Four-footed ministers in formation: the four-footed ministers pastoral-care program training manual for dog ministry based on the CAM/PS model

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To George C. Felton,

My late husband who was the wind beneath my wings.

(1920-2008)
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vision by allowing a qualitative research project to be conducted at Maryville. I also wish to thank my supervisor, Sister Josephine Pelster, SSMO, the chaplain/director of spiritual services at Maryville, who went the extra mile to ensure that the dog-ministry teams had what we needed when we needed it.

Finally, my ministry partners, Barbara Miller and her Four-Footed Minister, Caterina, deserve a note of special thanks. We worked together week by week and learned a great deal from the project that is encapsulated in these pages. With our second Four-Footed Minister, my dog Alya, we made a dog-ministry program at Maryville a reality.

Thank you all for your help and assistance. I wish each of you all blessings on your life journey.
Looking into cyberspace to see if anything in dog ministry had been attempted since 2005, the author discovered that there still remained a void in the literature and in practice regarding an over-arching program integrating dogs into ministry in healthcare settings. Though research has demonstrated possible spiritual benefits from elder-dog interactions, a programmatic, comprehensive ministry *with* dogs rather than *to* them remains relatively unexplored.

However, what is needed is a formal program for dog ministry. A comprehensive program would enable chaplains to set up, launch, and maintain a “road-tested,” safe, effective, and repeatable program. A training manual on such a program will be a valuable resource for chaplains, and the print-based artifact included in the appendix defines such a program.

Section Two examines many of the other solutions possible to the problem of ministry *with* dogs rather than *to* them. Section Three describes the comprehensive program defined in the appendix that will enable healthcare facilities to risk implementing the use of dogs in ministry. Finally, Section Four will briefly discuss the qualitative research study undertaken to define the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.
Though there are many ministers and volunteers use their dogs in visiting patients/residents, the artifact formalizes and systematizes a comprehensive program for dog ministry ensuring that volunteers and professional teams have effective and consistent guidelines.

Building on elders’ strong attachment to pet(s), the training manual functions as a template for chaplains to enable them to design their own Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral Care Program. Our ultimate goal is stimulation of further research into dog ministry, a concept that is in its infancy. Those involved in this project hope that others will join them on the quest to provide better spiritual/pastoral care, enjoying the company of both two-legged and four-legged travelers on the road to God.
SECTION ONE

THE PROBLEM

And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
    I’m lonely—
    I’ll make me a world.
—James Weldon Johnson

Overview

God created the world with a word because he sought companionship. What follows is a discussion of current ministerial efforts that reflect the rising importance of animals in the lives of human beings. Further, this chapter defines the problem of using dogs in ministry and theorizes a reason as to why there has been little systematic implementation of using dogs in ministry, suggesting that there is a possible solution.

The State of Affairs: The Good News

The section taken from the poem “The Creation,” by James Weldon Johnson, expresses in few words a spirit of restless creativity moving within Roman Catholic and other Christian circles that helps to define the problem of using dogs in ministry. Recently in a homily given by Father Cantalamessa, the homilist of the papal household in his meditation on the phrase, “God is Love,” he stated that “love is, by nature, diffusivum sui, it tends to communicate itself.”¹ This indicates that the time might be right for the streams of the Christian religious tradition to take another look at the issue of how

the love of God is manifest in the created world, especially in the relationships of humans to animal/pet world.

Christianity has not always looked kindly on the relationship between human beings and their pets, nor has the ministerial community recognized the intense bond that can develop between a human person and their dog. An article on the phenomenon of the importance of faith communities connecting to those elders with pets appeared on the front page of the Wall Street Journal on Wednesday, March 10, 2004. The article begins with the story of a woman, Mary Wilkinson, who had not attended church for ten years but “went to church one Sunday in January. She sat in a back pew at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Stamford, Connecticut…. What drew Ms. Wilkinson back into the fold was a new monthly program the church introduced—Holy Communion for pets.”

The article goes on to describe the service and ends with the comment that “she plans to come back each month, rotating her eleven other cats.” Obviously, this community undertook to do something out of the ordinary, because it is unusual that such a story would have reached the front page of the illustrious Wall Street Journal unless there was something of note—an anomaly that needed some comment because it was unusual.

As the above article acknowledges, there is now increasing sensitivity within the United States’ culture to the importance of the connection of human beings to the natural world revealed in the bond that an individual has with his/her pets. The Humane Society of the United States, a secular organization, has published a work entitled, “Animal

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3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.
Protection Ministries: A Guide for Churches.’\textsuperscript{5} This short booklet highlights the efforts that local faith communities have undertaken within their own organizations to effect better treatment for animals. Through the stories of what various communities of faith are doing, the Humane Society spotlights this important ministry of service and compassion to the ‘least of the brethren,’ those who cannot do for themselves. In fact there is now new hope for those suffering over the death of their pet, as this document highlights the work of a particular faith community (Trinity Episcopal Church in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania) that reaches out to those who have lost a pet, providing the bereaved with grief counseling and a memorial garden for burial.\textsuperscript{6}

It is commendable that churches have stepped forward to tell their stories of involvement in ministry to animals and suggested ways that other faith communities can engage in ministry to domestic and wild animals. Through these stories, many faith communities provide suggestions as to how others can reach out to those who, for example, in hard times, feel they must give up their animal because they cannot afford the cost for food and care.\textsuperscript{7} The educational activities highlighted in the faith community stories deal with issues that often hide systemic evils such as factory farming.\textsuperscript{8} However important this work might be, this pamphlet still does not bring to the forefront how ministers might work with an animal in spiritual/pastoral care.


\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 17-19.
There are, however, dogs who are involved in individual ministerial efforts. Mosby, a Golden Retriever and a delightful email correspondent is the dog minister of the First Baptist Church in Littleton, Massachusetts. An article about him appeared in the *Boston Globe* of July 16, 2009. This article highlighted Mosby’s work at church where “[he] is a Baptist, but his ministry is inclusive.” He visits various hospitals and assisted-living centers but enjoys his Sundays when he greets individuals who come to the service. The pastor of the community, Reverend Deborah Blanchard commented that “[a] dog ministry breaks down barriers right away, [and] helps…[to] connect on a real level to offer comfort and love.” This faith community sees the value in using dogs in ministry and is acting on it.

Another dog who is working in “ministry” is the service dog, Lilly, whose story comes from the Roman Catholic community. Lilly is a Labrador-Brittany mix and the service dog for Father John Groner of Richland, Missouri. Father Groner suffers from Type I diabetes and it is Lilly who alerts him when his blood sugar is becoming dangerously low. Because of the severity of his condition, Father was faced with the possibility that he would have to give up active ministry. That was before Lilly came into his life. As an added bonus, the *Catholic Sentinel* article mentioned that several attendees at an Encounter Christ weekend connected to Lilly first, then to Father John. The dog was the social lubricator who made it all happen. Thus, this particular service dog functions in dog ministry, a ministry *with* dogs rather than *to* them.

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10 Ibid.

As the researcher began to update research already conducted on dog ministry, there appeared to have been some progress in actually finding a systematic program for the integration of dogs into ministry. When using online databases, there was only one article that hinted at the possibility of a formal dog-ministry program. Though just a passing reference, this article mentioned a faith-community’s use of dogs in ministry. The main thrust of the article was the issue of mainline-faith communities that were experiencing growth rather than decline because of their alignment with forces in the political realm. In discussing aspects of growth as evidenced by parish outreach activities, Mark I. Pinsky mentioned the fact that St. Luke’s United Methodist Church had a program of pet therapy entitled the “Canine Crusaders.” The St. Luke’s Construction Manual available online stated that this group supports “weekly visits to nursing homes by individuals and their trained dogs, who attend a course to learn how to handle their dogs and how to meet persons in a nursing home.” This program is facilitated by their founder, Ms. Valerie Almos, a dog trainer and former breeder. Her program requires volunteers to take a six-week course of

12 Martha S. Healy, *The God Dog Connection Pet Ministry* (Aiken, SC: The Design Group Press, 2008). Healy outlines a simple but incomplete program for using pets in ministry. Ministerial activities are both internally and externally focused. Because it is not a comprehensive program, there are many areas where there could be potential safety and liability problems. However, it is a good beginning for further exploration for using dogs in ministry.

13 James Davidson Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University, 2010). See Essay II where he discusses the political connection of many evangelical communities and the ramifications of such political connections.


on-the-job training to learn how to interact with individuals in care facilities. At the end of that time, the teams are tested and commissioned at a church service to enable them to work as Canine Crusaders.

In a phone interview conducted on April 7, 2011,\textsuperscript{16} the researcher discovered that the Canine Crusaders program provides obedience and agility training, and is not affiliated with any national/international organization. Liability insurance coverage is currently extended to the group by the church community. This program does not currently have written protocols, though there are volunteers who could develop them should something happen to the originator. It appears from the interview that the care offered is more of a “meet and greet” nature rather than spiritual/pastoral care in a formal sense. This leads one to wonder if there are not more Canine Crusader programs available in other parts of the United States. One might hope so\textsuperscript{17}.

\textbf{Conclusion: The Problem Defined}

It appears that there \textit{is} ministry both to and with dogs taking place within the United States. This chapter highlighted the good news that in an effort to minister to animals, the Humane Society of the United States has published a pamphlet that is available online to help faith communities take seriously their call to care for all of God’s creatures. As this organization is a national one with vast resources both in print and online, they have the power to reach many different faith communities while spreading the word about ministry to animals and to their owners.

\textsuperscript{16} Valerie Almos, phone interview by researcher, April 7, 2011.

\textsuperscript{17} Providence Hospital in Milwaukie, Oregon has limited protocols for the use of dogs in ministry. At this point in time, their program is in its infancy.
As to ministry with dogs, there are many bright spots that glimmer in the various parts of the United States where individual dogs, such as Mosby and Lilly, or groups of dog teams, such as the Canine Crusaders, call on those who are shut in or experiencing compromised health. Truly they are doing dog ministry in a valid but qualified sense.

In the final analysis of this brief look at ministry with dogs, there does not appear to be any national organization that has promoted a comprehensive program of ministry with dogs that is “road-tested,” safe, effective, and repeatable. Thus, the question might be asked, is such a program approach necessary, seeing as dogs have already found a niche in spiritual/pastoral care? The researcher, who conducted a qualitative research study with long-term elders in a nursing-home environment, believes that a comprehensive program is necessary. Part of the reason that none has been implemented is due to the fact that a vision for a comprehensive dog-ministry program has not been adequately explored nor formulated so that a national organization is able to promote it. Therefore, this study’s aim is to rectify this situation by proposing one type of comprehensive program that can serve as a template for ministry with dogs.
SECTION TWO

OTHER POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Then God raised his arm and he waved his hand
Over the sea and over the land.
And he said: Bring forth! Bring forth!
And quicker than God could drop his hand,
  Fishes and fowls
  And beasts and birds
Swam the rivers and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the woods,
And split the air with their wings.
  And God said: That’s good!

Then God walked around,
  And God looked around
On all that he had made,
  He looked at his sun,
  And he looked at his moon,
And he looked at his little stars;
  He looked on his world
  With all its living things,
And God said: I’m lonely still.
  —James Weldon Johnson, “The Creation”

Overview: Six Other Solutions to the Problem of Using Dogs in Ministry

God had a problem as his created world did not alleviate his loneliness; so God
looked for another solution. In this section, the researcher will discuss of the potential
value of dog ministry based on the importance of spiritual and pastoral care to
patients/residents in healthcare settings. Further, it will describe six other solutions that
surfaced when considering the integration of a canine-companion into ministry in a
programmatic way. These suggestions range from the casual interactions where a
spiritual/pastoral-care provider brings one’s dog with him/her on a spiritual/pastoral-care
visit to a dismissal of this form of ‘ministry’ because ministry is most properly defined as

a relationship of one person to another person and an animal does not belong in this relationship.

Before moving to a description of specific objections, it must be acknowledged that spiritual/pastoral care has many benefits for elder persons whose lives may seem burdensome and worthless to others. As spiritual/pastoral care often seems a luxury for healthcare facilities, it must also be acknowledged that elder persons are in the time of life when reflection on one’s situation can be either a positive experience as preparation for transitioning or a negative one, concentrating exclusively on aspects of life that have been lost. Finally, it is important to recognize that empirical studies have demonstrated the value of interactions between elders and dogs, though the area of spiritual benefits has not been extensively explored.

In support of spiritual/pastoral care for elders, Blessed John Paul II discussed the issues of old age in a letter specifically directed to those who, like him, looked more longingly to eternity than to the present life. He gave various examples from scripture as to the benefits of old age beginning with Abraham and continuing through the New Testament. He stated that “each stage of life has its own beauty and its own tasks.” He continued by addressing the prevailing cultural attitude that casts doubt upon the value of elder persons in light of their dependence on others and inability to be productive members of society. While elder dependence is a reality, elders are “the guardians of our collective memory, and thus the privileged interpreters of that body of ideals and common values which support and guide life in society.” He affirmed that elder lives

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2 Ibid., par. 10.
have meaning, a fact that is recognized by spiritual/pastoral-care providers who visit and comfort these individuals.³

As if to continue to champion the value of elder persons despite their suffering, Pope Benedict XVI confirmed the value of the suffering individual by building on his predecessor’s work. In his visit to the sick in Poland on May 27, 2006, Benedict complimented the sick by saying, “You teach us that there is no faith more profound, no hope more alive and no love more ardent than the faith, hope and love of a person who in the midst of suffering, places himself [herself] securely in God’s hands. May the human hands of those who care for you in the name of mercy be an extension of the open hands of God.”⁴ Thus, the holy work of the giver, the spiritual/pastoral-care provider, and the receiver, the suffering elder person, is affirmed and the reciprocal value of the mutual service accomplishes God’s will for the world.

Spiritual/pastoral-care providers who love dogs and use them in their work know from personal experience the values of their animal-assisted interventions but might not be aware that such interventions have been the topic of serious empirical study. One of the often-quoted foundational studies appeared in the Journal of Gerontological Nursing in 1991. Here Dr. Judith Gammonley and Judy Yates, building on the unpublished data assembled by L. Nebbe, listed five categories of animal-assisted therapies that could be used in a nursing-home environment to improve the lives of elders. One of the benefits mentioned in that list was that of spiritual care⁵. In reference to the spiritual category,

³ Ibid., par. 13.


Gammonley and Yates commented that the “animal provides a source for feeling a oneness with life and creation. Residents renew their spiritual energy through reminiscence, which is one method of preparation for death in the elderly.” It would appear that the scientific community supports the fact that animal-assisted interventions do have a spiritual dimension and therefore, the spiritual/pastoral-care provider is moving forward on solid ground when bringing a dog with them to do their holy work.

It seems as if the intervention of using dogs in spiritual/pastoral care with elder persons is something that is worth serious investigation. However, if the other solutions/objections outlined are valid, then the question becomes: is it necessary to set up a comprehensive program for dog ministry? While each of the objections to a comprehensive program has merit and reveals some of the problems encountered with dog ministry, it will be demonstrated that these objections, including possible denominational and biblical prohibition to the whole concept, can be reframed and the program under study provides effective answers.

Objection One: Casual Interactions with a Dog by a Spiritual/Pastoral-Care Provider Are Effective, Rendering a Program Approach Unnecessary

“Since many spiritual/pastoral-care providers already integrate their dogs into their spiritual-care activities, there is no need for a comprehensive program for dog ministry in healthcare settings.” This statement glosses over issues of safety and liability that a program is most likely to address and is of vital importance to a healthcare facility.

In our litigious society, personal and facility liability have become a major issue. In an early attempt at revealing the benefits and burdens of animal-assisted interventions,

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6 Ibid., 14.
Caroline Reiken, CVT (Certified Veterinary Technician), discussed the importance of the practitioner being aware of local and state regulations prior to inviting animal-assisted therapy teams into a healthcare facility. In her article entitled, “Animal Companion Programs: Pet Therapy in Nursing Homes,” written from a veterinary technician’s point of view, she warns that “some legal complications may be associated with pet-therapy programs. For example, liability for accidents may be a problem.”

As if to serve as a warning for those who want to visit with their dogs without being evaluated/registered with an organization specializing in pet visitation/therapy, Pet Partners®, a non-profit organization that focuses on research into the animal-human bond, devotes a section in their training course addressing this issue specifically.

It is important for Pet Partners Handlers to understand the risks involved in being a volunteer, whether it be as a Pet Partners Handler or in any other volunteer pursuit. As a Pet Partners Handler, you are personally and legally responsible for damages or injuries that are either caused by you or your animal, or suffered by you or your animal. Pet Partners® assumes no legal responsibility for the actions of you or your animal.

While Pet Partners® does carry a general liability-insurance policy on its registered Pet Partners® teams, it recommends that the individual carry additional liability insurance to protect that person from a lawsuit should an accident occur while on a visit. Therefore, those individuals who undertake dog ministry would do well to consider this risk very seriously if they are not going to go through the process of becoming registered with an organization.

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8 Note that the Delta Society changed their name officially in January 2011 to Pet Partners®. If documents were published under Delta’s name they are indicated as such. The website location will also change at some future date and the new website location will be noted.

Within *Pet Partners® Team Training Course Manual*, the section that describes the general liability insurance offered to Pet Partners®-registered teams notes that this policy covers *volunteer activities only* and does not cover a registered team if there is any substantial payment for services.\(^\text{10}\) It becomes imperative for those who undertake dog ministry professionally to investigate further with their facility or organization as to the issues of liability coverage if they choose to use a dog in their duties as a paid spiritual/pastoral-care provider. At this juncture, there has been no discussion of liability coverage for this type of work with a registering body. In undertaking two qualitative studies on dog ministry,\(^\text{11}\) the researcher maintained a personal liability policy (a rider on a homeowner’s policy) for the research in order to provide further liability coverage should an accident occur with a Four-Footed Minister.

Beyond the issues of liability, there is also the monumental concern of any healthcare facility for the safety of all parties involved. While the spiritual/pastoral-care provider may think that his or her dog is appropriately trained for the work they will undertake, the facility or organization has no independent evaluation to support this fact. Unless there is an independent assessment of the training that the team has received, the facility or organization leaves themselves open to potential lawsuits. This fact alone supports the necessity of having the team being independently evaluated to ensure the safety of the patients/residents, their families, staff, and the spiritual/pastoral-care provider. Such an evaluation can be accomplished through registration with a nationally recognized body. Pet Partners® provides a series of exams that their Pet Partners® teams

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\(^{10}\) Ibid., Unit 4-29.

\(^{11}\) One study was undertaken with independent elders in a parish setting (a qualitative study conducted for the Master of Arts in Applied Theology) and one was undertaken with long-term care residents in a nursing-home facility (the qualitative study for the doctoral degree).
must undergo every two years to remain registered and eligible for general liability insurance coverage. By using only Pet Partners®-registered teams, the facility can be assured that individual teams will operate at a level of safety that will ensure the maintenance of a safe environment.

From the above discussion, it becomes apparent that an unregistered or uncertified spiritual/pastoral-care provider who is accompanied by their dog on their rounds puts that individual and the facility at risk unless the adequate groundwork has been laid to address liability and safety issues. Moreover, the facility would do well to adopt a comprehensive program for dog ministry that has been demonstrated to be safe in order to protect itself from potential loss.

Objection Two: If the Healthcare Facility Incorporates a Resident Dog, A Program is Unnecessary

A second possible objection to canine-assisted ministry can be stated thusly: “Many healthcare facilities have resident dogs who interact at will with patients/residents, so there is no need for a systematic-program model for dog ministry.” While it appears that bringing in a dog who will reside in the healthcare facility might be better than volunteer visitation with dog teams, this course of action has its own set of problems.

A foundational study to discover the benefits of a resident dog who became a part of a community of elders was undertaken in 1981 in Melbourne, Australia. The research team consisted of I. M. and P. W. Salmon, R. Hogarth-Scott, and R. B. Lavelle in conjunction with the Joint Advisory Committee on Pets in Society (JACOPS). This team recruited an ex-Guide Dog named Honey to be a resident of the elder facility for a period of time. The resident population consisted of patients who were “frail, with an average
age of 80."\textsuperscript{12} This empirical study used a research design that administered a pre-test to determine the expectations of both the residents and staff, monitored the behavior of the 60 participants over the life of the study, and finally administered a post-study test that determined if the expectations were met.\textsuperscript{13} When the data was analyzed, the results validated what had already been confirmed by previous studies: “The dog had a positive effect on emotional well-being and physical activity of a significant number of patients.”\textsuperscript{14}

More importantly, this study determined that “although the positive benefits of the dog were anticipated and realized, the negative aspects were not.”\textsuperscript{15} Some of the challenges that were anticipated dealt with the dog’s upkeep and the dog “get[ting] in the way.”\textsuperscript{16} The only negative aspect that became significant was the fact that the dog often did get in the way. It is also significant that whereas the staff had anticipated an increase in their workload, in actuality, the dog’s presence decreased their workload.\textsuperscript{17} This proved to be a surprise to the researchers for they did not expect to find that the staff workload decreased and could not discover a reason for the perceived decline in workload.\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 22.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 23.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 79.
It is important to note that as the bulk of the population ages, healthcare facilities will find that they are encountering more challenges to do more with less. As the aged segment of the population will be using healthcare services more frequently, the challenge of a resident pet and its caregiver might be too much for a facility to absorb. Cusack and Smith recommend that the care of the animal could be written into the job description of a staff member. Following the suggestion given by Jules Cass in a personal communication, they recommend that “the person delegated should be in a lower-ranked position.” Working as a professional in a professional capacity, the spiritual/pastoral-care provider would not be a good choice for caretaker of a resident dog because of the wage cost involved.

Finally, even if the dog were appropriately trained with safeguards in place to protect and maintain a safe and healthy environment for the dog and others, there is the spiritual aspect to dog ministry that demands the foundational spiritual bond be created between the dog and the spiritual/pastoral-care provider, an issue that cannot be ignored. Because of the spiritual nature of the work itself, the dog must, in some respects, be responsive to the owner/handler on an exclusive basis. This is not totally possible given the nature of having a resident dog in the facility. In the final analysis, it must be acknowledged that while a resident dog appears to solve many problems by creating a homey environment that is pleasant for all concerned, it will not solve the

\[19\] Ibid.

\[20\] Jerilyn E. Felton, *Four-Footed Ministers: Their Theology of Presence* (Staarbrucken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller e.K., 2008), 72. This “bonding” quality necessary for effective spiritual/pastoral care was noted in a discussion from the researcher's first thesis, “Four-Footed Ministers: A Roman Catholic Lay Pastoral Care Model for the Use of Canine Companions,” 58-59.

\[21\] Cusack and Smith, 22.
problem of engaging a dog in ministry to elder persons because the bond needed to accomplish spiritual/pastoral care is not present.

Objection Three: The Use of Virtual Pets Makes Real Dogs Unnecessary

“Empirical research has demonstrated that virtual pets (videotapes or stuffed animals) can be useful in helping patients/residents feel comforted and loved. Therefore, the perspective that suggests using volunteers and their dogs in a comprehensive program of dog ministry may be unnecessary.” This third objection highlights elements that, if true, could point to an inexpensive way to provide comfort and care to elders in healthcare facilities without the expense or headaches that come with integrating live-animal teams.

In an article discussing the summary of research studies (1996 to 2006), M. L. Morrison reviewed the results of a study that had been conducted on the use of videotapes of animals to reduce psychological stress resulting from reading out loud.\(^2^2\) The Wells study took the resting rates of the heart and blood pressure of volunteer subjects, then divided them into groups where the individual would watch a video of a fish, bird, or primate; a popular soap opera; or stare at a blank television screen.\(^2^3\) After this the subjects were directed to read aloud a complex document; then their vital signs were checked again. The Wells study confirmed that while all subjects’ heart-rate and blood-pressure went up after the stressor, those who had viewed the videotape of the


animals did not rise as much as those who had watched the soap opera or stared at a blank TV screen. In the discussion of the results, Dr. Wells affirmed that the findings from this study “suggest that videotapes of certain animals can reduce cardiovascular responses to psychological stress….Overall, the results from this study suggest that the presence of animals in video form can have the same type of effect on cardiovascular dynamics as real live animals.”

Morison goes on to point out, “There are times when the applicability of the use of real animals in practice is prohibited or not practical; in these cases, virtual pet therapy may be helpful.” The use of virtual pets could be indicated if a patient/resident has a compromised immune system; is allergic to dogs; has a fear of dogs or a dislike of them; lives in a culture that reflects negatively on dogs; or is one who might be a risk to the animal’s wellbeing.

In his article, “Calling Dr. Dog: Therapy Dogs Have a Healing Touch,” Dr. Terry Stawar mentioned that the one important instance when the visit by a pet or therapy dog would appear to present a real risk is in the case of a patient/resident who is postoperative or in intensive care. At the time his article appeared (November 2000), he stated that the issue of whether or not to admit a visiting pet to intensive care was still a matter of debate. However, in a more recent article taken from the nursing journal, Critical Care

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24 Ibid., 212-213.
25 Ibid.
26 Morison, 55.
28 Ibid.
Nurse (2002), the authors’ conclusion moderated the stance of outright prohibition of animal visitation to intensive care with the claim that the benefits of a pet visit on the morale of the family as well as the patient is well-founded—even if the supporting evidence is anecdotal. 29 Even though there are situations where dog ministry might be contraindicated because of the status of the patient (such as a person in intensive care), the scientific community is leaning toward supporting the inclusion of live dogs into caring for health-compromised individuals, provided the appropriate safeguards are set up and maintained. 30

Many who are aged have lost connections to family due to distance or death, and often these individuals retreat into a world where a stuffed animal becomes their constant, caring companion. 31 In the recent qualitative research study on dog ministry conducted over a nine-month period at Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton, Oregon, it became evident that those individuals who had these stuffed animals seemed to become more and more isolated from the community. In contrast, the appearance of “the girls” (the two Four-Footed Ministers) at the facility over this same period brought residents together if for no other reason than to view them, pet them, and share a story about past interactions with dogs. While it is true that the use of a stuffed animal does bring some level of comfort to an individual, the Maryville study seems to indicate that this type of interaction isolates rather than draws the resident into community. Therefore, the

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31 Leonard Sweet, Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 241. Tragically, Sweet comments that the marketplace has provided an answer to the hunger for touch. It is satisfied by a throw pillow dubbed “The Hug.”
adoption of a comprehensive program for dog ministry would not only be an avenue to ensure that vulnerable residents remained connected to community through possible interactions with live dogs, but also that this ministry would have appropriate safety protocols in place, ensuring that both professionals and volunteers have a guidance policy for their spiritual/pastoral-care interactions.

Objection Four: Dogs-Only Makes It Exclusive; So What about Other Animals as Ministers?

A fourth objection is one that deals with exclusivity where “it seems that only dogs are targeted for animal-assisted ministry. This excludes many popular pets such as fish, birds, hamsters, cats, and rabbits that are often considered pets in a family system.” This is a valid objection that addresses the wider question of animal ministry, a ministry with animals rather than to them.

The most important aspect of this objection to dog ministry is that it highlights a quality that many domestic animals do not appear to possess—an innate connection to the human person. In his book, Dogs Never Lie About Love, Dr. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, a psychoanalyst, begins with a quotation from Charles Darwin taken from Origin of Species where Darwin states that “‘it is scarcely possible to doubt that the love of man [sic] has become instinctive in the dog.’”32 It appears that the quality of ‘dogness’ seems to include a special relationship to human beings. This is not something that many other family pets possess because of their life situation or personalities. Fish, for example, cannot develop a close relationship to humans because they cannot be handled, though

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they can provide a calming effect on people under stress. Animals such as birds and gerbils can become close to their human protectors, but their life situation requires that they be caged for their own safety as well as the maintenance of sanitary conditions for the human household. Finally, cats generally have introverted rather than extraverted personalities that make them less than-stellar as Four-Footed Minister candidates.

Dogs seem to sense the needs of their human, and this sense is often remarkable. One story that illustrates this sense of connectedness and empathy comes from Achern, Germany. Dr. Rupert Sheldrake mentioned the case of a Dachshund who would typically meet his owner, Rosemary, greeting her with enthusiasm. Unbeknownst to the dog, Rosemary had sustained an injury and the animal “reacted very differently. He just stood there without moving and looked at me. Slowly he came to me and held out his paw. I lay down on the sofa and, contrary to his normal behavior, he did not start jumping on me. He quietly lay down next to me as if to console me” The dog seemed to intuit that his human was hurt and came to comfort his ailing mistress.

Even more amazing is the story Dr. Sheldrake relates that illustrates the courageous act of a dog named William who saved his mistress from a suicide attempt. In this instance, the dog was sleeping while his human went into another room to prepare the pills she would take to end her life.

Suddenly William, her beloved English Springer Spaniel, jumped up, ran in front of her, and for the first time in the fifteen years of his life, ‘He snarled! His lips were pulled completely back to that he was almost unrecognizable,’ she says. ‘Horrified I replaced the bottle top and, genuinely afraid of the dog, I went back

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33 Wells, 209. Quoting the 1983 study by Katcher, Friedman, Beck, and Lynch.


35 Ibid.
into the room and sat on the sofa. William bounded after me, leaped on to me and began frantically licking my face, his whole body wagging.’

While many in the scientific community would argue that the above stories are mere anecdotal evidence and not worthy of serious consideration, Dr. Sheldrake points to an important fact: “Our relationships with our pets are based on a different set of attitudes, on I-thou relationships rather than the I-it approach encouraged by science.”

As was discussed earlier, for ministry with animals there needs to be a bond, a connection between the spiritual/pastoral-care provider and one’s animal. It is this bond that provides a springboard for spiritual/pastoral-care interventions with patients/residents in healthcare facilities. While many might argue for the inclusion of other types of animals into ministry, given the reality of conducting a preliminary-but-manageable study, the researcher chose what appears to be the best representative for a qualitative study into ministry with animals. Ministry using other domestic animals is wide-open to further qualitative and quantitative research studies.

Objection Five: Those Pesky ‘Bugs’ – Zoonoses

“Because of the risk of infection, there is no feasible way to integrate dogs into spiritual/pastoral-care visits to medically frail individuals. A program for volunteers and their dogs would be counterproductive to the goal of a healthy environment.” This objection is perhaps the strongest one that prevents healthcare facilities from investigating the use of animal-assisted interventions, much less those that involve ministry with dogs. It is the risk of infection that becomes a significant factor because of

36 Ibid., 99.
37 Ibid., 3.
the nature of the medically compromised population. However, as healthcare facilities are often faced with balancing benefits and burdens, it is important to investigate and evaluate real risks to the patient/resident population.

Sarah J. Brodie, Francis C. Biley, and Michael Shewring present a workable definition of zoonoses derived from the World Health Organization (1959, *Zoonosis Technical Report Series, No. 169*, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland, pg. 2) as “those diseases and infections naturally transmitted between vertebrate animals and man [sic].” As the threat of zoonoses is always present and those at greatest risk are individuals at the ends-of-the-life continuum, these diseases, if there are no protective protocols in place, do present a real concern about animal-assisted interventions because dogs “are probably the most widely used animals in pet therapy and seem to have a very positive therapeutic effect.” There is a caveat to this issue with dogs, however, as M. Morrison points out. “Although there are 65 zoonotic diseases, only infrequently have these concerns [in the implementation of animal-assisted interventions] been validated.”

Brodie, Biley, and Shewring provide a compilation of possible infectious diseases that relate to dogs, presenting what steps might be taken to prevent the transmission of disease. Almost without exception, each one of the diseases or infections listed can be managed through appropriate vaccination, the administration of monthly oral medication for fleas and heartworm, and proper regular health screenings performed by a veterinarian. Beyond the issue of screening and vaccination, good hygiene procedures

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38 Brodie, Biley, and Shewring, 445.
39 Ibid., 446.
40 Morrison, 58.
41 Brodie, Biley, and Shewring, 447.
required by state and federal regulations with special health directives mandated for the spiritual/pastoral-care teams can reduce the chance of infection to a level that provides a tolerable balance of benefit/risks. Writes Brodie, Biley, and Shewring,

It is unlikely that dogs pose a substantial threat of contamination to people involved in pet-therapy programmes. The probability of the pet itself being infected is reasonable; however, with simple measures any risk can be virtually eliminated and the pet can be easily treated. Transmission to humans is possible, yet the chain of transmission is very weak and easily broken.42

In fact, effective protocols for dog health are defined and guidelines can be found “in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) Guidelines for Animals in Health Care Institutions and the Delta Society’s (2003) Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Therapy.”43 Therefore, a comprehensive program that incorporates the healthcare facility’s infection-control policies and mandates special hygiene procedures for the visiting spiritual/pastoral-care provider teams can go a long way to ensuring a healthy environment where individuals can experience the benefits of animal-assisted interventions and its spiritual/pastoral component, dog ministry.

Objection Six: Can Dogs Truly Be Ministers?

“For every theological insight one pays a price. The more brilliant the insight, the more likely that other aspects of truth will be put into the shade, often to be overlooked and forgotten.”44

—Rev. Raymond E. Brown, SS

“The concept of ministry is most properly described as a ‘human-to-human’ interactions only and the integration of a canine-companion into the work of ministry

42 Ibid., 449.

43 Morrison, 58.

would appear to be contradictory to the tradition/Tradition of the Church and should not be undertaken on biblical and theological grounds.” This objection expresses more than meets the eye, because it reveals the importance of fruitful discussion of the more fundamental and troubling questions of the biblical and theological relationship of animals to humans and to God. Because of the complexity of this objection, it will be unpacked and discussed in three distinct areas: (1) a formulation of a definition of ministry and an apparent unwritten dismissal of animals acting as servants in ministry; (2) a discussion of the traditional theological history that obscured other voices with an alternate vision of creation; and finally, (3) a new understanding of those traditional thinkers and a proposal of a new paradigm of Creation based on a ‘system-sensitive’ worldview assessment validating other biblical and theological streams latent within the Christian/Catholic tradition. This system-sensitive worldview assessment invites these other voices to be heard because they are perceived to be more in tune with the current ‘level of existence’ in human psychological development. These are the voices that called and continue to call the human community to a wider vision of God’s creation and of ministry to that creation, a call that is biblically and theologically based.

Though these discussions may appear to lead away from the objection itself, they are, in actuality, foundational to understanding of the validity of dog ministry. They reveal possible answers to the question of whether or not such a ministry should be undertaken at all. For this reason, it is important to discover if there are unspoken warrants within the broader Christian tradition that would render an exploration into dog ministry a futile exercise because the Christian tradition is opposed to or, at best,
unsupportive toward the integration of canine-companions into the spiritual/pastoral care of patients/residents in healthcare facilities.

