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## **Article I - Name**

The name of this organization shall be GRACE BIBLE CHURCH, INCORPORATED, OF CLAYTON, GEORGIA. Our name:

GRACE – Focuses on the source of our ministry. II Corinthians 9:8

- Grace is the undeserved, unmerited favor of God to sinners.
- God’s grace is the source of all that we have and are.
- Paul said, “By the grace of God, I am what I am.” I Corinthians 15:10

BIBLE - Focuses on the foundation of our ministry. Luke 6:46-49

- The Bible is the revelation of the knowledge of God’s means of grace. II Timothy 3:16-17
- The Bible is the absolute foundation on which we build everything: our salvation, family life, worship, etc.
- The Bible is preached and explained in a clear, warm, and practical manner, so that people will have a solid foundation on which to build their lives.

CHURCH – Focuses on the members of our ministry. Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:30

- We who are true believers in Jesus Christ have been baptized into the universal body of Christ. I Corinthians 12:13
- As an expression of that union we are joined to the membership of the local church.
- We are all to seek to fulfill our function as members of the local church. I Corinthians 12:12-27

## **Article II - Purpose**

This organization is organized exclusively for religious purposes, as a fellowship of believers. Its purpose can be summed up best in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:18-20) These words reveal a two-fold purpose: evangelization and edification. Our purpose is to evangelize the lost, and edify the saints. These are accomplished by clear Biblical teaching and instruction, as is evidenced by Jesus’ command to go and “teach”, V. 19-20. Therefore, we are “committed to evangelism and edification through Biblical exposition”.

## **Article III - Associations**

This church shall be independent and self-governing, subject only to Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church. We have no denominational affiliation, yet we share spiritually a common evangelical faith with a variety of churches. These may be denominational churches or independent churches. Definitions of terms differ from mind to mind. Therefore, it is not always easy to place a “label” on a

church. Some terms which would identify our church would be: “Evangelical”, “Conservative”, “Independent”, “Nondenominational”, and “Orthodox”. Terms which do not apply to our church are: “Interdenominational”, “Liberal”, “Charismatic”, “Ecumenical”, “Anti-denominational”, and “Neo-orthodox”.

## **Article IV – Statement of Faith**

### **A. The Holy Scriptures**

We teach that the Bible is the written revelation of God, and thus the sixty-books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (I Corinthians 2:7-14; II Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (I Thessalonians 2:13; I Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (II Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture, which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18, 24:35; John 10:35, 16:12-13, 17:17; I Corinthians 2:13; II Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; II Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God’s Word to man (II Peter 1:20 – 21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; II Timothy 3:16).

We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17, 16:12-15; I Corinthians 2:7-15; I John 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

### **B. God**

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; I Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14), each equally deserving worship and obedience.

#### **1. God the Father**

We teach that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; I Corinthians 8:6). He is the

Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; II Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (I Chronicles 29:11). In His Sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (I Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

## **2. God the Son**

We teach that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father (John 10:30, 14:9).

We teach that God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

We teach that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23, 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1 & 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; I Peter 1:18-19).

We teach that, in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God, assumed the place of a Son, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:5-8).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25, 5:8; I Peter 2:24).

We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence

of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25, 5:8-9, II Corinthians 5:14-15; I Peter 2:24, 3:18).

We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25, 8:34; Hebrews 7:25, 9:24, I John 2:1).

We teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:26-29, 14:19; Romans 1:4, 4:25, 6:5-10; I Corinthians 15:20 & 23).

We teach that Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the rapture (Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23):

- a. Believers (I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:10),
- b. Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46),  
and
- c. Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

As the mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5), the head of His body the church (Ephesians 1:22, 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

### **3. God the Holy Spirit**

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (I Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (I Corinthians 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4, 28:25-26; I Corinthians 12:4-6; II Corinthians 13:14; and Jeremiah 31:31-34; with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (II Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17, 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is His church (I Corinthians 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5, 2:4; Romans 8:29; II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; II Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and the prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; II Peter 1:19-21; I John 2:20, 27).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 3:18).

We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today, and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of the believers (I Corinthians 12:4-11, 13:8-10; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

### **C. Man**

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).

