



**Social Justice and Equality
in an era of Globalisation**

The John Smith Memorial Lecture

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

Held on

Thursday 9th November 2000

Banqueting House, Whitehall, London



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Welcome

The Lord Haskel

Chairman of Trustees
The Smith Institute

I feel very honoured to be opening this event. Honoured and a little emotional because, like many others, I held John Smith in very high regard. John was the leader of the British Labour Party from 1992 until his early death in 1994. I got to know him through my duties as Secretary and Chairman of the Labour Finance and Industry Group. During the long years of Opposition, after the 1979 election, he shadowed the Trade & Industry and then Treasury portfolios. I was running an international textile and clothing business, and we developed a routine whereby I would regularly report to him what was happening at the sharp end.

You may remember that in the 1980s we were told that the price of a strong and prosperous economy was social division and inequality. A price worth paying someone said. It was John Smith who turned that argument on its head. He persuaded us that social justice and fairness were part and parcel of a strong and healthy economy – two sides of the same coin. Many of us recognised this as a philosophy we could support and work for. I think this was the basis of the admiration that we felt for him.

Today these ideas of social justice and a market economy are central to the policies of the present Government. So when in 1997 we set up a think tank to look at the issues that flow from this, it was natural that we should name it after John Smith.

Of course, social values and economic imperatives are changing all the time. So we have been looking at equality issues such as Creativity in the New

Economy, Women in the New Economy, and other issues that have an impact upon a fair society. Later this month we are starting a series of seminars about Equality and Low Pay.

During our short life-time we have benefited from the support of Zurich Financial Services, largely, I think, because their Company culture shares many of John Smith's values. The fact that their Chief Executive, Sandy Leitch, and John Smith were fellow Scots may also have something to do with it. Whatever the reasons, we are most grateful for their support for this event and I have great pleasure in introducing Sandy Leitch.

Sandy Leitch

Chief Executive

Zurich Financial Services UKISA

On behalf of Zurich Financial Services and the Smith Institute it is my great pleasure to welcome you all here this evening.

This is something of a landmark event. An event which is so very special, both in terms of the man in whose memory the lecture is being held and also because of the man who is giving the first *John Smith Memorial Lecture*.

John Smith was a brilliant politician. A man of the highest integrity. A man who cared deeply for social justice and, tragically, a man who was taken from us, far too soon. He may well have been the best Prime Minister we never had.

And I would like to extend a special welcome to John's widow, Baroness Smith – the patron of the Smith Institute.

So to tonight's inaugural *John Smith Memorial Lecture*. We are honoured that

Senator Edward Kennedy is our very first lecturer. A world statesman, one of the leading figures of American politics and, above all, the torch-bearer of the social justice flame.

Zurich is proud to be sponsoring this wonderful occasion.

And to introduce him, please welcome The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown.

Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP

Chancellor of the Exchequer

Tonight is a very special occasion. An evening when we remember the man we considered Britain's greatest advocate of social justice – and are joined by the man we consider America's greatest advocate of social justice, Senator Edward M Kennedy.

We are honoured and delighted that Senator Kennedy is to deliver the first *John Smith Memorial Lecture* and to welcome him and his wife Vicki – herself a great crusader for social reform – to London.

And we congratulate him on his re-election to serve his seventh full term as the Senator from the State of Massachusetts. There was no need for a recount: he had a majority of (just) one and a half million. He won 73% of the vote. Massachusetts was never too close to call. Never again will a 20,000 majority feel like a safe seat to those MPs here this evening.

He and the late John Smith shared a tireless commitment to social justice. John Smith spoke often of public service as a virtuous pursuit – of the need to unite rather than divide, of the need to address the great issues of poverty and injustice which exist in every part of the world – believing that an injustice anywhere was a threat to justice everywhere.

So it is fitting that Senator Kennedy – for forty years America's major social reformer – should be delivering the lecture this evening. Over those years he has been a towering figure in the pursuit of social justice. He made his maiden speech in the Senate on the Civil Rights Act. He pioneered the fight for children's health and universal healthcare, from the Children's Nutrition Programme in 1972 to passing the Children's Health Insurance Plan in 1997. And he fights on for a Patient's Bill of Rights. He pioneered Head Start to give

children a better start in life and fights on to extend internet access to children in their classrooms. And only last week in the Senate, fighting for more investment to reduce class sizes and for the protection of workers from industrial injury – at every stage consistency of purpose matched by the certainty that we are stronger as a society when we work together.

And I want to thank Senator Kennedy for joining me today, when I met churches and non-governmental organisations in Britain, to plan, inspired by his leadership, to build a coalition in the United States and Europe – indeed around the globe – that will have as its aim to meet the challenge of eliminating child poverty around the world. Our pledge: that the cause of those children shall be our cause – for as long as one child in one country still lacks basic health provision, basic education, basic human rights, our fight must go on.

And let us remember as we welcome Senator Kennedy that his family influenced – indeed inspired – a whole generation. In 1960, President Kennedy spoke of “*a new frontier*” and in his inaugural address, he told of how the “*trumpet summons us again*” to join in a “*struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.*” In Cape Town six years later, Robert Kennedy spoke against apartheid and said that the world could be made anew to “*sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.*”

In the way his brothers did throughout the 1960s, Senator Kennedy’s speech at the 1980 Democratic Convention set the tone for radical politics for the next twenty years – a speech that had a great influence on me and I know influenced John Smith – one of the great speeches of our generation. In that speech he laid out what has been his life’s work, he said “*It is the glory and the greatness of our tradition to speak for those who have no voice, to remember those who are forgotten, to respond to the frustrations and fulfil the aspirations of all Americans seeking a better life in a better land.*”

He said then, “*For those whose cares have been our concern, the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives and the dream shall never die.*”

Senator Kennedy, that hope, those dreams, this cause lives on in the work you do and in those who have been inspired by your leadership and vision.