A Definition of ‘Ministry’ and the Apparent Dismissal of Animal ‘Servants’

In an effort to come to a working definition of ministry, the researcher began with her own religious tradition’s work on ministry. Important in this search was the document published in 2005 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that outlined the aspects of lay ecclesial ministry, synthesized from other preliminary studies. In this document, the U. S. Bishops defined ministry, specifically lay ecclesial ministry, by looking first into to what authorizes the human individual to act in service to the people of God. In language reminiscent of Martin Luther’s, the U. S. Bishops located this call to service in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. They explain the term ‘ministry’ as that service rendered by a lay individual, as distinguished from clerical authority. Lay ministry differs in essence because clerical authority originates from the Sacrament of Orders. Though lay ecclesial ministry is a participation in the threefold ministry of Christ, who is priest, prophet, and king, it would appear that working from a position of authority, sacraments, and law, ministerial activities should be properly narrowed to the interchange of service that occurs between ‘persons’, though this is not specifically stated.

45 This is ministerial service proper to lay persons in collaboration with the ordained.


47 Ibid., 21.

48 Ibid., 11.
In quoting an earlier Church document, the Bishops point to the fact that it was God’s infinite love that invited created persons to join the life to be found within the Triune God through the gateway, Jesus, Son of the Father. Given the fact that at the end of time, all creation, not just human beings, will be presented by Christ to the Father (1 Cor. 15: 24-28), one has to wonder if ever-evolving human theological reflection has arbitrarily limited God’s divine community by excluding His non-human creation.

Though the Bishops confirm that “in the broadest sense, ministry is to be understood as service (diakonia) and is the means for accomplishing mission in the communion of the Church,” there appears to be hope for the recognition of the importance of the created world’s ‘service’ outside of the human sphere of action. They state that the work of the Spirit continues within the community of believers that leads to new ministries and calls new ministers to use their gifts to serve God’s people. It would appear that this acknowledgement opens the way to an expansion of the definition of ministry to include the work of dog-ministerial teams, at least on the lay ministerial level. The Bishops recognize that “the Church’s experience of lay participation in Christ’s ministry is still maturing [within the realm of lay ministry itself].”

While this document provides a hopeful sign, the researcher’s long involvement in the subject of dog ministry has revealed that in the not-too-distant past, a dismissive

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49 Ibid., 17.
50 Ibid., 20.
51 Ibid., 26.
52 Ibid., 15.
attitude toward ministry with dogs seemed to be predominant. In the initial research laying the groundwork for the theoretical and theological basis for dog ministry, she discovered an article highlighting the local clergy’s connection with dogs within the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon. It revealed that dogs served their priestly companions as ‘greeters’ at Mass but beyond this, their presence had no connection to eucharistic activities. In short, the use of dogs in ministerial teams was characterized as being a “charming asset” that would lead one to conclude that ministry with dogs was not to be taken seriously. Moreover, in a study of Catholic priests conducted in England and Wales (2007), the researchers of that study found that ownership of dogs by clergy had a somewhat negative effect that was statistically significant. This could have been attributed to the fact that celibate clergy lived alone with no one to care for the animal when clerical duties necessitated leaving the dog, thus creating guilt and stress for the clergyman. This leads one to believe that dogs might not belong in ministry, at least with a clergy counterpart.

However, the question remains: Has the dismissive/negative attitude toward using dogs in ministry changed significantly and can a dog’s service to God’s people be properly acknowledged as ‘ministry’? Since the Roman Church moves very slowly in considering new theological insights, what would happen if it could be demonstrated that

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53 Jerilyn E. Felton, “Four-Footed Ministers: A Roman Catholic Lay Pastoral Care Model for the Use of Canine Companions in Ministry to the Elderly in Retirement Communities,” 86.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

other latent streams of Christian/Catholic thought that are “biblically based, and consistent with precedence” point to another perspective on ministry with animals?57

_A Traditional History of Hebrew and Greek Positions and the ‘A’ Trio of Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas_

It cannot be disputed that both philosophical and theological thought in the Roman Church was molded by Hebrew Scriptures and Greek thought expressed in the works of Aristotle, filtered through the Neo-Platonic work of St. Augustine, and finally given expression in the monumental works of St. Thomas Aquinas. While an exhaustive study of the development of theological tenants based on both the Hebrew scriptural picture of creation and the Greek notion of the ascendency of reason over and against the physical/animal world is not the aim here, this history is important. Thus, only broad outlines are attempted. These will inform the question of why other perspectives were overshadowed by the ‘A’ Trio.

To begin, the foundational threads of thought about the distinction between animals and humans can be traced in Hebrew scripture. In Hebrew scriptures, “nature plays a secondary role in reaction to the influence of pagan apotheosis of nature held by the peoples among whom the Israelites lived.”58 However, the story of creation held importance because it related the history of the human tribe that God chose to be His special possession.59 In the first creation story in Genesis 1, what God fashioned was so

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57 Deborah M. Jones, _The School of Compassion: A Roman Catholic Theology of Animals_ (Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, 2009), 5.


59 Ibid., 7.
far below God Himself that it could be viewed as being significantly separate from God and humans who were ‘made in God’s image.’ This position provided a philosophically oriented platform for later thinkers that could construct an intellectual solution to the problem of who God is rather than an existential solution of relationship of humans to the Divine.  

Therefore, creation was a possible subject for human intellectual investigation and study.

In discussing the story of how things came to be, Deborah Jones points to the fact that the Yahwist thread in Genesis 2, the second creation story, preserved along with a more metaphysical one told in Genesis 1, is a simpler and more concrete narration. She regrets the fact that this simpler story is “less emphasized in the Christian tradition” because the Genesis 2 story characterizes God as an artist where he creates all sentient beings from the same ‘stuff’, earth. This story tends to concentrate the focus on the similarity of humans and animals for “all creatures had within them the same ‘breath of life’. (Gen. 6:17)” In fact, Mary Phil Korsak in her translation of Genesis used the term ‘groundling’ for the human created, expressing its connection to the earth. Moreover, the term, ‘living soul(s),’ was used to designate human and other sentient beings created by

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61 Jones, 7.

62 Ibid., 12.

63 Ibid.

God. It would appear that within the developing Hebrew tradition, there is an intimate connection between humans and animals from the beginning because they are made of the same ‘stuff’.

For the Greeks, on the other hand, the emphasis of nature as non-rational implied that irrationality was a less-than quality in opposition to humans who possessed rationality. For, in Greek thought, reason was better than non-reason in the hierarchy of creation. Paradoxically, though the Greeks conceived of the divine residing in nature, they also “introduc[ed] rational and analytic philosophy which distance[d] human beings from non-rational nature.” Based on the further developments by Plato in separating matter and spirit, the biologist Aristotle affirmed that the lower (non-human sentient beings) should serve the higher (rational human beings). Therefore, animals were created for the good of human being because, based on his biological observations, Aristotle confirmed that all of nature’s components necessarily existed for a purpose and nothing had been created that did not have a proper end.

This ascendency of spirit over earth-bound matter became foundational for the Neo-Platonic trajectory of St. Augustine. Perhaps because of his struggles to deal with his own earthly passions, his philosophical development appeared to magnify the conflict between the animal and the spirit world, a world to which only humans could ascend if

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66 Hyland, 16.

67 Jones, 23.

68 Jones, 7.

69 Ibid., 26. See “Green philosophers before Christ,” 23-28 for complete discussion.
unencumbered by a fleshy body. For Augustine never questioned the assumptions of Greek philosophy that declared that “human beings [were] distinctly rational animals” and “it is right for reason to rule over unreason.”

Gillian Clark in the article discussing the Church Fathers and the rule of reason goes on to state that “‘reason’ means not just intellectual capacity, but the aspect of human beings which is closest to God, so it is both an intellectual and a spiritual force.” Given the suspicion of the material/fleshy world and armed with confirmation from Holy Scripture (Gal. 5:17), it became natural to extend the philosophical superiority of the rational humans into the theological realm. Here the separation of humans from other sentient beings depends on being rational for,

they [human beings] and they alone, have reason, [and] it follows (for him [Augustine]) that they must rule over non-human animals which lack reason. It also follows that non-human animals, lacking God’s image, are not in contact with God, and that God’s concern for non-rational sentient beings is restricted to their survival.

Further, Clark sums up Augustine’s argument pointing out that animals cannot have knowledge or be directed to happiness because they have no spiritual contact with God.

At the end of the essay, Clark wonders why Augustine never took up the philosophical question of the value of non-human sentient beings outside of their relationship to humans. Again, the strong anthropocentric leanings of Platonic thought obscured a vision of looking outward, for “Platonism, the dominant philosophy of late

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71 Ibid.

72 Ibid., 71.

73 Ibid., 78.
antiquity, discouraged attention to this complex and mutable world.” It was ‘the spiritual’ humanity that reigned supreme.

The intervening centuries between Augustine and Aquinas are often designated as the Dark Ages because of the chaos that reigned in Europe due to the fall of the Roman system of government and law. While the monasteries kept the light of learning alive during these tumultuous times, there also existed other avenues that preserved ancient manuscripts. These avenues are to be found the Arab world. In a somewhat roundabout manner, Greek thought came to European attention through this alternate avenue, because as Jones writes:

Among the inheritors of Aristotle’s theories are the Nestorian Christians who take them to Persia where they are developed by Arab thinkers. These then reintroduce them into Europe of the Middle Ages where St. Thomas Aquinas, among others, adapts them until a modified form of Aristotelianism becomes the bedrock of Catholic philosophy.75

It is from these sources that Aquinas began a systematic exploration and treatment of issues using his predecessors’ work, presenting their views on various existential questions, and then expounding upon his own ideas. Writes Jones, “Although not the first to do so, Thomas places man [sic] at the centre of his entire world-view, demoting nature merely to an instrumentalist role in human salvation.”76 Further, by using Holy Scripture to support his anthropocentric view (Ps. 8:8), and following Greek reasoning, Aquinas asserts that “all things are created for a purpose – their telos; for human beings it is to

74 Ibid.
76 Ibid., 45.
love God and return to him on death, for all else it is to serve man [sic] in this
endeavour.”

As if to characterize the important role Aquinas played in the development of
philosophical and theological systems, Willis Jenkins in his book, *Ecologies of Grace:
Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology*, casts Aquinas as a bridge builder. He
states that “Thomas integrates sanctification and creation as he combines Aristotelian
naturalism [with emphasis on bodily unity with the living principle] and Augustinian
mystical ascent [with its emphasis on escape from bodily flesh], which he does in order to
show how nature and grace work together that *humans may come to know God.*”

Though Jenkins comments that Aquinas “described a twofold integrity to creation: the
fundamental relation of all things to God, and the peculiar natures by which creatures
subsist in that relation,” it must be noted that the anthropocentric focus still remains; the
ultimate purpose of the created world is human salvation.

In addressing the issue of human salvation where adherence to a moral code of
action is paramount, many scholars have commented on Aquinas’ assertion that how the
human being treats animals is of more concern for its effects on the *human* and not the
animal. Deborah Jones notes that in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas noted that
humans should not be cruel to animals so that “the practice of it [cruelty] does not lead to
acting cruelly to other people, …’because harm done to [domestic] animals turns to the

77 Ibid.

University Press, 2008), 116-117. Note: the inserts and italics are mine.

79 Ibid., 120.
temporal loss of man,’ as these are counted as a person’s property.”80 The effect of cruelty toward animals on the humans is also noted by Paul Brett in his article “Compassion or Justice? What is Our Minimum Ethical Obligations to Animals?” He observes that much of Roman Catholic thought based on Aquinas could be characterized thusly: that “cruelty to animals is only sinful inasmuch as it degrades the perpetrator.”81 Finally, the champion of animal rights debate, Rev. Dr. Andrew Linzey, comments that “St. Thomas Aquinas was a great scholar and saint, but even he believed, quite erroneously, that God did not love animals for their own sakes, but only in so far as they were of use to human beings.”82 It is significant to note that these notations point to the underlying assumption that animals are the personal property of human beings and not the ‘property’ of God.83

In defining the boundary between what is animal and what is human, the human is characterized as being made in the *imago dei* and this term has become an ‘axiomatic’ entity within philosophic and theological circles within the Roman Church. Dorothy Yamamoto in her article, “Aquinas and Animals: Patrolling the Boundary?” confirms that “it is a cornerstone of Aquinas’ scheme that there is an absolute difference between animals and humans. Humans have reason, ‘intellectual nature’; animals have none, and

80 Jones, 45.


83 Jones, 131-197. Jones explores Par. 2415-2418 in the *Catechism* where animals are discussed, lumped into the area of personal property-human possessions.
are guided purely by instinct.”

Though this division may seem negative on the surface, Yamamoto hints that there could have been a line of inquiry to consider the question that if animals are so completely separated from humans, their value to their Creator might be independent of their perceived relationship to human beings. It appears that no traditional theologian followed this line of inquiry.

As ‘lower’ sentient beings had been established as legitimate subjects for human study, a new attitude emerged that glorified human endeavors to subdue the natural world through science. Human intellectual accomplishments triumphing over nature were ever expanding during the 17th and 18th centuries, and the natural world and its resources were viewed to be disposable, used by human beings based on their needs and whims.

Stories abound concerning the terrible cruelty human beings inflicted on animals in the name of science and one very famous one will illustrate this. Based on the ever-increasing attitude that science was going to provide all of the answers to humanity’s ills, it was Rene Descartes that best expressed the ultimate demotion of animals to the status of ‘things.’ He thought that dogs were nothing but machines (machine animata) that could not feel the pain of scientific experiments, and this fact was ample justification of their extreme mistreatment in the name of science.

As this sense of the sanctity of scientific truth grew, scientific experiments were touted as presenting ‘objective truth.’ Dr. Jeffrey Masson in his book, *Dogs Never Lie About Love*, points to the fact that the twenty-first-century culture relies too heavily on

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85 Ibid., 84.

86 Masson, 121.
truths revealed through scientific research, ignoring the fact that the totality of the phenomenon itself is obscured by the narrow focus of following the scientific method. Though science has apparently become the keeper of all that is true, other voices on the relationships between the human, the animal, and the Divine taken from the past are now being rediscovered and churchmen are taking notice of their alternate and ancient wisdom.

A New Paradigm of Creation: ‘System-Sensitive’ Worldview Assessment

Before discussing the alternate visions for creation and in an effort to further understand those church fathers and theologians whose writings continue to form the Roman clergy of today, it is important to investigate a theory taken from humanistic psychology that appears to make sense given the world situation. Though proposed as a theory, it resonates with lived experience, because it is here that one can discover not only a historical ‘why’ for the various theological viewpoints of the traditional thinkers discussed, but also understand more fully those whose voices sang and continue to sing a different hymn of creation.

The aim of this brief synopsis is to present suggestions defining a more experientially based theology of creation where a look at system-sensitive worldviews helps twenty-first-century Christians understand the nature of the connection of sentient beings to the Creator. Further, it is suggested that the worldview of the Roman Church

87 Ibid., xxi.

88 James Gaffney, “Can Catholic Morality Make Room for Animals?” Animals on the Agenda: Questions About Animals for Theology and Ethics, ed. Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto (Chicago: University of Illinois 1998). In this article, Gaffney, discusses seminarians who, in the past, used a text on moral theology by Fr. Joseph Ricaby. Here, Rickaby claimed humans had no moral responsibility to animals. This text is not used at Mt. Angel Seminary, St. Benedict, Oregon, where future priests are trained and spiritually formed.
has been hampered by the Aristotelian-Augustinian-Aquinian mode of theological reflection based on a worldview that does not reflect the world of today. Finally, it appears logical that humankind can no longer accept this inoperable worldview because humanity has moved beyond it. *The Christian Church as a body needs to look beyond traditional theologians to recover other historically relevant theological insights that offer a more holistic, inclusive, and circular connectivity that these other voices intone.* This discussion is foundational to the question of whether or not dog ministry has a place in ministry at all.

Though his article was published in the 1970s, Clare W. Graves proposed a psychological theory of evolution cataloguing the levels of existence that encompassed the hierarchy of needs proposed by Abraham H. Maslow. Graves, in his article entitled, “Levels of Existence: an Open System Theory of Values,” viewed the apparent progress/decline of human moral activities as a ladder of ever-evolving levels rather than a cyclic wave of highs and ultimate lows. His theory proposed:

I. That man’s [sic] nature is not a set thing, that it is ever emergent, and that it is an open system, not a closed system.

II. That man’s [sic] nature evolved by saccadic, quantum-like jumps from one steady state system to another.

III. That man’s [sic] values change from system to system, as his total psychology emerges in new form with each quantum-like jump to a new steady state of being.

He characterized these ever-evolving levels as increasing in complexity, where the first six levels relate to animal/human survival issues for both the individual and the community. The last two stages revealed that the truly ‘godlike’ qualities of the ‘fully

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90 Ibid., 132-133.
human’ were developing at a ‘being level’ because animal/human needs/problems had been met. It is in the quantum leap from the Sociocentric Existence (the sixth subsistence level) to the Cognitive Existence (the seventh but first being level) where humans separated themselves from the animals.\textsuperscript{91} “Man [sic], at the threshold of the seventh level, where so many political and cultural dissenters stand today, is at the threshold of being human…. He is no longer just another of nature’s species.”\textsuperscript{92}

Though this focus might seem to put the nail in the coffin to the development of a holistic interconnected vision that reconciles the animal, the human, and God, it opened the door for Michael Armour and Don Browning’s expansion of the Graves’ system into a structure that could be used to explain the traditional church history in terms of these ever-evolving, hierarchical systems of worldviews. Thus, in viewing the historical personages that have formed the basis for the philosophy and theology of the Church, Armour and Browning comment that:

In terms of dominating a culture, the first four systems are truly ancient. Systems One [physical survival of the individual-Graves Automatic] and Two [physical survival of the tribe-Graves Tribalistic] shaped the very earliest human societies…. System Three [the animalistic move to ‘power over’—Graves Egocentric] built the legendary empires of Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome. It then teamed with System Four [emphasis on rules and regulations—Graves Saintly] to govern the Middle Ages. As for System Four it gave us Greek philosophy, Hebrew and Roman law, systematic theology, medieval scholasticism, and the concept of constitutionalism in government….System Five [drive for material goods—Graves Materialistic] was laying the intellectual foundation for the modern world, giving us the concept of progress and leaving a lasting stamp on the scientific revolution.\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 141.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid. Italics are his.

\textsuperscript{93} Michael C. Armour and Don Browning, Systems-Sensitive Leadership: Empowering Diversity without Polarizing the Church (Joplin, MO: Collage Press Publishing, 2000), 45-46.
Armour and Browning go on to explain how System-Five thinking evolved into more complex levels, Systems Six [emphasis on the good of the community where all are equal—Graves Sociocentric] and Seven [emphasis on the individual feeling the connection to all of the created world—Graves Cognitive] continue to evolve to the point where humanity now seems to be moving, into a System Eight [a Gaia connection to all of creation for the good of the whole—Graves Experimentalistic]. Viewed through this lens for understanding worldview, it becomes apparent that the Aristotelian-Augustinian-Aquinan philosophical and theological discussions were characteristic, in many respects, of the worldview of their time—a System Three and System Four, perhaps with inklings of a System Five perspective. These worldviews no longer work for human beings in the twenty-first century because, as Graves pointed out, humanity has generally moved beyond this.

If it can be acknowledged that the twenty-first-century worldview has indeed reached a Gaia level, then it is important to discover what voices within the Christian tradition speak to this perspective. Historically, there are several voices that sing this alternate hymn of creation both within and outside of the Roman Church.

The Catholic connection

Building on scripture as it addresses the role of the Word of God in the creation and maintenance of the universe, St. Athanasius (296-373, a characteristically System Three era) discussed in his “Discourse Against the Heathen,” the way that the Word as described in John 1:1 harmonized all creation:

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94 Ibid. Corresponding Graves designations taken from Table 1, p. 136.

95 Graves, 155.
For just as though some musician, having tuned a lyre, and by his art adjusted the high notes to the low, and the intermediate notes to the rest, were to produce a single tune as the result, so the Wisdom of God, handling the Universe as a lyre, … produces well and fittingly, as the result, the unity of the universe and of its order, Himself remaining unmoved with the Father while He moves all things by His organizing action as seems good for each to His own Father.\textsuperscript{96}

Within this statement, it becomes evident that Athanasius saw the unity of the created world within Christ, for all came into being because of Him, each according to its own mode of existence, connected to Christ and through Christ to the Father. Athanasius goes on to use the example of a “great choir”\textsuperscript{97} where each person sings his own part with his unique voice, but what is produced is a blended work of sound.

Another alternate Catholic voice that spoke to the unity of creation, though tempered by the traditional Catholic thought in a characteristically System-Four era of the twelfth century, was St. Hildegard of Bingen. In the first of two addresses given a week apart (September 1, 2010 and September 8, 2010), Pope Benedict XVI heralded her sanctity and her wisdom stating, “During the centuries we customarily call the Middle Ages, certain female figures also stood out for the sanctity of their lives and the richness of their teachings.”\textsuperscript{98} Benedict continued his discourse on her in his second general audience. He spoke more specifically about her writings commenting on how her \textit{Liber divinorum operum} (Book of Divine Works) “ … underscores the profound relationship between man [sic] and God and reminds us that all creation, of which man [sic] is the


\textsuperscript{97} Ibid. par. 43, #1

\textsuperscript{98} Benedict XVI, “Hildegard of Bingen: Exemplary Ministry of Authority,” http://www.visnews_en-bounces@mlists.vatican.va (accessed September 2, 2010).
apex, receives life from the Trinity.” Deborah Jones commenting on St. Hildegard states that it is regrettable that her work did not affect the subsequent theological development of the Church in her time, but it appears encouraging that the current Holy Father is now rediscovering a feminine voice that speaks of the unity of all creation in God.

Finally, St. Philip Neri (1515-1595), a contemporary of Martin Luther, is a little-known Catholic saint who advocated kind treatment toward animals. Animals seemed to gravitate toward him. He was very conscious of their welfare; a trait that must have caused him difficulty for the birds he freed would stay with him by their own choice. Jones goes on to comment that he gave up eating meat out of concern for the animals slaughtered and not necessarily to follow a religious practice of mortification that was the custom of the time. It is perhaps because of his works of ordinary kindness to the ‘least of the brethren’ that Philip is the only saint, other than St. Francis, to be named in the Catechism of the Catholic Church when discussing the issue the human beings’ treatment of animals.

The Protestant connection of Luther; Wesley; and John Wollman, a Quaker

In compendium of the series of lectures given at Luther College in 1956, Roland H. Bainton discussed the musings on simple things written by Martin Luther where

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100 Jones, 66.

101 Ibid., 75.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.
Luther used his dog’s activities to learn moral lessons. In the work “Table Talk,” Bainton points out that Luther commented, “‘Look at that dog,’ said he of Toelpel. ‘There is nothing wrong with his whole body. He has glistening eyes, stout legs, beautiful white teeth, and a good stomach. All such gifts of the body God bestows on unreasoning animal.’” Further, Luther commented that human beings should be subject to God as Toelpel was to his young son, Martin. However, there appears to be a significant shift from the System-Four worldview to a more characteristic System-Eight sensibility in Luther’s comments when asked if Toelpel would join him in heaven. He answered, “Certainly, for there the earth will not be without form and void. Peter said that the last day would be the restitution of all things [2 Peter 3:13]. God will create a new heaven and a new earth and new Toelpels with hide of gold and fur of silver. God will be all in all.”

Scott Ickert, in his article, “Luther and Animals: Subject to Adam’s Fall?” writes that “Luther seems to suggest, therefore, that the significance of the original paradisal harmony lies in its anticipatory function, pointing forward to the final and perfect fulfillment of God’s promise and intention for everything created and called good. Therefore the treatment and use of animals must be set against the hope for the new creation where Christ will be all in all.”

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105 Ibid., 8.

106 Ibid., 9.

107 Scott Ickert, “Luther and Animals: Subject to Adam's Fall?” in Animals on the Agenda: Questions About Animals for Theology and Ethics, ed. Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto (Chicago: University of Illinois 1998), 99.
Moving forward into the eighteenth century, characteristically a System-Five era, another Reformer, John Wesley, took a stance on animals that was also ahead of his day, according to Tony Campolo. Campolo writes:

Wesley despised any cruelty to dogs, horses, and other creatures. As the Wesleyan revival unfolded, people in London even said, ‘We know who has been converted by the ways in which they treat dogs.’ In those days dogs roamed the streets of London and were not regarded as being worthy of concern. The Wesleyan converts, however, took compassion on the dogs and worked to have them treated in more humane ways.”

As if affirming the forward-looking sensitivity of his predecessor, Luther, Wesley also concluded, when looking at the new creation that God would bring into being at the end of time, that not only would animals have an intimate role in that new creation but also that this vision required human beings to follow God’s example by treating animals compassionately in the here and now. This seemed to indicate that animals had value apart from their relationship to humans. He preached “that animals will be with us in eternity.” However, Wesley balanced this forward-looking vision with the traditional qualifier as he continued to affirm, “God regards his meanest creatures much; but he regards man [sic.] much more.”

A contemporary of Wesley’s time, but living in the Colonies, John Wollman, “a Quaker reformer in Mount Holly, New Jersey, began hearing troubling stories about the English roads.” Rather than focusing on the upkeep of the main thoroughfares,

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109 Ibid., 56. Italics are his.


Woolman’s concern in this matter was over the issue of the abuse of horses used for ‘flying coaches,’ a mode of transportation based on speed rather than on the horses’ well-being. Historian, Geoffrey Plank reports, “Woolman was unlike most other Americans, however, in his concerns he expressed for animals.” As if ahead of his time with inklings of a System-Eight perspective though the hierarchical, biblical ‘chain of being’ was still implied, Woolman perceived that in an economy based on commercial agriculture, there would be a greater chance for the abuse of animals whose very lives had often been sacrificed for the produce to be taken to the city markets. He reflected a sensitivity that “assigned the animals in every landscape cosmological significance and [he] encouraged everyone, children and adults alike, to keep watch over the ‘brute creatures.’” He was taking a step in the right direction.

Peaceful co-existence: Traditional and “experimentalistic” perspectives

Reflecting the beginnings of the Gaia sensitivity in the world today, the work of Reverend J. R. Hyland, an Evangelical, reinterprets biblical passages with an ecological sensitivity. Through an exegetical treatment of key biblical verses, she re-examined these passages that had been used for many centuries to support the ‘domination over’ paradigm in biblical circles. In discussing the creation story, she makes the observation that “the Bible tells a story of regression, not progression.” Rather than supporting the evolutionary theory of ‘progress’ to a higher state, she points to the biblical history where

112 Ibid., 572.
113 Ibid., 573.
114 Hyland, 16.
“Genesis tells the story of creatures whose natural condition is one of peaceful coexistence with their own and all other species,” a condition that is lost because of the human abuse of freedom.\textsuperscript{115} In this system, “the man and woman were loving and trusted caregivers for the creatures among whom they lived. Theirs was a relationship of trust and leadership—not domination or exploitation.”\textsuperscript{116} This expression appears to support both the similarity of humans and animals (physically) but maintains the difference between humans and animals on the ‘spiritual plane’ because humans fill the role of stewards in this scenario.

Within the Roman Church, it appears that Catholic sensitivities have been moving into Gaia-consciousness that is more reminiscent of a System Seven-Eight sensibility. It is interesting to note that the members of the organization PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) celebrated the fact that Blessed John Paul II proclaimed that “the animals possess a soul and men [sic] must love and feel solidarity with our smaller brethren,” a sensibility reflected in both Wesley and Woolman.\textsuperscript{117}

Though Blessed John Paul II’s encyclical \textit{Evangelium Vitae}, the Gospel of Life, discussed the sanctity of human life, John Berkman in his article, “Is the Consistent Ethic of Life Consistent without a Concern for Animals?” points out that Blessed John Paul II

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{115}{Ibid.}
\footnote{116}{Ibid., 17.}
\end{footnotesize}
“goes on to affirm the goodness of non-human life” in this work.\textsuperscript{118} In a beautiful meditation on God and his creation, Blessed John Paul states,

Every life and every living movement proceed from this Life which transcends all life and every principle of life. It is to this that souls owe their incorruptibility; and because of this all animals and plants live, which receive only the faintest glimmer of life. To men [sic], beings made of spirit and matter, Life grants life.\textsuperscript{119}

Again, though the dividing line exists between human and animals with animals created to serve humans, Blessed John Paul affirms that,

man [sic] has a specific responsibility toward the environment in which he lives, towards the creation which God has put at the service of his personal dignity, of his life, not only for the present but also for future generations. It is the ecological question—ranging from preservation of the natural habitats of the different species of animals and other forms of life to ‘human ecology’ properly speaking — which finds in the Bible clear and strong ethical direction, leading to a solution which respects the great good of life, of every life. In fact, ‘the dominion granted to man [sic] by the Creator is not an absolute power, nor can one speak of a freedom to ‘use and misuse,’ or to dispose of things as one pleases.’\textsuperscript{120}

This affirmation of the ‘web of life’ was further echoed from the beginning of Benedict XVI’s pontificate. Pope Benedict XVI affirmed the Catechism’s directive,

“Animals are God’s creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory. Thus, man [sic] owes them kindness. We should recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip Neri [discussed earlier] treated animals.”\textsuperscript{121} This sensibility is further reflected in a recent

\textsuperscript{118} John Berkman, “Is the Consistent Ethic of Life Consistent without a Concern for Animals?” in Animals on the Agenda: Questions About Animals for Theology and Ethics, ed. Andrew Linzey and Dorothy Yamamoto (Chicago: University of Illinois 1998), 239.


\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 42.

speech Benedict XVI delivered to the bishops of Brazil on the topic of the unity of all life on planet Earth. Benedict observed,

   The first step for a correct relationship with the world that surrounds us is, precisely, the recognition on man’s [sic] part of his condition as a creature: man [sic] is not God, but his image; that is why he must try to be more sensitive to the presence of God in what surrounds him: in all creatures and, especially, in the human person in whom there is a certain epiphany of God….Man [sic] will only be capable of respecting creatures to the degree that he has in his spirit a full sense of life; otherwise, he will be led to contempt for himself and for what surrounds him, failing to respect the environment in which he lives, creation. That is why the first ecology that must be defended is ‘human ecology.’

This insight affirms the direction of the System-Eight thinking wherein the all life is perceived as one, though in the Roman Church, the perception of the human role in that unity remains a separate responsibility. Humans are creatures, as are animals, but “if one begins with the idea that humans are unique in terms of the function they play in the world (the function of exercising proper authority, or stewardship), then that makes room for a direct obligation we have over animals.” Hence, the recent trajectory of the biblical interpretation of Genesis reflects a ‘responsibility for’ (echoing Hyland) and not ‘domination over’ paradigm.

Two current voices that echo a more philosophical tone completing the circle that affirms the Roman Church’s movement toward a System-Eight worldview are those of a Catholic priest, Reverend Thomas E. Hosinski, CSC, and Dr. Stephen H. Webb. In his article, “How Does God’s Providential Care Extend to Animals?” Father Hosinski makes the philosophy of process thought accessible to the non-philosopher. He balances the tension between the freedom to choose and the compulsion for the human being and


123 Dr. Stephen H. Webb, email message to researcher, May 10, 2011.
animal to follow God’s will. Holding both recent scientific discoveries, quantum theory for example, and process thought in a delicate balance, he asserts that God has indeed given both human beings and animals freedom to choose that by necessity, requires God to self-limit, a position different from the classical philosophical sense of God as all-powerful. He asserts that “we can no longer assume that there is some immense gulf separating humans and animals, some ontological difference of status lifting humans outside of the world of nature so that God’s providence for us can be understood differently from God’s involvement with the rest of creation.” Moreover, because all creatures possess true freedom, God is not omnipotent in the classical sense but God waits upon His creation to respond to Him. God ‘lures’ creatures to Himself through his infinite love and compassion for that which he has created. Thus, this picture of the relationship of God to humans and to the created world more adequately reflects the biblical assertion, “God is Love” (1 John 4:8, NLT) but with a System-Eight twist.

Finally, as if to complete the circle of the discovery of other voices singing a new song of creation, Dr. Stephen H. Webb, in his article, “Pet Theories: A Theology for the Dogs,” discusses the issue of dogs as pets, highlighting the role that dogs play in revealing God’s loving intention through the presentation of dogs as gifts to human beings. He acknowledges what dog owners already know; when “I speak of the exuberance of the human-dog relationship, I mean the way in which dogs present themselves to us as gifts, adding something to our lives that is underserved and yet


125 Ibid., 139-140.
beneficial, inspiring an uncalculated response….Dogs can teach us a lot about gift giving
and generosity if we attend to the ways in which our relationships with dogs are
excessive and extravagant.” This expression of learning moral lessons from human-
dog relationships echoes what is best from Luther’s “Table Talk” musings.

**Conclusion: Six Other Solutions Refuted; So What’s Next?**

Throughout this discussion of the “other solutions” to the dog-ministry problem,
we have discovered that many of the objections listed, ranging from safety and liability to
the issue of *zoonosis* have been explained and refuted. These objections to using dogs in
ministry have solutions that in many cases have become standard ones when discussing
the use of dogs in a healthcare setting.

Though lengthy, the final objection—not to attempt dog ministry because
‘ministry’ is properly a transaction between two human persons and irrational animals are
‘tools’ for human use—was carefully unpacked because this objection reveals many of
the deeper, unspoken prejudices that still linger within ministerial circles. This objection
gave rise to a discussion of the history of the continual theological reflection on biblical
passages from Genesis that have traditionally been used to support a ‘domination over’
paradigm based on the exaggerated emphasis of the rational mind’s superiority to the
fleshy animal body. This ‘domination over’ paradigm, it has been shown, will not work
in our Gaia-sensitive culture.

In order to understand why the past theological musings by the church fathers do
not work in our globally connected age, we reviewed the writings produced during
various eras looking at them through the lens of Graves’ ‘level of existence’ schema as

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interpreted through Armour and Browning’s system-sensitive assessment. We sought to
discover other Christian/Catholic voices that more completely resonate with the human
spirit of today’s world. It appears that the theological reflections of various historical eras
reflected the ‘level of existence problems’ that, once the more basic-need problem had
been met, the human spirit, either individually or communally, jumped to a higher level
of spiritual existence. The twenty-first-century level of spiritual existence appears to
reflect a worldview that seems to be in harmony with a ‘God perspective’, a Gaia-
sensibility. Paradoxically, at the System-Eight level (Graves’ Experimentalistic level), the
divisions between flesh and spirit, animal and human, begin to dissolve, yet it is at this
being level where the human becomes truly human, separating from the animal. This
System-Eight worldview is one that resonates with our global interconnectivity that we
experience today.

