

THE STATE OF OUR NATION

A Warning Cry to the People of the United Kingdom

Our society is in a deepening social, moral and spiritual crisis. It is in danger of losing its direction. It is in danger of losing its soul. In spite of our affluence our national foundations are collapsing. We are in fact a sick society. This urgent call is made in the name of many thousands of Christian men and women of every political persuasion. They are committed members of churches of every denomination. It is addressed to our nation and to everyone in positions of leadership and authority.

A Nation in Crisis

A deep sickness has penetrated to the heart of our society. Regardless of the aspirations and strategies of politicians, our nation is in steep decline. We are confronted with great and growing evidence of moral and spiritual disintegration. There is deep unease about the direction in which society is moving.

The increasing devaluation of the marriage-based family is leaving an ever-widening wake of human suffering and social chaos. Drug abuse is now out of control. The media glorify sex, violence and foul language. Degrading pornography has become a major industry, promiscuity is actively promoted and sexually transmitted diseases are now out of control. Vandalism has become a national disease and many urban areas are disfigured with graffiti. There is widespread fear because of increasing violence and lawlessness on our streets.

God has been banished from our national thinking and living, and we are now paying the price. **The secular humanist experiment has failed.**

A Rich Inheritance

We are a society with a rich inheritance. Care for the needy, respect for the weak, justice for the poor and high standards of public morality have, in the past, been the hallmarks of our national life.

Britain was the cradle of modern democracy and freedom. In spite of many shortcomings, the fundamental dignity and worth of the individual were upheld. Tolerance and integrity were paramount and corruption was abhorred.

Whilst we have been enriched by various cultures, our way of life is deeply rooted in Christian belief, teaching and practice. Our parliamentary, legal, educational and health systems originate in Christian morality. Christian social, political and charitable initiatives have played a major part in forming the life of our land.

If the Judeo-Christian foundation of our society continues to be dismantled and destroyed, the consequences will be catastrophic. **There is no secure alternative.**

Human Unhappiness

There has been an alarming increase in levels of emotional and behavioural disturbance, especially amongst the young. Along with this there has been a significant growth in depression and suicide. Insatiable greed and hedonism have become driving forces in our culture today.

Saturated by non-stop advertising, our consumerist society teaches everyone to be money-orientated and self-orientated. We worship money, possessions, sex and power. We have developed an introspective individualism, obsessed with self-gratification, self-improvement and self-healing. In our secular

society, we have made man the centre of everything – instead of God.

In spite of all this, as a nation we are both inefficient and unhappy. In an age of unparalleled access to money, physical sexuality and choice, great numbers of our people lack personal fulfilment and there is widespread unhappiness. What we imagined would satisfy us has not done so. **We have become materially rich but emotionally and spiritually destitute.**

While politicians grapple with the problems of an ailing Health Service and a flawed education system, an inefficient postal service and dysfunctional public transport, crumbling unrepaired roads and deteriorating public services, the evidence of human unhappiness is to be seen all around. A huge proportion of the population has declared in public opinion polls that given the opportunity they would emigrate.

Broken Relationships

Human relationships are increasingly presented by powerful media influences as temporary, valueless, and dispensable. Promiscuity has been blatantly promoted for many years in the United Kingdom in films, television, newspapers and magazines. It has now wrought its inevitable havoc, destroying marriages, wrecking families and inflicting immense harm upon innocent children.

Increasing numbers are locked into dysfunctional families and social groupings. Because of promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases are now virtually out of control, especially among the young. Fundamentally unsound and essentially amoral public policies over sex education and the provision of contraception and abortion for children have made matters infinitely worse rather than better.

Children in Need

Future generations will judge us by the way we are treating our children. Through the holocaust of abortion, we have denied millions of them the right to be born. Vast numbers of children have been deprived of family life, and especially of their fathers. By wilfully or negligently exposing them to the corruption of the world, we have robbed our children of their innocence. We have poisoned their minds by what they see, by what they read and by what they hear. We have allowed them to be abused and corrupted. We have allowed them to be exploited by drug traffickers, by pornographers and by prostitution. We are guilty of their moral and spiritual corruption, and the consequences of this are to be seen in almost every part of the country.

