

Contemporary Relevance

This book is an exposition of ways and means of analysing and designing core processes of church and community development work. They promote the inter-related development of church and community, Christians and non-Christians, people and their environment, and the human and the spiritual. In this chapter, in order to demonstrate just how relevant these processes are to our contemporary situation, I am going to discuss the following principal effects and consequences of acquiring and using them:

1. they build up a more highly skilled, job-satisfied work force in the Churches, religious orders and allied organizations in relation to every aspect and kind of church and community work;
2. they enable workers and people to get a better subjective purchase on their lives, work and circumstances;
3. they contribute to the de-privatization of religion;
4. they generate egalitarian working relationships and facilitate the sharing of power and responsibility;
5. they promote ever widening circles of co-operation and dialogue between people of different faiths and none;
6. they can be used to provide back-up work consultancy services for workers;
7. they provide research data that can be used to enhance and develop church and community work generally;
8. they create a work culture and spirituality which is a medium of development.

Before proceeding to demonstrate the “effects and consequences” I think it would be helpful to distinguish two inter-related ways of getting at what needs to be done to promote human and spiritual well-being and development.

One way is through undertaking large-scale studies of church and society to determine the overall implications and the different kinds of action to be taken by people in various positions. Another way is through people themselves studying the work situation in which they are involved and the impact of their environment to determine what action they can take. (Work situations can be anything from a neighbourhood care group or a local Church to an international organization.)

Primarily this book is about this second way. Each of the ways is most likely to be effective when it is adequately cross-referenced with the other, i.e. when local action studies are checked out against the implications of overall studies and when large-scale studies are informed by the insights that come from the perspective of those intimately involved with an aspect of the whole. There are several ways in which people studying their own situation can do this: through reading books such as the ones quoted in this Chapter; through discussions with people who have a wider view of things; through using consultants; through contrasting their reference points with those of others. Most of my effort has gone into studying specific work situations and helping others to do so. Alongside this I have given as much time as I could to examining overall studies in my own field. This has profoundly influenced my study of work situations. However, it must be said that there are difficulties in becoming familiar with overall studies when you are deeply engaged in working at your own situation. Time is one problem. Another is finding the objectivity, courage and energy to pursue the implications of overall studies that throw some doubt on what you are doing. (This is an aspect of handling our overall context discussed in the last part of Chapter 5.)

Much of what follows comes from considering my experience of the processes and procedures central to this book in the light of a select number of overall studies.

I. A MORE HIGHLY SKILLED AND JOB-SATISFIED WORKFORCE

It is evident from what has already been said that the effects on workers and their work of the use of these processes is beneficial: it improves the quality and quantity of work done and its effectiveness; it gives workers greater job satisfaction; it enhances their qualities as workers; it builds up within churches and organizations a more highly skilled workforce. The procedures have also helped people to enter into or to establish themselves more securely in what Professor Gillian Stamp describes as the "well-being work mode".¹ She says that "more tends to be written about the experience and consequences of stress than about well-being. A word that is very widely used to describe the state of well-being is 'flow'. People in flow feel alert, energetic, motivated, competent and creative..."² People in stress, on the other hand, are "tired rather than alert, dull rather than creative, prone to poor judgements which deplete self-confidence and increase self-consciousness, ill at ease with the work as it progresses, constantly questioning self and others as the work proceeds".³ Anything that helps people to enter or to stay in the well-being mode is obviously of importance in a situation where stress and "burn-out" are a matter of concern.⁴

The processes, therefore, help to build up a more highly skilled workforce and to enhance the job satisfaction of its members. It follows that all clergy,

religious and laity, wherever they are working and whatever positions they hold, need to be able to use such processes and to help others to do so. It needs to be part of their basic equipment acquired through study, pre-service and in-service training, and evaluated experience. Gradually this is happening and people are working for the embodiment of these approaches into the working practices of churches, organizations and community programmes.

The processes are generic; they are as relevant to work with churches as they are with communities.* Indeed, as we have already seen, holistic development requires that they be used in churches, organizations and communities to promote the inter-related development of church and community, Christians and non-Christians, people and their environment and the human and the spiritual. Only then will these bodies use their full potential for the well-being and development of people.

An ever-increasing number of people are using these analytical approaches in their work. I have found them relevant to every form of church and community work; to clergy, deacons, deaconesses, religious and laity, and to women and men working at all levels. They are at the heart of church and community development. Various reports, papers and books show the importance of this newly emerging discipline. For instance, *Faith In The City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation*, The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas,⁵ emphasized the importance for such areas of community work and community development.

II. A SUBJECTIVE PURCHASE ON WORK AND LIFE THROUGH USING OUR INTUITIVE SENSITIVITY

This section draws heavily upon the work of Professor David Smail. From his wide experience as a clinical psychologist and as head of clinical psychology services in Nottingham he concludes that we are being seduced from our "intuitive sensitivity" and treating ourselves and others like objects rather than subjects, and that this has very bad effects upon our psychological health and our general social well-being.⁶

*Intuitive sensitivity** is the faculty which, he says, gives us access to "the

*Some of them are useful in counselling, in the private and personal domain and in business and industry. For instance the approaches to problems and cases are particularly helpful in thinking and sorting out knotty inter-personal relationships between members of families, friends, colleagues and bosses. Some of this is subsumed under church work but the wider application in business and industry is beyond the scope of this book.

