

A Sermon on the #TaoFu of "Liking" COPE in Good Faith

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for December 6th, 2020 (and beyond)

Today's sermon is more self-examination of COPE in terms of the commitment to being ecumenically Christian. I've sampled most Christian churches and sects operating throughout the United States. And, while I haven't adopted any of the other church's entire style or way, I've actually incorporated something from every good faith community with which I've had any experience. I understand my approach is different and that some see I and/or my co-founders (Priests John Ball and John Wycliffe) as heretics. I disagree with that and also believe every church will find that someone somewhere has denounced them as blasphemous or engaging in heresy.

So, the #TaoFu of "Liking" COPE in Good Faith may best be explained with short examples of where COPE is aligned with other good faith communities as well as where COPE differs or they differ from COPE. Below are the examples: (COPE Pro= Alike COPE Con=Different)

Catholicism:

COPE Pro: 7 Holy Virtues vs. 7 Deadly Sins, totally awesome and part of the foundation of what I call #TaoFu.

COPE Con: The Catholic oligarchy elevating any human being as above others in the eyes of God is what COPE protests most of all. It operates as an oligarchy and reinforces inequality which I find unacceptable. But, I believe the Catholic church would forgive my protests where I believe change is warranted such as recognizing the equality of all humanity in the eyes of God. But, in such a case I believe the Catholic church requires forgiveness for its role in perpetuating inequality.

Jehovah's Witness:

COPE Pro: Jehovah's Witness dedication to living an honest and virtuous life rather than idolatry of any sort to the point they don't even celebrate any holidays such as Christmas or even individual birthdays to avoid any possible temptation to vanity shows serious commitment and I recognize their sincerity. The choice to reject the crucifix as symbolic of faith is something I also recognize and practice to symbolically reject idolatry and recognize it is the life of good faith that is the inspiration not the death of the messenger. I feel the Jehovah's Witnesses are more religious than superstitious.

COPE Con: COPE celebrates holidays and birthdays while understanding celebrations such as feasts and festivals arguably encourage vanity, gluttony, and other deadly sins. But, the flip side of that is recognizing the abundance God provides and saying "totally awesome spread God, thank you and I feel extra loved and comforted right now which inspires me to share that feeling through Christian charity".

Pentecostal:

COPE Pro: Everyone is equal and no matter who the church director is, everyone can shout out during service and give their testimony or voice their inspiration. COPE adopts this with the guest sermons where all congregants and guests can participate and are welcome to share in an orderly fashion. And, also with the Feedback page.

COPE Con: The way some Pentecostal churches do it, it is chaotic, disorderly, and very uncomfortable when not used to that environment. And, I feel the Pentecostals are at times more superstitious than religious.

Baptist:

COPE Pro: Book of John is one of the more awesome books. And, there are many ways to interpret the meaning of Baptism. I see Baptism as symbolic of the baptized to commit to Truth (including honest reason) and Virtue as a way of life with understanding as long as they practice religion in that manner they will remain children of God.

COPE Con: This gets really superstitious in some sects and kind of disgusting depending on perspective. See, the waters of life are amniotic fluid in the mother's womb. In Judaism, you are only Jewish if your mother is Jewish. When her water breaks and the child is delivered into the world, the child is baptized through her waters of life (aka amniotic fluid). So, with the Catholic church, the church rejects the mother as an unclean baptism in faith and says the church is the true mother with holy water to baptize into "true faith". Where the mother is a narcissist, I do see how that could help, but, not all women are narcissists and how far did they need to take that message? But, the Baptists symbolically reject the natural mothers of all congregants through the symbolic baptism by the church.

Mormon:

COPE Pro: Taking history and faith, sharing your interpretation or understanding of it, and repackaging it with additional plot twists is fascinating and inspiring. They understand the US needs its own church and that's their version.

COPE Con: The Mormons do not align their practices with the spirit of the US Constitution (which is Wycliffite in regards to recognizing the equality of humanity in the eyes of the law with Wycliffites recognizing that as aligned with equality in the eyes of God). So, celebrates the religious freedom in some ways without fully respecting the basis on which individual liberties are equally recognized for all. So, a little hypocritical in being like "Secular storefront to help troubled teens that is really a conversion program that treats non-Mormons like slaves and Mormons like overseers who are enrolled" and claiming religious freedom is the basis that allows for that. Not all Mormons are like that, most are very good people. And, there are false prophets in every sect who pervert religion and the Constitution to exploit others, not just rogue Mormons.

I may do more sermons like this, but, feel the above should give you some food for thought and a better understanding of my perspective. If you represent a faith community I didn't cover in this sermon, please reach out to me and let me know where you agree or disagree with the way I practice and promote Truth and Virtue. If you aren't sure where your faith inspired me in some way, ask me. I bet I know and can answer swiftly. I've spent my life on a quest for a closer walk with God and sampled all the good faith communities and unfortunately some very bad ones run by false prophets as well. So, for those disgusting criminals who use the idea of God to oppress and exploit others, I'm an enemy who prays they truly repent and if so their good works will be the evidence of their good faith, not their soothsaying bullshit to avoid responsibility for wrongdoing. For everyone else, here to reinforce, educate, and share inspiration for the greater good in service of God which includes shutting down false prophets who injure God's children (and vicariously God) with their viciousness and deceit.

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>