Let us welcome, to deliver the inaugural *John Smith Memorial Lecture*, Senator Edward M Kennedy.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

Thank you, Chancellor, for that gracious introduction.

Baroness Smith, ladies and gentlemen – It is a great honour and privilege for me to be with you this evening in honour of John Smith.

I'm also delighted to be back in London. I lived in this spectacular city in 1938 and 1939 when my father was Ambassador, and I have many warm memories of that time in my life. It's wonderful to be back.

This is always a very moving time of year for both our nations. In two days, we will celebrate Remembrance Day, when our countries pause to honour the extraordinary sacrifices and contributions of our veterans. We think especially of those who fought and those who died in the two great wars of this century – the quiet heroes whose courage and achievements preserved our freedom. Often, they were not professional soldiers but average citizens who left their families and friends behind and went off to fight because our nations called.

As President Kennedy once said about his own service in the Navy, *“I can imagine a no more rewarding career. And any man who may be asked what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: ‘I served in the United States Navy!’”*

I'm sure those words apply to the British Navy as well, and to the veterans of all the other services of both our nations. We honour them today, and we will never forget them.

I'm never surprised by London's beauty and loveliness, but some visitors from Massachusetts are surprised to feel so at home here. Massachusetts native

Abigail Adams – the wife of America’s second President and the mother of our sixth President – wrote of the surprise she found in London in a July 1784 letter to her sister. She wrote: *“The city of London is pleasanter than I expected... and more sunshine than I thought to have found. At my lodgings I am as quiet as any place in Boston, nor do I feel as if it could be any other place than Boston.”*

London’s changed a great deal since Abigail Adams was here two centuries ago, and even since I first arrived in 1938. It’s not as quiet as it was then, but the graciousness of the people has remained timeless.

This Institute bearing John Smith’s name preserves his ideals with its impressive scholarship, public service, and gatherings such as this. I am grateful to Baroness Smith, the Smith Institute and the Chancellor for inviting me here this evening to discuss contemporary concerns of social justice and equality – values upon which John Smith based and built his life.

John Smith has the noblest of legacies – a lifetime of public service distinguished by an extraordinary commitment to society’s most vulnerable members – service accomplished with grace, humour, and dignity.

John Smith was a spirited man, a dedicated and energetic husband and father, and a lover of nature – especially the hills of the Scottish countryside. His musical tastes embraced everything from Mozart to Patsy Cline. The son of a schoolmaster, he was an eminent student and no stranger to great works of literature. Once, as a guest on the BBC’s Desert Island Discs, when asked to choose a single book to keep him company as a castaway on a lonely island, he said he would take an anthology of poems – and no doubt, some of the works of his favourite, Robert Burns, would be among them.

And, when asked what luxury item he would select for that desert island, he didn’t hesitate to choose a case of champagne, so he could enjoy savouring it

– and then send messages out in the bottles.

Above all, we in America admired John Smith as an eloquent and impassioned defender of the poor. He battled destructive social changes sought by the Conservative government of the day. He fought for decent working conditions and fair wages. He was a frequent, vocal and witty critic of Tory economic policies. Ultimately, the flaws of those policies paved the way for the Labour victory that ushered in the current Government under the impressive leadership of Prime Minister Blair.

John Smith was the epitome of the dedicated Labour Party leader. He lived – and some say, died – for the party. His promise and commitment to the party’s values became apparent at an early age, when he led the Labour Club at Glasgow University. From the moment of his election to the House of Commons in 1970, he proved his grit and determination in many ways, especially through his service as Minister of State for Energy and then his leadership of the Labour Party during the last two years of his all-too-short life.

As Robert Kennedy told the students at the University of Cape Town in South Africa in 1966: *“Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”* And so today, I join in honouring John Smith for the many ripples of hope that he sent forth to all the world.

The work of John Smith and his colleagues and successors now enables the Labour Party to celebrate its centennial year in the best possible manner – leading Britain in the spirit of John Smith’s call for *“a partnership government that says if you are prepared to commit yourself to the success of your country, your government will be behind you.”*

When I first saw those call-to-action words of John Smith in his final speech, I was reminded of President Kennedy's similar call to the people of America in his Inaugural Address in 1961 – *"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."* These summons to sacrifice and concern for others have inspired many movements throughout the years to help the least fortunate in our own societies, and in many other nations.

John Smith taught us to be responsible to one another as we work to build a stronger community, to promote greater equality of opportunities for all, and to help all those who need our help the most. In our own day and generation, we have seen walls of oppression crumble from South Africa to South America, and from Birmingham, Alabama to Berlin. We have seen increased access to medicine, food, and shelter the world over. But the work of justice is never done. The context may change, but the ideals are global and timeless and enduring.

Today's context is marked by unusual prosperity in many lands. The choices we make in guiding our economies speak clearly about the scale of our values, especially our commitment to social justice and equal rights. In 1987, John Smith based his J.P. Mackintosh Memorial Lecture on the key concept of the inter-dependence of economic prosperity and social justice. He argued forcefully that prosperity *"is not only consistent with a socially just and caring society, but prosperity and social justice mutually reinforce each other."*

Today's context is also marked by unparalleled growth in the exchange of ideas, of products, and of services among peoples and nations. International long distance, intercontinental jet travel, and instant messaging over the Internet only became widely available in the last quarter of the twentieth century. It is clear that we have only just begun to feel the transforming effects of the extraordinary globalisation that this new century will bring.

