

# God's Judgment on Britain

No thinking person denies that the nation is in trouble; in fact the evidence is everywhere to be seen. For any closeted person too preoccupied with hedonism to notice, a few conversations with old age pensioners will soon put them right. Old people are everywhere speaking in an exceptional way; frequently one will hear the statement, *'I'm glad I will soon die, I cannot stand the way this country has degenerated'*. Or alternatively, *'I feel so sorry for young children who are being born into a life which is so repulsive.'* Statements like this are common the length and breadth of the country, from people of all social classes and means. It has nothing to do with old age cynicism or deprivation; there is a common perception that something dramatic and terrible has happened to society in the last thirty years.

A survey of young families for Mother & Baby Magazine released on 11 June 2003 said that Britain was a dirty, violent and unsafe place in which to bring up children. Over 50% of people questioned said that they no longer felt safe on the street. 60% felt that the UK is not child friendly, while 70% said that their town was strewn with litter.

The Prison Reform Trust asked a group of judges and magistrates in the summer of 2003 to comment on the high prison population in the UK. Their report attributes the rise in imprisonment to high levels of lawlessness in Britain which in turn was caused by a decline in family and moral values. One Crown Court judge said, *'I think people are becoming more lawless. I think it is probably a spreading thing that people think they can get away with it'*.<sup>1</sup>

Christians should be at the forefront of identifying the causes of this perception; in fact the state of the nation ought to be an opportunity for true Gospel preaching. Instead the church is caught up in novelties, personalities, emotional hedonism and worldliness. Absolute truth has largely departed from most pulpits, seminaries and pews. Famous Evangelical theologians can now propose:

- There is no hell as everlasting punishment.
- God cannot know the future.
- Men can change God's mind.
- God is not sovereign over all things.
- sincere followers of other religions will be in heaven.

... and much worse.

The key cause of all this confusion in the church and strife in the land is that the knowledge of God, truth and mercy have all been abandoned by church and state leaders. Britain's sovereign (Queen Victoria) could once boast to foreign princes that the Bible was the basis of social order and international effectiveness (no matter how shallow in practice), now the Bible is shunned and every Biblical truth which pertains to national life is attacked by the state. From the promotion of homosexuality to killing unborn babies, from adultery to genetic manipulation, the state supports many anti-christian acts. It is hard to imagine any modern Prime Minister proposing to The House of Commons, *'That this house do now attend at the Church of St. Margaret, Westminster, to give humble and reverent thanks to Almighty God for our deliverance from the threat of German domination'*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reported by *Evangelical Times*, August 2003 issue, p1.

<sup>2</sup> Winston Churchill, after announcing victory in the House of Commons on May 8, 1945.

God's patience with such a nation will only last a finite period. In his time he will bring judgment to a disobedient land in order to give an opportunity for repentance. This principle is clearly seen in the book of the prophet Hosea, one of the writing prophets called by God to denounce his land and its rulers for apostasy.

#### **Hosea 4**

1 Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, for the LORD *brings* a charge (strife, contention) against the inhabitants of the land: "There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land.

2 *By* swearing and lying, Killing and stealing and committing adultery, they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed.

3 Therefore the land will mourn; and everyone who dwells there will waste away (languish) with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Even the fish of the sea will be taken away.

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#### **Problems**

1. No truth.
2. No mercy, love.
3. No knowledge of God.

#### **Symptoms**

1. Swearing, cursing, wrongful oaths.
2. Lying, deceit.
3. Stealing.
4. Adultery.

#### **Results**

1. Norms of behaviour are broken.
2. Bloodshed upon bloodshed – everything gets worse and worse. Justice breaks down.
3. The land mourns and is devastated.
4. People waste away.
5. Animal life is affected. The ecological system breaks down. Specifically, the worst affected are: agricultural livestock, birds and fish.

God's word to Hosea outlines the effects upon the nation which departs from God's order for society. There cannot be a rejection of God or his principles of absolute justice without an effect in the nation (See also Joel chap.1; Rm 8:19-22).

God's assessment of Britain's recent Parliamentary stewardship could easily be summed up in the words of Hosea 10:13:

You have ploughed wickedness; you have reaped iniquity. You have eaten the fruit of lies because you trusted in your own way.

But God also remonstrates with the church because his people are 'destroyed for lack of knowledge' (Hos 4:6). Leaders who depart from the absolute truth of God's word destroy their people and are subsequently rejected (Hos 4:6). Rejecting truth always leads to sin and, consequently, punishment (Hos 4:7-10). God's word to the church, therefore, is surely found in Hosea 6:4-7:

... O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, And like the early dew it goes away. Therefore I have hewn ... I have slain them by the words of My mouth; And your judgments *are like* light *that* goes forth. For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt

offerings. But ... they transgressed the covenant; ... they dealt treacherously with Me.

It is just as certain that our response to the current crisis of knowledge and leadership should be the text close by:

Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up ... He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight.

Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter *and* former rain to the earth. (Hosea 6:1-3)

It is of vital importance that our lives are based upon truth, and truth is centred in the knowledge of the Lord. The church is founded and established in truth so any deviation from truth leads only to ruin. In the same way, a nation must be built upon justice, and justice is the outworking of truth. The truth sets free; falsehood brings bondage. When governments pass laws based upon lies, the nation dies a slow death.

It is instructive for us to see how God's judgment is actually being worked out in the life of our country; for only by understanding what is happening to Britain can we hope to have an answer to the questions of unbelieving friends.

Firstly, however, we have to convince some who may question whether our time is special in any way. 'Surely', they say, 'today is no different from any other historical period. There are always calamities and the current problems are just part of the normal exigencies of life.'

## **Is Britain currently under the special, judgmental discipline of God?**

1. We have already seen that **God warns nations** that the departure from his law will lead to judgment. Scripture is full of this and the warnings to national leaders are frequent. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God. Let the nations be judged in Your sight. Put them in fear, O LORD.* (Ps 9:17-20). See also: Isa 30:1-4, 60:12; Jer 5:29, 18:6, 25:12-33; Ezek 2:3ff, 39:23-24; Amos 9:8-9; Zeph 3:6-8; Acts 13:19. Inspection of many texts will show clearly that God warns all nations not just Israel. Indeed, history is merely the outworking of God's dealings with the nations that he established (Acts 17:26).
2. **Rulers are held accountable for the sins of the nation:** *For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD* (2 Chron 28:19). See also: Gen 20:4,9; 2 Sam 24:10ff; Prov 25:5; Mic 3:1-4, 3:9-12. **They are commanded to govern in righteousness:** *It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, For a throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And they love him who speaks what is right.* (Prov 16:12-13) See also: Prov 16:10, 20:28, 25:5, 28:16, 29:2; Ps 2:10-11, 110:5; Isa 10:1-2, 59:14-15; Amos 5:11-12; Hab 1:4.
3. **Judgment is not restricted to eternal punishment.** National sins often result in corporate strife today, as well as accountability tomorrow at the last judgment: The world was destroyed by a flood from God for its iniquity, only eight people chosen by God survived (2 Pt 2:5). Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire from heaven as a judgment for iniquity (2 Pt 2:6). The seven Canaanite nations were destroyed for their

immorality (Deut 7:1; Acts 13:19). Egypt was judged for oppressing Israel (Ex 6:5-7). The resultant loss of the leadership and firstborn eclipsed Egyptian power for centuries. Assyria was judged for its cruelty and pride, even though it was used as an instrument of God's judgment against Israel (Isa 10:5). Babylon was punished for its sins (Isa 13:1ff, 14:21, 43:14-17, 47:1; Jer 50:1ff, 51:1ff).

4. **Israel's disobedience was an object lesson for all nations.**<sup>3</sup> God promised punishment for national disobedience when the nation was first formed: Lev 26:14ff note that the resultant judgment includes – diseases, depression, defeat in war, unpopular leaders, crop failure, destruction of livestock, pestilence, famine, devastation in cities, desolation, captivity of the population and even cannibalism. The punishments are ratcheted up if national repentance continues to be ignored after warnings. (See also Deut 28:15ff). Israel experienced all these things in her rebellious history, e.g: *And it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD.* (2 Chron 12:2). See also: 2 Chron 24:23-24; Ps 44:9-16; Isa 5:25-30, 9:8-12, 13:3ff; Jer 12:7; Ezek 23:22ff. The judgment on other nations for similar sins, delineated in scripture, shows that all nations will be judged by the moral standard God gave Israel.
5. **The iniquity of Babylon is a symbol of national transgression.** Revelation explains that all nations follow in the typical lust and evil of historic Babylon and become similarly demonic in their transgression against God's law (Rev 14:8, 18:2-3). In the end times, all nations grow rapidly more corrupt in the same way that Babylon did, and are accountable to God for their sin.

