

Choosing connection

Beloved person,

As we write this weekly letter, our thoughts return to the drama that unfolded in Israel two years ago and quickly and violently spread to Gaza. The situation there remains painful and hopeless, and peace seems further away than ever. How will people, who are embroiled in conflict, ever find their way back to each other? How can enmity ever turn into closeness again? We can hardly find words for something so big.

What happens there is relatively far away. But don't we all carry seeds of war and peace within us? When feelings of anger or mistrust arise, we have a choice: do we hold on to those feelings and create distance, or do we focus on simple trust and seek connection? When we nurture and radiate this trust, but also literally express it to each other, we create space for a new world. What we believe, how we think, speak and act matters. Perhaps we recognise this: that a seemingly small gesture of love can suddenly make a big difference.

The great story of love has been told for centuries. It is our foundation, our inspiration and our strength. From that foundation, we draw courage from the past and work towards a future in which love and peace will be a reality. Every gesture of love is a seed for peace: sending a friendly message, for example, putting an arm around someone's shoulder, or listening attentively without immediately responding.

Living together in peace requires great deeds and small acts of courage: looking honestly at what separates us from others. Not hardening our vulnerability into judgement but instead opening it up to meeting; remembering that love is the foundation of our existence. And perhaps that is a continuous exercise for each of us: how do you remain open, even when you have been hurt?

How valuable it is to create an atmosphere of love and understanding in a community, and to consciously choose what is truly valuable. We often need each other to come to terms with ourselves or with others, to do what we can – surrounded by people who dare to hold up a mirror to us and who are there for us, especially when things get difficult. In that connection, trust grows and change becomes possible. We also learn to reconcile ourselves with what is undesirable, unchangeable or inevitable.

Working towards reconciliation takes a long time and is never “finished”. We are rooted in a tradition of the communion – formerly known as Reconciliation. There, feelings of love are evoked and inspiration is found to face the unknown. If we do not allow ourselves to be discouraged, we can trust that renewal will grow from this.

And then there's this...

If you believed in people who let you down:
keep believing anyway.

If you hoped for a miracle that didn't happen:
keep going and keep hoping.

If you wanted to leave a trail of love that was trampled on:
then continue with love.

If you have dreamed and then awakened:
then continue dreaming until morning!¹

That is our task for today: not to wait for world peace, but to make a start ourselves. By listening without judgement. By not postponing forgiveness wherever possible. By seeing the humanity in others, however difficult that may sometimes be. That is how we keep love alive. And every time we choose connection over separation, the world becomes a little bit more beautiful. Then peace is no longer a distant dream, but a path that begins within ourselves – and that we walk together.

With a loving greeting,

sister Christa de Wit and brother Bert Wiegman



¹*And then there's this*, Choir song 44 (Freely translated)