CHAPTER TWO

Seven Elements of Practice Theory

Exploring what makes and mars consultancy is endlessly fascinating. Here I do just that in order to discern why it is advisable to do things in this way rather than that. My aim is to get at the practice theory or, as some would describe it, the praxis of consultancy. This is the practical wisdom grounded in consultancy experience, informed and sharpened by theoretical and theological insights, which helps people to be consultors and consultants and which contributes to the continuing development of effective consultancy practice.[1] Critical aspects of consultancy practice theory cluster around one or other of the following seven basic elements.

> Roles
> Interpersonal behaviour
> Working relationships
> Work views
> Thinking together
> Systemics and logistics
> Beliefs, values and ethics

The systemic relationships between the first six are modelled in Figure 2:1. Good practice requires that beliefs, ethics and values, the seventh element, suffuse all aspects of the other six elements. This is modelled in Figure 2:2. An integrated consultative system is in being when good practice in each of the seven elements jells.

These seven elements enable practitioners to keep the whole process and system in focus and perspective as they pursue the many aspects and minutae of good practice. They also provide a check list against which consultors and consultants can readily assess their consultancy strengths and weaknesses in general and evaluate good and bad experiences they may have had.

These elements of consultancy practice theory are compounds. They are formed from three different kinds of human and spiritual qualities and abilities. The first of these is the cluster of *personal attributes*, the being and behaviour that equip people to be consultants and/or consultors. Trustworthiness is an obvious example of this kind of quality. Secondly, there is the *body or bodies of knowledge*, the knowing and understanding which informs consultancy praxis. This can include such things as the ways in which groups churches and communities function, the broad based theory and theology of development, ecclesiastical structures and politics. Thirdly, there is the *technical and practical human relations skills* related to doing and making which are required of consultants and consultors. The ability and skills which, for instance, enable them to think and work together, to analyse and design problems and situations. So the practice theory elements describe what consultors and

consultants need *to be*, what they need *to know* and what they need to be able *to do* and the importance of the unitive interplay between *being, knowing and doing*.Not surprisingly the same thing applies to the attributes required of practitioners as Chapter Seven demonstrates.

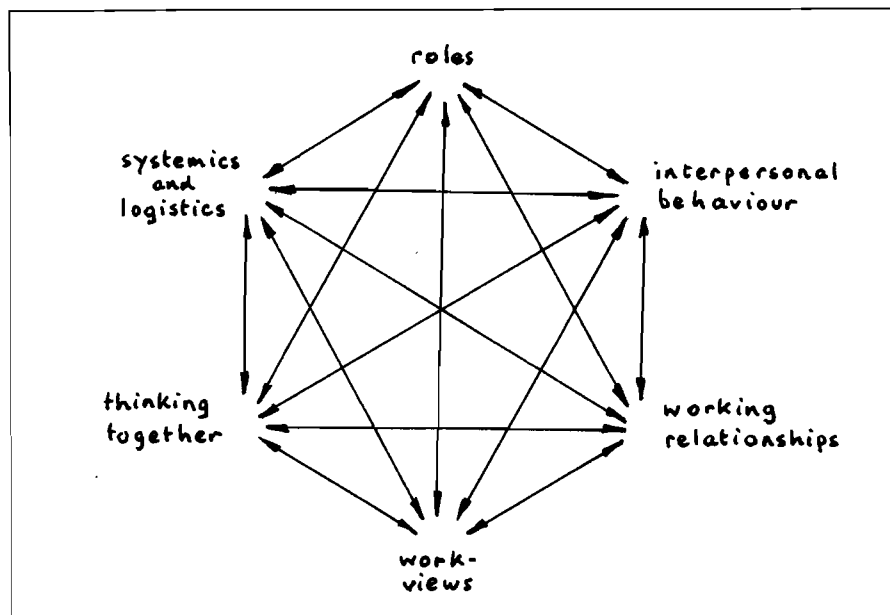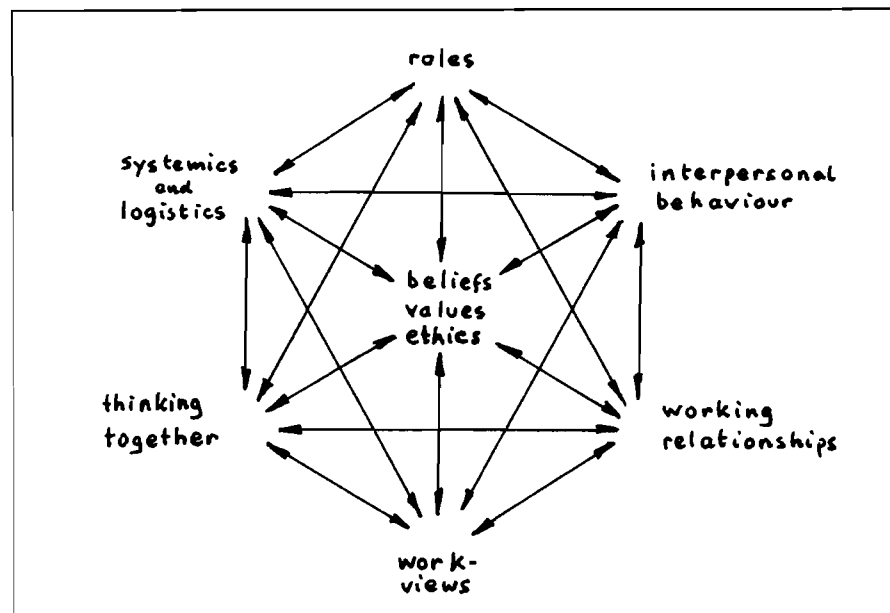**Figure 2:1 Systemic Relationships Between Six Consultancy Elements**

Figure 2:2 Systemic Relationships Between The Seven Consultancy Elements

At the heart of good consultancy practice is the ability of consultants and consultors to build these elements into consultancy systems that *work for them* in relation to what *they are doing*. To do this they have to put aside any ideas that a code of good practice is a simple list of "do's" and "don't's". Work consultancy is not a series of mechanical procedures. It is a creative art, based on the insights of Christianity and the behavioural sciences, which engages with all that is involved in the work of God and people in all the glory and messiness of human and spiritual life in the church and the world.

Consultancy work takes place in many different settings and relationships (cf Chapter 8). Except where otherwise stated, the situation I have in mind whilst writing this chapter is one where consultants and consultors meet privately away from the consultor's work situation. Normally the consultants have not and do not visit the working situation. (The pros and cons of consultants doing so are considered in Chapter 5, section 2.) Consultancy relationships could be between a consultant and a consultor or one or more consultants and a group of consultors or it could be a co-consultancy group led by a consultant. However, much, but not all, of what follows relates to any consultancy relationship however formal or informal, long or short it might be.

Now to a commentary on the seven elements.

ELEMENT ONE: ROLES

In non-directive work and vocational consultancy as defined in Chapter One, the essential role of a consultant is that of an enabler or a facilitator and the role of a consultor is that of an independent practitioner seeking help in thinking through aspects of his/her work without in any way becoming obligated to the consultant. Both are experts and learners. Their roles are complementary. They are fashioned to enable them to be collaborative egalitarian agents of creative reflective engagement on the consultor's work concerns in consultancy session. Their consultancy roles begin and end with consultancy relationships. Consultants and consultors move out of their consultancy roles if consultants become counsellors, supervisors, managers, colleagues or project partners of consultors. As it is all too easy for them to drift into roles such as these, continual role vigilance is essential on all sides. David Campbell describes vividly what can be involved in taking up the role of a consultant in a group:

> Learning to take the systemic "consultant position" is, to a very large degree a case of absorbing an altered picture of the world . . . We can learn some techniques and methods in advance, but it all boils down to assuming a consulting position in the group that summoned us as agents of change. And this requires a special kind of personal daring and a willingness to run risks, as we have placed ourselves in an unpredictable, uncontrolled field—in a web of relations and several assorted versions of a reality we seemingly share . . . When the consultancy role is thus described, we must possess a peculiar mixture of dominance and reservedness, a difficult mixture of waiting and guiding: an ability to be a "non"-person, abandoning personal safety and control of the situation when, at the same time, the client strongly demands our visibility and willingness to act. We have to trust our own perceptions even when they are in conflict with the traditional demands for a successful consultation. We must be

able to keep quiet and let the process run- often for much longer than might be expected from a traditional consultant with the supposed amount of immediate power of action, suggestions for solutions, and plans of action. As a systemic-based process consultant, I float in a room of not-understanding. I have to listen to what is happening, form my hypotheses, and ask my questions in order to mobilize the participants' own knowledge.[2]

A consultor's substantive role is determined by and located in his/her work situation and role-sets, that is, the complement of roles organized around his/her particular role. The roles adopted in consultancy relationships must enhance these roles: they must not undermine or compromise them in any way. This has profound implications for the attitudes of consultors and consultants towards those with whom consultors work. They need to be positive and respectful.

Taking up appropriate roles[3] is a master key to work and vocational consultancy; it facilitates the process. Consultors and consultants simply have to get into and remain in their respective roles for the duration of sessions and then to exit from them into their other roles. Doing this can be tricky for both of them. Most consultors do not have role models to help them apart from counselling relationships and they are not good guides.[4] Consultancy roles, like the processes, are subtly and significantly different from those with which they may well be confused: expert/non-expert; advice giver/advice receiver; counsellor /client or "counsellee"; doctor/patient; trainer/trainee; supervisor/supervised; manager/managed. Further clarification of appropriate consultancy roles is attempted in this chapter by studying what consultants and consultors have to do and the relationships which enable them to do it. And that takes us to the study of the other elements.

ELEMENT TWO: INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOUR

Much is required of the interpersonal behaviour between consultants and consultors. It has to establish and sustain consultancy relationships and processes in meetings of equals working interdependently at agreed tasks in consultancies ranging from those between colleagues in their work place to those with specialist work consultants outside of the consultor's work domain. Some consultors and consultants know each other well, meet each other continuously in different settings and their personalities, approaches to work with people, theology and spirituality are compatible. Others are strangers at the outset of the consultations, vary greatly in their natural compatibility, and meet exclusively for formal consultancy sessions, often infrequently.

Relationships between consultors and consultants have to facilitate intense task centred work in a friendly way on things of great importance to consultors when things are going well and when they are going badly.[5] Clearly interpersonal behaviour is a key to every aspect of consultancy. It creates the emotional ambiance and atmosphere. At best it facilitates consultancy processes, at worst it inhibits or prevents them. Effective use of approaches and methods do, of course, produce good vibes but they are no substitute for appropriate forms of behaviour. Moral trust comes before skills and technology.[6]

Critical aspects of behaviour which I consider here are: confidentiality; genuine interest and single minded concentration; empathic relating; controlled emotional

involvement; openness and privacy; freedom in interdependence and accountability; respectful and humble engagement. Other aspects are considered in the theological observations in the discussion on Element Seven.

1. Assurance of Confidentiality

Confidentiality and the trust that it engenders are of fundamental importance in all forms of consultancy and not least between people in the same organization. Consultancy work begins when consultors and consultants believe that confidences will be honoured. Sadly, a significant proportion of those with whom I have worked have suffered through breach of confidence in the church.[7] Untold damage has been done through these betrayals. Understandably both consultors and consultants are circumspect. Consultors can breach confidentiality as well as consultants, not least by quoting what consultants said out of context and using it to give authority to what they are saying or by distorting what was said: *e.g.,* "Dr Lovell said that so and so is the cause of our problems and that we should do this and that", when in fact what I said was a tentative summary of our joint analysis and our speculation on possible courses of action. I have experienced this kind of thing many times. Reinstating valued relationships has been costly. Consultors and consultants need to be able to trust each other, not only that confidences will be kept, but that whatever emerges from their exchanges will be used wisely and constructively in ways that further the causes they espouse. Apart from the obvious aspects of confidentiality about which much has been written, one thing needs to be mentioned here. Sometimes it is a breach of confidence to disclose that a person has consulted you—and doing this and declining to tell what transpired can cause people to be suspicious about secret meetings and to speculate wildly in ways that can lead to destructive rumours and gossip. To make consultations confidential it is sometimes necessary not only to agree to honour confidences but to be quite explicit about what that means in specific consultations at the beginning, during and at the end of sessions.

Confidential discussions create a safe house in which people can reflect freely, do their private work and determine what action they must take for the common good. On the other hand they can be used to plan secretly for personal or sectarian interests and against the common good. Secrecy for ulterior motives has no part in the consultancy processes I am considering. Consultants have to be on their guard against being drawn into such arrangements. If and when they begin to appear, they have the responsibility to question and challenge. The justification for critically examining in confidence behaviour that has caused problems, is the sincere intent to discern remedial action rather than to engage in secret censorious gossip. All kinds of things are said, of course, as consultors give vent to pent up anger and frustration in the security of confidential discussions. The challenging task is to avoid collusion and to help consultors to work through their feelings to constructive attitudes and approaches.

2. Paying Attention: Genuine Interest, Singleminded Concentration and Professional Curiosity

Genuine interest, single-minded concentration and professional curiosity are qualities of interpersonal behaviour essential to good consultancy practice. They can

be contagious. They are at the heart of consultancy; they constitute its spiritual core; they are the media of powerful creative forces. The degree to which they exist is an index of the quality and potential of any consultancy relationship: skills, procedures and methods are the servants of them, they can never be substitutes for them. Pretending they are present when they are not deceives no one. Feigned interest is soon apprehended no matter how consultants try to veneer and disguise it by acting out the body language signs and symbols of attention. It nullifies any good effects that consultancy might otherwise have and, sadly, increases the mental and spiritual isolation of consultors at times when they desperately need the true alliance of the minds and hearts of other human beings. There is no substitute for "behaving authentically." [8]

Consultants are in a position to offer very much the same thing that, in the following quotation, Professor David Smail says psychotherapists offer.

> The psychotherapist, in fact, offers a commodity available almost nowhere else (not, that is, with any consistency or predictability). Quite regularly, for about an hour at a time you can go to your psychotherapist and be listened to, concentrated upon, thought about, puzzled over, understood, questioned, encouraged. Here is someone who will take an absolutely exclusive interest in you (or so, certainly, it is likely to seem to you), who will attend to and remember even apparently trivial details of your life, who will sympathize with your pain even when gently remonstrating with instances of your intransigence, who will blame you for nothing and demand nothing from you, fob you off with no superficial or impossible advice, but open the way for you to tackle the difficulties in your life. Put like this, surely, it is not hard to see the attraction of psychotherapy nor to understand its popularity, and scarcely necessary to invent for it any spuriously technical justification. The more therapists' interest and concern is genuine (as opposed to the rather coldly distant professional posture which some earlier psychotherapists took to be proper), the more they appear as real, recognizable people, the more they are likely to be trusted, and the more effective their influence—just as loving, and lovable, parents will have more influence over children than punitive, forbidding, or indifferent ones. Just such inferences as these are to be drawn from research revealing the "non-specific" factors in psychotherapy.[9]

I value this quotation because it expresses much of my consultancy experience. (I had used the phrase "genuine interest, single minded concentration and professional curiosity" long before I read this paragraph by Smail.) To my surprise I discovered that during consultancy sessions of anything from one to two hours I rarely think of anything except consultors and their work and things which they evoke. Doing this is deeply satisfying and engenders feelings of peace *(shalom)* and fulfilment. Such absorption is pregnant with creativity when it is shared by consultors and consultants. They discover things they didn't know they knew, they have penetrating insights into their work and gain new ideas which enable them to make quantum leaps in understanding. The "listening" associated with this attention has the power to draw things from the depths of our experience, memory and consciousness. It is, of course, not without some strain. E. R. Ackerley in a personal memoir to E. M. Forster expressed this very effectively:

> When I was alone with him and his unselfconscious listening attention was turned upon me—attention which I felt was hearing not only the things said but the motive in saying it—I experienced a sense of strain, as though more and more were expected of me than I believed myself to contain. To be really listened to is a very serious matter.[10]

And Roger Graef after speaking of the "stillness of his presence as a listener" said this of the oral historian Tony Parker:

> The power of his silence created a vacuum which invited others to fill it. But he had not switched off: the quality of his attention made it clear he was taking in every word.[11]

These accounts resonate with my experience of being listened to by T. R. Batten, I would simply add that because it is a serious matter it is also a creative one. Sadly in the early days of my consultancy experience most consultors said that they had not been listened to in this way in relation to their work.[12]

Listening like this is an inner activity and attitude. It involves giving oneself to the other(s). It is considerably helped by practical arrangements which prevent unwanted interruptions of any kind. Whenever possible I make such arrangements and when I cannot I discuss with consultors interruptions that might occur and how we could minimise their possible adverse effects upon our concentration. Besides providing conditions for concentration such arrangements are a sign of the seriousness of the exercise and the value placed upon concentrated attention. This is so different from interviews punctuated by telephone calls and other people popping in without apology. Sometimes people seem to exult in this because they think it indicates just how busy and important they, not the consultor, are.

People can enhance their capacity for this kind of concentration through practising it. I have seen it happen time without number in co-consultancy groups of six practitioners with an experienced work consultant. There were two ground rules: concentration on one practitioner and his/her situation at a time; no anecdotes! The ability to concentrate on the other increases dramatically after two or three consultancy sessions. Concentration is self-generating from genuine interest in and curiosity about, the work of others in a similar field, the way in which they go about things and as to whether they are facing similar problems to you and, if so, how they tackle them. Interest and concentration rise sharply in co-consultancy sessions when people realise, as they invariably do, that they learn much that is of relevance to them and to their work by studying the work of another: the more deeply they go into the thinking and experience of another, and the longer they delay reading off the implications, the more they learn.

"Attention" plays an important role in consultancy as Simone Weil has shown it does in study of any kind, in prayers and in the love of neighbour and God.[13] There are further references to attention in the discussion about Element Seven, cf p 131-132.

Consultors too need these qualities. Getting them to concentrate on things of vital importance in sufficient depth and over long enough periods for them to break through barriers and discover ways forward, can be one of the most important things that is achieved through consultations. It is very frustrating when you fail to galvanise a consultor's interest in what you feel to be of critical importance and

when they are grass hopping from one thing to another when it is necessary to focus on one thing at a time.

3. Empathic Relating

Consultants need to relate to consultors with warmth, empathy, genuiness, rigour and love [14] not, as Smail noted, with austerity and supposedly cold clinical correctness. This way of relating is human and Christian, epitomising how people should relate. Consultancies are experiential expressions of the kind of working relationship which consultors frequently need to have with and between those with whom they work and live.

Empathic relationships can and do, in fact, foster and facilitate disciplined thinking, rigorous analysis and a businesslike approach. Also, they give consultants and consultors access to each other's subjective worlds in which, says David Smail, "We conduct our relations with each other, register and react to the impressions we give and receive, administer and respond to offers of love or threats of annihilation".[15] Our "intuitive sensitivity" says Smail, gives us access to these inner worlds with their "immediate knowledge of interpersonal 'truth'".[16] Intuitive sensitivity is not, of course, infallible [17] but it provides some of the insights and understandings vitally important to consultancy processes.

Watts and Williams came to a similar conclusion through considering "empathic knowing".[18] "The classical concept of empathy", they say, "involves vicarious emotional experience. Sharing the emotions of another person, and seeing things from their point of view, are two intertwined aspects of empathy that facilitate each other". They submit that there are two alternative modes of perceiving other people, the analytical and the non-analytical. "Empathy involves the latter, and is thus a form of intuitive cognition".[19]

Empathic relating and knowing enable consultors and consultants to explore analytically deeper subjective substratas of a consultor's approach to work and vocation.[20] What is involved in empathic relating is further developed in the discussion of Element Four, interaction of perspectives. Theological implications are discussed in relation to Element Seven.

4. Controlled Emotional Involvement

Notwithstanding all that has been said in the previous section, effective empathic relating in consultancy work involves controlled emotional involvement. To get caught up with or carried away by a consultor's positive or negative feelings can skew consultancy processes. One of the many ways in which this can happen is through consultants giving vent to their feelings during consultancy sessions when they are incensed by the deplorable way in which they believe their consultors have been treated and disturbed by the distress caused to them. When I have done this I have discovered that whatever the expression of my feelings might have done for me it has had serious adverse effects upon the consultancy process. Taking the consultor's side in such an unqualified and undisciplined emotional manner compromises my ability to help the consultor to think about the events from the perspectives of any others who were involved or implicated. Also, adding my

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feelings to the consultor's has heightened the emotional temperature. The effect has been to generate heat without illuminating the situation. Thinking in a measured way was much more difficult for consultor and consultant. Emotional indulgence had compromised intellectual activity. Controlled emotional involvement is essential. What that means in these circumstances is working through our own feelings and thoughts in order that we are free to work with consultors on their feelings and thoughts. That is quite different from working together on their feeling and ours. Empathising with the consultor's feelings is essential but this does not necessarily involve sharing all we feel and think.

Take one more example. Problems arise when consultants get increasingly more excited about an idea than their consultors and express it enthusiastically. Consultors can be marginalised from the idea, the discussion, the enthusiasm and the consultant. They can feel that the idea is now owned by the consultant more than it is by them.[21] The dynamics can be confusing because consultancy is about helping consultors to develop ideas which they own and about which they are enthusiastic. In effect, the result of the consultant's over reaction militates against consultancy purposes. Given that consultants are genuinely enthusiastic about a consultor's project, and that is potentially an advantage, they need to express their feelings in ways that they give support to consultors and build up their responsible affective ownership without in any way appearing to take over. That too requires controlled emotional involvement.

Experiences of these kind of phenomena are not restricted to consultancy work. People experience them in all kinds of relationships and settings.

Of itself, awareness of the dangers of these kinds of emotional involvement enables consultants and consultors to guard against them. What I have also found is that consultants and consultors can help to control their emotional involvement by:

- *establishing what kind of a person they are emotionally;* (See the section on "accepting, knowing and trusting yourself as an instrument of engagement and analysis" in Chapter Seven and especially notes 65 and 66, which describe practicable ways of getting a better understanding of the ways in which we behave emotionally.)

- *reflecting on and mapping out critical aspects of positive and negative affective involvement and engagement with each other and the work they are considering;*

- *evaluating their emotional performance in relation to purpose and beliefs and drawing out the implications for their consultancy practice theory.* (Records of positive and negative consultancy experiences and a consultancy diary can help to do this.)

5. Openness and Privacy

Even when they are desperate for help, consultors risk sharing things which are personal and important to them only when they are confident that they will be treated with respect. When they do share these things with consultants in order to get the help they need, consultors and consultants need to feel that the consultation has been a wholesome experience, that precious areas of privacy remain inviolate, that confidences will be kept, that they have discussed others in an honourable way.

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Otherwise they can feel sullied. A recurring struggle in consultancy sessions is to find ways of examining realistically, without feeling pseudo guilt, what action to take about the attitudes and behaviour of people, colleagues and friends, which are causing problems. Consultors can find it very difficult to do this. The most sensitive and honourable are inclined to withdraw from doing so because they feel they are betraying people they love, gossiping about them, "pulling them to pieces", "talking about them behind their backs", "destroying their reputation". When this situation arises it helps, I find, to consider openly these kinds of feelings in relation to the purpose of the discussion. It is justifiable to talk openly and honestly providing that the exchanges about other people are constructive rather than destructive, that is, that the purpose is to discern action likely to be for their good and that of everyone else. Such discussions help to orientate consultants and consultors towards thinking positively about problematic relationships. They avoid polite pretence and backbiting—both of which have no constructive place in consultancy relationships.

To do these things, consultants and consultors have to facilitate, through their interpersonal behaviour, openness which respects privacy boundaries. Consultors need to be disciplined, economical and purposeful in their sharing. Consultants have to guard themselves against asking intrusive questions and making hypercritical comments. When consultors are getting carried away in a manner which they may later regret, consultants need to hold them back in order to give them an opportunity to reconsider whether or not they should continue.

6. Securing the Freedom of Consultors to be Their Own Person in Interdependent Relationships (cf the section in Chapter Six on the creative engagement with the nature and operation of freedom.)

Consultors seek consultancy help because they feel unable to do their job to their own satisfaction from their own resources. Consultations are most effective when they enable consultors to do their job to their satisfaction from their own resources; they are least effective when consultors become unhealthily dependent upon consultants and their services in ways which impair or compromise their ability to be their own person in interdependent relationships and to enable others to be so. Effective consultations bring out the rich qualities of human and spiritual interdependence and the joy of living and working with people for development. Interdependency is vital to achieving consultancy aims not least because it is a paradigm of all working relationships.

Paradoxically, the dangers of dependency are in some ways greatest when consultations produce telling insights and workable ideas. Consultors can experience subtle and debilitating personal and relational problems associated with dependency and autonomy. For instance, knowing that consultations will improve their analyses and designs they can feel less secure in their own judgements and hesitant to act without consultancy guidance. Again, they can feel bound by, or even psychologically trapped, by suggestions made in consultancy sessions: for example, consultors can feel compelled to carry through plans made with consultants about which they are increasingly uneasy for one reason or another.

Consultancy relationships in which problems of this kind are present but not tackled can undermine the confidence of consultors and impair their ability to get on with their work. Fundamental damage of this kind caused to consultors is an unacceptable price to pay for any help they might get on specific work situations from processes which cause and mask the unwanted side effects associated with obtaining it. Dependency prevents the realisation of one of the fundamental objectives of consultations, viz, to assist consultors themselves to gain the confidence and the abilities that they need to be able analyse, design and do their work in their own way and in their own situation. Sessions, therefore, must help consultors to be their own person within all their working relationships including consultancy ones. Being their own person is not to be equated with being autonomous or independent. Working with people is of necessity an interdependent activity with its components of dependency and independency which, at best change dynamically according to roles, functions, relationships and situations. (When roles and relationships are fixed hierarchically the flexibility necessary for human well-being and development is reduced.)

Taking all this into account is easier said than done. Many things in human nature and the ways in which people normally relate in church and society militate against achieving such relationships. It is all too easy and natural, for instance, for consultants to trespass upon the inner freedom that consultors need in order to be creative workers and to collude with them in forming unhealthy dependent relationships around their felt need for consultancy help. It feeds the consultant's ego. Consultors can misuse consultants by getting them to do things for them that they can and should do for themselves. Clearly, both consultors and consultants have parts to play in tackling these problems. What kind of interpersonal behaviour helps to avoid and deal with the difficulties noted and to free consultors to be workers in their own right? That is what we now consider.

(a) Consultants need to be non-directive and consultors must want to be "their own person"

Non-directive [22] behaviour directs people's attention towards the need to do their own thinking and to be their own person and enables them to do the one and become the other. Discussions between consultants and consultors about the nature, use and relevance of this approach in their consultancy relationship, therefore, opens out on the issues raised above and agreement about how to deal with the dangers. It is natural to do this in making consultancy relationships because, to be true to the non-directive approach and for it to be most effective, its use needs to be negotiated and agreed: imposing it can be a denial of its nature and a missed opportunity. For the form of consultancy we are considering to be effective, consultors must want to do their own thinking, albeit with help. And this flows from an inner desire to be their own person. If, on the contrary, they want to be directed—and such discussions would reveal this and lead to participants assessing its advisability which of itself is a consultancy service—then the danger of entering an abortive consultancy relationship would be avoided.

Consultants too need to be their own person, otherwise they do not contribute all that they might. The non-directive approach allows consultants to make strong

inputs and challenges because it enables consultors to examine critically whatever is contributed in relation to what they want to do, what they can do and who and what they are.

(b) Consultors and consultants need to play their respective parts in ensuring that consultors remain true to themselves and their abilities

The following poem needs to be the heartfelt cry of all consultors. It helps them to assess consultants' contributions and to correct them. It alerts consultants to their solemn responsibility to help consultors to be themselves and to do things in their own way—not simply to be themselves as they are but the best selves that they can be through consultancy help.

> I am not you—
> but you will not
> give me a chance
> will not let me be *me*.
>
> You meddle, interfere
> in my affairs
> as if they were yours
> and you were me.
>
> 'If I were you'—
> but you know
> I am not you
> Yet you will not
> let me be *me*.
>
> You are unfair, unwise,
> foolish to think
> that I can be you,
> talk, act
> and think like you.
>
> God made me *me*.
> He made you *you*
> Let me be *me*
> For God's sake.[23]

The inner orientation and commitment on the part of both consultors and consultants to "me being me" and "you being you" are effective agents in achieving self-definition. They allow all parties to present and use their real selves. Simple but effective practices, however, help. For instance asking consultors how they would do things; checking out whether they could do such and such in the way suggested—"is this you"?—or would some other way be better for them; getting them (rather than the consultants) to summarise the action they propose to take and what they are getting/learning from a discussion. Other things also help: consultants, for instance, continually assessing what they must do *with* consultors, what they must do for them and what they must leave them to do *for themselves and with other people* (cf Chapter 7:I, 5 for more on this point). Getting that equation right is of vital importance and the terms of it are not constant. Putting this into practice involves, inter-alia, doing only that work with consultors which enables and frees them to work things out themselves privately and with others. Anything that takes away that freedom must be rigorously avoided. Questions such as the following can help, "Have we done enough on this for you to take it forward yourself?" "Can we leave this now or is there more we need to do?" "Do we need to do any more here and now?" This is sound educational practice which enhances their autonomy—and it is economical in consultancy time. Similarly, consultors, in order to make sure that

consultants work at that which they would find most difficult to work on by themselves, can say things such as: "I think I can do that myself, but this I would like to consider with you". "I think we have done enough on that now for me to follow it through. Thank you." All of these things help consultors to be increasingly more in control and for them to be their own person in interdependency.

These processes of enabling consultors to be their most effective selves and to do things in their own way are consummated through consultors being mandated to work to the realities of their situation as it unfolds after a consultation. (This is quite different from working to the consultation in the working situation as we will see.) Mandating can be initiated by either consultant or consultor. Consultors do so by saying things such as: "I understand that my responsibility now is to work these ideas out with people in my situation and to modify them to fit anything that might arise which we have not considered". Consultants need to discover whether consultors have the confidence to take the next steps on their own and whether they feel free to do whatever seems appropriate to them *in situ* whether that accords with conclusions reached in the consultation or not. And, should they have doubts, to work at them until they have made the transition from being a consultor working with a consultant on their situation to being a practitioner working on their own and with others in the situation. Consultors simply have to leave the consultant behind: they can be tempted to try to take the consultant's mind set with them. Evidence of this is to be found in questions such as, "I wonder what my consultant, John Blower, would suggest I do in this situation?" The transition involves making the switch *from* thinking about the situation in a consultancy session to thinking about the consultancy session in the work situation. And that involves knowing when to hold to what was worked out in the consultancy session and when to let it go—and the freedom, courage, humility and common sense to do so! And all this is most likely to occur when consultors are using the thinking processes induced by consultations and not simply their products.

Consultants too have to let go, to withdraw and wait, in ways discussed later (cf p 122). Concepts and models devised by Professor Gillian Stamp are most helpful in conceptualising what these processes are all about. First of all they are about "trusting": about helping consultors to trust their own judgement and freeing them to do so and about consultants entrusting consultors with the substance and outcome of consultations. Second, they are about helping consultors to exercise their discretion. "Discretion", says Stamp, "is the expression of the self in judgement and action . . .". and, "the exercise of discretion is the part of work in which the person is responsible for making choices".[24]

When consultors have the autonomy they need, consultants are more likely to have the autonomy that they need, and consultors and consultants are able to relate in a relationship of creative freedom in which neither seeks to dominate the other. Such behaviour is properly Christian and properly non-directive.

7. The Need for Consultants and Consultors to be Respectful and Humble in Creative Reflective Engagement

Consultants are allowed the great privilege of a guided tour of work that is a person's personal God-given vocation: they tread on holy ground; they need to take

off their shoes in respect. Consultants are least likely to be helpful if they are not judgemental or aggressive or assertive in relation to other people's work. Such attitudes can engender defensiveness and that spells death in consultancy work. Consultants are likely to be of most help if they respond in humility, with respect and appropriate deference to the authority and autonomy of consultors and the unique way in which they see and experience things. Then they can affirm and comfort; they can be forthright, direct, open, honest, specific, rigorously analytic and clear; they can raise questions of concern and be open about things they see to have potential for good or ill; they can make judgements, assess things and challenge without being judgemental. They do not allow acts of affirmation to veneer concerns. They encourage and help people to get to the heart of things even when this is painful. But judgemental, aggressive or assertive they must not be, these are the things which destroy or mar consultancy work. They must be humble before the sanctity of workers and their work, tentative in their submissions, non-directive in their approach. This calls for sensitivity, compassion, understanding and humanity.

Freedom without accountability is in danger of becoming licence. Mutual understanding and trust is built up when consultors and consultants voluntarily give to each other explanations for actions they have taken related to the consultancy relationship. Such explanations must be offered and received in an egalitarian relationship, not in a supervisory or didactic one.

Together these seven aspects of interpersonal behaviour build up mutual trust that creates the environment necessary for effective consultancy. They greatly help consultors to experience consultants as a "non-anxious presence" [25] *and that reduces their anxiety and helps them to be freely open to the rigours of consultations which can make heavy demands upon them intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.*

ELEMENT THREE: WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Working relationships are task oriented. Practitioners have many such relationships. When they enter into consultancy arrangements, essentially working relationships, new relational dimensions are added to those in which they are already engaged. Figure 2:3 illustrates some basic working relationships and those added by consultancies. With reference to these relationships, four of the many conditions which make for effective consultancies are:

- consultors and consultants relating together constructively;

- consultors being able to live with and handle, interiorly and exteriorly, their local and consultancy working relationships and the interaction between them; (cf the discussion about "openness and privacy", pp 41-42);

- the acceptance of consultants and consultancy arrangements by all those who know about them in the consultor's working domain;

- the absence of negative attitudes, feelings and actions from those with whom consultors work towards consultants and consultancy arrangements.

These conditions variously relate to the consultancy sub-system and the organizational system(s) upon and within which it has to operate. Many things which establish and maintain these conditions and those which undermine them are considered in this book. In this section we consider the part played by the form of consultancy adopted and essentials in the working relationships between consultors, those with whom they work and live, consultants and supervisors.
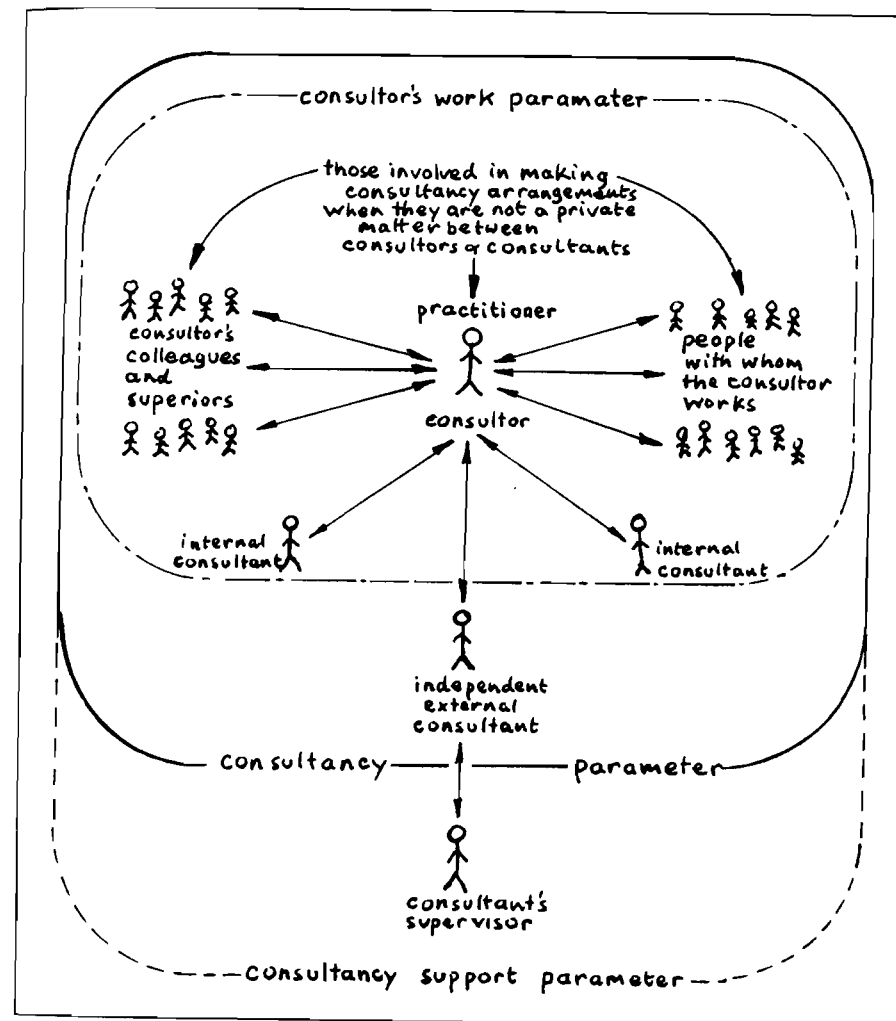

Figure 2:3 Consultors' and Consultants' Working Relationships[26]

1. Forms of Relationships Between Consultors, Those With Whom They Work and Consultants

A common consultancy arrangement is one between a consultor, say a minister, and a consultant. This basic consultancy unit can take many forms and relational shapes. It can, for instance be:

— an exclusive, private and confidential relationship between the consultor and the consultant;

— known about in confidence by the key officers in the consultor's organization and /or church;

— known about openly by all and sundry;

— backed officially and possibly contracted and paid for by the consultor's organization or church.

Another common form is a consultancy arrangement between a group, team, church and a consultant variously mediated through meetings of all concerned with the consultant and/or through their representatives acting as consultors. This consultancy unit also can take many relational shapes.

No one consultancy relationship is always right. The art is to choose the one which is most likely to create the conditions necessary for effective consultancy in relation to the consultor, the people with whom s/he is working and the particular circumstance of their situation.

