

Transformative and Effective Disciple-Making
(TED)

TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
2021–2025

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PURPOSE

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Trans-European Division exists to take part in the mission of Jesus Christ: ‘To seek and to save the lost’ (Luke 19:10 ESV). We have a divine commission to make fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 15:16; Acts 1:8). Christ gives us, his followers, the extraordinary opportunity to be part of the mission given him by his father (John 20:21; Luke 19:10). That mission is not only to seek out the lost—to evangelise them—but to ensure they are saved—to help them become disciples of Jesus, as we are. It is, then, a mission in which sharing the ‘good news’ of redemption with those who don’t know it is essential and indispensable, but is just the start of a journey of discipleship. And God also calls us, as he has humans throughout history, but with greater urgency as history draws to a close, to ‘worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water’ (Rev. 14:7 NKJV).

So what, then, is the Trans-European Division’s purpose and reason for existence? The TED exists partly, and importantly, to serve as the point of contact between its unions and the world Church, but its purpose is primarily to support and enhance what is being done by its 1,400 local congregations and 14 component units, as they engage in the business of every local church and administrative body: to worship God ‘in spirit and in truth’ (John 4:23–24 NIV) and to make fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ—a mission carried out within the distinctive framework of the historic, prophetic identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The decision to create this division was taken nearly 93 years ago. For most of the last nine decades, this *distinctively Adventist* mission was all-important in the TED. In the face of war and cold war, depression and recession, ever-increasing materialism, secularism, and irreligion, the division headquarters has facilitated mission. For church members in its territory, mission was *the* driving force. But for much of its history, that mission imperative was focused outside, to mission fields in Africa and Asia. Since 2012, for the first time other than short interims, the TED is an exclusively European division. It now faces the test of ‘whether the Trans-European Division can . . . simply be European.’¹ But it also now has a chance to focus energies and resources solely on territories on the continent of Europe and the islands of the North Atlantic.

To make the most of that chance, however, expanding God’s kingdom must still be the chief driving force—not holding on, not fitting in, but growing the people of God in Europe. The passion for distinctively Seventh-day Adventist mission needs to impel *everything* done by the Trans-European Division, by its 11 unions and 3 attached fields, its 70 educational, publishing, and health and welfare institutions, its 1,400 congregations, its nearly 90,000 members. It is our heritage; it is our challenge; it is our opportunity. This strategic framework is intended to help Seventh-day Adventists in the territory of the Trans-European Division to renew our Adventist identity that speaks to the challenges of the 21st-century world, and to renew, in this century, the passion for mission of past generations.

God the Father asks us to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to help people in Europe to look past postmodernity, material prosperity, and scepticism of organised religion, and to recognise the God-shaped hole in their lives. Our Father in heaven wants us to help them fill it with Jesus Christ our Lord. Everything else must be subordinated to this imperative.

STRATEGIC CONTEXTS

Mission Statement and Values Statement

The Church across the TED territory has the same Mission Statement (incorporating statements of mission, method, vision, identity, and implementation) as the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole (Appendix). Of the subsidiary declarations within the Mission Statement, the most important is the first, ‘Our Mission’: *Make disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels’ Messages in preparation for His soon return.*

The distinctive Adventist mission must necessarily be contextualised to a wide range of different settings and cultures around the globe; this is recognised in the church’s *Working Policy*.² The TED, therefore, has added both a specific Mission Statement for its disciple-making initiative,³ and a general Values Statement to the world-Church Mission Statement.

TED Values

- ***Transformation***: We will meet people where they are, instead of demanding they meet us on our terms, but will not leave them where we find them. Instead, we seek to build transformational communities, facilitating the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming lives and equipping people to build up God’s kingdom in this world, even as we share the good news of ‘the world to come’ (Heb. 2:5).
- ***Ethical Integrity***: We pursue the highest standards in church leadership, at all levels, recognising and promoting integrity as the quality that makes Adventist ethical positions more than abstract, enabling them to become the basis for moral action, in the church and in society.
- ***Diversity***: We recognise the innate worth of every human being, all alike born into the image of God (Gen. 1:26–27; 5:1, 3; 9:6). Consequently, we make the case for religious freedom because choice is an attribute granted to humanity by the creator; and we encourage all church members to respect, empathise with, and show Christ-like compassion for, all people: regardless of colour, caste, nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, health condition, age, gender, or sexual orientation. In leadership and in church policies, we endeavour to reflect the TED’s considerable diversity: geographical, cultural, racial, and national-origin.
- ***Service***: Following the consistent teachings of the prophets, the example of Jesus, and bearing in mind the value of *diversity*, we humbly strive to do justice and manifest Christ-like compassion (Mic. 6:8) by serving our communities, ministering to individuals and populations affected by poverty, tragedy, hopelessness, and prejudice, and providing healing and highlighting wholistic principles of healthy living. Through our ministry to the poor, the oppressed, the unwell, and the migrant ‘stranger within our gates’, we cooperate with the Creator in His work of ‘making whole’ (John 5:6).
- ***Distinctiveness***: We are committed to the distinctive and wholistic Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the Bible’s teachings about freedom, healing, and hope in Jesus. We are dedicated to strengthening Seventh-day Adventist identity by fostering a fuller

understanding of Adventist history (especially in Europe), the ministry of Ellen G. White, and Adventism's unique eschatology.

- **Action:** While we wait patiently for Christ (Psa. 40:1; Mark 13:32; Matt. 24:36) we do not wait passively. Rather than being inwardly focused, we will work collaboratively to actively spread the good news of Jesus Christ and His soon return, in ways that are biblically faithful, distinctively Adventist, and attractive, relevant, and culturally authentic to people in 21st-century Europe.

World-Church Strategic Focus and TED Strategic Frameworks

Transformative Effective Disciple-Making flows from the Seventh-day Adventist Church Mission Statement and the TED Values Statement. The division's framework intermeshes with the strategic plan developed by the General Conference (GC) for the world Church, *Reach the World*, and its current (2020–2025) strategic focus, *I Will Go*.⁴ The *I Will Go* focus consists of 10 objectives and 59 key performance indicators (KPIs), grouped into three areas: mission, spiritual growth, and leadership; four objectives are related to mission, three to spiritual growth, and three to leadership development.⁵ The TED executive committee and collective leadership has embraced the *I Will Go* focus, while recognising, in its discussions,⁶ that the GC calls for the *I Will Go* objectives and KPIs to be customised by divisions and unions, to suit local contexts. As a result, in 2020 the TED Ministries and Services Advisory Committee approved another 15 KPIs specific to this division.

Accordingly, the structure of this strategic framework partly reflects the world-Church's current strategic focus, but it also has features reflecting the particular priorities of the church in the unions and attached fields which the TED oversees and supports. In what follows, however, the points of intersection with *I Will Go* are highlighted in the text, with amplifying information in the endnotes. This framework will become the basis for the development of a full TED strategic plan in the autumn of 2021.

