

Storming the Seven Mountains

Johnathon Victor Reese · 1 June 2026

Our sole business should be to use the Law to reconstruct the world from the chaos into which it is already half tumbled.¹

The world is in a state of collapse. Or perhaps, more accurately, it is in a state of entropy and dissolution. It's not a dramatic crash of social, political, and cultural edifices—though the last decade has certainly accelerated that downward spiral quite a bit—but a grinding, relentless erosion of meaning, value, and coherence. It is a world half-tumbled, as Crowley put it: half broken, half listless, and adrift in its own unraveling.

Old-world liberalism, with its promises of progress, is fading. Its institutions feel outdated, its culture worn out, and belief in 'rational humanity' has turned into cynicism. Conservatism has become stuck in longing for a past that's gone for good, reacting with rigid authority. Progressivism, which once led change, now often gets lost in self-righteousness and struggles with its own contradictions, pushing social coercion as if it were moral purity.

Underneath it all, we see violence, despair, and isolation. Mental illness is widespread. Politics has become a show on social media, and corporations have turned into tools of control. Even the sacred is now just another consumer choice or a click online. There is no guiding vision. There is no shared *telos*.

Stepping back from all this a moment, Crowley's words about "the Law of Thelema as a spiritual, social, and political movement" come to mind.² For Thelema to matter today, it can't just be private mysticism or empty magical practice. It needs

to be a way to *engage* with the world and help rebuild it. This is *our* world, and it's time to leave the "drifting occultists" ³ behind and focus on real change.

Crowley claimed that Thelema revolutionized "philosophy, religion, ethics and the whole nature of Man"⁴—and I believe that. I abuse that quote all the time to justify all kinds of directions in my writing. The real question is whether we can support that claim from the Book of the Law, the physical source for our ground and surety of Thelemic faith (*fidēs*).⁵

And I believe we can. So did Crowley, who wrote, "[The *Book of the Law*] may therefore be regarded as indicating a complete revolution in human affairs, for it advances mankind in the most radical manner."⁶ I agree with him that Thelema is "a complete revolution in human affairs." That then asks the question: what are all these "human affairs" in which there is "a complete revolution"?

Thelema isn't magick or New Age self-help or psychology or religion or philosophy or an ethical code or a new morality.

And yet it is *all* of these. It touches all of these. It revolutionizes all of these. We should be talking about all of them—except maybe 'New Age self-help,' which I think is a scam. But hopefully you catch my drift here.

First, we must disabuse ourselves of the notion that Thelema is a thing of itself, a commodity to be marketed as something alone. Thelema is not merely one domain among others. It is not reducible to ritual, attainment, devotional practice, metaphysics, personal liberation, political theory, or cultural criticism. It is the Law by which all these things are reoriented. It is the grammar by which the whole of human life may be read again.

If Thelema truly revolutionizes the whole nature of Man, then it cannot remain locked away in the private chamber of the solitary occultist. It must have something to say about how we live, how we build, how we educate, how we govern, how we create, how we love, how we make meaning, and how we structure common life.

In other words, **Thelema has social consequences.**

This shouldn't be a controversial idea. It should be clear. Still, after more than a hundred years, many Thelemites act as if the Law is just a personal matter, only helpful for their own magical growth. That might feel safe or even helpful for a time, but it isn't enough.

The world was already half-tumbled into chaos in Crowley's time. The question is whether we intend to do anything about it *now*.

The Seven Mountains

The so-called "Seven Mountains Mandate" is not well known in most circles of occulture, but it should be. It is, in essence, a strategic framework developed among certain currents of Christian Dominionism, particularly the New Apostolic Reformation, and it's the underlying mandate for the Heritage Foundation's takeover of the United States. The idea is brutally simple: to "take dominion" over seven major spheres of cultural influence—Religion, Family, Education, Government, Media, Arts & Entertainment, and Business.

One need not agree with the religious values behind the Seven Mountains framework—and I surely do not—to recognize its practical brilliance. It is a clear-sighted vision of how cultural power operates. It recognizes that cultural views shape political structures, and that political transformation requires the reshaping of the collective imagination as well as the institutions that structure daily life.

And it works. The past few decades of right-wing Christian cultural gains in America are no accident. They were built through long-term infiltration of school boards, media outlets, civic groups, legislatures, and corporate structures. For example, I've mentioned elsewhere in my writing how the Heritage Foundation has significantly influenced our government, particularly the judicial branch through the Supreme Court takeover, *in just 50 years*.

