

D.MIN. INTEGRATION SEMINAR REPORT ON SESSION #20 [1 Mar 76]

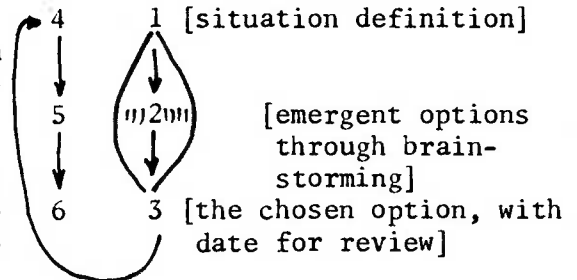
SOMETHING NEW: I'm addressing this not as in all previous [i.e., to staff] but to the candidates, who will recognize themselves each in the quotations, which come from all. [My reason for not identifying the speaker is that the report goes also to staff, and my reports to staff speak of individual candidates only when necessary.]

1. A difficult session to govern, but the liturgist-timekeeper kept his cool and effected a productive flow within the limits of our not having decided, at last session, a structure for this session. [One member was absent.] Session theme: THE CASE WE ARE.

2. What, in view of our having left the process open last week for this session, should we have expected to happen? (1) That we'd all use #712 [modified Glasse], as we have throughout our cases, with increasing comfort and flexibility; (2) That we'd all write the case, since no one person was expected to.... Only one person met these [his!] expectations: me. So I was asked to distribute my write-up of our case, which I did [= #761; distributed after the session: #766 (Glasse form) and #769, the latter facing reality by ideality]. Then I was asked to read what I'd written, but there were objections to this, so I suggested that you turn the sheet upside down, and commented that the worst way I could think of to begin the session would be to have me read something at you: that would beguile toward (1) dealing not with the case we are, but with the case only one of us is, namely me, and (2) cheaply accepting, as the process spine, my definition of the situation.

3. My old boss Truman Douglass used to say, "I don't care what happens in the meeting so long as you let me take the minutes." The con person [ex conman] says, "I don't care what happens in the planning so long as you let me define the situation." On the chalkboard I drew this planning diagram:

If "3" fails to meet the need (solve the problem), instead of going back immediately to "2" to choose an alternative option, the wise course is to return to "1" [as step "4"; situation REdefinition, for probably significant changes have occurred since the decision for the first option], then back to "2" [as step "5"; decision for a second option (step "6") being deferred till you repeat stage "2," whose optional range has probably increased by now]. Failure to do your homework on "1" distorts the whole process and makes it unvaluuable both as process and in personnel--as I explained variously in the three thinksheets I prepared for today's session.



4. The diagram above was put on the board at the end of a long round of speeches in which everyone took part. The session leader gently tried to get the group to put spine into the flesh, and with partial success. I think that he'd have been unsuccessful had he pressed for more spine: people had things they wanted to say, and were getting help [as confirmation, but also as challenge in dialog] from the free flow....Here, I've processed the speeches by gathering what I thought most significant about each speaker's contribution. You will probably recognize yourself and the others through the letter code:

"A": In this seminar, I do and don't want input: much of my frustration is self-inflicted. I've gotten riches from Willis before, and don't want to forego that, yet...."I come with a lot of anger from the earlier hour." [Fellow: Why didn't you deal with it there? I (Willis) wonder whether the group experience wouldn't be better put as the last period of the day, with the seminar the first period so

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that the style and agenda of the group experience does not slop over into the seminar; and so that ministry concerns immediately hit the seminar, which should center therein; and so that personal concerns, which emerge more easily when one is tired and which are to be dealt with in the group experience, may emerge at day's end.] At the retreat, Webber said "high quality" is expected; but the processes of the program seem to impede this, though the potential is certainly here.

"B": "The tremendous goldmine that's here [in the potential in all of us], and all I have is a screwdriver and a hammer." "The great gift that each one brings ...dammed up rather than let loose": collegiality is "a constipated model when we're bound this way." Probably many reasons: "disillusioned" by overexpectation; givens [staff decisions before the seminar began]; Willis sometimes "takes things personally"; we chicken out on our responsibilities as candidates [at which point a fellow mentioned that few took advantage of the opportunity to meet with the staff].

"C": "Do the rest of you still feel frustrated [even though things have been going very much better]? There's still so much I'd like to get, especially so many riches Willis has to give" and is frustrated from giving because of group-process impediments and unclarity as to what we're about ["integration"].

"D": Willis has "a tremendous wealth of knowledge" I'm frustrated at not getting, but the seminar is to be "where the whole program comes together." [Willis: I did not interrupt here, as I did not want to interfere with the flow of the speeches --but this function, program integration, resides in the mentor/mentee relationship, as I've mentioned several times during the year and as I illustrate on the diagram below.] Streng is potentially great, but we haven't been getting from each other what we have to give each other. [Willis: When I said "The purpose of #317 is to enable that mutual giving, in interface with Streng," the candidate said "I couldn't understand that format" [8pp. "For Self-Examination" form]. Relating to Willis, "I feel I may damage the relationship" if I occasion non-cool responses. I ran away from PhD-style education but want "the quality of learning to match the [high] quality of people in the program." [Willis: This candidate, when I asked about crossing me ("You feel guilty?"): "Yes." On the quality question, he's hit upon a real issue for the DMin: "quality" in a graduate program usually means intellectual quality, and must mean something other in a nonacademic, professional doctorate; I say "other," not "else": intellectually, I cannot press you as I would in a PhD program, but I expect heavy intellectual effort before and during a seminar session in spite of the fact that it's an integration seminar, not an advanced-level subject seminar.] Before the seminar started, we had "a lot of anger" and "divergent expectations." [Willis: A clear error was not to spent the first session working this all through. In that session, I did say what an integration seminar is/is not, but slow time should have been taken, and enough of it, till we'd all bought into the same vision --or would that have been possible the first session?] [Willis, on "quality": The first function of thinksheets is response to what we're immediately about; the second is to provide potential intellectual enrichment, on para-issues, for those not satisfied with the amount of intellection in the seminars. A third, very minor, function is to share with you, humanly, something from out of my life, as I've invited you to do from yours....The whole spectrum of response to my thinksheets: have nothing to do with them, and get the screamin' meanies that the group can't process everything in them (partly from former schooling's lust/anxiety to finish). A big factor: in our profession and at our cultural level, Noah's flood takes the form of paper. In clever manipulation of this fact, a high-level sales meeting I recently attended provided no paper at all--until you left on the elevator! Transcend it!]

