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JLS FUTURE OPTIONS  [Terry Messenger / BUC News]

With Haringey Council holding a public consultation on the possible closure of John Loughborough Seventh-day Adventist School (VA), the South England Conference of the Adventist Church is in strong consultations to protect the interests of the children by moving the school to academy status. The Voluntary Aided school is run by the SEC under the auspices of Haringey Education Authority.

"Nobody would deny that the school has gone through a difficult phase over the past four years, both academically and financially, but with strong governance and a recently appointed head teacher we have been seeing many signs of improvement," states SEC President, Pastor Sam Davis.

The John Loughborough School was established by the SEC in 1980 as an independent, fee paying school with the objective of providing a Christian education for Seventh-day Adventists and the wider faith community. It also aimed to specifically address the poor levels of academic attainment amongst pupils of black ethnicities at that time. For the first years of its existence it fulfilled that mandate and received some critical acclaim in the academic world.

To make Adventist Education more affordable, the school moved to Grant Maintained and then Voluntary Aided status. However, in recent years the Office for Standards in Education's (Ofsted) Inspections have shown that the school has failed to consistently deliver an acceptable standard of education to its pupils. The school has been in an Ofsted category of 'concern' since February 2007, and the most recent inspection in December 2011 placed the school in 'special measures' for the second time.

It is on this basis that Haringey Council is consulting with a view to closing the school in 2013. This includes a public meeting at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, 7 November at Tottenham Green Leisure Centre, 1 Philip Road, London, N15 4JA.
Church members with positive views on Adventist Education and the future of the school are encouraged to attend the meeting. Meanwhile, Berton Samuel, Acting Chair for the Board of Governors writes that "we have considered a number of potential sponsors [for academy status] and have finally settled on one with whom we feel the future of the school can be secure. We have worked with them to ensure that our Adventist ethos is maintained and have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding which details how we will work in the future."

As a result the school and the SEC have submitted a robust proposal to the Department of Education to grant the school academy status. If successful, Haringey will immediately stop the consultation process and the school will begin a transition plan towards being an academy.

Haringey Council notes concern that only about one third of children at the school come from Adventist families. While the SEC would like this percentage to be higher, it does nevertheless note that the school has helped very many students to make positive decisions in their faith journey. Both the school and Conference leadership solicit your prayers and support as strategies are developed to help John Loughborough School succeed and develop.

More details on the Haringey Council consultation process, and an online questionnaire, can be found at http://www.haringey.gov.uk/JLS.

UNITY, COMPASSION AND MISSION AT GC ANNUAL COUNCIL  [BUC News / ANN]

If Pastor Ian Sweeney is looking tired, it is with reason. Returning from intense meetings at Seventh-day Adventist World Church Headquarters in Washington, he is now absorbing all the information received, discussed and voted during the 12 - 17 October meetings.

This includes the World Church emphasis on Mission to the Cities – with London being in the forefront for the Trans-European Division in 2013, followed by Dublin for the British Union in 2014.

An initiative by Adventist Risk Management also resonates with the British public following the recent allegations against Jimmy Savile. The Seven Campaign, aims to raise awareness about child abuse and help end it.

With 40 million children worldwide likely to be abused this year, and one in seven children will be bullied or be bullies themselves, ARM President Robert E Kyte states, "This is not just about Adventist Risk Management – we simply are the catalyst, the organization, that has chosen to help get this launched." He encouraged the Annual Council audience to "make a positive difference for children in the world today – we want to invite you individually and as your organization to be a partner in the campaign."

The major debate during the meetings was regarding the World Church response to the three Unions, two in North America and one in Europe, that have 'leapfrogged' the current study process on ordination to authorise ordination 'without regard to gender'. The meeting noted that while two of the Unions had gone ahead with ordination that was outside of that currently voted by the World Church in a General Conference Session, those ordinations would not be recognised by the larger Church.

While the debate in the 'twittersphere' and various Adventist forums has been very heated on the issue, Pastor Sweeney noted that the meeting was conducted in a spirit that was far different in tone and
tenor to that of the Adventist message boards. Members of the Annual Council voted to approve a "Statement on Church Polity, Procedures and Resolution of Disagreements in the Light of Recent Union Actions on Ministerial Ordination" with 264 in favour and 25 opposed.

