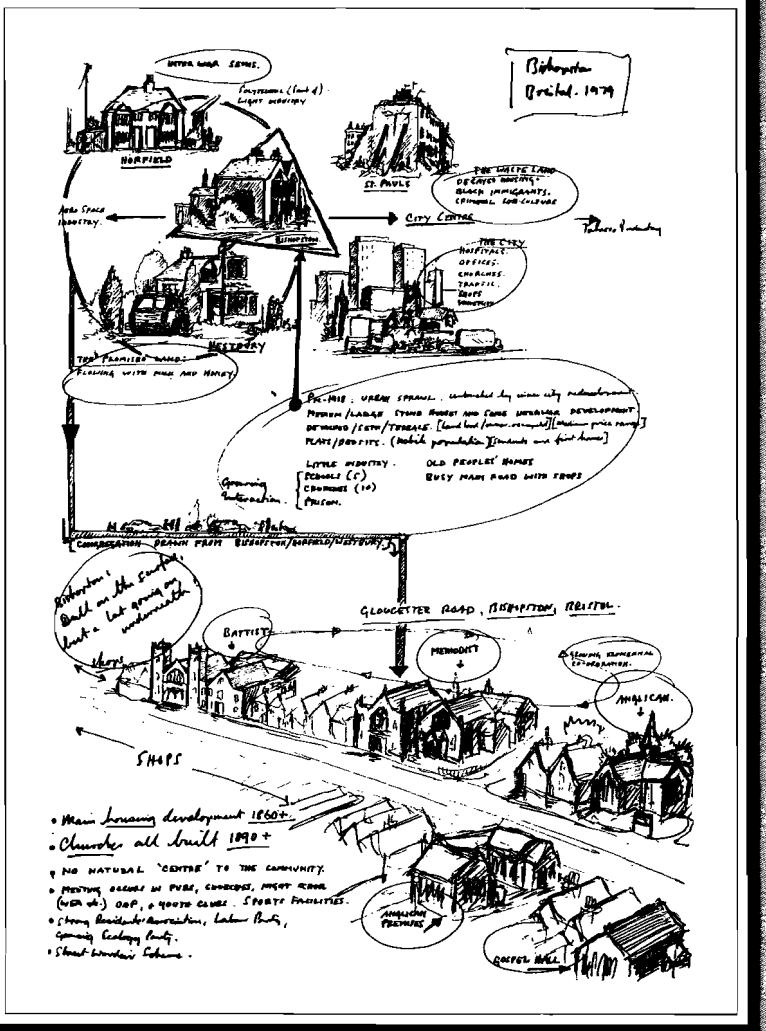
CONSULTANCY, MINISTRY AND MISSION

GEORGE LOVELL



A Handbook for Practitioners and Work Consultants in Christian Organizations

By the same author and published by Burns & Oates

ANALYSIS AND DESIGN
A Handbook for Practitioners and Consultants in Church and Community Work

Consultancy, Ministry and Mission

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GEORGE LOVELL

BURNS & OATES

To Dorothy Household, an early inspirational colleague to whom I owe much and who would have loved to live and work on this project
and
to all those who accompanied me in Avec on the ministry through consultancy pilgrimage and helped to make this book possible and to those who still accompany me

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Introduction

CONSULTANCY, AN ESSENTIAL RESOURCE

Consultancy in the Christian context is a means of providing non-directive help on any practical, personal, theoretical or theological aspect of Christian vocation and the work of the Church. Consultants are not responsible for doing the work. They help those who are without in any way controlling or directing them.[1]

Broadly speaking work consultancy is to reflective practitioners and their work what counselling is to people and their lives.

Consultors are those seeking consultancy help; consultants those offering it.

The Church needs specialist consultancy services but it is essential to its overall effectiveness that leaders, workers and ministers can and do act as consultors and as consultants to each other in the workplace.

Consultancy services will be a commonly accepted and deeply valued characteristic of the work-culture of the third millennium.

The Need for Consultancy Ministry

Generations of people engaged in the work of the church have given outstanding service without consultancy help and many continue to do so. Why then is it now becoming both a perceived and felt need? [2]

Briefly stated I believe it is because of radical changes in the work culture in church and in society. A paradigm shift is occurring in the ways in which people work together. Egalitarian, participative and non-authoritarian working relationships are becoming more widely accepted, in theory if not always in practice. More clergy, religious and laity are using methods from the behavioural sciences. There is a strong movement towards personal and collective responsibility. Appraisal and audit schemes are being introduced. Consequently, for instance, increasingly those who were trained to direct and lead now collaborate, enable and empower. Those schooled to service, maintain and develop established programmes of church, and community work, have now to design and manage new projects and programmes. Those who were trained to follow traditional ways have to think out

for themselves how to do things, their motivation for doing them and how to get others to do the same.