For the convenience of adults, we are destroying the marriage-based family and engineering the precipitous erosion of all moral standards. We appear to be putting the supposed rights of adults to do what they want above the rights of children to be protected against hurtful, damaging or corrupting influences.

Across the UK, some 1.2 million children and young adults are now not in education, employment or training ("NEETs"). **Many of these will form the pool from which future drop-outs and criminals will emerge.**

A Violent Society

Aggression and violence are now commonplace in our society. In many quite ordinary places, people are afraid to walk alone at night. The elderly and infirm are at constant risk of attack.

Many parents feel they cannot let their children out of their sight. We are being conditioned to treat others with mistrust and suspicion.

The emergence of a gang culture and the use of knives, sawn-off shotguns and even machine guns in the pursuit of crime are signs of a society in crisis. Assaults become ever more grotesque and sadistic. The rape of elderly women, the kicking of pregnant young women, and the deliberate blinding and maiming of innocent people are evidence of this. Road rage and increasing assaults upon those providing a service to the community are all signs of radical disharmony within ourselves, absence of self-control, and disrespect for life, health, property and social order.

Public confidence in the criminal justice system has been severely eroded. People are understandably worried about very low crime detection rates and the widespread breakdown of law and order. A growing army of private security forces coupled with high insurance rates are constant reminders of the changes that have taken place in our society. A general feeling that crime and dishonesty pay has emerged. Our prisons are overflowing and our social services cannot cope with the massive load of human need.

Aggression is rooted both in evil intent and in the accumulated hurts and injustices of many years. It is vented in many directions - at institutions, specific groups and individuals. The numbers of people seeking help with anger management have mushroomed. Studies show that a high proportion of male young offenders have had no father-figure during their formative years. The increasing instability of the family unit, due to the denial of the importance of marriage, heralds an even greater increase in violent behaviour.

A Culture of Death

A culture of death is manifest at the beginning of life by our readiness to destroy millions of children in their mothers' wombs, and at the end of life by proposals to allow doctors to kill their patients. Fundamental questions are also raised by embryonic stem-cell research. Popular culture has an obsession with death and destruction, both in song lyrics and in film presentations. Popular films and television series increasingly feature creatures formed by distortions of the human face and body created by God.

Drug addiction and alcohol abuse have escalated and constitute a serious drain on national resources. A vast number of children now have parents with serious drug or drink problems, or have drug or drink problems themselves.

In contrast to the glossy presentation of aspirational lifestyles and hedonism, we have become a spiritually and morally self-destructive society. **We are actively embracing death rather than affirming life.**

Alienation

There is a huge gulf between politicians and the people. Politicians are held in low esteem. The young especially, are indifferent and alienated. Increasingly, the majority of people in the United Kingdom choose not to vote in elections. Each of the political parties is representative of only a small section of the community. The membership of the political parties is considerably smaller than that of the churches, which are themselves written off by many people – not least in the political parties – as insignificant to the life of the nation.

Our democracy is very fragile. Unlike past generations, most electors do not even know the identity of councillors who

represent them locally, some do not know their MP's and very few know the names of their Euro MPs. The overwhelming majority of the population knows little or nothing about what is going on in the European Union, which appears to many to be increasingly remote, bureaucratic and threatening.

A huge amount of legislation is being pushed through, both in Westminster and Europe, often without evidence of substantial public demand and sometimes due to the activities of small but powerful pressure groups.

Lowering Standards

Public moral standards are no longer established by leading and respected public figures and institutions such as the Church. Standards are being set by commerce and dubious and often unelected advisory committees, often dominated by special interest groups. We are inventing our own public morality as we go along. We are in fact facing a moral melt-down.

The destruction of values which took place in the 1960s has brought a bitter harvest. We have turned our back upon God and now we are reaping the consequences.

Nothing is seen any longer as intrinsically right or wrong. 'Informed choice' and 'the right to choose' has supplanted right and wrong. In schools our children are being taught that there are no absolute truths. As a result, violence, foul language and depraved material on film and television, loutish behaviour in public places, and widespread pornography are increasingly the norm.

In our postmodern culture, appearances count for everything. Style is more important than content. The packaging (if it sells) is more important than the product. The image (in spin politics) is more important than the truth. Success is all-important. Wealth, power and popularity are the goals.

