

Animal-Assisted Therapy

Titus 2

When God created everything, He put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to take care of it. And when they were forced out because of sin, they still lived off the land, but with a lot more work.

But that life style produced stronger and healthier people. However, over the years, many people have left the land; some even voluntarily.

The new city life has many problems, especially obesity. Without chores on the farm, youth have too much free time to get into trouble and gangs.

And when looking at the whole situation, dysfunctional would characterize many. Much of what God created and put in order has been killed, stolen or destroyed. (John 10:10)

Then this new chaos has been re-configured, but not in God's Image. The historical Jesus has replaced Our Lord Jesus Christ. Anti-christ has replaced the Holy Spirit. Worshipping the creation has replaced worshipping the Creator. People have gotten so far away from God that they go by their feelings and intuition instead of by reason; as they were created. And the Church has been decimated, and is not ministering to the world, or to believers, as they are supposed to. What are Churches to be doing?

John 6:28-29 - Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Acts 4:32-37 - And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, & laid them down at the apostles' feet: & distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. & Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted The son of consolation) a Levite & of the country Cyprus Having land, sold it, & brought the money, & laid it at the apostles' feet.

Titus 2:1-15 - But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of

good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Galatians 6:1-2 - Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

When Our Lord Jesus Christ was here on the earth, He showed us the right way to do things. Matthew 4:23-25 - And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, (or demons) and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.

He left pastors to continue the work that He had started. 1 Timothy 3 explains Gods qualifications for those to help His people. We won't read this now, but I'll leave it for your homework. People ministered to people in the Name of Jesus. How many animals were involved in the ministry?

In order to keep the oppressed away from God, alternate therapies have evolved. Many of them centre on the "Attachment Therapies". Here are some highlights a main one; Animal-assisted therapy from Wikipedia.

Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is a type of therapy that involves animals as a form of treatment. The goal of AAT is to improve a patient's social, emotional, or cognitive functioning. Advocates state that animals can be useful for educational and motivational effectiveness for participants. A therapist who brings along a pet may be viewed as being less threatening, increasing the rapport between patient and therapist. Animals used in therapy include domesticated pets, farm animals and marine mammals (such as dolphins). While the research literature presents the relationship between humans and

companion animals as generally favorable, methodological concerns about the poor quality of data have led to calls for improved experimental studies. Wilson's (1984) hypothesis is based on the premise that our attachment to and interest in animals stems from the strong possibility that human survival was partly dependent on signals from animals in the environment indicating safety or threat. His hypothesis suggests that now, if we see animals at rest or in a peaceful state, this may signal to us safety, security and feelings of well-being which in turn may trigger a state where personal change and healing are possible.

History - Animal-assisted therapy sprouted from the idea and initial belief in the supernatural powers of animals and animal spirits. First appearing in the groupings of early hunter gatherer societies. In modern times Animals are seen as "agents of socialization" and as providers of "social support and relaxation." Though animal assisted therapy is believed to have begun in these early human periods it is undocumented and based on speculation. The earliest reported use of AAT for the mentally ill took place in the late 18th century at the York Retreat in England, led by William Tuke. 6 Patients at this facility were allowed to wander the grounds which contained a population of small domestic animals. These were believed to be effective tools for socialization. In 1860, the Bethlem Hospital in England followed the same trend and added animals to the ward, greatly influencing the morale of the patients living there.

Sigmund Freud kept many dogs and often had his chow Jofi present during his pioneering sessions of psychoanalysis. He noticed that the presence of the dog was helpful because the patient would find their speech would not shock or disturb the dog & this reassured them & so encouraged them to relax & confide. This was most effective when the patient was a child or adolescent. The theory behind AAT is what is known as Attachment theory.

Therapy involving animals was first used in therapy by Dr. Levinson who accidentally discovered the use of pet therapy with children when he left his dog alone with a difficult child, and upon returning, found the child talking to the dog. However, in other pieces of literature it states that it was founded as early as 1792 at the Quaker Society of Friends York Retreat in England. Velde, Cipriani & Fisher also state "Florence Nightingale appreciated the benefits of pets in the treatment of individuals with illness. The US military promoted the use of dogs as a therapeutic intervention with psychiatric patients in 1919 at St Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC. Increased recognition of the value of human-pet bonding was noted by Dr. Boris Levinson in 1961".

