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The
Church Covenant
Confession of Faith
and
Constitution of
Grace Bible Baptist Church
McAllen, Texas

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GRACE BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE

This church is an independent, Fundamental Baptist church. The Word of God, the Bible, is its sole rule for faith and practice.

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this church shall be called Grace Bible Baptist Church. Grace Bible Baptist Church is a “*non-profit religious organization*” located in Hidalgo county in the state of Texas.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Grace Bible Baptist Church exists to honor and glorify God by making and maturing disciples who are becoming like the Lord Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III CHURCH COVENANT

Having given ourselves to God, by faith in Jesus Christ, and adopted the Word of God as our rule of faith and practice, we now give ourselves to one another by the will of God in this solemn covenant.

We promise, by His grace, to love and obey Him in all things, to avoid all appearances of evil, to abstain from all sinful amusements and unholy conformity to the world, and to provide things “*honest in the sight of all men.*” We willingly submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit for guidance and direction and for ultimate protection from Satan’s devices and our own propensities to fleshly desires.

We agree to faithfully discharge our obligations in reference to the study of the scriptures, secret prayer, family devotions, and corporate worship; and by self-denial, faith, and good works endeavor to

“*grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for church conferences, public worship, and the observance of the ordinances of the Gospel; nor fail to give of our resources according to our ability for the support of the Church, of its poor and all its benevolent work.

We agree to give and accept Christian admonition and reproof with meekness and to watch over one another in love, endeavoring to “*keep the unity of the Spirit,*” in the bond of peace. To be careful of one another’s happiness and reputation, and seek to strengthen the weak, encourage the afflicted, admonish the erring, and as far as we are able, promote the success of the Church and of the Gospel.

We will everywhere hold Christian principles sacred and Christian obligations and enterprises supreme; counting it our chief business in life to extend the influence of Christ in society, constantly praying and proclaiming the Kingdom of God is coming.

To this end we agree to labour for the promotion of any and all ministries of Grace Bible Baptist Church including evangelistic efforts for the salvation of the world and discipleship efforts to edify the saints. May the God of peace sanctify us wholly, and preserve us blameless unto the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE IV CONFESSION OF FAITH

THE BIBLE:

We believe that the Bible in the autographs, exclusively comprised of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the only inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God (1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

Inspiration is the supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness (2 Tim. 3:16). The mode used by God in inspiration was that men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:20-21). Although there is a human aspect in the

process of inspiration, the Scripture finds its origin in the mind of God (2 Peter 1:21; 3:15). The Scripture's ultimate origin certifies that it is without error (inerrant: John 17:17) and that it is incapable of failing in its judgments and statements (infallible: Matt. 5:18).

We believe that God providentially preserved His Word as evidenced in His divine promise (John 10:35), in the Biblical practice of keeping records (Ex. 17:14; Joshua 24:26), in the continuing authority of the Scriptures (Matt. 5:18), in the implied warnings regarding tampering with the Scriptures (Deut. 6:4-9; John 3:10), and in the existence of translations, versions, copies, and reproductions of the text.

We believe that the Scriptures' central message is clear and plain (perspicuity - Ps. 119:105; 130), that it is self-attesting (1Thess. 2:13), and that each believer can come to the Scriptures directly. Therefore, the Scriptures must be interpreted correctly to ascertain God's message, to formulate correct doctrine, and to have valid and authoritative content in teaching and preaching.

We believe that God parcelled out His revelation as He willed it and as man was able to receive it (Heb. 1:1); that with each dispensation came additional revelation, and that while everything in the Bible is written for the New Testament believer, not everything is written to the New Testament believer (Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

We believe that the natural man cannot understand the significance of the Scriptures (1 Cor. 2:14). It is only those who possess the Holy Spirit and have received the Scriptures in faith who profit from it (1 Cor. 2:10-16; Heb. 4:2). At the new birth, the Holy Spirit removes any hostility towards the Word, imparts certainty that the Scriptures come from God (1 Thess. 1:5), and illuminates the mind to understand the significance of the Scriptures and accept it as true and enables the believer to live by the scriptures (1 John 2:20, 27).