This TED framework consists of eleven areas of strategic emphasis:

- * Three areas of emphasis drawn, in part or in whole, directly from the GC's focus:
 1. Mission, Identity, and Evangelism
 2. Spiritual Growth
 3. Leadership Development
- * Five areas of emphasis arising from the first, fundamental, three:
 4. Disciple-Making
 5. Church of Refuge—iCOR
 6. Media, Communications, and Online Ministry
 7. Finances and Financial Leadership
 8. Leadership Structures and Organisation
- * And finally, three areas of emphasis that reflect essentially TED challenges, summarised by the acronym **T E D**:
 9. **T**rainning
 10. **E**ducation
 11. **D**iversity

TRANSFORMATIVE AND EFFECTIVE DISCIPLE-MAKING: AREAS OF STRATEGIC EMPHASIS

1) Mission, Identity, and Evangelism

A mission think-tank met in St Albans in February 2020, and later digitally; it produced a substantial report, ‘Adventist Identity, Mission and Evangelism’ (Annex B). The report affirms the need to strengthen Adventist identity in the territory of the TED, where postmodernity carries with it the danger of dissolving adherence to Adventist distinctives (and indeed to biblically faithful Christianity). There is a growing tendency to take on board and promote the values of wider society; this is not necessarily deleterious to Adventist identity, but in practice has tended to be. The significance of distinctive Adventist doctrines has been diminished, their value questioned, and the indispensability of outreach doubted.

The three angels’ messages sum up the gospel and the divine plan of redemption from creation to re-creation; this is, indeed, ‘good news’ that needs to be shared. Belief in a prophetic mission as ‘the remnant’ need not imply a sense of elitism or exclusiveness; rather, it should create a sense of responsibility to share the fuller biblical understanding we have of the great themes of the Scriptures. The proclamation of the good news of salvation in the context of the ‘Great Controversy’ theme, based on a strong Adventist identity, should be the prime motor of the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the TED: more than humanitarianism or social justice (crucial as those are in reflecting Christ’s character and vital as they are for establishing credibility in Europe); more than perfecting administrative processes (indispensable as good governance and sound administration are to mission); more than working together with other churches, even in the face of the rampant secularism and materialism of 21st-century Europe. All of these are subsidiary to what Adventists understand as our distinctive and prophetic mission.

This vision of Adventist identity and mission is the foundation for a call to *action*; the vision needs to be urgently broadcast by each level of church structure to the next level below it, down to the individual church-member. Their role will in fact be crucial. Whereas until recently Christianity was Europe’s cultural heart, today, the continent that gave us the Reformation and was instrumental in spreading the gospel to mission fields far away, is now post-Christian and is itself a mission field.⁷ As a result, church members in the TED’s territory can no longer see their role in evangelism as supporting a professional in proclaiming propositional truth, which is our traditional approach. Doctrinal truth still needs to be proclaimed, but now as just one part of a wider strategy. What is necessary is not only to give mission a stronger emphasis, endorsing and amplifying the Disciple-Maker’s Initiative (strategic emphasis no. 4), though put firmly in the context of Adventist identity, but also to give mission a new slant, which foregrounds relationships.

Key Recommendations

- a) Church members need to be trained and equipped to intentionally build ‘relationships that reveal the love, character and truth of Jesus.’ To foster this approach, the division,

- unions and, where appropriate, conferences, should each establish in their territory ‘an organic network of disciple-making groups’.⁸
- b) The traditional connotation of the word ‘evangelism’ needs to be expanded considerably. A new ‘shared set of public definitions/descriptions’ is needed, which ‘will work to shape the culture within the TED’.⁹
 - c) In particular, if church members are to become important agents in evangelisation of their communities, pastors need to transition to being trainers, equippers, inspirers, and coordinators rather than evangelists.
 - d) The TED should provide special support to its internal mission fields (Albania, Bosnia, Cyprus, Greece, Greenland, Iceland, Kosovo, and Montenegro), including appropriate administrative responses to particular mission challenges.

2) Spiritual Growth

More than one-third (21 of 59) of the KPIs of the *I Will Go* strategic focus relate to the Spiritual Growth area. Given the post-Christian nature of 21st-century Europe and the prominent place of pleasure-seeking in the effective values of contemporary societies across the continent, the TED recognises that there is an urgent need to broaden and deepen the spirituality of all church members, but in particular of Adventist teenagers and young adults.

Furthermore, if the church in Europe is to grow, we need to improve audited retention rates. While we believe that accession rates will increase, they are likely to remain relatively low in world-Church terms. For sustained growth, we need not only to throw open the front door more widely but also to close the back door, as was identified at the TED Nurture and Retention Summit.¹⁰ We need especially to ensure that more of our young people remain church members. Even more, however, the church in the TED needs its members not simply to remain passively on the rolls, but to be active.

This will be delivered partly through the Disciple-Making Initiative (strategic emphasis no. 4) and through iCOR (strategic emphasis no. 5). But it should be noted that the strategic emphasis on spiritual growth will draw on (and thus has implications for) the proposed restructuring of leadership for greater effectiveness (as discussed under strategic emphasis no. 8, below), and the provision of Bible training for pastors, church leaders, and church members (strategic emphasis no. 9, below).

Opportunities for service are crucial and we commit ourselves to increasing engagement with our communities. This is not as a substitute or surrogate for evangelisation, but partly in order to give our idealistic youth the chance to serve others, while also fostering what Ellen G. White calls ‘Christ’s method [of] reaching the people’—which she exemplifies thus: ‘The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counselled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice.’¹¹ At each level of church structure, church leaders, as encouraged by the *I Will Go* focus, actively foster deliberate interaction with neighbours and communities, and intentional application of Christ’s method of ministry.¹²

Key Recommendations

- a) Further to world-Church goals set out in *I Will Go*, pastors and elders are to be trained and encouraged to redemptively review membership records, with an eye to identifying those who have left or are in danger of falling out of membership and to finding ways to reconnect with them. Each union is to set a firm goal of increasing the proportion of church members and unbaptised children and youth who remain in the Adventist community of faith.¹³
- b) The division and unions will commit to implementing the recommendations of the 2017 Nurture and Retention Summit.
- c) In particular, Nurture and Retention committees will be established, and nurture and retention coordinators designated, in the division, each union and conference/mission, and each local church with enough members to sustain departmental appointments.¹⁴

3) Leadership Development

Our purpose is to help create the conditions in which unions, conferences, and missions (and the congregations within them) can flourish. Certain factors that affect the ability of the leader to lead effectively must be recognised. First, the Trans-European Division's territory is more complex than ever before, and becoming more so. While the division comprises two geographically separated regions, with significantly different histories and cultures, it is also the case that north-western and south-eastern Europe alike are increasingly complex: multicultural; ethnically and religiously diverse; largely sceptical; green, disability, and social-justice conscious; materially prosperous; yet spiritually impoverished. At the same time, this is an ageing church; Europeans are elderly by global standards, but the Seventh-day Adventist church membership is older than the wider population. All this makes leadership training even more urgent than in the past. The current leader needs to broaden his/her skillset and cultural competence. But there is also the need to identify the leader of the future, including at the highest levels.

In addition, while leadership is vital in all organisations, this is especially true of smaller ones, such as most denominational organisational units in Europe, because individual leaders can have outsize influence and importance. A second reason that the relatively small size of the TED makes leadership development essential is that, unlike in some larger divisions, the talent pool is small. The practice of term limits in some unions means that in their territories the talent is spread even thinner. On the other hand, also unlike some divisions, church membership in the TED includes a significant group of well-educated, professional lay-people on which to draw; however, they often do not have experience (or in some cases good understanding) of Adventist church structure and how it is intended to function. Furthermore, "a willingness to use women in leadership roles ... has been present from the beginning of the church" in the TED's territory,¹⁵ so that there is ample precedent for drawing on 100% of members in the TED for leadership—and, given the small leadership pool, it is essential that this is still done in the division's tenth decade (and beyond), as the TED has formally recognised and affirmed.¹⁶

To make the most of the available resources of talent and readiness to serve, leadership development is essential. Consequently, the division headquarters has a keen interest in the

spiritual growth of leaders and the fruition of all development plans within our territory, and in providing resources that will support relevant plans and programmes.

