



**EPC**

*A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches*

**COMMITTEE REPORT**



**Rufus Smith**  
*Co-Chairman*

**Revelation 7:9 Task Force**  
Report to the 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly



**Andrew Smith**  
*Co-Chairman*

**Summary of Work, 2020-2021:**

1. Reiterated the purpose of the Revelation 7:9 Task Force and described what a Revelation 7:9 church can look like.
2. Described seven expressions of a local church aspiring to imitate Revelation 7:9 as much as possible in our broken world.
3. Defined the local outreach philosophy of a local church aspiring to imitate Revelation 7:9.
4. Established the threefold process for interested churches that aspire to imitate Revelation 7:9 as much as possible in a broken world.
5. Initiated conversations with churches throughout the denomination about the possibility of imitating Revelation 7:9.
6. Established four sub-committee teams.
7. Recruited 11 new members to the Task Force. We now represent all 14 presbyteries.
8. Co-chairs reported to NLT in March about the work of Revelation 7.9 Task Force.
9. Set the goal to identify and assist 12-15 churches who aspire to imitate Revelation 7:9 by September 2021.
10. Continue to develop the theological statement of the basis for the Revelation 7:9 Task Force mission, in conjunction with the Theology and Ministerial Vocation committees.

## **Recommendations to the 2021 General Assembly:**

### **1. Recommendation: 41-05:**

Due to the COVID-19 interruption and work stoppage, the Revelation 7:9 Task Force recommends that our initial two-year request be extended from June 2022 to June 2023. Churches are responding to the vision of living out the Great Commission and the Great Commandments in our local neighborhoods where the Lord has placed them. Another year will make it possible to serve them more effectively.

Please note: Even though all churches should be missional, the fact of the matter is that we are not as missional as we can be. Revelation 7:9 is an attempt to refresh or re-emphasize being more missional. To use a technological term, a church aspiring to imitate Revelation 7:9 is simply “rebooting” its evangelistic ecosystem. We also know that the work of Revelation 7:9 can coincide with revitalization by executing with more fervor the Great Commission plus the Great Commandments. If a church chooses the language of revitalization, so be it. Praise God the Father!

## **Work of the Committee in 2020-2021:**

### **1. Reiterated the purpose of the Revelation 7:9 Task Force**

A Revelation 7:9 Church is one that desires to improve its delivery of the Great Commission and the Great Commandments within their 1-3-5-mile radius.

### **2. Described six expressions of a local church aspiring to imitate Revelation 7:9**

- a. A mono-ethnic church that decides to transform into a multi-ethnic, inter-generational, and/or sociologically and economically diverse congregation.
- b. A mono-ethnic church or a cluster of churches which plant churches using a Revelation 7:9 ethic, as for example:
  - Plant a multi-ethnic, inter-generational congregation in an area where the demographics make sense.
  - Plant a multi-site campus extension differing in age or ethnicity than the mother church.
  - Plant a mono-ethnic church among people of color in a given ZIP code. This plant will very likely look and feel different than the “mother” church.
  - Plant a church in an under-served ZIP code. Please note that we are using the definition for the “under-served” from the EPC Church Planting Team, which differs from an under-resourced community. An underserved ZIP code is defined as a local church plant designed to evangelize a demographic dominated by “Nones” or “Dones”—the religiously unaffiliated (formerly called “unchurched” or “dechurched”)—in their 1-3-5-mile radius.
- c. A facility-sharing arrangement congregation between a majority and a minority congregation, as long as the relationship stretches beyond a transactional landlord-tenant contract. Facility-sharing would also include frequent joint events and partnering on joint outreach endeavors as equal partners.

- d. A Revelation 7:9 church will also express a different local outreach philosophy described in Section 2 below.

**3. Defined the local outreach philosophy of a local church aspiring to imitate Revelation 7:9 as being less paternal, with more active listening rather than leading.**

For instance:

- a. Mitigating condescension by developing personal relationships with minority church, non-profit, or community leaders.
- b. Convening community stakeholders to ask permission for and input about their needs.
- c. Jointly adopting an under-resourced school with a minority church.
- d. If facility sharing, stretching beyond a transactional landlord-tenant relationship by participating in regular joint ventures, etc.

**Summary of a Revelation 7:9 Church Outreach**

- Convene for candid, Christian, civil conversations.
- Cultivate multi-ethnic relationships.
- Inclusive and intentional planning, where power is shared.
- Frequency of events.
- Recognition that poverty is more than economics and requires wholistic ministry.
- Research what is good about the neighborhood instead of seeing just what is bad.
- Intensity or passion proven by budget.

**4. Established the process for interested churches that aspire to imitate Revelation 7:9**

This occurs with the guidance of the three sub teams listed below. This includes, but is not limited to, assessing the readiness and capacity of a church to reach their neighborhood of 1-3-5 miles; the attitudes and desires of the staff, leaders, and congregation; setting goals; providing resources; and establishing a strategy.

