

## **<sup>1</sup>PART 3: OVERVIEWS OF MY ENGINEERING CAREER AND MY MINISTERIAL VOCATION**

**A**s I got into this vocational autobiography I saw more clearly than previously that there are two major phases to my working professional life:

- my engineering career, 1942 – 1955;
- my ministerial vocation, 1955 –

The contrast between career and vocation is quite deliberate. The words are carefully chosen to represent precisely how I think of them: the one was a career; the other is a vocation. There are factual overviews of my engineering career and my ministerial vocation in the CVs which follow. Copies are also presented in the third section of the “Vocational Autobiography” i.e. the one immediately preceding this one, “Personal Note from Retirement” to give an early overview of my career and vocation.

### **CV OF MY ENGINEERING CAREER, 1942-1955**

#### **Education**

1932 to 1942 Rishton Wesleyan Day School, Lancs

Sept 1942 – July 1944 Full time student in the Engineering Department of the Accrington Junior Technical School, Lancs

Sept 1944 to May 1945 Evening classes at Accrington Technical College, Lancs

Sept 1945 to July 1949 Evening and part-time study at Burnley Municipal Technical College, Lancs

#### **Examination awards resulting from the above studies**

1946 National certificate in Mechanical Engineering:

Subjects:    Mathematics  
                 Applied Mechanics  
                 Heat Engines

1948    Higher National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering

Subjects:     A1 Mathematics  
                  A1 Strength of Materials  
                  A1 Hydraulics and Hydraulic Machinery

                  A2 Mathematics  
                  A2 Theory of Structures  
                  A2 Theory of Machines  
                  A2 Advanced Heat Engines and Applied Thermodynamics  
1949            S.2 Electrical Science

English for I.M.E.

Industrial Administration (completed the course but not able to sit examination)

### **Other Examinations**

1951     Forces Preliminary Examination

Subjects:     English Part I  
                  General Knowledge Part I  
                  Mathematics Part I  
                  Physics Part II  
                  Mathematics (Additional) Part II  
                  Ethics Part II

### **Employment**

Aug. 1944 to June 1945 At Messrs Bristol Aircraft Co. Ltd., Clayton-le-Moors Accrington, Lancs., in the Jig and Tool Drawing Office

June 1945 to May 1947 At Cherry Tree Machinery Co. Ltd., Cherry Tree, Blackburn, Lancs. in the General Fitting shop as an Apprentice Fitter

May 1947 to Sept 1949 At Messrs Howard & Bullough Ltd., Accrington, Lancs., in the Textile Drawing Office - May 1947 - Sept 1948 and in the Research Drawing Office - Sept 1948 - Sept 1949 as an Apprentice Draughtsman

Sept 1949 to Feb 1950 At Ministry of Supply, R.A.E., Farnborough, Hants in the Mechanical Engineering Research Dept as an Assistant Experimental Officer

2nd Feb 1950 to 31st Jan 1952 National Service in H.M.F./Army  
Employed as a Draughtsman in the R.E.M.E.

### **Brief resume of career**

Draughtsman III	20.2.1950 to 19.7.1950
Draughtsman II	19.7.1950 to 30.12.1950
Draughtsman I	30.12.1950 to 31.1.1952

Most of service time spent in lecturing in Mechanical Engineering up to National Certificate standard

Concluded service as a Corporal in charge of Base Workshop Drawing Office

March 1952 to August 1955      Resumed position as an Assistant Experimental Officer.

In this capacity the following are the principal papers I have written and had published:-

- ‘Design and Development of the R.A.E. Dummy of the Standard Airman’, R.A.E. Technical Note, *Mechanical Engineering* 176 May 1954
- “Development of Mechanical Instrumentation for Seat Ejection and Escape Experiments”, R.A.E. Technical Note *Mechanical Engineering* 182 Sept. 1954
- “Aids to the Analysis and Interpretation of Mechanical Accelerometer Records obtained from Seat Ejection Air Trials”, R.A.E. internal memorandum No. ME161, May 1954
- “Free Drop Civilian Clothing Trials on Dummy Man Mk.V”, R.A.E. Test Note 530, May 1954

## **CV OF MY MINISTERIAL LIFE AND VOCATION**

### **1. Personal Details**

Date of Birth: 7th July 1929

### **2. Present Status**

Supernumerary Methodist Minister and Free-lance Consultant

### **3. Previous Employment**

1944-55 Engineering apprentice, various jobs as a mechanical engineer and researcher and a two year period of National Service with REME

1958-62 Llanelli and Carmarthen, Methodist Circuit Minister

- 1962-66 Sydenham and Forest Hill, Methodist Circuit Minister
- 1966-72 Croydon, Methodist Circuit Minister
- 1980-98 Associate minister Victoria and Chelsea Circuit
- 1985-86 Acting Superintendent Victoria and Chelsea Circuit
- 1972-76 Principal Research Worker, Action Research 'Project 70-75'
- 1976-91 Avec (Service Agency for Church and Community Work, which became an Associated Institution of Roehampton Institute), Founder Member and Director
- 1991-93 Research Worker Roehampton Institute/Avec, Course Tutor Roehampton Institute, Honorary Research Fellow
- 1994-99 Part-time Senior Research Fellow, Westminster College, Oxford
- 1995-2001 Tutor on the MA (Evangelism) Sheffield Degree course at Cliff College.
- 1999-2004 Part-time Course Tutor, Postgraduate Diploma/MA Course, Consultancy, Mission and Ministry, University of Sheffield. Offered by Cliff College in partnership with the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford and the Urban Theology Unit, Sheffield.
- 2004-2006 Assistant Tutor Postgraduate Diploma/MA Course, Consultancy, Mission and Ministry, University of Sheffield offered by Cliff College.

