

A Sermon on Propaganda

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for October 18th, 2020 (and beyond)

This sermon is intended to be a modern adaptation or expansion on John 8:32 KJV which is quoted in the closing of my sermons each week. So, assuming you are familiar or can scroll down and then return here to continue. The Truth is one of the many names of God. One best arrives nearest the Truth (i.e. God) through honest reason, objectivity, and logic. And, the scientific method is one of the best ways to determine whether something is fact or fiction. For the sake of this sermon, I will be providing examples of what some argue is propaganda and use the scientific method to determine whether it is true (and therefore not propaganda) or false/misleading and therefore propaganda. Propaganda is defined by Oxford Languages via Google as "information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view" and "a committee of cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church responsible for foreign missions, founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV." I'm not getting into my issue with the Gregorians at this time and accept the current calendar. Hoping they were inspired by John Wycliffe to organize records of some sort for some sense of continuity and tradition. That's my guess.

Scientific Method to Determine Truth for Closer Walk with God #1

Step 1: Ask a question.

Is the Sentencing Project's claim that those in the demographic identified as African American/Black are 5.9 times more likely to be incarcerated than other demographics true? (Source: <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/un-report-on-racial-disparities/>)

Step 2: Do background research.

University of Georgia reports that 8% of the US population has been convicted of a felony. 66% of that 8% fall outside the demographic identified as African American/Black and 33% of that 8% identified as African American/Black. (Source: <https://news.uga.edu/total-us-population-with-felony-convictions/> At this point it would appear those identified as African American/Black are 1/3 as likely to be incarcerated.

Step 3: Hypothesis: I believe it is possible that Sentencing Project's statement is false, misleading, or inaccurate.

Step 4: "You conduct a fair test by making sure that you change only one factor at a time while keeping all other conditions the same." Source: <https://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/science-fair/steps-of-the-scientific-method>

So, 8% of the US population is 26,256,000 persons convicted of felonies regardless of demographic particulars. That's all inclusive. 33% of that is 8,664,480. (I honestly

finally understand why my math teachers always told me to show my work even if I could do it in my head.) And, 8,664,480 is 19.64% of the entire US population demographic identified as African American/Black. The remaining 17,591,529 persons convicted of felonies who are not identified as African American/Black, represent 6.14% of the population not identified as part of the African American/Black demographic. So, that is 3.198 times higher incarceration/conviction rate for African American/Black demographic when compared to the entirety of all other demographics excluding that one. $19.64\% \div 6.14\% = 3.198$ times. See this Twitter thread for a more in-depth look at the calculating and additional cited sources: <https://twitter.com/heal247/status/1313083592617029632>

Step 5: Analyze Data and Draw Conclusion

Based on my research and calculations, it does appear that Sentencing Project is inaccurate and in consideration of all reasonably applicable variables the actual incarceration rate shows those identified as demographically African American/Black are 3.198 times more likely to be convicted of a felony (i.e. be incarcerated). I believe that's a reasonable number to convey a fact based on available data. And, I conclude that the 5.9 times more likely to be incarcerated statement by Sentencing Project is misleading. You can't be more likely to be incarcerated at a rate greater than the rate you are actually incarcerated. That doesn't matter who you are either. The notion self-negates. "I've been incarcerated 5 times more than you." "How many is that?" "0." "Why?" "Because, neither of us have ever been incarcerated and are part of the roughly 92% of the country for whom that is true."

Step 6: Communicate Results

I believe in showing my work above including the conclusion this step is arguably superfluous though this particular sermon is meant to be shared widely. In the next test to see if something is propaganda, Step 6 will be omitted because the sermon itself is the step.

Scientific Method to Determine Truth for Closer Walk with God #2

Step 1: Ask a question.

Does Sacred Breath Academy provide "Health Benefits" as claimed? (Copy of Source: <http://www.heal-online.org/sbasite.pdf> Source: <https://sacredbreathacademy.life/what-is-breathwork> (on 10/5/20 it appears that page was updated to remove the words "Health Benefits" while still claiming it provides health benefits))

Step 2: Do background research.

Sacred Breath Academy's disclaimer:

"DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

Spiritual and emotional work, breathwork, yoga, meditation and any other form of alternative healing should not be construed as a substitute for direct medical advice from your doctor or other qualified clinician, medical or psychiatric examination, diagnosis or treatment. Anyone interested in breathwork is also responsible for seeking the specific medical or psychiatric attention they need, should they need it.

