.

After having crossed the Red Sea the Israelites were not far into the desert when they begin to experience thirst. They come to the Wilderness of Sin after having traveled for a short while and are unable to find water. As they become more and more thirsty, panic sets in and they begin to complain and chide Moses. Moses takes their complaint to God. God informs Moses to take his rod and go to the rock in Horeb and smite the rock—at which point it will give water. After Moses struck the rock, water came out, and the people were able to quench their thirst. (Ex17).

The Apostle Paul makes references to this text in the New Testament when he informs the Corinthian church that the rock which Moses struck in the wilderness was really Christ and it was he who quenched the Israelites’ thirst. Paul submits: and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ (1Co 10:4). As natural thirst is quenched by natural water, “precisely in the same manner Christ our Good Shepherd makes it clear that thirsty souls of men and women can only be fully satisfied when their capacity and thirst for spiritual life is fully quenched by drawing on himself.”23

23 Ibid 49
In John chapter four Jesus having left Judea and entered Galilee decides to go to Samaria. While in Samaria He decides to stop at Jacob’s well to get a drink of water. At the well Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman. Jesus asks her for a drink of water. She thought it odd that Jesus a Jew—asked her, a Samaritan for a drink since the Samaritans and Jews had no dealings with one another. Jesus informs the Samaritan woman that if she were aware who it was who asked for a drink she would ask him for a drink instead. She would ask Jesus for a drink because he was uniquely qualified to give a special kind of water—living water. Jesus argues that whosoever drinks of this living water shall never thirst and that this water will be a well of water springing up into everlasting life!

Jesus at the feast of Jerusalem offers an invitation: “if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” (Jn7:37) Jesus alone quenches the thirst of whosoever will come unto him by faith. The water that Jesus provides surges through the inner man and satisfies the soul. This water brings that quiet peace and comfort that we all look for, and need; the more of it that we ingest the more it becomes a part of us and we are transformed. Keller offers that, “the difficulty in all of this is that men and women who are ‘thirsty’ for God; who are in quest of that which will completely satisfy, often are unsure of where to look or really what they are looking for.”

David found that he could consistently rely on the Lord to refresh him and quench his spiritual thirst. David needed to be in close communication with the Lord. During the dark times of his life, David communicated with the Lord. When King Saul sought to take David’s life David depended upon the Lord to deliver

24 Ibid 50
him out of Saul’s hand. On one occasion Saul had flown into a murderous rage. We are told: “…Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul’s presence and he smote the javelin into the wall and David fled, and escaped that night” (1Sm19:9-10). Even though David had done nothing but good to Saul, Saul pursued him mercilessly. David was forced to flee from Saul. The scripture tells us further: “And David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand” (1Sm 23:14). After having slain Goliath and taken away the reproach from Israel it would appear that Saul would have been eternally grateful to David. This was not the case; instead David became a hunted man.

It is understandable and much easier to bear when we know the reason why someone has become our enemy; but it is quite another thing when we are totally unaware of the reason for the ill will. David experienced extreme distress in being hotly pursued by Saul and failing to understand why. On one occasion David finds himself on the run in the wilderness of En-gedi with Saul and three thousand of his chosen men pursuing. David has to make his way among the rocks and the caves to escape. Coincidentally Saul and his men had taken rest in the cave adjacent to David. While Saul and his men were asleep David secretly entered the cave and cut off the skirt of Saul’s robe thereby later informing Saul that if his intentions were evil he could have easily slain him. In fact, many of David’s men encouraged him to kill Saul. David, however, refused to harm Saul. David still has no idea why
he is pursued—and after putting a safe distance between himself and Saul, David engages Saul! And David said to Saul,

Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, Behold, David seeks to harm you? Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD’s anointed. Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it. (1Sm 24:9-11 NAS).

This left David confused and full of angst.

During these times David could resort to his only source of comfort. The Lord was David’s shepherd as he led him safely through the wilderness as Saul and his men pursued. David relied on the Lord for guidance and direction. The word of God truly was a source of comfort and served to refresh his spirit. These were the times, I’m sure, that David could identify with the psalmist who offers, “As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God” (Ps 42:1 NRS). David looked to the word of God to refresh and strengthen him just like a cool stream would refresh a deer. Phillip Keller offers, “In the Christian life it is of more than passing significance to observe that those who are often the most serene,
most confident, and able to cope with life’s complexities are those who rise early each day to feed on God’s word.”

Because he enjoyed such immeasurable comfort and direction from God’s word David comes to develop a deep appreciation and love for it. He tells us concerning God’s word: “they are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them thy servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward,” (Ps 19:10-11).

David found that his frequent communication with God was instrumental in keeping his composure and sustaining hope in God. There were numerous opportunities to have his faith in God tested. One of these many times David and his men returned to their camp (Ziklag) to find that it had been attacked by the Amalekites—one of the ancient enemies of Israel. The Amalekites had burned their camp and taken captive their wives and children and all of their goods. David and his men fell into deep depression, because of the loss of their wives and children. David’s men were so depressed that they spoke of stoning him. The Bible tells us that David also was very much distressed, but he encouraged himself in the Lord:

But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, ‘Please bring me the ephod.’ So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. David inquired of the Lord, saying, shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them? And he said to

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him, ‘Pursue, for you will surely overtake them, and you will surely rescue all’ (1Sm 30 NAS).

David experienced the Lord leading him *beside the still waters*; leading him to places of safety and rest even when he was being pursued by his enemies. David was completely satisfied and at rest to ponder God’s goodness. There is a special place in our souls that only God can refresh and satisfy. Most Christians today have not come to the place to rest and have their souls satisfied by God. Keller offers that, “they often try, instead, to satisfy their thirst by pursuing almost every other sort of substitute. For their minds and intellects they will pursue knowledge, science academic careers, vociferous reading, or off-beat companions. But they are always left panting and dissatisfied.”

An example of an individual who never came to the point of allowing the Lord to satisfy that place in his soul was Solomon—the son of King David. It is quite paradoxical when we contrast these two figures. King David could not compare with his son Solomon in terms of riches. Few, if any could match the splendor that Solomon enjoyed. Nor could David match Solomon in wisdom. King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. We read in Scripture:

> And God said to him, (Solomon) ‘Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise

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26 Ibid 52
and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days, (1Ki 3:11–13 NAS).

King Solomon was the ultimate example of someone who pursued things to try and take the place of God. In addition to his wisdom and riches Solomon indulged himself with “seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away from God” (1Ki 11:3 NAS). Unfortunately he found that nothing could fill the void in his soul, a place that only God could satisfy. When Solomon became an old man having lived all of the lust that life has to offer, he comes to a settling conclusion that would serve us all well. He informs us that there can be no substitutes for that special place in us that only God can fill. God wants to satisfy that thirst in us that only he can. In the book of Ecclesiastes which is purported to have been written by King Solomon he packs some of his life’s experience in a few sage words: The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: “fear God and keep his commandments, because this applies to every person” (Eccl 12:13).

**King David (Type)**

God was the ultimate shepherd of which David testifies in Psalm 23. He relates his own personal experience with God as his shepherd, ostensibly reflecting on very good and bad times. However, God was not only a shepherd to King David he was a shepherd to the entire nation of Israel. We read in Psalm 78:52, “But he
(God) led forth his own people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.” This brings in sharper focus the tender loving care and concern that God exercised for his people.

The Hebrew Bible considers God as a shepherd. Yahweh ushers the Israelites his people through the wilderness like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” (Ps 77:20 NIV). He as the divine shepherd passes on the shepherding responsibility of his people to his earthly shepherd such as David (2Sa 5:2; 7:7-8). Thus, David a king is also connoted as shepherd-king. A dual shepherd figure is embedded in Davidic rule.\(^7\)

As a shepherd appointed over God’s people, King David was obliged to lead in accordance with the will of God. Israel was surrounded by numerous nations who worshipped idol Gods. Temptation was ever present—temptation to draw them away from God. There was no lack of opportunities for the children of Israel to be enticed away from God. This idea of enticement extends back prior to when they had a king.

After crossing the Red Sea the Israelites found themselves traveling through the wilderness. Fear was upon all of the surrounding nations because they heard what God had done to Israel’s enemies. Moab was one of those surrounding nations who feared Israel. We are told that the Moabites were so afraid that they enlisted the help of Balaam, a soothsayer, to curse the Israelites. Each time Balaam

attempted to curse Israel God turned his curses into blessings, (Nm 22). All attempts to curse God’s people proved unsuccessful. As long as the Israelites obeyed God’s commandments they were not able to be defeated. However, when they were seduced to transgress God’s commandments they became vulnerable.

We read: While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor (Nm 25:1-5 NAS).

The children of Israel were inclined to disobey God and adopt the ways of the surrounding nations. Historically they were not personally acquainted with having a king rule over them. However, after observing the idolatrous nations around them who were ruled by kings, they also wanted a king. This was very displeasing to God.

God acquiesced and gave Israel its first king by the name of Saul. They were informed that if they would faithfully serve and obey God, God would cause them to continue and prosper, but if they rebelled and refused to obey—the hand of God
would be against them. In fact, God promised to destroy them and their king (1 Sm 12). Unfortunately Saul proved to be a king who was not willing to follow God’s leading. He failed to realize that he could only serve as he was obedient and followed God. As a result of his disobedience God rejected and removed King Saul. Because God had previously pronounced destruction against the Amalekites he informed Saul through the prophet Samuel to destroy them.

We read: Then Samuel said to Saul, the Lord sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the Lord. “Thus says the Lord of hosts, I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. Now Go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey (1Sm 15).

God’s directions to Saul were explicit and clear—no ambiguity about what he was to do. He was not allowed the liberty to second guess God’s direction. Instead of adhering strictly to what God instructed him to do, Saul takes liberties and allows himself to be persuaded by the people—to modify God’s directive. This proved to be very costly to Saul as it is to men and women today. Later when Samuel comes to inquire of Saul whether he performed the commandment of the Lord, Saul lies and says that he had in fact carried out the commandment of the Lord (1 Sm 15). This was actually Saul’s second act of disobedience. This act of
failing to destroy the Amalekites proved that he was determined to follow his own self will.

Samuel was very displeased and heartbroken at the prospect of God removing Saul. The Lord, from the point that he allowed Israel to have a king, looked for someone to follow his guidance. Through his disobedience Saul proved himself to be totally unacceptable. This being the case, The Lord finds himself another king, a man after his own heart. Saul is told, from an earlier act of disobedience, “But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after his own heart, and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you,” (1Sm 13).

“The shepherding function frequently ascribed to the shepherd-king is that of leading.” God wanted someone who would obey his commandments and carry out his desire in leading his people. The kings stood in the place of God as shepherds leading the people. David proved himself to be faithful to God in performing all that the Lord called him to do. As long as the king was faithful to God the Israelites would prosper; faithful in the sense of ensuring that the people followed no other God except the one true and living God. They had to be faithful in the sense that they would obey his commandments. David was the perfect example of a shepherd in leading a flock as he stood shepherd-king over Israel.

David stands prominent as the king who became a standard by which all other of Israel’s kings would be judged (1 Kgs11:38). He remained faithful to God

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28 Ibid 28
in leading Israel and was devoted to the one true God notwithstanding the many nations who surrounded them with their idolatrous practices. God had long warned them that they would not prosper if they turned from following his law. However, if they followed his commandments they would be prosperous. Included in this prosperity would be a long list of blessings.

They were informed: “Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. All of these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God: if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully, and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them,” (Dt 28:1, 13-14NAS).

On the other hand God warned them of the consequences of disobeying his commandments. They in fact would not be prosperous if they disobeyed, but the Lord would send curses upon them and they would be oppressed by their enemies. We read:

But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses
will come upon you and overtake you: The LORD shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you will go out one way against them, but you will flee seven ways before them, and you will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth. Your carcasses will be food to all birds of the sky and to the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away (Dt 28:5, 25).

With this clear admonition David takes care to follow the Lord and to lead the Israelites accordingly. In addition to leading, “the second shepherding function connected to the shepherd-king metaphor is that of feeding.” Jesus exemplified someone who had ingested the word of God, and after having fasted forty days in the wilderness he was prepared for the Devil. When the Devil tempted Jesus to turn stones to bread Jesus informs him that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. (Mt 4) The more of God’s word we ingest the more likely it is that we will continue to follow him, because the word of God provides direction and strength for our lives. We must therefore, continue to feed from his word. God had a criterion that his ideal shepherds would feed his people with knowledge of him.

Scripture informs us: Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding (Jer 3:15NAS). Observe that the word “lead” can be translated as “feed” in the Hebrew word ra’ah. In

29 Ibid 29
short, the shepherd-king should lead by feeding them with necessary knowledge and directive to life, especially their religious life. Historically and prophetically, David became king of Israel and Israel was prosperous. He ruled with the power of Yahweh, and the surrounding nations feared the Nation of Israel because of Yahweh.\textsuperscript{30}

Because David was diligent to lead and feed the nation of Israel according to God’s direction his kingdom was established. In contrast to David, his son, Solomon, failed to remain faithful to God.

In 1 Kgs 11:1-9 we get a picture of how Solomon led the nation of Israel away from God. We are told that he married strange wives from the surrounding idolatrous nations, which God forbade. Further, he permitted his strange wives to institute the worship of their gods in Israel, which violated God’s commandment to have no other gods—to serve only the one true God. We are told that in this behavior, the wives of Solomon turned away his heart from following the Lord and his heart was not right with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. Not only did Solomon allow the worship of these false gods, he did evil in the sight of the Lord and served these gods. His love and dedication for the Lord had grown cold. Solomon did not take heed to fully follow after the Lord as David his father did. He failed to properly lead and feed the nation of Israel; therefore, he put them in a weakened state. Instead of feeding the nation of Israel with the knowledge and understanding of the ways of the Lord, Solomon effectively taught

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid 29
the nation to follow the gods of the surrounding nations. He fed, he taught them 
knowledge and understanding of strange gods.

As a result of Solomon’s behavior God was angry with him and would have 
removed him from being king but because of David, God allowed Solomon to 
remain king over the nation of Israel. God did however cause a division in the 
kingship for Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

We observe: And it came about at that time, when 
Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the 
Shilonite found him on the road. Now Ahijah had clothed 
himself with a new cloak; and both of them were alone in 
the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new cloak which 
was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. And he said to 
Jeroboam, “Take for yourself ten pieces; for thus says the 
LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Behold, I will tear the kingdom 
out of the hand of Solomon and give you ten tribes: (but he 
will have one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and 
for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen 
from all the tribes of Israel) (1Kgs 11:29-32).

In this division God allowed Solomon’s son Rehoboam to reign over two 
tribes—Judah and Benjamin (1Kgs 12:21-24). Jeroboam, one of Solomon’s 
servants became king over the remaining ten tribes. He was given a golden 
opportunity to be an outstanding king. Unfortunately he failed to follow the 
commandments of God. Jeroboam feared that the people in returning to Jerusalem,
the center of worship, would become nostalgic and revert to Rehoboam; therefore leaving him at great risk. In his mind, to prevent this he built two golden calves and set them strategically--one in Bethel and the other in Dan. Further, he built a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. He also made an altar and made sacrifice to the two golden calves, (1Kgs12:26-32).

