

Hating Girls

An Intersectional Survey of Misogyny

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Patriarchal Power and the Catholic Church

Diane Dougherty

Misogyny is a culturally inculcated hatred of women. At the same time, however, misogynists often loudly profess their love of mothers and other women in their lives. How can this apparent contradiction arise? It occurs because misogyny is a primarily hidden predatory behavior of dominant enculturated males and females who feel the necessity to maintain invisible stands of division and separation. An example of this was given by U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio Cortez (a Roman Catholic) in her response to a Roman Catholic House colleague, U.S. Representative Ted Yoho who called her a “Fuckin Bitch” on the steps of the U.S. Capitol in front of media.¹ She was not traumatized by this language because she has seen this type of behavior in many men. Name-calling is but one aspect of misogyny. What bothered Ocasio Cortez was Yoho’s use of the women in his family to cover for him. She bristled at the silence of his colleagues, the acceptance of this violent language against women and a structure of power that supports it in the halls of Congress. Dehumanizing language is common and undetectable to most. She thanked him for saying this, so that she could remind everyone that people of great stature, holding high rank, can accost women but decent men apologize to acknowledge the harm done.

Patriarchal architecture founded on misogyny forms the foundation of “conservative” and “liberal” politics as a virus mutating and reproducing itself from one generation to the next emphasizing male superiority over women. This false premise is the primary engine that justifies the use of man-made laws and legalized codes of conduct that in turn promote societal illnesses and extreme inequality.

When feminist scholars of philosophy began examining the exclusion of women by male historical and canonical philosophers, three aspects of misogynist beliefs were examined: explicit misogyny; gendered interpretations (women are lesser); and synoptic interpretations where reason and objectivity are exclusively male attributes. Under this microscope, Aristotle could be seen

1 Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, July 23, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LI4ueUtkRQo>.

as a masterful misogynist.² He believed that men were mentally and biologically superior to women, therefore by nature they (women) should be slaves. He wrote “women are deformed males ... without a soul,” a belief that continues to resonate in the minds of many leaders today. His misogynist narratives were utilized by nations to frame social structures based on the premise that “humans are divided into two kinds, male (superior beings) and female (lesser beings).”³ Hence, much of the world’s population, governments, and religions today continue to operate under the influence of unrelenting patriarchal structures that do untold harm.⁴

1 Normalizing Misogyny

Go to any toy store, bookstore, or game store and misogyny is on full display. What is in the girl’s section giving them messages about themselves? Girls are pretty, thin, queens, princesses, and they love to wear pink. Successful females are portrayed as dolls with perfect makeup and high heels that match the perfect outfit. Make-up tables, mansions, yachts, expensive clothes, all stimulate the minds of boys and girls telling them what outer image is culturally acceptable for successful females. For boys we see endless displays of guns, building gadgets, action packed toys, video games loaded with winning through violence or oppression, as well as an emphasis on aggressive competition of all sorts. Boys and girls are enculturated to believe that girls are uncompetitive, emotional, and fragile while boys are expected to be brave, aggressive, competitive, and dominant. Masculinity ideals translate into life choices opening avenues for white boys’ free exploration of these violent character traits to the point that legal and oftentimes criminal offences are trivialized.⁵ Kate Manne calls this *Himpathy*, excessive sympathy shown to male perpetrators. Women and men are known for showing sympathy to white men’s criminal behavior because they are reluctant to ruin their lives. Victims of white male violence

2 Charlotte Witt, “Feminist History of Philosophy”. In: Alanen L., Witt C. (eds), *Feminist Reflections on the History of Philosophy. The New Synthese Historical Library* (Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy), vol 55. 2004. https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-2489-4_1.

3 Carrie L. Bass, “Gender Ontology and Women in Ministry in the Early Church” *Priscilla Papers, Academic Journal*, (Spring, April 30, 2011).

4 Rabbi Tirzah Firestone, “Beyond Patriarchy: What to do with the Legacy of Trauma and Fear.” *Tikkun*, (Winter, 2019), <https://www.tikkun.org/what-to-do-with-the-legacy-of-trauma-and-fear>.

5 Kate Manne, *Down Girl. The Logic of Misogyny* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 196–208.

are often vilified in order to support the leniency shown to perpetrators. This is particularly evident in the multitude of cases in which parents dismiss their children's accounts of sexual abuse by a trusted male relative or priest.

On the other hand, women are treated quite differently in the patriarchy. One out of every three females will be sexually molested by a trusted adult male.⁶ These females are largely unprotected by the courts. Additionally, policies and practices regarding women lead to a lifetime of inadequate income. Once caught in the cycle of poverty, wealth building is not part of their future and there is a high likelihood that their children will follow the same path.⁷ As a matter of fact, the poor do not believe they have a future, they can only focus on the unmet needs of the day. The question raised here directly relates to how a low-wage workforce is necessary for other people's wealth building.⁸ However, if people have human rights, societies need to rework structures to provide equity in education that in turn provides a living wage and frees poor people caught in the net of poverty for profit.⁹ Could this be why in America the vast majority of those living in poverty are women and their children, and why Christian leaders under patriarchy do not address it, but offer minimal services to salve their consciences?¹⁰ Could it also be the reason that the majority of women are kept poor from one generation to the next?

Cultural misogynist behaviors are protected by the very laws and codes that misogynists design. They become the terms of relationships demanding women stay in their place while men move about freely. "Society presents women as voiceless bodies ready to serve hetero-male desires," and that has led to a multitude of ways patriarchal society practices dehumanization of women and minorities, thereby exponentially increasing gender inequality.¹¹

6 National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, <https://ncadv.org/>.

7 US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/90321/escaping-poverty.pdf>.

8 Camille Bureau, "How do patriarchy and capitalism jointly reinforce oppression of women." *Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt*, September 13, 2018, <https://www.cadtm.org/How-do-patriarchy-and-capitalism-jointly-reinforce-the-oppression-of-women>.

