

Grace Baptist Church
U.S.A., Incorporated,
of Farmington, New Mexico
Revised, October 20, 2009

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ARTICLE I — NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1.01 — Name

This congregation of believers shall be known as Grace Baptist Church, U.S.A., Incorporated, of Farmington, New Mexico.

Section 1.02 — Preamble

Reposing our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, believing in the teaching and the practices of the Baptists and those great distinctive principles for which they have ever stood, namely:

- (a) The Bible as the only rule for faith and practices (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21);
- (b) The priesthood of the believer (Heb. 4:14-16; Heb. 10:19-22; I Pet. 2:5-9);
- (c) A regenerated church membership (Acts 2:41-47; Rom. 1:7,8);
- (d) Believer's Baptism (Immersion) (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 8:39);
- (e) The autonomy of the local church (Acts 6:1-7; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 14:26; Col. 1:18);
- (f) The separation of church and state (Matt. 22:15-22; Matt. 28:19,20; Rom. 13:1-7);
- (g) A separated walk of the church membership (2 Cor. 6:14-17)

We, therefore, band ourselves together as a body of immersed believers in Jesus Christ and adopt, ordain, and establish for our government and plan of worship and service the following declaration of faith, covenant, constitution, and by-laws.

Section 1.03 — Purpose

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for religious, educational, and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, daycare centers, and camps; the evangelizing the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; the educating of believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; and the maintaining of missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country.

ARTICLE II — STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

Section 2.01 — Statement of Faith

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of this church and its members.

- (a) **The Holy Scriptures.** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed and, therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. For the purposes of consistency and uniformity the King James Bible will be the official translation used in all ministries of Grace Baptist Church. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
- (b) **The Godhead.** We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, coequal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:10, 26)
- (c) **The Person and Work of Christ.**
 - (i) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)
 - (ii) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)
 - (iii) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2)
- (d) **The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.**
 - (i) We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14)
 - (ii) We believe that He is the divine Teacher who instructs believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27)

- (iii) We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12)
- (iv) We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit, and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22)
- (e) **The Total Depravity of Man.** We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God; but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19)
- (f) **Salvation.** We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19)
- (g) **The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.**
 - (i) We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1; 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:4-5)
 - (ii) We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word and witness of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Tit. 2:11-15, Rom. 8:16)
- (h) **The Church.**
 - (i) We believe that the local church is made up solely of born-again persons whose purpose is fulfilling the Great Commission and practicing the Scriptural ordinances (1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27)
 - (ii) We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)
 - (iii) We recognize water baptism and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)
- (i) **Separation.** We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and to refrain from all immodest and immoderate appearances. (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; Lev. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:19-20)

(j) **The Second Advent of Christ.** We believe in that blessed hope, the personal, imminent coming of Christ in the air who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints to the earth, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel. (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Tit. 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

(k) **The Eternal State.**

(i) We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13)

(ii) We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)

(iii) We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment. (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15)

(l) **The Personality of Satan.** We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the tempter of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10)

(m) **Creation.** We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)

(n) **Civil Government.** We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14)

(o) **Human Sexuality.**

(i) We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, sexual abuse, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God

disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)

- (ii) We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

(p) Family Relationships

- (i) We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
- (ii) We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)

- (q) Divorce and Remarriage.** God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). "Divorce in the Scripture is permitted as an accommodation to man's sin for the protection of the innocent party. Since divorce is only a concession to man's sin and is not a part of God's original plan for marriage, all believers considering divorce should have the same attitude toward divorce as does God. In Matt. 19:5-9, Christ teaches that divorce is an accommodation to man's sin and is in violation of God's purpose for intimate unity of the marriage bond (Gen. 2:24). It was a concession for the 'innocent party' due to the insensitivity of the other partner to God. This is defined biblically as the 'hardness of heart': (Matt. 19:8). Dissolution meant that the 'innocent partner' no longer had to remain in a hopeless and intolerable situation (Matt. 5:32, 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:12-15). It is to be expected that a believer will have the same attitude toward divorce as does God and will see it as a violation of God's expressed purpose for marriage (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Mk. 10:1-12; 1 Cor. 7:10-15; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Tit. 1:6)"
– John Mac Arthur, *Divorce and Remarriage*.

