

**Revelation 7:9 Task Force**  
Report to the 40<sup>th</sup> General Assembly



Rufus Smith  
*Co-Chairman*



Tom Werner  
*Ex-Officio*



Dean Weaver  
*Co-Chairman*

The Revelation 7:9 Task Force was appointed by the Moderator of the 39<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to study how the EPC can better become a denomination that faithfully embraces, worships with, and serves our neighbors from “every nation (ethnicity), tribe, people, and language.” Our “neighbors” include people of different ages, genders, socioeconomic status, and educational backgrounds within a one- to five-mile radius of our local EPC churches.

The Apostle John wrote: “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9).

**Summary of Work, 2019–2020**

During this second year, the Revelation 7:9 Task Force has developed specific steps we may take as a denomination and as presbyteries, pastors, and individual congregations toward becoming a missional church that moves faithfully toward the vision of the Kingdom of God as revealed in Scripture. Any such recommendations are not a quick fix or easy solution to complex issues. It is the hope of the Task Force that when we produce the final report and its recommendations, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church will take another step of biblical faithfulness in pursuit of the Kingdom of God. Until the day the kingdom of this world becomes the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ ... we cry “Maranatha.”

The Revelation 7:9 Task Force:

- Met twice as a whole team.
- Created small teams within the Task Force to recommend SMART goals based on what we heard during the first year of the life of the Task Force.
- Took a field trip as a whole team to Selma, Montgomery, and Birmingham to experience important historic civil rights sites.
- Conducted a meeting with 30 EPC pastors committed to the 7:9 goals.
- Continued to meet with our listening and prayer teams to strategize and pray.
- Recommended that the Church Information Form (CIF) include data questions to ascertain demographics as to age, ethnicity, and economic status. This was implemented.
- Recommended adding a subcategory, “Professions of Faith,” to the Annual Church Report to ascertain the number of professions of faith of adults (18 years and over). This was implemented.
- Recommended that the EPC translate all denominational materials into Spanish.
- Reported live to the 39th General Assembly on the Task Force’s work.
- Reported to the 39<sup>th</sup> General Assembly through a written interim report.

### **Recommendations to the 2020 General Assembly**

#### **1. Recommendation 40-11:**

That the Revelation 7:9 Task Force be continued until the 2022 General Assembly for the purpose of resourcing interested local EPC churches.

#### **2. Recommendation 40-12:**

That the contents of this report and any additional reports from the Revelation 7:9 Task Force be distributed electronically to all EPC presbyteries, churches, and pastors.

### **Work of the Committee in 2019–2020**

For the past two years, the Revelation 7:9 Task Force as a group has primarily been listening, researching, and writing for what we trust is the benefit of the EPC as a whole. We also have acted to a limited degree as a practical resource, and we look forward to expanding that work.

The Task Force is fully aware that:

- Not every local church in the EPC is interested in or feels compelled to be a participant in the Revelation 7:9 initiative. But many churches in mid-sized and major cities do.
- Many EPC churches are in rural areas that do not lend themselves to an age, ethnic, or economic mosaic, and must continue the work of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment in their context.

- The timing or missional objectives of Revelation 7:9 are incompatible with some churches' understanding of their mission.
- Some churches have set aside sufficient sums of money to invest in hiring minority TEs to plant gospel-centered churches in minority areas whose worship and ministry reflect the ethos of a particular minority community as a local expression of their Revelation 7:9 commitment.

If extended, the Revelation 7:9 Task Force will continue to function as a practical resource, providing equipping and encouragement to churches that are interested in becoming more practically engaged in the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, as well as becoming more mosaic in age, ethnicity, and economics. The Task Force would submit semi-annual progress reports to the National Leadership Team.

### **Recommendations to the 2020 General Assembly**

#### **1. Recommendation 40-11:**

The Revelation 7:9 Task Force recommends that the Task Force be continued until the 2022 General Assembly for the purpose of resourcing interested local EPC churches. This team would encourage and equip these churches by helping to implement the appropriate recommendations that have developed during its tenure. The goal is that our churches grow toward the God-given variety within our 1-3-5-mile neighboring communities for the gospel of Jesus Christ. The NLT has reviewed and joins in this request.

#### **2. Recommendation 40-12:**

The Revelation 7:9 Task Force recommends that the contents of this report and any additional reports be distributed electronically to all EPC presbyteries, churches, and pastors.

**Committee Members**

- TE Rufus Smith (Co-Chairman), Presbytery of the West
- TE Dean Weaver (Co-Chairman), Presbytery of the Alleghenies
- TE Tom Clymer, Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic
- TE Marc de Jeu, Presbytery of the Alleghenies
- RE Enid Flores, Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean
- RE Phyllis Le Peau, Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes
- TE Soon Pak, Presbytery of the Midwest
- Beth Paz, Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest
- RE Brandon Queen, Presbytery of the Gulf South
- TE Andrew Smith, Presbytery of the East
- RE Ted Winters, Presbytery of Mid-America
- RE Tom Werner (ex officio), Presbytery of Mid-America

We submit this report in grateful memory of the Task Force member who loved God, spoke with authority, and bore witness to the Kingdom—  
TE Tim Russell, Presbytery of the Central South

**Committee Meeting Dates**

- September 22-25, 2019—Birmingham, Selma, Montgomery, Alabama
- November 19, 2019—Video Conference

Respectfully submitted,



Rufus Smith  
Co-Chairman



Tom Werner  
Ex-Officio



Dean Weaver  
Co-Chairman

September 2020