

The Nexus between Shepherd Leadership and Modern Leadership Models: A Systematic Literature Review



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ABSTRACT: Leadership theorists' have time immemorial endeavoured to conceptualise the best leadership models that would meet the challenges of our ever-changing business landscape. Many theorists have postulated theories on human behaviour that seek to provide insight in effective leadership practices. Lamentably, few have sought to inquire what biblical ancient wisdom has to say on this very important subject. Thus, the purpose of this study is to conduct a systematic review of the shepherd metaphor as a leadership model. Data for this study were gathered from databases of Google Scholar, EBSCO, and JSTOR. A total of 83 articles were identified in these databases while 36 articles were discovered in other sources. 76 articles remained after deleting duplicates, 71 of these articles were examined, 37 articles were excluded, 34 complete articles were chosen to be evaluated, and after 13 complete articles have been excluded, 21 articles ultimately remained for inclusion in the synthesis. Overall, the review revealed that shepherd leadership is a potent metaphoric illustration of leadership relevant to contemporary leadership practice. The metaphor is effective today as it was some 2,000 years ago when it was first practiced.

KEYWORDS: Shepherd leadership, shepherd metaphor, leadership models; leadership styles.

1. INTRODUCTION

The shepherd and his staff have long been common symbols of leadership across cultures (Swalm, 2010). Although it is to be found in other sources such as in Egypt and Mesopotamia royal texts, there are over a thousand references to shepherds and their sheep in the Bible, making the shepherding motif the most prominent leadership metaphor in Scripture. The associations derived from the use of the shepherd metaphor included provision as in food and shelter, healing as in medicine, guidance or direction as in law, and protection as in military.

A shepherd refers to a keeper of sheep and the person who tends, guides, feeds, and guards the flocks (Resane, 2014). The shepherd metaphor derived from the shepherd, illustrates the relationship God has with his people, and by extension, leaders with their followers. It further illustrates how leaders ought to take care of their followers and its main practical lessons are on relationships, guidance, team-formation, providence and protection. The metaphor gained greater prominence when Jesus referred to himself as the good shepherd.

This study explores what the Bible says on shepherd leadership and how this can inform secular leadership practices. Is shepherd leadership relevant and applicable to modern leadership challenges, and how can it be reconciled with modern secular leadership models? Answers to this question require a deep and clear understanding of the history, development and characteristics of a shepherd as recorded in Scripture.