Many visitors from overseas comment that something has gone badly wrong in the United Kingdom. They are surprised and saddened by street lawlessness and disorder and also by our continued toleration of acres of graffiti disfiguring urban areas and vulgarity in our media and advertising hoardings. **They tell us that the values which we once espoused seem to have disappeared.**

Sickness & Confusion

The welfare society that we carefully created during the first half of the last century has been recognised as deeply flawed. There are still major injustices coupled with huge inequalities in wealth. Many people in real need are in despair. We have built enormous and often wasteful administrative and managerial hierarchies in many of our public bodies which have failed to win public confidence or deliver much-needed results.

No amount of political fine-tuning and no number of utopian manifestos can alter the fact that there is a deep sickness in our society, which is rooted in our rejection of the Christian values that have held the nation together over past centuries.

In a shrinking world with huge movements of population taking place, some cultural intermingling is inevitable, but this should not give rise to the confusion and anarchy seen today in the United Kingdom. Pluralism, so long exalted, is now widely seen to be a chimera. Pluralism told us that nothing was inherently right or wrong, good or bad, true or false. Pluralism told us that all religions were equally true. Pluralism told us

that the marriage-based family was one of a number of equally valid alternatives.

It is evident that two characteristics of many of the young today are confusion and uncertainty. With the rejection of all absolutes, we have moved steadily towards a nihilistic and disintegrating society.

The Expulsion of God

In spite of all the change and the inflated claims of non-Christian elements in our society, 72% of our people still claimed to be Christians in our most recent national census. Nonetheless, strenuous efforts continue to be made politically and socially to de-Christianise our culture and to destroy the foundations upon which our nation has been built. Just as those promoting the EU Treaty are endeavouring to air-brush out centuries of Christian civilisation, so in our country there is a deliberate refusal to recognise that many, perhaps most, of our valued institutions were Christian foundations – schools, hospitals, orphanages and a wide variety of charitable organisations.

In a multifaceted society, the establishment of goodwill between different religious and cultural groups is vital. Christians are in fact at the forefront of working to establish harmonious relationships with minority communities. This does not mean, however, that we can simply reject and turn away from the Christian teachings which have permeated our nation for centuries and which are respected throughout the world.

Christians have welcomed those of other faiths into this country and have recognised the values of diversity and the intermingling of different cultures. This in no way alters the basic fact that the eternal truths to which we have held fast for centuries cannot be changed, and their influence should not be eroded.

It is of immense importance that we recognise that the troubles the United Kingdom faces today are essentially not political, or even social, but spiritual in nature. If we try to rule out the spiritual dimension of life, as some are anxious to do, we are in danger of taking a very lop-sided, unbalanced and unrealistic view of life and human nature. Our deepest need is for spiritual renewal. This will not come from any political party, but politicians must honour the spiritual world in which we have been created and the spiritual framework within which we are designed to live. As Christians, we believe spiritual renewal will in the last analysis come from God, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.

Responsibilities

We live in a world where human rights are given far more emphasis than human responsibilities. Unbelief is rated more highly than belief. Deep conviction is sweepingly branded as 'fundamentalism'. This is dishonest, cynical and cruel. Tolerance is the new god and we are encouraged to tolerate everything.

At the same time there is a prevailing attitude that the solution of society's problems is someone else's responsibility. Often people do not stop to help someone in trouble on the street. Many do not even know their neighbours.

Our society is clearly in crisis. On the whole, local communities are not working – in spite of the superficial appearances of normality. There is a deep malaise within our country, which we ignore at our peril, for it bears the seeds of our destruction.

Some leaders claim to be 'non-religious', but the truth is that if we cease to believe in God we will believe in another god. If we do not worship the living God, we will worship idols. We are presented with and bow down before the idols of money, power, and sex, which are self-serving. Celebrities of entertainment and sport set our standards. They receive our applause and our money, but most, with notable exceptions, do little to build up the fabric of the nation and some actively promote an attitude of defiance and irresponsibility.

We have been sold a lie. Though we have been seduced by the false promises of hedonism, problems of human need continue to grow with widespread despair and depravation.

Dangerous Living

We are not as safe and secure as once we believed ourselves to be. People are uneasy about the risk of terrorist outrage. Issues such as climate change and global warming give people a sense of uncertainty.

In spite of our claimed affluence, many feel fearful about the future. They are concerned about widespread consumer debt, job insecurity and inadequate pension arrangements.