Therefore, it would appear that dog ministry is, indeed, a worthy undertaking for
ministerial activity. If one expands the definition of ministerial service based on this
System-Eight worldview, understanding dogs as God’s gift will enable humans to
appreciate not only dogs’ example of unconditional generosity but also work with them
to serve the People of God.

In pondering His act of creation, God found He was still lonely; then, He created
a being in own His image. By using God’s gift of dogs as the basis for ministry, we now
consider what qualities a comprehensive program for dog ministry brings to
spiritual/pastoral care offered to elders in a nursing-home environment that will make
their spiritual lives richer and more fulfilling.
SECTION THREE

THE THESIS

Then God sat down—
On the side of a hill where he could think;
By a deep, wide river he sat down,
With his head in his hands,
God thought and thought,
Till he thought: I’ll make me a man!
—James Weldon Johnson, “The Creation”

Just as God pondered His problem with loneliness and created a being in His own image, the insight of viewing dogs as *gifts* makes possible the creation of a comprehensive program for using dogs in ministry, as it has been demonstrated that such a program is needed. It is now claimed that a comprehensive program for the integration of dogs into ministry that is “road-tested,” safe, effective, and repeatable will enable healthcare facilities to confidently take the risk of implementing a program for dog ministry. Given the potential holistic benefits of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, healthcare facilities will be presented with:

- a program that has been preliminarily road-tested to provide the facility with the assurance that many problems connected with a new program have been addressed;
- a “road-tested” program that will ensure that the minister is not harming the patient/resident to whom he/she seeks to give spiritual/pastoral comfort;
- a safe program that will better protect the facility and possibly the spiritual/pastoral-care provider from liability and safety concerns;
- a safe program that better protects medically fragile individuals;
an effective program, though effective spiritual/pastoral care is difficult to ascertain in a patient/resident;¹ and

a repeatable program that ensures continuation of care following the spiritual/pastoral-care provider’s transition to another department or facility.

To this end, the discussion of the project as well as the artifact based upon a qualitative study will demonstrate that the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is:

1. **Preliminarily road-tested.** With the data collected in a qualitative research study conducted over a nine-month period at Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton, Oregon, it will become evident this program does indeed provide an effective structure for using dogs in ministry to long-term care residents.

2. **Safe.** Empirical evidence supports the beneficial interactions of medically compromised patients/residents with pets and this outweighs the burden of possible contamination.² Moreover, based on solid ongoing research from peer-reviewed gerontological nursing journals,³ it will become evident that the program under consideration has been designed to meet the gold standard for safe animal-human interactions. The foundational protocols are found in the publications of Pet Partners®, a non-profit organization, located in Bellevue, Washington. Using *Standards of Practice* and other Pet Partners®

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² Laura Cullen, Marita Titler, and Ronda Drahozal, “Family and Pet Visitation in the Critical Care Unit,” *Critical Care Nurse* 23, no. 5 (October 2003), 62. This article confirms that banning animal visitations from critical care units often is more harmful than beneficial to the patient and family.

publications as a basis, it will become apparent how the program is designed to meet these standards for safe and fruitful interactions between patients/residents.

3. **Effective.** While the methodology of spiritual/pastoral care does not conform to the rigors of evidence utilized in other empirical studies, using a qualitative methodology analyzing stories told by participants, a methodology appropriate to spiritual/pastoral care, interactions with dogs in a spiritual context did provide spiritual benefits for those who participated in the qualitative study.

4. **Repeatable.** Because the program will standardize the basic components of what is needed to set up a Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, Section Four and the artifact will illustrate the process for setting up, launching, and maintaining the program based on an initial qualitative research study used to validate the program design. The artifact will serve as a training manual for chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care in nursing-home facilities and will cover challenges discovered during the setup, launching, and maintaining of the program. The program is continuing beyond the research study that concluded in May 2011.

Having described the qualities of the program proposed, the next step is to consider how the program was set up, implemented, and run during the nine-month qualitative research study. The following section will tell the Maryville story of dog ministry that has become a part of the ongoing schedule of activities for residents at Maryville.

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SECTION FOUR

THE PROJECT

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled him down’
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of his hand;
This great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till he shaped it in his own image;
—James Weldon Johnson, “The Creation"

Overview

There had to be a better way. So the artisan of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program set out to create a preliminarily road-tested, safe, effective, and repeatable program for dog ministry. Though the idea for dog ministry had received positive comments every time it had been proposed, given the fact that there did not exist a comprehensive program, there was no way for spiritual/pastoral-care providers to envision the possibilities of such a program.¹ There had been little comprehensive systemization of spiritual/pastoral-care visits with dogs in healthcare facilities.

This section describes the artifact, a 136-page manual for setting up, launching, and maintaining an all-volunteer spiritual/pastoral-care program for dog ministry. This program was formulated on the CAM/PS model (canine-assisted ministry/pastoral and spiritual care). The program itself was the fruit of a nine-month qualitative research study

¹ The online journal, Busted Halo, is helping to spread the word about the program. See Elizabeth A. Elliott, “Canine Ministers of Healing: Therapy dogs help a range of people in nursing homes, schools, and even a Barnes and Noble Bookstore,” Busted Halo (November 8, 2011), under “Features: Politics and Culture,” http:bustedhalo.com/features/canine-ministers-of-healing (accessed November 9, 2011).
conducted at Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton, Oregon between May 2010 and May 2011. In order to understand the artifact, the Maryville story of the qualitative study will frame the research results. As this training manual appears to fill the gap in Pet Partners® literature on animal-assisted interventions, the ultimate goal will be the presentation of it to Pet Partners® for publication. The hope is that the national and international exposure of the program will lead to its adoption by various healthcare facilities.

Setting Up the Research Study

As has been discussed, dogs form an important part of the lives of human beings. An anonymous midrash circulating on the internet best captures this phenomenon. In this short story, God felt sorry for Adam who had been banished from the Garden because of his sin, and so He created Dog. “And God said, ‘Because I have created this new animal to be a reflection of my love for you, his name will be a reflection of my own name, and you will call him DOG.’”

The idea of dogs as gifts to humans was briefly noted at the end of Section Two. From this insight, it became apparent that using dogs in ministry to elders, required viewing the dog as gift and this perspective provided the real key for doing dog ministry.

The idea for dog ministry was first formulated with a question: “How can a person take a dog to work when one works in ministry?” This question led to sketching a brief outline of a model for the integration of a canine-companion into ministry to elders in a retirement community. A qualitative research study to test the model in a group

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setting was conducted in June 2004 over a five-day period in a parish with independent elders. The study was set up so that volunteer subjects were read an animal-specific section taken from the world religions’ scriptures based on a quality that had been attributed to God. These volunteers had time to ponder a question germane to that quality, tell their pet story demonstrating that quality, and finally, consider how this reflection might help them come closer to God. The results generally supported the validity of the model that was verified through questionnaires where stories told became the backbone of the project. It appeared that this could be a fruitful line of study.

The Maryville Connection

In 2009, discussions began with Sister Josephine Pelster of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon (SSMO) about the possibility of a research project on dog ministry. In July of that year, Sister Josephine, chaplain at Maryville Nursing Home, confirmed that the administrator, Ms. Kathleen Parry, was willing to host a nine-month qualitative study on the proposed program for using dogs in ministry. In conjunction with Sister Josephine, a training session on the model/project was formulated and conducted with senior staff, nursing staff, and CNAs. Visitations were slated to begin in the fall of 2010.

Though many family pets were already visiting the facility, Maryville did not have a pet-visitation policy. With the help of the researcher, a policy for family-pet visitation was formulated with policy flyers made available at reception for those families who wanted to bring their pets to visit. The message of the importance of safety in animal-assisted interventions was further affirmed when Maryville agreed to become a registered Pet Partners® facility, a registration renewable every two years.
Taken from the application for registration, the following items helped to define the project:

**Proposed Animal-Assisted Activities/Therapy Program:**

**PROGRAM GOALS:** The goal of this new form of ministry/pastoral and spiritual care, based on the CAM/PS model, is to provide spiritual comfort and care to elder residents of Maryville through interactions with a volunteer Pet Partners®-registered team.

**ROLE OF THE PET PARTNERS® TEAM:** As empirical research has revealed the great benefit that elder residents of nursing-care facilities receive through interacting with volunteers and their dogs, the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program aims to use this natural connection taking it to a higher level. Four-Footed Ministerial teams (FFM teams) will work with the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator and/or chaplain to provide this spiritual comfort and care through the normal interactions of a dog with a resident having the “measurable goal” of pastoral/spiritual-care for that resident.

**NUMBER OF PET PARTNER® TEAMS NEEDED:** As visits will be scheduled on Sunday afternoons between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., we anticipate needing 4 teams to commit to one Sunday per month, subject to scheduling around holidays, vacations, and other unforeseen events.³

**Logistic Questions**

a. Background checks are required of all volunteers.

b. There are no medical tests/protocols required for volunteers.

c. Animals can eliminate in flower beds in front of facility and in an enclosed courtyard on grounds that is easily accessible.

d. There is a gray trash receptacle labeled for “waste products only” where waste can be placed.

e. Clean linens for each resident are located in the closet in each room or near each bed.

f. A restroom is accessible near the Center unit.

g. The sign in/sign out log will be located at reception and in the volunteer room near the reception desk. FFM teams will have a closet with supplies and name tags available, as well as the FFM Pastoral-Care Log.⁴

h. The food preparation area is off the main hall down from the reception area.

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³ This schedule was changed to visitation on Thursdays between 10 a.m. to noon.

⁴ The FFM Pastoral Care Log was important during the study. At the completion of the study the program was opened up to others desiring a visit. Due to the number of residents (150 beds), this document is no longer used. Short debriefing sessions with the chaplain/director after visitation/dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings have taken its place.
Staff Involvement Questions
a. Each team will be accompanied by the FFMPC program coordinator and/or chaplain during both one-on-one and group pastoral/spiritual-care visits.  

b. Either the FFMPC program coordinator or chaplain will be there for each visit. The FFMPC program coordinator will evaluate the visit and record the teams’ observations in the FFM Pastoral-Care Log.

Participating Questions
a. For the research study and beyond, residents will be pre-screened by the senior-staff interdisciplinary team for participation in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.  

b. Residents who have not been selected as appropriate for the study will not be visited. Only pre-screened residents will be visited.  
c. The FFM Pastoral-Care Log will indicate the room number and bed number of the person to be visited.  
d. The one-on-one visits will generally be conducted in the resident’s room. It has yet to be determined where the group gatherings will take place, but these once-a-month gatherings will probably take place in the Chapel.  
e. In most cases, animals will not be allowed on the beds of residents. However, the condition of the resident and/or other factors occurring at the time of the visit might require a change in this directive.

Additional Information
The nature of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program requires that volunteer teams attend in-service spiritual/pastoral-care training sessions.

Because the research involved human subjects, the researcher was required to prepare and submit an application for permission to conduct the research to the Department of Psychology at George Fox University. The biggest issue in obtaining this

5 To parallel the animal-assisted therapy model, two different job descriptions were formulated: one for the volunteer who did not want to offer spiritual care and one for the volunteer who did have the pastoral-care training and who felt comfortable in this role. See the artifact for more information.

6 Due to the open nature of the facility, the researcher found this restriction hard to enforce. This requirement will be suggested, however, because it forms a level of safety that minimizes risk to all parties involved.

7 See footnote no. 6.

8 There was a code system set up to designate those in the study in order to protect confidentiality. It will be strongly suggested that each facility have a system in place to protect the resident.

9 At the study’s conclusion, it was determined that the dog ministry prayer-group gathering will be conducted once a week during the 10 a.m. to noon visitation time because it was so enthusiastically embraced by the residents.
approval concerned the guarantee for the safety and care of the long-term resident volunteers who often were in compromised health both physically and mentally. In order to assist in satisfying these requirements, the researcher contacted Pet Partners® and received their support for the project. The appropriate university permission was obtained and the project moved forward.

The Pet Partners® representative in the Vancouver-Portland area, Ms. Lisa Zeiner, sent out a call over the internet for registered Pet Partners® dog-teams to work in the qualitative research study. Though there were several inquiries that came through official channels, one woman seemed to be particularly interested.\textsuperscript{10} Coming from the Presbyterian faith community as an ordained elder and deacon, Barbara Miller and her Four-Footed Minister, Caterina, were the perfect candidates for this ground-breaking qualitative research project because of their pastoral-care experience. With the moral support from her ministerial partner, Caterina, Alya, the researcher’s dog, passed her Pet Partners® test and it appeared that all was in place for visitations to begin.

\textbf{Implementation of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program}

\textbf{Challenges Encountered and Surmounted}

The formal visitations were begun in September 2010, and from the beginning there were challenges that needed to be met. One of the first was the issue of scheduling visits. Following Jesus’ directives, the Four-Footed Ministerial teams working together in

\textsuperscript{10} Barbara Miller and the researcher had adopted dogs who came from the same breeding program conducted by Guide Dogs for the Blind, San Rafael, CA. Barbara’s dog, Caterina, had been a guide but became a ‘change of career’ dog about the same time the researcher’s dog, Alya, also became a ‘change of career’ dog. It was the dogs who brought these two human counterparts of the Four-Footed Ministerial teams together.
pairs (actually two teams but four individuals) discovered that a Friday morning was not the best time to visit because many of the volunteer residents were gone on outings. Because of this, the FFM teams changed their visitation day to Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon. This schedule enabled the teams to reach many more of the study participants who lead very busy lives despite the fact that they were considered long-term care residents.

The notification of and location for the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings also posed a challenge. Beginning in January 2011, the researcher found that the weekly gatherings were well-attended if the teams could engage CNAs and others to bring the volunteer subjects to the gathering location once it had been determined. Unfortunately, given the fact that Maryville is more often than not a hub of activity and the program had not yet been totally accepted by the activity staff, the notification and location for these gatherings was not always consistent. This prevented several volunteers from attending. Despite this, Sister Josephine was instrumental in ensuring that those who wanted to attend could find our gathering location. She would often bring residents to the gathering spot and then return them to the dining room for lunch after the prayer-group gathering had concluded.

Perhaps the biggest challenge that the program encountered during the nine-month study was the busy lifestyle that is a part of this large facility. As spiritual/pastoral-care providers already know, a minister must always be attentive to the needs of the individual to whom they are rendering service. Given the age and continually changing situation both physically and mentally of the research subjects, the team members, as ministers of God’s compassionate care, had to deal with unplanned

11 Luke 10:1 [NLT] “The Lord chose seventy-two others disciples and sent them on ahead in pairs to all the towns and villages he planned to visit.” We discovered that Jesus was right, for we were much more effective when we visited in “pairs” than when the researcher visited solo.
problems that, in many instances, prevented them from visiting or praying with the volunteer residents.

As the goal-oriented ministry was that of spiritual/pastoral care, the researcher used a spiritual/pastoral-care methodology that prayerfully considers the volunteers’ stories that had been told. The study results were based on assessments made by the researcher where she summarized in her chart notes the stories told in one-on-one visits and dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings. There was a simple oral evaluation given at the conclusion of the study. Everyone interviewed positively affirmed that their experience with the Four-Footed Ministerial teams was beneficial to them spiritually and they affirmed the value of the program that is outlined in the artifact.

Benefits Realized

In reflecting on the weekly encounters with those in the study and other residents, there are several benefits that point to the value of a Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program. These benefits can be characterized as providing communal prayer outside of liturgy, a chance for good friends to gather in a spiritual setting to enjoy one another’s company in the presence of dogs who see only the best in them, and finally, the opportunity to touch and to be touched in a loving and gentle way.

Though Maryville is a Catholic facility, it has an ecumenical outlook, providing opportunities for those of other faiths to worship together in their own faith communities. There is daily Mass offered for the Catholic residents and many independent elders from the surrounding area come to take part in this daily liturgy. It must be noted that the Four-

\[\text{12} \text{ Rabbi Dayle A. Friedman “PaRDeS: A Model for Presence in } \text{Hitlavit Ruchanit,” Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Handbook from Traditional and Contemporary Sources, ed. Rabbi Dayle A. Friedman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001), 60-73.}\]
Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is, by its nature, ecumenical. Ms. Miller is Presbyterian and the researcher is Roman Catholic. Though the stories used for the initial dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings were based on Christian scriptures, individuals seemed to enjoy gathering outside of liturgy to pray as a group without specific connections to a particular Christian faith community.

Community forms a big part of Maryville and the residents are urged to be a part of the activities that are scheduled during the daytime. The one thing that became obvious was the close friendships between residents that had already formed before the study began. This was revealed when a member of the study group died unexpectedly. This person had been a catalyst for fun and engaging activities, possessing a very quick wit and, when having a good day, interacted with “the girls” (the Four-Footed Ministers) by petting them and giving them treats, joking all the while. After her passing, the other members of the group honored her wish for a kazoo band by performing at her memorial, an event that was organized by a member of her group. This was a fitting remembrance for their companion who loved interacting with her human and dog friends.

Finally, the most important benefit derived from the spiritual/pastoral-care visits and the group interactions was the opportunity for the long-term care residents and others not in the study to experience the wonder of touch in a holy way. It is often stated that elders are more often ‘handled’ rather than ‘touched’ because of the necessity of their caregivers to focus on the physical needs of their charges. Though seen as a fault in a therapy dog, the propensity for Alya to lick the hand of the person who reached out to her was a way for physically challenged residents to connect to her. In many instances, those who were unable to connect any other way found relating to others through touch
exciting and engaging. This connection through touching the Four-Footed Minister could then facilitate further interactions of that person with the spiritual/pastoral-care provider and others. As both of the dogs had been trained as Guide Dogs, they were attentive to their ‘person’ and those with whom they were directed to interact. Touching the dogs provided an important way for a person to relate through touch to something beyond themselves. “To pet a dog is not such a bad way to practice theology,” says Dr. Stephen H. Webb. “It is to acknowledge wonder as the impulse that drives us out of ourselves, and it is to witness reverence—as well as a plea for love and understanding—in the eyes of the other.”

**Maintenance of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program**

From the outset of the negotiations to set up the study, the administrator was hopeful that, if the program was successful, it would continue beyond the conclusion of the research. To that end, the researcher has agreed to continue as the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator. In defining the elements necessary to include in the training manual, it was determined early on that it would be imperative to include job descriptions for this ministry, beginning with one for the coordinator’s position (see the artifact, Appendix B: Program Forms).

As the study progressed, it became evident that two different volunteer job descriptions were necessary. Some Pet Partners®-registered teams expressed hesitancy at volunteering if the volunteer activity was defined in such a way that that person would

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13 One particular person who was not in the study but loved dogs was able to receive comfort and care through Alya licking her hand. This person could only make unintelligible sounds but the caregiver assured us that this was the way that person communicated joy and acceptance.

feel he or she was *expected* to offer spiritual/pastoral care, even if one had no prior experience in this area. Therefore, two job descriptions for volunteer-ministerial teams were prepared: one for the volunteer that would work *alongside* the FFMPC program coordinator and/or chaplain and one for the volunteer who would work *in tandem with* the FFMPC program coordinator comfortable in offering their own spiritual-care insights. Though a syllabus for training volunteers does include spiritual/pastoral-care issues, having the two job descriptions should facilitate recruiting volunteers regardless of their religious sensibilities.\(^\text{15}\)

As the researcher is still involved in the program at Maryville, periodic updates to the program’s aspects will be completed as needed. At some point in the future, once the program has been running smoothly and more volunteer teams have been added to the visitation schedule, this position might be a good one for a paid staff member. It is hoped that, as more and more problems are met and solutions found, the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program will be adopted by other healthcare facilities using the templates provided in the training manual to craft their own program that meets their unique situation.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a brief look at the Maryville story that is the basis for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program found in the artifact. This section defined some of the challenges as well as the great benefits that were noted as the qualitative research project progressed. As the training manual (artifact) will be offered to

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\(^{15}\) The need for two job descriptions became evident when a Pet Partners®-registered team came into the volunteer room to sign in and the researcher asked if the team would like to be a part of the spiritual/pastoral-care team. The response was “I am spiritual but not religious.”
Pet Partners® for publication, it is hoped that the dissemination of the manual by a nationally and internationally connected organization will encourage healthcare facilities to develop their own in-house Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Programs based on the templates provided in the artifact. A proposed schedule for presentation of the training manual to Pet Partners® is offered in Section Five, The Project Specifications.
SECTION FIVE
PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

Overview

As God quickened the inanimate clump of dirt he had scooped up from the earth by imparting the ‘breath of life’ to it, so also it is hoped that the artifact’s target audience of chaplains in healthcare settings will mold the dog-ministry model to their unique situations, discovering in the process a more holistic form of spiritual/pastoral care for their patients/residents. Dog ministry can make this contribution to holistic spiritual/pastoral care because it is based on the benefits of animal-human interactions, empirically demonstrated and verified. The 136-page manual for setting up, launching, and maintaining an all-volunteer spiritual/pastoral-care program founded on the CAM/PS (canine-assisted ministry/pastoral and spiritual care) model can help to provide that holistic form of spiritual/pastoral care.

The Artifact—A Training Manual

Chaplains in healthcare settings know the trauma individuals experience when they enter a healthcare facility. An individual’s trauma is often further complicated when one is separated, either temporarily or permanently, from his or her beloved pet(s), a fact that often is overlooked\(^1\). The artifact will provide chaplains with a way to use this strong

attachment to pet(s), specifically dogs, in a spiritual context, to offer spiritual/pastoral care to that person.

The artifact is specifically targeted to chaplains who are either in directorship roles or are able to present the case for dog ministry to administration. It is written to be a “self-directed” training manual providing a step-by-step method for setting up, launching, and maintaining an in-house Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program that meets the facility’s unique situation. The ultimate goal is to open the door to a comprehensive structure for dog ministry, a structure that will provide a springboard for further research into the field of canine-assisted ministry/pastoral and spiritual care.

Goals and Strategies:

- This work will present the case for the inclusion of dogs into spiritual/pastoral care to elders using a comprehensive program that governs the interactions between volunteer teams and elders, a program that is “road-tested,” safe, effective, and repeatable.

  - The dissertation discussed the wider theological issues that operate unseen when considering the inclusion of dogs in ministry. Further, the dissertation presented a theological perspective that is based on an alternative view of creation that resonates more completely with the twenty-first-century worldview.

  - Specifically, the artifact describes a process for chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral services in nursing-home environments as to how they might begin their own Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.
The artifact was developed from a qualitative research project conducted at Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton, Oregon. The study concluded on May 2, 2011 with a short oral evaluation given to long-term resident volunteers to evaluate the success of the program in both the one-on-one and prayer-group gatherings.

The researcher believes the success of the artifact will be demonstrated by its being published. The program is unique in animal-assisted interventions and therefore, publishers who are interested in new, innovative, and topical areas of ministry may be interested in this work. Moreover, there is a high probability that Pet Partners® in Bellevue, Washington will be interested in the artifact as it extends the scope of the Pet Partners® Program, providing this organization with a missing piece in their own library of educational materials. This work provides a spiritual/pastoral-care structure for ministry that is currently being practiced but in a relatively casual and unstructured way.

As the researcher continues to function as the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator at Maryville Nursing Home, she will have the opportunity to prepare updates as new problems and solutions arise.

Artifact Scope and Content:

This artifact used spiritual/pastoral-care methodology that differs from quantitative, empirical methods used in other types of research projects. Using observation and interviews as a basis for the qualitative study, the aim here is to help chaplains and directors of spiritual/pastoral services to incorporate
volunteers and their dogs into the spiritual care of long-term residents, their families, and staff in a comprehensive, programmatic way.

- As the artifact will be presented in written form, there are no special technical considerations that need to be addressed.
- The dissertation will follow the Track 02 Guidelines of presentation.

**Standards of Publication:**

- The dissertation will be presented in printed/electronic book format that is normally judged acceptable to a publisher in the ministry field, the academic field, or to Pet Partners® as per above. Preparing the artifact in Word will fulfill the dissertation requirements and will be easily modifiable to fit the general criteria of a specific publisher when the time arises. The artifact loosely follows the structure used in other Pet Partners® training manuals in order to present a document that can be easily integrated into Pet Partners® training-manual library.
- Depending on the acceptability of the artifact to professional chaplains and directors of spiritual/pastoral care, there always exists the possibility of producing a CD-ROM that includes the electronic format of the PowerPoint training presentations. At this time, a print medium with a user-friendly format will be the best way to get this artifact into the hands of professionals in the field.

**Other Considerations**

**Budget:**

- Other than the time spent on the dissertation, the financial investment was minimal because of the use of volunteer Pet Partners®-registered teams. Pet Partners®-registered teams will work as either as a volunteer Four-Footed
Ministerial team, a role that parallels the animal-assisted therapy model defined by Pet Partners®; or as a spiritual-care provider Four-Footed Ministerial team, a newly defined role where the owner-handler of the dog functions as a spiritual/pastoral-care provider without much professional staff assistance. Though Pet Partners® teams are not paid for their work, their mileage to and from the facility is tax deductible. This fact can encourage greater volunteer involvement in the program.

*Specifically technical skills:*

- If it is determined that a CD-ROM would be helpful to the marketing of the artifact, it may be necessary to engage a professional to produce a CD-ROM that includes electronic versions of the PowerPoint training presentations. In the appendix to the artifact, there is a print copy of the PowerPoint slides and scripts used in the orientation and training presentations.

- Since photographs are incorporated, a volunteer photographer was engaged. There was no cost to the researcher for this service and the photographer was given due credit for his involvement in the project.

- The only outsourcing fees that will be incurred in the preparation of the artifact are printing and binding the dissertation. The current cost is estimated at $25.00/per copy.

- At this point, the program is all-volunteer in nature. In order to offset start-up costs such as brochures explaining the program and other minor supplies, the researcher obtained a ministry grant ($500) from the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary to underwrite some of these expenses. After the
pilot study, the costs for brochures can be assumed by the Maryville Nursing Home.

Promotion:

- As a Ministry Volunteer member of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC), the researcher will approach the NACC to alert them to this resource for their members.
- If the artifact is to be published by Pet Partners®, this organization has a vast internet network and an online store where they market their manuals. If need be, the researcher can contact VDM Publishing, a firm that publishes dissertations, to see if this pioneering work would be of interest to them.
- If the above avenues are not fruitful, there is always the self-publication route available on IUniverse.com (a cost of approximately $500). Potential publishers can then be directed to a website to view the online/published work.
- The overall marketing strategy will depend on the willingness of a publisher to take on the artifact. The market seems ripe for a work of this nature, due to the aging population and the cultural climate that recognizes the immense value of dogs and their interactions with seniors. Unfortunately, the overall marking program remains unknown at this time.

Schedule for Completion of the Artifact-Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April-May</td>
<td>Complete sorting the articles collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Follow-up on finding original sources that were used in books supporting the arguments presented in Section Two. Submit 8-10 pages (Abstract and Section One) as final assignment for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DMin 543.
Continue to work on Abstract and Section One. Write rough draft of Sections Two through Section Five.

May 2011
Complete research study at Maryville with short oral evaluation given to long-term care resident volunteers (May 2, 2011).
Meet with dissertation advisor (May 31, 2011). Review with him what has been done.

June-August 2011
Write a rough draft of the training manual following Pet Partners® format. Submit a draft to the expert advisor for review. This was completed in July 2011.
Filed for December 2011 graduation. Though graduation documents were submitted, graduation was postponed until April 2012.
Continue to refine the work based on recommendations from both expert advisor and dissertation advisor.
Submit drafts of what has been completed to editor for review by August 2011.
Begin to work with Pet Partners® to see if there are any avenues for publication by the Society.

September 2011
Submit artifact to editor for review.

October 2011
Submitted evaluation draft of dissertation/artifact. It was determined that additional work on the artifact was necessary. Plan to resubmit to committee for evaluation by January 20, 2012.

March 2012
Dissertation/artifact was passed. Present the Oral Defense on March 15, 2012.

As interest in the artifact has already been generated through both formal and informal channels, it is important to bring the dissertation/artifact to completion and offer it to the world of spiritual/pastoral care.

Conclusion

This section has defined the specifics of bringing the artifact to the world through the discussion of the potential publication of the artifact in a print form. As the researcher

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2 A chaplain and volunteer spiritual/pastoral-care provider from Providence Hospital, Hood River, Oregon shadowed the Four-Footed Ministerial teams on individual visits and attended a dog ministry prayer-group gathering on May 12, 2011. Both women were favorably impressed with the program and are anxious to see the finished training manual.
has some knowledge of the publishing world, publication of the artifact, given the potential interest in the work, should not be an insurmountable challenge.

The best outcome from this project would result in chaplains and directors of spiritual/pastoral care catching the enthusiastic vision of what dog ministry can be. By using the templates provided in the training manual, they should be able to design their own programs that incorporate Pet Partners®-registered dog-teams into spiritual/pastoral care to their residents and patients. In the final analysis, this best outcome would enable every part of a healthcare organization to reap the benefits from a comprehensive dog-ministry program.
Greetings from Portland, Oregon!

In the recent past, the city of Portland, Oregon has been named as the most dog-friendly city in the United States. This continues to be true. As a woman moving into ministry, I asked myself the question how I might take my dog to work with me. This question started me on a lengthy journey to study how this might be done. What resulted is the book, *Four-Footed Ministers in Formation: A Training Manual on Dog Ministry Based on the CAM/PS Model*.

Over the course of thirteen years, I discovered that though many chaplains and pastoral-care providers did use their dogs in ministry, there were no books published that present a comprehensive program for the integration of dogs into ministry. With the help of my ministry colleagues, I conducted a qualitative research study at Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton, Oregon where a comprehensive program for dog ministry was formulated and resulted in the work listed above. At present, there are no other works in the field of ministry that deal with a comprehensive template on how to do dog ministry.

I have published articles in peer-reviewed journals on my research into dog ministry as well as having a synthesis of two theses published under the title, *Four-Footed Ministers: Their Theology of Presence*. I continue to be fascinated by our canine-companions who have become such an intimate part of our lives.

Thank you for your time and I hope that the following proposal and writing sample taken from the book are helpful. I selected Unit Three because it illustrates how day-to-day interactions can be viewed as ministerial encounters. I believe it will give you a glimpse of how to take the fear out of “doing ministry” with dogs.

Blessings!

Jerilyn E. Felton  
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Portland, OR 97206  
Phone: 503-701-6819 (cell)  
Email: icedancer@comcast.net

cc: file
Title: Four-Footed Ministers: A Training Manual on Dog Ministry Based on the CAM/PS Model

Author: Jerilyn E. Felton

Overview: This work provides chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care with a template for the setup, implementation, and maintenance of a comprehensive, all-volunteer program for the integration of canine companions into the spiritual/pastoral care of patients/residents in healthcare facilities. Based on a qualitative research study conducted over a nine-month period, this self-directed manual introduces a program that is “road-tested,” safe, effective, and repeatable. As the author continues to be involved in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, new insights and observations will be available to enhance and improve the original publication.

Purpose: This work’s goal is to:
- Introduce the concept of dog ministry to chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care;
- Provide a template for chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care for the development of their own unique program that integrates Pet Partners®-registered volunteer/dog teams into ministry to the patients/residents in their specific healthcare setting;
- Provide assistance and resources for chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care in the setup, implementation, training, and maintenance of the Four-Footed Pastoral-Care Program in their facility. This work provides helpful tips and suggestions toward the ultimate goal that is effective spiritual/pastoral care to their patients/residents.

Promotion and Marketing: This work is based upon the protocols and procedures developed by Pet Partners®, Bellevue, Washington. Pet Partners® has national and international connections that could provide the promotion and marketing of this work. As the concept becomes more widely known, there are various professional organizations that may be interested in this model, such as the National Association of Catholic Chaplains, the Association of Professional Chaplains, and the National Association for Lay Ministry. Because this work is unique in the ministerial field of practice, this book fills a pressing need in an area of spiritual/pastoral care where chaplains are asked to do more
with less, handling ever-increasing workloads. Because the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral Care Program requires Pet Partners® registration and is an all-volunteer program, the burden of selection of appropriately trained, healthy volunteer dog-teams is made much easier. An additional plus is the fact that the volunteers are covered under the Pet Partners® general liability insurance policy when doing dog ministry.

**Competition:**

This work continues to be the only one specifically directed to presenting a comprehensive program for dog ministry.

**Endorsements:**

Dr. Stephen H. Webb, a widely published author on animal issues, provided an endorsement for my published work, *Four-Footed Ministers: Their Theology of Presence*. Dr. Webb is a professor of philosophy and theology at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana, who would be willing to provide an endorsement.
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Chapter Outline: As this training manual is meant to be a self-directed learning experience, the following unit summaries lead the chaplain/director through the process:

Unit One
This unit acknowledges a local program doing dog ministry as well as introduces the structure of the CAM/PS model (canine-assisted ministry/pastoral and spiritual care) with a brief history of the model’s development.

Unit Two
This unit tells the story of the qualitative research project that directed and shaped the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.

Unit Three:
This unit will present a lens through which an often-hidden spiritual formation process builds upon a culture of service already present.

Unit Four:
This unit will discuss the nuts and bolts of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, providing the chaplain/director with a look at the program elements. A list of preliminary questions will assist in ascertaining the feasibility and possible development of an in-house program.

Unit Five:
This unit will discuss the chaplain/director’s role in setting up, implementing, and maintaining the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program. This unit presents helpful suggestions and resources.

Manuscript: This book is approximately 35,000 words.

Author’s Biography: Jerilyn E. Felton, director of ministry formation for the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, is a graduate of Seattle University. Transitioning from a sales agency in 1998, she completed an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies as well as an M.A. in Applied Theology at Marylhurst University where she laid the foundations for a model of spiritual/pastoral care using dogs in ministry. She began her doctoral studies at George Fox University, and dog ministry became the topic of her dissertation project. Over a nine-month period at Maryville Nursing Home, she conducted a qualitative research study
on setup, implementation, and maintenance of a comprehensive program for spiritual/pastoral care, the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program. She recently completed the Doctor of Ministry degree.

