

# Αγνός

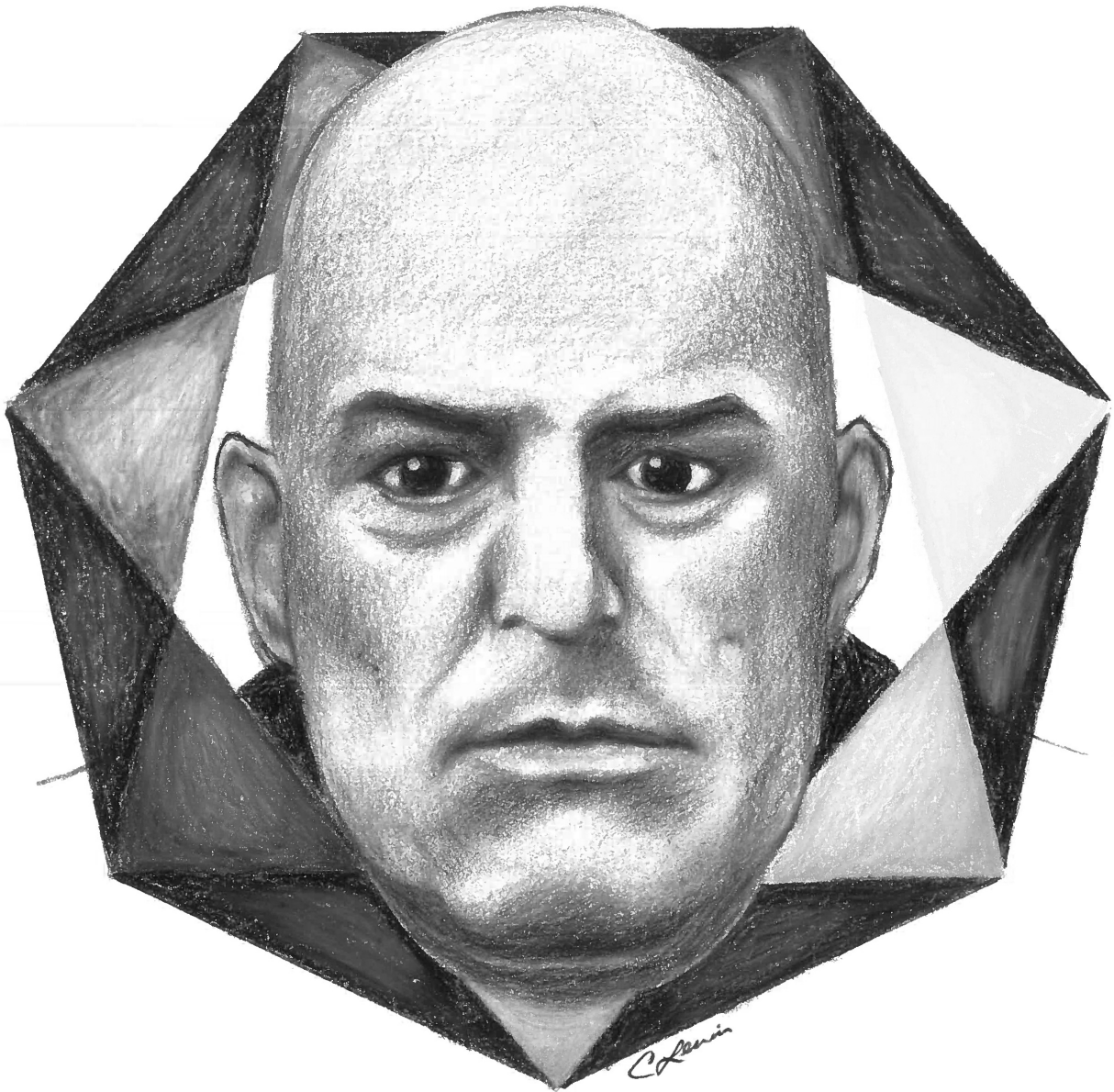
The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.



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Ordo Templi Orientis, U.S.A.



E.G.C.

# Agapé

The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

I hope this issue of Agapé finds you well!

If you would like to submit articles, artwork, poetry, or announcements to Agapé for submission, please do so by sending it to [agape@oto-usa.org](mailto:agape@oto-usa.org). Please note that artwork should be sent at the highest resolution possible, and will be converted to grayscale for publication.

NOTOCON XII is almost upon us! I'm really excited to be part of the team this year as we have it in the Valley of Cleveland, Ohio. I'll be managing the vending area, so I hope I get to get a chance to talk with folks!