We believe in a closed canon and that the process of special revelation and inspiration has ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Rev. 22:18-19); that the canon is the only collection of divinely inspired books and writings which are therefore authoritative, sacred, and binding. No tradition or claim of further revelation can replace the authority of the Scriptures (Ps. 119:89; 2 Tim. 3:16).

GOD:

We believe in the one true God. He is existing eternally in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three persons exist in one divine essence, identical in nature, having the same attributes and perfections, equal in power and glory, worthy of all honor, worship and adoration (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 13:14).

A. GOD THE FATHER:

We believe that God the Father is the infinite and perfect Spirit in whom all things have their source, support, and end (John 4:24). He has manifested His essence through His attributes which could be divided into two categories. First, attributes associated with His greatness include: self-existence (Ex. 3:14), infinity (1 Kings 8:27), perfection (Matt. 5:48), omnipotence (Matt. 26), omniscience (Ps. 139:7-12), immutability (Mal. 3:6), and uncomprehensibility (Rom. 11:33). Secondly, attributes associated with His goodness include: holiness (Ps. 99:4-9), love (1 John 4:8,16), truth (1 Sam. 15:29), righteousness (Ps. 11:7), faithfulness (Ps. 36:5), justice (Rom. 2:6), mercy (Eph. 2:4), and grace (Eph. 1:7).

We believe that the source or ground of God's existence is wholly in Himself. He is totally uncaused and is independent of all things external to Himself. The Scriptures presuppose the existence of God (Gen. 1:1) and never directly defend it. Man, who is made in the image of God, clearly and undeniably possesses the innate knowledge of God through his conscience (Rom. 2:14-15) and general revelation (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20). Consequently, it is this innate knowledge that holds all mankind as inexcusable (Rom. 1:20).

We believe that God created the universe out of nothing (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9) in six literal, twenty-four hour days (Gen. 2:1; Ex. 20:11). God preserves that which He has created (Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:17), and controls it according to His divine purpose (Ps. 104). In the functional aspect of the Godhead, the Bible presents a certain priority in function only, not in essence. In the work of the Godhead, the Father is the planner, source, and functional authority (Gen. 1:1-2), the Son is the channel, and the Holy Spirit is the active agent (Eph. 2:18).

We believe that God has one single, all inclusive, and comprehensive purpose, plan, or will. This plan (decree of God) is that eternal plan by which God has rendered all things certain and all the events of the universe, past, present, and future (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:11).

B. GOD THE SON:

We believe that Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead, is God (John 1:1,18), He is worshipped as God (John 5:23), and He is identified as Yahweh of the Old Testament (Isa. 6:1; 40:3; Mt. 3:3; John 12:41). He is coeternal and coequal with the Father and the Spirit in essence (John 8:58; 10:30).

We believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin through the work of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:20,23; Luke 1:35). This miraculous birth was necessary because it best explains the preexistence of Christ (John 1:1-2; 8:58). As a man, He grew and developed (Luke 2:40), expressed emotions (Mark 3:5; John 11:35), manifested an appetite (Mt. 4:2; John 19:28), manifested human limitations without sinning (Mt. 8:24; John 4:2; Heb. 4:15), suffered and died (Luke 22:44; John 19:30, 34). He is fully God and fully man; one person with two distinct natures (Col. 2:9; 1Tim. 2:5).

We believe that at the incarnation, Jesus Christ humbled Himself and became the self-emptying One when he voluntarily laid aside (yielded to the will of the Father) the independent use of His divine attributes and prerogatives (Phil. 2:5-8). Jesus took on the role of a servant, voluntarily restricted Himself, in order to achieve His objectives in redemption (John 10:10; Heb. 5:8).