+ Smail is self-conscious of the use of this term: "the very fact that I am driven to use such a clumsily unsatisfactory term as 'intuitive sensitivity' shows how impoverished is our conceptual apparatus for the understanding of this faculty".⁷ Later he adds, "... perhaps in part because of the degree to which it has been spurned and ignored in our culture and consequently is as a faculty poorly understood and weakly developed from a conceptual standpoint, it is quite easily put in the service of self-deception. Even so, it is, in the last resort, all we have to go on".⁸

intricate and finely balanced subjective world in which we conduct our relationships with each other, register and react to the impressions we give and receive, administer and respond to offers of love or threats of annihilation".⁹ Immediate knowledge of interpersonal truth is transmitted through intuitive sensitivity. This faculty is acquired through being an "embodied subject in a difficult and often cruel world";¹⁰ it is learnt through "embodied transactions with the world".¹¹ It is through our embodied relationships with our circumstances that we gain a "subjective purchase" on our predicament.¹² All this is the case because "however sophisticated our ability to deceive ourselves, we actually *are* engaged *bodily* in a *real* world which cannot be wished (or talked) away".¹³

One of the main reasons that Smail gives for this situation is that there is much in contemporary society that leads people to believe that reality is to be found in the objective, and illusion in the subjective. This causes us to lose the "freedom of our subjectivity",¹⁴ to give up "subjectivity as a bad job"¹⁵ and to place ourselves:

in a universe in which *we* are subject to the interplay of laws objectively established as independent of us, we create conditions for ourselves very similar to those of the table tennis ball—batted to and fro, often painfully perhaps, but at least without having to take the responsibility for it.¹⁶

My experiences of trying to get people to define *their* purposes is a small but not unimportant example of getting people to trust their intuitive sensitivity. Frequently when I ask people to state *their* purposes they will, as I have already indicated, repeat the purposes of their organization or church. This happened with a group of people holding national posts with whom I was working. After several failed attempts to get them to state *their* purposes one of them said, "Do you *really* mean that you want us to say what we feel in our gut that we are aiming for? I thought we were supposed to be objective. Is it right to work to our inner purposes?" Within minutes he was convinced of the importance. The relief and light on his face were moving. As profound definitions of *their* purposes poured out, the discussion, previously deadened by dull official statements of objectives, came to life. We have *our* purposes. They influence what we are and what we do, whether they are stated or not. Ignored, repressed and sublimated, they are more likely to have undesirable effects. Purposes are subjective realities that, as we saw earlier, are formed within us through complex subjective processes but point to things we wish to do beyond ourselves in the world "out there". Not working to our own subjective realities compromises our ability to work to the subjective realities of others and to get them to do the same.

This is but one of the many ways in which the processes described in this book are an antidote to this propensity in society and in the Church. They enable people to submit their intuitive sensitivity to critical examination and to

use it to get a purposeful purchase on things within and beyond them, on their experience of "subjectivity" and "objectivity", and to create an inner base for outgoing action. The orientation towards action prevents people from preoccupation with their inner selves by leading them to thoughtful or purposeful occupation in human and spiritual affairs. The subjective purchase is gained by putting the intuitive sensitivity to work for the common good. The processes we are discussing are relevant because they help people to do this and because they help all kinds and conditions of people to do this. The result is that people are changing the world by changing their worlds, their involvement in them. To quote Smail again:

Until we change the way we act towards each other, and the social institutions we have constructed, we shall not get much relief from the symptoms of anxiety, depression and despair which beset all of us at some time in our lives, and some of us nearly all the time. The "experts" will not change the world—they will simply make a satisfactory living helping people to adjust to it; the world will only change when ordinary people realize what is making them unhappy, and do something about it.... Changing the world is of course, largely a political enterprise ... I wish to suggest not so much that people must change the world (though that would be nice!) as that they must change *their* worlds, and that to do that they must first develop their *own* grasp of what is happening in that limited personal world in which they pursue their existence¹⁷.

III. CONTRIBUTIONS TO DE-PRIVATIZATION

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin's¹⁸ socio-religious studies have helped me to see more clearly one of the contributions that the approaches described in this book make to the life and witness of the churches in contemporary Western culture. By comparing biblical, medieval and post-Enlightenment thinking, Newbigin shows that the biblical and medieval world views were integrated, corporate, and co-operative whereas those that followed the Enlightenment were fragmented, individualistic and privatized. The following quotations illustrate this.

The Bible closes with a vision of the Holy City coming down from heaven to earth. It is the vision of a consummation which embraced both the public and private life of men and women. There is no dichotomy between these two.¹⁹

The Medieval world-view, based on the Christian dogma, was one which embraced the whole life of society, public as well as private. It had as much to do with economics and social order as with prayer and the sacraments. Like the Bible, it assumed that human life is to be understood in its totality, that is to say as a life in which there is no dichotomy between the private and the public, between the believer and the citizen.²⁰

The story of the Church's attempt to respond to the challenge of the

Enlightenment is ... complex.... At the inevitable risk of over-simplification one may say that the Protestant churches gradually surrendered the public sphere ... and survived by retreating into the private sector. The typical form of living Christian faith in its Protestant forms from the eighteenth century onwards was pietism, a religion of the soul, of the inner life, of personal morals and of the home.... Christian faith became—for most people—a private and domestic matter strictly separated from the public worlds of politics and economics.²¹

Essentially the development processes described in this book direct and enable people to work for holistic and inter-related development in church and community through processes of adult education and the use of social and behavioural sciences for Christian ministry and church and community work. That brings together those church and community worlds separated through the privatization of religion²² and causes people to work at the interfaces between biblical, church and secular worlds of experience. It also inter-relates the disciplines of ministry and mission, adult education and the behavioural sciences. Practised throughout the church, these processes will make significant contributions to the de-privatization of religion.

