

Our Doctrines and Beliefs¹

Bill and Heather Lavender affirm the following doctrines and beliefs as missionaries with BIMl.

The Inspiration of the Bible

We believe the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God. We believe the writings of the Old and New Testaments are fully God-breathed to the extent that the very words were chosen by God from the human writers' vocabulary so that the Bible is the very word of God, inerrant in all its assertions and teachings. The Bible is therefore the only infallible authority for both doctrine and life. Since this is true, it is the special revelation of God to man and the only basis for true Christian unity. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 5:18; Acts 1:16; Mark 12:36; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Hebrews 4:12; John 10:35;16:12,13;17:17)

The Person of God the Father

We believe God is supreme in His Person, eternal in His being, absolute in His attributes, and glorious in His Perfection. We believe in the Trinity. We believe in one Triune God, the creator of heaven and earth. We believe that in the unity of the Godhead there are three distinct persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory. God is personal, spirit, omniscient, sovereign, perfect, immutable, eternal in His being, holiness, love, wisdom, and power. We believe that God is absolutely separate and above the world as its creator, yet everywhere present in the world as the sustainer of all things. God is self-existent and self-revealing in His relationship with His creation. (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:1-3; Romans 1:2-4; Ephesians 4:3-6)

The Person of Jesus Christ

We believe in the virgin birth of Christ, His Deity, and sinless life, His vicarious death, along with His bodily resurrection and ascension, and in His personal, pre-millennial return. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the second person of the Godhead, God in the flesh, virgin born as no other man has ever been born nor ever will be born. He lived an absolutely sinless life and became the sinner's voluntary substitute on the Cross by His vicarious death for man's sin. Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day, giving eternal assurance of redemption's full payment and the satisfaction of God's righteous indignation toward sin. He ascended bodily into heaven and he will come to rapture His saints to be with Himself. His coming for His saints is imminent and will be personal, pre-tribulational, and pre-millennial. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18; John 1:1; 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Luke 1:35; 1 Peter 2:22; 3:18)

The Person of Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is the executive of the Godhead. We believe that He executes the Plan of God for our conviction and salvation. Christians are partakers of the Holy Spirit and empowered for service by Him. We believe the Holy Spirit is a person possessing all the attributes of Deity. He convicts the unbelieving world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He regenerates, seals, indwells, fills the believer and bestows gifts upon believers for service. He teaches the believer and sets him apart for a holy life. We believe the Bible repudiates the charismatic emphasis upon the experiential oriented tongues and ecumenical practices as any ministry of the Holy Spirit. We believe the Holy Spirit is the Commander-in-Chief of missions and that His testimony is not of Himself, but Jesus Christ and the redemptive truths centered in Christ. (John 14:16,17; 16:8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Acts 5:3,4; Ephesians 1:13,14; Romans 8:9)

The Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in the image of God and by choice fell into sin and death. Hence, every person is sinful and under condemnation to eternal judgment. We believe that man was created by a direct act of God in the image and likeness of his Creator. By disobedience to the revealed will of God, man forfeited his reign over the earth and fell from his created state and standing with God. Therefore, all men are universally sinful both by nature and

choice, and are void of the righteousness of God. All men are thus alienated from the life and family of God, without excuse, under the righteous judgment and wrath of God, and have within themselves no possible means of salvation. (Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23; 5:12-19; Isaiah 53:6; Ephesians 2:1-3).

The Salvation of Sinners

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of Grace, and that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. We believe in the salvation of man by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. We believe that salvation is the free gift of God, neither merited nor secured in part nor in whole by any virtue or work of man, but received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life, a perfectly righteous standing, sonship in the family of God by a new birth. We believe that the cross of Christ is redemptive, substitutionary, propitiatory and the only basis of reconciliation for all lost men who believe and that there is no possible salvation outside of Jesus Christ and His shed blood. (John 3:3-6, 16; 10:28-29; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Timothy 2:5,6; 1 Peter 1:18-23).

The Free Gift of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free by the Gospel, that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel. We believe that salvation was accomplished on the cross by Jesus Christ and is extended to all men as a gift to be received by faith. The basis of this salvation is totally the grace that provided the cross. Although all men are responsible to receive the gift of salvation in Christ, only those who respond to the ministry of the Spirit of God in the presentation of the Gospel will be saved. Salvation is the free and completed gift of God to all who will believe. (John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; 12:46; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:11-13).

The Security of a Believer

We believe that those who receive Jesus Christ as Savior are eternally secure. Our security rests on the finished work of Jesus Christ. As a result, we have assurance. We believe that the true believer is forever secure as a redeemed possession of God. This security is founded on the full payment of the believer's sin by the cross of Christ in His substitutionary atonement and God's proof of receipt of that payment in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The sole condition of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ and His redemptive work. This positive expression of faith has as its negative side repentance and rejection of any other basis of salvation. Therefore, the security of the believer is not conditioned upon his circumstances nor emotional experiences nor strength, but it is an acceptance of that basis of reconciliation which has already been accepted by God. The believer is in the possession of God, which is the opposite of lost. He is secure because God has taken the responsibility for His own. (John 10:27-30; 1 John 2:1-2; Romans 8:31-34, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Hebrews 2:10).

The Church

We believe that the visible church is a congregation of baptized believers, practicing New Testament principles, believing its doctrines, observing its ordinances, and exercising its autonomy. We believe that a local church is an organized body of believers immersed upon credible confession of faith in Jesus Christ, recognizing only two offices (filled by pastor and deacon), sovereign in polity, and bonded together for work, worship, mutual edification, observance of the ordinances and the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel. The church is distinct from Israel in the Old Testament, autonomous, with Christ as its head. (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 1:22,23; Acts 2:41-47; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Corinthians 12).

Heaven and Hell

We believe in the eternal blessedness of the saved in Heaven and the eternal punishment of the lost in Hell. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and lost, secured by the bodily resurrection of Christ. The spirits of the saved at death go immediately to be with Christ in heaven, their lives and works shall be evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ for the determination of rewards which will take place when Christ comes for His own in the rapture.

They will experience the blessedness of God's presence for all eternity. The spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the Great White Throne Judgment. At this time, their bodies shall be raised from the grave and be cast into the eternal lake of fire, the place of final and everlasting punishment. (John 5:28,29; 14:2; Revelation 20:14,15; 21:4; Matthew 25:46).

Positions on the Current Trends in Theology

We take our stand regarding the current trends that lead to discrediting the Bible and undermining the fundamentals of the faith. We take a separatist stand against Neo-Orthodoxy, Neo-Evangelicalism, the Ecumenical movement, and the Pentecostal/Charismatic movements.

¹ Adapted from the Doctrinal Statement of Baptist International Missions, Inc., accessed December 16, 2020, <http://www.bimi.org/content/about.php#doctrines>.