

Currently, Hindu evangelism in beguiling secular garb [as "Transcendental Meditation" and "The Science of Creative Intelligence"] is calling itself "the best way to inner peace"; Marriage Encounter promises marital peace and joy with or without God, if you stick with the 10-to-10 [10" per day letter-writing to each other, and 10" sharing what's written]; and variegated cults are offering the same ritual-cure, viz. attentional control for "integration" of self, self-in-world, self-in-cosmos. As the Hellenistic world came to disintegration via empire-building/maintaining, trade, and missionary cultural exchanges, so the "Western" world--the first global culture--has come to disintegration, with these additional destabilizing-disintegrating factors: knowledge fragmentation-departmentalization-compartmentalization, and work specialization in a succession of industrial revolutions foreseen in Adam Smith's THE WEALTH OF NATIONS (1776!). Now, in our increasingly post-Western world, here's what these factors look like: imperialism is at least dormant, trade continues to expand [our dogbed being from Poland], missionary activity has not diminished [but is now more Islamic and Hindu than Christian, and of course more Communist than any of these], the knowledge explosion is beginning to show some tendency to implosion [the systems approach, e.g.], and work is undergoing radical revalorization under bombardment from the new economics [variant labor/income relations theories and experiments] & the new personism [a values revolution asking more radically the question of the human costs of the job and the work system, synchronous with "the leisure revolution"]....Out of this roiled sea of consciousness--individual, tribal, emergent global--is rising a hunger for wholeness, for integration--for individually "getting your head on straight" and your "shit together," for tribal cohesiveness through consciousness-raising by class and race and sex and language-group, and for world understanding-action-institution. In America, the main way folks are acting toward satisfying this hunger is the main way folks did in Hellenistic times, viz. the small sacred group--instance the RCC sodalities, the Jewish chavurot movement, prayer groups and house churches ["parachurches"?) in Protestantism (e.g., Phil and Phoebe Anderson's just-out THE HOUSE CHURCH), human-potential and therapy groups of many sorts, and of course a welter of cults, chiefly on Hellenistic models (detailed in Ellwood's RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL GROUPS IN MODERN AMERICA)....I call all these sacred because, in contrast to functional groups serving a limited purpose, such as a business club, these all (1) address ultimate hungers, (2) provide experience of deliverance from some anti-human pressure(s), and (3) care in some way(s) about the individual's fears, hopes, and destiny. Of all such groups in America, by far the largest category is the local church or synagogue, whose clergy are therefore asked increasingly to be expert integrationists: "INTEGRATION," NOW, IS MINISTRY, not just something one does in an academic degree process. The biblical heritage relates differentiation and disintegration (e.g., Gen.11), provides a moral dimension for critiquing and curing brokenness ["repentance," "forgiveness," "reconciliation," etc.] and a spiritual energy against forces, processes, and structures of alienation, loneliness, and consequent aimlessness....the very shape "good news" will take when it arrives again, whether or not it's "the good news in Jesus." INTEGRATION IS EVANGELISM....This is the first thinksheet in a series of its title, which details the series' purpose. My presupposition, my conviction, my knowledge is that meditating slowly on an image, a story, an idea, an event, a proverb, a word--on anything that has convergent, centripetal, implosive, gathering, syncretic, synergistic value--will strengthen both integrity in person/group and integrational knowledge/skill. For us Christians, supremely this is daily meditation on THE story, Jesus in the Gospels: I assume and invite to this. All the items in this series are intended as adjunctive to this. Action toward justice and peace in community/world centers in this.

1. Seeing with eyes of faith, eyes that integrate the world into the Story, is a false spirituality--a mere using of the world for one's cosmizing, as in Hinduism--unless one really struggles to see the world on its own terms, with eyes of flesh, wide eyes wondering and fearful and hopeful. These eyes are made to coordinate in binocular vision, not as the one eyes of Isaiah/Jesus ("Look, look, but don't see") or of Sherlock Holmes ("You see, but you do not observe"), for whom the world was nothing but clue-sifting territory.