

Being adult about childhood;
A Consideration of *The Good Childhood Inquiry*

A Report from The Children's Society and
the Mission and Public Affairs Division

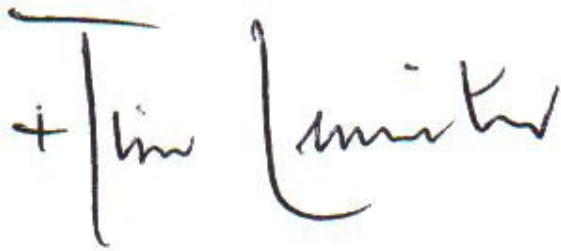


Foreword

'*A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age*' was published in February 2009. It is the fruit of nearly five years of planning and preparation led by Bob Reitemeier, the Chief Executive of The Children's Society. The inquiry panel brought together specialists and academics as well as practitioners and the Children's Commissioner for England. They worked together for two years under the Chairmanship of Professor Judy Dunn. Lord Layard, Emeritus Professor at the London School of Economics was the principal author of *A Good Childhood*. All three deserve the gratitude of the Synod for completing a report with such far reaching horizons on time and accessible to a wide audience.

The central vision of this report is to give a voice to children and young people. Their grateful to the thousands of children who gave us their thoughts and hopes and who spoke to us so powerfully from their experience.

During the final stages of the preparation of the report it became clear that the publication would coincide with a deepening global financial crisis. The challenge for us all now is to hear what this report is saying to us about how our world shapes the possibilities and the futures for our children. This report draws our attention away from our narrow adult concerns and helps us to see the world through children's eyes. It presents a challenge and an opportunity for all of us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tim Laminthorpe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chair of the Board of Trustees of The Children's Society

Background

1. In 2006, amid growing concern about the well-being of children and young people in the UK, The Children's Society launched *The Good Childhood® Inquiry*, the UK's first independent national inquiry into childhood. The inquiry panel¹, chaired by Professor Judith Dunn, a child developmental psychologist at the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College, London, met throughout 2007/8 to consider what were the conditions needed for a good childhood; what obstacles existed for these, and what changes should and could be made to improve childhood today.
2. The inquiry is unique and powerful because it drew together evidence from over 18,000 children and young people, as well as existing research on each of the inquiry's six themes: family, friends, lifestyle, values, learning and health. In July 2007 Sir Albert Aynsley-Green, England's first Children's Commissioner, one of the panel members, addressed the General Synod about modern childhood. The Children's Society published evidence summaries on the themes over the duration of the inquiry and in February 2009, the findings and recommendations were published in a penguin book '*A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age*'² [called hereafter '*A Good Childhood*'].

Theological Context

3. 'We know nothing of childhood; and with our mistaken notions the further we advance the further we go astray'

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*

4. The purpose of this theological preface is to highlight the Gospel context in which the findings of *The Good Childhood Inquiry* might be understood as being the rightful business of the church rather than to present a Christian context of what constitutes a child or childhood.
5. The final report from *The Good Childhood Inquiry*, was deliberately addressed to the world beyond the church. It therefore chose not to frame its findings within an overtly theological framework since it is, sadly, the case that ideas framed within a religious vocabulary are unlikely to command attention or even respect across a wide canvas of opinion.
6. This is not to say, however, that the report's findings were not rooted in a Christian ethic. Seeking the good of children is one area of public life where the church may, indeed, have some profoundly counter-cultural insights to offer. But the welfare of children is also one area where it is still possible to appeal to a shared moral sense which extends well beyond the family of the church.
7. This is what the report, *A Good Childhood* attempted, not least for the practical reason that changing the way children are treated in our society is urgent and complex, requiring a broad consensus of political and moral will. Although *A Good Childhood* does not "do God" overtly and publicly, it is important to remember that, in public theology, what may matter is not so much that the church's voice should be distinctive but that it should be authentic.
8. Part of the purpose of this paper is to present *The Good Childhood Inquiry* and its findings, and report to the Church in such a way that the authentic theological reasoning, which leads to the findings of the report, is expressed "out loud". Yet it is still important that Synod members go back to the report, *A Good Childhood* which, despite being addressed to a wide audience beyond the church, offers an immense body of evidence and argument which underpins good Christian ethics and action.³

9. Constructs of the child and of childhood, theological and social, vary considerably, both culturally and historically. This is simply illustrated by comparing the various ways in which the Biblical teachings about the child have been interpreted over time and in different cultural contexts; from Augustine and Aquinas, through Erasmus, Calvin and Janeway who concentrated on the sinful nature and moral threat of the untutored child to the model of the 'children as innocents' and 'pure revelations of the divine' found, for example, in the writings of Schleiermacher or von Balthasar.
10. The difference in emphases of these theological models also demands different emphases in the appropriate 'Christian' response and responsibility: that a child is fundamentally a sinful creature, for example, led Luther, Calvin and Simons to insist on the importance of education and discipline for the moral wellbeing of the child and the protection of society, whereas Schleiermacher and Rousseau, believing the child to be fundamentally innocent, saw the Christian task of nurture to be about protecting them from the evil influence of society.
11. That the changes in those concepts have accelerated in the modern era is again well illustrated by the ways in which we have determined 'when is a child?' Many of the constructs of childhood depend on a model of deficiency; i.e. the period during which a human person, by virtue of their young age is considered to be incapable of making certain decisions or taking on certain responsibilities. For example, the minimum age at which a person can marry without parental consent is currently 18. This age was set as late as 1929, before which date a person was considered sufficiently mature to adopt the responsibility of marriage at 12 in the case of a female or 14 in the case of a male.
12. Such age limits on adulthood/childhood also demonstrate an inconsistency in current practice and thought for whilst the age for marriage has been increased the age of criminal responsibility was reduced from 13 to 10 years in 1998. Whilst recognising the limitations of definitions, for the purposes of this paper, we are considering children and young people up to the age of 18. The Board of Education has been working alongside the inquiry on a strategy document which will offer a useful contemporary theological model of the child.
13. Of all the biblical pictures of childhood⁴ none is unique to Christianity except Jesus' teaching recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 9:35-37, 10:13-16, Matthew 18:1-14, 19:13-15, Luke 9:46-48, 18:15-17) in which he appears to turn contemporary concepts of the child on their heads: the child is the model for greatness, they are possessors of the Kingdom, examples for adults to follow, valuable of and in themselves and to be identified with him.
14. Often the ways in which we have interpreted this teaching have owed more to secular constructs of childhood rather than the internal evidence of the Gospels. For example we have often interpreted the instruction to 'be like a child' in order to enter the Kingdom in terms of adopting a purported child-like innocence or unquestioning acceptance, neither of which characteristics feature in the concept of child of the first century where a child was considered to be wicked, sinful and lacking in the capacity to comprehend.
15. In fact Jesus' teaching about children is entirely consistent with the remainder of his teaching about the Kingdom of God, in which context these accounts appear. In the sermons of the Plain and the Mount, Jesus tells us that the Kingdom belongs to the 'poor' or 'poor in spirit'. Later in Matthew's Gospel he makes the same sort of identification of himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick and the imprisoned.
16. In short, Jesus places children amongst the groups whose condition must be addressed in the name of social justice. In this way, the instruction to change and become like a child

is not to adopt some childlike quality, but to adopt their lowly status and therefore akin to his instruction to the rich man to give up his possessions that follows immediately on in Mark's account of Jesus' encounter with the young children (10:13-16, and 10:17-31).

'Without the participation of children, not simply their presence, the church and society as a whole is as incomplete as when it excludes the poor or the sick'⁵.

17. The focus of Jesus' teaching then is not upon the attributes of children but on our attitudes towards them. The world that Christians seek to create is a world modelled upon this Kingdom and therefore a place that must at least in part be ordered and defined by children; this will include how we construct our concept of childhood itself. To explore what it is to be a child is therefore not simply to understand an immature phase of human being but rather to explore a paradigm of citizenship in a society modelled on Christian values.
18. Clearly, this raises questions about the role of the Christian community within wider society. Part of the gospel – the good news – with which the Church has been entrusted and which it is bound to share with the world, is its understanding of the significance of children within God's dispensation. The American theologian, Stanley Hauerwas, argues powerfully that contemporary culture's understanding of children as the possessions of their parents is deeply disordered. Instead, he says, the church is called to be the kind of community which shows its trust in God through its collective care for children. As he puts it:
Christians, single and married, are parents. "Parent" names an office of the Christian community that everyone in the community is expected faithfully to fulfill. ... (T)he goods and the burdens of that office cannot be restricted just to those that "have" children.⁶
19. For Hauerwas, the Church's understanding of children is profoundly eschatological. He speaks of how "the hope born by the gift of the kingdom patiently learns to wait in the time made possible by the presence of children."⁷ And he concludes: "I think Christians can do few things more important in a world like ours than to be a people capable of welcoming children."⁸
20. Whilst this perspective has much to say about the place of children in the family of the church, the wider point is that Christians have a responsibility for shaping a world which is welcoming to children other than their own. This drives Christians so to shape their involvement in the world of politics and social relationships of all kinds that the theological significance of children is not endangered by the neglect of their welfare. And here there is much in the Anglican tradition of social ethics to sustain a practice for today.
21. Perhaps the greatest, and almost certainly the most widely read, exposition of the Church's responsibility to engage with politics, economics and society is William Temple's *Christianity and Social Order* (1942). Temple ends the book with six objectives, grounded in a Christian understanding of the world, which could help shape the direction of political and social policy-making.
22. Temple understood that it was not the church's task to lay down the minutiae of policy, but that the church was nonetheless called to speak with more than platitudes or generalisations. Nor was the church's task solely to order its own communal life. As he said, "The art of Government is not to devise what would be the best system for saints to work, but to secure that the lower motives actually found among men prompt that conduct which the higher motives demand."⁹ There is an echo here with the approach of *A Good Childhood* to change.