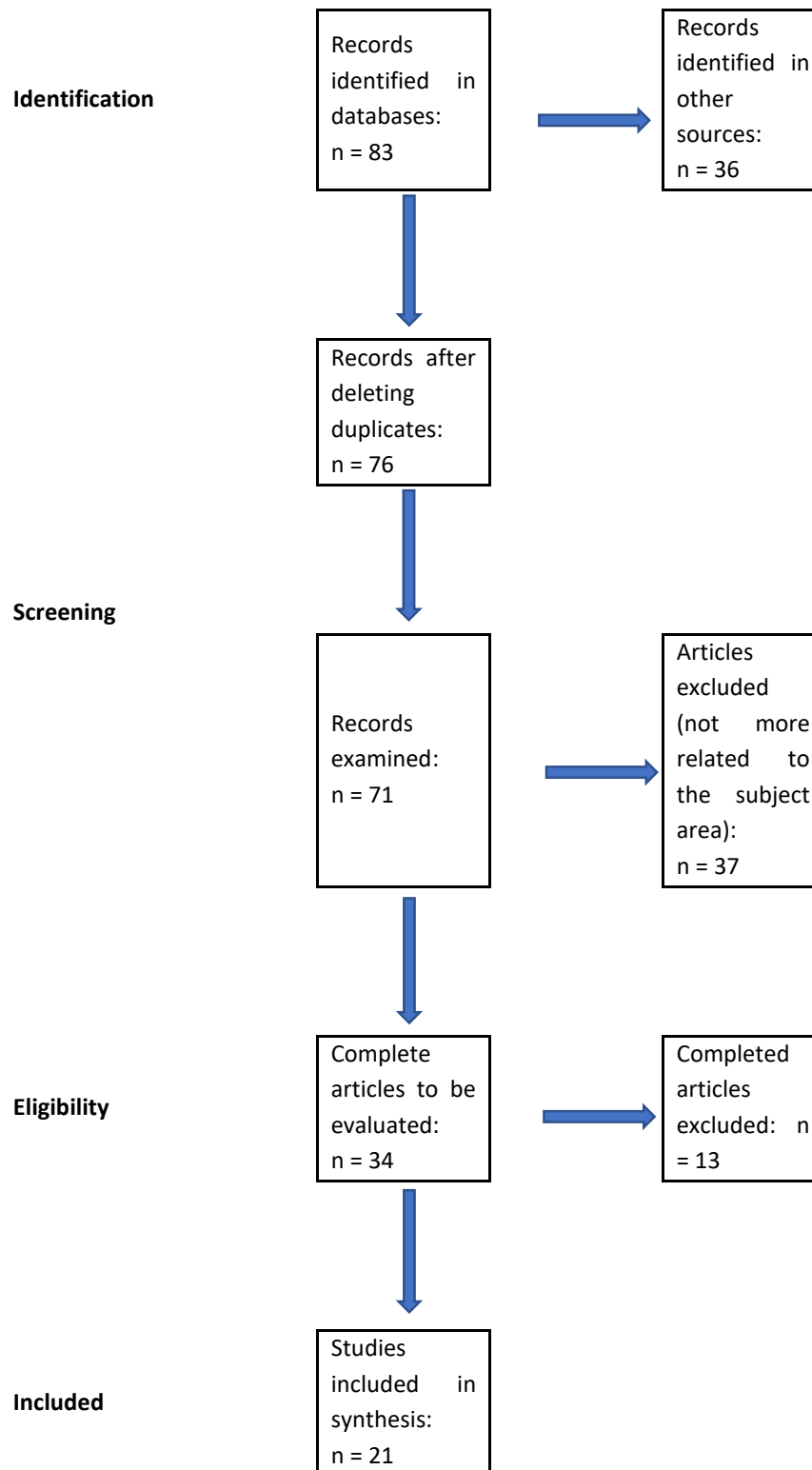
2. METHODOLOGY

In this systematic review, articles eligible for the study were derived from Google Scholar, EBSCO, and JSTOR. The researcher selected 21 articles from amongst 83 papers that were uncovered in the databases and were related to the object of study; the shepherd leadership metaphor. The result of the search were obtained from English-language articles published from 2000 – 2022. For the initial search, the search terms were as follows: (a) "Shepherd leadership", (b) "Leadership models" and (c) "Leadership

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metaphors.” Figure 1 displays the PRISMA based on the articles that were obtained based on the research objective. As displayed below, 21 of the original 83 articles were ultimately included in the investigation.

Figure 1 - PRISMA



3. RESULTS

As illustrated in PRISMA, the present study ultimately included 55 articles. Table 1 shows a summary of the researcher’s findings regarding the shepherd metaphor of leadership. According to the results of this study, the shepherd metaphor is a very powerful leadership model that educates, informs and underpins the rest of the secular leadership model. It is surprising how theorists and researchers have overlooked the vast knowledge and insight regarding leadership that ancient biblical wisdom has to offer. Shepherd leadership is a field of study that requires more research to unlock the secrets of effective leadership practices.

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Table 1: List of Articles Reviewed

Year	Author	Title of Study	Study Purpose	Subject
2000	Sharon Simmonds	Leading More Like Jesus	Explores the imagery of shepherding in the Bible	Church leadership
2004	Bill Pentak, Dr. Kevin Leman	The Way of the Shepherd	Discusses the 7 ancient secrets of managing productive people.	Managing productivity
2004	William Bee Donelson, Jr.	Shepherd Leadership	Addresses the question, "Is the biblical shepherd an appropriate Church leadership model?"	Church leadership
2007	W. Calvin Fields	7 Ancient Secrets to Managing Productive People	"The Way of the Shepherd" book review	Shepherd leadership
2007	Phillip Gene Carnes	Like sheep without a Shepherd	The shepherd metaphor & its primacy for biblical leadership	Shepherd metaphor
2014	Igbakua Iorjaah	Jesus' servant-shepherd leadership	Developing a leadership model	Shepherd leadership
2016	Nathan H. Gunter	For the Flock: Impetus for Shepherd Leadership in John 10	The principle of affective priority in shepherd leadership and its implications to Christian leadership	Shepherd leadership
2016	Ernest Frank Brodie, Jr.	The Leader as a Shepherd	A Case Study of Ecclesiastic, Business, and Education Leaders	Shepherd leadership
2019	Roger Pascoe	Biblical Models Of Christian Leadership: The Shepherd Model	Examining the Shepherd paradigm as all-embracing in that it represents all aspects of leadership	Church leadership
2020	Scott Addis	Leadership: The way of a shepherd	What characteristics makes an effective leader	Shepherd leadership
2020	Richard A. Roof	The Shepherd Metaphor of Leadership	Guidance for Contemporary Leadership from John 10.	Shepherd leadership
2020	Kelebogile T. Resane	Servant leadership and shepherd leadership	Explain how Servant and Shepherd leadership are expressed leadership in the church	Church leadership
2020	Blaine McCormick	Leader as Shepherd	Aligning vision, strategy and values	Shepherd leadership
2021	Peter Weedfald	Are you a Shepherd Leader?	How to strive to become formidable and effective shepherd leaders.	Leadership and shepherd leadership
2021	Holly Culhane	A Shepherd's vision	Consider this Shepherd leadership equation: Service + Sacrifice = Shepherd Leadership	Leadership as requiring both service and sacrifice
2021	John Truscott	The Leader as a Shepherd: Practical application	Ten principles from the shepherd image	Shepherd leadership
2022	Sammy Davies	The Shepherd Motif for Church Leadership	Relevance of the biblical Shepherd motif to pastoral ministry	Church leadership

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2022	John B. MacDonald	Servant –Shepherd Leader	Servant-leaders to becoming shepherd-leaders.	Shepherd leadership
2022	The Brethren Church	Servant or Shepherd Leadership	Explores the concept of Shepherd-Servant Leader	Shepherd-Servant Leadership
2022	Blaine McCormick	The Leader as Shepherd	Examines the characteristics of the shepherd leader	Shepherd leadership
2022	R. A. Roof	Lessons on Leadership from the Shepherd Metaphor	Lessons from the shepherd leadership motif	Shepherd leadership

4. LITERATURE REVIEW - THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

The researcher realised that most of the articles, if not all, written on shepherd leadership were based on Bible teachings. If the Bible is indeed spiritual more than it is secular as many have claimed, how can it explain and inform us on matters of leadership? Theologians respond to this question by claiming that the Bible is the very Word of God pertains to all matters of life (King James Bible, 1769/2009; 2 Peter 1:3). It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss whether or not the Bible is indeed God's Word. However, it would suffice to include a summary literature review on what theologians have written in their effort to authenticate and legitimise Bible teachings.