We believe that Jesus Christ died a genuine death as a substitutionary atonement for the sins of the whole world (Mt. 27:50; 1 John 2:2). With His death, came the completion of His atoning work (John 19:30). Christ's death was in the eternal plan of God (Acts 2:23; Rev. 13:8) and is of infinite value and is sufficient for all the sins of the world (Isa. 53:6; John 1:29; 1 John 2:2). Christ's death is a ransom (Mt. 20:28), propitiation (1 John 2:2), reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18), and substitution (Isa 53:6). The atonement is universal in its worth and is sufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of all mankind (1 Tim. 4:10).

We believe that Jesus Christ rose miraculously and bodily from the dead on the third day (Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:4-7), and that His

resurrection was an act of the Triune God (Acts 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18). His resurrection is the firstfruits of our resurrection (1 Cor 15:23) and gives validation to our preaching (1 Cor. 15:14-15), faith (1 Cor. 15:16-17), salvation (1 Cor. 15:14-17), and our present and future hope (1 Cor 15:18-19). Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:11) where He is interceding for the saints (Heb. 4:15; 7:24-27), awaiting His return for the saints (1 Thess. 4:16), and the establishment of His Kingdom (Rev. 19:11ff).

C. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT:

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Triune God (Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:18). He is coeternal and coequal in essence with the Father and the Son (Mt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4). He is eternal (Heb. 9:14), omnipresent (Ps. 139:7-10), omnipotent (Rom. 15:19), and omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10-11). He possesses the attributes of personality: intellect (1 Cor. 2:11), volition (1 Cor. 12:11), emotion (Eph. 4:40), and communication (Acts 8:29).

The Holy Spirit's involvement in the world included creation (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4), the exaltation of Christ (John 16:8-11), the conviction of sinners (John 16:8-11), and the restraining of sin (2 Thess. 2:6-7). His work with respect to Jesus Christ was that He prepared a body for Him (Luke 1:35), He anointed Jesus at His baptism (Mt. 3:16-17), He led Jesus at the temptation (Luke 4:1), and He empowered Him in His Ministry (Luke 4:14, 18). In His work concerning the Scriptures, He was the active Agent in inspiration (1 Peter 1:11) and He illumines believers to understand the significance of the Scriptures (1 Cor. 2:14ff). In His work in relationship to the believer, the Spirit regenerated (John 3:5-6), indwells (1 Cor 3:16), seals (Eph. 1:13-14), baptizes (1 Cor 12:13), controls (Eph. 5:18), assures (Rom. 8:16), convicts (Rom. 8:14), illumines (1 Cor. 2:15), intercedes (Rom. 8:26), and is our earnest (Eph. 1:14).

We believe that spiritual gifts are God-given abilities, distributed by the Holy Spirit (Heb. 2:4; Rom. 12:6-13), for use in the service and outreach of the local church (1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28-31; 1 Peter 4:10). The purpose of the gifts is for the equipping of the saints for the work of service (Eph. 4:10-12), and for the good of the body (1 Cor. 12:7).

ANGELS:

We believe that angels were created in the opening moments of the first day of creation (Job 38:6-7). The angels were originally and directly created with great intellect and power (Dan. 9; 2 Peter 2:11), free from sin (Gen. 1:31; Jude 6), immortal (Luke 20:36), and unable to procreate (Mt. 22:30; Luke 20:35-36). Angels can be classified as 1) those who kept their holy position and are now confirmed in holiness (Mt. 25:31; I Tim. 5:21); 2) those who left their original holy position and followed Satan in his rebellion against God (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:4).

The angels which kept their holy position, known as Archangel, Seraphim, and Cherubim, are ministers of God to carry out His work (Dan. 10:12-13; 12:1), to minister to the saints (Heb. 1:14), and they will accompany the Lord Jesus Christ at His return (Mt. 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7-8).

The evil angels, known as demons, are actively opposing the people of God (Eph. 6:12), hindering the work of God (Dan. 10:13), and afflicting God's people (2 Cor. 12:7; Rev. 2:10).

