

UPF's monthly International Cafe in Giessen, Germany drew an audience of 20

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The monthly International Cafe event organized by UPF Gießen drew an audience of about twenty on November 25, when the UPF Ambassador for Peace, Aschalew Amenu, related his extraordinary life, which can only be briefly summarised here.

Aschalew grew up in a farming family in Ethiopia as one of seven children; his three younger brothers were shot in childhood. In 1986, at 21, he came to study in Leipzig, in the then DDR (East Germany). He experienced the situation before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Monday prayers in the St. Nicholas Church. He has long been a German citizen and lives with his family in Hüttenberg near Gießen.

From an early age, Aschalew was impressed by Karlheinz Böhm, who appeared on 16 May 1981 on „Wetten, dass ...“ (a popular German TV show) and bet that not even one in three viewers would donate one DM (German Mark) for people in need in the Sahel area (a semi-arid region in Africa between the Sahara desert and the savannas). In the end, about 1,2 million DM was donated, and Böhm established the well-known and successful aid organization „Menschen für Menschen“ – (roughly: people for people.) Aschalew, who identifies as a believer in the Apostles' Creed, saw this as a challenge: someone from a completely different culture is so close in heart to and is helping my people; what can I do?

After overwhelmingly positive feedback from his colleagues and friends, Aschalew Amenu established 2010 the association „ Help for the Lives and Schooling of Ethiopian Children. “ or HiLSchaeK. To this date, this small organization has already supported over fifty children with sponsorship.

Of course, we learned much about Ethiopia: its more than eighty ethnic groups, geography, religion, and political developments and happenings. For example, legend has it that in an ancient Christian chapel in the highlands of northern Ethiopia, the mythical Ark of the Covenant containing the Ten Commandments is to be found. And indeed, there is here a chest which monks strictly guard.

At the end of the event, the moderator made a spontaneous call for donations, resulting in an impressive € 200 offering to HiLSchaeK.

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