

The background of the cover features a stylized, monochromatic illustration of the Statue of Liberty. She is depicted in a desert landscape with rolling sand dunes under a hazy, orange sky. The statue is shown from the waist up, holding a flaming torch aloft in her right hand and a tablet in her left. The entire scene is rendered in shades of gold, brown, and orange, creating a somber and apocalyptic atmosphere.

# The Thelemic Guide to Surviving the Dominionist Theocracy

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An extreme Christian minority has taken control of administration. How did this happen, and what does this mean for Thelemites?

Whatever Candidate Trump promised, President Trump has proposed policies which restrict liberty and endanger the common good:

- withdraw from the international Paris Accord climate change agreement;
- cut legal immigration in half and halt legal immigration from Muslim majority countries;
- prevent transgender people from serving in the military;
- end the Affordable Care Act providing health care to millions of Americans;
- defund public schools;
- sell public lands;
- replace the serving judiciary;
- restrict the freedom of the press.

What ideology is driving these policy decisions?

On July 31 the political website The Hill reported that [President Trump and his cabinet attend weekly Bible study sessions](#). The Christian Bible Network [described this](#) as a “spiritual awakening” of the “most Evangelical Cabinet in history”. This Evangelical Bible study is led by Pastor Ralph Drollinger, a man who has called Catholicism a false religion, labelled working mothers “sinful” and called homosexuality an [abomination in the eyes of God](#). It is clear that these extreme religious views drive the policies of the White House and Cabinet.

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The cultural war in America is usually framed as a battle between Republican and Democrat, conservative and liberal, ultra-rich and everyone else. These ideas don't adequately capture the radical reformation we are undergoing. We are revisiting the Enlightenment battle between religion and secular humanism. At present the powers of restriction are winning. Dominionist Christians hold many of the most powerful offices in the country. This crisis extends beyond the current President; when Trump leaves office, however late or soon, we will still face a political climate which is inimical to our way of life.

This is a field guide to surviving this dangerous moment for our freedom and helping to steer our Thelemic boat to a safe harbor in the future.

## What is Christian Dominionism?

Not all Republicans are Christian, not all Christians are Evangelical, and not all Evangelical Christians are Dominionist.

Evangelicals are pre-millennialists. They believe that the 1000 years of peace and justice promised by the Book of Revelations will occur only *after* Christ's Second Coming which unleashes earthly destruction. Evangelical Dominionists further believe it is their duty to occupy secular institutions and reconstruct them around Biblical principles to hasten Christ's coming. They are authorized to take "dominion" by Genesis 1:26:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. [King James Bible online](#).

For decades Evangelical churches, colleges and media have spread Dominionist doctrines among Christians, particularly white Baptists, Pentecostals, Presbyterians and Mormons. Movements advancing Dominionist ideas include Christian Reconstruction, Christian Identity, and New Apostolic Reformation. The idea that the Bible mandates Christians to occupy secular authority has become the [central ideology](#) for the Christian right.

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## Which politicians are Dominionists?

Politicians holding Dominionist views may not identify as such publicly. They may belong to churches which stigmatize this extreme viewpoint; for example, Catholic Vice President Mike Pence holds Dominionist views, calling himself an Evangelical Catholic, even though church scholasticism centers on social justice.

Trump's personal spiritual advisor is [Paula White](#), a televangelist who preaches prosperity doctrine, the neo-Calvinist idea that wealth is a sign of God's approval and poverty is God's punishment for personal sins. While Trump did not begin his campaign as a religious extremist, Evangelicals and Dominionists took [control of his campaign](#) and maintain control of his administration and Cabinet. In July 2017 a photo surfaced of Evangelical ministers [laying hands on the president](#).

Here are the people attending the weekly Evangelical Bible study sessions:

- Attorney General Jeff Sessions,
- Department of Energy Secretary Rick Perry,
- Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Ben Carson,
- Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue,
- CIA Director Mike Pompeo.

Other administration officials align with Evangelical and Dominionist views, and more Evangelical leaders are being invited to [closed door meetings with the White House](#).

## What does this mean for public policy?

It's hard to understand policy decisions by the Administration which conflict with Trump campaign promises, contradict science, upend successful programs, and ignore broad citizen support. Where are they coming from? It is helpful to understand that extreme Dominionist ideas lead Evangelicals to radical disruptive actions.

