



December 2016

Dear friends,

As we are approaching Christmas, getting into the spirit of Christmas is not high on our list of priorities. By the end of November all Christmas markets, carol concerts and other end-of-year functions will have happened and the great exodus from Windhoek to the coast or the rural north will begin. Our focus in December, amongst other things, will be getting some much-needed rest. So, following the final marks review at NETS, we will be off to the coast from 1 – 8 December to escape the incredible heat and also get an emotional break from all the pastoral issues we have been dealing with lately.

Upon our return, Thorsten will have a couple of sermons to preach and Kerstin will continue with her Christian Counselling module on 'addictions'. Then there will hopefully be time to catch up with friends, some more mentoring and counselling sessions with current and former students and sadly more goodbyes as two couples who are part of our close circle of friends will be leaving Namibia.

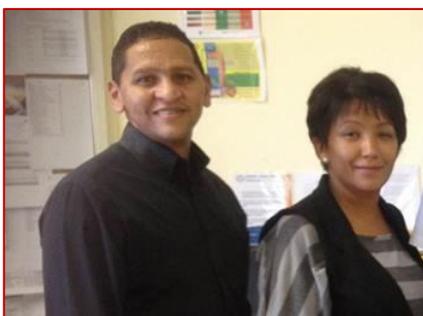
Exciting times at NETS

Being a witness of the transition from missionary to local leadership at NETS is a great privilege. The NETS leadership (see photos) now consists of Namibians, some of whom we trained and mentored (such as Christo and Lynette below) and others who have come from outside.

There were times when we had doubts that such a handover would ever happen – partly due to lack of finances, partly due to lack of the right personnel. But God has been gracious and provided in His own special ways.



Board Chairman De Wet Strauss (l.), Principal Lukas Katenda, Director Church & Community Department Berdian Beukes (r.)



Director Distance Department Christo Bock (left) & Office Manager Lynette Beukes

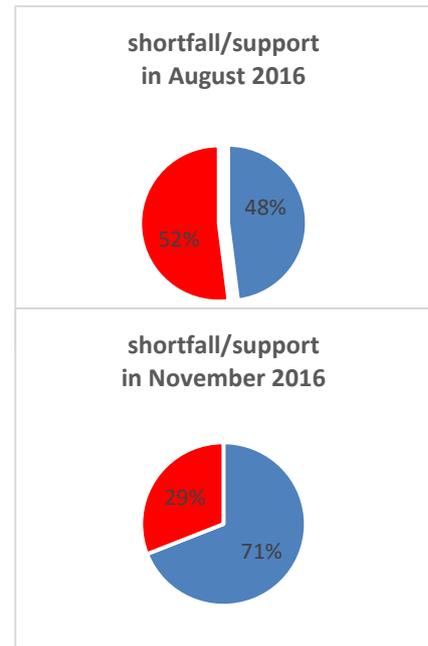
Much more grace will be needed as the new Leadership Team begins the year with a deficit of N\$600,000 and a vacant Academic Dean position which is going to be divided amongst several lecturers and headed up by the new Principal. While we have great trust in the new leadership, we also have concerns that the task of leading as well as fundraising might become overwhelming. Please pray with us for great wisdom for the leadership, for the provision of funds and the right people to help with important tasks in the Academic Dean's office and library. Pray that students will be able to pay their outstanding

fees and that NETS will be successful in finding new donors both in- and outside of Namibia.

Coming back to Europe...

Our search for a new future ministry in Europe is beginning to take shape. We are really excited about the way the Lord has led us in recent weeks and opened up a great new opportunity. Kindly read the attached letter from Crosslinks for further details. If you want to find out more, please let us know. We are very happy to personally share our heart and vision with you.

We had initially planned to leave Namibia early next year, but both a shortfall in the future budget and the need to support NETS in its time of transition has prompted us to extend our stay for another six months. We praise God for several generous friends who have increased their giving and others who have started supporting us. If you feel prompted by the Lord to partner with us in our new ministry, we would be very grateful. We are still in need of new partners willing to give a monthly amount of eg. £10/£20/£30 or more as well as some new partner churches. Please pray with us that the shortfall will be met soon.



Looking back and forward...

The last few months have been emotionally demanding as we dealt with a number of sudden deaths through accidents and other difficult pastoral issues that we cannot write about in this letter. Recently, Thorsten was asked to pray in the Sunday service for a woman and her three small children because her husband had died. He did so and when he sat down again and asked his colleague how the husband had died, Thorsten was told it was a suicide. This was one of four suicides we had heard about within the space of one week. We need prayer for strength, wisdom and perseverance for the next few weeks as we are getting alongside people with traumatic experiences, burnout and burning questions. Thorsten will continue teaching at NETS as well as in the church and Kerstin will be wearing several hats in and outside of NETS (admin, fundraising, mentoring, counselling as well as getting better equipped as lay counsellor through distance studies with South African Theological Seminary).



In the midst of all these challenges we praise God that Advent and Christmas are not about getting into the right spirit, but to remember and celebrate that our Lord Jesus has come to earth and will come again. Thankfully, we do not need candles, cold weather, snow and fir trees for this. May you be filled with joy once again as you celebrate the Word who became flesh this December. Thank you for your faithful partnership in the Gospel which enables us to continue and persevere in our ministry.

With much love in Christ

Thorsten & Kerstin

Please contact your local Crosslinks office to change your contact details

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