

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH OF NORTH COUNTY

CONSTITUTION, BY-LAWS
AND
STATEMENT OF FAITH



Rev 1, September 2002

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CONSTITUTION OF GRACE BIBLE CHURCH OF NORTH COUNTY

PREAMBLE

We, the Elders of Grace Bible Church of North County, establish and approve the following Articles.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this local body of Christ shall be the Grace Bible Church of North County (hereinafter "Grace Bible Church").

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

God's purpose in establishing this local expression of the body of Christ is that His manifold wisdom, which He demonstrated in Christ Jesus our Lord, shall be made known (Ephesians 3:10). In response, we purpose to glorify God in the following mutually supportive ways as directed by the Holy Scriptures:

- a. By gathering together for worship and prayer in the unity of the Spirit (Acts 2:42);
 - b. By the exercising of spiritual gifts for the edification, maturing, and equipping of God's people for service to God (I Corinthians 12:4-7; II Timothy 3:16,17);
 - c. By proclaiming the gospel of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ to the world through word and practice (Acts 1:8; Matthew 5:13-16);
 - d. By encouraging the application of biblical principles to all spheres of life (Matthew 5:13-16; Jeremiah 29:7; I Corinthians 10:31).
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ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. The Statement of Faith for Grace Bible Church is a summary of what we believe God's Word teaches with

regard to the essential tenets of Christian theology. Grace Bible Church is in substantial agreement with the historic Baptist Confessions of Faith of 1644 and 1689. All statements of faith and confessions are subordinate to Scripture and amendable.

ARTICLE IV: FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The government of this church shall be under the headship of Jesus Christ and in obedience to the Word of God (Colossians 1:17-18). Under Christ's leadership, Grace Bible Church shall be ruled by Elders (pastors) in accordance with this Constitution, fulfilling the Biblical responsibilities defined in Article IX of the By-Laws. Likewise, Deacons will administer the affairs of this church, under the oversight of the Elders, in accordance with this Constitution, fulfilling the Biblical responsibilities defined in Article IX of the By-Laws.

SECTION 1: ELDERS

Elders shall be men called of God who are qualified according to I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and I Peter 5:2-3, and have accepted the Grace Bible Church Statement of Faith. Unless providentially hindered, there shall be no less than two Elders at any given time, and up to as many as the Lord calls to the undershepherding role. Each Elder will serve as long as he remains Biblically qualified, available, and desires to continue to serve.

SECTION 2. DEACONS

Deacons shall be men called of God who are qualified according to I Timothy 3:8-13 and have accepted the Grace Bible Church Statement of Faith. Unless providentially hindered, there shall be no fewer than two Deacons at any given time, and as many as the Lord calls to this ministering role. Each Deacon will serve as long as he remains Biblically qualified, available, and desires to continue to serve.

SECTION 3. OTHER LEADERSHIP

All positions of leadership associated with Grace Bible Church shall be filled with members. This includes all teaching positions (Sunday School, home fellowship small groups, etc.), the leading of worship services, and leadership positions for all other recognized ministry areas. All teaching and preaching from these leaders is expected to be consistent with the official Statement of Faith of Grace Bible Church. The Elders may invite members of other churches to minister at Grace Bible Church periodically.

ARTICLE V: CORPORATION STATUS

Grace Bible Church is a religious corporation as filed with the State of California and is not organized for the private gain of any person. It is organized under the Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law exclusively for religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE VI: AFFILIATIONS

Grace Bible Church shall not be subordinated to any other organization. Grace Bible Church may, cooperate with other organizations of like mind and purpose, and may even affiliate with the same as long as the right of withdrawal is reserved. However, neither Grace Bible Church authority nor property shall be subordinate to any other organization.

ARTICLE VII: MEMBERSHIP

The membership process allows a means of maintaining the purity of Grace Bible Church and ensuring the administration of pastoral care (I Peter 1:15,16).

Grace Bible Church receives as members those who evidence faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Each member is expected to exercise personal and corporate study of all tenets of the Grace Bible Church Statement of Faith and not to undermine the doctrine and practice reflected in the Constitution, By-Laws and Statement of Faith of Grace Bible Church.

It is not required that a person be re-baptized to become a member. However, if the prospective member was only baptized as an infant, or for some reason there is a question about the validity of the original baptism, the prospective member shall be encouraged to be baptized as a believer.

ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

It is the aim of Grace Bible Church to vindicate the integrity and honor of Christ by maintaining the purity of the local church and her worship (Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:6-8; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; Titus 1:13, 2:15, 3:10). Grace Bible Church, by consistently applying Biblical principles to Christians whether

they be members or regular attendees, shall strive to restore offenders (I Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1) and deter others from sin (I Timothy 5:20).

ARTICLE IX: ADDITIONAL GRACE BIBLE CHURCH DOCUMENTS

All additional church documents approved by the Elder Board shall be in agreement with and subordinate to this Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE X: DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of Grace Bible Church by the Elder Board, no member, officer of the church, or private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any assets. Upon dissolution, assets of the church shall first be used to pay any outstanding debts. Following this, the remaining assets of the corporation shall be given to a non-profit corporation of like faith and practice and/or to missionaries supported by the church.

The selection of recipients, as well as the timing of the actual transfers, shall be determined by vote of the Elder Board with consideration given to recommendations made by the Board of Deacons. Actions required to carry out the dissolution shall be performed by the Deacon Board, who shall seek out legal assistance to complete the process.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS

The Elder Board shall solicit comments and recommendations from the membership of Grace Bible Church on all proposed amendments to this Constitution and By-Laws at least thirty days prior to their formal approval and incorporation. After evaluating responses from the membership, final approval of amendments shall be made by the Elder Board at a regularly scheduled Elder Board meeting.

BY-LAWS OF GRACE BIBLE CHURCH OF NORTH COUNTY

ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES

SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS

Any person desiring to become a member of Grace Bible Church may indicate that desire to any Elder at any time. At the earliest convenient time two or more Elders will interview the prospective member(s) to determine their personal understanding and belief in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (Romans 3:21-26) and to discuss the responsibilities of church membership. Upon credible profession of faith and agreement to membership responsibilities, the person interviewed will be considered a member of Grace Bible Church.

Consistent with their walk of faith and commitment to this local body of Christ, all members are expected to exhibit the following:

- a. A willingness to submit to the authority of Scripture;
- b. A desire to share in the ministry of this local church family by using the spiritual gift(s) God has given (I Corinthians 12:4-7);
- c. A willingness to submit to the leadership and authority of the Elders of this local body as they submit to God and the authority of Scripture (Hebrews 13:17);
- d. Regular attendance at the Sunday morning and evening worship services of Grace Bible Church unless providentially hindered;
- e. A familiarity with the contents of the Grace Bible Church Statement of Faith, Constitution, and By-Laws and not to promote doctrine or practice contrary to them.

SECTION 2. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Recognizing the need for orderly transfer of membership, it may be necessary to determine whether a transfer from another church body is in order and based upon Biblical grounds. If any unresolved difficulties are uncovered, the Elders shall work with the prospective member for their resolution.

For those members of this local body who wish to transfer to another church, a letter of transfer shall be submitted to the accepting church should it be desired by those transferring. When such letter is granted, membership in this church shall be considered terminated.

SECTION 3. DUAL MEMBERSHIP

Any person who is currently a member of another church, yet through a temporary relocation has routinely been in attendance at Grace Bible Church, shall be encouraged to have dual membership status. This status shall facilitate proper watchcare and oversight while the person is under the care of Grace Bible Church.

SECTION 4. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Board of Elders of their intention to withdraw and the reasons for their withdrawal. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Board of Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Board of Elders is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to his gifts and needs. If it appears to the Board of Elders that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be granted until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded (see Matthew 18:12-20; By-Laws Article V).

Members may also be removed from membership by order of the Board of Elders when they persistently, over an extended period of time, and without adequate reason, absent themselves from the stated services of the church; unite with another church; or are removed by excommunication for persistent impenitence (see By-Laws Article V).

SECTION 5. PRIVILEGES

Each member shall have the privilege of pastoral oversight. Only members may be Elders, Deacons, teachers, or serve in any ministry leadership position. Pastoral involvement and church ministries including the Lord's Supper, weddings, funerals, counseling, use of equipment and facilities, and financial aid are privileges reserved for members. Exceptions must be approved by the Board of Elders.

