

Mr Bruce D Hales, CEO the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church/Exclusive Brethren

Mr John Gadsden, Manager, Charity Commission Project

Mr Garth Christie, UK leader

All Regional and Local Co-ordinators (RCs and LCs)

All members of the fellowship referred to above

Dear all

I had hoped that you were attempting to 'come in from the cold' and I was willing to assist you in this process.

I have become increasingly dismayed as I have observed recent developments which seem to have consisted of frenetic efforts to persuade UK politicians that you are today other than you have always been, in order, it seems, to maintain a place of financial advantage.

Whilst change is welcome and becoming something else is legitimate, what is simply wrong is to make representations which suggest that what you do today has always been your way of operation.

It is also not a little surprising that you have gone to such lengths to use the benefits of a democratic political system to retain taxpayer subsidy for your activities when you absolutely deny participation in that same system through the ballot box. The latter participation is one generally exercised by the very taxpayers whose contribution you enjoy but from whom you assiduously separate even to the extent of keeping your children from their schools.

You claim that your meeting rooms have always been open to the public. You know – and I know – that this is simply not the case. You know – and I know – that it is only in recent months that entry has been allowed except in exceptional cases. You know – and I know – that work is going on right now to make facilities for non-brethren attendees by way of seating arrangements and booklet displays which were not there just a few months ago.

- You claim you have always shown times of meetings on your notice boards. You know – and I know – that this just began to happen in the second half of last year.
- You know - and I know – that most of your meeting rooms are surrounded by high security fences and steel gates. You know – and I know – that that is simply not the way with churches.
- You claim to be a growing church but there is no evidence of this. You know – and I know - that you require new and larger meeting rooms because you relocate to new areas and sell off old premises.
- You claim that the name *Plymouth Brethren Christian Church* is your historic name. It is a perfectly legitimate name but you know – and I know – that it is a name coined only in recent months. Indeed, your previous website ([www. theexclusive brethren.com](http://www.theexclusivebrethren.com) – and yes, it can still be found) claimed to be 'the only site endorsed by the Exclusive Brethren'. You know – and I know – that you are going to great lengths to try to make the name Exclusive Brethren disappear rather than simply stating that you were once called that but have changed.

- You claim in a submission to a Parliamentary Committee that where brethren are not informed of the death of loved ones, or the denial of relationships with grandparents it is a family matter. You know – and I know – that this has long been practice imposed on members: for a member to have done otherwise would have resulted in their own excommunication.
- You know – and I know – that even relationships between spouses are broken despite the teaching of Jesus Christ as recorded in Mark 10:9 *What God has joined together let not man separate*. Your own submission to Parliament includes the fact that husband and family separate. You know – and I know – that this is not a personal decision but has been a mandate for decades. You know – and I know – of cases where parents have never seen children again; where young children have written letters to parents stating that they do not want to see their parents again; where letters and birthday presents have been returned unopened.
- You claim to give free Bibles to prisons: you know – and I know – that until a few weeks ago this had never happened.
- You claim that your young people enjoy *higher* education. You know – and I know – that, despite your claims, young people cannot freely enjoy this in the subjects of their choice and go away to University. You know - and I know – that higher education in the sense normally understood is denied.
- You claim you have always given food to the poor. You know –and I know – that charitable giving was not permitted; that the recent activities are just that: recent, and that not giving to charity was an edict set out by a former leader, James Taylor Jnr.
- You claim that hating the world is about hating worldly practices. You know – and I know – that every practice has been employed, any amount of money is used, anybody can be hurt, any sudden variation in church practice can be pursued in order to retain your financial strength.

You also know that Jesus Christ said, in Matthew 6:

Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

I urge you to come clean about your activities and tell the Parliamentarians that you have not always been how you are now representing yourselves. Most of all, I urge you to turn to Almighty God and repent for what you have done over the last half century in separating husbands from wives, children from parents and brothers from sisters.

Sincerely

John Weightman