Just as we saw the need for frames of reference to guide and evaluate thoughtful action, Newbiggin sees the need for new “fiduciary frameworks”, i.e. frameworks held in trust:

I do plead, that the Church recognize with fresh clarity that it is the community entrusted with a “fiduciary framework” which offers a new starting point for understanding and coping with experience.... It must live in genuine and open dialogue with those who live by other “frameworks”.²³

No “fiduciary framework” or “pattern”, in the sense that we are using these words, can exist except as it is held by a community. Science is the enterprise of a confraternity of scholars who share the same basic framework of thought; it would be impossible without this confraternity.... But the point is that no systematic science is possible except where there is some kind of community which sustains and protects the “fiduciary framework” within which research and discussion are conducted. And every such community has power.²⁴

The processes of church and community development are designed to ensure that these conditions are met. They enable people to use the approaches and methods of the behavioural sciences and to understand the theory and theology on which they are based. They also help people to articulate and to “own” their frames of reference and to use them in their own work and in dialogue with others.

Thus, this approach to church and community development makes significant contributions towards de-privatization by enabling people to work privately, corporately and publicly at public and private aspects of their lives in co-operative ways. (See the discussion in Chapter 8 about “working privately and publicly”.) It can do this without people being disorientated because it also

enables them to get a subjective purchase on things within and beyond themselves, as we saw in the previous section.

IV. ENGENDERING EGALITARIAN WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

At all levels in churches and allied organizations there are growing theological commitments to and demands for shared ministry; for participative, collaborative and egalitarian rather than hierarchical working relationships; for non-directive, rather than directive approaches to working with people. These changes are easier to discern than to make. Generally speaking, they have to be made in churches and organizations with hierarchical structures of one kind or another (or the shadows of them) and with a variety of democratic practices and procedures. Attempts to make these changes are challenged and resisted by some people in churches and organizations in many different ways: some do so because they feel deeply that their vocation is to lead other people; others do so because they fear change or that things will get out of control.

People with authority and power working locally, regionally and nationally operate at the nexus of all this. Whatever their personal leadership style might be, they have primary responsibilities to see that churches and organizations are true to their vocation and to ensure that law, order and discipline are maintained amongst staff members and users. Generally speaking they have more models and experience of power and authority being used in autocratic, authoritarian and permissive than in egalitarian and non-directive ways. What they are looking for is help with human relations and the technical problems of translating their egalitarian theology into effective practice from their position of power and authority. Considerable numbers of people of all denominations have got such help from the processes, approaches and methods described in this book.

First, the analytical processes themselves give leaders tools to help them to work their way through authority and power problems and cases more systematically and systemically than they have done previously. Situational analyses have helped them to trace out with greater accuracy the power and authority structures (formal and informal, ascribed and acquired) and to find ways of improving them. Some church leaders have found the case-study method extraordinarily useful in dealing with clergy whose behaviour has been unacceptable.

Second, ability to use the processes equips leaders to give a strong lead to people over whom they have authority to think things through and to help them to do so with respect for their respective power and authority domains. That builds up trust and creative interaction between different domains of power and authority. What is involved in doing this is amply illustrated and modelled in this book and is discussed later in the section on consultancy.

Third, what does help people in authority is to see that non-directive and

directive action are integral parts of the same creative process. This means, for instance, that the directive action they must take to maintain discipline and good order can work together with the non-directive action they can and must take to promote discussion about discipline and good order and all other matters related to human and spiritual well-being and development. The art, as we have seen, is to use them appropriately, not to choose between them *in toto*.

The following things have helped leaders to construct models of leadership consonant with their theological convictions about egalitarian action and apposite to them and their situations.

1. Stance and Strategy

A wide spectrum of approaches from dictatorial to *laissez-faire* is in operation in a church or organization at any one time. For the foreseeable future this situation is likely to remain. So, even if the spectrum is shortened and the distribution of approaches modified, this is the kind of situation in which leaders have to work for change. Changes of the kind required can be inaugurated but not achieved by edict. (Vatican II demonstrated that.) Even if they could, that would be a denial of the egalitarian approach; attempts to impose it deny its nature. The means of inducing it must embody the ends to be achieved; the substance of it must be in the process. Thus egalitarian participation emerges by slow and sometimes painful processes of interaction and dialogue between those who differ significantly in their approach. Church leaders highly committed to egalitarian ministry may feel disadvantaged in promoting it because their strong feelings about it might cause people to feel they have to accept it. They are disadvantaged only if they have not the means to promote it in an egalitarian manner. Both their stance and strategy must be egalitarian. Inevitably that involves being nondirective about the essential personal choices however directive one is in holding institutional boundaries and maintaining an organizational context in which the dialogue can mature.

2. Leadership Labels

Labels such as “democratic”, “directive”, or “non-directive” have a certain use when examining different forms of leadership. However, using them to decide the kind of lead to give in complex situations is unhelpful, possibly even dangerous. As we have already seen in Chapter 8, the kind of questions that help to determine appropriate forms of action in different situations are: “What must I do for these people? What must we do together? What must they do for themselves? When must I withdraw? How must I withdraw so that my waiting and returning promote processes of development?”²⁵ The questions are universally relevant; the answers, and therefore the leads to be given, vary enormously from one situation to another and as people and situations change.

