

Neoshamanism: Mushroom Churches in the United States

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The use of hallucinogenic mushrooms religiously has been around for centuries.¹ There has been a recent increase in mushroom / psychedelic churches in the United States in the past century. In this paper, through the use of textual and literary analysis, I examine the history of mushrooms in Mexico, then dive into the emergence of two mushroom churches in the US: The Divine Assembly (TDA) and Psanctuary; I follow this by discussing the role of mushrooms in each church and end with the legal implications of the use of mushrooms in these churches. I argue that despite these churches’ attempt to subvert Eurochristianity,² their use of mushrooms as

1. Hallucinogenic mushrooms have been used all around the world, but each place around the world has specific hallucinogenic mushrooms that are endemic to that location. In 9000BCE in the Sahara Desert, there is a mural of men – like figures with mushrooms on their heads (Tom Froese, “On the Origin of the Genus *Psilocybe* and Its Potential Ritual Use in Ancient Africa and Europe1.” *Economic Botany*, vol. 70, no. 2, Oct. 2016, pp. 103–114., doi:10.1007/s12231-016-9342-2. Journal article). Another mural from 6000BCE was found in Spain with the image of bulls and mushrooms which alluded to the aspect that these hallucinogenic mushrooms grow from dung of cattle (Edmond R Badham. “Ethnobotany of *Psilocybin* Mushrooms, Especially *Psilocybe Cubensis*.” *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1984, pp. 249–254., doi:10.1016/0378-8741(84)90007-2). The mushroom species found in Mexico are endemic to that area and were not brought over from the Old World.

2. “Eurochristian”, *Or What Are We Going To Do With White People – Revisited (Tink Tinker And Roger Green)*, Part 1 – *THE NEW POLIS*, February 16, 2023, <https://thenewpolis.com/2023/02/16/eurochristian-or-what-are-we-going-to-do-with-white-people-revisited-tink-tinker-and-roger-green-part-1/>. “The worldview of these invader peoples was indeed shaped by and developed enmeshed with european christianity. Teaching in a liberal

sacraments fits in with neoshamanism.³ Here we can see the cultural erasure of the Indigenous people in Mexico from which sacramental usage of mushrooms stemmed.

Hallucinogenic Mushroom History

Hallucinogenic mushrooms have been used for centuries all around the world, but this paper specifically focuses on their religious use arising from Mexico. In this section, I argue that hallucinogenic mushrooms are sacraments, just as the Eucharist (bread/wine) is a sacrament in Eurochristianity, I constructed this argument by comparing how several scholars define what is a sacrament. In Balthasar Hubmaier's words "a sacrament...the visible sign that communicates the invisible grace that it signifies."⁴ A sacrament here is just the vessel that the divine figure uses to connect to humans through physical matter, such as mushroom or bread/wine. Going along with this idea of signs, Kirk Macgregor states, "every sacrament is a symbol, but not every symbol is a sacrament."⁵ Thus, the Eucharist and mushroom are representative of something, but not every bread, wine, and mushroom out there are necessarily sacraments because they do not have that specific blessing from a shaman or priest. According to these definitions, sacrament needs a specific setting, among certain people, to have power, or to be considered a sacrament.

christian school of theology for three and a half decades, Tinker persistently argued that colonialism is christianity. And christianity is colonialism."

3. "Neoshamanism | Research Starters | EBSCO Research," EBSCO, accessed September 16, 2025, <https://www.ebsco.com>. "Neoshamanism is a contemporary spiritual movement that draws inspiration from the ancient practices of shamans, primarily associated with Indigenous cultures. The term "neoshamanism," meaning "new shamanism," reflects how modern practitioners in urban Western societies adapt traditional shamanic rituals to fit contemporary contexts. While the concept of shamanism has roots in various cultures worldwide, neoshamanism is particularly linked to Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Central to neoshamanism is the belief in connecting with the spirit world, often achieved through altered states of consciousness, which can be induced by rituals, drumming, meditation, or the use of psychoactive substances."

