Tears welled up in British Union Conference President, Ian Sweeney's eyes, after the first report from the Nominating Committee was returned at the 61st North England Conference Session, held at the Cheltenham Race Course, from 13-14 September. The report, and subsequent vote, established that older brother, Pastor Cyril Sweeney, would not be returning as President of the NEC for the next four years.

However, the tears were not of sadness, but of brotherly love. They continued as Ian spoke of Cyril's work for the NEC in his short commission as President. He was elected to the role shortly after Ian's own appointment from NEC President to BUC President on 3 July, 2011. Elected as president for the next term is Pastor Lorance Johnson, who will be supported by newly elected John Ferguson as Executive Secretary, and re-elected Treasurer, Rejoice Kampengele.

Pastor Johnson was on holiday in Jamaica when he received the message about the Nominating Committee's decision to put him forward for the Presidential role. His response by text was partially read to the delegation by Ian Sweeney, ‘Indeed all of yesterday afternoon and until the early hours I have been restless and praying…it is truly only God's will June and I seek, we will move forward…let the will of God be done'.

Beginning his ministerial career in the NEC, Pastor Johnson interned at Camp Hill Church, was Chaplain at the Harper Bell School and continued on to pastor churches such as Handsworth and Nottingham. In 2006, he left to become part of the Adventist Frontier Missions programme, returning to the UK in 2009 where he currently serves in the Aberdeen district of churches with his wife, June, and three children Darren, Daniel and Rebecca.
Making up the other two thirds of the Administration team is Pastor John Ferguson, until today, pastor of the Grantham church and returning Treasurer, Rejoice Kampengele, who has served one full term in the office since 2008. Rejoice admitted, "Although it's a spiritually fulfilling experience working at the Conference, it's also a challenge and I relish a challenge; so I'm looking forward to the next four years of challenges and building on what we have started."

These decisions came at quite a late stage in the process, almost halfway through the second day of proceedings. Immediately after, the delegation also voted and approved directors of Personal Ministries, Church Planting, Church Growth, Youth and Ministerial Association. By the close of business at 6.27pm, on Friday 14 September, not one name had been referred back to the Nominating Committee for discussion and the final, voted list of directors is as follows:

- Children's Ministries - Pastor Patricia Douglas (newly elected)
- Church Planting & Church Growth – Pastor Michael Simpson (re-elected)
- Communication – Pastor Peter Jeynes (newly elected)
- Community Services – Mrs Grace Walsh (re-elected)
- Family Ministries – Pastor Paul Liburd (newly elected)
- Health Ministries – Mrs Grace Walsh (re-elected)
- Personal Ministries – Pastor Michael Simpson (re-elected)
- Ministerial Association – Pastor Richard Jackson (re-elected)
- Sabbath School – Miss Beulah Plunkett (re-elected)
- Stewardship – Pastor Curtis Murphy (re-elected)
- Women's Ministries – Mrs Geraldine Farmer (re-elected)
- Youth – Pastor Adam Ramdin (newly elected, previously Dir. of PEACE)
- Assistant Youth & Pathfinders – Pastor Alan Hush (newly elected, previously Youth Dir.)

Surprisingly, the most debated topic of the Session was a proposed amendment to the NEC Constitution, late on Friday afternoon. The Constitution Committee, whose duty is to scrutinise any proposed changes to this Constitution, had recommend that Article 6, Section (b), which deals with Regular Delegates at Session, include a point about capping the number of Regular Delegates at 350, just short of the 374 attending this year. The arguments against included the effects of membership growth and church expansion and the possibility that, if capped, delegate numbers would no longer represent a growing church. The final decision came down to a vote resulting in 91 'for' and 87 'against', which sent the proposal back to the Constitutional Committee. Ironically, it was a vote that could leave one wondering where the other delegates were whose places were being fought for!

However, this thread of contention ran throughout the Session, with even the first point of order, the allocating of time to various reports, being challenged. Pastor Garry Gordon argued that a larger allotment of time for reports and questions should be allowed to correspond with the larger expenditure of both the Youth and Church Planting departments. A motion in that vein was then approved by the delegation, allowing a deeper presentation and discussion for both departments.

More discussion followed during Director Jeff Nicholson's Communication section. Mr Hines, from Bulwell, Nottingham, commented on media stating, 'When I want to know about a company, I look at their website. The way a website is run shows me how good things are. Are there any reasons why we can't make ours up-to-date?' Jeff replied saying there was no reason it can't be kept current, as there are ways for churches to update and send their events in. He also added that NEC departments do 'try desperately hard to get their events out there'.

