

Social issues



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World Religions -Social Justice Issue Paper Legalization

ofMarijuanaIntroduction: Tracey Martin Every Religion demonstrates unique aim to adhere to specific way of living. " Typically, members of the Religious institutes either take vows of evangelical chastity, povertyand obedience (the " Evangelical Counsels") to lead life in imitation of Christ Jesus or those following the Rule of SST. Benedict, the vow of obedience, stability (that is. To remain with this particular community till death and not seek to move to another), and " conversion of life" which implicitly includes the counsels of chastity and evangelical poverty' (Booker, 2003). " The golden rule exists in all Religions in some form. It is a statement, in summary, of the basic requirement for all human behavior. It appears sometimes in positive form: Jesus said, Do to others whatever you have them do to you" (Matthew 7: 12). It also appears in negative form: Confucius said, " What you do not want done to you, do not do to others" (Analects 15. 3) Since this is the fundamental obligation in all religions, why are so many religions involved in so many of the most bitter conflicts in the world? "(Booker, 2003). With that question dated, we will explore and compare the view points offered by Catholicism and the United Methodist (Methodism) related to the social Justice issue around the legalization of Marijuana. Supporting Data: The controversy over the legalization of illegal drugs in the U. S. , has been an ongoing debate over the last decade or greater.

From the early sass's to the sass's, Congress had enacted marijuana control laws, which saw a change in penalties for possession in the early sass's, imposing minimum sentence of 2 years for first-offense, and again increased in 1956 based on the Narcotic Control Act, which classified marijuana with

iron. By 1965, the first-time drug offense carried a sentence of 5 to 20 years of imprisonment, and second offense carried 10-40 years. It was noted in 1956, the United States had 1.6 million arrests, and by 1970 's the annual numbers had tripled.

The early sass's, President Nixon proposed the war on drugs, related to the drug epidemic, which also lead the urban American public to believe it was the cause of the increase in crime. 1971, a treaty with Columbia was signed with the United States, as the first step to the war on drugs. The goal was to raise awareness among lawmakers and to stop the production ND trafficking from the Caribbean to the United States. By the sass's, the war on drugs met challenges from the fight for power and the display of violence, observed from drug cartels.

The violence and uprising led various murders from lawmakers, judges, and other public officials. Over the last few decades, noted changes with the legal status of marijuana has been seen. Eleven States have passed laws that discriminative the possession of marijuana for personal usage, and other states continue to evaluate their state policies. In the sass's, the worldwide epidemic of AID, parked the consideration for medical usage, which in 2005 policy was presented to lawmakers for consideration as the " Last Resort and Fundamental Rights".

The policy review demonstrated Cancer and Aids patients experienced signs and symptoms from treatments, and marijuana alleviated the side effects, when no other methods had been successful for treatment. The history of marijuana continues to be a political controversy in the United States, which

is observed at both the state and federal levels. Lawmakers are not the only ones undecided in regard to public and medical views push for legalization. Many opinions have been documented for the acceptance and noncompliance for the legalization of marijuana.

Points of view are divided in the medical communities with the psychiatric doctors pushing opposition due to substance abuse concerns in the general populations and adolescents. Churches/ or Religious Institutes are offering opinions based on values and beliefs stemming from the religious order. The general public of the United States also seems to be divided based on familial values and beliefs or the continued awareness through media coverage and acknowledgment of divided view points. The basic view points identified for the two different religions beliefs are as follows: Catholicism - 1. Apostle Peter as its first leader. 2.

Belief that Jesus Christ is Divine. 3. Transubstantiation; elements become really, truly, the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ at consecration, Real Presence of Christ, and the sacrament. (full communion). 4. Possession of the " threefold ordained ministry'. 5. Belief that the church is the vessel and deposit fullness of the teachings of Jesus Christ. 6. A belief in the necessity and efficacy of sacraments. 7. The usage of sacred images, candles and music, often incense and water at airship. 8. Veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus as the blessed virgin Mary. 9. The distinction between God, Saints and Virgin Mary among the Saints. 0. Seven sacraments or " sacred mysteries" Methodism: 1. Tribune God, God is one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 2. Scripture; writings of Old and New Testament inspired by God. 3. Sin, human beings are intended to bear the image of

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God. Sin estranges people from god and corrupts human nature from ability to heal or save ourselves. 4. Salvation through Jesus Christ; through stoning death, resurrection, presence through history and promised return. .

Sanctification; draws one to Christian perfection, " habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor" and as " having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked". . Sacraments; two recognized. 7. Free Will; free to make choices because of God's divine grace and people are truly accountable before God for their choices. 8. Grace; God gives unmerited favor freely to all though it may be resisted. Though the identified beliefs and practices during worship are different. The two religions identify very similar views regarding social issues. Opposing examples include: Abortion, Addiction, Capital Punishment, SuicideNDEuthanasia, War, and the threat of human life and dignity.

With the examination of the two religious views regarding the legalization of marijuana. Neither one of the religions endorses the use of Marijuana or " smokingpot". Clergy emphasize God 's disapproval to mind-altering drugs, and promote abstinence from the use of illegal drugs, which is considered factors for crime, disease, death andfamilydysfunction. Marijuana is is described as a precursor or the gateway drug to the use of other drugs. With review of Amendment 64 in Colorado though, almost all the signers are Unitarians or liberal Mainline Protestants.

Nearly one third are United Methodists pastors, but presumed they do not preside over any of the larger congregations. Also several Jewish rabbis, but no Catholic or Orthodox clergy. " Apparently there's no specific denominational official stance for or against the actual legalization. The absence of a stance is a little surprising, as Methodists were the original

Prohibitionists". (Dooley, 2013) " The traditional clergy are on stronger ground when citing the already experienced abuse of medical marijuana laws. Stronger theological insights into what a civil state could and should ban versus regulate would be lawful.

Those who believe in creating a more Just and godly society need to argue for maintaining a healthy common culture of mutual responsibility that guards against vice without exceeding the state's proper vocation". (Dooley, 2013). Both national religious institutes have made reference to the religious documents that blind their belief and values. For the Catholics documents such as traditional Papal, Conciliator and Episcopal. The Methodists cite Doctrine of Standards, and the Book of Discipline. Pope Francis quoted " In every suffering brother and sister we embrace the suffering body of Christ. Dealers of death.... Allow the logic of power and money', When addressing chemical addiction. United Methodists quote the church founder John Wesley " None are recognized as Methodists who did not recognize the named Standards of Doctrine". Conclusion: In the end the same question of; why are so many religions involved in so many of the most bitter conflicts in the world? "(Booker, 2003). I think the answer is still very divided, especially when examining a social issue. The legalization of marijuana, has been controversy since it was first introduced as an alternative approach for pacific medical treatments for signs and symptoms.

As lawmakers are currently divided in overall decision, it is also demonstrated thru the different religious institute, from one end of the spectrum to the other. There is a divide of opinion and focus, relating to the process and the end result. Religions are focusing on the belief, values and

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the good of all people. Others of the more liberal religious orders relate more to the statistics of criminal behavior, financial costs to the general public, and the logic of usage by an individual person as a controlled substance (comparative to alcohol consumption).

Currently, there is not an agreed upon solution to the social issue of marijuana be decentralized. Many States have taken it upon themselves to make decisions at the State level, and at this time others continue to evaluate. I think this is an issue that will continue to cause great debate over the coming years, the United States is very divided, from government in Washington, Religious Institutions, and the general public views for and against the legalization of marijuana at this time. References: Allen, J. L. (2013), Pope decries "dealers of death" opposes drug legalization, National Catholic Press