When leaders decide to answer the questions themselves, or insist that others do, that aspect of their leadership is directive. Taking such action may well be a prelude to leaders doing things *with* people and therefore to collaborative, democratic or non-directive leadership. When leaders work out the answers to such questions *with* others, their leadership is variously consultative, collaborative, democratic, non-directive. (In this case the questions may be put in this way: “What do I need to do? What do you need from me? What can you yourselves do? What do you need to do for yourselves? Do you need any help to do these things? What arrangements do we need to make so that we are able to work together and separately to best effect and call on each other as needed? How long do you think I should be involved? What will be the best way to bring my involvement to an end?”) When leaders leave others to find, formulate and answer the questions, their action (it can hardly be called leadership because there is no intervention) is first permissive or *laissez-faire* and then reactive. (The questions the people have to find and tackle are: “What do we want our leaders to do *for* us and *with* us? If we get our leaders involved, how do we ensure that they do not take over, that we remain in control of our projects and that they leave us to our own devices when we want to get on with things ourselves?”)

Appropriate action, it follows, will generally be a combination of several kinds of leadership, apart, that is, from those that are autocratic, authoritarian, coercive or manipulative. Leaders are more likely to determine what is the appropriate form in given circumstances by tackling the questions (on their own and/or with others) in relation to key reference points (beliefs, purposes, needs, resources, key contextual factors), rather than by adhering to one style of leadership or another. *A composite form of leadership evolves from making situational choices in these ways. It is properly and effectively eclectic. In the development work in which I engage it is predominantly, but not exclusively non-directive.* It has no readily recognized title even though it models the way in which God relates to us in the Church and the world: God does things for us, does things with us and alongside us, equips us to do things for ourselves and with each other; God gives us a lead to do the same. All this shows just how misleading it can be to ask whether one should be directive or non-directive in relation to situations *in toto*.

3. “Leadership through Self-differentiation”²⁶

The idea is that leaders need to define, occupy and maintain the unique position that is theirs in the system of which they are an integral part. This is not to be confused with independence; it is about “the ability of a leader to be a self while remaining part of the system”.²⁷ The art of leadership is in fact to “define self and continue to stay in touch”.²⁸ (“Any leader”, says Friedman, “can maintain his or her position by cutting himself or herself off, but from that moment on, the leader is no longer a leader, only a head.”²⁹) To do this, Friedman says,

leaders need to have the “capacity to deal with the sabotage”, i.e. any attempt to put leaders “out of touch” or to place them in positions, possibly traditional positions, foreign to them. (I once worked with some provincials who were preparing to meet bishops to discuss for the first time their respective roles. A moment of disclosure occurred when they realized that inwardly they were relating to bishops as they knew and experienced them a generation previously. This would have made it difficult for the bishops to differentiate themselves.) Egalitarian working relationships depend upon differentiated selves working collaboratively: they do not develop when people feign to be what they are not.

4. Participation

To complete the picture it is necessary to say something about participation, even though it means going over some ground already covered in the previous chapter.

Those preoccupied with the disestablishment of hierarchy have used “participation” to represent thorough-going egalitarian sharing and partnerships. Such relationships are of great importance. However, treating them as the only mode of participation worthy of consideration is debilitating. It is tantamount to suggesting that a necessary pluriform system of participation in society should give way to a uniform one. As we saw in Chapter 11, the life of churches, organizations and communities depends upon an enormously wide range and varied pattern of participation. (Undoubtedly they all need to be improved. That is not in question.)

Some people, for instance, gladly and freely participate in what others organize and have no desire to be partners in its provision. Others wish to participate through discussions, consultations, negotiations, etc. Yet others wish to collaborate, to be in short- or long-term partnerships or to have responsibility delegated to them. *Each of these forms of participation can be based upon egalitarian relationships.* Establishing appropriate modes of participation is vital to human and spiritual well-being and development. Doctrinaire allegiance to one form prevents this. (Deep involvement, for example, can be damaging. We have all heard people say in anguish, “I wish I’d never got involved”. Keeping people out of things in which they want to and should be involved has very bad effects.)

Appropriate modes of participation can be determined by considering the options in relation to workers and people, their capacities for responsible participation and their desires for it. One also has to take into account reference points and the realities of the working situation; for instance, initiating consultative procedures that cannot be completed before decisions are made have long- and short-term adverse effects upon getting people to take seriously invitations to participate. No one mode is necessarily correct. In living and developing working relationships the patterns are not fixed; they are flexible and changing as relationships grow organically.

Sufficient has been said, here and in Chapter 11, to illustrate the processes of demythologizing “participation” and examining its community and organizational anatomy as a prelude to discerning the purposeful uses of appropriate modes. Church leaders find this helps them to identify and put into effect the modes of participation related to the creative distribution of power, authority and responsibility—that which they must retain and that which they must share.

People with power and authority find that making distinctions and choices of the kind made in this section helps them to work with authority without being authoritarian; to establish their position and that of others; to analyse their situations, cases and problems and to design action programmes; to establish creative patterns of involvement and the power-sharing necessary to empower all participants; to determine rhythms of engagement and disengagement. All this helps them with two basic problems: managing a multiplicity of intersecting roles, and discerning the essential nature of their job. Church leaders of all kinds grappling with issues of authority, power and responsibility in collectives need this kind of apparatus.