Nonetheless, some departments, such as Geraldine Farmer's Women's Ministries, sailed through their reports. Finding no one coming forward at the end, Pastor Cyril Sweeney commented, "Geraldine's done an excellent job, there are no questions!"
Fortunately, lunch was provided each day, which created an escape during the lunch break between business sessions. Unfortunately, on the first day, this resting time actually turned out to be a test of perseverance, physical fitness and mental abilities as around 400 people exited the Conference Centre to find that their lunch was a half-hour walk away! Delegates and visitors were led throughout residential neighbourhoods, along country roads and through an expansive field before the smell of food wafted towards them. Blazing along the trail were Paul and Heather Haworth. Managing to overtake many hungry wanderers, Heather commented, "At least it's good exercise for us all!"

Later that day, Family Ministries Director, Geraldine Farmer, spoke on the types of marriage enrichment days and retreats the department has been able to coordinate. She enthused, 'These were well attended and indicate the need we have to give our couples a place to go where they can pay attention to their special relationships.' In response to this, one question was raised by delegate Leonard Haye on the topic of divorce and remarriage. He asked, "What plans do we have in place to address this 'cancer' which is spreading throughout our church?" The answer was two-fold as Geraldine asserted that this was one of the areas that the new administration would have to take seriously and BUC counterpart, Heather Howarth commented that the BUC has taken this issue on board nationally and that there truly is a need to understand what marriage commitment is about.

One of the first reports of the Session was that of Treasurer, Rejoice Kampengele. He opened by telling the delegation that, in 2011, £5,161,661 was received in tithes and during the previous term £19.2m was collected into 'the storehouse'. But delegate Icilda Mardner wanted a definitive answer. Stepping up to the microphone, she questioned plainly, "I want to know, are we in the black or in the red?" As well as a few laughs, this brought a serious answer from the Treasurer as he described how the Conference, while technically in the 'black', is trying to rebuild their general reserves.

Michael Simpson, in Personal Ministries, Adam Ramdin, Director of PEACE (Practical Evangelism and Adventist Christian Education) and Alan Hush, each spoke of how their outreach has been making an unprecedented impact. Pastor Simpson spoke on how we can bring training to the membership, as opposed to getting members to come to retreats. He stated that 700 people were trained over one weekend session as opposed to the 70 or 80 people that would go to a NEC wide retreat. Pastor Ramdin also spoke of training the laity, commenting on the PEACE goal of "reaching the reached and the unreached" and Pastor Hush gave a thoughtful answer to delegate Everton Haslam who asked, "What can I do to reach those less outgoing in my small church? Hush's response concluded, "The first connection is through the pastor, then the Youth department, then the parent, then lastly through the website. That's the form of connection. I like to say to the small churches, I would do a special package to try and bring those young people to an event so that they become involved."

While Health Ministries, Community Services, Sabbath School and Music presentations went smoothly, one of the most impacting topics was when, wearing his Personal Ministries hat, Michael Simpson asserted that, because of the numbers of young men moving from churches in the North to the Islamic faith, he would like to see a sponsor allocated to Adventist Muslim Relations, if not a director, to ensure there is some support for these challenges in the North.

Near to the close of business on Friday afternoon, the Nominating Committee appeared with the names chosen to serve on the Executive Committee; the individuals that would carry on the business that was started at Session over the next four years. The names voted and approved are listed as follows; Lorance Johnson, John Ferguson, Rejoice Kampengele, P. Liburd, V. Marshal, G. Kumi, J.

A fitting subject to coincide with the theme of the Session, Dr Bertil Wiklander, Trans-European Division President, spoke on how we each are 'Citizens of God's Kingdom'. "There is a part for all of us to do in God's mission." he said. "If we look at the whole of the book of Revelation, God has one purpose. God's mission is not just to create a new heaven and new earth. Ellen G White says, 'The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men.' Let us remember this as we leave here."

SEC STATEMENT ON JOHN LOUGHBOROUGH SCHOOL

Following reports in the local London Press this week and consultations with church members and friends of the John Loughborough School in the London area the South England Conference issued the following statement on John Loughborough School on Friday, 14 September 2012:

The South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is part of a global church fraternity that is known for its commitment to education, and operating schools around the world. The Adventist Church aspires to offer quality education to individuals of all cultures, ethnicity, backgrounds and faiths.

