



THE ARCHBISHOP  
OF CANTERBURY



Church University last night.

Good evening. It is a rare pleasure for me to be able to be at this university in which I have the privilege of being the Chancellor. I must be one of the most absentee chancellors in the British University system for which I apologise. I am immensely grateful to the vice-chancellor, Professor Rama Thirunamachandran for his kind invitation to be here and also to those who have done the work in preparation. Thank you so much.

Thank you too to all of you for turning up and being willing to listen. I trust that if the lecture is too boring at least you will get some rest.

In some ways when I was re-looking at the lecture having written it a couple of weeks ago, I thought, well, it would be a lot easier and a lot more profitable for the publishers if you just bought a copy of the book and read it because I'm going to summarise it a little bit. So if you have read it then please do just quietly have a mental cigarette break until the questions when you can ask the awkward bits.

The thesis of this lecture is that we are at a remarkable time of opportunity and choice for our nation, but the way in which that opportunity is seized or missed (not merely which happens - the way in which it is seized or missed) depends on the values which underlie our choices. We may seize the opportunities that lie before us, which I'll unfold a little bit, and yet build a country which is dysfunctional, dystopian and fearful for all those who are not successful and rich, which will be the overwhelming majority.

Or we may find that although the challenges of the next few years are enormous, we yet have a society in which inequality is reduced, those in need are cared for, the vast majority have satisfactory and fulfilling lives, and we are proud to belong to our country, not only by our birth and our belonging, but also because of what it achieves.

I'm making the assumption that 'good' societies are not built only through economics but that they need a deep set of values that are both linked to their history and their culture, but adaptable to changing circumstances that enable all eventualities to be faced with care for one another, with determination to move forward, and with the capacity to deal with setbacks.

I do believe – and this is not in any sense controversial or new, it goes back to Alasdair MacIntyre's book 'After Virtue' back in the late 1980s – that there is today in Britain a lack of common values due to our breakdown and confidence of what was once a shared narrative of virtue in the Christian tradition. I'm not intending to analyse this further, but both in the book and in this lecture, I am seeking to suggest ways in which policies could be more closely linked to historic virtues while maintaining and indeed enhancing the diversity and freedom that are so attractive in modern life, which have been things that have growing up in my lifetime since the 1950s, have added immeasurably to the attractiveness of this country.

## **Evolving traditions**

I want to start by talking about our own traditions. Edmund Burke, in his essay on the French Revolution, commented that the social contract that should exist is one that is essentially a covenant between those who have lived in the past, those who are alive today and those who are yet to be

born. His infinitely flexible, pithy and rather striking definition of the social contract contrasts with the views posited by the revolutionaries in France at his time, who saw a need to ignore the recent past and little need to adapt to the indefinite future. Burke was, of course, a conservative, a Tory, and a member of parliament, yet his political philosophy encapsulated much of the way in which the English – and I am consciously talking about England and not using English as a substitute for British – in which the English tradition of political development had occurred in his time, and in which he hoped it would continue to occur.

In the book that lies behind this lecture, 'Reimagining Britain: Foundations for Hope', what I'm trying to do is argue for three groups of values, all based in the Christian tradition – basically all based in the teachings of Jesus Christ – but all adaptable to our present society. The three groups of values are: first, Community; second, Courage; and third, Stability. Traditions have to be adaptable as well as recognisable if they are to be useful during times of change. The two ways in which traditions die is either if people lock into the tradition and nothing can change - because then the society changes and nobody can keep up; the tradition is no longer relevant. Or alternatively, if you do these step changes, a paradigm shift, what you are then trying to relate to bears no relation to the way in which your tradition has worked in the past. In both those cases, traditions expire.

Unwritten traditions, which is how we work in England at least, depend for their adaptability on the mood of a society. If it is flexible, confident and outward-looking, they will adapt and flex without people feeling a great sense of loss. People will be excited by change. They will change, without paradigm shifts -- and yet looking at where they end up one will still see the ancestry from which they came.

Let me start with our changing context and historic values, before moving on right at the end of the lecture to discuss the application of our values. I leave that to the end and do it fairly briefly because, despite all appearances, I'm really not a politician and that is more a problem for politicians, although I'm happy to stray into dangerous territory from time to time – particularly when my communications director is not here!

