

CONVERSION PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT: Liahona Academy in UT
By Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE (<https://www.cope.church>) Dated: 6/1/22

The HEAL Mission of COPE has received 35 separate complaints from individuals and families alleging misleading marketing/false advertising, one parent reported via e-mail to the HEAL Mission “I brought my son there when he turned 16 years old. Parker told my wife and I that Liahona had a success rate of 90% for drug addiction. Based on that, we took our son there. Now, he is 18 years old. He has been out for a little over a month and he is worse now than ever. Also, we have been contacted by a fellow graduate student who claims that he keeps in touch with four other Liahona graduates. Every one of them, are back to using drugs as before Liahona or worse. The boy that called named [Redacted], is now in jail. So, I feel very misled that six out of six are still drug addicts. The 90% success rate that Parker spoke of is a lie.”, false imprisonment/kidnapping, one survivor reported via e-mail “I was given the option to leave once I turned 18, but I stayed because they promised me I would graduated the same month. My birthday was March [Redacted] and I wasn’t able to leave until September of that year. So six months went by and I wasn’t able to apply to colleges, I wasn’t able to apply for scholarships, and I lost my ability to go on. I went through hell.”, wrongful death (victim: Taylor Mangum), labor trafficking (youth forced to work as staff without compensation including restraining other students), coercive thought reform, physical abuse, isolation, emotional/psychological abuse, one former staff whistleblower reported via e-mail to the HEAL Mission “I know who still works there and can give you an updated list. Peter Stuercke is no longer there. The new director is Parker Haslam. He is a bully and hurts kids. I reported it and I was released. He has sent kids to the hospital and several had rug burns and stitches. He loves to take kids down and yell at them. He also keeps their mail if its food or something he likes. I have seen it. I can give you many names of students that he has hurt over the years. He is sneaky and untrustworthy. He lies and threatens staff. He likes to control everything. He has taken kids outside in the 100 degree heat and worked them so hard they have passed out. No water. Clay Ah Quin Sr. is the same way. He bullies kids and works them. He has taken them to his house to do yardwork for his benefit. He is the activities director, Clay Jr.s father...This is a money making business for these people and I don't think they are really taking care of the kids. They wear nasty old shirts and charge the parents \$2,000.00 for new uniforms when in fact they use hand me downs that have tears, holes and worn out clothes. They all buy fancy new cars in the \$80,000.00 range, big homes, etc. The money should be to help these kids. They are the ones that need treatment. The other owners, Todd and Jason Vowell are also mixed up in a money scheme with Jeremy Johnson who is in jail right now for cheating people out of money. Liahona is mentioned in that lawsuit. Dirty people.”, another survivor sent the following with permission to share it anonymously via e-mail to the HEAL Mission “It is really amusing to see Mr.Stuerke's mug shot! Typical of the caliber of staff, and Peter was one of the more congenial staff. Mostly neurotics, probably getting paid as close to minimum wage as possible, with a penchant for sadistic behavior---the daily staff conducted themselves in a highly unprofessional manner, passing the time by teasing and emotionally tormenting students when not inflicting more visible forms of violence. I remember one boy whose face was made into a bloody mass of rug-burn wounds in a 'take down' for some minor infraction. I can still hear his moaning and crying; they made

all of us go to our rooms and shut the doors, but that didn't keep out the screams. Often, I have nightmares about Liahona. Even after all these years. I remember that trail of bloody footprints on the track. One kid had a sore in his foot, but the staff always made us walk barefoot and, more importantly, were indifferent to the suffering of others. The logic is: if you are in the program, you have been stripped of your humanity and been designated as merely a flesh of labels to be disposed of as they see fit. The gulag analogy is apt; the same quality of dehumanization that made the holocaust possible makes boys' homes possible today. There is no real oversight, the victims have no means of defending themselves and no one to represent them in the outside world, and there also is the stench of legal and political corruption that hangs about this industry of misery wherever it goes. "Thinking Error," that's what they called our objections to maltreatment, abuse of authority, and injustice. Their motto should be: "might makes right and money pays." And, boys, did the money ever pay! How anyone could have a clear conscience after running such a program is inconceivable. The rife hypocrisy was palpable. There are all variety of incidents of abuse I could recall, but who wants to think about that? There are even much more incriminating, serious legal transgressions I have in mind, but looks like the statute of limitations has elapsed. Yes, sometimes evil does triumph.”, and held incommunicado (communication blackouts, censored and monitored communications with outside world) at Liahona Academy. Some of these complaints are referenced online and others remain confidential and on file with the church. With the intention of providing an opportunity for closure, clarification, and potentially peace, on 5/24/22 Rev. Angela Smith invited Liahona Academy victims (families and survivors) as well as staff whistleblowers to provide a guest sermon. That invitation read thus:

"Dear Liahona Academy Survivors and Families,

Liahona Academy is on the HEAL Mission watch-list (of fraudulent and abusive programs) and enrolled in the COPE Conversion Program based on your reports to the HEAL Mission alleging fraud, abuse, and/or other violations. You can learn more or refresh your memory at <https://www.heal-online.org/thelist.htm> and/or <https://www.heal-online.org/liahona.htm> .

