

A Sermon on the Orphan's Perspective

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for May 16th, 2021 (and beyond)

This sermon is a bit of a morality play and in dialogue format. It is my hope by the end, if you are in a position to do so and reasonably qualified, you will consider becoming a foster parent to help keep children out of segregated congregate care who need proper socialization for the sake of maintaining civilization for everyone.

Orphan #1: My parents are dead, insane, or in jail. Doesn't anybody care?

Adult Citizen #1: I pay taxes and help fund social services. I support providing basic necessities to orphans and approve my tax dollars being spent on such services.

Adult Citizen #2: I also pay taxes. In addition, I give to Toys for Tots and have participated in providing and collecting items to give to children in foster care including backpacks, clothing, new beds, and more. I support and approve my tax dollars being spent on such services.

Government: So, taxpayers and presumed voters support foster care for orphans. Now, are there any family homes with an opening for Orphan #1? Anyone? If not, what is the least restrictive and cost-effective option, given the taxpayers are looking minimally to provide basic necessities to orphans without apparent ability or willingness to provide a family home? Is there any for profit or nonprofit environment for children and youth with an opening? If so, will you take Orphan #1?

Orphan #1: Doesn't anybody want me?

Adult Citizen #3: I'm pro-life and do want you. I'm so happy you are alive. I've got no openings as I currently am foster parent to 3 and have adopted 2 more with grown children of my own who have left the nest. My eldest is a mentor and working on becoming a foster parent. The other is still in school. Every chance I get I tell everyone what a blessing it is to have all the children in my care in my life. I encourage everyone to do whatever they can to help. I so wish I had an opening. Please know you are wanted and loved. I'm touched by your plight and we're going to make whatever placement accepts you our holiday priority. We always choose one segregated congregate care provider to do Christmas for each year. All the kids participate. We'll choose yours this year.

Orphan #1: Can I live with you?

Government: The government is of, by, and for the people in the United States. So, we volley back to private corporate and individual citizens when a need arises. We trust the people to respond to fellow citizens in crisis when we alert the public to the need. And, we choose the best option available with consideration of many variables including your best interest.

Orphan #1: Does anybody care about me? Why doesn't anyone want me? What if I become the best kid I can be, then will I find a forever home?

Segregated Congregate Care Staff #1: Keep your head down. Follow the rules. Here's your schedule. There are penalties for not being in the scheduled place at the scheduled time as well as not completing assigned tasks. Focus on yourself. Don't make friends with others nor seek to stay in touch with them after you or they leave. Some of the kids here are adjudicated having committed serious crimes and then sentenced here. Appreciate you are getting your basic needs met. If you complain, there are more penalties.

Adult Citizen #4: I've recently filled out the paperwork and begun the process of becoming a foster parent. I was asked if I'd accept a child or youth from a facility that accepts children and youth convicted of serious crimes including rape and murder who are ready for integration and assimilation in society. I said no on that one. I'm sure Orphan #1 is a great kid and deserves a family home. But, the history and then current placement where God only knows what goes on, feels like more than I'm equipped to handle as a beginner in the world of foster parenting.

Orphan #2: See, I told you nobody cares. It's all a big lie. They just take us from our families and put us in work camps. You are lucky I'm your assigned buddy. I was a bit of a gang-banger on the outside, but, I've got your back. You are a good kid and can only be a good influence (and/or cover). What's your full name? Here's a number you can always reach me or someone you can trust at if you get out alive. Some people don't.

Orphan #1: So, we're like family now? I can always reach you? I'm no longer alone?

Segregated Congregate Care Staff #2: Are you two talking about running? You trading contact info? That's it. You are both going to solitary confinement. Little gang-banger, you know the rules. Orphan #1, hand over the contact info. That's contraband. You are going to have to work the ranch for two weeks because of this little scheme. One in the barn and one in the field. No further contact.

Orphan #1: I memorized the number. When I get out, I'm calling. Orphan #2 is the only one who ever cared about me. Orphan #2 is family.

Government: Please consider fostering children and youth in foster care even if currently housed like human trafficking refugees like in HBO's "Oz" just waiting for someone to save them by providing a family home environment. They are children and deserve the opportunity for proper socialization. We trust our citizens to respond to notifications of emergency needs in a meaningful way that shows understanding of all variables involved.

Adult Citizen #5: I'm openly homosexual and Catholic Services with whom you contract as a private foster care placement agency will not accept my application because I am homosexual. Are you telling me a bunch of "holy men" who cover up child rape and did for decades is a safer environment than with me where I've never nor would I ever rape

anyone. This is outrageous! I'm going to sue everyone because I can because I have disposable income because I'm homosexual. So there.