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*Dominionist policies intend to establish the Kingdom of God on earth at the expense of the common good.*

Here are some defining characteristics of Dominionist ideology.

## **Dominionists have the Truth**

Dominionists can be highly educated and intelligent. However Dominionism is a closed-loop ideology – it does not admit the possibility that any of its claims can be disproven. As with other adherents of closed-loop ideologies this makes Dominionists almost impervious to reason. The doctrine is always right and does not change; when individuals develop disagreement with the doctrine they fall out of the system.

Appeal to self-interest also does not move Dominionists. Adhering to a doctrine even when it negatively impacts the individual is a sign of commitment; it makes you a hero, a highly valued status. In [Far Right Fantasy](#) James Aho notes that this extremism does not focus on the cares of daily life. It's driven by a sense that what is happening currently differs from the Christian ideal.

## **Demons must be defeated**

Dominionists believe that the secular world is controlled a hierarchy of demons under Satan's rulership. Dominionists identify [seven mountains](#) currently under demonic control which must be taken back by Christians: arts, business, family, government, media, religion, and education. The Democratic party in particular is controlled by demons; President Barack Obama and Secretary Hillary Clinton are not metaphorically demonized, they are actually possessed by demons.

Dominionists blame real world disasters on the failure to confront demons. The Japanese tsunami in 2011 was God's reaction to Obama policies, Haiti's earthquake targeted Voudoun practitioners, the 9/11 terrorist attack reflected God's judgement on America, among many examples.

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## Only Christians can be patriots

Dominionists fiercely protest their patriotism. However this patriotism is not a commitment to the Constitution as written. Dominionists see the Constitution and Bill of Rights as addendums to Old Testament Biblical law – these were not documents written by people but handed down by God. All public policy should be found in Biblical law, and if it's not in the Bible, it shouldn't be policy.

**Dominionists believe only Christians enjoy the benefits guaranteed by the Constitution.**

- America is a Christian nation. The Bill of Rights applies only to Christians. Freedom of religion means freedom for Christian religion.
- Immigrants should be Christian only. Those immigrants already in the country, legally or not, should be repatriated. Jews should emigrate to Israel.
- Nonbelievers (this includes Thelemites) should lose freedom of speech and political rights.

Establishing a Christian theocracy requires overturning the First Amendment which guarantees separation of church and state. There are several approaches to this:

- **The direct approach:** through a Constitutional Convention. A majority of governors, 34, can call such a convention. Since West Virginia Governor Jim Justice changed his party affiliation from Democrat to Republican there are now 34 Republican governors.
- **The indirect approach:** through enacting laws and policies which restrict the freedoms on non-Christians. This is one of the results of the administration's [reshaping the American judiciary](#).

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## Dominionist doctrine is marked by falsity

Dominionist doctrine exhibits falsity in a number of ways.

- **Make your own dragons:** it creates problems, like the war on Christmas, confusing its own stories as facts.
- **Contradict Christian gospel:** for example, finding money as the root of all good.
- **Subvert public discourse:** Dominionist politicians use the language of American civil values while working to overturn the civil contract and establish a religious theocracy.
- **Fail to acknowledge debt:** Dominionists benefit from the common good (roads, clean air, healthy food) while working to dismantle it.

Falsity is especially troubling. Dominionists may argue that a given policy would have an economic or public safety benefit which casts the conversation as a normative democratic discussion. When investigated these policies are very often found to be costly and dangerous, enacting the opposite result from what was proposed. Understanding the extreme religious origin of these ideas helps make sense of the contradiction. The end goal is not a healthy economy or a safe country, but a Dominionist one, establishing “God’s kingdom on earth”.

What does a that country look like? The America that Christian Dominionists envision is white, capitalist, and controlled by churches.

## The Dominionist vision for America

### White America

Dominionists believe that white Americans and Europeans are descendants of lost tribes of Israel. They are the rightful rulers of earth; those who are not white or European are meant to be governed by white people.