**Publishing Credits:**

*Four-Footed Ministers: Their Theology of Presence.* Starrbrucken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller e.K., 2008.

A member of the editorial board and frequent contributor to *Healing Ministry*, a peer-reviewed journal:

“*Do All Dogs Go to Heaven? Implications for Pastoral Care to Elder Persons.*” *Healing Ministry* 11, no. 2 (Spring, 2004): 77-80.

“The Significance of Story in Pastoral Care to the Elder Person.” *Healing Ministry* 11, no. 3 (Summer, 2004): 113-115.

“*If I but Touch the Hem of His Cloak...*’: ‘Touching Prayer’ as the Best of Both Worlds.” *Healing Ministry* 13, no. 3 (Summer, 2006): 7-9.

”*Canine-Assisted Pastoral Care: She Gave a Party and Nobody Came.*” *Healing Ministry* 12, no. 1 (Winter, 2005): 13-16.

Contributor to *Presence: An International Journal of Spiritual Direction*


**Future Projects:** I hope to continue my work in dog ministry through the publication of articles in peer-review chaplaincy journals and make myself available for consulting work in the area as well.

I am also working on the concept of using movies in group spiritual direction, following up on my article that appeared in *Presence*, as is noted above.
UNIT THREE
FORMATION PROCESS OF BUILDING A CULTURE OF SERVICE

LESSON OVERVIEW:
This unit will present a schema concentrating on a spiritual-formation process that builds on a culture of service.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To learn about a process of spiritual formation that taps already existing cultural components latent within the notion of service rendered to others.

- To appreciate the contributions made by each segment of the populations involved in the nursing-home environment that creates the culture of service and care.

- To intentionally engage these populations to appreciate their gifts for spiritual/pastoral care to each other through working with volunteer Four-Footed Ministerial teams.
FORMATION PROCESS OF BUILDING A CULTURE OF SERVICE

Lesson 3.1: Religious/Ministerial Formation Schema

To understand the populations that make up a nursing-home environment, both ministerial and clinical documents can provide insight in understanding the complex organism that is called ‘human.’ A work on lay-ecclesial ministry published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops entitled Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord treats the human being from a perspective of the human, intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions. These dimensions interact through the formation process so that ministers can carry out their ministerial duties more effectively. These four areas dovetail with the clinical division of therapeutic goals defined by Dr. Judy Gammonley in her article entitled, “Animal-Assisted Therapy as a Modality within Nursing.” Here, she set up a sample nursing plan using animal-assisted therapy. Both schemas can be utilized when considering how to tap into the already-present culture of service that should be operational in a nursing-home environment.

While the descriptor ‘human’ can be seen as incorporating the physical and the cognitive, the description of physical and cognitive goals in Gammonley’s sample nursing-treatment plan point to activities that the patient/resident is encouraged to perform to effect their healing. In the realm of ministry formation, the human, intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions also outline intentional activities the lay minister undertakes to become more formed in the image of Christ for the good of other

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human beings.\textsuperscript{5} Thus, both sets of descriptors point to intentional activity to be undertaken for a specific purpose of healing or more effective ministry.

The last two goals Gammonley mentioned in her sample nursing plan were psycho-social and spiritual. With the aid of a therapy animal, activities in these areas helped the individual seeking healing in connecting to community. Further, these activities have the potential to assist that individual through contact with the animal to enter a new plane of reality. Gammonley mentioned, quoting from an earlier article, that the ‘spiritual’ was one of the five categories where animal-assisted therapy was appropriate for healing.\textsuperscript{6} She quoted a study by L. Nebbe where the spiritual response is defined as one where “an animal provides a sense of oneness with creation and a sense of well-being. Hospice patients renew their spiritual energy through reminiscence. This activity takes place by daily interactions with the resident cat [used in her study] and/or staff. A sense of well-being occurs while holding the cat.”\textsuperscript{7} This is a good start, but these interactions can be seen as meaning so much more than this, as was demonstrated in the stories of the study participants described in Unit Two.

In understanding the nursing-home culture as formative, the formation process itself can be thought of as a molding procedure that takes place within the human person because that person resides within a physical, social, cultural, and spiritual world.

Everything influences the human person in this world, for,

Every thought we hold, every decision we make, every action we take, every emotion we allow to shape our behavior, every response we make to the world around us, every relationship we enter into, every reaction we have toward the

\textsuperscript{5} M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., \textit{Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation} (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 12.

\textsuperscript{6} Gammonley, “Animal-Assisted Therapy,” 2.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
things that surround us and impinge upon our lives—all of these things, little by little, are shaping us into some kind of being.\textsuperscript{8}

The human being has no choice in the matter of being shaped\textsuperscript{9} into some new being dictated by these factors in their surroundings. Thus, each facility would do well to examine how their environment lives up to their commitment to provide caring service to those who cannot care for themselves.

If the nursing-home culture is such an important part of formation for all those who interact within it, then what does the environment within the facility look like and how can the aspects of spiritual formation be undertaken for the benefit of the whole community?

\textbf{Lesson 3.2: Populations in Spiritual Formation}

By its very nature, a nursing-home facility should be a place that provides skilled nursing care to individuals who are incapacitated by injury, sickness, and/or old age. The creation of a caring environment depends on its people as well as its physical plant. It is the quality of loving service, ‘ministry’ in the best sense of the word, which can be the formational element to be used by the chaplain/director to their advantage when looking at the formation process within their facility.

\textbf{Looking at Staff}

As staff members from the senior level down review interactions that create community, the environment of the facility can take on aura of ministry. The

\textsuperscript{8} Mulholland, \textit{Invitation to a Journey}, 23.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
chaplain/director can be aware, through observation, whether or not a caring environment exists. He or she can notice the interactions of staff members with patients/residents to help those staff members become aware of the fact that their work not only affects the individual they have before them, but also has an effect on those who surround them, such as family members or visitors. According to the current pontiff, “A respectful and compassionate silence, a prayerful presence, a gesture of tenderness and comfort, a kind look, a smile, often achieve more than many words.”

Staff meetings are a good time to alert the nursing staff and CNAs to the importance of their interactions with patients/residents, family members, and visitors. Repetition of the facility’s mission statement can be helpful in re-affirming the purpose for their work. The mission statement that guides the work at Maryville is the simple proclamation of “Service with Love.” It is the driving force behind the work they do. Awareness and affirmation of the mission are two activities that take little time, yet pay big dividends.

Looking at Patients/Residents

In his booklet entitled “Sickness,” the current pontiff, Benedict XVI, puts the diminishment experienced by patients/residents into perspective. He states,

In our generation, in our culture, we have to rediscover the value of suffering in general, and we have to learn that suffering can be a very positive reality which helps us to mature, to become more ourselves, and to be closer to the Lord who suffered for us and suffers with us.


11 Ibid., par. 28.
Though this is written from a Roman Catholic point of view, the acknowledgement of the reality of suffering and the unity of all sentient beings, coupled with the ache to relieve that suffering, is echoed throughout the scriptures and traditions of world religions. For those who profess to be Christians and those who follow a non-Christian faith tradition, such encouragement from this religious leader gives them hope that their suffering has meaning and purpose. Finally, it can be said that the above sensibility is not just a concept that informs a ‘believer’s’ perspective alone, but is one that can also inform those who profess to be spiritual-but-not-religious.

There are many more individuals in this current day who come to nursing homes professing to be spiritual-but-not-religious. They have a profoundly deep spiritual connection to the Divine. Though the chaplain/director might profess a certain faith tradition, the sense of caring compassion on the human and pastoral level will be felt and appreciated by those who are in need of spiritual care. In most cases, a compassionate act will be received as such by most individuals who will recognize the caring concern that flows from actions that may be performed in the name of a Christian God, though not named as such.

The spiritual-not-religious person who likes dogs and readily interacts with them on a purely human level will respond to ministerial attempts at spiritual care in their own spiritual way that may not be immediately apparent to the Four-Footed Ministerial team. Thus, interactions with the team should affirm and support the individual whose sensibilities are not conformed to a particular religious tradition. In the end, the lead must always be directed by the patient/resident. Regardless of the patient/resident’s belief or non-belief, the spiritual formation of the spiritual-but-not-religious persons in the
nursing-home population must be acknowledged and affirmed, especially by those who minister to them.

It must be noted that within the realm of the pastoral dimension, many believers and non-believers, including the spiritual-but-not-religious, do not see the important role they play in the spiritual formation of those who serve them. From a purely human standpoint, it is important that patients/residents be thought of as being part of the spiritual/pastoral-care service team. They provide their care in the form of being open to receiving the gifts of service from the staff as well as the Four-Footed Ministerial teams who visit. In this instance, their contribution cannot be understated. Their openness to receive is essential in the creation of a loving community of care and service needed for a nursing-home facility to totally fulfill its mission.

Looking at the Four-Footed Ministerial Teams

Building on Pet Partners® protocols that define animal-assisted therapy to be a volunteer team working in conjunction with a professional or paraprofessional to accomplish measurable therapeutic goals, it became apparent from the Maryville study that two types of job descriptions for Four-Footed Ministerial teams would be necessary. As those with pastoral-care training or extensive spiritual/pastoral-care experience might not necessarily need the visitation support of the chaplain and/or FFMPC program coordinator, it became necessary to create a separate job description for those volunteers who did need that support. Thus, a job description designated as “volunteer” was created. This type of volunteer-role paralleled the function of a Pet Partners® team used in animal-assisted therapy (see Appendix B, Program Forms, Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, volunteer). This job description makes orientations in volunteer
procedures and basic pastoral-care awareness required; however, further training in spiritual/pastoral care is optional. After some time working as a “volunteer”, that individual may wish to obtain additional spiritual/pastoral-care training to enable that person to be evaluated for solo visits.

The spiritual-care provider (see Appendix B Program Forms, Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, spiritual-care provider) is an individual who has had spiritual/pastoral-care training or extensive experience in pastoral care such as an ordained member of a faith community or an individual who has completed one or more units of Clinical Pastoral Education. Because of this extensive training, this individual is able to visit patients/residents solo or paired with the FFMPC program coordinator and will be required to document their visits for the chaplain/director in the Four-Footed Ministers Assessment Tool form (see Appendix B, Exhibit J: Sample of Four-Footed Ministers Assessment Tool). Any concerns noticed will be recorded so that the chaplain/director can attend to them or, if appropriate, record them in the patient/resident’s chart.

The linchpin of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is the program coordinator (see Appendix B Program Forms, Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, program coordinator). This person has had training in both worlds—working or training in spiritual/pastoral care¹² as well as working with Pet Partners®-registered dogs. This individual works under the supervision of the chaplain/director, collaborating closely with that individual in running the program. Depending on the requirements of the facility, this individual is responsible for scheduling visiting teams, handling

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¹² To fulfill the spiritual/pastoral-care requirement, the successful candidate should possess either CPE training, be ordained in their faith tradition, or possess a graduate certificate in pastoral care.
paperwork for the teams, and working with teams as the chaplain/director dictates. In conjunction with the chaplain/director, this individual helps to train staff and volunteers as to the specifics of the program. At Maryville, the FFMPC program coordinator works with the volunteer coordinator in updating the *Maryville Volunteer Handbook* to ensure that the section on the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is current.

Spiritual formation with the spiritual-care provider is more highly structured because of the nature of their volunteer service. Therefore, training in spiritual/pastoral-care issues as well as opportunities for debriefing sessions with the chaplain/director are required as well as attention to prayer and spiritual formation within their own faith community. Formal prayer sessions could be scheduled for these volunteers as their numbers within the facility increase.

This section has described an over-arching schema for spiritual formation using both religious and clinical sources that describe the possibilities for formation latent in the nursing-home culture itself. These unrecognized forces define areas where spiritual formation can arise organically. With the structure of job descriptions for the two types of volunteers as well as the job description for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator, the chaplain/director is well on their way to developing their own in-house program based on these templates found in Appendix B. The next unit lays out more program specifics for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.
Checklist for Chaplains

- Awareness and affirmation of the mission–Are these being acknowledged and confirmed in staff meetings?
- Has the willingness to receive the service of others by patients/residents been acknowledged as important to the creation of a culture of spiritual/pastoral care?
- How many spiritual-but-not-religious patients/residents reside in the facility? Are their spiritual needs being met?
- Will the Four-Footed Ministerial teams have adequate support and follow-up to their work by either the chaplain/director or the FFMPC program coordinator?

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And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
I’m lonely—
I’ll make me a world.
—James Weldon Johnson

“Big change can happen.”¹ Out of God’s loneliness God created a world. Out of a perceived need to change the way people think about ministry, this work/artifact aims to open ministerial minds. It aims to encourage others to glimpse the possibilities of a new way that ministers can offer spiritual/pastoral-care to others through a program that offers a road-tested, safe, effective and repeatable way to incorporate canine-companions into ministry, doing ministry with dogs.

From the outset, the ministry problem was defined and other solutions suggested. Each of these was dealt with one by one. Each objection, while it had merit, could be adequately overcome or refuted based on additional information or empirical data.

Perhaps the most difficult objection was expressed in the question: “Why do dog ministry at all?” This objection was partially refuted using the work of a humanistic psychologist, Clare W. Graves, as interpreted by Michael Armour and Don Browning. It was discovered that the writings of the theological giants of past were molded and shaped by the level of spiritual existence framing the worldview of the century in which that theologian wrote. Therefore, the writing produced reflected a spiritual sensitivity that was appropriate for that historical period, but perhaps, not beyond it.

Based on the Armour/Browning assessment, it was demonstrated that the cultural and spiritual existence of human beings in the twenty-first century has moved beyond the worldview that formed the great thinkers of the past. Given this and the fact that theological reflection is an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit within the Church, it is imperative that a more interconnected Gaia-sensibility frame the ongoing theological dialogue. Thus, it was determined that the definition of ministry should be expanded to include dog ministry based on the worldview where dogs are God’s gift to humanity.

Having determined that a program approach was necessary, the thesis laid out four qualities that a comprehensive program should possess to be an effective tool for dog ministry. The qualities of being “road-tested,” safe, effective, and repeatable were the four pillars that shaped the qualitative study conducted at Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton, Oregon from May 2010 to May 2011. The study’s aim was to use a model for one-on-one visits and prayer-group gatherings\(^2\) as the foundation for program templates put into a training manual that would be usable by chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care in nursing-home facilities to set up their own programs. The training manual fills a gap in the literature because, as of this date, there does not exist a comprehensive program that points the way for those interested in dog ministry.

The study revealed both strengths and weaknesses. One strength that came to light was the comprehensive nature of the structure that the program defined and concretized. One weakness the study uncovered was the two-hour-per-day visitation limit required by Pet Partners® protocols that hampered spiritual/pastoral-care work within the facility. For a preliminary excursion into the programmatic world of dog ministry, it appears that the

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\(^2\) The model used was the researcher’s model, the CAM/PS model. CAM/PS is the designation for canine-assisted ministry/pastoral and spiritual care.
study was a success. It is hoped that the artifact on dog ministry will be useful to chaplains/directors.

As the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program continues to become more widely known, more avenues for further research will open up. As one of the objections pointed out, this program is currently designed as a dog-only ministry. More research with other domestic animals as well as other populations in other venues is important for the field of dog/animal ministry to expand and improve the spiritual/pastoral care offered to human beings of all ages, physical and mental challenges, and living situations. This current work and the artifact are just a beginning. The mind-set change necessary for wide-spread adoption will happen as the training manual finds a home in the print-publishing world, expected in the not-too-distant future.

Change is never easy, but the undercurrent of a change can begin to ferment within spiritual/pastoral-care circles if leaders take the risk to form their own dog-ministry programs based on the templates provided in the training manual. With the help of the training manual, chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care have an opportunity to begin a change that will result in more holistic spiritual/pastoral care for their patients/residents through dog ministry. In his review of *Four-Footed Ministers: Their Theology of Presence*, Dr. Stephen H. Webb stated that dog ministry could spark a revolution and he urges others to “Let the movement begin!”

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3 Jerilyn E. Felton, *Four-Footed Ministers: Their Theology of Presence* (Staarbrucken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller e.K., 2008). See the back of the book.
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Four-Footed Ministers

In

Formation

A Training Manual

On

Dog Ministry

Based on the CAM/PS Model

Written by
Jerilyn E. Felton, D. Min.
with the assistance of
Sister Josephine Pelster, S.S.M.O.
And
Barbara Miller
Aided by the Four-Footed Ministers
Alya and Caterina
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Alya, the second Four-Footed Minister

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who saw this new ministerial form as a way to fulfill Maryville’s mission statement
to provide

“Service with Love.”

I thank you all for your contributions to this work and I look forward to collaborating with you as the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program continues to unfold at Maryville. Our efforts will assist residents, families, and staff as we journey to God’s Kingdom where all will be welcome—both two-legged and four-legged beings.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the

Residents of Maryville

and those who have gone home to God

beginning with my late husband,

Mr. George C. Felton

who passed into Eternity at Maryville on December 12, 2008.

I thank you all for your gracious gift of your wonderful, vibrant selves.
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INTRODUCTION: SPIRITUAL INTERACTIONS WITH DOGS REVEAL A NEED FOR STRUCTURE

To paraphrase the great Lao Tzu, an academic journey of many miles began with a single question. That question was, very simply, how a lay minister might take his or her dog to work. This question on how to integrate a canine companion into ministry with elders was the driving force for research that spanned several years. While there were many ministers visiting patients with their dogs, it appeared that there was no comprehensive, sustainable program in healthcare settings that provided an over-arching structure for ministerial interactions integrating dogs.

After many years of study, this structure for dog ministry became a reality. There was more research being done on the human-animal bond and the empirical data from these studies highlighted the many benefits of these interactions. Though mentioned in the literature early on as a possible benefit, the ‘spiritual’ benefit from animal interactions had not been systematically explored.

One reason for this lack of exploration could be the fact that ‘spiritual’ benefits pose a particular problem for scientific research design.

There is a contrast between much of clinical research and spiritual care research. For example, in the world of clinical research there is often consensus on scientific definitions, methods, and anticipated outcomes. By contrast, the field of spiritual care research lacks consensus about the definition of spirituality. Neither is there agreement on the anticipated therapeutic outcomes of spiritual care.

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2 Some of the problems to this approach will be discussed in Unit One, Lesson 1.1.

interventions. Measuring spiritual care interventions is difficult and their effect seems elusive.⁴

Though this might be true, those involved in spiritual/pastoral care realize that stories provide the way of dealing with the ‘heart’ component of the human person. Stories become the link to other human beings for those who find themselves in a nursing home due to age (loss of youth) or illness (loss of health). It is through a listening presence that care and comfort are rendered in a ministerial setting; this is the place where someone is present for another listening to their story.⁵

In order to present the case for the integration of a dog into this holy work, the researcher laid down theological and theoretical grounds for dog ministry⁶ in her first thesis. She continued to develop this emerging model in a second thesis that consisted of a very small research study of prayer-group, faith-sharing sessions. These prayer-service, faith-sharing sessions involved independent elders in a parish setting who interacted with a Pet Partners®-registered therapy dog over the course of a five-day study. In this study, discussed in Unit One, Lesson 1.2, the structure was built based on the observation that dogs are social lubricators who facilitate community through their being totally present to the humans in that community. Dogs seem to possess the quality of being totally ‘into’

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⁵ See James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, The Leadership Challenge, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 88-89, where they discuss the areas of serious emperically based research that supports the power of stories that human beings appreciate instinctively.

⁶ Jerilyn E. Felton, “Four-Footed Ministers: A Roman Catholic Lay Pastoral Care Model for the Use of Canine Companions in Ministry to the Elderly in Retirement Communities” (Marylhurst University, 2002) and Jerilyn E. Felton, “Four-Footed Ministers: Their Theology of Presence--a Research Study on CAM/PS (Canine-Assisted Ministry/Pastoral and Spiritual Care)” (Marylhurst University, 2005).

⁷ The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is built upon the CAM/PS Model that was constructed on the protocols defined by the Pet Partners® program outlined in the Student Manual, Pet Partners® Team Training Course.
the moment. Moreover, “patients who are body conscious and feel unappealing to others, such as stroke patients, cancer patients, and patients with AIDS, can improve their self-esteem and self-acceptance by associating with animals.” Dog ministry appeared to be supported by the research, but more work was needed.

The second qualitative research study, discussed in Unit Two, formed the basis for the formal, comprehensive, and systematic program that is outlined in Unit Four. Senior citizens who were long-term-care residents in a nursing-care facility were asked to participate in a qualitative-research study to see how dogs might make a difference in their spiritual lives. The qualitative-study participants were invited to interact with a volunteer and their Pet Partners®-registered ‘Four-Footed Minister’ through gently directed spiritual-care interventions. These explorations were conducted in one-on-one interactions and group-prayer gatherings. A definite structure for canine-assisted ministerial interactions for both types of interventions took shape as the study progressed. The discussion of this nine-month qualitative study includes a description of the proposal, summaries of the Maryville research study notes on the topics of general visitation as well as the notes on pet grief-support gatherings, and the final interview assessment. From the work so far, it appears that the CAM/PS model based on Pet Partners® protocols, provides, preliminarily, a viable framework for the inclusion of dogs in ministry. The program developed is one that is “road-tested,” safe, effective in a spiritual/pastoral-care sense, and repeatable.

This manual is specifically directed to chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care in nursing-home facilities who recognize from their own experience, supported by

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nursing-care peer-reviewed journals, that there are many possible spiritual/pastoral-care benefits from integrating dogs into ministry to patients/residents. The program outlined in these pages should enable these professionals to use this program as a template for their own set of protocols and other forms.

The Four-Footed Pastoral-Care Program discussed in Units Three, Four, and Five will provide the chaplain/director with a hands-on, self-directed guide for this “road-tested”, safe, effective, and repeatable plan that has the potential for offering the highest level of spiritual/pastoral care. In addition, Unit Five specifically addresses issues of how the chaplain/director might sell the idea to administration and infection control, listing helpful hints on dealing with possible negative resistance that potential change might generate. As the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program presents a ready-made volunteer program that is based on time-tested Pet Partners® protocols, administration and infection control should be satisfied that this program should have an impressive positive impact on the facility overall.

The Appendices will provide the chaplains/directors with the templates on the components of the program. Appendix A details the research notes that formed the foundation for the discussion found in Unit Two. Appendix B consists of sample job descriptions, sample ads for recruiting volunteers that can be put into newsletters and posted to the web, a volunteer-training lesson plan, a sample of the program description for a volunteer handbook, and sample forms for use by both volunteer and spiritual/pastoral-care provider teams. Appendix C consists of samples of theological

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9 See Unit Five where the chaplain/director will receive tips from the business world that deal with a specific outline for anticipating resistance. Further, Unit Five presents concrete suggestions on how to create enthusiasm for an in-house dog-ministry program.
reflections and their assessments that illustrate how it is possible to find and use dog and animal stories to spark storytelling in a prayer group, leading to the discovery of how sharing personal pet stories can connect each individual to God. Appendix D provides the specific protocols that govern the running of the program within the Maryville facility that could be used as templates to formulate protocols for a healthcare facility. Finally, Appendix E contains samples of training slides and scripts that can be modified as needed, useful for training staff and volunteers. These provide a starting point for chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care from which they can develop their own training presentations for use in their unique program.

In the final analysis, this work is the culmination of a journey of ministry begun many years ago. It forms a beginning for many other journeys that might be taken by chaplains/directors of spiritual/pastoral care into the realm of dog ministry. Blessings on your journey.

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UNIT ONE

GONE TO THE DOGS—LITERALLY

LESSON OVERVIEW:

This unit acknowledges a Florida program doing dog ministry as well as introduces the structure of the CAM/PS model (canine-assisted ministry/pastoral and spiritual care) with a brief history of the model’s development.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To learn about one “regional program” for dog ministry, contrasted with a comprehensive model for using dogs in ministry.
- To define the CAM/PS model with a brief summary of its history.
Lesson 1.1: A ‘Local’ Dog-Ministry Program

Many within the ministerial ranks have recognized the importance of the relationship of the human being to their dog and have stepped forward to share their animal with those who can no longer care for or have an animal of their own. One dog trainer has even developed a program, Canine Crusaders, which functions within her own faith community at St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, Orlando, Florida. The aim of the program is to reach out to the elderly and sick, providing them with comfort and care from a faith-community member and their “four-footed minister.” While this local program has discovered the value of the spiritual connection, there exist unforeseen challenges that have been addressed in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program. This latter program was formalized and defined through a qualitative nine-month study at Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton, Oregon. While this study was but a preliminary one and there is more work to be done, the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is built upon the model for animal-assisted interventions highlighted in the Pet Partners® training program. The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is a solid first step in providing a comprehensive program for dog ministry that is “road-tested,” safe, effective, and repeatable.

1 Canine Crusaders already has a 10-year history of success. The founder, Ms. Valerie Almos, functions as the trainer for the volunteer teams through a once-a-year series of six weeks of obedience training and two weeks of on-the-job training. She has a group of volunteers who assist her in her efforts in training, testing, and helping volunteers who visit nursing homes and hospitals in the area.


While there might exist other local programs in the US, the Canine Crusaders program is a good one for comparison because this program highlights issues that are often overlooked in program design, such as adequate documentation of the program’s protocols, documentation of accidents if they should occur, and documentation of spiritual/pastoral-care interactions as needed. Moreover, since the Canine Crusaders program has not been extensively developed in a written form and depends heavily on the work of the founder, its longevity beyond the founder’s involvement might be considered questionable. The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program has addressed these challenges.

Thus, while this local program is a step in the right direction, the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program provides template forms for visitation documentation, job descriptions for two specifically defined volunteer roles, application forms, a training lesson plan, and recruitment samples (see Appendix B–Program Forms). Based on Pet Partners® protocols, the ministerial protocols (see Appendix D–Maryville’s Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program Protocols) will ensure safe interactions between the volunteer, the dog, and the patient/resident. While it is difficult to determine “empirically measurable results” in pastoral care⁴ and these are not immediately evident, the stories of those who minister with their dogs testify to the miracles that occur when a four-footed minister is present. Finally, a formalized program makes it possible for the continuation of the program beyond the life of the originator as well as continued development and refinement over time as new challenges arise and are met and conquered.

Lesson 1.2: What is the CAM/PS Model?

The CAM/PS model is a structure for the interactions between a volunteer/spiritual/pastoral-care provider and a patient/resident where the dog acts as a social lubricator to facilitate first physical, then ‘spiritual’ interactions. Physical interactions that establish the caring relationship between the volunteer/spiritual/pastoral-care provider (owner) and their dog are the basis for relationships formed with other human persons. From that solid base of care, concern, and respect built over the life of this relationship, the team can more easily connect to the patient/resident who loves dogs and loves to be in their presence. It is important to note that the aim of the interaction is not only sharing the beautiful gift of the dog with the patient/resident, but also to help that person connect to God. In the CAM/PS model, the goal is the spiritual/pastoral care of the individual. Thus, by its nature CAM/PS is not really a meet-and-greet modality but it is also not formally a therapeutic interaction either. It falls somewhere in the middle of these two modalities. While its focus is the well-being of the person served, the therapeutic value is to be found in the spiritual/pastoral plane where, as was previously mentioned, these therapeutic interactions are not empirically measurable in the strict sense of the word.

Structures of the Program

Based on the above interactions, the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care (FFMPC) Program has two related structures. The first is that of a ‘one-on-one’ interaction where the volunteer, either alongside or collaborating with the chaplain or
FFMPC program coordinator, visits the patient/resident in their room or a private setting. The Four-Footed Ministerial team/FFMPC program coordinator, depending on their job duties, interacts with that person, developing a relationship that provides the opportunity for the patient/resident to express their concerns and, if appropriate, to pray or receive a blessing. Here is an example of the sequence of action that governs what happens in a one-on-one visit:

Visitation Sequence for Four-Footed Ministerial Team

1. Ask permission to enter the room or private area.
2. Identify yourself with your name, noting you are from the chaplain’s office. Ask if person would like to visit with the dog.
3. If answer is yes, enter the room; if not, thank the person and wish them well.
4. Encourage the resident to interact with the dog, listening deeply to their concerns and needs.
5. Ask if there is anything that the person needs or concerns that should be addressed by spiritual/pastoral services.
6. End session with a blessing (if appropriate) wishing them well.

The following example of a verbatim provides the chaplain/director with an idea of how typical interactions develop. The characters are the spiritual/pastoral care provider (SPCP) and ‘Mary,’ a long-term care resident.

SPCP: Good morning, Mary. I am Jerilyn from the Sister Josephine’s office. How are you doing today?

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5 See Appendix B where there are two volunteer job descriptions. One describes the volunteer who wishes to work alongside the chaplain and/or Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator (FFMC program coordinator). The second job description meets the needs of the volunteer who has sufficient training and experience in spiritual/pastoral care and wishes to work independently to a degree.

6 Ibid.
Mary: Well, Jerilyn, since I last saw you, I have been sick.

SPCP: I am sorry to hear that, Mary. I am so glad to see you today and you look like you are feeling better. Would you like to visit with Alya?

Mary: Yes.

SPCP: (brings the dog to the front of Mary’s wheelchair so that Alya can lick her hand, as Mary is somewhat paralyzed and bent over). There, Alya is saying hello.

Mary (putting out her hand to be licked, and then begins petting Alya): Yes, she is. It is good to see you too, Alya.

SPCP: Does Sister know that you have not been well? Has anyone come to see you to bring you Holy Communion? So often many of our volunteers who bring communion to the sick can overlook someone if they are tucked back in their room or are asleep.

Mary: I haven’t seen any volunteers or sisters lately. Would you tell Sister Josephine that I miss Holy Communion?

SPCP: Certainly. I will see Sister after completing our visiting rounds and I will let her know that you would like to be visited and receive communion.

Mary: That would be nice.

SPCP: Is there anything else?

Mary: I guess not.

SPCP: Well, we have to continue our rounds, Mary. Blessings!

Mary: Blessings to you also.

Within the CAM/PS model there is also the recognition of the importance of community prayer. Here both volunteer and spiritual/pastoral-care providers work in conjunction with the FFMC program coordinator to gather and pray with a group. These
dog ministry prayer-group gatherings are approximately 20-30 minutes in length and held in a community room or other gathering location. The chaplain or FFMC program coordinator functions as a leader for the group by directing the participants through a process of theological reflection based on scriptures (not necessarily Christian), the attendees’ own religious or spiritual tradition/orientation, and their own lived experience remembering their beloved pet(s). Based on a quality of the Divine that is illustrated by the sacred scripture reading and a question of how their pet illustrated that quality, each participant is invited to share stories about their interactions with their pet(s). The leader then asks how the insights from the stories might help each individual to come closer to God, the Divine, or a Higher Power.

Here is an outline of one such prayer service that was built around the quality of the compassion that God shows to His creatures:7

### Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program

#### Dog-Ministry Prayer-Group Gathering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Script</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call to Prayer</td>
<td>With individuals seated in a circle: begin with “Let us all be in God’s Spirit, and we begin this time of prayer and meditation in the name of the Holy One.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>Time for centering and connecting to Spirit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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7 See Appendix C for a fuller exploration of this dog-ministry prayer-group gathering.
Welcome

“Welcome to the circle of wisdom where we can share our stories of our canine companions and other beloved animals. Today’s lesson is that of compassion.

“We begin with a mystery–a musty document has come across the desk of an academic who sees that it tells a story about Jesus not found in the Gospels. The story seems to answer the question, ‘What if Jesus had a pet dog?’

“This story is based on the method used by the rabbis in the Jewish tradition where they, being filled with the Word of God and great storytellers, filled in the blanks left in the approved scripture stories. This story uses imagination to fill in those gaps left in the Gospel stories.

“Since Jesus loved those who were outcasts from society, it seems logical that he would also take in outcasts from the animal world–dogs, for example. Dogs were outcast because they were scavengers and feasted on blood, an act that was forbidden according to the Jewish law.

“What follows is a story about Jesus and a dog who found a place in the community of disciples. Our question for the day is, how did we show compassion toward our pet or another’s animal when it was hurt or in trouble? What does that tell us about God’s compassionate care?”

Scriptural Reading

Read “Prologue” and “Chapter 1” of The Master’s Companion: A Christian Midrash. Adjust the amount read based on the situation at the time.

Silence

A period for reflection.

Faith-sharing time on compassion

Repeat the question of the day.

Time for sharing of stories about past experiences where each resident has a chance to tell a story about their compassionate act toward an outcast animal.

Next Session

“A Night in the Garden” (Chapter 2)–Jesus is our refuge from fear.

Conclusion: Sending Forth

“Let us now pray… Holy One, as we reflect on the beauty of your creation, let us takes the lessons we have learned into our community to spread Your joy, Your love, and Your peace. Amen.”

Both structures form the basis for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, as will be further explained in Unit Four. As this is an all-volunteer program, the time for individual visits and a schedule for the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings should be carefully planned and have the possibility of being adjusted. The above structures provide an overall picture of the program’s functioning.

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The CAM/PS History

Shackleton wanted the crew to get exercise….The dogs that had been brought along for pulling sleds were assigned to certain men for their care. Those men trained and bonded with those dogs and in this, maintained a real sense of purpose.\(^9\)

In his book *Summoned to Lead*, Len Sweet uses the story of Sir Ernest Shackleton’s trek to the South Pole as an example of how a leader hopes for the best but plans for the worst. When Shackleton and his crew were stranded, they found a way to survive by focusing on a purposeful activity; that of taking care of and bonding with the dogs that they brought with them. This story is an extreme example of how dogs can form important bonds to human beings regardless of their age or situation.

Perhaps an even more pointed story highlights the strong bond between the human and the dog, God’s gift to human being. In an anonymous midrash circulating on the internet, God felt sorry for Adam who had been banished from the Garden because of his sin. So, loving Adam very much, He created Dog. “And God said, ‘Because I have created this new animal to be a reflection of my love for you, his name will be a reflection of my own name, and you will call him DOG.’”\(^{10}\) Using dogs in ministry to elders required viewing the dog as *gift* and this perspective provided the real key for doing dog ministry.

As was mentioned, the idea for dog ministry was first formulated with a question: “How can a person take a dog to work when one begins working in ministry?” This question led to sketching a brief outline of a model for the integration of a canine.

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\(^{9}\) Leonard Sweet, *Summoned to Lead* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 154.

companion into ministry to elders in a retirement community. A qualitative research study to test the model was conducted in June 2004 over a five-day period in a parish setting with independent elders who tested the group aspect of the model. The study was set up so that the volunteer subjects were read an animal-specific section taken from the scriptures of world religions, had time to ponder a question germane to a quality often attributed to God, and tell their pet story that demonstrated that quality and how this reflection might help them come closer to the Divine. The results generally supported the validity of the model accomplished through questionnaires where stories told became the backbone of the project. It appeared that this could be a fruitful line of study.