We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-

17, 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23, 6:23; I Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; I Timothy 2:13-14; I John 1:8).

We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23, 5:10-12).

## **D. Salvation**

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10; I Peter 1:18-19).

**1. Regeneration** - We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (I Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; II Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; II Peter 1:4; I John 3:2-3).

**2. Election** - We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; II Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 2:10; I Peter 1:1-2).

We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32, 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36, 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; II Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; I Peter 1:2).

We teach that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign, but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other



attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Romans 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-28; II Timothy 1:9).

**3. Justification** -We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 11:18; Romans 2:4; II Corinthians 7:10) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 12:3; II Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20, 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; I Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

**4. Sanctification** - We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore, declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; I Corinthians 1:2, 30, 6:11; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11, 3:1, 10:10, 14, 13:12; I Peter 1:2).

We teach that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1-22; II Corinthians 3:18; I Thessalonians 4:3-4, 5:23).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict – the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh – but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9).

**5. Security** - We teach that all the redeemed once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24, 6:37-50, 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10, 8:1, 31-39; I Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25, 13:5; I Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22, 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

**6. Separation** – We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days, apostasy and worldliness shall increase (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; II Timothy 3:1-5).

We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1-2; I Corinthians 5:9-13; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11).

We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness demonstrated by a beatitude attitude (Matthew 5:2-12) and continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; I John 3:1-10).

## **E. The Church**

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (I Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22, 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture (I Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6, 5:32).

We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (I Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6, 5:32).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27, 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (I Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

We teach that the one, supreme authority for the church is Christ (I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-5).

We teach that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (I Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; II Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5-14), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; I Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).

We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:19-31, 20:28; I Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; I Peter 5:1-4).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (II Timothy 2:2, 15, 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; I John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8, 2:42).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (I Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. First, He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12) and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; I Corinthians 12:4-31; I Peter 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the Apostles' message (Hebrews 2:3-4; II Corinthians 12:12); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (I Corinthians 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (I Corinthians 13:13-14:12; Revelation 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8).

We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; II Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; I John 5:14-15).

We teach that the two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (I Corinthians 11:28-32). We also teach that whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual fellowshiping with His people (I Corinthians 10:16).

## F. ANGELS

**1. Holy Angels** - We teach that the angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14, 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10, 22:9).

**2. Fallen Angels** - We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).

We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10), the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20), and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20: 10).

## G. LAST THINGS (Eschatology)

**1. Death** - We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; II Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (I Thessalonians 4:13-17), when soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; I Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:8).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; II Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).

We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the resurrection (Luke 16:19-26), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

**2. The Last Judgment** - We teach that God has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31; John 45:22, 27). In that day not only will apostate angels be judged (I Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6), but also every person that has lived upon the earth shall appear to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done, whether good or bad (II Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10-12; Matthew 25:32-46).

We teach that the purpose of this day will be to manifest His glorious mercy in the eternal salvation of His elect, and His justice in the eternal punishment of the lost (Romans 9:22-23). The righteous will go into everlasting life, and receive fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord (Matthew 25:21, 34; II Timothy 4:8). The wicked, who know not God, will be cast into everlasting torments, and punishment with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; II Thessalonians 1:7-10).

We teach that Christ would have us presently persuaded that this day will come so that it will deter all men from sin (II Corinthians 5:10-11), and give comfort to the Godly in their adversity (II Thessalonians 1:4-10). He has chosen not to reveal the day or hour of this judgment so that men will not rest in carnal security, but always be watchful for they do know not at what hour He may come (Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40), and to make them cry out, "Come Lord Jesus; come quickly (Revelation 22:20).

**3. Eternity-** We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ having returned and the last judgment being complete, the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, and dwell in a new heaven and earth wherein only righteousness dwells (II Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21, 22). In that eternal state the saved will enjoy fellowship with God and one another forever (John 17:3; Revelation 21 & 22).

## Article V - Government

This church is independent, and never shall be answerable to, or under the jurisdiction or supervision of any other ecclesiastical body. The government, membership, practices, policy, discipline, benevolence, indebtedness, and such things as are necessary for the function of this church shall be determined by and are under the direction of the eldership of this church. The

Elders must, in loving consideration of the flock and in awareness of accountability to God, lead in a spirit of humility, regarding one another before themselves, as they are unanimously led by the head of the church, Jesus Christ, after prayerful consideration.

