

A Sermon on Merciful Releases

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for May 15th, 2022 (and beyond)

The COPE Conversion Program (for Conversion Programs and more) also known as the HEAL Mission watch-list provides merciful releases to those involuntarily enrolled if certain criteria are met. This policy is controversial and not all sponsors support it. The criteria that must be met for a merciful release are if the last complaint occurred past the state requirement to retain the records in the state where the program operates based on official regulations and/or industry standards of keeping medical records because school administrative records have an even shorter expiration date or none at all if a nonpublic/private school, and, if no guest sermon has been provided by a complainant prior to time being up on the last complaint occurring. By last complaint occurring, it is based on when the incident(s) occurred and not when they were reported to the HEAL Mission of COPE.

“Merciful” is defined by Oxford Languages via Google as “showing or exercising mercy” and/or “(of an event) coming as a mercy; bringing someone relief from something unpleasant.” “Mercy” is defined by Oxford Languages via Google as “compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm” and/or “an event to be grateful for, especially because its occurrence prevents something unpleasant or provides relief from suffering.” The survivor with whom I’m familiar that spent the longest time enrolled in fraudulent and abusive programs/cults was in them from age 10 to 18 years old. So, 8 years at varying programs was the length of their enrollments in any conversion program setting. The programs they were enrolled in were located in Delaware and Idaho. The programs they were enrolled in are now permanently closed. Delaware's standard for record retention is 7 years and Idaho's standard is 5 years. The majority of victims/complainants spent far less time in the programs that are the basis of their complaints to the HEAL Mission. And, where legal guardians are the complainants, even less or none at all. So, it doesn’t sit right with me for the HEAL Mission of COPE to be arguably less merciful towards those involuntarily enrolled in the virtual COPE Conversion Program than those on the watch-list are towards their own captives. In addition, as a church of good faith that sincerely believes mercy is one of the many names of God and that God is merciful, I honestly have to exercise mercy even where others don’t understand why.

One of the reasons I exercise mercy is that I believe in justice and am well aware that the wheels of justice move slowly and deliberately with the intention of not unjustly depriving anyone of life, liberty, or property without a court order that includes a conviction beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury of one’s peers. I sincerely believe in due process and love the Bill of Rights possibly more than anyone you’ll ever meet. I don’t agree with institutionalizing anyone involuntarily without due process and a court order. And, I’d never accept the involuntary enrollment of a living person to be placed in my physical custody without a court order. The HEAL Mission/COPE Conversion Program is virtual and an effort in consumer advocacy as well as an artful display or representation that children (and adults too) do learn what they live and live what they learn.

So, I feel the watch-list gives all on it a taste of their own medicine and hope they learn empathy and reconsider accepting involuntary enrollments without a court order. But, the truth is the programs/entities on the watch-list are reasonably believed to be fraudulent, abusive, and often enough human trafficking fronts. One is a drug smuggling front operating just south of the US/Mexico border that I've assisted families in rescuing loved ones from where they enrolled without first exercising due diligence as a result of the false advertising of that particular storefront. I've coordinated with those families and the State Department to help get their loved ones home safely on more than one occasion. But, because it is outside the jurisdiction of US laws, it can't be shut down even if our law enforcement knows all about it and wishes they had the jurisdiction but do not. It was recently reported to me that that program isn't just trafficking drugs, but also sex trafficking women and children. So, I'd love to see it shut down and feel as frustrated as our law enforcement bodies do in regards to that situation.

Many of the programs that have found themselves enrolled in/on the HEAL Mission watch-list have been shut down after being sued and/or prosecuted because the victims/complainants in those cases actually did the right thing in reporting it properly in a timely fashion to the proper authorities or filed suit within the statutes of limitation. The ones that "died"/were closed before ever being eligible for merciful release are buried in the virtual cemetery at www.beyondbusiness.net/youarenext.htm. Some closed due to lack of enrollments and blame/credit the HEAL Mission watch-list consumer advocacy efforts with their demise. But it is clear that many remain open including the first one to make it to the watch-list, which is Provo Canyon School. That has had the most "bad press" for many decades, including victims like Paris Hilton and myself.

I understand from my own experience having two very questionable volunteers in the past who volunteered for the HEAL Mission that you can hire or accept volunteers/workers that seem good at first and fine on the paperwork you've received regarding their character, but turn out to be malicious criminals you need to and do dismiss as well as cooperate with law enforcement should they or their actions be investigated. I also understand you can grieve the loss of good volunteers where foul play may have been involved in their deaths. For more on that, see <https://www.cope.church/blueskysermon.pdf>. So, I don't want the HEAL Mission/COPE to be demonized for believing two volunteers were acting in good faith prior to discovery of their malice nor for the deaths of two other volunteers that are known to have been acting in good faith. As a result, the merciful release policy is in place even if I run the risk of releasing an entity who belongs on it even if there hasn't been a new complaint for 5 years or longer depending on individual state standards and it remains open. If HEAL Mission/COPE were on someone else's consumer advocacy watch-list, I'd want more options than just closing and wouldn't really respect anyone not willing to file a proper complaint. The link to file a consumer complaint against COPE Ministries (including HEAL Mission) is on the church homepage at <https://www.cope.church> on the main menu. I'm not a criminal, but any crime committed has to be reported in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred before the statutes of limitation expire on the crimes alleged. And, I've never been arrested for nor convicted of any crime. Whether you are a criminal or have ever committed a crime or not, you likely have jaywalked which is a

misdemeanor. In WA State, jaywalking offenses can come with a penalty of 90 days in jail and a \$1000 fine. So, if you get away with crossing the street without using a crosswalk ever, then you may be relieved we don't actually live in a "police state". If you feel more comfortable in a "police state" environment, I highly recommend you enroll in a residential conversion/discipleship program and one with a civil rights waiver like Teen Challenge. And, if that really is your position, how could you possibly complain because clearly that's the environment you want to live in if that's what you are asking congress to do? You can't expect others to read your mind and actions speak louder than words.

Some believe criminals are asking for punishment/penalty by the nature of their actions or conduct. If said criminals are competent at law, they know or have reason to know that the actions they've taken have penalties attached should they be brought to justice within the statutes of limitation for their offense(s) and sufficient material evidence for conviction beyond a reasonable doubt. That's due process. But, showing up with a mob or crew to spirit them away to an undisclosed location to torture, kill, or enslave them without due process is lynching or very similar which is also a crime. Only criminals respond in kind to crime, the rest of us are competent at law and act like it with respect for equality and the Bill of Rights, which many criminals didn't study when given the opportunity or were denied as a result of being enrolled in an unaccredited and fraudulent program that claimed to provide academic services while teaching their captives their ways that include not trusting the government and never saying an honest word to any government officials, especially law enforcement. Snitches get stitches or wind up in ditches. And, people who say shit like that are ones I drop a dime on. I believe due process is merciful enough and that failure to pursue justice through the justice system is the legal equivalent of forgiveness. It is forgiveness at law, especially when the statutes of limitation have expired on the offenses alleged to have occurred.

I can't live in a world where anything I'm party to is less merciful than the US Justice System and those populating the watch-list. Therefore, merciful releases remain policy here at COPE (including the HEAL Mission) whether you like it or not. And, you forgave all criminals you didn't report properly before the statutes of limitation expired or all material evidence disappeared as a matter of law whether you believe it or not. Have mercy.

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>