

The Patriarchy!

By Frank Zimmerman

*(This is the substance of a letter I wrote to my daughter in 2023,
after she shared with me a book by Bell Hooks,
dealing with the current teaching about “the patriarchy.”)*

HERE is my reply and report about the book by Bell Hooks (*The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*), which you sent me.

Giving someone a book, instead of taking the time to explain to them what you learned, and what you believe, puts quite a burden on the receiver. Now I have to go through a few hundred pages, not knowing what parts you were impressed with, nor what you got from the book, and then I have to write a book review, which could take hours or days. I’m also a busy person, like yourself. If I just sent you a book to read, every time I learned something new that I thought was important, what would you do?! Would you read it, and then give me a full report?

My mom sometimes does something similar. She will email off a link to a one hour video, with the message,

“Oh this was really good, watch this!”

And when shall I have time to do the things that I think are important, especially since I’m reaching the end years of my life? And I found that if I watched it, and then gave her a full report of what I thought, she never really responded to it, or maybe just replied with a quick and relatively meaningless sentence. So all my labor is for naught.

When your Mom and I got married, her Dad gave us a book as a wedding gift. It was a modern professedly-Christian book, from an author who was popular at the time (Max Lucado). I read the book, and then wrote him a few pages of what I thought about some of it. He never responded.

So that is my experience. I find that when people send me books, or links to videos, they are not sending them to have a conversation, they are sending them to convince me of what they believe, and if I am not convinced, they have no time or inclination to discuss the matter. So it is quite a fruitless task.

Nevertheless, I will give you an answer. This will not be a full book report!

First of all, the book is primarily about the problems with men, and how these problems permeate society. Now let's notice first of all that there is a difference between men and women. Men have more muscles, and different hormones. Because of these things, men will tend to rush into danger and take risks, more than women. It also means they will depend more on their physical strength, and also the hormones that make them more aggressive. This does not mean aggressive has to be negative, as in crushing other people down; there can be positive aggressive actions too: pushing a good work ahead with energy, vigor, and drive, for example; not being afraid to take risks where it is warranted; knowing when a work requires momentum, and pushing it ahead at the right time.

Let's also not ignore that there are problems with women too! The natural instinct of a woman is to settle down and build a comfortable nest. In order to do this most effectively, she (maybe unconsciously) will be drawn to a man who has resources (power, money, etc.). All this brings security. Hence a rich man, even if he is old, has no problem getting young women. So there is a tendency for women to use their beauty to attract men, so that they can use that man's power to build their kingdom of security. If they get married, as long as the man builds her dream kingdom, everything goes well.

The book mentions "church" and a teaching about God. She doesn't attempt to define God's character, and what His intent was for humans, but goes on to speak about how the concepts they learned in church and society forced them into certain roles.

So were they learning the truth, as God intended it, or were they learning human traditions, which are man's misunderstandings of God?

When I started searching for truth, I wanted to know about God. I wanted to know what His idea for man was. I did not start looking for God so that I could use Him or His power, to build my own kingdom (like the women I mentioned above). I didn't go to a church to "make connections" so I could get work, or find a "decent woman." Nor was I looking for a social outlet.

Right here, we should ask: Is the Bible an authority? Will we accept God's picture of what man/woman should be, because He made them? Shouldn't the Maker know what He intended, and how we will best fulfill our destiny? Or is the Bible just a production of distorted human minds ("the patriarchy"), and therefore to be treated like other documents of the past: interesting, but marred by the human weaknesses of the past?

What I found, when I seriously started studying the Bible, is that it nailed down the weaknesses of man's character perfectly. Every kind of permutation, every injustice, and evil desire of the heart, was fully exposed. This is not the kind of book that people would have written to justify themselves, or fool others. It's too honest.

I find that Bell Hooks makes no references to Jesus Christ! Imagine that—the One whom God put forth as the model of what He intended humans to be, without sin, and she does not even consider it. Yet, according to the Bible, Jesus is the "word" of God, God's thought made audible, the "wisdom of God," the only one who can fully reveal the Father who dwells in light unapproachable. It seems to me like this is a major flaw in the book, even a fatal flaw.

Now, I need to lay a foundation, in the character and nature of Christ, in order to deal with Bell's book. So bear with me, I will keep it as short as I can.

