

By the same author

*The Church and Community Development: An Introduction*

(Grail Publications/Chester House Publications)

By the same author and Catherine Widdicombe

*Churches and Communities: An approach to development in the local church*

(Search Press)

## **HUMAN AND RELIGIOUS FACTORS IN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY WORK**

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**Based on the Beckley Social Service Lecture 1981**

**GEORGE LOVELL**

**A GRAIL PUBLICATION  
1982**

First published in Great Britain in 1982  
by The Grail (England)  
125 Waxwell Lane, Pinner, Middlesex, HA5 3ER  
Distribution: The Grail, 1066 London Road,  
Alvaston, Derby, DE2 8QA.

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*To my mother and father  
to whom I owe  
so much*

ISBN 0 901829 65 X

Printed by J. N. & H. Lock & Co. Ltd., 66 Lower Rd., Harrow, Middx.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WAS DEEPLY indebted to the trustees of the Beckly Trust for their invitation to give the lecture for 1981. I counted it a great honour, so much so that it took my breath away when I received it. But I was glad to receive it, principally because of the contribution it could make to the field of church and community development work, a field in which so many have given so much, over a long period of time. In a unique sense it is their lecture because it grows out of collaborative action with all kinds of people inside and outside the Church by which 'research is democratized'. The phrase is Biddle's not mine.<sup>1</sup> Their names are too numerous to mention and my indebtedness too varied to describe here.

The work undertaken during the past ten years could not have been possible without the financial and moral support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Edward Cadbury Trust, the Voluntary Services Unit of the Home Office and anonymous donors. To them I am deeply grateful.

Those closest to me in the preparation of this lecture were Molly, my wife, and Catherine Widdicombe (The Grail) and Charles New, my colleagues. To them I say thank you for their help and support and encouragement. The debt I owe to Dr. Reg Batten becomes clear in the text. He set me on this road and he has accompanied me along it with all its ups and downs and twists and turns. To the Rev. John Stevenson I am also indebted for helpful criticism. To the Rev. Edward Rogers, who chaired the lecture and who has chaired all the meetings of the Avec Trust since its formation in 1976, I owe a great debt for all his support and encouragement over the years since 1966. It was entirely fitting that he should write the foreword and I am deeply grateful to him for doing so.

George Lovell

## FOREWORD

THIS IS NOT a book born in a library. It is a distillation of experience. As Dr. Lovell says, he has spent most of his time and energy for seventeen years 'learning about the approaches and methods of community development, practising them in local church and community work, researching and testing them and helping others to practise them'.

He describes the progress of his own thought; of the gradual evolution of a way of working 'in which there was a continuous interplay between doing and learning, between experience and theological reflection and between action and research'. In rather less dignified language I once ventured to comment that he had learned by falling into all the pitfalls on the road and climbing out of them.

Was it worth it? The non-directive approach to the work of 'church within community' basically means doing things with people rather than for them; which is easier to say than to do. The professional — priest, minister, social worker — by disposition and training guides and instructs and directs with the best intentions; the disappointed shepherd of a too often awkward flock. George Lovell has learned that there is a better way, and that the technique can be acquired. He acquired it. He and his colleague, Catherine Widdicombe, impart it — non-directively. It works.

It is a personal pleasure to write this Foreword. I congratulate myself that as a Methodist Divisional Secretary I supported George from the beginning. As Secretary of the Beckly Social Service Trust I invited him to give the lecture and urged him to make it a personal testimony. As Chairman of the Avec Trust I have watched him at work, marvelled at his industry and insight, and read the letters of grateful appreciation from those who have shared in his courses. Moreover, I live in Croydon, frequently visit the place of his initial experiment in Thornton Heath, and have seen for myself that a decade after his departure the way he pioneered proves effective. In brief, George Lovell is offering us a seminal word for our time. I trust that it will be heard and acted on.

Edward Rogers

Edward Rogers MA BD  
Former President of the Methodist Conference. Ex-Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, and ex-Vice President of the British Council of Churches. Chairman of Avec.

## PREFACE

THE BECKLY TRUSTEES, when they invited me to give The Beckly Social Service lecture for 1981, expressed the hope that the theme would arise from my experience in church and community development work. Happily that accorded with my feeling that this is a good time to describe some essential elements of that experience in order that they could be critically assessed and their implications considered. And so I gladly responded to their invitation in relation to the purpose of the Beckly Social Service lecture which is: 'To set forth the social implications of Christianity, and to further the development of a Christian sociology and the expression of the Christian attitude in reference to social, industrial, economic and international subjects'.

Having delivered the lecture in July 1981, I was encouraged to publish it. That I am pleased to do, in this slightly extended form, in order that a wider audience may critically assess what is emerging and, I hope, act on the conclusions and their implications.

From the outset the primary focus of my ministry has been the local church *and* community work. It is on this that I have worked and specialised for twenty-three years, first as a circuit and then as a sector minister. The origins of this commitment were in my call to the Methodist ministry. A commitment I have renewed consciously, enthusiastically and joyfully on each of the occasions — and they are numerous — when I have seen more of the enormous potential for development in local church units of all denominations and found new ways of realising more of it than I had previously dreamed possible. One of the most significant ways in which that happened to me was through discovering that the insights, approaches and methods of community development were highly relevant to church work and to what churches are trying to achieve in relation to their neighbours. Most of my time and energy during the past seventeen years has been spent learning about these approaches and methods; practising them in local church and community work; researching and testing them and helping others to practise them. What I have done here is to describe briefly the basic features which I have found effective in promoting overall human betterment in church and in community work.

## 1. Introducing a New Way of Working

### A NEW ERA IN LOCAL CHURCH WORK

DURING THE past two or three decades many local church work programmes have been extended and diversified to include, in addition to traditional church work, a wide variety of community work projects with people of all ages from widely differing cultural and religious backgrounds. At the same time, attitudes and approaches to church and community work are changing, and many clergy are making genuine attempts to share power and responsibility more widely. Thus there is now a plethora of new approaches to liturgy, work, organisation, Christian education, society, ecumenical activity and in-service training in all churches and Christian agencies. Underlying these radical changes are new insights into the nature of man, society and the Church and into the processes which lead to human and religious growth.

All this is potential for good. However, it will only be realised if local clergy, religious, deaconesses and lay-workers can see how they can pursue a purposeful and effective ministry in the new situations which confront them; and this is by no means easy because so many of them are in situations for which their previous training has not prepared them. But as this potential is realised, a new and exciting era dawns for local churches, for religious orders and for Christian agencies exercising specialist ministries to the Church and in the community.

### A NEW WAY OF WORKING

During the 1960s, glimpsing this potential but feeling ill-equipped, I found that by adopting a different approach and acquiring new skills I was able to work more effectively than ever I had done before. This was the non-directive approach to working with people in community. It is a negative-sounding term which nevertheless involves positive and demanding action to get more and more people to think freely and

critically about themselves (their purposes, needs and beliefs) and about others and their needs; to discuss their thoughts and feelings openly and objectively; really to consider other peoples' ideas as well as their own, including those of the worker, to decide what they are going to do and how they are going to do it; to reflect critically on what happens and to decide what to do next. Work of this kind promotes self-help, self-determination and self-direction in individuals, in groups, in churches and in communities and leads to co-operation rather than competition between people. There is just not a word in the English language that conveys the essence of this kind of action. It is the antithesis to the directive approach which involves getting other people to act on our conclusions.

Adopting a non-directive approach meant radical changes in my attitudes to and in my ways of working with people. These changes constituted a conversion to a new way of life and ministry.

#### INTERRELATED DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Gradually several things have become clear over the years from my experience of adopting this approach in a wide range of church and community work. In particular, it has shown that the potential in local churches for development is most likely to be realised when ministers and laity together work purposefully with others for the interrelated development of:

- church and community;
- Christians and non-Christians;
- people and their environment.<sup>2</sup>

This is illustrated in Diagram 1.

Experience has shown also that development is most likely to occur when ministers and laity take into proper account the complex interplay between:

- change for the better in people and in environment<sup>3</sup>; (The one, for example, does not necessarily follow the other).
- human and religious factors;
- church and community development work and the work of other statutory, voluntary and political agencies aiming to promote human well-being;
- local and non-local action.

It has taken me years to face up to all this; to explore some of the implications and to orientate and commit myself to working

purposefully and consciously in relation to as many of the factors as I possibly can at any one time, and to encourage and help others to do the same. It is so much easier to deal separately and simplistically with the various factors and areas of work. For instance, it took me a long time to get my being as well as my mind committed to the concept of the interrelated development of church and community

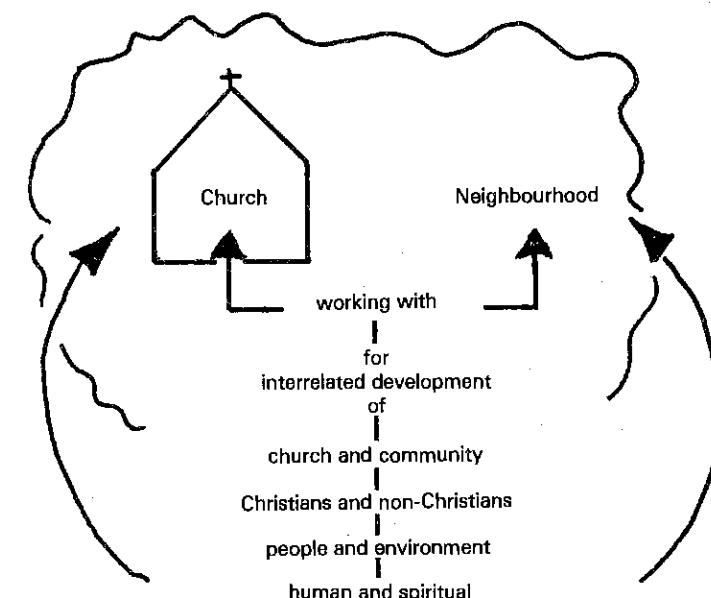


DIAGRAM 1.

and to the church working *with* as well as *for* the community for such development.<sup>2</sup> In practice this means that one accepts the need for improvement in both church and community, not simply in the community. It also means that people in the community contribute to the development of the church and Christians, just as Christians contribute to the development of the community and the non-Christians. In turn that means that the church and the community are of mutual help to each other in relation to their respective beliefs and purposes.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst working in Ronsey (a pseudonym) on Project 70—75, I

had a moving experience of the significance of this dawning upon a senior community development officer quite unconnected with the church. First he saw that through adopting the approaches and methods we were using, the church as an organisation can promote development in local communities. Second, and more startlingly for him, he saw that a non-church person could act as a catalyst to church people in relation to their church work just as church people could act as catalysts to non-church people in relation to their community work. Such reciprocal action engenders partnership. It demonstrates the common humanity that links Christians to non-Christians in their need to help and to be helped. All this, he said, opened his eyes to a new area of development work.<sup>4</sup>

To commit oneself to an interrelated approach and to practising it gets out of one's system attitudes of 'do-gooding', of putting the world to rights from a church that is thought of as a citadel of perfection. Equally it involves getting away from the idea that the 'world writes the agenda'; church and world together in partnership 'write the agenda'. Basically it means getting involved with others on equal terms in a relationship of mutual openness which enables all parties to make their contributions. Orientating myself to this was a demanding but rewarding exercise.

### LEARNING NEW SKILLS

There were several new skills I had to acquire, or more precisely to start to acquire because there is always more to learn. I had to learn how to work *with* as well as *for* people, and when to do which and when to do neither. I had to learn how to start where people are, rather than where I thought they should be, and to work at their pace. I had to learn how to work with communities and groups as well as with individuals and congregations. I had to learn how to work more closely and accurately to actual human conditions and circumstances, to the constraints upon people and the authority of their situations. Doing that involved learning how to use, with loving care, empirical methods in church and community work; how to draw out theory and theology from experience instead of imposing them upon it; how to assimilate these skills into my calling and profession as a minister; and how to deploy them in working with church and non-church people.

In all this I gained most help from the newly emerging discipline of community development, from the psychology and sociology of education, and especially that of experiential and adult education.