23. What is most striking, however, is that, of Temple's six objectives, three are directly concerned with the welfare of children. The similarities with the concerns of *A Good Childhood* are striking. Temple suggests these objectives for social policy:
- i. "Every child should find itself a member of a family housed with sufficient decency and dignity so that it may grow up as a member of that basic community in a happy fellowship unspoiled by underfeeding or overcrowding, by dirty and drab surroundings, or by mechanical monotony of environment".
 - ii. "Every child should have the opportunity of an education till years of maturity, so planned as to allow for his (*sic*) particular aptitudes and make possible their full development. This education should throughout be inspired by faith in God and find its focus in worship."
 - iii. "Every citizen should be secure in possession of such income as will enable him to maintain a home and bring up children in such conditions as are described in paragraph 1 above."¹⁰
24. As is well-known *Christianity and Social Order* had a significant role in shaping the British Welfare State, which was to emerge after the Second World War. The principles and objectives that Temple enumerated were very close to the objectives which the architects of the Welfare State sought to achieve. The fact that, some sixty years on, *A Good Childhood* can highlight the vast distance we still have to travel before such objectives are realised may be an indictment of the principle of welfarism as embodied in the Welfare State. But what is indubitable is that welfarism ceased to be the sole guiding principle of government by the end of the 1970s and yet, as *A Good Childhood* emphasises, the lives of children have not improved, and for some children and young people, in many ways, it deteriorated in that period. The critics of the welfare ideal articulated by Temple have not convincingly shown that children are safer under any other system.
25. Hauerwas, in contrast, understands our disordered attitudes to children as the consequence of two trends. Firstly, he notes the tendency (which he traces back to Adam Smith) to treat the family as primarily an economic unit and, in consequence, to emphasise the bonds of affection within the immediate family as far more significant than wider relationships. This, Hauerwas suggests, is in stark contrast to the church's calling to be a family bound together in baptism. Secondly, he notes the modern romantic idealization of the family, which places burdens upon families, which they are unable adequately to bear. Neither the family as currently conceived, nor the state, is adequate, in his view, to safeguard the welfare of children. Instead, the witness of the church to the radical reorientation of relationships under God is our last best hope.
26. So we can see the inquiry and its report, *A Good Childhood*, as standing within the Anglican tradition of social ethics epitomised by Temple, but also as something more than that. For if the church is indeed to witness to God's kingdom, inaugurated and completed in Christ, and to present a radical reorientation of human relationships to the world, then our understanding and care of children must be at the very heart of our corporate life and our mission to the world. And by "children" must be meant all children, for they are God's and not "ours".
27. *A Good Childhood* may not have spoken this theological language directly. But our conviction of God's love in Christ drives the church to take the inquiry's evidence very seriously. Because it shows that all is not well with the lives of children today, the church is concerned and is called to act. The findings contained within *A Good Childhood* point a way forward which – because of that love – the church may wish to make its own.

28. We therefore commend this paper and the inquiry's report *A Good Childhood* to the General Synod, dioceses and parishes for study and reflection within the context of our Christian faith and teachings.
29. What follows includes a summary of the contents of the report *A Good Childhood* and further reflections on some ways that the Church might respond.

Part 1

Introduction

30. The realities of the lives of our children and young people growing up in today's UK are undoubtedly different from most adults' memories of their childhood. '*That our concept of childhood no longer matches our experience of children may be one reason why the idea that we are facing 'a crisis of childhood' has crept into popular awareness*'.¹¹ But are the changes necessarily for the worse? Is there a danger of idealising our own childhood falsely in comparison with what we observe of children's lives today? If they are worse, are there responsibilities and changes to our own attitudes and behaviours as adults that we need to consider so that more of our children and young people experience a good childhood?
31. This GS paper will explore some of experiences of childhood drawn primarily from the findings of the inquiry and *A Good Childhood*, draw some observations from this evidence about what makes for a good childhood and how the Church can play its role in the transformation of society.
32. So what are the realities? Firstly there are fewer children as a proportion of the population from approximately 30% in the 1950s to 15% today. We see this reflected in our communities with the number of single-occupancy households being about the same as the number that contain dependent children. In the 1970s the average completed family size was 2.4 children, whereas today the average is between 1.6 and 1.7. The underlying trend is that first time mothers are increasingly older and having fewer children. The shape of families that children are being born into is changing with the numbers of children in single parent households and step-families increasing and the marriage rate consistently falling since the 1970s.
33. In our churches too, we have seen fewer children and young people attending worship regularly¹². This is due in part to the increase of other types of activities such as sport on Sunday mornings but also due to the complexity of the lives children live, with many seeing the parent they do not live with or travelling to visit members of their extended family on Sundays. The group of children that the Church is used to being engaged with is eroding away fast. These cultural shifts have meant the Church needs to find new ways and new places in how it engages with children and young people as well as its traditional role in providing education (for example, 19 Church of England Academies are now open, with a further 9 due to open in September, the majority replacing vulnerable or failing schools and many in areas of social deprivation).
34. The changes in family structure have had an effect on household income. Whereas in the 1950s, the proportion of children was roughly constant across the income groups, the 2001 census shows that children are more likely to be found in poorer households. As households in the lowest income deciles are three times as likely to suffer multiple disadvantages such as access to schools of choice, low educational attainment, amenities including outdoor space to play, poor housing, transport and access to fresh food this means that a disproportionate number of children are experiencing these multiple disadvantages. In 2006, nearly 1 in 5 children were born into households where no adult was employed.

35. Statistics on maltreatment of children are alarming. NSPCC's latest figures show 7% of children experienced serious physical abuse at the hands of their parents or carers during childhood, 1% of children aged under 16 experienced sexual abuse, 2% by a parent or carer and a further 3% by another relative during childhood. 11% of children experienced sexual abuse by people known but unrelated to them. 5% of children experienced sexual abuse by an adult stranger or someone they had just met. 6% of children experienced serious absence of care at home during childhood. 6% of children experienced frequent and severe emotional maltreatment during childhood.
36. According to a report by Barnardos, an estimated 175,000 children between the ages of 3 and 18 in the UK help to care for a sick or disabled member of the family with 18,000 providing nearly 3 hours a day.
37. UK families are increasingly diverse. In 2007 1 in 4 children were born into families where one or both of the parents were born outside the UK. Children born into ethnic communities are more likely to suffer from economic disadvantage and because average completed family size for minority ethnic groups is much higher than the overall average this means more children will experience economic disadvantage.
38. There is also increasing confusion about how children are perceived. This can be illustrated by the ways in which the media report childhood. In 2008 a MORI report showed that reporting is dominated by violence, crime and anti-social behavior committed by and against children and young people. Surveys by The Children's Society and other children's charities and agencies show that the large majority of adults think that juvenile crime has increased dramatically especially violent crime and antisocial behaviour.
39. Whilst government figures of juvenile crime over the last two decades are confused by several changes in the way crime statistics are calculated and the emergence of new offences such as compliance with ASBOs, overall they suggest a decline of about 14% over the period. More reliable figures from self reported crime which have been gathered annually since the 1950s (i.e. ask 1000 young people aged 14 – 18 'Have you committed a crime in the past year?') suggest that there is in fact no change in underlying rates – 25% of young people from the general population think they have broken the law compared with 35% of adults¹³.
40. In 2006, in the light of the changes in the realities of childhood, The Children's Society commissioned *The Good Childhood Inquiry*. This paper summarizes the key findings of the inquiry and of *A Good Childhood* in Part 2.
41. Not long after the inquiry was established a new report from UNICEF¹⁴ shocked many by revealing that the UK came bottom of the ranking order in children's well-being, when compared with other rich countries. The report ranked the UK last out of 21 countries, behind the US and a number of less wealthy countries. Indeed it found that there was no obvious relationship between levels of child well-being and GDP per capita, with the Czech Republic achieving a higher overall rank than several more wealthy countries including the UK.
42. The report measured 6 dimensions: material wellbeing, health and safety, education, peer and family relationships, behaviour and risks and subjective well-being. Whilst acknowledging the limitations of the UNICEF report, it was still disturbing to find that according to these measurements, the UK was in the bottom third of the country rankings for five of the six dimensions reviewed and did particularly badly in areas such as children's perceptions of their relationships with their peers, their behaviour and the risks they took, and how they felt about themselves and their lives.

43. Child well-being continues to be the subject of research, the latest being *Child wellbeing and child poverty* published in April 2009 by Child Poverty Action Group, which used a snapshot of data drawn from a new league table of child well-being in 29 European countries in 2006. As it takes data that is at least three years old, many of the Government policy initiatives of recent years are not fully reflected in the data. However its results do support a continuing criticism of UK society. It found that the UK scored in the bottom third of the table for health, subjective wellbeing, material resources and education. In the remaining three domains (personal relationships, behaviour and risk and housing and the environment) the UK is ranked in the middle of the table.