Government: Okay, so Catholic Services isn't the only private foster care placement agency or service with whom we contract. Is it? What location? We'll investigate. This definitely seems problematic. We hear you. You have been heard.

Orphan #1: I've aged out of the labor camp. I honestly don't trust anyone at all except Orphan #2. Orphan #2 is the only one who ever showed me any kindness or hope for my future. Sure, Adult Citizen #3 sent us all Christmas gifts one year. But, we were all forced to re-gift them to Toys for Tots so the CEO could get a photo op to show how "reformed" we all are because of our generosity to the less fortunate. It's all bullshit. Orphan #2 was right about everything. I'm calling the number.

Orphan #2 Number: "This number has been disconnected or is no longer in service. If you believe you've reached this recording in error, please hang up and try your call again."

Orphan #1: Cool. The library has internet. People are protesting the government over injustice. That looks like Orphan #2 on the news. They've got the CHOP ZONE. I'm going to go join them. We all want reparations now!

Government: We hear you. No one wants anyone to get hurt. Do we all agree that nobody means any harm? Can we agree on that? Everyone has rights and that includes the right to due process. One at a time, please follow proper procedure in seeking redress of grievances and/or public assistance.

Orphan #1: Why in the hell would I trust you? You put me in a private prison for children that was actually a labor camp. I didn't even get an accredited diploma you cheapskate motherfuckers! Do you even look into where you place kids and see if it is a good fit or just randomly drop orphans into hell with absolutely no forethought regarding how that could end very badly for everyone? You deserve to be burned to the ground. I could do better on my own than in your care even at the age I first became an orphan.

Orphan #3: Hi! I'm an actual refugee from Guatemala originally. I was in the same facility as Orphan #1 and Orphan #2. It was so great. No one raped me the entire time. So, better than the trip up from Guatemala. I had a bed to sleep in every night and three square meals a day, plus a snack. And, they helped me learn English and get job placement after I left. The rules were strict. But, it was kind of like when the human trafficking refugees on HBO's "Oz" had to stay at the prison while the government figured out next steps or looked for a better option. Also, some family gave us all Christmas gifts to give to the less fortunate and it was the first time I had the joy of receiving and then giving to someone else.

Government: Okay, Orphan #3, we need you to be our ambassador to the entire orphan community regardless of how that status came to be. Can you handle the task?

Orphan #3: I'd be happy to help. Can I become a foster parent too? How about a mentor?

Orphan #1: Orphan #2 was shot to death by a rival gang. I'm living on the street somewhere. CHOP Zone has been shut down. All the homeless shelters are filled. I can't get a job without a residence and sincerely do not trust the government nor government assistance. President Reagan was totally right. Scariest words from the government "We're here to help". No. You are not. You are here to spirit children away from society and put them in labor camps and then have the nerve to suggest we are a social problem, which is dehumanizing.

Orphan #3: Orphan #1, how did you become an orphan?

Orphan #1: My parents are dead, insane, or in jail and that goes for my entire family as far as I know.

Orphan #3: Would it help to know your actual family history? Do you want help finding your family? Do you seek family reunification?

Orphan #1: It's worth a shot. What do I need to do?

Orphan #3: I suggest you start by contacting legal aid or a nonprofit law center for children and youth. Ask them to use Lexis Nexus to find all the public records of you, your immediate family, and any extended family. Then, let them reach out to any relatives found to see if reunification is possible. You are so lucky, my family is dead. I saw the traffickers kill all of them when they grabbed me and put me in the van. Small village, they split the kids up in different vehicles. I've no way to find my family or reunite with them. My hope is America.

Orphan #1: That's how I feel about Orphan #2. I feel like the death of Orphan #2 was my village dying. Can I stay with you?

Orphan #3: Have you heard about extended foster care? There are some options for youth who have aged out to continue to receive services. Do you want to apply?

Orphan #1: I want to kill you.

Orphan #3: I'm going to take that as a deimatic response because my suggestion is perceived as threatening to you. I'm the ambassador for all orphans. The Biden Orphan Czar if you will and sincerely am giving you the best help I can given limited resources. I'm an orphan too. I understand. So, here's the info on legal aid and a nearby nonprofit law center. You can call, e-mail, or chat online to get the ball rolling. Who knows? Maybe you have family the government was unable to locate at the time you were orphaned as an alternative. Reunification would be so amazing. Just the thought of it brings tears of joy to my eyes.