In order to be the high-impact movement that God intends us to be, the division and unions need to jointly develop leaders within the TED who can lead in every aspect of church life, and at every level of church structure. The wholistic development of our leaders will take into account mind, body, and spirit.

To meet the need to equip leaders more effectually—laity, pastors, and administrators (existing and future)—we will take a three-pronged approach: mentoring, equipping, and training.

i) Mentoring

Mentoring should be seen as vital for all life situations and should include mentoring parents, youth, workers, and leaders. Mentoring is itself a skill, however, and persons with experience will by no means naturally be good mentors of the unexperienced. Leaders also need to be mentored spiritually as well as in leadership principles and praxis.

ii) Equipping

Not everyone who feels called to formal pastoral ministry is equipped for ministry. Redefining, expanding, and developing the definition of pastoral ministry to include core competencies and clear job descriptions would help create processes to identify those best suited for ministry; at the same time, it might expand the ranks of those able to contribute (e.g., if not as lead pastor of a church then as part of a disciple-making team: see strategic emphasis no. 4, below).

Once pastors are qualified, unions and conferences/missions should require them to undertake continuing professional development; continuing education should be mandatory for all pastors: ordained, licensed, or commissioned, full time or part time. Ability to meet the core competencies would be a part of professional development.

iii) Training for Administration

The election process within the Church can create leadership vacuums. There is a need to create a pool of qualified people across the TED, who would serve local fields; this would enable and ensure wider diversity and greater experience among elected and appointed leadership at the division headquarters. To meet this need, it is desirable (as recognised in the *I Will Go* strategic focus) that all new officers and members of executive committees of unions and conferences/missions be clearly briefed, soon after election, about their responsibilities, Adventist church governance, and how committees function therein.¹⁷ It is also desirable to have transparent and comparable job descriptions for all elected and appointed positions at headquarters of units of church structure; officer and departmental director positions might not be advertised for, but such administrators still need to know what their position entails on entering it, and are often left in the dark

Presentations and training materials throughout the division should stress the value of all human beings and their potential contribution to the mission of the church, as well as how we can foster diverse and inclusive leadership in our churches. The division, unions, and districts/conferences should model this in all gatherings, committees, etc.¹⁸

Key Recommendations

- a) Put in place a mentor-training system that covers the whole division and all levels of church structure, and that involves both modelling good practices and producing training materials.
- b) Put in place policies requiring the mentoring of pastors, elected and appointed staff of organisational units, and, where possible/applicable, local church officers and departmental coordinators;
- c) Create and universally implement (as per *I Will Go*) a standard orientation process for officers and executive committee members of all units of denominational structure and of institutions.¹⁹
- d) Put in place at union level an ongoing process whereby suitably gifted adults mentor young adults who are actively engaged in disciple-making and service and would in turn become mentors for other young people.
- e) Ensure that the mentoring system includes experienced women leaders as mentors, facilitating, if need be, virtual mentoring by experienced women pastors from outside the TED and/or drawing on Adventist professional women working outside the church.²⁰
- f) Establish forums in which leaders provide spiritual support for each other.
- g) Create professional competencies and job descriptions for pastors, drawing on the work done by the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (which has identified 18 pastoral competencies and the TED's 7 competencies), but tailoring both the list and job descriptions arising therefrom to the local context.
- h) Develop standard job descriptions for all elected and appointed positions at the division, union, and conference/mission headquarters.
- i) Ensure that executive committees and administrative committees of all units of denominational structure reflect diversity in their membership.

4) Disciple-Making

Disciple-making has been recognised as crucial to the TED for several years, but is now being given even greater prominence. This area of strategic emphasis connects to four *I Will Go* objectives, from all three categories: objective 1 (Mission);²¹ objectives 5 and 6 (Spiritual Growth);²² and objective 8 (Leadership).²³ In terms of the TED strategic framework, the division sees disciple-making as core to a range of other areas of emphasis, and in particular as the means to deliver the aspirations set out above under the strategic emphases on Mission, Identity, and Evangelism, and on Spiritual Growth.

Plans for a disciple-making initiative have been maturing for some time. In 2018, the Division Executive Committee approved a framework for 'Inspiring and equipping a movement of disciple-makers to the fourth generation'.²⁴ Because planning is well advanced and has already received scrutiny by church leaders from across the division, it is summarised here.

Disciple-making as adopted by the TED is conceptualised as a four-stage 'journey': Preparing, Calling, Apprenticeship, and Sending—at which point the disciple becomes the

disciple-maker and the cycle begins anew.²⁵ The intention is to create ‘a disciple-making movement which multiplies to the fourth generation of disciples’, who are ‘the foundation of transformational communities.’²⁶ While the Disciple-Making documents have stressed the role of leaders, small groups will have a fundamental role to play in spreading and growing the disciple-making movement. This will pose challenges in terms of leadership and resources, which can partly be addressed through measures for leadership development, especially mentoring (strategic emphasis no. 3) and for the training of pastors and other workers (strategic emphasis no. 9). Church leaders will, however, also need to take a variety of measures to encourage greater use of small groups (see Recommendation e., below).

The adoption of disciple-making as a strategic emphasis will necessitate the creation of online, other digital, and print resources, the establishment of a division-wide prayer ministry (this is an integral part of the concept), the organisation (and funding) of an annual conference to share good practice and for inspiration, the undertaking of research to feed into good practice, and coordination across union and conference/mission boundaries.²⁷

Disciple-making will take longer to garner a harvest than traditional evangelism; however, it has the potential to effect *organic* growth of a kind evangelism of the traditional kind no longer achieves in Europe and to reach demographics who have long since ceased to respond to public evangelism. It thus requires a considerable commitment by the church right across the division, which has to buy in, and for the long term. However, it is envisaged that this will become the primary engine for church growth: the primary avenue both for outreach and for in-reach (nurture and retention). It thus justifies substantial and long-term dedication of resources and moral support by church leaders at all levels of denominational structure.

Key Recommendations

- a) Establish ‘Adventist DiscipleMakers’ as a mission initiative across the TED, at every level of church structure.
- b) Launch, maintain, and enhance a disciple-making website to provide an online learning platform and to promote, inform, and inspire.
- c) Create a regular cycle of annual, division-wide, disciple-making conference, followed by regional conferences, for training, sharing of good practices, praying together, and vision-casting.
- d) Agree four-year, shared, disciple-making objectives applicable to all elected TED staff.
- e) Leaders at the union and conference/mission levels to encourage greater use of small groups, to provide appropriate resources to them, and to ensure suitable equipping and training of group leaders and members.
- f) TED to establish a platform for support and spiritual care of lay and pastoral disciple-makers.

5) Church of Refuge—iCOR

The iCOR (‘intergenerational Church of Refuge’) concept/tool was initially developed as a joint venture of the Youth Ministries Department (YM) of the Inter-European Division (EUD)

and TED YM, then further developed and promoted by GC YM.²⁸ It responds to and seeks to help deliver at least four KPIs associated with *I Will Go* objectives 5, 6, and 7.²⁹ This area of strategic emphasis will help to deliver the goals set out under Spiritual Growth (no. 2, above).

