

PART 9:5 FROM AVEC AS AN AGENCY TO AVEC AS A RESOURCE

AS IT BECAME CLEAR that the closure of Avec was unstoppable attention turned to:

- continuing aspects of Avec's training and consultancy programme;
- harvesting its assets;
- preserving its records;
- selling the large number of books in stock about the non-directive approach to church and community development.

A generic title for this phase could well be, 'Avec: An Approach and Resource' in contradistinction, that is, to the previous phase which was described as 'Avec: Agency and Approach'. (In fact this movement led me to write an article in 2000 for Modem's Newsletter entitled *Avec: From Agency to Resource* (see Appendix IX). Avec Resources, a small charitable trust, was developed and adapted to manage and to help to fund this new situation.

In an open letter to the friends of Avec Catherine and I described the major developments during the period 1994 – 2007 which we thought of as 'a second lap of Avec's history'. As this letter gives an overview of this period I can do no better than include it in this section. It is presented in the next five pages.

After some brief notes about this phase I summarise the present situation as I see it in 2014. At the end of the section there is a copy of the prayers that Catherine said at a service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Avec. This service was in the Chelsea Chapel for those members of staff who were available. I am not sure of the date.

Notes about the letter Avec, 1994 – 2007

1. The very positive responses to the letter that I received are on file.
2. The initiatives taken to continue Avec's training and consultancy programme were headed up by Keith Davies who invited Catherine and me to be involved with him and the other Associates which we were pleased to do.
3. Alerted by May Farina, the last of the secretaries to Avec, said that Malcolm Grundy and Catherine Ryan had instructed her to see

that all the extant Avec records were shredded (many of them were already stored in black bags in the cellar of Chelsea church ready to be destroyed), Catherine leapt into action and saved them. The story of what happened to them and how they were formed into an archive is told in *The Avec Archives: Annotated Catalogue*. Over many years Catherine took on the responsibility for the administrative work involved in establishing these archives.

4. Combined, the archives and the other resources provided material which could be of interest and help to a wide range of practitioners and researchers.

Rev'd Dr George Lovell
5 Lidgett Park Avenue
Roundhay
Leeds LS8 1EN
Tel & Fax 0113 393 0130

Miss Catherine Widdicombe
The Grail Community
125 Waxwell Lane
Pinner HA5 3ER
Tel: 020 8866 2195

March 2007

An open letter to friends of Avec about a second lap of Avec's history, 1994-2007

Greetings!

Avec's story up to the point of ceasing to trade in 1994 is well documented. This letter sketches out what we have begun to see as our involvement in a second lap of its history in which we have been privileged to be engaged. Reassuringly we are now seeing the baton being taken on with some enthusiasm by others.

Continually we hear about various ways in which the approaches developed in and through Avec from 1976 to 1994 are being used and adapted in a range of socio-religious work and training contexts. Glimpses of such developments are deeply reassuring and heart warming. They justify the faith placed by so many of us in the non-directive approach to church and community development and the work of Avec. Quantifying or even surveying the impact of Avec and its approach is beyond us and is probably not possible. What we can do, however, is to give you some idea of the work that flows from Avec in which we ourselves have been engaged. Now seems to be the right time to do so because we have completed some projects and the responsibility for ongoing tasks has happily been handed over to other people.

After the closure of Avec in 1994 many of those who had been heavily engaged as "Associate Staff" made strenuous efforts to reinstate aspects of its programme

and consultancy services and to organize themselves as an “Avec Association”. For a while some of us continued to be involved in running a few avec type courses but attempts to set up an organization ultimately proved impractical. However, “Avec Resources”, a small Charitable Trust set up in association with the Grail, maintains the Avec tradition. One of its functions is to make more generally available Avec books and papers, which it continues to do admirably. A generous and substantial bequest from Dr T R and Mrs M Batten and two other large private donations enabled it to make critical and strategic financial contributions not only to publishing, but also to work on the archives and the course on consultancy, both of which are described below. It also met the cost of publishing *Avec: Agency and Approach*, which George wrote in the aftermath of its closure.

Developments described below result from 40 years continuous collegueship between Catherine and I with active and moral support from Molly and others. Some of the work we have done separately with mutual support and some together.

Forming and establishing the Avec Archives was joint work, which took a considerable slice of our time and energy over a period of several years and there is still more to do. Fortunately we were able to employ someone part-time to help us with this formidable archival task. A seventy-five-page book, *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue*, which was widely circulated, describes what was involved in classifying the material and sorting out tricky matters related to confidentiality. (For notes about this and our other books see Avec Resources website, www.avecresources.org.uk.) This Catalogue and its supplement make the extensive collection of unique and valuable papers readily accessible for study and research. They are housed in the Wesley Centre Archives, Oxford Brookes University under the day-to-day care of the Archivist, Dr Peter Forsaith, who made invaluable contributions to establishing them and is now a member of the Trust. After long negotiations a legal agreement has been drawn up to cover this and other collections in the Archives. The Avec Resources Trust owns and oversees them.

The Archives contain papers written by all kinds of workers expressly to help them become more effective particularly in working collaboratively with people to promote development and the common good. They also contain working papers on the design and evaluation of in-service training courses, records of consultancy programmes, internal working papers and research papers and theses. Qualitatively this data is quite different from that obtained through surveys and observational research. By common consent, those acquainted with these papers and records consider they are of especial value as they contain unique information about and insights into the church of the period and attempts to participate, collaboratively and non-directively, in community development from religious bases. And they demonstrate the effective use of theological approaches combined with some from the social and behavioural sciences. This archival material could, therefore, be of interest to a wide range of practitioners and researchers interested, for instance, in such topics as: the history of the Church and the faith and work

opportunities and problems of the period; the application and use of community development and non-directive approaches in and by various churches and socio-religious institutions; and the in-service training and support of people through work study courses; consultancy services and independent service agencies. An example of the use of the archives is to be found in a book mentioned later, *Pioneers of Social Passion: London's Cosmopolitan Methodism*.

The Trust now has a group of four new trustees under the chairmanship of Professor Christopher Rowland. George and John Budd have retired and Catherine is continuing for the time being, particularly to liaise about the archives and our books. Exciting ideas for the development of the work of the Trust emerged spontaneously at their inaugural meeting last November. A major thrust will be to get essentials of the work of Avec better known in relevant educational and training circles and to get people studying and researching the archival material. For instance they plan to make it available for those pursuing a new Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology. Maintaining close links with the consultancy course mentioned below is a priority for them. To do these things, however, they will need to supplement the rather small financial resources.

Catherine continued to run some courses, to provide consultancy services and to do some project work until 2004 both at the Grail Centre and elsewhere in the U.K. and Ireland. This included work with religious, returned missionaries, diocesan teams, and Christian organizations. In 2003 she went to Nigeria to introduce community workers, who customarily worked and provided for people, to community development approaches. The response was enthusiastic and this was particularly gratifying because it was in Northern Nigeria that T.R. Batten, whilst serving in the colonial educational services at the beginning of his career, developed working principles that led naturally to his discovery of the non-directive approach.

Aware that most people would never attend a course, Catherine was stimulated by what she had learnt to commit to paper the approaches and methods she had been using, in the hope that a wider clientele would be enabled to train themselves. The first book is a practical handbook about making meetings work, now in its second edition. The second is concerned with religious community life. Over a long period of time she has worked extensively with many kinds of women's religious communities at all levels in this country and at international conferences. Drawing upon this experience she wrote a handbook to help religious themselves negotiate the transition from larger single vocational communities to smaller multi-vocational ones. The third, on which she is currently engaged in co-operation with Nigerian trainers in this country and in Nigeria, is a training manual for Nigerian community workers and trainers. She also continues to promote the sale of Avec literature, both by post and through displays at various conferences up and down the country.

Alongside this she has been deeply engaged in the life, work and development of the Grail, both the community in Pinner and the wider membership of the

Grail Society. She served as President for three years, inaugurated and served on the Grail Development Group, stimulated the formation of Grail Young Adults, and was heavily involved in the two first ever conferences for members of all the various sections of membership. She is an active Grail representative on the Pinner Association of Churches, which she chaired for a year. During that time she ran a conference to review the way local clergy and laity work together.

Since he retired as Director of *Avec* in 1991 (incredibly sixteen years ago!) George has been variously involved in short and long-term consultancy and project work, short courses, conferences and retreats. For six years he helped to inaugurate and run a post-graduate course in missiology. His contribution was on research praxis and development. Alongside this he has been involved for seven years in facilitating a “continuing Local Preachers’ Development Programme” in the Circuit in which he lives and preaches. This proved to be an interesting application of the *avec* approach to situational analysis and group and community development work. The next job is to write it up!

Most of his time, however, has been spent researching, developing, teaching and writing up what was learnt about analysing and designing church and community work and providing consultancy services. (Some overall findings about *Avec*’s contribution are summarized in an article in the *Epworth Review*, “Some Resources for Contemporary Ministry and Mission” October 2000.) With others he wrote up a popular account of his first serious attempt to practise the non-directive approach in Parchmore Methodist Church. A Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship and a research support group enabled him to examine, through in-depth interviews, eighteen people’s experiences of *Avec* courses and consultancy services. This was published in *Telling Experiences* and led him to focus on “work consultancy” whilst he was a part-time Senior Research Fellow at Westminster College Oxford (1994-1999). Having established the vital importance of this and the enormous need for it in churches and Christian organizations, his attention turned to the acute need for training consultants capable of working with people in these institutions. A postgraduate course in consultancy, ministry and mission was designed and inaugurated. This became a cooperative venture between three Methodist Colleges (Westminster, Cliff and UTU). For five years it ran as a University of Sheffield Diploma/MA course at Cliff College under George’s leadership. Now it is well established as a two-year part-time Diploma or Masters Degree at the York Institute for Community Theology under the gifted leadership of Dr Helen Cameron, another new Trustee. George is no longer involved in the delivery of the course. Over the years, George wrote several distance-learning handbooks for these courses, three textbooks on analysis and design, consultancy praxis, and different modes and models of consultancy. A small library of resource papers has also been built up. Over the period 2000 to 2006, twenty-four people from six denominations have graduated; five were awarded Diplomas and nineteen MA’s. Currently four people are completing their dissertations and twelve people are on the new course with an intake for 2007-2008 lined up already.

A related development of considerable potential is that of co-consultancy groups for people in ministry. There are only a few of these but they have run successfully for several years. An example, which is still thriving, is described in "Take Three Presbyters...The Role of Co-Consultancy" in the Epworth Review, July 2000. This group has offered support to George from 1997.

Much of last year George, with Catherine's help, spent sorting out T R Batten's papers for the Avec Archives, researching the principles implicit in his early work in Africa, 1927-1943, linking them with his original concept of the non-directive approach to community development and examining critical responses to and problems of this approach. The findings are in an occasional paper for the Consultancy Course, a chapter in a book on education and community work to be published later this year, and possibly an article on the life and work of T R Batten in a journal of education (www.infed.org.)

As you would imagine, these developments, which happened in parallel, interacted creatively.

2006 was an unforgettable year for us because the work of Avec gained much attention and recognition. Brian Frost wrote a chapter on it in *Pioneers of Social Passion: London's Cosmopolitan Methodism*. The Archbishop of Canterbury awarded Catherine the Cross of St Augustine and George a Lambeth DD for their work. Our indebtedness to those who nominated us is profound. In our wildest dreams we never expected such awards to come our way; our minds have always been entirely absorbed if not obsessed by the work. Whilst we feel unworthy, we are glad that the work of many people, and their faith in the enterprise, and the beliefs and concepts upon which it was based, has been officially recognized. It was not always so! Catherine has written up accounts of these occasions in the Grail magazine *In Touch*.

