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**CONSULTANCY  
MODES AND  
MODELS**

**George Lovell**

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**CONSULTANCY  
MODES AND  
MODELS**

by

**George Lovell**

**cliff**   
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*To members of my immediate family  
Molly, Janice, John, Patrick, Rachel, Raymond and Rita  
with gratitude and love*

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## FOREWORD

Those who approach this text with serious enquiry should beware because their own approach to consultancy will undoubtedly be challenged.

The desire to offer Consultancy to those working in Church and Community, and more recently to train key people as Consultants, has been a significant focus of much of George Lovell's life and ministry. This unique contribution comes from the pen of one who has been immersed in the literature and the practice of consultancy. It reveals that George Lovell has a detailed knowledge of the literature and as an experienced practitioner, the ability to offer his critical reflection on each aspect of consultancy.

There is no doubt that my own ministry owes much to learning from and sharing with George Lovell across almost thirty years. I have known Revd Dr George Lovell since I attended a seminar on working with people in Church and Community in November 1977. He was at that time establishing with Catherine Widdicombe the small but very effective organisation *Avec*. I benefited enormously from attending courses run by *Avec* and eventually joined that privileged cohort of people who acted as helpers on the courses, but who also learned so much in the process. Through all of this George Lovell had the deliberate aim of seeking to enable people to work *with* people rather than *for* them. He adopted, as a result of his own research, what is sometimes called the 'non-directive approach' but this was no laissez faire attitude. Rather it was an active engagement with people to support, offer insight and guidance so that those he worked with could reflect on the process and the outcomes in such a way that good practice could be bettered and poor practice abandoned.

In 1995 George Lovell played a crucial role in launching the first programme of postgraduate studies at Cliff College during the time I was Principal (1994-2004). This was an M.A. in Evangelism Studies, which led to the later development in 1999 of the M.A. in Consultancy Mission and Ministry (C.M.M.) validated by the University of Sheffield. The ideas for this programme had originated in a course on consultancy developed between the Urban Theology Unit Sheffield, Westminster College Oxford and Cliff College at a time when George Lovell was a Senior Research Fellow at Westminster College. At a critical stage the course was offered to and accepted by Cliff College and developed into the present Masters programme. It would not have been possible to begin thinking about such a course without the wisdom of George Lovell.

Consultancy Modes and Models grew out of the need identified by the students and tutors of the C.M.M. programme for a detailed description of consultancy methods and an exposition of the underlying assumptions and values. Few people are experienced enough or sufficiently well-versed with the literature as is George Lovell, to produce an outstanding volume as this one. A range of consultancy methods are clearly described and with each there is both a written outline as well as a diagrammatic model which will help the student to compare and contrast the models. Lovell also identifies the way in which the method can be applied as well as teasing out the underlying assumptions or value judgements. Thus the book is a unique evaluation of both modes and models of consultancy.

One of George Lovell's great skills is the ability to empathise and understand the position of others. In his own consultancy he has always sought to stand in the shoes of the other person. More than that he has the ability to see their work situation from their perspective and so become a 'virtual insider'. This is what has made him such a consummate consultant and trainer. It translates into this book because he 'stands in their shoes' as he describes the models, either with the authority of first hand experience or by using published literature. He not only describes the model but also the underlying philosophy behind each method and evaluates the consultant's role in the process. In this way he is able to evaluate the approach and values that a consultant has in relation to the clients. Due to his experience and insight the reader is offered clarity rarely found to the underlying issues of consultancy.

There is no doubt that this book will become essential reading for all studying consultancy. Matched with the necessary training this book is vital for all who have regional responsibility within the Church, community organisations and human resources. This text deserves not only close reading but also offers a practical guide to all who would seek to engage in consultancy. I know it would be George Lovell's greatest desire for the text in this volume to be translated into improving consultancy in church and community.

Howard Mellor  
Advent 2004.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book emerged directly from a course in Consultancy, Mission and Ministry at Cliff College and the need for a picture of different modes and models of consultancy. Basic concepts used in this book were first formulated in a lecture and explored with students on the course. The course started life in Westminster College, Oxford. I am grateful to the, The Revd Howard Mellor (then Principal of Cliff College), The Revd Dr Martyn Atkins (then Director of Postgraduate Training) and Mrs Theresa Phillips (Secretary to the Postgraduate Department) for all that they have done to establish and run this course as a Diploma/MA validated by the University of Sheffield and now by the University of Manchester. It is, therefore, fitting that this book should be published in the Cliff College Academic Series and I am glad that this has been made possible. It is also fitting that Howard should write the Foreword to this book and I am grateful to him for having done so.