SECTION 6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

New members shall be announced at the earliest convenient time to the church body at one of its regularly scheduled meetings. Upon departure of a member from Grace Bible Church an appropriate announcement will be made to the congregation at a subsequent service. Usually, an evening service will be the most appropriate service to make such an announcement. Since discretion must be used when giving the reason for leaving, general agreement among the Elders shall be reached before the reason is publicly announced.

ARTICLE II: CHURCH MEETINGS

Grace Bible Church holds Sunday morning and Sunday evening worship services. These meetings are intended to complement one another so that the body will be provided with a balance of those elements essential to Christian worship (e.g. corporate prayer, teaching, preaching, sharing, mutual edification, praise, singing, Christian ordinances, exercising of spiritual gifts, etc.). In addition we offer Sunday School for all ages.

Throughout the week there may be smaller group meetings for specific purposes such as: home fellowship, discipling, youth activities, etc..

There shall be at least one formal Elder Board meeting each month for the conduct of business associated with oversight of Grace Bible Church. This meeting shall be open to the entire body to attend. However, only Elders may vote when a vote is required. Other meetings may be called by the Elders (with limited attendance) to address sensitive shepherding issues not appropriate for public exposure, extended times of prayer, and mutual shepherding.

There shall be at least one annual Grace Bible Church meeting for conduct of business that affects the entire body. This meeting will be held in the December - January time period and will include presentation of the budget for the coming year.

In addition, other meetings may be called or established for worship, fellowship, or business as required. These additional meetings are to be approved by the Elder board and may be requested by any member of Grace Bible Church.

ARTICLE III: CHURCH ORDINANCES

Grace Bible Church recognizes that the Lord has established two ordinances to be faithfully observed in the church. These are: baptism, which is to be undergone once at conversion; and the Lord's Supper, which is celebrated regularly.

SECTION 1. BAPTISM

Water baptism is symbolic of the Christian's spiritual union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). According to the Biblical pattern, a new Christian is to be baptized after conversion at the earliest convenient time as an expression of personal faith in Christ and membership in the church. Full immersion is the preferred method, consistent with the New Testament practice (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:10, Acts 8:36-40). A believer who regards his infant baptism as valid, will not be required to undergo baptism as a condition of membership. However, he will be encouraged to study the Biblical principles involved in the hope they will be persuaded to be baptized as a believer.

A person desiring to be baptized should contact one of the Elders, who will arrange a meeting with the candidate at the earliest convenient time. Two Elders are to interview the candidate to hear his profession of faith. The candidate for baptism should demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of sin, repentance, substitutionary atonement, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Particular care should be taken to ensure that the candidate understands the meaning of baptism as an important act of obedience and outward profession, but is not a condition of salvation. In addition, those conducting the interview should look for the fruit of faith and repentance as expected in the life of a believer. If the men conducting the interview determine that some of these issues remain unclear after the first meeting, further instruction and additional meetings may be required. Children who seek baptism must meet the same requirements as adults.

If the one desiring baptism gives a credible profession of faith, arrangements shall be made for a public baptism service at the earliest convenient time. Baptisms will ordinarily be by immersion. Baptisms shall be conducted under the supervision of the Elders. Before the candidate is baptized, he or she is to be given opportunity to give a public profession of faith in Christ either through a testimony or by answering questions asked by the one performing the baptism.

SECTION 2. THE LORD'S SUPPER

Because the Lord exhorted us to do this in remembrance of Him (I Corinthians 11:24), and in light of the practice of the early church (Acts 2:42, 20:7), Grace Bible Church observes the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis. The ordinance shall be carried out under the supervision of the Elders. Participation in the Lord's Supper is open to all believers (see Article I Section 5 of By-Laws) who are members in good standing of an evangelical church. Those who partake should examine themselves as to whether they have unresolved sin against God or another believer (Matthew 5:23-24; I Corinthians 11:28-29).

ARTICLE IV: BIBLICAL COUNSELING

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships (Romans 3:23; 7:7-25). Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God desires that he seek assistance from other members, and especially from the Elders who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-2; Colossians 3:16; II Timothy 2:15-26; II Timothy 3:16-5:2; Hebrews 10:24-25; 13:17; James 5:16). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its members to make confession to and seek counsel from each other and especially from pastoral counselors.