This issue's artwork is by Chris Lewin, who states "it was inspired by Liber Oz fest at Star & Snake, NH 2018."

Love is the law, love under will.

Andrew Lent  
Editor, Agapé

## FROM THE GRAND MASTER

*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.*

### U.S.G.L. Military Collective

The first official Collective of U.S.G.L. has been formed: the U.S. Military Collective.

Many U.S.G.L. current and veteran service members, cadets, and midshipmen may have issues relevant to their service that they might feel uncomfortable discussing within the open forums provided by various public veterans and/or service organizations, which also might not be relevant or well understood within existing civilian Thelemic community discussion forums. We hope this collective will become a body of resource and additional community to its members, and of benefit to U.S.G.L. at large.

To join the U.S. Military Collective, initiate members must be dues current in good standing with U.S.G.L. and be willing to provide proof of service (remove/blackout SSN) in the Active, Guard, or Reserve components in one of the seven U.S. Uniformed Services; be students or alumni of the five U.S. Service Academies; or have held active crew member status in the U.S. Merchant Marine under W.S.A. or O.D.T. between December 7, 1941 and August 15, 1945 <sup>EV</sup>. If those guidelines change at any point, existing members will all remain eligible, and new guidelines will be made known.

Also included are women with veteran status from the women's reserve components that were later Congressionally Regularized into the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy:

- Women Air Forces Service Pilots (WASP)
- Women Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC)
- United States Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS)
- United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve
- Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES)

The point of contact for this Collective is Soror

A.S.P.K., who can be reached via email at [milcol.oto.usa@gmail.com](mailto:milcol.oto.usa@gmail.com).

For more information on U.S.G.L. Leagues and Collectives: <https://oto-usa.org/2017/09/leagues-and-collectives/>

### Man of Earth Delegates Reminder

Liber CXCIV: An Intimation with Reference to the Constitution of the Order states, "In order that the feelings of the general body may be represented, the Men of Earth choose four persons, two men and two women, from among themselves, to stand continually before the face of the Supreme and Holy King, serving him day and night."

In U.S.G.L., these volunteers are termed the "Man of Earth Delegates," and their roles currently emphasize representation of the feelings of the general body of the Man of Earth Triad via weekly teleconferences with the National Grand Master General, rather than performing household and clerical duties.

The Delegates are selected by a national Man of Earth Delegate Nominating Panel. The members of the Man of Earth Triad of each Local Body are entitled to choose a representative to serve on this Nominating Panel, which votes twice annually to select two Delegates, one male and one female, from those who have submitted applications. Any member of U.S.G.L. in good standing may volunteer to serve as Delegate upon being initiated to the II\*. If you would like to apply to serve in this position, please write to [dnp@oto-usa.org](mailto:dnp@oto-usa.org).

### A Note on Cakes of Light

The line in section III.B.5.b.(vi) of the current version of the E.G.C. Manual that reads "Optionally, one of the following ingredients may be added" has been amended to read "Either of the following" i.e., one of the two ingredients mentioned must be used in the Cakes.



The revised wording will be included when an updated version of the Manual is issued, but the revised wording and policy is now in effect.

*Love is the law, love under will.*

Sb



## UPDATES FROM THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The Electoral College took the following actions at the Winter Meeting online on January 26, 2019 EV:

- Passed the Mastership of Dove & Serpent Oasis (Atlanta, GA) from Sr. Rebekah S. to Br. Bobby C.
- Passed the Mastership of Lapis Lazuli Oasis (Phoenix, AZ) from Br. Scott P. to Soror Prunikos.
- Passed the Mastership of Star of Babalon Camp (Raleigh, NC) from Soror Crystal Lal to Frater Temujin.
- Passed the Mastership of Tahuti Lodge (New York City, NY) from Soror Aleto to Soror Constance.
- Extended the tenure limits of the masters of Anabasis Camp, Azul Nox Oasis, Black Sun Lodge, Hidden Spring Oasis, NOXULUXON Camp, Roar of Rapture Camp, Sekhet Bast Ra Oasis, Song of Freedom Oasis, and Star Sapphire Lodge for a period of one year.

Also of note:

- A proposal for raising standards of expected services provided by local bodies was referred back to committee.
- A proposal for revising the procedure for selecting local masters is in committee.

### About the Electoral College

#### Appeals

Those wishing to appeal decisions of the Electoral College may do so in writing to the Supreme Grand Council through the Grand Secretary General (gsg@

oto-usa.org).

Those wishing to appeal verdicts of the Grand Tribunal to the Areopagus may do so with the sponsorship of a seated Elector. See our website for contact details of individual electors (<http://ec.oto-usa.org/electors.html>).

