

## **Viver o Batismo**

*“Eu escolhi vocês para que deem fruto” (João 15.16)*

Presidência  
IECLB nº 280274/20



Porto Alegre, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To  
Partner Churches and Institutions

Greetings from Brazil,  
Greetings from the IECLB,  
Easter greetings.

Holy Week has arrived. It will be different this year. For the first time, we will not be able to meet in person in the temples and halls of worship. At best, we will meet people who live in the same house. It will be different. For two or three generations of people, this will be their first Easter experience without the possibility of participating in community worship. The Lord's Supper will not be possible on Easter morning.

It will be different, but it will not be less relevant, less significant or less important. God is not stuck in a place; not even stuck in time. God is everywhere and at all times. We will have a Holy Week with the presence of the God of life, who in Jesus Christ overcame death to give us full life and to save us. And the Holy Spirit of God will unite us, as sisters and brothers, near and far, in faith, hope and love.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also reached Brazil. Initially slowly, but now in an accelerating process. The Brazilian people built, with much struggle and organization, a single health system – the SUS (National Health System), a national, broad, comprehensive and public system. Although SUS was the victim of blows that aimed to ruin it in order to expand spaces for private companies in the health area, it still remains. SUS will certainly be the only hope of support and care for thousands, if not millions of Brazilians who will need it, due to the new coronavirus.

If the pandemic itself - which has been announcing itself as a tragedy for Brazil - was not enough, both socially and economically, we still need to be concerned with the rather unscientific understanding on the part of the Brazilian government, which has proved to be extremely dangerous from the point of view of epidemiology. Fortunately, most organizations follow the guidelines of the health sciences.

The IECLB is in its third week of quarantine. It was an important decision, taken jointly by the Presidency and the 18 Synodal Pastors. We will most likely keep it for even longer. Quarantine time has enabled the Presidency to have online meetings with Synodal Pastors on a weekly basis.

We are aware that the decision not to allow face-to-face meetings such as conferences, services, events, assemblies, etc., will have its consequences, one of which has to do with sustainability. But we are firm in the belief that the important thing at this point is to save lives, reducing the possibility of contagion and allowing public authorities more time to prepare to care for sick people.

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### **Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil**

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The new reality is teaching us other formats of dialogue and meetings: digital, virtual, audio-video. We are learning a lot and discovering that there are many possibilities in this area. Most of the more than 800 Ministers working in the 1800 Congregations have endeavored to keep in touch with their members, through chats, phone calls, WhatsApp and other communication mediums. Their celebrations, prayers, songs and intercessions have flooded the networks. Many people have been reached, including beyond the IECLB itself. There will be a lot of reflection to be done on what all this will mean for the life of the Church after the pandemic.

We are both concerned and confident. We have the certainty that Christ is with us every day until the end of time (Mt 28:20), and that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). We live by the grace of God, and so, although heavy, the burden becomes light. Above all, we have experienced in Christ the new reality that Easter brings: life will triumph.

More than anything, perhaps the most important thing at this point is to continue to pray for each other. Then, when this "trampling" is over, we will reorganize ourselves properly, for many face-to-face meetings.

We thank God for your partnership; we thank you very much for your support and prayers. Please note that we also pray for you brothers and sisters in the partnership - you can count on us.

Happy Easter!

In Christ,

Pastor Sílvia Beatrice Genz  
Presiding Pastor

Pastor Odair Airton Braun  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President

Pastor Dr. Mauro Batista de Souza  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President

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