If the so-called "left" or "liberal" world has been caught flat-footed, endlessly reactive, the dominionist visionaries have been busy at work. They have a

narrative. They have a plan. They have patience. And they are winning ground every year.

The question for us—Thelemites, and those of like spirit—is not whether we oppose this. *We do*. The question is whether we are prepared to think *at that scale*, and act with such resolve, in service of a vision grounded not in dominion, but in liberty.

Most Thelemites—and pagans—are not prepared or even capable of this level of commitment, much less planning and resolve.

Storming Without Dominion

Let me be clear: Thelema has no interest in imitation. We are not called to simply mimic the strategies of dominionists by substituting one form of tyranny for another. Our Law is not one of coercion, but of liberty. It requires not mere reaction, but the creation of something new.

Yet the world is what it is. These structures of society and these vast spheres of influence serve as the scaffolding upon which human life is shaped. The air we breathe, the myths we inherit, and the stories we tell ourselves all shape our reality. We do not float above these elements, pure and untouched. We exist within them, and they shape us as much as we strive to shape them.

This is about *responsibility*, *not utopianism*. Thelema, as a movement, must actively influence the world. It must face this era of entropy and transform it into a place where liberty thrives.

Here, the idea of *storming* comes up—not to dominate, but to free and change things. Our goal is to take back these areas from fear, repression, and control.

Our Constellation of Social Forces

But we shouldn't think of our answer to the Seven Mountains as just climbing new peaks and planting flags. Dominionism sees power as a conquest, taking one hill

after another. Thelema should look at things differently—as a constellation rather than a hierarchy.

Stars do not rule each other; they influence each other through their movement, their light, their gravitation. The same applies to the forces that shape a culture. We do not need to own or control every institution. But we must learn to navigate these forces, to influence them, and to illuminate new orbits of possibility.

Thelema isn't about escaping the world, but about engaging with it. Our map is not a ladder to God, but a sky that represents the totality of God already.

I've put the following categories in *alphabetical* order for no other reason than because I felt like it. There is no suggestion of any hierarchy of importance by such an arrangement.

1. Arts & Culture

Art is spirit made visible. It goes beyond dogma and speaks straight to the soul. In a time of mass-produced culture and empty entertainment, Thelema must champion art that enlivens—works that evoke awe, wonder, eroticism, and the intense beauty of life itself. Our role is not didactic; it is generative. We create not to preach, but to awaken. The more we fill the world with powerful art—music, painting, performance, or craft—the more we loosen the grip of deadening norms. Thelema calls us to be creators, not just critics: to birth beauty fierce enough to change the world.

This isn't about debating the subjectivity or objectivity of art and beauty. It's about advancing art and beauty—and thereby culture—that *advances Thelema*, not as a model of standards but as an awakening of spiritual motifs, as the bedrock and expression of cultural myths, and as the expansion of Thelemic beauty in the world. The *Book of the Law* is full of language that admonishes us to fill our lives and the world around us with “joy & beauty” (AL 2.35), “beauty and strength” (AL 2.20), and “for beauty's sake and love's!” (AL 3.56).

The conundrum for Thelema is that *with very few* exceptions—and Mitchell Nolte is one of those notable and amazing exceptions—Thelemic artists tend to be less than amateurish, and their art has little to do with celebrating or promoting the iconography of Thelema.⁷ For reasons I can only guess, so many Thelemic artists work to present the ugliest aspects of *their* darkness to the world. Such is a tragedy coming from a religion that proclaims for itself the pillars of Light, Life, Love, and Liberty.⁸

Finally, we don't need to all look or act the same to share a culture. If anyone thinks this means we should all conform to one bland standard, they should reconsider—and maybe take a good college-level world culture course.

2. Civic Life & Justice

Liberty is not license; it is the state in which individuals and society can thrive. Civic life—the sphere of governance and justice—must, therefore, be engaged, not neglected. Here, we must be very clear: *Thelema is not anarchy*. It represents freedom under the law of one's own nature, with mutual respect for the sovereignty of others. Thus, we must strive for forms of governance grounded in consent, transparency, and the protection of rights—not only for ourselves but for all. In this age of rising authoritarianism, Thelemites must be defenders of civic liberty: participating where needed, resisting when necessary, and always advocating for a polity where stars may move freely according to their needs and preferences.