Part 2

The findings of *The Good Childhood Inquiry*

44. *The Good Childhood Inquiry* was independent both of The Children's Society and of the Church, and the inquiry's final report '*A Good Childhood – Searching for Values in a Competitive Age*' was written for the general reader. The uniqueness of the inquiry is that it drew not only from the expertise of academics, parents, policy makers, children's charities, and the Church but more importantly it drew on the evidence of those actually experiencing childhood. Children and young people were asked about 6 aspects of childhood – family, friends, lifestyle, values, learning and health. Over 18,000 children and young people took part through 'my life' postcards and the microsite www.mylife.uk.com, oral evidence submissions direct to the inquiry's panel, a vibrant partnership with CBBC Newsround, 80 focus groups with children and young people nationwide, including a specific example of children in Church of England churches and schools, young offender institutes and pupil referral units as well as schools and a national survey.
45. The following content is a summary of the key findings and conclusions drawn by the inquiry on what makes a good childhood. It is punctuated by quotes from children and young people and evidence from adults and the research considered by the panel¹⁵. Reflections on the inquiry's findings from a Christian perspective and possible response and responsibilities for the Church are to be found in Part 3.

Family

46. Every child needs a loving and committed family, where they observe and experience love, and thus learn how to love others.

What makes a good family? *It's just a family that loves each other, and as long as they do that's a happy family*' 8-year-old girl

47. Ideally children experience this love from birth, if not before, with a strong attachment between the baby and its parents or caregivers, who provide a high and consistent level of warmth and are sensitive to the baby's needs. By their second year children's social relationships grow to include their wider family and friends, and the security of their attachments within the family increases the quality of these relationships. And as the child grows the parents sustain this warmth, putting in clear boundaries where appropriate, in a loving yet firm style that parenting experts call 'authoritative'.
48. Children clearly considered the family to be central to their lives, this being the topic they talked about most. Just having a family was felt to be hugely important and they had lots to say about their own families, usually in warm and appreciative tones¹⁶.

49. All family relationships are interrelated and important. However, recent research has highlighted the importance of the relationship between fathers and children. This evidence suggests that if fathers are closely involved with their children then the children develop better friendships, more empathy, have higher self-esteem, better life satisfaction and higher educational achievement. They are less likely to become involved with crime or substance misuse. In contrast, if children are in conflict with their fathers or find them harsh or neglectful, they are much more likely to become destructive and aggressive themselves.

What makes a happy family? *Lots of family things, lots of playmates, people visit you, you visit people, everyone together on weekends* 9 – year-old girl

50. It is to be welcomed therefore that fathers as well as mothers are becoming more involved with their children's lives, particularly in the early years. But there are external pressures on this commitment: 60% of adults polled by The Children's Society agreed that parents nowadays weren't able to spend enough time with their children. This is often because, for mostly economic reasons, both parents work outside the home while their children are cared for by other adults.
51. *A Good Childhood* states that some have voiced concerns about the effect of childcare on cognitive development and child well-being, and recent research provides new insights into this controversial area. If children are put into group childcare before the age of eighteen months this has a negligible effect on their cognitive development; and beyond the age of two, group childcare can lead to more rapid cognitive development, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This positive impact on cognitive development is greatest where the childcare is of good quality and the children in it come from a mixture of backgrounds.
52. However, the research shows less clear results about the impact of childcare on children's well-being. Some children who have had group care are more gregarious when they start school, while others – especially those who have experienced long hours of group childcare – can tend to be more anti-social and aggressive, although this effect disappears by the age of eleven.
53. While there are mixed outcomes from group childcare, there are clear positive benefits for children who are cared for by their grandparents, other relatives, child-minders or small parent-run playgroups. These children develop very similarly to the ways they would have done if cared for by their parents – both in terms of cognitive and emotional development, underlining the importance of good, loving relationships to the well-being of children.
54. Unfortunately these valuable and loving relationships can be difficult to sustain. Many parents don't realise how important their own relationship and their feelings for one another are to their children. Children learn to love and respect by seeing these qualities in the relationships between the adult members of their family, and good relationships between parents or carers should be supported.

'I think all kids should have the right to live in a happy place where they feel safe and loved. I haven't felt like that in some time but I know my parents don't mean it. It's just they argue and take it out on me.'
14- year - old

55. But the research suggests that there can come a point when the level of conflict between parents is so bad that it may be better for them to separate. Nevertheless a separation, especially if it is acrimonious, can have a significant effect on the children involved especially in the year or two immediately following it. Children whose parents have separated can feel confused, sad and betrayed; they may also experience psychological difficulties including anxiety and depression, and problems with self-esteem, peer relationships and academic achievement. Not all children are affected in these ways, and nor are these effects entirely due to parental separation: poverty, stress and the poor mental health of a parent can also have a detrimental influence.
56. The inquiry concluded that the evidence shows that many of these problems do not have long-term effects especially if the parents are able to maintain good relationships with the children and with each other and can involve the children in any decisions that are made about where they spend their time. Here again good relationships with other family members are crucial: if their parents have recently separated many children turn to their grandparents and other relations. Grandparents' support can make a big difference to how well children cope with their parents' separation, as can the support of friends, siblings, teachers and parents themselves.

Friends

57. When The Children's Society asked young people what they thought made for a good life for them 'friends' was one of the words that they mentioned most often. They left no doubt to the significance of friends in their lives. On the other hand, not having friends and not feeling included, was a source of anxiety.
58. Friendship begins early: by their second year children can often understand what upsets other children and will seek to comfort them, and will form clear attachments to each other. These early friendships help children to develop empathy and imagination, but are also simply a source of pleasure and excitement. Research with young children shows that children who make friends early do better later in life, have greater moral sensibility and a better understanding of social relationships; they tend to be more popular, less bullied and less aggressive. There is evidence that friends can buffer children from stressful changes in their lives, such as the arrival of a sibling or starting school, and friends can provide important protection when children are bullied.

'You can't have a good childhood without friends every child needs friends' a girl from Loughborough
59. The findings from the inquiry contained a recommendation that adults need to support friendships by providing love and good guidance on how to get along with someone. Once young children are playing, parents should keep a discrete distance so as not to disturb the creative, imaginative play that is so valuable to children's development. For older children who naturally want to have the freedom to play with their friends outside the home this need for distance can present real problems as parents are increasingly anxious about letting their children play unsupervised. This is an area where attitudes have changed significantly over the last generation: for example, the inquiry found that in 1971 80% of children aged 7-8 years went to school on their own, but by 1990 this had dropped to less than 10%.
60. There are various reasons for these changes, including an increase in traffic in streets where children used to play, and a perceived increase in the risk of abduction or murder. There are certainly fewer places where children can play safely. We can encourage

parents to be less risk averse, but should also insist that planners provide a more child-friendly environment. Playing fields should not be built on, and open spaces should be kept for children. The return of organised sports to schools could also help, as would the provision of a good youth club in each community, more grown-up leisure facilities outside school and free public transport. But perhaps most importantly children and young people and their friends should be welcomed into our public spaces.

61. Sadly, some young people struggle to form or maintain friendships, a trend which has got

What would you change about your life if you could? *I would change my life because me and my friends are forever falling out and I really don't like it'. -11 -year-old girl*

worse in recent years: between 1986 and 2006 there was a drop in the number of sixteen year olds who said they had a best friend they could trust from 87% to 82%.

This is particularly an anxiety for the young people who had lived in the care system, who responded to the inquiry¹⁷. Children without friends tend to feel lonely, and are more likely to become depressed as adults. Loosing friends can be very traumatic for children: even very young children suffer anxiety when a friend moves away, and young people are more likely to become depressed.

62. For some young people their first romantic relationships can be a journey into new emotional terrain with new and intense feelings such as love, lust, jealousy and loss. While early involvement in romantic relationships has been associated with a cluster of problem areas such as alcohol and drug use and difficulties at school, these relationships can also be very positive, contributing to feelings of self-worth and self-esteem.
63. Research suggests that first sexual experiences between young people in the UK are not always as positive. The age of first sexual experience has become earlier in recent years, and is the product of many forces and changing attitudes. Teenage sex for boys in Britain is more a matter of physical attraction and of peer pressure than of love and commitment; girls can regret having sex too early; only half of our young people use contraception when they first make love. This contrasts with the situation in Holland, for example, where sex is more likely to be associated with love, there is greater use of contraception and fewer teenage pregnancies than in the UK. One plausible explanation is the more open attitude of Dutch parents and the fact that sex education there begins in primary school.

64. As well as recognising the positive value of different kinds of friendships between children and young people, it's also important to support them when they experience problems. Bullying was frequently mentioned by children and young people giving evidence to the inquiry. Bullying can involve

repeated physical attack by one or more bigger children, or repeated psychological attack such as name-calling, rumour-spreading and ostentatious exclusion. Physical bullying is more common among boys, while psychological bullying is more common among girls; but rates of both these kinds of bullying have remained steady since 2002 with 12% of children aged 10-14 saying that they have been bullied more than once or twice in the previous six months. The recent development of cyber-bullying is however on the rise, with 7% of schoolchildren aged 11-13 having received nasty or threatening text messages or emails at least once in a while.

12 - year-old girl who had experienced bullying '*I sometimes feel all alone like I am trapped and like noone cares.'*

65. Rates of bullying seem to be similar in many countries, and Britain is no worse than elsewhere. But we can improve: schools can have anti-bullying policies, teachers can be trained to spot and address bullying, and peer support groups can help children who are bullied. In fact, developing new, good friendships can help both bullies and bullied children.