#### **4. Qualifications and academic distinctions:**

HNC (Mechanical Engineering), 1947

BD, University of London, 1958

##### **Postgraduate Qualifications:**

PGCE, University of London, 1969;

PhD, University of London, Faculty of Arts, 1973

Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship, 1993-1996

DD (Lambeth), 2006

#### **5. Publications:**

##### **Books:**

- 1963 *Ten Days in Hospital*, Epworth Press (reprinted 1964)
- 1971 *The Youth Worker as First-Aid Counsellor*, Chester House Publications (revised 1975, reprinted 1979)
- 1972 *The Church and Community Development: An Introduction*, Grail and Chester House publications (revised 1980, reprinted 1992 as an Avec Publication)
- 1976-1996 A range of Avec Occasional Papers

- 1978 with Widdicombe, C., *Churches and Communities: An Approach to Development in the Local Church*, Search Press
- 1980 Collaborated in *Involvement In Community: A Christian Contribution* (William Temple Foundation)
- 1982 *Human and Religious Factors in Church and Community Work*, Grail Publications
- 1994 *Analysis and Design: A Handbook for Practitioners and Consultants in Church and Community Work*, Burns and Oates
- 1995 Grundy, M. (ed.), *The Parchmore Partnership: George Lovell, Garth Rogers and Peter Sharrocks*, Chester House Publications
- 1996 *Avec: Agency & Approach*, An Avec Publication
- 1996 *Telling Experiences: Stories About a Transforming Way of Working with People*, Chester House Publications
- 2000 *Consultancy, Ministry and Mission: A Handbook for Practitioners and Work Consultants in Christian Organizations*, Burns and Oates
- 2002 with Catherine Widdicombe, *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue*, An Avec Publication
- 2005 *Consultancy Modes and Models*, Cliff College Academic Series, Cliff College Publications
- 2009 Chapter on “T R Batten’s Life and Work” in *Essays in the history of youth and community work: Discovering the past*, Edited by Ruth Gilchrist, Tony Jeffs, Jean Spence and Joyce Walker, RHP Russell House Publishing
- 2011 With Neil Richardson, *Sustaining Preachers and Preaching*, T and T Clark International, A Continuum Imprint

### **PhD Thesis, 1973:**

*An Action-Research Project to Test the Applicability of the Non-Directive Concept in a Church, Youth and Community Centre Setting*, PhD Thesis, University of London, unpublished

### **Articles in Books, Journals and on the Web.**

- 1967 With Riches, G., ‘Evaluation in Community Work’, *Community Development Journal*, October (and January 1968)
- 1974 ‘The Church and Community Development’ in *Expository Times*, T. and T Clark, later reproduced in Mitton, C.L. (ed.), *Social Sciences and the Churches*, T. & T. Clark
- 1979 new phase will involve ‘Experiences of Working with Other People on their Work’, *Crucible*, October/December
- 1990 ‘A New Phase of Involvement in Church and Community

- Development' *Advent, Journal of the Division for Social Responsibility*, No. 3, August (Church in Wales Publication)
- 1990 Wrote foreword for, Ballard, Paul (Ed) *Issues In Church Related Community Work* (The Board of Studies In Pastoral Studies, The Collegiate Faculty Of Theology, The University Of Wales College of Cardiff)
- 1991 Appendix 3 to *A Century of Methodism in Zimbabwe*, 1891 – 1991 General Editor, Canaan Sodindo Banana, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
- 2000 with Copley, David and New, Charles 'Take Three Presbyters...The Role of Co-consultancy', *Epworth Review*, Volume 27/ number three, 2000
- 2005 "Some Resources for Contemporary Ministry and Mission", *Epworth Review*, Vol.32/Number four, October 2005
- 2007 "T R (Reg) Batten and Madge Batten, Non-Directivity and Community Development", <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/batten.htm>
- 2007 *A Critical Appreciation of Some Outworkings in Christian Churches and Organizations of Batten's Non-Directive Approach To Community Development*
- 2008 Leeds North-East Methodist Circuits' Ongoing CLPD Programme A Worked Example 2000-2007". <http://www.preacherdevelopment.uk7.net/programme>. "Towards Developing Local Self-Help In-Service Training Programmes for Preachers" <http://www.preacherdevelopment.uk.7.net/programme.htm>

### **Occasional Papers:**

- 1969 The Youth Leader As A (First Aid) Counsellor ('*Pro Juventus*' *Papers* No 4, Croydon)
- 1980 *Diagrammatic Modelling: An Aid to Theological Reflection in Church And Community Development Work*, first edition The William Temple Foundation, Occasional Paper No. 4; 2nd edition an Avec publication 1991
- 1996 *Work Consultancy: A resource Required by Laity Religious and Ministers*, Westminster Wesley Series, No. 6
- 1996 with Middleton, J. & Smith, H., *A Process Model for the Development of Individual & Collective Vocations*
- 2014 with David Copley, Ian Johnson and Charles New *Reflections on Life and Ministry in Retirement*

### **Distance Learning Material (College publications)**

Study Guide-cum Workbooks for/postgraduate / MA/ diploma courses in Consultancy Ministry and Mission at Westminster College, Oxford, UTU and then at Cliff College: *Analysis and Design of Church and Community Work* (for Unit 3), George Lovell with Chris and Burkett, June 2001, 143pp

*Consultancy Praxis and Theology*, George Lovell, June 2000, 49pp

*Supervised and Evaluated Direct Experience*, George Lovell, February 2000 104pp

(There were various editions of these workbooks between the period 1997- 2006. The ones listed above are the only ones I know to be extant. They are in the Avec Archives, Box [173])

### **Unpublished Papers**

An extensive collection of manuscripts of books, papers and lecture notes on many aspects of church and community development and consultancy work dating from 1972 to 2003 to be housed in the Avec Archives.

Also, numerous reports and position papers.

### **Selected Lecture Papers:**

1980 The Beckly Social Service Lecture (published as *Human and Religious Factors in Church and Community Work*)

1992 *Analysis and Design: Ways of Realising the Learning Potential in Church and Community Work*, The 1992 Avec Annual General Meeting Lecture, an Avec Publication

## **6. Other Relevant Information: Training and Consultancy Experience**

1972-93 Conducted, organised or supervised some 150 courses in church and community development for lay, religious and ordained of seven denominations engaged at all levels in church and community work in Britain, Eire and fifteen other countries, involved directing programme through which Avec staff studied in depth with some 3,500 people the work situations in which they were engaged. (For details of all this see Lovell, G and Widdicombe, C (2002) *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue*.)

