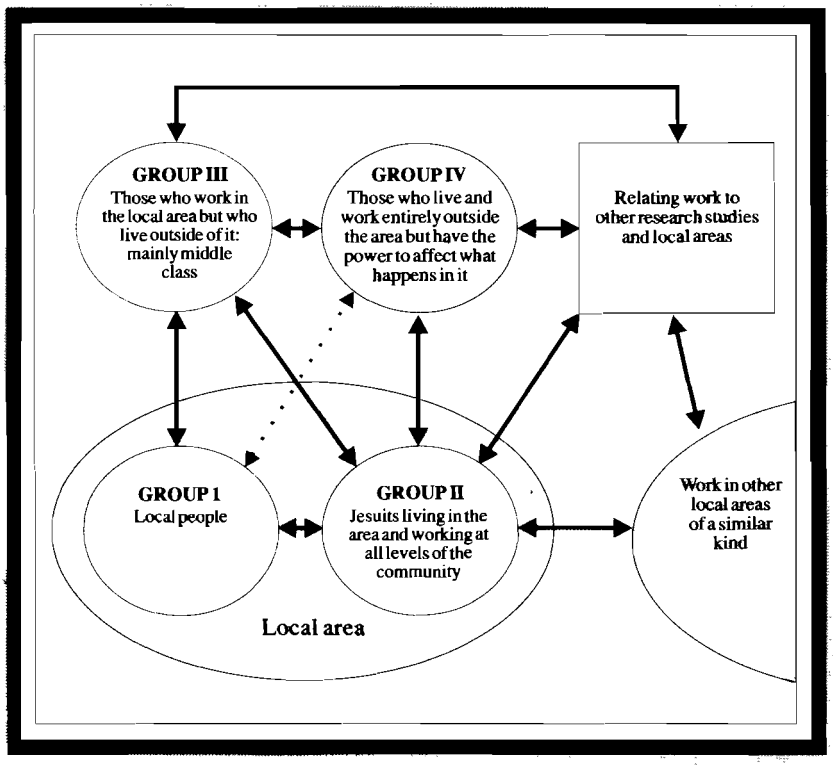
ANALYSIS AND DESIGN

GEORGE LOVELL



A Handbook for Practitioners and Consultants in Church and Community Work

Analysis and Design

A Handbook for Practitioners and Consultants in Church and Community Work

GEORGE LOVELL

With a Foreword by
LESLIE J. GRIFFITHS

BURNS & OATES

First published 1994
BURNS & OATES
Wellwood, North Farm Road,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3DR

Copyright © 1994 by George Lovell

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means whether electronic, mechanical, chemical, photocopying, recording or otherwise known or as yet unkown for any purpose whatsoever without the previous written permission of Burns & Oates/Search Press Limited.

ISBN 0 86012 234 4

Typeset by Search Press Limited
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Biddles Limited, Guildford and King's Lynn

To Reg and Madge Batten
My beloved mentors
Throughout three decades of my ministry

Contents

Foreword page 13

Preface: The Purpose and Structure of this Book 15

List of Displays 21

List of Figures 23

Acknowledgements 25

PART ONE:
EXAMPLES OF WORK ANALYSIS AND DESIGN

Orientation 29

1. Working on Cases 31

I **A case study** 31
Family communion · The diagnosis · Towards redeeming the situation · Action suggestions

II **What are we learning from this case study?** 42

III **Essentials in working on cases** 43

IV **Uses of the method** 46

V **Reflections on the method** 47

2. Working on Problems 51

I **A problem: Coping with a persistent sense of failure** 51

II **Facilitating problem analysis** 58
Cycles in the life of a problem · Six basic questions

III **Problem-conscious not "problem-centred"** 67

3. Working on Situations 71

I **Working with a bishop on his situation** 71
The bishop's work paper · Studying the situation over the period of the consultation

II **Notes on the substance of the work study** 88

III Notes on the work-study process 90
IV Subsequent developments 91

4. Designing a Project 93

I Design information 93
Father Doyle and the project · The team's ideas for the project · Difficulties foreseen · Action already taken
II Designing-Acting-Designing 96
Entering the diocese · The overall pattern of working relationships · Entering Portadown · The essential design · Project objectives redefined
III Observations on the process 103
Purpose and objectives · Developing a systemic approach · Diagrams and models
IV Assessment by the team 105