These actions brought about Jeroboam’s downfall. The Lord sent one of his prophets to prophecy against Jeroboam. We are told:

Now the Lord had said to Ahijah, “Behold, the wife of Jeroboam is coming to inquire of you concerning her son, for he is sick. You shall say thus and thus to her, for it will be when she arrives that she will pretend to be another woman. When Ahijah heard the sound of her feet coming in the doorway, he said, “come in, wife of Jeroboam, why do you pretend to be another woman? For I am sent to you with a harsh message: “Go, say to Jeroboam, thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘Because I exalted you from among the people and made you leader over my people Israel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you—yet you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commandments and who followed me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in my sight; you also have done more evil than all who were before you, and
have gone and made for yourself other gods and molten images to provoke me to anger, and have cast me behind your back, therefore behold, I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person, both bond and free in Israel, and I will make a clean sweep of the house of Jeroboam, as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone’ (1Kgs 14:5-10).

As a result of Jeroboam failing to properly shepherd God’s people he was removed and his future posterity cut off. He too failed to follow in the footsteps of his father David.

David was unique also as a shepherd-king in that he provided protection to the sheep—to the people of God. “The flock is vulnerable when there is no shepherd, or when the shepherd lacks understanding (Zec 10:2-3). A foolish shepherd will abandon the flock and leave them to the mercy of the devourer. The lost sheep will be broken and scattered (Zec 11:16-17). Therefore, the shepherd is to shield the sheep from harm.” 31 In this context protection can only be provided as the shepherd follows the Lord and seeks his guidance. In fact, refusing to follow the leading of God makes an individual vulnerable and the resulting leadership weak and flawed.

The provision of protection additionally has a function of keeping the flock from scattering. For example, the unrighteous shepherds in Jeremiah 10:21 illustrate that the actions without divine guidance from Yahweh will scatter

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31 Ibid 29
the flocks, “the shepherds are senseless and do not inquire of the Lord; so they do not prosper and all their flock is scattered.”

Because David followed the Lord with all his heart those surrounding nations who would be inclined to attack Israel were rebuffed because the fear of the Lord was upon them. The Lord was also with David wherever he went. In 2 Samuel 7:9 we hear the Lord speaking through the prophet Nathan as he tells David: “And I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth.”

**Central Characteristics**

We see then David exemplifying key characteristics of a shepherd-king in that he exercises the qualities of leading, feeding and protecting the sheep under his care.

The three activities of shepherd-king: leading, feeding, and protecting, must depend on two foundations. The first is tender care. This is an application of the shepherd metaphor display in love and care for the flock. Ezekiel 34:4 and Zechariah 11:16 depict the picture of the unrighteous shepherds. They did not care for Yahweh’s flock; they did not strengthen the diseased, heal the sick or bind the

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32 Ibid 29
broken. A righteous shepherd will be one who seeks out
the straying from the flock (Ez 34:4-6, 8; Zec 11:16). Thus
a shepherd-king is like the righteous shepherd who does
likewise; tend the flock with love and care.\(^{33}\)

There is a long list of kings who failed to exercise love and care as shepherd-
kings. Among this list of kings, of Israel in this case, are Nadab, Basha, Elah,
Zimri and Ahab, just to mention a few. They are said to have done evil in the sight
of the Lord (1Kgs 15:26, 34; 16:19, 30). However, King Ahab was the worst of all
of these kings. King Ahab is noted for having done evil in the sight of the Lord
above all that were before him (1Kgs16:30). Inasmuch as following God, Ahab
failed miserably. He was self-indulgent and chose to follow the desires of his own
heart, therefore leaving the flock of God to scatter and fend for themselves. He
served idols. He was greatly influenced to do evil by his wife Jezebel who stirred
him up to walk contrary to the way of the Lord. She was from a nation of idol
worshippers whom God had prohibited his people from marrying. She was the
daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians who served and worshipped Baal (1
Kgs16: 31).

Insofar as the prohibition of intermarriage of the foreign nations we note in
Deuteronomy 7:3: “Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not
give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons.”

We observe yet again the warning that they are given: So
take diligent heed to yourselves to love the LORD your
God. "For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these

\(^{33}\) Ibid 29
nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know with certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they shall be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you (Jos 23:11-13 NAS).

The children of Israel were warned on more than one occasion to love the Lord their God with all their heart and to keep his ordinances and statues. We note: “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might,” (Dt 6:5 NAS). Additionally in Deuteronomy 11:1 the scripture reflects, “You shall therefore love the LORD your God, and always keep his charge, his statutes, his ordinances, and his commandments.” Since Ahab’s love was to follow idols instead of God, this weakened him and he was unable to provide the necessary care for the flock of Yahweh. In fact, in a spiritual sense this lack of care is seen as sheep that are sick, diseased, broken and scattered. When a shepherd-king turns away from God his love is misdirected he, therefore, cannot display the necessary love to care for the flock of God. In looking at the vile state of Ahab we hear God’s pronouncement against him and therefore the resultant condition and lack of care for Israel. In his pronouncement Micaiah the prophet offers: So he said, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep which
have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each of them return to his house in peace” (1Kgs22:17 NAS).

In contrast to Ahab or some of the other unfaithful kings, David demonstrated faithfulness to God. This is another aspect that grows out of his love for God. David was faithful to God. The Lord often referenced David as: my servant David, (2 Sm 3:18; 1 Kgs 11; 1 Kgs 11:36; 1 Chr17:4; Ps 89:20). It is interesting that the Lord also makes reference to Abraham as: my servant Abraham (Gen 26:24). Additionally, we read of Moses: “Not so, with my servant Moses, he is faithful in my entire household.” (Nm 12:7). This title of ‘my servant’ seems to be specifically resigned to those who have been faithful to the responsibility that God gave them. Faithfulness to responsibility is vitally important; “Cyrus, for example, though not one of Israel’s kings was regarded as Yahweh’s shepherd. He was referred to as one who would perform the work of Yahweh and he (Is 44:28), portrayed his faithfulness to the task assigned.”

When a shepherd-king has the requisite love for God he will be faithful to the responsibility that God has given him. The Hebrew word for faithful in Numbers 12:7 is אָמַן 'aman. It carries the meaning of being sure, lasting, confirmed, reliable, stand firm, trusty and steadfast. These men Abraham, Moses and David all had the characteristic of faithfulness to God; as they were willing to remain reliable, steadfast and stand firm in carrying out the responsibility that God gave them.

Shepherds who had done evil in the sight of the Lord, such as Nadab, Basha, Elah, Zimri and Ahab were not steadfast, not faithful in carrying out their

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34 Ibid 29
responsibility to God. They were among the “unfaithful shepherds who did not feed the flock, but the flock became food for all the wild animals, and because they did not search for the flock, but cared for themselves rather that the flock the flock was left vulnerable (Ez34:8). Restoration from trouble like this fits the favorite description of the feeding of sheep metaphor (Jer 3:15).”

In Psalm 23 David highlights another characteristic that grows out of love and care that the shepherd has for the sheep. He tells us that the Lord restoreth his soul. The Hebrew word for restoreth is: שׁוּב (shub) to turn back, return, refresh, repair, to cause to return, bring back again, to turn back (to God), repent, turn back (from evil) to put back. There are times when we go astray—perhaps through a lapse in judgment or for some other reason. David was not unlike many of us. He was certainly acquainted with the need to have his soul restored to God. He was familiar with what it meant to be cast down. “David was acquainted with the bitterness of feeling hopeless and without strength in himself. In Psalm 42:11 he cries out, “why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God….”

The author Phillip Keller reflects upon his own vast experience as a shepherd.

He recalls how on numerous occasions one of his sheep may have become “cast or cast down, that is to say, fallen or lain down and rolled on its back and unable to right itself. In this position it is virtually impossible for the sheep

35 Ibid 30
36 W. Phillip Keller, A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 58
to regain its footing without assistance. If the shepherd does not locate the sheep and restore it to its footing the sheep would perish. He further notes that a cast sheep is easy prey for all of its many enemies. As a natural shepherd restores his sheep when they go astray and get into trouble, only God can restore us and bring us back to where we should be.\(^{37}\)

Perhaps David thought of his transgression with Bathsheba when he is given credit by many to have penned these penetrating and impactful words for all time in Psalm 23 and 42. At the time of David’s sin with Bathsheba he was at the zenith of his power. The Lord had given him victory after victory over his enemies. David had a history of enjoying the sweet communion of his relationship with God. He was noted as the king who had danced before the Lord with all of his might in celebration in bringing back the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem (2 Sm 6:14). David was excited about what God had done. David was elated that God had shown such favor upon Israel and that the Lord had elevated him king over Israel. David had a history of dedication and faithfulness to God.

However, we are informed in 2 Samuel 2:1 that after the year had expired, a time when kings went out to battle, David sent Joab and the rest of the army to fight against the children of Ammon; but David remained in Jerusalem. This proves to be problematic because David regretfully yields to temptation. While on his rooftop he notices a very beautiful woman, Bathsheba, the wife of one of his soldiers—as she bathes herself. David inquires about the woman. In 2 Samuel

\(^{37}\) Ibid 58-61
11:3-5 we read: “So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”

And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. And the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, “I am pregnant.” After receiving this news David is desperate to cover up his misdeed. He therefore sends for Uriah the husband of Bathsheba giving him a respite from battle hoping that while Uriah is home he will sleep with his wife. Uriah being an honorable man refuses to sleep with his wife while his fellow soldiers remain on the battle field. He therefore, never goes home but sleeps outside the king’s house. David meanwhile becomes more desperate and hatches a plot to have Uriah set in the forefront of battle with the hopes of having him killed. As it turns out Uriah is killed. After Uriah is killed David takes Bathsheba for his wife. Nathan the prophet visits David of to inform him of God’s displeasure of his evil deed (2 Samuel 11). After this terrible stain on his remarkable record David needs restoration.

After David’s sin with Bathsheba he writes Psalm 51 in which he pleads for God’s mercy. He confesses to his intemperate behavior and takes full responsibility for his transgressions. He realizes that his relationship with God has been greatly impaired. David longs for restoration for his relationship with God. Thus in verse 11 he implores God to: “restore unto me the joy of your salvation…” It is interesting that this Hebrew word *restore* has the same meaning as found in Psalm 23, that is: שׁוּב (shub) to turn back, return, refresh, repair, to cause to return,
bring back again, to turn back (to God), repent. David realizes that only God can restore him, that only God can refresh or cause his to return to him. Only God can bring us back again when we have wandered off.

David was like the “cast” sheep which found itself on its back and unable to get its footing. This transgression of David provides a picture with which we are all acquainted. “This is part of the pageantry and drama depicted for us in the magnificent story of the ninety and nine sheep with one astray. There is the shepherd’s deep concern, his agonizing search, his longing to find the missing one, and his delight in restoring it not only to its feet but also to the flock as well as to himself.”

David here is tantamount to that one lost sheep that the shepherd has to go out and find. Similarly the pastor-shepherd is responsible for recovering the lost sheep of God. Because of the undying love of God the shepherd is impelled to search for the lost sheep until he finds it.

**Position Description—Psalm 23**

As we reflect upon Psalm 23 we get the picture of a pastor—shepherd. The primary concern of the shepherd is not for himself but for his sheep. The provision that this shepherd makes grows out of an undying love for his sheep. The qualities exemplified by the shepherd in this psalm are emblematic of commitment and care for the sheep.

Kysar relates that: Spiritual leadership is concerned about

the whole person. The extension of care to another person

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38 Ibid 61
is both an enactment and a proclamation of the Gospel as well as nurturing of spiritual wholeness. Care may be defined as the extension of one’s personal concern to another: it is a form of love which attempts to enhance the welfare of another person.\textsuperscript{39}

Though many credit David as having written this psalm prior to our Lord Jesus Christ’s physical manifestation—Jesus is the ultimate and perfect example of the qualities exemplified in psalm 23. Jesus is the \textit{model} shepherd. In the New Testament Jesus is spoken of as the good shepherd.

In the Greek text R.E. Brown offers that “model instead of \textit{good} is a more exact translation of \textit{καλός} {kal-os’}.\textsuperscript{40}

The good shepherd dies willingly. Jesus speaks openly of his vicarious death twice in John 10. Observe the contrast: the thief takes the life of the sheep (10:10), the good shepherd lays down his own life for the sheep. Jesus is not speaking generally here, but specifically: He has his own substitutionary death on the cross in mind. For a literal shepherd with a literal flock, the shepherd’s death would have spelled disaster for the sheep; in this instance it spells life for them.\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{40} The NET Bible, New English Translation Bible (NET) (n.p.: Biblical Studies Press, LLC, 1996), BibleWorks, v.8.
Jesus sets himself forth as one whose life is to be mirrored. Timothy Laniak expands further on the idea that Jesus is the model shepherd—pastor. He relates:

While Jesus is certainly contrasting malevolent thieves, bandits and hirelings with a benevolent shepherd, he might have used the more common term agathos. Kalos implies an attractive quality, something noble or ideal. Model captures these connotations, but also implies a second nuance that is important in this context: Jesus should be emulated. John makes it clear elsewhere that Jesus is training his followers to be like him in life and death (4:34-38; 14:12; 17:20; 20:21—23; 21:15-19). They will eventually take care of his flock and risk their lives like their master (21:15-23).41

Psalm 23:5 gives a view of the protective aspect of the shepherd. The sheep are able to go about their feeding without a care in the world because of their confidence in their shepherd. Jonathan Gan writes:

What we see here in Psalm 23 is a feast that the sheep is fed in the presence of hostility, but yet without fear, just as walking through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil” (NIV). The word translated “anoint” (NIV), be made fat, be revived, dasen) has a sense of making the one who comes to be pleasant. This has no special power as the

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41 Timothy Laniak, Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2006), 211
usual connotation of the word “anoint” used in Christian church. What it implies is that the host is responsible to oversee the well-being of the guests. This includes safety and peace. The sheep in the banquet, though faced with hostility, is safeguarded by the presence of the shepherd. Thus, the protecting activity of the metaphor of the shepherd is exhibited here.\(^{42}\)

Implicit in the protection of the shepherd is his care for the sheep. Jonathan Gan highlights this point as he reflects upon the words of Herbert Lockyer.

Herbert Lockyer (1983, 73-76) commented that the psalmist, David, effectively utilized the shepherd metaphor to illustrate the providential care of Yahweh to him who listened to his voice and followed his instructions. The Lord as a shepherd is a care-giver, indeed (Ps23:1). But Yahweh’s shepherding responsibility goes beyond care-giving, it also provides rest for our souls, so that we may be refreshed again (Ps23:2). In times of need, God graciously restores our souls, and guides us in righteous living (Ps23:3). Under the shepherding care of God, we should

not fear evil and the power of darkness, for Yahweh, our
shepherd will protect us.\textsuperscript{43}

The Lord Jesus Christ wants to demonstrate His care for his children today
in the same spirit that David and others experienced. The Apostle Peter informs us
that we are to: “cast all your anxiety or care on Him, because He cares for you” (1
Pt 5:7). As Christians we often lose sight of the fact that the Lord is constantly
providing care for us when we are not aware of it, we can therefore, relax and rest
in God. We are secure in God—in times of trial and difficulty; we are secure in
God at all times. We are encouraged that the Lord is faithful in providing his
protection. We are comforted through 2 Thessalonians 3:3 “that the Lord is
faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.” 2 Timothy 4:18
comments further on the protection of God. He informs us that the Lord will rescue
us from every evil deed and bring us safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be
glory forever and ever Amen. Additionally, the psalmist makes note of the fact that
his shepherd comforts him.