At the same time we are beginning to recognise the serious long-term damage probably being caused by a variety of dangerous chemicals and admixtures in the food chain and additives incorporated into processed and pre-packaged foods. We simply do not know for sure the long-term consequences of what we are doing.

In addition to this, we are seeing a dramatic increase in a range of diseases rooted in our lifestyle. Obesity has become a national problem, particularly amongst the young. There has been a steady increase in illness directly related to stress and emotional problems, with enormous medical resources being devoted to this area.

Facing the Truth

We must face the truth. Secular humanism has failed to resolve the major problems facing our nation. Vociferous, unrestrained and aggressive individualism has destroyed families, communities and public standards.

A new intolerant libertarianism is invading our society and political thinking. In rejecting moral constraints we are embracing a culture of vulgarity, which brashly ridicules the virtues of kindness, gentleness, modesty and humility. We have become a consumerist society driven by greed. We are brainwashed by much of the media and the popular music industry. We have become a society which extols triviality and violence. Instant gratification has demolished eternal values. The dignity of life has been diminished as we embrace the culture of death.

There is Hope

There is a widespread spiritual hunger throughout our nation. At the same time we are seeing the emergence of hundreds of exciting Christian initiatives being taken in countless local communities. Standing with the poor and needy, and working with the disadvantaged, vast numbers of believers, many of them young, are today speaking and living the simple Gospel. Their impact will undoubtedly grow in coming years. We recognise that the Church must bear responsibility for its failure to maintain a powerful Christian influence in the land, and as Christians we repent for the state of our nation. We are glad to see a growing emphasis upon the central, non-negotiable truths of the Christian Gospel.

An Urgent Call

We must start to look more honestly at the state of our nation today. We must stop denying the seriousness of our moral and spiritual situation. Without a radical spiritual change, our nation will inevitably plunge deeper into the abyss.

This is God's world. Even though we may choose to ignore His existence and presence, He is not absent – He is with us. Moreover, He has the desire and power to roll back the dark storm clouds which are gathering over us, and to heal our nation.

The world and our nation are in a mess. We need a Saviour – we cannot save ourselves. Some of the basic assumptions of contemporary culture are wrong and need to be directly challenged. We need to recognise the powers that are controlling the present age and we need to reject all their processes of indoctrination and manipulation. In short, we need to turn to God, as a nation. We have a Saviour, Jesus, sent by God, who can save us, who wants to save us and who will save us if we accept him as our Lord. In pointing to the dark storm clouds over us, we declare that this darkness need not overcome us. We reaffirm the Biblical truth *"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it"* (John 1.5). **As Christians, we are called to warn of impending dangers, but also to give hope.** The prophets were told by God *"Speak to your countrymen"*, but they were warned *"If the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet ... I will hold the watchman accountable"* (Ezk. 33.6).

The way of Jesus is the way of peace, love and healing. It is the way of transformation – changing people and changing society. As Christians we believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour and Healer of the world. His influence upon the life of this nation over the centuries has been fundamental. We believe that God is calling us to respond again to the words of Jesus – "I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life."

This statement is published by the MARANATHA COMMUNITY, a national movement of many thousands of Christians who are active in all the main churches throughout the United Kingdom. It was originally presented in Parliament in December 2004. It followed the "State of Our Nation" meetings held in the House of Lords and House of Commons in February 2004, which were followed by an interdenominational service held in The Chapel of St. Mary Undercroft in the Palace of Westminster. It also followed the "State of Our Nation" conference of Church leaders held at Buckden Towers in June 2004. Together with a factual Evidence sheet it was presented to the Prime Minister, leaders of the political parties and those in positions of leadership throughout the country.

It is a call to the people of our nation. This edition was updated in January 2008.