As the book has developed I am fortunate to have had significant help from many people. Dr Helen Cameron made invaluable comments on an early manuscript of part of the text. Professor Roger Hartley, helped me greatly with the chapter on epistemology. The Revs. David Copley and Charles New helped me to make key decisions about the book in our consultancy sessions and gave me moral and spiritual support as I worked at it. They gave me permission to include the piece on co-consultancies. It was Helen Cameron who suggested I might write something on epistemology and read a draft of that chapter as did the Revs David Dadswell, Ian Johnson, Howard Mellor, Charles New and Catherine Widdicombe. David Dadswell contributed the postscript to that chapter and made valuable suggestions about the Tailpiece. Mrs Rita McGee provided me with notes on her approach to "coaching", read parts of the manuscript and encouraged me by her enthusiasm. My erstwhile colleague, Miss Catherine Widdicombe, read parts of the book, helped me to make critical decisions in relation to it and, as always was supportive. All these people; through their belief in the book and their continued interest in it, gave me support, encouragement and the confidence, will and energy to pursue it to its conclusion. At very short notice Mrs Catherine Frieze read the galley proofs for grammar. Gladly, with deep gratitude I acknowledge all their help.

I am greatly indebted to Dr David Firth of Cliff College who professionally and graciously saw this book through the final stages of preparation for publication and for helping me to deal with several tricky publishing problems.

Once again I am pleased to acknowledge my great indebtedness to my beloved mentors, Dr Reg and Mrs Madge Batten. A bequest they made for the work in which I am engaged has helped to meet some of my costs.

Above all I am indebted to Molly, my wife, who has lived with me through the ups and downs of this book and translated all my handwritten manuscripts into typescript. Then she helped me edit it all in order to prepare disks and hard copy for the publishers. My most sincere gratitude is quite inadequate.

Also I am greatly indebted to Mrs Tracey Harris and Mr John Hogarth for their efforts in obtaining permissions to quote other authors. All reasonable efforts have been made to get permission to quote. I am pleased to acknowledge permission from the following who have

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Finally, I am greatly indebted to Mr John Moorley and to Moorley's Print and Publishing for laying out and producing the book and for their understanding, tenacity and help in working through some unexpected difficulties. Thankyou very much.

George Lovell  
January 2005

#### Erratum

The description of "Model Two: Reciprocal or Co-consultancy" (pp164-167) is based on an article taken from the Epworth Review, July 2000. © Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes. Used by permission of Methodist Publishing House for which the author is grateful.

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## INTRODUCTION

For more years than I care to remember I have been engaged in developing my own model of work consultancy, which evolved, from my involvement in church and community development programmes. Gradually through practising, researching, teaching it and writing about it I have evaluated, clarified and refined it.<sup>1</sup> As I have been doing this I have been reading about other people's models mainly to develop my own. Recently, mainly to discharge my responsibilities to a postgraduate course on Consultancy Mission and Ministry,<sup>2</sup> I have been studying other approaches in their own right and lecturing on them. Amongst other things this has taken me from the church and Christian organization settings into consultancy as practised in various parts of the secular, public and voluntary sectors. Having got my own model clearer I felt free and more confident to do that. So far, it has been a good and rewarding experience.

Consultancy is about consultants helping consultors with their work without doing it for them or controlling or supervising them. Consultants are *not* responsible for the work but they help those who are. (I prefer the use of the word *consultor* for anyone who is consulting rather than consultee or client but in this book I use all three to reflect the terminology favoured by the advocates of various consultancy systems.)

The limited objective of this book is to describe as clearly and disinterestedly as possible the basics of different *modes* (approaches to being a consultant and doing consultancy) and *models* (the theory and practice of consultancy operational systems) and to note the *nature* of work to which they have been applied. Definitions of consultancy abound, as do the forms and styles. What I have attempted is to get at and demonstrate the nature and praxis of consultancy by describing six consultancy modes and twelve models through which they actually function. Ten of the models featured have evolved from and been used in predominantly secular settings and two from church settings. In addition there are some brief notes on five other models. Consequently, this book could be of interest to people variously engaged in secular and religious organizations.

