

# The Use of Electronic Media

In our day, information and technology are expanding rapidly. One of the most significant areas is in communications technology. Information is now readily and economically available in a variety of video and other electronic formats. These range from computers with their wide variety of programs and games, to video cassette recorders and monitors and other electronic devices.

Man's moral consciousness, however, has not always kept pace with his technological advances. Many of the tools of our age are accepted without adequate thought as to the moral or ethical implication involved in their ownership or use. A great quantity of the programming available is dominated by the spirit of the world and exerts a damaging influence upon an individual's spiritual life.

There are many similarities between video devices and television. Because of the predominately evil nature of commercial television, we ask our members to abstain from its possession and use. (*Statement of Faith*)

While the video and radio have some practical and legitimate applications, we also recognize some inherent dangers which may undermine our faith. For instance, most religious programs do not reflect our understanding of Biblical principles or our theology. The same concern would also be valid in regards to some educational and instructional programs.

Entertainment is geared toward the carnal mind, appealing to the sensual and frivolous nature of man. We must give a faithful and clear testimony against patronizing video stores and counters and listening to or watching commercially produced programs that are contrary to Christian principles. These include movies, professional athletics, country and rock music, as well as any other program that violates the Scriptures in their contents.

The computer has great potential for good in the church and the home. We can increase our knowledge, improve our understanding of our world, and manage our businesses more efficiently and more profitably with the use of programs available for the computer. Again, we warn of

the possibility for the promotion of sinful and destructive lifestyles encouraged by some of the things available. We urge the membership to maintain the utmost restraint over its use in our schools, homes, and businesses. Children and adults who are exposed to the computer will learn. Care must be taken as to what we learn. It must be wholesome, beneficial, and uplifting. Games that promote the competitive spirit, encourage addiction, or that glorify violence and loose living should never be viewed.

On-line service is another area that confronts the computer user. We discourage the Brotherhood's involvement with these media unless there is a real clear need, such as business transactions, communication with missionaries, etc. Because this area of the computer world is not regulated by any government laws, all kinds of wicked devices are available to anyone connected to it. Any adult with access to on-line service should keep a close guard on that access to protect the family (including children, youth, and adults) from things that would be spiritually destructive. We encourage the use of a lock or password for the computer so that parents can approve and supervise its use.

The electronic media have great possibilities for the eternal good of man, but because of his fallen nature, these things can be very destructive morally. Therefore the church must guard itself against the evils available through the video, the computer, the television, and the radio, as well as other such devices.

We are accountable to God and the Brotherhood and must honor the Scriptural principles of separation from the world and separation unto God. Because of the possibility that the use of these technologies may turn to abuse in the amount of time, resources and interest that they may consume, we support those who refrain from their ownership and use in the home.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." Romans 14:21

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

We ask all those who have need to access these computer services to sign the following pledge and covenant with your pastor or another brother.

"I purpose before God and my Christian brothers never to access any file whether text or graphic that is sensual, pornographic, obscene, and/or immoral in content. I will avoid news groups, chat groups, and mailing lists that promote such material. I am giving my brethren the privilege and responsibility for holding me accountable to be faithful in this commitment."

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Officially adopted as a statement of position and policy on Oct. 19, 1996 by the South Atlantic Mennonite Conference.*