PART TWO: APPROACH AND METHOD

5. Process, Context and the Human Factor 113

I The core process: from experience through critical and imaginative thought to creative action 113
Stages in critical and imaginative thought · Workers' reference points · Purposes and avoidances (noxiants) · Beliefs · Resources · Needs · Independent reference points · Articulating learning · Meditation, reflection and prayer · Evaluation
II Using the Schema 132
An art and a craft · Working to the whole and the parts · The dynamic · Using it with other people · The human factor · Workers as their own analytical instruments · Feelings and emotions · Handling feedback · Using appropriate mode · Subject-matter · But there is limited thinking time!
III Coping with contextual intimidation 149
Contextualizing our approach · Understanding the dynamic · Relating to the wider context · Determining the implications of the context for my work

6. Designing

I Designs 160
II Designs as action systems 162
III Aspects of designing 163
IV Aids 164
Forming patterns · Visual aids · Separate designing from planning and programming
V Comparing theory with practice 169
VI Creative nature of designing 172

7. Basic Equipment 175

I Words: spoken and written 176
II Diagrams 179
III Questions 184
Different kinds of questions · Sequences of questions
IV Hypotheses 188

8. Using the Process 193

I Working privately and publicly 193
II Generating communities of reflective practitioners 196
Taking each person's contribution seriously · Workers intervening, engaging, withdrawing, waiting and returning · Commitment of workers to private work · Commitment to thinking things through time and again with different groups · Acquiring the ability to work in private as well as in public · Managing the transition from the personal and private to the public · Using the process in all settings and relationships
III Towards acquiring the ability to use the process in community 204

PART THREE: A COMMENTARY ON THE APPROACH

9. The Nature of the Activity 213

I Multi-faceted 213
II Oriented to workers and their work 215
III Rooted locally, oriented outwards 218
IV Reflection-in-action 219

V Developmental, concentrating on change from within 219
VI Educational 221
VII Non-directive 222
VIII But what of dependency? 223
IX *In vivo* 224

10. Theology in the Approach 229
I Theological objectives 229
II Commitments 231
III Theological content 233
Subject-matter · Human and divine relationships · Interaction between belief–action systems
IV Theological activities 239
Articulating beliefs · Application and feedback · Reflection and analysis
V Theological competencies engendered 242

PART FOUR: APPLICATION

11. Persuaded but daunted? 247
I Negative feelings about past practices 247
II Feeling inadequate to the intellectual challenges 248
III Difficulties of finding time and energy 252
IV Fear of losing control 253
Facing the fears · Recalling the sheer necessity of everybody being in control · Giving up control does not necessarily mean losing it · Genuine sharing of control and power · Promoting creative forms of participation and sharing · Sharing the need to share · Prior agreements about how to handle problems · Accepting that complete control is neither possible nor desirable

12. Contemporary Relevance 261
I A more highly skilled and job-satisfied workforce 262
II A subjective purchase on work and life through using our intuitive sensitivity 263
III Contributions to de-privatization 265

IV Engendering egalitarian working relationships 267
Stance and strategy · Leadership labels · Leadership through self-differentiation · Participation
V Co-operation and dialogue in a competitive and pluralistic society 271
VI The development of a work consultancy infrastructure that services and supports workers 272
VII The provision of invaluable data about church and community development 277
VIII The promotion of a spirituality of church and community development 278

Bibliography 285
Index of Subjects 293
Index of Names 299
Appendix: Notes on Work Papers: A Proposed Outline 301

Foreword

I've known George Lovell for most of my life. It was he who brought me into membership of the church when I was a teenager and it's to him that I've turned at most of the key moments of my life for help with my work. I've had the thrill too of working with him a number of times, mainly in various countries of Africa. I think I've read everything he's written over the years. So, I reckon I've seen George Lovell's work from many different angles of view. It's a privilege to be asked to write this Foreword for this latest book.

I know a man who repairs cars. He can take an engine to pieces, right down to the last nut and bolt. Then, when he's done his repair, he can put the pieces back together again. And the miracle (for my untechnical brain it's no exaggeration to call it that) is that, when the key's turned in the ignition, the engine seems always to start at once.

I drive a car most days of my life. If anything goes wrong or needs checking, I have to resort to the car's handbook just to open the bonnet. And what I see inside the bonnet is simply one of life's mysteries as far as I'm concerned. Wires and plugs; metal and plastic; dipsticks, camshafts and radiators—to think that my everyday work depends upon such things as these!

