

The woman in the Light of the World Sara S.Pozos Bravo "I paint myself because I am the person I know best" Frida Kahlo JUSTIFICATION. Much has been said, affirmed and misrepresented regarding the role of women in La Luz del Mundo Church. The affirmations without support, without any knowledge and justifying them on merely personal pretexts, have wanted to present a totally distorted vision of the role that women have in the Light of the World: that if we are less than men, that if they discriminate against us, that if we suffer violence, if they exclude us, if we have sexual relations with the apostle of Jesus Christ before getting married, if they force us to wear skirts or long dresses, etc. Almost every time I am made a statement of this type, I smile to myself and I usually answer with my personal experience and with what many of us have lived at La Luz del Mundo Church. I smile because these "doubts" of some people are actually lies that have been poured out in public opinion, on social networks and in some media, with the intention of misinforming and disseminating malicious information against the women of La Luz del Mundo. I smile because I know those rumors are false. I smile because slander and lies are the tools of those who seek media fame, economic reward or venting their own frustrations. Since none of the media and pseudo-journalists or large corporations that produce entertainment content have been interested in coming to ask me if what I mentioned before -and other things- is true, I have decided to write this series of 7 essays, started by This one is related to the role of women in La Luz del Mundo. Through these essays -paraphrasing Frida Kahlo- I will paint myself because I am the person I know best. In my narrative, I will refer to personal experiences and experiences; I will argue and make it clear that the bitterness of a handful of dissident women from La Luz del Mundo is that, bitterness, and not immoral and illegal, reprehensible, underhanded or covert patterns of conduct as they have wanted to años. Getting here has not been easy. I have spent years, even decades, enduring any number of false statements expressed by people who constantly repeat false information, with the intention of insulting my dignity as a woman and reproducing the number of myths surrounding La Luz del Mundo Church. Because? Why do people think without knowing? Why do people repeat myths assuming that what is "said" is true, and ignoring the interest of whoever generated or created the myth around The Light of the World? It is precisely what I want to answer in these lines. I will respond to the lies with analysis, arguments and explanations that allow those who read these lines to have elements to draw their own conclusions. Also, I will try to answer those whys; why people keep repeating those lies about the woman in La Luz del Mundo. Let's not lose sight of the fact that, in the digital world, misinformation and lies sell much more than the truth and good actions. No one will be interested to know that a woman surpassed herself and finished university as a result of having found inspiration in a religious discourse that guides her life; instead, many people will be interested in hearing false stories of supposed emancipation against a faith because that will generate reactions, morbidity, incitement to hatred and monetization by interactions that these false stories produce. Therefore, it is easier for people to believe that there is evil instead of good, because there is so much violence and injustice in our social environment that we believe that anyone can be capable of doing something, even if we have never met that person or that person. A group of people. To form an opinion of the other, the media, opinion leaders, large media conglomerates, social networks, algorithmic programming, among other factors and actors, play a determining role in creating a negative perception. Although I will analyze this subject in more depth in essay number 7 of this series, in this document I will refer to some reflections on perception and the production of perception to hate a particular group. LIE: Wearing long skirts is synonymous and a sign of submission. They wear long skirts because they are forced to. They are not free to dress as they please. They wear long skirts to protect man from falling into sin. And the use of the veil is a sign of submission. MY ANSWER: I find it worrying that some people continue to believe that by wearing long clothes (skirts and/or dresses) my rights are restricted. I maintain that the use of a long skirt by the woman of the Light of the World is an act based on two rights: the right to religious freedom and the right to decide for herself. To the extent that women's religious freedom is fully exercised, I find reasons to wear a skirt or long dress. Being a personal decision, there is no imposition or institutional obligation. I tell you how my first experience was and it led me to make the decision to consciously wear skirts for the first time in my life. Getting

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Although I will analyze this subject in more depth in essay number 7 of this series, in this document I will refer to some reflections on perception and the production of perception to hate a particular group. In my childhood I played these sports with the children and I really liked the shorts. He wore them day and night and only stopped wearing them when we went to school or when he went to church. After the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, my family moved to the city of Guadalajara, in the Hermosa Provincia neighborhood. By then I was already 12 years old and in my first year of high school. When we arrived in Guadalajara, my aunt Ana, my mother's younger sister and who is a year older than me, took me to the meeting that the teenagers of that age had in the church. The meeting was held from Monday to Friday (except