

Yearly Report 2020
Akebulan- (Global Mission) e.V.



Dear Friends of Akebulan,



our first question about your wellbeing during the last year is overshadowed, this time. 2020 was imprinted by COVID-19, and this caused many challenges to everybody. Noone was prepared for this. Nevertheless, it is our hope and our prayer that the harm was not too bad, and that you were and are able to experience God's concrete presence and help, in it all!

What did this unusual year bring to our church? How were we able to proceed our work under such circumstances? At first, we had a peaceful start. For the second time, Peter and Steffi travelled to a strategic workshop of the "Church(es) on Eye-level"- project in Spangenberg. In the meantime, they have received very generous sponsorships. This way, at summer time, a film team could be engaged to come and record our work to present it on their digital "Map of Encouragement". It is now about being uploaded. Together with the subproject "Global Local", we had a zoom conference in November. This year, the two of us will work together with their editorial team to write texts that can be chosen in different modules, later.



In January, Together for Berlin e.V. organized another "Prayerday One"- event with a lot of Christians and churches. We were happy to go there, and we enjoyed the unity in diversity as well as meeting lovely brothers and sisters in the faith. This year, the event was aired as livestream from Berliner Dom, where Akwaba was invited to sing. Afterwards, prayer groups were formed via zoom.



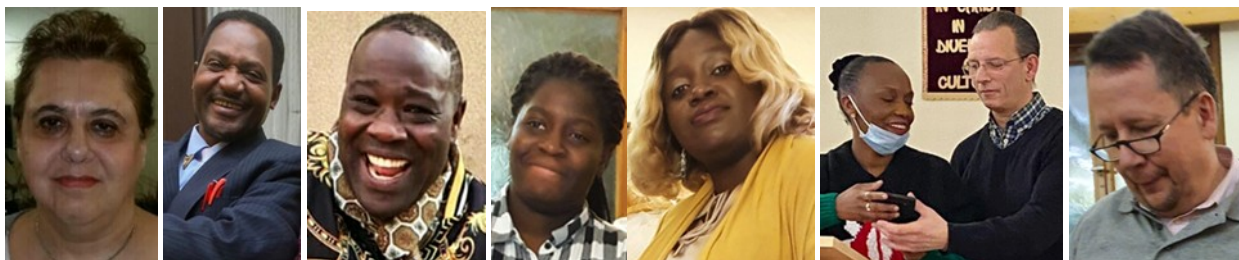
In January and February, we were able to meet with our inclusion Gospel choir for two workshops. For the first time, we used the Stadtmission church rooms where the Evangelical Blind People's Service in Berlin have their basis. It proofed to be a functional alternative for this purpose. At first, this was necessary because the ABSV (General Association for

Blind and Partially Sighted People) cook was not available. Later during the year, the ABSV closed down for a very long time, also after the first lockdown. In our last report, we announced our plan to prepare a short concert for a conference of the "Forum Perspectives for the Handicapped" of the German Evangelical Alliance. This should have come on in November in Berlin, but because of COVID-19, it had to be cancelled. Since singing in groups was largely difficult or forbidden, we couldn't have practised enough, anyway.



In February as also mentioned in our last report, Peter was able to start his work as religious teacher at a Montessori- High-school, which he enjoys very much. He could be introduced by his predecessor. The Evangelical pedagogical training for religious teachers is also very enlightening for him. We are very grateful for this opportunity which brings the fulfillment of a longlasting dream for Peter. Despite COVID-19 with all its inconveniences and impossibilities, he could continue with both. This was not so easy, but manageable.

Again in February, we held a prayer meeting. Our women gathered on one Sunday to discuss plans for the year. On the 19th January, we had had our yearly membership meeting. Unfortunately because of the pandemic, most plans could not be realized.



At the beginning of March, Peter and Steffi finished a contribution to a book with concepts for special services celebrating the Lord's Supper. Prof. Drea Fröchtling from Hermannsburg had invited us to join the project. Our concept is for an intercultural service. At the moment, the process has come to the printing, and hopefully, the publishing will be this March. The same month before the first lockdown, we were able to meet with the group Csi (To be a Christian interculturallly). Dr. Triebel announced that he had decided to withdraw. Sadly, despite our pleas to think this over, he did so during the year. This means a great loss for the group. Together with Klaus Hügele and others, Dr. Triebel had started the work many years ago, when the late Rev. Dr. Roswith Gerloff had come up with the idea. His statements as a scientist as well as president of the Social Scientist Study Circle for Intercultural Perspectives (SSIP e.V.), had always been very enlightening. Andrea Meyerhoff has joined us since 2019. This, we are very grateful for. She brings in ideas and experience from her work at Together for Berlin e.V.



During the first lockdown when we had to stop our services, in Akebulan, we kept in contact via telephone. Peter wrote down his preachings in English, Steffi translated them into German, and as PDF, we sent it via E-Mail and Whatsapp as well as put it on our website and on Facebook. I, Steffi, also helped one girl with her homeschooling. When in May, we were allowed to meet, again, we developped our hygiene concept. During the following months, we increased and adjusted it to

the changing regulations. In this procedure, it was helpful that Bro Detlef as a medical doctor was able to buy disinfectant and holders for the liquid, soap and paper towels. Together with Bro Karlheinz, they installed them. Before restarting our services, we met for a spring-cleaning.



Via zoom, spiritual leaders from Berlin and its surrounding areas united in prayers. At the following appointments, unfortunately, we couldn't make it; but in December we were able to join them, again. COVID-19 has caused a lot of suffering, but we also see good things developing. Technical resources are used more effectively, creative new ideas are being brought up, and in parts, people come closer inwardly.