## **The Changing Context**

What I am suggesting is we are in a third moment of radical potential change, both in the way our economy and our society works, and in our external circumstances, which combines with changes in the nature of our society and in our social customs to provide a challenge to the way we understand how we relate to each other and how our nation can work.

My suggestion is that the first of these great periods of change was in the period from the Great Reform Act of 1832 until more-or-less the National Education Act of 1870; I recognise that dates are slightly arbitrary. In that period, I suggest that there were two huge changes were going on in the world. First of all, as a country we were acquiring an empire, as Macaulay says, in a fit of absentmindedness. The English had had an empire in Europe in the late-medieval period, which had progressively been dismantled and conquered; the loss of Calais under Queen Mary.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a second empire had grown that was mainly in North America and the West Indies, with some links

to the continent of Europe and increasing dominions in India, especially Bengal. Other territories were continually added to this empire as a result of wars with France and other countries – and exploration, for example in Australia.

Britain lost some of its richest colonies in the course of the American Revolutionary War, or the American War of Independence, of 1776 to 1783.

Within a very short period (less than five years) under the premiership of Pitt the Younger (who if you remember was Prime Minister from 1783-1801; then 1804 until 1806), Britain recovered its economic nerve, and its rapid development of the agricultural and industrial revolutions. By the end of the Napoleonic Wars, partly as a result of the Marquis Wellesley's period as Governor General in India, British control of territory in India had grown considerably and continued to grow until around about the mid-1850s. At the same time, we also gained significant holdings in North America, in what is now Canada, in the Caribbean and in the Pacific and Australasia. We also gained significant territory in Africa. Africa became an important part of the empire, although that only grew significantly after the Congress of Berlin in the 1880s. But we must be mindful that we built our empire on merchant adventuring as well as on the agricultural and industrial revolutions. The merchant adventuring of course we need to remember was based on the transatlantic slave trade and the holding of slaves until the 1830s, and it was that which enabled us to become one of the world's great powers.

The Industrial Revolution that was going on at the same time meant that there was a mutual relationship between what was happening overseas and what was happening internally in this country. It was the time of rapid movement of population from the rural areas to the cities, which sprang up in huge numbers with very sharply growing populations in terrible conditions. The combination of external and internal also challenged the understanding of what had been a rural society. From about the late 1820s, beginning with the Great Reform Act of 1832 – which it is worth remembering that the then Archbishop of Canterbury opposed rigorously the whole way through parliament, to the extent that on one occasion he was in Canterbury there was a crowd rioting against him. (If only we still attracted such attention! My best comments are, “Didn’t I see you on the telly the other day”!) Someone threw a dead cat through the then Archbishop’s carriage window. His chaplain objected and the Archbishop remarked, and this was in 1832, “At least it was dead.”

But the combination of the acquisition of empire and the huge changes in society led to, in this country, especially for Christians and not especially the established church but the non-conformists above all, challenging the failures of our society. After the great Reform Act there were numerous other acts which stopped children going down mines and up chimneys, that limited working hours; there was the first limits to how people were treated at work, and slums began to be cleared – and to be fair, led by the Church of England, not exclusively, from 1812 to 1870 when the numbers became too great, universal primary education was introduced.

There was also public health and care for the poor in a new way. Public health, particularly with the introduction of sewerage and of public health inspections to reduce cholera epidemics and other forms of epidemic. The conditions of the urban poor by the end of the nineteenth-century

were still terrible, but there was a deep sense that reform was a good and important thing. That was the first major change, 1832 to 1870. To some degree it ended with the Great Depression that began in the 1870s, an agricultural depression above all.

The **second** major change was after 1945. We can pin this date down fairly precisely as it was the moment at which the long process of unwinding the effects of two world wars began, albeit accompanied by the Cold War which lasted until 1989. During this period, there was also very rapid economic development, as the world economy and system was re-created following the disasters of the two world wars; it had disappeared effectively in 1914 despite attempts to recreate it in the 1920s but the Great Depression put an end to that. It was accompanied also by decolonisation occurred. There again you have external foreign policy influences – the loss of empire - and internal economic influences mutually reinforcing each other.

At the same time, through the work of many different groups – the Labour Party, parts of the Conservative Party, the churches, and others, particularly under the influence of Beveridge, Temple and Tawney – three school friends who just down the road in the Old Palace sat around the dining room table discussing what the post-war settlement should look like. It was an extraordinary moment of, I would say, the providence of God.

