

CONVERSION PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT: Meridell Achievement Center in TX

By Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE (<https://www.cope.church>) Dated: 2/16/22

The HEAL Mission of COPE has received 32 separate complaints from individuals and families alleging forced unlawful involuntary sterilization of a minor, abuse, physical abuse, improper/excessive restraint resulting in injury, beatings, one extended family member of a victim/survivor reported to the HEAL Mission via e-mail “I think this place is worse than being in Hell. They should not be allowed to get by with doing children the way they do”, fraud, deceptive marketing/misleading advertising, mistreatment, one survivor reported via e-mail to HEAL Mission “I was admitted to Meridell almost five years ago now. I appreciate the fact that the loved ones in my life were willing to help get the help I needed, by my stay there only prolonged my treatment experience because of how horribly they treated their patients. I would not recommend anyone to send their children there,” coercive thought reform, another survivor reported via e-mail to the HEAL Mission “I would like to elaborate on how when abusive action might be taken by a single staff member only, co-workers - agreeing with the action or not - would make an effort to aid that staff member in his justification of events and things would quickly progress from a single mental health techs abusive behaviour to the collective guilt of entire branches of the facility. I would like to elaborate on consistent taunting and attempting to provoke reactions from patients with the intention of then applying a corrective response. I would also like to note that the abuse I witnessed was usually not life threatening however extensive psychological abuse happened daily. I still dream of the place and people regularly,” religious discrimination/abuse, another survivor reported via e-mail to the HEAL Mission “While there they also denied me what I considered to be my religious material, and criticized my belief system since its "unusual". Not sure I can prove it but I can pretty much guarantee my beliefs are what kept me in there so long. They wouldn't allow me any of my religious clothing or reading materials,” isolation/solitary confinement (i.e. 13-year old for over 2 months), residents held incommunicado (communication blackouts/restrictions/censored/monitored), and sexual abuse at Meridell Achievement Center (Meridell). 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 2/8/22 Rev. Angela Smith invited Meridell victims (families and survivors) as well as staff whistleblowers to provide a guest sermon. That invitation read thus:

"Dear Meridell Achievement Center (Meridell) Survivors and Families,

Meridell 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/meri.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 Meridell Achievement Center (Meridell) occurred in 2018 (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 10 years in Texas. So, the requirements for merciful release have not been met. This is an invitation for you to provide a guest sermon no later than Wednesday, February 16th, 2022 at 8pm Pacific if you believe Meridell should remain on the watch-list beyond December 31st, 2028 (a progress report will be posted in lieu of a guest sermon beginning February 16th, 2022 through December 31st, 2028 if a guest sermon is not provided by the deadline). For sermons (including guest sermons), see <https://www.cope.church/sermons.htm> (including sermon archives for 2020 and 2021) and for 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 Meridell 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/meri.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, 2028, Meridell 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 Meridell should remain on the watch-list initiated on April 7th, 2020 where all Sponsors of that program's placement in the COPE Conversion Program were invited to participate. The majority 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 Meridell, 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/meri.htm> .