### GAINING AND EVALUATING EXPERIENCE: PARCHMORE (1966—1972)<sup>5</sup>

My search for more effective ways of working with people goes back to my ministry in Anerley and Sydenham, down town areas in South London. It was there, in the early '60s, that I made my first serious attempts to get each of two churches involved in meeting community needs, those of 13—16 year-olds described at the time in the *Newsome Report* as being of 'average or less than average ability' and greatly deprived. Two projects evolved. They had some success but they failed to achieve what I hoped they would because, I concluded, I had failed to get the churches really involved. They were my projects, not theirs. Eventually I worked out that this was because I lacked skill in what I now know to be the non-directive approach. I had tried to work with the people. I had faithfully followed church procedures. But I had adopted a way of working with people which was a dysfunctional combination of elements from democratic methods, directive approaches and laissez-faire attitudes.<sup>6</sup> And so I sought training in the non-directive approach, i.e. in how to get people to think and work things out for themselves.

My next appointment was to be at Parchmore Road Methodist Church in Thornton Heath, which is in the London Borough of Croydon. (It is in the public eye because of the alleged murder of a white youth by a gang of black youths. The need for youth and community work there had been first highlighted as early as 1952 by the police murder trial of Craig and Bentley who lived in the area). It was in this area, in partnership with the laity, that I learnt and practised this non-directive approach in the church, youth and community work. This learning process was difficult but extremely rewarding. The church found a new lease of life and inaugurated a comprehensive programme of church and community work which is still developing sixteen years and two ministries later. In the conclusion to my doctoral thesis on the work done at Parchmore I described the changes that occurred in the following way and attributed them to the use of the non-directive approach.

'During the period immediately preceding that described in this thesis Parchmore people were experiencing a period of crisis. Many of them foresaw that, unless some radical changes occurred, Parchmore would cease to exist. They themselves could not think of effective ways of dealing with the situation. Their minister at that time, a few Parchmore people and some Methodist Connexional Officials were pressing the local people

to convert their premises into a church, youth and community centre. This scheme was presented as the solution, the only solution. Although they had no other ideas many Parchmore people had reserves, doubts and suspicions about this proposal which they felt was being imposed on them. They were, however, unable to think, consult and act corporately. Eventually a majority of Trustees and Leaders agreed to accept the scheme in principle.

'Soon afterwards, in September 1966, I became the minister of Parchmore Methodist Church. From the outset I adopted a non-directive approach to my work. Some three years later the attitudes and outlook of the people were very different, as was the working situation. The community centred on Parchmore had found a new lease of life. Parchmore people had carried out successfully a re-building scheme. They had studied community development in relation to their project and successfully introduced new programmes of church, youth and community development work. They had introduced some training programmes. They had revised their programme of Christian education and were considering revising their programme of worship. They were preparing to make radical changes in the administrative and organisational procedures to meet the new situation. They felt the project was controlled locally by them and those with whom they worked and shared their facilities. They had negotiated the employment of additional staff — a full-time youth worker and a full-time resident caretaker. They had made adequate financial arrangements for the work. They were working with more people from a wider social and religious spectrum than ever before and yet they did not feel they had lost their identity. They were facing many problems but the despondency has given way to a new confidence. They were able to think, consult and act together (i.e. they were more self-determining) and they were able to cope more adequately with conflict. What had started as a building scheme had become a community development project. It is central to the argument of this thesis that these changes came about through the use of the non-directive approach as defined by T. R. Batten in *The Non-Directive Approach in Group and Community Work* (Oxford University Press 1967). This work and the analysis of it in this thesis demonstrates the applicability of the non-directive approach in work aimed to promote the development of people'.<sup>7</sup>

#### GAINING AND EVALUATING EXPERIENCE: PROJECT 70—75

The next phase was to test out whether this approach to development in the local church was applicable to churches of other denominations. Six years work established that it is. This was done through Project 70—75, an action-research project conceived by Catherine Widdicombe, a Roman Catholic and a member of the Grail. She had come to the conclusion that the findings of Vatican II could not be put into practice without priests and laity having the ability to act non-directively. The project was carried out by an ecumenical team of which I was a member. The team worked with the clergy and laity of sixteen churches of seven denominations in one typical Council of Churches area in North London on their schemes and projects and it ran training courses for them. The ministers, priests and laity concluded that the non-directive approach is highly applicable to all aspects of the work of their denominations: Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Church of Christ (a combined church), Methodist, Moravian, Roman Catholic and United Reformed. Thus the need to introduce people in these denominations to the non-directive approach to church and community work was established. A detailed and objective record of the work done and the conclusions reached has been published in book form.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the approaches were tested and the skills acquired in real life situations doing church and community work for its own sake, first in a church of one denomination of which I was minister (Parchmore), and then with an ecumenical team in sixteen churches of seven denominations (Project 70—75).<sup>9</sup> The approaches were also tested from the outset through reflecting on them theologically. In this the Community Development Group of the Division of Ministries of the Methodist Church and the William Temple Foundation were particularly helpful, and to meet the need that was felt for a theological appraisal of church and community development work they promoted a four year project (1975—79). Two reports resulted from this work. They affirm the theological validity of working with people and critically assess its potential and limitations.<sup>10</sup>

#### PROMOTING THIS WAY OF WORKING THROUGH 'AVEC'

It was only in 1976, after exhaustively testing the effectiveness of this approach and the skills associated with it over a period of ten

years, that it was felt that the time was ripe to promote their use in the church at large.

Considerable thought was given to the best way of doing this. From the outset it was realised that it would be unwise for ministers, religious, deaconesses or church workers to adopt a new approach without being sure that it is both theologically sound and appropriate to the situations in which they work. In addition it was realised that should they come to value it, they will need to acquire real skill in using it, for although it is easy to grasp the theory, putting it into practice is much more difficult. After wide ranging discussion with churches and ecumenical organisations, the Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches decided to form an ecumenical agency, *Avec*<sup>11</sup>. This was to provide opportunities for people of all denominations, lay and ordained, to think critically about approaches to working with people; to reflect theologically upon them; to test out their relevance to what they believe and to what they want to achieve with regard to the work in which they are engaged; and to acquire the necessary skills to put their conclusions into effective practice. *Avec*'s role was also to provide support for clergy and laity during the early stages of using the approach and to train experienced users of the approach to train others.

During the past five years the staff of *Avec*<sup>12</sup> have done this through providing a tailor-made service of lectures, seminars, consultations, conferences, courses and consultancy services. Generally speaking lectures and seminars are used to provide opportunities for people to make their own assessment of the relevance of *Avec*'s services, for them and their work; and to do so in a comparatively short period of time and without prior commitment to further work. While the courses are planned to help people to practise this new approach in their church and community work, whatever that might be, *Avec* staff also act as consultants to church and community development projects. Providing this service involves the staff in practising what they preach. And this in turn gives those with whom they work first-hand experience of the approaches and methods, as well as opportunities to discuss critically what they have experienced and what they have heard.

Several different kinds of courses are made available: ten-day work and theory courses; practice and theory courses; courses for missionaries returning to work in the United Kingdom; courses for theological students about to take up their first appointment in church work; follow-up courses; courses for trainers. The ten-day

work and theory courses, however, constitute the central core of *Avec*'s work. All courses are for people in full-time employment in church and community work. As far as possible, courses are fitted to their particular needs; to the pace at which they can assimilate new ideas, approaches and methods and translate them into effective action; and to the time that they can give to in-service training. Consequently they tend to be short courses, sometimes carried out locally.

The courses have two main features, namely the exposition of relevant theory and methodology, and the practical and theoretical problems raised by members of the course. Only the first of these can be described prospectively and then only in broad terms because the basic problem is to engender those learning processes which best help students to relate theory to practice and to continue to do so in their work. Therefore, courses are geared as closely as possible to current work situations, and this means that one of the basic entry requirements is relevant work experience and the willingness to explore it openly and critically with others.

These courses all have certain basic elements in common but each is tailored to the particular needs of its members. Ideally they comprise a group of 12–18 people with 2 or 3 staff members. Beforehand each member is required to write a paper about his work, either that in which he is currently engaged or that which he is about to take up. During the course the staff get the members to think critically and systematically about their work and the problems they are facing; to appraise critically the theory and practice of both the directive and the non-directive approach to working with people; to practise group work skills; to decide precisely what implications their conclusions have for them and their work; and to reflect theologically on all that emerges.

The evaluation of these courses by the participants has given very positive indications that they have helped clergy and laity of many denominations to work more effectively and have opened up for them new ways of thinking, planning and conducting their work. They have helped them to make the transition from their former ways of working to those they have decided to adopt by bringing into a more creative union both theory and practice, belief and action, purpose and approach, theology and the actualities of local church and community work. They have engendered new hope and new enthusiasm.

Courses have been attended by people from eight denominations and from both urban and rural areas, in this country, in Ireland and

overseas. Some of these people were working in local churches; some had responsibility for local churches in an area; some were trainers of clergy and church workers; some were members of religious orders (male and female); and some were working with young people or the handicapped. Each course has in fact been an admixture of people. This enables members to see church work from different perspectives and to widen their knowledge and understanding of the work of the Church and the interrelation of its various ministries. It also enriches the discussions about working with people, and it leads to new insights. So far there have been twenty-three such courses including two in Belfast; and four for people with regional and national responsibility for church and community work, bishops, chairmen, moderators, directors of agencies or secretaries of boards, divisions or departments. (*See Appendix*). Others are being planned in different parts of the country. Some of them are held from Monday to Friday for two consecutive weeks and are non-residential. Others are being arranged to cover two five-day periods separated by a longer period, say two months.

Similar courses are organised for those working in the same area or on the same project or in the same agency, and these are held wherever they are wanted: again, generally speaking, for 12–18 people with 2–3 staff members and often with the ten days spread over a period of 6–9 months. These courses are tailor-made in every possible way.

So far such courses have been arranged for various denominational groups: for Methodist ministers in Bradford, Liverpool and Wolverhampton; for Anglican clergy and church workers in the Amersham area; for Methodist ministers and community and youth workers who were members of teams in South London; for a Roman Catholic team ministry of priests and sisters in the Archdiocese of Liverpool; for the consultors and superiors of a Roman Catholic religious order of men in Ireland; for the Roman Catholic Association of the Deaf. The work done from 1976 to 1981 is listed in the appendix which was prepared by my colleague, Catherine Widdicombe.

These courses for specific groups have also been evaluated very positively by the participants. Their particular advantages are that they enable clergy and laity who work together; to pursue a course together; to assimilate and test the ideas at their own pace and in direct relation to their work; to work out together the implications of any decisions they make; and to establish a strong base for further action.

Generally speaking they come into being in the following ways: A local group or agency, through one of its members, contacts Avec to find out what such a course would involve, and then decides whether or not it wishes to proceed further. Then, a member of the Avec staff spends, say, a day or a half-day with those who are interested. Such meetings are very much like seminars. They are without prior commitment on either side and, because courses are more likely to be helpful if all the participants really do want to attend, Avec places great emphasis upon the need for all persons to be left free to make up their own minds for themselves. The members of the group next consider whether or not to have a course. (Occasionally this leads to another meeting to deal with queries). If the people want a course, there is a meeting or meetings to decide what kind of a course and what preparation is needed; whether it should be residential or non-residential, the venue, the dates and times of sessions and so on. Finally members and staff work together on the 'course', generally over a period of 6–9 months. A typical pattern is:

- preparation: 3 to 5 days course session;
- further work individually or in groups without Avec staff;
- 2½ to 5 days course sessions;
- further work;
- 2½ to 5 days course sessions;
- evaluation and decisions about next steps.

Our experience so far is that it takes from 1–3 years from the initial discussions to the completion of such a course.

As a result of these courses a rapidly increasing number of clergy, religious, deaconesses and laity have found that this non-directive way of working is a very positive means of stimulating and enabling people to promote their own inner growth as they create a better environment, a better community and a better church. To their surprise and joy more and more people, both lay and ordained, are finding it as relevant to contemporary church work and religious life as to community work.