The post-war settlement resulted in an enormous volume of reform in social legislation. It was the fastest and most effective range that we have ever seen in our history. Between 1945 and 1951 the Attlee Government not only gave independence to what is now India, Pakistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka (an achievement that would occupy most governments for their whole term and a great deal more) but also created the present welfare system, implemented the 1944 Education Act, began health and safety legislation, and started the National Health Service. The pace of reform continued in the 1950s and 1960s with changes in social legislation where there were reforms to divorce law, the introduction of the first race relations act, the abolition of the criminalisation of homosexual acts, and changes in abortion law and many other areas.

From quite early in the 1950s, whichever Government it was, began to seek ways of having a closer relationship with the emerging European community, beginning with the European Coal and Steel Community. Again, you had the external and internal – huge changes in the way we lived internally but at the same time the disposal of empire and a turn towards Europe.

There were obviously a number of hiccups, not least coming from what Flanders and Swan in a well-known song of the 1960s referred to as “that old man, he said non”, in reference to Charles de Gaulle’s veto of our entry into the Common Market. However, British policy was directed towards membership of the Common Market and achieved it in 1972. That settled foreign policy for many years. Basically, it was the Cold War and working with Europe. The British Empire was gone, at least largely; I did know a diplomat once whose main job was to go around the world looking at the remnants of the empire trying to persuade them to seek independence. Foreign policy was about links between the United States and Europe, and a clear direction of travel within Europe.

Note that these first two periods grew out of values that were obvious to people at the time: they were obviously based in a Christian tradition, and Temple in his great book, 'Christianity and Social Order', makes that point very clearly. He was able to speak in an era where a Christian view of the world was widely accepted.

We are now, I suggest, in a **third period** where all is changing again.

First of all, we have huge and entirely unpredictable economic change resulting from technological advances in everything from the human genome, biology through the other sciences, to artificial intelligence, automation and robotics, to name but a few. Secondly, the impact of the end of the Cold War continues to be felt in a more chaotic world order characterised by numerous smaller wars and disputes – some relatively small, some as in Syria or the DRC really very large, but in the second case forgotten – many of which are threatening or potentially threatening because of the proliferation of nuclear weapons which we can't uninvent, and – which this is a huge change – by the renewal of religiously-motivated conflict, or religiously excused conflict even if genuinely not motivated, where adherents of all the major world faiths can be found justifying atrocities on religious grounds. We need to be very clear that Islam is far from the only religion that has an issue with extremism, and I include Christianity. We live in many ways in a less violent world compared to the past, particularly if you're in north-west Europe, but also a more unpredictable one in terms of the location and intensity of violence, for example terrorism.

At the same time, as we know we have voted to leave the European Union, begging the question of what we are going to, not just what we are coming from. Much as we may say that by leaving the EU we are not leaving Europe, and much as in some aspects such as security policy, this may be true, it does not answer the question as to what we are going to do as opposed to what we are not going to do.

### **Reimagining the kind of society we want**

In such circumstances, as I suggested at the beginning of this lecture, we have to look afresh at what are the drivers for the kind of society we wish to create. Let me be clear: it seems to me inevitable that there will be a new type of society. Our grandchildren and children will not look at things in the same way as we do.

I was looking at the BBC website reporting on the Chief Executive of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg's evidence to the Senate yesterday and there were a series of hysterically funny tweets which began with the statement that his giving evidence was for him every 20-something, early 30-something's worse nightmare: trying to explain social media to a bunch of seventy-year olds. Some of the questions that came really illustrated the point.

We really don't know the impact of what technology is going to do. We have the world in our pockets with our smart phones and yet we have the same number of relationships that we have ever had. In other words, we have information about everyone but the capacity to relate properly to

very few. What will be the impact of that? What will be the impact of being able to indefinitely replace bits of ourselves and keep ourselves going? What will be the impact of analysis of the human genome and the treatments that are emerging already from that? What will be the impact of Artificial Intelligence? Steven Hawking saw it as a threat, others see it as the hope, but experts are divided equally. So there will be a new form of society. It will look very different over the next 20, 30, 40 years. Each of our reimagining's have taken 30 or 40 years – they take a long time.

But is the society we will have based on values, on a deep set of principles of what makes for a good place to be, which spring from our traditions that are adapted? Or is it one that just sort of happens? When change in society just sort of happens, it is dystopian. It is the sort of society that has at its centre asymmetries of power, struggles that will have unpredictable effects except that large numbers of people who cannot struggle well are pushed to the margins – or worse.

