

CHAPTER SEVEN

Attributes of Workers

Our attention now focuses on three kinds of interrelated attributes which enable practitioners to do the work described in the previous chapter. The first is the personal characteristics of workers and has to do with their being and behaviour. The second is the body of knowledge they require and has to do with knowing and understanding. The third kind is the technical and human relations skills required and has to do with doing and making. Combined these attributes integrate what practitioners need *to be* with what they need *to know* and what they need to be able *to do*.

An example chosen at random illustrates the distinctions. Being a vocational team player by conviction and commitment rather than a solo worker or prima donna is what I am referring to as a *personal attribute*. Understanding the theology and practice theory of teamwork in religious organizations and secular communities is an aspect of the *body of knowledge*. The ability to work with people interdependently is one of a cluster of *abilities and skills* required of a team player. Properly equipped practitioners are endowed with apposite personal characteristics, the relevant knowledge and appropriate abilities and skills.

Attributes of all three kinds are required. They complement each other but, whilst the strength of one might compensate for the weakness of another, they must not be treated as substitutes. The commitment to be a team player, to continue the illustration, essential as it is, does not of itself equip a practitioner to be one. Lack of knowledge and skills prevent the full expression of any personal characteristics. On the other hand, attempts to act as a team player without personal commitment to the concept will lack conviction and credibility no matter how much knowledge and skill practitioners might have. At any level of competence it is essential that there is unitive interplay between personal characteristics, knowledge and skills. They are complexly and inextricably tied up with each other in the practitioner's being, reflecting and doing. Each of them is a sub-system, intricately connected to the others and to the whole human system in which they have their existence. Assimilated and made a personal fit, they make for the development of work and practitioners.

Nevertheless, the attributes can be expressed and experienced separately. Sometimes it might be one or other of the practitioner's personal attributes, at another aspects of his/her knowledge or skills. At times appropriately and at other times inappropriately. When they are assimilated and correlated, all attributes are present and active in one way or another in a natural unity, even though one is in the forefront. Each aspect is experienced, known and reinforced through the others: they are all of a piece in genuine encounters. Attitudes, the way in which things are done and the explanations are all expressions of the personal characteristics which they

embody; there is three way traffic through the interconnecting routes between them. Some of this I have attempted to portray diagrammatically in Figure 7:1.

Using this broad threefold classification I describe the things I believe equip people to be church and community work practitioners Much can be learnt by examining the attributes separately provided that that does not lead to them being treated as separate entities or simplistically connected in a mechanical or linear manner.

These attributes can develop and change, for better or worse, through various external and internal stimuli. Identifying and examining them, as we have done here, contributes to the knowledge about them and the practice theory associated with them. That could enhance practitioner's skills. It could also help people to decide what action they wish to take, to acquire or develop their attributes—or it might lead them to compile their own list of desirable attributes.

I have concentrated on attributes required to engage creatively with people and the nature of the work. Abilities, gifts and skills associated with important functions such as liturgy, preaching and Christian education and accountancy are beyond the range of this study and in any case there is a vast amount of literature on them. The kind of consultancy in which I am normally involved is about their place in the scheme of things and the work with people involved in promoting and organizing them rather than the technicalities of doing them.

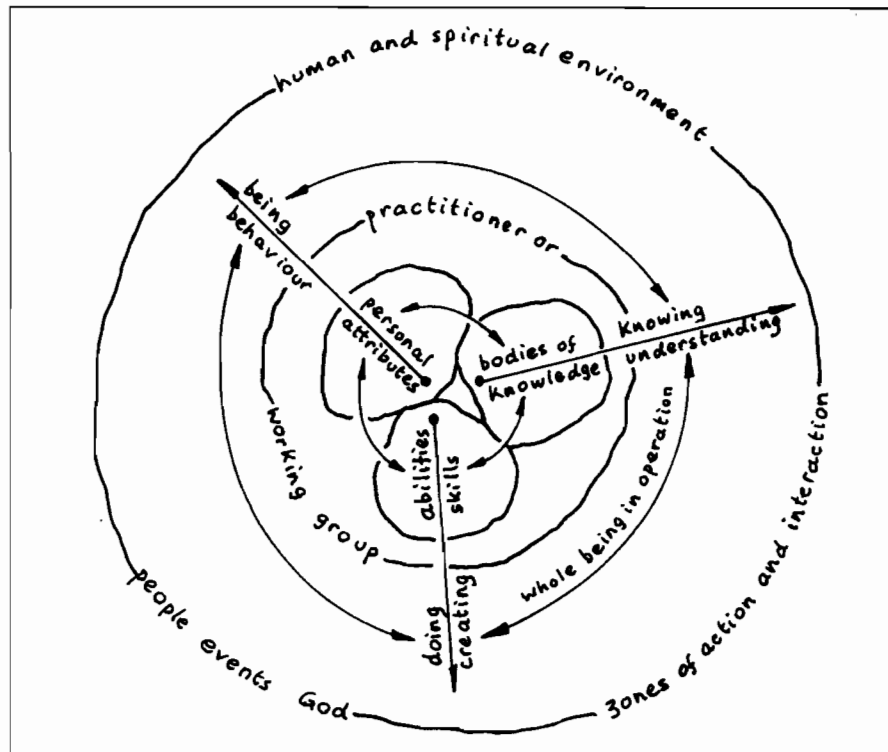


Figure 7:1 Personal Attributes, Bodies of Knowledge and Skills Operating Separately and Together

I PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES: What Practitioners Need To Be

The ideal nature of the work is downloaded into the actualities of church and community work through practitioners willingly accepting and embracing its human and spiritual characteristics, allowing them to be embodied in their being and their work-views and by working at the actual in relation to the ideal. When this happens the nature of the work is a reality in practitioners, in what they do and how they do it and, therefore, in the work done and what is created through it.

An attempt is now made to define personal characteristics which play such a vital part in bringing theory and theology to life in the workplace. They correlate with those of the nature of the work which have been described fully in the previous chapter. Attributes are so closely connected with skills that in some instances the description of the one runs into that of the other. Ideally practitioners are:

- in love with their work
- workforce persons
- team players and leader-enablers
- reflective workforce members
- committed to widely based developmental, collaborative participation
- instruments and subjects of human and spiritual development
- situationally committed and contextually engaged
- personally, professionally and spiritually disciplined disciples.

1. Practitioners are in Love with their Work

Ideally practitioners need to be in love with the nature of the work, to believe in it passionately and to have an affinity with it. For them it is an affair of the soul. They need to love God and people and to be able to relate to and engage with both. They need to be committed to the pursuit and evolution of their own vocation and to those of others. These are missiological, vocational and existential features of the work as set out in the previous chapter. They need to engage vigorously with its theological, theoretical and practical implications. They need to be committed to, relate to and to work with and for God, people generally and workers in allied disciplines. These positive psycho-spiritual relationships and their affective, intellectual and faith content are at the top end of a spectrum of characteristics which shades off until it enters the negatives of these positives. They have a dynamic which generates and develops personal characteristics. For those who have them the work becomes a spiritual and professional way of life.

When these attributes are present in individuals and groups they make unique contributions to the quality of the work. In almost any context and company attributes of this kind make them infectious workers. They bring the work to life because it has brought them to life and this shows in all they are and do. They spark off interest, enthusiasm, anticipation and hope. Other people get caught up in the work and fall in love with the theory and practice of it. All kinds of things happen because, through being endowed with these attributes, key aspects of the nature of the work are embodied in the very soul of practitioners—not only in their minds or in how they do things. This gives added meaning, significance, value and status to

anything they do or say. It makes them creative in ways in which knowledge and skills alone could never make them. Such attributes are the heart of the body of knowledge and the corpus of skills. This does not mean that the attributes always operate at a high level of performance. They do not. Performance is influenced by such things as mood, interpersonal relationships, circumstances and energy levels. In this they are not dissimilar to any other human or spiritual attribute.

People acquire these kinds of characteristics in many different ways. Some people seem naturally endowed with one or other of them. They can come through moments of disclosure or evaluated human and spiritual experience, study or training practice through taking on challenges or through experiencing them in other people, events, experiences, study and research, conversation and many other and often unpredictable ways. They can be formed by becoming committed to ideas and by using or experiencing the methods associated with them. But, as they are more and other than learned behaviour, they have to become consistent and integral parts of the essential character and being of practitioners.

2. Practitioners are Workforce Persons

This is one of the personal attributes formed by the perspective practitioners have of a collaborative workforce and their part in it. As Church workers have to use all their faculties they require many skills. That, an unavoidable conclusion of our analysis, is reflected in a recent denominational report, *The Making of Ministry*,¹ in a section about competencies and expectations of ministers as reflective practitioners. Display 7:1 summarises the points made.² Skilled as individual practitioners might be, nothing less than a workforce, balanced and finely tuned, can bring together all the abilities necessary for the work. Every aspect of the form, nature, complexity and size of the work require it.

Basically what is required to do this work is a workforce composed of practitioners with aptitudes and skills for particular jobs who can work on their own and with others in groups and teams. A way of thinking about this work I find helpful is to determine the “pool of competences” required of the workers and members of a church to make it collectively competent.³ Apart from doing their own work practitioners contribute towards making task groups and workforces jell together, function effectively and economically.

It is common for churches to look for, and exult in, polymathic practitioners, individualistic and directive solo performers. Clearly this militates against building up collaborative workforces and teamwork. Everything must be done to change this approach so that proper emphasis is given to polymathic workforces.

A primary personal attribute of practitioners, therefore, is that they are by conviction, not simply fashion or necessity, inwardly committed to forming and taking their place in collaborative workforces of vocational practitioners committed, motivated, disciplined and directed by their collective vocations. Anything less is second best.

3. Practitioners are Team Players and Leader-Enablers

Lay and ordained church work practitioners can make significant contributions towards building up workforces through being team players and leader-enablers in

A Methodist Minister (presbyteral or diaconal) will be a **Reflective Practitioner**. This means that he or she

- 1) engages with God, with the created order, with others (individuals, communities and institutions) and with self
 - directly through personal encounter and the exercise of basic skills and through
 - a) knowledge and understanding of biblical, theological and other appropriate theoretical material
 - b) imagination, vision, empathy and self-awareness
 - 2) rehearses the integration of the skills, knowledge, understanding, imagination, vision, empathy and self-awareness into creative performance
 - 3) reflects on the experience, process and outcome of particular acts of ministry
 - a) personally
 - b) with others (e.g.: Circuit Staff, Leadership Team, Support or Reference Group),
 takes the necessary steps suggested by that reflection of
 - studying
 - practising basic skills or acquiring new ones
 - praying
 and as a consequence improves his or her performance on the next occasion
 - 4) receives regular supervision for what he or she does in ministry
 - 5) exercises accountability to others for his or her ministry, articulating it to them in appropriate ways
- In general he or she
- 6) understands the basic content and nature of biblical and theological material and of particular pastoral contexts, relates them to each other with discernment and, where appropriate, preaches effectively about them
 - 7) discerns the imperatives of the Gospel and the needs of contemporary society, relates them to each other articulately and prophetically; and, as a consequence, enables people to engage in appropriate forms of Mission in response to both

- 8) knows the liturgical traditions of the Church and of Methodism in particular; understands the principles underlying worship, participates in it creatively and, where appropriate, plans, organises and leads it in different contexts and for different kinds of congregation
- 9) understands the dynamics affecting the life-cycles of communities, groups and individuals, discerns where they are operating in particular situations, addresses them with pastoral sensitivity and, where appropriate, helps devise and preside at suitable rites of passage and sacramental activities for them
- 10) knows the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, understands its underlying principles and the dynamics that affect the life of groups, and assists them to make effective decisions, taking the chair where appropriate
- 11) discerns how issues of power affect the way people work together and handles authority effectively, both acting under that of others and, where appropriate, exercising it over them
- 12) understands the nature and role of the different forms of ministry, collaborates with them effectively, and maintains that quality of relationship with others which is essential for effective pastoral work, discerning his or her own strengths and weaknesses in dealing faithfully with administrative matters and knowing when to call for help
- 13) knows the spiritual traditions of the church, discerns both the public and private aspects of his or her life of prayer, and persists in the discipline and development of his or her own spiritual life so that all that he or she does retains its freshness
- 14) makes use of accompanied self-appraisal, knows how to give and receive help and is able to deal creatively with his or her areas of incompetency.

In particular he or she may specialise in some of particular areas of ministry, e.g.: Christian Worship; Social Justice and Peace; Pastoral care; Church Administration; Christian Education; Evangelism; Professional and Personal Nurture.

Display 7:1 Competencies of Ministers as Reflective Practitioners

their own organizations and in the wider socio-religious context in which they operate. As team players they differentiate their part and place and are living models of what it means to participate in this way.

As leader-enablers their primary functions are: to get the theory and practice of workforces thoroughly considered in relation to the work as a whole and/or to aspects of it and projects; to work with others to develop and deploy workforces in their own organizations and, where necessary, with other institutions. The leadership can be enthusiastic, vigorous and even charismatic, indeed it often has to be, but, as informed, free and willing participation is a condition of effective collaborative teamwork in a workforce, it must be essentially non-directive. These leadership roles and functions are not the exclusive prerogative of a few individuals. All concerned have opportunities and responsibilities to build up the collective leadership. However, there is simply no way in which churches can or will operate in the ways being considered without principal team players who are leader-enablers. Their services are required in every grouping and meeting point of the workforce from the staff of a parish to international consultations for the routine round of activities, the development of new approaches and programmes and when there is a spontaneous surge of thought and action. As primary workers they play key, but not exclusive, roles in making things work and getting all concerned to make their contributions towards making them do so: if leadership is left to anyone and everyone the chances of purposeful co-ordinated effort are remote; on the other hand if leadership is left entirely to the "leader" undesirable things can and do happen.

The facilitative functions performed by enabler-leaders are key to helping people to develop working relationships and practices which enable them and their organizations to work systemically. But the ability to enable people to do things must not be confused or equated with the ability to do those things: enablers may or may not be able to do them and even when they can it may not be appropriate for them to do so. No one person in a complex organization can do everything. They should not expect nor be expected to do so; they cannot possibly possess all the skills or time required to do the work. That is why workforces are required.

4. Practitioners are Reflective Workforce Members

Practitioners need to engage in creative reflection, on their own and with others, on what they experience as they pursue their vocation. By their example and by stimulating and enabling others to do the same, they promote and induce collaborative reflection throughout the churches and organizations in which they are involved.