While there is no appeal process for Notice of Pending Bad Report at a Local Body, if an initiate feels the notice they have received did not follow the process as outlined in the COLMH for issuing notice, believes that there was inappropriate motivation behind the notice, or can prove the notice is patently false (through disputation of facts), they may contact the Secretary of the College outlining the manner in which the Notice was deficient or false.

#### Attending Meetings

Dues Current Members in Good Standing of Vo are invited to attend regular meetings of the Electoral College. We request that those planning to attend contact the Master of the hosting body to R.S.V.P. Online regular meetings may be observed by being physically present with a willing Elector. There is a standing invitation to all Lovers to attend this meeting in Dallas-Fort Worth. Contact [hattie.quinn@oto-usa.org](mailto:hattie.quinn@oto-usa.org) for more information.

#### Communications

In addition to hosting email lists for masters and mentors and for communication with Grand Lodge, we also maintain a blog of College Updates, News, and Transmissions on our website (<http://ec.oto-usa.org/wp>) and are slowly experimenting with a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ECUSGLOTO/>).

Initiates with specific concerns or questions regarding the operation of the Electoral College are invited to write to either the President or Secretary. See the included U.S.G.L. Officers Directory for contact details.

#### Revolutionary

Members in Good Standing of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the IX° living within the United States but not currently serving as Officer or Voting Member of any Governing Body of U.S.G.L. are heartily encouraged to volunteer to fill the vacant

second post of Revolutionary by contacting the President or Secretary of the Electoral College. Thus may progress be effected.

### Website

The official website of the Electoral College can be found at <http://ec.oto-usa.org>.

In addition to the aforementioned resources, one may find information on volunteering to host a meeting or organize a study group in new areas, and other services provided by the College or expected of local bodies within U.S. Grand Lodge.

### Demographic Survey

Have you participated in the U.S.G.L. O.T.O. Demographic Survey? If you have, we thank you for supporting this endeavor, and if you have not, we'd like to invite you to do so now. This data collection is in support of one of our Order's strategic initiatives, moving toward our Vision in which "we will manifest a culture that is comfortable with myriad expressions of the Self..."

Still on the fence? Here are the top five reasons why you should go to <http://ec.oto-usa.org/survey/demographics.html> right now and provide your information:

#5 – It's quick (less than one minute).

#4 – It's painless! The questions are simple, and if you think its none of our damned business, please participate to say so ("prefer not to answer" is an option).

#3 – It's helpful... O.T.O. is looking for a clear picture of who we are as a group, in order to understand and evaluate potential concerns, and to establish baselines to assess the effectiveness of our efforts.

#2 – It's confidential. Our survey questions do not ask for specific personal information. We will not be able to identify you.

#1 – The Grand Master asked, and he said "please".

## JOIN THE MoE NETWORK!

Hello! I'm Frater OOsá, and I am one of three Man of Earth Delegates serving the US Grand Master of our magical Order. It is written in our Constitution that the Man of Earth Delegation should include two men and two women who are initiates of the II°. We are currently short one delegate because not a single female initiate of the II° volunteered in time for the December 1 deadline last year. I've just joined the delegation, but already I am amazed with how cool it is to be involved in weekly discussions with the Grand Master about our beloved Order. If only it were more widely known how cool it is, surely every initiate of the II° would volunteer. My hope in writing this is primarily to encourage other II° Magicians to volunteer, but also to shed some light on how the Man of Earth Delegation is selected and what their purpose is.

So, in the O.T.O. we have members initiated in degrees numbered from zero to twelve. The bulk of our membership is to be found in what we call the Man of Earth (MoE) Triad, consisting of the Minerval, First, Second, Third, Fourth and P.:l.: Degrees, which are available to all who are sponsored, in good standing, and dues current. All the degrees above the MoE Triad are invitation only and those filling those higher degrees are far fewer in number. There is only one X° at the top of each National Grand Lodge, and only one XII° at the top of the entire international O.T.O.

The higher degrees are responsible for the "order" of the Order; i.e., its administration, function, image, and overall health and growth. The purpose of the MoE Delegation is to provide a line of communication from the large number of lower degrees straight to the top of U.S.G.L., straight to the Grand Master... our Supreme and Holy King. If you are in the MoE Triad and you have an urgent message for the King of our National Grand Lodge all you have to do is ask your MoE Delegate to deliver it.

In *Liber 194* it states that MoE Delegates are "to stand continually before the face of the Supreme and Holy King, serving him day and night."

