

Colors of the rainbow

HUMANIST SPEECH FOR INTERFAITH PRAYERS LUXEMBOURG, MAY 2024

Over the past year, a campaign was launched in my hometown of Utrecht, distributing free posters with the image of a peace dove and the text 'Peace Now'. Designer Max Kisman wants to use the striking black-and-white image to bring a little nuance to the world, which today is characterized by the threat of war, polarization and increasing tension in society. The idea is that a powerful positive image can positively connect people.



The poster campaign has spread like an oil slick across Utrecht and other cities in the Netherlands. People who feel powerless because of all the images in the news are expressing their feelings and their desire for a better world. In polarized discussions where only the extremes 'for' and 'against' seem to exist, the call for peace is a salutary alternative. And beautiful meetings and conversations also emerge from it.

Dialogue is important for a peaceful society and a united world in which we can continue to recognize each other as human beings. Whatever your origin, religion, social position or gender: despite all our differences, we are all human beings, living here and now in a sometimes inhospitable world that does not seem to be made for us. And only together can we make it livable for and with each other.

It is not only the world around us that we often experience as broken and without cohesion. We can also feel division and discord within ourselves. Sometimes a sudden event or a long-term dislocation causes you to lose direction and you no longer know exactly where you want to go in life. Or different conflicting desires and motives are competing within you and you feel confused. Your inner life is fragmented, so to speak. Actually, we are all a bit broken up inside. But perhaps there is a beauty in that. That is what this song by American singer Sara Bareilles is about:

Kaleidoscope Heart

Words & Music by
SARA BAREILLES

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 12/8 time signature. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 110. The score consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. Chords are indicated above the notes.

$\text{♩} = 110$ G D Em C G D
All the col ors of the rain bow Hid den 'neath my skin.

5 G D Em C G D Em
Hearts have col ors don't we all know. Red runs through our veins. Feel the fire burn in'

10 G Bm C G B Em
up. In spire me with blood of blue and green. I have hope. In

15 Eb C D G
side is not a heart but a ka lei do scope.

The human heart is not flawless; it suffers all kinds of holes, cracks and scratches throughout life. It can be healed, but you will always see the scars of those experiences. The message of this song is, that if you look through all the little broken pieces of your heart, of your inner self, you can still somehow see something beautiful and magical. Like the wonderfully colorful connected patterns of a kaleidoscopic picture.

Yesterday we were running with a large number of teams and individual runners from different countries and from different religions, each with our own origins and our own story. Together, we also formed a multicolored and kaleidoscopic whole. But that running didn't happen by itself. It took preparation in the form of training and organization. It required effort and endurance, individual motivation and team spirit. We merged into the greater whole of runners and contributed our stone to the Luxembourg Marathon. And at the same time we carried our message: 'run for a united world'.

That united world will not happen by itself. We will have to make constant efforts for it, even after the marathon. But if you want to see it, you can recognize the richness of many colors in our world. Let us continue to invite each other and others to make a beautiful and magical kaleidoscopic whole out of it together.

And let us pray we will meet each other next year at this Interfaith event again, in peace.

Wouter Kuijlmán,
Humanist chaplain