Doing all this has been an exciting and fulfilling but demanding way to spend the freedom we gained in our retirement from full-time appointments. It contributes to 'harvesting the work of Avec and making its intellectual assets more readily accessible' as the Avec Trustees commissioned us to do in 1991. Records of Avec's rich heritage have been secured in the Archives for research. And there is now available training in non-directive work consultancy, which was at the heart of all that Avec did.

When Avec was being formed, Archbishop Derek Worlock said that the working partnership between us was a unique gift to the Church and that its potential should be developed not squandered. We are humbled and thankful to God and to so many whom, like you, have helped us to realize some of that potential for nearly forty years and to continue the work well into retirement.

Should you wish to have more information about any of these developments, do visit the website or get in touch with us.

It would be good to have other stories about the successful or not so successful use of the avec and/or allied approaches to church and community development in church and community work. If you have a story to tell please send it to one of us.

Yours sincerely,

George Lovell and Catherine Widdicombe

Update, 2014

1. Consolidated attempts to continue aspects of Avec's training programme gradually petered out.
2. But independently Catherine Widdicombe, Charles New, Fred Graham, Henry Grant, Howard Mellor, Diane Clutterbuck, Margaret O'Connor, Mark Sanders, Brian Woodcock – and undoubtedly others – used what they had learnt from their Avec experience to contribute to various training programmes and to proffer consultancy services.
3. The work in which Catherine and I became engaged is listed in *The Avec Archives: Annotated Catalogue*.
4. The training and consultancy work in which I became engaged is described in the next part of these Notes.
5. Catherine and I have retired from the Avec Resources Trust which is now in the responsible hands of other people, see, www.avecresources.org.
6. Catherine and I, in close collaboration with Peter Forsaith and the Avec Resources Trust, are in the final stages of completing the work involved in establishing the Archives. The plan is to employ a postgraduate student during the summer to put them in good order.
7. Both Catherine and I have been interviewed about our vocational lives with Avec by Avec Resources Trustees and are to be placed in the archives and on the website.

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

At this moment we bring to God our prayers of thanksgiving for the work of Avec – there is much to be grateful for:

I thank God for inviting each one of us in our different ways to be part of this endeavour and for all those who, over the past years, have given generously of their time and energies to forward the work.

For our first Chairman and Trustees who had the courage to launch Avec in 1976 – a real act of faith.

For past and present Trustees who have stood by us over years of mixed fortunes and made some risky decisions.

For Charles and our Associate Staff who have contributed so much to the face-to-face work with so many people, who have supported George and myself and with their commitment buoyed us up in some bleak moments, and have helped to keep Avec afloat.

For all who have come on courses or used our services – always an act of faith on their part – and for all they have given to us by way of encouragement, ideas and insights.

For all those who have given financially to Avec – the various Trusts, diocese, and religious orders, the Grail, my Grail community which has been generous in so many ways, the Methodist Church without whom Avec would not have been able to continue, the Chelsea Methodist Church who have given us a home and supported us over the years, and many, many individuals who have contributed. May God see their generosity as given to Him and reward them as only he can.

For all those who have done the hidden work without which we could not have gone on especially Molly our Bursar, Alex our first full-time secretary and particularly now for May, Valerie and Marian for their hard work, good humour, kindness, support and loyalty.

I thank God for George and our God-given collegueship over the years, a collegueship which has endured despite its stresses and strains, a collegueship which has been enriching and rewarding. George has encouraged me, challenged me, egged me on and always been there as a firm support in times of need, someone I could always turn to with confidence. I am deeply grateful to God for him.

I thank God for giving us this work to do in his Church and his world. I thank him for the moments of excitement and vision and the times when we broke through to new ideas and I thank Him not only for the ups but also for the downs – the times when the going was rough – but somehow He always gave us just enough courage to persevere however black the future. I thank Him for all we learnt through these experiences of near despair.

I thank God for all the people I have forgotten to pray for but who have been part of this work down the years.

I thank God now, with a full-heart, for bringing us to this moment 21 years later when our work together has come of age and for the promise of the future opening before us.

Let us pause for a few moment of Silent Prayer while we add our own particular prayers of thanksgiving.

O God accept all our prayers. You have done so much to gladden our hearts may our thanks and continued work gladden yours. Amen.

APPENDIX I: ASPECTS OF AVEC STORIES THAT HAVE BEEN TOLD

This Appendix scans various ways in which aspects of Avec as an approach, an agency and a movement have been experienced and described in order in order to build up a composite picture of the information already available as a backdrop to my telling my own story of Avec.

The classification I use here indicates how various aspects of the story of Avec have been told is an adapted extension of that used in the bibliography presented in *Avec Agency and Approach*.¹ It is:

Avec as an agency;
personal stories and testimonies;
examples of the approach to church and community development
work in practice;
practical aids to working with practitioners, groups and communities
and to non-directive work consultancy;
books about basic concepts related to working with people in church
and community;
action-research into the non-directive approach to church and
community development.

Copies of some of this material will eventually be in my personal archives; some of the books are readily available online.² I restrict myself

1 For details of these papers and documents see *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue* (which is online at www.avecresources.org) pp 24-46 and 55-66).

2 See, www.avecresources.org where the books are classified under the following headings: church and community development; analysing, consulting and facilitating; approach and method; in-service training; Archive Catalogue. Also it has a section, 'occasional papers, lectures and websites' which contains other

to basic information about these books and papers; details of publications are to be found elsewhere in these Notes. The extensive collection of Avec working papers and documents are in the Avec Archives, Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue groups.

Avec as an Agency

Avec Agency and Approach by George Lovell

This book is a case study of the things which made and marred Avec, a small ecumenical agency that provided training and consultancy services from 1976 to 1994 for thousands of people of 7 denominations working at all levels in Britain, Ireland, Africa and some 15 other countries. It covers the period 1976 – 91.

Viva l'avec: An Evaluation of Avec's Training Ministry by Mark Europe

This major survey was carried out in 1989 and the report published and carefully considered in 1990.

Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue Organized and Presented by George Lovell and Catherine Widdicombe

The *Catalogue* provides easy access to rich seams of qualitative information about Avec in the Avec Archives. It contains overviews of the work from which the archives derive, the research already carried out, describes the way in which the archives are organized and classified and references the archival material.

The Supplement to Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue Compiled by Catherine Widdicombe

This supplement comprises: papers about the use of the archives; revised indexes; information about seminars and courses; notes about consultancy project papers and work with religious orders; additions and amendments to the Catalogue; additional research notes; information about consultancy courses and conferences.

Avec occasional papers and booklets:

Avec resources brochure: an annotated book list

Related to Avec's 10th anniversary

An Anniversary Reflection: The Chairman's Address, by Edward Rogers

Avec and Its Future by George Lovell

Avec At Work by Lady Margaret Brown

A Theological View by Michael Atkinson

Analysis and Design: Ways of Realizing the Learning Potential In Church And Community Work by George Lovell, the 1992 Annual Meeting Lecture also revised as: *Reflective Practitioners in Church and Community Work*

Edward Rogers A Portrait of a Christian Citizen by John Prichard

Edward Rogers chaired the Avec Trustees from 1976 to 1989

Personal Testimonies to the non-directive approach and the services of Avec

Our Church and Community Development Stories by Catherine Widdicombe and George Lovell

This booklet describes the separate paths which led two people into church and community development: Catherine Widdicombe, through the second Vatican Council, and George Lovell, through local church ministry in this field of work. It describes the work they did together from 1971 to 1976 through project 70-75 and from 1976-1991 through Avec.

Telling Experiences: Stories About A Transforming Way Of Working With People, George Lovell (editor)

In this book eighteen very different people tell their own stories about how the 'avec approach' and Avec courses and how they profoundly changed the way in which they work with people in their churches and communities. (Participants in the Avec programme coined the term, 'avec approach', to describe the non-directive approach and methods and the ethos and culture generated by the staff through their use of them in all their personal and working relationships.)

The George Lovell Interview

This is an an interview with George Lovell by David Reed and David Dadswell reviewing his life and work in an interview which took place in September 2011. See www.avecresources.org.

Examples of The Approach to Church and Community Development Work In Practice

Churches and Communities: An Approach to Development in the Local Church by George Lovell and Catherine Widdicombe

This book, the official report of Project 70-75, describes how clergy and laity of sixteen churches of seven denominations in Ronsey (a pseudonym) helped by a an ecumenical team learnt about the non-directive approach to working with people and tried it out on a wide range of church and community work and how they found the experience of working in this way deeply satisfying and highly productive.

Avec

Avec itself – the way in which it was organized, administered and run – exemplifies the non-directive approach to church and community development work. See particularly the records of Trustees, Staff and Associates meetings, position papers and memoranda etc, which are to be found in the *Avec* Archives.

The Parchmore Partnership: George Lovell, Garth Rogers and Peter Sharrocks

This is the unique story of three consecutive ministers who, over a period of 25 years, dedicated themselves to developing the life and work of Parchmore Road Methodist Church in Croydon by using church and community development methods and policies.

Furlough Work Study by Peter Russell and George Lovell

An occasional paper about the provision of work consultancy services to missionaries on furlough from 1983 to 1987 through group co-consultancy approaches to the study of their work.

A Process Model for the Development of Individual and Collective Vocations by George Lovell, Jane Middleton and Hilary Smith

This occasional paper, written collaboratively, is a case study in promoting the creative interplay between individual and collective vocations to form the Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO) into a collective religions vocational community and an order of ministry in its own right. It describes the processes which induced such interplay in the MDO at a time of radical reappraisal by the church of the nature of diaconal ministry.

A Century of Methodism in Zimbabwe, 1891 – 1991, General Editor: Canaan Sodindo Banana

Appendix III of this book is a slightly abbreviated copy of a connexional working party's report of a consultation led by George Lovell in 1980 which he drafted entitled 'Key Tasks in the Post War Period'.

Work Consultancy Services for Missionaries, 1975-79 Provided By The Methodist Missionary Society (MMS), The Methodist Church Overseas Division (MCOD) and Avec

This paper was presented by the Rev Dr George Lovell at a conference at Hinsley Hall, Leeds on 6th October 2013 in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Bicentenary Celebrations, see www.avecresources.org.

Sustaining Preachers and Preaching: A Practical Guide by George Lovell

Chapter 11 of this book describes the use of the Avec approach to the in-service training of preachers.

Reports Of Project Work (in my articles and papers box)

Diocese Of Oxford: A Report Of A Consultation On Partnership Teams, 1984.

Community Growth And Prophetic Action

Report of a one-day meeting of The Conference Of Major Religious Superiors, September 1990

CMRS (The Conference Of Major Religious Superiors) and Contemplative Religious, December 1988.

A conference about the nature and relationship between apostolic and contemplative religious life.

Making Shared Ministry Reality: Course In The Diocese Of St Edmundsbury And Ipswich, October 1990

A Consultation: Reviewing Ministry at St Mark's, Greenwich

'Relationships In Mission' by Leslie J Griffiths. *Epworth Review* vol 15, no 2, May 1988

A description of three consultations held between the overseas division of the British Methodist Church (MC OD) and the Methodist churches in Sierra Leone (1984), Ghana (1985) and Nigeria (1986)

[There are many more such pieces of work but the details are not to hand.]

Practical Aids to Working with and Providing Training for Practitioners, Groups and Communities and to Non-directive Work Consultancy

The Youth Worker as a First Aid Counsellor in Impromptu Situations by George Lovell

This booklet describes practical ways in which youth workers can help young people to make decisions, choices and satisfactory relationships with other people without providing specific advice and ready-made answers.

