

Where the Life is

Ian Bayliss (2006)

A great deal of my involvement in CPE has more to tell about the personality of God and the way in which I've been led in ministry, than anything else.

I did my first CPE in the summer of 1972 at Porirua Hospital supervised by Diana Goss. I wasn't really burning to do the course; I just had three months of down-time before doing further study in pastoral care in the UK; we were located in Wellington and it seemed to be the sensible thing to do!

On returning to Aotearoa two years later, Liz (my wife) and I began parish ministry in Turangi. It was a tough call as the parish carried old wounds and I was too proud to seek appropriate help, so when I was invited to consider being the Methodist-Presbyterian chaplain at Porirua Hospital after three years at Turangi, the invitation seemed very attractive. It was more so when I discovered that they would wait a year for us to come, to allow our newly formed Turangi Co-operating Parish to settle in. No doubt the people who called me looked through the lists of past CPE students to see who had shown an interest in the Porirua job!

I saw the first period of my time at Porirua Hospital as a gift from God, a moratorium, a safe place where I could heal and find some new insights about my preferred style of ministry. Something from that first CPE was calling out to me.

Diana Goss told me that the biggest insight into my inner revolution was seen in the way I led worship at the Porirua Hospital Chapel. I moved from formal to freer form, from dictate to dialogue. And along with a succession of really creative colleagues, we had some golden years of ministry!

Like I had discovered earlier, it has always repaid me to take opportunities to learn as they presented themselves. So I did some more CPE. I did a unit with Derm Buchanan and then another one with Nora Calvert. Then, as Diana Goss talked more about retiring, I gained Supervisor-in-Training status with NZACPE in 1985 and began co-supervising courses with her and Derm Buchanan. This time wasn't easy as I spanned a transition phase within CPE in the move from a confrontational style of supervision to the more facilitative models of today. I didn't get a lot of encouragement to proceed from that lot; they felt I was too gentle!

The big movement in my CPE development was doing a unit in Melbourne with John Bell at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1989. Partly as result of the gift my family gave me in enabling me to step out of home life for three months, I broke open a lot of new ground in my sense of personal identity and in the 'theory of learning', on the back of which I gained Provisional Accreditation as a CPE Supervisor on my return home.

On my journey to Full Accreditation as CPE supervisor, which I gained in 1996, I undertook quite a stint of personal psychotherapy. A lot of it was dream-work with the late Peter Reid who was a Jungian analyst. This naturally wetted my appetite for this dimension of healing, and in 2002 I began training with the Australasian Association of Self Psychology, Sydney, graduating in 2004. I have found many of Self Psychology's concepts very compatible with CPE, particularly in the area of transferences and metaphors.

Working with and being part of the training of Kath Maclean as a CPE Supervisor has further enriched these last few years.

Looking back at all the students who have passed through our CPE centre over the years, I get a great deal of satisfaction in contemplating the eventual focus of my ministry and how God placed a long string of learning opportunities in my path, just knowing that I would find them irresistible!

Again and again, like Moses and the burning bush, I have been attracted to something interesting but mysterious and on walking towards it, have heard God's voice speaking a new truth to me.

As of March 2006 I have begun working half-time here at Porirua Hospital so that I can leave behind me those aspects of Hospital Chaplaincy, that after 28 years I am weary of, and focus on what I am now finding more passion for, namely pastoral psychotherapy and CPE. Once I have moved through the inevitable adjustments that such a change demands, I hope to have more energy to push further into both disciplines, and especially the creative dialogue that is possible between them.