- (i) **"Innocent Partner."** There is a dual responsibility in marriage. Very seldom is one partner totally innocent. Believers must search the scriptures and themselves regarding their responsibility in marriage before placing themselves in the category of the "innocent party."

(ii) Biblical Grounds for Divorce.

- 1) Fornication (any sinful sexual activity, including adultery—unfaithfulness of a marriage partner, homosexuality, and incest (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; 1 Cor. 5:1)

- 2) Abandonment by a nonbelieving partner who refuses to live with his or her believing spouse, especially because of his or her Christ testimony (1 Cor. 7:12-15)
- 3) It is essential to keep in mind that the Bible merely permits divorce in these limited circumstances but never commands divorce.

(iii) **Biblical Grounds for Remarriage.**

- 1) Remarriage is permitted for the innocent party when the divorce was on biblical grounds [Article II, Section 2:01, (q), (ii)].
- 2) According to the Old Testament pattern, remarriage was allowed after the divorce (the exception is found in Deut. 24:1-4). The New Testament allows for remarriage when the divorce was based upon biblical grounds (1 Cor. 7:15).

(iv) **Non-biblical Grounds for Remarriage.**

- 1) In cases where a divorce was obtained between believers on nonbiblical grounds the person who remarries first commits “adultery” (Matt. 19:9) and the person who marries a person who was divorced on nonbiblical grounds also commits adultery (Lk. 16:18) In cases where the divorce was not for the two reasons stated above, the believer is exhorted to (1) seek for reconciliation, or else (2) remain unmarried (1 Cor. 7:10,11).
- 2) When one party remarries after a divorce which was on nonbiblical grounds, that person has committed adultery because God did not recognize the validity of the divorce (Matt. 5:32; Mk. 10:11). Since the remarried partner has “committed adultery,” the marriage bond is now broken and the remaining partner is free to remarry.
- 3) If the divorce was not on biblical grounds, the person who marries the divorcee is considered an adulterer. (Mark 10:12)
- 4) Believers who pursue divorce on nonbiblical grounds are subject to church discipline because they openly reject the Word of God. The one who obtains a divorce on nonbiblical grounds and remarries is living in a state of “adultery” since God did not recognize the validity of the original divorce (Matt. 5:32; Mk. 10:11,12). That person is subject to the steps of church discipline as outlined in Matt. 8:15-17 (Article 3, Section 3:04) and as illustrated in 1 Cor. 5:1-13.
- 5) Where the divorce took place on nonbiblical grounds and where the guilty party repents, it is assumed that the repentant party will endeavor to restore the marriage whenever possible as a sign of true repentance. A true sign of repentance will be a desire to implement 1 Cor. 7:11. This involves a willingness to remain unmarried or else to be reconciled to their mate. If a believer obtained a divorce on nonbiblical grounds and remarried, the second marriage union is recognized as living in “adultery” (Mark 10:11,12). If repentance takes place, it is recognized that to obtain a second

divorce would disobey Scripture (Deut. 24:1-4), hence, they are to remain in the second marriage.

- 6) If the innocent party in a divorce is seeking remarriage, it is preferable that he/she wait until the spouse has remarried or a sufficient amount of time so as not to preclude any possibility of reconciliation.
- (v) **Divorce before Salvation.** Salvation means that a person begins a new life. The believer is responsible to live up to what God has revealed about marriage and divorce from the point of his or her salvation.

A sign of saving faith will be receptivity and a willingness to obey what Christ has revealed about marriage and divorce through the Word. The Apostle Paul's counsel in 1 Cor. 7:20,27 is that a believer is to see every circumstance that they are in when they became a believer as from God. If they were called while married, they are not to seek a divorce (except on the grounds allowed in Matt. 5:32, 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:12-16). If they were called while divorced, they are free to be remarried to another believer. (2 Cor. 6:14).

- (vi) **The Possibility of Church Leadership (Pastor and Deacon).** The church has a responsibility to uphold the biblical ideal of marriage, especially as exemplified by its leadership. In cases where there has been a divorce in a person's past, the church has an obligation to restrict, for a period of time, the person's involvement in leadership until it can be proven that the present marriage exemplifies Christ's relationship to His church. 1 Tim. 3:2,12 sets the marital qualification for leadership within the church. The phrase "the husband of one" does not mean that a person cannot have had a divorce in his past since none of the other qualifications listed refer to specific acts in the past (prior to salvation or subsequent to salvation) but rather to qualities which currently characterize a man's life.