Working With Youth Edited by Bernard Davies and Jennifer Rogers

This booklet which accompanied the BBC television series of the same name aims to help part time youth workers with some of the skills and background knowledge of the job. One of the chapters for one of the sessions, 'Helping Individuals to Help Themselves' was contributed by George Lovell and is based on *The Youth Worker As First-Aid Counsellor...*

Taking the Chair at Committees: a paper produced by the Community Development Group of the Methodist Church.

This publication was designed to help people who chair small local church committees

Diagrammatic Modelling: An aid to theological reflection in church and community development work by George Lovell

The title is an accurate description of the contents of this booklet. Drawing heavily upon the work of Bishop Ian Ramsey, models are described and diagrammatic modelling is illustrated.

Analysis and Design: A Handbook for Practitioners and Consultants in Church and Community Work by George Lovell

This book gives examples of ways in which clergy and laity can analyze and design their work with people. It describes sequences by which clergy and laity can think through the work they do with people more systematically and systemically and examines the underlying theory and theology.

Community Work a Handbook for Volunteer Groups and Local Churches by Malcolm Grundy

This book puts a case for churches being involved in community work and community care, discusses fund-raising, managing a project, employ-ing

staff, using volunteers and organizing meetings and groups and evaluating project work.

Meetings That Work: A practical guide the team working in groups by Catherine Widdicombe

This 'how to do' book is about things which help members of groups to think together, take everyone's contribution seriously and enable each other to have a say in decisions which affect them.

Small Communities in Religious Life: making them work by Catherine Widdicombe

This book, based on wide experience with Roman Catholic religious orders, draws out principles which are applicable to the formation of secular, religious and ecumenical small communities.

Working With People for Development: A Study and Training Manual for Community Workers and Trainers by Catherine Widdicombe

This manual emerged from training courses conducted by Catherine in Nigeria. It was prepared for local trainers, group leaders and workers.

Working with People in Local Communities: A Practical Guide by Catherine Widdicombe

This is a down-to-earth book of practical suggestions, methods ideas and examples to stimulate discussion or quiet reflective thought about the what, why and how of community work and development.

Books About Basic Concepts Related to Working *with* People in Church and Community

Human and Religious Factors in Church and Community Work by George Lovell

This book, based on the Beckley Social Service Lecture 1981, is about: introducing a new way of working into the church; features of that way of working and skills associated with it; churches working as churches; some limitations to this way of working; making the transition to this way of working in the church.

The Church and Community Development: An Introduction by George Lovell

In non-technical language, this book describes how local churches can work with rather than for people. It gives illustrations of projects and schemes and discusses the biblical theology underlying this approach.

Work Consultancy: A Resource Required By Laity, Religious and Ministers by George Lovell

An occasional paper which describing work consultancy, its importance to clergy and laity in the church and ways in which it can be provided and accessed.

The Non-Directive Approach by TR and M Batten

This book, written in a plain, direct and lucid style, is to indicate how various aspects of the story of aAvec have been told. A critical study of the nature, scope and limitations of the non-directive approach. The directive and non-directive approaches are defined and contrasted and their relative uses discussed.

A Critical Appreciation of Some Out Workings In Christian Churches and Organizations of TR Batten's Non-directive Approach To Community Development by George Lovell

The key themes of this occasional paper are: the non-directive approach; historical perspectives; world-views and work-views; qualitative autonomy; the neutralizing bias of non-directivity; reverence for freedom; spirituality; the non-directive presence.

Essays in the history of youth and community work: discovering the past edited by Ruth Gilchrist, Tony Jeffs, Jean Spence and Joyce Walker

There is a chapter in this book, 'TR Batten's Life and Work' by George Lovell.

T. R. (Reg) Batten and Madge Batten, Non-Directivity and Community Development; an article on <http://www.infed.org/thinkersbatten.htm> and www.avecresources.org

This article describes how Reg Batten introduced the revolutionary concept of non-directivity to the newly emerging discipline of community development in the second part of the 20th century. It describes their work and lives, and explores the origins of the non-directive concept in Thomas Reginald Batten's comparatively unknown groundbreaking work on education and development in Africa 1927-1949.

Involvement in Community: A Christian Contribution

This is a theological critique of church and community development work by a group of people which met over a period of some three years under the aegis of the William Temple Foundation. It argues the necessity

for a theory of involvement in community and discusses what is involved in formulating one. It concludes that this way of working is in fact a way of life.

Action-Research into the Non-directive Approach to Church and Community Development

An Action Research Project to Test the Applicability of the Non-directive Concept in a Church, Youth and Community Centre Setting (A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Institute of Education, Faculty of Arts, University of London).

This thesis is a factual study of a community development action-research project. It tests the applicability of the non-directive approach to working with people in a church, youth and community centre setting in Thornton Heath, Surrey. It concludes that the use of the non-directive approach helps people to “change for the better” and is applicable to work undertaken in church, youth and community centre settings. It recommends that church and community workers be trained in the non-directive approach and states the need for more consultancy help.

The Roman Catholic Church and Vatican II: Action research into means of Implementation (Thesis submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in the Institute of Education, Faculty of Education, University of London).

This thesis studies work done between 1970 and 1981 with Roman Catholics in Project 70-75 and Avec on introducing the new ideas and practices required by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) into the Roman Catholic Church through clergy, religious and lay church workers by the use of directive and non-directive approaches. It concludes that Roman Catholics in positions of authority at every level in the church need training and support in the non-directive approach if they are to implement the innovatory ideas and practices of Vatican II.

Development in Church and community: Promoting personal growth through community development and curriculum development methods (A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the University of Liverpool) by Charles New

This thesis describes a three-year period during which important changes occurred in the Church of which Charles New was minister and his role and function. Insights from both community and curriculum development practices are incorporated into a tentative model by which a local church worker could put these ideas into practice in his or her own situation.

A Theological Examination of the Non-directive Approach to Church and Community Development with a Special Reference to the Nature of Evangelism (A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Theology in the Theology Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Durham).

This thesis concludes, from an examination by Howard Mellor of his experience of practising the non-directive approach during his seven-year ministry in Addiscombe, Croydon and subsequently as Principal of Cliff College in relation to the biblical narrative, that the non-directive approach is not only consonant with evangelistic ministry but could be a vital partner to such a ministry and increase its effectiveness.

Dissertations, Essays and Seminar Papers Produced by Members of Diploma Courses (An Avec Resource Publication) by George Lovell

This report is a note of the dissertations, essays and seminar papers produced by thirty-four members of the Avec/Rochampton Institute Diploma in Church and Community Development courses from 1986-1993. The dissertations are about action-research programmes on church and community work by clergy, religious and lay workers of six denominations. Notes of each dissertation are given.

Aspect I: Missing; Embargoed until 2040.

APPENDIX II: WORK CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR MISSIONARIES, 1975 – 95 PROVIDED BY THE METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY (MMS), THE METHODIST CHURCH OVERSEAS DIVISION (MCOB) AND AVEC BY GEORGE LOVELL

Discussions between the Revs Dr Colin Morris and George Lovell in 1975 initiated twenty years cooperation in the provision of work consultancy services for missionaries and missionary organisations conducted by the newly formed organisation, Avec. By common consent this extensive programme became valued by both organisations and greatly enhanced their work. The first joint venture was a long series of courses for missionaries returning to work in the United Kingdom, the first of these was in 1976 and the last one in 1995. The second was a series of courses for missionaries on furlough; the first was in 1983 and the last in 1992. Other work evolved. In 1980 I led consultations in Zimbabwe on, 'Key Tasks in the Post War

Period'. Between 1984 and 1986 I led three consultations on, 'Relationships in Mission' between MCOD and the Methodist churches in Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria. At various stages there were consultations with the staff of MCOD about different aspects of their work. This paper describes and reflects on this work and on the origins of the non-directive approach central to this work.

Avec: Its Background, Approach and Services

For more than ten years in the 1960's and 70's I was involved with others in practising the non-directive approach to community development in Christian churches and critically examining the validity of its praxis which emphasised the importance of working *with* in contradistinction to working *for* people. I did this through two action-research projects: the first of these was in a Methodist Church and was written up for a doctoral thesis; the second was with a local Council of churches in North London which comprised sixteen churches of seven denominations and resulted in a published report.³ This work proved beyond doubt that the approach is of great importance to churches and convinced leaders in the Methodist and Roman Catholic churches of the necessity to provide training and consultancy services ecumenically. Consequently, in 1975 I became involved with an inter-church group in wide ranging discussions which led to the formation of an ecumenical agency, Avec, to promote the praxis of this approach in Christian ministry and mission and to provide in-service training and consultancy services for clergy and laity.

Discussions with MMS Staff

When I met Colin Morris (and Rachel Stevens) in February 1975 he talked about difficulties he had faced in coming back to Britain after fifteen years in Zambia. For him Britain was an alien culture and many missionaries had similar experiences. He said there was a deeply felt unmet need and MMS had the money to fund courses aimed at meeting such needs and a College where courses could be held during summer vacations. Discussion turned to the kind of courses/services Avec could provide. A combination of two things uniquely qualified Avec to provide reorientation and briefing courses for returning missionaries: the evaluated experience of a wide range of church and Communion to work in the UK and the commitment to working with people. The former would provide useful information; the latter with its emphasis upon the nondirective approach

3 Lovell, George and Widdicombe, Catherine *Churches and Communities: An approach to development in the local church* (search press) 1978

would mean that the missionaries would be helped to think for themselves through their experiences as missionaries, the transitions through which they were passing, and their future life and work or retirement in the UK. Dr Morris asked me to prepare a detailed proposal for such courses.

Incredibly, this meeting was pivotal to twenty years extensive multi-various work with missionaries, the organisations that deployed them, and the churches they served.

Reorientation Courses for Missionaries Returning to the UK

I drafted a course outline, discussed it with my colleagues and tested it out with Father Patrick Fitzgerald, a White Father who has been a colleague team member in the ecumenical action research project which I have referred to earlier. He had extensive experience in Zambia and in the preparation and training of priests to work in various parts of Africa. The proposal I submitted to Colin Morris was for residential courses for 6 to 12 missionaries and their spouses and children in two parts: the first as soon after their return to this country as possible and before they were redeployed in the UK; the second 9 to 12 months later. The first part would provide opportunities for them to reflect on and evaluate their experiences as missionaries and establish what they had learnt, to consider the current range of local church work in the UK and to reflect on it theologically with reference to their missionary experience, to consider church and community development praxis, to articulate and prepare a position paper about their approach to their work in Britain and what they would like to achieve, to consider the support and training that they might need. They would be asked to evaluate the course for MMS. The second part, would provide opportunities for the ex-missionaries and their spouses and children to assess their experiences of living, ministering and working in the United Kingdom.

In advance, by way of preparation both the ex-missionaries and their spouses would be asked to submit to a given outline papers describing critical aspects of their life and work during the preceding year. During the course they would be given opportunities in small co-consultancy groups to study each of these papers in turn and to think about the next phase of their work and ministry. Children and young people would also be given purposeful sessions on their experiences of returning to and living and studying in the UK. This emphasis upon the reorientation of the family was crucial.

The involvement of missionaries and their spouses in work analysis

proved to be extremely important. Many of the spouses – at that time almost entirely wives – found it very exciting and fulfilling and said that it was the first time that the church had arranged for them to be involved in serious discussions and theological reflection about their separate and joint vocational work and their working relationships which at times were complex and even problematic.

This basic structure was refined and developed through reflected experience and adapted to meet various circumstances but the essential elements remained unchanged.

During the period 1976 – 95 there were 31 courses of this kind in which some 223 missionaries participated; most of them were presbyters involved in local church work with a minority involved in regional and national work. There was also a significant number of deacons and lay participants. Records of these courses are catalogued and stored in the Avec Archives, Westminster College, Oxford.⁴ Several people on these courses attended other Avec courses and events including a two-year postgraduate diploma.

