Some time ago I drove 100 miles to preach in a large Adventist church. We checked the mileage and route beforehand, calculated the time required to get there, and left on schedule.

The trip was uneventful and we arrived with time to spare, parked next to the only other car in the spacious parking lot, and entered the impressive building well before the start of Sabbath School.

There were a few people in the foyer and they welcomed us warmly.

One hundred and ninety-four vacant seats . . .

We then slipped quietly through some large doors and took our places in the impressive 200-seat sanctuary. But – when the superintendent welcomed us a few minutes later – 194 of those seats were still vacant!

Nothing could hide his embarrassment – and I can't help wondering how Jesus must have felt.

Oh, don’t get me wrong. Throughout the Sabbath School people kept arriving, even during the lesson study. They came in ones, in twos, even in noisy family groups – irritatingly announced by the incessant opening and closing of those large sanctuary doors.

Where are the others?
The theme and lesson were about soul-winning, and the superintendent boldly asked this question in closing: ‘What can we do to make our church more appealing to the unchurched – to visitors?’

His words were scarcely cold, when someone blurted out: ‘Be on time for Sabbath School!’

This was grist for his mill, and he bounced back with this anecdote.

‘Some time ago I invited a work colleague to this church for a special programme. He agreed to come and, true to his word, was here on time for Sabbath School. But we weren’t! Just like this morning, there were hardly any of us here when things started. Do you know what his comment to me was: “If this programme is so important, where are the others?” He hasn’t been back!’

Now readers, that is the fundamental question: ‘If this programme is so important, where are the others?’

I don’t know where they are . . . or why they are so ‘faithfully late’. But Jesus does, and I hope He won’t make the ‘mistake’ of coming back on a Sabbath morning!

*One of the senior members gave me the seat estimate and I believe he was right.
**Enhancing Health**

**Golden eight — part 7**

**Water**

Known as the ‘elixir of life’, water has for centuries been hailed for its therapeutic properties.

Advocating the beneficial use of water, E. G. White states: “In health and in sickness, pure water is one of heaven’s choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system and assists nature to resist disease.”


In his book *Hydro-Thyro: The Science of Curing by Water*, Dr R. Lincoln Graham M.D repudiates the beneficial elements of water.

Commenting on the general trend to underestimate its value, the author wrote: “Do not forget that they are God’s work in progress . . . and as prone to sad and silly failures as we are. Celebrate them in ways to affirm their egos, but not inflate them. Let them sense your growing pride in what they are becoming . . . especially on those days when they feel fragile or frightened by life.

Try to give each child a daily preview of his or her portrait – not as a book!

Recognise each of our children as a unique, living masterpiece.

Ministries leader, decided to put a ‘water challenge’ to the members of Chiswick Church. The task: to cut out all fizzy drinks and box drinks and replace those beverages with water for one month. Participants were to have no less than eight 500ml glasses of water per day, or the equivalent of 1.5 litres. The option of some freshly squeezed fruit juices for those who found the sole use of water difficult was allowed.

At the end of four weeks an evaluation was undertaken to ascertain the impact of the water challenge. The results were remarkable. Of the participants who took part, the following outcomes were reported:

- Improved concentration
- Consipation replaced with free bowel movements
- Alleviated headaches
- Lower back pain disappeared
- Clearer skin problems (even blemishes that had not previously improved with medicated creams)
- Enhanced sleep as quality improved and quantity increased
- Weight loss (where previously individuals were unable to shift excess weight)

Individually, our requirements for water may differ according to our body weight, ambient temperature, dietary practice and exercise level as well as age and gender.

In the next few issues, we will address some of the common debates around water usage in relation to quantity, water types – their benefits and risks – and a detailed look at the therapeutic use of water.

Good health!

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**Rachel weeps . . .**

On Friday 25 May, at around 1pm local time, Syrian soldiers opened fire on a protest in the village of Tallud, Homs Province. The midday Muslim prayers were scarcely over when the shooting and shelling began.

When UN observers reached the scene some hours later they ‘confirmed that at least 108 people were killed, including 49 children and 34 women. Some were killed by shell fire, but the majority’ had been ‘shot or stabbed at close range.’

I first picked up the report on Sky News – but it was what I saw online that tore my heart out. All life is sacred. Each death is a tragedy. But the callous slaughter of forty-nine innocent children, mostly below the age of 10, is utterly repugnant!