They are finding that this way of working enables them to help people themselves to make that contribution towards their own growth and salvation which they alone can make; a contribution which is essential and complementary to those made by other people and by God. Consequently they see it to be essential to ministry in church and society.

## ACTION AND RESEARCH

It was on this experience that I drew when I delivered the Beckly lecture. In effect it constitutes an extended and wide-ranging programme of action-research and theological reflection which began in 1966 and is still continuing; which is related to local church work in no less than eight denominations in this and other countries; and which involves training ministers and laity working at all levels to promote service and support it. In researching for the lecture I tried to identify and describe the basic features which are proving to be effective in promoting overall human betterment through church based community work. And in doing so I saw things in a way I had not done before.

## 2. Features of a New Way of Working

IT IS now possible to see that the developments that occurred resulted from the combined effects of four main features of the new way of working that has emerged from this action, research and reflection.

They are:

- working with churches and neighbourhoods as community entities;
- emphasising the non-directive approach;
- using empirical methods;
- working theologically.

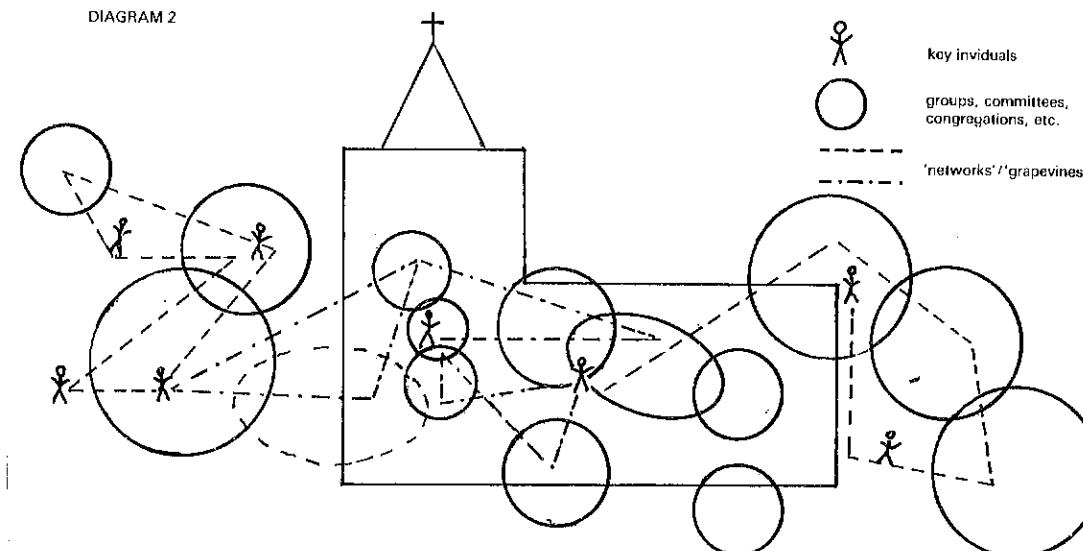
### WORKING WITH CHURCHES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS AS COMMUNITY ENTITIES

Margaret Stacey, reviewing the ninety-four definitions of community identified by Hilary, distinguished between those who use community in a geographical sense and those who use it in a feeling sense.<sup>13</sup> Both senses are important in church and community development work. Here community refers to all the people with whom and for whom one hopes to work in a locality for development; the places where they live, meet and work together; the relationships between friends and the feelings they have for one another; and the ways in which they relate formally and informally.

Each local church and its neighbourhood consists of individuals (some of whom are key figures) and of complexly interrelated groups (congregations, committees, councils, organisations, associations and clubs differing in shape, size, openness and with varying power and influence). Some parts are knitted together by grape-vines, networks, structures and cultural devices, and some are separated by significant differences and factions (Diagram 2). The nature and the degree of interaction, and the ethos varies from church to church and from time to time.

Whether they are conscious of it or not, ministers and laity engaged in church and neighbourhood activity are working with

DIAGRAM 2



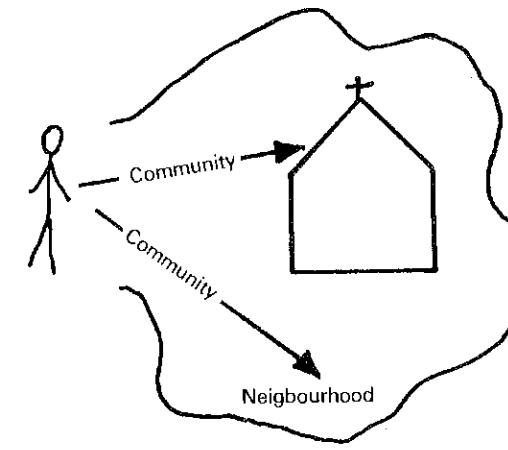
complex community entities within which human and religious factors are compounded. It follows that it is utterly essential for them to treat the church and its neighbourhood as interrelated entities and, when they accept this, it profoundly affects their orientation to the work they do in the church and its neighbourhood. They work to a community entity. They seek to know, understand, serve and promote its well-being as they seek to know and understand individuals, groups, communities or congregations, other entities with which they work. No matter how small the community entity with which they are directly engaged, they work in relation to the whole: work with the whole is always through the parts. Consequently what they do is related to what 'is'.<sup>14</sup>

Such a community orientation is not easy to establish and maintain. Some ministers and lay people apply the concept to the neighbourhood but not to the church. The British Council of Churches is inclined to do this.<sup>15</sup> Some apply it to the church and not to the neighbourhood and the church (Diagram 3).

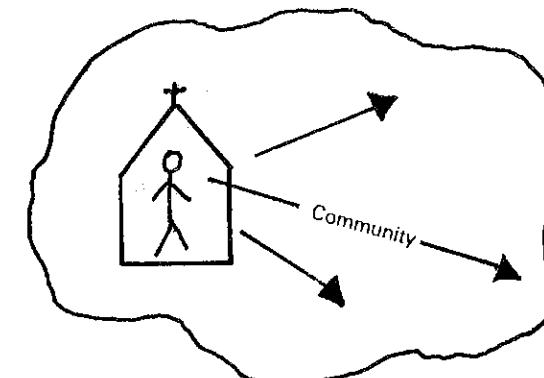
Others, probably the majority, do not work to this concept at all. Variously they focus their attention on one or all of five work areas:

- conducting worship and preaching the gospel;
- teaching the Christian faith;
- pastoral care of Christians and non-Christians;

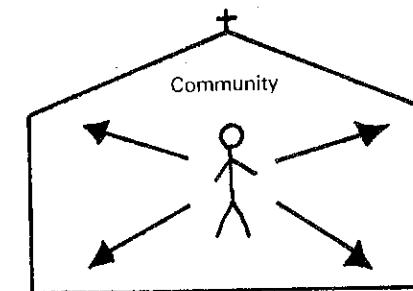
DIAGRAM 3



Orientation One:  
treating church  
and neighbourhood  
as communities



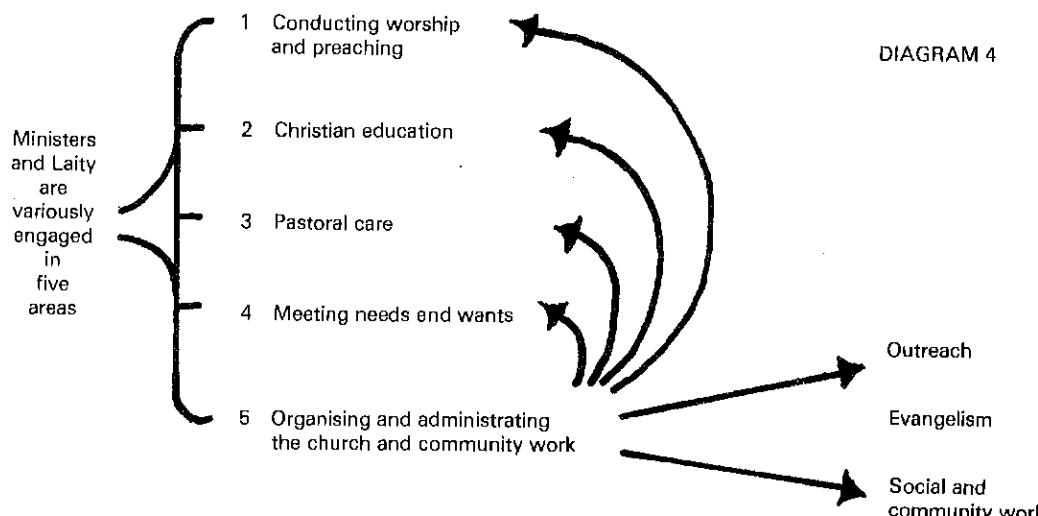
Orientation Two:  
treating the  
neighbourhood as  
a community



Orientation Three:  
treating the church  
as a community

- working with individuals and groups as autonomous entities in the church and in the neighbourhood in relation to their needs and wants.
- organising and administering the affairs and the work of the church.

This is illustrated in Diagram 4.



The dangers of focussing attention on work areas are best seen by considering what happens when it leads to undue emphasis on one activity. The church then becomes, and is seen to become, a preaching/worship centre or a Christian education institute or a counselling clinic or a community work agency or a club or a business. (Exactly the danger spelt out in another metaphor in 1 Cor. 12, where Paul, in writing about the variety of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ, said: 'If the body were all eye, how could it hear? . . . if the whole were one single organ, there would not be a body at all. . . Within our community God has appointed . . . apostles . . . prophets . . . leaders'.) The change of orientation is not easy to make; but church work orientated to community, and deploying itself in each of these five vital work areas, is most likely to be an effective agent in any community for human and spiritual well-being and development. And it will be seen as such.<sup>16</sup>

Doing this calls for community development work skills.<sup>17</sup>

### EMPHASISING THE NON-DIRECTIVE APPROACH<sup>18</sup>

The second feature is the emphasis on the non-directive approach. Practising the non-directive approach in the church community context just described is complicated by various human and religious factors. Effective ways of dealing with the human factors have been discovered, extensively discussed and documented.<sup>19</sup> Here I consider the theological problems and conflicts I faced during the '70s about the place of directive and non-directive approaches in the life, work and mission of the church.

Basically and briefly the directive approach involves getting other people to act on our conclusions about what is good for them; and the non-directive approach involves getting people to think things out for themselves and to act upon their own conclusions. When acting directly we aim to get others to align their thinking with ours; when acting non-directively, we aim for an alliance of thought in relation to their purposes and ours for them. Both approaches are necessary because if we are to live and develop some things must be done *for us*, some things must be left for us to do *for ourselves* and some things we will only do if someone works *with us*. Thus Church workers, lay and ordained, need to be able to do things *for* and *with* people (i.e. to act directly and non-directively) as appropriate. It follows that they also need to know when to do things *for* people, when to do things *with* them and when to leave them to do things *for* themselves, *for* each other and *with* each other. And choosing is a skill in itself; not least because the effective combination varies from time to time, from situation to situation, and from people to people.

Without in any way detracting from any of this, the non-directive approach is a key factor in promoting human and spiritual development. Erich Fromm sheds new light on the implications of this for me by distinguishing between what he calls 'non-alienated' and 'alienated' activity. He writes:

'In alienated activity I do not experience myself as the acting subject of my activity; rather, I experience the *outcome* of my activity — and that is something 'over there', separated from me and standing above and against me. In alienated activity I do not really act; I am *acted upon* by external or internal forces. I have become separated from the result of my activity. . . . In non-alienated activity I experience *myself* as the *subject* of my activity. Non-alienated activity is a process of giving birth to something, of producing something and remaining related to what I produce. This also implies that my activity is a manifestation of my powers, that I and my activity

are one. I call this non-alienated activity *productive activity*. . . . Productiveness is a character orientation all human beings are capable of, to the extent that they are not emotionally crippled. Productive persons animate whatever they touch. They give birth to their own faculties and bring life to other persons and to things.<sup>20</sup>

Those who wish to promote this kind of non-alienated activity in individuals, groups and communities — and I certainly do — must of necessity adopt a non-directive approach. For this approach is not simply a way of helping people to take responsibility for aspects of their own lives previously controlled by others, although it is that. It is, more importantly, a way of helping others to make that contribution that they alone can make towards creative activity and their own salvation and growth. It is this approach which enables one person to get as near as he can to the inner places of individuals, groups and communities (religious and secular) where the human and divine are at work; places where there is a glorious confusion between processes of human growth and salvation, and where the activities of God, self and others are fused. And to do so without 'taking over' and with the respect God accords to us all. Thus it takes us to the very heart of ministry.

