

Vision for the Nation - a Christian Manifesto

This initiative was launched by Church Society in the run up to the 2000 General Election. The following text was issued at the time giving both the reasoning behind the Manifesto and the Manifesto itself. The Society was criticised by some for this initiative including one complaint to the Charity Commission who argued that the Society had entered the political sphere and was promoting one particular party. Needless to say given the purposes for which the Society exists this complaint was vigorously rebutted.

Explanation of the Manifesto:

On the face of it we as a nation have much to be thankful for. There is considerable material prosperity, and when asked many people consider themselves to be happy. But knowing, as we do, the will and mind of God revealed in scripture there is much to be concerned about and ashamed of in our nation today. We must as a nation give thought to God and His purposes. We must as Christians call people to repentance, to recognise that we have strayed from God's ways and that, whether in the short term or long term, the consequences of such rebellion are severe.

It is with these things in mind that Church Society has initiated a ***Vision for the Nation - a Christian Manifesto***. In the first instance this will be directed to ministers and elders (primarily because it is easier to identify them). We are seeking to ensure widespread support from bible believing people. The core concern is to make people recognise that there are moral and spiritual issues facing us as a nation. The response to a government budget or to political canvassing is too often motivated by personal interest, 'what is in it for me'. We believe that many people know that there are more important matters and as Christians we want to make people think about these things. It is time that people began to ask where we are heading as a nation. It is time to ask what God is saying to us through the problems we have been facing. It is certainly time that we as a people repented of our godlessness and turned to the ways of God. Our longing is that the people of our nation and our national leaders would recognise the importance and truth of what is set out in the Manifesto. We pray that they would see in the Vision a positive statement of the good and well-being that comes through joyful obedience to the loving purposes of God.

Text of the Manifesto

WE, the undersigned Christian ministers and church elders, who believe that God has made himself known to mankind, who hold the truth of the Ten Commandments and teach the Christian ethic of the Bible, are resolved to proclaim in the power of the Holy Spirit that the Lord Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

We shall proclaim God's Word (the Bible) knowing it is able to bring people, whatever their past, into a right relationship with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and that it teaches the right way to live. In doing this we will encourage all people to be good citizens, to do all things to the glory of God, and to enjoy him for ever.

We state the following principles which we believe are of first importance to all people.

We affirm that, in his goodness, God has given to the peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland relative security, stability and prosperity.

We affirm that civil government is a means ordained by God for maintaining good order in communities.

We affirm that the prime duty of civil government is to uphold truth and virtue and to restrain wickedness and vice.

We affirm that civil leaders are called by God, the supreme Lord and King of the world, to honour him in all that they do so as to serve him and people not with pride but in humility.

We affirm that Christians are to pray for all people, including especially those in authority, and to demonstrate in their lives that God's way is the best way.

We affirm that the moral relativism and libertarian values which dominate public life have had disastrous consequences for our nation. The institution of marriage has been seriously undermined and deep damage has been done to family life. The abortion rate continues to rise, especially among young women and teenage girls. Since 1995, despite efforts to promote "safer sex", diagnoses of sexually transmitted diseases have risen dramatically. The rising levels of crime provide evidence of a lack of respect for people and their property.

We affirm that the institution of marriage is the God ordained basis for a well ordered society and that the only form of marriage that should be recognized in civil law is the union of one man with one woman voluntarily entered into for life to the exclusion of all others.

We affirm that heterosexual marriage is the most conducive to good and stable family life and that recognition of this should be seen in both adoption law and the tax and benefit system.

We affirm that sex is a gift from God which is to be enjoyed only within lifelong heterosexual monogamous marriage and that the failure to teach chastity within marriage and abstinence by those not married is an affront to Almighty God and has encouraged the promotion of promiscuity.

We affirm that same sex sexual activity is always sinful and contrary to God's law and, therefore, call for the retention of the legislation that prohibits the promotion of homosexuality in schools.

We affirm that responsibility for the upbringing of children lies primarily with parents and that it is important for schools to respect and help them in this duty.

We affirm the need for and value of an education system which is based upon and respects core Christian values and that the teaching of the Bible provides the best moral instruction for children.

We affirm the importance of daily corporate acts of Christian worship in all state schools, the vital place of teaching the Christian gospel and Christian ethics in the basic curriculum, and that local and national government should facilitate the provision of Christian schools whether church or parent controlled.

We affirm that human life from the moment of conception is a gift from God which has a dignity because it reflects God and, therefore, that the use of human embryos for experimentation and cloning and the deliberate killing of unborn children in abortion seriously undermines the claim that we live in a civilized society.

We affirm, as life is God-given, that proper care should be provided for the handicapped, elderly and terminally ill in a way which respects the dignity of the individual, and that euthanasia should not be legalized in any form.

We affirm that the preservation of the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, as a day of godly rest and worship is essential for society, that its character should be protected, and that proper and suitable safeguards should be given to employees.

We affirm that the depiction of violence, blasphemy and immorality on television and the internet, and in newspapers and magazines, is destructive and that proper restraints and clear moral guidelines are required.

We affirm, in this age of digital communication, that full opportunity should be given to Christians to hold broadcasting licences thus giving them freedom to provide interesting and wholesome alternatives.

We affirm that the use of drugs for recreational purposes is both dangerous and destructive and that appropriate sanctions should be enforced to restrict the supply and use of them.

We affirm that the state promotion of gambling through the National Lottery is wrong in principle and detrimental to society.

Being grateful for help already given, we affirm that every assistance should be made in tax and regulation to enable Christian charities to prosper in the vital work undertaken by them, be it at a local, national or international level.

We affirm that support should be given to the needy and persecuted in countries such as Burma, Indonesia and the Sudan.

We list these principles to encourage informed debate. We call upon our political leaders

and parties to include the concerns of these key issues in any future legislative programme. We urge voters to consider them carefully as they use their vote at an election. At the same time we encourage all Christians to make these issues a matter of prayer and to continue in prayer for our nation and its leaders.

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The individuals listed above have assented to this manifesto in a personal capacity. This does not necessarily imply the assent of any organization with which they are associated.

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Church Society
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in church and nation