

1 Nov 78

Reflections on today's AF "What is 'prophetic' HERE AND NOW?"
 --as we wrote (distributed) and spoke

1. The most conspicuous form of false prophecy at present is not anything said, but the failure to say what may trigger paying up to the cost of discipleship: SILENCE as the inaction of the false prophet...silence in public and private. This silence takes two forms: (1) failure to "mind," to call to mind (re-mind, in case of those who've heard and have conveniently forgotten), "what the Lord requires" (Mic.6.4), which has been "told" (narrated, in the Story of God's *daver*, his word-nature in action and his word as action) us, at points where human life is in violation of the nature and will of the One in whom the Story centers; and (2) failure to identify the storied One, to "name the Name" in situations in which it might be embarrassing, or worse, to do so. Radicals and liberals commit the second failure, and evangelicals the first. In inauthentic self-defense, each camp invidiously points to gross failures in the other camp as examples of the internal logic of the rejected position.... and thus "their" false prophecy is used to conceal "our" false prophecy by arrogant self-blinding and self-deafening. So seldom is heard an encouraging word and the skies remain cloudy all day.

2. The prophet, when true (i.e., loyal-to-call), is unfree, under the burden of obedience--paradoxically, most so when reminding of and calling to freedom. This reveals that in biblical religion, freedom is only a relative value: obedience is absolute (a truth picked up in "Islam," the Arab. wd. for "submission" in obedience). Seen negatively, the pressure for freedom is denigrated: Adam & Eve became apple-free from dependence on God in decision-making, and the garden's God chased them out before they could eat from the other tree and become free from death. Biblical religion, with "prophetism" at its heart, aims to keep us dependent on God for life and decision-making: it is pro-freedom only as liberation from internal/external interferences with this dependence--viz., oppressions and "idols." In starting somewhere else than this, and in winding up somewhere else than in biblical shalom, most so-called "liberation theology" is false prophesying and will bear the bitter fruit of IFD (unrealistic idealism, to frustration, to disintegration). And much argumentation for "liberation theology" turns out to be econ^opolⁱtical conformism--instead of to the current establishment, to the anticipated establishment of a Marxian infra/supra-structure: a futuristic form of false prophecy, often self-sanctioning by references to the early-and-middle-industrial "loss of the working class" by the Church.

3. The true prophet does/doesn't need to be accountable to a community; has courage to speak truth to power as s/he perceives both power and truth; stands up to accusations of being a false prophet; puzzles out the here-and-now realities in light of the biblical paradigm (=way of seeing and living in the world, in conformity to the Story and obedience to the One whose Story it is); groans toward shalom and cries out against hindrances thereto; would rather be doing something else, but can't because of a compulsion; is uncomfortable to be around, as s/he's never satisfied with how things are; is image-conscious (so, symbolic actions and avoidance of "spoils"); scared (of God and for people); humble; hopeful.