To continue with our talks from the Stake Women's Conference, please enjoy this excerpt from Annette Stacy. Her favorite title of Christ is "Shepherd" because of a beautiful handout given to her by an Institute teacher years ago. The story in the handout was originally published in the National Wool Grower by James K. Wallace in December 1949. This beautiful story is how Annette thinks of Him, loving her as a shepherd loves his sheep.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalms 23.1) "Sheep instinctively know," said D'Alphonso, "that they have been folded for the night, the shepherd has mapped out their grazing for the morrow. It may be that he will take them back over the same range; it may be that he will go to a new grazing ground. They do not worry. His guidance has been good in the past, and they have faith in the future because they know he has their well-being in view."

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. (Psalms 23:2) "Sheep graze from around sunrise until late morning. They then lie down for three or four hours and rest," said D'Alphonso. "When they are contentedly chewing their cuds, the shepherd knows they are putting on fat. Consequently, the good shepherd starts his flocks out in the early hours on the rougher herbage, moving on through the morning to the richer, sweeter grasses, finally coming with the band to a shady place for its forenoon rest in fine green pastures, for the best grazing of the day. Sheep, while resting in such happy surroundings, feel contentment."

He leadeth me beside the still waters. (Psalms 23:2) "Every shepherd knows," said the Basque, "that sheep do not like to drink gurgling water. There are many small springs high in the Holy Land, whose waters run down the valleys only to evaporate in the desert sun. Although the sheep need the water, they prefer not to drink from these fast-flowing streams. The shepherd must find a place where rocks or erosion have made a little pool, or else he fashions with his hands a pocket sufficient to hold at least a bucketful."

He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. (Psalms 23:3) "Holy Land sheep exceed in herding instinct the Spanish Merino or the French Rambouillet," D'Alphonso continued. "Each takes his place in the grazing line in the morning and keeps the same position throughout the day.

"During the day, however, a sheep may leave its place and go to the shepherd. Whereupon the shepherd stretches out his hand as the sheep approaches with expectant eyes and mild little baas. The shepherd rubs its nose and ears, scratches its chin, whispers affectionately in its ears. The sheep, meanwhile runs against his leg, or if the shepherd is sitting down, nibbles at his ear and rubs its cheek against his face. After a few minutes of this communion with the master, the sheep returns to its place in the feeding line."

Yea, though I walk through the Valley of Death, I will fear no evil… Thy rod and they staff they comfort me. (Psalms 23:4) "There is a valley of the shadow of death in the Holy Land. It is south of the Jericho Road leading from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and is a narrow defile through the mountain range. Climatic and grazing conditions make it necessary for the sheep to be moved

through this valley for seasonal feeding. The valley is four and a half miles long. Its sidewalls are over 1500 feet high in places and it is only 10 or 12 feet wide at the bottom. Travel through the valley is dangerous, because its floor, badly eroded by cloudbursts, has deep gullies. Actual footing on solid rock is so narrow in places that a sheep cannot turn around, and it is an unwritten law of shepherds that flocks must go up the valley in the morning hours and down towards the eventide, lest flocks meet in the defile. Mules have not been able to make the trip for centuries, but sheep and goat herders from earliest Old Testament days have maintained a passage for their stock.

"About halfway through the valley the walk crosses from one side to the other at a place where the path is cut in two by an eight-foot gully. One section of the path is about 18 inches higher than the other; the sheep must jump across it. The shepherd stands at this break and coaxes or forces the sheep to make the leap/ If the sheep slips and lands in the gully, the shepherd's staff is brought into play. The old-style crook is encircled around a large sheep's neck or a small sheep's chest, and it is lifted to safety. If a more modern narrow crook is used, the sheep is caught about the hoofs and lifted up to the walk.

"Many wild dogs lurk in the shadows of the valley looking for prey. After a band of sheep has entered the defile, the leader may come upon such a dog. Unable to retreat, the leader baas a warning. The shepherd, skilled in throwing his rod, hurls it at the dog and knocks it into the washed-out gully where it is easily killed. Thus the sheep have learned to fear no evil, even in the valley of the shadow of death for their master is there to aid them and protect them from harm."

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. (Psalms 23:5) "David's meaning is a simple one," said D'Alphonso, "when conditions on the Holy Land sheep ranges are known. Poisonous plants abound that are fatal to grazing animals. Each spring the shepherd must be constantly alert. When he finds the plants, he takes his mattock and goes on ahead of the flock, grubbing out every stock and root he can see. As he digs out the stocks, he lays them upon little pyres, some of which were built by shepherds in Old Testament days, and by the morrow they are dry enough to burn. In the meantime, the sheep are led into newly prepared pasture, which is now free from poisonous pants, and, in the presence of their deadly plant enemies, they eat in peace."

Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (Psalms 23:5) "At every sheepfold there is a big earthen bowl of olive oil and a large stone jar of water. As the sheep come in for the night they are led to a gate. The shepherd lays his rod across the top of the gateway just higher than the back of his sheep. As each sheep passes in single file, he quickly examines it for briers in the eyes, snags in the cheek, or scratches. When such conditions are found, he drops the rod across the sheep's back and it steps out of line.

"Each sheep's wounds are carefully cleaned. Then the shepherd dips his hand into the olive oil and anoints the injury. A large cup is dipped into the jar of water, kept cool by evaporation in the

unglazed pottery, and is brought out-never half full but always overflowing. The sheep will sink its nose into the water clear to the eyes, if fevered and drink until refreshed.

"When all the sheep are at rest, the shepherd lays his staff on the ground within reach in case it is needed for protection of the flock during the night, wraps himself in his heavy woolen robe and lies down across the gateway, facing the sheep, for his night's repose.

"So," concluded D'Alphonso, "after all the care and protection the shepherd has given it, a sheep may well soliloquize in the twilight, as translated into words by David:

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalms 23:6)