



European Forum of Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual and Transgender
Christian Groups



Babel or Pentacost? - Meditation

Written by Ineke

During the annual conference in 2015 in Merville, France an Ecumenical Celebration took place on Sunday evening May 24. The first reading was Genesis 11: 1-9 about the Tower of Babel. It was read in different languages at the same time. The second reading was Acts of Apostles 8: 26-40 about Philip speaking to the Ethiopian eunuch. Ineke Lautenbach held a short meditation.

Could you understand a word of what was read in the first reading? I couldn't. But it was about the Tower of Babel, as you may have read in the booklet.

During this reading, and in the past few days, we felt the confusion, the discomfort of not understanding each other. We all know it takes patience and an open mind to communicate with each other, having so many different languages around. But it is possible to have a chat, to share ideas and to have fun across the borders of this *Babylonian Confusion*. As we have experienced these last few days.

But it's not only language that's standing between us. To be able to understand each other, we need to understand ourselves, our own life. As we just discussed, that's not always easy. But we can help each other. Coming from different countries, churches, beliefs, traditions, we can give someone else a new perspective. Such a new view may lead to better understanding ourselves and others.

And as we sit here, we are a group with an enormous gender-variety. We are a true rainbow family! This blesses us with even more insights in how life can be. Today we find each other, here in this chapel, united in the eternal Light from above.

That's what the second reading is about. The Ethiopian eunuch has been to Jerusalem to worship. According to the rules stated in Deuteronomy he would have been excluded from the temple. Yes, he is an important man, a servant of the queen of Ethiopia. We would say he's the minister of finance. But he is also a foreigner and he is a eunuch, a castrated man. Although we speak about him as *he*, as male, he doesn't fit into the gender standards of male and female.

Philip hears him reading out loud from Isaiah and starts talking to him. From what he is reading, Philip tells him about Jesus. Philip understands that the message of Jesus reaches out to everyone. There are no rules that exclude anyone on whatever basis. Philip knows the passages in the scriptures that speak about including everyone.

Together they might come to read Isaiah chapter 56, close to the passage that the Ethiopian eunuch has already read. Isaiah explicitly mentions foreigners and eunuchs, although in some translations it says: “men who are unable to become fathers”.

We also know the message from the letter of Paul to the Galatians that was our theme of the conference in Amsterdam:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

This Ethiopian eunuch gets the message. When they come across some water, he says: “What is keeping me from being baptized?”. Well, nothing really. And so it is done right away.

So let’s take that message with us when we’re going home, tomorrow. Whatever people think, say, do about us, against us, nothing is keeping us from the eternal Light from above. In that Light we will stick together, we hold each other in our arms, in our hearts, in our prayers.