Emergent Developments

Reorientation courses led directly to many other developments. At the end of the 70's and in the early 80's MCOD and Avec invited personnel and training officers of other missionary societies to attend seminars on the reorientation of missionaries. As a result close working relationships were established especially with CMS, USPG and several religious orders and dedicated to missionary work.

Meanwhile contact between Avec and MCOD developed in other directions: officers of MCOD including staff of Kingsmead College, Birmingham, the principal, Peter Russell and the tutors, and several missionaries had attended Avec work study courses and, in some cases, follow-up courses to practise the skills of enabling work study groups. Returning missionaries looking at their work during the reorientation courses began to say, 'If only we could have done this when we were working overseas.'

Out of all this interaction came the suggestion for furlough courses as a co-operative effort between MCOD, Kingsmead and Avec. The proposal was that these courses should be staffed by Avec and Kingsmead, the former

4 Details are presented in the *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue* pp 32-33 (the text of the catalogue is accessible on line, www.avecresources.org, and *Avec Agency and Approach* pp 142-43 (the text of this book is accessible on line, www.avecresources.org).

providing expertise in community development and the latter experience of cross-cultural mission and mission training. A further advantage of this staffing was anticipated: those from Avec who had been involved in the reorientation programme had learnt a great deal about the conditions, needs and feelings of serving missionaries, and had seen the value of this being fed into initial training processes. As the Principal of Kingsmead had attended two Avec courses he was the obvious choice of worker from the Kingsmead side. In the event this feedback loop proved most useful; through working with missionaries in this way a lot was learnt about their feelings, initial problems, personal reactions, mistakes which greater understanding could have prevented or at least made less serious. There was also much to be learnt about the places in which missionaries were working and to which other missionaries would in future go. Much of this information was personal and confidential and so could not be shared, but the insights gained could be used without breaking confidences. There was also factual information about places and the nature of the work that was not usually so sensitive but useful.

Furlough Courses

Missionary furlough courses were established. From the outset it was seen to be essential that attendance was voluntary. There were ten such courses, the first in 1983 and the last in 1992 with a total of 65 participants. Details of all ten courses are to be found in the Avec Archives but they are not readily available to me as I write; those for the first five are; there were thirty five participants on these courses from five denominations who were working in fifteen different countries.⁵

Peter Russell and I staffed all ten courses. The evaluation of the courses by the participants was without exception positive; they participants recommended that the courses should be available to all missionaries on a permanent basis. Peter and I found them exciting and deeply fulfilling. After the first five courses we wrote an internal memo describing the courses in some considerable detail reviewing and reflecting upon them; what follows draws heavily upon this document.⁶

5 There were: 24 Methodists; 1 Anglican; 1 Quaker; 6 Roman Catholics; 1 Wesley Reform Union. Of these 15 were females and 6 males; 4 were Religious; 1 a deaconess; 7 ordained. They served in 15 different countries: Brazil (1); China (1); the Gambia (2); Guyana (1); Hong Kong (2); India (5); Ivory Coast (1); Kenya (2); Nepal (5); Nigeria (3); Sierra Leone (4); Sri Lanka (2); Uganda (1); Zambia (1); Zimbabwe (2). Russell, Peter V and Lovell, George, *Furlough Work Study* March 1988, 31pp.

6 *Furlough Work Study*

The aims were:

1. to help the missionaries to work more effectively and with more satisfaction on their next tour;
2. to help them to use their furlough work to the best advantage of all concerned;
3. to provide them with opportunities to examine their feelings about Britain and the home church and the implications of those feelings.

Generally speaking these aims were achieved through structured exercises and discussions in sub-groups and plenary sessions. We saw the need for pursuing the second and third aims from our experience of returning missionaries having strong negative feelings about Britain and the home church. What we were doing took on an added significance when we heard about the approach to reorientation problems adapted by a German missionary society which involved providing missionaries on a regular basis with information about cultural changes at home throughout their service overseas and reorientation sessions furlough by furlough. Turning now to the first aim and the principles of the approach and method fundamental to the way we went about achieving it.

Each person's situation was considered separately and individually in small co-consultancy groups according to their own abilities, beliefs and concerns. Anecdotes were not allowed nor were comparisons with the work of other members of the group. To make useful contributions to another person and their work it was essential to give sympathetic attention to the actualities of the missionary and his/her situation without diverted attention by making premature comparisons with other situations. Suggestions and insights were shared sensitively with the mutual understanding that action alien to them would not be imposed because that could not be done without detriment to their happiness, efficiency and satisfaction.

The work study followed a natural and systematic order with six stages: the participant experience; his/her description of their work situation; analysis and discernment of the essentials; designing programs and formulating plans; determining first steps to be taken after return; deciding on actions to be taken at once. One or two 1¼ hour sessions were dedicated to working through this sequence. Whenever possible, to give this process a kick-start, participants wrote a 'work paper' to a prescribed outline in advance and these were circulated. When they could not do that this they made verbal presentations. During the session or sessions a member of the group took notes, edited them and handed them to the person concerned.

The aim was to do just enough work to enable missionaries to pursue things on their own afterwards. Careful thought and discussion went into ascertaining whether this point had been reached or not. Posing various questions helped us to do so: Do you want to continue what we have been engaged in? Do you feel able and confident to do so? Do you feel that you have made any of the ideas we have discussed your own and able to work them out with your colleagues? Do you feel free to do what you see to be appropriate if, on reflection it is different from what is emerging from our discussions? Ascertaining that they did feel autonomous and reinforcing their freedom and confidence to act autonomously was very important to us because it was utterly essential to their ability to work on their own in their situations overseas with satisfaction and to good effect – and that is one of the aims of work consultancy work.

Paradoxically, participants found that they are most likely to discover insights which illuminate their own vocational work when they are concentrating totally on that of others and sympathetically entering into them, rather than looking for immediate comparisons with their own. Important consideration about how to approach or initiate changes in their own situation that have not become explicit in their own sessions, occasionally came unbidden in considering those of others.

Structured, serious and disciplined as these sessions were, they were anything but cold cerebral analytical processes. Because we were talking about the work of God, they were spiritual exercises which frequently became profound spiritual experiences. Quite often we became conscious that we were standing on holy vocational ground. In fact, we were engaged in collaborative exercises in the application of faith and theology, and theology spirituality fellowship were strands throughout the whole process.

Initiating the courses was not without difficulty. Not all missionaries, for instance, were home at the same time. Some of the people not able to make these courses attended other Avec courses; co-consultancy sessions were arranged for individual and small ad hoc groups. On more than one occasion it was suggested that staff members should travel overseas and lead courses in the actual context of the missionaries work but this was never implemented.

Each course ended with the analysis and discussion of appraisal forms filled in by participants. Without exception these were positive and one missionary said of his work paper session, 'It was wonderful to be able to discuss my work for two hours with like-minded people'. Others have talked about being able to see ways forward, of adding new ideas, of

identifying problem areas and finding ways of solving them or of realising the importance of the next tour overseas.’ The following the long quotation from an extended interview with Rosalind (Ros) Colwill about her many experiences of Avec courses is included because of the number of points it makes about the value of the approach and the courses.

An experience on one of the first Furlough Courses has remained with me over the years. One of the ordained missionaries, John ... felt that it was time to leave what he had been doing and to move onto something else. He was struggling to decide which of four very interesting options... was the will of God for him? We went into the issues in great depth. The quality of the sharing was moving and humbling. ... we helped him most by exploring the criteria by which he decided God’s will for and by challenging the assumption that he was most likely to find God’s will in what he saw to be the worst and the hardest option. ... [we] got onto this because, although John was trying to treat all the options equally, we saw that the one nearest to his heart he put right at the bottom of the list. He lit up when that was mentioned. He was afraid of that option because he wanted it so much that he felt that it couldn’t be God’s will, it must be his own selfish ambition. The group helped him to see that the last option on the list might be God’s will for him. It was not disqualified because he was attracted to it, what excites you and makes you feel happy is quite likely to be the thing God wants you to do, and the place where all your talents and strengths... can best be used.

I am convinced that Avec’s rule about no anecdotes helped us in that session. It prevented us from being side-tracked by comparing John’s dilemma with our experiences... That would not have helped. Working with John and his experience and his issues did help. That doesn’t mean that what you just out your own experience. You take from it anything which you feel might be relevant to the other person and offer it for him/her to take up or discard. But you do not get them to switch to your experience or story.⁷

Missionaries as well as staff learnt about many different missionary postings and work and gaining a much more detailed and realistic picture of the world Church and its work among other peoples and cultures. Live connections between missionaries led in some cases to them corresponding with each other and continuing the discussions started on courses. Some missionaries attended further courses on subsequent furloughs.⁸ Clearly,

7 Lovell, George (editor) *Telling Experiences: Stories About A Transforming Way Of Working With People* (Chester House Publications), 1996 pp186-187

8 Notable among these was Ros Colwill who attended four and has had a series of consultations with me over the years. In the interview already quoted she said, ‘I have never had any other opportunities of the kind provided by those courses to Luke in depth with other missionaries at their work in mind. ... Other courses

there were many tangible benefits from these courses, not only for the missionaries themselves but also for the church and colleagues overseas, for the home church and the sending agencies and the family.

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe: Key Tasks in the Post War Period

Following the Lancaster house agreement (December 1979), there was a movement to majority rule and on 18 April 1980 the United Kingdom ceremonially 'granted' the newly formed Zimbabwe independence. At the invitation of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and under the aegis of MCOD, in August of that year I was privileged to lead consultations on the rehabilitation of the work after the war. A connexional working party of some fourteen church leaders, predominantly black, met in Gwelo for seven days under the chairmanship of the Rev Dr Crispin C.G. Mazobere to which I acted as a non-directive work consultant. The purpose was:

To make a contribution towards determining just what it is necessary to do during the post-war period to re-establish the work of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe so that it can make the best possible contribution to its own members and to the community of which it is a part.

In order to picture and contextualize the situation, we differentiated between four periods in the life of the Methodist Church, first in Rhodesia and then in Zimbabwe: pre-war; war-time; post-war; the future. Then we considered the relative strengths and weaknesses of the church in the first three of these periods and the critical factors in the current working situation. Reflecting on the emergent material we considered what kind of a church and the participants wished to see in the newly formed Zimbabwe and the key tasks in building up such a church and its work. I drafted a thirty-nine page report of the consultation after the first five days work and the working party studied, checked and revised it thoroughly on the seventh day! It was, therefore, the Report⁹ of the working party produced there and then in order that the ideas could be communicated and discussed throughout the church and thought could be translated into action as soon as possible: they made eight requests for action to the Standing Committee and through them to the Conference. During the remainder of the month

organised by the Methodist church do not do anything approaching what we did and the furlough courses.' *Telling Experiences* pp 178 – 79.

9 *The Methodist Church In Zimbabwe, Key Tasks In The Post War Period: A Connexional Working Party's Report Of A Consultation At Gwelo And The Standing Committee's Response To It*, August 1980, Compiled And Edited By The Rev Dr George Lovell

that time was in Zimbabwe I led consultations with church officers and committees on the Report. I am not in a position to assess the impact of the Report on the life and work of the Church but I was pleased to discover that it was sufficiently alive in a decade later to be reproduced as an appendix to *A Century Of Methodism In Zimbabwe, 1891 – 1991*.¹⁰

I found it particularly gratifying that the members of the consultation considered that the procedures adopted was ‘a model for promoting thoughtful action’ and began to speculate about the possibility of similar procedures being used for the same kind of purpose in, say, the conference, the districts and synods and the circuit meetings. That led to a discussion about their ability to adopt of the approach and use the methods and whether, in any case, it was advisable to get people thinking for themselves. Considering these things, the kind of questions that facilitated discussion, the functions of non-directive workers led them to realize that they had more resources than they thought and that they had been learning about these procedures through their experience of the consultation and that they could continue to learn about them through trying them out and through periodic training sessions. Discussing the pros and cons of getting people to think and decide and act for themselves they came to the conclusion that whilst it takes time and people ‘can get bogged down’, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages: it engenders commitment, responsibility and confidence, which leads people to stick at things with tenacity and endurance; it is satisfying and fulfilling and promotes human understanding and growth. ‘Such qualities’, they concluded ‘are required of Christians in Zimbabwe and therefore, they said they want a “thinking church”.’¹¹ Many years later I met a training and development officer of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe who told me about the ways in which she and others were using this approach, methods and procedures.

