

'The State to Come, *FUTURE*wise'

by Dr Patrick Dixon

It's a privilege to be here tonight, at a time of change in our nation, in Europe, in the world. I want to bring to you some of the things that I've been presenting around the world to chairmen and chief executive officers of some of the largest multinationals. I want to look at the issues which they're concerned about, things which they see could wipe out tens of thousands of jobs in a town or a city like Chelmsford or London in a matter of weeks. I want to look beyond today at major changes which will impact your life and mine; and I want to do it from the perspective of someone who is a doctor, from someone who is consulting on new technologies around the world, someone who is involved a lot in the media today, and concerned to tackle these issues.

I want to talk about five key words and then a sixth word which will help unlock the future for you. They spell the word 'FUTURE' - and if you remember nothing tonight, you'll remember that word, I know. And the first word is 'Fast'.

FAST

Speed will be a fundamental challenge in the future, and it doesn't matter whether you run the corner shop in the high street a hundred yards from here or whether you are a junior manager, a senior manager, or reaching retirement. Speed is a fundamental challenge for us, and new technology is at the heart of it. You only have to count how many of us have gone on the Internet in the past two years. We're part of a revolution. New technology is here to stay.

In 1977 a phone line could carry around twelve conversations at once. Now we can get 70 million telephone lines on a fibre the size of a human hair! That means that telephones are becoming basically free. At home I have a system which allows me to telephone any country anywhere in the world - London to Australia - all evening, all weekend, and it costs me nothing! I have a cable connection to my Internet service provider, which is a just a computer in London, and I have unlimited use of that for around £15 a month. And I have unlimited use of the phone as well through cable, through my Internet service provider, all evening, all weekend, every week, every year, for ever. Using this technology, I can connect a little camera which costs £100 to my portable PC and I can watch my relatives in Australia and they can talk to me. I can talk to them and see them, for free, for twelve hours every Saturday night if I want. It's a revolution. And when you couple that with something else - a tiny bleep, a pager. By 2016, devices this size will be able to hold every word that has ever been written in the whole of human history. Computer power is doubling every eighteen months.

Now, when you put these two things together, the phone lines which are basically free, and this amazing technology, and the fact that I can already talk to my own computer at the speed at which I am talking to you now (and it's 95% accurate at 100 words per minute), we have a revolution. And it will transform every aspect of life, whether you're in a business, a retailer, or a doctor. A doctor like me will not be able to make a decision about the treatment to give without talking to the robot within the next five years. It's nearly happened. If you go to your GP today and you ask for a repeat prescription because you've run out of your basic medication, that GP will type the details in and it comes out of a robot, a computer. If the doctor thinks the combination of drugs is safe, he may still be over-ridden by the computer; the robot may say, 'I'm sorry, Dr Dixon, but I can't let you prescribe this because it's unsafe.' And if the doctor over-rides it and I die, my wife might sue the doctor and take him to court because he failed to talk to the robot, or failed to do what the robot told him.

Another aspect of the speed of change is currency instabilities in the market. You might think it doesn't affect you, but it affects everyone. We take holidays in Scotland, with no bleeps, no faxes, no mobiles. We had a wonderful holiday on the Isle of Eigg; no electricity,

just water from the stream and coals for the fire. You might think that what happens to the Indonesian currency doesn't matter when you're on Eigg. But you're wrong. The reason why sheep farmers are blowing their heads out with shotguns is because when the exchange rate changes in Indonesia and in Russia, they can't sell their lamb any more. It affects everybody. This kind of technology allows us to switch focals, shares, currency, around the world in seconds, at costs which have become almost zero. Billions of dollars can be switched in a few nanoseconds from one country to another, with terrible consequences for people.

Here's another example. I have here a computer, which is a mobile phone, a fax, and an e-mail system. It surfs the Web and gives me short messages. It's got my diary, my word processor, everything that I need; my complete virtual mobile office. The next step beyond all this is a hypodermic needle. This needle is hollow, and inside it is something the size of a grain of rice. It's made of glass and it's a complete computer system. It's got a chip inside it. It requires no battery and it will last for ever. It contains a radio transmitter and receiver and it is capable of holding my bank account details, my medical records, my name, my address, and all my passwords, and PIN numbers. You can inject it under my skin. It costs £25. One million of these devices have already been distributed in Britain. This is, for example, a pet passport. It's a sign of the future; it's part of tomorrow's world.