What this means for people of color:

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- **Native Americans:** all tribal members should be confined to reservations.
- **Black Americans:** some people are slaves by nature and should remain so. African slaves benefited from benevolent masters who took them from unbelieving cultures. The Emancipation Proclamation was inhumane and irresponsible. The Supreme Court should re-affirm the Dred Scott decision that black people do not own themselves.
- **Hispanic Americans:** all undocumented Hispanic people should be immediately deported. American citizens who aid “criminal invaders” should have houses and vehicles confiscated and the funds used to build border protections.
- **All non-European Americans:** the proposed [Pace Amendment](#) to the Constitution should be enacted. This amendment states: No person shall be a citizen of the United States unless he is a non-Hispanic white of the European race. ... Only citizens shall have the right and privilege to reside permanently in the United States.”

## Corporate America

Dominionist doctrine adopts the Calvinist belief that good fortune is a sign of God’s favor and a reward for individual virtue, while poverty is a sign of god’s punishment for individual sins. If you can’t afford food, health care, housing, then you don’t deserve them.

The economic policies that result from these beliefs are described as laissez fair capitalism. This favors capital over labor and is hostile to collective bargaining and fair wages. The corporate “person” is obligated only to increase profits. Capital should be owned only by private entrepreneurs, nothing should be owned by government. Public lands should be sold off. Prisons should be privately owned. Military forces should be corporate; Erik Prince, former CEO of the mercenary force Blackwater/Academi and Evangelical, has suggested that the [Afghanistan war be outsourced](#).

At its most extreme, Dominionist ideology treats the corporation as an incarnation of God’s presence in the world, deserving piety, and takes money as the root of all good. While these ideas run counter to other Christian teachings it has shaped a corporate culture which exalts greed over public interests.

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## Church Controlled America

Dominionist doctrine calls for the complete dismantling of the social safety net. Any program not mentioned in the Bible should be shut down. This includes social security, Medicare and Medicaid, OSHA, SNAP, WIC, among many examples.

What replaces these programs? Christian charity. Instead of taxes, individuals should tithe 10% of their income to government funnels into church based charities. The churches would decide who can get this charity and what they would have to do to deserve it. The poor must be drug free, well behaved, and repent of the sins that brought them to this state. If they do not they should be left to suffer the consequences: lose their homes, lose their health care, and starve.

Schools should also be church controlled. Public schools at present teach children how to read, write, and think critically, and to support secular civil democracy. These schools should be closed down and children funneled to schools which teach Christian doctrine. Department of Education Secretary Besty DeVos overtly intends to shape public schools to “[advance God’s kingdom](#)”.

## Thelemites in a Christian theocracy

In his [keynote address](#) to the biannual conference NOTOCON in 2015, O.T.O. Grand Master Sabazius sounded the alarm about conservative Christianity: “You know how more and more evangelical Christians are seeking elected offices, and winning. You know—especially here [Texas]—the kind of effects these people can have on your daily lives.”

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## Strong man rejoicing in his way

Libertarians who favor policies minimizing governmental oversight of individuals and businesses reject the [neoliberalism](#) which has governed the Democratic party's policies for the past several decades. Interestingly, neoliberalism also favors laissez faire capitalism. One factor in the 2016 election was a rejection of neoliberalism, but as we can see this did not result in a shift away from unchecked capitalism.

Not every Republican is Christian; some are Thelemites. Some Thelemites voted for Trump. It's not impossible to recognize his appeal – he seems to be a “strong man rejoicing in his way”. A vote for Trump may not necessarily have been meant to support Christian Dominionism, but this is how it is playing out. The policies and rhetoric of Christian Dominionists may seem to align with Thelemic values because of their emphasis on individual sovereignty. It is important to remember that the individual sovereignty which Christian Dominionists advocate applies only to Christian Dominionists.

## Special threats to Thelemic freedom

Aho points out that the radical right has been a force in American politics for centuries. While anti-Semitism continues to be an issue the most vilified groups have shifted to Muslims and Hispanic immigrants. However Satanists and Witches also continue to be targets; for the far right Thelema registers as a form of Satanism.

Thelemites take the Book of Revelations as a set of spiritual metaphors; Aleister Crowley drew from its imagery, calling himself the Beast, and the Biblical Babylon-the-Whore “Our Lady Babalon”. He vilified Christianity and called it a slave religion. Christian Dominionists on the other hand take Revelations as a literal reality. If you're enacting the war that Revelations prophesies, we are on the opposite side. Dominionist fantasies dwell on the tortures that people like us would experience in the Christian Apocalypse.

