



Quon Stothers Journey

Berkeley / Los Angeles / Ireland

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Newsletter August 2013

The Lull Before the Storm . . .

Last night we had the privilege of hearing Jim Wallis and our clergy group met with him this morning. He is the long time political activist for social justice, now speaking about the "common good". He is the publisher of *Sojourners* magazine. He spoke for skepticism, but never cynicism, as it becomes our excuse for disengaging. Marda was able to say to a local professor who cited the hypocrisy of Stormont to have an "I have a Dream" event when they have no vision, that the government ministers have given us a big vision for taking the peace walls down within ten years. There are 80 interface area walls in



Marda on the right enjoying down homegospel music; Vinny singing on the left

Belfast. We all must act for this to happen.

On a praise note our pre-worship prayer and prayer bulletin have been noted. We are seeing the evidence of God working when people from the neighborhood have sought out our minister and are coming to the church. This is from a hard core area

decimated by the 30 years of the Troubles, dereliction, and a freeway. In addition, a Bible College, from the east side of town, has moved into our adjacent premises, adding people and additional Christian ethos to the neighborhood. Lastly, two gospel singers came in this week to inquire about renting a hall. We later



New elder Colin Skillen teaching Holiday Bible Club Space Academy



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. . . hope our guests see sun

saw them in front of City Hall, singing and offering free coffee and tea.

We have no vote but we do live here. Marda attended a meeting of Art for Arterial Routes and met two artists who are contracted to make art for two streets in the

lower Shankill. Both have vehicular gates in the peace walls. These are really blighted areas. She gets a call from Frank who wants to meet her to discuss why the wall can't come down. This is her opportunity to help one person remove the walls in their mind

Special prayer points

- PRAISE for special gifts and kindnesses. PRAY for sustained monthly gifts. That donors be blessed.
- PRAISE for new freedom and a wonderful sponsor. PRAY for Jon Kennedy who joined us on 13 March.
- PRAY for a call for Donna Quigley a gifted rector.
- College Avenue Presbyterian Church, in Oakland, Pastor Monte and congregational growth.
- PRAY for poetry to flow and next steps for pottery.
- PRAISE for new friends and weaving relationships
- PRAISE Sunday morning prayer continues
- PRAISE for team building relationships
- PRAISE for discussions about walls coming down.
- PRAISE for expansion of Townsend church vision and the people to implement it

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Townsend St. Prayer Room with Jack's welcome carpet

it's not really a problem." "No I don't think so." "Good." I proceeded to park my car.

So, yes, it is all around us but not on our block so we are fine. We pray and good things are happening.

John Grant who was baptized on St Patrick's Day came back, and is heading home to Wellington, N.Z. Pray for him as he reunites with mom, kids, and church.

and heart.

July we purposely didn't write about parades and riots. It seemed that the world news was covering it. However when we read many simplistic regurgitations characterizing the Irish Catholics as against the British Protestants, I feel I must clarify. The people born in and who have roots from the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland are Irish. The old Gaelic language shared with Scotland and Wales is called Irish. It is not Ulster Scots which is a dialect of English. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom (Great Britain and Northern Ireland since the partition of Ireland in 1921). Westminster is the seat of government, Stormont, is the Assembly for Northern Ireland, and the Belfast City Council is the local

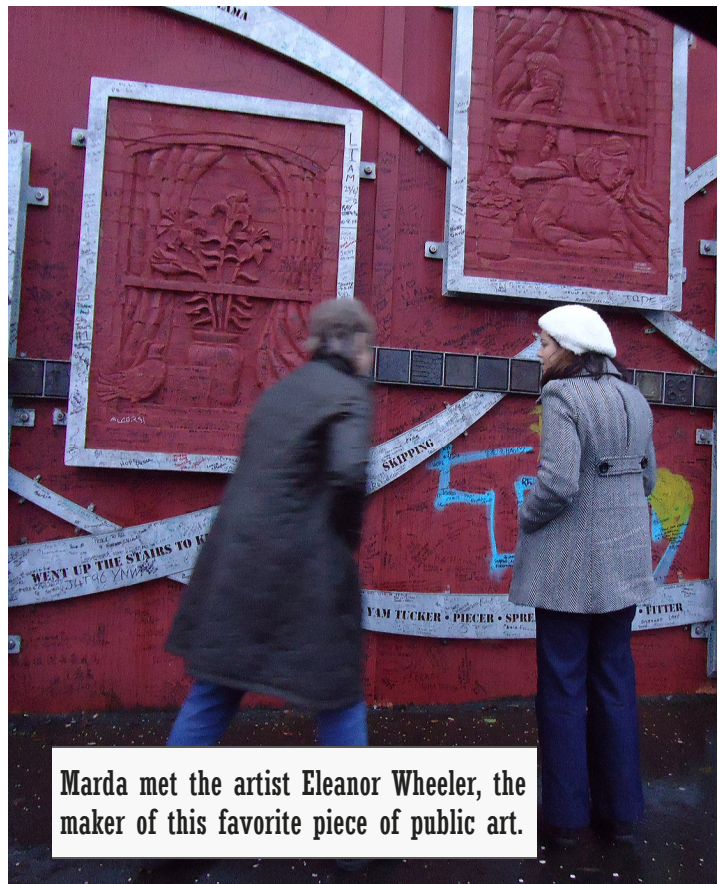
government. Citizens of Northern Ireland are all British not just the Protestants. Just like people born in the United States are Americans, red and yellow, black and white.

We advocate the rule of law and also give vent to frustrations. We pray for resolution and peace. We continue to support the local merchants who are affected and speak to strangers whenever we can. We ask you to pray for peace.

I don't know exactly where the Divis Street bonfire was (another riot location) but when I pulled into the church parking lot one night, four teens were hanging around the entrance which is 100 feet from the security barriers (peace walls) and over on the other side I could see a bit of smoke

rising. So I rolled down my window to ask one of them, "do you know what's burning over there?" The wee teen said, "I think it's some scrap wood". I said "so

Starting on Wednesday the Chans will arrive and start the Fall visits to NI from five sets of our American friends and a pastoral care visit from CTEN. We hope the nice weather holds up.



Marda met the artist Eleanor Wheeler, the maker of this favorite piece of public art.