The South England Conference has worked tirelessly alongside the local authority to raise the level of teaching, learning and attainment at John Loughborough School. Regrettably the school has been underperforming for some time and has come to the attention of the Local Authority and Central Government. As a church we firmly believe that every child matters and have seen positive signs of improvement in teaching and learning in the past year.

The South England Conference is confident that we will be able to see standards raised. To this effect we are seeking Academy status for the School, where we will aim to offer the very best in education through quality management and teaching.

DECLINE AND FALL OF JUNK DNA  [John C Walton]

Recent startling developments are shaking up the bitter war secular materialists have been waging against religion. It's now over a decade since scientists first charted the entire human genome. Their maps confirmed that only 2% of the DNA sequences in the genome were actually used in making cell protein components. The rest seemed inert and insignificant and was dubbed "junk DNA". For years evolutionary biologists including Jerry Coyne, Richard Dawkins, PZ Meyers and Kenneth Miller have been claiming this junk DNA is powerful evidence of our evolutionary history. They had predicted that genomes would be full of silenced, dead or fossil genes that were once useful but that had become vestigial as evolution progressed. They trumpeted the finding of junk DNA as irrefutable proof of our descent from common ancestor species. What is more, critics used it as a telling objection to design. Why would a designer fill our chromosomes with so much useless and redundant material? Creationists and intelligent design (ID) scientists on the other hand predicted that all the DNA in genomes would play useful cellular roles.

The ENCODE project (Encyclopedia of DNA Elements), a US public research consortium, has been analysing this vast "junk DNA" area of the genome. This month the team released its initial results in a set of 30 papers published in the prestigious journals Nature, Genome Biology, and Genome Research. To the amazement of many evolutionary biologists, these articles report that at least 80% of noncoding DNA in the human genome is biologically active, and fulfils many crucial roles, rather than
being merely "junk" as once believed. The articles also express the view that the remaining 20% is probably not junk either. The BBC website quotes Dr Ewan Birney, of the European Bioinformatics Institute in Cambridge, who led the analysis, as saying "It's clear from this research that a far bigger part of the genome is biologically active than was previously thought." He added, "The term junk DNA must now be junked."

This is a stunning vindication of what creationists and IDers have been saying about the human genome. Recent books including Jonathan Wells' "The Myth of Junk DNA" (Discovery Institute Press, Seattle, 2011) and Brian Ball's "In the Beginning" (Pacific Press, Nampa, 2012) summarise the ID viewpoint which is so clearly upheld. As has happened so often in the past, evolutionary icons have turned out, on close inspection, to be terminally flawed. It is good to see one evolutionary scenario exposed for the tabloid science it really is – just ideologically inspired propaganda. Evolutionists' claims for DNA junk, turned out to be ideological bunk! This atheist icon just melted away, like a Dali clock on a sunny day! Of course the atheist bloggers are already regrouping and we confidently expect that they will quickly be claiming that the ENCODE results are just what evolution predicts!

DECLARE YOUR INDEPENDENCE  [Chiswick Communication Department]

Red, black, white, yellow and green – these were the colours that filled Chiswick Adventist church on Sabbath, 18 August. It was a lovely day that turned out to be the hottest day of the year. It was also the day that Chiswick celebrated the 50th anniversary of independence for the beautiful islands of Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica. The church was filled to capacity, some standing on the outside as it was just too hot.

We were blessed to have a number of special people at the service. Not only our members, regular visitors, friends and family but also the High Commissioners of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. SEC Conference President, Pastor Sam Davis, preached, reminding us that deep down every one of us has an innate desire to be free. Countries want independence and freedom from the dominance of a foreign power or force. But our biggest desire for freedom should be to be free from the shackles of sin. "We cannot be free from sin by ourselves – but in Christ we can walk tall. Today we declare our independence through Christ," he stated.

Also joining us that day was Louanne Sampson and the steel orchestra of St Michael and All Angels. They added a truly Caribbean flavour to the day with the sound of the steel pans. The brollies were out in the afternoon. Not because it rained, but because it was a very hot day and being in the shade was a premium. We were thankful for the weather as we had planned to have praise time in the courtyard, of course with a Caribbean flavour; and that's what we had.

Led by the steel orchestra we sang along to whatever they played. We were joined by our neighbours and a couple who were passing but decided to sit down and enjoyed the whole programme. Everyone enjoyed the sun, the music and the blessings from God. Even when there was a temporary hiccup with the PA, the words of the chorus "It's amazing what praises can do" seemed to solve the issue. Musical items were also provided by Godfrun Moore, Diadem and our own Chiswick Gospel Choir.