Scientists have just learnt how to grow brain tissue directly into the surface of a computer chip. That would enable me to control a computer by thinking, which could be quite useful if I'm paralysed. It also enables a computer to create thoughts inside my head, which means that I'm not so sure that I want this any more. Technology is changing incredibly quickly, powered by any external electrical source. This chip, under the skin of your pet, when the scanner comes close, creates a magnetic field which activates the chip and powers it up. With a radio transmitter, it can receive and transmit information. And it's part of the future.

URBANISATION

The second face of the future is 'Urbanisation'. Urbanisation is the 'U' of the 'Future'. We live in an urbanised world where most people will live in cities by the year 2005, 2010. I have been inside a megacity, in the slums, in situations where the city is literally outstripping its resources, and we have the problems of the megacity. We also have problems in our own cities, for example, with drug addiction.

One of my books, *'The Truth About Drugs'*, has just been published. It made banner headlines because it describes the problems in our society. In the last three weeks alone I've done five or six hours of live TV debate on the issue of drugs. 1.75 million schoolchildren have taken an illegal drug at least once. 10% of all those who started in high school this autumn will have taken an illegal drug for the first time by this summer. In my own profession 10% of us, according to the official statistics of the BMA and an interpretation of that data, are abusing alcohol or illegal drugs. If you look at junior doctors in Chelmsford in the hospitals round here in casualty departments, you will find that 14% of the men are using amphetamines, cocaine, crack, magic mushrooms or LSD. That's a statistical average across the country, of course, but this is a concern. Part of it is that people are finding the speed of change, the new technology and the pressures of life, very difficult. Coupled with marital breakdown, it's a real double whammy.

Or take children in care. We spend in Britain one billion pounds every year just putting children into care. If you look at marriage, we have one of the highest divorce rates in Europe. No government in the world can afford a policy which isn't strongly pro-family. That's why Labour and Conservatives are now so similar, because pro-family policies are the only ones that work in a society. We are reaping the consequences now of social chaos, which no government can possibly grasp or handle: HIV, Aids. I became involved with Aids because I discovered as a doctor that almost three-quarters of all the nation's Aids patients were within eight miles of my own home in London. I recognised that the Church needs to make a compassionate response to this issue while upholding the traditional teachings of Christianity. I started an organisation called ACET (Aids Care, Education and Training), and we care for thousands of people at home. We've put 1.2 million booklets into schools. We're

working in India, in Africa, in countries where a third of you tonight would be HIV infected, if you were in some cities where I have spoken in some churches. Aids is a disease of our time. It's another symbol of our society. It's a thermometer, if you like, of destruction of relationships and of addiction, and despite the stereotype, most HIV is spread heterosexually through men and women. In the poorest nations where they have very little health care, very little health education, it's part of the urbanised world in which we live. India alone will have more HIV infection soon than the whole of Africa has today, and Africa is extremely badly hit right now. I have been in towns where a third of the entire adult population is already doomed. Nelson Mandela has described how Aids is striking at the very heart of all the reforms that he has pioneered in his own country, with one in five of all the mine workers already infected.

TRIBAL

'T' for 'Tribal'. 'Fast' and 'Urban' are a pair. All these six faces make a cube, and 'T' is at the top of the cube. Tribalism is the most powerful force in the world. It's more powerful than atomic bombs. Look at what's happening in Bosnia today. It's a strange thing, isn't it? Here we have Europe trying to make itself one federal superstate. At the same time individual countries cannot even hold their own people together. We have children shooting other children; fathers cutting open pregnant women who were living opposite them in the same street. These things are happening in Europe now as we speak.