The information and content available on this web site is intended for informational purposes only. It is not intended to diagnose, mitigate, treat or cure any disease or condition. Individuals should consult a qualified health care provider for medical advice. The user assumes all responsibility and risk for the use of the information on this web site.

SACRED BREATH ACADEMY DISCLAIMS ALL RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY FOR ANY INFORMATION, PRACTICES, OR SERVICES OBTAINED BASED ON VIEWING THE CONTENT OF THIS SITE. THE CONTENT INCLUDED HEREIN HAS NOT BEEN EVALUATED OR APPROVED BY THE FDA."

Source: <https://sacredbreathacademy.life/what-is-breathwork>

Step 3: Hypothesis: I believe Sacred Breath Academy is an obvious fraud that engages in misleading marketing then disclaims everything while putting full assumption of risk on clients or believes such a disclaimer results in that at law.

Step 4: "You conduct a fair test by making sure that you change only one factor at a time while keeping all other conditions the same." Source: <https://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/science-fair/steps-of-the-scientific-method>

So, it is spiritual and for profit. Is that legal? Not in Kyrgyz Republic. (and I like their laws: https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/7579/file/Kyrgyzstan_Law_non-commercial_organisations_2013_en.pdf) How about in USA? Not really, but, someone who would fall for it would need to identify the fraud within the statute of limitations and sue or file a consumer complaint to recover any loss as a result of harm recognized at law which could include wrongful death, paranoia, and theft by deceit (AKA fraud). (see <https://www.heal-online.org/breathless.htm> to learn of the risks which are confirmed by the NIH and National Cancer Institute of the NIH.)

It makes a lot of false claims and then disclaims everything. Liars self-negate.

Now, "Today, however, the media focus seems increasingly to be falling on various therapies that have become objects of business transactions, which one Japanese researcher has vaguely referred to as the 'spiritual business'. The author of this paper, by examining the activities described as 'spiritual business' through an empirical study of practitioners active at the forefront of this phenomenon, narrows down the use of the term 'spiritual business' to the Ehara-inspired, independent professional spiritual therapists, and links their increasing number to two sociological factors: the sluggish Japanese

economy and the commercialization of therapy as sacred." and the "Watching the Hawks" episode embedded at the bottom of <https://www.heal-online.org/breathless.htm> should further establish for you that this "phenomenon" is a bunch of cults profiting off of fear and chaos, so no better than warmongers and using the same POW tactics. (Source: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09555803.2011.598015>)

Are known and knowable risks disclosed by Sacred Breath Academy to those assuming all the risk? No, Sacred Breath Academy doesn't disclose known risks for the practice of breathwork. HEAL Mission does though. See <https://www.heal-online.org/breathless.htm>. It can cause a heart attack.

Does such a disclaimer result in exempting a for profit cult from liability at law for torts they commit against clients they misled into signing up?

"There is some dispute over whether disclaimers are legally binding. Much of this arises from the way they are presented. Disclaimers are often not treated like contracts or legal agreements which makes them more difficult to enforce if you face legal issues." Source: <https://www.termsfeed.com/blog/disclaimers-legally-binding>

"Nature Made" dietary supplements uses the disclaimer "†These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease." Source: <https://www.naturemade.com/products/nature-made-sleep-softgels>

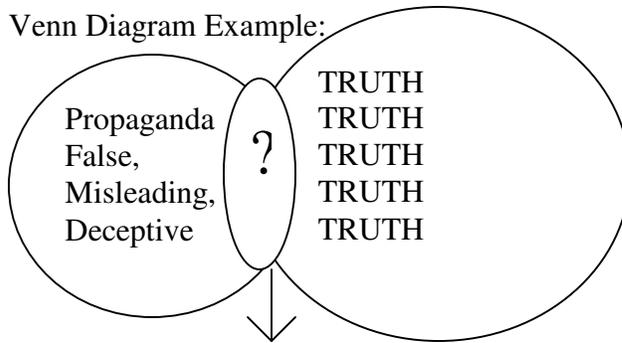
"Nature Made" has been sued for fraud repeatedly and lost those suits. Sources: "The lawsuit alleges that despite a guarantee of "transparency and openness," America's best selling vitamin and supplement manufacturer fails to disclose existence of pork gelatin in dozens of its supplements, causing severe distress for millions of consumers, including those of the Muslim faith and vegans." <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20120712006680/en/Robbins-Geller-Rudman-Dowd-LLP-Announces-Filing> A Class Action suit for fraud in 2018 which "Nature Made" lost. Source: <https://topclassactions.com/lawsuit-settlements/lawsuit-news/855767-naturemade-tripleflex-supplement-class-action-settlement-checks-mailed/> So, going with the disclaimer doesn't protect from lawsuits involving false claims made even where disclaimed in advertising.