## **Values**

Where then can we look for our values? I want to suggest that our values, even in what in this country is one of the most secular societies on earth, still derive in most respects from our Christian tradition, and most clearly from the Bible. In most respects, I am not saying exclusively. However, they have to be reimagined in the way they work, because of the huge changes in our society.

One or two of the impacts of those changes is diversity, in traditions of faith, and in ethnicity is infinitely greater even than after 1945. In the 1940s one of the greatest of my predecessors, William Temple, wrote a book entitled 'Christianity and Social Order.' It is a wonderful book and I commend it to you most warmly. Much more warmly than my own book! But it does not deal with a number of issues. It does not ask questions about foreign policy: it was obvious at the time – beat Germany and then rebuild. It does not deal with issues of diversity of faiths: in the 1951 census there were less than 100,000 people of other faiths than Christianity in the United Kingdom - there are 3.7 million today. It does not tackle questions around new forms of technology and automation, except for a certain sense of worry about television, on which he was unusually prescient in saying it would change the way we ate supper. It does not ask questions about the structure of the household and families. We all knew what families and households were. They were parents, of opposite gender – and there were only two genders – and they were married, and they at least intended to have children, and on the whole they didn't get divorced. Remember, I come actually from a family with a considerably more complicated history, but I won't go into that now.

So how do we explore what our values would look like in the future?

## **1. Community**

Let me start with the first one, community or cohesion - what sticks us together.

Since the late nineteenth century successive popes, initially Leo XIII, and then most importantly after Vatican II, John XXIII, Paul VI, Saint John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and now Pope Francis have continued to develop the system of Catholic social teaching. It is a most sophisticated and powerful tool establishing a number of basic principles which indicate the ideas of a virtuous and values-based society, founded in Christian understanding, a society which is good for the individual and good for the collective.

The key values among the Catholic social teaching tradition are ones we will all have heard of: solidarity – that we belong to one another, subsidiarity – that decisions should be taken at the lowest possible level of any institution. The Church of England are actually very good at subsidiarity, at least apart from the decision bit. We do everything at any level you like, it's just that we don't really make decisions; the common good, which means what it says, and the universal destination of goods – which means God gives us everything for everyone not just for those whom are the most powerful; as well as a number of others around justice and peace, and particularly with Pope Francis, around the environment with *Laudato Si*.

Such values are deeply embedded in the tradition of the scriptures which itself has so formed Scottish and English thinking since the Reformation, across the bridges of the Reformation, even through the Enlightenment.

The first group of values, as I said, are those around community. A society in which isolation continues to be a major problem - and in the future, is likely to be an even greater one - has been explored by Michel Houellebecq in his book, *'Atomised'*, and is a society of individualistic tragedy, without hope, without desire and without purpose.

In Holy Week, the week before Easter, I was doing a mission in the Isle of Thanet, in the deanery of Thanet, less than 25 miles from here. In that one deanery an area that does literally just cover the Isle of Thanet, there are more than 20,000 people living alone, with some level of isolation. And in much of the work we did, at some of the events we held, the people we met at small and large gatherings, you saw the destructive impact not of simply living alone, but of isolation, of the diminution of people who do not have people with whom they can relate; who are isolated. We all know the South African expression that 'You are because I am.' In other words, we exist because we exist in relationship. Expand that 20,000 to the whole country and we see why isolation is one of the great dangers threatening our society. Cohesion calls us to care for neighbour, and emerges from Jesus' redefinition of what a neighbour is. The common good reinforces the same approach in terms of our giving and our international solidarity – international as well as national, and internationally exemplified by the extraordinary commitment to 0.7 per cent of GDP as our level of international giving, one of the great achievements, I think, of my lifetime, by a Government who could not have seen that as politically advantageous.

## **2. Courage**

The second group of values is around courage. Community, or cohesion, or 'what sticks us together' by itself can easily become inward-looking



and stultifying, preventing the taking of risk. What is it that drives us forward? I suggest another range of traditions around the theme of courage. Within this group I would put aspiration. We were talking earlier about the programme you are running to get young people, teenagers, to aspire to go to university. Aspiration is what drove the industrial and agricultural revolutions, it's what drove the creation of the welfare state.