The fact that iCOR was born in Europe and reflects the European context—and is based on empirical research—makes it particularly applicable to the TED, in which the culture is broadly similar to that in the EUD, and in which, too, it helps to have initiatives supported by research. It must be stressed that iCOR is not a ‘programme’ but an approach (or tool) best implemented as a joint initiative across departments and with support of all officers at each level of church structure.³⁰ The approach takes seriously the biblical metaphors of the ‘family of God’ and ‘body of Christ’, but also actually (not merely figuratively) engages with the family, which emerged from the 2015 Strategic Priority Consultation as a key area of importance in the TED.³¹ It will help to highlight the need to do better as regards diversity, by helping to build acceptance and respect among different groups; and it addresses the need to meet high ethical standards, since it is in family and gender situations where ethical challenges, including abuse, can arise.

Key Recommendation:

That in each unit of denominational structure in the division a small working group explore how iCOR’s principles and concepts can inform and enhance existing forms of ministry, with a coordinating role assigned to the team (see strategic emphasis no. 8, below) or elected member of staff responsible for Family Ministries and/or Youth Ministries.

6) Media and Online Ministry: Print, Video, Radio, Television, Websites, and Social Media

This strategic emphasis connects to and arises from the emphasis on *Mission*, since the potential for reaching people using online media, in particular, is extraordinary, but it also relates to world-Church *Spiritual Growth* KPIs.³²

The proliferation in different kinds of media provides unprecedented opportunities for communication by church leaders to church members and potential for new ways to communicate about Christ. But the astonishing multiplicity of media options can induce bewilderment. At the same time, church leaders have not always been sure of the best way to maximise communications channels and media.

Media has too often been regarded in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, including in the TED, as something ‘separate’ to the regular work of the church. However, the 2015 Strategic Priority Consultation stressed the need for it to be incorporated into regular church operations, and indeed it ‘should be an integral part of all Church activities’.³³ There are three aspects to media and communication, but all must be integrated: i) strategic coordination; ii) content and production; and iii) internal communication. These three aspects are not distinct—all are forms of ‘corporate’ communication by the Adventist Church.

i) Strategic Coordination

The *I Will Go* strategic focus highlights the need, globally, for each major unit of church structure to develop an ‘integrated media plan’ to maximise ‘the potential of

technology?³⁴ This is a particular necessity in the TED: there is a need for a concerted media strategy across the division, which would include union-level media and communication plans, entailing close collaboration between departments and between different levels of church structure, down to the local church. Such strategies and plans could allow either for centralised, or for devolved, production of ideas, scripts, templates, and media stock.

Whether or not media *production* is centralised, there would still be a need to involve the union, conference/district, and potentially congregational levels, in order to close the gap between *interest* in Adventist programming or materials and *contact* with a local church. Moreover, the division is best equipped to support union/conference-based training and enrichment for local and regional communication directors and content developers.

The division definitely has a vital role to play in co-ordinating production and output across the TED. It also potentially has an important part to play in facilitating networking with *supporting ministries* within the TED, such as LifeStyle, and *church entities*, from outside the division, but with expertise relevant to European culture and society, such as Stimme der Hoffnung, Hope Channel, and the South Pacific Division Media Centre. Such collaborations would need to be managed by the TED.

The desired end results are, *firstly*, the integration of print, digital and broadcast media in the development and marketing of resource materials for the church; and, *secondly*, the development of strong communications teams around the division, by pooling resources and working strategically across different levels of church structure.

ii) Content and Production

There is a vital need to create and obtain content that is culturally authentic and engaging, and that is relevant to target audiences on different platforms. Yet, media production is a challenge in a small division comprising many cultures and languages. Some programming requires substantial funding; other options might require or benefit from coordination across the division.

Centralisation offers both advantages and disadvantages. Solutions to the need for authentic and attractive content include licensing content from third-party producers (especially official Adventist media production centres, as discussed above); developing the number of skilled local content-producers by sponsoring targeted individuals for further study; prioritising *local* content creation for targeted demographics; and/or assigning different projects to local centres of excellence or supporting ministries.

The Adventist Church needs what some would call a ‘brand’, meaning not a logo, but a distinct, common, corporate identity. As already noted, the church is small in the TED’s territory and diversification will only lead to fatal fragmentation of the message. Further, there needs to be a common narrative or brand story, which makes it plain how Seventh-day Adventists are different and why people outside the church should be interested in what we have to offer. This includes corporate branding (signage, mottos/straplines, website and social media ‘look’ and design, etc.), but goes well beyond that.

iii) Internal Communication Channels

The 2015 Strategic Consultation identified a number of communication challenges and needs. Effective vertical communication is vital, with the TED, as ‘branch office’ of the GC, transmitting from the world-Church level, down to unions and attached fields, policy changes and global programmes, initiatives, and resources; articulating upwards the concerns of unions; and providing an interface for unions and conferences/missions across the TED, including the work of departments at different levels of structure. When this is missing, all feel its want. However, horizontal communication across levels of structure is vital and has been impeded at times in the past by a ‘silo mentality’.³⁵ The Communications and Media Department at the division needs to ‘horizontally’ underpin other departmental directors or teams, enabling both communication between them, and their communication to unions, conferences, missions, and, ideally, to the rank-and-file church member. Administrators currently can communicate to church members only with difficulty, which impedes the sharing of common initiatives, resources, etc. Stronger communications teams at division and union level, with more strongly defined functions, could help to solve this problem.

Key Recommendations

- a) The division and unions should jointly decide the common Adventist narrative for the TED’s territory, and then *all* denominational entities utilise and promote it.
- b) Funding should be set aside by the division to enable the sponsoring of talented individuals, identified by the unions, for further study/training/professional development.
- c) The TED should help fund the establishment digital delivery systems—both video-on-demand and streaming—around the division territory.
- d) The question of whether media production should be centralised should be explored by a high-level panel including representatives from TED headquarters, unions, GC, potential media partners, and laypeople who are media and creative professionals.
- e) Every church organizational unit should create an integrated communication plan.
- f) Communications and Media at the TED should be conceptualised as a distinct service department, operating ‘horizontally’ (see strategic emphasis no. 8, below).

7) Finances and Financial Leadership

This emphasis, along with the strategic emphasis on leadership development (no. 3, above) and the strategic emphasis on structures for effective leadership (no. 8 below), responds to the *I Will Go* emphasis on leadership. The division’s ‘Financial Leadership Strategic Framework for 2021–2025’,³⁶ builds on the *I Will Go* strategic focus’s mandate ‘To align world church resources with strategic objectives’,³⁷ and represents the TED’s financial strategy for the next four years.

This framework document emphasises the need for the headquarters of all levels of church structure to develop organisational cultures that ‘nurture . . . transparency, accountancy and ultimately trust.’ It also highlights the limited resources available in light of the pandemic, and the

consequent need for ‘reviewing office staff levels’, for studying ways to utilise technology to reduce expense, and for ‘constantly reviewing and aligning resources in light of our vision and strategic priorities.’³⁸

Key Recommendations

- a) TED to provide substantial funding for mission projects throughout the territory.³⁹
- b) TED to put in place a system to identify and train financial leaders across the division, with focused training on denominational financial policies and reporting.⁴⁰
- c) Division, union, and conference/mission headquarters all to nurture high levels of professionalism, accountability, and transparency in financial leadership.
- d) TED to regularly review and align resources and expenses in light of TED strategic priorities to maximise available resources across the division.