Recent examples of dogs in ministry originating from the secular press reveal that the idea of dog ministry is catching on. In July 2009, Erica Noonan of *The Boston Globe* wrote a human interest article about the work of Mosby, the Ministry Dog, who visited the sick and nursing-care residents of his faith community in Littleton, Massachusetts. It was reported that the First Baptist Church welcomed Mosby for he, like a good dog, quietly curled up under a pew as services were conducted, but made himself available for interacting with the members of the congregation after services. He is acknowledged as an important part of the church community outreach.\(^\text{11}\)

Even before Mosby came on the scene, Pet Partners®, a non-profit organization in Bellevue, Washington, had begun serious study of how dogs and other animals could benefit human beings. Over the course of several decades, Pet Partners® developed training curricula that offered volunteers and their dogs education in safety procedures to enable them to work in healthcare facilities. They could function as either “meet or greet”

volunteer teams (animal-assisted activities) or work with professionals or paraprofessionals in the treatment of sick or injured individuals (animal-assisted therapy). As time progressed, Pet Partners® became a leader in recognizing and fostering research on the benefits of human interactions with dogs and other animals. Because of their rigorous work in the field, it was a natural step for Pet Partners® to develop a structure for registering pets and their owners. Healthcare facilities could then be confident that the Pet Partners®-registered teams would be knowledgeable about and take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of all participants when interacting with those who needed their care.

To provide a minimum standard for behavior, Pet Partners® developed a series of tests that were used to evaluate potential “therapy dogs.” The tests evaluated the volunteer team as a team and this test structure provided a comprehensive way to evaluate how a team might perform in a healthcare setting. Pet Partners® had provided not only a training manual on the evaluation tests, but also developed a series of standards for facilities that were interested in integrating “dog therapy” into their facility but had severe concerns about issues of safety and, more importantly, liability.¹²

Beyond the Initial Discoveries–The Maryville Story

In the intervening years, work continued on the CAM/PS model. Though an increasing number of individuals had become interested in dog ministry, no one had yet developed a road-tested, effective, safe, and repeatable program that could be used as a template for other unique programs. Thus, the CAM/PS model formed the basis for a doctoral qualitative research study that was conducted at Maryville Nursing Home,

Beaverton, Oregon from May 2010 to May 2011. Here, the actual program was further refined, implemented, and is sustained, demonstrating dog ministry in action (see Unit Two, The Maryville Nursing Home Story: Where the Program was Formulated).

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UNIT TWO

THE MARYVILLE NURSING-HOME STORY: WHERE THE PROGRAM WAS FORMULATED

LESSON OVERVIEW:

This unit discusses the qualitative research project and its results, highlighting the stories of the people and dogs who made the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program work at Maryville during the nine-month study conducted between May 2010 and May 2011.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

❖ To discover the story of the qualitative research study that defined the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program at Maryville.

❖ To appreciate the results of the study and provide preliminary questions that will help to determine the suitability of a Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program for a healthcare facility.
The Maryville Nursing Home Story: Where the Program Was Formulated

My doctoral mentor, James Wm. McClendon, Jr., taught me that the first task of theology is to locate our place in the story.1

Stories serve as a kind of mental map that helps people know, first, what is important (purpose and values) and, second, how things are done in a particular group or organization.2

Why do even the most educated of people tend to set aside their well-honed cynicism and critical nature when listening to a story? Because stories help individuals transport themselves away from the role of a listener who is rigorously applying rules of logic, analysis, and criticism and into the story itself.3

Stories are the powerful tools that the chaplain/director uses in spiritual/pastoral-care interactions to understand the person before them.4 The following pages provide the chaplain/director with a glimpse into the qualitative study conducted at Maryville. In retelling the stories of the Maryville study participants, chaplains/directors can see the impact the Four-Footed Ministerial teams made on the study volunteers and those who just wanted to tell the human member of the team about their beloved animal who was no longer permitted to be with them. It is an empirically demonstrated fact that the grief experience at “… the loss of a pet can be as intense as the loss of a significant person, [and] the significance of pet loss is more likely to go unacknowledged.”5 The


brief review given below begins with a discussion of the qualitative research design that includes both the strengths and the limitations, continuing with the stories of how the interactions with the dogs made a difference in the spiritual lives of the study participants. This discussion concludes with a list of preliminary questions the chaplain/director should consider as that person thinks about a project to develop their own in-house Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.

The Qualitative Study at Maryville

The Research Design: The Informed-Consent Form

The thesis statement below summarizes both the history and the direction of the Maryville study and formed the lead paragraph for the informed-consent form that was presented to potential volunteers:

Thesis Statement: Given the empirically demonstrated benefits of interactions of people with dogs, the CAM/PS model (canine-assisted ministry/pastoral and spiritual care) integrating canine-companions into pastoral care, took these beneficial animal-assisted interventions to the next level. In June 2004, the CAM/PS model was tried and affirmed as a viable way to connect independent elders in a parish setting through the process of theological reflection to God in a meaningful and beneficial way. In order to encourage use of the model in another setting and provide further development resulting in a program of spiritual/pastoral care based on the CAM/PS model, this present study aims set up an all-volunteer spiritual/pastoral-care provider program (Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program) from which a training manual for directors of spiritual/pastoral care/services will be produced.

The informed-consent document continued to define risks and benefits for the potential volunteer in the study as the following paragraphs explained:

At this point, there two areas that might be of concern. There is a risk of possible injury from the canine companion. On the personal/spiritual side, reminiscences
about a beloved companion who has died might bring up unpleasant memories resulting in sadness and unexpressed grief.\textsuperscript{5}

While physical harm is a possible event, the researcher has tried to reduce the risk of injury by screening volunteers and their dogs for appropriate obedience training and behaviors. Each dog’s health has been duly certified by a veterinarian as being up to date on shots and vaccinations. Each team will be required to have taken adequate flea control measures. All dogs will be Pet Partners\textsuperscript{®} registered.

With regard to the personal or spiritual stress that might arise from either one-on-one visits or prayer-group sessions, the social-services team is available to study participants to process any grief reactions. Realizing death is a part of the human condition and that our society does not honor grieving at the loss of a pet, if memories of pet loss should arise, the social-services team and/or researcher will create a safe environment where this pet loss is acknowledged and supported.

The issue of confidentiality was outlined for the potential volunteer making the basic outline of the study complete:

For individual visits, the Four-Footed Ministerial team will be accompanied by the researcher. Any stories deemed important to the research will be summarized in a written form and kept in a secure file. The researcher will make it possible for the participant to review this document at any time if allowing seven business days to process the request. The researcher will use a coding system to protect the participant’s anonymity. At the end of the study the key will be destroyed. The stories will remain in the files of the researcher.

The Research Design: The Elements of the Study

There were nine individuals (6 women and 3 men) who were selected by the chaplain, the admissions coordinator, nursing staff, and senior staff. They were suggested as possible participants in the study because these long-term nursing-care residents had expressed a love of dogs, had cared for dogs in the past, and had no medical issues that would have prevented them from participating. No one withdrew from the study, though one individual left the nursing home for adult foster-care (Dinah). One of the men (Seth)

\textsuperscript{6} While the processing of pet loss became a very important theme in the June 2004 study, it did not figure prominently in the Maryville study (see Appendix A, Exhibit B, Notes on Pet Grief Support Gatherings at Maryville). However, one resident who was in hospice did process a loss of a pet with the researcher on a one-on-one basis. A hesitancy to discuss pet loss could be due to the limitation of time for visitation as well as the reluctance of the individuals involved to talk about the subject in a group, though the topic could have been important to the participants and could have been discussed in one-on-one visits.
and one of the women (Deborah) died during the study. Each one of the potential volunteers had both the chaplain and researcher explain the study and each signed the informed consent form themselves or a healthcare representative signed it on their behalf.

One-on-one visits began in September 2010 and continued throughout the course of the study that concluded in May 2011. The one-on-one visits were attempted with all of the participants in order to build a level of trust with each person. Because of the compromised health condition of the participants who suffered from a variety of medical issues both physical and mental, it was often not possible to visit every week. Many of the residents were often not available for other reasons such as outings arranged through the activities department that conflicted with the scheduled visitation time. Finally, the dogs, the two retired-Guide-Dog Labrador Retrievers used in the study, were very popular with visitors and other residents. It was often difficult to adhere to a formal schedule of visitation due to the many interruptions because of the nature of the open campus and the physical attraction of the dogs who looked so much like siblings, their presence always initiating questions from residents and visitors.  

The test of the dog-ministry prayer-group-gathering structure began in January 2011, and group prayer was conducted on the same day as individual visits. Both modalities have continued beyond the conclusion of the study. It appeared from the regular attendance by study participants that dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings were

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7Marian R. Banks and William A. Banks, “The Effects of Group and Individual Animal-Assisted Therapy on Loneliness in Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities,” *Anthrozoös* 18, no. 4 (2005): 398. In their article on a research study on AAT to reduce the effects of loneliness with residents in long-term care facilities, Marian R. Banks and William A. Banks mention the work of P. R. Messent (1983) who discovered that pet dogs could facilitate casual human encounters in a park. These encounters happened infrequently if the person did not have their dog with them. The researcher’s observations and experiences throughout the Maryville study confirmed this observation.
more successful than the one-on-one interactions.\textsuperscript{8} However, given the nature of spiritual/pastoral-care interactions where the “cornerstone of pastoral care” is the “comfort that can be given by simply ‘being with’ the sufferer,” the issue of comfort rendered is increasingly important.\textsuperscript{9}

One factor that could have contributed to the apparent success of the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings was the fact that almost every human person likes a story. Using midrashic extension in exploring scripture and sacred story, many of the residents found these creative extensions to be fruitful ground in which to explore their relationship to God. The elements and process of theological reflection beginning with experience leading through self-awareness, the text, and finally to community were reversed in the case of dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings. An altered order was used in a research study conducted in 2004 and the Maryville study. It began with a gathering of the community facilitated by the dog, then to a statement of a quality attributed to the Divine and a question, moving into the text, and ending with the experience revealed through the pet story. Given the variable presentness of each participant, the researcher found it best to move quickly but prayerfully through the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings. Ultimately, using a question based on a God-like quality often attributed to a pet, the participant could more readily see how their interactions with their pet, as revealed in

\textsuperscript{8} It is interesting to note that the researcher’s observations are contrary to the results noted by Banks and Banks in the same study, 396-397. Though they attempted to build on their earlier study that indicated that AAT was beneficial to long-term care residents, Banks and Banks, in their 2005 study, found that AAT was more successful with individuals in reducing loneliness in one-on-one interactions rather than in the group. More research is needed in this area in order to determine if this is indeed consistent for dog-ministry prayer-group interactions.

\textsuperscript{9} Rabbi Zahara Davidowitz-Farkas, “Jewish Spiritual Assessment,” in Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Handbook from Traditional and Contemporary Sources (Woodstock VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001), 106.
their own story, could lead them to contemplate their relationship to God through that quality.\textsuperscript{10} This midrashic extension through pet stories based theological reflection provided a new potential avenue for the participants to access the meaning of the sacred text.\textsuperscript{11} Midrashic extension provided an easy way in.

The Research Design: Strengths and Weaknesses

There were several areas where both strengths and weaknesses became evident as the study progressed. From the beginning, the study was to be a qualitative one, using interviews and observations from spiritual/pastoral-care interactions conducted in a one-on-one setting and in the group interactions. To begin, there was no control group defined. This was due not only to the nature of the facility where the researcher was a “guest,” but also because the aim of the study was the definition of a structure built on the CAM/PS model from which a training manual for chaplains/directors could be constructed. The lack of a control group is not unique. This same challenge had also been encountered in a study conducted by Ira Perelle and Diane Granville where they note that a lack of control group did “dilute the strength of the results” and “because of the nature of the population and the institution, [an objective selection process and observations of a control group] were not possible.”\textsuperscript{12} Though a control group was lacking, this did not


\textsuperscript{11} For more information on the use of midrash as a pastoral-care tool in spiritual assessment see Davidowitz-Farkas, 107-108.

appear to significantly affect the outcome of the study, but points the way to further research refining the model.

As the aim of the study was to describe a structure for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, there was no formal baseline pre-test assessment taken. The selection of volunteers for the study was based on suggestions made by the staff. Their assessments depended on the individual’s history of dog interactions or the resident’s expressed wishes to participate. Therefore, the participants could be characterized as self-selected in this instance.

Finally, though the program appears to be a pioneer effort, the researcher did design and administer the oral assessment given at the end of the study to evaluate the research efforts (See Appendix A, Exhibit C). Though the questions were carefully reviewed and the researcher took every opportunity not to influence the answers given, it became apparent that the participants had developed a close relationship with her. This could have been a factor in the overwhelmingly positive results that came from the oral assessment. However, as the researcher is still involved in the program, positive comments about dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings have continued. Future studies would do well to use standardized assessment tools and external evaluators to determine the success of the model used in the program. However, in the final analysis, for a preliminary attempt at the formulation of a comprehensive structure for dog ministry, the study did prove successful in defining templates for a program using dogs in ministry.
Discussion: Glimpses of the Spiritual/Pastoral-Care Encounters from One-on-One Visits and Dog-Ministry Prayer-Group Gatherings

Following Rabbi Dayle Friedman’s outline for understanding the human person, reading them like a book, the first participant revealed that her dogs functioned as a lifeline for her, so administration permitted her to have one dog with her in her room. Staff recognized her connection to her companion dog and accommodated that dog’s needs in the early months of her stay at Maryville. It became apparent that the dog meant more to her than just a companion, as the following story reveals:

The issue of pet loss is the theme that runs through Dinah’s story. Dinah was a relatively young woman who had to give away one of her beloved dogs because she could only take one dog with her to Maryville. As it turned out, when she began to decline, the care of the dog fell to staff. It was then that the dog was adopted by a staff member.

As a hospice patient, she wanted to participate in the study because, she said, it would give her a reason to live. In the initial interview, she related how her dogs gave her love and kisses when she got her terminal diagnosis that required her to move to Maryville. She remembered how they knew that something was wrong with their “mom” and they “licked away the tears” from her eyes.

As time progressed, she seemed to enjoy the visits with the FFM dogs and was always happy to see them. We were there for her and we always prayed with her, giving her a blessing as we were about to leave. Though she had times throughout that year when she rallied physically, the strain of not having a dog of her own began to weigh heavily on her. With outside help, she moved out of Maryville at the end of 2010 to a location where she could have a ‘dog of her own.’

Another resident who loved dogs and appeared to have been somewhat isolated because of his declining health and relatively non-communicative stance revealed ever so slightly that dogs meant something to him beyond just a friendly face with whom to

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14 Biblical names have been assigned for the study participants to further protect their identities.

15 Chart notes: dated 7/18/2010. Stories quoted from chart notes will be noted by the date alone to protect the identity of the study participant.
interact. He verbalized when around the dogs and came to dog-ministry prayer-groups if someone could bring him. He paid attention to the dogs when in the prayer group but seemed to be oblivious to other surroundings.

**Seth** was another early participant in the study. He had been at Maryville for several years and, though appearing to suffer from a form of dementia, loved to interact with the dogs. The dogs always seemed to bring him out of himself to engage the world around him. He liked to have the dogs come to see him and would cluck at them to draw their attention.¹⁶ Throughout the intervening months of the study, he seemed to be withdrawing more completely into himself. Sister Josephine, the chaplain/director of spiritual services, mentioned in a debriefing session that Seth seemed to be very content with being alone in a sunny part of the facility processing his own thoughts.¹⁷ In order to ensure that he could see the dogs, the staff assisted him in attending the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings and he did so until the week before he died.

Joseph characterizes the other end of the spectrum with regard to engaging in life activities. **Joseph**, one of three men in the study, is a man who is always on the go despite his advancing years. Though a late riser, he seems to have a mental calendar and has many commitments within the facility, always cognizant of being there for his appointments. Because of his ability to get around by himself and because he enjoyed gathering with others, during the study he was a fixture of the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings. He is a man whose mind is as sharp as a tack. After one of the gatherings, Joseph told the following story about how close he felt to a friend’s hunting dog:

He told me [the researcher] about his experience of hunting with a friend’s Vizsla. He thought that because the dog was used in hunting birds (killing them) some in our group might be upset by that issue so he decided to share this story privately with me. He said that remembering this dog “touched his button.” I understood this to mean that it caused him to choke up with emotion because he pointed to his throat. He said how much he missed his hunting companion.¹⁸ I tried to reassure


¹⁷ Chart notes: 12/16/2010.

¹⁸ A pet-grief support group never seemed to come to fruition. See Exhibit B in Appendix A for the brief summaries concerning the efforts to start a group.
him that there is a ‘wideness in God’s mercy’ and that animals form a part of
God’s creation, side-stepping the issue of canine immortality. He seemed to be
satisfied with that statement. 19

This story reveals the deep attachment to and meaning of the dog to Joseph.
Reminiscence was a very powerful tool in this instance, yet there seemed to exist an
underlying sadness that future spiritual/pastoral-care encounters might illuminate.

The following stories of the women who were consistent study participants reveal
the various challenges both physical and mental that were overcome as time progressed.
Some had been faithful attendees at the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings and others
came as they could, depending on their feelings on that day. All were good friends who

sat together at mealtimes and appeared to enjoy being together for the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings that occurred outside of the normal daily liturgical offerings. Though each person’s story could be interpreted differently depending on how the spiritual/pastoral-care person read the ‘human document,’ the stories below summarizing their engagement with the dogs helped expose something more about each person that normal spiritual/pastoral-care interactions might not have uncovered.

**Jael’s** story tells us something of the facts of her life. She was a very sweet woman who had a severe physical challenge. Though confined to a wheelchair, she was always upbeat and seemed to be happy despite her lack of mobility. She loved to have the dogs visit her and loved to interact with them. She surprised the researcher by remembering Alya’s name though she had not seen Alya for several weeks. The sisters who worked in her section needed to bring her to the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings, but she came and seemed to enjoy her time together with her friends and the dogs. Though she did not share any special stories about dogs or cats, she seemed to be content to look at the dogs and be with them. Her interactions with the dogs gave her the opportunity to gather with others during the day other than at mealtimes. It appeared as if dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings were her avenue to community.

**Deborah** was the catalyst for the group of residents who ate meals together. She was always in the center of things. Moreover, she was computer savvy and loved to print out pictures of her friends that she had taken with her camera. She had a wonderful sense of humor that was illustrated in the following story:

Deborah was in her room and was wearing a tiara emblazoned with “2011.” She was in a very festive mood, anticipating the New Year’s Eve party that would be taking place on the following afternoon. As there were repairs being done in her part of the facility, there were several workmen moving about. They gravitated to Alya, who continued to lick Deborah’s hand as we talked. Deborah mentioned that Alya “could not hold her licker.” One of the workmen responded that she must not have her “licker license.” We all got a great laugh out of that. This dog-ministry visit had provided Deborah with another chance to showcase her great sense of humor.

Though Deborah’s physical health was up and down over the course of the study, she seemed to be able to maintain her sense of humor. She had even ordered a set of kazooos for some of her mealtime buddies and was going to start a kazoo band. Unfortunately, she died before the kazooos she ordered arrived. At her

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20 Chart notes: date 12/30/2010.
memorial, led by her resident friends, her meal companions played those instruments in her memory.

A very stately woman named Judith had been a professional musician and was very elegant in her manners and her dress. She loved both of the dogs and loved to interact with them. She would use ‘motherese’ to talk to them just like a mother talks to her small child. She called Alya her “bootiful” baby.21

The dog-ministry prayer-group gathering seemed to be her favorite time to visit people and the dogs. She came to one of the early gatherings and stated that she loved the beginning of the story of The Master’s Companion. When it came time for sharing, she offered her story of compassion for an animal by sharing with the group how the mutt she and her husband had adopted was a natural for ministry. This Four-Footed Ministerial mutt went with them to an “old folk’s home” and greeted each person assembled appropriately and correctly without being taught how to interact. Judith told her story with excitement, for she was totally engaged in the process.

Abigail is a woman the Four-Footed Ministerial teams met when she was surrounded by her family, both local members and those visiting from out of town. Abigail loved to see Alya and Caterina but continued to mention “Caleb” whom we would later come to know more about. It turned out that Caleb was Abigail’s cat who she would telephone every so often. She could not keep a pet at Maryville and her son had graciously agreed to take Caleb for her so she could keep in touch with him over the phone. She missed Caleb, though he “talked” to her weekly.22

When the research team conducted a quick verbal assessment of the dog ministry one-on-one visits, Abigail was asked if the visits by the dogs had helped her spiritual life. She responded that she eagerly looked forward to the dogs visiting. She also mentioned that she had noticed how several of her friends who were ill had been helped by the ‘dog visits.’23

The final woman in the study was Sarah, a woman with a wealth of stories about her lifetime interactions with both dogs and cats. In the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings, Sarah shared stories about her animals. One story particularly stood out because it reflects the general feeling that married couples have about their dogs.


22 In her article about animals, Lynette A. Hart mentioned a study conducted by R. L. Zasloff and A. H. Kidd conducted in 1994 that verified that those women who owned cats affirmed that cats gave them unconditional love and affection. The recognition of the importance of Caleb to Abigail confirms this observation. See Lynette A. Hart, “Positive Effects of Animals for Psychosocially Vulnerable People,” in Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy: Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice, ed. Aubrey H. Fine (San Diego: Academic Press, 2010), 64.

23 Chart notes: 12/16/2010.
Sarah shared with us her joy of being able to take her dog, Maura, a black poodle, with her into the surf when she visited the beach. Though the dog picked up sand and sea in her coat creating a bit of a mess to clean up, Sarah enjoyed being with her and mentioned briefly about the stillness and quiet she had experienced. Further, Sarah recalled an interchange she had with her late husband of 25 years when he lamented that she loved the dog more than she loved him; she responded, “I’m sorry you noticed.”

A resident with Sister Josephine, Barbara, Caterina, Alya and Jerilyn.

A study participant with Jerilyn, Alya, and Caterina.

The final male participant in the study falls in a class by himself because of the nature of the helping profession he had exercised during his working life. He had
been involved in church work, but the animals who had graced his life were very important to him, as his reminisces about the family dog revealed.

Sean had been a clergyman and enjoyed being with dogs throughout his entire life. He is a real storyteller, relating stories about his beloved Kerry Blue Terrier, Mike, a dog he had as a child. Because he came from a large family, Sean noted that Mike often wanted to get away from the family and would hide out so that he could get some peace.

In November 2010, Sean was very excited because he was going to have the chance to use his ministry background for a Bible-study gathering. Unfortunately, he had a physical setback toward the end of the month so could not conduct the gathering.

As time went on, Sean enjoyed coming to the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings if he could get there. His condition required that one of the CNAs bring him or accompany him as he used his walker. He made it to several of the gatherings, offering a blessing at the conclusion of one of them and, most importantly, when blessing a group he never forgot the dogs.

In the final analysis, the research study points to the following challenges that a chaplain/director should seriously consider when thinking about how they might set up and implement a Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program in their facility:

- The research revealed that many of the impromptu interactions within a hallway or on the way to a patient/resident’s room presented opportunities for both residents and visitors to engage the Four-Footed Ministerial teams. Normally these individuals connected to the dogs first, then related their dog stories to the human counterpart. Unfortunately, these impromptu visits often prevented the teams from attending to those who had scheduled visits. (See Appendix A, Exhibit B, Notes on General Visitation).

- A weakness not previously mentioned relates to the issue of a consistent gathering location for the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings. Though the stories do not reveal this, the assignment of a particular place would have helped to create a sense of schedule and predictable routine for the participants, especially given the fact that many depended on CNAs to bring them to the group. Areas that were thought to be ideal for a gathering did not work out because of scheduling difficulties with the activities department. From experiences beyond the study, it was discovered that meeting in the same place every week has made a tremendous difference in aiding residents to come to the group.
The research revealed that the time for scheduling visits did not work with the residents’ schedules. It was necessary for the teams to change their visitation day from Fridays when activities outside the facility were often scheduled, to Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon, when most residents were available. Given the two-hour-per-day visitation window for the dogs according to Pet Partners® protocols, timing issues have become important considerations in scheduling both individual visits and dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings.

One additional challenge that the research uncovered was the necessity to ask staff to assist with gathering the residents for dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings. Many of the residents would have liked to attend, but often did not remember the time designated for the gathering or know the place where the gatherings were being held. Sister Josephine was instrumental in making sure that those who wanted to come were able to gather in prayer with the dogs.

The research confirmed that the chaplain/director is often required to put forth extra effort in publicizing and helping facilitate an effective gathering. Sister Josephine was normally apprised of the scriptural reading for the week and she prepared handouts of that scriptural piece for those who were still able read. She made sure that there was a sign posted to notify all residents where and at what time we were to gather. She even arranged the physical space to make it more inviting to the participants who were in wheelchairs.

Finally, the research study confirmed the wisdom of visiting in pairs. The researcher and her ministry partner felt that they were more successful on their one-on-one visits as well as their group interactions if both teams could be present, even though this decreased the number of possible visits.

The above results define some of the successes and challenges encountered in the Maryville study. The subsequent chapters will assist the chaplain/director in discovering what makes up the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program and how this program might provide comfort and spiritual/pastoral care for their patients/residents.

Preliminary Personal and Facility-Analysis Questions

The following provides the chaplain/director with questions that will aid in a preliminary assessment of one’s personal commitment and the facility’s willingness to
accommodate a Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program. Helpful resources and suggestions as to answers to these questions will follow in the subsequent chapters:

1. Am I willing to take on the additional duties required by the program? 24
2. Will I be willing to present the program to administration and infection control?
3. Are there potential challenges with regard to staff members who might be allergic to dogs or afraid of them? Would a short survey of the nursing staff and CNAs be in order as I consider implementing the program?
4. Am I able to educate myself to the point where I can make an informed decision as to who might function in the role of FFMPC program coordinator? Are there individuals who can assist me in this endeavor?
5. Is the facility able to accommodate dog visitations? 25
6. Will the activities department be willing to work with the Four-Footed Ministerial teams who call on patients/residents?
7. Is there a time slot where dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings can be scheduled so that prayer does not conflict with other activities going on in the facility?
8. Is there a place that can be easily accessible to patients/residents where the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings can be held on a consistent basis?

24 See Appendix B: Program Forms-Exhibit A that lists the additional duties.

25 Flooring issues such as tile versus carpet will need to be considered in planning how the program unfolds. Physical-plant issues such as potty areas, areas that allow the dogs to take breaks, etc., are important considerations at the beginning planning stages.
Bibliography


UNIT THREE

FORMATION PROCESS OF BUILDING A CULTURE OF SERVICE

LESSON OVERVIEW:

This unit will present a schema concentrating on a spiritual-formation process that builds on a culture of service.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To learn about a process of spiritual formation that taps already existing cultural components latent within the notion of service rendered to others.

- To appreciate the contributions made by each segment of the populations involved in the nursing-home environment that creates the culture of service and care.

- To intentionally engage these populations to appreciate their gifts for spiritual/pastoral care to each other through working with volunteer Four-Footed Ministerial teams.
FORMATION PROCESS OF BUILDING A CULTURE OF SERVICE

Lesson 3.1: Religious/Ministerial Formation Schema

To understand the populations that make up a nursing-home environment, both ministerial and clinical documents can provide insight in understanding the complex organism that is called ‘human.’ A work on lay-ecclesial ministry published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops entitled *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*\(^1\) treats the human being from a perspective of the human, intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions. These dimensions interact through the formation process so that ministers can carry out their ministerial duties more effectively. These four areas dovetail with the clinical division of therapeutic goals defined by Dr. Judy Gammonley in her article entitled, “Animal-Assisted Therapy as a Modality within Nursing.”\(^2\) Here, she set up a sample nursing plan using animal-assisted therapy. Both schemas can be utilized when considering how to tap into the already-present culture of service that should be operational in a nursing-home environment.

While the descriptor ‘human’ can be seen as incorporating the physical and the cognitive, the description of physical and cognitive goals in Gammonley’s sample nursing-treatment plan point to activities that the patient/resident is encouraged to perform to effect their healing. In the realm of ministry formation, the human, intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions also outline intentional activities the lay minister undertakes to become more formed in the image of Christ for the good of other

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human beings. Thus, both sets of descriptors point to intentional activity to be undertaken for a specific purpose of healing or more effective ministry.

The last two goals Gammonley mentioned in her sample nursing plan were psycho-social and spiritual. With the aid of a therapy animal, activities in these areas helped the individual seeking healing in connecting to community. Further, these activities have the potential to assist that individual through contact with the animal to enter a new plane of reality. Gammonley mentioned, quoting from an earlier article, that the ‘spiritual’ was one of the five categories where animal-assisted therapy was appropriate for healing. She quoted a study by L. Nebbe where the spiritual response is defined as one where “an animal provides a sense of oneness with creation and a sense of well-being. Hospice patients renew their spiritual energy through reminiscence. This activity takes place by daily interactions with the resident cat [used in her study] and/or staff. A sense of well-being occurs while holding the cat.” This is a good start, but these interactions can be seen as meaning so much more than this, as was demonstrated in the stories of the study participants described in Unit Two.

In understanding the nursing-home culture as formative, the formation process itself can be thought of as a molding procedure that takes place within the human person because that person resides within a physical, social, cultural, and spiritual world.

Everything influences the human person in this world, for,

Every thought we hold, every decision we make, every action we take, every emotion we allow to shape our behavior, every response we make to the world around us, every relationship we enter into, every reaction we have toward the

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3 M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 12.


5 Ibid.
things that surround us and impinge upon our lives—all of these things, little by little, are shaping us into some kind of being.\(^6\)

The human being has no choice in the matter of being shaped\(^7\) into some new being dictated by these factors in their surroundings. Thus, each facility would do well to examine how their environment lives up to their commitment to provide caring service to those who cannot care for themselves.

If the nursing-home culture is such an important part of formation for all those who interact within it, then what does the environment within the facility look like and how can the aspects of spiritual formation be undertaken for the benefit of the whole community?

**Lesson 3.2: Populations in Spiritual Formation**

By its very nature, a nursing-home facility should be a place that provides skilled nursing care to individuals who are incapacitated by injury, sickness, and/or old age. The creation of a caring environment depends on its people as well as its physical plant. It is the quality of loving service, ‘ministry’ in the best sense of the word, which can be the formational element to be used by the chaplain/director to their advantage when looking at the formation process within their facility.

Looking at Staff

As staff members from the senior level down review interactions that create community, the environment of the facility can take on aura of ministry. The

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\(^6\) Mulholland, * Invitation to a Journey*, 23.

\(^7\) Ibid.
chaplain/director can be aware, through observation, whether or not a caring environment exists. He or she can notice the interactions of staff members with patients/residents to help those staff members become aware of the fact that their work not only affects the individual they have before them, but also has an effect on those who surround them, such as family members or visitors. According to the current pontiff, “A respectful and compassionate silence, a prayerful presence, a gesture of tenderness and comfort, a kind look, a smile, often achieve more than many words.”

Staff meetings are a good time to alert the nursing staff and CNAs to the importance of their interactions with patients/residents, family members, and visitors. Repetition of the facility’s mission statement can be helpful in re-affirming the purpose for their work. The mission statement that guides the work at Maryville is the simple proclamation of “Service with Love.” It is the driving force behind the work they do. Awareness and affirmation of the mission are two activities that take little time, yet pay big dividends.

Looking at Patients/Residents

In his booklet entitled “Sickness,” the current pontiff, Benedict XVI, puts the diminishment experienced by patients/residents into perspective. He states,

In our generation, in our culture, we have to rediscover the value of suffering in general, and we have to learn that suffering can be a very positive reality which helps us to mature, to become more ourselves, and to be closer to the Lord who suffered for us and suffers with us.9


9 Ibid., par. 28.
Though this is written from a Roman Catholic point of view, the acknowledgement of the reality of suffering and the unity of all sentient beings, coupled with the ache to relieve that suffering, is echoed throughout the scriptures and traditions of world religions. For those who profess to be Christians and those who follow a non-Christian faith tradition, such encouragement from this religious leader gives them hope that their suffering has meaning and purpose. Finally, it can be said that the above sensibility is not just a concept that informs a ‘believer’s’ perspective alone, but is one that can also inform those who profess to be spiritual-but-not-religious.

There are many more individuals in this current day who come to nursing homes professing to be spiritual-but-not-religious. They have a profoundly deep spiritual connection to the Divine. Though the chaplain/director might profess a certain faith tradition, the sense of caring compassion on the human and pastoral level will be felt and appreciated by those who are in need of spiritual care. In most cases, a compassionate act will be received as such by most individuals who will recognize the caring concern that flows from actions that may be performed in the name of a Christian God, though not named as such.

The spiritual-not-religious person who likes dogs and readily interacts with them on a purely human level will respond to ministerial attempts at spiritual care in their own spiritual way that may not be immediately apparent to the Four-Footed Ministerial team. Thus, interactions with the team should affirm and support the individual whose sensibilities are not conformed to a particular religious tradition. In the end, the lead must always be directed by the patient/resident. Regardless of the patient/resident’s belief or non-belief, the spiritual formation of the spiritual-but-not-religious persons in the
nursing-home population must be acknowledged and affirmed, especially by those who minister to them.

It must be noted that within the realm of the pastoral dimension, many believers and non-believers, including the spiritual-but-not-religious, do not see the important role they play in the spiritual formation of those who serve them. From a purely human standpoint, it is important that patients/residents be thought of as being part of the spiritual/pastoral-care service team. They provide their care in the form of being open to receiving the gifts of service from the staff as well as the Four-Footed Ministerial teams who visit. In this instance, their contribution cannot be understated. Their openness to receive is essential in the creation of a loving community of care and service needed for a nursing-home facility to totally fulfill its mission.

Looking at the Four-Footed Ministerial Teams

Building on Pet Partners® protocols that define animal-assisted therapy to be a volunteer team working in conjunction with a professional or paraprofessional to accomplish measurable therapeutic goals, it became apparent from the Maryville study that two types of job descriptions for Four-Footed Ministerial teams would be necessary. As those with pastoral-care training or extensive spiritual/pastoral-care experience might not necessarily need the visitation support of the chaplain and/or FFMPC program coordinator, it became necessary to create a separate job description for those volunteers who did need that support. Thus, a job description designated as “volunteer” was created. This type of volunteer-role paralleled the function of a Pet Partners® team used in animal-assisted therapy (see Appendix B, Program Forms, Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, volunteer). This job description makes orientations in volunteer
procedures and basic pastoral-care awareness required; however, further training in spiritual/pastoral care is optional. After some time working as a “volunteer”, that individual may wish to obtain additional spiritual/pastoral-care training to enable that person to be evaluated for solo visits.

