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MINISTRIES

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A Nobody Trying to Tell Everybody About Somebody,

Pastor Mark Driscoll

# Marijuana Research Brief

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## **I. Statistics**

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### **A. Legalization of Marijuana**

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According to a recent survey from Pew Research Center on a representative sample of the population of the United States, 41% of respondents that they were in favor of marijuana being legalized, and 52% were opposed. As age increased, respondents were less likely to be in favor of marijuana being legalized: 58% of respondents ages 18–29 supported the legalization of marijuana, 42% of those

30–49, 40% of those 50–64, and 22% of 65+. <sup>1</sup> When asked whether marijuana should be made legal, 33% of Protestants and 39% of Catholics responded “Yes.” The specifically evangelical opinion was slightly different, as only 25% of evangelical respondents were in favor of the legalization of marijuana.

## **B. Medical Marijuana**

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Statistics on marijuana usage for medicinal purposes were a bit different. For example, “nearly three-quarters of Americans (73%) say they favor their state allowing the sale and use of marijuana for medical purposes if it is prescribed by a doctor, while 23% are opposed. Support for legalizing medical marijuana spans all major political and demographic groups, and is equally high in states that have and have not already passed laws on this issue.”<sup>2</sup> In particular, 68% of Protestant and 73% of Catholic respondents were in favor of marijuana being available for medicinal purposes. Furthermore, 64% of evangelicals supported the availability of medical marijuana.

## **C. Marijuana Usage**

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According to the survey, “Four-in-ten Americans say they have ever tried marijuana while 58% have not. Men are more likely than women to have tried marijuana—nearly half (48%) of men have tried marijuana compared with only 31% of women.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, age drastically affects whether a person has tried marijuana: “About half (49%) of young people admit to having tried marijuana, as do 47% of those ages 30 to 49 and 42% of those ages 50 to 64. By comparison, only 11% of people age 65 and older say they have ever tried marijuana.”<sup>4</sup>

## **II. Evangelical Views**

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There are two main issues surrounding the question of evangelicals relationship with marijuana: its legality and its morality. The two issues should not be confused. Just because marijuana is deemed legal by the government does not mean that Christians ought to smoke it. Similarly, just because the government says that it is illegal does not mean that marijuana use is necessarily immoral (though it is immoral to disobey the government, as we will see below). So, we will first look at the different positions on the legality of marijuana before moving to the moral issues involved in the question.

### **A. Should Marijuana Be Legal?**

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<sup>1</sup> “Broad Public Support For Legalizing Medical Marijuana,” *Pew Research Center* (April 1, 2010), <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1548/broad-public-support-for-legalizing-medical-marijuana>.

<sup>2</sup> “Broad Public Support For Legalizing Medical Marijuana,” *Pew Research Center* (April 1, 2010), <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1548/broad-public-support-for-legalizing-medical-marijuana>.

<sup>3</sup> “Broad Public Support For Legalizing Medical Marijuana,” *Pew Research Center* (April 1, 2010), <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1548/broad-public-support-for-legalizing-medical-marijuana>.

<sup>4</sup> “Broad Public Support For Legalizing Medical Marijuana,” *Pew Research Center* (April 1, 2010), <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1548/broad-public-support-for-legalizing-medical-marijuana>.

The first set of issues bound up with marijuana in society is its legality. The question is whether marijuana ought to be treated as an illicit drug or a recreational controlled substance. There are three different views on this issue.

### **1. Legalize and Regulate**

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There are some people who argue for the legalization and regulation of marijuana specifically for social and economic reasons. However, such positions say little to nothing on the actual moral issue associated with the use of marijuana; instead, they focus on the social and economic tolls involved with its legalization.

Pat Robertson recently said, “I really believe we should treat marijuana the way we treat beverage alcohol...I’ve never used marijuana and I don’t intend to, but it’s just one of those things that I think: this war on drugs just hasn’t succeeded.”<sup>5</sup> Robertson’s reasons for arguing for the legalization of marijuana, however, are primarily economic: “Mr. Robertson has now apparently fully embraced the idea of legalizing marijuana, arguing that it is a way to bring down soaring rates of incarceration and reduce the social and financial costs.”<sup>6</sup>

