

UNION NATIONALE DES FRÈRES DE PLYMOUTH DE FRANCE

Association déclarée, régie par les lois des 1^{er} Juillet 1901 et 9 Décembre 1905

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THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN, A PROTESTANT MOVEMENT WHICH IS THE VICTIM OF UNFAIR PROSECUTION

Warsaw, 10th October 2006
Implementation Meeting on Human Rights

The Plymouth Brethren, whose delegation consisting of three Christians from France, Sweden and Australia we have the honour of representing today, are a Protestant movement over two hundred years old, and they follow their faith in the steps of the Christian pastor John Nelson Darby.

Now, quite unexpectedly, at the beginning of 2006, after lobbying by a handful of opposers, the Interministerial Mission of the Fight against Fringe Sects, in its annual Report, has officially censured, for the first time since it was set up, our Protestant cult, without setting up procedures to justify any such public accusation.

On the occasion of the publication of their Report, to which the Government deliberately gave media coverage backed by press conferences, this Mission, on the 26th of April 2006, explained on a French radio broadcast : "*Contacts have been made, and in any case we have received witness. It should be known that these organisations are very closed and that when you wish to meet them, it is not always very easy*".

In connection with the Plymouth Brethren, this Mission added "*We will gladly receive in Paris the responsible persons, to hear them, and listen to them, in order possibly to correct errors which we may have committed. This possibility is not to be totally dismissed, even though we have taken very, very great precautions. On the other hand, what we will request, if they specify the points they are contesting, is for competent help, locally, to be made available, for that is their function*".

Thus, having been publicly "thrown to the lions", the Plymouth Brethren state :

1. On the one hand, they had already met, on their own initiative, on the 8th of October 2003, and the 12th of May 2004, the responsible persons of the Interministerial Mission, and exchanged correspondence on several occasions, in order to keep them fully informed of their religious activities.
2. Moreover, according to the public declarations aforementioned, the administrative work of checking the facts was not undertaken before the publication of the Report in 2006 which called them into question.

Resulting from the wide media coverage of this official Report, the Plymouth Brethren are now suffering from numerous problems, such as, for example the refusal of insurance contracts in certain cases, and newspaper articles spreading slanderous incriminations.

In this situation, the Plymouth Brethren now expressly request in Warsaw of the French Government that they examine this matter as quickly as possible, in order to provide practical answers which would assure what is right in respect of administrative procedures which are debatable and fair, in view of France's committal to the Organisation for Safety and Cooperation in Europe.

We thank you for this opportunity to voice our petition and hope it will improve this situation.