

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 alcohol 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.

The Maranatha Community UK Office, 102 Irlam Road, Flixton, Manchester M41 6JT Tel: 0161 748 4858 Fax: 0161 747 7379
email: info@maranathacommunity.org.uk www.maranathacommunity.org.uk

EVIDENCE

The State of our Nation Today

Children

- 42,300 children and young people were the subject of a child protection plan for the year ending March 2011. (DfE 2011))
- 612,600 children in England alone were referred to children's social care services, categorised as "in need", in the year ending March 31 2011 (Ibid)
- There are an estimated 1.24 million NEETS (Young adults Not in Education, Employment or Training) in the United Kingdom. This is 9% of 16-24 year olds. (Cost of Exclusion Report, Prince's Trust Apr 2011))
- In 2009/10 there were 5,740 permanent exclusions from schools in the UK. In the same period there were 279,260 fixed -term exclusions from state schools of which 37,210 were from primary schools. Children who are eligible for free school meals are around 4 times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion and 3 times more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion than children who are not eligible for free school meals. (DfE Report 2009/10)
- More than 64,000 pupils play truant every day and 26,750 are classed as "persistent absentees". (DfE May 2011)
- 77,000 children, which is 11% (1 in 9), run away from home, or are forced to leave, on one or more occasion, before age 16. (NSPCC December 2011).
- Of 2.5 million children, 1 in 3 are living in poverty compared with 1 in 10 in 1979. This figure is projected to be 3.1 million by 2013. (IFS 2010)
- In 2006, nearly 1.3 million children had parents with addiction problems. ("Bottling it up" campaign, Turning Point May 2006)
- 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)
- 21% of 16-19-year-olds and 8% of 13/14 year olds in England attended NHS family planning clinics. (Contraceptive Services, NHS Statistical Bulletin 2009/10)
- 38% of children nationally are affected by cyber-bullying. Childline answered 30,439 calls regarding bullying in 2010. (NSPCC November 2011).
- 23% of 5 year olds and 33.4% of 11 years olds were classed as overweight or obese. (NHS UK Data Collection 2011))
- One in nine young adults (11.3%) experienced contact sexual abuse during childhood. (NSPCC July 2011)
- 17,727 sexual crimes against children under 16 were recorded in England and Wales in 2010/11. (Ibid)
- More than 100 children, including children as young as five, contact ChildLine every week with worries about their parent's drinking or drug use. (Alcohol Concern 2011)
- It is estimated that 2.6 million children in the UK are living with parents who are drinking hazardously and 705,000 are living with dependent drinkers. (Ibid)

Marriage

- There were 231,490 marriages in the UK in 2009 the lowest total since 1895. UK marriages are in decline from a peak of 480,285 in 1972 (Office for National Statistics Feb 2010)
- The United Kingdom has the third-highest divorce rate in Europe. The number of divorces in England and Wales in 2009 - the latest year published - was 113,949, (ONS 2011).
- One in five people getting a divorce has had a previous divorce. (Ibid)
- 53% of divorces included a child under 16. (NSO/Divorce Online 2007)
- European data shows that by a child's fifth birthday less than 1 in 12 (8%) married parents have split up compared to almost 1 in 2 (43%) cohabiting parents (Centre for Social Justice July 2007)
- Costs of family breakdowns are estimated to be well over £20bn per year. (Ibid)

Families

- 48% of births are outside of marriage in the UK (OECD Family Database Aug 2011)
- 44% of children lived in a single-parent family in 2010/11, compared with 7% in 1972. (Fatherhood Institute 2010)
- 1 in 4 children rarely, or never, sees their non-resident fathers. (The Fatherhood Institute)
- 9 out of 10 lone parents are female (Ibid)
- Over half of couples divorcing in the UK in 2007 had at least one child aged under 16. Therefore 110,000 children were aged under 16 when their parents divorced. 20% of these children were under 5 years old. Many more children go through parental separation each year that are not included in figures like this, as their parents were not married. (Royal College of Psychiatrists Nov 2011)
- 70% of young offenders identified by Youth Offending Teams come from lone-parent families. (Youth Justice Board 2002)

