

TOPIC PAPER 3 – 2011:

Internet

At the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union Convention last year, it was Resolved that members use every avenue available to them to alert parents to the inherent dangers their children face in the use of the internet and other activities. We live in a rapidly changing world. Who would have imagined 20 years ago, how much the influence of the Internet, computers and cyberspace would have on our lives at the end of 2011? Where the benefit to business and society of these incredible advances in technology is enormous, there is also much to cause us real concern.

The Internet is a powerful tool for fast communication world-wide, especially when friends and family live or are travelling overseas. However, we are all aware of the problems caused by virus to our Internet Banking system not so long ago. E-mail filters are used in an attempt to block out unwanted "spam mail", but even with these programmes it is more and more difficult to sort out "good mail" from "bad". Then there are the social networking sites. "Facebook" is reputed to have had 500 million visitors to it in just one month! This site has been used for cyber-bullying with disastrous results. Addiction to playing Computer Games, which come in a vast range of skill needed and content, some extremely violent, can be just as addictive and dangerous as alcohol or illegal drugs. I know of the father of 4 small children who spends every spare minute playing games on his computer, sadly with the complete neglect of his home and family responsibilities.

How can the bad and good use of all this technology be understood by Christian parents, (and grandparents) and guiding children accordingly? A sanctified conscience must be their guide. We are left in no doubt what our minds should dwell on when we read the letters of the Apostle Paul as he wrote to the Christians at Philippi, *"Finally, my brothers (and sisters), whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things"*. (See *Philippians 4:8*).

May the Lord bless and guide you and make you a blessing at this Christmas season and in the year ahead.

Yours in White Ribbon Bonds,

Mavis Gerrish

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