The Rt Hon. Tony Blair, Founder and Patron of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, delivered a keynote speech on the impact of faith and globalisation at HKU in June.

This was the inaugural lecture of the partnership between the Faith and Globalisation Initiative (FGI) of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation and the HKU’s Faith and Global Engagement Initiative (FGE). FGI is a global network of leading universities of the Foundation while FGE is a multi-disciplinary platform for experts to discuss the role of faith in the public, professional and cultural life.

“Religion has much to say from many perspectives on many issues. What is required is proper, in depth and rigorous research into these issues. This is where these programmes and the work of HKU can help,” Mr Blair said.

Professor Daniel Chua, Director of the FGE, noted that “leaders should be intelligently engaged with the questions of faith and the global impact. We formed the Faith and Global Engagement programme to initiate a conversation in the spirit of hospitality. Whoever you are and whatever you believe in we want to engage with you about religion.”

HKU should be a place where faith is freely discussed and understood. This is now an urgent issue given the re-emergence of religion as a potent social and political force in recent years across the world.

“This part of the world is one of the fastest areas of growing Christianity as well as many other faiths. HKU has a steadfast commitment to scholarship and freedom. The basis for the Tony Blair Faith Foundation’s Faith and Globalisation Initiative is similar. The face of religion in this environment is two-fold: conflict and compassion. Much of the news about religion is about conflict. However, religion is also capable of great compassion.”

HKU is the ninth university in the world and the second in China (following Peking University) to join the FGI. In collaboration with other FGI partner institutions, HKU’s FGE explores topics including religion and conflict, religion in public life, and human rights bringing critical analysis to the forefront of global debate, providing current and future leaders with a theologically informed and responsible understanding of religion and how its engagement with the world can transform the social and political landscape.

HKU’s Faith and Global Engagement Initiative: www.faith.hku.hk