As was noted earlier whatever arrangements are made it is an advantage if all who know about the consultancy in the working situation are positive towards it. Suspicion, for instance, that an outsider, albeit a non-directive consultant, is influencing or controlling local affairs can have adverse effects which outweigh the potential value of the consultancy. Similarly, people can feel very uncomfortable about private conversations taking place about them and their work. If potential consultors do not see any way of getting local agreement and receiving good will for a consultancy they have several choices: drop the idea of going for consultancy help until they can get local support for it; go for it privately and confidentially and risk people finding out; discuss their dilemma with those who are their pastor managers providing they respect confidences or will be sympathetic and trustworthy. Sadly, it is often the case that those in greatest need of consultancy help are most likely to encounter local difficulties over the arrangement. Often they will need ready recourse to confidential consultancy help to think constructively about the help required, the forms that it might take and possible ways of getting backing for it. Various factors indicate that open consultancy arrangements of one kind or another are possible. Openness is likely to produce good effects when:

• a consultor's local interpersonal behaviour is valued and s/he is respected and trusted;

• it is known that consultors are sincere and positive about their work and are known to have good will for and to be respectful towards those with whom they work;

• consultants are known and trusted;

• the consultant is non-directive and the nature of this approach is generally understood;

• the benefits of consultations are experienced not only by consultors, but by those with whom they work through consultors sharing the insights they receive and through developments that are valued locally and are attributed to the consultancy;

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• a consultancy is seen by all concerned to be an integral part of a developmental programme.

These conditional factors can be used to determine whether the form of consultancy should be an open or private one. They can also be used to determine precisely what changes are required to create circumstances more conducive to consultancy help being generally acceptable and to decide what action to take to promote the changes.

In many circumstances the private consultancy mode is the only viable form. Of itself, the fact that it is not generally known about does not necessarily make it a lesser good. Much study, training, preparation and research is a private occupation undertaken without any other person's permission or knowledge. Such a consultancy arrangement gives a consultor freedom to explore any and every aspect of their thinking and situation without let or hindrance. Critical analytical thought requires such freedom. The morality of the action is determined by purpose and intention.

2.   Consultors' and Consultants' Responsibilities

This section points to essentials of the working relationship between consultors and consultants through identifying their functions and responsibilities. To sharpen up the nature of the relationship most points are made in summary form. In some ways it is a check list of much that is said elsewhere in the book. Theological functions and responsibilities are discussed in the section on Element Seven.

Overall responsibilities: As we have seen, consultors are and must remain responsible for their work and for what they do or do not do about the outcome of consultations. Consultants have primary, but not exclusive, responsibility for the consultancy processes. Put in another way, consultors have substantive responsibility for their work, consultants for the consultations. They share responsibility for forming and maintaining working relationships which enable them to discharge their respective roles and functions to good effect.

Joint functions and responsibilities: Consultors and consultants are jointly responsible for the consultancy relationship and particularly for the following functions:

• defining and negotiating the scope and boundaries of the consultancy relationship

• making honest contracts, committing themselves to them and making them work

• seeing that the consultancy relationship is consistent with their respective beliefs and purposes and those of the organizations they serve

• for agreeing ways of working together and making them work

• for raising any difficulties encountered in and by the consultancy and working out their implications.

Consultors' functions and responsibilities: Consultors are responsible for:

• producing relevant information and being as honest and open as possible

• ensuring that the work done reflects the reality of the working situation

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- working out the implications of the consultancy
- helping consultants to be as effective as possible and to become better consultants
- their own learning and working out its implications.

Consultants' responsibilities: Consultants are responsible for:

- introducing effective consultancy processes
- seeing that respective and joint responsibilities of consultants and consultors are clarified and agreed
- making realistic assessments of what can be achieved in the time available so that unrealistic expectations are not aroused
- working to the consultor and her/his purposes, priorities, beliefs and situation
- helping consultors to be effective consultors
- building up the confidence of the consultor
- ensuring that, whenever possible/necessary, the consultor has got the agreement and understanding about the consultancy of any with whom he or she is working so that the consultancy is seen for what it is and not as a threat
- enhancing the relationships between consultors and those with whom they work
- their own learning and its implications. (One person said at the end of a course on consultancy, "The most startling thing I have learnt here is the willingness of the consultant to be changed by the process".)

3. Consultants, Those Whom They Consult About Their Consultancy Practice and Their "Supervisors"

Consultants, especially those working on their own with individuals or groups, frequently need help just as consultors need it. Consultancy subject matter is always of great importance to consultors. They are seeking help because they are stuck or stumped by human relations or their failure to overcome problems or to convert plans into projects. Invariably much is at stake. As would be expected, consultants grapple with questions such as: is our analysis correct? Have we missed something of importance? Why am I uneasy about the suggestions that seem so logical? Sometimes it is possible for them to pursue the questions to a satisfactory conclusion. When they remain hauntingly unanswered a second opinion is welcome. Sometimes they can get help through ad hoc consultations with someone with consultancy experience or from someone with the appropriate expertise if the problem is a technical one. To be effective, the nature of these consultations on consultancy must be the same as those on church and community work. The same rubrics apply. Sometimes they can legitimately take place without the permission of the consultor especially if the issues can be discussed anonymously without betrayal of confidences. At others times the permission of consultors must be sought if it is not a part of the initial contract. Consultors can gain considerable advantages from such an arrangement but it can create problems. The relationship is similar to the relationship between consultors, those with whom they work and consultants (cf Figure 2:3).

I have sought help in this way extensively. It assists with immediate problems and contributes to the development of consultancy practice theory. It unearths faulty practice of which you are unaware. Consultancy "supervision" is a way of doing that. Supervision, in this case the practice of consulting about consulting, models consultancy practice theory. It enables consultants to develop their skills through systematically and continuously examining and reflecting upon consultancy work in which they are or have been engaged with a supervisor.[27]

If the supervisor has been present at the consultancy session or viewing it from an observation post behind a one way mirror, the discussion is based on the consultor's and supervisor's experiences of the session. If not, as is generally the case, supervision is based upon the consultant's description of consultancy sessions along with any other evidence or video recordings. Learning occurs through analysing sessions, role playing critical exchanges, exploring suggestions about alternative ways of proceeding, instruction, through the interaction between consultant and supervisor when it reflects good consultancy practice and when it does not! Supervisors act as guides, instructors and teachers but not as directors. As they accompany consultants in these capacities they offer models, support and encouragement to consultants.

An effective form of supervision was practised by the Avec staff. Consultants were appointed to courses which studied the participants' work through co-consultancy groups. They attended key staff meetings but not the course sessions. They read documents. The staff described to the consultant what they had done, why and with what results. Course consultants acted as supervisor-facilitators in these discussions. Their role was made known to all participants from the outset (cf the section on "Consultancy Courses" in Chapter Eight).

Members of consultancy teams can offer each other supervisory services. They can for instance, in turn, take observer roles in each other's sessions and later discuss what they observe. In Chapter Eight (the section referred to above) there is a description of the application of these procedures in co-consultancy groups.

ELEMENT FOUR: WORK-VIEWS

Fundamentally, work and vocational consultancy operates through and upon the ways in which consultors see, think and feel about themselves as practitioners, their vocation, their work the Church and the world: that is, through what we will call their "work- views". The following well known phenomena make this possible and necessary.

- The way in which practitioners see things is a primary determining factor in the ways in which they present and deploy themselves and in how effective they are.
- Practitioners' perspectives, normally permeable, are open to outer as well as inner influences. (Consultors can change their perspectives: they can tell themselves new and radically different stories about themselves and their world; they can convert and be converted; they can be influenced to change by others and various kinds of perturbations;[28] they can adopt and adapt alternative stories consultants tell them about themselves and their circumstances.)

- It is possible for people to engage conceptually and creatively with each other's inner and outer realities because it is possible for them to understand sufficiently well what the other thinks and feels and to know that they understand and are understood or not as the case may be, *i.e.:* it is possible for them to "stand in each other's shoes" and "to see things through each other's eyes".

- Practitioners can engage actively in reflecting upon and creating their "reality".[29]

The first two of these phenomena are generally accepted. Doubts or reservations are often expressed about the third. Sometimes people say that it is impossible for other people to understand them when what they actually mean is that it is not possible for them to describe their thoughts and feelings. More commonly people say that only those who have had similar experiences to theirs can understand what they are going through. This assumption confuses and mistakenly equates the ability to enter into the experience of another with having had a similar experience. People can emphathize without having had the same experience. People can have similar experiences without being able to empathize; they can misread the experience of another person by assuming that they understand it through reading off what happened to them .

In this section we examine how consultancy operates through these phenomena by stimulating and helping consultors of their own free will to examine and, when necessary, to change their inner orientation to themselves as workers and to their work and how they intend to go about it. Basically it does so through the interaction of the "work-views" of consultors, which are the aspects of consciousness of primary importance in consultations, and of consultants. This term was suggested to me by one used in sociology and philosophy, world-view *(weltanschauung)*, and an article by Philip Meadows.[30] Meadows suggests that, "put simply, a world-view may be likened to a pair of spectacles through which we both see and read the world in which we live". Similarly, work-views enable us to see, read and to find our way around the complexities of vocational work in the Church and in society. More precisely, a work-view is an inner function of human cognition which sums up and models what we know and believe about our work generally and specifically, and how we evaluate it emotionally and respond to it volitionally.[31] Work-views are in part formed by, and in turn, are used to form aspects of the world of church and community work. (See Figure 2:4) In various ways our work-view sums up, conceptualizes, represents and models:

- what we believe about the nature of our work, *i.e.:* it can have a *theological, philosophical* and *spiritual* content;

- what we know, understand and think about it , *i.e.:* it can have a *cognitive* content;

- how we feel about it and evaluate it emotionally, *i.e.:* it can have an *affective* content;

- how we respond to it volitionally, *i.e.:* it can have a *vocational* content;

- what we know, think, believe and feel about the actualities and realities of church and community work in general and that in which we are engaged in particular, *i.e.:* it can have *existential* content.

The content of work-views, therefore, is both general and specific and represents aspects of the actual and the ideal. On the one hand, for instance, they contain mental pictures of the forms of work and its nature and the attributes of workers of the kind described in Chapters Six and Seven. Aspects of these pictures are often fixed reference points over long periods of time. They give direction, thrust and stability to practitioners and their work. On the other hand, they contain views of specific situations, projects, problems. Continually, reflective practitioners find new information is being introduced into their work-views through processes of applying and assimilating. Some of it fits neatly into place. But some of it, because it is not a fit, challenges and confuses. Work-views themselves, therefore, require attention if they are to facilitate the development of practitioners and their work and this is often achieved through consultancy. Ideally there is continual interaction between the different parts of a work-view. In fact a work-view should be the crucible of development not a static group of mental pictures.

Work-views are formed in many different ways, actively and passively, through study, research, personal and spiritual experiences, the experience of others, observation, osmosis and from direct and indirect experiences of particular situations and church and community work in general. They draw upon a multiplicity of diverse sources such as recognised bodies of knowledge associated with such disciplines as biblical studies, the social and behavioural sciences, theology. Then there is the practitioner's personal sources which draw upon self-knowledge, their general and spiritual experience and their stance (attitudes, approaches, prejudices etc, vocational commitments). Other sources are: tradition; general and specific information about religious institutions and church and community work; practice theory; factual and topographical information; religious, spiritual , moral and aesthetic insights and judgements; personal theories, hunches, common sense observations, impressions, hearsay and prejudices; empathic understandings of the experience of others.This list, by no means comprehensive,
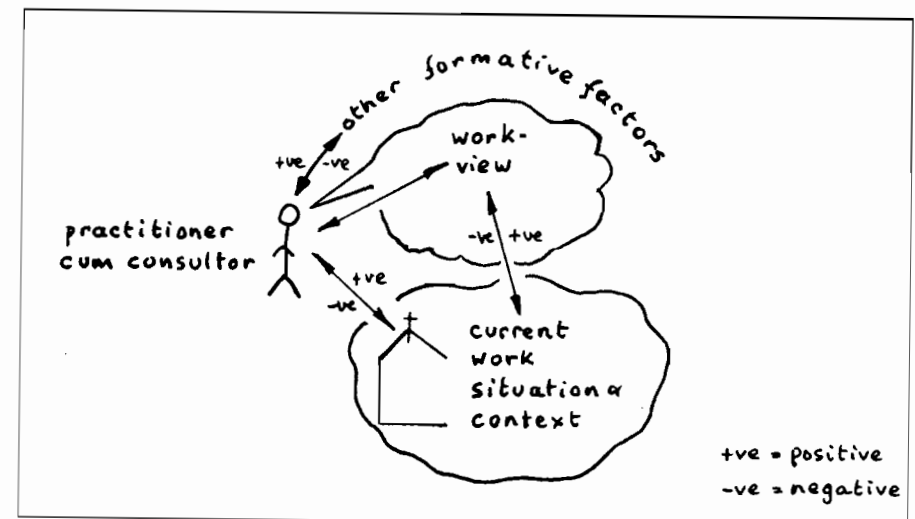

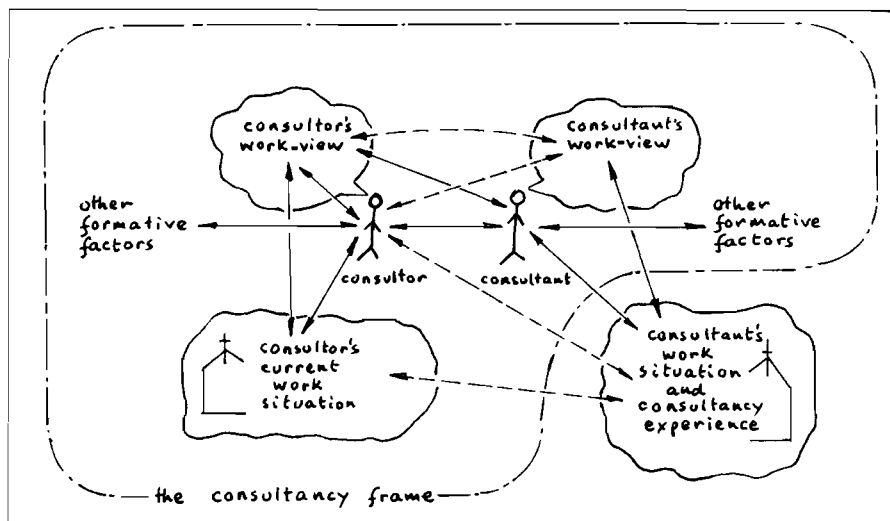**Figure 2:4 : Consultors: Their Work Views and Situations**

Figure 2:5: Consultors and Consultants: Their Work-Views and Situations

indicates that different kinds of data are woven into the work-views. The permutations and variations of these variables are infinite. No one work-view is exactly the same as another, And that is one of the things that makes consultancy work endlessly fascinating and for ever full of surprises. Reflecting on them and reorganising them is, of itself a form of work, very hard work at times even when it is exciting. The inner realities represented by work-views must be differentiated from the outer realities to which they refer and relate.

During consultancy sessions different facets of the consultor's work-view come to the fore. Generally speaking it is an admixture of what they think and feel about specific situations and about the work in general. This mixture can be seen in the outlines for consultancy briefing papers in Appendix I. As consultants concentrate on the consultor's work-view. aspects of their own work-view come into their minds and induce interactive processes which are described later.

The resulting interplay of consultors' and consultants' work-views must be directed towards consultors and their work-views. Any effect upon consultants and their work-views is incidental but, of course, not unimportant to them and sometimes to consultations. Aspects of this are illustrated in Figure 2:5.

The aim is to help consultors to sort out their feelings and thoughts so that they are more adequately equipped and in the best possible frame of mind to pursue their purpose in their work situation and its environment. To do this they have to reflect critically on their work-views and revise them in relation to their work in general or aspects of it in particular and any other relevant information.

All this means that consultors and consultants engage conceptually with work situations without being in direct personal encounter with them and the other people involved in them. Consultors simply cannot bring their work situations with them no matter how well they describe them and bring them to life through descriptions or anecdotes or pictures or video films. They can only bring themselves and their work views and possibly, at second hand, work-views of people with whom they

work. Consultants can visit consultors' work situations. In some instances this can illuminate or challenge aspects of a consultor's work-view. But in other instances consultants can become preoccupied with their own limited view of the situation and fail to give proper attention to the consultor's view of it. Such a deflection of perspective can undermine consultancy processes. (See pp 28 and 35 and Chapter 5, Section 2 for a further discussion of this.)

Working to consultors and their work-views means that consultants operate through direct encounter and dialogue with one side of many sided stories. This is so even when they know of other sides. The situation is moderated when working with a team or a group but even then consultants are working to the work-views of individual members, the interaction between them and, where there is consensus, their collective work-view. Rarely are they in direct contact with more than a few of those critically involved in the complex interpersonal relationships in a working situation.

Clearly the limitations and dangers in this approach present considerable challenges. First we explore ways in which consultors and consultants can ameliorate the limitations and avoid some of the dangers and then reflect on the practice of consulting through work-views.

1. Aids to Working to Consultors and Their Work-Views

The things which help and hinder consultancies being effective are discussed under seven headings.

(a) Working to consultors and their work-views faithfully

Effectiveness depends upon consultants, and ideally consultors, understanding the nature of the process, its limitations and dangers and being faithful to the underlying principles and the distinctions made in the introduction to this section. Work-views must not be equated with the consultor as a worker. Nor must they be confused with the work itself. Their true nature must be respected. Some aspects will normally appear fixed, others in flux; some will be in harmony, others not; some will be distinct, others will overlay each other and merge with the general view.

Again, as we have noted, the primary consultancy focus must not be allowed to drift from the consultor's to the consultant's work-view. This can occur all to easily when, for instance, it appears that the consultant has a better conceptual grasp on the situation under consideration or the field in general than does the consultor. To plan to his/her conceptual view may cause both consultor and consultant to miss critical nuances in the consultor's view not represented in the consultant's. And that could mean that the action plans simply will not work. Whilst the consultant's view must not be substituted for the consultor's, it must not be ignored. It must be used purposefully as a foil to explore, to develop and, if necessary, to refine the consultor's view.

(b) Realistic approaches to the nature and use of work-views

Work-views are attempts at expressing critical aspects of the complex inner and outer human and spiritual worlds of consultors and the intricate interplay between them. Aspects of them can be presented verbally or through written statements such as position papers (cf p 87 and Appendix I). Composing representative statements

and pictures of complex work situations and working relationships is a demanding task requiring courage and skill. Invariably people feel some degree of dissatisfaction with their attempts and frustration at their inability to communicate elusive aspects of their situation and thoughts about it as they experience them. Consequently an important aspect of consultancy practice is the correcting and editing of work-view presentations, verbal and written, through dialogue and questioning and by consultants checking out work-views by reflecting back to consultors the picture they are receiving.

Work-view presentations can be distorted by factors other than the difficulties of those who know situations intimately portraying them to those who do not know them. Consultors, for instance, can deceive themselves and they do have blind spots. Proximity to or distance from emotionally charged events, of a positive or negative kind, colour the presentation. Hurt can distort. Events in other aspects of a consultor's life can and do influence, for better or worse, how consultors feel about their work in ways that can be difficult to discern. Then again, quite frequently critical aspects of a situation are left unmentioned until the analysis reveals that that which was considered of no importance is in fact a vital factor.

Work-views have substantive and continuing core characteristics. But this does not mean that the practitioner's consciousness of them is unchanging. Conceptually and emotionally it changes as circumstances, moods and events accentuate some features and depress others. Consequently, descriptions of work situations at any moment of time represent the effect of the interplay of critical interior and exterior contextual factors upon core work-view characteristics. Work or position papers are, therefore, cross sectional views of long-term core values and features of conditioning factors currently operative: in fact, long- and short-term work-views are in play together. Rarely, if ever, do descriptions give comprehensive pictures of work-views. David Smail, a clinical psychologist, casts some light on this aspect of the nature of work-views. He has come to the following conclusion, "For every day purposes it seems that reality *is* the best description I am able to give myself of it".[32] To demonstrate this he invites us to consider an occasion when something happened which constituted a painful blow to our pride and threatened our peace of mind. Then he says:

> The chances are that in the course of the hours following this event you reconstructed it "in your mind" several times (*i.e.:* told yourself several alternative explanatory versions of it) until you settled on a version which seemed best to account for the facts. The chances are, too, that the version which best accounted for the facts was also one which left least injury to your self-esteem.[33]

This rings true for me. I have done this as a consultor. I have seen countless others do it in all kinds of consultancy relationships. And, when my self-esteem has been reinforced as consultations have proceeded, I have been able to bring out more things which reflect badly upon me without losing face and to modify my work-view to take them into account. I have seen others engage in this same kind of progressive revelation which follows close behind affirmation. Such experiences can have two effects upon consultants and consultors: it can make them less

judgemental; it can stimulate them to explore more deeply and creatively inner and outer realities and the interplay between them.

Work-views, therefore, are created by several interrelated variables not one. They represent something of each variable—consultor, beliefs, work, relationships, context, events, vocation—and the form which they take at a given period of time. They are projections of socio-religious systems and need to be understood, interpreted and used as such: they do not represent the independent reality of one variable, be it the consultor or the work. Multi-factor, not mono-factor analysis is required because work-views represent systemic realities. Much of what follows helps consultants and consultors to do just that.

(c) *Respectful and critical approaches to consultors' work-views*

Consultors need to know that consultants understand and respect them and their work-views. Non-judgemental initial acceptance is required to establish trust and to learn about the ins and outs of another person's work-view. The presenting work-view forms the base line for consultancy processes, the point from which consultants must start with consultors if they are to work together. Effective consultancy depends upon this. Equally, it depends upon an approach which pursues any questions or unease consultants might have about the work-view as a whole or any aspect of it. During the early stages of entering into the consultor's work-view such questions often have to be held in suspended animation. Noting them, mentally or on paper, can help to do this. Some of the points will be answered. Those that remain unanswered need to be pursued as trust, process and opportunity permit.

Generally speaking I have found work-views as presented convincing. For the main part they speak of and echo realities with which I can identify. The stronger the identification the more difficult it can be to maintain the distance and the emotional independence to be analytical and to avoid taking the consultor's side. So it is good practice to ask oneself habitually, "Does the picture of the situation as depicted by the consultor and perceived by me seem to be sufficiently representative of the reality? Does it provide reliable data for the consultancy process? If the answer is in the positive, fine, but it is advisable to return to the question at critical consultancy stages. If it is in the negative then it becomes the substantive consultancy issue until it is resolved. The ways in which this might be done are dependent upon the nature of the unease and the working relationships between consultors and consultants. Some of the many possibilities are:

- To ask consultors how they would describe the mood and context in which they wrote the notes on their work-view and/or are presenting it. And, as necessary and possible, to pursue any implications of their response with them in order to establish the veracity of their presentation.

- To explore with consultors their experiences by asking them to clarify, explain, illustrate what they mean by statements they have made about events and feelings.

- To ask consultors how they would demonstrate, prove, explain an aspect which does not ring true to the consultant.

- To ask consultors whether they feel their description/explanation represents their experiences of situations or events. Then, if the answer is in the negative, to try to tease out with them a description/explanation which gets nearer to the experience.

- To ask consultors if they have always seen things in the way they have described them. If they have not, then explore critically with how they came to feel and think differently.

- To ask consultors whether others see things as they do and explore any differences or significant points that emerge.

- To ask consultors how they think specific representative people in their situation (not people in general) would respond or react to their work-view and explore what emerges. (cf pp 65-66 and Display 2:1)

- For consultants to share with consultors difficulties they are having in getting in touch conceptually and affectively with the realities which the work-views purport to represent.

- To ask permission to see any documentation independent of the consultor which confirms critical aspects of his/her work-view.

Various other methods which help to work realistically with work-views are to be found in the suggestions in the next four sub-sections about getting inside the consultor's work-view, negotiating the interplay of work-views, practising circularity and the interaction between observer and observed

(d) Ability to get into consultor's work-view

The need to get into consultors' work-views without trespassing upon their privacy is self-evident. The efficacy of methods of entry depend upon the nature of the consultant's desire, attitude, intention and approach. Consultants must really want to get into the work-views of consultors and to know how they see things and feel about them. Genuine altruistic interest and the deep desire to understand, of themselves, open windows and doors by which consultants may look at and enter into the consultor's work-view. They create very different feelings and responses from those generated by a matter of fact approach to getting the necessary information no matter how professional it is. The most effective approach is achieved through the combination of the following characteristics:

— genuine interest which can be cultivated but not feigned;

— accepting, patient, disciplined, reflective, sensitive and critical approaches to consultors and their work-views;

— a graceful, accepting and respectful approach to knowing and not knowing; (cf p 40 and Display 7:5)

— skills such as listening, questioning and conceptualising which can be learnt and polished through practice.

This is a formula for empathic relating (cf p 40) which is crucial to creative reflective engagement (cf Chapters 6 and 7). Two conceptual aids to applying it are discussed here, role-taking and virtual insidership .

Role-taking.[34] Imaginatively taking the roles of others is one way of entering into their work-views. Role-taking is a conceptual form of role play: imagining one's way into the roles of another and noting the inner spontaneous reactions evoked. It helps consultants to deepen their subjective understanding by getting the feel of what it is like to be in the consultor's role and role-sets.[35] Role-taking can be an important aspect of participant observation (discussed in Chapter 7).The form of role-taking which is most helpful to consultants is that which seeks to understand a consultor's role in a particular work situation. This can involve reflexive role-taking by, for instance, trying to discover how the consultor might appear to others or how the consultant might appear to the consultor and vice versa. (The use and misuse of reflexive role-taking in consultations is considered later.) However, non-reflexive role-taking is required for the consultancy objective of entering into a consultor's work-view.

"Virtual insidership" is another approach to understanding the process of getting into the work-views of consultors. I am drawing upon the development of this conceptual device by Philip Meadows, a Methodist minister with a master's degree in multimedia and artificial intelligence. One of the ways in which he has pursued his interest in the dialogue between computing and theology is through examining the use of virtual insidership in inter-religious dialogue.[36] What I attempt here is an application of his approach to the processes of entering into a consultor's work-view. In this concept consultants are seen as *outsiders*, consultors are *insiders*. A consultant, an outsider, attempts to gain an understanding which matches as closely as possible the consultor's understanding, an insider's view, whilst remaining an insider to his/her own work-view. Consultants are, in fact, outsiders seeking empathic insidership. *Virtual insidership* is a metaphor which helps to explore and understand this process. It draws upon a method developed by computer scientists which generates a three-dimensional virtual world which gives people a sense of "really being there". Consultants who make the empathic journey become *virtual consultors*. The virtual reality of the consultor's work view is constructed through the joint activities of the consultor and the consultant. The consultor shares, describes, projects, illustrates, explains and demonstrates ideas, situations, events, emotions, beliefs, hypotheses. Consultants discipline themselves to learn the consultor's language, to listen, question, imagine, immerse themselves in the consultor's situation, feelings and ideas and check out the way they are beginning to see things through the consultor's eyes. Consultors and consultants engage in dialogue until they have pieced together what is for both of them is a virtual reality which is a reliable basis for the work they need to do together. This is represented diagrammatically in Figure 2:6. Note, there is a sense in which the description and profile of the consultor's work-view used to facilitate the consultancy dialogue is a virtual reality for the consultor as well as for the consultant because it is "approximate, nearly-but-not-quite the same" as the consultor's reality. It is "really-but-not-fully" or" similar—yet different". Consultants and consultors approach it from different points of being. Nevertheless for both of them it "approximately corresponds to the 'fullness' of that to which it refers".[37] Consequently it is near enough to act as a basis for effective consultations.[38]
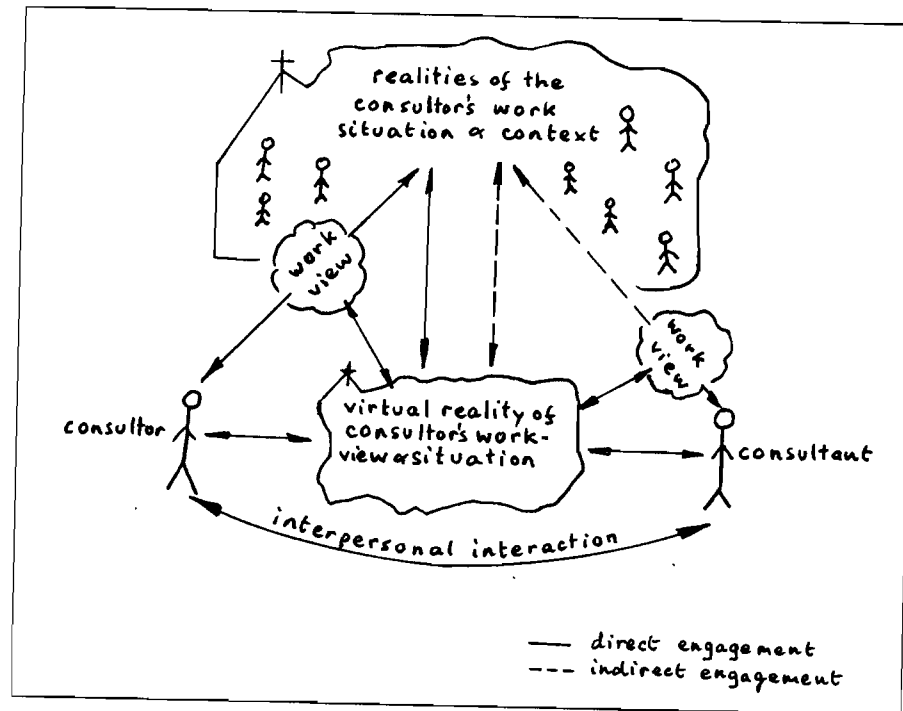
**Figure 2:6 Consultant, Consultor and the Virtual Reality
of the Consultor's Work-View which they Construct and Use** [39]

Getting inside a consultor's work-view is not a discrete phase in a consultancy. During the initial stages it will normally be a major pre-occupation along with establishing working relationships. But it is not a task which is neatly packaged at the beginning of a consultancy. At various stages the dialogue will reveal further aspects of the consultor's work-view—sometimes things which come as new and fresh to the consultor as to the consultant. Consequently, there may well be points at which it is necessary to concentrate exclusively on the re-shaping of the consultor's work-view in the light of new insights, perspectives and patterns of thought. Indeed, there is a continuing pre-occupation with the consultor's work-view because, as was said at the beginning of the discussion about this element of practice theory, the consultor's work-view is a determining factor in his/her vocational performance.

(e)   The ability to negotiate, manage and use creatively the interplay of work-views through the interaction of perceptions

Consultants are unlikely to have their own work-views in mind whilst concentrating on getting a thorough understanding of their consultors' work-views. But it is in play at some level of consciousness, it is never out of action. Indeed, consultancy processes are promoted through the creative interplay between similar and dissimilar aspects of the consultor's and consultant's work-views because of their

importance and relevance to the consultancy dialogue. Occasionally this may involve comparing and contrasting the consultor's and consultant's work-views in toto. For the main part, the interaction is between the perceptions and perspectives of consultors and consultants.

The interaction of perspectives and perceptions in consultancy dialogues (and, of course, in any other form of human encounter) is incredibly complex. A wide range of sophisticated mental skills combined with emotional discipline are required to negotiate and manage them. The natural and acquired abilities to do this are amazingly widespread in the population at large. This phenomenon means that consultancy services are readily accessible to people with no previous experience of them. The complexity is demonstrated by differentiating some of the perceptions that come into play during consultancy sessions. A selection is described below and referenced as perception 1, 2, etc. (p 1, p 2, etc.) for ease of reference in the figures. Then, the value of being aware during consultations of the perception in play is discussed.

Consultants are variously aware of and concentrating and working upon the following perceptions:

Perception 1: Consultants focussing upon the consultor's perceptions of his/her work-view and of themselves as practitioners.
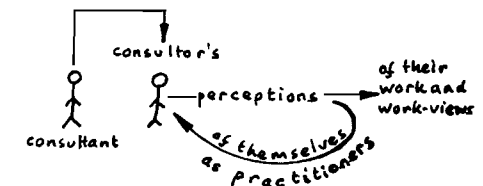
Perception 2: Consultants focussing on their own perceptions of the consultor's perceptions of
— themselves as a practitioner and person
— his/her purposes, beliefs, approaches, etc.
— his/her work-view and situation
— self *in situ*
(They might for instance be thinking, "What are the implications of the positive/negative thoughts and feelings I have about the consultor's perceptions, the consultor as a person etc.?")
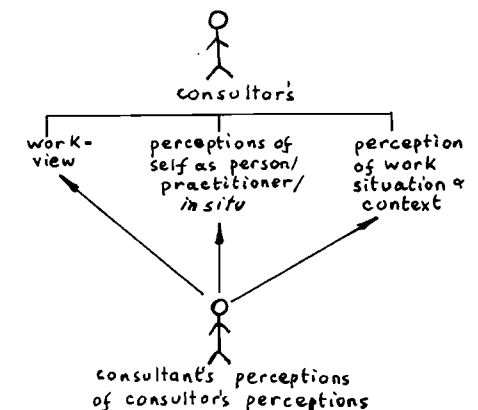
Perception 3: Consultants focussing on the consultor's perceptions of their, the consultant's, perceptions.

(*e.g.:* "How do I think/feel s/he is seeing me?" "It seems s/he is reacting negatively to how I see things". "Do we need to discuss what s/he is thinking and feeling about my ideas? How could I raise the subject?")
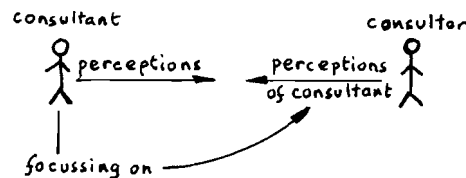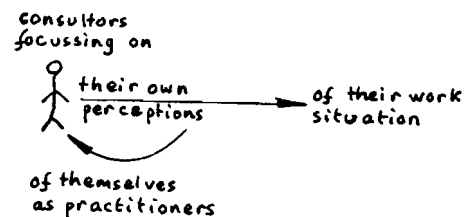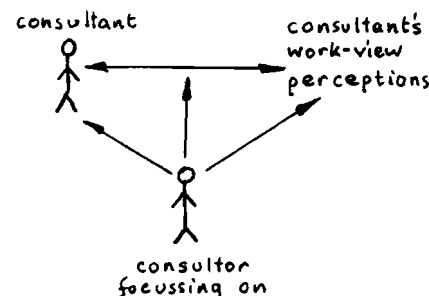
Perception 4: Consultors focussing upon their own perceptions of their work and on themselves as a practitioner.

Perception 5: Consultors focussing upon the consultant and upon his/her work-view and perceptions.

(*e.g.:* "I like the way s/he is approaching this project but I am uneasy about his/her view of things but I cannot say why. What on earth can I/should I do about this?")

**Perception 6:** Consultors focussing on the consultant's perceptions of:
— their perceptions of themselves as a practitioner
— themselves as a person
— their work-views
— their situation
— themselves *in situ.*

(*e.g.:* "What does that mean about what s/he thinks or feels about my perceptions and my situation and me as a person? I would like to know but is it wise to ask? Can I handle the truth, be it good or bad?")
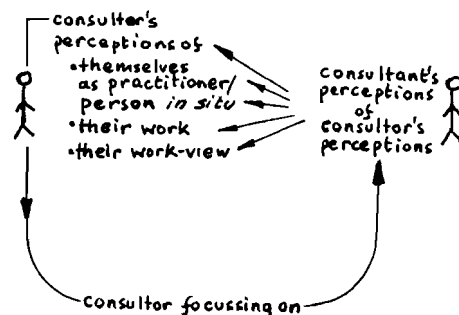
Perception 7: Consultors focussing upon their perception of the consultant and his/her perceptions.
(*e.g.:* "Is my judgement of her/his analysis and proposals impaired by my respect for his/her experience and wisdom?")
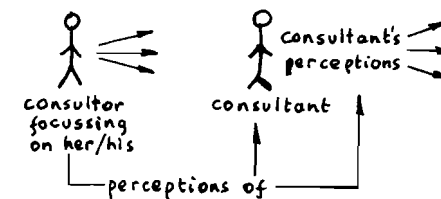
Perceptions can interact positively or negatively or neutrally. They are variously shared and owned. When lecturing about this I illustrate the different perceptions by building up diagrams of the kind presented above and in Figure 2:7. A typical initial response to a presentation of this analysis of perceptions is that whilst it explicates features of common experience, it is too cumbersome a conceptual construct to be used in consultancy sessions especially when the exchanges are intense and rapid. Subsequently, however, some who have made this kind of response say that, to their surprise, they have found it a useful reflective device when they were participating as consultors and consultants. They had become more aware of the perceptions and perspectives active at a particular stage, better able to use them constructively and freer to move from one perception to another as purpose and situation required it. Also, they found that, as consultors and consultants, they were better able to understand the consultancy dynamic and to evaluate the status, significance and meaning of their observations, feelings, thoughts and the contributions made by others. All of this is true to my experience.

