



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

COMMITTEE REPORT

Moderator

Report to the 39th General Assembly



Tom Werner, Moderator
38th General Assembly

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 39th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Denver area is the gateway to one of the most beautiful areas of the world, and I trust you will enjoy this part of God's creation (perhaps a hike?) as well as our time together in study, prayer, rich fellowship, joyful worship and, oh yes, some business as we talk together about how God is moving in and through the EPC.

Serving as your Moderator has been a pleasure and a great joy for me. I have chosen to spend my time primarily in two initiatives, church planting and the Revelation 7:9 Task Force, and I am eager to see what God will do through each of these works.

Church Planting

I have a strong personal connection to church-planting, in part because my own church, Greentree Community Church in Kirkwood, Missouri (a St. Louis suburb), is a church plant which has been a blessing to me, my family, and our community. Greentree also has initiated or contributed to five church plants—with number six soon to come. During my term as Moderator, my wife, Susan, and I visited EPC church plants and church planters in Memphis, upstate New York, Brooklyn, Northern California, and the St. Louis area, representing more than fifteen church plants in all. I think the work of church planting to be challenging, sometimes exhilarating, sometimes wearing, and always requiring dependence on God, as our planters work without much of a safety net. I have found our planters and planting network leaders to be creative, full of fresh vision and surprises (who knew wearing a clerical collar with blue jeans would be a thing?), perseverance, and biblical grounding. God bless them!



Revelation 7:9 Task Force

The Revelation 7:9 Task Force is also personal to me. Five years ago, this summer, an African-American teenager named Michael Brown was killed in Ferguson, Missouri, by a white police officer. The surrounding St. Louis-area community erupted. I had to acknowledge that I knew too little about the reasons for anger, and that I had not done much of anything, ever, to ease what I think is the most divisive problem facing our nation. I felt called to better understand my greater community, and what the Bible says to the people of God's church about ethnic differences. I am grateful to Rufus Smith and Dean Weaver for their leadership of the Revelation 7:9 Task Force, and I would be happy if I can make some small contribution to the work. It is my prayer that through our individual churches, our denomination would broaden the scope of our ministry to include all our neighbors and look more like our neighborhoods—and thereby look more like the Kingdom of God as we see it portrayed in Revelation 7:9. I am persuaded this is a biblical priority.

Why these two interests? Well, as you can see, they are both personal, but they are also both future-facing, and they are important for our denomination going forward. I am glad to have gotten a glimpse of what God has in store for us.

In the next few years, we will see transition in our staff leadership, as both Jeff Jeremiah and Phil Linton retire after years of wonderfully productive ministry. The National Leadership Team wants to contribute to the transition by reassessing the priorities of the EPC and what we hope our new leadership can bring to our denomination's mission, vision, and strategies. It will be a busy year ahead, and I am glad to serve next year as Chairman of the NLT.

I am honored to have stood in shoes previously worn by leaders I admire and respect, and I look forward to what God will do in the EPC.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Werner, Moderator
38th General Assembly

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