

A NEW LIFE WITH CHRIST

Church

*Body of
Christ*



❖ The Gospel Series ❖

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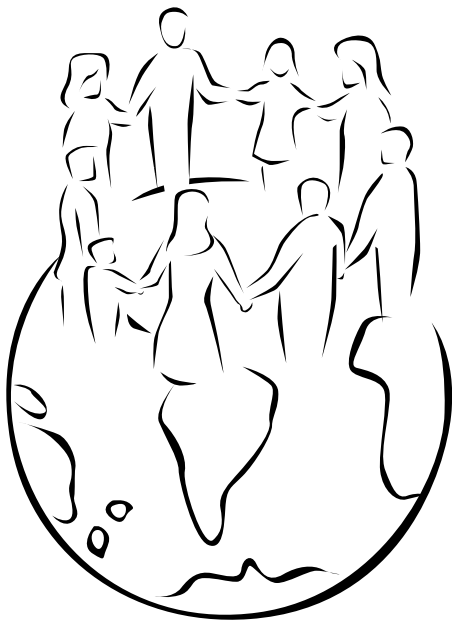


If you would like to understand the church in greater depth after reading this booklet, additional free literature is available. Please see the contact information on the opposite page.

What Makes A Church?

The word “church” has a two-fold meaning. The church is the congregation of believers in this world, and it is also the collective body of all believers in the past, present, and future.

So the church in the Bible is not a place to go or a building to sit in. It is made up of people, God’s people. It goes beyond national boundary, ethnic group, political alliance, or social status. With his own blood, Christ “purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9 NIV). Together, these believers constitute the church (Acts 20:28).



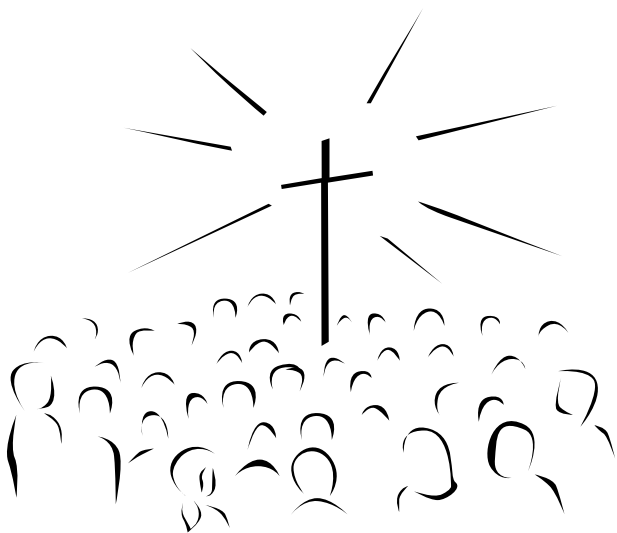
Becoming a church member, however, is not a choice to join an organization for some common interest, but the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In a social organization, a few like-minded people can come together, set up a charter, and recruit members. But in the church, it is God who chooses people into the church. As our Lord said, “you did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit” (John 15:16). Through baptism, the blood of our Lord unites us as members of the church.



The Body of Christ

Christ is the “head of the church.” Out of his love for the church, he gave his own life for her. So the church must submit to Christ in everything. She must follow Christ’s command and do only what Christ would do and speak what Christ would speak.

The church has a very intimate relationship with Christ. It is “his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:23). In other words, Christ shines forth his wisdom, power, and glory through the church.



Each believer is a member of this body. Like a family, the church provides for the spiritual needs of her members. The Holy Spirit distributes various gifts and abilities to the members so that they may encourage and serve one another.

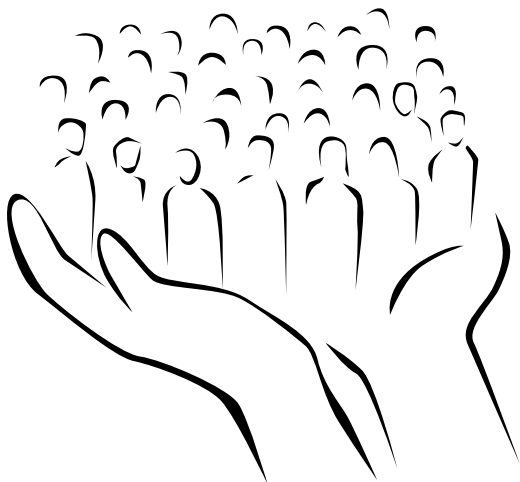
Despite the variety of jobs and functions, we belong to one body. “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). The spirit of unity and mutual support is the guiding principle of the church. As members of this family, we need to work together using our God-given abilities to help each other grow. Having the love and grace of our Lord as our common bond, we can always have joy, peace, and strength in Christ.