My everyday work depends upon much more than a car, of course. It depends upon the people I work with, my own aptitudes, the various focal points of action and reaction, the structures within which my work is done, available resources, and people's expectations of me. My work is coloured and shaped by the values I consider important, the degree of fulfilment I find in what I do, and the frustrations that come from being prevented from achieving what I set out to do.

My mechanical friend knows how to take a car engine to pieces, do his repair, and then reassemble the motor. George Lovell knows how to take a piece of work apart, identify and address the elements that aren't functioning very well, and then put the whole thing back together again. But that's only the beginning. What George goes on to do (or, to be more exact, what he does whilst analysing a piece of work) is to enable the person whose work he's looking at to recognize and identify its constituent parts, examine the way those parts inter-relate, strip the whole thing down if necessary, and then put it all back together again. Here he scores heavily over any mechanic I've ever known. For no mechanic has ever persuaded me that I could cope with the intricacies of a motor engine. Yet George Lovell has more than once helped me to look at my work, to analyse its inner dynamic, and to identify the critical path which would help me achieve

the objective of a more effective output. Again and again, in more than a quarter of century of patient (yet innovative) work with people as varied as you can imagine—from Methodists on council housing estates to nuns in religious community, amongst those living in communities divided by boundaries as harsh as those in Ulster or as subtle as those in suburbia—George Lovell has helped church workers look critically at what they're doing and find ways of handling what they see. His has been a charismatic ministry and the whole church is deeply in his debt.

With this book, a further important step has been taken. We know that our author can analyse and reflect upon a piece of work, and that he can design and sculpt models for doing it better. Many people have seen him do it. But George Lovell is no Paul Daniels, a magician who reduces his audience to speechless wonder before the mystery of it all. He has shown so many of us how well he works with people, helping them to acquire some of his own analytical and synthesizing skills. The large majority of those who've attended Avec courses can testify to this. But now a third dimension opens up. Here, in this book, George Lovell is offering a service to people who want to help others with their work, people who want to work as he works. This is a book for consultants as well as practitioners. In its pages, the author shares the treasures of his life's work, the fruits of his labours, the depths of his wisdom and long experience. It is a generous offering from a big-hearted man.

I welcome this book because it fills a gap that needed filling for a long time. I'm convinced it will enable us understand George Lovell a little better; it will help all of us who want to know how to look critically at the work we do; and it will help any who want to help others analyse and reflect on their work.

June 1994
Leslie J. Griffiths
President of the Methodist Conference 1994–95

Preface: The Purpose and Structure of this Book

Thinking to good effect about work aimed at promoting the human and spiritual development of people in church and society is one of the most absorbing, worthwhile and rewarding activities. It is absorbing because it is about temporal and ultimate matters of human life and destiny. It is worthwhile and rewarding because the quality of any work we do with people is directly related to the quality of the thinking that we ourselves put into it. Sometimes thinking things through can be straightforward. But, for many reasons, it can be extremely difficult. Our knowledge and understanding of human affairs is always partial no matter how much experience and knowledge we have and how sharp our analytical faculties are. Psychological, sociological and theological explanations of any and every human phenomenon abound and many of them are mutually contradictory. Which should we use? To complicate things further we have to think as clearly as we can about the feelings we bring with us to the task and those generated by our emotional involvement and investment in the work—feelings which suffuse our thinking and play all kinds of tricks upon us and our thoughts. We encounter difficulties in thinking practically, theoretically and theologically about complex human situations and making decisions which have profound consequences for us. Whatever the circumstances, thinking about work with people about whom we deeply care activates many levels of belief and touches the raw nerves of our unfulfilled vocational aspirations.

All this makes it difficult to think at all, and even more difficult to "think straight". Consequently it makes heavy intellectual, spiritual and emotional demands upon us. Quite often people with considerable academic experience and competence say to me that they are surprised to find themselves deeply satisfied but quite tired after thinking about human situations for a couple of hours. They are surprised because they had not found other studies anywhere near as tiring. They were also surprised to realize that they had not previously given themselves to this combination of thinking and feeling. Thinking feelingly but constructively is an expensive but creative activity. And, this thinking has to take place in situations that are alive and very demanding. One of three things can happen: thinking time is squeezed out and people give up trying to think things through and become hyperactive; or they think more and more deeply without following it through with action; or they look for ways of thinking and acting which are more effective and satisfying.

