

A Sermon on Abuse of Power and Arguable Economic Disenfranchisement
Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for November 13th, 2022 (and beyond)

This sermon is in dialogue format and intended to enlighten and inform any debate on issues raised in discussion.

DIALOGUE:

Abusive Provider: You are an adult and free to leave. Go pursue independence with my blessing or obey no matter how unreasonable or illegal my practices are in any way.

Society/Chorus: Report violations of the law and/or sue. If a crime has been committed, you may receive restitution through criminal prosecution.

Victim/Dependent: I'd like to apply for a job, but my provider was a moron and I didn't get a good education so have limited options.

Abusive Employer: Tell me all about your medical and family history. I'm going to make you strip and experience a golden shower of sorts in a room that may trigger your pre-existing trauma all before day one of your actual employment. And, if you can't handle the interview process, you can't work here.

Victim/Dependent: I need this job. I won't go back to my abusive provider and I just want to work for or interact with people who understand the concept of mutual respect and practice it like they mean it. Is that a problem for you?

Abusive Employer: You can't work here. Good luck finding a job.

Victim/Dependent: This is my first time seeking employment. I have no work history and limited education and skills. I'm willing to learn on the job.

Prospective Employer: That's great! We're looking for someone with experience and there are 13 other applicants more qualified than you. But, we'll have you come down and take a tour and even let you try doing the job without pay so we can judge your performance before we officially decline.

Victim/Dependent: Should I go to school? I have no collateral and no job. Can I even get a loan? Do I qualify for Federal Work-Study programs? Would that even cover my costs?

University Registrar: You need to talk to financial aid. But, the maximum per year with the Federal Work-Study programs is on average \$5,000 so you may want to find other work because it's \$31,040 per year undergraduate with room and board, books, and incidental expenses calculated for total.

Victim/Dependent: Can I get assistance with housing and food through a community college?

Community College Registrar: You need to talk to financial aid. Average annual cost for tuition, room and board, books, and incidental expenses is \$18,830. The maximum financial aid for community college is \$6,345 per year. You could take out a loan if you qualify.

Victim/Dependent: I'll keep looking for work.

Potential Employer #2: Do you have a car? Do you have a stable residence? If you answered no to either or both, we don't find you stable enough to hire.

Victim/Dependent: I really need a job. I can't afford loans. What am I supposed to do?

Society/Chorus: Get a job.

Victim/Dependent: I feel disenfranchised from the free market because I have no spending power and therefore have no voice in the free market.

Abusive Provider: If you come back, you have to respect who pays the bills and that's me. It's rough out there, isn't it?

Victim/Dependent: Should I write my legislators and demand universal basic income so that people with traumatic stress who have been abused or victimized their whole fucking lives have a chance at some peace of mind and sanctuary?

Society/Chorus: You should sue your abuser or report the abuse to law enforcement. If your abuser caused the trauma and you have medical documentation of that, then that would prove damages and they will likely have to cover your treatment and potentially multiply the damages if the judge or jury finds reason for punitive measures on top of provable damages. Call a lawyer.

Victim/Dependent: Can I sue my provider?

Lawyer: The court is going to weigh benefits vs. damages overall as well as whether you chose to be dependent or were falsely imprisoned. Were you with your provider by choice or is or was the provider ever your legal guardian? Either way, whatever expenses they previously covered for you or your benefit may be counted in their favor or used to offset any damages you now claim and can prove. Are you covered by their medical insurance? Do and/or did they cover the deductible and any costs of treatment associated with any harm you can prove? If so, you have no damages because they already paid for it. If a crime was committed and you are the victim of a crime, you should report that to law enforcement.

Victim/Dependent: So, I still need a job then. Is there a charity or shelter that can help?

Human Trafficking Front Ad: Need room and board? Get job skills and more with us! Call today! We can even pick you up.

Victim/Dependent (phone-called number on ad): Where are you located? What kind of work is it? I don't have many skills and no specialties.

Human Trafficking Front Representative (phone): We have many locations. Positions vary. No special skills needed. We can train you. Can you be ready for pick-up the day after tomorrow?

Victim/Dependent (phone): Don't I need to fill out an application?

Human Trafficking Front Representative (phone): You can fill out any paperwork needed when we get to the site. There are limited openings. If you aren't sure, call again in a few months.

Victim/Dependent (thought bubble): Can I please have actual necessities like room and board without having to deal with this shit?