9 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <https://www.humanrights.com/what-are-human-rights/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/preamble.html>.

10 Shailly Gupta Barnes, "Explaining the 140 million: Breaking down the numbers in the moral budget." *Kairos Center*, Undated. <https://kairoscenter.org/explaining-the-140-million/>.

11 Chris Crass, "Going to Places that Scare Me ...," *Colours of Resistance Archive. Resisting Patriarchy*, Undated. <http://www.coloursofresistance.org/536/going-to-places-that-scare-me-personal-reflections-on-challenging-male-supremacy/>.

2 Patriarchy and Trauma

Meera Atkinson writes that patriarchy perpetuates trauma to such a degree that living itself is traumatic with endless suffering and strife.¹² Prominent church leaders are encased in patriarchal teaching and promote misogynist beliefs as part of the Christian tradition.¹³ These men used religion to adopt patriarchal norms throughout recorded Christian history subjugating women to men's wishes, enslaving them, and forcing them into prostitution. Today's movement in the U.S. courts to protect rapists is a prime example. A young man raped a 16-year-old girl. It was filmed and distributed. The judge, concerned about the "assailant's bright future" ruled him a minor and gave him a light sentence because he believed it did not constitute "calculated cruelty."¹⁴ In every age, conscious laws were on the books to deny women access to justice in the courts, as well as health, education and welfare. Why? Because Christian leaders collaborate with governments that function under patriarchal rule, meaning the emphasis is more about protecting male privilege than justice under the law.

While there is a plethora of examples of patriarchal Christian leaders, we will highlight just a few of these and provide some examples of early Christian women who pushed through boundaries, and built egalitarian communities for the first 300 years, only to be forgotten and purposefully erased from history. A leader in the early Christian Church, Tertullian (160–220 C.E.) preached, "Woman is a temple built over a sewer, the gateway to the devil. Woman, you are the devil's doorway."¹⁵ When he met a woman who was part of the noble class, his tone changed. Free-born Roman citizens could come from families of senatorial or equestrian rank, but their wealth had to remain in that class. Once converted to Christianity, a noble woman had to marry a nobleman, or give up power, status and wealth.¹⁶ Tertullian wanted to use her wealth and

12 Meera Atkinson, "Patriarchy Perpetuates Trauma. It's Time to Face the Fact." *The Guardian*, April 29, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/30/patriarchy-perpetuates-trauma-its-time-to-face-the-fact>.

13 Miguel De La Torre, "Quotations Track Church's Anti-Woman Legacy," *Good Faith Media*, March 25, 2005.

14 Lillian House, "US Justice System Protects Rapists," *Breaking the Chains*, July 11, 2019. <https://www.breakingthechainsmag.org/u-s-justice-system-protects-rapists/>.

15 Miguel De La Torre, "Quotations Track Church's Anti-Woman Legacy," *Good Faith Media*, March 25, 2005.

16 Margaret Mowczko, "Wealthy Women in the First Century World" *Priscilla Papers, Academic Journal*, Summer, 2018.

influenced her and others not to marry, for the benefit of the church. If society allowed additional freedoms to women, the church hierarchy tried to take them back.

However, women were the source of the growth of the early church and believed themselves to be disciples of Christ. Margaret Mowczko tells us that at this time, women were active in public spaces as artisans, such as Priscilla, or businesswomen, such as Lydia. Some like Phoebe were independently wealthy or born into royalty that brought privileges.¹⁷ They filled places in society and in church. They built strong networks of Christian communities that thrived around the Mediterranean. Women believed in Christ's transformative message, allowing them to cross the boundaries of womanhood to serve outside society's norms. They grew diverse communities in the homes of the wealthy leaders of the time, preaching, teaching and ministering to those in need. Their communities were egalitarian, open to all.¹⁸ In spite of misogynist rules and strict codes of conduct regarding marriage and sex, Karen Jo Torjensen's research shows that while early Christianity lacked buildings, officials, and large congregations marked by later stages, it was a social movement, "marked by fluidity and flexibility that allowed women, slaves and artisans to assume leadership roles," within the societal codes that kept them out of public spaces.¹⁹

Although they were able to accomplish great things in the early church, certain misogynist practices of the time imposed painful choices. In order to serve, some women had to be non-sexual and declare themselves a widow. Women who had authority in their communities were women who had either transformed themselves into males or who wiped out femaleness in favor of androgyny or hermaphroditism ... neither male or female.²⁰ They accepted these societal norms for the promise, hope and experience of women living in an egalitarian community, preaching, teaching and promoting the gospel as a disciple of Christ. However, in terms of time, this experience was short lived. April De Conick, in her book *Holy Misogyny*, describes the patriarchy's noose around a God that would dare try to call a woman a disciple. She declares, "The

17 Deborah Sawyer, "Sisters in Christ or Daughters of Eve", in Lucinda Joy Peach, *Women and World Religions*. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002), 215.

18 Karen Jo Torjensen, *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of Their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity*, (San Francisco, Calif: Harper Publishing, 1993), 11–37.

19 Ibid, 11.

20 April DeConick, *Holy Misogyny*, (New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 79.

real serpent in the garden is misogyny that makes the divine write the subordination of the female in her own hand.”²¹ The power behind the patriarchal false notions of women continued to stream through the minds of men growing stronger as women’s work and creative initiatives began to flower in the early church. Like a well-greased engine, the pathogen of power, domination and wealth building became an invisible hand trying to manipulate and/or erase their work. “I am not giving permission for a woman to teach or to tell a man what to do. A woman ought not to speak, because Adam was formed first and Eve afterwards, and it was not Adam who was led astray but the woman who was led astray and fell into sin. Nevertheless, she will be saved by child-bearing.” (1 Ti 2:12–15).

