

Prince Charles:

“Whatever it is, it seems to me that, by contrast, our Western outlook on life has too often become de-constructive and partial; too often concerned with the part and not the whole; concerned only with what we might call an “outer” rather than an “inner” reality. Indeed, I feel that we in the West have, to all intents and purposes, abandoned our intuitive capacity - that intelligence of the heart which senses there is an invisible as well as a visible dimension to reality. Perhaps we could call it a ‘sixth sense’ - one of those God-given senses without which we may find ourselves becoming evermore vulnerable to extinction from the processes of environmental and natural degradation we have set in motion. Surely there is a growing and evident need for us to re-integrate this part of ourselves in order to recreate the balance and the sense of wholeness that is required if we are to meet the alarming challenges now confronting us.

All of our traditions benefit from parables, for the intelligence of the heart helps us to find ways of better understanding each other. I know that we are not all the same. But we do share common values which speak of a timeless and universal wisdom - a wisdom which enables us to contemplate our place within creation, and which draws us together and enables us to build bridges. So although each of us is committed to our own Faith, by developing this wisdom and understanding we are surely better able to show proper respect for the Faith of others; to grasp the fact that our neighbours’ beliefs are as precious to them as our beliefs are precious to us. Indeed, by showing this respect we demonstrate the maturity of our Faith which, collectively, is also a mark of the civilization of our Nations.

And yet we live at a time beset by more and more examples of Man’s selfishness and arrogance towards each other and the World around us. In such heavy seas we need a firm anchor to hold us in place; a means of acknowledging our frailty. And I sometimes wonder if the differences between us relate more to our interpretation of divine teaching than to the teaching itself.....

With all the evidence we now have of the damage we are causing to the natural world - the evidence of climate change; the far more rapidly melting Arctic ice-cap than originally predicted; the destruction of eco-systems such as the last remaining rainforests on which we all depend for our weather patterns and life giving rainfall; the elimination of species of flora and fauna and the brooding catastrophe of flood and storm - it is perhaps timely to question whether there is a direct link between these terrible events and the loss in mankind, throughout the industrialised world, of a sense of the sacred.

The industrialisation of life around the globe has disconnected us, to a terrifying degree, both from our traditional religions and the natural world. Such outright disconnection from the natural order disconnects us from our innate sense of the sacred. It dims our capacity to see with awe and wonder the miracle of Creation; it dulls our song of praise.

**Prince Charles**