In view of this it is surprising that to adopt and advocate a non-directive approach in work associated with the Church causes conflict. It appears that this approach challenges something apparently commonly, widely and deeply believed by Christians, namely that *the way* and *the only way* to do the essential work of the Church is through directive action. Preaching and evangelism, it seems, are equated with getting people to think, to believe, to do and to be what the Church or the minister or the preacher thinks they should, rather than with stimulating them to think and decide freely for themselves whether or not to align themselves with Christ. The first is a directive and the second a non-directive approach to evangelism and both approaches call for vigorous action.

In short the weight of current theological thinking seems to be for the directive approach of getting people to accept the church's views, however uncritically, and against the non-directive approach of getting people to think for themselves. When challenged to make a theological case for the non-directive approach I found it not too difficult to do to the satisfaction of those convinced of its value, but it proved impossible to do to the satisfaction of those who were convinced it was 'wrong'. But a case for the habitual use of a directive approach was not called for by the Church. That was taken

as given, proven and normative.

Clearly the conflict has irrational and emotional aspects, and that makes it all the more debilitating and painful. Indeed, so deep seated are my own original feelings about the need to be directive that from time to time I still find myself inwardly disturbed when I am not 'telling others' what to do and believe. This is so, even though I am entirely convinced of the rightness of the non-directive approach and when I know that I and my faith and my witness are taken most seriously by people when I work *with* rather than *for* them.

This polarisation of 'directive' and 'non-directive' is distinctly unhelpful and problematic. In retrospect, the nature of the change through which I have passed can now be more clearly defined. I was changing from habitually, indiscriminately and uncritically adopting directive methods, towards using non-directive and directive methods judiciously in relation to purpose, people and situation. I was not changing *from* being habitually directive *to* being habitually non-directive although it may have appeared in the early stages that this was what I was doing! I was assimilating a new idea seen to be of enormous value. During the early stages it was easy to lose a sense of perspective because the new-found treasure dominated my thinking and I was busy exploring its treasures and trying it out. From the outset, however, intellectually I understood the need for both approaches; but I had insufficient experience properly to put into practice what I had grasped with my mind. Thus, for me and for others, the polarisation misrepresented the nature of the change, tended to fix the discussion at an early stage in the process of assimilation and generally to confuse the theological and pragmatic issues.

## USING EMPIRICAL METHODS

The third feature is the use of empirical methods. Researching for this lecture led me to see that this conversion to a new way of working with people had become a new way of life.<sup>21</sup> It is other than, and more than, the changes involved in adopting a non-directive approach although that was a key and causal factor in it.

I can best illustrate what I mean with an incident in Parchmore. The much beloved chapel had been sacrificed to build a youth and community centre at considerable cost. The youth work started with a flourish but soon had to be closed down because the premises had been vandalised and people assaulted. The violence had been more than the leaders and neighbours could cope with and the police had to

be called in. All concerned were disappointed and hurt.

Two basic kinds of response were made.

The one is epitomised in sayings such as: 'Can't expect anything else from them yobs! What they need is more discipline. What I say is bring back the birch and national service!' 'They're trouble and always will be, best left alone they are!' 'They are all right really, just normal if you talk to them on their own, it's when they get in gangs that the trouble begins!' And on the basis of this kind of thinking people variously argued about closing the youth centre, excluding the trouble-makers, imposing more discipline, introducing epilogues, or using more of 'our own young people' to tame the others.

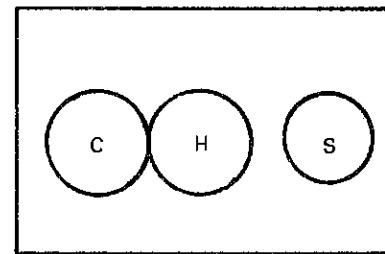
The other response was made by the staff directly responsible for the work of the centre. We started by making the first kind of response, saw it was not getting us anywhere, and then together — as 'active participant observers' who saw what happened from different angles — we worked out from all our observations that there were three categories of young people in the centre. We called them 'co-operatives', 'hostiles', and 'aggressives'. The co-operatives and the hostiles could live together without violence until the aggressives arrived. Then the hostiles joined the aggressives, became violent, damaged premises and attacked the co-operatives and the staff. The co-operatives disappeared and later were aggressive to the staff because they had allowed 'that lot to spoil our club and evening'. Much of this analysis was done through diagrams which became for those involved 'disclosure models' (cf Diagram 5 and Section 6:2c). And in this way the inter-group dynamics were conceptualised.

Next we considered the relevance of some research into hostile and aggressive behaviour.<sup>22</sup> The implications for the future were then worked out by the staff who arranged that the co-operatives, the hostiles and the aggressives met separately, each subject to clearly defined behaviour boundaries formulated from the analysis and the research findings. Success followed, in spite of some early difficulties, and even led to some of the hostiles and the aggressives eventually renovating and re-decorating the premises; to the interchange of members of the groups; and to positive interaction between them.

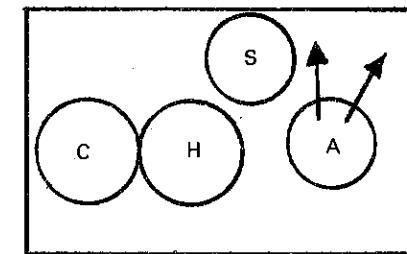
Those responsible for the work of the centre, about twelve in number, had never done this kind of thing before. Only two or three had any relevant professional training and most of them had no academic training at all.<sup>23</sup>

Subsequently, this kind of approach was adopted with success in

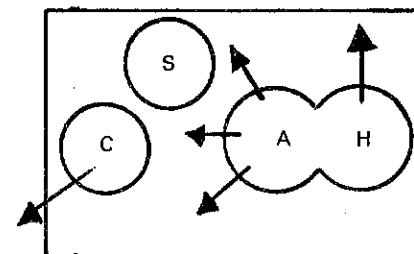
— club —



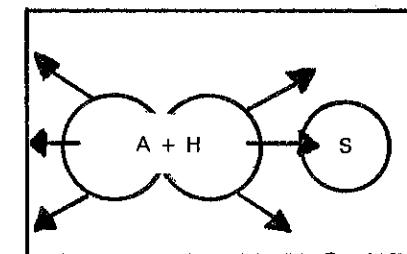
Beginning of the evening:  
positive relationships



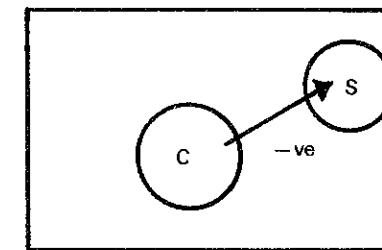
Mid-evening:  
hostility



Later: aggression



Later still: conflict



Next club evening: hostility

C = 'co-operatives'  
H = 'hostiles'  
A = 'aggressives'  
S = staff  
— ve = negative

DIAGRAM 5

tackling a wide range of problems including those related to worship and to the organisation and administration of the church and centre. Gradually there evolved a way of working in which there was a continuous interplay between doing and learning, between experience and theological reflection and between action and research. This meant that the work done was continuously assessed by those engaged in it for what could be learnt from it, and whatever was learnt was ploughed back to inform future decisions and action. Full records were kept of what was done; why it was done; and with what observable results — including what those with whom the work was done said and did, both as the work proceeded and after it had been completed. Wherever possible these records were checked with those involved. This process, best described as action-research, has been maintained in all the work undertaken from the mid-sixties.

I can most clearly describe the difference between these two ways of tackling work with people by stating that one is based upon observation and induction and the other is based upon authority and tradition; the one is analytical (thinking out what action to take in relation to belief, purpose, and the authority of the working situation) and the other is inspirational and jumping to conclusions and solutions; the one is empirical, experimental and scientific and the other is not.

The work done demonstrates the enormous value of what, for want of a better term, I will call an empirical approach. And this is so even though the intractable complexities of human nature are much less accessible to scientific exploration than those complexities associated with the realm of nature. It does not deny the need to make intuitive and inspirational leaps.

Thus the change that has occurred in my way of working and that of others, is in fact part of a scientific revolution that has taken place during this century in relation to the theory and practice of working with people. Like the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries and the revolutions in historical thinking and biblical scholarship in the 19th and 20th centuries, it has given birth to a new 'technology' in community and social work. There is now available a vast amount of data from the researches, experiments and reflections of people engaged in several closely related disciplines which can be roughly described as the behavioural, social and educational sciences. Also available is a bewildering but potentially valuable variety of information about ways and means of applying this knowledge to work with churches, groups and communities. From my experience,

that which is most directly useful in church work is the code of theory and of good practice emerging from community development.

This revolution is taking place in the Church. It cannot be reversed, any more than any other scientific revolution can be reversed. Its challenge will not go away. A lot of work has been done to integrate that which is of value into the theory and practice of Christian ministry and mission. Much more needs to be done.

It is interesting to note, in passing, that no less than two former Beckly lecturers have taken as their theme the revolution in the physical sciences and Christianity.<sup>24</sup>

## WORKING THEOLOGICALLY

For Christians, working for development in the church and in the community is a theological task whatever else it may be, as is demonstrated by the discussion about the non-directive approach (cf, Section 2, p27 ff.

The way of 'doing' theology must be consonant with the way of doing the work, i.e. it must be doing it *with* people as well as *for* them. To do this, workers and theologians need to be skilled in the non-directive approach as well as being theologically informed. They will need to help people:

- to work through the theological problems that emerge as Christians and non-Christians, separately and together, work in new ways;
- to work at the theological issues revealed when what is believed 'below' meets and challenges that which is taught from 'above';
- to reflect theologically on experience, to make sense of the human and religious factors and to make a theological critique of its implications for church and society;
- to promote creative discussions between those whose ways of working with people and whose theological outlook are at variance;
- to get people to think about theological concepts new to them.

To do this ministers and laity will need the help of academic theologians, as we did. Margaret Kane describes the kind of theologians required:

'A particular type of theologian is needed for this kind of theology. Theologians for this process must be well-equipped in academic theology, for without that the process could become simply an exercise in group dynamics. More than this is however needed. They must be able to identify the theological questions within secular

life. They must be able to help people to see the relation of faith in their day-to-day concerns, and they must have the skills and the belief in people that enables them to draw from others their latent gifts, insight, faith and ability to express themselves. These theologians are not primarily lecturers, though they must be able to present unfamiliar material in comprehensible ways. First and foremost, the theologians that are needed are those who can enable others to think theologically. Their skills are distinctive and we therefore give them distinctive names. We will call these people "enabling" or "intermediate" theologians.<sup>25</sup>

This is a very important time to be working theologically, not least because in community work generally there is an upsurge of interest in theory, ideology and the theory of practice. Reports are available of work done by the Community Development Group of the Methodist Church and the William Temple Foundation.<sup>10</sup>

It is not uncommon for this theological dimension to be missing from church-sponsored community work. Workers concentrate on the human factors. Two extensive training programmes for community workers and parish workers known to me, concentrated on skills and deliberately avoided any mention of other than human factors because of religious factors (the one was in Ulster and the other in Holland). Eventually they both regretted this emphasis because they came to see the necessity for working in relation to both factors and discovered ways of doing so through the approaches adopted by Avec. It is our experience that in work established only on the religious factor, it is often difficult to get those involved to take into account the human factor; similarly in work established only on the human factor, it is difficult to get workers to consider the ideological and religious factors. Once there is a dichotomy, it is very difficult to get people to cross the Rubicon in either direction.

### **3. Skills Associated with this Way of Working**

THUS ACTION and research prove the importance of working theologically as well as empirically; of a theological as well as a community orientation; and of non-directive as well as directive approaches in promoting theological understanding in church and community work programmes.

