



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Belfast 8-year-olds taking drugs!!



Children as young as eight are taking drugs and drinking alcohol in the north Belfast area, a recently published report has claimed. Neil Jarman of "Radical", the group behind the report, said the problems must be addressed before they become more widespread. He said confidence had fallen in the work done by statutory bodies, including social services, police and GPs. "What the report shows is that people are very critical of current educational programmes being delivered through the schools."

"People want to see a complete revamp of service provision, education and preventative treatments across north Belfast, developed in conjunction with the people in the communities," said Mr. Jarman. Surprisingly, what he did not mention is the need for parents to take responsibility for their children's behaviour!

A self-completion questionnaire, given to more than 6,000 post-primary school children in 62 schools, revealed in January that more than a quarter of Northern Ireland school pupils were offered drugs. That survey was conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It said a fifth of pupils had been offered solvents on at least one occasion and most of those who tried solvents were aged 12 the first time they tried them. Most of the 28% of pupils offered drugs were offered cannabis, with the majority of the 17% who took drugs aged 14 at the time. What the "Radical" report showed is the presence of drugs amongst school children at a level unsuspected before, for this research is the first local community study of its kind.

The measures taken by statutory bodies such as schools can never succeed, since they do not start with the correct perspective of the problem. Children are told by drug-taking teachers that drugs are wrong and they quickly see the hypocrisy of such a situation. The teacher who smokes and drinks alcohol is a drug-user. Indeed, it has been reported that smoking cigarettes is more harmful to health than smoking cannabis and what of the physical, mental and social ravages of alcohol within society? Children hear these issues reported on the television and see the hypocrisy of those warning them of the dangers of "drug-taking." There is a warning in this report for Christian parents who send their children to a state school. How wrong it is to risk a child in such an environment when the means of a Bible-based alternative is at hand.