The HEAL Mission and COPE Conversion Program (for Conversion Programs) has updated our protocols to provide entities populating the watch-list and/or enrolled in the COPE Conversion Program three ways off the watch-list or out of the program. Death and/or closure remains one way after which they will be buried at <http://www.beyondbusiness.net/youarenext.htm> with the others who didn't make it off the list or reform in time. Programs enrolled in the COPE Conversion Program/placed on the watch-list are also eligible for graduation if they meet the minimum Honesty In Marketing Standards described and/or provided via hypertext link at <https://www.cope.church/standards.htm> . The third option is merciful release. Merciful releases are determined by date of last directly reported to the HEAL Mission complaint (date of incident(s) of abuse), whether those incidents occurred prior to when by custom or law the requirement to retain such records has expired, and whether Sponsors (you) are actively participating or maintaining interest in holding your program accountable.

The most recent complaint the mission received on Liahona Academy occurred in 2020 (if you were abused later than that then you did not include the dates of your enrollment when you contacted the HEAL Mission). The custom is to retain such records for 7 years in Utah. So, the requirements for merciful release have not been met. This is an invitation for you to provide a guest sermon by Wednesday, June 1st, 2022 at 8pm Pacific unless you prefer a progress report be posted at that time in lieu of any guest sermon. For guest sermons and progress reports see <https://www.heal-online.org> . Here's how to participate:

1. In the body of an e-mail message write out your complete sermon and include answers to the following questions:

Did you report fraud or other unlawful actions to the proper authorities? If not, why? If so, what happened with the reports? (So, 2 part question)

Why do you believe Liahona Academy should remain enrolled in the COPE Conversion Program?

2. Send that guest sermon to me at rev@cope.church with your first and last name (full) and notify me if you wish for your contact information to be included or for all feedback to be handled by the mission and/or church. Your full first and last name will be shared along with your sermon as written and provided by you. It will be posted as a Guest Sermon at <https://www.heal-online.org> , <https://www.heal-online.org/liahona.htm> , and <https://www.cope.church/sermons.htm> .

If no one provides a guest sermon and there are no new complaints received by the HEAL Mission of COPE by December 31st, 2027, Liahona Academy will be mercifully released.

Thank you in advance for participating. And, please learn more about how to value your contributions at <https://www.cope.church/givetoday.pdf>.

In Solidarity,

Rev. Angela Smith
HEAL Mission National Coordinator/Founding Mother of COPE"

Now, there was a vote on whether Liahona Academy should remain on the watch-list initiated on April 11th, 2020 where all Sponsors of that program's placement in the COPE Conversion Program were invited to participate. The majority of participants voted against merciful release or the equivalent at that time. HEAL Mission and the COPE Conversion Program recognize participation in the vote in April as recent enough participation even if Sponsors prefer more time to consider, write, and/or provide any guest sermon. While we understand this may be disappointing for Liahona Academy, it is the hope that this progress report helps explain the reasons for the continued enrollment/placement in the COPE Conversion Program. Additional or continued

participation by Sponsors, including providing guest sermons or participating in future votes will impact whether or not the program qualifies for merciful release or remains enrolled. Lack of participation by Sponsors where all other criteria for merciful release are met, will result in merciful release of the program.

Similar invitations will be going out to all survivor/victim/whistleblower e-mail lists and their respective programs placed on the watch-list. It may take some time to get through the entire list especially if enrollments pick up. But, we are working on it and everyone can submit Feedback at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> at any time regardless of position regarding program placement or enrollment.

To close, I remind everyone that there are remedies at law. Labor trafficking, rape, fraud (misleading marketing/false advertising), false imprisonment, kidnapping, battery, assault, and any crime or tort you could name are actionable at law. The HEAL Mission of COPE is prepared to assist all victims by providing reporting resources and information for the sake of justice and we appreciate all Sponsors who selflessly contribute content for the sake of informing the public to help those exercising due diligence avoid becoming a victim. Reporting Guide Available at: <https://www.heal-online.org/report.htm> and <https://www.heal-online.org/liahona.htm> .