Critical reflective engagement is an expression of an approach to life and work rather than a technique used periodically. It is a vital force deeply rooted in practitioners and work-forces which pulsates through everything they do from face to face work through prayer and meditation to academic study. Moments of deep inner engagement with those with whom they are working can, for instance, occur when they are writing up notes of events in the privacy of their study. The quality of academic engagement is invariably reflected in task group work and vice versa. In fact critical reflective engagement is holistic: it is a reflexive and systemic

activity; engagement in one part can suffuse the whole. All this is reflected in the aids to engagement. Respect for people affects the way in which practitioners behave towards them and the ways in which they think about them in preparation and planning. Conceptual abilities facilitate every aspect of engagement with ideas, people and events.

5. Practitioners are Committed to Widely Based Developmental Collaborative Participation

Another personal attribute is the deep seated yearning for widely based participation in anything and everything that relates to the human and spiritual well-being of people, individually and collectively. No one form of participation is invariably right: the form it takes will be determined by purpose, people and circumstances.⁴ These factors will lead people to participate in many different appropriate ways from giving their opinions to working in egalitarian partnerships. Two modes of intervention and engagement are necessary to promote such pluriform participation. One is directive. This approach involves thinking, deciding, planning, organizing, administering and providing *for* people. The other is non-directive. This approach involves working *with* people in order that they think, decide etc. for themselves.⁵ It facilitates working with people interpersonally in depth which is a distinctive feature of the nature of the work we are considering. It enables practitioners to get very close to the inner places at the very heart of being and living in individuals, groups, communities, religious and secular organizations. That is where human and divine activities and work and ministry interact and fuse. Therefore, it is very important that practitioners should be able to engage with people participatively.

Both approaches require practitioners to be forthright, responsible, loving, caring compassionate and close. Directive action can all too easily become impersonal, arrogant, autocratic and dictatorial: non-directive action can all too easily appear clinically cold, distant and *laissez-faire*. Neither directive nor non-directive action is *ipso facto* right or wrong: doing too much or too little *for* or *with* people can inhibit development. Both approaches are necessary because, if we are to live and develop, some things must be done *for us*, some things must be left for us to do *for ourselves* and *with others* and some things we will only be able to do if someone works *with us*, alongside us. Therefore, choices have to be made continually between approaches in relation to key reference points such as purposes and circumstances.⁶ What worked in one situation may be inappropriate or dysfunctional or disastrous in another. Requests for a fixed formula for choice of approach must be resisted. Questions that help me to decide on appropriate directive or non-directive action are:

What must I do *for* these people at this time and in this situation?

What must I do alongside them, *with them*?

What must we do *together*?

What must I leave them to do *for themselves* and with *each other*?

Should I decide the approach to be adopted without consulting or should I negotiate it?

When and how must I withdraw so that my waiting and returning promote processes of development?

The questions are universally relevant; the answers, and therefore the action to be taken and the leads to be given, vary enormously as people grow and from one situation to another.⁷ This indicates that this approach is much more complex than this brief introduction might suggest. Critical elements are charted in Appendix II. Many have come to refer to it as the "*avec approach*" (from the French for "with" chosen to represent the central concept of working *with* people for human and spiritual development which was promoted by "Avec", an ecumenical training and consultancy agency for church and community work, 1976-1994).

6. Practitioners are Instruments and Subjects of Human and Spiritual Development

Undoubtedly practitioners can make contributions, possibly significant ones, to the development of others and their work, without experiencing comparable changes in themselves. But it is difficult to imagine how anyone can give themselves wholeheartedly to the work we are discussing without themselves being changed in various ways. For many years, using methods similar to those we are considering, Dr. T. R. Batten ran courses which enabled small groups of practitioners to reflect on and analyse the theory and practice of their work. He often said, "I do the course with the members", meaning that he was learning and changing as he facilitated their development. He could not describe himself as a catalyst as some do because of the first meaning of that word, "a substance that, without itself undergoing permanent chemical change, increased the rate of a reaction" (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Ninth Edition, 1997). He was an instrument and a subject of change. There is a healthy and wholesome feel about this which is absent from those who operate on people and things without being changed or expecting to be so themselves. Profound all round human and spiritual development occurs when reciprocal formative processes are at work which causes change for the better in practitioners, those with whom they are engaged and the work they are doing. Practitioners engaged in these forms of interchange are instruments and subjects of human and spiritual development throughout their lives.

7. Practitioners are Situationally Committed and Contextually Engaged

Generally speaking practitioners are most effective when they are situationally committed and contextually engaged. That is, they are dedicated to the situations and jobs to which they are appointed, be it in a local church or a denominational office. From that base they are involved in contextualising their work in its ecclesiastical, secular and academic worlds and settings. They can do this through sharing in the corporate life of their own denomination or religious order⁸ the overall organization and administration of their denomination, ecumenical affairs and secular bodies and by participating in their workforces.

Practitioners can be active members of a community of scholarship sharing in conferences and training events. Workers who are thus engaged can, through using imaginative approaches, get members of local churches thinking about anything that

is of interest and value to them and in this way help them to set their work in a wider context.⁹ At the same time they are able to share with others what is happening in their situation and that can be an extension of their particular ministry. Apart from this there are all round benefits from this interaction as workers grow and develop and are therefore increasing their potential. The more they take from their own situations to their other relationships, the more they can bring back to them.

Paradoxically, the nearer workers are to those with whom they work the more important it is for them to distance themselves in the ways described and through meditation, reflection and prayer. Situational workers are, generally speaking, better workers when they are contextually engaged. Getting a creative balance between situational involvement and contextual engagement is clearly vital. There are real dangers of one or the other taking over. Denominational jobs, academic study, ecumenical fellowship and community involvement, for instance, can provide attractive and respectable escape routes from facing tough situational realities. They can become an alternative, absorbing time and energy that should be given to situational ministry. On the other hand workers can give themselves exclusively to their "own" situation to the neglect of the wider scene, their studies and their vocational development. More work may be done in their own situation, although this does not necessarily follow because contextual engagement can give added momentum and value to practitioners in all their activities. Isolationism can be injurious to workers and situations. It can produce "group think", see section III:1.

Timetabling situational and contextual work can help to get the right balance. That generally works even though there are times when it is essential to drop everything in order to concentrate totally and exclusively on one's situation over short or long periods. General studies have to be suspended in order to grapple with extraordinary events. On the other hand, it may be necessary to do the absolute minimum in relation to one's job in order to reflect, study or research. This is quite different from neglecting things for trivial pursuits. It is synchronising working rhythms with those of the situation and context so that they are developmentally in harmony and neither damages the other. Achieving this kind of dynamic balance is critical to creative reflective engagement. This is not to be confused with everything being in flux and open ended. Routine standard procedures and programmes are amongst the many things which can contribute to rhythmic work flow and dynamic balance. Rigid adherence to them, however, is to give priority to the equilibrium of the practitioner's work programme rather than to that of the whole work system in which s/he is engaged. The result is a static or dead weight balance rather than a dynamic one.

Practitioners most likely to promote and enjoy dynamic balance are oriented contextually to their situations, dedicated to their job, sensitive to events and open to change, purposefully flexible but not malleable, organized and disciplined.

8. Practitioners are Personally, Professionally and Spiritually Disciplined Disciples

To sum up, the minister is a reflective practitioner in that s/he is a *prayerful person*, a *collaborative colleague* and a *member of a community of scholarship and interpretation* which exercises *mutual accountability*.¹⁰

This is the way in which the report on the making of ministry quoted earlier summed up the marks of a minister (cf Display 7:2 for an extended quotation). Discipleship of this kind requires discipline, “training that produces obedience, self-control, or a particular skill”.¹¹ Inner personal discipline and accountability help to convert the freedom of thought, expression and association, which is fundamental to the approach advocated in this book, into creative reflective engagement. Freedom and discipline must go together with commitment and ability. Gordon Wakefield ends a dictionary note on discipline in this way:

What must be generally conceded is (a) that the way must not be narrower than Jesus made it, and (b) just as poetry is a “desperate discipline” (Richard Church) so the Christian life cannot be one of “uncharted freedom”, and the very generosity of the divine love demands an absolute dedication in return.¹²

To be an active member of a professional discipline related to ministry and church work, a community of scholarship, is to be self- and other- disciplined by the rigour of study, research and academic standards and codes of practice. To be personally disciplined is to work assiduously at the core of one’s calling and its application to the situations in which practitioners find themselves. To be spiritually disciplined takes many forms in relation to private prayer and meditation, “attendance upon the ‘means of grace’”, sharing in Christian fellowship (*koinonia*), studying the bible and literature about the Christian life and being open to “spiritual direction”. What makes people into practitioners of church work is the combination into an integrated whole of personal, professional and spiritual disciplines. Practitioners who practise these disciplines concurrently as a threefold core of ministry pursue a developmental path. They become lifelong learners, disciples, attempting to master and practice their disciplines.¹³

The values implicit in these personal attributes can be made explicit through a brief indicative list of the commitments associated with them. They are the commitment to:

- work at the Christian missiological project with and for God and Christians and non-Christian people;
- work at theory and theology, situationally and academically;
- active purposeful involvement in church and community rather than to a spectator or commentator role;
- work with, through and in the Church for overall betterment of people in church and society as a whole rather than any one part of it;
- the responsible and accountable empowerment of people;
- cultivate human and spiritual working relationships and to engage in action which generates well-being, happiness, joy, satisfaction, socio-religious communities and *koinonia*;
- supportive non-threatening working relationships which enable, for instance, people to stand by, empathize with and help each other without attempting to take over one another or to take each other’s place;
- approaches and methods which promote creative consensus by revealing and working constructively at differences, factions and conflicts;

Ministers, Deaconesses and Deacons have a commitment to a particular form of engagement

- with God (through the Bible and the theological traditions of the churches and through spiritual experience)
- with the created order
- with others (individuals, communities and institutions)
- with self.

Training for this life involves a rigorous and prayerful process of

- acquiring, understanding and applying theoretical knowledge
- developing practical skills
- analysing situations and experience
- discerning, understanding and applying appropriate value systems
- developing a critical awareness of situations so as to maintain a prophetic stance towards them
- developing self-awareness whilst undergoing affective change.

This process is a particular form of being a “reflective practitioner”. Ministers Deaconesses and Deacons form corporate bodies of such reflective practitioners which on the one hand enable the church to become a community of reflective practice, and on the other are nurtured by it. The Convocation of the Methodist Diaconal Order, and Ministerial Session of Synod and Conference are focal points of these corporate bodies. We would urge that these be developed further to ensure that provision is made for mutual and communal experiences of spirituality, worship and theological reflection on mission and church life. The training for this process of becoming a reflective practitioner therefore best occurs within particular communities of scholarship, interpretation, collaboration and mutual accountability.

To sum up, the Minister is a reflective practitioner in that she or he is a *prayerful person*, a *collaborative colleague* and a *member of a community of scholarship and interpretation* which exercises *mutual accountability*.

Display 7:2 Marks of a Minister as a Reflective Practitioner

- work primarily with all people for self-induced change rather than to provide services for them;
- get people, including those who differ from each other significantly to work with and for each other for the common good;
- collaborate rather than compete;
- promote those processes of change in others, ourselves and structures that facilitate human and spiritual betterment;
- work at actual situations, no matter how small or large, and to do so in context;
- work with churches, communities and organizations as systems, not simply as collections of individuals or congregations;

Work and Workers

- use verbal skills, status and resources *for* and not *against* people;
- open processes of educational dialogue within which people freely articulate their needs in their own way through their own cultural norms;
- get people thinking and thinking again;
- be inclusive rather than exclusive;
- respect people and their needs for privacy, interdependence, autonomy and dependence;
- creating equal opportunities for all people to participate and especially those who are disadvantaged, discriminated against, marginalised, victims of injustice and cruelty.¹⁴

II BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE: What Practitioners Need to Know

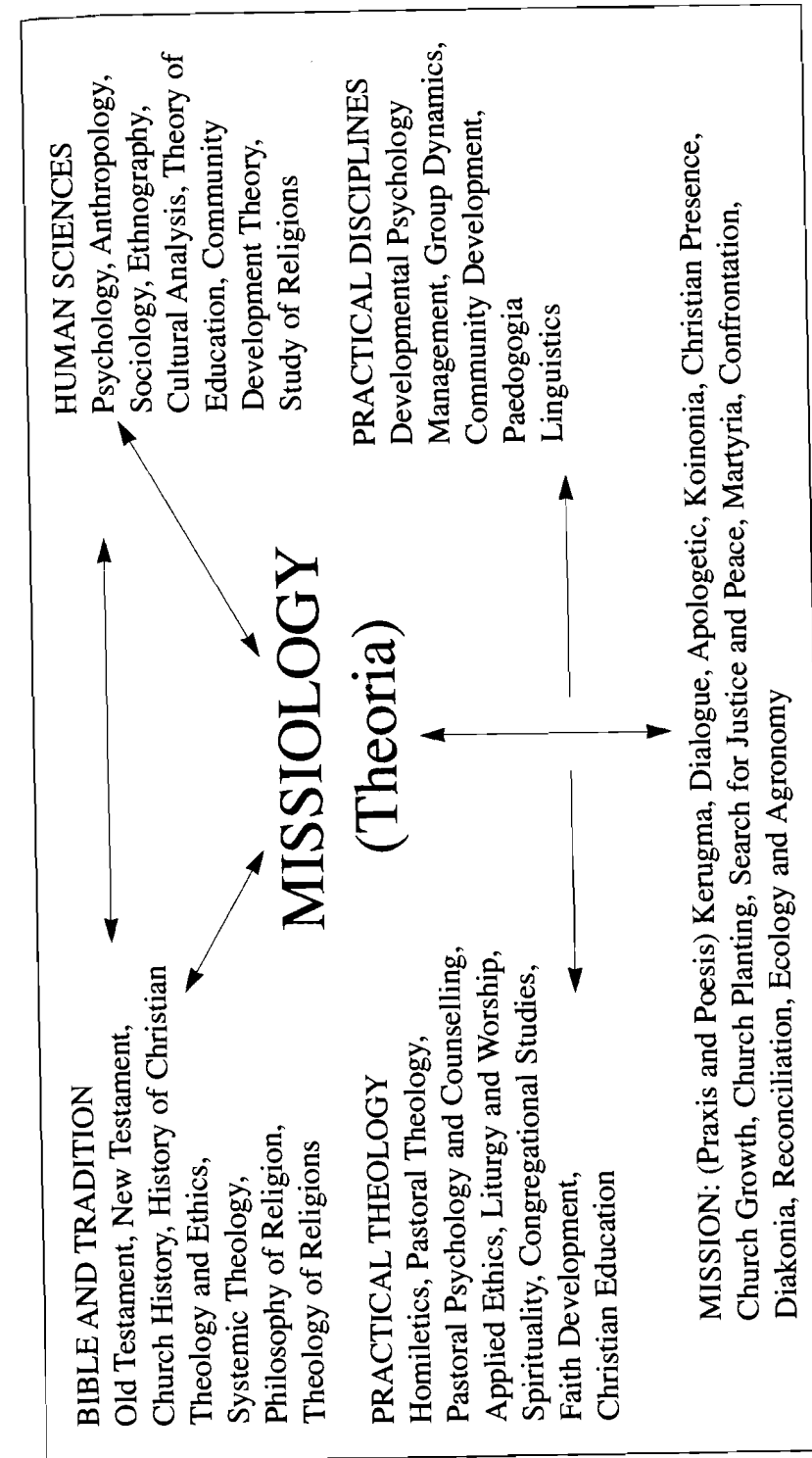
Various attempts have been made to describe the bodies of knowledge that are fundamental to the practice of the profession of ministry. One attempt is summarised in points 6-13 of Display 7:1. Professor Kenneth Cracknell's conceptual map of related bodies of knowledge I find enormously helpful. It is presented with his permission in Display 7: 3¹⁵ (cf the earlier discussion on missiology). It gives a focal discipline, (theoria). Then it presents five other disciplines: bible and tradition; practical theology; mission (praxis and poesis); practical disciplines; human sciences. Each of these disciplines and their sub-disciplines have their bodies of knowledge. The diagram is important because it shows how the disciplines are systemically interrelated. This is much more helpful than lists which give linear connections. For me the diagram shows that missiology is the hub of a wheel of which the disciplines are the spokes and the bodies of knowledge are conjoined to form the rim which is the means of engagement and missiological and developmental traction.