The Hebrew word for comfort is quite uplifting. “The Piel of נָחַם (nakham),
when used with a human object, means ‘comfort, console.’ But here, within the
metaphorical framework, it refers to the way in which a shepherd uses his
implements to assure the sheep of his presence and calm their nerves. The

\textsuperscript{43} Jonathan Gan, \textit{The Metaphor of Shepherd in the Hebrew Bible}(Lanham Maryland: University
Press of America, Inc., 2007), 92
underlying reality is the emotional stability God provides the psalmist during life threatening situations.”

The psalmist reflects that your rod and staff comfort me.

Phillip Keller urges that: “the rod speaks of the spoken word of God, the expressed intent, the extended activity of God’s mind and will in dealing with men. It implies the authority of divinity. It carries with it the convicting power and irrefutable impact of thus saith the Lord. Just as for the sheep of David’s day there was comfort and consolation in seeing the rod in the shepherd’s skillful hands, so in our day there is great assurance in our own hearts as we contemplate the power, veracity, and potent authority vested in God’s word. For, in fact, the scriptures are his rod. They are the extension of his mind and will and intentions to mortal man.

The word of God is the voice of God speaking to us at our lowest points. It is the voice of God to guide and direct us when we are at a place of perplexity and despair. Through his word God speaks words of consolation to our souls and inspires us to continue. In John 13 the disciples of Jesus are saddened when he informs them that he must go away and that they cannot follow him. In John 14:1 Jesus offers to his disciples: “Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me” (NIV). Jesus comforts us in our deepest disappointments and

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challenges. Phillip Keller reflects that: “there is no substitute for the Scriptures in
coping with the complexities of our social order. In every situation and under
every circumstance there is comfort in the knowledge that God’s word can meet
and master the difficulty if we will rely on it.” 46

This now brings us to the point that we must explore the *staff*. It is the
emblematic tool that we have become accustomed to seeing all shepherds carry.
The staff is an instrument that we see shepherds use only for sheep. No other
profession makes use of the staff to manage their animals.

Again, Phillip Keller offers that it is designed, shaped, and
adapted especially to the needs of sheep. And it is used for
their benefit. The staff is essentially a symbol of the
concern, the compassion that a shepherd has for his
charges. No other single word can better describe its
function on behalf of the flock than that it is for their
comfort. The staff speaks of all that is longsuffering and
kind. 47

Just as David was reassured by his shepherd, similarly, we find Jesus as the
ultimate source of our comfort. He is the source of our comfort at the point we find
ourselves in the low places of life. He is our comfort when we don’t have anyone
to share our many concerns and shoulder the load of our burdens.

Just as the rod of God is emblematic of the word of God, so
the staff of God is symbolic of the Spirit of God. In Christ’s

46 Ibid 97
47 Ibid 98
dealings with us as individuals there is the essence of the sweetness, the comfort and consolation, the gentle correction brought about by the work of His gracious Spirit. Similarly in the Christian life we find the gracious Holy Spirit, ‘The Comforter,’ drawing folks together into a warm, personal fellowship with one another. It is also He who draws us to Christ, for as we are told in Revelation, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.”

As King David experienced the special relationship that he enjoyed with God as his shepherd, we today can experience a relationship which is no less rich—with our ultimate shepherd—The Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 2

Pastor as Teacher

The pastor as teacher is in a unique position as an instrument of God. He or she has the tremendous privilege to lead and instruct God’s people. “One leads partly by the constant search for the language and the concepts that will enlarge the number who find common ground. The leader thus strives to bring people together, and hold them together, as an effective force.”

The pastor as teacher is provided the opportunity to assist in the growth and maturity of the flock of God. Under the watchful eye of the pastor as teacher

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48 Ibid 98-99
individuals can be observed to grow from spiritual infants to reach maturity in
God. This seems to be, in part, the expectation of the message from the author of
Hebrews as he urges these Christians not to come to a place of stagnation in God,
but rather to move on. He writes: “Therefore leaving the elementary teaching
about Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of
repentance from dead works and of faith toward God” (Heb 6:1). “Through the
Holy Spirit, the pastor, the community and others who share the pastoral role are
the delegates of the larger Body of Christ. That means that in the sanctuary, the
people as a whole educate through their pastor. Further, the entire life of the
church educates in a general way, and each of its ministries educate specifically.”

Ideally the pastor as teacher is concerned with equipping others to do the
work of God.

The roles of care provider and teacher are very closely
related, since they are both concerned with assisting others
to grow and realize their potential. As a teacher, the pastor
is concerned to help persons grow in their understanding, to
develop helpful attitudes, and to learn useful skills.
Teaching is the facilitation of experiences of learning and
growth. The pastor knows, as does any good teacher, that
people learn best through meaningful experiences.

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50 Earl E. Shelp and Ronald Sunderland, eds., *The Pastor as Teacher*, Pastoral Ministry Series

51 Christopherson M, Kysar, *The Pastor as Servant-Leader: A vision for Parish Leadership*. (MN:
He realizes that he cannot accomplish the job of spreading the gospel alone. The work of God is far too important to end with one man or with one great personality. When Moses’ tenure of service with God was about to come to an end God chose Joshua to take the place of Moses. Joshua had been assisting Moses in the work of the Lord. We read: “Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, “Moses, my lord, restrain them,” (Nm 11:28NAS). It is apparent that Joshua was constantly being taught how to carry out the work of God. As we observe here the work of God of leading the people to the promise land continues under Joshua’s charge. The scripture reflects:

Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ servant, saying, “Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. (Jos 1:1-3).

The pastor as teacher is concerned about perpetuating the work of God, about spreading the gospel and is not overly enamored about receiving glory for him or herself. The focus is on the Lord!

Additionally, the Lord has by design ensured that there must be cooperation one with another in the church. The pastor as teacher is charged with causing those sheep under his or her charge to work in unity—the same sense of unity and cooperation that the natural body demonstrates.
This point is clearly expressed as we note: For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). As we follow this analogy given in scripture it becomes clear that unity and cooperation are essential. The pastor as teacher is instrumental in teaching others to be Disciples of Christ. As disciples every Christian must be committed to learning.52

The pastor as teacher then must be someone who leads and instructs those whom God has put under his or her charge. He or she must be someone whose focus is to prepare God’s people to continue spreading the gospel that others might come to know the love of God.

**Metaphor of a Teacher**

The life that Jesus lived was exemplary to us as children of God. His life was exemplary to us in the way that he was singularly dedicated to God. Not only did he live his life as totally sanctified for the service of God and his fellow human being, but he continued this singular dedication even to the point of his death. We get a picture of his dedication in John 9:1-7. We see Jesus as he encounters a man who was born blind from birth. Immediately, discussion ensues as to why the man was born blind. Who is to blame? Did his mother and father sin? Did he sin? Jesus,

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52 Ibid 25
much to their dismay informs them that neither the man nor his parents had sinned. But there was a higher purpose to be manifested—the works of God needed to be displayed in this man. No doubt this response seems harsh to us. That this man was born blind—that he might be an instrument for God to demonstrate his power? Somehow this doesn’t reconcile with our common sense of what is good and fair and right.

It might be easy to miss a valuable lesson that Jesus was perhaps teaching them; a lesson that one might have to look a little deeper to see. One lesson might be that there is no lack of problems in the world that need our attention if we look closely enough. The fact that this man was born blind gave Jesus the opportunity to heal him and therefore show the power and goodness of God. Jesus here teaches us, that just as he took the opportunity to do good to this man we as his children are to follow his example. We are to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. Indeed it is said of Jesus in Acts 10:38-39 “You know Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all the things he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem.”

In verse 3 of this same text the second lesson that we learn from Jesus is his dedication and subordination of his will to the will of the Father. He notes that “I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day when night comes no man can work.” At times this may be a hard lesson for us to grasp and internalize—that our will must be second to God’s will if we are to be of value to him. Additionally,
Jesus teaches us that our time is limited wherein we are commissioned to do God’s will. None of us really know how much time God is gracious to give us. Our time is relatively so short on this earth. The 90th Psalm ponders this very question. The Psalmist offers: “for all our days have declined in your fury; we have finished our years like a sigh. As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years.” The psalmist reminds us that our lives are short lived and we are fortunate if God is so generous to allow us to reach eighty years. This could be viewed as a life of longevity in comparison to how long others have lived. Since we have no idea how much time God gives us we must be about doing good— doing the work of God just like Jesus.

Jesus continued to show the same spirit of dedication to the Father when he was about to go to the cross. Jesus no doubt, had witnessed many crucifixions. Crucifixion was a cruel and barbarous practice with which those under Roman domination were quite familiar. Jesus undoubtedly was in much anguish and anxiety at the thought of going to the cross. Yet he remembers that he had come to do the work of his Father. Yes the cross was repulsive and would be painful, but Jesus remains dedicated and committed. In Matthew 26 Jesus, after having been struggling with the prospect of going to the cross goes to the Father and prays. We read that Jesus goes back a second time: “He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cup cannot pass away unless I drink it, your will be done.”

Jesus here teaches his disciples and us a valuable lesson. Our walk with God will offer some unpleasant experiences, but it is not the time to turn around or give
up. Rather, this is the time to trust God through the pain and difficulty. Jesus could have very well decided to refuse the cross. That would have been easy to do.

Instead, Jesus teaches a lesson of perseverance and dedication to the task.

Additionally, our actions, our work for God, are about more than ourselves. The work that Jesus was doing was to benefit humankind. The thought of Jesus not going to the cross would be incomprehensible to us. Where would we be? Just as the work that Jesus did was for us, so our work reaches outside of ourselves. Our scope is not as large as Jesus was but it is important. Jesus through his death on the cross teaches selfless service with the ultimate aim being to please God.

**Jesus the Example**

Jesus was the ultimate example of a teacher that all pastors would do well to emulate.

Kysar suggests: The model that contemporary Christian disciples and rabbis seek to emulate is that of the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. There are a number of important lessons to be learned from the model of the relationship that Jesus had with his disciples. The first is that learning takes place in the context of a relationship where teaching by example and by life-style is as impactful as words and concepts.\(^{53}\)

When Jesus, for instance, was in various cities teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of diseases and

\(^{53}\) Ibid 25
sickness, his disciples were there to observe and learn from him. We are told that Jesus, seeing the multitudes, had compassion on them because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Here Jesus is teaching his disciples a valuable lesson. He teaches them to have compassion on those who are ill advised and gone astray. Jesus is teaching them with close up lessons about the type of work they will be doing once he departs. Indeed they are told that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few (Mt 9:35-37).

An additional point that Kysar makes is that learning takes place within a community of Faith. Jesus surrounded himself with a group of men who became his disciples. They were privy to many life changing experiences that could only be imparted by Jesus. In the course of their relationship and association with Jesus they were able to have their faith raised to higher heights. In Matthew 15 a multitude of people had been following Jesus. Most of them were following him because they were troubled with some infirmity or sickness or disease from which they wished to be healed. We are told that they had been following Jesus for three days without anything to eat. Jesus had compassion on them; how would such a vast number of people be fed? Jesus tells his disciples to feed the people, at which time they respond that they did not have enough food to feed four thousand men in addition to the women and children. After Jesus had taken seven loaves and a few little fish that the disciples brought to him, he had the people to sit down on the ground. Jesus then, by faith, blessed the fish and loaves and proceeded to have his disciples pass them out. So great was this miracle that after feeding the multitude
of people the disciples took up leftovers. Jesus was teaching his disciples to expand their horizons of faith in God.

Finally, as I alluded to earlier, disciples of Christ are taught to teach others. After Jesus comes to the end of his life here on earth we are able to get an understanding of why he gave so much training to his disciples. Jesus’ disciples were with him constantly. As eyewitness they had intimate knowledge of all that he taught. On a number of occasions when he presented parables with hidden meanings to others they were blessed to have the benefit of having the true meaning or teaching of the parable explained. One example is the parable of the sower who went about sowing seed. As Jesus relates the four types of ground upon which the seed is sown (stony, wayside, thorns and good ground) he gives them the true meaning of the parable:

> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches
choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty (Mat 13:19-23 NAS).

The disciples of Jesus were uniquely qualified to continue Jesus’ work as he is getting ready to leave. They had received the best possible training that anyone could have ever received. Jesus now commissions them to essentially continue his teachings spreading the Gospel through the world. In Matthew 28:19-20 we read: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world Amen.”

“The Jesus model demonstrates that discipleship leads to apostleship: the apostle is the learner who is sent out to share his or her experience with others. That means that the teacher teaches so that the learners might themselves become teachers.”54 This is what we observe as Jesus was preparing his disciples. Jesus clearly is looking beyond the work that he performed during his earthly ministry. He envisions continuous, more and greater growth of the work of God. We hear his words in John 14:12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.”

54 Ibid 25
In his book, *God With Us* Dr. Powell asserts that Matthew 28:20 makes clear that teaching is to be an important part of the ongoing work of Jesus’ followers. Indeed it is one of the most important aspects of the post-Easter mission, for teaching is the means by which the baptized are ‘made disciples’ and the Great Commission is fulfilled.\(^5\)

In Matthew 14 verses 22 through 33 when Jesus commanded his disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side of the lake they had no idea they would encounter a violent storm endangering their lives. Jesus was preparing to teach his disciples a valuable lesson. As they proceeded to make their way to the other side of the lake they were battered by the wind and waves, because the wind was contrary to them they were unable to make sufficient progress to get to the other side. In their state of abject panic they see Jesus walking on the water and they thought him to be a spirit. They exclaim in terror “it is a spirit.” Jesus informed them they need not fear—it was he! Upon hearing that it was Jesus, Peter requests permission to come out to meet Jesus on the water. Jesus grants Peter permission to come out on the water and Peter proceeds to walk on the water, but after noticing the wind he became afraid and began to sink. For those few initial moments Peter was walking on water, but when he became afraid, he started to sink. Peter averted his eyes away from Jesus—this serves as an object lesson for all of us today.

I am certain that Jesus knew that the disciples would encounter this terrible storm that would put their lives in jeopardy. They were not aware that Jesus was teaching them yet another lesson. They were able to learn from this experience that they should have faith in God in all situations—at all times. Regardless of how bleak things look—have faith in God. Jesus was teaching that we must keep our eyes on him in the most trying situations. Thus we see Jesus as taking a role of leading and instructing his disciples.

**Function of a Teacher**

The function of a teacher is to not only teach but to be an example to God’s people. The teacher is called upon to live out the gospel before those he or she leads. As a result of living out this lifestyle those under his charge are able to beget other sheep. On more than one occasion Jesus informed his disciples that he would have to go away. The teacher’s role becomes one of preparing individuals to take his or her place to carry on the work of God. Jesus in John 9 after having healed a blind man informs his onlookers that he must work while it is day. Jesus realized that he had only a certain amount of time to complete his assignment for God. Part of this time here was serving as a role model for his disciples ensuring that there would be others to continue the work of God.