Life

- At least one third of British women will have had an abortion by the age of 45. (Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists 24 May 2011)
- The total number of abortions in 2010 was 189,574, more than double the number in 2000. (Department of Health 2010)
- 34% of women who had an abortion in 2010 had had at least one previously (Ibid)
- The highest rate of abortion was amongst 19-21-year-olds: 33 in every 1000 pregnancies. 1,042 abortions were for 15 years old and under (Dep't of Health 2011)
- 2,290 abortions (1.2%) were carried out in 2010 because of the "risk" that the child would be born handicapped. (Ibid)

Lawlessness

- Recorded crime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland cost nearly £34 billion in 2010. Of the £34 billion an estimated £18 billion was the cost of the physical and emotional impact of crime on victims. Over £2bn was spent on health services as a result of crime and £4bn was lost in lost economic output. (The Cost of Crime – Taxpayers Alliance 2011)
- There are currently 34,939 registered sex offenders in England and Wales (NSPCC March 2010)
- The prison population in the UK is 85,458 which represents maximum capacity. (Home Office 2010)
- 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 2010/11 the British Crime Survey recorded 9.6 million crimes. (Crime in England & Wales 2006/07, Home Office 2010)
- 36% of males aged 18-21 admit to committing an offence in the last year. (Home Office Research Study 2009)
- 60% of short term prisoners committed another crime within one year of release. The average number of previous convictions within this group is 16 (National Audit Office 2010)
- 26.4% of the UK population were victims of crime in 2010/11. (Nationmaster 2011))
- Crime has cost the retail industry in excess of £1.4 billion. The number of robberies in shops has increased by 20%. (Facilities Resource Ltd 2011)

Violence

- In 2010 there were 12,995 offences involving firearms in the UK, including 40 deaths (Gun Control Network 2011)
- The latest figures from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 show that the number of police operations in which firearms were authorized was 21,181 – an increase of 17.5% on the previous year. (The Minister of State for Policing, Crime and Security March 2010)
- Police recorded 7,231 offences involving knives in the London area alone in 2011. (Metropolitan Police Report)
- The estimated total cost of youth crime for Great Britain was in excess of £1.2 billion in 2004. (Prince's Trust and RBS 2010)
- There were 57,830 physical assaults on NHS staff in 2010/11 but only one in 50 led to prosecution. (NHS Protect 2010/11)

Drugs

- Over 1 million people used cocaine in the UK in 2008/9. (UN Office on drugs and crime 2009)
- 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 Psychiatrist 2010)
- In 2009 22% of 11 to 15-year-olds said they had tried drugs. (NHS Health and Lifestyle report 2010)
- It is estimated that just over 11.25 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 2009/10)
- In 2008, the latest year for which figures are available, 1,738 people died of drugs-related deaths, of whom 374 were women. Accidental overdose was the principal cause of death, accounting for 763 of the cases. (Guardian.co.uk 2011)
- Police and the UKBA made 212,784 drug seizures in England and Wales in 2010/11 (Home Office Statistical Bulletin November 2011)
- 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

- The Internet Watch Foundation reports that 58% of child sexual abuse domains traced contain graphic images involving penetration or torture; 68% of the children appear to be aged 10 or under; and 74% of child sexual abuse domains are commercial operations, selling images. (*IWF 2008*)
- 70% of men under 24 browse pornographic websites regularly (*June 2010 International Secure System Lab*)
- There are 4.2 million pornographic websites (12% of all websites), 420 million pornographic pages, 68 million daily pornographic search engine requests (25% of requests), 2.5 billion daily pornographic emails (8% of total emails), 42.7% internet users who view porn. (*Internet Pornography Statistics- Internet Filter Review 2009*)