- 1986-93 Designed and conducted Two-year Part-time Diploma in Church and Community Development validated by Roehampton Institute. (For details of all this see Lovell, G and Widdicombe, C (2002) *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue*.)
- 1972-93 Principal worker/consultant to some 17 projects with wide range of churches, organisations and religious orders in UK, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria. (For details of all this see Lovell, G and Widdicombe, C (2002) *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue*.)
- 1972-2005 Consultancy work, long and short term, with some nine hundred people, lay, clergy and laity working at all levels - individually and in groups. (For details of all this see Lovell, G and Widdicombe, C (2002) *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue*.)
- 1988-92 Principal worker/consultant to Conference of Major Religious Superiors, England and Wales, in relation to setting up of community development unit and an association for consultant and facilitators. (For details of all this see Lovell, G and Widdicombe, C (2002) *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue*.)
- 1992-95 Consultant to Methodist Diaconal Order and to individual members of staff.
- 1996-2006 Lead consultant in a co-consultancy group of three.
- 1980-88 Member of working groups which published: *Involvement in Community - A Christian Contribution* (William Temple Foundation); A National Centre for Community Development: *The Report of a Working Party to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* 1984 (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation); *Report of the Division for Social Responsibility/Avec Development Consultation About the Church in Wales/Children's Society Community Development Partnership*, May 1988 (Church in Wales Publications); numerous internal consultancy and project report.
- 1995-2004 Designing and developing an MA post graduate course in consultancy, ministry and mission at Westminster and Cliff Colleges and the Urban Theology Unit. This course is now established as an MA/PG Diploma in Consultancy for Ministry and Mission at York St John University, The York Institute for Community Theology, <http://www.theologyinthecommunity.org.uk>



- 1995- A range of consultancies including promoting co-consultancy arrangements in London, Manchester and Leeds.
- 2000-2010 Developing an in-service training programme for lay and ordained preachers in the Leeds NE Circuit of the Methodist Church, <http://www.preacherdevelopment.uk7.net>

### **Other Autobiographical Files**

List and Location of Background and Family Papers, Photographs, Slides and Tape Recordings

## 21. OVERALL MAPPING OF MY VOCATIONAL LIFE

Whilst journalling yesterday I unexpectedly found myself attempting to draw a flow diagram of the overall contours of my ministerial vocational life. Realizing that this was pertinent to my vocational autobiography I decided to make a separate note and to sketch out the overall map which is attached.

Most of what I want/need to say at the moment is on the diagram. At some stage I need to write a further commentary on it. Here a couple of points.

Constructing the diagram (which proved more difficult than I expected) brought out the following:

I never gave up on my fundamental call to preach although for a prolonged period I was more frequently in the pew than in the pulpit (it would be interesting to check out the percentage from my diaries) during the period of 1972 – 1991. However, the preaching that I did was very important to me and was invariably well received. I believe it made important contributions especially in Forest Hill (FH), to Project (P) 70 – 75 and in Chelsea and latterly in Leeds NE but I did not become a national preacher or even a regional one – always a local one. I became

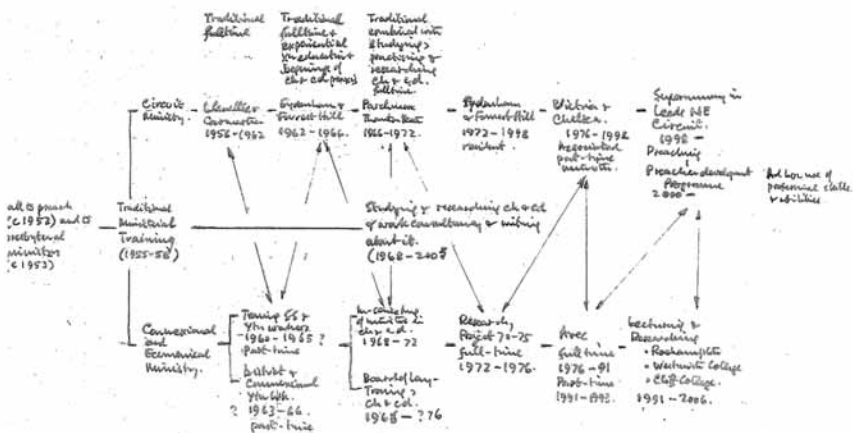
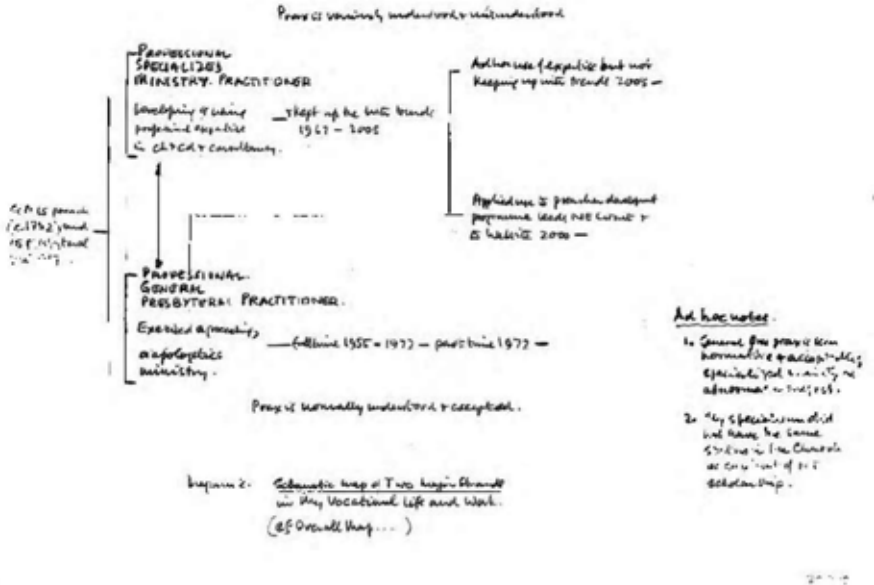


Diagram 1      Overall Map of G.L's Ministerial Vocabularies  
Life = Study, Work + Research. +

(cf Schematic map - - -)



preoccupied with working out in local churches and cities the implications of Christianity. During the early part of my ministry in Parchmore when I had given full expression to the theology and spirituality of church and community development and the nondirective approach (nda) I remember thinking and possibly saying, "O for goodness sake let me give up preaching until our work and witness in the church and city has caught up with it!" Until, that is our reality resonated more truly and clearly with our rhetoric.

I need to examine more deeply the connections between preaching and church and community development etc in my ministry. At times I have felt that I defaulted from/neglected my preaching ministry. But I am beginning to glimmer that as my preaching ministry comes more into the fore since 2000 that there is wholeness in my preaching and church and community development ministry. They write/combine my intention and calling to preach about and bring about a better church and world. Continuously I feel guilty about the paucity of my contribution to the poor and dispossessed and especially those in extremis. What I have done is to try to see that workers and churches and community organisations are better fitted for and more capable of ministering to deep human and spiritual need. What I have not done is to live the life of the disadvantaged and to live with alongside the poor.