The first "evidence" theologians provide to prove that the Bible is divine is its formation and unity. From beginning to end, the Bible is unified around the single theme of the fall and redemption of humankind. This unity is considered a miracle given that it consists of 66 individual books, written in three different languages, on 3 different continents, over a period of approximately 1600 years, by more than 40 authors who came from different regions and varying walks of life (Schoenheit, 2005). Schoenheit (2005) argues that this unity is unique among all other books and is possible, if and only if the Bible is divine. Secondly, the Bible is a literature miracle in that it is the oldest book, an all-time best-seller, transcends all generations, and the only book to be translated in all languages and found in all regions of the world (Sumner, 2009). Thirdly, the Bible is indestructible. Despite suffering the most vicious attacks and attempts to destroy it, the Bible has withstood and outlasted its attackers and remains the world's most popular book (Wierwille, 1992). Fourthly, the Bible has extremely clear and detailed predictive prophecy than any other book. Theologians have documented about 6,200 prophecies, about 3,300 of which have been fulfilled. There can be no logical way to explain fulfilled prophecies in the Bible other than through divine origin and power (Schoenheit, 2005).

The fifth argument and one most relevant to this discussion, is that the Bible agrees with genuine knowledge, be it science, history, archaeology, sociology or medicine (Schoenheit, 2005). Summer (2009) claims that most of the so called scientific "discoveries" were long recorded in Scripture. The hydrological cycle has only been known in the last 100 years ago and yet the Bible in Ecclesiastes 1:7 refers to the cycle long before it was "discovered." It is not long ago when the Greeks believed that the earth was held on the shoulders of a god called Atlas, and Hindus believed that the earth was balanced on the back of a huge elephant. However, it was written in the Bible many centuries ago that God created the earth and hanged it over nothing! Job wrote, "God stretched out the northern sky and hung the earth in empty space" (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Job 26:7). Recently scientists "discovered" that there is a huge mass of water above the sky. Had they read the Bible they would have known how God during the creation, separated the waters below the sky from the waters above the sky. God commanded saying, "Let there be a dome to divide the water and to keep it in two separate places," and it was done. So God made a dome, and it separated the water under it from the water above it. He named the dome Sky (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Genesis 1:6-8). For centuries people believed that the earth is flat and the Church persecuted Galileo for claiming that it was round. Regardless, the Bible had long mentioned that the earth is spherical. "It is God who sits above the sphere of the earth (Isaiah 40:22). Theologians ask, "How can it be that the Bible contains knowledge that man is only recently 'discovering?'" They answer their question by claiming that God as Creator certainly knows all about his creation and human kind, and had all these details recorded in the Bible (Sanders, 2007). Authors that used the Bible as their main source of information wrote articles that the researcher accessed for this study. These authors seem to question the legitimacy and authority of the Bible.

5. THE NEED FOR A METAPHOR

Leadership has become extremely complex and increasingly challenging, resulting in an avalanche of literature on the subject that has created some literature stress (Carroll, 2006). What has been written on leadership is often difficult to conceptualise, let alone implement. As such, most leadership theories lack empirical evidence and are simply gunshots in the dark. There is need for clarity

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and simplification of the leadership phenomenon, and it is in this respect that metaphors have been particularly effective (Starr-Glass, 2005).

Lakoff (1993) define A metaphor is a figure of speech that describes one thing in relation to another. It is an implied comparison commonly employed by stating that one thing is the second thing. The expression “shepherd leadership” is metaphorical, with a leader being identified with a shepherd. The similarity between the two things being compared forms a connection that relays a large amount of information under a single symbolic identifier. Metaphors are now considered foundational, not only to language, but to human thought as well. They are extremely important because they condition and reveal our complex thought processes, which in turn directs our behaviour (Laniak, 2004).

The shepherd metaphor provides guidance on leadership and its effectiveness lies in how it illustrates more than how it instructs. Caine (2011) asserts that it is unlikely that a metaphor chosen from popular culture would convey the same breadth and depth of leadership as does the shepherd metaphor. Recent years have seen a growing interest in the use of metaphors. What is interesting however is to note is that the Bible is awash with various kinds of metaphors. Most of Jesus’ teachings were through metaphors and parables. Ancient Bible writers seem to have understood the potency of metaphors in communication abstract ideas, a realisation that modern teachers, philosophers and social scientists are now awakening to. Although the shepherd metaphor abounds in scripture, it is not popular in secular and contemporary literature. The past thirty years has only seen a handful of doctoral dissertations on the subject (Laniak, 2004). There is therefore, need for further exploring this powerful metaphor and bring it into mainstream literature.

6. THE SCRIPTURAL PORTRAIT OF A SHEPHERD

The shepherd metaphor is informative to leadership only when we have prior knowledge of what the Bible says about shepherds. The Bible has a lot to say on this subject considering that the shepherd imagery occurs over 500 times in the Bible, making it one of the most employed in Scripture (Swalm, 2010). The metaphor first reveals the characteristics of the relationship between God and his people. God is The Shepherd and his people are the sheep of his pasture. Secondly, the metaphor depicts the relationship between human leaders and their followers.

6.1. Old Testament Shepherds

Most notably in the Old Testament are numerous references to God as a shepherd who cares for his flock. Jacob on his deathbed refers to God as the one “who has been my shepherd all my life to this very day” (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Genesis 48:15). Talking about God, the prophet Isaiah says “He will feed his flock like a shepherd, gather the lambs in his arm and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those who have their young (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Isaiah 40:11). David says of God, “The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not be in want” (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Psalms 23:1).

God as The Shepherd shepherds his flock through his co-shepherds to whom he delegates leadership. Examples of God’s co-shepherds are two larger-than-life figures, Moses and David. It is interesting to note that both started out as shepherds as their job-on-training, before God called them to position of leadership. Moses led the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt after spending some 40 years as a shepherd. David, the man after God’s own heart, was out in the fields shepherding when the prophet Samuel came to anoint him as a future King. The background of these two men is what led to shepherding and leadership to be so synonymous with one another. When commissioning David, God introduces the two tasks as one saying; “You will be shepherd of my people Israel, the leader of Israel” (King James Bible, 1769/2009; 2 Samuel 5:2). However, many failed in their duties and God referred to these failed leaders as worthless shepherds that abandons his flock (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Zechariah 11:17). It is because of the failure of human leaders that God at the close of the Old Testament makes promise of the good shepherd to come, one who would lead God’s people justly and rightly (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Jeremiah 3:15, Ezekiel 34:23-24).

