Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche

Ich bete für meine Kirche 2014

September 14 to 20

Kinder- und Jugendwerk Süd
JugendAktionsTage (JAT) (YouthActionDays)

About that time, while the number of disciples continues to increase, a complaint arose. Greek-speaking disciples accused the Aramaic-speaking disciples because their widows were being overlooked in the daily food service. (Acts 6,1)

Attention to Differences

A solid conflict in the first Christian congregation! Caused by cultural and language differences: The locals speak Aramaic, the migrants speak Greek. Different languages mean different cultures. The conflict indicates a division in the congregation. It seems that in this first congregation in Jerusalem the needs of the native group were taken care of while the migrants were not noticed.

And it is probably more than that. Barriers of language and culture can be bigger even in Christian groups than is often admitted. The common faith in Jesus Christ does not automatically solve conflicts.

The responsible leaders of the congregation in Jerusalem ("the Twelve") come to a surprising solution: They commission leaders with practical life experience, they are familiar with the Greek culture, have good reputations, and are, of course, fluent in the Greek language. Obviously this practical solution of the problem worked, because the original conflict is never reported again.

Most interesting is the way of thinking of "the Twelve". Their first concern is that the preaching of the Gospel must not be neglected due to the conflict. Therefore, the leaders commissioned for the Greek group must also be well grounded in God's spirit. The strength of the congregation is the preaching of Gospel and the influence of God's spirit on everybody.

The Gospel does not automatically eliminate differences. But it improves the attentiveness for diversities between people and leads to considerate and even loving cooperation. It facilitates a cultural and linguistic appreciation for one another.

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I GIVE THANKS

- For the diversity we encounter in different cultures.
- For the power of the Gospel that brings people together in their faith in Jesus Christ.
- For the possibility to speak fearless in our country to other people about God's love.
- For all the young people who speak about their faith during JAT with much creativity and energy.
- For people who support our work financially and in their prayers.

MY PRAYER IS

- That we treat people of other cultures with respect and appreciation.
- That we never think in cultural "stereotypes" but will always see the individual person and his or her own story.
- That we will always first listen attentively and then find the right words and deeds to help the other to come into contact with God's love.

The JugendAktionsTage (JAT) / YouthActionDays / is a section of the mission activities of the Children and Youth Mission South of the EmK. Every year 350 to 500 youngsters and young adults take part in the JAT-weeks conducted in cooperation with local congregations.

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