At times they found it, as I have, extremely helpful to make explicit the perspective(s) around which the dialogue revolved. For example, a consultor might say to a consultant, "It seems that we have now turned from how I see the root of this problem to the way in which you are approaching and tackling it". Such interventions can prevent the kind of cross-purpose conversation that occurs when contributions are coming first from this and then from that perception and perspective in a confused and confusing manner. That kind of interaction can confound, depress, de-energise and bring consultations to a grinding halt. As well as preventing difficulties, the constructive use of the awareness of perspectives facilitates all round thinking participation in contradistinction to talking participation which may or may not be thinking participation—and that is at the heart of the consultancy process.[40]
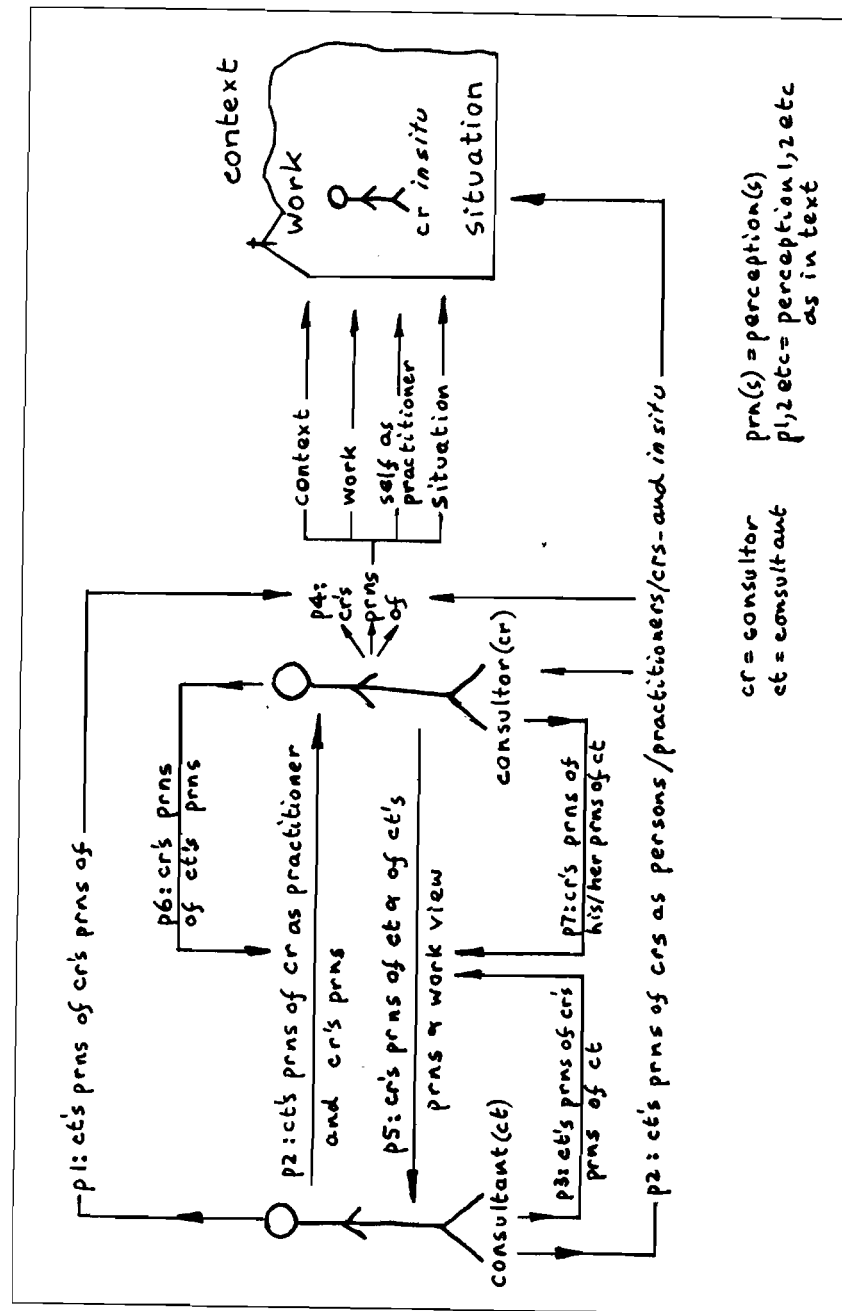
Figure 2:7 A Conceptual Summary of Work Perspectives In Play During Consultancies

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One of the things of particular value about this kind of awareness, a particular form of reflexive role taking, is that it enables consultors and consultants to develop and build upon each other's contributions and thoughts collaboratively: analyses are fine tuned; ideas emerge and grow; designs evolve and are embroidered; consultors and consultants are engrossed and work as one. Animated experiences of this kind are high moments of consultancy creativity. They are precious and productive moments. They can appear to be spontaneous mental combustion caused by a fortuitous combination of events and circumstances. And to some extent they are. By definition, it is not possible to devise, hatch or engineer such events: they contain elements of surprise. But people can prepare themselves to make the most of the events when they arise and they can organize meeting points where they are most likely to happen. That is what this book is about—the attitudes, approaches, methods, preparation and action which are most likely to facilitate creative interaction between consultors and consultants in all kinds of circumstances, formal and informal, and in relation to a wide range of issues.

(f) Practising "Circularity"

Dependent upon the way in which you look at it, one of the limitations or challenges of consultations with individuals is that consultants are in dialogue with only one side of many sided stories. Remembering this and taking it into account is of itself an antidote. Some of the disadvantages can be overcome by using an adaptation of a practice common to systemic family therapy which is rather misleadingly called "circularity". It is a process used in sessions with families to get a picture of the systemic relationships between all the members. An example given by Mara Selvini Palazzoli to illustrate the process is from the first therapy session with a family with an anorexic son, Marcello.[41]

Therapist (to sister Ornella): When your mother tries to get Marcello to eat and he refuses the food, what does you father do?

Ornella: For a while he holds himself back, but after a while he gets mad and starts yelling.

Ther.: At whom?

Ornella: At Marcello.

Ther.: And when he yells at Marcello, what does your mother do?

Ornella: She gets mad at Daddy. She says that he's ruining everything, that he doesn't have any patience, that he's just making everything worse.

Ther. (to father): And while all this is going on, what does Ornella do?

Father (smiling at his daughter with open admiration): She just goes on eating as if nothing is happening!

Brief as this extract is, it shows how the therapist gradually teased out the dynamics of the systemic interaction between members of the family. Insights into the interactions between individuals and groups can be obtained by using an adaptation of this method to get a consultor to trace out the pattern of actions and reactions and of initiatives and responses between the people involved. "What did they say when you made that proposal?" "How did others react to their response?"

etc. The method can also be used to get people speculating privately about the probable responses of others to their work perspective. Display 2:1 describes such an application.

A variation of this method is to make imaginative mental and affective attempts at taking the part or playing the role of other key participants whilst consultors are describing events. In this way consultants can get some idea of what might be happening to those located elsewhere in the story and the system. Consultors can be encouraged to engage in the same kind of exercise especially when there is an impasse in thinking things out. Such exercises generally shed light that does not always come through other forms of analysis. The method can also be used to good effect to test out possible ways of approaching individuals and groups.

Notwithstanding, it is of the essence of human life that the ways in which people respond cannot be determined precisely by calculation or by the most sensitive and perceptive role play. Even people we know well and whose responses we think we can predict continually surprise us by what they actually say and do. Nonetheless, much of value can be learnt about the possible range of responses. Any attempt to look at things from the position of others and through their eyes can be useful. It stimulates consultors and consultants to look at human systems from other perspectives in addition to their own and those of consultors. Consequently imaginative exercises of this kind are charged with creative potential.

By way of preparation for a co-consultancy course participants were required to write a position paper describing their work-view and situation from their own perspective using an outline similar to the one given in Appendix I. As an addendum to their paper, participants were invited to consider the perspectives of others by trying to imagine how they might respond to what they had written. The instructions given were:

This part is an exercise in imagination, of putting yourself in other people's shoes. It gives you the opportunity to articulate your picture of the answers they might give.

For this part we invite you to think of two or three people in your church or institution. Describe who they are and their place in your church or institution, and why you have chosen them.

Imagine you are engaged in discussion with them about the issues you have listed for consideration.

What do you think they would say about the subject matter and what would they say about considerations raised?

We suggest you do not discuss this with the people concerned, but keep this to yourself for the time being.

Finally, describe what you experienced whilst writing this part.

The results were fascinating. Most found the exercise difficult; surprisingly, a few found it impossible. For some it proved to be a transforming experience—they radically revised their views of themselves and their perspectives and their attitude to, and understanding of the people they had "used" for the exercise. One person said that he realised that up to that point he had been so pre-occupied with what he thought about his ideas that he did not listen to what others said about them or to the ideas they had. Another "heard" for the first time what the laity had been saying to him for a year or more about plans he had.

**Display 2:1 Stimulating Imaginative Speculation by Consultors
About Possible Responses of Those With Whom They Work
To Their Perspectives On Their Situation**

(g)   Recognising and respecting potential limitations

To a greater or lesser extent all of us are the victims of self-deception, we are capable of "kidding ourselves" (cf Display 2:2). Consultants and consultors need to be mindful of the possibility of dysfunctional self-deception, especially when presentations seem to be very convincing. Self-deception is no foundation for constructive analysis and design.

As a general rule, then, we assume that if a person gives us an account of his actions which he *(sic)* sincerely believes to be the case (*i.e.:* he is not lying) this is the best guide we have as to the true state of affairs. It is the prevalence of this myth which makes possible the phenomenon of self-deception. That people are capable of "kidding themselves" is of course something widely acknowledged in our culture, though I suspect that this possibility is considered only in relatively rare and fairly superficial cases; what we do not recognize, I think, is that self-deception is the characteristic mode of existence in this society, nor that it is the combination of self-deception and our excessive over-valuation of words which maintain the objectifying structures of our culture.

To say that people deceive themselves is not to question the sincerity of their utterances—the element of dishonesty in self-deception exists more at the level of experience than at that of words. Indeed, dishonesty may not itself be the best concept to invoke in this context: on the whole, people deceive themselves through lack of courage rather than lack of honesty, or even simply through lack of clarity about the predicament in which they find themselves—one may deceive oneself because one lacks the courage to face the implications of one's experience, or simply because that experience is so confused and puzzling that one opts for a relatively non-threatening interpretation of it. But in either case there is no doubt that people believe the stories they tell themselves.

**Display 2:2 Self-deception and the Stories People Tell Themselves:
An Extract from David Smail[42]**

Self-deception can take many forms in church and community work. There is a propensity, for instance, to focus on laudable vocational purposes and intentions in planning and evaluating and to edit out those related to meeting personal needs. Clearly this leads to distortions in self-perception, planning, working and evaluating. Identifying what needs to be avoided, noxiants, is a manageable way of bringing into play some of the complexities of mixed motivation, a normative condition, and treating them seriously as an integral part of the human situation. Another area in which self-deception occurs is in a practitioner's understanding of his/her performance in interpersonal working relationships. If s/he has got it wrong then s/he is likely to misappropriate responsibility. The case study method is a most effective way of identifying the many ways in which we can deceive ourselves about the nature of our action and culpability. (The method is discussed later cf pp 79-80.)

For the most part approaching and using work-views in the vigilant way described above helps consultors and consultants to become aware of, and to counter self-deception by bringing it under some measure of affective and intellectual control. Information is gained by which to correct, edit, modify and develop perception and perspectives. Occasionally, however, I have experienced consultancies in which any progress has been prevented through my inability or lack of courage to get a consultor to consider the real possibility of his/her self-deception. Such encounters, I hesitate to call them consultancies, have devoured enormous amounts of energy and time to no apparent good effect and generated all round frustration. In some instances, it appears—and feels—as though consultors are

conjuring up pictures of their situation from data quite inaccessible to the consultant in order to invalidate successive analyses and designs each of which took account of the reasons given for the rejection of the previous one. Things do not add up or make sense. Suspicion that consultors are deceiving themselves and, possibly by default rather than design, trying to deceive their consultant is inescapable. Certainly everyone and everything are being confused. Consultations with these dynamics are something of a black hole experience.[43]

At an early stage such consultancies can seem so plausible that they make consultants feel that the problem is in their lack of skill. Once consultants are engaged with the consultancy their desire to find solutions and their professional pride can make them prisoners to the successive inconclusive cycles of interaction. Possibly the consultations serve other ends for consultors than those of finding ways forward. For instance, consultors may be using, probably unconsciously, consultations to demonstrate to all and sundry that their situations are beyond redemption, that there is no way that they themselves could be expected to improve them when even professional consultants cannot find a way forward. The situations must be beyond redemption and so they, the consultors, cannot be held in any way responsible for the failure. In such situations consultors are deceiving themselves and the consultants about their motivation and aims for the consultations. The consultor's unacknowledged desire for vindication is at the heart of the consultancy impasse. Their determination to prove the situation to be impossible is in dysfunctional conflict with the consultant's determination to find a way forward!

In some cases I have made limited progress by raising with consultors what I felt was happening. In others I have done so by examining in detail with them procedures they said did not or would not work. In yet other cases, they have had the grace to acknowledge at a much later date that they had put into effective practice ideas they had previously dismissed out of hand. But a small hard core of cases soundly beat me. I keep a weather eye open for such possibilities in order to conserve my energy for more profitable consultancies. But identifying them at an early stage is problematic and the danger of withdrawing when you should not is always present. I become uneasy when: suggestions about well-tested methods are rejected out of hand; consultors simply do not try to understand what I am saying; there is the slightest evidence that consultors are seeking my support for views they hold about the impossibility of the situation; consultors are defensive when approached in a thorough-going, non-directive and respectful manner.

Yet another kind of situation can arise, but only rarely in my experience, when a consultor's view of a situation appears to the consultant to be incredible. In one way or another it simply does not touch reality as experienced by the consultant. If, after careful questioning, the consultant concludes that the work-view does not recognisably represent a reality other, that is, than the one that is in the consultor's mind and feelings, there is no starting point for the consultancy processes we are considering. If the consultor is deluded or fantasizing, then, whatever the meaning of the story, the consultor needs other kinds of professional help from a counsellor or psychiatrist. Then the consultant's job is to point the consultor to more appropriate forms of help through what could be described as first aid pastoral-cum-work counselling. Drifting across the boundaries between consultancy and clinical

psychology can be dangerous. (see section 7 of Chapter 5 for a discussion about the interplay between consultancy and counselling.)

The need for any kind of specialist help that the consultant does not have marks out other boundaries of the limitation of the method. In one consultancy with a missionary on furlough from a post in Africa little progress was made until, at my suggestion, the consultor sought the advice of a social psychologist. Action plans were then made using the insights gained. Upon her return to Africa the action programme we devised worked admirably. The specialist and technical help that might be required varies enormously. Consultants may have to help consultors to define the help required, to obtain it, to interpret it and to determine how to apply and use it.

2. Reflective Notes on the Work-View Approach to Consultancy

Having examined the nature of work-views and some of the things involved in their use in consultancy practice we can now consider the reasons for, and the wisdom of investing heavily in this approach to consultancy.

The approach is essential to self-development. There is no viable alternative to work-view based consultancy when practitioners want and need help which will enable them themselves to do their own work more effectively. Similarly, those who wish to promote holistic human and environmental developmental programmes simply must engage with people and their work and work-views: they must not ignore or bypass or take them for granted or try to impose changes upon them.

Opportunities to pursue this approach present themselves naturally and frequently. An infinite number of opportunities to influence vocational ministry and church and community work through this approach are presented by practitioners and religious institutions when they seek help.

Work-views are reliable guides because they represent comprehensively the theological and existential features underlying the activities of practitioners. Rightly, sociologists would describe work-views as we have described them, as an admixture of "hard" and "soft" data varying in quality. What is important, however, is that they enable all concerned to get as close as possible to the idiosyncratic characteristics of the ways in which consultors (and consultants) think and feel about themselves as practitioners and about their work. And, as no one work-view is exactly the same as another, that is vital to building on the bedrock of human reality.

Work-views facilitate a multi-factor approach needed for holistic development. At their best, work-views are an operational synthesis of many aspects of the nature of a vocational approach to church and community work. This means that they facilitate a multi-factor approach which avoids the limitations and dangers of working to one or two factors such as purpose or belief or approach. Consequently they are profound but complex instruments of development.

Practitioners can access their work-views and scrutinize them with others. Practitioners can of course fail or refuse to do this. But the fact that they can and do access and submit their work-views to others openly and undefensively makes this approach to consultancy possible. Examining, researching and interpreting work-

views can be difficult and complicated as we have seen and human fallibility is ever present. So their analysis cannot be an exact science: but that does not mean that they cannot be subjects of critical scrutiny. They can and must be. Given the time that can normally be spent on describing work-views, the best that can be expected is a working model. A perfect description is unlikely. To achieve the desired result, consultors must be openly forthright; consultants must be thoroughly non-directive in relation to the substance of the consultor's work-view to avoid veneering it with his/her own ideas; both must persist with the processes of clarification until they are satisfied that they have an acceptable definition. Position papers of the kind outlined in Appendix I help towards this process.

Work-views will be most useful if they are based upon astute assessments of the reliability and unreliability of the data used. Doing this involves hard thinking using all our critical faculties and drawing upon intuition, imagination, empathic insight and the common touch. Analyses which proceed from the unquestioning acceptance of the data upon which the work-view is based can be grotesquely skewed away from reality and produce action plans which at best are impracticable and at worst dangerous because they can be implemented. Testing out plans for purposeful feasibility with consultors is one of the ways of unearthing the unreliability of the data on which diagnoses and designs were based and correcting work-views. Thus, the effective use of work-views as the medium of consultancy is an important part of the craft of human and spiritual purposeful action. It draws upon a wide practice theory base. The use of work-views lends itself to the rigours of the behavioural sciences even though it is not based on an exact science. Further, research into the anatomy of work-views could greatly help in shaping, articulating, examining, using and refining them.

Periodically practitioners need help to give their work-views the attention they need. Healthy vocational development and the evolution of good practice require that, from time to time, work- and world-views need revamping or revising or adjusting. Otherwise they become instruments of undesirable action or they prevent or pervert change for the better. *In fact, work-views are important subjects as well as objects of developmental programmes.* They are also important data banks containing practice theory memories, reference points and a repertoire of working and theological models. They are formed, shaped, structured, converted within people by their responses to, or the effects of, all kinds of stimuli, variously personal and impersonal, which are experienced through the mass media, educational and developmental programmes, personal and religious experiences, secular and religious institutions, spiritual and charismatic figures. As we have seen handling all these influences responsibly is a complicated business. Not surprisingly, therefore, those seeking consultancy help generally need face to face assistance in articulating and sorting out their work-views so that they are the best possible instruments of their vocational aspirations in the realities in which they pursue them.

Experience suggests that a good way of meeting this need is by reviewing work-views contextually rather than abstractly and generally. That is, by exploring the dialectic between a practitioner's work-view and his/her work situation in order to determine any implications for both entities and the relationships between them. From time to time practitioners need consultancy help and moral support to discern

and determine any changes that they might need and want to make which can vary from fine tuning to transformational change. They might also need help in determining how to implement changes. Progress in meeting this need is a multiplier because it enables practitioners themselves to be more effective *and* to help individuals and groups to work at things in similar ways.

Getting people involved in creative contextual reflective engagement with their work-views is, therefore, essential to qualitative human and spiritual development. Doing so through one-to-one and small group consultancies and assessment programmes is a costly necessity, not an expensive luxury. It needs to be a part of the missiological economy through budgeting and planning. Without it much of the potential value of research findings, development programmes and projects and mission strategies will simply not be realised. Put another way, work-views are an unavoidable critical factor in any serious approach to human betterment. Their definitive formation is an inner human and spiritual activity, with which occasionally practitioners in church and community work need the collaborative assistance and support of non-directive consultants.

The approach has the potential and power to extend and deepen the work-views of consultors and consultants. Several things invariably happen when one person explores his/her work-view with another person. Consultors gain a better understanding of their work-view. Through the privilege of being allowed access to the inner mysteries of another person's work-view, the consultant's work-view is variously confirmed, extended, challenged, revised. And, paradoxically, the more that consultants give themselves to the study of the consultor's work-view the more open consultors become to in-depth exploration of other people's work-views, including the consultant's and to new ideas. This effect is particularly noticeable where there are significant differences between those involved. So, by helping consultors, new understandings and relationships evolve.

The efficacy of the method is proven. There is an abundance of evidence that working with consultors in these ways is an effective and efficient way of improving their performance, enhancing their abilities, extending their knowledge and understanding and enabling them to gain job satisfaction. The evidence is to be found in carefully evaluated consultancy experience of a wide range of secular and religious consultancy services referred to in various parts of the book. It follows that an understanding of the nature of work-views and the ability to use them critically and creatively help to equip clergy and laity to be: consultors and consultants; reflective and collaborative practitioners (see Chapters 6 and 7); participant observers (see Chapter 7); analytical instruments (see Chapter 7).

The proper use of work-views necessitates and facilitates taking seriously other relevant thinking, perspectives and analyses.

ELEMENT FIVE: THINKING TOGETHER

A. N. Whitehead said that "Organised thought is the basis of organised action" and that "Science is the organisation of thought . . . a river with two sources, the practical source and the theoretical source".[44] This section is about some things which help or

hinder people from being able to organise their thoughts about church and community work in ways which lead to organised action. It describes aspects of the practice theory of promoting creative thinking: it does not purport in any way to be an exposition of the psychology of thinking.

Collaborative thinking on anything from concepts to feelings is of the essence of consultancy processes. Consultors engage consultants primarily to help them to think through things which they have not been able to work out on their own or with others. To do this, a temporary alliance of minds is formed to promote the free flow of constructive thought which, hopefully, reveals to the consultor ways forward. As they work on immediate concerns consultants also aim to help consultors to extend their thinking capabilities and their abilities to help people to think on their own and with others.

1. Four Approaches

Roughly speaking, consultants proffer help in four ways: they think things out *for* consultors; they accompany consultors as they themselves think things out; they stimulate and help consultors to think; they think things out *with* consultors. Here we note the differences in these approaches and consider their uses.

(a) Thinking things out for consultors alongside them. One way in which a consultant can help is by taking the lead in thinking and working something out for a consultor in such a way that s/he can follow the process step by step, make contributions, check what emerges and assess anything that emerges for feasibility and acceptability. The consultant thinks aloud; the consultor accompanies. This method is appropriate when, for example, a consultor simply cannot think out how to prepare for and run an important meeting or event either because they simply do not know how to do so or because they have not got the time and/or the energy to do so and/or because the thought of the event renders them emotionally and intellectually unable to face the task. When I have used this method in such circumstances I have invariably found that consultors relax, find reserves of energy, and become increasingly more active in the process — sometimes to the point that we are working with each other or they take over. They needed a start. The method is also appropriate in cases where people simply have no experience of designing, say, a project or a research programme. In the first instance they participate by following the process.

(b) Accompanying consultors as they think things out. A second way, the obverse of the first, is that the consultant accompanies a consultor as s/he thinks through something or other in their own way. The consultant's presence stimulates the consultor to think and provides moral support. The consultor thinks aloud; the consultant affirms, follows, accompanies. S/he helps the consultor's thinking processes in any way that s/he can. But s/he is working to the consultor's ways and means of thinking things through. More often than not during consultancy sessions over a period of thirty years with T. R. Batten I sat on the same chair in his study. Simply to sit there was often all I needed to think about things which in other circumstances I would shy away from. Batten and his study were for me a presence and a place which stimulated creative thought. Frequently he followed, challenged,

developed my line of thought. But he also contributed alternative thought patterns and processes which took us into the third and fourth approaches where we spent most of our time.

(c) Promoting, stimulating and facilitating consultors to think. In this mode consultants are primarily the originating and/or the facilitating agents of thought in consultors. They seek to get consultors to think about things which they are either not thinking about or not doing so productively. Their aim is to engender creative thinking processes in others, not to transfer patterns of thought or ideas. this can variously involve consultants getting consultors to think:

— about something they have not previously considered which is potentially of importance to their work and vocation;

— again and possibly revise their ideas about this or that;

— about something they need and want to think about but so far have failed to make much progress;

— about things they need to think about but do not want to do so;

— their way through emotional and intellectual blockages.

(d) Thinking things out with consultors. A fourth way is for the consultor and consultant to think through things together. They decide what they are going to think about and how they are going to do so. Consultors give a lead in relation to the substance and, more often than not, consultants give a lead in relation to the approach and method and new material.

Each of these approaches has a place in consultancy. One is not necessarily better or worse than the others. As we have seen each is more or less appropriate to a given relationship task, and situation. All four can be used in quick succession even in short consultancy sessions. Consultors and consultants need to be able to alight quickly upon the apposite approach with which to start and to pick up the clues which indicate when it is advisable to move from one approach to another and to do so freely and naturally. It is vitally important, for instance, to give consultors their head as it were, when spontaneously they break excitedly into a line of thought after a period of groping with the consultant for a lead on a problem. Consultants simply must move with them into the second approach. Whilst all the approaches have their uses, the third and the fourth — promoting and facilitating consultors to think and thinking with them — are the ones basic to the mode of consultancy developed in this book. Indeed, it could be argued, that the first and second approaches are allies to the third and fourth.

2. Technical Aids to Analytical Thinking

The aids to thinking discussed here are relevant in different ways to each of the modes of thinking described in the previous section. Consultants and/or consultors can take the lead in using them.

(a) Conceptualising and formatting consultancy subject matter. Consultancy subject matter is an extraction from complex situations, relationships and events with positive or negative emotional overtones presented from the consultor's

perspective. To describe the situation as economically as possible consultors have to select essentials. Understandably the initial presentation can be somewhat ragged; ends need to be tied up. Constructive thinking involves getting an agreed understanding or conceptual picture of what the consultor wishes to consider. Diagrams help to do this concisely. They quickly reveal distortions and misunderstandings in ways in which they can be corrected without hesitation and loss of face.

Then it is necessary to format the subject matter in a way which lends itself most readily to constructive thought. A simple example illustrates this procedure. A consultor sought help because he was experiencing difficulties in working with people from the church of which he was minister, a community activists' group of which he was chairman and the council which he served as the mayor's chaplain. His difficulties related to conflicts of role and interest, frequently, he said, he felt he was "piggy in the middle." It became clear that different kinds of difficulties were experienced in different settings: meetings attended by representatives of all three groups and which he chaired; working with the groups separately, variously on their own and on neutral ground; formal and informal discussions and encounters with individuals. Formatting the information in relation to each of the settings was the prelude to thoughtful exchanges about the things he should/should not be and do.

Consultancy subject matter can be formatted in many different ways. Much of it can be formatted as either a case or a problem or a situation or a project. In fact these four natural categories are widely used by practitioners to talk and think about their work. The most useful way of formatting a case, a sequence of events which concluded in unresolved difficulties, is as a story told from the consultor's perspective. It starts with an objective and ends with an assessment. Specific and general problems are formatted by defining and describing them. (cf Display 2:3) Material about situations can be formatted by constructing position papers and situational profiles to outlines such as the ones presented in Appendix I. Projects are formatted by setting out: the origin and purpose of the project; any available information about the design criteria; possibilities and difficulties foreseen and action already taken in relation to them; the consultancy help that is sought and why. These ways of formatting are examples of the many possible adaptations of the generic thinking structure described in section (g).

(b)   Diagnostic Reading of Consultancy Subject Matter. Diagnostic reading is a phrase used by Gareth Morgan in an impressive book on organizations. He uses the word "diagnostic" not in the medical sense of attempting to identify diseases (or, in the case of organizations, problems) but in the old Greek sense of attempting to discern the character of a situation. Morgan claims that "any realistic approach to organizational analysis must start from the premise that organizations can be many things at the same time".[45] Revealing diagnostic readings can be obtained by using different metaphors or images to "read" situations and to highlight key aspects of them. This facilitates the reading of "the same situation from multi perspectives in a critical and informed way".[46] He uses a range of images of organizations as aids to diagnostic reading: organizations as machines; organizations as organisms; organizations as brains; organizations as cultures; organizations as political systems;

organizations as psychic prisons; organizations as flux and transformation; organizations as instruments of domination. He claims:

> As our experience in this diagnostic process develops, so does our skill. As we . . . learn how a particular image leads us to a way of thinking about the subject under study, the process becomes a very natural ability. Indeed, it becomes part of the intuitive process through which we judge the character of organizational life.[47]

Diagnostic reading through using images of organizations, models of the church and concepts of community is a way of stimulating new trains of thought through a form of lateral thinking. Frequently, for instance, as I have listened to a consultor describing a situation in which s/he feels trapped, the image of an organization as a psychic prison has come to mind and proved to be a powerful aid to analytical thought. An example of diagnostic reading through images is to be found in some work by the Revd Diane Hare. She discerned an unusual range of twenty two models of church which enabled her to think about the ways in which people in examining villages in South Wales saw local Methodist churches, the ministers and themselves as members. The chart she compiled is a remarkable example of getting at the complex character of the chapel communities and the nature of local folk religion. (It is reproduced in reference 80 of Chapter Six.) Gradually, through using these models as diagnostic tools, she began to collect clues to new ways of tackling problems which had previously baffled her and blocked her ministry. Overviews of the field of work similar to those presented in Part Two are other invaluable aids to the diagnostic reading of working situations ranging from the local to the international.

Both consultants and consultors need to be involved in diagnostic reading of situations which involves "listening" to and having a "dialogue" with situations. Indeed, one of the consultant's primary tasks is to help consultors to develop their ability to do these things in consultancy sessions and in their day to day work. These ideas are developed further in Chapter Seven in discussions about the attributes required of practitioners.

(c)   Identifying Systemic Hypotheses.[48] Diagnostic reading can frequently help to identify systemic hypotheses, *i.e.:* hypotheses which relate to human systems and the functional, structural and affective relationships between their parts. To search for these hypotheses people have to think hard and deep; once formulated they are thought provoking tools.

(d)   Contextualising: Comparing the Specific with the General. So far the emphasis has been upon studying, examining and reflecting upon the consultancy subject matter itself in relation to itself. Thinking about specifics in this way is utterly essential. New light can be cast upon specific situations by thinking about them in relation to the generality of which they are a particular example. This is where Part Two comes into its own. It can be used as a contextual map of church and community work to identify, define and locate the form and nature of the situation and issues under consideration and the consultor's approach to it. As a foil it can bring into sharper relief characteristics of the situation and reveal things that are missing or neglected.

These dialectical and cross referencing processes can generate creative thinking about the specific and the general and the relationship between them. They will do so in direct proportion to the clarity of the conceptual pictures of them both. Comparing a clear picture of the consultor's situation with a blurred one of the generality of church and community work can adversely affect the thinking about both—as indeed can a clear picture of the general and a blurred one of the specific. Consultants simply must be students of the relevant field(s) of work and encourage consultors to be so. They need to be able to penetrate the outer forms of work and practice to get at their essential nature deep in the heart of things. This is no easy task as I found whilst writing Part Two. But it is necessary because, whilst the outer forms can be instructive, the deeper insights necessary to creative consultancy come from studying the nature of the work and its impact on the forms. Chapter Six makes this absolutely clear in relation to the nature and properties of work whilst Chapter Seven does so in relation to characteristics required of creative practitioners. The ability to do this kind of thinking makes process facilitators into church and community work and vocation consultants (see Chapter 8).

(e)   Introducing Consultors to Relevant New Material. Consultations open out on to a vast amount of subject matter potentially relevant to a consultor's situation—contextual factors, approaches and methods and subject matter from pastoral theology and the behavioural sciences. One of the consultant's tasks is to get into play relevant information which is not being taken into account, some of which will be new to the consultor. The skill is to introduce it in a form which enables consultors and consultants together to work at it constructively there and then. Some, if not much of this material, will come from the consultant's work-view. Chapters Six and Seven show that this will be about what practitioners need *to be* and/or *to know* and/or *to do* in order to operate effectively. This is quite a different procedure from the extended and systematic study, through courses of one kind and another, of subjects prior to application. High risk factors can be associated with consultors using ideas and methods without extended study of the field or discipline in which they evolved. It makes consultants and consultors vulnerable. Therefore skill, discernment, discipline and judgement are required to select subject matter, to introduce it succinctly and to find ways of working at it realistically in a limited period of time. Doing this, and coping with the frustration of not being able to pursue subjects in detail, can be energy consuming. The material introduced is more likely to be apposite when consultants concentrate on the consultor, their reference points and their situation than when they focus on pre-determined input. When I do concentrate on consultors, relevant material generally flows into my consciousness, the selection of it just seems to happen unconsciously. The shortest possible statement of it is required to start a dialogue with the consultor about it and its relevance: "I think Kurt Lewin's concept of high and low equilibrium would help us to understand this situation. If you are not acquainted with it, may I explain what it is and then together we can see whether it is relevant?"

(f)   Using Recent Research Findings and Research Methods. What is true of generally accepted knowledge discussed in section (e) applies to more recent research findings. Consultancies have considerable potential for two-way flow between research and work praxis and between researchers and practitioners. They

provide significant inlets to the workaday world for the findings of any form of relevant research. This is effected through several features of consultations. Core activities of analysis and design take consultors and consultants, experientially and conceptually, into close proximity to the basic characteristics of the consultor at work and to his/her work situation. The mode and mood of the engagement make consultors expectant and open to what is to them new and even radical thinking: they have withdrawn from physical involvement in their situation and willingly entered into processes of critical reflection in order to take different and possibly daring initiatives. Consultors and consultants are, therefore, in sound positions from which to assess the potential of research findings for consultors and their work. They can, for instance, through analytical thought, test out the research findings in relation to their own explanation and interpretations of phenomena with which they are dealing. They can speculate about hypotheses and proposed solutions and whether they fit the consultor and his/her circumstances; they can write the findings into project designs; they can learn how to organise their own action and survey research programmes to test out research findings which seem to hold potential but about which they have some reservations. In these and other ways, consultors and consultants can take other people's research into the ambit of their thinking and, if it proves useful, embody it through applying it. A fuller understanding of research approaches and methods will help them to do this more circumspectly. So much for the inflow; the contraflow is from work situations via practitioners engaged in analysis and design through consultancy processes to researchers and their research. Flow in this direction enables those engaged in reflective practice to provide researchers with all kinds of information including the usefulness of their consultancy experiences. Thus consultors and consultants engage in qualitative research.

There are yet other aspects to all this. Practitioner-consultors can not only use and test other people's research, they can be researchers in their own right as they work, analyse and design. As we will see later, they can be disciplined "participant observers", variously active and passive, of the phenomena they are experiencing and examining, the process by which they are doing so and of the action to implement plans and projects they have helped to create. This means that they are instruments of research (see other references to research).

Again, their analytical thinking may well take them to the point where they cannot make any further progress without getting information which they can only obtain through exploring their own experience in this way. To make progress with the design of projects and developmental programmes they may need information that can be obtained only through engaging in or commission research.

Intermission: Two Notes Reflecting on the Nature of the Processes Underlying the Approaches to Thinking throughout this Section

1.   Concentrating on the given specifics of a consultor and her/his situation can be described as "single loop learning" because it operates in relation to consultors, their situation and their operating norms. Introducing material new to consultors causes them to take a "double look" at their situation and their approach to it and their operating norms. That is referred to as "double loop

learning" (see reference 57 of Chapter 7). It stimulates new thinking. That is the process proposed in (d), (e) and (f) and to a lesser extent in (b) and (c). The material in Part Two can be used to facilitate both forms of learning.

2. Consultors and consultants who are analysing, designing and evaluating in the ways discussed above are variously engaged in complementary processes. They are working deductively, i.e. from their understanding of things to their application in their particular situation. They are also working inductively, i.e. from their particular situation and experience to the general. These processes complement each other in the analytical design and evaluative activities of reflective practitioners. A model by A. W. Ghent which helps to conceptualise this is reproduced here, see Figure 2:8.[49]
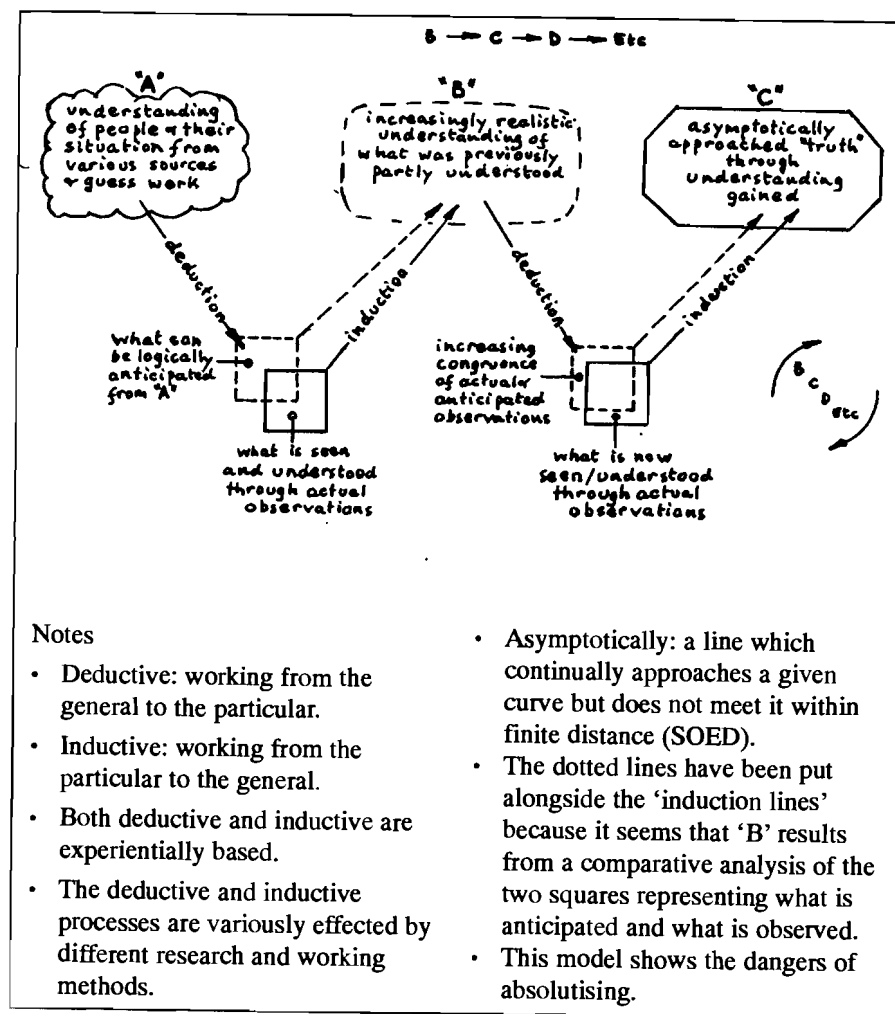

Notes

*   Deductive: working from the general to the particular.
*   Inductive: working from the particular to the general.
*   Both deductive and inductive are experientially based.
*   The deductive and inductive processes are variously effected by different research and working methods.

