

The Moral and Religious Dilemma of Statoil According to Bishop E.J Pettersen.

By Randy Naylor

This is an artistic account of the moral and religious dilemma of Statoil. I choose to write in English, as this is the official language of Statoil. My story begins at the solidarity concert in Dome Kirke last Wednesday night in Stavanger. The winds of change and challenge invited me to attend. I find myself near the front row. Bishop Erling J. Pettersen initiates a dialogue with the Indian chief Francois Paulette.

“Chief Francois, did you hear the sound of the River in the song we just heard.”

Bishop Pettersen with his astute mind and vision frames the conflict. The Norwegian church, having been so dormant is now to awake. I stare up over their shoulders and into the wooden carving of Jesus above the lectern. “Jesus, St.James and St.Paul correctly stated that Faith without work/action is dead.” Bishop Pettersen now knee deep into the river has called us to action, to work. For now it is to swim or to sink. This is both an environmental and humanitarian call to arms.

Fulfilling one of the main commandments of all religions and moral systems, namely: “Thou shalt not kill.” The Bishop is referring to the river. Upstream in a polluted quagmire resides the moral and religious dilemma of Statoil. In the 19th century once upon a time one did not even need to rationalize the practice of Colonization. This is how the West was won. It is appalling that anyone would attempt this type of environmental and exploitive intervention today. Yet here we are in the toxic waste stream created by Big Oil in the tar sand fields of Alberto. Down stream Francois Paulettes tribe is the collateral damage. The River is Dead, their life stream is poisoned and their children have developed a rare form of leukemia.

Statoil takes a secular stance. In the national and local papers her point men and women cleverly try to circumvent the topic. One declares that Statoils carbon footprint is the lowest of any oil company operating in the Canadian oil sands.

This Mad Men approach totally denies that there is a River and lakes of toxic wastes visible from outer space. The Norwegian minister of petroleum accuses the bishop of mixing Religion and Politics. And in one swift pen stroke thereby decrees that Statoil oil has no moral or religious boundaries. . No moral compass. Love thy neighbor as thy self . Ola Botten Moe does not fathom that Bishop Pettersen has adopted Francois tribe as our neighbor. That the purpose of religious philosophy is to practice moral precepts, particularly the main precept : God is Love and Love is God. That all moral social movements are inspired by sympathy, compassion and the Gospel of Love. Love the River. Love the neighbor. Love the biosphere.

Moral polarization wrecks any society. The advertisements that Statoil run on TV are personified. Statoil is not a company, it is a person. Statoil has assumed bodily flesh, acts secular and subjective. Statoils dilemma is that “the moral imperatives we need to save us need an intellectual base that is not to be found in purely scientific-mechanical understanding of the world.”

This is the prayer and hymn of bishop Pettersen, moral value and truth are not for sale and profit in thy neighbors river. Statoil cannot have a double moral, might is not right. Statoil if it will survive has to practice moral imperatives at home and abroad. Least the employees know where they stand. The major dilemma is that if Statoil has no moral character, so goes Norway. This is why the Norwegian Church had no other choice than to awake and lead a moral and environmental regeneration. Right on Time Bishop Erling J. Pettersen.