**First proposition:** Britain, like all nations, is obliged to honour God and obey his laws. The more light it has, the more it is accountable. Since England drew up its laws in the light of the Ten Commandments and also professed to be a 'Christian country' (not that there is any such thing), England has no excuse when it flouts the law of God.<sup>4</sup>

6. **Has Britain departed significantly from God's law in the last fifty years or so?** There is no doubt that it has. A number of factors demonstrate this, among them we mention:
  - *The law against witchcraft was repealed.* In 1951 the Witchcraft Act of 1735 was repealed by the Fraudulent Mediums Act, the onus being put upon protection from fraud by bogus spiritualists. This opened the door for fortune telling and divination, prohibited by the 1735 Act, witches and Satanists could also practice their pagan rites and spells with impunity. [The 1735 Act repealed the 1604 Act that had prohibited the conjuring up and invocation of evil spirits.]
  - *The blasphemy laws (of 1189) were weakened in practice.* On 15 November, 2001 Home Secretary David Blunkett called for Britain's ancient laws against blasphemy to be scrapped (CWNews.com). They were last used in a 1977 prosecution of Gay News over a poem depicting Christ as a homosexual. In reality they are ignored.
  - *Laws against homosexuality were weakened.* The Sexual Offences Act of 1967 states that homosexual acts performed between consenting adults over 21 in private is no longer a criminal offence. The New Labour government brought the age of consent down to 16. This government was tireless in pushing for gay rights: it ended the ban on gays in the forces; it fought to scrap clause 28; it let gay couples adopt; and it scrapped laws against 'cottaging' in public toilets. In July 2003 it proposed to institute 'civil partnerships' or 'gay 'marriage' rights (at a heavy cost through extending pension rights to gay partners).

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<sup>3</sup> See excursus at end.

<sup>4</sup> Alfred the Great prefixed the Ten Commandments to his Legal Code so that they became associated with the nation's statutes. They remain there today.

- *Abortion was legalised.* Before David Steel's 1967 Abortion Acts became law the number of legal abortions in England and Wales was 6,100 in 1966. By 1968 it was 24,000; by 1973 167,000. By 1983 over 2 million legal abortions had been carried out since the Act was passed. By 1995 this figure rose to over 4.5 million.
- *Birth control for teenagers without parental consent was allowed.*
- *Divorce was made easier and marriage discouraged.* The 1969 Divorce Reform Act allowed divorce on the grounds of 'irretrievable breakdown' based on one of five evidences (adultery, desertion, unreasonable behaviour, two year separation when divorce is agreed and five years if not agreed). The Family Law Act of 1996 is based upon the 'no-fault principle', irretrievable breakdown being the sole cause, proved by a 12 month separation. New Labour ended the married couple's tax allowance.
- *Parental disciplining of children was restricted.*
- *Teachers' ability to physically discipline children was removed.*
- *The violent and immoral content of media images were increasingly permitted.* Full frontal nudity and simulated sex was allowed by the 60's on Television. Graphic (and often gratuitous) violence became commonplace on TV and movies.
- *Justice was seen to be increasingly perverted.* Police prosecutions became increasingly corrupt and unsafe. One after another high profile trials revealed that the police had fabricated evidence, hidden evidence from defence counsels, provided false confessions and so on. An astonishing 68% of convictions reviewed in England are overturned. (See later.)
- *Drug abuse and street crime soared* as the police presence on the streets waned.
- *The church is in meltdown and apostasy.*

The list could be extended ad infinitum, but why is all this any different from what transpired in the past?

- The sheer aggregation of differing events is one thing. Problems of this sort have always been around, but the way all the calamities are currently coming together, and the number of them, is historically unusual.
  - Some things are exceptional. Even in barbarian societies there were basic moral absolutes. Children respected parents, old people were cared for within the community, children were protected. In the UK today we are seeing a massive failure even in these basic areas: many children fail to be protected – paedophilia is rampant, especially within the very circles which are supposed to protect them (such as the police, judiciary, care services and government). Old people are treated with derision, disrespect or ignored. Which ancient 'barbarian' society ever experienced the mugging of an old woman in her home for a pittance, followed by the lady being killed and her heart ripped out; or the breaking of an old lady's hand to rip her handbag away as she lay flowers on her husband's grave? Which historical government allocated a rise in old age pensions of a derisive 75p? Which ancient societies ever encouraged children to be disrespectful of parents in the way the UK does by teaching children about their 'rights' within the family and curtailing child discipline. Which historical society condoned the murder of millions of unborn babies?
  - Another factor is that many of the nation's problems arise from legislation. Calamities can reasonably be expected where there is no law, punishment, civil service, public services or democracy. However, many of our contemporary problems are actually caused by the government, bad laws, failures in crime and punishment, over arching bureaucracy and leadership flaws.
7. **Are there signs of God's displeasure manifested in unusual circumstances of domestic calamities?** The news repeatedly reports that certain catastrophes are without parallel in living memory or recorded history.

- *England has repeatedly seen severe tornadoes in recent years which have caused exceptional levels of devastation to property.* When land areas are taken into account, the United Kingdom actually has the highest frequency of reported tornadoes per unit area in the world. This was first recognised by an American meteorologist, Dr. Ted. Fujita (who devised the F-Scale), in 1973. On average the UK might see up to 33 reported damaging tornadoes every year; but in 1982 there were 150 tornadoes. Damage is usually slight but in recent years tornado damage has ripped apart houses, gardens, roofs and outbuildings in places on the South Coast like Selsey and Fareham.
- *England has experienced unusual earthquakes of sizeable proportions.* An earthquake in the West Midlands in 2002 caused fear and alarm as houses shook. Bystanders thought that a bomb had exploded.
- *There has been unprecedented floods in the last ten years.* ‘Several extreme weather events have recently caused large-scale losses across the UK. Examples include the windstorm during the Christmas and New Year period in 1997/98, the floods along inland rivers in central England in April 1998, and the storms and inland floods across the U.K. between October 2000 and February 2001. Each of these events caused several fatalities, damaged hundreds of millions of pounds worth of property, and caused severe disruption to society.’<sup>5</sup>
- Despite floods, the 90’s saw unprecedented droughts and raised summer temperatures.
- New diseases are arising while some are plaguing the community. For example: CJD, SARS and AIDS, while MRSA affects one in ten people admitted to hospital.
- Cattle livestock has been devastated by BSE. Farmers were subsequently brought to near ruin by Foot and Mouth disease. The tourist industry lost billions due to poor government handling of the epidemic.

We will examine these in more detail shortly.

## 8. **The conclusion must be that God is judging Britain and ratcheting up the punishment.**

- Britain has formally rejected God’s commands for the ordering of society.
- National calamities comply with the sorts of warnings and curses which God delineates in his word for the disobedient nation.

# An outline of some judgments upon Britain and their correlation to God's Biblical curse

We cannot specify all the information required to satisfy a technical survey, as this would require dozens of pages of data going back centuries, in any case confirmed weather data is rare before the 18<sup>th</sup> century. All we can do is outline cases to illustrate that severe problems are being manifested in Britain since the 1950's, and the common perception is that these problems are being compounded in number and intensity. [For further details on these subjects, turn to Appendix Two.]

## Severe Weather

Since the 1950's Britain has seen the highest temperatures, the worst floods, the strongest winds, the worst tornadoes, the most rain, the biggest earthquakes and some of the worst storms in recorded history.

### Temperature and Rainfall

The highest and lowest recorded temperatures occurred in 1990 and 1995. Other extremes also took place after 1950. The highest rainfall, both for one day and for a whole year happened after 1950.