Holding to this modest objective and approach will, I hope, enable readers to make their own judgements about the potential of various forms of consultancy available and to weigh up their strengths and limitations for them as practitioners and for their work. To achieve this I have evaluated the key features of each model but abstained from making a general overall critique because I felt that could interfere with people making their own judgements. For similar reasons, five basic elements of each model have been presented in a standardised way in order that readers can most readily compare and contrast one model with another for themselves but I have refrained from comparative analytical comments about the models and from cross referencing them except where it helps to distinguish, differentiate or define them.

Understandably I have not had direct experience of most of these modes and models. Clearly, the status of what I have written about my own approach or those I have experienced at first hand is quite different from what I have written about those I have only heard or read about. Throughout I have been sensitive to these differences and as true to the sources as possible.

What I have written is not the last word on the models I have described, even my own. Models are continually being refined and developed by consultants who reflect upon and

research their praxis as they practice: things written today need updating tomorrow. Inevitably, therefore, the texts I have used are to a greater or lesser extent in need of updating. But this does not invalidate what I have done which is to provide a consultancy landscape by describing and classifying modes and models being used around the same time.

The contents of this book are designed to provide significant help to those who are seeking and providing consultancy help to organizations in the religious, voluntary and public sectors and their practitioners. This help is offered not by providing a directory of consultancy services but by giving readily accessible detailed information about the praxis and values associated with a range of different approaches to, and models of consultancy.

Readers are given information and diagnostic tools of consultancy praxis which will enable them to question consultants who they come across and are considering employing and to interrogate the mode and model of consultancy they employ.

The consultancy model profiles can be used for different purposes by the following three categories of people.

### **1. Consultors**

Would be consultors could use the profiles: to identify the kind of consultancy which fits them and their approach to working with people; to select the one which meets their needs and which they can use and manage; to ensure consultants are using the model; to make contracts; to hone up their consultor skills in order that they can make their best contributions to consultancy processes.

### **2. Consultants**

Consultants can use the profiles to understand better and to define their own approach; to locate and contextualize their approach amongst other approaches and to improve it by garnering anything that is useful from them; to assist consultors to get the consultancy services most appropriate to them which may not be their own. Consultants can also use the material to study issues related to consultancy practice.

### **3. Consultancy purchasers and advisers**

The profiles enable those who advise about, recommend and purchase consultancy services to be better informed about what is available and therefore about that which is most likely to be appropriate for their purposes and constituencies. It also enables them to establish with consultants the model on which they will operate and to make technically informed contracts with them.

These purposes are achieved by using the same framework to describe the basic characteristics of each consultancy model: by providing, that is, a model and a way of modelling the basic elements of any consultancy model.

All these are contributory objectives to the primary aim of improving and developing consultancy resources and services, making them more widely understood and more readily accessible to practitioners in various forms of purposeful people work. And this takes us neatly into the first chapter.

#### **References and Notes: Introduction**

1. My approach and model and the way in which it evolved are described in Model One, Chapter VI.
2. Postgraduate Diploma/Master of Arts in Consultancy, Mission and Ministry, validated and awarded by The Board of Collegiate Studies of the University of Sheffield. It is offered by Cliff College and arises from a partnership with Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford and the Urban Theology Unit, Sheffield.

## **PART ONE MODES, MODELS AND MODELLING**

Part One prepares the ground for the descriptions of different schools and forms of consultancy in Part Two. Chapter One contains generic definitions of consultancy, differentiates between modes and models and establishes six modes each of which has a chapter in Part Two. The second chapter establishes five basic elements of consultancy models. These are formed into a model of five basic elements of any consultancy model. This provides the basis for the examination of the models in Part Two. The chapter concludes with a section on experiential and vicarious understanding of modes and models and a note of the differences between consultancy and facilitation.

## CHAPTER ONE

# SIX CONSULTANCY MODES

This chapter presents a selection of generic definitions of consultancy, differentiates between modes and models and identifies six consultancy modes, which provides the overall structure for Part Two.

### 1. Consultancy

There are many forms of consultancy, definitions are legion. What is attempted in this book is to put on display, as it were, a representative range of models so that they are open to view. Classifying models and describing critical and idiosyncratic elements of each model achieve this. In this way models are self-defining: definitions emerge from descriptions: Nonetheless, some readers may find at this stage some basics about consultancy will help them to enter into the models empathetically through the descriptions. So here are a few bald statements about consultancy.<sup>1</sup>