Abusive Provider (text): Want to come back? I'm going to move on. I won't let you come back. You'll probably just come back long enough to report me to law enforcement for a fresh crime. I don't trust you.

Victim/Dependent (phone): Sure, I can be at the pick-up location the day after tomorrow. What time?

Society/Chorus: That's not a real job. Don't do it. Get a real job.

Victim/Dependent (thought bubble): That's the only serious job offer I've gotten where I felt remotely respected by the employer. They didn't ask me any inappropriate questions nor have me do anything that violates my principles or my rights. They didn't require I take out a loan when I have no way of paying it back nor claim that I can work for about 25% of what they plan to charge me per year to learn new skills. They didn't ask if I had a car or stable residence either nor use those to exclude me from consideration. They didn't shine me on. I feel like that's the best chance for me.

[DAY AFTER TOMORROW]

Human Trafficking Front Driver: You ready? Packed light? Well, don't worry, we'll get you what you need at the site.

Victim/Dependent: Where are we going? What's it like?

Human Trafficking Front Driver: Not too far, a few counties away give or take. You'll be assigned a position when we arrive. There's a test of sorts and after that you'll be placed.

Victim/Dependent: How much does it pay? Are the rooms private? Will I be sharing living quarters? What's the food like?

Human Trafficking Front Driver: Pay varies based on position. We're not allowed to discuss it. But, off-the-record, I get paid \$5000 per month and under the table so no taxes. Sound good? I think so. I tend to buy my own food. Maybe they'll assign you to the cafeteria or kitchen and you can influence the menu. (quiet laugh)

Victim/Dependent: Cook? For how many people and how often? Is it short order or like a cafeteria?

Human Trafficking Front Driver: I can let you out here, but can't take you back. You want out? I can't guarantee you'll be assigned to the kitchen. Are you a good cook?

Victim/Dependent: No, I feel good about this. I'm a pretty good cook. What kind of business is it again?

Human Trafficking Front Driver: Look, you ask a lot of questions. I think it is best to hold further discussion until we get to the site. Once we pass into the next county, I won't offer to stop again until we reach our destination.

Victim/Dependent: Can you let me out at the next gas station? I'm a bit overwhelmed and don't feel prepared for such an adventure.

Human Trafficking Front Driver: That's cool. I have another pick-up and there will be more room for them. That's a town away.

Victim (on phone): Can I live with you?

Friend #1 (phone): I'm so sorry. But, my girlfriend will not be cool with it. She can't stand you, otherwise I totally would.

Friend #2 (text): We just had our third child. My mother is visiting. My mother-in-law is actually staying in a hotel nearby hoping my mother leaves so she can come help with the kids. I honestly would, but I just can't. Have you tried any shelters?

Relative #1 (text): You made your bed, now lay in it. Sounds like you turned down two or more jobs. Beggars can't be choosers. Tough lesson, but one worth learning early.

Relative #2 (phone): I just lost my job. I'm about to be evicted myself. I can't help. In fact, I'm calling your provider to see if I can crash there. That's how bad it is, seriously.

Victim/Dependent (phone): Take me with you. Come get me and we'll both go to provider and you can be my witness if needed.

Relative #2 (phone): I'm not looking a gift-horse in the mouth on this one. If I'm welcome, I'm not ratting. Sorry.

Victim/Dependent: What does victim's services do and how can they help?

Victim's Services: If you need help finding housing, we can help you apply and get on a waiting list where you qualify for assistance. Are you disabled or a veteran? Are you on any form of public assistance like Medicaid? Do you need help finding employment? Are you receiving unemployment benefits? Have you reported crimes of which you are victim to law enforcement and do you need court support from a counselor or peer? Do you have any children or pets? Once you answer these questions, I'll be better able to assist you.

Victim/Dependent: And you think suicidal ideation is a symptom of mental illness when all of the above is reality? Tell me, if that's the actual world that a dependent of any sort for any reason enters upon leaving an abusive situation, whether or not someone somewhere has falsely advertised regarding actual opportunity and the reality of passive economic coercion forcing victims into perpetual victimhood because there is no other option seemingly?

Victim's Services: Are you suicidal? I'm going to need to report this and get you into a 72 hour psychiatric evaluation.