Also, there are significant changes in the kind of work undertaken by churches and in the purposes for which it is done. It is now common practice, for instance, for churches, in addition to their traditional activities, to be deeply involved in ecumenical partnerships and in community work. Some churches are engaged in inter-faith projects with genuine altruistic motives: proselytizing has given way to new approaches to mission and evangelism which include dialogue and working together with others for the common good. Consequently ministers and laity who once pursued their ministry with segregated like minded people, now have to relate to and work with people of other denominations, religious and secular cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Considerable interpersonal skills and theological acumen are required to do this with respect for the beliefs of others and the moral and spiritual integrity of all involved.

Alongside these changes, the membership of churches and religious orders is falling, in some cases dramatically. Fewer ministers and religious are available. Many lay leaders and workers find themselves with less time and energy for voluntary work because of the demands made upon them by their jobs and professions. Consequently more is required of retired people especially those who have taken early retirement. Resources are reduced. Logistics and economics mean that organizational changes have to be made. Structures have to be slimmed down. There is less energy and time for reflection and creative thought. At the same time society and human and spiritual needs present new and exciting challenges to the Church. Resources must be used strategically and efficiently if the Church is to seize the enormous opportunities. Lay leaders, deacons, religious and ministers must have every form of help and support that they need.

The Need for Collaborative Reflective Practitioners, Churches and Communities

All this adds up to multi-dimensional changes in the approaches and attitudes of those engaged in contemporary church and community work, in individual, group and organizational behaviour and in the body of knowledge required to work out Christian vocation in the contemporary setting.[3] Combined, these changes make great personal, practical, relational, theoretical and theological demands upon workers. Accepting the practical aspects of these changes without examining the underlying theory and theology makes workers vulnerable because they cannot give adequate reasons for what they are doing. Yet examining the underlying theory and theology openly and critically is a complicated business. It involves exploring other denominations and religions and foraging in many disciplines such as theology, sociology, management and business studies, the study of organizational theory and behaviour, social work and community development studies. Extraordinarily difficult things for busy practitioners to do! Rival claims and contradictory theories can confuse laypeople and specialists alike. No sooner have workers and people got hold of one new idea and concept than it seems to be upstaged by another. Very few people can master even one discipline. Workers often find themselves on the practical and theoretical edges of all this - and they are practitioners, not academics;

they have to decide and act now, not juggle with and speculate about ideas and theories indefinitely.

To be effective and to experience vocational fulfilment in this changing context clergy, religious and laity must reflect, critically, imaginatively and systematically, on their own and with others, on the work, ministry and mission in which they are engaged or contemplating. In short, workers need to be reflective practitioners capable of promoting collaborative reflective groups in churches and communities. For some this is already an established way of life, they are thoroughgoing reflective practitioners; but for many, if not most, it is not.

The Need for Training and Consultancy

Gradually, training is being made available to help clergy and laity to make this radical shift in their work culture, to become collaborative reflective practitioners and to acquire analytical tools which they themselves can use. Experience has proved that, in addition to training, workers now need people who can help them to reflect on their vocation and to examine the nature of their work, think through critical aspects of it, design new action programmes, open up new areas of work and deal with complex problems and emotive issues. Such people - commonly referred to as consultants, enablers or facilitators - need to be readily available at the moment and point of need. As we shall see, over the past thirty years a great deal of effort has gone into providing consultancy help and building up the body of knowledge about the practice theory upon which it is based. Unfortunately consultants are still in short supply as are courses to recruit and train them. ***In fact the promotion of reflective practice has outstripped the resources required to sustain and service it.***

Meeting the need for consultants is frustrated by factors other than their shortage. There is considerable confusion about the precise nature of consultancy and the need for it and there is bewilderment about the different forms it takes. It had, for instance, been assumed that the church generally, and appraisal schemes in particular, could readily make use of consultants from the business world. But experience is showing that the transfer of skills from business and industry to the church is more complicated and problematic than was previously thought.[4] Nonetheless, much can be learnt from consultancy theory and practice in these and other domains which will help to develop consultancy services for those engaged in church and community work.