The influential St. John Chrysostom (304–407 C.E.) joined the men of the day parroting hatred for women, “Among all savage beast none is found so harmful as woman, a woman is as sick as a hideous tapeworm, the advance post of hell.”²² Perhaps the growth of house churches during that time through women’s leadership was an annoyance. Conceivably his lashing out relates to the role women were given when Christian congregations became unmanageable. These women presbyters went to rural and large urban communities. Solid evidence exists that many women led large communities, and the practice was widespread throughout Phrygia, Thera, Egypt and Sicily. Giulia Runa has a tombstone in St. Augustine’s Cathedral in Hippo, noting her as *presbiterissa* soon after his death. In other words, she was commissioned on his staff and upon death, was buried in the church with her office engraved as a mosaic on the floor at the entrance of the door.²³

For centuries women have participated in church ministries, and men of great stature and influence continue to make sure that their work is largely uncompensated and devoid of authority and power. Such was the announcement in 2000 at the Southern Baptist Convention that shook up the patriarchy as they altered the practice of some branches of the convention that had ordained women, allowing them to preach, teach and lead congregations. “While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture,”²⁴ assuring higher salaries for

21 Ibid, 149.

22 Miguel De La Torre, “Quotations Track Church’s Anti-Woman Legacy,” *Good Faith Media*, March 25, 2005.

23 *National Catholic Reporter*, Staff, January 13, 2013, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/theology/early-women-leaders-heads-house-churches-presbyters>.

24 Southern Baptist Convention. “Resolution On Ordination And The Role Of Women In Ministry” (June 1, 1984) <https://www.sbc.net/resource-library/resolutions/resolution-on-ordination-and-the-role-of-women-in-ministry/>.

men and more work for women. An account of an ordained woman chaplain in a women's prison highlighted the impact this conflict produced. Because her job was dependent on further endorsement by her Baptist denomination, she and many other women would have lost their jobs. Eventually they decided not to ordain women in the future and her status did not change. It was during this time that Jimmy Carter left the Southern Baptist Convention and with a group of Elders began proclaiming worldwide that he lost his religion for equality.²⁵ No voice, or man of influence or denomination has been more influential in broadcasting the reality of the impact of gender inequality under patriarchy than Jimmy Carter.²⁶ His book, *A Call to Action, Women, Religion, Violence and Power*, is a call to spread egalitarianism in all sectors of governance, rather than patriarchal rule.

Misogynist principles continue to build wealth through systems that keep people poor. There is no room for partnership—only domination and power building. This model is responsible for continued poverty. It is the leading cause for social divisions, as well as the deconstruction of systems that take food from people and allow governments to cull their own populations by distributing health care to a select few. Christian churches today have had select armies of official clerics, lay men and women, trained to build and maintain patriarchal rule. Seen as ministers for the building of the Kingdom of God, a kingdom itself is being built on the misuse of power by domination over people. Christian missionaries of all denominations seeking to bring a gospel of good news to the poor in hindsight have come to realize they were simply used as an arm of the government to build colonial rule—the product of their colonized mind.²⁷ Living within the toxic culture of patriarchy, their efforts actually helped create structures that promoted patriarchal slavocracy worldwide.²⁸ Even today, there is not clarity within Christianity about the role of patriarchy and the practice of patriarchal rule. But a glance at the societies impacted show hierarchies of male domination, female submission, property

25 Jimmy Carter, "Losing my Religion for Equality", *The Age*, July 15, 2009, <https://www.theage.com.au/politics/federal/losing-my-religion-for-equality-20090714dkov.html?page=-1>.

26 Emilina Guimont, "A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power", review of *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power*, by Jimmy Carter, *Christians for Biblical Equality*, 2017, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/Call%20to%20Action%20Drupal.pdf>.

27 Kaitlin Curtice, "Missions: Is it love or colonization?" *Religion News Service*, November 27, 2018. <https://religionnews.com/2018/11/27/missions-is-it-love-or-colonization>.

28 Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Ecofeminism-The Challenge of Theology," *Deported, Exiles, Refugees*, n.20, 2012. p. 27. https://www.unive.it/pag/fileadmin/user_upload/dipartimento/DSLCC/documenti/DEP/numeri/n20/o6_20_-Ruether_Ecofeminism.pdf.

ownership and wealth building that left large portions of one culture poor while a small portion of another was enriched.

3 The Society of Jesus

Three major armies of global patriarchy significantly influence the identity of the Catholic Church today. The oldest, the Society of Jesus (also known as the Jesuits), has begun the process of examining the intergenerational trauma and harm they have done under the influence of patriarchy, beginning a process for restitution, restructuring and change in their policies toward women in their institutions. They have also examined their complicity in racism that was exhibited in their past treatment of slaves, making steps toward restitution. The other two, The Legion of Christ and *Opus Dei*, are using Catholicism to return to patriarchal rule in their institutions and in American society itself. They could be considered free market agents in this iteration of the global economies of power.

The Jesuits, a highly educated community established in reaction to the Protestant Reformation, began intense examination of their role in the discrimination of women in 1995 that led to significant changes in their operating procedures.²⁹ In an effort to stand in solidarity with women moving forward, they proposed eight action items for immediate change within all institutions, including teaching equality for women in ministry, opposing movements steeped in the exploitation of women, and the promotion of women's education at their university campuses.³⁰ In 2018, they came to the aid of a group of women in immediate need of a conference venue. When a woman's group called "Voices of Faith" heard they were ejected from Vatican property the day clerics realized the topic addressed was *Misogyny in Christianity*, the Jesuits offered their Conference Center. Mary McAlesse proclaimed: "We don't have trumpets, but we have voices, voices of faith and we are here to shout, to bring down our Church's walls of misogyny. We have been circling these walls for 55 years since John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in*

29 Rachel I. Swarns. "Georgetown University Plans Steps to Atone for Slave Past", *The New York Times*, September 1, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/02/us/slavesgeorgetown-university.html>.