I can understand how that might intimidate newly initiated Second Degrees from volunteering. But our Grand Master is cool. All he requires is a sit down in front of a laptop for a one-hour weekly video conference call. Easy peasy, casual, fun, and fascinating! I have learned more about the Order in three one-hour video chats than in six years of being afraid to ask. It is easy to volunteer if you are a II° and interested. Just fill out the application form online, have two brothers or sisters write a letter of recommendation, and email it to the Delegate Nominating Panel by June 1 or December 1.

What is this Delegate Nominating Panel (D.N.P.), you ask? This is where all members of the MoE Triad are encouraged to participate in the selection of new delegates. Every local body in the United States, every Camp, every Oasis, and every Lodge is encouraged to provide one nominating Panelist. I was shocked to discover that many bodies are not represented on the D.N.P.. Each Camp, Oasis, and Lodge can choose its Panelist any way it wants. If you are an MoE initiate and your local body does not have a Panelist on the D.N.P., volunteer for that! Say "Hey (local body) Master, I noticed we don't have an MoE Panelist on the D.N.P.. May I be our body's Panelist?" That Master has the power to say yes and it is so.

Imagine one MoE Panelist from each and every US body gathering into communication with each other twice a year to interview and select the next MoE Delegates. By volunteering to be your body's Panelist you will become a conduit of communication for all of the MoE initiates in your body directly to the Grand Master because you will be a part of that delegation network. Each and every Camp, Oasis, and Lodge should have a Panelist to inform, encourage, and assist II° initiates in volunteering for this awesome opportunity. It goes without saying that if your body has one of the four MoE Delegates rapping with the Grand Master every week it can only help raise awareness of your local body.

If you are interested in volunteering to serve the Order as an MoE Delegate or DNP Panelist just visit [admin.oto-usa.org/man-of-earth-delegates](http://admin.oto-usa.org/man-of-earth-delegates) or contact the Chair of the DNP directly at [dnp@oto-usa.org](mailto:dnp@oto-usa.org)

[usa.org](http://usa.org). Don't be shy. We are very actively seeking more participation.

## AN ORDER FOR FAMILIES

by Fr. Beto Cuervo

Sisters and Brothers, Champions of the Law of Thelema,

*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.*

I believe the children are the future. In Thelema the vast majority of us are converts, coming from Ol' Time traditions or an irreligious upbringing, this in stark contrast to mainstream religions Occidental and Oriental where most of their adherents are born into an ideological framework composed of morals and metaphysics that most of us would consider morose and mundane. We were born into that framework as well, and while we have embraced the Law of Light we still bear the scars of the scourging of our indentured servitude to the slave gods. To what degree can we spare our children the servile madness of times past? Can we raise a generation free in mind, body and spirit from the heavy darkness of the world? Crowley seemed to think so, and he thought that O.T.O. might be the vehicle for that change.

In several places Crowley talks about the importance of promulgating to the masses, such as in his campfire metaphor in *Liber 300*, but in the O.T.O.-focused book *Liber 101* Crowley seems more interested in a special kind of growth in our community by adopting and educating children. This practice was not uncommon in more contemporary traditions such as Islam where special schools would be set up to care for the orphaned children of conquered peoples. Rather than eating the children they would be sent to special schools and raised in the light of Islam to grow into capable diplomats or assassins, as needed.

In *Liber 101* Crowley writes in Of the Duties of the Brethren, Fifth House (that of Leo):

"13. Every Brother shall seek constantly to give pleasure to all Brethren with whom he is acquainted, whether by entertainment or conversation, or in any other manner that may



suggest itself. It will frequently and naturally arise that love itself springs up between members of the Order, for that they have so many and sacred interests in common. Such love is peculiarly holy, and is to be encouraged.

14. All children of Brethren are to be considered as children of the whole Order, and to be protected and aided in every way by its members severally, as by its organization collectively. No distinction is to be made with regard to the conditions surrounding the birth of any child.

15. There is an especially sacred duty, which every Brother should fulfil, with regard to all children, those born without the Order included. This duty is to instruct them in the Law of Thelema, to teach them independence and freedom of thought and character, and to warn them that servility and cowardice are the most deadly diseases of the human soul."

Crowley not only recommends that we make love to one another but anticipates children being born of these common interests. He also says that children are to be a priority, each equally, and that the general membership should take pains to rear and revere them. He goes so far to say that children born without the order should be extended the same charity, that they should be taught pride and strength in accordance with the Law of Thelema.