However, consultancy must not be seen as a substitute for long or short courses on the analysis, design and the doing of work with people. Profound learning occurs through consultancy, not least about what needs to be learnt. Consultors are open to it when faced with problems they desperately want to overcome and things they want to achieve. But if such learning is not the gateway to further study then consultors remain undesirably dependent upon the knowledge of the consultant.

Consultancy processes are, in fact, an important feature of the newly emerging work culture and, along with in-service training, are needed to help practitioners enter into it. Increasingly, practitioners need consultants who can help them to develop new work programmes, to tackle the problems as they encounter them, to acquire any skills they require and to integrate into their practice and theory things

of value from other disciplines. To do this consultants have to study with practitioners the work in which they are engaged and the possible application of anything they feel might be relevant from their interdisciplinary experience and studies. The integrity and security of workers depend upon such tailor-made consultative processes, without them the contribution of consultants is likely to be just a veneer or add to the worker's confusion. Practitioners need to learn these consultative processes: they are considerable assets to every facet of their working relationships and they add to their security and integrity.

Currently there is a shortage of people skilled to act as consultors and consultants. The need is great as the demand for consultancy services rises sharply. How is it to be met?

A Providential Discovery

A particular form of consultancy has helped me personally to grapple with these changes and opportunities first as a consultor and then as a consultant. I first experienced it as a consultor when, in 1966, I was preparing myself to become the minister of Parchmore Road Methodist Church, Thornton Heath, which had been designated one of ten experimental church, youth and community centres planned for Greater London by the Methodist Church.[5] For four years I had been enthusiastically developing youth and community work in two seriously deprived urban areas in a nearby circuit.[6] It was a new area of ministry with which I was now hopelessly in love. I was married to it but the honeymoon was over! Problems of getting people to accept responsiblity for projects I thought we had agreed upon had beaten me. I knew I would meet such problems in one form or another in Parchmore. I needed help. A wide ranging search for it was successful only when I met Dr T. R. Batten, at that time the Reader in Community Studies in the University of London. I poured out what I wanted to do at Parchmore, the intractable problems I had encountered in my previous attempts at church based open youth and community work and my hopes and fears. He listened intently. He asked questions. His responses showed me that he understood precisely what I was talking about. Within no time we were working things out together, not just talking about them. Words and diagrams were power tools and the papers on which they were written were work sheets of great value. *No one had ever talked to me about my work like that before.* I knew I had stumbled on treasure. I needed and wanted the ways of thinking and working I had just experienced and I was prepared to sell everything to have it for myself. As I write, I experience again the deep feelings of excitement and joy that I had then.

Like all subsequent consultations—and I continued to have them for almost thirty years—this one was significantly but subtly different from anything I had ever experienced before. The process was different, it was an alliance of minds, experience and insights in relation to *my* work, *my* purposes, *my* beliefs and *my* concerns. In contrast, the active giving and the passive receiving of advice, with which I was very familiar, were dowdy and demeaning patronage. The consultations involved meticulous cooperative analysis and the examination of alternative courses of action, but not in an argumentative or competitive manner: there was no "winner" or "loser" The content was rich, not least because the consultant had a wide

knowledge and experience of different ways and means of working with people. It was intense, "structured", and disciplined concentration and yet strangely open and free. It facilitated the development of thought; it enabled us to get to the bottom of things, to face realities and conflicting ideas and views, to keep our feet on the ground whilst dealing with vital theoretical and theological issues; it engendered objectivity and helped to get things into perspective. From his wide repertoire the consultant was selecting first this and then that and testing out with me whether they fitted or were useful or not: those that were not were abandoned undefensively without ceremony whilst those which proved to be suitable were adapted. Concentration on *my* situation and *me as a* worker gave me a confidence and freedom of expression I had never previously known in discussions with people in the academic world.

Not surprisingly, the results and consequences were quite different from those associated with the giving and receiving of advice and arguing cases. I never left such consultancy sessions without feeling challenged, uplifted and encouraged, with insights into what I could and could not do, with a renewed desire and enthusiasm to get on with what I had seen I must do. And I did not feel slavishly bound by what had been decided during a consultation. I was free to work things out as it subsequently appeared right for me to do so in the situation. Always I was urged to subordinate the authority of the consultancy session to that of the working situation. Previously I had not experienced the freedom to explore things privately with the freedom to practise publicly without fear of censure or of losing "friends" if I did not follow the advice I had been given. Both freedoms resulted from the consultant's non-directive approach. Most of the things worked out in these consultations paid high dividends in a wide range of work: sometimes by the direct application of what had been thought out, sometimes through using the same thinking process with others and coming to similar or different conclusions.