V. CO-OPERATION AND DIALOGUE IN A COMPETITIVE AND PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

Co-operation is a hallmark of the ways of working set out in this book: the procedures require and engender it. The processes, approaches and methods constitute an in-depth approach to the promotion of co-operative effort in relation to the common good and to the dialogue necessary to sustain it. They enable people to think together at the depth that they can manage about their work and their personal orientation to it. Thought as well as action is characterized by co-operation: rhetoric and debate have no place in this kind of sensitive but penetrating exploration. As people work at things in this way they discover where their experiences, ideas, beliefs, etc., converge and diverge and just how much or how little they have in common. They will experience consensus and conflict and feel the associated resonances and dissonances. All this will enable them to decide realistically whether they have sufficient in common to enable them to undertake together shared tasks and to continue to explore their differences, i.e., to enter into a dialogue about work and faith as they work together.

Forging this kind of co-operation is demanding but rewarding. It has great internal strength. It is charged with power and energy. It has integrity. It is of a quality that does not evolve from superficial consensus. Combining thought with action gives a cutting edge to discussions which is simply not present when the conversation is open-ended. My experience is that these processes do build up relationships of trust and respect within which there are sharings about the deep things of life quite unrelated to the tasks, but which would not

have taken place outside the context of working and struggling together. Soul friendships are formed. Consequently I place high value on both the processes and their product.

This book is based upon the belief that in order to promote the human and spiritual development of all people (poor and rich and those in between) and to ensure the well-being of those most vulnerable it is essential to extend and deepen the areas of qualitative co-operation throughout society and its religious and secular institutions. This is what church and community development is about and it is to this that I am committed. Co-operation is, of course, an integral part of the competitive society: groups, teams and organizations in church and community cooperate to survive, compete, win—or to beat or to destroy their rivals. Some people grow through it; others are marred and destroyed by it. The cooperation that is required for holistic development is that which brings together in collaborative and egalitarian endeavour, for the common good, people from secular and religious organizations and communities and from churches of different faiths. The intrinsic difficulties of extending such forms of co-operation and linking self-contained pools of narcissistic cooperation are exacerbated by the dedicated and militant way in which competition is being promoted in contemporary society. That kind of competition has now entered the fields of medical and social care.

Most of the work in which I have been engaged through church and community development has been promoting co-operation of this kind between people from different churches and denominations and people in local community and society at large with no religious affiliation. It has taken an enormous amount of effort to get co-operation for development across the Christian-secular socio-religious divides. These forms of co-operation are established and extending. They must not be neglected. Another challenge is opening before us, that of using these procedures to promote inter-faith co-operation through dialogue about work and faith. Hans Küng says that there is “no world peace without religious peace”. These procedures are well-tested tools for interfaith work projects that will help to establish that peace.

VI. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK CONSULTANCY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS WORKERS

Work consultancy is an enormous contemporary need. Chapter 5 describes a process which workers can use to think their way through their work on their own or with others. This is highly desirable. People and workers can become proficient in using the processes and helping each other to do so. When, for one reason or another, they are finding it difficult to work through the process on their own with sufficient objectivity, they can be helped to do so by others less involved, I call such helpers non-directive work consultants. Workers and

consultants can use the same processes, approaches and methods: they are tools they have in common.³⁰

Experiencing consultancy help is an admirable way to acquire understanding of and a facility to handle the processes. The workers in each of the four examples in Part One were helped by consultants to work on the problem, the case, the situation and the project. Temporarily the worker becomes the consultor. Consultants and consultors combine their resources in an alliance of minds to work on the consultors' work in relation to the consultors' reference points and what consultors feel they can do. Work consultancy operates through the complex interplay between consultors and consultants. Thoughts and beliefs and feelings about consultors' work and ways of approaching it are exchanged and mulled over. Consultors and consultants allow their respective perspectives and their perspectives on each other's perspectives to interact. The art and science of work consultancy is the fusion of these perspectives in processes that produce things within consultors which enable them themselves to do their work more effectively and efficiently and with more satisfaction than they would otherwise be able to do. The fusion must occur within the consultors themselves if the energy is to be released in them and subsequently in their work.

These processes facilitate this. It is of the essence of consultancy that consultors remain free to act in their own right in whatever way they and those with whom they work see to be right. Emphasizing this is necessary because the autonomy of workers can by default be easily and subtly compromised by being consultors: consultors can feel they must carry out just what was decided during consultancy sessions; consultants, on the other hand, can feel they want to ensure that what they see to be necessary is done. To circumvent this real danger, consultants must avoid any semblance of remote control. They cease to be consultants if they supervise or manage consultors and their work and they become co-workers if they undertake work that is properly that of the consultors. Of necessity, therefore, being and remaining a consultant and avoiding these and other dangers involves being non-directive in the ways defined by T. R. Batten.³¹ It is the use of this approach that enables consultants and consultors to be vigorously proactive in ways that help consultors to be more creatively active. It facilitates the bonding of consultants and consultors that is necessary for productive consultancy sessions and gives consultors the freedom to be independent workers.