In the book, *The Place of the Bible in Education*, by A. T. Jones, he makes the point that when it comes to the study of psychology, which is the study of the human mind, how can a mind study itself? Especially if that mind is marred by sin?

But how shall the mind investigate the mind? How shall the mind explore the realm of the mind? Can the mind itself do all this concerning itself? Can the mind take a position back of itself, and put itself under a mental microscope composed of itself, and thus itself, through itself, investigate itself? Such a thing is not only mentally but physically impossible.

With the mind we investigate all other things. But in order to investigate and to know the mind itself we must have another mind, as really as in order to investigate and to know anything else we must have the mind itself. The individual mind can not take a position back of itself, and examine and analyze itself; but the individual mind can find back of itself another Mind, by which true and certain knowledge of the individual mind can be attained.

Without quoting the whole book, I will just summarize, and say that the conclusion is that we need another mind, an outside view, to understand ourselves. That other mind is the mind of God.

The Bible view is that God had a wonderful plan in making man and woman. Lucifer (later Satan) had raised charges against God's character in Heaven, and now the Earth was created as a theater in which those charges would be answered. The creation of lives that produced via seed, whereby male and female parts joined to make a new life, was a new order. Angels did not reproduce. And yet this new order is not just in man/woman, but in almost every plant and animal in this world.

Lucifer had been the highest angel, next to Christ, who was called Michael the archangel. Christ was one with the Father, and possessed the full divine nature, but His unique place was to join His divinity to the created body, in order to draw near to the creation. By taking an angel nature, Christ could do a few things: act

as the communicator and joiner between the Father and the creatures, show the Father's character in a way that creatures can see and understand, and also show the creatures how they should relate to the Father.

The simple reason for this arrangement, so far as we understand, is that the Father "dwells in light unapproachable." In the book of *Daniel*, it says:

Daniel 7

¹⁰ A fiery stream issued and came forth before Him.

This is the stream of life that keeps the whole universe going. It is understandable then, that no mere created being could enter into that incredible source of power without being destroyed. It would be similar to a human getting too close to the sun, or touching a high voltage line.

In the New Testament, this arrangement, of Christ being the connector between God and creatures, is called "the mystery of God."

1 Timothy 3

¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Paul further writes that this arrangement was not something new, that just began in Bethlehem, when Jesus took upon His divinity a human body, but it existed in the past also. It was God's...

Ephesians 3

¹¹ ...eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It was made this way for "fellowship":

⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

⁹ And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

¹⁰ To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

It is often referred to as “hidden” or “secret” because when Christ took the form of an angel, for example, He did so before all the angels were created. So none of them saw Him taking this body. Today we look back and see that Christ was born in Bethlehem. The mystery is not so hidden anymore. But they did not see that. When they were created, they opened their eyes, and there was Christ (known to them by the name of Michael), the highest angel of God. And yet He was more than an angel. There was a divine life in Him that none of the others possessed.

By the way, the name Michael means: “Who is like God?” It is a riddle, or mystery! This is what the Angel who met the parents of Samson indicated, when Manoah asked for His name, and He replied,

Judges 13

¹⁸ Why do you ask after my name, seeing *it is secret*?

Then He revealed His divinity by rising in the flame of their offering (thus showing that He was the divine offering, the promised Messiah who would come, the Lamb of God).

In heaven, Lucifer was the highest angel, next to Michael [Christ]. But Michael could do things that Lucifer was not allowed to do. He could go into the presence of the Father, for example. Eventually, Lucifer began to wonder why he was not able to do these things. And he questioned whether the Father was favoring His Son above Lucifer. This was the beginning of the thought that God was some kind of tyrant, who lifted up some, and oppressed others, denying them the opportunity to advance to their full potential.

Eventually these thoughts led to rebellion, and Lucifer was able to convince quite a few of his fellow angels, that God was being unjust. You might say this was the beginning of the charge against God as running an “oppressive patriarchy”!

Now the only reason Lucifer could not do what Michael could do, is because of the difference in their nature. Michael possessed a divine life: uncreated, underived, unborrowed; immortal in itself. Lucifer possessed a created life: holy and pure, and immortal only as long as it was connected to the great Source of all life. He was dependent. Michael took upon himself a dependent body, and put himself in the place of a dependent creature, but His divine nature had by inheritance immortality.

