

In church this morning [9Jan77] Dave Pomeroy (NCC masscom) began a series on "Film and Christian Communication" and later referred to something I'd done with him directing, "The Inner Life" [5May76, titled "The Inner Life"]; and before the session, someone who's formally into philosophy asked me about Jesus' "The Kingdom of God is within you"--having been told three days ago by her professor that Jesus was a guru (in evidence of which he adduced this passage and the work of Carl Jung) and the church, misunderstanding this, has perverted his memory, making him "Savior." This thinksheet addresses my inner dynamics in the pincer between my own tendency, as introvert, to do "inner" things, and my knowledge, as biblical scholar, that the perversion is the reverse: neo-Hindus of all kinds, including Jung, pervert Jesus, and the Church's major intellectual battle through the centuries has been against these gnosticisms.

1. If Jesus were guruizable, I've the genetic and other equipment necessary to manage it and would have long ago. Historical-critical competence, and honesty, have forced me to resist "the peril of modernizing Jesus" and also the peril of Easternizing him. Rather, he is (1) thoroughly Jewish, with all that means for creation-and-history conviction, and (2) sui generis, a se, an sich --his own man, unique, uncategorizable, unassimilable to any role-types or titles.

2. Only ignorance or deception would make a case for Jesus as, like Carl Jung [the above professor's reference-person], most serious about the individual-inner stage, "the soul" or "inner life." He was most serious rather about God's Will in History: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"--none of these three realities being "inner" in the mystical, guru, sense. Jewish mysticism, indeed, such as it was, developed many centuries after Jesus, as an occult underground profoundly different from Philo's first-century neoPlatonizing of Torah [an exercise in dialog with the Alexandrian mentality]. I'm not saying that Jesus was unaware of mystical streams in the tolerant pluralism of Hellenisticism, the non-Jewish cultural surround of the Mediterranean world of his day; I am saying that whatever notice he took of it was so slight that the mystical dimension appears neither positively nor even negatively in his teaching--nor can a scholarly case be made for the Church's rubbing out the Mystic-Cosmic Jesus, expunging such materials from the published Gospels.

3. The guru [as Jung] directs your attention to your "within." I now have a counselee so "in," from long Jungian counseling, I wonder if she'll even come "out" again. Nothing in the NT invites us to understand "mystery" or "salvation" as of inner locus; on the contrary, history is always mytery's locus: the life of interpersonal, public, and political forces. In the whole RSV Bible, "inside" meaning the inner life is used only negatively, in reference to the even content of the heart--the only reff. being Mt.23.25f (L.11.39f). The Bible is suspicious of inner gazing, believing it threatens only with chthonic ["demonic"] forces, as in necromancy. Even TM, innocent and "not religious" in claim, has a long string of leader suicides to account for or [as now] to conceal. Far from Jesus being guruizable, the NT sees him as good, and would have to see him as evil if it had to see him [as it seems, e.g., Simon Magus] as guru!

4. L.17.21 is the reference the Jesus-guruizers most use to sanction their view: in KJV, "the kingdom of God is within you." If Jesus had meant this to refer to your [singular] inner life, he could have made this clear by saying "within you [singular]." He didn't. If he meant "among you [plural]," he could have made this clear by saying it. He didn't. Tragically, English "you" is open-number, i.e. either sing. or pl., depending on context; so accurate rendering here would have to be something like "among you all," "in your midst," i.e. in the fact of my presence and message and mission; or even "your responsibility," "in your hands," "in your power of choice." He's addressing his enemies, and not about to concede that God's kingdom is "within" them distributively, in their hearts

if they only truly look within for inner light, "enlightenment" [meaning of "buddhahood"!....Further, "within" is a language fossil, never used in RSV, which here has "in the midst of" [=Mof. "in your midst" --"among": Alf., NEB(n."within, ""within your grasp, ""will be among"), JB--"inside": only Phillips]. WEE: "in your company" or "hidden among" or "within your circle" or "within your midst"; but even if "within," what's inside is not soul [atman=Brahman] but a Jewish-reality-about-to-appear-in-history, the "Kingdom of God".