### Floods

- In Jan/Feb 1953 storm surges on the east Coast killed more than 300 people. Sea defences were raised but are now requiring renovation. In this area housing development has rapidly expanded under the apparent protection of these defences. Today, the sea level has risen and there has been large scale land subsidence causing specialists concern that a major storm surge in this area would cause casualties higher than in 1953.
- In 1993 Chobham was seriously flooded. It was the worst flood to hit this area in a century.
- The floods of autumn 2000 affected 10,000 properties resulting from what the news media called the 'Great Storm' followed by other gales. On 13 October, insurers feared that it would prove to be the most expensive natural disaster in British history. Insurers estimated costs may run to £4bn - the biggest bill for a natural disaster the UK has seen and more than twice as much as the hurricane of 1987. Lewes and Uckfield were badly hit. Uckfield was flooded twice in three weeks. At one point in Lewes a cow was seen floating down the high street. By 31 October there were 34 severe flood warnings and 225 flood warnings in force on dozens of rivers across the country. Villagers had to be evacuated from Yalding in Kent for the second time in a month after three nearby rivers burst their banks. In November 2000 York was flooded when the River Ouse reached its highest level since records began, 5.3m above normal. 3,000 homes were evacuated. Later, thousands of homes were swamped around Britain. The River Severn also threatened Worcester, Gloucester and Shrewsbury. In December 2000, floods and severe storms brought chaos to many other parts of the UK. South West England and South Wales were worst hit and in Devon the weather conditions claimed the lives of two people after their car was swept off a road. Police said much of West Wales had been practically cut off by floods.
- Floods in January 2003 also caused chaos to homeowners. The River Thames in Oxford reached its highest levels since 1947.

## Fog

Between 4-9 December 1952, 3,500-4,000 people died (mostly children and the elderly) from acute bronchitis resulting from smog (smoke mixed with fog) in London. This was the longest ever duration at low altitude of fog in the UK (4 days 18 hours in London, from 26 November to 1 December 1948 and again from 5 to 9 December 1952).

## Earthquakes

- 23 September 2002, Dudley in the West Midlands was the epicentre of an earthquake measuring 4.8 on the Richter scale. Buildings shook for up to 30 seconds in parts of the West Midlands, Wales, North Yorkshire, London, and Wiltshire. Glenn Ford, a senior seismologist at the British Geological Survey (BGS), said: 'It's an extremely large earthquake in UK terms'. BBC weather forecaster Pete Gibbs said: 'It's not that unusual to have an earth tremor, but it is unusual to be that widespread and that widely reported'. Julian Bukits, of the BGS, said that an earthquake of magnitude four is equivalent to 1,000 tonnes of TNT - which in turn is equivalent to the power of a small nuclear weapon.

## Tornadoes

Instances of tornadoes activity and damage appear to be on the increase.

- 23 September 1999 - In Pagham (West Sussex) at about 5 a.m. a tornado caused a £1m trail of destruction, at least 50 dwellings and some vessels in the harbour were badly damaged.
- 30 October 2000 - Two people were injured when a tornado hit Selsey, in West Sussex, early on Monday - less than 48 hours after a similar freak wind caused devastation a few miles along the coast at Bognor Regis.
- 26 May 2002 - In the Haywards Heath (West Sussex) area a farmer reported a damaging tornado which killed one of his cows with flying debris.
- The longest-track tornado in the UK was on May 21, 1950, which touched-down at Little London (Buckinghamshire), tracked 107.1 km to Coveney (Cambridgeshire) and continued 52.6km as a funnel cloud to Shipham (Norfolk) where it disappeared out to sea. By comparison, the tornado with the longest reported track in Europe occurred nearly 300 years earlier during September 1669, tracking from La Rochelle (Charente-Maritime) to Paris - a length of 400 km.<sup>6</sup>
- The largest tornado outbreak in Britain is also the largest tornado outbreak known anywhere in Europe. On November 21, 1981, 105 tornadoes were spawned by a cold front in the space of 5.25 hours. Excepting Derbyshire, every county in a triangular area from Gwynedd to Humberside to Essex was hit by at least one tornado, while Norfolk was hit by at least 13. Fortunately most tornadoes were short-lived and also weak.
- Another source states that there were 150 reported tornadoes in 1982 but this may be a wrong reference to 1981.<sup>7</sup>

## Wind extremes

The highest hourly and annual recorded wind speeds occurred after 1950.

## Storms and Gales

- On 15-16 October 1987, 20 million trees were destroyed, mostly in the South East, as winds of over 115mph thrashed the land; whole woods disappeared and 19 people died.

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<sup>6</sup> The Tornado and Storm Research Organisation  
(<http://www.torro.org.uk/severeweather/britwxextremes.htm>)

<sup>7</sup> The 'Severe Weather UK' web-site; <http://www.severewx.co.uk/tnfaq.htm>



Several caravan parks were flattened while Shanklin Pier was destroyed. [Such ferocity is unprecedented in living memory, however, the weaker gale which hit southern England on 26 November 1703 had worse effects. Winds of up to 80mph killed 123 people and destroyed more than 400 windmills. 8,000 sailors perished as the storm decimated the British fleet. Hundreds of vessels were lost, including four Royal Navy men-of-.] It was estimated that insurance claims amounted to over 1 billion pounds.

- According to the Met Office the last storm of similar magnitude in England occurred in 1703. On 30 October 2000, the worst storms in a decade battered southern Britain, killing three people and flooding roads and towns. Winds reaching almost 100mph brought travel chaos; hundreds of houses were evacuated and fallen trees caused damage to power lines.

... therefore the land will mourn, (Hosea 4:3)

## **Decline of Industry**

### **Farming**

- *BSE* (bovine spongiform encephalopathy or 'Mad Cow Disease') – is a disease which renders the brain of cattle spongy so that the animal loses control and eventually dies – there is no treatment. It is similar to scrapie in sheep. It was first diagnosed in the UK in 1986 and 95% of cases have occurred in Britain. It is believed that the cause was feeding cattle contaminated meat and bone meal, instead of grass. The US, whose herds of cattle freely graze, has had no instances of BSE. The effects of BSE are still continuing as some countries still restrict imports of British beef. UK farmers suffered terrible losses from this outbreak. When exports were renewed to Europe in September 2002, farmers had effectively lost six years of exports at a cost of millions, but even before this, beef sales were damaged by the BSE scare as far back as the late 80's.
- *Foot and Mouth disease* - Britain's livestock farmers were devastated by the recent outbreak which cost the UK billions of pounds. The failure of the government to vaccinate (as recommended by the Royal Society report and many others) caused the culling of thousands of animals which devastated the countryside and failed to contain the outbreak. The government even failed to ban the movement of animals or call in the army in time. The resultant loss to tourism was worth billions, while the actual cost to rural residents breathing in dioxins from the pyres is unknown, let alone the devastation caused to farmers who were already on a knife edge after BSE. The lesson of the previous outbreak in 1967 were ignored.
- *EU Common Agricultural Policy* - CAP is a system of European Union agricultural subsidies which represents about 50%-70% of the EU's spending. These subsidies work by guaranteeing a minimum price to producers. Politically, the CAP was a means of enticing France into economic union with Germany in 1960, whereby Germany was able to transfer funds to France's farmers, the main beneficiary of CAP. The supposed aim was to support farmers to enable Europe become self sufficient in agricultural products after the war. In time, intervention prices (supposed to be below the market price as a floor to help the farmer) rose far higher than market prices, thus subsidising farmers to be living in unreality – paying them for unnecessary produce. In turn this meant exports were subsidised but imports had levies. So farmers were encouraged to grow more, and these stocks could not be sold – the result was mountains of butter, skimmed milk powder and beef plus lakes of wine; much of which is destroyed. Farmers became dependent upon subsidies and grew what nobody needed in order to secure them. Proposals to reform this ludicrous system were passed by the EU in July 2003, but these were weak.