To work with people, however, always involves establishing and maintaining relationships *and* doing things together. The way we relate affects what we do, similarly the way in which we do things affects our relationships, positively or negatively. Thus the efficacy of our doing, no matter how technically competent it is, will depend upon our ability to relate well to ourselves, to others, to our environment and to God. And we are most likely to do that if we love and care for ourselves, the world, the Church and God. Love plus technical competence is a powerful combination, the one does not make the other redundant.

Clearly an unusually wide range of understanding, expertise, gifts and graces is required by the local church to do its work creatively. Note that this expertise is required by the church, clergy and laity in ministerial partnership, not simply by one man, the minister. It includes an understanding of Christianity, the Church, theology, society, communities and of human, moral and religious behaviour and development. Conducting worship calls for the ability to write sermons and to preach them, to prepare services and to conduct them: and to do this on one's own, in an age when the performances we see most of the time result from the combined efforts of script writers, directors and performers! Pastoral ministry calls for some of the skills to which counsellors and case workers dedicate their professional lives. Much effort has been put into this by all kinds of people in a range of disciplines, including some in the Church.

Without being complacent, because there is always room for improvement, this has been to good effect. As well other abilities are required: the abilities to work with communities in the church and in the neighbourhood, and to do so purposefully, empirically and theologically. And these are the skills most lacking in the Church: it was the lack of them that caused the failure of the Sydenham and Forest Hill projects; it was the acquiring and using of them that facilitated the Parchmore developments, Project 70—75 and Avec. The majority of clergy and laity lack these skills and this is one of the key factors which prevents the Church, as an institution, from becoming effectively involved in promoting overall development in the church and in the community. And this is so even though an ever-increasing number of ministers and lay people are beginning to work with their churches in this way. Most of them are 'surprised by joy' when first they learn what it is all about and say that it is just what they have been looking for. Not infrequently their joy is touched by sad regret: 'How I wish I had known about this twenty years ago! If only I had been taught this in college, my ministry would have been so different!'

## 4. Churches Working as Churches

CHURCHES make their best contribution to human and spiritual well-being when they are working well as churches or as institutions. An obvious statement, likely to go into one church ear and out of the other without depositing anything en-route. Its significance becomes apparent if we compare two attitudes to church meetings.

In the first church, committee meetings are normally conducted in such a way that plans, suggestions and reports from organisations are rubber stamped and the criterion of successful meetings is getting through things in the shortest possible time with minimum challenge to, and change in, pre-determined plans.

In the second, the church committees are really thinking things through and involving as many others as possible in doing so with them; for them the criteria of successful meetings are getting to the practical and theological heart of the matter, taking every contribution into proper account and making good decisions together.

The first results in a federation of tenuously attached organisations controlled by a few, possibly an elite and leaves most of those who attend uninvolved — and the uninvolves, who want to make their contribution, soon lose interest and can be put off meetings — thus creative people are lost to the church whilst the submissive are retained.

The second is likely to be a church in which the heart and mind is linked to its body and its experience of the world: a church which knows and feels what is happening to its members, thinks and acts to good effect and formulates a theological critique of its experience in church and society and makes that known (making such a critique and getting people to act upon it can be a vital contribution to human well-being).

The church then works as the Church.<sup>26</sup> Avec's effort over the years has been directed towards this.

It is, however, very difficult to get ministers and lay people to change from the first to the second way of working with committees. Not long ago I worked with some thirty new superintendent ministers. Many, if not most, were cynical about committee work. They saw it as a waste of time, deflecting them from what they thought of as their true ministry and thus to be dealt with in the perfunctory way described above. It took two days hard work to get some of them to see any value in the second way of working, and when they did, they felt ill-equipped to make the necessary changes. They have, therefore, been missing out on so much for so long. This is symptomatic of what the Church itself is missing.

Churches are most likely to work as churches when ministers and laity are community oriented; when they emphasise the use of the non-directive approach; when they use empirical methods and when they are working theologically.

Working in this way greatly enhances church people's ability:

- to put into practice in the church and its neighbourhood that which is preached and thus to meet a great felt need to experience locally a corporate expression of Christian teaching;
- to promote theological awareness, understanding and reflection through which the church becomes theologically alive in new ways;
- to promote processes of development rooted in the church and in the community;
- to help the church to work *with* the community and the community *with* the church.

All this builds up the body of Christ, makes it fitter, stronger, and a more effective workman, because each organ and limb is making a better contribution. It promotes organic growth. It is worth all the sweat, blood and tears involved in making the transition and working in this way because it brings the mind and the heart of the Church to bear upon all its work with people.

From the outset, therefore, my thrust has been towards Churches as institutions with the aim of discovering those which wish to work in this way and of assisting those which need help to do so.<sup>26</sup>

## 5. Some Limitations to this way of Working

CLEARLY THIS way of working is potentially applicable to what the church does at all levels and to the work that any and every agency does with people.<sup>27</sup> But that does not mean that it is all that needs to be done to promote human development and well-being, or that it is the only way to do so. It is, nevertheless, an indispensable contribution, most effective when properly related to relevant current action of an educational, political, welfare, medical or bureaucratic nature purposefully directed to human betterment. It will be most effective if it takes into account the potential in human beings for disunity, evil and injustice; if it takes seriously the need for structural change; if it avoids becoming a way of exercising social control and engineering human affairs; if it enables ordinary, as well as extraordinary, people to make their contribution; and if it avoids the undesirable elements of institutionalism.

Emphasis on the 'local' has its limitations too, not least because some of the main power points of economic, ecclesiastical and political forces lie outside the local community and beyond easy reach, direct influence and control by local people. Local work can, in fact, be nullified and bitterness engendered by non-local action. We know of heartbreaking examples of this. Consequently local workers and/or their agencies need to tackle critical local and non-local factors; and as far as possible to get local people to do the same. The Church is ideally constituted and organised to do this.

Spelling out and considering these limitations was one of the important things done by the William Temple Foundation research group on community development work. It really helped me to set my work much more adequately in the overall context.<sup>28</sup>

Four things only need to be said here:

First: generally speaking the church is a part of the locality, of its

social as well as physical environment, and the workers (lay and ordained) live in the area but they are also part of a regional or national organisation through which they can act as a go-between for the local and non-local. This is a vital community development function by which some of the limitations of the 'local' can be overcome.

Second: the Church, through its regional, national and international, denominational and ecumenical structures, has considerable potential to take action at all levels and in all the relevant sectors in which action is necessary for human betterment. And what it does politically and prophetically would be better informed and strengthened if it took into account the kind of action-research discussed in this booklet.

Third: it follows from the first and the second points, that the Church has the structure to promote growth from below and above (in an earthly not a heavenly sense, that is!).

Fourth: the work described here should be assessed in relation to *all* that is needed for overall human and spiritual well-being in contemporary society; for what it is and not for what it cannot be; for what it does and not for what it cannot do.

## 6. Making the Transition in the Church

THERE ARE two major stages in making the transition to this way of working in the Church. The first is to try it out (Parchmore and Project 70-75). The second is to get those ways proven to be useful effectively used throughout the institution (Project 70 — 75 and Avec). At both stages it is essential that people have sufficient information and experience about working empirically, non-directively and theologically with a community orientation, to enable them to arrive at their own conclusions and act upon them. We now focus on the second of these stages.

### PROMOTING CONSCIOUS AND CRITICAL ASSIMILATION

Churches and workers need to assimilate from these ways of working that which they see to be of value to them, to their work and to their ministry. This can be done through a process which involves understanding, experiencing and assessing such ways of working critically in relation to their beliefs, purposes, work situation; experimenting with them; adopting (or rejecting) them; practising them and learning from them as they do so. This process ensures that the way of working fits the church and its workers, and progressively becomes a better fit. (In Fromm's terms it is a 'non-alienated' activity). It ensures that methods are properly subordinated to ministry and mission and it thus avoids the dangers of ministers (lay and ordained) doing a professional role-switch and becoming community workers or social scientists. It also ensures that church ministers and leaders think their way through both the pragmatic and theological issues which the new ways of working raise for them. It is a process of gradual self-directed change by which churches and workers make those changes they want to make — a process with many applications. Avec was set up to promote such processes in the Church and through the church in the community.

Over the past five years in relation to this task we, the staff of Avec, have worked in depth with some 500 ministers and lay people at all levels of the church and from eight denominations and numerous ecumenical organisations, in the ways described in Sections 1, 7 and 8 (cf Appendix). Discussions have taken place with many more. Generally speaking, in our initial contact, people are at a fairly early stage in this process: they really do want to work *with* rather than *for* people and are trying to do so with mixed success; they are acquainted with the associated concepts and ideas but they have not studied the practical, theoretical and theological implications and do not know how to do so; and rarely have they experienced these ways of working in a church and its neighbourhood. (There are, of course, notable exceptions).

Starting where they are, Avec works with them on *their* work, on the theory and practice of working for development relevant to them and on related theological issues. Thus, their work, ways of working with people and theology constitute a threefold core running through all that Avec does. These aspects are continuously cross referenced.

The basic problem in the limited time available is to discover subjects *and* ways of working at them constructively which trigger off those learning processes which best help all concerned to relate theory, practice and theology to current concerns, and which subsequently enable them to do the same on their own and with others. Clawing away at this problem in relation to a thousand and one situations has led us to see that it can be overcome by being specific rather than general; by using highly structured approaches to case study, problem solving and work analysis; by using various combinations of lecture and discussion; by using carefully selected and casually arranged sub-groups; by practising in the group what is preached and by analysing the experience with them; and by careful recording.

To facilitate all this it is necessary for Avec staff to act as non-directive work consultants to those with whom they work in these various ways.<sup>29</sup> Work consultancy is to people and their work, what counselling is to people and their life; and work consultants need knowledge of, and skills in, the ways of working with people in church and community, just as counsellors need psychological knowledge and skills. They also need to be able to get individuals and groups to contribute their own experience, understanding and insights, to discussions of issues and problems.

Let me illustrate what this means in practice by describing one of the several ways in which we work with people. A person writes, to a

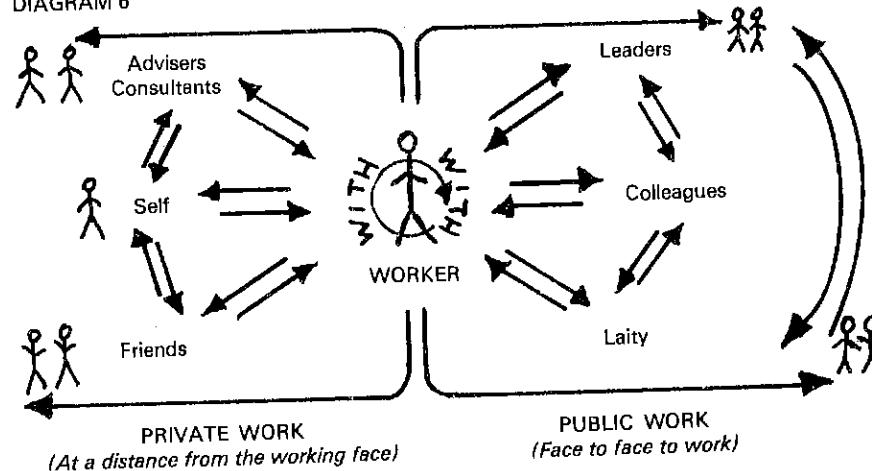
prescribed outline, a paper describing his work situation, his purposes, beliefs, ways of working, his working relationships and his key difficulties. Then, using this as a basis, the working situation is discussed in two private consultations with the Avec staff member and in two group sessions. To picture the group sessions, imagine six or seven people around a coffee table on which are placed sheets of newsprint for drawing diagrams and writing notes. It could be a group of Methodist ministers, equally it could be an ecumenical group — a monk, a nun, two ministers, a deaconess and an Anglican lay worker — it could include local workers as well as a chairman or a divisional secretary.