Gradually, as my ministry at Parchmore developed, I started to offer to others this kind of consultancy help without naming it, but with much trepidation because I lacked so many of Batten's qualities and abilities. My zealous desire to provide this kind of service compensated to some extent for my lack of skill and ability, at least I like to think so as I recall my first clumsy attempts! Parchmore eventually had a full-time youth worker and a part-time community worker. I acted as "consultant" to them and, in turn, they to me. This arrangement was extended to the voluntary youth and community workers. Sometimes the sessions were formal ones: meeting at an appointed time, sitting around a table with an agreed agenda and objectives and using a blackboard or large sheets of paper upon which to make notes and lists and to draw charts and diagrams. Others were informal and impromptu "sessions": sitting having a cup of coffee and drawing on scraps of paper, or standing by the car before departing for home and constructing diagrams on dusty metal surfaces. The practice was extended to the Sunday School staff; the Sunday School Superintendent (a regular monthly meeting at 4 pm on a Friday in my study on her way home); the Boys' Brigade officers; the Wives' Club, staff and members. These sessions proved to be effective and people began to ask for this still unnamed kind of help. Instinctively they too knew that it was different and valuable. Work consultancy, like pastoral counselling, became a core activity of my ministry. The

time-cost-effectiveness of this was enormously high. One hour spent in such a consultation enabled others to achieve much more than they would otherwise have done; it enabled me to have a much deeper and fuller picture of the rapidly expanding work than I could possibly have had otherwise; it enabled both them and me to make more profound contributions to the parts and to the whole. So, I had stumbled upon a way of receiving and giving help on church and community work of which previously I had no notion.

Since those early days Avec* staff developed and used this form of consultancy with some 3,500 people of seven denominations and acted as consultants to numerous individuals, teams and projects. Roughly speaking the staff worked equally with Anglicans, Methodists and Roman Catholics, they worked with laity and almost equally with religious and clergy at all levels of the Church. Most of the people were working in the UK and Eire but they worked extensively with missionaries and led major work consultations in Central and West Africa.[7] All this, which has been thoroughly evaluated internally and externally, confirms my experience of the value of of work consultancy.[8] It enables people to study their own work, receive non-directive assistance, and think out programmes of work which fit them and their situation.

So, over a long period I have been learning about consultancy through receiving and providing it in relation to a wide range of subject matter. At the same time I was a practitioner/trainer in local church and community development work in various settings. For most of this period I was researching all the work in which I was involved through a series of action-research programmes.

Several things emerged from doing these things together. On the one hand I gained a deeper understanding of: different kinds of church and community work and the approaches and methods being used; the contexts in which it had to be done; the essential nature and characteristics of work which promoted human and spiritual development. On the other hand the combined use of the non-directive approach and action research methods led to the development of effective ways of analysing and designing church and community work in the workplace and through consultancy processes.[9] All this helped me to conceptualise work situations, to engage with them and to analyse and design them on my own and with consultors. Gradually, I started to study other people's writings on consultancy and to write about it myself.

This Book

The basic aim of this book is to make a contribution towards meeting the needs for consultancy services in the Church and Christian organizations. It is a handbook for those seriously interested in studying and promoting consultancy and in practising as consultors and consultants and training others to do so. Also, it is useful for those responsible for resourcing and managing church and community work. Therefore, it could make a contribution towards all that is being done to promote reflective practice, equip reflective practitioners, improve the quality and effectiveness of

* Avec was a Service Agency for Church and Community Work, from 1976 to 1994. I was the Director from 1976 to 1991. It was an Associated Institution of Roehampton Institute. A critical account of what made and marred this institution is to be found in Lovell, George (1996), *Avec: Agency and Approach* (An Avec Publication).

church and community work and enhance the job satisfaction and creative productivity of those engaged in it. Primary objectives are to:

- spell out the practice theory of consultancy;
- provide information which makes possible a critical assessment of the value of non-directive consultancy to those at work in the church and community;
- help practitioners to be consultors and consultants and to develop their own consultancy practice;
- offer a training resource ;
- provide information about the actual uses which are and can be made of different forms of consultancy services which will help authorities to make them readily available;
- build up a climate of opinion throughout the Church which is more conducive to the provision, funding and use of consultancy.

