

Chapter One

The World in Crisis and Why Discipleship to Jesus is the Key.

This book is all based on my own faith-perspective. What follows here is based on my personal beliefs and my worldview. Take what you will from this book, carefully consider what you will, and dismiss the rest. After all, God gave free will to humans. Essential to free will is that everyone can decide for themselves what they believe in.

So, let me share my bias, that is, my faith-perspective. What I believe is the most important thing in life can be summed up in four parts: 1. To know Jesus; 2. To love Jesus; 3. To follow Jesus; and 4. To resist Patriarchy. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6) I believe that Jesus is basically the key to everything. I believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, sent from God with the mission “to save the world.” Maybe a better description of the mission is that Jesus’ mission was and still is “to bring salvation, justice, and liberation to the whole world.” This description indicates that universal liberation is the goal. And what are humanity and the world to be liberated from? In short—from the power and rule of Patriarchy. The real Jesus is totally against Patriarchy. The real Jesus is all about overcoming Patriarchy and spreading a revolutionary alternative to Patriarchy on Earth, i.e., the “kingdom of God”—or the “commonwealth of God.”

Obviously, the world is not “saved.” Massive human suffering all over the world and frequent human rights abuses and atrocities make it obvious that the world is far from being “saved.” The goal of universal liberation also seems far-fetched and practically impossible. To better make sense of these dilemmas it can be helpful to put them into a clarifying “big picture” context.

Let me put forward a “big picture” context for addressing these problems. The conceptual framework that makes the most sense to me for understanding human civilization for the past

10,000 years or so and for understanding humanity's dire condition today is a *very broad understanding of Patriarchy*. *1

Feminists have greatly expanded our understanding of the meaning and scope of patriarchy. *2 There is a vast amount of feminist literature critiquing patriarchy. It is incredibly helpful. And yet most people have a very limited definition and understanding of patriarchy. Most people will “compartmentalize” their understanding of patriarchy, regarding it as another term for “sexism” or placing it in the category of “women’s issues”—and thereby diminish its overall importance. But I use Patriarchy in a very broad way so that it essentially represents a comprehensive conceptual framework for critically analyzing any issue.

The big-picture context for every problem, issue, or topic is a very broad understanding of Patriarchy. The basic premise of Patriarchy is male dominance and female subordination, resulting in hierarchy, inequality, oppression, and violence. But Patriarchy is much more than that. Patriarchy helps to reveal how human civilizations have historically organized themselves for many millennia. Patriarchy has very deep roots in recorded history, in the development of tribalism, kingdoms, empires, and nations. It has deep roots in all the major institutions of a society. Patriarchal organization is accompanied with supporting patriarchal myths, philosophies, religions, and traditions. Patriarchy is supported by patriarchal languages and an enormous amount of male-generated (androcratic) intellectual thoughts and rationales to justify the various forms of patriarchal civilization. Patriarchy can be viewed as a “social totality,” affecting everything. Patriarchy can be viewed as a power or force that transcends individuals and various entities. In its totality, Patriarchy can be viewed as a powerful force that “infects” everyone and dominates human civilizations. There are many variations of patriarchal civilization around the world. Despite their differences they are all branches of Patriarchy.

This book is relatively short. Although the essays on various topics are relatively short, they contain a fair amount of content but are by no means comprehensive. This book is intended to show the pervasiveness, depth, and power of Patriarchy, some of its harmful effects, and Jesus’ strategy and practices for overcoming Patriarchy. Each of the following chapters will expand upon the power and rule of Patriarchy and

how its comprehensive grip over human civilization is leading humanity down the path of “death and destruction.”

What is the Problem?

First, the world is in crisis and the consequences are devastating. Second, individual and organized efforts to overcome the crisis and to change the world for the better are woefully insufficient. Third, there is a solution but far too few people are pursuing it.