The Church and Salvation

Our salvation is through Jesus Christ alone. But since the church is the body of Christ, the church is closely related to our salvation. Christ has given the church the mission to preach and baptize for the forgiveness of sins; he also continues his saving work through the sacraments administered by the church. Therefore, to accept the church is to accept Christ and to be saved is to become a member of the body of Christ—the church. We may not separate the Savior from his body.

“For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior” (Ephesians 5:23). Christ is the savior of the entire body, not of separate body parts. Therefore, we are not saved apart from the church, but as part of the whole church.

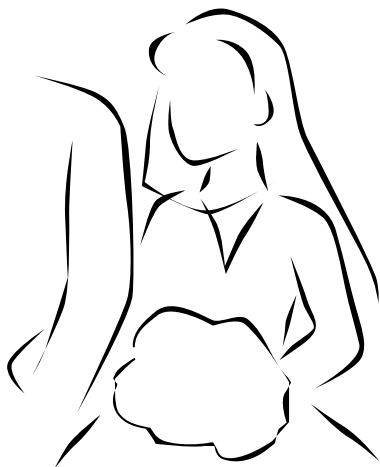


One Church

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call” (Ephesians 4:4). Since Christ has only one body, and there is only one Spirit, there can only be one true church.

The Bible uses many analogies to teach us that there is only one church. Christ is the Bridegroom and the church the bride. Just as a bridegroom knows only *one* bride, our Lord knows and saves only one church.

Furthermore, Christ is the Shepherd and we are the sheep. Just as a shepherd gathers his sheep into *one* flock, Christ brings all believers into one church.



One Faith

To find the one true church, we need to first understand that the truth of salvation is what defines the church. Finding the true church does not just mean choosing one congregation over another, but finding the church that preaches the true gospel. The Bible tells us that the church is founded on the teachings of the apostles and the prophets (Ephesians 2:20). It also calls the church “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). It upholds and proclaims the truth that is taught in the Bible.

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:4,5). There is only one gospel of salvation. Two churches with different beliefs on salvation cannot be both true, because the true church only has one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

Tens of thousands of Christian churches with different teachings on salvation exist in the world today. It is necessary for every Christian to seek the one faith that the apostles once shared and preached, rather than make choices based on factors such as the quality of the choir or the eloquence of the speaker. In this end time, the Lord himself has raised up the True Jesus Church to preach the only way of salvation. We must come into this church by accepting the true gospel and be baptized into the one body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:13).

The Holy Spirit and the Church

“The body apart from the spirit is dead” (James 2:26). Likewise, a congregation without the Spirit of God has no spiritual life. The church of the living God must have the Holy Spirit. In other words, believers in the true church are given the promised Holy Spirit, with the speaking of tongues as the evidence*. Together, these believers become the dwelling place of the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22).



* For a more detailed explanation, please read the booklet in the series titled *Holy Spirit*.

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ gives the church the authority to forgive sins (John 20:22-23). Therefore, it is the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes baptism effective for the forgiveness of sins (1 John 5:6–8).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who reveals the truth of salvation (John 16:13). Thus in the true church where God's spirit is present, people can hear of the full gospel and walk in the way of salvation.

The Holy Spirit also distributes his gifts to the members of the church, such as the gift of understanding, the gift of healing, and the gift of encouragement. As members of Christ's body, we may benefit from these various spiritual gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12:4,12,13).



The Church and Miracles

Our Lord gave the apostles the authority to perform signs, wonders, and miracles. “He called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity” (Matthew 10:1). Because the church is the body of Christ, she also carries this divine power.

Signs and miracles serve to testify to the truth of salvation. “And [the disciples] went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it” (Mark 16:20). The witness of blood in visions during baptisms in the True Jesus Church, for example, is a strong proof of the cleansing power of baptism.

