

## CHURCH OF PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION (COPE) MINISTRIES STATEMENT OF BELIEFS AND BYLAWS

Provided by COPE Ministries and authored by Rev. Minister Angela Smith

### STATEMENT OF BELIEFS:

Luke 17:21 "The Kingdom of God is within you". That's a statement by Jesus Christ saying hypocrites won't acknowledge that fact in full context of the passage. It is COPE Ministries belief that that is the Christian way of saying "Namaste" or that the divine in Jesus recognizes the divine in you and that every human being is in him/herself a temple or church with direct access to God and equal to all other human beings in the eyes of God aligned with the teaching of 14th Century England's Priest John Ball who was inspired by John Wycliffe, both of whom inspired the protestant religious movement which our church is honoring and revolutionizing for the 21st Century and beyond.

COPE Ministries serves God (the Absolute TRUTH and All Virtues Combined in a perpetual, universal, and perfect heroic abstract archetype to inspire all people of good faith to good works and that understanding of God is in part derived from Sufism which recognizes Jesus Christ as a prophet of God).

### BYLAWS:

1. No rapists allowed and anyone committing rape will be turned into law enforcement. Victims will be believed, supported, and comforted. Rapists will find no sanctuary nor absolution here.
2. No human traffickers allowed and anyone committing human trafficking (for sex or labor) will be reported to law enforcement and/or find themselves on the Mission Watch-List.
3. No fraud is allowed and anyone committing fraud (deception for the purpose of vicious gain) will be reported to law enforcement and/or find themselves on the Mission Watch-List.
4. Hypocrites are welcome, but, may not appreciate our commitment to Truth and Virtue and are as welcome to leave as they are to stay.
5. Volunteers who wish to officially establish themselves as churches will need to agree to all bylaws and church beliefs before being ordained. Said agreement will be implied in accordance with the certification requirements at <https://www.cope.church/certification.htm> Those volunteers will then need to officially incorporate their own church officially with the state to be recognized at law as a church, but, COPE Ministries recognizes that without the secular government documentation.
6. Volunteers of in-kind contributions described at <https://www.cope.church/givetoday.pdf> are eligible for a tax receipt for their contributions and if not provided but earned, can contact [rev@cope.church](mailto:rev@cope.church) before filing. All gifts to the church are tax-deductible. Appreciation is always implied and often expressed at <https://www.cope.church/fellowship.htm> .

7. Minister Angela Smith has taken a vow of poverty and the church covers all modest living expenses to serve God and help heal 24/7.

8. #TaoFu Defense classes or courses will not be mandatory, but, are recommended for all congregants. You do not want to interact with those who seek assistance, goodwill, or Christian charity nor often those who provide it without some experience in #TaoFu Defense. #TaoFu Defense is when you call upon the correct Virtue to combat the Vice currently tempting you to Vice. Many Vices tempt everyone to the Vice of Wrath. So, it's important for the sake of justice, peace, and harmony that people exercise #TaoFu even if calling it something else. You don't have to call it #TaoFu.

9. Since everyone is equal, you cannot expect more of anyone else than you expect of yourself with consideration to variables, challenges, obstacles, and who is legally or otherwise responsible for addressing those issues. And, when contemplating this bylaw, ask yourself "If I became wealthy, would I give to someone in my current actual position what I'm asking others to give to me right now? What would it take for me to say "yes"? That's often your answer." COPE Ministries is committed to total social equality.

10. Clean up after yourself. Volunteers and Minister Angela Smith are not a maid service. We do and/or will provide places to learn, eat, interact, and do good works in good faith. But, everyone who is exercising Virtue effectively will be diligent and responsible in at least doing their part unless actually physically incapable and in need of assistance as a result of legitimate disability. Like, if Stephen Hawking were to be a congregant and spilled juice or wine, Minister Angela Smith would be happy to clean that up. But, if you have working appendages and can wipe your own rear after using the toilet, then, you can throw away paper plates, cups, or rinse a dish you've used in self-service where the refreshments were provided. That's not asking too much of you. If you've fallen temporarily ill and honestly aren't up to it and have to leave a service, meeting, or soup kitchen meal because you are sick in the moment, then likely someone else will be happy to clean up after you and hope you pay that forward when someone else gets sick.

11. Regarding in person church events and services, the following will apply and be enforced. With church/theater service, performance first (sermons, vignettes, plays, etc) and a 15-minute intermission with invitation to stay for the Vices vs. Virtues Discussion or return home. However, anyone who refuses to participate in the discussion is not welcome to comment on the performance outside of church. If such is found to occur where no feedback was given directly and there was no participation in the Vices vs. Virtues discussion, you are banned from COPE but can still read sermons online and if you provide feedback properly the ban may be lifted because God is merciful.

This represents the core beliefs and bylaws for the Church Of Philosophical Exploration (COPE) Ministries as of August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The bylaws may be added to or edited at which time we will post an updated version. [Edited and amended last August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.]