She lost ten . . .

One of the Tallud mourners was an old woman who lost ‘three grandsons, three granddaughters, [a] sister-in-law, daughter-in-law and cousin’ in the space of three blood-soaked minutes.

What memories will haunt her sunset years? Can you quantify the emotional impact of that loss? I can’t! But somehow I hear the echo of her tortured cries, as she kneels among them searching vainly for a flicker of life.

And perhaps this is what the prophet heard too . . . before he wrote: ‘This is what the LORD says: “A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.”’ (Jeremiah 31:15, 16, NIV 1984.)

Matthew applied this prophecy to Herod’s slaughter of innocent boys in Bethlehem:

“When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.” (Matthew 2:16, 17, NIV 1984.)

But it could just as easily be applied to countless other cruel events that have mimicked its savagery since then – including those in Syria today!

Rachel still weeps . . .

She weeps from Syria’s hillsides; her wailing waves across the deserts of Dafur; her stooped shoulders shake as she listens to Anders Behring Breivik in an Oslo court; and she sobbs while Dowayne (13), Jade (10), John (9), Jack (7), Jesse (6) and Jayden (5) are carried to a Derby coroner’s van. Rachel has a thousand tear-stained faces – and lives in many sad and ghastly places.

Children don’t only ‘die’ by the blade or the bullet. Rachel also weeps for the millions who ‘suffer to live’ – those who lose their lives incrementally, bit by bit, having it stolen by parental neglect or blatant abuse.

What is neglect?

According to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) this is the definition: ‘Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development.’

The latest statistics from the same source (April 2012), indicate that neglect ‘is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a child protection plan or on a child protection register in the UK.’ But those stats become something for Rachel to weep about when you translate them into faces: Almost one in 10 young adults (9%) had been severely neglected by parents or guardians during childhood.

Almost one in ten!

Never mind the politicians, the civil servants, the bankers or Rupert Murdoch – leave them alone for a bit. We should chastise ourselves for this national disgrace! Yes, I can guess what a few of our readers will say: ‘My Editor, it’s the people of “the world” who made those statistics. Not us!’

Well, to anyone who thinks that, let me say that I have worn the cloth long enough to know that some ‘saints’ practise what they would never openly preach! Abuse is also a problem within our Church.

So, while Rachel weeps, what can we do to change things? These are my simple suggestions, given humbly, because I have notched up a few failures too:

Pray this prayer daily, as often as required: ‘Lord, please forgive my past parenting failures, and help me become the most positive parent I possibly can.’

**Rachel still weeps, . . .**

But she never weeps alone . . . the cumulative pain of her sadness, amplified by His capacity to feel it as only He can, means that Rachel never weeps alone. God sobs with her!

Let them see their emerging beauty and help them visualise the unique quality of their finished product – especially on those days when they feel fragile or frightened by life.

Rachel weeps . . .

Go to: http://adventistwebministries-org-uk.adventist.eu/megapixels

*English Messenger*
Come to the fair
by Anita Marshall

Many years ago, October was always the month that lit up my sky at night. Why? Because of Hull Fair. Growing up, I used to love the fair, which was never known simply as ‘the fair’, but always Hull Fair, as if it were our own exclusive fair. Until I was ten or eleven years old, I just accepted that it appeared magically in the second week of October, sprawled itself over the 14-acre fairground, completely filled the longest street in Hull, and then vanished a week later as quickly as it had come. It never occurred to me to wonder what those magical people did for the other 51 weeks of the year! I was simply fascinated by it.

Why are we fascinated by fairs? Maybe you don’t bother with such things today, but as a child I loved the fair. In those far-off days we usually went without holidays, but to go without a visit to the fair was unthinkable! Was it the sheer abandon of being whipped, whipped, or whisked through the air at a mighty rate of knots on one of those fabulous rides; screaming your head off – half out of delight, half out of real, naked fear? Was it the surrealistic food? Cockles and mussels (you didn’t get those at home!) and all tricked out in a mass of white net and sparkly bits? Or was it the thrill of winning for a change – even if the prize was only a half-dead goldfish that might not survive the journey home on the bus? I’ve come to the conclusion it was all of these things. It was being out at night – safe among so many other people enjoying themselves. When I was a kid we hardly ever saw anyone misbehaving at the fair. The worst thing we can remember was the over-enthusiasm of eight young people trying to get into a Waltzer designed to hold five, but I dare say there were worse sights later in the evening.