The Evolution of Three Mental Pictures or Maps

At an early stage in the research and writing programme from which this and other books evolved I found myself confusing and equating analytical and consultancy processes. One of the main reasons for this was that the analysis and design of church and community work form major parts of consultancy. Another reason was that they have approaches and processes in common. Separating them was a disclosure event. It enabled me to see that the nature, practice theory and theology of the one differs significantly from that of the other and that the respective activities were obscured and confused by the overlap and similarities between them. So I set out to write two books, one on analysis and design and the other on consultancy which would clarify both activities and show the relationship between them.

Having published the first book, *Analysis and Design*, and got into this one, other issues which had been rumbling around in my mind for some time surfaced when I was involved in designing a post graduate course on consultancy. I realised that I had been concentrating almost exclusively upon defining the nature of consultancy and the theology upon which it is based and formulating a mental picture of the practice theory that makes it effective. Necessary as this is to the promotion of consultancy, I now saw that two other mental pictures or maps need to be readily available to consultants and consultors. The first of these would depict the *forms and nature of the work* which have to be done to carry out the Christian project in different churches and through them in widely differing socio-religious environments and contexts. The second would depict the *attributes and skills* required of those called and commissioned to do this work. These pictures are constituent parts of my work view.

Previously, I had a much clearer working model in my mind of the practice theory of consultancy than of the nature of the work and the attributes required of workers. I had conceptualised some aspects of the work and the workers required very clearly, especially those associated with non-directive collaborative action. These and other less well thought out ideas emerged in consultancies in various ways but they had not been shaped into rounded models of the essential characteristics of the nature of church and community work and workers. Without such models there was

an over-reliance on consultancy praxis. Amongst other things, this meant that conceptually there was an inbuilt bias to work to the actual nature of the work rather than to the actual and the ideal together. The other models act as correctives to this propensity.

But there simply were no overall pictures of the nature of the work and the attributes of workers known to me and those I consulted which would readily facilitate the performance of these functions. Much has been published about the forms of church and community work but I could not find a suitable description of its nature, *i.e.:* its essential characteristics.There are many descriptions of worker's attributes, but none which fitted what I felt was needed. So I took my courage into both hands and did what I now realise consultants and consultors need to do for themselves, I constructed my own. Consequentially, this book includes mental pictures of :

— the practice theory of work and vocational consultancy (Chapters 1 and 2);
— the forms and nature of church and community work (Chapter 6);
— the attributes required of workers (Chapter 7).

These are presented as working pictures or maps, the ones I am currently using. Because they are continually put to work they contain living models which evolve. As I struggle to articulate them, I see them grow and develop into new shapes. They mirror the stage of my development as a consultancy practitioner. So they are not in any way presented as final and perfect.

They are offered to you as aids in formulating your own pictures, maps and models. You may use them as a starting point or as a collection of suggestions to stimulate your own thinking. However this may be, you need pictures and models that you own as yours and with which you feel comfortable and which you can use to good effect.

As the details of the three pictures emerge, ways in which they correlate and correspond become clear. Approach, attitude, belief, purpose, collaborative reflective practice and the non-directive approach, for instance, are common denominators. However, for the purposes of this book the pictures stand side by side, as they normally do when ready to be used comparatively or interactively in analytical or consultative processes. These uses are illustrated in the text generally and in the detailed case study in Chapter Three. The pictures are cross referenced, but not exhaustively so. What has become clear to me through researching and writing this book is that three separate pictures are more useful in reflective analytical and consultative practice than a unitary one.

For our purposes the consultancy practice theory picture is the substantive guide to consultancy processes; those of the nature of the work and the attributes of workers capable of doing it being vital auxiliaries. The picture of the consultancy model helps consultants and consultors to consider realistically, analytically and purposefully the work in which consultors are engaged and the approaches and methods they are using. Consultancy processes are also facilitated through using the pictures and models of the nature of the work and the attributes required of practitioners to compare and contrast the actual in relation to that which is ideally required. This leads to thoroughgoing analysis and design of projects, programmes

and problems based on situational realities and theological criteria implicit in the Christian project.

Valuable immediate and long-term returns normally accrue from this form of consultancy because at its very heart are profound learning experiences about the nature of work and the attributes required of workers. Consequently it fashions the work and the workers, consultors and consultants. Consultors invariably find that they have a better understanding of themselves as practitioners and of the work about which they have consulted. This means that, more often than not, they find that they are more effective right away and enjoy greater job satisfaction. Consultors and their colleagues find their confidence grows, morale goes up and new vocational energy is generated. So, the work and workers are in flow. Moreover, what is learnt is not restricted to the specific work situation. Consultors and consultants get a better understanding of the actual and the ideal nature of church and community work, the ways in which it is and should be done, the positive and negative factors in Christian organizations and their communities which enable and prevent their development, the accommodations that have to be made in vocational engagement. At the same time they are learning about ways and means of analysing and designing church and community work and the giving and receiving of consultancy help. Much of this learning occurs whether or not the presenting problems are resolved or not: in fact, there is as much, if not more, potential for learning in failure as in success. The accumulative effect upon consultors is that they are better equipped through the knowledge and skills they gain to do their present work and to do other work in the future.