6.2. New Testament Shepherds

The Old Testament references to a shepherd as a leader continue right into the New Testament. If Psalm 23 is the Old Testament’s most well-known shepherding passage, then John 10 is the most well-known of the New Testament. When Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd” (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:11), he identifies himself with the good shepherd that God had promised in the Old Testament. The metaphor is not only fulfilled in Jesus, but finds it’s perpetuation in the leadership of the first century church. Paul in his farewell address to the elders of the Ephesian church instructs them to be, “shepherds of the church of God” (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Acts 20:28). Peter picks up the shepherd metaphor with a bold warning coupled with a promise:

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...be compassionate shepherds who tenderly care for God's flock and who feed them well, for you have the responsibility to guide, protect, and oversee... And when the Shepherd-King appears, you will win the victor's crown of glory that never fades away (King James Bible, 1769/2009; 1 Peter 5:2, 4).

Leaders who care for themselves as referred to as "shepherds who feed only themselves" (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Jude 12). The shepherd metaphor continues right into the last book of the Bible, when the "The lamb in the center near the throne will be their shepherd to lead them to springs filled with the water of life..." (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Revelation 7:17).

In the Old Testament God is the Shepherd, who delegates his authority to the shepherds of his people. Due to their failing in their duties, God strongly rebukes the false shepherds and makes promise of the good shepherd to come. In the New Testament, Jesus is the good shepherd, and the notion of good shepherding is extended to those who would lead in the church. Thus the breadth and depth of the shepherd metaphor extends throughout Scripture depicts how a leader should govern his followers.

7. DISCUSSION

Understanding the lessons of Scripture as regards to shepherd leadership and applying it to the non-agrarian contemporary contexts can yield considerable insight to guide modern leaders. Increasingly, many contemporary leadership books are now using Scripture as their theoretical framework (Swalm, 2010). Secular authors have written extensively on this subject and have addressed the question of the nature and characteristics of shepherd leadership and how they educate contemporary leadership practices.

7.1. People like Sheep need a Shepherd

The scriptures use the sheep metaphor to aptly describe human beings. Sheep wander aimlessly when left to themselves, need pasture and still waters but have to be led to it, and need protection from predators. This according to the Bible is a fitting description of humans. Humans like sheep are often dumb, vulnerable, and gullible and as such are desperately in need of leaders to guide, care, provide and protect them. History has time again revealed the sheepishness of mankind often demonstrated through how people are misled to unquestioningly performing deplorable acts that defile reason. In biblical times the idea of a flock of sheep without a shepherd would portray an utterly hopeless and helpless situation. The shepherd and sheep picture makes a strong case for the need for humans to be led. Thus, Truscott argues that the imagery of a shepherd and sheep is sufficient to justify the basic need for leadership.

The shepherd metaphor illustrates that regardless of how talented sheep might be, flock will always need good and strong leadership. It further illustrates that sheep cannot lead itself, and without a shepherd, there can be no flock (Thompson, 1997). This has implication for modern leadership in that, wherever there are groups of people there is need for good and strong leadership. Like sheep, people have a powerful flocking and need to belong instincts that a leader must tap into (Leman, 2004). Nature abhors a vacuum and when good and strong leadership is lacking, the void is often filled with mediocre opportunistic leadership.

7.2. Shepherd-leadership is Self-sacrificial

The greatest characteristic of a good shepherd as depicted in Scripture is self-sacrifice, which is often demonstrated through the shepherd's care, providence, guidance and protection of the flock. Five times in John 10, Jesus highlights this characteristic as one that qualifies him as the good shepherd (Monti, 2011). He says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:11). The "good" is not a simple adjective to indicate how well the shepherd performed, but depicted the shepherd's genuine care for the flock (Swalm, 2010). The good shepherd gladly and willingly sacrifices for the wellbeing of his flock (Neyrey, 2001).

Self-sacrifice requires the shepherd to be self-less by ensuring that the flock is first taken care of before the shepherd. In Ezekiel, God castigates the false leaders saying, "... Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Shouldn't the shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourself with the wool, you kill the fatlings, but you do not feed the sheep! (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Ezekiel 34:2-3). Unlike the false shepherds, the good shepherd is not in it for what he can acquire for himself, but in service for the benefit of the flock. A shepherd leader, "...leads from the heart ... not as a way to gain finances dishonestly, but as a way to eagerly and cheerfully serve (King James Bible, 1769/2009; 1 Peter 5:2). Carnes (2011) agrees with Peter and argues that leaders are to be servants and not bosses, ministers and not executives.

The sacrificial and selfless trait of the shepherd is a requirement for any leadership model. Genuine leaders are those that willingly experience personal sacrifice for the benefit of those they lead (Wright, 2012). The shepherd leadership model does not subscribe

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to those who ascend to position of leadership primarily for personal gain. It abhors leaders that privilege themselves while their flock remains malnourished and impoverished.

7.3. Shepherd-leaders show Selfless Love

A deeper study of John 10 suggests that the greater indicator of goodness of the shepherd is not merely self-sacrifice, but self-sacrifice motivated by selfless love. Jesus talks of calling his sheep by name (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:3); leading them to pasture (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:3-4); knowing his sheep and being known by them (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:14); laying down his life for the sheep (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:11, 14-15), and gathering his flock (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:16). All these are descriptive of a deep, enduring love-based relationship between the shepherd and the flock. Jesus does not state that the good shepherd merely lays down his life. Both times the phrase is used, Jesus adds an important qualifier; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Thus, the shepherd is “good” because he loves the sheep and consequently, its welfare is his primary concern (Bruce, 1983). The shepherd sacrificial service is founded on his love for the sheep. Self-less acts of sacrifice can be cold if they are not motivated by love (King James Bible, 1769/2009; 1 Corinthians 13:3).