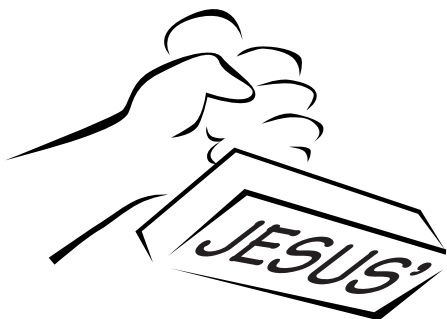


True Jesus Church

God spoke through the prophet Zechariah, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). It is God’s Spirit, not human effort, that establishes the temple of the last days—the church. This was how the True Jesus Church came to be. The Holy Spirit first revealed the truth of salvation in the Bible to a few humble Christians and then commissioned them to proclaim the full gospel.

The Lord has also confirmed that the True Jesus Church is his church through signs and miracles. Since the establishment of the True Jesus Church until today, many have found the truth of salvation in this church and have experienced the wonder of God’s power.

The name True Jesus Church tells us that Jesus is the Lord of the church. The church is the body of Jesus; everyone who is baptized in the church comes under the Lord’s name (Acts 15:16,17). It is only right that the church bears and uplifts Jesus’ name.



Church Services

While not every church-goer may be a true Christian, every true Christian makes an effort to attend church meetings.

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). Our Lord himself is with us when we gather in his name. He will bless us as we worship him through songs and prayer, and as we study his word through sermons and discussions.

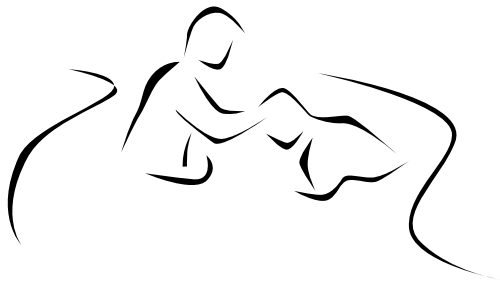
The Lord Jesus also taught us to love and serve one another. By meeting with brothers and sisters in the church, we use our given talents to build up one another. By combining our efforts, we can spread God’s Word more effectively. The body of Christ can only function and grow through unity and coordination.

“Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24,25). While we wait for that day (the coming of Christ), we need to strengthen each other’s faith so that we will meet our Lord with confidence when he comes.

The Church and Her Mission

Our Lord Jesus gave the church a mission: preach the gospel and take care of his flock. This mission is a continuation of Christ's ministry in the world.

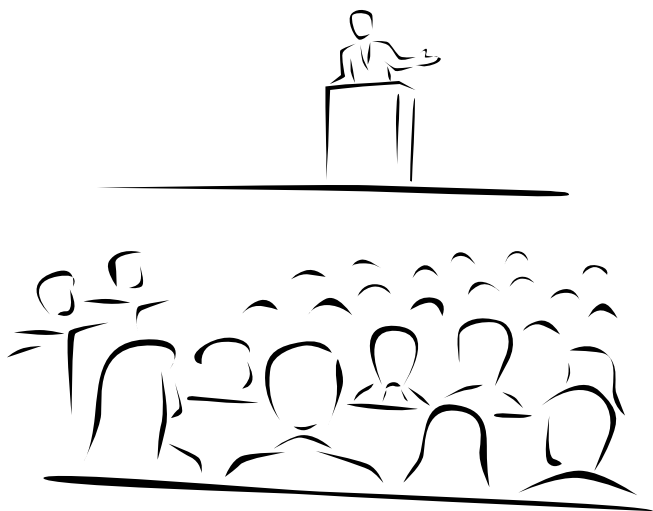
Before his ascension to heaven, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28:18–20).



* That is, the name of Jesus (see John 17:11; Acts 4:10–12; 2:38)

The church takes on Christ's authority and must bring the gospel to the world. It is through preaching that people may have the opportunity to listen and believe. And as people believe and are baptized, the church grows. The church also needs to bring up the faith of the members by teaching them to obey the commands of our Lord.

By fulfilling her mission, the church is also preparing for the coming of Christ. There will be a great wedding banquet for Christ and his bride—the church. That will be the finale of God's salvation plan, when the believers will join with the Lord and be with him forever.



The Church and You

God has invited you into his household, the church, to become his child. Come into Jesus' open arms, where you will find warmth, forgiveness, comfort, and a new start.

Before Christ comes to judge the world, God has rebuilt the church on earth to call everyone to repentance. He now opens wide the door of salvation through his church. So we invite you to seek the truth in the True Jesus Church, be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord guide you into the gate to eternal life.





TRUE JESUS CHURCH

11236 Dale Street
Garden Grove, CA 92841

U.S.A.

1.888.878.3463

www.tjc.org



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