An incident in the first section of the consultation was a key to the whole non-directive process and vindicated its use. Spontaneously, an intensive group conversation erupted in which they shared deep feelings and high hopes that they had about the situation in which they found themselves. I listened intently for the best part of an hour without intervening. When the conversation had run its course, I structured and summarized what they had been saying. This was followed by an awesome silence which lasted possibly only for a minute or two but which seemed to last for an eternity

10 *The general editor was, Canaan Sodindo Banana and it was published by the Methodist church in Zimbabwe in 1991.*

11 A whole page in the Report was devoted to this very important overall conclusion, p 25.

and which I was at a loss to interpret. Had I offended them and got off on the wrong foot? Had I misunderstood and misrepresented them? What should I do now? One person broke the silence and said, 'You have a good ear. You have heard and understood what we were saying. No white man has listened to us like that.' There was a murmur of approval. I was deeply moved then as I am now as I recall the incident. To my great relief, I knew we were going to be able to work together.

Relationships in Mission: An MCOD/Avec Project

During the early 80's MCOD staff was concerned to move the relationship with overseas churches to one where dependency and independence gave way to interdependence and mutuality. The idea of consultations with West African churches under the title of 'Relationships in Mission' emerged. I was asked to design and lead them. Consultations designed to enhance interdependence and mutuality were held between MCOD and the Methodist Churches in Sierra Leone (1984), Ghana (1985), and Nigeria (1986). The objectives were:

1. To learn together from each other how to be increasingly helpful to each other in the work to be done in each place, and how that work might be enriched in partnership and fellowship through:
 - a) sharing understanding, exploring common problems, concerns and resources;
 - (b) establishing guidelines for determining priorities for mission and the use of resources;
2. To determine what is being learned about relationships in mission and to make suggestions to the churches and organisations represented.
3. To share ideas about a possible multilateral consultation.

Progress was made in relation to these objectives but unforeseen circumstances prevented holding a multilateral consultation.

The facilitating group consisted of three ongoing staff members (the late Ivy McGhie MCOD Africa Secretary, George Lovell and Leslie Griffiths) which benefitted from the addition of a local person in Ghana and Nigeria. Leslie's job was to record the consultations and to write them up. Doing that involved something which now seems incongruous – he had not to participate verbally in the sessions! It is a measure of his discipline that he only spoke on one or two occasions. Each consultation involved structured discussions between two teams: one representing the particular church in West Africa and the other representing MCOD and the Church

in Britain. Each team presented profiles of the work and contextual factors affecting their church. When the teams were satisfied that the other team understood the pictures and points emerging from their profile, and not until, they established an agreed programme of work to be done in the time that remained. Ways and means of working at the agreed tasks in subgroups and plenary sessions were drawn up. When the work was done recommendations were formulated. In each of the consultations a report of the proceedings and recommendations was compiled and copies produced for each participant to take away with them. (This was achieved through the assiduous work undertaken by staff and by typists and secretaries provided by the host church.) Drafts of the reports were carefully considered and agreed by participants. This allowed everyone to own the report. These reports were an important achievement and certainly of more value than a more refined report might have been sent after the event to the participants. First assessment of the experience by the participants before the close of each consultation allowed the facilitating group to make modifications to the Ghana and Nigeria consultations. It is not possible here to give an account of the findings of these consultations which are summarised in an article in the *Epworth Review*.¹²

The general consensus was that the methods used for these consultations worked well. Each of the consultations developed its own dynamic; friendships were formed, participants were honest – sometimes brutally so – in their search for the truth and ways of proceeding together. Two different groups of people in every case helped each other to cross frontiers of experience to see things from the other's perspective and to develop agendas on the basis of what they had perceived. There were moments when the spirit of God moved the hearts and minds of people who had not been understanding each other so that love and grace flooded in and brought reconciliation and peace. There was general agreement that the method could well be employed more widely.

In the 90's at the suggestion of my Research Support Group I conducted a series of extended interviews designed to give people who had been influenced by Avec the opportunity to tell their stories and to explain the impact that it had had on them and their work. Three of the people I interviewed had participated in these consultations. Here I quote some of the things they said.

The President of the conference of the Sierra Leone Methodist Church at the time, The Rev Nelson Charles, reflections, May 1994.

¹² *Epworth Review*, vol 15, no 2, May 1988

The consultation was an eye opener. ... None of us had ever experienced anything like that before. It was very different from a conference where a few people gave lectures...some of our friends who came from provincial churches were not as outspoken as others...They were bemused at first but as the consultation developed...they got to follow up the discussion they knew that the aim was beneficial to the local church and became more interested and participated more. All of us gained a lot of confidence. The diagrams you drew helped everyone to participate...they dramatized situations...We weren't just using words....We could see things as objects...It helped us to listen to see things to ask questions and to understand. It was all so very different and better than anything we had known before.

Ten years later I would say that the consultation helped the work of the church in my time.¹³

The Rev Dowridge-Williams who succeeded Nelson Charles as President of the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone reflections, May 1994

The consultation opened our eyes. We have an African proverb which says 'our hand goes, a hand comes'. That is to say you will give and take. That is how life should be lived...these ideas were suppressed by the way in which the Methodist Church Overseas Division gave financial grants to us. This is where we put a very big blame on the early missionaries. They gave people the impression that they will always receive and not that they are to give. So people have grown over the years with that ideology which was not African. The consultation started to reverse all that.

Another thing we have done is to use the methods used at that consultation to promote church growth and development.¹⁴

Miss Rosalind Colwill, a mission partner who was a participant in the Nigerian consultation, 1995

Whenever we talk of church history in Nigeria that consultation is always talked of as the occasion which turned round the relationship between Methodist Church Nigeria and the Overseas Division.

Following on from that consultation the two sides of the Methodist Church in Nigeria, the 'Presidential' and the 'Patriarchal', set up a committee to seek reconciliation....They decided to have a consultation organized in a similar way to the Avec one. At their respective Conferences they appointed equal numbers of Elders to meet and pursue the consultative process. It worked. We are now reconciled in one church.¹⁵

13 *Telling Experiences* pp 116 and 118

14 *Telling Experiences* pp 119

15 *Telling Experiences* p 189

Consultations With MCODE Staff

At various times during this period I was invited to lead work consultation sessions with individual staff members and groups. Details of these are not available to me as I write.

A Secular Missionary's Contribution to Christian Mission

All the work described in this paper was facilitated through various applications of the non-directive approach, a concept we owe to Dr T R Batten. From 1927 to 1949 he worked in Africa, first in the Colonial Education Service in Nigeria and then in social studies as Vice principal of Makerere College, Uganda. In Nigeria he worked assiduously for an indigenous educational system consonant with African perspectives on life and history; in Makerere he worked equally assiduously to establish the cultural, developmental, economic and educational, financial conditions necessary to constructive self-government. He came to the conclusion that a primary requirement in every aspect of this wide spectrum of developmental work was to equip people to think, decide and act for themselves in relation to their own best interests and those of their communities i.e. to promote the common good through active informed participation. It was when he came to consider how to achieve this that he broke entirely new ground by coming up with an original concept which he called non-directive. The practise of this approach was central to all the work discussed above. Thus, Batten, a secular missionary for comprehensive human development, made unique and profound contributions to the work of Christian mission – and to that of many other secular and religious organisations.¹⁶

Conclusion

MCODE does not field as many mission partners as it did in the period 1976 – 96; avec services are no longer available. So, why have I written this paper in the 85th year of my life and the 55th of my ministry? For several reasons: to contribute to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Bicentenary Celebrations Conference; to overview a rich seam of work; to demonstrate the value and the continuing validity of non-directive work consultancy processes can mission and ministry; to stimulate interest in and encourage

16 See 't.r.batten and madge batten, non-directivity and community development', <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/batten.htm>, in which I describe the work and lives of the Battens and explore in some detail the origins of the non-directive concept in Thomas Reginald Batten's comparatively unknown groundbreaking work on education and development in Africa 1927 – 1949 and list his publications

the use of these invaluable services to the work of the Christian Church in this and other countries; to make more widely known the extensive documents of this work now in the MCOB and Avec archives which could provide valuable information to those researching missionary activities in the period; to express my deep heartfelt gratitude to God and to the Church for the great privilege of participating, howbeit in a minor role, in such a rich seam of missionary work with some extra ordinary people.

George Lovell, 14th of September 2013

APPENDIX III: T. R.(REG) BATTEN AND MADGE BATTEN, NON-DIRECTIVITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Lovell, George (2007) ‘ T. R.(Reg) Batten and Madge Batten: their worldwide contributions to the non-directive approach to community development’, *the encyclopaedia of informal education*. [www.infed.org/thinkers/batten.htm]

The Battens, and particularly T. R. or Reg, introduced the revolutionary concept of non-directivity to the newly emerging discipline of community development in the second part of the 20th century. George Lovell describes their work and lives, and explores the origins of the non-directive concept in Thomas Reginald Batten’s comparatively unknown groundbreaking work on education and development in Africa 1927-1949.

contents: introduction · batten in africa · the battens at the institute of education · the non-directive approach · courses · field work · community development journal · the researching and writing partnership · the battens in active retirement · unwritten books · conclusion · books · archives · other publications on the battens · how to cite this piece

The worker who uses the non-directive approach does not attempt to decide for people, or to lead, guide, or persuade them to accept any of his own conclusions about what is good for them. He tries to get them to decide for themselves what their needs are: what, if anything, they are willing to do to meet them; and how they can best organize, plan, and act to carry their project through. Thus he aims at stimulating a process of self-determination and self-help, and he values it for all the potential learning experiences which participation in this process provides. He aims to encourage people to develop themselves, and it is by thinking and acting

for themselves, he believes, that they are most likely to do so. Moreover, the outcome will usually be a project designed to produce some change for the better in people's lives. Thus two kinds of betterment result, and change in people and change in their environment go hand in hand. Batten with Batten 1967: 11-12)

Thomas Reginald (Reg) Batten (1904-1999) was born in Wimbledon in November 1904 and died there in January 1999 at the age of 94 years. He followed a first in history at Oxford with a Diploma in Education. As an undergraduate he had been inspired to undertake a career in African education by a missionary talking about his work in Africa. After Oxford he was first Superintendent and then Senior Superintendent of Education in the Education Department in Nigeria from 1927 to 1943. His next appointment was at Makerere College, Uganda where he was Vice-Principal and Head of Social Studies Department, from 1943 to 1949. From 1949 until his retirement in 1972 he was at the Institute of Education, University of London, first as a Senior Lecturer and then as Reader in Community Development Studies. In retirement he continued to work until 1994.

T R Batten was a pioneer in African education and development and in worldwide community development. Way ahead of his time he made original contributions to the praxis of each of these disciplines and encapsulated them in an impressive series of seminal Oxford University Press publications. He was one of a comparatively small number of people who discerned revolutionary ways of approaching, educating and working with ordinary people for betterment, which he practised extensively in many countries of the world. He profoundly influenced the praxis of educationalists, community development and youth workers and academics internationally. His brilliant mind and his deeply compassionate and truly humble nature infused his life long commitment to the holistic development of underprivileged and under educated people and communities the world over.