30 Portal to Jesuit Studies. Decree 14: "Jesuits and the Situation of Women in Church and Civil Society," General Congregation 34 (1995), https://jesuitportal.bc.edu/research/documents/1995_decree14gc34/.

Terris first pointed to the advancement of women as one of the most important ‘signs of the times.’”³¹

In 2017, coming to understand their role in patriarchal slavocracy, the Jesuits also began working to change leadership patterns from practices of domination to partnership.³² In keeping with their reformation agenda, the Jesuits apologized for the ownership and selling of slaves at Georgetown University, making restitution to the descendants they could identify.

4 Legion of Christ

The second group answering directly to the Pope is the Legion of Christ, known for the toxic influence of its cultish drug-dealing leader, Marcial Maciel Delegado, a recognized pedophile who fathered children by two women. Despite his obvious illegal activities, Pope John Paul II admired Delegado because of the money and vocations he brought to the church.³³ Delegado’s community has a clerical branch of ‘Orthodox’ soldiers formed in cult-like fashion to the head. In addition to their obedience to the Pope, his followers take an additional vow of obedience to their leader. Their formation is a clear indication of how dehumanization is used to develop the domination/submission model of compliance to the authority of headship. The engine operating the Legion throughout the United States is the lay group, *Regnum Christi*.³⁴ These unordained men and women insert themselves into dioceses and start up ‘private’ schools in parishes of great wealth, using undue influence to siphon off the children of the wealthy, and eventually pull wealth out of the parish for their own benefit. They use the term *conservative orthodoxy* to legitimize their role. Jason Berry argues that they participate in “religious mercantilism,” selling “wealth-as-virtue that triumphed over liberation theology’s idealism.”³⁵ The Gospel of Prosperity became the Vatican’s clarion call.

31 Mary McAlleese, “The time is now for change in the Catholic Church”, *Voices of Faith*, March 8, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9Q9VqkrfCw>.

32 Daniel Burke, “In emotional service, Jesuits and Georgetown repent for slave trading,” CNN, April 18, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/04/18/living/georgetown-slavery-service/index.html>.

33 Jason Berry, “Legion of Christ’s deception, unearthed in new documents, indicates wider cover-up” *National Catholic Reporter*, February 18, 2013, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/accountability/legion-christs-deception-unearthed-new-documents-indicates-wider-cover>.

34 Regnum Christi, <https://www.regnumchristi.org/en/mission-2/>.

35 Jason Berry, *Render Unto Rome: The Secret Life of Money in the Catholic Church*. (New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group, 2011) 159–196.

Archbishop Harry Flynn of St. Paul, Minneapolis refused to let the Legion into his diocese saying they develop parallel churches and schools and cut parishioners off.³⁶ Some called them millionaires of Christ due to their efforts to get the wealthy to invest in their schools of orthodoxy, appealing to an elite class of Catholics hoping to consolidate power. An egregious example of this was the undue influence they placed on a wealthy heiress, Gabrielle Mee (89 years old), changed her will leaving all assets to the Legion. After years of court battles, the estate was returned to the family, with a portion left to the Legion.³⁷ Members are actually tentacles of patriarchal rule in Catholicism with an eye on ‘wealth building,’ and influencing domination/submission models of governance that use the force and fear for compliance. Former members, John Lennon and Genvieve Kineke, left the cult after seeing the operations of the Legion as a pyramid scheme.³⁸ Their introduction into dioceses erased the 40 years of collaborative work the dedicated men and women willingly gave to build progressive Vatican II institutions. It is astounding to watch the ease with which a series of these so called ‘conservative’ appointments could collapse those efforts, replacing them with a patriarchal architecture for the purpose of furthering the goals of power, domination and wealth building.

Today women are addressing issues related to those who, consciously or unconsciously, collaborate in patriarchal rule. Ana Marie Cox calls white women supporting patriarchy “foot soldiers.”³⁹ Like members of *Regnum Christi*, women congratulate themselves for their active engagement in reinstating patriarchal rule.⁴⁰ Kate Manne coined the word, *Himpathy* to describe these women.⁴¹ Coming from long lines of patriarchal foot soldiers, it is understandable how an element within male domination controls their belief system and how the cultural surroundings cement those beliefs. However, it is incomprehensible when their actions become confused with the actual gospel Christianity is called to promote. There is no compatibility here.

36 Jerry Filteau, “Legionnaires of Christ Banned in 2nd Catholic Diocese.” *Cult Education Institute*, January 2, 2005, <https://forum.culteducation.com/read.php?12,8412>.

37 Jason Berry, *Render Unto Rome: The Secret Life of Money in the Catholic Church*. (New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group, 2011) 166–168.

38 Ibid. 190.

39 Ana Marie Cox, “White Women: Foot Soldiers of the Patriarchy,” *I Told You So*, February 11, 2019, <http://www.anamariexox.com/with-friends-like-these/2019/2/11/white-women-foot-soldiers-of-the-patriarchy>.

40 Mona Elthahawy, *The Seven Necessary Sins for Women and Girls*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2019), 16.

41 Kate Manne, *Down Girl. The Logic of Misogyny*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 196–208.

Mind manipulation of the masses is an intergenerational traumatic mark of patriarchy. Whether you are at the top of the Christian hierarchy or the bottom, some Christians are encased in a lifetime of judgment, guilt, shame, fear of God, fear of the priest, fear of hell and compliance to church norms. Choices and actions of Catholic feminists within the church's framework are not understood or tolerated. However, a growing number of Catholics are beginning to see themselves as foot soldiers for Christ called to assist the oppressed and examine oppressive structures to bring about sustainable change that promotes healing. They are at odds with a multitude of believers that stand as oppressors of their very own people, falsely believing that race and gender discrimination is God's will.