## <sup>3</sup>2. EVOLUTION OF MY VOCATION

Whilst working on these overviews last month I made notes about the evolution of my career and ministry. I attempted but was unable to complete a flow chart showing my vocational chronology and content. I was trying to identify stages in the development of my vocational life, the route(s) out of my working class beginnings into engineering and out of engineering into ministry and from form of ministry and one discipline to another. This raised questions related to “flow” (Stamp <sup>4</sup>), turbulence, rhythms, critical vocational issues, the shadow side of ministry and stress. Once these questions came to the surface, I was tempted to tackle them now. After some hesitation I have come to the conclusion that I would be better able to address them when I have done notes on the first few sections. And that is what I am planning to do. So rough notes I made have gone to section 11. Working at these overviews enabled me to do the first convincing and viable list of possible contents of these reminiscences and to get on writing them. In fact after a period of turbulence I feel I am in flow and have done for a month or more. A flow interrupted only by other tasks and regulated by a somewhat relaxed mode of life! I feel very happy, contented and thankful for this.

## <sup>5</sup>3. VOCATIONAL CURRENT AND FLOW

Clearly there is a disjunction between my engineering career and ministerial vocation. How and why this occurred will be examined later. From the time I was accepted for the Methodist ministry there was no question in my mind of my leaving it. There were, however, quite radical changes in the ways in which I felt called and constrained to exercise it and that is clear in the charts and will become clearer as my story unfolds. Similarly, from the time I became committed to the non-directive approach to church and community development work that was and remains fundamental and central to the exercise of my ministry. Inwardly I felt I was being held to it by “hands” constraining me on my left and right sides and gliding (leading/shepherding/conducting/escorting/ushering me along this vocational path. This experience of constraint, which I have by and large thankfully accepted, was powerfully present throughout my Parchmore ministry and continued through my work in P70-7, Avec and all

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3 21.11.08

4 See Gillian Stamp’s occasional paper ‘Well Being & Stress at Work’, BLOSS, Sept 1988 in y file of GS’s papers. Cf *Consultancy Ministry & Mission* p376 for importance I attached to it and still do.

5 27.11.05

that I have done so as a major part of my vocational spirituality. Outwardly, there were no serious invitations to leave Avec and do anything else in the church outside it. Occasionally this disappointed me (I would have liked the opportunity to decline an invitation or two) and from time to time I wondered why. Close friends said that I would not be considered because I was known to be utterly dedicated to what I was doing.<sup>6</sup> Eventually I came to the conclusion that the Lord was being kind to me: He was saving me the agony and temptation of pursuing invitations from my calling and the deflection of precious time and energy from what I was doing. These feelings of constraint and that I was doing what under God I was meant to do greatly affected me and my work, it gave me an enormous sense of vocational direction and well-being; it freed me from squandering my energies on furthering my career and looking for new opportunities; it maintained and sharpened my focus on my work; it gathered, formatted and galvanized my energy to be a more powerful vocational force; it gave me vocational stability and peace and assurance; it made me feel I had an important part, place and status in Christ's vocation and his spiritual economy; it induced creativity. Gillian Stamp describes this as experiencing "well-being and the state of 'flow'". (see her paper *Well-Being and Stress at Work*, September 1988 and my references to it.

I consider myself greatly privileged to have had this experience and thank God profoundly for it.

## <sup>7</sup> 4. HIDDEN VOCATIONAL JUNCTURES

By their very nature the charts, which sketch out the actual path my vocation took, do not indicate possible alternatives. Features of the ways in which my career and vocations evolved, how doors opened and closed, will engage me as I tell my story in more detail. However, whilst I do not understand why because it is not entirely logical, I have a felt need to note critical periods of transition in order to free myself to continue.

One significant juncture occurred in 1961-62 when I felt my ministry in Llanelli and Carmarthen Circuit should conclude. I had a conviction that the next phase should be in a city even though there was a very pressing and attractive invitation to stay in Wales. That conviction took me to London and the geographical base from which I ministered for thirty six years.

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6 I wonder if this also applies to my not being used this past ten years in the Leeds District? Possibly the Lord was being kind again!

7 27.11.08

A second significant juncture occurred in 1965-66 when I had decided to leave the Sydenham and Forest Hill Circuit and I was looking for my next appointment and considering and being considered for various possibilities. Amongst these was one which I had not sought and which I did not really think was a job for me or more precisely that I was not the person for the job. It was the post of General Secretary of the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs (MAYC) for which I was to my surprise and without my prior knowledge short-listed by the Executive of the Connexional Youth Council. During my ministry in Sydenham and Anerley I had become increasingly involved in youth and community work. I was the District Youth Secretary and had become involved with Douglas Hubery and others in introducing experiential Christian education into the Methodist Church. I was one of the tutors at MYD Summer Schools for Sunday School teachers and youth workers. Douglas Hubery wanted me to succeed Reginald C Bedford (Reg B.) and to introduce and develop the professional praxis of open youth work to which I had become committed. My considered response was that that was not my job. This task excited and challenged me. But the other things that went with the secretaryship made me anxious. Traditionally secretaries had been dynamic and charismatic and extrovert people who had great gifts in communicating with young people about life and the Christian faith. I could not see myself fulfilling the expectations integral to the role. The thought of hosting and addressing large rallies fazed me. And Molly was unhappy with all the travelling it would involve and the time I would have to spend away from home especially at weekends. I told Douglas of my reservations and asked that my name should not be considered further but I was persuaded to allow my name to go forward. To my great relief I was not nominated. The church made the right decision without any doubt at all. I thank God I was saved from that post. Irreconcilable tensions and conflicts between the reforming task implicit in my appointment and the popular expectations required of my performance would have crucified me. (See CMM on 'coalitions and alliances', pp118-120. My experience could have been of this kind I fear.) In spite of what I wrote on the 21st October 1965 about Molly and I having faced together what the appointment would involve in our married and family life and accepted it, with hindsight and the experience of *Avec* I realize it would have been extremely tough and stressful. Also, it would have taken me from the work of a local reflective ministerial practitioner to that of national ecclesiastical leader, administrator and bureaucrat – and possibly to a career at that level. This would have been tragic. I would have missed out on the most creative period of my formation as a practitioner and theoretician of church and community development work at local level which informs work at all other levels designed to promote and support it. Thank God I was saved for that

and from a bureaucratic life. It puts any yearnings for a life at the top or half-way up into perspective! More of that later.