Also, knowledge and use of the pictures of the nature of the work and workers:

- equip "enablers" and "facilitators" to be church and community work consultants. Without this knowledge they are overly dependent upon the material that consultors produce. They are not equipped to get consultors to take into account other relevant information.
- facilitate the critical, evaluative examination of consultancy practice theory in relation to the essential nature of the work and the attributes of workers. Therefore they can be used to make significant contributions towards the development of Christian models of consultancy practice for church and community work which, in turn, can be examples of good church and community work praxis.
- are a permanent reminder that consultancy praxis evolves from ongoing interactive processes with work and workers: it is not something created in abstraction with a separate life of its own.
- can be used to profile and audit the relationship between the actual and the ideal.This can be done through the continual cross reference of the actual nature of the work associated with a range of programmes and projects and the way in which workers carry them out with those characteristics which make church work and workers what they are intended to be, *i.e.* the quintessence of their true nature.

With hindsight, therefore, three books should have been written on the following subjects and in the following order:

(a) the nature of church and community work and the attributes required of its practitioners
(b) the analysis and design of church and community work
(c) consulting about church and community work.

But, as we have seen, in the messiness of development through trial and error, and reflection and research, that is not how things evolved! *Analysis and Design* which covers (b) with brief reference to (c), emerged first in 1994. It has detailed worked examples of working analytically and constructively on cases, problems, situations and projects. *Telling Experiences* came next in 1996. It illustrates (a), (b) and (c). Now this book deals with (a) and (c)!

Other Parts of The Book

Briefly stated the remainder of the book: illustrates consultancy, describes the forms it can take and discusses common problems; suggests ways in which readers can develop their own models; profiles the uses made of consultancy services and ways of providing them. The structure and details are set out fully in the list of contents.

Emphases and Key Themes

It might be helpful at this stage to note briefly some of the emphases and key themes which are distinctive features of the approach to and the provision of consultancy help in this book. They are as follows.

- *This book is about consultancy processes in church and community work but the approaches and methods could be adapted to any form of purposeful work with people.*
- *Ministry through consultancy is an auxiliary, work centred service to practitioners, churches and organizations provided by specialist consultants and colleagues. It is a way of facilitating creative human involvement in the work of Christ in the Church and the world. It is based on the model of the Church as a working institution and its members as co-workers with Christ.*
  "Work" is a key concept in this book. It helps us to think about the work of Christ and of the Church in ways that, for instance, "ministry" does not, although some prefer to use this term. The notion of work is used to focus on the job of Christian ministry: Consultancy helps people to express and examine work issues, tasks and situations and their feelings about them.
- *Consultancy is an important feature of a newly emerging work culture which is needed to help practitioners and churches to enter into it.*
  Changing aspects of the culture and scope of this work are described earlier in this introduction.
- *Consultancy relationships, processes and purposes require consultants to interact positively and creatively with consultors in a non-directive mode.*
  If the consultor is to own the thinking and the outcome of consultations, this rubric must apply to the consultor's and the consultant's input (of content or procedure or structure). Occasions when consultants have to be directive must not be allowed to compromise the essential non-directivity of their contribution.