As New York Times journalist Tom Friedman said in his recent book *“The Lexus and the Olive Tree,”* the words of former U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Tip O’Neill, that *“All politics is local,”* are less true today. As Friedman noted, *“All politics is now global. Not every country may feel itself part of the globalisation system, but every country is directly or indirectly being shaped and affected by this system.”*

I do not believe that prosperity can be sustained in any nation over the long term unless it is accompanied by greater social justice, and there must be a correspondingly greater equality of opportunity for all of the world’s peoples. This truth is not a threat to prosperity, but a profound invitation to build a more just world.

Now, not only can we dream of universal health coverage in America, but you and many other European nations have led the world in advancing it. Now, not only can we dream of approaching full employment without igniting inflation, but we have proved that it can be achieved for sustained periods. Now, not only can we dream of worldwide access to quality education, but the Internet can begin by placing a library of infinite depth in the remotest village. Now, not only can we dream of a world that is free of hunger, we can realistically make it happen. Now, a cure for AIDS is much more a possibility than a dream, carrying the hope of saving the lives of a considerable share of our planet’s population, especially in Africa.

Alleviating these problems in both the poorest and the wealthiest countries of the world will be the hallmarks of human progress toward social justice. The need for greater progress could not be clearer. According to the World Bank, half of the planet’s six billion people still live on less than two dollars a day – and a fifth live on less than one dollar a day. As many as 20 percent of the world’s poor children die before they turn five, and 50 percent of them are plagued by malnutrition.

Even in the industrialised nations of the world, the basic needs of too many of our peoples are unmet. Almost one out of every hundred children born in the industrialised world die before their fifth birthday. Some five percent of children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition and go to bed hungry. Even in the United States, three million families go hungry each month, and the need for emergency food has increased by 15 to 20% over the past year, according to food banks surveyed across our nation.

Despite the hunger in our country, our farmers are growing record amounts of food. Our government is paying record sums – \$32 billion last year – to support the incomes of American farmers who are feeling the financial hardship that has resulted from lower farm prices. Surely, those who are feeling the desperate hardship of hunger deserve priority too.

The crisis of global hunger is all the more reprehensible because it is so thoroughly preventable. Surely, in this era of globalisation, our world community should be able to say with one voice that food must never ever be used as a weapon in international disputes. As my former Republican colleague in the Senate, Mark Hatfield, once said, *“We stand by, as children starve by the millions because we lack the will to eliminate hunger. Yet we have the will to develop missiles capable of flying over the polar cap and landing within a few hundred feet of their target. This is not innovation. It is a profound distortion of humanity’s purpose on earth.”*

The most basic progress we can make on child poverty is to do a better job of feeding the world’s 300 million hungry children. It is impossible to expect children to learn and grow if they are not fed.

Sensible measures like globalising a school lunch program and an infant feeding program will go a long way to help the hungry children of the world. This year, the United States has dedicated \$300 million for pilot global food

and education programs, and we intend to dedicate at least this much more over each of the next few years. Many of us in Congress support a permanent global school lunch and infant feeding program, and we will do all we can to enact it into law next year.

The possibilities for a strong international commitment are great as well, because the idea is so immediately appealing to the public, and because our agricultural producers and shipping concerns will strongly back it.

I know the Chancellor is a leading voice for a strong partnership between the U.S. and U.K. to end child poverty and hunger. I commend his leadership, and I look forward to our two nations working closely together to see that this shameful world problem is solved once and for all time.

Like economic growth itself, progress in overcoming these problems can be made only through increased cooperation among the world's governments and peoples. The international community must also come together more effectively to reduce the debt that is strangling the poorest countries of the world. Working through international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the international community must redouble its efforts to eliminate poverty, to reduce infant mortality and child mortality, to ensure that all children are provided with a decent education, and to alleviate human suffering wherever it is found. And we can do all this most effectively if we all work at it together.

As Martin Luther King Jr. observed, *“All inhabitants of the globe are now neighbours... The large house in which we live demands that we transform this worldwide neighbourhood into a worldwide brotherhood. Together, we must learn to live as brothers, or together we will be forced to perish as fools.”*

It is very encouraging to see these ideas of visionary civil rights leaders take new root in unexpected places. Recently, a major agri-business purchased national television time to portray itself as a leader in ending world hunger. That gesture suggests that amid all the dissension over increased globalisation, a powerful new common purpose is beginning to emerge. Harvard Professor Lisbeth Schorr has written extensively on the new hope that is emerging from the discovery of such a common purpose in all societies – hope for new progress on the most intractable problems from youth violence to school failure to inter-generational poverty.

As a society identifies with a common purpose, it resonates most noticeably among young people. They were there at the lunch counters and bus boycotts to end segregation in the United States, because they believed they could make a difference in reaching our highest ideals of civil rights. Young people fought hard in the Vietnam War – and then fought even harder to end the war. Young Americans worked to protect the environment, and have made earth day an inspiring success each year.

I firmly believe that political leaders must respect the idealism of young people, and learn from them. Youths of the world can provide tremendous creativity and service to any nation, if they are inspired to act. But if government appears to serve only narrow interests, it fails to earn or deserve their energy and their allegiance.

