



**EPC**

*A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches*

**THE JEREMIAH JOURNAL**

## **April 2017**

Friends, we are in an exciting new era in the life of the EPC. After growing us from 182 to more than 600 churches since 2007, we have come to realize that God did have a purpose in gathering this larger group of churches together.

Since 2014, we've affirmed that He has given us this mission: "We exist to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus as Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional congregations."

This is who we are; who He has called us to be: Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional.

And we believe our Lord Jesus has given us this vision: "To the glory of God, the EPC family aspires to embody and proclaim Jesus' love as a global movement of congregations engaged together in God's mission through transformation, multiplication, and effective biblical leadership."

God is doing something distinctively different in the EPC. He is calling us to be a mission- and vision-driven denomination of churches.

Four strategic initiatives are embedded in that vision statement: global movement, transformation (that is, church revitalization), multiplication (church planting), and effective biblical leadership. These strategic initiatives are of prime importance for us in this new era. And they have been enthusiastically received and embraced over the past three years.

In 2015, the National Leadership Team of the EPC began wrestling with the question, "What is the best way to fund what God is calling us to be and to do?"

Our historic funding model has been Per Member Asking, or PMA. This was a voluntary contribution from the local church to the GA (or national level) of the EPC.

Since 2009, this voluntary "ask" has been \$23 per member. So, if a church had 100 members on its roll, its PMA for the year was \$2300 (100 members x \$23).

As we've grown to more than 600 churches, there's been an increasing realization that PMA is not the most effective or efficient way to fund the national ministry of the EPC.



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Last year, the National Leadership Team decided to solicit your input—your answer to the question, “How we can best fund a mission- and vision-driven denomination?”

At last year’s General Assembly, we hosted focus groups of church leaders to get their input. Last fall, a survey was conducted of all pastors in lead positions at their church. Three responses came back loud and clear:

1. The four strategic initiatives need to be included in the GA budget.
2. PMA is not a good way to assess what a church should contribute, because membership is not a good metric.
3. Local church giving to the EPC should no longer be considered voluntary; it should be expected. Among the comments we received on this point: “The Lord Jesus is doing something special in and through the EPC, so all of us should be ‘all in.’” There was also this statement: “What’s funded at the national level to support and encourage churches and presbyteries is of very high value.”

So, if PMA is not a good approach, then what is? The answer offered by an overwhelming majority of you is “one.” One percent. One percent of the local church’s operations and outreach budget.

Among the comments you made on this: “One percent is easier for a Session and congregation to understand than the PMA formula ” and “Budget-based is more reasonable than membership-based.”

In response to your input on this important matter, the National Leadership Team proposes the following recommendation for your consideration at the 2017 General Assembly:

*The administration and strategic initiatives of the General Assembly shall be supported by the giving of EPC churches. The expected giving amount from each church should be either \$23 per member or one percent of that church’s annual operations and outreach budget. Following fiscal year 2020, the expectation is that all giving should be at the 1 percent level.*

Three comments about the proposal:

1. The addition of “and strategic initiatives.” That’s new language. You said to put global movement, transformation (that is, church revitalization), multiplication (that is, church planting), and effective biblical leadership into the GA budget.



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2. “The expected giving amount” It is no longer voluntary; no longer an ask.
3. “Either \$23 per member or one percent of that church’s annual operations and outreach budget.” We became aware that for some of our churches, moving from \$23 per member to one percent of the budget could produce a temporary hardship, so we’ve proposed that this move to one percent be phased in over three years.

Should we enjoy the increased revenue we believe the Lord will provide, we are committed to investing as much as we possibly can into these strategic initiatives because of the impact we have all seen and enjoyed as we have implemented them.

Friends, these are your answers to the question, “How we can best fund a mission- and vision-driven denomination?”

The National Leadership Team has listened to you. They have listened well, and they propose this change for your consideration as we seek to accomplish the mission and the vision that God has given to us, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Thank you, God bless you, and remember: He is risen!