The spiritual-care provider (see Appendix B Program Forms, Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, spiritual-care provider) is an individual who has had spiritual/pastoral-care training or extensive experience in pastoral care such as an ordained member of a faith community or an individual who has completed one or more units of Clinical Pastoral Education. Because of this extensive training, this individual is able to visit patients/residents solo or paired with the FFMPC program coordinator and will be required to document their visits for the chaplain/director in the Four-Footed Ministers Assessment Tool form (see Appendix B, Exhibit J: Sample of Four-Footed Ministers Assessment Tool). Any concerns noticed will be recorded so that the chaplain/director can attend to them or, if appropriate, record them in the patient/resident’s chart.

The linchpin of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is the program coordinator (see Appendix B Program Forms, Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, program coordinator). This person has had training in both worlds—working or training in spiritual/pastoral care\(^\text{10}\) as well as working with Pet Partners®-registered dogs. This individual works under the supervision of the chaplain/director, collaborating closely with that individual in running the program. Depending on the requirements of the facility, this individual is responsible for scheduling visiting teams, handling

\(^{10}\) To fulfill the spiritual/pastoral-care requirement, the successful candidate should possess either CPE training, be ordained in their faith tradition, or possess a graduate certificate in pastoral care.
paperwork for the teams, and working with teams as the chaplain/director dictates. In conjunction with the chaplain/director, this individual helps to train staff and volunteers as to the specifics of the program. At Maryville, the FFMPC program coordinator works with the volunteer coordinator in updating the *Maryville Volunteer Handbook* to ensure that the section on the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is current.

Spiritual formation with the spiritual-care provider is more highly structured because of the nature of their volunteer service. Therefore, training in spiritual/pastoral-care issues as well as opportunities for debriefing sessions with the chaplain/director are required as well as attention to prayer and spiritual formation within their own faith community. Formal prayer sessions could be scheduled for these volunteers as their numbers within the facility increase.

This section has described an over-arching schema for spiritual formation using both religious and clinical sources that describe the possibilities for formation latent in the nursing-home culture itself. These unrecognized forces define areas where spiritual formation can arise organically. With the structure of job descriptions for the two types of volunteers as well as the job description for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator, the chaplain/director is well on their way to developing their own in-house program based on these templates found in Appendix B. The next unit lays out more program specifics for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.
Checklist for Chaplains

- Awareness and affirmation of the mission—Are these being acknowledged and confirmed in staff meetings?
- Has the willingness to receive the service of others by patients/residents been acknowledged as important to the creation of a culture of spiritual/pastoral care?
- How many spiritual-but-not-religious patients/residents reside in the facility? Are their spiritual needs being met?
- Will the Four-Footed Ministerial teams have adequate support and follow-up to their work by either the chaplain/director or the FFMPC program coordinator?

Bibliography


UNIT FOUR
THE FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM

LESSON OVERVIEW:
This unit will discuss the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, providing the chaplain/director with a look at more program elements to assist in ascertaining the feasibility and possible development of an in-house program for the facility.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To learn how the components of the program are designed, operate, and interface with one another through a theology of presence and touch.
- To come to an appreciation the importance of the program as a conduit for spiritual comfort and care for those within the facility.
THE FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM

Lesson 4.1: Administrative Duties of the FFMPC Program Coordinator: Where It’s All About Relationship

Within any healthcare facility, there is a division of labor that requires all departments to work toward fulfillment of the organization’s mission. As Maryville has the mission of providing “Service with Love,” the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program has become an asset to the facility by enhancing the service of the spiritual/pastoral care department in the areas of internal and external community relationships.¹

Currently, this program is an all-volunteer effort and has had little or no direct financial impact on the facility. It is possible that at some future time, the program might evolve to the point where the volunteer FFMPC program coordinator will become a paid member of the staff because of the increased workload due to an expanded number of visitation teams as well as the assumption of additional volunteer supervisory duties. The FFMPC program coordinator functions as the liaison between the various departments of nursing care, activities, and spiritual care, advocating on behalf of the patients/residents and the volunteer Pet Partners® teams. These efforts have already resulted in a perception of care and concern both internally and externally.

As the main focus of the FFMPC program coordinator is administration of the program, this person assists department heads to understand the benefits of the program and calm the fears of those who could perceive the program as an encroachment to their

¹ Early in the study, the chaplain informed the author that there had been a donation made to Maryville specifically because the donor had noticed that there were dogs working within the facility.
areas of influence. Thus, facility cultural sensitivity is of vital importance for the person who fills this role, as well the ability to adjust to conditions as they present themselves.

As the program administrator, the FFMPC program coordinator (see Appendix B: Program Forms, Exhibit B) works under the direct supervision of the chaplain/director. The job description for the FFMPC program coordinator defines the following administrative duties that are crucial to the running of the program:

- Maintain file of health records on dogs in the program;
- Develop health requirements for FFM teams based on good practices for animal-assisted interventions;
- Maintain FFM pastoral-care log file for program;\(^2\)
- Register and credential FFM teams for visitation;
- Schedule volunteer FFM teams for one-on-one visitation;
- Schedule (and prepare) prayer-group gatherings with activities department;\(^3\)
- Schedule FFM team in-services and continuing-education sessions for staff and volunteers;
- Assign volunteers to residents who request one-on-one visits;\(^4\)
- Be responsible for supplies for dogs kept in the volunteer office;

\(^2\) Rev. Richard B. Gilbert, “Chaplains and Charting,” *Healing Ministry* 17, no. 3 (2011): 11-13. In the study at Maryville, charting was supplanted by debriefing sessions after visitation/group ministry. If items of concern did arise, they were discussed with the chaplain at that time. She determined if the information should be charted.

\(^3\) For the Maryville Study, the program was run independently of the activities department. Because it was a study and not generally open to those outside of the study participants, coordination problems resulted with regard to a consistent meeting space and time. However, these were handled as they arose. Moreover, the FFMPC program coordinator was responsible for preparing the weekly dog-ministry prayer-group gathering and this duty continues to be part of her responsibilities. The problem of a consistent gathering space was solved by Sister Josephine through her action of reserving a small reception area for the weekly gatherings.

\(^4\) Because the study was small, there was no need to make any formal assignments, though staff did contact the FFMPC program coordinator if a patient/resident requested a visit.
❖ Update *Maryville Volunteer Handbook* section on FFM teams as needed;\(^5\)

❖ Develop and modify forms for the program.

Based on the above duties, during the study, the FFMPC program coordinator devoted between two to four hours per week on these tasks. This volunteer time was allocated between on-site visitation and work done at home. As there was only one other volunteer team involved in the Maryville study (Barbara Miller and Caterina), scheduling visitations and group gatherings did not present an insurmountable obstacle. As more teams are recruited and more patients/residents are added to the list for visitation, more time will have to be allotted to this position. *As a preliminary requirement for participation, it is imperative that every team that works in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program be Pet Partners®-registered and have up-to-date credentials.*

Though Maryville is a relatively open campus, there were visitation documents designed and used at the beginning of the study (see Appendix B, Program Forms, Exhibits I and J for examples). However, the use of these was abandoned after a time because it became evident that debriefing sessions with the chaplain/director were more productive. Sample forms are provided to enable larger programs to have an adequate way to document volunteer visits. These examples are easily modified to meet the level of expertise of the chaplain and/or volunteers. Their use will result in the effective implementation and maintenance of the program.

**Lesson 4.2: One-On-One Visits: The Theology of Presence and Touch**

“The elderly should not be reduced to remembering the way it felt to be

\(^5\) This responsibility could be negotiable depending on the requirements of the facility.
touched.”6 This statement encapsulates the current cultural state of affairs with regard to those who are in compromised health who find themselves in a nursing-home facility. It is truly unfortunate that both the presence and the touch of one human being reaching out to another is becoming a thing of the past. “The twenty-first century is increasingly being asked to live without touch.”7 One can see that the massive use of technology has distanced person from person, for as technology increases, physical touch decreases.8 A technological interaction is a poor substitute for contact with a living, breathing being who is focused and responsive to another. One comes to realize that texting and email are poor substitutes for being there.

Added to this is the fact that, with the bulk of the population aging, nursing-home staffs are asked to do more with less. The number of caregivers appears to be decreasing while the number of those needing care increases. This leads to situations where elders are more likely to be handled as a commodity rather than touched lovingly.9 While this lack of mindfulness is part of the human condition, the pressure to help and assist patients/residents within a limited time frame often leads to forgetfulness of the holy work that that staff member performs for those who cannot do for themselves.

The Four-Footed Pastoral-Care Program provides a way for this lack of presence and acceptable touch to be overcome through the appreciation of the ‘self gift’ of a dog.10

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7 Ibid., 240.

8 Ibid., 246.

9 Jerilyn E. Felton, “‘If I but Touch the Hem of His Cloak...’: ‘Touching Prayer’ as the Best of Both Worlds,” *Healing Ministry* 13, no. 3 (Summer 2006). This article provides ways busy staff can make their work a prayer.

Dogs will reach out for those drawn to them by allowing the human to pet them or by licking an outstretched hand. In the American culture, it would appear that touching a dog is culturally acceptable by either a male or female and is, in our dog-crazy world, encouraged. Therefore, an important spiritual connection can be made through the dog because the dog is both present and touchable. This bridge of connectivity can be encouraged and built upon as visits continue and relationships develop, eventually moving the connection from the physical plane alone to both the physical and spiritual planes. “The dog is always more than we know, extending beyond our knowledge, and calling on us to match its excess with acts of generosity of our own.”

Lesson 4.3: Dog-Ministry Prayer-Group Gatherings

As loneliness seems to increase as one ages, the gathering of community becomes more and more important, because “pets, otherwise known as ‘companions,’ alleviate the stress and alienation of old age and illness.” This is where animal-assisted therapy has empirically demonstrated that feelings of loneliness are reduced in those elders who wish to participate in this type of interaction. It appears that the dog seems to bring people

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11 The Maryville study confirmed that licking, a perceived fault in a therapy dog, was an asset to ministry work with elders. Many elders could not, because of the nature of their infirmity, interact with a dog unless that dog first extended herself to them through the process of licking. This was very powerfully illustrated in an instance where a patient/resident was unable to communicate or touch the ministry dog unless an aid assisted the person to extend a hand. The dog’s licking of the person’s hand caused visible joy to that physically challenged person observable to all in the room.


together by its nature as dog for those willing to be a part of a community. Therefore, group gatherings integrating dogs, having a spiritual/pastoral care goal, are a natural extension of the one-on-one connection.

In the Maryville study, it became apparent that when the dogs (two Four-Footed Ministers) entered the building, they were immediately the center of attention for eager elders and their family members excited to interact with them. Throughout the study, the individuals would seek to touch or otherwise interact with the dogs, often moving beyond the human component of the Four-Footed Ministerial team directly to the dogs. Some individuals were happy to sit back and just look at the dogs that looked so very much alike they could almost be sisters. In any case, the dogs constantly drew a crowd as soon as they came into the building.

From left to right: Alya and Jerilyn; Caterina and Barbara.

A sample of a dog-ministry prayer-group gathering is provided in Appendix C, defining the various sequences of actions that make up prayer gatherings. It is important to note that while the dogs are present and are able to be touched, they should not be the
focus of the gathering. The dogs in the Maryville study were on long leads and able to interact with those who called to them, as they were usually placed in the center of the prayer circle so that they were visible and touchable. Some residents who participated did tend to focus more on the dogs than the prayer.¹⁵

In short, the dogs helped to gather the individuals into the circle for prayer and the leader provided a prayerful focus. Beyond that, however, each individual ‘prayed’ in their own way–some participating, some sleeping, or some attempting to interact with the dogs. Each session during the study was an adventure. As dog ministry received enthusiastic reviews in the evaluations conducted at the end of the study, the sessions have become a part of the Maryville culture of prayer and service.

**Lesson 4.4: Chance Encounters**

As was mentioned earlier, perhaps the most frustrating thing for a study at Maryville was the ‘open’ campus environment. It became a challenge to visit those who were in the study because so many family members encountering the FFM teams on their way to a patient/resident’s room made impromptu requests for the dogs to visit their loved ones, because “my mother/father/husband just loves dogs.”

Added to these chance encounters, Pet Partners® protocols have set a two-hour-per-day limit for visitations. This makes the scheduling of individual visits and prayer-group gatherings a challenge. During the study, the FFMPC program coordinator took the information given to her by staff and, with her ministry partner, Barbara,

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¹⁵ One particular individual enjoyed clucking to the dogs to get them to come over. More often than not, both of the dogs would stay in the center of the gathering, sleeping. One individual who enjoyed being with the dogs was close enough to have her stocking foot on Alya throughout one whole session. The dog, however, remained motionless the whole time. The resident was happy and so was the dog.
attempted to visit the individuals who had requested visits as well as those in the study. Added to individual visitations was the challenge of fitting in a 20-to-30-minute prayer service during the two-hour window. Over the life of the study, it became evident that despite the number of impromptu requests, everyone who wanted a visit was able to receive one eventually.

As there are more and more requests, it will become more important for the FFMPC program coordinator, in conjunction with the ministry volunteers, to schedule visitation time carefully in order to cover the needs of those who have requested visits. There will always be those patients/residents who stop a FFM team in the hall, preventing them from going to a scheduled visit. However, having a brief discussion of who to visit before commencing visitation rounds or having a list of patients/residents to visit ensures that, at least, an attempt will be made to visit everyone on that list. As the program grows and expands, the importance of written visitation schedules will become more and more critical to ensure that everyone has a chance to interact with the dogs. In spiritual/pastoral care, the mantra is ‘we deal’—meaning the Four-Footed Ministerial teams adjust to the situation, whatever it might be.

**Checklist for Chaplains**

- For an example of visitation elements that form the basis for training sessions for both volunteers and spiritual/pastoral-care providers, review Appendix E: Maryville FFMPC Program-Training Module Sample. This PowerPoint slide presentation/script example provides a starting point for the development of in-house training sessions.
Dog-ministry prayer-group gathering examples in Appendix C define the sequence of prayers and periods of silence for reflection. Various stories about animals can be used as a basis for the process of theological reflection. There is included a column on the far right to record impressions of the session at its conclusion to enable the spiritual/pastoral-care department to work on further refinements.

Perhaps one of the biggest revelations that came from designing the program for Maryville was the importance of having Four-Footed Ministerial teams visit in pairs (See Unit Two, Discussion). The prescription for this comes from the New Testament where Jesus sent out His disciples two by two. Visiting in pairs proved to make tremendous sense (See Mark 6:7, NAB). Both the researcher and her ministry partner, Barbara, have been pleasantly surprised how this simple principle worked so well in the study and continues to enhance current interactions.

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UNIT FIVE
THE CHAPLAIN/DIRECTOR’S ROLE IN IMPLEMENTATION

LESSON OVERVIEW:

This unit will discuss the chaplain/director’s role in setting up, implementing, and maintaining the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program. This chapter presents helpful suggestions and resources.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To learn more about the canine component of the program; learn how to sell the program to administration and infection control, working with helpful suggestions on how to effect relatively painless change within the organization; and finally, benefit from suggestions on recruiting and training.

- To continue to analyze and develop an in-house program based on the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program templates, moving forward toward implementation.
THE CHAPLAIN/DIRECTOR’S ROLE IN IMPLEMENTATION

Lesson 5.1: Canine Companions 101

Before undertaking any big project, it is important to know something about the components that will be used. To that end, it is important that the chaplain/director know something about the “social lubricator” who makes the whole process of dog ministry work—the dog.

To quote a noted scholar in the field, “‘it is scarcely possible to doubt that the love of man has become instinctive in the dog.’ These words are taken from Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*, first published in 1859.”

It becomes apparent to anyone watching dogs long enough or who has a dog as a companion pet that there is a bonding that takes place between the main caregiver and the dog. It becomes a process of developing a loving relationship where each gives of the self to the other in myriad ways. While what follows is not an extensive treatment of the canine companion, three canine behaviors will be examined because they relate directly to an effective dog-ministry program. These were chosen because they are often misunderstood and must be appreciated in order to grasp the importance of behavioral predictability, controllability, and reliability when working in ministry with an animal.

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1 Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *Dogs Never Lie About Love* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997), xv. This important quotation begins his book that discusses this love between humans and dogs.

2 The actual level of obedience training and specifications for the owner-handler in order to become a registered Pet Partners® team are covered in the *Pet Partners® Student Manual*. The work *Animal-Assisted Therapy: Therapeutic Interventions* provides additional directions on using dogs in a therapeutic environment. Chaplain/director should consult these books for the basics on registration with Pet Partners®.
Alexandra Horowitz studied animal behaviors and wrote about her work in her book, *Inside of a Dog: What Dogs See, Smell, and Know*. Published in 2009, this highly engaging book on dogs corrects many of the misunderstandings that humans have developed over the centuries relating to what this animal understands about the world around them, the nature of their interactions with other dogs, and their bonding with humans.

The dog picks up all sorts of scents from the surroundings that inform her about what is happening or has happened. The surroundings will tell a dog who has been by, what they had for breakfast, and if they are ‘available.’ Not only that, but Horowitz mentions that there is the aspect of time built into what a dog understands from sniffing, because “while we can see one of the petals [of a flower] drying and browning, the dog can smell this process of decay and aging.” Thus, many of the smells that humans describe as pungent, a dog will find irresistible.

This fact points to the importance of a Four-Footed Minister responding quickly to voice/hand signal to “leave it,” because many patients/residents often drop food on their clothing or wheelchairs, forming a perfectly delectable two-week-old snack for a dog. It is very important that the canine companion respond immediately to the command to “leave it,” e.g., pass it by, no matter how delectable the morsel might be. This ensures that the animal is safe in case there is the possibility of something harmful on the floor or wheelchair such as an overlooked medication that was dropped or spilled.

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I Only Have Eyes for You

“Look at a dog in the eyes and you get the definite feeling that he is looking back. Dogs return our gaze,” according to Horowitz. This aspect of being able to connect visually is very important in spiritual/pastoral care. Connecting to another visually is where the spiritual/pastoral-care provider can read feelings beyond the words expressed, often intuiting a message the words did not communicate, but which is expressed in that person’s eyes.

Just as in human language, the dog language of gazing can have many meanings. It is a dog-behavior fact that an aggressive dog will use the power of gazing to express dominance and the dog recipient will avert that gaze to diffuse the uncomfortable situation. Therefore, a well-trained and appropriately screened team where the dog seeks to interact with others through eye contact is an asset in facilitating spiritual/pastoral-care interactions. Many patients/residents in the Maryville study commented on the beauty of the gaze that each of the dogs returned to those who sought to catch their eyes. Both were real charmers when it came to looking at those who sought to pet them.

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4 Ibid., 139.

5 See Friedman, “PaRDes,” 63-64. Rabbi Friedman comments on an encounter with a woman who was language-challenged and how eye connection was an affirmation that the language-challenged woman had been heard.

6 Horowitz, Inside of a Dog, 149.
Working like a Dog

While it is very difficult to get inside a dog, or a person for that matter, humans judge other humans on what they observe about their behavior. Horowitz states that dogs do sense that something has happened to their human and they become anxious, exhibiting stress-reducing behaviors such as licking their lips, yawning, shifting their weight, and panting. A well-trained FFM team works together where the human is responsible to be the advocate for the dog during visitations and spiritual/pastoral-care interactions. Therefore, the FFM teams will often take short ‘potty’ breaks because the human counterpart has determined that the animal is feeling stressed, because he is exhibiting those signs mentioned above. As time limitations are a part of working with dogs, it is important to have a FFMPC program coordinator who not only has the spiritual/pastoral-care training but also possesses a history of working with dogs. This person can put together schedules for teams that make sense given the inherent stress of visiting. This ensures happy teams, happy dogs, and happy patients/residents.

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8 Horowitz, *Inside of a Dog*, 239.
Lesson 5.2: Selling the Program to Administration and Infection Control

One example of the recent research on the benefits of elder-animal interactions in healthcare facilities can be found in a pilot study conducted in an aged-care facility in Melbourne, Australia. Here, follow-up questionnaires confirmed that those elders who participated wanted the animals to continue to visit beyond the study. The researchers discovered that the participants had enjoyed the social interaction that occurred when the dogs visited. Moreover, study participants enjoyed the anticipation of future visits that provided a pleasing break to institutional life. Given these facts, it can be easily demonstrated that the benefits of instituting a road-tested, safe, effective, and repeatable program for dog ministry formulated from the Maryville study far outweigh any burdens.

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of implementing such a program. (See the discussion of the qualitative research study in Unit Two.)

In considering other solutions to the problem of why there does not appear to exist other comprehensive programs for ministry with dogs in healthcare facilities, there are several objections that came to light. The chaplain/director should be aware of these should they surface in discussions about implementation of a dog-ministry program within their facility.

The first objection often raised is the argument that casual interactions with a dog handled by a spiritual/pastoral-care provider are effective and an in-house program is unnecessary. While this type of casual interaction does occur, there are no guarantees that an animal brought into the facility by a volunteer or chaplain is healthy and appropriately trained to interact with the patients/residents. Any dog lover knows that it is hard to evaluate one’s own animal objectively and often real behavioral problems can be overlooked. Moreover, if the animal has not been registered with a therapy organization, the facility could leave itself open for potential lawsuits should an accident occur. An animal who is registered with Pet Partners® is one who should perform well and the owner/handler knows the protocols for safe interactions.

The second objection to a comprehensive program is often stated in terms that a resident dog would be much more effective in offering comfort on a continual basis. While this is true for general comfort and care, because of the nature of spiritual/pastoral-care interactions, the dog and volunteer or chaplain must act as a team and this is not possible if the animal has no special relationship with one person. In addition to this, though a resident dog appears as a good idea, the animal’s care and comfort requires a
staff member to be responsible for it. This could create staffing problems as well as jealousy between staff members.

The third objection that is often raised relates to studies that have demonstrated that virtual pets are a good substitute for live interactions.\(^{10}\) While virtual pets can be helpful where actual live encounters are contraindicated medically, the Maryville qualitative study confirmed that virtual pets often isolate individuals, while the presence of the dogs (live dogs) was a magnet that drew patients/residents together. This enthusiastic response to their visitations confirmed the general tendency of the scientific community to lean toward supporting live-animal visitation, provided appropriate safety protocols are in place.\(^{11}\)

Another objection that might be raised relates to the fact that the visitations and interactions were limited to dogs. While many different types of animals are registered by Pet Partners® for both therapy work and pet visitations, in the interest of conducting a manageable qualitative study on ministry with animals, the formulation of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program was limited to dogs alone. The Maryville qualitative study confirmed that, while many residents had possessed cats in the past, they could still have fruitful interactions with the dog teams. Those invited into the study were not afraid of dogs, nor had they had a bad experience with them. A natural extension of the program to include other animals that Pet Partners® registers is a wide-open expanse for the curious researcher to explore.


Infection control worries, and rightly so, about animal-human cross-contamination. This objection, however, actually speaks the loudest in the support of a comprehensive program rather than against it. The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is based on Pet Partners® protocols that have addressed these issues at length and provides guidance for volunteers and the chaplain/director. Therefore, while cross-contamination is always a possibility, with a comprehensive program in place, the risk is minimal at best.

It is surprising that the biggest objection to dog ministry appears to originate from within the ranks of spiritual/pastoral care providers. One of the first objections raised by those in ministry is the question, “Can dogs really be ministers?” With the ever-increasing sensibility to the global chaos humans have caused, the issue of ministry as service can truly be defined in a wider context. Namely, if ministry is service to other humans, and the twenty-first-century person views all of creation as intimately connected, then the definition of ministry can and should be expanded to include the non-human, created as a gift for the human species.

While the six objections discussed above express legitimate concerns, each objection can be refuted. It can be surmised that administration will be favorably impressed with a Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program because the program developed at Maryville was an all-volunteer program, having a minimal if any effect on the bottom line. Using Pet Partners®-registered dog teams relieved the facility of the burden of additional liability insurance purchase because Pet Partners®-registered dog teams are covered under a general liability-insurance policy when volunteering.\footnote{It is suggested that any recruitment or training materials might include a disclaimer outlining the specific levels of liability coverage provided by Pet Partners® and the facility. Pet Partners® carries a general}
Infection control should be satisfied that the use of Pet Partners® protocols, developed and implemented over many years of work in the field, would adequately balance the risk of ministry with dogs with the potential benefits of dog-human interactions that have been demonstrated in serious empirical studies. While infection control often poses the most formidable obstacle to setting-up and implementing a Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, *The Pet Partners® Student Training Manual* devotes a whole section to this topic that is quite comprehensive. This student manual provides a step-by-step introduction on safety issues for the Pet Partners®-registered team. This manual also provides a “Sample Infection Control Policy” that can be molded to fit the healthcare facility’s needs. Finally, infection control can receive additional information at the CDC website at


The document at this web address describes a ‘pet-scription’ that can be signed by a health professional and is a good guide for nursing-care staff. Further, it confirms the importance of the protocols that Pet Partners® has already set up to ensure safe interactions between humans and animals.

Though there is a charge for facility registration with Pet Partners®, start-up costs in the Maryville study were minimal. This registration entitled the facility to be listed on

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13 Brodie, Biley, and Shewring, 445.

14 Julie Miller and Katherine Connor, “Going to the Dogs...For Help,” *Nursing 2000* 30, no. 11 (2000). See pages 65-67 of this article, which provide a good summary of the benefits of dog visitation as well as a summary of Pet Partners® protocols.

Pet Partners® website (www.petpartners.org) and the local representative was alerted to the need for dog teams to participate in the qualitative study. Moreover, the researcher was able to secure a modest grant from the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary that covered many of the incidental costs. Therefore, there was no significant financial impact on the operating budget of Maryville.

As the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program was built on solid time-tested Pet Partners® protocols, many of the questions as to formulation of a procedure for the program have already been addressed in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program Protocols (See Appendix D). If there are any questions with regard to the spiritual/pastoral-care component, these could be addressed by the FFMPC program coordinator who, in conjunction with the chaplain/director, is responsible for incorporating changes to the program into the volunteer training manual. Therefore, the study provided a solid though preliminary foundation for the integration of the program into the Maryville facility.

If additional assistance is needed, the chaplain/director can visit Pet Partners® website or call the headquarters for more information and direction to other resources that will help support the case for the inclusion of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program into the spiritual/pastoral care department.

Chaplain’s/Director’s Tool Kit for Helping to Create Change

When something new is contemplated by an organization, one of the first emotions that surfaces within the ranks is the fear of change. It is a fact of human nature that changes in procedures within an organization will create stress and anxiety. Therefore, if a chaplain/director can be armed with tools to help create a climate where
change happens as painlessly and naturally as possible, it is more likely that staff and patients/residents will perceive the beneficial aspects of the changes and be able to adjust relatively easily to any negative ones that might come to light.

In order to provide a structure for change to take place easily, Chip and Dan Heath, in their book *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard*, began with a story based on a simple example taken from a work by Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis*.16 Building on Haidt’s image of an elephant guided by a rider where the elephant is the emotional side of an individual and the rider is the rational one, the brothers use this image to construct three simple directives that could assist others in appreciating the process of change: direct the rider, motivate the elephant, and shape the path.17

In directing the rider, the brothers mention three actions that help to focus on the change that will happen within the organization. The first is selecting a story that will tell more about how beneficial the proposed program will be when instituted. For example, in speaking with administration, the chaplain can tell the stories that have come their way in reference to the intense love that patients/residents express when talking about the comfort and care their own pet had provided. Secondly, the chaplain can discuss with staff how having a FFM team visit will boost the spirits of their charges, creating a pleasant atmosphere. Finally, the chaplain, in training staff about the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, can remind the staff of how their mission statement can be achieved with the help of the FFM teams who visit on a regular basis.

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17 Ibid., 259.
In order to control the emotional aspect of the human person characterized by an unruly and possibly overpowering elephant, the brothers suggest “motivating the elephant.” Realizing that the elephant is the emotional side of the human person and is strongly driven by desire, the chaplain should illustrate how the FFM team can create a climate of calm and care by using a concrete example, e.g., having a FFM team visit with the administrator and senior-level staff in one of their meetings. It is necessary prior to undertaking this to check with administration and staff to ensure that no one is allergic to dogs nor has any fear of them. At this same meeting, the chaplain can suggest that the FFM team that they have met could visit on a temporary basis for a short period of time, being able to revisit the issue of the inclusion of a full-blown program after a period of probation. This focus, “shrinking the change,” makes the proposed addition of the program manageable.\(^\text{18}\) The final suggestion the brothers make in the section discussing “motivating the elephant” is “growing your people.”\(^\text{19}\) Here, the chaplain can ask for volunteers from the ranks of the senior-staff level and below who have dogs and would like to serve with them as probationary volunteers. This might present these volunteers with scheduling challenges because of the limitations specified in Pet Partners® protocols, but these can be managed effectively.\(^\text{20}\) Moreover, local Pet Partners® representatives are available to conduct classes for interested staff and evaluate the potential FFM team for Pet Partners® registration, making the possibility of an in-house program more likely.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) Dogs must be Pet Partners®-registered when working as a Four-Footed Ministerial team. In addition, there is a two-hour per day limit on dog visitation, according to the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program and Pet Partners® protocols.
The final directive the Heath brothers present is to “shape the path.”\textsuperscript{21} Here is the opportunity for the chaplain to be truly collaborative with those staff interested in volunteering for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program development. Those staff members who would relish the chance to share their canine companion in a spiritual/pastoral way can be encouraged to work with the chaplain to develop a pilot program for their own organization. People who have the input in designing the change will be more likely to come on board with that change. Effective change will require the staff who volunteer to build the habit of “scheduling in” their visitation times because their work as a FFM team must be volunteer in nature.\textsuperscript{22} Finally, “rally the herd” is the final suggestion for “shaping the path.”\textsuperscript{23} If the chaplain is behind the development of the facility’s own Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program and is excited about the possibilities, the staff will catch the enthusiasm generated. As enthusiasm creates an atmosphere of adventure, those staff members who want to become a part of the organization’s mission beyond their own professional efforts can help to change the facility’s procedures to encompass their own, in-house program for dog ministry. These simple suggestions can help the chaplain, thinking about integrating the program, with ways they might work with administration and staff to create a comprehensive dog-ministry program.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22} See extensive discussion of liability issues in Pet Partners® Student Training Manual, page 6-12 through page 6.18.

\textsuperscript{23} Heath, Switch, 259.
Lesson 5.3: Recruiting and Training Volunteers: Volunteers or Spiritual-Care Providers

As the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is currently an all-volunteer program, contact with Pet Partners® to discover a local representative is the next step. The local Pet Partners® representative can direct the chaplain/director to individuals who might be interested in the program and possibly could fill the job of FFMPC program coordinator. Moreover, the local representative has a vast web network where an ad about the program can be posted and potential FFM teams can be recruited.24

Though this program is new, the interest in dog ministry is ever increasing. One good place for recruiting a FFMPC program coordinator is a university or seminary in the area. With the culture becoming more aware of the uses of dogs in various helping fields, those in seminary may be eager to discover new possibilities for ministry that appears to have a holistic focus. The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program fits in well within this focus.

Beginning with one’s own faith community, the chaplain/director can canvas fellow parish/congregation members for those who might be interested in using their dogs in ministry. Many individuals might already meet the requirements for Pet Partners® registration.

In order to ensure that volunteers are comfortable with the roles they will play in dog ministry, there are two job descriptions provided, as was discussed in Lesson 3.2. For those who wish to participate but choose not to pursue additional spiritual-care training, these individuals will function as advocates for their dogs, similar to the role of a

24 See Appendix B, Program Forms for sample ads.
volunteer in animal-assisted therapy. The direction of spiritual/pastoral-care interactions is the responsibility of the chaplain/director or FFMPC program coordinator and not the volunteer. This alleviates the fear that many individuals may feel at being asked to be a part of a ministerial endeavor.25

The job description designated as “spiritual-care provider” can be filled by an individual a background in spiritual/pastoral care, such as a chaplain or one who has had experience in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), or holds a graduate Certificate of Pastoral Care. If the chaplain/director wishes to participate in the program with their own dog, there are issues of facility liability that should be addressed by administration. Currently Pet Partners® general liability-insurance policy would not cover chaplains during their spiritual/pastoral care interactions with their animal. This issue of professional liability coverage for a FFM Team is one that will need to be addressed at some later date.

In Appendix B, there is an example of two training-session outlines where the chaplain/director and FFMPC program coordinator work in tandem to explain the volunteer procedures of the facility as well as those aspects that relate specifically to the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.26 A separate PowerPoint presentation on the program provides the volunteers with a look at how the program works within the facility.27 At these training sessions, both one-on-one and dog-ministry prayer-group

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25 The researcher experienced one instance where an invitation was extended to a potential Pet Partners®-registered volunteer dog team, but was refused. The individual was spiritual-but-not-religious, assuming that the job required one to be of a particular faith. Moreover, the researcher has also encountered resistance about the issue of spiritual/pastoral care from within Pet Partners® ranks.

26 Part of the duties of the chaplain at Maryville is the orientation of volunteers and thus, in this instance, there is no additional cost to the facility for this training.

27 See Appendix E: for the copy of the Maryville training presentations.
gatherings should be explained to and explored with the volunteers. Appropriate forms should also be discussed and reporting procedures reviewed.

The training sessions were designed to orient a group of both “volunteer” and spiritual-care providers to the basics of dog ministry. Based on the number of volunteers, these training sessions were designed to cover approximately a four-hour period, two hours for each segment. Additional training for the spiritual-care providers could be scheduled after this initial session, as their commitment is more extensive because of their increased involvement. Follow-up training should occur as needed so that the highest level of care is offered and maintained.

A study participant with Caterina and Barbara on the left and Alya and Jerilyn on the right.
Lesson 5.4: Training Staff

If the chaplain/director has done their preliminary work well, training staff on what to expect when the dogs come into the facility should be an easy task.\textsuperscript{28} An explanation of the history of the program\textsuperscript{29} and its function should help staff to see that having the dogs assist in good spiritual/pastoral care will make their jobs much easier. Patients/residents will have the opportunity to experience the joy of ‘having,’ if only for a brief moment, a dog to pet and with whom to interact. These interactions will create an environment that results in happier patients/residents and happier staff.

