# VALUES

Prince Charles is on a tour of the Middle East – he's met with leaders in Jordan to express solidarity with them, after the recent horrific killing of their pilot and has visited the Zaatari Refugee camp near the Syrian border – a home to 85,000 displaced people.

And he spoke at the weekend about his concerns at the increasing radicalising of young people in the UK and their desire to be a part of extremist organisations.

Charles has spoken too of the conflicts in the Middle East and I noticed that he carefully uses the expression *"in the name of religion"* when referring to the many groups involved in conflict.  In that way he is making a distinction between the faiths themselves, and those who use violence and terror, and who seek to try to justify this behaviour on religious grounds.

But I'm less sure of the use of the expression "*British*" when speaking about the values that he sees people abandoning to leave the UK to go and fight.
Because I can't help thinking that the values of tolerance and respect for others, and a refusal to resort to violence and brutality, have surely got to be values which are shared around the world by all people of goodwill.

My concern is that it taps into the idea that we in Britain have a monopoly on goodness and decency and fairness – and the notion that our values are in some way superior to other nations can be divisive.

I guess there's nothing wrong with many of the stereotypes attributed to Britain – a sense of decency and fair play, politeness, tolerance - and these are all things we can either pride ourselves on, or at least aspire to as goals of citizenship.

But the danger lies in attributing others with labels which are less complimentary, and not strictly accurate.

Surely the real hope for those of faith and no faith – is to aspire to end conflict and divisions whether tribal, ethnic, national or religious … and to encourage a belief in shared values of respect, diversity and the desire to live with others in peace.

In that context, what Prince Charles refers to as '*British'* values are really the core ideas that are at the heart of the religious and moral outlooks of all decent humanity – and they belong to all of us as a worldwide community.

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