It is especially important, in cases where there has been a divorce in a man's past, that there be a period of careful observation to see that his present marriage is characterized by devotion and sacrificial love, this period of time should be sufficient for him to prove and be known as the "husband of one wife."

- (r) **Abortion.** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions or pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)
- (s) **Love.** We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers and those who oppose us. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God

commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Tit. 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)

- (t) **Lawsuits Between Believers.** We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)
- (u) **Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that they may believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ, we must use all biblical means available to bring the Gospel to the foreign nations. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20)
- (v) **Giving.** We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially for the spread of the Gospel and relief of those in need. Once a gift has been designated and given the designation cannot be changed. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)
- (w) **Stewardship of the Physical Body.**
 - (i) We believe that Christians are to possess their vessel in sanctification and honor (1 Cor. 6:19,20; 1 Thess. 4:4). Thus we would encourage them to abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the abuse of drugs.
 - (ii) Although the Bible seems to allow the consumption of Alcohol while condemning drunkenness, we believe that a member of Grace Baptist Church should abstain from the use of alcohol for the following reasons:
 - 1) Wine is a mocker (Pro. 20:1).
 - 2) Wine has the power to enslave oneself (1 Cor. 6:12).
 - 3) Wine has the power to be a stumblingblock (Rom. 14:3, 1 Cor. 8:9).

Section 2.02 — Authority of the Statement of Faith

The Bible itself is the sole authority and final source of all that we believe and practice. Although the preceding Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs, we have endeavored to accurately represent the teaching of Scripture. Insofar as this statement is in agreement with the Bible, it is binding upon all members.

Section 2.03 — Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of our Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel to all nations.

We also engage to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior; to maintain family and private devotions; to biblically educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, gossiping, unrighteous anger; to separate ourselves from worldliness and unbiblical practices.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy of speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, and to secure reconciliation without delay.

We agree moreover, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP

Section 3.01 — Qualifications for Membership

Upon a majority vote of the members present at any church service or meeting, membership shall be extended to all who have had and whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; who renounce sin; who endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord; who fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith (Article 2) contained herein; who enter into the Church Covenant (Article 2, Section 2.03) contained herein; who agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders as set forth herein; and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:

- (a) By baptism (immersion) as a true believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
- (b) By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith;
- (c) By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion; or
- (d) By restoration, if having been removed from membership, upon majority vote of the congregation after confession is made publicly before the church membership of the sin

or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the pastor (or the board of deacons if the office of pastor is vacant).

Section 3.02 — Duties of a Member

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the covenant contained in Article 2, Section 2.03, each one further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the pastor; to pray for him; to recognize his authority in spiritual affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, in finances as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands, to support through a godly life the beliefs and practices of the church.

Section 3.03 — Privileges of Membership

- (a) Only members at least eighteen years of age (18 years of age) who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church has certain limited areas to exercise a vote. Members wishing to suggest a church action shall bring that suggestion to the pastor and deacons for consideration.
- (b) This congregation functions as an autonomous body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. All authority for doctrine and practice resides within the local church. The church decides what responsibilities it will give the pastor and deacons and what responsibilities it will hold. The pastor shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church with the authority given him by the church. The board of deacons shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor as requested by him.
- (c) Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor, pastoral staff, or deacons have the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property for biblical reasons or reasons of orderliness or safety. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the board of deacons), be treated as a trespasser.
- (d) A member, upon five-business days prior written request made upon the church, may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church, the minutes of the proceedings of church meetings, and the minutes of the proceedings of board meetings.
 - (i) A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, the list of names and addresses of the church members, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.

- (ii) The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.

Section 3.04 — Discipline of a Member

- (a) There shall be a discipline committee consisting of the pastor and the board of deacons. These men shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Bible, from the Statement of Faith, and violations of the church covenant. If the pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee. The pastor and deacons shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline.
- (b) Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of a trespass of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he or she is to go alone to the trespassing party and seek to restore their brother or sister. Before he or she goes, they should first examine themselves. When he or she goes, they should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.
- (c) If reconciliation is not reached, a second member, or a deacon or the pastor, is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
- (d) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, the discipline committee, as the church representatives Biblically responsible for putting down murmuring, shall hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing before the discipline committee, the committee shall recommend to the members of the church that they, after self-examination, make an effort personally to go to the offending member and seek that member's restoration.
- (e) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B), (C), and (D) have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon a majority vote of the membership present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering disciplinary action.
- (f) No matter may be heard by the discipline committee or the church unless the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, except in the case of a public offense.
- (g) If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the church membership, all contact with him from that point forward (except by family members) must be for the sake of restoration.
- (h) The procedures provided in this section are based on Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; and Tit. 3:10-11.

