

Mission Council May 2015 in Dorfweil

Please do not be surprised if this report on the Mission Council will be somewhat different from those of former years. This is because at the time when it took place, I had been working with EBM INTERNATIONAL for no more than three months; being, so to speak, a newcomer, I certainly had a somewhat different perspective on this event. I had had no idea of what was awaiting me, but I was highly motivated to meet the many international guests coming from so different backgrounds. And so, I got a thrilling picture of what EBM INTERNATIONAL stands for, which was much to my joy and amazement.

A big worldwide family, connected from Germany to many other countries in Europe, Africa, Latin America, and India. EBM INTERNATIONAL never sees its mission as detached from the basic needs and afflictions of people but always tries to combine both: Jesus' love and message of salvation and hands-on assistance of many kinds, thus serving to alleviate and eliminate the immense hardships of many people. This concern fascinates me, and I could sense this thrill also among the roughly 150 delegates and one-day guests from the 26 countries.

As in a real family, everyone is quite different from everyone else; you have to close ranks, to listen to and to respect one another, while never losing sight of the common goal. There were many reasons for joy and gratitude – there was really a lot of laughter, and the humour was also there. But there were also intense and painful elements. In this context, I was especially moved by a contribution made by Daniel González from Cuba: He pointed out how much he appreciated that we in Germany, and thus also within EBM INTERNATIONAL, have democratic structures; in this way, he said, nothing could be swept under the table. There was no corruption nor any fear of clear-cut statements here, as he knew them in his country. Being able to deal with one another in an open and authentic way was a big gift and a great blessing for which we may thank God, he said.

Conclusion: We are looking forward to our "family reunion" next year in Arnhem, Netherlands.

Kerstin Funk