*Therefore the land will mourn; and everyone who dwells there will waste away (languish) with the beasts of the field. (Hosea 4:3)*

## **Fisheries**

- *EU Common Fisheries Policy* - adopted in the early 70's was unjust from the very start in the way it was planned and operated.<sup>8</sup> Neither fishermen nor the electorate were consulted before Edward Heath gave away the UK's fishing rights.
  - Equality of access to member states of our more plentiful fishing waters (e.g: France has about a fifth of our stocks) denied freedom to UK fishermen.
  - The policy was rushed through by the original six EU states just before the accession talks with Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the UK. Entry to the Common Market meant that the new states had to accept the discriminatory policy, determined at the last minute, by existing states who fished in their waters. For this reason Norway declined to join the EU.
  - The result of all this was that Britain suffered outrageously from the CFP. The main problems have been the policy of quotas introduced in 1983 and decommissioning introduced in 1992 (downsizing the fishing fleet to save stocks) both of which have been exacerbated by the size and practices of the Spanish fleet. Eighty per cent of EU fish come from British waters but, thanks to the quota system, British boats have only been allowed to catch 30-50% of many species. Moreover, since 1983 the tonnage of fish landed in British ports has declined by one third.<sup>9</sup>
  - Quota hopping is also unjust (where foreign states buy UK vessels to obtain the fishing licence). This resulted in the loss of about a third of the UK's tonnage of fish.
  - Ludicrous quota rules resulted in the destruction of fish stocks when fishermen were forced to dump dead fish back into the sea [thus polluting it] if these fish are of the wrong type or if they take a vessel over its quota. However, the Spanish pay no attention to the rules. The huge Spanish fleet (18,000 vessels compared to the 1,000 British) is not policed by Spain whose inspectors are in land-locked Madrid. Consequently, it breaks all the rules and takes what it likes.<sup>10</sup>
- The final result has been the devastation of the British fishing industry, the demoralisation of fishing communities, unemployment and massive damage to fish stocks so that even cod is now on the danger list. By May 2003, the situation was so bad that, despite having cut cod quotas by 45% in the previous year and restricting boats to fishing only 15 days a month, the EU announced the first long-term clampdown (10 year catch limits) on cod fishing in the North Sea, Irish Sea and Atlantic Ocean.

*Even the fish of the sea will be taken away. (Hosea 4:3)*

## **Coal Mining**

Britain once had a mighty coal industry when Yorkshire and Lancashire competed for the title of 'workshop of the world', then Britain had more than 1 million coal miners but, gradually, economic problems have resulted in closure after closure. Whether this could have been avoided is debatable – the National Union of Mineworkers say that the pits are full of coal, the industry chiefs insist that it is too costly to remove and can't compete with natural gas which is much cleaner to use. Britain only has 11 viable collieries left, and their fate seems gloomy. The imminent closure of the Selby pit and the loss of 2,000 jobs will get rid of a quarter of Britain's remaining coal production. Every time a pit closes, the whole local community infrastructure is destroyed; not only are historic jobs lost and families desolated, but supporting businesses cannot survive, whether sub-contractors to the coal

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<sup>8</sup> See: *The Politics of Fishing*, Tim S. Gray, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne.

<sup>9</sup> *The Common Fisheries Policy*, Dr. Alan Sked

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

industry or suppliers of the local villagers. For instance, UK Coal estimates mining machinery manufacturers contribute £34m a year to the regional economy. Miners were once said by a Prime Minister to be the 'backbone of England', now with only a few thousand left England has no mining industry to speak of.

### **Steel**

By March 2003 Anglo-Dutch steelmaker Corus was severely leaking cash. Its chief executive quit, and it announced an operating loss of £393m, while its share price collapsed. It may have to cut up to 3,000 jobs after already shedding most of its workforce when it cut around 6,000 jobs over the previous three years. Like other UK businesses it failed to adequately invest in its future and speculated poorly; a botched take-over of Brazilian iron ore giant CSN last year only added to its woes. One analyst dryly put it: 'Corus' achievement was quite spectacular in managing to lose money in 2002.' This criticism could be applied to a number of British firms, for instance Marconi or the Post office. Again, poor British management was blamed for the failures.

### **Manufacturing**

By February 2003, Britain's manufacturing industry reported its worst fall in output in more than 10 years. Factory production fell by 4% in 2002, the largest annual slump since 1991, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics. The fate of British manufacturing again raised fears over the health of the UK economy in general. More companies collapsed: there was 15% increase in company insolvencies in the fourth quarter of 2002, compared to the same period a year earlier. The figures confirmed the scale of the UK slowdown, with 4,323 companies going bust in the fourth quarter of 2002, an increase of 11% on the previous quarter. Simon Rubenstein, chief economist at investment bank Gerrard, said that the manufacturing figures proved the sector was deep in recession ... 'By any standards that should be sufficient to conclude that the industrial part of the economy remains firmly locked in recession,' he said. Manufacturing has borne the brunt of the slowdown in world trade and is believed to be shedding about 10,000 jobs a month. The sector makes up around 20% of the British economy. The figures of 18 February show industrial output was down 0.9% from the third quarter of 2002, and 1.5% down on the third quarter of 2001.

## **Crime and Punishment**

### **Failure of Justice – Miscarriages of Justice**

A staggering 68% of convictions reviewed in England are overturned.

- *Stephen Downing* spent 27 years in jail until his conviction was quashed.
- *Derek Bentley* (who was 19 but had a mental age of 11 and an IQ of 66) was hanged despite a public outcry on January 28, 1953, less than three months after a bungled robbery. He was technically under arrest when his companion Christopher Craig, 16, shot PC Sidney Miles. In July 1998, forty five years after Bentley was hanged, the conviction was overturned by the Court of Appeal.
- *The Guildford Four* In 1989 Carole Richardson, Gerard Conlon, Patrick Armstrong and Paul Hill were cleared of the Guildford and Woolwich bombings after serving 14 years in prison. Prosecutors told the Old Bailey police officers had seriously misled the court, altered notes of interviews and suppressed and fabricating evidence (including concocting supposed confessions).
- *The Maguire Seven* convictions were ruled unsafe in 1990 after an inquiry exposed faults in the police's forensic evidence. Annie Maguire, husband Patrick, Sean Smyth, Vincent Maguire, Patrick "Guiseppe" Conlon and family friend Patrick O'Neill were convicted of running an IRA bomb factory in north London in 1974. Mr Conlon died in prison in 1980 while serving his 12-year sentence. However, three appeal court judges

found that traces of nitroglycerine found on their hands and gloves could have been the result of innocent contamination.

- *The Birmingham Six* were convicted in 1975 for the murder of 22 people in two pubs in Birmingham the previous year. Paddy Hill, Richard McIlkenny, Hugh Callaghan, Gerard Hunter, William Power and John Walker - were freed in March 1991 after the Court of Appeal quashed all the convictions, having heard that police interview notes were fabricated and other evidence was discredited.
- *Judith Ward* was wrongly convicted of the 1974 M62 coach bombing in which 12 people died - at the time it was the worst IRA outrage on the British mainland. She served 17 years for crimes she did not commit and lawyers at her appeal said there had been significant and substantial non-disclosure of information to the defence.
- *Andrew Evans*, served 25 years for a murder he did not commit. He was 17 when convicted in 1973 of battering 14-year-old Judith Roberts to death near her home in Tamworth, Staffs, but in December 1997 the Court of Appeal ruled his uncorroborated confession was unsafe.<sup>11</sup>

### **Failure of Justice – weak sentences**

The appalling sentences of some long term criminals is almost too staggering to believe, as is the human rights issues of convicted felons. Recently James Robertson, a convicted murder who had served his time for kicking to death an elderly war veteran, was arrested for attacking a colleague with an axe and was dismissed from his job as a health inspector with Preston Borough Council. He claimed compensation for wrongful dismissal and won the case. Apart from his compensation of £800, the tribunal hearing cost the tax-payer eight thousand pounds. Surely this is a world gone mad? A few further examples will have to suffice:

- According to a report in *The Guardian* (7 January 2001), the light sentencing of Internet child porn users resulted in an epidemic of child porn and paedophilia. Courts refused to treat child porn as abuse. Typical cases:
  - the possession of live films of children as young as two being abused resulted in the offender being given 80 hours community service.
  - Paul Gadd (aka Gary Glitter) - received a four-month sentence in 1999 for downloading 4,000 images of children, including a two-year-old being tortured. He was released after just two months.
  - A 22-year-old was given a three-year probation order for creating and distributing child porn. He was found to have downloaded 5,000 images of children who were being abused.
- Of the 16.4 million crimes committed each year (Home Office British Crime Survey) only **0.33%** (yes, less than ½%) result in a custodial sentence.<sup>12</sup>
- Community service does not work. In January 2002 the *Daily Express* identified that as at April 2001, according to Home Office figures, more than 100,000 arrests warrants were outstanding in relation to persistent criminals who have failed to serve community punishment orders supervised by the probation service. As the situation worsened, probation officers were told to forget about outstanding warrants more than a year old. These people are usually career criminals who milk the system.