Tribalism is a powerful destructive force; and yet it's also a most powerful *positive* force in the world today. Tribalism is what gives me my sense of family. It gives me that sense of identity. I'm a member of the Dixon tribe. Your kids who wear Nike trainers are part of a Nike tribe. People who always shop in Marks and Spencer's are part of the M & S tribe. People who support England football are part of a tribe. So tribalism is very powerful. It's only when one tribe says it's better than another tribe that we get sectarianism and problems. But tribalism in and of itself is not wrong. In fact we need tribes to survive. I'm sure that many of you feel you're a part of the tribe of Chelmsford and you're proud to be part of the city. Those of you who work for a company may feel part of that tribe, and feel very positive about it. Tribalism is very important to us. The Bible is full of the history of positive tribes; and the Christian message is that one day we will all be one tribe, one people, one nation. Tribalism will be a very important factor in the future.

UNIVERSALISM

The opposite of tribalism is 'Universalism': This is the second 'U' in FUTURE. Globalisation. McDonald's is everywhere, in case you hadn't noticed - even in Chelmsford High Street! But it's also the same McDonald's in Hong Kong, in Zurich, in Geneva, in Czechoslovakia, in Russia: everywhere. Globalisation means that jobs are created in one city and then they're moved to another. It means that large companies research and develop in Chelmsford, London. They make the goods in Hong Kong or China, most likely, and they sell them in the United States of America. That's globalisation. We've landed on the first day of a new world and the so-called global village, which has yet to grow up and mature. We can expect a lot more global instability, the kind of things we've already had. These forces are very powerful. On Black Wednesday we saw our own currency take a hit, because someone gambled that the Bank of England was running out of cash - and they were right. In fact, speculators can overwhelm the Bank of England in about four hours flat with a concerted attack. That is to say, we would lose our entire national reserves in less than 24 hours trying to defend our currency if the markets really started attacking. Now, we are one of the top seven nations of the world in terms of industrial might. Think, then, what the plight is of Malaysia, the Philippines, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Columbia.

English is the universal language. It's quite difficult to get my children to learn French or German, because already 80% of all international calls are transmitted in English. 85% of all computer data is in English. English is the universal language, but the lesson of history is this: that the more universal we become, the more tribal people want to be. I mentioned that we often go to Scotland for holidays. Gaelic was a dead language, almost, up until about six or seven years ago; but now the street signs are in Gaelic, the universities are in Gaelic; the

radio stations transmit in Gaelic 24 hours a day. There's Gaelic TV, and Gaelic has revived. Why? Because of tribalism. Why now? Because of globalisation, because of the loss of identity, because of the fear of Scotland losing itself in England.

Tribalism is causing the break-up of the United Kingdom. Tribalism challenges Westminster. What's the point of being an MP? I'm not sure what the point is of being a prime minister in tomorrow's world. What will you be prime minister of? By the time the minister for transport's no longer running the railways, and the minister for post office and telecommunications has nothing to do. It's all been franchised away. Scotland wants to govern itself, Wales, Northern Ireland. London wants to have its own mini-parliament or its own government. So the prime minister will preside over little England, what's left, outside of London and the M25. At the same time, the prime minister is also losing power very rapidly to Europe. The ultimate court and sanctions and all the rest are somewhere in Brussels. At the same time as tribalism is looking towards local government, we have universalism pulling us into a global village, the region of Europe. There are two opposite sides of the same cube: the more tribal you are, the more universal you want to be.

Now, churches that are both tribal and universal will be very successful. I don't know if anybody here has been to a Bible week or a church week or an event like Spring Harvest. These events are growing, because they help people to identify with the broader church. My children are not interested in whether they're Anglican or Baptist or house church; they just want to be known as believers. They want to be known as Christians, because for them that's what's important: to be part of the universal picture. And yet, churches which can identify with that big picture but also offer that sense of belonging (cell structures, home groups, Lent Bible study groups, little groups of people, who can really belong to each other, develop a tribe, a sense of family), are growing. Many people are coming to faith, not because of some great sermon that they've heard, but because they have found family with people who have a faith, and it's kind of grown on them. My wife and I have been working in part of the inner city of London, in Brentford, in some very deprived areas, and it's tribalism, the sense of family and belonging, which has really made all the difference for people who are really on the edge.