Section 3.05 — Active and Inactive Members

- (a) **Membership Roll Review.** Quarterly, the pastor, church clerk, chairman of the deacons, and the financial secretary will check the church membership rolls and correct addresses and then place each member into one of the following groups, active or inactive.
- (b) **Active Members.** A member who attends worship services from Sunday to Sunday and who contributes regularly to the financial support of the church shall be an active member. All active members eighteen (18) years of age and older are eligible to vote.
- (c) **Inactive Members.** Inactive members (those who attend worship services very irregularly and refuse to assume any responsibility for the good of the church) can hold no office in the church. Members absenting themselves from the regular worship services six (6) weeks prior to any church action cannot voted in church matters. Before a person's name can be changed from active to inactive, the deacons and or the pastor shall call the member for the purpose of trying to retain that person on the active list. Inactive members may be declared active by action of the pastor and deacons.

Section 3.06 — Termination of Membership

- (a) **Termination for Lack of Attendance.** The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the pastor and deacons, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the pastor and deacons.
- (b) No member of this church may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person is automatically terminated without notice from membership in this church.
- (c) A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the pastor and deacons.

Section 3.07 — Transfer of Membership

Members not under the disciplinary process of Section 3.04 may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church.

ARTICLE IV — OFFICERS, STAFF, AND WORKERS COVENANT

Since officers, staff, and workers are in positions of respect and/or example, all those who have been elected or appointed to offices and positions must conscientiously endeavor to live faithfully to the Lord. All personnel must be members of Grace Baptist Church, living exemplary lives in dedication to the Lord. Grace Baptist Church officers, staff, and workers therefore, shall:

- (a) Abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the abuse of drugs.

Although the Bible seems to allow the consumption of Alcohol we believe that an officer, staff member or worker of Grace Baptist Church should abstain from the use of alcohol for the following reasons:

- (i) Wine is a mocker (Pro. 20:1).
 - (ii) Wine has the power to enslave oneself (1 Cor. 6:12).
 - (iii) Wine has the power to be a stumblingblock (Rom. 14:3, 1 Cor. 8:9).
- (b) Abstain from entertainments and amusements that hinder their fellowship with God, their spiritual growth, or their Christian testimony, which includes the duties to:
- (i) **Guard their eyes.** Psalm 101:3: I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.
 - (ii) **Guard their mind.** Phil. 4:8: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
 - (iii) **Endeavor not to be a stumblingblock.** Rom. 14:13: Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock (cause to sin) or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. 1 Cor. 8:9: But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.
 - (iv) **Avoid "doubtful things."** Rom. 14:23: And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.
 - (v) **Not love the world.** I John 2:15-17: Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.
 - (vi) **Abstain from any appearance of evil.** 1 Thess. 5:22: Abstain from all appearance of evil.
- (c) Be exemplary in matters of Christian standards, such as wearing appropriate and modest apparel. (1 Cor. 11:1-16; 1 Tim. 2:9-15)
- (d) Be faithful in personal Bible study and prayer, witnessing, honoring the Lord in tithes and offerings and in church attendance unless providentially hindered.
- (e) **Divorce and Remarriage—The Possibility of Church Leadership (Pastor and Deacon)**

- (i) The church has a responsibility to uphold the biblical ideal of marriage, especially as exemplified by its leadership. In cases where there has been a divorce in a person's past, the church has an obligation to restrict, for a period of time, the person's involvement in leadership until it can be proven that the present marriage exemplifies Christ's relationship to His church. 1 Tim. 3:2,12 sets the marital qualification for leadership within the church. The phrase "the husband of one wife" does not mean that a person cannot have had a divorce in his past since none of the other qualifications listed refer to specific acts in the past (prior to salvation or subsequent to salvation) but rather to qualities which currently characterize a man's life.
- (ii) It is especially important, in cases where there has been a divorce in a man's past, that there be a period of careful observation to see that his present marriage is characterized by devotion and sacrificial love, this period of time should be sufficient for him to prove and be known as the "husband of one wife."
- (iii) See Article 2, Section, 2.01