Madge Batten formerly Mrs Madge Gill, nee Bailey (1914-2002) was his research assistant when he joined the staff of The Institute of Education, University of London in 1949. They became work partners, married and became lifelong collaborators in a long series of London-based courses, an international programme of fieldwork and several publications. They were equally committed to the non-directive approach to community development and made complementary contributions to the partnership. Madge was outgoing and enthusiastic. She had an encyclopaedic memory and the ability to classify complex data. Reg was more retiring, analytical and reflective with a formidable intellect. Their interactive partnership was

extraordinarily creative and deeply satisfying to them both. During the second half of the twentieth century they achieved together what neither of them could have achieved separately.

Thomas Reginald Batten, Africa 1927-1949

For four of the sixteen years T. R. Batten was in the Education Department in Nigeria Batten taught in a Secondary School (he was fluent in the local language). During this period he wrote eight books. Whilst he was the Vice-Principal of Makerere College, Uganda he inaugurated and headed up a Social Studies Department. During this period he wrote three books in the plain, direct and lucid style that characterised all his writing. These books are referred to below and listed towards the end of this article.

Each of these books was the product of several years' work on some aspect of African education and development, which had previously been neglected, and each had a marked influence on subsequent educational practice in its particular field. They show that the work he did during this period had profound effects upon Batten himself. It established at the outset of his career his life-long commitment to combining fieldwork and training with research and writing up his original findings. It had a formative effect upon the evolution of his approach to people and working with them. Seven principles for good educational and developmental praxis can be discerned in these writings, though he himself did not enunciate them as such. They are: belief in human equality and potential; respectful attention to historical perspectives and world-views; commitment to conceptualizing, factorizing and contextualizing; commitment to qualitative autonomy; focus on education; accentuate self- and voluntary help; operate disinterestedly and even-handedly. Brief notes on some of these principles indicate the originality of Batten's contributions and their influence on the emergence of the non-directive approach.

The respectful attention to historical perspectives and world-views principle. Very early in his career Batten identified the cardinal mistake of educating Africans from the perspective of European history. Realising that well composed historical perspectives and world-views have positive effects on the education and development of people and upon their personal and corporate sense of identity, he undertook the enormous task of recasting world history *from the perspective of Africans* living in tropical Africa. For three or four years he tested out how to do this at Government College, Ibadan (cf Batten, 1953). Then he wrote a series of four textbooks for a four-year course of study for middle and junior secondary schools, *Tropical Africa in World History* (1939-1940). No aspect of world history was included

unless it was in some way directly relevant to understanding what had happened, or was happening in tropical Africa. These books demonstrate that he was a serious professional academic historian and an avant-garde educationalist deeply concerned about and affected by human sufferings and injustice, as demonstrated, for instance, in his writings about slavery. In the 1930's, the practice of this principle of helping people to establish their own historical world-views and to think constructively and act creatively with proper respect to them was an enormous shift in orientation. A parallel series was produced in China. When Batten came to write *Problems of African Development*, he used the same principle.

The commitment to conceptualizing, factorizing and contextualizing principle. Batten applied this principle rigorously in *Problems of African Development*, first published in two parts: *Land and Labour* (1946) and *Government and People* (1948). Their scope is breathtaking. First, he conceptualizes and factorizes the thirty interrelated problems and issues that influence development, and then, as he analyses the problems related to each factor he conceptualizes and contextualizes them in relation to each other and the whole. (A selection of them indicates the range of the analysis: the future of African society; problems of African economic development; from subsistence farming to cash cropping; new farming methods; animal husbandry; water for use or for waste; capital and labour as factors in African development; internal and export trade; health; formal and community education; problems of development; self-government; law in a changing society.)

Without naming it as such, he carried out a comprehensive systemic analysis of developmental issues in tropical Africa. He told me that he was helped to do this by what he considered to be a great work by Lord Hailey, *An African Survey* (Oxford University Press, 1938). The revised edition, 1956, had over 1600 densely packed pages. Batten's copy was still on his bookshelf when he died.

The commitment to qualitative autonomy principle. A recurrent theme throughout all Batten's work on African development was that qualitative autonomy, not simply independence, must be a conscious aim of development programmes. It emerged in *Tropical Africa in World History* and was worked out more fully in **Problems of African Development**. At one point he gathered his thinking in this way:

Throughout ... we have assumed that we are aiming at something more than independence. We are interested not only in the fact of independence but also in its quality. Self-government should mean representative and

preferably democratic self-government, and not government by any small minority enjoying special economic and political privileges. Self-government should also mean efficient government. If these two conditions are not met there is a danger of perpetuating for many of the people their present unsatisfactory way of life, and on these terms self-government might well be bought at too high a price (Batten, 1948, p156 et al).

Batten's deep and passionate commitment to qualitative democratic self-government and the independence, autonomy and responsibility that goes with it, did not blind him to the danger that granting independence "too early might lead to serious trouble and possible civil war", to the handing over to privileged minorities (black and/or white) and to autocratic rule (Batten 1939/1940, Book 4 page 226 and 1944, page 12 et. al.). Manifestly the conditions for qualitative democratic autonomy were not achieved before self-government was granted. Subsequent attempts to do so have been associated with the painful struggles and bloody events. Sadly, much that Batten foresaw and feared in the 1930's and 40's has happened and is still happening with tragic consequences. Notwithstanding, Batten worked assiduously to establish the cultural, developmental, economic, educational, financial and governmental conditions necessary to constructive self-government.

The focus on the education principle. For Batten education was a substantive factor in achieving qualitative autonomy. He saw the need for greatly extended and improved standards of educational provision through formal programmes at primary, secondary and higher levels and, concurrently, through programmes of community and "mass education" or, as it became known, community development. In addition to communicating knowledge, he argued, each of these programmes must educate people in the methods of obtaining knowledge. It was this emphasis that led Batten in the 1960's to argue the case that education, not social work, should be the major professional influence that should shape the newly merging discipline of community work in the UK. But eventually, largely through the influence of Dame Eileen Younghusband, social work prevailed. (see Thomas, David (1983) *The Making of Community Work*, George Allen and Unwin, pp17-36 cf p. 91.)

Accentuate self and voluntary help principle. Batten argued that developmental progress in Africa required that government action be twinned with self- and voluntary help purposefully aimed at the common good and at less fortunate members of communities. Later with Dickson he developed further his ideas about voluntary action and social progress (cf Batten and Dickson, 1959).

In Batten's thinking these interrelated principles prefigure the formulation of the non-directive concept, which could be seen as an eighth such principle because it emerges so naturally from them. To do this, however, would obscure two complementary relationships between the principles and the non-directive concept. The first is that the principles contribute significantly to a philosophy of the concept and a framework of cardinal reference points for the operation of the approach. The second is that the non-directive approach makes unique contributions towards translating the principles into effective practice in the realities of working with people at all levels for holistic development. The first is self-evident; the second leads to a closer look at Batten's understanding of the non-directive approach to community development.

THE BATTENS AT THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, 1949-1972

During this period the Battens first formulated the notion of "non-directive" and tested it through a long series of courses they ran at the Institute and a far-reaching fieldwork programme.

The non-directive approach to community development

Batten was in at the birth of community development whilst he was working in Africa. The concept emerged from that of "mass education" presented in an influential report on adult education in Africa published in 1944, *Report on Mass Education in African Society Colonial No 186 Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies*, HMSO. Batten examined and endorsed the philosophy and principles of this movement, "to promote all forms of betterment through active participation" (Batten, 1948, p78-91). So, the what of community development was familiar ground. It was when he came to consider how to achieve such developments that he broke entirely new ground by coming up with an original concept, which he called "non-directive" (Batten, 1967 and 1988). (It was not until Batten had been using the term for some time that he learnt that Carl R. Rogers had coined the same term for client-centred psychotherapeutic counselling.) This concept involves inner commitment to self-directivity in others and the skilful use of approaches and methods to help people to decide for themselves what their needs are in contradistinction to their wants, what they are prepared to do to meet them, and what action they are going to take. References to this concept can be about non-directive theory or philosophy or approaches or attitudes or intentions or methods or actions or being or presence. Having demonstrated the efficacy and indispensability of the concept they

produced their much-acclaimed definitive work on the concept, *The Non-Directive Approach in Group and Community Work*. In the preface he writes:

During the last eighteen years we have been working with all the many experienced administrators, trainers and field workers from ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ countries who have attended our courses either in England or overseas to get the positive roles and functions of non-directive workers and trainers specific and clear. In this book we present the conclusions which they and we have reached, in the hope that these will stimulate further thought and be of some practical help to all the many workers and trainers now experimenting in this field.

As already noted, this approach to community development emerges naturally from and is informed by the seven principles for good educational and developmental praxis described above.

For the Battens, both directive and non-directive approaches have their uses. Using them effectively involves, inter alia, assessing their respective advantages and limitations. A chapter in their book is about choosing between them. Later Batten redefined four kinds of situations in which workers have “to revert to working for, i.e. directly”: crisis situations such as fire, flood and epidemic; holding and preventative situations when the prime need is to prevent people harming themselves and others; transitional situations including the transition from directive to non-directive ways of working with people.

Courses

From 1949 to 1972 the Battens ran a long series of interactive courses at the Institute for national and international groups of people widely experienced and influential in community development and for youth and community workers engaged with secular and religious groups in the UK. Lochhead, in a tribute to Batten at the end of this phase indicated the nature and significance of these courses:

His retirement [from the University] ... ends nearly a quarter of a century of quite remarkable pioneering effort. Not only did Reg Batten ... introduce community development courses as a subject to be taught in universities, but the method of teaching was as novel as the subject itself. He drew from the students their experience and their difficulties as a kind of continuous group discussion and exploration. In the process the members, including Dr Batten himself, gained insight and confidence and knowledge which no amount of didactic teaching could have given. Community Development method was demonstrated in the classroom. It is appropriate that his account of this teaching method, published as *Training for Community Development* (1962),

should have gained him his Doctorate (A.V.S. Lochhead, “Dr T R Batten” in the *Community Development Journal*, Oxford University Press, Vol.7 No.3, October 1972, pp194-195.)

One of the things often said to the Battens about one or other of their courses by people who did not normally use such terminology was that it had been a “religious experience”. The Battens, who did not think of themselves as religious and were not churchgoers, were always moved and gratified by such responses because they showed that the philosophy and praxis of non-directivity resonated with the wide range of ethical-spiritual-religious-social convictions of the participants.

Fieldwork

During this phase Batten undertook an impressive sequence of consultative and training field work/research assignments, which, inter alia, complemented, earthed, contextualized and informed the London-based central training programmes. From 1954 to 1972 there were sixteen of these assignments, seven in collaboration with Madge Batten – and all this in addition to twenty-two years in West and East Africa! (In chronological order they were in: Nigeria; Ghana; India; Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica; Rhodesia; Canada; Rhodesia; Nepal; Thailand; USA (twice); Liberia; Nepal; Saudi Arabia; Finland.) They varied in length from one to six weeks. Most of them were conferences or seminars for senior people and government departments and ministries in national community development work and training programmes. Various they involved lectures and interactive training sessions and several involved Batten submitting reports and recommendations to governments and their departments. The list of the extant reports presented towards the end of this article indicates the range of his first hand experience of world-wide community development

Batten and the Community Development Journal

Batten was one of the prime movers in establishing the *Community Development Bulletin* and then, in 1966, its successor the *Community Development Journal: An International Forum* (Oxford University Press). He chaired the Editorial Board of the CDJ until 1981. By then the Journal was well established, prestigious and widely influential.