Aspiration, competition and creativity, again these are found in the scriptures as gifts to human beings from God; the aspiration for liberty in Egypt, the creativity that led to the building of Solomon's temple or of the Tabernacle, the relationships between the tribes of Israel that were competitive, in the sense of competition towards holiness and living under God's law. In the New Testament the great missionary outreach of Paul and Peter and of the early church was driven by aspiration. The adaptability of Christian life, starting with Christianity as a subset of Judaism, but which emerged in the most extraordinarily intellectually creative way so that within 300 years it had become predominantly gentile and had conquered the greatest empire of its age without drawing a sword or fighting a battle. And it is striking that Paul in his letter often uses expressly competitive terms; seek to outdo one another in love, seek to outdo one another in holiness. This is the group that drives us forward. They're embedded in our tradition, and they've been embedded in much of what we see in our universities and in the development of artificial intelligence, the other things that are causing so many changes. Aspiration and creativity, for good or ill, led to Facebook, led to Twitter – that's probably less favourable, I might move on from there, I feel the ice cracking under my feet. There are many other examples.

### 3. Stability

But the **third** group is around stability, and I am not quoting from the Conservative Party manifesto of 2017. Within this group – so we start with cohesion, we have courage, and then we have stability – and here I put resilience, sustainability and reconciliation. They are the things that keep us going when there are set backs. They deal with the realities of life. Resilience is essentially a spiritual and psychological virtue that enables us to rise above disaster, whether as individuals, through illness, or as nations or organisations through economic setbacks and other issues. It has deep roots in the New Testament with words as long-suffering, and patience.

Sustainability is about development and competition and creativity that can be kept going in a world where we are more and more aware of our impact on resources and especially on climate. You see it emerging very powerfully from the letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament.

Reconciliation enables us to cope with the diversity of a complicated world which is brought closer and closer to us through social media; as I have said, reconciliation is the foundation of the entire Christian Gospel and the aim of its outworking is to break the barriers that divide us. A reconciled people are a people who can work together while maintaining difference. In this country it is one of our greatest challenges.

Tomorrow, I will be in Belfast – I have been very kindly invited to the last day of this great meeting they have had to celebrate 20 years since the Good Friday Agreement. I've been there quite a lot and reconciliation is probably the thing that, within the work I do, presses my buttons most strongly. But it is very hard to find reconciliation. Reconciliation is the work of generations not of years, let alone of weeks and months. But

whether it is in Northern Ireland, or in South Africa, or other places in the world where there is conflict, reconciliation is something which has to take enemies and bring them together. It has to take the other and make them part of one's own self and surroundings. Individually we find it difficult. The hopes of a society that works together for the common good cannot be separated from reconciliation, because otherwise, as long as there are the differences, you are open to politicians leveraging them apart, jimmying them apart, as a means of gaining support from one group or another. This is what we have seen in recent elections in Europe.

### **The application of values to life**

And so in the final part of this lecture – and we're quite near the end, I hope. I'm sure you do – I will briefly apply these three groups of values to a few areas, starting with the basic building blocks of housing, education and health, and then turn to foreign policy, immigration and integration, and a little at prisons, which I don't cover much in the book.

#### *Three building blocks*

In each of the previous two periods that I have suggested we were reimagining what this country was like, or should be like – in the mid-nineteenth century, the post-war period and the twentieth century – there were three basic building blocks which changed the way in which our society worked.

First was **housing**. Much could be said about that, and I don't intend to do it now, however, both in the mid-nineteenth century and after the Second World War the building of new houses and the clearing of slums was seen as a priority. The tragedy today is that we are talking not about the building of new communities but of the building of new houses. If we are to reimagine our country we must reimagine what it is to be in community. There is a practical application that when new towns are built, which are positive for the next few years, that it is central that within them there should be places where people meet and form community. And at the moment what typically happens with new builds is that the developer in the private buildings, rather than in rented accommodation, agrees that they will put in an infrastructure of community and halfway through the building appeals and get permission not to do it any longer. And you end up with rows and rows and rows of house and nowhere to meet. No means of building cohesion. No means of developing one another. I'll come back to that at the very end.