## **Article VI-Membership**

The Congregation of Christian believers who have applied for membership and have been received shall constitute a spiritual body united for the spiritual purposes set forth in this constitution.

**SECTION 1. ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP** – Active membership shall be open to all persons who confess Christ as Savior, who yield to Him as Lord of their lives and who have been baptized, or have expressed a desire to be baptized.

**SECTION 2. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP** – All requests for membership shall be made to a Pastor, an Elder, or a Deacon. Upon making such request the person shall be given an application for membership, along with a copy of the constitution and by-laws of this church. A Pastor, Elder or Deacon shall meet with the applicant following receipt of the application. Each applicant shall subscribe to the constitution, by-laws and practices of this church, and testify publicly before the Elders at a designated meeting held for prospective members.

**SECTION 3. DENIAL OF MEMBERSHIP** – If, upon review of an application for membership, and/or after meeting with a prospective member, the Elders determine that a.) the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, or that b.) there is lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership will be denied. The decision made by the Elders to deny membership shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any authority from that decision. This does not imply or suggest that future application cannot be made for membership. The decision to deny present membership is based on the present assessment by the eldership.

**SECTION 4. ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP** – Applicants admitted to membership shall present themselves at a worship service designated by the Elders, at which service such applicants shall be publicly acknowledged as members.

**SECTION 5. VOTING PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS** – Membership entitles each member the right to vote on those things which have been submitted to the membership by the Elders. Voting privileges are restricted to members who have passed their sixteenth (16) birthday. Only those whose names stand on the membership records of the church are entitled to vote.

**SECTION 6. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS** – Members of this church who shall err in doctrine or conduct, shall be subject to dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before such dismissal, however, it shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring member's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring member in private. If the erring member does not heed this warning, then the warning member shall again go to the erring member accompanied by one or two witnesses to warn and correct the erring member. If the erring member still refuses to heed this warning, it shall be brought to the attention of the Elders

who shall tell it to the church. If the erring member refuses to heed the warning and correction of the Elders and the church, he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the church membership. This decision is final and there shall be no appeal to any authority from that decision.

**SECTION 7. REMOVAL FROM THE MEMBERSHIP ROLL** – A member of this church who shall willfully, without plausible reason or excuse, absence himself from the services of this church for a period of one (1) year shall be removed from membership at the discretion of the Elders. The removed member will be promptly notified of these actions.

## **SECTION 8. MEETINGS AND NOTICES OF MEETINGS**

**A. REGULAR MEETINGS** – Quarterly scheduled business meetings for the membership are to be held on the second Sunday of the months of January, April, July, and October. The January quarterly meeting shall also constitute the annual meeting for election of officers. To be considered are the reports of the affairs of the church, and such other business as the Elders determine should be brought before the members. Notice of regular meetings shall be given from the pulpit by the Pastor for two (2) successive Sundays prior to the meeting.

**B. SPECIAL MEETINGS** – Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by order of the Elders. Notice of special meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

**C. FISCAL YEAR**- The fiscal year for conducting transactions and meetings shall be from August 1<sup>st</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup>.

**SECTION 9. QUORUM** – At all meetings of the members, whether regular or special, two-thirds of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## **Article VII – Ordinances**

The only two ordinances to be observed by this church are baptism by immersion, and the Lord’s Supper (see Article IV – Statement of Faith, E. The Church).

## **Article VIII – Officers and Official Board**

Office-bearers of the New Testament Church are of two kinds: Elders (also called “bishops” and “pastors”) and Deacons (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5, 7; Ephesians 4:11; I Peter 5: 1-2). These shall constitute the Official Board of this church.

### **SECTION 1. ELDERS**

**A. RESPONSIBILITIES** – To shepherd and have the oversight of the flock. Such responsibilities shall be, but are not limited to: establishing policies and practices for this church consistent with the purposes of its constitution; assist the Pastor-Teacher in the administration of

the ordinances of baptism and communion; oversee the indebtedness, outreach ministries, discipline, and whatever things are necessary for the spiritual welfare of the flock.