4. Kirk Macgregor, "The Eucharistic Theology and Ethics of Balthasar Hubmaier." *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 105, no. 2, 2012, pp. 223–245., <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0017816012000508>, 225

5. G. H. C Macgregor, *Eucharistic Origins, a Survey of the New Testament Evidence*. J. Clarke, 1929, 12

Additionally, in the words of Sergius Bulgakov “a sacrament is a manifestation of the power of God.”⁶ Bulgakov means that the sacraments are a way to show the power of the divine on Earth, that could not be shown in other ways. Finally, sacraments, and the one I found to be the best description, comes from Martin Luther, a German theologian, who states, “two things are presented to us, the word and the sign, so that we are to understand the word to be the testament, but the sign to be the sacrament.”⁷ This statement suggests that the sacrament is only “sacramental” with the words that follow and are said by a priest (or shaman in the case of mushrooms). Herein lies the limitations for hallucinogenic mushrooms taken outside of ceremonies; they become less “sacramental” because they lack the “words” that effectively “bless” them, per the Eurochristian worldview. Essentially meaning that one cannot just simply eat bread, drink wine, or consume mushrooms and it *magically* transform to the body, blood, and flesh of the divine without the words/actions accompanying it. Through these definitions, I argue that mushrooms like bread/wine are both sacraments in two different contexts.

One of the most crucial documentations regarding hallucinogenic mushrooms in Mexico, comes from Friar Bernardino de Sahagún,⁸ who wrote the *Florentine Codex*, which is a “codex that contains the general history of the things of New Spain” including subjects like “prayers, commerce, astrology, and the Spanish conquest.”⁹ This codex is written in both Spanish and in Nahuatl,¹⁰ which are shown side by side on the pages. In the codex, hallucinogenic mushrooms

6. Paul F. Bradshaw, and Maxwell E. Johnson. *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation*. Liturgical Press, 2012. Ch 3

7. Martin Luther, *Three Treatises*. Fortress Press, 1986, 162

8. There is limited information regarding the use of hallucinogenic mushrooms in Mexico prior to the 16th century because of cultural erasure done by the Spaniards who came into the “New World.” The information we do have is from the friars who came into Mexico and wrote about their experiences, which often presented a one-sided narrative that benefitted the colonizers.

9. Franca Arduini, *The World of the Aztecs, in the Florentine Codex* (Mandragora, 2007), 7.

10. “Nahuatl,” Endangered Language Alliance, accessed November 11, 2024, <https://www.elalliance.org/>. Nahuatl only became a written language after it was introduced to a “Latin – based alphabet” after colonialism.

are named “Teonanácatl” which translates to “flesh of the gods.”¹¹ Additionally, in relation to Catholicism, specifically, Sahagún described mushroom consumption for their properties, stating, they possessed “harmful and [are] intoxicating like wine.” Sahagún’s only real point of comparison was the inebriation factors that were similar to that of the consumption of wine in the Eucharist. The friars could not truly grasp the real meaning of the rituals regarding hallucinogenic mushrooms, but what is evident is that hallucinogenic mushrooms were important and not just a drug to the Indigenous communities.¹²

Hallucinogenic mushrooms made their big debut on media sources in the United States after the 1950s when Gordon and Valentina Wasson traveled to Mexico in hopes of studying the sacred mushroom. The Wassons coauthored an intriguing article in *This Week Magazine* that romanticized the use of hallucinogenic mushrooms.¹³ Travel data showed that the publishing of this piece led to an increase influx of US tourists going to Mexico to try the hallucinogenic

Before contact from the “Old World,” Nahuatl was a spoken language, but the Spaniards came and enforced their language to be written, in a way forcing the Indigenous people in Mexico to assimilate to something the Spaniards could understand.

11. Estrada, Alvaro. *María Sabina, Her Life and Chants*. Ross-Erikson, 1981, 23. Everything in the codex was scripted by a Catholic Spaniard from the 16th century. This is especially important when it comes to the translation of things, such as the hallucinogenic mushroom being translated as the “flesh of the gods.” This could be the literal translation, and then again, it could also have been inspired by the Spaniards who saw the mushroom to be like the Eucharist similar to how the bread is the body of Christ.

12. I only mentioned one friar but there are many other stories, such as from Fray Diego Duran. He has a book: *Historia de las Indias de Nueva-España y las Islas de Tierra Firme (1867-80)*, 430-432, in which he mentions the ritual of mushroom consumption. I translate from Spanish to English the following: “It was very ordinary and common among these people to kill each other and have sacrifices in ceremonies. After the ceremonies the fields would be filled with human blood, and after they would all go eat mushrooms. From the mushrooms they would be even more drunk than if they were to just drink wine. They were out of consciousness (not blacked out but just not fully there). Many would kill themselves because of the strength of the mushrooms, they had visions.” Here the ritual that is being observed is more violent because of the inclusion of sacrifice, suicide, and blood.

