

BYLAWS OF

Grace Fellowship Church West Palm Beach, Florida

ARTICLE I

Introduction:

These are the Bylaws of Grace Fellowship Church, a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Florida. The purpose of these bylaws is to set forth the manner by which the internal affairs of Grace Fellowship Church will be managed. All references to the "Church" herein shall mean Grace Fellowship Church. All references to the elder team herein shall mean the Team of Directors of Grace Fellowship Church as described in the Articles of Incorporation.

ARTICLE II

Offices:

SECTION 1. *Principal Office.* The principal office of the Church in the State of Florida shall be located at 8350 Okeechobee Blvd, in the City of West Palm Beach, County of Palm Beach. The Church may have such other offices, either within or without the State of Florida, as the elder team may designate or as the affairs of the Church may require from time to time.

SECTION 2. *Registered Agent.* The Church shall have and continually maintain in the State of Florida a registered agent as required by the Florida Nonprofit Corporation Act. The address of the registered agent and the principal office of the Church may be changed from time to time by the elder team by filling the appropriate documents with the Secretary of the State of Florida.

ARTICLE III

Beliefs:

SECTION 3. *Statement of Faith*

Our Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of the Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, the final interpretative body of the church and her documents is the collective of the pastors and elder team which provides leadership to and oversight of the congregation.

We are an independent and autonomous congregation and not subject to an outside governing body. For the purpose of cooperative ministry and joint evangelistic efforts, we align with the Florida Baptist Convention, a branch of the Southern Baptist Convention. We hold to the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) as our statement of faith and practice.

A. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

B. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

a. God, the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

b. God, the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully

God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

c. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

C. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

D. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

a. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

b. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

c. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

d. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29;15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13;Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

E. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79;2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-

14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39–12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

F. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ (baptism and the Lord's Supper), through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors/elders and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

G. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

H. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

I. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into

which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

J. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

K. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

L. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute.

The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

M. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

N. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

O. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the

needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

P. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

Q. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

R. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

IV. Clarifications and Additional Comments on Contemporary Matters

- A. **Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation and Sexual Behavior.** We believe that each human being is deliberately born into this world under the providential superintendence of God (Psalm 100:3, Proverbs 22:2), and that their gender at the time of their birth reflects His purpose for their lives (Jeremiah 1:5). Consequently, it is contrary to God's will, and is therefore sinful, to modify one's gender-identity whether physical or psychological. We believe the Bible is also very specific regarding acceptable sexual behavior. Acceptable sexual behavior is exclusively reserved to occur within the confines of a monogamous marriage union of a consenting man and woman (Matthew 5:28, 1 Corinthians 7:2-3; Hebrews 13:4). Any sexual behavior outside of this relationship is considered to be fornication and therefore prohibited as outside the scope of God's will (Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).
- B. **Foster Care and Adoption.** We believe that it is God's will to bless married couples who live according to these guidelines with children (Genesis 3:16,4:1). In most instances, this blessing occurs through the natural biological process, but in some cases adoption is the means by which God blesses a husband and wife with children. The principle of adoption is extolled in scripture and is even identified as being endemic to God's Nature (Psalm 68:6; Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:5-7). Consequently, the Church supports the principle and process of adoption while requiring all prospective candidates for foster parenting and adoption to agree with and adhere to the aforementioned standards as defined by the Bible.

Any other attitude toward, definition of or form of marriage, parenting, gender identity, sexual orientation or sexual behavior is in fundamental conflict with our sincerely-held religious beliefs; making these practices something we are unable to support or facilitate in any manner in good conscience.

ARTICLE IV

Members:

SECTION 1. *Classes of Members.* The Church shall have only one class of members consisting of those persons who have attended a membership class – the Belonging class – offered by Grace Fellowship Church and have offered a verbal declaration of their faith and profession of commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ and have been baptized after that commitment. In the case of those who are transferring from another church body, evidence may be required that individuals have left that church in good standing.

SECTION 2. *Meetings.* Meetings of the members, for any purpose or purposes, may be called from time to time by the lead pastor or elder team.

SECTION 3. *Voting of Members.* Grace Fellowship Church is an elder-led church. As such, the elder team shall, under the leadership of the lead pastor/elder, oversee the doctrine, discipline and direction of the church as it is administrated by the vocational pastor/elders and other staff. The elder team shall offer counsel and direction to appointed staff who shall plan, lead, coordinate, delegate or manage all matters regarding the external or internal affairs of the Church under the daily supervision of the lead pastor or his designee.

If an item is brought by the elder team before the membership for a vote, then each member shall be entitled to one vote upon each and any matter submitted by the pastor(s)/elder(s) to the membership of the Church. Such meetings may be called by the pastor(s)/elder(s) from time to time solely at the lead pastor's or elder team's discretion. Primarily, members should not have an expectation to cast a vote, but rather the opportunity to offer a voice which will be duly considered by the leadership team of pastors/elders. As part of the opportunity to exercise a voice, the congregation will be called upon to affirm the recommendations of the elders as related to the appointment of a lead pastor, the dismissal of a lead pastor, any changes in the doctrinal statement of the church or any other matter deemed of sufficient weight by the lead pastor and/or a majority of the active elders for congregational input.