The shepherd metaphor therefore, educates secular leadership models by illustrating that the leader’s love for his followers must precede his or her service. Any act of the leader that is not motivated by genuine love for followers might work in the short-term, but will not bear fruit in the long-term.

7.4. Shepherd-leaders are Visionaries that Lead by Example

Nelson Mandela (1995) once said:

A leader... is like a shepherd. He or she stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind.

However, the biblical shepherd does not follow after his sheep; rather he leads them from the front. The shepherd exercises “pull leadership” by going before the sheep while the sheep follow behind. Jesus illustrates this “pull leadership by saying:

... the sheep recognize the voice of the true Shepherd, for he calls his own by name and **leads them out**, for they belong to him. And when he has brought out all his sheep, **he walks ahead of them and they will follow him**, for they are familiar with his voice (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:3-4)

The shepherd does not manipulate the sheep and push it ahead; rather the sheep follow the shepherd out of their own freewill volition. Peter warns the shepherds of God’s people saying, “Don’t be controlling tyrants or manipulators, but lead others by your beautiful examples to the flock (King James Bible, 1769/2009; 1 Peter 5:3).

Leading from behind is akin to a puppeteer pulling the strings behind the scenes and make puppets dance. Leaders would do well to learn from the biblical shepherd in this regard. The shepherd illustrates that true and genuine leader will lead by example. A leader must know where he or she is leading followers, must get out in front and keep the flock on the move by use of persuasion rather than coercion (Leman, 2004). Modern leadership practices are often transactional rather than relational in that followers are often commandeered and manipulated in doing what the leader desires. According to Carnes (2011), leaders must lead by way of example saying, “Do as I do and not as I say.” Leman (2004) informs that true leaders don’t tell people what to do, but instead lead them to where they need to be. Leaders must be the example of what they want their followers to and become worthy models they followers would seek to emulate (MacDonald, 2022).

7.5. Shepherd-leaders create Trust among Followers

Sheep follow the good shepherd “because they know his voice” (John 10:4), implying that the shepherd develops intimate relationships with the sheep founded on trust. The shepherd can only lead when the sheep trust him. This relationship based on unwavering trust is developed over time through the shepherd constant leading the sheep to places of safety, pasture and still waters and his constant presence with the sheep (Swalm, 2010).

This shepherd-sheep trust based relationship informs modern leadership by illustrating that good and effective leadership is dependent upon the level of mutual trust that exists between the leader and followers. Leaders must be inspirational enough to communicate a clear vision of where they want to lead followers. Followers will expect a desirable outcome because the leader has demonstrated wisdom through the experience of previous journeys. When a leader cultivates a deep sense of trust among followers, this becomes the basis the leader influencing followers. The quality of the relationship between leaders and their followers is dependent upon the level of mutual trust resulting from the leader-follower exchange relationship building process (Goodwin, Whittington, Murray, & Nichols, 2011).

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7.6. Shepherd-leaders are Relational rather than Transactional

The shepherd metaphor illustrates that leadership is all about relationships. Jesus spoke of relationship when he said; “I am the good shepherd and I know my own and my own know me” (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:14). Truscott (2021) notes that shepherd would know each sheep by name and that the sheep would recognise their own shepherd’s call and follow him. The imagery is that of a leader knowing each follower and is known by them, and this implies intimate relationships. Therefore, the idea of personal recognition and intimacy is a widely known feature of the sheep-shepherd relationship (Tenney, 1981).

Research has revealed that the leader-follower intimate relationship is an essential characteristic of effective leadership (Bass, 1998). This is because leadership is more relational than transactional because it is a complex tapestry of personal interrelationship influenced by internal and external factors (Morgan, 1997). Begg and Prime (2004) posit that in order to be effective, leaders must take the time and energy to build solid and genuine relationships with those entrusted to their care. A leader will fail to impress his or her mark on followers unless he or she gets up-close and personal (Leman, 2004). Leaders must not treat followers as servants, objects or mere slaves, but each follower must intimately be acquainted with and treated as having intrinsic value. Unlike mechanistic models of leadership that emphasizes the efficiency of performing organizational tasks (George & Hill, 2000), the shepherd metaphor calls for organic models of leadership that take a more relational view of leadership.

7.7. The Shepherd Guides, Protects, Cares and Nourishes the Sheep

Resane (2014) explains that the Hebrew word for shepherding is often translated as feeding, and reflects the main functions of the shepherd to lead the sheep to pastures and water, to protect them from wild animals, and to strengthen and heal the sickly. When examined in detail, these functions illustrate the main functions of a leader.

The primary function of a shepherd was to lead the sheep to green pastures and still waters (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Psalms 23:1). Sheep were helpless creatures that their very life depended on the shepherd for both food and protection. Therefore, a shepherd who failed in his job by abandoning the sheep to starvation is used as imagery for human leaders who fail in their leadership responsibilities. God sternly rebukes false shepherds who were more interested in fulfilling their needs while abandoning the sheep.

Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Shouldn’t the shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, and you clothe yourself with the wool, you kill the fatlings, but you do not feed the sheep. ...the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed my sheep (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Ezekiel 34:2-3, 8)

The leader as a shepherd must “feed the flock,” meaning he must reasonably meet follower’s needs.