ARTICLE V — OFFICERS

Section 5.01 — Church Officers

The church officers are Pastor (see Article 6, Section 6.01), Deacon (see Article 6, Section 6.02), Church Clerk (see Article 6, Section 6.03), Church Treasurer (see Article 6, Section 6.04), and Financial Secretary (see Article 6, Section 6.05). One person may hold two or more offices, except that of pastor. The pastor, from time to time as he deems appropriate, may appoint other church officers, subject to a confirmation vote of the church membership.

Section 5.02 — Designation of Corporate Officers

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the Church Clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation; the Financial Secretary shall serve as treasurer of the corporation; and the Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall serve as vice president of the corporation. The Board of Deacons shall constitute the remaining members of the board of trustees.

Section 5.03 — Eligibility for Office

- (a) A person must be a member of Grace Baptist Church for one year before he is eligible to hold any office other than that of pastor.
- (b) The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith (Article 2). All church officers, upon request of the pastor, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith (as set forth in Article 2).

- (c) All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the pastor and congregation in order for them to commence or continue in their offices.
- (d) Only church members are eligible for election or appointment to any church office or position.

Section 5.04 — Terms of Office

- (a) The relationship between the pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or unless by mutual consent. The calling of a pastor or severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular church administration meeting, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to said regular church meeting. A three-fourths majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to call a pastor. A two-thirds majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to dismiss the pastor from the church. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of Article 3, Section 3.01(D).
- (b) The maximum term of service for a deacon shall be three (3) consecutive years. Following a full term of three (3) years, a person may not be elected to the office of deacon until a lapse of one year.
- (c) The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except the pastor and pastoral staff and deacons, shall be one year, at the expiration of which they may be re-elected or re-appointed.
- (d) A vacancy occurring in any office or board, except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular church meeting.
- (e) All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed.
- (f) Members of the board of deacons may be removed from office for unbiblical conduct, as determined by the other board members, upon a majority vote of the remaining members of the board of deacons.

Section 5.05 — Election of Officers

The annual election of officers by the church membership shall occur during the month of December at the annual church election meeting.

Section 5.06 — Pastoral Oversight of Officers and Staff

- (a) In order to meet the needs of the congregation adequately, the pastor, in consultation with the deacons, is at liberty to fill positions salaried and unsalaried with personnel who are equipped for the task and meet the spiritual qualifications previously set forth. Salaried

personnel may only be hired after the congregation has allocated funds for that position. The pastor, in consultation with the deacons, is entrusted with the responsibility of dismissing staff members who violate the conduct expected of the officers of Grace Baptist Church or who are remiss in their duties.

- (b) Assistant Pastors will be recommended to the congregation by the Senior Pastor and a congregational vote constituting a call will require a three-fourths vote, (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5) while the Assistant Pastor serves under the direction of the Senior Pastor, his termination shall be handled as per Pastoral tenure (Section 4:06 [B])
- (c) All church staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the pastor who has the sole authority to dismiss the same. No employee or volunteer shall be hired, appointed, or retained who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith.
- (d) **In the Absence of a Pastor.** The Assistant Pastor(s) and Administrators shall function under the Board of Deacons when the Church is without a Pastor. All positions of Assistant Pastors and Administrators shall be considered temporary and may be vacated or retained by the incoming pastor.

ARTICLE VI — DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS

Section 6.01 — The Pastor

- (a) The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He shall administer the ordinances of the church, act as moderator at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership.
- (b) The pastor and the deacons shall appoint the members of the various committees.
- (c) He shall serve as the president of the corporation. He shall publicly inform all newly elected officers of the particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position. The pastor shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him.
- (d) All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than the stated appointments, shall be under the control of the pastor and deacons.

Section 6.02 — The Board of Deacons

- (a) The board of deacons shall assist the pastor, in such manner as he shall request, in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the religious services, and in

performing all other work of the church. They shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the church. They shall, if requested by the pastor, consider applications for church membership. They shall, in cooperation with the pastor, disburse the Deacon Benevolence Fund. They shall assist the pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the church. The board of deacons shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries as requested by the pastor. They shall provide the pulpit supply and choose a moderator for church meetings if the pastor is unavailable or the office of pastor is vacant.