[ADDITION TO "A": "A lot of insight from THE WAYS OF BEING RELIGIOUS." Cases helpful especially because "I've not had CPE."]

"F": "In mining, we're constantly in danger of a cave-in," and this fear has been with us in the seminar during our "5- or 6-week cycles of trying to get it together." [Willis: Get what together? It's a good phrase, well used in Jim Glasse's book, which shows where the DMin aims to get it together: GETTING IT TOGETHER IN THE PARISH. Here, again, is an issue for NYTS and this seminar as we continue: Is the seminar to be self-integrating, and if so how does this relate to the givens?]

"F": "Willis, I have great difficulty with your style in thinksheets and in

the group," though not 1:1. Sometimes I think you're putting us on. "Nothing is happening to me." [Willis: My perception is that much is happening to, inside at least, this candidate.] What I hear is "a unanimous cry for a different type of educational process throughout the program." [Willis, to staff: Now there's something to be heard, in detail, as we take a radical look at the program in June!]

"G": "I personally haven't been responsible enough."

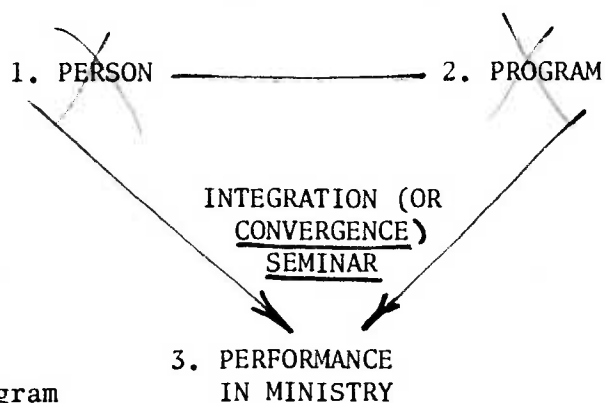
"H": "Ambivalence": I like/don't like the program, and in the seminar the process. But I can't come up with concrete suggestions at this point.

"I": When Willis says something's "irrelevant," irrelevant to what? He has a good fix on what an integration seminar is to be; but to the extent that we disagree, his irrelevant is often irrelevant to the relevant of some of us. [Willis: I couldn't agree more! Sometimes I'm timid, don't give a firm enough lead, because the group is not about to let me define the parameters. Dilemma: The experience would be richer for the candidates if I had full power to (1) declare out of bounds and (2) make transitions; but the group declared early on that it did not want that kind of leader. Who can say which way leads to more "relevant" learnings?]. . . . The seminar's content should be shaped from our Questionnaires; perhaps first-retreat time could be taken for this, so the seminar could begin together. . . . Willis says he splits feeling/thinking only for analytic and teaching purposes, but I think the split goes deeper with him. [Willis: The split is deep in our culture, and therefore in me and in my biography (passion having more freedom as I go through the life-stages). Loree says I'm much more together than I look: feeling is just as powerful in me as thinking, and I switch modes easily through a metaphoric consciousness that makes "integration," convergence, easy for me.]

"J": "I haven't been able to use Streng, but maybe this is going to happen."

5. At the end of the speeches, and after I'd put on the diagram [here, p.1], someone said "That interferes with the spirit of what we're doing." [Willis: Clearly, your speeches we're over, and I was to speak last; the sentence illustrates the difficulty I have in leading you into transitions, or even in making statements my own way: why so touchy?] "Anyway, what's the diagram got to do with what we were doing?" [Willis: I indicated that stage "1" (situation definition) is still in process of staff definition: What is an "integration seminar"? NYTS gives were (a) a process (the case method, represented by Glasse) and (b) a ministry interface (ways people are religious, represented by Streng): should the seminar begin without givens, but only with a focus? But here, too, is vagueness: what should be the focus of a DMin integration seminar? I diagrammed the possibilities:

Position "1" is the heavy favorite because of the use of "integration" in psychology. In fact, it's so heavy that I prefer the term "convergence" seminar. Position "2" is common in participants' understanding (as "D," above). But the DMin Document clearly gives program integration to the mentor/ee relationship. Position "3" has always been my understanding of the focus of the seminar: the lines are to converge not in the person, or in the program, but in "the ministry," to which person and program are penultimate integrations. For this, how to



pray the NYT is more important than whether the group ever manages to converge-- in the current groupy jargon, "to become a group." [For the convergence of preparation/life/ministry, see #769.1; for contexting for evaluation, see #771.]

6. Discussion of Way #4, especially the East/West differences. "My spiritual discipline" [using #317?] is next session's interface. . . . More cases, please!

ATTACHMENTS for staff [Mel and Bill]: None, as they already have #761, #766, #769.