Books and the researching and writing partnership

Batten wrote six books in this period, the last three in collaboration with Madge Batten. During his African career Reg did his research and writing on his own. All his other work was done in “in collaboration” with Madge.

They researched and worked on things separately and together and through interactive seminars and fieldwork. He led courses and projects and did most of the lecturing; they collaborated in group work; she conducted skills practice sessions. When it came to writing, he drafted, they discussed what he had written and then he re-drafted until they got an agreed text.

Reg Batten's *Communities and their Development* first appeared in 1957 and quickly established itself as a major reference point for the field. His main purpose was to examine and compare differences in aim, method and organization. As he commented in his introduction, it was difficult to state briefly, yet adequately, what community development is. He brought out a number of the key areas of tension in discussions at the time. One of the most significant was the relative emphasis put upon community participation – where local people 'thoroughly discuss and define their wants, and then plan and act together to satisfy them (Batten 1957: 1) – and the development agency. In the case of the latter community development is identified with 'almost any form of local betterment which is some way achieved with the willing co-operation of the people' (op. cit.). Reg Batten goes on to examine trends in community development; the role of agencies; the processes of encouraging and directing change, and of building community; the relationship of schools to their local communities; working with groups; and selecting and training workers. One of the striking features of the book is the emphasis placed upon fostering and developing group life.

The process of community development (or creation) is envisaged in two stages: the first, development within the groups themselves as the members become more knowledgeable people, more friendly and co-operative among themselves, and more able to conduct their business without outside help and guidance; and the second, development in the community at large as the characteristics developed within the groups influence the conduct of the members in their homes and in their neighbourhood. Thus through the groups they sponsor the agencies aim to produce socialized and community-minded people, as well as knowledgeable people. They hope that leaders developed in their groups will later become leaders in community affairs. (Batten 1957: 81)

Unfortunately, Batten commented, 'the more the agency directs its groups, the less socially creative its work tends to be' (op. cit.: 82). The chief task of the development agency, he argued, was to help all kinds of democratic groups to grow.

A G Dickson wrote an extended review of *Communities and Their Development* in the *Community Development Bulletin* (March 1958, Vol IX, No2,

pp30-36). Batten deeply appreciated this review. He was moved by the importance Dickson ascribed to his work and valued the critical attention to detail and the way in which Dickson had set the book in context. Dickson concludes his introductory paragraph in this way:

Wisely skirting the morass of definitions and semantics in which so many United Nations and Colonial Office conferences on Mass Education, Social Welfare and Community Development during the last decade have become bogged down, Batten has concentrated on what the tasks are to be tackled and how. The four principal tasks are described as adopting new skills: meeting new problems arising from change; retaining a sense of community; and creating a sense of community in situations such as new towns. (op. cit.: 30)

In *Training for Community Development: A Critical Study of Method* (1962) Reg Batten describes the origins of the case study method and illustrates the use of slides to introduce cases. One of the defining, and most popular, features of the books that Reg and Madge Batten produced was their extensive use of case studies. It was put to good effect in *The Human Factor in Community Work* (1965) and *The Human Factor in Youth Work* (1970). Based upon systematic discussions about real life situation cases contributed and worked on by members of the Battens' training courses, their use of case studies had the dual benefit of anchoring their discussions in the day to day struggles of workers; and of encouraging people to look behind initial impressions, and to develop deeper appreciations of what might be going on, and what might be possible. The problems are discussed and ways of dealing with them assessed. Both books illustrate how the Battens used case studies to build up their non-directive praxis. *The Human Factor in Community Work* presents thirty-seven cases grouped under the chapter headings such as "Meeting Requests for Help", "Dealing with Faction". The lessons to be learnt from the cases are pertinent to workers in any country. *The Human Factor in Youth Work* contains nineteen analysed problems and many others, which are not analysed. These cases are from the British scene in the 1960's.

The Non-Directive Approach in Group and Community Work (Batten with Batten 1967) was a critical study of the nature, scope and limitations and relative uses of the directive and non-directive approaches and the use of the non-directive approach to train community development workers. This book had profound, dramatic and far-reaching effects on the fields of community development, community work, social work, adult education and church work. It provided a clear statement of directive and non-directive approaches and dealt with the nitty gritty of training

The Battens in active retirement, 1972-1994

The Battens were in active retirement from 1972 to 1994, i.e., when he was 90 and she was 80 years of age. During this period they were both very active and creative but Madge retired from professional activities and gave herself to supporting Reg in his continuing work. His mind was clear and sharp and he could concentrate for long periods until the onset of Alzheimer's in his early 90's. Apart from five short overseas projects, he concentrated on two long-term consultancy commitments in the UK. For several years he acted as a non-directive consultant to members of a team of avant-garde YWCA detached field workers engaged in pioneering community development projects, which involved unstructured, face-to-face work with individuals and small groups of young people variously alienated from society. Batten threw himself into this programme with young workers significantly different from him in age, culture and politics. Meticulously, he wrote up records of the consultancy sessions and notes about emergent practice theory but later destroyed his copies because they did not come up to his high professional standards. The second commitment was to an extensive consultancy arrangement with Catherine Widdicombe and me, and to Avec, an independent ecumenical agency for church and community development work.

Batten made enormously important contributions to the design, founding and development of Avec. It resulted from, and immediately followed, a six-year action research project to which Batten also acted as consultant. George Lovell and Catherine Widdicombe wrote up this project in *Churches and Communities: An Approach to the Development in the Local Church* (Search Press, 1978) Avec was founded in 1976 and ceased to trade in 1994. (Avec is not an acronym. It is simply French for "with" and is used to indicate the Avec approach which involves working with rather than for people.) It provided a wide range of in-service training and work consultancy courses. These ranged from half-day conferences to a two-year part-time post-graduate diploma in church and community development. Ten-day interactive work and theory courses were the central core of the overall programme. The staff also provided consultancy services and worked on a large number of projects, mostly in the U.K., though some were in Ireland and Africa. Avec staff worked with up to 8,000 people of ten denominations, including almost 4,000 Roman Catholics, 2,000 Methodists and 1,500 Anglicans. People at all levels used these services (some 5,100 at local and 2,500 at regional and national levels) by clergy (2,800), religious, deaconesses and church workers (3,800) and lay people (1,000). The subject matter was varied: it included most forms of local church and community work and a

range of specialist work with, for example, profoundly deaf and travellers. There were courses for specific groups such as missionaries (on furlough and returning to work in the UK., religious (for superiors and provincials), people working regionally and nationally. All the training and consultancy work was treated as an action-research programme. (For publications on *Avec*, its work and praxis see website www.avecresources.org).

Alongside this, returning to his first love of history, Batten was a member and President of the Wimbledon Society and Chairman of its Museum and Education Committee. He classified, annotated and catalogued the contents of the museum and commissioned historical essays. With his wife, Madge, he was also an active member of the Wimbledon Horticultural Society and, surprisingly, the Modern Sequence Dancing Club!

During this phase he published an important article in the *Community Development Journal* (Volume 9 Number 2, April 1974), “Major Issues and Future Direction of Community Development”. It was a lecture he had given to the Peace Corps in the USA in which he concluded with sadness:

As I look back over my years of research, study and fieldwork, my overall feeling is one of sadness that so much community development effort has, on the whole, resulted in relatively so little actual betterment and more especially for the poor and under privileged people who need betterment most. I know, of course, that powerful minorities in every country often succeed in influencing development policies in their own interests at the expense of the mass of ordinary people, and I accept that as a fact of life we have to live with. What concerns me much more is that the well-intentioned efforts of so many planners, administrators and field workers who really want to promote betterment have, on the whole, so often fallen so far short of realising their full potential. (Batten, 1974, p96)

It was his last publication.

Unwritten books

Up to 1985 Batten was researching and outlining two books. He wrote copious notes on the chapters but he never got them into manuscript form. One, which I knew nothing about until I went through the papers he left, he had entitled, *Principles of Extension Work*. This draft outline drew heavily upon the Community Development Courses at the University of London. Why he abandoned it is a mystery. Given all the thoroughly documented work he and Madge had done with international seminar groups of very able and widely experienced people he should have had no difficulty in writing it and it could have been a useful book.

The other one is a quite different matter. He entitled it *Development and People: A Critical Study*. An earlier sub-title was, *A Critical Study of Principles and Practice*. This book was meant to make a fundamental contribution to overcoming a problem, which he said he had encountered throughout his career from his earliest days in Nigeria. It was that all forms of secular and religious programmes and projects designed and intended to contribute to the common good failed to achieve their potential, to a greater or lesser extent, because", he argued, "of inadequate understandings and definitions of 'development and 'betterment'. Starting with a multiplicity of understandings of these two concepts, he set out to establish a generic philosophical and theoretical basis and framework, which would inform holistic developmental programmes. The detailed outlines had sections on: purposes; basic approaches to the development of environment and people; promoting the development of environment and people; problems; training; evaluating work. Reading through his papers I realised, with deep empathic feelings and sadness, that he simply could not conceptualize the issues with sufficient clarity to describe the philosophical and theoretical framework he saw to be so necessary. Eventually he abandoned the book in the early eighties ostensibly for health reasons: he could not write without smoking his beloved pipe; smoking was having a deleterious effect on his health and life expectancy and he very much wanted to live on, particularly for Madge's sake who was ten years his junior and unwell. (In the event she outlived him by some three years.) So he gave up smoking and with it writing. Reg was bitterly and lastingly disappointed, and so was I.

Conclusion

Batten's vocationally operative life spanned sixty-seven years of focussed, independent, original thought and intensive creative action. Madge was an ideal colleague and vocational partner for forty-five years. As I muse on his awesome life I see him, especially during the African years, as a thoroughly professional and dedicated "secular missionary" with a passion for education and development of those most deprived and in greatest need. A renaissance of well-informed non-directive praxis is, I believe, highly desirable in education, training and social and community development work. A significant contribution could be made through setting the contemporary emphasizes on collaboration, collegiality, egalitarian participation, self-directed group work and empowerment in a non-directive theoretical and philosophical praxis framework highlighting the connections between these associated concepts. This could enable more people to draw upon the Battens' capital investment in human betterment, which is an important part of our inheritance.

Bibliography and further reading

Books by T.R. Batten during his African experience

Some of the principal issues emerging from these books are discussed in the article.

Batten, T. R. (1933, 6th edition 1950) *Handbook on the Teaching of History and Geography in Nigeria*, CMS, Lagos.

Batten, T. R. (1934) *Koyaar Labarin Kasa da Tarihi*, CMS, Nigeria.

Batten, T. R. (1939/40) *Tropical Africa in World History*, Oxford University Press:

Book 1: The Foundations of Modern History.

Book 2: The Growth of Europe and the British Empire.

Book 3: Africa: Modern History after 1800.

Book 4: The Modern World.

Batten, T. R. (1941) *The British Empire and the Modern World*, Oxford University Press.

Batten, T. R. (1943) *Africa Past and Present*, Oxford University Press.

Batten, T. R. (1944) *Thoughts on African Citizenship*, Oxford University Press.

Batten, T. R. (1947) *Problems of African Development: Part I: Land and Labour*, Oxford University Press.

Batten, T. R. (1948) *Problems of African Development: Part II: Government and People*, Oxford University Press.

Books by the Battens from their London base

Batten, T. R. (1953) "The textbook and the Teacher" in *Overseas Education*, Volume XXV, No 2, July 1953, pp62-63

Batten, T.R. (1955) *Thoughts on African Citizenship*. London: Oxford University Press.

Goodban, G. A., Ching-lien, Chien, Batten, T. R. (1958-1961) *China in World History*. London: Oxford University Press:

Book 1: The First Civilization.

