

First Global Ethic Lecture
by Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

“Values and the Power of Community”

It is an honour to speak at Tübingen University. One of Germany's oldest and most influential seats of learning. A renowned centre of scholarship and science that has long been and remains at the forefront of Europe's intellectual development. And also the city twinned with Sedgefield, my constituency in Co. Durham, which I have represented for over 17 years in the UK Parliament. Tübingen was at the heart of the Reformation, something that has relevance to some of the theme I want to talk about today. In 1534 Duke Ulrich introduced the Reformation into Tübingen and in 1536 he established the Lutheran seminary which played such a prominent role in the development of Lutheranism in Germany. But in 1817 the university's Catholic faculty of theology was restored. It has co-existed in an environment of mutual understanding and creative dialogue ever since.

It is a good thought to start on.

I shall split the speech into four parts.

1. The nature of global change.
2. Community within a nation.
3. The doctrine of international community.
4. The role of religious faith and understanding.

Northern Ireland

But first, as I know that progress in Northern Ireland is one of the reasons I was invited here, I will say a few words about that. The history of Northern Ireland teaches us many things. But primarily it teaches us the value of a civic society where ancient divisions can be healed.

Today, engagement and dialogue have shattered the depressing status quo of the past. „Working together“, once dirty words, is now the basis of a new future that offers hope in place of war.

Of course there are those who reject this change. People who believe that if you don't fit in with their view of the world, you don't belong. But they are the minority. The majority rejected the old ways. They voted for change. For the first time ever Northern Ireland has an inclusive government voted for by the people of Northern Ireland.

I am proud of what has been achieved in Northern Ireland. I am honoured by the interest shown in it round the world. With the support and prayers of millions outside Northern Ireland, I know we can build a future of peace and harmony in Northern Ireland.

But what is the fundamental lesson of Northern Ireland for us all? For me it is this. There is no place in the 21st century for narrow and exclusive traditions. It underlines the supreme importance in the modern world of understanding our dependence on one another, for future progress.

The challenge of change

We are living through an age of global change, one of the most dramatic and unpredictable in the history of the world. Hardly a month passes without some breathtaking development in science and technology.

In 1990 two American futurologists published a book entitled *Megatrends 2000*. They did not need to look too far – a mere ten years. Yet one word does not appear in the entire book – the ‘Internet’ – the phenomenon that today is changing our lives.

Our world is moving at breakneck speed, and continuous change is among the hardest things for human beings to bear. Small wonder that ours has been called the ‘age of anxiety’ or, in the title of Francis Fukuyama’s latest book, *The Great Disruption*.

I believe it is no exaggeration to say that we are in the middle of the greatest economic, technological and social upheaval the world has seen since the industrial revolution began over two centuries ago.

Globalisation is not merely an economic phenomenon, and that is why our response cannot simply be an economic one. During most of the twentieth century, scarred as it was by ideological conflict and divisions, such a concept would have been unthinkable. In that sense, you could say that globalisation started here in Germany, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. Last night I strolled with Chancellor Schroeder over the Glienicke Bridge, where once spies between East and West were swapped. The exchanges were going on until not much more than a decade ago; the Berlin Wall fell just 11 years ago.

It was only once the ideological barricades came down all over the globe that the choice became not the state or the market but how you develop a dynamic market, an intelligent state, and an active civil society.

Earlier this week I participated in an event to launch the first draft of the book of life – the human genome project. The power that this information puts at our disposal almost defies our comprehension. Only future generations will be able fully to evaluate its true significance. Many of us reacted with wonder mixed with foreboding. Wonder at the new frontiers that science has opened up. Foreboding at what lies beyond; at what this means for our sense of ourselves, for our destinies, for what we understand to be the natural order of things.

Globalisation has brought us economic progress and material well-being. But it also brings fear in its wake. Children offered drugs in the school playground; who grow up sexually at a speed I find frightening; parents who struggle in the daily grind of earning a living, raising a family, often with both parents working, looking after elderly relatives; a world where one in three marriages ends in divorce; where jobs can come and go because of a decision in a boardroom thousands of miles away; where ties of family, locality and country seem under constant pressure and threat.

Yet it is a world where our living standards rise, our opportunities for travel and communication are those our grandparents would never dream of.

It is a world with a paradox at the heart of it: greater individual freedom; yet greater interdependence. We can do more; yet the very nature of globalisation is that what we do affects others more. We buy and consume more as a matter of personal choice; yet the opportunities we have and our quality of life depend ever more on choices we make together – good schools, environmental pollution, safe streets; or at an international level, world trade agreements or nuclear weapons control.