Undoubtedly, some people in every nation will always seek increased concentration of wealth over all else – and most of these people may never be persuaded of the richness that can flow from more inclusive priorities. But fortunately, their narrow agenda cannot survive scrutiny in any democracy that is truly of the people, by the people, and for the people. As President Kennedy said, *“If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.”*

John Smith sounded this theme when he proclaimed that government's "*goal must be about the advancement of individual people – about their freedom and their autonomy, about their ability to participate and their capacity to prosper – which we believe can only fully be achieved in the context of a strong and supportive society.*" Consistent with John Smith's vision, Labour today is working to transform Britain into "*a more competitive and egalitarian society.*"

In important respects, I believe that America is still searching for its way in this new era. Tuesday's close election is a strong signal that Americans still hunger for a new common vision in government. Yet that vision continues to prove elusive. I see many reasons for optimism, however, that the path we choose will be a path that emphasises social justice similar to the path chosen by Labour here.

Stanford University's Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Kennedy examines major cycles of American political behaviour. He observes that a hundred years ago, as today, neither party could secure the majority needed to pursue its agenda. Platforms during this period of stalemate were largely based on nineteenth century models of government that were increasingly irrelevant to the broad economic and social forces at work in America. Not until the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt did we see the vision that made government responsive to the needs of the times, and it produced an enduring legacy.

Today, American institutions of government have yet to adapt to the globalisation at hand. I agree with David Kennedy that the political leaders who articulate a vision to accomplish this transition will break the political stalemate and create a durable legacy. This capacity of democracy to patiently await a worthy vision is among its highest virtues – frustrating though it may be.

The vision that resulted in the New Deal was rooted in social justice, and I expect that the same will be true of the next great period in American history. The core strategy of conservatives in last Tuesday's election was to de-emphasise their extremist agenda of the past, and sell themselves as similar to those of us who have fought for social justice over the years. This fact dwarfs the meaning of any election results.

No government can afford to lose sight of the fundamental truth that social justice, economic progress, and national security are essential to one another. As we stand on the threshold of this new century and consider the prosperity and globalisation at hand, our challenge is to discover what this truth means for this new era. Our capacity to promote greater social justice and greater equality in the world during this period of accelerating globalisation depends upon our continued attention to social justice and equality at home. Simply put, we must produce justice at home – if we ever hope to export it.

Many people raise legitimate concerns about the impact of globalisation on job displacement, individual liberties, environmental protection, education, and health. Too often in the past, global trade has enriched multi-national corporations at the expense of working families. We can't allow globalisation to become a "race to the bottom" in wages, benefits, and living standards. I strongly favour free trade, but it must also be fair trade.

This means renewed focus on the critical areas of health care, education, employment, individual liberties, immigration, and the environment – areas where the ideals of social justice and equality are directly translated into policy. While industrial nations have made considerable progress in each of these areas, ample work remains. The work of justice and civil rights is never done.

It will come as no surprise that I continue to believe that health care should

be a basic right for all people. Every industrial society in the world except the United States and South Africa achieved that domestic goal in the 20th Century – and under Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, South Africa has also taken giant steps toward health care for all.

Americans have much to learn from the experience of Great Britain and other nations. It was the Labour Party's commitment to fighting deprivation that led it to establish the National Health Service in 1948, at the same time that President Harry Truman was fighting for a national health program in the United States. I will continue that fight as long as necessary to make universal coverage a reality for all Americans.

In a study of 191 nations released earlier this year, the World Health Organisation found that the United States ranked first by a substantial amount in per capita spending on health care, but ranked only 37th in the overall performance of the health care system in serving its people.

More than 42 million Americans are uninsured today. Lack of health insurance is now the seventh leading cause of death in the United States – killing more people than kidney disease, liver disease, and AIDS combined.

Too often in America, lack of insurance means delay of needed treatments or no treatment at all. Twenty-seven thousand uninsured women in the United States are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. They are twice as likely as insured women not to receive medical treatment until their cancer has already spread in their bodies. As a result, they are 50 percent more likely to die of the disease.

In the age of our soaring new economy, it is a national disgrace that so many Americans find the quality of their health measured by the quantity of their wealth. The cost is staggering in terms of human suffering, the loss of creative

abilities, and avoidable expenses for medical care and rehabilitation.

Medicare – America’s national health service for elderly and disabled citizens – includes hospital benefits and doctor’s benefits, but not coverage of prescription drugs. This means that Medicare does not pay for hypertension medications needed by senior citizens. Yet it will pay – and pay and pay and pay – for hospital and rehabilitation expenses after a stroke that could have been prevented simply by taking a pill – saving dollars and dignity. Yet in Congress, we are in the midst of an unfortunate partisan battle about how best to assure coverage of these new treatments for millions of our most vulnerable citizens.

In this new century, we must bring more compassion and common sense to our health care policies. Earlier this year, it was an occasion for genuine transatlantic pride when Prime Minister Blair joined President Clinton in announcing the completion of the project to map the entire human genome. This is the kind of international leadership and partnership that will lead directly to richer, fuller, longer lives throughout the world.

Cracking the code of life by mapping the human genome is providing a better understanding of the role of genes in disease, and leading to the development of new therapies based on genetic information. The implications of this achievement are profound. Drugs can be prescribed based on an individual’s genetic make-up to prevent side effects. Diseases can be diagnosed and treated before symptoms appear.

These discoveries are likely to lead to the cure of tragic inherited diseases like cystic fibrosis, Tay-Sachs disease, juvenile diabetes, and sickle cell anemia. They will also form the basis for treating other diseases that are not strictly inherited, but in which damaged genes or genetic predispositions play a key role in the development of the disease.