What was this fascination we had for the fair?

Was it all those bright lights? The freedom to make as much noise as you liked because you were surrounded by noise? The thought that you might see something you’d never seen before?

At Hull Fair several of those fourteen acres were covered with booths bearing banners proclaiming that within was the smallest women (two-and-a-half feet tall, perfectly formed, and by coincidence called Anita), the Snake Man, the Rat Woman, the five-legged sheep. My Mum and I once spent a considerable time admiring a glass-cased, eight-foot tall, two-headed giant (not alive!), and even if I wasn’t real, they deserved all the threepenny bits they took!

Was it seeing the unusual, the bizarre, even? And not, for once, turning away embarrassed, because you expected the unusual, the bizarre, at the fair. In fact you felt let down if you didn’t see it!

Was it simply ‘letting go’?

That was my biggest thrill at the fair. Being taken off terra firma and shooting through the dark but dazzling night air. Feeling it cold on your hot cheeks (not from the last breathtaking ride), and the wind in great gales of it when you felt really sick on your return to earth. And we were really young, staggering on to your next experience!

Something different. Something wonderful. Something magical. Something for a change.

The sense of fun, of adventure, was placed in us by a God who is not afraid of fun, of laughter, of sheer joy. And, let’s face it, it isn’t until we learn to ‘let ourselves go’, and not put so much weight on our own ‘ability’ that we really begin to enjoy the fun, the adventure, the wonder, the absolute difference of life as Christians.

Because he has made it fun. He has made it different. He has made it desirable. And he’s made it eternally satisfying, because we know we can’t have it by ourselves. We can only have it by means but by his presence – is a fundamental part of being a Christian.

The food – healthier than hotdogs, though not as bright as candystrips – keeps us fit to enjoy the fun of the Christian life.

The movement – the Great Advent Movement, that is, though maybe not quite as exciting as whizzing through the air at great speed – at least keeps us on his way.

And, ultimately, one day we’ll experience a real extra-terrestrial trip as Jesus draws us through the air to be at his side. And then the meteoric rides we knew as children will fade away and we’ll find a heavenly night turf and we’ll be on our way to a God-it heap, and experiences more dazzling and wonderful than we could ever imagine.

I shall always be thankful that someone said to me as a child, ‘Come to the fair’, because it gave me a taste for experiencing the excitement of the unusual, a momentary but magical loss of self-conciousness, a sense of wonder.

And I shall always be glad someone said to me as an adult, ‘Come to the Fairiest’, because from the moment I did, I’ve had the wonder of enjoying his often surrealistic creations; I’ve felt the sense of letting go and knowing God; and there has been growing within me the marvellous, exciting anticipation of a real space-ride with my Saviour, and a deep longing for the brighter lights of Heaven.

Hull Fair began in 1299, though it was a horse and cattle fair then. The second-largest in the country, Nottingham Goose Fair, is a relative newcomer, beginning in 1542. The Great Bible, published in 1539, translates ‘balm’ in Jeremiah 6:22 as ‘treacle’. Did some kind person lend a copy of this publication to the Newfield Library? If so, he or she is requested to kindly contact Mr Linda Baldwin, the assistant librarian.

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

Numbers crop up throughout the Bible – the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:9-11; Deuteronomy 5:15); the 144,000 (Revelation 7:4-8; 14:1-5); and the feeding of the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44). Jesus often used such occasions to teach his disciples, identifying the events by their numbers (Mark 8:11-21). One of the most intriguing numbers of the Bible, though, has to be 1,260.

Assuming that the phrase ‘a time and times and half a time’ means three and a half prophetic years, and that the Hebrew prophetic year had 360 days made up of twelve thirty-day months, then the 144,000 is certainly a very exciting topic! Find out more with the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary.

What was it the sheer abandon of being whipped, whipped, or whisked through the air at a mighty rate of knots on one of those fabulous rides; screaming your head off – half out of delight, half out of real, naked fear? Was it the surrealistic food? Cockles and mussels (you didn’t get those at home!) and all tricked out in a mass of white net and sparkly bits? Or was it the thrill of winning for a change – even if the prize was only a half-dead goldfish that might not survive the journey home on the bus? I’ve come to the conclusion it was all of these things. It was being out at night – safe among so many other people enjoying themselves. When I was a kid we hardly ever saw anyone misbehaving at the fair. The worst thing we can remember was the over-enthusiasm of eight young people trying to get into a Waltzer designed to hold five, but I dare say there were worse sights later in the evening.