Later, in the Tenth house (that of Capricorn) Crowley marks that

"Colleges of the Order will presently be established where the children of its members may be trained in all trades, businesses, and professions, and there they may study the liberal arts and humane letters, as well as our holy and arcane science. Brethren are expected to do all in their power to make possible the establishment of such Universities."

Later, in Privileges' Fifth house, Crowley continues,

"Children of all Brethren are entitled to the care of the Order, and arrangements will be made to educate them in certain of the Profess-Houses of the Order. Children of Brethren who are left orphans will be officially adopted by the Master of his Lodge, or if the latter decline, by the Supreme

Holy King himself, and treated in all ways as if they were his own."

Children come from mothers, and Crowley wanted every consideration to be made for women. He writes in Duties' Tenth house:

"37. All pregnant women are especially sacred to members of the Order, and no effort should be spared to bring them to acceptance of the Law of Freedom, so that the unborn may benefit by that impression. They should be induced to become members of the Order, so that the child may be born under its ægis.

38. If the mother that is to be have asserted her will to be so in contempt and defiance of the Tabus of the slave-gods, she is to be regarded as especially suitable to our Order, and the Master of the Lodge in her district shall offer to become, as it were, godfather to the child, who shall be trained specially, if the mother so wishes, as a servant of the Order, in one of its Profess-Houses.

39. Special Profess-Houses for the care of women of the Order, or those whose husbands or lovers are members of the Order, will be instituted, so that the frontal duty of womankind may be carried out in all comfort and honour."

And continuing in Privileges' Tenth house:

"Women of the Order who are about to become mothers receive all care, attention, and honour from all Brethren."

It's fascinating that so significant a portion of this brief document be focused on the encouragement to create, welcome, educate and defend children and to venerate and support women who give birth. Crowley wanted children to be born and raised free and glorious, as is our father the sun. Crowley set up the O.T.O. to further this with obligations all the way up to the Supreme and Holy King.

We can take steps as local body members and organizers to facilitate this environment, this mechanism of long-term change. I want to propose several policies and practices be set up to accommodate and encourage the incorporation of families into the local body setting.

First, that local bodies schedule a regular and

frequent occasion that is designed to draw in children (and thereby their parents). Let there be colors for younger children and crafts for older children. Let there be book clubs to promote education and wherewithal and let the local body musicians offer free music lessons that children might attenuate their mind and aesthetics to harmony and beauty. Let there be a conclusory ritual such as A Short Eucharist as written by Tau Polyphilus or some other simpler ceremony designed to inspire children to partake of the holy host of heaven and a moderate glass of red wine. Let them contribute to the local body by making candles or grinding herbs or polishing brasswares. Whatever activities may be made available to them, let them theirs! And don't only reach out to the Thelemic community, reach out to the larger "magical" community which might be more receptive to our sort of special Thelemic environment, but likewise reach out to the secular community or any whose minds are not so profaned as to be ignorant of the value of joy and beauty to the development of a Sovereign Star.

Second, let local bodies accommodate those brethren upon whose mystic loves success has fallen in the form of a star. Remember that many parents are essentially working two full-time jobs – reach out to them and ask them how they can be scheduled around. Saturday nights work best for those who intend to get soused after a fraternal gathering, but Saturday mornings are best for those who have to wake up at 7am to manage the digestive minutiae of others. Have members volunteer to go through child care training so that they can offer certified skills in sitting for the especially young. Have workshops for parents to teach their kids about participating in Mass. But most importantly you have to reach out and insist because a polite parent with too much on their plate is not wont to impose their newfound familial obligations on what was once their single sexy social circle. You, leaders, have to take the initiative, because this is not something that we should simply fancy to do but rather something to which we are duty-bound to provide and encourage.

We have to plan and practice with Aeonic goals, not just immediate ones. Do we live and work because we think the world will be saved in a few lucky decades? No, because we see all around us what

Crowley prophesied, that these are the dark ages of the New Aeon and we must thrive and survive if we are to be the light at the end of the tunnel. We will not live long enough to enjoy the shade of this sacred oak that we have planted. We may not live to see the day where the vintage comes into its fullness. For the present, ours are the pains of the labor of love, the grueling work of breaking up the soil, smashing the stones, setting the fence and shooting the varmints. But if we work hard now and plan for the future then the third century of Thelema might look very different than this one and we might be recalled as the pioneers who dared to settle this new land where our sons and daughters might build a lasting civilization for the Crowned and Conquering Child. This is our duty.

*Love is the law, love under will.*



## TO ODHINN FROM LOKI TO BALDUR FROM ODIN

by Frater Luca 97

The Vicissitudes of my Eternal Heart or A History of the Future (adapted)

His Fitra is the Universal Love,  
His Triumphs that he kept his mind the whole time  
by loving us ones below.

