

What is Human Care?

Definitions

NB the term 'Pastoral Care' is often used interchangeably for 'human care', you might want to consider the difference between the terms.

Pattison (in 'A Critique of Pastoral Care') gives a variety of definitions including:

1. Pastoral care and counselling are forms of religious ministry which integrate the findings of behavioural sciences and theology in the effort to prepare the way for human and divine encounter in the midst of human crises' (Martin Thornton)
2. 'The divine/ human encounter (is) the communication of grace or the forgiveness of sins. To prepare the way for such an encounter is quite a different thing' (Thornton)
3. Care is.... 'A pastoral conversation' (Thurneyson). In true conversation, a pastor risks real engagement. He risks real change in himself as a result of the conversation. He is emotionally prepared to meet God in his conversation partner. (Michael Jacob, talking about Thurneyson, whom he says does not do these things!)
4. 'Caring is the necessary attribute which makes possible the survival of the infant, the forming of groups and the life of societies and nations'(Erikson)
5. The carers know themselves to be engaged in the responsiveness of God
6. '.....care is the practical out working of and involvement with and in the God who blesses'
7. All pastoral care is the out working of God's love amongst and between members of the body of Christ alongside their outreach, witness, mission and ministry to others
8. Pastoral care is a fabric of interwoven activities and responses directed towards individuals, relationships, groups and communities undertaken from within the overall context of a faith community.....it is about recognizing. Welcoming, affirming, encouraging and rejoicing with others and receiving this recognition, welcome, affirmation and encouragement from them. (Michael Jacobs at Vaughan College)

9. Human care....consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed towards the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns (Clebsch & Jaekle)
10. '... care is that activity undertaken especially by representative Christian persons, directed towards the elimination and relief of sin and sorrow, and the presentation of all people perfect in Christ to God' (Stephen Pattison)
11. 'Pastoral care has one fundamental aim; to help people know love both as something to be received and as something to give'. (Alastair V.Campbell)
12. 'Pastoral care is any form of personal ministry to individuals and to family and community relationships by representative religious persons (ordained or lay) and by their communities of faith, who understand and guide their caring efforts out if a theological perspective rooted in the tradition of faith. ' (Rodney J Hunter in Pattison p195)
13. 'Michael Taylor distinguishes between pastoral carewhich consists of any helping act by any person and Christian pastoral acts which consist of any helping acts done by Christians'
14. 'Pastoral care is none other than the caring activity of recognized pastors of churches'
15. 'a specific communication to the individual of the message proclaimed in general (i.e. to all) in the sermon to the congregation' (Eduard Thurneyson)
16. Note the corporate and social aspects of Pastoral care (as well as the individual aspect) as seen in 'The Diocesan 'Pastoral committee' (= the deployment of the clerical work force), a 'Pastoral letter' from the Pope to church leaders or political action (eg Tutu or Romero) who deny they are behaving politically, 'simply exercising appropriate pastoral care of their flock)
17. To think about pastoral theology from the feminine perspective... requires a fundamental reorientation of the core functions of pastoral care. In place of or in addition to the conventional modes with which pastoral care has been routinely equated- healing ,sustaining, guiding and reconciling – four other pastoral practices acquire particular importance, resisting, empowering, nurturing and liberating (Bonnie Miller McLemore)

and finally, remember

'Clericalism- the domination of ordained people over lay people in the church-

should be deplored and resisted- we need to work together.