But the debate about appropriate bodies of knowledge continues. New bodies of knowledge are identified. Earlier sections indicate how the bodies of knowledge expand exponentially. This raises some basic questions for practitioners: what are the most appropriate bodies of knowledge for me? Which is/are fundamental and how do other disciplines and bodies of knowledge relate to it/them? How do I build up my understanding of them? (Aspects of the third question are discussed in various places.)

III ABILITIES AND SKILLS : What Practitioners Need to be Able To Do

Now we turn from what practitioners and work-forces need to be and what they need to *know* to what they need to be able *to do*, *i.e.*: to the abilities and skills required.

The ten points noted are indicative rather than comprehensive. Separating and listing them is something of a distortion of reality. Each characteristic is a part of a system of competence: the skills, like tools, are used in relation to various tasks often in combinations. Practitioners, therefore, need the ability to use them separately and together as appropriate to tasks, situations and people. When they are



Display 7:3 Missiology As a Substantive Discipline,
 A Diagram by Professor Kenneth Cracknell

used well they do not obtrude, they are integral, natural, subordinate parts of the aspects of the practitioner's person and the dynamic and rhythms of their working engagement with people and things. For this to happen practitioners need to be able:

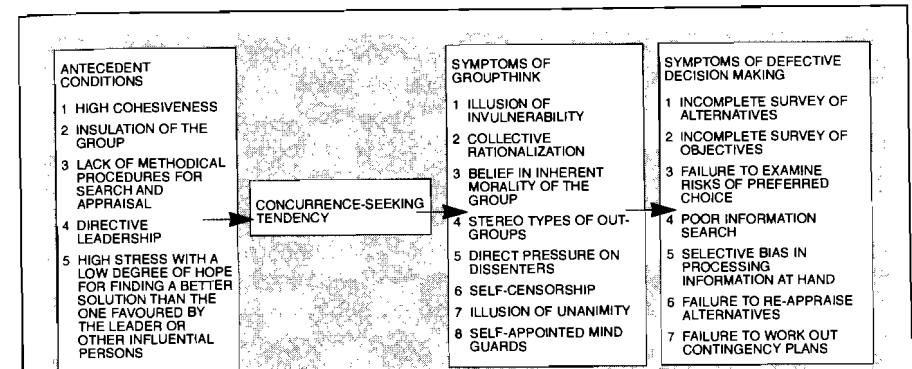
- to relate to God and work with people inclusively and interdependently through sentient task groups
- to promote vocational involvement
- to use all human and spiritual facilities
- to access and put to effective use appropriate bodies of knowledge
- to form and re-form work views
- to discuss constructively issues of life and faith
- to cope with the psycho-spiritual ups and downs of creative reflective engagement
- to deal with their own incompetence and that of others
- to use and provide support systems
- to disengage creatively.

1. Practitioners Need to be Able to Relate to God and Work With People Inclusively and Interdependently Through Sentient Task Groups

The human and spiritual relationships required for this work were discussed in the previous chapter (cf pp 262-266). Here we concentrate on maintaining and deploying sentient task groups to work inclusively with all kinds of people interdependently for Christian ends and the common good. An undertaking calling for considerable skills.

Christian workforces are task groups, that is they have jobs to do. They are also sentient groups.¹⁶ Without some positive sentience a workforce cannot do its job: deep mutual feelings help to galvanise workers, individually and collectively; "we" feelings strengthen groups and provide security in vulnerability; empathy and loving care and concern provide support. Creating a particular form of sentience, *koinonia*, is, as we have seen, a feature of church work. However, if sentience takes priority over task, a workforce betrays its *raison d'être*.¹⁷ This can happen in several ways. For instance close relationships between members of teams can make others feel outsiders. On several occasions I have seen teams of workers become so preoccupied with their interpersonal dynamics that they have seriously neglected and impaired the tasks they were appointed to perform in the church and community. On the other hand the workforce is impaired if the approach to the tasks engenders negative feelings because, for instance, it is too businesslike. And what is true of the workforce is true of other groups and of churches themselves. Workforces are required which are sentient task groups able to promote developmental sentient activity.

Many things make it difficult to form such groups. Some people wish to be businesslike and eschew close personal relationships in working groups. Others value the sentience above the tasks. Sometimes they can be possessive about their workforce and make it difficult for others to belong or feel they belong: they introduce a tendency towards sentient exclusivism. Similarly some people are



(a) Groupthink: A Collective Pattern of Defensive Avoidance
 An analysis of groupthink, based on comparisons of high- and low-quality decisions by policy-making groups

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| <p>a. An illusion of invulnerability, shared by most or all of the members, which creates excessive optimism and encourages taking extreme risks.</p> <p>b. Collective efforts to rationalise in order to discount warnings which might lead the members to reconsider their assumptions before they recommit themselves to their past policy decisions.</p> <p>c. An unquestioned belief in the group's inherent morality, inclining the members to ignore the ethical or moral consequences of their decisions.</p> <p>d. Stereotyped views of rivals and enemies as too evil to warrant genuine attempts to negotiate, or as too weak or stupid to counter whatever risky attempts are made to defeat their purposes.</p> | <p>e. Direct pressure on any member who expresses strong arguments against any of the groups stereotypes, illusions, or commitments, making clear that such dissent is contrary to what is expected of all loyal members.</p> <p>f. Self-censorship of deviants from the apparent group consensus, reflecting each member's inclination to minimise to himself (<i>sic</i>) the importance of his doubts and counter-arguments.</p> <p>g. A shared illusion of unanimity, party resulting from this self-censorship and augmented by the false assumption that silence implies consent.</p> <p>h. The emergence of self-appointed "mindguards", members who protect the group from adverse information that might shatter their shared complacency about the effectiveness and morality of their decisions.</p> |
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(b) An Exposition of the Symptoms

Display 7:4 Groupthink

possessive about the work and keep others at bay. An extreme form of these dangers of seeking to preserve oneself through self-isolation, exclusivism, possessiveness and sentient indulgence is known as "group think". Characteristics of this phenomenon are presented in Display 7:4.¹⁸ This analysis has helped me to identify, understand and get people thinking creatively about forms of the phenomenon which differ in degree.

One of the antidotes to these dangers is the ability to get right alongside people and to talk with them, not at them, about anything and everything to do with working together including the dangers described above. Another is to emphasize building up teamwork throughout organizations rather than teams. Yet another is building up a sense of identity and destiny which enhances the ability and confidence of the members of a workforce to pursue their purposes consistently whilst working inclusively with people, within and beyond their own organization, when there are some significant differences between all parties. Through experience of doing this people come to know that in the wider encounters they will find rather than lose themselves. Consequently they enter upon such encounters with expectation and excitement and find greater fulfilment in being inclusive rather than in being exclusive.

Doing this involves practitioners and participants working interdependently with God and a wide range of people inclusively. Interdependency takes many forms. J. D. Thompson¹⁹ has identified three in relation to work in factories. Adapted, I find they help me to understand modes of interdependency in church and community work. *Pooled interdependency* occurs when different people work separately on things that come together in some event or creation. Most acts of worship illustrate this mode. Separately, ministers write sermons, organists select and practise music, caretakers and stewards make the necessary arrangements etc. Then at the appointed time their independent preparations are brought together. *Sequential interdependency* occurs when the success of one step in a process depends upon the satisfactory completion of a prior step. Programmes of Christian education illustrate this mode. *Reciprocal interdependency* occurs when people have to work together because their inputs and outputs feed each other. Working groups, committees, study groups teamwork and some acts of worship are examples of this mode. Many activities involve the first and the third (worship and committee meetings for example) and some all three (a building project for example). Thompson also suggested that three kinds of co-ordination are necessary to facilitate these three kinds of interdependency. Pooled interdependency requires what he calls *standardization i.e.:* procedures, structures, rules and regulations. Sequential interdependency needs what he refers to as *plans i.e.:* programmes, critical paths and task sequences. Reciprocal interdependency requires *mutual adjustment* which in church work I take to mean the ability of people to act collaboratively.

Those engaged in interdependent action are variously: in dependent relationships with each other; deployed interdependently; acting in concert. Promoting creative interdependency in church and community work, a key function of pastoral leaders and managers, involves connoting each mode of activity positively, facilitating them and bringing them together organically. Thompson's classification shows that being

dependent upon others and independent action are as necessary to interdependency as doing things together.

2. Practitioners Need to be Able to Promote Vocational Involvement

Earlier it was established that personal and collective vocations are important aspects of the nature of church work. Generally speaking practitioners have to pursue their own vocation as they work with people whose sense of vocation and understanding of mission differ significantly. Vital aspects of their vocation are to help individuals to develop their own sense of vocation and to facilitate the processes by which groups form cohesive collective vocations and programmes and pursue them. This calls for advanced group work skills and the ability to "do theology" with people whose spirituality and theological knowledge varies enormously. Much is said in various parts of this book about ways and means of doing this. Here we concentrate on voluntary accountability.

Promoting vocational participation involves, inter alia, generating disciplined, accountable, sustainable involvement of all the members of the workforce, regardless of whether they are paid or unpaid, ordained or lay. This can be problematic. Some people, ordained and lay, welcome the increasing practice of workers having job descriptions, contracts and assessment procedures to follow which enable them to be publicly accountable. Many do not want to work under such conditions. And, as we have seen, most church and community work is undertaken voluntarily and in many instances sacrificially by very busy people. Some want to learn how to do their job well and to be accountable to the Church for what they do. By and large, however, demands for disciplined accountability of the kind associated with paid employment would be seen or felt as an affront to the voluntary sector of church life. It would be culturally abrasive. It runs counter to a widespread attitude that in the voluntary labour market you take what is given with gratitude, fulsomely acknowledge it and do not attempt to apply conditions other than those which are essential. (Training is of course required for some jobs and rightly there are strict procedures to follow in the deployment of those working with children and young people.) In practice this can mean that voluntary workers themselves determine the conditions of service and in some instances hold off attempts to challenge them by threats of withdrawing their labour ("I'm doing my best. If it is not satisfactory, find someone else.") when they know there is no-one else. This is no basis for collaborative work and personal development.

When finding people to do necessary jobs is desperately difficult, taking peoples' offers on their terms is natural and understandable. Contract making is difficult in such one-sided contests but in as much as progress is made in doing so, however small that might be, personal working relationships are enhanced. Strange as it may seem the ability to establish the theological basis for working vocationally for God through the church, whether it be in a paid or voluntary capacity, is a key to the solution of many of the problems. To do this effectively, ways and means have to be found of discussing with all kinds of people before they accept jobs, some basic issues. For instance, in relation to the voluntary giving of self and time, some points for discussion could be: giving time to church work involves sharing control and ownership of that time with the Church and God just as the control of the time of paid employees is shared with the employer; time that is given belongs to the

Church and God who must have a say in the use of it just as do secular employers. When this is accepted, time has been truly given by a worker to God and the church. A vocational transaction has been made. Ideally this should be done with people before they accept jobs through language with which they are familiar and in ways in which they can handle. In some cases the discussion could be short, low key and tentative; in others it could be extended, deep and binding. However this might be, any progress contributes to shared, if not mutual, understanding of the nature of the work. That is a good basis for working relationships and the continuing exploration of the spiritual and pragmatic nature of doing the work together.

Ideally such discussions should be made through joint reflective collaboration. Not everyone has a strong personal call but behind most offers of help are inner promptings and some desire to do something for God, the church and the community. Helping people to articulate and understand their promptings and to see how the work they do for the church relates to the collective vocation is an important part of making and renewing contracts. Without such an understanding paid and unpaid workers can act as though they have acquired and privatised part of the work of the church through taking it on. That is a travesty of vocational involvement. I am not suggesting the Church dictate how workers and their time should be used. That is as undesirable as a worker dictating how they should be used. What is needed is a proper basis for collaboration.

Open exploration and discussion of these theological issues when there is not a case in point can help to form vocational learning communities. When these theological principles are integral to the work culture it is much easier to discuss them openly, naturally and simply, and to establish vocational contracts with individuals and teams of the kind required for the work of Christian mission. Establishing, communicating and reinforcing them is part of the education for work and can be done through preaching, bible study discussion groups, in-service training and general conversation. Contracts based upon mutual understanding of the spiritual and practical nature of jobs enable everyone to feel relaxed with one another and provide a sound basis for tackling problems as they arise.