RADICAL

What comes next? Well, the last two faces are extremely important. The fifth face is 'Radical'. This is to do with how our society is reacting to some of these issues, as some of you are here! The thing about radicalism is this: politics is changing. Do we know any longer whether we have a Left or Right wing prime minister? Do we care a fig? No? Tony Blair has one main policy, and it is this. He believes passionately that he was elected with a spectacular majority for change in Britain. He believes that many Tories voted for him and he's holding a position of trust, not to drive through some left-wing agenda of a minority view, not to abuse that position of power, but holding it in trust on behalf of the people. But he's very insecure about that. He's always saying we do this or we do that and people may not like it; we'll be out. The main policy is what I would call 'populism'. So we have today referenda, have you noticed? We have had more referendums on issues in the last three years than in the previous hundred. Why? Because Tony Blair's philosophy is: let the people decide. On European currency 'Let the people decide.' On Scottish nationalism, 'Let the people decide.' And technology will help us decide an awful lot of issues very quickly, with electronic voting which tends to make referenda government a whole lot easier. So you have a transport policy. Then they do an opinion poll and realise that transport policy is very unpopular with some people. So, let the people decide. Sorry, Mr Prescott. No transport policy, not at least one that's going to offend the majority of people. Now the trouble with this kind of government - and it's the same with every European nation where Left and Right have died - what happens with Left-wing policies? I've been to China recently. I can tell you, they are climbing into the market economy as fast as their legs can carry them. Right wing has died: the old Thatcherite dream that somehow market forces, left unchecked, will solve the entire world's problems.

And then we get the problems I've described of the global market and the rubbishing of individual human beings by the market forces. There's a recognition that something has to

change, whether you look at speed, urbanisation, tribalism, globalisation; something has to change. The question is: what?

Who here is a member of a political party? Who here has written a letter to a councillor, a governor, an MP about, say, Sunday trading or euthanasia or abortion or human rights or whatever? If so, you are a political force of tomorrow. 'Left' and 'right' has died, and instead we have single issues. That's very good news for you. It's very good news because when governments lose their way in terms of a great big political vision, they become simply clusters around the single-issue concerns; which is what's happening.

In Switzerland there are secret Swiss bank accounts. That it isn't so secret any more, because of Nazi gold as an issue. That's a very old single issue. It's fifty years old as a single issue, but driven by a relatively small proportion of people in a country several thousand miles away, Swiss banking policy has been changed. You can't think of anything more fundamental to government psyche and feeling than banking secrecy in Switzerland; but it's changed. What percentage do you think of the population of U.S. has brought about this miraculous transformation of Swiss banking culture - 20%? I think 1% is probably more accurate.

Let me give you another example and I'll ask the same question nearer to home. This is about the vulnerability of governments to single issues, and it affects us all. If you want to see the political activists, don't look at the universities; they're certainly not fretting about apartheid or the atrocities in Chile. If you want to look at the political energy of our society, you find a little old lady with two arthritic hips who will lie down in the sleet and snow in front of an articulated lorry taking lambs to slaughter in France. There is the political energy of today.

Another issue was the Brent Spar oil rig. 'Greenpeace', Friends of the Earth, RSPB and some other environmental or poverty groups are powerful forces. Your oil pump prices went up as a result of a protest. 'Greenpeace' decided that Brent Spar oil rig was a contaminated, polluted structure and should not be sunk. They marched on Number 10 Downing Street and John Major told them it was absolutely fine. Our environmental science experts, who are the best in the world, had sanctioned the sinking of the oil rig, as far safer than doing it on land.

'Greenpeace' then flew a helicopter onto the top of the oil rig, landed a crew with a satellite dish, and started transmitting live pictures all over the world on CNN, Sky, BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Channel 4: saturation coverage of themselves as mega heroes, saving the world by planting themselves on an oil rig.

Shell responded by getting fire tenders that were three times the height of this cathedral, designed to be big enough to put out a huge oil rig fire. They had three of them spraying these men who were trying to abseil up the side of the oil rig. It did not look very clever and they even hit one of the helicopters with dramatic jets of water. That made prime CNN news and it looked like Shell had something dreadfully dark and horrible to hide inside the oil rig. Two-thirds of the way up the oil rig, 'Greenpeace' found a great big tap and wheel and a hole where the oil comes out. They opened it and were hit by forty gallons of crude, two thirds of the way up. They said the oil rig was bursting with toxic waste. Forty tons of crude oil is rather a lot to fall out of a pipe. What they didn't realise is that, in an oil rig, large pipes have large drips; and in fact it was the last drip in a dripping tap. The tank was empty, but they didn't realise that for five months. When they did, they were extremely embarrassed because what had happened was the result of the campaign just two weeks after Major said sink it. The prime minister had to cut back on that agreement and withdraw permission to sink it. Now no-one can sink an oil rig. The decision was based on a scientific myth, and I'm not blaming 'Greenpeace'. They were doing their best. But they were wrong.