5 *Opus Dei*

In another attempt to further tether the Catholic church to patriarchal roots after the reforms of Vatican II, Pope John Paul II made *Opus Dei* (Latin for 'God's Work') a "personal prelature," designating it as a "floating diocese" that he could dispatch across the globe.⁴² This action literally cut off the systemic renewal promised to clerics and laity alike, and returned the church to patriarchal rule. Born in the fascist society of Spain in 1928, *Opus Dei* believes it is the Church's mission to "return the Catholic Church to the Center of society as in medieval times," reporting its successes directly to the Pope.⁴³ At its inception, its founder, Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, understood that "no institution with a bunch of street sweepers as members could influence key public sectors, nor pull in the kind of income needed to achieve all he had in mind."⁴⁴ His political strategist taught him early on that the only "way to make a mark on society, state or institution was by dominating its summit."⁴⁵ These two principles guided the formation of the order.

Opus Dei has developed a multitude of systems that makes them a global super-spreader of patriarchy working directly to diminish democratic structures that promote equality in any form. Their undue religious influence is

42 Americans United for the Separation of Church and State., "Breaking the Opus Dei Code," May 2006, <https://www.au.org/church-state/may-2006-church-state/featured/breaking-the-opus-dei-code>.

43 Robert Hutchinson, "The Vatican's Own Cult," *The Guardian*, September 10, 1997, <https://culteducation.com/group/1086-opus-dei/15639-the-vaticans-own-cult.html>.

44 Robert Hutchinson, *Their Kingdom Come*, St. Martin's Press, 1999, 2006. p. 108.

45 Ibid. p.109.

transmitted through two tentacles. The first is *Corporate Works* found in systems of education, banking, financing, foundations and non-profits.⁴⁶ Under the secretive hands of unidentified members, they gain access to monies in institutions, governments and corporations to shore up their social architecture as seen in various South and Central American countries, where their institutional influence is felt nationwide to such an extent they are named a Catholic country.⁴⁷ With the appointment by the Vatican of *Opus Dei* bishops, and archbishops, entire dioceses are delivered to Vatican control bypassing the local community. The people of a diocese have no say in appointments.

The second tentacle of *Common Works* promotes the use of members' money and money from institutions manipulated by *Opus Dei* members to promote their goals. The purpose is to initiate their broad influence through media, print, broadcasting, education, and halls of governance to create an outer image of how Catholics are to identify themselves in society according to their right-wing conservative norms. For members, this means becoming active in the daily prayer life of the church as well as supporting policies that promote gender discrimination under *Religious Liberty* laws. The formula itself, based on false notions of domination, keeps people poor and women subjugated, as the organization gains access to wealth and power in the name of God.⁴⁸

Beginning in the mid 1970s, *Opus Dei* influenced the Vatican at a time of grave financial losses for the hierarchy, leading the organization to plant the seed that it could become the Pope's Prelature and a floating diocese from which the Vatican would benefit, as it continued to spread its message throughout Europe and the Americas.⁴⁹ By building a network of private schools and universities, *Opus Dei* was assured of future vocations as well as connections with the moneyed elite. With Vatican approbation, they could claim dioceses with the appointments of *Opus Dei* bishops and archbishops, which gave the Vatican access to a new source of wealth and control over orthodoxy. For instance, in Chile, the pope's strategy was to "purge its soft bishops and replace them with *Opus Dei*." In addition, Liberation Theology, a theology that promotes a more viable option for the poor of Latin America, was eliminated from Catholic university studies.⁵⁰ But real societal changes came with appointments of *Opus Dei* members to elected and appointed strategic positions in all

46 Opus Dei Awareness Network, "Opus Dei Affiliated Foundations," <https://odan.org/foundations>.

47 Hutchinson, *Their Kingdom Come*, p. 261.

48 Ibid. pp.164–167.

49 Ibid. pp. 220–223.

50 Ibid. p. 214.

branches of national as well as state and local governments. Their campaigns were financed by these unregulated multinational Catholic capitalists and as they won offices, *Opus Dei* right-wing conservative members sought to limit the rights of women and LGBTQ community members, while shifting funds from local and state budgets to their coffers. Their members were taught international business, banking and financing in their universities. They understand how to set up shell holding companies with no paper trails as well as how to avoid state and federal taxes by setting up their own systems of intercontinental banks.⁵¹ They insist that piety “never interferes in politics—only daily life” while they are a global mega-church, using members deeply invested in the political lives of nation-states, and diminishing the distance that connects the church to the Vatican as a sovereign state.

In the absence of international finance laws, the Vatican turns a blind eye from limiting their immoral activities because their ‘works’ have taken the Vatican finances from the red to the black in less than half a century. The hierarchy is aware of their practice of using the finances of nefarious people and institutions to gain access to markets, only to discard them when they achieve their goal. For *Opus Dei*, the end always justifies the means. An example would be *Esfina*, a bank under the illegal control of *Opus Dei*, that was operated through offshore trusts. They justify their actions with assertions such as “We take money from unholy souls to finance holy works.”⁵²

In the United States, *Opus Dei* is known for spreading its wealth and influence strategically throughout Washington, D.C., and in places where patriarchal power can be supported at the highest levels of institutions and governments. Not unlike South and Central America, their network of schools has been unduly influenced by the appointments of bishops and archbishops nationwide, an action that immediately turns the offices of Religious Education toward ultra-conservative orthodoxy, complicating the lines of local clerical authority and obedience as well as diocesan finances, as funds now go to support the “floating diocese.”⁵³ In the era of a movement to privatize public education in America, as well as a united effort to gain access to public funds for private schools, this is most concerning in that all Catholic schools under the influence of *Opus Dei* hierarchy could come under their tutelage. “It is part of *Opus Dei*’s *modus operandi* never to spend—except as a last resort—its own money to finance ‘good works’, but always to dig into someone else’s resources,

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 164.

⁵² Ibid. p. 167.

