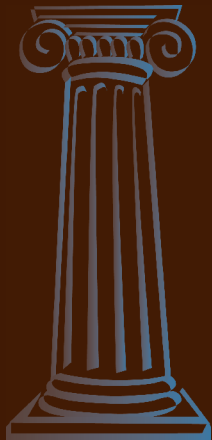


Church

Body of Christ

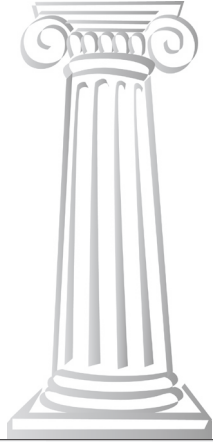


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TRUE JESUS CHURCH

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Church

Body of Christ

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WHAT MAKES A CHURCH?

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

Thus, the church is not merely a place to go or a building to sit in; it is made up of people — God’s people. It goes beyond national boundaries, ethnic groups, political alliances, or social status. With His own blood, Christ “purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9 NIV), and together, these believers constitute the church (Acts 20:28).



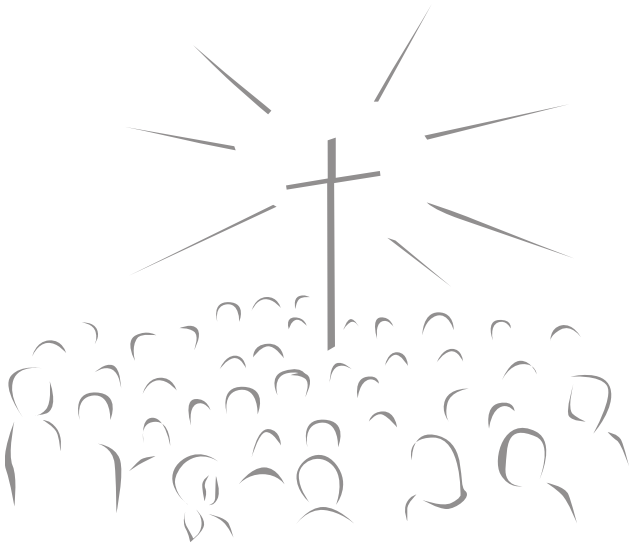
Becoming a church member, however, is not a choice to join an organization for some common interest, but the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In a social organization, a few like-minded people can come together, set up a charter, and recruit members. However, in the church, it is God who chooses. 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). As members of the church, we are united through baptism by the blood of Jesus Christ.



THE BODY OF CHRIST

Out of His love for the church, Jesus gave His own life for her. Christ is the “head of the church” (Ephesians 5:23), 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 fullness 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 members so that with them they may encourage and serve one another.

Despite the variety of jobs and functions, we all belong to the one body.

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12).

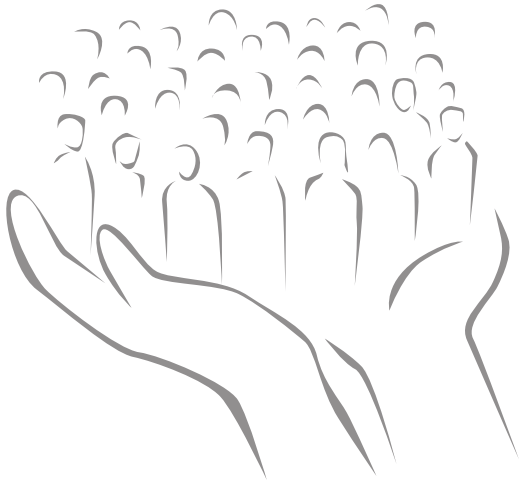
The maintenance of a spirit of unity and mutual support is the guiding principle of the church. As members of this family, we need to work together using our God-given abilities to help each other in our growth. With the love and grace of our Lord as our common bond, we will constantly have joy, peace, 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. “...Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body” (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 in one hope of your calling” (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 is His 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 His 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 is not simply a matter of 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 NIV). The true church upholds and proclaims the truth that is taught in the Bible. “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 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 to salvation. We must join this church, the body of Christ, by accepting the true gospel and being baptized into the one body (SEE 1 Corinthians 12:13).

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

“The body without 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 the complete gospel and be led to the correct path to salvation.



THE CHURCH AND MIRACLES

Our Lord gave the apostles the authority to perform signs, wonders, and miracles. “And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease” (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 they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mark 16:20). The witness of blood in visions during baptisms in the True Jesus Church, for example, is 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 into existence. The Holy Spirit first revealed the truth of salvation in the Bible to truth-seeking Christians and then commissioned them to proclaim the complete 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 in 1917 to the present time, 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 4:12; 15:16–17). The church should thus bear and uplift Jesus’ name.



CHURCH SERVICES

While not every church-goer may be a true Christian, every true Christian makes an effort to attend church services. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). For those who gather in Jesus’ name, the Lord is with them, blessing them as they worship Him through songs and prayer, and as they study His word through sermons and discussions.

The Lord Jesus also taught us to love and serve one another. By meeting with fellow believers in the church, we can use our given talents to help and build up each other. In fact, by combining our efforts, God’s word can be spread more effectively. The body of Christ can only function and grow through the unity and coordination of its members.

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24–25).

As we wait for that day (the coming of Christ), we need to strengthen each other in our faith so that we may be able to meet our Lord with confidence when He comes.

THE CHURCH AND HER MISSION

The 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.

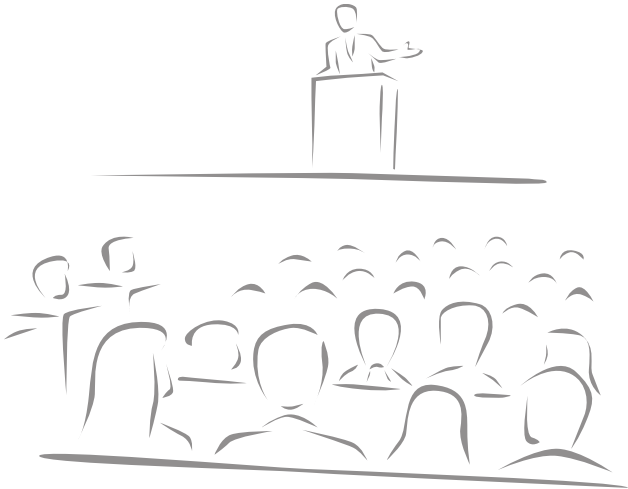
Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus said to His disciples, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end 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 evangelism that people are given the opportunity to listen and believe, and as people believe and are baptized, the church grows. The church also needs to nurture the faith of its 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. It is the finale of God's salvation plan, the eternal union of believers with the Lord in heaven.



THE CHURCH AND YOU

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

Before Christ comes to judge the world, God in His mercy has rebuilt His church on earth so that all may be called 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.



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