8) Leadership Structures and Organisation

In addition to strategic emphases on general leadership development (no. 3) and specifically financial leadership (no. 7), there is also a need to consider structures for effective leadership at the administrative level, of units of church structure.

Departments have long been central to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; they are vital in allowing coordination of and communication between those involved in similar areas of ministry across different levels of church structure, from the GC to the local church. However, while the existence of one association and 13 departments are prescribed by the General Conference Bylaws,⁴¹ and while the Bylaws and *Working Policy* stipulate that departments be covered by appropriate leadership, they also allow for a degree of flexibility and regional variation.⁴² The key provisions about departments at divisions are that i., ‘All departments shall be represented,’⁴³ and ii., to ‘assist the executive officers of the division in the leadership and nurture of the church, by promoting plans and programs developed in coordination with their General Conference counterparts, and by facilitating the involvement of the membership in the mission of the Church.’⁴⁴ As long as there are persons formally responsible for the functions of all 14 ‘departments’, who can liaise with GC-level departmental directors, then the configuration of responsibilities can and does vary from division to division in order to meet the goals set by the division executive officers in consultation with the executive committee. Further, *Working Policy* specifically provides that ‘not all departments will necessarily be needed at all other levels.’⁴⁵ Thus, the GC constitutive documents allow for flexibility, to allow divisions to tailor to their circumstances. As long as departments are covered, there is room for extending the principle—departmental responsibilities need not necessarily be individual, but could be collective.

At the 2015 strategic consultation, the issue of team ministry received much discussion and there was a very clear consensus. ‘Rather than allocating specific departments to individuals,’ strong support was expressed for ‘the concept of groupings and [for] team work . . . particularly in the areas of family, children, teens and youth.’ The consultation also observed ‘that not all departments/areas need to be reproduced at all levels of the Church structure, but where they are reproduced it would be ideal for them to reflect the same groupings.’⁴⁶ While this was not taken

up last quinquennium, the strength of support during the 2015 consultation, and other factors (discussed later in this section), indicate it should now be revisited and adopted.

The division, and potentially union, headquarters could profitably be restructured with a small number of teams, rather than multiple individuals, responsible for the ‘ministries’ departments, which would be grouped by function (tentatively, disciple-making and relational ministries); all team members would *collectively* be responsible/accountable for *all* ‘departments’ within the group, rather than each department the responsibility of just one individual. The goal is not so much to reduce staffing and budgets, as to enable greater responsiveness and flexibility in the important work of departments, as well as streamlining management and membership of committees. Some ‘service’ departments, that is, those which are identified as resourcing all other departments and headquarters entities, would continue to function as autonomous departments, rather than being grouped into teams.

Such greater flexibility is necessary given the limited resources of talent (discussed under 3, above). It is likely that, at least at some levels of church structure, there could be a lack of people with appropriate experience and talents to staff particular departments; moving to a team-ministry-based approach, especially at the conference/mission and union levels, would grow expertise and experience across departmental spheres, and thus grow collective talent pools, thereby also contributing to leadership development (strategic emphasis no. 3, above).

Further, in light of the emphasis on iCOR and its integrated approach, there is a concomitant need for integration across traditional departmental boundaries; this points to a need for team-based leadership in the ministries to which iCOR is most applicable, including Children’s, Family, Women’s, and Youth Ministries. Relevant here are the recent Youth Alive projects in Albania and Lithuania, though these initiatives need to be evaluated to establish lesson learnt. Also highly relevant is the Mission Think-Tank’s specific recommendation to ‘intentionally collaborat[e] around strategic plans and processes *instead* of departments.’⁷⁴⁷ A disciple-making leadership team would logically include not only departments as such, but also the Ministerial Association, because of its role in the assessment and thus in the calling and placement of pastors with local disciple-making teams, as well as for their ‘apprenticeship’ and support, mentoring, and professional and spiritual development.

In sum, this reorganisation and restructuring of leadership functions is in fact necessary if we are to deliver the strategic emphases already outlined above.

Key Recommendations

- a) Restructure the division headquarters with a small number of teams members of which will *collectively*, rather than multiple individuals, *solely*, have responsibility for departments, which will be grouped by function.
- b) Service departments to continue to function separately, operating ‘horizontally.’
- c) Communications and Media (as per strategic emphasis no. 6, recommendation f.) would definitely be a service department.
- d) Unions to explore whether the implementation of a team approach could profitably be extended to their headquarters and, where applicable, conferences/missions.

9) Training of Pastors and Other Workers

Historically the answer to virtually all the division's needs for worker training was Newbold College. In the coming quinquennium, while Newbold College of Higher Education (NCHE) will continue to be crucial, training of workers will be diversified.

i) NCHE

The college is currently undergoing a reorientation.⁴⁸ This process is ongoing, with a proposed new curriculum continuing to be revised, and has in some respects (inevitably) been painful, but the general direction is becoming clear.

Newbold's organisational structure, academic curriculum, and general approach all needed to shift to reflect the realities of the 21st-century Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe. Long-standing and serious problems made the college's operating model, successful as it had been in the late 20th century, no longer feasible. Yet at the same time, for a number of years, Newbold has only partially been providing what the Church needs from its flagship institution.⁴⁹ There has been, then, both a necessity and an opportunity: not only to shift Newbold's operating model but also to revisit its *raison d'être*.

The reorientation is aligning Newbold's goals, and consequently its curriculum, staffing, and structure, more closely with those of the TED and its 14 unions and attached fields, which fund it—and which, in turn, it is expected to support and serve. What the board (many of whose members are Newbold alumni and retain great affection for it) desire from this reorientation is that Newbold continues to flourish, but that it becomes a centre for equipping both spiritually gifted individuals (men and women alike) and worshipping groups across the TED to participate dynamically and fruitfully in ministry and mission. The board wants NCHE to be a source of ethical and effective leaders, and of committed pastors, disciple-makers, and church planters. The new Newbold will combine excellence in scholarship with training that is highly practical and mission focused. It will also reflect the diversity of the church across the division as a whole.

The reorientation is not intended to achieve savings. There will still be a need for the division and its unions to provide substantial funding to Newbold. Now, however, there is the prospect of making it truly 'fit for purpose' in the 21st-century TED and for the church's needs across the division.

ii) Pastoral Education

For a number of years,⁵⁰ there has been a growing need for pastoral education to continue beyond degree studies, or even postgraduate study. The most demanding professions in the world take for granted that learning does not stop with the attainment of a professional qualification; if highly regulated continuing education is appropriate for physicians of the body, it is even more appropriate for physicians of the soul.

The nature of the TED's territory underscores the need for pastoral professional development: the populations of countries in the TED are some of the most highly educated in the world, meaning there is a need for a well-credentialed pastorate. At the same time, the ever-increasing sociocultural complexity alluded in the discussion on

Leadership Development (strategic emphasis no. 3) means that if a pastor's training ends on graduation, it is bound to become inadequate. While serious-minded pastors have long been concerned to continue expanding their knowledge, there is an increasingly felt need for such continuing education to be systematic and mandatory.