Our teachers in a natural sense were about the task of preparing us for the future to take our places in the world. Along the way there were tests given to us. With each level of preparation we were able to move to the next grade level. Frequently, we were given pop quizzes and surprise exams. Fortunately as we progressed we learned lessons that brought us close to the places of preparation
that our teachers were helping us to reach. Hopefully, the pastor as teacher will be able to witness those under his or her charge going from babe to a mature individual in Christ. Just as Jesus led and instructed his disciples on different occasions, so the function of the pastor as teacher is no different. It provides a great sense of joy and exhilaration when the pastor as teacher is able to see the work of God progressing.

The teaching function is quite visible and pervasive. The Old Testament is saturated with teachers and teaching. Everywhere and in all cases, this teaching is a convinced, passionate, partisan activity that urges a particular perspective on reality and that mediates to the learner a distinct identity and vocation. That is, teaching is aimed at the creation of a particular community of discernment and practice. This teaching is always ready to differentiate itself from other perspectives and other discernments that it judges to be false, foolish or death dealing….In the Old Testament Moses occupies the central teaching office and the decisive teaching function. He is the figure from which all other teaching derives in ancient Israel. The episode of the burning bush (Exod. 3:1-6) is the foundational event that authorizes and energizes Moses to create a community that is an intentional alternative to the Egyptian empire. Moses’ teaching is, of course by praxis. That is, Moses
does not simply talk about these matters but he shows Israel how to be free, bound in covenant, and landed.\textsuperscript{56}

Similarly, as Moses’ teaching was by praxis the pastor’s teaching must be by praxis before his or her congregation.

\textbf{CHAPTER 3}

\textbf{Pastor as Servant}

We shall now turn to the study of pastor as servant. Another metaphor that has been used to describe the role of a pastor is servant. The most often used Greek word for servant is \textit{δουλος} (doulos). It means a slave, bondman, one who gives himself up to another's will, those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among people; devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests. The primary Hebrew word for servant is: \textit{עֶבֶד} (ebed) it means slave, servant, or to be in bondage. “In a general sense it means simply worker. But servant also refers to one who is an agent of God, for example, Abraham, (Psalm 105:42), Moses (Exodus 4:10), Solomon (Kings1:26) Paul (Titus 1:1). These persons are first identified as servants but they are also identified as being strong leaders.”\textsuperscript{57} Today however, a servant is viewed in less than complimentary terms, it is not a term that engenders respect among our contemporaries.

Myrna Christopherson Kysar asserts that: “All too often the general mindset of most persons when thinking of a servant is someone who has no initiative and is


\textsuperscript{57} Christopherson M. Kysar, \textit{The Pastor as Servant-Leader: A vision for Parish Leadership}. (MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987.), 4
controlled by others. This person is given no respect.”58 A pastor or a leader on the other hand seems to enjoy a measure of esteem and honor often unrivaled by others. The pastor’s focus should not be to function with a purpose to have his needs met at the expense of those under his or her charge. As God’s servant he or she must function out of love for God, and as consequence, a love for God’s people. Kyser writes: “The servant-leader is a servant first. The first commitment is to serve others. It is from this basis that any false individualism is set aside since I begin with a commitment to be a servant to others. Obviously this reflects a basic biblical motif and the one call of our baptism (Ephesians 4).”59 The focus of many pastors is terribly myopic; instead of being a servant first they see themselves as leaders first. Their vision is truly shortsighted.

Robert Greenleaf relates: Some see themselves as leaders first, perhaps because of a need to assuage and unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant, first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The test I like best, though difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?60

59 Ibid 4
There is a grave misunderstanding among many pastors as to why they serve. For many there is little or no commitment to God or sad to say no real relationship with God. They unfortunately started at the wrong place for their service. “A discussion of the pastor as servant-leader does not begin with the pastor but with God and the congregation in which the servant-leader lives. Being a servant leader demands that one take seriously both the intent of God and to the persons the pastor is called to serve and lead.”\(^{61}\) Unfortunately many pastors have not embraced this bit of sagacious wisdom. The role of a pastor requires one to count the cost, to be willing to surrender their will to the will of God. The highest priority of the pastor has to be to please God in his or her service to God’s people. “The servant role of the pastor should be carefully conceived. The pastor is ultimately the servant of God, but that call to servanthood propels him or her to become the servant of the people. The pastor serves others as a servant of Christ.”\(^{62}\)

The Apostle Peter offers a bit of sage advice to pastors and would be pastors. He offers: “Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness” (1Pt 5:2 NAS). It may be that Peter is drawing from his conversation with Jesus and his own experience as a shepherd of God’s people. As mentioned earlier, in John 21:15-17 Jesus engages Peter in a discussion about feeding his sheep, feeding his lambs. Prior to instructing Peter to feed his lambs-sheep, Jesus asks Peter whether he loved him; fortunately Peter affirmed

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\(^{62}\) Ibid 18
that he loved Jesus. If Peter did not love Jesus it would not be possible for him to function as a shepherd with a sense of love and caring for the sheep. The love that the servant has for his master is the basis from which all other service flows. Without a love for God there can be no acceptable servanthood. For example, in the Old Testament those kings who demonstrated their love for idols instead of God are never referred to as servants of God. One such person was Amon king of Judah, we are told, who “did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father Manasseh had made, and served them…” (2 Chr 33:21). Love for God is a prerequisite for acceptable servanthood, for service to God’s people.

Kysar offers: “The pastor’s servanthood takes place within the context of Jesus’ question, “Do you love me?” (John 21:15-17). That is, leadership requires personal commitment. If we dare to respond “yes” to Jesus’ question, then a command follows: ‘If you love me, feed my sheep.’ In other words, ‘be my servant; become responsible for the nourishment of a congregation of the people of God.’ That responsibility not only lies in the nourishment of word and Sacrament but in the whole leadership role of the pastor within the congregation and throughout the community. It is not enough to nourish the spirit without attending to the needs of the body, nor is it enough to fill the bellies of
the hungry and ignore their relationship with God. Pastors are called to be faithful servants so that when the King comes he will say, “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me (Mt 25:35-36).63

When Peter writes in 1 Peter 5:2 to feed or shepherd the flock of God, the Greek word that is used is ποιμαίνω (poimaino) which means to shepherd, feed, tend, care for, to pastor exercising oversight. It further means to supply the requisite for the soul’s need. Particular emphasis must be given to doing all of this work according to God’s will. This then is essential because it subordinates the servant’s will to God’s will. Jesus, whom we will address shortly as a servant, offered that “I do always the thing that pleases my father” (Jn 8:29). When preparing to go to the cross he offered again, “not my will but thy will be done O Lord,” (Lk 22:42). Of primary importance for the pastor is to administer the word of God. Through the word of God the sheep are able to become strong and healthy and beget other sheep, thereby increasing the flock of God. Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:2 “like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1Pt 2:2 NAS).

It is essential that the servant of God maintains an attitude of humility. Peter invokes this humility as he urges that service to God must be done in a spirit of humility. He offers: “clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for

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63 Ibid 17
God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1Pt 5:5 NAS). If service is not done in a spirit of humility, pride begins to emerge in the servant of God. The Apostle Paul seemed to be well aware of this danger after having met with his disciples at Ephesus he tells them that his “service to God has been with all humility and tears” (Acts 20:19 NAS). In this same chapter of the book of Acts Paul goes on to comment that he has not coveted any man’s silver or gold; in other words he has not been greedy of filthy lucre. When we observe many contemporary pastors, sadly, we get an unhealthy picture.

Many contemporary pastors, instead of serving from a place of love for God and humility, serve from a place of pride and self promotion, from a place of material gain. They don’t see themselves as servants; therefore they bear numerous kinds of bitter fruit.

**Prosperity Gospel**

Chief among these are pastors who preach a prosperity gospel to which I alluded to earlier. Because it appears that they do not posses the very essential requirement of love for God, they therefore are unable to fulfill the role of a pastor as servant of God. Many of these contemporary pastors who preach a prosperity gospel mirror the shepherd kings of ancient Israel whom God chided quite sternly. These shepherd kings of ancient Israel failed to feed the sheep. They put the law of God behind their backs. They were instructed from the very beginning, “You shall therefore love the LORD your God, and always keep his charge, his statutes, his ordinances, and his commandments,” (Dt. 11:1).
As a consequence of not meeting the basic requirement to love God and to be a faithful servant they therefore could not tend, and feed God’s people. They became proud and self willed. Instead of feeding the sheep, they fed themselves; they took advantage of the sheep and they became fat and prosperous. All of this was at the expense of the sheep. The Lord chides these wayward shepherds further through the prophet Ezekiel:

   Son of Man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel.
   Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the Lord God, woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock. Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them (Ez 34:2-4 NAS).

This same negligent behavior is exemplified in numerous present day pastors who preach a prosperity gospel. Because they do not possess true love for God it is not possible for them to be true and genuine servants of God. This is manifested in many ways. Instead of offering humble service to God they are enshrouded with pride.
“Pride is the most fundamental of the seven deadly sins, most Christian theologians agree, because it gives rise to all the rest—including of course the sin of lust. The ancient Greeks’ word for excessive pride was hubris; modern psychologists label it narcissism. One wonders what term Bishop Eddie Long might choose.”

There is an unbridled and brazen lust for opulence and riches that these prosperity preachers display while many of their faithful flock continue to follow them trustingly and naively. When Ezekiel spoke of those who made themselves fat he must have had some of these individuals in mind. Consider Bishop Long again.

The Atlanta Journal Constitution reported that Long had formed a charity—Bishop Eddie Long Ministries, Inc.—that provided him with at least $1 million in salary over four years, a $1.4 million house and the use of a Bentley that was worth about $350, 000. This, according to the newspaper, was Long’s response: “We’re not just a church; we’re an international corporation. We’re not just a bumbling bunch of preachers who can’t talk and all we’re doing is baptizing babies. I deal with the White House. I deal with Tony Blair. I deal with presidents around this world. I pastor a multimillion-dollar congregation. You’ve got to put me on a different scale than the little black

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preacher sitting over there [who’s] supposed to be just getting by because the people are suffering. I’ll go out on a limb and say that qualifies as a textbook (or Good textbook) example of pride. And as we all should know by now, pride goes before a fall.\(^65\)

An outgrowth of pride is greed and self-will as is clearly manifested by many of these prosperity preachers.

Consider Creflo Dollar the popular Atlanta based ‘prosperity theology’ televangelist, who owns Rolls Royces, million dollar homes and a private jet. And why wouldn’t he reveal his salary a few years ago when asked by the Senate Finance Committee? Actually the success that prosperity preachers such as Dollar continue to enjoy is not all that hard to understand. If you set up two loudspeakers on opposite street corners, one blaring, “God wants you to be rich,” and the other blaring, “God wants you to be virtuous,” which do you think would draw the bigger crowd? What is true in all other aspects of our lives is also true in religion: The con man’s success depends on the mark’s eagerness to be conned.\(^66\)

The other side of pride is humility.

\(^{65}\) Ibid 110
\(^{66}\) Ibid 110
The pastor as servant of God must be humble if he or she expects to render acceptable service to God. Humility is the hallmark of the servant of God. We are reminded by James: “But he gives a greater grace. Therefore he says, ‘God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble’ (Jam 4:6 NAS).

We get a picture of the importance of humbly following God in the Old Testament, Dt. 8 as the Lord exhorts the people to keep the commandments, of God, to be submissive to his will. The ground for that exhortation is the memory of the wilderness wanderings and how God humbled His people there (vv.2f). He afflicted them surely, but as discipline (v5). He “humbled” them, but to do them “good in the end” (v.6). God’s authority and power are legitimate as well as actual. Then follows the significant contrast by which the virtue of being humble suddenly bursts into view: Beware lest you say in your heart, my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth, (v.17, italics added). The attitude of pride is not fitting for a people whose life and prosperity are due to the kindness and power of Yahweh.\(^67\)

The warning and instruction that God gives to the Israelites is applicable to pastors today. They have failed to serve God humbly; they have been greedy to increase themselves in riches on the backs of the sheep under their care. It is clear then to

see that when a pastor does not serve God in an attitude of humility he or she
necessarily serves out of self will. Self will service is totally unacceptable to God.
Unfortunately many pastors who preach a prosperity gospel have sunk to a new
low. God attempted to teach the Israelites a lesson of humility through various
forms of chastisement. God wants service that is clothed with humility today. I
recapitulate an earlier point: the will of the servant must be subordinate to that of
the master. In John 13:13 Jesus responds to his disciples on one occasion: “Ye call
me Master and Lord and so I am.” On another occasion in Luke 6:46 he poses the
question to false disciples, “how callest thou me Lord and do not the things I say?”
Prosperity gospel preachers have not submitted their will to God’s will in any
sense of the word.

This is particularly the case when we look at the requirement of being godly
eamples and leaders among the flock. We note in 1 Peter 5:3: “Be shepherds of
God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must,
but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain,
but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you; but being examples to
the flock.” Unfortunately it appears that leadership runs amuck when individuals
violate Godly tenets of being examples to the flock of God. For many of these
individuals a lust for wealth, power and fame and their egos have led them astray.

Liane Membis writes: As far as leadership for some of
these spiritual behemoths is concerned, egos are
quintessential to making them come alive—no play can
win a Tony without an artful stage master….Many of these
prosperity preachers have the ability to move (and crush) mountains with the power of their words. They are held in high esteem as leaders because they have the ability to gather the masses each Sunday like hordes of excited shoppers on Black Friday….they say what it is that people need and want to hear. Sadly, that same ego can bury the preacher, a lesson that we learn from not only megachurch leaders such as Bishop Eddie Long, but also other pastors and ministers who have fallen off the glory path in a spectacularly public fashion.

Just as we would protest unjust legislators, scrutinize big banks and question sketchy politicians, we must also hold accountable the people who lead us spiritually and claim to be of the highest moral example. What comes out of a pastor’s mouth is indeed debatable, but the Word should be equivalent to their worldly example. Pastors cannot hold themselves apart from the expectations they set for their flocks. The life a minister lives in church is the life he should live outside of it. The condemnation of others through an authoritative lens without recognition of one’s own actions is indeed faulty and any such hypocritical and
unscrupulous behavior absolutely warrants public
censorship.\textsuperscript{68}

Another responsibility that prosperity preachers have failed to live up to is
to feed the flock of God. That is to feed them with the sincere milk of the word
instead of their own cobbled together versions of God’s word and false teaching.
The Apostle Peter issues a warning against false teachers and prophets. “But false
prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers
among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies…and many will
follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned:
and in their greed they will exploit you with false words….\textsuperscript{2 Pt 2:1-3 NAS).}

My thought goes to one of the eminent prosperity preachers around today.
Joel Osteen, is the pastor of the largest church in America,
best selling author, and a former student at Oral Roberts
University. A typical piece of Osteenian advice: ‘friend,
you have to start believing that good things are coming
your way and they will!’ Other advocates of this position
today include the very popular televangelists Joyce Meyer
and T.D. Jakes.\textsuperscript{69}

This type of sit on your hands advice leads many Christians astray and they may
become disillusioned if their lives don’t turn out the way Osteen predicts, where

\textsuperscript{68} Liane Membis, "Do mega churches equal mega trouble?" \textit{Ebony} 66, no. 2/3 (December 2010):
111. \textit{Academic Search Complete}, EBSCOhost (accessed April 24, 2013).