Thursday) at three in the afternoon for the girls who went to school in the morning, and at 10 in the morning for those who went to school in the afternoon. That day, when I returned from high school, I changed my clothes and put on a T-shirt and shorts for the day. When it was a few minutes before three in the afternoon, my aunt told me that it was time to go and I ran for my scarf and my Bible. I don't remember that he said anything to me about how she was dressed and we went to the building located on Belén street, about three or four blocks from the house where we lived. Upon arriving at the place where the meetings were held, my aunt's friends came out and that was when I realized that she was not dressed correctly for the activity we were going to do. Girls and teenagers wore more or less long skirts and I didn't. I remember feeling something strange, a feeling that I had not known until then, and that day I could not - because I did not want to- enter to pray with the group of girls. Later the night came and I reviewed in my mind what I had felt that afternoon. For the first time I wondered the reason for the use of the scarf and the long skirts. I already wore them, I used to wear my scarf and my skirt when we went to church in the Vallejo neighborhood, but I had never questioned why I wore them. The next day, I was still worried and I asked my mother. She sat down with me and my sister Esther and she began to fully explain to us the reason for both actions. She asked us to find some quotes from the bible, she explained them to us and told us: "...the decision is yours, if you want to wear long skirts or not. They have a few years to decide." It didn't take me long to figure out what I would do. A few days after what I am telling you about, my mom was able to buy me a longer skirt (actually it reached my knee because I was always a girl who grew a little more than expected) and with that I went to the meetings of the group of girls in Hermosa Province. Has she made me happy to dress as I have? Yes, of course I do because it is the freedom I have to dress as I like best. Have they forced me, from the hierarchy of the Church, to wear long skirts or dresses? They never have and they never will. But then, where does the idea or interpretation come from that it is a limitation of our rights to wear long clothes? Here the answer: The

way of dressing -like other regulations- has a biblical basis that we find repeatedly in the discourse of the informants. So many limitations imposed on the physical appearance of the woman cannot hide the fact that what is intended to protect is not the woman but the one who sins for her. (emphasis mine). The woman must cover her body because she is essentially flesh -origin of sin- that provokes the opposite sex. She must also cover her head as a sign of inferiority and humility in front of the man and a way of preserving herself from the profane world. The veil is imposed when the word is heard or explained inside or outside the temple and when there is fear of falling into temptation. I do not know who the informants of the authors were, but in any case, their interpretation is incorrect. First, because the decision to dress as I do is mine. I decide if I wear a long skirt or a short skirt, if I wear pants or a dress, if I wear a shirt or a blouse, if I wear tennis shoes or high-heeled shoes. Second, although it is true that religious discourse is a normative framework -a duty to be- it does not impose, coerce or limit the human rights of women. In my case, I have liked long skirts and I wear them because I am fully convinced that it does not make me less of a woman, nor does it limit me, much less is it to protect the man who sins when he sees me. I differ and disagree with the affirmation of the authors when they say that "the woman must cover her body because she is essentially flesh -origin of sin- that provokes the opposite sex". Actually, all human beings cover our bodies because going naked is a violation of the law. The woman who wears pants also covers her body and does it completely, just like me who wears a long skirt. So, those women who like to wear pants also do it because they provoke the opposite sex? It is not like that, I think. However, the affirmation of the authors that when we cover our heads we do it as a sign of inferiority and humility in front of men, is far from correct. I do not cover my head as a sign of inferiority to men because when I go to prayer, to the temple or to church; I do it because I'm going to worship God. The scarf has nothing to do with the man and the use of the veil is strictly religious. Therefore, to a certain extent, I am outraged by the interpretation that the authors made - either by themselves or because the informants erroneously transmitted that to them- because going to worship God has absolutely nothing to do with submission. And yes, we use it when we read the Bible, when we pray, when we worship God, and when we sit down to reflect on our faith and our convictions in church. Now I stop to comment on a book that has helped me build some of my arguments. It is called "Against Hate", by Carolin Emcke, a German philosopher who reflects deeply on the most controversial issues of today: fanaticism, racism and the growing hostility towards others. From this book there is a line of analysis in which I saw myself reflected. The author analyzes how historically excluded groups are attacked and hated, made invisible and despised. Among other groups, the reference that caught my attention is the one related to Muslims and Muslim women wearing the burqa. At some point in her dissertation, the author stops to ask: But beyond that, why should a headdress make us so nervous? After all, it is nothing more than a cultural or religious symbol that tells us that there are people with other beliefs. Is that why it bothers so much? Why is diversity harder to deny if it manifests itself publicly? And so I ask those