Modern Animal-Assisted Therapy - AAT advocates for animals to be used in a variety of settings such as prisons, nursing homes, mental institutions and hospitals and in the home. At this point, it is important to make a distinction between using animals to assist you in your daily routines; and using animals

for psychological treatment. The mental health industry blurs this difference, in order to bring more people under their domain.

For thousands of years, people used camels, donkeys & horses to get around, & in their businesses. Many people to-day use dogs for protection & security. Some visually impaired use dogs and miniature horses to guide them around. This is a matter of accessibility, not psychological therapy. This is using the animals for what God created them. These days, people use border collies to chase Canada Geese in parks. Some use goats to clear scrub around airports. Now, there are those who do not have adequate social contact; like the elderly. Deprived of caring personal attention, they resort to pets, such as cats, dogs, birds etc. And they interact with their pets as people.

This, then has crossed the line from animal assistance to animal therapy. Mental Institutions, Hospitals and Nursing Homes - A 1998 study looked at the use of AAT in reducing anxiety levels of institutionalized patients. They determined that anxiety levels were significantly reduced in patients with mood disorders and psychotic disorders after a session of AAT. In fact, for the patients with psychotic disorders, those who participated in AAT had twice the reduction in anxiety scores as those who participated in some other form of recreational activity. This suggests the low demands of human-animal interaction was effective for individuals with psychotic disorders compared to traditional therapy. A controlled study of 20 elderly schizophrenic patients found significant improvements by the use of cats & dogs as companions, indicating that this population may benefit from the companionship of an animal, especially if they do not have access to friends or family.

Nursing Homes - Animal assisted therapy draws on the bond between animals and humans in order to help improve and maintain an individual's function and is being used to assist in the process of enhancing the individual's quality of life in nursing homes. Psychologists and therapists notice increasing unfavourable behaviours of elderly people that are transferred to nursing homes. Once the patients become settled into their new environment, they lose their sense of self-efficacy and independence. Simple, everyday tasks are taken away from them and the patients become lethargic, depressed, and anti-social if they do not have regular visitors.

Animal assisted therapy (AAT) is a therapy that incorporates animals in the treatment of a person; especially elderly people in nursing homes or long term care (LTC) facilities. The goal of using animals as a treatment option is to improve the person's social, emotional, and cognitive functioning and reduce passivity. When elderly people are transferred to nursing homes or LTC facilities, they often become passive, agitated, withdrawn, depressed, and inactive because of the lack of regular visitors or the loss of loved ones. Supporters of AAT say that animals can be helpful in motivating the patients to be active mentally and physically, keeping their minds sharp and bodies

healthy. Therapists or visitors who bring animals into their sessions at the nursing home are often viewed as less threatening, which increases the relationship between the therapist/visitor and patient.

There are numerous techniques used in AAT, depending on the needs and condition of the patient. For elderly dementia patients, hands on interactions with the animal are the most important aspect. Animal assisted therapy provides these patients with opportunities to have close physical contact with the animals warm bodies, feeling heartbeats, caress soft skins and coats, notice breathing, and giving hugs. Animal assisted therapy counsellors also plan activities for patients that need physical movement. These planned tasks include petting the animal, walking the animal, and grooming the animal. These experiences seem so common and simple, but elderly dementia patients do not typically have these interactions with people because their loved ones have passed or no one comes to visit them. Their mind needs to be stimulated as it once was. Animals provide a sense of meaning & belonging to these patients & offer something to look forward to during their long days. The AAT program encourages expressions of emotions and cognitive stimulation through discussions and reminiscing of memories while the patient bonds with the animal. Many of the troubling symptoms in elderly dementia patients include decreased physical functioning, apathy, depression, loneliness, and disturbing behaviours and are all positively affected by AAT interventions. Animal assisted therapy is very useful in helping these negative behaviours decrease by focusing their attention on something positive (the animal) rather than their physical illness, motivating them to be physically active and encouraging communication skills for those with memory loss. Numerous researchers found that communication with animals have a positive effect on older adults by increasing their social behaviour & verbal interaction, while decreasing tense behaviour & loneliness.