3. Practitioners Need to be Able to Use all Human and Spiritual Faculties

Church work is the product of all faculties faith and love based action.²⁰ In a sense the phrase says it all. It draws upon natural and acquired human and spiritual faculties and feelings, hunches, intuition, inspiration, insights, action-learning, reflections, ideas, theories, thoughts. . . . (Church work is not unique in this regard. Other occupations have similar characteristics including scientific work.) It is no more the exclusive work of the intellect than it is of the intuitive faculties. It is hard rigorous thinking combined with Christ-like loving: it is neither cold and clinical nor abstract thought nor is it thoughtless emotional and spiritual action. But at times it does involve taking conviction based action which logically does not make sense. Ideally there is a creative interplay of the faculties in a faith framework. This can occur in individuals as it can in partnerships, teams and groups where different members, possibly on different occasions, are operating on different faculties.²¹

In any case it is highly desirable that people think, and at times think very hard, about feelings, hunches, experiences interpreted as divine inspiration in the same way as they do about thoughts, ideas, concepts—and research them. All this accords

with Jesus' commandments."you must love the Lord your god with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" and "you must love your neighbour as yourself".²² Charles Elliott caught some of the meaning of this when he described the work of the Kingdom as that of the mind, the heart/soul, the hands and the feet.²³

4. Practitioners Need to be Able to Access and Put to Effective Use Appropriate Bodies of Knowledge

Practitioners need to be able to access appropriate bodies of knowledge and to put what they find to appropriate use. As we saw in the discussion about the multi-discipline and interprofessional nature of Church work this does not necessarily involve becoming well versed in one or more additional disciplines, although it might lead to that. (It did so in my case. Having found help in community development for problems I was facing in local church work, I went on to study the subject seriously.) It can however involve learning enough of the language of other disciplines to be able to forage in the most economic manner because, for most practitioners, the time and energy available for such activities is at a premium. This is akin to searching manuals for information in relation to particular problems or to scanning them to see what help they could possibly give should certain contingencies arise. As such it is an important way of self-training. Any form of serious academic and experiential study of the human and spiritual condition has the potential to enhance the quality and efficacy of situational and academic engagement with church work. Earlier we discussed some of the things which help to do this in such a way that what is discovered is used and integrated into the basic profession of ministry (cf the section "multi-disciplinary and interprofessional", pp 287-290).

5. Practitioners Need to be Able to Form and Re-form Their Mental Pictures or Maps of Work Situations

Work performance and professional development of practitioners depend upon their mental maps of work situations and of their attributes being in good repair. (cf Chapter Two, Element Four.) Unexpected experiences and problems, studies and moments of disclosure are amongst the things that can lead practitioners to reconsider them, sometimes radically. Therefore, they need to be able to form and re-form their mental pictures and maps so that they are reliable aids to thinking and doing. Practitioners are helped to this when they are able:

- (a) to approach knowing and not knowing reverentially
- (b) to reflect and think again
- (c) to think and operate systematically and systemically
- (d) to "listen" to and to "read" and "dialogue" with work situations
- (e) to act as a "participant observer" in work situations and to gather and use data
- (f) to use other people's ideas and research critically and creatively
- (g) to portray work situations.

Each of these abilities enhances all the others. In fact they operate in concert. Figure 7:2 represents the processes in operation. For instance, the approach to knowing is generic and the ability to listen to work situations is key to participant observation. Generally speaking, abilities (e) and (f) help practitioners to gather information and material whilst (a) to (d) help them to study it and (g) helps them to make conceptual sense of it and to communicate it. They could, of course, have been listed in reverse order, starting with collecting data and then processing it. The given order was chosen because (a) to (d) are abilities which facilitate every stage of forming work-views and reflecting on them privately, or with colleagues and consultants or in appraisal sessions. Consequently, some of the subject matter discussed in this section correlates and overlaps with that considered in Element 5, "thinking together", in Chapter Two. The difference between the two sections is that the one in Chapter Two is primarily about consultants and consultants reflecting and thinking in consultancy sessions whilst this is about practitioners doing so on their own and with others in any situation.

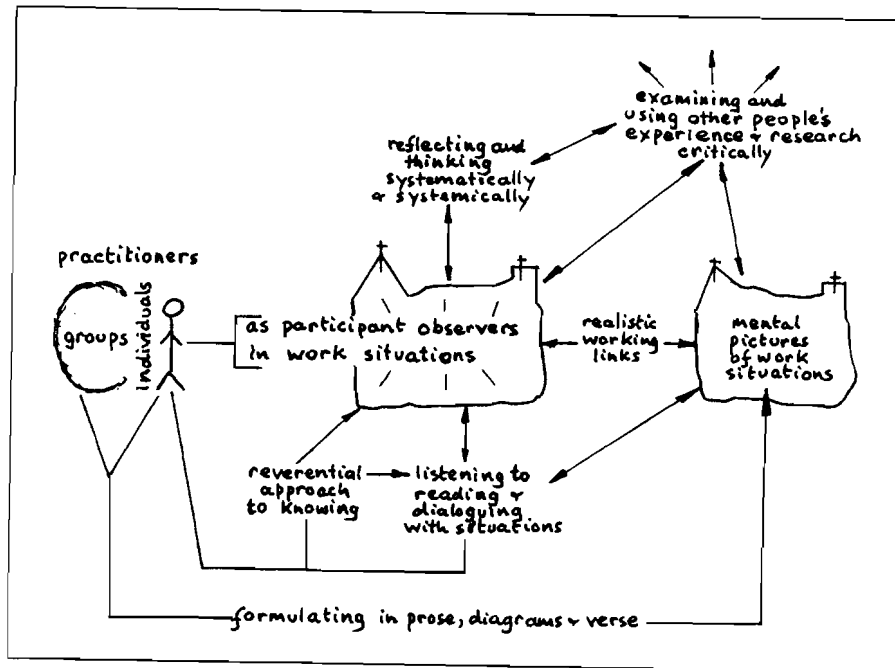


Figure 7:2 Aids to Understanding and Depicting Work Situations

This section is reminiscent of an outline for a training manual even though all that can be attempted within the scope of this book is to describe briefly the competencies and some sources of further information about how to acquire them. (a) *The Ability to Approach Knowing and Not Knowing Reverentially*. Some things practitioners need to know can only be known from the people themselves through voluntary disclosure. Reference was made to this in the previous chapter and to the usefulness of Johari's Window (see pp 212, 230, 300). Much in this book

is about creating the conditions in which people can safely share, information and the responsible and constructive use of it by all concerned.

People are most likely to share their knowledge, thoughts and feelings when they: trust those with whom they are sharing, identify with their purposes and are at ease with them, feel they are contributing to something that is important to them; know that they and their privacy are being respected; feel that there is a genuine interest in them and their opinions—and that cannot be feigned in face to face work; they know that they are not being "used" by others.²⁴ They need to feel that the balance of advantage for them is in sharing and that the risks are worth taking. For example during the opening session of a consultation I led in Zimbabwe just after the new state had been formed in 1980, the black African church leaders said to me, "You have come at a good time. Before liberation we would have told you what we thought you would like to hear. Now we will tell you what we think and feel and just how it is with us". The quality and reliability of information depends upon factors such as these.

Those acting as workers and facilitators need to do all they can to see that these conditions of free exchange are met. They can all too easily prevent the kind of sharing required and damage personal and working relationships by pressing for information about thoughts or feelings which people feel reluctant or unable to provide.²⁵ Information must always be collected respectfully and with economy. Moments of openness must not be used to pursue idle curiosity. Sensitivity is required which enables practitioners to identify no-go areas and to stop short of trying to probe them. Trespassers will be prosecuted!

With religious knowing, it is always necessary to find a middle way:

- it requires seriousness of purpose, but lightness of touch;
- it cannot thrive either when people's emotions are uninvolved or when they are unrestrained;
- it requires a sense of relatedness to God that is neither one of identification with Him nor of alienation from Him;
- it is a matter neither of pure faith nor of pure reason;
- it is not independent of observation, but neither does it follow straightforwardly from it;
- it inhabits the realms, neither of private fantasy nor of external reality, but a space between;
- it is a creative act, that goes beyond the "given" but must be faithful to it;
- it shows a capacity, in myth and sacrament, to make connections that are more than merely symbolic representations of literal truths, but without going so far as to confound the symbol with the symbolised;
- it depends on the combination of both genuine personal experience and the effort to articulate it, for neither alone can lead to knowing;
- it requires the intellectual effort and clear-headedness to reach towards religious knowing wherever possible, but also the recognition that there is a time for silence and not-knowing.

Display 7:5 The Middle Way of Religious Knowing

Fraser Watts and Mark Williams have helped me to understand this through what they call the "middle way" of religious knowing. Display 7:5 reproduces a summary description of this which occurs at the end of an enormously helpful book.²⁶ Good practice requires gathering and gleaning as much information as is necessary and possible and being aware of what is not known. Considerable progress can be made

within the constraints noted. But, as we observed in various places (cf pp 264 and 300), there will always be the unknown and the unpredictable in the hidden depths of ourselves, others and God. Church work is always an act of faith based upon what is known and upon assumptions, hunches, hypotheses, intuitions, guesses, suppositions about the unknown. Thus, whilst it can never be an exact science, it can be based on the best possible intelligence.

(b) Practitioners Need to have the Ability to Reflect and Think Again. Earlier we explored the need to reflect and the forms it takes. Now we consider the capacity of practitioners to do so.

Practitioners have to be able to respond and to deal with the unexpected because any kind of work with people for development is punctuated by surprises, good and bad; the unexpected of people and of God. These events cannot be foreseen in planning because the future is shrouded by the unpredictable acts of God and people. One of the implications of this is that practitioners cannot depend entirely upon set procedures. They have to continually reflect about their work especially at the critical stages. The quality of the work depends upon it, as does their own development as reflective practitioners and that of their colleagues. The capacity to reflect is an important personal attribute. What then is the nature of this activity?

Reflecting about things is a normal part of human behaviour. It is a cerebral and affective activity. Often it is spontaneous, things just come into our mind either casually or persistently. Sometimes it is pleasurable, often it is painful. The issues and implications can be clear or vague and bemusing. Some thoughts crowd in on us and stay with us or we stay with them. On some occasions we make progress as we think about them, at others we go round in circles. From some thoughts we try to escape, some we repress but others haunt us. The reflective capacity required of church and community workers is the ability to get to grips with this raw material, to take hold of it, and to process it through their beings (not simply their minds) in such ways that work-wise progress is made and everyone concerned grows and experiences satisfaction. For me this is the central hard creative core of reflective practice. It is dynamic. It is adventurous and explorative and therefore both exciting and frightening.

Reflection can take place either during or after action in a whole range of formal and informal settings. "Reflection-in-action", is a term Donald Schon uses to describe "the thinking what they (practitioners) are doing while they are doing it [the action]".²⁷ They can do this in relation to any and every aspect of their experience. This can lead to "knowing-in-action".²⁸ Sometimes people reflect on their own and other people's reflections as one stage of reflection gives way to another. Schon describes these as rungs on a "ladder of reflection".²⁹

The capacity to reflect is made up of several parts which can be expressed as a formula: the intellectual ability, attitude, courage, will and stickability to face up to and to think about the realities encountered in relation to work and work-views *plus* the personal and particularly the emotional ability, to work through any negative or positive feedback encountered through facing up to whatever the process reveals *plus* the will, determination and stamina to initiate and sustain the reflective processes to their conclusion *plus* the requisite knowledge and insights *plus* the

technical skills which enable practitioners to conceptualise, analyse, research and design church and community work.

The capacity to do this varies enormously from person to person and in the same person from circumstance to circumstance. Practitioners, for instance, who are intellectually able can be emotionally weak and vice versa. Amongst other things the ability to reflect depends upon there being a match between the practitioner's capacity and the complexities upon which they need to reflect. It also depends upon the moral, personal and technical support that they receive from others. That underlines the importance of consultancy.

For people schooled in the traditional ways of doing church work, creative reflective engagement can be a work paradigm shift and a culture shock. Making the transition is a risky business, an act of faith requiring courage. Developing reflective practice for Christian ministry and mission involves educating and training practitioners, forming church workforces which promote reflection within their own organization and creating an action-reflection work culture.

Displays 7:1 and 2 illustrate how one denomination understands what makes a reflective practitioner.

From the 1960s I have worked to promote action-reflection and action research in communities and between them. I was taken by surprise by the amount of work that had to be done with church leaders for them to be sufficiently committed to and equipped for the promotion of reflective and collaborative practice in their own organization and with others. Substantial progress was made through using non-directive reflective processes to help people explore the practical, theological and missiological implications of such an approach. This approach combined experiential learning with critical study of the concepts and methods.

My experience suggests that to remain reflective, practitioners need reflective groups and organizations just as organizations need reflective practitioners to become and remain reflective. But research is needed into the processes and factors which help practitioners, churches and allied organizations to become more reflective and collaborative and into the dynamics between the private and public modes of reflection and collaboration in practitioners and organizations and how they affect one another.

People reflect generally and critically in many different ways. Part One describes how it can be done through consultancy. This section describes aids which can help practitioners to reflect on their own and with others. It is cross referenced with sections of Part One to which it is closely related.

(c) The Ability to Think and Operate Systematically and Systemically. Systematic thinking is the ability to put order and shape into subject matter and to examine things through analytical sequences. This was discussed and illustrated in Chapter Two in relation to problems, the study of cases and the analysis of work situations (cf pp 73-83). Aids and guides for systematic analysis and thought are formed by formulating a series of questions or discrete tasks which break down complex processes of analysis, design and planning into manageable stages. By working through these stages in some orderly, but not irreversible or dogmatic way, the process is completed. These facilitating structures can help people think about systems systematically and systemically. But there are other ways and aids.

According to one definition, "A system is an organized whole made up of interdependent elements that can be defined only with reference to each other and in terms of their positions in the whole".³⁰ A more colloquial or user friendly definition is: "A system is a perceived whole whose elements 'hang together' because they continually affect each other over time and operate towards a common purpose"³¹ Checkland and Scholes suggest that "all (definitions of systems) take as given the notion of a set of elements mutually related such that the set constitutes a whole having properties as an entity".³² Organizations, communities and churches are examples of social and socio-religious systems.

"Systems thinking" has become a technical term. Checkland and Scholes differentiate between "hard systems thinking" which "takes the world to be systemic" and "soft systems thinking" which treats the world as if it were a system by creating "the process of enquiry as a system."³³ There is a tendency to use the hard and soft approaches indiscriminately, I have done so. Practice theory is clearly improved by distinguishing between them.