Just as the engine of economic growth and improved living standards in the 20th century was the physical sciences, the 21st century is very likely to be the century of the life sciences. During the last century, we saw the development of commercial electric power, the automobile, the airplane, atomic power, and the computer and Internet revolutions. Our understanding of the cosmos in which we live grew more in the 1900s than in all of prior history.

Discoveries in the life sciences may well shape this new century as profoundly as discoveries in physics and engineering shaped the last one. The opportunities for a better life for all humanity are boundless. No one can foresee exactly where the scientific revolution in biology will take us. But developments already underway make the conquest of a host of dreaded illnesses – from cancer to heart disease to Alzheimer’s – not just a dream but a likely reality.

Creation of biomaterials will be used to replace or cure organs and tissues damaged by accident or disease. Soon, damaged kidneys may not require years of dialysis. A scarred cornea may not mean blindness. A crushed spine may not lead to a lifetime in a wheelchair. New biological techniques may be able to eliminate paralysis by regenerating the spinal cord, replacing malfunctioning cells that cause diabetes, and to treat Parkinson’s disease or Alzheimer’s disease by replacing damaged brain cells with healthy ones. The benefits can be immense. Nearly half of all persons in nursing homes in the United States today suffer from Alzheimer’s or other dementias.

New approaches to medical imaging, new medical devices, and lasers and laproscopic surgery have already reduced the trauma caused by many types of conventional treatment. Not long ago, installing a heart pacemaker, opening clogged arteries, or repairing a damaged joint all required major surgery that led to days or weeks of convalescence. Now, these procedures often do not even require an overnight stay in the hospital.

Our scientific understanding of mental illness will also deepen in this century, and we will undoubtedly see the development of effective therapies to prevent, treat, and cure depression, addiction, schizophrenia, and other conditions.

As scientists reach an ever deeper understanding of the biological composition of individual cells, drugs will be targeted to specific cells and organs. Drugs to cure metabolic diseases may carry molecular “tags” to direct them to liver cells. Chemotherapy and its harsh side effects may be replaced by drugs that attack tumour cells while sparing normal tissue.

In the 20th century, computers shrank from being the size of a room to fitting on the head of a pin. Already, scientists have developed wires that are only a few atoms thick and circuits that are no bigger than dust particles. Tiny, implantable medical devices will be created to control high blood pressure or release medications only when needed.

Even now, patients with spinal damage can have tiny circuitry implanted in their arms to regain the ability to pick up a cup or shake hands. Babies born deaf can now hear, thanks to ear implants. Miniature pumps may soon allow patients with Parkinson’s disease to receive strictly controlled doses of drugs to treat symptoms of the disease. Implantable medical devices to continuously monitor and regulate the flow of insulin to diabetics are just over the horizon.

In ways such as these, the century of the life sciences will bring immense medical and economic benefits. But it will also bring enormous new challenges. Ethical questions about the appropriate use of genetic technology will undoubtedly frame countless debates in the coming years.

The internationalisation of disease will also raise tremendous public health challenges. Deadly viruses like ebola have spread throughout Africa and to

other shores as well. We are investing large public and private resources in basic research to combat HIV and other emerging infectious diseases. The fruits of these discoveries should be readily available to the poorest nations, too. It's a matter of sensible public health policy – and a matter of basic social justice as well.

In a large sense, the environmental issues associated with international trade are also public health issues. Like organised labour, environmentalists deserve a seat and a voice at international bargaining tables. For the world they seek to protect is a world that will increasingly be traveled by our grandchildren. They will legitimately ask what has been gained, if we pursue economic growth without regard for the world's capacity to renew itself and support the magnificent diversity of life that it now contains.

Technology will play a central role in meeting the increased need for clean, renewable energy, and in minimising the damage already done to the ozone layer and other precious natural resources. But human behaviour will remain the essential ingredient in determining the adequacy of our approach to environmental responsibility.

Of course, the most immediate concern of our citizens remains the threat that globalisation poses to their ability to feed and shelter their families. Today more than ever, we must take the strong actions that are within our means to keep ample work opportunities available domestically, and to build the critical internal support for the globalisation that is taking place. This goal cannot be achieved without vigorously promoting basic labour rights, good job training, and excellence in education.

Labour unions in both our nations have a noble history of hard-won achievements. I am proud of the work that America's Democratic Party and Britain's Labour Party have joined with unions to accomplish. From the time that

unions introduced the novel concept of weekends off, to their tireless promotion of workplace health and safety, to ensuring that workers can take time off from their jobs for medical leave and family leave, labour unions have been indispensable in promoting social justice in both our nations.

Yet too often in America, the laws that protect basic rights to organize and to bargain collectively have been undermined through lackluster enforcement, and through reactionary interpretations of the law that enable anti-union employers to buy their way or delay their way out of complying with the law. A recent study found that between 1992 and 1997, more than 125,000 U.S. workers were awarded back pay by the National Labour Relations Board, because they had suffered reprisals from their employer for union activities.

The insights and participation of strong unions continue to be essential in our modern societies. Government shows its good faith when it safeguards the basic right to organize. We have not done enough to enforce our basic labour laws in America. But the past two years have shown improvement in the area of funding for enforcement. And improved enforcement has resulted in important gains, particularly in the unionisation of low-wage workers.

Our credibility on domestic labour rights enforcement is particularly important if our current effort to bring labour rights to international bargaining tables is to be more than an empty gesture. This century will bring us in closer contact with nations that lack a history of adherence to the rule of law. Our example will be essential, if other nations are to benefit as we have from the voice of labour unions. I strongly support collective bargaining by freely organised labour unions in any country where the United States does business – and I strongly support the elimination of child labour everywhere on this planet through sanctions that are enforceable under the rule of law.