**B. NUMBER OF** – There shall be not less than two, of which one shall be the Pastor-Teacher, and as many as need demands unless changed by amendment to these by-laws. If the number falls below the minimum number, the Official Board members shall appoint the needed member(s) to serve until the next annual meeting of the members to elect officers.

**C. NOMINATION, SELECTION, AND TENURE OF OFFICE** – Nominations to fill the office of Elder shall be requested once a year from all church members. A nominating committee consisting of not less than three active church members shall be appointed by the Official Board, who will also designate a chairman of the committee. This committee shall review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications. Members of the nominating committee may be nominees, but no committee member shall nominate himself. The proposed slate of nominees prepared by the committee, along with any relevant comments, shall then be submitted to the Official Board. The Board shall then approve, disapprove or add to the list of nominees. The Secretary shall publicly post the nominees approved by the Official Board at least three weeks prior to the annual meeting of the church membership. At this meeting, the slate of the nominees shall be presented to the members to affirm the decision of the Official Board. The decision must be affirmed by three-fourths majority vote. If the slate of nominees is affirmed, the newly elected Elder(s) shall assume office immediately. Each Elder shall serve until the next annual meeting of the members.

**D. QUALIFICATIONS** – Each Elder must be an active member of this church and possesses the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

**E. REMOVAL** – Any Elder may be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or has some inability to serve his office.

**F. FEES AND COMPENSATION** – Elders (as such) shall not receive any stated or fixed salary for their services. However, that does not preclude any Elder from serving the church in any other capacity and receiving compensation for it. Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from Grace Bible Church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of compensation.

## SECTION 2. DEACONS

**A. RESPONSIBILITIES** – To assist in the shepherding of the saints. Such responsibilities shall be, but are not limited to: assisting the Elders in the implementation of church policies and practices; assisting the Pastor-teacher at the communion and baptismal services; serving as a wider base of council to the Official Board; and performing other duties that are necessary for the physical care of this church.

**B. NUMBER OF** – There shall be not less than two and as many as need demands unless changed by amendment to these by-laws. If the number falls below the minimum number, the Official Board members shall appoint the needed member(s) to serve until the next annual meeting of the members to elect officers.



**C. NOMINATION**- The same procedure shall be followed as for Elders. (See Article VIII, Section 1C.)

**D. QUALIFICATIONS** - Each Deacon must be an active member of this church and possesses the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:8-13.

**E. REMOVAL** - As is applied to the Elder. (See Article VIII, Section 1 E.)

### **SECTION 3. OFFICIAL BOARD**

**A. MEMBERS** - The Official Board consists of those men elected to the offices of Elder and Deacon by three-fourths majority vote of the congregation, along with the Pastor-Teacher. They are subject to the same rules of discipline and church order as all other members, and are not above any other member in importance because of their administrative role.

**B. RESPONSIBILITIES** - To care for the physical and spiritual welfare of the church as they labor together to carry out the will of God for this church. However, since Deacons are to serve as a wider base of council to the Elders, who bear the responsibility of the spiritual oversight of the church, the Elders shall bear the responsibility for all decisions made by the Official Board.

**C. OFFICERS** - All offices of the Official Board shall be filled by annual elections within the membership of the Official Board. These offices are to include, and may exceed, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

**D. MEETINGS** - The Official Board shall meet monthly to discuss issues pertinent to the welfare of this church.

**E. FINANCIAL REVIEW** - The Official Board shall appoint yearly a qualified and competent person, outside of the Official Board, for the purpose of the review of all financial transactions of the past year. This review will then be reported to the membership of the church.

## **Article IX - Pastor-Teacher**

**SECTION 1. RESPONSIBILITIES** - Prayer, study, and the ministry of the Word. He shall be in charge of all public and regular services of the church as related to pulpit ministry, and administer the ordinances of the church. He is responsible to assist the church or any individual member wherever his help may be needed in their Christian experience. He is to be a spiritual teacher, counselor, friend and helper. He is an ex-officio member of all councils and committees and is responsible to the Official Board.

