

Farewell as Chairman of Gossner Mission

Harald Lehmann

Dear friends of Gossner Mission wherever you are in this world. Today I speak to you on the occasion of my retirement as President or Chairman after more than 25 years as a member of the governing boards and 14 years on top of our foundation.

In my life I have been blessed to be able to visit many countries related to our history and our present work. I met many of you and experienced your hospitality. I slept in your homes and ate your meals. We shared thoughts and prayers and many times I delivered the greetings of your fellow Christians in Germany to you. I was honoured to preach in your Churches and to meet your representatives but much more often I enjoyed the invitation to your private homes and the exchange of ideas when we sat together.

Throughout the years we shared many moments of friendship and happiness and sometimes moments of hardship as well.

Many of you throughout the last decades have – vice versa – been in our home and my wife and I were blessed with visitors who opened up their hearts and thoughts for us and a lot keep the contact by still writing messages and calling us and we hope this will continue.

But now – at the age of 71 – I decided to step aside and give up this official position. It's not that I'm too tired or unwilling to contribute any longer to our work. But I'm convinced that it's good for everyone in such a position to hand over responsibility at a time when you have reached a certain age and when younger people are there whose ability to lead is visible and who have a perspective to successfully mark the coming years. That is why I have resisted the temptation to continue in this position.

Today I look back with a heart filled with thankfulness. Our LORD has blessed my life when he accompanied me through these years. Your faith was a source of joy when we came together in church services and devotions and prayers.

My support of Gossner Mission will go on even without official duties. And looking back we know that our work is never done in a conclusive way. Things remain which are a challenge for those who take over from us. May they be guided and kept by our LORD.

In Germany many Christians follow the tradition to look up the Moravian watchwords for the day. For my final day as chairman on the 9th of October there were two verses which fitted to settle my time.

Jes 49,4 (The prophet says) "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God."

1. Cor. 15,58 (St. Paul writes) Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

And as Christians we know: we shall meet again! -
Stand firm! Stay well and be blessed! - Good bye!