

Morgenandacht des Uhusiano-Projekts

Gehalten von Christian Pohl am 03.03.2012

Englische Fassung

Material:

Guitar, **Uhusiano Booklets** (Bind us together)

Laptop/ Beamer, UhusianoDevotion12-03-03.ppt

1. **Welcome** (1 min)

„In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit“ Amen.

2. **Song** (3 min)

Bind us together (*Uhusiano Booklets*) ---> **PPT: Click!**

3. **Impulse** (8 min)

Click! There it is, the Tanzanian person. It can easily be recognized: wrapped in a Tanzanian flag.

Click! There it is, the Bavarian person. It also can easily be recognized: wrapped in a Bavarian flag.

Well, we can see, they *look* different: diverse colours, diverse designs. And they *are* different. Yesterday we heard about cultures - how different they are. Each person has her/ his own cultural backpack, meaning own cultural habits ...

What is typical for Bavarians? They like to eat pork and dumplings. You guests from Tanzania should taste this dish during your stay here - it's delicious!

What is typical for Tanzanians? They like to eat wali na maharagwe - rice and beans - also very delicious. Maybe you can cook this food together with your host, that's also a good way to get to know each other.

But to make the situation more complicated: not all Bavarians like to eat pork and dumplings, and maybe there are Tanzanians preferring an other dish than wali na mahargwe. What we see as a common picture of a certain culture is more diverse having a closer look.

Here they are, our two friends. They are together in a partnership - and it's good to come together: to walk, to talk, to work, to sing, to pray together!

But in a relationship like that, we experience differences: Last year when I was travelling with a partnership-group in TZ we had a service in Tanga which took nearly *three* hours. For some of the Germans it was quite a long thing, our services in Germany are about one hour only (o.k., when there are guests: one and a half hours)! I was preaching only a little longer than usually at home, but the rest was much more extended than in Germany: many choirs, speeches etc.

In your partnership you surely make this experience of differences on various levels: projects, ethical questions etc., because you are from different cultures. But we *are* in a partnership. What makes us being together? What holds us together - despite all differences?

Well, there is this plus *Click!* - it looks like a plus. - But it also has the shape of a cross. And the cross stands for Jesus Christ - of whom we believe, that God is in him. It is our God who brings us together and holds us together as Christians and Churches of different cultures. *Click! Click!* We have someone uniting us - in Jesus Christ we have something like a new culture, a new community across all cultures on this earth.

Apostle Paul has a very interesting picture for this new culture:

In **1 Corinthians 12, 12-20** he says, that all Christians are the body of Christ:

¹² The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. ¹³ Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, *and I add: some are Bavarians, some are Tanzanians*, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

¹⁴ Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. ¹⁵ If the foot says, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” that does not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, “I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

¹⁸ But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. ¹⁹ How strange a body would be if it had only one part! ²⁰ Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. *New Living Translation*

Paul wrote this text to the Corinthians in a situation when there was quarrel in the congregation: There were different groups fighting each other. He gives them the picture of one body. A body is made up of single parts: they are different and they have different functions: ear: hear - eye: see. But they need each other and they can not exist separate from the body. *Click! Click!* With other words: There is *individuality* and *communion/ togetherness*. Paul wanted both to be recognized in the Christian church.

This text can easily be applied to our partnerships: Like in a body there is individuality and togetherness - we already talked about the individuality, meaning the differences.

But togetherness is also an important experience in our relationship: We need the different views and gifts for completion (to be complete). A single person cannot do everything in a partnership - we need many people. And it is Christ, who makes us one. Paul mentions the baptism as the entrance to the Body of Christ, and the Spirit uniting us.

Let me come back to the service in Tanga I talked about before: It was a joyful and great experience of togetherness: we sang together/ we clapped our hands, we exchanged words, we enjoyed the common bond.

And this event also pointed out, that we were united by our God, despite all differences - for example when we prayed the Lord's Prayer, each one in her/ his own language. I'm sure you all could talk about a lot of similar experiences in your partnerships.

This scripture of the Body of Christ is also true for our world wide communion of churches not only for a single partnership. The ELCT and the ELCB are together as partners for already 50 years. For this reason we are here to celebrate and to thank God for this relationship. The spirit of the Triune God brings and holds us together.

In the end looking at the picture we can see: It's a colourful puzzle. It's not boring - the different parts and colours make it interesting: Difference is not a problem, it is enrichment. Partnership - Uhusiano is like a colourful body made up of different parts united by our God.

4. **Prayer** (1 min)

Father in heaven,
you created us as different people, living in different cultures.
Let us cope with these diversities in a good way - let us understand, that it not a threat, but enrichment.
Let us experience your uniting power - the spirit of your Son Jesus Christ
binging and holding us together.
Bless this day and all the days we are going to be together.
And listen to us, when praying the prayer, your Son Jesus Christ gave to us:

5. **Lord's Prayer** (2 min)

Each one in her/ his language ...

Vater unser im Himmel. Geheiligt werde dein Name. Dein Reich komme. Dein Wille geschehe, wie im Himmel, so auf Erden. Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute, und vergib uns unsere Schuld, wie auch wir vergeben unsern Schuldigern. Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung, sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen. Denn dein ist das Reich und die Kraft und die Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit. Amen

6. **Benediction**

We go into this day with the blessing of our God, the father of Jesus Christ:

“May the LORD (יהוה) bless you and guard you.

May the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

May the LORD lift up His face unto you and give you peace.

Amen.”

Not used:

... And in the end of the visit, when we had the evaluation of the last two weeks - and of the partnership, there was thankfulness of the relationship. But we also talked about difficulties: There were different views on a joint sewing-machine project, which were not communicated for some time. While talking we could understand the thoughts of the others and solving it this way. ...

... Paul wants to tell the Corinthians: It's the same in your congregation: you have different people and different groups, you have different positions and



different gifts - but you belong together, because you need each other. Each of you has a certain function in church - a single person can not do everything. In another text (Eph. 1,22; 4,15) he varies the picture, saying Jesus Christ is the head - the centre coordinating everything.