

WEIS from Willis.....c: Mel and Bill

17 Dec 75

"Integration Seminar" +/- "Encounter Intensive" in STM/PC?

This is the memo I said I'd write in the light of the AF discussion of this today and of our subsequent brief conversation, you and I.

1. As I said, Jud would consider this either/or a bad joke, his integration focus and mine being both consonant and radically different. The Shaloms focus intra-skin, toward personal integration: my type of integration seminars focus extra-skin, on the faith-order-life-work-world context. Neither he nor I would be silent if accused of neglecting the other focus, but the orientation is that radically different. Your comment about "integration," it was clear from your subsequent comments, centered in the Jud-type personal-psychological focus, which is the usual meaning one encounters in this "the Age of Therapy" [see #731, attached]. It was appropriate to that, and inappropriate to "integration seminars" I'm responsible for.

2. This memo is "a defenseless Mennonite" in that I'd rather lead integration seminars than anything else, and your proposal if adopted would knock me out of an integration seminar--ironically, for something old Jud and I developed together! If you can manage to set aside this personal consideration, as I think you can, let's continue to discuss substance-difference.

3. I'm eager to succeed in communicating something in this memo, viz. more clarity as to what an NYTS-program "integration seminar," in my opinion, should be. The institution is not remiss in defining "integration seminar." Rather, we are wisely working our way, experience by experience, toward a definition, which should emerge as functional rather than ideological. On with it!

4. Just this afternoon the STM/PC integration seminar got #728 [attached], which charts some components of integration and leaves the definition functionally, operationally, open. #732 deals with the integration of the odd into the ordinary, which is for religious leaders a primary integrational polarity in life and ministry, e.g. as the Holy in the common. Several scores of my integration thinksheets deal with this basic question *Who/what is to be integrated into whom/what?* My whole thing on planetary consciousness, global awareness, "ways of being religious" centers in the integrational availability, for personal life and ministry today and tomorrow, of the religious dimension as context for understanding-living Christianity and indeed for all high-meaning human living. Increasingly people, in and out of the churches, are wanting upaya/guru, i.e. spiritual leaders who provide action in the form of sense-making disciplines for attention, devotion, and life. Almost no "Christian leaders" are prepared to meet this need, and that--as I see it, feel it, taste it--is an integrational crisis. Institutional hacks in religion are a dime a dozen when, as now, people with their spiritual hungers couldn't care less what happens to "religious" institutions and their hacks. Either we get clergy retooled fast, or they and their institutions are dead. No amount of "personal integration" can touch this need.

5. Is "personal integration" inimical to what I'm talking about? Perhaps: many gurus, by which I mean spiritual leaders who provide nourishing disciplines, would be ruined in their influence if they got themselves "integrated"! But I believe in both integrations, as I made clear in the meeting today, and strongly favor PC candidates doing a Shalom with Jud before they do the integration seminar with me. [Jud and I have never seen ourselves as competitors, but only and always as complementaries in this business of clergy CE.] [Gurus control the dynamics by upayas, i.e. imposed-discipline trips.]

6. I'd like to see a thoroughgoing evaluation of the STM/PC program by students who've had, during the program, first an "encounter intensive" and then an "integration seminar." Meanwhile, we need a thoroughgoing evaluation by those now in the integration seminar, as we had for those last year.

NOTE ON TIME OF DAY: An integration is very tough head-work, and late afternoon is the worst possible time of day for it. For one thing, not enough fight left in the students!