Quartet Special Envoy to the Middle East Tony Blair addressed Yale students on the issues of faith and globalization today, as part of a new initiative organized by Yale's School of Divinity and Blair's own Faith Foundation project. The first class was chaired by the former British Prime Minister and the Yale President Richard Levin, and marks the launch of the three year ' Faith and Globalization Initiative ', which aims to promote understanding between world religions and aid the process of globalization. Blair, who recently converted from Protestantism to his wife's religion of Catholicism, remarked that religion was a double-edged sword which could be used to cause either harm or healing. He said that proper spiritual faith could enhance the process of globalization, but religious division could equally tear it apart.

Quote: *"Blair, 55, who recently became a Catholic, told the students that those without faith are not lesser people in his eyes. Many great leaders have led without faith, he said. But it is important to realize that religion matters to people in this world, Blair said.* ***And understanding people's faith can make globalization work — and help bring about peace and end such long-standing clashes as those between the Israelis and the Palestinians.*** *Blair is currently working in the Middle East as a representative of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia, helping the Palestinians prepare for statehood as part of the world's efforts to secure peace in that region. "I am convinced that the majority of Israelis and the majority of Palestinians want a two-state solution," Blair said. "It's just that they've given up hope of getting it. But they want it and that's important, so it means that there is a desire there for peace."*

As I have commented before, there are three things that stand in the way of the process of globalization. Politics, economics and religion. As we have seen this past week, the world is largely unified when it comes to the issue of economics. With our global stock markets, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other such organizations, it is easy to see how we are quickly becoming interdependent. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown recently called for a complete shake-up of the world economic order , which would help prevent a repeat of the financial crises we have witnessed this past number of weeks. Many regional blocs, such as the ASEAN and GCC , are also considering adopting a single currency similar to that of the European Union . When it comes to politics, it is also easy to see how the world is becoming more unified in this regard. This past year we have witnessed the birth of the Union for the Mediterranean . Other regional blocs, such as the European Union, the North American Union , the African Union, the Asia Pacific Union

, the
ASEAN Economic Community
, the
Gulf Cooperation Council
, are still in the process of increasing their powers. The world is becoming more and more politically unified. That leaves just one main obstacle to the globalization process - religion. And the world could not be more religiously divided. There is only one force that can unify people of different languages, cultures and traditions and that is religion. Throughout the history of the world, politicians have tried to unify people through religion. Whether it was the
Roman Emperors
, who demanded that their citizens worship them as God, the Catholic Church, which murdered believers throughout the centuries, the Church of England, which once imprisoned those who preached the gospel, or the Communists, who set themselves above every god. Religion is unifying force, and Tony Blair's Faith Foundation is the realization of this.

The Bible states that these three points which I have mentioned, obstacles to the process of globalization, will be removed sooner or later. In Revelation 13:16-18 we have a one world monetary system called the Mark of the Beast, and those who refuse to take the Mark in their right hand or forehead will be unable to buy or sell. In Revelation 13:2-4 we have a one world government, headed by a man to whom Satan will give great power and authority. And in Revelation 13:11-15 we have a one world false religious system, headed by a man that Satan will enable to perform all manner of lying wonders to deceive the people of earth into worshipping a false Christ. As you can see, there is time of great deception ahead. Christians are called to be subject to governments, for their power is ordained of God (Romans 13). And it's not that we are against the process of globalization either. As in the days of the Roman Empire, globalization can be used for the proclamation of the gospel. But we are against the one who is behind this whole world system, which is Satan himself (2nd Corinthians 4:4).

Will you end up becoming part of this one world religious system? Though it appears to have a morality about it, it has been condemned by God. For the Bible states that all our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), and that the only way to God is through faith in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Will you end up becoming part of this one world economic system? Jesus Christ said, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also ", Matthew 6:20-21. Will you end up becoming part of this one world political system? The Bible states, " Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end ", Isaiah 9:7. True peace can only come through the Prince of Peace, which is Jesus Christ. He died on the cross for your sins, so you might know peace with God (Colossians 1:20). Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today.

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