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Hunt for the ‘treacle’ Bible

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Bible ARME camp

Dear Editor

What an extravaganza the Bible ARME (Adventist Revival Movement) School for the Endtime camp was, organised by the NEC youth department and the Sabbath School Children’s department. It was a great combination for youth and families to attend. The messages by the ARME camp team were new, refreshing and powerful, and showed us a new vibrant way to study our Bibles. We were a bit sceptical about the United Prayer Room, but gave it a go. We certainly changed our perspective on coming together to pray with, and for, each other, and we feel we were truly blessed. We believe the prayer room opened the way for people to come and give their testimonies on the final night, especially the youth. They are going to spend their hearts out about the struggles in their lives, and how the United Prayer Room had helped and healed them.

We also take our hats off to the young people who worked so hard over the five days of the camp. They and others provided tasty vegan food in the kitchens for nearly 600 people with cheerful smiles and lots of sweat on their brow. Give the young people in our church something to do and they will do it well. Thank you to all the people who worked so hard to make this a memorable event, may we have more like it.

Jack & Joy Rayne, Ministry Helps

by Anita Marshall

Why are we fascinated by fairs? Maybe you don’t bother with such things today, but as a child I loved the fair. In those far-off days we usually went without holidays, but to go without a visit to the fair was unthinkable!
Claire Lomas was now a paraplegic. This young chiropractor from Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire—a four-star equestrian ‘eventer’—was instantly doomed to life in a wheelchair.

Despite the best efforts of the staff at the Queen’s Medical Centre in Nottingham and the spinal unit at the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield, the medical verdict was clear: it was unlikely she would ever walk again.

Claire’s response was equally clear: ‘They don’t know who they’re dealing with.’

They didn’t! According to Claire: ‘There were days at a time without any physical, and they refused to do any work on my legs, telling me, “You have no use to you now.”’

So, with a display of what reporter Sadie Nicholas described as a mix of ‘resilience and sheer bloody-mindedness’, and against the advice of the consultant, she discharged herself after just two months of what was expected to be a six-month stay!

Claire wanted to keep her legs as strong and mobile as possible—she was not about to abandon hope. Claire wanted to walk again!

Then, in 2008, at a time when she needed love and support, her boyfriend of three years failed to return. They separated and she was ‘incredibly hurt’, and her confidence ‘was on the floor’.

Put yourself in her wheelchair. What would I have done at this point, were I Claire’s wheelchair? How could my courage have stood up? Would my fighting spirit have faded in the face of such adversity?

It would be too light to be totally dependent on others, even for life’s simplest activities. Basic bodily functions, personal hygiene, nourishment, exercise, turning over in bed, or getting out of bed, dressing, self-help, self-defence, drawing back the curtains... just to let the sun shine in—to need help for all this, and more—for the rest of your life. Unimaginable!

You can’t visit friends easily—and try and get visiting you. Your life partner no longer finds the relationship “tantalising”—wants to be your ‘lover’ not your ‘career’! That’s when the numbers in the world drop abruptly to zero.

Unimaginable?

You find yourself thinking about those things you’ve never—do ever, never.

A relevant hostage

But Claire Lomas is no wheelchair hostage. Like so many who live with disabilities, Claire strives to overcome hers. She is keen that everyone who has suffered a major disability, given birth to a beautiful daughter and even tried her hand at snow skiing—a series of major achievements.

Were these to be her only achievements, however, we would probably not have heard about her again. But Claire was determined to walk again!

Enter ReWalk

ReWalk, an Israeli-designed and made ‘bionic suit’ costing around £43,000, which ‘enables people with lower-limb paralysis to stand, walk and climb stairs through motion sensors and an onboard computer system.’

When she heard of this apparatus, Claire ordered one and set herself the goal of walking the London Marathon in it—all 26.2 miles of it—in a vainglorious effort to raise money for spinal research, a British charity, seeking to find cures for those with catastrophic spinal injuries.

Now test we underestimate the task involved, bear the following in mind. The suit is made largely from aluminium, weighing 20 kg. It supports the woman from the waist down, but does not stop the wearer from falling—not even does it dispense with the need for crutches.