Still, I don't have another fifty years ahead of me. Even with the right team and funding, it's unlikely we could reshape a country in the next fifty years like the Heritage Foundation did in the United States. It sounds appealing, but it's not realistic. Honestly, since 2016, the United States has shown that liberty alone isn't enough to inspire people to push for political change.

But that doesn't mean we can't still make a difference right where we are today, or build smaller solutions that work for the progress, protection, and proliferation of our own kind. Sound tribal? Sure. Of course it is. It's just that Thelema does not

delineate individuals through ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, or other genetic information, sexual orientation, age, or disability.⁹ It allows for—and in fact insists on—*chosen* (willful) delineation of association (constructed or affiliative kinship).

3. Communication & Media

Culture runs on story. He who controls the story shapes the world. Dominionists recognize this. Do we? Too often, the forces of liberty cede this ground for fear of unduly influencing someone “against their Will.” Thelema must not make this mistake. Whether through writing, film, art, or conversation, we must become tellers of new myths, narratives that resonate with the soul of the Aeon. We must learn to communicate in symbols that awaken rather than lull. We must craft tales that empower, not domesticate, the individual. Our task is to seed the culture with stories of courage and freedom, so that the collective imagination might remember how to dream beyond the old cages.

If this means creating new symbols, new icons, new myths, new stories, so be it. *Let's get to it!* The idea that we will ever have a propaganda-free society is absurd. The question is, who controls the propaganda? Who controls the message? Is the message about liberation or conformity?

I know social media is still important right now. But I think it's fading, and it's always been a kind of *manufactured* reality. That's nothing new—we already know it. I don't mean online communities are disappearing. In fact, I think they've been gone for a while and are only now coming back in a new way.

4. Education

It's no accident that authoritarian movements target education early on in their march to take over. Once shaped in youth, the mind is difficult to unbend. In this respect, we must be neither naïve nor complacent. Education is not merely instruction; it is the formation of Will. Thelema must advocate for an education that liberates: one that teaches critical thinking, fosters curiosity, and cultivates

the unique genius of each learner. This means resisting indoctrination¹⁰ and the commodification of knowledge.

Wherever possible, Thelemites should build or support spaces of liberatory learning—schools, circles, online communities—where young minds can grow wild and wise in equal measure. While I am not a fan of the homeschooling movement in general, and especially not in the United States under Christian dominionist influence—I have very direct and personal experience with it—I find that many of their resources in the last decade have greatly improved in a way that supplements “public school education” and, in many ways, improves upon many of the weaknesses of that public education.

I think it’s important for us, as a larger community, to make sure our children get a well-rounded education that avoids extreme religious indoctrination and poor science teaching found in *many* modern curricula—even if we have to build it ourselves.

5. Enterprise & Economy

Commerce is not evil. Money is not a sin. But today’s economy is mostly controlled by forces of exploitation and alienation. Thelema should take action here, too. We want businesses and work that are based on choice, dignity, creativity, and freedom. This means supporting economic models that value autonomy, cooperation, and independence, and building businesses and networks that offer real alternatives to lifeless corporations. The economy won’t fix itself. We need to help shape it—engaging in commerce as an act of freedom, not servitude.

I fully admit this isn’t my sphere of expertise. I look forward to someone with economic experience and education to provide a more engaging model of what an equitable and free economic system would look like.

6. Kinship & Community

In a world still shaped by brittle moralism and coercive notions of family, Thelema must represent a new vision of kinship: one that is voluntary, fluid, and *chosen*.

The true bonds of love are not decreed by church or state, nor fixed by outdated roles. They arise from *love under will* and flourish in consent.

To engage this sphere means modeling new ways of relating—partnerships that transcend traditional gender roles, families of affinity as well as blood, and networks of care rooted in the freedom of association. Thelemites should be builders of such affiliative kinship structures at the micro-scale, not merely at the macro-scale in civic spheres of life.

This matters because culture is not only shaped in legislatures, classrooms, and institutions. It is also shaped at dinner tables, in friendships, in the way we raise children, care for elders, tend the sick, honor lovers, and make room for those who have been cast out by the respectable arrangements of polite society. Kinship is where the Law is tested not as an abstraction, but as a daily practice of respect, restraint, affection, and mutual recognition.

Thelema does not require the destruction of the family. That would be too easy, and frankly too adolescent. What it requires is the liberation of kinship from compulsion. The family, like any other human form, must justify itself by the freedom, love, and flourishing it makes possible. Where blood becomes bondage, we must make room for chosen bonds. Where tradition becomes tyranny, we must recover the living heart beneath the inherited form. And where love is present under will, we should have the courage to call that kinship sacred.

