

OVERTURE 17-B



Referred to Overtures and Resolutions

*OFFICE OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE
PACIFIC*

Ron Bengelink, Stated Clerk

April 3, 2017

To Dr. Jeff Jeremiah
Stated Clerk

Evangelical Presbyterian
Church Office of the
General Assembly

Dear Jeff,

As you are aware, after a nine-month study by an ad hoc Committee and two extensive discussions by the full presbytery, the Presbytery of the Pacific approved the attached Overture to the General Assembly by a vote of Yes: 119, No: 0, and Abstentions: 5, at its Stated Meeting on January 27-28, 2017. Please submit this Overture to the 37th General Assembly meeting at Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church, Fair Oaks, CA, this coming June 2017. We are convinced that this action will create an effective foundation for the long-term growth of the EPC church and its influence for the Gospel in the many communities up and down the Pacific coast of the United States.

In the name of Christ,

Ronald Bengelink
Stated Clerk, EPC Presbytery of the Pacific

cc: Rev. Ed McCallum
Rev. Jerry Iamurri

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An Overture to create two new presbyteries from the current Presbytery of the Pacific

That the General Assembly be requested to create two presbyteries from the current Presbytery of the Pacific. One, called the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest, to include all EPC churches and ministries north of a line ten miles south of California State Highway 299 from the Pacific Ocean east to the California/Nevada border, then north to the southern border of Oregon, and then east along the border of Oregon and Idaho to the 114⁰ W meridian of longitude. This Presbytery will also include the entire State of Alaska. The other, called the Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest, to include all EPC churches and ministries south of this defined border. This Presbytery will also include the entire State of Hawaii. Other boundaries of these new Presbyteries will be the defined boundaries of the Presbytery of the Pacific.

If the way be clear, we request that this action be effective January 1, 2018

Further, that any retired Teaching Elders, Candidates under Care, and all other Teaching Elders not associated with a specific church but located in the geographic boundaries indicated shall be included in the membership of these presbyteries, subject to any exceptions as provided for in the *Book of Government*.

Grounds:

1. The Presbytery of the Pacific currently represents the largest geographic spread for a single presbytery within the EPC (2,600 air miles from the Northernmost to the Southernmost churches and across three time zones – not including Hawaii). Our average representation ratio at our presbytery meetings for the past four years is 1.18 RE's to TE's, compared to the EPC goal of 2.0. The cost to participate, the time to travel, and the cost of air travel for most churches will be significantly lessened by the formation of two Presbyteries as proposed. Difficult winter travel through high mountain passes will also be reduced – especially in the Pacific Northwest.
2. Growth due to transfer of churches has stabilized and therefore our ability to grow by revitalization and church planting can only happen if local church leaders in geographic clusters are able to spend more of their time and resources to engage more frequently and purposefully with each other.

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Responses to the EPC Position Statement on Presbytery Development

[Acts of the Assembly 12-05 (text is in italics)]

In order to be faithful to, and effective in, its mission a Presbytery must be self-sustaining, self-governing and self-perpetuating.

In order to be faithful to its mission, a Presbytery must be viable. It must have sufficient human and financial resources to carry out its work. The extent of the resources needed will vary, depending on the geographic scale of its boundaries, the experience and gifts of its members and the level of commitment of its churches. Factors to be considered:

1. Total church membership.

The PNW Presbytery will include 39 churches and approximately 7,000 members.

The PSW Presbytery will include 30 churches and approximately 10,800 members.

2. Total financial resources of churches within its bounds.

The PNW Presbytery's proposed budget requires an average per member askings of approximately \$18 and \$0 startup cost.

The PSW Presbytery's proposed budget requires an average per member askings of approximately \$15 (since it will include approximately \$15,000 first year startup costs).

Note: The PNW would retain the current office furnishings and equipment and the Articles of Incorporation. The PSW would require \$12-15,000 for offices and legal fees. The current non-designated savings account (of approximately \$60,000) and the current checking account would be divided with two thirds to the NW and the remainder to the SW at the time of division.

3. Financial support for or pledges of support for its work.

The results from the surveys of all current Sessions conducted in Sep. 2016, and with more specifics in Jan. 2017, indicated that the expectations in #2 above are realistic. A request for pledges from all churches for their 2018 contributions will be conducted after the action of the General Assembly on this motion in the late summer of 2017.

4. Geographic scale and cost and mode of travel within its bounds.

The Presbytery of the Pacific currently represents the largest geographic spread for a single presbytery within the EPC (2,600 air miles from the Northernmost to the Southernmost churches and across three time zones – not including Hawaii). Our average representation ratio for the past four years is 1.18 RE's to TE's, compared to the EPC goal of 2.0 The cost to participate, the time to travel, and the cost of air

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travel for most churches will be significantly lessened by the formation of two Presbyteries as proposed. Difficult winter travel through high mountain passes will also be reduced.

In light of the above, and recognizing the cultural and economic affinity all those living in the large basin encompassing both sides of the political boundary between Oregon and California, the new boundary line between the presbyteries is proposed to be drawn 10 miles south of CA Hwy 299 from Eureka eastward through the California cities of Redding and Burney to the Nevada/California border and then north to the Oregon border and east along the southern Oregon and Idaho borders to the 114⁰ W meridian of Longitude.

5. Presence of experienced and capable potential leadership.

Both proposed Presbyteries contain experienced and capable leadership. The following committees have been functioning with separate NW and SW teams for 3 years: Candidates Care, Ministerial, World Outreach, and Church-Planting.

The committee plans the following process to identify individuals for leadership in the new Presbyteries:

- Moderator: The 2017 Moderator-Elect for the Presbytery of the Pacific will become the first Moderator for the PNW in 2018. The Alternate Moderator –Elect will become the first Moderator for the PSW for 2018.
- Stated Clerk: RE Ron Bengelink will continue as the PNW Stated Clerk and the PSW will elect RE Marl Eshoff as their Stated Clerk. He will serve as the Assistant Stated Clerk to the Presbytery of the Pacific for the rest of 2017.
- Treasurer: Current Treasurer RE Connie Badgley has committed to continue to serve both Presbyteries
- World Outreach and Church Planting will continue to operate with leadership spanning both presbyteries.

1) Chairs for the other committees (Ministerial, Care of Candidates, Session Review, and Nominations) will all be selected by each presbytery from among the current chairs or experienced past or present members of these committees.

Again, the survey of all Sessions taken in Jan. 2017 shows a commitment of most churches in each new presbytery to provide both TE and RE leaders to assume these, and other, leadership roles.

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6. Other clear indications of commitment by churches within its bounds.

The Jan. 2017 survey of all church sessions showed:

- Willingness by 93% of the responders to provide the requested level of financial, attendance, and leadership support
- Several smaller churches are already indicating an interest to host presbytery meetings for the smaller group in 2018

It is also clearly evident that most Teaching Elders and many Ruling Elders in all the churches have embraced a strong “Pacific Presbytery ethos”. This is viewed by all as a valuable contribution of the leaders of the Pacific Presbytery since its inception in 2011 and a solid foundation for two active and viable west coast EPC presbyteries in the future.

7. While the presence of one or more large churches may be desirable, sufficient commitment by medium-sized and small churches can provide a sufficiently strong foundation for an effective Presbytery.

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed PNW</u>	<u>Proposed PSW</u>
Over 1000 members	4	1	3
Between 400 and 1000	8	3	5
Between 100 and 400	31	16	15

The Assembly must satisfy itself regarding the viability of proposed or existing presbyteries, including through the means of the National Leadership Team (formerly the Committee on Administration), the Presbytery Review Committee and any other committees or commissions formed for this purpose.