Section 4. *Church discipline.* When the need arises, Matthew 18 should be the guiding principle. The desired result of church discipline is repentance, forgiveness, and restoration (Galatians 6:1).

ARTICLE V

Team of Elders:

SECTION 1. *General Powers.* The affairs of the Church shall be overseen by the lead pastor and in cooperation with the team of elders/pastors and/or their designated representative(s).

SECTION 2. *Number, Tenure, and Qualifications.* The number of elders on the elder team of the Church shall not be less than three (3) nor more than twelve (12). Elders shall serve for a term of three years which may be renewed for a second three-year term and as long as each one meets the qualifications and/or operating principles determined by the lead pastor and team of elders/pastors. Following the completion of the second third year term, a one-year sabbatical shall be taken for a period

of reflection and restoration. At the conclusion of a sabbatical year, an elder may be reappointed to the elder team by unanimous invitation of the existing elder team. Elders must hold the same Biblical qualifications as those found in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-8 and they must be males.

SECTION 3. *Regular Meetings.* A regular meeting of the elder team shall be held at least monthly or at a time and frequency to be determined by the lead pastor and a majority of the sitting elders. At his discretion, the lead pastor may invite vocational elders (pastors) for the purpose of counsel and communication.

SECTION 4. *Special Meetings.* Special meetings of the elder team may be called by or at the request of the lead Pastor or a majority of the elder team. The lead pastor is authorized to call special meetings of the elder team and may fix the place for holding any special meeting.

SECTION 5. *Notice.* Notice of any special meeting shall be given at least three (3) days previously thereto by written notice delivered personally or received by e-mail or mailed to each member of the elder/pastor team. Any elder or all elders may waive notice of any meeting.

SECTION 6. *Quorum.* A majority of the number of elders fixed by Section 2 of this Article V shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the elder team.

SECTION 7. *Manner of Acting.* All decisions of the elder team regarding philosophy, ethics, doctrine, policies and procedures of Grace Fellowship Church will be based on the authoritative teachings or principles derived from the Scriptures (Bible).

SECTION 8. *Vacancies.* Any vacancy occurring in the elder team may be filled by the vote of the remaining elders upon recommendation of the lead pastor and confirmed by the membership in a manner to be determined by the elder team upon recommendation of the lead pastor.

SECTION 9. *Compensation.* The elders shall receive no salaries for their services; provided, however, that the elder team may direct that reasonable compensation be paid to any elder whose services to the Church amount to more than the usual expenditure of time. Elders who are otherwise employed by the church may receive their regular compensation, but no additional compensation shall be assigned due to their responsibilities on the elder team. Any elder receiving compensation from the church shall recuse himself from all conversations, votes and recommendations related to that compensation or any other facet of their responsibilities which may create the impression of a conflict of interest.

SECTION 10. *Dismissal.* The elders may act to dismiss any elder who no longer is qualified or cannot fulfill his duties. The manner will follow the process prescribed by the elder team in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

ARTICLE VI

Body of Deacons:

SECTION 1. *General Powers.* The body of deacons shall minister to the Church in a manner prescribed by the elder team.

SECTION 2. The number of deacons shall be determined by the elder team. Deacons shall serve as long as each one meets the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and as determined by the elder team or until they request to be removed as a Deacon. Additional qualifications shall be found in the church Policies and Procedures Manual.

SECTION 3. *Meetings.* Any and all meetings of the body of Deacons shall be called by the lead pastor or a majority of the elder team.

ARTICLE VII

Pastoral Staff and other Employees:

SECTION 1. Hiring Authority. The lead pastor shall work with the executive team of elders and appropriate department heads (ie...School Headmaster, Executive Pastor, etc...) to secure staff and employees sufficient to care for the needs of the ministry and within the allocated resources found in the annual budget.

SECTION 2. Dismissal Authority. The lead pastor shall have the authority to dismiss any non-Pastoral staff member or employee at his discretion. He shall provide the Headmaster, Executive Pastor and other department heads authority to dismiss or choose not to renew a contract for any individual in the employee of the church or the school with his input and/or supervision.

SECTION 3. Pastoral Employment. The lead pastor shall recruit, appoint and train pastors for the sake of spiritual ministry and leadership with the involvement of the elder team.

SECTION 4. Office of the Lead Pastor. Upon the vacancy of the lead pastor, a Pastoral Search Team shall be formed within fourteen (14) days and which shall be composed of a team comprised of 4-6 elders, 1-2 representatives from the deacons and 1 member of the pastoral staff. Recommendations of the committee shall be considered by the whole of the elder team. Specific expectations and procedures for the Pastoral Search Team will be found in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Except in the event of denial of any portion of the BF&M (2000), moral failure or sufficient legal accusations, the lead pastor cannot be dismissed by the church unless recommended by at least 3/4ths of the elder team and affirmed by a majority of the church congregation. Should doctrinal heresy (as according to the BF&M (2000), moral failure or sufficient legal accusations occur, it is at the discretion of the elder team to immediately suspend the lead pastor and to call for his resignation. Any requested resignation or dismissal shall be communicated to the church along with the cause.