Generations of people engaged in the work of the Church and in social work have given outstanding service without consultancy help and many continue to do so. Why then is it now both a perceived and felt need far beyond the resources to meet it?³² Briefly stated, I believe it is because of radical changes in the kind of work now undertaken by churches and in the ways of doing it. Those who were trained to say mass, conduct worship and to address audiences now work with groups openly to facilitate participatory worship and those trained to give pastoral advice have to counsel. Those who were trained to lead

in an authoritarian manner are now expected to collaborate and lead. Those schooled to service, maintain and develop established programmes of church or educational work have now to design and manage diversified socio-religious programmes. Those who were trained to follow traditional ways of doing things have to think for themselves about how to do things and their motivation for doing them—and to get others to do the same. Those who once pursued their ministry with segregated like-minded people now have to relate to people of other denominations, religious cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

These changes make great practical, theoretical and theological demands upon workers. Accepting the practical aspects of these changes without examining the underlying theory and theology makes workers vulnerable because they cannot give adequate reasons for what they are doing. Yet examining the underlying theory is a complicated business. As we have seen, it involves foraging in many disciplines such as sociology, management and business studies, organizational theory and behaviour, social work and community development studies, and so on. An extraordinarily difficult thing to do. Rival claims and contradictory theories confuse laity and specialists alike. Also, no sooner have workers and people got hold of one idea than it is upstaged by another. Very few people can master even one discipline. Workers often find themselves on the practical and theoretical edges of all this—and they are workers and not academics. They have to decide and act now, not juggle with and speculate about ideas and theories indefinitely.

Meeting more of the needs for consultancy help involves increasing the number of people who can provide specialist consultancy services and building up the practice of workers giving to and receiving from each other consultancy help in their workplaces. It is imperative that these two modes of provision are developed concurrently as interdependent consultancy services. Certain consultancy needs can be met only by consultants who are autonomous and quite independent of any of the consultants, those with whom they work and their organizations—and are seen to be so. However, no matter how proficient and readily available such a service becomes, it could never meet all the consultancy needs that church and community development workers have. Some of those needs can only be met by people on the spot, by their colleagues or by others in their organization, including their bosses. And, in any case, a proficient and readily available specialist service could, through its very proficiency and availability, prevent other important needs being met.

One such need is the need to be as self-sufficient a worker as possible. Another need is for workers to build up their working and personal relationships by giving and receiving help from each other. One of the sad things about the evolution of social work is that it has in some circumstances stripped neighbours of the confidence to counsel and care for each other because they feel that they are not qualified to do so because they are not “experts”,³³ whereas in fact they are the local experts. Should this happen through the provision of consultancy services for clergy, religious and laity it would be a travesty of the purpose of

the whole enterprise because it would diminish rather than enhance workers and local resources; it would not be an exercise in church and community development. Building up co-consultancy infrastructures reduces this danger and also minimizes other dangers inherent in specialist consultancy relationships. There are the dangers, for instance, of workers becoming unhealthily dependent upon consultants, insecure in their own judgements, hesitant or unable to act without having consulted. These things impair workers and relationships with any who resent the procrastination that ensues and what must appear to be the powerful say of an absentee consultant.

Consultants must take action to avoid these and other problems, but so must consultants. They need to be aware of these dangers and how to avoid them. They will be best able to do so through being helped and trained to be as self-sufficient as possible in thinking through their own work. They need to be able to use the analytical and design tools used in consultancies in a dialogue with themselves, to become self-consultants. Having got as far as they can on their own they then need to be able to turn for help to those working alongside them with confidence that they will get consultancy help rather than advice. In these ways workers act as first-aid consultants to each other and build up their own DIY consultancy services.

So we are forced back again to the need for both specialist and local consultancy provision. Combined, they strengthen the workforce of any church or organization and enhance its power through creating highly desirable work consultancy infrastructures. Skills apart, the provision of these services must meet two critical conditions: people must opt to use them freely because they want to, they should not be mandatory; they must be strictly confidential.

The ability to use these processes will enhance the effectiveness of work reviews, which are becoming established and sometimes mandatory procedures for people at all levels in churches and allied organizations. These reviews are variously described as “appraisal”, “assessment”, “audit” and “evaluation”. As Michael Jacobs³⁴ shows, the terminology is not used in a consistent way. There is some overlap between these activities and work consultancy. Work consultancy does involve helping people to evaluate their work. Evaluative schemes and audits are of themselves discussions about work. Whether or not the parties proceed from assessment to work consultancy will depend upon whether or not they are able to analyse situations and design action programmes along the lines described earlier.

Both institutionalized evaluative schemes and work consultancy aim for better and more satisfying work and for better workers. However the activities must not be confused. They have different immediate foci: the one focuses on evaluation and the other on work development. Workers are often required to participate in the first, whereas they participate freely in the other. Clearly one of the advantages of assessments is that they provide opportunities to discuss work with people who would not do so if it were not required of them by their organization. Work consultancy approaches and methods help people to

conduct appraisals. Work consultancy also provides a quite independent service by helping people to work out the implications of their evaluations.

The processes are also useful to those who train people as they do the job through various forms of supervision, apprenticeship schemes and "mentoring" (non-directive help offered by an experienced expert to a novice working in the same field of work but independently). These relationships are established so that some people can help others to learn their job. Supervision and apprenticeships imply that those who instruct and teach have some control over their student workers, they observe them at work and intervene quite freely and directly. These are significantly different working relationships from those established between consultants and consultants. Work consultancy is an activity associated with the reflective and proactive side of a worker's working life aimed to help people to learn how to do their job better.