There was such a consumer reaction in Europe, and in Germany in particular, that Shell could not survive. That single issue was so powerful and so irrational. 'Greenpeace' now

say that all oil rigs should be sunk, and Shell think that it's the best thing to do; but there is no government in Europe who would dare to sink an oil rig in the North Sea. That shows the power of a single issue.

One feature of single issues is that there are more of them. Dolly the Sheep has become one of the most famous legends you can possibly imagine. I predicted her creation in a book called '*The Genetic Revolution*', when I talked about human cloning. When Dolly appeared, my telephone was red hot. I was on CNN every half hour for two days. People, TV crews, came from Germany, from Switzerland, from Australia and the rest, to ask me who's next? That's the question.

The genetic revolution is a mega single issue. Did you know that people can take genes from my body and put them into your body and they'd work? We can take genes from your body and put them into the soil; bacterium, a microbe, and they work. We can teach a microbe, instead of making you sick, to make pure human insulin for your neighbour. Here is an extraordinary thing: the universal language of life.

If you read the account of Genesis, God said this, God said that. It's the same language of life in the microbe, in the pig, in the fish, and in the bug. I could take some genes from Cyril's body, and put them into a scorpion insect, and they'd work. I could take Cyril's genes and put them into a baboon, and they'd work. I can take a scorpion's poison genes, that's the gene for the sting of the tail, insecticide sting, and put it inside a cabbage. An insect sting into a cabbage - you can't get more odd than that. And the cabbage makes an insecticide in the sac: the cabbage kills caterpillars. We have potatoes which are immune to Colorado beetle. They curl up and die when they eat them. Every one of you in this church tonight has already eaten your genetically modified food in soya beans. And it's just the beginning.

The headlines last week were that we can put human genes into pigs, so that the heart might be suitable for another human. Again, my phone was red hot. People were saying we could now take a little ball of cells from a day or two after fertilisation, and begin to grow bone or blood cells. Actually, we could improve those cells. I can see that you are such superior human beings to me, we should take some of your genes and put them inside one of these cells, so that it has the benefit of your genetic code. We then put these cells back where they came from and implant them into a mother, and we could then have a super human. You can take cells from my body using today's technology, take a cell from my skin, stuff it into an unfertilised human egg, put a spark of electricity across, and a miracle happens. It happens in animals. It happens in mice and sheep. It's only a matter of time, maybe it's already happened.

We have a woman called Diane who's visited my website. I have a website called 'Globe Change'. I have had 350,000 hits on that site in the the last 8 weeks alone, many on cloning. One woman said to me, 'Dear Dr Dixon, my name is Diane. I wish to clone my dad and have my dad as a baby. Weird. I did a live Channel 5 debate on this cloning issue just about four weeks ago. 88% of people agreed with my view, which is that clones should not be born But they're complex issues and they're part of tomorrow's world.

I know, by the way, that we urgently need gene technology. We need it to cure disease, to help feed the world, but we also need to ask what kind of world we're creating now we have the ability to alter the very basis of life itself.

Now here's a passing thought before we get onto the most important face, which hopefully will bring it all together and bring a sense of relief into the present chaos. We've made a geep; that's half sheep and goat. It's actually very simple. You take a ball of cells from a sheep when it's fourteen days and a goat and you rub the two together and, hey presto, you get a geep. We've done it with animals and plants, and we can do it with any animals we choose. How about humonkeys? Could it be done? Yes. We're talking about today's technology. Did you know that human sperm had been used to fertilise rabbits' eggs? That was done in 1957. Why would anyone want to do such a thing? It's like climbing mountains.

Whatever can be done will be done sometime by someone. You can put whatever mixture you like, you can put a human gene into a fish, and they grow to salmon, they grow to four times their normal length in twelve months. As long as you have a human gene and a mouse gene to the salmon gene.