Another shepherd function was to protect the flock from wild animals (Ogereau, 2009). David’s confidence in confront the giant Goliath was gained from his experience as a shepherd. When King Saul tried to dissuade him, David confidently replied:

Your servant was keeping his father’s sheep and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him and struck him and rescued it out of his mouth. When he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, struck and killed him. Your servant struck both the lion and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine [Goliath] will be as one of them (King James Bible, 1769/2009; 1 Samuel 17:34-36)

Shepherding called for bravery and a legitimate shepherd would risk his life for the protection of the sheep. This illustrates that a leader must always stand in the gap to support and fight for his followers (Leman, 2004).

Foster (2010) highlights another of the shepherd’s function; that of strengthening and healing the sick and weak sheep, to bound up that which was broken, and to carry the weakened in his arms (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Ezekiel 34:4, Isaiah 40:11). The good shepherd is contrasted to false shepherds that led with force and cruelty and oppressed the sheep (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Ezekiel 34:4). A leader must therefore understand that strengthening and building up of followers is one of his or her main responsibilities.

Feeding and watering the sheep, protecting them from danger, caring for the weakly and the sickly are all metaphorical references to how true leaders always put followers before themselves. In the words of Jesus the good shepherd, a leader must always acts in a way that gives “abundant life” to follower (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:10). Shepherd leadership has much more to do with responsibility than with privilege or reward. When a leader demonstrates genuine love and concern by protecting and taking good care of followers, this endears the leader to followers and bolsters their loyalty and allegiance. When a leader strengths and builds up followers, this not only empowers them to perform their duties, but it also helps develop trust and intimate relationships between the leader and followers as qualities indispensable to good leadership. Life is like a mirror it reflects on

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what we do, and it is only when a leader gives out his or her best will followers reciprocate. Followers do not care what the leader knows or do, until they know how much he or she cares (Pentak, 2004).

It is evident that shepherd leadership is diametrically opposed to modern leaders who emphasize results at the expense of those that bring about the results. How often have we witnessed leaders who care more about assets, systems and procedures than the people that manage them? Leaders who are more concerned with golden eggs but hardly care for the goose that lays the eggs. Leman (2004) is right when he says that people are a leader's greatest competitive advantage.

7.8. Shepherd Leaders are Empathetic

The Scriptures highlights the shepherd's genuine love and care for the sheep that makes him empathetic. Empathy is the ability to be aware of and feel the need and challenges of others and lies at the heart of the shepherd leadership because the shepherd is always putting himself in the sheep's shoes.

Modern research agrees with shepherd leadership when it reveals that empathy is one of the most important leadership skill. Leaders that excel in social awareness are those that practice empathy and endeavour to understand follower's feelings and perspectives. When a leader practices empathy, he or she is able to personally identify with follower's challenges and consider their feelings when making decisions. Leaders without empathy fail to understand that in social contexts and interactions, they need to focus more on followers than themselves. An empathetic leader like a shepherd is better positioned to support followers and fight for them, thereby earning their respect, trust and loyalty.

7.9. Shepherds Unites the Flock

Talking about the unity of his flock, Jesus as the good shepherd said:

And I have other sheep that I will gather which are not of this ... flock. And I, their shepherd, must lead them too, and they will follow me and listen to my voice. And I will join them all into one flock with one shepherd (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:16)

The shepherd's focus on calling, caring for, protecting and providing for the sheep demonstrates his knowledge that there is strength in the collective. For the sake of unity, shepherds see to it that sheep hang around the flock and that dangerous elements are prevented from scattering the sheep away from the flock. When sheep wandered away from the flock, the shepherd would leave in search of the lost and bring them back into the unity of the fold.

Jesus taught on the unity of the flock through The Parable of the Lost Sheep. A shepherd had 100 lambs but one wandered away and was lost. The shepherd left the 99 lambs in search for that one lost lamb. He did not stop until he found it and with exuberant joy, he raised it up, placed it on his shoulders, and carrying it back with cheerful delight! Returning home, he called his friends and neighbours together saying, "Let's have a party! Come and celebrate with me the return of my lost lamb, it wandered away but I found it and brought it home" (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Luke 15:4-6). This parable illustrates the great love and concern that the shepherd had for even one lamb, and for the unity of the sheep. It is in the context of the unity of the flock that God strongly rebukes the false shepherds who had not united the sheep but scattered them to become fall prey to wild animals (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Ezekiel 34:4-8).

The shepherd metaphor illustrates one valuable lesson that modern leadership has always known; that there is strength in the collective. The effectiveness of teams has always been known and the adage "united we stand and divided we fall" is true in every social context (Stewart, Manz, & Sims, 1999). The unity of the flock is defined in the shepherd's pen within which only his sheep may gather (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 10:1-2). A leader has the responsibility to make the workplace a safe place for followers. The safety of the followers is not primarily from physical threats, but also protection from misinformation and anything that may weaken follower. A leader must also set and maintain appropriate ethical, moral, and other boundaries for the benefit of followers. This is critical because every relationship is defined and preserved by boundaries, and stepping over the boundaries weakens or destroys the leader-followers relationship.

7.10. The Rod of Correction

The shepherd would carry a staff and a shorter stick referred to as the "rod of correction." While the staff represents the shepherd's responsibility to direct the sheep, the rod represents the shepherd's responsibility to correct the sheep and use discipline as a teaching opportunity. Like sheep, people can be rebellious and stubborn and this requires appropriate doses of discipline and persuasion. A leader must be able to distinguishing between correction and punishment and be more inclined toward the former. Discipline and correction must be used as instructional exercises rather than punishment, and a leader must seize every opportunity to lovingly correct followers and help them grow. This requires a leader's empathy and when one falters,

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rather than humiliating and pounding one to the ground, the leader must point out the mistake as an opportunity to teach and build-up the one. A leader must understand and teach followers that to err is human and that it is fine to make mistakes, what is important is to learn from them. This lesson is critical to effective leadership because leaders that lead with the rod rather than the staff, and inflict pain on followers every time they err, will often fail to win follower's loyalty and allegiance required to lead (Leman, 2004).