**SECTION 2. QUALIFICATIONS**– Since his role is one of spiritual oversight, he forms a part of the eldership of the church and must therefore meet the qualifications for eldership. He is not separate from the remaining Elders, nor over them, but is a vital part of the eldership team.

**SECTION 3. ELECTION AND TENURE OF OFFICE** – Pastor-Teacher shall be selected by the Official Board and confirmed by the members of the church at its annual meeting or at a special business meeting, and such confirmation shall be a three-fourths majority of all votes cast. He shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time except for reasons described under Section 4. Removal.

**SECTION 4. REMOVAL**– He may be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or by other causes is unable to serve his office. If the Pastor-Teacher elects to resign, he must give one month’s written notice of his intentions to the Official Board, who in turn will relate it to the congregation. If the Official Board determines that he is no longer able to fulfill his office they must give him one month’s written notice of its intentions to dismiss which must be confirmed by members of the church by a three-fourths majority of all votes cast. The time limit of a Pastor-Teacher’s resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the Pastor-Teacher and the church by mutual agreement provide otherwise.

## **Article X – Settlement of Disputes**

**SECTION 1. GENERAL** – In any dispute arising between church members, Pastors, Deacons, or staff pertaining to any matters of spiritual teaching or practices, church finances or title to property purchased with church contributions, the dispute shall be resolved by the Official Board of the church. A decision will be reached only after prayerful consideration in a spirit of humility, with each board member regarding one another before himself.

**SECTION 2. PERSONAL** – In the event of differences between members, it is recommended that they be settled personally in accordance with Article VI – Membership, Section 6.

## **Article XI – Mission Outreach**

**SECTION 1. FOREIGN MISSIONS** – It is desirable that the church seek every opportunity, within its means, to support financially and with prayer those that we have identified ourselves with in the evangelization of the lost to the uttermost part of the world. Full or partial support of missionaries may be undertaken as determined by the Official Board and confirmed by the membership of the church by three-fourths majority vote.

**SECTION 2. AUXILIARY MINISTRIES** – All ministries and missions outreach of the church shall perform the duties for which they were designed under the control of the Official Board.

## Article XII - Dissolution

Upon dissolution of Grace Bible Church of Clayton, Georgia, the Official Board shall cause all of its debts to be fully satisfied, and the assets of the church to be distributed to another Christian organization(s) whose purposes and views are in keeping with the Constitution of Grace Bible Church. No assets of this church shall go to the benefit of any donor, member, director or officer of the church, in keeping with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service Code of 1954 (Section 501 C-3).

## Article XIII - Amendments

This Constitution may be amended at any congregational meeting provided a two weeks' notice has been given the members, which notice shall state the proposed amendment. A three-fourths majority vote shall be needed to pass the proposed amendment except for Article IV - Statement of Faith, which shall require a ninety percent majority vote.

I, the undersigned, being the Secretary of Grace Bible Church of Clayton, Georgia, do hereby certify that the above Constitution was adopted on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1991, by the congregation of Grace Bible Church at a special called meeting. This Constitution, as of date of this certification, is the adopted and existing Constitution of Grace Bible Church.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 25<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1991.

### Amendment One

Article VI. Section 9, regarding quorums for all business meetings shall be amended to read as follows: **"The voting membership present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business."**

Passed by vote of congregation on 10/24/1993

### Amendment Two

Article VI. Section 5, regarding voting privileges of members shall be amended to contain the following words: **"On ballot issues an absentee ballot will be provided for those who are providentially hindered from being at any meeting, as the Official Board considers the nature of the hindrance, and must be returned within the week of the scheduled or called meeting."**

Passed by vote of congregation on 11/28/1993

# Amendment Three

## ARTICLE VIII - OFFICERS AND OFFICIAL BOARD

- The constitution reads, pg. 15 “Office-bearers of the New Testament Church are of two kinds, Elders (also called “bishops” and “pastors”) and Deacons (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5&7; Ephesians 4:11; I Peter 5:1-2). These officers constitute the Official Board of this Church.”

The amendment is to read, “Office-bearers of the New Testament Church are of two kinds, Elders (also called “bishops” and “pastors”) and Deacons (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5&7; Ephesians 4:11; I Peter 5:1-2). From among these officers the Official Board of this Church is elected.”