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Another specific threat is to women's sexual freedom. Aleister Crowley was crystal clear: "The essence of my Word is to declare woman to be Herself, of, to, and for Herself; and I give this one irresistible Weapon, the expression of Herself and Her will through sex, to Her on precisely the same terms as to man...The best women have always been sexually-free, like the best men." *The Law is for All*, III:55.

For Evangelicals on the other hand women are to be married, express sexuality only in marriage, and be governed by men. There is no clearer example of the incompatibility of Dominionist doctrine with Thelemic values than this.

## Fighting for freedom

In his 2015 NOTOCON address Grand Master Sabazius said: "Recall that we oppose tyranny, which is the use of political or economic power in a cruel, unjust or oppressive way. We are against oppression, which is the deprivation of any minority group, or even an entire people. or sex, of their human rights. And we are against superstition—which people understand in different ways, but which I personally understand as the imposition of unscientific or pseudo-scientific beliefs to gain and hold on to political or economic power."

As of 2015 [the Christian population in America is declining](#). According to the Pew Forum, from 2008 to 2015 adults identifying as Christian dropped from 78.4% to 70.6%. Of these 25% identified as Evangelical (Pew does not distinguish Dominionist Evangelicals). This is the largest single religious group in the country. The second largest group is unaffiliated at 23% (56 million).

There may be as many as [1.2 million Witches, Pagans and magical folk in America](#). That's less than 1% of the voting population. The several thousand Thelemites in the country would work out to a statistical error in that total. We don't make up a voting block.

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How can a group which comprises a vanishingly small percentage of voters affect public policy? Like any other small group we can join with others and ally with groups and politicians who align with our values. Grand Master Sabazius suggests that we can be guided in our efforts by [Liber Oz](#). Sabazius notes that while Thelema does not hold democracy as a core principle, the tiny population of Thelemites in the U.S. lives within a democracy. “Hold onto your own vision and principles, and vote them. If you can find candidates who actually advocate your principles, support them. Perhaps more importantly, actively oppose candidates who espouse views and policies that are inimical to your principles.”

American civil democracy is far from perfect. We continue to confront the legal and cultural legacy of slavery, colonialism, and overt control of women. We have a lot to do to bring the promise of liberty and justice for all. However, given a choice between Dominionist America and an imperfect secular civil democracy, only one of those supports our way of life. In particular, “freedom of assembly” protects our meetings, and “freedom of religion” protects our public celebrations of the Gnostic Mass and tax-exempt status for Thelemic religious organizations. Civil policies based on a covert design to limit Constitutional rights to Christians only clearly threatens our way of life.

Here are some ways we can work within the current political system to advocate for the rights of Liber Oz.

## Support an organization

Groups working to protect civil liberties include the [ACLU](#) which protects religious freedom and [Americans United](#) which specifically advocates the continuing separation of church and state. Human rights commissions exist in many counties; if there’s an opening you can apply to be appointed. I currently sit on the Kitsap County Council for Human Rights.

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## Join the Resistance

A number of progressive groups have sprung up since the 2016 election. These include [Indivisible](#), MoveOn's [Resistance Summer](#), and the Democratic Party's [Resistance Summer](#).

In [The Resistance Handbook](#) Markos Moulitsas points out how important it is not to condemn any group whole cloth, including Christians, Republicans and corporations. [Christian leaders](#) and [moderate Republicans](#) oppose administration policies. Corporations are [dismayed by the economic and financial impact of draconian immigration actions](#).

## Talk to your neighbors

Trump didn't invent racism but his rhetoric galvanized American white supremacists. If you're white you can educate yourself about racism and [talk to your family and neighbors](#). If you're a man you can [talk to other men about sexism](#). Those who identify with a gender can all [support transgender people](#). We can reach out to people of other faiths to work together to [protect religious freedom](#).

Finally, we can encourage each other in our efforts. One example of this effort is the Facebook group [Thelemites Against Injustice](#).

Whatever our path, remaining informed and keeping an eye on the White House is prudent and an important step in defending our liberty.