Robertson said his primary reason for making this decision was that the nation “has gone overboard on this concept of being tough on crime...It’s completely out of control...Prisons are being overcrowded with juvenile offenders having to do with drugs. And the penalties, the maximums, some of them could get 10 years for possession of a joint of marijuana. It makes no sense at all.”<sup>7</sup> Robertson went on: “I believe in working with the hearts of people, and not locking them up.”<sup>8</sup> Robertson is not alone in his position. Paul Armentano, deputy director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) says, “Many Americans have grown justifiably weary of the federal government’s war on cannabis. Since 1970, more than 21 million US citizens have been cited or arrested for violating marijuana laws. Yet more than 100 million Americans—including the president—acknowledge having consumed cannabis. One in 10 people older than age 11 admits to having used it in the last year.”<sup>9</sup>

Interestingly, “Conservative groups that usually align with Mr. Robertson...were largely silent when asked for comment on his stance. For example, Focus on the Family—a Christian group whose disdain for same-sex marriage and support for

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<sup>5</sup> Jesse McKinley, “Pat Robertson Says Marijuana Use Should Be Legal,” *New York Times* (March 7, 2012), [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/08/us/pat-robertson-backs-legalizing-marijuana.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/08/us/pat-robertson-backs-legalizing-marijuana.html?_r=0).

<sup>6</sup> McKinley, “Pat Robertson Says Marijuana Use Should Be Legal.”

<sup>7</sup> McKinley, “Pat Robertson Says Marijuana Use Should Be Legal.”

<sup>8</sup> McKinley, “Pat Robertson Says Marijuana Use Should Be Legal.”

<sup>9</sup> Paul Armentano, “3 Views on Whether States Should Legalize Marijuana,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (September 10, 2012), <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/One-Minute-Debate/2012/0910/3-views-on-whether-states-should-legalize-marijuana/Yes-Follow-the-model-of-tobacco-regulation.-Its-use-is-at-a-historic-low>.

family values are in line with Mr. Robertson’s—declined to respond beyond saying that the group opposes legalization of marijuana for medical or recreational use.”<sup>10</sup>

It is important to understand Robertson was “not encouraging people to use narcotics in any way, shape or form.”<sup>11</sup> However, he saw little difference between the legality of alcohol and marijuana: “If people can go into a liquor store and buy a bottle of alcohol and drink it at home legally, then why do we say that the use of this other substance is somehow criminal?”<sup>12</sup>

Armentano’s argument is that “Marijuana prohibition hasn’t dissuaded the general public from experimenting with cannabis or hindered its availability, especially among young people. Consuming cannabis may temporarily alter mood and pose other risks. However, such concerns are hardly persuasive arguments for maintaining the plant’s illegality. Numerous adverse health consequences are associated with alcohol, tobacco, and prescription pharmaceuticals – all of which are far more dangerous and costly to society. That’s why these products are legally regulated and their use is restricted. A pragmatic regulatory framework that allows for limited, licensed production and sale of cannabis to adults, but restricts use among young people, would best reduce risks associated with its use or abuse. Society already imposes similar regulations for tobacco, a legally marketed yet deadly recreational drug. Doing so has reduced consumption to historic lows. Why would we not apply these same proven principles to cannabis?”<sup>13</sup>

## **2. Do Not Legalize and Regulate**

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Some worry whether legalization will actually increase use and affect health, social, and economic costs.

David G. Evans, a special adviser to the Drug Free America Foundation, says that while many claim that the drug war has failed, “evidence shows that marijuana use has decreased in America by almost 50 percent since its peak in the 1970s. This is thanks to a three-pronged approach of prevention, treatment, and law enforcement.”<sup>14</sup> Evans worries that “If marijuana were to be legalized, businesses might attractively package it to increase sales by including marijuana candy, soft drinks, and ice cream (sold now in some ‘medical’ marijuana states). Based on experience in Europe and Alaska, the number of young users will

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<sup>10</sup> McKinley, “Pat Robertson Says Marijuana Use Should Be Legal.”

<sup>11</sup> McKinley, “Pat Robertson Says Marijuana Use Should Be Legal.”

<sup>12</sup> McKinley, “Pat Robertson Says Marijuana Use Should Be Legal.”

<sup>13</sup> Armentano, “3 Views on Whether States Should Legalize Marijuana.”