A wide range of methods is used in systems thinking.³⁴ Two of them are described briefly in Display 7:6. David Campbell and Rosalind Draper,³⁵ drawing heavily on the work of the Tavistock and Grubb Institutes, have edited an extraordinarily useful "systems thinking and practice" series on family therapy and work with

Two of a wide range of methods used in systems thinking are noted in this display.

In the U K Professor Peter Checkland and his colleagues at Lancaster University have developed what they call a "soft systems methodology" (SSM) for use in organization analysis and design. Central to their system is a sequence of operations indicated by the mnemonic CATWOE: customers; actors, transformation process: weltanschauung (worldview); owner(s); environmental constraints. Widespread use is made of "rich pictures" to depict the "rich moving pageant of relationships".³⁶

In the U S A Professor Peter M Senge and his colleagues have worked out in great detail an approach to systems thinking for the management and development of learning organizations. They call it the "fifth discipline" (the other four are: personal mastery; mental models; building shared vision; team learning). Their approach builds upon "system dynamics" developed by Professor Jay Forrester and his colleagues at Massachusetts Institute of Technology over the past forty years. The tools and methods are: "links and loops", archetypes; stock-and-flow modelling.³⁷

Display 7:6 Two Approaches to Systems Thinking

organizations. (Their work was referred to earlier in relation to their systemic approach to consultancy, see pp 35-36.)

What follows in bullet format are notes of some of the things which I personally have found helped me to think and work systemically. Some have already been mentioned but they are noted here for completeness.

- **Diagrams** aid systems thinking because they provide opportunities to represent pictorially and symbolically key people, groups, events in a situation and to position them spatially in ways which bring out the relationships, interactive patterns and dynamics between them and the ebb and flow of cause and effect. As they represent how things function and malfunction they provide diagrammatic "scale" or "disclosure" models.³⁸ They help us to understand aspects of work situations and to design developmental programmes. Consequently, as diagrams portray elements of systems in an orderly way, they help practitioners to work at things systemically and systematically and to express what they think. Checkland and Scholes use them extensively as I do, and have coined a most telling phrase for them, "rich pictures" because, they say, they are a better means for reading the rich moving pageant of relationships and connections than linear prose.³⁹ (I was amazed to find how similar their pictures are to the ones I have used quite independently.⁴⁰)
- **Images and metaphors** bring into play holistic concepts and, therefore, are aids to thinking systemically about churches, communities and organizations (see pp 74-75).
- **Charts and spread sheets** can also help people to think systemically and systematically. An outstanding example is the way in which Professor Gillian Stamp has used this method to do what she describes as "workscaping" in relation to the Anglican Church. Each horizontal line of "boxes" in a large spreadsheet represents a particular level of the life of the church from that of the parish to that of the international Anglican communion. In these boxes she notes things like: scale of community, object of work, what has to be left behind by those who move from one level to another, responsibilities, creativity, vulnerability, what causes disintegration. The result is a most revealing detailed systematic and systemic picture of the work structure of the parts and the whole of the Church of England. Then symbols are used to represent the systemic nature of the work at each level.⁴¹
- **Loop analysis** is an effective way of tracing out positive and negative feedback in complex systems of mutual causality. Aspects of an organization or a programme are set out and connected with lines indicating positive and negative effects. An example is given in Display 7:7.⁴² There are similarities with Buzan's method of "brain patterning" which can help with this process.⁴³
- **Circularity** a somewhat misleading term for a way of tracing out the interaction between people living and working in a socio-religious system from as many perspectives as possible which has already been described (pp 65-66).
- **Systemic hypotheses**, also mentioned earlier, help to work to systems and to multiple rather than linear causation (cf p 75).
- **Lateral thinking**, a well-known process popularised by Edward de Bono, involves switching to something radically different in an attempt to tackle problems in a "non-vertical" way.⁴⁴
- **Parallel thinking**⁴⁵ is another of de Bono's concepts which I have found extraordinarily helpful in thinking systemically. It involves: accepting alternative

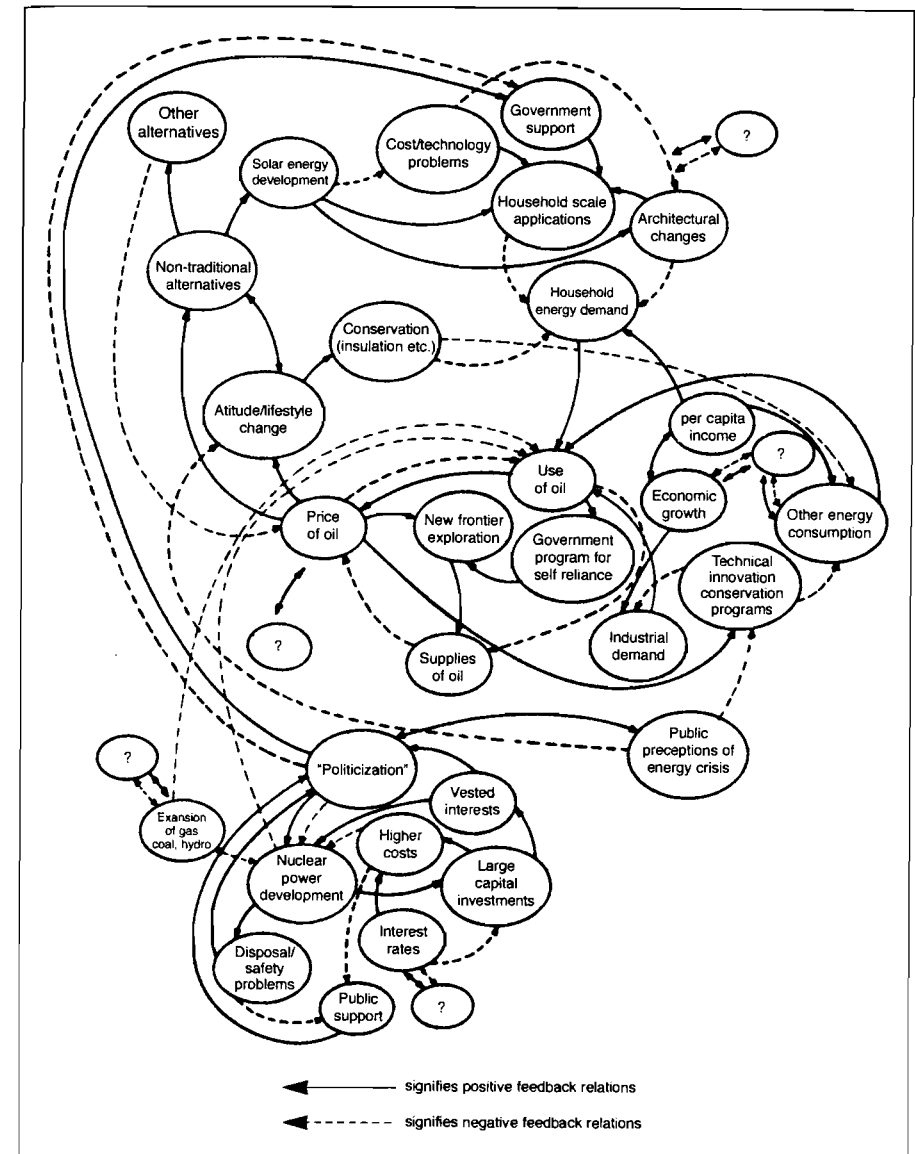
possibilities or both sides of a contradiction without judging them; laying them down in parallel; designing forward from alternative or parallel possibilities. These processes enable all those involved to focus in the same direction and to think co-operatively in parallel. All ideas are drawn into the process so people do not have to try to squeeze in an idea or to jump on one as soon as it is presented. He claims that “the method provides a means of talking about thinking and for organizing thinking”. Parallel thinking is particularly useful in understanding and practising the art of designing which is a systemic and holistic activity. “We have become obsessed”, says de Bono, “with analysis and spend far too much time on analysis and far too little on design”. Possibly that is because it is easier to dismantle systems than to put them together.

- **Community studies and community development** help through their respective emphases upon researching and working with communities as communities and, therefore, systemically.⁴⁶

These methods are ways and means of helping practitioners to approach, conceptualise and engage with things systemically. It helps them to engage conceptually with the whole in relation to the parts and vice versa. It also helps them when they are working face to face with individuals or groups or meetings to do so in relation to the whole. Whilst it is possible to engage conceptually with the whole and the parts and to consider things systemically from this perspective and that or from this sub-system and that, it is possible to engage practically with the whole only through working with a particular part at specific periods of time. A key to positively affecting the part and the whole, the sub-system and the system, is to pay careful attention to the positive and negative connections and dynamics between them. Systemic thinking is potentially creative, as is systematic thinking. Combined, their potential increases exponentially.

(d) **The Ability to Listen to and to Read and Dialogue with Work Situations.** Much of the time and energy of practitioners and participants goes into writing their developmental programmes and scripts into working situations. They will do this perfectly legitimate purposeful activity more effectively if they learn how to listen to⁴⁷ and to read and dialogue with work situations. This can be done through concentrating on a situation, working at it from this angle and that and focussing on anything that strikes you, rather than your thoughts about and plans for it, musing and reflecting on it until it starts to speak to you, says things to you. Jackson W Carroll, in a book on reflective leadership in ministry urges practitioners to “attend to talkback from the situation.”⁴⁸ Gareth Morgan gets near to what I am trying to articulate with the following sentences with which he ends a book on images that help people to get to grips with organizations:

... the trick is to learn how to engage in a kind of conversation with the situation one is trying to understand. Rather than impose a viewpoint on a situation, one should allow the situation to reveal how it can be understood from other vantage points. In a way we can say that one should always be sensitive to the fact that a situation “has its own opinion” in that it invites understanding through a frame of reference other than the one being applied. The art of analysis described above allows one to probe a situation through the reading process, gradually moving to some judgement or critical evaluation of the situation at hand.⁴⁹



Display 7:7 Positive and Negative Feedback in the Power Industry⁵⁰

Earlier, reference was made to Morgan’s telling phrase “diagnostic reading” which he uses to describe attempts to “discern the character of a situation” (pp 74-75). This is quite a different approach from those in which people are preoccupied with talking to or at a situation, dictating to it, doing things to it, modelling it on some pre-determined design. It is, in fact, working *with* and *to* situations and all we find in them in relation to what we bring to them and want for and from them.

Enough, then, about the nature of this important ability. What can help people to address situations in this way whatever their natural aptitude might be? I will restrict myself to those things which I have found helpful.

Inner orientation is key. Situations reveal their nature to practitioners who attend to them, who wait upon them (cf pp 86, 334), and who approach them with eager expectation and willingly accept the discipline and challenge of doing so. (Compare the way in which consultants attend to consultors, pp 37-40.) And this is possible because people, not things, comprise the most important aspect of any working situation. Patient perseverance is necessary because, whilst situations sometimes speak to us clearly and unambiguously, they do not normally talk to us through carefully sculpted sentences and edited texts. They can speak to us with many voices and in different languages. Messages and meanings can be garbled and unclear. Listening to, reading and dialoguing with situations can be difficult and at times impossible especially when they overwhelm us. Assuming they can be read like books is dangerous. The truth of the matter is that it is simply not possible to completely understand work situations and some of the things we feel most certain about may not be correct. This enhances not diminishes the importance of attending to what situations have to say. It underlines the importance of having a reverential approach to knowing and being humble before the realities with which we are engaged. If we are to be able to act on what we know and learn from situations as we do so two things need to be held in tension: being clear about what is seen, understood and believed; holding to and using the knowledge confidently whilst remaining alert and open to new insights which indicate that it needs to be rethought, revised or corrected. Being able to hold these things together is an important skill.

I-Thou rather than *I-It* relations between practitioners and situations, to use Martin Buber's telling phrases, are a central feature of these reflective processes. They induce inner dialogues about practical, intellectual, emotional and theological issues. The experience is akin to a combination of praying and doing mental exercises. The human ability to sort out a complex of confusing information, thoughts and insights is incredible but not infallible. Our minds and hearts have ways of their own for doing this. The unconscious can perform miracles in sorting out chaos and confusion if given time to do so before its findings are suppressed by imposed interpretations.

Several things I find help these inner processes. One of these is through getting things on paper. This can be done by using Buzan's method (cf p 186) or loop analysis (cf pp 333, 335) or through simply writing down everything that is going through our minds without trying to organise it and then to try to get some meaning and order out of it as we read off what it is saying to us. One way of doing this is by preparing *records* which are structured accounts of meetings or events which describe purposes, processes and implications. They are different from minutes or diary entries.⁵⁰ "Journalling"⁵¹, another method of dialoguing with situations and events on paper, is a structured way of writing reflectively about things from different perspectives. Another way is the preparation of work and position papers by using outlines. Examples of such outlines are given in Appendix I. Practitioners have been amazed at the increased understanding of themselves as workers and of

their situation that comes from simply assembling information and thoughts in this way. Other outlines help people to write about cases and problems.⁵² "Profiling", in these and other ways, is another creative process.⁵³ Drawing diagrams is yet another way (cf pp 90-91).⁵⁴ When people simply cannot put pen to paper they can provide the information verbally whilst someone else listens attentively and takes it down.

Projecting what is in the mind onto paper presents the broad picture of the inner thinking. Objectifying it in this way means that practitioners can engage with what is on the paper rather than chasing thoughts and feelings around their heads. Others can also engage with what is in the practitioner's mind through what is in writing. This brings us to another aid. Informed and structured conversations and consultations with other people, as we have seen in Part One, can contribute enormously to reflective processes.

The social and behavioural sciences offer a wide range of tools and information which help practitioners to know and understand the realities of churches and communities. They have made available, for instance, a vast amount of information about the ways in which people act in all kinds of social and religious contexts and settings and many different theories and hypotheses. These can help us to interpret and understand situations. They have also provided tools by which to explore and research human situations through asking questions, interviewing, surveying and observing. (The second of these methods is considered in the next section.) One fascinating development is the study of signs and symbols ("semiotics") in church and congregational life.⁵⁵ Research into symbolic boundaries I found particularly helpful.⁵⁶

Any and all of these activities can induce "double loop learning."⁵⁷

(e) *The Ability to Act as "Participant Observers"*. This ability and the previous one facilitate each other: The ability to participate and observe depends upon the ability to listen to and to read and dialogue with situations and vice versa.

