Is most development work premised on a myth that you can donate people out of poverty?

In a world where 80-90% of the victims of war are now civilians, do we need to change our assumptions about what “peace” looks like?

Given the growing evidence that the adolescent brain is incapable of acting on its moral understandings until at least the late-teenage years, is it ever right to prosecute juveniles as adults?
At the Technology and Culture Forum, we specialize in asking thought provoking questions, and this year’s speakers provided them in spades. As I reviewed my notes from our 2007-2008 events, I was amazed by the quality and timeliness of our speakers’ questions.

Two themes emerged through the myriad presentations and events we helped mount this year. Alan Wallace put the first theme most succinctly: The great koan of the 21st century is, “How can we know so much and be so awful to one another?” The second theme, not unrelated to the first, was a call for self-reflection and discipline by individuals and institutions engaged in development-related work. As MIT’s global role evolves, we’re witnessing students, faculty, and administrators newly engaged around these critical issues. The excellent attendance at our events and the deep engagement of the audiences with our speakers indicate that we are making an important contribution to the life of the Institute at a historically critical time.

We were glad to be able to bring global, national and state-level conversations to MIT through our collaborations with the Massachusetts Climate Action Network, Trinity Institute’s national conference on “Religion and Violence,” and Doctors Without Borders. We helped take MIT’s International Development Network to the next level, expanding the size of the fall Development Fair and adding a spring event in collaboration with Harvard’s International Development Conference. We were especially encouraged to see an increasing number of students at our events, moving us toward our goal of having a greater impact on the formation of the next generation of leaders.

Last year, TAC began mentoring a student environmental club at the Boston Latin School. The club, BLS Youth Climate Action Network <www.blsyouthcan.org>, now boasts over 225 members and in May 2007, TAC and BLSYouthCAN hosted the 1st Annual Youth Summit on Global Climate Change to great success. To follow up on that success, TAC and BLSYouthCAN hosted the 2nd Annual Summit on Global Climate Change on May 10. Nearly 300 students from the metropolitan area attended the summit and enjoyed a day of facts and fun. MIT President Susan Hockfield warmly welcomed the students to MIT and encouraged them in their work. Among the other speakers were Boston Mayor Tom Menino, James Hunt, III, Chief of Environmental and Energy Services for the city of Boston, and Liz Soper from the National Wildlife Federation. Workshop leaders included MIT staff, administration and graduate students. Special thanks go to BLS teacher advisor, Cate Arnold.
As we end our 44th year, we celebrate the past, present, and future of this unique program. We mourn the passing of Louis Menand, III, whose wisdom, humor and brilliance had been part of TAC since its early days. Steering Committee Ali Wyne, ’08, was awarded the prestigious Karl Taylor Compton Prize and has contributed to the work of TAC in creative and inspiring ways and will continue to serve on the Steering Committee as our youngest alum member. We are gratefully astounded by the work and energy of Xaq Frohlich, who helped organize five of our events this year, and Sarah Johnstone, whose four years of excellent work for TAC was recognized this summer by the Diocese of Massachusetts, which awarded her the Barbara C. Harris Award for Social Justice Work.

We eagerly anticipate the 2008-2009 academic year.

Amy McCreath
(The Rev.) Amy McCreath
FINANCING ISLAMIC TERRORISM
Dr. Ibrahim Warde, Contributor, Le Monde Diplomatique, author of The Price of Fear: The Truth Behind the Financial War on Terror, and Visiting Professor, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University
Co-sponsored with the Emile Bustani Middle East Diplomacy, Tufts University

THURSDAY • SEPTEMBER 20, 2007
WHERE MORALS COME FROM (AND WHY IT MATTERS)
Beatriz Luna, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh
John Mikhail, Associate Professor, Law Center and Philosophy Department, Georgetown University
Patrick Byrne, Professor of Philosophy, Boston College
Moderator: Christopher Moore, Assistant Professor of Neuroscience, Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Whitehead Institute, MIT

FRIDAY • OCTOBER 5, 2007
6TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FAIR
An annual event designed to showcase the many groups, projects and activities at MIT that provide students with an opportunity to work on issues related to international development