Thus it was with great relief that I received the letter copied on the next page from Douglas Hubery. From the moment I received it, I treasured it particularly for the personal note in the third paragraph. At first it was a reassuring pastoral note but as the years have passed I have been moved by its prophetic truth. Unfortunately he did not live to see the way in which my ministry developed. I owe him a great debt for the enormous encouragement he gave to me and the potential he foresaw in me and my ministry. That greatly enhanced my confidence. Inducting me into the praxis of the experiential approach to Christian education and the associated literature changed my way of working with people radically. And that made me open and receptive to the non-directive approach: the approaches are complementary. It helped me to grasp its relevance and importance, to grasp its nature and to practise it. (Initially, subtle differences between the experiential approach and getting students to practise and do exercises passed me by. Once I realized the essentials of the approach I moved into another world. Incidentally, I helped myself to do that by representing the approach through diagrams and models. I think that was the first time I had done that since my engineering days. From then on I used them widely and another dimension of my ministry opened up, one that proved to be very creative.)<sup>8</sup>

A third possibility emerged, becoming the minister of a prestigious church in Bristol and chaplain to the Methodist students in the University. My superintendent, the Rev Walter Coss, a Bristol man, was very excited about this. It was as though I was his son. He urged me to consider it very positively and carefully and I did. The Circuit Stewards of the Circuit concerned pursued the matter at length but eventually decided to offer the post to another minister, who accepted it. I was disappointed. Had I taken it, my ministry would have opened up in a very different way from what it did. Preaching would have become a central and prominent activity and I would have become involved in chaplaincy to university students and tutors and in higher education. Whilst I am glad that the door closed because another one opened onto Parchmore and all that, I have some regrets that I did not have the opportunity to develop my preaching ministry in the Bristol setting. But it would have cost me dearly to match up to the opportunity.

A fourth possibility was to become minister and worker of the

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8 18.3.13 It suddenly occurred to me that much of what Douglas foresaw for me was fulfilled in Parchmore and all that followed.

Bermondsey Settlement which had a great history but was in a parlous state. I declined mainly because we did not want to bring up our children in a flat in the Settlement and in the East End. As to whether it would have given me the same opportunities as Parchmore to promote church and community development, I am not sure. Certainly it would not have been as representative an example/model of local church and community development as Parchmore proved to be. But that was not a possibility at the time we made this decision.

Alongside these critical junctures in my ministerial deployment there was one in relation to my research programme. The three month course in community development that I did with the Battens in 1969 led me into a research programme in 1968/9 which resulted in a PGCE in 1969 and a PhD in 1973. Alongside this rigorous programme undertaken whilst I was working hard in Parchmore and partly as a consequence of it, my work in experiential Christian education and the PGCE studies, I became seriously interesting in researching “those aspects of community life which are formative in the development of Christian attitudes or ideals and practices in children and young people.” As can be seen from the copy of the draft paper, *Sociological Factors in Christian Education*, at the end of this section, this project was very seriously considered and commended. It came out of a project in the London SE District on Christian education which I did with Alfred Gilliver and with John Prickett’s support.<sup>9</sup> I think it failed for lack of funding – or was it because I simply had not the energy? How on earth I managed to take it so far given my work load, I have no idea. Had it materialized it could have been a valuable piece of work,

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9 There is/was a collection of papers on this project. I must try to locate them. They are in the Avec Archives [155] Sec p47 of *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue*. See footnote next page.

Christian Education: The London S.E. District of the Methodist Church  
Project on Christian Education, 1962-1972 [155]

Local Education Teacher In-Service Training Group, Croydon, 1963-1966  
[155]

Christian Vocation: The London S.E. District of the Methodist Church  
Working Party on vocation, 1962-1972 [155]

Harrow Weald Grammar School retreats, 1967, 1968 & 1969 [155]



complementary to my other researches. I doubt it would have become a rival to my commitment to my other research, but it could have done.

One thing that is striking me is the enormous explosion of creative energy that I experienced and generated in the period 1965 – 1972 and onwards of course: my ministry was key to the development of Parchmore; I did Batten's course and completed the studies necessary to enrol for a MPhil/PhD; wrote a book on church and community development; acted as the worker for the staff members of the Ten Centres; through the Board of Lay Training I built up the Community Development Group with a small group of people; in cooperation with CW I helped inaugurate P70-75; inaugurate and conducted 10–14 day in-service training courses for ministers in church and community development work; this work on Christian education.

Listing it makes me feel tired. I am amazed at my capacity and productivity. I had the full backing and enormous support and help from Molly and Dorothy Household and latterly from Catherine, of course.

Another juncture occurred in 1971/72 when I began to feel I should move on from Parchmore. Eventually I became full time on P70-75. Norman Dawson<sup>10</sup> felt I should go to a Methodist Theological College as a lecturer in practical theology or some other similar discipline which would enable me to teach my approach to local ministry and to research it. As I remember it there were one or two such appointments coming up. Influenced by Reg Batten I felt the most effective area would be in in-service rather than pre-service training. I am sure that was right. Somewhere I have worked out the pros and cons of this.

<sup>11</sup>In 1974, Peter Stephens wrote to me saying, "I hope that when you finish your work next year you will find it possible to have a job teaching others about the work of community development." He went on to mention Manchester as a possibility. I had forgotten all about this until I came across the letter whilst looking for something else yesterday.

## <sup>12</sup>MINISTERS AND MATRIMONIAL PROBLEMS:

Yet another possible vocational juncture occurred in September 1986 with the pressing invitation from the General Purposes Executive of the Methodist Conference. The correspondence which follows is self-

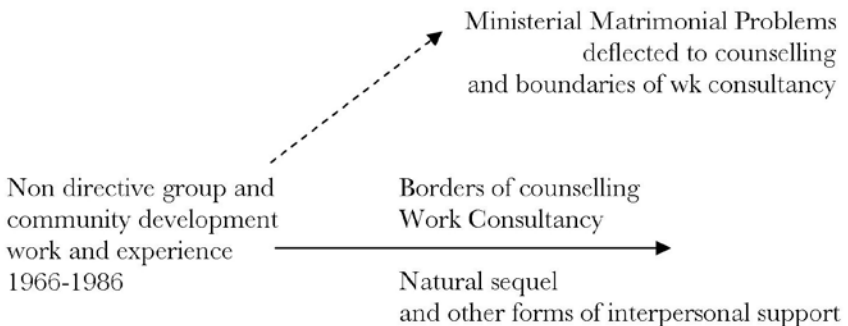
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10 At the time Chair of the London SE District, and one time minister of Parchmore

