

(Ratified January 11, 2009)

## ARTICLE I – NAME

This church shall be called "GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH of ORANGE", dba "GRACE CHURCH OF ORANGE", a California religious non-profit corporation.

## ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

**TO WORSHIP GOD:** through public services (both large and small), prayer and helpful resources, to encourage personal and corporate worship of God, recognizing God as the center of our lives and giving Him first place in everything. (Colossians 1:13-18; I Corinthians 10:31; Matthew 6:33; II Corinthians 8:1-5)

**TO BUILD UP THE BELIEVER:** through teaching, fellowship, caring, encouragement and training, to present every believer spiritually mature in Christ and equipped for effective ministry in the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28; II Timothy 3:16-17; I Peter 4:10-11)

**TO REACH THE LOST:** through personal and corporate proclamation of the Gospel to the non-believing world, and recruiting, training, sending and supporting missionaries, to bring spiritually lost people to the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, their baptism in water as an act of obedience and public confession, and their membership in the local body of believers, the church. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47-48; Acts 1:8; 2:38-41; Acts 13:1-4; 14:21-28; I Corinthians 9:7-14; I Thessalonians 1:5-8)

## ARTICLE III – AUTHORITY

### Section 1 – THE BIBLE

The ultimate authority governing the belief and practice of this church is God's Word, the Bible. (II Timothy 3:16-17)

### Section 2 – THE MEMBERS

The members of this church are responsible for choosing the CHURCH OFFICERS and bear full responsibility for the facilities and equipment owned by the church. The Constitution, Bylaws and annual budget, and the sale, purchase, or encumbrance of real property and buildings which the church and its related ministries will own and use, are subject to approval by the members.

### Section 3 – THE STATE

This church is incorporated and chartered under the laws of the State of California as a non-profit (501-C-3) corporation.

#### **Section 4 – DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY**

The property and facilities of this church are dedicated to fulfilling its purpose. Upon the liquidation, dissolution or abandonment of the corporation, the property, facilities and funds will inure to a fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated for like religious or charitable purposes, and not to the benefit of any private individual or member.

#### **ARTICLE IV – STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We believe and teach the following statements as the basic truths taught in the Bible.

1. **THE BIBLE:** the Word of God, the sixty-six (66) Books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, wholly without error as originally given by God, the complete and final written revelation from God, and sufficient as our only rule of faith and practice (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21).
2. **THE ONE TRUE GOD:** manifested in three distinct and separate persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each of Whom is God and to be worshipped as God (Luke 3:22; Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14).
3. **THE HEAVENLY FATHER:** preexistent deity (Isaiah 9:6), who gave His only begotten Son for the sins of man, (John 3:16), who hears and answers the prayers of believers in Christ (John 16:23), who cares and provides for His children (Matthew 6:25-33), who offers an intimate relationship to all mankind (II Corinthians 1:3; Galatians 4:6; Colossians 1:1-12).
4. **THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:** preexistent deity (John 1:1-3), God manifest in human form (John 1:14), born of a virgin (Matthew 1:18-23), sinless (Hebrews 4:15), crucified for our sins (I Peter 3:18), resurrected bodily from the dead (Luke 24:36-43), ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9-11), and coming back again to establish His Kingdom on Earth (Revelation 21:1-7).
5. **THE HOLY SPIRIT:** preexistent deity (Acts 5:3-4), convicting of sin and guiding into Truth (John 16:7-15), causing spiritual birth (John 3:5), baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ and indwelling at the moment of spiritual birth (I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9), filling and empowering believers for Christian life and service (Ephesians 5:18, 3:16, 4:30; Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16, 22-23).
6. **MAN:** created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28), fell into sin resulting in spiritual death (Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 5:12, 3:23), and now all men and women need a spiritual birth for salvation (John 3:3-5).

7. **THE SALVATION OF MAN:** complete and eternal salvation from sin, death and hell by God's grace alone, received as a gift from God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, secured eternally in Christ (John 10:28-29; Jude 23-24; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6; Romans 10:9-10; I Peter 1:18-19; I John 5:11-13).
8. **CHRISTIAN LIVING:** righteousness, good works, and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world (Romans 12:1-2), manifested by speaking the truth (James 5:12), maintaining the sanctity of the home (Ephesians 5:22-6:4), settling differences between Christians according to the Word of God (I Corinthians 6:1-8), not engaging in carnal strife (Romans 12:17-21), exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), maintaining a life of prayer (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6; James 5:13-18).
9. **THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST:** one true Church, the body and bride of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:22-32; Matthew 16:13-18), composed of all true believers of the present age of Grace (I Corinthians 12:12-13); and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for world-wide gospel witness, each local church being autonomous but cooperating in fellowship and work (Ephesians 4:11-16; Acts 2:41-47).
10. **THE ORDINANCES:** we believe in 1) water baptism by immersion and practice the triune form, baptizing once each in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19), and in 2) remembering our Lord's commands the last night He was with His disciples in the Upper Room and practice a three-fold communion service which includes: the Lord's supper (I Corinthians 11:20-22, 33-34; Jude 12), washing the saints' feet (John 13:1-17), and the communion of the bread and cup (I Corinthians 11:23-26).
11. **THE GREAT COMMISSION:** to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations as our Lord commanded (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15), every believer being a witness for Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:11-21), trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), and responsible to pray for (Matthew 9:36-38), support (I Corinthians 9:13-14), and send missionaries into all the world (Romans 10:13-15).
12. **SATAN:** created by God but through pride and sinful ambition rebelled against God (Isaiah 14:13-14; Ezekiel 28:13-17), exists as the adversary and accuser of God's people (Revelation 12:1-10; Ephesians 6:12-18), deceives and blinds people (John 8:44; Genesis 3; II Corinthians 4:4), will be judged by God (John 12:31), and final destiny is eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 12:9-10, 20:10).

13. **THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST:** the personal, visible and imminent return of Christ to remove His Church from the earth (I Thessalonians 4:13-18) before the tribulation (I Thessalonians 1:9-10; Revelation 3:10), and afterward to descend with the Church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth (Revelation 19:11-20:6).
14. **THE FUTURE LIFE:** the conscious existence of the dead (Philippians 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31), believers in God's presence upon death (II Corinthians 5:8), believers in heaven awaiting the resurrection of the body (John 5:28-29), the judgment and reward of believers (Romans 14:10-12; II Corinthians 5:9-10), the judgment and condemnation of unbelievers (Revelation 20:11-15), the eternal life of the saved (John 3:16, 5:24), and the eternal punishment of the lost (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:15).

#### **ARTICLE V – AMENDMENTS**

Amendment of this Constitution requires the written affirmative vote of three-quarters (3/4) of the members present and voting at any congregational business meeting, provided that, at least two (2) weeks in advance, 1) notice of the date, time and location of the meeting has been given by public announcement in the regular services of the church, and 2) printed recommended amendments have been made available.

#### **ARTICLE VI – RATIFICATION**

Ratification of this Constitution and accompanying Bylaws requires the written affirmative vote of three-quarters (3/4) of the members present and voting at any congregational business meeting, provided that, at least two (2) weeks in advance, 1) notice of the date, time and location of the meeting has been given by public announcement in the regular services of the church, and 2) printed recommended Constitution and Bylaws have been made available. Upon ratification, all prior Constitutions, Bylaws and procedures, and amendments or revisions thereto, shall be of no further force and effect.