Children in Massachusetts have been active in the effort to end child labour

worldwide. Their effort initially focused on a young Pakistani boy named Iqbal, who had been sold for \$12 to a carpet factory where he worked for six years, often chained to his loom. At 10, he escaped and spent two years encouraging other enslaved children to do the same. He won a human rights award and traveled to the United States to accept it, where he met students at the Broad Meadows School in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Later, he was murdered in his village in Pakistan, and the students in Quincy initiated a fundraising campaign to build a school in his memory. They used the Internet to enlist the support of other school children, and they raised \$100,000 for the school, which is celebrating its fourth anniversary this month. It has educated more than 280 students each year, 60% of whom are girls. Additional funds have been raised throughout Massachusetts and the United States, which have enabled the school to provide health care and microcredit loans to poor mothers to start small businesses and enroll their children in the Iqbal school. The effort of these children in Quincy, Massachusetts is an inspiration to all who care about eradicating child labour from the earth.

Other labour rights are essential as well. I am proud to stand with John Smith and the Labour Party in holding the view that a fair minimum wage is a basic element of social justice that ultimately benefits everyone. For millions of people even in the United States, this historic period of economic prosperity is someone else's prosperity. In America, men and women working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year for the minimum wage earn only \$10,700 a year – \$3,400 below the poverty line for a family of three. They can rarely afford adequate housing in any area of the United States.

Workers are putting in longer hours on the job, and more family members are working. A study released by the Economic Policy Institute in September shows that in 1999, lower income families in the United States worked 416

more hours a year than they did in 1979. As a result, parents are spending less and less time with their families – 22 hours less a week than they did 20 years ago, according to a study last year by the Council of Economic Advisers.

Maintaining an adequate minimum wage is an issue of fundamental fairness – a worker’s honest labour deserves an honest wage. The minimum wage is also a women’s issue, since 60 percent of American minimum wage earners are women. It is a children’s issue, because a third of minimum wage earners are parents with children – and 4.3 million American children live in poverty, despite being in a family where someone works full-time, year-round. Above all, raising the minimum wage is a family issue. Waitresses, teacher’s aides, child care workers, elder care workers and all other workers deserve to be paid fairly for their hard day’s work, and to be able to spend fair time with their families.

Another critical area that needs attention is to enhance the ability of workers to adapt to changing job needs. Especially in today’s high tech economy, there is no substitute for a modern and strong job-training program. High-tech companies are feeling the crunch of a tight domestic labour market. As John Smith emphasised, governments have a responsibility to foster training among the employed workforce, as well as for the under-employed and for young men and women. He realised that training in the United Kingdom was insufficient to meet the needs of the new economy, and he worried that too many were being left out and left behind. We have the same problem in the United States today, and I feel just as strongly as John Smith that we cannot allow this problem to continue to fester.

As part of a renewed emphasis on education and training for the twenty first century, we must do more to help current workers obtain the skills they need to compete in the high tech economy. Seventy percent of the new jobs in the United States today require some high tech knowledge, and these jobs pay

78% more than the average job outside the high tech industry. Workers want these good jobs, and employers are desperate to hire these workers. In America today, there are 300,000 unfilled software and information technology positions – yet we lag well behind Europe and Japan in the high tech training opportunities we provide.

The days when workers would spend their entire careers with one employer are fast disappearing. Today, average workers will have seven or eight different employers during their career – and the work skills required in their jobs are steadily changing as well. The opportunity for workers to periodically upgrade their skills has become essential to career success.

Corporations today, however, are far more likely to provide training for their managerial employees than for their blue collar workforce. Nearly 90 percent of those with at least a bachelor's degree receive formal, employer-provided training, compared with 60 percent of those who have a high school education or less. The training which corporations do provide for blue collar workers is often narrow in scope, focusing on how to operate a new piece of equipment, rather than teaching broadly applicable career skills. This disparity makes a vigorous government role in workforce training essential, particularly for the less educated workers who need it the most.

Belatedly, in 1997, the United States acted to create the necessary structure-local boards composed of industry, government, educational institutions, and labour unions to set training priorities for each region of our country. But new laws won't result in modern skills, until we fully fund these training programs. It is shortsighted and counterproductive for certain wealthy elements in our society to insist upon the immediate gratification of tax breaks for themselves, instead of the kinds of investments that will help us all in the long run.

In these modern times, we must recognise that learning is a lifetime enterprise – a continuum that begins at birth and extends throughout life, not something that begins when the school bell rings and ends at final graduation. Just as our job training policies must reflect this reality for the working years, so our policies for the care of infants and toddlers must reflect this reality long before young children reach the first day of school.

We now know that almost all biological growth in the human brain occurs before age five. The stimulation that infants and toddlers receive during this critical period strongly influences their ability – for the rest of their lives – to learn, to interact with others, and to master physical skills. France, Germany, and Sweden have been leaders in putting this medical research into practice, and in making quality early learning opportunities readily available to all children.

The need is obvious. In America, 60% of mothers with infants under age one and 64% of mothers with children under age six are in the labour force. This means that 13 million children under age six are left in the care of someone outside the home. We have developed exemplary early learning programs, but many parents still cannot afford them. More parents are satisfied with our Head Start early learning curriculum than any other federal program – but only two in five eligible children are enrolled in it. And Head Start already starts late. It is for children ages 3 to 4 – which leaves ages 0 to 3 with inadequate early learning opportunities.