So my question is this, and it's a theological question as well, and you might like to debate this. How many human genes - if you could put 5% of human genes into a pip - how many human genes does an animal have to have to win human rights? We've just passed a human rights bill on Monday. How many human genes? I asked a judge this question. He said, 'If it's more than half human, then I'll prosecute it for murder.' So I said, Are you aware that a monkey is 97% the same as a human being genetically? Did you know that you are 84% the same as a bacterium and 86% the same as an earthworm? The baboon is 97% genetically the same as a human being. The judge said that's different. If we're only 3% different from the monkey, then as long as that monkey's got the right 1.6%, then I'll prosecute for murder. 1.6% would be enough. Well, that's about the same amount as we're already swapping, rather randomly, between one species and another.

How many human genes does an animal have to have to have human rights? I don't know the answer to that question. I'll ask you a spiritual one now. If you are a Christian, as I am, and if you accept the historical truths of the Christian faith, you believe in the ultimate reality that we have a God in heaven who loves us. There is a purpose, and I must say, as a medic, every time I look at the universe I see the most incredible intricacy and purpose. I see the craziness of human beings but not of the Creator. If you accept that, how many human genes does an animal have to have to gain salvation? That's a question we are going to have to tackle, perhaps sooner than you think. The Catholic Church is very forward thinking in some of these issues. They are already debating whether UFO's from outer space could be saved. I think there's an official edict on that somewhere.

ETHICS

And now I want to bring these things together. I can see some of you are saying this is the most horrendous talk I ever heard in this church. I wonder if you guess what the final face of the 'FUTURE' is - Fast, Urban, Tribal, Universal, Radical? It's Ethics, values, spirituality. Things that motivate us, that strike into the very depths of our being. I talked about this restlessness, this sense that something has to change. That was the message after the last war. Never another one! I know that was the message after the First War, which we have been remembering this weekend. I have been in the trenches. I have been there with my family. I have been at the gravestone of my great uncle who perished. I have held the helmet that has the hole where my grandfather had his head pierced by a shell. Fortunately, he survived. People say something has to change. The same restlessness is on every front today, whether it's the domestic revolution, the collapse of marriage and family life, the spread of hatred, the rape of our planet's resources, globalisation, or the intense forces of tribalism.

Something must change. We cannot go on like this. We'll be divorced before we've even got married! There is the most profound questioning at the very senior levels of every organisation; those that influence and shape our future. Wherever I talk about this cube, there are more questions on the ethical face than any other. They're worried about ethics.

Ethics is to do with values; with relationships. It's to do with marriages that work, with having children who actually know who you are, with community, with belonging, with knowing who you are and why you're here, and where you are going and what the point of your life is. I mean, there's more to life than banking. Thank God for that.

Early retirement is a sign of the times. For some it will not be a voluntary retirement; but many people are choosing to downsize. They take a commitment downwards, for the future of Britain, for the sake of ethics. They value relationships and the principle of putting something back. If you have given up a highly paid job which wasn't very satisfying, for one you feel is more worthwhile, then you are part of a new trend. Downsizing. People who held executive

positions are now running charities for a twentieth of their former income. Why? Because there is a need to do something to improve the world.

All this is found in spiritual terms, too. The historical creeds are growing at a rate of knots. 20% of the world is Islam. Islam is growing at 2.9%, which is far higher than the population explosion at one point. Christianity is also a global religion: 23% of the world's population, growing at 2.4% per year; much faster, until the last five years, than population growth. Whole pages in the Sunday Times are devoted to the stars, because there are bankers in London who will not invest if Jupiter is out of alignment with Mars. They won't take the risk. Count the column inches devoted to stars and horoscopes. Why? Because people want to believe in something. In a rapidly changing world, things that don't change become extremely important. That's why the eco warriors have been winning so much support. All these roundabouts look the same. Tesco, Safeway, they all look the same; you could be anywhere. Then you come into the centre of a town and see the fabric of the Cathedral or a tree. It's very beautiful.