\textsuperscript{69} Robert Barron, “The Dangers of the Prosperity Gospel,”
they are wealthy and have everything their hearts’ desire. It is true we are to exercise faith and think positively in our walk with God.

I concede straightaway that there is some Biblical validity for the position that the prosperity gospel preachers take.

The book of Deuteronomy consistently promises Israel that, if it remains faithful to God’s commands, it will receive numerous benefits in this world. The psalmist too assures us, “delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps 37:4). And Jesus himself counsels: “seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things (food, shelter, clothing, etc.) will be added unto you” (Mt 6:33). And there is no doubt that the Bible consistently urges people to trust in the providence of God at all times. Jesus’ reminder that the bird, who neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns but who are nevertheless fed by their heavenly Father, is a summation of the Scriptural confidence in God’s care for those who have faith in Him.70

However, as Father Robert Barron advises:

We must be attentive to the very subtle way that the Bible itself nuances and specifies these claims. The great counterpoise to the book of Deuteronomy is the book of Job, which tells the story of a thoroughly righteous man

70 Ibid 2
who, in one fell swoop, suffers the loss of all of his material
prosperity. Job’s friends, operating out of a standard
Deuteronomistic (or prosperity Gospel) point of view,
argue that he must have grievously offended God, but Job –
and God himself-protest against this simplistic
interpretation. The deepest reason for Job’s suffering, we
learn, is lost in the infinite abyss of God’s permissive will
and is by no means easily correlatable to Job’s virtue or
lack thereof. And Jesus himself, the very archetype of the
faithful Israelite, experiences not earthly prosperity, but a
life of simplicity and death on a brutal instrument of
torture. If Joel Osteen and other prosperity preachers were
right, we would expect Jesus to have been the richest man
in Nazareth and very much celebrated in Jerusalem high
society.  

In John 10 Jesus contrasts the difference between himself as the good
shepherd who cares for the sheep and the hireling who cares not for the sheep. The
good shepherd or pastor puts himself in harms way and will protect the sheep out
of a sense of love. The false shepherd or pastor does not care for the sheep, but
runs at the slightest sign of danger and in no way offers protection to the sheep.
The hireling is singularly interested in what is best for him or herself. It is said of
the hireling: “He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the
sheep” (Jn 10:13 NAS).

71 Ibid 2
Prosperity gospel preachers have failed to function as humble servants of God. Additionally they have not cared for or been concerned for the flocks under their charge. Nor have they protected them from the wolves, in many cases they have presented themselves as the wolves by sowing a pernicious doctrine of false hope and destruction. Instead of promoting a love of the Lord they have promoted a love of the world. We are told in 1 John 2:15: “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” If God in God’s great providence and bounty decides to bless an individual with a new car, house or whatever the case might be, then we owe God all the more thanks. However, God has to continue to be the focus of our love instead of money or material things.

We are cautioned to be careful and sober in our thinking:

We read in 2 Timothy 6:6-10 but godliness with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money have
wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many
grievings.

It appears that the message that Paul gave to Timothy has never gotten
through to the behemoths of the prosperity gospel preachers. But then most of
them are quite adept at keeping their finances and lifestyles out of the limelight.

In 2007, concerns over the finances of six prosperity gospel
ministries led by Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, Benny
Hinn, Eddie Long, Joyce Meyer, and Randy and Paula
White came under scrutiny by Republican Senator Charles
Grassley. Under question were extravagant ministry-
related, and therefore tax exempt, purchases including
private planes, multi-million dollar mansions, thousand
dollar business dinners, and a $23,000 toilet. Grassley’s
concern over these prosperity ministries, all members of the
Faith movement, brought the sometimes sordid world of
prosperity televangelists back into the national headlines.72

Frequently, to keep money pouring into their coffers prosperity preachers
encourage the faithful to do outlandish and downright foolish things.

For example, during an episode of Behind the Scenes, TBN
founder and Faith teacher, Paul Crouch, encourages

72 Kathleen M Hladky, "I double-dog dare you in Jesus’ name! Claiming Christian wealth and the
American prosperity gospel." Religion Compass 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 82-83. ATLA Religion
Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed September 4, 2013).
viewers to unleash the power of God by writing bad checks: If you will make a faith promise to God, a pledge and say God I don’t know where I’ll get a thousand dollars I don’t know where I’ll get ten thousand…some of you business people your businesses are in trouble why don’t you try pledging fifty thousand dollars and just see what God will do! I dare you, I double dog dare you in Jesus’ name! (Behind the Scenes, March 15, 2005). By writing a check for money that God is about to manifest, viewers can demonstrate their complete faith.  

Unfortunately, many of God’s people are deceived while following the doctrine of the prosperity gospel preachers. They find themselves averting their eyes from God and toward material gain only to reap dire consequences. 

**Jesus the Example**

Jesus is the perfect example of someone who offered humble service to God. He embraced the mindset of service to others at his own expense. He was from the very beginning outwardly focused. Instead of seeking to be elevated or exalted, Jesus was willing to leave a place of exaltation and move into a life of service to God, and as a corollary, service to the whole human race. His life was one of subordinating his will to the will of God. We read concerning Jesus:

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73 Ibid 83
Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name (Phil 2:5-9 NAS).

Jesus offered humble service to God as a ransom for the sin of the whole world. Thus, he submitted himself to die on the cross.

As his time approaches for crucifixion even as cruel and repulsive as crucifixion was, nevertheless; Jesus reasserts his obedience to God. He reasserts the subordination of his will to the will of God. We read:

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples, ‘sit her while I go over there and pray.’ And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.’ And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as thou wilt’ (Mat 26:36-39 NAS).
In the scriptures preceding (Matthew 20:26-28) Jesus is in dialogue with his disciples as they inquire about obtaining positions of authority in his kingdom. Jesus responds that these positions are given to those to whom they were prepared. He continues his discussion with the disciples and informs them that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them (Mt 20:25).

It appears that the disciples were under the impression that Jesus came with a lofty mission in worldly terms. What they failed to realize was that his mission was lofty—it was lofty in a spiritual sense. The disciples continued to struggle with questions of how to be great. Jesus tells them: “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt.20:26-28). Jesus here takes the opportunity to qualify greatness for them in the eyes of God—a concept of greatness to which they were not accustomed. In the process of this explanation he informs them of the reason that He came into the world. His reason was unique and different from those who were in authority—generally those who are in authority expect to be ministered to, but Jesus offers that he came to minister to others.

The Greek word that he uses for minister is διακονέω (diakoneo) meaning to be a servant, to serve, to wait upon, to relieve one's necessities, to provide the things necessary to sustain life, to take care of the poor and the sick, to serve one or by supplying any thing. We see Jesus beginning to minister right in this text (Mt
20:29-34) as he encounters two blind men sitting by the wayside. These two blind men heard Jesus passing by and petitioned him to have mercy on them; even though the blind men were rebuked by the crowd, they continued to implore Jesus to have mercy on them. Jesus stood still and had the two men brought to him, whereupon he asked “what do you want me to do for you?” They responded: “that our eyes be opened.” We are told that Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes that they received their sight—and afterward they followed him—people will take note of the authenticity of a true servant of God.

We join Jesus again in the servant role (Mk.1:39-42). He has just finished preaching in one of the synagogues and casting out a devil. He encounters a leper:

And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee,
preaching and casting out the demons. And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching him and falling on his knees before him, and saying, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’

“Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’

“And immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Having heard of the reputation of Jesus for doing good, the leper here has the confidence to approach Jesus to heal him. The leper offers to Jesus that, “you can make me clean if you will.” Jesus being moved with compassion touched the man and pronounced him clean.
We continue to get an image of Jesus as a servant of God who renders selfless service to those in need. There is no focus on compensation for his service. His service is done unto God. Because of the large crowds that followed him, I’m sure he could have converted this into an opportunity to enrich himself. It is palpably clear that Jesus was not focused on money. He testifies of himself in (Lk 9:58) “And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.” Service to God carried the preponderance of weight in doing the will of God. Service to God was more important that enriching himself. Jesus transfers this same emphasis for service to his disciples when he sends them out as servants.

Shortly after Jesus had raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead, he meets with his disciples and sends them out—he sends them out to do God’s work. “And he called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal diseases. And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. And he said to them, take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have two tunics apiece” (Lk 9:1-3). We see here that as Jesus sent them out, he instructed them essentially to be more concerned about rendering selfless service to God than receiving money or clothing or tangible things. The servant of God is more focused on doing the work of God than enriching himself. The servant of God is committed to doing God’s will. In doing the will of God, service to God, must be done in a spirit of humility.
Jesus Washed His Disciples’ Feet

Jesus was constantly providing his disciples with a paradigm for service to God, and in turn, to those they were called to serve. In John 13 after having finished supper we are informed that Jesus begins to wash his disciples’ feet. As a sign of exceptional love, a disciple might wash a master’s feet (contrast John 13:13-14). In an abnormal turn of events “Jesus washing of the disciples’ feet (John 13:4-5) has both an ethical and a symbolic sense. The ethical sense is emphasized in John 13:14-15 where Jesus presented Himself as the example of humble, loving service (cf. Luke 22:27). The command to do for one another what Christ had done for them ought not to be confined simply to washing feet. What Jesus did for the disciples was to lay down His life for them (John 15:13). Thus the ethical imperative calls for giving our lives in extravagant acts of selfless service. Foot washing is one expression of this. Additionally, foot washing was regarded as so lowly a task that it could not be required of a Hebrew slave.\(^74\)

Therefore, when Jesus initially approaches Peter to wash his feet Peter offers vehement objection that the Lord would never wash his feet. Of course Peter does not understand the spiritual lesson of service that the Lord is teaching. Jesus wants

them to realize that their focus is to be on providing service to others vis-à-vis having others to serve them.

Both servant and leader (pastor) have positive meaning. When we combine them in servant-leader, we preserve the strengths of each. Where can we find an example of a servant-leader? The best one is Jesus himself. During this last evening with his disciples, he washed their feet. In doing so he said, you call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am” (Jn 13:13). He was their leader but he also served them.\(^{75}\)

This lesson of humility that Jesus portrayed is one that contemporary pastors would do well to emulate. The office of a servant as Jesus demonstrated is synonymous with humility.

**Office of a Servant**

We see an example of a committed servant in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. This text provided instruction for the release of slaves or servants after they had completed their time of service. We read: “It shall come about if he says to you, I will not go out from you, because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you; then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever” (Dt 15:16-17). Here we get the picture of a committed servant-slave. After having served his master for six

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years, in the seventh year he would be allowed to go free. However, if the servant
decides that he doesn’t want to go free out of a sense of love, out of a sense of
commitment to his master; he can remain a servant forever. This master—servant
relationship is commemorated by having a hole bored through the ear of the
servant. The servant is now willingly committed to his master for ever.

The Apostle Paul was a committed servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He
declared himself to be a bond-servant, δοῦλος (doulos) of Christ Jesus, called as an
apostle, set apart for the gospel of God (Rom 1:1NAS). Paul dedicated himself in
service to God. He informs us that he not only served the Lord Jesus in a spirit of
humility, but he suffered many tears and temptations. He was such a dedicated
servant spreading the Gospel and serving God’s people that he was willing to
hazard his own life. He was not moved from his commitment to God when
informed through prophecy that he would be bound and suffer affliction if he
continued with plans to go to Jerusalem. Instead of reconsidering, Paul offers that
doing the will of God was more precious than his own life. He continues to
Jerusalem in spite of the many warnings he received. (Acts 20-21)

As he continues in the spirt of humility he writes: “I have coveted no man’s
silver, or gold, or clothes. Yes you yourselves know that these hands have
ministered unto my own needs and to the men who were with me,” (Acts 20:19-34
NAS). Indeed Paul was a consumer of his own advice insofar as wealth, riches and
material things that he offered to Timothy. He tells Timothy:

But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when
accompanyed by contentment. For we have brought nothing
into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we should be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang, (1 Tm 6:6-10 NAS).

Examples of Godly Pastors:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Some would argue that today there is a great dearth of pastors who have an authentic love for God; a paucity of those who serve God feeding his sheep as Jesus instructed Peter. Others may argue that there are indeed numerous pastors who have answered the call of God, not as an opportunity for self enrichment or self-aggrandizement, but as an opportunity to fulfill the mandate Jesus gave Peter.

Fortunately history informs us that there have been a number of outstanding pastors who because of their love for God undertook to offer authentic and dedicated service to God. As a result of their love for God, they, with compassion took seriously their call to protect, care for, nurture and lead God’s people in a spirit of humility. They were truly more than hirelings; a hireling who when trouble comes will abandon the sheep and leave them to destruction by the enemy. They are unlike hirelings because these pastors cared more for the sheep they
demonstrated their love for God’s people by leading them through challenging times. They served with humility and selflessness. They remind us of Jesus in mirroring many of the characteristics that he demonstrated.

One such person who comes to mind was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born in 1906.

He was the sixth of eight children. He had four sisters and three brothers; one of the sisters was his twin. When he was six years old his family moved to Berlin, where his father, Karl Bonhoeffer, became professor of Neurology and Psychiatry and the director of the university neurological clinic. His mother, Paula Bonhoeffer was a committed Christian, who had grown up as the daughter and granddaughter of theologians.\(^\text{76}\)

There has been much discussion and speculation as to what led Bonhoeffer to choose a path of service to God. His family orientation was not religious—although his mother had grown up with theologians in her family. “The Bonhoeffers were not churchgoers in the sense that they were active members and participated in the life of a congregation. The children were not sent to church, and the family didn’t attend church even on the major holidays.”\(^\text{77}\) While they were not regular church goers, their mother did maintain a relationship of sorts with God


by reading her Bible regularly—the feeling was that there was no need for a traditional ecclesiastical guidance. Eberhard Bethge notes that “although the Bonhoeffers could not be described as churchgoers, it would be wrong to describe them as non-Christian.” They were taught to love and respect all people and to believe in the importance and the dignity of all human beings.

**Career Choice**

From the very beginning Dietrich and his brothers were expected to attend college and continue the family tradition of having some type of esteemed profession. Dietrich was expected to follow his father into the field of psychiatry. The parents wanted their boys to pursue careers that would provide them a measure of esteem and also ensure a respectable living.

Contrary to their expectations Bonhoeffer decided to be a minister and theologian at a very early age and never seemed to have strayed from his decision. He was quite dogmatic about his decision. In fact when his brothers and sisters refused to take him seriously, he did not let it disconcert him. When he was about fourteen, for instance, they tried to convince him that he was taking the path of least resistance, and that the church to which he proposed to devote himself was a poor, feeble, boring, petty, and bourgeois institution; he confidently replied: “in that case I shall reform it!”