*   Asymptotically: a line which continually approaches a given curve but does not meet it within finite distance (SOED).
*   The dotted lines have been put alongside the 'induction lines' because it seems that 'B' results from a comparative analysis of the two squares representing what is anticipated and what is observed.
*   This model shows the dangers of absolutising.
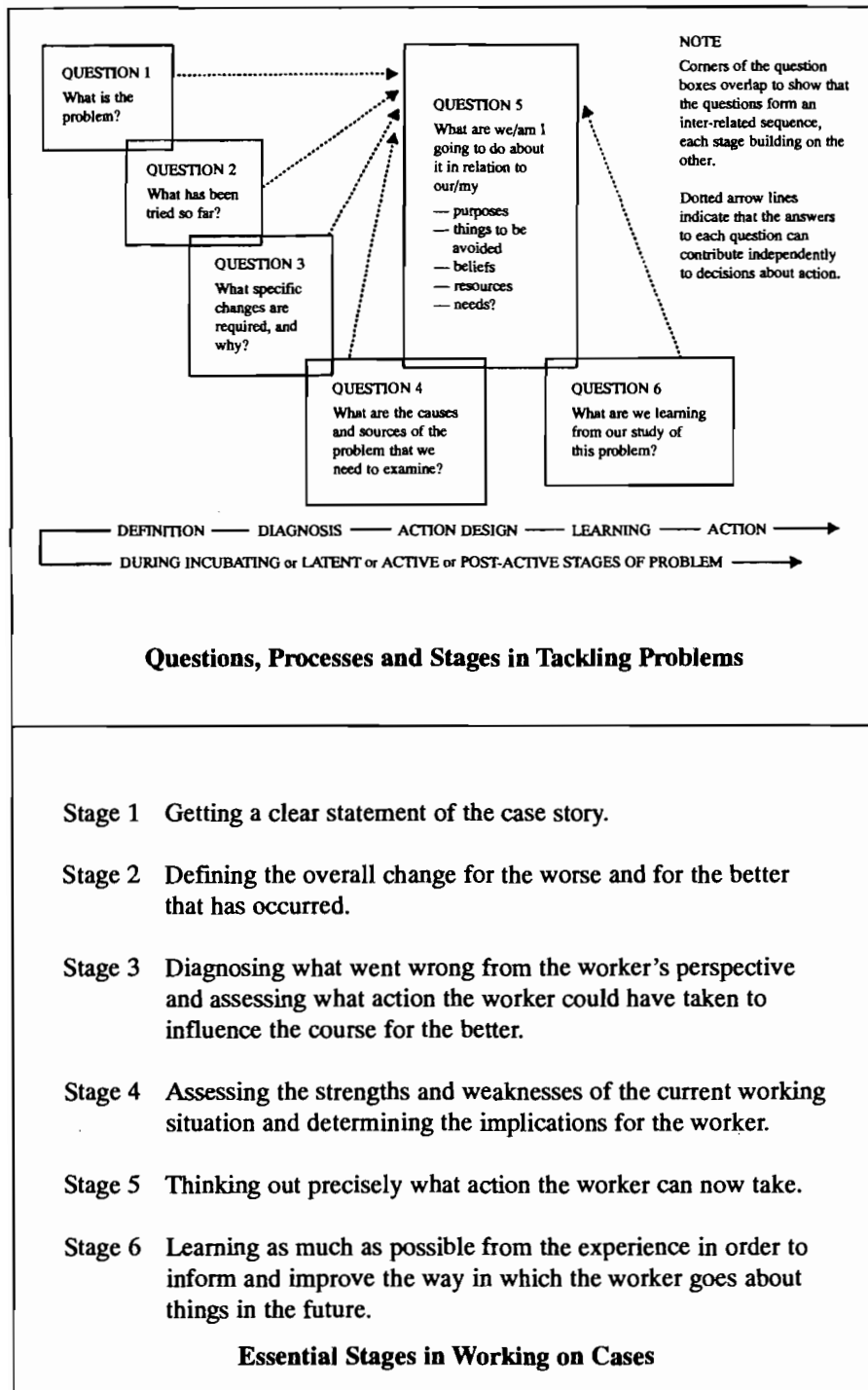
Figure 2:8 Deductive and Inductive Processes

(g)   Tools, Facilitating Structures and Thinking Patterns. Basic tools are words, diagrams, questions and hypotheses. These are illustrated and discussed fully in Analysis and Design, the companion volume to this book.[50] Facilitating structures are sequences of questions or tasks designed to help people to discuss things effectively and efficiently. Those in common use are legion. Structures which I use to study cases and problems are presented in Display 2:3. They, along with many others that I use, are particular applications and adaptations of a basic schema that can be formatted in many different ways to aid the analysis of all kinds of situations and their contexts and the design of widely differing projects and work programmes. (see Figure 2:9) Central to the schema are the following eight stages in creative and imaginative thought.[51]

Stage 1   Depicting situations, backgrounds, contexts and how consultors see and feel about them.

Stage 2   Depicting things as consultors would like them to be.

Stage 3   Establishing points of reference such as purposes.

Stage 4   Conceptualizing, analysing, diagnosing, forming hypotheses and synthesizing.

Stage 5   Drawing up development agendas.

Stage 6   Designing work programmes and means of evaluating them.

Stage 7   Planning ways of putting designs to work and of evaluating them.

Stage 8   Deciding, contracting and commissioning.

Roughly speaking stages 1 to 4 are studying things as they are; stage 5 is defining what needs to be done; stages 6 to 8 are working out how to do things.

During the first three stages and part of the fourth the emphasis is upon consultants getting into the consultor's mind, feelings, work-view and situation through seeing them through his/her eyes and standing in her/his shoes. Then the fourth stage, analysing and synthesizing, opens out into the sharing and the interaction of perceptions, the introduction of material by the consultant and mental and spiritual collaboration in making a diagnosis and a synthesis with which the consultor identifies and really owns. So we are back to how the consultor sees things and feels about them. At all stages their perceptions and perspectives are determinative.

Stages five to eight, mark a radical change of activity from taking things apart to planning and making things, from analysis to design. During these stages all kinds of ideas and suggestions are likely to emerge. Those selected must fit the situation, the people and the consultor if they are to work and achieve developmental purposes. So the process starts and finishes with what consultors think and how they feel: it is their situation, work, vocation; they are the bridge between the consultation and situational realities; effectiveness is related to whether or not they can and do act out of their own personal understanding and conviction.

Questions, Processes and Stages in Tackling Problems

Stage 1   Getting a clear statement of the case story.

Stage 2   Defining the overall change for the worse and for the better
          that has occurred.

Stage 3   Diagnosing what went wrong from the worker's perspective
          and assessing what action the worker could have taken to
          influence the course for the better.

Stage 4   Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current working
          situation and determining the implications for the worker.

Stage 5   Thinking out precisely what action the worker can now take.

Stage 6   Learning as much as possible from the experience in order to
          inform and improve the way in which the worker goes about
          things in the future.

Essential Stages in Working on Cases

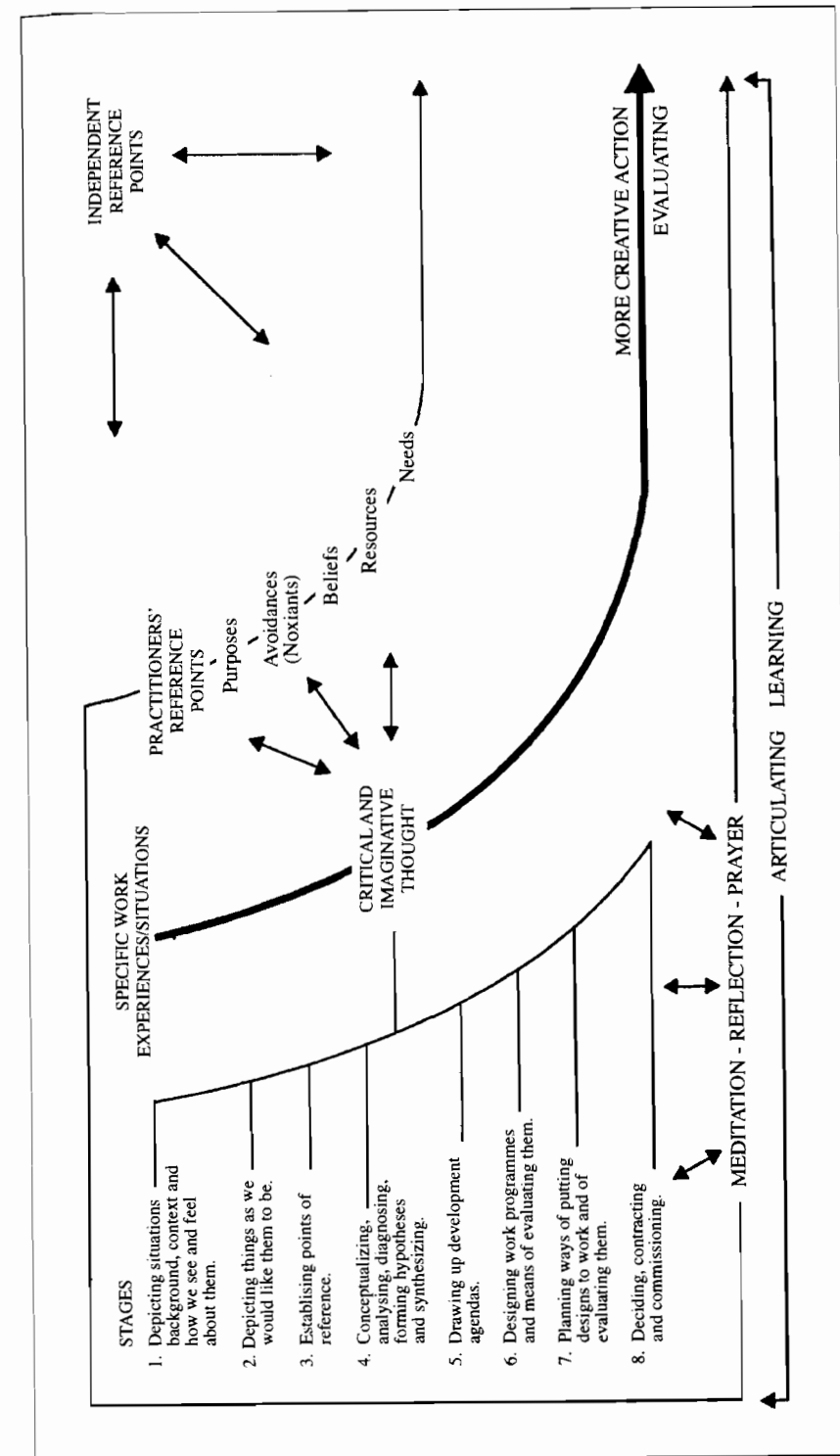**Display 2:3 Facilitating Structures for the Study of Cases and Problems**

Figure 2:9 A Schema for Analysing and Designing Church and Community Work

Clearly, there is a logic in the order of the thinking stages, but the sequence of tackling them is not invariable. Stages 2 and 3 could well precede Stage 1. Sometimes an examination of a situation or problem starts with what people are planning to do next, *i.e.:* with Stages 6, 7 and 8 or in the evaluation of a programme of work. Wherever a start is made, some of the steps can be done adequately only when the others have been worked on: 2, for instance, can be informed by 4 and 6 and 7, dependent upon what people are prepared to do, and that comes out clearly in 8. In practice, each stage facilitates and refines the others, and stage 3, points of reference , is a guide to them all. It is good practice to summarize what is emerging in order to revise earlier thoughts in the light of later insights.

These thinking stages are especially helpful when we are overwhelmed by complex situations and issues, when we are daunted by the task, when our feelings tend to inhibit rational thought, when we feel it is not possible for us to think our way to a good conclusion and when we are so eager to get on with things that we do not want to stop and think.

The schema, represented diagrammatically in Figure 2:9, is important to consultancy for many reasons. First, it models critical features of the processes of shaping patterns of thought and feelings about work situations and human and spiritual development programmes. It is, therefore, an aid to the processes of construction, de-construction and re-construction of thought patterns. Second, it helps to give mental and procedural order to the existential processes of analysis and design which can be anything but orderly and tidy. Third, it helps consultors and consultants to keep in touch with subjective, objective and spiritual realities and to interrelate these domains of experience. What follows are explanatory notes on some of the stages and aspects of the schema which may not be self-evident.

The action thrust. Maintaining the thrust through the stages of critical and imaginative thought to more creative action is vitally important because, for instance, it reduces the danger of action without due thought and thought without the action which should accompany it.

Consultor's reference points. Reference points are important for reflecting, planning and evaluating. Stage 3 shows that formulating and checking them is an integral part of the consultancy process. They are set alongside the thinking processes, as well as within them, so that they are more likely to be used in relation to each and all aspects of analysis and design and revised in the light of developments—they are all too easily formulated, polished, revered and forgotten in the cross currents of thought and feeling.

Independent reference points. Consultors create a context within which they are going to think and work by constructing their own reference points. A danger of this is that consultors can be locked into their own closed thinking circuits. Using independent reference points, such as organizational mission statements, helps them to avoid this and to engage with the issues at the interface between their thinking and activity and that of others and especially that of their denomination.

Beliefs. Articulating beliefs enables consultors to get in touch with them, to examine them critically, to modify them and to use them habitually as reference points. Amongst other things, this enables them to pursue concurrently vital aspects of

mission which ideally go together: the articulation of faith; work for human and spiritual betterment; the communication of faith through the body language of action programmes; the sharing of beliefs and faith and dialogue about them; the development of personal and spiritual relationships.

Purposes and things to avoid (noxiants). Thought is much more likely to be profound, and action to be effective, when it is related to what we want to achieve (purposes and objectives) *and* to what we want to avoid (noxiants).

Development agendas comprise those things which need to be done to pursue the implications of the analysis.

Designing is working out ways in which things work or will work or are meant to work. Designs are models which show the causal connections between people's tasks, working relationships, the secular and religious organizations with which they are engaged and connections by which desired ends can be achieved. Designing, a demanding but deeply satisfying activity which pays high dividends, is one of the most neglected aspects of all forms of church and community work.

Facilitating structures such as the schema we are considering can be used as private or public aids, they can be followed consciously and deliberately stage by stage; they can become so ingrained in the way individuals, groups and organizations tackle things that they come into play automatically. For the most part they are hidden mechanisms in the consultancy activities to which they give shape, form and movement as does the skeletal structure to the human body. They are most effective when they cause the consultancy processes to flow with grace and rhythm which feels natural and good to all participants. For this to happen consultors as well as consultants have to feel comfortable with them as aids to thinking. On occasions this can happen when they are entirely new to consultors and consultants use them naturally, rhythmically and effectively without explaining or negotiating them. At other times it is necessary to explain procedures and test them for acceptability. However this might be, unobtrusive flexible infrastructures must be there to help to shape and form the substance of the consultation.

(h)   Thinking in Different Emotional States. So far the affective dimension has been somewhat neglected in the emphasis upon what needs to be thought about and ways of doing so. To my surprise I can find few references in the literature to this aspect of consultancy. Creative thinking is variously and complexly enabled and disenabled by positive and negative feelings and emotions and by affections and disaffections. Sometimes consultors express their feelings fiercely, at other times they bottle them up. Their emotional state can range from bubbling excitement to a feeling of emptiness or deadness, as can that of the consultant. Their feelings influence to a greater or lesser extent, the ability of consultors and consultants to think at all and to do so constructively. But feelings do not simply countervail against thoughts and vice versa. Thinking is an emotional as well as a cerebral activity. Indeed, feelings of one kind or another associated with such things as compassion, interest and curiosity and sheer necessity, motivate people to think. It is because I feel very deeply about practitioners who need consultancy help, that I struggle to put my thoughts on paper.

Consulting itself is a profoundly sentient activity. Some of the deepest and most important feelings, emotions and sentiments about the human and the spiritual are encountered in consultations. There are several sources of this affective content. Direct sources are: the consultors; the people with whom they live and work; the things about which they are concerned; consultants and the responses they make. Indirect sources are any other people or circumstances which have significant effects upon consultors and consultants. Family events, celebrations or problems could, for instance, distract consultors and consultants and put them in a good or a bad mood.

Consultants can experience all kinds of emotions in relation to the consultor and the consultations such as: admiration or envy or jealousy of the consultor and his/her abilities and opportunities; a sense of privilege at being allowed to contribute to another person's vocational work; a deep desire to help; feelings of inadequacy; apprehension that s/he will not be able to help. Consultors also have all kinds of feelings: elation; excitement/apprehension about and thankfulness for the opportunity to share concerns in confidence; relief; good and/or bad feelings about their work; unhappiness, anxiety, dread, fear, panic; desperate hope that the consultation will help them and/or fear that it will not; unease about talking about people they respect and love; admiration or veneration, envy or jealousy of the consultant. Then there is the emotional ambience of the working situation under consideration which is of critical importance.

These various feelings and emotions congregate to create the sentience of consultations. Consultors and consultants, separately and together have to manage the affective milieu in which they find themselves. In some instances the consultor's feelings, always to be taken seriously, are the critical factor. Inevitably these feelings become part of the substantive subject matter—whatever their sources might be, primary or secondary—because they influence and affect, positively or negatively, the consultor's ability to be an effective practitioner. Invariably, the opportunity to give free expression to their feelings in a safe environment is cathartic. Sometimes that is all that is required. On other occasions it is a prelude to a pastoral and/or analytical conversation about the feelings in relation to the consultor and his/her work and vocation: consultancy is a pastoral office as well as a professional service. Rational discussion of feelings can be productive. In most cases a combination of pastoral and professional approaches enables consultors to deal with their feelings and to get into the frame of mind they need to be in. When it appears they need more than this kind of help and first aid counselling, it is up to the consultant to discuss this possibility with them.

Generalising about cause and effect of feelings and the ideal emotional state for reflective practice is unhelpful. Different people make different emotional responses to similar circumstances. For instance, pressure, high drama, conflict and tension associated with deadlines make some people think clearly but cause others to freeze and panic. Difficulties and problems depress some people and stimulate others. But guidance about dealing with feelings and emotions is needed. It is proffered here in the following responses to the question, "What can consultants do towards creating sentient conditions conducive to good thinking?"

- Consultants can provide and create the personal and environmental conditions for consultancy sessions which are emotionally neutral to consultor and consultant. That is, an emotional refuge or safe house in which they are free from unrelated and unhelpful emotional interventions and distractions. For instance, good or bad news conveyed by telephone or someone bringing in messages can add an unhelpful emotional layer to the session.

- Consultants can control their own affective state in order to concentrate upon the consultor's emotions and feelings and those associated with the situation. Their feelings must not obtrude unhelpfully.

- Consultants can accept the consultor's emotional state non-judgementally and non-indulgently. They can seek to quieten disturbing feelings but avoid any suggestion that they should not have been expressed or that they are not relevant to a technical discussion. On the contrary they can say and show that it is acceptable and necessary to show feelings and that it is possible and essential in some circumstances to examine them in the same way as other things are examined. Doing this can be an important part of analysing and designing. *Emotions and feelings are proper consultancy subject matter which can be important objects of critical creative thinking.*

- Consultants can address what is causing emotional dissonance: "The emotional content of a task oriented job related problem is dealt with indirectly as help and relief is provided directly to the work dilemma." [52]

- Consultants can discuss with consultors how to take feelings into account. They can enquire about them especially when they are not expressed verbally or non-verbally in any clear way.

- Consultants can empathise without making it more difficult for consultors to handle their feelings. Consultants must avoid adding their feelings to those of the consultor's (cf pp 40-41). For instance, a consultant may feel incensed at the way the consultor has been treated. Empathise s/he must, but to give free expression to his/her anger means that the consultor has to cope with the consultant's emotions as well as his/her own; attention focuses upon, the consultant's feelings when it should concentrate on the consultor's; the consultant's feelings become a rogue factor in the analysis and design.

- Consultants can learn as much as possible about the way in which feelings affect the consultor's ability to think creatively and how s/he manages her/his emotional responses. This can be done in two ways: by observing how the consultor in fact copes with feelings during consultancy sessions; through discussions with the consultor. The latter is not always possible. Whatever information is available is used by the consultant, hopefully in collaboration with the consultor, to create optimum conditions and to facilitate constructive thought about things which generate considerable emotion. Consultancy sessions become a place in which consultors, and consultants, can learn how to deal with emotion when thinking privately and publicly in other situations.

- Consultants can engender different thinking moods and modes. This is considered in the next section.

No matter how helpful consultants might be, sharing and examining their feelings can be demanding and traumatic for consultors. Given that they are convinced that it is important to consider emotions and feelings and that it is safe to do so, there are things consultors can do towards getting them taken into proper account. They can make sure that the consultant really understands them, accepts their significance, addresses them and takes their implications seriously. The danger of feelings being expressed and accepted sympathetically and then ignored must be avoided: they may have to be put on hold whilst some things are thought through but account must be taken of them in any creative thinking. This will involve consultors in expressing and describing their feelings and their effects in ways which promote constructive thought rather than quash it. Consultors must do all they can to manage their affective involvement. Emotional self-indulgence must be avoided. When consultants are acting as suggested above they need to cooperate with them; when they are not consultors can use the points to suggest ways in which they could be more helpful.

(i)   Using Different Thinking Moods and Modes. Thinking things through in consultancy sessions involves different but complementary activities. *Analysing and designing* are in the active mood and mode of thoughtful being and doing. This kind of thinking involves the disciplined application of mind and heart to the job of exploring, questioning and working things out systematically. It is carried out in various ways through logical dialogues informed by intuitions and hunches; by forming and testing hypotheses; by submitting the product of the imagination to critical scrutiny. *Meditating and reflecting* are in quite different moods and modes, relaxed rather than active. They involve concentrating and waiting upon things expectantly, mulling things over and cogitating, "listening" to what they might say, pursuing thoughts that arise. *Prayer* is a listening to and a dialogue with God. *Meditation, reflection and prayer* are activities which allow the free wheeling association of mind and heart with all that is happening in the widest possible context. *Formulating learning* is in a reflective, reflexive, searching, active, disciplined mood and mode. It involves standing back from things, looking for connections, surveying and scanning for anything that might emerge and finding ways of expressing it accurately. *Doing theology* is variously in the active and reflective moods and modes. Applied or practical theology is actively putting beliefs into practice. Experiential theology is reflecting on events. Emergent theology is discovering God working in situations.

These different thoughtful activities range from "direct thinking" to what Koestler calls "thinking aside".[53] They draw and feed upon one another. Working at things systematically and praying about them in a consultancy context of pastoral care integrates them, creates a spirituality of its own, generates and releases energy and enables consultors to work more creatively for human and spiritual development.

Sometimes the movement from one mood and mode of thinking to another occurs quite naturally. When that happens it has to be recognised, accepted, respected and used. It happens, for instance, when conversation gives way to a comfortable quietness in which participants are quite clearly thinking deeply. An

analytical consultancy conversation merges into a meditative silence. At other times it has to be effected. One of the skills of the art of consultancy is to discern which approach to suggest and when: a structured analytical approach; a meditative reflective period to mull over what has emerged; a time of prayer or to use St Ingatius of Loyola's expressive phrase, "a colloquy with the Lord". Simple questions or statements can cause a movement of mood and mode: "Can we take a moment to catch up with our own thoughts and feelings?" "I feel the need to reflect/meditate on that for a moment, may we?".

(j)   Drawing and Writing. Drawing, speaking and writing are means of communicating what has evolved from thought, of getting others thinking and of promoting debate and dialogue. Equally the very acts of drawing, talking and writing are means of thinking—of engendering and refining thinking processes and generating new thought. Self-evidently, talking is vital to consultancy. It is the medium by which consultors and consultants think aloud separately and together. What each of them says must express as clearly as possible what they are seeing, thinking and feeling in its clarity and confusion in order that they can think aloud together. Here we concentrate upon the ways in which writing and drawing promote and extend thought in consultancy.
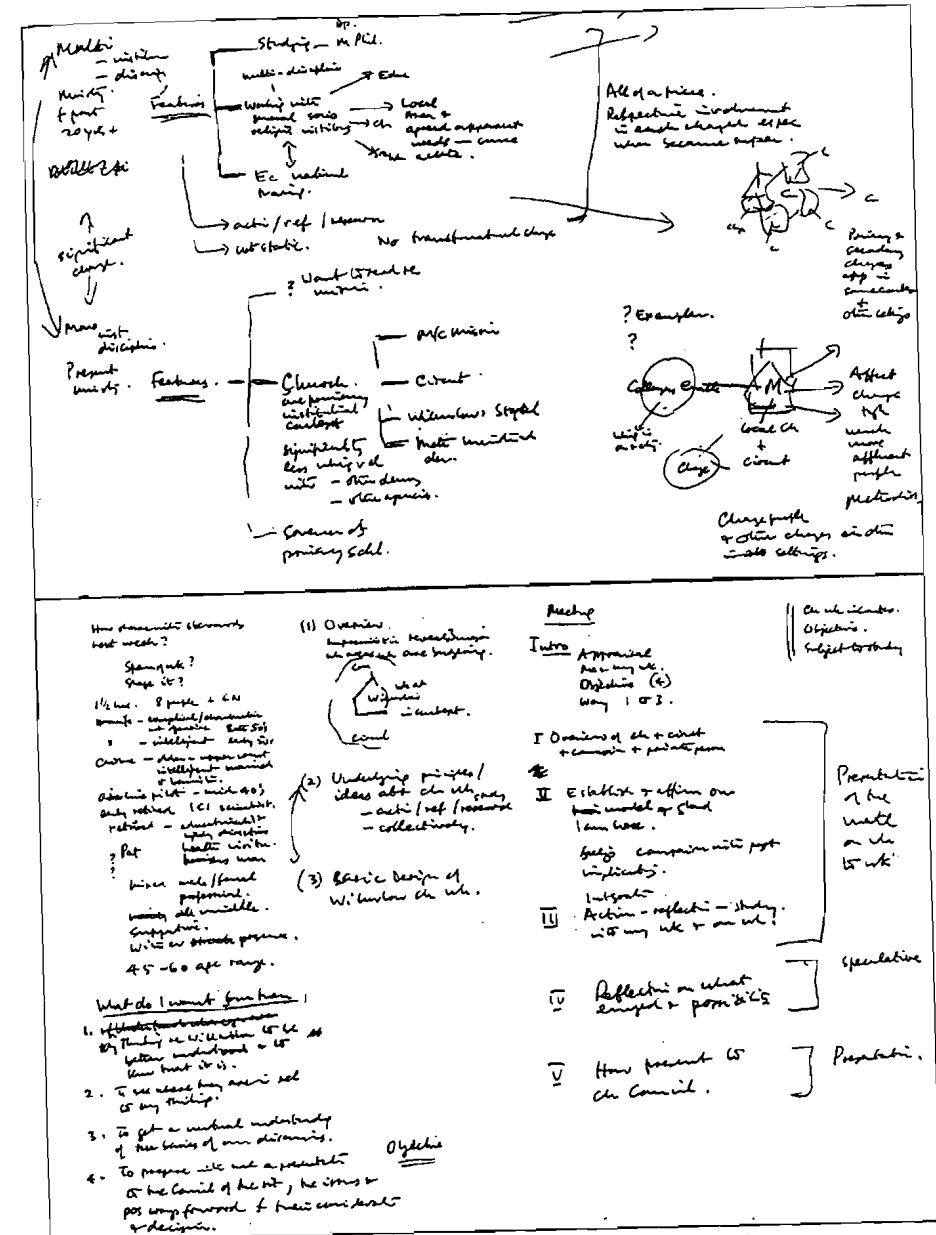
Writing can make contributions at different stages of the consultancy process. Already it has been shown that, when consultors can write notes on the work about which they want to consult, it is invariably helpful. It causes consultors to think, orientates consultants and facilitates preparation. Sometimes, however, emotions or a block to writing or lack of time mean that they simply cannot write anything. They simply want and need to talk. Currently I am involved in consultancy with two people. By common agreement, substantial position papers prepared for the first session proved to be indispensable whereas they could not bring themselves to, or find the time to write papers for the second session.

Emphasizing that it is working notes that are required not polished essays, helps consultors to put pen to paper. The scope of the notes requested varies enormously and must fit consultors and their circumstances. I simply ask some people to drop me a line confirming the arrangements and indicating: why they want a consultancy session, what they want to discuss and what they hope to get out of it; how they feel about their work and how things are going. More often than not this low key approach produces a short, often hand written, letter packed with punchy information and insights. Those who write such letters benefit from the exercise and say so. This approach proves to be useful when a more formal request for a briefing paper would have been threatening. At the other end of the scale position papers covering a range of stated topics can be requested. (Appendix I) Those who attended Avec work and theory consultancy courses had to produce "work papers" similar to those suggested in Appendix I. For most of them it was the first time they had produced a technical paper on themselves as a practitioner and their work. (On the basis of the MARC Europe evaluation of Avec's work most of them were in mid-career: 15% under 40; 62% 40-59; 23 % 60 or over.)[54] Most people struggled over writing these papers even though they were well used to writing academic essays and reports, lectures and sermons and were provided with a suggested outline—but they invariably found that it had been a most valuable learning experience. It had

really made them think, enabled them to reflect on their work and themselves and find a vocabulary for a creative dialogue with others about their situation and thinking.

Writing things down is also useful during consultancy sessions. When working with small consultancy groups (5 - 8 people) I use newsprint to draw diagrams, note principal points and to summarise a discussion. When working with one or two consultors I do the same, but on sheets of A4 paper. A sample is reproduced in Display 2:4. This makes many useful contributions to the consultancy process:

- it provides a shared focus for the discussion;

- it creates time in which to think again about the points made and therefore it is a check on things; (I frequently find consultors correct things when they are written down or put in diagrammatic form, which they did not when they were spoken.)

- it helps consultors relax and give themselves more fully to the process (they often take over the pen) because they know that they are not losing anything by not keeping their own notes; (Frequently they ask for things to be written down.)

- there is a shared reference point for and note of the session (consultors invariably ask for a copy) which consultors and consultants can gloss as they require for their own record purposes;
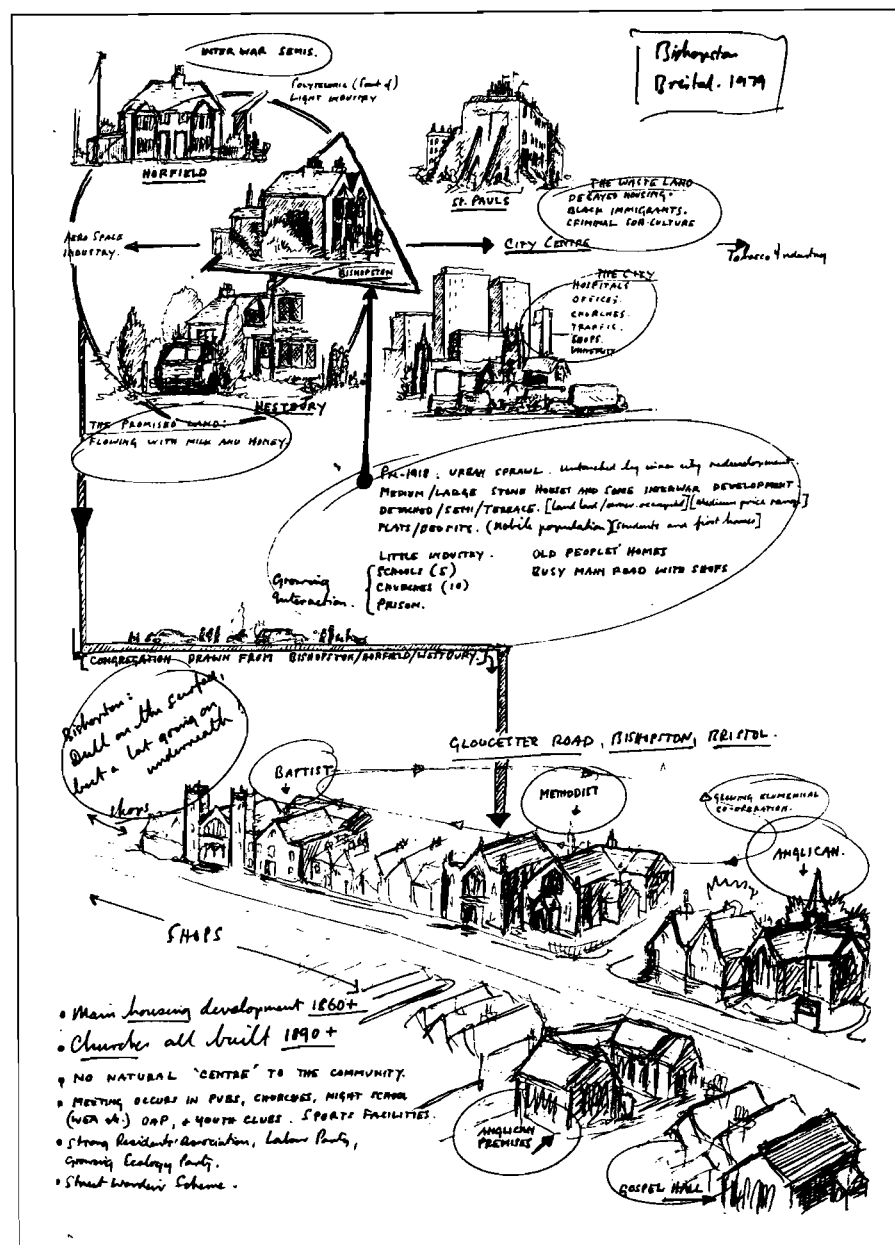
- these notes are an admirable way of recalling sessions.

Consequently, the writing and drawing, which at first seems to slow down the consultancy process, does in fact add considerably to the effective and efficient use of time. The work sheets become records which consultors can and do go over with others and use to do further thinking and planning. In a consultancy group, members might be asked to make notes for each other. Establishing the understanding that without ceremony anyone can instruct the note taker to write something down makes the service more useful.

Consultants can learn much about consultancy if they follow consultancy sessions through by writing structured accounts and records of them which describe and reflect analytically upon: the subject matter; positive and negative aspects of the pattern of interaction; the processes and the outcome.[55] This is one of the principal ways in which I have learnt about consultancy and working with people. Similarly, consultors can add value to the consultations and learn much about themselves as practitioners, their work and consultancy by writing records. In writing about the consultancy subject matter they are likely to gain further insights. They could find it helpful to describe and reflect upon what s/he now considers to be: the principal features of the work situation; the processes which promote and those which prevent development; the key issues, major opportunities and main problems; the development plan; the action choices, the decisions to be made and the balance of advantage. Reflective writing before and after consultancy sessions promotes reflective "talking work". Consultors and consultants are all the poorer when they neglect to do this.

There are, however, times when, as Arthur Koestler argued so cogently, "we have to get away from speech in order to think clearly"[56] and that is when drawing comes into its own and brings in the right side of the brain.[57] Drawing, diagrams and models and constructing critical paths and flow charts make important contributions

Display 2:4 Samples of Consultancy Working Notes

to analysing and designing.[58] I use these methods extensively. This book is illustrated by them and exemplifies their use in consultancy sessions. Sketching also can be used to great advantage as can be seen from Display 2:5.[59] Most people find drawings useful even if they themselves are not in the habit of using them. Subsequently a large percentage of consultors do start to draw their own diagrams and show considerable skill in doing so. For the majority they open up new exciting worlds of thought because they are powerful thinking tools.

Display 2:5 A Pictorial Position Paper

Diagrams and diagrammatic models are line drawings showing the parts of things or how they work. They select, simplify and exaggerate aspects of reality seen to be significant for the purposes in hand and play down those that are not. Some diagrams picture things, map or plot them out. Diagrammatic models, particularly disclosure models, reveal something of the inner structure and essential shape of

things; they disclose the connections between variables and processes of cause and effect; they show how things do or could or should fit together and function. Examples are to be found in this book. Diagrams and models are useful because they enable us to talk about things that are difficult or impossible to describe.[60] Once constructed, they are invaluable aids to the consultancy process. Consultants and consultors can identify unmistakably things to which they are referring by pointing to them. Making points verbally without recourse to diagrams can be very difficult and takes much more time and effort. Consultors have made blobs on a piece of paper to help them to explain complex patterns of interaction between people. As they explained what each person did they pointed at "their" blob and indicated the interpersonal dynamic by pointing at the blob representing the next person. The description took less time and was more intelligible! Ideas flow freely. They use the side of the brain that thinks in pictures rather than words. Diagrams are particularly useful for conceptualizing, analysing and designing projects and programmes and explaining them. But they do have their limitations: they are approximate; they are not comprehensive statements of realities; some of them do not travel well—diagrams which promoted exciting discussion when reproduced in another context appear lifeless because that which was experienced as the diagram was built up stage by stage is not communicated by the final drawing.

3.   Interpersonal Aids to Interactive Thinking

I have used this heading to differentiate these aids from technical ones.

(a)   Consultors and consultants need to understand and work to each other's modes of thinking. Amongst other things, the quality of the interaction between consultants and consultors depends upon them understanding and being open to each other's ways of thinking which may differ considerably. During consultancy sessions they may use each other's methods or work together in ways new to one or other of them. Sometimes consultants use methods without discussing them and then test them out for acceptability. At other times they must be tested out for acceptability at the outset of a piece of work and then as it proceeds when the consultor has experience of the approaches simple questions help: "Is this a way of working which is acceptable to you?" "Are you comfortable with this way of thinking things through?"

Forthright presentations of methods is in order but they must be tested out non-directively. Collaborative approaches of this kind help consultors and consultants to find the best methods and enable them to learn about each others' approaches and methods and facilitate creative interactive thinking. Consultors may or may not use the consultant's methods beyond the consultancy sessions. That is another question. Finding a mutually acceptable modus operandi is the prior question, assessing its wider application is another which is discussed later.

(b)   The thinking between consultors and consultants needs to be first open, collaborative, flexible and imaginative and then focused. Thinking of this kind is the life blood of consultancy processes. Because they are private and confidential, consultations provide opportunities to think in the most adventurous ways and to pursue any and every idea including the most outrageous ones. Open, tentative and

uninhibited thinking can be very creative. This is most likely to happen when the different thinking roles and functions that consultors and consultants perform and their respective abilities are seen to be complementary and used collaboratively. Attitudes or actions that lead to dominance or deference or paternalism in either party, inhibit open and free thought in consultors and consultants and between them. Defensiveness breaks down and ultimately destroys consultancy processes.

Consultations, however, are not "open ended". They are open in exploration in order to focus down on specific action programmes. Periodic strategically timed summaries help the process of gathering together wide ranging, complex, open discussions and giving them coherence and direction. Summaries can enable no less than four things to happen. First, they recall the essentials and reveal where consultants and consultors have got to in their thinking. (Sometimes it is better for the consultant to make the summary and for the consultor to supplement and amend it. But, whenever possible it is advisable for consultors to do it and for consultants to add their contributions as it enables them to shape and own what is emerging and it reveals how they are thinking. When acting as a consultant, I have to hold myself back from making summaries because I invariably find it is a way of developing the thought as well as synthesising it—and I love doing it and showing how it can be done!) Second, summaries enable corrections to be made and any afterthoughts sidelined by the flow of the discussion to be gathered in. Third, they provide opportunities for consultors and consultants to take hold of the discussion and to make conscious decisions about the direction in which they want to take it and thus they avoid unhelpful drift. Fourth, they facilitate editing. They enable earlier points to be re-shaped and re-stated in the light of later ones; they enable consultors and consultants to organize and re-organize what has emerged in different conceptual patterns by establishing clusters of ideas and the connections between them. Summarising, therefore, can give a major forward thrust to consultancy sessions by putting things together in more meaningful, useful and productive forms. People give themselves much more freely and confidently to open wide-ranging discussions when they know from past experience that it will be garnered in a summary and that they can make or request one if they wish. Summarising is a very useful tool of interactive thinking.

