

Marijuana Minister Update

Contributed by Brenda Shoop
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Here we are in the news again!
Peace, Brenda

"Wow! All I can say is that Bruce and Brenda are rock solid! That has got to be the best television coverage I've ever seen on this issue. It just doesn't get any better than that!"

Reverend Carl Olsen, Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church

BALDWIN CO., Ala. -- A strange case out of Baldwin County will soon go to court. It involves a minister and his wife accused of growing marijuana they claimed to use in worship. If the judge buys the defense's argument, it could change how the law in Alabama interprets the use of drugs for religious reasons.

On the Green Earth Ministries website, the massive 28-pound marijuana plant the Baldwin County Sheriff's office seized is called the Tree of Life. "That was for our own personal use as a religious sacrament, as a health remedy," Reverend Bruce Shoop stated. The two people who grew it, Bruce Shoop and his wife, Brenda Williams have filed a motion in Baldwin County Circuit Court saying they are Cannabis Ministers. Reverend Brenda asserts, "It's not really necessary for me to convince anyone that my religion is real, just that I believe it, I believe it, my own personal self. And I do, I am very sincere." Shoop and Williams say marijuana helps them commune with God, the Prophets, and Jesus Christ. In their 26-page court brief, they also argue it was used in Biblical times to make anointing oil. "I don't think the facts in this case are gonna' bear out even a religious practice that these people have been involved in," said Baldwin County District Attorney Judy Newcomb. She also states Shoop and Williams knew they were breaking the law, no matter what their beliefs. So far, Alabama courts have not recognized the use of illicit drugs in religious practices. The DA also stated, "I do not see it as a valid exemption to growing marijuana in your yard." The plant in question was recovered by narcotics officers who spotted it growing over a septic tank in the middle of the couple's back yard. "You obviously did not try to conceal that plant in your yard," Fox 10 News reporter Adam Walser wondered aloud. Reverend Shoop replied, "Of course not. We planted it just like God would want us to plant any seeds. And it grew just like God would grow any plant." "There are motions before the court, we'll make our arguments, and I'm sure they'll make theirs," the DA further stated. Reverend Brenda continued, "If I'm allowed a fair trial, and if my evidence is put into place, I have a rock-solid case.....It's rock-solid." If the case is not dismissed, it's scheduled to go to court at the end of this month. What happens in the courtroom could determine future drug policy for the entire state of Alabama. Original story by Adam Walser Fox 10 News Baldwin County Alabama