The group undertakes specific and carefully structured tasks in this order: getting an understanding of the working situation from the perspective of the worker; identifying the things that help or hinder him; modelling how the situation works or malfunctions; working out in specific terms with the worker what he can do to promote betterment, not just what the members of the group think *they* could do. To maximise concentration on the given situation no anecdotes or yarn swapping is allowed. Initially it is a hard discipline for ministers but one in which they eventually rejoice! To illustrate this, I cannot resist an anecdote; there are exceptions to all rules! One of the people who experienced such a process was an Anglican priest holding regional office. He had a good mind and was well educated and very competent. He was the sort of man who could command a hearing and get attention in any company. The sessions were particularly helpful to him. Some time after we had finished I noticed he was still there and felt he did not want to leave. I approached him and he said, 'I am almost fifty, and I cannot get over the fact that this is the first time in my life that a group of people have concentrated on me and my work exclusively for two one and a quarter hour sessions in a highly professional way. I have never had that experience before. It has done so much for me I am reluctant to leave the place where it occurred'.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR 'PRIVATE' AND 'PUBLIC' WORK

Those with whom we have worked needed and wanted to improve their ability to work on their own *and* to work with others. Working on one's own involves determining what one is going to do, why, how, with whom, in what order and when; working with others involves determining what we all are going to do. These are the private and public sectors of church and community work. The following diagram illustrates them.

DIAGRAM 6



Note: The circular arrow in the centre of the diagram indicates that all the time thoughts are going through our minds and feelings are being engendered. Consequently we are always working privately.

I first constructed this diagram to promote discussion about a common misunderstanding that I have identified from my discussions with ministers, religious and lay people about working *with* rather than *for* people. It is that progressively less should be done privately and systematically and more publicly, spontaneously and intuitively. The feeling behind this is that one is more likely to be directive or manipulative if one has thought one's way through things. (Some priests said to me recently, for example, that they felt 'that thinking things through privately on our own can move priests on too fast and break down feelings of "us" and "ours" created by joint work between clergy and laity'.) Given that one genuinely wants to get people to think and decide for themselves, the clearer one is about purpose, issues and questions that need to be answered, the more likely one is to get others to think clearly and decide for themselves. In fact much more needs to be done privately, because it is necessary to think about things and about how to get others to think about them and to come to a good decision within the given constraints. (It is often more difficult to get people to think than to think for them, especially if they need to think but do not want to). Adequate skills in both private and public sectors are, therefore, the keys to effective work with people for development.

Recently a group of Anglican priests, working in a wide range of parishes discussed the preceding diagram. It helped them to see the necessity for, and the relationships between, private and public work. Some of the things which came to have significance for them are pertinent here, although when written down they seem obvious.

Insights, ideas and plans can evolve from working things out, from intuitive judgements, from contemplating, praying and reflecting in both private and public.

The interaction between the worker, leaders, colleagues and laity can be complex.

All concerned have their private and public facets.

The diagram does not show:

- the critical relationship between private and public;
- the factors, from within and without, acting upon the local participants;
- the criteria and constraints (e.g. time) which must be taken into account if action is to be effective.

The diagram needs to be amended to suit a worker and to represent the pattern of interaction he experiences. (For example, he may not have colleagues and the interaction is unlikely to be as uniform as the arrows suggest.)

Therefore effective work with people involves sustaining a creative relationship between the work done privately and publicly. And this calls for different kinds of self-discipline. For instance, when struggling on one's own, group work can seem so much more attractive, and *vice versa!* The psychological effects of oscillating between them can be quite devastating. And some things just cannot be worked through either on one's own or with people generally, and that is where a work consultant (not a counsellor) is needed. One of the great unmet needs is for non-directive work consultants for people involved at all levels in the church. This is vividly illustrated by experience with priests working in areas of deprivation. Their considered answer in reply to questions about the assistance they required was a request for consultancy help, and not for money as expected. And even in these days of economic constraint money is more readily available than consultancy help. To meet this need, some have formed 'work paper groups' (mutual work consultancy groups) as described earlier, in Croydon and Belfast.

Our experience is showing what is helpful in both the public and the private sector. Some points have been made already in the text.

Here brief reference is made to three more.

*a) Objectivity*

It suddenly dawned on me a year or so ago that all the people with whom I have worked knew how to make some changes for the better in their work from the resources that they already possessed, once they got a more objective view of it. The message is plain: help church workers to be more objective in private and in public, especially when under emotional pressure, and the quality and quantity of work done will greatly improve. This can be done through the kind of work analysis already described (cf p 42 para. 4).

*b) Working Purposefully*

In working with people for development, the freedom and ability to think creatively, to make good decisions and to evaluate work done, is greatly enhanced I find, if there are readily available reference points. Clarity of purpose is one of these. Belief, need, resources and the authority of the working situation are others. They are of fundamental importance in promoting self-directed change. (Dewey saw the vital importance of students being clear about their purpose when engaged in experiential education.<sup>30</sup>). Formulating one's own real purpose is often a difficult thing to do; but when achieved it becomes a signpost, directing and re-directing attention and effort to vital points. Most churches and workers I meet are working towards specific objectives which they do not consciously relate to any overall purpose. They have to work hard to define their overall purpose, but when they do they find it invaluable.<sup>31</sup>

To define one's overall purpose involves clarifying to oneself what is at the core of what one aims to achieve in and through every aspect of one's work. An objective is also something one aims to achieve but it is much more limited as it relates to only one of the aspects. For example, to increase church membership is an objective; to get people to live in Christian love is a purpose. The former is not a purpose because it is not the core of what the church wants to achieve. But because it pervades many, if not all, aspects of church work it is often treated as, or confused with, a purpose. And this is dangerous practice.

To achieve the church membership objective may or may not promote the overall purpose. It will only do so if, as the result of joining a church, people live in Christian love. Joining a church is a first, though an important step, towards that. Whether it ever

becomes more than a first step on the road to the purpose depends upon a lot of things, including the kind of experience that people have when they enter the church. In fact promoting the overall purpose beyond the entry point involves achieving other objectives related to worship, fellowship, pastoral care, Christian and moral education, the Christian vocation, ministry and mission. Again, the effectiveness of a church is likely to be impaired if any one of the objectives associated with aspects of church work is pursued as though it were a purpose, *i.e.* as an end in itself rather than as a means to other ends. Conversely objectives are more likely to serve the purpose when clergy and laity work consciously for their objectives in relation to it.

Similarly, to build a community centre is an objective; to help people differing widely in belief and culture to love and care for each other is a purpose. The building of a community centre does no more than provide opportunities for people to meet. It is the way in which it is run and the effects, good or bad, that staff and members have upon one another, that are crucial to promoting the purpose. Consequently the real question, both in relation to providing the building and in relation to the running of it, is, 'What needs to be done to ensure that the purpose is served?'

Numerous community centre and similar schemes flounder because the people are working on objectives rather than on purpose. Many times I have heard clergy and laity say in relation to a new centre or building, 'We will get the building up and then decide how we are going to use it!'. And nothing I said could move them from that. As a direct consequence of fixing attention on an objective rather than on a purpose they could be taking action contrary to their purpose and missing out on essential preparation of another kind. For instance, a committee may well be faced with the position that if they do not make an immediate decision to accept a building contract for a centre they will be involved in, say, £10,000 additional expenditure. The committee has the power to decide but the situation may well be such that acting without consultation could engender faction. Such a committee is much more likely to make a good decision if it considers the pros and cons of taking immediate action in relation to purpose (to promote love and care in the neighbourhood) than it would if it considers them in relation to objective (to build a centre). Considering the options in relation to purpose would make clear that on the one hand saving the money could make it more difficult if not impossible to achieve the purpose

if faction ensued; on the other hand it would become clear that, this being the case, additional expenditure would be a part of the real and unavoidable cost of achieving the purpose. Clearly articulating and working to a purpose is of fundamental importance, but it is difficult to get people to do this.<sup>32</sup> Doing so was a key factor in the people changing Parchmore from a building scheme to a development project.

For the churches, changes in people are the key element in any definition of overall purpose. To ensure that one has identified one's purpose aright and that the objectives chosen do subsequently help to promote that purpose, it is necessary continually to ask, in relation to objectives, 'Why do I want to do that?' And to go on asking oneself that question until it becomes clear what changes one really wants to achieve in people's lives.

Frequently I help people to see the distinction between purpose and objective through the illustration of a schoolboy working at his 'A' levels. His purpose could be ascertained by asking in relation to each objective the question, 'Why do I want to achieve that?' Starting with 'Why "A" levels?', the successive answers could be: 'To get a medical degree'. 'Why?' 'To qualify as a doctor.' 'Why?' 'To become a medical missionary.' 'Why?' To share the medical resources of the "North" with the "South".' 'Why?' To enable people in the North and the South to become more humane.' 'Why?' To enable more and more people to experience and practice informed medical care and the love of Christianity.' The final answer is his purpose, the others are objectives. Such a statement would help him to make choices, to keep on course and to evaluate progress. Should the questioning persist beyond a certain point the answer becomes abstract: 'To bring in the Kingdom', and this clearly is not as useful for decision making and evaluating, whatever other uses it may have.

Thus, for church and community workers a purpose stated in terms of helping people in a specific church and neighbourhood to love themselves, each other and God and to care for one another is more useful than one stated in terms of bringing in the Kingdom. This is so because it is possible for most people to assess whether or not specific action in a given situation is likely to promote loving and caring relationships. The same people may make gross errors in assessing whether the action will bring in the Kingdom. To define purpose involves identifying what changes in people and their environment are key to bringing in the Kingdom. So defining purpose is a theological

exercise as well as anything else. It is in fact a complex operation by which we define what we see, feel and think to be key to overall betterment.

### *c) Diagrams and Models<sup>33</sup>*

Diagrams have proved in my experience to be important aids because they greatly help people to express, work at and talk about things which are difficult to conceptualise, describe and discuss without them. They summarise what is seen to be the inner structure and essential shape of things. They disclose the connections between variables and processes of cause and effect. They show how things fit or do not fit together. They help people to think about the human and religious factors in complex interactions between individuals and groups. They help people to objectify their own thinking and to reflect critically upon it. Diagrams in this book illustrate these points.

Diagrams also help us to think about the 'models' on which we are working. There are two kinds of model: 'scale models' and 'disclosure models'. 'Scale models' look like what they represent and so they are sometimes called 'picturing models'. 'Disclosure models' are quite different. They disclose something of the inner shape of things. They show how things fit together. They conceptualise the process of cause and effect. Piaget has shown how we build up in our minds a working model of the physical world.<sup>34</sup> A model, that is, of a world of continual movement of persons and things, of recurring events set in a framework of space, time and regular order. Such a model conceptualises essential information about distance, time, speed, movement and about number and quantity. Kohlberg shows that we construct models which represent our understanding of the moral order of things: how we see the moral order working (or not working); the moral authorities, imperatives and contracts that motivate us; the relationship between our morality and that of others.<sup>35</sup> Similarly we build theological and ideological models. These are to us spiritually what the others are to us physically and morally. They summarise how we think God's world and Kingdom work; or how they should work or how they will work; how we see the basic shape of things; the relationship between the human and the divine; the causal connection between God, the world and the Church.

All these inner models play an important but hidden part in defining what we do, how we do it and how we react and respond to things. They regulate our thinking, planning and acting. They are most helpful when they enable us to pass effectively from the inner

world to the outer world. Disclosure models, therefore, are at the fountain-head of physical, moral and spiritual change. Not infrequently profound change for the better involves changes in how we see things, *i.e.* changes in our models and especially in our moral and spiritual ones. These models cannot be represented diagrammatically, but diagrams help to articulate and analyse them.