Orphan #1: Do you think the government failed in due diligence when I was initially orphaned? Did they exhaust all resources trying to find family members that would take me in or did they decide my family wasn't good enough and a labor camp/diploma mill was in my best interest?

Government: Social Services is not equipped to do the level of background check and private investigation to locate any potential family placement for each individual child. We believe if a child has family that would volunteer then they would volunteer at the time the child was orphaned. So, when no family steps up to say "Wait, that's my niece or my nephew, I'll take them", we look for the best option available that has an opening.

Orphan #1: You suck. You are the worst government on the planet. I hate you. I'm going to start my own riot and my own CHOP Zone.

Orphan #3: Give me your information and sign this permission slip allowing me to contact legal aid and/or nonprofit youth law center on your behalf. Give me a way to contact you. I know you are residentially challenged. Do you have e-mail and can you check it at your local library? Here's my card. Call me anytime. I'll e-mail you when I know if reunification is achievable in your case. Legal aid and the law center serve many people and there may be a delay. As soon as I get an ETA on family search results, I'll let you know.

Orphan #1: I've been waiting to hear back from "Biden's Orphan Czar", pompous ass, for 3 weeks. I'm still on the street. I've called three times and no response. I e-mailed and got an auto-response that promised a real one "as soon as possible". I applied for a job and they said my diploma was fake so I should get a GED. I can't afford that because I have no job. Another "help wanted" sign owner said the fact I didn't have stable housing made them concerned about my stability as an employee, but, wished me luck. I'm going to blow something up just for fun any minute.

Orphan #3: I'm sorry it took me so long to get back with you. I've been reaching out to legal aid and the law center regarding any luck in tracking down your family. They sent me a printout of some names. Here are the names [redacted]. Do any of those names seem familiar to you? I've contacted the first three and haven't heard back. I hope you don't think that was too forward. My goal was to speed things along. I was excited they found some that appear to still be alive.

Orphan #1: I'm so glad to hear from you. I honestly thought you forgot about me. Please try all of them that appear to be living. Any chance at a real family is worth taking. How long do you think it will be before I hear from you again?

Orphan #3: I don't know. I am working on it. I can finish calling all the names and/or sending letters where a number isn't shown. It all depends on how quickly the family gets back to me. I have no control over that. I'll be in touch as soon as I have more information.

Orphan #1: It has been three months. I'm still living on the street. I haven't found gainful employment. I haven't heard from Orphan #3.

Human Trafficking Cult Member #1: Hi! You seem down on your luck. Have you heard of Sacred Secrets Community? It saved my life. I was once like you. I know what it's like. I had no one and now I'm part of a family, the Sacred Secrets family. Do you need a place to live? Why don't you come with me to one of our shelters. You can eat, get freshened up, and start orientation. I see your potential.

Orphan #1: Can you help me find work? I'm looking for a job. I don't want to rely on public assistance. I grew up in the system.

Human Trafficking Cult Member #1: Don't trust the government. They've been after us for a while. They actually institutionalized one of our founders. One of our members in another state got killed in a shootout. You'll be safe with me and the whole Sacred Secrets family. You'll receive all your basic needs and be expected to volunteer. If you reach your potential, maybe you'll become a leader too. Only leaders get paid. The rest of us volunteer and work to achieve our true potential with the guidance of our leader.

Orphan #1: Do you have a business card or website? I want to check with a friend before I commit to anything.

Human Trafficking Cult Member #1: Yes, here's a leaflet. My name's Danielle. Put my name in the subject to hear from me if that makes you more comfortable. The address is at the bottom and you can just show up too. We're very welcoming. You'll love Sacred Secrets.

Orphan #1: I'm e-mailing to see if you've had any luck finding my family for reunification.

Orphan #3's Assistant: Hi, I'm Orphan #3's assistant. I'm responding to incoming. Orphan #3 is currently working with the Government Accountability Office on assignment from the Biden Administration. I've checked the files and it appears there were no responses from your family regarding potential reunification. If any respond, Orphan #3 or I will reach out to you immediately. Would you like to try public assistance?

Orphan #1: Danielle seems nice. I like her. Sacred Secrets Community sounds like as good a place to start as any. I prefer independence and don't trust the government.

#Human Trafficking Cult Leader: My name is Joffrey, but, you can call me Leo. That is my spirit name. You shall be called Orphan no longer. We are family now. Please, freshen up and join me in the kitchen. Are you hungry?

