

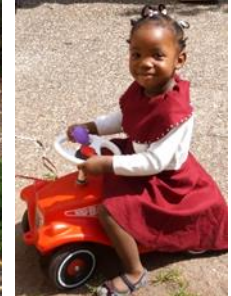
**Yearly Report 2019**  
**Akebulan- (Global Mission) e.V.**



**Dear Friends of Akebulan,**



how are you? In 2018, you didn't receive a report from us. This was the case because as we told you before, Pastor Peter and Steffi went to Hermanssburg for one year so that Peter could study fulltime to do his Master degree in Intercultural Theology. He also had to travel to Göttingen for more lectures. The University of Applied Sciences for Intercultural Theology in Hermanssburg is connected with the University of Göttingen, and the Master studies are organized there. In addition to his academical training, Peter continued his halftime job as ecumenical youth worker for „ELM“ (Evang.- Luther. Missionswerk Niedersachsen). He held 1-4 days seminars for confirmands in the whole federal state. Either the groups came to Hermanssburg, or Peter had to travel to their diverse small towns. The topics circled around the worldwide church and Fairtrade. To combine fulltime studies, halftime work plus travelling for both was a challenge, as you can imagine. Steffi was allowed to participate as guest listener. She also had a work as private nanny and supported Peter here and there. When in September/ October we came back, Peter had to begin with his Master thesis research. In addition, his work at ELM continued until the second half of November. All this was demanding so that only at the end of the year he was able to fully engage himself in our Akebulan church work, again. At the same time, our co-pastors Evangelist Ben Akpalu und Pastor Alex Bierhals desperately needed to be relieved. Both are working fulltime and do furthermore care for their families with four and five children. Moreover, some of our staff had worn out themselves. Our sisters Susanne and Ursula, for example, who had temporarily helped out, now again needed their time and strength for work and engagement in other churches.



Thus, when the year 2018 ended, the situation in Akebulan appeared rather calm and a little instable. We celebrated Christmas and held our traditional half prayer night at New Year's Eve. We prayed and very consciously dedicated the future of the church into the hands of God. We didn't know whether the Lord would enable us to continue the work. What came next was a big surprise for us: God seemed to bring a fresh breeze into our small congregation! New members joined us, "old faces" showed up, again. Mainly, these people originally come from Kenya. Since our dear Sister Irene had invited many of them, we jokingly called this renewal "Sister Irene's Evangelism". Especially our brothers Jimmis and Eli-John as well as our Sister Cristina engage themselves much and this way bless us with their gifts in preaching and worship. Without new births, only because of this joining and rejoining, the number of our children has raised to 21. From very small to almost grownup, every age is present. We only have a half room for our Sunday school, which especially in winter is not so easy. But of course, we are very grateful for every single child in our midst! And the children, too, are very happy to meet their fellows and play together...



I will continue a little chronologically: In January, Peter and Steffi travelled to Göttingen, where Peter had some exams. From there, we went further to Spangenberg nearby Kassel. There, we participated in a 2 days' workshop for the development of a German- wide "Eye-level"- project that aims to help German and immigrant churches to approach one another, increase their relationships and open up for more interculturality in their midst. Later during the year, several teams met for further progress of the project, of which one Peter was a part. For example, they applied for funds. This year on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of January, another workshop took place in Spangenberg, which was very lively and diverse. In Kassel in 2019, we were welcomed to a joyful intercultural New Year celebration of Pastor Steve's church who also invited Peter to preach and this year, we were able to take part in their prayer meeting.



Again in January 2019, we held our first Inclusion- Gospelworkshop of the year. (This work is a continuous cooperation with Pastor Daniela Nischik and the Blind People's Service of Berlin.) Thanks to a third donation of Aktion Mensch e.V. together with members from our church, we had been able to go to Lobetal nearby Bernau for a practicing weekend. There, Sis. Christine taught us two Kenyan songs. As a special challenge, we planned to

present one of these songs together with the professional pan-African Gospel choir Akwaba e.V. This should take place when as a highlight of the project; we invited them to give a concert at the State Blind People's Service ABSV as appreciation because we still can use their rooms free of charge during our practices. Besides: As a church, we still cooperate with Akwaba choir. Two of our members, our sisters Christine and Wachuka, are part of it, and since the end of 2018, they use our church rooms for their practices on Saturday evenings.



On the same day as our Gospel workshop in the building of a Baptist Church in Schöneberg, the second "Prayerday One" of Together for Berlin e.V. (GfB) took place. It was the first time for us to participate, and we found it very affecting to see hundreds of Christians from about 90 diverse denominations and cultural backgrounds joining in worship, in listening to the Word of God, fellowship with one another and inviting each other to try different prayer methods. This year, again, both events took place after another, and we found this prayerday very inspiring, too.



