Pastoral Care in English Schools: A Canadian Perspective

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Résumé

Dans cette article les auteurs examinent le soin pastoral, une dimension d'assistance sociale dans les écoles secondaires en Angleterre, de point de vue des pratiques d'orientation et de consultation dans les écoles d'Amerique du Nord. Quoiqu'il n'est pas précisément defini, le soin pastoral est en train de prospérer. En même temps counseling n'est pas largement accepté dans les écoles.

Le milieu social, historique et culturel est une des explanations de ce développement. L'accent sur la discipline et sur le contrôle dans le soin pastoral ne correspond pas aux pratiques d'orientation et de consultation d'Amerique du Nord. Cependant, on note quelques correspondences entre les elements de programme scolaire et de soin pastoral. A présent les soins pastorals sont administrés par des enseignants non-spécialisés, pendant que counseling en Amerique du Nord est mis en pratique par des conseillers professionels.

Abstract

In this paper, pastoral care, the welfare dimension of English secondary schools, is examined in light of North American school counselling and guidance practices. Although not precisely defined, pastoral care has prospered in recent years. At the same time, school counselling has not found wide acceptance. The specific social, historical, and cultural milieu is one source for understanding this development. The discipline/control emphasis of pastoral care does not correspond to North American practices in guidance and counselling. However, some commonalities in the academic/curricular and pastoral/welfare components are noted. At present, pastoral care programs are implemented through non-specialized teachers while North American practices depend on the specialized counsellor.

Two articles in Canadian journals (Perkins, 1971; Hughes, 1982) have addressed the state of school counselling in Britain. The earlier article presents an optimistic view of what was at the time a relatively new phenomenon in Britain. Hughes (1982), on the other hand, is much less sanguine about what has happened to school counselling in the intervening decade. Essentially, many aspects of the North American approach to school counselling have not been readily adapted to British schools for historical and cultural reasons. As a result, school counselling in Britain has atrophied, while counselling in other segments of society has experienced considerable growth.

In contrast to the lack of growth in school counselling, another movement, pastoral care, has gained momentum in British secondary schools. Milner (1983) indicates that pastoral care is difficult to define accurately, but generally the term encompasses the welfare dimension of

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secondary schooling. It includes such diverse aims as assisting individuals to enrich their personal lives and maintaining an orderly atmosphere in the school (Robinson, 1978). The formation of the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education in 1982 and the publication of a journal, *Pastoral Care in Education*, devoted to this topic are indicative of the rise of this approach.

An examination of pastoral care from a Canadian perspective is warranted for two reasons. First, a number of Canadian policy and program reports in recent years have redirected the counsellor's attention to the classroom and to the curriculum (Action Committee on Counselling Services, 1983; Canadian School Trustees Association, 1981; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1984; Task Force on School Counselling and Guidance in Alberta, 1981). School counselling programs need to address such issues as the role of counselling in the curriculum, the role of the teacher in the counselling program, and guidance objectives that involve all students. Pastoral care represents a British response to these types of issues. It has many parallels to the development of guidance and counselling in Canadian schools, and yet, when considered as an entity on its own provides a useful contrast with our own system. Critical information about pastoral care is also needed at this time because a number of Canadian school boards have consulted with British authorities on pastoral care (Wilson & Cowell, 1984).

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care is an integral part of British secondary school organization. It covers "all aspects of work with pupils other than pure teaching" (Marland, 1974). Although the name and the approach are particularly English, pastoral care is also found in all states in Australia and in New Zealand, and to some extent in Nigeria and Israel (Dynan, 1980; Lang & Ribbins, in press; Lovegrove, 1982).

Pastoral care can be identified in English secondary schools both in terms of a system and a set of ideas. However, the teachers' understanding of the term varies, as does its interpretation from one school to another. Much of what is now described as pastoral care, such as house organization and the assignment to teachers of a tutorial role, originated before the term itself.

In terms of a system, the organization of pastoral care tends to take one of two forms. The students are either organized into vertical groupings containing across age "houses" or into horizontal groups by age "years." Both types of groups tend to contain between 150-300 students. These groupings are subdivided into groups, each of which has a "tutor." The "house" or "year" is the administrative responsibility of a house or year head. The purpose of the house or year groups and the tutor groups is to try to insure that all students know and are well known

by at least one member of staff. As a means of organizing effective pastoral care, it is hoped that these groups provide help with problems, facilitate referral where necessary, and provide an ethos conducive to the development of good interpersonal relationships.