### **Failure of Justice – Government intervention**

From time to time the Government overrides the very basic principles of human justice in seeking to prevent a worse scenario. This application of situation ethics (the end justifies the means) has led to an appalling corruption of justice and caused grief to victims and

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from article in <http://christianparty.net/dnaengland.htm>

<sup>12</sup> For more information, see: <http://www.csra.org.uk>

relatives. The worst such case is the *Good Friday Agreement* in Northern Ireland which allowed the release of scores of convicted murderers and terrorists. To take just one case: on 12 October 1984, Patrick McGhee's bomb exploded at the Brighton Grand Hotel in the first attempt to destroy the ruling power in the land since Guy Fawkes in 1605. He failed to kill Margaret Thatcher, or disrupt her power base, but did kill 5 innocent people and maimed many more. He was sentenced to 35 years in prison (many would say this itself was not enough). In fact he only served 13 being released under the *Good Friday Agreement* to cheers from IRA supporters. This is a travesty of justice which God holds the British Government accountable for.

### **Failure of justice – Government tactics and trendy policies**

- When the government uses the same kind of principles as terrorists then the nation is in terminal decline. That many governments have done this goes without saying. History shows that even Churchill used gas on Iraqi dissidents. A modern example is the protection of informants in Northern Ireland. The double-agent known as 'Stakeknife' was a man who repeatedly tortured and assassinated victims, murdering up to 40 people. He supplied the British Army with information from 1978 onwards for a salary of £80,000 a year. An entire team of the Force Research Unit (FRU) was dedicated to handling him. More than once innocent people were killed in order to protect him. One, Thomas Oliver, was tortured and killed after helping the police when it implicated Stakeknife. It beggars belief that the British Army 'handled' this killer and organised the murder of innocent people to protect him.
- A convict successfully sued his local education authority for failing to give him a 'suitable' education. Marvin Pomfret, 24, who is serving a life sentence for torturing a prison officer during a siege, was awarded £75,000 after he claimed that his criminal career could have been avoided if Bolton council had sent him to a special residential school instead of care homes when he was young.<sup>13</sup>
- America has long allowed the torture of suspects but does so by farming them out to friendly nations which have no qualms about it (such as Jordan); CIA operatives are usually present. However, torture is now becoming admissible in English law. Subsequent to 9/11 (the excuse for many restriction of liberty) a special immigration appeals committee reviewing the cases of ten of Britain's twelve foreign nationals, detained under the anti-terrorist legislation, has decided that evidence extracted by torture can be used to determine guilt etc.<sup>14</sup>

### **Rise of Crime**

Again as we approach mid term local elections in 2003, one of the key social problems being highlighted in the debate is the sense of overriding criminality in British streets. This was one of the first things picked up in the Tory TV campaign broadcasts. Statistics on this subject have been twisted left, right and centre by the left, right and centre parties to suit themselves. The appalling twisting of facts as presented in some places is staggering. I actually wrote to the Chief Constable of Sussex Police after their annual accountability newspaper revealed that the front page headlines, which stated how well they had performed, were actually the very reverse of the statistics placed in small tabulated print at the back of the paper. I received an unsatisfactory reply and a customer friendly visit from a commander. The following year exactly the same occurred. Headline statements were made that certain crimes had gone down while the actual figures showed that they had risen.

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<sup>13</sup> *The Week*, 18. 10.03, PC Watch.

<sup>14</sup> Jon Snow, *Snowmail* 29/10 [Channel 4 News team's daily e-mail briefing.]

In fact, the Home Office figures for many crimes, and certainly for violent crimes show a gradual increase year on year since the turn of the century, with an acceleration after 1950. But whatever the statistical facts, the perception of the homeowner, the parents, the teachers, the religious leaders etc. is that crime is increasing in severity and quantity. Most of us now know the victim of a mugging, of a burglary, of car crime or violence. Time was that very few people in any large social circle had personal knowledge of such crimes. Official facts: in 1921 there were only two crimes per police officer per year, in 2002 there were 44. The rate of detection has plummeted in the last 20 years, there was 50% clear up rate of robberies in the early 70's, today it is 15%. Between 1857 and 1992 robberies rose to 60,000 a year. Between 1996 and 2002 robberies rose to 121,000 a year.

Although government leaders downplay the rise of crime, at election times they major on it and what they intend to do; then they fail to do it. Labour came to power on a slogan of, 'Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime', and then presided over several years of the biggest drain of police officers this country has ever seen.

The fact is that few people seem to be able to stem the rise of crime so that more and more streets become unsafe. The root causes of drug abuse, drug dealing, indiscipline of schoolchildren, anti-social behaviour and so on, always fail to be tackled. The land becomes more and more lawless and the policing services more and more ineffective.

## **Social Issues**

It would take a whole book in itself to outline even the barest impact of the permissive society upon the social situation in the new millennium. Just one or two points will have to suffice.

In the sixties people sought to be able to express their personal freedom by throwing off all restraint. In some areas there was a real need for correction, but in many cases the restraint (such as marriage or sex/abortion laws) was a vital component of decent society. For instance, sexual promiscuity became not only tolerated, but allowed and even encouraged by the media. The contraceptive pill enabled much more freedom for women's sexual emancipation. If that failed, abortion laws were weakened and terminations became much more available. Marriage became passé and divorce became easier. All of this was claimed to be egalitarian, liberal and modern. However, the result was: that divorces soared as people failed to knuckle down to the responsibility of partnership, the end result was that today one in four children are raised by a single parent. Much of the resultant delinquency problems which are plaguing British suburbs arise from lack of proper parenting, often because the single parent is unable to do so, however sincere. Incidents of sexual disease increased dramatically (see later). Children as young as 12 started to become pregnant. A great deal of the crises facing Britain today arise out of the breakdown of the family.

Another issue has been the growing degradation of the old. As the NHS faces meltdown, it is the old that suffer most. As care homes close all over the country, it is the old that suffer most. As the transport system collapses and prices rise, it is the old that suffer most. As society fragments and families become separated by long distances, it is the old that suffer most. As the country becomes fixated with youth culture, it is the old that suffer most. As the nation becomes more dependent upon technology, cars, out of town supermarkets, and so on, it is the old that suffer most. As prices rise for those who cannot afford cars to get to supermarkets or distant relatives it is the old that become more and more poor. Research undertaken by Age Concern and the Fawcett Society published in May 2003, reveals that 25% of women OAP's are living in poverty. A quarter of those senior citizens who have brought up children in better times, or who served in the war are officially in poverty!!!

This alone is a disgrace to the nation, and especially to the government who just a couple of years before granted a derisory 75p pension increase to these same people.

Additional bullet points:

- Back-to-school fashions for children are so shocking that parents have called the experience *'the whore wars'*. Girls as young as ten are dressing like 'pop tarts', emulating celebrities they see on TV with: spaghetti-strap blouses, micro-miniskirts, midriff-baring tank tops, lacy thong undies and T-shirts with racy slogans. Some schools have issued prohibitions that, *'No underwear should be visible'*. Bombarded by images from the entertainment industry, even pre-teen girls today *'treat oral sex like a handshake'*.<sup>15</sup> In 2004 one in four 16-17 year-old girls is on the contraceptive pill.
- A respected journalist applied to several children's charities to offer her assistance. She was repeatedly rejected. Her faults: 1) she believed that children needed to be told the difference between right and wrong. Leaders told her that they would never dream of doing this, children need the freedom to make up their own minds. 2) She believed that children should be told to stop swearing. The policy was that swearing was part of kids culture and children should not be deterred.<sup>16</sup>

## Health

### Disease

- Diseases once under control are reappearing.
  - Tuberculosis is now on the rise in the UK, mainly in underprivileged areas in the North. In 1992 an outbreak gripped New York and killed hundreds of people.
  - STD's - By 2003, cases of the sexually transmitted disease chlamydia had increased 73% in the previous five years, and genital herpes by 13%. Cases of infectious syphilis had increased 374% between 1997 and 2001.<sup>17</sup> The latest report given to the News Media on 11 June 2003 showed that the UK's genito-urinary clinics were in meltdown, unable to cope with the rise of stds. One in ten woman are now infected with chlamydia while syphilis rates have now increased by 500%.
- New diseases:
  - MRSA – the superbug, found mainly in hospitals, is a sober testament to the decline of UK standards. It mainly breeds as a result of poor cleaning in wards. There are hardly any medications left which will combat this powerful bug and one in ten people who stay in hospital will catch it. 100,000 people each year catch infections in hospitals they did not have when they went in, and over 5,000 people every year die from these infections. The very place meant to care for sick people has become a threat.
  - AIDS – has killed more than 2.3 million people in 20 years and is now a raging epidemic in places like China and Africa.
  - Ebola – a haemorrhagic fever thought to have come from monkeys. First identified in 1976, this virus kills 80% of those it infects.
  - Nipah virus – originated from bats.
  - SARS – originating in China, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome is a new flu like virus which currently is killing 10% of those affected and it is spreading like wildfire. There is no vaccine and no test for it at the time of writing. It appears to be another zoonosis (animal disease spread to humans) like bird flu which also arose in China due to the overcrowded conditions and proximity of humans with animals. [Asian

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<sup>15</sup> *The Week*, p13, 20.9.03.