<sup>14</sup> David G. Evans, “3 Views on Whether States Should Legalize Marijuana,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (September 10, 2012), <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/One-Minute-Debate/2012/0910/3-views-on-whether-states-should-legalize-marijuana/Yes-Follow-the-model-of-tobacco-regulation.-Its-use-is-at-a-historic-low>.

double or triple. Drug treatment facilities are already full of young people dependent on marijuana.”<sup>15</sup>

Legalizing marijuana, for Evans, would lead to a variety of health issues that would negatively effect the economy: “Marijuana use, especially regular use, can impair problem solving, concentration, motivation, and memory, and can cause birth defects. Teen users are more likely to become delinquent, schizophrenic, depressed, and suicidal. Marijuana is the most prevalent drug found in drivers killed in crashes. Thirteen percent of high school seniors admit to driving after using marijuana, while only 10 percent admit driving after having five or more alcoholic drinks. Employees who tested positive for marijuana use had 55 percent more accidents, 85 percent more injuries, and 75 percent higher absenteeism rates.”<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, he concludes, “The potential benefits of legalizing and taxing this drug are far outweighed by the costs of expanded use. Alcohol and tobacco, while legal, are still deadly and still abused, and the tax revenue on them is far outweighed by the costly damage they cause. Legalization of marijuana will have a substantial and irreversible adverse impact on our social and economic well-being.”<sup>17</sup>

### **3. Medical Benefits Without Legalization**

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A third position says that while marijuana ought not to be available on the open market, it ought to be available for medicinal purposes. Citing the same views as the “No legalization” position, Kevin A. Sabet, a drug policy advisor, says that “Marijuana should not be sold on the open market. Legal alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs kill more than 500,000 people a year. Research tells us that access and availability lead to greater use, and big tobacco showed that legal industries can play down harmful health effects of their products. Neither is there any assurance, under legalization, that the underground market would disappear, because that market could very easily adapt to and undercut a legal, taxed product like marijuana.”<sup>18</sup>

Sabet also worries that continued strict enforcement can also be harmful as well: “Few people are in prison or jail for mere possession of marijuana, but even an arrest record can hamper chances for employment, education loans, or other public assistance. Laws that provide for a sanction but do not penalize an offender’s future should be considered. Drug courts—which offer treatment with

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<sup>15</sup> Evans, “3 Views on Whether States Should Legalize Marijuana.”

<sup>16</sup> Evans, “3 Views on Whether States Should Legalize Marijuana.”

<sup>17</sup> Evans, “3 Views on Whether States Should Legalize Marijuana.”

<sup>18</sup> Kevin A. Sabet, “3 Views on Whether States Should Legalize Marijuana,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (September 10, 2012), <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/One-Minute-Debate/2012/0910/3-views-on-whether-states-should-legalize-marijuana/Yes-Follow-the-model-of-tobacco-regulation-Its-use-is-at-a-historic-low>.



accountability—and probation programs that focus on intervention also make sense.”<sup>19</sup>

Instead, Sabet says that the chemical compounds in marijuana plants have medical utility. As such, research ought to focus on finding medical means of taking advantage of such benefits. For instance, “Nonsmoked formulations (like Sativex, a mouth spray under Food and Drug Administration review) offer a safe, scientific, tested way to properly medicalize cannabinoids. Such drugs may not mollify marijuana enthusiasts who want a ‘medical’ excuse to smoke marijuana. But they represent a common-sense marijuana policy that the US would do well to follow.”<sup>20</sup>

## **B. Should Christians Use Marijuana?** [\(top\)](#)

The aforementioned positions focus only on the legality of marijuana and say nothing concerning the moral issues bound up with marijuana usage. The following positions represent typical Christian responses to the issue from a biblical standpoint.

### **1. If It’s Illegal, Neither Recreationally Nor Medicinally** [\(top\)](#)

The Christian’s decision about marijuana is simplified when the government takes a stance on the issue. Douglas Wilson claims that the government does not stand in direct contradiction to Christian Scripture when they outlaw marijuana; as such, the faithful Christian has no warrant for disobeying the governmental ruling on the issue.<sup>21</sup> Christians are to be obedient and submissive to governing authorities and only to disobey those authorities when the governmental restrictions or requirements necessarily entail that one directly violate Scripture either by failing to do something that one is required to do or doing something that one is prohibited from doing. So, as long as marijuana is regarded as illegal by the government, Christians are required to abstain from using it. In the same way, the use of alcohol is wrong for persons under age 21 in the United States because the government has declared it illegal. If, however, the government makes marijuana usage legal—either recreationally or medicinally—the Christian cannot simply embrace the practice because the government has made it legal. Instead, he or she must ask whether the practice is one that Scripture views as morally acceptable. The following three positions each answer this question in a different way.