ARTICLE VIII

Officers:

SECTION 1. *Number, Election and Term of Office.* The Officers of the Church shall be a President (hereafter referred to as the lead pastor/elder and a Secretary-Treasurer (hereafter referred to as the executive pastor). Such other officers and assistant officers as may be deemed necessary may be elected or appointed by the elder team at the recommendation of the lead pastor. The term of office

shall be for the period of time whereupon they are serving in their roles as lead pastor/elder and or executive pastor or upon their death.

SECTION 2. *Lead Pastor/Elder.* The lead pastor/elder shall be the principle executive officer of the Church and shall be accountable to the elder team. He shall generally supervise and control all of the business, financial and administrative affairs of the Church. He shall, at his discretion, assign oversight and supervision of the business, financial and administrative affairs of the Church to his designee(s) with knowledge of the elder team. He shall preside at all meetings of the members and of the elder team. He may sign, with the Secretary-Treasurer or any other proper officer of the Church there unto authorized by the elder team, any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the elder team has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the elder team or by these bylaws to some other officer or agent of the Church, or shall be required by law to be otherwise signed or executed; and in general shall perform all duties incident to the office of the lead pastor/elder and such other duties as may be prescribed by the team of elders from time to time.

SECTION 3. *Secretary-Treasurer.* The Secretary-Treasurer shall (a) preside at the elder meetings if the presiding elder (or Chairman) is absent, (b) ensure that minutes are taken at each meeting, (c) have elder oversight of all funds and securities of Church, (d) work with the financial staff of the church in order to lawfully perform all necessary duties with respect to receiving, recording, acknowledging all gifts to the Church and paying all liabilities incurred by the Church.

SECTION 4. *Compensation.* The officers shall receive no additional compensation or remuneration for services rendered to the Church, except in the case in which an officer is also an elder entitled to compensation pursuant to the provisions of Section 9 of Article IV of these bylaws. Compensated elders must recuse themselves from all decisions and discussions by the elder team that are related to their responsibilities, compensation, job performance, job description and other issues in which the matter of a perceived or actual conflict of interest may be involved.

SECTION 5. *Executive Team.* At the discretion of the lead pastor/elder, an “Executive Team” of elders may be formed to provide expedited counsel on matters of Direction, Discipline or Doctrine within the church and which may provide, as necessary, reports and recommendations to the full elder team for consideration. The Executive Team should be composed of no more than five elders including the lead pastor/elder and will be ratified by the full team of shepherding elders.

SECTION 6. *Types of Elders.* Acknowledging in Scripture that different elders had varied responsibilities within the Body, Grace Fellowship shall identify elder roles in three categories: Pastoral/Vocational, Sitting, Shepherding. The lead pastor/elder shall preside at all meetings of the elders and shall assign the frequency of meetings to be approximately as follows: Pastoral/Weekly – one-four times per month; Sitting Elders – One time per month; Shepherding Elders – two times per year.

SECTION 7. *Terms.* Sitting Elders shall be appointed to three-year terms which can be followed by a second three-year term. A mandatory one-year sabbatical for the purpose of spiritual reflection and refreshment must pass before re-appointment to an active role as a Sitting Elder. During the one-year sabbatical, they will be part of the Shepherding Elders. All past elders may remain as part of the Shepherding Elders indefinitely unless Biblically unqualified to do so.

ARTICLE IX

Contracts, Loans, Checks, Deposits, and Gifts:

SECTION 1. *Contracts.* The elder team may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

SECTION 2. *Loans.* No loans or leases shall be contracted on behalf of the Church and no evidences of indebtedness shall be issued in its name over the amount of \$50,000 unless authorized by a resolution of the elder team or as included in the annually-approved budget. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

SECTION 3. *Checks, drafts, etc.* All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Church, shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Church and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the elder team.

SECTION 4. *Deposits.* All funds of the Church not otherwise employed shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Church in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the elder team or their designee may select.

SECTION 5. *Gifts.* The elder team may accept on behalf of the Church any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the Church.

ARTICLE IX

Books and Records:

The Church shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its elder team and of meetings of the members, and shall keep a record of the names and addresses of the members and elders. All books and records of the Church may be inspected by any elder or his agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

ARTICLE X

Fiscal Year:

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on the first day of July and end on the last day of June.

ARTICLE XI.

Waiver of Notice:

Unless provided by law, whenever any notice is required to be given to any member or elder of the Church under the provisions of these bylaws or under the provisions of the articles of incorporation or under the provisions provided by Florida law, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or

persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice.

ARTICLE XII

Amendments:

These bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and new bylaws may be adopted by the elder team at any regular or special meeting of the elder team.

Approval: Grace Fellowship Church lead pastor and elder team

Date: 09.28.16 