Clearly, by the very nature of their vocation all ordained and lay leaders have wide ranging access to church, community and family life in their formal and informal settings. Thus, through participating and observing, they have much information, many perspectives and insights into what is happening and why. By and large they are not trained in the skills necessary to do this professionally,⁵⁸ but that is not to say some of them are not good at it; they are. For those who wish to develop these vitally important skills there is a wealth of readily available highly relevant experience and knowledge about the theory and practice of "participant observation", the principal field work method of ethnography used by anthropologists and those who carried out the community studies noted earlier.⁵⁹ James P. Spradley says that ethnography means *learning from people rather than studying people*.⁶⁰

Clergy and lay leaders are ideally placed to use these methods because, unlike anthropologists and other researchers of community who have to feign an acceptable role such as that of an author, they have an ascribed and accepted place in church and society. Moreover, as ministers and priests belong and yet do not belong to local churches and are therefore insiders and outsiders of the congregational culture, they stand in a unique position to meet two of the necessary conditions of those who want to be effective participant observers: personal

involvement, passive or active, and detachment.⁶¹ Experience has proven that help of various kinds is available to practitioners of church and community work from the practice theory of participant observation. Basically what this help does is to sharpen up the use of opportunities to participate and observe so that they are more creatively deployed in developmental use. This practice theory will help practitioners to:

- clarify their roles and functions as participant observers and pastor-workers and the ground rules necessary for such involvement;
- clarify the nature and significance of the data that they obtain; (For instance, it provides inner pictures of action meanings and cause and effect which cannot be obtained from external observation survey methods.)
- take into account the effect that the nature of their participation (active, passive, interested or disinterested, directive or non-directive) might have on their observations and vice versa;
- make general, focussed and selected observations and describe them;
- identify taken-for-granted feelings and meanings and things which lead to self-deception in practitioners and themselves;
- recognise misinformation “evasions”, “lies”, “fronts” and ways of dealing with them or taking them into account;
- collect data and assess it for bias and distortion;
- make an ethnographical analysis of churches and communities;
- make better informed judgements about what they have done and seen;
- record and write up their observations and findings;
- stand back and reflect and sharpen the pictures of what they have experienced and observed.

I have used these methods extensively in work with people in churches and communities and in research and training programmes.⁶² A telling example of the use of them by a group of ordinary people to solve an acute problem of violence in a youth centre has been written up.⁶³

Some ministers I have worked with have been uncomfortable with the idea of using anything that smacks of scientific research methods. They felt that doing so leads to using people for research and spying upon them. Such outcomes are as unacceptable to them as they are to me because it can have adverse effects upon how we see people and our relationships with them. Two things I have found reduce the danger of these things happening. The first relates to the use being made of the methods. They are being used to study *the work* and the human factors which help and hinder it, *not the people*. As noted above ethnography is about learning from people rather than studying them. Clearly this involves looking at what people do and how they do it. However, this is quite different from studying parishioners and participants *per se*. Observing carefully and thinking deeply about vocational work and our personal and working relationships adds value to them if our motives and purposes are honourable; it demeans and diminishes them if our intentions are not. The second thing is, that whilst thinking about some of our observations is of

necessity a private activity which influences the ways in which we go about things, the sharing of observations and working together at their implications is central to the approach advocated in this book. And when all is said and done we do observe and think our thoughts. What is being suggested here is that we do it more carefully and scrupulously in relation to Christian purposes and beliefs and the common good. Apart from its usefulness, it can refine and redeem inner human and spiritual processes, understandings, attitudes and approaches.

(f) The Ability to use Other People's Ideas and Research Critically and Creatively. Up to this point the emphasis has been upon practitioners gathering their own data and doing their own research. A complementary approach is to use the ideas and researches of others. All my work has been informed and enriched through a wide range of research and thinking which I simply could not have done for myself, this book makes that apparent. Generally speaking other people's work has helped me to understand: the nature of the constituency with which I am engaged (through, for example, biblical, theological, community and organizational studies); the processes of intellectual, moral and faith development (through, for example, the work of Piaget, Kohlberg and Fowler); the functioning of people in groups, teams, communities, secular and religious organizations; ways of working with people and modes of leadership (through a vast number of social and behavioural science scholars). Some ideas about what was involved in drawing upon various disciplines were discussed earlier, cf pp 288-290.

One of the many people upon whose work I have drawn is that of Professor Michael Argyle. He is highly skilled at drawing together the findings of research in relation to the socio-psychology of a range of human activities. Of itself the way in which he does this is an education about the way in which practitioners in church and community work can use other people's research. Moreover, research findings are presented in user friendly ways.⁶⁴

Other people's research findings, for instance, can greatly help practitioners to formulate working hypotheses and to establish assumptions. Community studies and profiles can be used as templates to explore the actualities of a local community. Examining dissonance between general research findings and the evaluated experience and researches of practitioners can be rewarding. Effective use depends upon practitioners thoroughly testing out the research in relation to their own experience and the actualities of their working context: unthinking, uncritical acceptance and application of independent research findings is dangerous no matter how prestigious the source and is contrary to the way of working described in this book. It is essential that practitioners have confidence in their own evaluated experience and their ability to test that of others.

(g) The ability to Portray Work Situations. Drawing upon all their information, insights, beliefs and aspirations, practitioners need to be able to conceptualize and portray how they see and understand their work situations. This can be done in prose or in diagrams through position papers of one kind or another (cf p 87 and Appendix I). What is involved in this activity is discussed in Chapter Two.

6. Able to Discuss Constructively Issues of Life and Faith.

Inevitably and naturally, as we noted earlier, engagement in church and community work leads to exchanges and discussions about life and faith between people of

similar and different beliefs and approaches to religion. As trust and respect grows between practitioners and those with whom they work they are able to explore the questions that concern them. The subjects and the slants on old and new agendas are legion. The literature is varied and vast. It would be interesting to have a survey of the topics that arise, but to the best of my knowledge that is not available. What is important is that the approach to these questions is entirely consistent with the approach to working with people advocated in this book and a natural extension of it. So, for instance, anyone and everyone who participates needs to be free to express just what they feel and think and to be helped to do so, to think about each other's ideas beliefs and fears, to question and challenge each other critically but graciously, to point each other to important sources and to learn from each other. Above all they need to be able to help each other to think more effectively and satisfyingly and to struggle together with issues that concern them rather than to strive against each other. Many of the skills we have already discussed such as conceptualising and analysing can be used in relation to these matters. Practitioners need to be able to participate in such discussions and to facilitate them. This means that Christians participate on the same terms as anyone else and they help others and especially those who differ from them to do the same: there is no place here for religious group think (cf pp 212, 323-324). This activity is not about winning theological arguments or scoring spiritual points. It is not preaching to others. It will involve sharing beliefs and religious experiences and exploring their meanings with humility.

Quite commonly practitioners feel that they should have all the "answers". At times it is an advantage to have some or the ability to find them through exploring the literature or consulting specialists. Generally speaking, however, admitting ignorance and setting out with others to see what can be discovered is much more creative than providing answers. But it must be a genuine search. This can draw people together. It can cause them to learn how to explore and research a subject for themselves. Answers apart, all this can promote human and spiritual development.

What practitioners need to be able to do is to engage in, promote and facilitate conversations of a reflective kind which enable people to learn from one another, grow together and build up communities capable of working together and doing theology and exploring faith together.

7. Practitioners Need to be Equipped and Resourced for the Psycho-Spiritual Ups and Downs of Creative Reflective Engagement

The inner lives of practitioners and other participants engaged in creative reflective engagement are pivotal points of the whole process. Essentials of the whole drama of engagement are played out over and over again in their heads, hearts and souls. Their inner world is alive. They could, for instance, be trying out this idea or that, or speculating about how others might respond to particular courses of action, or rehearsing and re-rehearsing how they might go public with their thoughts. After events they could be re-enacting, re-living, re-working things that have happened and the emotions associated with them, from the most wonderful and sublime to the most debilitating and painful such as pride, shame, fear, panic, angst.

Some of my most searing and unpleasant experiences have occurred during the overnight interval between working sessions when things had got into an intellectual

or emotional or interpersonal mess to which I had contributed. Trying to get at causes, sort out complex issues on my own and decide what action to take whilst struggling with tiredness, emotional flash backs and my raw feelings were enormously difficult things to do. At times panic was hard to keep at bay especially when the stakes were high. The quality of the subsequent engagement with others depended to a large extent, but not entirely, upon my ability to turn my debilitating reactivity into constructive proactivity overnight. These experiences are by no means limited to times of privacy, similar ones occur in public. Inner and outer engagement reciprocate and intersect. All this illustrates that the inner lives of practitioners are base workshops which produce critical elements of creative reflective engagement: practitioners are, as we have noted, the subjects and instruments of the engagement. The open system process we considered earlier is another way of looking at what happens (cf pp 271-272). The currents and effects of the engagement flow into and through practitioners who, at their most effective, act creatively upon them through their inner activities and, at their worst, are beaten, mauled and hurt by them. Clearly, the well-being and development of practitioners and their work are strongly influenced by the quality of their inner life. So, what are the abilities and resources which experience has proved help practitioners to live and endure this inner working life?

Many have already been considered. Topics still to be considered in this chapter are highly relevant: discipline, dealing with our incompetence, support systems, disengagement and prayer. In this section I concentrate on the nature of the abilities and resources rather than on how to acquire them. Listing points distorts the reality that at any one time is an interdependent cluster of things which helps practitioners to deal with the ups and downs of engagement.

Accepting, knowing and trusting yourself as an instrument of engagement and analysis (cf p 71). Self-knowledge and acceptance of oneself as an instrument of engagement and analysis is vitally important. Understanding, which emerges quite naturally, can be sharpened by listing strengths and weaknesses or by getting a psychological profile.⁶⁵ I was greatly helped to understand and use myself as an instrument of research by some simple methods for determining my response to sensory experience and how strongly I feel.⁶⁶ Acceptance is as important to current practice, as the desire to improve is to future development.

Understanding and acceptance are most productive when they are combined with the confidence to trust yourself.⁶⁷ Take, for instance, an incident of the kind described earlier, an overnight interval between sessions when things have gone seriously wrong. There is a pattern in my experience of such events: working hard to try to sort things out; reluctance to go to bed before I do so; getting more and more tired; ending up with what I know to be a somewhat forced and unconvincing plan of action; going to bed; wakening three or four hours later with everything more-or-less sorted out in my mind in a way with which I immediately feel comfortable; relief! Given the knowledge that this happens more often than not, the sensible thing to do is to conserve my energy by gathering the material and resting whilst at some deeper level of consciousness things are sorted out. But I will keep worrying at it when I know I should leave it. Three things are needed to stop work at a strategic point: the ability to discern when I have done sufficient thinking,

working and worrying for my unconscious to take over and do its job; the confidence that my mind can and will operate constructively analytically when I am not conscious of it doing so; the discipline to overcome my desire to complete things in a tidy order and my impatience with the slowness of the process. At my best I instruct my unconscious to get on with it without disturbing my sleep!

Of itself, developing such self-knowledge and the confidence to use it enhances performance.

The ability and resources to think clearly under pressure and to access appropriate bodies of knowledge. Much has already been said about facilitating structures that, when assimilated, come into play automatically to help to order thinking and feelings and reduce emotional dissonance.⁶⁸

The ability to bond with people emotionally at levels and depths appropriate to the nature of their working relationships. Practitioners need to be able to control their emotional involvement. Given the nature of the engagement, cool clinical involvement is ineffectual and spiritually unacceptable. At the other extreme, to be out of emotional control is neither desirable nor useful. As with “knowing”, there is a middle personal and professional way for practitioners. Emotion must be a constituent part of a practitioner’s involvement with people but it must not control relationships nor work programmes.

Ability to respond constructively to complicating events in face-to-face work. An event could be an unexpected acrimonious breakdown of working relationships in a group at a critical moment over a point of principle or policy. Some such events can be anticipated, others cannot. Speculative anticipation about the worst and best eventualities gets people thinking about a range of possibilities and preparing for them. This overcomes the tendency for preoccupation with the desired critical path. Important as it is, foresight cannot by definition deal with that which is unpredictable and unimaginable. Therefore, what practitioners need are the skills to deal with the ever present possibility of a visit from the unexpected. Many of the things already mentioned help. Amongst the many other things that people find helpful a few can be named by way of illustration: the confidence and personal discipline to allow events to unfold and to face up to the issues and get others to do the same; the ability to describe the event in ways which enable everyone to see it more objectively, to talk about it and to work at it; the wisdom and discipline not to take sides whilst trying to facilitate creative discussion between all parties; the ability to get people working together at the event constructively. Amongst other things, this means that leaders must refuse to pander to or be intimidated by any misplaced expectations they or others may have of them, for example, that if they are worth their salt they must be able to save the situation by immediate and definitive responses. What practitioners need to be able to do is to know themselves, the strengths and weaknesses of their attitudes, approaches and skills and to assiduously work at improving them in and through learning from past experiences, study, role play, mental exercises, and any other means in preparation for the unexpected. Anticipation, preparation and training is a sound trinitarian formula!

The Ability to handle positive and negative feedback constructively.⁶⁹ There are two main kinds of feedback, the inner self feedback which comes unbidden and that

which comes from others. Getting feedback is one thing, handling it is another. Individuals and groups need the ability to process it constructively through their personal and interpersonal systems. Doing this can make heavy demands upon the intellect, the emotions, and spiritual resources whether the feedback is negative or positive. Both forms of feedback have good or bad potential: for instance, acclamation can lead to conceit and strident criticism to depression or loss of self-worth if they are not properly processed through the human psyche. Developing the ability to handle any and all forms of feedback is especially important at a time

Personal Preparation for Feedback

Some questions help to prepare to receive and work on feedback that comes in all ways:

- What kind of good and bad inner responses and reactions do you customarily make when you receive feedback that is positive/negative?
- What responses do those with whom you work often make and what effects do they have upon you?
- What would you have to do in order to improve the way in which you process and use feedback?
- What kind(s) of feedback do you need from whom or from what?
- Why do you need it?
- Are there any dangers in trying to get it?
- How can you get and receive it?