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78 Ibid 35
79 Ibid 36
As a result of the family’s affluence, all of the children were afforded the best secondary education. (However, only the boys went on to acquire university training.) Discrimination and equal opportunity for women was not something that society saw as necessarily wrong. Fortunately, all of the Bonhoeffer children were introduced to a very cultured lifestyle.

“Dietrich, being a precocious young man, passed his graduation examination at seventeen and began his theological studies in Tubingen. Taking a brief hiatus from his studies he took some time to explore Rome. It is here, he offered, that he first began, after his initial contact with the Catholic Church—to understand the concept of “church.” His trip to Rome was, in some ways, therapeutic as he kept a journal which allowed him the opportunity to look back years later to ponder some of his encounters and observations.”

Upon his return home to Germany, Dietrich began in earnest to pursue his education. Perhaps there was something that was awakened in him that had not been there previously—which spurred him on even more. In any event, “in the winter of 1927/28 Dietrich passed his first theological examination, and submitted his doctoral dissertation, Sanctorum Communio, which was published in 1930.”

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81 Ibid 15
Dietrich Bonhoeffer was, perhaps unbeknownst to him at that time, set on the path of becoming a prominent theologian and pastor. “In 1928 Bonhoeffer had departed from the demands of the academic life to enter the new world of a pastoral intern in a Barcelona parish. This was the beginning of those pastoral ministries that were to accompany his life story all the way to his untimely death in the concentration camp at Flossenburg.”

Perhaps this was also the time that the leader in Bonhoeffer was beginning to emerge. “On September 5, 1930 Bonhoeffer leaves for New York to study at Union Theological Seminary.” “When he first arrived in New York he was not satisfied with the preaching and ministry at the adjacent Riverside Church, but he found a spiritual home at the large Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem.

The time that Bonhoeffer spent in the African American community would prove to be invaluable and change his view and outlook on life and compassion toward his fellowman. Consequently his exposure to, and immersion within the African American community would be very impactful to him as a person. This experience caused him to be sensitized by the evils and ugly underbelly of discrimination and marginalization of an entire group of people. “At Union Seminary, Bonhoeffer became friends with an African American student named Albert “Frank” Fisher. Through this friendship, Bonhoeffer gained an insider’s view of the racial injustice in the United States and witnessed the worldview of

persons victimized by racism. Bonhoeffer’s relationships in the African American community educated him to the many levels of humiliation and disparaging slights they endured on a daily basis. He came to understand the indignity of being unable to get a room after a day of tiring travel on the highway. And he was able to witness individuals being turned away from a lunch counter, or to be persecuted with insulting and degrading monikers regardless—of their station in life. Academic achievement carried little weight insofar as shielding African Americans from gratuitous acts of disrespect.

Bonhoeffer was deeply concerned at the plight of African Americans as he observed the emotionally and spiritually crippling effects of their ill treatment. He observed social activist pastors as the Senior Pastor Adam Clayton Powell Sr. “Pastor Adam Clayton Powell Sr. was a significant leader in the struggle against racial injustice.” Bonhoeffer was an eager student of the fight for racial justice. He read voraciously and widely to increase his knowledge of the African American plight. One fellow student from the Union Seminary offered:

> What was so impressive was the way in which he pursued the understanding of the problem to its minutest detail through books, and countless visits to Harlem, through participation in Negro youth work, but even more through a remarkable kind of identity with the Negro community, so

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86 Ibid 27
that he was received there as though he had never been an
outsider.\textsuperscript{87}

Getting a close up view of the plight and predicament of the African American
stimulated a strong sense of compassion in Bonhoeffer that would stay with him
for the rest of his life.

His, was the kind of compassion that would move him to action in years to
come. It would be because of his love for God that he would be moved to function
as a caring compassionate pastor who refused to sit on the sidelines of life; but to
sacrifice himself, his life in the course of providing the service that God ordained
him to do. He would feed, nurture care for and lead the people (sheep) of God.
This calls to mind the leper who came to Jesus, petitioning Jesus to heal him of
leprosy. We are told that Jesus was moved with compassion. “And there came a
leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If
thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put
forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean” (Mk
1:40-41). Looking closer, we get at the essence of this word compassion,
\(\sigmaπλαγχνισθε\textual{s}\), (splagchnizomai) which means to be to be moved in the inward
parts. Could it have been that though Jesus was not afflicted with leprosy he
imagined how it felt to be struck with leprosy and all of the accompanying misery?
No doubt what caused Jesus to be moved with compassion was when he thought of
the fact that this leper had to cry, “unclean, unclean,” whenever he ventured near
others, or that he could not enjoy the company of friends at a sit down dinner, or

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid 27
that he was denied the benefit of visiting the temple where praise and worship was offered to God.

Bonhoeffer’s Evolving Compassion for Others

During his stay in New York and observing the plight of the African American, Bonhoeffer was very much troubled by the lack of involvement and compassion of the white church establishment. Perhaps it seemed natural that an institution claiming to represent God would be quick to get involved to assist in alleviating the racist and cruel mistreatment of their fellow human beings. Needless to say these eyewitness accounts of racism did have a profound effect on Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer found a new compassion for those less fortunate than himself and sensitivity for the condition of the oppressed and exploited of society. After his year in New York at Union Theological Seminary, Bonhoeffer returned home in 1931 as Adolf Hitler continued his agitation for power.

During the years roughly from 1931 through 1933 Bonhoeffer busied himself with numerous endeavors. He was active teaching theology at Berlin University, and attending ecumenical meetings in Geneva, Switzerland, and other places. He saw the ecumenical movement as a sort of call to public discipleship—calling the whole world to discipleship—thus as having broad appeal. “Bonhoeffer began to get intensely involved in the ecumenical movement due to his resistance to National Socialism in the German Church struggle.”88 The German Church struggle was gaining momentum and growing stronger.

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Bonhoeffer believed that the Christian church had a role to play in society. It was urgent and incumbent upon them to move from their places of safety and get involved. When forces or individuals arose to threaten what was right, the Christian church should be there to oppose wrongdoing where ever it raised its ugly head. If they could come together and begin speaking with a unified voice they would wield tremendous clout.

Since as early as 1919 Hitler had been on a quest for power. Early on, he harbored anti-Semitic sentiments. “As a result of World War I, Germany under the Treaty of Versailles was saddled with the burden of paying heavy reparations. Steps needed to be taken to wipe out the humiliation of Versailles. Many Germans felt that Germany had been treated very shamefully.”89 In addition to the burden of reparations their economy was struggling with high unemployment and general sense of malaise. There was a general mood of needing someone to blame. For example “in the summer of 1936 an American visitor took a picture of a sign that was posted in a bookstore in Berlin. The sign read, in doggerel lines: ‘After the end of the Olympiad/we’ll beat the CC (Confessing Church) to a pulp. Then we’ll chuck out the Jew. The CC will end too.’90 Hitler wanted to restore Germany to its former state of greatness and throw off the humiliation they were now enduring in the eyes of the world. Hitler and many of the Germans were looking for someone


to blame—other than themselves. A convenient list of scapegoats easily emerged—not the least of which were the Jews.

On January 30, 1933 Adolph Hitler assumed full dictatorial powers. He moved to solidify his power. One of the major steps he took was to promote a German Nationalistic philosophy. Under this banner he campaigned to force all elements of society, including the churches, to come in line with the ideology and structure of the Nazi party. Early on, great pressure was put on the churches to harmonize their views with those of the National Socialist. A significant part of showing oneself in agreement with Hitler’s nationalistic policies was to discriminate against fellow Jewish citizens.⁹¹

The steps that Hitler was taking affected many in the Christian community with a strong sense of uneasiness and fear. The Nazi party was growing in influence and power. As time evolved it was becoming apparent that one of Hitler’s priorities was to engage in a campaign of discrimination, boycotts and persecution against the Jews. Police protection for them was non-existent.

The government advanced a mass scale of persecution on any one of “non-Aryan” descent. Some, in Hitler’s circle, saw this as the first step in dealing with the Jewish

question. The Jews were divested of all citizenship rights. They were excluded from professional positions. They were prohibited from holding public office. The exclusion of Jews from public office grew out of the “Aryan Paragraph” which specifically prohibited non-Aryans, meaning Jews, from holding public office. Things would only grow worse for the Jews. Through the process of time Hitler ushered in various other laws aimed at the Jews. The national citizenship law was implemented which specifically abolished Jewish citizenship. A definition was given as to what it meant to be a Jew. Another law for the protection and purity of German blood and honor was implemented. This law prohibited intermarriage with Jews, and sexual relations with them became a crime which was designated as Rassenschande \(^92\) (“Racial defilement”).

As these laws gained traction in Germany, many church pastors and leaders were perplexed as to what action they should take. Some felt an obligation to come to the assistance of their Jewish brethren—but how? Hitler’s latest strategy was to form a National church also known as the German Reich church. All forms of church teachings/doctrine would come under the umbrella of the German Reich church. Hitler now would have control of ecclesiastical matters.

As a direct result of the position and tenets espoused by the German church, a number of church leaders, including Dietrich Bonhoeffer, formed the Confessing Church.

The leaders of the Confessing Church stood in open conflict with the German Reich Church. Those who headed the Reich Church supported the Nazi government and accused the opposition churches of being disloyal citizens….Acts of brutality and psychological coercion followed, as well as imprisonment of dissident pastors, as the Nazi government tightened its control over the ecclesiastical sphere and thus impeded any putative church opposition. Beatings, arrests, police terror, and rampant injustice were commonplace in the years in which the Nazi government reinforced its grip on every aspect of life in Germany.93

The Confessing Church leaders found it difficult and distressing to embrace the direction advocated by the German Reich church. The German Reich church sought to change some of the basic principles of the doctrines of faith and justification by faith. The focus of praise, glory and honor was gradually being moved from God, and redirected to Adolf Hitler. He was managing to raise himself

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to a level of deification in the eyes of many. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and many in the Confessing Church saw this as denying God his due glory; glory which was reserved exclusively for God and no one else. They took a public stand. They became known as the Confessing Church because of the public confession they were willing to make.

Bonhoeffer encouraged the Confessing Church to be more active in speaking out against Hitler. Unfortunately most of his fellow pastors were paralyzed with fear. They forgot that they should stand up for those who were weakest in society, those who were unable to advocate for themselves.

In Bonhoeffer’s opinion they had been too timid in that they did not resist more forcefully those government policies that victimized Jewish citizens. From the moment of the anti-Jewish legislation in April 1933 and throughout the church struggle, Bonhoeffer was nearly without support in defending the Jews. He frequently cited the passage from Proverbs 31:8 (‘Speak up for those who have no voice’) as a God given mandate to oppose energetically the anti-Jewish policies of the nation. Bonhoeffer felt that the church had a duty to question the civil legislation in its malicious intent to target the Jewish citizens for persecution. Additionally he felt the church was to be more active in its aid to the victims and the church should be bold in opposing the government—as Bonhoeffer put it,
‘Jam a spoke in the wheel’ of the state. These were the hallmarks of a spiritual life and moral leadership in keeping with Jesus’ beatitudinal demands on his followers.  

Besides Bonhoeffer, few were willing to enter into battle for the Jews. The quietness of the church was tantamount to a betrayal of the Jews in their hour of need.

By the time the early loss of their civil rights had escalated into full-scale genocidal extermination of the Jews of Europe, the church’s silence had itself become not merely a failure of nerve but also, in Bonhoeffer’s eyes, a sinful denial of Jesus Christ present in those weakest among his brothers and sisters. The total silence of the churches on Crystal Night, November 10, 1938, presaged its feckless silence and failure to take effective counter-action during the coming horrors of the death camps.

Members of the Confessing Church and others in the ecclesiastical community in failing to speak out had abandoned their flock; they had become mere hirelings. They were only concerned about themselves—self preservation was the key. As long as they were not persecuted they were willing to acquiesce to Hitler’s demands. They didn’t seem to care what happened to the Jews. They were abandoning their call, and leaving the wolf (Hitler) to come in and slaughter the

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95 Ibid 45
sheep. Their actions call to mind the behavior that Jesus described of the hireling.

“He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep” (John 10:13-14). These pastors failed to lead, nurture and care for the sheep in their hour of need. As Jesus said of the hireling: “he flees when he sees danger approaching”—his words were never truer. The hireling never puts himself at risk!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer loved God. As a result of his love for God he was willing to put himself at risk for the well being of his fellow human beings. He was willing to put himself at risk for those the Lord put under his pastorate. When Jesus asked: Do you love me? Bonhoeffer took seriously the injunction from the Lord; Feed my sheep! At times when the Jews were under verbal, physical and mental assault Bonhoeffer took the opportunity to feed God’s sheep. He fed God’s people with the word of God. Bonhoeffer was a tremendous leader who sought to instill faith, hope and determination into his congregation. At great risk to himself Bonhoeffer welcomed at once the beauty and uniqueness of his role to alleviate hurt and refocus the gaze of those within his reach. Seemingly, in part, for this ability or opportunity, he relished every opportunity to preach. “As one commentator on his life has put it, although Bonhoeffer admitted he was less enthused about routine parish meetings, ‘preaching was his finest hour.’”96 By
preaching God’s word Bonhoeffer brought comfort to those under the sound of his voice. Hitler had become an unconquerable colossal force. There seemed to be no way for the people to free themselves from the grips of his power. By preaching God’s Word, by feeding God’s sheep, Bonhoeffer paints another picture. He paints a picture of trust in God—just like the picture seen in scripture. He recalled in the book of Judges that the Israelites were greatly oppressed by a powerful enemy. They were vastly outnumbered and there seemed to be no chance of victory. God selected just three hundred Israelites and used a miraculous strategy to defeat the Midianites. Because Israel trusted in the Lord, the Lord brought victory! Pastor Bonhoeffer advocated that same trust for the terrible times and challenges they faced.

He reminded the congregation that they served that same God. He encouraged them to have faith in God in spite of what they saw. Bonhoeffer wanted to lift their focus to a higher plane—he fought to instill and nourish a hope in them, a hope that was not moored in the earth, but a hope that was anchored in Jesus Christ. Throughout his life Bonhoeffer continued to point his congregation past himself—past himself to a much greater power—he pointed them to God who was their hope!

Bonhoeffer was a man of faith and action who led, nurtured, and cared for God’s people. He was an example of a Godly pastor right up to and including when it came time for him to die on the gallows. In an effort to bring an end to Hitler’s murderous rampage Bonhoeffer agreed to participate in a plot to
assassinate him. Unfortunately the plot was discovered and Bonhoeffer and his co-conspirators were arrested and imprisoned.

Finally, on April 9, 1945, the prisoners were taken from their cells and their verdicts read aloud. The prison doctor watched as Dietrich Bonhoeffer knelt in prayer. ‘I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer.’ He prayed again as he approached the gallows, and then climbed the steps, ‘brave and composed.’

Bonhoeffer maintained his great love for God right up to the end of his life. Because of his love for God he was able to feed, lead care and nurture God’s people. He presented himself as a humble, yet courageous servant of God. He submitted himself to the will of God. His life remains a testimony as to what it means to be a faithful servant of God.

