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An Outlaw's Theology

by

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THE CONCEPT

Is globalization a predatory or a creative movement? Does it seek dominion through conquest or can it become an enabling, humanizing movement? The answers depend upon the story we tell ourselves about the purpose, meaning, and value of human life, that is, our story of human origin. Globalization is presenting the opportunity and challenge to imagine and embody a new mythic story of origin, one that replaces the dominant Western biblical story of Genesis. *You* can and should imagine this new story of origin. You start by embracing Outlaw Theology.

ABOUT THE BOOK

All my life I've been trying to stop people from murdering one another. I've been failing miserably. Yet, when as an elder I went back on campus (2006-2008) to promote a play about my Vietnam era anti-war trial, "Peace Crimes: the *Minnesota 8* vs. the war," I was stunned and amazed to find that in so many ways these young activists were my visionary grandchildren.

I found that among today's youth the mingling of the passion and insights of Martin Luther King with John Lennon's vision was stirring up a storm of change. Young activists were engaged in a slate of human service and social justice causes which sought to create compassionate communities both locally and globally. The main topic on the young activists' agenda was the question about the survival of the planet. In my day it was just one war—Vietnam. Today, the concern was whether the human species will insanely kill itself by unleashing an ecological apocalypse and/or destroy the whole planet through creating a nuclear winter.

An Outlaw's Theology's three Pathways take you on a journey that wends through monastic hallways, trial courtrooms, jail and prison cells, and onto campuses to engage with today's young activists. You will follow me as I climbed to the mountaintop, shouted "Peace! Peace!"—and heard society's judgment: "Criminal!" We then fall and descend into the hellish sectors of prison's darkness where I existed as a subhuman. Finally, we listen to young campus activists as they profess a profoundly hopeful and powerful vision of the

preciousness of all human life that guides their efforts at directing the globalization movement.

I use personal narrative and accounts of intimate prison experiences so that you can enter into realms of human thought and feeling that are dark, at times heretical, even possibly evil to you. You then descend into the terrifying prison sector “where everything human is soon absent.” Next, you learn how to ascend from the dark sector into the sunlight sector and develop an innovative “Earthfolk” vision that enables you to dwell peacefully and comfortably at home on the Living Earth. The journey concludes with an upbeat invitation to engage a series of ritual practices that will enable you to transform your own subhumanness and envision yourself and others as one of Earthfolk’s precious beloveds.

Pathway#1: Outlaw relates how an altar boy and young monk became a federal criminal. My transformation had three sources. 1) In my faithful obedience to the radical moral challenges issued by my Church. 2) My faith as formed by my family, especially my father. 3) The revolutionary theological vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., which led to my embrace of nonviolence and pacifism. Then, I present my “peacemaking theology” which drew ridicule from the prosecutor and stark condemnation from Church and State magistrates but was all I had to give as patrimony to my sons.

Pathway#2: Subhuman recounts my entry into federal prison—the *Inside*—and my post-prison journey as a lost soul on a ten year Dark Night of the Soul wandering. My experiences on this Pathway might be near impossible for you to fully appreciate because such requires more than sympathy or empathy. To properly walk this Pathway requires an effort on your part to become me.

I describe my becoming a subhuman, an institutional number—8867-147, and being The Man’s Bitch. You hear that the judge ruled that I was an “irrelevant and immaterial” human. With that verdict he effectively showed the world that I was no more than a babbling, incoherent fool. Ironically, being so humiliated and devalued, arguably, forced me to listen more sympathetically and attentively to inmate stories and to empathetically share their raw,

sometimes savage, emotions. These inmate stories are the factual and inspirational bedrock for Outlaw Theology.

There are three sets of “Rung stories” written as first-person accounts which are raw and savage. I make no apologies. They take you down three levels into the Shadow realm, ending “where everything human is soon absent.” Prison’s revelation was that unless I experienced my own subhumanness that I would never become a real human person. To enable you to become me, I tell these Rung stories—which I carved out of my flesh and spirit.

