

Mom gets probation after Bible-inspired botched circumcision

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August 17, 2011

PORTLAND, Ore. (RNS) A 30-year-old Portland woman who botched a home circumcision of her 3-month-old son has been sentenced to five years of probation.

Keemonta Peterson was arrested last April after a lengthy investigation into the October 2010 incident. Peterson, inspired after reading the Old Testament, decided she wanted her son to be circumcised.

But because she believed he was too old to be circumcised by doctors, she decided to do it herself, after watching YouTube videos.

She called 911 after the botched circumcision left her son bleeding uncontrollably and in great pain.

On Monday (Aug. 15), Peterson pleaded guilty to first-degree criminal mistreatment and agreed to undergo mental health treatment and to work with a mental health probation officer. Two other charges of abuse were dismissed.

Doctors completed the circumcision and the boy has fully recovered, said Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney John Casalino. The boy and his three siblings are in the state's care, although Peterson can see them under supervision.

The circumcision was "an aberration during a down period in her life," said her court-appointed lawyer, Scott Raivio. Multnomah County Circuit Judge Eric Bergstrom agreed there was little benefit in Peterson spending any more time in jail than the 28 days she already served.

Despite the "sensational-sounding facts," said Bergstrom, "the reality is you love your children and had absolutely no intent to harm

your child."