The head of this demonic race is Satan (Mt. 12:24; 2 Cor. 4:4) who is a personal being (John 8:44; Eph. 6:11-12), a powerful being (Jude 9), the author of sin (I John 3:8), the enemy of God and His people (Rev. 12:10; 20:8-9), and who will ultimately be cast with his followers into a literal lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:1-10).

MAN:

We believe man was created, on the sixth day of creation, in the image of God as a direct and supernatural act of God (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7). The image of God in man is moral (Gen. 1:31), mental (Gen. 1:28), social (Gen. 2:18), and is not necessarily physical (John 4:24). This image, although severely marred at the fall, is not totally lost or removed (Gen. 9:6; James 3:9).

We believe that Adam was created with a true knowledge of his God in righteousness and holiness (Ecc. 7:29; Col 3:9-10), but, by an act of his own volition, he chose to disobey God and plunged the entire human race into condemnation and depravity (Rom. 5:12; Gen. 3:1-7). As a result of Adam's act of disobedience and as the representative (federal headship) of the human race, God imputes sin to every person (Rom. 5:12); therefore, each individual stands

guilty before God. Furthermore, each individual is absolutely responsible for his sin and its accompanying judgment (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

Each person is composed of an immaterial part and a material part (Mt. 10:28; James 2:26). The material part of man is represented by the body and the immaterial by the soul or spirit (2 Cor. 4:16; James 2:26). Both the material and immaterial parts of man are propagated by natural generation (traducianism - Gen. 5:3; Ps. 51:5; Acts 17:26).

We believe that man is totally depraved and is therefore unable to contribute to his salvation or to have any spiritual merit before God (Prov. 21:27; Rom. 3:10). Each person stands condemned for his rebellion to an eternal conscious punishment which includes eternal separation from the presence of God (John 3:18; Rev. 20:15), unless he repents and trusts in Jesus Christ for salvation (John 3:16).

SIN:

We believe in the universal sinfulness of the human race (Rom. 3:10-12). Sin is lack of conformity to the moral law of God, by nature. (Ps. 32:1; John 8:34; Rom. 7:17; I John 3:4). Sin includes pollution as well as guilt (Eph. 4:22). Sin is essentially selfish and desires to exalt itself over God thus destroying the Creator/creature distinction (Gen. 3:5; Rom. 1:21).

The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). It includes physical death (James 2:26), spiritual death (Eph. 2:1), and the second death which is the permanent and final separation of the person from God. The second death is an irrevocable continuation of spiritual death (Rev. 20:14-15). Therefore, as a result of Adam's sin being imputed to the entire human race, depravity, condemnation, and death have affected the entire human race (Rom. 3:23; Eph. 2:1-5). Depravity is total in that it has affected the entire human race (Rom. 3:10) and the whole of man's being (Isa. 1:6; 64:6). Depravity has penetrated man's body (Rom. 8:10), mind (Eph. 4:17-18; Titus 1:15), will (John 8:34), and heart (Jer. 17:9).

SALVATION:

We believe that God, before the foundation of the world, chose all believers to salvation in Christ with all its accompanying blessing and responsibilities (regardless of human merit 0 Eph. 1:4). Salvation consists of the following: Election -- God, in eternity past and according to His good pleasure, made His sovereign choice of unworthy sinners to salvation (Eph. 1:4-5, 11); Calling -- There is one calling of God with two aspects: first, the general call invites all who hear the gospel to come and be saved (Mt. 11:28; John 12:32), second, the effectual call is the direct work of the Holy Spirit that brings the sinner to faith and repentance (John 6:64; Rom. 8:30; I Tim. 1:8-9); Regeneration -- the instantaneous, supernatural impartation of spiritual life to the spiritually dead (John 3:3; Eph. 2:1); Repentance -- a change of view, feeling, and purpose toward God, sin, and ourselves (Acts 20:21; Heb. 6:1); Faith -- knowledge of, assent to, and unreserved trust in the accomplished redemption of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures (Heb. 11:6); Justification -- the judicial act of God by which He declares the believing sinner righteous and treats him as such (Rom. 5:1); Adoption -- the judicial placement of the believer as a child of God and the bestowment of all the accompanying rights and privileges of a child (Gal. 4:4-5); Sanctification -- the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened (2 Cor. 3:18); Eternal Security/Perseverance -- the securing by God of all true believers unto final salvation and the causing of them to persevere in grace until that time (I John 3:9; Jude 24).