Lifestyle

66. By 'lifestyle' the authors of *A Good Childhood* meant how children spend their leisure time, and what leisure activities really excite them. Most children enjoy their lives and we should not worry if what they enjoy is different from what their parents enjoyed. But compared with fifty years ago there have been significant changes in this area of children's lives: they nearly all have more money, and as a result are a lucrative market for products and services; they mostly have more leisure time, and are in full-time education for longer; and the communications revolution has introduced lots of new leisure activities and pastimes. The effect of all this is a quite new youth culture that can be seen as more separate than ever from the world of many adults, and which some adults can find concerning. However for children leisure was felt to be a vital ingredient of a good life¹⁸.
- What do you like to do in your spare time?
I like playing football or cricket. After that I might go on the web or play on my PS2. Also, if it's a cloudy or rainy day or my friends don't want to play I just play inside
11 year-old boy
67. The inquiry felt that there are three main causes for concern about the modern culture which young people are exposed to. Firstly, it encourages *consumerism*, the view that to be happy you have to be wealthy and beautiful; secondly, it encourages *aggression*, a conflictual and often violent model of human relationships; and thirdly, it encourages *unhealthy living* with physical inactivity and eating, drinking and smoking to excess.
68. Consumerism emerges partly from the modern media and mass marketing, which children, just as adults, are immersed in. On top of this is the increased purchasing power of children, which brings into children's lives issues of consumer choice. Each year, in Britain, children under sixteen spend some £3 billion of their own money – much of it on clothes and shoes, snacks and sweets, music and CDs, software and magazines. Pester power – spending by parents who are influenced by their children – substantially increases the amount of money which is controlled by children.
69. Naturally this market has attracted advertisers, and children can be seen as especially vulnerable to advertising: by the age of three children prefer an advertised brand to another which tastes just the same, while it's not until they are ten or eleven that they are able to identify the persuasive intent in an advertisement. The inquiry recognised that much advertising is good fun and is a proper part of marketing operations. However, they expressed concern that the overall effect of advertising is to make people feel they need more in total than they otherwise would. 34% of 9-13 year olds say they'd 'rather spend time buying things than almost anything else', and 45% agree that 'the only kind of job I want when I grow up is one that gives me a lot of money'.
70. Of course, advertising isn't the only source of these attitudes: there is a constant exposure on television and the Internet to people who are richer and more beautiful than us, which has found to raise aspirations but also to reduce self-esteem. Research shows that the more a child is exposed to the media (both television and Internet) the more they will become materialistic, have poorer relationships with their parents and poorer mental health. These effects are worse for poor children who are of course already at risk in other ways¹⁹.

71. A second problem associated with the modern media is that much of its content is extremely violent. On television both physical and psychological violence is frequently shown to be a normal part of human life, and there is evidence that exposure to violent images encourages aggressive behaviour. Video and computer games are also a source of exposure to violence, and both TV and game violence have in the USA been linked to aggressive behaviour in children, along with a number of other factors. In order of importance these are gang membership, then playing violent videogames, followed by parent-child relations, being male, exposure to television violence, having anti-social parents, low IQ, a broken family, living in poverty, and substance use.
72. The Internet also has the potential for danger to children. A recent review in the UK stressed the dangers coming from ‘stranger-danger’ where children were providing too much information about themselves to other users online, and the exposure of children to sexual content that is designed for adults. For example, 57% of British 9-19 year olds have come into contact with online pornography, 36% by stumbling on it and 25% receiving it by unsolicited email.²⁰ Finally, the inquiry felt that although social networking sites can be a great way of making and meeting friends, they might tend to value the quantity rather than quality of these friendships.
73. If our culture fosters consumerism and aggression the inquiry also found that it is in many ways unfavourable to physical health and well-being. The biggest problem is alcohol. While alcohol use is a feature of many societies what makes Britain different is the pattern of binge-drinking engaged in by adolescents and younger adults. Among sixteen to nineteen year olds a quarter engage in hazardous drinking, and 14% are alcohol dependent. Much of this drinking starts well below the age of sixteen, and can be heavy. Of children aged fifteen 20% had got drunk in the week before being questioned, and on a typical day 45% drink more than the recommended daily limit of four units. This type of heavy drinking has social consequences, but also health consequences, including addiction and physical illnesses.
74. Some parents are able to socialise their children into a pattern of moderate drinking; but some parents are themselves addicted: 11% of children live with a parent who misuses alcohol. What is needed is a change of attitude, especially in relation to heavy drinking and drunkenness. Raising taxes on alcohol, restricting the advertising of it and better education could all help, as could strict enforcement of the law on sales to under-age children, and encouraging young people to develop constructive pursuits in an alcohol-free environment.
75. Although fewer young people’s lives are affected by drugs than by alcohol, the effects are just as serious and wide-ranging. Fewer than 5% of young people are dependent on hard drugs, while cannabis use is far more common, with 40% of 16-19 year olds having tried it. There is evidence that cannabis use among teenagers has been slowly decreasing, and it is of concern that the recent reclassification of cannabis from Class C to Class B will effectively criminalise large numbers of young people with no evidence that it will reduce usage. More generally, drug policy should take into account the adverse effects of the drug trade on the lives of children and young people, and not only the effect of the drugs themselves.
76. Another increasing health problem is obesity. In 2006 17% of 12-15 year old boys in Britain were obese, up from 11% in 1995; for girls the figures are 15% up from 12%. If it continues to rise at the present rate, by 2023

Why don’t some young people eat healthily? *‘People eat because others think they are fat, they carry on eating because it makes them feel better’. ‘Too much pressure makes me do for sugar’.* Focus group of girls aged 12 -16

there will be a 54% rise in Type 2 diabetes and by 2051 life expectancy will be reduced by five years. The rise in obesity is linked to a decline in exercise, part of the move from active to passive leisure encouraged by the communications revolution mentioned above. But obesity is also linked to unhealthy eating: high proportions of 7-14 year olds surveyed in the year 2000 were failing to achieve healthy eating targets. The recent ban on the advertising to children of food that is high in fat, salt or sugars (HFSS) is to be welcomed, but since the overwhelming majority of children's viewing is of adult programming these restrictions can only have limited effect, and for this reason all HFSS food should be advertised only after a 9pm watershed.

77. The final unhealthy practice is smoking: some 15% of 15-16 year olds are smokers, with a higher rate in working-class families and amongst girls. Although smoking amongst children has been declining, it still remains the single biggest cause of preventable illness and premature death in Britain.

Values

78. The authors of *A Good Childhood* argue that for centuries values have been drawn from religious belief and from secular sources. There is arguably less confidence about values than used to be the case, and this has led to the development of a view that things will work out all right if everyone looks after themselves. This individualism is flawed: research shows that unselfish people become on average happier than people who are more preoccupied with themselves. Clearly we should all benefit if other people were nicer to us. But what the research shows is that we ourselves benefit from being nicer to other people. This shows the central importance for our society of the kind of people we are. If we want to improve our quality of life, we must above all produce better people, people who are well adjusted, have a sense of their personal identity and potential and who seek to realise their lives fully by seeking fulfilment in helping others. The values that children and young people acquire in childhood are crucial to making this change.
79. *A Good Childhood* states that children are born with moral potential²¹ which research shows is in their genes to a greater or lesser degree, and early moral development can be seen in children as young as three negotiating over who plays with certain toys, for example. This moral sense only develops through relationships, first with parents, then with other children, and then with other adults including teachers and religious leaders.

It's important *'to be in a good school with good people because if they grow up around good people they usually become good people'* 14 – year-old girl from London

80. So how can adults help children to acquire good values? Example is better than precept, but both matter. The Inquiry looked at two particular ways in which children can be taught values formally: 'values-based schools', and social and emotional learning programmes.
81. *A Good Childhood* gives the example of a 'values-based school' where the staff, parents and children agree on a list of words which embody the values of the school; the Oxfordshire school that the panel heard from had decided on respect, trust, courage, hope, caring, tolerance, honesty, love, responsibility, understanding, humility, peace, cooperation, patience, gratitude and generosity. Each word acts in turn as 'word of the month' and gets written prominently on walls around the school. This moral vocabulary forms the basis for assemblies and some other lessons and for discussion between teachers and children when behaviour comes into question. This programme is supported by an

ethos that emphasises non-violence, and a timetable that includes periods of silent sitting, reflecting on your inner self and how you are contributing to the needs of others.

82. In recent years a number of social and emotional learning initiatives have been developed to help children to learn to understand and manage their emotions, to cultivate the positive parts of their nature, and to understand other people. For example, positive psychologist Martin Seligman has developed a Resilience Programme for eleven-year-olds which teaches children how to manage their own feelings, and how to understand others and care for them. This programme has impressive results: the average effect is to reduce the number who suffer depression in the following three years by half, and the number who behave badly by a third. Other similar programmes in the USA have similar effects on behaviour, as well as helping to improve academic performance.
83. These results suggest that there is a powerful argument for social and emotional learning (SEAL) being taught as a separate subject at school by teachers who are specially-trained to do so, rather than the ad hoc provision of PSHE which exists in English schools at present. In addition, the school itself should embody the values being taught and the teachers should live them out throughout the week.
84. Parents and schools cannot teach values effectively without the support of society as a whole – what has been called our social capital. We experience and learn from others not just in the family, the school and the workplace but in the whole network of social institutions to which we belong, institutions that support us in the values we hold and through which we express our generous and positive impulses. For religious communities this is an explicit aim. But although these good human relationships are central to the development of our values, many human beings have always sought more than that – the spiritual dimension that lights up the inner life. This can include the feeling of belonging to something bigger than oneself – something that gives meaning to one’s own small existence; and the idea that no one can determine your inner state except you yourself. *A Good Childhood* also drew attention to the particular role religion has in fostering the spiritual dimensions of children’s lives.