13. What the article in *This Week Magazine* did was exploit the use of mushrooms and made people ignore the fact that Indigenous communities saw mushrooms as more than a drug. Upon the release of the article, tourists flooded Mexico, and they were not doing the ritual correctly, they were disgracing the Indigenous side of mushrooms and in turn affecting people’s spiritual ideologies.

mushroom which eventually led to an increased access and usage of mushrooms in the US. This was the first recorded use of hallucinogenic mushrooms being used in the US by white people.

History of the Mushroom Churches in the US

These mushroom churches, The Divine Assembly (TDA) and Psanctuary, have deliberately neglected to address the rich historical roots of hallucinogenic mushrooms, in turn reinforcing the US' culture of domination and control, key elements of the harmful nature of neoshamanism.¹⁴ In this section, I discuss the history of these churches and their belief systems.

TDA defines itself as “a mystic religion, where pilgrims search for divine communion through worship.”¹⁵ It is a “religion devoted to autonomous worship,”¹⁶ meaning that the individual is the maker of their own religion, having the option to commune with others if they want. There are no set rules on how the person must do their worship, and thus this way of worship leaves the religion open to the interpreter, which is contrary to many established religions, like that of Eurochristianity, that have sets of rules on how to worship. I argue that with TDA establishing autonomous worship as a main facet of their religion that they are going against the established “colonizer’s religion, Eurochristianity.”¹⁷ Another way that TDA is moving away from colonizer’s religion is by stating that “worship needs no dogma...worship

14. Psanctuary does include slight historical facts which will be mentioned below.

15. Steve Urquhart, “A Message From the Co-Founder,” The Divine Assembly, accessed September 14, 2025, <https://www.thedivineassembly.org/founders-message>. The Divine Assembly (TDA) is based in Salt Lake City, Utah and was founded by Steve and Sara Urquhart, who are ex- Mormons. Before Steve founded TDA, he was known as “one of the most powerful republicans in the Utah State Legislature, serving from 2001 to 2016.

16. “The Divine Assembly,” The Divine Assembly, accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.thedivineassembly.org>. An autonomous worship means that the “individuals can fully worship on their own and, at times, as an active part of TDA's healthy, interconnected community. But, always, the individual is sovereign.” 1/24/2026 4:56:00 PM

17. There are several religions that could fit into the definition of a “colonizer’s religion”, but in terms of this paper I am referencing Eurochristianity that came into the western world through colonialism.

requires no intermediaries, leaders, or hierarchy.”¹⁸ Ultimately, they iterate that there is no hierarchy in place and that everyone is on equal ground.

Additionally, TDA states, “there is not a need for clergy to stand between a worshipper and the divine to interpret or explain... In most religions, the founder alone is allowed such freedom, while adherents are expected to stay within the boundaries prescribed by the founder’s vision.”¹⁹ This statement ultimately represents that the individual gets to decide what their experience tells them about their religion. They are critiquing EuroChristianity because of their use of pastors explaining the religion to parishioners. In TDA, it is all open to the interpretation of the individual. While this seems like a way of reworking the systems of religion in the US, this can also cause issues because of the abundance of different interpretations that may come from each of the participants. Therefore, by being an autonomous religion, with no hierarchy, and no one person to explain the religion, TDA is reworking what religion means and trying to step away from oppressive power, yet they end up becoming one of those oppressive forces as I will explain further below.

On the other hand, we have Psanctuary²⁰ which is a “508(c)(1)(A) faith-based organization, [it] is a Constitutional Church...” Unlike TDA, Psanctuary includes the type of nonprofit that they are covered under.²¹ These mushroom churches are seen as institutions of

18. “The Divine Assembly”

19. Ibid.

20. “Eric Osborne - Psanctuary,” accessed November 5, 2024, <https://www.psanctuary.org/clerics/eric-osborne>. And “Athena Short - Psanctuary,” accessed November 5, 2024, <https://www.psanctuary.org/clerics/athena-short>. Psanctuary is based in Kentucky. The two founders of Psanctuary are: Eric Osborne and Athena Short. Eric Osborne is the “board president and community minister” and he started his own experiences with mushrooms in 1999, and he grew up Catholic. Athena Short is the “membership lead, friends and family minister” and her experiences with mushrooms started in 2017.