7. Religion

Thelema offers the first and only truly universal creed. That is its strength. While dominionism demands uniformity of doctrine and control, Thelema thrives on pluralism of spirit and exercise under a single epistemological banner: **Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law**. Yet this does not absolve us of the need to engage with the sphere of religion. It is here that the soul of a culture is forged: its deepest myths, its sacred symbols, its stories of meaning.

Therefore, Thelemites must become mythmakers, initiators, and founders of new avenues of expression. Not proselytizing, but offering: creating living paths of

spirit where the worn-out dogmas of the past have failed. Our work is to forge sacred forms that invite freedom—rites, communities, and liturgies that awaken the star within each seeker.

Thanks to Gerald del Campo, I remain convinced that sectarianism is the only way forward. I remain convinced there is an underlying, coherent, and consistent body of work that unites us all. However, I still believe there is ample room for diversity of thought without disengagement or disharmony of fellowship among those who disagree on matters of moderate importance (second-order doctrines) or minor importance (third-order issues).^{[11](#)}

The Nature of Our Engagement

It must be said plainly: *the Thelemic approach to culture is neither reactionary nor revolutionary* in the old, tired senses of those words. We are not seeking to dismantle everything for the sake of rubble, nor to preserve what is decayed merely out of nostalgia. We seek the liberty of the individual to be expressive within their nature, and for that, we require the requisite forms of a structured society—forms that are living, not static; structures that serve life, not suffocate it. That may require a revolution, but revolutions tend to come with body counts—and not the fun kind. When Crowley declared that the *Book of the Law* announced “*revolutions* in philosophy, religion, ethics [and] the whole nature of Man,”^{[12](#)} he’s referring to ideological underpinnings in how we approach these subjects, not to taking professors and priests out into the streets to shoot them.

We don’t approach these social forces as conquerors, but as part of a constellation. We don’t ‘seize power’ like dominionists, and we can’t hide in secrecy, ignoring the world’s problems. Instead, we move forward as independent stars, working with these forces, influencing where possible, and creating when needed. However we do it, we must take on the world with “beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire”! (AL 2.20)

And let me be clear: government itself is not the enemy. Tyranny is. Coercion is. We cannot mistake liberty for lawlessness. Rather, we must understand liberty as

the space in which all stars may pursue their courses without interference, so long as they do not disrupt the orbits of others.

This is the heart of our ethos: to engage without enslaving, to shape without coercing, to create without dominating. That's what sets us apart from both authoritarians and nihilists.

How Shall We Now ... Begin

It is one thing to speak of ideals; another to ground them in action. If we are to meet this moment, we cannot remain in abstraction or wallow in personal ritual alone. We must learn to walk in the world as Thelemites rather than "drifting occultists." We must learn to create in the light, rather than hide in darkened rooms filled with suffocating incense. We need to move beyond The Occult™ and the lingering performative teenage angst that sticks to many so-called "adult" Thelemites like stale body odor.

Let's start with some basics.

1. ***Build networks.*** Not dominator hierarchies, but alliances of like-minded individuals and groups who share the vision of liberty. No star shines alone. Collaboration, mutual aid, and shared purpose are our starting points. This is where I would like to begin exploring the ideas of network unions and adjacent concepts in the near future.
2. ***Create enclaves of culture.*** These may be as humble as a local study group or as ambitious as a school, an online or even print journal, or an art collective. Spaces where our values live and breathe—where freedom, beauty, and expressions of individual Will are cultivated. While I've nothing against Crowley book clubs, I think we've run out of time with this one. I think it's time to create the Thelemic version of the *Young Politicians Soup Kitchen and Gun Club*¹³ and spread like termites through the woodwork of the current structure of society.

3. ***Engage existing institutions***—not with naïve optimism, but with strategic clarity. Where there is ground to be gained, we take it. Where the old structures can be bent toward liberty, we bend them. And where they cannot, we build something new. This is precisely what I was saying about starting to get elected as the Dog Catcher—not that you can really do that!—and then working your way into the school boards, mayoral elections, and more beyond that. Get involved.

4. ***Cultivate courage and endurance***. The reshaping of culture is not the work of a season. It is the labor of decades, perhaps centuries. We must raise up those willing to labor in the long arc of time—artists, teachers, activists, builders—who understand that the true victory lies in vision, vocation, and vigilance. This is *The Long Game*.

