

Public Statement

Regarding The Use of Cannabis Derivatives In Religious Contexts

As the founder and Heathen minister of A Different Path, I issue this statement to address the potentially confrontational and controversial elements within my platform. Drawing from historical precedents of public testimonies—such as Hillary Rodham Clinton's forthright denial of involvement in the Jeffrey Epstein matter during her congressional deposition, where she asserted her lack of knowledge while critiquing the proceedings as a political distraction, and the 1985 PMRC Senate hearings where Dee Snider, Frank Zappa, and John Denver defended artistic expression against censorship—this declaration affirms my commitment to transparency, constitutional protections, and fostering dialogue across ideological divides. Timestamped February 27, 2026, at 04:13 AM CST, this statement stands irrespective of future governmental actions under any administration.

The content on A Different Path examines the history of the Christian church, including its Catholic origins and the Protestant denominations I have personally experienced—Fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and Evangelical sects. This includes critiques of institutional abuses, such as missionary violence and forced conversions, while acknowledging the value some derive from sacred texts. The purpose is not to attack but to encourage critical examination, promoting individual sovereignty and discernment in spiritual matters. My approach integrates non-religious Heathen perspectives, drawing from LaVeyan philosophy, Celtic and Norse traditions (free of racial supremacism), Indigenous wisdom, and shamanic practices. This unorthodox blend is intentional, designed to challenge unquestioned authority and weaponized theology, much like the musicians at the PMRC hearings who argued that provocative art serves to provoke thought rather than harm.

My works are protected under the United States Constitution, specifically the First Amendment, which prohibits Congress from making laws respecting an establishment of religion, prohibiting the free exercise thereof, abridging freedom of speech, or of the press. These protections extend via the Fourteenth Amendment to state and local actions, ensuring due process and equal protection. Even amid state-level challenges or decisions that appear to erode these rights—such as restrictions on religious practices or expressive content—the federal framework safeguards sincere religious expression and speech. Relevant statutes like the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) further reinforce that government must not substantially burden religious exercise without compelling interest and least restrictive means, as seen in cases involving sacramental use of substances.

Regarding religious practices involving cannabis, traditions such as Rastafarianism and certain Pagan or Indigenous groups treat it as a sacrament for spiritual insight, not recreational indulgence. Fact: I am not anti-cannabis; I oppose "stoner culture" that promotes casual use "just for kicks." I endorse and would advocate for full legalization in an adults-only framework, with provisions for medicinal and religious applications, standing alongside lawmakers pursuing this. Drawing from my platform's publicly available material, I have used legally available cannabis derivatives—such as those sold in Omaha, Nebraska's smoke shops—for personal exploration in shamanic contexts, avoiding black market sources. This is legal under current Nebraska regulations for such products, though unorthodox.

Multiple sides: Proponents of strict controls argue for public health protections, while advocates highlight therapeutic benefits and religious freedoms; I foster dialogue by recognizing both, emphasizing responsible use without endorsing excess.

I have opened my platform to scrutiny, aware that its controversial, taboo elements—bordering on the uncomfortable—will invite opposition. This is deliberate, not an assault on conventional beliefs or politics that have worked for many, but an invitation to awaken critical thinking. Some may perceive arrogance in my methods, akin to George Carlin's pointed observations on societal hypocrisies: He noted how the "owners of this country" preach opportunity while ensuring the game is rigged, or how religious institutions demand piety yet overlook the homeless. In Nebraska's conservative landscape, leaders tout the "good life" and values protecting Fundamentalist Christian ideologies, yet policies often appear to enrich influential figures without aiding constituents most in need [fact-check state budget allocations for social services versus tax incentives for the wealthy]. Unlike ministries that sermonize without action, I have escaped homelessness in Omaha and Nebraska through resources I now share openly on the site, including Nebraska legal aids, boundary-setting guides, and educational tools like Khan Academy. This demonstrates practical outreach, presenting facts of systemic barriers while acknowledging that conservative frameworks provide stability for some, urging constructive reforms over confrontation.