So the first thing God did, after the rebellion led to the expulsion of Satan and his angels from Heaven, was to create a planet where this principle of two lives joining to make a new life, was repeated over and over again. This was to reveal the mystery of Christ’s nature, to show that He possessed two lives: the life of God, and the life of the creature. So today, children are born that possess the life of both parents: father and mother. This practical living example is designed to show that Satan’s charges against God are false, and that God always works for the best development and advancement of all His creatures. There is no favoritism with God. However, He sees the heart, and knows what people are capable of, and so His decisions may not always be understandable to us.

When Samuel the prophet went to anoint the next king, he was directed to the household of Jesse. The prophet went through all the seven sons of Jesse, but God refused them all. Finally, Jesse had to call the youngest son, David, and he was the one whom God chose. God told Samuel:

1 Samuel 16

⁷ The Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

Now, Satan was allowed to tempt Adam and Eve in the Garden, but only at a certain tree, of which they were warned. When they were overcome by the temptation, and fell into sin, their moral natures were corrupted, and sin affected everything: their bodies, and even the Earth, for they had been given dominion over it.

But what God had made, in order to reveal His mystery, became an object for Satan to use, to reveal his mind. And so the history of this world is largely a picture of Satan's mind. There is oppression, competition, strife, disharmony, and every evil thing. And just as man, who was created to reveal God's character, now often reveals Satan's character, so the Bible, which was given to bring man back to God's image, is often used by carnally minded men, to teach Satan's principles.

I won't go into long detail about this, but you know, for example, that the teaching of an eternally burning hell, distorts the character of God in an awful way, and yet it is considered to be "orthodox Christianity." I have no problem dispensing with that kind of "patriarchy," but I would never discard the true fatherhood of God, as Jesus revealed it.

Now then, let's come back to Bell's book. When she speaks about the "patriarchy," is she talking about God's ideal of rulership, as revealed in Christ? or is she talking about man's distorted picture, which is caused by the ruling of the power of sin in him? The very fact that she never refers to Jesus Christ, shows that she is talking about the distorted picture caused by sin. And just because she finds that type of distortion supported by traditional religion, does not mean that it is God's ideal.

There was a special period in the early part of the Old Testament known as the "patriarchal" period. This was the period from the fall to the time of Jacob. It would involve men such as Enoch, Noah, and later Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. None of these men showed oppressive traits. In fact, when Cain killed his brother Abel, nobody went after him to kill him. God did meet him, and spoke with him, but Adam did not send out people to revenge the

spilled blood. We find no violence on the side of the “sons of God,” as the followers of Jehovah were called. But in the rest of the world, in those children who chose not to walk in God’s ways, there was plenty of violence.

Genesis 6

⁵ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

They had rejected the true picture of fatherhood, the true patriarchy; and were left to their own twisted version, the false patriarchy.

Among God’s followers, the wives of the patriarchs were not enslaved, or treated as non-intelligent. The characters of the women are portrayed, as well as those of the men. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, are very much involved. In the incident I mentioned, where Samson’s parents met the Angel, the Angel first appeared to Manoah’s wife. If this was the “patriarchy” as Bell describes it, shouldn’t the woman have been ignored? Shouldn’t the angel only talk with the man? Likewise with Mary, when she was to have Jesus, the angel came to her first.

Now in the picture which God gave in the mystery of seed production, it is true that the man stands as an object lesson of divinity (he was made first and represents Christ), and the woman as an object lesson of the creature (she proceeded from him, as the angelic and human creation proceeded from Christ). So normally, the man plays a leading role. And as I mentioned, he often has the stronger body, and the hormones that drive his mind, in order to be a leader. But this object lesson will pass in the resurrection, where we will obtain new bodies, and there will be no male/female, and no bearing children. And so, looking forward to that new order, even in this earth there are times when women are used to lead out, when there are no men who will do the task.

Thus Deborah became a prophetess and leader, in the book of *Judges*. And so Paul wrote:

Galatians 3

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

You know well, perhaps, that I read the writings of Ellen White, who I believe was chosen as God's prophet, when other men would not accept the task. And God enabled her to do the task very, very well. The vessel is not so important, for God's power to be revealed, provided it is submissive and knows enough about Him to cooperate with His work.

But let's look at Jesus again, for He is God's image especially. When He came to earth, as the prophet, and the messiah, the leader of the new testament church, what kind of character did He have?

John 5

³⁰ I can of my own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me.

