

The Truth is . . .

A Statement of Faith for the TIBM Family of Churches

THE TRUTH IS: God exists. He alone rules over all things, and He does so completely and perfectly. God is the Supreme King, the Sovereign One, and His Kingdom is boundless and endless. At the beginning of time, God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing by His spoken word. God works out all things for His own purpose and glory.

THE TRUTH IS: The one and only God of the universe exists in three persons. So, the Father is God, the Son, Jesus Christ, is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. These three persons are eternally distinct and co-equal.

THE TRUTH IS: God is speaking and always has been. He delights in making Himself and His ways known. You can hear His message in the things He has created. You can read His words in the Bible. Above all, God showed Himself to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

THE TRUTH IS: The Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, are God's written word. The Holy Spirit moved in the hearts of men to write it, and, therefore, the originals are without error. God has preserved His word through the centuries so that we may study it and live by it. The Bible can be fully trusted and thoroughly tested—its words are true and lasting, and are the supreme rule for living.

THE TRUTH IS: Jesus Christ is God the Father's one and only Son. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to a virgin named Mary—a miracle baby. Throughout His life, Jesus never once disobeyed God the Father, never once failed to do what was right. In fact, He was history's only perfectly sinless person. Jesus was and is fully man and fully God all in one person.

THE TRUTH IS: God directly created Adam and Eve. They were not made like any other creature. No, when God made the first humans, He made them special—in His image. When first made, they were without flaw and enjoyed a perfect relationship with God. Adam and Eve are the real, historical parents of the entire human race.

THE TRUTH IS: Our first parents sinned by disobeying God. God is holy and will not leave sin unpunished. The punishment for sin is both physical and spiritual death. We have inherited our sinful nature from Adam and Eve. Our natural habit is to go against God's will in our thoughts, our words, and our deeds. We are all guilty of sin. Our sin means that we are guilty of violating the laws of God. Our sin means that we are unclean, shame-covered, and separated from the holiness of His presence. Our sin means that we are vulnerable prey to Satanic attacks, deception and bondage.

THE TRUTH IS: Satan and evil spirits exist. They are created spiritual beings who oppose God's Kingdom and seek to destroy humanity. However, Satan, sin, and the powers of evil suffered their ultimate and final defeat when Jesus Christ died on the cross.

THE TRUTH IS: Jesus died on the cross in order to rescue us from sin, shame, and Satan. He was our substitute, dying in our place and taking upon Himself all that stood against us. Everyone who trusts in Jesus as Lord is declared innocent by God, forgiven of all their sins, cleansed from shame, and set free from the bondage of Satan. All this is a free gift of God's grace. After Jesus died, His body was placed in a tomb. On the third day, He physically rose

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from the grave. Jesus totally and completely defeated death. After appearing various times to many witnesses, Jesus ascended into heaven. He is there right now, sitting at the right hand of His Father. He is Lord of all, the King of Kings, our great High Priest, and Advocate.

THE TRUTH IS: God loves you! His free gift of eternal life is available to anyone who will put his or her faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is believing Jesus is who He said He was and trusting He'll do what He said He would. When you accept this gift of grace, you are reborn and enter into a personal relationship with God. The Holy Spirit comes to dwell in your heart and begins to transform your life. You become God's child. The Holy Spirit gives you life, helps you understand the Bible, empowers you to live for God, and gives you everything you need to serve and to tell God's story.

THE TRUTH IS: The Church is not a building. The Church is made up of all true followers of Jesus Christ. In the Bible, they are called His "body" and His "bride." They have been given the task of filling the earth with the knowledge of God's glory and grace. God is on a mission. His saving plan means joy for every nation, tribe, people and language. The Holy Spirit leads the Church in its participation in God's mission. The Church may also be described as the "God-worshippers"—those who seek to honor and praise God through Jesus Christ in all areas of life. Jesus Himself instructed His followers to practice two very special ceremonies that we commonly refer to as Baptism and Lord's Supper.

THE TRUTH IS: The "two ceremonies" cannot save you. However, their importance must not be understated. They are "symbolic" in that they point to the promise of God through the life, death, resurrection, ascension and second coming of Jesus Christ. They are "sacramental" in that they are in various ways spiritually nurturing to the believer. They are "ordinal" in that they are practiced in obedience to the words of God in the Bible.

THE TRUTH IS: Jesus is coming back. He will soon take the world by surprise by personally and visibly returning to earth. He will return in power and glory. He will then gather His elect ones—the Church. He will finally judge the living and the dead, and He will bring His Kingdom to fulfillment.

THE TRUTH IS: Whether or not you believe in Jesus Christ, your physical body will be raised from death at His return. Those who have not put their faith in Him will be punished forever for their sin in Hell. Those who are His followers will be forever with God in the joy-filled and glorious Kingdom of Heaven.

THE TRUTH IS: No matter how messed up you are, no matter how flawed or sinful, even if you think you just might be the worst sinner ever, God really loves you. God can and will forgive you if you'll just come to Him. And, by the way, you *need* Him. None of us can get along without Him. There is no set of rules or recovery program or psychology that will ever fully heal you, fill you or give you an eternal home. But He can. In fact, you can talk to Him about it this very moment. You can pray to Him right now—turning your life over to His way of living, confessing that you are a sinner, and asking Jesus to be the Lord of your life. He stands ready to save you just as you are and to transform your life as you never thought possible.