7.11. The Heart of a Shepherd

Two were discussing what it takes to be a true shepherd. The one, a shepherd, insisted that the heart is the most important thing. He lamented, "My sons don't have the heart for this work, so they don't deserve the business. I'll sell the sheep to someone else before I let them go to those who don't care for them" (Laniak, 2007). The passion and force behind this shepherd's words reveal the depth of his genuine concern for the animals in his care. Such heart commitment to the well-being of a flock is the hallmark of a true shepherd leader.

John 10 depicts Jesus as the good shepherd willing to lay down his life for his sheep. In contrast to contemporary leadership models, the shepherd metaphor places greater emphasis on the leader's heart motivation than on the practical methodology and tactics of his or her leadership. Shepherd leadership as depicted in Scripture reflects not just behaviours, but motives, not just the hands but the heart of leadership (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). Peter admonishes those who have the responsibility to guide, protect and oversee others to consider leadership as a joyful pleasure and not a mere religious duty. They must lead from the heart:

... be compassionate shepherds who tenderly care for the flock and who feed them well, for you have the responsibility to guide, protect, and oversee. Consider it a joyous pleasure and not merely a religious duty. **Lead from the heart** ... not as a way to gain finances dishonestly but as a way to eagerly and cheerfully serve (King James Bible, 1769/2009; 1 Peter 5:2)

Leadership is not about doing, but the heart behind the doing, and great leaders have a heart for their followers manifested in a genuine desire to serve others (Leman, 2004). Although the skilful work of the leader's hands is demanded, it is his or her heart that is most required. If the leader wants followers to go above and beyond what is expected of them, he or she must demonstrate passion and heart. Therefore, the shepherd metaphor illustrates to modern leaders, the need to invest greater time cultivating a genuine loving heart for followers.

8. RECONCILING SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP TO MODERN LEADERSHIP MODELS

Leadership is easier to understand and apply through the understanding of the shepherd metaphor. Shepherd leadership is more practical and time-proven than secular wisdom often depicted as the eight rules, six levels, or fourteen habits of leadership. It underpins all leadership models in that it focuses on the why of leadership rather than the how. When the why of leadership is correctly set, the how of leadership naturally falls in place. Modern leadership models that seek to be effective align themselves with the lessons of the good shepherd metaphor, and demands that a leader be self-sacrificial, loving, moral and ethical, relational and group oriented, committed to the well-being of the team, humble, inclusive, and protective (Wright, 2012). A few of these leadership models and theories will now be discussed through the shepherd leadership paradigm.

8.1. Servant Leadership

Perhaps the one metaphor that is very close to the shepherd metaphor is that of a servant, timeless biblical leadership philosophy whose main emphasis is on the leader as a servant. Jesus taught the principles of servant leadership when performed a task that was a reserve of the lowest of slaves. Jesus explains his washing of the disciple's feet saying, "If I your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you must wash each other's feet. I have given you an example that you should follow" (King James Bible, 1769/2009; John 13:13-15). Jesus continued his teaching:

...The kings and men of authority in this world rule oppressively over their subjects, claiming that they do it for the good of the people...But this is not your calling. You will lead by a different model. The greatest one among you will live as one called to serve others without honour. The greatest honour and authority is reserved for the one who has a servant heart. The leaders who are served are the most important in your eyes, but in the kingdom, it is the servants who lead. Am I not here with you as one who serves you? (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Luke 22:25-27)

Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader* coined the phrase 'servant leadership'.

The servant-leader is servant first ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions ... (Greenleaf, 2010)

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The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme, and the shepherd leadership provides meaningful insight in striking a balance between these two extremes (Holly Culhane).

The fact that both the servant and shepherd model are biblical means that the shepherd leadership model is consistent with servant leadership (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). Both are sacrificial, although the shepherd metaphor is the primary leadership image while the servant is a modifier (Rardin, 2001). Since shepherd leadership can be helpful in developing a better understanding of how servant leadership can operate in the workplace, it does not replace servant leadership but only deepens it (McCormick & Davenport, 2004).

8.2. Charismatic Leadership Style

A shepherd must not only have vision of places of safety, greener pastures and still waters to lead his sheep to, but he must be charismatic enough for the sheep to follow him. This understanding is the basis for the inspirational, motivational and charismatic leadership model. Like a shepherd, a leader must have a clear vision that will inspire followers, and be able to effectively project an attractive future state to inspire followers (Bass & Riggio, 2010). An inspirational or charismatic leader is one that combines charm, interpersonal connection and persuasive communication to motivate others (Bryman, 1992). Like shepherds, charismatic leaders motivates by tapping into follower's emotions, thereby creating purpose, trust, and passion.

8.3. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership assumes that people are motivated when they are inspired and engaged, feel loved and cared for, and develop trust in their leader (Kotter, 1990). Followers will freely be committed to their leader if they trust him or her (Covey, 2009). This is exactly what shepherd leadership is all about! Trust, allegiance and loyalty are built through the shepherd's respect for the sheep, treating them with dignity, and showing genuine love and care for them. The shepherd metaphor illustrates transformational leadership when the leader's unfailing love warms up and transforms follower's hearts, thus enabling the leader gain buy-in, obedience and commitment among followers (Bass & Riggio, 2010). As earlier discussed, genuine love and care, relational trust, transformed hearts and vision are all hallmarks of the shepherd leadership model.

8.4. Authentic Leadership

Most definitions of authentic leadership emphasize positive values, trusting relationship with followers, consistency in words and actions, and a motivation based on values and beliefs rather than power (Yukl, 2010). A shepherd leader is an authentic leader because of his unmasked genuine love and care for followers.

