

Willis to other noncandidates* in the 6Dec76 D.Min. Seminar session.....c: Mel
(Tom, Dick, Diana, Bill)

REFLECTIONS ON THE SESSION

ASSUMPTION OF THESE REFLECTIONS: That when consultants are in a session, their contract includes reflecting on the action.

7. No time was given to reflecting on the groups life/performance in the processing of the case. Such critiquing would seem to be an important aspect of learning from, and to use, case method.

1. I was asked for 9-11 (and was 15" late because my train was 40" late), and was there till 12, when we stopped processing the case. I wouldn't have wanted less time than the 3 hours, but more: we were getting a good start by noon! But what happened, in feelings and agenda, vis-a-vis whatever had been planned from 11-12?
2. Sorry Dick had to leave just when it was beginning to get good.
3. The groups were given two sets of agenda--an ideational one by Dick, and an operational one by Tom. Our group didn't manage to sort these out, so never arrived at a clear focus, so was muddy in report-back (as were also the other groups). Was the presenting of two sets of agenda deliberate?
4. The assigned material was first-rate (with the slight exception that a woman's case was written up by a man). Several matters puzzle me:
 - (1) No one ever used the text. Participants had the case quite well in mind, but there was no public wrestling with the wording, as there probably would have been with more assiduous attention in a longer period of time.
 - (2) No one ever referred to the excellent theological commentaries on the case--except me, and I did so once for each case after having given most of the period to saying nothing about the Altizer-Cobb-Way material (in hope that others would). Why was nothing done in the session with this material, in light of its being so good for both observing and doing theology? The three theologians were so good that our three groups might have used each group one of the theologians--but that's only an alternative suggestion: in general, I was well pleased with the session, and it's value appeared in many saying afterward "There was a lot more in that case than I thought!"
5. The biblical dimension on the session was handled chiefly through free-floating metaphors ("Exile," "Exodus"--why not also "Return," which I mentioned once? And "Wilderness"? And "Conquest"? And "Diaspora"?). One of the three theologians warns against the free-floating metaphor as substitute for thought: it is also often substitute for exegesis and even exposition.
6. I found the session oddly Manichean. In herself, in the case write-up, and in our session, Anna did not seem to have a body. Is it dirty for the boys to talk about girls' bodies? What little I did in our group seemed to produce chiefly shock. Our anti-sexist session felt sexless. (Which reminds me: It seems to me preachily ideological to use a case as illustrative of an ism, instead of letting the case be its full self.) A few possibly pertinent facts on this:
 - (1) The first assigned theological reading raised the prior question: not "God the Father," but "God." A liver specialist might conclude there's something wrong with Anna's liver: a theologian, with her theology (the occupational myopia of our session). A prior prior question: Has Anna owned her body?
 - (2) The female biology is both anatomically and physiologically superior to the male, and the male is anatomically superior to the female. Both are "broads": it's sexist to call only women broads. The male is a dynamic broad, the female a static broad: to use engineering language for the mutual superiority of male/female anatomy, the triangle of the female body is "stationery" (the triangle being on base, for load-bearing: women are naturally the burden-bearers of the world, the stabilizing sex), whereas the male body is "mobile" (the triangle being on a tip, unstable, destabilizing and therefore of conscious power with need for conscious attention to space-making/keeping and therefore boundary-defining).
 - (3) The mutual bio-superiority of the sexes should be accepted and celebrated, not neglected and obscured. God's different and convergent gifts.