SECTION 1. PRINCIPLES OF COUNSELING

Counseling at Grace Bible Church is based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the lay counselors of this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

The pastoral and lay counselors of Grace Bible Church seek to apply biblical principles to all aspects of life. If a member or regular attender of Grace Bible Church seeks help in legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions, the counselor will apply scripture to the matter to the best of his ability. The pastoral or lay counselor shall seek to cooperate with professional advisors and help members or regular attenders consider their advice in the light of relevant scriptural principles.

SECTION 2: CONFIDENTIALITY IN COUNSELING

Confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, however there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the

Elders of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people. Typical circumstances include:

- a. When an Elder is uncertain about how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other Elders. (Proverbs 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; Matthew 18:15-17);
- b. When the person who disclosed the information, or any other person, is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Proverbs 24:11-12);
- c. When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (see Matthew 18:15-20 and By-Laws Article V) or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (see, e.g., Romans 13:1-5); or
- d. When required by law to report suspected child abuse.

ARTICLE V: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Application of church discipline shall be consistent with the Biblical approach outlined in Matthew 18:17-18. As such, it is to be exercised against offenders who profess to be Christians (see Article I of By-Laws). The Elders oversee the disciplinary process described below.

SECTION 1. OFFENSES ADDRESSED

General categories of offenses in Scripture that may result in church discipline include:

- a. Divisiveness (Titus 3:9-11; Romans 16:17-18; Hebrews 13:17)
- b. Scandalous immorality (I Corinthians 5:9-11; 6:9-10; Exodus 20:12-17)
- c. Rejecting the essential doctrines of the Christian faith (I Timothy 1:19-20; 6:3-5; II John 9-11)

SECTION 2. METHODS USED

Matthew 18:15-16 outlines the approach to bring about reconciliation between individuals when offenses occur. If this is unsuccessful, then those that sought the offender's repentance may come to the Elders of the church. The Elders, in turn, are to follow the general procedures below to ensure everything is pursued in an orderly

and proper way. Each of the four following steps represents a separate phase of church discipline, with the time required for each dependent upon the particular circumstances. Each step in the process below will be documented in writing and will include all pertinent information (e.g., history, proven offenses, expectations, actions taken). The Elders will not entertain anonymous accusations. The person accused of sin has the right to face and answer their accusers. Any charges against an Elder must be supported by two or more witnesses (I Timothy 5:19) as well as provided in writing.

Investigation The Elders are to conduct an investigation to determine if the accused is guilty of the charges. If the charges are proven false, then appropriate exhortation will be given to the parties so that reconciliation can occur. If the charges are proven (by confession or by witnesses), admonition is to be initiated.

Admonition Admonition includes a description of the unacceptable behavior and what must replace it, a procedure for monitoring the behavior over a specified period of time, and a warning that public admonition (II Thessalonians 3:14-15) or excommunication could follow if the behavior is not corrected. If satisfactory changes occur, the Elders may discontinue any further monitoring. Other disciplinary measures, short of excommunication, may include limitation of ministry opportunities, suspension from the Lord's Table, and public admonition.

Excommunication If admonition and monitoring fail in correcting the unacceptable behavior, excommunication will occur. This action excludes the offender from the privilege of participation in the public services of the church. He is also excluded from church social meals, gatherings and recreational activities and is removed from the membership rolls. The church will be informed by the Elders of the reasons for this decision, and will explain the duty of all members relative to the offender. If the excommunicated person withdraws from any further involvement with the Elders and begins attending another church, the Elders are obliged to inform the new church of the offender's status.

Restoration When the excommunicated person repents, restoration begins. Restoration is a process that restores an offender to the full privileges that were withdrawn during excommunication. This will only occur if the Elders are satisfied that full repentance is a reality. If restoration is appropriate, the Elders will inform the church of the reasons for this decision and will explain the duty of all members relative to the restored person (II Corinthians 2:5-11).

The methods described here also cover any and all disputes or claims arising from or related to church membership, doctrine, policy, practice, counseling, discipline,

decisions, actions, or failures to act, including claims based on civil statute or for personal injury.

By joining this church, all members agree that these methods shall provide the sole remedy for any dispute arising against the church and its agents, and they waive their right to file any legal action against the church in a civil court or agency.