An increasing number of people who are searching for more effective and

satisfying ways of thinking about their work are looking for help to the behavioural sciences and adult education. I know this from my own experience. Over the past twenty years I have been privileged to work with thousands of people—men and women, ordained, religious and lay—of eight denominations engaged in a very wide spectrum of church and community work at all levels in Great Britain and in some twenty other countries. I have spent equal amounts of time working in the Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches. I never cease to be amazed and excited by the far-reaching effects of helping people to think for themselves more systematically, thoroughly and deeply about their work and their part in it through using the approaches and methods described in this book. What happens is that they see possibilities and potential they had not seen before; they are animated; they are able to do things they did not previously think they could do; they experience greater job satisfaction; developments occur in people and their environment; workers and people gain a greater control over their lives and circumstances; they discover more effective and satisfying ways of thinking about their work with people. *My experience convinces me that a most important need in church and community work today is to get people, separately and together, at all levels in the church and in the community, to think for themselves more creatively and consistently about their work and what they do, or must do, for the common good, for human and spiritual well-being and the development of people and their environment in the light of the insights from the social and behavioural sciences and pastoral theology.*

But the time and energy to think is strictly limited! It simply is not possible to think in a thorough-going way about everything all the time. Doing so would paralyse us. This does not mean, as some infer, that there is little point in trying to think about anything in depth. On the contrary, it points us to the vital importance of selecting carefully just what we should be thinking about at any particular time. Of itself that requires thought. Life is, in fact, sustained by an ever changing pattern of doing things without thinking, doing and thinking at the same time, and thinking before doing. Human and spiritual development occurs when the combination of thought and action is creatively integrated.

Several things help us to do this kind of thinking. First, we need to be convinced that it is of vital importance that we do think for ourselves. This is necessary for our own growth and development as well as for the good of the work and it is part of our response to Jesus' command that we love God with our minds as well as our hearts. While the thinking of others informs our own thinking, it is no substitute for our own thought. Second, we need to believe that we can think for ourselves. Many of us come to this belief only when others believe that we can think for ourselves and help us to do so. Third, we all need, from time to time, people who will help us to think for ourselves. I refer to such people as non-directive workers and consultants. The response to such help is almost always positive. Tools are the fourth thing we need: tools which we ourselves can use to help us to think things through and tools which enable us

to help other people to think through things. Fifth, we need to know about ways of working with people in groups, churches, communities and organizations which enable them to think and act for the common good. (Most of the help I have received of this kind comes variously from community development, behavioural sciences, adult education, theology and particularly pastoral theology.) Sixth, we need an atmosphere of thought which reinforces all this and which leads people to make the arrangements to facilitate it.

The purpose of this book is to provide conceptual tools which enable individuals and groups to think more creatively about work for development in churches, communities and organizations.

A core process comprising a series of stages of thinking is at the heart of the various things which over the past thirty years have equipped and helped me to think about my work, have helped me to help others to think about their work and have helped them to do the same. Essentially this process, thoroughly tested and researched, comprises a series of stages of thinking which helps people to move from experience through critical and imaginative thought to creative action. The stages involve studying things as they are, defining what needs to be done and working out how to do things in relation to reference points (purpose, things to avoid, beliefs, resources and needs) and in a context of meditation, reflection and prayer. Reference points are important because the ability to think can be used for good or evil. Consequently, checking out our motivation and purposes is an important part of the processes and procedures described in this book. The process has a strong thrust towards thoughtful action: it directs and eases people towards that even when it is holding them back from precipitate action to get them to think things through. This process is at the heart of that tradition of church and community development work which has its roots in adult education rather than social work. It integrates into the methodology of ministry and mission relevant aspects of the behavioural sciences. Basically, therefore, this book is a contribution to the *means* of doing the work of the kingdom. This is an important correction to the propensity in the Church to talk about visions and ideals and to neglect the means of achieving them in specific social contexts. Visions are important; without them we perish. Visions of what things ought to be like help us to know whether we have arrived, or not, just as photographs of places do. But they do not help us to find our way through the labyrinthine pathways of thought, decision-making and action involved in moving from where we are to where we want to be; directions and the means of travelling are needed to do that.