The division wishes to meet this need. It anticipates developing an online platform to facilitate continuing education; formulating a framework of competencies (discussed under strategic emphasis no. 3, above, p. 6–8) that should be covered in continuing education; and working with Newbold College and other entities to provide courses and materials that meet these needs. The division will take a lead in making the case to pastors in its territory about the vital importance of continuing education and expects to be joined in this by unions and conferences/missions.

Unions need to initiate discussions with conference and mission Ministerial Association secretaries on how to create an environment of lifelong learning, and to support pastors in taking time for personal and professional development (in line with the world Church's KPI 8.1). Unions and conferences/missions will need to include continuing-education training events in their annual calendars and provide some financial resources for them; they will need to create and implement policies which affirm and support continuing education (e.g., sabbaticals and training in time management).

Local churches will need to be educated in the need for, and benefits of, continuing education, and about how they can support their pastor; while the conference or union of churches will take the prime role here, it will be helpful if the TED communicates clearly and decisively about the importance it attaches to continuing pastoral education.

Key Recommendations

- a) NCHE to offer BA and MA degrees but supplement them with graduate diplomas and a One Year in Mission & Service program.
- b) NCHE to emphasise delivering training related to mentoring, financial leadership, and other aspects of leadership development (strategic emphases, no. 1 and no. 7) as well as professional development/continuing education for pastors.
- c) NCHE to ensure that women are among those delivering theological education and pastoral training, and that pastoral training is relevant to the challenges that will be faced by women in ministry and leadership.⁵¹
- d) TED to develop and maintain a centralised website for continuing education units, to which unions can upload information on available courses.
- e) MINTAC to develop a framework of pastoral competencies, to be covered in education at NCHE and in continuing education.
- f) TED to develop a rationale for continuing education that can be shared with pastors, and local churches, including that training is an integral part of *disciple-making*.
- g) Unions and conferences/missions to support pastoral education by appropriate policies and with appropriate resources.
- h) Continuing education curriculum to be regularly updated in light of changing demographics in the TED.

10) Education

In light of relatively high levels of education in the TED's territory (discussed under strategic emphasis no. 3, above, p. 6), the TED recognises the need for schools and seminaries in which understanding of Adventist identity can be deepened and convictions about Adventist beliefs strengthened. The role of Adventist educational institutions in 'educating for eternity' is widely recognised around the world, but in many countries of the Trans-European Division, there is only one Adventist school, or none. There are structural and financial reasons for this that are difficult to overcome.

The TED therefore sees an urgent need for membership nurture, personal development, and deepening of spiritual commitment, within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist faith; for training in disciple-making; and preparation for mission and service. The TED has identified a number of different options, levels, timeframes, and sites at which religious education and Bible training can be offered to church members and to pastors and church leaders, and is committed to making them widely available (see Recommendations a and b). There is also an ongoing role for the 11 unions to play in facilitating further education for pastors and for elders and local church officers; these not only need to address practical problems and governance questions but also should be occasions for spiritual and theological education.

There also needs, however, to be opportunities for church members to gain a deeper understanding of issues relating to theology, spirituality, and Adventist identity. The TED will explore developing and delivering continuing education beyond its pastoral workforce, via webinars and other online delivery; it can take the form of tracked programs certified by the TED, or local unions/fields, for spiritual growth and nurture of all church members across the division.

Key Recommendations

- a) TED to co-organise a European Pastors' Council once a quinquennium, to which all TED pastors (full-time and part-time pastors, lay pastors, and Bible workers) are invited.
- b) TED and unions to work with the GC Biblical Research Institute to periodically hold Bible and Mission conferences at union level, at which current issues are addressed.
- c) All unions to regularly host union-wide ministerial meetings for educating, upgrading, equipping, and inspiring the pastoral force.
- d) All unions to periodically hold union-wide elders' meetings for educating, upgrading, equipping, and inspiring local church officers.
- e) A working group to explore developing and delivering continuing education via online platforms with formal certification of achievements.
- f) Conferences and similar events, along with any curriculum for biblical and spiritual training, to teach competencies relating to all kinds of diversity.

11) Diversity

The 22 countries of the TED reflect the global diversity and multi-cultural nature of the church. Its rich mix of cultures and languages is reflected in our church communities and how we

worship. Not only are Seventh-day Adventists in one part of the division quite different to another, but within individual unions there can be very substantial ethnic and cultural diversity. This was always present, reflecting geographical, national, and linguistic differences, but over the past 60 years, the natural diversity has been enhanced and enriched by significant waves of immigration from territories with historical ties to Europe. In the TED, ‘We celebrate the tapestry of people in our territory, whose customs, culture and understanding, though diverse, have been woven throughout the Bible and Christian history, towards an appreciation of God’s inclusive grace.’⁵²

This rich diversity offers opportunities and challenges both inside the church and as we try to reach out to the wider community. Adventism comes in many subtle flavours depending on where one is from and where one lives. Sometimes, this can result in us talking at cross purposes without realising it.

There is general agreement, in principle, that *all* members of the body of Christ should be one, regardless of national, ethnic, racial, regional, linguistic, class, cultural, economic, or gender differences. As members of the body of Christ, we need to help *each other* to embrace more fully the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, recognising *all* members as our brothers and sisters in Christ and living out our relationship with Jesus in more loving, tolerant, and gracious relationships with others. Yet this is an ideal that a variety of circumstances can make complicated, even extremely difficult in some places, to realise.

The Trans-European Division is determined to make progress towards that heavenly ideal, in two respects. *First*, available data suggests that a significantly higher proportion of females than males in church membership—between 55% and 60% are women. Yet currently the workforce does not reflect that demographic, and this is particularly true of the pastorate. The world Church, in General Conference Sessions, has set criteria for ordination and the TED, as part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, will respect those voted actions. Yet it is noteworthy that though there was little interest in the division’s territory in ordaining women for most of its history that ‘did not stop women from the countries around the Baltic and from Britain being used in ... leadership’, from the very beginning of the division.⁵³ The TED is determined to increase the number of women in ministry and leadership, a direction affirmed at its 2015 Year-end Meetings and the 2019 Mid-year Meetings;⁵⁴ this is not at odds with world-Church policy, but a continuing expression of a value that has been important throughout its 90-year history. Furthermore, it is missionally vital, both because, in 21st-century Europe, gender equality is a primary cultural value; and because with a small church, *every* member’s spiritual gifts must be utilised to the fullest, and all members deployed in ministry or service according to their gifts. As the TED’s 90th anniversary history highlighted: ‘Given the small memberships, historically, throughout the TED, if only men, or only ordained ministers, were used’ in leadership positions and ministry, ‘then Adventists would *not* have been able to follow through on the founding premise of the division: to “carry the Adventist Message to the [...] unwarned millions”.’⁵⁵ This is still the case and the TED will follow through on its existing policies and support women in ministry and leadership.

Second, in some parts of the TED, as the division publicly acknowledged in December 2019, ‘bias, ignorance, prejudice, human fears, resentments, and suspicions have affected the Church’.⁵⁶ That statement cited the British Union Conference in particular, and offered a belated apology for

the bigoted practice and prejudiced rhetoric of church leaders in the past, which inflamed a situation complicated by mutual misunderstanding.⁵⁷ But Britain has not been unique. In other unions, too, tensions have arisen between church members from immigrant communities and those of majority populations; hostility between different factions has been a long-term problem elsewhere; and in south-eastern Europe, ethnic divisions led to the division of one substantial union conference into two small unions: a situation that still applies because of ongoing tensions in wider society.