In February together with his wife, the leader of the above mentioned Eye-level-project Reinhold Krebs came to Berlin and visited us in our church. In March we had the pleasure to dedicate Adrian to the Lord and celebrate together his 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

He and Benji who also celebrated his birthday are two of the above mentioned children who have joined our church during the year together with their parents. Our ecumenical networking brought us a reunion with our group "Csi" (To be a Christian inter-culturally). The workshop with young people, which we announced in our last report for 2018; unfortunately, couldn't be realized. After a long period of preparations, the date last minute had to be cancelled because of a huge wedding where especially young people from many African churches had been invited to. For some reasons, it was not possible to pick up the thread. This setback caused the group to think over our goals and to consider anew whom we can reach with our ideas.



In April and May, Peter had exams in Göttingen, again, and had to concentrate on finishing his Master thesis. At Easter, our friend Pastor John Taiwo visited us with his family and preached in Akebulan. Csi organized another encounter among members of different churches; this time visiting Centre Chrétien Agape e.V. of Pastor Okito. In Akebulan,

Cristina and Peter O. jointly celebrated their birthdays. It was a beautiful, sunny spring day, so we could enjoy fellowship in our garden and eating Barbeque. The last was not an "ordinary" one, and it was also not only with one but two large American grills (one borrowed). The meat was not only as much as one expects at such an occasion around here, but it was what we jokingly called an "XXL Kenyan Barbeque" with a whole lamb being roasted in good six hours- wow! Again in May, our dear Brother Juan who during the first years of Akebulan engaged himself much in supporting our then new project, got married in Tübingen. The year before, he had visited our church and introduced his obviously very tender- hearted fiancée Irina. God rewards those who patiently wait for him to answer their prayers!



The month June came with several highlights: First, our above mentioned concert with Akwaba e.V. in the ABSV rooms came on. We started with a coffee- time. Then the Gospel choir gave the first part of their performance; with rousing rhythms and magnificent sounds as always! During our regular workshops, our inclusion choir had continued preparing for this day. In the midst of the concert, Akwaba left the stage so that we could sing our first Kenyan song under Sis. Christine's conduct and with strong support of our Kenyan church members. Especially our sisters Wachuka, Irene and Mary were of help because they had also practiced with us in Lobetal, before. Our children surprised and joined, us, too, which had a special effect in this setting where mostly elderly people gather, usually. For our second song, Akwaba joined us. One can say that we rocked the hall! Our guests were excited, and our inclusion choir members were happy and proud about what we had accomplished.

On Whit Monday, we again took actively part in the ecumenical service in our neighbourhood. Their new reverend comes from Nigeria. As always, it was a joyful celebration with a lively fellowship at the refreshment. Shortly before the deadline at the end of the

month, Pastor Peter was able to submit his Master thesis, which we were very grateful for. He had researched and written about the above mentioned modern ecumenical network Together for Berlin e.V. His focus was on their contributing to an increased cooperation of Christians with different cultural backgrounds in our city Berlin. Now, a great deal of work lay behind him, and he was recompensed with a high grade as well as the fulfilment of a long lasting dream: From the beginning of February on, Peter will work as a religious teacher in a Montessori secondary school.



At the very end of the month as every year around the time, APPA e.V. (African Pentecostal Pastors' Association) held their awakening conference at "Südstern Church". We are grateful for this long lasting special cooperation that connects many African Christians and churches and lays the ground for supporting one another in many ways.



The month July brought us a mixture of joy and suffering: Our dear Brother Jack died suddenly during his journey to Nigeria, where he had gone with his very close friend Bro Flavor. Some years ago, Pastor Peter had baptized the two, together. We mourned with the widow and his children. What was delightful was the wedding of two fellow students of Peter; Philipp und Jessica. This was a particular joy for us since Philipp is the elder brother of Jacob. The last had come to our church with their father Lere several years ago. Unfortunately, we witnessed the father falling very sick and dying tragically. For the family, this was quite a shock, and we tried to be accompany and counsel them as well as possible. Now they were able to celebrate this delightful occasion, and we thank God for it!



One of our Akebulan founding members was Clementino from Cameroon. From Germany, he went to France to study pharmacy, and from there he moved to England to continue with his PhD. His father, too, had died when he was still very

young, and Pastor Peter had become a spiritual father for him. This was why he invited us for his inauguration ceremony. We felt very delighted and honoured. Sadly, Peter couldn't follow the invitation because the time for applying for a visa was too short. This was why Steffi and Phinissia went there alone, which was an exciting festivity and a nice opportunity for us to do sightseeing in London! In August, Together for Berlin e.V. celebrated a summer party. With our Inclusion- Gospelchoir and some accompanying members of our church, we made an excursion to Köpenick to ride pedalo boats. The idea had come

from two choir members who also helped organize it. It was a sunny day, and we had a lot of fun... As every year, the Berlin pastors of our Mülheimer umbrella organization first came together for their regular meeting and afterwards had dinner with their wives. This fellowship is always very uplifting for us.