**Established two essentials that begins the assessment**

- Senior Pastor has to be on board and involved; and
- A commitment to establish a futuristic team and setting goals for near-term and long-term development in imitating Revelation 7:9.

**5. Initiated conversations with churches throughout the denomination about the possibility of imitating Revelation 7:9 church.**

As of the date of filing of this Report, 3-4 churches have made commitments to becoming Revelation 7:9 churches and 4-6 churches are in serious conversations about becoming Revelation 7:9 churches.

**6. Established 4 sub teams**

**a. Assessment/Demographic Team**

This team assists pastors, staff and sessions to evaluate their interest, explore their 1-3-5-mile demographics, and assess their readiness to implement a Revelation 7:9 strategy. They produced assessment tools for this purpose, conducted interviews, etc.

**b. Resource/Curriculum Team**

This team assists in directing and training advocates, facilitators, or teachers, based on the context of a particular local church. The team recognizes that one size does not fit all. It will provide resources for this training and resources for the church leadership. It will provide some on-site training, such as in evangelism.

**c. Presbytery Team**

This team is proactive in navigating polity and raises awareness in the Presbyteries of the Revelation 7:9 mission. They communicate and work closely with the Presbytery Revitalization Coordinator, Moderator, and the Stated Clerk. They proactively contact Presbyteries or lead members of the Task Force to secure a place on the dockets to communicate the values of Revelation 7:9. They will also share encouraging stories with Presbyteries of what is happening in our Revelation 7:9 churches.

**d. Execution Team**

This team assists the staff and leadership of a church to fine-tune ideation, initiatives, and step-by-step implementation. This includes assisting a church to create a futuristic team whose sole objective is to visualize how the church wants to look and feel over the next ten years in preparation for the next generation.

- 7. Recruited 11 new members to the Task Force.** The names of all Task Force members are listed at the end of this report. We now represent fourteen Presbyteries.
- 8. The Co-Chairs reported to the NLT on the work of the Revelation 7:9 Task Force** in March 2021.
- 9. Set the goal to identify and assist 12-15 churches who aspire to imitate Revelation 7:9 by September 2021.**
- 10. Complete the theological statement for the basis of the Revelation 7:9 mission.**

This statement was begun in the interim report to GA 2019. A chosen group of theologians are being invited to participate in this important task.

**An Invitation**

Consider joining the great adventure of becoming a church that imitates Revelation 7:9 as much as possible in this broken world. It will be costly. There will be sorrow. We will all make mistakes. We don't have all the answers. Sometimes we don't even know the questions. We don't know where it will all lead—except that it will lead us closer to the one who is the Lord of all people.

“Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

## **Recommendations to the 2021 General Assembly:**

### **1. Recommendation: 41-05:**

Due to the COVID-19 interruption and work stoppage, the Revelation 7:9 Task Force recommends that our initial two-year request be extended from June 2022 to June 2023. Churches are responding to the vision of living out the Great Commission and the Great Commandments in our local neighborhoods where the Lord has placed them. Another year will make it possible to serve them more effectively.

### Committee Members:

TE Rufus Smith (Co-Chairman), Presbytery of the West  
TE Andrew Smith, (Co-Chairman), Presbytery of the East  
TE Tommy Allen, Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest  
TE Steve Burton, Presbytery of the Central South  
TE Jeff Cook, Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic  
TE Michael Davis, Presbytery of the Central South  
TE Marc de Jeu, Presbytery of the Alleghenies  
TE Jose Figueroa, Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest  
RE Enid Flores, Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean  
TE Laurie Johnston, Presbytery of the Great Plains  
TE Joe Kim, Presbytery of the East  
RE Phyllis Le Peau, Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes  
TE (Candidate under Care) Cheryl Mendes-Ellis, Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean  
TE Soon Pak, Presbytery of the Midwest  
RE Brandon Queen, Presbytery of the Gulf South  
TE Doug Resler, Presbytery of the West  
TE Eric Shipton, Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic  
TE Ben Tzeng, Presbytery of Mid-America  
RE Tom Werner, Presbytery of Mid-America

### Committee Meeting Dates:

*All meetings were remote*

**Full Task Force:** December 12, 2020; December 17, 2020;  
January 6, 2021; March 3, 2021; May 5, 2021.

**Executive Team:** January 4, 2021; January 6, 2021, February 24, 2021;  
March 3, 2021; April 28, 2021; April 5, 2021.

**Assessment Team:** February 19, 2021; March 16-17, 2021; March 30, 2021;  
April 4, 2021; April 21, 2021; April 30, 2021.

**Curriculum Team:** January 28, 2021; February 25, 2021;  
March 11, 2021; April 15, 2021; May 13, 2021.

**Presbytery Team:** March 25, 2021.

**Execution Team:** January 26, 2021; February 23, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Rufus Smith  
Co-Chairman

  
Andrew Smith  
Co-Chairman

June 2021