However, it is not enough to acknowledge a past history of discrimination and disharmony within the body of Christ, lest that may suggest it is somehow normative, or at any rate acceptable. It is not. And there can be no grounds for resting on laurels in light of what has been achieved in several unions. In the words of the 2019 statement: ‘We must work vigorously and intentionally to eradicate any traces of prejudice and intolerance that continue to exist.’⁵⁸ There is an ongoing need for the officers and executive committee members of the division, unions, and conferences and missions, to intentionally review policies, not least on employment, with the goal of removing the last traces of what once was conscious prejudice.

At the same time, however, there is a work to be done in making members aware of factors that complicate diversity: not least the issue of mission. For example, worship has a transcendent power to unite believers, yet all too often it divides them. In some places, there are simply different customs; but in others, members, even pastors, lack a common basis for assessing worship. In other places again, worship is associated with efforts by one racial or ethnic group to assert dominance over another. There is work to be done in challenging church leaders, pastors, and church members to become aware of their own, as well as others’, cultural biases; there is no ethnic group that cannot manifest as well as suffer from forms of prejudice, which, because of the ubiquity and significance of worship, can be especially evident in the way groups worship. What if worship is considered in the context of mission—what will make it more likely that European people will join our disciple-making movement?

The TED will create a think-tank to consider:

- i. how to create church environments in which everyone is valued, regardless of background or culture;
- ii. how we can more effectively reach out to people transitioning between cultures, especially (but not only) refugees;
- iii. what can be done to nurture and retain the second and third generations of migrant communities, who often seek to assimilate to wider culture (including its irreligious values) rather than maintaining the distinctive customs of the first generation;
- iv. how best to foster an understanding of different cultural expressions of Adventism, and an acceptance and appreciation of a variety of worship styles;
- v. what can be done, at all levels of church structure, to ensure that *all* church members, regardless of background, ethnicity, or other distinguishing features, have the opportunity to be heard; and how to build harmony within and between congregations.

Harmony cannot be reached, however, as long as there is even a suspicion that certain groups are still discriminated against on the basis of external factors, even if it is only because old structures of power, set up in a more openly prejudiced era, are maintained. As a result, in hiring staff to work at organisational headquarters and institutions, and in the way they are treated, it is not enough for leaders *not* to be racist, nationalist, or biased in other ways; church leaders and church structures need to be purposefully *anti-racist*. Leaders must take positive steps to ensure that prejudice does not creep into decision-making or hiring processes.

Research shows that often people who imagine themselves to be very open-minded and unprejudiced display unwitting bias, eliminating job applicants based on their name, the place of their birth, or address. But unconscious bias is still bias; the effect is still to pre-judge based not on a person's character or qualifications but on what they look or sound like. The church can borrow from wider society's well-established methods to increase diversity (see Recommendation d., below). Church leaders need to go the extra mile in combating all kinds of discrimination, whether on the basis of a person's gender, or the way that they look or speak.

The Book of Revelation foretells the day when 'a great multitude that no one [can] number, from all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues,' will stand 'before the throne [of God] and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"' (Rev. 7:9–10 NKJV). On that day there will be no difference: all alike, created in the image of God; all alike, saved by Christ's sacrifice.

As this prophecy illustrates, and as the extraordinary diversity of God's creation exemplifies, diversity is a divine value. It is accordingly a Value of the Trans-European Division (above, p. 2) and hence, despite the steps taken towards overcoming discrimination in its unions in recent decades, diversity is likely to remain an area of strategic emphasis for the TED for the foreseeable future, even as we look forward to that day on the sea of glass when all God's creation, together, join in a hymn of praise to the Lamb (Rev. 4).

Key Recommendations

- a) Officers and executive committees of the division, unions, and conferences/missions to thoroughly review policies to ensure there is no space for even unconscious bias.
- b) Create a think-tank to identify ways to create church environments in which diversity is prized and enabled to flourish, while preserving unity in the body of Christ; and to appropriately educate members, of *all* races, ethnicities, nationalities, etc., based on the conclusions (see above, p. 18).
- c) Hold the Diversity and Cultural Awareness Summit (originally scheduled for 2020 and postponed due to the pandemic) as soon as possible.⁵⁹
- d) Review and strengthen TED Policy AA 10 20 ('Ethical Employment Policies) in all units of denominational structure *and* institutions, and establish in them, as standard practice, so that an interview will always be granted to any applicant meeting minimum stated criteria, who is a woman, suffers disabilities, or is from an ethnic or linguistic minority.

- e) Ensure that women and ethnic minorities are well represented on executive committees at every level of church structure, in nominating committees, and institutional boards.

CONCLUSION

*I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"
Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." (Isa. 6:8 NKJV)*

Every Seventh-day Adventist living in the territory of the TED knows that we face considerable challenges. There are things we cannot change; perhaps at times a sense of helplessness takes over. We may even feel that whether we rise to the challenge, or are consumed by it, is not up to us.

Yet there are things we can do to turn around the fortunes of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the countries we live in. A number are identified above. But most important is the choice that absolutely lies in our hands: about *our* response to the challenges, and what view we take of our situation: struggling to survive, or acting together to ensure that we thrive. Our choice, in sum, is hope or fear. But as Paul writes, 'through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope'; veritably, our God is 'the God of hope', and 'by the power of the Holy Spirit [we] may abound in hope' (Rom. 15:13 ESV). Our future is up to us, if we decide that it shall be.

Today, in light of viral pandemic, economic upheaval, resurgent nationalism, and a post-Christian worldview that offers no hope for the future, truly, 'men's hearts are failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth'—and with uncertainty about what 'those things' might be (Luke 21:26 NKJV). Now, more so than for many years, is the right time to share the Adventist message of wholeness and hope in Jesus—the prophetic message of a time when 'all things, animate and inanimate,' join in 'unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, [to] declare that God is love.'⁶⁰ There is an opportunity, greater than any perhaps for decades, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As we co-operate with God's purposes and as we reorient what mission and 'evangelism' mean, we believe we will see growth the likes of which the trans-European territory has never experienced before. Christ's mission is to seek and to save the lost. He is asking us to join him in it. Let us each say, *I will*—and let us jointly decide that, empowered by the Holy Spirit, *we will succeed*.

APPENDIX

Seventh-day Adventist Church Mission Statement and Related Statements

Mission Statement*Our Mission*⁶¹

Make disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels' Messages in preparation for His soon return.

Our Method

Guided by the Bible and the Holy Spirit, Seventh-day Adventists pursue this mission through Christ-like living, communicating, discipling, teaching, healing, and serving.

Our Vision

In harmony with Bible revelation, Seventh-day Adventists see as the climax of God's plan the restoration of all His creation to full harmony with His perfect will and righteousness.

Implementation⁶²

Called by God, guided by the Bible, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Seventh-day Adventists, wherever we live in the world, devote ourselves to: Christ-like living; Christ-like communicating, Christ-like discipling, Christ-like teaching, Christ-like healing, and Christ-like service.