May Love specific and localized which reaches me  
from beyond the veil  
His love now mine  
For I was that Hanged Man's well  
The pit in which he wept  
The silken ropes used to bound His Beautiful arms  
The noose He saw in His dream  
The whispered story spun.  
I love myself for HE is I.  
Inky Whale and Pen  
His island cocoon of healing  
His wayward Folk turned right again  
I was his maggot filled hair though such stories  
Be headed da wrong way

Apollo's Station he mounted  
Hermes words Perfected so we could read the  
inverse  
Pythagorean two-edged sword on paper  
His adopted family, us humans, this Elijah loved.

Adieu Prince Jonathan – Philao was Amor for you  
and I.  
May those Silent Sisters whose song sets the heavens  
straight send us word of your arrival.

I am the absolute value of the One  
Neo a transmigration; not the End  
‡‡ – I see two; they see 11. We see 1.

Part 2

"Truly do I love the love of good; to scry the Glory  
of my Sustainer - until this Sun is hidden in  
the veil of Dawn." - King Solomon

Zieusoudra Shining BLACK Sun

## ON THE PURSUIT OF DOCTRINAL SANITY<sup>1</sup>

By Bishop Harber

While St. Augustine (354-430) is often credited with having written "*unitatem in necessariis, in non necessariis libertatem, in omnibus caritatem*" (unity in essentials; in non-essentials, liberty; in everything, charity), it is likely the more recent work of Marco Antonio de Dominis (1560-1624) in his book, *De Republica Ecclesiastica*.<sup>2</sup> In the early centuries of the Church, theologians typically only debated what they felt essential to the stability of Church doctrine and tossed the rest. Prior to the 1970s, in fact, the idea of a demarcation between anything other than essential and nonessential doctrines of the Christian community was absent from the theological discussion as nonessentials, such as in the distinction by Meldenius, were generally considered to be anything in Church practice that was not supported directly through biblical injunctions. Quite frankly, the theological landscape of the time did not demand much more than "this is vitally important" and "that's the way we do it"—though the debate on which doctrines should be in which category has raged throughout history.

Times change. More complex issues rise to the surface and get in the way of conversation even among those who agree more often than not on the subject matter. In 2004, Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, proposed a three-tier system to help deal with theological issues that surfaced within contemporary Christianity and which the previous two-tier system left lacking. He rightfully called it "theological triage" in the pursuit of ecumenicism within the Christian community toward "strategizing which Christian doctrines and theological issues are to be given highest priority in terms of our contemporary context."<sup>3</sup> This is not an isolated view as Grant Osborne, in his seminal work *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, offered up a similar breakdown of cardinal doctrines, denominational distinctives, and noncardinal doctrines.<sup>4</sup> In the attempt to remove doctrinal debate out of the area of emotional invectives and into the realm of academic discovery, both Osborne and Mohler lay the foundation for a more dispassionate approach to the complexities of doctrinal understanding.

With the continuing development of sectarianism and the increase of discussion on the internet, understanding what unites us as Thelemites and what can be areas of disagreement without disharmony is an approach that is favored by those seeking to promulgate the Law of Thelema in diverse ways rather than subjugate the Law to an authoritarian dogma of institutional power. Seizing on this approach from Mohler provides a framework by which institutional preference can be separated from doctrinal unity.

The outline by Mohler offers up three levels of theological urgency: first-order doctrines, second-order doctrines, and third-order issues.<sup>5</sup> I find these to be just as relevant in our own larger community today as they have been within the Christian community in the last decade and a half. It is little surprise the greater Thelemic community should find itself in the midst of doctrinal chaos so soon after the advent of the New Aeon. Rather than reinventing the wheel, maybe we can learn how to avoid the pitfalls from those religious institutions of the previous Aeon.

Let's briefly look at Mohler's three categories<sup>6</sup> and, with only a slight rewording, use them in relation to the Thelemic community.

First-order doctrines are those hierological issues (or doctrinal issues, if you prefer that phrase) that would include doctrines most central and essential to the Law of Thelema.

Second-order doctrines are distinguished from the first-order set by the fact that Thelemites may disagree on the second-order issues, though this disagreement may, and most likely will, create significant boundaries between adherents without a loss of identity. When Thelemites gather themselves into organizations and sectarian forms, these boundaries become evident.

Third-order issues are those things over which Thelemites may disagree (even heatedly) and remain in close fellowship, even within local groups and organizations.