So the change is fast and fierce, replete with opportunities and dangers. The issue is: do we shape it or does it shape us? Do we master it, or do we let it overwhelm us? That's the sole key to politics in the modern world: how to manage change. Resist it: futile; let it happen: dangerous. So – the third way – manage it. But it can't be managed unless there are rules of management, value judgments as to how and why we are managing it in a particular way.

Here's where we must resolve an apparent conflict between old and new, modernisers and traditionalists. The traditionalists mourns the passing of the old familiarities, points to the greater stability of family life in the past; points to the ugliness and disorder of much of the new world. The moderniser sees its opportunities; rejects the prejudices of the past, the old hierarchies, is impatient to grasp the material benefits modernity brings. And in politics, the fascinating thing is that there is left and right in both camps. A traditionalist left that hates global finance; a traditional right that fears the immigrant. A modernising left that sometimes too easily shrugs off the threat to family life; a modernising right that believes in the supremacy of market forces.

The resolution of this conflict lies in applying traditional values to the modern world; to leave outdated attitudes behind; but rediscover the essence of traditional values and then let them guide us in managing change. The theologians among you will say it is reuniting faith and reason.

What are the values? For me, they are best expressed in a modern idea of community. At the heart of it is the belief in the equal worth of all – the central belief that drives my politics – and in our mutual responsibility in creating a society that advances such equal worth. Note: it is equal worth, not equality of income or outcome; or, simply, equality of opportunity. Rather it affirms our equal right to dignity, liberty, freedom from discrimination as well as economic opportunity. The idea of community resolves the paradox of the modern world: it acknowledges our interdependence; it recognises our individual worth.

It allows us to unite old and new. The traditionalist is right to worry about the breakdown of family life. The moderniser is right to say that shouldn't prejudice us against single parent families, the majority of whom do not choose to be single parent families. The moderniser is right to say global markets are good not bad. The traditionalist is right to worry about the inequity that can arise from them. The moderniser needs values. The traditionalist needs modern reality. In this way globalisation in money, travel, communication, technology can extend to a global ethic as well.

Community within a Nation

So: let us start applying this principle to modern Government. We embrace change. We do so on the basis of building a community, where citizens are of equal worth. Opportunity to all; responsibility from all.

Nowadays, it is pretty clear what governments have to do to promote prosperity. Macroeconomic policy is no longer left or right. It is right or wrong. Indeed, it is governments of the centre-left who have often been cleaning up the deficits inherited from the right. In Britain in May 97, we found a borrowing requirement of £28 bn per annum and a doubled national debt. In our first year we were paying more interest out on the debt than we were spending on the entire schools system. We are now in surplus and destined to remain so, though there were a lot of tough decisions along the way. For the first time in my adult life, Britain's' long-term interest rates are below those of Germany.

But it's only ever a foundation. On top has to be built a modern economy whose raw material is knowledge, skills, the aptitude and intelligence of people. Here there is certainly a political divide. For me, the challenge is to use the power of the community, acting together, to break down the barriers holding back opportunity for all. Education – based on excellence for all and learning through life, not

just at school – becomes the economic, as well as social priority for a modern nation in the knowledge economy. When the Berlin Wall stood, the arms race occupied the leading nations of the world. Today, it is the knowledge race.

We are putting through an education revolution in Britain today.

We are raising, sharply, education spending. All 4 year olds are now given nursery education; 3 year olds will come next. Primary schools are being re-focused around literacy and numeracy, where we need a dramatic improvement in attainment. We are opening up 11–18 year old education, creating new specialist schools, which devote particular attention to one subject, building City Academies in our inner cities, to be schools of excellence in deprived areas; introducing new contractual arrangements for teachers to link pay to performance; closing poor schools; removing poorly performing Head Teachers, rewarding others, better; massively expanding university and further education. In addition there is a huge investment in I.T. training and education for adults as well as for children. There will shortly be opened a University for Industry, which will offer high-quality, easily accessible skills courses through the internet. We are doing a lot – but every day I worry it should be more. For I know there are children still being raised without the hope of making the most of themselves. And millions, literally, of adults who cannot read and write properly. So much potential, wasted, failed by the past.

But it's not just education we need. We need enterprise, small businesses encouraged, new structures as to how we treat business taxes to stimulate growth and reward entrepreneurs.