21. “508c1a | Start a 508 Church or Ministry under Section 508c1A,” The 508 Company, accessed November 6, 2024, <https://the508company.com/>. Based on the website, a “508 is one of four types of nonprofit organizations that enjoy the benefit of federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status without having to obtain official

worship and at the same time are involved in taking an “illegal”²² substance, thus the added information about their policies makes them seem legitimate.²³

Psanctuary is a “grounded, nature centered, non-dogmatic, non-hierarchical faith-based organization.”²⁴ Similar to TDA, it also focuses on this “non-hierarchical” system, centered on reshaping their system of religion. In addition to their lack of a hierarchical system, they also “believe in individual, personal responsibility, [they] admit [they] do not know [the answers], [but they] are here discovering with you.”²⁵ This aligns with TDA and their belief that the religion is centered on the individual themselves, and no one is telling them what to believe. Soon after this statement they state that they believe in a “non-denominational approach that honors and draws from the customs and beliefs of other religions that respect and value life, including Eurochristianity. The Church believes that all religions contain elements of the Universal Truth.”²⁶ In a way being a member of Psanctuary means you can practice other religions at the same time because they are open to “individuals from any faith or background....

recognition from the IRS. 508s can receive tax-deductible donations and do not have to report their income or activities to the IRS by filing annual tax returns called 990s.”

22. “Drug Scheduling,” DEA, accessed September 14, 2025, <https://www.dea.gov/drug-information/drug-scheduling>. Hallucinogenic (psilocybin) mushrooms are considered a schedule 1 drug in the United States, based on the scheduling by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The DEA states, “Schedule I drugs, substances, or chemicals are defined as drugs with no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse. Some examples of Schedule I drugs are: heroin, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), marijuana (cannabis), 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (ecstasy), methaqualone, and peyote.”

23. Having to prove your legitimacy is a system of colonization in and of itself. Regarding the context of this paper, the United States requires one to fit under a specific definition of religion to be protected, and usually that ends up not protecting the lesser-known ones, such as the mushroom churches. To go against this discrimination, these mushroom churches are providing as much legal jargon to protect their members and to legitimize their religious sacrament to those in power.

24. “Psanctuary.” Accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.psanctuary.org/>.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid. This is contradictory because they are stating that there is no right answer and that it is up to the individual to create their own ideas, yet they say that many of their values are adopted from other religions and that all religions have a truth to them.

recognizing only one race of humans.”²⁷ Thus, Psanctuary does not dominate in an individual’s life in an oppressive way (it does not close off other avenues of religion).

The Role of Mushrooms in These Churches

Hallucinogenic mushrooms play distinct roles in each of these mushroom churches, TDA and Psanctuary. It is important to acknowledge that the historical use of hallucinogenic mushrooms is not an emphasis in these organizations because TDA²⁸ and Psanctuary²⁹ only include very superficial information.³⁰

In TDA, mushrooms are not a mandatory sacrament, but it is a popular one among the members to use and the church is centered around them.³¹ Even the organizational structure of TDA is compared to mycelium.³² In terms of the actual use of hallucinogenic mushrooms, TDA

27. The statement: “recognizing only one race of humans” is degrading specifically for those people of color who have suffered in the hands of racists. Although it can be beneficial to see everyone as equal, there is no way that everyone is treated equally because skin color exists. Humans should be embracing our differences as well as acknowledging what people who are of different races have gone through in the past and today. Having a statement like this is ignorant of all the harm done and in a way is excusing that behavior.

28. “The Divine Assembly.” In terms of TDA, they state “psychedelic sacraments are ancient and pervasive across many cultures. Humans have long known that psychedelics can occasion mystical states of consciousness where they can encounter and worship the divine.”

29. Psanctuary has a blog in their website with the article: “The Mormon Church Is Imploding. Can Psychedelics Save It?,” accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/psychedelics-mormon-church-divine-assembly-1375027/>. It states: “the Maya, Aztecs, Huastec, Totonac, Mazatec, and Mixtec people all used hallucinogenic mushrooms in religious ceremonies stretching back thousands of years, with the Aztecs calling it Teonanácatl because the Spanish violently suppressed the Aztecs’ customs when they sacked Tenochtitlán in 1521, Teonanácatl was forced underground ... In 1955, María Sabina became the first Indigenous “wise woman” to introduce psilocybin to an American when she permitted Gordon Wasson, an amateur mycologist with a controversial legacy, to participate in one of her ceremonies.”

30. “Psanctuary.” Psanctuary refers to the term entheogen as “bring forth the Divine from within” and how this term rose from “Gordon Wasson, after his initial encounter with the Mazatec mushroom shaman.” Psanctuary mentions Gordon Wasson, but there is no leading information on who he is and what he is known for. As for the Mazatec mushroom shaman, they neglect to name her as Maria Sabina, a prominent figure associated with the usage of hallucinogenic mushrooms and not know if you are not familiar with this area. Technically, Psanctuary can get away with mentioning this information because they allude to the Rolling Stones article mentioned above. Overall, not including information or just vaguely including information only harms the history of those who used it before.