Thus this book is about the shaping and sculpting of work with people so that every aspect of it, from considering the initial ideas to the evaluation of any action taken, makes its best contribution to human and spiritual development. I use the word sculpting to indicate that it is a practical craft using technical and theological knowledge about ways and means of working with people for development and an art form using intuitive skills and creative imagination. I

describe sequences by which clergy, religious and laity can sculpt the work they do with people by thinking through it more systematically and systemically. These sequences help people to articulate, conceptualize, analyse, and evaluate their work experiences and ideas and to design, plan and carry out programmes most likely to achieve their purposes. Once these sequences have become embedded into the habitual working practices of clergy, laity and organizations they will form an infrastructure which gives depth to the work and enhances its quality and value. In turn this makes for better workers and more proficient working organizations and churches. This book illustrates and describes these sequences and methods and discusses the underlying theory and theology. It has the following four parts.

Part One: Examples of Work Analysis and Design demonstrates that clergy, religious and laity think quite naturally about their work and themselves as workers in terms of cases, problems, situations and projects. Each chapter gives a worked example of a systematic approach to one of these ways of thinking about their work. The subject-matter of these examples is of interest: an ecumenical church in faction over children at communion; a sense of failure; a bishop wanting to get the diocese to translate theology into social action; a small group of Jesuits putting into practice their "preferential option" for the poor in Northern Ireland. Having described the examples, essentials of the mode of analysis and design are discussed.

Part Two: Approach and Method considers the basic stages underlying processes described in Part One. It considers these processes, basically non-directive, and how they can be harmonized with the inner rhythms of the workers. It also considers the relationship between workers, their work and their context. The chapter on "designing" is important. Little has been written on this vital aspect of work sculpting. People generally find it more difficult than analysing, about which much is written! Neglect of this leads workers to opt for standard designs for church and community work which may or may not fit. The basic equipment for analysing and designing is considered in Chapter 7 and includes: spoken and written words and the relationship between them; questions; diagrams; hypotheses.

Part Three: A Commentary on The Approach takes the discussion of the approach a stage deeper and examines the theoretical and theological nature of the process which is based on the non-directive approach to church and community development. It discusses the ways in which it is a developmental process aimed at producing changes for the better in people and their environment. It shows that the approach is experiential but not limited to the experience of the workers and that it is both inductive and deductive. It considers the part beliefs play in this work and demonstrates that commitment and conviction are, along with abilities to think and skills to act, key factors in the quality of the work done.

Part Four: Application considers difficulties experienced by those who are persuaded but daunted by the approach, including: feeling intellectually