### **2. No, Never Recreationally, And Not Medicinally, At Least Until Science Is More Conclusive** [\(top\)](#)

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<sup>19</sup> Kevin A. Sabet, “3 Views on Whether States Should Legalize Marijuana.”

<sup>20</sup> Kevin A. Sabet, “3 Views on Whether States Should Legalize Marijuana.”

<sup>21</sup> Douglas Wilson, *Future Men*, 173–74.

The second evangelical position on marijuana usage says that it is wrong in all cases because the very reason one would use the drug—namely, to get high—stands in contradiction to Christian principles.

### *Marijuana's Unique Purpose*

As Douglas Wilson sees it, because people use marijuana for the effect, it is a sin to seek such an effect. “It is a sin to seek the strong forms of it—getting loaded—and it is a sin to seek the mild forms of it—getting a pleasant, euphoric buzz. If it has done its work *as a drug*, then that work has been a sinful one.”<sup>22</sup> Some may wonder whether a position like Wilson’s entails a rejection of caffeine, cigarette, and alcohol use. However, he is clear that he does not intend to go this far: “Unlike wine, for example, marijuana has an immediate effect, within minutes. Two sips of wine tastes good. Two hits from a joint, and the process of intoxication has begun.”<sup>23</sup>

The affects of marijuana are present much longer than those of alcohol, which is another reason marijuana use is objectionable. “The half-life of THC in the body is three to seven *days*. Contrast this with the half-life of alcohol, which is about an *hour*. Marijuana smokers frequently think that they do not have a problem with the drug because ‘they only smoke on weekends.’ But by the next weekend half the THC is still in the body and is still having an effect. Even after the high has worn off, THC continues to impair the body’s ability to function. For a chronic user, it can take months before the THC is out of the system, and even then, permanent effects on the ability to think can be measured and observed.”<sup>24</sup>

### *Be Sober*

Wilson, appealing to 1 Thess. 5:6–8, says that Christians must be sober, which “means to ‘be self-possessed under all circumstances.’ Being sober is utterly inconsistent with every form of mental and spiritual drunkenness. Someone who is affected to any extent by marijuana is not sober in the sense that Paul uses that word.”<sup>25</sup> He continues: “The use of wine in moderation is consistent with *nephos* [sober]. But nothing in what we know of marijuana makes it consistent with this biblical requirement. To smoke marijuana to get *any* level of euphoria from it is clearly a sin. Reasoning by analogy, we can also see that drug use is excluded because it is designed to bring about the one state—brain fog—which is condemned as a lawless application of alcohol”<sup>26</sup>

Wilson says that while some say Paul explicitly says not to get drunk with wine, he says nothing about getting a buzz from marijuana. But, according to Wilson,

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<sup>22</sup> Wilson, *Future Men*, 175.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, *Future Men*, 175.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, *Future Men*, 176.

<sup>25</sup> Wilson, *Future Men*, 176.

<sup>26</sup> Wilson, *Future Men*, 176.

“This is a good illustration of the legalistic, hair-splitting mindset of those who are attached to their sin. We too often think that legalism, the drawing of unscriptural boundaries, is the province of the overly righteous. But legalism is a sinful frame of mind, and it does not disappear even in the midst of licentious behavior...When someone says that Paul prohibits ‘drunkenness’ and not ‘getting high,’ we have an example of this kind of catching at words. Paul also says not to get drunk with *wine*. Does that mean that gin is all right? Beer? Rubbing alcohol?”<sup>27</sup> The thrust of Scripture and its intent, then, rules out recreational marijuana usage for the evangelical Christian.

### *Medicinal Marijuana?*

But what of marijuana’s purported medicinal value? Wilson says that, in theory, there could be potentially valid uses of the drug for medical purposes; however, Wilson is skeptical of people’s motives who push for medicinal marijuana: “Here we have to say that marijuana *could* be scripturally lawful *if* it were being used in a genuinely medicinal way. With this said, at the same time, we have to say that the current political push to allow for the medicinal use of marijuana does have a hidden agenda behind it—the issue is not medicine, but rather the legalization and normalization of marijuana use. The current science indicates that the proposed medical value of marijuana is greatly overrated. It is being pushed as a medicine for non-medicinal reasons.”<sup>28</sup> Such skepticism is common, and others argue that the science behind marijuana used for medicinal purposes is inconclusive, at best.