ARTICLE VI: FINANCES

In order to be above reproach before God and one another as stewards of all the Lord has entrusted to Grace Bible Church, it is important to establish proper financial accountability (I Timothy 6:9,10; I Corinthians 16:3,4). To ensure this, the Deacon Board will exercise oversight of all financial matters of the church, under Elder authority (see Article IX, Section 2c of By-Laws). To support this responsibility, a Treasurer shall be assigned by the Elders to account for all Grace Bible Church finances. The duties of the Treasurer are to:

- a. Ensure that no expenditure exceeds its annual item allocation without Deacon Board approval;
- b. Minister closely with the Deacon Board to ensure timely dispensing of funds when required for various needs of the body;
- c. Oversee the counting and banking of all funds collected by the church;
- d. Oversee the maintaining of an accurate accounting of funds received and dispensed by the church;
- e. Report the financial position of the church at the annual financial review in December - January;
- f. Submit a preliminary budget for the next year to the Deacon Board and Elder Board;
- g. Make available to the Elder Board and the Deacon Board a monthly, written financial statement;
- h. Recommend to the Deacon Board policies and practices relating to financial management that are not explicitly covered by this Constitution and By-Laws.

Detailed descriptions of the procedures to be followed relative to the above responsibilities are contained in the following sections.

SECTION 1. COLLECTIONS

After each service in which collections are received, the Treasurer, or his designee, and one other person (preferably a Deacon or a designated Bookkeeper) shall count the receipts and sign a register recording the amount. The Treasurer is responsible to ensure the deposit of any collections and to keep accurate records of each individual's or family's giving, if known.

SECTION 2. PAYMENTS

All payments or reimbursements must be approved by either a Deacon or Elder who is not directly involved with the transaction. Benevolence payments must be approved by the Deacons prior to actual distribution.

SECTION 3. DESIGNATED GIVING

Designated gifts shall be permitted to be contributed only to the fund accounts established by the Deacons and identified in the Grace Bible Church chart of accounts. Disbursement of funds from fund accounts shall be in accordance with the purpose of the fund account and under the supervision and full control of the Deacons.

SECTION 4. MONTHLY PROCEDURES

A monthly church expense and budget report will be prepared by the Treasurer to be presented to the Elders and Deacons. Independently, a Deacon will review the report and verify that proper procedures were followed. Each employed staff member of Grace Bible Church who requires expense reimbursement will submit an expense reimbursement report for review by the Treasurer and a separate Deacon. The monthly expense and budget report shall be available for review by any church member on request. However, confidentiality of individual or family giving will be maintained.

SECTION 5. ANNUAL PROCEDURES

The Treasurer shall compile a new calendar year budget, based upon input from the Elders, the Deacons, and other ministry leaders. It shall be presented first to the Deacon Board, then to the Elder Board, and then to the entire church during December or January. The annual budget is to be made available to the church for review for at least one month prior to formal adoption by the Elder Board. Whenever the Deacon and Elder Boards must make significant budget adjustments (affecting

five per cent or more of the total annual budget), these will be presented to the church for review prior to formal adoption by the Elder Board.

The Deacons shall appoint an appropriate individual to review the year's financial records and report findings back to the Deacon and Elder Boards.

SECTION 6. SALARY COMPENSATION

Salaries to be paid to Grace Bible Church staff shall be recommended by the Treasurer and follow the same procedure for approval as the annual budget. Any person receiving compensation from the church shall not be in a position to approve the amount of the salary.

ARTICLE VII: ELDER BOARD DECISION-MAKING POLICY

SECTION 1. POLICY

The Elder Board shall earnestly strive to make all decisions by consensus. In the course of discussions between Elders and with others who may be participating, each Elder must:

- a. Earnestly strive to seek God's will and counsel (Psalm 143:10);
- b. Ensure scriptural admonitions are not violated (2 Timothy 3:16,17);
- c. Show mutual regard for one another (Philippians 2:2-4);
- d. Submit himself one to another (Ephesians 5:21);
- e. Wait patiently upon one another (Ephesians 4:2);
- f. Genuinely consider one another's interests and perspectives (Proverbs 15:22; Philippians 2:4);
- g. Prefer and defer to one another and other delegated decision groups on all minor issues (Proverbs 13:10);
- h. Maintain a teachable spirit (Proverbs 18:15).