Pathway#3: Earthfolk In discussions with young activists I heard emerge a set of visionary words and images that were inclusive, universalistic, ecological, and above all, about justice and the acceptance of all people as children in one human family. Yet, I discerned a growing split between two ways to embody this emerging vision. One was that of the *Earthpeople*. The other that of the *Earthfolk*. The critical difference was in the activist’s sense of Mother Earth. Was she alive, a goddess, and worthy of veneration? Was She a *living* Earth? Or was the phrase simply symbolic and conveyed nothing other than the biological and geological facts that all humans lived on the same planet? I realized that my prison experiences and my Outlaw Theology—with its call to experience one’s subhumanness—could provide those emerging as Earthfolk with a pathway and set of practices to learn how to discover their Mother and venerate Her.

To discover your Shadow subhuman self I present a discipline and set of practices to follow to begin opening yourself to embracing your own subhumanness and walk in the Shadow realm. I further offer ways to use the Rung stories to meditatively descend into and ascend out of the Shadow realm where you touch your subhumanness and transform yourself into a real human person. Only at the moment you discover your Shadow Mother and come to venerate Her will you begin to embody the Earthfolk vision. Know however that the unfolding of the Earthfolk vision is not solely and simply an act of consciously seeing and sensing the world in a certain way, rather, conversely, it is also you being seen and sensed by the world in a certain way. The challenge facing you is to live in such a way that others see and sense you as an Earthfolk. The Earthfolk vision and practices present a fundamentally

distinct way of understanding what it means to be human, and how humans as individuals and communities can interact with each other.

This is written for a popular audience. It serves the intelligent reader who is seeking deep answers for the big questions about where humanity is going and how he or she can live in harmony through embracing the vision and practices of the Earthfolk.

Author

Francis X. Kroncke is a seeker whose has journeyed through the monastic life, the theological academy, federal courtrooms, a federal prison cell, and the byways of corporate America. In 1970, he took his Catholic theology into the American courts as he defended his draft board raiding crime, re: the trials of the “Minnesota 8.” During and after serving time, he explored the dark, Shadow side of America. In his published essays he has focused on the ancient call which is heard most distinctively in the institutions and through the experiences of the dark side of the biblically based Western and American cultures. The article, “An Outlaw’s Theology,” was published in *Cross Currents* (June 2011). A companion piece, “A vision of coupled presence,” is forthcoming in *Theology and Sexuality*. Thematically, they are bookends to the book.

Outcomes

Readers will gain

- an intellectual framework through which they can understand why the biblical mythic story of origin in Genesis has dominated human consciousness for over five millennia, creating a “Lone Male” vision and set of practices, and
- a set of practices and rituals for embodying and manifesting the vision and practices of the Earthfolk’s mythic story of origin.

When the vision of the Earthfolk is accepted, the reader will sense and experience his/her own body, mind and soul in a strikingly new way. They will dwell peacefully and comfortably at-home on the *living* Earth. They will have a working vision of how to live in

peace with everyone. And, they will have a totally new sense of what it means to be human, even to a new sense of their skin.

Outlaw Theology

Contradicting mainstream biblical theology is Outlaw Theology's core theological claim, namely, that Genesis' main message is about intimacy. From listening to inmate stories and inspired by scripture scholar Phyllis Trible's concept of "sad story," a "twice-bodied methodology" is presented. The traditional interpretation of Genesis is shown to be the result of a clever use of mis-direction and substitution imagery. The traditional interpretation is that Genesis is a story about a "Lone Male" god who creates a Lone Male son, Adam. And, that Adam's male body is claimed as the birthing body, in that, Eve is created from his Rib. However, once Adam and Eve experience intimacy, that is, eat of the symbolic Apple and so know their nakedness, they are exiled from The Garden. Their life is, then, as all human life is in the Lone Male vision, one of misery. Eve is cursed to suffer in childbirth. Adam is cursed as he labors to raise food. They, themselves, are fated to be engaged in an intimate war, which is aptly described by the phrase, "war between the sexes."

