

NEWBOLD COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MULTICULTURAL ADVENTIST ECCLESIOLOGY CULTURES

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BY

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Multicultural Adventist Ecclesiology

Multicultural churches in Revelation 7:9 stands as one of the most vivid and comprehensive biblical portraits of the eschatological people of God as John witnessed people from every nation, tribe, ethnicity, and language gathered before the throne of God.¹ This blog aims to critically analyse the ecclesiological implications of John's vision in Revelation 7:9, a pivotal biblical text that frames the Church's cultural diversity within God's creational and redemptive purpose, and to evaluate how this vision can inform and critique the Adventist perspective on the Church's unity and mission concerning cultural diversity. The guiding blog question is: To what extent does Revelation 7:9 challenge and shape the Adventist understanding of the Church as a unified body composed of diverse cultures?

Revelation 7:9 presents one of scripture's clearest depictions of God's eschatological of the redeemed community John sees:

A great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.²

John beheld the vast assembly all dressed in white garments, holding palm branches—a symbol of victory of the great multitude coming out from the great tribulation. They were church triumphant, no longer on earth but in heaven before the throne of God (v.9).³ The vision of God's salvation that is presented in the book of

¹Howard Culbertson, '*Looking Across the Finish Line: Revelation 7:9 and World Missions*', Howard Culbertson's Writings, accessed 14 November 2025, <https://home.snu.edu/missions/~hculbert/rev79.htm>

² Revelation 7:9 (NRSV)

³ Angel M. Rodriguez, *Andrews Bible Commentary*, with Daniel K. Bediako, Carl P. Cosaert, Gerald A. Klingbeil, associate editors (Andrews University Press:Michigan, p. 1960).

Revelation 7:9, that in heaven, the prophet foretells a vast multicultural community united in God.⁴ A vast assembly that cannot be numbered, representing every nation, tribe, people, and language.⁵ A vivid eschatological vision of this truth, as stated in the passage:

and there was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, from all tribes and people and languages, standing before the throne and before the lamb.⁶

This suggests that John depicts not a homogenised humanity, but a redeemed community where distinct culture identifies within the unity of worship. Diversity is perfected and directed onward the glory of God. Paul emphasizes that they are heirs of Abraham and participants in the promise.⁷

This vision also presents profound challenges for the church. It calls on Adventists to not only reach out to diverse cultures but also to actively include, empower, and integrate these cultures within a unified body.⁸ Moreover, the concept of unity in variety highlights the importance of diverse individuals and groups living in harmony within the body of Christ, regardless of their unique cultural backgrounds. The biblical view that there will always be different perspectives and backgrounds represented in the church is foundational to this

⁴Rachel Held Evans 'Biblical Considerations for an Inclusive View of Salvation', 16 November 2010, <https://rachelheldevans.com/blog/bible-inclusive-salvation-heaven-hell>.

⁵ *Enduring Word Bible Commentary Revelation Chapter 7*, Revelation, 5 December 2015, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-7/>.

⁶ Holy Bible, *New Revised Standard Version*, (Harper Collins, 2007), Rev.7:9

⁷Christopher-J.-H.-Wright.Pdf 'Text-Book-2-The-Mission-of-God_-Unlocking-t-', n.d., accessed 12 November 2025, https://fbcclassroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Text-Book-2-The-Mission-of-God_-Unlocking-t-Christopher-J.-H.-Wright.pdf.

⁸ *Church, Culture, Identity - Adventist Review - Adventist Review*, Magazine Article, 2 February 2021, <https://adventistreview.org/magazine-article/2102-22/>.

idea, as is the idea that variety is good for the church's development and progress.⁹

Many Christian communities, both past and present, have held the belief—sometimes unspoken—that church identity is best formed within a single cultural or ethnic setting. This assumption stems from cultural comfort zones, language barriers, and fears of losing traditional expressions. People often believe that adhering to a single cultural norm would facilitate church unification and missionary dispatch. This thinking has led to the establishment of churches for various ethnicities, such as Chinese, Hispanic, African-American, West Indian, Kenyan, and Brazilian. This approach could not only help resolve conflicts arising from cultural differences but also allow the church to focus on its mission of reaching members within the same ethnic group.¹⁰

This text shapes Adventist ecclesiology by emphasizing that unity is rooted in eschatological hope rather than in institutional structures. John's vision depicts unity as an act of divine redemption instead of a human endeavor. Consequently, the Adventist Church is reminded that its global diversity should not be viewed as an issue to be managed but rather to recognize and articulate the harmonious theological system of biblical truth.¹¹

In addition, Paul stated in Galatians 3:27-28 (NRSV) says;

⁹ 'Topical Bible: *Unity and Diversity in the Body of Christ*', accessed 6 November 2025, https://biblehub.com/topical/u/unity_and_diversity_in_the_body_of_christ.htm.