Although pastoral care is difficult to define precisely, direct questions to schools and an examination of the reports of the national inspectorate (Her Majesty's Inspectorate, 1979; Her Majesty's Inspectorate Welsh Office, 1982) give a fairly clear idea of schools' expectations of their pastoral care systems. These expectations include attempts to co-ordinate consideration of the students' personal, social, and academic development; to facilitate the development of good relations between teachers and students; to ensure that each student knows and is known by a particular adult; to make available relevant information through the development of effective communication and reward systems; to involve parents and outside agencies in the work of the school where appropriate; to enable someone to respond quickly and appropriately to students' problems or indeed to anticipate a problem which might arise; to provide educational and career guidance; and to ensure that teachers play a part as tutors in the personal and social development of students. These expectations are consistent with many of the expectations of North American school guidance and counselling programs.

Ribbins and Best (in press) identified the themes of pastoral care in the following description:

> Pastoral care is something which happens/should happen between *teachers and students* interacting in the context of an institution called a *"school"* or *"college"* which has *four interrelated dimensions* (disciplinary/order, welfare/pastoral, academic/curricular and administrative/organizational) and which is, itself, located in a wider *social, historical and cultural milieu.* (p. 8)

This description provides a framework for describing pastoral care and comparing it to Canadian school practices.

SOCIAL, HISTORICAL, AND CULTURAL MILIEU

Although the term pastoral care has only been in use since the late 1960's, aspects of both the ideas and system have an earlier origin—perhaps first with the great British public schools in the first half of the nineteenth century. Examples of these origins can be found in the evidence given by public school masters to the Clarendon Commission (1864), a government commission which reported on the public schools in 1864. Regarding the schools' tutorial [ystem, a master from Rugby said:

> The objects really attained by this mode of instruction are two; first, the establishment of a permanent relation between every boy in the school and some one of its masters from the beginning to the end of his career, during which his progress may be observed, the development of his character watched, and his general interests catered for. (p. 240)

Evidence from other schools underlined the fact that the major public schools by that time accepted the idea that there was more to the teacher's role than pure instruction, and that some form of system was needed to ensure that what the headmaster of Wincester described to the commission (Clarendon Commission, 1864) took place:

> I think that besides any amount of class instruction, he wants something else; something to tell upon his own personal needs, to make known to himself his personal deficiencies, and to suggest that means of filling them up; in short, to give that which class instruction generally must fail to give. (p. 143)

Thus, some of the ideas and elements of pastoral care are found in the nineteenth century public school. Traces of public school influence can in fact still be found in the operation of pastoral care today.

At the end of the Second World War, the Butler Education Act of 1944 set up a system of selective grammar schools for the top 10% to 20% of students as tested at age 11, and so-called secondary modern schools for all other students. However, a few local education authorities did not follow the Act's directions and instead started to set up comprehensive schools. These were large non-selective secondary schools taking pupils from the full ability range. During the following decades, particularly in the 1960's and 1970's, this trend continued until today when most education authorities in England and Wales provide mainly comprehensive education. Only a few authorities still maintain selective grammar schools. From the outset, there was considerable concern about the size of these schools which played some part in the later developments of pastoral care.

The shift to comprehensive schools was accompanied by the specific development of pastoral care both as a system and as a facet of the teacher's role. In fact, frequently pastoral care was the articulation of ideas about that part of the teacher's role concerned with the broader welfare and development of students. Marland (1974) expressed this need to describe the teacher's role:

> What you want to happen must be institutionalised. It is not enough to rely on good will, dedication, hardwork, personality and so on. (p. 11)

Thus by the end of the 1970's, all comprehensive schools had either vertical house systems or horizontal year systems. Each division was headed by a pastoral middle manager who was in charge of a group of tutors, each of whom had responsibility for a specific group of students. Often above the middle managers, there is a deputy headteacher with specific responsibility for pastoral care. From the 1970's, there was frequent reference to that aspect of every teacher's role that went beyond the purely instructional and was concerned with the general welfare of students and their development as persons.

Pastoral care was increasingly seen as having a major task in helping pupils cope with problems. During the late 1960's and early 1970's,

counselling approaches became particularly popular and influential in British education. This development played a central part in pastoral care's increasing concern with problems. It was also a period in which the ideology of cultural disadvantage was very influential, reflected in the Plowden Report of 1967 and at a policy level by the designation of some inner city areas as educational priority areas. This concern had a considerable spin-off effect on pastoral care, particularly in terms of directing its attention to problems caused by social background. Finally, it is clear that problems of discipline caused by the amalgamation of secondary modern and grammar schools into comprehensive schools contributed to the development of pastoral care.