who have questioned women who profess the faith of the Light of the World, paraphrasing Emcke, why do long skirts and dresses make you so nervous? Why does it bother them so much that we use them? Who has determined and under what criteria has it been done, that wearing long skirts or dresses is a sign of submission? Don't we have the right to dress as we want? By way of response and based on the above, I will tell you that, in reality, the women who profess the faith of La Luz del Mundo are authentically free and are like any other woman in society: we work, study, read, sing We go on a trip, for a walk, to meetings with friends, to eat with the family, we make decisions every day, we cry, we laugh, we get sick, etc. And yes, we also attend the temple and we do it when we want to go. LIE: The woman in La Luz del Mundo is discriminated against by the man, she is less than the man. MY ANSWER: The woman in La Luz del Mundo is not only equal to the man in his relationship with God, but she also actively participates in managerial positions as teachers and spiritual advisors, as heads of women's groups; she also trains ministers in social, administrative, accounting, medical, and health issues; she builds temples, designs global reach strategies and a long etcetera. She does it without being discriminated against in any way. Does the woman in La Luz del Mundo preach and teach topics of faith? Yes, she does and she has. I've done. Does she actively

participate in all religious ceremonies? Yes, of course. Does she have the same rights as the man? Yes she does she has them. And one of the most recurring questions about women in La Luz del Mundo: are they part of the hierarchy? Can there be female apostles? Women can and are part of the hierarchy of the Church. There are women in charge of groups just as there are men in charge of groups. There are female deacons who, in my opinion, are also recognized for their work, for their assertiveness, for their career in the Church, just as is the case with men. Do women deacons officiate sacraments? That is, do they baptize and consecrate marriages, or do they present children? As far as I understand, they don't, but that doesn't mean they can't perform that function. Now, the first time they asked me if there would be a woman who would act as an apostle, I answered the same thing that I will write here today: I cannot say no, because the election is an exclusive attribute of God and he can choose for the apostolate whoever he wants. And what can I say? That if we review the history of God, men have been chosen to exercise that ministry. So where does the idea come from that the woman in La Luz del Mundo is less than the man and that the religious institution exercises absolute control over the consciences and behaviors of the believers? To answer, I will quote again the work done by René De la Torre and Patricia Fortuny. I am going to quote long paragraphs, in order to be able to analyze more thoroughly the interpretations of the authors that, since then, everyone believed as if they were absolute truths. A woman cannot be a pastor, because in the Bible they are not authorized to officiate in cults: "Let your women be silent in the congregations; because they are not allowed to speak, but are subject as the law also says. And if she wants to learn something, ask her husband at her house; because it is unseemly for a woman to speak in the congregation." (First Corinthians: 14: 34-35). Even when women are excluded from the religious world of men, since they do not have access to officiate in general prayers, nor to speak in the pulpit, or speak or read the Bible in meetings attended by men, men, she plays an essential role in all-female congregations and prayers. For the married woman a special consecration has been instituted. This is an event run by them and for them, -although men can attend. It is the appropriate time for housewives since the children are at school and the husbands are at work. In this sentence, in addition to dealing with general topics of interest and current affairs, it is oriented towards the discussion of domestic issues. Here the central role that women play as mother and wife is also reinforced, in the reproduction of religion within the family. Women should not intervene in the ministries or in more teaching than exhorting others to advise them in the field of the family and sexuality (Morá; 1986: 117)". The first time I read this document, I wondered if the authors were referring to the neighborhood where I lived and grew up. The colony where I have attended prayers all my life. I even came to think that they were talking about another religious group. But no, they were referring to us, the women believers in the faith of La Luz del Mundo. In this regard, I must say that I have never been excluded "from the religious world of men." I have always felt the confidence to dialogue with many ministers on strictly religious issues, both apologetic doctrine and doctrine in general (the restoration of the Church, eternal life, election, faith, the love of God, Jesus Christ, etc. ). I have even differed with some on certain issues and the interpretation of those issues. But not only have I established that always respectful dialogue with them. I have also trained men and women in various topics in which I have specialized. In addition, the biblical text that women be silent in the congregation, I have never seen it used in any of the hundreds of prayers that I have attended during more than 40 years of my life in the Church. The women who have led some prayer -presided over- speak what we understand to be the doctrine -or as I call it, the religious discourse-. It seems to me that the interpretation made by the authors of the role of women in the La Luz del Mundo church is inadequate and incorrect. A little over 30 years ago they did the study, I was already at the University and I was beginning to collaborate in the Public Relations office of the Church. He also attended my prayers and read everything that fell into my hands. Everything was books, newspapers and magazines because the Internet, for those years, did not exist or had not reached my hands. So I, as a woman and young man in my 20s, was already participating in the administrative areas of the church, presiding at prayers, giving courses and workshops to men and women, speaking in public and from the pulpit, and doing everything the authors say. that we were forbidden. Even before that, I have no record in my memory