And then, there is a new phrase for modern Government policy – „social exclusion“. We can attain full employment in Europe today. But not by demand management alone. We need special targeted measures at that hard core of the unemployed, whose problems are not just lack of work, but who are often living in a culture of poverty, drug abuse, low aspirations and family instability, excluded, set apart from society's mainstream. Our New Deal in the UK has taken 250,000 of them off benefit and into work and helped 200,000 more with training. We are shortly going to announce how we renew the programme for the next Parliament, and press on further to the goal of full employment.

All of this requires a sense of responsibility from us as a community to help others; to allow each person the chance to fulfil their potential. Without the values of community, solidarity, there would be no driving imperative to act. Yes, it is economically vital to improve education. But is a moral case, too. Deprive a child of educational opportunity and you deny their equal worth.

This part of the agenda – though not perhaps the policies – would be familiar to any adherent to the centre-left, moderniser and traditionalist. But you can't build a community on opportunity or rights alone. They need to be matched by responsibility and duty. That is the bargain or covenant at the heart of modern civil society. Frankly, I don't think you can make the case for Government, for spending taxpayers' money on public services or social exclusion – in other words for acting as a community – without this covenant of opportunities and responsibilities together.

If we invest so as to give the unemployed person the chance of a job, they have a responsibility to take it or lose benefit. And on crime, I have no hesitation about being very hard on it. It's not just that the vulnerable suffer most from crime. It is that it breaks the covenant between citizens. In Britain, we are now introducing policies that mean automatic jail for third time burglars; minimum and long sentences for rape; and setting aside additional prison places for violent crime. Violent neighbours can be evicted. It is all controversial. The Conservative Opposition have for example, refused to support us when we say those who breach community sentences, should lose their benefits.

We help drug addicts, but we test offenders for drugs and they're positive, we demand they get treatment. We hit drug dealers hard.

And we believe in law and order. We have passed measures to deal with noisy neighbours, and anti-social behaviour. We have encouraged the courts to use them more.

You will know, sadly, shamefully for us, that we, like other countries, have a problem with football hooliganism. At home, we have a tough regime and it has worked. We need to do more to deal with the problem when England fans travel abroad. We will do so.

But it is not just about football.

We are now looking at giving the police more powers to deal with drunken anti-social behaviour which causes offence and misery in too many towns and cities on too many Friday and Saturday nights.

Bizarrely, as the law stands, the police have the power in Britain to levy on the spot fines for cycling on pavements and dog fouling. And yet, they have to deal with drunks who get offensive and loutish and often can do nothing about it without a long, expensive process through the police station, the courts and beyond.

It is perfectly legal for a private company to put a clamp on a car wheel and demand £100 to get it released.

Yet no comparable power exists for our public police force. I believe that should change.

On Monday I meet some of our senior policemen and I want to put to them the idea that their officers get the power to levy on the spot fines for drunken, noisy, loutish and anti-social behaviour. Obviously where real violence and serious criminal intent is involved, the courts must remain the only option. But I am talking about dealing with nuisance drunken behaviour.

A thug might think twice about kicking in your gate, throwing traffic cones around your street or hurling abuse into the night sky if he thought he might get picked up by the police, taken to a cashpoint and asked to pay an on the spot fine of, for example, £100.

If the police want that power – and I believe they will, and the public will support it – they should get that power.

Some of the libertarian left express shock at some of our measures; just as some of the right do not think the community should have a responsibility to provide jobs for people. Both are wrong.

Today's way forward is a modern civil society of rules and order but not prejudice or discrimination. We are tolerant of people's sexuality, opposed to all forms of discrimination, but intolerant of anti-social conduct. We have taken our traditional values of respect for others and solidarity, we have accepted the need for Government action, but are re-casting both values and role of Government to meet the challenge of a changing world.

Community as an international idea

Now – let us step outside our nation-states and analyse the world the nation-state finds itself in today.

None of the big issues facing us all – trade, finance, the environment, nuclear proliferation, organised crime and drugs – can be tackled today by nations acting alone.

The history of the last 100 years and more shows the vital importance of renewing the institutions of international cooperation and of building alliances between the main players.

For centuries, statesmen and philosophers, appalled by the horrors and futility of war, have made attempts to reconcile the ideal of an international community with the reality of a world based on states and their interests. In 1309 the poet Dante proposed in his book *The Kingdom* that all nations should live under one law and that this „world law“ would one day keep nations from going to war with each other. Two hundred years later the Dutch scholar Erasmus in his *Complaint of Peace* appealed to all earthly kings and rulers to set up a Council of Just Men to deal with disputes so that, as he put it, „wars should not breed wars“.

