

# THE STATE OF OUR NATION

## A Warning Cry to the People of the United Kingdom

*Our society is in a 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 we are seeing the signs of collapsing foundations. 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 all 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 breakdown 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.

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

### 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 is 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 the formation of our current culture.

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 created man as the centre of everything – not God.

In spite of all this, we appear to be 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, especially among the young, are now virtually out of control. In rushing to deal with the situation, public policies such as the provision of sex education, 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 every city.

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.

## 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. Numbers 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

This 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. The emerging popular culture has an obsession with death and destruction, both in song lyrics and in film presentations. Popular films and television series increasingly feature images characterised 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.

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. Frequently, the majority of people in the United Kingdom choose not to vote in elections. Each of the political parties is representative of a comparatively small section of the community. The membership of the political parties is considerably smaller than that of the churches, which are 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 and bureaucratic.

An huge amount of legislation is being pushed through, both in Westminster and Europe. This is 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.

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 being tolerated.

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 tell us that the values which we once espoused seem to have disappeared.** 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.

## 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 and yet they do not appear to be working.

**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 which have held the nation together over past centuries.**

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.

In a shrinking world, with huge movements of population taking place, a pluralistic culture is inevitably emerging, but this should not be giving rise to the confusion and anarchy seen today in the United Kingdom. Pluralism, so long exalted, is in large measure now seen to be a lie. 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 claim to be Christians, according to the 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 drafting the European Constitution endeavoured 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 pluralistic 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 and should not be eroded.

**It is of immense importance that we recognise that the troubles the United Kingdom face 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. All 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. He also 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 presented in Parliament in December 2004. It follows 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 follows the 'State of our Nation' conference of Church leaders held at Buckden Towers in June 2004.

Together with a factual Evidence sheet it has been 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.

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# EVIDENCE

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## The State of our Nation Today

### Suffering Children

- Over 60,000 children live in care; 98% are admitted due to family breakdown. (*Department of Health, 2002 ref 2002/0193*)
- 32,465 children and young people were on the child protection register for the year ending March 2003. (*Statistics of Education: Referrals, Assessments and Children and Young People, 2004, DfES*)
- There are 384,200 children in England alone categorised as "in need". (*Ibid.*)
- Over 110,000 adults have convictions for sex offences against children. (*NSPCC Child Protection HelpLine publication 2003*)
- In the summer term, 2003, there were 82,400 expulsions from schools in England & Wales, 14% due to violence against another pupil. (*Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions, Summer Term 2002/3, Experimental Statistics First Release, DFES, 29.7.04*)
- 100,000 children run away from home every year. (*Children's Society, 2001*)
- 1 in 3 (4.4 million) children are living in poverty, compared with 1 in 10 in 1979. (*Child Poverty Action Group Briefing, February 2000*)
- 17% of 15 year olds and 6% of 13-14 year olds in England attended NHS Family Planning clinics in 2003/4. (*NHS Contraceptive Services, Statistical Bulletin, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2004*)
- Nearly 1.3 million children now have parents with addiction problems. (*Institute for Alcohol Studies, 2004; ACMD, 2003*)
- There were 846 abductions and attempted abductions of children in Britain in 2002-03 - up from 584 in 2001-02. (*Home Office R&D Statistics Division 1.3.04*)
- More than 30,000 children rang ChildLine in 2003 about bullying - 10,000 more than the previous year. (*ChildLine 25.8.04*)
- 18% of children under 15 are now obese. (*Health Development Agency 8.10.03*)
- Teenage asthma rates in Britain are the highest in the world. 33.6% of 13-14 year olds now suffer from it. There are now 10 million sufferers in Britain and Ireland. (*Global Institute for Arthritis Research February 2004*)

### Marriage Breakdown

- The number of divorces has nearly doubled since 1971, from 80,000 to 157,000. (*Social Trends 34, 2004, Office of National Statistics*)
- The United Kingdom has the third highest divorce rate in Europe. (*Eurostat, Social Trends 34, 2004, Office of National Statistics*)
- 25% of divorces in 2001 occurred within 5 years. (*Series FM2 No. 29, Marriage, Divorce & Adoption Statistics, ONS, 2003*)
- 30% of divorces in 2001 involved people divorced in a previous marriage. (*Series FM2 No. 29, Marriage, Divorce & Adoption Statistics, ONS, 2003*)
- The direct and indirect cost of family breakdown to the economy is approaching £30 billion a year. (*The Cost of Family Breakdown, 2000, Family Matters Institute*)