In September, we celebrated the church jubilee of the APPA Pastor Frank Sarfo's „Trust in Faith Gospel Mission e.V.“ Pastor Peter had been invited to preach. The month October brought us the so-called “Hope”- gala of Pastor Joshua Lupemba's church and the big “Unison”- Event in the church rooms of “Gemeinde auf dem Weg” in Tegel, which had been organized ecumenically by Catholic charismatics. All celebrations were very inspiring. At the end of the month until the beginning of November, Peter together with Pastor Okito and Andrea Meyerhoff from GfB was able to go to a conference of the German Evangelical Alliance in Hannover. The following Sunday, Pastor Daniela Nischik visited our church to give a report about the situation of the Curdish people whom she tries to help, and we collected a special offering for her projects. Pastor Okito celebrated his ordination, and we held our fifth and last Gospel workshop of the year. Pastor Peter, again, started working as lector of Together for Africa e.V. and was sent to do some school projects with a honorarium. Again together with Pastor Okito, he was invited by the EKBO (Evangelical Church of Berlin- Oberschlesische Lausitz) to speak about intercultural communication at a seminar for vicars.



In December, Peter und Steffi were invited by Dr. Andreas Goetze to take part in an interreligious Advent celebration of the Berlin Bishop Stäblein, which we found very exciting. We also went to a symposium of the Göttingen University on occasion of their 10 years jubilee of Intercul-

tural Theology. Here as well as at a pastoral college in Brandenburg where, again, he had been invited by Dr. Goetze, Peter was asked to hold a speech. In Akebulan, we baked Christmas cookies with the children and memorized a rap about the Christmas story of which each old enough child learned one or two parts. At our Christmas family service, the children proudly presented it. We had a very beautiful celebration with a blessed fellowship and delicious international food after the service as well as even some spontaneous live music with dancing in the end. For the first time, we cancelled our year-end prayer half night. We decided to do so because of the extremely increased fireworks, which include many cheaply produced and dangerous pyrotechnics. Instead, we held a special service in January with lively testimonies of what we experienced with God during 2019, and at our yearly membership meeting, we decided to restart our regular prayer meetings. These, for the beginning, will now come on once in a month at Wednesday evenings.

We are very grateful for 2019 with all the special blessings that God surprised and strengthened us with. The just mentioned testimonies complemented that also privately; our members had received very much grace from the Lord. After our membership meeting,

Bro Flavor performed a wedding proposal for his beloved Christine. They already have had a traditional wedding in his homeland Nigeria, and we blessed their bond in our church in 2018 when we also dedicated their twins to the Lord. Now we will have the honour to celebrate our first wedding in Akebulan, and we are very excited about this. God is good!



Again, our inclusion choir has decided to undertake another challenge in 2020, which is our first own small concert. It will come on at the end of November when the "Forum Perspectives for the Handicapped" of the German Evangelical Alliance will hold their yearly conference in Berlin. Concerning this work, we are especially grateful for Pastor Nischik's report at the Akwaba concert in June. She mentioned that our members regularly express their joy about our singing and fellowship, which give them new motivation for their difficult everyday life.

As always, we give thanks to all members of Akebulan and to our guest preacher Pastor Ralph Webster for their faithfulness and engaged cooperation in all areas including the technique, administration of finances, kitchen, cleaning and gardening. We give thanks to Pastor Alex Bierhals for so many years of friendship and his faithful anointed ministry in our midst as co-pastor, counsellor and worship leader. We bless him and his family as well as his further ministry at Jerusalem Church and we are looking forward to his or their visit in our midst at any time. In addition in friendship, we bless our beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord Charles and Vida with their children, Ines und Peter O. to go in peace to where God is leading them, and we express our gratitude for their engagement in our midst bringing in their special gifts.



Again as always, we give thanks to our networking partners and our umbrella organisation Mülheimer Verband e.V. for the ongoing positive collaboration, to Aktion Mensch e.V. for their third sponsorship of our inclusion choir projects, to all our sponsors for their friendly backing, to Michael Fleischer for his professional administrative help, to our landlord Dr. Knappe for the good tenancy and to him and Brother Karlheinz for the cooperative roof repairing and last, but not least, to everybody who supports us in prayer, as well as to our good God for His mercies and manifold blessings!



**We wish all of you a blessed 2020!**  
**Yours sincerely; Peter and Steffi Arthur**  
**and Akebulan e.V.**

**Links:**

<http://www.muelheimer-verband.de>

<https://www.aktion-mensch.de>

<http://www.blindendienst-berlin.de>

<http://www.absv.de>

[http://www.akwaba-gospelchor.com/index\\_eng.html](http://www.akwaba-gospelchor.com/index_eng.html)

<https://www.gfberlin.de/startseite>

<http://www.fh-hermannsburg.de>

<http://www.ssip-web.de>

<http://www.gemeinsam-fuer-afrika.de>

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