Government: Do not join human trafficking cults. Stop it. Stop the human trafficking. It's a crime. You can go to prison. You will go to prison. Stop doing it. Sacred Secrets? Do we have a contract with them?

Human Trafficking Cult Member #2: Okay, "Orphan 1", you'll need to use your legal name when applying for food stamps and public assistance to help Sacred Secrets help you. It's the first step to showing you are committed to our lifestyle and willing to do your part. Leo and Danielle are pre-occupied and I've been assigned to you. Everyone just calls me Horse because that's my spirit animal.

Orphan #1: I thought Sacred Secrets didn't trust the government. Danielle told me all about it.

Human Trafficking Cult Member #2: We don't trust the government, but, do trust that when indigent people apply for food stamps that will help us feed the family. You want to support yourself and others with all the resources at your disposal, don't you? There's always the street. You are welcome to leave at any time.

Orphan #1: Orphan #3, Orphan #3's assistant, and now the only friendly faces I've seen in months all say I have to sign up for public assistance or stay on the street. I miss Orphan #2. It is kind of funny to join a commune that exploits the government while flouting social norms at the same time. I think Orphan #2 would tell me to go for it. At least someone sees my potential.

END OF DIALOGUE

The above is not as uncommon a scenario as you might think and sincerely why we need more foster family homes run by socially well-adjusted people, who are not in any cults, and that can help orphans with proper socialization for the sake of civilization. CHOP Zones, riots, and all of that is on all of us able to afford it but who can't be bothered to do anything except pay taxes and nag the government without ever realizing the government uses the tax dollars to hire independent/contracted service providers in the private sector be they individuals or corporations. And, that said private service providers sometimes look good on paper until someone turns them in to law enforcement for crimes such as human trafficking and they are shut down like Restoration Youth Academy or The Joshua Home.

I consider myself to have the spirit of Adult Citizen #3 without the resources. I've interacted with all character-types referenced above in my work at the mission. And, I listen to everyone while understanding why orphans feel no one cares even though that's objectively not the case at all. Simply put, institutionalizing orphans with those deemed or reasonably assessed to be anti-social and/or criminal (whether staff, ownership, leadership, or fellow orphans), because it is the best available option known to the government in any given orphan's case at any given time, seems insane to every orphan who never did anything wrong, wasn't diagnosed nor adjudicated, that just ended up in the first available bed known to the government in a time of crisis. If I were such an

orphan, I'd be understandably outraged if for any reason my life didn't start as bad as Orphan #3, but, still ended up on that path or trajectory on which Orphan #3 began in Guatemala.

In addition, the rule on not remaining in contact with other youth at a facility that accepts adjudicated youth as well as private/foster placements where a child/youth has committed no crimes at all, has a reasonable explanation. It does still suck and explains why some orphans are less well-adjusted than others.

The following is a Q & A excerpt from <https://www.avvo.com/legal-answers/how-is-it-illegal-for-two-felons-to-be-around-each-3202885.html>

Q: "How is it illegal for two felons to be around each other or even live in the same home even if both of whom are first cousins? I myself as well as my first blood cousin are both felons and he is still on parole I am not but have pending charge. He lives with his mom (my aunt) and I was staying there as well until the PO office told him that if I was gone be staying there that he couldn't stay there so I had to move out and if they caught us both there together he would go back to jail. Is that even possible since we are immediately family?"

A: "Once you become a convicted felon you lose certain rights, including the right to associate with certain people. The law is going to win this one, not you."

The law relevant to the above Q & A is "Under 18 U.S.C. § 3563(b)(6), the court may provide that the defendant "refrain from...associating unnecessarily with specified persons.'" And, the standard condition is "You must not communicate or interact with someone you know is engaged in criminal activity. If you know someone has been convicted of a felony, you must not knowingly communicate or interact with that person without first getting the permission of the probation officer." Source: <https://www.uscourts.gov/services-forms/communicating-interacting-persons-engaged-criminal-activity-felons-probation-supervised-release-conditions>

So, while the rule seems to promote anti-social mindsets, it is aligned with the law. In a facility that accepts adjudicated youth, including those convicted of felonies, such a rule is intended to reinforce the law and prepare them for release so they won't violate parole by socializing with each other after release in which case they'd be returned to a segregated congregate setting. As much as an orphan needs proper socialization which includes bonding and establishing long-term friendships or relations with other humans, if the only bed available is in a facility that accepts adjudicated youth, the rules are the same for everyone hoping to reduce the recidivism rate especially among those who might socialize with other ex-felons which would result in re-institutionalization. As counter-intuitive as this policy may seem, there is a reasonable basis for it in the eyes of the law. This is particularly true where someone convicted was part of an organized criminal enterprise like a gang. That's why.