Schooling

85. Many schools are like this boy’s, good, enjoyable schools with dedicated teachers and educated and decent young people. Two thirds of ten-year-olds say that they like going to school most of the time. Children spontaneously mentioned ‘school’ and ‘education’ when the inquiry asked them about the ingredients of a good life. What they liked most was the opportunity to be with their friends but they also attributed a positive experience of school to good teachers. The quality of both the physical and emotional environment of school mattered to them. But a minority of children talked about the painful experience of not having friends at school and a number were worried about the behaviour of other pupils and about exams and workload²².

<p><i>‘I like my school because it has some really cool teachers who make the lessons interesting and really make you want to work’, 13 - year-old boy</i></p>
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86. But there are three areas of today’s education system that concerned the inquiry panel: are standards of learning high enough across all schools? Is there too much testing, and are there too many league tables? And does the atmosphere in our schools support the values to which we aspire?
87. The authors of *A Good Childhood* concluded that while our largely excellent education system has some outstanding successes, the overall picture is one of huge educational

inequalities closely related to social deprivation. For more academically minded children we provide an education as good as most in the world. But for less academically minded children, especially those from deprived areas, it is often a story of less effective schools, followed by a weak system of vocational preparation. This inequality begins in our primary schools.

88. While the 1990s saw huge improvements in literacy and numeracy, there remains a huge variation in results between schools, with children in schools in deprived areas performing far worse than the national average. For example, in schools where there is a high proportion of free school meals (a key indicator of deprivation), only 69% of children achieve Key Stage 2 targets in English, compared with 89% in the least disadvantaged schools. Similar results are found in Maths. These differences are partly because the children come to school with greater personal disadvantages, and partly because teaching is more challenging in these schools. If we are serious about tackling disadvantage, we need to have our most experienced and committed teachers in deprived areas, and consider offering them enhanced benefits where there is a higher proportion of children on free school meals.
89. The picture of unequal outcomes is even starker in secondary schools than in primary schools. By 2006 only 28% of children in the most deprived quarter of schools (again measured by free school meals) reached five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and Maths, compared with a national average of 45% and a figure of 67% in the least deprived schools. In fact, almost none of the schools in the most deprived quarter of secondary schools reached the national average standard of GCSE performance.
90. Nevertheless, the educational achievement of young people aged fifteen in Britain is similar to those in other European countries such as France and Germany; it is from the age of sixteen that we fall behind. By their early twenties far more people remain functionally illiterate or innumerate in Britain than in other northern European countries. This reflects the fact that far fewer young people stay on in formal education or training after the age of sixteen than in other countries, as we have failed to develop an effective system through which most non-graduates acquire a proper training in a profession, craft or trade. Over the last ten years there has been an increase in the number of young people who are 'NEETs': not in education, employment or training. Every young person should be offered an apprenticeship, and be supported in it. A better deal beyond the age of sixteen for less academic young people is a central plank of any policy for social justice in this country.
91. Achievement matters at every level, and it is particularly important to support those who struggle most with learning. In order to raise standards governments in the early 1990s introduced standardised tests at ages 7, 11 and 14. While those for fourteen-year-olds have recently been abolished, the others, combined with GCSEs at 16, A/S levels at 17 and A levels at 18 combine to make English children the most tested in the world.
92. These tests also serve as a measure of achievement for the schools as well as for individual students, since the overall results at 11, GCSE and A level are published for each school, making it easy for newspapers to construct league tables of school performance. These tables can be problematic. Some give only the raw results with no adjustment for the type of children going to the school; tables based on adjusted data, which are now available, tend to get less publicity.
93. More controversially the most publicised scores relate to the percentage of children performing above some cut-off such as five good GCSEs. This score mainly reflects the

impact of the school on those children who are near the margin between success and failure. To maximise its score the school can be said to have no reason to improve the scores of children well below this cut off. Two changes would make a huge difference to this: first, we should focus on the average performance of all pupils rather than the proportion of those who 'succeed'; and second, we should standardise each child's performance for their background and, where relevant, their performance when they entered the school.

94. Some fundamental concerns arise because testing and league tables have taken on such importance. Firstly, if the main aim of the educational process is to produce exam results, what happens to the child's (and the teacher's) incentive to explore beyond what will be tested? There is a clear danger that education becomes less stimulating when the main incentive is to learn things only because they will be tested, and when the fear of failure is a major consideration. Secondly, how does testing affect the less academic children? There is evidence to show that it lowers their self-esteem; moreover, testing can influence a school's attitude to low achievers, who, instead of being children in need of support become a threat to the school's reputation. Thirdly, how does testing affect children's quality of life?
95. For many testing causes emotional problems such as anxiety as well as narrowing children's intellectual experience. There are now real questions as to whether external testing and league tables are vital for raising educational achievement in England, as they are not used in some other European countries and have recently been abolished in Wales and Northern Ireland. The main use of tests should be to help in the education of children and to monitor their progress, not to evaluate the school.
96. As indicated in the previous section on values, as well as developing the mind schools also help to form children's emotional lives. In many schools the atmosphere is excellent and highly conducive to learning, while a few schools experience regular low-level disruptive behaviour. The report concludes that to tackle this, schools must act as values-based communities promoting mutual respect between students, staff and parents, working to reach agreed standards of behaviour and aspiration. It is also equally important to help individual students to manage their emotions, and here a standard profile for emotional well-being at key stages may well be helpful in ensuring that children's emotional development is taken as seriously as their intellectual achievement.

Inequalities

97. After the USA, Britain is the most unequal of the rich countries, and this impacts directly on our children. In European countries a person is defined as poor if they have below 60% of the typical (median) level of income. In Britain 22% of our children are living in this type of poverty, compared with, for example, Sweden at 8% and Denmark at 10%.

'It's not fair that some people is rich and some are poor. No one help me and my family' 10 – year-old girl

Children living in poverty lead very different lives from other children: no holidays or school trips, cramped living spaces, fewer safe places to play or opportunities to go swimming for example, and a lack of means to entertain their friends. They feel shame and embarrassment when they are unable to dress like their peers; they experience school as exclusionary, with the stigma of being 'free dinner' children; they often try to protect their parents from their own feelings of disadvantage, including sometimes hiding their hunger. Some groups of children are more likely than average to experience poverty. These include children in minority ethnic groups, disabled children, children living with a disabled parent, Traveller and Gypsy children, children living in lone-parent households,

and children living in large families. The Inquiry report concluded that differences between children on this scale are simply unjust, and called for a more equal distribution of income²³.

98. Not surprisingly poverty is related to many of the other elements of child well-being. Children who live in poverty fare less well than others in terms of mental health, school achievement, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy. And in later life, poverty in childhood is one of the five most powerful and consistent predictors of subsequent disadvantage. While poverty is related to poor outcomes for children it is only partly the cause of them; evidence suggests that inequality also has a role. But the inquiry also suggested that a third factor – a lack of respect between people – may also play a part.
99. A society that practices less mutual respect will produce many types of poor outcome, and it will also produce more income inequality. To produce better child outcomes we have to change the fundamental ethos and this will produce better child outcomes of all kinds. We must reduce income inequality, but we must also change the overall ethos of our society, making it less success-orientated and more generous with respect for one another.
100. Returning to the issue of income poverty, many argue that a society with smaller differentials between rich and poor would indeed have less poverty but this would be at the cost of lower *average* income. This premise is not necessarily true – if we reduce child poverty this may not reduce average income. In fact, it may empower many more young people so that they are able to be more economically productive. But it can also be argued that if tackling child poverty does lower our national income then this may not affect the well-being of children detrimentally. Research has shown that the well-being of children does not depend on the average level of income in a country; it depends much more on income inequality.
101. Others argue that social mobility is more important than income inequality, and it is often said that policies that try to equalise income do so at the cost of social mobility – preventing the poor from rising. However countries with high inequality and high child poverty, like Britain, also have low social mobility. Although it has probably not increased in recent years, the level of inequality in Britain is still far too high compared with other similar countries.
102. *A Good Childhood* argues that child poverty and inequality should continue to be reduced. The Labour government committed itself in 1999 to halving child poverty by 2010 and abolishing it by 2020. But progress has been slow: by 2006-7 the child poverty rate had only been reduced to 22%, down from 26% in 1998-9. This and future governments should recommit to these targets despite the current economic climate.
103. Three factors are involved in cutting child poverty: parents in work, wages, and the impact of taxes, tax credits and benefits. We still have the largest proportion of households in Europe in which no parent is working; new government welfare-to-work initiatives should make a substantial difference to this. What these workers earn is also a problem: earnings in Britain became much more unequal in the 1980s and even with the help of the national minimum wage there has been little reduction in the dispersion of earnings except at the very lowest end. Investment in education and in training for young people leaving school could have a large effect in reducing low pay. Finally there is a third factor involved in cutting child poverty – the impact of taxes, tax credits and benefits.
104. While the present government has made this system substantially more redistributive, further redistribution will be needed in order to meet the child poverty targets. All the relevant benefits and tax credits should be indexed to earnings, and substantial sums

should be spent in further raising these benefits and credits. This has to be a top priority for any government.