We believe that each person is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1), and stands condemned before God (Rom. 5:23). Every person is in need of salvation which God has provided through the Person and Work of Jesus Christ (John 14:6). The offer of salvation is universal (Mt. 28:18-20); Acts 1:8); therefore, every believer is responsible to proclaim the gospel and seek to evangelize the world with the gospel (Rom. 19:9-17). However, man left to himself is unable to respond to God in any way apart from God's work (John 6:44; Rom. 3:11).

THE CHURCH:

We believe that the vehicle for worship and service in this dispensation is the church (Eph. 3:2-10). The New Testament churches consisted of believers who had been baptized and were meeting together for the purpose of evangelism, edification, fellowship, and worship (Acts 2:41-47). The church is the Body of Christ (I Cor 12:13) and He is the Head (Eph. 1:22-23). Universally, the church includes all believers saved between Pentecost and the Rapture whether they are in Heaven or on the Earth.

The local church is a local assembly of believers that have been baptized by immersion (Acts 2:41), organized with pastor(s) and deacons (Phil. 1:1), observing the ordinances (Acts 2:41-42), sharing a common faith based on a body of truth found in the Bible around which to worship and fellowship (Acts 2:42), carrying out the great commission (Mt. 28:18-20), meeting at regular and stated times (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25) at a given location. The local church is the visible expression of the Body of Christ in any one place on earth (I Cor. 1:2). The sole rule for faith and practice in the local church is the Word of God (I Cor. 14:37-38; I Tim. 3:15).

We believe the church was inaugurated on the Day of Pentecost by the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2: I Cor. 12:13). Spirit baptism is the judicial placing of the believer into the Body of Christ at salvation (I Cor. 12:12-14; Eph. 1:22-23).

We believe in the congregation form of church government (Mt. 18:15-17; Acts 6:3; Acts 14:23). Therefore, governing authority resides in the members of the local church with each local church exercising autonomy and independence with Christ as the head. Consequently, no one person or organization can be over the local church. Pastors and deacons are the leaders of the membership, but have no more ecclesiastical authority than any other member in the body.

The offices of the church are pastors (Phil 1:1; I Tim. 3:1) and deacons (I Tim. 3:8). The qualifications for these offices are delineated in Acts 6:1-4, I Timothy 3, Titus 1, and I Peter 5:1-4. While a plurality of pastors is found in the Scriptures (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1; James 5:14), it does not necessitate an equality of rule among them (Acts 15:13ff; 21:28; Gal. 2:12).

We believe the two ordinances of the church are the Lord's supper and baptism. An ordinance is a rite which Christ has appointed in His church as a visible sign of the saving truth of the gospel. It is a symbol and is not in any manner a means of grace. Baptism is the immersion of a professing believer into water and symbolizes the believer's union with Christ (Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 12:13). The Lord's supper symbolizes the body that was given and the blood that was shed by Jesus Christ. It is a memorial to Christ (I Cor. 11:24); a pledge of the New Covenant (I Cor. 11:25); a proclamation of Christ's death (I Cor. 11:26); and a prophecy and promise of Christ's Second Coming (Mt. 26:29; I Cor. 11:26).

We believe the church is responsible to maintain the truth of God's Word by separating from and exposing false teachers (I Tim. 1:19-20; 2 John 9-11). The church is not to associate with a church, ecclesiastical organization, or religious leader who does not hold to the fundamental, cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith as revealed in the Scriptures (Mt. 7:15; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Thess. 3:6-9, 14-15; 2 John 10-11). We believe that the church must maintain the crucial balance of being in the world but not of the world (John 17:13-14; I John 2:15-17).