MEDITATIVE QUESTIONS

If you were Orphan #1, how would you feel and would you do anything differently?

Are you more or less interested in becoming a foster parent after reading this sermon?

Do you better understand where the seemingly blind rage at society is coming from during riots or CHOP Zone-type activity?

Do you better understand that everyone cares about orphans and really believes everything is done that can be done under the circumstances?

If you were once an orphan or have had a similar experience to Orphan #1, do you blame yourself as an adult for not being a foster parent to help meet the ongoing need of people like yourself? If not, can you understand that other adults feel it isn't their responsibility, they don't have the resources, and do trust the government to provide public assistance in times of crisis?

Do you feel like burning something down just for fun right now just out of frustration that a problem where solutions seem obvious isn't addressed in a manner that shows trust to those in need, but, rather to others who are trusted to be more reliable because they have an address, are church-affiliated, faith-based, and/or licensed by the state even though to build trust you often need to establish trust so where such trust is reasonably broken given Orphan #1's experiences perhaps trusting Orphan #1 with the resources that would otherwise be allocated to third-parties to cover Orphan #1's expenses is in order?

Do you feel better about times you just handed cash to a homeless person in recognition of their humanity while trusting their need is real and trust issues are likely reasonable in full context?

Do you wish people wouldn't wind each other up or gaslight situations that are already identified by all first responders, public and private, doing our best?

Do you wish I'd stopped at the dialogue and not continued with the meditative questions?

FELLOWSHIP COMMENTARY by Caroline M.

It's great, thank you. Made me laugh (bitterly) a bit, too. You might want to put in a voice for congregate care lobbyists, speaking to the state and the adult who says "I care, I pay my taxes". (Don't worry, I'm not trying to sell you on anything left-wing, because those people represent the absolute worst, most dystopian aspects of the left.) I'm not sure what foster parents get paid, but I'm sure it's not \$150K a year, so congregate care is not actually cheaper. But the lobbyists sell an idea of meeting vague "behavioral health needs" and propose themselves as a caring alternative to prison, even for kids who have never been criminals, or whose only "crime" is status offenses, such as missing school due to physical illness or neglect*. You can probably copy-paste their sales pitch from their websites.

An additional benefit that the state reaps from bowing to congregate care lobbyists is good press. Liberal Massachusetts gets warm fuzzy feelings from handing whopping amounts of cash to these people. An example is linked below: This local columnist praised the lobbyist Erin Bradley numerous times over the years, and never once asked her why she thought DCF needed a \$908 million annual budget (\$81 million above the previous year, thanks to this woman.) I have met her; she is a monster, and she gets paid by facilities that made me beg for air when I was 13. But she speaks "liberal" like a champ. <https://www.telegram.com/article/20150713/NEWS/150719730> (She's not a registered lobbyist in MA as of 2018; she appears to have moved to DC. So now she's the whole country's problem, and I'm sure the Biden administration will love her. Oof. Sorry about unleashing that bitch on you.)

If you don't wanna put in a congregate-care voice for whatever reason, that's fine. It's good as is.

I don't know how you have the strength to advocate all the time; it really knocks the wind out of me.

Best,
Caroline

*Or, thanks to a law Erin Bradley wrote, breaking program rules, now an official legal status offense, which can result in a court case which the kid has no right to attend. As written, the law would also apply to completely private programs, so that is an additional reason for parents not to send kids to MA facilities: The parents could legally lose the right to bring their kid home. I don't know of any cases, but I can dig up the relevant legal sections if you are interested."

FINAL THOUGHT by Rev. Angela Smith

This is part of my private response to Caroline in this discussion. Caroline is a welcome member of the COPE Fellowship and passionately supports the HEAL Mission. Below is my reply to Caroline.

"The congregate care lobbyists I feel are represented by the two segregated congregate care staff characters. I know foster family homes are less expensive, the issue is the lack of people volunteering to provide said homes which I feel is covered.

I'd actually love to include your message as feedback on the draft though if you'd be okay with me adding it as a note on the sermon by a member/supporter of COPE/HEAL Mission. I can include your full name or just Caroline or Caroline M. Let me know. I do think your points are important too."

Caroline agreed and so is happily included.

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>