

National Leadership Team

Executive Summary Report
to the 39th General Assembly



Dean Weaver
Chairman

Summary of Work, 2018-2019:

1. Began work on an Executive Transition Plan for the Office of the General Assembly.
2. Continued to monitor giving the EPC Per Member Asking.
3. Continued to oversee the mission and vision of the EPC.
4. Evaluated and recommended the expansion of the NLT to the 39th General Assembly.
5. Brought forward *Rules for Assembly* amendments that could not be addressed by the 38th General Assembly 2018.

Recommendations to the 2019 General Assembly:

1. That the 39th General Assembly approve the formation of the Stated Clerk Search Committee, to be appointed by the Moderator.
2. That the 39th General Assembly adopt its proposal to amend *Rules for Assembly* 15-1 in order to amend or suspend only by 2/3 vote of the Commissioners.
3. That the 39th General Assembly approve amending *Rules for Assembly* by adding two Standing Committees: 1) Church Planting and 2) Church Revitalization.
4. That the 39th General Assembly approve the deletion of the Church Planting and Revitalization Permanent Committee from *Rules for Assembly*.
5. That the 39th General Assembly approve an amendment to *Rules for Assembly* that would increase the size of the NLT from 13 to 16 members.
6. That the 39th General Assembly approve an amendment to *Book of Government* 9-5 that would make explicit that the office of “co-pastor” is not constitutional.
7. That the 39th General Assembly adopt the FY 2020 Administration Budget.



8. That the 39th General Assembly adopt the FY 2020 Special Projects.
9. That the 39th General Assembly approve the Moderator to appoint an ad interim committee composed of five REs or TEs from diverse, strongly-supporting churches across multiple presbyteries to address how to improve our churches' long-term culture of giving to the EPC.
10. That the 39th General Assembly approve an amendment to *Rules for Assembly* that would revise and update the functions of the National Leadership Team.
11. That the 39th General Assembly approve Third Millennium Ministries as an "approved agency."
12. That the 39th General Assembly approve its recommendation to refer the matter of the Michigan chapter of Bethany Christian Services (BCS) to the Permanent Committee on Theology for review in light of the EPC Position Papers on Abortion and Human Sexuality.
13. That the 39th General Assembly adopt the Minutes of the 38th General Assembly.
14. That the 39th General Assembly refer to the Permanent Committee on Theology for study how the EPC can be more sensitive to the needs of the disabled.

Work of the Committee in 2018-2019:

Executive Transitions

This General Assembly marks the beginning of a leadership transition in the Office of the General Assembly. Chief Operating Officer Phil Van Valkenburg will depart June 30, 2019. Director of World Outreach Phil Linton and Stated Clerk Jeff Jeremiah are scheduled to retire June 30, 2021. Aware of these impending departures, the NLT at its August 2018 meeting began addressing how to produce the best possible transition for each position.

Chief Operating Officer

The NLT decided that as of July 1, 2019, the COO position will not be filled. Factors contributing to this decision include: 1) the outstanding staff reports the COO hired, 2) the major projects the COO implemented from 2013-2019 have been completed, and 3) budget considerations. A six-month trial of this staffing arrangement will take place. The Stated Clerk will conduct an evaluation in December 2019, and make a report with recommendations to the NLT at its January 2020 meeting.

Director of World Outreach

Anticipating a search for the Director's successor in 2020-2021, the NLT concluded that 2019-2020 presented an excellent opportunity for a review and evaluation of EPC World Outreach. The NLT appointed a "World Outreach Evaluation Team," which includes TE Betsy Rumer (Presbytery of the Alleghenies), RE Brad Gill (Presbytery of the Midwest), RE Johnny Long (Presbytery of the West), TE Kevin Cauley (Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic),



and RE Alan Johnson (Presbytery of the West). RE Rob Liddon (Presbytery of the Central South) of the NLT will lead this Team.

Stated Clerk

When Dr. Jeremiah was re-elected to a fifth three-year term in 2018, it was announced that this would be his final term. The NLT has prayerfully and repeatedly considered the best way to accomplish a good transition. It has decided that the goal is for the Stated Clerk's successor to be elected by the 40th General Assembly (2020), a year before the current Stated Clerk departs in 2021. While a twelve-month "overlap" of the two Stated Clerks is not considered necessary, this goal would provide much more planning flexibility. Following past EPC practice, the NLT also decided that every presbytery would be represented on the search committee. There are currently 14 presbyteries in the EPC. "Working back" from a June 2020 election of the next Stated Clerk, the NLT concluded that this search committee needed to commence its work as soon as possible after the 39th General Assembly (2019) acts on the NLT recommendation that the Assembly instruct the Moderator to appoint a Stated Clerk Search Committee.