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EVIDENCE

The State of our Nation Today

Children

- Over 60,000 children live in care in England, of which 42,000 live in foster care and 6,600 in care homes, and 2,900 are placed for adoption. (*Dept of Health Jan 2007*)
- There are an estimated 1.24 million NEETS (Young adults not in education, employment or training) in the United Kingdom. (*Cost of Exclusion Report, Prince's Trust Apr 2007*)
- 25,900 children and young people were on the child-protection register for the year ending March 2005. (*Child Protection Register, DCSF 2007*)
- 552,000 children in England alone were referred to social services departments, categorised as "in need", in the year ending March 2005. (*Ibid*)
- By 2003, over 110,000 adults had convictions for sex offences against children. (*Child Protection Helpline publication, NSPCC 2003*)
- In the school year 2005/06 there were 9,170 permanent and 343,840 fixed-term expulsions from schools in England – over 10% of the school population. (*Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions 2005/06, DFES 26/06/07*)
- 100,000 children run away from home every year. (*Beyond Refuge, NSPCC November 2006*)
- 1 in 3 (3.5 million) children are living in poverty, compared with 1 in 10 in 1979. (*Welfare isn't Working, Child Poverty, Reform 2007*)
- Out of a survey of 21 rich nations in 2007, the UK was ranked bottom for the overall well-being of children and young people, including material, emotional, family and educational well-being. (*Overview of child well-being in rich countries, Unicef 2007*)
- 16% of 15-year-olds and 5% of 13 to 14-year-olds in England attended NHS family planning clinics, and over 22,000 under 16 years attended for emergency contraception in 2005/6. (*Contraceptive Services, NHS Statistical Bulletin 2005/06*)
- In 2006, nearly 1.3 million children had parents with addiction problems. ("Bottling it up" campaign, *Turning Point May 2006*)
- There were 697 child abductions in Britain in 2006/07. (*Home Office Statistical Bulletin 2006/07*)
- 37,074 children rang ChildLine in 2005/06 about bullying, 26% of all callers. (*Bullying Statistics, ChildLine 2007*)
- 19% of children under 15 were obese by 2004. (*Health Survey for England 2004*)
- One in ten children has asthma. There are 5.2 million people in the United Kingdom receiving treatment for asthma. (*Asthma UK 2007*)

Marriage

- The number of divorces has nearly doubled since 1971, from 80,000 to 155,000. (*Social Trends 37, ONS 2007*)
- The United Kingdom has the third-highest divorce rate in Europe. (*Social Trends 34, ONS 2004*)
- 53% of divorces included a child under 16. (*NSO/Divorce Online 2007*)
- One in five people getting a divorce has had a previous divorce. (*Ibid*)
- The financial cost of family breakdown is estimated at £24 billion per year. (*Breakthrough Britain Report Jul 2007*)

Families

- 52% of all births in Wales, 47% in Scotland and 42% in England in 2005 were outside marriage, compared to 12% in 1980. (*Social Trends 37, ONS 2007*)
- 24% of children lived in a single-parent family in 2006, compared with 7% in 1972. (*Ibid*)
- 60% of fathers have little or no continuing relationship with their children after marital separation. (*Dame Elizabeth Butler Schloss, Family Law Division 2003*)
- 1 in 4 children affected by divorce are under 5, two-thirds are under 10. (*Social Trends 34, ONS 2004*)
- The UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe, 40% higher than Portugal, in 2nd place. (*Social Trends 33, ONS 2003*)
- 70% of young offenders identified by Youth Offending Teams come from lone-parent families. (*Youth Justice Board 2002*)

Life

- 46% of under 18-conceptions ended in legal abortion in 2005. (*ONS Teenage Pregnancy Unit 2007*)
- There were 6,628,203 abortions in England, Wales & Scotland between 1968 and 2006. (*Government Statistical Service Aug 2004, Dept of Health 2004/6 & NHS Scotland 2006*)
- There were 193,700 abortions in 2006, a rise of 3.9% on the previous year, and 87% were funded by the NHS. (*Dept of Health 2006*)
- The highest rate of abortion was amongst 19-year-olds: 35 in every 1000. (*Ibid*)

Need

- Each year 140,000 people attempt to commit suicide. (*Community Care 9/10/03*)
- Every day 4,500 children call ChildLine. Since it was formed in 1986, it has counselled over 1 million children. (*ChildLine 2007*)
- In 2005 the Samaritans received almost 5 million contacts. 20% expressed suicidal feelings. (*Samaritans 2006*)