From the Maryville study, it became evident that there was a very important component that had been overlooked in the initial setup of the orientation presentation. In that initial presentation, there was no appreciation for the diverse mix of countries represented by the CNAs as well as the nursing staff. Many of the CNAs came from cultures that might have a problem understanding the American sensibility that views dogs as full members of the family. In some Asian cultures, for example, there could be some confusion as to why a person would want to interact with a dog, because dogs are gastronomical delights. To address this oversight, one slide in the presentation (Appendix E) gives an explanation of the American culture’s love of canines and that many of the patients/residents would enjoy interacting with dogs on a regular basis.

\textsuperscript{28} See Appendix E.

\textsuperscript{29} See Unit One, Lesson 1.2 for more information for presentation information. Print templates for training session design are available in Appendix E.
Lesson 5.5: You are Not Alone–Local Resources

As was mentioned previously, you as chaplain/director are not alone. The first connection you should make is with the staff at Pet Partners®, as they are willing and able to help you locate those individuals in your area who can be valuable resources for you. They can provide information on local connections as well as referrals to other local resources such as the local Humane Society or dog trainers in the area who might have students interested in dog ministry. It is these connections made online and in person that will enable your program to become known in the area, and thereby encouraging other faith communities to join your efforts to bring a comprehensive dog-ministry program to the patients/residents within your facility. With the aid of dedicated volunteers and the resources to be found at local universities and seminaries, your program will develop over time. As more and more of those working in ministry get involved in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, the result can be greater assistance for you, the chaplain/director, in honing and perfecting the procedures of your facility that will raise the level of spiritual/pastoral care offered. In the end, everybody wins.

Checklist for Chaplains

- Contact Pet Partners® at [www.petpartners.org](http://www.petpartners.org) for the name of the local Pet Partners® representative.
- For additional reading, see Appendix B: Program Forms, Exhibit D: Resources for Animal-Assisted Interventions and CAM/PS.
- To sell the program to administration/infection control remember that:
  - **The program is road-tested.** There was a nine-month qualitative study conducted at Maryville Nursing Home in Beaverton, Oregon, upon which
the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program was built, and the program is based upon Pet Partners® protocols.

- **The program is safe.** In building upon time-tested protocols developed by Pet Partners®, modified and adjusted based on ongoing research in the field, safe interactions are of the highest priority. The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program recruits only currently registered Pet Partners® teams and follows the Pet Partners® protocols.

- **The program is effective.** The results of the Maryville study, though preliminary, confirmed the value of the program for the study participants who voiced their unanimous approval of the program with only minor enhancements suggested. The program was requested to continue at Maryville and is ongoing.

- **The program is repeatable.** Because both Pet Partners® and the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program have defined a structure for the operation, if the chaplain/director or the FFMPC program coordinator should move on, the program can continue. Moreover, as this is a program that is developed within the facility, program modifications can be made as required and the written records kept for future review and enhancement.

  - Contact local universities and seminaries as well as other faith communities in the area for potential candidates for the FFMPC program coordinator’s position or potential volunteers. Work with universities or seminaries to develop synergistic
relationships where seminary students could function as intern chaplains with their Pet Partners®-registered dogs.

- Training staff, “volunteers,” and spiritual-care providers can be accomplished through two lesson plans (See Appendix B, Program Forms, Exhibit G) and a short PowerPoint slide show (See Appendix E: Maryville FFMCP Program-Training Module Sample).

To the question, “Can we set up a Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program?” the answer should be a resounding “Yes, we can!” Enjoy interacting and developing an in-house program for dog ministry, knowing that you are improving the lives of the residents, their families, and the staff in your facility.

**Bibliography**


Note Date: September 3, 2010

As soon as we entered the facility, we began to encounter residents who wanted to interact with both Caterina and Alya. As we walked around, we interacted with residents who wanted to know more about the dogs. Barbara shared their story with those who asked. It was a great opportunity for residents and their family members to interact with the dogs. We had opportunities to interact with staff as well. As our intention was to introduce the dogs to those in the study, we made it a point to call on the study participants to introduce them to Barbara and Caterina. They made a big hit with those in the study who were available in their rooms. Some declined a visit because of ill health, but generally the dogs were well received and both dogs reacted positively to the interactions.

Observations:

1. Following Jesus’ directive in sending disciples out in pairs, we discovered that, when doing canine-assisted ministry/pastoral and spiritual care, it is good to go in pairs. It is a great way to train future FFM teams.

2. We will have a challenge in separating the study participants from other residents. I will have to keep good notes as I encounter our study participants, as many who are not in the study want to share their experiences of their dogs with us.

3. Barbara commented on the value of the ecumenical focus of our efforts, as we come from two different streams of Christianity (Presbyterian and Roman Catholic).

Note Date: September 17, 2010

There were several things that came out of our visits:

1. Sister will meet with us after our rounds to debrief. The information she gives us is valuable for understanding each of the study participants.
2. I notice how we are interacting with more and more people in the “meet-and-greet” mode. This is part of our work and in this area we do not get into any personal issues. It will provide me with opportunities to contrast “meet and greet” with spiritual care because our visits in those instances (meet and greet) are superficial.

3. It seems as if our visitations are expanding to a wider clientele just because of our visibility.

4. Barbara suggested we ask how the visits are being received. Perhaps this is a good follow-up for me.

**Note Date: September 24, 2010**

Observations from visits:

1. We have a “built in” quasi-control group in that residents and the people who visit them are free to interact with the dogs as soon as we enter the facility. This happens quite frequently. Sometimes we are unable to begin our visits until everyone in the area has interacted with the dogs.

2. We often have people who were not in the study make comments and share stories about their animals. Though these specific stories cannot be used in the study, it does illustrate the point that the dogs provide a gathering point for safe interactions; the dogs fulfill their role as social lubricators. Visitors, staff, and residents come to interact with them and seem to enjoy the interaction with me or Barbara much more than if we were just a friendly stranger/volunteer without a dog.

3. One individual NOT in the study is Joseph.¹ Joseph is a very mentally sharp resident in a motorized wheelchair who goes out of his way to interact with the dogs. He was particularly attentive to Alya today and likes to pet her, but even more importantly, he liked just look at her. One of the staff social workers was on his way down the hall and stopped to pet Alya. Again, the conversation was lively.

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¹ The names of the study participants are fictitious to protect their identities. Initials are used to indicate those who interacted with the Four-Footed Ministerial teams but were not part of the study. Joseph did join the study after September 24, 2010.
and engaging for the subject matter was the love of dogs. Everyone, myself included, felt better after that interchange.

**Note Date: October 1, 2010**

Observations:

1. Barbara and I had a chance to sit down and process our various visits. Barbara said that the dogs were “a bridge” that made visitation very easy. We keep experiencing over and over how the dogs permit us admission to a person’s life through physical interaction and help us create community.

2. Sister seemed to be very busy with new residents coming in and flowers delivered. We had wanted to debrief with her, but she must have not heard the page. I will touch base with her about adding two new participants, Joseph and R., to our list of visits, as these two people are becoming regulars in our visitation schedule.

**Note Date: October 8, 2010**

We had various people stop us to ask about the dogs. We began by visiting R., who is not a member of the study because she is not a long-term-care resident. She does love to see the dogs. We tried to ask her more about her own connection to dogs. We covered much of the same ground we had in previous visits. We did have a chance to catch the residents who had not attended the outing to the “Pumpkin Patch.”

Observations:

1. As mentioned, those who are not in the study have formed a quasi-control group. People are curious about the dogs. We field the same questions over and over but are pleased to inform the inquirers about the dog-ministry study.

2. We have a new participant, Joseph. I had asked him if he would be willing to learn more about the study and participate. He agreed. Sister had confirmed that he would be a good participant and could sign an informed consent on his own recognizance.

3. Alya did not want to go into Dinah’s room. She had that reaction when visiting my late husband before he died. Caterina also picked up on Alya’s reaction and
became reticent to stay in the room. Given the bad news that Dinah received from her doctor, the dogs might have sensed a change in her condition. Both Barbara and I have offered to be with her as she transitions. If the dogs can be there and if staff will permit it, perhaps they will be able to help.

We visited for about 1 ½ hrs. That seemed to be the maximum the dogs could tolerate today.

*Note Date: November 5, 2010*

We had an hour to process with Sister today and we will begin our Thursday rather than Friday visitations this month rather than next month.

We discovered that Seth’s sister Jael is in the room across the hall from him and I will email Sister an informed consent form for her because she really enjoyed talking with Barbara and petting Caterina. Caterina was a bit quieter than normal today, but was willing to engage with those who wanted to pet her. Jael was very excited about petting the dogs.

We continue to have difficulty getting around the building because so many people want to visit with the dogs. We even had a new resident, F, who came in yesterday, want to interact with the dogs. Her son M. saw us walking down the hall and asked us to come in. Barbara and I had a wonderful, welcoming visit with F. and will stop in to see her next week. It appears that we seem to have as many people who are “in” the study interacting with the dogs as those who are not part of the formal qualitative study.

It appears as if both Caterina and Alya had great visits because they did not exhibit many signs of stress. I was much more careful to make sure that Alya and Caterina had breaks outside for potty time and for a relief from visitation. Further, Barbara also mentioned that pairing up, following the biblical model of Jesus, has been working very, very well. I will make sure that it becomes a part of the program.

One of the good effects of dog ministry for Maryville is the fact that the facility received a donation based on the fact that there were dogs in the facility. That says something about the creation of a homey atmosphere where the residents are happy and engaged.
We will meet on Thursday and have a short pet-grief support gathering at 11:30 for those who have already expressed interest in this service. I have two women who have contacted me about it. We also have a staff member who will attend. We can see if this particular service will be an on-going one or if it will be held on an as-needed basis.\[Due to a waning interest in pet-grief support gatherings, this part of the study was not pursued in depth. See “Notes on Pet Grief Support Gatherings at Maryville” following these “Notes on General Visitations.”\]

Note Date: November 11, 2010

We discovered that the gathering spot has become the beauty shop where we meet many of the residents. We unofficially call on one woman who is somewhat withdrawn but has really enjoyed interacting with the dogs and we call on her every week, just to say hello. Her eyes light up when she sees the dogs.

A new resident whom we met the previous week loves to see the dogs and we came by her room, but she was not there. We saw her later outside of the beauty shop where she was going in to have her hair done. Though in compromised health, she also enjoyed petting the dogs.

Another woman we happened upon is a woman who has difficulty speaking. However, she does make herself understood, especially where the dogs are concerned. Again, the dogs make her day.

Today we were asked by a staff to visit a resident who really missed his dog. We did call on him and he was so happy to see us. He will be another person we will put on our list to visit. [This resident died suddenly after the study concluded.]

I will propose that we try to visit our “study participants” first then make the rounds to those who are not in the study. We are limited by a two-hour window that is the maximum time that the dogs should visit as Pet Partners®-registered therapy dogs. We will have to triage our visits. Because of the success of our efforts in dog-ministry visitation, the only other course of action appears to be to suspend the study and make only general observations of our interactions. I feel this is a bit pre-mature at this point, but I will suggest this in an email.
Note Date: December 2, 2010

I will increase my visitation times during the month of December to re-establish connections that may have grown fuzzy during our absence in November.

We have seen some remarkable interactions with individuals who have encountered the teams:

1. There is one woman D. who seems to have dementia and is physically challenged who likes interacting with the dogs. Her private care giver helped D. to interact with Alya. Alya connected to D. through licking her hand and this is the way this woman can communicate, for she can no longer talk nor move at will. It is through TOUCH that she can communicate with Alya and with others.

2. We were able to interact with a woman because Alya licked her hand in greeting. Here the woman can only make unintelligible sounds but can use her good hand to pet Alya and express her joy touching her. The woman makes the same sound over and over, often very loudly, but we know that she is delighted to interact with the dogs because of the tenor of the sound she makes.

3. We called on V. whose dog had died. His connection to dogs is strong for he had a comforter with pictures of dogs on it. He was very much “with it” today and thanked us for coming.

4. We were asked to call on B. who had been moved into the Alzheimer’s unit. Her son saw the dogs in the hall and asked that we visit her because she is a new resident in the unit and needed help getting acclimated.

5. We had the chance to meet those residents of the Alzheimer’s unit who were in a physical exercise class conducted in the open space. The facilitator was glad to see us and we will attempt to add this unit on our rounds.

The dogs seem to be doing their magic in connecting people because they always draw a crowd when they show up. Moreover, one factor against the use of virtual pets is the fact that real dogs create a community whereas virtual pets are objects that one person possesses and does not necessarily draw others to it. This is an important observation that was confirmed by Barbara stating that the “theology of touch” is so very important to elders who are often “handled” rather than lovingly touched. As ministers, we can hope to touch others through our presence; dogs do this naturally.
Additional visit – December 5, 2010 (Jerilyn and Alya)

Generally, Sundays are quiet without the hubbub of the week. Unless there is an activity, this seems to be a good time to really “visit” with our study participants. We can have extended spiritually focused visits.

Abigail made a suggestion for the “group prayer-service.” So that Dinah (in hospice) could attend, she suggested that we hold our gathering on the unit in the dining room. We had originally planned our gathering for Thursdays at 11:30 and this might not be a good time. Our next option would be to hold the gathering in Dinah’s room, but due to the number of attendees, that may not work either. I can read Dinah the story for reflection in her room after we have the dog-ministry prayer-group gathering. On the other hand, we might use the gathering as an incentive for Dinah to come out of her room. It might help her to interact with others.

Note Date: December 16, 2010

I have noticed that there seem to be a core group of people with whom we can connect on a regular basis: Sarah, Dinah, and Sean. I think this is due to the fact that they value the visits of the dogs. In fact, Sarah has “dogs” written in on her calendar.

I was very surprised to notice that when we entered the facility, the administrator was behind the desk in reception. She said that she wanted to get in touch with what happens in this most public area of the whole facility. As we were leaving, she commented to us how much the dogs meant to the residents and she thanked us for our efforts. That comment was greatly appreciated.

Additional Visitation Day: Sunday, December 19, 2010

General Observations: Judith, R. and Joseph, three people who love dogs, expressed their connection to Alya both verbally as well as through petting her. They mentioned the fact that we all had a very easy time connecting. Because she is a beautiful dog, the poster child for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, she is easy to approach. This confirms once again, the importance of having a dog to help lead us into a ‘spiritual’ space where it might be difficult to enter. Dog leadership in this area became
most powerfully evident when we visited Dinah who is in the process of transitioning. She loved dogs and we can reestablish a connection very quickly because of Alya’s presence. This is an area for further exploration as we move forward in time.

**Additional Visitation Sunday: December 26, 2010**

Generally it was very quiet in the facility on this day after Christmas. Those who were present were in their rooms or in the dining room playing Bingo.

Observations:
1. Dinah might be getting closer to the end of her journey as she talks about moving. I don’t know if this is her way of processing her death preparation or if it reflects her actual course of action. She stated that her doctor has found her a foster-care home AND had secured a dog for her, a miniature greyhound that can be hers in the new facility.
2. Sean is doing very well, but we need to give him more time to express himself. I am not sure that he will be teaching a class because of his general health, but time will tell.
3. Abigail was very chatty and is a woman who constantly speaks highly about others, re-directing the conversation to others’ needs. She is a joy to be around.

**Note Date: December 30, 2010**

The general mood in the facility was one of celebration. There is going to be a New Year’s Eve party that is scheduled for December 31, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. Many of the residents were very excited to be able to attend. The participants in the study had also picked up the excitement that permeated the facility.

Observations:
1. Alya definitely is a ‘social lubricator’ for our visits. Unless the person does not like dogs (we did run into one lady in the hall that said she did not want to interact with Alya) everyone flocks to pet her. This is the way to begin connecting to people.
2. A non-participant who must have had a very severe stroke for she cannot speak nor move, is very happy to see Alya. She appears to cry when she is able to pet
her. I understand from her caregiver that she loves dogs. Her caregiver has to position her hand so that she can interact with Alya, but the effect is truly amazing. She appears to come alive with happiness.

Note Date: January 6, 2011
We had a short debriefing session with Sister Josephine. We went over the various residents we had visited. This time is very important for us as we only visit once a week and need to know more about the spiritual state of those whom we visit.

Observations:
1. We had asked to get onto the January “Calendar of Events” but saw that we were not listed for the January 13th or January 27th dates. Sister said she would make sure that we get on the January 27th schedule.
2. We will draw on the power of music for our first dog-ministry prayer-group gathering. We will ask a member of the group (Sean) to lead us in the final blessing.
3. We have determined that it is important to have debriefing sessions with the chaplain after visits. It is in these sessions that we truly act as both an advocate for the program and the residents, for it is here we receive important updates as to any special conditions of the residents who might want visits.

Note Date: January 20, 2011
Several things happened during our visits today that have bearing on the development of the program. One of those developments points to what dog-ministry’s goal should be through the theology of touch.

Observations:
1. With many residents I find that visitation with the dogs brightens their day. The visits seem to lift the boredom of being in the same location day-in and day-out. As we are still within the parameters of the study and I can see the benefit the dog visits are having on the wider population, I believe that there will be more work to be done after the study is completed because of the challenges we face with both physical and mental concerns of the long-term resident population.
2. We interacted with a resident, D., whose private caregiver came searching for us. D. has many physical challenges, but her face lit up the room when she saw us in a meeting with Sister Josephine. Sister snapped a couple of pictures of Alya with D. Barbara noticed how Sister seemed pleasantly surprised at D.’s reaction to seeing the dogs. D., who probably has a diminished sense of touch as well as her apparent physical challenges, made grateful sounds as her caregiver guided her hand to pet Alya, who connected with her by licking her hand. Alya particularly liked interacting with both C., the caregiver, and with D.; she was wagging her tail and had her ears up. Both reactions speak volumes when looking at the ‘theology of touch’.

Note Date: February 27, 2011

I visited on February 27, a Sunday, to let the residents in the study know that I would be gone the following week and the week after that. I was able visit with Sean. It is such a joy to see him. He was glad to see Alya and me. We visited with him for a short while and he gave Alya and me his blessing as we left.

I called on one other resident, Jael. She was sitting alone in her room and was so glad to see us. She even asked if it was Alya or Caterina that was visiting. She is a wonderful person to visit. She was so grateful that we came to see her. I will have to check in with Sister to see how things are going with her family.

These notes were selected because they illustrate the observations that helped the researcher to structure the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program. For the complete discussion of the qualitative study, see Unit Two.
Exhibit B: Notes on Pet Grief Support Gatherings at Maryville

Date: Began September 9, 2010

*Note Date: September 9, 2010*

No one came to this first gathering that was advertised on the web newsletter. I emailed Lisa Zeiner, Pet Partners® program coordinator, about this. I suggested that we will hold our second gathering on a Saturday (October 16th) instead of on the previous Thursday, hoping for increased attendance. We had scheduled gatherings based on a need for a spiritually focused pet-grief support-group, a need that was originally expressed by Lisa.

*Note Date: November 5, 2010*

No one came to the second gathering. We decided to do pet-grief support by personal invitation. We determined that if Lisa Zeiner does receive inquiries for pet-grief support, she will email me and I will send a personal invitation to that individual who can meet with me privately or join others who wish to make a group. The issue of pet-grief support in a spiritual context is a moving target at this time. We will see where it goes from here and if we get any additional response from the two women who have already contacted me. We have one staff member who will come to meet with us. Again, we hope that will be a valuable service for those suffering from the loss of their pets.

*Note Date: November 11, 2010*

We had one woman come to our November 11th gathering. We decided to schedule our pet-grief support sessions once a month. Our next meeting will be December 9th at 11:30 a.m.

*Note Date: December 9, 2010*

No one came to this gathering. I did not have the chance to advertise it, so that could be one of the reasons for no one attending. The Pet-Grief Support project will put on hold as we will be conducting dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings beginning in January 2011.
Though no one came to the gathering, I did have the chance to process with one of the staff who talked about Buddy, her lab who had died the year before. She said she had a picture of their four family Labrador Retrievers and would email it to me for inclusion in the training manual. I was very pleased that she shared her story with me about her beloved pet, who is buried at her parents’ home along with the other family pets who have passed away. She mentioned that she visits their graves when she calls on the family.

She shared a story about a video taken this year where the family Labs had been dressed in costumes for the season. She related how funny it was when they tried to run to catch a ball that had been flung into the air but were somewhat hampered by their costumes. Sharing her story seemed to be healing for her and she appreciated the 20 minutes we had set aside so that she could tell her to tell her story of her beloved lab, Buddy and other family dogs.

*Note Date: December 30, 2010*

I saw Cathy and let her know I had received the picture of her dad with the Labs eagerly awaiting dinner. This is a perfect picture that reflects Luther’s comment about attentiveness in prayer that Christians should exhibit. The Christian in prayer should be like a dog waiting for a piece of meat totally focused on the object of their desire. (Luther learned the lesson on attentiveness from his dog, Toelpel. See Richard Bainton, “Luther on Birds, Dogs and Babies: Gleanings from the ‘Table Talk’” in *Luther Today*, edited by Roland H. Bainton, Warren A. Quanbeck, and E. Gordon Rupp, published by Luther College Press, 1957.)

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2 Permission was obtained from both Mr. Perrizo and Ms. Edwards to use their real names.
Exhibit C: Final Interview Assessment – Sample Evaluation

Subjects: Sarah, Jael, Seth, Judith, Sean, Abigail, Joseph
Date: May 5, 2011

Resident:_____

Thank you for participating in the nine-month study on dog ministry. In order to assess how we might continue the program, we need your input on the effectiveness of our spiritual/pastoral-care efforts.

One-On-One Visits:
1. What did you like or not like about being visited weekly by the dogs?

2. What can make these interactions better for you?

Dog-Ministry Prayer-Group Gatherings:
1. What did you like or not like about gathering as a group to hear scriptural readings related to an imaginative tale of Jesus and his pet dog?

2. What can we do to improve this experience for you?

Finally, tell us why or why not dog ministry made a difference in your relationship to God?
Exhibit D: RESOURCES FOR Animal-Assisted Interventions and CAM/PS

Below are general resources for Animal-Assisted Interventions and CAM/PS. Pet Partners® books can be ordered online from Pet Partners®. The work published by VDM Publishing can be ordered at Amazon.com.

Books


Felton, Jerilyn E. “Four-Footed Ministers: A Roman Catholic Lay Pastoral Care Model for the Use of Canine Companions in Ministry to the Elderly in Retirement Communities.” Marylhurst University, 2002.

_______. “Four-Footed Ministers: Their Theology of Presence--a Research Study on CAM/PS (Canine-Assisted Ministry/Pastoral and Spiritual Care).” Marylhurst University, 2005.

_______. *Four-Footed Ministers: Their Theology of Presence.* Staarbrucken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller e.K., 2008.

_______. “Do All Dogs Go to Heaven? Implications for Pastoral Care to Elder Persons.” *Healing Ministry* 11, no. 2 (spring 2004): 77-80.

_______. “The Significance of Story in Pastoral Care to the Elder Person.” *Healing Ministry* 11, no. 3 (summer 2004): 113-115.

_______. “‘If I but Touch the Hem of His Cloak...’: ‘Touching Prayer’ as the Best of Both Worlds.” *Healing Ministry* 13, no. 3 (summer 2006): 7-9.

_______. “Canine-Assisted Pastoral Care: She Gave a Party and Nobody Came.” *Healing Ministry* 12, no. 1 (winter 2005): 13-16.


**Web Sites**


*The CDC Healthy Pets Healthy People:* [www.cdc.gov/healthypets/animals/dogs.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/animals/dogs.htm).

*The CDC Healthy Pets Healthy People for health professionals:* [www.cdc.gov/healthypets/health_prof.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/health_prof.htm).
Exhibit A: MARYVILLE NURSING HOME
Additional Job Duties for Director
Connected with the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program
Based on Standard 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3. Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Animal-Assisted Therapy. Bellevue, WA: Delta Society, 1996.
Approved: May 23, 2010

POSITION NAME: Director of Spiritual/Pastoral Services/Chaplain—FFMP
CLASSIFICATION: Exempt
Duties
LOCATION: Maryville Nursing Home
EFFECTIVE DATE: To Be Advised

GENERAL DUTIES BEYOND DIRECTOR’S JOB DESCRIPTION IN CONJUNCTION WITH FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM: Because the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program integrates canine companions into a volunteer program of spiritual/pastoral care, it is important that additional duties be defined for the director of spiritual/pastoral services/chaplain position. This is necessary because of the specialized nature of this volunteer program.

ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES/ RESPONSIBILITIES:
1. Attend educational activities on good practices running a safe, professional, and up-to-date animal-assisted intervention program.
2. Assist administration in the area of liability concerns with regard to the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.
3. Continue education in good husbandry practices with regard to the safe and humane treatment of dogs in the spiritual/pastoral-care program.
4. In collaboration with the FFMT program coordinator:
   ❖ Assist in the development of goals and procedures for the program;
   ❖ Assist in the development and implementation of continual evaluation procedures to ensure that best practices are being followed with regard to the program;
   ❖ Assist in the development of methods for the integration of new volunteer teams in the spiritual/pastoral care visitation schedule;
   ❖ Assist in the review, termination, or release of under-performing teams or teams that no longer meet the minimum requirements for the program;
   ❖ Assist in the facilitation of problem resolution on issues involving Four-Footed Ministerial teams;
   ❖ Develop and conduct FFM team in-service and continuing-education seminars in spiritual/pastoral care for staff and volunteers;
   ❖ Help conduct monthly/as needed grief support meetings with FFM teams.
With a veterinarian and FFMPC program coordinator, form an advisory committee to ensure the health and well-being of residents, staff, and volunteers and their dogs.

5. Educate staff, residents, and families as to the rational, benefits, and risks of participating in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.

6. Advocate for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program with the Board as the need arises.

7. Advocate for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program outside of Maryville.

COMMUNICATION/RESIDENT CONTACT: per director’s job description

SPECIFIC SKILLS REQUIRED: according to director’s job description

EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE: according to director’s job description.

JOB CONDITIONS: as per director’s job description.

SUPERVISES: Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator.
Exhibit B: MARYVILLE NURSING HOME
Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program Coordinator
FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM
Based on Standard 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3. Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Animal-Assisted Therapy. Bellevue, WA: Delta Society, 1996.
Approved May 23, 2010

POSITION NAME: FFMT Program Coordinator
CLASSIFICATION: Volunteer
LOCATION: Maryville Nursing Home
EFFECTIVE DATE: To Be Advised

GENERAL DUTIES IN THE FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM: The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program integrates canine companions into a volunteer program of spiritual/pastoral care. In collaboration with the director of spiritual/pastoral services/care, the FFMPC program coordinator develops, integrates, and supervises volunteer spiritual/pastoral-care provider teams that use dogs in ministry in one-on-one visits as well as dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings.

ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES/ RESPONSIBILITIES:
1. Administer Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program on behalf of the spiritual/pastoral-care department.
   - Assist the interdisciplinary team in the assessment of residents for participation in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.
   - Recruit, train, and supervise volunteer spiritual/pastoral-care provider teams.
   - Evaluate volunteers and their dogs for suitability for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.
   - Assist in assessment of contraindications in residents for participation in Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.
   - Be responsible for administrative tasks in running the program:
     - Maintain file of health records on dogs in the program;
     - Develop health requirements for FFM teams based on good practices for animal-assisted interventions;
     - Maintain FFMPC pastoral-care log file for program;
     - Register and credential FFM teams for visitation;
     - Schedule volunteer FFM teams for one-on-one visitation;
     - Schedule dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings;
     - Schedule FFM Team in-services and continuing-education sessions for staff and volunteers;
     - Assign volunteers to residents that request one-on-one visits;
     - Responsible for supplies for dogs in volunteer office;
     - Update Maryville Volunteer Handbook section on FFM teams as needed;
     - Develop and modify forms for the program.
2. Be knowledgeable about and integrate good practices running a safe, professional, and up-to-date animal-assisted intervention program.

3. Responsible for good husbandry practices with regard to the safe and humane treatment of dogs in the spiritual/pastoral-care program.

4. Assist director and administration in the area of liability concerns with regard to the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.

5. In collaboration with the director of spiritual/pastoral services/chaplain:
   - Assist in the development of goals and procedures for the program;
   - Assist in the development and implementation of continual evaluation procedures to ensure that best practices are being followed with regard to the program;
   - Assist in the development of methods for the integration of new volunteer teams in the spiritual/pastoral-care visitation schedule;
   - Assist in the review, termination, or release of under-performing teams or teams that no longer meet the minimum requirements for the program;
   - Assist in the facilitation of problem resolution on issues involving Four-Footed Ministerial teams;
   - Assist in the development and running of FFM team in-services and continuing-education seminars in spiritual/pastoral care for staff and volunteers;
   - Help conduct monthly/as needed grief support meetings with FFM teams.
   - With a veterinarian and director of spiritual/pastoral services/chaplain, form an advisory committee to ensure the health and well-being of residents, staff, and volunteers and their dogs;

6. Educate staff, residents, and families as to the rational, benefits, and risks of participating in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.

7. Promote the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program within and outside Maryville through presentations.

8. Serve as a community resource for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program outside of Maryville.

9. Write and publish articles on the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program to update knowledge in the fields of animal-assisted interventions and spiritual/pastoral care.

10. Duties as assigned.

COMMUNICATION/RESIDENT CONTACT: This position requires that the FFMPC program coordinator work with staff, residents, and volunteers to ensure that all parties are safe at all times and that good practices are followed. As required, the FFMPC program coordinator will also work with the community to promote this form of ministry/pastoral care into other facilities.

SPECIFIC SKILLS REQUIRED: Excellent communication skills both verbal and written, excellent customer service skills, and the ability to be able to work with people from all walks of life are a minimum requirement for this position. Excellent organizational skills as well as comprehensive knowledge of MS Office are a must in this position.
EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE: The ideal candidate should possess at least a Bachelor’s degree in Theology or Theological Studies or a Certificate of Completion in Pastoral Care or Ministry as well as have extensive knowledge of animal-assisted interventions as defined by Pet Partners® protocols and best practices.

JOB CONDITIONS: This position requires the volunteer to be on site and available when Four-Footed Ministerial teams are visiting or involved in dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings.

SUPERVISES: Volunteer Four-Footed Ministerial teams (volunteer and their dog).
Exhibit C: MARYVILLE NURSING HOME
Four-Footed Ministerial Team-Spiritual/Pastoral-Care Provider
FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM
Based on Standard 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3. Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Animal-Assisted Therapy. Bellevue, WA: Delta Society, 1996.
Date Formulated: August 10, 2010

POSITION NAME: Four-Footed Ministerial Team – spiritual-care provider
CLASSIFICATION: Volunteer
LOCATION: Maryville Nursing Home
EFFECTIVE DATE: To Be Advised

GENERAL DUTIES IN THE FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM: The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program integrates canine companions into a volunteer program of spiritual/pastoral care. The Four-Footed Ministerial Team consists of a volunteer spiritual/pastoral-care provider and their dog to be used in ministry in one-on-one visits as well as dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings.

ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES/ RESPONSIBILITIES:
1. Assist the pastoral-care department in providing spiritual/pastoral care and comfort to residents, their family members, and staff of Maryville.
   ❖ Be knowledgeable in Pet Partners® protocols and best practices of animal-assisted interventions.
   ❖ Advise the FFMPC program coordinator if a resident, after a visit, exhibits contraindications for participation in Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.
   ❖ Follow all protocols and procedures as outlined in the Maryville Volunteer Handbook for volunteer interactions and those defined by the FFMPC program:
     ❖ Provide health records on dog(s) to the FFMPC program coordinator;
     ❖ Follow health requirements for FFM teams based on good practices for animal-assisted interventions;
     ❖ Sign in and sign out; make entries in FFMPC Log;
     ❖ Be credentialed as a FFM Team for visitation;
     ❖ Advise the FFMPC program coordinator at least 24-hours before scheduled time if unable to make a scheduled one-on-one visit or dog-ministry prayer-group gathering;
     ❖ Keep Pet Partners® registration/certification current on the dog registered in the program and provide record of such compliance;
     ❖ Be familiar with Maryville’s policies and procedures—especially those relating to confidentiality;
     ❖ Be able to assess stress in residents and dogs taking appropriate action;
     ❖ Practice safety at all times.
2. Be responsible for good husbandry practices with regard to the safe and humane treatment of dogs in the spiritual/pastoral-care program.
3. With the FFMPC program coordinator, assist, as able, to facilitate problem resolution on issues involving Four-Footed Ministerial teams.
4. Attend FFM team in-services and continuing-education seminars in spiritual/pastoral care.
5. Attend, pet-grief support meetings, if need be.
6. Act as ambassador to the community on behalf of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.

**COMMUNICATION/RESIDENT CONTACT:** This position requires the volunteer to be able to interact with all types of people—residents, family members, and staff—while acting in a safe and pastoral manner.
Exhibit D: MARYVILLE NURSING HOME
Four-Footed Ministerial Team - Volunteer

FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM
Based on Standard 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3. Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Animal-Assisted Therapy. Bellevue, WA: Delta Society, 1996.
Approved: May 23, 2010; Revised: August 10, 2010

POSITION NAME: Four-Footed Ministerial Team - volunteer
CLASSIFICATION: Volunteer

LOCATION: Maryville Nursing Home
EFFECTIVE DATE: To Be Advised

GENERAL DUTIES IN THE FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM: The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program integrates canine companions into a volunteer program of spiritual/pastoral care. The Four-Footed Ministerial Team consists of a volunteer and their dog to be used as support for spiritual/pastoral care staff in one-on-one visits as well as dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings.

ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Assist the spiritual/pastoral-care department in providing pastoral/spiritual care and comfort to residents, their family members, and staff of Maryville. This position parallels the role played by Pet Partners®-registered teams for animal-assisted therapy.
   - Be knowledgeable in Pet Partners® protocols and best practices of animal-assisted interventions.
   - Follow all protocols and procedures as outlined in the Maryville Volunteer Handbook with regard to volunteer interactions and those specific to the FFMPC program:
     - Provide health records on dog to the FFMPC program coordinator;
     - Follow health requirements for FFM teams based on good practices for animal-assisted interventions;
     - Sign in and sign out;
     - Be credentialed as a FFM Team for visitation;
     - Advise the FFMPC program coordinator at least 24 hours before scheduled time if unable to make a scheduled one-on-one visit or dog-ministry prayer-group gathering;
     - Keep Pet Partners® registration/certification current on the dog registered in the program and provide record of such compliance;
     - Be familiar with Maryville’s policies and procedures—especially those relating to confidentiality;
     - Practice safety at all times.

