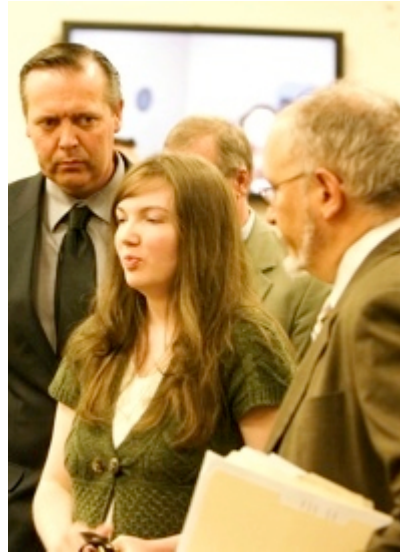




Faith-Healing Parents May Lose Child to State

A Christian family in Oregon lost custody of a 10-month-old Oregon City child for refusing to seek adequate medical care for the baby who is facing blindness in one eye. Oregon's Department of Human Services took custody of the baby girl from her parents, Timothy and Rebecca Wyland, who believe in "faith healing" over medical treatment. The parents are currently awaiting trial.



The Oregonian reports that the state of Oregon has had custody of the child, Alayna Wyland, since July. Alayna was placed in foster care, though the parents were permitted visitations. Immediately following Alayna's placement in foster care, she was put on a carefully regimented medical treatment plan involving three mandated daily dosages of medication.

Last month, however, Alayna was allowed to return to the Wyland home under a court order that also requires close medical supervision.

According to the *Blaze*, "Tuesday's ruling by Clackamas County Circuit Judge Douglas V. Van Dyk means the Wylands must continue to comply with a mandated treatment plan, and gives the state the power to act on the child's behalf should the parents neglect treatment."

Van Dyk contends that continuous state involvement is necessary in this case because the parents' failure to provide necessary proper medical care to their child "resulted in serious physical injury."

Alayna suffers from hemangioma, an abnormal buildup of blood vessels, which caused her left eyeball to be pushed outward and down. Her parents, who belong to the Followers of Christ in Oregon City, simply covered her eye, causing near blindness by a lack of light and stimulation.

Since the court order, the medication has helped to shrink the child's mass and it is believed that ongoing therapy will bring about improved vision, though recovery is not guaranteed.

Alayna's doctor, Dr. Leah Reznick, a pediatric ophthalmologist at Oregon Health and Science University, explains that Alayna's vision in her left eye is currently 20/1000, and could potentially get worse.

"I don't think we know exactly where she's headed," says Dr. Reznick.

The Wyland parents are charged with first-degree criminal mistreatment, but have pleaded not guilty. The family adheres to the teachings of their church, which rejects medicine in lieu of prayer. Their trial is scheduled for January, where the parents are expected to support their case by asserting their religious freedoms.



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 14, 2010

Rebecca Wyland's attorney, John Neidig, is accusing the Department of Human Services for "trampling" on the Wyland's religious rights.

"If these people had been Jewish, Catholic ... even Muslim, DHS would have treated them in a different fashion," Neidig asserts.

Van Dyk contends, however, that there is no evidence of discrimination in this case. "It is unhelpful to this case to point fingers. It is not a church that is before this court. It is the Wylands."

The Wylands' case is reminiscent of the Hickman couple in Portland, Oregon, who were charged in August with second-degree manslaughter after the couple failed to medically treat their premature son. When the Hickman's newborn baby suffered complications from premature birth, such as underdeveloped lungs and pneumonia, they did not call an ambulance.

Dale and Shannon Hickman were also members of the Followers of Christ Church and like the Wylands, believed in faith-based healing.

The Blaze notes, "The Hickmans were the third couple of the Followers of Christ Church to face criminal charges in the death of a child during the past two years."

However, the Hickmans and their supporters begged the public to keep an open mind. Their attorney, Mark Cogan, remarked, "This is a case that raises a host of issues involving religious freedoms, family autonomy, government power to regulate private activities, and that's one of the reasons why there is so much interest in the public."

Some are concerned by what they see as a government's infringement upon parental rights.

In August of 2000, for example, a New Mexico family lost custody of 3-year old Anamarie Martinez-Regino, who weighed 119 pounds and is 3'6" tall, because the parents could not control the child's weight.

American Patriot Friends Network reports, "Miguel Regino and Adela Martinez say authorities in New Mexico took their daughter, Anamarie Martinez-Regino after a doctor claimed the child's condition was life-threatening."

Mrs. Martinez grievingly noted, "They dragged her out of the room kicking and screaming. All she's known her whole life is me, Miguel, my mother, the family. She was terrified."

The APFN came out against the actions of New Mexico's state government. "It's not about fat or thin...it's about parental rights. How could this happen in America?"

On the other hand, some find it difficult to justify parental rights when they result in the preventable death of a child. According to Fox News, more than 20 children of church members have died of preventable or curable conditions within the past 30 years, as reported by the state medical examiner's office.

Photo: Timothy Wyland, left, 44, and Rebecca Wyland, center, 23, stand in Clackamas County District court for their arraignment by Judge Robert Herndon, charged with criminal mistreatment after their infant daughter, Alayna May Wyland, was discovered with an untreated mass growing over her left eye: AP Images



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