The second traditional building block was that of **education**. And I would just like to note a couple of things about that. Rama said that I went to Eton, which I did, and I was very fortunate to go there so you may think that I haven't got much that I can say about education – except that, being a vicar, all five of our children went through the state education system, always in the local schools. I'm sounding slightly defensive because I am always accused of this – “Talk about something you know about!” Well, I can tell you, if you've had five children going through the local schools you learn something about education. If you're a vicar, you're chairman of at least two of them.

I remain – and I know in Kent this is very controversial – I remain cautious, more than cautious, about selection. I've absolutely no doubt that many people, the right children going to grammar schools benefit hugely, but what they don't have is diversity. This brings me back to the value of reconciliation. They don't see diversity. The local secondary school where I was a parish priest, where many of our children went through their teenage years, was what Alistair Campbell would have referred to as a 'bog-standard comprehensive'. I was an elected parent governor and then was elected chair of governors, and was very involved with a brilliant head teacher in seeing – it wasn't a church school at all – in seeing the school recover from a difficult patch and emerge right through to 6th form as a really wonderful, wonderful school, from which we benefitted hugely. It was genuinely comprehensive. There was streaming. The result of that was that students found themselves in the surroundings which they could be taught most suitably in their class, but the moment they were out of the class they were all mixed up with everyone. Everyone from people with acute learning difficulties through to the outstandingly bright. I think one of the key things of education is to teach us to live in community. To value the other, regardless of their capacity. The tragedy of the future is if only the brightest and the best are considered to be the most important.

For that very same reason, although I strongly support the growth of the university sector, it seems to me that the application of the common good of values of cohesion means that we have to look more closely at FE (Further Education). It has been overlooked and is one of the areas that could be described as the Cinderella of the education system. The rapidly changing nature of work and the need for creativity, aspiration and competition will require effective teaching of skills through the kind of institution we have in an FE college as well as in universities.

The third area of the key building blocks is that of **health**.

In the nineteenth century health reforms were concentrated mainly around public health, and in the mid-twentieth century through further work on public health and also the creation of the NHS. Here again we have neglected and favoured areas. The neglected areas are now public health. We have differentials in life expectancy of up to 13 years in areas often only a few miles apart. If you went from Formby on the north-west coast - when I was Dean of Liverpool this was the statistic – down the eight or nine miles to Crosby you would find that for each mile further south you were born you lost one year of life expectancy. That was all down to public health, and represents a lack of solidarity which seems to me to be shocking. Mental health scarcely needs more explanation.

But today, national frontiers are not the point at which our common good and our cohesion stops. Religious fundamentalism creeps through the Web and is unlikely to be seen in armies crossing borders. It is driven by a host of factors including culture change, a sense of threat to traditional values, and by climate change. Many of the conflicts across countries just south of the Sahara Desert, are driven by the southward expansion of the desert, driving pastoralists into farmers' areas and threatening traditional livelihoods. These are global issues which make neighbours of all peoples, neighbours in the sense of the Good Samaritan in Jesus' parable. They are no longer the people in the DRC and South Sudan and

Nigeria, they are no longer far way peoples, of whom we know little, to misquote Chamberlain at the Munich Crisis, but they are the suffering and aspirational children and adults we see on our screens and who seek to cross that great cemetery which is called the Mediterranean. We are called to love and care for them not only out of self-interest but also out of the teaching of Jesus.

So in addition to the three normal areas, the changes in our society, in our communications, must change the way in which our foreign policy works to make it more proactive, more engaged. We cannot turn inwards. There are no strong borders, even on an island.

### **Immigration and integration**

That links in to immigration and integration. We live in a society of numerous faiths, and many languages. London is now, according to the United Nations, the most cosmopolitan and diverse city on the face of the planet in terms of the different languages and nationalities within it. We must have policies about integration in order to ensure cohesion, but they must not be based on the obvious issues of seeking conformity and eliminating threats, but they must be policies which enable the wonderful gift of diversity and of different traditions within our society to be celebrated and to contribute fully.

A couple of years ago during Ramadan we had an *Iftar* meal – the meal that breaks the fast at the end of each day of Ramadan – at Lambeth Palace in the Great Hall and we had young people from all over London with the Mayor of London and the Chief Rabbi, and myself and lots of others. Just the buzz, the fun, the excitement was extraordinary.

We are living in one of the gold ages of our country in terms of stimulation, in terms of imagination. We are not to be negative about it, but we do need to take seriously how we integrate. We need to teach religious education, even if you don't believe any of it so at least you understand people who do. We must have the learning of English in order to have a mutual language for talking to each other.