11 3.12.08

12 20.10.10

explanatory. When I re-read this recently I was deeply moved by it and being reconnected with the emotional and educational conflicts and struggles that it generated at the time. It was something that I would have loved to do, it was near to my heart, my pastoral and professional concerns. But I realize now as I did not at the time – and possibly could not – that it would have deflected my vocational path even though it would have drawn naturally and effectively upon my non-directive commitments and skills. Work consultancy was the natural and direct sequence to non-directive group and community development work as subsequent events demonstrated conclusively. Taking up this appointment would have diverted me to the edge of consultancy and into counselling – I say the edge because, as some of the matrimonial difficulties would undoubtedly be work related (much of my experience is evidence for this) the post would have properly included some counselling. Whereas my vocational path has taken me directly, centrally and deeply into consultancy which has involved considering matrimonial issues from time to time but from a consultancy rather than a counselling mode of interpersonal help. (Howbeit, on very rare occasions I felt I was nearer to a pastoral counsellor than a consultant.) One of our ministers verified this. She told a colleague that ‘I had saved her marriage’. She is married to a minister and I had been engaged in work consultancy sessions with them separately and together. It was clear the work issues impacted their marital relationships and we explored how and what they could/should/needed to do to improve things but I had no idea that this had saved their marriage until she confided in my colleague more than twenty years later. The following diagram came to mind. Revisiting this correspondence has confirmed quite conclusively that with the hindsight of twenty four years, that I took the right decision for my vocation and for the life of the Methodist Church, but at the time as my response indicates it was a tough call against a lot of emotional pressure.



## The Methodist Church

Secretary of the Conference  
The Rev. Brian E. Beck

Conference Office  
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01-222 8010

BEB/ajt

12 September 1986

Rev Dr George Lovell  
7 Reddons Road  
Beckenham  
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BR3 2LY

Dear George

You have noticed the enclosed Conference document "Ministers and Matrimonial Problems", which was circulated recently with my Westminster Letter. The copy that originally went out, incidentally, had a "Confidential" label on it, which was a mistake arising from the printer's initiative, and should be disregarded.

The Conference directed the General Purposes Committee to keep these matters under review and in particular to arrange for the appointment of the man and woman referred to in the fourth paragraph, under the heading "Support", in the centre pages of the document, who could be contacted by ministers, deaconesses, or others, or their spouses in total confidentiality if they needed help. The intention behind such an appointment is not that the two people concerned should bear the entire pastoral load of such contact, but that they would accumulate a list of consultants in various regions with whom people in need could be put in touch.

You will recognise the importance and seriousness of that responsibility, and the General Purposes Executive at its meeting yesterday gave very careful thought to the question who might be approached to serve the connexion in this way.

We were unanimous in thinking that you should be asked to be one of the two people to do this. I realise your many other commitments and the almost unlimited nature of the job if it were allowed to become something to be done single-handed, but the committee was quite clear that you were well known in the connexion, would be trusted to preserve confidentiality and would be recognised as not having other constitutional responsibilities which might conflict with your duty to those who came to you in pastoral need.

If you felt able to respond to this invitation I should be very glad to help in any way, by conversation or letter, to clarify any points that you might want to explore, before you gave a firm reply. For my own part, I very much hope that you will feel able to say yes.

With every good wish

Yours sincerely



Brian E Beck

Enc

Diff / disadvantages from pers client's point of view

- I am unavailable to take a wk or 2 out at a time or difficult to get a v. little time.
- I am closely identified with one aspect of int. chr. & cd. this did put some people off.
- ? • I am not more (am a natural) same.

- Aware of the size & intimidated by it.
- Aware that I am a Methodist.
- Not being given chance to minister.
- Should not go to talk.

4/28/80

my point of view.

P  
 Disappointing with while  
 involved in pastoral  
 capacity.  
 Seen to be all rounder  
 Seen to be called to do it  
 it ministry.  
 Counter-balance some  
 people's view of me.  
 Became better known.

Very pleased.

C  
 Time & energy demands  
 Difficulty of meeting the role.  
 I may not trust.  
 The people chosen to help.  
 Responsive ministry, i.e., it comes  
 when it comes, timely & unobtrusively.

20th September, 1986

Dear Brian,

Thank you very much indeed for your letter asking me to be one of the two pastoral contacts for ministers with matrimonial problems. The invitation surprised, overwhelmed and humbled me. Since I received it on Tuesday morning I have been grappling with the implications of it. It has generated conflict between my heart and my head. My Methodist pastoral heart desperately wants me to accept it because I am painfully aware of the need and I would love to do it because of my deep affection for our ministry. My head says it is not possible for me to find the time and the energy to do it. Sadly for me, the result of my struggle to make a responsible response is that I have reluctantly from both my head and my heart to decline the invitation.

I simply cannot see how I can do the job in the way in which it needs to be done. On the one hand the nature of my work means that quite often I will not be able to respond adequately to needs as they arise. As you know I work with groups of people intensively and for long hours for a week or more at a time, frequently away from London and sometimes abroad. When I am conducting these courses I am not easily accessible and I have very little time and energy for anything else at all. On the other hand, sohome as I might, I cannot see how I could take on all that is involved in inaugurating the scheme and getting a network of consultants because of the situation in which I find myself. My work load is punishing, we have just inaugurated a two-year part-time diploma course to which I am the sole tutor and we have development plans on the stocks to which I have committed myself.

Several times I have considered throwing caution to the wind and following my heart alone. But I feel that that would be an act of folly not faith. It could compromise both the plans you have so carefully drawn up and the work I am doing through Aveo. And that work does of itself contribute to overcoming some matrimonial problems and averting others.

My sadness is compounded because I would love to work with you personally on this. Seeing you dealing with difficult cases over the past year or so has greatly impressed me. I was deeply moved when I read Ministers and Matrimonial Problems earlier this month. I thought you had got right the balance between discipline and compassion and between law and grace. I think it is a very important paper. May I presume to say that I am thankful to God that you are a central figure in all that is being done to work through these difficult problems.

.../2

Revd Brian E Bock

Sheet 2

26th September, 1986

Would you please explain my position to the Committee. I deeply appreciate the confidence they place in me.

This has been a very difficult letter to write and it will be difficult to post it. I pray God that you will be able to find the right person. You know that I will support them in any way I can, but I need to say it.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

George Lovell

Revd Brian E Bock  
Secretary of the Conference  
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London, SW1H 9AN

255c  
- 8 OCT 1986

## The Methodist Church

Secretary of the Conference  
The Rev. Brian E. Beck

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EB/ajt

October 1986

Rev Dr George Lovell  
VEC  
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London  
W3 5TX

Dear George

Only the absence of my secretary on holiday this last week has prevented me replying instantly to your letter of 20 September.