God did not give Him a whole pile of power, and He could go and do with it according to His personal pleasure. That's not real leadership in God's eyes. He had to work very closely with His heavenly Father. To prepare for this greatest task ever given to any man, He was simply trained by a deep study and understanding of the Bible, and by His practical service in the carpenter shop. God did not give His Son a glorious rise to a position of ease and comfort. It was instead, patient toil, and perseverance; and deep study to prepare His mind and heart for the work of representing God correctly.

Even at an early age (12) he showed great intellectual ability, when he was in the temple talking with the doctors of the law there. He could have thought, and undoubtedly was tempted by Satan to think,

“Why should I stay here in this carpenter shop? It’s such a dead-end job. I have great abilities and talents; I should go out into the world and make a name for myself. How can I reach others if I just stay in this little shop in such an unknown town?”

This is what most people would think today, and it is the course they would take, to make themselves great; because their eyes are on the world and this life, and they have no time nor disposition to consider what God needs of them, and what is required to win the great controversy for God’s cause and government.

While Jesus himself never sinned, He was not ignorant of what sin would do. He deeply studied the lessons in the Bible, and could see what the results of sin were. Sin promises great things, and seems to lead to prosperity, but in the end, leads to ruin. He read these lessons, and knew that in order to give the demonstration of God’s kingdom that the world needed, He had to stay close to God, and follow His instructions to the letter. Only in this way could He truly glorify His life.

So part of His training meant He had to be content with menial tasks, but at the same time, do them as well as if He were doing a great work. The small things were as important as the great things, and all needed the same love and care. This is very different from the world’s training. In the world you are taught that if nobody can see the work, then you don’t need to be very careful.

“Oh, nobody sees my bed, so I can just leave it messy...I have more important things to do.”

“I don’t have time to cook a good meal, there are more important things.”

“I’m not getting paid very much for this work, so I won’t put my best effort into it.”

“These workers are all low-skilled, poor people. I won’t pay them very much, and won’t spend much time making their workplace pleasant...Oh, here is a rich customer! I must roll out the red carpet for him!”

Jesus' disciples had a hard time learning this lesson: that leadership meant service. Their view of the "patriarchy" was very different from Jesus' view. When they came to the Lord's Supper, and there was nobody to wash the feet of the guests, none of them wanted to do it. In their minds, that was a servant's task, and it would disqualify them for the high positions they hoped to occupy next to Jesus on the seats of government. Then Jesus picked up the towel and bowl and washed their feet, and they were humbled, and their hearts were touched.

Why did Jesus seem to have access to such unlimited power to heal people and read their hearts? Simply because the Father could trust Him to handle the power without misusing it. He had handled the small tasks with utter faithfulness, and now He could be entrusted with the large tasks.

I find one thing utterly lacking in Bell's book: the recognition of sin. Instead, she blames everything on a social order. It is as if she believes that the way to perfection is just to change a few rules, and teach people some new ideas. That, supposedly, will eliminate all sin and strife, and bring in a new system of world peace! At least for the Christian view, we have some examples in the Bible, and in history that speak to the effectiveness of God's way, when it is truly followed. But where are the examples, the success stories, for Bell's conclusion?

The Bible view is that all are affected by sin, and that their natural tendencies, unless either controlled (if they are temptations), or eradicated (if they are actually a wrong spirit), will lead to transgression. Transgression of the Law is the trampling of the rights of others. First, of the rights of God: we owe Him thanks, respect, and service for giving us life and a world; secondly the trampling of the rights of others, which is why the second table of the law deals with: respect of parents, lying, stealing, killing, committing adultery, and coveting.

Now, "the law is not made for a righteous man," (*1 Timothy* 1:9) because he has inside of him the living law, that will prevent him

from transgressing. But the law is made for sinners, and all have sinned. Essentially, the end argument of Bell's book, is that it is not sin that is man's problem, but just some wrong "patriarchal" ideas that were taught to us. With this view, the death of Christ is meaningless. Probably she does not even believe that it really happened.

There was a time in America (in the 1800's) where some educators believed that if we just brought education to all the people, they would naturally form a good society. For them, education was the saviour. They expected America to rise and grow in peace and enter into the thousand years millennium of peace on earth.

For atheistic scientists, their theory of evolution taught them to believe that man was progressing to a higher and higher state, and that therefore, current man was far above the man of the past. Then we had two world wars, the rise of communism in the USSR, China, and Cambodia, and the millions upon millions of people that were killed by these events. Probably more people died in the last 100 years, than any previous period in man's history. So much for the progress of man through evolution and education.