Lawlessness

- The total cost burden of crime against individuals and households in 2003/04 was around £36.2 billion. (*Economic and Social Costs of Crime, Home Office 2003/4*)
- It is estimated that fewer than 1 in 50 sexual offences against children result in conviction. (*Joseph Rowntree Foundation 15/11/04*)
- The prison population in England and Wales is at an all-time high of 80,205, an increase of 25,000 in the last 10 years and an increase of 2% on the previous year. (*Home Office 2007*)
- Less than 100,000 offences were recorded in England and Wales annually before the 1920s. By 1950 the level was half a million. By 1980 this had risen to 2.5 million and in 2006/7 the British Crime Survey recorded 11.3 million crimes. (*Crime in England & Wales 2006/07, Home Office 2007*)
- 36% of males aged 18-21 admit to committing an offence in the last year. (*Home Office Research Study 209*)
- 24% of people were victims of crime in 2006/07. (*Crime In England & Wales 2006/07, Home Office 2007*)
- Shoplifting theft totalled £205 million in 2006, an increase of 9% on the previous year. (*British Retail Consortium Retail Crime Survey 2006/7*)
- More than 54,000 pupils play truant every day. (*DCSF Autumn 2006*)

Violence

- The number of deaths and injuries caused by gun attacks in England and Wales soared from 864 in 1998-99 to 3,821 in 2005-06 – that is more than 10 people injured or killed in a gun attack every day. (*Home Office/TimesOnline 2007*)
- The Metropolitan Police have identified 169 gangs operating on the streets of London, and say they are responsible for more than one-fifth of all youth crime. (*Metropolitan Police Report 2007*)
- Police recorded 5,023 serious knife crimes in England and Wales in the first three months of 2007, equivalent to about 400 offences per week. (*Ibid*)
- Attacks in which a knife was used in a successful mugging have soared, from 25,500 in 2005 to 64,000 in the year to April 2007. (*Ibid*)
- The estimated total cost of youth crime for Great Britain was in excess of £1 billion in 2004. (*The Cost of Exclusion Report, Prince's Trust Apr 2007*)
- The number of police operations in which firearms were authorised increased from 10,913 in 2000 to 15,981 in 2005. (*Annual Use of Firearms 2004/5, Home Office*)
- One in 22 NHS staff suffers violence. (*Press release, Dept of Health Jun 2006*)
- 10 children a day were expelled for assaults in 2003. (*DfES 13/07/04*)
- 1 in 5 children have experienced bullying at school in the 12 months to November 2004. (*National Council of Parent-Teacher Associations, Nov 2004*)

Drugs

- Over 800,000 people used cocaine in 2006. (*Drug Misuse Declared, British Crime Survey 2006/07*)
- If you start smoking cannabis before the age of 15, you are 4 times more likely to develop a psychotic disorder by the time you are 26. (*Cannabis and Mental Health, Royal College of Psychiatrists Aug 2006*)
- The number of 11 to 15-year-olds taking drugs in England has doubled since 1998. (*Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use amongst Young People 2003, National Centre for Social Research/National Foundation for Education Research*)
- It is estimated that just over 11¼ million people aged 16 to 59 in England and Wales have used illicit drugs at some time in their lives. (*Drug Misuse Declared, British Crime Survey 2006/07*)
- 178,502 drug offences were recorded in 2005/06 compared with 26,000 in 1987. (*Crime Statistics, Home Office 2006*)
- 1500 cannabis farms were found in London alone in 2005/06, and 60% of cannabis sold in the UK is home-grown, compared to 11% 10 years ago. (*Drugscope 2007*)
- Research in 2004 suggested that 60% of drug-addicted mothers and 85% of drug-addicted fathers no longer look after their children. (*Drug Misuse Research Project, Glasgow University 2004*)
- There were 189,032 seizures of drugs in the United Kingdom in 2005, a 42% increase on the previous year. (*United Kingdom Focal Point Report 2007*)

- In 2003 HM Customs & Excise seized 6.8 tonnes of cocaine, 2.7 tonnes of heroin, 6.7 million ecstasy tablets, 1.5 tonnes of amphetamines, 99 tonnes of cannabis and 80,000 cannabis plants. (*Seizure of Drugs in England & Wales, Home Office 2003*)
- The £8 billion-a-year drug trade has 300 big drug importers in the UK, as well as 3,000 wholesalers and 70,000 street dealers. (*Home Office/Times Online 2007*)

