

Preamble

Historic Roots: Living Documents

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) began on the east coast of the USA in the 1920s as a direct result of the experiences of Anton Boisen. He, a minister of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, suffered a mental illness during which he established the belief that such an experience had profound spiritual dimensions. Additionally he discovered that his ministerial colleagues appeared to be those least helpful to him at his point of need.

Together with others, Boisen determined to establish a method of theological education that took into account his discoveries and from this beginning was born what we now know as CPE.

In the 21st century our understandings of wholistic health cause us to be more fully aware of the inter-connectedness of all aspects of human being-ness; but it was Boisen and his friends who recognized that the "living human document" of a person reveals God's work in their lives.

The training of those who wish to follow in the paths of Boisen and his friends has been the brief of Clinical Pastoral Educators since the 1920s. Institutes and Associations of CPE were set up in the USA, and subsequently in other parts of the world, including New Zealand. CPE Supervisors were trained in the process of education-by-reflection on actual pastoral experiences. As such Institutes and Associations were set up, the need for training and assessment structures for Supervisors became evident. NZACPE is one such Association and this handbook is offered as a guide to training and assessment of those who wish to become CPE Supervisors.

For Boisen and his friends, CPE was a process of theological education which offered space and time for people to grow and change in their understandings of the nature of being human, to develop themselves as people who are also pastoral ministers. Such growth, they believed, occurs within a community formed by a group of students who interact and then reflect on who they are and what they have experienced. Together and individually they make theological and personal meaning of their experience, plus consolidate and integrate their learning. CPE educators believe that this is a process which cannot be structured, and which must be minimally prescriptive. CPE's ultimate value is to witness and reflect the unique stamp of creation that is each individual.

Descriptors and Guidelines

Because of these understandings and values, those who have sought to continue the explorations of Boisen have been cautious about structures and words that may 'fix' or 'conform' people, thus denying the dynamic "living human document" at her/his roots.

The *Australia and New Zealand Association of Clinical Pastoral Education* (ANZACPE) does however describe CPE and its supervisory processes in this way:

CPE is (professional) education for pastoral ministry, involving personal and pastoral identity development. CPE takes place in a setting where a student exercises a pastoral ministry which becomes the focus for learning. Under the supervision of an accredited supervisor the student contracts to enter a self-directed learning process, involving an action-reflection model.

Supervision in the context of CPE is one expression of the Gospel's call to set people free and takes place both individually and in small groups. Supervision:

- ***includes the development of the use of self and the acquisition of professional skills and the integration of both in the art of pastoral care***
- ***emphasises the creative use of interpersonal relationships by attending to all dimensions of learning and growth: spiritual, cultural, psychological***

So despite the reticence about fixing structures in concrete, the process of learning pastoral care and the progress to becoming a CPE supervisor does require some naming, some signposts and guidelines. There are materials to be written, in which we give account of our actions; there will be Committees who will read and assess these materials to determine suitability and readiness to become first a Supervisor-in-Training (SIT), then a Provisionally Accredited Supervisor (PAS) and then an Accredited Supervisor.

**These pages then are offered as a guide for your reference.
You and your CPE colleagues will ensure that it is periodically revised. Dated: June 2009.**