(c) *Critical factors in collaborative thinking are the manner and mechanics of verbal and non-verbal communications between consultors and consultants and their interpersonal engagement.* Ideas, insights and concepts which open up new possibilities for consultors are primary sources of creative and inspirational thinking in consultancy sessions. That is true but not the whole truth. The manner and mechanics of verbal and non-verbal communications between consultors and consultants and their interpersonal and behavioural engagement have considerable influence upon the way in which thinking does or does not develop. What is required is that the thinking of one participant is forwarded by the content of the other person's contribution, by the way in which it is made and the manner and mechanics of their interaction. This can happen through ideas complementing one another and jelling or through challenges or in many other ways. One contribution builds upon/leads to another: it is as though one thought cog engages with another. The forward thrust is exciting and satisfying. Here we consider things which help and things which hinder the creative dynamics of interactive thought.

Rate of Thinking, Reactive Speed and Tempo of Interaction. For the interaction between consultants and consultors to be effective, in relation to any kind of content, the speed and tempo of the exchanges between them have to fit the rate at which consultors can think creatively, rather than at that which consultants can: consultants have to work to the pace of consultors. If the natural rate of the consultant's thinking is faster than that of the consultor's, s/he has simply got to contain herself/himself in patience and manage any frustration s/he might experience. When I am in such a situation, I try to ensure that consultors have the thinking space they need. I simply sit, wait and think. At other times I might ask them if they need time to reflect. Or I might ask if we are going too quickly or need to go back over things. Often I write things down that I want to raise—it reduces the desire to verbalise them at that moment and means that I do not have to fumble in my mind for them later.
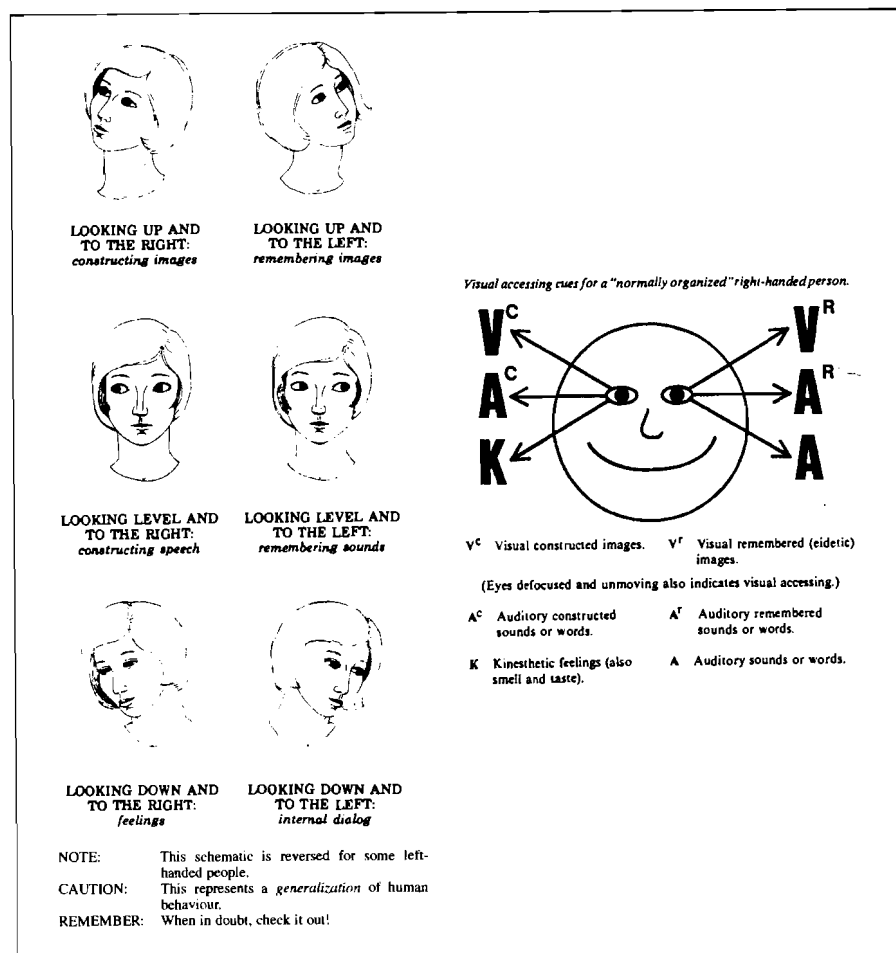
Notwithstanding, there are times when I have got so interested in and excited by ideas that I have left consultors behind when they are not having the same effect on them. This is not good if, as we have seen, consultors feel out of it and that their work has been taken over, intellectually and emotionally possessed, by the consultant. In other circumstances, however, it can be a trail blazing way of thinking out an idea *for* consultors when they glimmer the idea to be helpful and, whilst they cannot keep up they know that there will be an opportunity later to go over at their own speed what is emerging. Frequently consultors have said, "Go on, don't stop in full flow. I will catch up. I want to see where this idea could take us".

The shoe can be, and often is on the other foot: the consultant cannot keep up! Things can be much more difficult for me when I am acting as consultant to someone who thinks much more quickly that I do and is much cleverer than I am. S/he can intimidate me especially when the amount of information and number of ideas I have to try to get my mind round is vast and complicated. I am afraid that I will be left behind or that reducing the rate of thinking so that I can keep up, will create a speed of interaction too slow to generate creative thought in the consultor and that I will frustrate or bore him/her to the extent that consultations become of little or no value. In such relationships I ask consultors to go back over things as I summarise concepts and ideas to make sure I have got hold of them. I ask for thinking time—in sessions and if necessary between sessions. I ask for prior notice of subjects and background material to study beforehand. When this is not possible the face to face briefing during sessions is most useful when it has been prepared carefully. Consultors can help consultants by providing them with copies of their notes or diagrams or other briefing papers and working through them with them. Consultants have more time to absorb the material because they do not have to take notes and can annotate the papers as an aid to the consultancy process. Sometimes I discuss the rate of interaction and effects upon each of us. Not infrequently, however, making consultors think more slowly or getting them to explain complicated ideas in simple language and then reflecting back and modelling what I am hearing and seeing is very profitable to them. They see new things or old things in a new light which primes consultancy processes. In fact as they tell their story to the consultant they are telling it to themselves.[61] Also, consultors can learn a lot from the consultancy relationship about how they can work with people who think more

slowly than they do. In spite of my feelings, which are real, rarely does the interaction become an irritant and cause the consultancy relationship to be concluded, at least not to my knowledge!

Thus, three of the critical factors are: the respective rates at which consultors and consultants can think, the speed at which they interact and their ability to adapt to each other. People's capacities to do this kind of collaborative thinking are not fixed, neither quantatively nor qualitatively. They vary with mood, circumstance, subject matter, the personnel involved and their reactions and responses. Sometimes and in relation to certain things consultors can think more quickly than consultants. In relation to other things the situation might well be reversed. Consultants and consultors have separate and joint responsibilities for creating the circumstances which maximise the use of their capacities and for doing all that they can to develop them.

Modes and Methods of Interaction. There can be significant differences between consultors and consultants in relation to their methods of interpersonal interaction:

LOOKING UP AND TO THE RIGHT: *constructing images*

LOOKING UP AND TO THE LEFT: *remembering images*

Visual accessing cues for a "normally organized" right-handed person.

LOOKING LEVEL AND TO THE RIGHT: *constructing speech*

LOOKING LEVEL AND TO THE LEFT: *remembering sounds*

V^c Visual constructed images. V^r Visual remembered (eidetic) images.

(Eyes defocused and unmoving also indicates visual accessing.)

A^c Auditory constructed sounds or words. A^r Auditory remembered sounds or words.

K Kinesthetic feelings (also smell and taste). A Auditory sounds or words.

LOOKING DOWN AND TO THE RIGHT: *feelings*

LOOKING DOWN AND TO THE LEFT: *internal dialog*

NOTE: This schematic is reversed for some left-handed people.
CAUTION: This represents a *generalization* of human behaviour.
REMEMBER: When in doubt, check it out!

Display 2:6 "Visual Accessing Cues" [62]

the amount of speech time that they require to express themselves; the rate at which they speak, speed and tempo; the length of the interval before replying; the rapidity with which ideas are produced and assimilated; the speed of switching from one idea to another; the different forms of mental activity in which they engage and the manner and rate in which they change from one to the other as indicated, for instance, by the movement of the eyes as illustrated in Display 2:6; facial expressions and other forms of body language; eye contact; the rate of change of mood and temper.[63] Not only do these things vary from person to person but they also vary in the same person from situation to situation and during the course of consultancy sessions. For consultations to be effective consultors and consultants have to handle these factors. Understanding, mutual acceptance and patience are required. Consultors and consultants have to facilitate interactive meshing of contributions and the manner in which they are made. This sequence of utterances, interpersonal behaviour, tempo and time sharing need to be acceptable and conducive to all participants. This happens in many different ways.

Consecutive and Overlapping Speech. Consultors and consultants can make their contributions in an orderly sequential pattern or they can overlap or overlay each other's contribution. Cutting in can be particularly problematic in co-consultancy groups when people are not allowed to finish off what they are saying and two or three people are actively vying for speaking time and consequently not listening as they should. My own propensities towards orderliness in exchanges reinforced by my commitment to the non-directive approach, incline me to think that consultations are most effective when people speak in turn, neither interrupting the other. Cutting in before someone has finished can irritate me not least because people are not respected and therefore can feel put down and because valuable points are often drowned and lost. But then I recall some of the most creative moments have occurred when consultants and consultors are speaking at the same time, overlapping each other as they endorse or develop what the other has said. This can be quite exciting in dyads or in groups. Whilst more orderly exchanges are needed to organize the ideas that have emerged, stopping the exchanges prematurely for the sake of good order can be verbal vandalism. Then again, long uninterrupted speeches can inhibit the flow of ideas and kill dead the consultancy process. So much so that when someone is acting as a consultor in a group I seek prior permission privately to interrupt them in public if I think s/he is going on too long. But then, yet again, more often than not, listening to people for 20 or 30 minutes, interrupting only for clarification, as I frequently do at the outset of a session, can pay high dividends. For one thing it allows consultors to articulate their thoughts and feelings in ways that show connections and disconnections, the story lines, gaps in their thinking and the ways in which they think. Sharing of this kind contributes much to the quality of the consultancy relationship and to interactive thinking. Diagrams, as we have seen, help to increase the rate of exchange because a lot can be communicated through them in a short space of time and additional points can be made quickly by pointing to this and that or by adding additional lines, circles or arrowheads. One thing that emerges is that it is impossible to generalise. Consultants need to be able to live and work with many forms of interaction, some of which irritate them! What matters in the end is that there is significant

development of thought. This is not to be confused or equated with orderly sequential interaction. It can be generated by untidy and messy interaction.

Some Guidelines. Even though there are so many variables and different patterns of interactive creative thought, I venture some guidelines for consultors and consultants.

- Sensitivity to thinking processes is required throughout.

- Consultors must be heard out and consultants must take seriously what they say and feel and demonstrate that they are doing so. Otherwise, consultors will opt out or make their points over and again ever more insistently and/or or disown "solutions".

- Consultors and consultants must allow each other to think unilaterally when they need to; equally they must not become so excited and preoccupied by their own thinking that they override or leave others behind.

- The uniqueness of the mode of interactive thinking natural to each party to a consultancy must be respected.

- Making eye contact at key moments is of vital importance: it is worth hunting for or inviting it when it is not readily given, because the eyes reveal much of the truth about what people are thinking or feeling. Reading eye movements can be illuminating (cf Display 2:6).

- Consultants and consultors need to be able to regulate the intensity and tempo of their interactive thinking as circumstances require. To do this, inter-alia, they need to be able to stand back from each other to reflect and evaluate each other's thinking as well as to get into close engagement.

- Consultors must remain in control of their own situation and therefore of their own thinking about it.

- Consultors and consultants need to express relevant thoughts and feelings economically: but intellectual economy must not be gained at the expense of satisfying affective needs to spell things out in detail and go over some experiences and details time and again.

- Competing for speaking time is unhelpful.

- Learning together is important. (See section 5.)

4. Hindrances to Thinking

When the technical and personal aids discussed in sections 1 to 3 are properly deployed, the triangulation between the complexity of the subject matter, those doing the thinking and the effective use of aids to creative thought promotes all round development: the work improves; the thinkers become better thinkers and therefore better reflective practitioners; aids are tested, owned and improved. Appropriate technical and personal aid pays high dividends. They enable, heal and promote growth. When they are not used well, the effect is quite the opposite. The triangulation undermines the work, the thinkers and their confidence in the tools. The thinkers feel bad, lose confidence and their belief in themselves, become depressed, apprehensive and intimidated by challenges of the same kind. Or they

can become defensive or place the blame elsewhere. All undesirable outcomes. Serious attention must to be given to the potential hindrances to creative thinking in consultancy sessions which are implicit and explicit in what has already been said in the preceding sections. Briefly stated consultants can hinder thinking processes by: using inappropriate approaches (cf section 1); being ignorant of one or more of the technical aids to thinking or using them unskillfully or ineptly (cf section 2); being clumsy or gauche in their attempts to promote interactive thinking (cf section 3). Consultors can hinder them by their inability: to make the responses to the approaches required of them; to play their part in the use of the technical aids; to engage adequately in the interpersonal relationships which make interactive thinking possible.

Lack of skill apart, the consultors and consultants can hinder thinking through their attitudes. For instance, consultants can be hindered from constructive thinking when they decide that the consultors with whom they are working simply cannot or will not think about this or that. Such feelings can cause consultants, consciously or unconsciously, to write consultors out of the thinking processes and conclude that their only option is to think *for* them. Everything changes if the consultant's approach and attitudes are quite different: "So far I have not been able to get the consultor to think about that nor to help him/her to think through the other matter". Consultants in this frame of mind challenge themselves to find ways of getting people to think. Such an approach refuses to write off consultors. It indicates the consultant's responsibilities and describes his/her problem in relation to the consultor's problem. It humbles the consultant and respects the consultor. Whereas the first approach exonerates the consultant of responsibility by denouncing the consultor. Clearly the first attitude is a hindrance and the second a stimulating challenge.

People block themselves off from critical thinking and consultancy services in several ways. One way is through ill-formed ideas they might have about its value. "It is interesting to think about things beforehand but much of it is a waste of time because things are so different when you get to the action". Another way is through their fear of the consequences of thinking deeply about situations: consultors and consultants might be seen in a bad light; they might not be able to handle what is revealed when the "lid is taken off" a situation.

Some consultors find it hard and painful to think seriously and deeply about things because they have been hurt and injured by various experiences. Some have come to doubt their own intellectual abilities and to believe that they are unable to think because of bad experiences they have had of educational exercises and systems, and through being told repeatedly that they are unintelligent and unable to think. They are wounded thinkers.

Helping people with these fears and learning difficulties is a pastoral office as well as a consultancy function. Progress can be made by talking through the difficulties. Giving them good experiences of thinking their way through work issues and problems can be therapeutic if it shows them that they can think and helps them to acquire the skills and self-confidence to do so on their own and with others. But the development of the skills required and the confidence to use them must go together. It is important to avoid the sort of encouragement that leads people to

become over-confident before they realise the depth of the skills they need to acquire.

5. Learning Together about Thinking

Consultations are most productive when learning occurs about: consultors and their work; things which enable the consultors to work to better effect in the immediate future; ways and means by which consultors can think more clearly and constructively about themselves as vocational practitioners and about their church and community work. Combined, these forms of learning develop the abilities of consultors to be independent practitioners and consultants to be consultants. Here we concentrate on learning about thinking. The learning potential of consultations is enormous for consultors and consultants because every consultancy exercise provides opportunities: to test thinking methods experientially; to learn how to improve one's ability to think for oneself and for, with and alongside others; to stimulate other people's thinking and to be stimulated by it; to help others to think in formal and informal situations; to get help with one's own thinking.

Experiences of the four approaches, described in section one, present different learning opportunities. Accompanying consultors as they think things out, the third method, is a direct experience of the consultor's own way of thinking. Whereas the other approaches, stimulating and helping consultors to think and thinking things out *for* and *with* them, are predominantly experiences of the way in which consultants work at things. These opportunities to build up personal practice theory are invaluable.

Some of the learning will occur through processes of osmosis. Many consultors and most consultants are keen to discuss what is being learnt. They can do so by drawing out the learning, reflecting upon it and thinking out the implications for them in different contexts. Consultants have twin responsibilities: to understand the thinking processes and procedures themselves and to help consultors to understand them. Consultors also have twin responsibilities: to learn about the processes and procedures and to help consultants to do so. They can do these things by, for instance, indicating to each other what helps and what hinders and by evaluating sessions and their respective performances. This deepens their mutual understanding of both their roles and enhances their ability to perform them; it increases the potential of their sessions; it helps to make them equal consultancy partners and reflective practitioners. The ways in which they learn from each other will vary considerably. Sometimes it will be through consultants spelling out the what and why of the procedures they propose to use to see if they are acceptable. At other times, it will come through consultors or consultants raising questions or making suggestions about consultancy procedures. Yet more will emerge from evaluting consultancy sessions.

Even so, some consultors have no particular desire or intention of developing their ability to think more rigorously or differently—possibly because they see themselves as activists rather than thinkers, or because they do not feel they have the ability, the time or the intellectual, emotional energy required. They tend to approach consultations in a utilitarian way. They buy in a thinking service as and when required in much the same way as they would employ architects. They neither desire nor intend to learn to do for themselves what they can employ consultants to do for them. They find the kind of approaches to thinking described above very helpful when someone else is deploying them. They enter into the process and procedures with alacrity and find their thinking powers released and stretched. But they take no direct action to learn the skills, although undoubtedly something of the methods used rubs off. Whilst this approach is sometimes appropriate, there is a danger that they use consultants when they should be doing their own thinking. Consultants may have to try to get them to consider this. But from time to time, a desire to enhance their own thinking abilities surfaces when they begin to see that the methods they are experiencing could be useful to them and glimmer ways in which they could adapt them to their way of working.

When considering the implications for consultors of the thinking methods used in consultancy sessions it is essential to do so in relation to the ways in which it is natural and habitual for them to think and work things out. A propensity to neglect this side of the equation has many dangers. It is dismissive of the consultor's ways of thinking; it is tantamount to suggesting that the consultant's way is superior to that of the consultor's and that s/he ought to use it; it leaves consultors to work out on their own tricky and critical questions about the adoption or adaptation, assimilation and deployment of methods new to them; consequently the chances of consultors getting it wrong and suffering for it are increased. Some of these possibilities are dangerous, unacceptable distortions of a responsible and realistic approach. Learning about the ways in which a consultor thinks is utterly essential to the development of their practice theory. Almost by chance I came across a telling case of this when, as part of the research for a book, I was interviewing Charles New, a Methodist minister about his experiences of the way of working with people advocated in this book. A note I wrote on it which received his approval prior to publication is reproduced here because it illustrates points being made about thinking processes.

> A member of my research group said that people like Charles have "learnt the skill and forgotten the theory". There is some truth in that. Much of it had become so much second nature to him after twenty three years of practising and teaching the approach that he took it for granted. From what he said about the approach being a "way of life" it appears that theory, theology and methods have been fused within him indissolubly into a praxis nucleus. So, when I asked him if he consciously referred to basic theory and theological principles when deciding what action to take he was nonplussed. It seems that he does not. He focuses and concentrates on situations as they arise. Reflecting on this, it would seem that for Charles the basic dynamic is between situations and the way of life nucleus well-formed within him: it is not within him between his theory, theology and practice and the situation; it is not between his theory and/or his theology and/or his practice and the situation.
>
> An ill-formed working assumption led me to question him sharply about this. The assumption was that continuous conscious interplay between theory, theology and practice should be normative and that it enhances the performance of practitioners. But that is to give it a clarity it did not have at the time. It did not seem to work like that for Charles New. To repeat myself, the interplay which normally led to action was between the way of life nucleus and situations. So far

his experience has validated and modified his nucleus but not challenged it radically. Progressive development of these nuclei involves periodically scrutinising them. Exposing them to concepts and practices at variance to them is one way of engendering creative reflection.

A fuller understanding is desirable of the ways in which we and others build up the theoretical and theological bases from which we act and the ways in which we put them into practice. It helps us to develop as practitioners, to understand ourselves and others and thus to work together more effectively. Gaining such understanding is difficult. There are so many variations and permutations. Much eludes us because the processes flow into and out of our unconscious and conscious minds complexly and mysteriously. Much can be achieved through awareness and open-minded observation of the processes within oneself and others. But more research is needed.

Frequently people on (work and theory) courses said they wanted to work from examples to theory because they found "theory" difficult. More often than not others on the same course were happier to work from a theoretical base! For some time I felt I was failing the first group by not working in the way most natural to them even though most of the things we did emerged from careful study of the actualities of their work and situations. I bent over backwards to accommodate them. But I began to see that I was colluding with them to their disadvantage and mine. I was helping them to do better what they could already do satisfactorily and allowing them to neglect what they were not good at. And they, like me, had to work with people who varied in their abilities to work from theory to practice and vice versa. So I actively sought opportunities to discuss with them different ways of learning through theory, practice and experience, to explore with them where they were strong and weak and to consider with them the advantages of them overcoming their weaknesses.[64]

Both of us learnt new things about Charles' way of thinking and reflecting. What emerged is invaluable to us in our ongoing working relationship and in any discussions about the development of his approach. It is with chagrin that I say that we had worked together closely for twenty five years before this emerged. But I am glad that it has!

Some people think about one thing as they are going about other things; some appear to think only when they focus on a topic. Some people's unconscious is prolific, other's seem to be much less so. Some people think better in dialogue with others than they do on paper, for others it is quite the opposite. Some people think logically and systematically, others have a butterfly mind. The differences are endless. Each characteristic has its advantages and disadvantages. Abilities can be improved by strengthening weaknesses and reinforcing strengths. Determining which to attend to is important.

New methods need to become natural to those who use them. Assimilation is important. The difficulties of assimilating things and the dangers of using them without doing so, are directly proportional to the degree to which they are new and foreign and therefore challenging and disturbing to practitioners and their working situations. Explaining and negotiating the transition with colleagues and people can be a great help.[65]

Significant changes can be made quite naturally. This is true of a change to habitually asking unloaded questions. Some of those who have done this have told

me that after a while people say to them, "Recently you have been much better at getting us thinking and helping us to work things out. I sense you are doing something differently. What is it?" That is an excellent basis for development.

ELEMENT SIX: SYSTEMICS AND LOGISTICS

Each element of the practice theory discussed in this chapter makes its own distinctive contribution towards the formulation of the character of consultancy relationships, the unfolding of consultancy processes and the ethos of consultancy sessions. That is illustrated in Figure 2:10.

The especial contribution of the action associated with this sixth element is twofold. It helps consultors to move from their workplaces into consultancy sessions and to return to them. This is done by creating consultancy opportunities which fit the circumstances, structures and rhythms of the consultor's workaday
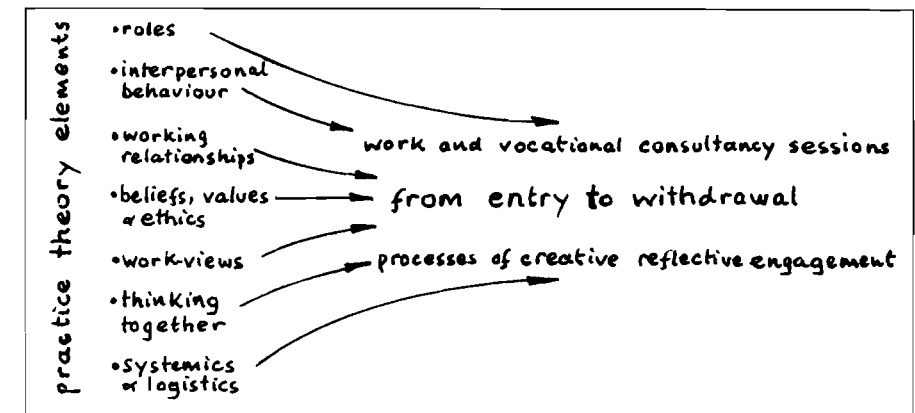
Figure 2:10 Practice Theory and Consultancy Processes

situation. That is illustrated in Figure 2:11. Secondly, it creates systemic frameworks within which consultancy relationships can operate effectively and efficiently. These things are achieved by: establishing contractual understandings related to making, maintaining and concluding consultancies; attending to the logistics;
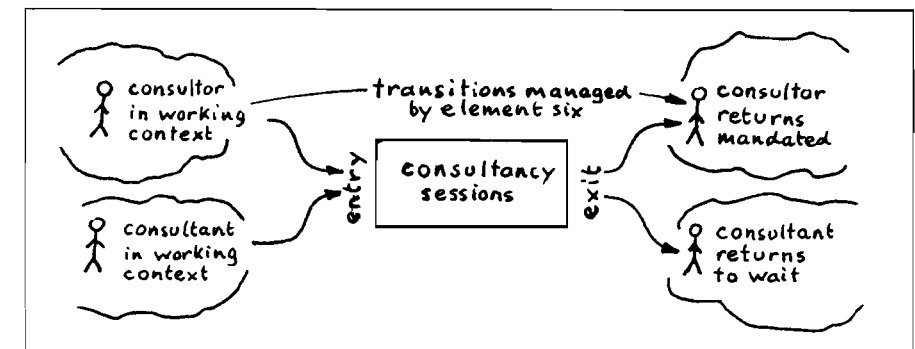
Figure 2:11 Management of Work Consultancy Transitions

arranging consultancy occasions and events; creating spaces for consultancy work; providing opportunities to earth and incarnate consultancy processes. This is illustrated in Figure 2:12. Exploring consultancy possibilities and making the initial arrangements is often the consultor's first impression and experience of the approaches and methods associated with this form of consultancy. It is, therefore, important that essentials of the approach to consultancy are communicated through the initial discussions related to systemics and logistics.

1. Forming Consultancy Systems

Whether consultors and consultants are aware of it or not, they form consultancy systems with a short or a long life span—anything from a brief one-off session to twenty five years or more of frequent sessions. These consultancy arrangements are
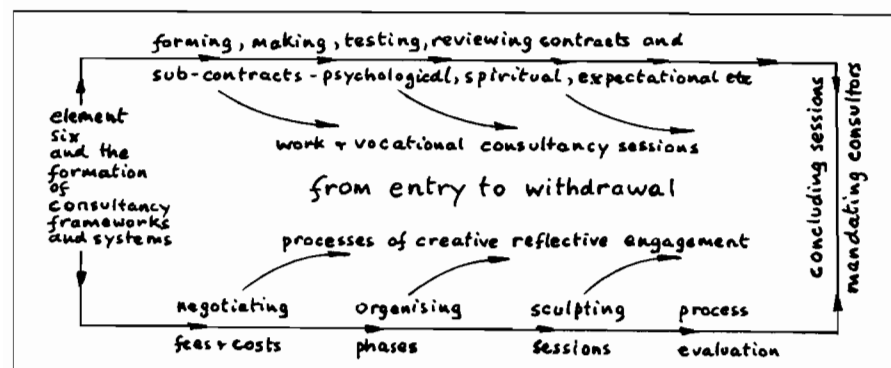

Figure 2:12 Forming Consultancy Frameworks and Systems

temporary or permanent sub-systems to the consultor's personal and vocational systems and the other ones within which s/he lives and works. To be effective, consultancy systems must provide the degree of autonomy consultors and consultants need for them to perform independent and lateral thinking functions essential to the work that they have to do. Relevant contextual factors must, of course, be taken into proper account. But as consultors and consultants analyse and design they must be able to rise above these factors and their thinking must be free from extraneous control or direction. Ideally the consultancy arrangements will be acceptable to all members of the consultor's organization who are involved in them or know of them. Difficulties can be encountered in meeting these conditions in both external and internal consultancies, *i.e.:* when consultants and consultors are members of the same church or organizations.

As we have seen, consultancies simply have to be private and confidential arrangements between consultors and consultants when significant others would be against them and reject or block anything that might flow from them, no matter how potentially useful it might be. In such arrangements, the consultancy system affects the consultor's system which, in turn, affects the systems in which s/he is engaged without revealing his/her sources of change. (See pp 47-49 for a discussion about private vs public consultancies.)

Considerable advantages accrue when it is possible for the arrangements to be public knowledge either to key figures or to members of the organization generally.

Then it is possible to sustain and secure consultancies in various ways by contracts between: consultors and consultants; consultors, those with whom they work and their organization; the consultor's organization and the consultant, especially if they are paying the fees involved. Consequently, more people are able to feed into and learn directly from sessions: as the consultancy is an accepted and supported sub-system, it is more likely to exert more influence through interacting with more people and its findings are more likely to be taken seriously and used.

In the final analysis efficacy is the primary arbiter of the acceptability of consultancies and the value consultors and their organizations place upon them. When organizations are involved in the negotiations leading to the setting up of a consultancy, critical factors can be: the severity of felt need and the degree of the desperation to find help; the confidence in the consultor and whether or not s/he is in good standing and favour; the degree of trust and confidence in the would-be consultant either through knowing her/him or through valued recommendations; tradition; costs; desire to keep control and fear of losing it; pride and apprehension about losing face through consultants learning about difficulties and failures. Another critical factor related to all kinds of consultancies has to do with the natural working rhythms, the diaries and the programme timetables of consultors and their churches and organizations. Consultancy systems must accept, respect and harmonise with them, and then, as proves to be necessary, help consultors, and through them their organizations, to work with them. Amongst other things this involves understanding natural biological, personal and institutional rhythms and habits and the ways in which these attributes are genetically, psychologically, sociologically and ecclesiastically underpinned. *The Metronomic Society* by Michael Young [66] greatly helped me to understand these dimensions and to work to them. The book is about time—how we experience it, how we think about it, how it rules us. Young examines how two complementary notions of time operate in society today: the cyclical with its emphasis on recurrences and continuity; the linear with its emphasis on development and progression.

All too easily creative rhythms can be upset by the imposition of timetables and deadlines. This has many implications for consultancy in particular and church and community work in general. Plans for development, for instance, are systems of intervention. They need to be in tune with the rhythms and timetables of practitioners and organizations and indicate a tempo to which people can realistically be expected to work. Similarly, practical arrangements for consultancy sessions must respect these factors. Ideally they must be timed and arranged so that they fit strategically into the work rhythms and timetables of consultors and their organizations. For instance, to avoid hasty or precipitous or even irascible action, consultors need to have the time and space to feel their way through, mull over and assimilate what emerged from consultations before acting upon it in public. Simple questions can raise these issues: "How does this fit into your timetables and those of your church?" "Does this give you the time you need to mull things over and consult before going public?" Three of the reasons why consultations with Batten were effective were that he took personal and situational rhythms and timetables seriously, he thought in the long as well as short term and, as he was almost always

available even at short notice for consultations, he was able to work to our rhythms and timetables.

2. Phases and Sequences

Consultancies vary enormously in length, the amount of organization and planning required and in the way in which they happen. At one end of the scale there are short spontaneous events. They can evolve from what starts as a casual conversation over a meal or on a car journey or at a conference. At the other end of the scale there are carefully negotiated consultancies, briefed by position papers and involving formal sessions over an agreed period of time. They all have interrelated sequences which contribute phases in the process. Listing the full range of sequences paves the way for observations about their uses in various kinds of consultancies.[67]

(a) Entry: forming relationships, engaging in initial discussions, identifying the consultancy agenda, making arrangements to work on it and beginning to form working relationships.

(b) Orientation and preparation by both consultors and consultants for working on the consultancy agenda.

(c) Working together on the consultancy agenda through the various analytical and interactive processes and determining next steps.

(d) Reflecting on the consultancy, assimilating what emerged, taking action or processing feedback.

(e) Repeating (b) to (d) for any subsequent consultancy sessions and renewing or revising contracts, relationships and arrangements.

(f) Concluding the consultancy.

(g) Withdrawing and waiting in ways which make it possible to return if necessary.

As presented, (a), (c), (e) (f) and possibly (d) represent interaction between consultors and consultants through correspondence or telephone conversations or face to face meetings over varying periods of time, whilst (b) and possibly (d) represent private work undertaken by consultors and consultants. In some situations the overall programme of sessions and preparation might be sketched out and be a part of the contract. In others the programme will evolve. Then again (a), (c) and (f) can be concertinaed into a single consultancy event, planned or spontaneous, which can be as short in duration as twenty minutes. Generally speaking in such situations the discussion moves from identifying the subject matter to the conclusion without any overt reference to procedure. Consultants use mental constructs of sequences to help them to structure the session constructively. Formally arranged one-off consultancy sessions average out at one and a half hours but they can be as short as an hour and as long as three hours. Sometimes the sequences are made overt and consultors and consultants collaborate in managing them. At other times they are used by consultants as a guide.

Consultancy sessions take place in all kinds of settings and situations and the degree of formality varies considerably. For the main part they involve face to face

discussions but consultations can also be conducted through telephone calls, correspondence, tapes, faxes, the internet and e-mail or through a combination of these methods.

The impression is easily gained from the list of sequences, that consultancy processes are or must be orderly and formal. They are not and they need not be so. Phases and sequences overlap. Structuring and re-structuring thought forms and re-visiting analyses and hypotheses are all part of the process which is systemic rather than linear. Contracts and working arrangements have to be re-negotiated. The attitude and approach to and the use of structures must allow these kinds of things to be done naturally as required. Doctrinaire adherence to procedures of any kind is a potential threat to the creative value of a facilitative structure no matter how finely tuned it might be. Notwithstanding, some things should precede others and it is of the essence of the consultancy process to discover ways and means of shaping, ordering, structuring and handling the purposeful exploration of complex subject matter, some of which has emotional connotations.

From start to finish, promoting and pursuing these consultancy sequences involves consultors and consultants entering into and remaining in appropriate roles *(Element One)*, engaging in apposite interpersonal behaviour *(Element Two)*, establishing and maintaining functionally effective working relationships *(Element Three)*, using work-views *(Element Four)*, thinking together *(Element Five)*, attending to the systems and logistics *(Element Six)* and being true to beliefs, values and ethics *(Element Seven)*. When this happens the creative consultancy processes pulsate through the phases and sequences and into the consultor's vocational life and work.

3. Sculpting sessions

Consultancy work is a fascinating and challenging art form because there are so many things to bring into creative unison in a comparatively short time. Consultancy systems depend upon sessions being entities of helpfulness complete in themselves which form building blocks in a sequential series. To do this in a session requires disciplined artistry which treats each session as a unique event with its own content, mood, rhythm and shape. Sculpting sessions is at the heart of consultancy art. Much has been said already about ways of doing this, here we concentrate on three factors: time and timing; economic information sharing; energy flow.

(a) Time and timing. A recurring thought in the approach to sessions is, how on earth can we work through the processes with the care required in such a short time? The thought of all that is involved can induce feelings of panic. The length of time over which most people can normally maintain the required level of concentration is between $1\frac{1}{4}$ - 2 hours. There are many desirable effects of concentrated thinking within agreed time boundaries: consultors and consultants are galvanized into intensive, concentrated, creative activity; more often than not mutually accepted tasks for the session are completed; time is treated as the precious commodity that it is and used economically and effectively; consultors are less likely to be defensive (the great time waster); self-discipline increases; adrenelin and energy flows;

concentration becomes part of the work and consultancy culture; a real sense of occasion is engendered.

There is enormous variation in the time required for each of the phases. Dividing the time arbitrarily can frustrate the process. Few generalisations are of any value. One or two things guide me. The speed at which one can proceed with any of the phases is closely related to the degree of thoroughgoing concentration given to the previous phase. Careful attention is a consultancy accelerator. Time and again consultors have said, "I would not have believed that we could have achieved so much in the last twenty minutes. We gave so much time to the first part of the session". In all cases they have agreed that it was because we did not hurry in the early stages that we were able to move quickly and profoundly in the later stages. Listening carefully to consultors and hearing them out during the initial stages invariably pays high dividends. It signals acceptance, affirmation and the desire and intention to understand and to work at things in depth. It gives some idea of the consultor's pace, the complexity of the issues and the consultancy time which is likely to be needed. Consultors relax and give themselves to the process. Consultants have time to think and think again, to formulate and re-formulate hypotheses and to decide how to respond. Consequently, whilst this can easily, and quite often does, take a quarter to a third of a session and in some cases longer, consultors and consultants are better poised to use the remaining time wisely. Time skimping especially during the initial phases, on the other hand, is time consuming and time wasting. As we have seen when this happens consultors are inclined to engage perfunctorily *or* they will repeatedly go back to the beginnings until they get over what they were prevented from communicating *or* they might invalidate suggestions by referring to points they were "prevented" from making. Sound work at each stage is essential. Panicking and yielding to the urge to move on must be resisted. If at any stage I sense that we have not the time to complete the tasks we set out to do, I discuss the situation with the consultor or consultant, as the case may be, so that together we can decide what to do—for instance to complete the analysis and brain storm on what action could be taken and to retain time to decide next steps.

(b)   *Economic information sharing.* Economic information sharing is a key to the effective and efficient use of consultancy time. This is one of the things which is easier said than done. Interest and curiosity can lead us to give and gather information not necessary to the consultancy task. Determining in advance precisely what is and what is not relevant information is difficult if not impossible. An aside late in a consultancy has often been the vital clue. There are narrow lines between too much and too little information, between relevant and irrelevant information. Several things help me to economise, apart, that is, from mastering briefing papers and thorough preparation. I continuously remind myself that I need only the information necessary to do the consultancy job and ask myself questions such as: "What do I need to know to do this job?" "Interesting as it might be, do I need to know this now?" "Have I got all the information we need?" "Does anything else appear to be directly, vaguely or obscurely relevant?" I know I need more information when I cannot make sense of what has happened. I suspect something which could be important is being held back when consultors skirt around a subject

or refer to it vaguely or are defensive about it. I find security and comfort in a recurring experience: when we get near to the nub of something, consultors invariably see the relevance of things that they had not even thought to mention.

Consultors can help enormously by preparing and making their presentations as succinctly as possible. I encourage them to do so whilst remaining aware of what was said earlier about consultors being given opportunities to say what is on their mind and that not all key information is recognised as such at an early stage in a consultation. Consultants can make inverventions which help consultors to economise in their presentation. For instance, asking what happened next encourages consultors to keep to the central story line and to move to the next part more quickly. Again, when consultants ask how much of the detail that is emerging they need to know, consultors are stimulated to edit and prune the information more purposefully. To achieve this, interventions must not appear to criticise their presentation or to rebuke them for being too long-winded or to indicate impatience or, worse, boredom. When any of these things happen consultors can find it very difficult to share their thoughts: fluency and free flow are reduced by lack of confidence and poise. Prompting statements or questions are a useful way of intervening: "This is very interesting but I am not sure that I am getting my mind around all the information. Do I need to? What do you think I need to know?" Another way is to stop the flow and summarize what has been said and possibly list the main points on a piece of paper visible to all, or draw a diagram. Invariably an effect of such an intervention is that the consultors makes the remainder of their input much more succinctly. They tend to emulate the consultant, add to lists and build on diagrams.