### **Prisons**

One of the areas in which our failures are most deeply shown, and the risks are most deeply shown, are in our prisons. Our prison system is struggling enormously, and continues to do so. It is starved of resources and lacks vision in which our solidarity with the human beings who are in prison is reflected, as well as the need for justice for those whom they hurt, from whom they have stolen, or whom they have damaged in some other way.

We know that justice must be done, and a society in which there is not proper accountability for crime leads to vigilante activity. But at the same time once someone is in prison, they remain a human being. Within our own tradition in this country, prison reform has historically been led by churches and by Christians, by the Quakers above all, particularly inspired by the words of Jesus in Matthew 25 verse 36, “when I was in prison you visited me.”

There are two problems at the moment. The first, is the keeping of order, and in particular the prevention of gangs, of drugs and of bullying and harassment. Prisons are dangerous places to be a prisoner. Secondly, there is the failure of rehabilitation and treatment, especially given the huge proportion of prisoners who have identifiable mental illnesses of one kind or another. Prisons are the places in which we lock our fears, not merely our criminals. They challenge us to be the places where we may liberate hope for justice, for reconciliation and for rehabilitation. When we do that we respect the human dignity of victim and offender, we recognise wrong and crime and yet we reimagine our futures. It is the litmus test of whether our society is built on deep values or not.

And then, of course – and I won't go into this because it's discussed more knowledgably by many others - the issue of climate change is the context in which all our other issues are held. If we are to take seriously Burke's words that we have a covenant with those as yet unborn then the issue of climate change is as important as our covenant with those alive today.

## **Conclusion**

So to conclude, I have argued that we are coming into the third great period of reimagining in our country. Whatever else may happen we face huge opportunities, but they require foundations of hope, because if we are founded in fear or anxiety we will be defensive and look inwards and not out. They need foundations of hope which come from clear values to guide our decisions, as in the past.

It is not only the work of government. It's not even principally the work of government. The means for re-imagination and the installation of values is something that happens at the local as well as at the national level. If we try to do it through legislation or government action alone it will fail most certainly. We need a reaffirmation – and Temple called for this in *Christianity and Social Order* – we need a reaffirmation of intermediate institutions: companies, hospitals, schools, clubs, associations, charities, where values are learned, because they are learned in the micro with a small number of people, relatively, and where they are put into practice and people held accountable, above all, Vice-Chancellor – universities. I don't want to put any pressure on you, but I know that being Vice-Chancellor has few things to fill the idle hours, rather like being an Archbishop.

The key institutions, though, the underlying institutions for value creation and virtue development begin with the oldest and most basic of all social structures, the household and family. We must have policies that affirm fidelity, commitment and stability in household life. The idea of fidelity is the most deeply based of our Christian heritage; it springs from God's fidelity to us, demonstrated above all through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In talking about families and households I am not talking about a romantic ideal of the perfect family, or some nostalgic approach to what family life was like in the past, because it wasn't. There have always been good families, bad families and indifferent families, and there always will be. But I am talking about benefits to remaining in relationship with each other even among the changing patterns of what it is to be a household, through times of hardship and times of blessing I'm talking about the recognition of the good thing it is for children to be brought up amongst stability and love, and of the household network as the centre for social care, compassion and value-giving to individuals.

Society, contrary to what was said by someone who you all recognise many years ago, is not made up only of the State and of individuals and families. We are deeply deceived. Universities, the other things I've mentioned, even social media networks, are themselves examples of what it means to have an intermediate institution in which social virtues and values can be found and held and nurtured. The flourishing of the intermediate inspires the individual and underpins the national. Without a renewal of intermediate groups we will remain incapable of resilience, a mere collection of individuals, isolated and vulnerable.

Michel Houellebecq's vision in *'Atomised'* and in many of his other works, including the deeply pessimistic most recent book *'Submission'*, a devastating satire and a profound meditation on isolation, faith and love is powerful but terrifying. The answer is not given by Archbishops in lectures, but in thinking which is stimulated by the healthy disruption from faith groups in a secular society who call for a recollection of the eternal amongst the temporal, and of compassion amongst competition. The reimagination is not simply come to, but it is the great challenge and excitement of our age. It is a moment of opportunity and hope, and one for which it is worth giving our lives, not only our attention, which I have asked for this evening for far too long. Thank you.

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