Indeed, the world is currently facing multiple crises. The crises are inter-related and are some of the consequences of patriarchal civilizations and their economic exploitation of labor and resources during the fossil-fuel era. The crises include: Earth’s 6th great age of mass extinctions of species (the Anthropocene Epoch); climate change/chaos; a massive migration of species toward the poles due to global warming and over-heated habitats; melting of glaciers and ice sheets; warmer oceans; rising ocean levels; acidification of lakes and oceans; endangered coral reefs; overfishing; depletion or pollution of aquifers; massive plastic pollution and spread of micro-plastics everywhere; decline of clean drinking water and groundwater; decline in wetlands; melting of permafrost; more frequent extreme weather events; loss of topsoil; growing desertification; more large dust storms; increasing deforestation; more severe forest fires and air pollution; steady increase in highly-radioactive nuclear wastes; spreading radioactive contamination; nuclear weapons proliferation and a high risk of nuclear war; massive military spending, weapons sales, and military conflicts; growing threat of killer drones & robots and uncontrolled A.I.; more authoritarian governments; more violent gangs/militias/cartels; overpopulation/over-consumption of Earth’s resources; suburban sprawl; habitat loss; decline in bees and pollinators; a global pandemic; growing economic inequalities and growing number of people facing economic destitution and homelessness; a growing number of internally-displaced people and economic and environmental refugees; large social unrest against systemic racism, police brutality, and repressive authoritarian governments; more droughts and floods; more algae blooms; spread of harmful invasive species; and growing pollution, “dead zones,” and fish die-offs. This incomplete list highlights some of the travail that the world is currently experiencing. These are not just problems for the distant future. These problems are happening now and,

when taken collectively, show that the world is in a very real emergency situation right now. The problems are extraordinary—and the response of humanity needs to be extraordinary. But it isn't.

The crises the world is facing are tied together by the human factor, by the role played by Homo sapiens. More specifically, the crises are the result of Patriarchy. They are the result of male-dominated human civilizations all around the world. They are the result of patriarchal governance and economic development. Governments and large corporations are patriarchal institutions that are constantly driven to seek increased military power and economic wealth. They are a major cause and source of the world's deteriorating ecosystems. At best, they can offer top-down (hierarchical) reforms to mitigate some of the harm and damage being done. They can bring some relief—but can never get to the roots of the problems. They remain pillars of Patriarchy and it is, ultimately, Patriarchy which must be overcome.

How Hard is it to Save the World?

If a solution to the crises is to be found, and if Patriarchy is to be overcome, the solution must come from grassroots efforts. Individuals are doing lots of good works. Every individual is important. The personal is political. Everything is connected. Every small contribution is helpful. Good deeds live on, with a ripple effect. Acts of love and kindness strengthen social connections, bringing people closer together. Every day, every moment, provides an opportunity for doing some good. However, relying on individuals alone to overcome Patriarchy is a losing strategy. Individual efforts alone will not overcome the collective power of patriarchal civilizations.

Grassroots organizations are doing lots of good things. They are helping many people who otherwise would not be helped. They provide valuable services in many areas. They are doing important social justice education, organizing, and protesting. Some grassroots organizations can offer a counter-cultural rural alternative to mainstream patriarchal society. In general, grassroots organizations have the potential to develop stronger resistance to Patriarchy and do much more good than individual efforts. However, in practice, grassroots organizations' overall effectiveness, in relation to the world's collective crises, is

limited by several factors. First, organizations and movements tend to focus on a single issue or a single area of concern. They are not holistic. They can appeal to a segment of the population and seek changes in a particular area of concern. But they can't grow large enough to really transform a patriarchal society. For example, even the renowned Occupy movement, which famously proclaimed, "We are the 99%," didn't really live up to their key slogan and could not sustain itself (although 0.01% of their activists are still hoping for a resurgence). Second, organizations and movements may have idealistic and/or radical beginnings along with strong rhetoric. But they tend, over time, to move toward a reformist legislative agenda, aimed at convincing the ruling class to make some adjustments. For example, the original energy and efforts to protest specific instances of police brutality and murder of Blacks, in particular, eventually weakened. The focus changed toward prosecutorial indictments, courtroom trials, and the details of possible police reforms. Third, organizations and movements arise but they often begin with a weak foundation and base. Such a movement may grow fast and create a lot of publicity—but then decline and fade away. For example, when the Arab Spring movement spread to Egypt it may have seemed destined to bring great changes. But it was based on the myths of democratic government, the false hope that the military would support it, and upon forging a superficial unity of the people. It failed badly.

Despite all the great things that individuals and grassroots organizations are doing, they are not collectively powerful enough to solve the world's crises and overcome Patriarchy. Underestimating the collective evil being done by patriarchal civilizations around the world will not motivate people to make the lifestyle changes that are necessary. Patriarchy is winning on the ground all the time—with devastating consequences for humanity and for the world. Much more is needed.

The problem is that it is very difficult to save the world from all of its crises. It is very difficult to change and transform the world. It is very difficult to build, sustain, and grow a movement that will overcome Patriarchy.

