



DECLARATION  
OF

Dr. Rubem César Fernandes  
Executive Secretary

Institute of Research on Religion – ISER  
Ladeira da Glória, 98 – Glória  
22211-120 – Rio de Janeiro – RJ

Dr. Rubem César Fernandes, declares under God the following:

The purpose of this Declaration is to provide information to the French authorities about how the Santo Daime religion is viewed by Brazilian society. We will start by introducing ourselves, as ISER, and we shall provide a description of what our contacts with the followers of Santo Daime have been like.

The Institute of Research on Religion, ISER, was founded in 1970 in the city of São Paulo, gathering experts in the study of religion, theologians, and scientists. In 1977, we established the magazine *Religião e Sociedade* (Religion and Society) and it is now the country's most important academic journal in this field. The purpose of the Institute, according to its by-laws, is to "promote research, conferences, seminars, courses, publications, and provide assistance in the cultural arena, particularly in religion-related aspects." Since 1991, ISER has reinforced its pioneering nature, creating and/or participating in major movements and projects that are focused on Human Rights and citizenship in Brazil, particularly in Rio de Janeiro.

In the latter half of the 80's, as a result of being commissioned by the National Conference of the Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), to undertake research on religious diversity in Brazil, we started our contacts with members of the Santo Daime Church. One of our researchers wrote about the founding and development of the Santo Daime and promoted a meeting between scholars and representatives from various religions in order to reflect upon the characteristics of this religious alternative. At the end of that meeting, attendees signed a document reassuring the principles of pluralism and religious tolerance. In several moments ever since, during inter-religious meetings and citizenship-focussed events, we have had active participation from members of the Santo Daime.

In every sense of the concept of religion, the Santo Daime church has clearly established itself. Scholars from all across Brazil have recognized the legitimacy and importance of this religion, particularly because it was actually founded in Brazil. All of the established religious leaders in Brazil also recognize the validity of the Santo Daime religious tradition and honor and respect its doctrine and practices including the ritual sacrament that members take at Church services.



Among various instances of participation by the Santo Daime in Brazilian life, we point out the 1992 Global Forum event A new day for the Earth: vigil and celebration of the world's religions, during the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development – UNCED/92. On that occasion, each religious tradition had the opportunity and the space to gather in their own manner and also to collectively celebrate peace in the search for bringing peoples and traditions together. SantoDaime played an outstanding role in this event that gathered world leaders and local communities (Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist, Afro-Brazilian, and others). We later had Santo Daime participants in the Inter-Religion Committee that was put together in support of the Citizenship Action Against Hunger and For Life, a campaign of major impact in Brazil. Currently, followers of the Santo Daime participate in the Rio de Janeiro session of the International Inter-Religious Movement.

These examples establish that it is a religious alternative that, due to its values and behavior, has earned a respectful opinion from other religions, research institutions, and legally constituted authorities in Brazil.

Faithfully yours.

Signature

  
Dr. Rubem César Fernandes

Executive Secretary Institute of Research on Religion – ISER

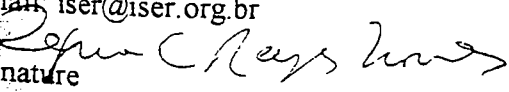
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