Social Costs

- The cost of crime to business is £12.6 bn. an increase of 20 per cent since 2004 which equates to over a sixth of the total cost of all crime in the UK. (*British Chamber of Commerce 2008*)
- The cost to the Exchequer in Job-seeker's Allowances 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.*)
- 17m working days are lost annually due to alcohol-related absence. 20m working days are lost annually due to alcohol-related reduced employment; and 58,000 potential working years are lost annually due to premature alcohol related deaths. Absenteeism through alcohol-related sickness costs the UK £1.5 bn (*Institute of Alcohol Studies factsheet 2009*)
- In 2009 there were 482,696 new sexually transmitted infections diagnosed in the UK, 3 per cent more than in 2008. (*September 2010 Family Planning Association*)
- Young people aged 15-24 years continue to be the group most affected by STIs in the UK. In 2009, around two thirds of new STI diagnoses in women were in those aged under 25, and over half of new diagnoses in men were in under 25s. (*Ibid*)
- The Government's total expenditure on the Drug Strategy for 2005/6 totalled £1.483 billion. (*Drug Strategy, Home Office 2006*)
- Every week 20 schools suffer an arson attack and are now estimated to cost insurers £100 million a year. (*Arson Prevention Bureau – Arson Key Facts*)
- Arson costs the economy £53.8 million pounds each week in England and Wales. (*Ibid*)
- The average resource cost per prisoner in England and Wales in 2009/10 was £39,000. This figure does not include YOI offenders. (*Prison Reform Trust 2010*)

Promiscuity and Disease

- An estimated 86,500 people were living with HIV in the UK at the end of 2009. As of December 2010, there have been 26,791 diagnoses of AIDS in the UK, and 19,912 people diagnosed with HIV have died. (*Avert 2011*)
- Since 1999 the number of annual cases of chlamydia has more than doubled. In 2010 there were 189,612 new diagnoses of chlamydia in GUM (genitourinary medicine) clinics. (*Health Protection Agency 2010*)
- There were 16,531 gonorrhoea infections in 2010. 418,598 new STIs were diagnosed in UK genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics in 2008 – 2010, an increase from 375,843 in 2006. 16 to 24 years olds account for around half of all newly diagnosed STIs in the UK (*Ibid*)

Television

- In Britain, older children have been calculated to spend, on average, five hours and 18 minutes watching TV, playing computer games or going online each day. (*Guardian newspaper 2009*)
- 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*)

Misuse of Public Money

- In 2007/08 British MP's living outside London claimed expenses totalling £11,513,892 of which £6,700,396 was spent on rent/mortgage for 2nd homes. (*Daily Telegraph "The Complete Expenses Files" 2009*)
- The net cost to the taxpayer of servicing public debt is £22.5 billion for 2009-10. This is projected to rise to £50 billion in 2012 and £52 billion in 2013. (*HM Treasury, IFS Calculations 2011*)

Dishonesty

- Welfare and tax credit fraud and error costs UK taxpayers £5.2bn p.a. ...this is the cost of 200 secondary schools or 150,000 nurses. (*David Cameron, August 2010*)
- Card fraud cost the UK £365.4 million in 2011 (*UK Cards Association March 2011*)
- In 2010, online banking fraud cost £46.7m, phone banking fraud £12.7 and cheque fraud loss was £28.9m. (*Ibid*)
- Identity fraud costs the British economy £2.7 billion p.a. and affects over 1.8m people (*National Fraud Authority Oct 2010*).