### Dysfunctional Families

- Births outside marriage have increased from 12% to 41% between 1980 and 2002. (*Social Trends 34, ONS*)
- The number of single parent families increased from 8% in 1971 to 23% in 2003. (*Social Trends 34, ONS*)
- Up to 40% of fathers lose contact with their children within two years of separation. (*Children First Consultation Paper, DSS, 1998*)
- 90% of births to teenage mothers are outside marriage. (*ONS 2001; Kirby, 2002*)
- 1.75 million children are being raised in single parent families. (*Population Trends 109, ONS 2002*)
- Three-quarters of a million British children have no contact with their fathers following the breakdown of their relationship. (*FPSC Survey of Lone Parents*)
- 1 in 4 children affected by divorce are under 5, two thirds are under 10. (*Social Trends 34, 2004, ONS*)
- The UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe, 40% higher than Portugal in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. (*Social Trends 33, 2003, ONS*)
- Young offenders now constitute one third of all criminal convictions. (*ONS, 2004*)
- More than half of convicted young offenders have absent fathers (*Wasted Lives Report co-authored by the Chief Executive of NACRO 1998*)

### Life Destroyed

- 23% of conceptions ended in legal abortions in 2000. (*Social Trends 33, 2003, ONS*)
- There were 6,024,221 abortions in England, Wales & Scotland between 1968 & 2003. (*Government Statistical Service August 2004 & ISD Scotland*)
- There were 181,600 abortions in 2003, 80% were NHS funded. (*Government Statistical Service August 2004*)
- 75% of abortions are carried out on single women. (*Statistical Bulletin, Abortion Statistics in England & Wales, DoH 2002*)

### Cries For Help

- Each year 140,000 people attempt to commit suicide. (*Community Care, 9.10.03*)
- Every day 4,000 children call ChildLine. Since it was formed in 1986, it has counselled over 1 million children. (*ChildLine 2004*)
- Last year the Samaritans answered 4.6 million calls from people in despair - one every seven seconds. (*Samaritans 2004*)

### Crime that pays

- Only 1 in 16 criminals face conviction. (*Route to Justice, Audit Commission, 2002*)
- It is estimated that fewer than 1 in 50 sexual offences against children result in conviction. (*Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report, 15.11.04*)

### Lawlessness and Disorder

- The prison population in England and Wales is at an all-time high of 73,688 (30<sup>th</sup> January 2004) an increase of 25,000 in the last 10 years and an increase of 2,729 in the past year. Home Office projections predicate a prison population of between 91,400 and 91,600 by the end of the decade. (*Home Office Statistics 2004*)
- Less than 100,000 offences were recorded in England and Wales annually before the 1920's. By 1950 the level was half a million. By 1980 this had risen to 2.5 million and in 2002/3 the BCS recorded 12.3 million crimes. (*Crime in England & Wales 2002-2003, H.O. 2004*)
- Annual criminal acts are now approximately 60 million: confirmed by Jon Simmons, Head of the Home Office's Crime Statistics Unit. (*Civitas; Nov. 2002*)
- 36% of males aged 18-21 admit to committing an offence in the last year. (*Home Office Research Study 209*)
- 27% of people were victims of crime in 2002-2003. (*Crime In England & Wales 2002-3, H.O., 2004*)
- There are approximately 31 million acts of shoplifting every year. (*The Economic and Social Costs of Crime, Home Office, 2000*)
- The total cost of retail crime is estimated to be £2,200 million a year. (*British Retail Consortium, 10<sup>th</sup> Retail Crime Survey, 2001/2*)
- More than 50,000 pupils play truant every day. (*DfES, September 2003*)

### Violence

- There was a group sex attack for every day in London in 2003. (*Scotland Yard Report January 2004*)
- Offences involving firearms have doubled since 1997. (*Social Trends 34, ONS*)
- Between 1987 and 2000 there has been a 500% increase in operations where firearms have been issued to police (2,185 to 10,913). (*Lords Hansard, 17.3.98 Statistics on the Police use of firearms in England & Wales 1999/2000, H.O.*)
- One in ten doctors are physically assaulted by patients or their relatives every year. One in three doctors experienced some kind of physical or verbal violence in the past year. (*BMA report, 'Violence at work: the experience of UK doctors', Health Policy and Economic Research Unit, October 2003*)
- Crime reported on trains, stations and railway property rose from 107,769 in 1998-1999 to 123,463 in 2003-2004. The detection fell from 30% to 21%. During this period sex attacks leapt from 719 to 1120. (*British Transport Police, May 2004*)
- 10 children a day were expelled in 2003 for assaults. (*DfES 13.7.04*)
- There were 116,000 violent or abusive incidents against NHS staff recorded in 2002/03 - a 38% rise in two years. (*Department of Health 14.3.04*)
- 1 in 5 children have experienced bullying at school in the last 12 months. (*NCPTA, November 2004*)