All material stems from my shared journey with my wife, often referred to as the Temple Priestess, who collaborates in this ministry. As the Elder Bard [an unofficial title] encompassing storyteller, outreach coordinator, network navigator, songwriter, and illustrator, I produce audio and visual works as therapeutic outlets. Illustrations occasionally venture into erotica, framed not as pornographic or exploitative but as expressive art for personal healing, similar to how Zappa defended lyrical satire. Target audiences span Conservatives and Liberals in a state adhering to values that may condemn non-mainstream identities. Multiple views: Conservatives may see my work as disruptive to moral order, while Liberals might view it as empowering; I aim to bridge this by showing shared human struggles, fostering meaningful dialogue without fitting neatly into any ideology. I once moved in conservative circles but now seek truth beyond them, ruffling feathers intentionally to provoke reflection, not division.

Additional Clarifications on Medical Restrictions, SSA Reviews, and Religious Use of Cannabis Derivatives

This addendum addresses restrictions within Omaha, Nebraska's medical community regarding care, particularly in the context of the state's evolving medical cannabis framework, and the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs). It also serves as a letter of intent clarifying our religious use of cannabis derivatives, limited to Ministers AJ and Tina Wisti, to inform any SSA review processes.

Fact: Nebraska voters approved Initiatives 437 and 438 in November 2024, legalizing medical cannabis possession up to 5 ounces with a healthcare practitioner's recommendation, effective December 12, 2024. There are no predefined qualifying conditions; recommendations are based on the practitioner's judgment that benefits outweigh harms. The Nebraska Medical Cannabis Commission is implementing regulations, including THC caps (5 grams per 90 days, 40 mg per dose), in-person appointment requirements, and restrictions on consumption methods, which advocates argue may limit access for disabled or rural patients—fact-check ongoing commission hearings and proposed rules for updates. In Omaha, as part of Nebraska, physicians can recommend cannabis but face potential liability concerns; Legislative Bill 933, advanced in February 2026, aims to protect them from civil, criminal, or disciplinary actions for recommendations, provided they evaluate patients properly. Multiple sides: Supporters of regulations emphasize public health and preventing abuse, while critics highlight barriers

to care, fostering dialogue on balancing safety with accessibility to ensure equitable medical treatment.

Fact: The SSA conducts CDRs periodically to verify continued disability eligibility, assessing if medical improvement has occurred or if the individual can work. When substance use is involved, SSA evaluates Drug Addiction or Alcoholism (DAA) materiality under SSR 13-2p: If DAA contributes materially to the disability (i.e., the impairment would not be disabling absent substance use), benefits may cease. Marijuana, including derivatives, is federally classified as a Schedule I substance under the Controlled Substances Act, potentially triggering DAA review regardless of state legality—fact-check specific case applications through SSA POMS (e.g., DI 28010.055, DI 28005.035). Multiple views: Proponents of strict DAA policies argue they prevent benefits from enabling addiction, while advocates for leniency note that substance use often co-occurs with disabilities, urging nuanced assessments to avoid penalizing those with legitimate needs and promoting constructive reforms like integrated treatment support.

This statement clarifies that any cannabis-derived substances detected in the systems of Ministers AJ and Tina Wisti stem solely from spiritual shadow work practices within our Heathen ministry partnership, not recreational use. These are legally available derivatives purchased from licensed retailers in Omaha, Nebraska, compliant with state regulations for such products. This is not a request for exemption or a "get out of jail free" card but a formal explanation of sincere religious exercise, protected under the First Amendment and RFRA, which applies to federal actions like SSA reviews by requiring compelling interest and least restrictive means for burdens on religion. Fact: RFRA has been invoked in cases involving sacramental substance use (e.g., ayahuasca exemptions via DEA petitions), and while no direct SSA-cannabis precedents are noted, it could argue against deeming religious use as material DAA—fact-check evolving case law and DEA guidance for accuracy. This covers only Ministers AJ and Tina Wisti and extends no exemptions to others, regardless of affiliation. Multiple perspectives: Religious freedom advocates emphasize RFRA's role in protecting minority practices, while regulatory bodies stress uniform application of federal drug laws; this fosters dialogue on accommodating faith without undermining public policy objectives.

Issued by Aaron (@svaliak), Heathen Minister of A Different Path and affiliated with the [Universal Life Church](#).