The process described in Chapter 5 provides a structure for consultations and courses. It is widely used in this way, as can be seen from Part One. From time to time people who have attended Avec courses set up local co-consultancy groups, some of which have proved to be very helpful.

I am highly committed to developing these consultancy processes because they have such profound and far-reaching effects. I am planning to write a book on the subject as a companion volume to this one.

A lot of effort and considerable resources are needed to make the kind of comprehensive provision which I claim to be needed (and needed urgently). It will include the following:

- multiplying endlessly and continuously the evaluated experiences of work consultancy and supervised opportunities to practise it for people in all spheres of church and community work—lay, religious and ordained;
- getting both those who offer consultancy help and those who receive it to study the theory, theology and practice of it;
- training all church workers (lay, religious and ordained) at an early stage in their pre-service training to be effective consultants and subsequently retraining them throughout their working life through in-service work consultancy programmes;
- getting people to think of work consultancy as a healthy and not a pathological activity;
- educating people and workers about the nature of, and the need for, comprehensive consultancy provision and thus creating an environment of thought conducive to its practice and funding;
- building up a cadre of specialist regional/national consultants who are committed to building up the kind of provision described in this book rather than an elitist consultancy service;

- establishing as an element of good practice the budgeting of fees for consultancy services and support for workers (lay and ordained) and for projects;
- developing ecumenical, inter-church and inter-organizational collaboration in making overall provision and particularly in providing consultancy services for one another³⁵ (people in one denomination or diocese, for example, can provide consultancy help for some people in another which they could not provide for people in their own);
- researching the experience of providing and receiving consultancy help;
- providing more literature on the subject.

Pursuing such a tenfold course of action would, by putting the processes described in this book to work in different modes, build up communities of workers suffused by a culture of work consultancy even though the process is an off-stage, back-room activity.

VII. THE PROVISION OF INVALUABLE DATA ABOUT CHURCH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A vast amount of broad-based experience of the use and research of these processes at all levels is accumulating. (Some of the research has been written up in reports and for further degrees.³⁶) Insights and information wrapped up in this experience are invaluable to all those concerned in any way whatsoever with church and community development. These data are one of the products of people searching for ways and means of doing their work more effectively and with greater job satisfaction. They are the result of trial and error; success and failure; studying, analysing, designing, evaluating and researching. Their genesis makes them hard-gained reliable information about the actualities of the aspirations and frustrations of workers, the actualities of working situations and what workers feel about them, what works and what does not work and what it is actually like to work in them.

Using these kinds of processes, Avec staff have studied in depth with almost four thousand people, individually and in small and large groups, the work in which they are engaged, with the express purpose of enhancing their effectiveness and abilities. Most of the work in which the participants were engaged was in Great Britain, but some of it was in twenty other countries. These work studies cover eight denominations and are equally representative of Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic church and community work in its many forms at local, regional and national levels. They were undertaken in the strictest confidence and give unique subjective perspectives on what it is

like to work in these situations. Some of this work has been written up.³⁷ Marc Europe has conducted an independent postal survey of most of this work.³⁸ Each stage of the work has been evaluated by all those engaged in it. New insights have been used by those concerned to refine the processes and the ways in which they are used. The study of these work situations undertaken entirely for the sake of the work under consideration has much to teach us about:

- critical contemporary features of church and community working situations in the UK and overseas;
- the changes taking place in church and community work;
- the difficulties actually experienced in adopting the non-directive mode of working with people in church and community (the efficacy of this mode of working has already been thoroughly researched³⁹);
- the theological implications of church and community development work;
- the kind of workers required and the aptitudes and skills they need;
- recruiting, selecting, training and deploying full and part-time workers for church and community development work;
- equipping the clergy and laity for church and community development work;
- analysing, designing and carrying out programmes aimed at promoting inter-related development;
- critical contextual problems;
- the implications of all this for the church, religious orders, Christian voluntary organizations and all those with whom they collaborate.

By describing the processes of church and community development this book makes a small contribution to providing information on some of these subjects and shows that research can be done without breaching the confidentiality of the work studies. However, there is a mine of information and insights that will be made generally available only when the resources to do the necessary research are made available.

VIII. THE PROMOTION OF A SPIRITUALITY OF CHURCH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The approaches, methods and processes we are considering, adopted and internalized, contribute a distinctive work culture that influences our being and

doing. They are not simply a collection of techniques or technical tools. In fact, they characterize the nature of our involvement in human affairs, become a way of life and generate a spirituality all of their own, the spirituality of church and community development.

Spirituality, a concept much in use now by people in religious and secular organizations, is defined by Dr Gordon Wakefield as "a word which has come much into vogue to describe those attitudes, beliefs and practices which animate people's lives and help them to reach out towards super-sensible realities".⁴⁰ This definition helps me to distinguish inter-related aspects of spirituality: the things that generate it (beliefs, attitudes and practices); its affective content within individuals and groups (the "core spirituality"); the feelings, ethos, atmosphere that it engenders; (the "projected spirituality"); and those things that it facilitates within, between and through people. The first and fourth of these are comparatively easily described; the second and third are directly communicated to the senses but elusive to description. Thus understood, "spirituality" points to the essential substance of human being and doing, not to something vague, amorphous and "religious". Figure 12:1 helps me to conceptualize this.