<sup>16</sup> *The Week*, p40, 13.9.03

<sup>17</sup> *The Week*, Medical File, 26.4.03

Flu (1957) and its Hong Kong variant (1968) were traced to paddy fields and chicken coops in China.]

- Nile virus.
- Bird flu.
- Foamy monkey disease.
- vCJD – variant Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease is the human variation of BSE, a rare and fatal neurodegenerative disease which renders the brain cortex spongy (spongiform encephalopathy). Studies confirmed this new variant in 1990, just after the BSE cattle crisis. Despite government assurances at the time, it appears that BSE infected meat can transfer infection to humans. Of the more or less confirmed 134 cases in the last 12 years, 127 have died. In March 2004 the NHS declared that all blood donors who had received blood transfusions themselves in the last 20 years would be rejected from giving further blood due to fears of vCJD.



## Environmental Issues<sup>18</sup>

### Plant losses

- English Nature warned in 2003 that a fifth of Britain's wild plants are under threat from new agricultural methods. The countryside has changed over the last 60 years as a result in new farming techniques, so that the diverse variety of rural environments is being replaced by flat, boring plains of agri-commerce.
- Over the last 20 years 28% of the UK's 1,254 plant species have declined.

### Insect losses

Over the last 20 to 40 years 71% of the UK's 58 species of butterflies have declined in the UK.

### Bird losses

Something is wrong when Britain's two commonest garden birds are in rapid decline.

- Once the most widespread of British birds, the sparrow population has been decimated in the last decade. Specialists are not sure why, but factors include: the destruction of hedgerows, farm pesticides and the proliferation of Magpies which eat Sparrow eggs and nestlings. Sparrows have declined by 52% since 1979.
- The number of starlings recorded, as by the RSPB's 'Big Garden Birdwatch', has declined by 67% since 1979.
- Wetland birds are declining at an alarming rate. Since 1982 60% of Snipe and 40% of Lapwings and Curlew have disappeared according to the British Trust for Ornithology. This is presumed to be due to the draining of flooded meadows.
- Some 2-3% of UK mallards are thought likely to die annually from lead poisoning from eating shotgun pellets, with certain species losing five per cent in some areas. Birds with acute lead poisoning die within a few days. Chronic poisoning takes several weeks to kill them.
- Over the last 20 years 54% of the UK's 201 bird species have declined.

Many bird species are in decline as a result of climate change, environment destruction, pesticides and intensive farming.

*... and the birds of the air (Hosea 4:3)*

## Economic issues

### Pensions

- The pension crisis facing the UK is a ticking time bomb. Labour MP Bob Marshall Andrews QC even stated on BBC's Despatch Box that when the full truth came out, this alone would cost New Labour the next election. Gordon Brown raids pension funds of billions to boost the exchequer each year, and penalised businesses with raised National Insurance contributions in 2003 after taking over 40 stealth taxes from the British people (by 2004 this had risen to 60). All this at a time when the value of investments fell so dramatically that the portfolio of pension groups dwindled in value. Full term occupational pensions will now be anything up to 50% of their expected value, and the future is as yet unknown. By June 2003, many workers found that since ailing pension funds prioritised existing pensioners, the value of some pensions for middle aged workers was zero, despite payments over decades. All the government has done so far is to encourage people to work until they are 70 (in France retirement age is 57). Many people now face a much poorer future, some face destitution.

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<sup>18</sup> See *Science Magazine*, March 2004. Article by Dr, Sandy Knapp of the Natural History Museum.

- Coupled with this was the scandal that hundreds of thousands of people would finish working without paying off their mortgages as a result of endowment policies which failed. The government knew about this problem brewing and had some responsibility, but has done nothing to alleviate the suffering of those affected – many of whom are the same folk who face low or zero firms pensions.

### **Public Services**

After an appalling failure to invest in public services for years, the Labour Government then planned a large increase of funds over several years. The problem was that many services had degenerated to such a level that additional funds could not resurrect them. However, failures of Biblical proportions emerged as, despite large injections of cash, services worsened. Millions were put into education – the result is planned teacher strikes, financial shortfalls, intended teacher redundancies, worsening infrastructures, deepening low morale and a more teachers leaving the job than ever before. Billions are being put into the NHS but waiting lists are still huge, doctors are in short supply, there are nowhere near enough nurses, infrastructures are falling apart, junior doctors' hours are still inhuman so that mistakes proliferate, specialist clinics are in crisis, cleanliness is a joke and now student nurses are being left in charge of patients with no supervision. One Bristol hospital was over £40m in the red in May 2003. We could go on.

This is another sign of a judgment from God where no matter how much the government invests in a matter, the money drains away, doing no good:

*Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Consider your ways! You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.' Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Consider your ways! ... You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away.'* (Haggai 1:6-9)

## **Conclusion**

I could literally write hundreds of pages outlining the further breakdown of society in Britain which evidences that God is judging this country, but surely the point is made.

Christians need to be in a right mind about this. It is pointless blissfully thinking that everything is well and good and revival is round the corner. It is tragic for believers to spend all their time in holy church huddles ignoring the depth of what is going on in the estates and urban streets around them. It is callous to pretend to seek the mind of God and ignore the huge signs of God's activity in judgment in this nation. Christians also need to take care how they use their citizenship rights to avoid being contaminated in sharing in the unrighteous decisions of those above them.

Prophets of God do not just address the Lord's people to encourage them. God sometimes raises up prophets whose key task is to condemn society and the leaders who have corrupted it. Amos was one such person, read his denunciations of Israel if you feel that there is no place for believers to evaluate and speak into their society. In fact, a great deal of the ministry of the writing prophets was denunciation of those who had rejected God's word. These denunciations included condemnation of kings, leaders, priests, the rich and public services.

It is also a mistake to simply spend all one's time focusing upon this subject to the exclusion of all else. We are here for a purpose, and that purpose is to focus upon the Lord

Jesus Christ and to testify to his Lordship and Gospel in all that we do. Trudging over conspiracies, government lies and breakdowns all the time is a poor testimony. Yes we need to know the truth, but our task is to represent Christ as the light the broken down world needs. Evangelism should be our prime social concern.

## What does the believer do in the light of all this?

Firstly, the Christian must have faith. These facts must be put into their Biblical context, especially in connection with the clear line of events that will mark the end times.<sup>19</sup> In this time of crisis and depression, the Christian should be marked out by his sense of security, peace and stability. His faith is strengthened as he sees the world follow the course that God laid out hundreds of years ago. His faith is in the God who declared the end from the beginning and who demonstrates his power and glory through his outworking purposes in the nations.

Secondly, this is a time of great Gospel opportunity. While the world fumbles about from crisis to crisis, the believer holds the key to explaining what is going on. As the world leaders adopt more and more foolish policies, the believer understands why this is so – godless leaders are forced into stupidity by their rejection of the law of God. The more they reject God's will, the more senseless their policies become. Nations seek to elevate themselves and mankind against God, but the Lord sits in the heavens and laughs. In this situation only true Christians can provide a proper commentary to world events. Consequently, these times present superb opportunities for the Gospel message. The world is fearful and worried about what the future holds; the believer can explain why the world is in this mess and show what the way out is. Almost any conversation about current affairs can now be turned into a Gospel opportunity because world events cry out for a saviour.