For instance, Dónal O’Mathúna says, “The U.S. Institute of Medicine in 1999 and the British Royal College of Physicians in 2005 published in-depth reviews of previous medical marijuana research. Because most of the studies reviewed were not controlled studies, the report concluded that there is little evidence to support the medical use of marijuana. However, products purified from marijuana, most notably a prescription drug called dronabinol, appear to be helpful. These products are legally available and have legitimate uses...In 2007, the first randomized controlled trial of marijuana smoking was published. Patients with painful HIV-related neuropathy smoked either marijuana or placebo cigarettes daily. Patients’ pain scores decreased an average of about one-third with marijuana. Since then, a few other controlled studies have produced beneficial findings for medical marijuana. However, these studies also showed that medical marijuana does not work well for everyone and has side effects. The prevalence and seriousness of the side effects is still debated.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Wilson, *Future Men*, 178.

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, *Future Men*, 179.

<sup>29</sup> Dónal O’Mathúna, “Should Christians Smoke Medical Marijuana?” *Christianity Today* (June 14, 2011), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/june/vg-medicalmarijuana.html?paging=off>.

Because of this, O'Mathúna concludes that Christians should hold open the possibility that scientific research could provide sufficient grounds for Christians to allow for the use of medicinal marijuana.

### *Don't Offend Others and Guard Reputation with Wisdom*

But even then, some think that because of marijuana's connotations, Christians should exercise caution and wisdom with using marijuana medicinally. As Brett McCracken puts it, "Christians should be cautious about using marijuana. Marijuana is associated with vice and unseemly activity. Christians are called to be above reproach, 'without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation,' shining 'as lights in the world' (Phil. 2:15, ESV)...The issue is not the relative danger of marijuana itself; it is about witness. If Christians use marijuana as a medical aid, it should be done in a quiet, private manner, without flaunting. Christians must be mindful of pot's controversial and hazardous reputation in culture, and be sensitive to the perspectives of both other Christians and unbelieving observers. Christians should take note of the food offered to idols issue in 1 Corinthians 8-10 and strive to abstain from arguably innocuous activities that are nevertheless contested in culture. It is not worth offending or making someone stumble."<sup>30</sup>

A variety of churches agree with this position. "The Catholic Church says that drugs 'constitute direct co-operation in evil' and does not seem to make exceptions for marijuana. The Vatican has condemned legalizing 'soft drugs' like marijuana, and its newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, recently scolded Italian lawmakers for liberalizing pot-possession laws. The Mormon church (whose members consider themselves Christians) also strongly advises members to refrain from smoking marijuana, though it has no established position on medical use."<sup>31</sup>

### **3. Yes, Medicinally, But Not Recreationally** ([top](#))

Some Christians are less skeptical of the current scientific evidence and say that Christians can use marijuana medicinally but not recreationally.

As Bosch notes, "There are biblical rationales for such a position. The Presbyterian Church's position on pot-smoking, which they adopted during a June 2006 General Assembly, notes that Matthew 25:35 calls for people to give aid to those who are suffering. Many Christians in favor of medicinal marijuana use this line of argument, saying that if it helps ease the pain of people dying from cancer, it's a good thing."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Brett McCracken, "Should Christians Smoke Medical Marijuana?" *Christianity Today* (June 14, 2011), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/june/vg-medicalmarijuana.html?paging=off>.

<sup>31</sup> Torie Bosch, "What Would Jesus Smoke: The Christian Doctrine on Bong Hits," *Slate* (March 20, 2007), [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/explainer/2007/03/what\\_would\\_jesus\\_smoke.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2007/03/what_would_jesus_smoke.html).

<sup>32</sup> Bosch, "What Would Jesus Smoke?"

In fact, a variety of Christian denominations and groups have supported the medical use of marijuana: “The Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and the Episcopal Church have all either issued resolutions or signed statements supporting the use of marijuana under the supervision of a doctor. The Episcopal Church’s 1982 resolution even delves into politics by saying that it ‘urges the adoption by Congress and all states of statutes providing that the use of marijuana be permitted when deemed medically appropriate by duly licensed medical practitioners.’”<sup>33</sup>

While allowing for marijuana used medicinally, many in this camp are skeptical of its benefit for recreational usage. Bosch says that “churches that support prescription cannabis don’t always endorse bong hits just for the fun of it. The United Methodist Church considers marijuana a gateway drug. At the Episcopal Church’s 1982 General Convention, a resolution was passed ‘proclaim[ing]there are harmful effects which can be permanently disabling with the use of marijuana.’ The Presbyterian Church is less strict; it stated in 1971 and again in 2006 that ‘marijuana is not properly classified...and conclusive evidence is lacking that it produces physiological effects or automatically leads to the use of more serious, addictive drugs.’”<sup>34</sup>

#### **4. Yes, Both Recreationally—In Moderation—And Medicinally** [\(top\)](#)

The fourth and final position is by far the minority Christian view. On this view, marijuana, like almost everything else in life, is a neutral thing that can be used for good or evil. For social smoking and medicinal use, marijuana is completely harmless, but it can be abused when used in excess, when it leads to addiction, or when one uses the high caused by the drug to escape reality.