31. “The Divine Assembly.” TDA was inspired from a mushroom ceremony.

32. M. R. Islam et al., “Morphology and Mechanics of Fungal Mycelium,” *Scientific Reports* 7, no. 1 (2017): 13070, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-017-13295-2>. Mycelium is a web - like structure. Mycelium is a “network structure” that works under the soil and is all interconnected. TDA is trying to use mycelium as a

explicitly states that they do not give the sacrament to the members, rather they “independently plan and conduct [their own] ceremonies.”³³ And as seen previously, consuming mushrooms is not even mandatory to be a member of TDA, but the majority still partake. Therefore, mushrooms are only related to aiding the individual but not necessary for the functionality of the religion as a whole. This is different than in EuroChristianity where the bread and wine (Eucharist) are offered to the people in church, and they are meant to be consumed within the vicinity. Since hallucinogenic mushrooms are “illegal” there could be potential issues that prevents TDA from giving the mushrooms to people in the church itself, emphasizing that TDA is still under the structural regime that is the government of the United States.³⁴

Psanctuary has a different stance on hallucinogenic mushrooms altogether. The members of this church believe that it is their “God given right to commune” with mushrooms as their sacrament.³⁵ Unlike TDA, who do not give mushrooms to their people, Psanctuary provides it for its members, but they explicitly state that “they will not provide access to [the] sacrament in any illegal context or outside of [their] spiritual healing services.”³⁶ Providing access to the sacrament puts the control on the higher ups in Psanctuary, even if they state to not be a hierarchical institution. Having this control over the mushrooms and providing them in controlled environments is contradictory to their non-hierarchical dogma since someone must be in control of dispersing the mushrooms and of deciding who they go to.³⁷ This is contrary to

metaphor to show that the entire organization can all function together alone in their own route, but all are tied together by the one entity of hallucinogenic mushrooms at the center.

33. “The Divine Assembly.”

34. I get into the specifics of the legal side in the next section.

35. “Psanctuary.”

36. Ibid.

37. This seems to be related to how the Eucharist works and how it does not just work with any bread and wine, but specifically with the one provided by the Church.

TDA, where they are given a kit on growing mushrooms on their own and they take it as they see fit, which is more aligned to their autonomous religion.³⁸

Psanctuary's mission statement is "to bring people together for healing and connection to divine revelation through communion with sacred mushrooms"³⁹... It is our sincere belief that the consumption of psilocybin-containing mushrooms is a communion which brings us closer to what is commonly called God."⁴⁰ If we go back to the earlier mushroom history mentioned, to Psanctuary, mushrooms are sacraments, while to TDA they are just an aid. To Psanctuary, mushrooms work to bring the participant closer to God, just like the Eucharist does in Eurochristianity.

The Legal Side of Mushrooms

Hallucinogenic mushrooms are considered an "illegal" drug in the United States, but TDA and Psanctuary navigate the use of them for their churches.⁴¹ As mentioned above, TDA does not give hallucinogenic mushroom to anyone; it is up to the members of TDA to grow them, obtain them, and take them in their own way. TDA mentions that the "law protects sincerely held religious beliefs. [The] use of the mushroom sacrament must be safe and central to

38. "The Divine Assembly."

39. It also seems that Psanctuary is very specific about terminology. They said that they prefer the term "entheogen" as opposed to psychedelic, when referring to hallucinogenic mushrooms. That is due to the fact that the words psychedelic and even hallucinogenic have a negative connotation as opposed to entheogen, which many people may not even know. "Definition of Entheogen," accessed November 6, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entheogen>. As Carl A.P. Ruck notes, "*Entheogen* is a neologism to designate psychoactive substances employed in culturally sanctioned visionary experiences in ritual or religious contexts." The key terms being "culturally sanctioned" and "ritual or religious contexts."

40. "Psanctuary."

41. "The Mormon Church Is Imploding. Can Psychedelics Save It?" This article states that "there are only three religious groups legally permitted to use psychedelics in the United States: The Native American Church, which uses peyote as its holy sacrament; the Brazilian União do Vegetal church [UDV], which uses ayahuasca; and the Brazilian Santo Daime church, which does the same." Psychedelic mushrooms have become decriminalized in some states in the US, for example in Utah

your sincerely held religious beliefs.”⁴² TDA enforces this idea of the hallucinogenic mushroom being central to the practice of the participant’s religion. TDA states that they do not know what the courts or laws will say and that they cannot guarantee protection, in a way showing that they are not responsible for any issues with the law that the participants may have.