Thirdly, we should be careful and watchful in prayer. In the light of God's judgment, we need to take care about what we pray for or we may find ourselves praying against God's will and purposes. Jesus specifically warned us about this in Matthew 24; as the end times unfold, we need to *watch* as well as pray. One gets regular prayer requests from various organisations which amount to asking for prayer to make the world a better place. Some churches and organisations are devoted to this purpose; one chorus from this stable falsely declares, *'We've been called to change the world'*. In fact, God has explained to us very clearly that the world in this time will worsen, nation will rise against nation, the church will plunge further into apostasy, there will be wars and famines while social structures will break down under the selfishness of citizens, focused upon money and their own pleasure.<sup>20</sup> In this situation, is it right to pray that the UK will be radically improved and shine like it did in previous generations? Is this God's agenda? As more calamities unfold there will be more opportunities to turn someone's crisis into a Gospel opportunity, by prayer and witnessing, but this is not a time to pray for national improvement. A nation under judgment cannot expect God's mercy without repentance.

Finally, believers need to be careful to find the truth in what is going around them. Satan is said to work by powerful deception during these times and none of the news outlets can be fully trusted. Christians need to realise that the world system is at enmity with God, even when it pretends to be Christian. Leaders lie, government apparatchiks spin yarns, the

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<sup>19</sup> The 'last days' is the time after the manifestation of Christ and the crucifixion (Acts 2:17; 1 Cor 10:11; 2 Tim 3:1; 1 Pt 1:20; Heb 1:2, 9:26; 1 Jn 2:18). The Gospel Age is the period of the last days. However, although Jesus initiated the 'last days' 2,003 years ago, there is still a clear Biblical sense of a time approaching the end which believers must be watching and waiting for (Matt 24:33,42), able to sense the nature of the times (2 Thess 2:1-3). Within the 'last days' period are items on God's plan which are yet still future (e.g. Isa 2:2; Micah 4:1); and other items which were future to the apostles (e.g. 2 Pt 3:3; 2 Thess 2:3). Thus it is right to talk of an 'end times' when these things start taking place. For instance, it seems certain that we are currently in the time of apostasy where multitudes in the church fall away from the truth.

<sup>20</sup> See Matthew 24; 2 Thess 2; 1 Tim 4:1-5 etc.

media is untrustworthy, therefore, believers must carefully investigate what is going on. They must check things out for themselves (much easier with the Internet) and read between the lines.<sup>21</sup>

An example would be the reasons behind recent moral wars. Why did the UK get involved with wars in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq? Was it really to prevent humanitarian crises and make the world a safer place? If so, why did we not go to war with worse abusive states like Zimbabwe, Saudi Arabia or North Korea? Why not relieve the suffering in the Congo where 4 million have been murdered? Why not take China or Russia to task for military and police atrocities where thousands, even tens of thousands, have died? Why has every war zone been left in a worse state than it was before? Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan are in a complete mess and still have no working democracy, while criminals have taken over.<sup>22</sup> The answer lies in power, greed, control and resources. In every case the war was meant to strengthen the United States' international power base and safeguard the flow of oil, either in oil fields (Iraq) or crucial oil pipelines (Kosovo, Afghanistan). Are these good reasons to go to war, especially in a pre-emptive strike? Certainly not; and yet millions of Christians supported these wars since they did not search out the full facts. We are accountable to God for what we support as well as our thoughts and actions. We should not allow Satan's deceptions to fool us.

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<sup>21</sup> This affects details as well as broad-brush issues. For instance, John Simpson stated, on a Channel 4 documentary presented by Jon Snow in June 2003, that while he was reporting from the Iraq war, he received much better unbiased reporting from the Al-Jazeera and Jordanian news networks than from any of the US ones, as a veteran foreign correspondent who was there he should know. He claimed that a definite propaganda message was being manipulated by the US news media. News reports have claimed that Jewish missiles blew up buildings when the damage was done by PLO/Lebanese troops. A major victory claimed for US forces in Tora Bora, Afghanistan was actually a debacle until British marines were called in. US news media claimed over 300 Taliban dead at the time when only one was killed while the US had suffered over 300 casualties. Such 'spin' happens everyday. Only after huge pressure and after the Iraq war ended did the UK government admit that its 'dodgy dossier', which helped convince citizens war was vital, was released without sanction of the intelligence services and contained outdated, uncorroborated evidence gleaned from the internet and put together by spin doctors. Events now show that much was fabricated or enhanced and that even US chiefs knew there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq which threatened the West. The government told lies to convince Parliament to go to war on an illegal basis in a pre-emptive strike that killed up to 10,000 innocent civilians. The seriousness of this beggars belief.

<sup>22</sup> Kosovo is a disgrace. The country is now the European centre for mafia activities where crime reigns supreme. Residents live in fear while muggings, murder, rape, kidnapping, prostitution and drug running thrive. To save an exaggerated ethnic cleansing of Kosovars, the west empowered an even greater ethnic cleansing of Serbs. Lies forced the war. As of July 2003 in Afghanistan, lawlessness reigns outside Kabul and the Taliban are rising to power again so that the US representatives are being forced to include them in power-broking deals. The west never achieved its key objects of capturing bin Laden or Mullah Omar. Cocaine and heroin production are now at high levels and flood the west after previously being eradicated by the Taliban. Again lies forced the war since most of the 9/11 terrorists were Saudi and none were Afghan. Iraq is a complete mess: an illegal pre-emptive war founded upon false claims of a threat to the west, the complete destruction of societal infrastructure which had been the best in the Middle East, alienation of the very middle classes needed to rebuild the country, refusal to allow true democracy since it would mean a Shi'ite government like Iran resulting in a guerilla war like Northern Ireland where more troops are being killed after the 'end' of hostilities than before.

## Appendix One

### Excursus: The relationship and contrasts between Israel and other nations

It is true that Israel's theocracy was unique; other nations are not called to live in exactly the same way that she did. God was Israel's king who did not command Britain to celebrate Jewish feasts or establish a temple. However, the moral basis underlying Israel's governance is a model for all nations.

Although the law was specifically given to Israel, and it contained religious elements specifically for Jehovah worship, the moral underlying principles were for all societies. Quoting from Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, Paul identifies the accountability of Gentile (Greek) cultures along with the Jews when he states that both are under sin (Rm 3:9-18). In Rm 3:19 he specifically states that the law is applicable to *'every mouth'*, that *'all the world may become guilty before God'*. Indeed, an examination of the laws of ancient empires reveals a close correlation with the laws of Israel.

The moral principles of God's law are to be obeyed by every society. It is right for all men to honour God, to not kill, to not steal etc. The Gentiles did not have the written law but the principles of moral goodness are known in the heart and conscience of all men (Rm 1:19-20, 2:14-15).

When God reveals his wrath against sin for ungodliness and unrighteousness, he is totally just since all nations know what is right, but they suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rm 1:18). David commented on this in Ps 14 when he declared that all men have become corrupt and fail to do good, all the children of men do abominable works.

So, although the Jewish law is not entirely applicable to modern societies, as theonomists would have us believe, the foundational principles and moral standards are right for all men. Keeping the Sabbath day on Saturday for total rest is not a law which God commands British citizens to keep; neither are the laws about livestock applicable, or the tabernacle worship system or stoning adulterers. All these must be interpreted in the light of New Testament revelation. However, the principles underlying these statutes, as well as the clear moral commands, are applicable to all. Adultery is a sin and should be punished, not legalised or encouraged for instance.

The law is the revelation of God's mind for human relationships and godly worship. If we know that God is against stealing or adultery, then our society must incorporate such into civic statutes. It is for these reasons that God condemns the wicked men and nations throughout scripture. They have no excuse since they ignored God's will as expressed in his internal (in the conscience) and external (in his Word) laws.

*Them that honour me I will honour (I Samuel 2:30)*  
*Righteousness exalteth a nation (Prov. 14:34)*  
*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD (Ps. 33:12).*

## Appendix Two

### Further examples of extremes in recent Britain

#### Temperature

- Greatest diurnal range: 29 C (52.2 F), from -7 C (19.4 F) to 22 C (71.6 F) at Tummel Bridge (Tayside) on 9 May 1978.
- Highest: 37.1 C (98.8 F) at Cheltenham (Gloucestershire) on 3 August 1990.
- Lowest: -27.2 C (-17 F) at Braemar (Grampian) on 11 February 1895 & 10 January 1982; and at Altnaharra (Highland) on 30 December 1995.
- Warmest annual mean: 11.5 C (52.7 F) at Penzance (Cornwall) and on the Isles of Scilly, averaged from 1931 to 1960.

