HOME PROTECTION DEPARTMENT 2024
Director - Anna-Mari Laine

There are many attacks against the Christian family institution nowadays. I suppose nothing else is under greater attack than the family. It is the social institution created and designed by God. It is the basic unit and the heart of our culture, the power for building healthy societies. The Creator created male and female. The biblical family produces children. The marriage was created to be a beautiful, living picture of Christ and the Church.

The increasing rates of divorces

We face more and more divorces. The common feelings among separated parents and their children are ANGER, CONFUSION, SHAME, ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND BITTERNESS. Many mental and physical problems!
We need more and more skills, knowledge and wisdom when helping and loving these crushed near-ones of ours. Psalm 147:3 says: "He heals the broken- hearted and binds up the wounds." James 1:5 says:" If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to you."
In Helsinki the professional White Ribbon therapists help families and individuals. There are 12 therapists who take clients regularly. But everyone can be a loved one. "Love your neighbour as yourself". Love for all people was at the very centre of Jesus' message.

The increasing sexual freedom and immorality

Christian freedom is freedom through knowing God who is eternal and everlasting truth. It is being his, and having him as ours. John 8:36 says: If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed". Sexual freedom without the biblical principles have led many youngsters into many difficulties, pain, remorse which cause depression and loneliness. Abortions, the gender ideology, polyamory in marriages and many other forms of sexual life are considered acceptable and they are often recommended and advertised as the great freedom. Laws are being changed into the more and more liberal direction of this sad situation. This is our deep prayer that families, schools, churches, and societies show the right way of living to children and youngsters and we Christians should be good examples to follow.

Addictions

Drugs, alcohol, smoking, and many new forms of addictions tie youngsters and even their parents. Family life can`t flourish if there are addictive bonds as addiction to substances leads to destruction. What I am happy about is that our WWCTU from the beginning has foreseen the great dangers and the members` labor has not been in vain. We try to alert people. I am proud of that. I thank God for guiding us for decades and decades. We are as if in a war. The enemy always finds new ways of penetrating into people´s lives to destroy them in one way or the other. Addictive takes different forms in different countries!
Vaping is a new problem. Teachers here in Finland sometimes ask for advice and help when it is not the smell of nicotine but the pleasant scents like strawberries and other fruit hovering in the air in schools. Younger and younger kids are starting to vape. I was very happy to read about the White Ribbon work and Anne Bergen`s leaflet on vaping. The state of Australia takes the problem seriously and wants to stop this trend among youngsters. I asked Joy Butler to write about the measures they have taken in Australia and I translated the text into the Finnish special bulletin on different substances, treatments and studies. This is a part of Anne`s leaflet: "IS IT BETTER TO VAPE THAN SMOKE CIGARETTES? Vaping was originally promoted as a harmless way for people to stop

smoking, harmful cigarettes. However, vaping is also dangerous and most vapes contain addictive nicotine like cigarettes do."
Vaping affects the lungs, the brain, the mouth and the heart. The kids and youngsters need a healthy brain. It affects their whole lives: The relationships, learning, memory, impulse control, emotions…All the development should be healthy without addictive ties. That´s why I am very worried about vaping which in soft, imperceptible ways is causing and will cause a lot of harm and destruction. I`m sending our Finnish White Ribbon bulletin and Anne Bergen`s leaflet in English to schools so that the youngsters can read English and have useful knowledge concerning vapes. I sent all the material to our Social Security Minister Sanni Grahn- Laasonen as well.