Victim/Dependent: I just want mutual respect. That's it. I want equality to mean something regardless of economic status. I don't want anyone stripping me of any dignity or integrity I have nor demanding I allow that just to survive in supposedly civil society. I'm not suicidal, I just understand why some would be if similarly situated.

Victim's Services: Do you feel I've disrespected you in some way? That was not my intention.

Victim/Dependent: No, I just don't understand why people can't just recognize that without spending power I'm disenfranchised from the economy which creates a situation in which unscrupulous "employers" or "providers" can passively or aggressively coerce compliance with their illegal and unethical practices without society overall stopping that and making sure no one is ever so desperate that they depend on criminals and end up making social problems worse rather than providing a true needs-based welfare system that does not involve any human trafficking or exploitation of that kind.

Victim's Services: Well, welfare or a universal basic income would actually make public slaves out of the taxed in some way to cover the expenses of people receiving that without contributing to the economy beyond spending tax money. But, the good news is people can give to charity which is tax-deductible and there are charities that provide

basic needs. Unfortunately, there is a waiting list for housing. The national average for waiting for housing is 2 and ½ years. But, there's plenty of resources to get food and often emergency shelter.

Victim/Dependent: So I just have to put up with abusers and have no other options, is that it? Why do you pretend that's not reality?

Victim's Services: There are many options and no one is forcing you to stay with nor be employed by someone who abuses their power or violates the law.

Victim/Dependent: Is suicide one of those options? Sounds like the best one to avoid more suffering.

Society/Chorus: Suicide is a crime. Get a job or be humble enough to accept the charitable assistance available to you now.

Victim: #WhatCheneySaid

END DIALOGUE

Meditative Questions:

Question #1: What is victim/dependent's main problem?

- a. Ignorance
- b. Impatience
- c. Vanity/False Pride
- d. Economic Disenfranchisement

Scenario: Whether you are a victim or not, you are a dependent for the following questions. You were recently evicted, kicked out, or otherwise needed to leave pre-existing shelter. You have no state issued identification and no job, no savings, and no credit. None of your friends, family, nor loved ones can take you in due to no fault of your own nor theirs at this time.

Question #2: What do you do first if the dialogue portion of the sermon is accurate in terms of your economic position?

- a. Get state issued identification because without it finding lawful employment is not happening. (You'll need 4 recognized documents establishing your identity which can include a state issued ID from another state, passport, certified birth certificate, and social security card. The cost is \$54 for initial and \$20 to replace.)

b. Get an address so getting a state issued identification is easier and they have somewhere to send it. (But, housing wait for public/charitable housing assistance is on average 2 and ½ years. Sources: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/families-wait-years-for-housing-vouchers-due-to-inadequate-funding> and <https://eligibility.com/section-8/washington-wa-section-8-benefits#:~:text=Washington%27s%20Section%208%20waiting%20lists,that%20approves%20you%20the%20fastest.>)

c. Accept unlawful employment so you can afford the identification card and hopefully a place to live.

d. Other (something different not listed)

Question #3: Why did you choose the answer you did and what risks did you assume by choosing it, if any?

Question #4: When you feel insecure, do you share your pain? If so, in what way?

Question #5: Would you actually wait for 2 and ½ years for housing assistance or do you believe you'd take care of yourself before the wait ended under the circumstances?

Question #6: Would you see prison as an upgrade from the scenario provided for these meditative questions?

Question #7: Do you believe convicted prisoners have it better than dependents and/or innocent homeless people given the scenario?

Question #8: How would you solve the problems showcased above? (Choose as many answers as apply for you.)

a. Give more to charities that provide emergency shelter/housing.

b. Demand more tax funding of housing assistance/expand public housing.

c. Support human trafficking and modern slavery as a better alternative to euthanasia, death camps, and homelessness.

d. Support euthanasia, genocide of the poor, or even suggest suicide to those who weren't born affluent and have no chance besides the lottery of even surviving without becoming a criminal or subject of the same. And, only the lottery if they can afford to play.

e. Demand employers not be permitted to discriminate based on economic position of applicants if otherwise qualified. Disallow discrimination against those without cars or housing unless the job requires it like a delivery or uber driver.

Question #9: Would you share your honest answers with anyone else and/or act on them whether or not doing so already?

Question #10: Would you throw any kind of public tantrum if you were in victim/dependent's situation and/or the scenario posited for these meditative questions? If so, would you be institutionalized for it and thereby have your basic needs met?

END QUESTIONS/END SERMON

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>