Guidelines to Processing Feedback

Remain critically open to negative and positive feedback; don’t dismiss or quench it by denigrating the sources. In relation to feedback, however, the source may be wrong and you may be right. Several things can help:

- Make it usable and manageable by:
 - collating and condensing it to avoid the problems of feedback overload;
 - try to de-personalize and objectify it possibly by writing it down, or talking to someone else about it. Look at it from different perspective. Feelings are facts but try to avoid being preoccupied with them. Delay reaction when possible.
- Determine quite specifically to what the feedback properly relates: to you? your work? your beliefs/purposes/your organization? Or is it a projection of a problem that others have?
- Decide whether or not anything can be done about it and whether it is worthy of serious attention.
- Try to keep things in proportion by counterbalancing positive with negative feedback and vice versa.
- Avoid confusing qualitative with quantitative feedback: one person may be right and the rest wrong and vice versa; the person who makes most noise may or may not be right!
- Evaluate feedback and determine its implications in relation to beliefs, purposes, needs, resources and your personal performance (not only in relation to yourself) and in relation to what you know of its source.
- Whenever possible seek help and support, not just one or the other.
- Think, feel and pray things through.

Display 7:8 Some Guidelines for Preparing for Processing Feedback

when evaluation, assessment and accountability are being stressed. Display 7:8, guidelines for preparing for and processing feedback, indicates the skills and resources required.

Getting the work flow right. As noted earlier, Professor Gillian Stamp has discovered that “flow” is widely used to describe the state of well-being at work. “People in flow”, she says, “feel alert, energetic, competent and creative . . . they feel good about themselves . . . sound judgements ‘just happen’ and because they are more often than not correct, flow feeds on itself and confidence grows accordingly”.⁷⁰ This is described as a state of “well-being”. It occurs for each person when challenges and capabilities are matched: stress occurs when challenges are more than or less than capabilities (cf pp 109, 150, 376, 388 and 391). A state of well-being and flow is both an agent and a consequence of creative reflective engagement. They are reciprocals of each other. Consequently practitioners with a deep seated state of well-being and in flow with rhythm and momentum are well endowed to ride the ups of creative reflective engagement and to cope with and correct the downs.

One of the many practical things that help practitioners to find and maintain this flow is to work within or just beyond the work capacity with which they are most comfortable. Another is organizing themselves realistically in relation to four repetitive sequences in church work: planning; doing; follow-through; reflecting. When practitioners allocate time realistically for each element they are, as one would expect, more effective and fulfilled. Strange as it may seem this is far from normative in my experience. There is, for instance, a propensity in compiling work diaries to enter events and meetings without entering time for the other work associated with them.

8. Practitioners Need to be Able to Deal With Their Own Incompetence and That of Others

Recently there has been much concern in my denomination about ministerial and diaconal incompetence. Reports⁷¹ have been presented to the Methodist Council and Conference and carefully considered. New procedures have been adopted for responding to complaints in professional and pastoral ways. Generally speaking such complaints are made when the incompetence is long-standing and chronic and therefore extremely difficult to deal with effectively. Clearly, corrective action by practitioners themselves and those to whom they are accountable is essential at a much earlier stage. Much is being done to this end by way of making contracts to which practitioners are held accountable through assessment programmes and by the emphasis on reflective practice and lifelong training. Many of the things advocated in this book can assist people to become more competent and to correct incompetence at an early stage. Personal resources and skills are required which enable practitioners and people to confront and challenge each other and together to work out the implications constructively. Much of what was said about dealing with feedback is relevant here.

Significant changes in attitude and approach can occur when the focus of attention is changed from the incompetence of particular practitioners and how to deal with it, to the incompetence to deal with incompetence. When a group of people are asked to consider the incompetence of others there is a tendency for them to think of themselves as amongst the competent, whereas in fact they are to a greater or lesser sense incompetent. A result is a “them” (incompetent)-“us” (competent)

attitude. (I experienced this in the annual Methodist Conference discussion on the Report and only faced it when reflecting on my unease.) That is very unhealthy. Admittedly the range of competence and incompetence is wide. What is required is a levelling sense of our common incompetence and especially that related to dealing with it, and a solidarity in finding ways of dealing with our own incompetence and that of others. Confession and remedial action need to go together.

Pursuing this shift in focus can lead to a systemic approach to incompetence which is more likely to treat the problem “holistically”. Such an approach looks for the causes of incompetence in any and all parts or members of the system, in a church for instance, rather than in the individual who is showing the symptoms. An illustration of this is in treating “burn-out” and stress as a function of the whole system of which the particular person is a part. The person who has burnt out may be acting as the “fuse” of the work system (cf pp 109 and 151).⁷² The ability to deal with incompetence systemically is essential to enhancing the competence of workforce systems and practitioners.

9. Practitioners Need to be Able to Use and Provide Support Systems

From time immemorial there have been those engaged in lay and ordained ministry who have supported each other. However, the practice has never been universal. Sadly, there have also been those who have withheld support from each other and even undermined and attacked each other. New impetus has been given to the provision of support through the emphasis upon collaborative ministry and the increasing practice of the use of support systems.⁷³ The latter take many forms of spiritual direction, counselling and consultancy, support groups and appraisal procedures. Formal and informal systems variously offer technical assistance and personal, moral and spiritual support. Great progress has been made in the theory and practice of providing help. This is reflected in the enhanced quality of formal and informal support. This is not the place to survey these systems as our purpose is simply to note some of the basic abilities required of those who wish to give and receive support. Part One examined in detail what is required of those who wish to give and receive work and vocational consultancy help.

Fundamentally, support must enhance the ability of those receiving it for creative reflective engagement in their work and situation. To do this, the interaction between supported and supporter needs to be a form of creative reflective engagement. Consequently the basic attitudes, approaches and skills required are the same as those for creative reflective engagement. Essentially and substantively supporters must be non-directive towards those seeking their support and the situations in which they work. Thus, they must not presume to “take over”, supervise, control, direct. Suspicion that outsiders are covertly controlling people and their situation through supposedly providing support to their primary workers seriously complicates and confounds their creative reflective engagement.

I know from bitter experience just how easy it is to fall foul of these dangers. They are insidious. Apart from lack of skill they derive from undesirable propensities on all sides. Those seeking support may be looking for direction from supporters or the false security of unhealthy dependency or wanting someone else to take or share their responsibility. Those offering support may be wanting to

influence and control or to indulge in a feeling of being indispensable or to have power without responsibility (cf references to consultants taking over). When some of these propensities meet, match and mate, collusion leads to unholy alliances.

Thus, the onus of avoiding the dangers does not rest entirely and exclusively upon supporters. Those seeking support need to be aware of the dangers, to be able to resist their temptation and to take corrective action should things start to go wrong. Ways in which consultants can do this have already been considered.

10. Practitioners Need to be Able to Disengage Creatively

One of the important rhythmic movements in working with people in the way we are considering is: intervening, engaging, withdrawing, waiting and returning.⁷⁴ Another is the movement from action to reflection. Yet another is the progression from the various aspects of creative reflective engagement to creative disengagement and the return journey. The ability to do this is vital and for some, hard to acquire. (I am experiencing it now as I come to the end of weeks of work on this section!) Practitioners will differ greatly in doing this. Each needs to find and cultivate his/her way.

Consultors can and do seek vocational and work consultancy help on any and every aspect of the work described in this PART. Thus, the list of contents, when used as a "map", helps consultants and consultors to locate and cross reference subject matter under consideration. Therefore, it is an aid to thinking about wholes and parts systemically and systematically from any and all perspectives.

NOTES AND REFERENCES: Chapter Seven

1. *The Making of Ministry: The Report of the Ministerial Policy Working Group to the Methodist Council, September 1996* (Methodist Publishing House) pp 66ff, as revised.
2. *op cit* p 67f.
3. McKelvey, Bill (1982) *Organizational Systematics: Taxonomy, Evaluation, Classification* (University of California Press) has helped me greatly in relation to this with his ideas of "compoos" which he defines as "the total pool of competence elements (comps) making up the dominant competencies of all members of an organizational population". "Comps", or "competence elements", he defines as "elements of knowledge and skill that in total comprise the dominant competence of an organization". pp 454 and 193-210.
4. cf Lovell, George (1994) *Analysis and Design: A Handbook for Practitioners and Consultants in Church and Community Work* (Burns & Oates) pp 255-258, 260 and 270f for a discussion of the promotion of creative forms of participation and sharing and egalitarian working relationships.
5. For an exposition of the approaches see Batten, T. R. and M., *The Non-Directive Approach* (Oxford University Press, 1967; 4th impression 1978; Avec Publication of an abridged version 1988), and Lovell, George, *The Church and Community Development—An Introduction* (Grail Publications/Chester House Publications, 1972, revised 1980, Avec Publications 1992 reprint).
6. The Battens, *op cit*, have a useful chapter on "Factors Affecting Choice".
7. There is a fuller discussion of this approach in Lovell, George (1994) *Analysis and Design, op cit*, pp 197ff *et al*.
8. The Methodist Church produced an interesting report as a basis for discussion, *The Corporate Life of the Presbyterian Ministry*, (presented to the President's Council in February 1992). It argues that

presbyters "belong to an order" (paragraph 1.7). See Chapter Three of this book for a discussion about the Methodist Diaconal Order as an order of ministry and a religious order.

9. cf Charles New's assessment of the value of being engaged in national training and local church and circuit work in Lovell, George (Editor, 1996) *Telling Experiences: Stories About A Transforming Way of Working With People* pp 35 and 196f.
10. *The Making of Ministry* (see Reference 1) p 66, as revised.
11. cf *The Oxford Paperback Dictionary*.
12. Wakefield, Gordon S. (1986) *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (SCM Press) p 118.
13. cf Senge, Peter M. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization, op cit* p 10f.
14. This is a revised version of a list which first appeared in *Analysis and Design* p 232.
15. This diagram was in a paper by Cracknell, Kenneth (1996) *Mission and Evangelism in Methodist Theological Inquiry and Education with Special Relation to Culture and Context*, presented to the World Methodist Council Theological Education Committee with two practical requests that funds be found (a) for the teaching in Methodist seminaries throughout the world of missiology and evangelism which acknowledges culture diversity (b) for programmes in which theological teachers and students may experience what it is to do theology in cultures other than their own.
16. In writing this and in much of the work I have done I am indebted to an article by B. W. M. Palmer which first appeared in the *Expository Times* and was later published in Mitton, C. L. (ed) (1972) *The Social Sciences and The Churches* (T & T Clark) pp 11-26. It was entitled "Work and Fellowship in Groups and Organizations". At the time Palmer was Director of Studies, The Grubb Institute of Behavioural Studies, London.
17. cf Palmer *op cit* p 20.
18. cf Janis, Irving L. and Mann, Leon (1977) *Decision Making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict, Choice and Commitment* (Free Press, Collier Macmillan) p 132, cf pp 129ff, cf Morgan, Gareth (1989) *Creative Organization Theory: A Resource Book* (Sage Publications) pp 224-228 and A summary of the symptoms by Dr. Frank Heller in *The Guardian*, 31st January 1983 issue, in an article entitled "The Danger of Group Think".
19. I owe this to McKelvey, Bill (1982) *Organizational Systematics: Taxonomy, Evolution and Classification* pp 183ff.
20. In part the phrase is borrowed but regrettably I cannot recall the source.
21. Much thought has gone into the interaction between people with different personalities. See, for example, the work of Isabel Briggs Myers and Katherine C. Briggs on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). See an article in *The Way* Supplement 69, Autumn 1990 by Robert J. Thesing entitled "The Myers-Briggs, Enneagram, and Spirituality" pp 50-60. (There is a scholarly assessment of this indicator in an article by Professor Leslie J. Francis in *Movement* Autumn, 1996, see reference 65.) Another example is Belbin, R. Meredith (1981 reprinted 1985) *Management Teams—Why They Succeed or Fail* (Heinemann), it describes experiments into the personal characteristics required of different members of teams to make them effective.
22. Mark 12:30f R.E.B. The parallel account in Matthew, 23:37ff does not include "strength".
23. Elliott, Charles (1987) *Comfortable Compassion: Poverty, Power and The Church* (London: Hodder & Stoughton) p182f.
24. An example of the importance of this is given in Lovell, George and Widdicombe, Catherine (1978) *Churches and Communities: An Approach to Development in the Local Church* p.37.
25. I faced this problem when researching the work that I was doing as a local Methodist Minister to learn how to do it better and writing a doctoral thesis on it in order to submit the methods I was using to the test of academic rigour. I knew the examiners would be looking for "hard" information which could have been obtained but only by compromising working relationships. The following statement indicates how I resolved the dilemma.

By conscious decision the worker made no attempt to quantify these reactions and views (to the non-directive approach). To do so would have meant conducting a survey and could have had serious adverse effects on the relationships between the worker and the people. It could, for example, have caused people to hold to their views more dogmatically. This would have made it more difficult for the worker to achieve his purposes. The ways in which the worker responded did in fact facilitate changes in people's attitudes to the non-directive approach which were in accord with his purposes. A similar point is made in Chapter 10 "Records and Recording", where it is argued that even if there had been people who could record "interaction sociograms" and "discussion direction diagrams" it would have been more than the people could have taken.

Lovell, George *An Action Research Project to Test the Applicability of the Non-Directive Concept in a Church, Youth and Community Centre Setting* (University of London, 1973) p 344.

26. Watts, Fraser and Williams, Mark (1988) *The Psychology of Religious Knowing* (Cambridge University Press) p 153. Watts and Williams argue that religious knowing involves not so much coming to know a separate religious world as coming to know the religious dimensions of the everyday world (151). Religious knowing is concerned with a world in which religion and material interact (152). Religious knowing is, "a highly personal process that is both similar to, and intertwined with, knowledge of ourselves" (152).

I have also found great help from Smail, David (1984) *Illusion of Reality: The Meaning of Anxiety* (J. M. Dent and Sons). He argues that immediate knowledge of interpersonal truth is transmitted through "intuitive sensibility". This faculty is acquired through being an "embodied subject in a difficult and often cruel world".

27. Schon, Donald A. (1990) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Towards a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (Jossey-Bass Publishers) p xi.

28. *op cit* pp 22ff.

29. *op cit* pp 114ff.

30. Palazzoli, Mara Selvini *et al* (1986) *The Hidden Games of Organizations* (Pantheon Books, New York) p 175 Note 2.

31. Senge, Peter; Kleiner, Art; Roberts, Charlotte; Ross, Richard B.; Smith, Bryan J. (1994, reprinted with corrections 1997) *The Fifth Discipline: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization* (Nicholas Brealey) p 90.