Concerning the yearly Ecumene in our church neighbourhood on Pentecost Monday, we also became creative. With the organizing group, we decided to form a human chain "from door to door" on that day. This meant, everybody first met in their churches, then we stepped outside. On the foot-walk, we positioned ourselves with enough distance to each other according to the COVID-19 regulations. The happening had been officially applied for, so the police was there to watch. Sis Christine and I, Steffi, started singing and walking forward. When we reached the end of our Akebulan chain, they followed us until reaching the next line formed by the members of our Catholic neighbors "Allerheiligen". At the end, we also joined the last chain of the Lutheran Gnade-Christi-Church. After another, we walked into their huge church garden where we stopped in a circle for a devotion. At the end before leaving, every participant walked with distance along the round. This way, at least everybody could greet one another shortly.

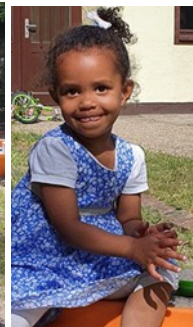


In July, Peter and Steffi were able to undertake a short journey to Hermannsburg, where we relaxed and met some "old fellows". In August, the above mentioned video filming for the "Map of Encouragement" came on. We were blessed with a sunny weather when we once more undertook an outing to Britzer Garden with our church and our inclusion Gospel choir. With the last because of the COVID-19 restrictions, we had not been able to see ourselves since February. Inside the park, we found a place under trees where we sat down in a circle with enough distance to picnic and sing together. Everybody enjoyed this very much! The next day, the film team came to our church, too. We give many thanks to Konrad Schmid and Dustin for their professional work!





In September before the next lockdown, we were able to hold one more workshop with distance and ventilation. In December, Pastor Daniela Nischik from the Evangelical Blind People's Service endeavored much to realize four instead of one advent celebrations with hygiene concept! We were blessed to take part in one of it.

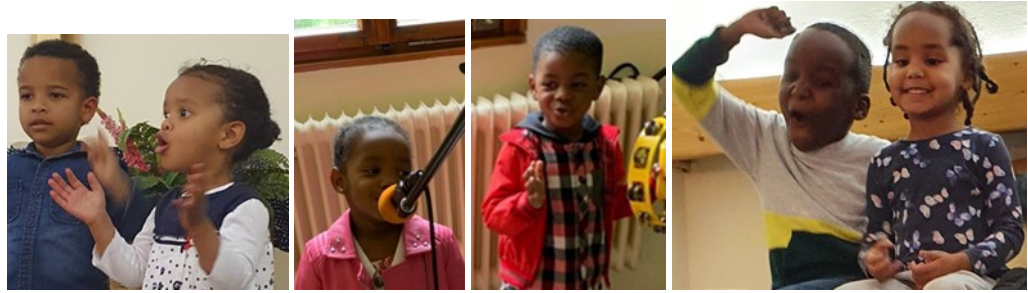


In September, three of our Akebulan children, Jermain, King and Kylie from Bro Flavor and Sis Christine got baptized at a big celebration in the garden of the Lutheran St. Johannis- Church in Moabit. Since we only dedicate children to the Lord and their school demands their baptism, we as church were guests, here. Because of the hygiene regulations, Peter was allowed to lay his hands on the infants. All children in our church bring us so much joy!



In October, we lost a young member of our church who had suffered from a deadly cancer. Bro Kevin came from Kenya where he had been a successful professional soccer player. He had come to Germany for medical treatment. Before the first lockdown, he felt better and was able to visit his family back in Kenya. This was practically made possible through the intervention of the Africa Center where we had introduced him. Unfortunately after the journey, his condition worsened, again. His brother who lives here, stayed with Kevin til the end. Peter pastored him, and several members from our church visited him in the hospital as well as in the hospice. Another case of untimely death happened at the end of the year when Sis Mariam from Sierra Leone who had been in our church for several years, also died from a cancer. Another sister who had been with us during the same time, Anazia from Nigeria, had befriended herself with Mariam. She accompanied her as much as possible. It is very hurtful to see young people die! Nevertheless, through our faith, we receive comfort that death is not the end of all. We

are redeemed by Christ, and we expect a new life that is free from pain and suffering in the loving presence of our Lord. There, we will all meet, again.



We are grateful for all engagement and support of any kind within our fellowship as well as from outside. Especially, we give thanks to Bro Karlheinz for his faithful service and his professional housekeeping. In addition, we give thanks to Dr. Knappe for the friendly tenancy. Again, we are grateful for all above mentioned cooperations and networking plus our umbrella organization Mülheimer Verband FEG e.V. and the African Pentecostal Pastors' Association in Berlin and Brandenburg APPA e.V. Because of the pandemic, the last had to cancel their yearly revival conference in 2020. The again stricter regulations demand that we stop our services, again. Nevertheless, we are grateful for everything that is possible. We hope to be able to effectively accompany our members during the crisis. Any form of togetherness that we can realize strengthens and encourages us all. It is our prayer that God will continue to keep and carry us all during these hard times, and it is our hope that after the pandemic, we will find that more good than bad things have developed out of it.



*God's blessings to all of you in 2021!
Heartedly, yours Peter and Steffi Arthur
and Akebulan e.V.*

Links:

<http://www.muelheimer-verband.de>
<http://www.blindendienst-berlin.de>
<http://www.absv.de>
<https://www.gfbberlin.de/startseite>

http://www.akwaba-gospelchor.com/index_ger.html
<https://landkarte-der-ermutigung.de/>
<https://www.ssip-web.de>
<http://www.afrika-center-berlin.com/>

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