LATEST MESSENGER ONLINE

The 14 September edition of MESSENGER, the official journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is now available online and at a church near you. Find out about LIGHT FM, the radio ministry of the South England
Conference. Enjoy reports from the European Pastors' Conference, discover the power of prayer and friendship, and learn about the greatest Olympian – along with all the regular news, columns and editorial.

**NO BUC NEWS NEXT WEEK**

There will be no BUC News next week due to the marriage of the editor’s daughter! Our congratulations go to Amy Hulbert and John Ainsworth. The next regular edition will be published on Friday, 28 September. Please keep sending in your stories as normal.

**PROGRAMMES TO WATCH THIS WEEK**

Here are some programme highlights for the coming week:

On Revelation TV (Sky 581 or Freesat 692): FaithTalks: Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist and guests discuss, "The problem of evil", Sunday lunchtime, 16 September, 1:00 pm (repeat programme from 13 September). Next week, Thursday 20 September and Sunday 23 September, the subject is, "Is Science Anti-Christian?".  

On Hope TV you can watch a wide variety of programmes on the satellite and website. Next week's schedule includes the following UK produced programmes among its much larger international output:

Friday 14 September: 8:00 pm: Jim Cunningham – Why education is so important,  
8:30 pm: Faith Talks: "Teens and Faith",  
Midnight: Jim Cunningham  
Sabbath 15 September: 9:00 am & 7:00 pm: Jim Cunningham,  
7:30 pm: Faith Talks: "Teens and Faith"  
Monday 17 September: 12:30 pm: Ron Clemow – From fear to God,  
9:30 pm: Viewpoint: What is truth?  
Wednesday 19 September: 8:00 am: What is truth?,  
11:00 pm: Rosemary Lethbridge – A burden for those with no church,  
Midnight: Searching for a God to love, (Humble Assurance II)  
Friday 21 September: 8:00 pm: Lynette Alcock – A young missionary adventure,  
8:30 pm: Faith Talks: "Faith and Disability",  
Midnight: Lynette Alcock  
Sabbath 22 September: 9:00 am & 7:00 pm: Lynette Alcock,  
7:30 pm: Faith Talks: "Faith and Disability"

**ERRATUM**

Last week's news incorrectly indicated that Pastor Theo Rios is working with Pastor de Nysschen on CROSS DISTRICT EVANGELISM IN EAST ANGLIA. In fact, Pastor de Nysschen is working with Pastor Rio Espulgar.

**COMING EVENTS**

'THE BETTER OPTION' SERIES. Continuing to Sabbath, 15 September. An Evangelistic Campaign at Willesden Seventh-day Adventist church, 1 Glebe Road, London, NW10 2JD. Nightly (except Thursdays), 7:00 pm and Saturday's 11:00 am and 7:00 pm on 15th. Speaker: Joseph Smith (Northern Caribbean University). Contact: Serene Allen <sgallen89@gmail.com>.
Happiness in Jesus. Continuing to Sabbath, 15 September. Come and support the 2-week Evangelistic Community Campaign at the High Wycombe Community Church (formerly Sands). Main speakers include international evangelist Pastor Mark Braithwaite and co-evangelist Pastor Moore. 7:30 pm start all nights (except Thursdays). For additional information, call 01494 539 802 or visit website - www.wycombecommunitychurch.org. Contact: WCC <info@wycombecommunitychurch.org>. Phone: 01494 539 802.

Telford Church Children's Day. Sabbath, 15 September. "Creation" Children's Day in Telford Adventist church at 11:15 am. Presenters Pastor Clyde & Sis Anette Moore, Welsh Mission Family & Children's Ministries sponsors. An interactive worship service for children of all ages. All children are welcome so bring all your friends – parents can come too. A fellowship lunch will be provided followed by an afternoon of Friends & Heroes DVDs. Contact: Anette Moore <anette.moore@yahoo.co.uk>. Phone: 01939 234785.

Youth Day at Palmers Green Church. Sabbath, 15 September. Entitled "On Eagle's Wings" this is our annual Youth Day event. Speaker: Nathaniel Peat, including the London Youth Federation team, special music, spoken word and lots more! Lunch provided. Contact: Lorraine or Susan <limbrah@yahoo.co.uk>. Phone: 07941016828.