THE END TIMES:

We believe that the next event on God's calendar is the rapture of the church which can occur at any moment (imminent - I Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 3:10-11; Rev. 22:20). The church will be taken to heaven for their final redemption (2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:6), the bema or judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10), and the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7).

After the rapture, the seven year Tribulation period will be initiated on the earth with the signing of a covenant between the Antichrist and Israel (Dan. 9:27). This period will be a time of wrath and judgment such as the world has never seen before (Reb. 6:16-17; 14:15-18). It is for the purpose of chastening Israel (Isa. 28:15; Jer. 30:7), saving Israel (Dan. 12:1; Zech. 12:10), saving the Gentiles (Zech 3:9; mt. 25:34), and reclaiming the earth for the Kingdom of God (I Thess. 1:10; Rev. 5). During the Tribulation many Jews and Gentiles will turn to God for salvation as a result of the ministry of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3) and the Jewish

evangelists (Rev. 7). The period will consist of three series of literal judgments (seals, trumpets, and bowls). In the middle of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and turn on them with great violence and contempt (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 13).

At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return with His saints to conquer all His enemies, cast the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire, and bind and cast Satan into the Abyss for 1000 years while Christ rules and reigns on earth in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 19:11-20:4). After the 1000 years, Satan will be set free for a season, and once again he will gather an army to overthrow God (Rev. 20:7-9). Jesus Christ will crush Satan and this army once and for all (Rev. 20:9-10). Satan will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10), and all those that died without salvation will be summoned to the Great White Throne Judgment to receive their eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:12-15). God will recreate the heaven and the earth and thus will usher in the eternal state (Rev. 21:1ff).

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

SECTION I BECOMING A MEMBER

- A. Applicant must have received Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
- B. Applicant must have participated in believer's baptism by immersion.
- C. Applicant must be living in an obedient manner.
- D. Applicant must be in agreement with this Constitution's confession of faith.
- E. Applicant must be examined individually by the pastor and/or deacon in order to affirm A-D.

F. Applicants that are coming from a church of like faith and practice must receive a letter of transfer.

G. Upon recommendation by the pastor and/or deacon, the applicant will be presented to the church for its vote of approval at any public meeting of the church. Upon majority approval of the church, the applicant will be given the right hand of fellowship.

SECTION II OBLIGATION OF MEMBERS

Members are biblically responsible, first of all, to be faithful to all the spiritual duties essential to the Christian life. These duties include mutual edification (Rom. 14:9), encouragement (Heb. 10:24), and exhortation (Heb. 3:13). Each member is biblically responsible to give financially, cheerfully, regularly, and sacrificially to the church ministries (I Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:7). Each member is biblically responsible to share in the ministry of fulfilling the great commission (Mt. 28:18-20). Each member is to be in agreement with this Constitution's confession of faith.

SECTION III DISMISSAL FROM MEMBERSHIP

A. By death.

B. By letter of recommendation: Such a letter shall be granted by the pastor and deacons for any member in good standing, to any church of like faith and practice which requests it.

C. By erasure in the case of members who have not attended the church for six months. They may be erased from the roll, upon the recommendation of the pastor and deacons to the church, only after due effort has been made to restore interest and support.

D. By recommendation of the pastor and deacons to the church and by a majority vote, for the denial of belief in any one or more

of the items making up this Constitution's confession of faith set forth in Article III, or for any member who persists in sinful, unscriptural behavior as set forth in Section IV: Discipline of Membership.

SECTION IV DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERSHIP

Church discipline must be exercised in a loving but firm manner against those members who persist in sinful, unscriptural behavior. Church discipline has as its aim the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church, and the spiritual growth of the offender. The procedure of church discipline shall be according to the Scripture (Mt. 5:23-24; 18:15-17; I Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; I Tim. 5:20).

A. When a member becomes aware that another member is clearly disobedient to God's Word, he/she is to go alone (Mt. 18:15), after careful examination (Mt. 7:5) and in a spirit of meekness (Gal. 6:1), to confront the erring member for the purpose of spiritual restoration.