At the heart of this vision stands Crowley's charge: "Our sole business should be to use the Law to reconstruct the world from the chaos into which it is already half tumbled." This is not a metaphor. It is a mandate.

Too often, Thelemites have been content to dwell in the inner chambers, polishing rites and debating minutiae, while the world slides into entropy. That time is past. The world needs the so-called "93 Current," as we used to so fondly call it—a current of liberty, courage, and creativity. We just need to wield it.

We are not here to dominate, but to liberate. Not to tear down blindly, but to build anew. And we need to start now. The forces of repression and fear are gaining ground—and more so now than ever before in my lifetime, for sure! The dominionists, the authoritarians, the old priest-kings, and new technocrats all sense the growing void and rush to fill it. If we don't offer another way, someone else will—and their vision won't be about freedom.

Chaos is the canvas. Will is the brush. This is the Law, this is our Work—not some secondary thing, not some private indulgence, but *our sole business in this world of chaos*.

If these words strike something in you—if you find yourself weary of small visions, tired of ornamental occultism, restless for a path that meets the world where it is—then perhaps it is time to begin this work together. No one will give us permission. No institution will lead us. But the stars have always been self-governing. And the work is waiting.

Our sole business is clear. Let's get at it!

1. Aleister Crowley, personal communication to C. S. Jones, August 28, 1936. [_](#)
2. Aleister Crowley, personal communication to W. T. Smith, June 6, 1928. [_](#)
3. Aleister Crowley, personal correspondence to W. T. Smith, April 1, 1943. [_](#)
4. Crowley, Aleister, Mary Desti, and Leila Waddell. *Magick: Liber ABA*. Edited by Hymenaeus Beta. Weiser Books, 1997, 429. [_](#)
5. I take up what *fidēs* means, contextually, elsewhere; but, in brief, whenever we speak of a Thelemic *fidēs*—referenced herein and elsewhere as a Thelemic faith in the sense of trust, conviction, or strong confidence, but ultimately as the ground of spiritual origin—we must always presuppose and remember the complex structure of relationships that organize and define that faith: 1. a matrix of historical origin; 2. the lack of and disinclination toward the need for an ecclesial tradition; 3. contemporary and emergent communication; and 4. an uncoerced certainty of truthfulness that continues to examine and learn through intimate engagement with the truth. [_](#)
6. Aleister Crowley, “The Commentary {to the Book of the Law, unabridged}.” In *OS K2, Yorke Collection Papers — Yorke Film 6 (Warburg, 1923)*, 168–169. [_](#)
7. This is also not to suggest that the only art that Thelemites should produce is “religious” art or “Thelemic iconography.” Far from it. I’m merely bemoaning the lack of it at all, beyond a small handful in which most of it is horrendous. [_](#)
8. This is not to suggest there is no room for the grotesque. See Mitchell Nolte’s work for examples of the grotesque that are brilliantly executed. My point is that even if we want to fall back into the whole, “but we want to show balance,”—and that makes me want to vomit every time I hear it—it still requires that we show beauty at least some of the time. Thelemites love their

shit and nipples over the “lambent flame of blue, all-touching, all penetrant, her lovely hands upon the black earth, and her lithe body arched for love, and her soft feet not hurting the little flowers” (AL 1.26f–k). [_](#)

9. I’m not particularly fond of lists like this. It always feels like someone gets their feelings hurt because their favorite “thing” wasn’t listed. The point here isn’t to list every single checkbox. It’s to provide an “attitude of inclusiveness” in the statement. If you don’t see your “thing” here, just assume that it would be, and let’s move on. [_](#)
10. As a professional educator, I really hate the word “indoctrination” when it comes to education, yet I can’t really avoid it either because of its use in so many conversations—both Left and Right—about how education manipulates students in the classroom toward some political ends rather than providing them with the environment and the tools for intellectual stimulation, critical and creative thought, and mastery of conceptual discovery. I reject the idea that this, indoctrination I mean, is the norm, but I can’t deny that it happens at all. [_](#)
11. That said, I have never in my life seen a religion that worked so hard to undermine itself as Thelemites do with Thelema. [_](#)
12. Crowley, *Magick*, 429 (emphasis mine). [_](#)
13. The admitted problem with this is that someone already attempted something like this—though I don’t know how successful they were—and ran off the rails into the Far-Right. Thelemites have to give up this obscene obsession with the current American left/right political field and start over with something new. [_](#)