⁵³ Universities, Institutions and Centers, <http://www.mgr.org/ODSomeInstitutions.html>.

public or private.”⁵⁴ Concerns about the flow of funding is one issue, but honest communication with fellow clergy is another. Reluctant clergy under *Opus Dei* bishops are forced into the silence of becoming obedient or simply “advisors” whose advice is discarded.⁵⁵

These changes have had a devastating impact on the collaborative structures built during Vatican II where Catholic institutions of higher learning developed programs for lay men and women who would take their place in the shared mission of the church. At one time, women were earning Master of Divinity and Theology degrees in seminaries, highlighting the changes in the American church on notice at the Vatican. Concerned about the growth of laity in ministry and the overt movement to ordain women, Pope John Paul II issued, *The Application of Ex corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, in 1999 clarifying that all Catholic institutions were to follow magisterial teaching. This *mandatum* went directly to most Catholic educational institutions and trickled down to theologians in seminaries, universities, schools, parishes, hospitals and the printed word, impeding the growth of Vatican II theology as well as the number of men and women in ministry.⁵⁶ The pope’s appointment of bishops was contingent on signing an agreement to “follow this *mandatum*” strengthening his authority in terms of “magisterial teaching” and gaining access to finances. By taking vows of obedience to the head, all ordained clerics were then obliged to adhere to both doctrine and dogma without question, to finance and build social structures to support the pope’s social agenda; namely, no birth control, no abortion, no same-sex marriage, no women’s ordination. They would hire only people who supported this agenda, namely *Opus Dei* members, those who agreed with the Pope, and those who graduated from universities who signed the *mandatum*. The resulting impact set up a conflict because individual Catholics would now have to oppose American laws that expanded the civil rights and equality for American citizens. Under this influence, all appointed to these positions have no voice or vote to speak in opposition. These patriarchal frameworks promote race and gender discrimination as the *Work of God*. Others view their work as patriarchy in Christianity. In essence, this platform

54 Robert Hutchinson, “The Vatican’s Own Cult,” *The Guardian*, September 10, 1997, <https://culteducation.com/group/1086-opus-dei/15639-the-vaticans-own-cult.html>.

55 Daniel Morris-Young, “San Francisco Priests Voice Frustrations with Cordileone at Convocation,” *National Catholic Reporter*, October 19, 2019 <https://www.ncronline.org/news/parish/san-francisco-priests-voice-frustrations-cordileone-convocation>.

56 United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, “The Application of Ex corde Ecclesiae for the United States,” June 15, 2001, <https://www.usccb.org/committees/catholiceducation/guidelines-concerning-academic-mandatum>.

stands in direct contrast to the work of democracy. With the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a wide variety of advances in American law that would never have come under fire, are now jeopardized.⁵⁷

Known for their undue influence in judicial circles, many lay *Opus Dei* members and affiliates in judicial branches of government as well as our Supreme Court, and the Office of the Attorney General, stand ready to use their undue influence in our judicial system overturning U.S. laws on health care, same-sex marriage, abortion rights for women, and even *Brown vs Board of Education*. Moreover, they strive to gain access to tax monies to shore up Catholic schools through vouchers and tax credits which will directly impact their influence on generations of Catholics and U.S. citizens.⁵⁸

Notably, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is now headed by an *Opus Dei* bishop. In reality, the hierarchical governance of U.S. Catholicism has become a visual representation of this agenda making people believe that Catholicism aligns itself with this brand of patriarchal architecture. For instance, some Catholics believed that if they voted for the Catholic Democratic candidate Joe Biden (a Roman Catholic) in the 2020 presidential election, then they were not really Catholic (due to the Democrats' support of *Roe vs Wade*).⁵⁹ Catholic Identity under the influence of the hierarchy promotes gender discrimination believing these divisions are a part of the natural order. In essence, the hierarchy's call is to maintain these divisions, puts it at odds with a democracy that promotes equality for all people under the law. Patriarchal leadership is strategically appointed within church structures to promote the overturning of laws that give reproductive choices to women, and marriage rights to the LGBTQ community, while securing funds for Catholic/private schools.

Lay advocates of the hierarchical agenda are now appointed to lifetime positions in courts, and as they use their power to reverse U.S. law, the oppressive divide between genders will increase. Federal funds flowing to religious institutions weaken the boundary between church and state leading to undue influence in democracy by religious institutions. Should this undue influence in policy become law, Catholics will deny gays' adoption rights because of new

57 Tom McCarthy, "What Does Ruth Bader Ginsburg death mean for the Supreme Court." *The Guardian*, September 18, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/sep/18/ruth-bader-ginsburg-supreme-court-faq-explainer>.

58 Betty Clermont, "Opus Dei's Influence is Felt in All of Washington's Corridors of Power," *The Open Tabernacle*, January 22, 2019, <https://opentabernacle.wordpress.com/2019/01/22/opus-deis-influence-is-felt-in-all-of-washingtons-corridors-of-power/>.

59 John-Henry Westen, "No Catholic Can Vote for Joe Biden." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bccOn_i94qA.

loopholes permitting discrimination. If employees are gay and married, their employment in Catholic institutions will be discontinued. The same holds true if the gay and gender non-conforming community want to enroll their children in Christian schools. They will be turned away. There will be *de facto* segregation based on a gender binary and a racial framework. This is intensified by many Catholic schools being located in elite neighborhoods. A grand transfer of government subsidy from poorer schools to wealthy Catholic private schools will flow through vouchers, making public district schools even poorer. Women employed in any Catholic institution will be denied birth control as well as an abortion if one is needed. Patriarchal architecture will dominate the social networks of American society through this version of *Catholicism* under the influence of patriarchal rule, putting a knee on the neck of American Catholics and society itself, crushing democracy.

In post-modern Christianity, many are becoming cognizant that they have little voice in the operation much less ownership of our churches and governments under patriarchal rule. Understanding patriarchy means understanding how soft violence and oppression operate for the maintenance of its very structures. Think about the ease whereby women from first-century Christianity were erased from scriptures and history, as well as their contributions to the spiritual and moral climate forgotten. This has happened today as the invisible hands of male dominance is working stealthily to erase the monumental work of the multitudes of women religious who built and served in our parishes, schools and hospitals.