that what they described based on the field methodology and interviews they did, as well as the review of what had been written about La Luz del Mundo up to those years, had ever been expressed or prohibited. So why do the media and some journalists and researchers and academics insist that women in La Luz del Mundo are discriminated against? Here I am going to quote Emcke again in other pages of the book that I have been commenting on. The context of the quote is as follows: the author analyzes the hatred of various groups against refugees who were entering Germany in 2015 and 2016. As a result of these migratory flows, hatred against refugees in society arose. But hate doesn't come out of nowhere. Hate always has a specific context that explains it and in which it arises. The reasons that support it and serve to explain why a group supposedly "deserves" to be hated must be produced in a specific historical and cultural context. These motives have to be exposed, narrated and illustrated over and over again until they settle in the form of a determined disposition [...] The staunch and fiery hatred is the product of coldly calculated practices and convictions, long cultivated and transmitted for generations [...] I maintain that this has happened with the perception that has been tried to produce around women in La Luz del Mundo. There are groups and people interested in destroying everything that has to do with it. These groups have allied themselves and launched a smear campaign against the faith of believers, causing the emergence of hatred. You already know the specific context that explains it and in which this massive "production" of documentaries, false and biased news, and total disinformation arises, but what are the reasons behind this hatred so that they believe that we "deserve" to be hated? and destroyed? By way of ideas that could serve as an answer to the previous questions, I propose that perhaps the unhappiness of some, the bitterness of others and fame or money, United States citizenship, the personal problems they had with someone, has led them to hate what they previously defended. I would not have any comment to make because I have also been taught to respect everyone's decisions and to change religion is an inalienable and totally respectable human right; However, what outrages and tires me is that some people use lies to produce an incorrect and discriminatory perception against my religious convictions, to attack us, and affirm things that are not true, and that is unacceptable. It is unacceptable for many reasons, but mainly, because the staunch hatred of a few who used their personal problems to want to destroy my faith, is a hatred -as the author says- product of coldly calculated practices and convictions, long cultivated and transmitted during generations. And precisely I want to resume one of those practices coldly calculated and transmitted for generations. That rumor that, after being repeated so much, has been translated into highly proven "science", incapable of being doubted. LIE: The women of La Luz del Mundo have sexual relations with the leader of their church before getting married. The women of this church are used as sexual bait for their leader. The women of La Luz del Mundo are "groomed" to believe that it is a divine blessing to be in bed with their leader. Of all the lies against my faith and the women who profess the faith of La Luz del Mundo, the one that outrages me the most is the one I have just described. Next, I will describe the reasons for my outrage and the response to those damn rumors that have become the most propagated lie in some media. 1. Those who suggest that the more than two million women in La Luz del Mundo are mere sexual objects is outrageous and disgusting. That damn rumor has never been and will never be true, which, honestly, irritates me and makes me feel annoyed. As I already mentioned, my family is part of five generations in the Church. From my grandmother, my mother, my aunts, my three sisters, my more than 20 cousins and my direct niece have found their husbands and have married them while in the Church. To say that all of us let ourselves be fooled because someone interpreted that there is a natural and irrational submission in the woman from La Luz del Mundo, capable of leading her to have sexual relations with her religious leader, is to mock our intelligence and treat us as ignoramus who do not know their rights, incapable of distinguishing between good and bad, between what is even morally permissible and what is not. Could a man be at the same time and at the same time in different geographical areas to have sexual relations with the more than two million women of La Luz del Mundo, who live in more than 60 countries, throughout urban cities? and rural? Of course not, but people who don't think, who don't analyze, who find their motivation in morbidity and in the lies of some, the pretext for hating others, don't even stop to reflect on human impossibility as a reason for disprove these