In fact, when you think of the coordination, concentration and sheer determination required to use the ReWalk suit, you can only admire the effort and not even to this description: A control module at the waist has five modes—sit to stand, sit to stand, walk, climb, and descend. Once the mode is selected, the module beeps to give a three-second warning before the exo-skeleton moves using four motors: two at the knees and two at the hips. Here is her explanation of the experience: ‘It’s so hard to use—‘as it is all about balance and trusting your feet even though I can’t feel them... ‘Lean too far back and you fall over, too far forward and your arms are in agony from taking the weight.’

Four months later

Four months later, on April 22—not yet having walked more than a mile a day in her suit—Claire Lomas joined 36,000 other participants at the start of the London Marathon. For the others the race was finished that day—for her it took 15 more gruelling days before she crossed the line.

‘We need heroes’ by Julian Hibbert, MESSENGER editor

The editor is under no obligation to defend his rejection of a submission, but if he feels that the piece has potential, he may offer some suggestions for a redraft.

‘Health reform becomes health deformation when it is carried to extremes,’ quoted Professor Craig as he read from E. G. White’s guidance to avoid extremes in her book, Counsels on Diets and Foods. With these introductory words of wisdom, delegates were guided on how best to minister in the area of health and nutrition in a balanced and Christ-like approach.

Professor Winston Craig was the keynote presenter at the second BUC nutrition conference, held 20 May, at the Stanborough Centre.

He is professor of Nutrition and Dietetics at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and is hailed as a world expert in the therapeutic and nutritive value of herbs and spices. His expertise in other areas, such as the protective elements of phytochemicals, soy nutrition, the risks and benefits of a vegetarian or vegan diet, and how to avoid health scams was also a great benefit to those in attendance. It is hoped that his visit has put to rest some of the ‘hot potato’ issues and controversial debates around food.

Annette Muller, nutrition consultant and director for CREATE School of Food at Health, coordinated the food demonstration segments. This was a fun, interactive and informative session where participants prepared food items and the eager attendees had the privilege of tasting them. After listening to the lunch at the nutrition conference would be closely scrutinised, the catering team excelled themselves both with the presentation, the menu and the ambiance they created in the dining hall.

Scientific research, fabulous food and interactive demonstrations were the highlights of the day as Health Ministers leaders, health professionals and health enthusiasts who came from across the British Isles were equipped to better serve in the churches and communities. The missions—Scotland, Ireland and Wales—were well represented, as were attendees from the North and South of England, and satisfied delegates were vocal in their appreciation of the conference. Conferences such as an outstanding event ‘excellent’, ‘better than I expected’, were voiced by a number of attendees, and the glowing evaluation sheets hoped those sentiments included in the conference were a range of books by Professor Craig and resources from the BUC Health Ministries department. Some of these resources are still available and interested parties should contact the Health Ministries department at the BUC.

As a next step the Health Ministries will be progressing with its nutrition strategy and convening the courses from the CREATE School of Food and Health. It will also be developing the community cooking hubs, which will give individuals a chance to learn the skills Annette Muller highlighted during the food demonstration session of the conference.

For more information on nutrition resources and establishing a community cooking hub in your area, please contact the Health Ministries department at the BUC on 01923 672251.
Catching the moment

by Victor Hublert, BUC Communications director, shares his views on making church attendance positive

It’s kind of fun to beat the professionals at their own game. Despite those heavy rains back in April I still did my obligatory Sunday morning dog walk. Rounding a corner of our local park I noticed that the course for the Bracknell Half-Marathon now ran straight through the middle of what was, until a few years ago, the flooded road. Nipping back to the house, I grabbed my camera and returned in time to see hundreds of runners being diverted through the park, up a muddy berm, then back onto the route. I captured the moment. Minutes later I met the official race photographer. He was on the other side of the park taking rubber shots of the runners. I mentioned to him that I had some good shots of the flood debris, clearly was not interested. I couldn’t blame him. After all, who was this stranger with a Nikon hanging around his neck. ‘Send it in to the local press,’ he said.

And so I did – with a result. The main BBC regional news bulletin at 6.15 pm told the story of weather mayhem across the south of England – and the only mention of the Bracknell Half-Marathon came along with my photo of the race steward diverting the runners. I had captured the moment and the spirit of the race. The official photographer had missed it.