¹⁰ 'Self-Giving Love: *The Key to Unity in Diversity*', 17 March 2022, <https://www.sandyadventistchurch.org/pastors-blog/self-giving-love-the-key-to-unity-in-diversity>.

¹¹ 'Seventh-Day Adventist Vision and Mission - 2', accessed 16 November 2025, <https://www.perspectivedigest.org/archive/23-4/seventh-day-adventist-vision-and-mission---2>.

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all you are one in Christ Jesus.”¹²

Furthermore, Revelation 7:9 portrays a multicultural church and provides a glimpse into the eternal family that God will provide.¹³ As John saw an innumerable multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and languages “standing before the lamb”.¹⁴ A cosmic vision of salvation that surpasses nationality, region, and language for His people.¹⁵ The final depiction of paradise features communities defined by language, ethnicity, and tribal affiliation. In this eschatological vision, God is reuniting His adopted children, resembling an extended family,¹⁶ a unified yet heterogeneous group.¹⁷ John the apostle saw a vision of God's people from every nation, racial and ethnic group, and socioeconomic class coming together as one voice to worship and praise God before His throne.¹⁸ According to Paul, the sacrifice of the Lamb has secured their redemption and set them apart from sin, rendering them acceptable in God's eyes and secured for all time. The vast, varied, and overwhelming number of people present testifies to the fact that Jesus Christ has made possible God's unconditional grace.¹⁹ This multicultural, multilingual,

¹² Gal 3:27-28 (NRSV).

¹³ ‘Cultural Diversity Definition, Benefits & Challenges - Lesson’, Study.Com, accessed 13 November 2025, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/defining-cultural-diversity.html>.

¹⁴ Smith, Andrews Bible Commentary, 2024

¹⁵ ‘The 144,000 and the Great Multitude’, accessed 11 November 2025, <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/articles/the-144000-and-the-great-multitude>.

¹⁶ ‘Eschatology And Mission For The Majority World: A Contextual Reading And Interpretation Of Eschatological Passages In The Bible’, accessed 6 November 2025, <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/articles/eschatology-and-mission-for-the-majority-world>.

¹⁷ *Immigration, Babel, and the End of History - Adventist Review - Adventist Review*, Commentary, 5 April 2025, <https://adventistreview.org/commentary/immigration-babel-and-the-end-of-history/>.

¹⁸ Hwarang Moon, ‘Toward the Vision of Revelation: Multicultural Worship in a Korean Context’, *Religions* 13, no. 2 (2022): 171, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13020171>.

¹⁹ Paul says, ‘White Robe, for Who? | Walk With Peter’, 17 July 2024, <https://walkwithpeter.com/white-robe-for-who/>.

multinational kingdom will be obedient to God as his priests and will rule over the earth.²⁰

The church must be consistent and intentional. There must be inclusivity, belonging, and respect for all believers and church entities, as well as those we desire to bring to Christ. Only when all Seventh-day Adventist members, friends, and neighbors feel included and valued for who and what they are in God's eyes, regardless of culture, will diversity be fully fulfilled.²¹

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is called to represent God's kingdom and communicate the good news to a broken and hurting world. They also must be realistic about multicultural calling's difficulties. Bringing disparate cultures together demands humility and Christlikeness.²² Furthermore, they must love each other.²³ In exemplifying Christ's full purpose, the multiethnic, inclusive, and reconciling church should reflect God's multicultural kingdom. As the one and only mediator and leader of the diverse church.²⁴

To conclude, the hope for the end times is depicted in Revelation 7:9, which is that human diversity will not be destroyed but rather redeemed and brought together in worship. From all walks of life and corners of the globe.

²⁰ Emma Patel, 'A Multicultural Vision for the Church', *National Association of Evangelicals*, 2 February 2024, <https://www.nae.org/multicultural-vision-church/>.

²¹ *Church, Culture, Identity - Adventist Review - Adventist Review*, Magazine Article, 2 February 2021, <https://adventistreview.org/magazine-article/2102-22/>.

²² *Church, Culture, Identity*, Article, 2

²³ Douglas J. Brouwer, *How to Become a Multicultural Church* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2017).

²⁴ Dan Creiss and Smith, *Church for everyone*, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press), 2024

Nation or race is no barrier to salvation.²⁵ Heaven represents unity, as indicated in Revelation 7:9, where a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language worships God at His throne, reflecting God's purpose for all His people. Therefore, the church should embody this heavenly worship unity on earth.²⁶

²⁵ Ray Rupert, *Revelation primer The Great Tribulation and Seventh Seal in Revelation*, (USA: Proverbs Three Nine Foundation, 2023), Kindle edition, 124.

²⁶ John Quick, '*Team Over Talent: A Call to Kingdom Unity*', *Mountain City Church*, 6 March 2025, <https://mountaincity.church/2025/03/team-over-talent-a-call-to-kingdom-unity/>.

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<https://stlukesramsgate.org/2025/06/08/unity-babel-and-pentecost-genesis-11-9/>.
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