TUESDAY • SEPTEMBER 18, 2007
FINANCING ISLAMIC TERRORISM
Dr. Ibrahim Warde, Contributor, Le Monde Diplomatique, author of The Price of Fear: The Truth Behind the Financial War on Terror, and Visiting Professor, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University
Co-sponsored with the Emile Bustani Middle East Diplomacy, Tufts University

TUESDAY • OCTOBER 16, 2007
THE DIGNITY OF DIFFERENCE
Sir Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth
Co-sponsored with the Chaplain to the Institute, Adir Fellows: MIT Interfaith Dialogue and MIT Hillel

WEDNESDAY • OCTOBER 17, 2007
GAMBLING: FACE TO FACE OR INTERFACE?
Ben Mezrich, author of Bringing Down The House, The True Story of Six MIT Kids Who Took Vegas for Millions
Dr. Natasha Schüll, Associate Professor, Program on Science, Technology, and Society, MIT, author of Machine Life: Control and Compulsion in Las Vegas
Dr. Maressa Hecht Orzack, founder and coordinator of the Computer Addiction Service, McLean Hospital; Harvard Medical School
Moderator: Dr. Christopher M. Kelly, Visiting Assistant Professor of The History of Science, Harvard University

TUESDAY • OCTOBER 30, 2007
DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS WEEK @ MIT AND HARVARD
Dr. Hansel Otero, Doctors Without Borders
Co-sponsored with Doctors Without Borders @ MIT and Harvard and the MIT Public Service Program

WEDNESDAY • OCTOBER 10, 2007
A GENIUS FOR CHANGE AND THE PASSION TO DO IT: MIT STUDENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Amy Smith, MIT D-Lab
John Durant, Director, MIT Museum
Co-sponsored with the MIT Museum

TUESDAY • NOVEMBER 6, 2007
MAKING HEALTH POLICY IN MASSACHUSETTS: AN INSIDER’S PERSPECTIVE
Jonathan Gruber, Professor of Economics, MIT

FRIDAY • NOVEMBER 9, 2007
SICKO: A FILM BY MICHAEL MOORE
Moderator: Dr. David Jones, Associate Professor, Science, Technology and Society, MIT
Co-sponsored with the MIT Lecture Series Committee and the Large Events Fund

WEDNESDAY • NOVEMBER 15, 2007
ADVANCEMENTS IN UNDERWATER VEHICLES: RESPONDING TO CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
Jim Morash, MIT Sea Grant Research Engineer
Co-sponsored with the MIT Museum

SUNDAY • NOVEMBER 18, 2007
CLIMATE ACTION CONFERENCE
Co-sponsored and organized by the Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN)

SUNDAY-TUESDAY • JANUARY 21-23, 2008
RELIGION AND VIOLENCE: UNTANGLING THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT
Webcast and discussions of the Trinity Institute National Interfaith Theological Conference
Co-sponsored with the Adir Interfaith Fellowship and the Chaplain to the Institute

WEDNESDAY • JANUARY 30, 2008
DARWINISM AND INTELLIGENT DESIGN: A DINNER DISCUSSION
John Durant, Director, MIT Museum

THURSDAY • FEBRUARY 14, 2008
RE: DESIGN
A play based on the correspondence between Charles Darwin and Harvard botanist, Asa Gray
Co-sponsored with the MIT Museum

THURSDAY • MARCH 6, 2008
COMPUTER-GENERATED INVENTIONS: RISKS AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS
Robert Plotkin, Esquire ’93

FRIDAY • MARCH 14, 2008
DISSOLVING WAR: WOMEN AS PEACEMAKERS
Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, author of Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why it Matters
Co-sponsored with the Center for International Studies
Dear Friends:

For 44 years the Technology and Culture Forum has been the MIT focus for connections among individual values, career interests, problems and opportunities at the intersection of technology, science and society, and moral and ethical issues. Its work engages students, faculty and staff. The vitality of this enterprise depends crucially on private financial support from alumni and friends. Please consider a gift this year for the Forum.

Thank you,
Paul E. Gray, MIT President Emeritus