

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII

UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA,

vs.

ROGER CUSICK CHRISTIE,
SHERRYANNE L. CHRISTIE,

Defendants.

CR. NO. 10-00384 LEK

DECLARATION OF LAURIE
COZAD, PH. D.

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I, Laurie Cozad, declare under penalty of perjury as follows:

1. In December 1999, I received my Ph.D. in History of Religions from the University of Chicago Divinity School.

2. Since July 2012, I have been employed at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as Program Director and Associate Professor of Religion, Division of Interdisciplinary Inquiry, Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences.

3. From August 1998 through May 2012, I was employed at the University of Mississippi, Department of Philosophy and Religion. I served initially as Acting Assistant Professor, then as Assistant Professor, and from 2005 forward as Associate Professor.

4. I have studied The Hawaii Cannabis (THC) Ministry. My study has

included review of THC Ministry literature, e-mail correspondence with Reverend Roger Christie, telephone discussion with Sherryanne Christie, telephone discussion with other THC Ministry members, and review of media reports.

5. It is my opinion that The Hawaii Cannabis Ministry, Reverend Roger Christie, and Sherryanne Christie's beliefs and practices concerning Cannabis are religious, and that the instant criminal prosecution for offenses involving manufacturing and possession with intent to distribute marijuana substantially burdens Reverend and Sherryanne Christie's exercise of their religion.

6. I understand that Reverend Christie was a member of the Religious Science church of Hilo from 1986 until 1993. It is evident from Reverend Christie's writings that The Hawaii Cannabis Ministry draws upon his years in the Religious Science Church. The THC Ministry and Religious Science share the belief that through thoughts, words, and communion with God, we can attract positive energy and block negative energy.

7. The Hawaii Cannabis Ministry shares two fundamental characteristics common to contemporary New Religious Movements: (a) the belief that the individual holds the key to his or her own spiritual well-being; and (b) the idea that particular techniques can empower each individual to reach his or her own spiritual enlightenment by allowing one to reveal one's own divinity in communion with a higher divinity. Such techniques include yoga, t'ai chi, meditation, chanting,

dance, and, in the case of The Hawaii Cannabis Ministry and other Cannabis ministries, the use of Cannabis sacrament. *See Clarke, ed. Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements* (London: Routledge, 2006) Kindle edition.

8. I understand that Reverend Christie joined the Religion of Jesus Church in 1993, and was ordained as a minister there seven years later in June of 2000. The Religion of Jesus Church was founded in 1969 by James D. Kimmel and is one of the earliest Cannabis churches in the United States.

9. Cannabis is a religiously powerful substance. Cannabis ministers and their congregants view this powerful substance as something that contributes to both spiritual and physical well-being. Reverend Christie and the THC Ministry see the sacramental use of Cannabis as a practice through which one is first gifted with a spiritual epiphany that then leads one toward realization of the plant's physical benefits.

10. Cannabis has been used historically and cross-culturally as a religiously powerful substance capable of effecting a change from the mundane to the sacred. It creates a transcendent disposition in the user and thereby provides access to the divine. Hinduism is but one tradition that uses Cannabis religiously. Cannabis is a naturally-growing seed bearing herb and need not undergo any processing whatsoever to yield its effect. Cannabis has medical benefits which are being confirmed by the scientific community. These three aspects of Cannabis,

namely its demonstrable altering of consciousness, its availability in nature, and its proven health benefits, amount to what Native Americans call “good medicine”; a category which includes much of what Native Americans call religion. *See* Lewis Mehl-Madrona, *Coyote Medicine: Lessons from Native American Healing*.

11. In line with Religious Science and many contemporary New Religious Movements, the THC Ministry believes in inclusivity, not exclusivity, and maintains that people can belong to, and even be ordained in, more than one church. In line with this belief, Reverend Christie has also been ordained in the Oklevueha Native American church by James ‘Flaming Eagle’ Mooney. Reverend Christie, like many leaders of contemporary New Religious Movements, deeply believes in this non-heirarchical model in which laypeople are empowered both to effect their own salvation and take responsibility for leading others.

12. Reverend Christie’s openness to new ideas and capacity for individual thought represent one of the hallmarks of a founder of a New Religious Movement.

13. Reverend Christie’s writings demonstrate his delight with the sacred, his knowledge of what ‘grace’ is, his own understanding of the divine, and his deep interest in biblical interpretation.

14. The beliefs, ritual practices, creeds, sacred days, scriptures, ministry services, concepts of divinity, and membership obligations embraced by THC Ministry members all serve to signify its status as a legitimate religion. The THC

Ministry rules require that members be over 21 years of age, that they affirm that they will use Cannabis sincerely as part of their religious practice and method of worship, and that they ingest Cannabis in one form or another as a required ritual act. Moreover, small details and quiet acts further particularize the religious sensibility found among the leaders and members of The Hawaii Cannabis Ministry.

15. Reverend Christie's public participation in religious organizations, and Reverend and Sherryanne Christie's lifestyles and practices within The Hawaii Cannabis Ministry are all hallmarks of their sincerity.

16. I have been informed that Reverend Christie and the THC Ministry distributed Cannabis to its members and medical marijuana patients. The THC Ministry's beliefs and practices mandated this. The THC Ministry's beliefs and practices also mandated that the ministry cultivate Cannabis sacrament plants.

17. Prosecuting Reverend and Sherryanne Christie on charges related to manufacturing and possession with intent to distribute marijuana substantially burdens their exercise of their religion.

18. I am persuaded that if Cannabis were made legal and Reverend Christie were free to operate out in the world, he would maintain his church, his beliefs, and his practices for the benefit of himself and his congregation, and that Sherryanne Christie would continue to share in these beliefs and assist him.

19. I, Laurie Cozad, do hereby declare under penalty of law that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: Sandwich, Massachusetts, April 1, 2013.

/s/ Laurie Cozad
LAURIE COZAD, Ph.D.