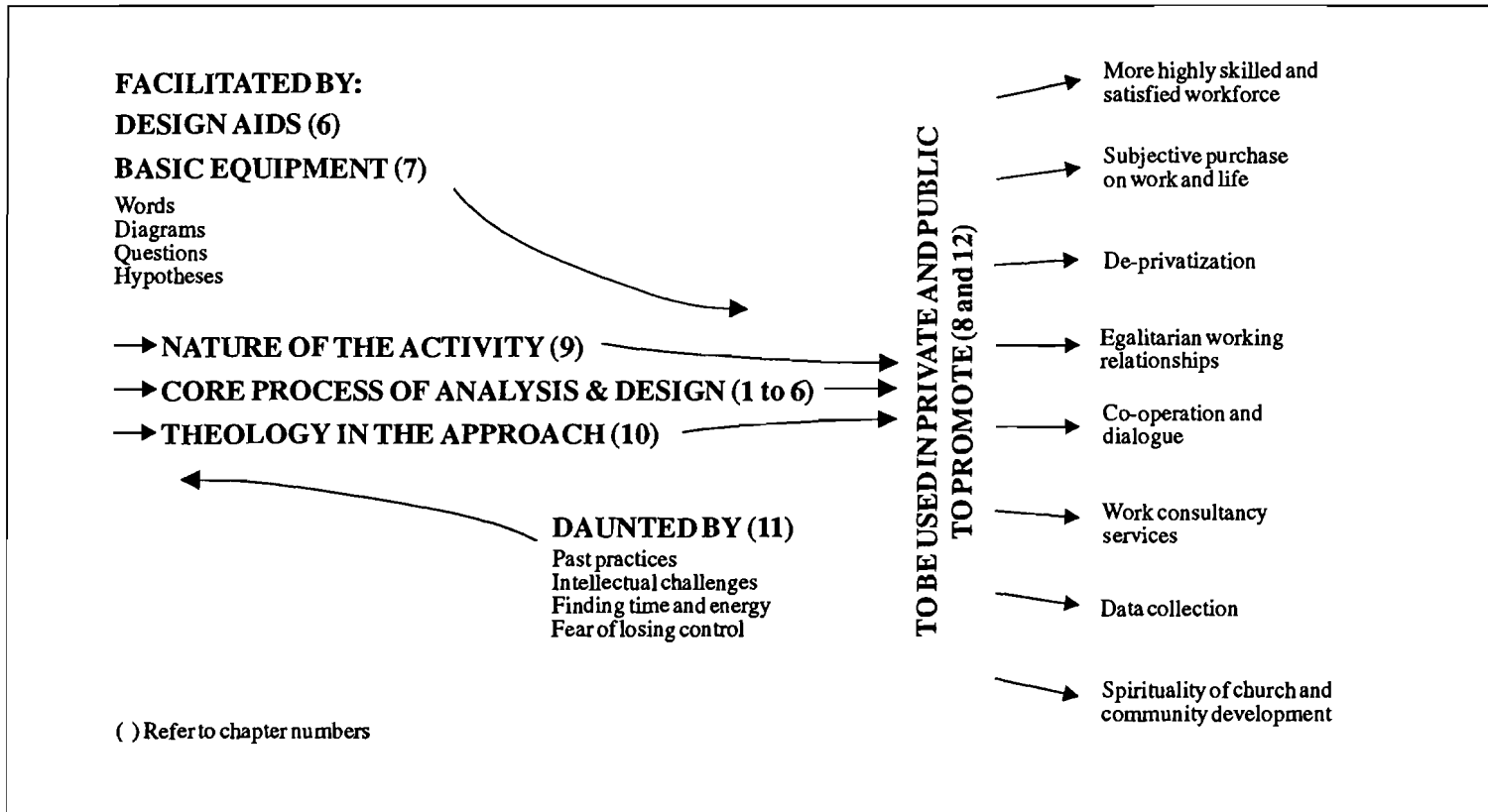
inadequate; the difficulties of finding time and energy; the fear of losing control. The approach is shown to be relevant to all kinds of church and community work: it contributes towards providing a more highly skilled and satisfied church and community development work force; it helps people to have a subjective purchase on work and life; it contributes to the de-privatization of religion; it builds up egalitarian working relationships, co-operation and dialogue in a competitive and pluralistic society; it can be used to develop work consultancy infrastructures which service and support workers, and it provides data about church and community work. This part concludes by showing that these approaches engender a spirituality which, of itself, is a medium of human and spiritual development.

The parts are presented in the order: practice, methods and practice theory, underlying theory and theology, application and current contextual relevance. This order helps those who prefer to proceed from the particular to the general and from practice to theory. But the way in which the book is written means it could be read in reverse by those who prefer to work in the opposite direction.

By its structure the book models the inductive method: it starts with descriptions of representative experiences of the process in action; draws out the generic structure of the process; considers the essential nature of the process and the theory and theology upon which it is based; then returns to its application as it discusses difficulties and describes uses. Inevitably this method, and my desire to produce a handbook for practitioners and consultants, means that, in returning to aspects of the analytical processes, there is some repetition in order that sections should be self-contained.

So, by way of summary, this book is about a particular way of analysing and designing work with people in church and community. It shows what it looks like in practice and as a conceptual schema (Chapters 1–5); it describes how to use it and the approaches and equipment required to do so (6–8); it examines the nature of the activity and its theology (9–10); it considers principal daunting factors (11); and it describes its contemporary uses and relevance (12). This is set out in the following figure, *A Diagrammatic Overview of The Book*.

My hope is that this book will engender more creative action through promoting better understanding, extended discussion and wider use of this approach to analysis and design and that it will stimulate and help others to examine and conceptualize their own approach to studying and planning their work in church and community.