- *Seven systemic elements of practice theory and theology form the constituent and systemic parts of the given work and vocational consultancy model.*
  The elements, differentiated and integrated conceptually and practically, are: roles; interpersonal behaviour; working relationships; work-views; thinking together; systemics and logistics; beliefs, values and qualities.
- *Consultancy processes are shown to be profoundly theological because they are incarnational, salvatory, revelatory, resurrectional, creational and sacramental.*
- *Mental pictures of the nature of church and community work and the attributes required of those engaged in it are presented as invaluable aids to working to the actual in relation to the ideal through "work-views".*
  Fourteen essential characteristics of the nature of church and community work are examined in some detail. They form a work map with several frames of reference: attitudinal, relational, situational, vocational, missiological. This, along with a twenty-four factor mental picture of the attributes required of workers, helps consultors and consultants to consider their work in relation to existential and theological realities.
- *Consultancy processes are described, examined and illustrated throughout from the complementary perspectives, abilities, contributions and responsibilities of consultants and consultors.*
  Self-evidently, the effectiveness of consultations depends upon the abilities of both principal parties and not simply upon those of consultants. But, surprisingly, much of the literature concentrates on the skills of consultants and neglects those of consultors. The emphasis here is upon consultants and consultors collaborating in organising, designing and managing consultancy processes and establishing appropriate forms of interpersonal behaviour.
- *This book examines the ways in which consultancy operates through and upon a consultor's work-view interacting with the consultant's.*
  Work-views sum up what consultors know and believe about their work, how they feel about it and how they respond to it. They are not to be equated or confused with the work itself.
- *Consultors and consultants need to develop their own practice theory of work and vocational consultancy and their own mental maps of the nature of church and community work and the attributes required of workers.*
- *Sequential consultations between a consultor and a consultant over an extended period about aspects of their work and their vocation can be very productive: discussions about work and vocation inform and correct each other constructively.*
- *An approach to consultancy is presented which can and needs to be used by external specialists and generalist consultants and by practitioners.*
- *Consultancy needs can be met comprehensively only through the combination of specialist services and by workers giving to and receiving from each other consultancy help in their workplaces.*
  Such internal and external provision alone will meet the need and as it does so it will promote interdependent self-sufficiency in church and community practitioners and organizations, minimise unhealthy dependency on specialist

consultants, build up collaborative and reflective relationships throughout the workforce. Progress has been made towards such holistic provision notably through Avec.

- *The design and maintenance of socio-religious institutions which are effective instruments of Christian mission are treated as vital and highly skilled missiological occupations.*

Those who Could find this Book Useful

This book goes into the practical and theoretical detail required by those who wish to learn about the nature of church community work, the attributes required of practitioners and consultancy theory and practice. Also, it explores the theological features of consultancy in order to set it in the praxis of Christian ministry and mission. That makes it a handbook-cum-textbook for those who wish to develop and practise their own consultancy models and to train others to do the same. It is for anyone engaged in any way in the use, organization and provision of consultancy services and especially for:

- ministerial students
- ordained, religious and lay practitioners
- consultors
- consultants
- anyone engaged in appraisal schemes
- those engaged in pastoral management and supervision such as bishops
- those involved in training.

Reading and Using This Book

Having completed Parts I, II and III, I began to wonder whether it would be better to put II first. Was it better, I cogitated, to study the nature of the work and the attributes of workers and then how to consult about it or to study consultancy and then to examine the nature of the work and the workers to which it has to be applied? Eventually I came to the conclusion that the answer depended upon the individual reader. Some may wish to read the book through in an orderly way. Others may enter it through a subject of interest or a particular problem and move backwards and forwards through the text. The material is presented in such a way that it can be readily accessed in many different ways.

Its Nature, Status and Primary Function

T. R. Batten, a keen gardener, developed an extremely good system for making excellent multi-graded compost. The local horticultural society invited him to give a talk about his method. Someone broke into his explanation saying with considerable exasperation, "That is not how it is done!" Batten's reply was sharp and telling, "Undoubtedly there are other ways of doing it, but that is precisely how *I do it* and I was invited here to talk about how *I do it*." That exchange helps me to highlight at the end of this introduction what I am attempting in this book. I describe and examine my approach to consultancy work from the perspectives of being a

church and community development worker, consultor and consultant. As I have described earlier; for over thirty years I have been receiving and offering consultancy, on my own and with many colleagues from all denominations. Consequently, at the heart of the book there is an evaluation of the experience of a wide range of consultancy work.

But the book is more than that. Drawing upon wide ranging experience, it puts forward what I *now* consider makes for good practice and discusses the theory and theology upon which it is based. Consequently it is the best statement I can make about the ideas and understanding that will guide the next phase of my work in this field, rather than an attempt to simply describe and/or justify what I did in the past and why I did it.

Some of the things I write about I have learnt directly from my own experience and those with whom I worked. Other things I have learnt from using and adopting other people's ideas and studying their writings. Much of what I have learnt has become an integral part of my own practice theory. Other things I am gradually assimilating. All this I gladly and fully acknowledge. The late James Britton, one time Goldsmith's professor of education, catches the nature of the process I am pointing to:

> The practitioner does not merely apply, he *(sic)* must reformulate from the general starting points supplied by research and arrive at new ends—new not only to him, but new in the sense that they are not part of the research findings, being a discovery of a different order.[10]

Describing the approach in this way facilitates a thorough going critique of it in its own right and in relation to other approaches. That I welcome as part of developmental processes. It follows that, whilst I give some indication of the location of my own approach in the spectrum of approaches, this book is not a typology of consultancy models although it could be used in the construction of one. Readers can use it to locate my approach in relation to their own and that of others.