- (b) At the next regularly scheduled deacon meeting following the annual church meeting, the board of deacons shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chairman who shall be vice president of the corporation, and a secretary.
- (c) The board of deacons shall constitute the board of trustees of the corporation. The board of trustees shall exercise only the following specific powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of the members present at a duly called church administration meeting:
 - (i) To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church;
 - (ii) To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges; and
 - (iii) To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation.

Section 6.03 — Church Clerk

The Church Clerk shall:

- (a) Certify and keep the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws;
- (b) Keep at the place where the bylaws or a copy are kept a record of the proceedings of meetings of the board of deacons, with the time and place of holding, the notice of meeting given, the names of those present at the meetings;
- (c) Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law;
- (d) See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. (In case of the absence or disability of the clerk, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice of dismissal may be given and served by the pastor or by the chairman of the board of deacons.);

- (e) Be custodian of the records of the church, including the membership roll, baptisms, and certificates of ordination, licenses and commissions;
- (f) See that the reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed;
- (g) Exhibit at all reasonable times to proper persons on terms provided by law the bylaws and minutes of proceedings of the board of deacons or the minutes of the meetings of the church members;
- (h) Keep an account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical interest and give a report at the annual church meeting of the status of the church membership roll in the past year;
- (i) Serve as the secretary of the corporation.

Section 6.04 — Church Treasurer

The Church Treasurer shall:

- (a) Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the corporation, and deposit all funds in the name of the church in banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected by the pastor and the board of deacons and voted on by the church;
- (b) Receive, and give receipt for all contributions, gifts, and donations to the church.

Section 6.05 — Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall:

- (a) Disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the church as may be directed by the pastor and the board of deacons, or the budget adopted by the members of the church at the annual church meeting, taking proper vouchers for the disbursements;
- (b) Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the church's properties and business transactions including account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital;
- (c) Make all expenditures of the church (except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements) by check or electronic transfer;
- (d) When and as requested, render to the pastor and the board of deacons accounts of all transactions as minister of finance and of the financial condition of the church;
- (e) Present a written report of itemized disbursements at the regular quarterly church administration meetings and make a general report for the year at the annual church administration meeting;

- (f) Serve as treasurer of the corporation.

Section 6.06 — Associate Pastors

Under the direction and guidance of the pastor, the associate pastor(s) of the church shall assist the pastor in carrying out the ministries of the church.

Section 6.07 — Duties of All Officers

- (a) All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church meeting and shall surrender any records in their possession to the pastor at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church.
- (b) Any officer who neglects his duties as outlined in the bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from his office at the discretion of the pastor and deacons, and another may be appointed by the pastor and deacons to serve the un-expired term.

Section 6.08 — Installation of Officers

A public installation service in which all newly elected officers of the church are to be dedicated to their respective offices and the ordination of newly elected deacons shall be held at a public church service following their election.

ARTICLE VII — MEETINGS

Section 7.01 — Meetings for Worship

Unless otherwise determined by the pastor, the church shall meet each Sunday for public worship both morning and evening and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed on a regular basis by the determination of the pastor and deacons.

Section 7.02 — Meetings for Church Administration

- (a) The annual church meeting shall be held in the month of January, at which time the regular church administration shall be considered. A quorum shall consist of the members present.
- (b) The Pastor shall preside as moderator of all Church business meetings. In his absence or at his election, the Board of Deacons shall appoint the moderator for Church business meetings. The moderator shall relinquish the chair during consideration of matters in which he is personally involved.
- (c) For any meeting under this article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers to leave the meeting room and to order

the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. The moderator shall have full authority to order the removal of all children (under the age of 18) if the moderator determines, in his sole discretion, that circumstances so warrant. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, the moderator may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises in accordance with Section 3.03(C) and treat the person as a trespasser.

- (d) *Robert's Revised Rules of Order* shall govern in matters not covered by this Constitution.

Section 7.03 — Special Meetings

- (a) The pastor (or deacons if the office of pastor is vacant or the pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at a regularly scheduled service at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or the severance of the relationship between the church and pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Section 5.04(A).
- (b) Bible conferences, missionary conferences, marriage conferences, and revivals may be held as the pastor deems beneficial.