The Lone Male vision has found apocalyptic fulfillment through the acts which generated the twin icons of the Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth. The Lone Male story of origin:

- is sourced in the emotion of dreadful fear,
- identifies and names the Other as intimate enemy,
- seeks to annihilate the goddess and the feminine, and
- prophesizes a self-fulfilling apocalyptic story of self-annihilation

The Lone Male fears the Other as "intimate enemy." It is a vision which has, actually, an atheistic cast, in that, in Genesis, there is no Mother goddess. Mythically and theologically it reveals that, "We are motherless children!" It is a vision which imagines that human fulfillment comes from exercising dominion over all peoples and all living things.

Earthfolk understand the Lone Male story of origin as driven by clever mis-direction. In

contrast to the traditional interpretation, Earthfolk return—using a twice-bodied methodology—to Genesis and find the presence of a Mother goddess. This is a Shadow Mother who is the consort to a Shadow Father, the Lone Male Father, who, together, are a model of sexually abusive parents. Once these interpretations are connected, the reader begins to understand the reasons why the world, today, right now, is in the grip of endless warring and nuclear saber rattling.

Earthfolk's vision is that the Other is precious. It holds that intimacy is a coupled, not an individual, experience. In contrast to the dominant visionary paradigm based upon the individualistic Hero's journey ("Jesus saves!" and *Christus Victor*), Earthfolk find fulfillment in the ecstatic embrace and communion of two as they become Beloveds. As Beloveds they make present a human energy, which Earthfolk term "vital zest," which is the only energy which can counter and defuse nuclear energy.

Many thinkers and visionaries have posited that there is a psychic envelope around the Earth, akin to the mind's relationship with the brain. Teilhard de Chardin was a recent visionary who called it a Noosphere or Mind-Sphere. It is clear to Earthfolk that as there is communal thought so is there communal feeling. Consequently, no human act is trivial. Every person counts and every human action counts either to sustain the vision of the Lone Male or that of the Earthfolk.

The story of the relationship between the Lone Male's Shadow Mother and Father is almost invisible in Genesis. However, their existence is referenced in Genesis by a phrase which has haunted Rabbinical and other scriptural scholars for millennia, namely, "let us make man in our image..." Genesis 1:26 *Us?* Is this a reference to many gods? Indeed, it is.

Readers close the book

- with an understanding of how Earthfolk present their vision and imagination,
- with tools that enable them to determine and evaluate their own acceptance or rejection of the Lone Male vision

- with a choice to make in respect to how they want to live their life, namely, whether
 - to continue to imagine a Lone Male world of endless warring and predatory globalization, or
 - to choose to consciously evolve towards a world where all humans are beheld as precious and beloved and dwell peacefully and comfortably at-home on the living Earth.

THE MARKET

Outlaw Theology has several consumer markets. It appeals to seven market segments, including:

- liberal and progressive Christians who purchase the books of Bishop John Shelby Spong, such as, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* (HarperSanFrancisco), and Matthew Fox *Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality Presented in Four Paths, Twenty-Six Themes, and Two Questions*, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam (October 9, 2000)
- feminist theorists who began by rejecting the patriarchal religion as articulated by Mary Daly's *Beyond God The Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Beacon Press; 2nd edition (June 1, 1993)
- New Thought/New Age readers of James Redfield's *Celestine Prophecy* (Warner Books)
- Neo-pagan readers of Starhawk's *Dreaming the Dark* (Beacon Press)
- New paradigm seekers who favor the works of Ken Wilber, such as, *The Eye of Spirit: An integral Vision for a World Gone slightly mad*, and *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Shambhala), and conscious evolutionists such as Barbara Marx Hubbard, *Conscious Evolution: Awakening the Power of Our Social Potential* (New World Library)