B. If the first attempt at spiritual restoration is not successful, the member seeking restoration should invite one or two other members with knowledge of the offense to accompany him/her in a meeting with the erring member (Mt. 18:16). Each party should exercise careful self-examination and seek to maintain a spirit of meekness during the process.

C. If the problem is still unresolved, the pastor and deacons, as officers of the church are biblically responsible to put down murmuring (Acts 6), and must hear the matter. If the matter remains unresolved, they must recommend to the church that we, as individual church members, examine our own lives concerning this area of offense and then participate in prayerful, loving, and fervent effort to restore the erring member. If the matter is still unresolved, the church is to exclude such a member or members who refuse to be restored (Mt. 18:17).

D. By majority vote the unrepentant party will be excluded from membership and the Lord's supper and must be notified in writing immediately. Any person dismissed, who gives satisfactory evidence of repentance, shall be restored by a majority vote of the members present at any regular public meeting of the church.

E. When the unrepentant party is excluded from the membership and the Lord's supper, all social relationships with him/her from that point on should be exclusively for the purpose of spiritual restoration (Mt. 18:17; I Cor. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:15).

ARTILE VI
MEETINGS

SECTION I
WORSHIP MEETINGS

- A. There will be services on Sunday as recommended by the pastor and deacons.
- B. There will be a mid-week prayer meeting and Bible study.
- C. The Lord's Supper will be observed once a month.
- D. There will be Bible conferences, missionary conferences, revival and evangelistic services, prayer meetings and special speakers as deemed necessary by the pastor and deacons.

SECTION II
BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A. The fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of the same year.
- B. There will be an annual business meeting to be held within the first 30 days of the month of January. Upon the recommendation of the pastor and deacons, a business meeting may be called after the congregation has received due notice (announced or posted).

C. Every member 18 years of age or older shall be entitled to vote. A quorum for conducting business at any church business meeting shall be a minimum of 51% of the membership roll of minimum voting age. All business, except as specifically prescribed by the constitution, shall be ratified by a majority vote of the quorum.

D. The pastor shall moderate all business meetings. In his vacancy the chairman of the deacons shall act as moderator.

ARTILE VII
OFFICERS

SECTION I
THE PASTOR

A. **QUALIFICATION:** The pastor shall be a man who is a believer and preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ and in agreement with this Constitution's confession of faith. He shall meet those qualifications outlined in I Timoth 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and I Peter 5:1-4.

B. **DUTIES:** The pastor shall be responsible for the preaching and teaching ministry of the church, administer the ordinances, watch over the membership, and promote the spiritual interests of the church. He shall organize and develop its strength for the best possible service. He shall be the moderator of all church meetings (deacon's meetings, business meetings, all committees, and all auxiliary church organizations). Any disagreements shall be settled by private efforts or by congregational decision. He shall arrange for and/or conduct all services related to the church.

C. **ELECTION:** The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time by the church membership upon the recommendation of the pulpit committee. His election shall be by secret ballot at a regular or special meeting of the church, providing notice of intention to vote on the calling of a pstor at such a meeting has been given at all church meetings during the two preceding weeks. Three-fourths (3/4) of all votes cast shall be necessary for his election.

D. **TERMINATION:** The pastor's term of office may be ended by him upon thirty (30) days notice of his intent to the church. His term of office may be ended by the church for immorality or doctrinal heresy. In the event the membership terminates the pastor's services for immorality or doctrinal heresy, the salary involved shall continue for thirty (30) days.

E. **SALARY:** The salary of the senior pastor shall be established by the deacons and may be adjusted as deemed appropriate and necessary by the deacons. All other salaries of personnel shall be established by the senior pastor and deacons and may be adjusted as deemed appropriate and necessary.