Section 7.04 — Voting

- (a) Only active members (see Article III, Section 3.03) are eligible to vote. The minimum voting age shall be eighteen (18) years.
- (b) All elections for the officers listed in Article V, or for the call or dismissal of a Pastor shall be by secret ballot. In matters of divided opinion, voting by secret ballot may be requested by the church membership.
- (c) No voting by proxy shall be allowed.
- (d) The Pastor or Moderator presiding at a business meeting requiring secret ballots shall appoint not fewer than three (3) tellers to canvass the vote. After the result of the election has been announced, the ballots shall be retained for one year by the church clerk. The number of votes for any of the candidates in the election of board or committee members shall not be announced.
- (e) In regular business matters such as the receiving or dismissal of members, a simple majority of the members present and voting shall carry the action.
- (f) **Pastoral vote.** A three-fourths affirmative vote of the members present and voting shall be required in the call of pastor or the licensing or ordination of a candidate. A two-thirds vote of those present and voting shall be required for the dismissal of a pastor.
- (g) **Amendments.** A two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting shall be required for the amendment of the Constitution or By-Laws.

- (h) **Dissolution of the Corporation.** A two-thirds affirmative vote of those members present and voting shall be required for the dissolution of the corporation.

Section 7.05 — Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

ARTICLE VIII — COMMITTEES

Section 8.01 — Standard Operating Procedures

- (a) Each committee must have over 50% of their membership present in order to conduct business.
- (b) Ex officio members of the board and of all committees shall not have voting rights.
- (c) All actions of committees which require Church approval shall be submitted to the Board of Deacons for review and approval before being presented to the Church.
- (d) Matters not covered by these By-Laws shall be governed by *Robert's Revised Rules of Order*.

Section 8.02 — Standing Committees

The pastor and deacons (or the board of deacons if the office of pastor is vacant) shall appoint standing committees and designate a chairperson for each standing committee and, except when otherwise specifically provided in these bylaws, shall determine the membership of each standing committee. In addition to the discipline committee, the pastor and deacons may appoint other standing committees as they deem appropriate.

Section 8.03 — School Committee

Duties are to advise and assist in the oversight of Grace Baptist Academy. Members of this committee must consist of the senior pastor, the school principal (unless these offices are vacant at the time) and at least six (6) individuals elected by the congregation. School board members must be active members of Grace Baptist Church and possess a vital interest in the success of the church's school ministry. New board members shall be nominated by the nominating committee (11.05) and voted upon at the annual election in December. They shall be elected to terms of one to three years in length such that at the beginning of each year two of the elected board members will have three (3) years of service remaining, two (2) will have two (2) years of service remaining, and two (2) will have one (1) year of service remaining. No school board member will be eligible to serve two successive terms unless his departure from the board would leave the board with fewer than four (4) returning members. Otherwise, a board member who has completed his term of service may be returned to board for another term after a hiatus of one (1) year.

Section 8.04 — Special Committees

The pastor and board of deacons, in its discretion, may create special committees to provide the board with advice and information regarding matters submitted to the committee by the board for consideration. The committee shall have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. The members of the committee shall be chosen by a majority vote of the board of deacons and shall serve solely at the pleasure of the board of deacons. The special committee shall be subject to the control and direction of the board of deacons at all times.

Section 8.05 — Pulpit Committee

Upon the death, resignation, or dismissal of the pastor, the board of deacons and the church clerk and two men from the membership decided upon by the board of deacons, shall become the pulpit committee. The chairman of the deacons is to be the moderator and the clerk is to do the necessary correspondence. No man shall be considered a candidate unless recommended by the pulpit committee.

This committee shall:

- (a) Search for suitable candidates, evaluating their qualifications in accordance with the constitution and criteria established by the Board of Deacons.
- (b) Schedule and hold at least one public meeting with the candidate and the church for a mutual question and answer time.
- (c) Present one candidate at a time to the Church in a special business meeting called by the Board of Deacons in accordance with (Article 7, Section 7.03).
- (d) With a majority vote approval of the congregation, provide the candidate with a compensation package covering salary, insurance, and vacation time.
- (e) Participate in the issuance of a letter of call to the new pastor.
- (f) The committee shall continue this process until a new Pastor has accepted the call, at which time the Pulpit Committee is dissolved.

