

## **ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISED PASTORAL EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA Inc MEMORIAL MINUTE FOR JOHN ERNEST PAVER**

John Paver graduated as a Diplomate from his initial theological education at the College of the Bible, Glen Iris, the theological college of the Churches of Christ. From 1964 he was the minister at the Ararat Church of Christ during which time he first became involved in the pastoral care of persons with disability as chaplain to the J Ward for the Criminally Insane at Ararat Hospital. In the autumn of 1972 while minister at the Hampton Church of Christ John undertook his first basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education conducted at Austin Hospital by Roy Bradley. He returned to the Austin in the winter of 1973 where he completed his Advanced CPE and gained acceptance into Supervisory CPE in 1974. In addition to Bradley, John was supervised by Jack Rodgers and Brian James. In 1975, following his appointment as the first employed chaplain at Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute and his accreditation as a Pastoral Supervisor John pioneered a CPE programme to successfully test the viability of ongoing CPE at the Cancer Institute.

Clinical Pastoral Education played a major part in John's personal, pastoral and professional development as in these years he gained accreditation as a Training Supervisor (Clinical Supervisor) and Clinical Pastoral Educator (1981). During his ministry at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute from 1975 to 1986 his chaplaincy role developed into the larger role of founding Head of the Pastoral Care Unit and Director of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute's Clinical Pastoral Education Centre. It was during this period that John also served VASPE as Chair of the Registration and Certification Committee.

In 1982 John took leave of absence from the Institute and went to the USA where he undertook a Doctor of Ministry program with the Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky. When he returned from the USA John was elected by ASPEA as President for 1984 and 1985 and was nominated as an honorary fellow in 1986. In the same year John resigned from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute when he was appointed by the Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky as its Professor of Ministry and Director of Field Education where he served the wider church for the following three years. During this time in the USA John presented to an ACPE Committee and was the first ASPEA Accredited Supervisor to gain recognition of his ASPEA accreditation as Certified Supervisor with the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education, USA on the basis of his ASPEA accreditation as a Clinical Pastoral Educator. Returning to Australia in 1990, he was appointed Director of Pastoral Care and Clinical Pastoral Education at the Repatriation General Hospital in Heidelberg, Melbourne. This appointment marked the beginning of what many believe to be the period of John's greatest contribution to Pastoral Ministry and Theological Education in the Australian Church and Community.

In 1991 John Paver was appointed Director of Ministry Studies for the Melbourne College of Divinity. This was a part-time appointment, undertaken in addition to his responsibilities at the Repatriation Hospital. There were approximately twelve students in the College's fledging Advanced Ministry Studies Program at the time. When John left three years later there were over one hundred and fifty. When John took up the Directorship, the program was new, pioneering in Australia and not totally accepted by all. When he left the Master of Ministry degree program was being copied by other institutions, at least eight by our count in Australia, the UK and Europe. His dedication, creativity, insistence on standards, and good and transparent processes, made the College's Advanced Ministry Studies program a model for many.

John Paver developed the Graduate Diploma in Ministry and the Doctor of Ministry Studies degree. In this he worked assiduously with the churches in Victoria in a consultative process and ensured that this Doctoral degree had ecumenical roots from its inception. This degree is recognised as the premier degree in its category, the standard against which other awards of a similar nature are judged.

In 1993 John resigned from his position at the College and became Director of Field Education at the Uniting Church Theological Hall, Melbourne. In the same year he transferred his church affiliation to the Uniting Church in Australia. Appointed Professor of Ministry with responsibility for Pastoral Theology and Theological Field Education at the Uniting Church Theological Hall, John Paver continued his pioneering role and developed the Supervised Urban Ministry Program and founded the Victorian Association for

Theological Field Education; a co-operative venture with wide participation from all sectors of the Church. During this time he completed a further thesis entitled *The Contribution of Pastoral Supervision and Theological Reflection to Theological Education* for which he received the degree of Master of Theology. In the year 2000 he was made a fellow of the Melbourne College of Divinity. Facing the diagnosis of a possible terminal illness John retired from his ministry appointment in 2002 however he remained active as a consultant to students and colleagues and grew in his authority as a writer which culminated in the publication of his book *Theological Reflection and Education for Ministry* in November 2006.

John's book expresses his life. It is a parting gift made all the more poignant because it is forged in suffering. Much of the power of the book is the vulnerability out of which it speaks. Typically, John didn't opt for magisterial pronouncements. He chose instead the way of enquiry, the way of a pilgrim. The book bears witness to what he knew from a lifetime of ministry and personal experience.

In his last weeks John was confined to his home at Sorrento where he died peacefully on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2007 supported, validated, enriched and strengthened by the intimate care of his loving wife Marlene and visited regularly by his son Adam and daughter Virginia, his grandchildren, family, friends and colleagues.

We give thanks to God for John Paver who was passionate about experiential education for ministry and theological reflection, a red-haired, red-bearded, warm, huggable, creative guy with an innate capacity to be with people and speak heart to the heart.