SECTION 2. NON-DISCIPLINE ISSUES

If a consensus cannot be reached in a reasonable period of time on decisions not relating to church discipline, then a motion may be made (and must be seconded by another Elder) to:

- a. Discuss the issue in further detail, or
- b. Delay the decision for prayerful consideration and obtain more information as required, or
- c. Consider delegating the discussion to another group for more thorough investigation and recommendations, or
- d. Call for a vote — in which case a quorum of the Elders may vote with a simple majority needed to decide the issue.

A quorum is attained when half or more of the Elders are present. Also, when an Elder knows he will be absent, he may use his proxy vote on an issue scheduled to be decided upon.

In addition, an Elder may choose to abstain from voting. In such a case, his opportunity to vote will not be counted in the number present.

SECTION 3. DISCIPLINE AND REMOVAL ISSUES

If a consensus cannot be reached in a reasonable period of time on decisions relating to application of church discipline of a member or removal of an Elder or Deacon from office, then a motion may be made (and must be seconded by another Elder) to:

- a. Discuss the issue in further detail, or
- b. Delay the decision for prayerful consideration and obtain more information/counsel as required, or
- c. Call for a vote — in which case all Elders must vote, and a two-thirds majority will be needed to decide the issue as follows:

VOTING ELDERS	VOTES TO CARRY
1	N/A
2	2-0
3	2-1
4	3-1
5	4-1
6	4-2
7	5-2
8	6-2
9	6-3
10	7-3

Also, in decisions relating to the discipline or removal of an Elder, the Elder in question will not be counted as a voting Elder and will not vote.

ARTICLE VIII: APPOINTMENT OF CHURCH OFFICERS

SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS

God is the one who calls a man to the task of Elder or Deacon, as He is the one who so equips the man both with the spiritual gifts and character needed for the office (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 4:11). It is therefore the responsibility of the church to discover and evaluate those whom God has called to the office of Elder and Deacon (Acts 6:3). This evaluation shall be based upon the biblical qualifications found in I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:23.

Each Elder and Deacon will serve as long as he remains Biblically qualified, available, and desires to continue to serve. An Elder or Deacon may be granted an approved leave of absence from Elder or Deacon responsibilities.

SECTION 2. PROCEDURE

A candidate for either office may be recommended to the Elders by any member of Grace Bible Church. A man who believes that God is calling him may also seek the counsel of the Elders for possible candidacy (I Timothy 3:1). It is the responsibility of the Elders to examine the qualifications of a candidate for either office. In addition, the Deacons are to examine and approve a candidate for the office of Deacon.

If there is consensus among the Elders regarding the qualifications of a candidate, then the candidate will be presented to the membership for consideration, prayer, and a time of evaluation (I Thessalonians 5:12; Acts 6:3-5). If consensus cannot be reached by the Elders, then the candidacy will be suspended.

A period of at least three months will be given for the membership to pray and ask questions of the candidate (or the Elders) with regard to his qualifications. At the end of this time period, the Elders will evaluate both the responses from the membership and the status of the candidate. If there is still consensus among the Elders as to the qualifications of the candidate, he will then be brought before the membership in a worship service, in which he will be formally presented and acknowledged as one whom God has called to the task of Elder or Deacon.

ARTICLE IX: RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS

SECTION 1: RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS

Under authority of scripture, the duty of Elders is to oversee the spiritual life of the church by:

- a. Preaching/Teaching All Elders attend to the ministry of the Word through teaching and preaching (Acts 6:4; Ephesians 4:11-12; I Thessalonians 5:12; I Timothy 3:2; 5:17; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9). It shall oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship, and the spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation (Ephesians. 4:11-13; Matthew 28:19-20).
- b. Shepherding All Elders carry on watchcare and oversight responsibilities relating to the flock entrusted into its care. (I Peter 5:2-3; Acts 20:28; Matthew 18:15-29; I Corinthians 5:13; Galatians 6:1-2; Titus 3:9-11). Elders use the Word of God to instruct, edify, encourage, admonish, and exhort the body (I Thessalonians 2:11; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 13:17; Psalm 23:2-3)
- c. Ruling The Elders are responsible to exercise authority in all areas of doctrine and practice. The Elders have the final authority over the activities of the Board of Deacons and all other ministries of the church, and have final authority over the use of the church property. (Heb. 13:17; I Thessalonians 5:12-13; I Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17). Authority to carry out these responsibilities is shared equally by all the Elders (Romans 12:8; I Peter 5:3).