Financial Development

Since 2016, the NLT has committed to encouraging all EPC churches to support Per Member Asking (PMA), the primary source of revenue that funds the General Assembly budget. As a point of reference, in 2016 giving to PMA hit an historic low of 61%. That is, giving was only 61% of the amount that would be given if every church gave 100% of its PMA.

By strongly promoting financial support, giving as a percentage of total PMA giving climbed in subsequent years:

2015	61%
2016	69%
2017	73%

At the 38th General Assembly in 2018, the Assembly approved a budget for FY 2019 (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019) based on PMA giving of \$2,550,000, a 3% increase in PMA (73% to 76%) over the previous year.

Through May 2019, giving to PMA was off by 4% (\$92,000) from the previous year. The current projected PMA for this year is \$2,418,000. The proposed FY 2020 budget that you will act on at Cherry Creek reflects these facts. The proposed budget can be viewed at www.epc.org/files/ga2019document-fy20192020budget. The Annual Ministry Report that summarizes past year results and tells how the new budget will be put to work can be viewed at www.epc.org/files/annualministryreport20192020.



Since 2017, the NLT has repeatedly wrestled with how to promote giving to the national level of our denomination. A number of proposals have been considered. In April, the NLT decided it needed input from our churches, focusing on those churches who have a record of strong support for Per Member Asking. It is for this reason that the NLT has recommended that the Assembly instruct the Moderator to appoint a small group to study the financial support challenge the EPC faces.

Oversight of the EPC Mission and Vision

The National Leadership Team is committed to knowing and promoting the mind of Christ for the 600+ churches that make up the EPC in the United States, the Bahamas, and Puerto Rico. After the devotional and opening prayer, at each face-to-face meeting the NLT immediately reviews and confirms the EPC statements of mission and vision.

Mission: We exist to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus as Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional congregations.

Vision: To the glory of God, the EPC aspires to be a global movement of congregations embodying Jesus' love to our neighbors near and far, engaged together in God's mission through transformation, multiplication, and effective biblical leadership.

At its October and April meetings, the NLT focuses on the business of the EPC that it needs to address. The August and January meetings are more strategic. The NLT reviews and evaluates more closely the four features of the EPC mission statement and the four strategic initiatives (which the NLT renamed as "strategic priorities" in April 2019) of the EPC vision statement.

Strategic Priorities

The statement of vision includes our four strategic priorities: 1) transformation (church revitalization), multiplication (church planting), effective biblical leadership, and global movement (World Outreach and fraternal relations).

As part of its oversight responsibility, in the past year the NLT invited the leaders of each priority to address and take questions from the NLT: Tom Ricks (church planting), Ken Priddy (church revitalization), Phil Linton (global movement—World Outreach), Jeff Jeremiah (global movement—fraternal relations), and Jerry Iamurri (effective biblical leadership).

Proposed Expansion of the NLT

The predecessor of the NLT was the Committee on Administration. Since 1994, the Committee on Administration has consisted of 13 members: three classes of three (nine members), the three General Assembly Moderators (the Moderator-elect, Moderator, and NLT Chairman [past-Moderator]), and the Stated Clerk. This structure served the EPC well when it had eight presbyteries. The number of presbyteries began to grow in 2010 so that



today there are 14. The NLT concluded that in order to increase presbytery representation, the NLT should expand by three members. If approved, this increase would be accomplished by expanding the three classes of three to three classes of four, which is the recommendation to the 39th General Assembly.

Amendment to the *Book of Government*

Since 1985, when the Fifth General Assembly approved the Permanent Judicial Commission's ruling that the office of "Co-Pastor" is "non-existent," it has been the official position of the EPC that this office is prohibited. However, this position is not explicitly declared in the *Book of Government*. A number of EPC churches that came from another denomination in the past ten years were familiar with or had used the "co-pastor" model in their past. Some of these churches have questioned the "constitutionality" of the prohibition of co-pastor. The NLT recommended amendment to the *Book of Government* makes explicit constitutionally the position of the EPC since 1985.

Rules for Assembly

Rules for Assembly is the "organizing document" of the EPC. It includes what is to happen at each meeting of the General Assembly, as well as the EPC committee structure and work of the General Assembly between annual meetings. Because the 2/3 majority of enrolled commissioners could not be met at the 38th General Assembly in 2018, a number of proposed amendments to *Rules for Assembly* were not addressed. By NLT action, these 2018 amendments have been presented to the 39th General Assembly, along with proposed 2019 amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean Weaver
Chairman