

A Sermon on Being Ignorantly Misled

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for June 18th, 2023 (and beyond)

This week's sermon is on being ignorantly misled. This can be done by salespeople and conversion activists of all sorts wittingly or not to those living in ignorance. The very ignorance of the ignorant often results in deimatic displays attempting to appear more knowledgeable or less ignorant resulting in loss of vicarious or well-studied enlightenment because the learned are initially fooled by some elaborate deimatic displays and are also not psychic so do not recognize the teachable moment. But, salespeople and conversion activists tend to capitalize on the arguable vanity of the ignorant who would rather buy bullshit than exercise due diligence by asking the right questions or doing their own research. This has resulted in me contemplating whether the ignorant are punished for their vanity (AKA false pride) by becoming victims of fraud and/or propaganda. If it is a natural consequence of willful ignorance, should anyone intervene?

I say to you that modern technology is new to the planet hence the use of the word "modern" to describe it. Before the internet, everyone had to go to libraries and sometimes request books from other libraries and then wait for that for sometimes months just to learn something new for free or with a subscription. Now, there are online libraries like www.archive.org as well as online encyclopedias, dictionaries, and much more. Amazon.com or any other bookseller online can get you almost any book you want within less than a week in most cases if looking to buy rather than borrow. The internet was officially invented in 1983 and became publicly available in 1993. So, 30 years of "I need one and now I can access all the information I want that people are willing to share publicly or otherwise make available online."

But, for the ignorant who have never taken computer science 101 nor done any consumer research, they are mystified by the new technology. To them the internet appears to be omniscient and everything's so interesting and a bit intimidating. There are security breaches all the time it seems. And, so it is irresistible, exciting, popular, and scary simultaneously. The ignorant may seek soothsaying and find salespeople who offer the technological equivalent of snake oil claiming it will better safeguard their systems where the operating systems already do that while providing quicker necessary updates. But, beyond that, there is the confusion about End-To-End Encryption when it comes to e-mail. End-To-End Encryption only works when sender and all recipients are on the same server/use the same e-mail service (i.e. yahoo to yahoo, hotmail to hotmail, gmail to gmail, etc). No amount of choosing encryption or adding encryption software is going to keep your e-mail encrypted if it is being sent to someone who uses a different e-mail service/server. But, now you are uncomfortable and may want to believe in that software anyway. What I'm telling you is the truth and I know you may be dismissive because you are more comfortable believing the extra security you invested in works so says the salesperson who sold it.

Is it vanity or fear driving buying the bullshit? Well, if you choose to learn and do your own research you become knowledgeable therefore better able to discern what's bullshit

and what's true, then you exhibit the virtues of diligence and humbleness likely feeling protected by enlightenment while fearing not as a result. Maybe the issue is more with sloth then. But, I think it is really more primal and less vicious in nature than attributing deadly sins may suggest. There may be some deep-rooted psychological issues too such as someone being told they are stupid and/or punished for trying to learn anything outside of the doctrines of a particular sales pitch or conversion manual. Those people need the most guidance but shy away from those that could help because they always feel stupid which results in their instinctually responding to their intellectual weakness, recognized or afraid to be recognized by others, with a deimatic display to cover their shortcomings. In addition, they've been taken advantage of before so have serious trust issues often relying on rumor or propaganda for information. Everyone seems so busy and no one has time to help, but some hear their cries and take on consumer advocacy as their mission while also recommending reliably sourced information to everyone.

I think people who were principally raised to primarily fear and obey while experiencing periodical soothsaying or love-bombing, are the most vulnerable though do not believe it is a result of vanity nor sloth. And, their courage is shown by exploring their curiosity with willingness to use the internet at all while their fear still makes them vulnerable to soothsaying salespeople of all kinds. I'm honestly not sure how to address it and hope they'll become better consumers by learning through trial and error where research isn't their forte. I think they are already afraid which is why they find additional warnings from consumer watchdogs or nightly news provocative rather than enlightening. So, when the soothsaying salesperson says "Download, plug and play, or install this to protect your privacy by encrypting e-mails", your e-mail service already does that until it leaves the server to go to another server and no technology exists to encrypt it between two separate servers. So, are you still going to buy it or do any research to see if I'm right? I am and I'm not selling anything either. But, you'd feel better with the snake oil because maybe you are actually downloading a virus or cookies or spyware that will give your operating system a chance to identify a new threat and create a new update then send out a warning about that particular problem or just handle it for you with the update and no alert? And, then maybe you'll be disappointed or fall for another soothsaying sales pitch having been alerted to your own operating system already doing that? Should anyone take the time to help those who seem to make the same mistakes over and over while seemingly ignoring anyone who triggers their fear rather than soothes it away whether bullshit or not? This is my struggle.