### The Scourge of Drugs

- Cocaine use has doubled in Britain in the past seven years. (*Independent Drug Monitoring Unit 19.7.04*)
- 11-15 year olds taking drugs in England have doubled in number since 1998. (*Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use amongst Young People 2003, National Centre for Social Research/National Foundation for Education Research*)
- People reporting to Drug Misuse Agencies in England have doubled in number since 1993. (*Regional Drug Misuse Database 6 months ending March 2001*)
- 26,000 drug offences were recorded in 1987. In 1998 there were 128,000 offences recorded. (*Drugscope Online*)
- There was a 27% increase in drug trafficking and possession offences in London for 2002/03. (*Metropolitan Police Crime Statistic 13.7.03*)
- More than five million people regularly use cannabis, 3.4m take Ecstasy and 2m amphetamines and cocaine. Two in five people between 25 & 34, and more than a third of those between 35 & 44 say they have taken unlawful drugs. (*Observer/ICM poll 21.4.02*)
- Research suggests that 60% of drug-addicted mothers and 85% of fathers no longer look after their children. (*Drug Misuse Research Project, Glasgow University 2004*)

## The Drug Conspiracy

- Drug seizures by HM Customs & National Crime Squad rose from 30,690 in 1987 to 72,065 in 1992 and to 137,340 in 2002. (*Home Office Findings 202*)
- 7.7 million ecstasy-type tablets were seized in 2001, a year on year increase of 17%. (*Home Office Findings 202*)
- There are 930 organised gangs in the UK. Most are involved in the £8.5 billion illegal drugs trade. (*National Criminal Intelligence Service Annual Report, 2001*)

## The Curse of Pornography

- 57% of 9-19 year olds have come into contact with online pornography. (*UK Children Go Online, LSE, July 2004*)
- The Internet Watch Foundation now processes 18 times as many reports on illegal websites as in 1997, from 1,291 to 23,824. (*IWF Annual Report, 2003*)
- BT is blocking up to 20,000 attempts a day to view child pornography. (*Piere Danon, CEO BT Retail, BBC Today Program, 20.7.04*)
- Five million images of child abuse are in circulation on the Internet featuring 400,000 children. (*Online Computer Library Centre, Annual Review, 2001*)
- Commercial pornographic sites on the Internet have increased by 1800 percent in the last five years. Now over 260 million pages are classified as pornography. (*N2H2 Press Release, 24.9.03*)

## The Price we pay

- Crime costs the nation £60 billion a year, according to Home Office estimates. (*Home Office Research Study 217, 2000, RDS*)
- Crime costs businesses £19 billion a year. (*British Chamber of Commerce 2003*)
- The annual cost to society of drug abuse in England & Wales is £18.8 billion, which equates to £775 per household. (*Home Office Report by University of York, February 2002; Social Trends 34, ONS*)
- 15 million working days were lost in 2003 due to alcohol, costing the economy an estimated £2.3 million. (*Drink & Work – A dangerous cocktail, TUC, 2002*)
- Treating sexually transmitted infections now costs the NHS more than £1 billion a year. (*The Family Planning Association, July 2004*)
- £460 million is being spent to reduce school truancy. (*DfES Press Notice, 17.9.03*)
- Policies tackling drug abuse will increase by 44% by 2005, to £1.5 billion a year. (*Updated Drugs Strategy, Home Office, December 2002*)
- The cost of arson attacks on schools has reached a record £73 million a year with two school arson fires a day in the UK. (*Arson Prevention Bureau 16.7.04*)
- Damage to churches and church premises now costs over £10 million a year, 3 times the level reported in 2000. (*June 2002; the Arson Prevention Bureau Report, Arson: The Major Threat to Places of Worship*)
- More than £2 billion a year is spent on benefits awarded due to stress, depression or anxiety. (*DWP, 2004*)
- 3 teenagers in secure accommodation are costing taxpayers half a million pounds a year. (*Cambridgeshire Children's Services 23.11.04*)

## Promiscuity and Disease

- New HIV infections increased by 20% between 2002 and 2003. 32% of the 49,500 people currently living with HIV in the UK are still unaware they are infected. (*Dr. Barry Evans, Health Protection Agency*)
- Chlamydia cases between 1995 and 2003 rose by 192%, from 30,694 to 89,818 in England, Wales & Northern Ireland. (*Health Protection Agency Report, July 2004*)
- Syphilis cases rose by 1058% from 136 to 1,575. (*Ibid.*)
- Gonorrhoea cases rose by 139% from 10,186 to 24,309. (*Ibid.*)
- Sexually transmitted infections totalled 708,083, in 2003 - an increase of 57% since 1995. (*Ibid.*)