Consultants give a lead by making their inputs as economically as possible. They need to avoid anecdotes and pursuing things of interest to them which are not relevant to the consultancy. Preoccupation with verbal economy for economy's sake that leads to hurrying consultors along, however, is likely to be counter-productive.

(c)   *Energy and energising.* This section focuses on the practicalities of the ebb and flow of energy in consultancy session. (See also the Troubleshooting Charts in Chapter Five on "Power Failure: Consultancy Energy Loss".) Consultations require considerable amounts of emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual energy. People well used to engaging in serious study and thinking have said that they were surprised to find that consultations about their work tired them more than any other intellectual exercises that they had done. Four of the possible reasons for this are: they are not used to thinking about their work so analytically, revealingly and intensively; they are personally involved and implicated because they are the subject of the analysis as well as an instrument of it; they are examining things of great complexity which are very important to them; consultancy exercises can lead to tricky and risky action with people, not simply academic speculation. These attributes make consultancy sessions into occasions and events which, like games or examinations, cause the adrenalin to flow and draw out of people resources that they did not know they had. Nonetheless, as consultancy sessions proceed the energy flow is variable and unpredictable. Sometimes there is a steady flow and a gradual rise in energy levels. At other times it surges and recedes, sometimes rhythmically,

at other times erratically. Consultants and consultors can feel full of energy one moment and exhausted the next.

Energy is required in order that: consultors and consultants are empowered during consultations to do whatever tasks they have to do; subsequently consultors and those with whom they work, are empowered to do whatever they need and have to do. For these things to happen the energy called forth must be "power actively and effectively exerted", to quote the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Here we note some things which experience has shown facilitate creative energy to flow and to be used purposefully.

Facilitating processes and relationships. Energy is generated, released and used constructively in consultors and consultants when they feel they are getting somewhere or when they see possibilities of doing so especially in relation to stubborn problems and things of great importance. Time without number I have come to life, and seen consultors do so, when a promising way of tackling things is discovered. Consultors and consultants are energised and empowered whenever the interactive analytical and consultancy processes described in this chapter act effectively upon their work and vocational concerns. This does not necessarily mean that the processes flow smoothly like a well tuned engine; they are anything but mechanical and predictable. Enormous amounts of energy are required, for instance, to stay with a problem when the analytical procedures appear to have stalled or be stymied and one approach after another has to be tried persistently from different angles.

Relaxed concentration on the task. Energy flows in relaxed concentration. C. G. Harding quotes a sport's commentator remarking of a famous fast bowler in a test match, "He is not yet giving of his best; he is not yet relaxed." [68] Relaxed concentration allows the mind to work freely, tense concentration can prevent it from doing so. Relaxed concentration can be be prevented by vocational or personal crises, feelings of frustration, hopelessness, powerlessness and of not getting anywhere; by intellectual, moral and spiritual confusion; by the challenge of the task being either too great or too small. Consultancy processes, on the other hand, can induce relaxed concentration and this enables consultors and consultants to energise each other and draw upon each other's energy. Sometimes the energy required is released from the beginning of the consultative interaction. Everything is right, personal chemistry included. On other occasions my heart sinks as the thought forms, "This one is beyond you". Thinking processes seem to freeze up and panic and despair are not far away when my contributions fail to help a consultor. These are most unpleasant experiences. Considerable resources are required to stem and reverse the ebbing away of energy. Generally speaking I relax and energy returns when I turn from my preoccupation with my feelings and my fear of failing the consultor, myself and those I represent and get back to the processes and the tasks in hand. Three questions often help me to do that:

In what ways and why is the consultor's situations presenting difficulties?
In what ways and why is the consultor experiencing difficulties?
In what ways and why am I, the consultant, experiencing difficulties?

Pursuing these questions can lead to renewed creative reflective engagement with the subject matter and takes me away from wallowing in the intimidation and

feeling sorry for myself. I am re-energised by the professional challenge. I feel stretched as I search for ways forward with the consultor and the processes start to function. But—it does not always work! A mirror image experience occurs when consultors reluctantly conclude that the consultant is not going to be able to help them. Their interest and energy plummets. Again, if the situation can be redeemed, it is through trying out one or other of the approaches associated with the basic process.

Awareness of energy sources. Awareness, understanding and acceptance of relevant energy sources in the consultor's work situation enable consultants and consultors to work with the available energy. It can, for instance, be located in the consultor, s/he is the power driving a project or scheme. Or it may be located in other people or in the consultor's organization rather than in the consultor. Possibly the consultant has more energy for a project than the consultor. The primary source may be in beliefs, values, purposes, concepts etc. Mapping the energy distribution is an important part of the profile of any working situation. It facilitates realistic analysis and design. The questions in Displays 2:7 and 8 on "energy auditing and profiling" can help consultors and consultants get a better understanding of energy resources and distribution in a working environment.

Noting and exploring the consultor's energy levels in consultancy sessions. Noting the kind of energy consultors appear to have for different facets of their work and the processes of analysis and design can lead to more profound consultancy interaction. Energy levels, for instance, indicate interest, concern, fear, intimidation, enthusiasm, commitment or lack of it. As it is difficult to feign energy you do not have, the amount of energy in use can be an invaluable aid to diagnosis. For example, raising the subject of energy flow in the following way with a consultor can open up deeper levels of profitable conversation: "You seemed to have a lot of energy when we were discussing what you hope to achieve through the new outreach project but not very much when we were considering how to get the church council more committed to it. Do you feel that you have less energy for that?" If they say they have, considering why could be revealing. Normally such interventions lead to discussions about areas of primary and secondary interest, priorities, problems and how to find energy for what appear to be chores. Occasionally it reveals that the scale of challenge experienced by the consultor is too high or too low. Both extremes de-energise practitioners by taking him/her out of the work and energy flow associated with the state of well-being as described by Professor Gillian Stamp. [69] Exhaustion, burn-out and breakdown occurs when consultors are stimulated to effort which involves a critical deficit balance between the output and renewal of energy levels. [70] Clearly, questions related to energy and power also need to be considered in relation to the consultor's transition from consulting to working out the implications in their work place.

Energy auditing and profiling. Consultors and consultants can increase their effectiveness through using the questions in Displays 2:7 and 8 to audit and profile energy levels and flow in: themselves; their work situations generally; working relationships with individuals and groups; consultancy relationships and sessions.

From where and in what ways do you find the emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual energy for your work and/or for consultancy sessions?

How do you draw upon them?

What is the present quality of your energy here and now?

What does "energy" mean to you?

What metaphors and concepts do you use to think about it?[71]

Do you experience positive/negative surges of energy?
  When?
  What causes them?
  What good and bad effects do they have upon you and others?

What consumes most energy? Why?

What saps your energy and vitality?

What galvanises you?

What renews your energy? How?

What restricts/blocks your energy flow? Why?

What are the implications of your observations for you?

**Display 2:7 Questions Which Help Individuals and Groups
to Make An Audit of Their Energy**

Whom or what are the main sources of emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual work energy in your working situation/church/organization?

  How do individuals and groups draw upon them?

  What is the present quality of this energy?

  How is it renewed and developed?

  What importance do people attach to it?

What metaphors and concepts do the people use to discuss their energy and that of the organization/church?

Are there positive/negative surges of energy?
  When?
  What causes them?
  What good and bad effect do they have?

What consumes most energy? why? when?

What saps energy and vitality in your situation/church/organization?

What restricts energy flow? How? Why? When?

What galvanises people collectively?

What are the implications of your observations for you?

**Display 2:8 Questions Which Help to Make Energy Audits or Maps
or Profiles of Work Situations**

Questions in both displays can be used by individuals or groups to stimulate reflection. A complementary way of exploring the issues, is by people keeping an "energy diary or journal" in which they note, with or without reflective comment, anything that happens to them and/or to their church/organization energy-wise. Then they can use the questions to help them explore and to reflect on the recorded information and the recollected experiences, privately or in groups.

Using the available energy to empower consultors. Sometimes consultors have the required creative energy. At other times it is with the consultant. When the latter applies, consultants may have to think things out for consultors alongside them. But this must be done in such ways that the consultor is empowered and not overpowered or disempowered.

Testing the energy thrust before going with the flow. Sources of human and spiritual energy empower people and give direction to their being and doing. Consequently they can play a major part, often untested, in determining the thrust of analytical processes. Spontaneously available energy left to its own momentum can be dangerous. It is judicous to check whether the direction of the energy flow runs along the lines which lead to purposeful creativity. If it does, then consultors and consultants are in the happy position of being able "to go with flow". If it does not, then ways and means have to be found of re-directing the flow or, if this is not possible, tapping into different sources of energy. Making such changes can be tricky because, as noted earlier, energy is closely associated with motivation and interest. A major danger is that one channel is blocked off whilst efforts to open more appropriate ones fail. One of the problems consultors raise is how to direct the energy of groups towards something which is more worthy or closer to the objectives of the church or organization.

Working in sessions for the energy required beyond them. Energised sessions are effective when they result in equipped and energised consultors in their work places, they are not ends in themselves. The memory of the best of them may well continue to be an inspiration well into the future. But consultors cannot live for long off the energy generated in the sessions. They themselves need to be able to use, in their work place with other people, the processes that energised them in consultancy sessions in order to continue and extend the human and spiritual energisation of people in vocational work in the church and in the community. This must be a key objective. Consultancy sessions then become exemplary models for the work in general. Something like this happened to Howard Mellor, now Principal of Cliff College, whilst he was a circuit minister. On a consultancy course he got excited about the idea of working to purposes and beliefs. Let him tell what happened.

> Now there happened to be a stewards' meeting in the middle of the Avec course. I said to them, "I want to tell you about something that is happening to me, something I've learned". I talked about working to beliefs and to overall purposes and of determining objectives which helped you to work step by step towards purposes and to put your beliefs into practice. We discussed what objectives we would need to decide on and how we'd go about determining what were our beliefs and purpose for Methodism in Addiscombe. Well, it was like lighting touch paper, the meeting was dynamic. It went on for hours, nobody wanted it to finish. The following

Sunday lots of people had heard that there had been a dynamic discussion in the stewards' meeting. They were very excited and wanted to know all about it. I thought to myself, this way of working is really such a simple way and yet a preferred way of looking at things. It is quite obvious, except that you never think about it.[72]

To work for empowerment of this kind, can involve addressing, directly or indirectly, with consultors the issues raised above about energy and empowerment. In particular it is necessary to consider with consultors what will energise and empower them and those with whom they work and to test out whether what is emerging from consultancies is likely to do so. If they do not think that the ideas and methods are likely to do so, then, it is back to the drawing board!

4. Contracts and Contracting [73]

Effective consultancy depends upon realistic contracting between consultors and consultants and, in some instances, between them and third parties. Consultancy contracts that help are understandings freely accepted by all parties which set out the essentials of the working relationship between consultors and consultants and their respective functions and responsibilities. Such agreements may be verbal or written and they may or may not be referred to as contracts, although it is now common practice to do so. A work consultancy contract is, in fact, a mutual, sincere commitment which gives consultors and consultants a framework within which to pursue together their separate and joint purposes related to some specific aspect of the consultor's work and/or vocation. It epitomises the living bonds of understanding and aspects of the practice theory to be employed. Contracts are formed by concentrating on those aspects of critical importance to specific consultancy relationships: the casuistry of negotiating every feature would legalise any consultancy relationship to death. Important items in contract making are considered here:

> Sub-contracts
> Fees and costs
> Explicit and implicit contracts
> Forming and testing contracts
> Discerning lack of potential
> Representative types of contractual arrangements
> Coalitions and alliances
> Reviewing and renewing contracts
> Check lists

(a)   Sub-contracts. Work consultancy contracts comprise four "how and why" sub-contracts: psychological and spiritual; expectational; praxis; logistical. I use the term *psychological and spiritual sub-contracts* [74] to refer to those personal and rather mystical ties which bind together people in a common enterprise, in this case to study the consultor's work. These ties are related to such things as beliefs, vocation, attitude, approach and other personal factors. Each factor can help or hinder consultancy bonding. These contracts can be assumed or they can be articulated: "I am glad that we are working together in this way and on these things". "Because of our shared interests/beliefs/approaches/ . . . I feel confident that we will be able to

examine these issues together". "I feel we are on the same wavelength". "I feel our approaches/beliefs/values/attitudes jell". "We are quite different people, do you think we have enough in common to form a consultancy partnership?" In some cases it is advisable to discuss this aspect openly.

Expectational sub-contracts relate to the expectations of consultors, consultants and other interested parties. They are about what consultants can reasonably expect to offer and provide and what consultors and their people need, want and hope to get out of the consultancy. Equally they are about the effort they expect they will have to put in before, during and after sessions in order to get those returns. So they are about outcome and income expectations, effort required and respective obligations. Important nuances of consultors' expectations which may not emerge in discussing them directly can be discovered through questions such as, "What will have to change in you and your situation for you to be able to say that our consultations have been worthwhile?"

Praxis sub-contracts are about work and consultancy processes and the ideas, theories theological concepts on which they are based. How much of this can or needs to be discussed and the terminology used varies enormously from consultor to consultor. Aspects of it are most easily discerned experientially.

Responsibility sub-contracts are about the respective and mutual responsibilities of consultors and consultants.

Practical sub-contracts are about such things as confidentiality, time required, deciding when and where to meet, evaluating the work done, re-negotiating contracts, terminating relationships and costs.

These sub-contracts variously relate to the other practice theory elements. The psychological and spiritual contracts relate particularly to Elements 1 and 7; the praxis contract to Elements 1, 4 and 5; the responsibility contract to Elements 1, 2, 3 and 5; the practical contract to Elements 2 and 3. No one of these sub-contracts can be a substitute for any of the others. For example, careful attention must be given to the praxis side of the contract in relationships where consultors and consultants are spiritually close and methodologically different, and to fees where their personal relationship makes it embarrassing to talk about money.

(b)   Fees and Costs. Freelance consultants and consultancy agencies have to decide whether or not they are going to charge fees and if so how they will calculate them and what their rates will be. Useful information about the ways in which this has been done is available.[75]

Charging fees of this kind is much more acceptable in the Church now than it was. Only a few years ago Churches were not accustomed to buying in such services, it went against their culture and the theological grain. Things have changed with the spread of the service contract culture. But, as the tradition of providing help and advice free of charge is still strong in the church, many people can still feel uncomfortable about paying for consultancy services. And those accustomed to receiving a stipend from the church so that they could minister freely to anyone and everyone, can find negotiating fees for their services embarrassing. However, putting consultancy services on a businesslike footing has some significant

advantages. It gives indicative cost value to consultancy service through using a currency people understand. People are inclined to take more seriously that for which they have to pay cash, and even the most dedicated and conscientious consultants tend to take more seriously that for which they are paid: payment enhances accountability. Another advantage is that paying consultants helps consultors to be consultors and to retain control of the services they receive and of their own work: it makes it more difficult for them to adopt the role of an employee or colleague towards the consultant or to be treated as such. The danger of patronage is reduced: consultors are employing the consultant, s/he is not doing them a favour freely. Again, financial commitments are the common currency of contracts, it seals them and the obligations that go with them. Also, it provides funds which give consultants their independence and enable them and their agencies to provide, research and develop the services which are increasingly required.

Experience and aspects of consultancy practice theory have shown that some of these relational advantages can be achieved without the exchange of money. Much depends upon attitude and theology as will become clear in the discussion about Element Seven. Nonetheless advantages of charging fees are real ones: consultancy fees should not be seen as a rationalization of the need to pay and to be paid in the contemporary culture.

There are however, major disadvantages to fee-based consultancy services. Some practitioners and churches, including those most acutely in need of consultancy services, simply cannot afford to pay for them and others are not prepared to do so. Financial considerations hold up and block the development of essential services. A danger is that consultancy comes to be seen as an expensive luxury for those "who are into that kind of thing", whereas it is a necessity which can save large sums of money from being wasted through, for instance, making expensive projects far more effective. Other serious disadvantages occur when church authorities fail to create a climate of opinion favourable to a fee based service economy or decline to arrange for the services to be available freely or at modest charges well within the range of the most needy. In such circumstances those convinced about the importance of consultancy services and committed to doing all they can to provide them, even though they do not have access to the financial resources required, have to struggle on several fronts. They, themselves, have to find the money to make available the consultancy help needed to do the work of the church.[76] They have to learn the necessary skills. They have to try to change the work culture of the Church to be more amenable to consultancy provision. All this they do generally out of love, dedication and loyalty. By design or default, the Church has a propensity to trespass upon vocational commitment. Generally speaking, funds made available for further training and consultancy are pitifully inadequate. It is vitally important that Church authorities make more adequate provision for consultancy services. Otherwise, the relational discomfort experienced will impede the development and use of consultancy services.

Any fees and costs to be charged should be negotiated at the outset of the consultancy. If there are to be no charges, this too needs to be clarified at the outset. Both possibilities have implications for contract making, they are important parts of it and of the consultancy relationships. Money, or the lack of it or confusion about it, simply must not be allowed to come between consultants and consultors.

(c) Explicit and Implicit Contracts. Considerable emphasis tends to be placed upon making contracts overtly very early in a working relationship so that consultors and consultants know where they stand from the outset. There is good sense in this provided that the contract includes a commitment to re-negotiating it should experience show this to be necessary. However, working out contracts in a business-like manner before getting into the consultancy work itself is not the only way in which contracts are made. Good contracts are formed and forged through the giving and receiving of genuine consultancy help over a period of time. Some of these arrangements can be strengthened through formalising the contract by making explicit what was formerly implicit. Other equally productive relationships could be put at risk by attempts to formalise them. Discussions I had with a Sunday School Superintendent in a church of which I was minister, for instance, were consultations in everything but name, and we adhered rigorously to an unstated contract. To have named the arrangements as a contract could have adversely affected the relationship we enjoyed. Whether or not to formalise contracts which have gradually evolved is a matter of discernment and judgement. Generally speaking consultancies that are working perfectly well should not be tampered with simply to bring them into line with standard procedures.

Effective consultancy contracts take many different forms and are made in all kinds of ways by consultors and consultants doing things together and discussing in prospect and retrospect their working relationships. Some are intuitively discerned, understood and accepted without being articulated. This is especially true of those that evolve and those that just happen spontaneously. Others are negotiated and formalised between the parties concerned in one way or another.

The time and effort required to make and maintain contracts varies enormously. Those who have experience of consultancy or who know and trust each others' ways of working can make good contracts quite quickly. In such instances it can take longer to describe the process than to do it. Whereas it takes more effort and more time to make contracts when consultants and consultors do not know each other and when consultors have no previous experience of the form of consultancy on offer.

(d) Forming and Testing Contracts. Open exploration of the proposed consultancy subject matter provides information which helps consultants and consultors to assess the value, feasibility and desirability of forming a consultancy relationship. So, for consultors this can be an experiential introduction to consultancy processes, roles, interpersonal behaviour and working relationships. So, without ceremony and a minimum of introduction, whether I am a would-be consultor or consultant, I am inclined to get to work on the subject matter until we have broken through to some mutual understanding about the issues—or come to a desultory impasse. Whatever happens it indicates whether or not it is possible to make the sub-contracts necessary for realistic contracts. One of the suggestions that I make to people seeking a long-term consultant is that they have one-off consultations on specific issues, possibly with different consultants, until they know from experience the kind of consultancy relationships that would work for them.

A whole range of questions that consultors and consultants can ask themselves help them to assess the potential of a proposed consultancy arrangement: Are our personalities, beliefs, spirituality, approaches, purposes etc. sufficiently compatible? Do we jell/get on with each other/hit it off? Do I feel I can trust him/her? Will s/he respect and trust me? Do I feel comfortable and free in her/his presence and able to be open and think? Such questions test the psychological, spiritual and praxis sub-contracts. Some questions which help consultors to assess expectational, praxis and practical sub-contracts are: Does s/he understand my situation and what I am about/saying/thinking/feeling/wanting? Will s/he be able to help me work things out? Does s/he have patience, concentration, time? Does s/he have the relevant experience? (Relevant consultancy experience is not necessarily similar to field work experience, it could be quite different.) In relation to these sub-contracts, consultants have to assess whether they have the ability, experience, patience, time and will to provide the necessary help.

(e) Discerning Lack of Potential. Discriminating between consultancy relationships which have potential and those which do not is of considerable importance to both consultants and consultors. Those which do not work devour time and nervous energy in ever increasing amounts for every decreasing returns (cf pp 67-68 reference 43). When I am unsure I tend to focus on things which indicate that a consultancy arrangement is unlikely to work. Some of those which signal an amber or red light for me are:

- people who block all the suggestions I make by saying that they have tried them and found that they do not work but do not convince me that they have tried them and /or that they understand significant nuances of the methods suggested;

- people who blame problems on everyone and everything rather than themselves and who seem unaware of the limits of their competence;

- people who do not identify with the people with whom they work and who denigrate them ("They haven't an idea between them", "No one can do anything with them", "They can't think"—note not, "I have not yet been able to help them to think about so and so");

- hints that would-be consultors are entirely committed to getting their own way and are looking for a "consultant" to help them to do so in a particularly resistant situation, *i.e.:* indicators that they are directive or authoritarian or even autocratic and that they appear impervious to the non-directive approach;

- evidence and hunches that I will be involved in and/or "used" for things which are contrary to my beliefs and purposes (cf (g));

- suggestions that they want readily available solutions, a "quick fix" as it were, and are not prepared to do the thinking that is self-evidently required.

None of these are infallible indicators—indeed they could point to consultancy challenges—but when two or three combine and the "chemistry" of the relationship doesn't seem right the omens are not good. Then, a consultant may decide not accept a request for consultancy and feel that it is not possible to discuss with the would-be consultor his/her reasons for declining. In other circumstances s/he may be able to decline and discuss. Open discussions in an atmosphere of mutual care could be

educative and developmental for consultors and consultants and could even lead to clearing the ground for a consultancy arrangement.

(f) Representative Types of Contractual Arrangements. Four representative types of the wide range of contractual arrangements common in work consultancy are described briefly in this section. The first is a private consultancy arrangement between a consultor and a consultant. This is a similar activity to that in which a consultor seeks to be a better practitioner and to find ways of doing things through studying and researching. As already noted, the consultancy simply has to be private and confidential when people would be highly suspicious and resentful at the thought of *their* minister discussing *them* and *their* affairs privately with an outsider who has the power to influence and is beyond their control. Generating such feelings makes the situation even more difficult at a time when the minister is in need of consultancy help. Overcoming the feelings, getting people to understand the truly non-directive nature of the consultancy and to accept the need for it, could be a tricky piece of development work which the minister simply could not undertake without consultancy help and support. In these circumstances, therefore, letting people know about a consultancy is counterproductive, it creates more problems than it solves.

A second kind of arrangement is one between consultors and consultants which is known to and/or supported by and/or funded by the consultor's church or organization. Various people might be involved in making the arrangements: those in the local church; colleagues; pastoral managers; those responsible for training and development of staff. Having made the arrangements they could treat the consultations as a private matter between the consultor and the consultant. Or they could be more directly involved and that takes us to a third kind of arrangement in which the people are more actively involved. They could, for instance, help the consultor to prepare for consultations and to consider what emerged. In such arrangements it is important to establish precisely who is/are the consultor/s. Is it the practitioner who alone has access to the consultant? Such arrangements can work but only with care. For several years I was one of two full-time workers in a team with three part-time workers.[77] The team members decided what they wanted to consult the consultant about and mandated the two full-time members to meet him. What emerged was then considered by the team. Essentially team members were the consultors The two workers were the consultancy go-betweens for two basic reasons: they were more readily available; to avoid the danger of the consultant being seen as the team leader. Committees and councils could have similar arrangements. Whatever the arrangements, if unwanted complications are to be avoided, *all concerned must be clear about who are the parties to the consultancy, their roles and functions, the nature of the consultancy relationship and the commitments they have made.*

A fourth kind of arrangement is one in which the consultancy contract is with a group or a team or a church or an organization. The contract could take many forms: it could, for instance, involve a series of work consultancy sessions over a short or long period or it could relate to an event such as a conference or a chapter (cf Chapter Three). Contracting with all those who will be involved in the consultancy can be tricky. In relation to some consultancies such as conferences the

contract has to be arranged beforehand through intermediaries. Even if those involved have been consulted, the contract is ratified before most of them first meet the consultant(s). Within the overall commitment to the contract that of individuals can vary considerably. Some may well go along with it out of loyalty to the others but with little conviction or enthusiasm. Others may be against it.

In the first kind of arrangement, consultancy contracts are entirely between consultors and consultants. In the second and third arrangements, the substantive contracts are again between consultors and consultants. But this time they are coupled with contracts between consultors and various members of their organization and with contracts between those members and the consultant. In the fourth, the substantive contracts are with an organizational entity. Within that arrangement there may be sub-contracts with individuals and groups as in the second and third arrangements. Maintaining consultancy boundaries is important in each case. Parties to any of the arrangements will, of course, be at pains to honour any moral or statutory or ecclesiastical obligations they may have.

(g)   Coalitions and Alliances. In consultancies with groups, teams, churches and organizations, *i.e.:* the fourth type, potentially debilitating complications can arise. It is common practice, as noted earlier, for two or three people, generally leaders, to carry out the initial negotiations with consultants on behalf of their group or organization.[78] One of the dangers of this practice is that, even when such discussions are quickly followed by thorough-going contracting with the group or organization there is, in the nature of things, psycho/spiritual and expectational, off the record, contract bonding between those involved in the initial negotiations. This bonding can be particularly dangerous when consultants allow themselves to be associated with covert purposes of the initial negotiators through, for example, appearing to accept through failing to challenge statements such as, "What we really want you to do is to get them to accept our new programme and change their ways of doing things". Or they might suggest that they want help in dealing with "problem people". These are attempts to form covert expectational sub-contracts.[79] Such overtures are invitations to act with them against others in what is referred to by some as a "denied coalition". They are described as "denied" because they will not be owned publicly by those who offer them. Consultants must avoid the seductive powers of these overtures. Taking sides in this way prevents them from working independently and in an open alliance with all concerned on things about which people are differently concerned. Pallazzoli says, "Jay Haley in his earlier thinking . . . brilliantly distinguishes between open alliances for (something) and denied coalitions against (somebody). The latter he labelled "perverse triangles".[80] Similar problems can occur when a consultant is engaged with different individuals and groups in the same organization. They can also occur when a sub-group has been formed from a large consultancy group to organize consultancy events.

Countering denied coalitions can be tricky. Understanding their nature and the dangers associated with them helps consultants to be vigilant and to identify them when first they begin to appear, and that is important. Making suggestions about the action to take when incidents arise is difficult because so much depends upon interpersonal skills and behaviour and the quality of the relationships between those

involved. However, some suggestions can be made.[81] The possibility of becoming ensnared in denied coalitions is reduced :

- by pre-emptive action;
- by declining, not opposing, coalitions and converting them into alliances;
- by helping potential consultors to see the importance in developmental work of avoiding coalitions and promoting alliances;
- by proposing alliances;
- by ensuring that the substance of discussions and negotiations with individuals and subgroups can be and where necessary are shared with other members of the consultancy group.

These suggestions are best seen as an interrelated, overlapping cluster of possible lines of action, variously possible and effective, rather than a series of steps. At an early stage in the exploratory discussions in situations where consultants feel consultors might suggest a coalition, they can emphasize the importance of alliances being formed and the dangers of coalitions. When they are not pointed, explanations of this kind can be preventive and educative and encourage the search for alliances which supplants the pursuit of coalitions. Frustratingly the expression of alliances, however, can suppress coalitions rather than lead to their rejection with the consequence that they become less accessible and their adverse effects can be even more subtle. Sensitivity and a lightness of touch are required. For instance, a judgemental attack on coalitions combined with unqualified praise for alliances can have all kinds of unintended, undesirable effects: it can, for instance, cause those who deal in coalitions to feel defensive or counter attack; it can impede the development of the relationships needed; in some circumstances it can be experienced as a coalition against a coalition.

Once coalitions have been articulated by consultors they must be tackled. To allow them to pass without comment can be interpreted as acquiescence. That is bad news for contract formation. But what can you do or say without evoking negative personal responses and appearing superior? It all depends on the personalities involved, relationships and circumstances. That is not a cop-out. There simply is no right or wrong approach: there is only action which is effective and that which is ineffective. One possibility is to try openly to get consultors to convert coalitions into alliances: it must not be done covertly or by deception. So a consultant might explore with the would be consultors the possibility of them genuinely changing their intention *from* "What we really want you to do is to get them to accept our new programme and change their ways of doing things" *to* "The purpose is to get the new programme seriously and critically considered along with the possibilities of adopting or adapting it". Exploring such a change—and it may be what they really need and want to do but do not know how to do it—involves *inter alia*: starting where they are and finding the courage and questions to ask them how and why they have come to see that this is what they must do; how they feel about getting people to do things against their will through persuasion, manipulation and "selling" things to them; considering directive and non-directive approaches and which is the more appropriate in the given circumstances and in relation to their purposes; determining what kind of action they wish to take; reconsidering whether the consultant is the

person for them and the job to be done and whether the consultant feels s/he could work with the consultors. The consultant should not facilitate a coalition, but s/he can enter into an alliance. The order of decision making is important. Decisions by the consultors about their intentions and approaches must precede and as far as possible be independent of those related to decisions about a consultancy contract. If they are intent upon a persuasive exercise, a non-directive consultant will be an embarrassment and a hindrance to them. If, on the other hand, they genuinely want to pursue a course similar to the revised formulation suggested above, they need a non-directive consultant/facilitator!

Of themselves, therefore, discussions of this kind are educative and developmental consultancy exercises whether they lead to the consultors changing their approach or to them contracting or not. They can be amicable and exciting if they are an open exploration of the pros and cons of alternative approaches and methods through which consultors become convinced which approach has the balance of advantages for them. Consultants must facilitate the examination of the approaches and, no matter how much s/he personally favours one against the other, s/he must not try to persuade. *Non-directive thorough-going exploratory action is an antidote to denied coalitions.*

(h)   Reviewing and Renewing Contracts. As contracts evolve with the consultancy process, earlier agreements can be outgrown. Some modifications just happen, others need to be considered and negotiated. It is easier to raise difficulties if there is an understanding in the initial contract that it is right and necessary to do so if things are not satisfactory. Checking things out periodically is advisable. This can be done with a light touch, "Is the way we are going about things all right or do we need to reconsider the arrangements?"

(i)   Check Lists. By now it is abundantly clear that contract making is a sensitive interpersonal activity that explores the detail to get at the fundamentals of an agreement that will enable and sustain everyone concerned as they attempt to do the work that needs to be done. Consultors and consultants are best equipped for this activity when they are able to give themselves to the nuances of each consultancy relationship because they have assimilated the basics of contracting. For them, contracting is a human event, not a standard procedure to be got through perfunctorily. Nonetheless check lists and guidelines can be useful. I offer the following.[82]

- Set the tone for the relationship early: you can contract for behaviour but not for feelings.
- Contracts must vary to fit people, situations and circumstances. Some are private, others are public.
- Contracts must be made between consultors and consultants and with all significant others in the consultancy frame.
- Implicit contracts can be appropriate forms of contracting.
- Make contracts explicit and write them down whenever advisable and possible.
- Contracts and sub-contracts are made in stages. Think and feel your way into them. Get things as clear as possible at a given stage and wait and watch for the

next stage for clarification. "Entry contracting" is followed by "working contracting" in relation to each and all of the four sub-contracts.
- Responsibility for any sustainable contracted relationship must be accepted by all parties, so contracts must :
  - be freely entered into;
  - be tested for commitment;
  - represent negotiated agreements.
- You cannot get something for nothing, so find out whether all parties are able and prepared to give what is required.
- You should not: ask for something that the other person does not have to give; make or accept promises that you have any reason to think cannot be kept.
- Get the finances clear.
- Keep a weather eye open for consultancies which lack creative potential and for coalitions.
- Good contracts require faith and trust and often accidental good fortune.
- Contracts are often broken by default not design.
- Check contracts for acceptability from time to time as the consultancy proceeds.
- Contracts need to be re-negotiable.

5.   Process Evaluation

Consultancy processes can be evaluated in relation to the following interrelated objectives:
- to help consultors to be better reflective practitioners and to do their work more effectively;
- to make the best possible use of the limited time available for consultations;
- to help consultors and consultants to learn as much as possible about consultancy;
- to enhance their abilities as consultors and consultants.

Evaluations can be made in many ways. Consultors and consultants can come to an understanding that, should things start to go wrong, they will say so without ceremony and without beating about the bush. Early warnings save time, avoid frustration and enable an immediate assessment of what is happening. They could agree, that, periodically they will check whether the way in which things are being done is acceptable by, for example, asking, "Is this way of working all right?" If the answer is yes or simply a nod, confidence to go on is gained with a minimum of interruption to the process. If no, then there is the possibility for an on the spot evaluation. Specific evaluations can be supplemented by general and possibly more formal evaluations of a session or a series of sessions. Agreement about process evaluation can be part of the initial contract.

6.   Concluding Sessions and the Mandating of Consultors

Much has already been said about the importance of consultors remaining true to themselves and their abilities. Consultors must be free to pursue their work with

other people in the light of the sessions and exigencies they encounter upon returning to their situations. Consultants must always help consultors to secure that freedom.

Discerning the right moment to conclude consultancy sessions is an important part of the process. This is partly a matter of the proper use of time but it is also related to the ability of a consultor to continue the process on her/his own. Sufficient work must have been done for the consultor to feel confident that s/he can use the ideas that have emerged. If too much work has been done, consultors, for instance, may feel that the ideas are not their own and fear that they cannot make them work with the result that their confidence could be undermined. In that event, attempts must be made to restore their confidence. Consultors simply must have the freedom to work things out for themselves by themselves and with their colleagues. Anything that takes away that freedom must be rigorously avoided. The stopping point is therefore to be determined not simply by considerations of time and energy but by satisfactory answers to such questions as:

- Has the consultor got sufficient help, the confidence and the will to continue the process on her/his own?
- Is the consultor ready to move on?
- Has the consultant confidence that the consultor can now continue, and is s/he thereby giving her/his confidence?
- Is s/he autonomous, and therefore free to do what seems to her/him appropriate with the ideas worked out together by consultor and consultant? Has the consultant ensured that s/he has that freedom?
- Has s/he made the ideas her own, so that s/he can share them and work on them with colleagues?[83]

At the end of consultancy sessions it is important that consultors and consultants know precisely what, if anything, their future commitments are in relation to each other and the ideas they have worked out. Consultants, as we have seen, must withdraw and wait in patience. This includes mutual understanding about any contacts between sessions and the kind of initiatives they can normally make towards each other in relation to things like afterthoughts or supplementary considerations. Again, summarising what has been done and said helps to determine the next steps.

ELEMENT SEVEN: BELIEFS, ETHICS, VALUES AND QUALITIES

Whichever way it is viewed, the theory and practice consultancy is shot through with theology. Consultancy processes and consultations are formed or influenced or affected in one way or another by the beliefs, ethics and values of the participants. These attributes are at the systemic centre of all elements of consultancy practice theory as Figure 2:2, illustrates. Inescapably and inevitably, because they are intrinsic and generative features, they make determinative contributions to the quality and efficacy of the consultancy services. Consequently, consultancy is a moral and, in our case, a religious activity as well as a technical one. This can be

seen through the influence of beliefs, ethics and values which are explicit and implicit in what has already been written about the other practice theory elements. Therefore, in one sense this section is an extraction of the theology of consultancy from its practice theory. That is why it appears at the end of the chapter not as a theological addition to justify consultancy but as an attempt at theological disclosure.

One of our theological objectives is to explore the ways in which beliefs, values and ethics can be and often are powerful creative forces in consultancy. The nature of this objective is well illustrated by quotations from Professor John Hull. "Ideologies have a dynamic quality. They are not merely static belief-systems but are power filled, charged with emotion and effective in activating people." "Therefore", he says "ideologies have a mobilizing as well as a justifying character".[84] Another objective is to help consultants and consultors to be more aware of the shadowy downsides of heavy ideological and theological commitment and to handle them better. To quote Hull again, "Ideologies operate not in front of our eyes but from behind our backs".[85] And he points out that ideology also has a falsifying character. "This lies partly in the way in which the codification of the ideology necessarily wipes out critical distinctions, smooths over problems and so distorts the original events, and partly in the fact that all of this is done without our realization".[86] Ideology, therefore, can be used to generate processes which give self-protective and self-indulgent comfort. Avoiding such processes, which are akin to "group think", is a key function of consultancy. These objectives are pursued by exploring the ways in which beliefs, values and theological concepts are expressed and experienced in:

> the theological orientation to consultancy
> the consultancy subject matter
> the working relationships between participants
> consultancy processes
> theological outcomes
> the qualities of consultants
> an inclusive theological model
> codes of good practice for consultors and consultants.

1. Theological Orientation and Stance

There are as many belief systems in play in consultancies as there are participants: some will be implicit and assumed whilst others will be quite explicit; some will be similar and others will differ, some greatly. The purposes of consultancy processes require that the consultor's beliefs, ethics and values must be a primary but not the only focus of attention in analysis and design. As core beliefs, ethics and values are generally constant over long periods of time they are reliable reference points. Interaction with other belief systems, including those of consultants, can help consultors to examine and develop or revise their beliefs. And that can, in some circumstances, be an important part of the consultancy process. In fact, to borrow another of John Hull's phrases, consultancy educates "from faith to faith".[87]

A consultant must work to his/her beliefs as well as to those of the consultor and to the interaction between them. Working to his/her own beliefs gives integrity to

the consultant; working to the consultor's beliefs and any dissonance between their systems gives integrity to consultancy practice; working to the beliefs of all those in the consultancy frame promotes theologically inclusive thinking and planning.