Section 8.06 — Nominating Committee

- (a) This committee shall consist of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.
- (b) This committee shall begin the nominating process no later than the month of October.
- (c) When necessary and possible, this committee shall present to the church a slate of nominees for the Board of Deacons, the Church Clerk, the Financial Secretary, the Church Treasurer, the Missions Treasurer, and the Grace Baptist Academy School Board.
- (d) When necessary and possible, the committee shall present at least two (2) more nominees than the number of offices which are vacant. The names of the nominees shall be read to the church and posted for display at least two (2) weeks before election.

- (e) Candidates shall be listed in alphabetical order on the ballot.

ARTICLE IX — MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Section 9.01 — Purpose

The church believes that it is to provide the members' children with an education which is based upon and consistent with Biblical teaching. The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To this end, the church shall engage in ministries in education in keeping with the following dictates.

Section 9.02 — Church Participation

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the pastor may permit non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if he deems it in the best interest of the church.

Section 9.03 — Staff Membership

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members of this church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or other special meetings on a temporary basis.

Section 9.04 — Statement of Faith Accord

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Statement of Faith of the church. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith.

Section 9.05 — Unity

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church.

Section 9.06 — Teaching

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. Any assertion or belief which conflicts with or questions a Bible truth is a distortion of the truth which will be disclaimed as false. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

Section 9.07 — Christian Walk

All administrators, instructors, and teachers shall continue or adopt a lifestyle consistent with the biblical precepts which they teach, whether in or out of the classroom.

ARTICLE X — ORDINATION

Section 10.01 — Ordination Qualifications

Any member of this church or its mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Tit. 1:6-9, and has received appropriate training may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

Section 10.02 — Ordination Procedure

- (a) Upon a conference with the pastor and after the pastor has approved the candidate for ordination, the Pastor in conjunction with the Board of Deacons shall recommend to the church that an ordination council be called.
- (b) If the church approves the recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons, the Pastor and Deacons shall call an ordination council of ministers and lay members to examine the qualifications of the candidate.
- (c) After receiving from the council a favorable report on the propriety of ordaining the candidate, the Church shall proceed with the ordination council.

ARTICLE XI — INDEMNIFICATION

Section 11.01 — Definition

Indemnity is the protection of insurance against loss, damage, etc. or a legal exemption from penalties or liabilities incurred by one's actions; the word also refers to repayment or reimbursement for loss, damage, etc. by compensation.

Section 11.02 — Actions Subject to Indemnification

The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any

action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 11.03 — Expenses Subject to Indemnification

To the extent that a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

Section 11.04 — Limitations of Indemnification

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section 1 of this Article. The determination shall be made (a) by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the pastor and deacons who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

Section 11.05 — Timing of Indemnification

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the board of deacons in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

Section 11.06 — Extent of Indemnification

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

Section 11.07 — Insurance

The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church against insurable liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not

the church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE XII — DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the pastor and the board of deacons. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Section 1.02.

ARTICLE XIII — BINDING ARBITRATION

Section 13.01 — Submission to Arbitration

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters between the members of this church which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

Section 13.02 — Notice of Arbitration

In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to these bylaws or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in section 13.01, above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to Section 13.04, below.

Section 13.03 — Limitations on Arbitration

Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline as outlined under Section 3.04, were followed.

Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Section 3.04 were followed.

Section 13.04 — Arbitration Procedures

The Procedures for Arbitration shall be as adopted by the pastor and the board of deacons.

ARTICLE XIV — AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be revised or amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular church administration meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken.

ARTICLE XV — DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to any donor, member, officer, or other private individual, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, to make payments and distributions, and render benevolence in furtherance of the purposes set forth in these articles.

ARTICLE XVI — CORPORATION DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the corporation by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, the Church shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all assets of the corporation in such manners as to be distributed to one or more organizations of like faith and practice which would satisfy the remaining membership and qualify under the provisions of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its regulations.

ARTICLE XVII — POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. However, the church may oppose any legislation that threatens the freedoms of the church and its activities.

ARTICLE XVIII — RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

CONSTITUTION ADOPTION SIGNATURES

These bylaws were adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of Grace Baptist Church in which a quorum was present.

Samuel L. Mauldin
Pastor

10-25-09

Date

Don Holter
Deacon Board Chairman

10-25-09

Date

Deborah A. Malone
Church Clerk

10-25-09

Date