Human betterment, therefore, is a theological as well as a practical exercise, and promoting the reflection that will lead to individuals, groups and communities critically reconsidering their models and making any changes they see to be necessary, calls for non-directive action. This was done at Parchmore in relation to the congregation's models of ministry and mission.<sup>36</sup>

## WORKING WITH LOCAL WORKERS AND CHURCH AUTHORITIES

The two previous sections give some idea how Avec helps individuals to assimilate and practise this new way of working. Most of those with whom Avec works are clergy and religious, but some are lay people; most are men but some are women; most work locally or regionally but some work nationally and internationally. Individuals who have really got hold of the ideas and worked out how they can put them into effect can achieve much in their own area of work and in some cases throughout their organisation and Church. To do so they have to overcome many difficulties inherent in working in this way and in introducing others to it, and they need all the encouragement and support they can get from their organisation and Church. (Should the atmosphere in which they work and in the Church, however, be alien to the approaches and methods they now wish to adopt, the difficulties they face are compounded and may confound them). If support is not forthcoming they have to try to 'take on the system' and clearly their ability to influence those with whom they work, and the Church in general will depend on their status, influence and personal resources. Avec is aware of this and does all it can to help and reinforce individuals as they struggle to work in new ways by corresponding with ex-course members about problems they have met; by arranging follow-up courses to discuss such problems; by encouraging ex-course members who live near each other to arrange meetings for mutual support; and by responding to their requests for an Avec staff member to visit their locality for discussions with those with whom they are working or their Church leaders and superiors.

*What has been said above underlines the vital importance of one of Avec's primary objectives; that of helping Churches as churches to make fuller use of what has been learnt from community development and allied disciplines about the practice, theory and theology of working with people for human and spiritual development; and to become increasingly more self-sufficient in doing so and in training their own staff to do so.<sup>37</sup>* Working for these objectives is best done by Church authorities, local workers and Avec working with each other concurrently. A diagram helps to highlight the significance of this. The idea is shown in Diagram 7.

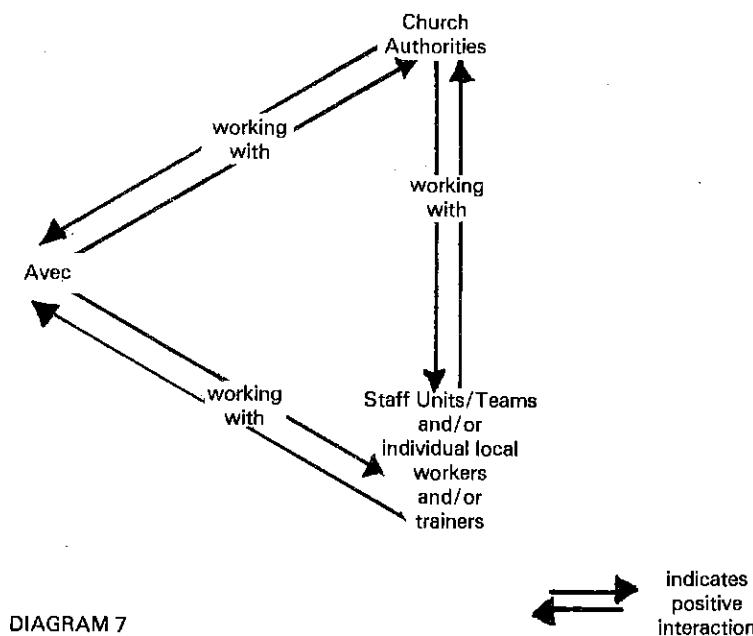


DIAGRAM 7

The absence of any one side of the triangle or any one of the arrows causes problems and can reduce the effectiveness of the work done, especially during the early stages of considering and introducing the new ways of working with people.

Avec has been and is working in this way with some churches, religious orders and ecumenical agencies. However, these working relationships need consolidating and extending, not only within the organisations with which they already exist, but also with every other

organisation to whose development purposes Avec may be able to make a relevant contribution. The advantages are considerable:

- a. It means that Avec's contribution is most likely to be creatively related to the purposes and main thrust of the organisation.
- b. It facilitates the selective use of Avec's limited resources through a progressive series of roles from initial contact to withdrawal: The introduction of church authorities and workers to the new way of working; then the role of trainer and consultant to Church authorities, workers and trainers; finally that of co-worker in the same enterprise of promoting these ways of working in the church generally.
- c. It means that help, support and training are more likely to get to those whom the organisation knows need it but who would not, or could not, take initiatives to obtain it unless it was part of the policy of their Church or organisation and laid on for them.
- d. It means that workers will have the active support of their Church authorities when they are trying to put new ideas into practice and therefore they are more likely to be able to exert influence for change and to get others to work in the same way.
- e. It means that people at different levels discover things together and learn from one another, and together make any changes they decide upon.
- f. It facilitates the continuity of approach and method in work programmes and projects that is needed for development work to reach its potential.

However, these advantages are only obtained if the Church authorities and workers *both* want to be involved; and if the arrangements are such that all concerned can examine critically and openly every aspect of their work in which they need to support each other.

#### AN ACTION-RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Making the transition to this new way of working in the Church has involved and will continue to involve what is commonly known as action-research. This means in effect that work done is continuously assessed for what can be learnt from it, and whatever is learnt is ploughed back to inform future decisions and action. Essentially the application of this concept to church and community development work involves:

- *promoting experiential learning through an interplay between action and research* (If problems are encountered in the course of

taking action, these demonstrate the need for further thinking in the light of experience gained. The results of such thinking help to determine the implications for future action. In this way planning and experience, action and research, theory and practice are related.)

- *studying developments as they occur in order to determine how to effect desirable change* (Action-research is contemporary to the events. It is concerned with *how* changes occur and therefore with the sequence of events which lead to changes. It is research into the very essence of the *modus operandi* of church and community development workers and the processes by which they try to bring about desirable change.)
- *working with people in relation to 'their' purposes, 'their' projects and 'their' problems* (Consequently action-research is people-work centred.)
- *enabling all those concerned to make their own contribution to the action-research programme* (Some refer to this as 'research democratised'. This means that a programme of church and community work becomes the classroom, laboratory, university and training ground for all engaged in it.)
- *obtaining research data through church and community development workers observing and noting what occurs as it occurs* (That is, workers become 'active participant observers'. cf pp 29 ff.)
- *getting those engaged in the action-research programme to vet records of meetings and events* (A record is a written structured account of a meeting giving an orderly presentation of the overt purposes, objectives, tasks of the meeting; any relevant information about the way in which it was conducted; any decisions made or conclusions arrived at by the members; any of the underlying considerations, arguments, reasons and feelings which led the members to their decisions and conclusions; any information about the apparent group processes, and any overt information about the interaction of members necessary for an understanding of whatever happened in the meeting. This method of recording was developed during the Parchmore Project.)

These action research processes enable people to learn systematically from their experience and especially from mistakes and difficulties. Learning from mistakes is profitable but painful. Action research, therefore, is an affective as well as an intellectual exercise which enables people to deal creatively with their fallibility and their failure.

Five interrelated areas of action-research have evolved from directing and re-directing our attention, at all levels of the Church and in ecumenical organisations, to the problems of promoting development in and through the local church in the ways described. Briefly stated they are action-research into:

1. the theory and practice of working with people;
2. working theologically;
3. introducing ministers, laity and churches into new ways of working;
4. creative relationships between this and other work for religious and human betterment;
5. the implications of the work done for the recruiting, initial training and deployment of clergy and church workers.

Much work has been done on each aspect of this comprehensive programme. (That for which I have had some primary responsibility is described briefly in Section I). Using the classification given above, it can be summarised as follows:

1. Theory and practice	Parchmore Project Project 70—75 Avec courses A thesis on work with Roman Catholics being written by Catherine Widdicombe
2. Working theologically	As above, point 1; a book, <i>The Church and Community Development: An Introduction</i> ; and two reports of projects: <i>Involvement in Community</i> and <i>Diagrammatic Modelling</i>
3. Introducing churches into these ways of working	As above, point 1.
4. Creative relationship between this and other work for religious and human betterment	Aspects of Project 70—75 and Avec courses but mainly in <i>Involvement in Community</i>
5. Implications for the recruiting, training and deployment of clergy and church workers	Raw material in records of Avec and other work described above

From this it is clear that most work has been done on the theory and practice, on working theologically and on introducing churches

into this new way of working, but there is much more to do.<sup>38</sup> Less work has been done on setting this approach in the context of other work; but it is desperately needed. In relation to the implications for recruiting, training and deploying of clergy and church workers, a vast amount of recorded data about the actual nature, opportunities and problems of church and ecumenical work in this country and overseas is available. Researching it, determining its implications and writing it up could be highly productive and if money were available to pay for it, it could be done without breach of confidence.

This action-research framework with its five interconnected areas is itself an important action-research finding. It has arisen out of the needs of field work. It has been pioneered by individuals and its usefulness proven. Amongst other things it indicates the enormous need for the Church itself to have a co-ordinated research and development programme which, to the best of my knowledge, it has not got in this field. Such a research programme is most likely to be worked out if it is part of, or closely related to, in-service training of the kind described earlier (sections 1, 7a, 6, 1). Such an arrangement means that, in the words of Kurt Lewin, action, research and training are treated as a triangle that must be kept together for the sake of its corners.<sup>39</sup>

## 7. By Way of Conclusion

THE CHURCH, because of what it believes about God and man, and because of what it purposed for its members and the world, simply cannot fulfil its destiny in this generation and the next without taking into consideration the ways of working I have described. Of that I have no doubt because I am utterly convinced that these new ways of working are essential, not optional, because it is true in relation to ways of working that:

New occasions teach new duties;  
Time makes ancient good uncouth;  
They must upward still and onward  
Who would keep abreast of truth.<sup>40</sup>

The response made by the Church as an institution is critical to its well-being and that of the world. If it ignores or rejects these new ways of working it becomes a barren island in a surging sea of human need. Those who have least: the poor, the broken, the underprivileged, will suffer the most and their suffering will be compounded because they too see what the Church could do and what it is not doing.

To adopt uncritically and superficially some of the techniques that are emerging — as some clergy and churches are doing — is dangerous and shallow. Such superficiality is not going to deal with the world's problems. The Church's capital is dissipated and the world disillusioned.

If, however, the Church explores with others on equal terms, critically but vigorously and enthusiastically, the application of the findings of these new disciplines to its work, it can make a real contribution to solving some of the problems in contemporary society and some of its own problems at the same time. The Church can only do that through working *with* and thinking *with* the world — with the rich, the poor and those who are neither. That in turn involves collaborative action between workers, theologians and authorities in