6 Erasing Women in Ministry

A real insight into this maneuvering is exposed by Kenneth Briggs in his book, *Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of American Nuns*. His work is a guide through the vast networks of women religious and the trauma they experienced at the hands of the hierarchy as they stepped out in renewal. Just changing their 'habit' to wear the ordinary dress of the day brought out the hierarchy's unseen fists sending shock waves throughout the world. In 1970, Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles, demanded, under obedience, that a community return to their habit. When the women refused, their IHM community of 600 sisters disbanded leaving only a remnant in his Archdiocese.⁶⁰

60 Kenneth Briggs. *Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of American Nuns* (Doubleday Broadway Inc. New York, NY 2006), 112–115.

Never before had there been such an overt power play. Younger sisters began to leave communities, causing those who remained to re-structure in protection of their elderly and most vulnerable.⁶¹ Awareness of their plight arose in the media and a retirement fund for the sisters was begun. Rita Hoffbauer, executive director of Support Our Aging Religious, SOAR, noted, "It was so hard for the church when women got more vocal!"⁶²

While the hierarchy lived in mansions with great pensions, the sisters were facing abject poverty. In the end, religious women are who were given the power to build institutions had that power removed without thought. They were becoming a footnote in history, with their accomplishments, leadership and contributions to generations of Catholics demeaned and washed over. The hierarchy believed that there would be plenty of women left behind who would step up. That was, until the laws of a nation changed, furthering the cause of equality under the law. Women chose equality leaving a church that was still holding tenaciously to patriarchal rule.

Patriarchal rule is an unnatural form of governance within all Christian sects, governments, and institutions, most particularly because its operating principle is power and authority over people, and its primary purpose promotes using and/or abusing populations as property to build wealth for itself. Misogyny is endemic in its form and function constituting a sin against humanity. Because it separates us from each other and undermines the liberating message of Christ, those who follow Christ become cognizant of its invisible chains.

Masculinity under patriarchy deafens the ears so that men cannot hear much less understand what people, most particularly women, are saying.⁶³ Those obedient men who are appointed to positions on the hierarchal ladder, are poorly educated, making their need to support the hierarchy more likely. Not only is patriarchy's function in society an impediment to the practice of Christianity, but its maintenance also demands the use of all political tools necessary to diminish equality. An example of societal predators aligning themselves for the purpose of recapturing the courts, can be seen in the fight to add a sixth practicing Roman Catholic to the U.S. Supreme Court following the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in 2020. Tom McCarthy of *The Guardian*

61 Ibid.172–203.

62 Ibid. 207.

63 Chris Crass, "Going Places that Scare Me: Personal Reflections on Challenging Male Supremacy," *Colours of Resistance Archive. Resisting Male Supremacy*, <http://www.coloursofresistance.org/536/going-to-places-that-scare-me-personal-reflections-on-challenging-male-supremacy/>.

captured succinctly what is at stake, “Reproductive rights, voting rights, protections from discrimination, the future of criminal justice, the power of the presidency, the rights of immigrants, tax rules and laws, and healthcare for millions of vulnerable Americans, to name a few issues.”⁶⁴ All of these rights gained through the law have dismantled patriarchal structures, expanding the notion that *We the people* means the inclusion of all Americans under U.S. law.

7 Dismantling Patriarchy

The realization that patriarchy is not the men of the Old Testament we honored as precursors of the Messiah, but an invasive form of all-male governance seeking power, domination and wealth was the ah-ha moment that begs the question, “Where are Christian leaders?” Christian denominational leadership today is imploding, collapsing by the weight of hierarchical leaders disputably saving the church by keeping ‘Christ in chains.’ In the latest Pew Research study, Catholicism’s decline in America was matched by the rise of the “NONES,” those claiming no religion.⁶⁵

Increasingly, moral leaders today are not church officials. They are mobile and flexible. They are living in a conglomerate of societies with a diverse number of power bases that do not rise from the top, their eyes pointing the way toward innovations in governance that comprise new diverse, fluid and inclusive social networks.⁶⁶ They are in the home, in the streets and in the states fighting for equality in laws and codes that extend the boundaries of citizenship to all in the nation. Their voices advocate for fair housing, and for funding to support laws that will make society fairer and more just.

As a serious pathogen, patriarchy must be dismantled because of the harm it does to humanity. Mary AcAleese asks, “How long can the hierarchy sustain the credibility of a God who wants things this way, who wants a Church where women are invisible and voiceless in Church leadership, legal and doctrinal

64 Tom McCarthy, “What Does Ruth Bader Ginsburg death mean for the Supreme Court.” *The Guardian*, September 18, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/sep/18/ruth-bader-ginsburg-supreme-court-faq-explainer>.

65 Pew Research Center, “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace” 10/17/2019 <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>.

66 Stanley Grenz, *A Primer on Post Modernism*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 19–20.

discernment and decision-making?”⁶⁷ Many are working to minimize and shed the virus of misogyny in patriarchal rule, actively focusing to shift the culture toward a new paradigm that offers gender justice and equality under the law. Some are claiming that by adopting the principles of radical feminism, their lives can be transformed. Men say they must become First Responders in the attack against misogyny. Men like Chris Crass have taken up this call for more than thirty years, as an activist, community organizer and author.⁶⁸ He says, “my work is dedicated to building powerful working, class-based, feminist, multiracial movements for collective liberation.” He believes the work feminists have done will lead to collective liberation for men. Among his many powerful essays is one published in *On the Road to Healing: An Anthology for Men Ending Sexism* in which he outlines fourteen steps for men as they become aware of the mental grip of sexism, offering practices to change it.⁶⁹ When Australian writer Tim Winton faced criticism about the undue male focus of his book, he says he was moved “to examine my own misogyny and the toxicity of patriarchy for men and boys.”⁷⁰ Robert Jensen, a professor of journalism at the University of Texas wrote a *Radical Feminist Critique of Patriarchy* because his understanding has changed his life.⁷¹ He consistently makes the connection between men’s sexual exploitation of women and the buying and selling of their bodies. These systems within patriarchy are primary networks that give men an authority to exploit people based in laws and codes of their own making. The influence is deadly for all in the gender binary and non-conforming community. In the pathology of patriarchy, he says, “the feminism we fear, is in reality a gift to us all” because it begins the movement to reorder and reconnect with the social/emotional networks in our own lives until male supremacy is eliminated.⁷²