There's a hunger for spirituality. In the old days, the great challenge was atheism versus faith. The great debate was: Does God really exist? That was the aftermath of the Great War. Today the debate is: Who on earth is God and do I believe in him? What do I believe he's like, or she's like? People hug trees, or talk to plants, or crouch under a plastic pyramid. There's a search for meaning, for ultimate reality, for destiny; a search for purpose, which is fundamental to our future.

Life is incredible. I have worked in terminal care, looking after people who are at the end of their lives, and this is a mystery. I've also worked in a labour ward, and that's another mystery.

Here is a woman, and her life is fading. She's in her own home, surrounded by all the things that have made her life so unique. The very walls breathe the atmosphere of her personality. I'm holding her hand, and I'm aware that these are her last hours. No words are needed, but every time she hears a familiar voice at the door she squeezes my hand. She's there. She knows where she is going. She is at peace with herself and her Maker.

As the minutes pass, I realise that there's a change in her pulse. I can hardly feel it. We're alone in the room and it's very peaceful. I'm not sure that she's breathing any more. I think she's going. I think she's gone. But she takes a breath, and I jump out of my skin! I have to say doctors are not very good at deciding if people are dead. We get there in the end, but not in the first five minutes. There is a miracle taking place. Everything has gone peaceful again. She's still there. Maybe she can't hear me anymore, but I'm still holding her hand. The relatives walk in. I say 'Come, come, she's still here, still here.' Ten or fifteen minutes later we both take a deep breath. She's gone, and we've just seen a miracle. I often say that the nearest an atheist ever gets to a supernatural experience is his or her death. Death heightens the spiritual awareness in every way. That's why death-bed conversion is so common. The first person into paradise was the dying thief on the cross. Don't despise it.

When you're facing your own mortality you realise pretty sharply that you're more than a bag of biotherms. Here are the facts. The woman has gone; but her skin cells are still dividing, and they are perfectly good for anybody else, for a burn victim. Her gut is digesting food and contracting still. Her kidneys are fine and can be donated. Her heart is fibrillating chaotically, but is otherwise OK. Her brain cells are becoming inactive, but most of her brain is still alive. Her bone marrow is still producing red and white cells. All the ingredients of life are there. Every structure inside her body is present and yet she is - where? We have a living body. All of the component parts are still intact, but I could go right inside her body and there's no one there. It's empty. This is a mystery of life. For me, that is part of this restlessness that I see. People keep asking the question: 'what *is* life about?'

We Christians believe that God intervened in history. The calendar we have is even dated from the coming of one particular Person. Not just the coming of that Person, but an

extraordinary claim that he rose from the dead. You don't have to have a religion of resurrection. Mohammed didn't rise from the dead, yet he was a very successful prophet. You don't have to defend such an absurd legend and have yourself hung upside down, stoned to pieces; nor because Jesus is the greatest prophet who ever lived. That's not the point of contention. The point was, he said Jesus had come back to life again.

I don't want to get into that too much. All I want to say is this: there are profound questions about spirituality and the historical base. Every aspect of belief has been re-examined. Every value in our society has been looked at again. And finally, we can look at the cube in two ways. You can look at the cube - Fast, Urban, Universal society. That's the way your bosses think about the world. Or you just spin the cube through 180° - Tribal, Radical and Universal world.

Now when I showed this to one influential group, I asked them what percentage of people would need to be in your society who are very radical, very tribal, to change your market, your shareholders? 51%? These are the most influential people in the world. They said about 0.5% to 2% of the world need to be very radical, very tribal, very ethical, to change it. It's back to the Labour Party and the Greenpeace issue again, isn't it? The single issue.

What it means is this: in the middle of this chaotic, fast moving world, values are going to become very, very important. The next century will not be a repeat of the last. The next decade won't. You can date this building, by looking, to within a hundred years. If you were an architectural historian you would be able to date various parts of the building and say, 'that's a mid-late 16th or 18th... you would be able to date the bits. So it is with every decade. But it's artificial, isn't it? There's only one millisecond between one decade and the next. We talk about the Thatcherite 80's or the Swinging 60's. Each decade has its character. Each century has its character, tomorrow will *not* be more of the same. We will see a most profound questioning in all kinds of ways. Some changes will be disturbing; but others will be very encouraging. And all of us have a part to play, to shape and build that world.