- “Sacred sexuality” advocates who practice the rituals in Margo Anand, *The Art of Sexual Ecstasy* Tarcher (December 1, 1990)

And, there is also a cross-over for those seeking a new political imagination, such as

- progressive political activists who are seeking a positive vision to guide the globalization movement, such as, Daniel Ellsberg (Pentagon Papers fame)

There are numerous major and minor magazines in these seven market segments. *An Outlaw's Theology's* analyzes will be of interest to a range of popular and scholarly journals, including, *Harvard Theological Review*, *Christianity Today*, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, *The Sun*, *Reclaiming*, *Cross Currents*, and *Oneness*. Numerous and diverse spiritual websites also address these markets, provide reviews of books, and offer publicity outlets.

Outlaw Theology appeals to liberal and progressive Christians because it provides an innovative interpretation of the Abrahamic tradition (Christians, Jews and Moselms) which shows why all Abrahamic religions have failed to provide a vision which enables humanity to live together, peaceably, on Earth. Liberals and progressives will value the critique of the tradition, though many will not make the radical step and embrace the Earthfolk vision.

Outlaw Theology appeals to feminist theorists since it forwards several innovative and controversial interpretations of the pivotal Creation story of Genesis, which is fundamental to their critique of dominator patriarchy. Among the claims are that Genesis is an atheistic tale in that it announces the death of the goddess. Yet, it is also claimed that there is a goddess in Genesis, namely, a Shadow Mother. The implication of these innovative claims is far-reaching for any reader or scholar who seeks to interpret the culture and spirituality of patriarchy.

Outlaw Theology appeals to New Age, neo-pagan, sacred sexuality, and conscious evolution readers since it addresses all the main themes of these movements. The list of Earthfolk

practices and rituals in Outlaw Theology are valued by many who want to practice embodying a new visionary discipline.

Finally, Outlaw Theology appeals to progressive political readers since there is no coherent vision which stands against the Lone Male vision which, in the progressive analysis, is destroying the world.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

Length: 114,169 words

Produced: Microsoft Word, Office XP

Delivery: Ready

Photography: 2 - Photos of Atomic Bomb Mushroom Cloud, and “Earthrise,”

Illustrations: 2-“The Creation of Eve” by Bartolo di Fredi, Italy, 14h C., and a Mobius strip

Permissions: TBD: Lyrics to John Lennon’s “Imagine”

Front matter: Note from Daniel and Patricia Ellsberg

Back matter: Appendix A- Additional Rung #3 stories
B – Additional themes for Rung #1 and #2 stories

Resources 1, 2, and 3 – references, citations, and resource links

PROMOTION

The author’s strongest base is in Minnesota where he is known for his anti-war activity in a group called the “Minnesota 8.” <http://www.minnesota8.net> The St. Paul based History Theatre commissioned a play, “Peace Crimes,” based upon the events of their trial that had a successful run in the winter of 2008. The play received broad media coverage. See, “Peace and War in the Heartland” <http://www.pwh-mn.org>

Additional ways in which the author will assist in promoting Outlaw Theology:

- ❖ presenting lectures and workshops
 - author has a long-standing network through
 - Catholic colleges
 - Seminaries and schools of theology
 - Theological associations meetings
 - Spirituality centers, e.g., “Wisdom Ways” www.wisdomwayscenter.org
 - Liberal and progressive Church and religious associations sponsored book-signings

- ❖ Writing magazine articles & soliciting book reviews
 - Theological journals, e.g., J. of Feminist Theology, Cross Currents
 - Alternative magazines, e.g., The Sun, City Pages
 - New Age/Pagan magazines, e.g., Reclaiming, Oneness

- ❖ Advertising Linkage of website <http://www.earthfolk.net> – author registered site
 - Maintain a message board
 - Writing clips for related websites
 - Interviews for web based alternative press, re: Cheryl Seal articles

Manuscript

The complete manuscript as well as individuals sections are downloadable at

<http://www.pwh-mn.org/outlaw-mss.htm>

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