

Yearly Report of 2021 Akebulan- (Global Mission) e.V.



Dear Friends of Akebulan,



how was 2021 for you? It is our hope and prayer that the pandemic with its direct effects plus diverse side-effects does not put too much load on you. We also pray that despite it is still open-ended by the grace of God, you can be confident and keep your inner peace...

What brought 2021 to Akebulan? In January, we first continued with our services in physical presence. From the end of the month until Pentecost Sunday, we offered services and Sunday school as well as for a time prayer meetings on Wednesdays via zoom. Rather a small circle of members participated which might have been caused by technical problems and also because it is definitely not the same as coming together physically...



Our inclusion Gospel choir, too, couldn't meet during this time of lockdown and other restrictions. Singing in closed rooms was different, and coming together with people fighting pre-existing illnesses, as well. This was why we felt very relieved when it was possible to receive the vaccination and most of the choir members were willing to accept it. (At this point, it is important to us to stress that we explicitly refrain from any judgement of this very personal decision of people for or against the COVID-19-vaccinations!) At summer time, we again met with the choir at Britzer Garden where we gathered on the grass, had a picnic and sang some songs. Everybody was very happy to finally be able to come and sing together, again! Shortly before this outing plus one time in autumn, we could meet for two of our workshops at our church. The first time we could use our garden, and the second time we sang inside with the obligatory distance and airing. This year, we finally could plan, again, to meet at ABSV, which we are very grateful for. We

will be allowed to use the hall where we have a lot of space and huge doors that can be opened for ventilation.



Now I continue a bit more chronologically: As mentioned in our last report in January, Together for Berlin e.V. (GfB) organised another Prayer Day One. It was hybrid with a limited number of participants at Berliner Dom plus the opportunity to connect via zoom. This year, the concept was the same. The two of us, Peter and Steffi, unfortunately couldn't be a part because we travelled to Hannover. It was a very sad occasion since the lovely and engaged professor of the FIT Hermansburg Drea Fröchtling had died shortly before Christmas after long-time sickness. We had befriended with her and took part at different projects, together. The last was the book with different ideas and concepts for diverse inclusion Lord Supper services which we mentioned in our last report. It was printed at the beginning of the year (see below). Drea always inspired and encouraged us even though her own strength was fading. We will surely miss her very much!



At the yearly strategic workshop of Church on Eye-Level, we also couldn't participate. Nevertheless, during 2021 we were glad to help the editorial team of the subproject Global Local to write modules for their 40 days process of intercultural encounters for churches and groups. (This can be shortened if wished.) An important part of the modules are daily devotions which the team decided should be written by many diverse people. We give thanks to Aneta Oladeji, Esther Srinivasan, Tracy Peukert, Pastors Mr. and Mrs Aidoo, Bismarck, Nimo and Stephen Duodu for their engagement of writing very lively, inspiring impulses! If some of you would like to take part or knows someone for whom it might be of interest, please feel free to contact us and/ or visit the website (link at the end of the report)... At the end of the year, we had to quit the editorial part of the cooperation. Peter had passed his exam and has become a state recognized religious teacher. This, we are very grateful for. Already at the beginning of the school year, he had been able to increase his teaching lessons, which is possible now, again. He also has started to teach at the former elementary school of our daughter Phinissia. Peter is very glad to do this work; yet, it is also demanding and taking strength. I, Steffi, assist Peter with creating teaching materials plus other writing work.

A lot of other meetings had to be conducted digitally due to the pandemic: The group Csi (To be a Christian interculturally) severally met this way and is now planning a larger meeting in physical presence with other people who engage themselves in intercultural church work and projects. The group itself is about to dissolve. Before, we try to figure out opportunities of networking, cooperating and/ or creating new projects with other activists. Himmelsfels e.V. offered zoom- meetings for their network partners to encourage and pray for one another. They even founded a support fund to help small churches in times of the lockdown. We are very grateful for their aid for Akebulan during these difficult times! Also, the African Pentecostal Pastors' Association (APPA) e.V. met digitally, if necessary. In June, their yearly revival conference with the motto "God of All Possibilities" could be executed hybrid. The guest preacher Pastor Albert Dadson came from Ghana. He encouraged the participants to put their trust in God. Pastor Olu organized a common worship team with a choir who practised diligently and later ministered to us very beautifully... Another zoom prayer meetings were held, again, by Together for Berlin e.V. with church and other Christian leaders. The FIT, too, invited for zoom gatherings.



After all this zoom which of course we are grateful for and which has its advantages, we were very grateful when more meetings in physical presence were possible, again. Before the APPA- conference in May, we were able to both plan and operate our yearly ecumenic Pentecost gathering in our church neighbourhood, analogue. As in 2020, we walked from "door to door" with singing, forming a human chain and in the end, had a devotion in the huge garden of the Lutheran Gnade-Christi-Kirche. The motto related to 1st Corinthians 13:13: "Trust grows, hope blossoms, and love remains". At this occasion, we finally saw ourselves as Akebulan members from face to face, again, and from this time on, continued our services normally. What a relief, though the participation remained very low for some more time...