32. Checkland, Peter; Scholes, Jim (1990, 1993 reprint) *Soft Systems Methodology in Action* (John Wiley and Sons) p 4.

33. Checkland, Peter *et al*, *op cit* p 25, cf p 22.

34. Senge, Peter *et al*, *op cit* includes cybernetics, chaos theory, gestalt therapy and the work of people like Gregory Bateson.

35. They are published by "Karnac Books", London. Reference is made to those of particular interest to people engaged in work consultancy in Part Two and listed in the Bibliography.

36. cf. Checkland, Peter, *et al*, *op cit*.

37. cf Senge, Peter *et al* (*op cit*) and Senge, Peter (1990, reprint 1993) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (Century Business).

38. Lovell, George (1980/1991) *Diagrammatic Modelling: An Aid to Theological Reflection in Church and Community Development Work* (An Avec Publication) p 16.

39. cf, Checkland, Peter *op cit* p 45.

40. I have described my use of them in *Diagrammatic Modelling* (see reference 35) and *Analysis and Design* pp 181-184.

41. See Stamp, Gillian (1988) *Well-Being and Stress at Work* (A Brunel Institute of Organisation and Social Studies, BIOS, Paper) and Stamp, Gillian (1988) *A Confusion Owned is a Change Begun* (A Brunel Institute of Organisation and Social Studies, BIOS Paper; and a chapter entitled "The hidden depths of organizations: people in working relationships: correspondence between Norman Todd and Gillian Stamp" in Nelson, John (ed) (1999) *Leading, Managing and Ministering: challenging questions for church and society* (Canterbury Press) pp 263-311.

42. This diagram is given by Morgan, Gareth *Images of Organization* (Sage Publications 1986) p 251 in a very helpful section on loop analysis. cf Senge, Peter (1994) *op cit* Chapter 17 and *et al*.

43. cf. Buzan, Tony *Use Your Head* (BBC 1974). See also Widdicombe, Catherine, (2000) *Meetings that Work: A practical guide to teamworking in groups* (The Lutterworth Press) pp 50f.

44. cf de Bono, Edward (1967) *The Use of Lateral Thinking* (Penguin Books, Ltd.) and numerous other publications.

45. de Bono, Edward (1994) *Parallel Thinking: From Socratic to de Bono Thinking* (Viking).

46. The books on this are numerous but see Bell, Colin and Newby, Howard (1971) *Community Studies* (Studies in Sociology: 5, George Allen and Unwin) and especially the discussion on community as open and closed systems, 57-60. Margaret Stacey made a breakthrough in community studies by drawing diagrams on the connections made by individuals between the various civic, sports and religious institutions in Banbury. cf Frankenberg, Ronald (1966) *Communities in Britain: Social Life in Town and Country* (Penguin Books) pp 154ff. F. W. Boal used a similar method in a chapter "Territoriality in Belfast" in Bell, Colin and Newby, Howard (ed) (1974) *Sociology of Community: A Selection of Readings* (New Sociology Library, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd.) p 191f. Warren, Roland L. (1963/1987) *The Community in America* (University Press of America) wrote about the American community as a social system.

47. cf Fiumara, Gemma Corradi (Translated by Charles Lambert) (1990) *The Other Side of Language: A Philosophy of Listening* (Routledge) I am reminded of the "I-Thou" rather than the "I-It" relationships Martin Buber wrote about.

48. Carroll, Jackson W. (1991) *As One with Authority: Reflective Leadership in Ministry* (Westminster/John Knox Press) p 129.

49. Morgan, Gareth (1986) *Images of Organizations* (Sage Publications) p 337.

50. Records and recording are described in *Analysis and Design* pp 178f.

51. Catherine Widdicombe, my colleague, uses this method. She mentions it in her book *Meetings that Work*, *op cit*. In a note on p 82 she says, "Ira Progoff, after studying with Jung, developed journaling as 'a tool for life'. See *At a Journal Workshop and Process Meditation* (Dialogue House Library NY). Information about Progoff Intensive Journal Workshops can be obtained from William Hewitt SJ, Campion Hall, Oxford OX1 1QS.

52. Many different structures are offered by different authors. Catherine Widdicombe describes several in *Meetings that Work*, *op cit*. The ones I use are described in *Analysis and Design*.

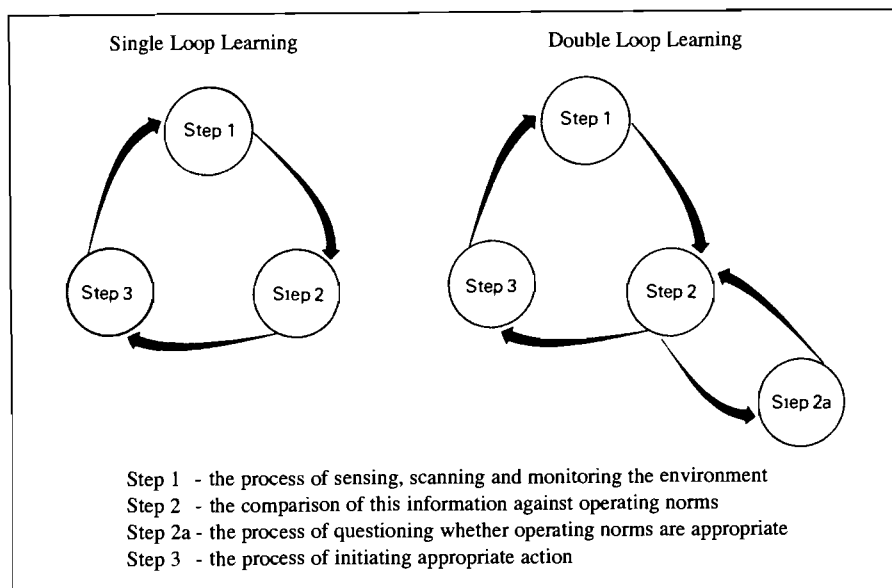
53. cf for instance, Hawtin, Murray, Hughes, Geraint and Percy-Smith, Janie with Foreman, Anne (1994, 1996 reprint) *Community Profiling: Auditing Social Needs* (Open University Press).

54. I discuss diagrams and their use in *Analysis and Design* pp 105, 175, 179-184.

55. Two examples illustrate this movement. The work of James F. Hopewell is an example of this approach to understanding churches and their culture. In his book *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (SCM Press, 1987) he differentiates and analyses different world-views through using what he refers to as the "semiotic square" which has four sections representing four world-view categories: authoritative, gnostic, charismatic, empiric. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale shows how to go about the semiotic analysis of a congregation in *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Fortress Press, 1997). In a chapter entitled "Exegesis of the Congregation" she discusses the symbolic approach to cultural analysis, argues that pastors need to be "amateur ethnographers" skilled in observing and describing the subcultural signs and symbols of the congregations they serve. She suggests guidelines for identifying symbols for study. Then, she discusses seven symbols for congregational exegesis: stories and interviews; archival materials; demographic information; architecture and visual arts; rituals; events and activities; people themselves. Clearly all this helps pastors to listen to and to read and dialogue with churches and congregations.

56. The following research on symbolic boundaries and constructs I have found very helpful: Cohen, Anthony P. (ed) (1982) *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures* and Cohen, Anthony (ed) (1986) *Symbolising Boundaries: Identity and Diversity in British Cultures* (both published by Manchester University Press). See also Cohen, Anthony (1989) *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London, Routledge).

57. "Double loop Learning depends upon being able to take a 'double look' at the situation by questioning the relevance of operating norms". "Single loop learning rests in an ability to detect and correct error in relation to a set of operating norms". Morgan, Gareth (1986) *Images of Organization* (Sage) p 88. He uses the following diagrams to illustrate the processes.



58. An exception to this is referred to by Leonara Tubb Tisdale (*op cit* see ref. 55) p 60. A Christian educator, Denham Grierson, has apparently developed a participant observer approach to congregational studies for Australian theological students. He has produced the following very useful guidelines.

1. The participant-observer shares in the activities and sentiments of the people. This involves face-to-face relationships, and direct contact with their shared life.
2. The role of the participant-observer requires both a necessary detachment and personal involvement.
3. The participant-observer is a normal part of the culture and the life of the people under observation. He or she does not come as an expert, but rather as a learner who, in order to learn, participates in the life of the people.
4. The role of the participant-observer is consistent within the congregation, so that no confusion is created by unexpected changes of behaviour or alternating of roles.
5. The participant-observer has as a target a symbolic level of meaning in the life of the congregation which cannot be gained from observing external behaviour alone, as would be the case for a detached observer.

59. There are many books and articles and chapters in books on social research on participant observation. Books I have found particularly helpful are: Spradley, James P. (1980) *Participant Observation* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston); Kane, Eileen (1983) *Doing Your Own Research* (Marion Boyars). In my doctoral thesis I made a comparative analysis of the advantage and disadvantages of survey and active and passive participant observation methods and a section on the relationships between the nature of my active participation and my observations.

60. *op cit* (in ref. 54) p 3.

61. cf Leonara Tubb Tisdale (*op cit*, ref 52) p 59ff for an interesting piece on "The Pastor as Ethnographer".

62. I first used them in Parchmore Methodist Church and Youth and Community Centre from 1966 to 1972 both to do and research the work in which I was engaged. It was the principal research method for my doctoral thesis on that work. A short account is contained in Grundy, Malcolm (ed) (1995) *The Parchmore Partnership* (Chester House Publications). Then it was used on a major action research programme, Project 70-75 and on the work of Avec, a Service Agency for Church and Community Work. The first was written up in *Churches and Communities* and the second in *Avec: Agency and Approach*.

63. cf Grundy, Malcolm *op cit* in ref.58 pp 52-60.

64. cf for instance: Argyle, Michael (1964/1967) *Psychology and Social Problems* (Social Science Paperback in association with Methuen and Company Ltd.); *The Psychology of Interpersonal Behaviour* (Penguin, 1967); *The Social Psychology of Work* (Penguin, 1972). And Argyle, Michael and Henderson, Monika *The Anatomy of Relationships—and the rules and skills to manage them successfully* (Heinemann, 1985).

65. "The Myers Briggs Type Indicator" (MBTI) is now, for instance, widely used in the churches to profile people psychologically. Prof. Leslie Francis, in an excellent one-page article, "Hi, I'm ESFJ—who are you?" concludes his assessment in this way:

Christians who take the psychological and theological challenges of the MBTI seriously are enriched. Those who accept the MBTI uncritically, however, are as impoverished as those who reject it out of hand (*Movement* 1996 p 6).

I accept his judgement. Three things have concerned me about the use to which I have seen people putting this method: the tendency to treat it as more scientific and accurate than it is; using it to excuse rather than to explain weaknesses in competence; treating the analysis as definitive instead of as a base and marker for development; using it to classify people. It is important to distinguish between a personality profile and a description of character which can never be complete. (I owe this last point to Margaret O'Connor.)

66. It is a fact of common experience and knowledge that individuals vary in the ways in which they see, feel and recount their experiences. Some people embellish, exaggerate and romanticise their experiences whilst others under-state them. Most people, however, fall between these extremes. The ways in which people consistently see, feel and describe their experiences is of critical importance in assessing the meaning and value of observation data. A general acknowledgment of these differences does not provide an adequate basis for making corrections to observations. I was helped by work by James Reason in a *New Society* article entitled "How Strongly Do You Feel?" (No. 395, April 1970 pp 680-682). His basic thesis is that the brain appears to contain a kind of 'volume control' for sensations. This determines how vividly we perceive the world. Following Asenath Petrie he divides people into three groups according to the way they typically deal with sensory stimulation. There are: *augmenters i.e.:* those who automatically amplify the strength of their sensations; *reducers i.e.:* those who have a built-in tendency to damp down or decrease the intensity of their sensory experience; *moderates i.e.:* those who are in an intermediate category on the continuum. Reason says that 'the variation in the way people intensify or damp down their sensory experiences remain much the same irrespective of the type of sensation involved, so it is reasonable to suppose that we are dealing with a general function of the brain, rather than with the efficiency of any particular sensory mode'. He has devised physical tests to determine into which category people fall. This work suggests:

- there is a consistency in the ways in which people feel, interpret, and react to describe their experiences;
- for some 'the world is a brighter, smellier, louder, tastier, heavier, faster, more painful, altogether more vivid place than it is for others'.

Most people consciously and unconsciously take into account whether the person they are talking to is an augments, reducer or moderate in interpreting and evaluating what s/he says. Successful personal, business or social intercourse depends upon the native or acquired skill in making these assessments. A similar device can be used in assessing observation data if it is known what type of persons (augments etc.) the observers and the observed are. I have been helped in my work by knowing that I am a 'moderate augments' *i.e.:* on the top of the 'moderate' or the bottom of the 'augments' scale.

67. An earlier reference to the work of Professor Gillian Stamp shows that a practitioner is more likely to trust their own judgement when their church trusts their judgement and entrusts them with the purposes of the Church. God does this to us.

Work and Workers

68. cf *Analysis and Design* p 47f.
69. I discuss this in some detail in *Analysis and Design* pp 139-141.
70. Stamp, Gillian (Sept. 1988) *Well-Being and Stress at Work* (Brunel Institute of Organisation and Social Studies, BIOSS, Occasional Paper).
71. *Ministerial and Diaconal Incompetence: The Methodist Council Report to Conference 1995*.
72. Friedman, Edwin H. (1985) *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (The Guildford Press) pp 216-219, compares two approaches to burnout: “burnout and the individual model” and “ a systems view of burnout”. The first sees “burnout as a symptom of the enervated person”. In the second the burnt-out person is “seen as the ‘identified burnout’, and the focus will be the overloading system”. The systemic approach to family therapy takes a similar approach to a malfunctioning member of the family system of which they are an integral part, cf the work of Mara Selvini Palazzoli.
73. cf Caplan, Gerald and Killiea, Marie (eds) (1976) *Support Systems and Mutual Help: Multidisciplinary Explorations* (Grune and Stratton, 1976 pp 325) etc.: The SPCK “New Library of Pastoral Care” and especially Coate, Mary Anne (1989) *Clergy Stress* (SPCK) pp 213; Jacobs, Michael (1989) *Holding in Trust—The Appraisal of Ministry* (SPCK) pp 187; Waldron-Skinner, Sue (1988) *Family Matters—The Pastoral Care of Personal Relationships* (SPCK) pp 179 and reports such as that produced by the United Reformed Church Stress in *Ministry* (1978).
74. I have discussed this process in some detail in *Analysis and Design* pp 197ff cf pp 45 and 122 of this book.