There is no society today, which would dare to abolish its police force, and its military. They know that their society would then be subject to all sorts of abuses by lawless selfish people, who care nothing for the rights of others. And there never has been a society in the whole history of this world, that has been able to solve the problem of sin in man, just by teaching some new educational ideas. And by the way, the Bible is not just a bunch of new ideas. It teaches that man needs a change within, a new life from God. As Fred Wright, the founder of my church, used to say,

"We are not people with new ideas, we are new people!"

Another problem with her book, is that it projects the problem onto something or someone else, outside of the person. With the Bible, the problem is always in each one of us. We cannot blame

our problems on someone else. This is exactly what Adam and Eve tried to do when they became infected by sin:

“Why did I eat the fruit? Oh, this woman that you gave me, she made me eat.”

And the woman:

“Oh, the serpent you made, it tricked me.”

See? No ability to point at the problem within; and make an honest confession, and take responsibility. In the end, it's all God's fault. And who was the first one that introduced that kind of charge?...blaming God? Lucifer. So should we put confidence in a book that echoes the great rebel himself? I wouldn't.

Consider also that once the relationship between man and God is restored, the believer does not have to worry about the circumstances he is placed in. God will use them for the good of His cause, and the eventual good of the person also. So when Joseph was put into slavery, then falsely accused and put even further down, into prison; he was not crushed by these circumstances. He rose above them, continued to serve no matter where he was put, and shortly after rose to the heights of power in Egypt.

I mention this because Bell's book seems to convey the idea that we are held captive by the "patriarchy"; it's all around us, and we can't free ourselves from this oppression. But to a man like Joseph, who has a relationship with God, the outer circumstances will not affect his inner character.

Psalm 23

⁴ Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me.

A Christian can live “in the world” but not be “of the world.” The town where Jesus grew up was considered very bad; Nathanael said,

John 1

⁴⁶ Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?

Yet Jesus grew up there, untainted by the evil.

The simple answer to all the problems of man is in Jesus Christ. There we see the character of God in full display, and that is what we must look to if we hope to be changed into the correct pattern.

But don't think that everyone will agree with that choice, or that they will complement you. Real Christianity is not palatable to the carnal mind. Submission to God is derided as a straight-jacket on the intellect by the so-called "educated classes." Read again the first chapter of *Pilgrim's Progress*, and see what a struggle it was for Christian to leave the doomed city where he dwelt.

There are long-held traditions that you have to oppose, and these will not make you popular. There is a lot of family and society pride in traditions, because:

"Our [relatives, teachers, leaders, friends] cannot be wrong!
How can all these talented charming people be wrong, and you be right?"

There is a natural confidence put in flesh, and a dependence on human ideas and authority, that will rise up when it is challenged.

And aside from all that, there is a host of fallen angels, who do not want mankind to be free from their control. When their kingdom over human minds is challenged, they will inspire men to war against the truth. They don't mind if people argue about different human ideas. They don't even mind if people use religion as an excuse for sin. But they do mind when people find the truth and break free from the controlling power of sin within the human heart.

It's a shame really; Bell talks about violence in movies, and how the "heroes" gain victory over the evil men by violence. We cover that same lesson in the book on God's character, *Behold Your God*. But we find in Jesus the answer. He portrayed the character of God the most clearly, and never resorted to violence to defeat evil or to further God's kingdom.

She speaks about having a few partners. Why not just one? for life? But the second partner she had was “a major advocate for stopping violence against women,” but then later she found him “emotionally abusive”! I find it interesting that she never considers that *she* might be the problem! Maybe he said something quite harmless, and she took it the wrong way? This term “emotional abuse” is so subjective, it can be a nice cover for all sorts of pride and self-seeking.

It’s hard to accept what she says without hearing the other side...and even then, for a Christian, nothing can be really harmful from external sources, provided he keeps his faith and trust in God. Jesus was shamefully abused during the trial and on the cross; but He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. *Hebrews 7:26*. He was not emotionally scarred by the abuse, and His character was untarnished by this treatment. Nothing Satan or evil men could do to Him would make Him lose His hold upon God, and His obedience to righteousness.

Psalms 56

¹¹ In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

And that is really the answer for humans, as we head into difficult times caused by the abounding sin of man.