I was very moved by it and recognise the burden the General Purposes Committee placed upon you. It would be quite wrong to press you to reconsider, although I know that there will be many who will be disappointed that your circumstances do not allow your heart to rule your head.

I trust your judgement and recognise how difficult it was to come to the decision, and am grateful that you gave it such careful consideration.

With every good wish

Yours sincerely



Brian E Beck

## <sup>13</sup>DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR PATIENTS REDISCOVERED!

This afternoon I found the manuscript *Daily Devotions for Patients* which I wrote during the early part of my ministry in Wesley Hall (unpublished) as a sequence to *Ten Days in Hospital* (which I wrote in Carmarthen and was published in 1963). I was thrilled. Last time I saw it was when we moved here. I never offered it to a publisher because soon after I completed it a similar book was published, I think by Arnold Kellett.

I was moved by the dedication. It reminded me that there was a real possibility at that time that I could have tried to become a ‘devotional writer’ but church and community development took over!

At that time, my practice was to get up between 4 and 5 am during the period after Easter and up to the summer holidays in order to do some serious study or writing. I did this for several years. It meant I got two hours solid work in before breakfast after which I took up my normal routine. In all probability much of this was written at that time.

## <sup>14</sup>FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON MY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

Searching for the collection of papers referred to in a footnote earlier led to my unearthing notes of my wider involvement in educational projects. Putting these together with those already mentioned, I arrive at the following list:

1. A London SE District project on Christian education, 1962-1972 (To the best of my memory this project originated in a small group I convened and led whilst I was District SE Youth Secretary. It comprised the secretaries of the various sections of the Youth Council’s work, children, youth etc. Alan Broadbent and Denis Gardiner were members and I think Bernie Heafford. There may have been another. We used to meet with our wives for a day’s conference about once a quarter in the East Grinstead and Oxted Circuit where Alan was minister of a Home Mission house church experiment. These were social and devotional occasions when we grappled with issues related to secular and religious education issues

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<sup>13</sup> 4.3.11

<sup>14</sup> 27.11.08



of children, young people and adults. They were quite formative occasions from 1962-1966 which I believe, were one of the many things which led to the sociological factors in Christian education research proposal.

2. A London SE District project on vocation, 1962-1968. (This was work I did with Alfred Gilliver from whom I learnt a lot about writing papers and reports and getting them considered by communities. He was a prominent member of the SE District and the LPMA. Alfred and I were the two local representatives on the Board of Lay Training otherwise composed of connexional dignitaries! This interest in vocation has continued and is taken up in Sections 9:3 Board of Lay Training and 11 Vocational Allies and Soul Friends.
3. An in-service training programme for teachers in the London Borough of Croydon, 1963-1966. (I cannot recall how I came to be involved in this project but it resulted in leading the project with Miss ET May, an HMI in the London Borough of Croydon. Incidentally she was the daughter of a Methodist minister and a member of a distinguished Methodist family. By the time I knew her she was, I believe, a Quaker. It was a very creative partnership, she had a very fine mind, well trained and disciplined, and a progressive well-informed approach to education. At my suggestion the work was eventually taken over by Palmer of the Grubb Institute.)
4. Sixth form secular retreats for pupils of Harrow Weald Grammar School in 1967, 68 and 69.

(These were exciting and extremely worthwhile events most revealing about teenage relationships and very rewarding.)

5. Study Conference on “Success and Failure in Technical Education – Implications and Applications of Recent Research”, 31st March – 2nd April 1964, Garnett College, Roehampton. (Little did I know at the time how Roehampton was to feature in my life at a later date! I attended this Conference with Terry Walton. Two things struck me as I leafed my way through my notes of the sessions and a pile of papers I had kept but now destroyed. The first is the way in which it linked with my own technical education and the teaching that I had done whilst I was a minister in Carmarthen at Pibwrlwyd Rural Technical College. From 1959-1962 I was a part-time lecturer in engineering to motor mechanics. The second was what came as a revelation at the conference. One of the lecturers, I think it was MP Carter, at the time a lecturer in the Dept of Social Anthropology,

University of Edinburgh, who made the point that college authorities had pastoral responsibilities for students involved that, inter alia, they should structure their courses to facilitate transition from one course to another when students found that they had made wrong choices or been guided into inappropriate courses. Both parties were involved in such decisions and therefore had responsibilities for their outcomes. This was startling. Pastoral care took on new dimensions: it involved constructive technical provision as well as personal support and comfort; it was as relevant in the secular as the religious world!)

6. Correspondence about technical college chaplains, 1965 (Correspondence with Douglas Hubery and through him with George Osborn, Secretary at that time of the Methodist Education Committee, about chaplains to technical colleges was in the same file. At an earlier date, possibly stimulated by the Conference noted in point 5 above, I had discussed with Douglas the need for such chaplains normative common in other more prestigious schools and colleges. The correspondence was triggered by an advertisement for a chaplain/lecturer at Bath Technical College. Douglas asked if I had thought of applying. The essence of my reply is interesting.

*Yes, the thought had occurred to me that this may be a job I could do. It certainly challenges me but as I have said in my letter to Mr. Osborn my present circuit commitments make it extremely difficult for me to consider making application for the post. I would be prepared to 'go through the hoops of our complicated processes' if all other things were favourable and if I felt sure God was calling me to such work. If we are to enter into 'Technical Education with the gospel of Jesus Christ I feel we will have to take such opportunities as these.*

*February 1965*

This was immediately prior to my Parchmore Ministry.

I note from a cutting I kept that in April 1966 the BCC addressed the situation seriously.)

As I browsed through this material and sorted out what I was going to save, all kinds of thoughts went through my mind about my involvement in various forms of education and training and the complexities of my feelings towards them. These tumbling thoughts took me beyond the way in which the idea of a research project proposal on sociological factors in Christian education presented a significant vocational choice. I need to try to note these thoughts.