8.5. Ethical and Value Based Leadership

The last two decades has witnessed an increased demand for ethical leadership. This follows the bankruptcy of several high-profile organisations because of senior leader's unethical decisions and behaviours. Ethical leadership is about doing the right things and treating people in the right way (Ciulla, 1998). It is akin to the golden rule; "Do unto others as you would want them do unto you," or the silver rule; "Don't do unto others what you don't want them do unto you." These are the principles of shepherd-leadership, which advocates for the leader to treat followers fairly with respect, and as ends in themselves, and never as means to ends (Johnson, 2011). The shepherd's sacrificial love demonstrated by his unending care, provision, guidance and protection for the sheep illustrates what ethical leadership is all about. Like ethical leaders, a shepherd leader would never do anything that is not in the best interest of those within his or her sphere of influence.

9. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHEPHERD AND SECULAR LEADERSHIP MODELS

Although the shepherd model underpins the rest of secular leadership models, there exist fundamental differences between them (Richards & Hoeldtke, 1980). The first difference is that most secular leadership models are manipulative and seek to influence, direct or control follower's actions in achieving organizational objectives (Nelson & Quick, 2000). While secular leadership models focuses on the leader power over followers by lording over them, shepherd leadership exercise power under through kindly gentle service.

...“The kings and men of authority in this world rule oppressively over their subjects, claiming that they do it for the good of the people...But this is not your calling. You will lead by a different model... (King James Bible, 1769/2009; Luke 22:25-26)

Shepherd leadership is relational and demonstrates genuine love as the greatest motivation and transformational force. It seeks to develop leader-follower unit of purpose and transform follower's hearts to the end that they cheerfully perform tasks out of their freewill volition. While secular leadership models get things done through people (Ware, 1989), shepherd leadership seeks to get things done in people through relationships and personal transformation (Olford, 1991).

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The second distinction is that secular leadership models are often transactional modelled after a contract, and seek to gain follower's commitment through promises of rewards or threats of punishments (Burns, 1978). They are based on a reciprocal transaction approach; you do that for me, I will do this for you. When leadership is modelled after a contract, it fails when a party fails to perform its part. The prospect of rewards and fear of retribution often motivates because it elicits positive or negative emotions in followers. Shepherd leadership on the other hand is relational with neither promises of rewards nor threats of repercussions, and followers do what they do because they reciprocate the leader's unwavering love and care for them. It is only when followers experience genuine love and care that they will go an extra mile in order to please their leader.

Lastly, shepherd leadership is a whole-person leadership model, and not simply a matter of thinking and doing things in a certain way. It is leadership that proceeds from a transformed heart and character that puts follower's interests first, and manifests itself in a consistent manner of leadership. It rests on the understanding that what we do does not define us, and that what we are is what is truly reflected in our behaviour. Shepherd leadership is therefore first becoming and then doing, and not doing to become. In other words, great and genuine leadership is a lifestyle, not a technique or method (Leman, 2004).

10. APPLICATION OF SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP IN THE SECULAR WORLD

The shepherd metaphor has mainly been developed in the context of and often associated with ecclesiastical and religious organizations and as such, many have assumed that its application is restricted to spiritual contexts. The Bible has the highest references to this metaphor, and the prophecies of the Old Testament pointed to Jesus Christ as the embodiment of all the qualities expected of a good shepherd. Another religious leader who has been deemed as a shepherd leader is the Islamic Prophet Mohammed. Adair (2022) defines a good shepherd as one who guides his sheep, unites them, works for their welfare without taking advantage of them and cares for each individual. He explains that what makes a great leader stand out is that like shepherds "lead from the front and lead by example. They must eschew arrogance, exude humility, be truthful, be prepared to share any hardship with followers, and provide both vision and dedication to achieving a task at hand." He sees these characteristics in the Prophet Muhammad, who not only cared for the well-being of every member of his flock, but also was uncompromising in his determination to protect the integrity of his mission.

However, a search for articles on how the shepherd metaphor of leadership has been applied outside religious contexts drew a blank. There are a few articles on how certain individual have exhibited shepherd leadership in the church and religious ministries, but none on how it has been applied in the secular and business world. Hunt (2005) argues that since its birth almost 2000 years ago, the application of Christianity and its teachings to modern business has been lacking and is relatively recent.

There is a tendency by most leader's to shun biblical teachings because on the general, they shun anything perceived to relate to the spiritual realm. Many would rather adopt Bill Gate approach to spiritual issues, who prefer to believe in a scientific approach that in a Creator. However, Gates believes that leaders can draw benefits from the application of religious teachings and its moral aspect in their organizations (Goodell, 2014). This would explain why secular leaders, who apply the shepherd metaphor, would rather not refer to themselves as shepherd leaders.

11. CONCLUSION

Although considered ancient, the Bible has in its use of the shepherd metaphor, concretized several powerful lessons on leadership for the modern non-agrarian societies. Despite the fact that the shepherd metaphor is primarily from ecclesiastic background, it is applicable in every social context (Brand, Draper, & England, 2003). The shepherd leadership is by far more complex and multifaceted than what contemporary societies may perceive. Depicted as a metaphor, shepherd leadership is more easily understood and applicable than purely philosophical leadership concepts. It helps us envision the relational and transformational aspects of any leadership model. The shepherd model well understood can operationalize leadership in ways that help illustrate a caring, self-sacrificial, team-oriented, strong and effective leadership. Leaders that act like shepherds, spending unhurried time, building deep trusting relationship, and continually seeking wisdom and direction to greener pastures, are more likely to create followers that are productive, happy, and committed. Some of the shepherd constructs such as the importance of the collective, the paternalistic and self-sacrificial nature of shepherd leadership, appear to conflict with secular leadership theories. However, the reconciliation of these differences offers unique insights into leadership as depicted by ancient wisdom. Therefore, today's leaders could do well to simply act like shepherds.

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