105. But *A Good Childhood* maintains that material deprivation is not the only kind of deprivation. There are many groups of deprived children – those with mental health difficulties, with physical disabilities, with learning difficulties, children who are in care, who are caught up in the youth justice system, children from ethnic minority groups and children who are refugees. The Children's Society works with many of these children on a daily basis. *A Good Childhood* focused on two particular groups – children in care and children in the justice system – because we as a society are directly responsible for their ‘corporate parenting.’
106. At any given time there are 60,000 children and young people in England and Wales who are in care or ‘looked after’ by their Local Authority, just over 1 in 200 children at any one time. Over 605 of these children come into care because of abuse and neglect, while most of the rest are there because of family dysfunction or disaster, or because of absent parents - including 3,000 unaccompanied refugee children. On average these children stay in care for about two and a half years and then return to their families, or are old enough to look after themselves. The majority are in foster families but some are in residential homes. They may well experience a lack of continuity in care, with a high turnover of placements and of the staff who care for them.

‘In care you need to have other friends who are in care’
‘Some parents don’t like their children to have friends who are in care’. Focus group of 15-21 year-olds

107. Many of these children are severely deprived; half suffer from mental health difficulties and a disproportionate number are from ethnic minority backgrounds or are physically disabled. Research shows that these children will go on to experience further difficulties. They are much less likely than average to get good GCSEs or go on to higher education; they are more likely to become teenage parents, to spend time in custody, and to have drug problems. These negative ‘outcomes’ cannot be seen simply as the result of being looked after by the state, since many children only spend a part of their childhood in care, and are often already disadvantaged before entering the care system. But in intervening in these children’s lives the state has both an opportunity and a responsibility to improve their well-being.
108. We must ensure a better standard of care, with more stability, a professional mental health assessment for children entering care, better training and pay for staff, and better organisation of social services. Finally, the state should reconsider its role as corporate parent that technically ceases at 18 in the light of the fact that half of all other young people aged 20-24 are still living at home.
109. Nearly half of children in custody were previously in care. The UK has 3,000 young people under 18 in custody, who stay inside on average for four and a half months; so roughly 8,000 go into custody each year. Our rate of incarceration of young people is one of the highest in Europe and our age of criminal responsibility, at ten, is one of the lowest. Most of these young people are severely deprived. Nearly half have literacy and numeracy levels below the norm. Of the girls 40% have suffered violence at home, often sexual abuse; so have 25% of the boys. Two thirds are from broken homes; a third have serious mental health difficulties yet very few ever receive an assessment, let alone treatment.

110. Of course society needs to protect itself, but *A Good Childhood* argues that there can never be effective protection unless the needs of the young offenders are also recognised. Custody should be the last resort, whereas at the moment it does not appear to be so. Our best protection is to help these young people earlier through the social services; even if they end up in custody they should be cared for as much as any child.
111. Combinations of inequalities can have a drastic effect on children's life chances. Research has shown that a young person aged 13-14 experiencing five or more problems in the family environment – such as mental health problems, physical disability, substance misuse, domestic violence, financial stress, neither parent being in work, teenage parenthood, poor basic skills and living in poor housing conditions – is thirty six times as likely to be excluded from school and six times as likely to enter the care system or to have contact with the police as a young person living in a family with none of these problems.
112. Many children who experience the inequalities above are further disadvantaged by the experience of discrimination. The experience of being treated unfairly or disregarded because of who you are, exposure to negative and belittling attitudes, or being a victim of bullying, aggression or harassment born out of prejudice are also damaging. In the same way as economic inequality damages our whole society, discriminatory attitudes and behaviours are not only acutely damaging for the individuals they target, but for all children who grow up witnessing and absorbing such disrespect as a part of our social fabric. We must acknowledge that prejudice and discrimination are significant barriers to creating the kind of caring, respectful society in which all children can flourish.

In summary

113. '*A Good Childhood – Searching for Values in a Competitive Age*' summarised these findings into seven concrete elements that make for a good childhood for children and young people today²⁴:
- They need **loving families**, where they observe and experience love, and thus learn how to love others. They also need boundaries to be set by parents who are firm but not dictatorial.
 - They need **friends**, as they begin to explore outside the family. From developing their friendships, they learn many of the basic lessons of living.
 - They need a positive **lifestyle**, in which they develop interests that satisfy them and avoid the enticements of excessive commercialism and unhealthy living.
 - Such a lifestyle can only be built on solid **values**, which give meaning to life and are acquired from parents, schools, media, political and faith organisations.
 - Children need **good schools**, where they can acquire both values and competence.
 - They need good **mental health**, and children with difficulties need help.
 - And they need **enough money** to live among their peers without shame.

Part 3

Our response and responsibility

114. We have set the theological context of this paper in terms of Jesus' teaching about children in the Synoptic gospels in which the child is the model for greatness, possessors of the Kingdom, examples for adults to follow, valuable of themselves and to be identified with him, and went on to place a concern for children within the Anglican tradition of social theology and the more radical approach which is increasingly influential in Christian ethics.

115. The evangelists' choice of vocabulary and the descriptions of Jesus, who is the manifestation of the Kingdom, variously embracing, standing alongside, presenting a child/children as he makes his pronouncements demonstrate that he is seen to be setting children as a sign/icon of the Kingdom. To welcome them is to deal with the Christ and the God who sent him. Jesus presents children as the model recipients of God's reign because of their powerlessness and low status. They are embodiments of the message of the Beatitudes who are incapable of knowing God through obedience to the Law and instead are wholly reliant on God's love for them. Because of this very powerlessness they are also to be among the prime objects of service for those who would be Jesus' disciples.
116. If the Church is indeed itself a sign of the Kingdom and called to anticipate in its internal and external relationships the new order that will be brought by its consummation, then this teaching of Jesus has profound significance. Jesus describes a Kingdom of which, along with the afflicted and poor, children are the possessors, the model citizens and the sign. The world that Christians seek to create is to be a world modelled upon this Kingdom and therefore is to be a place that must at least in part be ordered and defined by children. *A Good Childhood* offers us a unique insight into the real lives of children, combining as it does the contributions of academics in the field with those who are involved with the nurture and education of children and, most importantly, children themselves.
117. The inquiry was evidence-based, receiving tens of thousands of submissions from children, young people and adults, and reviewing the academic literature on each of its six themes. Much of this material is publicly available²⁵, and on the basis of it, of the inquiry's final report, and of the ongoing public debate about childhood, we therefore seek to ask two questions. Firstly in the light of *A Good Childhood*, what kind of a world nurtures good childhood? Secondly what can the Church say and do to bring it about?

What kind of world nurtures good childhood?

The Primacy of Love

118. In a modern world where many people worry that childhood has changed beyond recognition, that it has become dominated by technology and commercialism, the overwhelming message from *A Good Childhood* is both reassuring and challenging: people are what really matter to children, not material goods. Both children and adults agree that love is the very heart of a good childhood. Childhoods rich with material wealth and educational opportunities are still poor if lived without love.
119. *A Good Childhood* is not ashamed to put a child's need for love first, and as the Archbishop of Canterbury notes in his *Afterword* too, the Church has particular resources to understand and to express what love is. God is love. Love is the nature and activity of God and his outreaching initiative. The Old Testament sets love in the context of 'Covenant' – an unbreakable bond that regulates relationships with God and with those around us (e.g. Deut 6:5, 11:1). Jesus' innovation is to extend the scope of that obligation to love so that it becomes universal and unconditional. The Synoptic Gospels describe this love as being as much for others as for ourselves (Mk 12:28ff); for those who do or mean to do us harm (Mt 5:38ff); requiring forgiveness and reconciliation (Mt 7:1ff); and altruistic (Lk 6:27). As St Paul writes, "*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails*". (1Cor 13:4ff).

Loving Relationships

120. Christian moral teaching contains much exploration of the idea that God's love, explained in the teaching of Jesus, is the prototype for all human relationships, including those with children. This love involves covenant: it is to act within a set of reciprocal obligations and responsibilities for the well-being of children. It is a love that involves respect: that we should act in a way that recognises that every child and young person has an inherent value and dignity.
121. From birth children are not simply the sum of their parents' characters and influence, or that of their community or tradition. Each child plays their own unique role in shaping their childhood experience, for children are not simply or passively 'brought up': as they grow they actively make choices that shape their own lives. It is a love that is unconditional: nothing a child or young person does can qualify them or disqualify them from this respect or from active help. Like the father of the prodigal son, it forgives. But it is also conditional love, in that the welfare of the child is always paramount, therefore placing restrictions upon the one doing the loving; as the inquiry recognized, loving children has an element of self-giving, even self-sacrifice. Finally, God's love is proactive, never simply responsive. Like the father of the prodigal son, it looks along the road and runs out to meet the child with joy.

Love is personal

122. The Christian ideal is that love is always personal. Our obligation is not to practise a kind of vague love of humanity but to practise that love towards all those 'with whom one has to do'²⁶, and perhaps especially towards children. Love is worked out in attitudes and actions of affection, respect, justice, and forgiveness between individuals²⁷.
123. Good childhood require loving relationships between parents and carers and their children, with the wider family, between friends, and with pets. In these close relationships children can experience the unconditional love that research shows forms their brains, their personalities and their futures²⁸. Sadly, not all children experience this unconditional love. For children whose situations may appear complex and challenging, even unsolvable, sometimes we may overlook the possibility that the single most significant thing we could do would be to help them identify and nurture a relationship in which they are truly respected, valued and loved - perhaps for the first time.