At the end of the 16th century the Duc de Sully wrote the *Grand Design* suggesting that the 15 states of Europe set up a Council of Europe to deal with the problems arising between them as a national parliament would. Hugo Grotius, in 1625, set out in *Laws of War and Peace* the first comprehensive system of international law. William Penn drew up a scheme for a European Parliament and Abbe de Saint-Pierre in 1716 devised a *Project for a Permanent Peace* to unite the nations' rulers in a Senate, where voting would take the place of war-making. Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel and many others dreamed up the kind of world order, in keeping with their times, that would abolish war and bring the nations together.

But it was only following the First World War that a world legal constitution was actually drawn up and agreed at the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919. It was called the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Sixty one nations eventually joined the League, but not the United States. Although it was never a world parliament, many people today recognise it as the true parent of the present United Nations.

Despite early successes, the League failed to achieve its goal of preventing another world war. The League became a mirror of a discordant world. Its Council discussed the Japanese invasion of China, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and the German invasion of Czechoslovakia and Austria; and the powerless to prevent any of them.

The elaborate system of collective security that the League represented never worked; because in the end the common bonds of trust and shared values that would have to underpin such collective security were not there. Too much of the world, tragically, agreed with Mussolini, that it faced a simple choice between „fascism or communism“.

Thankfully he was wrong, though many millions died in defeating both. The Charter of the United Nations has now served for over half a century as the political constitution of mankind. But one has only to glance through the Preamble to be struck by the gap between promise and performance, between the hopes and pledges of 1945 and of 1919 and the frustrations of Bosnia, the Congo, Angola, Afghanistan.

We have not yet made a reality of our determination to „save succeeding generations from the scourge of war“, to „unite our strength to maintain international peace and security“ and to „practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours“. And we have had only limited success in our endeavours to „reaffirm faith in the fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person“ and „to promote social progress and better conditions of life in larger freedom“.

How we collectively respond to globalisation in many ways determine whether we can bridge that gap between these aspirations and today's reality.

I believe we will only succeed if we start to develop a doctrine of international community – based on the principle of enlightened self-interest. As within countries, so between countries. A community based on the equal worth of all, on the foundation of mutual rights and mutual responsibilities.

This is not to say nations will not pursue their self-interest or that there will not be occasions when those interests conflict in a way that diminishes or overwhelms the desire for mutual understanding. We are not naïve. But it is to say that increasingly, our problems are shared and our societies and economies threatened where no understanding to resolve these problems exists; and benefit greatly where it does.

Let us be specific

First, free trade is the key to prosperity for poorer nations and essential for the competitiveness of the richer ones. Protectionism on the other hand is the result of short-sighted view of the national interest. Today we have a World Trade Organisation where until recently we had no formal organisation to oversee world trade at all. More remarkably, China will shortly join it.

Rich countries need to go further, in particular to free up trade in agricultural goods, to meet both our moral obligation to the poor, and our long-term self-interest. That is why I believe we must restart the stalled WTO trade round before the end of the year.

Second, the fact that debt relief is on the Okinawa G8 in three weeks' time highlights how far concept of solidarity based on enlightened self-interest has come.

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We will also be looking at ways in which we can work in partnership with others to roll back the diseases that hold back the developing world: AIDS, malaria, TB.

Third, crime and drugs are international issues. As business has gone global, so has the business of crime, above all the drugs trade. When you hear stories of drug barons offering to pay off a country's national debt in return for the freedom to operate, you realise the scale of the threat we face.

As now in the EU, the fight against crime will make up an important part of the G8 summit. We will discuss measures to strike at the heart of the drug and crime cartels by identifying, and then confiscating, the criminal gains from their activities. We are also looking into drawing up common benchmarks against which to judge international financial centres, so that we are better able to crack down on the money

laundering and financial crime upon which the most sophisticated and dangerous international crime organisations depend. We will also look into ways of controlling the trade in the pre-cursor chemicals that are used to manufacture many of the synthetic drugs flooding our cities and streets.

Fourth, as individual nations, we are powerless to halt the destruction of our environment upon which we and future generations all collectively depend. But at Kyoto we showed that there is an international consensus on the importance of tackling global warming. A generation ago, this would have been unthinkable. We now need to take advantage of that agreement in principle to ensure that the commitments we made are followed up in practice. We are working closely with Germany on this.

At Okinawa we will also be making the case for a new drive on renewable energy. Two billion people do not have access to the most basic resource of the modern world: electricity. We need to find sustainable ways of giving them that access if we are to have any chance of bridging the global gap between rich and poor.

Fifth, despite the end of the Cold War the threat of nuclear proliferation is still with us. But the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty represent a collective determination to banish the possibility of nuclear war from the world.