Presenting the material in this way will, I believe, help to achieve a primary objective to which I am highly committed: *to help consultants to develop their own modes of consultancy, i.e. those which enable them to act ever more effectively themselves both as consultors and consultants.* In other words, I am describing my way so that you can do it your way. Please read the text with this in mind. For some, adopting the approach proffered here may well be a starting point; others may experience the presentation as a foil which stimulates them to articulate their own practice theory and become more committed to tending to its evolution; yet others may find one idea or another useful; and some may expostulate with Batten's critic, "That is not how it is done!" Each and all of these responses could help to achieve my objective, practitioners having a wardrobe of consultancy clothes which fit them. It is highly desirable that all practitioners, organizations and churches should be dedicated to pursuing zealously the development of their own practice theory and drawing out and reflecting upon the theory and theology upon which it is based. Effectiveness and growth depend to some extent upon these activities. Consequently it is important that clergy and laity are taught how to do these things by college tutors, in-service training staff and by consultants. It is a key to good reflective practice.

My hope is that, in one way or another, the book will induce inner and interpersonal dialogues which will enhance all our abilities to act as consultors and consultants. And I pray that it will help to prompt the Church to provide members of its workforce with more and better consultancy services which they deeply need and richly deserve.

These desires and aims point to some of the reasons why I have dared, but not without trepidation, to expose my own practice theory and theology with all its inadequacies to critical scrutiny.

Notes and References: Introduction

1. This statement is an adaptation of definitions by Fritz Steele and Peter Block quoted by Kubr, Milan (1976, Third Edition 1996) *Management Consulting: A Guide to the Profession* (International Labour Office, Geneva) p 3.

2. Lippitt and Lippitt give four reasons for "the growth and development of consultation resources": technological development and its impact on life styles; crisis in human resources and "the under utilization, underdevelopment and misuse of such resources as racial and ethnic minority groups"; undeveloped consulting skills of workers; discretionary time to spend beyond wage-earning activities. *The Consulting Process in Action* (University Associates, Inc 1986) p 2.

3. Kubr *op cit* has interesting chapters on "Consulting and Change" and "Consulting and Culture".

4. Professor Gillian Stamp made this abundantly clear in an article in which she argues that what is required in relation to ordained and episcopal leadership is "a firm rejection of the business model and the creation of a new model which will build on the enfolded and traditional hierarchies, but move towards a relationship with society based on service and example rather than on care and control". "A Church is not a Business", *Crucible* October-December 1983.

5. My six-year ministry at Parchmore was the subject of an unpublished doctoral dissertation: *An Action Research Project to Test the Applicability of the non-Directive Concept in a Church, Youth and Community Centre Setting*. A brief description of this work is given in my Beckley Lecture, *Human and Religious Factors in Church and Community Work* (1982) (A Grail Publication) p 15f and in an Avec publication which I wrote with Catherine Widdicombe *Our Church and Community Development Stories* (May 1987). Garth Rogers , Peter Sharrocks and I have written a book on the ministry at Parchmore from 1966 to 1989: *Parchmore Partnership: George Lovell, Garth Rogers and Peter Sharrocks*, Edited by Malcolm Grundy (1995) (Chester House Publications).

6. See *Human and Religious Factors in Church and Community Work* (p 15) and *Our Church and Community Development Stories* (p 5) on this.

7. An article by Leslie Griffiths on the West Africa Project appeared in the *Epworth Review* Vol.15 No.2 May 1988 p 85-94 entitled "Relationship in Mission". It describes in some detail the consultancy process and the outcome.

8. Avec courses and, when possible, consultations were systematically evaluated by staff and participants. In 1990 MARC Europe undertook an external evaluation of almost all of Avec's work and produced a report: *Viva L'Avec: An Evaluation of Avec's Training Ministry* (MARC Europe Report 1991) pp 188 and Appendices.

9. cf Batten, T. R. and M. (1988) *The Non-Directive Approach* (An Avec Publication)

10. I owe this quotation to an obituary of Professor James Britton by Tony Burgess in *The Guardian*, 3rd March 1994.

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