Underlying this approach are various theological purposes and principles. There is a commitment to theological pluralism and tolerance and socio-religious inclusivism. This stance enables consultors and consultants to accept each other in active consultancy engagement without necessarily endorsing every aspect of each others' beliefs. And at the same time, it enables all participants to be true to and respectful of all the beliefs and values represented and considered in consultations. It proscribes consultants trying to impose their beliefs and values upon consultors and vice versa. It creates the relationships and conditions within which consultants and consultors can collaborate in critical, creative reflective action on the consultor's beliefs, ethics and values and their implications. Without this kind of acceptance, which resonates with the doctrine of justification by faith,* non-directive consultancy is not possible.

So, consultors and consultants can and will work with people whose beliefs and religious practices differ significantly from theirs. To do this they must be ideologically sensitive and theologically multi-lingual—or able and willing to learn the basics of other languages. This is a vital part of the theological approach to consultancy but, as was established earlier, it does not mean that anything goes. Beliefs and values of consultors and consultants work out the dimensions and the boundaries of the broad church of consultancy practice.

2. Subject Matter

Consultors and their work, the subjects and objects of consultations, are theological entities shaped and formed vocationally whatever else they might be. Even a cursory glance at the list of contents of Part Two illuminates the truth of this statement. Consultors themselves, therefore, are a profound theological presence

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*Somewhat confusingly justification by grace through faith is about restoring relationships rather than making people just. Norman H. Snaith in "Just, Justify, Justification" in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, Ed. A. Richardson (London: SCM Press, 1950), says, "The verb *dikaioo* (justify) does not mean 'to make just', and indeed is not so much an ethical word as a word which belongs to the vocabulary of salvation. On man's *(sic)* part, the essential condition for justification is faith in Christ. This involves a complete trust in him. . . . On this condition every repentant sinner is brought by God into fellowship with him. This is the working of his grace, the undeserved favour with which God welcomes all who truly turn to him. . . . Justification is the first step in the process of salvation, that first reconciliation to God which is the beginning of a steady growth in grace and the knowledge of God (II Peter 3:18)." "Justification is that immediate getting-right with God which God himself accomplishes by his grace when a man has faith." *op cit.* p 119.

D. E. Jenkins, writing on "The Christian Counsellor" in *Living with Questions* (1969) says, "The aim of the Christian counsellor is to help people be themselves. . . . It is the practice of openness based on justification by faith". Kenneth Leech, to whom I owe the quotation, comments, "The counsellor knows that his *(sic)* own ability to be himself depends on God's acceptance of him. . . . He is then released to be an instrument of God's acceptance . . . to others. The Christian counsellor does not seek to dominate or dictate, but to be an enabler, enabling the individual to become open to the activity of the Spirit, and to become more truly human. Clearly there is a very close link between such a view of counselling and the traditional Christian ministry of the cure of souls". *Soul Friendship*: A Study of Spirituality (Sheldon Press, 1977, seventh impression 1985) p 99.

representing, as they do, their own belief and value systems and those of the people with whom they work which they bring into the consultancy process. These are important aspects of the theological content and nature of this form of consultancy.

Consultants too are a theological presence representing their own beliefs and value systems and inserting them into the consultancy process but in a subtly and significantly different way. Consultants and their beliefs are foils, catalysts, independent reference points, stimulants to double loop learning and reminders of essential subject matter of the Christian project. Their functions determine their status which is that of a servant to the process. Consultants must bring their beliefs and values into play alongside those of consultors whenever they can use them to perform the functions described. Their functions performed they are withdrawn into the background so that the focus remains on the consultors and their work. They do not perform their functions if they become a permanent, rather than a temporary, centre of attention and if they are seen to be *the* ideal theological/ideological model to be slavishly and unthinkingly adopted or copied. (My values and commitments are described in various parts of this book.)

When the consultor's and consultant's beliefs and values are being used in these ways consultations are experiences which can have many different effects upon consultors. They can affirm or re-activate their own beliefs and commitments. Or they can challenge them and those common to people in their work place or church. Or, again they can induct consultants and consultors into moral or spiritual aspects and dimensions of which they had not previously been aware. Over and again this has happened to me and I have seen it happen to consultors during their first experience of the non-directive approach to consultancy. Their excitement and joy is a precious memory. Invariably, they wanted to tell others about what had happened but were at a loss to know how to do so because, they said, "You have to experience it to understand and believe it".

3. Working Relationships

At the very heart of consultancy partnership relationships there is an alliance between consultors and consultants which enables them to concentrate all their resources upon aspects of the consultor's work in order that consultors may pursue *their* vocation more effectively and with deeper satisfaction. The effectiveness of these alliances depends upon the quality of the giving and receiving in consultancy relationships. Consultors have to share with consultants things which are very important to them and sometimes personal. To get the help they seek they have to talk of their successes and their failures, their strengths and their weaknesses. Opening themselves up to another person in this way is a profound and daring form of giving, requiring moral courage and involving considerable risk especially if the consultor is short on self-esteem and confidence. The way in which consultants receive what consultors give to them of themselves determines and affects the relationship and the efficacy of the consultancy processes. This has been worked out in considerable detail in this chapter. Consultants have to give themselves, their knowledge and their expertise to consultors freely and share their concerns in a disinterested and disciplined manner. They have to give all that they possibly can to help the consultor to live out their vocation in all its fulness. Their concern must

be about the success and well-being of the other and the Christian enterprise, not of themselves. This is no small undertaking even though profound self-giving is returned with interest to all parties. This kind of self-giving, quite different from the giving of advice and the sharing of know-how although they may be included, requires considerable spiritual resources as well as technical skills. Consultors, for their part, have to be receptive to the consultant's self-giving. That does not mean that they have to accept unquestioningly the content of what is offered: accepting the consultant is not to be confused with accepting everything s/he says. Complementary giving and receiving in non-directive consultancy is the relational catalyst to the dynamic of analysis and design. A process in which the participants make demands upon one another, challenge each other, support one another, cry *eureka* together and grow in grace as they do so. The cost can be high. Considerable human and spiritual resources are required. Consultors, for instance, can find it difficult to receive things of great value without feeling obligated or losing self-confidence and self-esteem. Consultants can find it difficult to contribute significantly, unreservedly and privately without public recognition to the outstanding success of someone in the same field. But those are the kind of things consultors and consultants have to do. Skills apart, they need the resources of the Christian gospel and the ministries of the Church to do them.

Effective consultations and personal development involves "finding a balance between making demands on other people, and recognising their demands on oneself", and between demands and support.[88] "The religious person", suggest Watts and Williams, "has something analagous to a role relationship with God. There is a common task (of the redemption of the world and of himself) on which the religious person is engaged with God, and his sense of himself will be based in part on his experience of this role relationship. . . . The vocational role relationship with God seems to conform to this general pattern of providing a balance between demands and supports. . . . God is experienced by the religious person as someone who understands him perfectly and supports him constantly, but also as someone who makes considerable demands on him".[89]

Thus, the efficacy of consultancy is directly related to the quality of the relationship which in turn depends upon the quality of the support, the giving and the receiving. Much is said elsewhere in this book about ways and means of forming these relationships, drawing boundaries around them and working within them. One of the many contributions that Christianity makes to the forming of these relationships is that it provides perfect models of the giving of self and the receiving of others. Critical features of this model can be seen clearly in the ways in which God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit give themselves and their resources freely and without condescension, pomp, fuss or ceremony. Each member of this Trinitarian God comes with great humility. They do not impose themselves: they allow us to ignore and exclude them, and we do. They come to engage with us, to confront and challenge, but they display great respect for all people and reverence for life. They come to accompany us, not to take us over. Omnipotent as they are, they depend upon human responses to their overtures to form loving and creative relationships. The incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus show the sacrificial self-giving measures they take to establish the divine-human relationships necessary to their purposes.

Almost unbelievably God gives himself to us and receives us and wants to be received by us and desires that we give ourselves to the interdependent relationships central to the Kingdom.

The very manner in which God comes to us and receives us in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, enables us to enter into the divine-human relationships so wonderfully on offer. God's unconditional acceptance through justification by faith is an archway into relationships real and rich because they take us into a vocational partnership with Christ in which we are taken seriously, affirmed, judged, refuted, challenged and commissioned. New perspectives on life and ultimate realities are revealed in the intimacy of the new relationship. Thus entering into and living within a relationship with God is an incredible learning experience about all aspects of our being and doing.

Through reflecting upon these experiences, relational models can be constructed which help us in forming relationships of any kind, including those required for consultancy. As we shall see in Part Two, in all our relationships there is a knock-on effect from those with God through Christ and the Holy Spirit because they are all interconnected systemically.

But, given the complexities of living and working creatively with all kinds of people, we need more than even the best exemplary models. All kinds of help are available from many sources, such as people in general, the ministry of Christians and the Church, the social and behavioural sciences. I believe that God's influence is experienced through all these aids to relationships. But, there is more. My conviction and experience is that the mediatorial ministry of Christ is a way in which God makes vital contributions to every aspect of our relating. Jesus Christ is, I believe, actively engaged in trying to improve all human relationships. Quite early in my ministry I got hold of the idea from the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer that Jesus Christ is *the Mediator* not only between people and God but between people and between them and their realities.[90]

This came as a revelation to me. It helped me to see that relating to people and the physical world in and through Christ lead to a quite different experience from that of doing so without recourse to his mediating ministry. Something very significant is added to the quality of my relational involvement, generally and in consultations, when I approach and see people and their context in and through Christ.[91] At best, the attitudes and actions of consultors and consultants work in concert with Christ's mediatorial activity. Undoubtedly we are facilitated by it. Christ, the Mediator, creates, a relational context in which we can operate. And, therefore, it may not be too presumptive to say that, in turn we can help to create a relational context for consultancy.

Whilst certain mediatorial and go-between functions are unique to Christ, they model the counterpart functions so central to helping consultors to relate ever more effectively to themselves, those with whom they work and their context.

Knowing that Jesus is involved as a mediator in consultancies and in all that happens to consultors subsequently is very important to me. It means that consultors and I are in a working partnership with God through Christ and the Holy Spirit, whether it is openly acknowledged or not. Being in such a partnership draws more out of me because, as Jesus does not normally take over, it certainly does not allow

me to relax. As this means that everything does not depend upon consultors and me, it helps me to cope with my anxiety. What I also value is the depth of Jesus' penetration. He always gets to the root of the matter and enables others to do so. The insights brought to the task through Jesus' teaching and spirit are quite incredible. They emerge in all kinds of ways not least in the reflective and meditative aspects of consultancy.

When we are examining the consultative process, the focus is upon the interaction between consultors and consultants. When we are studying the subject matter of consultations the focus is upon the consultor's relational involvement in his/her church, agency, community. There is however another important dimension of which I became much more aware through making an eight-day individually guided retreat at St Beuno's after an extended analysis of my work and vocation.[92] Once or twice each day the person appointed to be my guide or spiritual director, a Jesuit priest, visited me in my room for about half an hour. He listened most attentively to anything I wished to share. Generally, but not always, he commented on what he thought was the nature of my experience. But he did not discuss or analyse with me the substance of my experience. Then he gave me biblical texts or passages as subjects for prayer and meditation in relation to the things I had raised. Stage by stage he described to me the aspects of Ignatius' exercises to which he was directing me, he discussed with me methods of praying and from time to time gave me very useful handouts. Then, having dealt with my practical problems he left me to my prayer and meditation. Initially I was bemused by the method. Gradually I saw how it differed from anything I had previously experienced. My guide was, in fact, preparing and equipping me for a prayerful encounter, as he put it, with the Lord. At the heart of this prayer was a dialogue with Jesus, what Ignatius called a "colloquy". This is significantly and subtly different from work consultancy which is my metier. Consultants, as we have seen, work *with* people, albeit in the presence of God, in an intensive way on the things interesting and concerning them in order that they are better able to work at them on their own, with God and with others. My guide quite deliberately avoided becoming a spiritual consultant or counsellor to me, except on methods of prayer, and he told me so. His job was to get me considering things with the Lord, in the way I would with a soul friend, consultant or counsellor. It worked for me in an amazing way. My guide was, in fact, a facilitator of spiritual colloquy. I was continuously surprised at just how apposite the texts or passages proved to be although I was concerned that they were often used out of context. Following Ignatius, he concentrated on passages which described events such as Jesus washing the disciples' feet, rather than on parables.

This experience helped me to see that consultants must also help people to have colloquys. They certainly must avoid intruding into and trespassing upon personal dialogues with Jesus. This is an important dimension of the spirituality of consultancy. Consultations are carried out in the context of the personal relationships that consultors and consultants have with God. For many people it is these relationships, rather than beliefs, that are the quintessence of life and religion (cf Chapter 6:I, 2).[93]

An inescapable conclusion of this exploration of relationships is that the kind of consultancy we are considering is a form of ministry through which technical and pastoral services are offered holistically to consultors and through them to their constituencies. This throws further light upon consultancy as a pastoral office designed to provide assistance and support to those engaged in ministry and mission.

Relationships between consultors and consultants can run deep. Bonding occurs as they tackle vitally important tasks together at critical points in the consultor's life. Consultants can become so interested that they wish their involvement could be extended beyond the consultancy boundaries into the work place alongside consultors. The danger of interference is always present. Consultors can become dependent upon consultants and inclined to stray into a co-worker relationship. Such feelings can add to the difficulties of securing the freedom of consultors to be their own person in interdependent relationships discussed earlier. Placing high value upon the consultor's freedom in the way in which God does, is a powerful antidote to these difficulties. The stronger consultors and consultants believe this, the more likely they are to be committed to the action which helps consultors to be their own person. But there is an optimum strength to these beliefs: too weak and they all too easily become dependent; too fierce and they are unable to enter into the exciting but risky depths of consultancy relationships.

4. Consultancy Processes

This section offers a theological commentary on the nature of the consultancy processes already described in terms of procedures and interpersonal dynamics. Interestingly, observations on the theological nature of the processes fall naturally under basic Christian doctrines related to incarnation, redemption, revelation, resurrection, creation and the sacraments.

(a) Consultancy processes are incarnational. Consultancy processes are incarnational because they ensure that theology is done with particular practitioners within specific situations. They are about human and divine activities in particular places and their interpretation, meaning and implications. They are contemporary with events concerned with what is happening and with, when, how and why it is happening. Sequences of events, their causes and effect are explored through action-reflection/research procedures.[94] The processes are also incarnational because they help consultors to work out the implications of the gospel and their beliefs and their theological objectives and commitments in and through their vocational activity and the work and situation in which they are engaged. Then, as things proceed, consultants help consultors to reflect on what happens and to evaluate it theologically.

(b) Consultancy processes are salvatory. Consultancy processes are salvatory when, for instance, they assist consultors to remain true to their vocations and save them, as they frequently do, from creating unnecessary problems for themselves and for others and when they help them to see their ways through difficult situations. Such help may derive from technical expertise and/or spiritual and theological resources. However, valuable as this might be, additional help is required to enable us to cope with our inability to deal conclusively with the dilemma that no matter

how hard and well we work we cannot do everything perfectly nor can we finish the work which is endless. Dean Jacobson put it well:

> It is not thy duty to complete the task
> but neither art thou free to desist from it.[95]

Even when we finish our work, the sense of incompleteness remains. Work with people in church and community can be exciting, joyful, very rewarding and deeply satisfying. On the other hand it can be painful, hurtful, disillusioning and bitterly disappointing. In 1974 Dr T. R. Batten, towards the end of his long working life, wrote:

> As I look back over my years of research, study and field work, 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. What concerns me 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.[96]

Many of us share his feelings. David Deeks puts the case and a basic question: "All our work is distorted by sin and evil. So our work is hardly ever as satisfying as we expect it to be, nor as effective. And it is certainly not free of self-interest and self-aggrandisement. Where, in God's mercy, do we have access to the redemption of our work and our feelings about our work?" He answers his own question in the following way:

> The church is a provisional (and flawed) bearer and focus of what God is achieving and revealing, through divine love, in the nurturing of authentic human community. It exists in the contexts of many other, different and distinctive communities which God has also brought into being. The distinctive contribution of the church, related to all other human communities in a process of giving and receiving, is to guard, reflect upon and transmit:
> - the reality of ultimate dependence of all our human striving on the infinitely gracious, though absolutely incomprehensible, Mystery at the origin of all things;
> - the good news that what needs to be done for us has in fact been done for us in Christ's saving work, in order that we may be free to work with and for one another in the struggles for justice and peace, freedom and wholeness. When church and community development take place, the body of Christ is constituted. This is enabled by the gracious work of God which flows from the risen and ascended Saviour.
> - the conviction that in the face of evil and death and life's disappointments and tragedies, it is good and right to hope in God.[97]

Something that Peter Selby said in a remarkable lecture entitled, "Saved by Hope",[98] delivered in Belfast during the height of the Irish "Troubles" develops Deeks' final point. Selby's opening sentence was, "At the centre of Christian faith is a tradition of repeated intractable and radical disappointment".Then he says that it is

> the character of that tradition of disappointed hope, and hope in disappointment, which have made us as a church who we are and which permeate our beliefs, our

life together, our stories and our practice when we are true to our central purpose. To be the bearers of that tradition of hope purified by successive examples of tragic disappointment, is what the church has been saved for. . . .If we are saved through hope it is because what hope saves us from is the unintelligibility of our past and meaningless in the present.[99]

My experience is that, consultancy processes can help consultors to make salvific connections between their work and that of Christ. Selby talks about "the salvific link between what has happened, what has failed to happen and what we long to happen".[100] Such links make sense of radical disappointment, *i.e.*: "that which on the face of it is disproof of salvation".[101]

(c) Consultancy processes are revelatory. In a chapter in a fairly recent book on consultancy, W. Gordon Lawrence explores the following working hypothesis about the change in the mind set consultants bring to their work: *within the practice of consultancy there is occurring the beginnings of a paradigm shift from the politics of salvation to the politics of revelation.*[102] (Lawrence's italics.) This statement brought me up with a start. Reading it was a moment of disclosure even though at first I did not understand the use of the word "politics" in this context. It is, "the sense of 'influence' of one person or party over another". In a word and a moment I had a concept which interpreted some of the most precious and rewarding moments of my consultancy experience. They are those occasions when consultors and/or consultants have a disclosure experience. Insights and understandings suddenly emerge which illuminate a situation, crack open a problem, show the way forward. They are revelations. They do not supplant or contradict the salvific processes described in the previous section. Indeed revelation is often experienced as a saving event: not as being given solutions but as finding them; not as being saved but as discovering salvation; not as being told the way but as seeing and knowing it. Revelations of this kind seem to emerge from the totality of our experience through things coming and fitting together, sliding into place. There is generally something of a mystery about how it happens accompanied by a sense which is a form of knowing that, beyond the identifiable factors which led to a disclosure, there is an elusive dimension variously referred to as providence, the hand of God, the leading of the Spirit.

Revelations, or disclosures, occur in all kinds of circumstances and ways and at the most unexpected times and places. In my experience, there is no given sequence of thought or analytical procedures which step by step automatically and invariably lead to disclosures. They can come through hard thinking or through the "middle way of religious knowing" (cf Chapter 7:III, 5) or through expectation, openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who "leads us into all truth". Marion Milner, for instance, found that disclosures came through what she described as "wide attention", "an act of wide focus", by which she "could see the whole all at the same time".[103] When in this mode of attention she "simply stood and waited".[104] (Milner distinguished between wide and narrow attention. Narrow attention she saw as an automatic way of seeing things, "the kind of attention which my mind gave to everyday affairs when it was left to itself". The book from which these quotations are taken, *A Life of One's Own*,[105] is a remarkable account of the discovery, use and uses of wide attention.) But this is simply one of the countless approaches to

reflection and meditation which help to create dispositions, attitudes and frames of mind conducive to seeing things differently, in a new light and having unexpected insights.

(d) Consultancy processes are resurrectional. One of the claims that H. A. Williams makes in *True Resurrection* is that, "Resurrection occurs to us as we are, and its coming is generally quiet and unobtrusive and we may hardly be aware of its creative power".[106] One of the examples he gives to illustrate this claim is:

> An artist, at first only painfully aware of an utter emptiness and impotence, finds his imagination gradually stirred into life and discovers a vision which takes control of him and which he feels not only able but compelled to express. That is resurrection.[107]

Consultancy processes are resurrectional because repeatedly and regularly they induce experiences of this kind. Consultors come to life when they see ways forward in situations in which previously they simply did not know what to do or in which direction to turn: they are raised to a new lease of working life. There are, of course, dangers in using the word to describe such experiences which are of a different order from the unique event of *the* resurrection of Christ. But experiences of finding new vocational life, common in consultancies, is part of our resurrection in the here and now which is a trailer to our resurrection in the there and then beyond death.

(e) Consultancy processes are creational. Basically consultancy is about getting people to think and work out for themselves how they can make their best contributions to human and spiritual well-being and development. The processes of reflection, analysis and design are creative: they move inwards so that they are located deep in the creativity of consultors and outwards through them to be creative in the lives of people and their institutions in churches and communities.[108] At best the processes are infused by the creativity of Christ and are an integral part of the new creation.

(f) Consultancy processes are sacramental. Many people with whom I have shared co-consultancy group work sessions have said that the atmosphere and feel of the sessions has been reminiscent for them of acts of worship and especially of the eucharist. Some talked of them as experiences of the "sacrament of work" because they evoked feelings similar to those they experienced in the eucharist. Attempts to identify just what generated such feelings were never entirely satisfactory. Some attributed it to the privilege and intimacy of entering deeply into the vocational work of others, and doing so with great respect by treating it as holy ground, no matter how analytical or critical the consultancy process might be. Others attributed it to making and keeping contracts which they felt to be an extension of their covenant relationship with God and a particular application of their religious commitment. Yet others felt that the quality of acceptance was related to the processes of "justification by faith". Some felt that going down into the depths of human predicaments, struggling with conflicts and rising above them were sacramental paradigms of crucifixion and resurrection. All were agreed that the particular and precious spirituality was an outworking of the non-directive approach so much at the heart of these consultancy processes.

What significance can be attached to these experiences? Too many of us have had this experience for it to be dismissed as spiritual exaggeration or sentimentalism. The unfolding and representation through words and diagrams of essentials of the consultor's situational and vocational realities in consultancy sessions can be seen as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace". And that is a description of a sacrament, a sacramental presentation of work and vocation.

For a Christian, consultancy is a life-giving conversation of a reflective kind between people about what one or more of them believes God has called them to do, about their vocation. It is, therefore, an extension of a prayerful "conversation", a colloquy with, or a communication from God. It is a working out with consultors in specific terms what it means for them to be obedient to their call in concrete situations. As they engage with the consultor's vocation, consultants are entering into and following through their call from God, their conversation with Him or communication from Him. Outwardly, therefore, consultancy is a conversation about conversations with God. To be credible and effective it must be true to these human-divine encounters. Inwardly, for both consultors and consultants, it is a continuing vocational conversation with self and with God, an act of communion, as Brueggemann puts it, "A conversation of two well-spoken voices".[109]

One of the things that stands out from this section is the comprehensive theological nature of consultancy processes. Conceptually and pragmatically consultancy processes relate closely to the principal Christian doctrines. That alone gives consultancy a secure place in pastoral theology and missiological practice.

5. Theological Outcomes

Many of the desired outcomes of consultancies have already been described and others are discussed later. Here we concentrate on highly desirable theological outcomes. In the following quotation John Hull draws attention to the difficulty of bringing beliefs into focus and play.

> Alfred Schutz pointed out that people's ability to speak clearly about their ideas and feelings and beliefs decreases as these become more important, more central to the inner life. It is rather like the sense of sight. If a picture is too far away, you can't see the details, but if it is too close then, once again, the details are lost. There is an optimum distance for clarity of definition, and this seems to apply not only to our sight but to our beliefs as well. People find it more difficult to define the exact nature of their most intimate experience of being loved, or to know exactly what nationality really means to them, or to describe the characteristics of being the age they are, or to tell you exactly what the physical experience of walking is like. Things of this kind are so natural to us, so deep within us, so much part of our taken-for-granted sense of day by day reality that we never stop to reflect upon them, and find it extremely difficult to know quite what to say when asked. . . . Not only are the inward aspects of our deeper life and sense of identity not easily available for our descriptions, but we seem to be less curious about them. Because they are the unexamined verities of life, they do not attract our attention as being debatable. We are curious about the things we see; only in cases of eye disease or failure of sight do we become aware of the eye itself as the organ of vision.

The same is true of religious faith. It is remarkable how little curiosity people show about the religious faith not only of others but of their own tradition. . . .

This lack of curiosity about the things to which we are most profoundly committed seems to be defensive, in the sense that it would be painful and unsettling to question the things which are the source and ground for the rest of our life and its activities.

The basis of thought does not normally or easily become an object of thought. That which shapes our emotions is not in itself experienced as being one emotion among others. The ground of our being is not an aspect of our daily experience of becoming, an aspect concerning which we can take thought.[110]

"An optimum distance for clarity of definition", is a facilitative phrase; it points to a realistic objective. Such a distance is fixed by emotional, conceptual, spiritual and faith co-ordinates. Each of these can bring beliefs and experience into focus or blur them. What emerges from the previous section is that the consultancy processes converge naturally with the theological processes associated with revelation and redemption. This convergence brings into focus that which is discerned through the eye of faith with that seen through the eye of reason. Consultancy sessions help to focus the eye of reason through the analytical processes described earlier. They also help to focus the eye of faith with that of reason by stimulating and helping consultors and consultants:

- to develop those attributes in themselves by which they are
  - in touch with their own beliefs and able to examine them critically
  - able to understand and empathize with the beliefs of others
  - able to discuss beliefs with those with different beliefs
  - able to modify and change their beliefs as they see the need to do so
  - able, separately and together, to put their beliefs into practice;
- to use their beliefs habitually as primary reference points in analysing, designing, planning, programming, carrying out and evaluating their work and dealing creatively with positive and negative theological feedback;
- to deepen their understanding and experience of being co-workers with Jesus;
- to reflect theologically on their work and experience and to promote this practice among others;
- to enhance their ability, and that of others, to work for human and spiritual development with people whose beliefs differ significantly from theirs and to explore those differences with them.

Progress in these theological activities has far-reaching effects. Amongst other things it:

- helps individuals and groups to be theologically firm and flexible rather than theologically shapeless or rigid;
- enhances the quality of work and the satisfaction that people have in doing it with all that that can mean for worship;
- promotes theological growth and conversion(s) of individuals, churches, groups and communities and enables people to keep up theologically with their experience;

- introduces theology and biblical principles into social and community work in a natural and wholesome manner and makes explicit that which is intrinsic to it;
- enables individuals and collectives to communicate their beliefs more clearly and convincingly through the "body language" of action programmes;
- helps to infuse contemporary pluralism with new life and theological vigour through enabling people with different beliefs to work and dialogue more purposefully and with integrity to their convictions;
- makes clear that theology is as much about the way you work at and use your beliefs as it is about what you believe and why you believe it;
- encourages more people to "use" their beliefs in their work and to theologize about the outcome.

6. Qualities, Gifts and Graces Required of Consultants

Every aspect of consultancy goes back to the people involved in them and the human and moral, ideological and spiritual sources to which they refer and relate and upon which they draw. Broadly speaking consultants and consultors have overlapping complementary responsibilities. Consultants have to ensure that their beliefs and values are expressed in consultancy relationships and processes, seriously considered in relation to the subject matter and reflected in the product. But, as we have already seen, consultants may challenge consultors but they must not try to impose their beliefs and values upon them. To override consultors' beliefs and values in designing and planning can mean that the outcome is not owned nor ownable by consultors. For their part, consultors have to ensure that the consultancy processes are conducive to their beliefs and values and that they are properly respected. Whilst they need to be open to considering beliefs and values which differ from their own, they must ensure that analyses, designs and action plans are based upon their own beliefs, values, commitments and abilities. To do these things and to engage in patient, critical, collaborative theological reflection, consultors and consultants must respect each others' beliefs and values.

This section focuses on the qualities, gifts and graces required of consultants with some reference to knowledge and skills. (Readers could find it interesting to compare these characteristics with the attributes, knowledge and skills required of practitioners which are described in Chapter Seven.) In the first part, (a), they are listed summarily. The list is presented with some hesitation because it constitutes a counsel of perfection to which I assiduously aspire but continually fall short of some aspects more than others. Part (b) has notes on some of the things which help to acquire or develop the qualities in (a). Emphasizing that these qualities are required by consultants is not in any way intended to suggest either that they are their exclusive preserve or to compromise what has been said about the contributions consultors can and ideally should make to consultations. Undoubtedly, those who possess them will be more effective consultors and practitioners of church and community work. The emphasis stresses two things. First, the qualities are required of consultants in order that they may not necessarily be required of consultors. Consultants who have them or aspire to them, make consultancy accessible and safe to anyone regardless of their qualities or capacities. Second, consultants have

opportunities, and the responsibility to introduce consultors to these qualities experientially and to help those who wish to do so, to acquire and develop them.

(a)   Qualities Required of Consultants.[111] In this section eight primary qualities of consultants are identified and attributes associated with them are noted in summary form.

Consultants need a capacity for altruistic behaviour in relation to the Church and its workers. Amongst other things this involves them :

— being committed to resourcing the Church through its practitioners;

— having a disposition towards pursuing their vocation through those of others;

— having a genuine desire to help others to do their work and fulfil their vocation;

— in contributing all they can to the well-being, professional development and personal and spiritual growth of consultors and, through them all those with whom they work;

— having the ability to contribute generously, continuously and privately to the acclaimed success of others with minimal public recognition;

— having the ability to demonstrate commitment to and concern for others and provide developmental help in an acceptable manner;

— having the capacity to glory and rejoice in others and their achievements.

Consultants need a measure of intellectual ability and emotional and spiritual maturity. Amongst other things this involves them:

— being self-confident and humble and able to gain trust and respect;

— being genuinely interested in and curious about the views of others;

— having the ability to engage in deductive processes (from the general to the particular) and in inductive processes (from the particular to the general);

— being able to gather, select and evaluate facts and to synthesize and generalize;

— having a capacity for independent, imaginative, original and creative thought;

— having good judgement;

— having consistency and stability of belief and behaviour within the dynamic of their own development;

— being reliable, reasonable, responsible and courageous;

— being flexible and adaptable;

— being self-controlled, disciplined, calm, composed and poised;

— having the ability to withstand tensions and pressures, to live with frustrations, ambiguities and uncertainties and to think and act independently;

— being imperturbable and having sang-froid.

Consultants need to be able to understand people and work with them. Amongst other things this involves them:

— being available, approachable, accessible, courteous, well mannered and easy to get alongside and to get on with;

— having the ability to learn quickly from people, to conceptualise their situations and to present what they see in illuminating ways;

— having respect and tolerance for other people and their beliefs;

— having a facility for anticipating and evaluating human and spiritual reactions and responses;

— being trustworthy and just;

— having a facility for empathic relating.

Consultants need to be able to communicate, challenge, motivate and support. Amongst other things this involves them having the:

— ability to listen, "see" and to "hear" what is being communicated verbally and non-verbally;

— facility for oral, diagrammatic, written and non-verbal communication;

— aptitude for collaborative learning along with the ability to stimulate learning and to teach and to train;

— ability to get people to understand what has previously beaten them and to get them to consider that which they are prone to reject.

Consultants need energy and initiative and the ability to use it constructively. Amongst other things this means that they will:

— be mentally and spiritually vigorous in all modes of action including that which is non-directive;

— be ambitious for the human and spiritual well-being of all people;

— have a healthy degree of self-confidence informed and strengthened by knowledge and acceptance of their limitations;

— have physical, mental and spiritual health to sustain them and their work.

Consultants need to have human and spiritual integrity. Amongst other things this means they will:

— be honest and dependable;

— have courage, loyalty and perseverance;

— know themselves and their competencies and limitations;

— have the capacity to handle success and genuine appreciation without being conceited;

— be able to admit mistakes and to cope with and learn from failure;

— be ambitious for and committed to the Christian project and desire to make their best contribution to it;

— respect people and their confidences and their "no-go areas";

— be able to enter into the private lives of others courteously, respectfully and with a sense of privilege and awe;

— avoid voyeurism.

Consultants need theological understanding, ability and nous. Amongst other things this means they will:

— be able to explore their own beliefs and doubts openly, rigorously, critically, undefensively and constructively;

— have the facility to learn and to use the theological and ecclesial languages of their consultors;

— have the ability to help others to explore their beliefs and doubts openly, rigorously, critically, undefensively and constructively;

— have the ability to provide a pastoral context for critical practical, theoretical and theological enquiry;

— have the ability to keep their theological feet on the practical ground upon which consultors have to work.

Consultants need the capacity to love consultors and especially those who are significantly different and those who are tiresome and trying.

(b) Notes on Some Things Involved in the Development of the Qualities Required of Consultants:

On the need for energetic non-directivity. To be effective, non-directivity must be deeply rooted in the core of a consultant's being, beliefs and values. Commitment of this kind generates and releases the energy necessary to pursue this approach which, contrary to common belief, requires of non-directive consultants enormous amounts of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual resources.They have to be vigorous in order to be non-directive. This corrects common misunderstandings that people have to be vigorous to be directive and passive or laissez-faire or relaxed or laid-back to be non-directive. Thinking and deciding for yourself takes a lot of energy; helping others to think and decide for themselves can take even more. Again, this illustrates that beliefs and values are power generating agents at the heart of consultancy practice.

On the capacity to love. Consultants are most likely to be effective if they give themselves in love to the advancement of others, their work, their ministries, their vocations. It is natural to do this for people to whom we are attracted; it can be hard to do it for those we do not particularly like and especially those we envy. Necessary as it is, technical know-how cannot be substituted for love but professionalism can help to compensate for lack of love. To find and retain the love that they need for life in general and this work in particular, Christians will draw deeply upon the love they experience through living the Christian faith and through personal devotions, biblical and theological studies and through the ministry, worship and fellowship of the Church. What they will need and receive will vary enormously, as will the ways in which they get it.

One of the many things that prevent us from loving people is the tempting desire to "control" people.[112] God comes to us in ways that reject control mechanisms. Jesus demonstrates what this meant through his temptations.[113] As co-workers of Christ we are bound to follow his example. Subtle opportunities to control others occur, for instance, when consultors are finding consultants' contributions enormously helpful and when they have propensity to become dependent upon consultants. Reasoning

out what is for the good of consultors and consultants and what advances their purposes, may go some way to deal with the desire and temptation to control. But a more effective antidote is the challenge of the nature of love revealed supremely in Christ. The following quotations from W. H. Vanstone[114] about loving the other is pertinent:

When one who professes to love is wholly in control of the object of his *(sic)* love, then the falsity of love is exposed. Love is activity for the sake of an other: and where the object of love is wholly under the control of the one who loves, that object is no longer an other. It is a part or extension of the professed lover . . .[115]

Where the object of love is truly an *other* the activity of love is always precarious . . . [it] contains no assurance or certainty of completion: much may be expended and little achieved. The progress of love must always be by tentative and precarious steps: and each step that is taken, whether it "succeeds" or "fails", becomes the basis for the next, and equally precarious, step which must follow. Love proceeds by no assured programme. . . .[116]

The precariousness of love is experienced, subjectively, in the tense passivity of "waiting". For the completion of its endeavour as triumph or as tragedy, love must wait . . . It is important to see that that for which the lover. . . waits is not some gain or goal which might have been attained by different means, or as some "reward" for his devoted activity. The "reward" for which he waits is nothing less than the completion of his own activity - the response of receiving which is the completion of his activity of giving. For this the lover . . . must wait: and the necessity of waiting brings home to him the precariousness of his love's endeavour - its lack of final control over that situation which it has itself created. Where control is complete and exercised in complete assurance, the falsity of love is exposed.[117]

On the capacity to work privately without public recognition. Consultancy is a private affair. Consultants give themselves to the work and ministry of others. Their work is normally hidden and therefore unrecognised, they are back room workers. There are occasions when to mention that there has been a consultation is to breach confidentiality and to compromise consultors and consultants and their work. This means that consultants do not normally have the impetus, reinforcement, support and encouragement that would come from the public appreciation and recognition of their ministry and its value. All of which is generally enjoyed by their consultors. For the main part, they have to manage without it. This means that they have to rely heavily upon the private acknowledgement by consultors of the value of consultancies, upon their own assessment of the importance of what they are doing and upon seeing this work as their vocation, *i.e.:* what God would have them do. I find great joy and fulfilment in consultancy work although it can stretch me to the limits of my resources. Private recognition of value is all that consultants generally need to sustain them. From my experience, however, I know that there are times when genuine public recognition of one kind or another is craved for and when received is worth its weight in gold. But it must be genuine and freely given, it must not be sought. An unsolicited word of appreciation about a consultancy session, possibly years afterwards, gives the spiritual fillip to continue. Consultants, therefore, need the self-possession which enables them to draw upon the inner spiritual rewards for long periods and wait in patience for evidence of the efficacy

of sessions and, possibly, outer recognition. As consultancy is, therefore, an occupation sustained over long periods by inner personal gratification, private rewards and deferred satisfaction, consultants must have access to spiritual resources to meet their psycho-spiritual needs.

On the ability to work with tension.[118] There is a sense in which consultancy sessions are "tension workshops". They are used extensively to work at the positive and negative tensions which consultors are experiencing. Tensions, for instance, which are engendered by what is and what is desired and the problems that persistently keep them apart and tensions which exist between people with conflicting ambitions, personalities and theology.[119] It is tension that makes people act constructively and destructively and the reduction of tension through creativity that produces satisfaction.[120] Sessions provide opportunities for the free expression of tension and feelings about them in a safe environment. This means that consultants and consultors have shared experiences of working on some of the raw material of tension that takes them beyond a description of it. Of themselves such experiences can help consultors to handle it to better advantage in their situation.

Consultors bring to sessions tensions varying greatly in intensity and positive and negative potential. They may well be working conceptually and emotionally at some of these whilst being only partially aware of others. Sometimes consultors share what they feel about tensions they are experiencing. At other times the possibility or probability of there being tensions that need attention is apparent, but consultors do not refer to them and may be avoiding them. They could be only partially aware of them or unable to articulate them or apprehensive about what might emerge from opening them up for rigorous analysis. When this happens consultants have to judge whether or not they should attempt to get the tensions considered overtly. And, if they think they should, how should they do so? How forceful should they be? How much of the tension should they seek to bring to life in the session? How much tension can the particular consultors and consultants cope with? Although there are occasions when consultants have to make unilateral decisions, in response to these questions, generally speaking it is advisable to discuss whether consultors wish to identify and examine any tensions they are experiencing and, if so, do they feel able to do so. This opens up talks about talks through a general discussion about handling tension.