The voted statement expresses disapproval of the independent actions of the Unions, appeals for all Church units "to consider thoughtfully the impact and implications of decisions" made independently of the World community, and affirms the role of women in the Church's life and ministry. The document also points toward continuing studies on the theology of ordination, the results of which are expected to be ready in 2014, ahead of the following year's 60th General Conference Session. No sanctions are applied, or suggested, in the document.

"This statement deals with Church structure and procedures. It does not address the question of ministerial ordination practices per se," the statement said. "The central issue is one of Church polity – how the Church defines its organization, governance and operations."

Pastor Sweeney reflects, "I am in accord with the viewpoint that whatever we do let's do it together." He adds that while we may not agree on every point it is still better to be working together. [Pastor Sweeney's views on the current debate are frankly expressed in a recent BUC News video report.]

We live in a complex world. It is also a world where, even though we disagree with people's lifestyles and choices, we have a responsibility to show compassion. Thus, in a debate on Wednesday, 17 October, the Church reaffirmed its stance against homosexual activity and same-sex marriage, but also softened the denomination's position statement to offer compassion toward gays and lesbians.

"The heart of what the Church says is not just about condemning sin," Pastor Sweeney states, recognising that we have perhaps been much too good at doing that in the past. "We have to be a Church that reaches out to the falling, to help lift them up."

We must recognize the need to minister with compassion to gays, said Vice President Pardon Mwansa, who chaired the policy committee that recommended the change. He told attendees, "We felt we needed to close this statement with a phrase that shows that the Church is willing to show a Christ-like compassionate spirit to those who practise homosexuality."

Other reports during the Council noted that tithe contributions come evenly from North America and other World regions, with a strengthening financial base in what were traditional Mission Fields. The Ministerial Association also launched a particular ministry for pastor's children, seeking to support the unique needs of pastoral families so their children remain churched.

Full reports, text and video, from Annual Council can be found on the Adventist News Network website.

WOMEN 'HANDMAID' FOR MINISTRY  [Peter Jeynes, NEC Communication Director]

The women attending, 'Handmaid for Ministry', a Women's Ministries programme organised by the South and North England Conferences of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, demonstrated their commitment to each other and to God's people as they prayed for Heather Haworth, long-time supporter of Women's Ministries in the UK as she lay ill in Italy. The words, "get well soon
Heather" rang out loudly. Those prayers were clearly answered as Heather is now discharged from hospital and flying back to the UK.

A Women's Ministries programme contains all of the elements of any spiritual retreat – preaching, teaching and training come to the fore. Over the weekend, 20 - 23 October, over two hundred ladies, young, younger and not quite so young heard Sharon Platt-McDonald prepare them for their Lord's Supper. The Lord's offer of salvation was described as a makeover. No surgery! Simply inner rebuilding. "Don't just let him make you over, let Him take you over."

Andrea Rashford-Hewitt, potter and pastor's wife, showed the multiple connections between a natural product, clay, and God's care for His people.

Younger ladies were not neglected. A theme of the current leaders in Women's Ministries, Geraldene Farmer in the North and Malika Bediako in the South, is a desire to help their younger siblings develop Godly lifestyles and develop as beautiful young women. A separate programme ran concurrently in another part of the Staverton Conference Centre, Northants, helped to further these aims.

Meeting the ladies at lunch and in the evening programme demonstrated the enjoyable and profitable time being experienced. 'Filiae Dei', a mentoring programme for young people was announced in the evening by Leah Sweeney and Tashana Samuels, speaking on behalf of their partners in this ministry. Amanda from Liverpool, one of the young ladies attending described that the lady leaders, "made me feel welcome and comfortable."

Sharon from Sheffield spoke of her namesake, Sharon Platt-McDonald, as a "woman with passion." Alda from Wimbledon was reminded that, "God gives strength in all situations." Kathleen from Brixton, "enjoyed the potter and the clay." Speaking of Malika's 'Last chance parenting' workshop Suvi, from Middlesbrough said that the programme, "helped me understand my daughter and hopefully improve our relationship."

On a serious note the handmaid for health workshop by BUC Health and Women's Ministries director, guided women in the foods they should eat, the exercise they should take and the lifestyles they could adopt for a more fulfilling life as a handmaid for God.