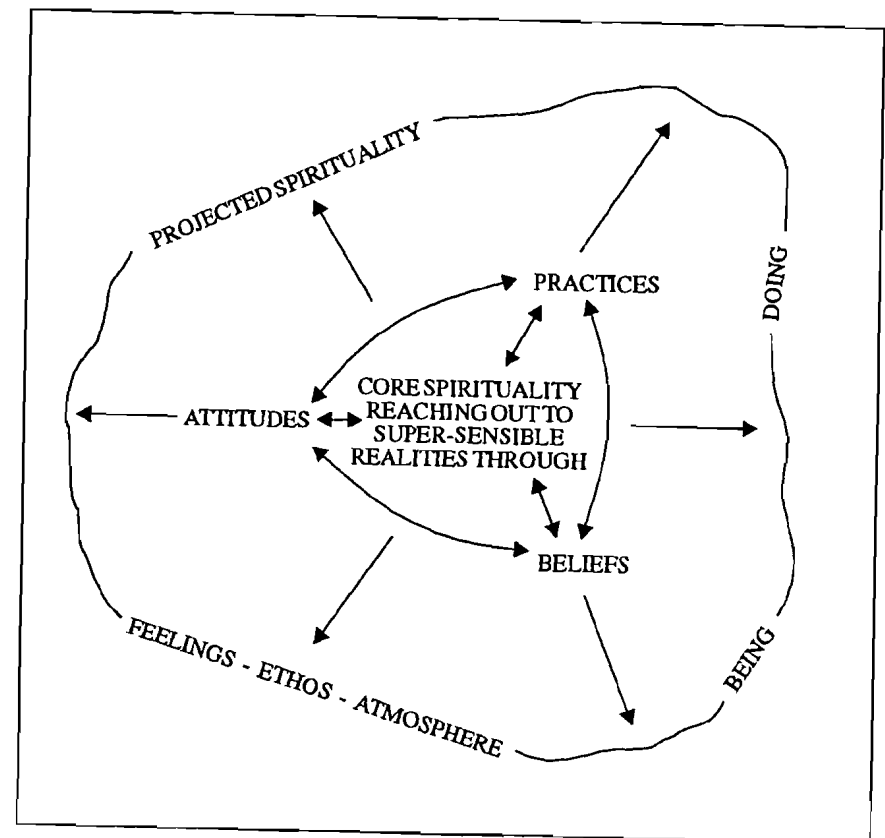


FIGURE 12:1. ATTRIBUTES OF SPIRITUALITY

At the heart of the spirituality that characterizes church and community development are the beliefs, practices and attitudes that enable people in all kinds of situations and circumstances to initiate and sustain imaginative critical thought and action relevant to the complexities of contemporary society. These processes of thought and action engender an ethos and an atmosphere in which people feel they matter and know instinctively that they and their interests are being taken seriously. It is an atmosphere in which they feel equal and enjoy equality of opportunity and participation and in which they know with deep personal assurance that they are significant. It is an environment within which people know that they are accepted for what they are, non-judgmentally and without patronage or condescension. The freedom to think, to think aloud and to think again is in the air.

The ethos encourages all forms of exploration and the facing up to differences; it discourages argumentation, rhetoric and debate; it is therefore unitive rather than divisive. It is characterized by receptivity, affective as well as intellectual responses, waiting or attentiveness and the acceptance of pain as intrinsic to the bringing forth of life.⁴¹ It constrains people to stop and think, stimulates them to go and act and deters them from being quietists or activists. It is a spirituality of being and doing. The atmosphere is that which goes with creative activity—people discovering and learning together and from each other how to do or to make something of importance to them. It is the ethos of healthy people at work rather than sick people at therapy. It is a learning atmosphere. It is my hope that readers will have felt some of these things as they have read the description of the processes in this book.

In the spirituality of church and community development the love of God, neighbour and creation coalesce.⁴² It is informed and infused by the vocation of Christians and the church and the findings of modern behavioural sciences.

A compounding process is at work within this spirituality: beliefs, attitudes and practices engender a distinctive affective content and an ethos. Combined, these facilitate things in human affairs; integrated, they refine beliefs, attitudes and practices, affective content and ethos. The cycle repeats itself over and again in relation to all kinds of work programmes and projects; in relation to promoting thoughtful action, holistic development, egalitarian and co-operative working relationships, power and responsibility sharing, interfaith and interdisciplinary dialogue and the de-privatization of religion; in relation to helping people use their subjectivity creatively; and in relation to providing consultancy support services.

This understanding of the spirituality of church and community development helps to understand and manage what happens when individuals and groups in complex organizations adopt the approaches and methods advocated in this book. They experience incremental or transformational change in their work culture and their spirituality. In either case it affects to a greater or lesser extent all aspects of their being and doing. If all the members of the group or the organization adopt the approaches, they manage the processes of loss and

change together and work out what they want to conserve. However, the most likely situation is that only some of the members of an organization or group will be attracted to these approaches. When this happens, an alternative spirituality—it might be a sub-spirituality or a counter-spirituality—is generated.⁴³ The interaction between normative and alternative spiritualities determines the pattern of development that ensues. It is more likely to be for the common good if the beliefs, practices and attitudes of the alternative spirituality are brought to bear on the dynamics of the interaction, whatever they might be.

All my experience convinces me that church and community development is a movement of the second half of the twentieth century that has much to contribute through its methodology and spirituality to Christian mission and ministry in the twenty-first century, through equipping practitioners, churches and communities for creative reflective action.