The following are examples of propaganda though I'm not identifying any specific organizations nor people, just their messaging:

Animal Rights Converter Says: "It is cruel to own and use animals and better they never existed or go extinct than to continue to be subjected to human utility."

Animal Rights Converter Says: "We should wipe out all omnivores and carnivores for a more peaceful and sustainable planet."

Environmental Converter Says: “Zero population growth, we need less of everyone and everything in order to save the planet. Join the Human Extinction Movement.”

Now, the Human Extinction Movement is a real movement and that’s the name of it. Other environmentalists say things like “Live long and die out” as a motto. Adolf Hitler was a vegetarian and seems to have shared much of the same views. Many animal rights groups protest kill shelters while running their own with over 80% of their “rescues” euthanized at their own shelters. I don’t see problem-solving with their propaganda, just judgment, fear, and hate. Not all vegetarians nor environmental stewards make the above arguments either. But, the ones who do are considered modern day influencers that unduly influence even youth with a fairly good K-12 education. If you call the eradication of over 66% of the planet a way to peace on earth, I have to wonder if you actually hear yourself or understand what you are saying. It almost seems biblical with the whole 2/3s will fall and 1/3 will remain. I feel like it may be bastardizing religious doctrine just to manipulate those who may see the numbers as a sign of religious import whether intended or not. The herbivores are the chosen ones and everyone else will perish. I’m not comfortable with anyone holding that position. I almost feel the call for the Human Extinction Movement is less frightening because it isn’t targeting 66% of life on earth, just 0.01% (the entire human race makes up 0.01% of life on earth). It all reads as potentially Nazi or Fascist Propaganda to me. They are very emotional and do not welcome questions nor facts that do not support their claims. One person high up in the animal rights movement told me when I asked about a quote from Gandhi and pointed out it was misquoted that “It doesn’t matter if it is true or not if it gets people to go vegan.” I was horrified and wished I’d gotten a recording of that. The truth is all that matters and is all that can be known while being available to all who are not willfully ignorant for any reason including childhood trauma and conditioning to respond to others with complacency whether you should or do know better or not.

It frightens me that animal rights and environmentalism are considered progressive movements. I’m more upset because there are enough resources for everyone and scarcity isn’t the issue in terms of actual resources beyond capital. The issue appears more to be that with advancing technology there are less and less jobs while current redistribution of annual Global Gross Domestic Product per capita in dollars is under the current US poverty line. Governments don’t know how to fix it while keeping abundant resources intact and people are free to give to charity or realize charity starts at home where loved ones in need are always welcome. But, we don’t need to kill 66% of the planet nor stop proliferation of the human race. We do need to consider others more, be charitable when appropriate, and reasonably share as needed while not being blind to need and economic reality where the necessities are there but the money isn’t which is a truly bizarre situation that results in many choosing to donate in-kind.

I hope I didn’t frighten you and make learning scarier than it needs to be. If ignorant, your ignorance isn’t a secret but does make you vulnerable which you instinctually know which is why you bluff with deimatic displays as a defense mechanism when really what you need to do is address the underlying issue of ignorance by learning more so your fears are dispelled and you don’t waste money on bullshit when you could put it to better

use. I hope everyone finds this sermon helpful for discussing any proverbial elephants in the room or at least helped demystify the internet while explaining that it holds information but is not one omniscient shared brain like Tron where individual bits were still individuals with their own beliefs and goals even inside the program. Basically, try not to be in awe or dumbstruck by anything manmade and remember humans made it. 30 years of seeing those who did take computer science bring "magic" to your desk and not knowing what really goes on because if you open it you might break it or lose data may result in both your believing everything is so efficient now that it seems perfect so needs all the protection it can get from potential threats and that it is your superior even though the operating system is the master and the random access memory/data is the slave in computer parlance while you are just the user with administrative access. Being a user doesn't make you a master. But, owning your own domain does make you an owner in the world of modern technology.

Now, who wants to donate? It's okay if you'd prefer not to, I understand and respect your right to choose and think for yourself.

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.