As a result, millions of children never receive the early brain stimulation they need. While their parents are at work, their infants are warehoused in day care and child care arrangements that ignore vastly important opportunities for productive early learning.

The waste is astonishing in terms of human potential and national and

international potential. It is also a waste of resources, since many of society's most costly problems could be avoided by paying serious attention to children early in their lives. Studies in the United States show that we can save over five dollars for every dollar that we invest in early learning by reducing costs for welfare, crime, and remedial education. So the investment is clearly cost-effective, too.

There is no greater concentration of unrealised potential than in our youngest children. The advances already made in the science of early learning can revolutionise education in the twenty-first century, if only we have the wisdom to put them into widespread practice.

Even so, the basics remain constant in education, and we cannot afford to lose sight of them. Your Labour Government has compiled a distinguished record of making education "the number one priority" by reducing class sizes, modernising school buildings, and raising standards in the classroom. Well done. I share your commitment to this vital work, and I share your priorities. There is no greater enemy of social justice than ignorance. Each of us need only reflect upon the great teachers who have touched our own lives to recognise the vital role of quality education in forming who we are and what we value.

Among new possibilities in education, Internet access will become a key education issue for the twenty-first century. The Internet is the megaphone by which a single voice can broadcast a powerful idea around the world. It can dramatically lower costs for government, business, education, health care, legal services, and other fields. It can remove geographic disparities for students, consumers and chief executives alike.

But if the Internet is to become the powerful engine of equal opportunity that it should be, we must act now to guarantee access for all. We must confront

and close the growing digital divide that separates the haves and the have-nots in modern technology. Lower income and minority families are far less likely to have access to computers or the Internet at home, at work, or at school. We can do far more at modest cost to encourage the spread of computers and the Internet to low income families and communities. Leading firms and private foundations are beginning to address these needs – but government must join in this partnership as well, if we are to avoid new forms of discrimination in access to education.

As we work to improve health, education, and employment, we must also weave greater justice into our social fabric through action to protect individual liberties. Our respect for these individual liberties builds a stronger society that is better able to withstand the pressures that globalisation brings. It also makes us more credible when we raise civil rights issues at international bargaining tables. Recently, one of the key arguments in America for granting China permanent normal trading status was that this may be one of our few effective means of promoting development of the rule of law in China.

On this basic challenge, we lead best by example. The powerful examples set by leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, John Smith and Martin Luther King Jr. have changed the hearts of millions – even billions – of people, and put justice and equal opportunity for all at the heart of our own domestic agendas. Britain's Human Rights Act is a recent example of your commitment to these principles. This important law – like the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution – will serve as a beacon and a guide for generations to come. Both documents are a promise to the people. They require governments to be vigilant in defending the rights and freedoms of all citizens when others would deny them.

Despite the profound awakening in recent decades, civil rights remains the

unfinished business of America. A major source of the current problem is that the rights guaranteed by our Constitution are often an empty promise to people who can't afford the legal services needed to protect their rights. The phrase "Equal Justice Under Law" is etched in the marble over the entrance of our Supreme Court Building in Washington, but too often it has been reduced to an empty slogan for people who claim that they are innocent of crime, or whose legal problems do not involve large sums of money. It's wrong to leave people powerless against injustice, simply because they can't afford the justice that is there for the asking by the wealthy. A right without a remedy is no right at all. Americans must work to enhance equal justice through adequate funding for the legal representation that is needed in both civil and criminal cases, and by according lawyers who represent the poor the same independence that lawyers who represent the wealthy need and deserve.

In addition, gaps in existing civil rights laws must be filled. We must provide adequate funds to enforce existing civil rights laws more rigorously, so that we can end job discrimination, housing discrimination, and government contracting discrimination. We must also pass legislation to end job discrimination based on sexual orientation. Just as race, ethnic background, religion, and gender can never be a valid reason to hire, fire or promote an employee, neither should sexual orientation. Employers should make their decisions based on merit and performance, not bigotry and prejudice.

In the same vein, stronger action is needed to fight hate crimes. We must bring the full force of law to bear on anyone who commits these despicable atrocities. Hate crimes are attacks on entire communities, and their psychological and emotional impact is felt far beyond the individual victims. When anyone is attacked or killed because of who they are – because of race, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, disability, or gender – our whole community is diminished and we are all hurt. Such attacks must be eradicated in communities the world over – from Boston to Berlin to London

to Belfast to Pristina to Jerusalem.

As the Archbishop of Canterbury so eloquently stated in his address on a wise and just society earlier this year, “*Justice seeks to put right anything that challenges the principle of equality, whether in the eyes of the law, or in the way we treat each other.*”

Refugees, asylum seekers, and families seeking to be united through immigration deserve our special protection, too, for they are often the most vulnerable among us, with the fewest language skills, the fewest resources, and the fewest ties to the communities in which they live. During times of economic difficulty, they can become targets of hatred. Yet in periods of prosperity, their labour in service industries, agriculture, and other sectors is needed, but rarely appreciated. Indeed, our commitment – or lack of it – to the ideals of social justice and equality today can be measured most directly in how we treat these, the most vulnerable among us.

The coming era will bring significant challenges for every aspect of how we regulate our borders, especially immigration. Two policies here will serve our highest ideals. On one hand, we must stay the course on job training, employment, and education that I described earlier. Our efforts should be so vigorous that competition for employment between citizens and immigrants is minimal.

