

IN THE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF OREGON

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY LIGHT
OF THE QUEEN, et al.,

CV 08-3095-PA

Plaintiffs

V.

MICHAEL B. MUKASEY, et. al.,

Defendants

**AMENDED WITNESS STATEMENT
OF
MIRIAM RAMSEY**

My name is Miriam Ramsey. I am a 54 year old woman with a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology from Lewis & Clark College. I am licensed by the State of Oregon as a Licensed Professional Counselor and have received post-graduate certifications in the fields of chemical dependency; marriage & relationship; and trauma & abuse. I have counseling offices in both Ashland and Bend, Oregon and make my home in Ashland.

I am active in my community and serve on the Board of Directors of my church, the Church of the Holy Light of the Queen. I also hold the role of treasurer/secretary for the non-profit corporation of the church and am the church administrator, the first paid position in our growing organization. In the past two decades I have been on numerous other boards and volunteered both my time and money working for charities to which I feel committed. These include the Sara Fisher Breast Cancer Project, an Oregon branch of the National Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. I served as a committee chairperson of that project for seven years to help raise funds to assist women of Central and Eastern

Oregon, women from all walks of life, to receive the medical and mental health care they needed. I have volunteered my skills as a licensed counselor in shelters for Abused Women and Children in Deschutes and Jackson Counties and helped to develop and teach other counselors how to work with this particular population in Deschutes County. I have worked with severely addicted teens in Chemical Dependency clinics and Wilderness programs and with the severely mentally disturbed.

I was married for 14 years and am currently unmarried. I am active in the lives of my family; my siblings, nieces, nephews, and cousins. I was raised in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church where my father worked a dedicated life as a parochial school teacher and assistant pastor. He was one of the first to teach me about my deep connection to Spirit. He encouraged and taught me through his actions, through his love of God, and his kindness to other people. He followed in his father's footsteps as my grandfather was also a pastor for the Lutheran Church in North Dakota and Oregon. They were loving Christian men who honored family and God's work. I remember learning about Jesus from my grandfather as early as 2 and 3 years old as he would read to me.

I am writing this declaration to speak about my relationship to the Santo Daime Church and its presence in my life. The Santo Daime is both a religion and a sacrament. The sacrament itself is an intelligence which embodies the Spirit of Christ in a liquid, just as we are embodied in physical bodies. The religion and its form help me and each person who comes to church to be in a personal relationship with Christ.

I'd like to back up and tell you a story about my relationship to Jesus. I was raised in a good home, with two loving parents and two older brothers. I had a large extended family to whom we were connected and enough of everything even though we would have been considered low to middle income. I had a healthy social life with lots of friends and fun. We lived only 1/2 block from the church and I attended parochial school there for grades K-8, so I would usually be at church 6 days a week. I was very familiar with the different pastors, their wives and children, the staff, and all the families. I grew up in the church.

I was a curious child and asked many questions about God, Jesus, our religion and all the people in the world. When I was about 11-12 years old, I started feeling in the services and teen's camps that there was something more that was not being shared with me. I asked the elders for more of the connection I knew was available, but I did not receive answers that helped.

Throughout the next three decades I searched for the connection I knew I had. Sometimes I would give up. I searched in my work and through helping others, always knowing God was behind me. I searched the Eastern religions. I attended one church, "the best I could find", in Bend, Oregon, off and on, for about 20 years. Then I "met" the Daime.

I went to my first service and just knew this was something different. Afterwards, I remember saying to the leader of the work, "this changes everything". And I meant it. This communion with Christ, this immediate one on one relationship with the Divine source of God would change my work, my life and the person I thought I was.

Somehow, without knowing the details, I knew all that after just one work. After years of study I have come to understand what The Holy Daime was showing me in that first meeting. That I was coming back, finally, to my relationship to Jesus. That this was my spiritual path, “for real”. That this place and this way would, and has, challenged me to be a better, kinder, more peaceful and compassionate person; someone who has more authenticity to share with the world. And what more could I ask for – for me to put this into practice in my relationships, my work, and my community. In my professional work it helps me to help others to find the same in themselves; compassion, forgiveness, and self-awareness. This is what I want and what I believe our world so desperately needs.

Our religion teaches us that the Daime is the Teacher. It is teaching me about humility and about my own healing. I am very grateful for what I have received and want to continue to be able to practice. I am fearful, however, that my professional license might be at risk or about what others, particularly my family would think if the government tries to prosecute me or other church members. My family members are Christian, and that includes tolerance, and they trust me as a person. Until now, however, when we are about to come into the public eye, I have only shared parts of my practice with them for fear of the lack of understanding, given we are not recognized by the government. For me the only righteous outcome of this legal action is for the highest courts and officials of this land to make decisions that find my religion, the Santo Daime, to be clearly what it is – a true spiritual practice. Anything less than that is an untruth and simply does not serve the world.

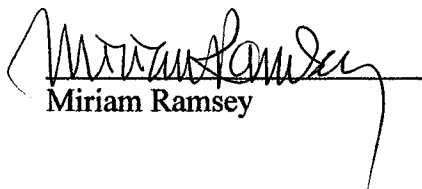
Recently I had been asked by the attorney for our church to possibly represent my church in court, either in this declaration and/or as a plaintiff for the suit. Just before that,

I had been sitting in a meditation in one of our church rituals contemplating just this idea. During that time, I was told unequivocally, "if you are asked to represent the Santo Daime in public, of course you will do it." No matter that my counseling license might be at risk or my life put in a harmful position. "You will do it because it is your life, it has given you what you are today and for this, there is only gratitude." This is completely true. I am a better person for the Daime. It is already free in me. I ask that you make it free for all others.

Pursuant to 28 USC Section 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 1st day of November, 2008.

Respectfully Submitted,


Miriam Ramsey

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I served the foregoing AMENDED WITNESS STATEMENT
OF MIRIAM RAMSEY on:

Eric Joseph Beane / Brigham J. Bowen / Julie Straus / Lily Farel
Civil Division, Federal Programs Branch
U.S. Department of Justice
P.O. Box 883, Room 7124
Washington, DC 20044
Attorneys for Defendants

by mailing a copy thereof in a sealed, first-class postage prepaid envelope,
addressed to each attorney's last-known address and depositing in the U.S. mail at Portland,
Oregon on the date set forth below;

by causing a copy thereof to be hand-delivered to said attorneys at each
attorney's last-known office address on the date set forth below;

by sending a copy thereof via overnight courier in a sealed, prepaid envelope,
addressed to each attorney's last-known address on the date set forth below;

by faxing a copy thereof to each attorney's last-known facsimile number on
the date set forth below; or

by filing electronically via the court's CM/ECF system.

DATED this 1st day of December, 2008.

TONKON TORP LLP

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