SECTION II THE ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE PASTOR(S)

A. **QUALIFICATION:** The same as Article VI, Section I, A. Qualifications.

B. **DUTIES:** The assistant/associate pastor(s) shall assist the senior pastor in all areas of spiritual leadership of the church that the senior pastor so directs. In the vacancy of the senior pastor, the assistant pastor(s) shall share in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church, administer the ordinances, watch over the membership, and promote the spiritual interest of the church.

C. **ELECTION:** The assistant/associate pastor(s) shall be chosen by the senior pastor in conference with the deacons.

D. **TERMINATION:** The assistant/associate pastor's term of office may be ended by him upon thirty (30) days notice of his intent to the church. His term of office may be ended by the senior pastor in conference with the deacons for immorality, doctrinal heresy, or as deemed appropriate and necessary. In the event of the termination of an assistant pastor's services the salary involved shall continue for thirty (30) days.

SECTION III DEACONS

A. **QUALIFICATION:** The qualification for the office of deacon shall be according to those outlines in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13. No man shall be elected to the office of deacon who is not in agreement with this Constitution's confession of faith. They are to be men who are vitally involved in the life of the church and whose wives and children faithfully attend the services of the church.

B. **DUTIES:** The deacons are the pastor's helpers. They are to be associated with the pastor(s) concerning the spiritual interest of the church and the administration of the ordinances and fulfillment of the Great Commission. They are to work with the church's shut-ins, be in charge of counting the money, prepare for baptisms and the Lord's Supper, have oversight of the property of the church, shall act as trustees representing the church as its agents, shall act as the pulpit committee in the calling of the senior pastor (there shall be no standing committees, when a job has been completed, the committee shall be disbanded). They shall have regard to the discipline of the church, and they shall seek out the sick and the needy members of the church and shall have under their administration the funds which the church provides for such.

C. **ELECTION:** The total number of deacons shall be determined by the church's need and by the number of Spirit-filled men available who meet those qualifications listed in Article VI, Section

III, Qualifications. The pastors and deacons shall form the nominating committee for deacons. The nominated deacon must have a unanimous vote by the committee before being submitted to the church for approval. Each deacon shall be elected for a two-year term (rotation system). No deacon shall be eligible for re-election until the expiration of twelve (12) months from the end of his term. His term of office may also be terminated by the pastor, the deacons or church for immorality or doctrinal heresy.

SECTION IV
TREASURER

The treasurer shall be elected at the annual business meeting. He/she shall be elected for a term of two years and may be elected to successive terms. He/she shall be the custodian of all funds belonging to the church. He/she shall pay all bills by check. He/she shall make a yearly report (written) to be presented to the church at the annual business meeting. In the event of the change of treasurer, all records shall be turned over to the new treasurer.

SECTION V
CLERK

The clerk shall be elected at each annual business meeting to serve one year, or until a qualified successor shall be elected. The clerk shall keep a current and permanent record of all business meetings of the church, sign all letters of reference and maintain a register of members in which shall be noted such changes as may occur. He/she shall distribute envelopes and assign numbers to names of contributors. In the event of a change of clerk, all records shall be turned over to the new clerk.

ARTICLE VIII
AFFILIATION

This church is organized as an independent, fundamental Baptist church. It shall remain as an independent, fundamental Baptist church. However, it may participate in fellowship, association, and activity with organizations of like faith and practice as long as the organization does not infringe upon the independence of this church.

ARTICLE IX
AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be revised or amended as recommended by the pastors in conference with the deacons at any business meeting of the church provided due notice of such proposed revision or amendment has been given. Amendments must be made upon the recommendation of the pastor(s) and deacons and a 75% vote of those present is necessary to carry an amendment.

ARTICLE X
DISSOLUTION

This church shall have the right to own, buy, or sell properties and possessions in its own name (Grace Bible Baptist Church) through properly elected and authorized church officers. No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any persons from the assets, holding, or other transactions in which this church may become involved. In the event of the dissolution of this church, all its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated by a majority vote of the senior pastor and other church officers to such other non-profit religious organizations as are in agreement with the letter and the spirit of this Constitution's confessions of faith (Article III), and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service (Section 501c-3).