Unconditional love

124. Ideally children first experience this unconditional love at home, where committed and loving relationships between the adults who care for them provide an atmosphere of security and stability. Here children should receive and give love, have freedom to make mistakes and to learn, are listened to and respected. Home should provide the physical and emotional warmth, comfort and safety children need, with adequate room and resources for them to play and have fun. It should be a haven, where all members feel respected, and the inevitable tensions and disagreements that come from living together are resolved in ways that strengthen rather than damage relationships and provide a good example. It is normal for children to misbehave and to test boundaries; children should be involved in setting boundaries and rules, and these should be maintained in ways that are age-appropriate, respectful and safe.

What can the Church say and do to bring it about? **Church and Families**

125. The findings of the inquiry and *A Good Childhood* pose questions for us as Church. How do we model family? Where and how is love experienced in our relationships in, with and

through Church? Do we make space and time for families to be together? How much do we celebrate family with all members together or support families that may be in crisis or find love hard? How do we help families explore their faith and learn to pray together? Is this an area of the Church's ministry that has been downgraded or forgotten²⁹? Where and when is the Church a source of good parenting practice? Where are fathers and what kind of ministries support them best?

I think a good church is when all the church acts like a 1 big family!
[My Church Postcards – Anon, Age unknown]

126. There have been many good initiatives in work with families at all stages of their lifecycles, within the Church and in our communities. We need to support and encourage these even in the current economic climate. As illustrations, some examples follow:
- Annual Baptism celebration parties for the children, parents/carers, extended families and Godparents
 - Messy Church encouraging family interaction with all ages and worship time for families
 - Children and family days at every level to celebrate the Church's Year of the Child, 2009 as some dioceses have arranged this year
 - Activities focusing on and supporting fatherhood (such as the 'What Dads Add' baptism card)

Church and Friendships

127. As well as having loving relationships with their families and carers, children need good friendships from an early age. Friendships that allow children to talk, play and have fun without constant adult supervision are an essential part of social and moral development. It is important to strike a balance between our instincts to protect children from being hurt or harmed with the need to let them take physical and emotional risks with their friends, and so learn how to handle these risks. Children's friendships should be nurtured and special support given to those children who have difficulty in meeting or making friends; practices that are premised on separating children from their closest friends should be challenged.
128. Good childhoods need not just families and friends, but also good relationships with other adults. Adults who are neither a parent themselves and who do not work with children still have a particular responsibility towards them. Whether conscious of it or not, adults act as a collective parent for the next generation of children and young people. The society they shape in turn shapes children's attitudes and opportunities. To embrace this collective responsibility requires all adults to be mindful of how their behaviour can positively or negatively influence children's lives and learning. They need to be willing to 'foster the needs and dignities of children effectively and without resentment'³⁰ and to support children's welfare, possibly even at some cost to their own freedoms.
129. So how can we as Church promote and support children and young people in developing and sustaining positive friendships? How do we model and value friends and how can we create space and time for friendships to be expressed, grown and learned through play and meeting together in safe and welcoming environments? Here are a few examples of how churches have tried to do this taking their local context into account:
- The Diocese of Leicester undertook a consultation with young people aged 11-16, My Space, on what facilities and places were needed. The young people's ideas were fed into the local regeneration and city development plans.

- The Diocese of Chelmsford is actively involved in the Thames Gateway and Olympic project development for facilities that will be a legacy for young people in the region.
- Many churches were involved through Hope 08 in cleaning up, refitting and rebuilding play spaces in their local community.
- Many holiday clubs and activities are run by church based groups and children's and youth leaders.
- Being involved in mentoring programmes such as the one for Refugee and Asylum seeking children in The Children's Society's project in the diocese of Blackburn.
- Initiatives within schools that foster positive friendships and stop bullying such as playground monitors, peer to peer buddying programmes and transition activities.
- Supporting or developing sports based activities as part of youth work

Church and Society

130. Individuals, however loving, cannot bring about a good childhood alone. As the Archbishop of Canterbury has pointed out, 'children are not brought up, are not educated or inducted into human society just by one or two people. The whole social complex of which they're a part makes them the persons they are'³¹; or, in the words of the African proverb, 'it takes a village to raise a child'. If we want to ensure that all children and young people have a good childhood, as well as those individual children with whom we personally 'have to do', then love must also be embodied by our organizations, and loving relationships must be valued by our culture. *A Good childhood* calls this the 'law of love'. So, a good childhood requires a shared vision of a good life that is based on love, a vision that is practised not just in families but in communities, schools and churches, and that is supported by a change in our society.
131. Our excessively individualised society has tended to look upon parenthood as a lifestyle choice, and parenting as a private interest not a public good. But to flourish, families and carers need the support of a society that values and supports loving and stable personal relationships and that allows time and space for these good relationships to develop and be maintained. Families also need a society that helps repair and strengthen struggling relationships and that supports children to develop their own, independent and loving relationships with friends and family members.
132. Good childhood also means a good 'corporate parent' that provides a loving, safe and stable home for all those children in the state's care who are unable to live with their birth families.
133. Many churches are actively involved in supporting family development through courses that equip couples prior to marriage in church that are either short conversations or longer programmes and by offering parenting skills courses or support groups. Many Christians see fostering and adoption as their vocation.
134. Families also need employers who are able to respect and support family life, and an economy that ensures that families and carers have enough resources so that children do not experience material deprivation; and in which children and young people are protected and respected as both consumers and as workers. But if adults continue to put priority on the importance of work and material possessions, then they collectively put pressure on families and carers to put careers and earnings before time invested in relationships at home. If, however, greater priority is placed on the happiness and health of the people and relationships that mean most to us, and in particular the relationships that mean most to children, then we can start to create a culture in which the demands and the rewards of the workplace act in support of, rather than competition with, these relationships.

135. Good childhood needs the support of a good state: one that values family life and introduces laws and policies that support parents and carers in their responsibility; that provides the support of committed adults, whether advocates, guardians, mentors or other workers, to all children who need it. A state where children and young people are equal citizens and where policies and laws do not discriminate on the grounds of age; where the growing maturity of young people is recognized by a consistent set of legal and statutory responsibilities and freedoms.
136. And good childhood requires media portrayal of children and young people to be fair and respectful, without negative stereotyping or belittling; one in which they can actively contribute to public life and cultural activities while being protected from exploitation or inappropriate public exposure.

Church and Community

137. Good childhood need a good community, where children are treated as equal and essential members not as problems or as pests. Children learn their values from being valued; they learn to respect by being respected; so, if we wish children and young people to understand and to show respect towards other people it is by our respectful conduct towards them and towards each other from which they will learn to do so. There are young people in our communities who have never experienced this respect, and who therefore find it difficult to treat others with respect. Perhaps most challengingly, it is precisely these young people who need most urgently and consistently to be treated with dignity and respect.
138. So, a good community for children and young people is one where they are welcome in public spaces and have freedom to play out safely and to socialize with their friends; where adults are not anxious about the risks to children or afraid of the behaviour of young people; where parents and carers have the confidence to entrust their children to other adults because every adult is safe, willing to take their share of the responsibility for nurturing children; where children and young people can take an equal part in community decision-making.
139. Good childhood needs good schools: where all children are included and are respected as individuals, just as they are at home; where children learn social and emotional skills to equip them for a good life; and where children achieve the academic qualifications and acquire the vocational skills that equip them to earn a living in the increasingly complex and abstract world of work. To achieve this, schools need the support of an education system that values cooperation as well as competition in entry procedures and testing regimes, that encourages the development of 'soft' skills as well as academic achievement, and that ensures that every decision is based on the needs of the children in their care, not on the needs of the staff, the parents, the school or the state.
140. The continuing requirement for an act of daily worship of a broadly Christian nature in every school provides many possibilities for parishes to build relationships and engage with schools and children. Initiatives such as breakfast and homework clubs, holiday clubs or joint children's centres could also offer opportunities for broader learning development as well as modelling communities that nurture and value children.
141. The National Society has recently launched www.christianvalues4schools.co.uk a new website which seeks to identify the distinctive values that make Christian schools popular with parents and students, and promote ways of living out those values in the day-to-day activities.

Church as Community

142. If each child is precious, loved and made in the image of God, how can we as Church value all the children and young people of our communities both inside the church and within the wider community? As part of our response to the findings of the inquiry, we encourage churches to consider materials and initiatives that enable children to play an active part in the life, growth and ministries of the church and that enable them to grow in their own faith, prayer and understanding of the bible. Churches might consider resources such as *Leaves of Life* from The Children's Society, or '*Will You Make a Difference*'.
143. Key Christian agencies such as the Church Army work to transform the lives of many young people who are not engaged with church at all. The Church Lads' and Church Girls' brigade provide activities that create space for children and young people to build friendships, broaden their skills and explore Christian and moral values. Agencies such as these engage with children and young people and value them as precious in the sight of God. Diocesan children and youth advisers are a key resource in helping churches welcome children. We should also recognize we all have a part to play in welcoming those children and young people who we may not have previously welcomed.
144. Our response as Church is one through which love is revealed and in which the law of love is practised, a Church that welcomes children, prays for and with them and celebrates their arrival, growth and development; and that prioritises the care and nurture of children and young people and the relationships that are so important to them, both in its own work and in its influence in society as well as love that is expressed and modeled within and to all in the local community.