During the late 1970's, there emerged a critique of the concepts that undergird pastoral care and its practice in schools (Best, Jarvis, & Ribbins, 1977; Lang, 1977). The major point of this critique was that though the "conventional wisdom" of pastoral care described it as warm, convivial, and caring, in actual practice, it was mainly concerned with discipline, containment, and control. It seems pastoral care has been created to meet the needs of teachers facing discipline problems as a result of the mergers mentioned earlier rather than having been created for the needs of students.

DIMENSIONS OF PASTORAL CARE

The four interrelated dimensions of pastoral care, disciplinary/order, welfare/pastoral, academic/curricular, and administrative/organizational are not equally found in the historical antecedents nor in current practice. While the disciplinary/order dimension may have predominated in past practice, the academic/curricular and the welfare/pastoral dimensions represent more current concerns and parallel interests in Canada. The welfare/pastoral dimension refers to what in North America is thought of as the remedial function of school counselling.

Disciplinary/Order Dimension

The disciplinary/order dimension of pastoral care has been a major influence in the development of pastoral care programs and is of current concern. Milner (1983) reports on several studies that indicate that pastoral care provides a vehicle for the disciplining of students and a mode of control, in effect functioning *in loco parentis* without permission. This dimension has no parallel in Canadian practice. The historical roots of school guidance and counselling have been with the provision of occupational information and vocational planning. The upsurge of interest in school counselling in the 1960's corresponded with the adoption of therapeutic rather than disciplinary models. Indeed, no critique of school counselling in Canada has suggested that it is excessively concerned with discipline, order, and containment. Shertzer and Stone (1981) recommend that the counsellor's role in discipline is as a

therapeutic adjunct rather than as a supervisor or enforcer of school discipline policies.

Academic/Curricular Dimension

Pastoral care has taken two forms in broadening the secondary school curriculum: tutorial groups and specific curricula. It is in the curriculum area that pastoral care overlaps to the greatest extent with Canadian practices. Clearly the school curriculum has become a focus of attention of guidance and counselling in North America (American School Counselors Association, 1981; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1984).

In the past, a major problem in pastoral care has been the tutorial period, that is, the time allocated to tutors to work with their groups. Tutors were often unprepared both in terms of skill and attitude to cope effectively. As a result, tutorial periods often became vacuums to be filled at all costs, with anything that kept the pupils occupied (Lang, 1982). Over the last five years, various schemes offering not only programs of activity but new concepts and teaching styles emerged as a response to this problem (Baldwin & Wells, 1979-1983; Button, 1981). These innovations, linked to a development group work approach, enable tutors to undertake far more purposeful and significant work with their groups. The work contributes particularly to the development of effective and rewarding interpersonal relations, group cohesion, and personal awareness, and also to the students' social competence. Essential to the effectiveness of this work is adequate training which at present is not always available.

Another closely connected development has been a great increase in interest in the personal and social education of students. David (1982) recently described personal and social education as "including the teaching and informal activities which are planned to enhance the development of knowledge, understanding, attitudes and behaviour, concerned with oneself and others; social institutions, structures and organization; and social and moral issues" (p. 18). Many schools now see personal and social education as a significant part of the curriculum. In some cases, this dimension of the curriculum takes place through tutorial work of the type outlined above, but in other schools special programs within the broader curriculum have been developed. Some specific subjects such as health education, career education, and moral education are distinct examples of personal and social education.

The relationship between pastoral care and personal and social education is imprecise and hazy. Pastoral care tends to be mainly curative—basically acting only after problems have arisen, often with the result that the problems have become so intractable or the resources available so inadequate that little can be done. There is a clear need for synthesis, structure, and more preventative action. A response to this has been Marland's (1974) suggestion of a pastoral curriculum. He argues

that part of the school's curriculum should be seen as specifically pastoral and should be concerned with ensuring that the school takes systematic measures to ensure that students are prepared in a way which means that the more common problems are less likely to arise. Individuals can be helped without giving individual help. Pastoral care represents the remedial dimension while the personal and social curricula represent the preventative and developmental dimensions.

The personal profiling movement is another academic/curricular dimension of pastoral care that has developed recently (Broadfoot, in press; Department of Education and Science and Welsh Office, 1984; Her Majesty's Inspectorate, 1983). Rather than simply being assessed on the basis of a set of examination results, students are also judged in terms of a personal profile, which range from those where a large part of the content is predetermined and appropriate ticks are placed by the teacher on grids reflecting an agreed set of criteria, to profiles consisting entirely of open-ended statements, which represent the end product of negotiation between teacher and student.