TDA mentions that the court will look “at evidence to determine (a) whether you use mushrooms to sincerely worship or (b) whether you use religion to get around drug laws.”⁴³ These two factors that the court looks at are vague and strictly are up to the interpretation of whoever is in the court deciding such matters. This statement is followed by information about a United States Supreme Court case about the religious use of Ayahuasca, through the UDV. In this case, the UDV was “protected under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act⁴⁴ because their use was safe and central to the group’s sincerely held religious beliefs. They weren’t pretending to be religious. They were religious.”⁴⁵ As I pointed out previously, the Supreme Court is the one in power who gets to decide what is religious and what is not. Yet, there are several definitions for what constitutes as a religion and there is no one consistent definition.⁴⁶

42. “The Divine Assembly.”

43. Ibid. How can the court know if the mushroom is being sincerely worshipped, what are the parameters?

44. “The Mormon Church Is Imploding. Can Psychedelics Save It?” In this article, it states that the “Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)...prohibits the federal government from substantially burdening a person’s exercise of religion, even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability.” The latter part of the definition refers to the protection of the use of hallucinogenic mushrooms, in this case, despite their illegal stance in the US.

45. “The Divine Assembly.”

46. But nonreligious under what idea? In Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (University of Chicago Press, 2005). Masuzawa talks about the comparison of World religions versus “primitive religions.” Where world religions constitute the major religions of the world as “Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism” and primitive religions as: “shamanism/animism” (4). She argues that there exists this idea of “correct religion or religion proper” which alludes to “whatever variety of Christianity endorsed” (58). This means that the authentic religion or to be considered authentic you have likeness to Eurochristianity. All this to say that there is no one way to define religion, and the fact that the Supreme Court has the power to decide what constitutes as religious is unjust.

On the other hand, Psanctuary starts off by stating that they are a 508(c)(1)(a) Faith Based Organization,” and that their church fits legally under “the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993...Kentucky Rev Stat 446.350 and [more]” which in the end all allow for the use of hallucinogenic mushrooms.”⁴⁷ Psanctuary is more knowledgeable on the rights that their participants have and this leads to giving their people a peace of mind regarding the law. They want to make sure that their members know that their right to use this sacrament is protected. Both Psanctuary and TDA mention the case of the UDV and their use of ayahuasca. Psanctuary also brings in the Native American Church and their use of peyote. Additionally, Psanctuary also includes another section about “initiatives in the US impacting Psilocybin – Containing Mushrooms” which provides information about different states around the US that have started to approve mushrooms legally either medicinally or by decriminalizing them.⁴⁸ This alludes to the hope that one day mushrooms will be legalized and there would not be a need for all this legal jargon. Overall, Psanctuary does a better job of including the rights that their participants have, while TDA does not want to claim any responsibility for any legal ramifications.

Conclusion

These mushroom churches,⁴⁹ The Divine Assembly and Psanctuary, are going against the norm of other churches in the US by bringing in an “illegal” drug as a sacrament, showing how they are subverting the systems in place. However, they both fall short of this when they act as

47. “Psanctuary.”

48. Ibid.

49. I only focused on these two examples of mushroom churches, but there are many more around the US. Some others include: Church of Ambrosia, which can be found: “<https://Ambrosia.Church/>,” Church of Ambrosia, accessed November 7, 2024, <https://ambrosia.church/>. The second church I want to bring up is the Colorado Psychedelic Church found here: “Community of PACK Life | Colorado’s First Psychedelic Church,” PACK Life, accessed November 7, 2024, <https://www.coloradopsychedelicchurch.com>. Both of these other churches are in more liberal states, California and Colorado, respectively, while the ones I did a case study on are in Utah and Kentucky.

oppressive forces themselves by ignoring the history of hallucinogenic mushrooms in Mexico and being actors of neoshamanism. As Albert Memmi states in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, “the most serious blow suffered by the colonized is being removed from history and from the community.”⁵⁰ And we see this again with mushroom churches in the US stealing ideas from Indigenous people in Mexico and not giving them any credit while at the same time creating a religious space that is no longer for the original users. These in turn have become white religious spaces founded by white people for a white audience.

50. Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Beacon Press, 1967), 91.

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