With the multiplication of phone cameras, that is now often the case. The amateur gets the shot because they are there at the right time in the right place. And if that is important for journalism it is just as important in church!

How do you capture the moment? I visited a church in the East Midlands recently. A joyous lady, bedecked in jewellery, sat near the back and clearly felt at home. ‘Ah,’ she told me, ‘one of the members invited me to help wash pans for the soup kitchen. They were so friendly and welcoming that I haven’t stopped coming since.’ Those members had caught the moment. They opened their hearts at the right time and place.

A student from New York came to see me at a service where I had commended the congregation on how warm and welcoming they were. ‘That may be true for you,’ he said. ‘You are a preacher and you are one of the first time he visited that particular church nobody had spoken to him at all – for the whole morning. The following Sabbath he tried again. Nobody spoke to him and so he decided to walk out of church. Enough was enough. Thankfully, somebody noticed and chased him down the street. They caught the moment – and saved a lonely New-Yorker from dropping out of church.

How sad for the 200 congregation? It can take effort but the answer is undoubtedly yes! A number of churches have recently engaged, as church families, in a local church communication audit. It is a very simple document that helps you look at your church through a stranger’s eyes. What are your strengths? Where can you improve? What can you do to be more visible in the community? It may be simple, but it does work.

Catching the moment is an all-inclusive activity – the juniors in the Torquay church that approach visitors to offer a hand-made bookmark and the main presenter, pastor Alex Royes, made an interesting statement regarding using Twitter in church services.

‘To Tweet or not to Tweet?’

by Jeff Couzins, Pastor, North England Conference

I was at the NCG Leaders Summit at Silverton Park over the weekend, and the main presenter, Pastor Alex Reyes, made an interesting statement regarding using Twitter in church services.

Pastor Alex’s point was that our young people engage with dozens (if not hundreds) of young people who will probably never enter an Adventist church – or any other church for that matter – during a worship service. They may enter for special services such as dedications, weddings, and funerals but, for the most part, do not see any relevance in church. Since our young people are engaging socially with their friends and contacts on Twitter and Facebook, Pastor Alex encourages them to tweet a nugget from his sermon to their friends. Sometimes they just tweet what they have heard, on other occasions Pastor Alex will deliberately say, ‘Tweet that last point I just made’.

Now here I am someone who question the presence of hi-tech phones and iPads in people’s hands during church services, in fact I used to be one of them until I saw the Conference president using one, and then my wife started using the I-digital Bible on her smart phone. I am not a techno-osophy or luddite (I used to be an electronics engineer and software engineer before training for the ministry) but I do feel I’m in a quandary in some uses of hi-tech in churches.

I have a concern over the use of Twitter (or other Social Network sites) in church, it relates to reverence. I am not suggesting that tweeters are less well behaved than others, in fact, sometimes I wish they were! However, I do feel I’m in a quandary in relation to some uses of hi-tech in churches.

First of all, how do we know whether someone is sharing a sermon nugget in real-time or playing tetris?

The attention aspect derives from the respect angle. If someone is online during a sermon and their focus is on the internet, it cannot be on the message being presented. Someone may object to what I say, but social media is distracting and it is impossible to attend to a virtual sermon and to a physical one, unless you are unhuman. Someone may tweet for around 2 seconds before the memory decays away or is overwritten. If we have not processed what we perceived (saw or heard) in around 2 seconds then it is gone forever.

The twin tensions I see are these: How do we know someone is on Twitter and not on Super-Mario? Also, whilst it is wonderful to think a tweet about a brilliant sermon nugget is being shared, it is that ethical? It may be fine for a parent to check what was tweeted, but is it right for an elder or pastor to do so?

Also, how do we know whether someone is sharing a sermon nugget on Super-Mario or playing tetris?
Skydive for charity
Mel Jennings took to the skies near Chiltern Aerodrome on 13 May to do a tandem sky-dive from 15,000 feet at 140 mph, raising over £2,500 to help fight motor neurone disease.

For Mel, the waiting before the jump was the worst part. ‘Going up in the plane, I felt so nervous but ready. We had to circle at 10,000 feet for about half an hour, so this delay got me feeling nervous. Then suddenly, there was an announcement saying it’s time. I screamed, externalising my fear, as I knew in five seconds it would be my turn. We had to quickly shuffle to the end. I was reminded what position to be in; dangled over the side of the plane; and one second later, I was falling!’