Our Sister Cristina already is a full-time social worker. Still, she is schooling to become a learned deaconess which seems to be very demanding. In May, she held a devotion at Johannesstift which was well recognized. We are amazed how she is managing and wish her God's grace for this process!

Pastor Joshua Lupemba with whom we are cooperating, was able to move with his very young congregation into their own house with a garden. They presented it together with the upgraded visions for their work at an opening party with hygiene concept. We pray God's blessings over their ambitioned, diverse projects that are not only dedicated to spiritually minister and foster young people, but also include practical social aid.

In June, the Berlin and Brandenburg church leaders and pastors of our umbrella organization Mülheimer Verband FEG e.V. traditionally met for their regular cooperation plus afterwards sharing dinner with their wives. This time, we met in a beautiful garden and again had a blessed fellowship with interesting conversations.

In July during summer holidays, we organized a children's Bible Day in Akebulan under the motto "To trust Jesus (blindly)". We had had the idea to do so for a long time, but somehow never managed to accomplish it. It was a joyful get-together with beautiful sunshine in our church garden. We appreciate our sisters Enisa's and Irene's as well as our elder children's help!



The month August brought us our biggest church event of the year, the wedding of our members Sister Christine and Bro Flavor which was our first Akebulan church matrimony. The two planned a rather big celebration which was not easy to conduct during these pandemic times. Nevertheless thanks to grown relationships and trust within our neighbouring Ecumene and the engagement of Reverend Gorgas, it became possible for us to use the facilities of our above mentioned Lutheran neighbours Gnade-Christi-Kirche and celebrate ecumenically.



Our Catholic neighbours Allerheiligen, too, were ready to help us out. The decision where to celebrate was largely influenced by the hope to be able to use the also mentioned big church garden. Unfortunately, the weather was not on our side. Nevertheless, the wedding became marvellous, and we thank God for His mercies and outpouring of blessings! We

hereby again express our gratitude for the opportunity! A surprise happening in the context of this wedding became the bridal shower party for Sister Christine which her friend Victoria with the women of their self-founded Kenyan group organized in our Akebulan garden with the support of our church. What a sweet idea!



Again in August, Peter was able to travel with a group of almost 40 young people from the APPA- churches to the International Youth Bible Summer Camp at Himmelsfels. They participated for the first time at this one week long camp. In addition after several years, it was the first time that a larger group from Berlin went there. This year, we hope to be able to go there, again.

GfB operated another Transforum conference. Unfortunately since it was the same date with our wedding, we couldn't participate. They offered two intercultural workshops where Simon Hainbach from Campus Crusade for Christ introduced Global Local.



In October, the two of us Peter and Steffi went to Ghana. We are grateful for the opportunity to enjoy being there and meeting our family. In November, Peter lectured at the Evangelical Academy. They had invited him to speak about migration churches and our Akebulan church work at a European Bible dialogue.

In December, the APPA pastors met again to enjoy dinner at a restaurant. With our Akebulan children, we did crafts and enjoyed baking Christmas cookies. Our Christmas service was a beautiful highlight at the end of the year. Afterwards until the midst of January, we had to discontinue our services- this time not because of the pandemic, but because our heating system broke down and had to be repaired. We are very grateful to our landlord Dr. Knappe who did his best to get this done as fast as possible. Since the 23rd, we can meet, again.



We heartedly state our thanks for all engagement and support of any kind for our church work! Especially, we express our gratitude to Bro Karlheinz for his long standing professional help with the upkeeping of our house and garden as well as to Dr. Knappe for the continuous friendly tenancy and the elaborate repairment of our heating installation. We

give thanks for all fruitful partnership and cooperation with our umbrella organization Mülheimer Verband FEG e.V., the African Pentecostal Pastors' Association in Berlin and Brandenburg (APPA) e.V., the Evangelical Blind People's Service Berlin, the General Association for Blind and Visually Impaired People Berlin e.V. (ABSV), our neighbouring Ecumene and the group To be a Christian interculturality (Csi), the panafrikan Gospel choir Akwaba e.V., Together for Berlin e.V. and last but not least the Fachhochschule für Interkulturelle Theologie Hermannsburg (FIT), Himmelsfels e.V., Church on Eye- Level and its subproject Global Local.

We are grateful for everything that is possible despite the continuing pandemic restrictions as well as for all unity among Christians in a time when there is an increase of separation in our society. It is our hope that together with our members and everyone connected with us, we will be able to master the current challenges of the crisis. Any form of fellowship which we can realize, will strengthen and encourage us. We pray that God will continue to carry us all through these hard times, and that an end of the pandemic will come nearer.

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>

http://www.akwaba-gospelchor.com/index_ger.html

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

https://www.fh-hermannsburg.de/die_fit

<https://himmelsfels.de/>

<https://gemeinde-auf-augenhoehe.de/>

https://www.eva-leipzig.de/product_info.php?info=p4974_Alle-sind-eingeladen.html

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