

## The Church of the Living God

Without a doubt, we are living in an historic moment. This International Charis Encounter 2015 is so transcendental for the life of the Grace Brethren Fellowship around the world, that I believe we can compare it with other historical moments of the history of our church, like the first baptisms in the Eder River or the sending of the first missionaries.

It's the first time during these 307 years that a group of leaders from each of the National Fellowships is meeting to agree upon the Scriptural convictions that mark our identity as a church in a global context. And this is no small thing! Actually, it's a very important step towards the consolidation of our beliefs, in a global context, as a Christian Church. And with that, what it means in terms of each fellowship looking ahead, until He comes.

I also believe, like the author of I Kings said, that *this turn of events was from the Lord* (I K. 12:15, NIV). That is, God is behind and above all this great project. I strongly believe that He is the motor and guide of our fellowship in this International Encounter.

From this point of view, we are a part of His Church, a tribe between the others, and a part of the great nation of God. The wealth of the church is God Himself, the living God. *This means to belong to a place where the host is an active part of the party* (D. Barbita), *the church of a God that lives and abides forever* (P. Peña), *the great historic and universal church that lasts through the centuries, designed, created and sustained by the only God, that lives and gives life* (J. Núñez), *a living body, dynamic, that develops without limits because it expresses the life of His Creator and Sustainer* (J. Sáez). *We are a people who pressed life because his God is alive* (I. Trindade); and that implies – by contrast – *that as a people of Christ we are not praising a false or dead god, but our living God* (A. Soares).

Since the church belongs to the living God, we have to take into account:

1. That God is a good, great and sovereign person (Ex. 3:13-18; Gen. 1:1; Psa. 103; Acts 4:23-33). God is the core. He's not a God of ink and paper, but alive and in the experience of each of us and our churches. If we lose God, we lose everything. Thinking about the Statements that we will develop and ratify, we *Christians are in danger of losing God amid the wonders of His Word. We must not forget that God is a person, and because of that we can cultivate his friendship like with any other person*<sup>1</sup> (John 17:3). We must avoid losing sight of the living God. God is the foundation of trust and the source of truth for the church. Our hope is in Him by the mere fact that He is the living God (I Tim. 4:10). All theological constructs must begin and end with Him.
2. That His living Word must be made flesh in us. In Colossians 3:16, Paul admonishes us so *the word of Christ dwells in you richly (...)*, and that implies not only knowledge at an intellectual level, but the practice that leads us to know how to be and to know how to do. These values (truths) are inseparable one to the other, since what we are affects directly what we do. And this fact of the Christian life is learned within intimate communion with a living God (Phil. 3:10). This century that we are living in, and its new generations, require of us this kind of living, committed with ideals that are seeing in "the everyday life". Like James says, *faith without deeds is dead* (Jam. 2:26).

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<sup>1</sup> A.W. TOZER, Searching for God, CLC, 1977

3. That the life of the church, as a community of faith, shows that there is a living God amongst we human beings. We, the believers as living stones are parts of the great building that is the church, in which Christ is the head (I Co. 12:12-20). *The real owner of the church is God and as a living being, He is the one that works and builds* (M. González), and we, as a Grace Brethren Church, are part of what the Lord wants to do in this world. *The church is the community that confesses Jesus Christ as the Lord of everything and of everybody and that lives in the light of that confession so that in it the beginning of a new humanity looms*<sup>2</sup>. It is the biblical church that is projected into a dark world to bring the living light of the truth of the living God (Acts 2:42-47). These Statements must be both a bedrock in which to settle and a “shot of spiritual adrenaline” that mobilizes us as a church.

We were created to glorify God (Is. 43:7). A living and true God, immutable, immanent, loving, holy, that becomes famous among us and through us. May our good Lord guide us during these days!

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<sup>2</sup> C. R. PADILLA y T. YAMAMORI, *The Local Church as a Transformation Agent*, Ed. Kairos, Buenos Aires, 2003