the Church and between them and workers, academics and officials employed in community work generally. This opens up new fields for working theologically, theoretically and practically for human well-being and especially for those most in need, and the Church's capital would then be put to good use. The Church would be a workman that need not be ashamed. The poor and the rich, the privileged and the underprivileged *together* would grow in stature. To make such a response, in addition to all that has been written, commitment to Church, God and World is an essential.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *The Community Development Process: The Rediscovery of Local Initiative* by William W. Biddle and Loureide J. Biddle. (Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc 1965) p 129.
2. The kind of interrelated development between church and community which is aimed at is described in *The Church and Community Development: An Introduction*, George Lovell (Grail and Chester House Publications 1972, revised edition 1980) see especially pp 32 ff.
3. Change for the better in people and in environment is complex; changes of the one kind do not necessarily lead to changes of the other kind. Assuming that they do, as agencies and workers often do, is unlikely to promote overall human betterment. Both kinds of changes invariably occur when people think, discuss, decide and act together with satisfaction. And therefore we try to maximise this kind of activity in the church and in the community. The issues are thoroughly explored by T. R. Batten in: *Communities and Their Development* (Oxford University Press, 1957); *The Non-Directive Approach in Group and Community Work* (O.U.P. 1967); *The Human Factor in Community Work* (O.U.P. 1965); *The Human Factor in Youth Work* (O.U.P. 1970); by L. J. Biddle in *The Community Development Process*. Maurice Brady considers them from a different perspective in *Planning for People: Essays on the Social Context of Planning* (The Bedford Square Press, 1968).
4. *Churches and Communities: An Approach to Development in the Local Church* by George Lovell and Catherine Widdicombe (Search Press, 1978) p 150.
5. The work done at Parchmore was written up in my doctoral thesis which has not been published, copies are in London University library and the Division of Education and Youth, The Methodist Church. It is entitled: *An Action Research Project to Test the Applicability of the Non-Directive Concept in a Church, Youth and Community Centre Setting* (Institute of Education, University of London, 1973. pp 677. An aspect of this work was published as one of several case histories in *Working with People: Examples of Community Development* ed by Harry Salmon (Methodist Church Home Mission Division 1977).
6. I discuss this way of working in *The Youth Worker as a First-Aid Counsellor in Informal Situations* (Chester House Publications 1971, revised 1975) see especially pp 18f.
7. *An Action Research Project to Test the Applicability of the Non-Directive Concept in a Church, Youth and Community Centre Setting*. pp 432f.
8. *Churches and Communities*: Lovell and Widdicombe p 218.
9. An overview of the developments from 1966 to 1977 was published in an article by George Lovell in the *Free Church Chronicle*, Spring 1977, entitled 'Ministry and Mission: Promoting Thoughtful Action'. Copies available from Avec, 155A King's Road, London SW3 5TX; price 25p post free. *Avec and Its Work* describes the organisation and its work. Available from Avec, price 30p post free.
10. They are: *Involvement in Community: A Christian Contribution* (Published by the William Temple Foundation 1980) pp xv and 102 and vii; *Diagrammatic Modelling: An Aid to Theological Reflection in Church and Community Development Work* by George Lovell with a preface by Professor David Jenkins (William Temple Foundation Occasional Paper No. 4, 1980) pp 62.
11. The French word for 'with' to indicate the stress on working *with* rather than *for* people in the church and in the community.
12. Currently two full-time people, Catherine Widdicombe (a Roman Catholic and a member of the Grail) and myself, a Methodist minister, and one part-time person, the Rev. Charles New, a Methodist minister.
13. Margaret Stacey, 'The Myth of Community Studies' *British Journal of Sociology* (1969 20:2).
14. Social workers, for example, are being encouraged to give their work a community context of *Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services* (H.M.S.O., 1969) commonly referred to as the 'Seebohm Report'. See especially paras 474 to 501.
15. Community orientation for some is the orientation of the church to the community, and not the workers to the church and to the neighbourhood as communities. cf *The Community Orientation of the Church: the final report of the B.C.C. Working Parties for Community Activities in Multi-Racial Areas* (B.C.C., 1974); *Community Work and the Churches* (B.C.C., 1976); and *Britain Today and Tomorrow* by Trevor Beeson (Collins 1978).
16. Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell in *Personal Growth and Social Change: A Guide for Ministers and Laymen as Change Agents* makes an excellent critical comparison of ministry focussed on helping individuals with that focussed on changing 'person-damaging social conditions' in a section entitled the 'interdependency of the pastoral and the prophetic' pp 12 ff. The book was published by the Westminster Press (1969) but is regrettably out of print, possibly obtainable from libraries.
17. These are described in the books referred to in refs 2 and 3.
18. This section draws heavily upon *Diagrammatic Modelling* (ref 10).
19. cf the work of T. R. Batten, C. Widdicombe and G. Lovell referred to in other footnotes.
20. *To Have or To Be* by Erich Fromm (Jonathan Cape, 1978) pp 90 ff.
21. One of the significant things that came out of the William Temple Working Party on Church and Community Development was the realisation that this involvement in community was a way of life. cf *Chapter 5 of Involvement in Community: A Christian Contribution* (ref 10).

22. We found, for example, that some research had demonstrated that some young people are least aggressive when they are not permitted to do certain things but not punished when they do. And that it is greatest when permitted and punished. We had been not permitting and punishing. cf Argyle. *Psychology and Social Problems* (Social Science Paperbacks, 1964. Ch. 4).

23. cf *An Action Research Project to Test the Applicability of the Non-Directive Concept in a Church, Youth and Community Centre Setting* pp 206—219 (ref 5).

24. *Science and Modern Life* by Sir E. John Russell, 1955. (Epworth) *Science, Technology and the Christian* C. A. Coulson, 1960 (Epworth).

25. *Theological Development*, William Temple Foundation Occasional Paper No. 2, 1980 pp 35f.

26. Parchmore showed that a church centre can be a centre of community against what the critics say, cf *Creative Living: the Work and Purposes of a Community Association* (NCSS, 1964) in which it is argued that a 'Methodist or Church of England community centre is a contradiction in terms' p 16. A major aspect of Project 70—75 was a critical examination of working with the Church as an institution for overall development and the criticisms of doing so. This is fully discussed in *Churches and Communities* pp 38f and 200ff (ref 4).

27. T. R. Batten made a pertinent comment about this: 'Community Development's core concept of working *with* people rather than *for* them — of helping them to think and decide realistically for themselves rather than, often unrealistically, attempting to think and decide for them, is I feel much bigger than any one specialisation, profession or department. It is potentially applicable to the work that every specialist agency does with people, and as such is, or rather should be, part of each specialised agency's professionalism.' An article entitled The Major Issues and Future Direction of Community Development. *Community Development Journal: An International Journal for Community Workers* (Vol. 9 Number 2 April 1974.) p 102.

28. cf *Involvement in Community* pp 34 ff (ref 10).

29. This form of work consultancy is described in *Churches and Communities* in a chapter entitled "Working with Individual Clergy" pp 66—72 and in an article I wrote in *Crucible* (Oct/Dec 1978 issue) pp 161—168 entitled "Experiences of Working with Other People on Their Work". Available from Avec (ref. 9).

30. cf *Experience and Education* by John Dewey (Collins Books 1963, fifth printing 1966) and especially Chapter 6 "The Meaning of Purpose".

31. An example is given in *Churches and Communities* pp 125 ff (ref 4).

32. The same distinction can be made by speaking of short-term aim (objective) and long-term aim (purpose). An example is given in *Churches and Communities* pp 79—90 see especially p 86 f (ref 4).

33. cf *Diagrammatic Modelling* (ref 10) and *A Workbook in Experiential Theology* by Bruce I. Rahtjen (with Bryce Kramer and Ken Mitchell) (pp 65 duplicated 1977. Printed in the USA, a publication of Associates in Experimental Theology, Inc. 1019 West 70th Street, Kansas City Mo. 64113). See also on theological reflection *Theology in an Industrial Society* (SPCK 1975) and *Theological Development: An Experiment in the Development of Intermediate Theologies in the North East* (William Temple Occasional Paper 2, 1980) both by Margaret Kane.

34. There is a most readable booklet on the work of Piaget by Nathan Isaacs, *The Growth of Understanding in the Young Child: A Brief Introduction to Piaget's Work* (Ward Lock Educational Company Ltd., first impression 1961, sixth 1966). p41.

35. Kohlberg's work is discussed and described in relation to that of Piaget in *Introduction to Moral Education* by John Wilson, Norman Williams and Barry Sugarman (A Pelican Original, 1966). p 256ff.

36. Some of the work on this is described in *In Community: A Report of the Parchmore Road Methodist Church, Youth and Community Centre Residential Conference at Sunbury Court, March 1968* (available from Avec, price 50p post free).

37. What has been said about 'churches working as churches' (section 6) and 'working with church and neighbourhoods as entities' (section 2, pp 23—24) informs this objective.

38. For example to write up as a code of practice the findings to date. To work out how to improve intuitive action in working with people — this has been done in relation to two major sports, tennis and skiing, cf *The Right Brain: A New Understanding of the Unconscious Mind and its Creative Powers* by Thomas R. Blakeslee (Papermac 1980). And there is an enormous amount of work being done on 'theory' of community work, cf *Involvement in Community; Community Studies* by Colin Bell and Howard Newby (Studies in Sociology 5, George Allen and Unwin 1971 3rd impression 1978); *Community and Ideology: An Essay in Applied Social Philosophy* by Raymond Plant (R & K P 1974); *The Boundaries of Change in Community Work* by Paul Henderson, David Jones and David N. Thomas (George Allen & Unwin 1980); *Ideology and Social Welfare* by Vic George and Paul Wilding (R & K P 1976); "Theories and Ideologies in British Community Work", by Jalna Hanmer *Community Development Journal* (Vol. 14 No. 3 October 1979, O.U.P.).

39. Quoted by Biddle and Biddle in the *Community Development Process*, p 29 (ref 1).

40. Methodist Hymn Book 898.

# FIVE YEAR SUMMARY: Participants in Avec's Work Programme 1976-1981

## Appendix

### Courses, Projects, Seminars and Conferences

Description	Nos.	Location	Nos.	Denomination							Membership			
				A	B	DRM	M	RC	Q	URC/P	?	Local work	Nat/Reg. work	Ch.wkrs
Regional or national responsibility	4	London	39	9	1	9	16	4				6	34	29
Local, regional or national responsibility	2	Belfast	26	6		5	9	1	5			17	9	13
Local or regional responsibility	9	London	100	23	1	30	44	2				69	31	61
Provincial	7	Provinces	72	23	1	40	6	1				64	8	60
Eire	1		11			11						9	2	11
<b>Totals for 10 day courses</b>	<b>23</b>		<b>248</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6 day Follow-up Courses</b>	<b>4</b>	London	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>				<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>
Clergy & wives: stages 1 & 2 (10 days)	3	Midlands	25	2		23						13		12
stage 1 only (4 days)	3	Midlands	22			22						12		10
Lay 2 - 4 days	3	Provinces	26			25	1					1		12
<b>Missionary courses</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>73</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>1</b>					<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>
Assoc. of R.C. Deaf 1977-80	20					20						20	11	9
Penarth Methodist Church 1976-78	4	S. Wales	1		3							4		3
Religious Congregation 1979-81	23	U.K./Eire										21	2	23
Steelmersdale Team Ministry 1978-79	10	NW				10						10		6
Methodist Teams in S. London 1978-80	11			9			2					10	1	6
Urban Deprivation in C/E diocese 1979-81	20	Sheffield										19	1	19
YWCA 1979-81	14	National											14	14
Zimbabwe Methodist Church 1980	21	Zimbabwe										9	12	12
4 day course for RC deans 1978	1	Liverpool		11		11						9	2	11
Practice & Theory Courses	2	London	21	9		5	7					13	8	13
2	Preston	17			3	13	1					15	2	10
For Ordinands, Salisbury & Wells	1	Salisbury	23									20	3	23
Ecumenical seminars on specific topics	3	London	32	19	3	4	5	1				9	22	5
5 Provinces	106	17				77	12					81	9	78
1 London	10	10										9	1	9
5 Provinces	707	4				380	304	4	15	394	52	108	328	275
<b>Totals</b>	<b>52</b>		<b>1394</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>550</b>
												<b>489</b>	<b>388</b>	

## The Author

Dr. Lovell is a Methodist minister and a director of Avec, a service agency for church and community work. A mark of the high regard in which his work is held was the invitation he received to give the 1981 Beckly Social Service Lecture. His opening words were: 'This lecture analyses seventeen years of carefully recorded experience of church and community work and of training clergy, religious and lay people to work *with* as well as *for* people. The experience constitutes an extended programme of action-research which grew out of felt needs for new skills and approaches to church and community work I experienced as a circuit minister during the '60s.

The author of *Church and Community Development: An Introduction* and co-author with Catherine Widdicombe of *Churches and Communities: An approach to development in the local church*, George Lovell studied community development methods under Dr. T. R. Batten at London University.

Born in Rishton, Lancashire in 1929, George Lovell is married and has a son and a daughter.

## *The Church and Community Development*

'A tightly written, well-footnoted, and crisply printed book'.

Denis Rice *Journal of Social work*

'The book is made especially valuable by having a number of very practical illustrations, demonstrated by diagrams in order to impress their methods upon the memory. These obviously come out of actual experience of the life of a local congregation and community and relate to everyday needs'.

Pauline W. Webb *Methodist Recorder*

'An excellent account of practical ways the Church can promote community work. The chapter on resources includes an annotated bibliography. The diagrams illustrating different ways the church can work with the community are models of their kind. One of the best short books to appear in years and of special value for training volunteers'.

*Community Development Journal*

## *Churches and Communities*

'The book talks about the kind of radical approach I think is needed if the church is to be seen as a cook in the kitchen rather than a dotty elderly aunt in the spare room'.

*Herbivore New Society*

'It is refreshing to read a book which, so far from dismissing churches as irrelevant and effete, finds in them great potential and unique resources in revitalizing the community'.

G. Thackray Eddy *Expository Times*