Alcohol

- Over 10m adults in England are now drinking more than the recommended daily limit, with 2.6m of them drinking more than twice that. (*Alcohol Concern 2011*)
- 50% of 15 to 16 year-olds have participated in binge drinking and 44% of 18 to 24-year-olds are regular binge drinkers. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation- Drinking in the UK May 2009)
- The total cost of alcohol harm is estimated to be between £17.7 billion and £25.1 billion a year; of this, the cost to the NHS is £2.7 billion per year (*Alcohol Concern 2011*)
- Alcohol-related crime and disorder is thought to cost the taxpayer between £8bn-£13bn every year (*Ibid*)
- The number of alcohol-related deaths in the UK has consistently increased since the early 1990s, rising from the lowest figure of 4,023 in 1992 to the highest of 9,031 in 2008. There were 6,584 deaths directly related to alcohol in 2009. (*Ibid*)
- Parental alcohol misuse has been identified as a factor in over 50% of child protection cases. (*Ibid*)
- In 2009/10, there were 1,057,000 alcohol-related admissions to hospitals (*Ibid*)

Tobacco

- In England in 2006/07 among adults aged 35 and over, there were approximately 1.5 million hospital admissions with a primary diagnosis of a disease that can be caused by smoking. The annual number of admissions has been rising steadily since 1996/97, when the number of such admissions was 1.1 million. (*NHS Statistics on Smoking, August 2011*)
- In 2009/10, 26% (116,200) of all admissions with a primary diagnosis of respiratory diseases and 16% (141,300) of admissions with a primary diagnosis of circulatory diseases were attributable to smoking. (*Ibid*)
- In 2010, UK households spent an estimated £17.7 billion on tobacco, (*Ibid*)

Homelessness

- Approximately 400,000 people in the UK are homeless. (*Hidden Homeless: Britain's Invisible City, Crisis Sep 2007*)
- 64,000 homeless households in England were living in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities at the end of March 2009. Just over 49,000 of these households had dependent children. (*Shelter March 2009*)
- It is estimated that at least 75,000 young people experience homelessness each year in the United Kingdom. (*Study by Centrepoin and University of York*)

Care

- One quarter of the adult prison population has been in care and almost 40% of prisoners under 21 were in care as children (only 2% of the general population spend time in prison). (*The Who Cares Trust 2009*)
- More than half of all children in care have at least one mental health problem - compared with one in ten of the general child population. (*Ibid*)
- Young women aged 15 to 17 who have been in care are three times more likely than their peers to become young mothers. (*Ibid*)
- One third of care leavers are not in education, employment or training - compared with 13% of all young people. (*Ibid*)
- 65,520 children were looked after at 31 March 2011, an increase of 2% on 2010 and the highest number since 1987. (*DFE September 2011*)

Debt

- Total personal debt in the UK currently stands at £1.46 trillion. The average household debt in the UK is £8,920 (excluding mortgages). (*Citizens Advice Bureau 2011*)
- Citizen Advice Bureaux deal with 9,300 new debt problems every day in England and Wales, an increase of 27% compared with the same period in 2008. (*Ibid.*)
- The number of UK homes repossessed by mortgage lenders rose by 15% to 9,100 in the first quarter of 2011 (*Council of Mortgage Lenders April 2011*)
- Total credit card debt in August 2011 was £57 billion. (*Debt Wizard Dec 2011*)
- £141,370,000 is the interest the Government has to pay each day on the UK's net debt of £2258.8bn (which includes financial interventions). This is estimated to rise to £182m a day in 2015-16 (*Ibid*)

Emotional Need

- The NHS prescribed 39.1 million anti-depressant drugs in 2009; the figure was 20.1 million in 1999. (*NHS 2010*)
- Depression is costing the nation's economy £8.6bn a year, £3bn more than a decade ago (*House of Commons Library 2009*)
- Depression with anxiety is experienced by 9.7 per cent of people in England, and depression without anxiety by 2.6 per cent (*MIND 2011*)
- One in ten under 16s has a diagnosable mental health disorder – and many more have mental health problems. (*Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Jan 2012*)
- Nearly 1 million women experience at least one incident of domestic abuse each year. At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence (*2009/10 British Crime Survey*)

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 March 2012. 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.

The Maranatha Community, UK Office, 102 Irlam Road, Flixton Manchester M41 6JT Tel: 0161 748 4858 Fax: 0161 747 7379
email: info@maranathacommunity.org.uk www.maranathacommunity.org.uk

Updated March 2012