Lastly on the G8 agenda, there is technology. We will not be able to deal with the global implications of the information and biotechnology revolutions if we cannot do so on the basis of common values and mutual responsibility.

At Okinawa we will be taking action to avoid the emergence of a global digital divide, and extending the opportunity of education. We will also be looking at ways of building a greater international scientific consensus on genetically modified foods, and wider food and crop safety issues.

Common problems, common interests have led to mutual responsibility and mutual gain.

The EU is the most obvious manifestation around us of the need for nations to co-operate together. This is not a speech about Europe – though I am happy to take questions on it. Neither – despite what you may read – was this ever going to be a response to the interesting and important speech made by President Chirac to the German Parliament earlier this week. I will be setting out the British view as to Europe's future in a speech in the Autumn. I have no doubt that it is important for Great Britain to be a full and leading partner in Europe. And as I said last night, it is time we had the confidence in Britain to realise we can shape and influence events in Europe and indeed are doing so. Europe is not a conspiracy against us, but an opportunity for us.

Inter-Faith Understanding

There is something else we can do as well and I mention this because I am speaking here in Tübingen and I have Hans Küng alongside me. We can do our best to overcome the religious divisions that still threaten our peace.

There is a contradiction between trying to renew the doctrine of community politically; and ignoring the dimension of inter-faith understanding. Faith and reason are not opponents but partners. In the past, and increasingly today, we value the role religions play in promoting peace. Peace and religion have not always been fellow travellers, it is true, but today with greater understanding between religions a more just and peaceful world is ever closer.

We live in an era rich with examples of inter-religious dialogue. The Pope's recent pilgrimage to Jerusalem springs to mind when Jews, Muslims and Christians met in a spirit of fraternity. Equally poignant and closer to Tübingen's cultural experience was the signing last year of that great milestone in Lutheran-Catholic understanding – The Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification. Such examples give great hope and send a clear sign to the world that faiths will not allow their doctrinal differences to stand in the way of greater

Co-operation.

Religious dialogue and understanding is essential to peace. Ignorance creates fear, which creates conflict. Such dialogue does not have to deny or trivialise differences, but it should look at the common elements in faith.

Our global community is like a tapestry; individual threads at its back; an intelligible picture at its front. All our faiths make up our global community, but they are all different ways of pondering the same fundamental question; the nature of existence.

If it is true that it is only by clear commitment to shared values that we survive and prosper in a world of change, then surely religious faith has its own part to play in deepening such commitment. What is faith but belief in something bigger than self? What is the idea of community but the national acknowledgement of our own interdependence? In truth, faith is reason's ally.

Religion has often resulted in bigotry. But so has political ideology. However, a society where there is religious faith will always, in my view, be inherently more likely finally to pursue the good of humankind; and the less it sees reason as its enemy, the quicker it will get there. But how religion modernises itself – that is a topic for another time, and another speaker.

Religions can help to make our communities – communities of values. The inevitability of globalisation demands a parallel globalisation of our best ethical values; not a distilling or unnecessary uniformity of the rich values that make up our communities of faith. But the basic premises of our faiths; solidarity; justice; peace and the dignity of the human person are what we need in the age of globalisation.

Conclusion

Traditionally, these were religious values. But we now know, through several quite different disciplines, that they are universal values. Economists call them „social capital“. Evolutionary biologists call them „reciprocal Altruism“. Political theorists call them communitarianism or civil society. Each of these phrases stands for what is really a quite simple idea – that what gives us the power to survive in a rapidly changing environment are the habits of co-operation, the networks of support, our radius of trust. And we learn those habits in families, school congregations and communities. It is there that we learn the grammar of togetherness, the give and take of rights and responsibilities, where we pass on our collective story, our ideals, from one generation to the next. Without them, society is too abstract to be real. Community is where they know your name; and where they miss you if you're not there. Community is society with a human face.

And that is what we need at times of change. It is an extraordinary fact, and a moving one that our great faith traditions have survived, while political, economic and social systems have come and gone. Wherever you find a group that has managed to break free of the encircling bonds of poverty and deprivation, there you will invariably find strong families, associations and communities of faith. It's there we discover that a crisis shared is a crisis halved; and a celebration shared is a celebration doubled.

So my argument to you is that traditional values and change are not enemies but friends – because it is precisely at the epicentre of change that we need the human foundations of stability. It's when the winds blow strongest that you need deep roots. When we know we are not alone, we can face the future without fear.

It is community that allows us to do so. It is values that sustain communities. And it is in a new world, global values, reaching our beyond national frontiers and ideological horizons, that will guide us to our destination: a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world for all.