William Seymour

William J. Seymour was an African American who grew up in the American South under racial discrimination. “Each of us has a different starting point even when we are reared in the same family. But to grow up in the American South, as an African American, the child of former slaves, during the period of Reconstruction immediately following the Civil War (1861-1865), is an experience

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97 Elizabeth Raum, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Called by God* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 150.
that the majority of the world has never had.”

William Seymour was the son of former slaves. “The names of his parents were Simon and Phillis Seymour. William Seymour was born on Monday, May 2, 1870, in Centerville, Louisiana. Centerville lies in the heart of bayou country, in St. Mary Parish, a dozen miles from the southern coast of Louisiana.” Seymour taught himself to read and write and was for a time a student in Charles Fox Parham’s Bible School who gave him guidance in the ministry. Parham was a white preacher and Bible teacher who was very influential in introducing others to Pentecostalism. “Parham was often described as a pioneer of Pentecostalism, as well as a sympathizer of the Ku Klux Klan.”

William Seymour grew up during a very difficult time in our history. He experienced discrimination and segregation first hand. Lynching was something that was quite common during his lifetime. “During his lifetime 3436 black persons were known to have been lynched, averaging two per week.” In spite of suffering humiliation and maltreatment, Seymour would not allow himself to be weighed down by hate and bitterness. In fact, he believed that love was the operative word. Seymour went on to become a very influential pastor who led a Pentecostal revival in Los Angeles, bringing together a multicultural group of people from all walks of life.

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In his early years Seymour moved from Louisiana to Indianapolis, Indiana partly to find work. There it is believed that he found work as a “waiter according to each edition of the Indianapolis City Directory published between 1896 and 1898.”  

Seymour still on a quest to learn more about the Lord and spiritual gifts found himself in Houston Texas. There he had the good fortune to meet Lucy Farrow. Lucy was the pastor of a small Holiness congregation in Houston, Texas. She, as well as Seymour had a hunger for the Lord.

During this time the Rev. Charles Parham was traveling the country preaching and teaching about divine healing and the gift of the Spirit or speaking in other tongues. He drew large crowds to his meetings.

Parham had gained notoriety in January, 1901, when students in his short-term Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, began to speak in other tongues. Born in 1873, he had been healed of a life-threatening illness as a boy. As a result, he believed that he had a call to preach, and in 1890 he attended South West Kansas College. Before long, he decided that education was not a priority for him as a minister and he dropped out.

There had been recent notification in the Houston press of Parham’s arrival. Parham continued to preach and teach about divine healing and the gift of speaking in tongues. There was much evidence of people receiving the baptism in the Spirit.

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103 Ibid 40.
“A young woman named Agnes Ozman asked that Parham place his hands upon her so that she might receive this baptism in the Spirit with the Bible evidence. Parham and the others did as she asked, and soon she was speaking in other tongues.”

As his popularity grew Parham opened a short term hands on, Bible school in Houston, Texas. During the evening hours Parham took his students out in the streets to witness and present the word of God. “While Parham and his students ministered in Houston, Parham recruited Lucy Farrow, whom he described as a very light colored woman, to serve as the organization’s cook.” Farrow was very impressed with Parham’s teachings. She would be instrumental in introducing Seymour to Parham. Seymour was interested in receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. “At an earlier encounter Parham had refused to allow Seymour to seek the Holy Spirit at the altar, because Parham did not allow for a racially mixed altar.” Seymour wondered whether it might be possible to study at Parham’s school. Unfortunately Texas laws forbade race mixing in school. “Lucy Farrow apparently interceded on Seymour’s behalf, and Parham conceded that Seymour could have a space in the class, though not in the classroom. He would have to take a seat in the hall outside the classroom door.” When Parham finally left Houston to return to Topeka, Kansas to continue his work, Lucy Farrow followed. Lucy turned her church over to William Seymour who occasionally served as pastor in her absence.

While Seymour was serving as pastor “a young woman from Los

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104 Ibid 43
105 Ibid 44
106 Ibid 47
107 Ibid 47
Angeles named Neely Terry was on a trip to visit relatives in Houston. She attended the church where Seymour preached. She was so impressed with his preaching that she told her local congregation about him.\textsuperscript{108} Not long after Miss Terry’s arrival back in Los Angeles William Seymour received an invitation from Mrs. Julia Hutchins to accept the pastorate of a new Holiness mission in Los Angeles. As it turned out, “Miss Terry had given a very good review of Seymour, describing him as a ‘very godly man.’ Mrs. Hutchins was anxious to go to Liberia as a missionary, and after consulting with her congregation, she issued the invitation to Seymour.”\textsuperscript{109}

When Seymour accepted the invitation from Mrs. Hutchins he did not have the total blessings of his mentor, Parham. The Bible Training School did however lay hands on him and send him off with prayer. In Los Angeles he found a burgeoning lively city. The city was a melting pot of immigrants, as people were endeavoring to make a better life for themselves. There was a large African American population that had also migrated to Los Angeles for a better life. Seymour was prepared to begin his pastorate taking over from Mrs. Hutchins. Much to his dismay, after a few sermons and closer conversation with Mrs. Hutchins she realized that there was a large chasm between them on some doctrinal points. Chief among the doctrinal differences was speaking in tongues. Seymour believed that speaking in tongues brought empowerment for ministry. From all reports

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid 44
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid 50
Mrs. Hutchings equated baptism in the Spirit with sanctification, and did not see the ability to speak in tongues as connected to sanctification at all. Mrs. Hutchings was concerned to preserve holiness orthodoxy among those she had brought into the Holiness Church. As a result she probably concluded that she could not allow Seymour to confuse her flock. When Seymour arrived for the evening meeting along with the African American couple, Edward S. and Mattie Lee, they found that Mrs. Hutchins had locked the door and refused to admit him.\(^\text{110}\)

To say the least this left Seymour in a quandary. He was now forced out on the streets; fortunately the Lees opened their home to him. While residing with the Lees they began to have daily prayer meetings seeking the will of God. They were seeking God to give them enlightenment and clarity concerning his will. Gradually others joined the prayer meeting. As the meetings grew, Seymour shared his doctrine of receiving the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues. Soon the prayer group outgrew the Lees’ home and another couple by the names of Richard and Ruth Asberry opened their home.

Word began to spread rapidly of the meeting at the Asberry home. With increasing regularity Seymour was being invited out to explain his teaching about receiving the Holy Spirit.

Those who were gathered in the Asberry home soon came to accept his teaching and to pray that they might receive

\(^{110}\) Ibid 63
that baptism. To help him minister to these people as he and they sought to be baptized in the Spirit, Seymour contacted two friends in Houston, Lucy Farrow and Joseph Warren. He invited them to join him for meetings at the Asberry home.\textsuperscript{111}

This spirit of sharing and working in harmony with others was a characteristic that Seymour would demonstrate during all of his years of ministry. He was a very humble man. Word of these meetings continued to spread and many people were attracted to them. For example, “Emma Osterberg, a recent Swedish transplant from the Chicago area, attended fairly regularly during this time. In late March, she testified about the meetings to the congregation at the Full Gospel Tabernacle at Sixty-Eighth and Denver. She urged the congregation, which was led by her son, Arthur Osterberg, to join here there.”\textsuperscript{112} Arthur Osterberg, did visit and observed that there was something uniquely godly about the meetings.

Soon the meetings had swelled into large crowds and many people began speaking in tongues. Around this time Seymour himself received the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues.

With so many people going to the services, the meetings began to receive attention from the daily newspapers. Reporters attended the services and then wrote derisive accounts of the charismatic gifts that were displayed. They often ridiculed Seymour as a ‘self appointed negro

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid 65
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid 65
prophet.’ One correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times* wrote mockingly about a worshipper who prophesied awful destruction to this city unless its citizens are brought to a belief in the tenets of the new faith. The reporter’s article had unintended consequences, because it was featured in the paper on the same day that another more famous story captured the headlines: the San Francisco earthquake.

Given the uncanny connection between these seemingly apocalyptic events, more and more people started attending Seymour’s Pentecostal meetings.113

Because they were steadily growing, Seymour’s movement needed a larger place to meet. The best that they could find was an inexpensive run down building on Azusa Street. They designated the building as Apostolic Faith Mission.

The tumbledown building became the center for religious exercises that ran nearly nonstop for three and a half years….From the beginning of the revival, blacks and whites attended the services in nearly equal numbers. Occasionally there were also Mexican Americans, Chinese Americans, Native Americans, and people from other ethnic backgrounds. Newspapers wrote disparagingly of

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this clear break with social custom, while participants

In spite of some opposition by newspapers and other detractors, the movement continued to gain momentum as it spread through Los Angeles and grew like wildfire throughout the United States and other countries. The growth of this movement reached almost mythic proportions as it continued to attract other churches and people from all walks of life, including doctors, lawyers, janitors, etc. On one occasion “the press revealed that the daughter of a prominent Los Angeles physician and surgeon and hospital president, Miss Lillian Keyes, had begun to speak in tongues….”\footnote{Cecil M. Robeck, The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement (Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2006), 84.} As a result of their story on Miss Keyes the press sought out an interview with her father. He reported that “he supported his daughter’s activities and viewed them as genuine spiritual phenomena given by the Holy Spirit. His response caused many readers to consider the claims of the revival anew. Sometime after the interview another newspaper published a detailed description of services under the title “Queer Gift Given Many.”\footnote{Ibid 84} By this time it had become routine for Pastor Seymour and the Azusa Street mission to be pilloried and ridiculed in the press.

For example, consider a report from the Los Angeles Times entitled: “Weird Babel of Tongues.” These people, comprising “colored people and a sprinkling of whites,”
claimed to be able to speak in tongues and understand it.
Such a startling claim has never yet been made by any
company of fanatics,” wrote the reporter, “even in Los
Angeles, the home of almost numberless creeds.” An old
colored exhorter with his stony optic fixed on some
luckless unbeliever who yells his defiance and challenges
an answer; An ‘old colored mammy’ who swings her arms
wildly about while uttering ‘the strangest harangue [sic]
ever uttered;’ a ‘buxom dame’ so overcome with
excitement she almost faints; ‘A gurgle of wordless
prayers’ that is nothing less than shocking;…” And a rabbi
named Gold who claims to have been healed and converted
to the group’s teachings. What was the world coming to?117

A Humble Leader

In spite of these attacks Seymour continued to lead the Azusa street
movement. As a leader he led with a unique spirit of humility. The Mission had
grown large and had reached far beyond the confines of Los Angeles. Seymour
was becoming well known and certainly could have become proud and exalted
because of the tremendous success the gathering enjoyed. When I think of the
“prosperity preachers” in contrast to William Seymour there is a palpable
difference in their dedication and integrity before God. Pastor Seymour was

117 Ibid 75-76
certainly in a position to manipulate and exploit the flock under his care. Instead of tactics of exploitation and manipulation to enrich himself, Pastor Seymour continued to maintain his integrity before God, and his integrity among the people whom he served.

He refused to stoop to unspeakable levels of depravity and trickery such as:

Oral Roberts who created the ‘Blessing-Pact’ (Barron 1987: 62-3). Subscribers who contributed $100 to his work were promised a refund if they did not receive the gift back from a totally unexpected source within one year. Roberts also published a book called God’s Formula for success and prosperity (1955), and similar messages of material welfare were proposed by, for instance, A.A. Allen and Gordon Lindsay. In encouraging persons to donate to his ministry Roberts offered: “You sow it, Then God will Grow it” (Brouwer et al. 1996:24); similar imagery has been deployed by Hagin, Copeland and others.118

There was never any hint of him betraying the confidence of the people whom he served. He maintained the trust between himself and God and between himself and God’s people. No one ever presented any records or made allegations of him either living a lavish lifestyle or having a large bank account, or for that matter having any of the trappings of wealth. Instead he remained a humble and

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selfless servant of God. His goal was to serve and prepare God’s people to carry on
the work of the movement. He was not interested in being the star or center of
attention. He was one who led by example.

He brought the Apostolic Faith message to Los Angeles
when he arrived in February 1906. He had proclaimed it to
the Ninth and Santa Fe congregation. He had prayed with
individuals until they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.
And when they received that baptism, he became their
pastor by acclamation. While several people have written
about Pastor Seymour, they haven’t said much about
Seymour as a leader. However, through further study of the
many sources surrounding the mission and its activities we
are able to get a more complete picture of Seymour as a
leader.119

One individual who visited the Azusa Street Mission was the Bible
translator Adolphus S. Worrell who offered:

That he had not a single doubt but that Brother Seymour
has more power with God, than all his critics in and out of
the city. His strength is in his conscious weakness and
lowliness before God; and so long as he maintains this
attitude, the power of God will, no doubt, continue to flow
through him.”120

119 Ibid 90
120 Ibid 91
Mr. Worrell continues his reflections as he remembered the adjectives that others used to describe Pastor Seymour, among them were: ‘humble,’ ‘quiet,’ ‘soft spoken,’ ‘unassuming,’ and ‘gentle.’ Additionally the Chicago Pastor William H. Durham, who traveled to Los Angeles in February 1907 to seek his “Pentecost,” described Seymour, as ‘the leader of the movement under God,’ in similar terms. He is the meekest man I ever met.121

There were those who had heard of Pastor Seymour and the Azusa Street Mission and made it their business to go down and straighten him out. One example was the feisty evangelist Glenn Cook. Cook took the position that he would confront Seymour on the heretical doctrine that he was preaching. The services were in progress and people were testifying and providing some exhortation about the Lord. When Cook took the floor and began his harangue of telling the people that they were all incorrect in their approach and doctrine, he realized that it was he who was wrong. He found himself needing to ask God for forgiveness. There were others who had visited the Mission to straighten Pastor Seymour out but when they encountered him they were totally disarmed by his humble and gracious spirit. Many of them wound up joining the Mission.

Because of the Godly love that Seymour exuded it was easily observed by those who visited. Again Pastor Durham from Chicago gives his observations: “The first thing that impressed me, was the love and unity that prevailed in the meeting, and the heavenly sweetness that filled the very air that I breathed…I

121 Ibid 91
never felt the power and glory that I felt in the Azusa Street Mission.”

Pastor Seymour made it clear that it was his mission to prepare God’s people for service. He wanted to prepare them to go out and spread the gifts and word of God. Everyone was seen with equality as they worked in the ministry.

   It was remarked that Seymour differed from many other pastors in the way he lived out his belief in the equality of every person who gathered for worship at the mission. He invited them to a space made sacred both by the presence of God and by Seymour’s commitment to take seriously whatever gifts the people brought to share. He made no difference among black, white, rich or poor, male or female, lay or clergy.

Pastor Seymour led by presenting himself as a selfless and caring leader.

   “Pastor Seymour’s lack of selfishness set him apart from many around him. He believed that God was doing something new, and he wanted to be used in that new thing. When others looked at the revival, they, too, wanted to be part of it.”

Consistent with his desire to teach and train God’s people for service he maintained a sense of openness with the Mission that allowed other ministers and lay people to teach and preach.

\[\text{Ibid 91}\]
\[\text{Ibid 92}\]
\[\text{Ibid 93}\]
Leading Through Preaching

William Seymour realized the importance of the word of God. We are reminded by Jesus that: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4 NAS). Pastor Seymour preached regularly at the mission realizing the word of God was necessary for spiritual growth.

