News from Marta Bennett in Nairobi:

31st July 2016

Reports of my “retirement” have been greatly exaggerated! Though the Presbyterian Church (USA) has now recognized me as “Honorably Retired” from mission service after 21 years as a PC(USA) mission co-worker, I have definitely not retired from Kenya, from ministry, nor from university teaching in East Africa! Not only have I not “retired”, I am excited about the way opportunities and engagement in the region continue to deepen and expand. Justin (18), Steven (29), Imani

(17) with Marta (mom) in the middle

But let me back up. For those who are not aware, mine was one of eight mission co-worker positions discontinued by PC(USA) last year, due to the major financial challenges being faced by the denomination, and specifically in the Missions division. This became effective as of 31st December 2015, and we were given a “re-entry grant” to return to the US and to pursue whatever would be next.

Having no sense that it was time to leave Kenya, I still spent some time soul-searching and seeking God’s guidance for myself and for us as a family. Nothing changed in the conviction to continue on here; if anything, it has deepened, and as a result, the “re-entry” grant enabled us to keep going here the past number of months in Nairobi. Justin finished his last semester of high school, graduating in May, and Imani finished 10th grade, getting ready to continue on. Steven finished university two years ago, and is working and starting some small businesses. I have just completed my 10th year at International Leadership University (formerly Nairobi International School of Theology), as Head of Department of Leadership Studies. (I was at Daystar University prior to ILU, for 12 years, 1994-2006), and have also been teaching 3-week intensive Masters courses in Burundi and Ethiopia for the last several years, as well as other local and regional involvements.

I am happy to report that I have now come under the umbrella of The Antioch Partners (TAP - [www.theantiochpartners.org](http://www.theantiochpartners.org)), and am starting over to let people know what I am doing, and to invite folks to partner in the ministry, through prayer, finances, and other ways as opportunities present themselves. Since I am no longer under Presbyterian Missions (PC(USA), I have lost a number of supporting churches. I am so grateful for the individuals as well as the few churches who are continuing, and at the same time, this is an opportunity for me to connect (or reconnect!) with many dear friends and colleagues from over the decades, and to invite you as new partners, both individuals and churches to join in at this time.

For those of you who have so faithfully walked with me and my children over the last many years, a heart-felt thank-you. I enthusiastically invite you to continue on into this next chapter. For those who have not been involved in the past, I invite you to join this opportunity to share in what God is doing here in East Africa.

Attached you will find the TAP form which gives information on how to give, and/or to be added on my mailing list for prayer and news updates. The form can be down-loaded, filled, and sent back to me, and any gifts can be given as directed on the form and on the TAP website ([www.theantiochpartners.org](http://www.theantiochpartners.org) ).

Current ministry focus:

1. At ILU, teaching and advising Masters and PhD Leadership students in Leadership, including personal leadership development, leading change, conflict transformation, theology of leadership, and more, integrating faith and values with the knowledge and development of skills, along with on-going mentoring and discipleship, life on life.
2. Continuing to teach short courses and advise theses at other schools in the region (Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST) in Ethiopia; ILU Burundi; and others), and assisting with DMin modules at Africa International University (NEGST) here in Nairobi.
3. Serving on the executive board of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), especially working with the bishops and pastors, and on developing schools around the country;
4. Serving on the board of Transformational Leadership in Africa (TLAfrica), led by a former student and pastor from Rwanda, focusing on grass roots pastoral training, women’s economic empowerment especially in Rwanda and DRC, as well as other countries in the region including South Sudan, Together we are dreaming and working towards developing Thousand Hills International University in Musanze, Rwanda.
5. Involvement in my local church, Nairobi Chapel. Besides my home Bible study/fellowship groups, this past June I taught an adult spiritual formation course on “Growing Deep in the Depths of our Souls”. We had an amazing and profound time together.

Upcoming needs:

1. General overall support – Cost of living in Nairobi continues to go up, as well as I now need to cover all medical insurance, travel, and school fee costs.
2. Justin begins university this August at Penn State, to study Architectural Engineering. He has received an amount of federal and other financial assistance, but even with that and savings, there are expenses, including, we’d love for him to come home to Kenya at least every year or two to visit, if possible.
3. Imani is at West Nairobi School, a private American/International high school. She transferred to WNS in 9th grade, after doing all of primary school in the Kenyan British system. She has two more years to go before she finishes.
4. Our faithful little Suzuki has served me well (OK, most of the time) – for the last 17 years, as the 3rd owner. It has come to the point that we really do need to buy a newer car that is strong and dependable.
5. As I continue to teach intensive courses and seminars in other parts of East Africa and beyond (Ethiopia, Burundi, and I have invitations to ILU Nigeria and DRC coming up), and to serve on the board of TLAfrica, which involves some travel to Rwanda and the region, the costs of travel need to be to covered.

So, with joy in the journey, I am gratefully yours,

Marta

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**To give and/or receive e-newsletters:**

1. Through The Antioch Partners (TAP):

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2. Through University Presbyterian Church, Seattle.

For those of you who choose to give through my home church in the US, you may write a check or give on-line. Go to [www.upc.org](http://www.upc.org), then click on “Menu”, then “Serve”, then “Give to UPC”. Once you select the “form of giving,” you can indicate that your giving type is “other” and in the Memo, write: “For Marta Bennett, Kenya”.

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Recent photos of me with, left to right: Mary Gathoni (TLAfrica staff); Leticia Bellon (long time friend, now ILU graduate, from Ghana): and Rahab Mukiama (center, in red), an ILU alumni, lawyer, pastor, and sponsor of these four July ’16 ILU graduates.

  