Book 2: The Growth of China and Europe.

Book 3: China and the West: Development before 1900.

Book 4: China and the West in Recent Times.

Batten, T. R. (1957, fifth edition 1965) *Communities and Their Development: An Introductory Study with Special Reference to the Tropics*, Oxford University Press.

Batten, T. R. (1959) *School and Community in the Tropics*, Oxford University Press.

Batten, T. R. (1962) *Training for Community Development: A Critical Study of Method*, Oxford University Press.

Batten, T. R. (1974 a) "The Major Issues and Future Direction of Community Development", *Community Development Journal*, Oxford University Press, Vol. 9 Number 2 April 1974, pp96-103. Also published in *Journal of Community Development Society*, Volume 4 No 2, Fall 1973.

Batten, T. R. and A. G. Dickson (1959) *Voluntary Action and Social Progress*, The British Council.

Batten, T. R. with the collaboration of Madge Batten (1965) *The Human Factor in Community Work*, Oxford University Press.

Batten, T. R. with the collaboration of Madge Batten (1967) *The Non-Directive Approach in Group and Community Work*, Oxford University Press. This is now out of print. An abridged version is available, Batten, T. R. and M. Batten (1988) *The Non-Directive Approach*, An Avec Publication.

Batten, T. R. with the collaboration of Madge Batten (1970) *The Human Factor in Youth Work*, Oxford University Press.

Reports of the Battens' overseas assignments

Batten T. R. (1959) *Impressions of the Indian Training Programme and Some Suggestions for its Improvement.*

Batten, T. R. (April 1964) *Report on Community Development in Southern Rhodesia*

Batten, T. R. (October 1966) *Some Comments on the Policy of Panchayat Development and Decentralisation in Nepal and some Suggestions for Increasing its Effectiveness.*

Bloore, Keith (July 1967) *Community Development Training: A Condensation of the (July 1965) Batten Report* (Published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs)

Batten, T. R. (March 1972) *National Development in Nepal: The Decentralisation Policy: Its Purpose and Problems.*

Batten T. R. (July 1972) *The Community Development Programme in Saudi Arabia: Report Submitted by Dr T R Batten.*

Batten T. R. and Batten M (July 1965) *Report and Recommendations by Dr T.R. Batten and Mrs M Batten to the Rhodesia Government on Implementing the Policy of Local Government Through the Concept of Community Development.*

Batten, T. R and Batten M (March 1968) *Some Suggestions Based on Work Done with the Community Development Department, Ministry of the Interior during our Visit to Thailand, January-March 1968.*

Batten, T. R. and Batten, M (November 1966) *Suggestions for Increasing the Effectiveness of Training and some Other Activities of the Community Development Department, Ministry of the Interior, Thailand.*

Batten, T. R. and Batten, M (February 1968) *Community Development Department Ministry of the Interior Bangkok: Report of the Community Development Department Trainers' Seminar Conducted by Dr T. R. and Madge Batten, January 15-26, 1968, Prepared by Training Division, Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior.*

Batten, T. R. and Batten, M. (February 1968) *The Non-Directive Approach in Training, An Account of the Recommendations arising from the Rose Garden Seminar for Officers of the Training Division and Technical Services' Division of the Local Administration Department, Thailand, from February 5th –16th 1968.*

Archives

The Battens' papers and memorabilia will eventually be housed in the Avec Archives in the Wesley Centre, Oxford, Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University, Harcourt Hill, Oxford OX2 9AT. Contact: Methodist Heritage Coordinator (Archives and Art), Dr Peter Forsaith (details on p75 of *Avec Archives Annotated Catalogue*). (see www.avecresources.org).

Other publications on the Battens

Lovell, George (2006) *An Occasional Paper: A Critical Appreciation of Some Outworkings in Christian Churches and Organisations of Batten's Non-Directive Approach to Community Development* (see www.avecresources.org).

Gilchrist, Ruth; Jeffs, Tony; Spence, Jean; Walker, Joyce (Eds) *Title?* (Forthcoming in 2007), a chapter by George Lovell, "The Life and Work of TR Batten" (National Youth Agency)

APPENDIX IV: AVEC AND ITS FUTURE

The contents of this Appendix consist of the following papers and variously located in the Avec archives:

Avec and its future by the Rev Dr George Lovell (May 1987);

Avec, a service agency for church and community work (Record of meeting 23 (T 23) held 22 March 1985 in Avec's seminar room 155 A Kings Road, Chelsea.

The future of avec: Report of a meeting of the President's Council to the Division of Ministries, April 1990 and the overall recommendations of an evaluation of Avec's training Ministry by Marc Europe in 1990.

APPENDIX V: MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS RELATED TO AVEC AND ITS FUTURE, 1981 – 1990

The contents of this Appendix consist of the following papers and variously located in the Avec archives:

Correspondence: TR Batten Nigel Gilson and George Lovell.

And: **EXTRACTS FROM NOTES OF THE METHODIST SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY WORK FORUM** Held at NCH Action for Children, Highbury on Monday, 22nd April 1996

Present: David Deeks (Chair), John Kennedy, Albert Jewell, David Cruise, David Gamble, David Halstead, Peter Sharrocks, David Copley, Helen Martyn, David Seddon, Deborah Rees, Alfred Salami, Garth Rogers, George Lovell, Ms Diana Morrison, Andy Lyons, Lynda St.

Louis, Bill Lynn and Helen Dent

Apologies: Judy Jarvis, Paul Goggins, Catherine Shelley, June Harrison, Brian Duckworth, Tony Holden, Malcolm Braddy, Michele Rigby, Tony Kinch, Carole Helme, Chris Wood, Peter Sutcliffe, Dick Jones and Tom White

David Deeks, Chairman of the meeting, welcomed everyone to the Forum, particularly our special guests, Rev. Dr. George Lovell, Rev. Garth Rogers, Diana Morrison and Andy Lyons, who had come to facilitate the day, the theme of which was Community Development Issues, focusing on the book “The Parchmore Partnership”.

2.0 “The Parchmore Partnership”

2.1 The afternoon was devoted to looking at the book “The Parchmore Partnership”, which tells the unique story of the Methodist Church in Parchmore sustaining community development models over an extensive period covering the three ministries of Dr. George Lovell, Garth Rogers and Peter Sharrocks. David Deeks commended the book warmly, saying that each contributor was himself and the story comes together in a most interesting and readable way.

2.2 George Lovell introduced the story of three ministries spanning 1966 to 1989 and radical changes in people, work and programme, and how the work challenged common assumptions at that time that “people needed guidance”. He told the story of the conversion of the buildings, the conversion in the approach from working “for” people to working “with” them and the conversion in the work programme to Church and community. People in the Church were converted into new ways of seeing the community and people in the community were looking at new ways of seeing the Church. The strategic importance of the “local” and potential for far-reaching change is the key to the story. It represented the local creative nexus of several creative approaches to community/spiritual development, balancing emphasis on the practical versus research demands. In context:

- new theological understanding of the mission of the Church
- new approaches to open youth and community work
- new methods: non-directive approach, action research
- “Scientific” approach, integrated into the practice of ministry

At Parchmore, the question always was, “Why is this not working; what changes are necessary”. George Lovell, in questions and discussion, told how working in this way in the present context would require the

opportunity for an external reflective consultant group for effective practice

2.3 Garth Rogers spoke about the focus on action, given the demands of the community, particularly in relation to the work at youth and community centres. It is important to realise that the process is not the message and there needs to be theological reflection:

- to realise the importance of pastoral care/networking
- no one person can do everything, be everything to everyone

2.4 Peter Sharrocks made the third contribution in relation to the Parchmore story. He spoke about the desire to see the Gospel effect local change and the importance of learning and growth in a mutual experience for those who are open to one another. Peter spoke about how the authority had been transferred and taken up by the people or the Church and the community- empowerment.

The benefits of living and working in the world:

- how it authenticates your faith and refines discovery of the world as a resource
- the Church is an enabler not a sole resource
- training policy was recognised as a need
- vulnerability; sharing pain, being open, the “stories” which Churches relive in their history
- relate sufferings to that of Christ and the resolution of their problems
- maintaining diversity and unity
- the importance of working in all areas of life according to the same principles and values
- finding somebody in whom you have confidence and who knows your work and can be a support/supervisor
- learning how to survive in stressful situations

2.5 Further contributions:

Community Worker, Diana Morrison, who worked with all three ministers, underlined the importance of the empowering of the people, which made working for change possible. Diana emphasized how “commitment” was central to carrying the project along.

Questions arising in discussion were:

- How far do we need to respond to the loudest expressed need?

- How do we make most impact with limited resources?

Comment:

- -non-directive approach a means of putting ideas in for consideration without imposing them (George Lovell)

2.6 Andy Lyons, Youth Worker, spoke of Parchmore being a story of “valuing” human beings and providing an environment which offered reflection/development of human values. He spoke of the importance of evaluation and ways of resolving conflict and handling tension.

2.7 A common theme from all contributors: “It’s person-centred as well as process-driven”.

2.8 In conclusion, David Deeks thanked our guests who had contributed to an extremely stimulating afternoon.

APPENDIX VI: AVEC, THE STAFF AND THEIR FUTURE: REPORT BY GEORGE LOVELL 5TH OF APRIL 1990

APPENDIX VII: LEVERHULME EMERITUS FELLOWSHIP AWARD TO GEORGE LOVELL

APPENDIX VIII WAS: AVEC’S CLOSURE: SOME PAPERS:

The contents of this Appendix consist of the following papers which are variously located in the Avec archives:

Correspondence: TR Batten Nigel Gilson and George Lovell.

APPENDIX IX: AVEC FROM AGENCY TO RESOURCE, REPORT BY THE REV DR GEORGE LOVELL

AVEC AND THE PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE CHURCHES

The parish clergy, lay workers and the members of their congregations constitute an immense reservoir of actual or potential community workers on a country wide basis. They are motivated by Christian values of service to others and are influenced by a long tradition of involvement in various forms of community work – predominantly through Sunday Schools, youth groups and women's and men's groups of various kinds – and they are relatively well provided with premises in which these activities take place.

In terms of meeting current community needs, however, they have tended to become decreasingly effective. Many fewer people now go to church and correspondingly fewer make use of the community provision which the Churches have traditionally provided and which people find too Church-based, too Church-orientated and even too Church-dominated: but the Churches, old-established and steeped in tradition, have been slow to change and face the additional difficulty that even when change is attempted, their clergy and other workers have not been trained in the skills they need to work effectively in a largely secular community.

This is the problem that Avec is now working to solve. With minimal resources and a full-time staff of only two it has since 1976 stimulated many hundreds of clergy of many denominations to rethink their role as Christian community workers in a largely secular society and helped them to develop the skills to do much more effective work within it in relation to the current needs, not only of their own congregations but also, and equally, those of the non-Church people of the neighbourhoods in which they are based. This work is highly cost-effective in terms of what it has already achieved, not only because the staff, though tiny, is highly motivated, but because the approaches and methods it uses are themselves the product of a long period of preliminary action research – initially by the present Director of Avec in his then capacity as a Methodist minister-cum-community development worker for several years in a very 'difficult' urban parish; and then, from 1970-1976 with a small ecumenical team of clergy and a lay-worker on a follow-up project in a Council of Churches area in London. All that Avec now does is thus firmly based on the experience gained during nearly ten year of initial action-research, supported and developed by constant evaluation by the Avec staff and the people it has worked with since Avec

itself was established in 1976.

Avec has amply proved itself in terms of cost-effectiveness. Its big remaining problem at this time of financial stringency is how to get itself funded on a permanent basis. So far it has been continuing on a hand-to-mouth basis with no regular income apart from fees at a level which its would-be students – clergy – can ill afford to pay.