Step 5: Analyze Data and Draw Conclusion

Sacred Breath Academy is itself a walking legal liability for anyone who invests time or money in it. Though, those who exercise due diligence should be able to avoid becoming a victim and those who do so after being victimized have remedies at law. The HEAL Mission can help with navigation and guidance.

Based on the above, I see Sentencing Project as perhaps inadvertently misleading the public regarding data to support their arguments which is in the overall "Propaganda" side of a "Propaganda/Truth" Venn Diagram.

Venn Diagram Example:



[The middle part with descending arrow pointing down at this bracketed statement is explained here and is the place where you don't know if something is true or is not because the evidence is inconclusive. But, the truth is that you don't know and knowing you don't know is the truth about what you don't know. You could call it curiosity, but, may wish to watch the film "The Vanishing" before exploring the unknown even if really curious with great personal investment like in that 1993 film starring Kiefer Sutherland, Jeff Bridges, Sandra Bullock, and Nancy Travis. But, investigating the unknown may be worth it at least for the greater good. "The Vanishing" is not necessarily the film to encourage that though. But, I totally empathize with Kiefer, Sandra, and Nancy's characters.]

And, I see Sacred Breath Academy as clearly and arguably openly a total fraud and therefore meets all the criteria for propaganda. I believe the trial courts will agree and look forward to reading about those cases.

I fact check like crazy and do a lot of research. I am also willing to admit error and make corrections when brought to my attention. Sacred Breath Academy appears to make corrections without admitting error. So, in making the minor changes like removing "Health Benefits" as phrasing on the page after I raised the concerns, suggests some ability to self-correct. Though, not leadership material if unwilling to be humble enough to openly confess and sincerely repent. And, time will tell if Sentencing Project examines more why there is a disparity in terms of ignorance of the law and remedies available at law and any limitations those may impose resulting in the 3.198 times more likelihood of incarceration of those identified demographically as African American/Black when compared to the rest of the population.

Now, whether you think this entire sermon is propaganda is up to you. I can tell you I'm being as intellectually honest and logical as possible given the variables. But, freedom allows people to choose ignorance at their own risk and assumes others harmed as a result of those taking such a risk will report it because clearly someone is developmentally disabled or has a criminal mind (dishonest and vicious). And, we all make honest mistakes on occasion. The thing is, if honest though, willing to admit capacity to err as well as correct when found in error. I'm willing to be corrected right now by Sentencing Project if they can reasonably explain how they arrived at the 5.9 times number when the actual rate is 3.198 times based on my calculations as shown. If I

missed a few variables or they used data I failed to include, I'd like to see it and the whole process. I'd be happy to apologize in such a case.

With Sacred Breath Academy, I have no faith that it can effectively resolve its own issues or stop being fraudulent without a complete overhaul, some legitimate education, proper licensing, and disclosing all known and knowable risks of practicing their method in all advertising and contracts. They don't recognize the law and the law doesn't recognize Sacred Breath Academy either until a direct victim who lost money or was physically harmed reports it to the proper authorities and then the crime/tort is recognized and perpetrator identified and penalized at law. In the meantime, HEAL Mission and COPE act to warn the public as a watchdog and additional safeguard. Thank you for your support and again, hope the church and mission helps you too.

This sermon delivery begins at 9pm Pacific on Saturday or 12am Eastern on Sunday. Saturday is Wycliffite Christmas. For more on church holidays, see <https://www.cope.church/holidays.pdf> . I wish everyone a safe, honest, and happy Wycliffite Christmas this weekend and always. God bless you.

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 <http://www.heal-online.org>