

MY EXPERIENCE OF THE ÖKUMENISCHER KIRCHENTAG 2010

(Fr. Michael Sia Teshu, SDS)

The Ökumenische Kirchentag has opened a new page in the book of my life experience. Being a Tanzanian and my first time in Germany, the Kirchentag has, indeed, become a wonderful event of learning and experiencing “new things” in terms of people, culture, language, places, activity organizing know-how, and of course, not putting aside the cold weather all through the four days of this great event. Yes, the weather was, in fact, so cold to me. The lowest temperature degree was 4 Centigrade which never had it happened in Tanzania. I come from the Kilimanjaro region in Tanzania, of which the lowest temperature in the months of May to July can only be 7°C and that happens rarely, not every year.

So what I can say in general, the Ökumenischer Kirchentag has opened the door of challenge to me; the challenge of new encounter. And this made me also learn and understand the challenge that face missionaries from Europe coming to the mission lands, like our country, where the climate is very hot most of the time in the year, encountering people with different ways of life and culture, and facing the challenge of communication barriers in terms of language, yet hopping that what they are doing is good kept them going.

The lesson of the Kirchentag thus is that: if anything has to be done and not only done but done successfully, there must be decisions, then moves (call it actions), and no matter the coming out of difficulties, perseverance with hope is important for carrying out things and get them done. Despite the cold and rainy weather, I could see how crowded Munich was in all the main centres set for the Kirchentag events and all people moving actively and gleefully. It was perseverance with hope that was moving us all like that. It was all wonderful! Nothing could stop it! And nothing better could have been done!

It was also wonderful time to meet some of the MaZ volunteers who, in different times, had been in Tanzania for one year or less than a year to some of them. It was great talking Kiswahili with them and I was so glad that they still remember Kiswahili, even if they only stayed for such short a time. These MaZ volunteers may have faced difficulties in Tanzania but I could see in them that they still have hope. Hope that things can be done. And actually, after visiting the globe hut of MaZ at the Olympiastadion, I am of the opinion that MaZ is one of remarkable program that gives chance to the young people and any of good will person in Germany to encounter new realities around the world. My hope is that all volunteers involved in the MaZ program will grow more in the understanding of the global realities, the cultural variety of the world's people, the encounter of God's in peoples life and our Christian faith.