For Osborne, these would be cardinal doctrines, denominational distinctives, and noncardinal

doctrines respectively. This outline is a great start for discussion concerning what unites Thelemites as opposed to what divides Thelemites. What should be apparent in Mohler's breakdown of these levels is that at each level the emphasis is on unity and identity of the larger community. It is what he even titles a "call for [...] maturity." Looking past the unity of first-order doctrines into second-order doctrines and third-order issues, we can see definitively that the focus is about acceptance, continuity of identity, and fellowship among individuals and groups even in spite of disagreements. It is, quite frankly, a doctrinal pax templi.

Yet the question inevitably comes up as to what constitutes a doctrine of the first-order or second-order or what may be relegated to a third-order issue. I don't really think this takes any kind of Council of Nicaea. Such a model is archaic and ridiculous in the New Aeon.

We could start with the affirmation that *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law*<sup>7</sup> as certainly a first-order doctrine. It is, after all, the central tenet of Thelema.<sup>8</sup> We could bring up the necessity and sufficiency of the Book of the Law as a first-order doctrine. We could add the discovery and pursuit of pure will as a first-order doctrine (though "True Will," as the correct term would be an example of a third-order issue that resides within a first-order doctrine). For the most part, merely as examples, these seem like common sense for common ground with minimal controversy.

The sacredness or authority of additional Class A texts beyond the Book of the Law is an example of a second-order (sectarian) doctrine. This may be one of the most controversial topics—hence, why it would be a second-order doctrine—since some will find the addition of Crowley's inspired writings to be necessary for their institutional purposes and teachings and others will find they are without any additional import beyond exemplary guides of an Adept on the path of the Great Work. The addition to the A·A· curriculum and classification thereof is entirely that of a second-order doctrine—though I might argue in a different forum that this could be reduced to even a third-order issue altogether. That said as well, all discussion of authority outside of the Book of the Law and its Prophet is second-order

doctrine. Such diversity in approach can certainly be found within sectarian lines without the loss of identity of any individual Thelemite while still causing distinctive lines of difference between sects. This brings up, however, a short diversion into the topic of Authority. While it is not the scope of this essay to explore the concept and form of Authority itself, it needs to be said clearly that no institution can offer Authority within confines of the Law of Thelema. To reduce the idea of Authority to a petty challenge between organizations is to betray such a complex topic for little more than personal nuance. When I look around at the doctrines of various groups and I watch online conversations happening, what I see most is third-order issues dividing the conversation into sectors of opinion reframed as some kind of prime importance. I witness institutional dogma stretched as first-order doctrines sometimes subtly, sometimes directly. I believe the magisterial movement that is starting to arise around the world, this fundamentalism of doctrinal and institutional purity, is the worst direction for Thelema we could possibly imagine.

I find Mohler's comments about the particular extremes in the theological spectrum to be as succinct as they are accurate, and they serve as a warning for us all: "Fundamentalism [...] is the belief that all disagreements concern first-order doctrines. Thus, third-order issues are raised to a first-order importance."<sup>9</sup> Conversely, he offers this observation of the other extreme, saying, "The mark of true liberalism is the refusal to admit that first-order theological issues even exist. Liberals treat first-order doctrines as if they were merely third-order in importance, and doctrinal ambiguity is the inevitable result."<sup>10</sup> We find ourselves looking into the mirror here as we watch one extreme through the fundamentalist/magisterium approach and the opposite extreme through the outliers of radical individualism<sup>11</sup>—though if we are going to err in the area of doctrine, may we always fall closer to the liberal side than the fundamentalist side.<sup>12</sup>

I once suggested it was time to change the conversation. I submit that now is time to begin the conversation as to what actually constitutes those first-order doctrines that unite us all, that which is outside institutional power-plays and individual nuances. It is not something that will be resolved

in a committee. This discussion in the greater community needs to happen through the boots on the ground rather than through any magisterial dictate.

When all is said and done—even though doctrinal discussions are never truly all said or done, if the Christians have taught us anything in this regard—despite the radical individualists crying betrayal or institutions declaring authority within their own impotent fiefdoms, I truly believe there will be some who are shocked by the results.<sup>13</sup>

Conversely, I also think there will be those who abuse their assumptions since catchphrases and slogans are easier than doctrines and truth-claims, that there will be those who still remain grounded in the assumptions about the "Aeon of the Child" (while missing the "Crowned and Conquering" part) as something immature, "innocent," and fleeting in attention span. There will always be those who think the outliers of radical individualism are an accurate representation of the doctrinal mean. There will always be those who proclaim the Law of Thelema, as such, existing before the Book of the Law. There will always be those who bemoan the idea of inevitability of sects within the community of Thelema. It makes no difference. Radical outliers of the last two thousand years did not fold Christianity into itself. Such in our own time will not shake the firm foundation of the New Aeon either.