The climate change and the environmental challenges

God is the Creator of all the earth and nature. He created a perfectly beautiful world. But we have spoilt and destroyed it a lot. It is not easy when we as believers want to show respect for God and advise young people and their families to prefer ways of living which are not greedy and selfish. We can eat in healthy ways, choose local fruit, berries, meat, grain, and other products that are produced locally.
Many youngsters are worried about climate change. If we have not enough knowledge and information, it is difficult to communicate effectively with the younger generation. Jesus asks his listeners to consider birds and their behavior. We can follow many things in our environment: animals, plants, trees, dying fish, plastic litter on beaches, the quality of the air etc. Can we do something? Countries are very different. Our worries are different.
At our WWCTU Conference in Helsinki in 2019 Irja and Kaija Erkkilä told us about litter picking. Now they have picked up 2 million cigarette butts in the streets, in the nature. They like to visit schools. The students are usually very eager to work with them. Litter picking is a perfect meaningful activity that gives quick and rewarding satisfaction. Litter picking provides anyone with the ability to drive positive change in the environment.
God has reserved many good things for the planet earth. We can read many interesting things in the Bible. But now it is crucial we do our best to show gratitude to our Creator and His creation. These habits are formed at home.

Anger, wars and fears

The Covid time was a big challenge to mankind. Many young people could not understand many difficult stages. Some needed special help. But after that two big wars have broken out. Russia wants to conquer more and more countries. After attacking against Ukraine millions of Ukrainian refugees are escaping to European countries. Russia has threatened words Finland. There was a merciless attack against Israel by Hamas. More and more violence and more and more anger between people and nations in the world. More violence, wars, deaths, and riots in the streets! As believers, when reading the Bible we can understand, but to many people this is a very difficult new time. Prices go up; the confidence in the future has disappeared… families are facing many challenges in this chaotic world.
"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."(Isaiah 41:10) Our important task in these difficult days of our history is to be God`s witnesses, the sources of mercy and love. We have the good message to tell everybody. BEING IN CHRIST SAVES YOU. It does not prevent all the suffering and problems, but it makes you free from your crippling fears.

Christians and persecutions

Our member countries are very different. Christians are being persecuted in some countries. In other countries it is not possible very openly to arrange meetings, children`s clubs or summer camps and tell people about Jesus. We, in our local union, decided to start to support Open Doors, the non-denominal mission supporting persecuted Christians around the world. The Christians are the most persecuted group in the world. We do not want to forget our brothers and sisters in other countries. It is important that families and children know the facts.
So far, we have supported, and I suppose the members in the other countries as well have supported, so many forms of work helping and loving all the people around the world: Girls` education, suffering women, earthquake victims, refugees, those suffering in war, mission organizations etc. We want to support and help all. Corinthians16:4 say: "Do everything in love." We pray for those persecuting and killing Christians but also for those who are victims as well. Teach families to think above themselves.

LET`S PRAY FOR EACH OTHER, THE WWCTU MEMBERS AND COUNTRIES

We felt God`s love and mercy and all of us could learn so much from each other. In the Bible, unity is seen in the marriage of a man and a woman, the unity of believers through the Holy Spirit, and ultimate unity among all believers through Jesus Christ.
I was thinking of all the work in our member countries. I am praying for everybody`s new ideas, to have endurance in this very challenging situation in the world and to reach more and more children and adults.

Recently I visited South Korea and was much encouraged to witness the KWCTU work. Dr. Young Joo Kim`s prayer was that new countries could be reached in our WWCTU work. Only the Holy Spirit can open paths in our very different WWCTU-countries, in the new and the old ones. We are praying for each other. We have not seen each other for a long time, but through prayer we are together in spirit.

Please see what you can do in your country for the welfare of families.

- Counseling of families in loneliness and depression with prayer is very effective.
- Make effective pamphlets on the facts and bad effects of vaping, smoking, alcohol and other addictive substances.
- Teach to nurture and sustain the environment and Country and its resources from the beginning.
- Insist that families give good Christian values and create good Christian God-given boundaries as a lifestyle to our children.
- Families play an important role in making or breaking the country so we need to be healthy and happy, which can be possible only following God's command.
- We need to reach out to people and families with love and good solid fact- based advice.
- Teach the children to save water and keep their surroundings clean.