

An Opportunity to Help

June 2, 2006

Dear Ones,

On our path towards gaining the legalized right to practice our religion without threat of government interference, there are some questions that we ourselves must answer to the satisfaction of the courts or other agencies who will decide if we receive their protection to do so. One of the major ones is concerning the effects on the health of those who drink our sacrament in its ritual context. We have to show, in a way and a form that meets strict scientific and established legal standards, the truth of those effects.

Our lawyer, Roy Haber, has put together a team of top flight researchers, of the highest competency and respectability. The two researchers, John Halpren of Harvard and James Rutenber of the University of Colorado, have created a protocol for a preliminary study on the health effects of drinking Dalmé. It is scheduled to begin this summer. They have gained the approval for the study from their university scientific boards. In addition, the study received unanimous approval from the recent conclave of the Santo Dalmé churches. We have raised half the money for the study, enough to go forward. Now, each of us has to decide if we will become subjects in the study.

The study needs residents and citizens of this country who have drunk Dalmé for different amounts of time and in varying frequencies. It is not necessary to be an initiate. We need all levels of involvement to be represented.

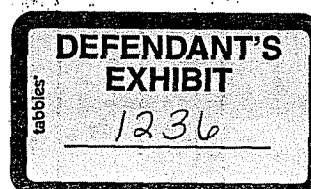
The study is an epidemiological study. This means that the actual process of being "studied" involves interviews, not clinical tests. There is a questionnaire administered by trained people in individual interviews. The data is then correlated and compared to, ideally, both a control group and an established "norm" of what the health profile for a person of your age, sex, life station, etc, would be expected to look like. The results are then tabulated, written up, and presented to a review committee. When it has passed muster for its integrity and defensibility, it then will be published and used as the basis for applying for more money for a full scale study. Eventually, the study will be used to demonstrate to a court and/or other agencies, if necessary, the health effects of drinking the Dalmé on those who partake of it in the context of our rituals.

The study will not only benefit us in our process, but because it will be done by such respected researchers with the backing of such highly respected institutions, it will be of worldwide use.

We need a minimum of 50 participants. The more we get, up to around 150, the better. It will require initially about four hours of your time, divided into two parts. There may be follow up interviews as well. The researchers will come to Ashland. I assume they can come to Bend as well, if there are sufficient numbers of people to warrant it.

There are questions which naturally arise. How confidential is this information? How is it protected? How am I? Can the government get my name if it wants to? What if it does?

The names of participants is protected by being known only to the researchers, who are shielded by law from having to reveal the information in almost all circumstances. However, the information is not shielded in all circumstances. Your name will be well protected, but not guaranteed to never be revealed. That being said, the possibility of any legal action being taken against an individual who drank Dalmé is not real. This is because the possible offense one could be charged with under law is either possession or distribution, neither of which you are doing by having drunk Dalmé. Having drunk Dalmé at some time does not fall under any law. You may choose to not participate because of your particular situation or with your particular concerns you do not want to run even the slightest chance of your name being revealed in any arena. But the reason should not be the fear of direct legal action taken against you for drinking Dalmé. There is no precedent for that happening in any action taken by governments anywhere in the world. It is possible to imagine a scenario under which such a thing might happen, but it would be a farfetched one.



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If you are willing to participate in this study, or you have questions that have not been covered in this letter, please let Minam know asap. Depending on the number of people who are available in our own circle, we will extend the request to other churches.

Jonathan

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