Several witnesses left descriptions of Seymour’s preaching style. One participant wrote of a service in which Seymour preached from Luke 4:1-19, ‘with demonstration of the Spirit and power, the saints drinking in the Word with shouts of praise and victory.’ Another wrote of a short fiery talk on some of the words of Isaiah that Seymour gave before closing with an altar call, the preacher’s invitation to the congregation to come forward and pray at the altar.\footnote{Ibid 115}

Pastor Seymour preached regularly at the mission, but he willingly allowed others to preach the Word also. This was again in line with his commitment to serve, to teach others to exercise their gifts equipping them to go out and start other missions, thereby spreading the word of God. In fact many works were spawned out of the Azusa Street Mission, in large part because of the selfless spirit of Pastor William Seymour. Because of Pastor William Seymour’s love for God he...
was able to serve God’s people. He was indeed a selfless, humble and caring servant of God.

CONCLUSION

In the Old Testament the Lord tells the children of Israel “to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Dt. 6:5) They were again reminded in Dt. 11:13 ….“that ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I commanded you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart…. It appears that this admonition from God was a safeguard, in part, to the children of Israel because if they failed to love God they would almost necessarily be carried away by self-indulgence and serving of idols.

Those kings who heeded God’s advice were successful in leading God’s people. A couple of examples are King David and King Josiah. Israel’s greatest king, King David was a man that God referred to “as a man after his own heart” (1 Sam 13:14). What a compliment for God to pay to David! Because of David’s dedication and love for God his life is an example of someone who was a godly shepherd. David demonstrated all of the characteristics that a pastor is called upon to demonstrate in ministering to God’s people. He was a shepherd who cared for the flock of God by feeding them God’s law and ensuring that Israel stayed away from idols. David could not have successfully led God’s people if he did not have the requisite love for God. Because of his love for God David became uniquely qualified to humbly lead, cultivate, instruct and care for God’s people. David could
not lead God’s people unless he took a position of humility to obey and follow God. Perhaps David was a man after God’s heart because he was willing to admit his mistakes.

Even though David had a great love for God and we would never imagine him transgressing God’s law, yet he did find himself committing adultery and having the woman’s husband killed. He confessed his sin to God and sought the mercy of God (Psalm 51). David realized that God was then and still is very gracious to us today. God delights in those who are willing to confess and forsake their evil ways and he will abundantly pardon. In fact he tells the house of Judah through the prophet Isaiah: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa 55:7). God is a God of grace.

David as a Godly king was willing to seek the grace of God to receive forgiveness for his sin. It is unfortunate that many of Israel’s kings found themselves drifting away from God and serving idols and were not as willing as David to seek the grace of God. Ahab was one such individual. On numerous occasions prophet after prophet warned Ahab about leading the nation into idol worship. Their message seemed to fall on deaf ears. Instead of repenting and seeking God’s grace Ahab was provoked to do more evil. It is one thing to make a mistake, but it is quite another to continue unrepentantly to commit more and more sin. God is a gracious God who realizes that we will make mistakes and he is gracious to forgive us if we are willing to confess and forsake our transgressions.
We are told in 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Pastors who make mistakes must realize that God’s grace is still available for them today—just as it was to David many years ago.

We get a picture of King Josiah in 2 Kings Chapter 22. He was eight years old when he began to reign. Prior to Josiah under the reign of Amon, Israel worshipped idols. The Bible refers to Amon as having done that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. His son Josiah, however, was intent on following the leadership of the Lord. Since Josiah had commissioned repairing the house of the Lord the carpenters, masons and builders were busily making those repairs. While they were making the repairs in the house of the Lord a discovery was made. One of the scribes discovered the law of God. Since the people under King Amon had followed idols, there ceased to be a need to refer to God’s law. However, when the law was delivered and read to King Josiah he realized that Israel had not kept the law and there was ensuing wrath—in a state of contrition—he tore his clothes.

Josiah wanted to know what could be done to receive the mercy of God. He realized that God was gracious. After having sent Huldah the prophetess to inquire of the Lord, the Lord sends Josiah a word:

But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the

LORD thus shall you say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Regarding the words which you have heard,

because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself

before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this
place and against its inhabitants that they should become a
desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and
wept before Me, I truly have heard you,’ declares the
LORD. Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers,
and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, neither
shall your eyes see all the evil which I will bring on this
place. So they brought back word to the king. (2Ki 22:18-20
NAS)
Josiah like King David wanted to follow God in a state of humility. Both David’s
and Josiah’s lives are instructive for pastors today who want to serve God
honorably in leading God’s people. Both of them were willing to seek the grace
and mercy of God.

It must be noted that a pastor cannot lead the flock of God unless the pastor
is providing that leadership through God. This point is proven in the Old
Testament time and time again. Israel’s kings who followed God were pleasing to
God and the sheep were prosperous and well fed and the sheep were not scattered.
These Godly kings had the divine protection of God. Again, in I Chronicles 14:16-
17 David serves as an example: “David therefore did as God commanded him: and
they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer. And the fame of
David went out into all lands; and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all
nations”(KJV). In addition to King David, Hezekiah another Godly king was
faced with a threat from an enemy nation. Israel, militarily, was no match for their
enemies the Assyrians. As a result of this threat King Hezekiah was in great
distress and fear and Israel prayed for the Lord to deliver them. Notice God’s response in 2 Kings 19:32-35:

> Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, ‘He shall not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; neither shall he come before it with a shield, nor throw up a mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come to this city,’ declares the LORD. ‘For I will defend this city to save it for my own sake and for my servant David’s sake.’ Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out, and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead. (2Ki 19:32-35 NAS)

Because of the king—shepherds following God they had God’s protection and the sheep were not scattered.

On the other hand those kings who failed to follow God’s leading were bad shepherds and the sheep were scattered and there seemed to be an open invitation for their enemies to invade. Those kings-shepherds who refused to follow God’s leading were weak and it was evident to the surrounding nations. “They were seen as a city without walls” (Ezek 38:11; Zech 2:4). This is a spiritual metaphor which speaks to a lack of protection—it speaks to a lack of strength to defend oneself from the attacks of the enemy. As a result of the lack of protection from their
enemies these bad king-shepherds could not feed the sheep nor could they keep them from scattering (Ez 34:1-8).

Pastors or potential pastors would do well to understand that it is not possible to offer acceptable leadership and service to God’s flock unless the pastor is being led by God. Any other type of leadership leaves one vulnerable to self-indulgence and other vices which are tantamount to idol worship—in today’s terms.

When we explore the pastor as teacher we are reminded of Apostle Peter’s words. In 1 Peter 5:2-3 with more focus on verse 3. Peter admonishes pastors to be aware of dishonest gain. Further, don’t present yourselves as lords over God’s people, but rather be the examples to stand before God’s people. Pastors are called by God to be the visible example before the flock of what a Godly life looks like. Jesus was the example before his disciples. Jesus modeled a Godly life at all times. Pastors are also called to be the light of sorts for those who want to see Christ. It is unacceptable for pastors to have it said of them as Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees: “Then spoke Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Mt 23:1-3).

The pastor as teacher must necessarily be concerned about the continuation of God’s work. There are many who are overly enamored with personalities. There is so much attention on the personality of some pastors that unfortunately with their demise the entire work would cease to exist. As a pastor an individual must
tirelessly guard against this self-centered phenomenon that fills many of our churches today. Jesus had a focus on preparing individuals who could carry on his work. Realizing that he was soon to depart someone had to continue to spread the gospel—someone had to continue to teach—someone had to continue to be an example. As pastors we are to emulate Jesus and prepare—teach and model for others to ensure the work of God continues.

Now we consider pastor as servant. The operative word for servant is humility. The person who exercises the humility that God requires must be willing to sacrifice their will to the performance of God’s will. It is not that the servant doesn’t have a will as some would suppose, but rather the servant is willing to subordinate his will to the will of the master. As I mentioned in an earlier section of this thesis, we see Jesus demonstrating this principle as he prays to God: ‘…let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as thou wilt’ (Mat 26:36-39 NAS). At a minimum pastor as servant is a contradiction of terms for many pastors today. They have no idea that they are to be servants first. Instead their focus is on being served. They view pastoring as an office of opportunity. They see it as a wonderful convenience where they are afforded prestige and honor and enjoy numerous non-biblical celebrations to put themselves on pedestals and coerce the flock to favor them with large sums of money. In contrast to the self-indulgent type of pastor I think of men like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and William Seymour.

I am not offering by any stretch of the imagination that Dietrich Bonhoeffer and William Seymour were perfect men. I am presenting these men as venerable examples of Godly men because they first loved God and demonstrated that love in
their service to God and his people. It goes back to that all important question that Jesus asks Peter in John 21:16: Do you love me? If you love me feed my sheep. This is the question that Jesus is asking every preacher or potential preacher today. Without the love for God it is impossible to offer Godly service to God’s people; it is impossible to shepherd-pastor God’s people.

Deitrich Bonhoeffer and William Seymour had a great love for God. In the case of Dietrich Bonhoeffer we see it in his dedication to serve God’s people. At a very terrible time in Germany’s history he presented himself as a shepherd who was willing to speak up for the disposed, disenfranchised and downtrodden. He did this at tremendous exposure to himself. Early on, he had some support from the pastors of the confessing church, but as pressure from Hitler increased many of his fellow clergy fell silent. As pressure and assaults continued and became more frequent and brazen they ran for cover. Instead of demonstrating hireling like behavior Bonhoeffer stood firm like a shepherd-pastor. He continued at great risk himself to humbly lead, instruct, nurture and care for God’s people.

He took seriously the injunction from Jesus to feed my sheep. He did feed God’s sheep with the word of God. He used the word of God to infuse them with trust in God. Bonhoeffer encouraged them to look beyond themselves; he pushed them to look to God. In preaching Bonhoeffer made God the center of attention for himself and his congregation. Bonhoeffer was very much aware of the power of God’s word. We hear Jesus using the word of God while he is in the wilderness being tempted by the devil as he offers: “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is
written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Lk 4:4).

As a pastor and servant of God Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a man of humility. As a child his family hoped that he would become an eminent psychiatrist following in the footsteps of his father. Psychiatry was, after all, a very respectable and lucrative field. Instead of following his father, Bonhoeffer chose to become a minister and theologian. He chose a life of service to others; a life which in the eyes of many goes unrequited. “When he expressed his desire to become a minister and theologian to his family they felt that he was taking a path of least resistance and that the church to which he planned to devote himself was a poor, feeble, boring, petty, and bourgeois institution.”126 Bonhoeffer was un-phased by their criticism! Fortunately Bonhoeffer was not driven by the desire to become a wealthy man, but rather he considered it a noble calling to offer himself as a servant of God and to serve God’s people. Although he came from a well to do family there was no indication that he ever attempted to exploit those under his charge to enrich himself. He was never accused of abusing or misleading those under his charge. His life’s desire was to do the will of God and serve God’s people. With his sentence pronounced for having participated in an assassination attempt against Hitler—his fate was sealed. All of his life, and at the very end at his execution, he submitted himself to, what he accepted as the will of God. He walked calmly to the gallows and was hanged.

William Seymour would probably be an unlikely candidate in the minds of many as someone God would choose to be so instrumental in inspiring a great charismatic movement and go on to become an outstanding pastor. Fortunately our criteria and God’s criteria are seldom the same in choosing individuals for service and spawning greatness. I am reminded of the scripture in 2 Corinthians 8:12 that informs us: “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

As a pastor William Seymour’s life serves as an example for many pastors today. Because he loved God, he, like Bonhoeffer took the command from Jesus seriously to feed his sheep. He devoted his life to feeding God’s sheep. He believed that his job was to prepare God’s people to go out and disciples others. He knew that they needed to be prepared—he felt that it was his calling as a pastor to prepare them by humbly leading, instructing, nurturing and caring for them. God allowed many people from all walks of life to come under his pastorate. Like Bonhoeffer, William Seymour realized the power of God’s word to transform lives and provide spiritual healing. It was with God’s word that he fed the flock.

William Seymour was beloved by many because he realized the importance of the responsibility of the pastor as teacher to the flock. As God added to the flock under his charge William Seymour understood that the work of God was about more than himself. Therefore he freely allowed others to share in carrying out the work of God. Others were allowed to preach and teach. Seymour realized that the work of God was and is today greater than one person. William Seymour’s focus extended beyond himself. He wanted as many people as possible to share in what
God was doing. This was not his movement, it was God’s work. Just as Jesus prepared his disciples, William Seymour realized that it was his mission to prepare God’s people to go out and disciple others. A pastor as teacher has to realize that the work of God must go on in the event of the untimely demise of the pastor. God’s work is too important to be totally dependent upon one man or woman. This mindset requires humility.

Humility was the hallmark of Jesus as he presented himself as a servant. Jesus demonstrated that he didn’t come to be served—but to serve. Serving others on behalf of God is noble work. William Seymour realized that he was a servant first. He realized that he was serving the people on behalf of God. One of the qualities that many were able to discern almost immediately upon meeting William Seymour was his gentle authentic spirit and sense of humility. There were many who came to his services with the intention of causing a disruption or straightening out his hermeneutics, but they almost always were disarmed by his quiet sense of humility. As a result, many of those persons became a part of the movement and sat under his pastorate. William Seymour was there to serve. Unlike many of the prosperity gospel preachers who feel that the congregation or flock is there to serve them. They become fat by fleecing the sheep and causing many to scatter in confusion. They never come to terms with the notion that a servant of God is a servant first.

Finally, I am in awe of this man who could have exploited this vast, vast movement to his advantage and made it all about himself after the numbers swelled and he became well known. He could have taken the path of the prosperity
preachers of today and enriched himself, but he chose to serve God with integrity and not violate the trust that God had in him and the trust those he pastored had in him.

Yes—a pastor—a Godly pastor is a faithful and authentic servant of God and is indeed one who humbly leads, instructs, nurtures and cares for God’s people. The question that Jesus asked Peter is relevant today. Jesus is putting this question to you if you are called upon to pastor, the question is: “Do you love me?” and if you love me, feed my sheep” (John 21:16). Without this love an individual becomes nothing more than a hireling who will engage in many unspeakable actions that are not consistent with the love of God. Without Godly love individuals cannot shepherd or pastor God’s people; they can only render hireling like service.

We see examples of hirelings all around us, we witness them in numerous ecclesiastical settings, we hear of them through the electronic and print media. Their focus is upon themselves; their motives are slanted toward self preservation instead of sacrifice for the sheep. They present themselves in numerous forms; one of those forms is that of prosperity gospel preachers. As Jesus mentioned, the hireling sees the wolf coming and flees. This fleeing is demonstrated by prosperity gospel preachers who enrich themselves at the expense of their flocks. Instead of encouraging their flock to trust and hope in the Lord they perform acts of spiritual legerdemain. The focus is craftily redirected from the Lord to themselves.

Finally, in spite of all of the problems that we see emerging in the church world I am reminded of the words of Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1 he advises:
“This is a true saying, if a man desires the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.” I would paraphrase this by saying that if a man or woman desires the office of a pastor he or she desires a good work.

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