

## A Sermon on the Willingness to Govern

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for August 30th, 2020 (and beyond)

In the United States of America (USA) all the citizens govern. This goes way beyond voting and when we shirk the responsibility of governance, shit happens. The Code of Hammurabi is one of the earliest known systems of recorded laws and The Holy Bible is arguably an evolution of that or those laws. The US Constitution is in my opinion the fulfillment of the promise of The Holy Bible with some influence from Plato's Republic. To "govern" means the following according to Oxford Languages via Google: "conduct the policy, actions, and affairs of (a state, organization, or people)", "control, influence, or regulate (a person, action, or course of events).", "conduct oneself, especially with regard to controlling one's emotions.", and "serve to decide (a legal case)." So, to the extent you'd like your conduct, affairs, or actions to be governed by majority vote or someone other than yourself, that's your political perspective and you may be a Democrat. And, to the extent you'd like your conduct, affairs, or actions to be governed on the basis of mutual respect, individual liberties with respect for minority perspectives, and organized locally you may be a Republican or Libertarian.

If you are or at some point were or will be homeless, what is your first thought upon recognizing your circumstance? Are you thinking "I know exactly what I want and that includes instant gratification in all respects and regards"? Are you thinking "should I beg or seek help from a charity"? Are you thinking "I wish I had friends or family or I don't want to bother friends and family"? If the latter on the final question, that's very sweet of you but suggests false pride and also a desire to exploit the kindness of strangers where actual orphans are in desperate need who don't have friends and family at all. If homeless, would you tell other homeless people to go seek government assistance if you found a charitable service you preferred and others were challenging your position or trying to rush you to independence? The public is the government. Those in position to be taxed can donate to charity or pay taxes, sometimes a combination. People bitch about Donald Trump not paying much if any federal taxes because he is smart and charitable. But, do you have any idea how much Donald Trump pays in property taxes? \$477,800 annually according to Crain's New York: [https://www.craigslist.com/article/20161006/REAL\\_ESTATE/161009921/donald-trump-actually-does-pay-taxes](https://www.craigslist.com/article/20161006/REAL_ESTATE/161009921/donald-trump-actually-does-pay-taxes)

So, if homeless you are likely not paying property taxes and possibly no income tax either. And, if everyone was equally situated, there would be nothing to redistribute. But no one and no entity (including the government) can be all things to all people. So, individually everyone is responsible for ourselves, or at least those of us not adjudicated to be incompetent at law or otherwise due to age of minority find others responsible for us as a matter of law. And, there is a spectrum of helping hands for all in need, but, some hands seem to help themselves more than others in the name of charity.

Moving away from the topic of homelessness and navigating that situation, I return now to discussing how we annoy each other when we try to govern each other even though it is our right to voice ourselves but some approaches may need more self-governance.

This goes to the second definition of govern as far as approach and third and fourth definitions of managing emotions while showing mutual respect and being reasonable (discernment) in terms of self-governance. So, take the vegan movement for example. Vegans make up 0.5% of the US population. What vegans lack in numbers, is often made up for with aggression, emotional appeals, and a desire to control/dictate the affairs of others in a domineering fashion with no regard for those that may be adversely impacted or effected. It's almost as if the fact that vegans are a minority results in militant conversion tactics. I understand. I'm an enthusiast of lesser known or lesser appreciated artists including Saffire: The Uppity Blues Women (particularly Gaye Adegbalola). I tweet out their songs on occasion so if you follow @heal247 on Twitter, maybe you've caught them in my act so to speak. But, that's to the extent I spread the word for the most part other than buying the occasional CD or tickets for friends if I know they also like the blues or believe they would like The Uppity Blues Women even if not that familiar with the genre. Adegbalola is one of my favorite artists. She definitely makes my top 50 musicians. Are you wondering now how much more I'm going to say about The Uppity Blues Women and hoping I get back to the point so you can get on with the rest of your day? Did you start to lose interest? Okay, meditate on that if you are an enthusiastic activist or proselytizer of any sort. It will help you consider the perspective of those who have other interests and priorities when you approach with your message or cause.

I prefer being governed by the US Constitution as it stands to being governed solely by activists regardless of storefront or cultural influences. That's my truth. All activists everywhere, including me, are equal to all other individuals whether we organize with others or not. Having a "gang" or "clique" to back your play on an issue may result in your power-tripping your way out of a persuasive argument that many would otherwise be willing to consider or listen to in most cases.

This sermon represents my perspective and is intended to help everyone avoid hypocrisy, be more charitable, and more thoughtful when giving gifts and serving the greater good.

Seriously though, The Uppity Blues Women are awesome and Gaye Adegbalola is super awesome. Please check them out. I'll make sure they get some choir time. If you enjoy my work, I believe you'll love them too. I need you to love them. I do. I don't know if I'm comfortable loving them so much if everyone else doesn't join me in feeling the same way. You have to love them. Are you thinking "No I don't and now I am put off and don't even want to check them out but was thinking about it before this paragraph"? That's the point. #WithLoveFromSeattle

Now, the US Constitution is awesome as it stands right now. I don't feel I need it amended in any way right now. The economic system actually makes sense though leaves much to be desired. And, that's better than nothing. Okay, if socialist or communist, are we voting on whether Alton Brown can try a new recipe or open a restaurant where everyone votes and he has to abide by the majority decision? And, if Platonically Republican, isn't voting on those who may sit on a zoning board or public health board where meetings are open to the public as well as public comment, close

enough? As much as the majority kind of hate going to any government function whether a city hall meeting, congressional hearing, or trial of any sort, do you really want to mandate that? It is my understanding the Green Party does, but, on a volunteer only basis (for now) and I'd honestly prefer the Libertarian party even though that involves a lot more conscious awareness of individual responsibility, self-determination, and assumption of risk. So, I want Alton Brown to be free to try a new recipe or open a restaurant without approval by popular vote while trusting that if his restaurant sucks it won't be open long because he won't get repeat customers or may be protested if serving something controversial in any way. #HopefullyHelpful

I end this sermon with a final thought.... The final two of the definitions provided above and components of governance include exercising honest and objective reason for the sake of justice (i.e. legal decisions/cases) and not subjugating others through emotional appeals to one's own will but rather persuading with honest reason in discourse when making suggestions or attempting to influence others. While I understand many wish to adopt solely the second definition provided in first paragraph or opening statement as the criteria without applying standards they set for others to themselves or their own conduct (which is found in the first definition), that's not the American way. Welcome to America.

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 <http://www.heal-online.org>