END NOTES

- 1 D. J. B. Trim, *A Passion for Mission* (Newbold Academic Press, 2019), p. 381.
- 2 See *General Conference Working Policy* [hereafter, GCWP], A 10, ‘Roadmap for Mission’, A 20 15, no. 3.
- 3 Annex D.i: ‘Adventist DiscipleMakers Framework Document’ (approved at TED Year-end Meetings, Nov. 2018), p. 3.
- 4 Annex A: World Church Strategic Plan, *Reach the World, 2020–2025* strategic focus, *I Will Go* (approved GC Executive Committee, Annual Council 2019).
- 5 Details and relevant resources can be accessed at (and a booklet version downloaded from) <https://iwillgo2020.org>
- 6 Approved at the division’s 2019 Year-end Meetings and further discussed at the 2020 Year-end Meetings.
- 7 See, e.g., Trim, *A Passion for Mission*, pp. 29–30.
- 8 Annex C.ii, Think Tank Report, ‘Adventist Identity, Mission and Evangelism: Foundational Building Blocks for Disciple-Making for 21st-Century Multicultural Europe in the TED for 2021–2025 and Beyond’ (March 2020; rev. Jan. 2021), p. 7.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 10, and Annex C.i., Report Summary, p. 1.
- 10 Held as a preliminary to the Division Year-end Meetings, Nov. 2017.
- 11 Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.
- 12 *I Will Go*, KPI 6.1: ‘Increased church member involvement in fellowship and service, both in the church and in the local community’.
- 13 *I Will Go*, KPIs 1.7: ‘Improved retention rates of audited membership globally’, 6.8: ‘Improved retention rates of young adults, youth, and unbaptized children [. . .]’, and 10.1: ‘Widespread adoption of approved membership software to enhance accuracy and accountability of records of local church membership’.
- 14 Annex B: TED Additional *I Will Go* KPIs, p. 3.
- 15 Trim, *A Passion for Mission*, p. 344.
- 16 See Annex I: I.i, ‘Affirming Women in Leadership’ (approved TED Year-end Meetings, Nov. 2015); Annex I.ii ‘TED Recommendations to Encourage Greater Participation of Women in Ministry and Leadership’ (approved TED Executive Committee, 20 May 2019).
- 17 *I Will Go*, KPI 10.2: ‘An orientation process for officers and executive committee members of all units of denominational structure is developed and widely implemented’.
- 18 See Annex I.ii, ‘Recommendations to Encourage Greater Participation’, fourth bullet point.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 Cf. Annex I.ii: ‘Recommendations to Encourage Greater Participation’, second bullet point.
- 21 Objective 1: ‘To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples’; see KPI 1.1: ‘Increased number of church members participating in both personal and public evangelistic outreach initiatives [. . .]’.
- 22 Objective 5: ‘To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives’; see KPIs 5.1: ‘Significant increase in numbers of church members regularly praying, studying the Bible, using the Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, reading the writings of Ellen White, and engaging in other personal devotions’ and 5.2: ‘Significant increase in numbers of church members and unbaptized children and youth regularly attending divine service and Sabbath School’. See also KPI 6.3: ‘Evidence of new members being nurtured through active discipleship programs’.
- 23 Objective 8: ‘To strengthen the discipleship role of pastors, teachers, and other frontline workers [. . .]’.
- 24 Annex D.i: ‘Adventist DiscipleMakers Framework’.
- 25 Annex D.iii: ‘Jesus—The Disciple-Maker’s Journey’.
- 26 From the discipleship ‘Mission Statement’, in ‘Adventist DiscipleMakers Framework’ (Annex D.i), p. 3.
- 27 Annex D.ii: ‘Strategic Planning Proposal’ (23 August 2019).
- 28 Annex E.
- 29 Objective 5, text in n. 22 above; objective 6: ‘To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults’; and objective 7: ‘To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview’. See KPIs 5.2 (text in n. 22 above), 6.8: ‘Improved retention rates of young

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- adults, youth, and unbaptized children [...]', 7.2: 'Youth and young adults embrace the belief (FB 22) that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, recreational use of drugs and other high-risk behaviors, and embrace church teachings (FB 23) on marriage, and demonstrate sexual purity', and 7.3: 'Increased ethical and responsible use of media platforms by students'.
- ³⁰ Annex E.ii, 'Church of Refuge (iCOR) as Join Initiative'.
- ³¹ Annex G: 'Strategic Framework 2015–2020' (St Albans, Feb. 2015), p. 10.
- ³² *I Will Go*, KPIs 5.4: 'Increased number of people using Adventist social media when studying the Bible, to learn about Ellen White and read her writings, in personal devotions, and to promote mission' and 5.8: 'Increased availability in local languages of Ellen White's writings in print, braille, and audiobooks as well as on websites, mobile devices, and social media'.
- ³³ Annex G: 'Strategic Framework 2015–2020', p. 14.
- ³⁴ *I Will Go*, KPI 9.5: that the GC have, 'and its entities [be] working toward, an integrated media plan that maximizes the potential of technology'.
- ³⁵ Annex G: 'Strategic Framework 2015–2020', p. 10.
- ³⁶ Annex F.
- ³⁷ *I Will Go*, Objective 9.
- ³⁸ Annex F: 'TED Financial Leadership Strategic Framework 2021-2025'.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, concluding point no. 1
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, point no. 3; Annex B: TED Additional *I Will Go* KPIs, p. 3.
- ⁴¹ GC Bylaws, Art. X.
- ⁴² Bylaws, Art. XI; GCWP B 10 28.
- ⁴³ GCWP B 40 45.
- ⁴⁴ GCWP B 40 40.
- ⁴⁵ GCWP B 40 45
- ⁴⁶ Annex G: 'Strategic Framework 2015–2020', p. 13.
- ⁴⁷ Annex C: C.i, Summary, p. 1 and C.ii, 'Adventist Identity, Mission and Evangelism', p. 10 (*italics supplied*).
- ⁴⁸ Annex H: 'NCHE Centre of Ministry and Mission, Revised Curriculum Draft 9' (10 Jan. 2021).
- ⁴⁹ E.g., concerns were raised about this in 2015: 'Strategic Framework 2015–2020' (Annex G), pp. 8, 20.
- ⁵⁰ This was (again) articulated in 2015: *ibid.*, p. 11.
- ⁵¹ See Annex H: NCHE Revised Curriculum Draft', p. 1 under 'Purpose'; Annex Lii: 'Recommendations to Encourage Greater Participation', third bullet point.
- ⁵² Annex I.i: 'Affirming Women in Church Leadership'.
- ⁵³ Trim, *A Passion for Mission*, p. 351.
- ⁵⁴ See Annex I: I.i, 'Affirming Women in Church Leadership'; I.ii 'Recommendations to Encourage Greater Participation'.
- ⁵⁵ Trim, *A Passion for Mission*, p. 353.
- ⁵⁶ 'Trans-European Division Acknowledges Mistakes of the Past, Seeks Ways to Move Forward', Press release, Dec. 2019: <https://ted.adventist.org/news/1544-trans-european-division-acknowledges-mistakes-of-the-past-seeks-ways-to-move-forward>
- ⁵⁷ Trim, *A Passion for Mission*, pp. 153–54, 209–14.
- ⁵⁸ Cited in n. 53.
- ⁵⁹ Annex Lii: 'Recommendations to Encourage Greater Participation'.
- ⁶⁰ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan* (Pacific Press, 1911; 1950), p. 678.
- ⁶¹ GCWP A 05.
- ⁶² See *ibid.*, A 09 10, which includes further elaboration of the six 'Christ-like' methods of implementation, omitted here.