

SOCIAL & ETHICAL ISSUES GROUP

PARENTING IN A DIGITAL AGE

'It gets harder and harder, I just wish the iPhone had never been invented.'

This is one of the quotes that Care for the Family used as part of their opening session of the recent *'Left to their Own Devices'* parenting event in Edinburgh. The aim of this session was to allow parents the opportunity to grown in confidence in being a parent in what seems like a world of screens, and to understand the impact misuse of technology can have on our children.

Generation Y v. Generation X

It was highlighted from the beginning, very usefully, that the way in which Generation Y (those born between 1977-1994) and Generation Z (1995-2012) engage with digital media is different. Generation Y are seen as digital visitors, using these platforms occasionally and for a specific purpose, whereas Generation Z are classed as digital residents, spending much of their time accessing the digital world. It was clear from the reaction in the room that this terminology resonated with a number of people, helpfully allowing people to understand how different generations are accessing the digital world.

During the evening a number of helpful ideas were presented to raise parents' understanding and confidence when it comes to relating to our children in this area.

Being intentional

Firstly, there was the idea of being intentional in the way that we engage. It seems for many that it can be easier to shy from areas that we don't know that much about. However, the encouragement was to be willing to engage in conversations with our children and young people about their use of digital media to be able to gain an understanding of what it is that they are accessing. There was also a strong focus on not encouraging isolation, especially when thinking about times of day in which children have access to their devices, such as bedtimes and in bedrooms. It was acknowledged that this can be difficult, however it was recognised that parents want the best for their children and sometimes that means they need to have the conversation, but one that may not result in a mutual agreement!

Rob Fraser-Binns recently attended a Care for the Family event offering advice to parents on their children's use of computers, tablets and mobile phones.

In this article Rob shares what was presented.

**Being together**

Secondly, being together and making sure that there is consistency in boundaries that are agreed and how devices are used. Creating a 'Family Media Agreement', was just one way suggested to allow discussing this together. Simply by taking a sheet of paper and splitting it in to three columns, heading them Yes You Can; Ask Us First; or No, You Can't, allows for a conversation to be had

Being positive

Thirdly, the idea of being positive and thinking about ways in which the digital world can aid you in your parenting was encouraged. Ideas such a photo walk, uploading images to Instagram, or thinking about the apps that you could use together - potentially for praying or reading Bible - could all be seen as positive ways in which to engage together in the digital world.

See over the page for resources of parental advice.

'Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it'. Proverbs 22.6

Parenting in a Digital Age - Resources

Katherine Hill, one of presenters has written a book, *Left to their Own Devices*, to go alongside this event. You can find it in the shop section of the Care for the Family web site www.careforthefamily.org.uk

Digital Parenting from Vodafone is a website that helps you to get more involved with the technology that young people enjoy:
<https://www.vodafone.com/content/digital-parenting.html/#>

ORGAN DONATION PLANS ARE MISLEADING SAYS BIOETHICIST



Calum MacKellar of the Scottish Council on Bioethics says that the Scottish Parliament's proposals on organ donations mean that *'Scotland would become one of the very few countries in the world to enact a form of hard opt-out system for organ removal for transplantation which is generally considered as unduly traumatic for relatives in most other European countries.'*

Read his opinions on the Social and Ethical Issues pages of the SBC web site.

RESPONDING TO THE TRANSGENDER ISSUE

In their *Idea* magazine, Evangelical Alliance recently published a thoughtful article on the Church's response to transgender activism.

Among other views expressed, the author suggests that we need to differentiate when it is appropriate to respond pastorally and when ideologically.

The article is available at www.eauk.org/news-and-views/transformed

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN BRITAIN TODAY?

An inquiry into 'Being a Christian in the UK Today', led by the Christians in Parliament All-Party Parliamentary Group of the Westminster Parliament, seeks to explore the experience of Christians in the UK in 2018. In particular they are concerned with how living out Christian faith interacts with public institutions such as parliament, central and local government, and other professional and regulatory bodies.

This is an enquiry open to everyone, and of course the more people who respond to the enquiry the more accurate a picture the All-Party Group will have.



Why not take ten minutes to respond to this enquiry? Your view is just as important as that of anyone else! You can access the enquiry at: www.christiansinparliament.org.uk/inquiry/
The closing date for responses is 16 December.

.....AND ANOTHER ENQUIRY!

The UK Supreme Court has declared that it is against human rights law that civil partnerships are available only to same-sex couples.

As a result the Scottish Government is seeking opinions on two options for changing the law on civil partnerships.

To offer civil partnerships to heterosexual couples has been described as 'marriage-lite' and indeed, despite the human rights law argument, there would appear to be little advantage in making civil partnerships available when marriage is already on offer with similar legal provisions.

You can find the consultation at <https://consult.gov.scot/> and then search in 'See all open consultations'. The closing date for responses is 21st December