2. Be responsible for good husbandry practices with regard to the safe and humane treatment of the dog.
**Optional attendance beyond initial volunteer training session**: Attend FFM team in-services and continuing-education seminars in spiritual/pastoral care sessions.

3. Act as ambassador to the community on behalf of the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.

**COMMUNICATION/RESIDENT CONTACT**: This position requires the volunteer to be able to interact with all types of people—residents, family members, and staff—while acting in a safe manner.
Maryville, a nursing home facility with approximately 150 residents located in Beaverton, Oregon, is looking for Pet Partners® teams to work in “dog ministry.” Pet Partners® teams will have the option to function as assistants in spiritual animal-assisted therapy or to move beyond these interactions to directly assist the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator and/or chaplain in the spiritual/pastoral care of residents, families, and staff.

It is dog teams that are needed. Basic training in spiritual/pastoral care will be provided.

Please contact: Sister Josephine Pelster (maryville@ssmoministries.org), Spiritual/Pastoral Care Services at 503-643-8626.
Exhibit F: Sample Application

MARYVILLE NURSING HOME
FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM
APPLICATION
Approved May 23, 2010

POSITION NAME: Four-Footed Ministerial Team
CLASSIFICATION: Volunteer

START DATE: APPLICATION RECEIVED:
INTERVIEW COMPLETED:

NAME: ______________________________ ANIMAL COMPANION: ____________
ADDRESS: ____________________________________________________________________
CITY/STATE/ZIP: _______________________________________________________________
PHONE: __________________ EMAIL: __________________________
EMERGENCY CONTACT: _______________________________________________________
PHONE: ____________________________

DOCUMENTS NEEDED TO SUPPORT APPLICATION:
Pet Partners Registration Confirmation: _______________Received: _________
Pet Partners Health Screening Form: __________________ Received: _______
Pet Partners Volunteer Agreement: ________________Received:_________
Copy of Recent Vaccinations on Pet: _______________Received: _______

The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program is a volunteer program of spiritual/pastoral care offered to the residents of Maryville Nursing Home that provides care and comfort through the ministerial presence of a volunteer and their dog. In addition to the high ethical standards that have been set by Pet Partners®, Bellevue, Washington, the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program fulfills the mission of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon to offer “Service with Love.” It is expected that those who volunteer will exhibit the highest ethical conduct in accordance with Pet Partners® ethical directives as well as abide by the standards of conduct outlined in the Maryville Volunteer Handbook.

After submitting this application, going through an initial interview, and completing the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program training, I, the undersigned, agree to abide by Pet Partners® protocols as well as the volunteer policies and procedures defined in the Maryville Volunteer Handbook.

_____________________________ ______________________________
Signature of Volunteer Signature of Director of Spiritual Care Services
Exhibit G: Sample Lesson Plans for Training a Group of Volunteers/Spiritual-Care Providers

Preliminary Questions for Preparing Training Sessions
These are questions that volunteers might ask and can be good conversation starters:
- Why did you want to participate in this ministry?
- What do you need to know about our facility that will make this a great experience for you?
- What kind of expectations do you have for your volunteer work in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program?

First Training Session

Begin with Prayer
Self-Introductions – using questions listed above as starters; this is a chance for team members to get to know each other.

Sister Josephine will discuss important Maryville policies from the *Maryville Volunteer Handbook*, including check-in for FFM teams
- Boundaries
- Confidentiality
- Hand-washing or alcohol lotion
- Respecting privacy: HIPPAA regulations
- Respecting choices and diverse spiritualities
- Maryville’s Volunteer application and confidentiality form

Tour of facility follows with emphasis on special needs of the dogs, the check-in/out area, FFMPC pastoral-care log (if used), disposal areas, potty areas, etc.
- Volunteer office
- Center Unit
- Courtyard
- West Unit and area outside of business office
- Alzheimer’s Unit
- Chapel

Break

The dog ministry component - Jerilyn to offer a PowerPoint presentation that explains the story of the ministry model and outlines the steps for visitation.
Second Training Session

Begin with Prayer
Sharing the Story – volunteers share their stories about their Pet Partners® experiences in visitation in other areas

Break

Spiritual/Pastoral Care Skills - Sister Josephine will present the following:
  - Attentive listening to the story
    - Literal
    - Emotional: verbal and non-verbal
    - Meaning: is there a story within this story?
    - Spiritual: how is God (or Higher Power) present?
  - Self-care: intuition increase in the elderly as hearing, comprehending, and vision decrease. The elderly person’s gifts and challenges are accentuated. Sister will provide examples.
  - Volunteers should be present in the moment giving the other person time to take the lead in the conversation.
  - Volunteers should aim for establishing a trusting relationship; repeating information is often necessary. The volunteer should share briefly about him/herself, building a bridge in connecting with the resident. Volunteers should keep their story short; there will be time later in the relationship for more of the volunteer’s story to be shared.
  - In being with grief it is important to … listen… listen … listen; affirm the resident’s loss as mourning the loss of a pet is healthy. Sister will review manifestations of normal grief and the tasks of the bereaved.

Multi-tasking in spiritual/pastoral-care using a dog: Jerilyn will address these challenges that are unique to multi-tasking in spiritual/pastoral-care using a dog.

Finding the "We" - Sister, Jerilyn, Four-Footed Ministerial teams discuss how to work together in dog ministry at Maryville.
Exhibit H: Sections from the *Maryville Nursing Home Volunteer Handbook*, pages 7-8

**Volunteer Requirements for Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program**

Maryville has begun a program of volunteer spiritual care using dogs. This program aims to provide spiritual and pastoral comfort to those who love dogs, have had dogs as pets, and have no medical reason why they cannot interact with dogs. The Four-Footed Ministerial team acts as an extension of the pastoral-care office and volunteer observations are important to the chaplain who takes seriously their assessment of a resident’s well-being. Thus, the Four-Footed Ministerial teams form an important part of the overall spiritual and pastoral care of not only the resident, but also the staff and the families who visit.

While many individuals have dogs and often want to use them in spiritual and pastoral care, in order to ensure the safety of all concerned—residents, staff, and the volunteer—only Pet Partners®-registered dog teams are permitted in the program. If this type of volunteer ministry appeals to you, please contact the Four-Footed Pastoral-Care program coordinator for more information about Pet Partners® registration.

**Sign in:** Upon arriving, please sign-in and the time you arrive at the reception desk and in the volunteer office. The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator will be on site and accompany you as you visit the residents. If you are a FFM “volunteer” you will be the advocate for your dog working with the FFMPC program coordinator who will function as the spiritual-care provider.

**The Visit:** Though prayer and spiritual comfort is the aim of these visits, interactions with Pet Partners® teams will have many positive results and these might not be immediately apparent. If you have any concerns please discuss them with the FFMPC program coordinator or the chaplain.

**Name Tags:** Your Maryville name tag will be in the volunteer office and the FFMPC program coordinator will meet you there. Please also have your Pet Partners® name tag with you and prominently displayed. You must wear the Maryville name tag at all times while in the facility. There will be blue smocks available for you to wear over your clothes if you wish.

**Sign out:** At the conclusion of your visit, please sign out in the volunteer office and at reception.

**Last-Minute Emergencies:** If you are unable to come when scheduled, or have any questions or concerns, please inform the FFMPC program coordinator at (503)-701-6819 (cell phone) or the chaplain who can be reached at (503) 643-8626. A 24-hour notice of non-attendance is greatly appreciated.
SECTION FOUR: VOLUNTEER INFORMATION
Volunteer Job Descriptions (pg. 12)
(The following list contains ideas for volunteers)

Adopt a Grandparent: Provide companionship to a few residents, or just one on a regular basis.

Arts and Crafts: Individually or helping a facilitator with a group of residents.

Beauty Time: Nail care, hair, and makeup: group or individually.

Book/Poetry Reading: Small groups, or individual reading.

Entertainment: Music, plays, singing, church groups, school groups, music programs, dance programs.

Feeding Program: Helping those residents who need assistance. Training required.

**Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program: in conjunction with the director of spiritual/pastoral services and the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator, provide spiritual and pastoral comfort to residents and their families. Specialized training is required to participate with one’s dog.

Games: Cards, board games, Bingo, puzzles, and more.

Groups Visits: Churches, schools, Scouts, etc. Monthly visits or helping with special events.

Facilitation: Leaders who will facilitate, or help activity staff with a group of residents in an activity or special program.

Outings: Helping the activity staff escort residents out of the facility for special outings, such as the beach, fishing, Beaverton parade, and restaurants.

*Pet Visitation: In addition to the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program, we have a program of dog visitation that is provided by Pet Partners®-registered teams.

Transport: Helping transport residents to and from activities and mass.

Teach: Sharing your special skills and talents with residents, either individually or in a group setting.
### Exhibit I: Sample of Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral Care Log

#### Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral Care Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of FFMT</th>
<th>Room#</th>
<th>Status of Resident Visited</th>
<th>Did not seem to want a visit</th>
<th>Easily Distracted remaining distracted</th>
<th>Restless anxious nervous</th>
<th>Did not want to interact as had in past</th>
<th>Withdrawn -sad</th>
<th>Hostile to FFMT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In a good mood; cheerful</td>
<td>Easy eye contact with both FFMT and dog</td>
<td>Opened up to FFM Team (s) and told stories</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Withdrawn -sad</td>
<td>Hostile to FFMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In a good mood; cheerful</td>
<td>Easy eye contact with both FFMT and dog</td>
<td>Opened up to FFM Team (s) and told stories</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Withdrawn -sad</td>
<td>Hostile to FFMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In a good mood; cheerful</td>
<td>Easy eye contact with both FFMT and dog</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Withdrawn -sad</td>
<td>Hostile to FFMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Withdrawn -sad</td>
<td>Hostile to FFMT</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Withdrawn -sad</td>
<td>Hostile to FFMT</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Easy eye contact with both FFMT and dog</td>
<td>Opened up to FFM Team (s) and told stories</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Withdrawn -sad</td>
<td>Hostile to FFMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In a good mood; cheerful</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Withdrawn -sad</td>
<td>Hostile to FFMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In a good mood; cheerful</td>
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<td>Opened up to FFM Team (s) and told stories</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Withdrawn -sad</td>
<td>Hostile to FFMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In a good mood; cheerful</td>
<td>Easy eye contact with both FFMT and dog</td>
<td>Opened up to FFM Team (s) and told stories</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Withdrawn -sad</td>
<td>Hostile to FFMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes For Chaplain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above chart highlights descriptions of possible resident reactions and provides an easy way for the Four-Footed Ministerial team to record the status of the resident. If there are concerns about the welfare of the resident, notes can be made for the chaplain/director for further follow-up. The chaplain/director will make notes in the resident’s chart and alert other senior staff to the concerns noticed by the Four-Footed Ministerial team.
Exhibit J: Sample of Four-Footed Ministers Assessment Tool

Four-Footed Ministers Assessment Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of FFMT</th>
<th>Room#</th>
<th>Visitation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes For Chaplain

This more complex form could be used in much the same manner as the Four-Footed Ministers pastoral-care log but should be utilized by a more experienced spiritual/pastoral-care provider. Its function is to alert the chaplain/director to specific concerns that surfaced in a visit. The chaplain/director can then follow-up with senior staff and/or make notations in the patient’s/resident/s chart.
APPENDIX C: DOG MINISTRY PRAYER-GROUP GATHERINGS
Exhibit A: Dog-Ministry Prayer-Group Gathering

Date: Began January 27, 2011
Note Date: January 27, 2011 – The quality of compassion

General Comments: As this had been advertised within the facility, the group consisted of more than those who have been participating in the study. The comments made and reported in this summary reflect only those who have signed an informed consent form. We had a total of seven attendees, one husband and wife with several other residents including two who are participating in the study – Judith³ and Sean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service as Designed</th>
<th>Service as Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Call to Prayer</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With individuals seated in a circle: begin with “Let us all be in God’s Spirit, and we begin this time of prayer and meditation in the name of the Holy One.”</td>
<td>We begin with this prayer. It was not a smooth introduction because one of the residents was vocalizing and Sister Josephine thought it best to take that resident out of the group. After she left, we continued with the prayer. At this point, I gave a short introduction of what would happen during our gathering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for centering and connecting to Spirit.</td>
<td>There was not too much time for this. We had individuals who continually joined our group as they discovered the dogs in the center of the gathering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Welcome to the circle of wisdom where we can share our stories of our canine companions and other beloved animals learning lessons of life from their interactions with us. Today’s lesson is that of compassion. “We begin with a mystery. A musty</td>
<td>I followed this outline pointing out the lesson of compassion that would be illustrated in the reading of the story. I briefly summarized the story’s “Prologue” and then moved on to the question that the book addresses – “What if Jesus had a pet dog?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ If a name is indicated, that person agreed to be in the study. The use of a letter indicates that the person was not in the study but attended.

⁴ The ‘I’ indicated in these summaries is the researcher.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service as Designed</th>
<th>Service as Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>document has come across the desk of an academic who sees that it tells a story about Jesus not found in the Gospels. The story seems to answer the question, ‘What if Jesus had a pet dog?’ This story is based on the method used by the rabbis in the Jewish tradition where they, being filled with the Word of God and great storytellers, filled in the blanks left in the approved scripture stories. This story uses imagination to fill in the blanks left in the Gospel stories. “Since Jesus loved those who were outcasts from society, it seems logical that he would also take in outcasts from the animal world, dogs for example. Dogs were outcast because of they were scavengers and fed on blood, an act that was forbidden according to the Jewish law. “What follows is the story about Jesus and a dog that found a place in the community of disciples.”</td>
<td>I did not share this information with the group as I was not sure how it would be received. I felt it was too academic for our first gathering. As I will have to go back many times to catch up those who had not heard the story from the beginning, I will have time to cover this information at some point, depending on the mix of who attends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service as Designed</td>
<td>Service as Conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service as Conducted</strong> (Taken from an actual gathering)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scriptural Reading</strong></td>
<td>I summarized much of the story, reading only the first part of Chapter 1. This</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read “Prologue” and “Chapter 1” of <em>The Master’s Companion</em>. Adjust the amount</td>
<td>seemed to provide a natural break.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read contingent on the situation at the time.</td>
<td>I read pages 17-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silence</strong></td>
<td>I skipped this short silence because I wanted to see what would happen when we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A period for reflection.</td>
<td>opened the floor to personal stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faith sharing time on Compassion</strong></td>
<td>I asked Barbara [ministry partner] to share a story so that she could model for the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for sharing of stories about past experiences where each resident had an</td>
<td>group what sharing might look like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chance to be compassionate to an outcast animal.</td>
<td>She told a wonderful story of how she picked up a loose dog when she was on an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>errand. She wanted to make sure that the dog would be returned to its rightful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>owner. Her story illustrated the quality of compassion that was the theme for this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many of the attendees then shared their stories and Judith shared her story of her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four-Footed Minister Mutt that she and her husband took to an “old folk’s home” to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>visit. Judith had not trained the dog but the dog seemed to know what to do. The dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>would go to each person and acted appropriately as if she had been trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another woman participant shared her story of taking in a dog that was going to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dumped by someone. She showed compassion for the dog not wanting it to be left to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fend for itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It all began because Barbara modeled the behavior for our residents. Given the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>importance of knowing how to respond, points to the fact that Four-Footed Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>need to go in pairs – one helping the other if the situation warrants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service as Designed</td>
<td>Service as Conducted (Taken from an actual gathering)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Session</td>
<td>A Night in the Garden (Chapter 2)—Jesus is our refuge from fear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Sending Forth</td>
<td>Let us now pray… “Holy One, as we reflect on the beauty of your creation, let us take the lessons we have learned into our community to spread Your joy, Your love, and Your peace. Amen”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note Date: February 10, 2011-A Lesson on freedom from fear.

Prior to our beginning our prayer service, Jael and Judith were in our small room talking with me about Alya. Judith observed how important dogs were to her and she continued to talk to Alya using ‘motherese,’ language that mothers use with their young children. Her insights as to the importance of dogs were very surprising given her past encounters with us.

Jael is a dear woman who is a very shy person yet could engage with the conversation about dogs and how much she liked them. When Joseph entered, he commented again on how Alya’s eyes ‘took in’ the person on whom her gaze rested. G. commented that Alya’s eyes did, in fact engage him greatly. Abigail confirmed that Alya’s eyes were an important part of her personality, showing the love she has for me and others.

For this gathering, we joined by two other individuals, G. and P., who are not in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service as Designed</th>
<th>Service as Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Call to Prayer</strong></td>
<td>With individuals seated in a circle: begin with “Let us all be in God’s Spirit, and we begin this time of prayer and meditation in the name of the Holy One.” I shortened this call to prayer just slightly as I was not sure what faith traditions we had present, but did ask God to be present to our group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silence</strong></td>
<td>Time for centering and connecting to Spirit. In order to keep our group engaged as sleep often gets the best of them, I kept this very short, allowing time for silence in the span of taking a deep breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome:</strong></td>
<td>“Welcome back to our circle of wisdom where we can share our stories of our canine companions and other beloved animals by sharing the lessons they have taught us. Today’s lesson is that of freedom from fear. Remember our story began with a mystery where Dr. Evelyn Brown received a musty document from the First-Century A.D. She discovered that it told a story about Jesus, not I tried to summarize the story, going back to fill in the gaps that occurred in the first gathering, as I want to keep the reading to a minimum and concentrate more on telling the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service as Designed</td>
<td>Service as Conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>found in the Gospels. The story seems to answer the question, ‘What if Jesus had a pet dog?’ “In our first chapter, we met Sarah, the Samaritan woman who took in Jesus and the disciples and fed them. As the whole community wanted to see Jesus, they gathered outside of Sarah’s house after dinner. The small black dog with the white foot came into the gathering that caused the community members to be afraid. They were afraid of the dog because dogs were outcasts. Jesus had been telling a story about a loyal sheepdog, and there a dog appeared. Jesus spoke quietly and reached out to the dog and to the community by calming their fears. “Today we read about what happened during the two days that Jesus spent in the village. This chapter will show us Jesus and the disciples confronting both a physical and spiritual threat.”</td>
<td>After summarizing the story to this point, I read the short passage where Merea confronts an evil presence and alerts Jesus and the disciples. This is only a small section of Chapter 2 (pages 36-39) but reading it moved the group to consider the theme for the day that was freedom from fear. All of the individuals seemed to be engaged in the story for I could tell how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service as Designed</td>
<td>Service as Conducted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service as Conducted</td>
<td>attentive they were through eye contact. Alya continued to snooze at the center of the group that had been crammed into the small gathering space. This did facilitate connection because this way everyone could hear and see me without straining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>A period for reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>I went immediately into the next section of sharing pet stories. I asked Sister Josephine to go first so that she could model for the group a story about a pet protecting us just as Jesus protects us from harm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith sharing time on freedom from fear</td>
<td>Time for sharing of stories about past experiences where each resident talked about how the companionship of their animal helped them to calm their fears about something that threatened them such as a person, a situation, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith sharing time on freedom from fear</td>
<td>No one else shared stories at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Session</td>
<td>Jesus and the Canaanite Woman (Chapter 3) where a person pays it forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Sending Forth</td>
<td>Let us now pray… “Almighty God, as we reflect on the beauty of your creation, let us take the lessons we have learned into our community to spread Your joy, Your love, and Your peace. Amen”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Sending Forth</td>
<td>I concluded with this brief prayer as lunch was going to be served at noon. Our service lasted about 20 minutes. Everyone seemed to enjoy the story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After our gathering I sat with Joseph and Abigail. Joseph shared another story about a dog’s compassion and courage. As he said he lived in Beaverton for 38 years, he remembered a time when he saw a family of five ahead of him on a walk to a local park. One of the children had a dog on a rope that was ahead of the other family members, when the younger sister of about five-years of age missed the pedal on her bike and slipped to the ground crying. The dog ran back to comfort the child staying with her until she stopped crying.

When Sister and I debriefed after this session, Sister mentioned that Joseph’s stories focused on incidents in his life that showed forth God’s protection and love. They were significant events where God had broken through to show his kindness and compassion.

*Notes from March 17, 2011:*

In our debriefing with Sister Josephine we determined that:

1. We will meet in the hall outside of the chapel to give us more space. It will be an intimate but not a confining space lit by natural light. [Note that this has not been possible.]

2. Barbara suggested I pose the question for the group earlier in our gathering before I read the scripture/story. She suggested I phrase it in simpler language so that the participants can understand what I am asking them to consider.

3. Barbara asked how we might connect to a woman who attends but is language-challenged. We will need to figure a way to help her feel more comfortable in the group.

4. I will email Sister the scriptural verses for the subsequent week’s story so that those who are still able to read can prepare themselves for the gathering.
APPENDIX D: MARYVILLE PROTOCOLS
FOR
FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM
Vision Statement

The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program presents the opportunity to volunteer Pet Partners® teams, consisting of a volunteer and their dog, to provide spiritual/pastoral care to residents, their families, and staff through the gift of their presence and loving service.

- Only Pet Partners®-registered teams, consisting of an approved volunteer and their dog, are eligible for the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program. For more information on the registration process, please visit Pet Partners® website at www.petpartners.org.

- The Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator will keep up-to-date records on all visiting teams designated as “volunteers” or spiritual-care providers. These records will consist of an application for the program, a signed job description, current Pet Partners® registration, and current health records for the dog.

- The “volunteer” and/or spiritual-care provider is subject to Maryville volunteer requirements that include a background check (See Appendix B for separate job descriptions). There are no special health tests that are required.

- All “volunteer” and spiritual-care providers are required to attend orientation and training sessions prior to beginning their ministry work. Occasional debriefing sessions will be held in order to check in with teams as the need arises.

- All Pet Partners® requirements for visitation are to be followed unless they specifically conflict with Maryville volunteer policies and procedures. At this
time, there are no conflicts. If questions arise, Four-Footed Ministerial teams can refer the matter to the FFMPC program coordinator for clarification.

- Four-Footed Ministerial teams are required to sign in at both the reception desk and the volunteer office.

- As Maryville is a relatively “open” campus, the Four-Footed Ministerial teams are free to move about the halls interacting with residents, family members, and staff unless otherwise directed. The only volunteer shift that has been routinely scheduled for ministry is held on Thursday’s beginning at 10 a.m. concluding at noon. Normally, the dog-ministry prayer-group gatherings are scheduled at 11 a.m. in the small visitors’ room. As more teams become involved, more visitation times can be scheduled.

- If a person is actively involved in ministry and has had spiritual/pastoral care-experience working with elders such as a member of the clergy or an ordained minister, that person is designated as a spiritual/pastoral-care provider. This individual is able to call on residents without the FFMPC program coordinator or chaplain accompanying them. This person must alert the FFMPC program coordinator well in advance as to the time and day they wish to come. A follow-up report is required for this activity.

- **The Visit:** Though prayer and spiritual comfort are the aims of these visits, interactions with Pet Partners® teams will have many positive results that might not be immediately apparent. If a volunteer has any concerns please discuss them with the FFMPC program coordinator or the chaplain.
Name Tags: Maryville name tags, as a rule, will be found in the volunteer office. It is required that the Pet Partners® name tag also be prominently displayed. All volunteers must also wear the Maryville name tag at all times while in the facility.

The FFMPC program coordinator will make available to Four-Footed Ministerial teams a list of those who have requested spiritual/pastoral care visits. It will be posted on the volunteer log in the volunteer office on visitation day noting the number of the room/bed of the person requesting a spiritual/pastoral-care visit.

Each Four-Footed Ministerial team must sign out both at the reception desk and the volunteer office before leaving campus. If there are any concerns that surfaced in a visit, the volunteer office has forms that can be used to alert the FFMPC program coordinator and/or chaplain to those concerns.

Last Minute Emergencies: If an emergency arises, or a volunteer has any questions or concerns, please inform the FFMPC program coordinator at (503)-701-6819 (cell phone) or the chaplain who can be reached at (503) 643-8626. A 24-hour notice of non-attendance is greatly appreciated.

As in any dealings with animals, there are times when accidents do happen. It is important that if an accident occurs, the volunteer alert one of the nursing staff who will prepare the Maryville Resident Incident Report. The Four-Footed Ministerial team should work the FFMPC program coordinator to fill out the appropriate form for submission to Pet Partners®.

As safety and the overall good of the residents are the primary concern of Maryville staff and the volunteers, there might be times when a Four-Footed Ministerial team should not continue to visit. This matter will be brought to the
attention of the FFMPC program coordinator and chaplain who will meet with the “volunteer” or spiritual-care provider to discuss the matter and take appropriate action.

Finally, it is important that each Four-Footed Ministerial team enjoy the experience of sharing their caring concern and the gift of their canine companion with those who love dogs and want to interact with them. Maryville wishes all volunteer teams in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program every blessing for this holy work.
APPENDIX E: MARYVILLE FFMPC PROGRAM TRAINING MODULE SAMPLE

Sample of Staff Training Presentation/Volunteer and Spiritual-Care Presentation

SLIDE 1

SCRIPT: Thank you for attending this session today that will inform you about a new form of canine care here at Maryville. This new ministry is the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program. This ministry formed the basis for a Master’s thesis and a Master’s project. The Master’s thesis, completed in 2002, laid the theological and theoretical groundwork for the research project conducted in 2004. The 2004 research project used the CAM/PS model that will be explained later. Further, the CAM/PS model is the basis for additional research completed at Maryville where a training manual on the concept was developed. The training manual is designed for directors of spiritual/pastoral care in nursing-care facilities so that they can “duplicate” Maryville’s successes. So, to begin, let’s look at some of the basics.
SCRIPT: You might have heard the term “pet therapy” in connection with animals in healthcare settings. This popular term is more correctly broken down into animal-assisted activities and animal-assisted therapy all lumped together under the term, animal-assisted interventions. To understand the CAM/PS model, there are distinctions that are important when defining the treatment modality, animal-assisted therapy, from mere beneficial interactions with a canine, animal-assisted activities.

Animal-assisted activity can be defined as “meet and greet” action where a resident or staff member interacts with the dog with no measurable therapeutic goals in mind. For example: family members who visit with their dog who interacts with residents and staff.

Animal-assisted therapy, on the other hand, is defined as the modality where a canine and owner/handler are part of a treatment plan for a person. The interactions with the dog are specifically directed to measurable therapeutic goals set by a professional or a para-professional. For example, having a resident brush the dog to recover arm strength after a stroke required by a treatment plan and specified as a measurable and documented goal.

CAM/PS lies in between animal-assisted activity and animal-assisted therapy.
SCRIPT: Here is a physical representation of how the parties interact in animal-assisted interventions. There are a couple of things to note in this diagram:

The foundation for the relationships is the established connection of the owner/handler to the dog. There must be a firm hierarchical connection where the dog submits to the owner in unquestioned obedience. Moreover, the relationship is one of trust that where the dog trusts the owner to command what is best for the team. The relationship to the resident or staff member is built on the connection of dog to owner/handler. Further, the relationship to the resident or staff member can be established if that person does not fear dogs or has had a bad experience with them.

The relationship between dog and resident can be cemented because of the dog’s natural tendency to express unconditional acceptance of human beings, regardless of their appearance or condition. Moreover, the dog’s physical make-up—being soft, warm, and furry, possessing large eyes and wagging tale—presents an invitation that most humans cannot resist.
SCRIPT: The CAM/PS model builds on the natural interaction of humans and dogs. There are a couple of things to note in this diagram:

Here, the triangle expresses how loving kindness can flow among the participants but on another level. The spiritual-care minister has the primary relationship with the dog as caregiver and, again, this relationship forms the basis of the triangle. The other relationships are initially facilitated by the physical interactions of the parties. Touch is the key to this interaction and is particularly valuable in a nursing-care facility. The spiritual relationship to God in the center can then be built and/or strengthened. The relationship of the dog to God is drawn in red with a dotted line because this relationship is not yet been defined.

This whole scheme is based on a theology that sees all sentient beings as participating in God’s life connected to each other horizontally as fellow creatures as well as vertically, following a traditional interpretation found in Genesis. The CAM/PS model of relationships reflects the circular chain of being.
SCRIPT: To test the CAM/PS model, independent elder volunteers were invited to participate in a series of prayer-service/faith-sharing sessions conducted in a parish setting. These elder parish members were encouraged to share their stories about their pets seen in the light of a reflection upon scriptural passages that specifically related to animals. The connecting thread for each of the scripture passages chosen was a quality that could or had been attributed to the Divine, e.g., loyalty. Heidi, the Four-Footed Minister engaged for the study, was on a long lead and able to engage at will with the participants as she wished. Moreover, she was available to be petted by the participants as they saw fit.

“Success” was determined by the stories told; a methodology used in spiritual/pastoral care-research studies. The results confirmed that most elders could see the connection of their pet stories and scripture that led to a more prayerful interaction with God. They had not thought of scripture, their pet stories, and God in that way.
FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM
THE FOUR-FOOTED MEMBER

The Requirements to Conduct Research using a Dog

1. Trained to respond to basic obedience commands.

2. Dog had predictable behavior to minimize risk of accidents.

3. Dog had “documented” health checks, shots and heartworm/flea control medications.

4. Registered by a Pet Partner® trainer, through the Pet Partners® (OHS).

Why Registration was Important:

Protection for team and organization where ministry conducted. Liability insurance of up to $2,000,000 covers Pet Partner® team during their volunteer activities.

SCRIPT: For the 2004 study, the first step was to engage a team covered by liability insurance for the one big concern was the risk of accidents. In the study the Four-Footed Ministerial team was composed of Ms. Becky Rodes, an occupational therapist and Heidi, her five-year old English Springer spaniel. Heidi was trained to respond to basic commands and exhibit predictable behavior. She was current on her shots and was on medications for fleas and heartworm to minimize risk of infection.

Both, she and Ms. Rodes were evaluated as a team by taking two tests for registration through Pet Partners®, formerly the Delta Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to the investigation of the animal-human bond. The Pet Partners® Skills Test determined Heidi’s level of obedience in particular situations. The Pet Partners® Aptitude Test mimicked a visit to a facility. All of the Four-Footed Ministerial teams working here at Maryville are registered Pet Partners®. Overall, it appeared that the 2004 research confirmed the validity of using dogs in ministry. However, this study indicated that more research was needed.
SCRIPT: This brings us the study that defined the Maryville Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program.

This slide provides the particulars on the study conducted from September 2010 to May 2011. At its conclusion, a survey was taken to determine the value of the program. As the residents in the study overwhelmingly confirmed its importance, it has become a continuing part of the spiritual/pastoral-care program here at Maryville.

Pet Partners® dogs visit on Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon. The dogs have a limit of two-hour-per-day shifts, so the FFM teams will make every effort to visit as many individuals as they can. Part of the visitation schedule will be a dog-ministry prayer-group gathering that meets at 11 a.m. on visitation days.

The goal for this program is to offer spiritual care and comfort to residents, their families, and staff. Because of safety issues, if senior staff determines visitation is NOT appropriate for a resident, that person will not be included in the visitation schedule. To assist our volunteer teams, the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care program coordinator or chaplain will be present to accompany the Pet Partners®-registered teams as they visit.
SCRIPT: This slide points out that the American culture treats animals much differently than other cultures. It is important for all to understand that the patients/residents often has had to leave their pet when they came to Maryville and many of them experience grief at losing their beloved animal. The volunteers in the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program want to assist these residents in dealing with this loss by providing them with the opportunity to interact with *their* dog on a consistent basis. The members of the spiritual/pastoral-care team thank you for attempting to understand this important connection that the Four-Footed Minister is trying to keep alive through his or her presence and availability of the dog for being touched and caressed.
The Four-Footed Ministerial team will normally be accompanied by the FFMPH program coordinator. The volunteer’s job is to engage the resident to interact with the dog. After a short while, the program coordinator will ask questions and listen to the resident’s concerns and needs. If appropriate, a prayer will be offered. As they leave the program coordinator will offer a blessing if appropriate.

**Note that for “volunteer”/spiritual-care provider training, there are two additional slides, Slides 9 A and 9 B that explain the specifics for each volunteer role.**
SCRIPT: As was mentioned, there will be a dog-ministry prayer-group gathering available for residents and on the screen is an outline of how that will work.

It will begin with a call to prayer then a time of silence for reflection and centering. A selection taken from scripture or an animal story from another religious source concerning an animal will be read. For example, there is a story from the Catholic tradition, the Book of Tobit, where the author specifically mentions a dog who accompanies the main characters on their adventures (Tobit 6: 2 ff and 11: 1-4). There will then follow a time for reflection to consider a question based on a theme such as loyalty. Participants will be invited to share pet stories and reflect further on how their own pet stories enhance their relationship to God. At the dismissal, residents will be encouraged to take their insights into their daily dealings with others.
Thank You for Your Attention!

The Four-Footed Ministerial teams
Wish You
Blessings on your life journey!

Four-Footed Ministers
Pastoral-Care Program

Time for questions
Dismiss
The PowerPoint presentation is based on the staff-training one. The general format is the same for “volunteer” or spiritual/pastoral-care provider with the insertion of one role-specific slide to be inserted after Slide 9:

SLIDE 9 A spiritual-care provider

FOUR-FOOTED MINISTERS PASTORAL-CARE PROGRAM
A ONE-ON-ONE PASTORAL VISIT

Visitation by a Spiritual-Care Provider
1. Ask permission to enter the room.
2. Identify yourself as being from the chaplain’s office.
3. Ask if the person would like to interact with your dog.
4. If the answer is yes, enter. If not, wish the person a good day.
5. Encourage the resident to interact with the dog, listening to their cares and concerns.
6. Ask if there is anything the person needs from spiritual/pastoral services.
7. End the session with prayer and a blessing if appropriate.
8. Report any concerns to the FFMPC program coordinator or chaplain using the FFMPC log.

SCRIPT: On the screen, there are a series of steps that outline a normal interaction between a spiritual/pastoral-care provider and a Maryville resident. [READ THE STEPS]
SCRIPT: On the screen, there are a series of steps that outline how a “volunteer” Four-Footed Ministerial team visits with the FFMPC program coordinator or chaplain. The volunteer in this instance is an advocate for the dog, taking direction from the FFMPC program coordinator or chaplain. This person functions in the same role as a volunteer would in animal-assisted therapy, but the goal is spiritual rather than physical or psychologically therapeutic. [READ THE STEPS]