

Can there be Hope where there is Fear?



Author:

Neil Hawkes, Values-Based Education
29th March 2017

www.neilhawkes.org
www.valuesbasededucation.com

Copyright 2017

Can There Be Hope when there is fear

I am currently in the USA, where I have been invited to speak at a Summit at James Madison University, which is seeking to understand and cultivate what is termed as the globally sustainable self.

With many other people I am deeply concerned about the global turmoil that is destabilising our world. As one delegate put it, 'It seems as though human kind is going mad!' We seem to be acting like lemmings about to rush over a cliff to our deaths. At a political, cultural and social level distress is clearly identifiable as the good of humanity and the world is set aside. I notice that the level of unrest is dramatically increasing, as people feel that they do not have a voice that can be heard. Whether it is a presidential election or a referendum, citizens of all persuasions seem discontent and have a tendency to vote from that basis. My observation is that when individuals feel a sustained awareness of peacelessness, then this is translated into their behaviour, leading to the polarisation of political, religious, cultural and social identity. Leaders who mirror or use this unrest to serve their political agenda rise to the fore - as Hitler did in the 1930's.

Here in the USA the media is consumed with life-limiting messages, which encourage fear and distrust. Humanity is calling out for positive, altruistic leadership. Where can this be found? James Madison, the founding father of the US Constitution, would find much in the current situation perplexing to say the least. I sat at lunch today with a woman whose husband is a superintendent of a school district in the mid-west. He is spending his time consumed with the unhappiness of the Latino population who fear deportation because of presidential rhetoric.

Although the problems seem intractable, I believe there is hope. Many people seem to be waking up and saying, 'enough is

enough'. The women's movement here in the US is an example. In the UK, many schools are becoming values-based schools, seeking to enable children to have a moral compass based on positive human values. Values-based Education (VbE) is a fast growing movement for transformational change. It encourages adults and children alike to have a meaning and purpose in their lives, acting with integrity.

I have the privilege of being invited to speak at the Education for the Soul Conference in London on the 19th October and my aim will be to raise spirits and create a picture of hope for educators and leaders. I will encourage them to let their voices be heard – the sustainability of our specie depends on it.