



**EPC**

*A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches*

**THE JEREMIAH JOURNAL**

**May 2017**

Friends,

As spring winds down and we all start to think about summer, the tulips are blooming, the NBA—and more importantly, the NHL—playoffs are in full swing, and registration for our 37th General Assembly is underway. We are a bit behind last year's registration pace at this point, so make sure to go online and let us know you are coming.

It's going to be a great Assembly. Our hosts at Fair Oaks Church in Sacramento are rolling out the red carpet, and we have a great slate of worship speakers and Leadership Institute topics to refresh you, recharge you, and help you be more effective in your ministry.

We will also conduct the business of the national church, and there will be a number of items to discuss and vote on. Last month, I introduced a proposal from the National Leadership Team on a new funding model for the EPC.

This month, I want to talk about some important documents that will come before you in Sacramento. I believe these are highly relevant to the church. I also am convinced that they will prove increasingly timely and valuable as we seek to minister in a culture that more and more tries to define who we are and what we believe in terms that are antagonistic to the gospel.

I am talking about our strong biblical stance on human sexuality, and two papers that will be the focus of our attention:

The first is the Preliminary Position Paper on Human Sexuality.

Our 2015 General Assembly approved the formation of an interim committee to write a new Position Paper on Human Sexuality, taking into consideration our previous Position Papers addressing the Sanctity of Marriage and Homosexuality.

This interim committee presented its proposed Position Paper to last year's Assembly at Ward Church.

After extensive discussion, that Assembly approved the Proposed Paper and its status changed from "Proposed" to "Preliminary Position Paper."



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As a Preliminary Position Paper, it was then sent to our churches and presbyteries for their review, in anticipation of the final step in our “Position Paper Process.”

That last step is review and approval by the 2017 Assembly.

Because it is the work of an Interim Committee, the Preliminary Position Paper on Human Sexuality will not go to a standing committee in Sacramento, but it will come straight to the floor of the Assembly.

This will probably happen in Business Session 2, right after lunch on Thursday afternoon.

Should the Assembly approve it, the Preliminary Position Paper will become the Position Paper of the EPC on this important topic.

The second document is one that is currently in progress.

The Interim Committee that wrote what is currently the Preliminary Position Paper on Human Sexuality recommended to last year’s Assembly that the EPC consider the writing of a pastoral statement on “Ministering to the Church and the World on Issues Pertaining to Human Sexuality.”

They believed a Pastoral Letter would be helpful as our churches seek to respond with truth and grace in a redemptive way to those struggling with sexuality problems in their congregation and community.

The 2016 Assembly approved the formation of yet another Interim Committee which would be given two years to do its work and report to the 2018 General Assembly.

The Interim Committee on the Pastoral Letter met in September last year to begin its work.

Chaired by Sandy Willson, the members of the Interim Committee include Adam Barr, Sharon Beekmann, Mike Glodo, John Graham, Scott Griffin, Annie Rose and Rick Schatz. I’m serving as staff resource to this committee.

At this year’s Assembly, Sandy will make a brief progress report on their work to date.

More importantly, the members of the Interim Committee want to hear from you!



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What challenges, issues, and problems do you want to be sure they address in this letter, which could be up to 45 pages long? They want to be thorough, and they want to be helpful to you.

During the lunch break on Wednesday, June 21, the Interim Committee would love to meet with you in the Junior High Room at Fair Oaks to get your input.

Please make the most of this opportunity to interact with this committee, which is doing important work for you, and for all of us, as we commit to be faithful to our Lord. We live in a time in which it is critical for God-honoring ministry and testimony in our church, and to our world.

The Preliminary Position Paper on Human Sexuality concludes with these words:

“In the name of Jesus, our compassionate Savior, we tenderly welcome all, regardless of their beliefs or lifestyles, to attend our churches; and we invite into the membership of our churches all those who, bruised and broken by the fall, seek now, through sincere faith and genuine repentance, to live in obedience to the Scriptures and empowered by the Holy Spirit. To God’s Name be glory forever.”

We want the Pastoral Letter to—first and foremost—honor God. We also want it to be an instrument that our churches and individuals can use to help achieve the goal stated in that Position Paper. That is, that “those broken by the fall, through sincere faith and genuine repentance, live in obedience to the Scriptures.” Your input will help us get closer to that goal, so I hope you will participate.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you at Fair Oaks in June.

God bless you, and remember, He is risen!