- d. Praying Elders minister to the body through persistent corporate and individual intercessory prayer (Acts 2:42; I Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:14; Acts 6:4).

SECTION 2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEACONS

The duty of Deacons is to assist the Elders by:

- a. Benevolence Dispensing benevolence funds according to the physical and spiritual needs of the body and remaining aware of the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the body (Acts 6:1-7; I Timothy 3:8-13).
- b. Property Exercising caretaker and stewardship responsibilities over all church properties and the acquiring or disposing of all church property of any kind
- c. Finances Exercising oversight of financial matters of the church, including all expenses throughout the year, the annual review of the church budget, staff salaries, and financial needs of those whose ministries the church supports.
- d. Logistics Providing oversight of all items relating to logistical aspects of church services.

STATEMENT OF FAITH GRACE BIBLE CHURCH OF NORTH COUNTY

GOD

We believe the LORD God, as revealed in the Bible, is the one and only living and true God. He is the holy, sovereign, self-existent and self-sufficient One (Deuteronomy 6:4; John 5:39; Isaiah 43:10, 11; Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 135:6; Exodus 3:14).

This God reveals Himself to us in the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each equal in His nature, essence, and being, yet each possessing distinct personal characteristics suitable to His person and work (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2).

He is Creator of all things, visible and invisible, physical and spiritual. Out of nothing, by the power of His Word, He called all that exists into being and sustains it according to His desire and power (Genesis 1; Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 104; Colossians 1:16,17).

God has a purpose and plan for all things in heaven and on earth which will be accomplished according to His eternal decrees for His glory. In this, His manifold attributes, including His wisdom, power, love, and faithfulness are revealed to us (Isaiah 46:10-13; Ephesians 1:3-5, 11; Matthew 24:35; I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 1:20).

THE BIBLE

We believe the Bible, as it was composed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to be the only inspired, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Word of God. This Bible, which in English translations is made up of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is completely sufficient concerning all matters of belief and living (Proverbs 30:5a; II Peter 1:20,21; Deuteronomy 8:18; Hebrews 4:12,13; II Timothy 3:16,17).

Man's belief in the authority of Scripture comes from the inward work of the Holy Spirit who works in the mind, heart, and will of man. The Spirit and the Scriptures work in us to draw us into a personal saving knowledge of God in Christ, to establish the content of our belief or faith, and to direct us in the conduct of our daily lives (John 6:44; I Corinthians 2:12-14; Romans 6:17; John 16:13-15; II Timothy 3:16,17).

Nothing is to be added to or taken away from the Scriptures in any way, such as new revelation or traditions of men. It is the standard by which all knowledge is tested (Deuteronomy 4:7, 12:32; Revelation 22:18,19; Galatians 1:8; Colossians 2:8).

Each of us is called to correctly handle the Word of God. Thus, we are to discern its true, intended, and plain meaning. We establish meaning by context, by recognizing the basic unity of all Scripture, and therefore, by following the basic rule of all biblical interpretation — Scripture must be used to interpret Scripture (i.e., Genesis 12:7 with Galatians 3:16; Joel 2:28-32 with Acts 2:16-24; Genesis 15:6 with Romans 4:1-3; II Timothy 2:15; II Peter 3:15,16; II Corinthians 4:2; Romans 4:1-3,13).

SALVATION

MAN'S NEED

We believe that in the beginning all God's creation, including man, was good. Mankind, male and female, was righteous, walking closely with God. Man fell from that position of fellowship with God into disgrace, deserving condemnation to Hell, through unbelief and rebellion. Everyone has inherited Adam's sinful nature and is totally unable to do anything that is pleasing to God. All are dead in their sin and cannot in themselves respond to the gospel for salvation (Genesis 1, 2, 3; Romans 3:10-12, 5:12-21, 8:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-9).

GOD'S PROVISION

And this is the gospel, that Jesus Christ, being fully God and fully man, was sent by the Father and came willingly to be the only mediator between God and man. He was born of a virgin and lived a perfect life of obedience to His Father, observing all His commands and fulfilling all His purposes. In doing so, He revealed to man the glory, mercy, grace, and truth of God, teaching man the new way of life (Hebrews 1:1-3; John 1:14; Acts 2:23,36; I Timothy 2:5; Luke 1:26-28; I Peter 2:21,22; John 14:6, 17:4).