### SECTION 3. OFFICIAL BOARD

- **Number of**, The Constitution does not set a specific number for the Official Board, but recognized all Elders and Deacons as members of the Official Board.

The amendment is to read, “The Official Board is not to exceed 12 members at any given time.”

- **Tenure of office**, The Constitution states on page 16 that Elders and Deacons are elected to serve at the annual meeting of the members until the next annual meeting of the members. As such their tenure of office as members of the Official Board was until the annual meeting of the members.

The amendment is to read, “As members of the Official Board these leaders shall serve the task of board members for a term of three (3) years on a rotating basis. A board member may succeed himself once. After serving six years a board member will be required to take a one (1) year sabbatical, after which they may serve the duties of the Official Board again. After and during serving the terms of the Official Board the Elder or Deacon will still continue to serve their roles of ministry as described in the Constitution of Grace Bible Church.”

- **Meetings**, The Constitution reads, pg. 17 “The Official Board shall meet monthly to discuss issues pertinent to the welfare of this church.”

The amendment is to read, “The Official Board shall meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the months of July, October, January, and April to discuss issues pertinent to the welfare of this church.”

Passed by vote of the congregation on 7/8/01

## Amendment Four

### ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

#### SECTION 8. MEETING AND NOTICES OF MEETINGS

- **Regular Meetings**, The Constitution reads pg. 15 “Quarterly scheduled business meetings for the membership are to be held on the second Sunday of the months of January, April, July, and October. The January quarterly meeting shall also constitute the annual meeting for the election of officers. To be considered are the reports of the affairs of the church, and such other business as the Elders determine should be brought before the members. Notice of regular meetings shall be given from the pulpit by the Pastor for two (2) successive Sundays prior to the meeting.”

The amendment is to read, “Quarterly scheduled business meetings for the membership are to be held on the second Sunday of the months of August, November, February, and May. The August quarterly meeting shall also constitute the annual meeting for the election of officers and ministry positions. To be considered are the reports of the affairs of the church, and such other business as the Elders determine should be brought before the members. Notice of regular meetings shall be given from the pulpit by the Pastor for two (2) successive Sundays prior to the meeting.”

- **Fiscal Year**, The Constitution has no direct statement about the fiscal year of the church. It is more of an assumed calendar of January through December based on the annual and quarterly meetings throughout the year.

The amendment is to read, “The church fiscal year for conducting its business and ministry shall be from August 1<sup>st</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup>, each year.”

Passed by vote of the congregation on 7/8/01

## Amendment Five

SECTION 10. **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP** - All of the articles found under Article VI - Membership, Sections 1 - 8, apply to associate members with the following items defining the distinctions between an active member and an associate member.

- A. **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP** - Associate membership is open to those who desire membership in this Church while simultaneously retaining an active membership in an out-of-town Bible-believing Church. They must be considered non-fulltime residents of Rabun County who while residing in Rabun County for an extended period of time desire to participate in the life, ministries, and accountability provided by this Church.
- B. **PRIVILEGES** - Associate members are eligible to conduct ministry under the approval and oversight of the leadership of this Church.
- C. **LIMITATIONS** - Associate members are not eligible to serve as an Elder, Deacon, Treasurer, nor as members of the Finance or Leadership Committees.

Passed by vote of the congregation on 5/15/05

## **Amendment Six**

**Article IV - Statement of Faith, H. Marriage & Sexuality** (new section) “We teach that the term “marriage” has only one meaning, which is the union, sanctioned by God, which joins one man (male from birth) and one woman (female from birth) in an exclusive personal relationship which includes sexual intimacy (Genesis 2:22-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-33). We teach that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and woman who are married to each other (Proverbs 5:18-19; Hebrews 13:4).”

Passed by vote of the congregation on 8/16/15

**Article XIV - Marriages & Weddings** (new section) “Grace Bible Church does not conduct, allow, or condone weddings except on the basis of **Article IV - Statement of Faith, H. Marriage & Sexuality**.

Passed by vote of the congregation on 8/16/15