Pornography

- 57% of 9 to 19-year-olds have come into contact with online pornography. (*UK Children Go Online, LSE Apr 2005*)
- The Internet Watch Foundation processed 18 times as many reports on illegal websites as in 1997, from 1,291 to 23,658. (*Annual Report, IWF 2005*)
- BT is blocking up to 20,000 attempts a day to view child pornography. (*Pierre Danon, CEO BT Retail, BBC "Today" Programme, 20/07/04*)
- The Internet Watch Foundation report reveals that the number of websites featuring images of child abuse has quadrupled since 2005. (*IWF 2006*)
- Commercial pornographic sites on the internet have increased by 1,800% in the last five years. Now over 260 million pages are classified as pornography. (*Press Release, N2H2 24/09/03*)

Social Costs

- Crime cost businesses £19 billion a year in 2003. (*British Chamber of Commerce 2003*)
- The cost to the Exchequer in Job-seeker's Allowance for youth unemployment and inactivity is about £20 million per week. (*Cost of Exclusion Report, Prince's Trust April 2007*)
- The productivity loss to the economy as a result of youth unemployment is estimated at £10 million every day (*Ibid*.)
- By 2003, 15 million working days were lost every year due to alcohol, costing the economy an estimated £2.3 billion. (*Drink & Work – A dangerous cocktail, TUC 2003*)
- Treating sexually transmitted infections now costs the NHS more than £1 billion a year. (*Family Planning Association Jul 2004*)
- By 2003, £460 million a year was being spent to reduce school truancy. (*DfES Press Notice 17/09/03*)
- The Government's total expenditure on the Drug Strategy for 2005/6 totalled £1.483 billion. (*Drug Strategy, Home Office 2006*)
- The cost of arson attacks on schools reached a record £73 million a year, with two school arson fires a day in the UK, in 2004. (*Arson Prevention Bureau 16/07/04*)
- The total cost of arson in 2004 was estimated at £2.44 billion, and the cost of FRS responses to malicious false alarms was estimated at £81 million. (*Economic Cost of Fire, Office of Deputy Prime Minister 2006*)
- In 2004, more than £2 billion a year was being spent on benefits awarded due to stress, depression or anxiety. (*Dept of Work and Pensions 2004*)
- Also in 2004, three teenagers in secure accommodation were costing taxpayers half a million pounds a year. (*Cambridgeshire Children's Services 23/11/04*)

Promiscuity and Disease

- In 2005, 7,450 new HIV cases were diagnosed in the UK. This was nearly double the number diagnosed in 2000. It was estimated that 63,500 adults aged 15 to 19 were living with HIV by the end of 2005. (*NSO 2006*)
- Genital chlamydia infection rose from 89,818 cases in 2003 to 113,585 in 2006. (*Health Protection Annual Report 2007*)
- In 2006 there were 2,766 diagnoses of primary and secondary cases of infectious syphilis. (*Ibid*)
- There were 19,007 gonorrhoea infections in 2006; 40% of those infected were female teenagers. (*Ibid*)
- Sexually transmitted infections totalled 621,312 in 2006, an increase of 2% on the previous year. (*Ibid*)

Television

- Sex scenes on TV tripled over the 5 years to 2003. (*Report published by BSC, ITC and BBC: MediaWatch-UK Newsbrief Autumn 2003*)
- One child in five watched television after the 9 pm watershed in 2003. (*Study of Broadcasting Standards Council and Independent Television Commission 10/06/03*)
- In 107 films shown in 2006 Mediawatch identified a shocking 540 incidents involving firearms, 368 violent assaults and 180 incidents involving knives and other offensive weapons. (*Mediawatch Feb 2007*)
- 98% of the public agree that standards are slipping on terrestrial TV. (*Poll of 2,675 voters by ITV Teletext 20/01/03*)

Dishonesty

- In 2006-07, benefit thieves stole an estimated £700 million from public funds. (*Dept for Work and Pensions 'No ifs no buts' campaign*)
- Overall card fraud for 2006 was £428 million. (*Home Office/Association for Payment Clearing Services 2006*)
- Fraud costs the economy an estimated £13.9bn a year. (*Home Office 2006*)

- Identity fraud cost the British economy £1.7 billion in 2006, an increase of 30% since 2003. (*Home Office 2007*)

