

Beliefs to Die For (Or At Least Live Life By!)
Ni River Community Church Statement of Faith

1. There is only one God and his name is Jehovah (God Almighty)

There is only one God who is in charge and in control of the whole universe (sovereign). He created it and He commands it like a loving Father – not domineering, but guiding the outcome of the choices of all His creation. He has existed forever (eternal) and has three distinct but unified expressions of Himself – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (trinity). (See Genesis 1 for a good explanation and description)

2. Mankind is the supreme but flawed creation of God (Love child)

God created all that is, but his chief creation and most cherished relationship is with humanity. Humans were made in the likeness of God having trinitarian qualities like Him (body, mind, and spirit in one package). Man, being made in the image of God has the potential for great creativity, generosity, and love, just like God! However man chose to try and be God and sinned against God by disobeying Him. This has resulted in man's great separation from God and the need to be saved from sin and reconciled to God, thus reclaiming a rightful place as God's child. Until each human decides to confess that sin and seek forgiveness and reconciliation, that separation of relationship will continue to exist even into eternity. (See Genesis chapters 1-3 and Romans chapters 3-5)

3. Jesus is the Son of God and man's Savior (One who rescues the lost)

Jesus is God and the physical representation of the trinity that is God. As God, and having a desire that man relate to Him, God became man in the form of Jesus, the Son of God, and chose to be purely born quite miraculously to a virgin woman (only God could do that!).

As a human, Jesus lived a sinless life, which is important to believe, for He chose to pay the price for man's separation from God by sin. Jesus chose to die as the payment for that sin. Only a sin-free person could pay the price for sin. He conquered sin, Satan, and death by once again proving that He is God and doing what only a God could do – he died and came back to life!

He then left the physical world of humans and returned to Heaven, promising to come back physically and take all who choose to accept His payment for sin to Heaven with Him. In the meantime, He left the Spiritual

part of Himself to comfort and encourage those who believe in Him: the Holy Spirit! (See John chapter 3,14,15, Romans chapters 4,5, I Corinthians 15, and Hebrews 4)

4. Salvation from Death and Sin (A loving gift from God to man!)

Sin has separated humanity from God, because God is perfect and sinless! That's what makes Heaven perfect – no pain, no sorrow, no guilt! That perfection is also what keeps humanity from being able to go to Heaven.

However, God did not create humanity to never be able to spend time with Him, so He had to invent a cure for this disease called “sin.” Humanity tried to be really good, but couldn't do it. Humanity tried to build a way to God physically through a big tower called “Babel” and, spiritually, through religion and rule keeping, but both were terribly short of connection and perfection. So God decided, if you are going to do something right, you better do it yourself. He became human to identify with humans and lived among all the temptations of humans without ever giving into them. Then God allowed Himself to be killed by humans as the perfect sacrifice.

All of humanity's sins (past, present, and future) were placed upon Jesus by God, His Father, at the Cross. He paid for all of them through this death sentence. His death takes the place of our ultimate spiritual death and separation from Him, should we choose to accept that free gift! Not only that, but His conquering of death by rising from the dead, empowers us to live eternally with Him. That is called Salvation because He saved us from an ugly present and future (that is of course if we want it!). (See John 3 and Ephesians 2 and Romans 10 and Hebrews 4:14-6)

5 About Eternity (Life after death)

When humans die, what happens? Do people go to Heaven, and if so, where is Heaven? Do some really bad people go to Hell, and if so, where is Hell and is it really full of fire? The Bible speaks of both places, but often in vague and figurative terms.

One thing is for sure - **Heaven is always referred to as the place where God is and Hell as the place where God is not.** God desires that all mankind live forever with Him in Heaven where He is and that is why He became man and suffered death to pay that price so we could live with Him forever (John 3:16). However, God loves humanity, and He desires that we love Him, which demands choice – a choice to love or not to love Him.

Therefore, as a loving God, He leaves the choice up to us as to whether or not we want to be in His presence and live with Him forever in Heaven. He does promise to keep us with him forever if we choose Him (John 10) or to allow us to be apart from Him forever, and anywhere where God is not is hell and death, for the Bible says that God is Life (John 14:6) and God is Love (John 4)! (See John 10 and John 17:1-4)

6. About the Christian (One who follows Jesus as God and Leader)

A Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ. As followers of Jesus, Christians believe that Jesus is God's Son and the embodiment of God. Christians have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as the forgiver of their sins, and the leader of their lives.

Christians live each day with the goal of growing into the image of Christ by surrendering more of their lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and by growing closer to God through a personal relationship with Him. The Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ and believes that Jesus speaks to him/her through the "fleeting thoughts" that enter into a person's mind and heart. (See II Corinthians 5 and Galatians 5 and Ephesians 6)

7. About the Holy Spirit (God's Spirit indwelling the human spirit)

When Jesus physically left this earth, He did not spiritually leave humanity alone. According to John 14 and 15 in the Bible, Jesus promised that He would send a Friend, a Comforter, a form of Himself that would live inside each person who chose to give God his/her heart! The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ who lives inside and indwells those who submit to and follow Jesus with their hearts and lives.

The Holy Spirit speaks to each of His followers by speaking to their spirit. He is the voice in their fleeting thoughts, those thoughts that enter into their minds and spirits to do and think good and to love others. The Holy Spirit seeks to guide us as a loving parent guides a child through encouragement as well as discipline. The Holy Spirit also exists in the world to make all of humanity aware of its need for a Savior from Sin and to encourage all to accept God's free gift of Salvation. The Holy Spirit empowers all believers to be able to understand the Bible and to use special gifts from God to minister to the spirits of mankind. These unique God-endowed gifts are called Spiritual Gifts. (See John 14-16 and Romans 12)

8. About the Bible (God's voice in written form to guide my life)

God also has given humanity a great guide for understanding His love for all mankind. As He has done throughout history, God has chosen to use humans to communicate His love and His guidance for mankind to experience relationship with Him. The written Word of God is called the Bible and God has inspired humans to write out His words that reveal who He is and His love and salvation of humanity from its errant ways. Because of this, it is the supreme source of truth for establishing our human belief system in God, and our standard for living. (See II Timothy 3,4 and II Peter 1)

9. About the Priesthood of Believers

The Bible tells us every Christian is a holy priest before God, and that there is one mediator between us and God who is our Lord Jesus Christ. As priests, we may therefore come before the throne of God our Father as equals in his sight. As priests, we also have the ability to pray, worship God, and interpret the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit within us, without ecclesiastical or institutional control. (See Hebrews chapters 4-6 and I Timothy 2)