Proponents of this view often cite Scripture verses supporting their position. For instance, Genesis 1:29 says, “And God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.’” While it is far from clear that marijuana is the referent of this text, the principle still remains: God has given his creatures dominion over everything on earth, and such dominion can be abused.

Further, on this view, marijuana is viewed like many other substances or things: alcohol, cigarettes, caffeine, food, television, sex, etc. Each of these things has a proper use, but when abused, sin arises. This view thinks that Christians have too often allowed cultural assumptions to shape their views on morality, such that obesity is no problem but controlled marijuana smoking is a sin. Such a position, this view thinks, need to be rethought.

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<sup>33</sup> Bosch, “What Would Jesus Smoke?”

<sup>34</sup> Bosch, “What Would Jesus Smoke?”

Douglas Wilson above argued that marijuana is inherently wrong because unlike alcohol, it gives one an immediate high. This view responds by saying that alcohol also begins its intoxicating effect on the first drink, such that Wilson's argument is placing an arbitrary stick in the sand along an imaginary slippery slope from sobriety to "drunkenness" (or "highness"). This view would read Scriptures about drunkenness and sobriety like the ones Wilson quote as referring to patterns present in one's lifestyle. So, there may not be anything inherently wrong with a mild high in and of itself nor with drinking that induces a buzz.

Interestingly, the Rastafarian religion has dietary laws in which marijuana is a religious sacrament while other substances (such as coffee) are not permitted: "The most observant Rastas follow a dietary law called Ital (from the word 'vital'). Ital food is completely natural, not canned, free of chemicals and preservatives and eaten as raw as possible. Old Testament prohibitions against pork and shellfish are part of Ital; most Rastafarians are vegetarians or vegans. Coffee and milk are also rejected as unnatural, and Rastafarians condemn the use of alcohol, since it is a fermented chemical that does not belong in the temple of the body, and it makes a person stupid, thereby playing into the hands of white leaders. This is contrasted with the holy herb of marijuana, which is natural and believed by Rastas to open their mind and assist in reasoning."<sup>35</sup>

([top](#))

<http://azvoterguide.com/coloradosfailedexperiment/>

- Teen marijuana use is [74% higher than the national average](#). Colorado is #1 in teen marijuana and illicit drug use. The legal age to use marijuana in CO is 21, the same age required in Arizona under Prop 205.
- Newborns testing positive for marijuana [are on the rise](#). In one hospital alone, half of newborn babies test positive for marijuana.
- Marijuana-related fatal car crashes have [increased 62%](#) since legalization. They [more than doubled in Washington state \(pg. 28\)](#). In Colorado, marijuana-related [DUI offenses doubled](#).
- When legislators saw an increase in children ER visits due to accidental marijuana ingestion, they responded by banning marijuana-laced gummy bears. There have also been a number of cases of pets getting sick from accidentally eating drug-laced snacks. *Note: Arizona's legislature would not be able to make*

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<sup>35</sup> Marc Emery, "Rastafari: The Secret History of the Marijuana Religion," *Cannabis Culture: Marijuana Magazine* (August 28, 2009), <http://www.cannabisculture.com/content/rastafari-secret-history-marijuana-religion>.

*the same changes to the law because ballot measures are voter protected in Arizona, and a change like this could only be made through another ballot measure and public vote.*

- Colorado is the [#1 state](#) in the nation for marijuana use overall.
- Marijuana-related emergency room visits by visitors to the state doubled in the first year and are up [49% overall](#).
- Many schools have seen no money despite promises made during the campaign. Colorado's [top marijuana official said](#) tax revenue from legal marijuana is a "red herring ... you're not going to pave your roads and pay your teachers with marijuana tax revenue."
- Despite promises to the contrary, the black market in Colorado thrives. Colorado's [attorney general says](#) illegal dealers are "hiding in plain sight." Surrounding states have taken legal action against Colorado in an effort to stop the importation of marijuana into their states.
- There are [more pot shops](#) than both McDonald's and Starbucks combined.