The virus of patriarchy will never be removed as it is endemic in our global society, but like all viruses it can be minimized and contained as individuals

67 Mary McAllese, “The time is now for change in the Catholic Church,” <https://www.womensordination.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/McAleese-Voices-of-Faith-Text-1.pdf>.

68 Chris Crass, *Towards the Other America*. (Chalice Press, St. Louis, MO, 2015).

69 Chris Crass, “Tools for White Guys Working for Social Change,” in Basil Shadid, *On the Road to Healing: An Anthology for Men Ending Sexism*. (Dual Power Press, Seattle, WA, 2009), 119–121.

70 Tim Winton, “Being called a misogynist stings a bit.” Interview by Gay Alcorn. *The Guardian*, June 25, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jun/26/tim-winton-most-of-the-men-in-my-books-are-doing-badly>.

71 Robert Jensen, “Radical feminism is a gift to men,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mj5TG3E4rnE>.

72 Ibid.

and cultures demand change. Seen as a cultural infectious disease that emerges and re-emerges to harm people for the benefit of the wealthy, four major sources of patriarchy can be clearly identified: governments, religions, institutions and corporations, that are powered by three engines.

1. An undue desire for power that exploits.
2. Domination that maintains power over people, resources and property.
3. Wealth building through the development of slavocracies (Profit from prisons, human trafficking, low wage work, privatization of schools, health care, military, etc.)

In terms of undue influence, domination is also secured by altering the laws, rules and codes of conduct for the nation, state, city and home through judicial practices that pass authority to the male by appointment, assignment or undue interference in elections.⁷³ This form of violence is endemic to patriarchal architecture. Gender-binary in hierarchy maintains this framework, making it easy to control the development of dualities, male domination-female submission, white supremacy over people of color, and cleric over laity. Dualities make domination by force and fear, oppression and violence legitimate as the un-wanted are shed. Once identified, this group can become a low wage or free workforce from which profits can be made by those in power.

We do not have to accept this framework in our society. We can condemn it and can fight against it until it is dismantled. Radical feminists, like Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, have led the way through changing the legal structures of our institutions.⁷⁴ She and many others are intersectional pioneers that have pushed the boundaries of patriarchal social structures directing activism through full access to the vote, creating legislation, and demanding and protecting our rights and privileges. By using our collective consciousness to identify and map areas steeped in patriarchy, steps can be taken to mitigate the oppressions and violence of its impact, most importantly with the help of male radical feminists, reclaiming their place in this cultural liberation. All of these efforts are being done-slowly and with great initiative.

However, the initiatives above do not compare with the invasive well-financed worldwide impact of dual religious/political organizations like *Opus Dei*, the Legion of Christ and other Patriarchal Institutions that work to impede equality and justice within democracy. Now is the time to study

73 Jose Cabezas, "147 women sentenced to 40 years in prison after stillbirths," *NBC News*, (July 10, 2017), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/anti-abortion-el-salvador-woman-faces-second-homicide-trial-after-11038726>.

74 Sandra Pullman, *ACLU*, "Tribute: The Legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and WRP Staff." Undated, <https://www.aclu.org/other/tribute-legacy-ruth-bader-ginsburg-and-wrp-staff>.

their playbook and slowly, systematically enlist numbers of experts to turn it on themselves. This can only be done through worldwide collaboration in the disciplines of political science, religion and business. In concert with these efforts, women, the LGBTQ community, and all minorities must continue standing up and claiming equal rights demanding fairness through the laws of their country.

Universities teaching International Finance and Political Science should invest in collaborating with governments to identify loopholes in practices that allow for financial malfeasance that leads to human rights violations. They should urge the development of updated international criminal laws and courts that will prosecute perpetrators regardless of their country of origin. But the most urgent initiative would be to look at how a country's destabilization can be connected to sects or cults within a religion that infiltrate a nation's democratic processes at the top levels of governance. How, as a multi-cellular global community, do we join forces to support and help countries deal with that impact because in a global village, their problem becomes our problem.

If Christianity is to survive, it must make an enormous paradigm shift in terms of full examination of its use of power, dominance and wealth building. It must make a determined effort to dismantle patriarchal architecture by developing systems of checks and balances in which power is shared. Remember, Christianity is a religion of great importance. Patriarchy is a virus, acting as a parasite that attaches itself to all forms of governance. Such systems would automatically leave parasitical political groups like *Opus Dei* and the ultra-religious right, out of the reach of Vatican influence. Just as Catholicism has been a super spreader of patriarchal rule, it could become a central figure in bringing about the transformation of Christianity itself, as women and those supporting a renewed church, the 'street sweepers,' use their power to push away patriarchal thought and their imposed structures. Following the lead of the Jesuits, a call for repentance for these sins against humanity coupled with work to repair the harm it has done to the multitudes under its influence, would be a first step. Balancing power in governance from the top down to the bottom up would open up ministries to diverse groups of qualified men and women who understand how to structure legalized forms of gender justice and equality within the fabrics of institutions. These are essential elements in reclaiming a Christianity in which Christ's liberating and transformative message will offer hope as a healthy expression of a 21st century church, unravelling the centuries-long stranglehold that patriarchy has held on the neck of our Christian traditions.

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