The crucial agrument for profiles is that they include much which could be seen as achievement on the part of the student but not reflected in examinations and usually left out of the more traditional school reports. It is claimed such profiles greatly increase student motivation. They are compiled on a negotiated basis—the student exercises complete or partial control over what is or is not included. This process of negotiation is often seen as one of the pastoral responsibilities of teachers particularly in their role as tutors.

BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENT

The interaction between teacher and student is central to pastoral care. The emphasis of pastoral care is on teachers who in non-specialist roles provide educational, vocational, and personal services to students. Although teachers in Canadian schools may provide similar services, a system, such as pastoral care, has not been clearly articulated. The emphasis in Canada has been on the development and articulation of the guidance and counselling program and the role of the school counsellor.

The differences between the specialist and non-specialist roles in the English system are illustrated in Table 1. Pastoral care encompasses both specialist and non-specialist services, but at the present the emphasis is clearly on the non-specialist services. In contrast, the Canadian approach emphasizes the specialist's role, but makes much less differentiation among the various roles of the specialist. In Canada, the school counsellor is expected to provide educational, vocational, and personal services to students. In addition, school counsellors may be directly involved in teaching about careers.

Special training is provided for teachers with specific responsibilities for pastoral care, for example, heads of year, heads of house, and form tutors. This training ranges from full time courses at the Masters and Diploma level to short, evening courses run by the local education authorities. These courses vary both in scope and in approach. Some cover a wide range of topics related to pastoral care, others are very specific, for example focusing on the skills of effective group work. Some courses are fairly academic in nature while others are workshops and experienced-based. Many school counsellors in Canada are trained at the master's degree level, but teachers who are not specialists would normally have received little or no training in guidance and counselling.

Table 1
Typology of Pastoral Care

	Status of provider	
Type of Service rendered	*Specialist (Guidance, counselling)*	*Non-specialist (Teacher-care)*
Educational	Academic counsellor	Class teacher
	Director of studies	Head of year
		Head of subject
Vocational	Careers advisor	Careers teacher
	Youth employment officer	
Personal	School counsellor	Form tutor
	Educational psychologist	Class teacher
		Head of house

Note. This table is adapted from Best, et al., 1977, p. 127, and from Lang and Ribbins (in press).

DISCUSSION

Hughes (1982) points out that pastoral care has outstripped the establishment of professional counselling in British schools. The longer tradition that dimensions of pastoral care has had in English schools compared to guidance and counselling may be one reason for its comparative success. Moreover, counselling is not indigenous to Britain.

Pastoral care is practised in a variety of forms in English secondary schools. Systematic thought about, and the organized practice of, pastoral care is at a rudimentary stage of development. It faces some of the same tensions that face guidance and counselling in Canada: the attitude of other teachers, the relation to the curriculum, and the extent to which personal development is an educational goal to which public funds and students' time can be committed.

Pastoral care remains problematic on several fronts. The lack of clarity of what it is and its purpose in schools is apt to result in a number of competing, even conflicting, purposes in this domain. Evidence of its use to socialize (pastoralize) difficult students to the school (Williamson, 1980) and of its emphasis on the discipline and control dimensions has been identified earlier in this paper.

Clearly, English secondary schools face many problems similar to Canadian ones. In response to some of them, they have chosen to emphasize the role of the non-specialist over that of the specialist. These non-specialist teachers, however, seek more and more training (specialization) to cope with the enormity and seriousness of the problems that schools and students face and to work more effectively in the area of pastoral and social education. It seems that a specialized staff is required to offer the kind of programs envisaged by pastoral care. The success of pastoral care programs may depend on the skills of specialist personnel such as school counsellors.

Pastoral care developed in response to unique cultural, social, and educational conditions and, as such, is not directly transferable to the Canadian context. However, pastoral care can profitably be addressed by Canadian educators. Most importantly, in as much as it focuses on the curriculum and involves all teachers and students (the community), it is a basis for a "systems" approach to the practice of guidance and counselling in schools. Pastoral care broadens the base of practice and provides the means and substance for the interaction of parents, students, teachers, and counsellors. These aspects of pastoral care are particularly amenable to implementation in Canada because they can be developed in concert with the already well-articulated school counselling programs and by many well-trained counsellors.

SUMMARY

In this paper, we have attempted to examine pastoral care in English secondary schools from a Canadian perspective. Pastoral care is more readily compared with guidance and counselling in Canadian schools than with other educational practices and programs. However, the two are not parallel developments. Indeed, professional counselling in British schools has not prospered. The historical, social, and cultural milieu in which pastoral care has developed, the emphasis on discipline and control, and the delivery of services by non-specialist rather than specialist personnel are three factors that contribute to the differences.

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