## Corrupting Television

- Sex scenes on TV have tripled over the last 5 years. (*Report published by BSC, ITC and BBC: MediaWatch-UK Newsbrief, Autumn, 2003*)
- One child in five watches television after the 9pm watershed. (*Study of Broadcasting Standards Council and Independent Television Commission 10.6.03*)
- Violent scenes on TV have doubled in 4 years. There are more violent scenes before the 9.00pm watershed than after it. (*'The Depiction of Violence on Terrestrial Television', April 2002, joint publication by the ITC, BBC and BSC*)
- 98% of the public agree that standards are slipping on terrestrial TV. (*Poll conducted of 2,675 voters by ITV's Teletext, 20.1.03*)

## Growing Dishonesty

- Benefit fraud has increased to an estimated £2 billion in 2003. (*DWP, 2003, Tackling Benefit Fraud, HMSO*)
- Fraud is estimated to cost the economy a total of £13.8 billion a year, not including the costs to local government and services such as health. (*Cabinet Office Figures, 2003; Credit Industry Fraud Avoidance Scheme, 2003*)
- Overall card fraud increased by 18% to £478.8m in the twelve months to June 2004. (*Association for Payment Clearing Services, 2004*)
- Identity fraud has increased by 400% in the last five years. (*CIFAS, 2004*)

## Alcohol – A Huge Social Problem

- Alcohol related deaths have more than doubled since 1980. (*Health Statistics Quarterly, Spring 2003, ONS*)
- 1 in 4 men in the North West regularly binge-drink. (*Alcohol Concern, April 2004*)
- A quarter of road fatalities are principally caused by alcohol. (*DoE, 4.7.01*)
- 20 per cent of general hospital beds are occupied by people with alcohol-related problems. (*Chief Nursing Officer writing in Alcoholism, 2000*)
- Children as young as 6 are being treated for alcohol abuse, with one A&E department reporting "100s" of children admitted every week. (*BBC Survey of 50 A&E Departments, August 2003*)
- At peak times 8 out of 10 admissions to A&E departments are alcohol related. (*Your Very Good Health? – Report by Alcohol Concern, 28.2.02*)
- Every day 76 people are admitted to hospitals with alcohol poisoning or dependence. (*Ibid.*)
- Heavy drinking costs the country £12 billion a year. (*National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Statement : Prime Minister Strategy Unit March 2004*)

## Tobacco and Death

- Every year 114,000 people in the United Kingdom die through smoking, accounting for 20% of all deaths. (*Peto, R et al. Mortality from smoking in developed countries 1950-2000*)
- 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. (*Report by BMA, February, 2004*)
- £25 million was spent on Press, TV and poster tobacco advertising from September 2001 to August 2003. This does not include sponsorship. (*AC Nielsen MMS Ltd. October, 2002; www.ash.org.uk Factsheet 19*)

## Homelessness

- Approximately 380,000 people in the UK are homeless. (*Hidden Homeless: Britain's Invisible City, Crisis, July 2004*)
- 97,270 homeless families now live in temporary accommodation - a 135% increase since 1997. (*ODPM Report, 16.6.04*)
- 156,000 young people become homeless in Britain each year. (*Shelter, 2004*)

## Failure of Care System

- 39% of all male prisoners under 21 years old were in care. 70% of all prostitutes were in care. (*Project Caleb Report, 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.*)

## Disfigurement of Environment

- Graffiti is costing councils £27 million a year, and the London Underground £60 million a year. (*Keep Britain Tidy Report, 2nd August 2004*)
- More than £250 million is being lost to the public transport network every year through vandalism and trespass. (*NACRO Report, August 2003*)

## Massive Debt

- Unsecured debt per person has grown over 50% since 1997. Personal debt in the UK is now £1 trillion (£1,000,000,000,000), greater than the UK's annual income. (*Bank of England, July, 2004; ONS, 2004*)
- Citizens Advice has had a 44% increase in numbers of people with debt problems in the past 6 years. (*CAB Director of Public Policy 30.7.04*)

## 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 30's suffering depression and anxiety have doubled in the past decade. (*London University Institute of Education Project 24.6.04*)
- The number of 15 year olds suffering from anxiety and depression has increased by 70% since the mid 1980's. (*Nuffield Research Project September 2003*)
- 24% of adults are functionally illiterate. (*Basic Skills Agency report, May 2000*)
- Prescriptions of anti-depressants for children in Britain rose by 68% between 1992 & 2001. (*Archive of Disease in Childhood, November 2004 : School of Pharmacy in London*)

## Exit

- An opinion poll shows that 52% of British people would consider emigrating & 7% hope to relocate abroad soon. A quarter of those who would leave said it was because they "did not like what Britain has become". (*ICM Survey for BBC2 April 2004*)
- The flow of emigrants from Britain to Australia has more than doubled in the past 2 years : 8,749 to 18,272. (*Australian Immigration Department November 2004*)

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. 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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