Jesus Christ gave up His life by death on the cross at the hands of sinful men according to God's sovereign purpose. Christ, being without sin, did this in order to pay God's just penalty for sin on behalf of those whom the Father had chosen to redeem from the effects of sin. He then rose bodily from the dead, removing the power of the curse of death from His people forever (Acts 2:23; Romans 3:23-26; I Peter 1:18-21; John 20:25,27; I Corinthians 15:54-58).

After Christ ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent to make the Savior known to those whom God the Father had chosen. The Holy Spirit works in God's people by making them spiritually alive and enabling them to freely receive the free gift of eternal life as offered in the gospel through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Lord of His people, now dwells in the Father's presence, interceding on their behalf and enabling them to grow more and more in living obedience to Himself (Acts 1:8,9; John 16:7-13; Ephesians 2:4-8; Romans 3:21-26; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:18-21; Hebrews 7:24,25; II Corinthians 10:5).

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE

All who respond by faith to the gospel promises are declared righteous before God by means of the righteousness of Christ credited to them. They are reconciled to God through the forgiveness of sin by Christ's substitutionary death on their behalf. Thus reconciled, believers have passed from judgment, wrath, and death to life and have received a spirit of adoption as beloved children who know God as Father (Romans 3:21-26; II Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Romans 6:23; Romans 5:9-11).

Growth in conformity to the image and likeness of God by obedience is a vital and necessary part of the life of the believer. Thus believers, having been re-created to do good works, will grow increasingly in the grace of God, turning from their sin and following Jesus Christ as Lord (II Corinthians 3:17,18; Ephesians 4:11-13; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 6:1,2, 11-14; II Peter 3:18; I Peter 3:15a).

All those whom God has chosen and redeemed will most certainly be preserved by God and will persevere in their saving faith until that time when God chooses to take them to be with Him forever (John 10:28,29; Philippians 1:6; John 14:1-3).

THE CHURCH

We believe that all those who have faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are united by the indwelling Holy Spirit into one spiritual and physical body called the church, of which Jesus Christ is the head. This church is made manifest in each local

church that recognizes Jesus as Lord and Savior and serves Him according to the Scriptures (e.g., I Corinthians 1:1,2; Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:13b-14; Colossians 1:18).

God's purpose in establishing His church is to glorify Himself by making known His manifold wisdom, which He demonstrated in Jesus Christ. This is accomplished when believers:

- a. Gather together in the power and unity of the Holy Spirit for worship by the proclamation of the Word, praise, prayer, and participation in the ordinances of the church (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42-47);
- b. Mutually exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the edification, equipping, and growth of the members for works of service (Ephesians 3:10,11; 4:11-13; I Corinthians 12:4-7; I Peter 4:10);
- c. Proclaim the good news of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world (Matthew 28:19,20);
- d. Are salt and light in all of our various callings (Matthew 5:13-16).

God has established two ordinances for the church to observe: baptism, which is undergone once as a sign of the new life in Christ after a person has confessed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the Lord's Supper, which is to be observed regularly to call into remembrance the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on our behalf, until He returns (Acts 2:38,42; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

All believers are priests within the household of God. All possess a common dignity, calling, and privilege of communion before and with God. All are called to offer sacrifices of themselves, praise and thanksgiving to God. With our various gifts and callings, we serve God and one another. Within this household, Jesus Christ appoints Elders (pastors) as undershepherds to serve His people by administering the activities of His church and providing watchcare over the spiritual needs of its members. Deacons minister to the physical needs of the church, both corporately and individually (I Peter 2:9, 10; Romans 12:1,2; I Corinthians 12:7; Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

The final authority by which all disputes within the church are to be settled is Scripture, being interpreted by the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16,17; John 14:26, 16:13a).

LAST THINGS

We believe that God has appointed a day when Jesus Christ will visibly return in glory to judge the world in righteousness. His justice will be displayed in the resurrection to eternal punishment of all unbelievers who will be cast into Hell to experience separation from God forever. His mercy will be displayed by the gathering of all believers in resurrected and glorified bodies to everlasting life and fullness of joy in the presence of the LORD (Matthew 24:36; John 5:28,29; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 21:3; Mark 13:26,27; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 21:8).



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