I couldn’t shut my mouth at 140 mph. I struggled to breathe for about ten seconds,’ explained an exhilarated Mel, who teaches at the Seventh-day Adventist Newbold Primary School. ‘Suddenly, I had to outstretch my arms and then I enjoyed it. Ten seconds later, I had to cross them again and brace myself for the parachute being activated.

Mel’s close family member, aged 38, is suffering from the devastating, terminal and degenerative motor neurone disease. She picked skydiving to raise money, and although her husband, parents and three children, aged 13, 11 and 6, had mixed emotions about the dive, they supported her.

Food donated during ‘girls’ night in’ at Newbold
The uplifting, positive, team-bonding and fun ‘girls’ night in’, organized by The Newbold Sisterhood, was attended by forty-eight women on 19 May 2012.

They were encouraged to cast away their fears by Vladaana Santic, who used to list one of her fears as public speaking!

Team-building games were prepared by Anna Radosh and Elena Telyukina, and attendees were asked to bring non-perishable food items to donate to the Bracknell Food Bank.

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Pure joy – baptism of Jemima Nambo

On Sabbath 14 April, Grantham Church welcomed visitors from Grantham, Stamford, Rotherham and Nottingham to witness the baptism of their friend Jemima by Pastor John Ferguson. Jemima has been attending Grantham Church since the age of 1 and has been an able and popular pupil of Dudley House School, our church school in Grantham. Since her father became the pastor of the Nottingham district of churches in October 2011, she has been attending Nottingham Central Church with her parents.

Jemima was accompanied into the baptismal pool by her mother Queen, and recited her favourite Bible verse: Matthew 6:6. Pastor Nambo appealed. Jesus Christ has paid the full price for us to be in Heaven – don’t disappoint Him.

ELIZABETH CARNELL

ASNA ‘Race of Life’

The ‘Race of Life’ respite family weekend, organized by the Adventist Special Needs Association (ASNA) for people with disabilities and special needs, was held at Wokefield Park Hotel, Reading, over 20-22 April. This, the eleventh such retreat, was set against the backdrop of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Walks and outdoor activities supported the theme.

First-time attendee, Carmen Dublin, said she ‘learnt a lot’, and another first-time attendee, Cassandra from Yardley Church, Birmingham, added that she found help to care on caring for her son, who is an adult with additional needs.

Pastor Paul Liburn used the example of Derek Redmond’s race during the 1992 Barcelona Olympics to show we have support of family, friends and our Heavenly Father. Talks presented by Grace Watch (NEC Special Needs and Disability Ministries co-ordinator) and her team along with Joni from the Senhedan church, and Sophia Nichols (SE Disability Ministries director) provided support for new and more experienced co-ordinators, launching development of the Disability Co-ordinators’ Network and Advisory Group for co-ordinators in the SEC.

The inclusive children’s programme showed the meaning behind the Olympic rings – C. J. Nichols, one of the young people, said: ‘Understanding the white colour in the flag to mean “peace” has given me a different insight into the Olympic Games and how this relates to our Christian principles.’

For other events and information, visit the ASNA website at: www.asna.info or email info@asna.info.

For information about the Disability Co-ordinators’ Network and Advisory Group, email snicholls@secadventist.org.uk or telephone 07768298297.

SOPHIA NICHOLLS, SEC DISABILITY MINISTRIES DIRECTOR, ASNA TRUSTEE

Pertshire women receive aid

On the first Sunday of each month, Crieff Church volunteers known as Hearts and Hands use sewing machines, ironing boards, scissors and pins, needles and wool to make toilet bags, throws and pillowcases for the local women’s aid centre.

Hearts and Hands invited Hazel Bingham and Isy Clarke from Pertshire Women’s Aid to speak on Sabbath afternoon, 25 May. Domestic abuse is a serious social problem affecting one in five Scottish women over their lifetime.

Pertshire Women’s Aid has been adopted by the members of Crieff Church as one of their 2012 Crieff Aid Projects, and at the end of the presentation Pastor Bernie Holford presented a cheque for £2,000 to Hazel and Isy for the women and children in their care.