- *Consultors or clients are those seeking consultancy help; consultants or facilitators are those offering it.*
- *Broadly speaking work consultancy is to reflective practitioners and their work what counselling is to people and their lives.*
- *Consultancy is a working relationship between two parties, consultants and consultors or clients. Formal or informal arrangements enable consultors to receive the help they need about their work from the consultants: consultors seek help, consultants proffer it relationally. Consultancy relationships are generally temporary and/or intermittent.*
- *Consultancy is effected through an alliance of minds which enables consultors and consultants to think together and separately more creatively and which enhances the ability of consultors to think for themselves, on their own and with others, and to think with and for others.*
- *Consultants are not responsible for doing the work about which they offer consultations. They help those who are responsible, consultors or clients, without doing it for them or becoming colleagues or controlling them. Consultants and consultors are jointly responsible for consultations; consultors are responsible for their work.*
- *Consultors' work can be done in or through secular or religious organizations, communities and groups.*
- *The help sought and/or proffered can be on any practical, personal, theoretical, philosophical or theological aspect of a consultor's work.*
- *Consultancy can be:*
  - *a consultant's full-time paid occupation as a member of an agency or as a free-lance operator;*

- an allied function of the consultant's work or profession as, say, a manager or a minister of religion;
  - services practitioners at all levels of secular or religious organizations offer to each other on a reciprocal or co-consultancy basis.
- Any form of consultancy can be a professional service whether or not "professional" consultants on a fee-paying basis provide it.

Whilst these characteristics point to definitions, they more usefully sketch out the parameters of ground occupied by a relatively new family of activities variously described as consultancy, facilitating, enabling, mentoring, coaching and possibly some forms of appraisal schemes.

## 2. Modes and Models

Students, practitioners and users need help in finding their way around the increasing number of approaches to consultancy. They need to be able to distinguish between different approaches and models. A taxonomical approach was simply not an option for this publication because of the sheer complexity of the relationships between the practice and theory of the different approaches and the different and somewhat confusing ways in which they variously draw upon a common pool of concepts and methods. Even though they differ significantly they can appear to be similar, consequently distinguishing between schools of consultancy can be tricky. However, sketching out a working map of modes and models has proved to be possible and it makes a contribution to meeting the felt need for an introductory conceptual guide.

Differentiating between *modes* and *models* of consultancy leads to simple but useful ways of grouping and classifying them.<sup>2</sup> *Mode* is used here to indicate the idiosyncratic or prevailing approach and style fundamental to a particular form or forms of consultancy which determines the manner or way in which consultancy is offered and provided. It is more about *being* a consultant than about *doing* consultancy. A given mode can have a range of associated models

Modes of consultancy differ in their theoretical, theological and existential understandings about effective human relating in (a) the work of secular and religious organizations and (b) consultations. Ideally the approaches to (a) and (b) will mirror each other.

A *model* is a description or representation of the basic elements of the theory and practice of consultancy operational procedures or systems. Clearly, in a properly integrated approach to consultancy mode and model reflect and reinforce each other.

## 3. Six Consultancy Modes

Distinguishing between modes of consultancy can be quite tricky even though they differ significantly. Differences can be hidden or blurred because some concepts, approaches and methods are common to modes whose emphases, often subtle, are dissimilar or divergent or incompatible. Consequently the same features (for instance analytical processes, contracting, hypothesizing) appear in different modes and models. Differences can be further blurred when different modes and models are used to provide consultancy services to practitioners

engaged in the same areas of work and achieve similar results. However there are two factors which make significant contributions to the formation of modes and models of consultancy. One is the discipline or field of work in which they operate or out of which they evolved. The other is a characteristic which is emphasized because it is seen to be critical to consultancy praxis and to the work in which consultants are engaged. Fascinatingly, closely associated with the evolution of modes and models are compelling stories of professional, vocational and, in some cases, interdisciplinary journeys. Using these factors, six modes were identified each of which emphasize one of the following characteristics:

1. systemic and systems thinking;
2. development processes;
3. organizational management;
4. the non-directive approach to work;
5. psychological processes;
6. complexity and chaos theory.

A range of models can be associated with a particular mode. This is reflected by the contents of this book. A complicating factor, however is that the principal characteristic of one mode may well be an important subsidiary of another mode. Models drawing upon more than one mode can be somewhat confusing. All this underlines the value and importance of differentiating modes from models and principal from subsidiary characteristics.

### References and Notes: Chapter 1

1. I am indebted to several sources for ideas about how to define and describe consultancy but the formulations are my own.
2. Earlier I differentiated between models which emphasized the importance of the expertise of consultants from those which emphasized that of consultant. But that is inadequate for our purposes here. cf *Consultancy Ministry and Mission* pp29-31.