Lighter notes? The fashion show was an experience to behold. Donald McKenzie's photo shoot, raising money for the heating system at the Manchester Central church, was an entertainment in itself.

The close, a challenge to all the ladies delivered with evangelistic fervour, followed a spiritual and practical devotion as Mary Newman, with a faint South African accent endeared her younger colleagues to herself – and her picture of God.

A selection of photos from the event can be seen on the BUC Picture Gallery. See also a BUC News Video interview with Sandra Golding.
GOSPEL CONCERT FOR THE HOMELESS  [Roman Šmejkal]

The charity efforts of a small church plant in Long Eaton will make a significant difference for the homeless in this Derbyshire town.

The group raised £1,307 for the homeless through a benefit gospel concert held at Trent College on Saturday, 29 September 2012. The audience was astonished when the total donated by more than 160 people in attendance, was revealed by Madam Mayor, Jennifer Hulls, and Kevin Curtis, the project manager of Canaan Trust, a charity rebuilding people's lives in the town. Kevin reminded the audience that, "No one chooses to be homeless but it can be the fate that awaits anyone."

Millicent Richards, a Long Eaton resident remarked, "We need more of these concerts happening in Long Eaton." Local pastor, Roman Šmejkal from the Seventh-day Adventist church thanked all who came and contributed so generously. 'Palmers and Friends' the main act of the concert, performed Gospel songs of hope and encouragement.

Church members bore all the expenses of the evening, ensuring that every single penny raised went to the homeless charity.

DECIPHERING 'IDENTITY' AT EAST ANGLIA YOUTH PROGRAMME  [Katie Ramharacksingh with Derrick Mensah & Alicia Ramsay, Area 8 Youth Federation Vice-Presidents]

Even members of the public dropped in on the SEC Area 8 Youth Day of Fellowship, held at a visual arts centre, in Colchester, attracted by the singing and worship on Sabbath, 20 October, 2012.

Meeting at Firstsite, linked to London's renowned Tate Galleries, the young people focused on the theme, 'Identity'. People attended from all over Area 8, which spans Cambridge, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, to fellowship with like-minded youth. Pastor Dejan Stojkovic, South England Conference Teens director, spoke about how everyone should thirst for Jesus as He is the only one that can fill the void in our hearts.

Organised by the Area's Youth Federation, the day was interactive, engaging the young people from start to finish. The morning Bible study section split everyone up allowing each group to discuss difficult situations that could affect their identities. Obstacles raised included alcohol addictions, trouble with home life, family problems and negative perceptions of personal image. These were brought together by studying similar examples in the Bible.

Still centred on the day's topic, there was an interactive talk intended to discover the characteristics of each individual's identity; an element many found beneficial in starting to find out more about themselves. This was followed by "words of wisdom", in Pastor Stojkovic's sermonette, before the organisers delved into a slightly competitive Bible quiz. The day ended with games and activities providing all the young people an opportunity to meet and converse with those from other churches within the Area.
The whole day was filled with singing, praise and special musical items that had music reverberating around the venue and site. With the reverberation outside and the jubilation inside, at such a public place as Firstsite, members of the community were interested to see what was happening. Some came to the doors to see for themselves with a number feeling comfortable enough to join in straight away!

BUILDING BRIDGES IN CENTRAL LONDON  [Nancy Josee Ciakudia]

Just as Jesus came to build a bridge between heaven and earth so that all that believe in Him may enter eternal life, Central London church held two events last weekend to encourage more people to take part in building positive bridges.

On Friday, 19 October the main body of the church was transformed into a café where people from varied backgrounds and experiences gathered to sing, share scripture, and build bridges through individual interactions with each other.

Eirik Kristiansen, a visitor from Sweden, expressed that he found the event very successful. He said, "I have never taken part in anything like this before, this event gave me a lot of peace. I do not come from a Christian background but had a very nice experience tonight."

The following evening the church family joined together to celebrate the cultural diversity within the congregation. This included musical performances, fact sharing and free food from the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Africa and America.

Hosting the event, Francois Robinson expressed the importance of different cultures mixing together because there will be unity in heaven. Owen Smith, another visitor to the church stated: "Yes there may be many nations and many cultures but there is only one God."

This event was a brilliant demonstration of our ability to follow the example set by Christ.