Conclusion

145. As Patron of *The Good Childhood Inquiry*, the Archbishop of Canterbury, sets out a challenge to churches in his afterword to *A Good Childhood*:

“The report asks for more from churches and religious communities – as it does from all kinds of bodies in our society. It asks for a coherent vision of how human beings grow and become capable of giving and deserving trust, for unremitting advocacy on behalf of those who are growing up in poverty, for a systematic willingness to pay attention to how children and young people actually talk about themselves and perhaps above all for a realistic and grateful appreciation of who and what our young people really are”³².
146. Helping adults to be adult about childhood in order to let children flourish is not something which can just be achieved by legislation or enforcement. Being adult about childhood means listening to the current state of childhood and recognising our responsibility to play our part in creating and nurturing a society that allows children to flourish. *A Good Childhood* speaks powerfully of the primacy of relationships and the 'Law of Love' without which children cannot flourish. It provides the Church with evidence to challenge the widespread attitudes that perpetuate inequalities, poverty and injustice and impact negatively upon children. But it also challenges the Church both to be a source of the values that children identify as essential to a good life and to look again at how it understands its responsibilities to nurture children and secure their agency as 'fellow citizens' within its own communities.

Appendix

Where to find information, resources or organisations that could help parishes reflect on what makes a good childhood or equip and enable churches and schools to work towards developing initiatives, mission or ministries that contribute to making childhood better.

The full report of the inquiry is '*A Good Childhood – Searching for Values in a Competitive Age*', Layard R. and Dunn J., published by Penguin 2009, ISBN 978-0-141-03943-5

The Good Childhood® Inquiry was independent both of The Children's Society and of the Church, and the inquiry's final report '*A Good Childhood – Searching for Values in a Competitive Age*' was written for the general reader. For more information on the children's evidence, the summaries of all evidence of each of the inquiries themes and the final findings and recommendations of the inquiry, visit www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Useful resources available from The Children's Society are:

Leaves of Life – A children's worship resource encouraging them to explore and express what makes a good childhood with tools that help churches and schools listen to their views and take action to make childhoods better. For more information visit www.childrenssociety.org.uk/leaves

The Good Childhood Youth toolkit – An interactive CD designed to help churches develop and implement inclusive youth activities, making childhood better for young people in their communities. For more information visit www.childrenssociety.org.uk/church

Halloween Choice – A resource to help explore the Christian meaning and teaching of All Saints alongside children and young people. It contains fun activities focused around modern-day heroes or 'saints' such as nurses and firemen, a church celebration and a procession of light ending in a community party.

Other agencies that have information and resources that may support or build activities towards creating a better childhood for all are:

The Board of Education of the Archbishops' Council www.cofe.anglican.org

The Church Army www.churcharmy.org.uk

The Church Lads' and Church Girls' brigade www.clcgb.org.uk

Children Matter! The Will you make a difference campaign www.wymad.org.uk

Churches together for families www.churchesandfamilies.org

Care for the Family www.careforthefamily.org.uk

www.christianvalues4schools.co.uk A new website launched by the National Society which seeks to identify the distinctive values that make Christian schools popular with parents and students, and promote ways of living out those values in the day-to-day activities of a busy school environment.

Fatherhood. www.whatdadsadd.co.uk

To see examples of children's and youth activities being undertaken by many dioceses to celebrate the church's Year of the Child, 2009 visit www.yearofthechild2009.co.uk

The Fresh Expressions directory www.freshexpressions.org.uk

Messy Church www.messychurch.org.uk.

The Church Urban Fund t www.cuf.org.uk

The Mothers' Union www.themothersunion.org

The following, **forthcoming initiatives from The Children's Society** also hope to continue and extend the dialogue around what makes a good childhood:

A **new independent commission into Fatherhood** will be announced by The Children's Society later in 2009.

Wellbeing research – New national survey findings into young people's well-being are due to be released Autumn 2009. Done in collaboration with the University of York, the new survey hopes to explore what the key factors that affect young people's well-being are; explain some of the variations in young people's well-being and challenge how the concept of well-being could contribute to improving the lives of young people.

The Good Childhood conversation product – A new parish resource will be launched in late 2009. It hopes to support churches in creating and facilitating a conversation about what makes a good childhood. Through trained facilitators, the resource will share the key findings from the inquiry, allow people to reflect on what local children's childhoods may be like and then suggest and equip them with possible actions towards making childhood better in their community

Endnotes

¹ The Most Reverend and The Rt Hon. Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, was patron of *The Good Childhood Inquiry*. The inquiry panel was chaired by Professor Judy Dunn of the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, and its members were Professor Sir Albert Aynsley-Green, Children's Commissioner for England; Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, Secretary General, the Muslim Council of Great Britain; Jim Davis, Programme Manager, The Children's Society; Professor Philip Graham, Emeritus Professor of Child Psychiatry, Institute of Child Health, London; Professor Kathleen Kiernan, Professor of Social Policy and Demography, University of York; Professor Lord Richard Layard, Emeritus Professor of Economics, London School of Economics; Professor Barbara Maughan, Professor of Developmental Epidemiology, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London; Professor Stephen Scott, Professor of Child Health and Behaviour, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London; The Right Reverend Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester and Chair of the Board of Trustees, The Children's Society; and Professor Kathy Sylva, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Oxford.

² *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age* written by Judy Dunn and Richard Layard published by Penguin Feb 2009 ISBN 978-0-141-03943-5

³ More on this approach to public theology can be found in: Nigel Biggar, "A Methodological Interlude: a case for *rapprochement* between moral theology and moral philosophy", in (Ed.) Mark Bratton, *God, Ethics and the Human Genome*, London: Church House Publishing, 2009, pp.116—123. (Included amongst the papers for the July 2009 General Synod group of sessions).

⁴ On the one hand children are depicted as gifts of God and signs of his blessing. They are a source of joy and celebration, who come ultimately from God and belong to him (e.g. Gen 30:11, 20, 22, 1 Sam 1:11, 19 Ps 127:3). However, it also sees children as sinful creatures. Genesis 8:21 tells us that humans are '*evil from infancy*' and the Psalms that '*the wicked go astray from the womb, they err from their birth*' (Ps 51:5, 58:3). Their wickedness threatens to bring disaster on the community unless they learn to be controlled by the knowledge of the Law (Dt 6:7,11:18-19, 31:12-13) and their continued disobedience is a capital offence punished by stoning (Dt 21:18-21). Corporal punishment is seen to be an important part of ridding a child of folly and instilling righteousness (Pr 13:24,22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15, 19, Sir 7:23) and assuring the father of the benefits of a good reputation for himself (Sir 30:1-13) parallels for which can be found in contemporary and Classical works such as Hammurabi, Cassius Dio, Cicero etc.

⁵ P.20 *Through the eyes of a child* edited by Anne Richards and Peter Privett CHP 2009 ISBN 978-0-7151-4088-8

⁶ Stanley Hauerwas, "The Radical Hope in the Annunciation: Why Both Single and Married Christians Welcome Children", in (Eds.) John Berkham and Michael Cartwright, *The Hauerwas Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001, pp.505—518.

⁷ Ibid: p.513.

⁸ Ibid: p.516.

⁹ William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1942, p.76.

¹⁰ Ibid: pp.76—78.

¹¹ P.7 *Through the eyes of a child*

¹² <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/statistics/2007provisionalattendance.pdf> for example average weekly attendance for children under 16 in 2003 was 229,000 in 2007 it was 219,000

¹³ MORI 2008 showing that 32% of stories about children and young people were about violence/crime/ASBOS, 13% about education and parenting, 12% about accidents, 12% about child abuse or neglect, 11% about health and only 8% about children's and young people's achievements

¹⁴ UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre report card 7 *An overview of child well-being in rich countries: a comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in the economically advanced nations* 2007

¹⁵ The findings of *the inquiry* were written up in 'A Good Childhood – Searching for Values in a Competitive Age'

¹⁶ The summary of key evidence from children and young people themselves can be found on TCS's website www.childrengsociety.org.uk/all_about_us/how_we_do_it/the_good_childhood_inquiry/see_evidence

¹⁷ *The Good Childhood Inquiry: What children told us* summary of children's evidence p.6

¹⁸ *The Good Childhood Inquiry: What children told us* summary of children's evidence p.15

¹⁹ Nairn, A., Ormrod, J. and Bottomley, P. (2007) *Watching, Wanting and Well-being: Exploring the Links. A Study of 9-13 year-olds*, London: National Consumer Council

²⁰ Tanya Byron (2008)

²¹ P.75 'A Good Childhood – Searching for Values in a Competitive Age' Penguin 2009

²² *The Good Childhood Inquiry: What children told us* summary of children's evidence p.17,18

²³ P.133 'A Good Childhood – Searching for Values in a Competitive Age' Penguin 2009

²⁴ P.10 'A Good Childhood – Searching for Values in a Competitive Age' Penguin 2009

²⁵ The evidence received by *The Good Childhood Inquiry* was summarised for the panel in a series of briefing papers which are available to download from www.childrengsociety.org.uk/all_about_us/how_we_do_it/the_good_childhood_inquiry/see_evidence

²⁶ The literal translation of 'neighbour' from the Hebrew

²⁷ This brief discussion of love draws on *The Christian Values of The Children's Society* an internal document prepared by Revd Nigel Asbridge, Chaplain Missioner for The Children's Society, 2006

²⁸ For more information about this research see *Why Love Matters* Gerhardt s, Routledge 2004

²⁹ One of the main networks in the Church of England that promoted education in family life and marriage (the FLAME network) folded in 2009 because of lack of support.

³⁰ P.30, 'Lost Icons', Williams R., T&T Clark 2000

³¹ The Archbishop of Canterbury's lecture to Citizen Organising Foundation (COF), *Formation: Who's bringing up our children?* given at Queen Mary College, London, on Monday 11th April 2005

³² P.178 *ibid*