A DIAGRAMMATIC OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

List of Displays

3:1	A Note Prepared for the Group by the Bishop	page 82
3:2	The Bishop's Working Relationships and Settings	85
5:1	Eight Thinking Stages	114
8:1	Attributes and Abilities Required to Work in Private and Public Domains	202
11:1	Taking Stock	249

List of Figures

	A Diagrammatic Overview of the Book	page 20
2:1	Low and High Force Equilibrium	55
2:2	Sources and Initiating and Sustaining Causes of Problems	62
2:3	Tackling Problems: Questions, Process and Stages	66
3:1	Some Diagrams From The First Consultancy Group Session	80
3:2	The Bishop's Work Contexts	84
4:1	Pattern of Working Relationships Fully Aspired; Partly Achieved	98
4:2	Essential Design of the Project	102
5:1	The Creative Action Thrust of Critical and Imaginative Thought	113
5:2	A Schema for Analysing and Designing Church and Community Work	116
5:3	Processes Employed During The "Relationships in Mission" Consultation	144
5:4	Positive and Negative Interaction Between Contextual Factors, Workers, People and Their Work and Relationships	150
6:1	Pattern of Working Relationships Fully Aspired; Partly Achieved	161
6:2	Designs of Theological Projects In Chapter 3	170
6:3	General Schematic Presentation of Designs In Chapter 3	171
6:4	A Creative Nucleus: Analysing, Synthesizing and Designing	172
7:1	Three Forms of Causation	189
8:1	Private and Public Work Domains	195
9:1	Practitioner–Work Oriented Approach	216
9:2	A Practitioner's Vocational Context	218

10:1 A Trihedral of Relationships 235
10:2 Some Possible Points of Concord and Dissonance 238
10:3 Some Theological Activities 240
11:1 Modes of Participation: Sharing In and Out 257
12:1 Attributes of Spirituality 279

Acknowledgements

Vast numbers of people have contributed to the development of the approaches described in this book. Some have done so through allowing me the privilege of studying their work with them and entering into their vocational aspirations and struggles. They showed me just what would and would not work for them and their situations. General acknowledgement is too bland a recognition of the ways they allowed and helped me to forge my tools of analysis and design on the realities of church and community work. But naming them is impossible. Others have made incalculable contributions through the work we have done together to provide training and consultancy services through Avec. Colleagues became soul friends as we used all our resources to analyse profoundly and design perceptively. To all of them I am eternally indebted and particularly to the Avec Associates, the part-time staff (Charles New, Howard Mellor and Michael Bayley) and to my colleague for more than twenty years, Catherine Widdicombe. I cannot begin to express my debt to her for her continuous support, her utter dedication to the work and her unfaltering commitment to the Christian beliefs and vision through which she saw the vital importance of the non-directive approach to church and community work.

I am indebted to the Avec Trustees, who encouraged and enabled me to "harvest" the work of Avec during 1991–93, and to The Leverhulme Trust, which enabled me to continue my research and writing through granting me a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship in 1993. I am also indebted to the people of the Victoria and Chelsea Methodist Circuit who have given me a spiritual base, graciously affirmed my ministry and generously contributed towards my stipend.

Then there are those who have helped me more directly with the writing of this book. I am deeply indebted to those who graciously gave me permission to publish Chapters 1, 3 and 4 after reading my manuscript. The minister central to the case study and the bishop with whom I studied his work situation must remain anonymous but I am free to name the Portadown Team of Jesuit Priests and the person with whom I worked, Paddy Doyle.

Margaret O'Connor has read and commented on every part of it. Her suggestions have greatly improved the text. Her enthusiasm for the book and her moral support gave me much-needed encouragement. Several other people read various parts in draft and made helpful suggestions: Michael Bayley, Paul Bunyan, David Deeks, Leslie Griffiths, Peter Russell, Ann Sutcliffe, John Stevinson and Catherine Widdicombe.

Valerie Tredinnick, my part-time secretary for many years, has typed and re-typed the whole of the book with great care, cheerfully and patiently and without any hint of complaint or irritation when I produced yet more revisions.

Reg and Madge Batten to whom I dedicate this book are the initial inspiration for the approach which is at the heart of it. They continue to be beloved mentors. Reg has added value to my ministry beyond description through hundreds of hours of the richest consultative conversations I have experienced.

Molly, my wife, has allowed me the freedom and provided the domestic environment within which I could give myself unreservedly to this book. Not only has she given me her full support, she has also helped with the typing and the proof reading. She has lived through the low and high moments with me.

I acknowledge with deep gratitude all this help, support and reinforcing encouragement.

I also acknowledge permission from the Guilford Press to reproduce the figures on p. 188.

George Lovell
September 1994