Virtually all apply to the period after 1950.

#### Wind extremes

- Highest hourly mean: 159 km/h (99 mi/h) at Great Dun Fell (Cumbria) on 15 January 1968 and Lowther Hill, Scotland on 20 January 1963.
- Highest annual mean at low altitude: 33.1 km/h (20.6 mi/h) at Fair Isle (Shetland), from 1974 to 1978.
- Highest non-tornadic gust: 278 km/h (172 mi/h) on Cairn Gorm Summit on 20 March 1986.
- Highest non-tornadic gust at low altitude: 228 km/h (142 mi/h) at Fraserburgh (Grampian) on 13 February 1989.
- Highest wind in upper atmosphere: 656 km/h (408 mi/h) at 47,000 m (47 km) or 154,200 ft (29.2 mi) recorded by rocket above South Uist (Outer Hebrides) on 13 December 1967.<sup>23</sup>

All these occurred after 1950.

#### Rainfall

- Highest in any 24 hours: 279 mm (11 in) at Martinstown (Dorset) on 18 July 1955.
- Highest in any year: 6,527 mm (257 in) at Sprinkling Tarn (Cumbria) in 1954.

Both occurred after 1950.<sup>24</sup>

#### Floods

- Folkestone Flood (August 1996) 400 houses flooded.
- Boxing Day Storm 1998 - Northern Ireland peak 110,000 homes without electricity. Rest of UK 89,000 homes. Compensation payments £5.80m.
- Torbay Flooding (Oct 1999) 70 houses reported flooded.
- East Coast Gale (December 1999) severe disruption, 24,000 homes affected.
- N. Scotland Storm (Jan 2000) 9,000 homes without electricity.
- S. England Storm (May 2000) 781 houses flooded.
- Floods in October 2002 caused damage and closed roads in Northern Ireland and the Newcastle area. Ireland saw mudslides and landslides close roads while manhole covers shot into the air on fountains of water. Brian Irvine of the Fire Brigade office in south Down stated that it was the worst flood he had ever seen. Flooding also caused havoc in East Anglia. Fallen trees closed roads while a mini whirlwind destroyed property in Kirby Cross near Frinton.

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<sup>23</sup> The Tornado and Storm Research Organisation  
(<http://www.torro.org.uk/severeweather/britwxextremes.htm>)

<sup>24</sup> Tornado & Storm Research Organisation; *ibid*.

- The BBC quoted statistics which revealed that in the South West, rainfall had increased by 20% over the previous 60 years. Wales also suffered from floods and winds of 75mph.

### **Tornadoes**

- July 1999 - There were numerous reports of funnel clouds and tornadoes particularly in the Midlands, where local structural damage occurred in places.
- On the 25/26 September 1999 funnel clouds were seen near the Essex / Suffolk border and off the north Conwy coast respectively.
- 27 October 2000 - a tornado was reported from Bognor Regis shortly before 1700, resulting in local severe damage.
- 6 October 2001 - In the Norfolk Broads a tornado caused local destruction.
- 15 October 2002 - A tornado was reported in Torbay on the morning of the 15th, along with a couple of other separate reports in Essex later on the 15th.

By comparison, the UK's most deadly tornado hit on 27 October 1913, killing six residents of Edwardsville, a Glamorgan mining town. The strongest tornado occurred in 1810 according to the Tornado and Storm Research Organisation.

### **Miscarriages of Justice**

- *Jimmy Robinson and Vincent Hickey* were given life sentences; *Michael Hickey*, Vincent's cousin, who was 16 at the time of the killing, was detained at Her Majesty's Pleasure; and *Pat Molloy* was given a 12-year sentence for the manslaughter of Carl Bridgewater, a 13-year-old newspaperboy, who was shot at Yew Tree Farm, outside Wordsley in Staffordshire, in September 1978. There was no forensic evidence against the men. Mr Molloy signed a confession but died in prison in 1981 maintaining the statement was forced out of him. Four weeks after the men's trial ended in November 1979, Hubert Spencer, an early suspect in the Bridgewater case, shot dead Hubert Wilkes, an elderly farmer, at the farm next to Yew Tree Farm. He was subsequently jailed for life. The three surviving members of the Bridgewater Four were finally released in 1997, after serving 17 years.
- In 1976, a jury found *Stefan Kiszko* guilty of the murder of 11-year-old schoolgirl, Lesley Molseed. He served 16 years before being freed by the Court of Appeal in February 1992 after it emerged evidence which might have cleared him of the murder had not been made available at the original trial. Mr Kiszko suffered a fatal heart attack the following year.
- *Patrick Nicholls* was Britain's second longest serving victim of a miscarriage, after serving 23 years for a murder appeal judges ruled never even took place. The former showman was jailed for life in 1975 for killing a 74-year-old widowed friend, Gladys Heath, from Worthing. Evidence against Mr Nicholls had suggested she had been beaten and suffocated - but in 1998 he walked free after modern scientific opinion concluded she had died after falling down the stairs.
- *Darren Hall, Michael O'Brien and Ellis Sherwood*, also known as *the Cardiff Three*, had their convictions quashed in December 1999, 11 years after being wrongfully jailed for life for battering newsagent Philip Saunders to death during a robbery.

The Criminal Cases Review Commission was set up in April 1997. Since it began, the CCRC has examined 3,808 cases and referred 154 to the Court of Appeal. Of the 82 which have so far been heard, 56 convictions were quashed, 23 were upheld and three were reserved judgments.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Adapted from article in <http://christianparty.net/dnaengland.htm>



## Appendix Three

### A Letter From A Church Leader

Dear Sir,

As a vicar and writer in the Church of England, I am being inundated with letters from people from all over the UK, who are despairing at the state this country is in. My post-bag reveals that there is an ‘unofficial debate’ going on in every city, town and village – with people asking ‘What has gone wrong with Britain?’

The very essence of justice, decency and common sense is in meltdown. People are saying ‘the country has gone mad’, with crime and teenage pregnancies soaring, family values collapsing, teachers being reprimanded for disciplining pupils, road rage, courts failing to adequately punish offenders and so on.

Politicians often blame poverty, unemployment and bad housing for this rise in crime – but the UK has always had these problems to a greater or lesser degree, so clearly something else has gone wrong.

Statistics covering the past 150 years of British Society reveal two related U-curves. The first, an inverted U, shows church and Sunday school attendance rising in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and peaking in 1905, before going into steady decline.

The second U-curve, this time the right way up, also begins in the late Victorian era and shows crime, drunkenness and illegitimacy falling to a low at the turn of the century, and then steadily rising.

The marked fall in crime as church attendance rose was noted by commentators of the day. One such historian, O.L. Pike, wrote: ‘There has never been a time in which life and property have been so secure’. Another wrote: ‘Football crowds are as orderly as a church meeting’.

It seems it wasn’t people’s fear of arrest that kept them from breaking the law, but their inner morality. Church attendance had promoted conscience, self-control and the belief that they were accountable to God for their actions.

The lesson is surely that these values and beliefs have a timeless quality about them and they can only be ignored at terrible cost. Today’s Britain is paying that price.

Rev. J. Willans  
Leigh, Surrey

In a letter to *Evangelical Times*, September 2003

## Appendix Four

### An Author's Scenario

Famous author J.G. Ballard published a new book in 2003 called, *Millennium People*. In this the 73-year-old foresees a rise of middle class violence sweeping through London. Ballard stated that the middle classes are really teetering on the brink, angered by high housing costs, high taxes, and the large costs of childcare and schools. In all this, big salaries don't count for much. Privileges once accepted, like jobs for life or private education, are vanishing while the government expects them to carry on being the bureaucratic fodder to keep the establishment going. Ballard sees that their patience will one day snap and mentions the current active involvement of the middle classes in protest groups like: animal activists, anti-hunt demonstrators or Green issues, where violence sometimes occurs, even bombs being placed under animal experimenter's cars.

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