falsehoods. 2. Those who affirm that we have been educated to be submissive, docile and meek from faith and from religious discourse, is to suggest that we are women without a brain, without the ability to think for ourselves, without a shred of intelligence and without dignity. And that is completely false. We are empowered and free women. Yes, even if they make fun of it and don't want to accept it, that's the way it is. 3. I must affirm that the preparation that I have received as religious instruction in La Luz del Mundo, since I can remember, has been to invite me to be an authentic Christian who helps those most in need, who works for his community, who excels in terms of academics and to exercise their human liberties within the framework of their rights. And that's what I've tried to do since the first time I heard that I should study to be able to help the brothers who suffered from discrimination. 4. But despite my reasons and arguments stated above, there will be those who affirm that what I say is not true, that they will prepare us to have sexual relations with the leader of my church, that they manipulate us and that they brainwashed us. In such a case, they are people who will never understand that they should respect us and, in this case, it is better to ignore the irrational closure of these people. 5. Finally, those who know me know that I am anything but submissive. I don't mean my relationship with God; I mean that I have never been fooled by anyone and I mean that, in reality, I do and decide what I want and think is most convenient for me. I can go out and show my face and support everything I have written and will write. I am the clearest proof that my faith has ever clouded my reason and that, in fact, I have made decisions without considering my religious frame of reference. I say this, not because I want to appear or be irreverent or deny my faith; on the contrary, I say it because I reaffirm my faith in the rational use of my decisions and freedoms. The German philosopher that I have been quoting, Caroline Emcke, makes an analysis that comes in handy when I express my indignation in the previous lines. The context of the text is that the author is analyzing the bias that many people have about the world, about the other, about the other who professes a faith and, in particular, about the Muslim refugees in Germany, and she wonders what are the consequences of perceiving people, "... over and over again, in only one of its facets...". And she says: The nefarious effect of forums and publications in which refugees always appear as a collective and never as individuals, in which Muslims are always and only presented as terrorists or primitive "barbarians", is that they almost completely nullify the possibility of that we imagine migrants in a different way. [...] Whoever only gets information through these media, whoever only has access to this biased vision of the world and the people who inhabit it, will end up assimilating the same chains of established associations. Over time it will be almost impossible to conceive of Muslims or migrants in any other way. Let's imagine this narrow-mindedness applied to reality in other of its possible variants: let's imagine a Facebook page, a newspaper or a television program in which Christians were mentioned solely and exclusively when they committed a crime that every crime committed by a person of Christian confession was causally related to his creed. In a forum of this nature there would not be a single piece of news about Christian couples in love, about Christian lawyers who are experts in tax law, about Catholic farmers or Protestant mechanics; not a piece of news about sacred choral music or about theater festivals in which I could see Christian actors, but only and exclusively information about the Ku Klux Klan, the attacks by anti-abortionists and other individual crimes that would range from gender violence to bank robbery, kidnapping and murder with robbery, including child abuse; all under the heading Christianity. How would this scheme affect our perception of reality? If we change the words "Muslims" and "Christians or Catholics" throughout this text and put in their place the words The Light of the World, we will understand that the philosophical analysis carried out by Emcke describes, without thinking about it, perfectly what the misinformation, rumors, lies and erroneous academic interpretations of what the women of La Luz del Mundo have suffered. And what have we suffered? We have been humiliated in our human dignity and in our intelligence, when what I have already commented has been affirmed. We have been related per se as sexual objects, just because we wear a scarf or dress long. We have been wrongly and unfairly stereotyped as part of a group that has been associated with negative and criminal words and acts. We have suffered a negative association caused by the media with the issue of sexual violence. Where are the women of La Luz del Mundo right now? The woman in the Church lives a condition of privilege and total inclusion.

Not that it didn't exist before, but now, with much more clarity, women have become aware of our rights and obligations. Suffice it to cite the presentations of the apostle of Jesus Christ, brother Naasón Joaquín, in which he expressed -for example- the importance and role of women in the Church (Ecuador, 2015); the right of women and the obligation of men to live a life free from violence (United States 2016); the improvement of women in all senses, including the spiritual or religious (Mexico 2017 and 2018). Derived from these presentations, for example, in May 2019, some women with the degree of deaconesses were included to preside over religious ceremonies and outline issues related to women's rights in the Church. They are teachers in religious teaching just like men are. For this reason, every time someone questions us about these issues, perhaps what they are actually transmitting is the prejudice or misinformation to which they have been subjected. And also for this reason I have decided to write these lines because in La Luz del Mundo women are free to decide about their own lives, they are free to believe and exercise their religious freedom and they are, with full use of reason, happy with their decisions for what feels ful