

Secular and Postmodern Conference Statement

1. Challenges and Opportunities

We acknowledge the **challenges** of the postmodern *reaction* to modernity in the contemporary generation of Europeans who:

- perceive truth as localised, subjective and grounded in their experiential realities;
- distrust claims to universal objective knowledge and embrace plurality of interpretations;
- are open to spirituality, experimentation, belonging and seeking fulfilment;
- expect the Christian community “to live its truth”;
- value authenticity in teaching and practice as paramount.

As a group of believers with an end-time message, we see these changes as a challenge as well as an **opportunity** to become more authentic, loving, accepting, community-oriented and service-focused in order to make Adventist ministry relevant and useful to this generation of Europeans.

With the current needs in mind, we want to highlight the following six pertinent points in addressing the needs of the postmodern world:

2. Three Elements of Outreach

We renew our commitment **to live the gospel** among Europeans, engaging them deeply with incarnational love and sacrificial service by applying the following three principles of outreach:

- **Integration** – being part of and engaging in service with the local community; communicating the gospel in ways its members can understand; developing relationships that nurture trust; following a biblical process of discipleship rather than seeking immediate decisions;
- **Community** – functioning as a dynamic and accepting community which, while cherishing the values of believing and behaving according to biblical standards, prioritises relational belonging as the ultimate context for Christian growth;
- **Storytelling** – understanding the bigger questions of life by unleashing the power of storytelling in its various forms (i.e. music, visual art, drama, poetry, narrative preaching, multimedia and interactive tools).

3. Biblical Truth

We endeavour to **share biblical** values in the full depth with the contemporary digitally literate generation by encouraging the use of electronic methods of studying and presenting the scriptures inductively and interactively.

4. Creative Arts

We long to see the Church in Europe energetically engaging the **creative arts as a context for mission** that reflects the rich scope of God's own creative nature:

- Bringing the arts back into the life of the faith community as a valid and valuable component of our call to discipleship;
- Supporting those with artistic gifts so that they may flourish in their work and witness;
- Letting the arts—and especially the visual arts—serve as a hospitable environment in which we can acknowledge one another and come to know the neighbour, the stranger and God;
- Respecting cultural differences and celebrating indigenous artistic expression.
- Acknowledging that in the twenty-first century, visual artists will often express themselves digitally and that digital arts may be an effective means to attract young people Adventist churches

5. Servant Leadership

Those of us who are in Christian leadership commit to practising **vulnerability** by recognising our limitations and imperfections and accepting the **gift of accountability** within the body of Christ. We commit to leading by example, affirming that **our primary task is to empower, enable and equip church members** to witness to Christ. We commit to encouraging all Adventist church members to display tolerance, sincere openness and accountability.

6. Worship

We commit to exploring a **fresh God-centred vision of worship** that allows worshippers to have a wholistic worship experience that is participatory and missional in focus. Less leader-centred and less performance-driven worship can help transform the congregation from a group of spectators into a spiritually vibrant God-centred community.

7. Peace of Christ

We commit to spreading the **peace of Christ in our broken world**. This includes exposing, resisting, and taking action against all forms of **abuse and neglect** towards children, women, the poor, immigrants, and vulnerable people (whether by violence, exploitation, slavery and human trafficking, prostitution, gender and ethnic discrimination, commercial targeting, or wilful neglect). And as good stewards of the world God created, which the seventh-day Sabbath commemorates, we will promote and model responsible care for all creatures and for the physical environment.