CHRISTINE BAUWENS, COMMUNICATIONS, CRIEFF CHURCH

God’s ‘Men of Faith’ in Milton Keynes

The Milton Keynes ‘Men of Faith’ hosted international evangelist Taj Paclee during the month of April. The Men of Faith consists of twenty-plus men who meet every Monday evening to ‘catch up’ each other; to become better people and conduits of God’s blessing.

Taj Paclee challenged the men to be ‘God’s Men of Faith!’ at a time of great moral decay. The coming of Taj has awakened interest in expanding men’s ministry across Milton Keynes. Men, God wants you to be Men of Faith!

Milton Keynes COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Let’s get together

There were simply too many attendees at the Kettering, Wellesbourne and Corby district day of fellowship, held on 14 April, for any of the three churches to accommodate – so they had to worship at the Baptist chapel in Kettering! There were far more attendees than at the last day of fellowship as the churches have grown considerably in the interim.

Pastor Lloyd Lambert expounded on the theme of the antelavians who refused the offer of a place in the ark, comparing them with many in the world today. In the afternoon programme, Geraldene Farmer, NEC Family and Women’s Ministries director, challenged us to examine our choices.

Kettering was one of the earliest churches in the British Isles, and has an attendance of thirty to forty each week. Corby is the new kid on the block – a group of roughly thirty-five adults and nineteen children not yet fully recognised as a church, but with more than the required membership to move to the next level. Lisa, the caretaker, asked us to pray for her and sit where she can be a part of the service.

Wellesbourne has outgrown its sanctuary; ‘the church in the warehouse’ is trying to raise funds to complete its extension. We look forward to the next day of fellowship when, if the past is anything to go by, we shall need an even bigger venue!
Haircuts for little princesses


In January 1998 we celebrated the 100th birthday of Eliza Mitchell, born in 1998. On 7 February 1992, Sister Mitchell died at rest, vacating our Lord’s return, after passing away on 19 January 2012 aged 102. She was the last of her generation.

Sister Mitchell’s late husband, Arthur, had sailed to England from Jamaica on the SS Empress Windrush in 1948, and Elizabeth followed in 1959, after her five children (one deceased in 1959) followed later. Between these five children she enjoyed seventeen grandchildren, twenty-five great-grandchildren, and six great-great-grandchildren.

From the Wright brothers to Richard Branson, Elizabeth lived through just about everything, and in her 102 expressed a desire to learn how to use the computer.

She was a member of the Cornerstone church in Hounslow, and equally keenly, husband, and part of the Southall and Chestnut churches. During her earlier years in England she attended the Holloway and Regent Street services.

We thank God for her in her Seventy-Seven Adventist upbringing, and her strong old-school emphasis on worship, which greatly influenced the entire family.

ASNA makes Gospel accessible in Netherlands

Pastor Guiseke Berkell of the Netherlands Union, invited ASNA to run a ten-hour series on Disability ministries during the biannual Great Commission Festival in the Netherlands Union Conference. Four workshops were based on what was stopping us from shining our light, and how we could change these things through God’s will.

Music workshops were held in the afternoon.

Area 2 youth retreat shines light

Over 11-13 May forty youths from Area 2 gathered for a retreat at St Goldas Christian Centre, Taunton, where Julian Thompson (Area 5 president and preacher from Reading) gave presentations on letting our lights shine.

Four workshops were based on what was stopping us from shining our light, and how we could change these things through God’s will.

In the ‘prayer room’, a place of fellowship with the Lord, youth talked to Him for forgiveness, thankfulness, intercession and praise. It started off small, but grew into something great!

The youth now eagerly anticipate the next Area 2 event!
Young and old swim for Loughborough Church

On Sunday 20 May, nine children aged 3-12 took part in a sponsored swim to raise money for a building for Loughborough Church – along with retired member Terry.

This was the first sponsored event for most of the children. Most sponsors were not Adventist, so this event gave us the opportunity for evangelism. Many are happy for us to invite them to church programmes in the future.

Terry was eager to get started, but it took twenty-five minutes to persuade our youngest swimmer, 3-year-old Anja, to get in the water! Terry and the four older children (7-12) swam 200 ... widths.

The team raised almost £900 – far more than expected and a massive boost for our church building fund: thank God!

If you would like to sponsor the team or find out more see the ‘Building’ page on our website: http://loughborough.adventistchurch.org.uk/ or email loughboroug...church@gmail.com.

VIVIENNE BARRATT-PEACOCK