

**Grusswort im Auftrag des Vorstands der Basler Mission  
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**Gavva, den 15.8.2009**

"Go tell it on the mountains over the hills and everywhere...  
Go tell it on the mountains that Jesus Christ is born."

I guess you know this wide spread spiritual and I thought that it fits our anniversary today perfectly, because the first missionaries came over the Cameroun Mountains to this place in the mountains exactly to do this: to tell the people that Jesus Christ is born.

When they looked for a place to stay they chose the battlefield between the clans and today we can say it became a place of peace. A miracle happened because love was preached and exercised and who knew at this time that one of the first believers, one of the first set of young people to be baptised would be one day in the far future sit here as the president of an independent church together with all of us to celebrate this beginning .

This church came out of two missionary partners Basel Mission and Church of the Brethrens Mission, you can read this up in your TEE program or when you read about the history of EYN. They struggled seriously those first Missionaries coming to Lardin Gabbas how it was called and my predecessors whose names by chance all started with the German "sch" Schöni, Scheytt, Schanbacher set up the church in this part of the country (and I confess to you that their names dwarfed me they threw a big shade on me when I started my work here – just teaching and hidden by the walls of a government WTC). Those predecessors had built houses started schools and medical work –including the hospital in Ngoshe. The place prospered and was well known to the people around and many people were trained in those institutions.

But one event brought it nearly to a stop at the time - when the people of this land strip belonged for a while to nobody because they had belonged as a colony to Germany and now had to vote whether they wanted to be Nigerians or Cameroonians – the people wanted to belong to Nigeria, which meant that this little group of missionaries were cut off the lines to Cameroun and Basel Mission had got a new place of work – the county of Nigeria. So they thought it over and prayed what to do. Give up the place or find a missionary partner. Several attempts were made until they succeeded to become a partner of the Church of the Brethren Mission.

What a wonderful thing – those who had been their enemies 400 years ago wished now to be their friends and partners. At that time the German and Swiss congregations persecuted the Anabaptists and here they were to work with them.

O.K. the Basel Mission group brought in a complete different theology and pastoral thinking these days I got a feeling that EYN drives much more to this side in habit than to the side of congregational theology of the church of the Brethren. But if so I want to hiss the flag and say please march with us to the next step ordain your female pastors – the field is white and ripe for this harvest – because you need much more pastors for your millions of members. What on earth divides you still from this idea? I am sure you would encounter miracles again those congregations are cared for with much love through women pastors.

But this is music of the future- hopefully to come soon – but now I want to turn o another topic which belongs to our 50 years of relationship.

Relationship that means us und downs joy and sorrow, understanding and misunderstanding ... and much more.

All of us know the secret of a good relationship is trust – trust does not replace information but more information does not produce more trust. In my understanding the only way to communicate and to go on with a partner is to see him or her and to hear him/her physically or why on earth do you think businessmen go still round the world to see each other when they are able to correspond perfectly by phone, mail or even by skypeing. It is the inevitable wish of people to look into the eyes of their counterpart because we trust our personal watching listening and feeling much more then all our wonderful technical development.

The People of Mission have known this since....We of churches and missions know that the exchange of persons exceeds the exchange money. We need the money to work together but we need each other to pray together.

Therefore my wish is not – let´s go on for the next 50 years - no let´s go on as sisters and brothers of trust even if the institution in Europe got as well a new name –mission 21 –

To start these next 50 years some Nigerians and some Europeans put their heads together to write down the former 50 years into a book which should have launched today but time was not enough – and I do not mean the last 50 years – and please don´t think it needs another 50 years – Basel Mission now as a supporter Mission of mission 21 has decided to support the finalising of the book with 2500 SFR and since I shouldn´t come empty handed today the board sends you today another 500 SFR to throw a little light on the occasion. My own church sends 200 EUR for the Literacy work which is today stationed in this place on behalf of these two institutions I would like to give this now to the President of EYN as well in remembrance of the start in this place.

What is left to say is by God´s grace we will go on may He bless us all and our way together and the relationship in all its facets, which shall be like a diamond precious and shining giving witness to all of those who see it.