PASTOR PAUL CLEE RETIRES  [June Coombs]

This weekend sees Pastor Paul Clee saying goodbye to his colleagues and congregation at Stanborough Park church as he begins a well-deserved retirement following a 41-year ecclesiastical career. Reviewing details of his church service resembles a denominational version of 'Pass the Parcel' as he moved from one area of administration to another, covering most church departments in the process.

A proud Yorkshireman by birth, of whom it can be said he never let an opportunity slip to extol the virtues of his native county to his listeners, Paul graduated from Newbold College in 1971. His first appointment was with Pastor Jim Huzzey at Aberdaron Youth Camp (with all his worldly possessions in one tent) and from this
lowly start he worked his way across the North British Conference, the Welsh Mission and Trans-European Division finishing his career, which covered almost every church department, with a two-year period as Senior Pastor at Stanborough Park church, Watford.

From Aberdaron he was passed to Camp Hill, Birmingham (1 year) and then on to Leeds in his native Yorkshire (2 years); the first year working alongside Pastor Paddy Boyle, from whom he clearly learned the value of injecting a little humour into services, and the second as Youth director in a team ministry experiment. From here he was sent to Coventry for six years during which time he recovered successfully from a bout of meningitis.

Greater things beckoned; he was passed back to Wales to become President of the Welsh Mission (12 years). From here he was translated to work at the Trans-European Division in St Albans (10 years) where, for the first half, he led the Personal Ministries, Sabbath School and Health departments and, for the second, Field Secretary with additional responsibilities for Health and Communication.

However, the last layer of wrapping was finally reached two years ago when, as befits somebody approaching pensionable age, Paul's final move was to become Senior Pastor at a church just a gentle stroll from his home in an adjacent street adjoining the verdant pastures of Stanborough Park. Nonetheless a demanding role and he expresses much gratitude to his wife Barbara who, as he says, "came out of retirement from Stanborough Primary School to be my invaluable helper, visitor and aide."

Whilst retirement beckons it doesn't mean that Paul will be severing his ecclesiastical links entirely. In addition to spending more time on his hobby of photography and with his four grandchildren, he will remain on the local preaching circuit and will draw on his experience developing health and other outreach activities to help smaller churches.

For more on the life of Pastor Clee enjoy a humorous but moving episode of the Hope Channel Series, 'In Conversation'.

LATEST MESSENGER ONLINE

'Try listening to atheists' shouts the issues page of the 26 October 2012 MESSENGER, Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland. And when you have read and digested the sharp information there, try learning about 'Natural pain relief', becoming a veteran, or find out what 'Norman needed to know...'. Pick up a copy from a church near you or read it
now online.

BUC WEBSITE UPGRADE

The BUC website is gradually being moved to a new server to facilitate a new, better website that is currently under construction. The move has caused some disruption of service for which we apologise.

PROGRAMMES TO WATCH THIS WEEK

Here are some programme highlights for the coming week:

On Revelation TV (Sky 581 or Freesat 692):

**The Journey**: In part 3, Victor Hulbert discovers more than one kind of god – and more than one way to worship him. **"What kind of God?"** Thursday, 25 October, 8:30 pm repeated Sunday lunchtime, 1 pm. Next week: "Why did Jesus have to die?"

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 26 October: 8:00 pm: **Tom Pignon** – A heart for the helpless, 8:30 pm: Faith Talks: "Why is Christianity so divisive?", Midnight: Tom Pignon

Sabbath 27 October: 9:00 am & 7:00 pm: Tom Pignon, 7:30 pm: Faith Talks: "Why is Christianity so divisive?"

Monday 29 October: 12:30 pm: In Conversation, **Tim Standish** – Liberated by Intelligent Design, 9:30 pm: Viewpoint: End of Life Choices

Wednesday 31 October: 8:00 am: End of Life Choices, 11:00 pm: In Conversation, **Martin Anthony** – Ministry made the man

Friday 2 November: 8:00 pm: The Journey pt 1: **The Tunnel**, 8:30 pm: Searching for a God to Love pt 1: **The Centre of Existence**, Midnight: The Tunnel

Sabbath 3 November: 9:00 am & 7:00 pm: The Tunnel, 7:30 pm: The Centre of Existence

COMING EVENTS

For a full listing of Coming Events please visit [www.adventistevents.org.uk](http://www.adventistevents.org.uk)

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