Types of Animal Assisted Therapy

There are many types of AAT ranging from the use of dogs, to cats, even to small animals such as fish and hamsters. The most popular forms of AAT include Canine therapy, Dolphin therapy, and Equine therapy.

Dolphin therapy - Dolphin assisted therapy refers to the practice of swimming with dolphins. Proponents claim for such encounters "extraordinary results of the therapy and breakthroughs in outcomes", however this form of therapy has been strongly criticized as having no long term benefit, and being based on flawed observations. Psychologists have cautioned that dolphin assisted therapy is not effective for any known condition and presents considerable risks to both human patients and the captive dolphins.

Equine therapy - A distinction exists between hippotherapy and therapeutic horseback riding. The American Hippotherapy Association defines

hippotherapy as a physical, occupational, and speech-language therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement as part of an integrated intervention program to achieve functional outcomes, while the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATHI) defines therapeutic riding as a riding lesson specially adapted for people with special needs. According to Marty Becker, hippotherapy programs are active "in twenty-four countries and the horse's functions have expanded to therapeutic riding for people with physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and behavioural problems". Hippotherapy has also been approved by the American Speech and Hearing Association as a treatment method for individuals with speech disorders. In addition, equine assisted psychotherapy (EAP) uses horses for work with persons who have mental health issues. EAP often does not involve riding.

Criticisms of animal-assisted therapy - Although animal assisted therapy has been considered a new way to deal with depression, anxiety, and childhood ailments such as Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Autism there has been criticism as to the effectiveness of the process. According to Lilienfeld and Arkowitz animal-assisted therapy is better considered a temporary fix. They point to the lack of longitudinal data or research to see if there is evidence for long term improvement in patients undergoing the therapy. They then suggest that this further supports the idea that AAT is more of an affective method of therapy rather than a behavioural treatment. They also state the dangers of these therapy programs in particular the Dolphin assisted therapy. Dolphin assisted therapy has not been shown to have significant results when dealing with a child's behaviour. Instead Lilienfeld suggest that again animal assisted therapy might be a short term reinforcer, not a long term one. They also suggest that studies dealing with children should look into more balanced measures, such as having one group of children in the Dolphin group and the other in a setting where they still receive positive reinforcement. It is also suggested that DAT is harmful to the dolphins themselves; by taking dolphins out of their natural environment and putting them in captivity for therapy can be hazardous to their well being. Heimlich discussed in her study of AAT's effect on severely disabled children that without evidence that this therapy works outside a laboratory setting, assumptions can not be made that it is an effective therapy.

Another limitation of pet therapy also centers on the application during scenarios that involve adults who have been sexually assaulted. While pets do tend to cause more comfort to victims, pet therapy may not be the catalyst that provides positive success in therapy sessions. As mentioned above, adults tend not to focus as much on having an animal companion, and therefore, pet therapy cannot be attributed as the reason for success in those types of therapy sessions. Pet therapy does not raise any ethical concerns as

far as advancing nonscientific agendas. On the other hand, there are some ethical concerns that arise when applying pet therapy to younger victims of sexual assault. For example, if a child is introduced to an animal that is not their pet, the application of pet therapy can cause some concerns. First of all, some children may not be comfortable with animals or may be frightened, so there would be ethical concerns with using pet therapy, which could be avoided by asking permission to use animals in therapy. Second, a special bond is created between animal and child during pet therapy. Therefore, if the animal in question does not belong to the child, there may be some negative side effects when the child discontinues therapy. The child will have become attached to the animal, which does raise some ethical issues as far as subjecting a child to the disappointment and possible relapse that can occur after therapy discontinues.

So, that's the world's way of fixing things. I prefer the way Our Lord Jesus Christ set it up; in families. John 19:26-27 - When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

If people would treat others as Christ did; there would be fewer problems.

1 Timothy 5:3-4 - Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

Those who do not have families to help them, natural or church; ask the Lord to provide one.

Psalms 68:6 - God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

And as people need more help, Our Lord Jesus Christ provides for us.

Mark 16:17-18 - And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Let's look at some of God's qualifications for His pastors to help His people.

1 Timothy 3: 1 & 2 - This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach....

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