1. Throughout my career and my vocational life I have experienced a gravitational pull towards the promotion of my own education and that of others: arguably intensified by denied access to a grammar school education. I have been aware of it since I got a junior technical scholarship. Undoubtedly it is something of a compensatory reaction and response to my eleven plus failure, it is much more than that. I have a real love and propensity for it especially in relation to vocational education and further and in-service training. I have worked hard to get a better education for myself and others. The concept of education has fascinated me.
2. There has always been an educational core to my ministry. During the early years I worked at experiential Christian education (cf what Leslie Griffiths has written about that!<sup>15</sup>) and this was very strong in Sydenham, Forest Hill and Parchmore. In Parchmore I introduced the concept of the Boys' and Girls' Brigades and initiated a comprehensive educational programme for all the young people and children. (See the Parchmore Partnership pp 43-46. Avec was an educational and training agency and my subsequent work at Westminster College and Cliff College was educational (I intend to take this up again in Section 10. There is a file of papers on experiential education.)
3. Another aspect of my involvement in education was part-time. Whilst in Egypt as a National Serviceman I developed a teaching programme for fellow soldiers in engineering for the Ordinary National Certificate Diploma; before that I was an assistant to Professor Riffkin at Burnley Municipal Technical College in evening classes for that course; Pibwryd has already been mentioned; I did a half term's teaching in a Secondary Modern School at the end of my second year at Richmond College.
4. Had I not gained entry into Christian ministry in 1955 I had decided I would try to take a degree in mathematics and become a technical college lecturer or teacher.

I have a haunting feeling that I am approaching in these notes or reading around a core pivotal point in my life and ministry which I have not yet clarified to my satisfaction. Educational issues take me close to it, but is there more? I suspect so and my hunch is that it would be helpful and revealing if I could become clearer about this.

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15 See *MR* article July 20th 2006, copy at the end of this section.

AN AFTERTHOUGHT<sup>16</sup>

As I finished the previous note I felt dissatisfied with it, the writing did not feel sharp enough. Overnight, feeling that I was using ‘education’ in too general or broad a way, I found myself distinguishing between formal and informal modes of education, learning and training and the knowledge, insights and understandings gained through them. I delight and rejoice in insights and profound understanding of human and spiritual affairs and I adore the processes by which they are achieved and generated. That seems to be at the centre of the gravitational pull towards education that I experience. It is knowledge of that kind—or is it wisdom?—that I deeply desire and treasure and any form of education or training or study or research which generates it. Study or educational programmes which depend largely upon memory work or learning by rote I find enormously problematical and unattractive even though I greatly admire—no, revere—those who excel in it. Possibly or even probably because to make even modest progress in such studies the work I have to put in seems disproportionate to the progress made and the ground gained and held. Whereas the opposite is the case in what could be described as inductive learning. This is illuminating for me the way in which I venerate linguists and bemoan my own inability in this sphere. This has been terribly damaging and debilitating to me: I have allowed it to intimidate me, I have used it as the criticism of an educated person and to think, feel and say that this means I am not educated or not properly educated. (Have I been deluding myself that things would have been better had I had a classical education? Possibly!) This form of extrapolation is a form of false logic. What I should compare if I must, is my gift of emotional intelligence with other forms of intelligence. People with many different forms of intelligence can be educated or uneducated! At my best and happiest I have exulted in what I have got and what I am able to do. At no point would I have traded it for any other form of intelligence that excluded it. But to my shame I have coveted linguistic ability and a better memory.

[This is the kind of reflecting that I should be aiming for not least because I feel it is having positive effects upon me. It is slowly and incrementally changing my inner attitudes for the better and giving me a better perspective on myself and my life and vocation. Possibly the thinking and sorting out I have done over the past few days and wrote up yesterday was a necessary precursor. I had a disturbed night and dreams. I now realize that this contributed to it in part.]

## JOHN PRICKETT AND TENDERDEN MANOR 'SCHOOL'

<sup>17</sup>John Prickett had a great influence upon me during the 1960s. I do not remember how I first met him, probably through the London SE District/ Synod of which he was a prominent member. In 3.68 I refer to his support and encouragement in relation to education projects in that District and particularly to the research I was contemplating regarding *Sociological Factors in Christian Education*, 1969. This would be during his time as Secretary to the Education Committee of the British Council of Churches. He was instrumental in getting this considered seriously by academics particularly by W.R. Nisbett<sup>18</sup>, chair to the committee and by the British Council of Churches Education Committee. But as I recall it he was also very supportive of my growing interest and commitment to open youth work and church and community development. Presumably it was that which led him to invite me to spend a day with him at Tenderden Manor, a 'school' based very much on the same principles, approaches and methods as the much better known Summerhill (see (appended.... about this.) Tenderden Manor was run by George Lywood. (JP would know of me through my work as District Youth Secretary.) John was urbane, highly educated, deeply Christian, most approachable even though he was somewhat reserved, at ease in any company. It was a measure of the man that after being the headmaster of a public school for twenty six years he dedicated himself to Tenderden Manor for seven years up to its closure in 1967.

My memory of the visit is quite vivid. As always he was immaculately dressed in a grey lounge suit. There were only two or three basic rules related to helping the community run smoothly and respecting other peoples' rights and freedoms. Members were not compelled to go to classes. John told me of one student who had been at Tenderden Manor for some time and not attended any formal classes. One summer he said to John that he had decided he wanted to go to Oxford or Cambridge to study French and to take scholarship papers in Nov/Dec. He had not studied the language previously! With John's help he passed the exams and got a place at University. John's comment was that he was amazed at what people could achieve when of their own free will they had decided just what they wanted to do and why. To do this, he said, they needed the space free of pressure

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<sup>17</sup> 8.11

<sup>18</sup> W.R. Nisbett was an outstanding figure in education at the time. He was Dean and Professor of Education, University of London Institute of Education. He took a deep personal interest in me and what I was trying to do in my work.

and coercion to conform to goals or norms decided by others. And that was precisely what most of those at the school needed. Some of those in the school he said were from upper middle class families and public schools. They had left home and school because of pressures to conform. Their rebelling and learning could be triggered by an issue such as the insistence by those in authority that they have their long hair cut to more traditional styles. They became alienated. Tenderden Manor set out to let them find themselves. Members expressed their independence and autonomy in many ways – dress, mode of living – and even setting up their own living territory under a staircase inside or a canopy outside! I was deeply impressed by the easy and direct manner in which John, in his suit and cultured accent, related to and conversed with the young people whose dress, outlook and discipline were the antithesis to his. This was an enormous lesson to me: you do not have to pretend to be like others to relate to them in depth and sincerity. Be yourself; accept others as they are; approach them as equals without condescension or pretence. This was one of the many experiences that made me search for effective ways of relating with and working with people outside (and inside) the church from whom I differed significantly and made me receptive to the non-directive approach to which I was soon to be introduced.

<sup>19</sup>I need to check that I have written enough about the educational work I did in London SE District

- group of youth secs. (? Refer to anything in the Archives)
- Alfred Gilliver and Pauline Webb
- David Clark.