What is to be done? Let me make a bold, faith-based assertion: *The only true hope for overcoming Patriarchy, saving humanity, and saving the world is through Jesus and his discipleship/liberation movement.* To say that Jesus alone is the

only true hope may be technically true—but is incomplete and can be easily misunderstood. Jesus, the Messiah, the leader of God’s liberation movement, handed on his mission to his disciples. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20) The discipleship/liberation movement is partners with Jesus in the mission to overcome Patriarchy, save humanity, and save the world. Jesus is the strong foundation and groups or communities of disciples are the necessary base of the movement. God’s liberation movement is a grassroots, participatory, egalitarian movement in which followers and disciples of Jesus play an essential on-the-ground role. This is the solution but far too few people are pursuing it. Jesus needs a lot more followers and disciples in order to build the movement and build a powerful alternative to Patriarchy on the ground.

If the assertion is true that the only true hope for overcoming Patriarchy, saving humanity, and saving the world is through Jesus and his discipleship/liberation movement, then there are some very important corollaries that need to be emphasized. I will proceed on the basis that the assertion is true and point out five corollaries.

First, all other hopes for overcoming Patriarchy and solving the world’s many crises are false hopes. There are many false hopes. They will all fail. People often place their faith in false hopes and endeavors which actually end up strengthening Patriarchy. But, I suppose, it may be better for individuals to have false hopes than to have no hope.

Second, if God had not sent Jesus, the Messiah, then human beings, Homo sapiens, would go extinct. If God had not sent Jesus, then there would be no true hope for humanity. Thus Homo sapiens, like all their evolutionary hominid predecessors, would be on the sure path to extinction. Patriarchy is leading humanity on the path that leads to extinction and patriarchal civilizations have already travelled a long way down that path.

Third, the gospel, or Good News, of Jesus, the Messiah, leading God’s liberation movement is *extremely hopeful*. Since God did send Jesus, not only won’t human beings go extinct but followers of Jesus can be certain that eventually humanity and the world will be saved. Jesus began the discipleship/liberation

movement and established a permanent divine-human partnership for the mission. With a divine leader/partner in Jesus, the discipleship/liberation movement has a permanent connection to God and to God's Spirit-power. Since Jesus exercises the full power of God it is impossible that Jesus would fail to accomplish the mission. Hope in Jesus and in his discipleship/liberation movement is well-placed. The hope is true, the hope is certain that eventually Patriarchy will be overcome and humanity and the world will be saved.

Fourth, there are compelling reasons to prioritize participating in Jesus' discipleship/liberation movement—which is the harbinger of God's New Creation. There are too many reasons to go into here so only a brief rationale will be made. Jesus said, "But strive first for the kingdom [or commonwealth] of God and its righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33) There is some urgency, there is some imperative, based on love for God, love for humanity, and love for all creation, to prioritize becoming part of the ultimate solution by participating in Jesus' movement. The turning of the tide will not occur until there is a strong bona fide discipleship/liberation movement with many, many participants.

Fifth, Jesus offers a unique path to universal liberation. It involves new practices and new relationships. Old strategies and practices that don't include Jesus are tragically neglecting the value and importance of God's Spirit-power. Only one path is centered around Jesus. There is only one divinely-led liberation movement. Since the path to true liberation is opposed to all forms of domination, oppression, and violence, Jesus calls people to "come out" of patriarchal structures, institutions, and relationships. Jesus said,

"If you belong to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you." (John 15:19)

Also, Jesus said,

"As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." (John 17:18)

In order to overcome Patriarchy people must separate themselves from the patriarchal world and then re-engage the patriarchal world as participants in Jesus' unique discipleship/liberation movement.

Unless there is a cosmic change of consciousness, lifestyles, and practices among homo sapiens, conditions on Earth will continue to worsen. Jesus' followers and disciples are meant to be the "vanguard" of a worldwide renewal movement, a veritable New Creation.

Footnotes

1. This is a practical big-picture context for the past 10,000 years or so. Of course, a bigger big-picture context includes the God of creation and infinite Spirit-power and makes Patriarchy look small in comparison to deep time, immense space, and God's power. In this bigger big-picture context Patriarchy is a temporary and transitory blotch of mal-directed nature. But, for practical purposes for understanding humanity's plight today, the big-picture context of a very broad understanding of Patriarchy is most useful.
2. I prefer to use the upper case "P" for Patriarchy because I want to highlight the power and resiliency of Patriarchy. Using the lower case "p" for patriarchy can subtly diminish the importance of patriarchy and underestimate the enduring power of patriarchy.