Gospel Extra 2012. Sabbath, 15 September to Sabbath, 29 September. Why is this world in such a mess? Broken homes, loneliness, homelessness, corruption, failure, power struggles, fear, and financial crisis. Is there any hope? Yes! Come and be empowered at Gospel Extra 2012. A 2-week Evangelistic Campaign with evangelist Pastor Kirk Thomas. Sabbaths 11:00 am and 7:30 pm and weekdays at 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm (except Thursdays). Venue: Hounslow Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist church, 175 Heston Road, Hounslow, TWU5 0QU. Contact: Maureen Rock <maureenrock@hotmail.co.uk>. Phone: 07768304026.

Leadership Boot Camp: "The Mountain Within". Continues Sabbath, 15 September and 17 November. Central London church is hosting "Leadership Boot Camp: The Mountain Within" Part 3. Inspirational and practical sessions that will help you in your team building skills in everyday life and family relationships. Time: 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm with Herta von Stiegel. Two remaining session/workshops. Please contact us for further details or questions. Contact: Svetla <office@centrallondonchurch.org>. Phone: 07956196643.

Area 6D Pathfinder Rally Day. Sabbath, 15 September. Inviting all Area 6D Pathfinders and Youth to come and enjoy a Day of Fellowship and meeting your fellow club members in your area at the Little Eden Independent School, Eastcote Lane North, Northolt, Middx, UB5 4HW. Featuring: Drum display, Puppet school and much more... Afternoon programme includes the Area Bible Bowl Experience competition. This is a free ticket event. Contact us for more information: Kennedy Kundan <kkk_kennedy@hotmail.com>. Phone: 07534978222.


Roller Gospel Jam 2012. Saturday, 22 September. Fundraiser in aid of the New Life Adventist church Youth Club project. Come and roller-skate to the latest in urban Gospel music played by DJ Ministry plus surprise live PA. Starts at 7:30 pm until 11:30 pm. Food & drink on sale all night. £10.00 entry includes skate hire; knee/elbow pads plus free skating lessons. Venue: Newham Leisure Centre, 281 Prince Regent Lane, Plaistow, London, E13 8SD. Please contact Clive on 07946457108 for more info. Email <youthclub@newlifesda.org.uk>.

Sec School of Evangelism - Grand Opening. Sunday, 23 September. The South England Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries departments are launching the School of Evangelism at John Loughborough School. Course fee: £40, with a non-refundable registration fee of £10. Registration closes Friday, 7 September. Contact: Mavis Bramble
<mbramble@secadventist.org.uk>. Phone: 01923 656513. Watch the promo on YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3QT7gDF3Z0

GOSPEL HEROES SHOWCASE. Thursday, 27 September & Sunday, 30 September. A full day of gospel music singing by soloists and group acts in front of judges to try to win a pass as part of the Gospel Heroes Talent Search Showcase. All styles and forms of gospel music will be featured. Venue: Balham Adventist Church Hall, 83 Elmfield Road, Balham, London, SW17 8AD. Time: 12:00 noon to 8:00 pm, doors open at 11:00 am. Dates: 27 September and 30 September. Further details of the events please visit: http://www.herostars.co.uk/gospel-heroes-showcase/. Contact: Henshaw E Ehi <henshaw@herostars.tv>. Phone: 07831070998.

PARENTS' OPEN EVENING - STANBOROUGH SCHOOL. Thursday, 27 September. 1800 - 1900. Year 5 and Year 6 parents are welcome to visit the school and meet Headteacher and school staff. Stanborough School, Stanborough Park, WD25 9JT. Contact: Vanesa Pizzuto <vpizzuto@spsch.org>. Phone: 01923 673 268.

BUC POWER 34000. Sabbath, 29 September. On Sabbath, 29 September, the BUC in conjunction with the Conferences and Missions are asking every church, every member to set aside some time to share the good news of salvation through a day of mass literature distribution. What an opportunity for ministry! Churches are free to be creative about how they accomplish this. For FREE Focus Magazines please contact Catherine at the BUC. For ADC materials (VOP cards etc) please contact Des Rafferty at the BUC. Contact: Catherine Palmer <cpalmer@adventist.org.uk>. Phone: 01923 672251.


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SMALL ADS

SINGLE PROFESSIONAL FEMALE seeks one bedroom unfurnished flat to rent in Belvedere/Welling/South East London. Available from end of September/mid October. Please email Petula Peters at petula.peters77@googlemail.com or phone 07756249389.

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