I believe one of the most important issues on the table for harmony in our community is how willing we are to acknowledge and defend first-order doctrines to remain unified in the essentials while protecting, promoting, and preserving the liberty of such amazing diversity through sectarian distinctives, and encouraging charity in those third-order issues among us all.

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## Notes

1. Adapted from Bishop Harber, "The Science and Art of Theology," in *Canons of Thelemic Philosophy and Religion: An Introductory Primer to the Law of Thelema* (Unpublished Manuscript).

2. Much scholarship around the quote also provides evidence for attribution to Rupertus Meldenius (c. 1582-1651) who likewise developed a twofold system around



essentials and nonessentials; see Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 7: *Modern Christianity - the German Reformation* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1980).

3. The structure of this current paper is entirely modeled around the information and flow from Mohler's article; see Albert Mohler, "A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity," May 20, 2004, <https://albertmohler.com/2004/05/20/a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity-2/>

4. Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 399-402.

5. First- and second-order information is also used within the field of ethnography where (loosely speaking) first-order information is "just the facts" and second-order information is the "interpretation of the facts." While not typically addressed outside of specific academic studies in ethnography, third-order information could be seen as the "interpretation of the interpretation of the facts." One might see a correlation here as well.

6. Mohler, op. cit.

7. AL 1.40c.

8. This verse constitutes the central tenet of Thelema even though, from a philosophical perspective, it requires certain underlying axioms in order to be truthful. It is *not* Thelema's first axiom nor self-evident in isolation; cf. Antti P. Balk, *The Law of Thelema: Aleister Crowley's Philosophy of True Will* (Helsinki: Thelema Publications, 2018).

9. Mohler, op. cit.

10. Ibid.

11. One of the observations about these two extremes is they are both outliers when examined in the scope of the greater Thelemic community. As with most religious movements, the majority of individuals appear to exist in the mean of doctrinal opinions.

12. Fundamentalism and liberalism in this context should not be confused with the political spectrum of such words. A doctrinally conservative approach *also* would be—pun intended—fundamentally opposed to fundamentalism.

13. "The higher our attainment, the more closely will our points of view coalesce, just as a great English and a great French historian will have more ideas in common about Napoleon Bonaparte than a Devonshire and a Provençal peasant" (Aleister Crowley, John Symonds, and Kenneth Grant, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley: An Autohagiography* (New York: Arkana, 1989), 213). Likewise, the closer we get to the source of our doctrine, the closer we can see ideas take on a particularly common significance even if the words appear to be different.



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## INSIDE THE SCARLET TENT

by Soror Saffir

I had the honor and privilege of attending the first ever women's leadership retreat in Dallas in early March. It was a truly unique experience amongst the type of regional or national events we are used to. First and foremost, it was a retreat not a conference.

The experience itself was quite ineffable. A large part of the beauty of it was that none of us really knew what to expect when we got there and therefore I do not wish to rob future retreat attendees of a similar experience so this review will focus on feelings and observations more than details of the event.

Women filled the temple space at Bubastis Oasis, some sitting in chairs around the temple and some on the floor; we sort of naturally arranged ourselves into a rather loose circle. The entire set up was quite intimate and comfortable. I watched my sisters relax into the nurturing energy of the divinely sacred space, soaking in the succor of commonality and complete and utter acceptance.

Many of us talked about how we'd never been the type to go to a "women's event" in the past. As a matter of fact, many of us had never been in a room with solely women of this number before. I realized that we were each a minority, not as a woman within the greater Order or within our local bodies, but more in the sense of feeling like a minority amongst women in general, something all of us had felt in our lives prior to our involvement in the O.T.O.

There was laughter and tears with the expressions of our joys and sorrows. We held each other up and we asked each other and ourselves some tough questions. By the end of the weekend I genuinely felt that we had all formed bonds that will remain. This retreat afforded time and space for a depth of understanding and closeness with each other.

We talked about our lives and our magic, about our challenges and our triumphs. We talked about the past and how things have changed and how far they still have to go to bring true equality and empowerment to women leaders within our Order.

I highly recommend attending one when the opportunity presents itself again in the near future.

## BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Lee and Amber of Crux Ansata Oasis joyously announce the birth of a new Star: Apollo Ananda Lucius, born Sol in Capricorn, Luna in Capricorn, dies Veneris.



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— Liber III

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