On the other hand, we must apply the highest standards of due process and fairness in applying our immigration laws. I continue to be convinced that legal immigration is beneficial for the United States and for countries around the globe. It is no coincidence that two hundred years ago, our nations’ founders choose “*E pluribus unum*” – “*Out of many, one*” – as America’s motto.

In fact, according to scholars, that phrase came originally from a recipe for

salad in a poem by Virgil. The words were chosen as the motto by Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson – with an assist from England, because they appeared on the title page of “*Gentleman’s Magazine*,” a popular British magazine of the time.

Franklin, Adams and Jefferson were referring to the ideal that our separate and quarrelsome colonies were about to be transformed into one united nation – and they were right. In the years since then, it has come to apply to individuals as well. Our diversity is our greatest strength. We are a nation of immigrants, as President Kennedy liked to say, and America is proud, very proud, of its immigrant heritage and history.

Even as we take pride in that heritage, we still have immigration laws that return refugees to the hands of their persecutors, permit secret evidence to be used against them, deny them their day in court, and detain them indefinitely under harsh conditions. Obviously we must do more to live up to our national motto and our ideals of social justice and equality.

The principles of social justice and equality apply as well to British policy toward Northern Ireland, and I will close with a few words on that. It is a truism that inequality, exclusion on the basis of religious identity, and discrimination have been at the heart of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Because the Good Friday Agreement outlined a mechanism to resolve these problems in a peaceful and democratic way, while ensuring respect for the rights of all, it was rightly hailed as a brilliant foundation for peace. America was honoured that President Clinton and Senator George Mitchell were able to play a positive role in facilitating the Agreement.

The Agreement promised that wherever inequality and exclusion were found – in policing, in the criminal justice system, and in the fundamental rights of

the people of Northern Ireland – a way would be found to correct the faults. A fundamental principle of the Agreement is that the institutions established under the Good Friday Agreement can only operate through partnership and consent.

The Good Friday Agreement presented an historic opportunity to reform the police service in Northern Ireland and make it representative of the entire community. In September 1999, the Patten Commission published its unanimous report containing 175 recommendations for change. Legislation that is said to implement the recommendations of the Patten Commission is currently being considered in the House of Lords, but it does not fully implement the Patten recommendations. I hope that even at this late hour, significant changes will be made to ensure full implementation of the Patten recommendations, so that the new police service will have and deserve the trust of all the people of Northern Ireland.

Likewise, there will be strong interest in the full implementation of the report of the Criminal Justice Review Group and a profound hope that the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission will provide workable solutions to longstanding issues relating to equality.

We Americans know how difficult it is to build a just society, and our country is not without its own problems in these areas. But we know that representative police, fair and impartial criminal justice procedures, and vigorous protections of basic rights are indispensable.

The decommissioning of weapons held by the IRA and by Loyalist paramilitaries is also essential to the success of the Good Friday Agreement, and it must be part of the overall implementation of the Agreement. But so must the full implementation of the other aspects of the Agreement.

John Smith knew that the key to social justice and equality lay within every society's grasp, and that progress is largely a matter of mobilising the public and summoning the political will to achieve the needed reforms. As he said, *"It is a sense of revulsion at denied opportunity, injustice and poverty, whether at home or abroad, which impels people to work for a better world."*

President Kennedy believed that as well. He said, *"We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people... Whether it will become a force for good or ill depends on man."*

As we continue to dedicate our own efforts to achieve a better world, we look to leaders like John Smith for inspiration, for courage, and for realistic examples of how outrage and injustice can be channeled into lasting change. May it always be so.

Thank you very much.

Vote of thanks

Wilf Stevenson

Director

The Smith Institute

It falls to me to propose a vote of thanks, which I would like to do in three parts.

As you may know, the Smith Institute is a very small organisation. Our ideas are big, but we're very small! We have only got two staff. We couldn't hope to organise events of this scale on our own so we need partners such as Zurich Financial Services. As has already been said, they are terrific and I would like to thank Sandy Leach and his excellent team for their support this evening.

The headlines in today's papers were dominated by the US presidential elections and from what we have heard so far today, it's going to continue. But no one in this audience would have under estimated in any way the importance of the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report yesterday, not least because of the contribution it makes to the achievement of social justice in the United Kingdom. If that was not enough, he had Treasury Questions this morning and a major announcement about reducing international child poverty this afternoon. Chancellor, we are extremely grateful to you for your continuing interest in the Smith Institute and we thank you very much for being with us this evening.

Senator Kennedy, when we invited you to speak tonight we had an idea that your personal political philosophy and your recent legislative record in the United States Senate would have proved a good match with John Smith's interests. However, as you will have gathered from the reaction to your speech today, I am sure I speak for everyone when I say that your analysis of the

way that John Smith's principles could be used to address some of today's more intractable problems, and your conviction that a nation's prosperity can only be sustained if it is accompanied by greater social justice, are truly inspirational. And there can't be many senior politicians in either of our countries who could argue as persuasively as you have that the benefits of science, technology, medicine and the Internet can and must be made to work for social justice and greater equality of opportunity. You have given us all tremendous food for thought and, perhaps best of all, several ideas for new work that we can take forward in the Smith Institute.

In your concluding remarks you reminded us of John Smith's belief that the key to social justice lies within every society's grasp. It occurs to me that the struggle to turn that key and to open the door to greater social justice will only be successful so long as statesmen of the calibre of you and John Smith go on making the "ripples of hope" that you referred to.

Senator Kennedy, you have done us the signal honour of making a great speech on the occasion of the first John Smith Memorial Lecture, and may I on behalf of everyone here express our gratitude to you.