Alcohol

- The yearly number of alcohol-related deaths has more than doubled from 4,144 in 1991 to 8,386 in 2005. (*NSO Nov 2006*)
- 23% of adult males and 9% of adult females (a total of 5.9 million people) engage in binge drinking. (*Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology Report 2005*)
- On average, 3,500 people are killed or seriously injured on the roads each year. In 2005 over 90,000 people were convicted of drink driving. (*Greater Manchester Police 2005*)
- In 2004/05 there were around 35,600 NHS hospital admissions with a primary diagnosis of mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol. (*Dept of Health Alcohol Statistics 2006*)
- In 2006, 2,539 men and 1,238 women aged 35 to 54 died from alcohol-related causes, compared to 1,257 and 598 in 1994. (*ONS 2006*)
- The number of alcohol-related deaths in all age groups rose from 4,144 in 1991 to 8,758 in 2006. (*Ibid*)
- Children as young as six are being treated for alcohol abuse, with one A&E department reporting "hundreds" of children admitted every week. (*Survey of 50 A&E Departments, BBC Aug 2003*)
- Heavy drinking costs the country £12 billion a year. (*National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Statement: Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Mar 2004*)

Tobacco

- In England in 2004/05 there were approximately 1.4 million NHS hospital admissions with a primary diagnosis of a disease that could be related to smoking. (*NHS Information Centre Report 2006*)
- Smoking causes 5,000 miscarriages and 1,200 cases of cervical cancer every year. About a quarter of British men and women smoke. Smoking increases the risks of heart disease in women on the pill, causes an early menopause, reduces the chance of conceiving by about 40% and causes cervical cancer. (*BMA Feb 2004*)
- In 2005, total UK household expenditure on tobacco was £15.7 billion. (*NHS Information Centre Report 2006*)

Homelessness

- Approximately 400,000 people in the UK are homeless. (*Hidden Homeless: Britain's Invisible City, Crisis Sep 2007*)
- 107,200 homeless families now live in temporary accommodation. (*Crisis Mar 2006*)
- 156,000 young people become homeless in Britain each year. (*Shelter 2004*)

Care

- 39% of all male prisoners under 21 years old had been in care. 70% of all prostitutes had been in care. (*Project Caleb 2004*)
- Those in care are 50 times more likely to be imprisoned and 60 times more likely to be homeless. 75% of them have no educational qualification. Those in care are 66 times more likely to have a child which will be institutionalised. (*Ibid*)

The Environment

- It is estimated that cleaning up graffiti costs the UK over £1 billion per year. (*Encams 2006*)
- More than £250 million is being lost to the public transport network every year through vandalism and trespass. (*NACRO Report, Aug 2003*)

Debt

- Total UK personal debt at the end of October 2007 stood at £1.4 billion, a growth rate of 9.5% for the previous 12 months. (*Credit Action Jan 2008*)
- Citizens Advice Bureau clients have an average debt of £13,000, 17.5 times their monthly income. It will take CAB clients 77 years to repay the debt in full. (*Ibid*.)
- House repossession for 2006 totalled 17,000 - 65% higher than in 2005. (*Council of Mortgage Lenders 2007*)
- 2007 proved to be the strongest ever year for gross mortgage lending, reaching an estimated £362 billion. (*Council of Mortgage Lenders 2008*)

Emotional Need

- From 1991 to 2001, prescription items for anti-depressant drugs increased from 9 million to 24 million items. (*Social Trends No 33, ONS 2003*)
- 1 in 6 adults are mentally unwell. (*Ibid*)
- Those in their early 30s suffering depression and anxiety have doubled in the decade to 2004. (*London University Institute of Education Project 24/06/04*)
- Prescriptions for medicines for mental health problems in under-16s were up from 146,000 in the mid-nineties to over 631,000 in 2006. (*NHS Library for Medicines 23/07/07*)
- One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute. (*Domestic Violence, Home Office 2007*)

This information has been compiled and published by The Maranatha Community, a national movement of many thousands of Christians who are active in all the main churches. It is produced in conjunction with the document "The State of Our Nation – A Warning Cry to the People of the United Kingdom", which was launched at a special meeting in Parliament in December 2004. This evidence sheet was updated in February 2008. Both documents are published in the name of numerous men and women of all ages and every political persuasion. They have been presented to many in positions of authority and national leadership. Maranatha is committed to work for unity, healing and renewal of faith. It is deeply involved in community service, relief work overseas and initiatives for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. Its members work amongst the needy and destitute.

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