

1. If the Church's theological response to "the world" is to be more than "me-too" trendy, such deep-digging, exploratory, soul-and-institution searching must be normal and normative....Advantages both ways: having, and not having, an outsider.
2. One of the achievements of the fallen "principalities and powers" is to get folks to believe there's "a cosmic or universal principle." A philosopher needs such as a working hypothesis but not as a belief-in; a devotee needs a god; when anyone believes in, or believes there "is," a cosmic principle, that principle functions for that person as a god or [if comprehensive of the person's life as well as thought] as God. God has given the world the Jew to save us all from that blasphemy, but the temptation from the left brain continues to overwhelm the world as [e.g.] "evolution" [remember the monkey-trial ditty, "Some call it Evolution, others call it God"?] or "process" [ironically derivative from industrialism, especially the second industrial revolution] or [though this word has become embarrassing, with eco-consciousness-raising] "progress" or "Christ," a distortion this thinksheet is concerned with.
3. Paul, in fighting the gnosticizing tendency to capture "Christ" for the Universal Cosmic Principle, gets a grip on the enemy by rhetorical extension--thus, early Xn "cosmic Christianity." Stress "rhetorical": as a device for capturing every thought [no-e-ma] for Jesus [2Cor.10.5]. Only when the reader forgets the conflictual situation and so loses its tension can Paul be read as believing in a universal principle which becomes incarnate in Jesus, a notion giving ontic priority to the former over the latter, who as God is thus blasphemed. The question of the prior-primordial reality is no quibble; I found it crucial in teaching religion to Hindus, Buddhists, Shintoists, etc., at the U. of Hawaii; and it's crucial for the Church's confrontation with the cults in America-world today, and will be even moreso tomorrow.
4. Does "Christ" as class-title-name apply to "Jesus" without remainder? That is certainly Pauline in feel [on which cp. Kittel 9:540-562]. Certainly "the Christ" for Paul is no metaphysical category [as it is for Christian gnostics, including Tillich and Mary Baker Eddy and Jung], and no numinous political reality (Fuehrerprinzip). It's grounded in history both as a past class of "anointed" ["Christeds"] and as a political "I-have-a-dream." It's no principle of cohesion, stoic or taoist or mystagogic (as the Roman imperial cult): God's "son" Jesus provides the cohesion (Col.1.15-20). Paul's passionate inclusion of all created reality in and under Jesus appears in his straining backward (Pre-existence) and forward (Parousia). Jesus is no avatar of a cosmic principle; rather, a cosmic principle is an illusional misunderstanding of reality, which for the Christian centers in the God-Jesus axis. This no more denigrates the usefulness of the illusion than the maya doctrine commits Vedantist Hindus to suicide: I'm not "neo-orthodox."
5. The occult use of "[the] Christ" is antihistorical and therefore apolitical and therefore a notion promoted by the fallen "principalities and powers." A false consciousness sanctioning inauthentic otherworldliness: Tillich, thisworldly panderer, only seemed "relevant"--in contrast, e.g., to Bonhoeffer, who crossed the Atlantic toward rather than away from Hitler. Any cosmic-principle consciousness is, in biblical light, false consciousness: the occult, Hegel, Marx, Comte, Freud, Huxley [social darwinism], liberation theologies when using biblical metaphor only as illuminators of marxist themes. On this last, it's as fatuous to dream of structuring society on a cosmized economic theory, as it has proved to do so on a cosmized political theory ["the state," on which see Stri fellow in AN ETHIC... and also my materials on my 9Dec76 witnessing in a federal court case on Rev.13]. "Messiahs" Saul, Cyrus, Jesus were protector-delivers--in post-Apostolic Christian writers, "Savior" being the closest political parallel term. Needed is not an Illuminator-"Christ" [lit., "buddha"] to reveal a divine gnosis within our humanity and heart, but a Savior-Christ to deliver us from quite historical principalities and powers--interalized motivationally, sanctionally, systemically, operationally, structurally.