Such an approach is sensibly circumspect. It provides opportunities to do several things: to examine any limitations or fears that consultors and/or consultants might have about tackling the tensions; to consider any doubts either of them might have about their competence to do so; to search for ways in which they might consider the tensions and how they would deal with any difficulties that might arise; then, and then only, to decide whether or not they are going to expose themselves to an examination of the tensions. Sensitive and gradualistic approaches of this kind invariably pay dividends. At best working through these various stages, which need not be a long drawn out process, reduces consultancy process tension by legitimising and enforcing the consultor's power to control what is considered. In turn this conserves and frees more psychological and emotional energy for the work of exploring and of analysing the tensions the consultor is experiencing and the

ways in which s/he is experiencing them personally and privately, in the work place and in the dynamic of the consultation.

There is, of course, another possibility: the apparent lack of creative tension in the consultor's relationship with his/her ministry and work: the springs that give life to their vocation seem dead. Of itself, this can generate a depressing tension. The above considerations are applicable to this situation.

As the examination of tension is an important part of consultancy work, consultants and consultors need the psychological and spiritual resources and the technical skills to handle constructively, separately and together, its inner personal dynamic and its outward manifestation and implications. The technical skills have been discussed earlier. Many of the qualities required are those listed at the beginning of this section.

On the ability to do theology. Inescapably consultors and consultants engage in pastoral theology which David Deeks defines as *"an interdisciplinary study which, in order to understand pastoral actions, reflects on the relationships between pastoral work and the human sciences."*[121] So, consultants require abilities in the behavioural sciences *and* in academic and applied biblical studies and theology. They have to work with human, religious and spiritual subject matter, relationships and processes (cf sections 2, 3 and 4 above and Part Two). In one way or another, consultants engage in the following primary theological tasks.

- Consultants help consultors: to correlate the divine and human projects for human and spiritual well-being; to show how the one complements the other; to illuminate ways in which the human project is perfected in and through the divine project. Thus consultancy helps to meet the need:

> to relate faith to work;
> for an antidote to sin;
> to compensate for human incompetence;
> to sustain spiritual morale;
> to stir up the divine and human imperatives;
> to see church and community work in the context of the work of Christ.

Discharging these theological responsibilities involves considering three kinds of theology and the interaction between them:

> *public theology* which is what we say we believe, our public self;
> *head theology* which is what we believe we believe, our thinking self;
> *visceral theology* which is what we show we believe through
> our life-style, value system and commitments, our feeling self.[122]

Consultors and consultants bring these three theological selves to anything they do. Many of those to whom I have acted as consultant have found these concepts revealing but experienced some problems in trying to get in touch with their visceral theology, their "gut" beliefs, and that of the people in their situation. Doing so can reveal significant differences between public, head and visceral theologies. This can help to understand the nature of theological dissonance, confusion and conflict within and between people and sometimes to resolve it creatively. It can show, for instance, that the conflict results from exchanges in

which some people are drawing upon head theology whilst others are drawing upon visceral theology.

- Consultants must do all that they can to prepare, encourage and help consultors themselves to think through theological cycles - articulating beliefs, putting them into practice, reflecting on theological feedback, working out the implications for faith and action - and to offer moral and spiritual support to them as they do so.

- Consultants have responsibilities to help consultors to find appropriate ways and means of doing theology with the people with whom they are engaged.

- Consultants have a cluster of functions and responsibilities when there are differences in belief and theology between them and their consultors. They have to work to the consultor's theology without compromising their own theological stance and integrity. If consultants or consultors feel that they are compromising themselves or being compromised, they need to address the problem. The ways in which they do this could be an object lesson for both of them about the way to cope with those working relationships that would take them beyond the limits of theological pluralism that is acceptable to them.

- Consultants have responsibilities to help consultors to be open to the grace of God and the work of the Spirit, that is, to perform what are variously understood as pastoral, ministerial, prophetic and priestly functions. Doing this is a corollary to and not a substitute for helping consultors to be open to the use of analytical processes and the insights, approaches and methods of the social and behavioural sciences. When they are able to perform these functions human reason and divine revelation inform and complement each other.

- Consultants need to help consultors to work to reality by getting them to take seriously into account that human situations are alloys of grace, sin and evil.

Generally speaking, the ability to engage in this kind of theological activity as an integral part of work consultancy depends upon consultors and consultants being able to explore creatively the theological content of the consultor's experience. Academic theological and biblical knowledge are valuable and help to identify relevant theological issues and questions and also helps consultants to introduce relevant material. Important as the imparting of information and knowledge might be, it must not become a substitute for the basic aim, to get consultors to think theologically for themselves. Doing their own theological thinking in the ways already described, enables consultants, and through them, consultors to:

— get in touch with their own beliefs, examine them critically, and use them in analysing, designing planning, progamming, carrying out and evaluating their work and dealing creatively with positive and negative theological feedback and to help others to do the same;

— empathise with the beliefs of others;

— dialogue and work purposefully and creatively with those whose beliefs differ significantly from theirs and to reflect theologically on the outcome;

— live and work so that their relationships with God, themselves and others are all of a piece.

Doing these things calls for the range of personal, technical and social skills and pastoral and spiritual qualities already discussed.

7. An Inclusive Theological Model

A creation model is the theological concept which best serves me in relation to consultancy and church and community development work. A creation model, that is, within which there is continuous regeneration, re-creation, revelation and resurrection through the salvific work of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. A model in which all the processes are consumated at the end of time in the parousia. This model gives a theological framework for every aspect of this seventh element of practice theory.

8. Codes of Good Practice [123]

Throughout this book the ins and outs of good practice for consultors and consultants have been pursued in considerable detail. At this point it could be helpful to pinpoint those things which are key to effective consultancy practice. That is what is attempted here. It is intended as a focus and a reminder of the detailed discussion of consultancy practice theory, not a summary of it. Milan Kubr in an introduction to his formulation of ten commandments for management consultants says that they summarise in telegraphic form the critical points of which they need to be aware. [124]

A Code for Consultors. First of all, we look at what constitutes a code of good practice for consultors. [125]

- Learn about consulting and consultants.

- Be clear about your consultancy agenda, your objectives and critical features of your working situation.

- Choose your consultant carefully to match you and your criteria.

- Be clear about the nature of the consultancy contract and any cost that might be involved.

- Be an open active, egalitarian partner in control of your agenda.

- Safeguard areas of confidentiality and privacy.

- Ensure that anything that emerges fits you, your beliefs and morals and your situation.

- Monitor progress or lack of it.

- Evaluate results and your performance as a consultor and that of the consultant.

- Do not become dependent or feel under an obligation even when you are indebted.

- Do all you can to ensure that consultants in their dealings with you honour codes of good professional practice.

These points indicate what is involved in working with consultants and the qualities to which consultors should aspire. They are a basis for those starting in consultancy and from which consultors and their organizations could develop their

own code and policy. A profile of consultors derived from this list would show them to have a cluster of attributes: they would be their own person; they would be committed to self-development, self-determination, self-direction; they would have the self-confidence and self-assurance to receive help from others, from a position of strength or vulnerability, with dignity and without compromising their autonomy; they would be committed and able to work with other people collaboratively as equals in interdependent relationships; they would be humbly aware of their strengths; they would also be aware of their weaknesses and limitations by way of self-understanding and acceptance not self-denigration. In short good consultors are confident clients or customers seeking technical and pastoral help in a dignified and professional manner; they are not supplicants looking for help in relation to their failures. They are Christian workers inviting others to share as equals in their vocational enterprise. And that is an enormous privilege! Clearly, the degree to which consultors will have these desirable personal qualities will vary considerably. Possessing them is not a prerequisite of receiving consultancy help. On the contrary the more they lack them the more they need consultancy help of the kind described in this book because these qualities are amongst the highly valued products of consultancy services.

A Code for Consultants.[126] A code of good professional conduct for consultants in church and community work will include the following elements.

- Consultants will do all they can to help consultors to be effective consultors and to honour codes of good professional conduct.

- Consultants will seek to maintain standards consonant with the Christian faith and ethic: they will treat consultors with justice, courtesy and respect.

- Consultants will act in the interests of consultors and the nature and mission of the Christian Church.

- Consultants will behave in a self-disciplined and self-controlled manner.

- Consultants will maintain independence of thought and action, objectivity and their integrity within the intimacy of creative reflective engagement with consultors.

- Consultants will act only within the limits of their personal and professional competence and, as necessary, they will make those limits known to consultors: they will not, therefore, accept work for which they are not qualified or do not have the resources or which will involve them in a conflict of interests or working relationships; they will explore with consultors anything which limits their ability to help them or impairs their independence, objectivity or integrity.

- Consultants will not enter into any arrangements which will compromise their ability to honour their contract to consultors or which will detract from their impartiality.

- Consultants will agree with consultors in advance: those who are parties to the consultancy contract; the nature of the contract; the terms of remuneration; the acceptable use of consultancy supervisors and resource people.

- Consultants will establish with consultors areas of confidentiality and maintain them: they will *not* disclose, or permit to be disclosed, confidential information

concerning consultors; they will not use information gained through consultancies for any purposes or in any ways likely to have adverse effects upon consultors and their interests.

- Consultants will respect the privacy of consultors and their no-go areas; they will avoid inquisitiveness, idle curiosity, prurience and voyeurism.

- Consultants, by attending to the idiosyncrasies of consultors and the specifics of their situations, aim to establish ways forward which are realistic, practicable, clearly understood by consultors and within their capacities and resources: they do not deal in standardised, "off-the-peg", programmes and solutions.

- Consultants will establish with consultors how they will negotiate any changes in the objectives or scope of, or approach to the consultancy, deal with any difficulties that might arise and review or evaluate consultancy processes and programmes.

- Consultants will do all they can to preserve the freedom of consultors to be independent and interdependent, reflective, collaborative practitioners.

Consultants who follow this code give themselves wholeheartedly to the well-being of consultors in relation to the Christian project. They enter deeply into their vocational life and work whilst maintaining the independence and objectivity which enable them to pursue critical questions and issues with consultors. In the closest of consultancy relationships they remain their own person.

GETTING IT TOGETHER

Consultancy relationships and sessions work well when all seven elements interact harmoniously and are integrated systemically. In this extended chapter they have been taken apart in order to show how they work and relate to each other. The aim is to help consultors and consultants to understand the key elements of practice theory; to build up their facility in using them and bringing them together creatively; to research and develop their own practice theory. Effective practice involves bringing the elements together in holistic approaches, relationships and processes to fit consultants and consultors and their consultancy needs. Synthesizing the parts so that the joints are not apparent is both an art and science. Creativity evolves from using the approaches and methods and by building up systemic connections by habitually relating the part to the whole and the whole to the parts. These processes produce a seamless approach to consultancy which is effective, elegant and aesthetic.

Combined, these seven elements of practice theory generate the spirituality of consultancy. 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".[127] 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 Christian life and living, not to something vague, amorphous and "religious".

At the heart of the spirituality that characterizes work and vocational consultancy 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-judgementally and without patronage or condescension. The freedom to think, to think aloud and to think again is the air they breathe freely.

Such an 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.[128] 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 reflective, creative activity—people discovering and learning together and from each other how to do or to make something of importance to them and to their God. 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 chapter.

Notes and References: Chapter Two

1.   I have found an article by Philip Bryers very helpful , "The Development of Practice Theory in Community Work", *Community Development Journal* Volume 14 No.3, October 19979, pp 192-199. Following Roger Evans, in "Some Implications of an Integrated Model of Social Work for Theory and Practice", *British Journal of Social Work*, Volume 6 No.2, 1976, he distinguishes between *practice theory* based on experience and the *theory of practice* which is derived from a social scientific knowledge base. For Bryers practice theories are common sense or home-made theories, which practitioners carry in their heads and which are implicit in their day-to-day activities. Later he quotes an Association of Community Workers' paper *Knowledge and Skills for Community Work* (1975): "What we are arriving at here is the practical wisdom of experienced practioners who are used to dealing with people in a variety of situations, but a *practical wisdom which is sharpened by appropriate theory about human nature*." (p 16) This is nearer to what I mean in this chapter by practice theory. I have adopted some of the phraseology.

2.   Campbell, David (1995) *Learning Consultation: A Systemic Framework* (Karnak Books) p 72f.

3.   This phrase is not to be confused with "role-taking" which has a technical meaning in role theory. See the discussion on Element Four and reference 34.

4.   After only one consultancy session Rosemary Mellor saw that there was something quite distinctive about the roles of consultors and consultants but found it difficult to pin it down. The nearest she got was: "It isn't a doctor/or counsellor/patient model. It's people coming together to deal with, look at things". Earlier she said it was coming "together in equality". cf Lovell, George (1996) (ed) *Telling Experiences: Stories About A Transforming Way of Working With People* (Chester House Publications) pp 154 and 153.

5.   Argyle and Henderson suggest that relationships can be placed along dimensions such as:

intense - superficial
friendly - hostile
equal   - unequal
task   - social

Effective consultancy relationships tend towards the left of these spectrums. cf Argyle, Michael and Henderson, Monika (1985) *The Anatomy of Relationships and the Rules and Skills Needed to Manage Them Successfully* (Heinemann) p 5.

6.   cf *Association of Community Workers Talking Point* No. 122 April 1991.

7.   The situation was considered so serious in 1980 that The Methodist Publishing House at the direction of Conference sent to all ministers an offprint of a Conference Report, *Confidentiality in Pastoral Care*, urging them to keep confidences.

8.   Kubr , Milan (ed), (1996 Third revised edition) *Management Consulting: A Guide to the Profession* (International Labour Office, Geneva).

9.   Smail, David (1984) *Illusion and Reality: The Meaning of Anxiety* (J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd) p 141f.

10.   *The Observer*, 14th June 1970.

11.   *The Guardian*, 5th October, 1996.

12.   Leslie Griffiths said, for instance, of a consultancy experience, "Certainly nobody had listened to me for that long ever about my work" see Lovell, George (ed) (1995) *Telling Experiences* p 19.

13.   Simone Weil does this in *Waiting on God* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951). I was introduced to her thinking on "attention" by Watts, Fraser & Williams Mark (1988) *The Psychology of Religious Knowing* cf pp 62, 70, 71, 79 *et al.*

14.   Smail, David (1984) *op cit* p 135 quotes the first three terms, which he says are attributable to Carl Rogers.

15.   *Ibid* p 34.

16.   *Ibid* p 35.

17.   *Ibid* p 37.

18.   Watts, Fraser and Williams, Mark (1988) *The Psychology of Religious Knowing* pp 63f.

19.   *Ibid* p 63.

20.   cf Smail, David (1984) *op cit* p 59.

21.   An experience of this kind that I had is described briefly in *Telling Experiences* p 176 cf viii and ix.

22.   I first used and developed these ideas in my work at Parchmore Methodist Church, Youth and Community Centre. I describe just how I did it in my doctoral thesis, *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, 1973) and more briefly in *The Parchmore Partnership*, Malcolm Grundy (ed) (1995) Chester House Publications.

23.   Nolen, Barbara (ed) (1972/74) *Voices of Africa: Stories by Wole Soyinka Chinua Achebe and Other Famous Writers* (Fontana).

24.   The quotations are from notes by Gillian Stamp and a paper *Well-Being and Stress at Work* (September 1988) (Brunel Institute of Organisation and Social Studies). cf Nelson, John (ed) (1996)

Management and Ministry—appreciating contemporary issues (The CanterburyPress) pp 54-56. Also cf Jacques, Elliott (1976) *A General Theory of Bureaucracy* (Heinemann) pp 100ff and 123f.

25. I owe the phrase to Friedman, Edwin H. (1985) *Generation to Generation Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (The Guilford Press) pp 208ff.

26. Figure 8:1 in *Analysis and Design* p 195 gives a fuller picture of the private and public work domains and the relationships associated with them.

27. There is a helpful article on "Supervision, Pastoral" by John P. Millar in Cambell, Alastair V. (1978) *A Dictionary of Pastoral Care* (SPCK) p 272f. There are interesting notes about supervision and learning about consultancy in Campbell, David (1995) *Learning Consultation: A Systemic Framework* (Karnak Books) pp 18, 54, 55, 67, 88, 91.

28. Theories about the nature of the interaction which causes change in living systems are many. The work of Humberto R Maturana indicates the complexity of the processes. cf Maturana, Humberto R. and Varela, Francisco J. (1928/72) *Autopoiesis and Cognition : The Realization of the Living* (D. Reidel Publishing Company). They examine living systems as autopoietic machines which do not have inputs or outputs but which "can be perturbed by independent events and undergo structural changes which compensate these perturbations" p 81. See Morgan, Gareth (1986) *Images of Organizations* (Sage Publications) for a summary of Maturana and Varela's work under the title of "Autopoiesis: the logic of self-producing systems" (pp 235-240).

29. Bateson, Gregory (1972) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Ballantine Books, New York) says: " . . . we create the world that we perceive, not because there is no reality outside our heads . . . but because we select and edit the reality we see to conform to our beliefs about the sort of world we live in". p vii cf p 136 *et al.*

30. I got the idea after reading an article by The Rev Dr. Philip Meadows, "Virtual Insidership: Interreligious Dialogue and the limits of Understanding" in *Discernment : An Ecumenical Journal of Inter-Religious Encounter* Editor Clinton Bennet (Published by The Churches' Commission for Inter Faith Relations in association with The School of Theology, Westminster College, Oxford) New Series Vol 3:2, 1996 pp 29-41. In this article he uses the idea of a world-view to explore "virtual insidership". The influence of the article on my thinking is apparent at several places in this section.

31. Some of the phraseology I have used draws upon the definition of a world-view quoted by Philip Meadows from the *Dictionary of Philosophy*. Subsequently I have found James F. Hopewell (1988) *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (SCM Press) is very helpful on the nature, function and understanding of world-views in relation to Christian ministry.

32. Smail, David (1984) *Illusion and Reality* p 64.

33. *op cit* p 64.

34. Broadly speaking there are two approaches to role theory, those associated with symbolic interactionism and those associated with functionalism. The first sees role-taking as a form of role-making; the second sees roles as essentially prescribed. cf. Abercrombie, Nicholas, Hill, Stephen and Turner, S. Bryan (1984) *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* (Penguin Books) pp 180ff; Mitchell, G. Duncan (ed) (1968, 1970) *A Dictionary of Sociology* (Routlege & Kegan Paul) pp 148ff.

35. cf. Campbell, Alastair V. (ed) (1987) *A Dictionary of Pastoral Care* (New Library of Pastoral Care, SPCK) pp 241 for a note by Lawrence Reading on role play.

36. Meadows, Philip *op cit* see reference 27. I draw upon the terms and concepts he uses.

37. *op cit* p.33.

38. There is an interesting discussion in Meadows' article about a claim by Ross Reat that all the world's religions "share to some degree . . . the conviction that true understanding is tantamount to conversion". That is, in order to see the world like a Hindu, for example, one must actually become a Hindu. In the light of this, Reat considers the possibility and importance of becoming a "temporary convert". This is reminiscent of Paul's approach of "becoming all things to all people" cf 1 Corinthians 9:22 and p 138). Meadows feels, as I do, that it is possible to become sufficiently proficient in the language of another world-view without being committed to it. Similarly, consultants can become proficient in the consultor's work-view without being committed to his/her work-view. *op cit* cf pp31f. The differences are, as we shall see, the basis for creative dialogue and dialectic exchanges between people with significantally different world-views .

39. This diagram is modelled on the ones presented by Meadows in the article referred to in ref. 32 cf pp 33 and 34.

40. Batten, T. R. (1962) *Training for Community Development : A Critical Study of Method* (Oxford University Press) discusses the importance of getting "thinking participation" and the danger of equating it with talking participation.

41. Salvini, Mara Palazzoli *et al* "Hypothesizing—Circularity—Neutrality : Three Guidelines for the Conductor of the Session" an article in *Family Process*, March 1980 Vol.19 No.1.

42. Smail, David (1984) *op cit* p 68.

43. I have been involved in several consultancies where this has happened. One is reported in Lovell, George, and Widdicombe, Catherine (1978) *Churches and Communities: An Approach to Development in the Local Church* (Search Press) pp 115-123. The consultancy team put an enormous amount of time and energy into the project but nothing was achieved. No convincing explanation was given for the lack of progress nor for dogmatic claims that plans drawn up with great care with consultors and tested with them for acceptability, feasibility and practicability, proved in the event to be either unworkable or simple failed. Reasons, or more accurately, excuses, for their failure were always unconvincing. There was always something that they said we "did not understand". Try as we might, a sense of dealing with understandable realities evaded us.

44. Whitehead, A. N. (1932, sixth impression 1962) *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (London, Ernest Benn Limited) pp 153 and 154.

45. Morgan, Gareth (1986) *Images of Organizations* p 321.

46. *op cit* p 322.

47. *op cit* pp 329, see also p 328. Morgan gives an example of diagnostic reading, "The Multicom Case", pp 322-331.

48. Lovell, George (1994) *Analysis and Design* (Burns & Oates) pp 188f and 78, 91 and 191.

49. This model is slightly adapted from one presented by A. W. Ghent in "The Logic of Experimental Design", *Bioscience*, 16:17-22, 1966 as quoted by Bill McKelvey in *Organizational Systematics: Taxonomy, Evolution and Classification* (University of California Press 1982) p 19.

50. cf. *Analysis and Design* Chapter 7, Basic Equipment pp 175-191 and other references in the index.

51. These facilitating structures are illustrated and discussed in detail in Part One of *Analysis and Design*, pp 29-106; the schema and its stages in Chapter 5; designing in Chapter 6. Examples and case studies have been produced by the Battens. *The Human Factor in Community Work* contains cases set overseas but they are pertinent to work with people in any country. See also: *Training for Community Development* pp 39-40 and 113-120; *The Non-Directive Approach in Group and Community Work* (London, OUP, 1968), pp 96-100; *The Human Factor in Youth Work*, (London,OUP, 1979), is relevant to work with other age groups. In one way or another these cases are highly relevant to the work of the ministry. Further, the classification of the cases and the conclusions the Battens draw are relevant to anyone working with people. Unfortunately the first three of these books are out of print but they can generally be obtained from libraries.

52. Caplan, Gerald and Killilea, Marie (eds) (1976) *Support Systems and Mutual Help: Multidisciplinary Exploration* (Grune and Stratton) p 268.

53. Koestler, Arthur (1964) *The Act of Creation* (Hutchinson of London) Chapter VII.

54. *MARC Europe Survey of Avec Training and Consultancy Services: Notes and Presentation and Discussion of the Report* January 1991 p 2. see *Avec: Agency and Approach* p 158.

55. There is a fuller description of records and record making in *Analysis and Design* pp 178ff and in Widdicombe, Catherine, (2000) *Meetings That Work* (The Lutterworth Press) see indexed references to records, note-taker, journalling and Progoff.

56. Koestler, Arthur (1964) *The Act of Creation* contains a chapter entitled, "Thinking Aside : Limits of Logic". He quotes Souriau's famous phrase "to invent you must think aside". p 145.

57. cf *Analysis and Design* pp 183f and 190f. I developed the ideas in *Diagrammatic Modelling: An aid to theological reflection in church and community development work*,(An Avec Publication, 1980) Dr Hans-Ruedi Weber gives an extremely helpful description of the respective functions of the left or right hemispheres of the brain in an article entitled "Thinking Images". cf an article by Margaret Dewey in the series *Thinking Mission*, No. 39 (Summer 1983) issued by the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The article first appeared in the July 1982 *Ecumenical Review* under the title "Interpreting Biblical Images". For further discussion of this phenomena see *The Intelligent Eye* by R. L. Gregory (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979); *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain: How to unlock your hidden artistic talent* by Betty Edwards (London, Fontana/Collins, 1979); *The Right Brain: A new understanding of the unconscious mind and its creative powers* by Thomas R Blakeslee (London: Macmillan Press, 1980); *Writing the Natural Way* by Gabriele Lusser Rico (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher) 1983.

58. cf *Analysis and Design* pp 179-184.

59. This was submitted as a pictorial summary of a position paper to a small group on work consultancy in 1979 by the Revd. William C. Denning who is now the Director of Creative Art Network which promotes theological reflection through all forms of artistic activities.

60. cf *Analysis and Design* pp 180f.

61. Caplan, Gerald & Killilea, Marie (eds) (1976) *Support Systems and Mutual Help: Multidisciplinary Exploration* (Grune and Stratton) p 267.

62. cf Bandler, Richard and Grinder, John (1979) (Edited by Andreas, Steve, formerly John O. Stevens) *Frogs into Princes : Neuro Linguistic Programming* (Real People Press) pp 25-27 and Lewis, Byron A. and Pucelik, R. Frank (1982) *Magic Demystified: A Pragmatic Guide to Communication and Change* (Metamorphous Press) pp 121-122.

63. I got the idea for some of these distinctions from Argyle, Michael, (1967) *The Psychology of Interpersonal Behaviour* (Penguin Books). In a section entitled "Social Techniques and Social Interaction" he suggests that, "Synchronization" is necessarily along a number of different dimensions for smooth and motivationally satisfying interaction to take place: 1. Amount of speech . . . 2. The speed or tempo of interaction . . . 3. Dominance . . . 4. Intimacy . . . 5. Co-operation and competition . . . 6. Emotional tone . . . 7. Task, topic and procedure. cf pp 51-54.

64. Lovell, George, (1996) *Telling Experiences* pp 40-41.

65. Brian Woodcock tells how many years of ministry were marred because he did not assimilate new methods before practising them. See Lovell, George (ed) (1996) *Telling Experiences* pp 163f and 177.

66. Young, Michael (1988) *The Metronomic Society: Natural Rhythms and Human Timetables* (Thames and Hudson, ISBN 0-500-01443-4).

67. Various ways of defining the phases /stages are used. Lippitt, Gordon and Lippitt, Ronald (1986, 2nd edition) *The Consulting Process in Action* (University Associates Inc) offers the following: 1. engaging in initial contact and entry; 2. formulating a contract and establishing a helping relationship; 3. identifying problems through diagnostic analysis; 4. setting goals and planning for action; 5. taking action and cycling feedback; and 6. completing the contract (continuity, support and termination) p 11. Kubr, Milan (1976, third edition 1996) *Management Consultancy* uses the following classification: entry; diagnosis; action planning; implementation; termination. (cf Part II pp 141-247).

68. Harding, Rev C. G. (undated) *The Problem of Stress* (A booklet published by The Relaxation Society, Churches' Council for Healing and Health) p 10.

69. Stamp, Gillian (1988) *Well-Being and Stress at Work* (Brunel Institute of Organisation and Social Studies) pp 3ff—following McGrath (1970), Csikszentmihalyi (1975), Bailey (1988), Handy (1988) and Bonn (1988)—says that a person feels stressed "when what there is to do either out-strips or fails to challenge what the person feels s/he is capable of doing". The graphs in this paper are very telling. A band of well-being, flow and effectiveness set at 45 degrees is the central feature. The triangle above represents the situation in which there is too much to do. The stress here is marked by anxiety, worry, perplexity, indecisiveness, hasty or inappropriate decisions. The triangle below represents the situation in which there is too little to do. The stress here is marked by frustration, boredom, anxiety, vacillation, automatic solutions, lack of serious thought.

70. It is informative to compare the graphs used by Gillian Stamp with Yerkes-Dodson Law represented by a hump backed graph produced by plotting performance against arousal (stimulation and effort). Once past the optimum working level increasingly more effort produces less performance output. Energy is not renewed as readily and those working at this level progressively experience fatigue, exhaustion, ill health, break-down and burn-out. This has been used by Consultant Cardiologist Peter Nixon at Charing Cross Hospital. cf Horsman, Sarah (1987) *Living with Stress: Understanding and Managing Stress—A Guide For Christian Ministers* (Project Paper, produced privately).

71. Some of the questions in this and the next section were suggested to me by a paper by Dr Paul Tosey, "Consultancies as "Working with the Energy' in Organizations: A Report on Research in Progress" Published in *What Makes Consultancy Work—Understanding the dynamics:International Consultancy Conference* 1994 Edited by Roger Casemore *et al* (South Bank University Press 1994) pp 394-405.

72. cf Lovell, George (1996) (ed) *Telling Experiences* p 45.

73. There is much useful information about contracting in Kubr, Milan (see Ref. 70) and other standard texts on consultancy, see the bibliography.

74. Edgar H Schein (1988) *Process Consultation Volume I: Its Role in Organisational Development* says:

> There are two aspects to the contract : (1) the formal decision as to how much time will be devoted to the consultation, what general services will be performed, and the form and amount of payment that will be used; and (2) the informal "psychological contract" that involves the client's implicit (and sometimes explicit) expectations of what he will gain from the relationship as well as what he will give to the relationship, what obligations he takes on, and what he expects to gain from it. It is important for both client and consultant to explore as many aspects of the contract as possible provided there is mutual understanding of what is meant. Sometimes this requires delaying the discussion until the client has experienced PC (Process Consultation). (p 126).

It was from this that I got the idea of thinking about aspects of contracts but the classification is my own. I use psychological contract in a different way from Schein.

75. cf Kubr, Milan *Management Consulting* Chapter 26 cf Chapter 23. Lovell, George (1996) *Avec: Agency and Approach* is a case study of the things which made and marred a small ecumenical agency that actually provided training and consultancy services from 1976-1994 for thousands of people from seven denominations working at all levels in Britain, Ireland, Africa and some fifteen other countries. It covers the period 1976-1991. The aim was for the agency to be self-supporting from fees received. In the event it was possible to raise only 60% of the costs through fees. Details are given about the financing of this agency and raising money through fees cf. pp 73ff and 101ff.

76. Avec Trustees and Staff had to do this see previous reference.

77. Lovell, George and Widdicombe, Catherine (1978 Reprinted 1986) *Churches and Communities op cit* p 209.

78. For case studies of the difficulties which can arise and possible ways of dealing with them see: Palazzoli, Mara Selvini; Anolli, Luigi; Di Blasio, Paola; Giossi, Lucia; Pisano, Innocenzo; Ricci, Carlos; Sacchi, Marica; Ugazio, Valeria (1986) *The Hidden Games of Organizations* Pantheon Books, (New York) particularly the four cases in Part One pp 1-109. Also Bradford, Leland P. (1980) *Making Meetings Work: A Guide for Leaders and Group Members* (University Associates) particularly Chapter 9 pp 66-76.

79. cf Schein, Edgar H. (1988) *op cit* (see reference 70) p 127.

80. cf Palazzoli, Mara Selvini (1984) "Behind the scenes of the organization: some guide lines for the expert in human relations" *Journal of Family Therapy* 6: 299-307 see pp 303ff. cf also Palazzoli, Mara Selvini *et al* (1980) *op cit* has an excellent chapter on "Denied Coalitions", pp 149-155.

81. cf Palazzoli, Mara Selvini (1986) pp 149ff and 154f.

82. In this list I have drawn upon a chapter entitled "The Contracting Process" by Brian McEvoy in Casemore, Roger, Dyos Gail, Eden Angela, Kellner, Kamil, McAuley, John, Moss Stephen (eds) (1994) *What Makes Consultancy Work: Understanding the Dynamics: International Consulting Conference, 1994* (South Bank University Press) pp100-109. His list of "Contracting Guidelines" draws upon the work of Clare and Mike Reikev and he refers to Block, Peter (1981) *Flawless Consulting and a Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used* (Learning Concepts, Distributed by University Associates Inc.).

83. In this paragraph I have drawn on an unpublished paper: Russell, W. Peter and Lovell, George (1988) *Furlough Work Study* p 18. This paper is a description and examination of the work consultancy processes used on courses for missionaries on furlough, which were run by Avec in collaboration with the Methodist Church Overseas Division from 1976 to 1993.

84. Hull, John (1985) *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?* (SCM Press) p 64.

85. *op cit* p 67.

86. *op cit* p 66.

87. I cannot locate the quotation but cf *op cit* p 75f.

88. Watts, Fraser and Williams, Mark (1988) *The Psychology of Religious Knowing* (Cambridge University Press) p 104.

89. *op cit* p 104f.

90. cf Bonhoeffer, Dietrich (1937) *The Cost of Discipleship* (SCM, Abridged translation first published October 1948, reprinted August 1956) Chapter 4 and particularly pp 79f. Whilst Bonhoeffer's mediatorial concept has helped me enormously over many years, I have some difficulty with what he said about: Jesus "standing between us and God . . . and all other men *(sic)*" with the consequence that we have no "direct relation to the world" or loved ones or neighbours. He says "our relation to the world has been built on an illusion". My responses are severalfold. Part of me reacts against them. I feel that I am in a direct relation with people and the world and I want to be. Bonhoeffer says that that is an indication of opposition to Christ. Then again I know I relate better when I do so through Christ but I do not always do so. That is an indication that my discipleship is wanting. Part of me feels I am missing something of what Bonhoeffer sees to be the all inclusive nature of Christ's mediation and the consistency and permanence of its operation.

91. Later I was helped to see more clearly that the Holy Spirit too has a mediatorial role in effecting the Christian mission through a book by John V. Taylor, (1972) *The Go-Between God, The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission* (SCM Press).

92. I described this retreat in an article in the *Epworth Review* (Vol. 21:3 September 1994) entitled "An Experience of the Ignatian Exercises".

93. cf *Analysis and Design* pp 234ff.

94. cf any standard text book on research methods and *Analysis and Design* pp 219, 226, 287f, 288-90.

95. Jacobson, Dean (1966) *The Beginners* (Penguin) p 6 a quotation from *The Ethics of the Fathers*.

96. Batten, T. R. "The Major Issues and Future Direction of Community Development" in the *Community Development Journal* (Vol. 9/2, April 1974) p 96.

97. From a letter I received from The Revd David Deeks about the theology of work consultancy, 10 July 1992.

98. From the typescript of a lecture given by The Rt Revd Professor Peter Selby to a Conference in Belfast on 10 April 1986 entitled *Saved Through Hope* cf pp 1 and 2.

99. *op cit* p 2.

100. *op cit* p 4 Hasler, Joe (1992) *Becoming Human Together: Theology in the Planning of Community Development* (Diocese of Bristol, Association of Priority Area Parishes 1987-1992) does make some connections by reflecting on the theology of hope, liberation and process in relation to community development.

101. Selby *op cit* p 17.

102. This quotation comes from an article entitled "The Politics of Salvation and Revelation in the Practice of Consultancy" in Casemore, Roger *et al* (1994) *What Makes Consultancy Work— Understanding the Dynamics* p 87.

103. Field, Joanna (Marion Milner) (1934, 1986) *A Life of One's Own* (Virago) p 108.

104. *Ibid* p 107.

105. *op cit* cf Chapter VII and particularly 105ff.

106. Williams, H. A. (1972) *True Resurrection* (Mitchell Beazley, London) p 10.

107. *Ibid* p 10.

108. Eric Fromm differentiates between non-alienated activity which gives life to persons and things and alienated activity which is done at a dysfunctional distance from the creative centres of human beings. cf *To Have or To Be* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978) pp 90ff.

109. This imagery came to me after reading Brueggemann, Walter (1980) *Finally Comes The Poet: Daring Speech for Proclamation* (Fortress Press Minneapolis) and especially a section headed, "A Conversation of two Well-Spoken Voices" pp 74ff.

110. Hull, John (1985) *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?* pp 54f.

111. In this section I have drawn heavily upon Kubr, Milan (1976 third edition 1996) *Management Consulting* Chapter 32 pp 665ff and especially upon Box 32:1 on p 669.

112. There is a most helpful chapter on control by John Habgood entitled "Church and Risk (1)" in Holloway, Richard (1990) *The Divine Risk* Darton, Longman and Todd, London) pp 24ff. See also *Analysis and Design*, pp 253-259.

113. cf Matthew 4: 1-10; Luke 4:1-13.

114. Vanstone, W. H. (1977) *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense* (Darton, Longman and Todd). I was well acquainted with this book but I had not made this application until I read a paper on the *Theology of Community Work: Some Notes* by The Revd Dr Michael Bayley (April 1990). I am indebted to him for this reference.

115. *op cit* p 45.

116. *op cit* p 46.

117. *op cit* pp 49f.

118. cf Williams, H. A. (1976) *Tensions : Necessary Conflicts in Life and Love* (Mitchell, Beazley, London).

119. The relationship between theology and personality was explored in an interesting series of articles in the *Epworth Review* from 1981 to 1984 by: George. A. Raymond (Vol 8/1), Lake, Frank (Vol 8/1), Rowland, Christopher (Vol 8/2), Kent, John (Vol 8/3), English, Donald (Vol 9/1), Rack, Henry (Vol 9/3), Wood, A. Skevington (Vol 10/1), Hepburn, Ronald (Vol 10/2), Longley, Clifford (Vol 11/1), Dillistone, F. W. (Vol 11/2).

120. Batten, T. R. (1957) *Communities and Their Development* (Oxford University Press, fifth impression 1965) has a remarkable section in his final chapter on two of a community development worker's functions: to increase tension and to reduce it with satisfaction. He underlines the importance of doing the former only when it is possible to do the latter! cf pp 228ff.

121. cf Deeks, David (1986) "Some Recent Work on Pastoral Theology" *Epworth Review* p 88. He notes later that "pastoral care is now seen to involve participation in our understanding of at least the following corporate dimensions of our existence: human groups of all sizes; professions and institutions; politics and social work". He also quotes the introduction of the SPCK "New Library of Pastoral Care" edited by D Blows: "Today it is perhaps the secular helping professions of social work, counselling and psychotherapy and community development which have particular contributions to make to the pastor in his work" (p 90). Deeks sees church and community development to be one of the dimensions of pastoral theology.

122. Rahtjen, Bruce D, with Kramer, Bryce and Mitchell, Ken (1977) *A Workbook in Experiential Theology* (A Publication of Associates in Experiential Theology inc.).

123. Again I have drawn in this section on Milan Kubr (cf ref 109) cf Appendices 1 (pp 721-727) and 3 (pp 735-743).

124. *Ibid* p 721.

125. I have adapted Kubr's list cf pp 721ff.

126. Again I have culled points from Kubr, recast them and added my own.

127.   Wakefield, Gordon S. (ed) *A Dictionary of Spirituality* (London: SCM Press third impression, 1986). Article on spirituality p 361. This approach is modelled in *Analysis and Design* pp 278ff.

128. I am drawing here on an article by Professor Nancy C. Ring entitled "Feminine Spirituality" in Wakefield's *A Dictionary of Spirituality*.